



**AN ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS' ERRORS
ON SIMPLE PAST TENSE**

**A Case of the Tenth Grade Students of SMA Negeri 1 Pekalongan
in the Academic Year 2006/2007**

A FINAL PROJECT

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
of Sarjana Pendidikan in the English Department

by :

**Dewi Puji Anggriani
2201403568**

**ENGLISH DEPARTMENT
LANGUAGE AND ARTS FACULTY
SEMARANG STATE UNIVERSITY
2007**

APPROVAL

This final project has been approved by Board of Examiners of English Department of FBS, UNNES since August 29, 2007.

Board of Examiners

1. Chairperson

Drs. Nur Rochmat,

NIP.

2. Secretary

Dra. Dwi Anggani L.B., M.Pd

NIP. 131813665

3. First Examiners

Drs. H. Warsono, M.A.

NIP. 130350484

4. Second Examiners/ Second Advisor

Drs. L. Elyas Nugraha, M.A.

NIP.

5. Third Examiners/ First Advisor

Drs. Suprpto, M.Hum.

NIP. 131125925

Approved by

The Dean of Language and Arts Faculty, UNNES

Prof. Dr. Rustono, M.Hum

NIP. 131281222

MOTTO AND DEDICATION

MOTTO

“I may not be the best, but I will do my best”

“Loyalty is a diamond that makes a woman respectable and elegant”

“When there is a will, there is a way”

DEDICATION

This is dedicated with love and gratitude to:

- My beloved parents
Thanks for all, mom and dad. Your love is so amazing. Don't stop praying me...
- My love husband
Thanks for your love and your support.
- My sister
Be a good girl, yeah!
- My best friends Angie, Ratih, and Aoi.
- All my friends at the English department E' 2003 parallel.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost the writer would like to thank Allah SWT the almighty for the blessing and inspiration leading to the completion of this final project and finishing her study.

The writer would like to extend her deepest gratitude to Drs. Suprpto, M. Hum. as the first adviser and Drs. L. Elyas Nugraha, M.A. as the second adviser who have patiently guided her, untiringly encouraged her and gave her priceless advice and suggestions without which this hard work would not have been completed.

Furthermore, the writer would like to extend her deepest appreciation to Drs. Ahmad Sofwan, Ph.D. the chairman of the English Department. The writer would like to thank her lecturers in the English Department who have been teaching and guiding her patiently since the writer's first year of study in this department in 2003.

The writer also would like to give her sincere thanks to her beloved parents and teachers in SMA Negeri 1 Pekalongan and all her friends whom she can not mention their names one by one for their best time and support.

The writer realizes that the paper is far being perfect. The weaknesses and shortcomings appear because of the writer's limited ability. For that reason, she also hopes some suggestions or criticism from anyone. Only in this way does this paper become a better work.

Finally, the writer hopes that this paper will be beneficial and useful for anyone who is interested in reading this final project.

Semarang, August 2007

The Writer

ABSTRACT

The title of this project is *An Analysis of Students' Errors on Simple Past Tense (A case of the Tenth Grade Students of SMA Negeri 1 Pekalongan in the Academic Year 2006/007)*. The objectives of this study are to find out the dominant errors on simple past tense, and to identify the factors that may cause the students' errors.

The writer chooses this topic because many Indonesian students get problems in comprehending the simple past tense. Indonesian and English are quite different both phonologically and grammatically. Besides that, Indonesian does not use tenses the way English does.

The population of this study was the 10th grade students of SMA Negeri 1 Pekalongan. The total number of the population was 320 students. To take the sample, the writer used a random sampling technique. The whole population was grouped into 8 classes; those were classes X.1, X.2, X.3, X.4, X.5, X.6, X.7, and X.8. The writer wrote each of the students' names on a piece of paper. Then the writer rolled the papers and put them into a slot of a tin can. After being well mixed, the papers were dropped out of the slot one by one. The writer took 12.5% of the population (320 students), so there were 40 students taken as the sample of the study.

In gathering the data, the writer employed a test method. In preparing the test, the writer classified the test items into 6 categories: Affirmative statement, negative statement, and yes-no questions, question words question, adverb of time, and past habit. The instrument of the study was developed in the form of completion items and conversion items consisting of 110 items. A try out test was conducted. Then, the writer measured the validity, reliability, discriminating power and level of difficulty. From the analysis, it was found that there were 100 valid items which were taken as the final version to be used as the instrument of the study. After administering the test to the students, the writer analyzed the result by using statistical analysis and non-statistical analysis.

The test result of statistical analysis shows the percentages of errors that were made by the students on simple past tense. In this category there were 713 errors, which were equal to 45.97 percent. The test result using statistical analysis was calculated to find out the dominant errors. The data showed each type of errors as follows: Affirmative statement (153 errors = 6%); Negative statement (10 errors = 6%); Yes-no questions (85 errors = 5.6%); Question word (145 errors = 7.25 %); Adverb of time (54 errors = 5.4%); Past habit (156 errors = 15.6%). The test result using non statistical analyzed to find out the causes or sources of the errors. The result of the analysis reveals that there were 713 errors (45.97%) because interlingual errors were 296 errors (35.24%) and intralingual errors were 417 errors (64.76%).

The writer shows that past habit type of errors constituted the largest number of errors and so they are the dominant errors. In this category there were 156 errors, which were equal to 15.6 percent. This error occurred because the students found them confusing since the verb in English change according to the time relation. In Indonesian there are no changes of the verb caused by the tenses.

In conclusion the students tended to have problems related to simple past tense and they were likely to have problems in forming the verb into past tense.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page of Title	i
Approval.....	ii
Motto and Dedication.....	iii
Acknowledgments	iv
Abstract	v
Table of Contents	vi
List of Appendices	ix
CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION	
1.1 Background of the Study.....	1
1.2 Reasons for Choosing the Topic	3
1.3 Statements of Problem	4
1.4 Objectives of the study	4
1.5 Significances of the study	4
1.6 Methods of Research	5
1.7 Outline of the Final Project	5
CHAPTER II REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE	
2.1 Definition of Grammar.....	7
2.2 The Importance of Learning Grammar	8
2.3 Simple Past Tense	8
2.3.1 Form of Simple Past Tense.....	9
2.3.1.1 Regular Verbs	10

2.3.1.2 Irregular Verbs	11
2.3.2 The Use of Simple Past Tense	11
2.3.2.1 Action Completed in the Past at a Definite Time	11
2.3.2.2 The Simple past tense is used for action whose time is not given but which occupied a period now terminated, or occupied at a moment in a period now terminated.....	12
2.3.2.3 “Used to” Indicating Past Habit.....	13
2.3.3 The Time Signal of Simple Past Tense	14
2.4 Error and Mistake.....	14
2.5 Sources of Errors.....	15
2.5.1 Language Transfer or Interlingual Error.....	16
2.5.2 Intralingual interference	16
2.6 Error Analysis	18
CHAPTER III METHOD OF RESEARCH	
3.1 Method of Research	19
3.2 Population and Sampling	19
3.3 Technique of Sampling	20
3.4 Instrument	20
3.4.1 Construction of the Instrument	21
3.4.2 Try Out Test.....	23
3.4.2.1 Validity of Test	23
3.4.2.1.1 The Computations of the Validity of Test.....	23
3.4.2.2 Reliability of the Test.....	24

3.4.2.2.1 The Computations of the Reliability of Test	24
3.4.2.3 Item Analysis	25
3.4.2.3.1 Difficulty Level	25
3.4.2.3.2 Discriminating Power	26
 CHAPTER IV DATA INTERPRETATION	
4.1 Data Interpretation	28
4.2 Non-statistical Analysis	31
4.2.1 Interlingual Interferences.....	31
4.2.2 Intralingual Interferences.....	32
4.2.2.1 Overgeneralization	32
4.2.2.2 Ignorance of the Rule Restriction	33
 CHAPTER V CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS	
5.1 Conclusions	34
5.2 Suggestions	35
BIBLIOGRAPHY	37
APPENDICES	38

LIST OF APPENDICES

- Appendix
1. Analysis of Try Out
 2. Try Out Test
 3. Analysis of Real Test
 4. Real Test
 5. The Answer of Real Test
 6. Names List of Real Test

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Men, as social being, need companions to obtain their necessities, and in order to provide themselves with the necessities of life, they have to cooperate with others using language as a means of communication to convey their meaning to express their ideas. It is for the purpose of this cooperation that members of a social group need a means of communication, which is called “language”. With language man can express his ideas and feelings to other people.

In certain circumstances, one sometimes not only needs to communicate with others in his community but also with others outside his community. Therefore, he learns more than one language. After he acquires his first language, he learns another language. Indonesian students, for instance, before they go to school, they have already acquired a language that is their first language. Since Indonesian has culture diversity, the students’ first language may be different from one another and therefore at school they learn and speak the national language, Indonesian language. Besides Indonesian language, they also learn English as the first foreign language since English is the international language that plays an important rule in the international world.

Realizing the importance of English in the international world, people with different nationalities whose languages are not English are encouraged to learn it. For instance, Indonesia, as a developing country also realizes that English, as an

international language, is needed as a means to achieve development. English is used by Indonesians for the special function of international communication and trade. It is used to communicate with other countries as a tool for absorbing and developing science and technology, art as well as culture for the benefit of national development. Therefore, English becomes one of the compulsory subjects which is introduced into the school curriculum and has been taught both at junior high school and senior high school.

English has its own system or rules. It is not surprising that many Indonesian students find a lot of difficulties in learning English. It is due to the fact that English and Indonesian are quite different both phonologically and grammatically. It is understandable that it is difficult for Indonesian students to learn it. The students get problems in comprehending the simple past tense because of the differences between their mother tongue (Indonesian) and their target language (English). Indonesian does not use tenses the way English does. The verb form in sentences in Indonesian does not change when it is spoken to refer to present, past, or future time.

English grammarians differentiate tense-system, according to the way term tense is interpreted. Marcella Frank (1972: 52) states:

The description of verb-forms differs according to the way the term tense is interpreted. The most common interpretation of tenses is a semantic one; each tense roughly indicates a kind of time. On the basis of this interpretation by meaning, some grammarians present a three system, present, past and future. Most grammarians however give a six tense-system, which include three plus three perfect tense; the present perfect, past perfect and future perfect.

From the statement above, the writer concludes that learning English

tenses is very important because the learners should apply the correct tenses in the sentences. If the learners do not know the tenses, they may make some errors in writing or even speaking.

A student says to their friends about his experience with his family:

I go to Department Store with my family last night.

He has known something about simple past tense but he makes such an error. He understands about adverb of time in simple past tense. After he knows the whole rule of simple past tense, he can make the correct sentence. At the first stage, students are usually wholly dependent on the teachers for what they learn. Therefore, teachers should explain the patterns of simple past tense, which are taught to the students as clearly as possible in order to prevent the students from making mistakes. Many teachers ignore the importance of repeating the correct pattern they taught for the entire class. As a result many students continue making structural errors.

1.2 Reasons for Choosing the Topic

The writer has chosen the topic “*An Analysis of Students’ Errors of Simple past Tense*” for the following reasons:

1. The simple past tense, as stated in the 2004 curriculum called Competence Based Curriculum, is taught to the tenth year students.
2. The sentence patterns of Indonesian and English are different. Indonesia does not have tenses but English does.

1.3 Statements of the Problems

The writer limits the discussion of the final project by presenting the following problems:

1. What percentages of errors of simple past tense do the tenth grade students of SMA Negeri 1 Pekalongan?
2. What are the dominant errors that the students make?
3. What are the factors that may cause the students' errors?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study can be stated as follows:

1. To know the percentages of errors on simple past tense made by the students of SMA Negeri 1 Pekalongan.
2. To find out the dominant errors on simple past tense.
3. To identify the factors that may cause the students' errors.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The result of this research will hopefully be useful for:

1. English teachers

They can anticipate errors that students likely make and by knowing the sources of errors, they can develop teaching materials dealing with simple past tense to minimize the students' errors in simple past tense.

2. English learners

They are aware of the errors they likely make and be more careful in using

simple past tense.

1.6 Method of Research

In order to get empirical data required in her study, the writer applied two main methods, which support each other; they are library research and field research.

1. Library research

In the library activity, the writer looked for some reference books, which are related to the subject matter. The writer tried to get important information and ideas to support her ideas for this research.

2. Field research

The writer conducted a field research at SMA Negeri 1 Pekalongan a senior high school in her hometown. In getting the data, the writer administered the objective test. Then, the result was analyzed and computed in order to find out the dominant errors.

1.7 Outline of the Final Project

The discussion of this project is divided into five chapters. Chapter I is the introduction, which discusses the general background of the study, reasons for choosing the topic, statement of the problems, objectives of the study, significance of the study, method of research and outline of the final project.

Chapter II is the review of related literature, which discusses the definition of grammar, the importance of learning grammar, simple past tense, error and

mistake, error analysis.

Chapter III is the method of investigation, which discusses population, sample and sampling technique, the instrument, try out of the instrument, validity, reliability, item analysis, the difficulty level and the discriminating power.

Chapter IV is analysis of the data, which discusses the result of the test, statistical analysis, and non statistical analysis.

Chapter V is the conclusion of the investigation and the suggestion for the improvement of teaching learning.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Definition of Grammar

The word grammar has many definitions given by different experts. There is no universally accepted definition of it. Different experts define the term grammar differently.

Hornby (1987:375) says, “Grammar is study or science of rules for the combination of words into sentences (syntax), and the forms of words (morphology)”. So, we can say that it is grammar, which will guide us to combine words into sentences and to form words. In other words, whenever we study grammar we will study syntax and morphology.

“Grammar may mean an analytical and terminological study of sentences” (Robert 1958:132). Thus, when people learn the grammar, they will learn the parts of speech, their names, and their definitions. They will learn such terms as: phrase, clause, interrogative sentence, participle, etc. They will also learn how to identify those categories in sentences. They will also learn how to diagram sentences or to parse them.

The writer concludes that since people know the grammar of their language, they also know how their language is used; and they knew how to construct sentences or utterances in accepted forms. Finally, grammar is the rule of language that helps us to understand and to produce sentences or utterances.

2.2 The Importance of Learning Grammar

Having known the definition of grammar, it is not hard for us to understand why grammar is useful and important. Without knowing the grammar of the language, one cannot be said to have learned the language, without learning it, it seems impossible to learn a language, for it is the grammar that tells him how to use the language.

Grammar is very important since it makes the speakers of a language understand each other. If a language had no grammar, its speakers would never be able to communicate with each other, and thus, they would never know each other. The utterances or sentences spoken and written by a speaker would have different ideas or meanings to his hearers or readers or even they would not be understood.

Knowing the importance of grammar, teachers of senior high school should teach grammar to their students. In short, grammar is still needed at senior high school in order that the students understand English.

2.3 Simple Past Tense

English has two time systems; those are present tense and past tense such as “she studies every night” and “she studied last night”. In the first sentence, the action is a repeated occurrence, expressed in the present tense, while in the second sentence it is a past action, and is expressed in the past tense. In this writing however, the writer wants to talk about the simple past tense.

2.3.1 Form of the Simple Past Tense

Leech (1989: 340) states that when we use a past tense main verb and no auxiliary verb, the form of the verb is called past tense.

Form:

Affirmative Statement

S + V II + O

Yes-No Question

Did + S + V I + ... ?

Negative Statement

S + did not + V I + O + ...

Information Question

Question Word	Function Verb	Subject	Verb	Object/ Complement	Place	Time
a. Where			was		Jane	Last night
b. Who			went		to the Hospital	
c. What	Did	They	see?			
d. Why	Did	She	Do	It?		
e. When	Did	You	Study?			

Form the explanation above, we see that the form of verb in simple past

tense in English language includes: regular verbs and irregular verbs.

2.3.1.1 Regular Verb

Thomson and Martinet (1986:161) state that the form of regular verb can be divided as follows:

- a. Adding “ed” to the infinitive forms the simple past tense in regular verbs.

For examples:

To clean becomes cleaned

To work becomes worked

- b. Verbs ending “e” add “d” only.

For examples:

To close becomes closed

To love becomes loved

- c. Spelling notes

- The rule about doubling the final consonant when adding “ing” applies also when adding “ed”.

For examples:

To admit becomes admitted

To stop becomes stopped

- Verbs ending “y” following “a” consonant change the “y” into “i” before adding “ed”.

For examples:

To carry becomes carried

To try becomes tried

2.3.1.2 Irregular Verbs

In British usage, many verbs ending in -n, or -I add -t rather than -ed for the past tense and for the past participle -learnt, burnt, spelt, spilt, dwelt (Frank, 1972:73).

A small number of verbs, among them some of the most commonly used verbs in the language, have forms that differ from the regular forms. It is called irregular form. The simple past form of each irregular verb must be learnt and memorized because of the form of verb infinitive. In this study, the writer limited the regular verbs only.

2.3.2 The Use of Simple Past Tense

Thomson and Martinet (1986:162) state that the simple past tense is the tense normally used for:

2.3.2.1 Action completed in the past at a definite time

It is therefore used:

1. For a past action when the time is given.

For examples:

- I met him yesterday.
- Gus Dur became the President of the Republic Indonesia in 2000

2. When the time is asked about.

For examples:

- When did you see President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono?
- When did she find my wallet?

3. When the action clearly took place at a definite time even though this time is not mentioned.

For examples:

- The bus was fifteen minutes late.
- How did you get your present job?

2.3.2.2 The Simple past tense is used for action whose time is not given but which occupied a period now terminated, or occupied at a moment in a period now terminated.

1. The simple-past indicates that an activity *began and ended* at situation particular time in the past.

For examples:

- I *walked* to school yesterday.
- He *lived* in Paris for ten years, but now he is living in Rome.

2. If a sentence contains *when* and has the simple past in both clauses, the action in the “*when clause*” happens first.

For examples:

- I *stood* under a tree *when* it *began* to rain.
(First, the rain began. Second, I stood under a tree.)
- *When* she *heard* a strange noise, she *got up* to investigate.

3. The simple *past* tense is also used for a past habit.

For examples:

- The students never drank wine.

- I always sent a letter to my mother.
4. The simple *past* tense is used in conditional sentences.

For examples:

- If it rained, I would carry an umbrella.
- She would invite me if she had a party.

2.3.2.3 “Used to” Indicating Past Habit.

“Used to” is the past tense of a defective verb, which has not present tense. “Used to” is followed by bare infinitive.

1. “Used to” is used to express a discontinued habit or past situations, which contrast with the present.

For examples:

- Erna *used to put on* silk scarf, now she puts on cotton scarf.
 - Hening *used to hate* Musthofa, but she quite likes him now.
2. “Used to” is used to express a pass routine or pattern. “Used to” here is replaceable by would (but “would” can not replace “used to” for a discontinue habit).

For examples:

- Gunawan and Dini were a young married couple. Every morning Gunawan *used to say* “Assalaamu Alaikum” to her and set off for work. Dini *used to stand* at the door and wave good-bye. In the evening she *used to welcome* him home and tell about her day.
- If we used “would” we have:

Every morning Gunawan *would say* “Assalaamu Alaikum” to her and setoff for work. Dini *would stand* at the door and say good-bye. (Thomson and Martinet, 1980:151)

2.3.3 The Time Signal of Simple Past Tense

In English language, the hearer can know easily when the speaker does the activity by seeing verb form he used in his speech. But it is better for us to know time signals that are usually applied in simple past tense.

- a. Yesterday (yesterday morning, yesterday afternoon, etc.)
- b. Last (last week, last night, etc.)
- c. Ago (a few minute ago, a week ago, a month ago, etc.)
- d. In (in 1978, in 2005, etc.)
- e. Before (the day before yesterday)
- f. Other (the other day, the other year, the other week, etc.)
- g. When (when I was a girl, when he was a boy, etc.)
- h. On (on Sunday morning, on Sunday evening, etc.)

2.4 Error and Mistake

Before making error analysis, it is better for English teacher to know the distinction between errors and mistakes. Brown (1980: 165) states that error is a noticeable deviation from the adult grammar of a native speaker, reflecting the interlanguage competence of learner. Mistakes are not the results of a deficiency in competence but the result of some sort of breakdown or imperfection in the

process of producing speech. Native speakers are normally capable of recognizing and correction mistakes (Brown 1980: 165).

2.5 Sources of Errors

There are several sources of errors in the acquisition of English as a second language. Those are what may be called interlingual errors, which are errors caused by the interference of the learner's mother tongue.

According to Richards (1971), as quoted by Ellis (1994:58), the source of errors can be classified into:

- a. Interference errors occur as a result of 'the use of elements from one language while speaking another'.
- b. Intralingual errors 'reflect the general characteristics of rule learning such as faulty generalization, incomplete application of rules and failure to learn conditions under which rules apply'.
- c. Developmental errors occur when the learner attempts to build up hypotheses about the target language on the basis of limited experience.

Furthermore, he subdivides the intralingual errors as follows:

1. Overgeneralization errors arise when the learner creates a deviant structure on the basis of other structures in the target language. It generally involves the creation of one deviant structures (for example, "He can sings" where English allows "He can sing" and "He sings")
2. Ignorance of rule restrictions involves the application of rules to contexts where they do not apply. An example is 'he made me to rest' through

extension of the pattern found with the majority of verbs that take infinitive complements (for example: 'He asked/ wanted/ invited me to go').

3. Incomplete application of rules involves a failure to fully develop a structure. Thus learners of L2 English have been observed to use declarative word order in questions (for example, 'You like to sing?') in place of interrogative word order (for example, 'Do you like to sing?')
4. False concepts hypothesized arise when the learner does not fully comprehend a distinction in the target language. For example the use of 'was' as a marker of past tense in 'one day, it was happened'.

2.5.1 Language Transfer or Interlingual Error

Errors that occur in using a foreign language are caused by interference of the mother tongue.

In other words, errors, which are caused by the interference coming from the learners' mother tongue, are partly from the knowledge of differences between the first and the target language.

Indonesian students find the sentences confusing since the verbs in English change according to the time relation. This kind of verb changes often causes them to make errors.

2.5.2 Intralingual interference

Intralingual interference or intralingual error is the negative transfer of items within the target language or incorrect generalization of rules within the

target language (Brown, 1980: 173).

Those intralingual errors reflect the overgeneralization and ignorance of rule restrictions.

a. Overgeneralization

Overgeneralization happens when the learners create, false structure on the basis of his experience of other structure in the target language.

Overgeneralization can roughly be defined as the use of previously available strategies in new situation. In second language learning some strategies will be helpful in organizing the facts about the target language, although they may turn out to be misleading and inapplicable due to superficial similarities. Thus, overgeneralization occurs when a deviant structure is treated on the basis of experience of other structure in the target language.

b. Ignorance of Rule Restrictions

In this type of error, the learner fails to observe the restrictions of existing structure. Some rules restriction errors may be accounted for in terms of analogy and may result from the rule learning of rules. In this case, the learner mostly tends to generalize syntactic rules, she or he has previously learned, ignoring the new rules.

“Ignorance of rule restrictions is a failure to observe the restrictions of existing structure. It means that the application of rules to contexts where they do not apply” (Richards, 1974; 48).

2.6 Error Analysis

People who learn a foreign language will encounter a lot of problems with its structure, vocabulary, sound system and even culture. Even in any language teaching or learning situation especially in teaching English as a foreign language, problems or errors are unavoidably present.

Learners find difficulties in learning the target language since the rules of the target language are different from those of their mother tongue.

It is important to discuss error analysis for teaching English as a foreign language. English teachers should know error analysis because this analysis becomes the key to understanding the process of foreign language acquisition. They should know how the target language is learned or acquired, what strategy or procedure the learners employ in order to master the target language.

Error analysis will show the teachers some problems confronting the students. It may present further information to the teacher about the process of acquiring a foreign language made by the students.

CHAPTER III

METHOD OF RESEARCH

3.1 Method of Research

In order to get data required in this study, the writer divides into three subsections. They are population and sampling, technique of sampling, and then instrument. Instrument consists of construction of the instrument and try out. While try out itself is divided again into validity of test, reliability of the test, and item analysis. Knowing validity and reliability of test, those are the computations of the validity and reliability of the test. For item analysis, the writer uses two ways to get the valid results; those are difficulty level and discriminating power.

3.2 Population and Sampling

This study was held at SMA N 1 Pekalongan. There were 8 classes of the tenth year students consisting of 40 students each of the classes. There were 320 students of the tenth year. The students study English four sessions in a week in class lasting 45 minutes each session.

The population of this research was the tenth grade of SMA Negeri I Pekalongan in the academic year 2006/2007. On the average, each class has 40 students. All of them are given the same material in teaching and learning process. Studying a population more effectively, the writer selected sample from the population. Kerlinger (1965: 118) states that a sample is a part of a population that is supposed to represent the characteristic of the population.

The whole population was grouped into classes, those were 8 classes. The writer took 40 students (12.5%). This was in accordance with Arikunto (1996: 120) that states, "...For population more than 100 subjects; the researchers can take about 10-15% or 20-25% or more out of the population".

3.3 Technique of Sampling

The process of taking the sample from the population is crucial in a research. Ideally a sample is taken randomly to avoid having a biased sample in the sense that no member of the population has more chances of being selected as the sample than any other members.

Random sampling is a method of drawing a portion (sample) of a population or universe so that each member of the population has an equal chance of being selected as the sample. The writer used random sampling technique. Random sampling was easy to carry out and it did not need to follow difficult procedures.

There were 8 classes of the tenth year. Each class had 40 students. First of all, the writer wrote each of the students' names on a piece of paper. Then the writer rolled the papers and put them into a slot of a tin can. After being well mixed, the papers were dropped out of the slot until 40 papers were obtained. This would become the sample of the research.

3.4 Instrument

In general, there are two methods of collecting data, using a test or a non-test. In this study, the writer uses the first method to collect the data. The

instrument influences the data obtained and the result of the research. Because this research was intended to analyze the students' errors on simple past tense, the writer used a structure test as the instrument for collecting data. The test consisted of 60 completion items and 40 conversion items.

The writer classified and analyzed the test items into 6 categories: Affirmative statement, negative statement, yes-no question, question words questions, adverb of time, and past habit. The instrument of the study was developed in the form of completion items and conversion items consisting of 110 items. A try out test was conducted. From the analysis, it was found that there were 100 valid items taken as the final version to be used as the instrument of the study.

The writer used completion and conversion type for collecting data because completion items and conversion items are much easier to prepare than multiple choice and they require a certain amount of composition on the part of the students so that the writer found out the real errors made by the students.

3.4.1 Construction of the Instrument

The writer did not use a multiple choice test because the writer really wanted to know how well the students could understand about simple past tense.

To construct the test items, the writer first observed how simple past tense exercises were arranged in grammar book. She found out that simple past tense exercises in grammar books involved affirmative statement, negative statement, interrogative, question word question, and past habit. After knowing the aspects in

simple past tense, she observed simple past tense exercises in the textbooks and workbooks used by the students. The writer constructed the instrument based on the result of the observation from the grammar books, students' textbooks and workbook. The proportion of tenses in the instrument was obtained by counting the frequency of occurrence in the students' textbook and workbook.

Test Outline

Coverage	Proportion		Part of items				Number of the Items
	%	No	A	B	C	D	
Affirmative Statement	25	25	15	10	-	-	A = 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55 B = 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10
Negative Statement	20	20	10	-	10	-	A = 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35 B = - C = 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10
Yes – No Question	15	15	15	-	-	-	A = 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60
Question Words	20	20	-	-	-	20	A = - B = - C = - D = 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20
Adverb of time	10	10	10	-	-	-	A = 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45
Past Habit	10	10	10	-	-	-	A = 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50
TOTAL	100%	100	60	10	10	20	

3.4.2 Try Out test

Before the structure test was used as an instrument to collect data, it had been tried out to the tenth grade. There were 40 students in the class, in the first semester. The try out was carried out on December *8th* 2006 in SMA Negeri 1 Pekalongan.

On the previous day before doing the try-out, the students were asked to study simple past tense at home in order to be prepared to do the test the following day. After the test was finished, the writer made an item analysis to choose the items, which met the criteria of the good test items for the actual test.

3.4.2.1 Validity of Test

Brown (1988: 101) states that validity is defined as the degree to which a test measures what it claims to be measuring. Harris (1969: 19) also states that validity is usually distinguished into three kinds: face validity, content validity, and empirical validity or statistical validity.

Empirical validity or statistical validity refers to the fact that the test scores have a high correlation to some outside criterion such as they get at the end of the course. Since the study deals with statistical analysis, the writer used the last validity.

3.4.2.1.1 The Computations of the Validity of Test

To know the empirical validity of the test, the writer applies Pearson Product Moment formula. The formula is:

$$r_{xy} = \frac{N\Sigma XY - \Sigma X \Sigma Y}{\sqrt{\{N\Sigma X^2 - (\Sigma X)^2\}\{N\Sigma Y^2 - (\Sigma Y)^2\}}}$$

where,

X : the right odd number,

Y : the right even numbers,

r_{xy} : correlation coefficient between X and Y, and

N : ...

3.4.2.2 Reliability of the Test

Reliability is a major consideration in evaluating the psychometric characteristics of a test or scale. Reliability of the test shows the stability of the test scores when the test is used. The test cannot measure anything well unless it measures consistently. The test is said to be reliable if its scores remain relatively stable from one administration to another. In other words, the test should not be elastic in their measurements; that is if students take a test at the beginning of a course and again at the end, any improvement in his score should be the result of difference in his skill and not of inaccuracies in the test.

Based on the statement above, the writer carried out a try out test to 40 students of the tenth grade students of SMA Negeri 1 Pekalongan in academic year of 2006/2007 to get the reliability of the test item,

3.4.2.2.1 The Computations of the Reliability of Test

In this study, the writer used the formula KR-20 to know the reliability of test. The formula is as follows:

$$r_{xy} = \left[\frac{n}{n-1} \right] \left[\frac{S^2 \sum pq}{S^2} \right]$$

where,

r_{xy} : test reliability totally.

p : proportion of subjects that can answer the items correctly.

q : proportion of subjects that answer the items wrongly,

$\sum pq$: number of the items in the test,

n : number of the items in the test, and

S : standard deviation of the test (Arikunto, 1996: 180).

3.4.2.3 Item Analysis

Item analysis was aimed at finding out the difficulty level and discriminating power. Further discussion of difficulty level and discriminating power will be presented.

3.4.2.3.1 Difficulty Level

In line with the purpose of this investigation, the writer applied the procedure of calculating the difficulty of items as recommended by Arikunto (1993: 214 - 215) as follows:

- a. Result of the try out test was ranked from low-score to high-score.
- b. The writer grouped the students into two groups, upper and lower groups of students.

The formula of index of difficulty is as follows:

$$P = \frac{B}{JS}$$

Where,

P : index of difficulty,

B : number of students that can answer the items correctly, and

JS : number of students who answer that item.

To know the level of difficulty of items, the writer consulted score P that was gained from computations. The classification of difficulty level is as follows:

Items with $1.00 \leq P < 0.30$ is difficult

Items with $0.30 \leq P < 0.70$ is sufficient

Items with $0.70 \leq P < 1.00$ is easy. (Arikunto, 1993:212)

3.4.2.3.2 Discriminating Power

Harris (1969:105) states that discriminating power is a criterion in the test item selection to determine how well each item discriminates between high and low level examinees, for each item in a test should help to separate the proficient subjects from those who lack the tested skills or learning.

The formula of discriminating power is as follows:

$$D = PA - PB,$$

Where,

$$PA = \frac{BA}{JA} \quad ; \quad PB = \frac{BB}{JB}$$

PA : proportion of upper group who answer the item correctly

PB : proportion of lower group who answer the item correctly

JA : number of upper group students

JB : number of lower group students

BA : number of upper group students who answer the item correctly

BB : number of lower group students who answer the item correctly

D : index of discrimination. (Arikunto, 1993: 216-217)

To know the level of discrimination power of the items, the writer consulted score D that was gained from the computation. The discrimination power classification is as follows:

$0.00 \leq D \leq 0.20$ = bad

$0.20 \leq D \leq 0.40$ = satisfactory

$0.40 \leq D \leq 0.70$ = good

$0.70 \leq D \leq 1.00$ = excellent (Arikunto, 1993: 221)

CHAPTER IV

DATA INTERPRETATION

4.1 The Result of the Test

After collecting the data, the writer began to analyze the data according to the result of the test. To measure the percentage of errors, the writer used the percentage descriptive analysis as the other researchers used in their thesis. The formula of the percentage descriptive analysis goes like:

$$x = \frac{\sum E}{\sum T} \times 100\%$$

where:

- x : the percentage of incorrect answers,
- $\sum E$: various kinds of incorrect answers,
- $\sum T$: test items.

The next step was to carry out an error analysis in order to find out the dominant errors that often occurred. In this analysis the writer used the “Preselected Category Approach” favored by Etherton (1977) as adopted by Norrish (1983) in which the statistical computation is based on Gulo’s formula:

$$pi = \frac{fi}{n} \times 100\%$$

Where:

- pi : the proportion of frequency of occurrence of errors,
- fi : absolute frequency of a partial type of errors of a level,
- n : the total number of possible errors of the level.

Related to simple past tense, there are 6 levels to analyze:

1. Affirmative statement;
2. Negative statement;
3. Yes-no questions;
4. Question words question;
5. Adverb of time;
6. Past habit.

The next step was to compute the proportion of frequency of occurrence of errors as a whole, using the following formula:

$$PI = \frac{FI}{N} \times 100\%$$

where:

- PI : the proportion of frequency of occurrence of errors as a whole,
 FI : absolute frequency of type of error of all the levels,
 N : the total number of possible errors of all the levels.

The final step was to identify the degree of dominance of particular errors. Any error whose (pi-PI) is plus (+) is considered dominant. On the other hand, if the (pi-PI) is zero or minus (-), it is said to be less dominant. After the calculation, in descending order, the most dominant error through the least dominant one can be arranged as follows:

1. Affirmative statement;
2. Negative statement;
3. Yes-no questions;
4. Question words;

5. Adverb of time;
6. Past habit.

The following table (see next page) is that of the dominant errors explained above:

- The first column is number of the level on simple past tense.
- The second column is the sum of item for each predicted errors.
- The third column (n) is the total number of possible errors of the level and it derives from the sum of the items for each level time the total number of test items (100).
- The fourth column (fi) is the absolute frequency of a partial type of errors of the level.
- The fifth column (pi %) is derived from the absolute frequency of a partial type of errors of a level divided by the total number of possible errors of the level times 100%.
- The last column is (pi-PI). PI is derived from the absolute frequency of types of errors of all the levels divided by the total number of possible errors of all the levels times 100%.

The determination of dominant errors explained above is shown in the table 1 as follows:

Table 1
The Result of the Determination of Dominants Errors

No. Of Categories	Items	(n)	Erros		(pi – PI)
			fi	pi %	
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
1	25	2500	153	6.12	- 0.98
2	20	2000	120	6	- 1.1
3	15	1500	85	5.6	- 1.5
4	10	1000	145	7.25	0.15
5	10	1000	54	5.4	- 1.7
6	20	2000	156	15.6	8.5
Total	100	10,000	713	45.97 %	

After the statistical analysis, non-statistical one was then conducted. The latter will be discussed in the following section.

4.2 Non-statistical Analysis

The non-statistical analysis was done based on the interpretation of the statistical one. The main purpose of doing non-statistical analysis was to trace the sources or causes of the dominant errors based on the data presented above, namely the real errors made by the students. Having found the errors dominantly made by the students, the writer then, classified these errors into categories of error based on interlingual and intralingual interferences.

4.2.1 Interlingual Interferences

There were 296 errors due to interlingual interference occurred in using simple past tense. Especially, it occurred in the use of tense or verb form that

shows time. For example, the writer took number 5 as an example:

I ... (find) the key to my car under this table this morning.

The correct answer is *found*. The result of the test shows that there were only 30 students out of 40 students who gave the right answer. There were 10 students who gave the wrong ones. Therefore, the total number of students who made errors was nearly 25 percent.

This error occurred because the students found the above sentence confusing since the verb in English change according to the time relation. This kind of verb change caused them to make errors. In Indonesian there are no changes of the verb caused by the tenses. Whether the activity is about the present completed action or the present habit, the verb form remains unchanged. It has a concept of time relation concerning state one activity. Time relation is never indicated by tense but by words function as time indicator.

4.2.2 Intralingual Interferences

Errors can also be caused by intralingual influence. In this case, the writer found the two causes of it, namely, overgeneralization and ignorance of rule restriction. There were 417 errors because of intralingual interference.

4.2.2.1 Overgeneralization

Those errors occur when the students overgeneralize the structures that they have learned. The students create deviant structures in the target language. For example, no 22 :

I ... (study) together with my friend when I studied at a university.

The correct answer is *used to study*. There were 16 who answered it correctly and 24 students who answered wrongly. The total number of errors caused by overgeneralization is 269.

4.2.2.2 Ignorance of the Rule Restriction

In this case, some students failed to differ the irregular verb and regular verb and what verb must be changed and used. For example, no 4 :

The boy ... (throw) the wrapping-plastic on the grass in front of them yesterday.

The correct answer is *threw*. There were 24 students who answered it correctly and 16 students who answer wrongly. The total number of errors because of ignorance of rule restriction is 148.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

5.1 Conclusions

This final project is a descriptive study that aims at analyzing errors of simple past tense made by the tenth year students of SMA Negeri I Pekalongan in the academic year of 2006/2007.

1. On the subject of simple past tense, the study proves that 713 errors were made. They can be grouped into six types of errors categories, arranged in descending order as follows:
 - a. Past habit (156 errors = 15.16%)
 - b. Questions words (145 errors = 7.25%)
 - c. Affirmative statement (153 errors = 6%)
 - d. Negative statement (120 errors = 6%)
 - e. Yes-no questions (85 errors = 5.6%)
 - f. Adverbs of time (54 errors = 5.4 %)

These types of errors occurred when the students responded to the English grammatical items with which they were unfamiliar. As the result, the students tried to create forms based on their own analogies, which were unacceptable in English.

2. With reference to the causes of errors the writer revealed that intralingual errors come in the first rank as the dominant cause of errors. In this category there were 417 errors, which were equal to 64.76 percent. Interlingual errors

were the second case of errors. In this category there were 296 errors, which were equal to 35.24 percent of all errors. After knowing the result, the writer concludes that:

- a. The students make some errors in writing or even speaking because the verb form in Indonesian sentences does not change when it is spoken in present, past, or future time.
- b. The students are likely to have problems in forming the verb into past tense, especially irregular verb case because most of the students do not quite memorize the irregular verbs.

5.2 Suggestions

Based on the result of the study, the writer will offer some suggestions to be considered to minimize students' errors in using simple past tense.

1. To help students to improve their proficiency, the writer suggests that teacher should give more explanation and practice of simple past tense.
2. Because the students have made a large number of errors in grammar, the writer suggests that the process of teaching English grammar in this level should be emphasized on the way to apply grammatical rules in sentences.
3. Students should memorize the irregular verb and apply them to the sentences to increase students' achievement.
4. Teacher should give a lot of practice about simple past tense by ordering a pair of students to come in front of the class and asking one of them to make a sentence in simple past tense.
5. In learning English, the students should encourage themselves to learn English

and they do not worry in making mistakes because the process of learning a new language needs more time to master it well.

6. The English teachers, especially the teachers of SMA Negeri 1 Pekalongan should choose methods which can be understood by their students for example: using stories or songs which are related to the material and give drill exercises about simple past tense.

The suggestions will hopefully be helpful to anticipate and minimize the students' errors dealing with simple past tense. In addition, since simple past tense involves some aspects like the subjects, affirmative statement, negative statement, yes-no questions, questions words, adverbs of time, past habit, the writer hopes this analysis will also be useful when teachers are explaining and discussing other topics in English grammar in order to minimize errors that students likely make.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Allen, W. Stannard. 1959. *Living English Structure: a Practice Book for Foreign Students*. London: Longman.
- Arikunto, Suharsimi. 1992. *Procedure Penelitian Suatu Pendekatan Praktik*. Jakarta: PT. Melton Putra.
- Gay, L.R. 1987. *Educational Research: Competence/or Analysis and Application*. Ohio: Merrill Publishing Company.
- Johnson, Donna M. 1970. *Approaches to Research in Second Language Learning*. New York: Longman.
- Krohn, R. 1986. *English Sentence Structure*. New York: The University of Michigan Press.
- Kerlinger, Carol.J. 1965. *Visual Aids for Teaching English to Speaker of Other Language*. Washington DC: Center for Applied Linguistics.
- Leech, Geoffrey, Benita Cruickshank and Roz Ivanic. 1989. *An A-2 of English Grammar and Usage*. London: Edward Arnold.
- Leech, Geoffrey, Margaret Deuchar and Robert Hoogenraad. 1982. *English Grammar for Today*. London: Macmillan Education Ltd.
- Ramelan. 1992. *Introduction to Linguistics Analysis*. Semarang: IKIP Semarang Press.
- Richards, Jack C. 1974. *Error Analysis: Perspectives on Second Language Acquisition*. London: Longman Group. Ltd.
- Thomson, A.J. and Martinet, A.V. 1990. *Oxford Pocket English Grammar*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Tinambunan, W. 1988. *Evaluation of Students Achievement*. Jakarta: Departement Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, Direktorat Jendral Pendidikan Tinggi.
- Wishon, George E and Burks, Julia M. 1980. *Let's Write English*. New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc.