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## AN ERROR ANALYSIS ON USING SIMPLE PAST TENSE IN WRITING ENGLISH COMPOSITION

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### ABSTRACTS

Writing in English is actually difficult for some students and learners. When they use the language in writing, they might run into problems. It is for this reason that their writing will contain errors. Writing in English is governed by rules, which can make learning the language difficult. Drawing on the qualitative lens, the current study has attempted to investigate the errors on using simple past tense in writing English composition. Twenty students voluntarily participated in this study as the research participants. The data indicated that while writing English composition in the simple past tense, grammar is the most challenging. The verb that was contained in the regular and irregular, preposition, determiner, and noun was incorrect. The researcher discovered that students become confused when they employ spelling correctly when composing written work. This occurred because the students wrote a word without first looking it up in their dictionary. Punctuation is included last. The children are still unsure about when to use a full stop and comma in their writing.

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### INTRODUCTION

The associate degree integrated approach of learning English as a foreign language requires the learner to develop the four fundamental skills of speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Learners need grasp the fundamentals of a language or how it functions in order to use it properly. Writing is the most difficult and complex skill to acquire when learning English as a foreign language, according to Richards and Renandya (2002:303). Writing skills include all the knowledge and abilities related to verbalizing thoughts.

The ability to write effectively becomes the most difficult talent for people to acquire, particularly for students who need to be able to articulate their thoughts and feelings in a well-written format. One of the language skills that should be learned when studying English is writing. Writing, according to Hasani (2005: 1), is the act of putting ideas, thoughts, and feelings into a logical and methodical in writing, to ensure that the reader understands the content. Thus, writing's primary purpose is to serve as an indirect communication medium. In writing, to ensure that the reader understands the content. Consequently, the primary purpose of writing is to comprehend the communication directly.

Harmer (2007: 258) claims that the writing process is one in which drafting, organizing, focusing, coming up with ideas, and assessing are some of the interconnected, recursive steps that make up the writing process, according to Harmer (2007: 258). According to Brown (2001: 335), written work frequently results from thought, drafting, and revision processes that call for specific talent—a skill that not all speakers are born with. Writing is, in essence,

an output that skips the stages of ideation (planning), drafting, revision, and evaluation (editing) and proceeds directly to the final draft.

English has restrictions when it comes to writing, which can make it challenging to learn. Language learners often have trouble with certain parts of our grammar, punctuation, and spelling. Writing requires careful attention to grammar. In addition, grammar and punctuation are crucial while writing since proper English writing requires certain language skills. Due to their relationship to another component, these cannot be isolated from one another.

Writing in English is actually difficult for some students and learners. When they use the language in writing, they might run into problems. It is for this reason that their writing will contain errors. It's possible that the students' numerous English writing issues lead to mistakes in their final product. The simple past tense is employed for events or activities that started and ended in the past, according to Cowan (2008). Students typically write recount texts in the simple past tense, so they must be proficient in it. Recount texts, according to Anderson and Anderson (2003: 24), are texts that recount historical events, typically in the chronological order in which they happened. According to Ellis (1997: 7), students will repeatedly make the same mistake until they discover the right one from another source that verifies their English writing errors. A learner's inability to comprehend the correct rules of the target language is one example of how a lack of language proficiency can lead to errors (Fitria, 2020).

Writing in English is governed by rules, which can make learning the language difficult. Students may still struggle with knowing when to use which tense in a sentence. Errors are indicators that a student does not fully understand the rules of English (Fitria, 2019). Specifically, some of the subjects where spelling, grammar, and punctuation are problematic for language learners. Grammar is an important component of writing. In addition, spelling and grammar matter while writing in English since it contains linguistic elements. They are interconnected, thus it is impossible to separate them from one another. Through writing exercises, students can hone their critical thinking abilities as well as their command of syntax and vocabulary in English (Jayanti, 2019). Key components of teaching students to write coherent phrases and documents include spelling, vocabulary, grammar, and punctuation.

There is previous research that is related to error analysis in using simple past. Research is written by Fitria (2020) entitled Error Analysis in Using Simple Past Tense Found in Students' Writing of Recount Text. That research found out the types of error analysis and the most dominant type of error analysis found in Students' Writing Composition in simple past tense especially in Recount Text. This study used a mixed-method, both qualitative and quantitative approach. From the analysis, the students' error in writing composition of simple past tense consists of some aspects of writing, they were in grammar, punctuation and spelling. In grammar, there were 57 data or 53.37 %, which consist of errors in class words like in determiner/article (25 data or 43.86 %), in verb (14 data or 24.56 %), in preposition (11 data or 19.30 %) and the last in noun (7 data or 12.28 %). While, the most dominant error was in the determiner/article. Second, in the aspect of spelling, there were 26 data or 21.70 %. Third, in the aspect of punctuation, there were (23 data or 24.53 %). Based on the frequency of each aspect of error, the most dominant error found in students' writing composition was in the aspect of grammar as 57 data or 53.37 %.

According to the justification given, the author is interested to use different data from the research project named "An Error Analysis on Using Simple Past Tense in Writing English Composition" to carry out the identical error analysis investigation. This study will determine the many types of error analysis noticed in students' writing compositions with

relation to grammar, punctuation, and spelling, in addition to finding the most prevalent type of error analysis in the simple past tense.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

### **Research Design**

This study's design is a qualitative methodology. The descriptive design was employed by the researcher in the qualitative analysis, as the data collected primarily pertains to current events and occurrences. The researcher believes that the descriptive method is appropriate for this investigation.

### **Population and Sample**

The research's focus is 20 students' written compositions that were selected from Al-Mashduqiah's SPM students in the tenth grade. Writing English composition is taught in this school. The term "student writing composition" refers to the output of the composition course, which focused on writing in the simple past tense, particularly in recount texts.

### **Instruments**

The researcher uses documentation to gather data. The approach to documentation applied to every document. It could be an e-mail, newspaper, textbook, letter, or piece of paper. The author uses the recount texts that the students wrote as the data for this study. In addition, the researcher examined the material to identify any mistakes the students had made in composing their recount texts.

### **Data Analysis**

According to Ellis (1994:57–68), there are several processes involved in error analysis, including error identification, classification, description, and explanation, followed by tabulation. In the end, the data were tallied to determine how frequently students make mistakes. The following is the description.

1. Identification of errors

Finding the mistakes is the first stage in the analyzing process. The writer points out the mistakes made by the students in their recount text writing in this step. These mistakes include the misuse of proper nouns, descriptive language, the simple past tense, and the temporal connective.

2. Classification of error

The errors are divided into a few groups in this stage. In addition, characterizing the inaccuracy involves pointing out the variations in word disordering between the reconstruction of target language utterances and the utterances made by students.

3. Explanation of errors

The researcher will address the origin of a student error in this phase. The author attempts to forecast the error in order to identify its origins.

4. Tabulation of errors

In order to count the number of mistakes made by the students and identify the most common problems in their writing, the writer in this stage creates a table using the classification of errors.

## **RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Research Findings**

The research objectives as stated in the study's background are addressed by the findings of this investigation. This study aims to identify the most common type of error analysis found in students' writing compositions in the simple past tense as well as the types of errors found in their writing compositions in the linguistic domains of grammar,

punctuation, and spelling. The following is a description of the data investigation and error analysis:

#### a. Grammar

One of the components of the English language is grammar or structure, which is often regarded as an important component (Ameliani, 2019; Aniuranti & Rizkina, 2019; Effendi et al., 2017; Handayani & Johan, 2018; Nawira et al., 2019; Yuliyanto & Fitriyati, 2019). As a result, each student needs to have a solid understanding of grammar. Harmer (2003) contends that if grammatical norms are applied too loosely, communication may suffer. According to Utomo & Ahsanah (2020), learning grammar also helps students build stronger linguistic structures and send more meaningful messages. According to Wang (2010), structure is always crucial to the teaching and learning of foreign languages. Grammar is therefore essential to both language learning and the communication process. Grammar mistakes are typically the result of the writer's ignorance of punctuation usage. The following are the mistakes that were discovered in the students' writing composition.

#### b. Determiner/Article

In the example of the third students' writing composition

Wrong : When **holiday** time, I went to the zoo.

Correct : When **a holiday** time, I went to the zoo.

The example above demonstrates a grammatical error, particularly in the determiner/article. In that sentence, it shows that an article is missing before the word "holiday". It is considered in adding an article "a" or "the". Therefore, it will be "a holiday" or "the holiday".

In the example of the eleventh students' writing composition

Wrong : We looked **animals** in the zoo.

Correct : We looked **the animals** in the zoo.

The example above demonstrates a grammatical error, particularly in the determiner/article. In that sentence, it appears that an article is missing before the word "animals". It is considered in adding an article "a" or "the". Therefore, it will be "a animals" or "the animals".

In the example of the tenth students' writing composition

Wrong : It was **a** best experience in my life.

Correct : It was **the** best experience in my life.

The example above demonstrates a grammatical error, particularly in the determiner/article. In that sentence, it shows that the phrase "a best" does not contain the correct article usage. It is considered in changing an article "the". Therefore, it will be "the best".

In the example of the thirteenth students' writing composition

Wrong : **in first** day, I went to the beach.

Correct : **in the first** day, I went to the beach.

The example above demonstrates a grammatical error, particularly in the determiner/article. In that sentence, it shows that the phrase "in first" does not contain the correct article usage. It is considered in changing an article "the". Therefore, it will be "the first".

#### c. Verb

In the example of the sixth students' writing composition

Wrong :... in the last holiday, I **meeted** my friend

Correct : ...in the last holiday, I **met** my friend.

The example above shows that there is an error in the aspect of grammar especially in part of speech in the verb. In the sentence above, it uses the irregular verb "meet-met".

In the example of the seventh students' writing composition

Wrong : I **drived** car to my friend's house.

Correct : I **drove** car to my friend's house.

The example above shows that there is an error in the aspect of grammar especially in part of speech in the verb. In the sentence above, it uses the irregular verb "drive" it should be "drove".

In the example of the fourth students' writing composition

Wrong : ...this time was **to slept** after arriving at home.

Correct : ...this time was **to sleep** after arriving at home.

The example above demonstrates a grammatical problem, particularly in the verb's part of speech. It seems that the verb "slept" belongs in the base form as part of the to-infinitive in the sentence above. It is taken into account when converting the word to Verb 1 ("sleep").

In the example of the fourteenth students' writing composition

Wrong : ...so many people visited the Pasir Putih **to spent** their time.

Correct : ...so many people visited the Pasir Putih **to spend** their time.

The example above demonstrates a grammatical problem, particularly in the verb's part of speech. It seems that the verb "spent" belongs in the base form as part of the to-infinitive in the sentence above. It is taken into account when converting the word to Verb 1 ("spend").

In the example of the twentieth students' writing composition

Wrong : I and my family did not **noticed** the sign in the sea.

Correct : I and my family did not **notice** the sign in the sea.

The example above demonstrates a grammatical problem, particularly in the verb's part of speech. It seems that the verb "noticed" after did not is wrong. It is taken into account when converting the word to Verb 1 ("notice").

In the example of the seventeenth students' writing composition

Wrong : ...we played volleyball in the beach, after playing, we decided to **went** home together.

Correct : ...we played volleyball on the beach, after playing, we decided to **go** home together.

The example above demonstrates a grammatical problem, particularly in the verb's part of speech. It seems that the verb "went" belongs in the base form as part of the to-infinitive in the sentence above. It is taken into account when converting the word to Verb 1 ("go").

#### d. Preposition

In the example of the second students' writing composition

Wrong : .....I come there for **follow** the scout training.

Correct : .....I come there for **following** the scout training..

The example above demonstrates that there is a grammatical problem, particularly in the part of speech that a preposition belongs to. It seems that the preposition "for" was not properly used in this phrase. It is taken into account when verbs become verb-ing following "for." It ought to read "for following."

In the example of the eighth students' writing composition

Wrong : At 2 pm I went **to** home but before I went **to** home,

Correct : At 2 pm I went **to** home but before I went **to** home,

The example above demonstrates that there is a grammatical problem, particularly in the part of speech that a preposition belongs to. The preposition "to," which is inserted after the

verb "went," doesn't appear essential in that sentence. It is taken into account while eliminating the proper preposition "to."

In the example of the sixteenth students' writing composition

Wrong : My holiday was **at** 18th September 2023. It was Maulid's holiday.

Correct : My holiday was **on** 18th September 2023. It was Maulid's holiday.

The example above demonstrates that there is a grammatical problem, particularly in the part of speech that a preposition belongs to. It seems that the preposition "at" in the sentence might not be appropriate in this situation. It is taken into account when modifying the proper preposition "on."

#### e. Noun

In the example of the first students' writing composition

Wrong : ..., after playing, we felt thirsty. So, we drank much **waters**.

Correct : ..., after playing, we felt thirsty. So, we drank much **water**.

The example above demonstrates that there is a grammatical problem, particularly in the part of speech that a noun belongs to. There is no need to include a -s in plural for the uncountable word "water." as there is only one uncountable. It ought should still be "water."

In the example of the seventeenth students' writing composition

Wrong : My mother ordered me to bring my **sister** bag.

Correct : My mother oerdered me to bring my **sister's** bag.

The example above demonstrates that there is a grammatical problem, particularly in the noun part of speech. It seems that the noun "sister" belongs in the possessive form in the phrase above. It's taken into account when modifying the noun form. It should be "sister's" as a result.

In the example of the fifth students' writing composition

Wrong : In the second day, i went to my **grandmother** house.

Correct : In the second day, i went to my **grandmother's** house.

The example above demonstrates that there is a grammatical problem, particularly in the noun part of speech. It seems that the noun "grandmother" belongs in the possessive form in the phrase above. It's taken into account when modifying the noun form. It should be "grandmother's" as a result.

#### f. Spelling

Pronouncing specific letter combinations has an impact on spelling. One of the most important aspects of good writing is spelling, which is the skill of accurately putting words together from their letters. Spelling mistakes typically occur when a writer does not know how to spell a word correctly. The following are some mistakes that can be discovered in students' written compositions:

In the example of the second students' writing composition

Wrong : ..., I trained hard to follow the **competation**.

Correct : ..., I trained hard to follow the **competition**.

The example above demonstrates that there is a grammatical problem, particularly in the spelling part of speech. The term "competation" in that context is either misspelled or not found in the dictionary. It is taken into account when changing a suitable word. It ought to be "competition" as a result.

In the example of the sixteenth students' writing composition

Wrong : I asked the rule to the **commite** of competition.

Correct : I asked the rule to the **committee** of competition.

The example above demonstrates that there is a grammatical problem, particularly in the spelling part of speech. The term "commite" in that context is either misspelled or not found in the dictionary. It is taken into account when changing a suitable word. It ought to be "committee" as a result.

In the example of the fourth students' writing composition

Wrong : ...I like the beach **specially** for it's sunset.

Correct : ... I like the beach **especially** for it's sunset

The example above demonstrates that there is a grammatical problem, particularly in the spelling part of speech. The term "specially" in that context is not suitable. It is taken into account when changing a suitable word. It ought to be "especially" as a result.

In the example of eighteenth students' writing composition

Wrong : ...I chose pink **colour** as my favorite.

Correct : ... I chose pink **color** as my favorite.

The example above demonstrates that there is a grammatical problem, particularly in the spelling part of speech. The spelling of "colour" in that context is a non-American variation. It is thought to be replaced with the American English spelling for consistency's sake. It should thus be "color."

#### g. Punctuation

Punctuation can emphasize, logically, and make sentences more understandable. Punctuation aids in text organization and sequencing. Without punctuation, writing becomes harder to understand since it gives the phrase structure and makes it clearer what is meant to be read. Punctuation is important because it helps readers comprehend what is being written. Most punctuation mistakes are caused by writers who don't know how to use punctuation correctly. The following errors were found in the compositions written by the students:

In the example of the second students' writing composition

Wrong : **When holiday** I and my friend played volleyball.

Correct : **When holiday,** I and my friend played volleyball.

The example above demonstrates punctuation problem. It seems like there should be a comma after the opening word "when holiday" in that statement. It is regarded as comma addition. It should therefore read "when holiday,..."

In the example of the fourth students' writing composition

Wrong : **After arriving in the zoo** we went to the bath room.

Correct : **After arriving in the zoo,** we went to the bath room.

The example above demonstrates punctuation problem. It seems like there should be a comma after the opening word "the zoo" in that statement. It is regarded as comma addition. It should therefore read "the zoo,..."

In the example of the fifth students' writing composition

Wrong : **Finally** I ate the noodle in my frien's house.

Correct : **Finally,** I ate the noodle in my frien's house.

The example above demonstrates punctuation problem. It seems like there should be a comma after the opening word "finally" in that statement. It is regarded as comma addition. It should therefore read "finally,..."

In the example of the nineteenth students' writing composition

Wrong : **Since that time** I felt very tired.

Correct : **since that time,** I felt very tired.

The example above demonstrates punctuation problem. It seems like there should be a comma after the opening word "Since that time" in that statement. It is regarded as comma addition. It should therefore read " Since that time,..."

## Discussion

The systematic study of linguistic errors is known as error analysis, or EA. In order to systematically learn from and eliminate the errors found, this analysis is carried out. In order to determine how well a student is progressing with a foreign language, error analysis is another helpful tool. Understanding the language acquisition process in great detail is possible thanks to error analysis. By providing feedback on learners' mistakes, it aids educators in comprehending innovative pedagogical approaches. Learning mistakes are a known and acknowledged part of the learning process. Language experts and educators can use these errors as a source of fresh perspectives and methods for addressing issues with language acquisition.

The data indicates that while writing composition in the simple past tense, grammar is the most challenging. The verb that was contained in the irregular, preposition, determiner, and noun was incorrect. The researcher discovered that students become confused when they employ spelling correctly when composing written work. This occurs because the students wrote a word without first looking it up in their dictionary. Punctuation is included last. The children are still unsure about when to use a full stop and comma in their writing.

Nonetheless, a large number of mistakes discovered in student work are typically simple to fix. Because they disregarded some English language standards, students can face consequences or possibly lose marks. Proper grammar, spelling (orthography), and punctuation are necessary for writing well. Grammar may not technically include spelling and punctuation, yet our writing requires all of these components. We talk about grammar, spelling, and punctuation because these are separate but connected elements that come together to produce a technically sound piece of writing. The three basic components of successful writing are spelling, grammar, and punctuation. By being proficient in the norms and conventions, we may make our writing easier to read and more pleasurable for our readers.

## CONCLUSION

The analysis of this study shows that students' mistakes in Simple Past Tense writing composition are primarily related to spelling, grammar, and punctuation. It demonstrates that grammatical errors are the most common mistakes detected in student writing compositions. The three key components of excellent writing are punctuation, pronunciation, and grammar. By being proficient in the norms and conventions, we may make our writing more readable and enjoyable for our audience.

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