# AN ERROR ANALYSIS ON THE USE OF TENSES IN WRITING PERSONAL LETTER OF EIGHTH GRADE STUDENTS OF SMP N 1 PURING, KEBUMEN IN THE ACADEMIC YEAR OF 2012/2013

By:

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**Abstract**

This study is aimed to give description what kind of errors the students’ have in using tenses in writing personal letter**.** Then, the researcher classifies each error and identifies the causes of the students’ errors in using tenses in writing personal letter. In this research, the researcher uses descriptive qualitative method. The test is made by the students spontaneously without looking up their note or dictionary. Then, the researcher analyzes the students’ personal letters using surface strategy taxonomy method. After analyzing the student’s personal letter, the researcher gets the result that the students’ error belongs to fair category (42.35%). There are four kinds of errors that are made by the students. There are omission (41.98%), addition (8.98%), misformation (36.79%), and misordering (12.26). Omission error was the most frequent error that the students produced. It shows that the students get difficulties in using tenses in writing personal letter. They are lack of grammar mastery and most of them are also lack of vocabulary.

*Key words: Error Analysis, Tenses, Writing, Personal Letter.*

1. **Background**

English is an international language which is the most commonly used to communicate by the people among the different countries. Writing is not an easy subject because it is transcribing not only our ideas into written symbol, but also thinking process. One of the materials that can be done by the students is writing personal letter. Personal letter is a type of letter to communicate between a small numbers of people. Grammar is one of the most difficult things that are faced by the students. To make a good composition in writing, the students must be able to master and apply the structure correctly, especially about tense used. The researcher focuses analyzing the students’ errors in writing personal letter at the second semester of eight grade students of SMP N 1 Puring, especially in grammatical structure of the use of tenses.

1. **Research Design**

Research design is a systematic attempt which is used by researcher to collect the data of his/her research (Arikunto, 2010:20). There are two kinds of research design/method, they are qualitative and quantitative research. In this research the reasercher chooses the qualitative research as the design of this research. It was conducted in SMP N 1 Puring, Kebumen on was held on 7 th march – 16 th march 2013. Qualitative research does not use population for it starts from a certain case in certain sosial situation and the result of data analysis will not be generalized to population but will be transferred to other places in the same social condition as the observed case. The objects of this study are the students whose make error in their writing of the form personal letter. The object that the researcher takes is the eighth grade students of SMP N I Puring in the academic year of 2012/2013. The researcher takes C class as her object which consists of 33 students.

In this research, the researcher uses writing test as the main research instrument. Here, the researcher asked the students to make personal letter by using their own words spontaneously. It means that they did not have opportunity to look up their note. The researcher provided some topics and the students chose one topic that they like and arrange their sentences in certain limited time, for about 45 minutes. To support the main technique, the researcher uses interviews. Esterberg (2002) in Sugiyono (2010:317), states that interview is a meeting of two persons to exchange information and idea through question and responses, resulting in communication and joint construction of meaning about a particular topic. Here, the researcher interviews the English teacher to know about what are the difficulties or the students’ ability in learning tenses and writing.

In this research, the researcher used surface strategy taxonomy to analyze the data. According to Dullay, et.al. in Ellis (1994: 56), there are four errors based on the surface strategy taxonomy. They are Omission, Addition, Misformation and Misordering.

1. **Finding and Discussion**

Based on the criteria in research finding, the frequency of error made by the students are different. There are 14 samples make error less than 40%. It indicates that the error is low. There are 13 samples make error for about 40% - 55%. It indicates that the error is fair. There are 5 samples make error for about 56% - 75%. It indicates that the error is high. The highest percentage of this category is 83.333%. As a result, the computation of the overall error made by the students in using tenses is 42.315%. It can be seen that the percentage of the overall students’ errors belong to fair category. So, it is true that the students’ error which belongs to fair, shows that the students get difficulty in writing the form of personal letter using tenses.

After describing the data of students’ error, the researcher classifies each error to know what kinds of error made by the student. Here, the researcher analyzes the errors using Surface strategy taxonomy. It can be seen that the most frequent error that the students’ produced, that is 41.98%. The highest number of omission error indicates that the students ignore or absent an item which must appear in the well-form utterance or sentences. The second most frequent error is misformation error. It is about 36.79%. It shows that the students use the wrong form of the morphemes or structures in their sentences. The third rank of error is about 12.26%. It is misordering error. It indicates that the students understand well about the placement of a morpheme or group of morphemes in their sentences. The smallest percentage of error is addition. It is only 8.98%. It indicates that the students add or present an item which must not appear in a well-formed utterance or sentence. To support the data analysis of students’ errors in writing personal letter, the researcher gives description about the difficulty faced by the students in using tenses in their writing. Based on interview with Mrs. Elfiyati, S. Pd as an English teacher of eight grade in SMP N 1 Puring, English vocabulary is the most difficult thing faced by the students in writing skill. The vocabulary of the students is very low because they don’t have enough willingness to open their dictionary. Besides, the students often forget the sentence patterns.

1. **Conclusion and Suggestion**

Based on the research finding and discussion the researcher can draw conclusion that the eighth grade student of SMP N 1 Puring get some difficulties in using tenses in writing personal letters. It is shown by the category of students’ error that belongs to fair. The average of students’ errors is 42.35%. The students can produce their own sentence contains English tenses to express their idea. They compose at least nine sentences. They produced 516 sentences and there are 212 errors. The kinds of error made by the students are omission, addition, misformation and misordering. The most frequent error that students produced is omission error. Most of the students used past tense to tell their experience in the form of personal letter.

There are some causes of the students’ error. They are lack of vocabulary, they often forget about the pattern of tenses, they do not uderstand grammar clearly. They also don’t have enough willingness to open their dictionary. Besides that, there are interlingual error and intralingual error. Interlingual error is caused by the tendency of using their mother tongue structures and intralingual error is caused by the grammatical rules of the learners.

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