STUDENTS' ERRORS IN USING PAST TENSE IN WRITING RECOUNT TEXT: A STUDY AT SECOND GRADE OF SMAN 1 TERARA IN ACADEMIC YEAR 2023/2024

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Abstract: This research aims to identify the types of errors in the use of past tense in writing recount text by second grade students at SMAN 1 Terara. This research employed a descriptive quantitative, there were 372 students, it consisted of 6 classes of nature and social science program and there are 31 students in each class. The sample in this research was only taking 10% from the population because there are more than 100 students and the sample of this research consisted 37 students. There are five steps to analyze the data, there were collecting, identifying, describing, explaining, and evaluating. The data was collected through 37 student writings to identify the prevalence and nature of these errors. It was found that there are two types of grammatical errors made by students i.e., omission and misinformation. The result of this research found there were 4 errors of omission that was found in this research such as, "was", "were" are often omitted by students, makes the sentence sound incomplete and misinformation got 50 errors in students' test, students did not understand and mastering past form, such as students still use verb 1 in past tense. And it reveals that misinformation was the dominant errors, indicating a need for targeted instructional strategies. There were 54 errors made by students in their writing recount text using past tense. And this research highlights the importance of grammar in writing and provides insights into specific areas where students require further support to improve their written communication skills. The results aim to inform educators and English teachers to enhance English language teaching and learning process.

Keywords: Students' error, past tense, writing recount text, past tense errors, omission, misinformation.

INTRODUCTION

Grammar is a fundamental aspect of language, serving as the structure for sentence arrangement and the foundation for effective communication. As Halliday (1991) describes, grammar functions as the central processing unit of language, organizing words and phrases into coherent sentences. For students learning English, particularly in contexts where it is a

foreign language, mastering grammar presents significant challenges. This is especially true in writing, where proper grammatical structures are essential for clarity and precision.

Alice & Hogue (2000) state that writing is a process of discovering ideas. Writing as a means of expressing ideas, emotions, and knowledge, plays a critical role in language learning. And according to O'Malley & Pierce (1996), writing is a private act that allows individuals to convey their thoughts in written form. Alawiah (2014) states that identifying the purpose of writing can assist us in keeping our draft on track and selecting organizational ways to suit within the ideas.

In English Language Teaching (ELT) at the high school level, students are expected to develop both spoken and written communicative competence. The curriculum includes various text types, such as Descriptive, Procedure, Recount, Narrative, and Report texts. Among these, recount texts are particularly important as they involve retelling past events, necessitating the correct use of past tense. The use of past tense in recount texts is fundamental to effectively conveying previously occurring events or experiences. Gerot & Wignel (1994) states recount text retells an event and tends to use past tense. Furthermore, according to Cakrawati (2018) says that recount text is a text learned by students in the form of personal recount and biography. Furthermore, according to According to Hyland (2004), Recount text is a type of genre that serves a societal purpose by retelling events to inform or entertain.

It means that recount texts are meant to convey stories or give information to the reader about biography, personal experiences, or diary.

When writing recount text there are three sections must be followed: orientation, Sequence of Events, and reorientation, and to write an excellent recount text, students must know how to write properly and how use the past tense. If students understand past tense rules, the text of recount will be easy to create. It provides clarity, maintains narrative consistency, and helps reflect on past experiences with precision. Mastery of past tense usage enhances the overall quality and readability of recount texts, making them coherent and engaging for readers. According to Declerek (2006), past tense is a grammatical form used to describe an event in the past. past tense in English learning process are past continuous tense, past perfect tense, and past perfect continuous tense. Past tense is a grammatical tense used to describe something that occurred in the past or how something was in the past.

Indonesian students, for whom English is a foreign language, often struggle with grammatical accuracy, especially when writing in the past tense. This difficulty can be attributed to the inherent complexities of learning a new language, compounded by limited vocabulary and grammatical knowledge. Annisa (2015) observed that students frequently encounter problems in grammar and vocabulary, leading to errors in their written work. These errors can manifest in various forms, including omission, addition, selection, and ordering of grammatical elements. students make an error because they cannot distinguish what is correct and incorrect. Through creating error Students can be inspired to understand when they are aware of the right answer. The students may face or create an error, it is crucial to examine their error. According to Corder (1982) Errors can be classified as either systematic or non-systematic. Errors that arise from memory loss or psychological factors, such as exhaustion, are classified as non-systematic errors. Further, systematic errors are errors that indicate deficiencies in linguistic proficiency. But mistake according to James (1998) states that mistake can be defined as something that is self-correcting and aberrant. Furthermore, according to Freeman (1991), a mistake can be easily self-corrected because it is an involuntary performance slip brought on by excitement or exhaustion. Errors are, in the meantime, systematic deviations produced by students who have not yet understood the material.

Table 1. The differences between mistake and error

Mistake	Error
Related to the students' quality performance.	Related to the students' deficiency competence.
Reflected the students' temporary impediment or imperfection when utilizing the target language.	Reflected the students' understanding or competence in the target language.
Inconsistent deviation.	Consistent deviation.
Caused by some factors such as fatigue, lack of attention and motivation, carelessness, etc.	Caused by learners who have not mastered yet the L2 (second language) rules.
Can be self-corrected when students pay attention.	Cannot be self-corrected because the students do not know the correct of the L2 rules.

Recognizing the critical role of grammar in writing, this study aims to explore the common errors made by students in using the past tense in recount text writing. Focusing on the second-grade students at SMAN 1 Terara during the 2022/2023 academic year, this research seeks to identify and analyze the types of errors present in students' writings. The findings will provide valuable insights into the specific challenges faced by students and offer guidance for educators and curriculum developers to improve English language instruction and learning outcomes.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a descriptive quantitative research design to investigate the errors in using the past tense in recount texts written by second-grade students at SMAN 1 Terara. According to Creswell (2012), state that quantitative research is type of educational research in which the research decides what to study, asks specific, narrow question, collects numeric (numbered) data from participants, analyzes these number using statistics and conducts the inquiry in an unbiased, objective manner. Cohen (2000) also state descriptive means to describe and interrupted the phenomena. Meanwhile, Wasiams (2007), said that descriptive research is research design used to examine the situation involving identification of attributes of a particular phenomenon based on an observational basis.

The total population of second-grade students is 372 students, it consists of 6 classes of nature science programs and social science programs. Each class consists of 31 students. According to Arikunto (2006), if the population is less than 100, it is better to take all of the population as a sample of the research. However, if the population is more than 100, it's suggested to take 10%-15% or 20%-25% or more. In this research, there are more than 100 students comprising twelve classes. Therefore, the number of populations was only taking 10% from the total number of the population. So, the sample of this research is 37 students. The data were collected through a writing test, according to Brown (2001), the test is a method of measuring a person's ability, knowledge, or performance in a given domain. The researcher came to the class and gave basic knowledge about writing skills and grammatical use in the recount text. In which students composed a recount text about their "Holiday Experience." This entire test was conducted in the classroom and the test took approximately 60 minutes. The texts were analyzed for errors in past tense usage, categorized into addition, omission, misinformation, and misordering errors.

According to Dulay, et al., (1982) addition error occurs when learners include unnecessary elements or items in a sentence that do not belong there according to the rules of the target language. Example: "he did not went there yesterday", instead of "he did not go there yesterday", omission occur when a necessary element is left out of sentence. This type of error often reflects the learner's incomplete understanding of the target language's grammatical rules. In past tense constructions, this might include omitting auxiliary verbs, the past tense marker, or other grammatical elements. Example: "I not angry with you", instead of "I was not angry with you", misinformation error in language learning occurs when learners use incorrect words or structures that do not conform to the rules or conventions of the target language. These errors involve the use of wrong vocabulary, incorrect forms, or inaccurate grammatical structures. Misinformation errors can lead to misunderstandings or convey unintended meanings. The example: "he rided his motorbike", instead of "he rode his motorbike", Misordering errors involve incorrect placement of words or phrases in sentence. Example: "I did know not why she angry", instead of "I did not know why she was angry".

The analysis followed Corder (1982) steps for error analysis: collecting, identifying, describing, explaining, and evaluating. The study aimed to provide insights into the common grammatical challenges faced by students and to offer recommendations for improving their writing skills.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results of the analysis of the data, there are two types of students' errors in using past tense in writing recount text, there are omission and misinformation. In total, 54 errors were identified across 37 students writing test. The results showed that there were 4 errors in omission and 50 errors in misinformation.

Table 2. Result of students' writing analysis

No.	Type of errors	Total errors
1.	Omission	4
2.	Misinformation	50
	Total	54

This research showed that the students made 4 errors of omission that was found in this research such as "was", "were" are often omitted by students, made the sentence sound incomplete. And the example of omission errors made by the students such us:

Student 17, the sentence: "*we very enthusiastic*",
Should be "*we were very enthusiastic*".

It was because the sentence "*we very enthusiastic*" incorrect sentence because the verb "to be" is missing, in English, complete sentences typically require a subject and a verb to convey a clear thought. The original sentence "we very enthusiastic" lacks a verb, which is essential for expressing the state of being or action. The verb "*were*" indicates a past state, and its omission leads to ambiguity and grammatical incorrectness. Without the verb, the sentence doesn't communicate a complete idea, making it confusing to the reader. Thus, adding "were" clarifies that you are referring to a past state of enthusiasm.

In student 22 the sentence "*Yesterday, when I school holidays*"
Should be "*Yesterday, when I was on school holidays*".

The verb "*was*" clarifies that the statement refers to a past condition. The word "*was*" is indeed crucial for clarity, as it indicates the past tense. Without "*was,*" the sentence becomes confusing because it lacks a verb, making it feel incomplete. This omission can lead to

misunderstandings about when the action took place or the state of being. In corrected version, "*was*" helps convey that the student is reflecting on a specific time in the past when they were on school holidays, providing both context and clarity.

And another examples from student 29 the sentence *"We took photo, because the beach very beautiful"*

Should be *"We took photo, because the beach was very beautiful"*.

Same like the example before students omit the verb "was" in that sentence, it makes the phrase grammatically unclear.

And the second was misinformation 50 errors found in this research because student not understanding and mastering past form, such as students still uses verb 1 in past tense. And the example made by the students such us:

Student 1 the sentence *"Sunday yesterday me and my cousins go on* holiday to *the beach kuta to see the sunrise"*

Should be *"Yesterday, on Sunday, my cousins and I went on holiday to Kuta beach to see the sunrise"*.

The original sentence, "Sunday yesterday me and my cousins go on holiday to the beach kuta to see the sunrise," has several issues that make it hard to understand. First, the word order "Sunday yesterday" is confusing; it's clearer to say "Yesterday, on Sunday." Additionally, the phrase "me and my cousins" is incorrect; it should be "my cousins and I" as the subject of the sentence. The verb "go" also needs to be changed to "went" to match the past context established by "yesterday." Furthermore, "kuta" should be capitalized to "Kuta" as it's a proper noun. With these corrections, the revised sentence is: "Yesterday, on Sunday, my cousins and I went on holiday to Kuta Beach to see the sunrise." This version is clearer and grammatically correct.

Student 1 the sentence "After that we immediately got ready' looking for a place which is not too crowded"

Should be "After that, we immediately got ready and looked for a place that was not too crowded".

The original sentence, "After that we immediately got ready' looking for a place which is not too crowded," has several issues that can be improved for clarity and grammatical accuracy. First, it lacks a comma after "After that," which is necessary to properly set off the introductory phrase. This omission can lead to confusion about the sentence's structure. Additionally, the misplaced quotation mark before "looking" creates ambiguity about whether the sentence is meant to end or continue. The verb tense is another concern. The phrase "which is not too crowded" uses present tense, suggesting an ongoing situation, while the actions of getting ready are clearly in the past. This inconsistency can confuse readers about the timeline of events. Moreover, the original construction separates the actions of getting ready and looking for a place, making the sentence feel disjointed. Combining these actions into one cohesive thought can create a smoother narrative flow. The suggested revision, "After that, we immediately got ready and looked for a place that was not too crowded," addresses these issues effectively. It includes the necessary comma after "After that," improving readability. The use of consistent past tense throughout the sentence clarifies the sequence of events, indicating that both actions occurred in the past. Additionally, using "and" to connect "got ready" and "looked" creates a fluid transition between the actions, making it clear that they were completed in succession. The choice to use "that" instead of "which" is also more appropriate here, as it specifies the type of place being sought. Overall, the revision enhances clarity, grammatical correctness, and narrative coherence, allowing readers to easily understand the sequence of events.

Next example from student 6 the sentence *"we leave at 10.00 am"*

should be *"we left at 10.00 am"*.

The original sentence, "we leave at 10.00 am," uses the present tense verb "leave," which indicates a habitual action or a scheduled future event. However, if the intention is to convey that the action has already occurred, then it should be written as "we left at 10.00 am". Using the past tense "left" makes it clear that the departure happened in the past. This distinction is important because the present tense suggests that the action is either routine or planned for the future, like saying "we leave at 10.00 am tomorrow." In this context, the departure is not in the past but rather a scheduled event. When recounting events that have already taken place, it's essential to use the correct tense to avoid confusion. By saying "we left at 10.00 am," the speaker clearly communicates that the action of leaving has already occurred, providing a straightforward understanding of the timeline. Additionally, maintaining consistency in tense throughout a narrative helps the audience follow the sequence of events. If a story describes multiple past actions, using the past tense ensures clarity and coherence. Switching between tenses can disrupt the flow and lead to misunderstandings about when events took place. In conclusion, changing "we leave at 10.00 am" to "we left at 10.00 am" is necessary to accurately reflect that the departure occurred in the past, enhancing both clarity and effective communication.

And the other example in student 4, the sentence *"It is our annual agenda every holiday at the end of semester"*

Should be *"It was our annual agenda every holiday at the end of the semester"*.

The original uses "is," which suggests a current agenda, while the correction uses "was" to indicate that it refers to a past event. Additionally, adding "the" before "semester" clarifies that the student wrote about a specific semester. So, it's primarily a grammatical issue.

From the example above of misinformation error students still used simple present form in recount text that should use past tense form. The example provided illustrates a common mistake in writing recount texts, where students continue to use the simple present tense instead of the appropriate past tense form. In recount texts, which are meant to narrate past events or experiences, it is essential to use the past tense to accurately reflect the timing of the events being described. Using the past tense helps the reader understand that the events being discussed are no longer current, providing a clearer context for the narrative. Therefore, students should pay careful attention to verb tenses when writing recount texts to ensure they accurately convey the timing and nature of their experiences. This practice not only improves the clarity of their writing but also demonstrates a solid grasp of grammatical rules.

Based on the research findings, it can be indicated that the dominant error made by students was misinformation, which accounted for a total of 50 errors. The most dominant errors in the test may be due to interference from the students' mother tongue. In Indonesian, there is no distinction or change in verb form between the verbs for present and past are the same. According to Richards (1973) the sources of errors in studying a language might be derived from the interference of the learners' mother tongue and the general characteristics of the rule learning. On the other hand, Cunning (1987) remarks "Errors are systematic deviations from the norms of the language being learned". Interlanguage errors occur due to general rule learning properties and when learners' mother tongue interferes with their learning.

Based on the result and explanation above it showed that the differences in language structure can lead to incorrect tense usage habits. Particularly between languages that use tense conjugation and those that do not, can create challenges for learners. For instance, in languages like English, verbs change form based on tense, which can lead to confusion for Indonesian speakers where tense is often indicated by context or specific time markers rather than verb alterations. This structural difference may result in learners developing incorrect

habits, such as misusing verb forms or relying too heavily on context clues, ultimately impacting their fluency and accuracy in the new language. Understanding these differences is crucial for effective language instruction and can help learners navigate the complexities of tense usage.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the researcher has analyzed 37 worksheet of students writing recount text, the main purpose of this research was to find out the kinds of the students' error and the dominant error in using past tense in writing recount text. And according to data analysis there were 54 errors made by students include 4 errors on omission 50 errors on misinformation. The result showed that the dominant error students made in writing recount text using past tense of this research is misinformation. The researcher found there are 50 misinformation in students' worksheet. And based on explanation above the researcher concluded that the students made some errors not a mistake was because student lack of knowledge and repeat the same mistake in their writing test. It is evident that targeted educational strategies are necessary to enhance students' grasp of past tense. By providing focused instruction and opportunities for practice, educators can help students develop a stronger command of verb forms, ultimately improving their writing quality and clarity in recount texts.

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