

# SIMPLE PAST TENSE ERRORS IN RECOUNT-TEXT MADE BY THIRD- GRADE STUDENTS OF SMAN

**Firma Pradesta Amanah, Patuan Raja, Sudirman**  
**Firma.pradesta@yahoo.com**

## **Abstract**

Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui jenis kesalahan dan persentase kesalahan yang dibuat oleh siswa dalam menggunakan *simple past tense* pada teks recount tertulis. Metode yang digunakan adalah metode deskriptif. Sumber data diperoleh dari siswa kelas tiga SMAN 1 Pringsewu. Berdasarkan hasil analisis, hasil kesalahan yang dibuat oleh siswa sebanyak 200 item. Frekuensi kesalahan tertinggi berdasarkan *Surface Strategy Taxonomy* adalah *misformation* yaitu 111 (55.50%). Frekuensi selanjutnya adalah *omission* yaitu 42 kesalahan (21,00%), diikuti *addition* yaitu 24 kesalahan (12,00%), dan yang terendah adalah *misordering* yaitu 23 kesalahan (11,50%). Kemudian, berdasarkan *Communicative Effect Taxonomy*, kesalahan global yaitu 27 item (13,50%) dan kesalahan lokal yaitu 173 item (86,50%). Berdasarkan hasil penelitian, dapat disimpulkan bahwa sebagian besar siswa masih melakukan semua jenis tipe kesalahan, mereka masih memiliki masalah dengan tata bahasa Inggris.

The purposes of this research were to find out the types of errors and the percentages of errors made by the students in using simple past tense in writing recount text. The method was descriptive method. The sources of data were the third grade students of SMAN 1 Pringsewu. Based on the results of the analysis, the result of errors that was made by the students were 200 items. The highest frequency of errors based on Surface Strategy Taxonomy was misformation that was 111 (55.50%). The next frequencies were omission that was 42 errors (21.00%), followed by addition that was 24 (12.00%), and the lowest one was misordering consisted of 23 errors or (11.50%). Then, based on Communicative Effect Taxonomy, global errors were counted for 27 items (13.50%) and local errors were 173 items (86.50%). The conclusion of this research was most of the students still committed all types of errors, they still had problem with English grammar.

**Keywords:** communicative effect taxonomy, recount text, simple past tense, surface strategy taxonomy

## **INTRODUCTION**

Writing is a productive skill that should be mastered by the students of senior high schools as the language learners. Although there is no writing skill in English national examination, writing is clearly stated in standard of content of KTSP. Writing also has to be elaborated in syllabus by employing the genres or types of text. It is in line with the research which deals with one of the genres, recount text. It is a kind of essay text that functions to inform and entertain the readers.

In writing, the students still have mistakes about grammar. Grammar is essentially about the systems and patterns we use to select and combine words (Murcia, 1995: 4). By studying grammar we come to recognize the structure and regularity which is the foundation of language and we gain the tools to talk about the language system. Grammar must be learned by the students who want to learn language. It will be more effective to produce utterance based on the basic structure which they know (Nichols, 1993: 78). Moreover in writing skill, the grammar is really needed to be learned because the mistakes made in writing seem so clear when someone writes it and will be read by readers. Therefore, it is very important for the students to pay attention on grammar when they are writing.

In relation to the problem that connected with the teaching of English in Indonesia, Sulaiman (1970: 74) states that one of the serious problems connected with the teaching of English in Indonesia is that most of the students have difficulty in mastering the structure of language. Structure deals with the rules for forming words and making sentences. In making a sentence, we need some

elements. One of the sentence elements which play an important role is verb. From the fact, we know that the students still make errors in making sentences especially on how to use verb correctly in a sentence based on the tense being used. For example, they wrote “*She were sad when she left her village*” it should be “*She was sad when she left her village*”, then “*I gived her a beautiful flower*” it should be “*I gave her a beautiful flower*”.

The research questions are posed in this research. They are: 1) What types of simple past tense errors are made by the students in writing recount text at third grade of senior high school? 2) What are the percentages of errors made by the students in using simple past tense in writing recount text based on surface strategy taxonomy and communicative effect taxonomy?

## **METHOD**

This research is qualitative in nature that uses descriptive method. The method is intended to describe exactly a phenomenon or problem that researcher had observed. It means that the researcher investigated the use of simple past tense and to identify the grammatical errors in using simple past tense in students’ recount text writing based on surface strategy taxonomy and communicative effect taxonomy. In this way, the researcher collected the data from the students’ recount text writing and investigated them whether the students used correct simple past tense or made errors, and identified the errors based on surface strategy taxonomy and communicative effect taxonomy in order to conclude the result. This research was conducted to the third grade of senior high school year

2014/2015 in Senior High School 1 Pringsewu. Then, the researcher took one class for the sample to be investigated about the use of simple past tense and the grammatical errors in their recount text writing.

In this research, the researcher used the documentation of students' writing as the instrument to make a recount text according to the material that had been learnt before. To make the students not confused in determining what about they would write, the researcher gave two topics to be chosen by the students. Then, the procedures of the research were determining the subjects of the research, administering the research by giving the writing task, identifying data, and reporting the research finding.

In order to find out the use of simple past tense and its grammatical errors in students' recount text writing, the researcher analyzed the result of the students' writing, using the steps to analyze the data; the first step was collecting the data from the students. The second step was determining whether the use of simple past tense was used in well-formed or error by the students. In this step, the researcher classified the use of simple past tense into a table whether the tense was used in correct form or error. The third step was identifying the errors made by the students. In this step, the researcher identified the errors in students' recount text writing by underlining the errors and gave mark OM, AD, MF, MO for surface strategy taxonomy, GE and LE communicative effect taxonomy. The fourth step was classifying the errors of using simple past tense in students' recount text writing to find out the frequency of errors. Each error was classified

by using surface strategy taxonomy and communicative effect taxonomy. The fifth step was displaying the data, the researcher used the qualitative method to treat the data. And the last step was calculating the data taken and making the percentage in each category.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The research had was on Wednesday, January 14<sup>th</sup> 2015 for class XII.IPS.1 of SMAN 1 Pringsewu. It required 90 minutes to administer the students' recount text writing. The researcher investigated the use of simple past tense in students' recount text writing and identified the grammatical errors made by the students. In conducting the research, the researcher used students' recount text writing as the source of data. The researcher asked the students to make recount text. In order to make the students easy in composing recount text, the researcher prepared the topic to be chosen by the students. The topics were 1. Unforgettable moment, 2. School holiday.

**Table 1. The Types of Errors Based on Surface Strategy Taxonomy**

No.	Types of Errors	Total Errors	Percentage
1.	Omission	42	21.00%
2.	Addition	24	12.00%
3.	Misformation	111	55.50%
4.	Misordering	23	11.50%
<b>Total Errors</b>		<b>200</b>	

Having analyzed the students' result of recount text writing, the researcher found that there were 42 items (21.00%) of omission errors, 24 items (12.00%) of addition errors, 111 items (55.50%) of misformation errors, and 23 (11.50%) of misordering errors. From the data above the highest frequency of errors in using

simple past tense in students' recount text writing was misformation type that covered (55.50%) of errors. The next types were omission (21.00%) followed by addition (12.00%) and the lowest one was misordering (11.50%).

The data derived from the students' recount text paragraph writing shows that there is different account of errors occurring in the paragraph they wrote. The following are the explanations of the errors in using simple past tense committed by the students in their recount text writing.

### 1) Omission

Omission is characterized by the absence of an item that must appear in well-formed utterances. Based on the result of the research, some of the students omitted *be* in their sentences when there was no verbs in it. The students committed this error especially in using *be* (*was/were*) function as linking verb in the sentences. It might be caused by students unawareness in using *be* as linking verb in the sentence when there was no verbs in it.

**Sample:** *Our member only 23 student.* ( Data code BIC, sentence 16)

The rule of simple past tense is subject + verb<sup>2</sup>/ *be* past + complement. There is no "*be*" or verb in this sentence. Here, the student omitted *be –were* after subject. "*Were*" must appear after the word "*member*" in this sentence since there is no verb in it, because this sentence needs linking verb to make it a complete sentence. The revision of this sentence is "*Our members were only 23 students*".

## 2) Addition

Addition errors are the opposite of omission. They are characterized by the presence of an item which must not appear in a well-formed utterance. The students sometimes added be (was/were) in their sentence when there had been the verb in it and they sometimes did not delete the morpheme –ed in a verb which there has been modal for indicating past tense.

**Sample:** *I didn't forgot this moment.* (Data code RSD, sentence 20).

In this sentence there were double past markings “did” and “forgot”. It was incorrect because it was not rule of simple past tense. The rule of negative sentence of simple past tense is subject + did + not + verb1 + complement. So, the verb “forgot” should be in the verb 1 “forget”. The correct sentence is “*I did not forget this moment*”.

## 3) Misformation

Misformation errors are characterized by inappropriate use of structure or the use of wrong form of the morpheme or structure.

**Sample:** *He gived me grapes.* (Data code WSA, sentence 22).

In this sample, the student committed error because he/ she used incorrect verb of past form that should be in the form of past tense. The students used wrong inflectional morpheme “gived”. The word “gived” should be in past form “gave”. Because the verb “give” is irregular verb, so the past verb of “give” is “gave”. The correct sentence is “*He gave me grapes*”.

#### 4) Misordering

Misordering errors are characterized by incorrect placement of a morpheme or a group of morpheme in an utterance.

**Sample:** *Many things he asked me about my school, my activity, etc.* (Data code WSA, sentence 9)

The sentence structure above was ordered incorrectly. The words are ordered in wrong structure. The sentence also complicated the readers to get the meaning. The intent of this sentence is the student's uncle asked him/ her many things. So, the correct sentence is "*He asked me many things about my school, my activity, etc.*".

**Table 2. The Types of Errors Based on Communicative Effect Taxonomy**

NO.	Types of Errors	Total Errors	Percentage
1.	Global error	27	13.50%
2.	Local error	173	86.50%
<b>Total Errors</b>		<b>200</b>	

The table showed that the total of global and local errors that were made by the third grade students of Senior High School 1 Pringsewu in their recount text writing was 200 errors. They made 27 errors of global errors or 13.50% and 173 errors of local errors or 86.50%.

The data elicited from the students' writing indicates that there were 200 errors viewed in the basis of Communicative Effect Taxonomy.

##### 1. Global Error

Burt and Kiparsky in Dullay (1982: 191) stated that global errors are the errors that affect overall sentence organization that significantly hinder communication.



It is labeled as “global” because of its wide syntactic scope. Moreover, Dullay (1982: 191) said that the most systematic global errors include wrong order of major constituents, missing, wrong or misplaced sentence connector, and missing cues signal obligatory exception to pervasive syntactic rules. These aspects are encountered in the students’ recount paragraph as shown in the following samples.

**a. Wrong order of major constituent**

**Sample:** *We was very enjoyed our trip.* (Data code BIC, sentence 20)

The order of the sentence is incorrect. Wrong order of that sentence affects overall sentence organization. It changes the meaning of the sentence. Actually the student wanted to explain that she/ he and their friends enjoyed the trip. So, the sentence should be changed by “*We enjoyed our trip so much*”.

**b. Missing cues signal obligatory exception to pervasive syntactic rules**

**Sample:** *There were \_\_\_\_\_ rode a banana boat.* (Data code OGA, sentence 19)

In this sample, there was no subject that rode a banana boat. There should be subject who road a banana boat in this sentence. So, it should be filled with “people” to make the sentence more complete. The correct sentence is “*There were **people** rode a banana boat*”.

**2) Local Error**

Local error are the errors that affect single element (constituent) in a sentence, and usually the errors do not disturb communication significantly between the readers and the writer. Dullay (1982: 191-192) categorized the errors into error in noun and verb inflection, error in articles, error in auxiliaries, and error in the formation of quantifiers.

**a. Error in noun and verb inflection**

Sample: *I was not knew her.* (Data code AJ, sentence 8)

The verbs “was” and “knew” in this sentence were incorrect. This sentence was negative sentence of verbal sentence simple past tense. The pattern that was used is subject + did + not + verb1 + complement. So, the verbs that should be used were “did” and “know”. The correct sentence is “*I did not know her*”.

**b. Error in auxiliaries**

Sample: *We was very happy and tired.* (Data code MIW, sentence 21)

In this sample, the auxiliary that was used was incorrect. “Was” should be changed with “were” because the subject of this sentence was plural. So, the correct sentence is “*We were very happy and tired*”.

## **DISCUSSION**

In conducting this research, the writer followed the steps to analyze the errors proposed by Widiatmoko (2011: 35) and Juwitasari (2013: 28), they were a) collecting the data, b) identifying the errors, c) classifying the errors onto errors types, and d) giving statement of relative frequency of errors types.

After collecting the data from the students’ writing task, the errors were identified and then they were classified based on Surface Strategy Taxonomy (omission, addition, misformation, and misordering). While based on Communicative Effect Taxonomy the errors were classified into two, global error and local error. After classifying types of errors, the frequency was determined.

Based on the result of the research, the writer found that the highest frequency of errors made by the students based on Surface Strategy Taxonomy was misformation by 55.50%. This result was similar to the previous research on the errors in the students writing done by Widiatmoko (2011) which showed that the number of total errors in misformation was 50.31%. Below is the table of the result based on the research done by writer and Widiatmoko.

**Table 3. Error Comparison Based on Writer's Research and Widiatmoko's on Surface Strategy Taxonomy**

No.	Types of Error	Percentage	
		Writer's	Widiatmoko's
1.	Misformation	55.50%	50.31%
2.	Omission	21.00%	25.40%
3.	Addition	12.00%	15.54%
4.	Misordering	11.50%	8.75%

In the table above, misformation places at the highest level from the others. This case might be affected by lack of the students' knowledge about English structure. Then, the table above figured that omission had placed the second level in both research, but in the different percentage. And the lowest number or error in this research was based on Surface Strategy Taxonomy was misordering. The percentage of this type of error was only 11.50%.

**Table 4. Error Comparison Based on Writer's Research and Widiatmoko's on Communicative Effect Taxonomy**

No.	Types of Error	Percentage	
		Writer's	Widiatmoko's
1.	Global error	13.50%	11.16%
2.	Local error	86.50%	88.84%

In the table above, local error was higher than global error. This case might be affected by lack of the students' knowledge about English. Widiatomoko (2011: 55) stated that the second language learners might be confused recognize then use the second language because of their first language's influences. Take for the example, the sentence "she was very girl beautiful". The word "girl beautiful" in that sentence was incorrect, since it was wrong order. This error was caused by the influence of Bahasa Indonesia.

From the table above, the writer did not explain why differences of percentage of each type of errors happened in both of result researches. But, the writer just wanted to see the order of the types of errors which was the highest, the second, the third, and the lowest percentage. Since the differences of those percentages in both researches did not reveal the one was smarter than the other. So, it was not discussed as the main discussion in this chapter.

Form the table, it could be inferred that both researches (writer and Widiatmoko) had the same order in four types of error in surface strategy taxonomy and two types of error in communicative effect taxonomy. In the surface strategy taxonomy, the higher or the first was misformation that was 55.50%. The omission placed second place that was 21.00%, while addition and misordring placed the third and fourth that were 12.00% and 11.50%. It could be inferred that in both research the subjects still did many errors in writing, since they were developing their knowledge. In the other case of Communicative Effect Taxonomy, *global* errors were counted for 13.50% and *local* errors were 86.50%.

From the result, the students made mostly local error. In Communicative Effect Taxonomy, local error was the error which did not hinder communication significantly. So, their writing could still be understood by the readers, because the global errors were only 13.50%.

From the research finding, although the students of class XII.S.1 of SMAN 1 Pringsewu used more correct simple past tense than error in their recount text, the errors that were made by the students should be clarified in order to know what the common error made by the students. Therefore, it can be employed by other researcher to make more improvements in using simple past tense in students' recount text writing in order to minimize the errors.

## **CONCLUSION**

In relation to the result of the research, there were two major conclusions:

1. Most of the students still committed all four errors types of Surface Strategy Taxonomy and two errors types of Communicative Effect Taxonomy. It means that although the students were taught English 12 hours in a week, they still had problem with English grammar, especially in past tense. In other words, they still made many errors in the use of past tense.
2. Percentage and frequency of the errors (ranked from the types of error that is mostly made by the students) resulted from the students' recount text writing are based on Surface Strategy Taxonomy; error in misformation was 55.50% or 111 items, error in omission was 21.00% or 42 items, error in addition was 12.00% or 24 items, and error in misordering is 11.50% or 23 items. Then,

based on Communicative Effect Taxonomy, global error was 13.50% or 27 items and local error was 86.50% or 173 items.

This meant that the English teachers may use information of the types of students' errors as a guidance to evaluate the weakness or progress of the students' ability in learning English, especially in their recount text writing. In order to minimize the students' errors, the teacher should improve the students' knowledge of English grammar by teaching how to form or construct the sentences appropriately and meaningfully, and by telling the functions of the language area themselves. Besides that, the teacher has to set the first priority to the errors the mostly occurred (misformation and local error).

## REFERENCES

- Dulay, H., Burt, M. and Krashen, S. D. 1982. *Language Two*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Juwitasari, R. 2013. *An Analysis of Grammatical Errors in Using Simple Present Tense in Descriptive Text Writing by Students of MAN 1 (Model) Bandar Lampung*. Bandar Lampung: Script (Unpublish) Universitas Lampung.
- Murcia, M., and Hilles S. 1995. *Techniques and Resources in Teaching Grammar*. New York: University Press.
- Nichols, L. 1993. *Grammar Step By Step*. Jakarta: BinarupaAksara.
- Sulaiman. 1970. *Practical English Grammar*. Surabaya: Indah Press.
- Widiatmoko, A. 2011. *An Analysis of Students' Grammatcal Errors in Composing Narrative Paragraph at the Second Grade of SMA Kartikatama Metro*: Script (Unpublished) Lampung University.