

AN ANALYSIS OF THE ERRORS OF THE FIRST YEAR STUDENTS OF SMK TARUNA PEKANBARU IN USING SIMPLE PRESENT TENSE IN WRITING DESCRIPTIVE TEXTS

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Abstract: *The research is a descriptive research that was conducted based on the problem occurred at the first years students of SMK Taruna Pekanbaru; namely the students were lack in making texts using simple present tense that influence them got poor score in test. Therefore, this research was aimed to find out the dominant errors made by the first year students of SMK Taruna Pekanbaru in using simple present tense in writing descriptive text, The participants were 31 students from first years of SMK Taruna Pekanbaru. This research was conducted for about four months (January – April, 2015) and wad taken on March and April , 2015 at SMK Taruna Pekanbaru, Rajawali Sakti street No.37, Panam. In collecting the data, writer explained the subjects about the use of the simple present tense, and then writer explained about the rules in writing a descriptive text. Next, writer held a field research by preparing questions sheet and answer sheets. Each of the question sheets consisted of an outline that will guide them in writing a descriptive text and the answer sheets were for the students' writing. The writer looked after the test to avoid the same writing among the students. Then writer analyzed the students' works by making a list of the students' errors in using the simple present tense in descriptive text. Based on those errors, writer furthermore began to conduct an error analysis.*

Keyword: *descriptive texts, simple presents tense.*

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Abstrak: Penelitian ini adalah penelitian deskripsi yang dilaksanakan berdasarkan masalah yang terjadi pada siswa kelas satu SMK Taruna Pekanbaru; seperti siswa yang berkemampuan lemah dalam membuat teks menggunakan *simple present tense* sehingga mereka mendapat nilai rendah. Maka dari itu, penelitian ini dilaksanakan dengan tujuan untuk mengetahui apa kesalahan yang dominan dari siswa kelas satu SMK Taruna Pekanbaru dalam membuat teks menggunakan *simple present tense* . Penelitian ini dilaksanakan selama empat bulan (Januari - April, 2015) dan diambil pada sekitaran Maret –April, 2015 di SMK Taruna Pekanbaru, jalan Rajawali Sakti No. 37, Panam. Dalam pengumpulan data penulis menjelaskan kepada siswa tentang penggunaan *simple present tense*, kemudian penulis menjelaskan tentang aturan-aturan dalam penulisan deskriptif teks. Kemudian penulis membagikan lembar pertanyaan yang akan menuntun siswa untuk menulis sebuah deskriptif teks dan lembar jawaban tempat dimana siswa menulis deskriptif teksnya. Setelah Selesai pengumpulan data, penulis menganalisis deskriptif teks yang dibuat oleh siswa dengan membuat daftar kesalahan yang dibuat oleh siswa tersebut dalam menggunakan *simple present tense* dalam penulisan deskriptif teks. Berdasarkan kesalahan tersebut, penulis mulai menganalisis kesalahan siswa

Kata kunci: *simple present tense*, deskriptif teks.

INTRODUCTION

English is spoken by people in English speaking countries and in international events among countries around the world. In Indonesia, English has been taught as a foreign language. Ramelan (1992: 1) stated that “English has been taught in our country as the first foreign language since the proclamation of Indonesia on the 17th of August 1945.” It is taught as a compulsory subject in junior high schools, senior high schools and in universities for several terms.

English has four important skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Those skills are integratedly taught because the main goal of teaching English is to enable students to develop communicative skills in both written and spoken. However, there are many rules in grammar that cannot be ignored. Part of the grammar that is considered to be the most difficult to learn for Indonesian students is tenses including Simple Present Tense. Frank (1972:66) states that “Simple present tense is used to express habitual action with adverbs like usually, always, or often.”

The use of simple present tense often makes SMK Taruna students confused with its complexity. It was discussed with the English teacher in SMK Taruna. They said that the students usually had some problems in finding out the verb form of simple present tense. They often write “He walk to school everyday,” instead of “He walks to school everyday.” The third singular persons such as *he*, *she*, and *it* need suffix *-s* or *-es* for the verb. It shows that SMK Taruna students do not consider that in English there are verb forms in singular or plural. In Indonesian language, singular or plural forms do not affect the verb form.

This final project writer discusses students’ English skill in writing descriptive text using simple present tense. This due to fact that Simple Present Tense is the first tense that students learn. Writing a descriptive text should be clear, vivid, and concrete. If a student has made a mistake in using simple present tense, it means that he/she is not competent yet in finishing his/her text. Therefore, through descriptive text, it will be possible to find out the students’ learning problems, to know the students’ achievement and difficulties in learning the simple present tense. Wishon and Burks (1980:379) stated that “descriptive writing is used to create a visual image of people, places, even units of time days, times of day or seasons.” Hopefully, it will help students in using the simple present tense.

METHODOLOGY

This research is a descriptive research that has only one variable. It is to investigate smk Taruna Pekanbaru first year students ability in writing descriptive text, because this study talk about the subjects’ achievement in using simple present tense in descriptive text. Gay (1987:11) states that descriptive research involves collecting data to test hypotesis or to answer question concerning the current status of the subject of the study.

Participants

The participants in this research were the students of SMK Taruna Pekanbaru. The writer took the students of grade X. The total number of students was 254 students divided into 8 classes. From all of eight classes researcher decided took Teknik Komputer Jaringan 2 with 31 students. The researcher decided to took this class as the participant after the researcher discussed with the teacher of SMK Taruna Pekanbaru and did cluster sampling technique. So by applying research in this class, it was hoped

that the researcher knew how is the ability of the students in combining sentences using relative pronouns.

Instruments Techniques and Analysis

This study used an outline in writing a descriptive text. It has a logical validity; because it has already followed the rules in that writing. According to Arikunto (2002:65-66), logical validity for an instrument of evaluation shows the condition of the instrument which meets valid requirements of logical reasoning. Moreover, Arikunto stated that a written test is considered to be good if the instrument has followed the rules in writing. Therefore, logical validity would be reached if the instrument is arranged by following the theory or the rules in arranging the instrument. That is why, the conditions of logical validity will not be tested because the validity has been already got after the instrument is arranged.

In collecting the data, writer explained the subjects about the use of the simple present tense, and then writer explained about the rules in writing a descriptive text. Next, writer held a field research by preparing questions sheet and answer sheets. Each of the question sheets consisted of an outline that will guide them in writing a descriptive text and the answer sheets were for the students' writing. The writer looked after the test to avoid the same writing among the students. Then writer analyzed the students' works by making a list of the students' errors in using the simple present tense in descriptive text. Based on those errors, writer furthermore began to conduct an error analysis.

FINDINGS AND DATA INSTRUCTION

The Analysis of Observations Result

A. The Presentation of Research Finding

1. Statistical Analysis of the Data

According to Heidi Dulay, et al, (1981: 150), error analysis focused on the form of language learners, reviewing language learners based on the type of effect: errors of omission, error of addition, an error of selection, and the error of ordering. So, after collect and analyze the students' descriptive text, writer found that there are 10 types of SMK Taruna Pekanbaru was made;

Table 4.1 : Types of Errors

No	Types of Errors
1	Omission of be
2	Wrong form of be
3	Double be
4	Wrong use of singular and plural form
5	Addition of be (before and after verb)
6	Omission of suffix -s/-es
7	Wrong use of verb
8	Wrong form of modal auxiliary
9	Omission of verb
10	Wrong form of negative sentence

After finding the students' errors, I started to analyze the data helped by the English teacher of SMK Taruna Pekanbaru. First, I counted the proportion of errors made by each student. Next, I calculated the dominant errors by conducting an error analysis. To find out the dominant errors, I classified the errors into several categories based on the students' errors. The results of the computation are put in tables.

In order to determine the proportion of errors made by each student in using the Simple Present Tense in descriptive writing, I used the following formula:

$$X = \frac{\Sigma er}{\Sigma w} \times 100\%$$

Which: X = the percentage of errors
 Er = various kinds of errors
 W = words, and
 Σ = the total number

Since there were 31 students participating in this study, I had 31 computations for the percentages of errors in using Simple Present Tense. The result of the data can be seen in table 1. The first column is the name of the students who participated in this study that is 31 students. The second column is the total number of the Simple Present Tense that was used in the students' descriptive writing. Here, the students were to write at least 10 sentences in their writing. The total number of the Simple Present Tense occurrences is 358. The third column is the total of various kinds of errors made by the students. I found that there were 147 Simple Present Tense errors meaning that the errors almost took a half proportion of the students' writing. The last column is the percentages of the errors made by each student. The result of the study shows that the students made errors in various degrees of percentages.

Table 4.2 : The Percentages of Errors

Students	W	Er	Percentage { % }
1	15	8	53.33
2	13	5	38.46
3	11	2	18.18
4	12	5	41.46
5	11	3	27.27
6	10	2	20
7	12	3	25
8	10	4	40
9	11	7	63.63
10	13	4	30.76
11	11	5	45.45
12	14	5	35.71
13	13	8	61.53
14	11	5	45.45
15	11	3	27.27
16	12	3	40
17	11	6	54.54
18	11	4	36.36
19	14	8	57.14
20	13	6	46.15

21	12	4	30
22	11	3	27.27
23	11	5	45.45
24	11	3	27.27
25	13	6	46.15
26	14	8	57.14
27	12	5	41.67
28	10	4	40
29	15	4	26.67
30	11	3	27.27
31	10	6	60
Total	358	147	1236.58

After finishing the computation of the percentage of errors, I conducted an error analysis in order to find out the dominant errors. In this calculation, I used the 'Preselected Category Approach' favored by Etherton (1977) as adapted by Norrish (1983). The formula can be seen as follows:

$$Pi = \frac{fi}{n} \times 100\%$$

Which: pi = the proportion of frequency of errors.

fi = absolute frequency of a particular type of error, and

n = the total number of errors observed

Based on the data, I classified the students' errors into several types. The result of the data can be seen in this following table:

Table 4.3: The Proportions of Each Type of Errors

No	Headings	Fi	pi%
1	Omission of be	32	21.76
2	Wrong form of be	11	7.48
3	Double be	2	1.36
4	Wrong use of singular and plural form	10	6.8
5	Addition of be (before and after verb)	9	6.12
6	Omission of suffix -s/-es	52	35.37
7	Wrong use of verb	22	14.96
8	Wrong form of modal auxiliary	7	4.76
9	Omission of verb	1	0.68
10	Wrong form of negative sentence	1	0.68
Total		147	100

Table 2 shows that there were 10 types of errors made by the students in dealing with the use of the Simple Present Tense. The mean of the proportions of each type of error is derived from the total proportion of error of frequency of errors divided by the total number of errors types.

Before finding out the degree of dominant errors, I computed the proportion of frequency of occurrences of errors as a whole by using the formula:

$$PI = \frac{FI}{N} \times 100\%$$

Which: I = the proportion of frequency of occurrence of errors as a whole,

FI = the absolute frequency of types of errors of all categories,

N = the total number of possible errors of all the categories.

The PI was computed as follows:

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

$$\frac{PI}{10} = 100 \times 100\%$$

$$PI = 10\%$$

The final step was to identify the degree of dominance of the particular error. As I stated before in Chapter III, any error whose (pi - PI) is plus (+) is considered to be dominant. On the contrary, if the (pi - PI) is zero or minus (-), it is considered to be less dominant. After the calculation, the most dominant errors through the least dominant one can be seen in the table below.

Table 4.3: The Most Dominant Errors

No	Headings	pi%	(Pi - PI)
1	Omission of be	21.76	11.76
2	Wrong form of be	7.48	-2.52
3	Double be	1.36	-8.64
4	Wrong use of singular and plural form	6.8	-3.2
5	Addition of be (before and after verb)	6.12	-3.88
6	Omission of suffix -s/-es	35.37	25.37
7	Wrong use of verb	15.64	5.64
8	Wrong form of modal auxiliary	4.76	-5.24
9	Omission of verb	0.68	-9.32
10	Wrong form of negative sentence	0	-10

It could be seen from the table above that there are 3 out of 10 types of errors whose degree of dominance result is in plus (+). They are:

- (1) Omission of be
- (2) Omission of suffix -s/-es
- (3) Wrong use of verb

The biggest proportion of errors among the three types is the omission of suffix -s/-es from the verb of third person singular subjects. It shows that the students still difficult to pay attention to the existence of a particular rule applied in the English language that is the use of suffix -s/-es for verb of third person singular subject in simple present tense especially in descriptive text.

That is the result of students' dominant errors in using the Simple Present Tense made by the first year students of SMK Taruna Pekanbaru based on the statistical analysis. Then, I discuss those errors based on non-statistical analysis.

2. Non-Statistical Analysis

Here, I discuss the errors made by the students based on the causes of errors. From the result of the analysis of the students' errors in using simple present tense in descriptive text, I found that the errors are caused by both intralanguage and interlanguage errors.

2.1. Intralanguage Errors

\ Intralanguage errors are errors which reflect the learners' competence at particular stage, and illustrate some of the general characteristic of language acquisition. Based on the data, I distinguished the intralanguage errors proposed by Richards (1974:6) as follows:

2.1.1 Overgeneralization

Overgeneralization errors arise when the students apply a structure that they already experience in another new situation. Sentences (1) show the students' overgeneralization errors.

- (1) a. It is has four legs.
- b. They are like playing ball.
- c. It eats is meat.

These errors are categorized as the addition of *be* (before and after verb). The sentences above prove that the students over generalized the verbs *has*, *live*, *like*, and *eat* by adding *be* before and after the verbs. In fact, the verb for the Simple Present Tense is formed by using simple form of the verb called infinitive without *to* or *be* and when the third person singular subject is present, a suffix *-s/-es* is added to the verb. Since the students already acquired the rules of *be* before, they applied the rules in another new situation that is when they had to use 'infinitive' in simple present tense.

The use of double *be* in the sentence (2) is also a result of overgeneralization.

- (2) a. They are is lively.

There are two students who made the error. The students may thought that *be* is always identical with *is*. Though the subject is they and he already used *are*, he still added the sentence with *is* after *are*.

2.1.2. Ignorance of Rule Restrictions

Ignorance of rule restrictions occur when the students ignore restriction of certain structures as in sentences (3) below:

- (3) a. Her skin are full color.
- b. There is also people that not like it.
- c. The colors is orange, white, and black.

These errors are categorized as wrong form of *be*. The students ignored the restrictions on the use of auxiliary *be* for singular and plural subjects. They picked the auxiliaries without considering the correct use of them. The use of auxiliary *be* depends on the subject. When the subject of the sentence is singular, the students should use *is* instead of *are*. While when the subject is plural, the students should use *are* instead of *is*.

In this case, the students may be confused to use what kind of *be* must be used in the sentences, because in their mother tongue rules there is no differences in

meaning between both of them.

The ignorance of rule restrictions can also be found in sentences (4) below:

- (4) a. It can also plays football.
- b. It will protects the eggs.
- c. It is can run very fast.
- d. It can eating, flying, diving, and sleep.

These errors are categorized as wrong form of modal auxiliary. The students ignored the rule of using modal auxiliary that is the presence of infinitive after the modal auxiliary. The verb should not be added with *be*, suffix *-s/-es*, *-er*, or *-ing*.

The next sentences, sentences (5), show the students' errors which are categorized as wrong form of negative sentences. In this case, the students failed to use the correct form of auxiliary verb *do*. To make the negative sentence in the Simple Present Tense we should put *do not* or *does not* after the subject. These incorrect sentences are as follows:

- (5) a. It has not legs.
- b. I am not like this animal
- c. There is also people that not like it.

The sentence (6) also the result from the students' ignorance of the use of auxiliary verb for third person singular subject where *have* should be changed into *has*.

- (6) Bird have beautiful color

2.1.3. Incomplete Application of Rules

This cause of errors refers to the students' failure to fully develop a structure, like in sentences (7) below:

- (7) a. The animals in the jungle.
- b. I like cat because it tame.
- c. My elephant smart and strong.

The errors are categorized as omission of *be*. The students, in this case, failed to apply a complete structure in the Simple Present Tense as they omitted an element that is *be*. These errors occur since their native language does not require *be* to make a sentence followed by an adjective, a noun, or an adverb. They make English sentences as the way they do in their native language.

Incomplete application rules can also be found in sentences (8) below:

- (8) a. It live in the jungle.
- b. It look like people.
- c. My family love it

In the sentences, the students omitted suffix *-s/-es* from the verb. Because the subjects of the sentences are third singular person, so the students must use verb-s as the predicators. The words *live*, *look*, and *love* should be *lives*, *looks*, and *loves*. The next sentence, the student omitted the verb like in sentence (9):

- (9) It short tail

From the example above, the student seemed to be careless to observe presence of the verb as predicator in the sentence.

2.1.4. False Concept Hypothesized

False concept hypothesized derives from the students' faulty comprehension of distinctions in the target language. It may be due to poor gradation of teaching item which lead to students' confusion to distinguish two or more structures.

The following sentences, which are sentences (10) result from the students' faulty comprehension to distinguish singular and plural form.

- (10) a. It is big mammals.
 b. It ear are sharp.
 c. It is a wild animals.

The sentences above indicate that the students did not comprehend the structure in singular and plural form. Plural form is a process of adding morpheme (s/es) to plural words while singular form does not need morpheme (s/es) adding. In this case, the students seem confused in distinguish singular and plural form in English language especially in simple present tense.

2.2 Interlanguage Errors

Interlanguage errors are errors caused by the interference of the learners' mother tongue. I found out only two kinds of errors from the types of errors which are categorized into interlanguage errors. The two errors also resulted from intralanguage errors; they are omission of *be* and wrong form of *be*. Many students still found it difficult in using correct *be* in the sentences. Many of which still failed in using it, even they omit it. The examples are in sentences (11) below

- (11) a. It colors is chocolate and yellow.
 b. We do not afraid to elephant

In this case, some students have already known that the sentences need *be*. But they seem careless by picking the *be* as they like without considering the correct form. Then, some students also failed to apply *be* by using auxiliary *do*.

While in the sentences (12) below, the students omit the presence of *be*. As stated before, English maintains the presence of *be* to make sentences comprising of noun, adjective, or adverb.

- (12) a. It very cute and funny.
 b. It wild animal
 c. My favorite animal an elephant.

These types of error occur because *be* does not exist in the students' mother tongue, so that the cause of errors called over differentiation in which a certain target language item is not found in the native language.

Those are the data analysis that was made based on the students' writing of using simple present tense in descriptive text. In the next chapter, I will give conclusion and suggestions.

B. The Interpretation of the Finding

After analysing the data, the writer found that there are 3 of 10 types of errors whose degree of dominance result is in plus (+). They are omission of *be*, omission of suffix *-s/-es*, and wrong use of verb.

The the biggest proportion of errors among the three types is the omission of suffix *-s/-es* from the verb of third person singular subjects. It shows that the students

still difficult to pay attention to the existence of a particular rule applied in the English language that is the use of suffix –s/-es for verb of third person singular subject in simple present tense especially in descriptive text.

CONCLUSIONS

The main objectives of this study are to analyze the students' errors in dealing with simple present tense in descriptive writing made by the first year students of SMK Taruna Pekanbaru in the academic year of 20014/2015 and after analyzing the errors I find the causes of the errors.

Based on the findings of the analysis, I found that the students have most dominant problem particularly in dealing with suffix –s/-es from the verb of third singular person subjects. The proportion of the errors is 35.37%.

The errors made by the students resulted from both the mother tongue influence (interlanguage errors) and target language causes (intralanguage errors).

The interlanguage errors are caused by over differentiation and the intralanguage errors are subdivided into overgeneralization, ignorance of rule restrictions, incomplete application of rules, and false concept hypothesized.

Based on the statements above, I conclude that because of the limited amount of the data, this study is just a descriptive analysis. I hoped that the findings would be useful for English teachers in predicting the eighth year students' problems in using simple present tense.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the result of the study, I would like to offer some suggestions to the teachers to improve the students' ability in using the Simple Present Tense especially in descriptive writing.

First suggestion is the teachers should give more clear explanation of grammatical rules in English, particularly in the Simple Present Tense, so that the students will understand more about this kind of tense.

Then the teachers should know their students' ability in order to find out the students' difficulties, thus the teachers can solve the students' problems.

Next one is the students should be given more chance to have writing exercises and should be encouraged in using correct grammar.

The students should also be given more clear explanation about other grammatical rules, such as article, spelling, sentence pattern, parts of speech, etc so that the students can apply those rules correctly both in oral and in written ways.

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