ANALYSIS OF VERB TENSES ERRORS OF NON-ENGLISH STUDENTS' WRITING

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Abstract:
The tense of verb in a sentence reflects the time at which the action is set. Verb tenses errors made by students in writing need more attention since verb tenses have strong relation to (academic) writing. The circumstances that learners do make errors, and these errors can be analysed, carried out a surge of study of learners' errors, called error analysis. The aim of this research was to describe the students' errors and its causes in using verb tenses such as simple present tense, simple present continuous tense and simple past tense in writing composition. This research used error analysis method in a form of descriptive analysis (percentage) with the process as follow: observation, collecting the students' test, analyzing, and interpreting the data. For data collection, essay test was used as the instrument. This research involved 22 students of non-English Department, History of Islamic Civilization Class B of IAIN Tulungagung, as participant. One of the graduate profiles from this department is being a writer so that the skill of writing becomes important for its students. The study traced the most frequent of verb errors fit in the present simple (55.4%), past simple (28.9%), and present continuous (8.43%). Meanwhile, this study described the percentage types of errors called surfaced strategy taxonomy as following: omission (40.4%), addition (23.4%), misinformation (20,2%), and misordering (16%).

Keywords: *verb tenses, error, writing, non-English department*

English is divided into productive and receptive skills. The productive skills is the language skills where the students produce the language themselves (Harmer: 2007). Writing and speaking belong to productive skills. While, reading and listening are receptive skills. Writing is one of productive skill in English, which is important for the English as a Second Language (ESL) learners to be mastered. Myhill & Fisher (2010) tell us that "spoken language forms a constraint, a ceiling not only on the ability to comprehend but also on the ability to write, beyond which literacy cannot progress." Clearly if you can already write well then there's no real need to make you speak – we can see your thoughts on paper (Didau:2014). Thus, writing skill seems a burden for students to apply because of its complexity. Richards and Renandya (2002) say the top list in difficulty is writing skill. In writing, many aspects should be considered in order to convey the idea into written form. The statement is supported by Arapoff (1972). He states that in writing, students must define the purpose and supported facts then arranged them into a coherent fashion.

Error could be corrected. Students need to listen the explanation given by the teacher related to the causes of error in order to amend their error. Norish (1983:7) claims that error is a systematic deviation. It happens when the learner hasn't learned anything and persistently makes it wrong. Espouse this claim, Brown (1980: 165) states that errors is a deviation which could be noticed from a native adult grammar. This reflects inter-language communication of the learners which normally could not be recognized and corrected by learners.

Basically, there are two provenances of error: inter-lingual and intra-lingual errors. Richards (1974: 35) mentions that inter-lingual error happens when the error is interfered by mother tongue of the learner. This error frequently occur and at negligible language background of learners. The interference of native to target language learned will cause inter-lingual errors. How could it happen? Learners will constantly use the construct of

their native language before they hold the construct of target language.

By any reckoning, writing skill is not easy to master for most students. Many things that they should keep in their mind in process of writing. The sentence like: I go to sleep earlier last night, is kind of common sentence could be found in students' writing. The sentence failed to deliver its meaning to the reader because the verb tense is inappropriately used here. The sentence should be: I went to sleep earlier last night. The past verb is used instead of present because the time of sentence indicate the finished action. It might be a big deal related to their ability in conveying the correct message. This factor encourages the researchers to do the error analysis of students in using verb tenses in order to know the common errors happen in History of Islamic Civilization Department Class B, IAIN Tulungagung. This department manages their students to be writer, historian, researcher, and academician in the future. To reach the goal, students need to have good skill in English and it would be helpful to know their error in writing which has significant role on their future profession in order to correct them so that they could improve more in writing.

Research related to error analysis of verb has been carried out by Amanda & Jurianto (2013). They said that grammar is a significant component to lay a base for language learning skills. Making error is common in learning process to bring out the feedback in order to achieve higher understanding for the learners. Error analysis will show evidence of errors made by learners which will be used as feedback of their process of learning. Their study found 1075 cases of errors in verbs and verb groups. The highest errors appeared from omission of suffix -s/ -es/ -ed/ -ing. The second highest amount of errors appeared from unsuitable of tenses verb and auxiliary verb. The primary matter in this case is that students' lack of knowledge on the past tense usage. They seem insensible that past tense is applied in narrative and recount text. Furthermore, they rarely perform in writing using past tense.

Other study was conducted by Karim et al. (2015) where they

examined the errors of agreement with verb, missing of verbs, misusing verb tense, misusing past tense after infinitive and misusing "to have" verb. The aim of their research were to point out verb usage errors of tertiary level EFL learners, to drag the attention of teacher to the territory of issues in written English and to assist the learners to cope with the verbal errors to a greater extent. The result of their study denoted that the students of tertiary level in Bangladesh were performing verb tenses errors despite the fact that they've learned English for more than 12 years. The student comes up with suggestion that students must have textual analysis and feedback based on their write ups.

Limengka and Kuntjara deals with errors which include tenses (verb forms), number agreement, and active-passive voice, word order, and word formation on students' essays. The objective of this research is to discover the types of errors: addition, omission, misformation, misordering and blends performed by students in Writing 4 class. The result showed the highest amount of error is misinformation (of verbs and nouns).

Another research came from Mencias and de Vera from Pangasinan University. This is the research that exactly analyse the verb tenses errors. They made error analysis of verb tenses among Japanese ESL learners in 2017 at the Clark Institute of the Philippines Foundation, Inc., Angeles City, Pampanga. The research found total 224 incidences of error in all the types of verb tenses namely, Present Tense (simple, progressive, and perfect progressive), Past Tense (simple, progressive, and perfect progressive), and Future Tense. Their total number of verb tense errors is broken down into errors in specific verb tenses, in which the densest accounts of errors fall under the verb tense types: (a) Simple Present Tense (94 or 42 percent); (b) Present Progressive Tense (61 or 27 percent); and (c) Simple Past Tense (52 or 23 percent). The learners' errors in the other verb tenses only represent a rate of 0.9 percent to 2 percent to the total number of errors.   As to the distribution of the learners' errors in the three error types of Corder's Error Typology, the learners accounted for verb tense errors across the three (3)

types, i.e. selection errors (107 or 48 percent), omission errors (88 or 39 percent), and addition errors (29 or 13 percent).

Inspired by the researches mentioned above, the writer interested in making analysis of verb tenses of non-English Department students which rarely done by the previous researchers. As we could see that majority of the research were applied to English Department students. The differences in profile of the students surely appealing to writer to make analysis. While the previous studies had unspecific goal on their participants, this current study was applied to non-English department students who arranged to be writer. Seeing from the number of errors, this study found the less in amount of errors to previous ones. It was because of the amount of the participant were not as many as the previous ones. Not only as a finding, the result in tgis research can be used as an evaluation in improving the students' skill in writing. This isn't jus an error analysis which will end after the research but the result would give benefit to the class which has the same subject in their next semester. After knowing the most frequent errors they made, more exercises would be needed to minimize it so that they get to perform better writing in the next semester and also in the future.

Review of literature

Error Analysis (EA) has experienced huge concern from researchers of second language acquisition. Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982) state that the errors analysis is the way to analyse errors made by EFL and ESL learners in learning a language. This method contribute to reveal the learners' strategies in learning a language and help the teachers to discover the difficulties of the learners in order to make their teaching become better. James (1998) tells that Error Analysis (EA) is the analysis of learners' errors by making comparison of what the learners have acquired with what they are short of. Meanwhile, Corder (1974) suggests the five-stage process of Error Analysis (EA) which consists of (1) the collection of errors, (2) the identification of errors, (3) the description of errors, (4) the explanation of errors, and (5) the evaluation of errors. The sources of errors are divided as intralingual errors

and intralingual errors (Richards{ 1974). Intralingual errors happen when the learners use their first language incorrectly while producing sentences of the target language. Intralingual errors happen during learners' language learning process. In summary, Error Analysis (EA) is the study of language form diverging from the normative of target language which happens during learners' language learning.

The types of errors of this study called surfaced strategy taxonomy by Dulay, Burt, and Krashen (1982) as following: 1. Omissions: The absence of an item that must appear in a well-formed utterance. Ex: She sleeping. 2. Additions: The presence of an item that must not appear in well-formed utterances. Ex: We didn't went there. 3. Misinformations: The use of a wrong form of the morpheme or structure. Ex: The dog ated the chicken. 4. Misordering: The incorrect placement of a morpheme or group of morphemes in an utterance. Ex: What daddy is doing?

METHOD

The data collection procedure in this research applies an essay writing "Telling about Myself". Students should compose an essay within 60 minutes. The instrument of this research was essay test. It was purposed to quantify students' writing ability and trace students' errors in verb tenses usage in order to collect empirical data. The instrument had been tried out to the third semester of History of Islamic Civilization class A before implemented to obtain data from the respondents. A group of twenty-two native speakers of Indonesian at IAIN Tulungagung majoring in History of Islamic Civilization class B participated as sample in this study. As we know from the name of their department, they are students of non-English department. All participants were third semester students who had studied English in university level for a year.

The method of the study applied four steps: identifying the errors, classifying the errors, quantifying the errors, and analyzing the source of the error (Gay, 1987). The early stage of analysis process is identification of

errors. The writer began with reading all of the composition made by students to find the errors of verb tenses and made the list of it in order to recognize the errors then specified the types of errors namely, omission, misinformation, misordering, and addition. They were counted and formulated in percentage by using the following formula:

(F/N) x 100% = n%
F=the number of errors in each type;
N=the total number of errors;
n=the result

From the percentage, it could be calculated what is the most frequent errors committed.

Data analysis

The identification stage provided the verb tenses errors made by students. For example, when students are supposed to use present simple but end with present continuous then it will be counted as error in present simple. From the data, it should be concerned whether the error is a clear deviation in form (overt) or happens in utterances that are superficially well-formed but do not represent the learner's mean (covert). The example of overt error is "I sleeped all the day", and the example of covert error is "He was cut". Then, this study described the types of errors suggested by Dulay, Burt, and Krashen (1982) called surfaced strategy taxonomy. Both identification and description of errors enabled statistical processing by determining the frequency and ratio of concrete manifestations of errors distributed into the four error types as mentioned previously. Cohen et al. (2011) defines validity as the primary key in victorious   research and it assigns the valuable of a piece of research. To get the validity of the data, the researcher will apply proof reading. The documents of the students' assignment will be retyped by the researcher. Then the proof-reader will read the original documents and the retyped ones to ascertain that both data are exactly the same. Besides doing retype, the researcher will also use expert judgment. It will be performed by the experts in language learning. The errors from the students' document

will be discussed with the experts.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Frequency of Errors

Tense	Aspect	Number of covert errors	%	Number of overt errors	%
Past	Simple	1	9	24	28.9
Past	Perfect	0	0	2	2.4
Present	Simple	6	54.5	46	55.4
Present	Continuous	3	27.3	7	8.43
Present	Perfect	0	0	2	2.4
Present	Perfect Continuous	0	0	1	1.2
Future	Simple	1	9	0	0
Future	Perfect Continuous	0	0	1	1.2
Total		11	100	83	100

The data collection marked 94 total of verb tenses errors made by students in their written task given. Not all of tenses appeared here, there were eight (8) tenses: past simple, past perfect, present simple, present continuous, present perfect, present perfect continuous, future simple, and future perfect continuous. According to the table above, overt errors reveal the highest frequency. In this cluster, tenses with the highest frequency of errors compatible to the present simple (55.4%), past simple (28.9%), and present continuous (8.43%).

Seeing the data, the highest number of both covert and overt errors came from present simple. What does it mean? As we know, present simple is the most common tenses taught in high school level. The first tense to learn is present simple. When students made lots of errors in this tenses, it makes an implication that they literally don't understand the usage of this tenses. Simply, they don't put on the correct verb tenses which is V1 and Vs on the sentences they made. It can be said, most of the students still have low comprehension on present simple. The highest errors of verb tenses above were almost in line with Biber in Caplan who mentioned that in fact, 98% of the verb tenses used in (academic) writing are in these three tenses

present simple (70%), past simple (23%), and present perfect (5%). From the statement, the errors of course came from the most frequent verb tenses used.

The problem with the errors in the Table 1 is mostly the choice of aspect, which means the students in general could identify the time of the situation. Ex: I am study Philosophy, should be: I study Philosophy. Based on James' (1998) classification of intra-lingual errors, students make incorrect aspect for simplification reason as they think that the perspective of the writer is just based on the correct tense's choice without considering aspect.

Meanwhile, the tenses with the highest frequency of overt errors are the simple present (55.4%), and simple past (28.9%). The present perfect continuous and future perfect continuous only commit one for each. Meanwhile, simple future is the tense with zero errors of this cluster. The reason is just simple, there was no student used those tenses in their essays.

The top amount of overt errors reveals that students face issues with the correct use of aspect.

They need to have more drilling exercise in present simple vs present continuous for example, to obtain clearer comprehension of aspect. Furthermore, learning about contrastive analysis between English and Indonesian would help students acquire skill in word order patterns in the English tenses formation.

Table 2. Types of Errors

No	Types of Errors	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Misinformation	19	20.2
2	Omission	38	40.4
3	Addition	22	23.4
4	Misordering	15	16
Total		94	100

Table 2 above provides the data for types of error made by the students. The highest type is omission (40.4%) and the lowest is misordering (16%). Omission of errors as the highest type of errors indicates the students still unaware of well-formed sentence which tend to miss an item that must appear. For example, "I born in Lamongan" should be "I was born in Lamongan".

"Was" is missing item here, without it, the meaning of sentence will be different.

'I not know" should be "I do not know", do is the missing item. "I first son in my family" should be "I am the first son in my family". "Am" is the missing item here.

Meanwhile, addition becomes the second place of the highest errors made (22 errors = 23.4%) indicates the students unaware of the words they put in sentence. "I am take History of Islamic Civilization Department" should be "I take History of Islamic Civilization Department". The word "am" is unnecessary appear here. "I am study Philosophy" should be "I study Philosophy". It is another addition of "to be" found in students' error.

The third position is misinformation with 19 errors (20.2%). This error tells that the students unaware of the form of the word they use. "I life in earth" surely meant "I live on earth". "Life" and "live" are only distinguished by a letter but still make student confused. The last types is misordering with 15 errors (16%). This error shows that students make unjustified insertion of a morpheme or group of morphemes in an utterance. Usually, they apply their own mother tongue in composing write up in target language. "I am the child second" must be "I am the second child". This sentence obviously written in Indonesian grammatical style, which "child second" virtually means "anak ke dua" that should be "second child".

Further analysis revealed that intra-lingual (target language) made contribution in majority of students performed errors. The students cultivate the recent language data in their notion and created rules for its output so they frequently make the overgeneralization or communicative strategies. The delivery of sentence meaning might be done by students in an improper way or

misconception of the new language or target language. Furthermore, inter-lingual transfer took part in students' errors which might be affected by the mother tongue in terms or pattern, system or rules.

CONCLUSION

The percentage of errors data in this study admits 90% possibility of students to commit errors of verb tenses usage. It would be great if the lecturer could design the learning which give more opportunities to students in finding the differences of the aspect of tenses. Drilling might be considered as one of the way to support it. Moreover, the exposure of target language is needed to increase. Students could read or listen many English resources to enhance their familiarity of well-formed utterances. The comparison between English and Indonesian structure is also important to learn.

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