

**AN ERROR ANALYSIS ON THE USE OF SIMPLE PAST TENSE IN STUDENTS' WORKSHEET OF NURSING SCIENCE STUDENTS AT STIK BINA HUSADA PALEMBANG**

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**Abstract:** This study was conducted to identify the kinds of errors in surface strategy taxonomy which had been done in several stages: preparation was made by reading the theory and the previous related studies. The theory was used to explain how to analyze the use of simple past tense by students on Nursing Science students' worksheet of STIK Bina Husada Palembang. The data were taken from the third semester of English students' worksheet. The stages of analyzing the data were by identification of error, classification, description, and correction. The result of this study showed that there were three kinds of the error made by the students, such as omission, misinformation, and misordering. According to Lyons (1968, p. 54) in learning English, one of the biggest problems faced by students is grammar. In the second language learning process, a language learner cannot be separated from language errors. □

**Keywords:** error, error analysis, past tense, worksheet

## INTRODUCTION

As an international language, English plays an important role in how one gets knowledge, information, talent, and communication in order to compete with others at the international level, for example, people who can speak English can communicate with people around the

world, can read English books, and so on. In Indonesia itself, the need for English is very vast, both in the formal and informal sectors. English is studied from the elementary school to university level which focuses on four language skills, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Among

these language skills, reading plays an important role in one's life and has been developed continuously.

A language is a tool for interacting or communicating. Each language has a structure and sentence patterns that are different from other languages. There are various kinds of languages in the world, one of which is English which is an international language. As a means of communication between nations in the world, English cannot be ignored as a medium of communication both orally and in writing.

Grammar is indeed important to master, including when mastering English. However, one of these international languages has quite difficult grammar which a few people focus on understanding it until they ignore other components. Many

students have considerable difficulty with the English tenses system.

The difficulties arise from the nature of the system itself and from the differences between English and the learners' mother tongue. The students' disability in using the tenses to communicate is the problem found by the students because time and tense in English are not related to Indonesian language. In English, the verb will show the time orientation and there is a regular and irregular verb, where as in other languages including Indonesian has not those rules.

In learning English, there are difficulties that cause errors in using English. Mistakes and errors need to be distinguished, which are technically two very different phenomena. Brown (2007) states that mistakes are a result of one's systematic competence. Azar (1999) says that simple past tense is

an event that happened or was done in the past (yesterday, last night, two days ago, in 1990). For example, I played the guitar (the word "played" is a past form of "play")

In the writer's experience, when the students told about the events that had happened in the past, they still used the present tense. It was because the students did not have any knowledge of grammar; present tense, past tense, and future tense to apply in their writing or speaking. Based on those reasons, the writer was interested in analyzing the students' error on the use of simple past tense students' worksheet of nursing science students.

### **Error and Mistake**

In the teaching and learning process, it is very natural for the students to make mistakes. We cannot expect students to learn something with a perfect understanding for the

first time. Students' mistakes are part of the learning process that must be addressed wisely.

From error or mistake, we get feedback that allows us to know in terms of what students still experiencing difficulties in understanding the material is being taught. In the learning process, especially English, there are two terms to distinguish students' mistakes, namely 'mistake' and 'error' (Brown, 2000).

Error and mistake are two different things. James (1998) mentions that intention played a decisive role in the error and mistake definition. According to him, the error is unintentionally deviant and is not self-correctible by its author. A mistake is either intentionally or unintentionally deviant and it is self-correctible by its author, further, the

error cannot be self-corrected by the learner until further relevant input that has been provided and converted into intake by the learners. In other words, the learner needs to be provided the further relevant learning before they can correct themselves. Meanwhile, mistakes can be corrected by the learners by simply pointing out to them. On the other hand, Corder (1981) has another definition of error and mistake as stated in James' book (1998) . He upholds the competence versus performance distinction. According to him, mistakes are of no significance to the process of language learning since they 'do not reflect a defect in our knowledge' but are traceable to performance failure, such as memory lapses, spelling pronunciations, tiredness, strong emotion, and so on. The learner is normally aware of them immediately

and can correct them with more or less complete assurance. On the contrary, errors are everything that mistakes are not; they are significance; they do reflect knowledge; they are not self-correctable, and only learners of an L2 make them.

According to Corder (1981), error analysis as an alternative to contrastive analysis. It showed that contrastive analysis was unable to predict a great majority of errors although it has more valuable aspects that have been incorporated into the study of language transfer. A key finding of error analysis is that many errors are made by learners making faulty inferences about the rules of the new language.

Based on the definition above, it can be said that error is systematic deviance which is made by the learner intentionally; it reflects his knowledge

since it is not caused by performance failure, and it cannot be self-corrected by the learner. Meanwhile, the mistake is not systematic deviance which is made by the learner either intentionally or unintentionally; it is caused by performance failure, such as fatigue, memory lapses, and so on, and it can be self-corrected by the learner. □

### **Simple Past tense**

A simple Past tense is a form of tense that describes an event that occurs in a specific time in the past. The verb used in this tense must be a second verb. Similar to simple present tense, this form is one of the most basic tenses and is often used at the time of writing or conversation in English.

Basically, simple past tense has the same structure as a simple present tense. The thing that distinguishes the two is the time and verb used. The

form of verbs used in simple past tense must be in the form of a second verb or a past verb.

In general, the use of simple past tense is the same as the use of simple present tense. The only difference is that related actions or events have occurred in the past and do not occur again in the present.

### **Surface Strategy Taxonomy**

This category highlights the way surface structures are altered. Analyzing errors from this taxonomy holds much promise for researchers as it is concerned with identifying cognitive processes that underlie the learners' reconstruction of the new language. This also gives us consideration that students' errors are not the result of laziness or sloppy thinking but are based on some logic, as the result of the learners' use of interim principles to produce a new

language (Dulay, Burt, and Krashen, 1982, pp. 154-162). Those types of errors which belong to surface strategy taxonomy are (1) omission, (2) addition, (3) misformation, and (4) misordering. The further explanation of each type of errors were explained below.

1) Omission. This type of error is characterized by the absence of an item, which must appear in a well-formed utterance. Certain linguistic forms may be omitted by the learner because of their complexity in production. Generally, there are two main kinds of omission; they are an omission of content morphemes and omission of grammatical morphemes

2) Addition. This type of error is characterized by the presence of an item, which must not appear in

a well-formed utterance. It means that learners not only omit elements, which they regard as redundant, but they also add redundant elements.

3) Misformation This type of error is characterized by the use of the wrong form of the morpheme or structure. This error has three subcategorized, namely: regularization, archi-forms, and alternating forms.

4) Misordering. This type of error is characterized by the incorrect placement of a morpheme in an utterance. For example: What daddy is doing? This question is incorrect. It should be "what is daddy doing?"

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The purpose of English language learning in Nursing Science Study Program is to discuss the integration of four basic skills in English, namely speaking, listening, reading, and writing including aspects of grammar and vocabulary into the scope of services and nursing work both in clinical/community practice and in learning in class and/or in the laboratory. In the later stages, English courses prepare students to be able to get an adequate TOEFL/IELTS score to continue their education to a higher level or work abroad.

After participating in English language learning activities, students are able to:

- 1) Read and explain medical instructions and/or health teams regarding patient medical records in English

- 2) Identify commands/instructions in English conversations in class or simulating health service settings
- 3) Write/document reports on nursing care activities given to patients
- 4) Communicate English actively in classroom learning and in health service simulations

## **METHODOLOGY**

In this study, the writer used descriptive methods. The design of this method is used to explain the collected data. Descriptive research is not only limited to the problem of collecting and compiling data but also includes analysis and interpretation of the meaning of the data.

The stages in conducting this research were as follows: 1) Preparation; the author read several

books relating to the analysis of errors and tense especially simple past tense and previous studies. 2) Data collection; the data of this research were taken from the 3<sup>rd</sup> semester students worksheet, namely describing a memorable, scary, funny, or exciting experience that you have had. 3) Data analysis; the collected data were categorized into four types of errors put forward by Ellis (1997) , namely, errors in omission, addition, misinformation, and misordering. After categorizing the data the author explained the errors found and made corrections.

The population of this study was students of the Nursing Science Program, Bina Husada College of Health Sciences, the third semester in the academic year of 2018/2019 that was 30 students. The instrument used in this study was a test. The test used

in this study was a writing test in the description of the past, where the writer asked the students to write down a fun, frightening, and funny experience.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION □**

Based on the students' worksheet of the third semester of Nursing Science Student of STIK Bina Husada in the academic year of 2018/2019. It was found that there were several mistakes or errors in using simple past tense. The errors were then classified into types of errors namely: (1) omission, (2) addition, (3) misinformation, and (4) misordering. Nevertheless, the result of this study showed that there were three kinds of error made by the students, namely omission, misinformation, and misordering.

### **1) Omission**



Omission is an error in eliminating the parts needed in a sentence in the form of simple past tense. The example of this error is removing verb endings (-ed, d) in regular order words (regular verb).

In the use of simple past tense, the form of the verb used is the second form of the verb or verb that is added -d or -ed ending at the end of the verb basic form (regular verb). □ There were 25 sentences which were found to have the verb ending suffix errors (-ed, -d) one of them is as follows: **"I play with my friends"**.

The errors found in the sentence above were the existence of the ending -ed omission and d in the past tense verb of regular verbs in the above sentences must end with -ed or -d. The above sentences should be: **"I played with my friend"**.

#### **a) The omission in a negative sentence □**

In negative sentences, simple past verb tense used "did plus not", did word has a grammatical function that is very important because it forms negative sentences and question sentences in simple past tense patterns. The errors in 'did' omission were found in the data, for example, **I'm not meet my friends.**

The error found in the sentence above was the error of removing a word in a negative sentence. The correct sentence form of the above sentences was: **I did not meet my friends.**

#### **b) To be Omission**

Errors in this omission is an important component in a sentence because it functions as a link to the subject of sentences with predicates

or sentence objects. To be used in simple past tense sentences namely was and were. To be omission were found in the data, for example, **I there.**

In the sentence above, it was found that there was an error in removing to be and was used in simple past tense sentences. The sentence above should be: **I was there.**

## 2) Misinformation

Misinformation is an error in using grammar forms in other grammar forms. Errors in using the forms found in students' worksheet, for example:

### a) Error in using regular verbs and irregular verb past forms

Regular verbs or so-called regular verbs are words whose changes are regular by simply adding the suffix -ed or -d from the

original form so that it becomes the second tense (past tense).

Sentences containing the misuse of a regular verb and irregular verb forms as follows: **eat in the corner.**

The above sentences used the verb first form of an irregular verb, the sentence should be: **I ate in the corner.**

### b) Error in using the past form of irregular verb

Irregular verb, which is a verb that is not in accordance with rules or verbs that are not only added to the suffix -ed or -d but the verb that changes from the basic form to another form of the verb is not the same as the basic word. It can be seen from the following sentence: **I drived.**

In the sentence above there was a misuse of the past form of

irregular verbs. In the sentence, there was an added suffix-ed on the verb "drive" which was changed to "drived". The sentence above should be: **I drove.**

**c) Error in using the To be a form**

To be that is used in simple past form are "was" and "were". To be "was" is used for single (singular) subject and "were" used for plural subjects. The error in using the past form of to be, for example, **She is in the first rank.**

In the above sentence, it was necessary to use to be "was" and "were" as auxiliary verbs. The sentences above should be: **She was in the first rank.**

**d) Error in Using 'do'**

'do' form in the simple past tense is "did" for negative sentences and question sentences. Error using

the form 'do' found in the data, as follows: **I do not know him.**

In the sentence above used the incorrect do form in the form of negative sentences, simple past tense. The use of the correct 'do' form of the sentence above was: **I did not know him.**

**e) Error in Modals Form**

Modal is a small class of auxiliary verbs used mostly to express modality (properties such as possibility, obligation, and so on). They can be distinguished from other verbs by their defectiveness (they do not have participle or infinitive forms) and by the fact that they do not take the ending -(e)s in the third-person singular. The example of an error in using a modal form was: **I will stay.**

In the sentence above the use of modals "would" in a simple past

sentence was correct because it was past from "will" but in the sentence, the verb after the modals did not need to be changed into the past form or remains in the first form.

The sentence should be: **I would stay.**

### 3) Misordering

Misordering is the error of placing words in an incorrect order. The pattern of the simple past tense is S + past tense verb (V2) + Object + Adverb.□

In simple past sentences, the placement of an object in the past tense must be after the predicate so that the sentence is said to be grammatical. Based on the data, the misordering in an object was as follow: **I went to my family to my hometown.**

In the sentence above, the object should be written after the predicate

(verb), the correct placement of sentences was: **I went to my hometown with my family.**

### 4) Combination of 2 Types of Errors

Merging errors is where there is more than one type of error in a sentence. In simple sentences past tense merging errors can cause a sentence to be non-grammatical. Misordering and omission errors. Sentences that have a combination of placement errors and omission errors are as follows: subject misplacement and -ed removal error, for example, **Me and my friends return home.**

In the sentence above the placement of the subject, "my parents" was in the wrong order and in the verb the above sentence had no suffix –ed. The correct sentence from the above sentence should be: **My friends and I returned home.**

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the data analysis on the types of misuse of simple past tense that had been described, there were four types of errors found, namely omission, misinformation, misordering, and a combination of two types of errors. The types of errors have been classified based on the students' errors in writing the simple past tense worksheet.

According to Lyons (1968, p.54), in learning English, one of the biggest problems faced by students is grammar. Lyons further explains "Grammar is the form of words from the language itself and their combinations in phrases, clauses, and sentences" or it can be said that grammar provides rules about how to combine words into sentences. In the second language learning process, a language learner could not

be separated from language errors.

This was fundamental because second language learners were not native speakers of the language. Therefore, there was a need for a learning process to correct language errors in order to improve language skills.

The cause of language errors was not only based on linguistic factors but also came from nonlinguistic factors. The difference in the system between the mother tongue and the target language created a negative transfer that encouraged errors. On the contrary, the same pattern of patterns between two languages would lead to positive transfers which facilitated the process of learning foreign languages.

The use of forced target language and still in a state of lack

of mastery would produce many forms of language which were wrong in the process of acquiring a second language.

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