

## ERROR ANALYSIS IN USING TENSES MADE BY THE THIRD GRADE OF STUDENTS OF SMA N 1 PASIR MANDOGÉ

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### ABSTRAKSI

Penelitian ini berjudul “Error Analysis in Using Tenses Made by the Third Grade of Students of SMA N 1 Pasir Mandoge. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah mengamati bagaimana siswa-siswa SMA N 1 Pasir Mandoge, khususnya kelas 3, menggunakan ‘Tenses’ dan mengidentifikasi kesalahan-kesalahan yang kemudian mengklasifikasikan kesalahan-kesalahan tersebut ke dalam beberapa tipe kesalahan berdasarkan teori Rod Ellis (1997:15-19) yaitu Omission, Misinformation, Misordering, dan Overgeneralization dan juga teori Jack Richard (1974:6) yaitu Overgeneralization, Ignorance of Rule Restriction, Incomplete Application of Rules, and False Concept Hypothesized. Metode yang digunakan dalam penulisan skripsi adalah melakukan riset lapangan di SMA N 1 Pasir Mandoge dengan memberikan pertanyaan yang berhubungan dengan tenses yang mereka sudah pelajari dan mencari referensi yang berhubungan dengan judul Penelitian. Berdasarkan hasil penelitian, dapat disimpulkan bahwa tipe kesalahan yang dibuat siswa/siswi kelas 3 di SMA N 1 Pasir Mandoge dalam menggunakan ‘Tenses’ adalah Misinformation 73.87%, Omission 13.51 %, Overgeneralization 7.21 %, dan Incomplete Application of Rules 5.41 %. Kesalahan yang paling banyak terjadi adalah tipe kesalahan ‘Misinformati’ sebanyak 73.87 %.

**Kata kunci:** *tenses, student, analysis*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1. Background of Study

Sapir (1921:8) says that the most important means of communication for human being is language because it is used to express ideas, sense, thoughts, information, etc. Language is purely human and non-instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions, and desires by means of system of voluntarily produced symbols. We may conclude that the main function of language is to communicate to others. A good communication between someone and others can be achieved if they are able to use the language perfectly. Otherwise, if the language, they are using is not understood by the listeners and speakers, of course, the communication used can not reach the goal. In the process of teaching and learning, language plays an important role. Without a language this process can not be reached well. We can use more than one language if we learn other languages besides our native language. The language that we learn first is called first language. Richards (1985:106) says that first language is a person’s mother tongue or the language acquired first. The first language may be used to communicate with family members, other people of the same ethnic group or it is the language of the country where we are living. We will find problems when we have to speak in the

other languages which are different from our first language. Therefore, we need to learn Second language. The word “Second” in Second Language Acquisition may refer to any language that is learned subsequently to the mother tongue of first language. Our mother tongue is Indonesian language while other language that we want to learn is called Second Language. We can find the term “Error Analysis” in second language Acquisition. Brown (1987) says that according to cognitive approach the making of errors is an inevitable and necessary part of language learning. The language of a language learner contains errors. The errors are made by non-native learners in learning a Second Language. There are many languages in this world such as English, Dutch, Spain, and Japanese. English is one of international languages. It is very important for us to learn English because we know that many countries use this language as their introductory language based on formal or non-formal activities. Furthermore, there are also many books, mass media, reference books and other forms of communication written in English. Because of its importance, Indonesian Government decided English as a formal subject. According to GBPP (Garis-Garis Besar Program Pengajaran) the 2004 Competence-Based Curriculum (Depdiknas:2004) states that all students learn

English for communicative purpose both in written and spoken forms. As a consequence, English has been taught as formal subject from primary school to university. But there is a big problem; Indonesia has Indonesian language as their native language of which structure is different from English. Because of different structure, there might be some errors made by the students when they speak and write.

Agnes in Webster's New Word Dictionary (1998:222) defines error is the state of believing what is untrue, a wrong belief, and something incorrectly done. Richards in Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics (1985:96) defines error analysis is the study and analysis of errors made by second and foreign language learners. Error analysis may be carried out in order to find out how well someone knows a language, how a person learns language, and to obtain information on common difficulties in language learning, as an aid in teaching or in the preparation of teaching material. There are probable mistakes and errors in studying second language. Brown(1980:166) cites that learners do make errors and these errors can be observed, analyzed and classified to reveal something of system operating within the learner lead to a surge of study of learner's errors called error analysis.

Tense is a grammatical category that locates a situation in time that indicates when the situation takes place. Tenses is a part of grammar. Mastering tenses is very important because if we do not use appropriate tenses, it can make misunderstanding especially in written language. Unfortunately, students are often confused with English tenses, even for the University students. They assume tenses as a big burden. There is a fact that the students always make errors in using tenses and it is a phenomenon that the writer finds. The writer finds it after doing pilot study by distributing questionnaire to the students. She makes an English questionnaire for third year students of SMA N 1 Pasir Mandoge. These are some errors as the findings in the writer's pilot study as the following: `

- a. *I make a cake yesterday*
- b. *My mother wash our clothes every day*
- c. *She knowing me*

Ellis (1985:297) cites that the first way of classifying errors is through grammatical categories. In addition, he says that there are four kinds of errors, they are: omission,

misinformation, misordering, and over-generalization.

Stevens (1969) in Richard (1974:4) hypothesizes that errors should not be viewed as problems to be overcome, but rather as normal and inevitable features indicating the strategies that learners use. He conjectured that if a regular pattern of errors could be observed in the performance of all learners in a given situation, and if a learner was seen to progress this pattern, his errors could be taken as evidence not of failure but of success and achievement learning. Errors in this case are not inhibitory, but rather evidence of one's learning strategies.

Based on the above explanations, the writer is very interesting in doing a research on errors in using tenses made by the third students of SMA N 1 Pasir Mandoge.

## 1.2. Problems of Study

The problems that writer would like to investigate are as the following:

1. What kinds of errors are usually made by the students in using Simple Present Tense, Present Continuous Tense, Simple Past Tense, Past Continuous Tense, and Simple Future Tense?
2. What are the percentages of errors made by the students in using those tenses?
3. What is the nature of errors in using tenses made by those students?

## 1.3 Objectives of Study

The objectives of these studies are:

1. To classify the kinds of error made by the students in using Simple Present Tense, Present Continuous Tense, Simple Past Tense, Past Continuous Tense, and Simple Future Tense.
2. To count the percentage of errors made by the students in using those tenses.
3. To get the nature of errors in using tenses made by those students?

## 1.4 The Scope of the Study

In this research the writer would like to analyze the errors in using tenses made by the third grade students of SMA N 1 Pasir Mandoge. Based on the syllabus in the school, there are few tenses that the students have learnt; they are Simple Present, Present Continuous/Progressive, Simple Past, Past Continuous, and Simple Future. So the writer limits her analysis only to the tenses they have learnt.

### 1.5 Significance of Study

The writer hopes that the result of this research would be useful for both learners and teachers. For the learners, they can learn from the errors that they make and it can also increase the students' knowledge about tenses. This research is also useful for English teachers, both theoretical and practical purpose. Theoretical purpose is to develop teachers' study. While practical purpose is after a systematic analysis the teachers can determine the level of every learners and the knowledge that is still to be taught. In other words, it tells the teachers how far towards the goal the learners have progressed and what remains for them to learn. It can be also a feedback for the teachers reflecting how effective they are in their teaching style and what changes they have to make to get higher performance from their students. Furthermore, it can be as addition material for teachers in teaching method, making lesson plan, syllabus or so on. The writer also hopes that this research could motivate other researchers who want to carry out in the same topic. She also hopes that the result of the research would be useful to other people who are interested in learning English to understand their problems and difficulties especially in tenses.

### 2.1 Theoretical Concepts

It would be quite unreasonable to expect the students of foreign language not to make such errors since English is not their mother tongue in other words in learning a second language the students as the learner produces many forms which are not those which would be produced by a native speaker of standard form of target language. The realization that the second language learner's errors are potentially important for the understanding of the process of second language acquisition is a current focus on modern teaching.

The study of error is part of investigation of the process of language learning. Relating to this study, the writer puts some theories as her theoretical concepts which contain about the definition of error and Error Analysis.

#### 2.1.1 Error and Error Analysis

Agnes in Webster's New Word Dictionary (1998:222) defines error is the state of believing what is untrue, a wrong belief, something incorrectly done.

Richard (1985:95) states that error (in the speech or writing of second or foreign learner),

the use of a linguistic item (e.g. a word, a grammatical word, a speech act, etc) in way which a fluent of native speaker of the language regards as showing or incomplete learning. It results from incomplete knowledge.

While, Richards in Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics (1985:96) defines error analysis is the study and analysis of the errors made by second and foreign language learners. Error analysis may be carried out in order to find out how

#### A. Jack Richards (1974)

Jack Richards classifies errors into two kinds: Interlanguage Errors and Intralanguage Errors.

##### a. Interlanguage Errors

Richards (1974:173) says that interlanguage errors are errors caused by the interference of the learner's mother tongue. The interference mentioned above means the interference of native language into foreign learning and it indicates the learning process. Furthermore, he explains that Interlanguage errors as one of the two classifications of errors refer to language of the second language users. The term interlanguage was introduced because learner's language studied up to the time has regularly displayed formal features both the target language and some of other language, notably thought not exclusively of mother tongue. Interlanguage errors may happen when someone wants to learn another language besides his native language, and he will bring his native language into the foreign language situation which is being learnt. In other word, the learners tend to transfer his native language into the second language.

##### b. Intralingual Errors

Richards( 1974:6) says that intralingual errors refers to item produced by the learner which reflect not the structure of the mother tongue, but the generalizations based on partial exposure to the target language. Many intralingual errors represent the learning difficulty of what are often low level rules in target language such as differences between the verb inflection in *I walk, she walks*. It may be inferred that once basic rules such as those concerning subject object relationships, predication, negation, etc are acquired, a considerable amount of difficulty in second language learning is related to selectional restrictions and to surface structure and

contextual rules of language. For the Intralingual errors classify the errors become:

#### 1) Overgeneralization

Jacobvits (in Richards, 1974) defines overgeneralization is the use of previously available strategies in new situations. In second language learning...some of these strategies will prove helpful in organizing the facts about the second language, but others, perhaps due to superficial similarities, will be misleading and inapplicable. Overgeneralization is associated with redundancy reduction. It may be occurred, for instance, with items which are contrasted in the grammar of the language but which do not carry significant and obvious contrast for the learner. The definition overgeneralization is completed through Richards, overgeneralization happened when the learner creates a deviant structure on the basis of his experience of other structures in the target language. Generally, overgeneralization is generalizing an item because of previous items.

For example:

*She goed to school yesterday*

This sentence is wrong, the right one is *She went to school yesterday*. There is an over form by adding *-ed* to all past verbs, while the verb is irregular verb.

#### 2) Ignorance of Rule Restriction

Both the overgeneralization and the ignorance of rule restrictions are very similar because they both ignore the limitations of the existing structures and apply these structures in contexts where this is impossible.

For example:

*I ask him to do it, and someone produces: make him to do it.*

#### 3) Incomplete Application of Rules

These errors reflect the degree of rule acquisition and the ability correct utterance to be produced. In this respect the production of negative and interrogative sentences reflects most successfully the difficulties in this direction. Usually either an auxiliary verb is omitted or inversion is forgotten.

For example:

*How you go to school?*

This question is wrong, the right one is *how do you go to school?* After W+H question must be followed by Auxiliary verbs.

#### 4) False Concept Hypothesized

These errors are sometimes due to poor gradation of teaching items in other words, such mistakes resulted from a poor rule presentation.

To get clear explanation let us see the examples of the using of the word *yet*:

For example:

*He has left the office yet.*

The using of the word *yet* is an error of false concept hypothesized because *yet* is occurred in a negative sentence

### B. Ellis (1997)

Ellis (1985:27) says that error analysis is a procedure used by both researches and teachers. It involves collecting samples of learner language, identifying the errors in sample, describing these errors, classifying them according to their hypothesized causes, and evaluating their seriousness. In relation to kinds of errors Ellis (1997:15) classifies four kinds of errors through explaining three steps of analyzing the errors, they are:

#### a. Identifying Errors

In this step, we have to compare the error sentence (the writer mentions it as "original sentence") with what seem to be normal or "correct sentence" in target language which correspond with them (the writer mentions it as 'reconstruction').

#### b. Describing Errors

This next step, the errors are described and classified into kinds. This step can be done by several ways. According to Rod Ellis, there are two ways to classify errors, they are:

The first way is classifying the errors through grammatical categories. It means classifying the errors through their word classes and tenses.

For example:

Original sentence: *She make a cake yesterday*

Reconstruction : *She made a cake yesterday*

The second way of classifying the errors is try to identify general ways in which the learners' utterances differ from the reconstructed-target language utterances. It means the errors are classified into several types:

#### 1) Omission

Omission is the error of leaving out an item that is required for an utterance to be considered grammatical.

For example:

*She make cake.*

This sentence leaves out an item that is required to be considered grammatical. In order to get correct sentence, it should be *she makes cake* because *she* is third singular subject that must be followed by the word which is added by inflectional *-s* or *-es*.

## 2) Misinformation

Misinformation is the error of using one grammatical form in place of another grammatical form.

## 3) Misordering

Misordering is the error of putting the words in an utterance in the wrong order.

## 4) Overgeneralization

Overgeneralization is the error of using over grammatical form. Generalizing past verbs by adding *-ed*.

## 2.2 English Tenses

In Macmillan Dictionary (1979:1028) states that tense means the form of a verb that shows the time of its action or state of being or set of such forms indicating a particular time. If we go back to the history that tense comes from Latin “tempus” which means time. If someone wants to talk about Tense, he or she may not escape from grammar because tense is a part of structure. The major challenges in teaching students how to use the tenses of English is not so much having the students learn the uses of each individual tense but getting students sensitized to the differences between and among the tense. Tense means time. It is assumed by a verb for indicating:

a. The time in which an event occurs, for example, that an action is done in Present, as *he comes*: that an action is done in past, as *he came*; that it will be done in future time, as, *he will come*

b. The degrees of completeness ascribed to an event at the time of its occurrences there are four different forms to each tense.

## 3.1 Research Method

In order to carry out this research dealing with the topic, the writer needs to collect both the library and field research. She reads some books related to the topic.

The method of this study used is quantitative method as Arikonto (2006:12) *says that quantitative research applies numbers from collecting the data, describing the data, until the result of the research. In addition, the result of the research will be better if it applies table, graph, draft, picture, etc.*

The writer designs a questionnaire for the students. There are 35 students. She prepared a set of test consisting of 30 items filling the blanks. The test consists of five tenses and each tense has 6 questions. The students are asked to

answer the questions in 60 minutes. The research is held in SMA N 1 Pasir Mandage .

## 3.2 Population and Sample

The population of this research is 35 students because there is only one class.

## 3.3 Data and Collecting Method

In order to collect her data, writer gives a test. There are 1050 source data and it is found that there are 555 totals of errors.

## 3.4 Data Analysis

The writer uses the theory of Rod Ellis in analyzing her data and applies grammar structure or theory of English structures which deal with the use of English Tenses. The tenses that they have learnt, they are Simple Present Tense, Present Continuous Tense, Simple Past Tense, Past Continuous Tense, and Future Tenses. The steps of analysis are:

### a. Identifying Errors

In this step, we have to compare the error sentence (the writer mentions it as “original sentence”) with what seem to be normal or “correct sentence” in target language which correspond with them (the writer mentions it as ‘reconstruction’).

### b. Describing Errors

This next step is the step where the errors are described and classified into kinds such as Omission, Misinformation, Misordering, Overgeneralization, Incomplete Application of Rules, Ignorance of Rule restriction, and False Concept Hypothesized.

### c. Explaining Errors

This is last step of error analysis. In this step, the writer tries to explain/analyze how - and why a sentence called to be erroneous.

No	Original	Reconstruction
1	She goed to Jakarta Yesterday	She went to Jakarta day

This original is incorrect grammatical form. Because the students generalize all past verbs by adding *-ed* while *go* is irregular verb. The correct form of *go* is *go-went-gone*. Tense used in this sentence is past tense so we use past verb. In order to get correct form we must use *went* after subject *I*. So, the error is called Overgeneralization.

After analyzing the errors sentences, the writer identifies the percentage of errors made

by the students. To identify the errors, the writer uses *Bungin's theory* (2005:172)

$$N = \frac{F_x}{N} \times 100\%$$

Note:  $F_x$ : The amount of each kind of errors

N: The total amount of errors

#### 4.1 Data

The writer designs a questionnaire for the students. She gives a set of questions consisting 30 items. The test consists of five tenses and each tense has 6 questions. There are 35 students present when the writer gives the questions. In conclusion, there are 210 correct answers which are expected from each tense. So the total of data source is 1050 of five tenses.

**Table 1: All data source**

No	Tenses	Total
1	Simple Present	210
2	Present Continuous	210
3	Simple Past	210
4	Past Continuous	210
5	Simple Future	210
	Total	1050

From the 1050 sentences which are being analyzed, there are correct sentences and incorrect sentences. There are 555 incorrect sentences becoming data which must be analyzed.

#### 4.2.1 Errors of using Simple Present Tense

The original sentences become grammatically incorrect because the first original uses auxiliary *did* at the field of Present Tense. While, second until the fourth original do not have the right form in using auxiliary.

**Table 2: Errors in Using Auxiliary in Question Sentence**

No	Original	Reconstruction
1	How <b>did</b> she go to the market everyday?	How <b>does</b> she go to the market everyday?
2	How <b>doing</b> she go to the market?	
3	How <b>are doing</b> she go to the market?	
4	How <b>do</b> she go to the market?	

Thus, to get correct sentence we must use auxiliary *does* after *how* because we use Simple Present Tense in this interrogative sentence. In conclusion, all the sentences' errors are Misinformation.

#### 4.2.2. Errors of Using Present Continuous Tense

There are two types of original answers. Be-

fore explaining it, we should know what tense used in this sentence.

**Table 3: Omission of Auxiliary and V-ing.**

No	Original	Reconstruction
5	Shhhh, the teacher <b>teaching</b> .	Shhhh, teacher is teaching
6	Shhhh, the teacher <b>are teach</b>	

The tense used is Present Continuous Tense because it describes actions that happening at the moment of speaking. These original sentences give errors. First types, the students do not use *to be is* after the subject *the teacher*. They just add verb-*ing* without using *to be* first. Grammatically, the form of present Continuous is **Subject +to be + V-ing**. Because *the teacher* is the singular subject, we must use auxiliary *is* after the subject. Unlike the first type, in the second original answer, the students have used auxiliary *are* but they leave an item to be considered grammatical. They do not add *-Ing* after the verb *teach* These sentences' errors are Omission.

#### 4.2.3. Errors of Using Simple Past Tense

No	Original	Reconstruction
7	He <b>is</b> at home last day	He <b>was</b> at home last day
8	He <b>do</b> at home last night	
9	He <b>being</b> at home last night	

The table indicates that there errors in using *auxiliary* in nominal sentence (sentence which does not have a verb). The students fail to distinguish among tenses; they do not recognize that *last day* is visible signal of time indicating the activity occurred in past time. Normally, we use Past Tense in this sentence, we should use auxiliary *was* after subject *he* in order to get correct sentence. Therefore, the errors are Misinformation.

#### 4.2.4 Errors of Using Past Continuous Tense

No	Original	Reconstruction
10	They <b>study</b> English at 7.30 A.M. this morning	They <b>were studying</b> English at 7.30 this morning.
11	They <b>studying</b> chess at 7.30 A.M. this morning	
12	They <b>were study</b> chess at 7.30 A.M. this morning	
13	They <b>study</b> chess at 7.30 A.M. this morning	

Actually, there is a visible clue stating that this question is using past continuous tense. It is

known by the two adverb of time; *at 7.30 A.M.* and *this morning*.

These original sentences give incorrect form in using Past Continuous Tense. The first and second original sentences follow a similar pattern to what they have done in question no 59 and 60. While, in the third original, the student has got idea that this sentence uses past continuous, yet he omits *-ing* form in the verb *study*. The last, unlike previous original, in this respect the student uses past verb. In order to get correct form, we must use auxiliary *were* after subject *they*.

### 4.3 The Percentage of Errors in Using Tenses.

Having finished analyzing, I make some tables as the indicator of the frequency and the percentages of the errors.

**Table 5: The percentage of Errors in using Tenses**

No	Error of Tenses	Freq	Percentage (%)
1	Simple Present Tense	50	9.00 %
2	Present Continuous Tense	100	18.02%
3	Simple Past Tense	135	24.32%
4	Past Continuous Tense	150	27.03%
5	Present Future Tense	120	21.62%
	Total	555	100 %

**Table 6: Kinds of Errors**

No	Kinds of Error	Freq	Percentage
1	Misinformation	410	73.87 %
2	Omission	75	13.51%
3	Overgeneralization	40	7.21%
4	Incomplete Application of Rules	30	5.41%
	Total	555	100 %

**Table 7: Kinds of Error, Frequency and Percentage**

No	Kinds of Error	Freq	%
1	Omission of Simple Present Tense	20	3.06
2	Omission Present Continuous Tense	40	7.21
3	Omission of Simple Past Tense	-	-
4	Omission of Past Continuous Tense	25	4.50
5	Omission of Simple Future Tense	11	1.98
6	Misinformation of Simple Present Tense	37	6.67
7	Misinformation Present Continuous Tense	47	8.47
			18.5
8	Misinformation of Simple Past Tense	103	6
9	Misinformation of Past Continuous Tense	102	18.8
			18.9
10	Misinformation of Simple Future Tense	105	2
11	Overgeneralization of Simple Present Tense	-	-
12	Overgeneralization Present Continuous Tense		
13	Overgeneralization of Simple Past Tense	25	4.50
14	Overgeneralization of Past Continuous Tense	-	
15	Overgeneralization of Simple Future Tense	-	
16	Incomplete Application of Rules of Simple Present Tense	7	1.26
17	Incomplete Application of Rules Present Continuous Tense	5	0.9
18	Incomplete Application of Rules of Simple Past Tense	28	5.05

19	Incomplete Application of Rules of Past Continuous Tense	-	-
20	Incomplete Application of Rules of Simple Future Tense	-	-
	Total	555	100

### 5.1 Conclusions

Having finished writing the first to the parts, the writer of this thesis comes to draw some conclusions of the analysis.

Kinds of errors Made by the third grade students of SMA N 1 Pasir Mandoge in using tenses are:

- 1.1) Misinformation 73.87%, Omission 13.51 %, Overgeneralization 7.21 %, and Incomplete Application of Rules 5.41 %. The most common error is 'Misinformation' 73.87 %.
- 2.2) The percentage errors of using tenses are Past Continuous 27.03 %, Simple Past 24.32 %, Present Future 21.62 %. Present Continuous 18,02 % and Simple Present 9.00%.
- 3.3) There are some reasons why students make errors in using tenses:
  - It is very difficult for the students in using tenses since English structure is different from Indonesian structure.
  - The students are still lack of understanding on using the tenses, moreover, they are not capable of differentiating what kinds of tense should be used in a sentence.

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