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Verb Conjugation in Different Languages: A Preliminary Study in Developing German Grammar Book Based Contrastive Analysis

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Abstract. The purpose of this study was to investigate the verb conjugation process of German, Bahasa, and English. This study used a contrastive analysis which is one of approaches in applied linguistics. Data consisted of words and sentences in German, Bahasa, and English, and were analyzed descriptively. This article is a preliminary study which aims to do need analysis in developing German grammar book based contrastive analysis approach. Finding shows that there are 4 factors causing verb of a sentence should be conjugated: 1) Verb Conjugation Adjusted with Person as Subject, 2) Verb Conjugation Adjusted with active-passive voice sentence, 3) Verb Conjugation Adjusted with tenses of sentence, 4) Verb Conjugation Adjusted with quantifier factor of sentence subject.

Keywords: *Verb Conjugation, Contrastive Analysis, Error Analysis, Applied Linguistics.*

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INTRODUCTION

One of approaches that has been widely studied in the teaching of foreign languages is contrastive analysis which is one of the approaches in applied linguistics. The contrastive analysis approach has been one of the approaches that have been widely studied by previous researchers (Saud, 2019; Aljohani, 2019; Nasution et al., 2019; Mejías, 2019; Khansir & Pakdel, 2019). The Studies focus on comparing the grammar of several languages, the difficulties experienced by foreign language learners, strategies in teaching foreign languages, and the factors that influence foreign language learning. Most of studies using a contrastive analysis approach focus on comparing grammar from foreign languages and the first language of learners (Zhou & Wang, 2019; Spahiu & Spahiu, 2019; Callegaro et al., 2019).

The contrastive analysis approach ¹² is closely related to the language error analysis approach, therefore many previous studies integrate these two approaches in teaching foreign languages (Al-Sobhi, 2019; Burhansyah, 2019; Hasmawati, Mantasiah, & Yusri, 2019; Mantasiah et al., 2019). There are two schemes that can be applied in integrating these two approaches. First, contrastive analysis uses language error analysis. Second, the approach to analyzing language errors uses a contrastive analysis approach. In the first scheme, the results of contrastive analysis can find out the potential mistakes made by learners. In the second scheme, an analysis of language errors is carried out at the beginning, and to find out the cause of the error, a contrastive analysis is carried out.

This research is a preliminary study with the ultimate goal of developing German grammar textbooks for Indonesian learners. To develop the book, a needs analysis is needed related to the differences between the two languages and the potential errors that can be experienced by learners. This can make it easier for students to understand German grammar than to explain the grammar directly without using a contrastive analysis approach (Mantasiah et al., 2019; Mantasiah, Yusri, & Jufri, 2018). This study also compares English with German and Indonesian, because English is one of the foreign languages that also tends to be mastered by Indonesian learners. This is one of the innovations in developing grammar textbooks using a contrastive analysis approach, because it not only compares the first language with the foreign language learned, but also compares with other foreign languages mastered by learners. It aims to make it easier for learners related to the concept of grammar being learned. Therefore, learners not only learn the grammatical process, but also learn the main concepts of the grammar.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a contrastive analysis approach by comparing the process of conjugating verbs in 3 different languages (German, English and Indonesian). The research data consisted of verbs and sentences from the three languages that were the object of research. The researcher acts as a source of data that is the researcher determines words and makes his own sentences which are used as research data. To verify research data, native speakers are involved to check the validity of the sentences that have been made by researchers.

Data were analyzed using a qualitative descriptive approach. There are 3 stages carried out in data analysis 1) presentation of data. Each verb conjugation process for each language is explained separately 2) data classification. The purpose of contrastive analysis is to classify the similarities and differences of several languages. 3) drawing conclusions. The last stage is to provide conclusions based on data that has been classified. The

conclusion in question is what potential errors can be made by German learners based on the results of contrastive analysis of the three languages.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

There are several factors that require a verb in a sentence to be conjugated including 1) the verb is adjusted to the person acting as the subject of the sentence, 2) the verb is conjugated due to changes in sentence type from active sentence to passive or vice versa, 3) the verb is experiencing conjugation adjusted time or tenses of the sentence, 4) verbs adjusted to the singular / plural state of the subject of the sentence. Following is the process of conjugating each language in terms of these four factors.

Verb Conjugation in German

1. The verb is adjusted to the person acting as the subject of the sentence

The verbs in German are divided into 2 namely *starke verben* (irregular verbs) and *swache verben* (irregular verbs). In the following table, there are 3 verb data that constitute *swache verben*, and also 3 verbs of *starke verben*.

Table 1. German Verb Conjugation Adjusted with Person as Subject

Main Verb	Lernen (Study)	Spielen (Play)	Kaufen (Buy)	Trinken (Drink)	Schlafen (Sleep)	Sehen (See)
Ich (I)	Lerne	Spiele	Kaufe	Trinke	Schlafe	Sehe
Du (You)	Lernst	Spielst	Kaufst	Trinkst	Schläfst	Siehst
Er/Sie/Es (He/She/it)	Lernt	Spielt	Kauft	Trinkt	Schläft	Sieht
Wir (We)	Lernen	Spielen	Kaufen	Trinken	Schlafen	Sehen
Ihr (You)	Lernt	Spielt	Kauft	Trinkt	Schlaft	Seht
Sie/sie (They)	Lernen	Spielen	Kaufen	Trinken	Schlafen	Sehen

The data shows that almost all subjects cause conjugations with verbs, except *Wir* (we) and *Sie /sie* (they), both in regular verb data (*Lernen, Spielen, Kaufen*) and irregular verb data (*Trinken, Schlafen, Sehen*).

2. The verb is conjugated due to changes in sentence type

One of the distinguishing features of German with English and Indonesian is related to the process of changing active sentences into passive sentences, where in the German passive sentence, the verb is located at the end of the sentence. There are 5 types of active and passive sentences in German that are used as data to show the process of verb conjugation adjusted to the type of sentence:

Table 2. German Verb Conjugation Adjusted with Kind of Sentence

No	Kind of Sentence	Example of Sentences
1	Active	Ich kaufe ein Kilo Ei im Supermarkt (I buy a kilo of eggs at the supermarket)
	Passive	Ein Kilo Ei wird von mir im Supermarkt gekauft (A Kilo of Eggs is bought by me at the supermarket)
2	Active	Sie lesen das Buch (She reads a book)
	Passive	Das Buch wird von Ihnen gelesen (The book is read by her)
3	Active	Meine Mutter schneidet die Zwiebel (My mother slices onions)
	Passive	Die Zwiebel wird von meiner Mutter geschnitten (The Onions are sliced by my mother)
4	Active	Mein Vater liest die Zeitung (My Father is read a newspaper)
	Passive	Die Zeitung wird von meinem Vater gelesen (The newspaper is read by my father)
5	Active	Die Krankenschwester hilft dem Arzt (The Nurse helps doctor)
	Passive	Der Arzt wird von der Krankenschwester geholfen (The doctor is helped by the nurse)

The data shows that in converting an active sentence to a passive sentence, the verb in that sentence is turned into a verb three (Partizip Perfekt). In addition, there is an auxiliary verb "werden" which must also be conjugated with the subject of the sentence. Thus, the conjugation is not only the main verb, but also the auxiliary verb in the sentence.

3. The Conjugation Process is adapted to Tenses (Time)

There are several types of tenses in German such as Präsens, Präteritum, Perfekt, and plusquamperfect. In table 3, it can be seen the process of verb conjugation caused by changes in tenses of a sentence. Table 3 shows that there are 4 types of tenses in German that were the data in this study, it can be seen that the four tenses have different verb conjugations. In addition, the tenses of perfekt and Plusquamperfekt besides the verb undergo conjugation but there is the addition of the auxiliary verb "haben".

Table 3. German Verb Conjugation Adjusted with Tenses

No	Tenses	Example of Sentence
1	Präsens	<i>Ich lese ein Buch</i> (I read a book)
	Präteritum	<i>Ich las ein Buch</i> ⁶ <i>read a book</i>
	Perfekt	<i>Ich habe ein Buch gelesen</i> (I read a book)
	Plusquamperfekt	<i>Ich hatte ein Buch gelesen</i> (I read a book)
2	Präsens	<i>Sie lernen Englisch und Deutsch</i> (They study English and German Language)
	Präteritum	<i>Sie lernten Englisch und Deutsch</i> (They studied English and German Language)
	Perfekt	<i>Sie haben Englisch und Deutsch gelernt</i> (They studied English and German Language)
	Plusquamperfekt	<i>Sie hatten Englisch und Deutsch gelernt</i> (They studied English and German Language)
3	Präsens	<i>Er trinkt den Orangensaft</i> (He drinks orange juice)
	Präteritum	<i>Er trank den Orangensaft</i> (He drank orange juice)
	Perfekt	<i>Er hat den Orangensaft getrunken</i> (He drank orange juice)
	Plusquamperfekt	<i>Er hatte den Orangensaft getrunken</i> (He drank orange juice)
4	Präsens	<i>Sie kocht eine Suppe</i> (She cooks a bowl of soup)
	Präteritum	<i>Sie kochte eine Suppe</i> (She cooked a bowl of soup)
	Perfekt	<i>Sie hat eine Suppe gekocht</i> (She cooked a bowl of soup)
	Plusquamperfekt	<i>Sie hatte eine Suppe gekocht</i> (She cooks a bowl of soup)
5	Präsens	<i>Wir hören das Musik</i> (We listen a music)
	Präteritum	<i>Wir hörten das Musik</i> (We listened a music)
	Perfekt	<i>Wir haben das Musik gehört</i> (We listened a music)
	Plusquamperfekt	<i>Wir hatten das Musik gehört</i> (We listened a music)

4. Verb Conjugation Adjusted with Quantifiers

In German there are several types of quantifiers, but in this study, there are 3 examples of quantifiers that are used as research data.

Table 4. Verb Conjugation Adjusted with Quantifiers

No	Kind of Quantifiers	Example of Sentence
1	A (Ein(e))	Ein Mann sieht die Katze (A man sees a cat)
	some (Mehrere)	Mehrere Männer sehen die Katze (Some men see a cat)
	many (Viele)	Viele Männer sehen die Katze (Many men see a cat)
2	A (Ein(e))	Ein Schüler versucht Deutsch zu sprechen (A student tries to speak German Language)
	some (Mehrere)	Mehrere Schüler versuchen Deutsch zu sprechen (some students try to speak German Language)
	many (Viele)	Viele Schüler versuchen Deutsch zu sprechen (Many students try to speak German Language)
3	A (Ein(e))	Ein Kind kauft ein Geschenk für seine Mutter (A child buys a gift for his mother)
	some (Mehrere)	Mehrere Kinder kaufen ein Geschenk für ihre Mutter (Some children buy a gift for their mothers)
	many (Viele)	Viele Kinder kaufen ein Geschenk für ihre Mutter (many children buy a gift for their mothers)
4	A (Ein(e))	Eine Ärztin macht eine Forschung in einem Krankenhaus (a doctor conducts a research in a hospital)
	some (Mehrere)	Mehrere Ärztinnen machen eine Forschung in einem Krankenhaus (some doctors conduct a research in a hospital)
	many (Viele)	Viele Ärztinnen machen eine Forschung in einem Krankenhaus (many doctors conduct a research in a hospital)
5	A (Ein(e))	Ein Student geht nicht zur Uni wegen der Krankheit (a student is not going to the campus because of sick)
	some (Mehrere)	Mehrere Studenten gehen nicht zur Uni wegen der Krankheit (some students are not going to the campus because of sick)
	many (Viele)	Viele Studenten gehen nicht zur Uni wegen der Krankheit (Many students are not going to the campus because of sick)

Table 4 shows that the singular subject marked by the quantifier "ein / eine" which means one or someone with present tenses makes the verb conjugate. But not on a plural subject that is marked by "mehrere" and "viele" quantifiers.

Verb Conjugation in English

1. The verb is adjusted to the person acting as the subject of the sentence

There are 6 kind of verbs used as data to show the process of verb conjugation that is adjusted to the person who acts as the subject of the sentence

Table 5. *English Verb Conjugation Adjusted with Person as Subject*

Subjek	Examples of Verb					
	Read	Write	Catch	Watch	Cry	Fly
I	Read	Write	Catch	Watch	Cry	Fly
You	Read	Write	Catch	Watch	Cry	Fly
She/He/it	Reads	Writes	Catches	Watches	Cries	Flies
We	Read	Write	Catch	Watch	Cry	Fly
They	Read	Write	Catch	Watch	Cry	Fly

In English, the person who acts as the subject in a sentence can influence the verb conjugation in the sentence. However, this does not apply to all subjects, but specifically to third-person singular subjects. The process of conjugating verbs for third-person singles can be seen in the table 5, namely by adding -s and -es affixation.

2. The conjugation process is adapted to the type of sentence

There are 5 kind of sentences used as data to show the process of verb conjugation that is adjusted to the type of sentence:

Table 6. *English Verb Conjugation Adjusted with Kind of Sentence*

No	Kind of Sentence	Example of Sentence	Verb Conjugation
1	Active	He writes a novel	Writes – Written
	Passive	a novel is written by him	
2	Active	She cooks a traditional food	Cooks- Cooked
	Passive	A traditional food is cooked by her	
3	Active	I buy a sophisticated handphone in Jakarta	Buy- Bought
	Passive	A sophisticated handphone is bought by me in Jakarta	
4	Active	We make a birthday cake	Make- Made
	Passive	A birthday cake is made by us	
5	Active	Robert reads a love poetry	Reads- Read
	Passive	A love poetry is read by Robert	

Table 6 shows that to convert an active sentence to a passive sentence the verb of that sentence will be conjugated from verb 1 to verb 3, and this applies to all subjects.

3. The process of conjugation is adjusted to tenses

The type of tenses used in a sentence influences the conjugation process. There are 5 kind of sentences used as research data, and there are 5 types of tenses that are used as examples to show the process of verb conjugation.

Table 7. English Verb Conjugation Adjusted with Tenses

No	Tenses	Example of Sentence	Verb Conjugation
1	Simple Present	I visit my uncle in Bandung	Visit- Visit
	Simple Past	I visited my uncle in Bandung	Visit – Visited
	Simple Future	I will visit my uncle in Bandung	Visit – Visit
	Present Continuous	I am visiting my uncle in Bandung	Visit- Visiting
	Present Perfect	I have visited my uncle in Bandung	Visit-Visited
2	Simple Present	She writes a novel reflecting her self	Write- Writes
	Simple Past	She wrote a novel reflecting her self	Write- Wrote
	Simple Future	She will write a novel reflecting her self	Write- Write
	Present Continuous	She is writing a novel reflecting her self	Write- Writing
	Present Perfect	She has written a novel reflecting her self	Write- Written
3	Simple Present	You cook a chinese food	Cook- Cook
	Simple Past	You cooked a chinese food	Cook- cooked
	Simple Future	You will cook a chinese food	Cook - cook
	Present Continuous	You are cooking a chinese food	Cook- cooking
	Present Perfect	You have cooked a chinese food	Cook- cooked
4	Simple Present	They study English in University	Study- study
	Simple Past	They studied English in University	Study- studied
	Simple Future	They will study English in University	Study- study
	Present Continuous	They are studying English in University	Study- studying
	Present Perfect	They have studied English in University	Study- studied
5	Simple Present	We watch one of famous films in Cinema	Watch-watch
	Simple Past	We watched one of famous films in Cinema	Watch-watched
	Simple Future	We will watch one of famous films in Cinema	Watch-watch
	Present Continuous	We are watching one of famous films in Cinema	Watch-watching
	Present Perfect	We have watched one of famous films in Cinema	Watch-watched

Table 7 shows that not all tenses cause the verb conjugation process. In tenses "simple future", the verb does not experience conjugation, but there is the addition of an auxiliary verb in the form of "will". Whereas in simple present tenses, verbs will be conjugated if **10** the subject of the sentence is a third-person singular as explained earlier. In addition, for the other three tenses, the verb is conjugated. For example, in simple past, Verb 1 changes to verb 2, in simple present continuous verb 1 changes to verb-ing and there is an addition to be, and in simple present perfect verb 1 changes to verb 3, and there is the addition of auxiliary verbs in the form of have / has.

4. The Conjugation Process due to Quantifiers

2 In English there are several types of quantifiers, but in this study, there are 3 examples of quantifiers that are used as research data.

Table 8. *English Verb Conjugation Adjusted with Quantifiers*

No	Kind of Quantifier	Examples of Sentence
1	A	a girl eats one of cakes cooked by my mom
	Some	Some girls eat cakes cooked by my mom
	Many	Many girls eat cakes cooked by my mom
2	A	A student studies in school library
	Some	Some students study in school library
	Many	Many students study in school library
3	A	A child goes to hospital to check his self
	Some	Some children go to hospital to check their self
	Many	Many children go to hospital to check their self
4	A	A police reads a newspaper
	Some	Some polices read newspapers
	Many	Many polices read newspapers
5	A	A film got reward as the best film
	Some	Some films got reward as the best films
	Many	Man films got reward as the best films

As explained earlier that the subject can affect the verb conjugation process of a sentence. Research data shows that singular subjects that are marked by the quantifier "a" with simple present tenses make verbs conjugate with affixes -s and es-. But not on a plural subject. This is consistent with previous data that, subjects with third-person singles require verbs to be conjugated.

Verb Conjugation in Bahasa

1. The Conjugation Process is adapted to Person as the Subject

There are 6 kind of verbs that are used as data to indicate whether there is a process of conjugating verbs that are adjusted to the person who acts as the subject of a sentence as found in Bahasa

Table 9. Bahasa Verb Conjugation Adjusted with Person

Subject	Examples of Verb					
	Makan (eat)	Minum (Drink)	Tidur (Sleep)	Belajar (Study)	Bernyanyi (Sing)	Memasak (Cook)
Saya (I)	Makan	Minum	Tidur	Belajar	Bernyanyi	Memasak
Kami (we)	Makan	Minum	Tidur	Belajar	Bernyanyi	Memasak
Dia (He,She,it)	Makan	Minum	Tidur	Belajar	Bernyanyi	Memasak
Kita (We)	Makan	Minum	Tidur	Belajar	Bernyanyi	Memasak
Mereka (They)	Makan	Minum	Tidur	Belajar	Bernyanyi	Memasak

Unlike English, in Indonesian, verbs do not experience conjugation even though the subject is a third person. The data shows that the subject type of a sentence does not affect the process of verb conjugation in a sentence.

2. The conjugation process is adapted to the type of sentence

There are 5 kind of active and passive sentences used as data to show the process of verb conjugation that is adjusted to the type of sentence:

Table 10. Verb Conjugation Adjusted with Kind of Sentence

No	Kind of Sentence	Example of Sentence	Verb Conjugation
1	Active	Dia menulis sebuah novel (He writes a novel)	Menulis - Ditulis
	Passive	Sebuah novel ditulis oleh dia (a novel is written by him)	
2	Active	Dia memasak sebuah makanan tradisional (She cooks a traditional food)	Memasak- Dimasak
	Passive	Sebuah makanan tradisional dimasak oleh dia (A traditional food is cooked by her)	
3	Active	Saya membeli sebuah HP canggih di Jakarta (I buy a sophisticated handphone in Jakarta)	Membeli- Dibeli
	Passive	Sebuah HP canggih dibeli oleh saya di Jakarta (A sophisticated handphone is bought by me in Jakarta)	
4	Active	Kami membuat sebuah kue ulangtahun (We make a birthday cake)	Membuat- Dibuat
	Passive	Sebuah kue ulang tahun dibuat oleh kami (A birthday cake is made by us)	
5	Active	Robert membaca sebuah puisi (Robert reads a love poetry)	Membaca- Dibaca
	Passive	Sebuah puisi dibaca oleh Robert (A love poetry is read by Robert)	

Table 10 shows that changing the sentence type from active to passive sentences requires verb conjugation. For example, "membaca" becomes "dibaca". This is similar to the data shown in English.

3. The conjugation process is adapted to tenses

In some languages, the type of tenses used in a sentence affects the conjugation process. However, this does not happen in Indonesian, for more details can be seen in table 11:

Table 11. Bahasa Verb Conjugation Adjusted with Tenses

No	Tenses	Kind of Sentence
1	Simple Present	Saya mengunjungi Paman saya di Bandung (I visit my uncle in Bandung)
	Simple Past	Saya telah mengunjungi Paman saya di Bandung (I visited my uncle in Bandung)
	Simple Future	Saya akan mengunjungi Paman saya di Bandung (I will visit my uncle in Bandung)
	Present Continuous	Saya sedang mengunjungi Paman saya di Bandung (I am visiting my uncle in Bandung)
2	Simple Present	Dia menulis sebuah novel yang menceritakan dirinya sendiri (She writes a novel reflecting her self)
	Simple Past	Dia telah menulis sebuah novel yang menceritakan dirinya sendiri (She wrote a novel reflecting her self)
	Simple Future	Dia akan menulis sebuah novel yang menceritakan dirinya sendiri (She will write a novel reflecting her self)
	Present Continuous	Dia sedang menulis sebuah novel yang menceritakan dirinya sendiri (She is writing a novel reflecting her self)
3	Simple Present	Kamu memasak sebuah makanan cina (You cook a chinese food)
	Simple Past	Kamu telah memasak sebuah makanan cina (You cooked a chinese food)
	Simple Future	Kamu akan memasak sebuah makanan cina (You will cook a chinese food)
	Present Continuous	Kamu sedang memasak sebuah makanan cina (You are cooking a chinese food)

Unlike German and English, the type of tenses used does not change the verb tenses. The data in table 11 shows that of the 4 different tenses, the main verb in each

sentence did not change. However, the tense markers in a sentence are marked with the addition of words such as “sedang”, “telah”, and, “akan”.

4. Conjugation Adjusted with Quantifiers

In German and English, quantifiers become one of the factors that require verbs to be conjugated. But this is not found in Indonesian, as in the following table:

Table 12. *Verb Conjugation Adjusted with Quantifiers*

No	Penanda Singular/Plural	Example of Sentence
1	Sebuah/ seorang (a)	Seorang gadis memakan kue yang dibuat oleh ibu saya (a girl eats cakes made by my mom)
	Beberapa (Some)	Beberapa gadis memakan kue yang dibuat oleh ibu saya (Some girls eat cakes made by my mom)
	Banyak (Many)	Banyak gadis memakan kue yang dibuat oleh ibu saya (Many girls eat cakes made by my mom)
2	Sebuah/ seorang (a)	Seorang siswa belajar di perpustakaan sekolah (A student studies in school library)
	Beberapa (Some)	Beberapa siswa belajar di perpustakaan sekolah (Some students study in school library)
	Banyak (Many)	Banyak siswa belajar di perpustakaan sekolah (Many students study in school library)
3	Sebuah/ seorang (a)	Seorang anak pergi ke rumah sakit untuk memeriksakan dirinya (A child goes to hospital to check his self)
	Beberapa (Some)	Beberapa anak pergi ke rumah sakit untuk memeriksakan diri mereka (Some children go to hospital to check their self)
	Banyak (Many)	Banyak anak pergi ke rumah sakit untuk memeriksakan diri mereka (Many children go to hospital to check their self)

Table 12 shows that verbs do not experience conjugation even though the subject is a third person, so it can be concluded that the number of subjects from one sentence or the quantifiers does not affect the verb conjugation process of the sentence. This can be seen in the table 12 which shows that there is no change in verbs even with different subject quantifiers.

Similarities and Differences in the Process of Conjugating Verbs in English, German and Indonesian

Based on the research data described previously, it can be formulated differences and similarities of the three languages by using semantic feature analysis. For more details, can be seen in table 13.

Table 13. Contrastive Analysis of the Verb Conjugation Process

No	Factors Causing Process Conjugation	German Language	English	Bahasa
1	The Conjugation Process is adapted to Person as the Subject	+	+	-
2	The conjugation process is adapted to kind of sentence	+	+	+
3	The conjugation process is adapted to tenses	+	+	-
4	Conjugation Adjusted with Quantifiers	+	+	-

Table 13 shows that the conjugation process of German and English verbs is more productive than Indonesian. Verbs in Indonesian experience conjugation when active sentences are converted into passive sentences and vice versa. Apart from these factors, verbs in Indonesian do not undergo a conjugation process. English and German have similarities in conjugation of verbs as in table 13.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study indicate that there are 4 factors that cause the verbs of a sentence to be conjugated, including: 1) conjugations adapted to the type of sentence subject, 2) conjugations that are adapted to active-passive sentences, 3) conjugations adjusted to the tenses of the sentence, 4) the conjugation caused by the numeral factor of the subject of the sentence. English and German have similarities in terms of conjugation caused by these four factors. Unlike the case with the two languages, verbs conjugate in Indonesian only because the process of changing active-passive sentences. The subject matter of sentences, tenses, and numeral factors of the subject are not factors that make the verbs of a sentence conjugate.

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