AN ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS' ERRORS IN USING SIMPLE PAST TENSE IN TRANSLATING NARRATIVE TEXT

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ABSTRACT

Error may appear when students put the English grammatical incorrectly. Errors is mostly occurred in English as the foreign or second language. The aim of this study is describing kinds of errors are made by the seventh semester students of English department in Madura University on the use of simple past tense in a translated narrative text. The research method used in this study is descriptive qualitative. The subject is seventh semester students of English department which consist of 15 students. The instruments used is translating test. The data is analyzed by collecting the data from students, identifying the errors based on its grammatical errors, classifying them into errors classification, and calculated them into percentage. The results showed that the students' errors can be classified into four kinds of errors, which are 25% for omission errors, 5.36% for addition errors, 62.5% for missed formation errors, and 7.14% for missed ordering errors. There are total 56 errors occurred which is dominated by missed ordering errors. The teachers recommended to make a clear understanding related to differentiate grammatical differences between Indonesia and English. Further, students need to practice it more often. The other researchers can provide techniques to increase students' English grammatical understanding, especially in simple past tense usage.

Keywords: Errors, Simple Past Tense, Narrative Text.

INTRODUCTION

Languages have important roles in intellectual, emotional, and social life time of human life. In the era of globalization, the need of mastering a foreign language, especially English as an international language, is very urgent. English applies as foreign languages in Indonesia while mostly Indonesian still use Bahasa Indonesia or their mother language as their everyday tools of communication.

Learners is often make errors and mistakes while they are learning English. There are a big gap differences between English and Bahasa in many elements of languages, such us its pronunciation, its syntactic, and the most significant differences is the grammatical structure between two languages. Language learners and even English teachers have to be able to differentiate between mistakes and errors occurred in grammar. According to Brown (2007), mistakes refers to a performance error or a failure in utilizing a known system correctly. To make it clear, a person known the system well but cannot performance it well which may be caused by the "slip". Further, Brown (2007) stated that errors is something else. Errors is a person's noticeable grammatical deviation which reflect on the portion of their competence in English.

Errors cannot be self-corrected, while mistake can be self-corrected (James, as cited in Brown, 2007). This statement showed that an English teacher have to capable in doing what it is called as Error Analysis. Error Analysis is a type of linguistic analysis that focuses on the errors learners make, especially errors in English as second or foreign languages (Khansir, 2012). Error analysis is used to analyze and classify the learners' error from which the learners learning problem can be inferred.

According to Dulay et. al. (1982 as cited in Millah, 2016)), errors can be classified into four types, they are omission, addition, misformation, and misordering. Omission is a sentence where an element is omitted, actually it should be presented. For example I not go to school by bus every day, it should be I do not go to school by bus every day. Addition is a phenomenon in which a certain aspect of language rules is added into a correct order (correct sentence), in order words some elements are presented which should not be presented. For example we do study English three times in a week, it should be we study English three times in a week.

Misformation is the third types of error while it use one grammatical form in the place of another grammatical form. For example I doesn't know him, it should be I don't know him. The last one is Misordering which is a sentence where its order is incorrect. The sentence can be right in presented elements, but wrongly sequenced. For example she not does come early to school, it should be she doesn't come early to school.

These differences, in this case grammatical differences, causes some errors and mistake in the English usage are done by English speaker. Although grammar does not belong to skill in English like listening, speaking, reading, and writing but grammar actually supports those skills. There is no doubt that knowledge, implicit or explicit of grammatical rules is essential for the mastery of language. Moreover, every languages may have different grammatical structure.

Grammar is the central element in learning English and students are demanded to know how to use the grammar, both in spoken or written form. Learning language without understanding grammar may give some problems in mastering English well. There are many rules in grammar, including articles, parts of speech, sentence pattern, and tense, etc. (Cook and Ricard, as cited in Muhsin, 2016). The last rules mentioned, tenses, will be discussed more in this study.

Simple Past Tense is one of sixteen tenses in English grammar. The Simple Past expresses the idea that an action started and finished at a specific time in the past. Uchiyama (2016) stated simple past can be used for most past actions; we can use it for actions that happened quickly, actions that happened over time, or actions that were habits in the past. Simple past tense can be used in kinds of text such as recount text which tells about events in the past and narrative text which contains conflict in a story.

In the other hand, Narrative text is kind of text which its main purposes are to entertain, tell the story or provide an esthetical literary experience. According to Rebecca (2003:3) narrative text is a text which relates a series of logically and chronologically related events that are caused or experience by factors. This statement gives us an understanding to use simple past tense in writing a narrative text since it tells us the past events. Some examples of narrative text can be found in a biography, folk tale, fiction, short story, etc.

Budianto and Fardhani (2010) stated that in translating, a translator should try to reproduce the message contained in source language into the one in target language. In doing translation, a person have to understand the grammatical rules both in source language or target language. It is interesting to discuss about students' errors in using simple past tense in their translating narrative text assignment, because they have to transfer Indonesian grammatical rules into the English one since both of those languages have different grammatical rules in stating the past events.

METHOD

The research method used in this study is descriptive qualitative research. Qualitative is an inquiry process which aim to study the people's behavior by giving a complete description of their background such as cultural background or the setting where certain events occurred (Latief, 2014). According to the theory, the researcher focuses on analyzing students' of errors in using simple past tense in translating narrative texts at seventh semester students of English language department of Madura University.

The instrument of this research is a test where the students need to translate a narrative text in Indonesian Language into the English one. The test is intended to gather information about the students' errors in using simple past tense in translating narrative text, and to measure the students' translating ability in order to obtain empirical data.

The subject is seventh semester students of English department which consist of 15 students. Saturation sampling is done in this study, because there are only 15 students, so all the population is taken as the research subject. The instruments used is translating test, from Indonesian language to English, while the data is derived from the English one. The data is analyzed by collecting the data from students, identifying the errors based on its grammatical errors, classifying them into errors classification, and explaining the errors in percentage.

The data analysis technique is an important part in research because by using the method, the researcher can conclude the result of the research. In this research, there are some procedures has done by the researcher as follows:
1. Identification of errors, the researcher identifies the errors made by the students in their translation test viewed from the usage of simple past tense.
2. Classification of Errors, in this step the researchers classifies the errors into types based on Dulay et all's surface strategy taxonomy, namely Omission, Addition, Misformation, and Misordering errors.

3. Explaining the errors in percentage, from the previous step, the researchers then calculated each types of errors into percentages to make it easier in giving description. The researchers used the formula below:

$$Error\ percentage = \frac{The\ number\ of\ error\ x\ 100\%}{Total\ number\ of\ error}$$

DISCUSSION

As mentioned before, the first step in data analysis is identification errors. The identification of errors were focused on the use of simple past tense in translated narrative text by seventh semester students of English Language Department at Madura University. The researcher divided the errors into four types namely omission, addition, missed formation, and missed ordering based on their each criteria. The table 1 below show the description of errors made by students in using Simple Past Tense.

Table 1. Identification of Students' Error

Kinds of Errors	Error's Criteria
Omission	An element is omitted where actually it should be presented in well-formed sentences
Addition	Some elements are presented in a sentence which should not be presented
Missed Formation	It use one grammatical form in the place of another grammatical form
Missed Ordering	Incorrect placement

After making an identification, the researchers then classified the errors based on its kinds and criteria. There were 15 students participating in this study and there were 56 occurrences of errors found from their translated narrative texts assignment. These 56 occurrences were 14 for omission errors, 3 for additional errors, 35 for missed formation errors, and 4 for missed ordering errors. Here, are examples of errors made by the students:

a. Omission Errors

As presented in Table 1, omission errors can be indicated by the absence of one or more items that must appear in a well-formed sentence. The omission of errors found in this study are the omission of verb, omission of past marker –ed, and the omission of *was/were*. There are total 14 omission errors found in this study. Here are some example of omission errors found:

1. Omission of Verb *Take* : *My dad told my sister to rest*. It should be *My dad told my sister to take rest*.
2. Omission of –ed : *I ask my sister to play the radio*. It should be *I asked my sister to play the radio*.
3. Omission of *was/were* : *I _ so happy*. It should be *I was so happy*.

b. Addition Errors

Addition errors are characterized by the presence of one or more items that must appear in well-formed sentences. There are two kinds of addition errors are found in this study, they are addition of *was/were* and addition of past marker –ed. There are only 3 addition errors found in this study. Examples are presented below:

1. Addition of *was/were* : *His mother was cry every single day*. It should be *His mother cried every single day*.

2. Addition of *-ed* : *My family <u>didn't wanted</u> to waste time*. It should be *My family didn't <u>want</u> to waste time*.

c. Missed Formation Errors

Errors of missed formation are characterized by the use of the wrong forms of the morpheme or structure. In errors of missed formation the learners supply something, but its form is incorrect. 35 missed formation errors were found based on students' translated narrative text assignment. The missed formation errors found in this study are as follows:

1. Missed formation of simple past form of verb: *I <u>sing</u> all the fun song*. It should be *I <u>sang</u> all the fun song*,

2. Missed formation of simple past form of modal: *The holiday <u>will</u> end in 9th March*. It should be *The holiday <u>would</u> end in 9th March*.

3. Missed formation of irregular past form: *We <u>have</u> lunch and <u>continue</u> to take pictures*. It should be *We <u>had</u> lunch and <u>continued</u> to take pictures*.

4. Missed formation of To Be *was/were*: *There <u>are</u> no news from Malin*. It should be *There <u>were</u> no news from Malin*.

5. Missed formation of Time Signal: *He <u>always provided</u> socialization*. It should be *He <u>provided</u> socialization*.

d. Missed Ordering Errors

Errors of missed ordering are characterized by the incorrect placement of a morpheme or a group of morpheme in an utterance. There are four missed ordering errors found in this study. The examples are as follows:

1. Missed ordering of Subject-Verb: *And asked God to <u>she have her</u> son safe*. It should be *And she asked God to <u>have her</u> son safe*.

2. Missed ordering of Noun Phrase: *She cooked all Malin's <u>food favorite</u>*. It should be *She cooked all Malin's <u>favorite food</u>*.

3. Missed ordering There was/were: *<u>Many foreign visitors in there</u>*. It should be *<u>There were</u> many foreign visitors*.

After the identification and classification, the researchers then making a percentage based on each types of errors. This is in order to find out the domination of errors used to happen to the students especially in the use of simple past tense on their translated narrative text assignment. The percentage calculation showed 25 % for omission errors, 5.36% for addition errors, 62.5 % for missed formation errors, and 7.14% for missed ordering errors. Percentage summary for each types of errors can be seen below.

Chart 1. Percentage of Students' Errors
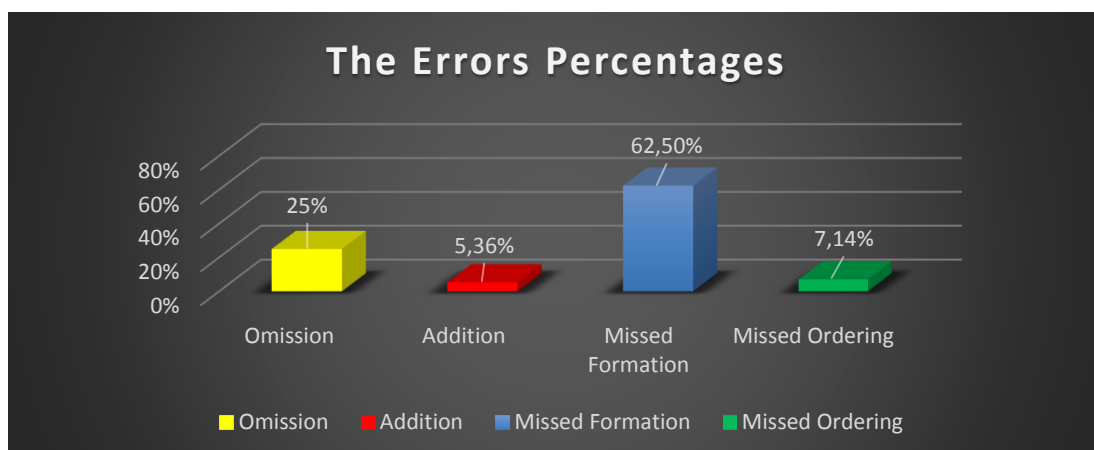
This study used translation assignment as the data where the students need to translate a narrative text in Indonesian Language into the English one. As the explanation on introduction of this research, in translating a text students need to understand the grammatical rules of both language that may be different. Students tend to replace the grammatical rules of source language into target language while they are translating a text. This phenomena also can be seen in this study where they used the concept of past events in Indonesia language to the English one. Example is as follow:

1. **Indonesian : Ayahku meminta kakak untuk beristirahat**, translated into ***My dad told my sister <u>to rest</u>***. The translation result still sound like Indonesian since the students ignored the verb *take* which is necessary to be put after the to-infinite in English grammatical rules. The correct one must be ***My dad told my sister <u>to take rest</u>***.

2. **Indonesia : Saya sangat senang**, translated into **I so happy**. There is no *To Be* in Indonesian grammatical rules, where subject can be directly followed by adjectives. Whereas in English, adjectives must be preceded by To Be. So the correct translation is ***I was so happy***.

3. **Indonesian : Kita makan siang dan berfoto**, translated into ***We <u>have lunch and continue</u> to take pictures***. Actually this is a correct translation, but turn into an incorrect one because this sentences uttered in past event. In Indonesian, there is no Tenses and verb will not change in past event as we find in English. This may be the reason missed formation errors occurred on their translated narrative assignment. The students tend to not make any changes on the verb of simple past tense. The correct translation is ***We <u>had lunch and continued</u> to take pictures***.

Those errors analysis above showed that some students still have difficulty and confusion related to using the simple past tense in English form, so they tend to replace grammatical rules in Indonesia into English. This is also the main reason why missed formation is the dominant errors occurred in this study. They arranged English by using Indonesian grammatical arrangement since they have lack understanding in using simple past form in English.

CONCLUSION

a. Conclusion

By studying the errors, the student's difficulties in using simple past tense could be analyzed and demonstrated the successes of students. Based on the finding in this study, the researchers found that there were 56 errors occurred on students' translational assignment. The errors were classified into four categories, namely omission, addition, missed formation, and missed ordering errors. Mostly, the cause of students' errors is their confusion in transferring Indonesian grammatical rules into English especially in the use of simple past tense. Based on findings, the writer found that there were 143 errors made by the students. Students tend to replace the grammar of Indonesian to English. This occurred since they did not really comprehend the target language. Richards says that these errors result from poor teaching materials and students' lack understanding of grammar from both languages. The findings of this study also showed that the dominant errors is the missed formation errors. The details are 25% for omission errors, 5.36% for addition errors, 62.5% for missed formation errors, and the last is 7.14% for missed ordering errors.

b. Suggestions

Based on the result of this study, the researchers would offer some suggestions to minimize the students' errors dealing with simple past tense in translated narrative text.

1. The teachers should give clearer explanations not only on English grammar rules but also Indonesian ones, such as articles, spelling, sentence patterns, and parts of speech, particularly in the simple past tense, so that the students can apply those rules correctly both orally and in writing.
2. The teachers should use their creativity to develop teaching materials. They can use a variety of methods or strategies for learning English to solve the students' problems so that the students will have better understandings of kinds of tenses.
3. The students should do more exercises and should be encouraged to use correct grammar.
4. The students also should understand different languages will have different grammatical rules, so they can use the right grammar instead of replace them by using their first languages' grammar.

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