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

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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 misorder.

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 quit 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

Asmiyati, Dede Nurdiawati
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.
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