Exploring Students' Understanding of
English Tenses through Writing

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ABSTRACT
English grammar and Indonesian grammar are differentin some ways. One of differences can be seen in constructing sentences based on referring time . The difference of grammatical structure between English and Indonesian which will be learnt especially is tenses for verbal sentences because in verbal sentences the rewill be shown the transformation of verb which does not occur in Indonesian structure. Therefore the researchers using Report Text material in spesifically about students' experience, then There are four students which will be observed by the researchers. the method- research using is the descriptive method or what is usually called the qualitative method.And qualitative data will submitted by observing a hand-writting from the students.

Keywords: English grammar, Grammatical structure, Indonesian grammar

ABSTRAK
Tata bahasa Inggris dan tata bahasa Indonesia berbeda dalam beberapa hal. Salah satu perbedaannya dapat dilihat pada penyusunan kalimat berdasarkan waktu rujukan. Perbedaan struktur gramatikal antara bahasa Inggris dan bahasa Indonesia yang akan dipelajari khususnya adalah tenses untuk kalimat verbal karena pada kalimat verbal akan diperlihatkan kembali perubahan kata kerja yang tidak terjadi pada struktur bahasa Indonesia. Oleh karena itu peneliti menggunakan materi Report Text khusus tentang pengalaman siswa, maka terdapat empat siswa yang akan diamati oleh peneliti. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah metode deskriptif atau yang biasa disebut dengan metode kualitatif. Dan data kualitatif akan disampaikan dengan mengamati tulisan tangan dari siswa.

Kata kunci: Tata Bahasa Inggris, Struktur Tata Bahasa, Tata Bahasa Indonesia

1.   INTRODUCTION

English grammar and Indonesian grammar are differentin some ways. One of differences can be seen in constructing sentences based on referring time . The difference of grammatical structure between English and Indonesian which will be learnt especially is tenses for verbal sentences because in verbal sentences the rewill be shown the transformation of verb which does not occur in Indonesian structure.The patterns in tenses are

considered as the complicate done by Indonesian students who do not have such kind of rule in their language, Indonesian. Tenses are the rule when we want to explain our activities and events on writting text.

A study reported that punctuation mistakes were the most common errors committed by participants, followed by spelling mistakes, preposition mistakes, article mistakes, incorrect verb tenses, and incorrect word forms (Khatter, 2019). Tenses are apart of grammar. As we are academic students, we must have full understanding about tenses, because if we do not do it, there is much miscommunication that we got. But students do not have full understanding about this problem. They assume tenses as a big burden. We can find term "Error Analysis" in language. They see errors could be very precious sources for teaching; the research that used the students' errors on writing as resources to teach students. In Linguistics, according to J.Richard et al., (2002), an error is the use of a word, speech actor grammatical items in such away it seems imperfect and significant of an incomplete learning.

Hendrickson (1987:357) mentioned that errors are 'signals' that indicate an actual learning process taking place and that the learner has not yet mastered or shown a well- structured competence in the target language. Learning tenses is important, because a sentence is constructed by using tenses. Even , nowadays in elementary level, the students are taught not merely about vocabulary, but also they are taught how to construct sentence correctly. Besides, tenses mastery has contribution in learning English skills; speaking, reading, listening and writing.

Some students are not able to use correct tenses when they use English either spoken or written. They seem reluctant to use English, because they are afraid of making mistake. They think that the structure of English is difficult to apply, because it is quietly different from Indonesian structure, included tenses. Although some consider tenses is complicated, but it must be learnt in order to use language appropriately and in the fact there are some students who have mastered tenses well. That becomes interesting to study how they learn tenses and what strategies they use. The students' errors are indicative both of the state of the learners' knowledge, and of the ways in which a second language is learned (Corder,1967).

The notion of errors is different from mistakes in the sense of how they happen. Mistakes are considered as non-systematic and they may be caused by memory lapses, physical states, such as tiredness and psychological conditions such as stronge motion. These phenomena do not reflect a defect in our knowledge of our own language. Errors, in the other hand, are deemed as systematic since the errors committed by the users of the language reveal their underlying knowledge or competence of the language. Errors committed by the students learning. This study can show what strategies make learning tenses easier.

By knowing the strategies, the learners can master tenses in easy and effective way,so that there will be many learners who master tenses well and use English. When the learners do not know what strategies in learning tenses, they will keep thinking that learning tenses is difficult. As the result, they do not have mind to learn tenses and there are still difficulties in using English.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In interaction and communication widely global in various aspects such as economic, social, cultural, political, and more. English is a necessity and a responsibility. Therefore, the Indonesian government itself concludes English as a compulsory subject for students, it starts from elementary school to high school. In fact, the student ability to speak English has become an individual competition among students. English competitions are often held to increase students' interest and enthusiasm in learning English. One of the purposes is students are able to compete at the global level and be able to survive among the global community.

There is a distinction between an error and a mistake, as argued in Brown (2000). According to this perspective, a mistake refers to a performance error where a known system is not utilized correctly. On the other hand, an error is a noticeable deviation from the grammar of a native speaker, reflecting the interlanguage competence of the learner. Corder (1967), James (1998), and Norrish (1983) highlight a criterion: mistakes can be self-corrected, while errors cannot. Errors are considered systematic, meaning they are likely to occur regularly, whereas mistakes are seen as inconsistent deviations.

To be able to use English well, students need to know at least the language components such as grammar to support them. English as a foreign language in Indonesia is taught from Elementary School as Local Content, and Junior High School to the University as a compulsory subject. In Learning English, there are four skills (writing, listening, reading, and speaking) and other complements, such as: grammar, pronunciation, and

vocabulary to support the development of those skills. Besides the four skills, grammar is one of the important components that suppose students learn.

Without grammar knowledge students will find many difficulties in building sentences and expressing their ideas for writing, reading, or communication activities. Grammar is one aspect of language taught to every language learner, if their grammar knowledge is good enough, they will be confident and fluent in speaking English with each other. In simple word, grammar is study about how to form word into sentence in grammatical order.

There is a statement about how important the grammar in language, teaching of grammar and the approach used in research and policy are subjects of disagreement. Hartwell (1985) discusses the various interpretations of the term 'grammar' and distinguishes between different perspectives. These include our innate ability to use language patterns to convey meaning, efforts to describe and analyze these patterns, considerations of language usage, traditional school grammars, and stylistic grammars. Lefstein's research demonstrates that elements of the traditional approach, which he defines as 'rule-based' grammar teaching, still persist in UK classrooms. This approach takes a prescriptive stance, treating grammatical conventions as rigid rules to be followed. It emphasizes the idea of 'proper English' and employs decontextualized exercises to assist students in learning and applying these rules (Lefstein, 2009, p. 380; Watson, 2013).

Moreover, grammar has some topics that must be learnt by the students. One of general topics in grammar is tenses. Tenses are usually defined as relating to the time of an action, event, or state. It is needed in forming sentence. The time of action is commonly expressed by the verb. Errors made by students are valuable resources for enhancing both teaching and learning processes. James strongly aligns with Corder's (1967) viewpoint, emphasizing the significance of errors in three key aspects. Firstly, errors inform teachers about the learners' progress towards their learning goals and highlight areas that require further attention. Secondly, errors provide researchers with evidence regarding language acquisition and the strategies employed by learners. Lastly, errors are indispensable for learners themselves, as they serve as a tool for learning and can be seen as a natural part of the language development process (Khatter, 2019)

Many senior high school students have some difficulties in learning English especially in learning tenses. They are confused because there are many forms of tenses that should be mastered by them. It is also supported by Maros et al (2007) states that there are two factors which influence the students for getting difficult in tenses usage. They are linguistics and non-linguistics factors. In linguistic factor, when the students must learn new language, the knowledge of their mother tongue will be interfered the new foreign language and will affect the process of internalizing the foreign language.

This research also can be used as consideration to be one of solution, to solve the problems. It is necessary for the researcher to help the teacher knows the problem of the students and their factor especially their strength and weakness in learning and using tenses. The teacher also can provide brush up treatment, improve better effectiveness teaching and learning process and they can help the students to correct their assignments. In the other hand, the students can provide analysis or contribute to the world of education in a small way for example their difficulties in learning tenses.

3.   METHOD

Based on the problems formulated in this study, the method used is the descriptive method or what is usually called the qualitative method. In this research, the forms used and considered appropriate are survey studies (Survey Studies), because in this study trying to describe the situation as it should.

The researcher conducted a mini research which was located at the Nur Azizi Tanjung Morawa Private High School. There were two participants recruited with two main categories, namely; two students with higher score of English subjects, and two students with lower score of English subjects. Those students were asked to write an Essay paragraph in English. After they wrote their essays, the researchers immediately examined where the errors in writing vocabulary and grammar arrangements were in their assignment sheets. The data collection technique used was observation and the students of Nur Azizi Tanjung Morawa Private High School were asked to write an essay telling about their experiences. Then, the researcher would pay attention to the use of grammar and examine what mistakes students had made in using English grammar.

4.   RESULTS

Result

After collecting, and analyzing the data, the result of the research showed that there are several errors and mistakes done by the students. In details, it is visually seen in table 1.

Table 1. Students' Errors

Partisipants	Kinds of Errors		
	Omission	**Misinformation**	**Overgeneralization**
Celvi Tania (higher)	1.I was serious in studying	1.When i was in ninth grade 2.Kept praying 3.It feels mixed,scared,happy,sad, confused,what it is 4.It's nice to be able to win the championship 5.I'm grateful 6.That's an achievement 7.I will never forget 8.I hope that there will be more olympic that will be held face to face	1.I was a little bit haunted by the curiousity to know the results
Puspita Sari (higher)	1.Last Saturday was a tiring day	1.First,i went shop at market in the morning 2.Then,i opened my aunts hijab shop 09.00am 3.After that 14.00pm i'm ready go to school riding motorcycle	1.I've been worked in this shop for 3 month 2.I remembered that there were home worked and some project is still had to do
Adelia (lower)	1.There were many other participants	1.There i and other participants	1.I stayed in one of the hotels for three days
Cindi Aulia (lower)	1.my reading teacher had each student read 2.But i never dad 3.I was not able to read engglish master fully at that time 4.I promised my self	1.I wanted to just get up and walk aut	1.Thank fully ther was no teasing from my class mates

After that the researcher makes a table where the table will serve as a benchmark or source to be studied. When the table contains the contents of the student worksheets being analyzed, it turns out that they still make a lot of mistakes in writing English. The researcher found that students who had fairly good English skills made many mistakes in using incorrect grammar and writing vocabulary. They made mistakes because they had quite a lot of explanations or details than their friends did on the assignment sheet. Omission is a type of error where they forget grammar rules, misinformation is a type of error where they forget to use a grammar structure in certain conditions while overgeneralization is a type of error where they put a word that was originally appropriate but added the same word.

All the students did a lot of misinformation from the type of errors in English because they still used a lot of grammatical structures that were not quite right, for example they forgot the timing to be used in a condition, and students also made the type of omission errors because students often forgot to put down the rules. grammar

Examples such as to be and the use of time rules in tenses and others. Whereas students who have poor English skills only make a few mistakes in writing or using grammar in English because they only write not too many essays on the sheet. Besides that, in English we have various kinds of errors which are divided into three parts, namely omission, misinformation and overgeneralization. When researchers have researched and collected data from students, researchers found many types of errors made by students.

Discussion

In this case, English grammar can be very challenging for EFL students because several reason, namely; complexity, irregularities, idiom expressions, pronunciation and spelling, and lack of consistency. EFL Learners must comprehend and accurately use a variety of verb tenses, sentence structures, and word order patterns. The difficulty may be increased by the large vocabulary and the freedom of word placement. The reality in this showed that students still learn English grammar conventionally. This research developed a study revealing that EFL/ESL students normally and naturally make errors during learning English (Sukasame et all, 2014; Khatter, 2019). Research based on empirical evidence has indicated that traditional first language (L1) grammar teaching, which often focuses on analyzing isolated sentences, does not yield any positive impact on writing skills. Several studies conducted by Andrews (2010), Andrews et al. (2006), Clark (2010), and Graham & Perin (2007) have collectively supported this finding.

5.   CONCLUSION.

The researcher found students who had fairly good English skills, made many mistakes in using grammar and incorrect writing vocabulary, while students who had poor English skills made only a few mistakes, in writing or using grammar, in in English because they only wrote not too many essays on the sheet. When researchers have researched and collected data from students, researchers found many types of mistakes made by students. Added the same words. Of the four students, they made a lot of misinformation about the type of error in English because they still used a lot of grammatical structures that were not quite right.

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