

# The Challenges Faced by Engineering Students to Write Effectively-The Teacher's Perspective

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**ABSTRACT---** *This study focuses on analyzing the errors made by engineering students when they write situational essays and descriptive paragraphs. When they write essays they are making errors in using grammar, punctuation, coherence, sentence constructions etc. This research focuses only on how they are making errors in subject-verb agreement. Subject-verb agreement is an important aspect of grammar. A lot of irregularities found in subject-verb agreement. Therefore to improve their writing skills process-oriented approach is used. In this research, the random sample method is used and 30 student's essays as a sample are taken. The main objective of this research is to avoid subject-verb-agreement errors. Through process oriented approach they can improve their writing capability. Random sampling method is used for taking samples.*

**Keywords-** *Subject-Verb Agreement, Process Oriented Approach, Random Sampling Method.*

## INTRODUCTION:

Many people lack the ability to write whatever they want to convey in an effective manner. Good writing skill conveys your message in clear, concise, error free and ease manner. Aptly writing is a skill; this will take you a long way in the workplace. If anyone who wants to broaden his/her career or personal related pursuits should first improve their writing skills. It should be readable, coherent and polished.

Writing skill is an important aspect of communication. **Cumming (1995:148) states that,** "The main importance of writing in that level is that it helps students to learn. Writing new words and structures help students to remember them; and as writing is done more slowly and carefully than speaking, written practice helps to focus students attention on what they are learning".

Pre – Final year engineering students find it very difficult to cope with their technical writing. This is because in twelfth standard they are learning prose, poem and drama. They are reading essays and mug up question answers. They are writing only what is given in the lessons. They are not getting the chance of developing their writing skills. They memories essays for exam. They never get a chance to write on their own. So when they are asked to write an essay or paragraph on their own, they are making many mistakes in

grammar, punctuation, content, spelling and discourse and subject – verb agreement.

**According to Emig (1977-123),** "Writing allows us to have our ideas immediately available for review, re-evaluation, a process that can lead us to reconsider and refine our ideas, i.e.to learn what we think while writing. Writing is a thinking process at various stages. Writing is best understood as a set of distinctive thinking processes in which writers orchestra to organize during the act of composing. Writing is originating and creating a unique verbal constant that is graphically recorded".

## PROBLEM STATEMENT:

1. Pre- Final year engineering students may not possess the necessary writing skills to cope with their studies.
2. Engineering students find it very difficult to write essays and paragraphs on situational topics. From their schooling they are taught and practiced product oriented method of writing. Product method means result oriented and controlled way of writing. For example: In letter writing Engineering students find it very difficult to write essays and paragraphs on situational topics. From their schooling, they are taught and practiced product method of writing. Product method means result oriented and controlled way of writing. For example: In teaching letter writing, the teacher teaches a set of model letters to the students. They supposed to prepare on the same model. They don't have any freedom to write or think on their own. In this way, their writing is controlled. They are getting used with that model, structure, and methodology of that pattern. This method of teaching is practiced until the twelfth standard. Not only in letter writing but in all their writings.
3. They don't know when and where to use process and product writing. Most of the students are not aware of process writing. In engineering, they have technical English. Here they have to prepare essays, paragraphs, reports on their own. While preparing they don't know how to plan, organize, brainstorm their ideas. They are not practiced revising and editing.
4. Engineering students make a lot of errors in using subject-verb – agreement. Basically, they are not strong in their grammar. They are getting used with

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product writing. When they start writing essays and paragraphs, they don't know the basic meaning and structure of the subject-verb agreement. In a sentence we have subject and verb, we cannot make a sentence without this. If a sentence is incomplete or it has some grammatical errors means the sentence is meaningless. The students making a lot of errors in subject-verb agreement. In a sentence subjects and verbs should agree with each other. In a sentence, if the subject is in singular and the verb also should be in the singular. If the subject is in the plural and the verb also should be in plural. If this rule is changed means the entire meaning will be changed. So the engineering students find difficulty in making a sentence without this error. The students from English medium can able to manage this problem. But the students from other medium finding a big problem. Because of this reason they are not able to score high marks also. They are managing to get pass marks.

### HYPOTHESIS:

Writing Skills could be developed by training students through process oriented approach. The teacher and the students engage in a process to give an effective text together.

#### *Process - Oriented Approach*

The process-oriented approach differs from the traditional methods of teaching writing. Most of the teaching systems adopt a product-oriented approach. Process oriented approach is not at all given importance. Process oriented approach has five stages. 1. **Pre-writing** 2. **Writing** 3. **Revising** 4. **Editing** 5. **Final**. Each stage follows a number of processes. In **Pre-writing** a) Brainstorming ideas b) Planning c) Organizing d) Selecting ideas takes place. In **revising** a) getting feedback from the teacher b) exchanging drafts with peers c) organizing ideas adding, changing or removing parts of the text changing words and expressions. In editing checking punctuation and spelling, checking grammatical inaccuracies, proofreading.

Then the writer checks whether his writing gives sense and clarity. The process-oriented approach helps the student to write his ideas clearly and efficiently. He can create, express and organize his ideas in a good manner. This process is extended to pre-writing, writing, revising and editing. Whereas in product-oriented approach Students are given certain forms; often the content and form are always controlled by the teacher. Process-oriented writing is better because it involves a lot of recursive writing. One writes and then makes corrections as one proceeds.

### OBJECTIVES:

1. To enhance writing skills of engineering students.
2. To make easy to write situational essays.
3. To teach process and product writing.
4. To avoid subject-verb-agreement errors.
5. To brush up basic skills of grammar.
6. To engage and motivate students.
7. To strengthen content and ideas and encourage reflection.

8. To emphasize confidentiality and positive reinforcement
9. To make them to write error free essays and paragraphs.

### LITERATURE REVIEW OF THE STUDY:

After correcting students' essay the type of errors frequently came is in Subject – verb agreement. Other types of errors also were there. A lot of research has been done on self directed learning as well as different types of assessment /correction/evaluation. I propose to use '**Error correction**' at different levels as a tool for developing writing skills. The researcher have reviewed journal articles with subject verb agreement with different problems and its solutions.

C.N, Mormer, E.Brehm, L. **The Production of Subject-Verb Agreement among Swedish and Chinese Second Language Speakers of English (Article)** Department of Germanic and Slavic Languages and Literatures deals with using a sentence completion task with Swedish and Chinese a second language user to investigate how L1 Morph syntax and L2 proficiency influence or affect the L2 English subject-verb agreement.

Asril, L.Z.<sup>a</sup> Zuriati, D. Email Author, Fathira, V., research **Error Recognition of EFL Learners in Subject-Verb Agreement and Parallel Structure at Stiba Persada Bunda Pekanbaru**, main focus is on error recognition in answering subject-verb agreement and parallel structure. The researcher proved the importance of subject-verb agreement and parallel structure in grammar.

The research by Md. Osman Farhan Al Harun, \*\*Md. Abu Sufian., **Errors in Subject-Verb Agreement: A Study Based On Bangladeshi University Student**, the researcher used 50 students to write-ups from a tertiary level private university of Bangladesh. Theory of constructivism is used in this research with a qualitative approach.

**Analysis of errors in subject-verb agreement among Malaysian ESL learners** by Siti Hamin Stapa Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia Sitihami@Ukm.My Mohd Mustafa Izahar Unisel. The research was done in Malaysian college. Error Analysis theoretical approach is used. The finding of this study is Subject-verb agreement of person, number, subject, coordinated subject, notional and proximity agreement.

### CONCLUSION

The major existing problems of subject verb agreement are medium of instruction, poor in grammar and lack of writing practice. The review of literature proves that most of the researchers deal on this aspect with different approaches and techniques. This research also points out how engineering students makes errors in subject-verb agreement but different perspective. Process oriented approach is not used by the previous researches to use Subject-verb agreement without error. So this research is done in different perspective.



**METHODOLOGY:**

**Fieldwork:** Sample of 50 Essays randomly taken from Students. The random sampling method is used to collect the data.

**Pre-test** - A paragraph of 100 words - to check their entry level.

Teaching them all the following stages.

1. **Pre-writing:** In this stage, the learner is thinking about some idea and plans on how to organize it. The learner works collaboratively and includes their ideas in the texts.
  2. **Writing:** Here the learner writes his first draft, he then revises and edits his own work. Here the composing of subject-verb agreement is important.
  3. **Revising:** In this stage, the learner reads again the text and reorganizes the ideas. Doing corrections like add, remove and change the sentences.
  4. **Editing:** Here goes for peer help to check his work again. Check his grammar, punctuation, spelling, and content etc.
  5. **Final:** Finally he submits his paper to the teacher and gets feedback from the teacher.
2. Post Test - To find the extent of learning Field work.

Field work:

1. *Research Design:*

- a) Quantitative
- b) The tasks above

*Qualitative Research.*

- a) Discussion with students after each test getting their feedback on what they have learnt.

*Aspects of Correction:*

- a) Grammar- Subject – verb agreement b) Vocabulary c) Spelling D) Discourse (Ability to write coherently) E) Punctuation

*Error Correction Analysis*

Subject – verb – agreement plays an essential role in writing. Most of the students find difficult in this sentence structure. Subject-verb agreement is one on the fundamental structure in a sentence. Learn to use shorter sentences and it has a great impact.

S.No.	Wrongly framed sentences	It could be written as....
1	My <b>parents done</b> many things for me.	My parents <b>are/were</b> done many things for me. ( Verb is missing in this sentence) My parents did many things for me.
2	My foremost <b>everytime</b> wish is to make my father and mother, the person who <b>were</b> had never <b>failure</b> and their wishes were to be immediately	The verb were did not seem to agree with the subject who. Instead of were, we can use was. Separate the word every time, like every time. Accomplished can be used instead of accomplished.

	<b>accomplished</b> and they most to free from stress and pains and explores all over the world and the things <b>what ever</b> they had missed at their young age that had to be fulfilled.	
3	One <b>cane overcome</b> the difficult if they are capable.	Here the subject is in singular, so it will not agree with The plural verb overcome. Consider changing the verb form for subject-verb agreement.
4	They are so coming that they <b>not</b> even care for their family, who have taken care of him from the time he <b>have</b> born.	Here the subject pronoun he and the verb have will not agree each other. So change have into has. Instead of not, we can use do not or did not.
5	My family had never <b>expect</b> anything from me for them.	It appears that the verb <b>expect</b> should be in the past participle form. Consider changing it.

It is identified that They are making these types of errors because, the students studied 12 years in an English as medium of instruction but with product oriented approach such rote learning method in order to produce better results in their examinations. Hence .They are not aware of the rule of subject-verb agreement, found difficult or uninterested to acquire a sufficient language knowledge. as a result don't have much real-time language learning environment with regard to writing skills. In order to avoid these types of errors the students need an intensive grammar practise environment for the real-world problems. Students should practice writing simple sentences without errors. At least they should learn some basic grammar. They should develop some writing practice as habit, pay attention to process oriented writing method and require extensive reading habit this will develop critical thinking skills hence content development can be improved gradually. it is strongly recommended to develop proofreading skills

*what are the benefits of Subject Verb Agreement? What makes it to play a major role in writing ?*

The main benefits of subject verb agreement is to give a meaningful content to the sentence.

Subject-verb agreement plays a vital role in writing because the sentence cannot be framed without this. If subject and verb doesn't agree with each other message will not be conveyed properly. That's why it plays a major role in writing.



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### *Benefits of Process Oriented Approach to Writing Skills*

It is advised to writing teachers to encourage students in free writing paragraphs, creative writing, open ended writing activities on situational topics for drafting paragraphs. Teach critical thinking skills and implement to the writing class in order to plan, brainstorming ideas, organizing ideas and activities such as mind mapping, peer correction will enable real-time language development that promotes active teaching learning method among the students even in large classrooms. Teacher should serve as facilitator for further improvement and content development. Finally make encourage students on developing proofreading skills.

### CONCLUSION:

However, errors are part of the natural process in learning a language (Harmer, 2007) and play a crucial role for the learners to uncover the rules of the target language by the feedback they get on the errors (Corder as cited in Ellis and Barkui-zen, 2005, p. 51; Chaudhury as cited in Rahman, 2015, p. 222).

Writing requires involvement and interest. It is called productive skill. While preparing, essays and paragraphs students must use Subject-verb agreement clearly and accurately. Then only the message will be understood by the reader clearly. A proficient writer is one who is able to write in a coherent manner, making good use of vocabulary, framing sentences in a meaningful way and convey his ideas clearly to the reader. In my opinion, there are five major difficulties that students face in writing skills. 1. Students are unable to write coherently. 2. Students are not in a position to frame sentences. 3. Their vocabulary is limited. 4. They find it difficult to put their ideas clearly and not able to revise. As students they find numerous problems to improve their writing, so teachers should understand and try to take some necessary steps to solve by using the process-oriented approach to solve their problem.

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