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Subject Verb Agreement Errors in Essay Writing among Diploma in Culinary Arts Students in UiTM Dungun, Terengganu

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated errors in subject verb agreement in the writing of Diploma in Culinary Arts students in UiTM Dungun, Terengganu. 15 students were selected as the sample and 45 essays were collected from them for data analysis. The data collected were analyzed using SPSS software version 18. The findings indicated that the students had problems in four types of subject verb agreement which were subject verb agreement for person, subject verb agreement of number, subject verb agreement of indefinite subject and subject verb agreement of notional agreement and proximity but no error was found for subject verb agreement of coordinated subjects. The students were also found to have problems mostly with subject verb agreement of number, followed by notional agreement and proximity, subject verb agreement of person and subject verb agreement of indefinite subject. This implies that students have problems in different types of subject verb agreement in their writing and the current teaching strategies should be revisited by language instructors to help the diploma students improve in their use of SVA in their writing.

Keywords: *subject verb agreement, error analysis, ESL learners, ESL writing*

INTRODUCTION

The role of English language is indisputable in Malaysia as a medium of communication in the country as it is regarded as a second language. Gaudhart (1987) quoted The Third Malaysian Plan (1976) which states that English language needs to be taught as a strong second language in the country so that Malaysia is able to cope with the development in the scientific and technological field and at the same time, contributes to international trade and commerce. Realizing the importance of the language, English language is introduced in formal education as early as at kindergarten level. During the learning process, students are equipped with basic language skills which include reading, writing, listening and speaking. When they further their studies in tertiary education, they are expected to have mastered the necessary skills in the English language as they have been exposed to the language for 11 years at the school level.

However, Naginder (2006) and Nor Hashimah et al. (2008) (cited in Normazidah, Koo and Hazita, 2012) point out that many Malaysian students have problems in achieving reasonable standards in English literacy despite being exposed to 11 to 12 years of formal learning of the English language. Many Malaysian English learners are unable to achieve the targetted level of fluency and accuracy. Previous studies indicated that among the four skills that need to be mastered in language learning, writing is regarded as one of the most difficult skills to be mastered by ESL learners (Abdul Rashid & Norizul Azida, 2012; Neda, Mariann Edwina & Seyyed Hossein Kashef, 2012; Sadiq Abdulwahed, 2011; Surina & Kamaruzaman, 2009). Many ESL learners regard writing as a challenging skill as they need to think, compose and put ideas together and the same time, construct sentences with correct grammatical structure (Sadiq Abdulwahed, 2012; Surina & Kamaruzaman, 2009).

One of the most important components in the writing process is the ability to construct correct sentence structures (Surina & Kamaruzzaman, 2009). Thus, writing is regarded as a challenging work for students as they have to master the structures in the targeted language to ensure that they are able to produce a good piece of writing. Tan (2005) mentions that to be competent in English, every learner must acquire basic grammatical knowledge and among it is knowledge about subject verb agreement. Surina

and Kamaruzzaman (2009) support the view by stating that the absence of non verbal communication in writing process requires students to master subject verb agreement rules to ensure that they can express their ideas effectively and clearly to readers.

Among the factors that led students to have problems in writing, subject verb agreement is believed to be one of the major problems faced by ESL learners in producing grammatically correct writing. Previous studies conducted by Surina, Latisha, Mahani, Anis, Nazira and Suhaimi (2011), Siti Hamin and Mohd Mustafa (2010) and Surina (2002) on subject verb agreement found that students have problems in five types of subject verb agreement as stated by Corder (1974, cited in Ellis, 1994) which are subject verb agreement of person, number, subject, coordinated subjects and notional agreement and proximity.

There are five types of errors in subject verb agreement which are in line with Corder's (1974, cited in Ellis, 1994) view. The categories of errors include subject verb agreement of person, subject agreement of number, subject agreement of subject, agreement with coordinated subjects and notional agreement and proximity. They are further explained as follows:

1. Subject-verb agreement of person
    She dislikes eating cucumber.
    (S)   (Vb)

2. Subject-verb agreement of number
    The student is in good health.
    (S)   (Vb)

3. Subject verb agreement of indefinite subject
    Every student is required to join co-curricular activities.
    (S)   (Vb)

4. Subject verb agreement with coordinated subjects
    Tammy and **Collins are** good friends.
    (S)   (Vb)

5. Subject verb agreement of notional agreement and proximity
    The government have broken all their promises.
    (S)   (Vb)

The aim of this study was to investigate the types of errors in subject verb agreement in the essays of Diploma in Culinary Arts students in UiTM. Besides, this study also aimed to find the frequency of errors made by these students in their writing.

This study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What types of subject verb agreement errors are seen in the essays of the Diploma in Culinary Arts students in UiTM Dungun?

2. What are the frequencies of subject verb agreement errors made by the Diploma in Culinary Arts students in UiTM Dungun in their essays?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Error analysis is one of the approaches used by language teachers to identify and analyze errors which are produced by learners during the process of acquiring a new language. Analyzing learners' errors in language learning has been long implemented in the teaching and learning process (Ellis, 1994). Ali and Mousa (2012) state that in order to determine the problem of how much the standard of English among non native learners has declined, the first step that can be taken is by looking at the types of errors that they made. Sunardi (2002) clarifies that error analysis is done with the purpose to identify, classify and interpret or describe the errors which are produced by second language learners in both speaking and writing with the purpose to inquire information on the common difficulties faced by language learners. This indicates that analyzing learners' errors is a beneficial activity in a language classroom.

In analyzing learners' errors, literature indicates that the five-stage of error analysis procedures as proposed by Corder (1974, cited in Ellis, 1994) is widely used by a number of researchers as a guideline in conducting error analysis studies (Nada, 2003; Vasquez, 2008; Mungungu, 2010; Jie

& Li, 2010; Siti Hamin & Mohd Mustafa, 2010). Corder (1974, cited in Ellis, 1994) identifies a model for error analysis which covers five stages, which are:

1. Collection of a sample of learner language.

2. Identification of errors.

3. Description of errors.

4. Explanation of errors.

5. Evaluation of errors.

These stages have been used as a guideline in conducting error analysis procedures as they provide a strong fundamental in analyzing learners' errors in language learning.

In writing classrooms, error analysis has long been introduced to complement teaching pedagogy (Ellis, 1994). According to Pongsiriwet (2001), researchers in error analysis do not only study errors committed by language learners in language acquisition, but also in the field of second language writing where linguistic errors have always become a major concern among them. ESL learners are prone to commit errors in writing as they have to put a lot of time and effort in acquiring the language and at the same time, learn to write.

Several studies conducted on subject verb agreement errors committed by Malaysian ESL learners indicated that despite the introduction of the English language learning in primary school, ESL learners still have problems with the correct rules of subject verb agreement in their writing in post secondary education (Siti Hamin & Mohd Mustafa, 2010; Sarimah & Nurul Ros Adira, 2010; Roselind et al., 2009; Surina & Kamaruzzaman, 2009; Surina, 2002). Siti Hamin and Mohd Mustafa (2010) state that many Malaysian ESL learners have problems with subject verb agreement while learning the targeted language, English as a second language because their mother tongue does not have any rule on subject verb agreement.

Bahiyah and Basil Wijayasuria (1998, cited in Surina and Kamaruzzaman, 2009) state that Bahasa Malaysia does not differentiate between persons and it is not necessary for the verb to agree with the subject of a sentence and thus, this creates difficulty among Malay learners in English with its subject verb agreement rules. Surina and Kamaruzzaman (2009) support the view by comparing the rules of subject verb agreement between Bahasa Malaysia and English. They point out that in Bahasa Malaysia, regardless of whether the noun is plural or singular, the same form of verb will be used.

Apart from that, Siti Hamin and Mohd Mustafa (2010) in their studies find that the majority of their respondents produced errors in subject verb agreement of person, followed by subject verb agreement of number, subject verb agreement with indefinite expression of amount, subject verb agreement of notional agreement and proximity and finally, subject verb agreement of coordinated subjects. The respondents were found to be confused in matching plural subjects with plural verbs and to associate singular noun subjects with singular verbs. The second category of errors committed by the respondents was on subject verb agreement of number. The respondents were found to have problems in determining the verb that will follow a subject in a sentence. Agreement with indefinite expression showed that the respondents were unable to recognize the singularity or plurality of a subject, thus causing them to use the wrong form of verbs in their sentence construction. Apart from that, the respondents were also found to have the least errors with notional agreement and proximity and coordinated subjects.

METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted using quantitative approach and the data was gathered from students' essays. The target population for this sample was the second semester Diploma students in UiTM Dungun who were doing their BEL 260, Preparatory Course for MUET. (BEL 260 is an English language course which is taught to all students at the Diploma level in UiTM and it incorporates grammatical structures, including subject verb agreement.) 15 students with intermediate level of proficiency were chosen to be the sample in this study. They were in their second semester of the programme.

45 argumentative essays were collected from the 15 students. The types of subject verb agreement errors that the students made and the frequencies of these errors were looked into. The titles of the three essays used in this study were:

1. Many teenagers are involved in various social problems such as illegal racing and drug abuse because they have too much freedom. Do you agree with the statement? State your opinion in not less than 350 words.

2. University graduates are finding it difficult to get jobs because they lack good communication and interpersonal skills. Do you agree with the statement? State your opinion in not less than 350 words.

3. Sports activities should be made compulsory for all university students. Do you agree with this statement? Write an essay stating your point in not less than 350 words.

The subject verb agreements errors in the three different essays written by each student were analyzed and coded by two inter-coders. The inter-coders that were chosen were language instructors who had at least five years of experience in teaching BEL260 (Preparatory Course for MUET). Errors on subject verb agreement were grouped based on the five different types of errors proposed by Corder (1974, in Ellis, 1994) which include subject-verb agreement of person, subject agreement of number, subject agreement of subject, agreement with coordinated subjects and notional agreement and proximity.

The findings on the five types of subject verb agreement errors in essays were then tabulated to determine the frequency of the types of errors in the essays of the students. Findings on the number of errors in subject verb agreement from the three different essays were grouped, and then analyzed using SPSS software version 18. Statistical analysis such as percentage, frequencies, mean and standard deviation for each of the errors produced by the students were conducted. Examples of the subject verb agreement errors were extracted by the researchers to provide examples of the types of subject verb agreement errors that the students made.

FINDINGS

Types of Errors in Subject Verb Agreement

The first research question investigated the types of errors found in subject verb agreement in the essays of Diploma in Culinary Arts students of UiTM Dungun, Terengganu.

Table 1: Types of Errors in Subject Verb Agreement

Type of Subject Verb Errors	SV1	SV2	SV3	SV4	SV5
Essay 1	0	52	3	0	13
Essay 2	7	67	0	0	4
Essay 3	8	72	1	0	0
Total	15	191	4	0	17

*SV1 – Subject Verb Agreement of Person
SV2 – Subject Verb Agreement of Number
SV3 – Subject Verb Agreement of Subject
SV4 – Subject Verb Agreement of Coordinated Subject
SV5 – Subject Verb Agreement of Notional Agreement and Proximity

The results in Table 1 indicated the types of errors in the essays of the Diploma in Culinary Arts students of UiTM Dungun. The five types of subject verb agreement errors, as proposed by Corder (1974, in Ellis, 1994) which are subject verb agreement of person (SV1), subject verb agreement of number (SV2), subject verb agreement of subject (SV3) and subject verb agreement of notional agreement and proximity (SV5) were focused on in this study. The results from this study found that students committed errors only in four types of subject verb agreement which were SV1, SV2, SV3 and SV5 while no error was recorded for SV4.

Subject agreement of person (SV1) requires the students to use correct verbs in agreement with the pronouns used as the subjects in their sentences. Some examples of SV1 problems seen in the students' essay are shown below. The SV1 errors by the students and their corrections which are provided by the researcher are underlined (other types of errors are not corrected in the students' essay).

Examples of SV1 errors:

1. *"This is because <u>they</u> <u>was</u> shy to speak to each other."*
    <div style="text-align:center">S   V</div>
    (Student 3, Essay 2)

2. *"When lack of confident, <u>they</u> also <u>doesn't</u> confident to speak English."*
    <div style="text-align:center">S   V</div>
    (Student 4, Essay 2)

    The Correct Version

1. *"This is because <u>they</u> <u>were</u> shy to speak to each other."*

2. *"When lack of confident, <u>they</u> also <u>do not</u> confident to speak English."*

Subject verb agreement of numbers (SV2) was also a problem area to the students. SV2 requires the students to apply the correct use of verbs according to the number of subjects used in the sentence. Some examples of SV2 problems seen in the students' essay are shown below. The SV2 errors by the students and their corrections which are provided by the researcher are underlined (other types of errors are not corrected in the students' essay).

Examples of SV2 errors
1. *"<u>Parent</u> also <u>give</u> a lot of pocket money to their children."*
    <div style="text-align:center">S   V</div>

    (Student 1, Essay 1)

2. *"Thirdly, <u>graduates</u> <u>finds</u> that the government only provided job*
    <div style="text-align:center">S   V</div>
    opportunities that not suitable for them."

    (Student 10, Essay 2)

The Correct Version

1.   *"<u>Parents</u> also <u>give</u> a lot of pocket money to their children."*

2.   *"Thirdly, <u>graduates</u> <u>find</u> that the government only provided job opportunities that not suitable for them."*

As for the third type of subject verb agreement; agreement with indefinite subject, (SV3), students also have problems with it. This type of subject verb agreement requires the students to use correct verbs for indefinite pronouns which are used as the subjects in sentences. Below are examples of SV3 errors in students' essay. The SV3 errors by the students and their corrections which are provided by the researcher are underlined (other types of errors are not corrected in the students' essay).

Examples of SV3 errors

1.   *"Besides that, the student skip the class because <u>no one</u> <u>care</u> about them such as their*   S   V
     parents not give advise to their children when their children not go to class."

(Student 4, Essay 1)

2.   "For example, the student simply skip the class because <u>no one</u> <u>care</u> about them."   S   V

(Student 5, Essay 1)

The Correct Version

1.   *"Besides that, the students skip the class because <u>no one</u> <u>cares</u> about them such as their parents not give advise to their children when their children nit go to class."*

2.   *"For example, the students simply skip the class because <u>no one</u> <u>cares</u> about them."*

The students also had problems in determining subject verb agreement of notional agreement and proximity (SV5). This refers to the correct use of collective nouns and plural expressions and agreement with verbs and also with nouns or pronouns that closely precede verbs. The SV5 errors by the students and their corrections which are provided by the researcher are underlined (other types of errors are not corrected in the students' essay).

Examples of SV5 errors

1.   *"Besides that, <u>society</u> also <u>take</u> a part in social education".*
                              S   V

(Student 2, Essay 1)

2.   *"For example, at home we seldom to speak in English because our <u>family</u> always <u>speak</u> in national language"*
        S   V

(Student 1, Essay 2)

The Correct Version

1.   *"Besides that, <u>society</u> also <u>takes</u> a part in social education".*

2.   *"For example, at home we seldom to speak in English because our <u>families</u> always <u>speak</u> in national language"*

However, the findings depict that no error was found for the subject agreement of coordinated subject (SV4). The students did not have any problem with it as they managed to use correct verbs in dealing with the subject agreement of coordinated subjects. For instance:

1.   *Therefore, <u>freedom from the parents, freedom from the society and freedom from school</u> <u>are</u> among the reasons for various social problems such as illegal racing drug abuse to happen.*

(Student 12, Essay 1)

2.   *Easy to get jobs, our body healthy and can educate student more discipline* <u>are</u> *the major factor why sports activities should be made compulsory for all university students.*

(Student 15, Essay 3)

It can be concluded that students had problems with the correct use of subject verb agreement of person (SV1), subject verb agreement of number (SV2), subject verb agreement of subject (SV3) and subject verb agreement of notional agreement and proximity (SV5) in essay writing but they did not have problem with subject verb agreement of coordinated subjects (SV4).

Frequencies of Errors of Subject Verb Agreement

The second research question aimed at looking into the frequencies of subject verb agreement errors in the essays of Diploma in Culinary Arts students of UiTM Dungun. There were five types of subject verb agreement as proposed by Corder (1974, in Ellis, 1994) focused on this study. They were subject verb agreement of person (SV1), subject verb agreement of number (SV2), subject verb agreement of subject (SV3), agreement with coordinated subjects (SV4) and notional agreement and proximity (SV5).

Table 2: Frequency of Subject Verb Agreement Errors

	SV1		SV2		SV3		SV4		SV5	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Essay 1	0	0	52	22.9	3	1.3	0	0	13	5.7
Essay 2	7	3.1	67	29.5	0	0	0	0	4	1.7
Essay 3	8	3.5	72	31.7	1	0.4	0	0	0	0
Total	15	6.6	191	84.1	4	1.7	0	0	17	7.4

*SV1 – Subject Verb Agreement of Person
SV2 – Subject Verb Agreement of Number
SV3 – Subject Verb Agreement of Subject
SV4 – Subject Verb Agreement of Coordinated Subjects
SV5 – Subject Verb Agreement of Notional Agreement and Proximity

The results in Table 2 indicated the frequencies of errors produced by the Diploma in Culinary Arts students of UiTM Dungun. Subject verb

agreement of numbers (SV2) had the highest frequency which was 191 (84.1%), followed by subject verb agreement of notional agreement and proximity (SV5) which was 17 (7.4%), subject verb agreement of pronouns (SV1) which was 15 (6.6%) and finally, subject verb agreement of subject (SV3) which was 4 (1.7%).

The highest frequency was recorded for subject verb agreement type two (SV2), which was subject verb agreement of number. Out of 45 essays written by the students, the total number of errors recorded was 191 errors (84.1%). It contributed to a huge difference in contrast to the other types of errors made by the students in their essays. The students' errors for SV2 were mostly seen in the third essay, which was *"Sports activities should be made compulsory for all university students. Do you agree with this statement? Write an essay stating your point in not less than 350 words"* with 72 SV2 errors (31.7%). The second essay; *"University graduates are finding it difficult to get jobs because they lack good communication and interpersonal skills. Do you agree with the statement? State your opinion in not less than 350 words."* had the second highest number of SV2 errors, with 67 errors (29.5%). Meanwhile, the first essay; *"Many teenagers are involved in various social problems such as illegal racing and drug abuse because they have too much freedom. Do you agree with the statement? State your opinion in not less than 350 words."* had the lowest number of SV2 errors which was 52 errors (22.9%).

Meanwhile, the second highest frequency of subject verb agreement errors was recorded for subject verb agreement of notional agreement and proximity (SV5). The total number of errors recorded for this particular type of agreement was 17 errors (7.4%). Many of the errors were found in essay one, followed by essay two, with 13 errors (5.7%) and four errors (1.7%) respectively. No SV5 error was recorded for essay three.

Subject verb agreement type one; subject verb agreement with pronouns (SV1) had the third highest frequency of errors committed by the students with 15 errors (6.6%). There was only a small difference in SV5 errors committed by the students in their three essays. For this particular type of error, the students committed the most errors in their third essay, with 8 errors (3.5%) and followed by the second essay with seven errors (3.1%). Meanwhile, in the first essay, there was no SV1 error.

The third type of subject verb agreement, the agreement with indefinite subject (SV3) had the lowest type of errors made by the students with four errors (1.7%). For this particular type of subject verb agreement errors, three errors (1.3%) were made by the students in essay one, zero error was recorded for essay two and only one error (0.4%) was indicated for essay three.

Thus, it can be seen that the students mainly made errors in subject verb agreement of numbers (SV2), followed by notional agreement and proximity (SV5), subject verb agreement of pronouns (SV1) and agreement of indefinite subjects (SV3). However, there was zero error recorded for agreement of coordinated subjects (SV4).

DISCUSSION

The findings from the study showed that students had problems with the correct use of subject verb agreement of person (SV1), subject verb agreement of number (SV2), subject verb agreement of subject (SV3) and notional agreement and proximity (SV5) in essay writing but they did not have problem with agreement of coordinated subjects (SV4).

These findings concur with previous studies on subject verb agreement which indicate that many ESL learners have problems with the correct rules of subject verb agreement in writing. For instance, a study conducted by Bailis et al. (1999) on writing among ESL students found that they mostly committed errors in subject verb agreement in the general category where the subjects and the verbs do not agree with one another.

In the Malaysian context, where English is regarded as a second language, previous studies also indicate that Malaysian ESL students also have problems with subject verb agreement in their essays. A study conducted by Saadiyah and Kaladevi (2009) found that one of the problems faced by ESL students in their writing was the wrong use of singular and plural forms. Likewise, Surina and Kamaruzzaman (2009) also found that the subjects of their study had difficulties in mastering subject verb agreement in English. Meanwhile, Marlyna, Tan and Khazriyati (2007) concluded that the students in her study were unable to use correct subject verb agreement.

On the same note, Sahirah and Zaidah (2004) found that the students in their research had problems in determining the correct use of subject verb agreement of numbers and subject verb agreement of pronouns. Surina and Kamaruzzaman (2009) in their study found that students had problems with agreement of indefinite pronouns and agreement with numbers. Meanwhile, Touran and Jayakumaran (2012) found that students had problems with subject verb agreement of number and subject verb agreement of pronouns. Siti Hamin and Mohamad Mustafa (2010) in their study found that the majority of their respondents produced errors in all the five types of subject verb agreement proposed by Corder (1974, cited in Ellis, 1994), which are subject verb agreement of person (SV1), subject verb agreement of number (SV2), subject verb agreement of indefinite pronouns (SV3), agreement of coordinated subjects (SV4) as well as notional agreement and proximity (SV5).

In this study, the students did not have errors for agreement with coordinated subjects (SV4). This finding is reflective of past research on subject verb agreement in the Malaysian context where it is noted that thus far, this type of subject verb agreement usage has only been identified as problematic by Siti Hamin and Mohamad Mustafa (2010). One reason for this finding in the present study can be linked to how often it is used by the students in writing.

The study depicted that the highest frequency of errors made by the students was on subject verb agreement of numbers (SV2), followed by notional agreement and proximity (SV5), subject verb agreement of pronouns (SV1) and agreement of indefinite subject (SV3). However, there was zero error recorded for agreement of coordinated subjects (SV4).

The study also revealed that the students had problems mainly with subject verb agreement of numbers in their essay writing. It constituted the highest frequency of errors. One reason for this is because this type of subject verb agreement is highly used in the students' essays. To illustrate, in Essay 1, *"Many teenagers are involved in various social problems such as illegal racing and drug abuse because they have too much freedom. Do you agree with the statement? State your opinion in not less than 350 words.",* 68.43% of this pattern was seen. In Essay 2, *"University graduates are finding it difficult to get jobs because they lack good communication and*

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interpersonal skills. Do you agree with the statement? State your opinion in not less than 350 words.", there was 66.30% of such usage. As for Essay 3, *"Sport activities should be made compulsory for all university students. Do you agree with this statement? Write an essay stating your point in not less than 350 words.",* 64.31% subject verb agreement of number was seen.

However, students were found not to have problem with subject verb agreement of coordinated subjects. One reason for this is it was not widely used in the students' writing. For instance, in Essay 1, only 2.9% of this pattern was seen, in Essay 2, there was only 0.82% of such usage and in Essay 3, only 1.87% of this usage was seen. This is because the students used agreement of coordinated subjects mainly in combining the three different main ideas used in their essay, in the thesis statement in the introduction and in summarizing them again in the conclusion.

IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The key findings of this study indicate that students have problems in different types of subject verb agreement in their writing. Their main errors in subject verb agreement are in the following order: subject verb agreement of numbers (SV2), notional agreement and proximity (SV5), subject verb agreement of pronouns (SV1) and agreement of indefinite subjects (SV3). However, there was zero error recorded for agreement of coordinated subjects (SV4). On the whole, these show that Diploma in Culinary Arts students in UiTM Dungun students still face problems with subject verb agreement in writing. This implies that the BEL courses offered to the diploma students in UiTM Dungun should give more emphasis to rules of subject verb agreement whether directly or indirectly so the students are more aware of the correct rules of subject verb agreement.

Besides, students should be encouraged to practice using English language extensively to help them familiarize themselves with subject verb agreement rules and usage. Therefore, new strategies should be implemented in teaching English language to the students. One way is to incorporate technology in language classroom to enhance English language use among the students. Next, the use of technology can also address the problem of lack of references for subject verb agreement and can help decrease subject verb

agreement errors in writing among the students. Teachers can use websites as references to model use of subject verb agreement to help students learn. In addition, the existence of various social networking sites can be a place for language instructors to give corrective feedback and encourage students to be aware of their written communication and indirectly, make them aware of the correct structure of the English language.

The following factors should be considered for future research. First, sample from different proficiency levels such as beginner, intermediate and advanced should be included for future research. This is to identify in-depth the problems faced by different ESL learners. Specifically, it can identify the extent of subject verb agreement errors for these different levels of students as well as to see if subject verb agreement error is a main problem for ESL learners irregardless of their level of proficiency. Second, diploma students from other fields of study besides Diploma in Culinary Arts students in UiTM Dungun can be employed in future research. The findings obtained will give a point of comparison as to types of errors in subject verb agreement made by diploma students. Third, the size of the sample can be increased in future research. The results can then be generalized to a wider population.

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