



KNOWLEDGE ON SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT OF GRADE 7 STUDENTS: BASIS FOR REMEDIAL TEACHING

Rochelle B. Cabaltica¹

Cielo A. Osabel²

Faculty¹, President Ramon Magsaysay State University
Student Researcher², President Ramon Magsaysay State University
rochellecabaltica1@gmail.com

Article history:	Abstract:
<p>Received: March 22th 2021 Accepted: April 3th 2021 Published: April 21th 2021</p>	<p>This study used a descriptive-survey design that sought to determine the knowledge of Grade 7 students on subject-verb agreement that became the basis for remedial teaching. This survey was conducted at the Grade 7 Laboratory High School of President Ramon Magsaysay State University S.Y. 2017-2018. In this study, an identification skill test was used as the main instrument in gathering data wherein the class of Grade 7 Junior High School English students served as the respondents and were chosen through comprehensive sampling technique. Frequency and percent distribution, weighted mean, item analysis, t-test and Pearson r Correlation analysis were used to analyze and to interpret the gathered data. The study showed the most familiar subject-verb agreement rule is plural personal pronouns in present, present progressive, past progressive and perfect tenses require plural verbs and the least familiar subject-verb agreement rules to the students are 1) percentage of count nouns requires plural verb; 2) singular subjects connected by 'and' but refer to only one thing or person; 3) the expression "the number" takes on a singular verb while "a number" takes on plural verb; and 4) when nouns derived from foreign language like 'agendum-agenda' and 'datum-data' are used as subjects. The study also showed that there is no significant difference in the level of students' knowledge on subject-verb agreement when grouped according to sex variables and there is a significant relationship between the students' skills on subject-verb agreement and their previous grades. The researcher prepared a remedial teaching action plan to make learning more meaningful that included presentation of actual identification of subject and verb. Through the knowledge and commitment of other teachers who are using English as their medium of teaching, it will also be a massive help to further improve the grammar of students by correcting their written works or when they are speaking.</p>

Keywords: Subject-verb agreement, remedial teaching

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Language plays a significant role in one's daily living as it is the medium of communication. English, the lingua franca, is the tool for bridging the gap between different cultures and beliefs. Thus, it is the key of unity and peace. It is the means of expressing one's ideas, opinions and suggestions effectively and efficiently. However, there are certain circumstances wherein people experienced ineffective communication and one of the reasons is the grammar.

In Philippines, speaking English provides many opportunities as it is one of the qualifications in any occupation. It has a vital role in the working process as one has to follow the instruction carefully and to give feedback or suggestions in order to better do the certain work (Basa, 2017). Filipinos are noted to be fluent English speakers since the current curriculum uses English as a medium of instruction. However, Senobio (2015) argued that few of the students show lack of speaking and writing skills though they are using the language since elementary. One of the factors that contribute to this dilemma is their mediocrity in grammar.

Karim, Fathema and Hakim (2015) emphasized that grammar plays a significant role in the mastery of certain language because it is the pattern that they must apply so that they can effectively and efficiently communicate what

they want to say. Furthermore, Wee (2009) claimed that poor emphasis on the grammar contribute to the poor language skills of the students. Grammar is concerned with the rules of structures that is essential in putting words together to create a paragraph and showing coherence and unity to create an effective essay.

Subject-verb agreement is a very important lesson to learn in English language. According to Eastwood, subject-verb agreement is selecting the appropriate singular or plural verb that comes after the subject (as cited by Iwan Kurniawan, 2016). Subject-verb agreement is like the backbone of grammar because it is the basis on how you will compose your sentences and ideas correctly. Also, subject-verb agreement is included in two of the five macro skills in English, writing and speaking. Tafida and Okunade (2016) concluded that subject-verb agreement plays an important role in language and even in communication; it shows how far and deep the learner grasp the rules. It means subject-verb agreement is one of the keys to master grammar and eventually master all the English language skills.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The researcher wanted to determine the knowledge of students on subject-verb agreement among the Grade 7 students of President Ramon Magsaysay State University (PRMSU) San Marcelino Campus- Laboratory Junior High School for the School Year 2017-2018 so that proposed remedial teaching plan will be developed.

Specifically, the study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the students in terms of:
 - 1.1. sex; and
 - 1.2. GPA in English?
2. What is the level of knowledge of students on subject-verb agreement?
3. What SVA rule is the most familiar to students?
4. What SVA rule is the least familiar to students?
5. Is there a significant difference in the level of students’ knowledge on subject-verb agreement when grouped according to sex variables?
6. Is there a significant relationship between the students’ skill on subject verb agreement and previous grade in English?
7. What action plan can be proposed for remedial teaching based from the results of the study?

SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

This study only focused on the knowledge on subject-verb agreement of Grade 7 students. The main instrument which is the researcher-made test aimed to assess how well the students in determining the correct verbs that agrees on the given subjects. This study is limited to the grade 7 students of President Ramon Magsaysay State University (formerly Ramon Magsaysay Technological University) - San Marcelino Campus Laboratory Junior High School in San Marcelino Campus for the School year 2017-2018. Other factors and variables are not incorporated due to some constraints in this study.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Constructivism creates desirable outcomes and it will be used by students and give them a chance to combine it with what they already know and use those to make new ideas (Wornyo, 2016). In doing subject-verb agreement application activities, learners are given the chance to self-reflect by giving them learning activities to make them reflect on the importance of the lesson in their everyday lives.

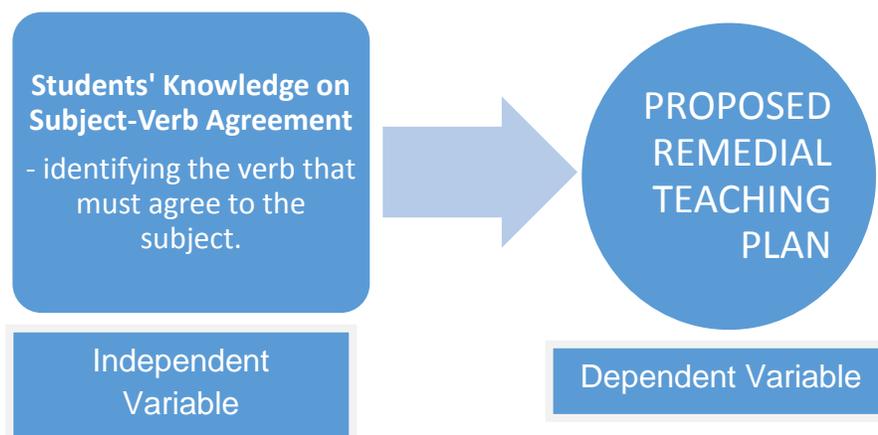


Figure 1. Paradigm of the Study.

Null Hypotheses

To make the data more vivid, the following hypothesis was tested in this study: ..

1. There is no significant difference in the level of students' knowledge on subject-verb agreement when grouped according to sex variables.
2. There is no significant relationship between the students' skills on subject verb agreement and previous grade in English.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study used descriptive-survey research design with conceptual test as the main instrument in gathering the required data. Descriptive-survey method was used in order to measure the knowledge on subject-verb agreement of students.

Respondents and Sampling Technique

The respondents of this study consisted of 26 females and 14 males for a total of forty (40) Grade 7 students of President Ramon Magsaysay State University, Laboratory High School at Brgy. Nagbunga, San Marcelino, Zambales. The researcher chose the Grade 7 since they spent almost 6 years learning English in their elementary and in their current module, subject-verb agreement rules are taught. The respondents are chosen through comprehensive sampling

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Profile of the Respondents

Table 1
Frequency and Percent Distribution of the Students-Respondents in terms of Sex

Categories	Frequency	Percent (%)
Female	26	65.00
Male	14	35.00
Total	40	100.0

Table 1 shows the profile of the forty (40) respondents consisting of twenty-six (26) female or sixty-five percent (65%) while there are fourteen (14) or thirty-five percent (35%) male respondents. This means that more than half of the respondents are female; they are dominating the males in this study.

Table 2
Frequency and Percent Distribution of the Students-Respondents in terms of Grade English

Range	Frequency	Percent (%)	Verbal Description
90-94	17	42.50	Outstanding
85-89	14	35.00	Very Satisfactory
80-84	7	17.50	Satisfactory
75-79	2	5.00	Fairly Satisfactory
Total	40	100.0	
Mean	87.73		Very Satisfactory

Seventeen (17) or forty-two and five hundredths (42.5%) are classified as outstanding, fourteen (14) or thirty-five percent are under very satisfactory level. Seven (7) students belong to satisfactory level while there are two (2) students are classified as fairly.

In the table 2, it showed that most of the students have an outstanding performance in English in the previous grading period. This means that less than half of the students show an outstanding performance in English. They can speak English fluently and effectively because they are applying the rules of Subject-verb agreement in speaking and writing when they are exposed in using the language then they can master the macroskills.

Knowledge Level of Grade 7 Students on Subject-verb Agreement

Table 3
Rating Scale Analysis of the 90-item Identification Test

Score	Frequency	Percent (%)	Verbal Description
55-72	18	45.00	Proficient
37-54	22	55.00	Approaching
Total	40	100.0	
Mean	53.56		
SD	7.18		

Twenty-two (22) or 55% of the students are classified under the approaching proficiency level group which means that they can be described with developed fundamental knowledge and skills and core understandings. On the other hand, in the proficient level, there are eighteen (18) students or forty-five percent (45%) who have developed fundamental knowledge, skills and core understandings and can transfer them independently through performance tasks. This shows that nobody has mastered the fundamental concepts about subject-verb agreement.

Table 4
Knowledge Level Performance in Subject Verb Agreement (By Rule)

Rule Number	Mean	Rank
1	2.12	5
2	1.85	15
3	2.05	7
4	1.70	19
5	1.87	13
6	1.38	27
7	1.90	11
8	2.53	1
9	2.33	3
10	2.10	6
11	1.55	22.5
12	1.53	24
13	1.82	17
14	1.55	22.5
15	1.15	29.5
16	1.90	11
17	1.98	8
18	1.77	18
19	2.52	2
20	1.90	11
21	1.97	9
22	1.43	25
23	1.65	20
24	2.23	4
25	1.40	26

26	1.60	21
27	1.85	15
28	1.30	28
29	1.15	29.5
30	1.85	15

Table 4 shows the ranking of subject-verb agreement rules from they are most familiar to least familiar with. Students can almost perfect or master the rule number 8 which is the personal pronoun I requires plural verb and rule number 19 which is all plural personal pronouns in present, present progressive, past progressive and perfect tenses – require a plural verb. Respondents can get two out of three items in rule numbers 9, 24, 1, 10, 3, 17, 21, 7, 16, 20, 5, 2, 17, 30, 13, 18, 4, 23, 26, 14, 11 and 12. The respondents can get one out of three items in rule 22 which is the subject and the linking verb complement differ in number, the verb agrees with the subject not with the linking verb complement, 25 which is titles of books, essays, plays, musical compositions, paintings or other such works that are in plural form take on a singular verb, 6 which is fractions of a unit or mass nouns require singular verbs, 28 which is the expression “the number” takes on a singular verb while “a number” takes on plural verb, 15 which is singular subjects connected by and but refer to only one thing or person take on a singular verb and 29 which is nouns derived from foreign language like agendum-agenda and datum-data.

Most Familiar Subject-Verb Agreement Rule to Grade 7 Students

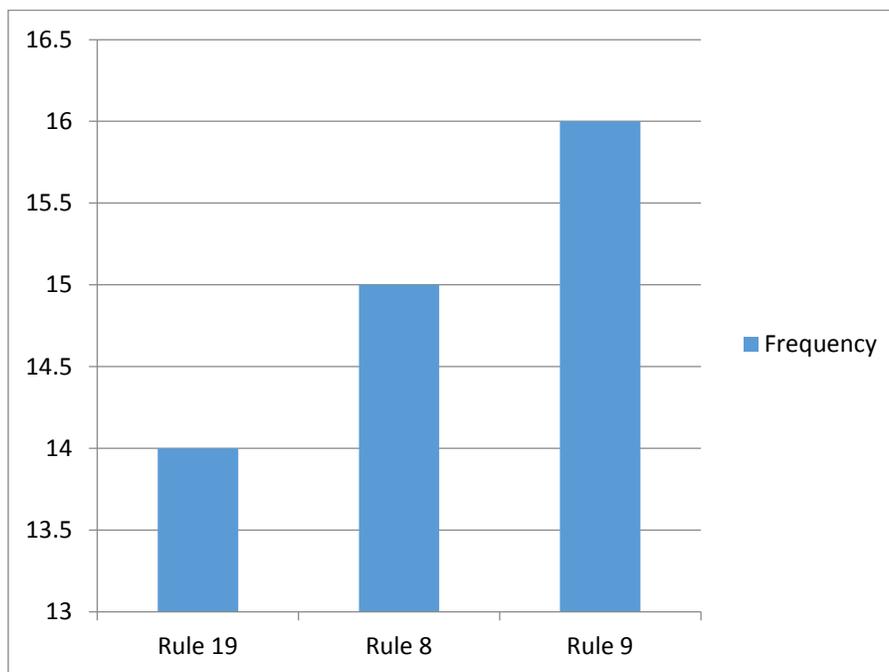


Figure 4. Lowest Frequency of Errors in SVA Rules

Based from the figure above, the lowest frequency of errors in subject-verb agreement of Grade 7 are 1) rule number 19 which is the personal pronoun ‘I’ requires plural verb. For example,

- 1) I work in a bakery nearby.
- 2) I have received your message.

2) Rule number 8 which is plural personal pronouns in present, present progressive, past progressive and perfect tenses require plural verbs. Examples are given below.

- 1) We are having a party this weekend.
- 2) We wear clothes that hardly expose skin.

3) Rule number 9 which is personal pronoun ‘you’ requires plural verb. For example,

- 1) You are his slave for a month.
- 2) You write with such a delicate stroke

LEAST FAMILIAR SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT TO GRADE 7 STUDENTS

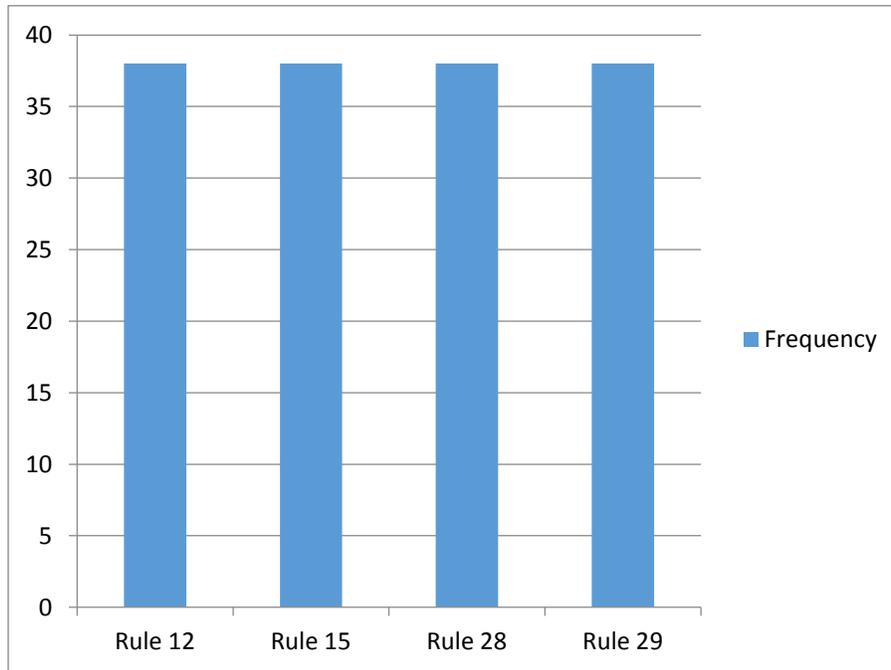


Figure 5. Highest Frequency of Errors in SVA Rules

Based on the collected data and analysis, the highest frequency errors in subject-verb agreement of the respondents are 1) Percent of count nouns requires plural verb. Examples given below are wrong answers of the respondents and inside the parentheses are the correct answers.

- 1) Ten percent of the class is absent today. (Ten percent of the class are absent today)
- 2) Fifty percent of the population does not care to the government. (Fifty percent of the population do not care to the government.)

2) Singular subjects connected by 'and' but refer only to one thing or person take on a singular verb. Below are the wrong examples of respondents with the correct answers inside the parentheses.

- 1) The mother and teacher encourage her kids. (The mother and teacher encourages her kids.)
- 2) The student and scholar have good grades. (The student and scholar has good grades.)

In the examples above, if you will look at it, the subjects seem like in plural form but those two (2) examples are both wrong. 'mother' and 'teacher' and 'student' and 'scholar' pertain to one person which require them to use singular verbs. 3) The expression 'the number' takes on a singular verb while 'a number' takes on plural verb. Below are the wrong examples of respondents with the correct answers inside the parentheses.

- 1) The number of apples are overripe. (The number of apples is overripe.)
- 2) A number of high school graduates decreases. (A number of high school graduates decrease.)

'Apples' which seems like the subject of the sentence may confuse the respondents, they didn't know that the expression 'the number' is also part of the subject and that means, singular verb should be used. Example 2 needs to use a plural verb because the subject uses an expression 'a number'. 4) Nouns derived from foreign language like 'agendum-agenda' and 'datum-data.' Examples given are wrong answers of the respondents and inside the parentheses are the correct answers.

- 1) The data for this experiment is available in the library. (The data for this experiment are available in the library.)
- 2) The agenda for today reaches the members' satisfaction. (The agenda for today reach the members' satisfaction.)

The subjects in the examples given which are data and agenda are tricky because we often use 'datas' and 'agendas' as the plural form without knowing that it is in plural form already.

The researcher asked some students why do they think subject-verb agreement is difficult, student 1 answered, "because it has so many rules to obey. It is also hard to understand, for example, the use of or-nor, either-or, neither-nor. I sometimes use either with nor or neither with or, other rules are also confusing."

Student 2 also expressed herself, "Subject-verb agreement is sometimes confusing. Sometimes I'm confused when I'm using have and has. I'm also confused when I'm using mass nouns, collective nouns and units of measurements because I use plural verb instead of singular." Another respondent shared an opinion, "Mahirap po siya kasi nga 'yung kailangan may idedepende ka pa 'dun sa subject mo tapos kailangan nakatugma siya 'dun sa verb." The respondents were having a

hard time about the subject and they didn't know if the subject is singular or plural but they knew the verb plus –s and –es.

It can be inferred that the lowest frequency errors in subject-verb agreement rules to the students are commonly used in their daily living. For instance, "I have a new notebook and pencil." Since, they are always using that, then it became a part of the vocabulary of the students. Meanwhile, it was found out that the highest frequency errors of subject-verb agreement rules to the students are not frequently used such nouns derived from foreign language. This result means that the students can master the usage of a certain rule if it is commonly used or is used in daily living.

Difference in the Level of Students' Knowledge on Subject-Verb Agreement when grouped according to Sex Variables

Table 5

Difference in the Level of Students' Knowledge on Subject-Verb Agreement when Grouped according to Sex Variables

Sex	N	Mean	SD	df	α	Computed t value	t-critical
Female	26	54.5385	7.21793	28	0.05	1.151746	2.048407
Male	14	51.7857	7.01842				

In determining the value of needed data for t-test, the researcher used independent t-test. The computed t-value is 1.151746 which is less than the t-critical of 2.048407. This means that there is no sufficient proof to reject the null hypothesis. The observe difference between the sample means of female and male (54.54 - 51.86) is not convincing enough to say that the results of facilitated subject-verb agreement examination between male and female students are significantly different.

Thus, regardless of their sex, students can master the subject-verb agreement when they are motivated and when teachers give them sufficient activities. Students will learn best if they are exposed on the continuous drills and practices.

Relationship between the Students' Skill on Subject Verb Agreement and Grade in English

There is a significant relationship between the students' knowledge in subject-verb agreement and grade in English with the computed Pearson-r value of 0.412 at 0.01 level of significance. The r-value is moderately correlated to the pair of variable and it can be said that they have significant relationship, which means, as the one variable increases, the other one has a tendency to increase too. In this study, it claims that as the students' examination scores increase, their grades also increases.

This result is supported by the study of Racca and Lasaten (2016) when they stated that English language proficiency is correlated to academic performance. The more language capacities with which students are capable, the more compelling their reasoning can be. In this manner, the more students are capable with the English language, the more they are probably going to perform well in their academic subjects (Racca & Lasaten, 2016). The table shows the proposed remedial teaching of the researcher based on the gathered data.

Table 7

Action Plan for Remedial Teaching

Objectives	Suggestions for the Implementation of Remedial Teaching	Activity	Duration
To familiarize oneself with the different rules of SVA.	Prepare memorandum of agreement to elementary schools to make a great effort in teaching language from the lower level to set permanently in the consciousness of the learners the correct use of SVA.	Actual identification of subject and verb. Help them to come up with their assumption about the rules.	First week of the first quarter
To identify what form of the verb should be used.		Complete a paragraph using present tense verbs.	First week of the first quarter
To make use of		Write an essay in	Second week of

verbs properly in writing.	Peer correction and corrective feedback.	present tense.	the first quarter
To give importance of SVA in writing and speaking.		Write an essay about the importance of SVA	Second week of the first quarter
To assess their own learning from the remedial teaching.	Give examples showing the rules.	Conduct a debate or drama showing the correct subject verb agreement.	Third week of the first quarter
	Give correct form to show contrast with the inappropriate form.		
	Seek the assistance of some subject teachers who are using English as medium to correct their grammar in writing and speaking.		

To be able to internalize the importance of subject-verb agreement in grammar and even in English learning, the last step in the proposed action plan for remedial teaching is to ask them its importance and conduct a debate or drama showing the application of subject-verb agreement. In that way, the teacher will be able to assess their learning.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Based on the gathered, analyzed and interpreted data the researcher facilitated and was able to come across the answers to the stated problems in the research.

1. Sixty-five percent (65%) of the respondents is female while thirty-five percent (35%) is male and all were Grade seven (7) students. The mean of previous grades of the respondents is 87.73 which is considered as very satisfactory.
2. The knowledge level of English students in subject-verb agreement is proficient which has the mean of 53.58 and a standard deviation of 7.18.
3. The subject-verb agreement rule that is most familiar to the respondents is rule number 19 which has the frequency of 26.
4. The subject-verb agreement rules that were least familiar to the respondents are rule numbers 12, 15, 28 and 29 with the frequency of 2.
5. Since the computed t-value is 1.151746 which is less than the t-critical value of 2.048407 and that means, there is no significant difference in the level of students' knowledge on subject-verb agreement when they are grouped according to sex.
6. There is a significant relationship between the students' knowledge on subject-verb agreement and grade in English with the computed Pearson-r value of 0.412 at 0.01 level of significance.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings, the following conclusions are derived.

1. More than half of the respondents are female; they are dominating the males in this study. Based on the mean of the students' previous grades in English, it lies under very satisfactory which implies that their performance exceeded expectation. All goals, objectives, and targets were achieved above the established standards.
2. The respondents' subject verb agreement knowledge are described as proficient which means they have developed fundamental knowledge, skills, and core understandings about subject-verb agreement.
3. The most familiar subject-verb agreement rule is when plural personal pronouns in present, present progressive, past progressive and perfect tenses require plural verbs. For instance, We have new notebooks and pencils. Since, it is always used daily, then it became a part of the vocabulary of the students.
4. The subject-verb agreement rules that are least familiar to the students are 1) Percentage of count nouns requires plural verb; 2) singular subjects connected by 'and' but refer to only one thing or person; 3) The expression "the number" takes on a singular verb while "a number" takes on plural verb; and 4) When nouns

derived from foreign language like 'agendum-agenda' and 'datum-data' are used as subjects. These rules are not frequently used such by the students. This result means that the students can master the usage of a certain rule if it is commonly used or is used in daily living.

5. There is no significant difference in the level of students' knowledge on subject-verb agreement when grouped according to sex variables. Therefore, male and female have the same skill in subject-verb agreement.
6. There is a significant relationship between the students' skills on subject-verb agreement and grades on English. As their previous subject-verb agreement skill increases, their English grade also increases. Therefore, English language proficiency is correlated to academic performance. The more language capacities with which students are capable, the more compelling their reasoning can be. In this manner, the more students are capable with the English language, the more they are probably going to perform well in their academic subjects.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are hereby presented for consideration.

1. The teachers can regularly give activities that will improve students' knowledge on subject-verb agreement. Journals and essays could be a good activities to enable students to express their ideas and opinions as well as to practice syntactically correct sentences.
2. To further enhance their skills in subject-verb agreement, it is recommended that the students must have an English proficiency test before they enter high school.
3. There are two (2) rules of subject-verb agreement that the respondents are least familiar with, these are when nouns are derived from foreign language like 'agendum-agenda' and 'datum-data' are used as subjects; and singular subjects connected by 'and' but refer to only one thing or person. The teacher is recommended to prioritize these rules and must be taught extensively.
4. Skills in subject-verb agreement may be emphasized in the upper grades for better acquisition of knowledge and skill.
5. Getting a bigger number of respondents is also highly suggested to test other factors that contribute to the knowledge of the students regarding subject-verb agreement.
6. Further studies may be conducted to test the result of this study. This could be a basis for the future researches.

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