

I. INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents background of the problem, formulations of the research, objectives of the research, uses of the research, scope of the research, and definition of terms clarified like the following.

1.1. Background

Generally language functions as a system of communication which consists of sound, word, and grammar. Language can represent the culture of a country especially for national language as unity of a country so that language is important to learn. The purpose of learning language related to cognitive, affective and psychomotor aspects. Then, there are four language skills, they are listening, speaking, reading and writing. The students who take a role as language learners should master those four language skills. In the realization one of the language skills that is created in all learning aspects including cognitive, affective, and psychomotor is writing skill.

In English as a foreign language (EFL), writing is often considered as a difficult language skill to master. Students who learn the writing skill need to be able to deal with some writing elements; they are content, form, grammar, style and mechanic. It starts from organizing ideas through employing vocabularies to form

a piece of writing by using grammatical rule. Then, it relates to manner whether it is formal or not and concerns with spelling and punctuation to built units of meaning.

Writing is a productive skill that should be mastered by the students of senior high schools as the language learners. Although there is not writing skill in English national examination, but there is clearly stated in standard of content that refer to KTSP. Writing also has to be elaborated in syllabus by employing the genres or types of text. It is in line with the research which deals with one of the genres, recount text. It is a kind of essay text that functions to inform and entertain the readers.

In writing, the students still have hesitancy about grammar. Grammar is the basic elements of an area of knowledge or skill, or it is a set of prescriptive notions about correct use of a language. Grammar is essentially about the systems and patterns we use to select and combine words (Murcia, 1995:4). By studying grammar we come to recognize the structure and regularity which is the foundation of language and we gain the tools to talk about the language system. Grammar must be learned by the students who want to learn about language. It will be more effective to produce utterance based on the basic structure which they know (Nichols, 1993: 78). Moreover in writing skill, the grammar is really needed to be learned, because the mistakes made in writing seem so clear when someone writes it and will be read by readers. Therefore, it is very important for the students to pay attention on grammar when they are writing.

English and Indonesian languages do not have similar structure in sentences. In Indonesian language, we do not use the form of verb but in English we have to use the form of the verb based on the tenses. There is no change of verb form in Indonesian but not in English. It is in accordance with Setiyadi (2003:22); he points out that English tends to be very difficult to be learnt in Indonesia because English has different grammar from Indonesian language which might be difficult for language learners to understand the system of target language.

English has many tenses (e.g. present tense, past tense, future tense, perfect tense, etc.) that should be mastered by students, but because of the differences between Indonesian language and English, it causes difficulties for Indonesian students in learning English tenses and using the tenses in writing. Murcia (1995: 4) says that teaching tense is one of the most difficult area of English grammar for non-native speaker.

In relation to the problem that connected with the teaching of English in Indonesia, Sulaiman (1970:74) states that one of the serious problems connected with the teaching of English in Indonesia is that most of the students have difficulty in mastering the structure of language. Structure deals with the rules for forming words and making sentences. In making a sentence, we need some elements. One of the sentence elements which play an important role is verb. From the fact, we know that the students still make errors in making sentences especially on how to use verb correctly in a sentence based on the tense being used. For example, they wrote “*She were sad when she left her village*” it should be

“She was sad when she left her village”, then “I gived hera beautiful flower” it should be “I gave her a beautiful flower”.

Sometimes students make grammatical errors. They often produce incorrect utterances. Dullay et.al. (1982: 138) said that errors are flawed side of learning speech or writing. They are those parts of conversation or composition that deviate from selected norm of mature language performance. However, making error is fundamentally human in learning process. Therefore, it is possible for students to make errorsunconsciously when they are writing. By analyzing the students’ errors, it willl give the important role in giving feedback for the English teachers and researchers in order to evaluate and develop the material in teaching learning process.

Table 1. The Errors Based on the Privious Research (Widiatmoko, Hanani, and Juwitasari)

No.	Types of Error	Percentage		
		Widiatmoko’s	Hanani’s	Juwitasari’s
1.	Omission	25.40%	32.9%	50.90%
2.	Addition	15.54%	15.6%	5.46%
3.	Misformation	50.31%	44.9%	35.46%
4.	Misordering	8.75%	6.6%	8.18%

The previous research done by Widiatmoko (2011), Hanani (2013) and Juwitasari (2013), showed that the students still made errors in the use of tenses. Based on the data analysis which has been shown by Widiatmoko, the total of students’

grammatical errors were 25.40% for omission, 15.54% for addition, 50.31% for misformation, and 8.75% for misordering. The results of the research done by Hanani were 32.9% for omission, 15.6% for addition, 44.9% for misformation, and 6.6% for misordering. Then, the results of the research that have done by Juwitasari were 50.90% for omission, 5.46% for addition, 35.46% for misformation, and 8.18% for misordering. The reason was that the students were not familiar with English structure such as the form of verb, because they did not find such rules in Indonesian. They used surface strategy taxonomy to analyze the grammatical errors. There are four types of errors were identified on a sentence level such as omission, addition, misformation and misordering.

This topic was chosen because many Indonesian students get problems in comprehending the simple past tense. For example, “my family and I visit Borobudur temple when I was in junior high school” the verb *visit* should be in the past verb *visited*, because the event happened in the past when the researcher was in junior high school. Indonesian and English are quite different both phonologically and grammatically. Besides that, Indonesian does not use tenses the way English does. When the researcher was doing PPL program and checked the students writing, grammatical errors also found in their writing. When the students were asked to write a paragraph, the errors in simple past tense were found in their writing. For example *yesterday I go to the market*. The word *go* should be replaced by *went* because the event happened in the past, so the verb should be placed in the past verb. And the other example is “*She gave me this book when I in elementary school*”, there is no auxiliary verb in this sentence. The

sentence is written in Indonesian way. Auxiliary verb should be used after word “I” because in the rule of English grammar, every sentence must use auxiliary verb or verb. So, the correct sentence is “*She gave me this book when I was in elementary school*”. Therefore, based on this fact the researcher was interested in examine the students’ grammatical errors in recount text writing to another school namely Senior High School 1 Pringsewu.

The students of the third grade Senior High School 1 Pringsewu in the academic year of 2014/2015 had many common errors of grammar when they were writing. For example, “*We was very happy at that time*”. The auxiliary verb on this sentence is wrong, it should be “*were*” because the subject is plural. Then, “*The teacher did not gave the example*”. There is double past marking on that sentence. The verb “*gave*” should be “*give*” because in the simple past tense sentence should not be any double past verbs. So, the correct sentence is “*The teacher did not give the example*”. The students have not mastered grammar well. Firstly, they are weak in tenses. They are confused how to use the base verb, past verb, and participle verb. In the context of this research, the tense that is used is simple past tense. Thirdly, they are confused in using auxiliary in past tense and followed by verb. Furthermore, despite of grammar, they are lack of vocabularies which are very crucial in conducting writing. They are inadequate in word usage and class.

This study is expectedly useful for students and teachers. It is expected that the English teachers give more practices to improve the English ability of the students. It is required for the students to improve their English grammar especially

in writing. Errors analysis can lead English teachers to learn the kinds, sources, and causes of the students' errors in writing especially in recount text. By knowing students grammatical errors, it can be a beneficial feedback for teaching learning process. In fact, the result of the research can be used for English teachers to improve their teaching technique in order to minimize the grammatical errors in writing in general, especially in recount text.

Considering the background above, the researcher is interested in investigating the use of simple past tense and in identifying the grammatical errors made by the students in composing simple past tense in students' recount text. This research covered the analysis of two categories and also compiled the percentages, in order to see which type of errors has the highest percentage. By this analysis, English teachers can identify the nature of errors mostly happen in students writing. It is hoped that there is improvement of students' ability in writing recount text. Therefore, the researcher entitles the research "Simple Past Tense Errors in Recount Text Made by Third Grade of Senior High School Students".

1.2. Formulations of the Problems

Based on the background of the problem above, the researcher states that there are two problems on analyzing students' errors in writing recount text:

1. What types of simple past tense errors are made by the students in writing recount text at the third grade of senior high school?

2. What are the percentages of errors made by the students in using simple past tense in writing recount text based on surface strategy taxonomy and communicative effect taxonomy?

1.3 Objectives

In relation to the research problems formulated above, the objectives of this research are:

1. To find out the types of errors made by the students in using simple past tense in writing recount text at the third grade of senior high school.
2. To find out the percentages of errors made by the students in using simple past tense in writing recount text.

1.4 Uses

After doing the research the researcher hopes that the result of the analysis will be useful contribution to educational research particularly in grammatical errors of using simple past tense in recount text. The researcher gives the input as follows:

1. Theoretically, the significances of this research are:
 - a. To verify the previous theory dealing with the theories in this research.
 - b. To be used as a reference for further research.
 - c. To enrich the theory about simple past tense errors in students writing recount text.

2. Practically, the significances of this research are:
 - a. To inform the English teachers about the grammatical errors made by senior high school students in using simple past tense in writing recount text.
 - b. To encourage senior high school students to learn structure more seriously in their learning.
 - c. To find out the students' grammatical errors in making recount text.

1.5 Scope

This research was conducted for students in third grade of senior high school. The researcher took only one class as the sample. This research focused on the use of simple past tense and its grammatical errors in students' made recount text. Moreover, the researcher investigated the use of simple past tense and its grammatical error in students' recount text by asking the students to write about recount text. The types of simple past tense were nominal sentence simple past tense and verbal sentence simple past tense. And the types of errors were classified based on the surface strategy taxonomy and communicative effect taxonomy. There were 4 types in surface strategy taxonomy; omission, addition, misformation, and misordering. Then, there were 2 types of errors in the communicative effect taxonomy; global errors and local errors.

1.6 Definition of Terms

In order to reflect the research items, there are some terms that were used by the researcher in making this research, to make it clear the researcher gives some definitions as follows:

- a. Writing is one of the language skill where the students are trained to be able to explore their thought into written form by paying attention to grammar, diction, vocabulary, mechanic, and organization (Linderman, 1983: 120).
- b. Text is a semantic unit that is realized in the form of word, clause, and sentence, or any meaningful stretch of language-oral or written form (Derewianka, 1992: 17).
- c. Recount text is a text which retells events or experiences in the past. Its purpose is either to inform or to entertain the audience. (Derewinka, 1992)
- d. Simple past tense is something that happens at a specific time in the past (Azar, 1989).
- e. An error is systematic and consistent deviance, which is the characteristic of the learners' linguistic system at a given stage of learning (Corder, 1976: 166).
- f. A grammatical error is categorized as being an error in either grammars, usage or mechanics and sometimes include subset of spelling errors. The errors were: run-on sentences, sentence fragments, incorrect subject-verb agreement, incorrect pronouns, confused homonyms, double negatives and incorrect capitalization (Hendrickson, 1982).
- g. Omission errors are characterized by the absence of an item that must appear in a well-form utterance (Dulay, et. at: 1982).

- h. Addition errors are characterized by the presence of an item which must not appear in a well-formed utterance (Dulay, et. at: 1982).
- i. Misformation errors are characterized by the use of the wrong form of themorpheme (Dulay, et. at: 1982).
- j. Misordering errors are characterized by the incorrect placement of amorpheme or group morpheme in an utterance (Dulay, et. at: 1982).
- k. Global errors are errors that affect overall sentence organization significantly hinder communication (Dulay, et. at: 1982).

Local error that affects single element or constituents in a sentence does not usually hinder communication significantly (Dulay, et. at: 1982).