ANALYSIS OF WRITING ERRORS IN RECOUNT TEXT BY XI MIPA 2 STUDENTS AT SMA NEGERI 2 KISARAN

Putri Lidiana Permata Sari[1], Alita Iras Kusumastuti[2], Adiati Pratiwi[3]
[123]FKIP, Universitas Asahan
alitatanjung44@gmail.com[1], hadiyantikisaran21@gmail.com[2]

ABSTRACT

This qualitative study investigates the errors made by eleventh-grade students of SMA Negeri 2 Kisaran in using simple past tense when writing recount texts. The analysis reveals a total of 17 errors, categorized into four types: overgeneralization (5 occurrences), ignorance of rules restriction (3 occurrences), incomplete application of rules (2 occurrences), and false concept hypothesis (7 occurrences). This study provides insights into the common errors made by students in using simple past tense in writing recount texts, which can inform teaching practices and materials development to improve student writing skills.
Key Words : Errors, Simple Past Tense, Recount Text Writing

ABSTRAK

Penelitian kualitatif ini menyelidiki kesalahan yang dibuat oleh siswa kelas sebelas SMA Negeri 2 Kisaran dalam menggunakan simple past tense ketika menulis teks recount. Hasil analisis menunjukkan total 17 kesalahan yang dikategorikan ke dalam empat jenis: overgeneralisasi (5 kejadian), ketidaktahuan akan batasan aturan (3 kejadian), penerapan aturan yang tidak lengkap (2 kejadian), dan hipotesis konsep yang salah (7 kejadian). Penelitian ini memberikan wawasan tentang kesalahan umum dalam penggunaan simple past tense dalam menulis teks naratif oleh par siswa, yang dapat menginformasikan praktik pengajaran dan pengembangan materi untuk meningkatkan keterampilan menulis siswa.

Kata Kunci: eror, recount text, menulis, simple past tense.

INTRODUCTION

According to Kreidler (2013), language is symbolic a system employed for communication. The symbols may be spoken, written, or signed with the hands. That means Language is a complex and organized system composed of various symbols that serve as tools for communication among people. These symbols are not limited to just one form; rather, they can take multiple modalities depending on the context and the communicators involved. Together, these diverse forms of symbolic representation enable humans to share ideas, emotions, and information, making language an essential and versatile medium for social interaction and cultural transmission. Writing is one of the way of people can be achieved to communicate.

Writing a text involves learners organizing their ideas from one paragraph to the next and ensuring those ideas are linked clearly and logically, making the text meaningful. However, while many students attempt to write texts, not all can do so using the appropriate structure

and characteristics of the given text type. Consequently, teachers are expected to support and direct students throughout the writing process.

Writing is an important part of language development, especially for second language learners of English. It is not only develops linguistic proficiency but also improves critical thinking and problem solving abilities(Lander & Brown, 1995). In some countries, English as a second language often makes learners errors in writing when they use simple past tense. It was shown that writing errors often arise from incorrect word choice, as well as issues with grammar and sentence structure. Many individuals reported struggling to write accurately and effectively because of challenges such as limited vocabulary, insufficient grammar knowledge, and other related difficulties. It is observed that writing tends to be the most challenging skill among the English language abilities, particularly when it comes to adhering to grammatical rules.

Writing skill can be only developed through participation learning activities and practices, as it is an unnatural skill that requires thoughtful effort to acquire. To have a proficiency to write, one have to practice from various types of alphabets to how to arrange words into sentences and sentences into good paragraphs based on what has been previously learned. Although some students have thoroughly studied grammar, such as the example of using tenses mentioned earlier, they still find it difficult to distinguish the usage of each type of tense. As a result, this chiefs them to create many errors. Many students commonly make mistakes in their learning. However, many teachers are not aware of this problem and do not prevent students from making the same errors by analysing the errors made by the learners themselves.

A recount text is a type of writing that describes experiences. It is a form of text that narrates past events, usually presented in the sequence in which they occurred. Common errors in student-written recount texts include lexical, syntactical, and discourse errors, with spelling and past tense verb usage being particularly problematic(Agustina, 2016).

In investigating learner errors, this study adopts the framework proposed by Richards (1974) in his seminal work, *A Non-Contrastive Approach to Error Analysis*. Richards challenges the traditional view that errors primarily stem from first language interference, emphasizing instead that many errors arise from the learner's internal development of the target language system. He classifies errors into four types—overgeneralization, ignorance of rule restrictions, incomplete application of rules, and false concepts hypothesized—highlighting the intralingual and developmental nature of many learner mistakes. This approach provides a more comprehensive understanding of error sources by focusing on learners' cognitive processes and language acquisition stages rather than solely on cross-linguistic transfer(Diez-Itza et al., 2025). Applying Richards' theory allows this research to analyse errors not just as failures but as natural steps in language learning, thereby offering deeper insights into learner difficulties and informing more effective pedagogical strategies. Examining the main categories of intralingual and developmental errors—such as over-generalization, lack of awareness of rule limitations, incomplete rule application, and the formation of incorrect systems or concepts—can prompt us to review our teaching materials for the underlying language learning assumptions they reflect.(Richard, 1971).

In Littlefair (2021), There are different types of written texts, such as narrative text, descriptive text, argumentative text, narrative text and report text, each of which has its own rules and functions. In this case, the narrative text is the main topic. Meanwhile, students often make grammatical errors in writing narrative texts(Kray et al., 2024). In addition, the researcher also wants to know what causes the grammatical errors that often occur. Thus, this can be an evaluation material for teachers to try to reduce the errors made by students in writing narrative texts.

From the phenomenon above, the researcher wants to do the research related to error analysis when writing in the simple past tense of recount texts.

ARGOPURO

RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a case study method with a qualitative approach. The focus was to identify specific types of grammatical errors as well as the causes of errors made by students in writing recount texts, using interview techniques as one of the data collection instruments. To gain a deeper understanding of the problem, the researcher conducted a series of data testing.

The entire study was carried out using the case study method, as described by Creswell and Poth (2018), who explain that a case study involves collecting detailed information from a group or individuals to obtain the necessary data. In this research, a qualitative approach was employed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation and its distinctive characteristics(Thomas et al., 2024). This was achieved through the use of document analysis and interview transcription, enabling a deeper exploration of the research questions(Pandey, 2025). Such a design allowed for a thorough description of the research process and facilitated the collection of detailed information about the group of students involved.

The research uses Richards' theory to classify learner errors into four types: overgeneralization, ignorance of rule restrictions, incomplete application of rules, and false concepts hypothesized. This framework focuses on errors arising from learners' internal language development rather than just first language interference. Learner data will be analyzed based on these categories to better understand the nature and causes of errors in this study(Setianingrum et al., 2025).

This study was conducted at SMA Negeri 2 Kisaran in the eleventh grade. The school was chosen as the research location because it has an attractive class, where students are expected to have better English skills, especially in writing, as well as a decent understanding of writing recount texts. The data collection method used was document review in the form of a test given to the eleventh-grade students. The researcher asked the students to write a recount text using the simple past tense on a piece of paper with a topic that had been assigned. After the assignments were collected, the researcher identified common errors made by the students in writing recount texts, particularly related to the use of the simple past tense. The data obtained were analyzed qualitatively based on English grammar and also calculated using a percentage formula:

$$P = \frac{F}{N} \; x \; 100\%$$

Description: P is for precentage
F is for frequency
N is for total number of student

RESEARCH FINDING

1. Kinds of error **students make with the simple past tense when writing recount texts.**

In the beginning, the researcher gave the students a test to write sentences in the simple past tense. In the second meeting, the researcher asked the students to write a recount text about their experiences, with the requirement that it be at least one paragraph long.

1) Overgeneralization

In the first meeting, students had been made simple past tense. There was student answer. The wrong answer was "she eat breakfast with her brother". It should be "she ate breakfast with her brother". In the second meeting, students made recount text. Here are examples students' worksheet who got error in overgeneralization.
Student 1

Last weekend, my friends and I visited my grandmother's house in the countryside. We *arrive* there in the afternoon, and the weather is very nice. We spent the first hour walking around the garden and pick some fruits. My grandmother cooked us a delicious lunch, and we enjoyed together in the backyard.

After lunch, we decided to play board games inside the house. We *laugh* the games a lot. Later, we went outside again and helped my grandmother water the plants. The flower are beautiful, and we took many photos. In the evening, we said goodbye and left her house. All of us feeling happy and grateful.

Student 2

When I was in elementary school, I *join* the school's basketball team. It was a new experience for me, and I *feel* nervous at first. Our coach *teach* us many basic technique, and we practiced every afternoon. Sometimes, I made mistakes during the practice, but my friends always supported me.

One day, we had our first match. The game began with our team scoring the first point. I passed the ball to my teammate and he made a great shot. We all very excited and cheer loudly. Even though we lost the game, I was proud of our effort and learn a lot from the experience.

The italic and underline words are errors in overgeneralization. *Arrive* should be *arrived*, *laugh s*hould be *laughed*, *join* should be *joined*, *feel* should be *felt*, *teach* should be *teached*. From this result, student did not manage to put the verb in the sentence of simple past tense.

2) Ignorance of Rules Distraction

In the beginning, student created sentence with simple past tense. One of them was "Citra is a nurse". The student wrote "Citra is a nurse". It should be "Citra was a nurse". In the last meeting, student created recount text. Here are examples of student worksheet that have error in ignorance of rules restriction.

Student 1

Last weekend, my friends and I visited my grandmother's house in the countryside. We arrive there in the afternoon, and the *weather is very nice*. We spent the first hour walking around the garden and pick some fruits. My grandmother cooked us a delicious lunch, and we enjoyed together in the backyard.

After lunch, we decided to play board games inside the house. We laugh the games a lot. Later, we went outside again and helped my grandmother water the plants. The flower are beautiful, and we took many photos. In the evening, we said goodbye and left her house. All of us feeling happy and grateful.

Student 2

When I was in elementary school, I join the school's basketball team. It was a new experience for me, and I feel nervous at first. Our coach teach us many basic technique, and we practiced every afternoon. Sometimes, I made mistakes during the practice, but my friends always supported me.

One day, we had our first match. The game began with our team scoring the first point. I passed the ball to my teammate and he made a great shot. We all very excited and cheer loudly. Even though we lost the game, I was proud of our effort and learn a lot from the experience.

The italic and underline words are errors in Ignorance of Rules Restriction. the *weather is very nice* should be the the *weather was very nice*. From this example, the first student cannot managed to put right the verb of be in the sentence of recount text.

3) Incomplete Application of Rules

Student 1

Last weekend, my friends and I visited my grandmother's house in the countryside. We arrive there in the afternoon, and the weather _is_ very nice. We spent the first hour walking around the garden and pick some fruits. My grandmother cooked us a delicious lunch, and we enjoyed together in the backyard.

After lunch, we decided to play board games inside the house. We laugh the games a lot. Later, we went outside again and helped my grandmother water the plants. The flower _are_ beautiful, and we took many photos. In the evening, we said goodbye and left her house. All of us feeling happy and grateful.

Student 2

When I was in elementary school, I join the school's basketball team. It was a new experience for me, and I feel nervous at first. Our coach teach us many basic technique, and we practiced every afternoon. Sometimes, I made mistakes during the practice, but my friends always supported me.

One day, we had our first match. The game began with our team scoring the first point. I passed the ball to my teammate and he made a great shot. We all very excited and cheer loudly. Even though we lost the game, I was proud of our effort and learn a lot from the experience.

Words that underlined and italic are the errors in Incomplete application of rules. The flower _are_ beautiful should be the flower _is_ beautiful. From this, student did not success to implement a complete structure in simple past tense.

4) False Concept Hypothesis

Student 1

Last weekend, my friends and I visited my grandmother's house in the countryside. We arrive there in the afternoon, and the weather is very nice. We spent the first hour walking around the garden and pick some fruits. My grandmother cooked us a delicious lunch, and we enjoyed together in the backyard.

After lunch, we decided to play board games inside the house. We laugh the games a lot. Later, we went outside again and helped my grandmother water the plants. The flower are beautiful, and we took many photos. In the evening, we said goodbye and left her house. _All of us feeling happy and grateful_.

Student 2

When I was in elementary school, I join the school's basketball team. It was a new experience for me, and I feel nervous at first. Our coach teach us many basic technique, and we practiced every afternoon. Sometimes, I made mistakes during the practice, but my friends always supported me.

One day, we had our first match. The game began with our team scoring the first point. I passed the ball to my teammate and he made a great shot. _We all very excited and cheer loudly_. Even though we lost the game, I was proud of our effort and learn a lot from the experience.

Errors in false concept hypothesis are the italic and underlined words. _All of us feeling happy and grateful_ should be _All of us are feeling happy and grateful_, _We all very excited and cheer loudly_ should be _We all are very excited and cheer loudly_. From this answer, student did not understand with singular and plural from sentence.

The precentage of students' error on simple past tense sentences:
a. Overgeneralization: $\frac{2}{20}$ x 100% = 10%
b. Ignorance of Rules Restriction : $\frac{0}{20}$ x 100% = 0%
c. Incomplete Application of Rules : $\frac{1}{20}$ x 100% = 5%
d. False Concept Hypothesis : $\frac{0}{20}$ x 100% = 0%
Students who can make the correct simple past tense sentence : 19
$\frac{19}{20}$ x 100% = 95%

The students' error in recount writing focused in simple past tense
a. Overgeneralization: $\frac{5}{17}$ x 100% = 29,41%
b. Ignorance of Rules Restriction : $\frac{3}{17}$ x 100% = 17,64%
c. Incomplete Application of Rules : $\frac{2}{17}$ x 100% = 11,76%
d. False Concept Hypothesis : $\frac{7}{17}$ x 100% = 41,18%
Students who can make the flawless simple past tense sentence : 11
$\frac{11}{20}$ x 100% = 55%

DISCUSSION

At this point, the researcher examines the findings from the result review to address the research questions outlined in the beginning. The research questions are as follows:
1. What type of error do students make in simple past tense in writing Recount Text At Eleventh Grade In SMA Negeri 2 Kisaran?

These types of error do students make in simple past tense based on the document review result of the writer in writing recount text:

The error in simple past tense sentences:
The precentage of students' error on simple past tense:
a. Overgeneralization: $\frac{2}{20}$ x 100% = 10%
b. Ignorance of Rules Restriction : $\frac{0}{20}$ x 100% = 0%
c. Incomplete Application of Rules : $\frac{1}{20}$ x 100% = 5%
d. False Concept Hypothesis : $\frac{0}{20}$ x 100% = 0%
Students that can make the right sentences using simple past tense : 19
$\frac{19}{20}$ x 100% = 95%

The students' error in recount writing focused in simple past tense:
a. Overgeneralization: $\frac{5}{17}$ x 100% = 29,41%
This error occurred because the teacher did not explain the simple past tense clearly to the students.
b. Ignorance of Rules Restriction : $\frac{3}{17}$ x 100% = 17,64%
This error is due to the fact that the teacher did not apply the simple past tense auxiliary correctly, so the students made errors.
c. Incomplete Application of Rules : $\frac{2}{17}$ x 100% = 11,76%
Students missed the complete structure of simple past tense, and the error category is omission of be.

ARGOPURO

d. False Concept Hypothesis : $\frac{7}{17}$ x 100% = 41,18%
Students had difficulty understanding the concept of singular and plural forms in sentences because the teacher did not cover this topic during the teaching and learning process.

Based on the worksheets, in document review, the researcher concluded that the type of errors do students mae in simple past tense in writing recount text at eleventh grade in SMA N 2 Kisaran were almost balance each other. Most of the eight grade students of SMA N 2 Kisaran cannot understand well about simple past tense especially use of it on recount text.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Two written tests were administered: the both tests. The initial results indicated that students still struggled to compose recount texts in the simple past tense, largely because the teacher had not provided a clear explanation of the material related to recount texts and simple past tense usage. In the first test, only 19 out of 20 students (95%) managed to construct correct sentences. After receiving an explanation about recount texts using the simple past tense, performance declined, with only 11 out of 20 students (55%) able to write a recount text in the simple past tense. This represents a 40% decrease in students' understanding of recount texts using the simple past tense. This suggests that although students may understand how to form simple past tense sentences, they still face difficulties when it comes to writing recount texts. This is partly due to a lack of adequate practice provided by teachers, resulting in students struggling to apply the simple past tense appropriately in recount texts.

Typical mistakes made by students include generalization errors and a lack of understanding of grammatical boundaries(YIĞ & AY, 2022). To help address these issues, students should be given examples of simple recount texts and then asked to create their own using the simple past tense. This approach indicates that effective teaching of the simple past tense along with recount writing practice can foster greater student engagement and success in learning to write(Al Habbash et al., 2021).

Based on these findings, it can be concluded that teaching the simple past tense is beneficial for developing students' ability to write recount texts. Therefore, the following recommendations are offered:

- Teachers should integrate instruction on the simple past tense when teaching recount text writing.
- Since making mistakes is natural, English teachers should support students in identifying and correcting those errors.
- If errors reveal that students do not understand specific rules, these areas should be revisited through focused remedial instruction in smaller groups.

REFERENCES

Agustina, T. (2016). Error Analysis in Writing Recount Text. *JoLLiET*, *3*(1), 81–89.

Al Habbash, M., Alsheikh, N., Liu, X., Al Mohammedi, N., Al Othali, S., & Ismail, S. A. (2021). A uae standardized test and ielts vis-à-vis international english standards. *International Journal of Instruction*, *14*(4), 373–390. https://doi.org/10.29333/iji.2021.14422a

Diez-Itza, E., Marrero-Aguiar, V., Auza, A., & Aguilar-Mediavilla, E. (2025). Editorial: New trends in typical and atypical language acquisition. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *16*. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2025.1573869

Khoirunisa, G., Suryanti, Y., & Mariam, C. (2021). Learners' Errors in Writing the Recount Text. *Pedagogia: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan*, *13*(1), 29–35. https://doi.org/10.55215/pedagogia.v13i1.3664

Kray, J., Sommerfeld, L., Borovsky, A., & Häuser, K. (2024). The role of prediction error in the

development of language learning and memory. *Child Development Perspectives*, *18*(4), 190–203. https://doi.org/10.1111/cdep.12515

Kreidler, C. W. (2013). Introducing English semantics, second edition. In *Introducing English Semantics, Second Edition*. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315886428

Lander, J. A., & Brown, H. D. (1995). Teaching by Principles: An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy. In *Language* (Vol. 71, Issue 4, p. 843). https://doi.org/10.2307/415773

Pandey, G. P. (2025). Designing and Conducting Qualitative Studies in ELT: Methods and Practices. *International Journal of Social Sciences and Management*, *12*(2), 114–122. https://doi.org/10.3126/ijssm.v12i2.77491

Pratchett, L. (1999). New technologies and the modernization of local government: An analysis of biases and constraints. In *Public Administration* (Vol. 77, Issue 4, pp. 731–751). https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9299.00177

Richard, J. (1971). *International center for mathematics*. *March*, 2–38. https://www.professorjackrichards.com/wp-content/uploads/1971-paper.pdf

Setianingrum, M. D., Ayu, I., Wedasuwari, M., Komang, I., & Putra, W. (2025). Analisis Kesalahan Berbahasa Lisan Siswa Dalam Pembelajaran Bahasa Indonesia Di Kelas Viii Smp Negeri 4 Mengwi Tahun Pelajaran 2024/2025. *Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Bahasa Dan Sastra Indonesia (JIPBSI)*, *10*(1), 15–28.

Thomas, N., Schneider, J., & Zhou, S. (2024). Qualitative research on language learning strategies and self-regulation. *AILA Review*, *37*(2), 177–187. https://doi.org/10.1075/aila.00059.tho

YIĞ, K. G., & AY, Z. (2022). An Analysis of the Qualities of the Problems Posed by the Students in a Seventh Grade Mathematics Course Assisted by the Problem Posing Approach. *International Journal of Contemporary Educational Research*, *8*(2), 13–30. https://doi.org/10.33200/ijcer.795390