

Error Analysis by Using Tenses of Senior High School

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Abstract—Errors can be observed, analyzed and classified to reveal something of system operating within the learner lead to a surge of study of learner's errors. This study is intended to find out the kinds of error usually made by the students in using simple present tense, simple past tense and simple future tense, and to count the percentage of error made by the students in using those tenses. The study was based on quantitative research and the method of data collection was questionnaire. The data of the study was 10 students who get first rank in Senior High School of Pangkatan Labuhan Batu (SMA Negeri 1 Pangkatan Labuhan Batu). The data was analyzed by Bungins' theory (2006). The findings showed there are Misinformation 20%, Omission 50%, Overgeneralization 30%, Incomplete application of rules 0%. And then Error of simple present tense 60%, error of simple past tense 25%, error of simple future tense 15%.

Keywords—error analysis; tenses; omission; misinformation; overgeneralization; incomplete application of rules.

I. INTRODUCTION

The most important means of communication for human being is language because it is used to express ideas, sense, thoughts, information, etc. Sapir (1921:8) says that ¹ language is purely human and non-instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions, and desires by means of system of voluntarily produced symbols. Furthermore, Wasson (1966:5) says that ² language is the supreme means of formulating and expressing thought. Human communicate by producing sounds or the combination of words which represent the object ideas and emotions of human thought.

We can find the term "Error Analysis" in language. Brown (1987) says that ³ according to cognitive approach the making of errors is an inevitable and necessary part of language learning. The language of a language learner contains errors. The errors are made by non-native learners in learning a Second Language. There are many languages in this world such as English, Dutch, Spain, and Japanese. English is one of international languages. It is very important for us to learn English because we know that many countries use this language as their introductory language based on formal or non-formal activities. Furthermore, there are also many books, mass media, reference books and other forms of communication written in English. Because of its importance, Indonesian Government decided English as a formal subject.

There are probable mistakes and errors in studying second language. Brown (1980:166) cites that ⁴ learners do make

errors and these errors can be observed, analyzed and classified to reveal something of system operating within the learner lead to a surge of study of learner's errors called error analysis. Tense is a grammatical category that locates a situation in time that indicates when the situation takes place. Tenses is a part of grammar. Mastering tenses is very important because if we do not use appropriate tenses, it can make misunderstanding especially in written language. Unfortunately, students are often confused with English tenses, even for the University students. They assume tenses as a big burden.

There is a fact that the students always make errors in using tenses and it is a phenomenon that the writer finds. The writer finds it after doing investigation by distributing questionnaire to the students.

II. THEORETICAL

In conducting this research, it applies some theories that relates to error analysis and tenses :

A. Error and Error Analysis

Agnes in Webster's New Word Dictionary (1998:222) defines ⁵ error is the state of believing what is untrue, a wrong belief, something incorrectly done. Richard (1985:95) states that ⁶ error (in the speech or writing of second or foreign learner), the use of a linguistic item (e.g. a word, a grammatical word, a speech act, etc) in way which a fluent of native speaker of the language regards as showing or incomplete learning. It results from incomplete knowledge.

While, Richards in Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics (1985:96) defines error analysis is the study and analysis of the errors made by second and foreign language learners. Error analysis may be carried out in order to find out how well some one knows a language, how a person learns language, and to obtain information on common difficulties in language learning, as an aid in teaching or in the preparation of teaching material.

B. English Tenses

In Macmillan Dictionary (1979:1028) states that ⁷ tense means the form of a verb that shows the time of its action or state of being or set of such forms indicating a particular time. If we go back to the history that tense comes from Latin "tempus" which means time. If someone wants to talk about

Tense, he or she may not escape from grammar because tense is a part of structure. The major challenges in teaching students how to use the tenses of English is not so much having the students learn the uses of each individual tense but getting students sensitized to the differences between and among the tense. Tense means time.

2.2.1. Simple Present Tense

Azar (1993:2) says that ⁸ simple present expresses events or situations that exist always, usually, habitually; they exist now, have existed in the past, and probably will exist in the future.

Werner (2007:15) states that ⁹ the usual time of the simple present tense is extended present. The tense is used in these ways: to describe habits, to make general statements of fact and to express opinions.

2.2.2. Simple Past Tense

Azar (1993:24) says that Simple Past Tense indicates an activity or situation began and ended at a particular time in the past. Pyle (1991:59) states that ¹⁰ the simple past tense is used for a completed action that happened at one specific time in the past.

2.2.3. Simple Future Tense

Werner (2007:17) says that the simple future tense and *be going to* are used for several specific meanings. She explains that *will* is often used to express the future in written. In spoken English, it is frequently used with predictions, promises, offers, and requests, while *be going to* is also used in conversational English. It often involves actions that have been planned before the moment of speaking. Both *will* and *be going to* are followed by the simple form of a verb.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The method of this study used quantitative method as Arikunto (2006:12) says that ¹¹ quantitative research applies numbers from collecting the data, describing the data, until the result of the research. In addition, the result of the research will be better if it applies table, graph, draft, picture, etc.

The writers designed a questionnaire for the students who get first rank. They prepared a set of test consisting of 6 items filling the blanks. The test consists of three tenses and each tense has 2 questions. The students are asked to answer the questions in 15 minutes. The research is held in SMA Negeri 1 Pangkatan Labuhan Batu.

IV. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The writers use the theory of Bungin (2006) in analyzing their data and apply grammar structure or theory of English structures which deal with the use of English Tenses. The tenses that they have learnt, they are Simple Present Tense and Simple Past Tense. The steps of analysis are

A. Identifying Errors

In this step, we have to compare the error sentence (the writers mention it as “original sentence”) with what seem to be normal or “correct sentence” in target language which correspond with them (the writers mention it as ‘reconstruction’).

Original : I went to Bali last year.
Reconstruction : I went to Bali last year.

B. Describing Errors

This next step is the step where the errors are described and classified into kinds such as Omission, Misinformation, Misordering, Overgeneralization, Incomplete Application of Rules, Ignorance of Rule restriction, and False Concept Hypothesized.

After analyzing the errors sentences, the writer identifies the percentage of errors made by the students. To identify the errors, the writer uses Bungin’s theory:

$$N = \frac{F_x}{N} \times 100\%$$

Note:

F_x : The amount of each kind of errors

N : The total amount of errors

The writers designed a questionnaire for the students who get first rank. They gave a set of questions consisting 6 items. The test consisted of three tenses and each tense has 2 questions. There are 10 students when the writers give the questions. In CONCLUSION, **there are 20 correct** answers which are expected from each tense. So the total of data source **is 60 of three tenses.**

Table 1. All data source

No	Tenses	Total
1	Simple Present	20
2	Simple Past	20
3	Simple Future	20
	Total	60

From the 60 sentences which are being analyzed, there are correct sentences and incorrect sentences. There are 20 incorrect sentences becoming data which must be analyzed.

Table 2. The data to be analyzed

No	Tenses	Total
1	Simple Present	12
2	Simple Past	5
3	Simple Future	3

5.1. The Kinds of Error in Using Tenses

In this section, the writer wants to analyze the error made by the third year of SMA Negeri 1 Pangkatan Labuhan Batu.

5.1.1 Errors of using Simple Present Tense

Table 3. Omission of Inflectional *-es*

Original	Reconstruction
My little brother always cry every afternoon.	My little brother cries every afternoon.

From the original sentence, we can see that the students do not use inflectional *-es* in the verb *cry*. Grammatically, because *my little brother* is singular subject, the verb must be added by inflectional *-s* or *-es*. If a word ends in *-y* and if there is a consonant (b,c,d,g,...) before *-y*, we drop *-y* and add *-ies*.

Cry **cries**

The error in this sentence is called Omission because the students omit the inflectional *-ies* to verb *cry*.

5.2.1 Errors of Using Simple Past Tense

Table 4. Errors in Using Verbs

No	Original	Reconstruction
1	The head master loses his books a couple weeks ago.	The head master lost his books a couple weeks ago.
2	The head master losed his book a couple weeks ago.	

The table shows that there are two types of original sentences. First, the students use Simple Present Tense instead of using Past Tense. They are not able to recognize the time signal; *a couple week ago* showing the activity happened in the past time. Meanwhile, the second is incorrect because the students generalize all past verbs by adding *-ed*. Normally, *lose* is **irregular verb**. The correct form is *lose-lost-lost*. So in order to get correct sentence, we have to use *lost* after subject. The first error is Misinformation while the second is called Overgeneralization.

5.2.2. Errors of Using Simple Present Future Tense

Table 5. Errors in Using Verbs

No	Original	Reconstruction
1	We probably will got our salary.	We probably will get our salary.
2	We probably will getting our salary.	
3	We probably will gets our salary.	

All original sentences also become grammatically incorrect because this sentence normally uses Present Future Tense; we know this by understanding the usage of PresentTense such as to state a prediction or opinion about something in the future. We use verbs such as *think, hope, believe, know, and be sure* in the sentence with *will*. In order

to get grammatical correct form, we must use the word *get* after *will* because auxiliary *will* must be followed by infinitive. The errors are called Misinformation.

5.2. The Percentage of Errors in Using Tenses

Having finished analyzing, I make three tables as the indicator of the frequency and the percentages of the errors.

Table 6. The percentage of Errors in using Tenses

No	Error of Tenses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Simple Present Tense	12	60
2	Simple Past Tense	5	25
3	Simple Future Tense	3	15

The table 6 presents data on the rate of frequency of errors made by the third year students of SMA Negeri 1 Pangkatan Labuhan Batu in using three tenses. It will be noticed that the rate of frequency of errors in using Simple Present Tense is considerably higher than the other two tenses – Simple Future, and Simple Past.

Errors in using Present Tense have nominal of 60% from the total error of 20. So, we can conclude that the students are still lack knowledge dramatically about the grammatical of Simple Present Tense.

Table 7. Kinds of Errors

No	Kinds of Error	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Misinformation	4	20
2	Omission	10	50
3	Overgeneralization	6	30
4	Incomplete Application of Rules	0	0
	Total	20	100

The table 7 shows that the most kind of error made by the third year students of SMA Negeri 1 Pangkatan Labuhan Batu is the error of Omission of which nominal is 50 %. In conclusion, the students tend to use one grammatical form in place of another grammatical form.

V. CONCLUSION

Having finished writing the first to the parts, the writer of this thesis comes to draw some conclusions of the analysis.

1. Kinds of errors Made by the third year students of SMA Negeri 1 Pangkatan Labuhan Batu in using tenses are Omission 50% (Omission of Simple Present Tense 50 %).
2. The percentage errors of using tenses are Simple Present 60 %, Simple Past 25 %, and Simple Present Future 15 %.

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