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Investigating the Problems of Secondary School Students in
Subject Verb Agreement

تقصي مشاكل طلاب المدارس الثانوية في موافقة الفعل للفاعل

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for Master
Degree in English Language (Linguistics)

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Dedication

This study is dedicated to my beloved parents and to my dear brothers, sisters and friends.

Acknowledgements

First of all, I thank Allah for this great help to do this study. Also I am very grateful to my supervisor Dr. Abbas Mukhtar who spared no effort in helping me through this study. Moreover I would like to express about my deepest and warm thankfulness for Dr.Najla Bashary and Dr.Hillary Marino Pitia.

Abstract

Grammatical errors are one of the major difficulties faced by second language learners. Among the most common types of grammatical errors is subject verb agreement. This study aimed at investigating the frequency of such subject verb agreement errors among thirty (30) Almanarat secondary school students, a test served as the instrument of the study. Then the data were analyzed by using the Statistical Package for Social Science SPSS. The study concluded the following findings: It was found that subject verb agreement mistakes are frequent among the verbs to be, the miss understand of the subject verb agreement was the main causes of such errors. The recommendations in this study for the secondary school students, that they must know how to use subject verb agreement, and study it in perfect way, and make more practice. The teachers must explain it very simply to the students.

Abstract

(Arabic Version)

الاطء النحوية هي واحدة من الصعوبات الرئيسية التي يواجهها متعلمي اللغة الثانية. من بين اكنواع الاطء النحوية شيوعا هو مطابقة الفعل للفاعل. هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى معرفة مدى تكرار أخطاء مطابقة الفعل للفاعل بين ثلاثين من طلاب المرحلة الثانوية في مدرسة المنارات. خدم الإختبار كأداة للدراسة ثم تم تحليل البيانات باستخدام الحزم الإحصائية للعلوم الاجتماعية SPSS. توصلت الدراسة إلى النتائج التالية: وجد أن أخطاء مطابقة الفعل للفاعل شائعة بين الأفعال أو الأفعال المساعدة. كان الفهم الخاطئ لمطابقة الفعل للفاعل هو السبب الرئيسي لمثل هذه الأخطاء. أوصت الدراسة طلاب المدارس الثانوية بأنه يجب عليهم معرفة كيفية استخدام مكابفة الفعل للفاعل و دراسته بطريقة مثالية و ممارسة المزيد. و يجب على المعلمين شرح ذلك بكل بساطة للطلاب.

Table of Contents

NO.	Topics	Page
	Dedication	i
	Acknowledgements	ii
	Abstract	iii
	Abstract (Arabic Version)	iv
	Table of Contents	v
	List of Tables	vii
	List of Figures	viii
	Chapter I Introduction	
1.0	Background of the Study	1
1.1	Statement of the Problem	1
1.2	Objectives of the Study	2
1.3	Significance of the Study	2
1.4	Questions of the Study	2
1.5	Hypotheses of the Study	2
1.6	Methodology of the Study	3
1.7	Limitation of the Study	3
	Chapter II Literature Review	
2.0	Importance of English	4
2.1	Tense and Aspect in English	4
2.2	Copula in English	4
2.3	Causes of Writing Errors	5
2.4	Previous Studies	7
2.5	Subject-Verb Agreement	11
2.6	Some Kinds of subject-Verb Agreements	13
2.7	The Principles of Subject-Verb Agreements	15
2.8	The Standard View of Subject-Verb Agreement and Some	20

	Chapter III Methodology	
3.0	Introduction	23
3.1	Method of the Study	23
3.2	Population of the Study	23
3.3	Sample of the Study	23
2.4	Instrument of Data Collection	23
3.5	Test Design	23
3.6	Test Validity and Reliability	24
3.7	Method of Analysis	24
	Chapter IV Data Analysis and Discussion of Results	
4.0	Introduction	25
4.1	Data Analysis of the Study	25
	Chapter V Main Findings, Conclusion and Recommendations	
5.0	Introduction	41
5.1	Findings	41
5.2	Recommendation	42
5.3	Suggestions for Further Studies	42
References		43
Appendices		45

List of Tables

Table No.	Contents	Pages
(2.1)	The distribution of to be in the present tense.	20
(4.1)	Frequency and percent of the question (1)	26
(4.2)	Frequency and percent of the question (2)	27
(4.3)	Frequency and percent of the question (3)	28
(4.4)	Frequency and percent of the question (4)	29
(4.5)	Frequency and percent of the question (5)	30
(4.6)	Frequency and percent of the question (1)	31
(4.7)	Frequency and percent of the question (2)	32
(4.8)	Frequency and percent of the question (3)	33
(4.9)	Frequency and percent of the question (4)	34
(4.10)	Frequency and percent of the question (5)	35
(4.11)	Frequency and percent of the question (1)	36
(4.12)	Frequency and percent of the question (2)	37
(4.13)	Frequency and percent of the question (3)	38
(4.14)	Frequency and percent of the question (4)	39
(4.15)	Frequency and percent of the question (5)	40

List of Figures

Figure No.	Content	Page
(4.1)	Frequency and percent of the question (1)	26
(4.2)	Frequency and percent of the question (2)	27
(4.3)	Frequency and percent of the question (3)	28
(4.4)	Frequency and percent of the question (4)	29
(4.5)	Frequency and percent of the question (5)	30
(4.6)	Frequency and percent of the question (1)	31
(4.7)	Frequency and percent of the question (2)	32
(4.8)	Frequency and percent of the question (3)	33
(4.9)	Frequency and percent of the question (4)	34
(4.10)	Frequency and percent of the question (5)	35
(4.11)	Frequency and percent of the question (1)	36
(4.12)	Frequency and percent of the question (2)	37
(4.13)	Frequency and percent of the question (3)	38
(4.14)	Frequency and percent of the question (4)	39
(4.15)	Frequency and percent of the question (5)	40

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background of the Study

A language is a tool of communication that is used by human being in this world language becomes a necessity for them to interact and to express some ideas, information with other people and countries. Mind and feeling can be expressed by language. In learning English there are four language skills which should be mastered by the students. They are listening, speaking, reading and writing. Writing is one of the important skills because student skill can be measured by it. It will be good if they master them. Besides that, they must have some ideas some ideas in their mind to explore that show in their writing. Writing on the other hand, is essentially a solitary activity and the fact that we are required to write on our own without the possibility of interaction or the benefit of feedback, in itself makes the act of writing difficult and linguistics problems. One of English grammar problem is the subject verb agreement. It is the suitability between subject and object. The agreement is the determination of the inflectional form of one word according to grammatical feature, such as number or gender of another word. It means related parts of a sentence have the right form to indicate. Using subject verb agreement in the sentence is very difficult for students because there is no agreement in the Arabic language.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

One of the most grammatical problems for secondary school students is subject verb agreement so far many studies have been conducted to investigate such kind of problem. Students need to clearly write what they want to convey in order to transmit their messages effectively to the receiver. Students in secondary school have problems in subject verb agreement and how to use it in correct way,

therefore this study attempts to investigating the problems of secondary school students in subject verb agreement

1. 2 Objectives of the Study

This study aims to explore one of the grammatical aspects of problems in written English among the secondary school students. This study specifically aims to:

1-Identify the frequency of subject verb agreement errors among the secondary school students.

2-Identify causes of subject verb agreement errors among the secondary school students.

1.3 Significance of the Study

This study has theoretical and practical significances. Theoretically, the study could give special information related to the main problems of subject verb agreement applied in writing. This information could encourage the English teachers to prepare the special consideration in making concrete expectation to the teaching done. Practically, the result of this study could encourage the English teachers to make the special material for subject verb agreement material should be suitable with the student's condition. By doing this the teaching learning process would be better than before.

1.4 Questions of the Study

1-To extent are students at secondary school face difficulties in subject verb agreement?

2-What are the most agreement mistakes committed by student in subject verb agreement?

1.5 Hypothesis of the Study

1-Students at secondary school face difficulties in subject verb agreement.

2-The most agreement mistakes committed by student in subject verb agreement are verb to be.

1.6 Methodology of the Study

This will present the methodology of the research it will give information about the population of the study, method of sampling, test design, for the validity and reliability of the research findings the current study will use descriptive method. Test will be employed as tools for data collection which will be administered to Almanarat secondary school

1.7 Limitation of the Study

This study focused on the subject verb agreement problems in writing descriptive test in Al Manarat Secondary School for grade first, second and third.

CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Importance of English

English writing is an important language in the educational setting of higher education institutions due to its being the medium of instruction (Al-khuwaileh and Shoumali 2000). English is the most widely spoken language in the world by native and nonnative speakers (Fatemi, 2008). English is the language widely used in diplomacy news and the different fields of information and knowledge

2.1 Tense and Aspect in English

English represents a verb in its own systematic way. For example, a finite verb carries both tense and aspect whereby the tense indicates the time an action occurs in, i.e., present, past or future. An example of tense is the present tense of the verb to eat, which is eat, while the past tense is ate and the future tense is will eat, as for the aspect, it shows whether an action happens habitually, continuously, or repeatedly (Longman Group, 1995). But clearly, there are four aspects in English that is simple (or zero aspect), progressive, perfect progressive (Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman).

2.2 Copula in English

Celce Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1999), consider the verb “be” main task is serving as the copula in English, whereby it links the subject of a sentence with a predicate, which can be a noun or an adjective (p.54). For example in sentence such as “He is a teacher”. The verb be links the subject with the noun. The verb “be” has many representations and forms in English, i.e. am, is, are, was, were, be, being and been. Celce Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1999) add that the verb “be” is the most frequent verb in English, and it has more distinct forms in regards to person, number and tense than any other verb in English (p.54).one major difference between the grammatical system of English and Arabic is that Arabic

has a pro-drop, whereas English does not have such a characteristics, for example, in Arabic, a verb may be dropped from a sentence without distorting the meaning. In English we say “Ahmed is clever”. However, its Arabic counterpart is “Ahmed clever”.

2.3 Causes of Writing Errors

It is established that writing is one of the most difficult skills in writing, even writing in one’s first language. Thus, writing in an L2 is more challenging, and is not likely to be achieved unless great effort is exerted. There many factors which contribute to boosting such a problem. One of the prominent problems which aggravate the difficulty in writing is lack of mastery of English grammatical rules. These difficulties in grammar or in writing, in general, are caused by many factors. James (1998) identified three causes of errors in relation to L2. These categories of errors are interlingual, intralingual, and induced errors. Interlingual errors are one main cause of problems in writing (Cedar, 2004; Chen & Huang, 2003; Collins, 2002; Jarvis, 2000; Jiang, 1995; Liu, 1998). Such interference of mother tongue is what is termed as ‘interlingual’ errors. Sometimes, learners commit errors due to generalizations established in the mind of a learner due to the effect of L1, and due to insufficient exposure to the target language (Richards, 1971). Put differently, learners may try to derive rules which are beyond to the information or knowledge they were exposed to; these rules are likely not to belong to a learner’s L1 or L2 (Richards, 1971). For example, they may produce deviant or ill- formed sentences by erroneously applying their knowledge of TL rules and structures to new situations. There are five types of inter lingual transfer. They are transfer of training, transfer of strategies of second language learning, transfer of strategies of second language communication, and overgeneralization of TL linguistic material (Selinker, 1974). However, Corder (1974) identified three sources of errors, that is, language transfer, overgeneralization or analogy, & methods or materials used in the teaching (teaching-induced error).

Intralingual errors are errors which occur due to basically two types of errors. The first type is “learning strategy based errors”, while the second type is

“communication-strategy-based errors”. Learning strategy errors include errors such as false analogy, misanalysis, incomplete rule application, exploiting redundancy, overlooking co-occurrence restrictions, hypercorrection (monitor overuse), and overgeneralization or system simplification (James, 1998). As for communication strategy-based errors, they result from holistic strategies: e.g. approximation and language switch, and analytic strategies such as circumlocution (expressing the concept indirectly, by allusion rather than by direct reference). In short, intralingual errors mostly result from faulty or partial learning of the target language rather than language transfer (Keshavarz, 2003, p. 62; Fang & Jiang, 2007, p. 11). The third type or cause of error as mentioned by James (1998) is induced errors. Induced errors occur as a result of classroom situation. They include material induced errors, teacher-talk induced errors, exercise-based induced errors, errors induced by pedagogical priorities, and look-up errors. As it is clear, this type of error is basically due to incorrect strategies used in classroom.

Similarly Brown (2000) argues that there are two main causes of errors, that is, interlingual errors and intralingual errors. Interlingual errors are those errors that are traceable to first language interference; they are attributable to negative interlingual transfer. Kavaliauskiene (2009) argues that interlingual transfer or transfer of errors may occur due to lack of L2 knowledge on the part of a learner, or due to shortage in the attentional capacity that is required to activate the appropriate second language areas of knowledge.

Having discussed the negative transfer, it is noteworthy to mention that transfer can be either positive and negative. Positive transfer occurs when the structure of the two languages is similar, whereas negative transfer mostly occurs when the structure of the two languages is different (Wilkins, 1972, p. 199).

All in all grammatical errors in L2 are systematic and occur to effect or interference of L1, or to other factors. Understanding these errors, and the contexts in which they occur, can be helpful to grammar checking systems (Lee & Sneff, 2008).

Corder (1967) classifies errors into two types: performance errors and competence errors. The performance errors are made when learners are tired or hurried, and

thus they are not serious because they are not inherent. The competence errors are more serious because they result from improper learning..

One of the characteristics that are shared by English and Arabic is overgeneralization. Overgeneralization mostly occurs when a speaker has acquired rules about morphology, without being informed about the exceptions to those rules. The inflection of verbs also suffers from such problem of overgeneralization. For example, to change from the infinitive to past tense in English, the morpheme *ed* is added to the verb; however, there are exceptions, i.e. the past tense of irregular verbs (Fromkin et al., 2011). Differently, in Arabic, the morpheme *ا*, [a] is added to an infinitive at the beginning of the word to change it to first person present tense. However, there are Arabic words that already begin with [a] and are thus inflected by changing the vowel segment in the middle of the word (Al-Baldawi & Saidat, 2011).

2.4 Previous Studies

1-Sugihartono explored about The Students' difficulties in Applying Subject-Verb Agreements in Sentences at SMPN ¹ Pahandut of Palangka Raya. Based on the result of this study, all of the students said that English was a difficult subject. Their difficulties in learning English were in reading, translating the text and understanding the structure of the sentence. The ones were caused by the limitation of students in mastering grammar and vocabularies. Some students had difficulties to pronounce the words because of the difference between writing and reading the ones in English and some of them had low motivation in learning English. The students had difficulties in applying subject-verb agreement in the sentences because they did not know the definition of verb agreement and could not apply it in the ones correctly.

They made disagreement sentences and made mistake in using an auxiliary verb of to be. They used an auxiliary verb of *to be* in the verbal sentences but did not use it in the nominal one. The causes of students difficulties in applying subject-verb agreement were the ability of students in mastering grammar was very low. It was seen that they did not know the definition and principles of verb agreement. They were still confusing about the number in English because they could not

differentiate between plural and singular form. They also could not differentiate between verbal and nominal sentences because they did not know the function of the auxiliary verb of *to be* as the verb (predicate) in the nominal one.

1-Sugihartono, *The Students' Difficulties In Applying Subject Verb Agreement In Sentence at SMPN 1 Pahandut of Palangka Raya*, Sarjana Pendidikan, 2010.

It was different with this study. In his study, he conducted the research about the difficulties in applying subject-verb agreements in sentence of SMPN 1 Pahandut of Palangka Raya. In this study was conducted the research to describe the problems of using subject-verb agreement in writing descriptive text.

To get the result of the study, he used descriptive qualitative method. But in this study to get the result used qualitative method. While in this study used qualitative method to investigate the problems of study. In his study, he conducted the object of research was subject-verb agreement in sentences, but in this study conducted the object of research is subject-verb agreement in writing descriptive text.

2-Shah Mohammad Saul Karim DK explored about Analysis of Errors In Subject-Verb Agreement Among Bangladeshi Tertiary Level EFL Learners. The errors are pointed out in written essays of comparison and comparison method” two places I have visited”. The errors are classified into three categories- error agreement between the verb and singular subject, the error of agreement between the verb and plural subject and error of agreement between the verb and relative pronoun. Thirty-six learners participated in the study. The study reveals that students commit the highest number of errors of agreement between the verb and plural subject followed by the error of agreement between the verb and plural subject followed by the error of agreement between the verb and singular subject. The least error is seen in the case of agreement error between the verb and relative pronoun.²

It was different with this study. In his study, they was conducted the research about an Analysis of Errors in Subject-Verb Agreement among Bangladeshi Tertiary Level EFL Learners. But In this study was conducted the research used qualitative method to describe the problems of using subject-verb agreement in writing descriptive text. But in their study, To get the result of the study they used

quantitative method. In their study, they conducted the object of research was Errors in Subject-Verb Agreement, but in this study conducted the object of research is subject-verb agreement in writing descriptive text.

2-Shah Mohammad Sanaul Karim, at all, *Analysis Of Errors In Subject-Verb Agreement Among*

Bangladeshi Tertiary Level Efl Learners, Journal Of ELT and Poetry, vol. 3, No. 2, 2015, P. 2-3.

3-Mariya Ulfa explored about The Students Problems in Writing Descriptive Paragraph face by the Fourth Semester Students of TBI STAIN of Palangka Raya. Problems in

terms of content were; in understanding the topic sentence, the characteristics of topic sentence, to

develop the topic sentence and makes the topic sentence differs from other sentences in the paragraph. In terms of organization were; to connect ideas between one sentence to another to achieve coherency in the paragraph, to practice how to connect ideas between sentences in the paragraph. in term writing expression were; the student difficult in determining the appropriate words in written context, in tenses, suffix, and agreement. And in terms of mechanics, some students still difficult to put period and comma.³ It was different to this study. In her study, she conducted the research about The Students Problems in Writing Descriptive Paragraph face by the Fourth Semester Students of TBI STAIN of Palangka Raya. But In this study conducted the research to describe the problems of using subject-verb agreement in writing descriptive text.

To get the result of the study, she used qualitative method. To know the problems in terms of content, coherence, written expression and mechanics of writing descriptive paragraph written by students. While this study used qualitative method to investigate the problems of study. In her study, she conducted the object of research was problems in Writing Descriptive Paragraph, but in this study conducted the object of research is subject-verb agreement problems in writing descriptive text.

4-Suriana Nayan explored about Error Analysis of Subject-Vverb Agreement in Writing. These students have studied English for almost 12 years. Unfortunately, they still make subject-verb agreement errors in their writing. According to Corder , an error refers to a systematic deviation made by learners who have not yet mastered the rules of L2. A learner cannot self-correct an error because it is a product reflective of his or her current

3-Mariya Ulfa, The Students Problems in Writing Descriptive Paragraph face by the Fourth Semester Students of TBI STAIN of Palangka Raya.2004

stage of L2 development or underlying competence. A mistake, on the other hand, refers to a random performance slip caused by fatigue, excitement etc and can be readily self-corrected. Therefore, as their lecturer, I wouldlike to help them minimize if not stop them from making this error in subject-verb agreement. My students have taken 2 English papers so far in their diploma course; this BEL 311 is their third paper.From my observation and my experience teaching them this semester December 2008-April 20 for almost 12 weeks, I can conclude that my students are having difficulty in correctly and effectively use the subject-verb agreement rules in their writing. Furthermore, they can be put under the category of novice writers.

Scardamalia & Bereitner as cited in Lee state that novice writers use the trial-and-error approach to trigger more writing. They also spend a little time planning and start off writing although they are still confused about the task Richard, 1990 as cited in Lee . This is evidence in my students writing where they tend to just quickly write their term paper without proper planning since they say that they are struggling with other subjects as well.

5-Agreement phenomena can be found in some three-quarters of the world's languages Mallinson & Blake, and agreement of subject and verbs perhaps the most widespread type. And understanding of how speakers or hearers construct subject-verb agreement would clearly be important of any account of grammatical processing.⁵

Based on some previous studies above, this study has different between the previous studies. The previous related studies are about the error analysis of subject-verb

4-Suriana Nayan," *A Study of Subject-Verb Agreement*," Journal International Education Studies, Vol. 2, No. 3, August 2009, p. 192.

5-Gabriella Vigiooco, Brian Butterworth, and Karlo Semenza," *Constructing Subject-Verb Agreement in Speech*," Journal of Memory and Language 34, University of Trieste, Italy, 1995, p. 186.

agreement in writing, applying difficulties subject-verb agreement in a sentence, The Students Problems in Writing Descriptive Paragraph, Analysis of errors in subject-verb agreement Among Bangladeshi Tertiary Level EFL Learners, analysis of subject-verb agreement in writing. But in this study conduct about the problems of using subject-verb agreement in writing.

2.5 Subject-Verb Agreement

Subject-verb agreement has a connection with the material which the teacher though in the school especially in writing descriptive text. Subject-verb agreement is needed and requires understanding by students in making a sentence. In writing a sentence the students must know what it is subject verb agreement and before started and create a sentence into a paragraph the teacher explain to the students how to put subject and verb well.

There are some definitions about subject-verb agreement:

The definition of subject-verb agreement is the determination of the inflectional form of the word according to a grammatical feature, such as number or gender, of another word. According to Riyanto with Emilia and Leila, agreement or concord is suitability between subject and predicate. It means that if the subject of the sentence is singular, the verb must be singular too.

And if the subject is plural, the verb must be also plural. Subject-verb agreement is important its means the students must know about subject singularly and verb singular, subject plural and verb plural. In the writing text the student's must know about subject-verb agreement and before the lesson begin, the teacher must

explain about subject-verb agreement. All of definitions above was support with this research.

6-Sugihartono, The Students' Difficulties In Applying Subject Verb Agreement In Sentence. 2010, p. 24

7-Slamet Riyanto with Emilia NH and Leila NH, A Handbook of English, 2008p. 186.

are some definition and example about subject-verb agreement.

The *subject* of a sentence is the *noun* (a person, place or thing) or *pronoun* (a word that can substitute for a noun) that is either doing something or being something.

Examples of Nouns: *Motorcycle Basketball Coach Love* Examples of Pronouns: *I, You, He, She, It, We and They*

Verb: A *verb* is a word that expresses *action* or *state of being*.

Examples of *action verbs*: *go run fly jump sit stand sleep*

Examples of *being verbs*: *am is are was were*

Finding the Subject: In order to identify the *subject* of a sentence, find the verb and ask, "Who is doing this action (or who is in this state of being)?" The answer is the subject. To make a sentence, it must agree on the subjects and verbs. The subjects and verbs agree in number.

Example :

My sister is married. (singular)

My sisters are married. (plural)

My brother and I are single. (plural) From the example above we know if the subject singular the verb is singular and if the subject plural the verb is plural. Subject and verb must agree with the number. In the study, subject-verb agreement is sometimes confusing in the following situations.

When a sentence begins with the word *there* + the verb *be*, the subject follows the *be* verb. Look ahead to see whether to use a singular or plural verb. Example :

8-Syma Solovitch, Student work Book Writing Conventions, The University of California, 2006, p. 4.

A-There is a student in the hall. (the verb is singular to agree with a student).

b- There are three students in the hall. (the verb are is plural to agree with three students).

A prepositional phrase (a group of words beginning with a preposition such as of, with, in, at, or on and ending with a noun or pronoun) can come between a subject and its verb. Prepositional phrases may come after a subject, but they are not part of the subject. You should mentally cross them out when you are deciding if the verb should be singular or plural.

Example:

- a. one of my sisters is a singer. (the subject is one, not sisters).
- b. The color of her eyes changes when she is angry. (the subject is color, not eyes).
- c. Six kinds of rice are available in the grocery store. (the subject is kinds, not rice).
- d. some word is always singular
- e. Neither (of my parents) is living.
- f. Nothing ever happens in my life.
- g. A few word are always plural
- h. Both (of my parents) are teachers.
- i. Several (of the teachers) speak my language
- j. Many (of my friends) work in the library.

2.6 Some Kinds of subject-Verb Agreements

Based on this research there are some kinds of subject verb agreement that will classifying. According Betty subject-verb agreement is divided into four parts as follows:

1. Agreement between subject and verb.

9-Betty Scramper Azar, *Understanding and Using English Grammar*, Jakarta: Binarupa aksara. 1993, p. 221.

2. Subject-verb agreement with using the expression of quantity.

3. Subject-verb agreement with using There + Be. When expletive *there* is used, the subject follows *be*.

4. Subject-verb agreement with using some irregularities

In this study is not all about the kinds of using-subject verb agreement can used by the students, because from the number two and four is difficult to understand. Here there are some examples of the kinds of subject-verb which are often studied in the school of MTs AN-NUR and to support of this research are number one and three:

1-Agreement between subject and verb

a- My friend lives in Boston.

b- That book on political parties is interesting.

c- Growing flower is her hobby.

d- She goes to school every day.

2-Subject-verb agreement with using the expression of quantity. Examples:

a- Some of the books are good.

b- A lot of the equipment is new.

c- Two-thirds of the money is mine.

d- One of my wives is here.

e- None of the boys is here.

f- The number of students in the class is fifteen.

3-Subject-verb agreement with using There + Be. When expletive *there* is used, the subject

Examples:

a- There is a book on the desk.

b- There are many girls in the street.

c- There were magazines in the library.

4-Subject-verb agreement with using some irregularities. Examples:

a- The news is interesting.

b- Statistics is an easy subject.

c- English is spoken in many countries.

Based on the kinds of subject-verb agreement above is not all the kinds of subject-verb agreement can be use by the students, because from the number two and four is difficult to understand. That often do by the students to make a sentence to be paragraph are agreement between subject and verb, subject-verb agreement with using There + Be.

2.7 The Principles of Subject-Verb Agreements

In the study, the students must know about the principle of subject-verb agreement, before begin the lesson the teacher must to explain about the principle of subject-verb agreement. According to Hobbes and Lim Ali, there are some principles of agreement between subject and verb in number and person but, they are:

1-f the subject of the sentence is plural, the verb must be plural.

Examples:

a- They *are* very happy.

b- The boys often *come* late.

c- We *have* studied hard.

2-If the subject of the sentence is singular, the verb must be singular. Examples:

a- He *learns* English every day.

b- A box *has* been stolen.

c- He *is* happy.

10-Hobben D. Lingga and Lim Ali Utama, Intisari Tata Bahasa Inggris Kontemporer, Jakarta: Visipro, p. 471-485.

3-If plural nouns and phrases are used in terminology, title of book, and note, they use a singular verb.

Examples:

a-The Proverbs of Different Nations is a new book.

b-Cameron Highlands is a good place to go for a pleasant holiday. If the plural subject shows the quantity, the singular verb must be used. Examples:

a-Fifty miles is a long distance.

b-Ten million dollars is a lot of money..

4-If Two nouns and pronouns or more are connected by *and*, take a plural Verb.

Examples

a-Wati and Ani study in this school.

b-He and I have finished our work.

5-If two subjects are telling one idea, can be used a singular verb. Examples:

a-Bread and butter is her main food.

b-The horse and carriage is in front of the door

But if the nouns do not show the same person or noun, we use a plural verb.

Examples:

a-An important politician and an administrator are dead.

b-The orator and the statement are dead.

7-If *teach, either, neither, one, another, much, many an every, anybody,*

anyone, everybody, everyone, somebody, someone, nobody, no one are used

as a subject, we use a singular verb.

Examples:

a-Everyone has arrived.

b-Another assistant has to be employed.

8-If the noun is begun by *each* or *every*, use singular verb although connected by *and*.

Examples:

a-Each man and each woman has to work for his country.

b-Every boy and girl was given a price.

9-If two subjects are connected by *or*, *either....or*, and *neither....nor*, we use a singular verb if the two subjects are singular.

Examples:

a-Neither she nor I was there.

b-Either Charles or John has found the watch.

But if the two subjects are plural, we also use a plural verb.

Example:

Neither clerks nor the secretaries are invited.

10-If the two subjects are connected by *as well as*, *like*, *with*, *along with*, *together with*, *in addition to*, *besides*, and *not*, the verb that is used is agree with the first subject.

Examples:

a-The general, as well as his soldiers, was killed.

B-He as well as you is on the right.

11-If the sentence is beginning with *there* or *here*, the verb must agree with the subject of the sentence.

Examples:

A-There is a boy outside.

B-There are sixty students here.

12-The phrases as like *a lot of, a great deal of, some of, most of, plenty of* are singular if they show to the quantity, but if they show to the number, they become plural.

Examples:

a- A lot of money is needed

b- A lot of books have been purchased.

c- Most of the students have come.

13-If *a pair of* is used to the nouns which considered as unity, the subject use singular verb.

Examples:

a- A pair of new scissors has been found.

b- This pair of trousers has cost me a lot

14-All of the fractions use a singular verb if they show quantity, and use plural verb if they show to number.

Examples:

A-Half of book is interesting.

b- Half the applicants were selected.

14-Any, all, more, most, half of, three-quarters of, twenty percent of, a

Percentage of and the same expressions use a singular verb.

Examples:

A- Three a quarters of water has been consumed.

B-Three-quarters of his project has been completed.

15-None of usually use a singular verb if it is used for the countable noun. But sometimes use plural verb if it is followed by plural noun or pronoun. Example:

None of them are married.

16-Collective nouns can use a plural or singular verb. It depends on to the context.

Examples:

a- The jury is ready to give its verdicts.

b- The fleet has set sail.

c- Parliament has elected its speaker.

d- The military were called out.

17-If the subject of the verb is a relative pronoun, the verb must agree with number and person with the antecedent of the relative pronoun.

Examples:

a- I, who am your friend, will help you.

b- He, who is my friend, should stand by me.

18-If a gerund is the subject of the sentence, takes a singular verb.

Examples:

a- Growing flowers is her hobby.

b- Writing many letters makes him happy.

19-If the subject of the sentence is *preposition phrase*, the verb is adjusted with the words come before *of*.

Examples:

a- The study of languages is very interesting.

b- Several theories on his subject have been proposed.

20-The group of animals is considered as singular, so the verb is always singular.

Examples:

a- The herd of cattle is breaking away.

b- The flock of birds is circling overhead.

21-If the subject of the sentence is a *prepositional phrase*, the verb (predicate) adjusts with the word that comes before *of*.

Example:

a- The study of languages is very interesting.

b- The cost of new house is rising every day.

From the principles of using subject-verb agreement it's same with the kinds of subject-verb agreement above the students cannot understood all of the principles of subject-verb agreement. Because the students grammar still low and there were used arefrom number one, two, three, four, and five to support this research and the other principles did not become a target it was not given to students. Beside that subject-verb agreement has a connection with other skills, especially about writing.

2.8 The Standard View of Subject-Verb Agreement and Some Problems

The grammar of any language is not just a simple matter of rules; in order to achieve correct formal writing, the students must follow some basic principles, such as subject-verb agreement. In English, there are three verbs used both as a main verb and as a helping verb, such as *to be*.

Their distribution in regard to present tense is represented in Table 1 (Werner, Church, & Baker, 1996 a, p. 3).

Table (2.1): The distribution of to be in the present tense.

	Singular subject and verb	Plural subject and verb
First person	I am	We are
Second person	You are	You are
Third person	He She + is It	They are

As illustrated in Table (2.1), verbs in the present tense for the third person take singular subjects: *she*, *it*, and *he*. Moreover, verbs in the first and second person are almost the same except for the verb *to be*; the first person takes *am* and the second person takes *are*.

On the other hand, it is not always easy to trace the subject in the sentence. Sometimes, subjects are separated from their verbs by a prepositional phrase (Werner, Church, & Baker, 1996 b, p. 5). The prepositional phrase includes the preposition and its object, which will never be the subject of a sentence.

This emphasizes the fact that this phrase cannot agree with the verb. The most common prepositions in English are *at*, *from*, *in*, *of*, *on*, and *with*.

In addition, there are other cases of subject-verb agreement of indefinite pronouns (Werner et al., 1996 b, p. 139-216). They do not refer to specific nouns; some of them are considered singular, and some are plural. Indefinite pronouns, such as *anyone*, *everyone*, *someone*, *anything*, *nobody*, *anybody*, *no one*, *nothing*, *one*, *somebody* *no one*, *someone*,

something, *none*, and *much*, are always singular and require singular verbs. However, indefinite pronouns, such as *all* and *some*, are singular or plural depending on what they refer to.

Furthermore, some phrases in English give the sense of the meaning. For example, *together with*, *as well as*, and *along with* are not the same as *and*. Thus, the use of one of these phrases does not compound the subject, so a singular verb is required.

The same is true for the phrases *neither* and *either* (Werner et al., 1996 a, p. 39). Even though they seem to be referring to two things, they are singular, and they require singular verbs. They join as parts of a subject, and the verb must agree with the part nearest to it.

Another principle in subject-verb agreement involves collective nouns (Werner et al., 1996 a, p. 187). They are a collection of different types of names. The

agreement between them and a verb depends on the context of the sentence. The most common collective nouns include *audience, team, band, class, cast, family, unit, troop, crowd,* and *jury*.

In some situations in English, subjects come after verbs. In these cases, the verb must be identified and any prepositional phrases must be removed in order to complete the action of the verb. Usually, there are some indicators to the verb preceding its subject, such as *there* and *here* (Benner, 2000).

Finally, verbs must agree with relative pronouns. These pronouns include *who, which, whom,* and *that*. The agreement is simply identified by the relationship between the relative pronoun, its antecedent, and its verb. Thus, if the relative pronoun refers to a singular antecedent, then it requires a singular verb. However, if the relative pronoun refers to a plural antecedent, then it requires a plural verb (Werner et al., 1996 b, p. 324).

CHAPTER III
METHODOLOGY

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter will present the methodology of the research it will give information about the population of the study, method of sampling, test design, test validity and reliability and method of analysis.

3.1 Method of the Study

This study follows the descriptive method, qualitative and quantitative research method were used to achieve the objectives of the study and to verify the hypotheses.

3.2 Population of the Study

The population of current study in Al-manarat secondary school, the students of this study from all levels

3.3 Sample of the Study

The sample was 30 students for the written test. Their age between 13-17. They were randomly selected to different items of collocations.

3.4 Instrument of Data Collection

The data of this study is collected by using a test for secondary school students a written test.

3.5 Test Design

The tool used in this study is a written test which was specially chosen for purpose of this study. The test is asking students to choose the correct answer or to write the correct answer in subject verb agreement.

3.6 Test Validity and Reliability

The test has been seen by supervisor it is suitable, for the purpose of this research. Validity is arguable the most important criteria for the quality of a test. The term validity refers to whether or not the test measures what it claims to measure. Reliability is one of the most important elements of test quality it has to do with consistency or reproducibility, or an examinee's performance on the test.

3.7 Method of Analysis

After the written test is collected all papers are marked and scores will be revealed. The percentage will be carrying out through SPSS. This research is descriptive and analytical by make written test for students to know the problems in subject verb agreement.

CHAPTER IV

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

4.0 Introduction

In this chapter the researcher is going to analyze the data being collected via the test and analyze the problems being faced by the students. The researcher used tables to analysis the data.

4.1 Data Analysis of the Study

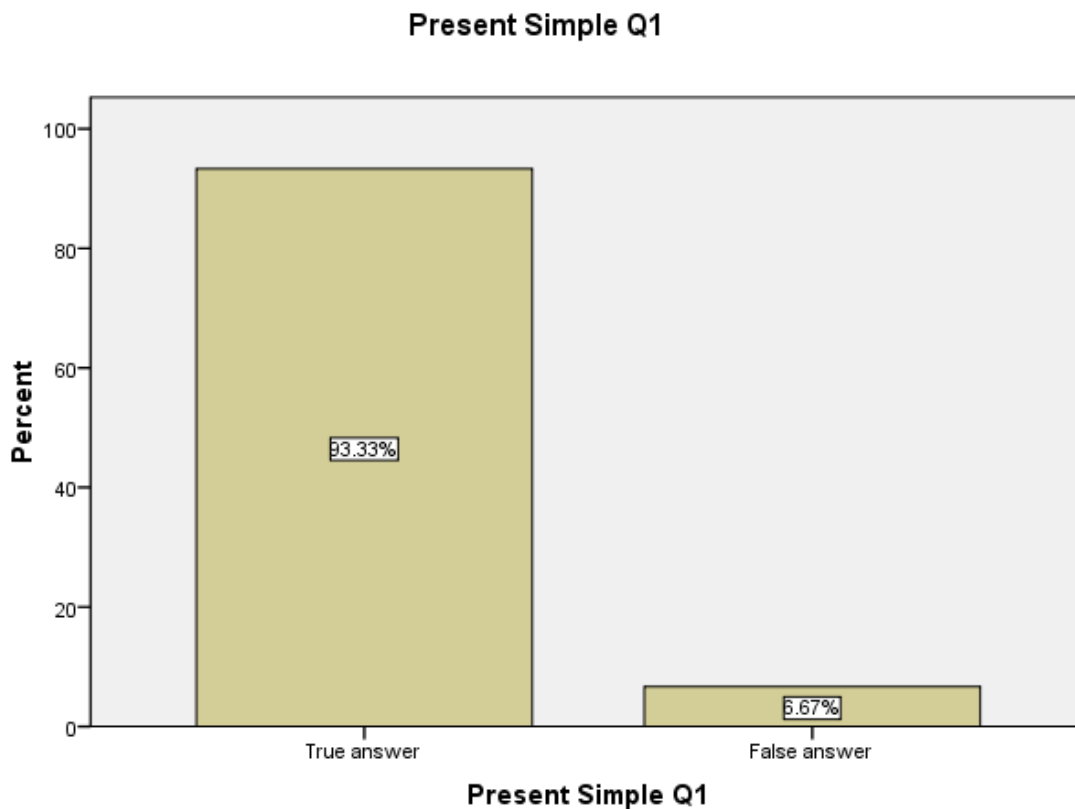
Descriptive statistics were employed to statistically treat the data collected by the researcher. The following tables show these data:

Table (4.1): Frequency and percent of the question (1)

Present Simple Q1

	Frequency	Percent
True answer	28	93.3
False answer	2	6.7
Total	30	100.0

Figure (4.1)



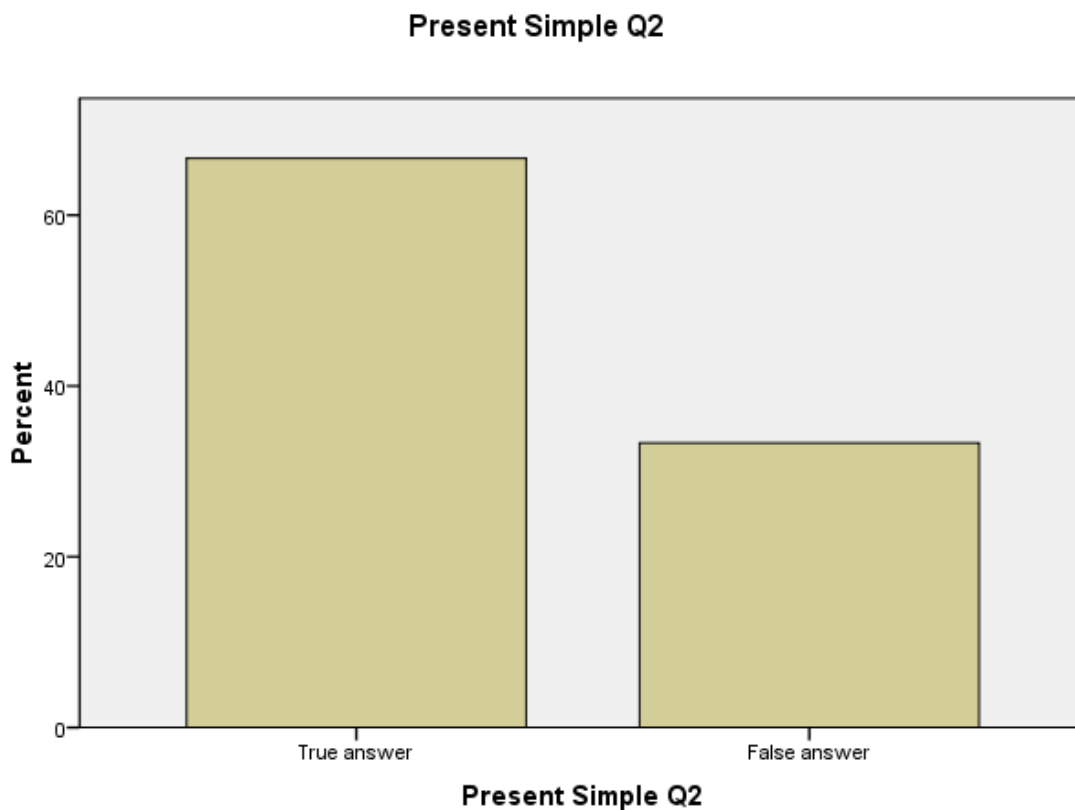
The table and figure (4.1) above showed the result. The true answers represent about [93.3] and the false answers represent [6.7], in the errors students used the singular auxiliary (is) instead of plural auxiliary (are).

Table (4.2): Frequency and percent of the question (2)

Present Simple Q2

	Frequency	Percent
True answer	20	66.7
False answer	10	33.3
Total	30	100.0

Figure (4.2)



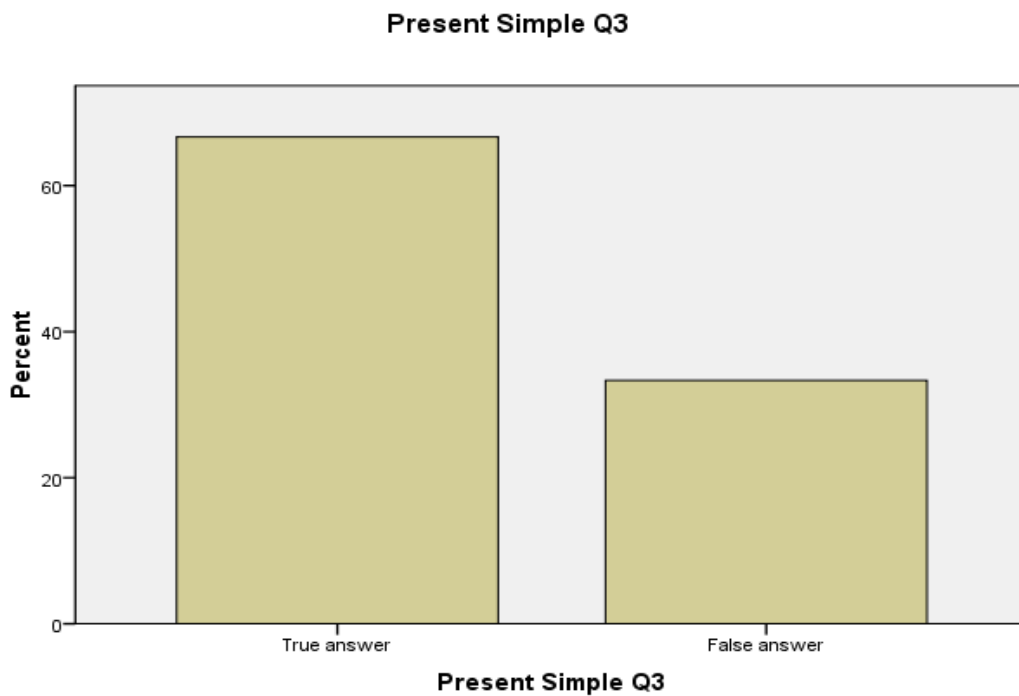
The table and figure (4.2) above showed the result. The true answers represent [66.7], and the false answers represent [33.3], in the false answers students used singular auxiliary (is) instead of plural auxiliary (are).

Table (4.3): Frequency and percent of the question (3)

Present Simple Q3

	Frequency	Percent
True answer	20	66.7
False answer	10	33.3
Total	30	100.0

Figure (4.3)



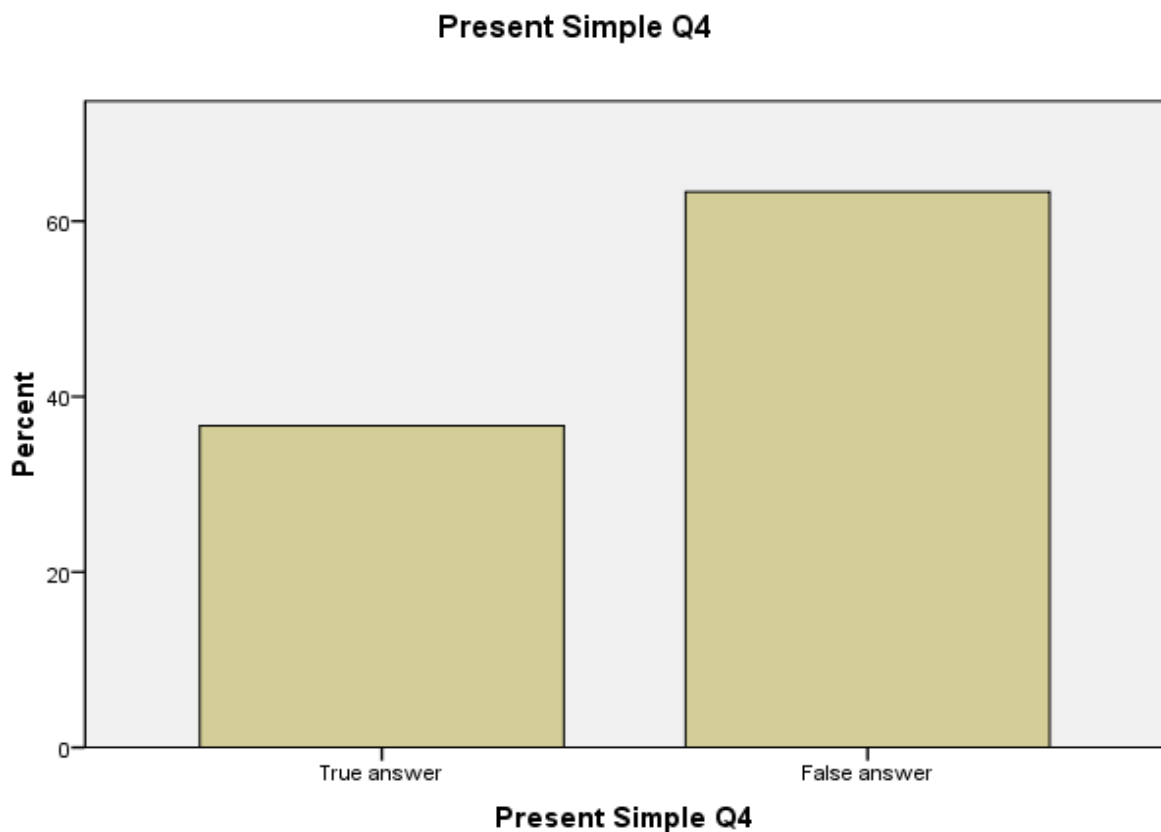
This table and figure (4.3) showed the result. Above the true answers represent [66.7] and the false answers represent [33.3] the false answers student use Does instead of Do

Table (4.4): Frequency and percent of the question (4)

Present Simple Q4

	Frequency	Percent
True answer	11	36.7
False answer	19	63.3
Total	30	100.0

Figure (4.4)



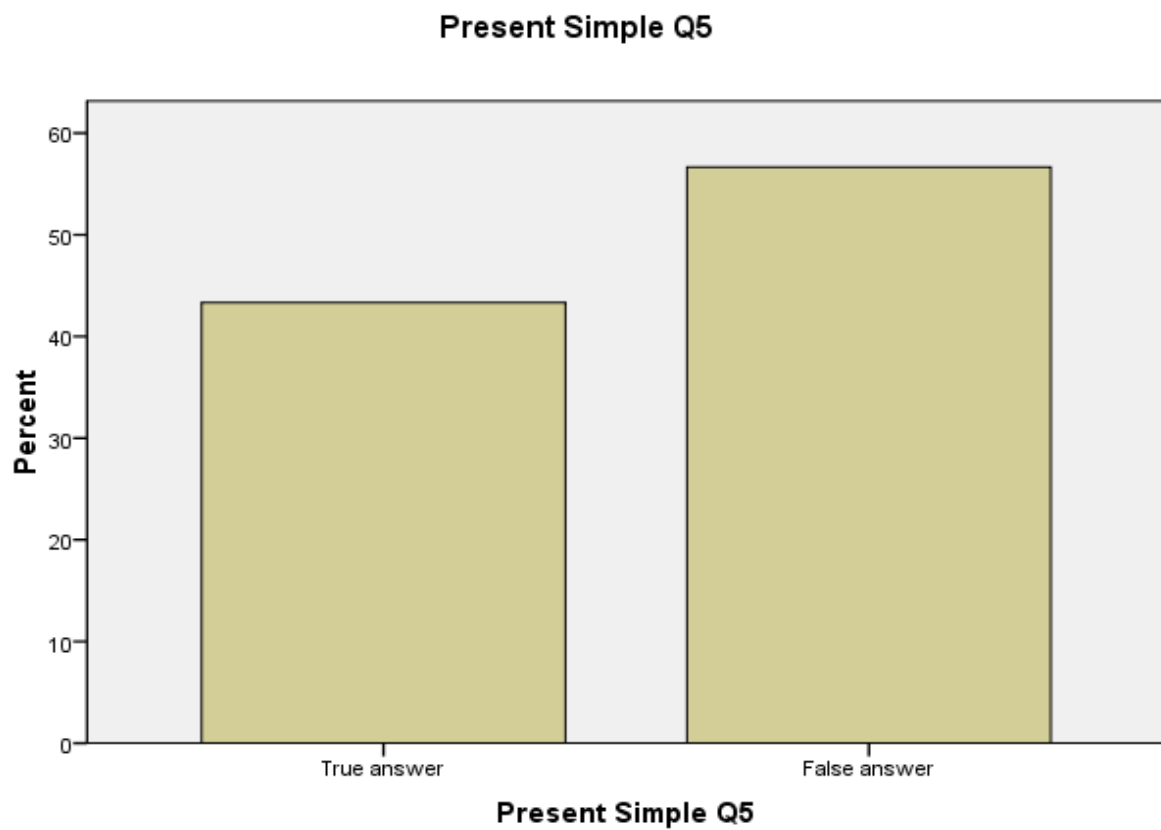
This table and figure (4.4) showed the result. Above the true answers represent [36.7] and the false answer represent [63.3] this false used by students show that they chose the infinitive form of the verb instead of the verb with (s).

Table (4.5): Frequency and percent of the question (5)

Present Simple Q5

	Frequency	Percent
True answer	13	43.3
False answer	17	56.7
Total	30	100.0

Figure (4.5)



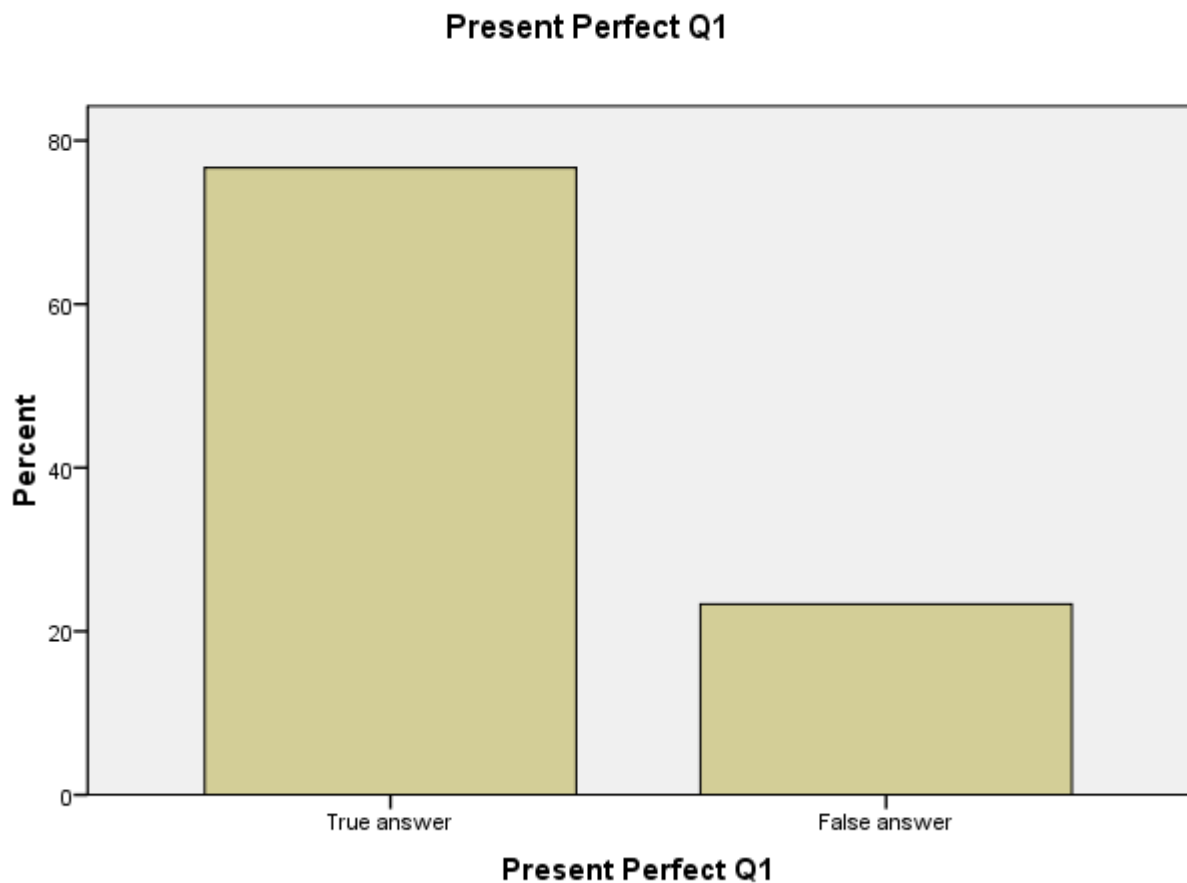
This table and figure (4.5) showed the result. Above the true answers represent [43.3] and the false answers represent [56.7], this showed that students used the infinitive form of the verb instead of verb with (s).

Table (4.6): Frequency and percent of the question (1)

Present Perfect Q1

	Frequency	Percent
True answer	23	76.7
False answer	7	23.3
Total	30	100.0

Figure (4.6)



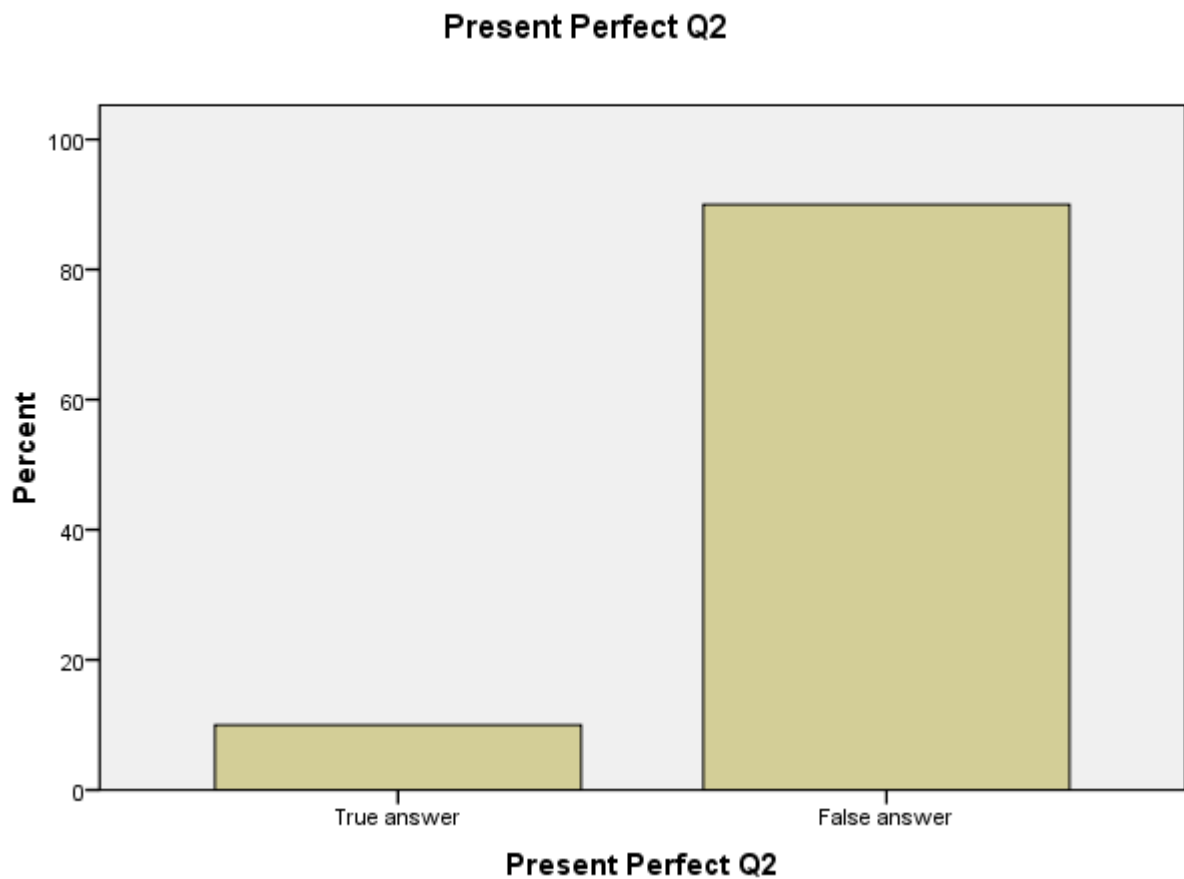
This table and figure (4.6) showed the result. Above the true answers represents [76.7] and the false answers represent [23.3]; in the false answers students used the plural auxiliary (have) instead of singular auxiliary (has).

Table (4.7): Frequency and percent of the question (2)

Present Perfect Q2

	Frequency	Percent
True answer	3	10.0
False answer	27	90.0
Total	30	100.0

Figure (4.7)



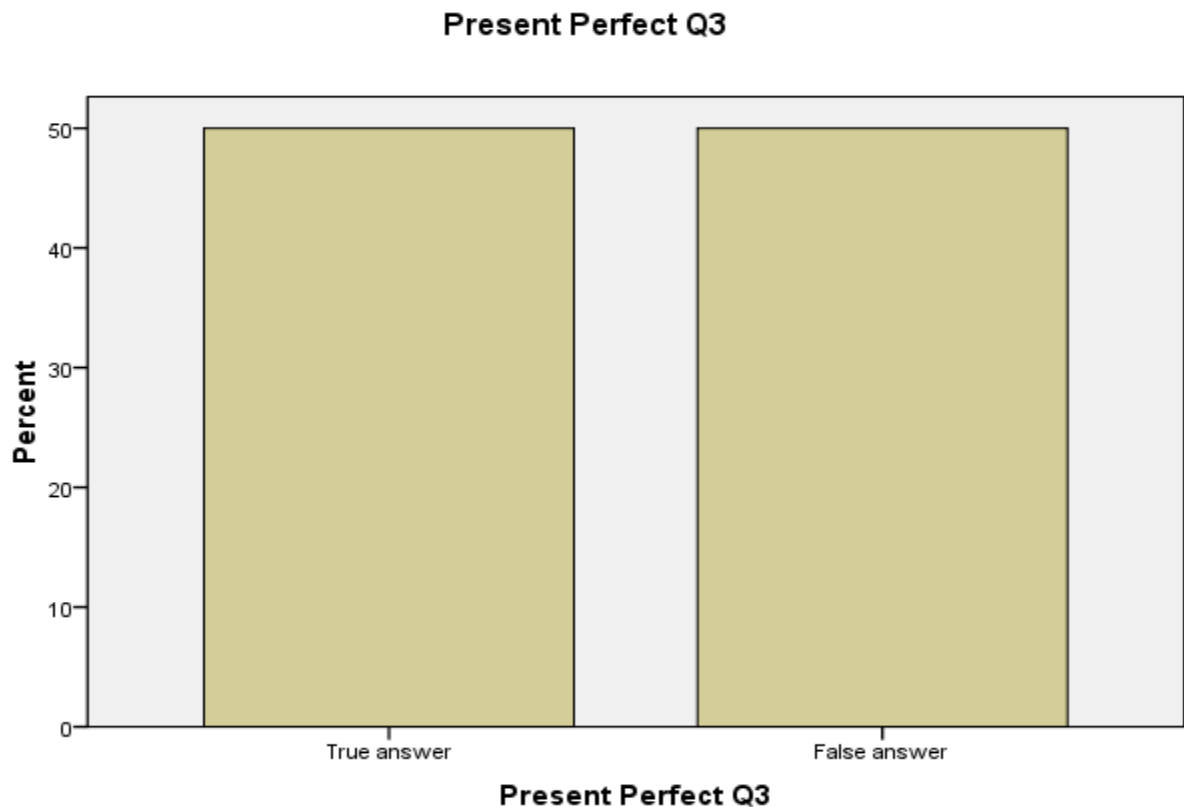
This table and figure (4.7) showed the result. Above the true answers represent [10.0] and the false answers represent [90.0]. In the false answers students used plural auxiliary (have) instead of singular auxiliary (has).

Table (4.8): Frequency and percent of the question (3)

Present Perfect Q3

	Frequency	Percent
True answer	15	50.0
False answer	15	50.0
Total	30	100.0

Figure (4.8)



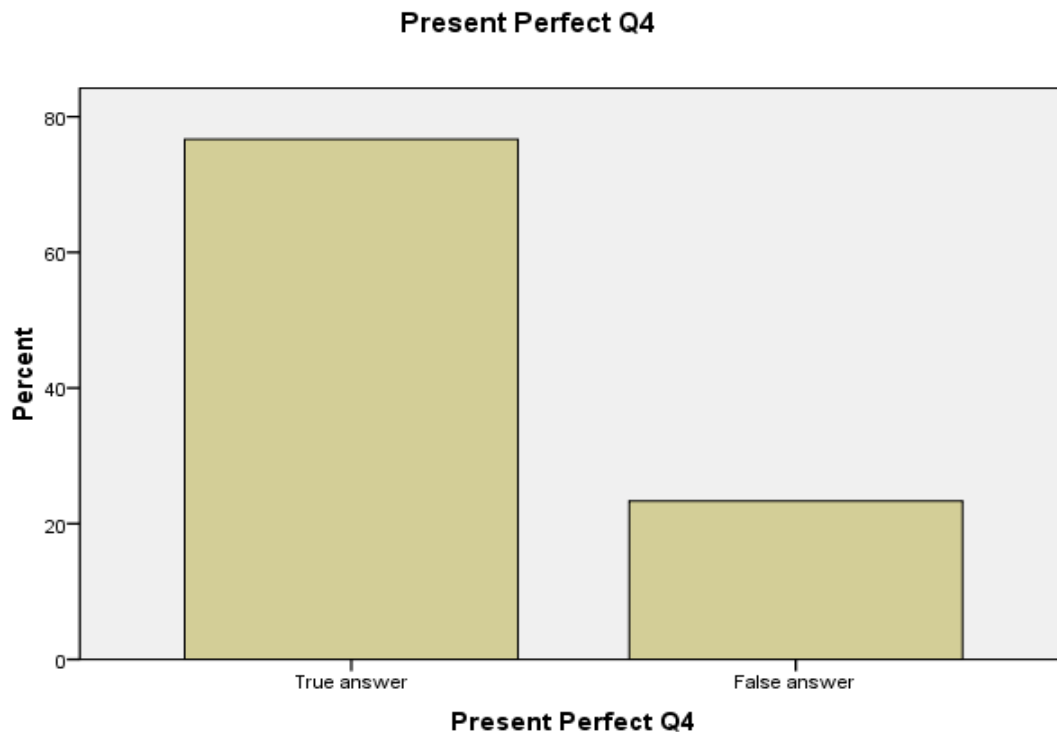
This table and figure (4.8) showed the result. Above the true answers represent [50.0] and the false answers represent [50.0], in the false answers students used singular auxiliary (has) instead of plural auxiliary (have).

Table (4.9): Frequency and percent of the question (4)

Present Perfect Q4

	Frequency	Percent
True answer	23	76.7
False answer	7	23.3
Total	30	100.0

Figure (4.9)



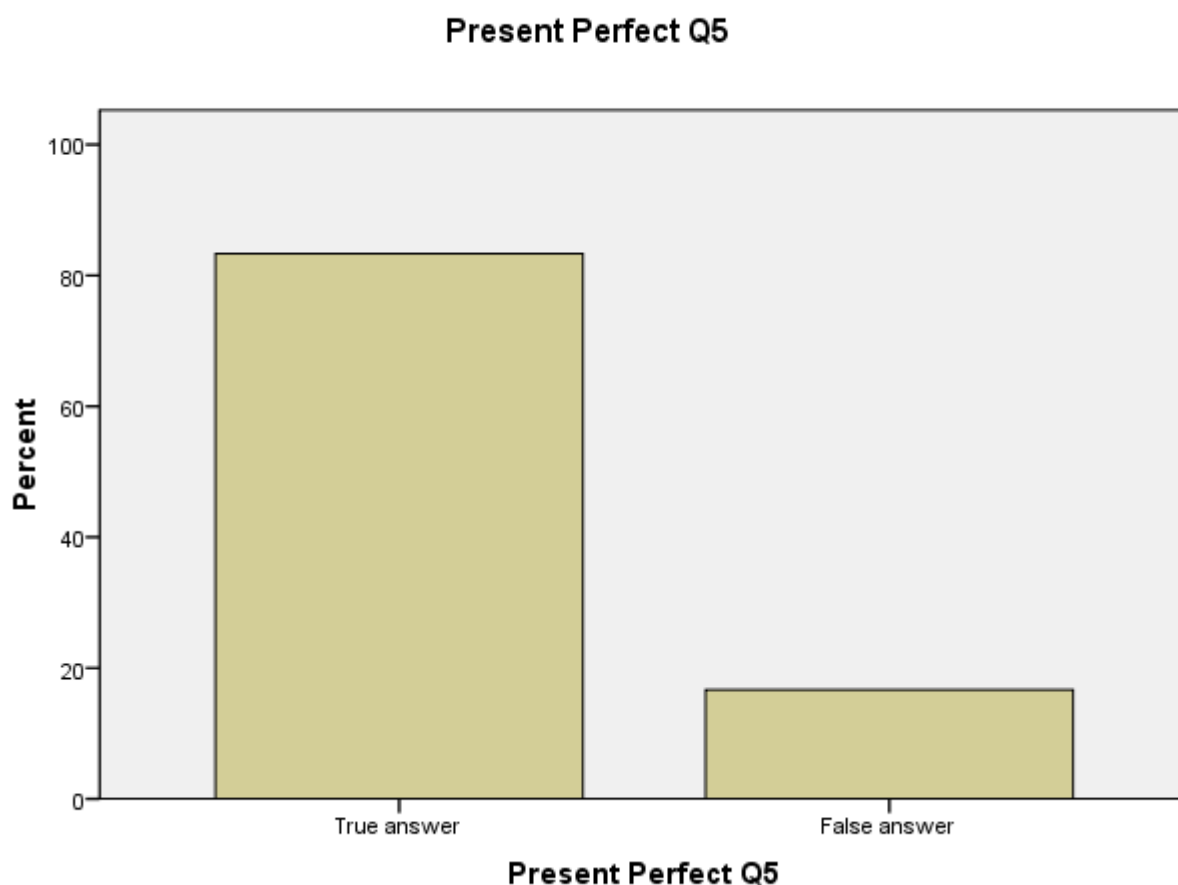
This table and figure (4.9) showed the result. Above the true answers represent [76.7] and the false answers represent [23.3], in the false answers students used plural auxiliary (have) instead of singular auxiliary (has).

Table (4.10): Frequency and percent of the question (5)

Present Perfect Q5

	Frequency	Percent
True answer	25	83.3
False answer	5	16.7
Total	30	100.0

Figure (4.10)



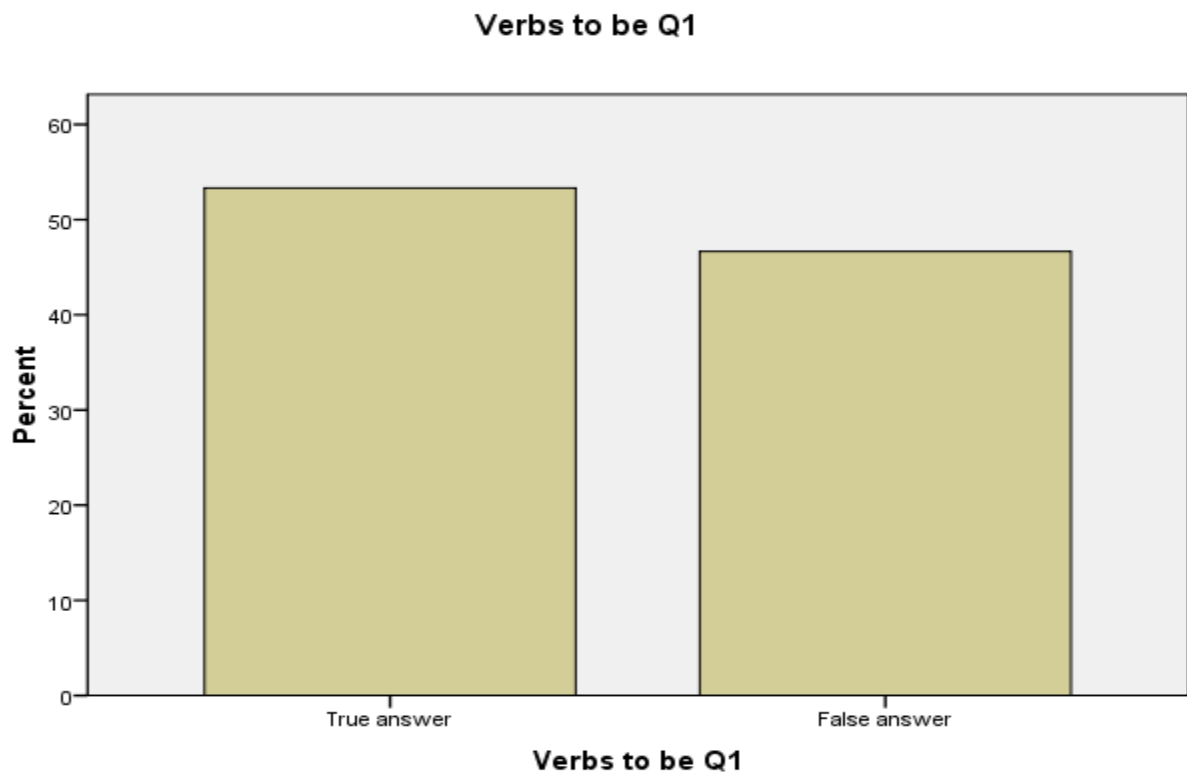
This table and figure (4.10) showed the result. Above the true answers represent [83.3] and the false answers represent [16.7], in the false answers the students used plural auxiliary (have) instead of singular auxiliary (has).

Table (4.11): Frequency and percent of the question (1)

Verbs to be Q1

	Frequency	Percent
True answer	16	53.3
False answer	14	46.7
Total	30	100.0

Figure (4.11)



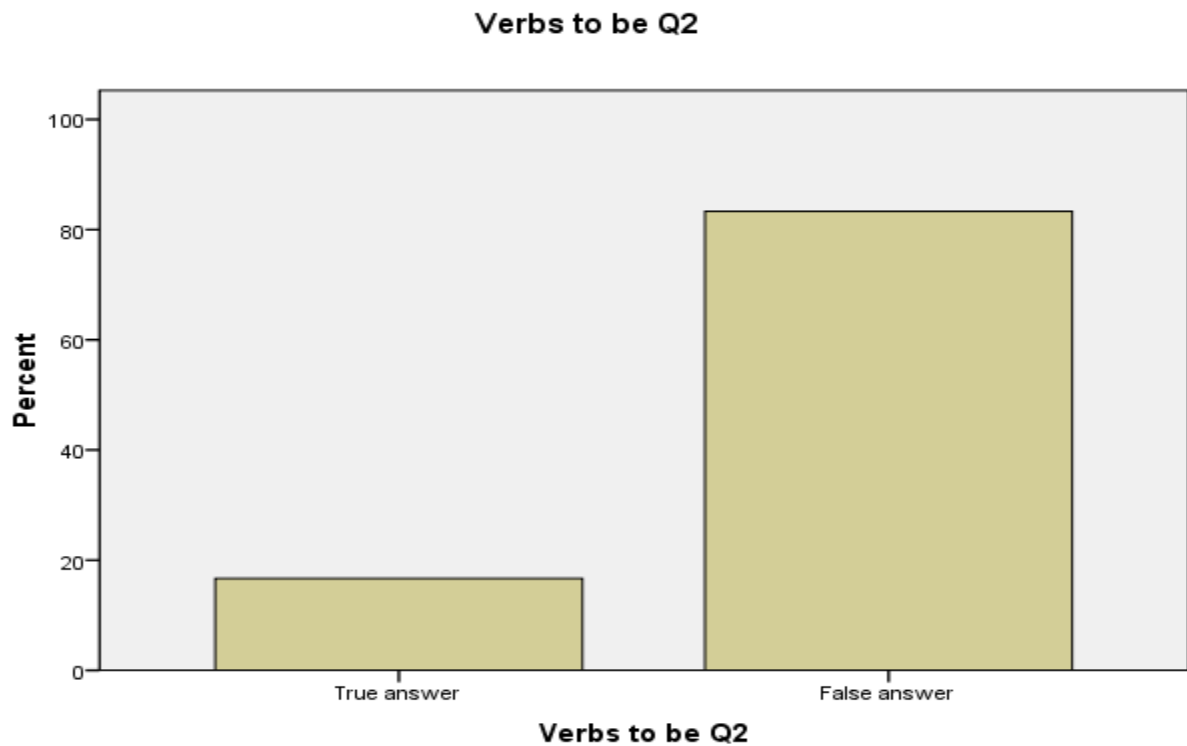
This table and figure (4.11) showed the result. Above the true answers represent [53.3] and the false answers represent [46.7], in the false answers students used (am) instead of (was) in verbs to be.

Table (4.12): Frequency and percent of the question (2)

Verbs to be Q2

	Frequency	Percent
True answer	5	16.7
False answer	25	83.3
Total	30	100.0

Figure (4.12)



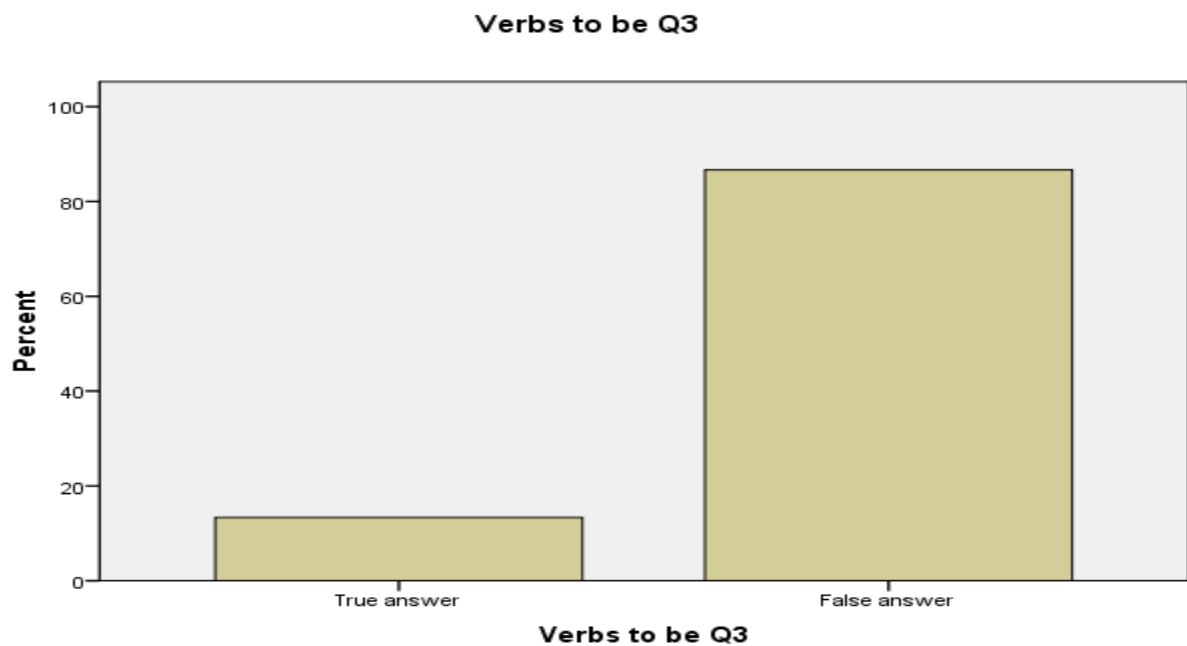
This table and figure (4.12) showed the result. Above the true answers represent [16.7] and the false answers represent [83.3], in the false answers students used (are and have been) instead of (were and was).

Table (4.13): Frequency and percent of the question (3)

Verbs to be Q3

	Frequency	Percent
True answer	4	13.3
False answer	26	86.7
Total	30	100.0

Figure (4.13)



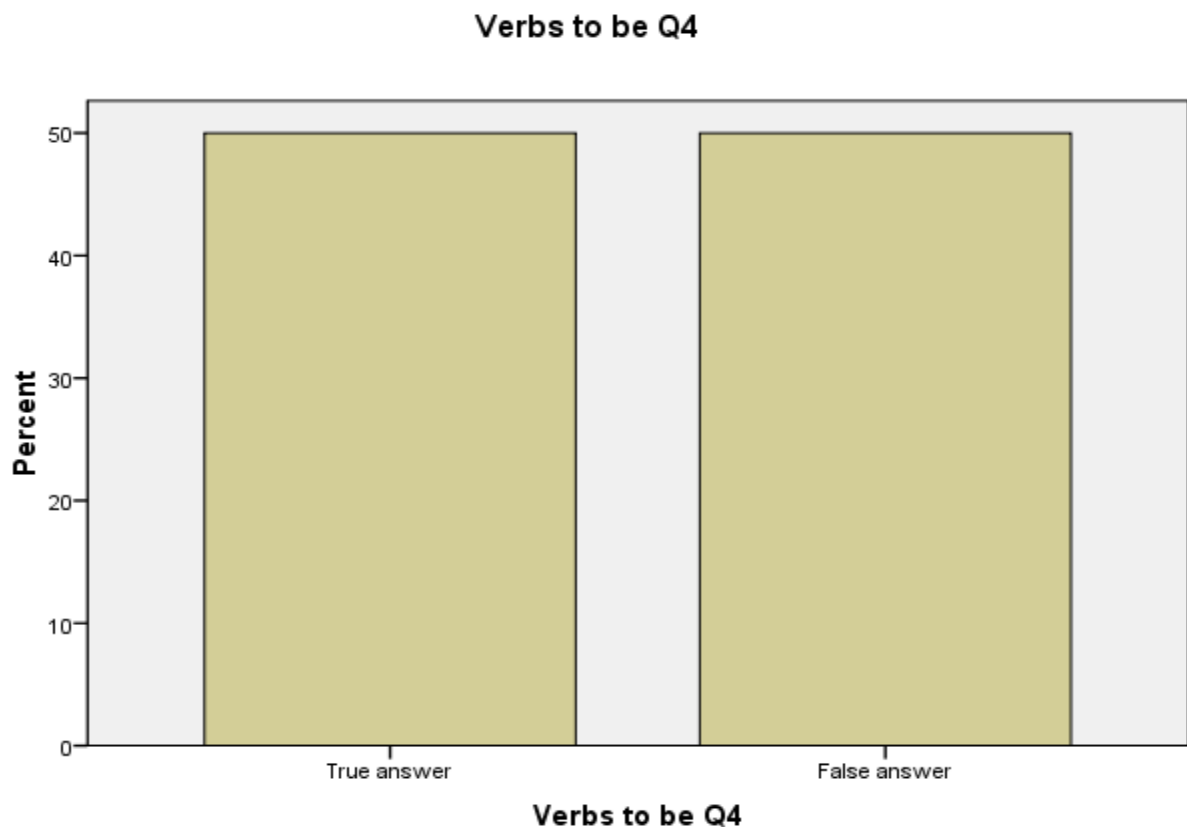
This table and figure (4.13) showed the result. Above the true answers represent [13.3] and the false the answers represent [86.7], in the false answers students used (is and has) instead of (has been).

Table (4.14): Frequency and percent of the question (4)

Verbs to be Q4

	Frequency	Percent
True answer	15	50.0
False answer	15	50.0
Total	30	100.0

Figure (4.14)



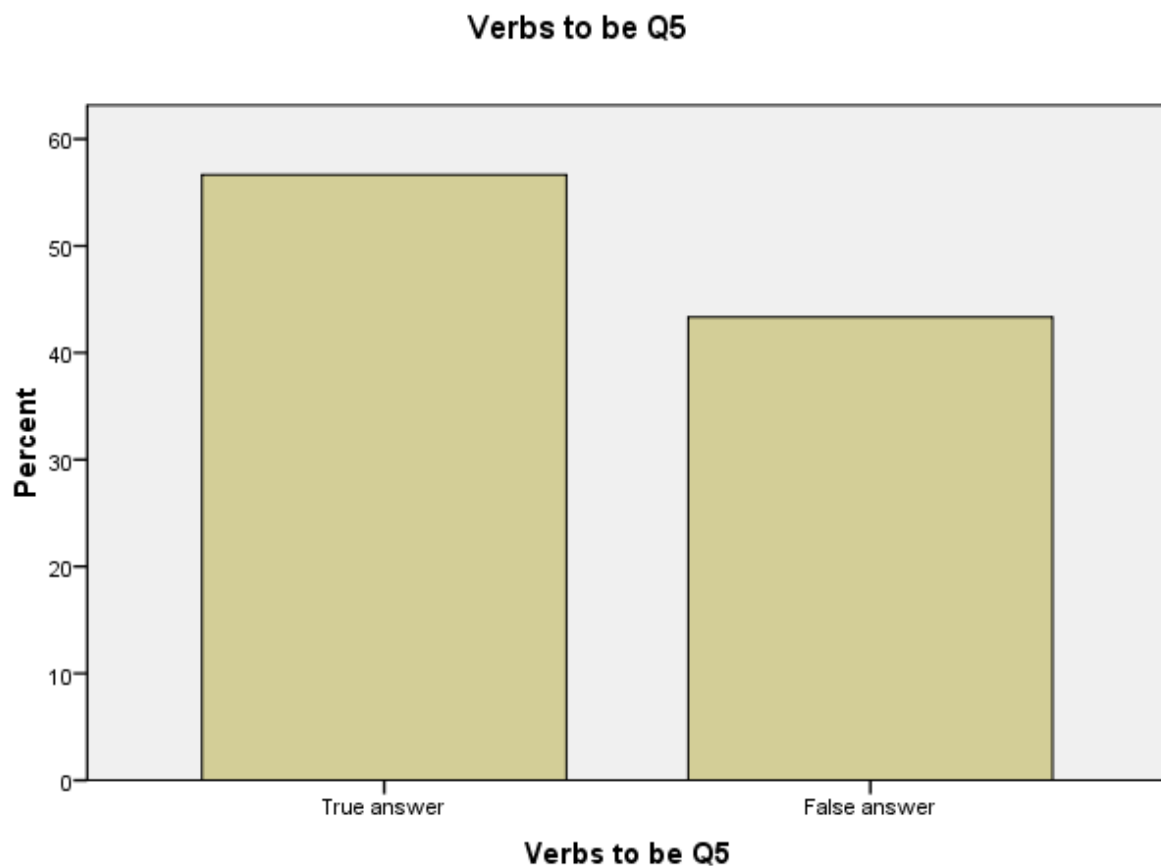
This table and figure (4.14) showed the result. Above the true answers represent [50.0] and the false answers represent [50.0], in the false answers students used (have been and were) instead of (are).

Table (4.15): Frequency and percent of the question (5)

Verbs to be Q5

	Frequency	Percent
True answer	17	56.7
False answer	13	43.3
Total	30	100.0

Figure (4.15)



This table and figure (4.15) showed the result. Above the true answers represent [59.7] and the false answers represent [43.3], in the false answers students used (has been and had been) instead of (is).

4-2: Discussion of the results:

Some students don't know how to use subject verb agreement in present simple, present perfect and especially in the form of verbs to be. Students had made many mistake in present simple, present perfect and verbs to be because may it complicated or may be don't care or know about plural or singular in the subject or may be don't understand the rule or the form of the subject verb agreement. Perhaps also had lack of practice during the study

Students had make many mistakes in verbs to be because may not understand it very well or the teacher don't explain it very perfect or simple way, some students have never seen the verbs to be and also they don't know the plural and singular in pronouns or the subject.

CHAPTER V

MAIN FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND

RECOMMENDATIONS

CHAPTER FIVE

MAIN FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction:

This chapter is about the conclusion, solving of the problem and recommendations

5.1 Conclusion:

Based on result and discussion of the study on chapter four, there were some problems or grammatical problems that that Almanarat secondary school students face. Among these grammatical problem is subject verb agreement. Subject verb agreement was found to be one of the major problems among the secondary school students. Most errors occur to interlingual or intralingual errors. They made disagreement sentence and made mistake in using plural subject with singular auxiliary and the singular subject with plural auxiliary and they used plural auxiliary instead of singular auxiliary and vice versa in the sentences

5-2 Main Finding:

Students had many problems in subject verb agreement. One of these problem is in the present simple they put “s” to the verb even the subject was plural. In this case teachers must explain well to student when “s” can be appearing in verb. Also teachers give students more example and exercise the same thing must do with present perfect teachers explain or show to students that “have” used with subject when it in plural case and “has” used with singular. For verbs to be teachers must explain it to the student in very perfect and simple way, teacher write it in the board and students must keep it in there notebook and there mind. Teachers must make more practice in verbs to be.

5-3 Recommendations:

The recommendations in this study for the secondary school students, that they must know how to use subject verb agreement, and study it in perfect way, and make more practice. The teachers must explain it very simply to the student

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APPENDICES

Appendices

Sudan University of Science and Technology

College of Graduate Studies

College of languages

Diagnostic Test

Q1- Present simple:

Choose the correct form of verb that agrees with the subjects:

- 1- Annie and her brother (*is, are*) at school.
- 2- Either my mother or my father (*is, are*) coming to the meeting.
- 3- George and Tamara (*does not, do not*) want to see that movie.
- 4- The man who won the cars (*live, lives*) on my street.
- 5- The players, as well as the captain (*want, wants*) to win.

Q2- Present perfect:

- 1- Carlos is the only one of those students who (*has, have*) lived up to potential described in the year book.
- 2- Not only the students but also their instructor (*have, has*) been called to the principal's office.
- 3- The police (*has, have*) caught the bank robbers. They are at the police station now
- 4- The policeman (*has, have*) caught the house breaker.
- 5- Ann (*has, have*) painted the room, it is pink now.

Q3- verbs to be:

- 1- I.....(be) late yesterday, and the bus did not wait.
- 2- We..... (be) waiting 30 minutes early last day for the party and there.....(be) nobody and the room(be)empty.

- 3- Omer.....(be) going to school for three hours.
- 4- They(be) speaking to the teacher about some issues.
- 5- Mary.....(be) one of my friend.