

AN ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS' PAST TENSE VERB ERROR IN WRITING RECOUNT TEXT AT THE TENTH GRADE OF SMAN 4 KOTA SERANG ACADEMIC YEAR 2016/2017

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ABSTRACT

The objectives of this research were to identify the frequency of errors and to describe the causes of the error on using past tense verb in writing recount text made by the tenth grade students of SMAN 4 Kota Serang. This study was a case study which involved 35 students of the tenth grade of social science 6. In this research, the researcher used two instruments, namely: students' writing assignment and open-ended questionnaire. The collected data were identified, classified, and analyzed based on the types of error by using Corder's theory. The result of this research showed that the students mostly made the error of selection (178=72.95%), omission (54=22.13%), addition (10=4.10%), and ordering (2=0.82%) from out of the total errors (244). The errors made by the students were influenced by interlingual and intralingual transfer. Thus, the causes tended to be related to the differences of the structural verb-forms between English and their native language. Finally, this research is expected to be used as a reference to the English teacher to minimize the students' errors and to the other researcher to make a solution for this problem.

Keywords: error analysis, interlingual transfer, intralingual transfer, past tense verb, recount text.

INTRODUCTION

Recount text is one of genres in writing that should be learnt by students of senior high school, as stated in curriculum 2013. Since recount tells about the past experiences, it uses past tense. When the recount text is taught in the classroom, the students are expected to be able to write it in English using a correct structure. In the fact, most students still faced problems when they used simple past tense in writing recount text. Based on the researcher's experience during pre-service teaching program, the researcher often found the students' error in mentioning past tense verb, for example: give/ *gived*, tell/ *telled*, and sleep/ *sleeped*. Many students did not understand to differentiate between the regular and the irregular form of past tense verb.

The problem which the students faced was closely related to the differences of language system between Indonesian and English. In line with Ramelan (1992) cited in Luthfiyati (2015: 161), the most learning problems are caused by different elements found between two languages. The Indonesian does not have tenses like English. Considering the problem that students faced in the classroom, the researcher was interested in identifying the frequency of errors and in describing the causes of the errors made by the tenth grade of social science 6 students of SMAN 4 Kota Serang.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Recount Text

Someone who has already learnt about recount text is expected to be able to express their idea related to their experience. As stated by Pardiyono (2007: 63), recount text is a kind of text which made with the purpose to give information about activity in the past.

Simple Past Tense

Simple past tense is a kind of tenses. According to Azar (1989) cited in Rizkiyana (2013: 59), the simple past indicates that an activity or situation began and ended at a particular time in the past. It can be said that the meaning of the past is in the location in time period.

These are some pattern of simple past tense, as follows: using verb and using non-verb. The pattern of using verb is S+ V₂, e.g. a) I **visited** my grandmother last week. (regular verb); b) You **bought** some books three days ago (irregular verb). The pattern of using non-verb is S + to be (was/ were), e.g. a) She **was** in Malang last holiday. ; b) They **were** in Jogja last Friday.

Error

Producing errors can be perceived as a normal part of learning anything. According to Brown (2007: 258), error is a noticeable deviation from the adult grammar of a native speaker, reflects the competence of the learner. Errors caused by lack of knowledge about the target language (English) or by incorrect hypotheses about it.

There are some types of error. According to Corder (1982) cited in Barzegar (2013: 322), error is divided into four categories: error of omission, error of addition, error of selection, and error of ordering.

- 1) Error of omission is the absence of an item that should be appeared or should be presented, e.g. Dinda has three *bag*. It should be “*Dinda has three bags*”.
- 2) Error of addition is the presence of an item that must not appear in well-formed utterances, e.g. She didn’t *slept* last night. It should be “*She didn’t sleep last night*”.
- 3) Error of selection is made by the learner where the learner chooses the wrong items in the right place, e.g. I *selled* two birds yesterday. It should be “*I sold two birds yesterday*”. From the example, a past tense marker is put by the learner, but it is incorrect.
- 4) Error of ordering is the error where the items presented are correct but wrongly sequences, e.g. *Tuti sang did not beautifully at the karaoke club yesterday*. The sentence structure above was ordered incorrectly. The correct sentence is “*Tuti did not sing beautifully at the karaoke club yesterday*”.

There are so many causes of error. Brown (2007: 263-266) classified sources or causes of errors into four, namely:

- 1) Interlingual transfer, that is the negative influence of the mother tongue of the learner.
- 2) Intralingual transfer, that is negative transfer of items within the target language.
- 3) The Context of learning which overlaps both types of transfer.
- 4) Communication strategies which is the conscious employment of verbal mechanisms for communicating an idea when linguistic forms are not available to the learner for some reason.

Error Analysis

Processes to analyze errors are called error analysis. There are some stages in analyzing errors. According to Corder (1982) cited in Chelli (2013: 80), in order to proceed to error analysis, three stages are to be followed: recognition of errors, accounting of errors and explanation of errors. The three stages are logically depends on each other, hence, we cannot describe errors without recognizing that a sentence is classified as errors, and ultimately trying to supply an appropriate explanation.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The researcher used case study as a design in this qualitative research. The researcher conducted the research at the tenth grade of social science 6 of SMAN 4 Kota Serang consisted of 35 students.

The researcher used the students’ writing assignment and questionnaire. The researcher used the students’ writing assignment in recount text with the theme, namely unforgettable moment. The writing assignment was used to find out the frequency of past tense verb error.

The researcher used open-ended questionnaire which consists of 11 questions to find out possible causes of error in recount text made by the students of tenth grade of social science 6. The open-ended questionnaire can be seen on the table below:

Table 1: Questionnaire Draft

No.	Question List	Objectives
A.	The Students' Interest Dealing with Writing	To obtain their glance of writing recount text
1.	How is your feeling while you are writing the recount text?	
B.	The Students' Simple Past Tense Mastery	To draw initial-conclusion of their simple past tense mastery
2.	Do you know the function of simple past tense? Explain it!	
3.	Do you know the difference on using was and were in simple past tense? Explain it!	
4.	Do you know that there are regular and irregular verb in simple past tense? Give the example!	
5.	Do you know that there are rule restrictions in some context of sentences in English? Explain it!	
6.	Do you use a complete application or rule in writing your recount text? Explain the pattern!	
7.	How is your strategy in translating a sentence from Indonesian to English in writing your recount text?	
C.	The Students' Difficulties Dealing with Simple Past Tense	To assume their problem dealing with simple past tense, their perspective on overcoming their problem, and to learn out of what is their opinion about the teacher's strategy in teaching learning activity
8.	What is your difficulty that you face in answering the assignment?	
9.	Why do you face that difficulty? Explain what you feel!	
10.	How do you solve your difficulty?	
11.	In your opinion, how is the way which your teacher should do in order to solve your difficulty?	

In order to find the answers of research question, the researcher used data analysis technique based on Miles, Huberman and Saldana's theory (2014) cited in Misna (2015: 527), such as data condensation, data display, and data conclusion/ verification.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

1) Students' Writing Assignment

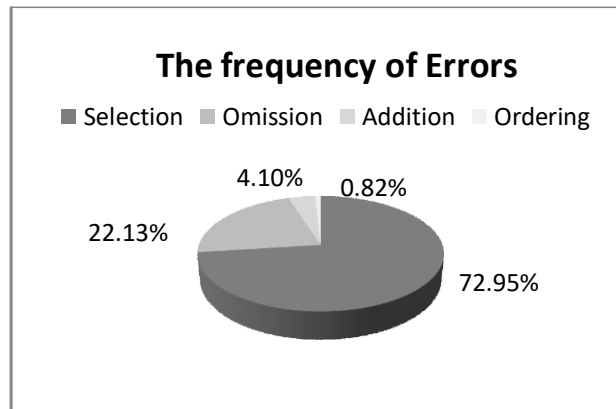
The finding of the students' writing assignment, as follows: the highest frequency is the error of selection with 72.95%, the second is the error of omission with 22.13%, the third is the error of addition with 4.10%, and the lowest is the error of ordering with 0.82%. The researcher displayed the percentage of error occurrences in the following table:

Table 2: Percentage of Error Occurrences

Corder's Types of Error	Frequency	Percentage
The error of omission	54	22.13%
The error of addition	10	4.10%
The error of selection	178	72.95%
The error of ordering	2	0.82%
Total	244	100%

The percentage of the recapitulation of students' errors was converted into a chart. The chart covered the highest until the lowest rank of frequency of error occurrences as follows:

Figure 1: The Frequency of Errors



A) The Error of Selection

The researcher found that there were 178 errors or 72.95% from the students' writing assignment. The most common occurred errors of selection in the students' writing assignment were identified into four kinds, they are:

- a. Selection of simple present (be/ auxiliary verb/ V1) in positive sentence for simple past tense, e.g. *I'm excited to play water....* The correct sentence is "*I was excited to play water....*"
- b. Selection of transformation from irregular simple past (V2) to base form of verb (V1) in negative sentence, e.g. *...and the car we rented did not came.* Negative form of simple past tense takes pattern of V1 after the "did not". The correct sentence is "*...and the car we rented did not come.*"
- c. Selection of transformation from irregular verb 1 (V1) to irregular past tense verb (V2) by adding "-ed/ -d", e.g. *...and spende time together.* The correct sentence is "*...and spent time together.*"
- d. Selection of transformation of verb after "to or modal", e.g. *There I could felt sadness.* The correct sentence is "*There I could feel sadness.*"

B) The Error of Omission

The researcher found that there were 54 errors or 22.13% from the students' writing assignment. It had been identified from the students' assignment that the most frequently errors of omission from the simple past tense in recount text assignment were classified into two, they are:

- a. Omission of "to be (was/ were)" in sentence of simple past tense, e.g. *I very tired.* The correct sentence is "*I was very tired.*"
- b. Omission of suffix "-ed" for regular verb of simple past tense, e.g. *I ask our brother, Bayu to join us.* The correct sentence is "*I asked our brother, Bayu to join us.*"

C) The Error of Addition

The researcher found that there were 10 errors or 4.10% from the students' writing assignment. The most common errors of addition from the participants found in this research are classified into two. They are:

- a. Addition of "to be" before verb in the simple past tense, e.g. We *were* also prayed in congregation. The correct sentence is "We also *prayed* in congregation."
- b. Addition of suffix "-ed" or use past tense verb after negative word in the simple past tense, e.g. On the ground, the trip was not *jammed*. The correct sentence is "On the ground, the trip was not *jam*."

D) The Error of Ordering

There were two students had shown this occurrences of error or 0.82%, e.g. I felt that my holiday yesterday *run did not smoothly*. The correct sentence is "I felt that my holiday yesterday *did not run smoothly*."

2) Open-ended Questionnaire

The first question was about the students' feeling dealing with writing recount text. The commonest answer was 21 students answered that they felt difficult in writing the recount text, as stated by student with code #7 "*Bingung karena tidak ngerti*". The researcher concluded that the students still faced problem in writing recount text. It can be seen by the number of students who answer difficult. The researcher predicted that the difficulty was related to the past tense verb that the students should use in the sentences.

The second question was about the students understanding dealing with the function of simple past tense. The commonest answer was 21 students answered that they understand the function of simple past tense, as stated by student with code #6 "*Simple past tense untuk menuliskan kejadian yang pernah terjadi di masa lalu/ masa lampau*". The researcher concluded that the students understood well about the function of simple past tense. It indicated that the student understood that when they wanted to tell about the past they should use simple past tense.

The third question was about the students understanding dealing with the use of 'was' and 'were' in simple past tense. The commonest answer was 24 students indicated that they do not understand about the difference on using 'was' and 'were' in simple past tense, as stated by student with code #5 "*was kata kerja yang digunakan untuk masa lampau, were yang sedang dialami*". The researcher concluded that the students did not fully understand about the difference in the use of 'was' and 'were' in simple past tense. They had lack of knowledge about it. The researcher predicted that this lack would cause many errors because "to be" in simple past tense is 'was' and 'were', they cannot avoid to be used in the sentences.

The fourth question was about the students understanding dealing with regular and irregular verb in simple past tense. The commonest answer was 17 students answered that they do not understand about regular and irregular verb in simple past tense, as stated by student with code #4 "*kata kerja beraturan dan tidak beraturan, contoh regular: go-went, irregular: arase-arose*". The researcher concluded that the students had lack of vocabulary of irregular and

regular verb so that they still did error in their example. The researcher assumed this lack would cause many errors because in verbal sentence needs one verb or more. If they did not understand it, they would make many errors.

The fifth question was about the students' understanding dealing with rule restriction in English. The commonest answer was 34 students answered that they do not know about the rule restriction in English, as stated by student with code #10 "*tidak mengetahui dan tidak mengerti*". The researcher concluded that the students did not have enough knowledge about English structure.

The sixth question was about the students' work while writing recount text whether they used complete rule or not. The commonest answer was 18 students did not answer the question fully, as stated by student with code #5 "*S+V2+O*". The researcher assumed that the student did not answer although they know about the structure well. The researcher concluded that the students understood that when he/ she wrote a recount text he/ she should use past tense and mention a pattern of simple past tense very well, but some students still confused of using it. Based on the data from questionnaire, all of the students understood well because they could explain the formula correctly.

The seventh question was about the students' strategy in translating a sentence from Indonesian to English. The commonest answer was 17 students answered that they translated sentence by sentence, as stated by the student with code #20 "*mentranslate per kalimat*". The researcher concluded that the students did English writing by translating it sentence by sentence. The researcher assumed that the students understood that translating sentence by sentence can minimize the error. If the students translated their sentences word by word, there would be an error, considering the differences between Indonesian and English language pattern (Richard, 1973)

The eighth question was about the students' difficulty dealing with recount text. The commonest answer was 20 students who answered that the translating as their difficulty, as stated by the student with code #1 "*mengartikan dari bahasa Indonesia ke bahasa Inggris*". The researcher concluded that translating becomes a problem for students considering the differences between Indonesian and English language pattern.

The ninth question was about the reason of the difficulty that students faced. The commonest answer was 10 students answered that lack of vocabulary as their reason, as stated by the student with code #4 "*dalam bahasa Inggrisnya, karena saya tidak terlalu hapal dalam bahasa Inggrisnya*". The researcher concluded that lack of vocabulary becomes a problem for students in writing recount text.

The tenth question was about the way to solve the students' difficulty. The commonest answer was 16 students answered that they look at dictionary as their problem solving, as stated by the student with code #20 "*dengan cara translate atau menerjemahkan dengan menggunakan kamus bahasa Inggris-Indonesia*". The researcher concluded that the students need an aid to solve their difficulty in writing recount text.

The last question was about the students' opinion dealing with the way the English teacher should do in the class in order to solve the students' problem. The commonest answer was 20

students answered that the teacher should teach clearer, as stated by the student with code #2 “*menjelaskannya lebih jelas lagi dan jangan terlalu terburu-buru ketika menjelaskan*”. The researcher concluded that the students want the teacher to teach clearly and suggest an attractive way to teach English.

In order to find the right answer of the second research question, the researcher combined two instruments. These are the explanation:

A) Interlingual Transfer

Most students made error in their writing. It is a fact that making error is a part of learning a language (Tarigan, 2011). In this research, the students were influenced by interlingual transfer. Brown (2007) said that interlingual transfer is the negative influence of the mother tongue of the learner. It happened because the features of the two languages are different. For example, English has different tenses to express the activities in the past, present, and future. However, in Indonesia does not have tenses.

Based on the questionnaire number 2, the students indicated that they understood about the simple past tense with its pattern, but in fact, in their writing assignment, the students still made many errors.

Example: “One day, I and my family *plan* to have a holiday.

Correct: One day, I and my family *planned* to have a holiday.

These finding of questionnaire can be restated that most participants have been basically thought that they have known about how to use simple past tense in written text, yet the result of writing assignment showed that they made various errors in their text.

B) Intralingual Transfer

Intralingual transfer is negative transfer of the target language itself. There are 4 language deviations, namely:

a. Overgeneralization

This type of language deviation was represented by question number 4. In the students’ answer, they can give an example of regular and irregular verb correctly, but in fact, some students still made errors in irregular verb, such as on using *maked*, *drived*, *spended*, *sitted*, *buyed*, and *eated*. The researcher assumes that it can be included to overgeneralization. It can be supported by Richards (1973) statement cited in Chelli (2013), overgeneralization is one of the strategies used by learners, which consists in applying a rule which has been learnt beyond the extent to which it applies.

This finding of questionnaire can be restated that some participants have been basically thought that they have known about regular and irregular verb in past tense, yet the result of writing assignment showed that they made errors in their text.

b. Ignorance of rule restriction

This type of language deviation was represented by question number 5. In the students’ answer, the researcher found that the students did not understand the English structure well. It can be supported by the students’ writing assignment, as follows: *to went*, *did not*

came, and could felt. The researcher can assume that it is included in ignorance of rule restriction based on the Richard's theory (1973) in Chelli (2013) that stated ignorance of rule restriction is ignorance to apply a rule to the context where they do not apply.

c. Incomplete application of rule

This type of language deviation was represented by question number 6. In the students' answer, the researcher found that the students understood the formula of simple past tense in recount text well because all of the students can explain the formula correctly, but in fact, in the students' writing assignment, some students still used verb 1 in their recount text. The researcher assumes that it is included in incomplete application of rule based on the Richard's theory (1973) in Chelli (2013) that stated incomplete application of rule is failure to learn the more complex types of structure because the learner finds that he can achieve communication by using relatively simple rules.

This finding of questionnaire can be restated that some participants have been basically thought that they have known about the formula of simple past tense, yet the result of writing assignment showed that they made errors in their text.

d. False concept hypothesized

This type of language deviation was represented by question number 3. In the students' answer, the researcher found that the students did not understand well about the difference on using "was" and "were" and the difference between regular and irregular verb. In fact, the students did not do error on using was and were because most of them did not use it. They used is, am, and are. It might be caused by the students thought that is, am, are are to be for all tenses. The researcher assumes that it is included in false concept hypothesized based on Richard's theory in Chelli (2013) that stated false concept hypothesized is sort of generalization which are due to the learner's limited knowledge of the target language.

C) Context of learning

This major source of error was represented by question number 11. Based on Brown's theory (2007), an untutored second language teacher and faulty presentation of word in a textbook can lead the learner to make faulty hypotheses about the language. The researcher focused on questioning about the teacher in the questionnaire because the researcher had read the students' textbook and the textbook is clear in explaining the material.

In the students' answer, the researcher found that the teacher taught the material correctly because the teacher's background is from English department, but the teacher taught it so fast, hence, the students needed more explanation, and the students needed an aid to make the learning process interesting. It is in line with Ahadi (1985: 79) who said that teaching aids improve the efficiency of education in terms of quality and quantity, as well as the objectivity of such equipment is up to the course. The researcher assumes that the context of learning was not a cause of error made by the tenth grade of social science 6 students.

D) Communication strategies

This major source of error was represented by the question number 7. In the students' answer, the researcher found that the students translated their sentences in their text by translating sentence by sentence. The researcher assumes that the communication strategies were not included in the cause of error made by the tenth grade of social science 6 because in the communication strategies based on Richard (1973), there is a literal translation that means the learner translates word for word from the native language, and in fact, the students did not do that way of translation.

Through the discussion of the result of the questionnaire and the students' writing assignment, the researcher discovered 2 general reasons for the students to create errors, there are interlingual and intralingual with all its language deviations, namely: overgeneralization, ignorance of rule restriction, incomplete application of rule, and false concept hypothesized.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Based on the findings in the students' writing analysis, the error of selection was the highest of errors in this research. It showed that the students made a total of 244 errors which consisted of 178 errors or 72.95% in the error of selection, 54 errors or 22.13% in the error of omission, 10 errors or 4.10% in the error of addition, and 2 errors or 0.82% in the error of ordering.

The researcher also concluded that the errors occurred due an interaction of interlingual and intralingual transfer. Thus, the causes of errors tended to be related to the differences of the structural verb-forms between English and their native language because they might take the students difficult to understand past tense and the complexity of the target language tended to make it more difficult to be learnt.

The researcher suggests the teacher to apply an attractive method to teach grammar and to test the students' comprehension which will assure the teacher that the students really understand it. The teacher is expected to give not only the explanation how to write a recount text, but also the reinforcement about what the students' did by talk positively. The further research is expected to consider technique in teaching past tense verb in order to make a solution for this problem.

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