T.R.

ISTANBUL SABAHATTIN ZAIM UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE EDUCATION INSTITUTE

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

AN INVESTIGATION OF THE SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT ACQUISITION BY ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS IN UNIVERSITY PREPARATORY PROGRAMS

MA THESIS

Merve KOÇAK

Istanbul

January-2025

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THESIS APPROVAL

This study has been approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for MA Degree in English Language Teaching

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DECLARATION OF SCIENTIFIC ETHICS AND ORIGINALITY

This is to certify that this MA thesis titled “An Investigation of The Subject-Verb Agreement Acquisition By English Language Learners In University Preparatory Programs” is my own work and I have acted according to scientific ethics and academic rules while producing it. I have collected and used all information and data according to scientific ethics and guidelines on thesis writing of Sabahattin Zaim University. I have fully referenced, in both the text and bibliography, all direct and indirect quotations and all sources I have used in this work.

Merve KOÇAK

Istanbul, January 2025

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Merve KOÇAK

Istanbul, January 2025

ABSTRACT

AN INVESTIGATION OF THE SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT ACQUISITION BY ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS IN UNIVERSITY PREPARATORY PROGRAMS

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This study investigates the challenges and strategies related to subject-verb agreement acquisition among English language learners (ELLs) in university preparatory programs. Through a mixed-method approach, the research identifies error patterns, explores learners' perceptions, and evaluates the effectiveness of various pedagogical strategies. Key findings reveal that native language interference, proficiency level, and instructional clarity significantly influence learners' ability to master subject-verb agreement. Additionally, the integration of contextualized practice and technology-based tools emerged as effective strategies for improving learners' confidence and accuracy in both written and spoken modalities. These findings contribute to the theoretical and practical understanding of subject-verb agreement acquisition, offering actionable insights for educators and curriculum developers.

Keywords: Subject-Verb Agreement, English Language Learning, Pedagogical Strategies, Native Language Interference, Proficiency Levels, Technology Integration

ÖZET

BİR ÜNİVERSİTE HAZIRLIK PROGRAMINDA İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRENEN ÖĞRENCİLERİN ÖZNE-FİİL UYUMU EDİNİMLERİNİN İNCELENMESİ

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Yüksek Lisans, İngiliz Dili Eğitimi

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Bu çalışma, İngilizce hazırlık programlarına devam eden İngilizce öğrenicilerinin özne-fiil uyumu edinimiyle ilgili zorluklarını ve stratejilerini araştırmaktadır. Karma bir yöntemle yürütülen araştırma, hata modellerini belirlemekte, öğrenicilerin algılarını incelemekte ve çeşitli pedagojik stratejilerin etkinliğini değerlendirmektedir. Temel bulgular, anadil etkisinin, yeterlilik düzeyinin ve öğretim açıklığının öğrenicilerin özne-fiil uyumunu öğrenme becerileri üzerinde önemli bir etkisi olduğunu göstermektedir. Ayrıca, bağlamsallaştırılmış uygulama ve teknoloji tabanlı araçların entegrasyonu, öğrenicilerin yazılı ve sözlü becerilerinde özgüven ve doğruluğu artırmada etkili stratejiler olarak öne çıkmıştır. Bu bulgular, özne-fiil uyumu edinimi konusundaki teorik ve pratik anlayışa katkı sağlayarak eğitimciler ve müfredat geliştiriciler için uygulanabilir öneriler sunmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Özne-Fiil Uyumu, İngilizce Dil Öğrenimi, Pedagojik Stratejiler, Anadil Etkisi, Yeterlilik Düzeyleri, Teknoloji Entegrasyonu

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ELL	English Language Learner
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
CAH	Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis
CALL	Computer-Assisted Language Learning
TBLT	Task-Based Language Teaching
VR	Virtual Reality
AR	Augmented Reality
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

Language acquisition, particularly in the realm of English, is a dynamic and intricate process that transcends mere vocabulary memorization and extends into the realms of grammar, syntax, and discourse. Among the foundational pillars of English grammar stands subject-verb agreement, a fundamental principle governing the concordance between subjects and verbs in sentences (Givón, 1993). This principle, while seemingly straightforward, presents a labyrinth of complexities and challenges for English language learners (ELLs), particularly those navigating the rigorous terrain of university preparatory programs.

Mastering subject-verb agreement is not merely a matter of rote memorization; rather, it is a skill that underpins effective communication and linguistic fluency in English (Bardovi-Harlig & Dörnyei, 1998). Consider, for instance, the difference between saying "The cat sleeps" versus "The cat sleep" – a subtle deviation in verb form can alter the entire meaning of a sentence. For ELLs embarking on their academic journey, proficiency in subject-verb agreement is not only essential for grammatical correctness but also for engaging meaningfully with academic content, expressing ideas coherently, and ultimately achieving success in academic and professional endeavors where English proficiency is paramount.

The significance of subject-verb agreement acquisition extends beyond the confines of language instruction and permeates various facets of ELLs' lives. From the linguistic background that shapes their cognitive approach to language learning to the educational context that frames their learning experiences, myriad factors influence the acquisition and mastery of subject-verb agreement among ELLs (Ellis, 2008). Furthermore, cultural influences, technological advancements, and globalization add layers of complexity to the language acquisition process, necessitating a nuanced understanding of effective instructional strategies and support mechanisms (Mitchell & Myles, 2004).

In light of these complexities, this research endeavors to explore the intricacies of subject-verb agreement acquisition among ELLs in university preparatory programs. By unraveling the interplay of linguistic, educational, cultural, and technological factors, this study aims to provide insights that inform evidence-based language instruction practices and empower ELLs to navigate the complexities of subject-verb agreement with confidence and proficiency.

Through a comprehensive examination of theoretical frameworks, empirical research, and pedagogical approaches, this study seeks to contribute to the broader discourse on language acquisition and instructional design. By shedding light on the challenges and opportunities inherent in subject-verb agreement acquisition, we aim to pave the way for more effective language instruction practices tailored to the diverse needs of ELLs.

In the subsequent sections of this chapter, we will delve into the background of the study, delineate the research problem and objectives, elucidate the significance of the study, outline its scope and limitations, and provide an overview of the structure of the research, setting the stage for a thorough exploration of subject-verb agreement acquisition among ELLs in university preparatory programs.

1.2. Background to the Study

English language acquisition, particularly regarding subject-verb agreement, is a complex and multifaceted process influenced by various factors that extend beyond the confines of language instruction. The background to this study encompasses a broad spectrum of elements that contribute to the challenges and nuances associated with mastering subject-verb agreement among ELLs in university preparatory programs.

Firstly, the linguistic background of learners significantly shapes their approach to subject-verb agreement acquisition. Learners from languages with similar grammatical structures may find it easier to grasp the concept of subject-verb agreement, while those from languages with divergent structures might encounter greater difficulties (Johnson et al., 2019). For example, speakers of languages with strict word order may struggle with flexible word order of English and varied verb forms.

Additionally, the educational context in which language learning takes place plays a pivotal role in shaping learners' experiences. University preparatory programs often cater to students with diverse linguistic backgrounds and academic goals, necessitating

tailored language instruction strategies. The effectiveness of these strategies may be influenced by factors such as class size, teacher expertise, and the availability of instructional resources.

Cultural influences further complicate the subject-verb agreement acquisition process. Cultural norms regarding language use, politeness, and communication styles can impact learners' receptiveness to grammar instruction and their willingness to engage in language learning activities (Gupta, 2018). Moreover, cultural differences in the perception of language errors and correction practices may affect learners' confidence and motivation in using subject-verb agreement correctly.

Beyond linguistic, educational, and cultural factors, technological advancements and globalization have also reshaped the landscape of English language learning. The proliferation of online resources, digital learning platforms, and communication technologies has expanded access to language learning opportunities but has also introduced new challenges, such as digital distractions and information overload.

In light of these complexities, this study seeks to delve deeper into the dynamics of subject-verb agreement acquisition among ELLs in university preparatory programs. By exploring the interplay of linguistic backgrounds, educational contexts, cultural influences, and technological advancements, this research aims to provide valuable insights into effective language instruction practices and support mechanisms for learners striving to master subject-verb agreement in English.

1.3. The Research Problem

Despite the centrality of subject-verb agreement in English grammar, research on its acquisition among ELLs in university preparatory programs remains relatively limited. While numerous studies have explored various aspects of language acquisition and proficiency among ELLs, there exists a noticeable gap in understanding the specific challenges and strategies associated with mastering subject-verb agreement in academic contexts.

The research problem addressed in this study revolves around the need to bridge this gap in the literature by conducting a comprehensive investigation into subject-verb agreement acquisition among ELLs in university preparatory programs. Specifically, the study aims to elucidate the following key aspects:

1. **Error Patterns and Challenges:** The first aspect involves identifying common error patterns and challenges encountered by ELLs in mastering subject-verb agreement. By analyzing learner language data and error patterns, the study seeks to uncover recurring difficulties and misconceptions that hinder learners' grammatical accuracy and fluency (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999).
2. **Pedagogical Strategies:** The second aspect focuses on evaluating the effectiveness of pedagogical strategies aimed at enhancing subject-verb agreement proficiency among ELLs. Through an examination of instructional interventions, teaching methodologies, and classroom practices, the study aims to identify best practices that promote effective language learning and address learners' specific needs and challenges (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).
3. **Linguistic and Cultural Influences:** Lastly, the study aims to explore the influence of linguistic backgrounds, cultural factors, and educational contexts on subject-verb agreement acquisition among ELLs. By considering learners' diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, the study seeks to uncover how these factors shape learners' perceptions, strategies, and experiences in mastering subject-verb agreement (Mitchell & Myles, 2004).

Addressing these aspects of the research problem is crucial for advancing our understanding of subject-verb agreement acquisition among ELLs and informing evidence-based language instruction practices. By elucidating the challenges, strategies, and contextual factors at play, this study aims to contribute to the development of more effective pedagogical approaches and support mechanisms tailored to the diverse needs of ELLs in university preparatory programs.

1.4. Research Aims, Objectives, and Questions

Aims: This study aims to investigate subject-verb agreement acquisition among ELLs, identify common errors, explore effective teaching strategies, and provide insights for language educators.

Objectives:

1. To identify common subject-verb agreement errors made by ELLs.
2. To examine the challenges encountered by ELLs in mastering subject-verb agreement.
3. To evaluate the effectiveness of different teaching strategies in improving subject-verb agreement skills among ELLs.
4. To explore the role of cultural and linguistic backgrounds in influencing subject-verb agreement errors among ELLs.

Research Questions:

The study aims to seek answers to the following questions:

1. What are the common errors made by ELLs in subject-verb agreement?
2. What are the main challenges encountered by ELLs when attempting to master subject-verb agreement?
3. What teaching strategies and techniques are most effective in improving subject-verb agreement skills among ELLs?
4. What role do cultural and linguistic backgrounds play in influencing subject-verb agreement errors among ELLs?

1.5. Significance of the Study

The significance of this study lies in its potential to address critical gaps in the current literature on subject-verb agreement acquisition among ELLs (ELLs) in university preparatory programs. By shedding light on the specific challenges, error patterns, and pedagogical strategies associated with mastering subject-verb agreement, this research may contribute valuable insights into both theoretical understanding and practical language instruction.

Firstly, this study is significant in its contribution to theoretical frameworks of second language acquisition (SLA). While existing theories provide foundational insights into language learning processes, the empirical validation of these theories in the context of subject-verb agreement acquisition among ELLs is still limited (Krashen, 1985). By conducting a rigorous investigation grounded in theoretical frameworks such as Krashen's Input Hypothesis and sociocultural theories of SLA, this study aims to

enrich our understanding of how ELLs navigate the complexities of subject-verb agreement acquisition (Vygotsky, 1978).

Secondly, the findings of this study hold practical implications for language educators, curriculum developers, and policymakers. In an increasingly globalized world where English proficiency is a prerequisite for academic and professional success, it is imperative to equip ELLs with the linguistic skills necessary to excel in university-level studies (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). By identifying common error patterns, effective pedagogical strategies, and contextual factors influencing subject-verb agreement acquisition, this study provides actionable insights for designing targeted language instruction programs and support mechanisms tailored to the diverse needs of ELLs.

Moreover, exploration of the linguistic and cultural influences on subject-verb agreement acquisition in this study contributes to fostering a more inclusive and culturally responsive approach to language education (Nation & Macalister, 2010). Recognizing the diverse backgrounds and experiences of ELLs, this research underscores the importance of culturally sensitive pedagogies and inclusive instructional practices that honor learners' linguistic diversity while facilitating their linguistic development.

Furthermore, the findings of this study may have broader implications for educational equity and social justice. By identifying and addressing the specific challenges faced by ELLs in mastering subject-verb agreement, this research contributes to leveling the playing field and promoting equitable access to educational opportunities (Cummins, 2000). By empowering ELLs with the language skills necessary to engage meaningfully with academic content, this study aims to enhance their academic success and socioeconomic mobility, ultimately contributing to more inclusive and equitable educational outcomes.

In summary, the significance of this study lies in its potential to advance the theoretical understanding, inform evidence-based practice, promote cultural responsiveness, and contribute to educational equity in the field of language education. By addressing critical gaps in the literature and providing actionable insights, this research aims to make meaningful contributions to the advancement of language education policies and practices, ultimately benefiting ELLs in university preparatory programs and beyond.

1.6. Scope and Limitations of the Study

This study focuses on subject-verb agreement errors among ELLs and the effectiveness of teaching methods in addressing these errors. It is limited to learners at a particular proficiency level and may not capture the full range of challenges faced by learners at different stages of language acquisition. Additionally, findings of the study may be influenced by the specific teaching context and materials used.

1.7. Structure of the Study

The study comprises five chapters:

1. Introduction: Provides an overview of the research topic, research questions, aims, objectives, and justification of the study.
2. Literature Review: Surveys existing literature on subject-verb agreement in English language learning, including common errors, teaching strategies, and cultural influences.
3. Methodology: Describes the research methodology, including participant selection, data collection methods, and analysis techniques.
4. Findings: Presents the results of the study, including error analysis, survey responses, and interview findings.
5. Conclusion and Recommendations: Summarizes the key findings, discusses implications for teaching practice, and provides recommendations for future research in the field of subject-verb agreement in English language learning.

CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

This chapter introduces the reader to the theoretical frameworks that underpin our understanding of SLA and their relevance to the study of subject-verb agreement acquisition among ELLs. It begins by exploring key theoretical perspectives that have shaped research in the field of SLA, providing a foundation for understanding the cognitive processes involved in language learning.

Krashen's Input Hypothesis, one of the most influential theories in SLA, posits that language acquisition occurs through exposure to comprehensible input (Krashen, 1985). According to this hypothesis, learners acquire language subconsciously by engaging in meaningful interactions and receiving input that is slightly beyond their current level of proficiency. This suggests that exposure to rich linguistic input, such as authentic texts, conversations, and multimedia resources, plays a crucial role in facilitating subject-verb agreement acquisition.

Vygotsky's sociocultural theory highlights the importance of social interaction and cultural context in language development, suggesting that cognitive processes are shaped through engagement with others (Vygotsky, 1978). He emphasizes that learning is fundamentally social, occurring through collaborative experiences with more knowledgeable individuals, including teachers, peers, and caregivers.. In the context of subject-verb agreement acquisition, sociocultural theory highlights the importance of creating supportive learning environments that foster meaningful communication and interaction among learners.

Furthermore, cognitive theories of SLA, such as the Interaction Hypothesis and the Noticing Hypothesis, provide insights into the cognitive mechanisms involved in grammar acquisition (Long, 1996; Schmidt, 1990). These theories suggest that learners develop grammatical knowledge through active engagement with language input, conscious awareness of linguistic features, and opportunities for practice and feedback. In the case of subject-verb agreement, cognitive theories emphasize the role

of explicit instruction, error correction, and structured practice activities in facilitating learners' comprehension and production of grammatically correct sentences.

By synthesizing these theoretical perspectives, this literature review aims to provide a theoretical framework for understanding the complexities of subject-verb agreement acquisition among ELLs. By examining how cognitive, social, and cultural factors intersect in the language learning process, researchers can gain a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities inherent in teaching and learning subject-verb agreement in diverse educational contexts.

2.2. Theoretical Frameworks of Second Language Acquisition

Subject-verb agreement, a fundamental aspect of English grammar, poses particular challenges for L2 learners due to its intricate rules and exceptions. In this section, we delve into the research surrounding subject-verb agreement in SLA and explore the factors that influence learners' acquisition of this grammatical feature.

2.2.1. Error Analysis and Common Challenges

Error analysis studies have identified common patterns of subject-verb agreement errors among L2 learners, shedding light on the specific difficulties that they encounter. For example, learners often struggle with agreement in tense, number, and person, leading to errors such as overgeneralization of rules or omission of auxiliary verbs (Bardovi-Harlig & Dörnyei, 1998).

Furthermore, variability in agreement patterns has been observed across different learner populations, indicating the influence of linguistic backgrounds, proficiency levels, and instructional contexts (Ellis, 2008). While some learners may exhibit persistent errors in agreement due to transfer from their L1, others may demonstrate greater accuracy through exposure to rich language input and explicit instruction (Mitchell & Myles, 2004).

2.2.2. Instructional Strategies and Pedagogical Approaches

Research on effective instructional strategies for teaching subject-verb agreement in L2 classrooms has highlighted the importance of explicit instruction, input enhancement, and communicative activities (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999). By providing learners with structured opportunities to notice and practice agreement

patterns in meaningful contexts, teachers can scaffold their acquisition of this grammatical feature (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

Moreover, the integration of technology-enhanced language learning tools, such as online grammar exercises and interactive feedback systems, has shown promise in supporting learners' engagement and motivation in agreement-focused instruction (Gupta, 2018). These digital resources offer learners additional opportunities for self-directed practice and error correction, complementing traditional classroom instruction.

2.2.3. Sociocultural and Contextual Factors

Sociocultural perspectives on SLA emphasize the role of social interaction, cultural context, and identity negotiation in language learning (Vygotsky, 1978). In the context of subject-verb agreement acquisition, sociocultural factors such as peer collaboration, teacher-student interactions, and classroom discourse practices influence learners' opportunities to engage with, and internalize, grammatical forms (Nation & Macalister, 2010).

Additionally, the cultural connotations and pragmatic functions of agreement usage vary across linguistic communities, shaping learners' perceptions and production of grammatical structures (Cummins, 2000). By acknowledging the cultural diversity of learners and integrating culturally responsive pedagogies into language instruction, educators can create inclusive learning environments that validate learners' linguistic identities and experiences.

2.2.4. Cognitive Processes and Learning Strategies

Cognitive theories of SLA offer insights into the cognitive processes involved in subject-verb agreement acquisition, including attentional focus, pattern recognition, and automatization (Long, 1996). Learners employ various learning strategies, such as repetition, mnemonics, and metacognitive reflection, to internalize agreement rules and monitor their language output for accuracy (Schmidt, 1990).

Moreover, the role of implicit and explicit knowledge in agreement acquisition has been a subject of debate in SLA research, with some scholars arguing for the primacy of implicit learning mechanisms and others advocating for the benefits of explicit instruction (Krashen, 1985). By understanding the interplay between implicit and

explicit learning processes, educators can design instructional interventions that cater to learners' individual needs and preferences.

In summary, research on subject-verb agreement in SLA highlights the multifaceted nature of grammatical acquisition and the importance of considering linguistic, sociocultural, cognitive, and instructional factors in language teaching and learning. By integrating insights from diverse theoretical perspectives, educators can develop effective pedagogical approaches that empower learners to master subject-verb agreement and communicate fluently in English.

2.3 Expanded Theoretical Frameworks

The theoretical exploration thus far has illuminated key concepts in SLA, including cognitive, discussion of additional frameworks and comparative studies in global contexts is warranted. The subsequent section delves into these perspectives, situating subject-verb agreement acquisition within broader interdisciplinary and cross-linguistic paradigms.

2.3.1 Relevance of Second Language Acquisition Theories

1. **Sociocultural Theory and Subject-Verb Agreement**

   Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory emphasizes how social interaction and cultural context influence language learning, highlighting the importance of collaboration and guided support in the acquisition process. Learners often acquire grammatical structures like subject-verb agreement through collaborative tasks and peer interaction, where they receive scaffolded support from more knowledgeable others. This aligns with findings from this study, which highlighted the efficacy of task-based and contextualized learning approaches in helping learners internalize subject-verb agreement rules. For example, engaging in activities like group discussions and role-playing allows learners to practice grammar rules in real-life contexts, promoting deeper comprehension through interactive learning.

2. **Krashen's Input Hypothesis**

   Krashen (1982) highlighted the importance of providing input that is slightly beyond a learner's current proficiency level, enabling gradual language development through meaningful exposure. Errors in subject-verb agreement,

particularly among beginner learners, may stem from insufficient exposure to input that incorporates both basic and complex agreement structures. This theory suggests that incorporating graded reading materials or structured listening exercises into the curriculum could provide learners with the necessary exposure to refine their understanding of subject-verb agreement.

3. **Krashen's Natural Order Hypothesis**

Krashen's Natural Order Hypothesis (1982) suggests that learners acquire grammatical structures in a systematic sequence, following a predictable progression that remains consistent across different first languages and teaching methods. This hypothesis suggests that certain grammatical structures are consistently acquired earlier than others, while more complex structures emerge at later stages of development.

In the context of subject-verb agreement, this hypothesis provides a theoretical explanation for the errors learners make at different proficiency levels. For instance:

- Beginners may struggle with basic agreement rules (e.g., failing to add -s in third-person singular verbs: He walk to school).
- Intermediate learners may show improvement but continue making errors in irregular agreement patterns (e.g., The team are playing well instead of The team is playing well).
- Advanced learners may make fewer errors but still face challenges with complex structures such as inverted sentences and collective nouns (e.g., A group of students was late vs. A group of students were late).

The Natural Order Hypothesis aligns with findings in this study, as errors in subject-verb agreement were not random but followed a pattern based on learner proficiency. Additionally, it reinforces the importance of comprehensible input, as emphasized by Krashen's Input Hypothesis, in helping learners internalize grammatical structures through exposure to meaningful and level-appropriate language

4. **Output Hypothesis and the Role of Practice**

   Swain's (1985) Output Hypothesis posits that producing language is crucial for learners to process and internalize grammar rules. Findings of the study reinforce this notion, as learners who engaged in both written and spoken tasks reported greater confidence in applying subject-verb agreement rules. This indicates that tasks requiring active production, such as essay writing or oral presentations, are essential for learners to move beyond recognition of rules to accurate application.

5. **Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CAH)**

   The role of native language interference, observed in this study, aligns with CAH. For instance, Turkish learners' difficulties with subject-verb agreement reflect the lack of verb inflection for subject alignment in their native language. Similarly, Arabic speakers' errors with auxiliary verbs can be attributed to the distinct grammar rules governing agreement in their L1. Recognizing these challenges emphasizes the need for targeted instruction tailored to the linguistic backgrounds of learners.

2.3.2 Comparing Findings to Global Contexts

1. **Commonality of Error Patterns**

   Studies conducted in diverse linguistic contexts reveal similar error patterns to those observed in this study. Research in East Asian contexts, for example, indicates that learners of Chinese, Korean, and Japanese often struggle with subject-verb agreement due to the absence of this feature in their native languages (Zhao, 2012). The persistence of errors such as proximity agreement ("A stack of books were left") and auxiliary confusion mirrors the findings of this study, suggesting universal cognitive and linguistic challenges in acquiring this grammar rule.

2. **Role of Instructional Approaches**

   Comparative studies in European and South American contexts highlight the importance of explicit grammar instruction combined with communicative practice. For instance, a study in Brazil by Figueiredo (2018) found that task-based learning approaches significantly improved learners' ability to apply

subject-verb agreement rules in speaking. These parallels suggest that integrating global best practices, such as contextualized and task-based methods, can enhance grammar instruction universally.

3. **Impact of Technology on Grammar Learning**

   Global research into the role of technology aligns with findings from this study, which emphasized the value of tools like grammar checkers and interactive platforms. A study in India by Rao (2020) demonstrated that mobile applications providing instant feedback on grammar errors led to significant improvements in learners' written accuracy. This underscores the potential for leveraging technology to address persistent grammar issues, including subject-verb agreement.

By situating the findings of this study within established SLA theories and comparative research, this expanded theoretical framework not only enhances academic rigor of the study but also demonstrates its broader applicability. It underscores the universal challenges learners face with subject-verb agreement while offering evidence-based strategies to address them effectively across diverse linguistic and cultural contexts.

2.4. Subject-Verb Agreement Errors: Patterns and Challenges

Subject-verb agreement not only involves grammatical rules but also carries cultural and pragmatic implications that influence language use in diverse contexts. This section will explore the cultural and pragmatic dimensions of subject-verb agreement and their significance for L2 learners.

2.4.1. Cultural Variability in Agreement Patterns

Cross-cultural studies have revealed significant variability in subject-verb agreement patterns across languages and cultural communities (Givón, 1993). In some languages, such as Spanish and French, grammatical agreement is pervasive and obligatory, reflecting cultural norms of linguistic precision and conformity (Siewierska, 2004). In contrast, languages like English exhibit more flexible agreement rules, allowing for greater variation in agreement patterns and sentence structures.

The cultural significance attributed to agreement usage also varies, with some cultures valuing grammatical correctness and adherence to formal norms, while others prioritize communicative effectiveness and pragmatic appropriateness (Kachru, 1992).

These cultural differences in agreement preferences and practices shape learners' perceptions of language correctness and influence their language production strategies.

2.4.2. Pragmatic Functions of Agreement

Beyond its grammatical function, subject-verb agreement serves important pragmatic functions in communication, including signaling speaker stance, expressing politeness, and conveying social identity (Brown & Levinson, 1987). For example, the choice of agreement forms may reflect speakers' social status, solidarity with interlocutors, or alignment with cultural norms of linguistic politeness.

In multilingual and multicultural contexts, speakers navigate complex sociolinguistic dynamics that influence their agreement choices and language use (Gumperz, 1982). Learners acquiring subject-verb agreement in an L2 must not only master grammatical rules but also develop pragmatic competence to effectively navigate diverse communicative situations and interact with speakers from different cultural backgrounds.

2.4.3. Intercultural Communication Challenges

The interplay of cultural and pragmatic factors presents challenges for L2 learners striving to master subject-verb agreement in English. Learners must negotiate between the grammatical norms of their native language and the cultural expectations of the target language community (House, 2003). This intercultural communication competence requires learners to understand and adapt to varying agreement conventions and usage norms.

Furthermore, cultural misunderstandings stemming from agreement errors can lead to communication breakdowns and misinterpretations in intercultural interactions (Hofstede, 2001). Educators must therefore incorporate intercultural communication training into language instruction programs to equip learners with the skills and strategies needed to navigate cultural differences and communicate effectively in diverse contexts (Brislin, 1981).

2.4.4. Implications for Language Instruction

Incorporating cultural and pragmatic dimensions into subject-verb agreement instruction can enhance learners' communicative competence and intercultural sensitivity. Language educators should expose learners to authentic language use

examples that illustrate the cultural nuances of agreement usage and provide opportunities for learners to practice using agreement forms in contextually appropriate ways (Kramsch, 1998).

Moreover, educators should foster learners' awareness of the socio-cultural factors that influence agreement choices and encourage critical reflection on their own and others' language use practices (Norton, 2013). By promoting an inclusive and culturally responsive approach to subject-verb agreement instruction, educators can empower learners to communicate effectively across linguistic and cultural boundaries, fostering intercultural understanding and global citizenship.

2.5. Pedagogical Strategies for Subject-Verb Agreement Instruction

Effective instruction plays a pivotal role in facilitating subject-verb agreement acquisition among ELLs. This section will explore various pedagogical approaches and instructional strategies employed in language classrooms to enhance learners' understanding and mastery of subject-verb agreement.

2.5.1. Explicit Grammar Instruction

Traditional approaches to language teaching often emphasize explicit instruction of grammatical rules, including subject-verb agreement (Ellis, 2002). Explicit instruction involves direct explanation of grammatical concepts, followed by guided practice activities and corrective feedback (Larsen-Freeman, 2001). Supporters of explicit instruction contend that offering clear explanations and structured practice helps learners enhance their grammatical accuracy (Spada & Lightbown, 2008).

However, critics contend that overly explicit grammar instruction may result in mechanical language use and hinder learners' communicative fluency (VanPatten & Williams, 2007). Moreover, research suggests that learners may struggle to transfer explicitly taught grammar rules to spontaneous language production (Norris & Ortega, 2000). Therefore, while explicit instruction can be beneficial, it should be supplemented with communicative activities that promote meaningful language use (Doughty & Williams, 1998).

2.5.2. Implicit Learning and Input Enhancement

An alternative to explicit instruction is implicit learning, which emphasizes exposure to comprehensible input rich in target language forms (Krashen, 1982). Input enhancement techniques, such as highlighting target structures in written or spoken discourse, draw learners' attention to subject-verb agreement patterns without explicit grammar explanation (Sharwood Smith, 1993). By immersing learners in language-rich environments and providing contextualized input, implicit learning approaches aim to foster subconscious language acquisition processes (Schmidt, 1990).

Research on implicit learning suggests that learners can acquire grammatical structures, including subject-verb agreement, through exposure to input that contains relevant linguistic forms (Ellis, 2005). Input enhancement techniques, such as bolding or underlining agreement features in texts, have been shown to facilitate noticing and internalization of target structures (Izumi, 2002). Furthermore, implicit learning may promote more authentic language use and greater transferability of language skills to real-world communication contexts (Ellis, 2015).

2.5.3. Task-Based Language Teaching

Task-based language teaching (TBLT) represents a communicative approach to language instruction that emphasizes the completion of meaningful, real-world tasks as the primary learning focus (Willis, 1996). In TBLT classrooms, learners engage in task-based activities that require them to use subject-verb agreement appropriately to accomplish communicative goals (Skehan, 1996). By integrating subject-verb agreement practice into authentic communicative tasks, TBLT promotes contextualized language learning and meaningful language use (Ellis, 2003).

Research on TBLT suggests that task-based activities provide learners with opportunities to negotiate meaning, receive feedback, and develop communicative strategies (Long, 2015). Additionally, tasks that require learners to manipulate subject-verb agreement structures in meaningful contexts promote deeper understanding and internalization of grammatical rules (Skehan, 1998). TBLT thus offers a pedagogical framework that aligns with the principles of communicative language teaching while addressing learners' specific needs for subject-verb agreement instruction.

2.5.4. Technology-Enhanced Instruction

Advancements in technology have transformed language learning and teaching, offering new opportunities for subject-verb agreement instruction. Computer-assisted language learning (CALL) tools, interactive multimedia materials, and online language learning platforms provide learners with access to engaging and interactive learning resources (Chapelle, 2001). These technologies can be leveraged to deliver subject-verb agreement instruction in diverse formats, catering to individual learning styles and preferences (Levy & Stockwell, 2006).

Research indicates that technology-enhanced instruction can enhance learners' motivation, engagement, and language proficiency (Warschauer, 1996). Interactive exercises, multimedia presentations, and gamified learning activities offer learners opportunities to practice subject-verb agreement in context-rich environments (Stockwell, 2010). Additionally, digital platforms may provide immediate feedback and adaptive learning features that scaffold learners' understanding of agreement patterns (Jones & Plass, 2002).

Incorporating technology into subject-verb agreement instruction requires careful selection and integration of appropriate digital tools and resources (Hubbard, 2008). When integrating technology into language learning, educators should consider learners' digital proficiency, access to resources, and instructional objectives (Kessler, 2010). Effectively utilizing technological tools allows for the creation of interactive and engaging learning environments that enhance subject-verb agreement acquisition and overall language development.

2.6. Cultural and Linguistic Influences on Subject-Verb Agreement Acquisition

Language acquisition is not solely governed by grammatical rules and linguistic structures; it is deeply intertwined with cultural and sociolinguistic factors that shape how language is used and understood in different contexts (Kramsch, 1998). In this section, the study will explore the influence of culture and sociolinguistic variables on subject-verb agreement acquisition among ELLs.

2.6.1. Cultural Perceptions of Language Use

Cultural norms and values influence individuals' perceptions of language use, including grammatical correctness and language variation (Gumperz, 1982). In some

cultures, adherence to grammatical rules, including subject-verb agreement, is considered a marker of linguistic proficiency and social status (Hill, 1995). Conversely, in cultures where language use is more flexible and context-dependent, deviations from grammatical norms may be tolerated or even celebrated (Hymes, 1972).

The cultural background of ELLs can therefore influence their attitudes towards subject-verb agreement and their willingness to conform to standard grammatical forms (Norton, 2000). Educators must be cognizant of cultural differences in language attitudes and perceptions to create inclusive and culturally responsive language learning environments (Kumaravadivelu, 2003). By acknowledging and respecting learners' cultural identities and linguistic backgrounds, educators can foster a supportive and inclusive learning environment that promotes language acquisition and proficiency (Pavlenko, 2002).

2.6.2. Sociolinguistic Variation in Subject-Verb Agreement

Sociolinguistic variation describes the patterned differences in language use among various social and cultural groups (Labov, 1972).Variability in subject-verb agreement patterns can be observed in diverse linguistic communities, influenced by factors such as age, gender, ethnicity, and social class (Eckert, 2000). Sociolinguistic research has documented variations in subject-verb agreement usage in different speech communities, reflecting the dynamic nature of language variation and change (Chambers, 1995).

For ELLs, exposure to sociolinguistic variation in subject-verb agreement usage can pose challenges in acquiring standard grammatical forms (Wolfram & Schilling-Estes, 2006). Learners may encounter discrepancies between the subject-verb agreement patterns that they encounter in formal instruction and those used in everyday speech (Milroy & Milroy, 1985). Educators should therefore incorporate sociolinguistic awareness into language instruction, exposing learners to diverse language varieties and fostering an appreciation for linguistic diversity (Blommaert, 2010).

2.6.3. Cross-Cultural Communication Competence

Navigating cross-cultural communication requires more than linguistic proficiency; it demands an understanding of cultural norms, communication styles, and

sociolinguistic conventions (Scollon & Scollon, 2001). ELLs must develop cross-cultural communication competence to effectively interact with speakers of diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds (Koester, 2006). Mastery of subject-verb agreement is not only about grammatical accuracy but also about using language appropriately in culturally diverse contexts (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003).

Educators can promote cross-cultural communication competence by incorporating intercultural communication activities into language instruction (Byram, 1997). Engaging learners in discussions about cultural differences in language use, pragmatic conventions, and communication strategies can enhance their communicative competence and intercultural sensitivity (Fantini, 2009). By fostering an awareness of cultural nuances and promoting respectful communication practices, educators empower ELLs to navigate diverse linguistic and cultural landscapes with confidence and proficiency.

2.7. Technological Advances in Language Learning

Recent technological advancements have transformed language learning by providing learners with innovative tools and resources that support the acquisition process (Levy, 2009). This section examines the role of technology in supporting subject-verb agreement acquisition among ELLs.

2.7.1. Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL)

CALL encompasses a wide range of technology-based resources and activities designed to facilitate language learning (Chapelle, 2001). CALL programs offer interactive exercises, multimedia materials, and feedback mechanisms that cater to diverse learning styles and preferences (Warschauer & Healey, 1998). For subject-verb agreement acquisition, CALL software can provide targeted practice activities, instant feedback on errors, and personalized learning pathways tailored to individual learners' needs (Hegelheimer & Tower, 2004).

2.7.2. Online Language Learning Platforms

The proliferation of online language learning platforms has democratized access to language instruction, allowing learners to engage in self-directed learning anytime, anywhere (Stockwell, 2013). Platforms such as Duolingo, Rosetta Stone, and Babbel offer interactive lessons, gamified exercises, and social learning features that motivate

and engage learners in the language learning process (Fotouhi-Ghazvini & Ketabi, 2017). These platforms often incorporate subject-verb agreement exercises within broader language proficiency curricula, providing learners with systematic practice and reinforcement opportunities (Godwin-Jones, 2014).

2.7.3. Mobile Applications

Mobile applications have emerged as convenient and accessible tools for language learning, leveraging the ubiquity of smartphones and tablets to deliver on-the-go language instruction (Kukulska-Hulme & Shield, 2008). Language learning apps such as Anki, Quizlet, and Tandem offer flashcards, quizzes, and conversation practice features that target specific language skills, including subject-verb agreement (Lai & Zhao, 2018). The portability and flexibility of mobile apps enable learners to integrate language learning into their daily routines, maximizing learning opportunities and promoting continuous engagement with subject-verb agreement concepts (Wang & Vásquez, 2020).

2.7.4. Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR)

Virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) offer immersive language learning experiences by enabling learners to engage with virtual environments and simulated scenarios, enhancing interaction and contextual understanding (Merchant, 2017). VR language learning applications can create contextualized scenarios where learners practice subject-verb agreement in realistic communicative contexts, such as ordering food in a restaurant or negotiating a business deal (Chang et al., 2019). Similarly, AR language learning apps can overlay digital content onto real-world environments, enhancing learners' understanding of subject-verb agreement usage in authentic contexts (Hsiao & Lin, 2020).

2.7.5. Adaptive Learning Systems

Adaptive learning systems utilize artificial intelligence to tailor instruction according to learners’ proficiency, preferences, and performance. These systems can modify the difficulty of subject-verb agreement exercises, offer personalized feedback on errors, and monitor progress over time, ensuring targeted language development. By adapting to individual learners' needs and pacing, adaptive learning systems optimize learning

outcomes and promote mastery of subject-verb agreement concepts (Baker et al., 2008).

2.7.6. Gamification and Serious Games

Deterding et al. (2011) highlight that gamification and serious games integrate game mechanics into educational environments to enhance motivation, engagement, and learning outcomes. Language learning platforms gamify subject-verb agreement practice by incorporating elements such as points, badges, leaderboards, and narrative-driven challenges (Arnab et al., 2012). Through gameplay, learners are incentivized to actively engage with subject-verb agreement exercises, fostering a sense of achievement and progress as they master grammatical concepts (Göbel et al., 2010).

2.7.7. Challenges and Considerations

While technology presents valuable opportunities for enhancing subject-verb agreement acquisition, its implementation comes with challenges. Factors such as accessibility, digital literacy, alignment with pedagogical goals, data privacy concerns, and the necessity for continuous professional development for educators must be carefully considered (Hubbard, 2019). Additionally, the effectiveness of technology-enhanced language learning interventions should be rigorously evaluated through empirical research to ensure their efficacy and impact on learners' language proficiency (Stockwell & Stockwell, 2016).

2.8 Summary

In this comprehensive literature review, various aspects of subject-verb agreement acquisition among ELLs have been explored. Beginning with an examination of the fundamental principles of subject-verb agreement and its significance in language learning and communication, the review delved into the complexities and challenges faced by ELLs in mastering this grammatical concept.

The review highlighted the role of linguistic factors, such as language typology and transfer, in influencing subject-verb agreement errors among ELLs from diverse language backgrounds. Additionally, educational and cultural factors, including instructional methodologies, classroom contexts, and cultural norms, were identified as crucial determinants of ELLs' success in acquiring subject-verb agreement skills.

Furthermore, the review discussed the effectiveness of various instructional approaches, such as explicit instruction, corrective feedback, and communicative tasks, in promoting subject-verb agreement proficiency among ELLs. It also examined the impact of technological advancements, including CALL, online platforms, mobile applications, and VR, on language learning outcomes.

The review underscored the need for culturally responsive pedagogies, inclusive instructional practices, and evidence-based interventions to support ELLs in mastering subject-verb agreement. Additionally, it highlighted the importance of ongoing research and evaluation to inform language instruction policies and practices effectively.

Overall, this literature review provides valuable insights into the complexities of subject-verb agreement acquisition among ELLs, offering a foundation for the subsequent empirical investigation in this field.

CHAPTER III
METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

This chapter provides a comprehensive overview of the methods and procedures employed in collecting and processing data for this study. It begins by outlining the research design, including its nature and characteristics, followed by a detailed explanation of the sampling process. Subsequently, the chapter delves into the data collection methods and tools utilized, along with the procedures implemented to gather the necessary information. Furthermore, it discusses the data analysis techniques employed to derive meaningful insights from the collected data. The chapter concludes with a reflection on the limitations inherent in the study design, acknowledging potential constraints and their implications. Overall, this section sets the stage for a thorough understanding of the methodological framework underpinning the research endeavor.

3.2. Research Design

The following parts will define in detail the research design of the study.

3.2.1. Nature of the Research

This study adopted a mixed-method approach, combining qualitative and quantitative methods to investigate subject-verb agreement acquisition among ELLs in university preparatory programs. While the overarching research design is qualitative, informed by the exploratory nature of the study and the need to delve into the complexities of language learning processes, a survey method was employed to gather quantitative data on error patterns and proficiency levels.

Qualitative research methodologies, such as surveys, provide valuable insights into learners' experiences, perceptions, and strategies related to subject-verb agreement acquisition (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). By administering surveys, this study aimed to capture a broad spectrum of data regarding learners' language backgrounds, learning experiences, and challenges encountered in mastering subject-verb agreement.

Survey research allows for the efficient collection of large-scale data from a diverse participant pool, offering insights into common trends and patterns across different learner groups (Babbie, 2016). The survey instrument was designed to elicit responses on various aspects of subject-verb agreement, including error types, frequency, and perceived difficulty levels.

Furthermore, the survey method enables the researcher to gather quantitative data that can be subjected to statistical analysis, providing empirical support for qualitative findings and enhancing the overall robustness of the study (Bryman, 2016). Quantitative analysis of survey data involved descriptive statistics to examine the prevalence of different error patterns and inferential statistics to explore potential correlations between learners' demographic variables and subject-verb agreement proficiency.

Overall, the integration of survey methodology into the research design enhances the comprehensiveness and rigor of the study, allowing for a nuanced exploration of subject-verb agreement acquisition among ELLs. By triangulating qualitative insights with quantitative data, this mixed-method approach aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing subject-verb agreement proficiency and inform evidence-based language instruction practices.

3.2.2. Sampling of the Study

This study utilized a convenience sampling method to identify participants, ensuring practicality and accessibility in recruitment. The sample included participants who were readily available and willing to take part in the research, making the process efficient given the constraints of time and resources.

The study targeted ELLs enrolled in university preparatory programs. Participants were selected from various linguistic backgrounds, proficiency levels, and academic fields to capture a wide range of perspectives. The sample size was determined based on the feasibility of gathering data and the need to include diverse demographic groups.

While the study did not impose strict gender quotas, care was taken to include both male and female participants to explore potential gender-related variations in subject-

verb agreement acquisition. This inclusive approach aimed to provide a holistic view of the learning process.

Although convenience sampling allowed for an efficient recruitment process, it has inherent limitations. Since participants were not selected randomly, there is a risk of bias that may affect the generalizability of the findings to broader populations. Furthermore, as participation was voluntary, individuals with particular traits or experiences may have been more inclined to join the study, which could lead to self-selection bias.

Despite these constraints, convenience sampling was chosen as a practical approach for exploratory research within the context of English language learning. By clearly outlining the sampling process and its limitations, the study aims to maintain transparency and strengthen the credibility of its findings.

3.3. Data Collection

The following parts will describe the data collection tools and procedures employed in this study.

3.3.1. Data Collection Tools

The data collection for this study primarily relied on a structured survey instrument designed to gather comprehensive information on subject-verb agreement acquisition among ELLs. The survey questionnaire was meticulously crafted to capture various aspects of learners' experiences, perceptions, and proficiency levels related to subject-verb agreement.

The survey instrument consisted of closed-ended questions, offering participants the opportunity to provide quantitative responses. Closed-ended questions allow for the collection of quantitative data on error patterns, frequency of occurrence, and perceived difficulty levels associated with subject-verb agreement. Participants were asked to rate the frequency of encountering specific error types, the extent of difficulty experienced in different linguistic contexts, and the effectiveness of various instructional strategies in addressing subject-verb agreement challenges.

To ensure the validity and reliability of the survey instrument, it underwent rigorous pilot testing and validation procedures prior to administration. The survey items were reviewed by language education experts and validated through pilot testing with a small sample of ELLs. Feedback from pilot participants was solicited to assess the clarity, relevance, and comprehensiveness of the survey questions, with revisions made as necessary to enhance effectiveness of the instrument in capturing the targeted data.

Overall, the structured survey instrument served as a robust tool for systematically collecting data on subject-verb agreement acquisition among ELLs. By incorporating both quantitative and qualitative elements, the survey facilitated a comprehensive exploration of learners' experiences and perceptions, providing valuable insights that inform the objectives of the study and contributed to the broader understanding of language learning processes.

3.3.2. Data Collection Procedures

The data collection procedures involved a systematic approach to ensure the reliability and validity of the survey data gathered from participants. The following steps outline the procedures for data collecting:

Survey Distribution: The survey instrument was distributed electronically using an online survey platform to reach a wide pool of participants efficiently. A link to the survey was disseminated via email to potential participants, including ELLs enrolled in university preparatory programs.

Informed Consent: Prior to accessing the survey, participants were provided with a detailed explanation of the purpose of the study, procedures, and confidentiality measures. They were required to provide informed consent electronically before proceeding to complete the survey.

Survey Completion: Participants were instructed to complete the survey at their convenience, ensuring they have sufficient time to respond thoughtfully to the survey items. The survey consisted of both closed-ended questions, allowing participants to select predefined response options, and open-ended questions, enabling them to provide detailed qualitative responses.

Data Quality Checks: Throughout the survey administration process, measures were taken to ensure the quality and integrity of the data collected. These measures included mandatory response validation for certain survey items, such as demographic questions, to minimize missing data and ensure completeness.

Participant Confidentiality: Participants' confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained throughout the data collection process. No personal identifiable information was linked to survey responses to protect participants' privacy and encourage candid responses.

Data Monitoring: The survey administration process was closely monitored to track response rates and identify any potential issues or discrepancies in the data collection process. Prompt action was taken to address any concerns and ensure the integrity of the collected data.

Data Backup and Security: Regular data backups were conducted to safeguard against data loss or corruption. Additionally, appropriate security measures were taken to protect the confidentiality and integrity of the survey data stored on the online platform.

Survey Closure: The survey remained open for a predetermined period to allow sufficient time for data collection. Once the data collection period concluded, the survey was closed to further responses to facilitate data analysis.

By adhering to these data collection procedures, this study aimed to gather high-quality survey data that effectively address the research questions and objectives while upholding ethical standards and ensuring participant confidentiality.

3.3.3 Expanded Methodology

This section elaborates on the survey instrument, its design process, and the demographic profiles of the participants, providing a comprehensive understanding of the research framework.

3.3.3.1 Survey Instrument Design and Validation

The survey instrument was meticulously designed to assess learners' knowledge, confidence, and perceptions regarding subject-verb agreement in English. It comprised

a blend of multiple-choice questions, Likert-scale items, and open-ended questions, ensuring a balance between quantitative and qualitative data collection.

The multiple-choice questions were tailored to evaluate learners' grammatical accuracy and error patterns. These items were based on common linguistic structures known to present challenges for non-native speakers, such as collective nouns, auxiliary verbs, and complex sentences. The Likert-scale items captured learner perceptions, confidence levels, and preferences for teaching strategies, while the open-ended questions provided insights into individual challenges and preferred learning strategies.

3.3.3.2 Participant Demographics

Demographic Factor	Category	Number of Participants	Percentage
Linguistic Background	Turkish	43	60%
	Arabic	22	30%
	Other (Tajik, Kurdish, etc.)	7	10%
Proficiency Level	Beginner	25	34.7%
	Intermediate	32	44.4%
	Advanced	15	20.8%
Duration of English Study	Less than 1 year	10	13.9%
	1-3 years	24	33.3%
	3-7 years	20	27.8%
	Over 7 years	18	25%

Figure 3.1: Demographic Details of Participants

Source: Research findings by the author, 2024

A diverse group of participants was selected to ensure the generalizability of the findings. The survey included 72 respondents, comprising learners of Turkish and Arabic backgrounds, alongside smaller groups of learners from Tajik, Kurdish, and

other linguistic communities. The participants were predominantly university students enrolled in English preparatory programs.

The table above provides a detailed summary of the participants' demographics, including their linguistic backgrounds, proficiency levels, and the duration of their English study. The majority of participants (44.4%) were at the intermediate level, followed by beginners (34.7%) and advanced learners (20.8%). The distribution reflects a typical English preparatory program cohort, where most students fall between beginner and intermediate proficiency.

Participants' English learning duration varied, with some having studied English for less than a year, while others had over seven years of formal instruction. This variation allows for a more comprehensive analysis of subject-verb agreement acquisition across different learning stages.

This expanded demographic analysis highlights the heterogeneity of the learner population and underscores the importance of tailoring pedagogical approaches to address diverse linguistic needs.

3.4. Data Analysis

The collected data underwent a thorough analysis to uncover patterns, trends, and associations relevant to the research questions and objectives. A combination of quantitative and qualitative data analysis techniques was utilized to extract meaningful insights from the survey responses, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the findings.

For the quantitative analysis, descriptive statistics—including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations—were used to summarize participant responses. Furthermore, inferential statistical tests were applied to examine potential relationships between variables and identify significant patterns within the data.:

- T-tests: Independent samples t-tests were used to compare the subject-verb agreement proficiency between different linguistic backgrounds (e.g., Turkish vs. Arabic speakers).
- ANOVA (Analysis of Variance): A one-way ANOVA was performed to examine whether different proficiency levels (lower-intermediate,

intermediate, upper-intermediate) had a significant impact on learners' accuracy in subject-verb agreement tasks.

- Chi-Square Tests: This test was used to determine whether learners' preferred learning strategies (explicit grammar instruction, practice exercises, technology-based learning) varied significantly across different proficiency levels.

For qualitative data analysis, a thematic analysis approach was applied to identify recurring patterns and themes in the open-ended survey responses. The process included data familiarization, coding, theme development, and interpretation to extract insights related to learners' perceptions of subject-verb agreement acquisition.

A comparative analysis was also conducted to examine differences in subject-verb agreement errors based on linguistic background and years of English study, allowing for deeper insights into how these contextual factors influence grammar acquisition.

To ensure the rigor and trustworthiness of the analysis:

- Inter-coder reliability checks were performed for qualitative responses.
- Statistical significance thresholds (p-values) were set at 0.05 for all inferential tests.

By integrating both quantitative and qualitative methods, this study sought to offer a well-rounded perspective on the difficulties learners encounter with subject-verb agreement and the impact of various instructional approaches.

3.5. Limitations of the Study

Despite careful planning and implementation, this study has certain limitations that may influence the interpretation and broader applicability of the findings. The following limitations are acknowledged:

Sampling Bias: The reliance on convenience sampling may result in sampling bias, as participants who voluntarily take part in the survey may not fully represent the broader population of ELLs in university preparatory programs. This could affect the generalizability of the findings and limit their applicability to diverse learner populations.

Self-Reported Data: The reliance on self-reported data through survey responses may be subject to respondent bias, as participants may provide socially desirable or inaccurate responses. This could affect the validity and reliability of the findings.

Limited Scope: The focus of the study on subject-verb agreement acquisition among ELLs in university preparatory programs may limit the generalizability of the findings to other educational contexts or proficiency levels.

Cross-sectional Design: The cross-sectional design of this study restricts the ability to determine causal relationships or track changes in subject-verb agreement acquisition over time. Conducting longitudinal research would offer deeper insights into learners' developmental progress and the long-term impact of instructional strategies.

Language Proficiency: Variability in participants' English language proficiency levels may influence their comprehension of survey questions and responses, potentially affecting the accuracy of the data collected.

Survey Design: Despite efforts to design a comprehensive survey instrument, certain nuances or complexities related to subject-verb agreement acquisition may not be fully captured, leading to gaps in the data.

External Factors: External factors such as participants' motivation, prior learning experiences, and cultural backgrounds may influence their responses and behavior during the survey administration process, impacting the validity of the findings.

Resource Constraints: Constraints related to time, funding, and participant accessibility may have limited the study’s scope and scale, potentially influencing the depth and breadth of the data gathered. Expanding resources and extending the study duration could enhance the comprehensiveness of future research.

Acknowledging these limitations is essential for interpreting the study findings accurately and contextualizing them within the broader landscape of subject-verb agreement acquisition among ELLs. Despite these challenges, the study endeavored to provide valuable insights into effective instructional strategies and support mechanisms for enhancing subject-verb agreement proficiency among ELLs in university preparatory programs.

3.6. Summary of the Chapter

In this chapter, the methodology employed in the study was outlined in detail. The research design, focusing on the descriptive nature of the study with elements of survey research, was discussed, emphasizing the qualitative approach. The sampling method, utilizing convenience sampling, was described, detailing the rationale behind the selection process and acknowledging potential limitations.

Furthermore, the data collection process was delineated, highlighting the use of a survey instrument to gather information from participants. The data collection tools and procedures were elaborated upon, ensuring transparency in the research methodology.

Subsequently, the data analysis approach, consisting of quantitative methods such as descriptive statistics, was elucidated. Potential limitations of the study, including sampling bias and self-reported data, were acknowledged to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research context.

Despite these limitations, the study aims to contribute valuable insights into subject-verb agreement acquisition among ELLs in university preparatory programs. Through rigorous methodology and careful consideration of potential constraints, the study endeavors to provide meaningful contributions to the field of language education.

CHAPTER IV
FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the research on subject-verb agreement acquisition among ELLs in university preparatory programs. The data analysis reveals recurring error patterns, learner perceptions, and the influence of linguistic, cultural, and pedagogical factors on mastering this foundational grammatical principle. By aligning these findings with existing literature, this chapter discusses their implications for language teaching and learning, offering insights into effective instructional strategies and areas for further exploration.

4.2 Findings

The findings of this study provide detailed insights into the challenges and progress learners experience when acquiring subject-verb agreement in English. The analysis identifies recurring error patterns, learners' perceptions of the difficulty of the concept, and the pedagogical strategies they find most helpful or insufficient. Each subsection below delves into these aspects, offering a comprehensive understanding of the data collected.

4.2.1 Error Patterns in Subject-Verb Agreement

Through an analysis of learner responses and test results, several recurring error patterns emerged:

1. **Number Concord Errors**
    - Learners frequently struggled with maintaining subject-verb agreement, particularly in ensuring that singular subjects paired correctly with singular verbs and plural subjects with plural verbs.. Common mistakes included sentences such as *"The group of students are ready to present"* or *"Each of the students have completed their homework."*
    - These errors were particularly frequent in sentences involving collective nouns, indefinite pronouns, or complex subjects where the

agreement is less intuitive. For example, phrases like *"Neither of the answers were correct"* and *"Everyone have their own opinion"* reflect confusion about singularity in such cases.

2. **Tense-Related Agreement Issues**
    - Errors in combining subject-verb agreement with appropriate tense markers were another major challenge. Examples included *"He do his homework every day"* or *"She going to the market yesterday."*
    - These errors suggest an incomplete grasp of irregular verb forms and the integration of agreement rules within the broader context of tense usage.

3. **Auxiliary Verb Misapplication**
    - Participants frequently made mistakes with auxiliary verbs, particularly in negative and interrogative constructions. For instance, sentences like *"Does he goes to school?"* and *"Is she work here?"* illustrate confusion regarding auxiliary usage and main verb forms.
    - This category of errors often reflected first-language interference, especially among learners whose native languages do not require auxiliary verbs to form questions or negatives.

4. **Agreement in Complex Sentences**
    - Learners demonstrated additional difficulty in longer, more complex sentences with multiple clauses. For example, sentences like *"The book on the shelf are mine"* or *"A pile of dishes were in the sink"* reflect a breakdown in agreement when the subject is separated from the verb.

For Turkish learners, the absence of overt subject-verb agreement in their L1 likely contributes to these errors, as the concept of verb modification based on the subject is novel. Similarly, Arabic speakers might struggle due to differing rules for pluralization and agreement in their native language.

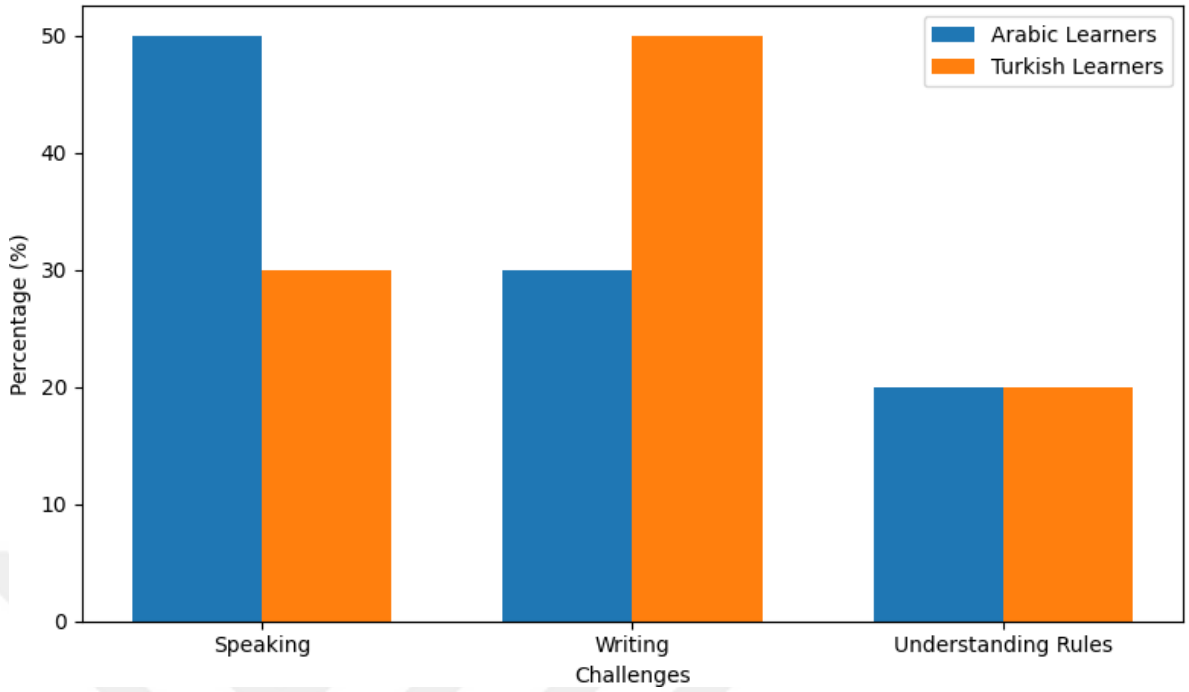


Figure 4.1: Learner Challenges in Subject-Verb Agreement by Language Group

Source: Research findings by the author, 2024

4.2.2 Learner Perceptions of Difficulty

The survey responses and interviews provided valuable insights into learners' subjective experiences with subject-verb agreement:

1. **Perceived Complexity**
    - A significant portion of participants rated subject-verb agreement as challenging, citing confusion over irregular forms, exceptions, and the nuanced rules governing agreement in complex sentences. Learners reported difficulty in distinguishing between singular and plural verbs in cases such as *"a number of people are" vs. "the number of people is."*
2. **Influence of First Language (L1)**
    - Many participants identified interference from their native languages as a primary source of errors. For example, Turkish speakers noted that their native language lacks overt subject-verb agreement in the same way English does, leading to errors such as *"She go to the market."*

- Arabic speakers highlighted challenges with auxiliary verbs, which are not used in their native language to form questions or negatives in the same way English requires.

3. **Contextual Variation**
    - Learners expressed greater accuracy in controlled practice activities, such as fill-in-the-blank exercises, compared to free writing or speaking tasks. Spontaneous language use often resulted in lapses, as the cognitive load of constructing sentences overshadowed attention to agreement rules.
4. **Confidence and Anxiety**
    - Confidence levels varied among learners, with those at advanced proficiency feeling more capable of identifying and correcting agreement errors. Conversely, beginner and intermediate learners reported feelings of frustration and anxiety, particularly when speaking, where they felt less time to self-correct.

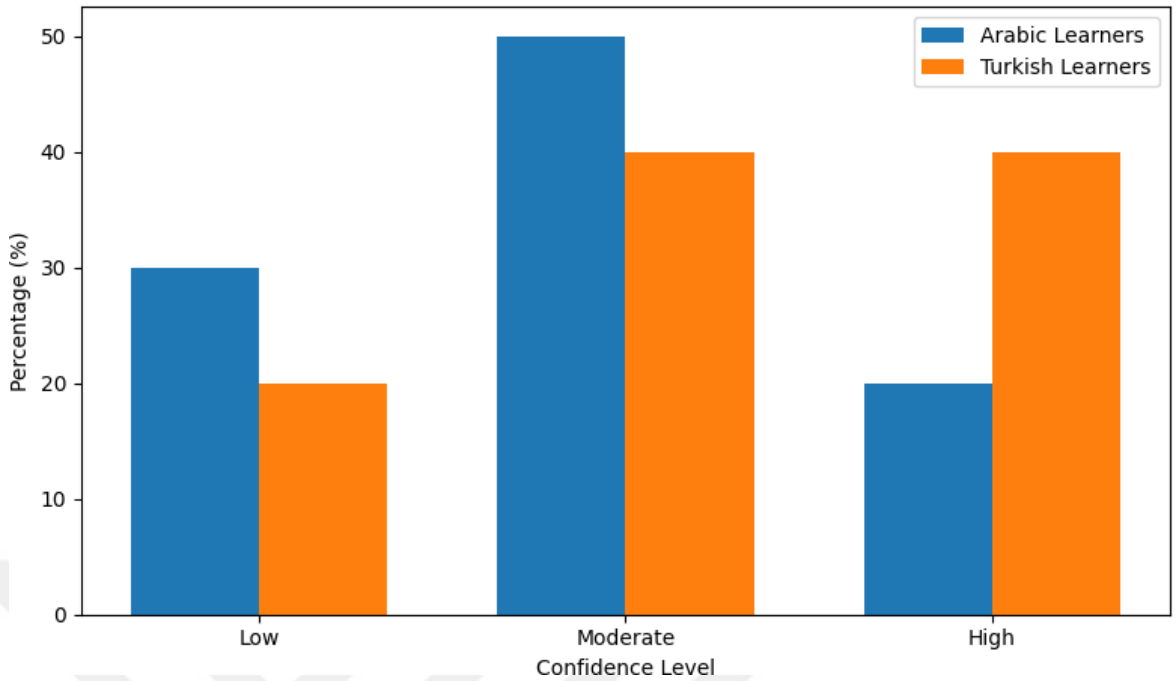


Figure 4.2: Confidence Levels in Subject-Verb Agreement

Source: Research findings by the author, 2024

4.2.3 Pedagogical Impact and Learner Feedback

Learner feedback on instructional approaches provided a window into what worked effectively and what fell short in teaching subject-verb agreement:

1. **Explicit Grammar Instruction**
    - Participants generally found explicit explanations of subject-verb agreement rules helpful. However, some noted that overemphasis on theoretical explanations without sufficient practice led to difficulties in retention and application.
    - Advanced learners expressed a desire for less repetitive grammar instruction and more integration of agreement rules into broader language.

2. **Practice Activities**
    - Structured exercises, such as multiple-choice questions and sentence correction tasks, were viewed positively for reinforcing basic rules. For example, learners appreciated clear examples of sentences illustrating correct and incorrect usage.
    - Some learners criticized traditional worksheets as monotonous and disconnected from real-world communication needs.

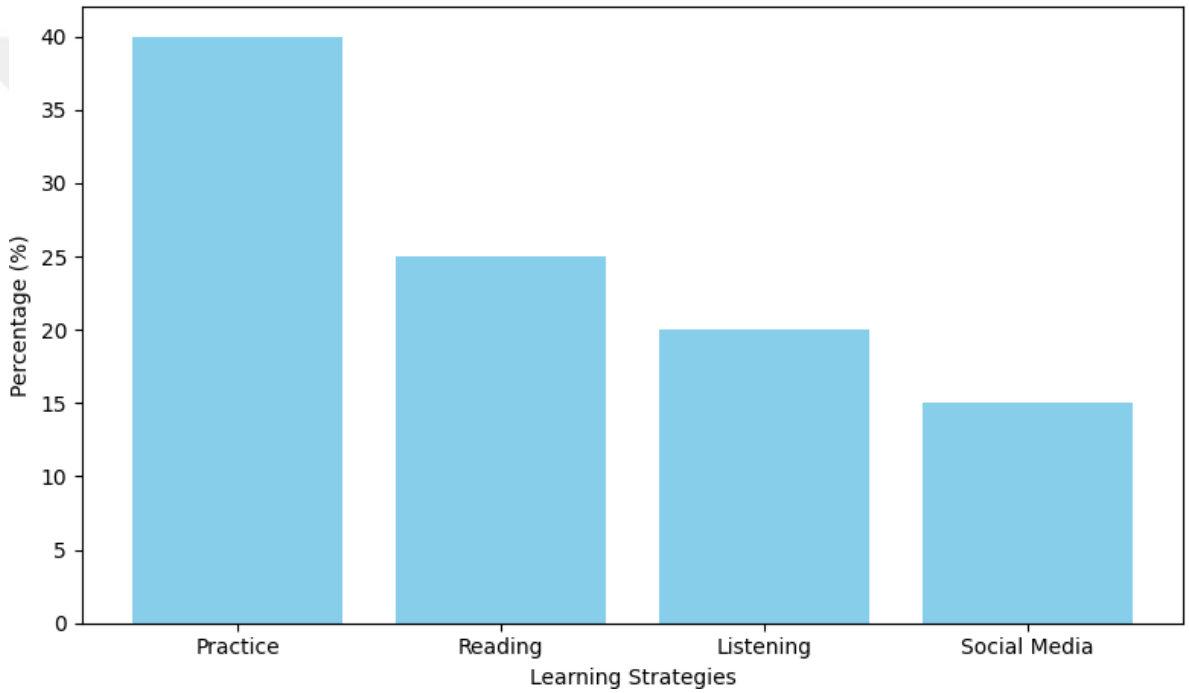


Figure 4.3: Preferred Learning Strategies for Subject-Verb Agreement

Source: Research findings by the author, 2024

- Activities integrating subject-verb agreement into speaking or writing tasks were praised for helping learners apply rules in authentic contexts. Role-plays, discussions, and collaborative writing exercises were identified as particularly effective.

3. **Technology and Feedback**
    - Many learners highlighted the value of technological tools, such as language learning apps and automated grammar checkers, for providing

immediate feedback. However, some expressed frustration with tools that lacked detailed explanations of errors.

4.2.4 Variations Across Proficiency Levels and Learning Duration

The findings revealed distinct differences in error patterns and perceptions based on learners' proficiency levels and the duration of their English learning experience:

1. **Beginners (25 participants, 34.7%)**
    - Beginner learners exhibited a high frequency of basic errors, such as omitting the -s suffix for third-person singular subjects ("He walk to school every day"). These patterns align with **Krashen's Input Hypothesis**, highlighting the importance of comprehensible input and structured opportunities for oral practice in low-pressure environments.
    - These learners also demonstrated limited self-awareness of their errors, emphasizing the need for explicit feedback and repetition.
2. **Intermediate Learners (32 participants, 44.4%)**
    - Intermediate learners showed progress in mastering basic agreement rules but continued to struggle with exceptions and complex sentence structures. Errors like "The team are playing well" were common and reflect the cognitive challenges described in **Pienemann's Processability Theory**, which suggests that mastering exceptions requires targeted practice in varied contexts.
    - This stage represents a critical transition point where learners benefit from integrating grammar rules into authentic tasks, such as essay writing or role-playing.
3. **Advanced Learners (15 participants, 20.8%)**
    - Advanced learners exhibited greater accuracy but occasionally erred in less intuitive cases, such as collective nouns and inverted sentence structures. They also demonstrated a stronger awareness of their mistakes and were more likely to self-correct, aligning with **interlanguage theory**, which views these errors as part of refining their language system.

4. **Learning Duration**
    - Participants with over three years of English learning experience generally performed better and expressed greater confidence in using subject-verb agreement. This supports **Long's Interaction Hypothesis**, which highlights the role of sustained interaction in building grammatical accuracy.

    - Conversely, learners with less than a year of exposure struggled more frequently with both basic and advanced rules. Their challenges underscore the need for intensive, foundational instruction early in the learning journey.

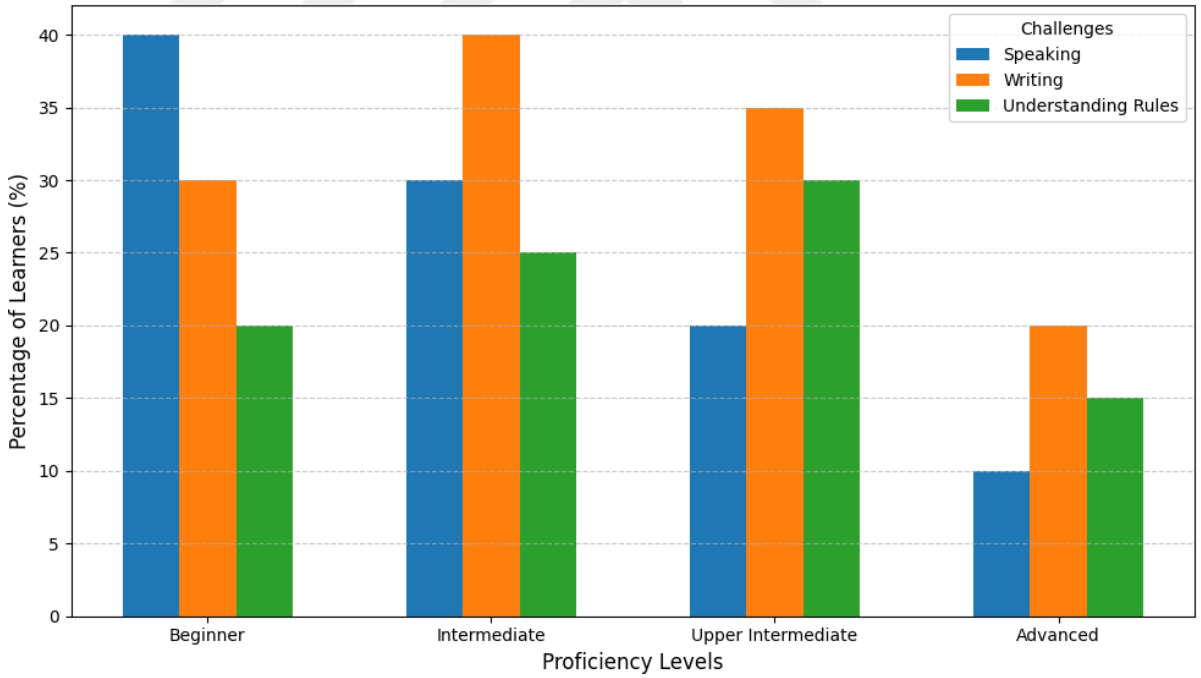


Figure 4.4: The correlation between learners' proficiency levels and the specific challenges they encounter with subject-verb agreement.

Source: Research findings by the author, 2024

4.2.5 Interpretation of Challenges vs. Proficiency

The heatmap presented in Figure 4.4 highlights the relationship between learners' proficiency levels and their reported challenges in mastering subject-verb agreement.

Notably:

Speaking difficulties were most prominent among beginner learners, likely due to the cognitive demand of real-time language production and L1 interference. This aligns with findings from Krashen's Input Hypothesis, which emphasizes the need for extensive input and output practice at foundational stages.

Writing challenges were prevalent among intermediate learners, suggesting that this stage involves transitioning from basic rule memorization to applying grammar in more complex structures, as theorized by Pienemann's Processability Theory.

For advanced learners, understanding grammar rules became a nuanced challenge. This likely reflects their shift towards refining linguistic accuracy and managing subtle grammatical nuances.

These patterns provide valuable insights into how subject-verb agreement challenges evolve across proficiency levels, suggesting differentiated instructional strategies that prioritize speaking practice for beginners, targeted writing exercises for intermediate learners, and in-depth grammar workshops for advanced learners.

4.3 Discussion

This section explores the implications of the findings, connecting them with existing literature and highlighting their significance in understanding subject-verb agreement acquisition. The discussion is structured around three key themes: error patterns and their linguistic implications, learner perceptions and their pedagogical relevance, and the impact of teaching strategies on subject-verb agreement mastery. Additionally, the findings are contextualized with curriculum design implications to enhance teaching practices.

4.3.1 Error Patterns and Linguistic Implications

The prevalence of error patterns in learners' responses underscores the complexity of subject-verb agreement as a linguistic concept. Several patterns observed in the findings can be contextualized within broader linguistic theories and second-language acquisition (SLA) research:

1. **Number Concord Errors**

    - Errors involving collective nouns (e.g., "The group of students are ready") and indefinite pronouns (e.g., "Everyone have their own opinion") suggest challenges with the conceptualization of singularity and plurality in English. Research by Ellis (1994) on interlanguage confirms that learners often form mental representations of grammar rules that are incomplete or influenced by their L1.

    - For Turkish learners, the lack of overt subject-verb agreement in their native language aligns with CAH, which explains errors as the result of differences between L1 and L2 structures. For Arabic speakers, pluralization rules in Arabic versus English support this mismatch.

2. **Tense and Auxiliary Verb Challenges**
    - Errors such as "Does he goes to school?" indicate a partial understanding of auxiliary verbs and main verb forms. This aligns with Pienemann's (1998) Processability Theory, which suggests that the acquisition of auxiliary structures occurs at later stages of SLA.
    - Additionally, tense-related errors reflect learners' difficulties in integrating subject-verb agreement into broader grammatical constructs. This reinforces the need for integrated grammar instruction that addresses multiple aspects of sentence construction.
    - Learners' challenges with auxiliary verbs, particularly in negations and interrogative constructions, also underline the significance of teaching these forms contextually. Providing learners with scaffolded examples

and integrating auxiliary verbs into communicative practice can reduce error rates.

3. **Complex Sentence Agreement Issues**

    - The Challenges vs. Proficiency graph (Figure 4.4) underscores that speaking challenges dominate among beginners, supporting the need for scaffolded oral practice as emphasized by Krashen’s Input Hypothesis.

    - The difficulty with sentences like "A stack of books were left on the shelf" indicates that learners may rely on proximity agreement (i.e., agreeing the verb with the nearest noun rather than the actual subject). This supports the findings of studies by Gass and Selinker (2008), which note that cognitive load increases error rates in complex sentence structures.

    - The frequent errors in such cases highlight the necessity of targeted practice on agreement in multi-clausal and inverted sentences, particularly for advanced learners.

    - The Challenges vs. Proficiency graph (Figure 4.4) further supports these observations, showing that beginner learners predominantly struggle with speaking due to insufficient opportunities for structured oral practice. This is consistent with Krashen’s Input Hypothesis, which highlights the role of comprehensible input in facilitating language acquisition while also stressing the need to lower learner anxiety in output tasks to support effective language development.

    - For intermediate learners, the graph reveals a tendency to encounter difficulties in written tasks. Pienemann's Processability Theory provides a theoretical lens here, suggesting that integrating grammatical knowledge across sentence structures requires explicit, scaffolded practice. This finding underscores the value of progressively complex exercises that bridge learners' oral and written competencies.

- The challenges with agreement in complex sentences further demonstrate the cognitive load learners face. These findings highlight a need for carefully designed exercises that reduce cognitive demands while focusing on accurate subject-verb agreement.

These error patterns not only highlight cognitive and linguistic challenges but also underscore the need to address learners' affective and motivational barriers, as discussed in the following section.

4.3.2 Learner Perceptions and Pedagogical Relevance

The insights into learner perceptions emphasize the importance of addressing affective and cognitive barriers to mastering subject-verb agreement:

1. **Perceived Complexity and Anxiety**

   - The majority of learners described subject-verb agreement as a challenging aspect of English grammar, particularly in spontaneous production. This aligns with Krashen's (1985) Affective Filter Hypothesis, which posits that anxiety and low confidence can inhibit language acquisition.

   - To mitigate these challenges, educators must create low-stress learning environments and provide ample opportunities for scaffolded practice, gradually increasing complexity.

2. **Influence of L1 Interference**
   - The role of L1 interference is significant, as learners consistently highlighted how the differences between English and their native languages complicate subject-verb agreement acquisition. For instance, Arabic speakers struggled with auxiliary verbs, while Turkish speakers reported confusion with singular/plural distinctions.

- Drawing from CAH, instructors can anticipate common errors based on learners' L1 backgrounds and design tailored interventions to address these areas of difficulty.
- These findings suggest that teachers should prioritize contrastive analysis as a regular instructional strategy, helping learners explicitly differentiate between English rules and their native language structures.

3. **Contextual and Modal Variation**
    - Learners reported higher accuracy in written tasks than in spoken ones, suggesting that time and cognitive processing play crucial roles in mastering subject-verb agreement. This supports Swain's (1985) Output Hypothesis, which emphasizes the importance of pushing learners to produce language in varied contexts to solidify grammatical knowledge.
    - The discrepancy between written and spoken performance indicates the importance of creating more spontaneous speaking opportunities in classroom settings, where learners can practice under realistic time constraints.

4.3.3 Pedagogical Strategies and Their Impact

The findings highlight the effectiveness and limitations of various teaching strategies, offering valuable insights for refining pedagogical approaches:

1. **Explicit Grammar Instruction**
    - Learners valued clear explanations of subject-verb agreement rules, consistent with DeKeyser's (1998) findings on the benefits of explicit grammar instruction. However, they noted that theoretical explanations alone were insufficient for long-term retention.
    - This suggests a need for balanced instruction, combining rule explanation with practical application through meaningful tasks.

2. **Practice Activities**
    - Structured exercises, such as fill-in-the-blank and sentence correction tasks, were widely appreciated for reinforcing basic rules. However, these activities sometimes failed to engage learners or connect grammar practice to real-world language use.
    - Research by Ellis and Shintani (2014) emphasizes the importance of communicative and task-based approaches, which allow learners to apply grammar rules in authentic contexts. Incorporating activities like role-plays and collaborative projects could enhance engagement and retention.
    - Learners' feedback suggests a combination of traditional worksheets with interactive tasks, such as peer-corrected exercises or digital gamified quizzes, for sustained engagement.
3. **Technology Integration**
    - Tools like language learning apps and automated grammar checkers were highlighted as helpful by learners. These technologies provide immediate feedback and support autonomous learning, aligning with studies by Godwin-Jones (2015) on the role of technology in SLA.
    - However, over-reliance on such tools could limit learners' ability to internalize rules without external support. Teachers should encourage balanced use, integrating technology with traditional methods.

4. **Task-Based and Contextual Learning**
    - Learners emphasized the value of real-life practice activities, such as writing essays, participating in discussions, and engaging in problem-solving tasks. These findings align with Long's (1985) TBLT framework, which prioritizes meaningful communication over rote learning.
    - Designing tasks that simulate authentic language use, such as planning events or debating topics, can help learners internalize subject-verb agreement in practical scenarios.

- Role-playing scenarios, such as simulating a job interview or planning a group trip, can provide authentic opportunities for learners to practice agreement rules. Digital tools like Quizizz or Kahoot can gamify the practice, making it both engaging and educational.

4.3.4 Implications for Curriculum Design

The findings suggest several implications for curriculum design and language teaching methodology:

1. **Differentiated Instruction**
   - Given the varying challenges across proficiency levels, instructors should implement differentiated instruction, providing simpler tasks for beginners and more complex, contextualized activities for advanced learners.

2. **Integration of Skills**
   - Subject-verb agreement should not be taught in isolation but integrated into broader language skills. For instance, speaking and writing activities can incorporate agreement practice, fostering a holistic approach to language development.

3. **Feedback and Reflection**
   - Providing timely, detailed feedback on errors can help learners understand their mistakes and avoid repeating them. Encouraging self-reflection through peer review or journaling can also promote metacognitive awareness.

In summary, the findings not only illuminate the intricacies of subject-verb agreement acquisition but also provide actionable insights for tailoring instruction. By bridging error analysis, learner perceptions, and effective teaching strategies, this study contributes to a nuanced understanding of how to enhance grammar instruction across proficiency levels.

4.4 Summary

This chapter presented and analyzed the findings from the research, offering a comprehensive discussion of the results in relation to the research questions and the existing literature. The data highlighted three key challenges learners face with subject-verb agreement: (1) the influence of native language interference, particularly among Turkish and Arabic speakers; (2) the critical need for contextualized grammar instruction to bridge theoretical understanding and practical application; and (3) the varying levels of confidence learners exhibit when identifying and applying subject-verb agreement rules across speaking and writing tasks.

The discussion emphasized the significance of tailored instruction that considers linguistic backgrounds, integrates grammar practice into real-life communication, and aligns with learners' proficiency levels. Contextualized learning, supported by scaffolding and differentiated tasks, emerged as a vital strategy to enhance both accuracy and confidence. Moreover, the strategic use of technological resources, such as grammar-checking tools and interactive platforms, was underscored as an effective means to address challenges while fostering autonomous learning.

By situating these findings within the broader framework of language acquisition theories, including CAH and Pienemann’s Processability Theory, the chapter reinforced the complexity of subject-verb agreement acquisition. This analysis laid the groundwork for the implications and recommendations presented in the following sections, providing practical insights for educators and curriculum developers.

CONCLUSION AND RECCOMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of Findings

This study provided a comprehensive analysis of the challenges learners face with subject-verb agreement and the strategies they employ to overcome them. The key findings are outlined below:

1. **Learner Proficiency and Challenges**

   Subject-verb agreement was universally identified as a challenging aspect of English grammar across all proficiency levels. Common difficulties arose from native language interference, limited exposure to authentic usage, and the inherent complexity and variability of English grammar rules. These challenges were particularly pronounced in spontaneous speech and complex sentence constructions.

2. **Role of Instructional Clarity**

   The clarity and consistency of instructional methods played a pivotal role in learners' confidence and competence. Participants who benefited from clear, structured explanations and guided practice reported significantly better outcomes. Conversely, inconsistencies in teaching approaches or a lack of emphasis on subject-verb agreement hindered learner progress.

3. **Importance of Contextualized Practice**

   Repetitive and meaningful practice emerged as essential for mastery. Learners who engaged in contextualized activities—such as writing essays, participating in discussions, or completing real-world tasks—demonstrated greater retention and application of subject-verb agreement rules compared to those relying solely on rote learning.

4. **Effectiveness of Technological Resources**

   Digital tools such as grammar checkers, language-learning apps, and online platforms proved valuable for supplementing classroom instruction. These resources provided immediate feedback and supported autonomous learning, enabling learners to address specific weaknesses at their own pace. However,

over-reliance on such tools was noted as a potential limitation for developing independent grammar proficiency.

5. **Variations Between Speaking and Writing**

   Learners reported greater confidence in applying subject-verb agreement rules in written contexts than in spoken interactions. Writing allowed for more deliberate processing, while the immediacy of speech introduced additional challenges, such as anxiety and cognitive load. This distinction reinforces the need for balancing explicit grammar rules with opportunities for communicative application in both modalities.

5.2 Limitations of the Study

Although this study offers important insights into the challenges and strategies related to subject-verb agreement acquisition, certain limitations should be acknowledged. Addressing these limitations offers opportunities for future research to build on the findings:

1. **Sample Size and Diversity:**
   - The sample size, while sufficient for exploratory analysis, was limited to learners from specific institutions and linguistic backgrounds. Future studies might mitigate this limitation by including participants from a broader range of educational contexts, age groups, and proficiency levels. This could provide a more representative understanding of the challenges faced by diverse learner populations.

2. **Focus on Specific Language Groups:**
   - This research primarily examined Turkish and Arabic learners, which, while insightful, limits generalizability to other L1 groups. Future research could incorporate learners from languages with different grammatical structures, such as Chinese or Japanese, to explore how typological distance from English affects subject-verb agreement acquisition.

3. **Temporal Scope:**
    - The cross-sectional design of the study captured learners' challenges and strategies at a single point in time. A longitudinal approach would allow future researchers to observe how subject-verb agreement mastery evolves over time, particularly in response to varying instructional methods.
4. **Limited Exploration of Instructional Methods:**
    - While the study highlights the impact of teaching strategies, it does not delve deeply into specific pedagogical interventions or their comparative effectiveness. Experimental research could investigate how different approaches, such as task-based learning or gamification, influence learners' accuracy and confidence in using subject-verb agreement.
5. **Technology Integration:**
    - Although learners reported the usefulness of digital tools, the study did not evaluate the effectiveness of specific technologies in depth. Future research could analyze how AI-based grammar checkers, mobile apps, or other technological interventions contribute to learners' grammatical competence over time.
6. **Cultural and Sociolinguistic Factors:**
    - The study did not extensively address how cultural attitudes or sociolinguistic contexts influence learners' perceptions and challenges. Further exploration of these factors could provide a more holistic understanding of the learning process.

By addressing these limitations, future research can not only expand the scope of understanding but also refine the practical applications of subject-verb agreement instruction across varied learning contexts.

5.3 Research Contributions

This study contributes to the field of English language teaching in several significant ways:

1. **Enhanced Understanding of Learner Challenges**: By identifying specific difficulties learners face with subject-verb agreement, the study informs targeted interventions and curriculum design.
2. **Insights into the Role of Technology**: The research underscores the value of integrating digital tools into language instruction, particularly for independent practice and feedback. This study highlights not only the advantages but also the potential pitfalls of over-reliance on digital tools, emphasizing the importance of balanced integration
3. **Practical Pedagogical Recommendations**: The study offers actionable strategies for educators, including the integration of contextualized practice, peer collaboration, and formative assessment.
4. **Foundation for Future Research**: The findings provide a foundation for further exploration into grammar learning, particularly regarding the interplay between instruction, practice, and learner autonomy.

5.4 Recommendations

Building on the findings and analysis in this study, the following recommendations are proposed to improve the teaching and learning of subject-verb agreement:

1. **Integrate Cultural Sensitivity in Lessons**

   Teachers should incorporate examples and contexts that are culturally relevant to learners' backgrounds. For instance, designing sentence exercises that reference learners' daily lives, traditions, or common situations can make grammar rules more relatable and meaningful. This approach not only engages learners but also helps bridge the gap between their native language structures and English grammar.

2. **Balance Technology with Traditional Methods**

   While tools such as grammar-checking applications and AI-driven platforms provide immediate feedback and promote autonomous learning, they should complement—not replace—traditional teaching methods. For example, teachers can use digital quizzes to reinforce basic rules while conducting group discussions or debates to focus on spoken applications of subject-verb agreement. Combining these methods ensures both foundational knowledge and practical application.

3. **Implement Task-Based Activities**

   Teachers are encouraged to incorporate task-based learning approaches where grammar practice is embedded in real-world tasks. For instance, learners might plan a class event, write emails, or role-play conversations that require accurate subject-verb agreement. These activities help learners internalize grammar rules through meaningful communication rather than rote memorization.

4. **Offer Differentiated Instruction**

   Given the varied challenges faced by learners of different proficiency levels, educators should differentiate their instruction. Beginners might benefit from more structured and repetitive exercises, while advanced learners should be challenged with activities involving complex sentences and spontaneous speaking opportunities. Pairing learners with varying skill levels for peer-teaching exercises can also foster collaborative learning.

5. **Provide Timely and Constructive Feedback**

   Feedback should go beyond identifying errors to explaining why an error occurred and how to correct it. Teachers might use error analysis activities where learners reflect on their mistakes in both speaking and writing tasks.

Incorporating peer review sessions and individualized feedback can further encourage learners to take ownership of their language development.

6. **Promote Metacognitive Strategies**

   Teachers can guide learners to think critically about their language use by encouraging self-reflection and monitoring. For instance, assigning learners to maintain a journal of common errors they make in subject-verb agreement and the strategies they use to correct them can boost awareness and retention.

7. **Enhance Professional Development for Teachers**

   Institutions should provide ongoing professional development opportunities to equip teachers with the latest methods and tools for teaching grammar effectively. Workshops on integrating technology, applying task-based learning, or addressing cultural sensitivities can enable educators to refine their practices and respond to learners' needs more effectively.

By adopting these strategies, educators can foster more engaging, inclusive, and effective learning environments that directly address the varied challenges learners encounter in mastering subject-verb agreement.

5.5 Implications for Future Research

The findings of this study open avenues for future research in several key areas, which could deepen our understanding of subject-verb agreement acquisition and its broader implications for language learning. These directions include:

1. **Longitudinal Studies**

   Longitudinal studies could offer a deeper understanding of how different instructional strategies impact learners' subject-verb agreement proficiency over time, providing valuable insights into the long-term effectiveness of various teaching approaches. By tracking learners over an extended period, future studies could examine how persistent exposure to contextualized grammar instruction impacts retention, accuracy, and fluency.

2. **Broader Grammatical Contexts**

   Future research could explore the interconnectedness of subject-verb agreement with other grammatical constructs, such as tense, aspect, and complex sentence structures. Understanding these relationships could shed light on how grammar rules contribute to overall language proficiency and communicative competence.

3. **Learner Motivation and Engagement**

   Delving into the psychological factors that influence learners' willingness to engage with challenging grammar topics could provide valuable insights. Research could focus on the role of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, self-efficacy, and the impact of anxiety on grammar acquisition, offering practical strategies for fostering learner confidence and interest.

4. **Effectiveness of Innovative Tools**

   Investigating the role of technological advancements, such as AI-driven language platforms, could reveal their effectiveness in enhancing grammar accuracy. Studies could evaluate how tools like chatbots, grammar-checking software, or gamified learning applications support personalized feedback and autonomous learning in diverse educational settings.

5. **Cross-Linguistic Comparisons**

   Comparative studies involving learners from different linguistic backgrounds could provide a more nuanced understanding of how first-language influence shapes the acquisition of subject-verb agreement. Such research could inform tailored instructional approaches for multilingual classrooms.

6. **Task-Based and Contextualized Grammar Instruction**

   Examining the impact of task-based and contextualized grammar instruction on learner outcomes could validate the efficacy of integrating grammar practice

into authentic communicative tasks. This line of inquiry could further refine pedagogical practices to better align with real-world language use.

7. **Teacher Training and Perspectives**

   Future studies could explore the role of teacher training and perspectives on teaching grammar. Investigating how teachers' understanding of subject-verb agreement and their instructional approaches influence learner outcomes could provide a holistic view of the teaching-learning dynamic.

By addressing these areas, future research could build on the findings of this study to enhance theoretical frameworks, refine teaching methodologies, and ultimately contribute to more effective and learner-centered language education.

5.6 Cross-Disciplinary Implications

The findings of this study hold significance beyond the field of English language teaching, extending into cognitive linguistics, educational psychology, and sociolinguistics. By examining the challenges learners face with subject-verb agreement, this research provides insights that can inform these disciplines in the following ways:

5.6.1 Cognitive Linguistics

The analysis of error patterns, particularly those influenced by first-language interference, aligns with cognitive linguistics research on how language learners conceptualize grammar rules. Findings about learners' struggles with collective nouns and auxiliary verbs reflect the cognitive processes involved in acquiring and internalizing abstract grammatical concepts. These insights could aid cognitive linguists in further exploring how second-language learners process and adapt to linguistic structures that differ significantly from their native language.

5.6.2 Educational Psychology

The emphasis on learner perceptions, such as anxiety and confidence levels, resonates with educational psychology, particularly in understanding how affective factors

influence learning outcomes. The study highlights the importance of creating low-stress, supportive learning environments, reinforcing Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis. These findings can inform educational psychologists developing strategies to foster motivation and resilience in language learners, particularly those working in multicultural or multilingual settings.

5.6.3 Sociolinguistics

From a sociolinguistic perspective, this study underscores the role of cultural and linguistic diversity in shaping language learning experiences. The differences in how Arabic and Turkish learners approach subject-verb agreement reveal the sociolinguistic factors that influence language acquisition, such as the social norms and expectations tied to their native languages. These findings could contribute to discussions about language policy and the design of educational programs that embrace linguistic diversity.

5.6.4 Broader Implications

By bridging the gaps between disciplines, this research highlights the interconnectedness of language, cognition, and social interaction. Future interdisciplinary collaborations could explore how the principles of grammar acquisition might inform theories in related fields or how findings from cognitive sciences could enhance language teaching methodologies. These cross-disciplinary connections demonstrate the broader relevance of this study and its potential to enrich various areas of academic inquiry.

5.7 Conclusion

In conclusion, this study has provided a comprehensive analysis of the challenges learners face with subject-verb agreement and the pedagogical strategies employed to address these difficulties. The findings underscored the critical role of clear instruction, contextualized practice, and the strategic integration of technology in enhancing learners' mastery of this complex grammatical concept. Additionally, the observed variations in learner confidence and accuracy between spoken and written modalities highlighted the need for balanced instructional approaches that address both real-time communication and structured grammar usage.

Reflecting on the research problem and objectives outlined in Chapter I, this study successfully identified specific learner challenges, analyzed pedagogical strategies used in instructional settings, and proposed actionable recommendations for teaching practices. These insights contribute not only to addressing the practical concerns of English language instructors but also to advancing the broader understanding of second-language acquisition processes, particularly in relation to subject-verb agreement.

By examining subject-verb agreement through both linguistic theory and classroom practice, this study creates a link between theoretical understanding and its real-world application, offering practical insights for educators and researchers. The findings offer a roadmap for educators to better support learners in navigating one of the most intricate areas of English grammar. Furthermore, emphasis of the study on tailored instruction and innovative tools underscores the potential for meaningful advances in teaching methodologies.

Ultimately, the contributions of this research extend beyond the classroom, offering implications for curriculum design, teacher training, and educational policy. As language education continues to develop, the findings and recommendations of this study aim to encourage further research, particularly in examining the long-term effects of instructional interventions, cross-linguistic influences, and the role of emerging technologies in grammar acquisition. Through continued inquiry and innovation, educators can empower learners of diverse backgrounds to achieve grammatical competence with confidence and ease.

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APPENDIX – A. The Survey

PART 1. Demographic Information

1. What is your native language? Please specify: _____
2. How long have you been learning English?
   - Less than 1 year ☐
   - 1-3 years ☐
   - 4-6 years ☐
   - 7+ years ☐
3. How would you rate your overall English proficiency?
   - Beginner ☐
   - Lower intermediate ☐
   - Intermediate ☐
   - Upper-Intermediate ☐
   - Advanced ☐

PART 2: Please put a tick into the box that is the most suitable option for you.

	Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	Section 1: Perceptions of Subject-Verb Agreement					
1	I understand the rules of subject-verb agreement in English.					
2	Subject-verb agreement is essential for speaking and writing correctly in English.					
3	I feel confident in identifying errors related to subject-verb agreement in sentences.					
4	Subject-verb agreement rules are similar to the grammar rules in my native language.					
5	I think that understanding subject-verb agreement is one of the most challenging aspects of learning English grammar.					
6	I am more likely to use correct subject-verb agreement in written English than in spoken English.					
7	I believe that practicing speaking English more frequently helps me improve my subject-verb agreement skills.					
8	My teacher explains the rules of subject-verb agreement clearly.					

9	I find exercises that focus on subject-verb agreement helpful in understanding the rules better.					
10	I think learning subject-verb agreement would be easier with more real-life practice activities.					
11	I often make mistakes in subject-verb agreement when speaking English.					
12	I often make mistakes in subject-verb agreement when writing English.					
13	I double-check my sentences for subject-verb agreement errors when writing essays or doing homework in English.					

PART 3: Please reflect on the following two open ended questions.

1. What challenges do you face when learning subject-verb agreement in English?

2. What strategies or resources do you find most helpful in learning subject-verb agreement?

APPENDIX – B. The Questionnaire

1. Choose the correct sentence.
   a) She go to the market every Sunday.
   b) She goes to the market every Sunday.
   c) She going to the market every Sunday.

2. Which sentence is grammatically correct?
   a) The dogs barks loudly.
   b) The dog bark loudly.
   c) The dogs bark loudly.

3. Identify the correct sentence.
a) A stack of books were left on the shelf.
b) A stack of books was left on the shelf.
c) A stack of books are left on the shelf.

4. Select the correct form of the verb to complete the sentence: "He ____ very tired after the game."
   a) is
   b) are
   c) am

5. Choose the correct sentence.
   a) They was happy to see each other.
   b) They were happy to see each other.
   c) They is happy to see each other.

6. Which verb correctly completes the sentence? "The book on the shelf _____ mine."
   a) is
   b) are
   c) be

7. Complete the sentence with the correct verb form: "Neither the teacher nor the students _____ ready for the test."
   a) is
   b) are
   c) was

8. Choose the correct verb form: "Every one of the members _____ to attend the meeting."
   a) want
   b) wants
   c) wanting

9. Complete the sentence with the correct verb form.
"A pile of dirty dishes _____ in the sink."
a) is
b) are
c) be

10. Select the correct verb form to complete the sentence: "My friends and I _____ planning a trip this weekend."
a) is
b) are
c) am

11. Choose the correct form of the verb: "Either the cats or the dog _____ to be fed."
a) need
b) needs
c) needing

12. Select the correct sentence.
a) A bunch of keys were found on the table.
b) A bunch of keys was found on the table.
c) A bunch of keys are found on the table.

13. Which sentence is correct?
a) The girl and her brother was playing in the park.
b) The girl and her brother were playing in the park.
c) The girl and her brother is playing in the park.

14. Select the correct sentence.
a) The list of items are on the table.
b) The list of items is on the table.
c) The list of items were on the table.

15. Choose the correct sentence:
a) Everyone have their own opinion.
b) Everyone has their own opinion.
c) Everyone having their own opinion.

16. Which sentence is grammatically correct in the past tense?
a) Neither of the answers was correct.
b) Neither of the answers were correct.
c) Neither of the answers is correct.

17. Choose the correct form:
"There ____ many reasons why he likes football."
a) is
b) are
c) am

18. Which is the correct sentence?
a) Each of the students have completed their homework.
b) Each of the students has completed their homework.
c) Each of the students having completed their homework.

19. Choose the correct form of the verb.
"A bouquet of flowers _____ in the center of the table."
a) is
b) are
c) be

20. Identify the correct form:
"The news _____ announced yesterday."
a) were
b) was
c) are

21. Select the correct option: "A number of people _____ waiting outside."
a) is
b) are
c) was

22. Choose the correct sentence: "Here ____ the keys to the car."
a) is
b) are
c) am

23. Which sentence is grammatically correct?
a) The group of students are ready to present.
b) The group of students is ready to present.
c) The group of students were ready to present.