



The Analysis Of Students' Errors for Writing Simple Present Tense in Descriptive Text

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ABSTRACT

In learning, simple present tense is the basic tense that should be mastered by the student and descriptive is one of the text types uses present tense. Descriptive is used the researcher as the text that let the students apply their writing ability in using present tense. This research paper explores the analysis of students' errors for writing simple present tense in descriptive text. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to find out the types of error that students made in writing descriptive text and the main factors that causing students errors in writing descriptive text. The research design used case study, with qualitative approach. The participants are 19 students of tenth grade at SMK Harapan 2 Rancaekek. This study used observational checklist, field notes, document analysis, and interview. In interview, the researcher only selected 6 students are divided into 3 categories, namely high achiever, middle achiever, and low achiever. The result of this study showed two points, they are: first, there are three types errors those the students made in writing descriptive text omission, addition, and misformation. The second is main factors that causing students' errors in writing descriptive text were understanding about grammar exactly in simple present tense, faced difficulties when should write English using tense (present tense) into written and lack vocabularies

INTRODUCTION

White (1986:10 as cited in Khasanah 2015) Writing is the proses of expressing the ideas, information, knowledge or experience and understand the writing to acquire the knowledge or some informations to share and learn. Writing is one of productive skills in language learning. The writing activity is different from other activities. One aspect of the English language that many students consider very difficult to study is writing. In writing, there are a number of language aspects such as model text, grammar, spell-check, punctuation and prepositions. Grammar is one of the basic components of any language, which must be learnt by students. Praninskas (1980 as cited in Muhsin, 2016).

In Indonesia, there are many cases about writing errors. The students are not mastering about the rules of grammar. The students' learning often make mistakes and commit errors while learning English. Especially, when they try to write or arrange sentences. They cannot use tenses in writing skill. Automatically, they write incorrect sentences because they do not know about grammar. The error is fault made by students and they do not know the correct item (Muhsin, 2016).

Brown (2004 as cited in Hasanah 2017) defines that error analysis is the study of students' errors which can be observed, analysed, and classified to reveal something of the system operating within the learners. Indrawati (2004 as cited in Muhsin 2016) wrote a thesis entitled. An analysis of the students' errors in writing paragraphs, and concluded that there are two types of errors in a written



paragraph (Anggraeni, et.al, 2023). Therefore, grammatical and semantic errors. These errors include nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, and articles. In learning language, most learners will make errors. Error is common thing that happens in the process of teaching and learning a language. Hedge (2000, as cited in Sahal 2018) claimed that “Error is now seen as reflections of learners’ stage of inter language development”.

Frank (1972: 66 as cited n Muhsin 2016) state, “simple present tense is used to express a habitual action with adverbs such as usually, always, or often” the use of -simple present tense often confuses students, especially when simple present tense is used in descriptive writing. When the descriptive writer makes an error in simple present tense, its means that the researcher is not careful enough in making their text vivid and the detailed. Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that simple present shows our daily lives. Betty (2002:2as cited in Hasanah 2017) explains that in general, simple present expresses the event or situation that exist always, usually, habitually, they exist now, have existed in the past, and probably will exist in the future. It means that simple present tense is used to express general truth, repeated actions and even something that is fixed in the future.

According to Hedge (2000, as cited in Sahal 2018) Writing ability is defined to initiate an evolve ideas and then use certain revising and editing practices to develop them to maturity in a given context (Ruswandi, et. al, 2024). It is believed that writing is important and frequently used in people’s daily lives either as individual such as writing application letter, messages, and dissemination of the research results or member of society such as in a workplace issue. A teacher who believes this view encourage students to develop power over their own writing without being directive, assuming that writing is a creative act and that the process is important as a discovery of the true self (Iftanti, 2016).

According to Gerot and Wignel (1994, as cited in Sahal, 2018) descriptive text is a text for describe person, place or things by visual experience. It can be concluded that descriptive text is a text for describe person, place or a thing by visual experience. The Generic structure of descriptive writing is different from the other texts such as, report, narrative, recount, procedure, and argumentation. Descriptive text must have two major elements. They are identification and description Sahal (2018). Identification to identify the event or thing that would be described. Meanwhile, description is to describe the parts or characteristics of the object Rosa et al (2008, as cited in Sahal,2018). Khasanah (2015) states that there are some main language features of descriptive text: a. Specific Participant, Descriptive text describes about specific object, not in general, and unique. b. The use of Adjectives Examples: beautiful, handsome, sharp, strong, small, big, famous, and etc. c. The use of Simple Present. In descriptive text, the writer should use simple present tense because they will describe the object still have the same characters when they are writing the object.

Based on interview with the English teacher in internship in senior high school, the researcher finds out the problem that the students write sentences with incorrect grammar. It’s supported by Mrs. Ayu as an English teacher of Mekar Arum Senior High School “they do not find difficult when practice English but if the teacher asks to write an idea to be written they cannot make the correct sentences. Therefore, students just make sentences without think the grammar”. Basically, writing is not easy when students try to write feelings and ideas into sentence or a paragraph.

Based on the problem above, the researcher tries to solve this problem in error sentence with give the descriptive text material using simple present. Then, the teacher tells what and how to write descriptive well, while explain all the rules how to write descriptive text using simple present. The researcher wants to carry out this research under the title “The Analysis of Students’ Errors for Writing Simple Present Tense in Descriptive text”.

METHODS

The research employs a qualitative approach. According to Fraenkel, Wallen, and Hyun (2012), qualitative research focuses on understanding the quality of relationships, activities, situations, or materials. This approach aims to deeply explore what the participants think, why they think as they do, and how they act about the research topic. Qualitative research is suitable for understanding complex educational phenomena (Creswell, 2014).

The method used in this study is a case study. Fraenkel, Wallen, and Hyun (2012:435) explain that the case study method collects data about learning styles, attitudes toward language, subject approaches, classroom behavior, and other relevant factors. This method aims to gain insights from individuals with unique characteristics, which may later inform strategies for helping other language learners. Case studies are often employed to understand in-depth experiences within specific educational contexts (Yin, 2018).

The research was conducted at Vocational High School (SMK) Harapan 2 Rancaekek, specifically involving tenth-grade accounting students. This site was selected based on students' observed challenges in writing descriptive texts using the simple present tense. The vocational school setting provides a unique context where English learning is integrated into specific professional tracks, highlighting the need for tailored instructional approaches (Richards & Renandya, 2020).

The data collection techniques used in this study include in-depth interviews, direct classroom observations, and documentation. In-depth interviews were conducted to explore students' perceptions, experiences, and difficulties. Classroom observations examined students' behaviors and challenges in learning English. At the same time, documentation focused on analyzing students' written tasks, particularly their use of the simple present tense in descriptive texts. These methods align with recommendations for triangulating data in qualitative research to ensure reliability and validity (Patton, 2015).

The collected data were analyzed using a thematic analysis approach. The analysis process included data reduction to identify relevant information, categorizing data based on emerging themes (e.g., challenges in using the simple present tense), data presentation in narrative or tabular form, and conclusion drawing to interpret findings and provide recommendations for English instruction. Thematic analysis is widely regarded as an effective method for identifying and interpreting patterns in qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESULT

The study aimed to address two research questions: (1) *What types of errors do students make when using the simple present tense in writing descriptive texts?* Moreover, (2) *What are the main factors that cause students' errors in using the simple present tense in writing descriptive texts?* The data were collected through document analysis, observation, and interviews.

Types of Errors in Using the Simple Present Tense

Based on Dulay, Burt, and Krashen's (1982) taxonomy, the analysis of students' writing identified three types of errors: omission, addition, and misformation.

1. Omission Errors

The most common type of error was omission. Students frequently omitted the suffix "-s" or "-es" in third-person singular forms, as seen in sentences like "*She eat breakfast every morning.*" This reflects the incomplete acquisition of subject-verb agreement rules.

2. Addition Errors

Students often added unnecessary elements to their sentences, leading to addition errors. For example, sentences such as "*I am like studying*" show the overuse of auxiliary verbs alongside main verbs.

3. Misformation Errors

Misformation errors were prevalent in cases where students used incorrect verb forms or constructed sentences that reflected Indonesian syntax. For example, students wrote "*He have a book*" instead of "*He has a book*," demonstrating confusion about subject-verb agreement influenced by the structure of their native language.

Factors Causing Students' Errors

Interviews with students revealed three primary factors contributing to these errors:

1. Inadequate Grammatical Knowledge

Students did not understand the simple present tense rules, particularly subject-verb agreement and auxiliary verbs.

2. Carelessness

Many students admitted that they did not revise their work carefully, resulting in frequent errors.

3. Interlingual Transfer

Structural differences between Indonesian and English led to reliance on Indonesian grammar when writing in English.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study provide significant insights into the challenges students face in mastering the simple present tense, particularly in writing descriptive texts.

Types of Errors: A Closer Analysis

Omission errors were the most frequent, which aligns with Dulay, Burt, and Krashen's (1982) observation that omission is a standard error among second-language learners. The absence of "-s" or "-es" in third-person singular forms indicates that students have not fully internalized the grammatical rule, possibly due to limited practice or lack of reinforcement in instruction. Richards (1984) noted that omission errors often stem from inadequate exposure to the target language's grammatical structures.

Addition errors, such as the redundant use of auxiliary verbs, suggest overgeneralization. Students may apply the "to be" rule excessively, assuming it is necessary in all contexts. As Ellis (2008) highlighted, overgeneralization occurs when learners extend the application of a rule beyond its appropriate context, indicating a transitional stage in language acquisition.

Misformation errors reflect more profound challenges, including first-language interference. Indonesian syntax, which does not require changes in verb forms based on the subject, appears to influence students' sentence construction in English. This finding supports Lado's (1957) theory of contrastive analysis, which posits that structural differences between the first and target languages can lead to errors.

Factors Causing Errors: Implications for Teaching

The interviews revealed that inadequate grammatical knowledge and carelessness were significant factors in students' errors. Many students confessed that they lacked a clear understanding of grammatical rules. This suggests a need for more explicit grammar instruction, as recommended by Ur (2012), who emphasizes the importance of focused grammar teaching in second-language acquisition.

Carelessness also emerged as a significant factor. Corder (1981) highlighted that errors caused by carelessness often stem from a lack of motivation or attentiveness. Teachers could address this issue by encouraging students to proofread their work and fostering a sense of responsibility for accuracy. Interlingual transfer was another prominent factor. The influence of Indonesian grammar on students' English writing demonstrates the importance of addressing first-language interference in the classroom. Teachers could employ contrastive analysis to highlight key differences between Indonesian and English grammar, as Brown (2007) suggested.

Pedagogical Recommendations

To reduce errors, teachers should focus on targeted grammar instruction, particularly in subject-verb agreement and the correct use of auxiliary verbs. Additionally, incorporating error correction activities and peer review sessions can encourage students to identify and rectify their mistakes. Furthermore, increasing students' exposure to authentic English materials, such as descriptive texts, can help them internalize correct grammatical structures.

CONCLUSION

Based on the finding and discussion above, this research aimed to conclude the types of errors that students made on using simple present tense in writing descriptive text and the main factor why the students made consistent errors on it.

First, the types of errors that student made on using simple present tense in writing descriptive text. the teacher gave the material about descriptive text include the generic structure and the language feature of the descriptive text. it showed that students made errors in using simple present tense in writing descriptive text into three types there are omission, addition, and misformation.

The second conclusion was the main factor that cause students errors using simple present tense in writing descriptive text. based on the interview that had been done with the students. The students did not master about grammar exactly in simple present tense. as result, they just wrote the incorrect sentence.

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