



## ERROR ANALYSIS ON SIMPLE PAST TENSE USED IN SHORT STORY MADE BY EFL STUDENTS

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### ABSTRACT

Tenses are a crucial element in the English language. In writing or saying a sentence in English, people should consider what kind of tenses will be used. This study aims to find out what kind of errors are made by eleventh-grade students in writing a short story. The instrument used for the research is the writing test. This qualitative descriptive study involves thirty-one Senior High School students. To know the error made by the students, the researcher used a written test and then analyzed it qualitatively. There are one hundred twenty-eight errors made by the students and it is found seven omission types of error, sixteen errors for addition types, a hundred errors made in misformation, and five errors in disordering. It can be concluded that the students mostly made an error in the misformation type and the students have a low awareness of using verbs in the simple past tense while writing a short story.

**Keywords:** *Error Analysis, Short Story, Simple Past Tense*

### ABSTRAK

Tenses adalah elemen penting dalam bahasa Inggris. Dalam menulis atau mengucapkan kalimat dalam bahasa Inggris, siswa harus mempertimbangkan jenis tenses apa yang akan digunakan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui kesalahan apa saja yang dilakukan siswa kelas XI dalam menulis cerpen. Instrumen yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini tes tertulis. Penelitian deskriptif kualitatif melibatkan tiga puluh satu siswa kelas sebelas Sekolah Menengah Atas. Untuk mengetahui kesalahan yang dilakukan siswa, peneliti menggunakan tes tertulis dan kemudian dianalisis secara kualitatif. Terdapat seratus dua puluh delapan kesalahan yang dilakukan oleh siswa dan ditemukan tujuh jenis kesalahan penghilangan, enam belas kesalahan untuk jenis penjumlahan, seratus kesalahan yang dilakukan pada salah formasi dan lima kesalahan pada salah susun. Dapat disimpulkan bahwa sebagian besar siswa membuat kesalahan dalam jenis misformation dan siswa memiliki kesadaran yang rendah dalam menggunakan kata kerja pada simple past tense saat menulis cerita pendek.

**Kata kunci:** *Analisis Kesalahan, Cerita Pendek, Simple Past Tense*

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### INTRODUCTION

There are language rules which need to be followed to communicate correctly. In English, there are known tenses as crucial elements to express an event or action in a sentence according to the time of occurrence. Tenses are the changes of verbs due to the time event. Based



on (Napratilora & Yanti, 2019), tenses are the use of specific verbs that refers to the time of an event or activity that happened in a sentence. The function of tenses can be beneficial to know the time occurrence of an event whether it is in the present, in the past, or in the future. (Fadzilyna, 2013) says that every kind of tense has its function. Therefore, in writing or saying a sentence in English, people should consider to what kind of tenses will be used.

Writing is a way for a person to express thoughts and feelings in a way that is understandable to everyone else as well as to themselves. It means that one may convey their feelings and thoughts through writing by turning their thoughts into meaningful sentences and paragraphs (Siddiq, 2013). Since writing is a productive skill that is commonly used to transmit the concept to communicate with others in addition to speaking, it can be inferred from the description above that writing is one of the crucial parts for students to learn English. According to (Iftanti, 2016), writing belongs to the capacity for unlimited expression. Since writing is a fundamental skill, just like listening, speaking, and reading, it is crucial to be learnt by the students. Through writing, students can express their desires. For the students, being able to write well has a big impact on their lives and is an important skill for second language learners to acquire.

Learning English at school made the students have to deal with writing certain texts in English. There are some genres of text in English which is studied at school namely descriptive, narrative, news item, short story, recount, and analytical exposition. The one that is discussed in this research is a short story since it is the one that is being studied in this first semester of 2022 for the eleven-grade students. Short story is a piece of writing that describes a certain fictional event. It is simpler than a novel. In writing a short story, the students need to pay attention to simple past tense since it is written in the past tense. Past tense is one of the tenses in English that is used to tell events that happened in the past. According to (Ikan et al., 2018), short story is a relatively short story and communicating complex life events based on real life. It is a story that conveys complicated life experiences based on actual community occurrences. Short story has an intrinsic element just like novel which are plot, theme, character, setting, point of view and characterization. Hence, short story is a shortened fictional story that tells a certain theme. In writing short story, the simple past tense is used. (Lubis, 2014) states that simple past tense is a grammatical tense that places an action or situation in the past. The adverbs is used in past time as well.

According to (Agustina, 2013), studying English presented certain challenges for students, particularly when it came to mastering vocabulary and grammar. Students believe they can speak or write if they have a rich vocabulary and know how to put those words together. Error is related to the student's knowledge of the target language. (Brown, 1980) also states that error analysis (EA) is the act of observing, analyzing and categorizing deviations from the language learners'. As a result, through error analysis, we can find out, especially for teachers, what errors often occur in students and overcome the mistakes made by students. Therefore, error analysis can be defined as the process of investigating the nature of foreign learning in acquiring the language that consists of identifying, describing, analyzing and explaining the errors.

When students learn English, there is potential in making errors and it becomes a natural process in learning a language. Furthermore, tenses are difficult for Indonesian students since there are no tenses that change the verbs especially simple past tense (Halim, 2018). As a result, conducting an error analysis is necessary to identify and resolve the students' challenges so students won't commit the same error. Therefore, the researcher wants to carry out a study to examine students' misuse of the simple past tense in writing short stories.

There are some previous studies regarding this grammar error in using the simple past tense. This research would like to see the similarities and differences. The first research was written by (Fitria, 2021). This research investigates the grammatical error in English abstract translation in *Jurnal Ilmiah Ekonomi Islam*. It is found that the misuse of grammar forms into other grammatical forms in the use of part of speech like article or determiner, preposition, verb, noun, and pronoun. Grammatical errors are mostly found in misformation types of errors. Secondly, research from (Hutauruk et al., 2022). The results show that university students' dominantly made misformation errors while writing a recount text with a total number of errors are 158. It is found that mostly the students faced difficulty in changing the form of verbs since the Indonesian language doesn't have the changing form of words related to the tenses. The third research was written by (Ilmiah, 2017) the students are tend to produce errors in using verb, article, pronouns, proposition, and conjunction. This study investigates the error in writing recount text. Moreover, in (Hasibuan & Simatupang, 2018), the study focuses on finding the lexicogrammatical error in writing recount text and the result shows that the students made errors in seventh indicator of lexicogrammatical features which are proper noun, pronoun, past tense, adjective, action verbs, conjunction, adverb, and time connective.

Related to the previous research, similarities and differences appear in this research. The similarity is in the investigation undergoing the topic of grammatical errors. All research results have the same frequent error type made by the students. Next, the differences rely on the subject of the research which are senior high school students, university students, and researchers. Besides, the context or the topic is different as well.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **1. Writing Skill**

Writing is one of the productive skills in the English language, and it may be defined as the act of putting one's thoughts, feelings, and ideas in writing. According to (Iftanti, 2016), writing belongs to the capacity for unlimited expression. Since writing is a fundamental skill, just like listening, speaking, and reading, it is crucial to be learnt by the students. Through writing, students can express their desires. For the students, being able to write well has a big impact on their lives and is an important skill for second language learners to acquire.

Additionally, writing is a way for a person to express thoughts and feelings in a way that is understandable to everyone else as well as to themselves. It means that one may convey their feelings and thoughts through writing by turning their thoughts into meaningful sentences and paragraphs (Siddiq, 2013). Since writing is a productive skill that is commonly used to transmit

the concept to communicate with others in addition to speaking, it can be inferred from the description above that writing is one of the crucial parts for students to learn English.

## **2. Short Story**

A short story is a condensed version of a novel that tells a fictional story. In (Makassar & Febri Indriani, 2019), according to MacMillan, is a shortened prose narrative. Short stories are works of prose fiction that are shorter than novels. They are characterized by the development of a single major theme and a scope and cast of characters that are constrained. In addition, a short story is a work of prose fiction that normally takes one sitting to read and concentrates on a single, isolated incident (Indirani, 2019). Moreover, based on (Ikan et al., 2018), short story is a relatively short story and communicating complex life events based on real life. It is a story that conveys complicated life experiences based on actual community occurrences. Short story has an intrinsic elements just like novel which are plot, theme, character, setting, point of view and characterization. Hence, short story is a shortened fictional story that tells a certain theme.

## **3. Error Analysis**

Error analysis is the method to examine, investigate and identify the rules in the target language and to reveal the error systems operated made by them. (Richards, 1974) states that error analysis is the study of errors produced by learners of second and foreign languages. Additionally, (Brown, 1980) also states that error analysis (EA) is the act of observing, analyzing and categorizing deviations from the language learners'. As a result, through error analysis, we can find out, especially for teachers, what errors often occur in students and overcome the mistakes made by students. Therefore, error analysis can be defined as the process of investigating the nature of foreign learning in acquiring the language that consists of identifying, describing, analyzing and explaining the errors.

## **4. Types of Error**

Error caused by the lack of knowledge about the language rules. It comes from the students' competence in learning a language. According to (James, 2013), errors are classified into four types based on the surface strategy taxonomy. The followings are the types:

### **a. Omission**

Omission errors occur when a component that must be present in a well-formed statement or piece of writing is not present. When students miss any morphemes from their sentences, it results in an incomplete sentence. The absence of an object that should appear is a sign of an omission error.

For example: He is in the restaurant last night. → He was in the restaurant last night.

### **b. Addition**

Addition is the opposite of omission. This is when an item appears when it shouldn't have appeared. There are three kinds of addition namely:

- Regularizations, a marker that is typically added to a linguistic item is erroneous.  
For example: mouses and readed → mouse and read
- Double marking, two items are marked for the same feature.  
For example: He didn't went to school yesterday. → He went to school yesterday.
- Simple addition, there is an item which simply added.

For example: A my friend visited my house yesterday. → My friend visited my house yesterday.

### **c. Misformation**

Misformation is when the learners using the wrong form of the morpheme or the structure. It is noticed by the utilization structure of the words.

For example: Once, there is a kingdom in the woods. → Once, there was a kingdom in the woods.

### **d. Misordering**

Misordering errors are characterized by the incorrect placement of morpheme or a group of morphemes in the utterance. Students might ignore the correct structure of each sentence used in the target language.

For example: I yesterday went to the bookstore. → I went to the bookstore yesterday.

## **5. Simple Past Tense**

Simple past tense is used for action completed in the past. It is used to indicate activities or states in the past, without indicating any connection with the present. According to (Lubis, 2014), simple past tense is a grammatical tense that places an action or situation in the past. The adverbs is used in past time as well. The form of simple past tense as follows:

(+) Subject + Verb 2 + Complement

( - ) Subject + did not + Verb 1 + Complement

( ? ) Did + Subject + Verb 1 + Complement

Example:

(+) I travelled to Maldives last month.

( - ) I did not travel to Maldives last month.

( ? ) Did I travel to Maldives last month?

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This research was qualitative descriptive research since the researcher will be described the errors made by the eleventh-grade students of SMA Al Kautsar. Qualitative research is a kind of research that focuses on the subject's phenomenon and the data would be gathered and presented in words. In line with (Moleong, 2014), qualitative research aims to understand the phenomenon of the subject's experience such as behavior, thought, motivation, or action. In order to give a detailed explanation or describe the error analysis of word order, the researcher used a descriptive research design. Based on (Burns & Grove, 2003) descriptive research is designed to provide a picture of a situation as it naturally happens. Therefore, to get a clear picture of students' errors in using the simple past tense, the researcher used a qualitative descriptive design.

This research involved students in eleventh grade in Senior High School Al Kautsar. The sampling technique of this research was simple random sampling. According to (Setiyadi, 2018), simple random sampling is each individual in the population has the same opportunity to be the sample. The researcher asked the English teacher at school to randomly pick the class that can be investigated. Finally, the sample of this research was thirty-one students of eleventh grade.

An instrument is a device that is used to accumulate data in the research. The researcher used a test to gather the data. The test is about writing a short story with the topic “bullying”. The purpose of this test is to know the students’ ability in using the past tense while writing a short story. The researcher divided the class into nine groups and then asked them to decide to think about the intrinsic elements of a short story. The researcher gave 50 minutes to write the short story. After finished, the collected data will be analyzed using the types of errors theory proposed by (James, 2013) namely: omission, addition, misformation, and misordering.

There are varieties of information in this research that are primary data and secondary data. According to Lofland in Moleong (Moleong, 2014), primary data sources in qualitative research are words, actions, and documents. Firstly, the primary data. It is when the data is collected directly by the researcher or it can be said that it is the original data. The primary source of data is collected from students’ writing of a short story. Next, secondary data is the data that already exists or is available. This kind of data can be in the form of a journal, essays, other research, the internet, and books that can be used as supporting documents.

The researcher analyzed the data qualitatively through the following steps. First, the researcher collected the data and read thrice the whole data. After that, identified the error made by the students by using the theory by Carl James. The researcher marked the errors and made a list of errors. The errors are classified into four types namely omission (O), addition (A), misformation (MF), and misordering (MO). Then, the researcher made the description of errors and corrected them. To give a clear picture of the errors findings, the researcher provided a table showing the categorization types of errors.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

This section intended to describe the findings of errors made by the eleventh-grade students in SMA Al Kautsar. After the data was collected, the researcher analyzed the data by identifying and taking notes of the errors made. Then, the researcher classified the errors based on the theory of (James, 2013). The errors of simple past tense used in writing a short story can be seen in the following table.

**Table 1. Students’ Error in Simple Past Tense Used**

<b>No</b>	<b>Group</b>	<b>Types of Error</b>			
		<b>Omission (O)</b>	<b>Addition (A)</b>	<b>Misformation (MF)</b>	<b>Misordering (MO)</b>
1	1	-	2	17	-
2	2	1	1	7	-
3	3	2	4	10	1
4	4	-	1	21	-

5	5	1	1	8	1
6	6	1	1	6	-
7	7	-	2	2	-
8	8	1	-	3	1
9	9	1	4	26	2
<b>Total</b>		<b>7</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>5</b>

Based on the table above, it can be seen that students mostly made Misformation errors a total of a hundred errors were found. There are seven omission types of errors found in students' writing. Then, sixteen errors in addition types and only five errors for students error found in misordering. The total number of errors made by the eleventh-grade students in SMA Al Kautsar is one hundred twenty-eight errors (Appendix 1). The followings are the description of each error made by the students:

**Errors in Omission**

No	Data	Correction
1	The news about AN's house spread.	The news about AN's house <u>was</u> spread.
2	Finally they admit mistakes	Finally they admitted <u>their</u> mistakes.
3	Inhaling the warmth air because <u>of</u> the sun	Inhaling the warmth air because the sun

Omission tends to be the less error made by the students. After dissecting the data, it can be seen that the omission falls into a few classes which are the omission of 'be', pronoun, and preposition. In the first data above, the students omitted the 'be' of simple past tense where it should appear. Secondly, they don't give a possessive pronoun to describe ownership of a noun. Then, they tend to omit a preposition or article such as of and the. The use of prepositions is difficult for Indonesian students since one preposition has many different meanings and can be used in a different context. As stated by (Ruminar, 2018) since the Indonesian language does not have preposition-paired as English does, the preposition problem is particularly complicated for Indonesian speakers. Prepositions can be used in a variety of ways and have a wide range of meanings, which helps to explain this issue.

**Errors in Addition**

No	Data	Correction
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1	He heard someone is crying.	He heard someone cried.
2	The teacher who <u>was</u> teaching	The teacher who taught
3	That they' <u>re</u> can make the nice relationship.	That they can make a nice relationship.

The second type is an addition error. It was found that the errors of addition included the addition of 'be', and unnecessary words. Almost all data found the students always used 'be' in a verbal sentence for instance as can be seen in the table above. The interference that the students experience is seen in the verb they are using. They tend to use verb-ing in the simple past tense. The 'be' is, are, and was are not needed because the subject already agrees with the verb, if the verb is written in verb type two.

### ***Errors in Misformation***

No	Data	Correction
1	<u>There's</u> a new transfer <u>study</u>	There was a new transfer student
2	The organization <u>do</u> it silently without the school <u>noticing</u> .	The organization did it silently without the school noticed.
3	The members <u>starts to discussing</u> it and they <u>do</u> an evaluation	The members started to discuss it and they did an evaluation.
4	Students' <u>are</u> free	Students were free.
5	Ayu <u>can</u> only surrender and <u>can't</u> fight	Ayu could only surrender and couldn't fight
6	The teacher who was <u>teaching</u>	The teacher who taught
7	<u>They're</u> <u>start</u> again with...	They started again with ...
8	I just <u>can keep</u> silence	I just kept silence
9	I <u>don't like to beating</u> a scumbag	I didn't like to beat a scumbag

The misformation errors committed by the students in simple past tense used is seen in the wrong use of the verb, be, and auxiliary verb. An example of this type of error can be seen from all the data results that lots of verbs are written on verb type one which belongs to the simple present tense. They often write 'There's' rather than 'There was' and this happens many times. However, they commit fewer errors in using an auxiliary verb in the past tense. Most of the students' errors are they select the verb in writing the sentence to describe the event.

### ***Errors in Misordering***

No	Data	Correction
1	The <u>news circulating</u> was wrong	The circulated news



2	Many <u>grade 11 students</u> broke the rule	Many eleventh grade students broke the rule
3	He <u>has always</u> the lowest grade.	He always had the lowest grade.
4	The sunshine <u>make warm my room</u>	The sunshine made my room warm
5	<u>make my morning mood is broken</u>	Broke my morning mood

The last one, in the classification of errors made by the students, is misordering. (James, 2013) said in addition to selecting the right forms to use in the right context is to arrange them in the right order. It is found that the students are good enough at arranging the words in the target language. However, there are some sentences arranged incorrectly. Usually, they reversed in writing the word for instance “The sunshine make warm my room” where it should be “The sunshine made my room warm”. The example shows that students tend to follow their native language order in saying “*Matahari membuat hangat ruangan saya*” when the adjective and the object should be written reversed from the native language. It supports the findings in Nadya’s research (Nadya & Muthalib, 2021), that the students made errors in arranging some phrases. When the object should be at the end of a sentence and the subject placed at the beginning, the students reversed that.

## CONCLUSION

This study has described the errors made by students in using simple past tense while writing a short story. After the written test was done, there found one hundred twenty-eight errors made by the eleventh-grade students. The results show that the errors are classified into four types which are seven errors of omission type, sixteen errors in addition types, a hundred errors made to the types of misformation, and only five errors for students’ errors found in misordering. Mostly, the students miss the form of simple past tense, they use verb type one which belongs to the simple present tense. In past tense, they should use verb type two to describe an event that happens in the past. Moreover, they likely produce the wrong ‘be’ in writing a nominal sentence in the past form.

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