

Students Errors of Using Suffix '-S', '-ES' in Writing Simple Present Tense

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ABSTRACT

This research aimed to determine and to describe the students' error of using suffix '-s', '-es' writing in simple present tense. This research was designed as form of qualitative research, particularly in writing simple present tense. The subject of this research is class VII that consists of 30 students. The data were collected using observation, tests, and interviews as the research instrument. The results showed that the student's comprehension in using suffix '-s', '-es' categorized as "good", with a total score of 47%. The recommendation of this research is the students can improve their skill about how to use the suffix '-s', and '-es' of simple present tense.

INTRODUCTION

In Indonesia, English is the language taught as a compulsory subject that must be learned in school to develop students' skills in science, technology, culture, and art. As the 1994 curriculum stated that "English is the first foreign language in Indonesia which is considered too important for science development, technology, culture and correction relation with other notions. To be able to communicate in English, students have to master basic language skills". They are listening, speaking, reading and writing. Heaton 1974:4 cited in Siti Maisyaroh (2019) stated that "Learning English has

two aspects those are skills and components Four major skills are listening, speaking, reading and writing. To be successful in mastering those skills, there are three components of English, those are grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation". From those components, "grammar is considered the most important as it serves as the foundation for more advanced language learning" (Cahyono & Widiati, 2011:87).

Grammar is an important thing, especially in the use of language processes. It is an essential part of both spoken and written language. According to Swan (1998: 19) cited in Khairunisa, A., Nadrun, 2018 stated "grammar is the rule that says how words are changed to show different meaning, and they combine into sentences". It means grammar is a way of forming different meanings of words which use to construct a sentence in writing. The other important thing about mastering grammar is to support other skills in English such as speaking and writing. In speaking skills, the students will utter sentence skills grammatically and semantically, while for writing, students have to write sentences the correctness. By learning English, especially grammar, students know how to make correct sentences. The learners have to be able to master them to get easier in using them in communication. However, many students still face difficulties and usual make errors in learning English as a foreign language because of the great differences between English and Indonesian language. In addition, learning about the second language is not same as learning about the first language (mother tongue). Sometimes, the learner of the second language will make error in producing spoken and written.

Errors are the features of the learners' utterances, which are different from those any native speakers, and the learners do not recognize their errors, so that they cannot correct their errors by themselves. When the errors recognized, it call error analysis. Error analysis is the study and analysis of the errors made by the second and foreign language learners. Besides the errors can be observed and analyzed, error also can divided into some parts. According to Richards, errors can classified to vocabulary (lexical error),

pronunciation (phonological error), grammar (syntactic error), misunderstanding of speaker's intention or meaning (interpretive error), production of intention or meaning (interpretive error), production of the wrong communicative effect e.g. through the faulty use of speech act or one the rule of speaking (pragmatic error).

English has some tenses. One of them is simple present. The simple present tense is usually used to tell habitual action. Aitken (1992:18) explains, the simple present tense is helpful to express actions which are always, repeatedly, or generally true, or actions occur at the moment of speaking (with no reference to past or future). The present tense of a verb is formed with the simple form of a verb for the first person, and third person plural subject except for third person singular subject; and the verb ends in -s, or -es, (Soemarto and Suharjito, 1994:27). The frequently used in the simple present tense include always, often, usually, every day, sometime, never, occasionally, seldom, and twice a week, etc. In addition, simple present tense is used to tell an ability to express an idea, opinion, feeling, or experience that somebody has heard in written form. It can begin from a simple piece of writing to a more advanced level.

There are many rules in grammar that cannot be ignored. They are articles, parts of speech, sentence pattern, tense, etc. Part of the grammar that is considered to be most difficult to learn for Indonesian students is tenses. Frank (1972:66) states that "simple present tense is used to express a habitual action with adverbs like usually, always, or often." The use of simple present tense often makes students confused with its complexity, especially for the seventh grade in junior high school. They usually have 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 Indonesian students do not consider that in English there are verbs formed in singular or plural. In Indonesian language, singular or plural forms do not affect the verb form.

Based on the research in the field, the researcher found that the students have difficulties in learning simple present tense. Especially student errors of using suffix *s*, and *es*. The use of simple present tense often makes students confused with its complexity, especially in junior high school where the researcher did the research. They look to have some problems in finding out the verb of simple present tense. It shows that Indonesian students do not consider that in English there are formed in singular or plural. In the Indonesian language, singular or plural forms do not affect the verb form.

This research is important to be done because the researcher wanted to know and got the data about the student's errors of using suffix *s* and *es*. Then the result of this research would be necessary for the researcher and the next researcher. In addition to information, the writer is the first researcher who did this research in this school. Lastly, this research has not been core searchers other research. For that reason, the researcher analyses the using suffix *s*, and *es*, in simple present tense and the difficulty distinguish them.

METHODS

The research design is descriptive. It is conducted by collecting data in natural classroom situation without altering the situation in any way. In this case, this study intends to reveal what errors appear most in the learners' descriptive writing. Secondly, qualitative research studies real-world behavior as it occurs in the natural setting as they are found. The research was conducted at seventh grade in junior high school. The data is collected by giving task to the students. This phase, the researcher studied the data obtained which were in the form of the test.

The test was to measure the comprehension of students in using affixation *s*, *es* of simple present tense. The test consists of 20 questions. The questions are about the simple present tense. Then, all students were given a question about the difficulties faced by them in using affixation *s*, *es* of simple present tense. The table below shows the criteria of every questions of the tests used

Table 1. Criteria used within the implemented test

No	Item number	total
Omission of suffix s	1,3,5,7,9,11,13,15,17,19	10
Omission of suffix es	2,4,6,8,10,12,14,16,18,20	10

The table 1 shows two criteria of the test. Those are omission of suffix -s, and es that every criteria has ten questions. The suffix omission -s questions are at item number 1,3,5,7,9,11,13,15,17,19. Then the suffix omission -es questions are at item number 2,4,6,8,10,12,14,16,18,20. The total of all questions from those criteria are 20 questions.

This data analysis was done in several steps. Those steps are identification of errors, classification of errors, statements of frequency of errors and description of errors in terms of their types. The first step in the process of the analysis was the identification of errors. Identifications of errors here refer to identification of any deviation in using grammatical structures found in students' writings. After identifying the errors, the total number of errors made by the students was recapitulated.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

There were many errors found from the 20 written products of the students. The errors found were analyzed using the surface strategy taxonomy proposed by Dulay et al. (1982). Thus, the errors were classified into errors of omission, errors of addition, errors of misformation, and errors of misordering. This research only focused on the analysis of errors in simple present tense, while the other errors, which were not included to simple present tense, were ignored. However, the whole data were not presented in this chapter and only described by some representative data. The data in this research were analyzed descriptively. In the analysis, the findings were presented in the types of error, the sample of sentences which

contain errors, the revised version of the sample sentences, and the frequency of the occurrence. Surface strategy taxonomy by Dulay et al. (1982) was used to analyze the errors of this research. Surface strategy taxonomy analyzed the change of the surface structures of the sentence. It analyzed the errors in which learners may omit, add, misform, or even misorder components of the sentence. Based on surface taxonomy strategy, errors were classified into omission error, addition error, misformation, and misordering. The result from the analysis showed that there were 85 errors in using the present tense in the 20 students' writing. There were 47,05% errors of omission; 4,70% errors of addition; 45,88% errors of misformation; and 2,35% errors of misordering.

Language refers to conveying ideas, opinions, thinking, and feeling to other people. People can communicate with others by using spoken and written language. English as a foreign language in Indonesia do not use for daily communication but it is learned in formal and informal education. Communication has a close relationship to the skills of listening, reading, speaking, and writing. Students can convey their ideas, opinions, thinking, and feeling effective, clearly, and efficiently by mastering tenses. Therefore, it is important to discuss the tenses understanding in using the English language. Tense refers to the time of an event or activity that happened in a sentence. Time refers to the present, past, and future. Generally, tense use specific verbs in sentences like "study-studied-studied, go-went gone, speak-spoke-spoken, and so on". In other words, tenses explain the time of speaking moment. So, the speaker, writer, or language users have to consider about time context of ideas, opinions, thinking, and feeling before using the verb or to be in a sentence or statement. Tense in verbs expresses time. It is referenced to the moment of speaking (Cowan, 2008). Getting more understanding of tenses, the first most basic thing that needs to be understood is parts of time. The English language has three kinds of time. They are present, past, and future. This paper will focus on the present tense. Present tense describes an event or activity which is happened at the time or to tell things in general and to explain the

repeated action or habitual. It is also used to express general facts. In addition, present tense refers to present action in the present time and it is not finished. The function of the simple present tense is to explain the present time (Huddleston & Pullum, 2005). Present tense is used to say thoughts, feelings, states, things staying the same, fact, thing that is true for a long time, repeated action, and for the future meaning of simple present (Eastwood, 1999). Besides that, simple present talk about actions that we can see as long-term or permanent (Brown & Brown, 2010). There are several uses of simple present tense. They are (Alexander, 1990): 1. Permanent truths Example: A human needs food Cat likes fish.

A. The Students Score Percentage

To count the score of every student, the researcher used this formula

$$S = \frac{Fx}{N} \times 100$$

S = Score

Fx = The sum of the correct answer

N = Total number of tests

Students' test scores using affixation s, es of the simple present tense as the follows table:

Table 2. The Recapitulation of Students' Scores

No	Students	Score	Mark	Rating Quality
1	R1	86	A	Excellent
2	R2	80	B	Good
3	R3	86	A	Excellent
4	R4	90	A	Excellent
5	R5	73	C	Fair
6	R6	90	A	Excellent
7	R7	75	C	Fair
8	R8	95	A	Excellent
9	R9	63	D	Poor
10	R10	66	C	Fair
11	R11	93	A	Excellent

12	R12	63	D	Poor
13	R13	95	A	Excellent
14	R14	95	A	Excellent
15	R15	65	D	Poor
16	R16	83	B	Good
17	R17	90	A	Excellent
18	R18	90	A	Excellent
19	R19	65	D	Poor
20	R20	86	A	Excellent
21	R21	80	B	Good
22	R22	90	A	Excellent
23	R23	80	B	Good
24	R24	93	A	Excellent
25	R25	63	D	Poor
26	R26	60	D	Poor
27	R27	83	B	Good
28	R28	80	B	Good
29	R29	95	A	Excellent

From table 2, it shows that there are 29 students who become the research subject. Further, some of them were able to achieve 'excellent' in which there are 14 students in total. While some others were able to achieve 'good' which were 6 students in total, and there were also 6 students who can achieve the category of 'poor'.

To count the mean score, the researcher used this formula:

$$m = \frac{FX}{N} N \times 100$$

Fx = Sum of the total score

N = Total Students Number

M = Mean score

$$\text{So, } m = \frac{2353}{29} \times 100 \quad m = 81\%$$

After analyzing the data, the researcher presented the result in the table. Then, the researcher classified them into 4 criteria. Those are:

1. Excellent : 86-100%
2. Good : 76-85%
3. Fair : 66-75%
4. Poor : 56-65%

After knowing the data and the criteria above, it showed that fourteen students got 'Excellent', six students got 'Good', three students got 'Fair', and six students got 'Poor'. The mean score of all students is about 81%. It showed that the students' comprehension in using affixation s, es and ies in the bare infinitive of the simple present tense is good. We can see the criteria above, it can be categorized as "good". The cause of this class can be categorized as "good" will be explain in the following sub chapter.

B. Students' Comprehension of Using Affixation S, and Es of the Simple Present Tense

The tables below show the average of students correct answer and suffix omission. The table 1 shows the average of students answer correctly in using -s. The table 2 shows the average of students answer correctly in using -es. The table 3 shows the average of suffix omission -s, the table 4 shows the average of suffix omission -es and the table 5 shows the average of suffix omission -ies. The average of correct answer and the suffix omission percentage -s, -es, were calculated through the following formula:

$$P = \frac{F}{N \times n} \times 100\%$$

P = Percentage

F = Frequency of suffix omission

N = Number of cases (total individual)

n = Number of item test

Table 3. The Average of Correct Answer of Affixation ‘-S’

No.	Simple present tense	Item number	Correct answer frequency	Correct answer percentage
	Students answer by affixation ‘-s’ correctly	1	15	52%
		3	12	14%
		5	14	10%
		7	12	6%
		9	12	5%
		11	10	3%
		13	14	4%
		15	14	3%
		17	12	2%
		19	12	2%
	Total	10	127	100%
	Average			43,79%

The Table 3 shows the data of students by answering affixation -s frequency and correct answer percentage as a result item in using the affixation -s of the simple present tense. From 10 item numbers, the writer found 127 frequency of affixation -s . So, the total of suffix -s percentage obtained from the 10 item numbers with the average is 43,79%.

Table 4. The Average of Correct Answer of Affixation “-ES”

No.	Simple present tense	Item number	Correct answer frequency	Correct answer percentage
	Students answer by affixation ‘-es’ correctly	2	20	28%
		4	18	11%
		6	24	9%
		8	20	6%
		10	18	4%
		12	17	3%
		14	20	4%
		16	20	3%
		18	18	2%
		20	20	2%
	Total	10	195	100%
	Average			67,24%

The Table 4 shows the data of students by answering affixation -s frequency and correct answer percentage as a result item in using the affixation -s of the simple present tense. From 10 item numbers, the writer found 195 frequency of affixation -es . So, the total of suffix -es percentage obtained from the 10 item numbers with the average is 67,24%.

C. The Difficulties Faced by Students Using Affixation ‘-S’, ‘-ES’ of the Simple Present Tense

From the data that have been collected, it can be seen in appendix 2 shows the reasons for the students’ difficulty in using affixation s, es of the simple present tense. From the data above, there are seven who said that they are still confused and felt difficult in using affixation s, es of the simple present tense. They feel difficult to distinguish which affixation should be used in the verb. The researcher notice that the most students commit errors

when they answering questions in the simple present, the most of their errors occur when they try to choose the affixation in the bare infinitive of the simple present tense. This is the highest difficulty that is faced by the students. They do not realize the rules how to use the affixation s, es, of the simple present tense.

As a result, they write incorrect answer. It should be easy to understand that they are English education students who have learned this material in junior high school. There are four students said that the difficulty in using affixation because of they can't differentiate the singular and plural subject. It makes them confused about which affixation should be used based on the subject. On the other hand they are not familiar with the verb and the kind of subject. It makes them difficult to distinguish the affixation. Even, three students did not know how to use the affixation s, es of simple present tense.

CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion of the findings presents in the previous chapter, the errors found seem to result from interlingual and intralingual interference. Therefore, the teachers are suggested to develop better method in teaching grammar in order to reduce the number of errors and fossilization that done by the students. Besides, they should integrate the grammar in other skill teaching and learning process. They are suggested to pay more attention to the particular structures that often create difficulties for the students by selecting contextual exercise on the structures, which are often omitted, added, misformed, and misordered. In addition, the teachers should give clearer explanation about structure differences between Indonesian and English.

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