AN ANALYSIS OF LEARNERS' MISTAKES IN USING SIMPLE PAST TENSE IN WRITING CLASS AT MTsN 2 SURAKARTA

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Abstract: *This research aimed to explore the most common errors made by students when applying the simple past tense in their writing, as well as to investigate the factors contributing to these inaccuracies. A qualitative approach was employed, as the researcher sought to analyze learners' difficulties in using the simple past tense. Based on the findings, it was revealed that these errors primarily stemmed from the students' lack of comprehension regarding the simple past tense material.*

Keyword: *Simple past tense, writing, qualitative research*

Abstrak: Tujuan penelitian ini ialah untuk mengenal kesalahan paling populer yang dilaksanakan peserta didik dalam menggunakan simple past tense dalam menulis dan untuk mengenal unsur-unsur apa yang mempengaruhi kesalahan siswa dalam menulis simple past tense. Penelitian ini memakai metode kualitatif, karena peneliti ingin mengkaji kesalahan siswa dalam memakai simple past tense. Hasil penelitianya berdasarkan analisisnya, kesalahan-kesalahan tersebut terjadi karena siswa masih belum mengerti materi simple past tense.

Kata kunci: Simple past tense, menulis, penelitian kualitatif

INTRODUCTION

Writing serves as a means of communication between individuals. Helen and Hafizh (2014) explain that writing is an essential skill students need in order to express their ideas, thoughts, and information to others. Similarly, Wulandari (2015) emphasizes that teachers must pay attention to students' writing abilities during the learning process at school. Thus, writing plays a crucial role in communication as it enables individuals to convey messages and information effectively in written form.

Grammar plays a crucial role in understanding English, particularly in writing. According to Brown (2000), it helps learners enhance their skills in writing, speaking, and other aspects of the English language. It is very important for users to understand English tenses, because they must know when to use them properly. Over time, the verbs in a sentence can change due to tenses. The most widely used tense by learners is the simple past tense.

The simple past tense serves to indicate actions or occurrences that took place at a definite point in the past, such as "yesterday," "last night," "two days ago," or "this morning." As one of the most frequently applied verb tenses in the English language. For regular verbs, the simple past form is generally created by appending the suffix "-ed" to the verb's base form. Second, irregular verbs are formed irregularly. namely, feel/felt, find/found, fly/flew and so on. However, for non-verbal words, use to be was or to be are.

Researchers have conducted observations of students at MTsN 2 Surakarta by operate interviews and checking students' test results. The researcher revealed several trouble faced by learners during the interview. For example, they experience difficulty using simple past tense correctly, among others,

they had hardship distinguishing verb 1 and verb 2 when they formed simple past tense sentences. In addition, learners did not have the motivation to learn English, which made it hardship for them to memorize simple past tense formulas. The test results showed that students generally understand English grammar structures, but they still have difficulty using them in everyday life. Although students have not mastered it, it is understandable if it is done.

First, Aditya (2022) explains that the of the simple past tense is used to indicate events that have already happened. This tense is frequently applied when recounting the majority of actions that took place in the past. In addition, it can indicate events that happened suddenly, occurred over a period of time, or represented habitual actions in the past. According to Greenbaum and Quirk (2003), the simple past tense functions to describe events that took place in the past.

Thus, by considering the above phenomena, the researcher is interested in conducting research entitled "An Analysis of Students' Errors Using Simple Past Tense in Writing Class at MTsN 2 Surakarta in the Academic Year 2022/2023".

METHOD

In this research, a descriptive qualitative method is implemented. Cresswell (2009) defines qualitative research as an approach that seeks to explore and comprehend how individuals or groups interpret the meaning of social or human-related phenomena. This approach was chosen by the researcher to examine students' difficulties in using the simple past tense. As a result, the descriptive qualitative design is employed to identify and analyze the errors made by students in writing texts the simple past tense at MTsN 2 Surakarta.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The most common mistake learners make in using the simple past tense in writing

Based on the students' worksheets, the mistakes are shown. In May 2023, researchers interviewed three learner who were selected based on the highest number of mistakes. Students were still confused in distinguishing between verb 1, verb 2, and verb 3, which led some of them to continue using verb 1 incorrectly. Besides that, they have difficulty in differentiate between regular and irregular verbs, so they use the help of a dictionary them learn verbs 1, 2, and 3.

The researcher revealed that students made many mistakes when writing recount texts. Each mistake made was marked and emend. Afterwards, the researcher explained each type of mistake and all sources of errors made by learners in one class consisting of 24 learners. The author found 79 errors, which they categorized into deletion, addition, and formation errors.

1. **Omission**
   Data AJK
   - Wrong sentence: I arried in Yogyakarta
   - True sentence   :   I arrived in Yogyakarta
   The error in the sentence lies in the missing initial letter of the verb "arrived." To make the sentence grammatically correct, the student needs to add the missing letter so that it becomes "I arrived in Yogyakarta.

2. **Addition**
   Data AWP
   - Wrong sentence: We performance the song again in front of the parents
   - True sentence   :   We performed the song again in front of the parents
   This sentence shows an addition error in the form of the noun form

"performance" which is not appropriate in this context. The correction is made by changing it to the past tense form of the verb "performed," so that the sentence becomes correct.

3. **Misformation**
    Data AL
    -   Wrong sentence: Inside it is very exciting
    -   True sentence   : Inside it was very exciting
    The error occurs in the form of the verb "is" which does not correspond to the time of the event that has occurred long ago. Therefore, the verb should be changed into the past tense "was" to express an event that has occurred in the past.

The aspects that influence learners' mistakes in writing simple past tense

Based on Interview data revealed that learners in grade 8A3 at MTsN 2 Surakarta continued to make mistakes in applying the simple past tense when writing recount texts, even though they were already familiar with the material. The findings highlight aspects of learners' errors.

Mother-tongue influence

Mother tongue is the learner's first language, which is very important and sometimes it's hard to change. In the process of learning English as a foreign language, the mother tongue can influence the way they organize and express their ideas in written form. As a result, students' writing patterns in writing English as a foreign language. Mother tongue affects students' errors in making recount texts at MTsN 2 Surakarta.

Target language causes

The cause of students' errors in making recount texts is the target language itself, unlike the cause of errors in number one which concerns the mother tongue. English as a target language is considered a foreign language for students, which results in errors in their English language skills, especially in writing. The cause of the target language is related to the rules in it; this includes grammar rules, pronunciation, spelling, vocabulary, and various elements that do not exist in the native language.

Carelessness

Negligence can be understood as the approach taken by educators when addressing learners' errors in writing recount texts. In some cases, teachers may be hesitant to mark every mistake made by students and to provide the corresponding corrections based on proper English grammar. For instance, when students are assigned to write a text and commit various errors, teachers may simply ask them to identify the incorrect parts rather than directly correcting them. In addition, when students have difficulty composing sentences or paragraphs and ask questions to their teachers, teachers get information by browsing the internet, but they do not provide more explanations to the students.

Translation

For students of MTsN 2 Surakarta, the translator becomes the most important thing when they create recount text. Translation means the way they write text in English with Indonesian language structure first, so that the words or meanings they use are be based words in Indonesian. Students of MTsN 2 Surakarta send meanings from Indonesian to English in written form. This is because of the lack of understanding they have and how to use words according to context correctly.

Limited learning

Students of MTsN 2 Surakarta learn English as a foreign language with limited time. Because they only learn English for a very short time, the limited learning time causes students to lack mastery of one aspect of writing recount texts. An additional factor is that teachers do not often provide students with writing text exercises. This situation occurs when

the teacher presents recount text material without assigning students any prior writing practice related to the topic. As a result, students only create a recount text once.

CONCLUSION

The objective of this research was to examine the most common mistakes made by students in class 8A3 at MTsN 2 Surakarta when applying the simple past tense, along with the factors that contribute to these errors. The findings indicated the presence of four main error categories: omission, addition, misformation, and misordering. These types of mistakes were evident in the students' written outputs. The overall results imply that the students have not yet mastered the correct usage of the simple past tense in composing recount texts.

Mother tongue influence

A learner's first language, commonly known as the mother tongue, holds a significant role in shaping language use and is often difficult to alter. When students study English as a foreign language, their native language tends to impact how they articulate their thoughts in writing.

The first language, or mother tongue, plays a crucial role in shaping a learner's linguistic behavior and is often difficult to modify. When learning English as a foreign language, a student's native language tends to influence how they organize and convey their ideas in writing. As a result, their writing patterns in English are frequently shaped by the habits formed through their use of the mother tongue.

1. Target language causes

Students perceive English as a foreign language, which frequently results in mistakes, especially in their writing abilities. Such errors often stem from the structural aspects of English—like grammar, spelling, vocabulary, and pronunciation—that either differ significantly from or are absent in their mother tongue.

2. Carelessness

Negligence refers to the way teachers correct mistakes or errors made by learners in writing recount texts. Occasionally, teachers don't write down all the mistakes made by students and measure them inside correct rules in English.

3. Translation

Students of MTsN 2 Surakarta, the translator becomes the most important thing when they create recount text. Translation refers to the process by which learners construct English texts by initially relying on Indonesian sentence structures, resulting in the vocabulary and meanings they use being based on Indonesian words. Students of MTsN 2 Surakarta send meanings from Indonesian to English in written form.

4. Limited learning

The previous explanation shows that learners at MTsN 2 Surakarta experience limitations in the learning process, especially related to the use of learning media, teaching methods, and assessment practices. Teachers also only use dictionaries and student worksheets (LKS) to convey material information. As shown by the data collected by the researcher, students receive very limited English learning in the classroom. This is especially true for students' writing skills. This is because they find mistakes in their writing.

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