

**AN ANALYSIS OF THE THIRD YEAR STUDENTS' ABILITY IN  
IDENTIFYING SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT OF TOEFL-LIKE TEST  
AT THE DEPARTMENT OF PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHER  
EDUCATION OF BUNG HATTA UNIVERSITY**

**THESIS**



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BUNG HATTA UNIVERSITY  
PADANG  
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**UNIVERSITAS BUNG HATTA**

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*Submitted to Fulfill a Partial Requirement for Getting S-1 Degree at the  
English Department, Teacher Training and Education Faculty, Bung Hatta  
University*



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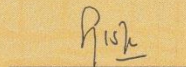
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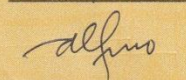
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## ABSTRACT

Putri, Zora. Aulia. (2024). *An Analysis of the Third Year Students' Ability in Identifying Subject-verb Agreement of TOEFL-like Test at the Department of Primary School Teacher Education of Bung Hatta University*

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The purpose of this research was to describe the third year students' ability in identifying subject-verb agreement of TOEFL-like test at the Department of Primary School Teacher Education of Bung Hatta University. The design of this research was the descriptive research. The population of this research was the third year students at the Department of Primary School Teacher Education of Bung Hatta University. The cluster random sampling technique was used in this research and the number of samples was 27 students. Instrument for collecting the data in this research was structure and written expression of TOEFL test that was copied from the TOEFL Test Book (*Phillips (2001): Longman Complete Course for the TOEFL Test: Preparation for the Computer and Paper Test*). To make the test reliable, the researcher used split-half technique. The reliability index of the test was 0.87 (very high correlation). It means that the test was reliable. Then the test was valid in terms of content because it had covered all materials that students had learnt.

Generally, the result of this research showed that the third year students had low ability in identifying subject-verb agreement of TOEFL-like test. It was proved that 1 student (3.7%) had excellent ability, 9 students (33.34%) had good ability, 4 students (14.81%) had moderate ability, and 13 students (48.15%) had low ability in identifying subject-verb agreement of TOEFL-like test. Specifically, 1 student (3.7%) had excellent ability, 1 student (3.7%) had good ability, 11 students (40.75%) had moderate ability, and 14 students (51.85%) had low ability in identifying subject verb agreement of TOEFL-like test in simple present tense. While, in identifying subject verb agreement in simple past tense, 1 student (3.7%) had excellent ability, 11 students (40.75%) had good ability, 2 students (7.4%) had moderate ability, and 13 students (48.15%) had low ability.

By having known that the students had low ability in identifying subject verb agreement, the researcher gave suggestion to the lecturers, students, and the future researchers. The lecturers are expected to be able to vary teaching techniques, to find alternatif technique and implement them in teaching subject-verb agreement in simple present tense and simple past tense, for example giving more exercises. The students are suggested to join the Persiapan TOEFL class seriously, pay attention to the lecturer's explanation, and do more exercises to answer those types of questions. Last but not least, the future researchers are suggested to find out the causes of the students' low ability in answering TOEFL-like test.

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the researcher discusses some points of this research. They are background of the problems, identification of the problem, limitation of the problem, formulation of the problem, research questions, purposes of the research, significance of the research, and definition of the key terms.

### **1.1 Background of the Problem**

Grammar is one of the most important language components. According to Mujahidah and Sardi (2021), grammar is a solid foundation of a foreign language. This implies that grammar encompasses all of language skills. Grammar teaches how to develop clear phrases and effectively communicate their thoughts and emotions. Therefore, without proper grammar, the meaning of everything spoken or written may be lost or cannot be supported.

Grammar is taught in the subject of TOEFL Preparation at the Department of Primary School Teacher Education of Bung Hatta University. In this subject students study subject-verb agreement, listening and reading in short dialogue, and the structure of short dialogues. (RPS of TOEFL Preparation from Bung Hatta's portal)

On April 25<sup>th</sup> 2024, the researcher conducted preliminary research on some students at the Department of Primary School Teacher Education of Bung Hatta University. She gave some questions related to subject-verb agreement to some students. Based on the students' answers, she found that the students still had

problems in identifying subject-verb agreement in the simple present tense, and simple past tense. Here are some examples of the errors made by students:

- a. He always write a letter for his daughter.

The sentence above is incorrect because the subject is he but the students choose write as a verb. The correct sentence is “He always writes a letter for his daughter”.

- b. Charlie and Christy is singer 9 years ago.

The sentence above is incorrect because it uses to be is and the subject of this sentence is plural. (Is) is one of to be that used for simple present tense, while the adverb of time in this sentence is 9 years ago, it means this sentence is simple past tense. The correct sentence is “Charlie and Christy were singer 9 years ago”.

Previous researchers had researched subject-verb agreement. Setiawati (2023) conducted a research entitled “An Analysis of Subject-verb Agreement in Descriptive Text Writing of the Seventh Grade at MTS Ma’arif 02 Kotagajah”. This research aimed to describe some problems, as follows: how are the students problems in subject-verb agreement in writing and why the students do the subject-verb agreement errors in writing .The result of this study is that there were 10 students had the problems in subject-verb agreement in writing a sentence and they made problems in using the auxiliary verb (have, has), to be (is, am, are) and they did not know the function between singular and plural subject (*she have a friend*), singular and plural verb (*they has a friend*), and adjustments to be/verb in sentence.

The second research was conducted by Mbau et al., (2014) who wrote “An Analysis on the Subject-verb Agreement Errors in Writing Paragraphs Made by the Second Semester Students of English Department”. The results of data analysis were showed by the errors on final –s/es (14.15%), the using expression of quantity (9.43%), the using there + be (5.66%), and no errors (0%) about some irregularities. Besides, the errors were influenced by 6 sources of errors, they are students do not ask questions when they find difficulties in learning, students do not know the rules of subject-verb agreement, intralingua transfer, context of learning, and communication strategies.

Referring to that research, it can be concluded that there were subject verb agreement errors made by students. Both of the studies above focused on subject-verb agreement on writing skills, while this research will focus on identifying subject-verb agreement in TOEFL-like grammar tests.

Based on the reasons above, the researcher wants to know students’ ability in identifying subject-verb agreement in a TOEFL-like test scientifically. As a result, the researcher is interested in conducting research entitled “An Analysis of the Third-Year Students’ Ability in Identifying Subject-verb Agreement of TOEFL like test at the Department of Primary School Teacher Education of Bung Hatta University”.

## **1.2 Identification of the Problem**

Structure and written expression test is used to measure accurate speech skills in accordance with the standard of written English. This section consists of 40

questions to be solved in 25 minutes. This part is also divided into two parts. They are structure, and written expression.

In structure, the questions are about sentences with one clause, multiple clauses, reduced clauses, inverted subjects and verb and more sentences with multiple clauses. In structure, there is 15 questions (question (1-15), consisting of 15 sentences one part of which is empty. Each sentence was followed by four choices of answers. Students are asked to choose the correct answer grammatically in order to fill the empty portion of the sentence.

In written expression, the questions are about problems with subject verb agreement (of Simple Present Tense, Simple Past Tense, and Present Perfect Tense), parallel structure, comparatives and superlatives, the form of the verb, the use of the verb, passive verbs, nouns, pronouns, adjectives and adverbs, articles, prepositions and usage. In written expression there is 25 questions (question 16-40), consisting of 25 sentences of which four words or word groups.

### **1.3 Limitation of the Problem**

Based on the identification of the problems above, the researcher limited the research on structure and written expression. It focuses only subject-verb agreement in simple present tense, and simple past tense. This research was conducted at Department of Primary School Teacher Education of Bung Hatta University.

### **1.4 Formulation of the Problem**

Based on the limitation above, the researcher formulated the problem of the research as follows: “How is the third year students’ ability in identifying subject-

verb agreement of TOEFL like test at the Department of Primary School Teacher Education of Bung Hatta University?”

### **1.5 Research Questions**

Based on the formulation of the problem above, the research questions are formulated below:

1. How is the third year students' ability in identifying subject-verb agreement of TOEFL like test in simple present tense at the Department of Primary School Teacher Education of Bung Hatta University?
2. How is the third year students' ability in identifying subject-verb agreement of TOEFL like test in simple past tense at the Department of Primary School Teacher Education of Bung Hatta University?

### **1.6 Purposes of the Research**

In general, the purpose of this study is to find out the third year students' ability in identifying subject-verb agreement of the TOEFL-like test at the Department of Primary School Teacher Education of Bung Hatta University. Specifically, the purposes of the research are:

1. To find out the third-year students' ability in identifying subject-verb agreement of TOEFL-like test in the simple present tense at the Department of Primary School Teacher Education of Bung Hatta University.
2. To find out the third-year students' ability in identifying subject-verb agreement of TOEFL-like test in the simple past tense at the Department of Primary School Teacher Education of Bung Hatta University.

### **1.7 Significance of the Research**

The finding of this study is expected to give contribution for lecturers, students, researchers, and the next researchers. For lecturers, they know the students' ability to identify subject-verb agreement of TOEFL-like test. Such information can be input for the lecturers in improving their teaching process about subject-verb agreement. For students, they know about their ability in identifying subject-verb agreement of TOEFL-like test. For the researcher, she hopes this writing can improve her ability in identifying subject-verb agreement of TOEFL like test. At the last, the next researchers can get idea of conducting other research.

### **1.8 Definition of Key Terms**

It is essential to specify the following crucial concepts in this research to avoid misunderstanding and misinterpretations:

1. Ability is students' competence in identifying subject-verb agreement of TOEFL-like test.
2. Identify is an activity of understanding about the subject-verb agreement of simple present tense, simple past tense, or present perfect tense.
3. Subject-verb agreement is an agreement between subject and verb.
4. The simple present tense is a tense used to express habitual action (routine/daily activity) and general fact.
5. The simple past tense is a tense used to describe an action that happened in the past but is no longer taking place.