

Chapter II

The Use of Tenses in Students' Writing Composition

This chapter elaborates theoretical foundation regarding this research, "An Error Analysis of Using Tenses in Students' Writing Composition." As mentioned before, this research is aimed to find the kind of tenses errors in students' writing composition. Thus, in details, this chapter gives some explanations about the definition of the variables related to this research, such as: definition of error, tenses, and writing composition.

2.1 Writing

There are lots of definitions about writing from many language experts that indicate that writing is the ultimate achievement in learning foreign language, and the most complex to learn and to teach. (Troyka, 1987) defines that writing is a process , a series of activities that start by the moment of thinking about the subject and end when they complete all draft. Troyka also siad that writing is a way of communicating a message to a reader for a purpose.

Writing is one of the language skills which is important in our life. Through writing, we can inform others, carry out transactions, persuade, infuriate, and tell what we feel. Like (Jim A.P, 2010) explains that writing skill is complex and difficult to learn. Requiring mastery is not only grammatical patterns but also the rule of writing such as high degree of organization in the development of ideas and information and also choosing the appropriate

vocabularies and sentence structure to create a style which is appropriate to subject matter. (Tarigan, 2008) said that, “*Menulis adalah Suatu keterampilan berbahasa yang digunakan untuk berkomunikasi secara tidak langsung, tidak secara tatap muka dengan orang lain*”. It means that writing is a way to communicate without speak.

Writing is not easy as eat an ice cream, but it is also not difficult as make a plane, (Chaedar and Senny, 2005) said that they belief learn how to write is like how to learn kungfu, we have to learn from “*Sang Jagoan*” that proved by their published literary works. The writing skill becomes very important when it is thought in schools and universities especially in language departments. (Rima Andriani, 2015) said that writing is an important form of communication in everyday life. That is why having a suitable book for writing course is very important.

Hugo Hartig in (Tarigan, 2008) summarized that the objective of writing are:

1. Assignment purpose: The writer write only as an assignment.
2. Altruistic purpose: The writer want to make the reader happy, helping the reader to respect the feeling.
3. Persuasive purpose: The writer want to convince the reader about the statement.
4. Informational purpose: The writer want to tell the reader about information.
5. Self expressive purpose: The writer want to tell the reader about himself or herself.
6. Creative purpose: The writer want to tell the reader about the value of art.

7. Problem solving purpose: The writer want to solve the problem, the writer want to explain, explore, and analyze the ideas and the statements from his or her own work, therefore the reader will understand what the writer delivered.

Many experts explain different about writing, and (Fisher, 1997) mentioned that no one definition of writing can cover all the writing systems that exist and had ever existed. He also said that a complete writing system should fulfill all the following criteria such as:

- A complete writing must have its purpose communication.
- A complete writing must consist of artificial graphic marks on a durable or electronic surface.
- A complete writing must use marks that relate conventionally to articulate speech (the systematic arrangement of significant vocal sounds) or electronic programming such as a way that communication is achieved.

The purpose of writing is to understood. Therefore the virtue common to all the writing is clarity. Our style is revealed in our choice of words and in the order in which we arrange our own words. There are some elements that we must do or do not, in order to write well. According to (Burton, 1982) those elements are:

- Avoid long windedness
- Avoid popousness
- Avoid affectation

- Avoid slang, jargon, and cliché
- Avoid passive and impersonal constructions

To achieve writing well must try to:

- Be plain
- Be direct
- Use no more words than are necessary
- Search your vocabulary for the right word
- Use active verbs whenever you have a choice

Those are useful guides to write well, but they will come alive for us only we deliberately use them in the practice.

2.1.1 Kind of Writing

According to the Department of Education and Communities 2011, there are some of text types (different types of writing):

a. Factual Text

Factual texts inform, instruct or persuade by giving facts and information.

Table 2.1
Factual Text

Factual Text Type	Purpose	Feature	Example
Factual Description	describes a place or thing using facts	begins with an introductory statement systematically describes different aspects of the subject may end with a concluding statement	Landscape Descriptions

Factual Recount	retells events which have already happened in time order	begins with an background information who, when, where describes the series of events in time order may end with a personal comment	Historical report
Information Report	classifies, describes and gives factual information about people, animals, things or phenomena	begins with a general classification or definition lists a sequence of related information about the topic ends with a concluding comment	facts about whales
Procedure	gives instructions on how to make or do something	begins with a statement of goal (could be the title) lists materials needed in order of use gives a series of steps (instructions) in order each instruction begins with a verb in the present tense	Recipes instructions manual
Procedural Recount	tells how something was made or done in time order and with accuracy	begins with a statement of what was made or done tells what was made in order written in the past tense documentaries	Retelling a science experiment and its results
Explanation	Explains how or why something	starts by naming the topic describes items related	the life cycle of a butterfly

	happens	to the topic in their right order explains how the items relate to each other and to the topic may end with a concluding statement may include visual images, eg flowcharts and diagrams, which support what is written in words written in the present tense	how gears work labelled diagrams flowcharts
--	---------	---	---

b. Persuasive texts

factual text types that give a point of view. They are used to influence or persuade others.

Table 2.2
Persuasive Text

Persuasive Text Type	Purpose	Feature	Example
Exposition	gives reasons for a point of view to try and convince others of it	begins with a sentence that gives a point of view on a topic lists the arguments giving reasons and evidence for them uses convincing language eg 'will damage' instead of 'may damage'	a team's argument for a debate
Discussion	gives different	begins with some	Should cars be

	points of view in order to make an informed decision	background information leading to the issue lists arguments for and against, giving evidence for different points of view conclusion might sum up both sides or recommend one point of view	banned from the inner city?
--	--	---	-----------------------------

c. Literary Text

Table 2.3
Literary Text

Literary Text Type	Purpose	Feature	Example
Literary Description	Describes people, characters, places, events and things in an imaginative way	describes characteristic features of the subject, eg physical appearance, behaviour often forms part of other pieces of writing	description of a character or setting within a story
Literary Recount	retells events from novels, plays, films and personal experiences to entertain others	begins with background information, eg character, time, place describes the events in time order may end with a personal comment	A recount of a traditional story, eg The Gingerbread Man. A humorous and creatively interpreted recount

		about the characters or events	of an ordinary incident that actually took place.
Personal Response	gives a personal opinion on a novel, play or film, referring to parts within the passage	describes how you feel about a novel, film, book or play lists what did and did not appeal to you may comment on some of the features of the writing	What did you like about that artwork and why? Describe why you do or do not like this story/poem.
Review	summarises, analyses and assesses the appeal of a novel, play or film, to a broader audience	describes how features (eg characters, plot, language features, humour etc) may or may not appeal	commentary on a film, play, book etc
Narrative	tells a story using a series of events	the scene is set in a time and place and characters are introduced usually has a problem that is addressed may contain a message for the reader	picture books, cartoons, mystery, fantasy, adventure, science fiction, historical fiction, fairy tales, myths, legends, fables, plays

2.1.2 Writing Process

In writing there are some processes, as mentioned by (McGinley, 1992) that writing is best seen as a recursive process, it means that we write effectively by rewriting and revising at each stage of the composing process by 'going back' and thinking again and then moving forward.

According to (Troyka, 1987) there are some stages in the writing process they are:

- **Planning:** gather ideas and think about focus.
- **Shaping:** consider the ways to organize your material.
- **Drafting:** to write ideas in the sentences and paragraphs.
- **Revising:** to evaluate the draft and rewrite it by adding, cutting, replacing, moving, and often totally re-creating material.
- **Editing:** to check the technical correctness of your grammar, spelling, punctuation, and mechanics.
- **Proofreading:** to read the final copy for typing errors or handwriting legibility.

Most people would agree in principle with the good writing, after all the readers, when they read they want the material to be significant, clear, unified, economical, and adequately developed, and they expect the correct usage of grammar and spelling. Many students however do not seem to believe that their instructors really want them to write clearly and economically and to say something honest and direct.

Instead, they think the instructor expect them to produce polished writing on scholarly topics and major issues, using an abstract and high level vocabulary and a complex and elegant style. That is not the major point about writing ability, that just makes the students affraid to write, the writing ability is achieved when the student produce an English essay, with the correct grammar, punctuation, preposition, and article, and read itself to evaluate or revise it again to make the writing become a good writing, the writing that significant, clarity, unity, adequately developed, economical, and acceptable grammar.

2.2 Tenses

Most people who learn English as a foreign language get many difficulty to find the right definition of tense. But in English, tense is so important thing to speak with right way. If people do not understand and master the tenses, They are impossible to use the English well in conversation and writing.

Languages are capable of expressing events happening in different times. Many languages, referred to as “tense languages”, build a number of time distinctions into their grammars. Thus, tense is said to be the ‘grammaticalization’ of time. (Klein, 1994) maintains that time and space are basic categories of our experience and our cognition, therefore all natural languages we know of have developed a rich repertoire of means to express temporality and spatiality. For (Jespersen, 1924), time is a natural or notional concept which in many languages is expressed in tenses.

Tense "refers to the grammatical expression of the time of the situation described in the proposition, relative to some other time. Connection with the verb. The distinction is that "tense refers to the grammatical changes made to the form of a verb, as opposed to time, which refers to the semantic functions such changes signal" (Finch, 2005).

(Shaw, 1986) stated that tense shows the time of the action or state being expressed by a verb. Not far from that statement (Richards & Schmidt, 2002) said that tense is the relationship between the form of the verb and the time of the action or state it describes. (Baker, 2012) also said tense is a grammatical category which involves changing the form of the verb to reflect the location of an event in time. The usual distinction is between past, present and future.

Actually tense is a form, form of the verb that shows us the happening time of the action, shows the perfection level of an action when it is done. (Maslud, 1998) and (Suryadi, 1988) said that tense is a form of the verb which the verb shows an action that is done in present time, in the past and in the future. While, (Hornby, 1995) interprets the tense as any of the forms of a verb that maybe used to indicate the time of the action or state expressed by the verb.

All the explanations of tense above have the same direction and the same definition. The essence is that the tense is the change of the verb form to describe the time of an event, when it happens.

A tense is the verb form that shows an action in English sentence, there are three dividing times; present, past and future. According to (Purnomo, 2014) tenses divided into sixteen, as follows:

Table 2.4
Type of Tenses

TENSES	Present	Past	Future	Past Future
Simple	Simple Present	Simple Past	Simple Future	Past Future
Continuous	Present Continuous	Past Continuous	Future Continuous	Past Future Continuous
Perfect	Present Perfect	Past Perfect	Future Perfect	Past Future Perfect
Perfect Continuous	Present Perfect Continuous	Past Perfect Continuous	Future Perfect Continuous	Past Future Perfect Continuous

According to the limitation of the research, the writer will explain only the Past Tense.

2.2.1 Past Tense

A tense is the verb that shows an action in English sentence, there are three dividing times, present, future. According to dividing times, it formed three groups of particular tenses and all of them are dividing again of assert action in more specific time.

One of them is past tense and this tense also divided four tense. Past tense is a tense that explain about past event. There are four kinds of past tense which, simple past, past continuous, past perfect, and the last past perfect continuous.

a. Simple Past Tense

The simple past tense is used for past actions that happened either at a specific time, which can either be given by a time phrase (yesterday, last week, etc) or understood from the context. Regular verbs add –ed to the base form, or –d if the verb ends with –e. Irregular verbs can change in many different ways.

The simple past tense is a tense that explains the events that happen or the activity that is done in the past time. The event or the activity is begun and ended in the past. (Jack, 2002) argues that the simple past tense is used to state an event or activity that has been done in the certain time in the past or that the certain time is not exposed if the event or activity is really has happened in the past.

The form of this tense is:

(+) S + verb 2 + O

(-) S + did + not + verb 1 + O

(?) Did + S + verb 1 + O

Example:

(+) I opened the door

(-) I did not open the door

(?) Did I open the door?

b. The past Continuous Tense

The past progressive tense is a tense that explains or states an event and action is in progress in the past when the other event or action is done. (Fika, 1992) said that the simple past progressive tense is a tense that states an event or action that happens in the past and it is in progress.

Using the adequate form of to be and the verb's present participle form past progressive: *He was going to church*. By inserting *not* before the main verb a negation is achieved.

Example: *He was not going to church*. Prefixing the adequate form of to be as in *was he going* form a questions?

Past progressive is used for describing events that were in the process of occurring when a new event happened. The already occurring event is presented in past progressive, the new one in simple past.

The form for this tense is:

1. It is used to state an action that is in progress or happening in the past when the other action is happened.

For example:

- Nina was listening music when we arrived (+)
Nina was not listening music when we arrived (-)
Was Nina listening music when we arrived? (?)

2. It is used to state two events or action that are in progress or happening in the same time in the past. It is usually use the adverb while or whereas.

For example:

- My brother was doing his literary work while my sister reading a book (+)
My brother was not doing his literary work while my sister reading a book (-)
Was my brother doing his literary work while my sister reading a book (?)

3. It is used to state an event or action that gradually expends in the past.

For example:

- The sun was getting bright (+)
The sun was not getting bright (-)
Was the sun getting bright (?)

c. The Past Perfect Tense

Past perfect tense is a tense that explains an event or action that happens in the past and is prevailing in the past. (Surjadi, 1988) stated that past perfect tense is a tense that states an event or action that has finished in the past or explains two events that have happened, but it clarifies which event that has happened first.

Past perfect simple is formed by combining the simple past form of *to have* with the simple past form of the main verb: *We had shouted*. A negation is achieved by including *not* after *had*: *You had not spoken*. Questions in past perfect always start with *had*: *Had he laughed?*

Past perfect simple is used for describing secluded events that have occurred before something else followed. The event that is closer to the present is given in simple past tense: *After we had visited our relatives in Los Santos, we flew back to San Andreas*.

The form of this tense is:
S + had + V +ed / V3

1. It is used to show an event or action that began in the past and has also finished in the past. The adverb of *since* and *for* are usually used in this tense.

For example:

- My mother had been a doctor for ten years. (+)
My mother had not been a doctor for ten years (-)
Had my mother been a doctor for ten years? (?)

2. It is used state an action that has finished before another action is done in the past.

For example:

- Raven had already gone home when Lola arrived at the party (+)
Raven had not gone home when Lola arrived at the party (-)
Had Raven already gone home when Lola arrived at the party? (?)

It is clearly that the past perfect tense must be used if the time of the past event is faster than the other event. The adverbs are usually in this tense are *after, as soon as, until, before, when.*

d. The Past Perfect Continuous Tense

This tense is a tense that state an event or action that has been began and it is still in progress in the past. Or it is use to state an event or an action that has been done in the past and the event is still in progress when another event is happened.

The form for this tense is:
S + had + been + V + ing

1. It is used to state an event or action that happens in the past and the event is still progress when another event happened.

For example:

- When Anna arrived, I had been waiting for three hours (+)
When Anna arrived, I had not been waiting for three years (-)
Had I been waiting for three hours when Anna arrived? (?)

2.5 Errors and mistakes

In our daily use we know the word errors and mistakes as two synonymous words, two words that have similar meaning. The terminology of errors and mistakes are differentiating in the use of language. It is natural for every learner to make errors and mistakes in the learning process, because learning is not an instantaneous process, it is one of their learning development process.

Therefore, it is necessary to distinguish between errors and mistakes. Error is an inherent part in every learning process, so is in the language learning. According to Tarigan, error is caused by the competition factor, means that the learner do not understand the system of language linguistically. Actually the error commonly occurs as consistent or systematically. Errors can last long if it is not corrected. The correction is usually by teacher through the teaching remedial, exercises, etc.

While mistake is caused by performance factor, refereing to what we know as the defiant that are the result of processing limitation rather than the lack of competence. Mistake is randomly, means that it is possible to happen in every linguistic circle. Mistakes does not last long and usually corrected by the learners themselves, if they are not careless and more concentrate to what they learn.

Sometimes in learning language someone do error, and most of teacher assumed that it happened because he or she do not pay attention, but it is not true at all.

(Norish, Burt and Kiparsky, 1972) have suggested a distinction in errors, which relates to comprehensibility. They suggest fundamentally two types of error, and they are global and local. The global error is the type which affects the interpretation of the whole sentence, and the local error merely a part of it, a clause or a phrase.

In linguistics, there is a difference between mistake and error. According to Saville – Troike (2006), mistakes can still be corrected while errors cannot since they are not noticed by the doers. Besides, (Saville and Troike, 2006) added that errors apparently reflect gaps in the learners' language while the learners do not know what the accurate ones are. Even though the errors are not noticed by the doers, still, error analysis is important to know the progress in learning a second language. (Corder, 1967) perceives that error analysis is important either for the learners or the teacher themselves. He convinces that the error made by language learners make it easier to establish the parts that need improvement in teaching.

(Corder, 1981), in addition, states that there are several categories of error systems which have been developed by error analysis researchers, they are:

2.5.1 Pre-systematic

Errors happen before the learner has realized about any system for classifying items that have been learned. In this stage, the learner cannot either correct or explain the errors.

2.5.2 Systematic

Errors happen after the learner has considered a system, yet, errors constantly take place. In this stage, the learner can explain, but cannot correct the errors.

2.5.3 Post-systematic

Errors happen when the learner becomes consistent in recognizing the system. In this stage, the learner can correct and explain the errors.

Based on the three categories above, it can be concluded that errors are considered as an integral part of language process. Errors help the learners improve their competence of language learning and acquisition.

2.5.4 Common Mistakes in Using Past Tense

According to (T. J Fitkides, 1936), there are some common mistakes in using Past Tense:

- Using Past Tense after *did* instead of the infinitive without *to*.
 - a. To ask question:
Mistake: Did you went to school yesterday?
Correction: *Did* you *go* to school yesterday?
 - b. To make negatives:
Mistake: I did not went to school yesterday.
Correction: I *did* not *go* to school yesterday.
- Wrong sequence of tenses.
Mistake: Rachel asked me what I am doing.
Correction: Rachel *asked* me what I was doing.
- Using may instead of **might** in a subordinate clause.
Mistake: Last Sunday Ailsa told me that she may come.
Correction: Last Sunday Ailsa *told* me that she *might* come.

- Using **can** instead of **could** in a subordinate clause.
Mistake: Ben thought he can win the prize.
Correction: Ben *thought* he *could* win the prize.
- Using the past simple tense after **to** + the infinitive.
Mistake: He tried to kicked the ball away.
Correction: He *tried* to *kick* the ball away.
- Using the past simple tense after an auxiliary verb, instead of the past participle.
Mistake: I have forgot to bring my book.
Correction: I *have forgotten* to bring my book.
- Using the simple past tense instead of the present perfect.
Mistake: I saw the Parthenon of Athens.
Correction: I *have seen* the Parthenon of Athens.
- Using the simple past tense with a recent action.
Mistake: The clock struck.
Correction: The clock *has struck*.
- Using the past continuous for a habitual action, instead of the simple past tense.
Mistake: Last year I was walking to school every day.
Correction: Last year I *walked* to school every day.
- Using the past tense instead of the past perfect.
Mistake: The train already left before I arrived.
Correction: The train *had already left* before I arrived.
- Using the past perfect instead of the simple past tense.
Mistake: I'd finished the book yesterday.
Correction: I *finished* the book yesterday.