ANALYSIS OF ERROR IN SIMPLE PAST TENSE USAGE IN WRITING NARRATIVE TEXT IN ENGLISH BY 3RD SEMESTER ENGLISH EDUCATION STUDENTS AT UNIVERSITAS NIAS IN 2024

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Abstrak: Penelitian ini menyelidiki kesalahan penggunaan bentuk lampau sederhana (simple past tense) dalam teks naratif yang ditulis oleh 38 mahasiswa semester tiga Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris di Universitas Nias. Dengan menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif, penelitian ini mengidentifikasi jenis, frekuensi, dan penyebab kesalahan melalui tes, wawancara, observasi, dan analisis dokumen. Kesalahan diklasifikasikan berdasarkan taksonomi Dulay: misformasi (51,05%) merupakan yang paling umum, diikuti oleh kelalaian (19,48%), penambahan (16,86%), dan kesalahan urutan (12,50%). Faktor penyebab meliputi transfer antarbahasa dan intrabahasa, konteks pembelajaran, serta strategi komunikasi, sesuai dengan kerangka Brown. Mahasiswa mengalami kesulitan dalam mengingat bentuk kata kerja tidak beraturan, menjaga konsistensi waktu, dan menguasai struktur kalimat kompleks. Kesulitan ini dipengaruhi oleh interferensi bahasa ibu dan kurangnya latihan. Penelitian ini menekankan perlunya pengajaran yang terfokus pada tata bahasa, kata kerja tidak beraturan, dan konsistensi penggunaan tense, serta merekomendasikan metode pembelajaran interaktif seperti bercerita berbasis media dan umpan balik berkelanjutan. Meskipun terbatas pada satu universitas, temuan ini memberikan wawasan berharga untuk pengajaran tata bahasa Inggris dan penelitian selanjutnya.

Kata kunci: Analisis Kesalahan, *Simple Past Tense*, Teks Naratif

Abstract: *This study investigated errors in the use of the simple past tense in narrative texts by 38 third-semester English Education students at Universitas Nias. Using a qualitative descriptive method, the research identified error types, frequencies, and causes through tests, interviews, observations, and document analysis. Errors were categorized using Dulay's taxonomy: misformation (51.05%) was most common, followed by omission (19.48%), addition (16.86%), and misordering (12.50%). Contributing factors included interlingual and intralingual transfers, learning context, and communication strategies, as per Brown's framework. Students struggled with irregular verb forms, tense consistency, and complex sentence structures. These difficulties were influenced by native language interference and limited practice. The study highlights the need for focused teaching on grammar, irregular verbs, and consistent tense use, recommending interactive methods like media-based storytelling and continuous feedback. Although limited to one university, the findings offer useful insights for English grammar instruction and future research.*

Keywords: Error Analysis, Simple Past Tense, Narrative Text

INTRODUCTION

English had been widely used worldwide and had become the primary language for international communication, which was in line with Rao's opinion (2019:65) that English has been widely utilized in various fields, particularly in education. One form of English language influence in the field of education is through the presence of English education programs at the college or university level. At the university level, four basic skills are introduced in English language itself, namely reading, writing, listening, and speaking (Karademir, 2019:118). In this research, the researcher would discuss writing, which was one of the basic skills in English language. Essentially, English was one way for individuals to conveyed information, thoughts, and opinions through a medium so that readers could understand the purpose and intention of the writer in their writing.

As one of the ways for someone to conveyed ideas, opinions, and feelings to others (Kiuk, 2021:11), it is crucial for the writer to be able to write well, especially in structuring sentences and using appropriate vocabulary. Thus, the writer's message and feelings could be conveyed to the readers effectively because the writer has chosen

each word or sentence carefully in their writing (Slamet in Kiuk, 2021:12). As a form of writing activity, English also had several texts that have certain rules in their writing. One of them is narrative text, which tells about events that occurred in the past and is presented in written form. Narrative text itself is a text that uses the simple past tense (Siti, 2020:92). This is because narrative text is used for past events.

The simple past tense usage in this case was very important because it was a characteristic linguistic feature of a narrative text. The simple past tense itself was a tense that expressed an action that started and ended at a past time.

Uchiyama in Anjarani (2019:70) it means that in this case, the use of verbs and "to be" in each sentence in simple past tense in a narrative text uses the past form or the past participle form. However, in reality, many difficulties were encounter among English education students when created a narrative text. In some cases, many still does not understand the use of second form verbs and "to be" as part of the simple past tense structure. As a result, numerous errors emerge in their narrative writings. Therefore, through this research, the researcher aims to analyze the types of errors that are frequently encountered and predominant when students use the simple past tense in composing a narrative text.

At the end from those things above the researcher's research title is "Analysis of Error in Simple Past Tense Usage in Writing Narrative Text in English by 3rd Semester English Education Students at Universitas Nias in 2024"

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach, chosen because it aligns with the research objectives, namely to describe and deeply understand the types of errors made by third-semester students of the English Education Study Program at Universitas Nias in using the Simple Past Tense in English narrative texts. Through this approach, researchers can observe and analyze errors in real usage contexts and identify factors influencing these errors.

According to Sugiyono (2019, p. 18), qualitative research methods are based on postpositivist philosophy, used to examine objects in natural conditions (real conditions, not set or experimental), where the researcher serves as the key instrument. This approach allows the research to be conducted more comprehensively and contextually, capturing the actual difficulties faced by students in using the Simple Past Tense.

Sugiyono (2022) states that primary data is a direct source providing information to researchers, such as interviews and questionnaires. In this study, primary data was obtained through interviews with third-semester students, who acted as informants or respondents. The success of this research relied on the responses provided by the participants. Direct interviews were conducted using structured questions based on interview guidelines to identify errors in the use of the Simple Past Tense in narrative texts.

The data in this study consisted of errors made by students in their written tests on the Simple Past Tense. The data source was a free writing test on the theme "Folklore," assigned to students as an assessment of their narrative writing skills. In addition to primary data, the research also utilized secondary data to support findings and broaden insights into the research topic. According to Sugiyono (2022), secondary data refers to information obtained indirectly from existing sources, including literature, documentation, previous studies, articles, journals, books, internet sites, and other relevant materials.

Kusumastuti (2020, p. 49) emphasizes that research instruments play a crucial role in achieving research objectives. In this context, the researcher analyzed errors in tense usage in narrative writing. Additionally, research instruments serve as tools for collecting data to support study objectives. Yusuf (2014, p. 391) adds that one type of research instrument is documentation, which refers to records of past events. In this study, written texts produced by students served as the primary source, while interviews were also used to obtain further data.

To gather data, the researcher employed a mixed-methods approach, combining an English test to measure the frequency of errors in the use of the Simple Past Tense in narrative writing, followed by student interviews to explore the underlying causes of these difficulties. The study used semi-structured interviews, a type of interview that allows participants to express their thoughts and ideas more freely compared to structured interviews. The purpose of semi-structured interviews is to explore issues more openly by encouraging interviewees to share their opinions and insights.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This part presents the findings of the research on the error analysis of the use of simple past tense in writing narrative texts by third-semester students of English Education at Universitas Nias. The English education study program is one strata-1 study program focusing on English education with B accreditation. The focus of this research was on the third-semester English education students who totaled 38 people. Data were collected through tests, interviews, and observations, focusing on identifying the types of errors, frequency of errors, and their causes. The findings were categorized according to the types of linguistic errors, as proposed by Dulay's taxonomy of surface strategies, including

omission, addition, information errors, and sequencing errors. In addition, factors contributing to these errors were explored based on Brown's classification, which includes interlingual transfer, intralingual transfer, learning context, and communication strategies. This analysis highlights the difficulties students often had, especially with irregular verbs, negative and interrogative sentence structures, and the influence of their mother tongue. The discussion in this chapter linked these error patterns to existing literature and pedagogical implications, providing insights into how teaching strategies can be adapted to address these challenges.

In collecting data, researchers used interviews to get answers directly from students, then researchers also conducted non-participant observations of students in the classroom to support answers from interviews and documentation as evidence that researchers had conducted research at the school.

For the first instrument, researchers conducted direct interviews with students based on interview questions prepared by researchers. Researchers asked questions that could answer the two research formulations prepared by researchers for students. After getting the interview results, the researcher conducted non-participant observations to support the answers from the interview findings. The researcher made observations when students wrote various kinds of narrative texts. The researcher compiled an observation sheet based on a combination of interviews related to the research.

1. The Result of Interview

The research objectives were to find out the types of errors found in the usage of the simple past tense in writing narrative text and the causes found in the usage of the simple past tense in writing narrative text. The first step was direct interviews with several students as a source of relevant information and considered to know the

most things related to the research objectives. Researchers conducted interviews from Monday, December 16th to Saturday, December 21st, 2024 at 14.00 - 16.00 WIB.

Based on the results of interviews that had been conducted with several students, it could be concluded that most respondents stated that they understood the difference between simple past tense and other tenses. However, some admitted to having been confused about the difference between similar tenses, especially the continuous and perfect forms. Some respondents only understood most of the concepts without being able to fully apply them in complex sentences. Most respondents expressed difficulty in remembering irregular verbs. The main challenge was the lack of vocabulary and inconsistency in memorizing verbs that did not follow regular patterns.

Some found it more helpful with repeated practice and exposure to texts. After reading or listening to stories, almost all respondents stated that they used the simple past tense more often in narrative writing. They considered this tense most suitable for describing past events, in accordance with the purpose of narrative texts. Respondents had mixed views on this difficulty. Most felt no difficulty when the story had a clear time sequence. However, some difficulties arose when combining simple past tense with other tenses, such as past perfect, to show a more complex sequence of events. All respondents claimed to have received corrections regarding the use of simple past tense, especially from lecturers or classmates. They agreed that the corrections were very helpful in understanding the mistakes and improving the correct use of the tense in the future. Most respondents admitted to making frequent errors in sentence structure, especially when writing long sentences or trying to use more complex patterns. Common errors included using the wrong verb tense and incorrect word order.

However, most respondents felt more confident and found writing narratives easier after doing exercises that focused on tense usage. However, some still faced challenges in combining multiple tenses effectively in one story. It can be concluded that although they had a basic understanding of the simple past tense, the main challenges included difficulties with irregular verbs, combining complex tenses, and using proper sentence structure. Correction, repeated practice, and confidence were key to improving their skills. Also, it can be concluded that the causes found in the use of simple past tense in writing narrative texts were the lack of understanding of the appropriate use of tense and the difficulty in changing verbs.

2. The Result of Observation

The next step taken by the researcher was observation by conducting tests with students to get accurate results regarding errors that were often made. Observation was only used to support the results of the interview. Researchers observed conditions, situations, and activities. Researchers made observations from December 22 to December 31, 2024. After collecting data from the test results through observations, the author found several mistakes made by students in using simple past tense in writing narrative text.

Table 1.1 Recapitulation of Word Errors

No	Error Type	Frequency
1	Omission	67
2	Addition	58
3	Misformation	176
4	Misordering	43

Percentage of words errors:

a) Omission

$$P = \frac{67}{344} \text{ x } 100\% = 19{,}48\%$$

b) Addition

$$P = \frac{58}{344} \text{ x } 100\% = 16,86\%$$

c) Misformation

$$P = \frac{176}{344} \text{ x } 100\% = 51,05\%$$

d) Misordering

$$P = \frac{43}{344} \text{ x } 100\% = 12,50 \%$$

Based on the table of students errors, it can be stated that:

1. Total errors of Omission are 67 errors on percentage 19,48%

2. Total errors of Addition are 58 errors on percentage 16,86%

3. Total errors of Misformation are 176 errors on percentage 51,05%

4. Total errors of Misordering are 43 error on percentage 12,50 %

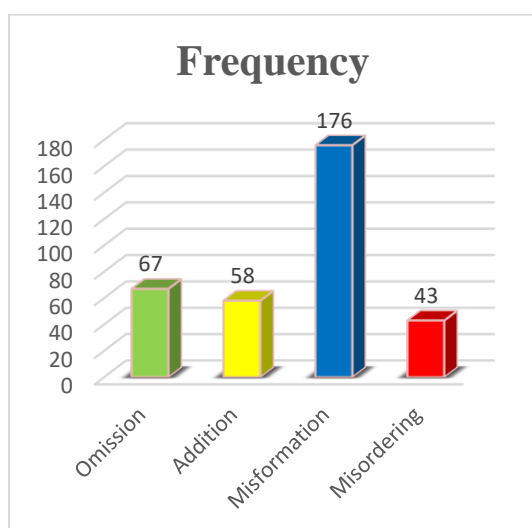**Figure 1.1** Frequency of Word Errors

Table 1.2 Frequency of Students' Errors

No	Types of Error	Frequency of Students
1	Omission	30
2	Addition	30
3	Misformation	38
4	Misordering	27

There were 38 students and 176 errors made in the Misformation area, with a percentage of 51,05%. This happened because students may have had difficulty forming verbs (regular and irregular) and been confused about the difference between similar tenses, especially the continuous and perfect forms. Some respondents only understood most of the concepts without being able to fully apply them in complex sentences.

First, students tended to use present verbs in the form of verbs, causing verb formation errors such as "There is a legend That has never faded overtime." The correct form should have been "There was a legend That has never faded overtime." because the word "is" was the wrong form in the past tense. The correct form should have been "was" in the past tense because it is an irregular verb. There were 30 students and 67 errors made in the omission area with a percentage of 19,48%. Most of the errors came from the omission of auxiliary verbs.

There was 27 students and 43 errors made in the misordering area with a percentage of 12,50%. For example, "The commander felt that no one can defeat him, with a brave heart Laowomaru accepted the challenge."

There were 30 students and 58 errors made in the addition area with a percentage of 16,86%. Most of them made mistakes in addition problems related to spelling.

Based on the observations and observations that had been made, it can be concluded that they understood the difference between simple past tense and other tenses. However, some admitted that they were confused to distinguish between similar tenses, especially the continuous and perfect forms. Some respondents only understood most of the concepts without being able to fully apply them in complex sentences, and some difficulties arose when

combining simple past tense with other tenses, such as past perfect, to show a more complex sequence of events.

3. Interpretation

Based on the observations and Based on the data analysis, the researcher found that students made mistakes in writing with frequencies of 51,05% misformation errors, 19,48% omission errors, 16,86% addition errors, and 12,50% misordering errors. From these frequencies, the author saw that most students were still confused in using the simple past tense, so it needed more attention from various parties. In other words, tense errors were the incorrect use of one grammatical form as a substitute for another grammatical form, or when the learner gave something inappropriate. In fact, according to Dulay, this type of error was often committed by students learning English. He explained that this type of error showed how the surface structure changed and allowed language learners to omit and distort sentence items, so that learners created or possibly added unnecessary sentence items in the sentence. In general, this type of error could be classified as an informational error.

From the explanation above, the author concluded that Indonesian learners likely still lacked understanding of English grammar, especially the simple past tense, because English grammar and Indonesian grammar were very different.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

From the results of the study, misformation was the most common type of error with a percentage of 51,05%.

This error included the improper use of verb tenses (for example, the use of present tense in a text that should have used past tense). Other errors included omission (19,48%), addition (16,86%), and misordering (12,50%), but the number was relatively small compared to misformation.

Some Challenges Faced by Students:

a) Difficulty remembering irregular verbs, such as distinguishing between present, past, and past participle forms.

b) Confusion in combining multiple tenses in one narrative text, for example between simple past tense and past perfect tense.

c) Lack of mastery of complex sentence structures, especially in long sentences or when trying to construct a story with a complicated time sequence.

d) These errors result in the lack of effectiveness of the narrative texts written by the students and show the need for more attention in teaching grammar, especially the use of simple past tense.

Based on the research results and findings, there were some suggestions for the future good related to this research which could be explained as follows:

For lecturers, strengthening the teaching of grammar which was focus on the simple past tense, especially on:

a) The use of irregular verbs.
b) Negative and interrogative sentence structure.
c) Implementing consistent exercises using narrative texts to help students understand grammatical patterns, using media such as video or audio-based storytelling, where students could practice recognizing and applying the simple past tense, and conducted in-depth evaluation by providing specific and constructive feedback on student errors.

For students, utilizing English learning apps such as Grammarly, Duolingo, or Quillbot to assist in checking for grammatical errors.

For future researchers, examine other factors such as learning motivation, reading skills, and the relationship between lecturer teaching and student learning outcomes.

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