

# An Error Analysis on The Use of Simple Past Tense in Narrative Text in Mts Jawharot Al Muzakky

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## Abstract

English is crucial in Indonesia's educational curriculum, taught early to ensure proficiency by graduation. Its global importance is seen in business, technology, science, and tourism. Mastering English, especially tenses like the Simple Past Tense, is key for effective communication. However, many students struggle with its rules and structure. This study aims to analyze these errors in narrative texts, providing insights and recommendations to improve English education at Jawharot Al Muzakky Islamic Junior High School in Malang. Using descriptive qualitative methods, the authors explored error patterns in the simple past tense among Class 9C students at MTS Jawharot Al Muzakky. Observations, interviews, and analysis of students' written work revealed common mistakes such as omitting the -ed ending on regular verbs and incorrect forms of irregular verbs. These insights can help teachers develop effective strategies to improve student learning and understanding of grammar. The assessment instrument evaluates students' narrative writing using the simple past tense, focusing on grammar, discourse management, punctuation, and neatness, rated on a scale of 1 to 4. Grammar and vocabulary scored 68.75%, indicating moderate difficulty. Discourse management scored 65.63%, showing partial relevance in idea processing. Punctuation use scored 56.25%, with 50% errors. Neatness scored 69.75%, indicating legible but untidy writing. The results suggest students have basic proficiency but need improvement in these areas.

**Keywords:** *Errors Analysis, Narrative text, Simple past tense*

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## INTRODUCTION

English is a foreign language that holds significant importance in the educational curriculum of Indonesia. Taught as a compulsory subject from an early age, English ensures that students possess a basic proficiency in the language upon graduation. Its inclusion in the curriculum reflects its global relevance and critical role across various fields, including business, technology, science, and tourism.

The Simple Past Tense, a key component of English grammar, often presents challenges for students in Indonesia. This tense is used to express actions or events that occurred in the past, requiring the correct use of regular or irregular verbs and auxiliary verbs. A study that was done by Budik Kusworo with *An Error Analysis in Recount Text Written by the First Year of English Department AL- Qolam Islam Institute Gondanglegi Malang* found that The categories of student errors in writing recount texts made by first-semester English Department students in the Study Club at Al-Qolam Islamic Institute fall under the surface strategy taxonomy. These categories include omission, addition, misformation, and misordering (Kusworo 2022). Previous studies have highlighted several factors contributing to these difficulties, including confusion over verb usage and errors in applying auxiliary verbs. Error analysis has been identified as an effective method to address these issues, as it provides insights into common mistakes and their underlying causes. (Abdullah Syukur and Ardhy Supraba 2022). Therefore, the purpose of this study is to conduct an error analysis in the use of simple past tense when studying narrative text. Through the error analysis, this study is expected to provide useful information for English teachers and students in overcoming difficulties in the use of simple past tense. In addition, this study is also expected to contribute to further research in the field of English language learning in Indonesia

This research will use the error analysis method. Data will be collected in the form of student written texts in the form of stories or narratives using simple past tense. (Hermanto, Sudarsono, and Rezeki 2023). The Study with the title *Why Study Error? That is written by Irawansyah* stated that Error analysis helps identify the strategies used by language learners. Additionally, it can reveal common learning difficulties and assist teachers in designing materials for remedial instruction (Irawansyah 2017). A total of 20 third-semester students from Purworejo Muhammadiyah University, Indonesia, produced 138 errors in their writing. The errors were categorized into four types: omission (47 errors), addition (10 errors), substitution (80 errors), and permutation (1 error). The analysis results indicate that the percentage of each error type is as follows: omission at 34.06%, addition at 7.25%, substitution at 57.97%, and permutation at 0.72%. Based on these findings, the researchers conclude that substitution is the most dominant error, as evidenced by its highest percentage of 57.97% (Setiyorini, Dewi, and Masykuri 2020).

Tri Agustina in her study found that Among the three classifications of errors, the most dominant types are as follows: First, lexical errors are most commonly found in misspellings, accounting for 13.7%. Second, syntactical errors are predominantly seen in the misuse of past tense verbs, making up 20%. Third, discourse errors primarily involve issues with the generic structure, comprising 7.7%. The challenges arising from syntactical errors indicate that many students still struggle with and feel confused about using English correctly (Agustina 2016). A study was done by Mohammed revealed that The analysis demonstrated recurring patterns of errors in students' oral English production. Among these, grammatical errors emerged as the most dominant, followed by phonological inaccuracies, lexical mistakes, and discourse-related issues. These results underscore the importance of providing targeted instruction in grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, and discourse competence to effectively minimize such error tendencies

A paper in *An error analysis on EFL students' writing* that is written by Yasir Mubarak said Student errors in thesis writing stem from various factors, including lack of attention, carelessness, fatigue, limited ideas, insufficient reading and writing practice, influence from their first language, overgeneralization, direct translation from their native language, incomplete rule application, and other performance-related issues (Mubarak and Budiono 2022). A study also found that some students did not consider the use of tenses correctly. They used past tense verbs to describe present events or situations. Additionally, errors related to misordering were also identified. These misordering errors occurred when students attempted to structure a noun as a modifier for another noun. Such mistakes were characterized by the incorrect arrangement of morphemes within a phrase (Nadya and Muthalib 2021).

The data will then be analyzed in order to find out the types of errors that are commonly made by the students when using the simple past tense. Furthermore, the results of the error analysis will be used to provide recommendations for English teachers to solve students' difficulties in using simple past tense.

This study aims to analyze errors in the use of the Simple Past Tense among students studying narrative texts. Conducted at MTs Jawharot Al Muzakky in Gondanglegi, Malang, this research focuses on Class 9C students and seeks to identify and categorize the types of errors made, as well as determine their frequency. By doing so, the study aspires to provide practical recommendations for English teachers to enhance the teaching and learning process.

The results of this study are expected to contribute to improving English language education in Indonesia, particularly in the mastery of the Simple Past Tense, and to serve as a valuable reference for future research in the field of English language learning.

## METHOD

The study employed descriptive qualitative methods to analyze error patterns in the use of the simple past tense among Class 9C students at MTS Jawharot Al Muzakky. According to David Wiliam, qualitative research involves gathering data in natural settings to capture authentic experiences, Focusing on the specific types of errors, the researchers gathered rich qualitative data through observations, interviews, and students' written work. Common errors included omissions of the *-ed* ending, incorrect irregular verb forms, and subject-verb agreement issues. By analyzing these patterns, the study identified areas requiring additional instructional support and offered insights for improving teaching strategies. This research contributes to understanding how learners develop grammatical proficiency, helping educators address common challenges with targeted methods and materials.

Based on these objectives, the approach used in this research is descriptive qualitative. The researchers collected data directly through questionnaires, observations, documentation, and interviews. This study is described in accordance with the implementation of the sequence, namely: 1) Data Reduction, 2) Data Presentation, 3) Data Verification.

## FINDINGS

In this chapter, an analysis will be conducted on the results of data collection regarding the errors in using the simple past tense among the ninth grade students of Islamic Junior High School Jawharot Al Muzakky. This analysis will cover the types of errors that occur and the percentage of each type of error. But before that, the author will explain the results of the assessment on the object of the research, namely the use of simple past tense in grade 9 as follows:

Tabel 1.1 use of simple past tense in grade 9

No	Name	Criteria Assessed				Score	Value
		Gramm ar	Discourse management	Punctuat ion	Neatness		
1.	A Z	3	2	3	3	11	68,75%
2.	M C A D	3	3	3	2	11	68,75%
3.	N Y	2	2	2	2	8	50%
4.	N M.	3	2	2	3	10	62,5%
5.	N W N	3	2	2	4	11	68,75%

6.	S S	2	3	1	2	8	50%
7.	Z A A	2	3	3	2	10	62,5%
8.	Z N H	4	4	2	4	14	87,75%
Total		22	21	18	22		
Percentage		68,75%	65,63%	56,25%	68,75%		

## 1. Types of Errors in Using Simple Past Tense

Based on the data collected through observation, interviews, and documentation, several types of errors commonly occur in the use of the simple past tense by the ninth-grade students of Islamic Junior High School Jawharot Al Muzakky. The following are the types of errors identified.

### 1. Errors in forming the simple past tense of regular verbs

Errors in forming the Simple Past Tense of regular verbs are a common issue in English language learning. This occurs when students fail to apply the correct rules to form the past tense of regular verbs. The Simple Past Tense is used to indicate actions that happened and were completed in the past. For regular verbs, the general rule is to add the suffix "-ed" to the verb to form the Simple Past Tense. The types of errors in forming the Simple Past Tense of regular verbs include:

#### a. Incorrect verb forms

- This occurs when students use the base form (infinitive) of the verb instead of the correct form for the Simple Past Tense. For example, saying "I goed to the store" instead of "I went to the store."

#### b. Omission of the "-ed" ending

- Students often disregard the rule of adding the "-ed" suffix to regular verbs. For example, saying "She walk to school yesterday" instead of "She walked to school yesterday."

#### c. Grammar error is a mistake in the use of grammar rules or sentence structures that do not adhere to the prevailing language rules. This can occur in various ways, including errors in word usage, subject-verb agreement, grammar rules, and so on.

Examples of grammar errors:

#### a. Subject-verb agreement error

"They goes to the market yesterday." (Should be: "They went to the market yesterday.")

#### b. Grammar rule error

"I already has eaten." (Should be: "I have already eaten.") Such errors can affect the understanding of the message being conveyed and can reduce communication clarity. Therefore, it's important to pay attention to proper grammar when communicating.

### 2. Errors in using the simple past tense of irregular verbs, such as:

- Incorrect verb forms, for example: "She writed a letter last night."
- Use of inappropriate verb forms, for example: "I seen the movie yesterday."

### 3. Errors in the word order in simple past tense sentences, such as:

- Incorrect placement of time expressions, for example: "Yesterday, I watched a movie."

### 4. Errors in selecting the appropriate tense, where students use the simple past tense when another tense would be more suitable, for example: "When he arrives, he go to the store."

## 2. The impacts of these errors

The impacts of these errors include:

### a. Difficulty in communication

Errors in the usage of the Simple Past Tense have the potential to create significant obstacles in effectively conveying messages in English. When individuals inaccurately employ this tense, it can result in confusion, ambiguity, and misunderstandings in communication. For instance, using incorrect verb forms or failing to apply the Simple Past Tense appropriately may distort the timeline of events or alter the intended meaning of sentences. Consequently, listeners or readers may struggle to grasp the intended message, leading to breakdowns in communication.

Consider a scenario where someone recounts an experience using the wrong past tense form, such as saying "I goes to the store yesterday" instead of "I went to the store yesterday." The incorrect verb form disrupts the flow of the narrative and makes it challenging for the listener to understand the sequence of events accurately. As a result, communication becomes less effective, and the message may be lost or misunderstood.

Additionally, errors in the Simple Past Tense usage can undermine the speaker or writer's credibility and proficiency in English. In professional settings, such as business meetings or academic presentations, linguistic accuracy is often associated with competence and expertise. When individuals consistently make errors in grammar, including tense usage, it can create doubts about their language skills and overall communication abilities. This can have adverse effects on their professional reputation and may limit opportunities for career advancement or academic success.

Moreover, in personal interactions, errors in the Simple Past Tense can hinder meaningful communication and interpersonal relationships. Misunderstandings caused by linguistic inaccuracies may lead to frustration or tension between individuals, impacting the quality of their interactions and rapport.

### b. Misunderstandings

Indeed, students who misuse the Simple Past Tense may encounter challenges in comprehending texts or conversations that utilize past tense constructs. When students are not proficient in correctly applying the Simple Past Tense, they may struggle to discern the chronological sequence of events or the temporal context presented in written or spoken narratives. As a result, their comprehension of past tense passages or dialogues may be hindered, leading to difficulties in extracting meaning from the text or following the flow of conversation.

Misused or incorrectly applied past tense forms can distort the intended message, causing confusion and ambiguity for the student. For instance, if a student mistakenly uses the present tense instead of the past tense when describing past events, it can create confusion about when those events occurred and disrupt the coherence of the narrative.

Furthermore, inadequate understanding of the Simple Past Tense may impede students' ability to engage in meaningful discussions or express themselves fluently in English. Without a solid grasp of past tense grammar, students may struggle to articulate their thoughts and experiences related to past events accurately. This limitation can hinder their ability to participate effectively in classroom discussions, share personal anecdotes, or recount stories in English.

Therefore, mastering the correct usage of the Simple Past Tense is not only crucial for producing clear and coherent language but also for comprehending and interpreting past tense materials accurately. By acquiring proficiency in the Simple Past Tense, students can enhance their overall language skills and confidently navigate various communicative situations that require an understanding of past events and experiences.

Additionally, teachers play a vital role in supporting students' development in this area by providing targeted instruction, practice opportunities, and feedback to reinforce proper usage of the Simple Past Tense. Through systematic language instruction and ample practice, students can improve their ability to use past tense forms accurately and effectively in both receptive and productive language tasks.

## DISCUSSION

The assessment instrument is designed to evaluate students' ability to write simple narrative text using the simple past tense in terms of grammar, discourse management, punctuation and neatness. Similar idea which stated that It is included identifying the errors and classifying the errors. Identifying the Errors was done identifying and counting the numbers of errors which appeared in the students answer sheets (Abdullah Syukur and Ardhya Supraba 2022). The assessed aspects are rated by entering a scale of 1 to 4. The score is then calculated and processed and then presented in the form of a percentage. The percentage results can give the reader an idea about how well students can write with simple past tense with good grammar, discourse management punctuation and neatness.

According to the results of the assessment of the rubric made. The author can conclude that In the field of grammar and vocabulary selection, the class got a percentage of 68.75%. With the lowest score from a scale of 1-4, there are children who get a score of 2 and the highest is a score of 4. And the average is 2.75. This indicates that the average student has sufficient ability in the sense that they use grammar and vocabulary selection that is difficult to understand.

Furthermore, in terms of discourse management, the class received a percentage of 65.63%. With the lowest score on the scale of 1-4 there are children who get a score of 2 and the highest score on the scale there are children who get a score of 4 and the average score is 2.63, which indicates that the students still have sufficient mastery in terms of discourse management. This means that they are able to process ideas but are not in accordance with the topic or message given. In terms of the use of punctuation, the class received a percentage of 56.25%. From the scale of 1 to 4 there are children who get the lowest score of 1 and the highest score of 3 and the average score of 2.25, this provides information that students are at a sufficient level in the use of punctuation, that is, students have used punctuation, but from all the punctuation marks they use, 50% errors are still found.

Next, from the aspect of neatness of writing, a score of 69.75% appeared. And from that scale, the lowest value is 2 and the highest is 4. The average score in this aspect is 2.75 which shows that they have writing skills that are not neat, but quite easy to read.

Common Errors Found	Details
Tenses (Verb Time)	Most stories use the past tense (past) to describe events that have already happened. "Was" should be replaced with "lived" for ongoing situations.
Subject-Verb Congruence	The subject and verb must match in number (singular/plural).
Articles (a/an/the)	Use "a/an" for non-specific singular nouns and "the" for specific nouns.
Preposition	Use appropriate prepositions such as "in," "above," "on," etc., depending on the context.
Word Choice	Choose the right words that convey the desired meaning.

Text Specific Errors	Corrections
<b>Text 1 (Zahra)</b>	
"In the ocean was a family mermaid"	Changed to "lived": Use "lived" for ongoing situations.
"Once upon a time, aril, ana, and grazile swam around the ocean. Then saw the human walked..."	Changed to "saw": Use the past tense consistently.
"They became the usual humans, because they have a curious."	Changed to "had": Use the past tense for completed actions ("had" for possessive).
"They saw the men do work..."	Changed to "did": Past tense for action.
"And they saw haw the women..."	Changed to "how": Typo, use "how".
"Then they have a party wit humans."	Changed to "with": Typo, use "with".

Text Specific Errors	Corrections
<b>Text 2 (Azqiah)</b>	
"In the sea there life was a kingdom..."	Changed to "lived": Use "lived" for ongoing situations.
"The three daughters swam the side of the sea margin sea."	Changed to "swam": "Sea margin sea" is redundant, choose one.
"Mita, aril and stella became the usual humans because her wants."	Changed to "their": Use "their" for plural subjects.
"They saw men work bring and cut wood."	Changed to "bringing": Use the present participle "-ing" for actions in progress.
"And they saw woman activities..."	Changed to "activities": No articles needed for general activities.
Texts 3-6 (Nadya Yasmin, Ainu Zahroh, Sajidah, Nadzifatul, Nurul W):	Similar corrections apply.

### Important Points

1. Use the past tense consistently for actions and circumstances that were completed in the past.
2. Ensure subject-verb agreement (singular/plural).
3. Select the appropriate article (a/an/the) based on specificity.
4. Use appropriate prepositions such as "in," "above," "on," etc.
5. Choose words that accurately convey meaning.

## CONCLUSION

The analysis conducted on the errors in using the simple past tense among ninth-grade students of MTs Jawharot Al Muzakky reveals several significant findings. Firstly, errors in forming the simple past tense of both regular and irregular verbs are prevalent among the students. These errors include incorrect verb forms, omission of necessary endings, and the use of inappropriate verb forms. Secondly, errors in word order in simple past tense sentences and the incorrect selection of tense also contribute to the overall challenges students face in using the simple past tense accurately. Additionally, the assessment of students' attitudes towards communication, collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking shows a generally positive outlook, with variations among individual students. While some students demonstrate excellent attitudes across all aspects, others may require further development in specific areas. The data

suggests that the majority of students performed well in terms of content, with a significant portion also performing well in vocabulary and grammar. However, there are areas for improvement, particularly in vocabulary and grammar, for some students. This analysis can help identify which students might need additional support in specific areas. The following is an explanation of writing errors, based on the assignments given to students including several errors, namely, past tense, -ed, grammar errors.

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