

**AN ERROR ANALYSIS OF SIMPLE PAST TENSE  
USED IN WRITING RECOUNT TEXT**

Asmiyati <sup>1</sup>  
Dede Nurdiawati <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> the Graduate of English Education Study Program  
Peradaban University Bumiayu - Brebes  
E-mail: asmy\_bms@yahoo.com  
Phone: 085726016791

<sup>2</sup> the Lecturer of English Education Study Program  
Peradaban University Bumiayu - Brebes  
E-mail: dedenurdiawati7@gmail.com  
Phone: 087710305577

**Abstract**

The objective of this research was to find out the types of error and the dominant factor that influenced the use of simple past tense in recount text. The writer used descriptive qualitative method and the techniques to collect the data were documentation, interview and questionnaire. The data were analyzed by using error analysis method. The respondents of this research was the tenth grade of MA Ar-Ridlo Pekuncen, there were 23 students. There were four types of errors found: omission 20.8%, addition 12.5%, misformation 54,2% and misordering 12,5%. The factor influenced was found from the result of interview and questionnaire. The result

showed many factors, there were: over-generalization, carelessness, lack of knowledge, translation, errors encouraged by teaching material and or method, first language or mother tongue. In this research, the dominant factors that the writer found was first language or mother tongue because they wrote recount text by using Indonesian pattern.

**Keywords:** error analysis, simple past tense, recount text

## **A. Introduction**

As an international language, English has an important role as a means of communication among people in the world. Realizing the importance of English as spoken and written international communication, the Ministry Education of Indonesia includes English as a compulsory subject to learn in junior to senior high school. There are certain skills in learning English that students need to learn, such as: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Listening and reading skills that involve receiving messages are regarded as receptive skills. Speaking and writing skills which involve language production are considered to be productive skills.

As productive skill, writing is the most difficult skill for not only it needs a lot of vocabularies in composing paragraph, but also grammatically correct in order to be comprehensible besides other writing's rules. Therefore, composing paragraph in writing activity takes a lot of time.

In Indonesia, English is learnt by students as foreign language, so they have some difficulties to master English and they usually have problems to create good sentences in writing process. These

problems are clearer when the learners make a written text. One of written text that causes an error is recount text. Writing recount text includes the productive skills that should be mastered by students especially in senior high school. It requires some aspects such as widely perception, involving thinking process and need good understanding on simple past tense. In this case, the strong foundation in simple past tense becomes an aspect that should be comprehended in order to make meaningful sentences in writing recount text.

Although senior high school students have been studying English since elementary school, but there are some students who still make simple past tense error in writing, especially in recount text.

Due to phenomenon above, the writer interested to conduct a research entitled “An Error Analysis of Simple Past Tense Used in Recount Text Written by the Tenth Grade Students of MA Ar-Ridlo in the Academic Year 2014/2015” to know the errors and problem faced by them in writing recount text.

## **B. Literature Review**

The theories reviewed here are related to procedure text and “Snowball Throwing” method.

### **1. The Definition of Error Analysis**

Richards in Fitriyani (2013: 18) says that error analysis is the study of errors written by the second and foreign language learners. Error analysis may be carried out in order to find out how well some one knows a language, find out how a person learns a language, and obtain information on common difficulties in language learning, as an aid in teaching or in the preparation of teaching materials.

## **2. The Procedures in Error Analysis**

According to Ellis (1997: 15-20), there are some procedures to analyze data in error analysis that consist of:

### **a. Identification of Errors**

The first step in the process of analysis is recognition or identification of errors. In identifying errors the sentences produced by students are compared to the normal and correct sentences in the target language.

### **b. Description of Errors**

In this step, the writer describes those errors by identifying and classifying into kinds of omission, addition, misformation, and disorder.

### **c. Explanation of Errors**

Explaining is a step to analyze the cause of errors. In other words, in this step the writer tries to explain how and why a sentence called to be erroneous.

### **d. Evaluation of Errors**

Evaluation is a process to collect, clarify and verify relevant values and standard. It is designed to reduce, revise and devise remedial lessons in teaching learning process. However, in this study, the writer uses evaluating the errors as a step that involves drawing conclusion.

## **3. The Types of Error**

Ellis (2007: 18) makes a classification of errors based on surface strategy taxonomy. Errors can be classified into four types. They are:

### **a. Errors of Omission**

It is a sentence where an element is omitted, actually it should be presented.

b. Errors of Addition

It is a phenomenon in which a certain aspect of language rules is added into a correct order (correct sentence), in order words some elements are presented which should not be presented. There are three kinds of addition of errors:

1) Double Marking

Double marking is marked by increasing element with the same characteristic in utterance.

2) Regularization

Regularization is marked by error formation in using regular or irregular verb.

3) Simple Addition

If an addition error is not a double marking or regularization, it is called a simple addition.

c. Misformation

Misformation is the error of using one grammatical form in the place of another grammatical form.

d. Misordering

It is a sentence which its order is incorrect. The sentence can be right in presented elements, but wrongly sequenced.

#### 4. The Causes of Error

The errors made by students are caused by some factors either from the students itself or from the other person. Norrish in Cholipah (2014: 12) exposes three causes of errors:

a. Carelessness

It is often closely related to lack of motivation. Many teachers will admit that it is

not always the student's fault if he loses interest; perhaps the materials and/or the style of presentation do not suit him.

b. First Language Interference

Language learning (mother tongue or a foreign language) was a matter of habit information. When someone tries to learn new habits the old ones will interfere the new ones.

c. Translation

Probably the most students make errors is translation. This happens because the students translate their first language sentence of idiomatic expression into the target language word by word.

Another expert who also discusses the cause of errors is Corder in Khodijah (2006: 9) who claims that there are three major causes of error that consist of:

a. Over-generalization

Over generalization generally involves the creation of one deviant structure in place of two regular structures

b. Errors Encouraged by Teaching Material or Method

Error can appear because of the teaching process itself and error is an evidence of failure of ineffective teaching or lack control. If material is well chosen, graded and presented with meticulous care, the error can be prevented. So effective teaching a structured material are needed in teaching-learning process.

c. Mother-Tongue Interference

Even though the students appear to be able to learn a foreign language quite easily and to produce new sounds very effectively, must

older learners experience considerable difficulty. The sound system and grammar of the first language impose themselves on the new language and this leads to a “foreign” pronunciation, faulty grammatical patterns and occasionally to the wrong choice of vocabulary.

### **C. Method of Investigation**

In this research, there were two kinds of primary data source such as questionnaire and interview. The first was questionnaire from the students of MA Ar-Ridlo in academic year 2014/2015. The total numbers of the students are about 23 students. The second was interview for the teacher in order to know the factors that influenced simple past tense errors in recount text written by students on the tenth grade of MA Ar-Ridlo.

The qualitative technique would be used to analyze the qualitative data. The data would be taken from documentation, questionnaire and interview. The result of analysis was used to know about the kinds of error and the dominant factor that caused simple past tense error in recount text.

The writer used qualitative-descriptive analysis as technique of data analysis. It meant to describe the data by using sentences in order to get clear and detail explanation. The process of data analysis of qualitative research was while data collection process and after the data have been collected. This research used some steps of Miles and Huberman in Sugiyono (2010: 338) which presents the steps in data analysis, which were: data reduction, data display, and data conclusion. In analyzing the data, the writer used error analysis method that consists of some procedure which includes the steps suggested by Ellis (1997: 15-20): identifying errors by comparing the respondent

sentences to the correct sentences, describing errors to classify the error made by the students, explaining errors to explain the cause of errors, evaluating errors to reduce, revise and devise remedial lessons in teaching learning.

## **D. Discussion**

There were 38 sentences errors related to simple past tense in recount text committed by respondents. Why a sentence is called to be erroneous in each kind of errors is explained as follows:

### **1. Omission**

These errors were identified by the absence of an item that should appear in a well-formed utterance.

- a. The students omit ending verb-ed/-d as past form.

*I return to home.* In this sentence, the verb “return” should be “returned”. So the sentence should be “I returned to home”. And then, there was also the sentence “my fish jump to river again”, that sentence should be “My fish jumped to river again”.

- b. The students omit “to-be”.

The example was “The water very cold” it should be “The water was very cold”.

### **2. Addition**

This type of errors was characterized by the presence of an item that must not appear in a well-formed utterance.

- a. The Addition of Preposition

The students used inappropriate preposition in the past tense. The example was “Last month I went in the to garden”, that



sentence should be “Last month I went to the garden”.

b. Addition of to-be

The students used to-be before verb. However this sentence is active. The example was “I am and Fatkhul went to visit Bunton”, this sentence should be ”Fatikhul and I visited Bunton”.

### 3. Misformation

Errors of misformation were characterized by the use of one grammatical form in the place of another grammatical form. The students still used incorrect structure. They used V-1 in several sentences in writing recount text and recount text might use past tense. For examples:

- a. Incorrect sentence: I forget to study.  
Correct sentence: I forgot to study.
- b. Incorrect sentence: I am happy.  
Correct sentence: I was happy.
- c. Incorrect sentence: We eat together.  
Correct sentence: We ate together.

### 4. Misordering

Errors of misordering were characterized by putting the words in the wrong order. The students didn't follow the right pattern of sentences: S+V2+O. The examples are: “I and friend went house uncle in Ajibarang”, this sentence should be “My friend and I went to my uncle's house in Ajibarang”. And then another example was “I get value a terrible”, that sentence should be “I got a terrible value”.

From that kind of errors, there was one type often committed by the students that was misformation. And the sum of the analyzing data

were misordering there were 6 or 12,5%, misformation there were 26 or 54,2%, addition there were 6 or 12,5% and then omission there were 10 or 20,8%.

The factors that influenced errors in recount text especially in simple past tense were taken by the result of the interview and the questionnaire. They are: lack of knowledge, over-generalization, carelessness, first language or mother tongue interference, error encouraged by teaching material or method, translation. The dominant factor that influenced the use of simple past tense in recount text was first language or mother tongue interference and the minor factor was over-generalization.

## **E. Conclusion**

It can be concluded from the findings there are four kinds of error which the students did, they are: omission, addition, misformation and misordering. The study reveals that the most frequent errors type was misformation, it 26 times or 54,2%. And the other like omission 10 times or 20,8%, addition 6 times 12,5% and the last is misordering 6 times or 12,5%.

The result of the research about the dominant factors influence error in the use of simple past tense in recount text was first language interference because the students directly translate word by word. And then the other factors are: lack of knowledge, lack of motivation during teaching and learning process, translation, over-generalization and errors encouraged by teaching material or method.

## **Acknowledgement**

The writers would like to express the deepest gratitude to some people who have supported and assisted the process of writing this article. They are Prof. Dr. Yahya A. Muhaimin as the Rector of Peradaban University, the Head of English Education Study Program and the English Education Study Program lecturers of Peradaban University.

## Bibliography

- Ali, Muhammad. 1984. *Penelitian Kependidikan: Suatu Pendekatan Praktek*. Bandung: Angkasa.
- Anderson, Mark & Kathy Anderson. 1998. *Text Types in English*. Australia: Macmillan Education Australia.
- Arikunto, S. 2010. *Prosedure Penelitian Suatu Pendekatan Praktek*. Jakarta: Rikena Cipta.
- Azar, Betty Schramper. 2003. *Fundamentals of English Grammar*. NewYork: Longman.
- Bakir, R. Suyoto. 2011. *Focus on English Grammar*. Kharisma Publishing Group.
- Cholipah. 2014. *An Analysis of Students' Error in Writing Recount Text*. Thesis: UIN Syarif Hidayatullah. Not published.
- Corder, S. P. 1981. *Error Analysis and Interlanguage*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Ellis, R. 1997. *The Study of Second Language Acquisition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Fitriyani, Anisa. 2013. *An Error Analysis of Word Order Used in Recount Text Made by Students at the Tenth Grade of MAN 1 Kota Magelang Academic Year of 2013/2014*. Thesis: STAIN Salatiga. Not published.
- Frank, Marcella. 1972. *Modern English*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc, Englewood Cliffs.

- Hartono, Rudi. 2005. *Genres of Texts*. Semarang: Universitas Negeri Semarang.
- Helmi, Farid. 2012. *Improving Students' Skill in Writing Recount Text by Using Personal Letter*. Thesis: State Institute for Islamic Studies Walisongo. Not published.
- Hornby, A. S. 1995. *The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*. Australia: Oxford University Press.
- Kardimin, Akh. 2005. *Essential English Grammar*. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar Offset.
- Khojidah, Siti. 2006. *Error Analysis of the Students Test Result on Personal Pronoun*. Thesis: UIN Syarif Hidayatullah. Not publish.
- LPPM. 2014. *Buku Panduan Skripsi*. Bumiayu: STKIP Islam Bumiayu.
- Marina, Efa. 2013. *An Error Analysis on the Use of Past Tense Construction in Writing Recount Text*. Thesis: STKIP ISLAM BUMIAYU. Not published.
- Moleong, Lexy J. 2011. *Metode Penelitian Qualitative*. Bandung: PT Remaja Rosda Karya.
- Mulianingsih, Indra Ratna. 2014. *An Error Analysis of Students' English Writing*. Thesis: UMP. Not Published.
- Norrish, J. 1987. *Language Learning and their Errors*. London: Macmillan Publisher Ltd.

- Oshima, Alice, and Ann Hogue. 2006. *Writing Academic English*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. New York: Addison Wesley Longman.
- Pardiyono. 2012. *Pasti bisa! Let's write!*. Yogyakarta: C.V Andioffset.
- Parrott, Martin. 2000. *Grammar for English Language Teachers*. United Kingdom: University Press Cambridge.
- Richards, Jacks. 1972. *Error Analysis*. Cambridge: Corder Longman Group.
- Riyanto, Slamet dkk. 2010. *A Handbook of English Grammar*. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar.
- Sarwono, Jonathan. 2006. *Metode Kuantitatif dan Kualitatif*. Yogyakarta: Graha ilmu.
- Sugiyono. 2010. *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif Kualitatif dan R & D*. Bandung: Alfa Beta.
- Sugiyono. 2012. *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif Kualitatif dan R & D*. Bandung: Alfa Beta
- Wiyati, Ari. 2012. *The Analysis of Grammatical Errors Made by English Departement Students of STAIN Salatiga in Writing Inrtoduction of Graduating Paper*. Thesis: STAIN Salatiga. Not published.