

## **An Error Analysis of Using Simple Past Tense in Writing Narrative Text at Tenth Grade Students of Senior High School 1 Jambi**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study aims to identify whether students make errors and find the types of errors made by students in class X MIPA 1 of Senior High School 1 Jambi City. This research is descriptive qualitative. The subject of this research is X MIPA 1 of Senior High School 1 Jambi City academic year 2021/2022. The data collected through the students' writing test. The results of this study indicate that there are errors made by students in the use of the past tense. All errors in using the past tense have been categorized and identified, namely omission, addition, misformation, and misordering. The findings of this study indicated that there were 102 total errors made by students which are classified into four categories based on the surface strategy taxonomy. There are 14 omission errors, 27 addition errors, 49 forming errors, and 12 sorting errors. The students made a dominant error in misformation. This can be seen from the results of the percentage where the wrong formation is 48.04%, then followed by stacking errors of 11.76%, omissions of 13.73, and addition errors of 26.47%. Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that the students of class X MIPA 1 SMAN 1 Jambi City made the most types of errors, namely misformation. This misformation error is the most difficult for students because they do not really understand the movement of verbs and the infinitive to the past tense. Students need to practice more in writing narrative texts so that they understand the use of simple past tense and the students can make good narrative texts.

**Keywords:** *Error Analysis, Simple Past Tense, Writing, Narrative Text*

### **INTRODUCTION**

English is an important language subject in the educational matters. The government realizes how important English is today for global development. Therefore, English has become an important part of the school curriculum, which is studied as the main subject by Indonesian students to develop technology, science and culture. To achieve this, Indonesian students must be able to master the four English skills; namely Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. Listening and reading are receptive skills whereas speaking and writing are productive skills. All skills must be improved in the teaching and learning process of English.

Writing is the most difficult and complex language skills to be learned by almost all students of all levels in the process of teaching and learning English. According to Gorrell and Laird (1964:1) writing requires thinking, and thinking is always complicated and hard. Writing is

complicated because the writer needs to do everything at once. Writing is the most difficult skill to learn because it needs hard thinking and produces words, sentences, paragraphs at the same time. That is why writing is the highest order thinking.

There are four types of genres in English: descriptive, narrative, recount, and exposition. In writing narrative, the students have to pay attention about simple past tense because it is commonly used in writing narrative. According to Axelrod and Cooper (1985) narration is a basic writing strategy for presenting action. Narrative writing is a writing which tells about the story of events in a period of time. Narrative is not only about fiction writing, but also about scientific writing can be written in a narration.

In this case, students who are learning to write narrative text may produce many errors. Such as in structure, they often make errors in forming simple past tense. Based on This research's experience when

teaching English at SMAN 1 Jambi City, most of them also get difficult when they have to make the correct form of simple past tense in writing narrative text. They make errors because they do not master the grammar well, especially in simple past tense.

According to Tomas (2011) and Zinsser in (Saputra, Pro. Dr. Dewa Komang Tantra, M.Sc., & Ma Ni Made Ratminingsih, 2014) stated that errors can be caused by absence of knowledge, less practice, and forgetting. The errors can be happened because of some factors, based on Norrish (1983) there are some factors that can cause the errors, they are: the carelessness from the foreign learners, the interferences from the learners' mother tongue which was believed as one the aspects that caused the errors, the translation from their mother tongue to another language so it caused the difficulty where there are not any synonyms between those two language, the learners could not translate the materials which were given to them based on what was expected by the native speaker.

Therefore, an error may occur in all components of language such as grammar. It can happen because they do not know how to understand about the aspect in the second foreign language, actually in grammar. Grammars are needed in a text, without grammar we cannot arrange a sentence properly. According to Knapp (2005) grammar therefore needs to deal with language from three perspectives: the generic, the textual, and syntactical. Error is a systematic deviation from the accepted system of target language.

When we talk about grammar, we cannot be separated it from tenses. Tenses have several functions. First the occurrence of an action in the present tense, past tense, or future tense, second whether it is really incomplete tense, the state of the sentence, third indicates whether an event or action will be executed. The past tense is used to express an action that happened in the past and is no longer happening. Important for anyone who wants to talk about the past, which has nothing to do with the future.

There are various tenses in English. According to Betty Schramper Azar (1999), there are 12 tenses. Pardiyono (2007) states that past tense is one of the most frequently used tense to tell about past activities of events. And it would be impossible to learn or write something effectively without knowing the grammar.

## **ERROR ANALYSIS**

Error analysis is a type of linguistic analysis that aims to focus on errors made by students. It consists of a comparison between the errors made in the Target Language and the target language itself. Brown (1994:206) states that errors can be analyzed, observed and classified to reveal something from the system operating by students, and cause learning progress about errors made by students.

## **SIMPLE PAST TENSE**

Apte (2004) states that the simple past tense and perfective aspect of the verb are two difficult areas for ESL (English as a Second Language) learners in the world. The simple past tense is used for past tenses that occur at a specific time. This can be specified in a time phrase (yesterday, last year, etc.) or understood from the context. A regular verb added to the base form, or -d if the verb ends in -e. Irregular verbs can change in many ways. The form of the verb is the same for all people.

## **WRITING**

Writing is a way of thinking and learning. According to Tarigan (1985:5), writing is a skill because writing is a productive skill for writing indirect communication, and his personality traits are very different from what is expressed by speaking directly.

## **NARRATIVE TEXT**

According to Rebecca (2003), narrative text is text related to a series of logical, and chronologically related events caused or experienced by factors. In addition, she states in that one key to

understanding the story is to understand the storyline, themes, characters, events, and their relationships. She also explains that narrative text is a text that tells the story of while entertaining the audience. It has a personality, attitude and behavior. characters, setting, story questions are usually presented first. The problem peaks in the center. The ending fixes the problem.

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research chose qualitative as a research design. According to Burns & Grove (2003); Holloway & Wheeler (2002); Parahoo (1997), qualitative approach is about describing individual or group life experiences which focus on how they interpret this experience. This research was designed with a descriptive qualitative research which answer the problems of errors commonly in students' writing. Qualitative approach is about "describing individual or group life experiences which focus on how they interpret this experience" (Burns & Grove, 2003; Holloway & Wheeler, 2002; Parahoo, 1997). This research can be named as a descriptive research because the data is described using words that tell its condition.

The subject of the research was be the students at tenth grade of Senior High School 1 Jambi City in academic year 2021/2022. The total of the students at tenth grade is 303 which consist of 10 classes. The sample of this research is students form X MIPA 1. This research determines the sample by using random sampling.

This study will use the test as research instruments to collect the data. This research gives the test to know error frequency in using simple past tense in writing narrative text. The test is narrative text writing test.

After the data collection is complete, This research will analyze the data found. According to Ary et al (2010, p.481) the most compound and puzzling phase of qualitative research is data analysis. For this research, This research analyzed the collected data by giving test. This research applies the theory of Rod

Ellis (1974:51) analyzing the data. The steps of analysis are as follows:

1. Collection of sample: the first step of analyzing errors is collection of sample. In this step, This research must decide a number of students which is being sample of the research. Then, they will be given a writing test in order to get data.
2. Reading, this research read the students' writing narrative text test.
3. Identification of errors: to identify the errors, This research must compare the sentence that was produced by students to the correct sentence in the target language.
4. Description of errors: after identifying the errors, then they can be classified into the types of errors.
5. Explanation of errors: this step will explain why errors occur.
6. Evaluation of errors: in this step, this research must decide the criteria of error which will be corrected because some errors can be considered more serious than other. The aim of evaluating errors is to distinct which errors will be corrected so the learner, which made error, will not be stress of getting correction.

To get qualitative result, the data would calculate and draw up in the table as follow:

$$\text{Score} = \frac{\text{correct answer(s)} \times 100}{\text{number of test/questions}}$$

After that, this research uses the formula for counting the student's percentage as follow:

$$P = \frac{F \times 100\%}{N}$$

P: Percentage

F: The total number of subjects made mistake

N: The total number of the subjects

### FINDINGS

After This research analyzed the data from the test, this research found some errors made by the students in writing narrative text using Simple Past Tense. It shows the total errors that made by the students. Misformation is the most frequent

error made by the tenth grade students of Senior High School 1 Jambi City, with 49 total of error. The second is addition with 27 total or errors. The next is omission with 14 total of errors. And the last is misordering with 12 total of error. And the total error that the students made were 102 errors.

**Table 1**  
**The Recapitulation of Students of Error**

Students	Add itio n	Om issi on	Misfo rmati on	Misor derin g
Student 1	2	4	5	-
Student 2	3	2	4	2
Student 3	2	1	3	3
Student 4	2	-	-	-
Student 5	-	-	4	-
Student 6	2	1	4	-
Student 7	-	-	2	1
Student 8	3	-	2	1
Student 9	1	-	1	-
Student 10	1	-	-	-
Student 11	2	3	5	-
Student 12	3	-	2	1
Student 13	-	1	-	-
Student 14	-	-	4	-
Student 15	-	-	1	-
Student 16	-	-	-	-
Student 17	2	-	1	-
Student 18	1	-	3	1
Student 19	-	-	1	1
Student 20	-	-	-	-
Student 21	-	-	2	-
Student 22	-	-	1	-
Student 23	-	2	3	-
Student 24	1	-	-	-
Student 25	2	-	1	2
Total	27	14	49	12
Total (N)	102			

## DISCUSSIONS

According to dulay's theory about types of error, this research found some errors made by the tenth grade of MIPA 1 of Senior High School 1 Jambi City. The errors are:

### a. Miformation

The students used the wrong form of the morpheme or the structure, the students used to be in present form for past sentence, irregular and regular verbs, and using modals in present form for past tense, verb 2 after modals. The picture below is an example of a narrative text made by students from class x MIPA 1, we can see that the error he made was writing verb 2 incorrectly, and found several words in the text.

### b. Misordering

This error occurs because the students make errors in the placement of morphemes or a group of morphemes in sentences. This means that the sentence can be true in the elements presented, but the order is wrong. There were 12 (11.76%) misordering errors made by students found in their narrative texts. For instance: *me and my brother*, it looks like there is no error in this word, but actually the placement of the words is not right, it should be *my brother and I*.

### c. Omission

This omission error occurs when the student does not produce an item that should appear in a well-formed utterance. In this error the students made the mistake of omitting some words and making incomplete sentences in their narrative writing. There were 14 (13.73%) omission errors made by students. This omission is the second least error after misordering, this error does not reach 50% or even 15%, but even so we still have to pay more attention to students and explain more about narrative text and simple past tense, with those errors found will be more reduce.

### d. Addition

This addition error occurs when students produce an item that should not appear in a well-formed utterance. The student makes the mistake of adding some elements in the sentence that should not

appear. There were 27 (26.47%) addition errors made by students. This research also found the addition errors in students' text "-ed" at the end of the sentence that the student should not do. The text below is an example students' narrative text, it can be seen that the sentence is actually correct, they added unnecessary words, and became an error.

The dominant error made by students in the use of the simple past tense in narrative texts is misformation, with a total errors of 49 (48.04%). Misformation is errors in using one grammatical form to replace another grammatical form or the student gives something, even it is not true. Despite being the most errors made by students, this error does not exceed 50%, in contrast to previous studies, the percentage for misformation errors exceeds 50%. From the explanation above, this research concluded that most of the students made mistakes in the incorrect formation of irregular verbs. This shows that most students have difficulty with the irregular verb. They do not use verb 2 in writing narrative text, they have to use it. For example, in a writing test, students mostly write unnecessary words, forget the words they should write, and write in the present tense rather than in the simple past tense.

## CONCLUSIONS

After this research conducted After This research conducted research and analyzed data using the selected instrument to the students in class X MIPA 1 Senior High School 1 Jambi City. Based on the findings and discussions in the previous chapter, it can be concluded as follow:

1. The errors that made by the tenth grade students of MIPA 1 of Senior High School 1 Jambi City in writing narrative text using simple past tense are error of addition with 27 or 26,47%, errors of omission with 14 or 13,73%, errors of misordering 12 or 11,76%, and errors of misformation 49 or 48,04%. The students made such error because they are still confused with the formula of simple past tense, as well as regular and irregular verbs which are still found

errors because of this. And also adding the -ed word that they should not do.

2. Based on the data analyzed above, this research found that the dominant error made by students is misformation with 48,04% total of errors. Although the percentage figure does not reach 50%, but from the data, we can see that the tenth grade students of MIPA 1 still have a problem about using simple past tense in writing narrative text, especially in irregular verbs. They were confused in using simple past tense in paragraph was applied. This misformation error is the most difficult for students because they do not really understand the movement of verbs and from infinitive to past tense.

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