

# AN ERROR ANALYSIS ON THE USE OF VERBS IN RECOUNT WRITING

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## **Abstract**

This study was carried out to analyze students' error on the use of verbs in recount text writing made by the second semester English education study program of teacher training and education faculty of Tanjungpura University Pontianak. The method used in this study was descriptive qualitative method. Furthermore, the subject of this study was second semester students of Regular B consisted six students from class A and six students from class B. The data were collected through documentations that researcher took from the lecturer. The result of the error analysis process showed that students committed error into four types: omission, addition, selection, and ordering. From the frequency of each error types, selection took 58.1% of the total errors. Moreover, 25.8% errors fell into addition and 16.1% errors fell into omission; whereas, for ordering, it took 0%. This study revealed that the most dominant errors on the use of verbs in recount text writing done by the students were selection.

**Keywords: Verbs, Recount, Error**

## **BACKGROUND**

Since English is used as a foreign language in Indonesia, many efforts are needed in teaching and learning process, it's not only from the teacher but also from the student side. There are four main skills, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The writer focuses on the last skill, writing because writing is viewed as the most complex and hardest language skills among the others. The students need to think everything at once. They should produce words, sentences, paragraph, and extending compositions at the same time. Writing is different from learning other skills because writing is thinking process and need much time. Writing can help us to deepen understanding. It can help to make the sense of the information. Almost all the students in every level of education whether they are the senior one or even the university students will find that writing is not an easy process. English is different from Indonesia in its structure, phonology, and lexical meaning. So learning English is different from learning Indonesian. In fact, even college students still feel difficult in

writing English grammatically. Even though they have studied English for many years and have mastered the grammar, they still make many errors when they write. It means grammatical knowledge is needed for writing. Like simple past tense.

That is why, the students who learn English may produce many errors in their writing such as tense. Some students confuse in using tense in their writing. For example, where do you go yesterday? It should be where did you go yesterday? Their mistakes because they did not understand the grammar well.

In this case, the writer wanted to find out the grammatical error that's made by the second semester students of English Education at Tanjungpura University because, learning English in English Education Study Program is not just for the introduction anymore as they learn in the elementary, junior and high school. In the writer's experience, when the students tell about the events that had happened in the past, they used verbs in the presents tense. It because the students not have any knowledge of grammar,

especially regarding the use of verb in various tenses, such as present tense, past tense, and future tense to apply in their writing. Based on those reasons, the writer chooses the recount text because it is the simple writing that tells about the students' habit in the past. The writer also wants to research about the grammatical errors which is made by the students in writing recount text and the factors behind. And, by knowing the students' errors which are obtained from the documentation of their recount text writing focuses in their grammar, we will know what kind of errors on the use of simple past tense and what are the most frequent categories of error committed by the students.

Wang (2010) defines grammar as a set of rules for arranging words together into correct meaningful sentences and it is important in language teaching. However, there is a part of grammar that is considered to be one of the most difficult material to learn for the Indonesian learners, namely, tenses. According to Muftah and Galea (2013) tenses is the most problematic part for EFL learners to get easily master it properly in learning English. Therefore, the use of tenses can make the learners confused with its different patterns and functions.

There is one aspect of tenses that is important to be mastered is simple past tense. It is mostly often used by the learners to tell the past actions. It means that the simple past is used to express situations that happened in the past when talking about tenses; automatically it deals with the form of verbs. In simple past, the learners will learn about the past verbs form to be used for past actions.

Generally, there are two forms of verb namely regular and irregular verbs. Sometimes, some students often get confused to work with past verbs. Most verbs of simple past verbs requires an ending -ed/-d with regular verbs. As Uchiyama (2006) states that to make a sentence in simple past tense, add verb-ed if the regular verb is regular. Otherwise, it is different with regular past verbs because the rule is not the same. The students should be able to memorize the

irregular verbs frequently to make sentences easily.

The form of most verbs in the simple past tense by adding -ed in the ending of the verbs in singular and also plural form, it is called by "regular verbs" and "irregular verb" for which has changes in the verb. Kolln & Funk (2010) states that regular verbs are those in which the past tense and the past participle are formed by adding the suffix -ed (or in a few cases, -t) to the base form.

In the certain verbs, there are also changes in the verbs; they are called irregular verbs. An irregular verb, by contrast, is one where the shape of at least one inflectional form has to be specified for the particular verb (Kolln & Funk, 2010). The dictionary helps to find the irregular verbs because the form of the verbs can't be predicted. However, the students need to learn and memorize the regular and irregular verbs in English so that they will be to master how to use them in a sentence correctly.

Learning irregular verbs in simple past tense work in more than one way. Some base verbs make a vowel change. It means that the students have to know how a verb changes its form into an irregular verb. For example, the base form of the verb know, it has a vowel change become knew as the past irregular verb formation which shows the past action. Another way is that some base verbs make a vowel and consonant change. For example, the base form of the verb buy, it has a vowel and consonant change become bought as the past irregular verbs formation which shows the past action. A few transform completely. For example, the bases of the verb go, it has complete transformation as an irregular verb become went which also shows the past action. Langan (2003) said in his book, almost everyone has some degree of trouble with irregular verbs. When you are unsure about the form of the verb, you can check the following list of irregular verbs, or you can check a dictionary, which gives the principal parts of irregular verbs.

Furthermore, a small group of verbs in the past tense looks identical to the present – tense verbs. It means that there are some

main verbs that have no formation at all, but they still remain as the main verbs which may indicate the past actions. For example, the base form of the verb hit, it has no transformation at all as an irregular verb if the students use it to tell the past action in simple past tense. However, there are many ways of forming irregular verbs in English.

However, students will always make errors in using tenses either in writing or speaking (Ratnah, 2013). If the students get confused and failed in using appropriate verbs form, they may create an error in making a sentence.

According to Rustipa (2011) an error is a noticeable deviation, reflecting the competence of the learner. It is a systematic deviation produced by the learners who has not yet mastered the target language or has showed the incorrect use of language system elements. (Muftah & Galea, 2013) claims that the learners of a target language are not ware of their errors and thus are unable to correct these errors themselves. Gustilo (2002) also states that errors “are the result of the learner’s developing linguistic competence.

Despite the rules of the target language has been mastered by the students in classroom, the errors still occur because they don’t have appropriate knowledge to be able to correct the errors by themselves. This reveals that the learners still have not learnt something correctly and consistently wrong. As Maicusi (2000) states that making errors is the most natural thing in the world and it is evidently attached to the human being. However, all English foreign learners often make both errors in learning process (Xing, 2007).

Maicusi (2000) states that errors reflect gaps in learners’ knowledge. Errors occur because the learners do not know what is correct so that they cannot make correction because of lack of knowledge. Garrido and Romero (2012) also errors are systematic and correspond to the underlying knowledge of the language or traditional competence.

This is also supported by Maicusi (2000) that the error is what takes place when the

deviation arises as a result of lack of knowledge. This can be concluded that an error, reflects the learners’ competence in the target language itself in which the students cannot correct their own error. On the other hand, Erdogan (2005) suggests the ways how to find out students’ error the first one is to check the consistency of learner’s performance. If he always uses the form incorrectly, it is then an error. The second is to ask the learner to try to correct his own deviant utterance. Where he is unable to, the deviants are errors. Hourani (2008) also states that errors are systematic deviation when a learner has not learnt something and consistently get it wrong”. When the learners of the target language make an error systematically, means that they have not learnt the correct form.

Therefore, an error analyses has an important role to reveal what kinds of error the students do most, what are the most frequent categories of the error and how the students can learn from their mistakes in writing by themselves. Thus, the students will not do the same error or make same errors repeatedly. Those are the reasons why the writer is interested in analyzing students’ writing.

Recount text is one of the text genres that the students learn. This text is written with the purpose to inform the readers or people about something that happens in past. It can be experiences or events. Many students do not understand how to write this text correctly, especially to write the structures of contents in the text.

According to Djuharie (2008), recount is a reconstruction of something which happened in the past. It is unfolding sequence of event over time and the purpose is to tell what happened. Recount text begins by telling the reader who was involved, what happened, where this event took place and when it happened. The sequence of event is the described in some sorts of order, for instance a time order. The generic structure of a recount consists of three parts, they are the setting or orientation, events, and conclusion.

Based on the reason above, the writer is interested in analyzing the error in writing focused on verbs in simple past tense, this study is conducted in second semester students of English Education Study Program at Tanjungpura University Pontianak.

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this research, the researcher decided to use descriptive qualitative research. The descriptive qualitative research was intended to describe the data taken from the students which showed the students' errors in using simple past tense in a sentence based on the result of descriptive statistic analysis.

According to Bayinnah (2013) it is a statistic that organizes and analyzes the data, so that can give the description about the phenomenon and the situation which exist at the time of the study.

This research will take a random sampling technique. Sugiyono (2013) refers random sampling to a kind of probability sampling in which is used to give the same opportunity for every members of population chosen. Random sampling itself is the technique of getting sample that is done randomly without paying attention on the levels existed in the population.

**Table1. Population and Sample**

Class	Number of Students	Sample
A	26	6
B	28	6
Total	54 Students	12 Students

The instrument of this research is documents of their work sheet. The documents is writing test, w to the students about "What Did You Do Last Holiday. In analyzing the data, the first step is to identify students' error. To identify error, the researcher will check the sentence that contains error(s) with the incorrect verbs of English. After identifying the error, the researcher will describe the error into the categories of error. The next step is to compute the number of each category to find

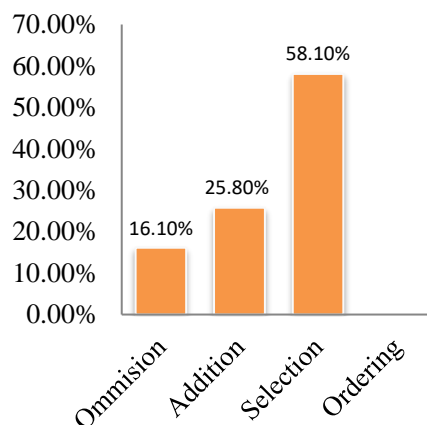
out the frequency of occurrence. The researcher will count the errors. After identifying the errors, the errors will be computed to find out the frequency of occurrence.

### RESEARCH FINDING AND DISCUSSION

#### Research Findings

There were many errors on the use of verbs in students recount writing, and then it needed to make the classifying of the students error on grammatical aspect. It only focused on the types of grammatical errors according to Corder (1982), error of omission, error of addition, error of selection, and error of ordering.

The writer found errors on the use of verbs in students recount writing, and then she made the classifying of the students error on grammatical aspect. After gathering the data, then the writer counted the errors by using the table and calculated the number of each error. Next, she processed the calculation of the result of the writing task by using percentage. Then, the writer made a graphic of writing error based on the calculation. Interpreting the data is done after processing the result.



**Graphic 1. The Percentage of Errors**

The table below is the interpretation of some errors that students committed:

**Table 2. The Recapitulation of Error Types, Frequency and its Percentage**

No.	Types of Error	Frequency of Error	Percentage
1.	Omission	10	16,1%
2.	Addition	16	25,8%
3.	Selection	36	58,1%
4.	Ordering	1	0%
<b>TOTAL</b>		63	100%

The total error of omission are 10 errors or 16.1%, addition are 16 errors or 25.8%, selection are 36 errors or 58.1%, and in ordering is 0 error or 0%. From the calculation of the data, error of selection is the most frequent errors that done by the second semester of English education study program student of Tanjungpura University Pontianak with the percentage 58.1%. moreover, it is followed by error of addition with percentage 25.8%, error of omission with percentage 16.1%, and error of ordering is 0%.

There are 10 errors of omission that made by the students. Many students made errors in forming the right utterance. It is caused by the grammatical morphemes are more complex, for example in using tenses, the learner should be aware of the addition of the ending of the verbs (-ed, -ing, -s) correctly. For example, when we arrive, we felt the fresh air of Sanggau Ledo. While he supposed to write, when we arrived, we felt the fresh air of Sanggau Ledo. We walk until midnight. While he supposed to write, we walked until midnight.

There are 16 in addition; the students add some items that shouldn't appear. The student knew about the using of verb 2 but they add to be which is not needed in the sentence. The example is, we are decided instead of we decided. The students add to be

before the verb, and it is not needed. The students know that they should use simple past tense form in their writing, but they don't know when they should add to be in the sentence.

In the error of selection, the writer found 36 errors. It is the most frequent error that made by students. For example, the students use go, see, and is/am in their writing, instead of went, saw, and was. Some of my friends, they go by taxi. While he supposed to write, some of my friends, they went by taxi. We see the beautiful waterfall, while she supposed to write, We saw the beautiful waterfall.

There is no students who committed error of ordering in the documentation that writer took from the lecturer, it shows that the students know how to order a sentence in simple past tense.

### Discussion

Based on the analysis done on twelve written texts produced by second semester of regular B of English study program in Teacher Training and Education of Faculty of Tanjungpura University in academic year 2016/2017, there were some grammatical error found in their writing text. Data indicated that there were 63 grammatical errors committed by the second semester students of English study program which were caused by omission, addition, selection, and ordering.

Most of the students did not realize that they used the wrong regular verbs and irregular verbs, which is not required in Indonesian. It means that, the students have to memorize well about the regular verbs and irregular verbs that they have to use when writing recount text.

The second semester students of English education study program had contributed errors when using simple past tense in writing recount text for example (1) I was go there with my friends; (2) But some of my friends they go by taxi; (3) We arrive to Sanggau Ledo and we felt the fresh air of Sanggau Ledo; (4) We see the beautiful waterfall Riam Berawan; (5) That maked me

so happy; (6) I smell the fresh air; (7) Arifin want to ride the bike; (8) Lina try to swam in that pool last holiday; (9) I and Maria cooks for everyone; (10) We grill many fishes in the beach; (11) We visits our senior high school teacher.

For the first sentence, she used word was go to explain something that happened in the past, instead of went, and she added was in the sentence which is to be should not appear in the sentence that the students wrote and this is what we called error of addition. The second sentence, she used word go again to explain something that happened in the past. We called it as error of selection. Sometimes it happens because it was not realized by the students, and error of selection is the most frequent error that committed by the students. In the third sentence, she used arrive instead of arrived, it is the error omission.

The forth sentence, she wrote see instead of saw to explain past action, it called as error of selection. In the fifth sentence he should use word made, but he chose word maked in that sentence, it is error of addition, then in the sixth sentence he should use smelt not use smell in that sentence because it happens in the past and this is error of selection. Then we can see in the seventh sentence, he didn't change want to the past verb, that is wanted, so the right sentence is Arifin wanted to ride the bike, because it's all happens in the past and this is error of selection.

As we could see from the seven sentences above, students committed error on the use of verbs in their writing. Then to make it clear, we discuss about the other sentences that contains of error. In the eight sentence, the student wrote that Lina try to swam in that pool last holiday, it contains of two verbs error, try (error of selection) and swam (error of selection), student should write Lina tried and to swim in that pool last holiday.

For the ninth sentence, the right sentence should be I and Maria cooked for everyone but she wrote cooks (error of selection), it's totally an error, because cooks is used in

present tense, explain about present action or a habit and cooks is for she, he and it, not for subject we, I and Maria.

In the tenth sentence, we grill (error of selection) many fishes, it should be we grilled, because the irregular verb of grill is grilled but the student still write with the verb one in the past tense in writing recount text. The last sentence is we visit (error of omission) our senior high school teacher. The verb of this sentence is visit. Since it happens it the past time, the students should change the verb, and the sentence should be we visited (visit+ed) our senior high school teacher.

As Erdogan (2005) states that errors occur as a result of interference happens because the difference between the learners' mother tongue and the target language Maicusi (2000). However, in the field of error analysis, the nature of errors implicates the other reasons for errors to occur. There are mainly two major sources of errors in foreign or second language learning namely interlingual errors and intralingual error Touchi (1986), Erdogan (2005), Heydari (2012), Wang (2010).

Interlingual error is also called as transfer or interference errors. As Swick (2010) explains that interference is when an L1 srtructure or rule is used in L2 utterance and that use is inappropriate and considered and error. It means that errors take place due to the influence of native language. Maicusi (2000) defines those interference errors reflect the use of elements from one language to other languages. Erdogan (2005) states this source is a significant source for language learners because the errors occur as being the result of language transfer, which is cause by the learners' first language. This is also supported by Heydari (2012) that interlingual error reflect the structure of the first language to the target language.

This can be concluded that interlingual errors happen because the learners often transfer their habit of the structure of their first language into the target language when speaking or writing, which can cause them to

commit errors in producing the target language itself.

As Erdogan (2005) states that interlingual errors may occur at different levels such as transfer of phonological, morphological, grammatical, and lexicosemantic elements of the native language into the target language. For example, some expression where the error often occurs in grammatical way made by Indonesian students on the use of verb in writing recount text is, we see the beautiful waterfall Riam Berawan instead of saying we saw the beautiful waterfall Riam Berawan. At this grammatical level, the use of irregular past verb does not occur in Indonesia which can cause the students to make incorrect utterance. They attempt to use *see* than *saw* to tell the past action in English. It means the students are not able to use the correct verb to tell a situation which happens in the past correctly. This is considered as an error. It means that learners' first language plays a significant role in language learning.

However, the learners' first language is not the only factor that may lead the learners for committing error in language learning. The learners' competence in understanding and using the target language also reflects some errors in language learning which is called as intralingual errors. This happens because the faulty learning due to the difficulty of the second/target language itself (Touchie, 1986). It means that this errors occur during the learning process of second/target language at a stage when the learners have not completely mastered the knowledge because of the difficulty of the language itself. It can also be said that the errors happen within the target language itself. However, there are many descriptions about the general characteristic of intralingual errors when the students attempt to complete a task in learning and use the structure of target language itself based on their limited experience. The factors that may cause the learners to commit errors due to the intralingual error or internal learning process are subdivided to the following categories Heydari (2012): (1) overgeneralization; (2)

ignorance of rule restriction; (3) incomplete application of rules; (4) false concept hypnotized.

To put it simply, in confronting the new situation, for example when the students are asked to tell their activity in the past, they would create the wrong rules in their utterance to the target language. In this case, the learners use the strategy to make the utterance based on their previous knowledge of the target language which they have already learnt but fail to construct it. In using simple past tense, overgeneralization includes such as the use of *comed* and *goed* as the past tense forms of *come* and *go* and also the omission of the auxiliary verb *did* in a positive or negative sentence. The omission can be a word, a morpheme, or an element. For example: "They *comed* to my house yesterday". In this sentence, the learner produces an error because he generalizes that a verb in past sentence must be formed by adding *-ed* to the base verb. However, the learners need to learn more about the regular and irregular verbs which are used in English.

The second one is cause of error is closely related to overgeneralization. For example, "Do you *brought* my English book?". The sentences are grammatically incorrect because the learners fail to use the correct structures of the sentences. Such as the first sentence, the students should use *did* in the sentence, because the sentence is an interrogative sentence, and since the students ask the situation that happened in the past, the correct sentence is "Did you give my English book to Rina yesterday?". In this case, the students ignore the rule of the target language where it is necessary to apply in the context or they may be have not completely learnt about the pattern of simple past tense as well as the use of *did* itself.

However, the students' errors are due not only to interference from their mother tongue or native language, but also the structure of the target language itself which is new and different to the students themselves. Of course a better understanding about the errors and the source of errors in the process

of language writing will help the teacher to understand about the students' problems in learning the language. In addition, it will add the teachers' knowledge about how to create or prepare an appropriate teaching strategy to help the EFL learners learn the language better. However, the study of error analysis, will help the researcher or the English teachers to know the developmental stage of students as well as the strategies the students use in learning the target language.

## CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

### Conclusion

Based on the explanation and the description in the previous chapter, the writer concluded that the types of error that were made by the students of the second semester of English education program of Tanjungpura University in their English writing from the highest percentage to the lowest are error of selection, error of addition, omission and error of ordering.

As shown on the table in the previous chapter, error of selection is the most frequent errors that done by the second semester students of English education study program of Tanjungpura University with the percentage 57.1%. They did it because some students found difficult in distinguishing between regular verb, and irregular verbs.

### Suggestion

Errors in teaching learning process of foreign language are something unavoidable. Although it seems natural, students should learn more about both enhance vocabularies and grammatical function in order to improve their writing skill. The writer intends to give some suggestions as follow: (1) the students have to pay more attention to some aspects that are difficult for them in writing. After knowing their mistakes, the students should be able to learn from it, so they will not do the same mistakes; (2) the students have to be diligent to memorize and apply the regular and irregular verb in their daily life; (3) the last, after knowing the errors made by the students, the lectures should pay more attention, help the student and provide more

exercises and also focuses on the material which is difficult for the students and the lectures may motivate her students to be more relax in learning English, tell them that English is easy to learn, and do not be afraid to make mistake, because it is a process to reach success.

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