

## SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT IN EFL STUDENT'S ESSAYS: A DETAILED MORPHO-SYNTACTIC EXAMINATION

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**Abstract:** The purposes of this study are to identify and to describe *morphemes* in the subject –verb agreement of EFL student's Essay writing, second is to describe *tenses* of subject-verb agreement written in the student's Essay writing. The third is to describe the *dominant tenses* of subject-verb agreement in the EFL student's essay writing. The last is to describe the interferences of EFL student's first language to their essay writing. It was descriptive qualitative research. The data was taken from third semester of essay writing classes, in the academic year 2023/2024. The data was analyzed using theory of Morpho-syntactic developed by Andrew, Carstairs & Charthy and Miller, Jim (2002). Findings revealed that three hundred and forty-five clauses that subject-verb agreement contained free and bound morpheme. There were two hundred and fifty-nine subjects of clauses contained free morphemes. Then, there were eighty-six subjects of clauses contained bound morphemes. Furthermore, there were one hundred and sixty-one clauses of verb-agreement contained free morphemes. Then, there were one hundred eighty-four clauses of verb-agreement contained bound morphemes. Then, there were two hundred and eighty-three clauses that the subject-agreement of clauses was written in present tense. Furthermore, there were sixty-one clauses of subject-verb-agreement were written in past tense. Then, there was only one clause used future tense. Then, EFL students essay writing was still influenced by their first language culture. It found that there were one hundred and sixty-one clauses contained first language cultures. Further, understanding English linguistics (phonology, morphology, syntax, vocabulary, and spelling) is needed to be learned by EFL students deeply. Then, EFL students' essay writing was developed significantly.

**Keywords:** *essay writing, EFL students, morpho-syntactic, subject-verb agreement.*

### INTRODUCTION

Subject and verb are the basic component of written language. Understanding the basics of grammar, particularly subject-verb agreement, is crucial for EFL learners as it forms a foundational skill set that every student should acquire early on (Tampubulon, 2020; Kurniawan & Firdaus, 2020). Proficiency in this area not only simplifies the acquisition of other grammatical concepts but also ensures accuracy in sentence construction across various contexts (Mahdalena et al., 2020). Both spoken and written languages commonly used four types of word, namely noun, verb, adjective and adverb. Lack of comprehension regarding subject-verb agreement (SVA) rules inevitably results in grammatical inaccuracies (Drahman & Hashim, 2020; Pandapatan, 2020).

Further, it is urgent and fundamental knowledge of language learning for any English language learners to master those four types of words. However, there are still many English language learners who are confused to arrange the words into sentences, sentences into paragraphs, and paragraphs in some texts. Structural disparities between Indonesian and English grammar structures frequently bewilder students, leading to

common errors, particularly in subject-verb agreement, when writing in English (Febrianti & Said, 2022; Hanim et al., 2024; Mukarromah, 2022) (Hardi et al., 2022). According to numerous educators, the predominant errors arise from improper placement of subject-verb pairs in both narrative and expository compositions (Sholehah et al., 2023). Permatasari & Yuliasri (2020) expound upon the multiple sources of learner errors, citing inappropriate lexical choices, ambiguities, incorrect verb forms, and superfluous verb additions. These findings are corroborated by studies conducted by Rifki et al. (2019) and Fauzan et al. (2020), which reveal a frequent occurrence of mistakes, particularly in the syntactical connection between subjects and verbs. Gulö & Rahmawelly (2019) further pinpoint a notable tendency among students to omit singular verb markers, verbs, auxiliaries, and the suffix -ing. Such errors are often attributed to unfamiliarity with fundamental grammatical elements such as subjects, verbs, nouns, adjectives, and adverbs (Saputra et al., 2022).

The basic competence for EFL English language learner is the words construction or word building, it is commonly called *morphology*. Further, the basic competence to arrange the words in a meaningful sentence or a meaningful clause, it is named *syntax*. This study is about the using of words as a subject in the

sentences, and also the using of words as a verb in the sentences. Further, the researcher would like to combine between words building (morphology) and words arrangement in the meaningful sentence (syntax). It becomes a *morpho-syntactic study*. Mukarromah et al. (2020) emphasize that inflectional processes, transitioning from morphology to syntax, are pivotal in helping students grasp grammar rules and improve their writing proficiency.

Subject-verb agreement is reflected the writers' purposes of their writing, including in writing essay Ensuring grammatical correctness in sentence construction necessitates careful attention to subject-verb agreement in every instance (Dinillah et al., 2021). This fundamental aspect of grammar is indispensable for constructing precise sentences and cohesive paragraphs, thereby enhancing comprehension and communication effectiveness (Adawiyah & Yani, 2024; Jayanti, 2019) (Jäger et al., 2020). Widiastuti & Saefurrohman (2021) underscore the importance of ensuring alignment between subjects and verbs in terms of number and person, emphasizing that singular subjects require singular verbs and plural subjects require plural verbs (Hasanah & Habibullah, 2020) (Rahmanu et al., 2020). Failure to adhere to these rules can lead to ambiguity or misinterpretation, thereby hindering effective communication (Ramzan et al., 2023). Based on the using of subject-verb agreement properly, the sentences will reflect an accurate meaning of the sentences. Subject-verb agreement should be correct and and in suitable arrangement both in the written language and spoken language. It is in the written language; the arrangement of subject-verb agreement should be accurate.

In the spoken language an utterance is possible only contain one word. For example; *go, write, eat out, stop!* These words are meaningful, if it is used in the spoken language. Speech allows for spontaneity, writing demands meticulous attention to detail to avoid errors (Özkayran & Yılmaz, 2020). On the other sides, in the written language the writer should write completely, at least, it contains subject and verb. As stated by that Mayasari & Sari (2024) that The mastery of writing skills poses a formidable challenge for learners due to its heightened requirement for accuracy compared to spoken language. For examples; *You should go! You should stop smoke, if you want to be healthy! Rewrite your assignment, if you want to get a good score!* It is the simple examples of differences between written and spoken language.

The difference between written and spoken language is argued by M.A.K Halliday, (1994: 61- 91). He argued that written and spoken language have the following differences;

No	Written language	Spoken language
1	Grammatical words and lexical words	The myth of the formlessness of spoken language

2	The kind of complexity that is typical of written language	The disorderly appearance of speech an artifact of the it is transcribed
3	The concept of a lexical item	Speech no less highly organized than writing
4	The number of lexical items as a proposition of the number of running words	Spoken language tends to have lexical density than written language
5	Clause, sentence, and complex clause	Speech and writing two different ways of representing the experiences
6	The number of lexical items as a ratio of the number of clauses	The distinction between speech and writing becoming blurred as a consequence of modern technology
7	The defining the clause by reference to its threefold function	It takes a clause to represent experience in the form of process (action or event, mental process, and relation).
8	The clause as the locus of transitivity, mood, and theme	Clauses have to be strung together in meaningful ways
9	Nominal groups and propositional phrases	The clause complex: parataxis and hypotaxis
10	The internal structure of the nominal group, contrasted with that of the verbal group	The clause complex in spoken language: a highly organized structure
11	The thematic structure of the clause	The kind of complexity that is typical of spoken language: grammatical intricacy- a choreographic conception
12	Dressing up as a noun the only way to gain access to all possibilities in thematic and informational structure	Transcribing spoken language, and the kinds of transcription in current use

Based on the differences between written and spoken language, it was necessary to identify the subject-verb agreement. The differences between written and spoken language is not separated from the exists of clauses. Further, a clause is at least made of subject and verb

The theories of subject-verb agreement are used by some linguist in the previous research. One of the linguists who argued about the use of subject-verb

agreement were Goundar and Bogitini, (2018), they described that there were six errors of writing skill, namely; (1) incorrect of mechanics arrangement, (2) error in constructions of subject-verb agreement, (3) construction of redundancy sentences, (4) inaccuracy of using prepositions, (5) inaccuracy of using tenses, and (6) unsuitable of using words, (vocabulary).

Various studies have identified prevalent errors in subject-verb agreement, such as those highlighted by Hong et al. (2020), Mesrawati & Narius (2019), and Tampubolon (2020). These studies underscore the challenges faced by students across different educational levels and contexts (Dinillah et al., 2021; Cabaltica & Osabel, 2021). Febriyanti (2019) elaborates on the complexities associated with mastering subject-verb agreement at the university level, emphasizing its profound impact on students' proficiency in essay writing.

Based on some research conducted by previous linguists, it is still necessary to investigate the using subject-verb agreement in essay writing skill from different perspectives. This study investigates the using subject-verb agreement particularly in essay writing done by EFL students of the third semester, in Muhammadiyah University of Purworejo. The study addressess four primary research questions, specifically: (1) what are the morphemes used in the subject-verb agreement written in EFL students essay writing? (2) what are the tenses of subject-verb agreement used in the EFL student's Essay writing? (3) what is the dominant tenses used in subject- verb agreement written in the students' EFL student's Essay writing? (4) is there any first language interferences in the student's essay writing?

## METHOD

This is descriptive qualitative research. Creswell & Creswell (2018), described on their book that there were three types of research method, namely; quantitative, qualitative, and mixed method. This study, researcher used qualitative research design. One of the criteria of qualitative design was describing the data qualitatively. It was by describing the data based on the theory used for interpreting the data. Researcher used the theory of morpho-syntactic. The study was conducted in EFL students, particularly students of English education program in the third semester, University of Muhammadiyah Purworejo. It was conducted in essay writing classroom. There were two classes of essay writing classes. The data was taken by giving the students essay writing test. Further, researcher toke the results of students' essay writing test randomly. There were forty-five (45) students' essays writing worksheets. Researcher analyzed and identified twenty-five (25) students essay writing. The unit analysis of this study was clauses of students' essay writing.

Further, the data analysis procedure was the following; first was data collection, second was data reduction, the third was data displaying, and the last was data conclusion or verification, (Miles and Huberman: 1994: 10-12). Then, to analyze the data researcher used the theory of morpho-syntactic developed by Carstairs & Charthy and Miller (2002)

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table.1. *Subject of clauses containing of free morphemes used in the EFL students essay writing*

Example of Subject	(1) "Sometime, people do this continuously"
Clauses contained free morphemes	(2) "Because of working and they are studying in the University of Big City."
	(3) "The reason is why they work and study in the big city."

Based on the data analysis, there are three hundred and forty-five (345) clauses of EFL students writing contained free and bound morpheme both in the subject of clauses and in the verb-agreement of clauses. It was written in the table.1.the number of clauses of essay writing which were the subject had free morpheme was (259) two hundred and fifty-nine clauses. Then, there were (86) eighty-six clauses that the subject had bound morpheme.

Researcher wrote the examples of subject of clauses containing free morpheme in the table.1. The clause number one (1), "Sometime, people do this continuously". There is the word "people", it is an example of subject, and it is a free morpheme. The word "people" is a meaningful morpheme, even it was not combined with other morphemes. (2) "Because of working and they are studying in the University of Big City." In this clause, there is a morpheme "they", in traditional grammar, it was a pronoun. It was a personal pronoun to replace more than two or three persons or thing, or animals. "They" in the morphology discussion, it was a free morpheme. It was a meaningful unit of word. It meant that even though the free morphemes were not combined with other morphemes, they have a meaning. Further, the example of clause number three, (3) "The reason is why they work and study in the big city." The example of clauses number three, there is a morpheme "reason". It is a free morpheme. It meant that even this morpheme was not combined with other morphemes, it was meaningful. The three clauses were only the examples from the total number of clauses contained free morphemes.

Table.2. *Subject of clauses containing of bound morphemes used in the EFL students essay writing*

Example of Subject Clauses contained bound morphemes	(4) It is because the time is limited Because, they lived near the house. (5) Living at home and living away from home are similar
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In the table 2, it was the example of clauses of EFL students essay writing contained bound morphemes in the subject of clauses. The clause example number four, (4). There is morpheme "it". In the traditional grammar "it" is to replace the noun, or "it" was used to replace something general. For example, "it is time to go home". Morpheme "it" in that clause was meaningless. On the other sides, in traditional grammar, "it" was used as subject of a clause. Further, "it" in the morphology discussion was as a bound morpheme. It was meaningless, if it was not combined with other morphemes. The example of subject clauses contained bound morphemes was in the clause number five. There were morphemes "live+ing: living" the morpheme "live" it was free morpheme. It has a meaning. On the other side, "morpheme" ing", it was meaningless. Further, there were morphemes "at, from" in traditional grammar, they were prepositions, on the contrary, in the morphology, they were bound morphemes, because they were meaningless if they did not combine with other morphemes. Furthermore, there was morpheme "and". In the traditional grammar, it was a conjunction. The function of conjunction was to combine two equal words or clauses. In the morphology discussion, "and" it was bound morpheme. It has no meaning if it did not construct to gather with other free morphemes.

Looking at this finding, it was a clear finding that EFL students in English Education program, Purworejo Muhammadiyah University have a good understanding in the using English morpheme. They were able to use the morpheme appropriately constructed in the clauses, particularly in constructing the subject of clauses. They were able to contracted subject of clauses containing free and bound morphemes.

Table 3. Verb-Agreement of clauses containing of free and bound morphemes used in the EFL students essay writing

Verb -Agreement		
Free Morpheme	Bound Morpheme	Total number
161 clauses	184 clauses	345 clauses

Verb is the second component of a clause. A clause will be meaningful if the clause has a verb. Even in the level of morphology, a sentence or a clause is possible only containing a verb. For example; go...! eat...! close...! etc. It is the example of clause only containing a verb, but it is meaningful in the context of morphology discussion. In the traditional grammar, it is impossible a clause or a sentence only containing a verb. In traditional grammar, a clause or a sentence at least contains subject and verb. For Example; they go., John comes, the film finish, etc. This study also investigated

the verb-agreement written by EFL students on their essay writing. Researcher analyzed the data of clauses on essay writing focused on identifying the subject-verb agreement from the morphology point of view. Verb-agreement used in the EFL students 'essay writing focused on the form of morpheme; namely free and bound morpheme. It was written in the table 3. There are two types form of morpheme written in the verb-agreement, they were 161 (one hundred and sixty-one) clauses contained free morphemes. Further, there were 184 (on hundred eighty-four) clauses contained bound morpheme. Further the total number of clauses contained free and bound morphemes were three hundred and forty-five (345) clauses. Free morpheme is a morpheme that is able to stand by itself as a verb, and it is meaningful. On the other side, bound morpheme is a morpheme that is not able to stand by itself. It should be combined with other morphemes, (McCharty, 2002:16-18). Based on the theory developed by McCharty, (2002), it is clear that clear there are two forms of morphemes, such as free and bound.

Table.4. Example of Verb-agreement of clauses of EFL Students' essay writing contained free morpheme

Examples of Verb-agreement of EFL students' essay writing contained free morpheme	(1) They got responsibility to teach their students. (2) In the school, students can also find comfort and happiness (3) In some countries, they go to traditional school and home schooling. (4) Traditional schooling, where students can learn in school like usual.
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Table 4 contains four examples of clauses contained free morphemes in the verb-agreement. Clause number (1), "They got responsibility to teach their students ". The verb-agreement of this clause is "got". The morpheme "got" is the past form of the morpheme "get". In the traditional grammar "get" got" and "gotten" is verb transitive. It is a verb that needs an object. Further, in the morphology discussion, it is as a free morpheme. A morpheme that it has meaning even it did not combine with other morphemes. Furthermore, the example of clause (2) "In the school, students can also find comfort and happiness". The second example of clause of verb-agreement has the morpheme "find". In traditional grammar" find" found" and found", it is also verb-transitive. It was a verb that needs an object. Further, in morphology discussion, "Find" it is a free morpheme. Furthermore, the example of clauses in the number three (3) and four (4), the morpheme "goes" and "learn" are also free morphemes. Based on those examples, it meant that EFL students in English Education program, Universitas Muhammadiyah Purworejo are able to write verb-agreement of clauses contained free morphemes.

Table.5. Example of Verb-agreement of clauses of EFL Students' essay writing contained bound morpheme.

Examples of Verb-agreement clauses	(5) School is a place of teaching and learning.
EFL students' essay writing contained bound morpheme	(6) Where you are able to study, to get knowledge, and to get any information //
	(7) School is a second place for children and students in the whole world. //

The example of clauses number 5,6, and 7, three clauses used the bound morphemes; such "is", and "are". In traditional grammar, "is" and "are" are relative words, or it is to be. To be or relative word in the clauses, it is usually followed by adjective, noun, or adverb of places. For examples; "it is a chair", "they are happy students", "and books are on the cupboard". Three examples of clauses used relative word or to be. Further, those three clauses, in morphology discussion, the clauses used bound morphemes. The morphemes "is" and "are" will be meaningless, if they were not combined with other morphemes. Looking at table.4 and 5, it reflected that EFL students of English Education Program, universitas Muhammadiyah Purworejo understand and they were able to identify the using of free and bound morphemes in the clauses.

Table 6. *Tenses of subject-verb agreement used in the EFL student's Essay writing*

Subject-verb agreement	Total Number
Present Tense	283 clauses
Past Tense	61 clauses
Future Tense	1 clause

In the EFL students essay writing, data analysis revealed that there were two hundred and eighty-three (283) clauses written by students in their essay writing used present tense. It is stated in the table 6. Furthermore, there were sixty-one (61) clauses written by EFL students in their essay writing used past tense. Then, there was only one (1) clause of students essay writing used future tense. Based on that findings, it revealed that EFL students of English Education Program, Universitas Muhammadiyah Purworejo used three types of basic tenses; namely; present, past, and future. The using of present tense was the highest number, the followed by the use of past tense, and the lowest tense was future tense. It meant that EFL students of English Education Program, Universitas Muhammadiyah Purworejo wrote their ideas in form of essay writing are smoothing in general phenomena. They did not think about phenomena happed in the future. It was limited idea; it was only one clause. On the other side, talking about phenomena in the past also not priority, it was only sixty-one clauses. Based on the using of tenses by EFL students in their essay writing, it stated that most of EFL students understand on using the tenses appropriately. Table.6. It is a table to describe the using of *tenses* by EFL students in their essay writing. *Tense* is a crucial part of linguistics study. Miller (2002: 148 -151), He described that there were three types basic of tenses in English, namely; present, past and future. The using of tenses differently in English, it will

influence the changes of verb. It was different from the linguistics of Indonesia language or Javanese. Indonesia language and Javanese did not change their verb of clauses, even they clauses written in the different times. On the other sides, English linguistics, the clauses will be different if the clauses were written in the different times. The examples of clauses are written in Indonesia Language, Javanese, and English.

Table 6. *Example of clauses containing English, Indonesia and Javanese verb-agreement*

English	(1) Mr. Hartono went to Yogyakarta two years ago.
Indonesia Language	(2) Pak Hartono pergi ke Yogyakarta dua tahun yang lalu.
Javanese	(3) Pak Hartono tindak menyang Yogyakarta kalih tahun kepengker.

The three clauses used verb-agreement differently from the term of tense. The clause number one, it was written in English. The verb-agreement was "go" in English, the morpheme "went" was derive from "go". It was changed into "went", because the tense used was past form. The tense of clause number one was past tense. It was coded by the adverbial of time "two years ago". It meant that the phenomenon was done in the past. It was not happened at present or in the future.

On the other sides, Indonesia language, there will be never changes of verb-agreement. Furthermore, morpheme "pergi" will never change of the form, even the clause written in different times. The phenomenon happened at the present, in the past, event in the future, the morpheme "pergi" never changed because of different tenses. Further, the example of clause written in Javanese, morpheme "tindak", it can be changed in different form because of Javanese politeness. For example; "tindak" changed into "lunga", "budal". The changes of "tindak" into "lunga" or "budal", it was used depend on the status of people in the Javanese society, or it depends on the age of speakers addressed to the other people. Then, the dominant tense used by students in essay writing was present tense.

Further, the next discussion in this study is about the interferences of their first language (Javanese or Indonesia language) in their essay writing. The result of data analysis was presented in the table 7.

Table 7. *First language interferences made by EFL students in their essay writing*

Clauses: first language interferences;	Standardize English Clauses ;	(110) (235) clauses
(1) Living at home and living away from home feels different. //	(1) Living at home and living away from home are different.	
(2) Sometimes people do this routine//	(2) Sometime people do this continuously/	
(3) Because reason of working and sometimes they do colleges in out of city.//	(3) Because of working and they are studying in the university of big city.	

(4) The main reason why they do//	(4) <i>The main reason is why they work and study in the big city.</i>
(5) this is because it minimalist the time, //	(5) <i>It is because the time is limited</i>
(6) because they lived near place//	(6) <i>Because, they lived near the house.</i>
(7) that they do the activity//	(7) <i>They did the activities</i>

Those were the examples of clauses made by EFL students in their essay writing. The interferences of first language (Indonesia or Javanese) are possible written by EFL students. It happened not only in the written language but also it happened in the spoken language. The influence of first language in spoken language is more complicated than in written language. In the spoken language, the interferences are included in the actions, spelling, pronunciation, intonation, styles, dialects, etc. On the other hand, the first language interference in the written language mostly happened in term of *omission, overgeneralization, substitution, and addition*. It was made by EFL students of English Language Education, Universitas Muhammadiyah Purworejo. Based on the data analysis, it was found that there three hundred and forty-five (345) clauses identified as a unit of analysis. From the total number of identified clauses, there were one hundred and ten, (110) clauses influenced by EFL students' first language in their essay writing. Then mostly, among of them were able to write essay writing with minimum influences of their first language. It was proved; that there were two hundred and thirty-five (235) clauses were written by EFL students used standardized English clauses. It meant that students were mostly able to minimize their first language interferences when they were writing their essay writing skill. In the table 7, researcher stated the examples of clauses influenced by EFL students' first language. There were seven examples of clauses interference by their student's first language and the standardized English clauses. The example of clause number one in table 7 is clause influenced by first language culture. There was morpheme of "feel", student wrote English clause used Indonesia Language culture. Students wrote "living at home and living away from home feels different. There is no expression like that in writing English clause. The morpheme "Feel", it meant "merasa", in Indonesia language. The standardized clause was "Living at home and living away from home are different". The standardized clause to express EFL student's idea in English, the clause should use relational word or in traditional grammar, it was "to be". Further, second example of first language interferences in the EFL student's essay writing, "Sometimes people do this routine". This clause used the morpheme "routine". It was not suitable to express the students' idea used the morpheme "routine". The suitable morpheme to expresses EFL student's idea, it was better to use morpheme "continuously". The morpheme "routine", it was Indonesia language culture. It was written correctly as the follow;

"Sometime people do this "continuously". The next example, it was written in the clause number three. "Because reason of working and sometimes they do colleges in out of city." This clause used Indonesia culture, in the using of morpheme "they do". The standardized clause to state student's idea is such as "Because of working and they are studying in the university of big city". Further, the standardized clause of EFL students' statement, it was a clause that, it was used the expression "they are studying". Further, example of clause used first or Indonesia culture was "The main reason why they do". This clause should be replaced by the following clause "The main reason is why they work and study in the big city. The first clause did not use relation word, or is did not use to be. So, students omitted to be.

Further example of influences by EFL students' culture, it was clauses; such as number five, six, and seven. "This is because it minimalist the time," This clause is influenced by Indonesia culture. The morpheme *minimalist the time*, this morpheme sounds Indonesia language. Further, this clause replaced by the following clause; "It is because the time is limited". Then, the example of clause influenced by Indonesia language is such as; "because they lived near place". This clause has morpheme "near place", morpheme "near place" is Indonesia culture. This morpheme is not clear meaning. That clause should be replaced by the clause "Because, they lived "near the house". The last example of clause influenced by Indonesia culture is such as; "that they do the activity", this clause should be replaced by the clause of "They did the activities". Morpheme "do" and "activity" should be replaced by morpheme "did" and "activities". It was done, because students wrote the phenomena happened in the past, but the EFL students wrote the clause in present tense. Those were seven examples of clauses influenced by the first EFL language. The discussion of research findings was completely finished. Researcher had explained the morphemes used in the subject of clauses; morphemes used in the verb-agreement of clauses. Further, researcher also finished to describe the tenses used in the subject-verb agreement. Further, the influences of first language to EFL students were also completely investigated in this study. Then, researcher would like to write down the conclusion of the study in the section of collusion of this research paper.

## CONCLUSION

The investigation of morphology and syntax simultaneously is not many done by researchers. That, researcher would like to write down the conclusion about the description of data analysis in the section of finding and discussion. Researcher found that there were 345 (three hundred and forty-five) clauses as unit of data analysis. The three hundred and forty-five (345) clauses identified in the EFL students essay writing, it was stated that there were (259) two hundred and fifty-nine subjects of clauses contained free morphemes. Then, there were 86 (eighty-six) subjects of clauses

contained bound morphemes. Furthermore, researcher also found that there was 161 (one hundred and sixty-one) clauses contained free morphemes, and there were 184 (one hundred eighty-four) clauses of verb-agreement were contained bound morphemes. The tenses used by EFL students in writing their essay writing were present tense, past tense, and future tense. Among of three types of tenses, present tense was used dominantly by EFL students. It meant that EFL students were talked about their idea's general phenomena. There were 283 (two hundred and eighty-three) clauses written in present tenses. Then, there were 61 (sixty-one) clauses written in past tense. There was only (1) one clause written in the future tense of EFL students' essay writing.

Based on the data descriptions, EFL students in English Education Program, Universitas Muhammadiyah Purworejo have a good understanding in the using free and bound both in the subject of clauses and verb-agreement of clauses in their essay writing. Furthermore, EFL students also understand to use tenses of clauses appropriately in their essay writing. Furthermore, it was also found that EFL students essay writing was still influenced by their first language culture in writing their English essay writing. It stated in the clauses written by EFL students contained first language culture. There were 161 (one hundred and sixty-one) clauses were influenced of first language culture. Further, EFL students should be better to learn deeply about the linguistics competences (phonology, pronunciation, spelling, syntax, and morphology). Then, they will be able to minimize the influences of their first linguistics cultures. Giving more exercises and reading texts written or published by overseas publishers were necessary for EFL students. At the end, EFL students' competences in essay writing skill will be developed significantly.

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