Error Analysis on Simple Past Tense as Found in Recount Text of Tenth Grade Students at SMAN 4 in Jambi City

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Abstract

Error is common in language learning process which are unavoidable, but it is necessary in the process of learning. The purpose of this research was to find out and analyze the errors in using simple past tense as found in recount text which made by tenth grade students at SMAN 4 Jambi city. This research used quantitative descriptive approach where the writer analyzed the students’ recount text writing as the instrument of the research and described the errors that students made into four types of errors. They are omission, addition, misselection, and misordering. The population of this research was one class of tenth grade students in SMAN 4 in Jambi city which consisted of 44 students. The writer used total sampling in this research so that all students in one class of tenth grade students at SMAN 4 in Jambi city became the sample of this research. The results showed that there were 317 times of errors found from students’ recount text in one class of tenth grade students at SMAN 4 in Jambi city. Based on the findings, the writer made conclusion that the tenth grade students of SMAN 4 Jambi city still made many errors on simple past tense form. The writer assumed this issue happened because the students placed incorrect verb2 items or morphemes forms, their native language influenced them when they wrote the target language, and they made errors because of their carelessness, lack of concentration, and lack of understanding. But based on these issues, the writer assumed that the writer’s second assumption was the most influenced issue that students often made.

Key Words: Error Analysis, Recount Text, Simple Past Tense
1. Introduction

Error is common in language learning process. Olasehinde (2002) said that “It is inevitable that learners make errors and that errors are unavoidable and necessary in the process of learning”. Corder (1974) stated “Errors are usually made by learners who do not yet fully command several institutionalized system of language” (p.29). The statements point out that errors are produced by students who don’t understand well about the aspects of language system such as grammatical, lexical, and phonic systems. Second language students tend to make errors in the process of language learning, including English learning. According to Corder (1967) “Errors refer to systematic errors which often occur in second language learning”.

One of the areas that students tend to make errors in the English learning process is in using tenses. Tense has to be explicated in relation to the time of utterence, which makes it a deictic feature of language (Griffiths, 2006, p.96). It means that tense is the substance which show the time of action in a sentence that is contained through using verb and adverbials. Griffiths (2006) also classified errors into three main tenses, they are present tense, past tense, and future tense. The errors that English learners usually make relate to the tenses are the dysfunctional using of tenses which learners dysfunction unappropriate tense in specific purpose of sentence.

Past tense is events, actions, or states that completed in the period of time in the past. There are several kinds of past tense. They are simple past, past progressive, past perfect, and etc. In writing, past tense is adhesive to the recount text and narrative text types of writing. Recount text is a text of writing which retells the events or experiences in the past. Past tense has important role in recount text as recount text language feature which indicate the particular time of recount text in the past. So the students have to really understand in using past tense in writing recount text. In fact, many students are found still have difficulties to construct the sentences gramatically by using past tense in recount text such as, the uses of another tense like present tense.
2. Literature Review

2.1 Errors and Mistakes

Errors are systematic deviations that learners cannot be recognized by themselves. Norrish (1987) stated “Errors are systematic deviation, when a learner has not learnt something and consistently gets it wrong” (p.7).

On the other hand, error is different with mistake. It is necessary to differentiate between error and mistake. According to Norrish (1983) “Mistake is an inconsistent deviation which is made by learners that is sometimes learners get right but sometimes wrong”

2.2 Error Analysis

Learners in learning a second language often produce erroneous utterances whether in their speech or in their writing. They find difficulties in learning the target language since its rules are different from those of their mother tongue. Those errors happen because there are influences of the rules of their mother tongue on those of the target language.

2.2.1 Identification of Errors

Identifying error is the first step in error analysis. It is needed in order to find out the deviants of learners’ writing to distinguish students’ error or mistake. According to Ellis (1997) “There are two ways to determine it. First is by checking the consistency of learners’ performance. Another way is to ask learners to try to correct their own deviant utterances” (p.173).

2.2.2 Description of Errors

Corder (1974) classified errors into four different categories.

1. Omission

The absence of an item that must appear in a well form utterence. For example; I didn’t go to school yesterday. I sick. In this sentence, to be is missing. It should be add was after the subject and before the adjective.
2. **Additions**

The presence of an item that must not appear in well formed utterences.

For example; *The teacher did not explained the materials.*

In this sentence, there is the addition of morpheme –*ed* that is not required in that such form. The true construction is: *The teacher did not explain the materials.*

3. **Misselection**

The error which is made when the learner chooses the wrong items in the right place.

For example; *My uncle wried a letter for his wife a couple of days ago.*

This example shows the wrong selection in this form. *Write* has irregular form that will be changed to be *wrote* if the condition is past tense form.

4. **Misorderings**

The incorrect placement of a morpheme or group of morpheme in an utterence.

For example; *I want to the Bali did not holiday*

Here the order of the sentence is incorrect and is becoming the reason of error.

### 2.2.3 Explanation of Errors

“Errors are, to a large extent, systematic, and to certain extent, predictable” (Ellis, 1997). Identification and description of errors are preliminaries to much more interesting test of trying to explain why they occur.

### 2.2.4 Evaluation of Errors

“Error analysis has a purpose to help learners learn an L2 which there is a need to evaluate errors” (Ellis, 1997).

### 2.2.5 The sources of Errors

Richards (1974) classified sources of errors into two kinds, namely interlingual and intralingual errors.

#### 2.2.5.1 Interlingual Errors
“Interlingual errors are errors which are caused by interference from the native language to the target language they learn (Richards, 1974, p.35). An interlingual error may be made when Indonesian students are using in writing sentences. The errors occur due to the fact that their native language has no such form and rule like the target language.

2.2.5.2 Intralingual Errors

Intralingual errors are caused by interference of the target language. In addition, “Intralingual or developmental errors reflect the learner’s competence at particular stage and illustrate some of the general characteristics of language acquisition” (Richards 1985, p.46).

2.3 Simple Past Tense

Simple past tense is events, actions, or states that completed in the period of time in the past. Past tense is also used to describe the past events and to tell story. Azar (1989) stated “The simple past tense indicates that an activity or situation began and ended in the particular of time” (p.27). Based on the statements above, past tense can be concluded as a tense that indicates the activity, events, actions or statements that began and completed in the past, before now or at particular time in the past.

There are three formula of simple past tense, they are affirmative, negative, and interrogative.

The formula is as following :

1. **Affirmative : S + V2 + O + Adverbs**
   
   For examples :
   
   - I played football yesterday (Regular verb)
   - The teacher taught a difficult lesson of Math last week (Irregular Verb)

   Based on the examples above, we can see that the form of simple past tense is used to all subjects, singular and plural.

2. **Negative form : S + did not + V1 + O + Adverbs**
   
   For examples :
- He didn’t play football yesterday
- The teacher didn’t teach Math last week.

Based on the examples above, we can see the negative forms of simple past tense use V1, but did not is used before the main verb.

3. **Interrogative form : Did / didn’t + S + V1 + O + Adverbs ?**
For examples:

- Did they play football yesterday?
- Didn’t she teach us Math last week?

Based on the examples above, did / didn’t is used in the beginning of sentences to indicates the interrogative form of simple past tense.

Beside regular and irregular verbs, there is to be of past tense. In the present tense, we use am, is, and are. But in the past tense, there are only two to be forms. They are was (for singular form) and were (for plural form). Krohn (1970) said “Was or were are the past tense forms of be and use was with first and third person singular, were with other persons” (p.23).

These are to be of formulas below:

1. **Affirmative : S + to be + complement**
For examples:

- I was blank at that moment
- We were interested on Math

2. **Negative form : S + to be not + Complement**
For examples:

- He wasn’t blank at that moment.
- They were not interested on Math

3. **Interrogative form : To be / to be not + subject + Complement ?**
For examples:

- Was the market full last Sunday?
- Were the lessons interesting yesterday?

2.4.1 Writing Recount Text

Actually, recount text is easy to be written for students in Junior High School because recount text is a type of text that tell about their own experience. But almost of students have an error in their grammatical structure when they write recount text. In this research, writer will analyze and observe what are the errors of students and what are the sources of error in using simple past tense in recount text.

3. Methodology

3.1 The Research Design

This research was undertaken as descriptive qualitative approach. “Descriptive research has a purpose to become more familiar with phenomena, to gain new insight, and to formulate a more specific research problem or hypothesis” (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003).

3.2 Researcher’s Bias

In qualitative research, researchers had to explicitly identify their biases, values, and personal interest about their research topic and process and access to the research participants and in this case the researchers is not led by the researchers’ personal argument in the research. The researcher was not led by her personal argument in this research. In the discussion the researcher allowed the participants to share ideas that they think without influencing them to have the same belief or argument with the researcher. In hope the research will get the real data.

3.3 Research Participants and Sampling Procedure

The participants of this research was one class of tenth grade students at SMAN 4 Jambi city in academic year 2016/2017. The number of participants was 44 students. This research used total sampling technique to select the sample. A sample in a research study is the group on which in formation is obtained (Fraenkel
All of students in one class of tenth grade students was taken as the sample of this research.

3.4 Instrument of the Research

In this research, the writer used recount text as a test. The theme of the recount text is “Unforgettable Moment in Your School”. Then, the writer identified and analyzed students’ recount text, and found the students’ errors in using simple past tense to get the result of the research.

3.5 Data Collection Methods

This research collected the data from the result of student’s recount text. The writer collected the students’ recount text written from the teacher who taught one class of tenth grade students at SMAN 4 Jambi city that had been coordinated before. The writer used the recount text for this research because students used simple past tense in this text. After the writer got the data, the writer began to collect the data by identifying and analyzing students’ errors in using simple past tense in their recount text written. The data of research reflected from students errors in using simple past tense in their recount text written.

3.6 Data Analysis

The writer used several stages in analyzing the data:

1. The writer gave a paper with the instruction based on the need of the research, and then identified and found out the students’ errors in using simple past tense.

2. The writer used error analysis method to analyze the data. They were identification of errors, classification of errors, and explanation of errors (Ellis, 1994).

3. Strategy taxonomy (Corder, 1974) was writer’s guide to describing the errors in which writer classified the errors into 4 types; omission, addition, miselection, and misordering.
4. To finding the percentage of errors for each type, the writer used the following formula:

\[
\text{The percentage of errors} = \frac{\text{The total number of errors in each item}}{\text{total number of all errors}} \times 100\%
\]

3.7 Trustworthiness

To build the trustworthiness of this study or to verify the accuracy of data, findings, and interpretations, the writer analysis the data based on rich and thick description of the data analysis. This data was accurated. This data is real, there is no data which is added or descreased by the researcher. This data was obtained without any changes. The researcher report the data based on the finding of this study.

4. Findings and Discussions

4.1 Findings

This chapter discusses about the use of simple past tense in recount text which has some purposes to find out and analyze kinds of errors in the use of simple past tense. Those errors found were classified by using the surface strategy taxonomy proposed by Corder (1974). The errors were classified into errors of omission, errors of additions, errors of misselection, and errors of misordering. This research only focused on the analysis of errors in the use of simple past tense, while the other errors which were not included to simple past tense were ignored. The data in this research were analyzed descriptively. In the analysis, the findings were presented in the kinds of error, the sample of sentences which contain errors and the analysis of error. The following section is sequence of steps in analysing data: identification of errors and classification of errors.

4.1.1 Identification of Errors

After the research conducted, the students’ writing were collected and analyzed. The writer only picked the simple past tense errors that were made by students as data of the research.

4.1.2 Classification of Errors
After all errors were noted, they were classified into their types. For this study, errors on the use of simple past tense were classified based on Corder’s (1974) surface strategy of taxonomy, it showed the cognitive process that underlines the learner’s construction of the new language.

The example of student’s performance each type will be showed. For example: *My friend win the football tournament last week* (S.34). It means S as the student and 34 number is the code of the student who committed an error, the writer did not write their name.

### 4.2 DISCUSSIONS

The findings of the research were discussed in this sub chapter. The first was identification of error. Identification was done by comparing the learners’ sentences with the correct form. Furthermore, in identifying an error, it needed to distinguish error and mistake, whether learners’ sentence is mistake or error. To distinguish that, the writer asked the students correct their own deviant utterances. According to Ellis (1974: 17), “There are two ways to determine it. First is by checking the consistency of learners’ performance. Another way might be to ask learners to try to correct their own deviant utterances”. After the research conducted the writer found errors were 317 occurrences of all errors in some of their writing. From the data the writer can assumed that the students still confuse in using simple past tense.

The second was classification of errors. To classify the errors, the writer used Corder’s surface strategy of taxonomy. Corder (1974) classified errors into error of omission, error of additions, error of misselection, and error of misordering.

The writer found all errors were 317 occurrences in 40 students. It can be assumed the students in SMAN 4 Jambi City are still confused and still have problem especially with the patterns in simple past tense also because the students still did not correct to make the patterns in simple past tense.

Beside on the discussions above, the writer discovered something that need to discuss properly that were found on student papers. We agreed that errors are
systematic and consistent. Corder (1967) stated “Errors refer to systematic errors which often occur in second language learning”. Norrish (1987) stated “Errors are systematic deviation, when a learner has not learnt something and consistently gets it wrong”. Cunningsworth (1987) stated “Errors are systematic deviation from the norms of the language being learned”. These statements means errors are consistent and systematic deviation which are usually made by second language students. But in fact, the writer found several errors which looks like were not consistent and systematic on the second language student papers.

Sample 2 example sentences:
1. In the last hour I learned Math. False
2. The assignment of teacher we gathered on Monday. True
3. In the first hour, we learned Math. False

We can see this student did not fully made errors on using simple past tense. The first and third sentences, this students made errors, but in the second sentence, this students was correct. This student consistently made error on “learned” items which prefered as specific items.

5.1 CONCLUSIONS

Based on the data analysis and research at the tenth grade students of SMAN 4 Jambi city, the writer wants present the conclusions. In this study, there were 317 errors found from 40 students’ writing recount text. The errors were classified on the surface strategy taxonomy proposed by Corder (1974). The kind of errors divided into errors of omission, errors of addition, errors of misselection, and errors of misordering.

Based on the findings, the writer made conclusion that the tenth grade students of SMAN 4 Jambi city still made many errors which students made totally 317 occurences of omission, addition, misselection, and misordering. They did not fully made errors in their writing, there were some items that they were correct. The writer found that the students consistently made errors on specific items or morphemes. From the findings, the writer has some theories for these issues:
1. The students made errors because they placed wrong verb items or morphemes form.

2. Their native language influenced them when they wrote their target language, as the result they made incorrect forms of the target language or they made new language that was not appropriate with the target language and their native language. This issue found based on Richards theory in 1974 about interlingual errors that he stated “Interlingual errors are errors which are caused by interference from the native language to the target language they learn”. The errors occur due to the fact that their native language has no such form and rule like the target language.

3. The students made the errors because of their carelessness, lack of concentration, and lack of understanding.

5.2 SUGGESTIONS

The teacher should find correct formula to make good situation when the teacher give the material to make students more interested in learning the material. Teacher should make a concept of pre and post evaluation in the process of learning to find students need to improve their ability in mastery the simple pat tense. Then give exercise continuously to their students. So they will be able to know and improve their ability to write a good composition of writing on simple past tense.

The students should memorize the past form of verbs, both regular and irregular past form. Because based on this research, the students still confused in choosing the verb that must be used in simple past tense form in their writing. The students should practice more in the use simple past tense form and should know or comprehend tenses form that they will be used in writing composition.

References


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