

STUDENTS GRAMMATICAL ERROR IN USING SIMPLE PRESENT TENSE

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Abstract. *Students error analysis is very important for helping English as a Foreign Learners (EFL) teachers to develop their teaching materials, assessments and methods. The study aims to describe and analyze the students grammatical error in the use of simple present tense, and the cause of errors by the eleventh grade students of Senior High School (SMAN) 4 Bandar Lampung in the school year of 2018/2019. This is a kind of descriptive qualitative study, in which the data consisted of students' sentences containing errors in the use of simple present in the text of analytical exposition, viewed from Linguistic Category Taxonomy (LCT). The study discovers that there are five types of errors based on LCT. They are errors of noun phrase verb phrase, verb-and-verb construction, word order and transformation. Moreover, the causes of error most widely performed are subsequently performance fault, overgeneralization, markers of transitional competence, teacher-induced error, scheme of communication and assimilation, interference.*

Keywords: *EFL, Students Grammatical Error, Types dan Causes of Error*

A. INTRODUCTION

There is a proverb stating that the boundary of language denotes the boundary of one existence (Schulte, 1992). The proverb reveals that when someone does not use language to interact, he is restricted to be able to prolong his awareness. Thus, language concerns with mental skill and the man's thought conjures up the world.

Foreign language errors specifically in teaching learning English are the instances which are hard enough to keep away from. Many components can motive the

novices of EFL make mistakes and from time to time mom tongue interference also turns into one of the cause. (Hasyim, 2002:2).

In any state of affairs in which the foreign language really has to be applied outdoor of the school room in actual sconditions, the student necessarily finds himself having to deal with instances which the school syllabus has not included or for which he may additionally no longer have the linguistic sources available. Regarding such language samples, it is regularly impossible to know whether or not a unique error is derivable to a design of conversation, or to an approach of amalgamation, a traceable action for the learner to the lesson being learned (Richard, 1971: 19).

Regarding the rationalization above, the teacher is required to provide error analysis for writing task of the students. Error analysis is an exercise to recognize, categorize and define or explain the faults created by any individual in talking or in writing and it is performed to take data on prevailing adversities confronted by students in making spoken or written English. Error Analysis is the process of determining the incidence, nature, causes, and consequences of unsuccessful language (James, 1998:1)

Concerning the topic of error analysis, previously Bustomi (2009) investigated an error analysis on students' descriptive writing at the Senior High School Harapan Jaya, Tangerang. The research investigated students' barriers in writing descriptive text and discovered kinds of errors the students often did in writing descriptive composition and the causes of those errors. Another study investigated an error evaluation of using simple present tense in descriptive texts MAN 1 Surakarta students in 2015/2016 academic year. The researcher solely centered on describing

kinds of errors in the use of simple present tense in descriptive texts (Rohmah, 2017).

Based on the discussion on the previous research, it can be concluded that there is a significant difference to this study. The difference lies on the object and the analysis type used. This study only focuses on error analysis in analytical exposition text analyzed by Linguistic Category Taxonomy. Theoretically, it is hoped that this study can broaden the discussion on the error analysis with the enrichment of the object and analysis type. Meanwhile practically, this study can be beneficial for EFL Teachers in teaching and evaluating the way they taught the materials of simple past tense by understanding the students weaknesses or error in using simple present tense. Thus the aims of this study are to analyze and describe the types of errors performed by the students in applying simple present tense in analytical exposition text, and the causes of error the students performed.

Factually it can be said that error and mistake are dissimilar. Mistakes mirror particular faults in realization; they show up because, in a unique example, the student is unable to function what he or she is aware of (Ellis, 1997). A mistake refers to a realization error that is either an incidental waver or a "slip," in that it is a fault to make use of a regarded system efficaciously (Brown, 1980). In other phrases the student is aware of the rules, however they make a slip when producing it.

Sometimes we are confused with the difference between error and mistake. If the student is inclined and capable to right a flaw in his or her output, it is regarded that the structure he or she chosen was once now not the one intended, and we shall say that the fault is a mistake. If, on the different hand, the learner is unable or in any

way disinclined to make the correction, we anticipate that the structure the learner used was once the one intended, and that it is an error (James, 1998).

Mistakes can solely be corrected via their agent if their deviance is pointed out to him or her. If a easy indication that there is some deviance is a ample immediate for self correction, then we have a first-order mistake. If additional facts is needed, in the shape of the specific region and some trace as to the nature of the deviance, then we have a second-order mistake. Errors cannot be self-revised till further applicable (to that error) enter (implicit or explicit) has been furnished and converted into consumption by means of the learner. Similarly, errors need next applicable gaining knowledge to occur before they can be self-revised (James, 1998).

Error analysis is a technique of determining the incidence, nature, causes, and consequences of unsuccessful language. Richard (1971) maintains that error evaluation is an action to identify errors located in spoken and written English. Additionally it is the course of blunders made by the learners of second and foreign language.

Causes of Error

According Richard (1971: 95), in doing error analysis for EFL, at least there are six points to consider, categorized as sources of errors:

- a. *Interference*, an error arising from the change of grammatical and/or stylistic components from the origin to the aimed language
- b. *Overgeneralization*, an error caused by drawing out object language rules to areas where they do not use
- c. *Performance error*, an unsystematic error that happens because of memory declines, exhaustion, maze, or strong emotion

- d. *Markers of transitional competence*, an error resulting from a habitual and maybe unavoidable progress arrangement in the second language learning process
- e. *Strategy of communication and assimilation*, an error as a result of the effort to correspond in the aimed language without having comprehensively gained the grammatical form crucial to do so
- f. *Teacher-induced error*, an error ensuing from didactic techniques included in the text or used by the teacher.

Error Analysis Technique

To perform error analysis, some techniques are proposed as follows (Saugi, 2014, p. 12):

- a. Error Identification
Recognizing the errors of the learners in the given task.
- b. Error Description
Describing the students' errors involves classifying the kind of errors made by the students.
- c. Error Explanation
Attempting to consider for how and why such errors might take place.
- d. Error Evaluation
Giving assignments to verify such errors as improper ones.
- e. Error Correction
Verifying the results of the tasks or tests performed by the students and thus fixing the errors.

Categorization of Error Analysis

Error is a defective part of the student's speaking or writing, that part of the composition of that device by a selected noun of the nature of the language performance. Dulay divides errors into four categories, Linguistic Category

Taxonomy, Surface Strategy Taxonomy, Comparative Analysis Taxonomy, Communicative Effect Taxonomy (Dulay, 1982). In this study, the researcher applied linguistic category taxonomy to investigate students' errors, because it categorizes errors based on the language element or the linguistic component of the error. A number of researchers use the linguistic category taxonomy as a device to organize the errors they have collected. In other words, the system is used to categorize the mistakes discovered in the information. In the linguistic category taxonomy element, phrases of simple present tense are categorized by syntax fault. In the categorization of error, the researcher used Dulay's theory of syntax error, consisting of a noun phrase, a verb phrase, a verb and a verb structure, a word order, and some transformations.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

Research can be defined as thorough, systematic, patient study and inquiry in a given area of expertise (Fraenkel, 2009). A research method is set up to decide, among other problems, how to gather, evaluate and interpret further information and, lastly, to provide a response to the issue (Sekaran, 2003). This research was performed in a descriptive study using a qualitative approach. This study was performed to explore grammatical faults of learners in the use of simple present tense in the writing of analytical exposure text. He recognized the mistakes produced by the learners, and categorized the mistakes on the basis of the syntax error.

The data gathered in this research are qualitative. Qualitative data are gathered in the form of phrases or images rather than figures (Fraenkel, 2009). The information was provided by English teachers and learners. The data obtained by the researcher in this study were in the form of the student questionnaire and the student's task, which included errors found in the analytical exposure text compiled by eleventh

grade students of SMAN 4 Bandar Lampung in the school year of 2018/2019 and some supporting documents from the English teacher, such as lesson plan, curriculum and pictures. The data consisted of main and secondary data. In this study, the main data were gathered from all the results of the analytical exposure document produced by 183 learners, consisting of six classes of eleventh grade SMAN 4 Bandar Lampung and the results of the student questionnaire on the causes of error.

The population of this studies was all the phrases used by learners in simple present tense. The sample was a part of the population selected because of some of the factors or features that made it into a sample. It can be emphasized that the sample of research respondents is component of the population and all have certain features that make them representatives of the group sample. (Schreiber & Croker, 2011). In this study, all phrases that contained mistakes in the use of simple present tense were sampled. Purpose sampling technique was used in this study. The technique of purpose sampling is the method of taking information origin with some attention (Sugiyono, 2015). The researcher took one class of the eleventh grade of SMAN 4 Bandar Lampung as a sample of this study, it was suitable to use sampling techniques based on particular reasons.

The researcher used the field research method in this information collection technique. Data were collected directly on the ground by receiving the student's written text from the teacher and completing questionnaires. The researcher would use the questionnaire and paperwork to obtain the information. The way to acquire the information for this study was by completing the questionnaire given by the researcher. A number of appropriate data may be collected with the use of this questionnaire. The researcher used a closed query in this study. The closed issue limits the respondent to the set of options provided (Foddy, 1993). Because the

closed issue assisted the participants to respond rapidly and also made it easier for the researcher to analyze the information and tabulate the outcomes of all the questionnaires that were gathered. The scale used in this study is also the scale applied to achieve a fair, rigid and coherent response. This study applied "yes" and "no" to figure out which variables are causing learners to make mistakes. The researcher would use the study of documents as a data method. It was the writing of the learners in the analytical exhibition. The researcher then evaluated the students' written analytical exposure text in reference to a syntax fault in the taxonomy of the linguistic category.

Data analysis was conducted to create understanding of the data and enable the researcher to present the result of this research to the readers. The following measures were taken to evaluate the information containing the students' errors:

1. Data collection from the student's work.

To obtain the information required, the students were instructed to write a text on analytical exposure text containing simple present tense.

2. Identification of errors

In order to discover the fault, the simple present tense was particularly current in each of the topics making the text in the analytical exposure document. The code was used to indicate the phrases containing an mistake (underline mark).

3. Classification of students error

The data were categorized into error-based types of linguistic category taxonomy.

4. Percentage calculation

Then, after categorizing the data, the error rate of each type of error was calculated. To obtain the percentage of each type, the formula below has been applied.

$$P = \frac{F}{N} \times 100 \%$$

Notes:

P: Percentage

F: Frequency of error's occurrence

N: Number of total errors.(Sudjiono, 2008, p. 43)

C. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Error Types

Syntax is a manner of asking whether the mistake is in the primary or sub-clause and the clause which is influenced by the mistake. (Dulay, 1982, p. 147). The linguistic category taxonomy-based syntax errors are categorized into five primary classifications.

1. Noun Phrase

Approximately all learners performed faults in the use of noun phrase structure. In this situation, five kinds of noun phrase errors produced by learners were as follows.

a. Determiners

Many learners have still discovered it difficult to place determinants. Errors in the noun determinants are mostly the omission of a definite or indefinite article in the situation of the need for clarity.

Data	Fault	Revision	Explanation
1 (1)	If we want to be <i>a smart people</i>	If we want to be <i>smart people</i>	The noun phrase 'a smart people ' is truly plural form. It's supposed to be written without a. So the correction is 'smart people '

Based on the data in (1) we can see the identification of error in the first sentence "If we want to be *a smart people*". The error occurred because of using *a* before people. It is the wrong form. The word people is a plural noun. So, *a* must be removed. The correction is "If we want to be *smart people*".

a. *Nominalization*

The error of nominalization reflects the students failure in identifying the use of verb or other word into noun.

Data	Fault	Revision	Explanation
2 (14)	It will make students <i>interesting</i>	It will make students <i>interested</i>	The word interesting is inappropriately employed in the sentence. The correct form is interested

Based on data (2), we can see the identification of error in the sentence "It will make students *interesting*". The error occurred because in the word interesting is not correct form. It should be interested. It showed that someone had a feeling of interest. So, the correction is "It will make students *interested*".

b. *Number*

The student had trouble using the plural noun, identified by the absence of the plural affix (-es).

Data	Fault	Revision	Explanation
3 (21)	The students can borrow <i>some book</i>	The students can borrow <i>some books</i>	In fact, the term ' some book ' is plural in the sentence. In English , -s / es is added to demonstrate a plural name. So, the right form is ' some books '

Data (7) showed an error occurring in the sentence “The students can borrow *some book*”. The construction “some book” is considered plural in sentence. “some” is a modifier, stating number of people or things. In English grammar, -s/es in a noun is actually added to show a plural noun. So, the correct form is “The students can borrow *some books*”.

c. *Pronoun Usage*

Students rarely made this kind of mistake. It engaged the replacement of a relative pronoun where the inaccurate one was applied.

Data	Fault	Revision	Explanation
4(40)	Library is a <i>place which students can study</i>	Library is a <i>place where students can study</i>	In construction 'Library is a place which students can study', <i>which</i> is improperly applied. The correct form is 'Library is a place <i>where</i> students can study. '

Based on data (4), the error in the sentence “Library is a *place of which students* can study” can be identified. Here the use of the word *which* is not correct as it denoted to a place. The word *where* should be used to replace *which*. The correct construction is “Library is a *place of where students* can study”.

d. Preposition Usage

In this situation, students have not been able to use the right type of preposition. They did not understand what preposition that can be used in preposition phrases.

Data	Fault	Revision	Explanation
5(41)	<i>With</i> the existence of the library in school	<i>By</i> the existence of the library in school	The preposition ‘with’ is inappropriately applied in the sentence. The correct use is ‘by’, substituting ‘with’

Based on data in (5) we can see the identification of error in the sentence “*With* the existence of the library in school”. The word ‘with’ is not appropriately used in the sentence. It should be substituted ‘with’ into ‘by’

2. Verb Phrase

a. Deletion of Verb

Some learners had trouble using verbs based on tenses.

Data	Fault	Revision	Explanation
6(50)	<i>Library a place where the students study</i>	<i>Library is a place where the students study</i>	Construction ‘library a place where the students study’ is incomplete. Verb be ‘is’ needs to be added. It should be ‘Library is a place where the students study’

Based on data in (6) we can see the identification of error in the sentence “*Library a place where the students*”. In nominal sentence, *tobe* or an *auxiliary verb* is used to show the tense of the sentence. It is simple present tense. So *tobe* ‘is’ is used. It should be ‘Library is a place where the students’

b. *Subject-Verb Agreement*

Students failed in recognizing the suitable verb for the subject.

Data	Fault	Revision	Explanation
7 (58)	<i>It give positive activity</i>	<i>It gives positive activity</i>	The word <i>it</i> in the sentence needs singular verb, using -s/es. So the correct form is ‘It gives positive activity’

On the data in (7) it showed an error in the sentence “*It give positive activity*”. The error occurred because in the sentence is formed simple

present tense. For the third singular, it uses s/es after the verb. It should be “It gives positive activity”.

3. *Verb and Verb Construction*

Some students felt difficult to construct the pattern to + V or V

Data	Fault	Revision	Explanation
8(99)	We go to <i>restaurant to breakfast</i>	We go to <i>restaurant to have breakfast</i>	Construction ‘restaurant to breakfast’ is incomplete. Here verb 1 should be preceded by <i>to</i> . Thus, the correct form is ‘...restaurant to have breakfast’

Data (8) showed an error in the sentence “We go to *restaurant to breakfast*”. The error occurred because in the phrase ‘restaurant to breakfast’ is not complete. After ‘to’ should be added verb 1. The correction is “We go to *restaurant to have breakfast*”.

4. *Word Order*

This failure was signified by misplacement of a word in the sentence construction.

Data	Fault	Revision	Explanation
9 (113)	<i>I more take pictures</i>	<i>I took more pictures</i>	The word <i>more</i> as determiner is inappropriately placed in

			the sentence. It should be placed before noun as in 'I took more pictures'.
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Based on data in (9) we can see the identification of error in the sentence "*I more take pictures*". The word 'more' is not appropriately used in the sentence. It is a modifier of the noun *pictures*. It should be 'I took more pictures'.

5. *Some Transformations*

Some students have also produced other kinds of error linked to negative and passive transformations.

a. *Negative Transformation*

Negative conversion of transformation includes the placement of auxiliary *do/ does* and *be* verb.

Data	Fault	Revision	Explanation
10(126)	<i>The books not wasting time to talk with friends</i>	<i>The books are not wasting time to talk with friends</i>	In negative present continues tense, the <i>be Verb</i> 'are' for plural noun before <i>not</i> is applied. Then, the It should be 'The books are not wasting time to talk with friends'.

Data in (10) indicated a grammatical error in *The books not wasting time to talk with friends*. In negative verbal sentence, *to be* or an *auxiliary verb* is used to show the form of the sentence. It is present continues tense. So *to be* ‘are’ before not is used. It should be ‘The books are not wasting time to talk with friends’.

b. Passive Transformation

Passive form needs the use of an auxiliary be and a form of past participle verb.

Data	Fault	Revision	Explanation
11(129)	<i>Cars should be ban</i> in the city	<i>Cars should be banned</i> in the city	<i>Cars should be ban</i> is actually a passive sentence. The word <i>ban</i> should be written in participle, instead of simple form. Thus, the correct form is <i>Cars should be banned in the city</i> .

Data in (11) showed the identification of error in the sentence “*Cars should be ban* in the city”. The sentence ‘cars should be ban’ is actually a passive form. It should be written in participle, not in simple form. So, the correct one is ‘Cars should be banned’

Analysis of Error Causes

The data of error causes were drawn from the student questionnaire in the previous explanation. In addition to the student's writing, the questionnaire session was arranged to provide the reason of personal position of the respondents on the chosen topic. The list of questions evaluated and conferred the results of errors identified in frequency and percentages. The researcher applied Richards' causes of error. These include interference, over-generalization, error in performance, markers of transitional competence, communication and assimilation strategy, and error-induced teacher. Here are some reasons for the data computation and exposition.

Table 2
Distribution of the Students' Answer on the Interview Question

No	Questions	Yes	No
1	Do you pass the rules from your mother tongue to the English language?	25.80%	74.20%
2	Do you consider you understand some English rules, but you cannot communicate them correctly in writing?	87.09%	12.91%
3	Are you ashamed of other students while making English sentences in the classroom as directed by your teacher?	96.77%	3.23%
4	Do you believe it is essential to know English by making errors?	80.64%	19.36%
5	Do you attempt to write English in the class regardless of the English rules properly?	64.51%	35.49%
6	Was your English teacher engaging you in practices of writing in the classroom?	32.25%	67.75%

With regard to the result of students' questionnaire, the first query was intended to explore the transition of students' mother tongue to English. The reply was discovered from question (1) where 25.80 per cent of learners believe that the same grammar was used to translate their language into the target language. But they're distinct grammar, actually. Interference is the cause of this problem. Item 2, 87.09 per cent of learners intend to write properly, but in fact it is not feasible for them to do so in the current scenario. It is found in the Overgeneralization process. Question No.3, where 96.77 percent of learners may experience problems while practicing due to this less participation in writing. It triggered an mistake in performance. Question 4, 80.64 per cent of learners conveyed their view that they often made mistakes in writing in English. Markers of transitional competence were included. Question No 5 was intended to explore whether learners were writing in the classroom regardless of the grammar properly. The reply was discovered in the fifth issue, where 64.51 per cent of learners admitted that they had made a mistake in writing in English. It has shown that communication and assimilation strategy has been part of the cause. The last issue, where 67.75 per cent of learners believe that teaching methods require to be enhanced and adequate instruction and teaching methods can assist to enhance their writing and talking abilities. Teacher-induced error is the cause of this problem.

Table 3
Distribution of Error Causes Based on Student's Interview

No	Category	Question (Number)	Percentage

1	Interference	1	25.80%
2	Overgeneralization	2	87.09%
3	Performance error	3	96.77%
4	Markers of transitional competence	4	80.64%
5	Strategy of communication and assimilation	5	64.51%
6	Teacher-induced error	6	67.75%

Referring to the assessment on table 3, it can be seen that the most commonly performed cause was performance error, subsequently followed by overgeneralization, markers of transitional competence, teacher-induced error, communication and assimilation strategy, and interference.

The results of the information shown and discussed above showed that this source of error could be motivated by the error in performance. They had trouble learning between the first and second languages in the classroom. The distinct systems of both languages make learning more difficult to create a fresh language. When the student did not comprehend the material, they did not ask the teacher. Meanwhile, the teacher gave them inadequate explanation of the content. In addition, learners rarely exercise how to create good sentences based on the rules of English grammar.

After gathering information from students' writing tasks, mistakes were recognized and categorized on the basis of a syntax error in the taxonomy of the linguistic

category. They are noun phrases, verb phrases, verb and verb construction, word order, and some transformations. The frequency was determined after classifying the kinds of mistakes and correcting the mistakes.

Based on the results of the studies, it was discovered that the largest amount of mistakes produced by learners was noun phrase error and verb phrase error with the same amount, 49 items and a proportion (35.51 percent). It can be concluded that the learners made the mistake of the sentence and the error of the sentence in the phrases because they had a lack of understanding. In this case, the use of them was not well mastered.

In addition, they have not used the suitable objects in their phrases. In this study, learners committed many mistakes not only in the word and sentence error, but also in the verb and verb building error with 15 items and the proportion (10.87 percent). In this case, it might be that the learners did not understand the use of infinitive.

Then, as a consequence of this studies, learners also discovered a word order mistake. Students committed 12 items with a percentage mistake in word order (8.7%). In this situation, the learners might have grasped the right order of the term. The last one, learners committed 13 items with a percentage (9.41 percent) mistake in some transformations. In this situation, the learners had to modify the phrases to the correct form.

Based on the information shown and discussed above, the outcome showed that this kind of mistake could be caused by their mistake of performance. In this case, the learners did not exercise much in the use of English, so the reason they produced an mistake was a performance error of 96.77 per cent. Another option that caused an

mistake was the rules of the target language. It was called percentage interference (25.80 percent).

Another cause of student mistake was over-generalization with a proportion of 87.09 per cent. It led the student's mother tongue to interfere with learning the target language. While markers of temporary expertise had a proportion of 80.64 per cent. Another cause was communication and assimilation approach with a proportion of 64.51 per cent. The last cause was a teacher-induced mistake with a proportion of 67.75 per cent. It occurred because the teacher did not apply the suitable technique to the teaching and learning process.

D. CONCLUSION

The primary goals of this research are to evaluate students' mistakes in coping with simple present tense up to the eleventh grade of SMAN 4 Bandar Lampung in the academic year 2018/2019. The researcher has categorized the mistakes into five classifications. They were noun phrases, verb phrases, verb-and-verb construction, word order, and some transformations. Almost all learners have created such mistakes. The researcher split the noun phrase into five groups of mistakes: determinant, nominal, number, use of pronouns, and use of prepositions. While the verb phrase was split into two groups of mistakes, it is the omission of the verb and the agreement of the subject and the verb. Then the word-and-verb building and the word order. The last one was a few transformations. It was split into two groups of mistakes: adverse transformation and passive transformation. It can be seen that the mistake of the noun phrase and the error of the verb phrase produced by the learners had the same proportion. It was 35.51 percent for every kind of error. Verb and verb building mistakes amounted to 10.87 percent. While some conversion mistakes were only 9.41 per cent, word order mistakes were 8.7 per cent.

The researcher also identified the causes of the student error by using interview questions. The researcher applied several sources of error from Richards. They were *Interference*, *Overgeneralization*, *Performance error*, *Markers of transitional competence*, *Strategy of communication and assimilation*, and *Teacher-induced error*. Then the researcher asked a few questions about the causes of the students' errors, and two questions were asked about each cause. Students have identified the dominant causes of mistakes in the handling of performance error. It can be seen that performance error was the largest proportion; it was 96.77 per cent. Overgeneralization accounted for 87.09 percent. The markers of transitional competence had 80.64 per cent of them. Teacher-induced mistake was 67.75 per cent. The Communication and Assimilation Strategy accounted for 64.51 per cent. The interference rate was 25.80 percent.

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