

GRAMMATICAL ERROR IN SIMPLE PAST TENSE AT RECOUNT TEXT APPLICATION: A CASE STUDY

KESALAHAM GRAMATIKAL DALAM SIMPLE PAST TENSE PADA APLIKASI TEKS REKON; SUATU STUDY KASUS

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Abstrak

Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui jenis-jenis kesalahan simple past yang umum ditemukan dalam teks rekon yang ditulis oleh siswa kelas IX SMPN 03 Muncang Lebak Banten dan beberapa penyebabnya. Metode campuran digunakan dalam penelitian ini. Sebanyak 15 siswa kelas IX menjadi peserta dalam penelitian ini. Instrumen penelitian yang digunakan adalah kuesioner, wawancara, dan beberapa latihan. Analisis data dilakukan dengan menghitung data kuantitatif. Sementara itu, data kualitatif dianalisis dengan memeriksa dan mengidentifikasi kategori kesalahan yang diajukan oleh Dulay et al., pada tahun 1982. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa jenis kesalahan misinformasi adalah kesalahan yang paling umum terjadi, yaitu sebanyak 51 kesalahan (67,11%). Sementara itu, jenis kesalahan penambahan (addition) menjadi jenis kesalahan yang paling sedikit dilakukan oleh siswa, yaitu 1 kesalahan (1,32%). Sisanya adalah penghilangan (omission) sebanyak 21 kesalahan (27,63%) dan kesalahan urutan (misordering) sebanyak 3 kesalahan (3,39%). Sementara itu, penyebab kesalahan siswa dalam menulis meliputi (1) kecerobohan, seperti kurangnya perhatian dan terlalu percaya diri, (2) interferensi bahasa pertama yang terjadi dalam hal tata bahasa dan perbedaan struktur, (3) penerjemahan, yaitu masalah terletak pada penerjemahan kata per kata berdasarkan struktur bahasa Indonesia.

Abstract

The objectives of this study were to find out the common types of simple past errors found in recount texts written by the ninth-grade students of SMPN 03 Muncang Lebak Banten and some causes. Mixed method was employed. 15 ninth-grade students were enrolled in this study. The research instruments were questionnaires, interviews, and some exercises. Some data analysis were conducted by calculating some data quantitative. Meanwhile some data qualitative were analyzed by checking and identifying the categories of errors purposed by Dulay et., in 1982. The results revealed that misinformation type of error was the most common error taking place which was 51(67,11%). Meanwhile, the addition type of error proved to be the least common type of error made by the students (1) 1,32%. The rest are omission (21) 27,63 % and misordering (3) 3,39% respectively. Meanwhile the causes of the students' errors in writing consist of (1) Carelessness, such as lack of attention and too confidence, (2) First language interference in which it took place in terms of grammar and structure dereference, (3) Translation that is the problem lies on to translate word by word regarding Indonesian structure.

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INTRODUCTION

Among the various language skills, writing is often regarded as one of the most challenging and intricate abilities for students to master at all levels of education within the context of English teaching and learning. Writing presents challenges due to the intricate nature of language aspects and writing skills, which encompass punctuation, spelling, syntax, vocabulary, and more. Taye & Mengesha, (2024) add some challenges in academic writing such as vocabulary, grammar, and sentence structure related to each other since they are the main aspects of writing an essay. However, some writers may have abundant for vocabulary interpretation (Brown 2000). Hence, they may have some interpretation regarding some vocabulary usage.

Moreover, in English, every sentence always contains a tense. Tense is another type of verb that denotes a difference in time. There are numerous varieties of tenses, including simple present, simple past, present perfect, and present continuous (Azar and Hagen 2017). Of these tenses, the simple past tense can be confusing to certain students. Since there are some distinctions between these tenses when translated into Indonesian. The simple past tense might be difficult to understand, especially for Indonesian students. Tenses are grammatical categories that link with time disparities (Wurmbrand 2018). The simple past tense is one of the sixteen tenses in English grammar, expressing the idea that an action started and finished at a specific time in the past (Azar & Hagen 2009). The simple past can be applied to most past actions, including those that occurred quickly, those that unfolded over time, or actions that were habitual in the past (Mahmudah et al., 2019). This tense finds application in various types of texts, such as recount texts, which narrate past events, and narrative texts, which involve conflicts in a story, leading to errors that impede their ability to effectively compose recount texts.

Recount text adopts genre in which it aim is to tell any information (Agustam et al, 2022). Hence, the students cannot write their draft in term of letter, journal, speech and biographies in order to adopt recount text as their writing exercise. The tenses used is simple past since it conveys message regarding event in the past (Fridayanthi 2017). The text aims to entertain in order to social function (Asni et.al, 2018). The recount text itself consists of 3 steps such as 1) direction in which some aspects are written, 2) occasions that is some objects told in chronological order, and 3) reorientation is for some information is repeated (Misa 2022).

Some researches had been conducted regarding the use of recount text and its matters. A study conducted by Salawazo et al. in 2020 may have some results that are the students' low motivation, lack of vocabulary and grammar competency, and language transferability. Maru'ao (2022) revealed that some teacher may have their teaching strategies in order for the students to be able to apply some rule for writing recount text. Corrected feedback is a must to be applied during the writing session (Ariansyah et al. 2024).

Based on some initial interview conducted with five students, it was discovered that some of the students in ninth grade at SMPN 03 Muncang Lebak Banten frequently conveyed they struggled to write simple past tense recount text. They found difficulties in vocabulary regarding how to write simple past tense appropriately. In this condition, some of the students often cheated on one another in a writing session and could not develop their writing. In addition, the classroom situation showed that the students did not directly do the task given. Some of them were indicated as not too interested in the writing lesson. They had some negative attitudes when attending an English class. Moreover, according to information from the teacher, he still discovered some errors in students' writing after teaching for one and a half years. Hence, the writers intended to conduct a research in order to facilitate the students using simple past when writing. The benefits of this study may cover some

aspects such as the student's ability in writing, their knowledge regarding the recount text, and successful learning as well.

In regard to the challenges encountered by students, the writers hold a significant concern for the utilization of recount texts in the classroom to teach writing skills. The writers had seen some errors took place in conveying past events and the students' exercises. Some related studies conveyed similar causes in which some students may have some particular problems to write recount text such 1) the students were struggling in regard to grammar function (Asni et.al, 2018), 2) some teachers may have traditional teaching method regarding grammar instruction (Krishnapatria et.al, 2019).

In regard to the problems mentioned before may cover the following research questions: (1) What are the common types of errors in simple past tense found in recount texts written by the ninth-grade students of SMPN 03 Muncang Lebak Banten? ; (2) What are the causes of students' errors in writing simple past tense recount text?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Writing Recount Text

Recount text is a text that retells past events. In a recount text, the students are required to narrate the sequence of events or experiences they have encountered in the past (Fernando et al., (2024). Husna & Multazim, (2019) describe recount text as the simplest type of text, which is formally structured as a sequential narrative that focuses on a sequence of events. In any story, no matter how simple, orientation is very important. This means establishing specific characters, time, and place, as it is impossible to tell a story without these basic elements, although certain postmodern narratives may play with these conventions. Recount texts usually follow a general structure consisting of orientation, event, and reorientation (Saputra et al., 2023) . Each element in this structure has a specific social function. Some general structures are such as (1) Orientation: recount text begins by providing information about who was involved, what happened, where the event occurred, and when it occurred. Orientation offers readers the background information necessary to understand the text, (2) Event: events are the main activities revealed in the recount text narrative and presented in chronological order in order to provide the readers with further information, (3) Reorientation: reorientation functions as the conclusion phase of the retelling text and involves elaboration. Some recount texts include a concluding paragraph where a writer can provide comments or personal statements. In writing a recount text the students have to apply their writing skills.

Writing skills are an important component in language learning for students at school. This skill plays an important role in supporting the teaching and learning process. Developing writing skills requires students to be creative and actively involved in thinking and activities, thus enabling them to articulate their ideas effectively through written language. Harmer (2004) identifies four essential elements of the writing process: planning, drafting, revising, and editing. By doing so, students not only complete assignments but also acquire valuable insights into the intricacies of writing.

During the writing process, the students usually make errors. An error is described as a performance error, representing a random guess or slip that signifies a failure to correctly apply a known system (Brown 2000). Errors manifest as noticeable deviations from the grammar used by native speakers, both adults and children, reflecting the learner's competence. This implies that errors unveil the students' understanding of the target language, whereas mistakes are transient obstacles or

imperfections in the learner's utilization of the language. The students may omit necessary elements, add unnecessary elements, misunderstand elements, or misplace elements.

According to Dulay et al., (1982) there are four main types of errors, the types of which are identified as follows:

Omission: it is a linguistic phenomenon, that refers to the intentional exclusion of essential elements from a sentence. It involves the absence of specific components that are expected to be presented in the sentence structure. This phenomenon is particularly pronounced during the initial stages of language acquisition, where the students often omit elements as they develop their linguistic skills such as a) omission -ed/d in the regular verb, for example in the sentence *We cook the noodle yesterday*. The correct sentence should be *We cooked the noodle yesterday*, b) omission to be (was/were), for example in a sentence *The air is cool*. The correct sentence should be *The air was cool*. (2) Addition, the opposite of omission is the nearness of an entity that must not show up in well-formed utterances. When expanding, the students may use words that are not necessary for the statement or add extraneous details. For instance, *She didn't studied yesterday*. (3) Misinformation that is misused in another grammatical form, misinformation all wrong shapes are safe morpheme or structure. Incorrect information in using a specific wrong format such as a) misinformation in using irregular verbs and regular verbs, for example in a sentence *I and my family bringed many food*. It should be *I and my family brought foods*, b) misinformation in using to be for example in a sentence *Some food and beverage was prepared all stuff*. The sentence should be *Some food and beverage were prepared all stuff*. (4) Misordering involves inaccuracies in the arrangement of words within a sentence, influenced by their grammatical function. Specifically, misordering refers to the improper placement of morphemes, the smallest meaningful units of language, within sentence structures. Within the context of the simple past tense, the typical pattern entails organizing elements as subject+verb+object/complement/adverb, such as a) misordering verb and object, for example in *Last day, souvenirs we bought at Jl Maliaboro*, the sentence should be *Last day, we bought a souvenir at Jl Maliaboro*, b) misordering subject, in example for a sentence *Yesterday to the park, Sarah and her friends went*, the sentence should be *Yesterday, Sarah and her friends went to the park*.

The Causes of Error

Norrish (1987) states that there are the causes of type regarding errors such as carelessness, first language interference, and translation. (1) Carelessness that is frequently associated with a lack of motivation. Teachers often acknowledge that it may not be solely the student's fault if they lose interest; perhaps the materials or the style of presentation is not suitable for them. Carelessness can have many causes and is often caused by a combination of factors. (2) First language interference as Norrish (1987) states that first language interference takes place when forming habits is a part of learning a language, whether it is one's native tongue or a foreign language. Errors may occur when some students are trying to form new habits since the old ones may conflict with the new ones. First language interference is the term used to describe this source of inaccuracy. First language interference, also known as language transfer, occurs when features of a person's native language influence the use of a second language. Several factors contribute to this phenomenon. (3) Translation is another cause of error, which occurs when a student translates a sentence or idiomatic expression from their first language into the target language word by word (Saputra et al., 2023). This cause of error is closely linked to the previous one that is first language interference. When attempting to

translate from the first language to the target language, the influence of the first language can interfere with the accuracy of the translation. This is likely one of the most common causes of error.

The Simple Past Tense

Grammarians offer multiple definitions for the simple past tense. In line with what Azar (2002) says the simple past tense is characterized by indicating that an event or activity transpired and concluded at a specific moment in the past. The simple past tense often referred to as the past tense, serves as a means to discuss past events. Azar (2003) says that simple past is used in terms of time specific when used in a sentence. The first category of the simple past tense involves regular verbs, which are verbs that receive the suffix -ed at the end. Azar & Hagen (2017) present a list of common verbs, for example in a sentence *I walked to school yesterday*. The word walked is an instance of a regular verb, where the base verb walk is transformed into the past tense by adding the suffix -ed. Some other examples such as *I bought a new car three days ago*, in which the negative forms become *I didn't walk to school yesterday and I didn't buy a new car three days ago*. This adjustment is made because the rule for the negative form in the simple past tense involves adding did not before the main verb, and consequently, the main verb must shift to the present. The second category comprises irregular verbs, which deviate from regular verbs in that they undergo more specific changes unique to each verb. |

METHOD

This research utilized mixed methodological approach. To undertake this research, interviews and exercises were conducted to gather comprehensive data, aligning with relevant theoretical foundations. Regarding to mixed method, Hamied (2017) highlights that some data may be taken from different attitudes in accordance to some sources of the data. Some participants were 15 ninth-grade students at SMPN 03 Muncang Lebak Banten. They were enrolled as some students with different attitudes, ability and competency. The data for this study were taken from the recount text written by the students involved in this study. The instruments used to collect the data were some exercises and interview. For the first data, the students were asked to write simple past tense recount text on the blank paper that was given by the writers for one hour. The exercises are eligible in term of number. Through this activity, the writers determined the types of errors, made by the students in term of number, in accordance with some theories purposed by Dulay et al., in 1982. The second data were in term of semi-interview consisting of 5 questions in which some criteria were taken from Norrish theory in 1987. The students were interviewed on the next day after the class finished. The interview was conducted using Bahasa, this was done to make it easier for students to answer the writer's questions. Some data analyses were conducted by calculating some data quantitative such as some types of error and by analyzing some data qualitative that were some causes of error. |

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The common types of errors

Based on some identification of errors observed in the application of the simple past tense within recount text written by students, table 1 below presents the prevalent student errors in descending order, starting from the most frequent to the least frequent.

Table 1 Percentage of Students' Errors

No	Type of Errors	Total Errors	Percentage (%)
1	Omission	21	27,63 %
2	Addition	1	1,32 %
3	Misformation	51	67,11%
4	Misordering	3	3,39 %
	Total	76	100%

Table 2 The extract of the classification regarding the student's error

The student's name	The total number of errors taken place	The types of error			
		Misinformation	Mis-ordering	Omission	Addition
Ani	6	5	-	1	-
Ade	2	2	-	-	-
Bambang	3	1	1	1	-
Lisa	3	1	1	1	-
Yuli	8	7	-	1	-
Tuti	4	1	-	3	-
Andi	6	6	-	-	-
Hendri	5	2	-	3	-
Halim	4	4	-	-	-
Ilham	4	1	-	2	1
Farhan	9	5	-	4	-
Nazia	4	2	-	2	-
Rully	4	4	-	-	-
Mila	8	8	-	-	-
Fauziah	6	2	1	3	-
Total number	76	51	3	21	1

The extract above shows some averages of classification regarding to the students' errors.

Table 3 Some errors and corrections

The Participant	Type of Error	Error taken place	Some correct sentences
Bambang	Misinformation	I and my family go to zoo	I and my family went to the zoo
	Omission	It walk to me	It walked to me
	Misordering	The food I gave them	I gave them the food
Ilham	Misinformation	When I was children	When I was child
	Omission	I back to home	I backed home
	Addition	I play together	I played together
		I didn't ate anything at night	I didn't eat at night

The causes of students' error in writing

The writers conducted some interviews with five selected students, and the transcripts of these interviews were included in the appendix for clarity. During the interviews, the writers delved into the causes of errors by using Norrish's theory in 1987 which categorizes the causes of errors into three types: carelessness, first language interference, and translation, as seen on the table 4 below.

Table 4. The causes of students' errors in writing

No	The Cause	Data Interpretation
1	Carelessness	a. Lack of attention b. Too confident
2	First Language Interference	It takes place in terms of grammar and structure differences
3	Translation	The problem lies on translating word by word regarding to Indonesian structure

Discussion

Table 1 presents the proportion of each error category following the classification by Dulay et al., in 1982. The results revealed that misinformation errors emerged as the predominant type, consisting of 51 in which it is equivalent to 67,11%. The second most frequent error is omission, amounting to a total of 21 errors or 27,63%. Subsequently, misordering errors account for 3 errors or 3,39%, while addition errors represent the least frequent, with a total of 1 error or 1.31%. These errors were identified through the analysis of some exercise results as seen in the extract below. Some contrast results were depicted from some studies conducted by (Fridayanthi (2017) in which the findings revealed that omission for 130 errors (77%), misordering for 14 (8,28%) , misinformation for 13 error (7,7%, and addition for 12 error (7.1). This indicates some probability may be caused by some different interpretation.

Table 3 informs some details regarding some analysis in relation to some error corrections. The followings are depicted as data analysis.

Datum for number 1 as Bambang

There is one error that was discovered in the student's writing that was classified as an error of misinformation such as *I and my family go to zoo*. This sentence was incorrect because the student still used verb 1 (go). Verb 1 is usually used for writing simple present tense for example in the sentence *I go to school every day*. It should be changed into past form because the students wrote recount text or retelling the story that happened in the past. Hence, the correct sentence will be *I and my family went to the zoo*. As Dulay et al.,¹ (1982) says that improper information may affect to the students' interpretation in per se. This characterizes the students' habitual consequence in which the students may have some knowledge taken from their mother language (L1) (Rohmana et al., 2019).

There is one error that is classified as an error of omission such as *It walks to me*. This sentence is incorrect because the verb *walk* should be changed to past form or added with *ed* so the correct sentence is *It walked to me*. It may be said some students have their own interpretation regarding what they understand for the application of verb 1 (Hutauruk et.al, 2022).

Lastly, there is one error found in the student's writing classified as an error of misordering, such as *The food I gave them*. The sentence is incorrect because of the wrong placement. Misordering refers to the incorrect placement of a morpheme or a group of morphemes within a spoken or written utterance (Dulay, Burt, and Krashen 1982). Therefore, the correct sentence is *I gave them the food*. Some students may have their own interpretation regarding to what they might have in mind (Mastura et.al, 2022). Some errors may confuse others regarding the structure and meaning as well (Asni et al, 2018).

Datum for number 10 as Ilham

There is one error that was found in the student's writing that included an error of misformation such as when *I was children*, for the word *children* is incorrect because it's plural. It should be *a child*. Hence the correct sentence is when *I was a child*. The error produced is caused by some errors analysis made by some students in order to interpret some structure (Ariansyah et.al, 2024).

There are two errors that are classified as errors of omission in a sentence *I home yesterday*. This sentence is incorrect because there is no to be. According to Azar & Hagen (2017), in the simple past tense, the copula to be is *was* for the subjects *I, He, She, and It*, while *were* is used for *We, They, and You*. Therefore, the correct sentence is *I was home yesterday*. For a sentence *I play together last year* is incorrect because the students used verb 1 for the word *play* when describing past experiences. Therefore, the correct sentence is *I played together last year*. Certain errors may take place whenever some students try to match their linguistics competence with the copula to be should use in their sentences. Some students may tend to create some errors in term of omission of subject, object, *ing* form, auxiliary and punctuation (Sitohang 2025).

The last error that was classified as an error of addition such *that I didn't ate anything at night*. This sentence is incorrect because after using an auxiliary *didn't*, the students used the word *ate*. The student should have used verb 1 for the word *eat* after the auxiliary *didn't*. Hence, the correct sentence is *I didn't eat anything at night*. Some students may have their own interpretation regarding what might their attitudes are when interpreting the sentence structure (Seftiani et.al, 2024).

As can be seen on table 4 mentioned before some causes of students' errors in writing such as (1) carelessness, (2) first language interference, and (3) translation.

a. Carelessness

Carelessness is frequently associated with a lack of motivation. Teachers often acknowledge that it may not be solely the student's fault if they lose interest. Perhaps the materials or the style of presentation are not suitable for them. When the writers confirmed with the five students about their ability to complete the task successfully, some of them expressed confidence in their capabilities. The causes of carelessness that are made by the students might be caused by such as (1) lack of attention or focus. When individuals are distracted or not fully engaged in a task, they tend to overlook details and make mistakes. The data can be seen from the fourth participant who said that he didn't check his work that causes carelessness. (2) Too confident that is overconfidence can result in carelessness as individuals may believe that they do not need to double-check their work or pay attention to details. This can lead to some errors that could have been avoided with a more careful approach. The last data can be seen from the answer of the second participant who didn't check her work because she was sure that her work was correct. Such error may take place when some students

have some knowledge. However, they might not know how to apply their knowledge (Wulandari and Harida 2021).

b. First Language Interference

Learning a language often becomes a matter of habit, and during this process, the students may still be influenced by their native language Norrish (1987). The five students as the participants in the study acknowledged that they were typically influenced by the structure of the Indonesian language, and also the rule of grammar, as exemplified by the first participant who stated that first language interference had a different structure compared with English. Furthermore, the second participant said that when we learned English, we must know or understand grammar. The third participant said that he should follow a grammar rule in writing English. The fourth participant said that English had a sentence structure that must be followed and Bahasa had a few sentence structures. The fifth participant said that language was not the same everywhere. Hence, I had to cope with the differences that emerged every time I tried to write a text. Some errors may have their interference since some structures need some structural component in per se (Islam and Mufidah 2022).

c. Translation

Translation is another cause of error, occurring when a student translates a sentence or idiomatic expression from their first language into the target language word by word. It can be seen from a datum taken such as what the fifth participant conveyed that some translation processes might have an impact through the use of words in which some words might have different meanings. Hence, I needed a dictionary in order to translate English into Bahasa and vice versa. Some students may have some experiences that create some errors in term translation type (Jannah et.al, 2022).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMENDATIONS

It was found four types of errors took place while the students were constructing recount text by using the simple past tense such as omission 21 in number (27,63%), addition 1 in number(1,32%), misformation 3 in number (3,39), and misordering 51 in number (67,11%). Meanwhile the causes of the students' errors in writing consist of (1) Carelessness, such as lack of attention and too confidence, (2) First language interference in which it took place in terms of grammar and structure differences, (3) Translation that is the problem lies on to translate word by word regarding Indonesian structure. Regarding some problems mentioned before , some suggestion may cover 1) some students may have their interpretation regarding the use of past event. Hence, they can be trained using simple past in a regular way, 2) the students may adopt some strategies |

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