

CHAPTER I

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1.1 Background of the study

Teaching English has become very important to students nowadays. The importance of English is due to the fact that communication in English becomes a necessity, with the struggle to strengthen students in learning the English language as the part of everyday human life. English has a great influence on all aspects of human life, especially in the development of communication, for example: English is the language of knowledge. The fact is that many text books are written in English from the lower level to the higher level of education. Besides, people are also very familiar with English as means of communication on television, radio or a media (Marhum, 2009).

Since human relationship between people by using languages is built through mutual communication, the teaching of English as a means of communication for the secondary school level students is expected to help them develop the potential within themselves how to know themselves, their culture and the people around them. Aside from that, the teaching of foreign languages can also assist students in expressing their ideas and feelings verbally with the correct grammar (Dursin, 2008). "Education Unit Level Curriculum" (SBC) based on Law no. 23 of 2005 is a functional set of curriculum that is applied nowadays in teaching English for Junior High School. The way of teaching should be based on the curriculum or should be appropriate with the school's context or circumstance of the school itself. The curriculum refers to the school's education goal and the capacity of the school (BSNP, 2006).

In learning a language, acquisition includes the need for language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. In this study the writer focuses on writing skill because writing is a difficult thing for many students. Expressing feeling and ideas in writing requires sufficient knowledge of vocabulary systematicity; writing skills will be greatly influenced by sufficient knowledge of vocabulary and systematicity of building sentences and discourse conveyed to readers (Rore, 2012).

According to some senior teachers of a Junior High School who teach English past tense in grade 8, students still make many errors on the use of simple past tense when they are asked to write past experiences. These errors are caused by several factors, for example, students' weaknesses in memorizing vocabulary, and their Indonesian language. Still many students are confused with the use of regular and irregular verbs of simple past regular and irregular verbs.

Based on the fact above, the writer is interested in researching and learning more about the students' errors in the uses of simple past tense in recount text, because recount relates to the past events and each student has an interesting past experience and unforgettable moment. Students' rich past experiences remain memorable, and students are encouraged to express them.

1.2 Statements of the problem

According to the background above, this study is conducted to answer the following research questions:

1. What types of verb errors are found in the use of the simple past tense in the recount compositions of the eighth grade students of Saint Joseph Junior High School Surabaya?
2. What are the possible causes of verb errors in the use of the simple past tense in recount texts?

1.3 The objectives of the study

Based on the problem statements above, this study is conducted:

1. To describe the types of verb errors found in the use of the simple past tense in recount text made by the eighth grade students of Saint Joseph Junior High School Surabaya.
2. To explain the possible causes of errors in the use of the simple past tense in recount texts.

1.4 Theoretical Framework

1.4.1 Errors and Mistakes

According to Brown “in order to analyze language errors in appropriate perspective, it is crucial to make a distinction between mistakes and errors, which are technically two very different phenomena. Mistakes refer to “a performance errors that is either a random guess or a slip in that it is failure to utilize a known system correctly” (p.217).

In a setting where people are learning a new language, they may “fail” to produce the target language or TL. In this process of learning the TL, the imperfection of the TL production may be recognized and, therefore, be corrected by the learners themselves.

Brown (2000) states an error “is a noticeable deviation from adult grammar of native speaker” (p. 217). That reveals a part of the learner’s competence in the target language.

The competence of the learners can be found out in both their speech and writing. When the learners speak or write, they do not really understand whether they are on the right track or not. The deviations made by the learners are problematic whether the deviations are mistakes or errors. For example, a learner does not really distinguish verbs and modals in producing English for example a student may say: “*John cans sing*” At a different occasion, however the same student may say: “*John can sing*”. This is called a mistake. However: “*John wills go*”, and “*John mays come*” are called errors because there is a pattern that systematically changes when the learner produces the target language. In this case, like there is a mistake from the past until now, the learner cannot realize that what he or she speaks or writes is an error (pp. 217-218).

James (1998) concludes that “an error cannot be self-corrected”, while “mistakes can be self-corrected” if the deviation is pointed out to the learner (p. 83). In reality learners do make errors, and these errors can be observed, analyzed, and classified.

1.4.2 Contrastive Analysis (CA)

Dulay, et al. (1982) maintain that “Contrastive Analysis (CA) took the position that a learner of a second language “interferes” with his or her acquisition of a second language, and that it therefore comprises the major obstacle to successful mastery of the new language” (p. 97).

Based on Dulay's statement, CA takes care of errors by comparing the learner's native language and target language. The CA also takes the role to find out the distinction of the structure in L1 and L2. The first language pattern can influence learner's second language production. In this comparison of the two languages the process is known as "transfer". There are two types of transfer: positive transfer and negative transfer.

1. Positive transfer

When the structure of the native language is alike or the same as the structure of the target language, it helps the gaining process. The example of positive transfer is the use of the Spanish plural markers *-s* and *-es* (e.g. *nina-s* and *mujer-es*; *girl-s* and *dress-es* in English (Dulay et al., 1982, p. 47). In other words, the learner did not find difficulty in producing the target of language.

2. Negative transfer

When the structure of the native language is different from the structure of the target language, learners can produce the TL wrongly. The first language may influence the learners when they produce the target language (Dulay et al., 1982, p. 47).

1.4.3 Error Analysis

According to James (1998) "Error Analysis (EA) is the process of determining the incidence, nature, causes and consequences of unsuccessful language" (as cited in Sampurno, 2007, p. 21).

Corder (1981) states that "error analysis has two functions". The first is a 'theoretical' and the second 'practical'. The theoretical aspect of errors analysis is part of the methodology of investigating the language learning process. The

practical aspect of error analysis is its function in guiding the remedial action we must take to correct and unsatisfactory state of affairs for learner or teacher (p. 45).

In the way of learning a second language, a learner will produce utterances which are ungrammatical or ill-formed, when judged by generally accepted rule of the language they are learning.

1.4.4 Sources of Errors

Richards (1974, p. 173) states errors are classified into two major kinds as: (a) interlanguage errors, (b) intralingual and developmental errors.

1.4.5 Causes of Errors

Richards (1974, pp. 173-178) found “there are several causes which are produced by learners.”

1.4.5.1 Interlanguage Errors.

Errors; are those made by second language (L2) learners as a result of their first language (L1) interference.

1.4.5.2 Intralingual and Developmental Errors.

Intralingual and developmental errors are those made by second language (L2) learners as a result of their limited knowledge of second language (L2) rules. These errors are classified into four kinds: 1. overgeneralization, 2. ignorance of rules restriction, 3. incomplete application of rules, 4. false concept hypothesized (Richards, 1974, pp. 174-178).

1.4.6 Recount Texts

According to Calkin (1989) in Herman (2009) “Writing is a communicative act; it is a way of sharing information, thoughts, experiences, or ideas, between ourselves and others. It means that we need to say to others about things related to ourselves, such as our lives and our experiences” (pp. 16-20). In relation to writing activity, both teachers and students have the same need to write.

The 2004 Curriculum and the KTSP 2006 Curriculum recommended that there are five different types of genre or text in writing for Junior High School: recount, narrative, procedure, descriptive, and report (BSNP, 2006).

A recount text is one of the text genres that the students learn. This text is written with the purpose or goal to inform the readers or people about something that happened in the past. It can be experiences and events. The text structure of a recount is orientation, events, and reorientation.

Orientation tells who was involved, what happened, where the events took place, and when it happened, for example: *Last night, I read an article about adolescence in a magazine.* ‘What happened’ refers to *she or he read an article about adolescence.* ‘Where’ refers to the event took place such as *in a magazine or another place.* ‘When it happened’ refers to the time: *she was fourteen years old.*

Events tell what happened and in what sequence, for example: *After I finished reading the article, I remembered my own adolescence. To divert my emotions I took many extra-curricular activities.* In this story, what happened is described in: *after she finished reading the article, she remembered her own adolescence. To diver her emotion, she took many extra-curricular activities, and*

the sequence that is the order of things or should be arranged is *after she finished reading the article, she remembered her own adolescence*. Thus, the act of reading happened before the act of remembering.

Reorientation consists of optional-closure of events or ending, for example: *I was able to control my emotions and to have a place where I could express my activity in positive way* (Wardiman, 2008).

The recount text in this study is in the form of controlled writing. The students have to supply the correct forms of the verbs.

1.5 The significance of the study

The writer hopes that the result of the study would benefit teachers in teaching grammar to their students:

1. The teachers know what types of errors are made by students on the use of the simple past tense in recount texts. The teachers have the ability to predict the errors that will probably be found in the students' works so the teachers will be able to solve their problems.
2. As a motivator, the teacher can motivate students and support them to study more about grammar especially the simple past tense verbs.

1.6 Limitation and scope

In this study, the writer limits the scope of the discussion about the errors on the use of the simple past tense made by the eighth grade students of Saint Joseph Junior High School Surabaya in a recount text. The writer took only the eighth-grade students of Junior High School because they had already been taught

the simple past tense. The writer took one kind of the genres especially recount text because a recount text is given in that grade as it is in the school syllabus.

1.7 Definition of key terms

In order to help the readers understand the key terms that are used in this study, the writer needs to explain them as follows:

1.7.1 Errors

Dulay et al. (1982) state that “Errors are the flawed side of learner speech or writing” (p. 138). Corder (1967) in Ellis (2009) states that “An error takes places when the deviation arises as a result of lack knowledge” (p. 48).

1.7.2 Simple Past Tense

Dart (1988:44) states that “the simple past tense is used for an events that occurred above at a definite point the past”, for example: *That United States declared its independence from Great Britain on July 4, 1776, The American Civil War began in 1960 and ended 1865.*

The past ‘be’ verb forms are “was and were, and other verbs are in regular and irregular forms, such as *pulled, swam.*

1.7.3 Recount Texts

A recount text is one of the text genres that inform readers or people about experiences or events that happened in the past, the structure of orientation, events, and reorientation (Wardiman, 2008).

1.8 Organization of the study

This study is divided into five chapters. Chapter One contains background of the study, the statement of the problem, the objectives of the study, theoretical framework, the significance of the study, limitation and scope,

definition of key terms and organization of the study. Chapter Two concerns a review of related literature and previous studies. Chapter Three, Research Method, consists of research design, the subject, the research instruments, the data source, the procedure of collecting data and analyzing the data. Chapter Four contains data finding and interpretation. Finally Chapter Five emphasizes the conclusion which summarizes the whole chapters, and proposes the suggestions.