
A Study on The Students' Errors in Using Simple Present Tense

Muhammad Rifki, Asmi Rusmanayanti, Noor Eka Chandra, Fatchul Mu'in

English Education Study Program,
Universitas Lambung Mangkurat

Abstract

This research aims to analyze the kind of errors conducted by eighth-grade students of SMPN 13 Banjarmasin when writing simple sentences in simple present tense form. This research is a descriptive study. The sample of this research was 23 students from 8-B. The data were gathered by using tests that were conducted twice with three weeks interval to check the errors made by the students. The result of the first test shows that the total errors done by the students were 193 errors. The students made 138 errors (71.5%) in verb agreements. Followed by the verb *be* with 58 errors (28.5%) as the lowest number of errors. While in the second test, from 212 errors, the students made 138 errors (65%) in verb agreement and 74 (35%) in verb *be*. Thus, from the results, we can conclude that errors in verb agreement are the most errors that occurred with the highest percentage in both tests. It was recommended that the students should practice grammatical rules in the simple present tense to minimise the errors.

Keywords: *error analysis, intralingual error, writing*

INTRODUCTION

As an international language, English become an essential thing for every part of human society in many places. Learning English is not as easy as we learned our mother tongue (Fatchul Mu'in (ed.), 2019). It is because English has some skills that should be learned and practised. There are four skills as basic competence in English; listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Those essential competencies are integrated taught because the primary goal of teaching English is that students can develop their communicative skills in both written and spoken English. Besides, to support the development of those necessary competences, the language components – structure, vocabulary, spelling, and pronunciation, – are not separately taught. To have excellent communication in English, the using of the correct structure is very important. Structure or grammar is one of the elements that should be not separately taught with some necessary competences. Leech (1982:4) writes that grammar is a central part of language which relates sound and meaning. In other words, there is no language without grammar. It means that grammar is one of the most important parts of English to communicate with others. While doing communication, both in written and spoken ways with other people, useful vocabulary and correct grammar is needed. Therefore, without grammar, it is hard for people to understand something spoke or written because grammar makes a string of words or utterances meaningful.

There are many rules in grammar that cannot be ignored. These are the rules of using articles, parts of speech, sentence patterns, tense, etc. For Indonesian students, the most challenging part of grammar is tense. The simple present tense is the example. The simple

present tense is used to express a habitual action. They usually have some problems in finding out the verb form of simple present tense. They often write, “Andi often comes late,” instead of “Andi often comes late.” The third singular person, such as he, she, it needs suffix -s or -es for the verb. It shows that Indonesian students do not consider that in English, there are verbs formed in singular and plural. It happened because, in the Indonesian language, singular or plural forms do not affect the verb form at all.

Based on the previous research in SMPN 13 Banjarmasin, the researcher found that just two or three students in the eighth-grade have good scores in the evaluation of choosing the correct form of subject-verb agreement in the simple present tense. It shows us that the eighth-grade students do not consider that the Indonesian language and English have a different verb form. For example, when the researcher asks students to fill in the blank about the subject-verb agreement by using simple present tense, they also answer it with simple past tense such as “He walked to school every day, instead of “He walks to school every day.”

Studying students’ errors plays a vital role in knowing the ability of students to learn a foreign language. By reviewing students’ error, it provides evidence that the students learning a new language since making errors is natural and an unavoidable part in the process of learning the language. The researcher can not judge students that have bad scores are stupid. It might be the researcher who gives the test at the wrong time. Furthermore, the students might not be in good condition, or the environment distracts them, such as noisy class, or the students may do not know about the subject of the test. This is what the researcher does to find out what kind of errors that students do.

The problem of the study is, “What kind of errors made by the eighth-grade students of SMPN 13 Banjarmasin when writing simple sentences in the simple present tense?” This research aims to analyse the kind of errors made by the eighth-grade students of SMPN 13 Banjarmasin when writing simple sentences in the simple present tense. To avoid discussion, which is too general, the researcher put some limitations: The research focuses on the intralingual errors made by the students in writing simple sentences by using simple present tense (subject-verb agreement). The location of this research is at SMPN 13 Banjarmasin. The subject of the study is the eighth-grade students of SMPN 13 Banjarmasin.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

This part consists of tenth parts, namely errors and mistakes, the definition of errors, the sources of errors. Besides, this chapter also discusses the definition of writing, writing in middle school, kind of sentence, simple sentence, subject-verb agreement, simple present tense, and the previous study.

Errors and Mistakes

It is necessary to make a distinction between errors and mistakes to analyse the errors in the use of subject-verb agreements in the simple present tense, Ellis (1997:17) states that errors reflect gaps in learners’ knowledge; they occur because the learner does not know what is correct. While, mistakes reflect occasional lapses in performance, they occur because, in particular, the learner is unable to perform what he or she knows.

The definition above shows that errors cannot be self-corrected because they do not know what is correct. Meanwhile, mistakes can be self-corrected because they know the

right ones, but they failed to apply their knowledge in a given time. In conclusion, the error is a systematic and noticeable deviation in learner language from the grammar of the native speaker, which results from a lack of knowledge of the correct rule. It reflects the interlanguage competence of a learner and consistently made by a learner who is unable to correct. And the mistake is a deviation in learner language which results from the failure to perform learners' competence and to utilise a known system correctly, but they can their fault.

The error is something done incorrectly because of a lack of knowledge. According to Ellis (1997:17), errors reflect gaps in learners' knowledge; they occur because the learner does not know what is correct. The definition shows that error is a fault that is made by the learner, and he or she is unable to correct. Norrish (1983:78) states that those errors happen because there are influences of the rules of their first language to the target language. But, nobody is perfect, making errors is something unavoidable because every process of learning is related to the errors.

From the statements above, it can be concluded that errors happen because the students do not have enough knowledge to know what is correct, and their first language affects the target language. Furthermore, they can not fix it, and sometimes they just let it go. But, it is fine because part of the learning process is making errors.

Error analysis is the best way to know what kind of errors that the students have made. By using error analysis, errors that are done by students can be classified. It makes the teacher easily to decide lesson planning for the next lesson. Brown (1987:66) says that error analysis is the study of students' error, which can be observed, analysed, and classified to reveal something of the system operating within the learner. Error analysis will show teachers some problems confronting the students. Besides, the teacher must discuss error analysis for teaching English as a foreign language. By using error analysis, they may improve their teaching method and attempt to find some answers or solutions to solve some problems faced by their students.

Sources of Errors

By determining the causes of errors, the teacher will understand how the learner made the errors. Richards (2008:124) states that the origins of error in studying a language might be derived from the generalisations of the rule learning are called the intralingual error, and the errors cause by the interference of the learners' mother tongue are called interlingual errors. According to Harmer (2001:99), there are two distinct errors, interlingual errors and intralingual errors.

Interlingual Errors (Interference)

It is necessary to identify errors in the language learning process. The teachers need to make sure what are the causes of the errors conducted by the students. This is because the identification of errors will help the teachers to decide what kind of treatments suitable for students. Students who learn English as a second language, and where the first language and English come into contact with each other, there are often confusions which provoke errors in learners' use of English. As a result, language learner may conduct code-switching and make errors. Li Wei code-switching refers to the process of alternation involved two

languages in one discourse (in Ramadan, 2019). Mackey (in Fatchul Mu'in and Sirajuddin Kamal, 2006:61) defines interference¹ as the use of features belonging to one language while speaking or writing another. In writing or speaking the target language, foreign language learners tend to rely on their native language structures to produce a response. If the structures of the two languages are distinctly different, then one could expect a relatively high frequency of error to occur in the target language, thus indicating interference of the native language on the target language.

Fatchul Mu'in and Sirajuddin Kamal (2006) stated that interference occurred due to speakers' failure to transfer from the native language into the second language. Therefore, the degree of failure is different from one to another, and the differences are based on how bilingual the speaker is. It is also stated that the aspects of bilingualism, whether it is compound, coordinate, or subordinate, will determine whether or not the interference phenomenon occurs in the language user (2006:60).² Furthermore, Troike and Blackwell (in Fatchul Mu'in and Sirajuddin Kamal, 2006:61) stated the interference concept could be referred to the usage of formal elements, such as the phonological, morphological, lexical, or syntactic element in a given language that could be explained by the effect of contact with another language. Besides, Weinreich (in Fatchul Mu'in and Sirajuddin Kamal, 2006:61) also stated that interference occurred since the user of one language tend to have a higher degree of familiarity than the other language they know. The different degrees of familiarity may occur due to the first language overwhelm the second language that the speaker has, since the first language usually learned from the speaker's environment, whether it is from parents, family, or friends and acquaintances.

Since a language is a tool used by a society to communicate and interact with each other, it is something that was agreed by the whole members of said community, which is the reason why they have their own rules which are affected by the values and other cultural aspects of that community (Fatchul Mu'in and Sirajuddin Kamal. 2006:24). Thus, every language tends to have its own specific rules, and those said rules can interfere with the usage of new language learned by the speaker.

Intralingual Errors

The second sources of errors that will be discussed in this research are the intralingual error. Richards (2008) stated that the intralingual error is the negative transfer of items within the target language. The error of this kind are part of a natural acquisition process when second language learners make errors, and they are demonstrating part of the natural process of language learning. Richards (2008), the sources of errors that are viewed from intralingual sources can be divided into four kinds. They are:

1. Overgeneralization

Overgeneralization is where the essential experiences' of the students related to specific structure causes them to create a deviant structure with other arrangements they

¹ Also see: Fatchul Mu'in. 2008. INTERFERENCE AND INTEGRATION – Prodi Bahasa Inggris ...<https://english.fkip.ulm.ac.id> › 2008/10/18 › interference-and-integration

² Also see Fatchul Mu'in "Phonemic interference of local language in spoken english by students of english Department of Lambung Mangkurat University " - *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 2017

have learned as the basis. Generally, overgeneralization is the creation of the structure in place of two regular structures.

For example, *She can reads*. It should be, *She can read*

This kind of case is inevitable since students reflect various stages in their language development. Hubbard et al. (1983) state that the learners tend to process their new language data in their mind and produce the rule of its production based on the evidence.

This error happens when the learner overgeneralizes some rules of structure. The examples of this error are adding “-ed” for the past form and adding “-s” for every plural noun. A learner does it based on her/his experiences. Another example is “ He *walks* to the class *yesterday*” where the correct form is “ He *walked* to the class *yesterday*”.

2. Ignorance of Rules Restriction

Ignorance of Rules Restriction is the students’ failure to observe the restriction of the existing structure. That is the application of rules to the context where they do not apply.

For example, *the baby not does cry*. It should be, *the baby does not cry*

3. Incomplete Application of Rules

Incomplete Application of Rules is students’ failure to develop a structure fully. The learners fail to produce a correct sentence according to the standard rules.

For example, *you student*. It should be *you are a student*.

4. False Concept Hypothesized

This error happens because the students have a wrong conclusion about a topic or some topics about the target language because of several reasons. In other words, the students fail to comprehend the target language fully.

For example, *I go to the other town yesterday*

It should be *I went to the other town yesterday*

Kind of Sentences³

A sentence is a group of words that are put together to mean something. A sentence is the basic unit of language which expresses a complete thought. Joshi (2014:5) states that sentences are divided into four types. They are:

1. A simple sentence is a sentence that has one subject and one predicate (Joshi, 2014:11). A simple sentence usually uses a simple word and only contains few words. Example: They are busy.
2. A compound sentence is a sentence that consist of two or more independent clause joined together by coordinating conjunctions, correlative conjunctions, transitional expressions (Joshi, 2014:14). Example: I want to go to the movie, and I want to watch The Guys.
3. A complex sentence is a sentence that contains an independent clause joined by one or more dependent clauses or subordinate clauses (Joshi, 2014:28). In other words, a

³ Fatchul Mu’in. 2019. *Theory of Sentences*. Banjarmasin : Universitas Lambung Mangkurat.

complex sentence must contain a subordinating conjunction or a relative pronoun.
Example: Meeney is a very faithful cat.

4. A compound-complex sentence is a mixed sentence. Joshi (2014:37) states that a compound-complex sentence is a type of complex sentence in which there is more than one independent clause joined by one or more dependent or subordinate clauses.
Example: You can use anything in my room, but do not use something out of my room because it is not mine.

Simple Sentences

A sentence is a group of words that are put together to mean something. Sentences which has one subject and one predicate is called a simple sentence (Joshi, 2014:11). A simple sentence always an independent clause and express a complete thought. Examples:

1. They are busy. (subject – they, predicate – are busy)
2. She is innocent. (subject – she, predicate – is innocent)
3. Chris and Smalling won the world cup competition. (subject – Chris and Smalling, verb – won)
4. He wrote and sang a song. (subject – he, verb – wrote and sang)
5. Clark and Tom jogged and swam. (subject – Clark and Tom, verb – jogged and swam)

Subject-Verb Agreement

According to Sutomo (2011:3), subject-verb agreement is the rule of grammar that states that singular subjects must agree with singular verbs, and plural or compound subjects must agree with plural verbs. The verb in a sentence must agree with the subjects and not with any other word that is placed between them. In other words, singular subjects go with singular verbs. And plural subjects go with plural verbs. The subject-verb agreement can be found in the verbal and nominal sentences.

1. Verbal Sentence

A verbal sentence consists of a subject or noun that is followed by a verb. Here are the rules of Subject-Verb Agreement in a verbal sentence:

- a. If the noun is singular, the verb must have –s
 - b. If the noun is plural, the verb does not have –s
- Example: The cloth needs washing, and The clothes need washing.

There are some additional rules of subject-verb agreement (Leech, 1989:34). They are:

- a. Where the subject consists of two or more items joined by “and,” the subject becomes plural and is followed by a plural verb.
For example, My brother and I both like cheese.
- b. Two singular subjects joined by “or” become a singular subject and are followed by a singular verb.
For example, I don’t know whether Dennis or Kevin loves me deeper.
- c. As subjects, the pronouns “any”, “either”, “neither”, and “none” sometimes take some singular verb and sometimes take a plural verb.
For example, Her sons are grown up, but none of them is married.
Her sons are grown up, but none of them is married.

- d. Group nouns such as audience, committee, family, government, and the team can take plural and singular verbs.

For example, The committee meets every week

The committee meets every week

Moreover, Leech (1989:418) states that the “-s” form of the verb is used only with the third person pronoun or singular noun phrases. For the second person pronoun, that is, “you,” which can be singular or plural, the verb does not have an “-s.” For example, you (singular) always do the work well.

You (plural) always do the work well.

She always does the work well.

Furthermore, do not add “-s” or “-es” to a verb when the subject pronoun is plural or I (Hill, 2001:72). For example, I hide the answer.

They ask him for hints.

We make a guess.

The “-s” or “-es” affixation is used after a singular name, noun, or one of the pronouns; he, she, or it. There are some characteristics in making the “-s” or “-es” form in the simple present tense. Add “-es” for verbs ending in “o”, or in a letter or combination of letters which represent a sibilant sound such as: “s”, “sh”, “ch”, “x”, or “z”. And for verbs ending with y preceded by a consonant, the “y” is changed to “-i” and “-es” is added.

2. Nominal Sentence

A nominal sentence is formed with am, is, are after the subject of the sentence. Azar (2002:457) states that a sentence with “be” as the main verb has three basic patterns:

- a. Be + noun. Example: John is a student. (be – is, noun – students)
- b. Be + an adjective. Example: John is intelligent. (be – is, adjective – intelligent)
- c. Be + prepositional phrase. Example: John was at the library. (be – was, prepositional phrase – at the library).

The verb has different forms after different subjects. “Am” is used after the first person singular subject (I), “is” is used after the third person singular subject (he, she, it, the boy, cat, etc.). “Are” is used after the first person plural subject (we), second person singular and plural subject (you, you), and the third person plural subject (they, the boys, etc.). For example:

- a. I am a student. (first person singular subject – I, verb be – am)
- b. You are clever. (second-person singular subject – you, verb be – are)
- c. You are clever. (second-person plural subject – you, verb be – are)
- d. He is in the classroom. (third-person singular subject – he, verb be – is)
- e. The book is green. (third-person singular subject – the book (it), verb be – is)
- f. We are football players. (first-person plural subject – we, verb be – are)
- g. They are beautiful. (third-person plural subject – they, verb – are)

The pattern of the present tense of verb *be* are :

S + *be* + a noun or noun phrase

S + *be* + adjective or adjective phrase

S + *be* + adverb or adverbial phrase

In the negative form, the word *not* is used after the verb *be*. For example, she is not a singer. In “yes” or “no” question, “*be*” comes before the subject. For example, “Is she a singer?” In the “*wh*” question, “*be*” comes before the subject and after the “*wh*” question. For example, “Who is she?”. The different pattern of two interrogative forms is in the put of “*be*.” In the “yes” or “no” question, “*be*” is in front of a sentence, but in the “*wh*” question, “*be*” after the “*wh*” question.

Simple Present Tense

The simple present tense is used to talk about things in general. We are not only thinking about now, but it is used to say something is true in general. Azar (2002:13) states that the simple present says that something was true in the past, is true in the present, and will be true in the future. Furthermore, the simple present tense is formed by using the simple form of the verb that is the form that was listed in the dictionary or it was called infinitive without ‘to’.

1. Simple present tense with *be*

The verb *be* is different from another verb. Here is the positive form of the simple present tense:

- a. I am
- b. You are
- c. He is
- d. She is
- e. It is
- f. We are
- g. They are

For example,

I am a student.

He is hungry.

They are always on time.

In the negative form, *not* is added after *be*:

- a. I am not
- b. You are not
- c. He is not

- d. She is not
- e. It is not
- f. We are not
- g. They are not

For example, I am not a student.

He is not hungry.

They are not always on time.

Besides, an affirmative form of simple present tense have “yes” or “no” questions and the “wh” questions:

- a. Am I?
- b. Are you?
- c. Is she
- d. Are we?
- e. Are they?
- f. Where am I?
- g. What are you?
- h. Why is he?
- i. Who is he?
- j. When are we?
- k. How are they?

For example,

Am I a student?
Are you from Indonesia?
Is he in good condition?
Where are you from?
Who is that girl?

The example one until three is “yes” or “no” question, and four until five is examples of “wh” question.

2. Simple present tense with another verb

In the simple present tense with another verb, “-s” is added in the verb if the subject is “he”, “she”, or “it”:

- a. I play
- b. You play
- c. He plays
- d. We play
- e. They play

For example, I play football every week.

She likes cheese.

They usually go to the cinema on Monday.

In negative form just added “do not” or “does not” after the subject:

- a. I do not play
- b. You do not play
- c. He does not play
- d. We do not play
- e. They do not play

For example, you do not study very much

Shaw does not like sport.

We do not live in Malaysia.

For “yes” or “no” questions in affirmative form the sentence use do/does before the subject. While in “wh” questions just put question word in front of the sentence:

- a. Do I play?
- b. Do you play?
- c. Does she play?
- d. Do we play?
- e. Do they play?
- f. Where do I play?
- g. What do you play?
- h. Why does he play?
- i. Who does she play?
- j. When do we play?
- k. How do they play?

For example, do you work at your own company?

Does Rooney play football every weekend?

Do they like travelling?

Where do you live?

What does she like to eat?

The simple present tense is used to tell about something in present time. In general, the simple present expresses events or situations that always exist, usually, habitually; they live now, have lived in the past, and probably will exist in the future (Azar, 2002:2). In other words, the simple present is used to express habitual or everyday activities such as:

- a. To express a habitual action, with adverbs like usually, always, or often.
Example: They often play football together.
- b. To state a general truth.
Example: The earth revolves around the sun.
- c. To express future action, especially with verbs of movement or travel such as come, leave, stay, or arrive. Example: I arrive in Hong Kong on Saturday.
- d. In commentaries on games and plays.

Example: He takes the shuttlecock and sends it high above the net.

- e. In exclamations, announcements, or demonstrations.

Example: Our club gives its annual dinner next week.

For Indonesian students, the simple present tense is not as simple as the name. Notably, on the suffix “-s” or “-es” to the verb when the subject is a third singular person. This is different from the Indonesian language that has no suffix, whether it is the third singular person or third plural person, and or every subject in a sentence. It is because of their first language interference in their foreign language. Those will make the Indonesian students have difficulties in applying them in a sentence.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Approach and Type of Research

In this research, the quantitative approach is used. The quantitative approach is concerned with the collection and analysis of data in numeric form. The quantitative approach uses numbers and statistics to analyze the data collection to examine the hypothesis of the research. Since this research uses numbers and they are required to be analyzed, therefore, the quantitative approach would suit this research. The researcher chose the descriptive method since the objective of the research is to describe the phenomena from the data that were derived from the observational situation. Seliger and Shohamy (1989:124) also mentioned that the descriptive method involves a collection of the technique used to specify, delineate, or describe naturally occurring phenomena. This research tried to explain the students’ error in writing a simple sentence in the simple present tense by the eighth-grade students SMPN 13 Banjarmasin without giving any treatments to the students.

Sample

The sample is defined as the smallest number of observations taken from the population (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2006). There were six classes of the eighth grade of SMPN 13 Banjarmasin. They are VIII-A, VIII-B, VIII-C, VIII-D, VIII-E, and VIII-F. The total subjects of the research are 180. The sample taken in this research is based on the classes. Therefore, the type of sampling which is used is purposive sampling. In using purposive sampling, the researcher decides what needs to be known and sets out to find people who can and are willing to provide the information under knowledge or experience (Bernard, Lewis, and Sheppard in Tongco, (2007:147)). Based on the statement, in other words, a researcher uses purposive sampling techniques to determine the sample of research based on specific purposes and considerations of accessibility. Thus, the researcher takes VIII-B as the sample. In using purposive sampling, Fraenkel and Wallen (2006:100) further explained that researchers do not merely study who is available or accessible but instead use their judgment to select a sample that they believe, based on prior information of the population, will be representative. In this case, the preceding information obtained is that class VIII-B has learned the material needed for research when the other classes have not reached the same material as that of the class VIII-B.

The instrument of the Research

In this research, the test in writing simple sentences was used to know the students' errors in writing simple sentences of subject-verb agreement in the simple present tense. The students were asked to make fifteen sentences of subject-verb agreement in the simple present tense. The sentences must have three components of a sentence. There are affirmative sentences, negative sentences, and interrogative sentences.

The technique of Data Collection

The technique used to collect data in this research was a writing test. Students were asked to write simple sentences based on the instruction preceding in the paper given by the teacher to the students. The test was conducted two times, namely the first test and second test, with the interval three weeks to get the data needed, the test items of the first and second test were the same. In these tests, students were asked to make simple sentences of subject-verb agreement in the simple present tense. The data resulted from any instrument was valid and reliable. A reliable instrument is one that gives consistent results. In this case, the test did not measure the students' ability but analysed students' errors in writing simple sentences of subject-verb agreement in the simple present tense. The design of the research implementation is shown in the following table:

TABLE 1
The design of the research implementation

1 st test	Time Interval			2 nd test
01	W1	W2	W3	02

Notes:

- 01 = First test
- 02 = Second test
- W = Week

The technique of Data Analysis

There are some steps in analysing the data. The steps are:

- a. Identifying the errors that made by the students

After checking the students' answers in the tests, the researcher tries to determine whether the students' wrong answers are a mistake or contain intralingual error and also writes the name of the students who are wrong in answering the questions. Some answers which may contain intralingual errors will be written or will be underlined by the researcher.

- b. In classify the error, the researcher needs the result of the test and the researcher will classify the error based on the verb be and verb agreement.
- c. Calculating the number of errors based on each type. Then to analyze data, the researcher uses the formula by Anas Sudjiono (2010) to have the frequency and percentage of errors :

$$P = \frac{N1}{\sum N} \times 100\%$$

Where :

- P = the percentage of errors
N1 = the number of each type of errors
 $\sum N$ = the number of the whole errors observed

- d. Describing the data. After getting the result of the test, the researcher described where and what error made by the students. The researcher also gave some examples of students' work.
- e. Drawing a conclusion. In the end, the researcher told whether error in the verb 'be' or verb agreement that was appeared as the dominant one.

FINDINGS, RESULTS, AND DISCUSSION.

Description of the Data

The subject of this research was the eighth-grade students of SMPN 13 Banjarmasin in the academic year 2017/2018. As stated in methodology, the researcher used purposive sampling to obtain the data. Thus, the researcher chose VIII-B as the sample.

The data of this research was collected by giving the written test to the students. The test required them to write simple sentences by using simple present tense based on the topic given. The students were asked to write five simple sentences in the simple present tense that consist of positive, negative, and interrogative sentences. The test was given twice at different times to get reliable data of the students' error. The first test was given on Saturday, January 9th, 2018. The second test was given on Saturday, January 30th, 2018. Based on the data which has been collected, the researcher started to analyze the data of students' error in writing simple sentences in the simple present tense.

Research Findings

In order to get a description of the students' errors in writing simple sentences in the simple present tense, the errors that were made by students were classified into two types: (1) verb *be*, and (2) verb agreement. Then, total errors from every number of sentences were calculated to determine which type has the most errors.

The Description of Data Analysis on Students' Errors of the First Test

The first test was given on Saturday, January 9th, 2018. In the first test, there were 23 students present at the meeting. Four students were absent from the meeting. The recapitulation of students' errors found in students' works can be seen in the table below:

Table 3
The Recapitulation of Students' Errors in the First Test

No.	Students' Number	Types of Error	
		Verb be	Verb Agreement
1	Student 1	3	6
2	Student 2	6	6
3	Student 3	2	6
4	Student 4	1	6
5	Student 5	3	6
6	Student 6	1	6
7	Student 7	-	6
8	Student 8	-	6
9	Student 9	-	6
10	Student 10	-	6
11	Student 11	3	6
12	Student 12	7	6
13	Student 13	-	6
14	Student 14	-	6
15	Student 15	1	6
16	Student 16	2	6
17	Student 17	7	6
18	Student 18	8	6
19	Student 19	3	6
20	Student 20	2	6
21	Student 21	-	6
22	Student 22	-	6
23	Student 23	6	6
	TOTAL= 193	55	138

From the table above, the researcher calculated the percentage of errors, the result is as follow:

1. The errors of Verb be = $\frac{55}{193} \times 100\% = 28.5\%$
2. The errors of Verb Agreement = $\frac{138}{193} \times 100\% = 71.5\%$

Table 4
The Recapitulation of Error Types, and its Percentage

Types of Errors	Verb be	Verb Agreement
Total Occurrences	55	138
Percentage	28.5%	71.5%
Total	193 = 100%	

Based on the calculation of errors above, it can be concluded that the total number of students' errors were 193 errors. There are 55 or 28.5% errors in verb be, and 138 or 71.5% errors in verb agreement. From the calculation of the data, errors in verb agreement are the most frequent errors done by the eighth-grade students of SMPN 13 Banjarmasin with the percentage 71.5%. Moreover, the lowest errors were found in the verb *be* with the percentage only 28.5%.

The Description of Data Analysis on Students' Errors of the Second Test

In the second test, there were 23 students present at the meeting. The second test was given on Saturday, January 30th, 2018. Same with the first test, the researcher asked the students to write simple present tense in simple sentences. The recapitulation of students' errors found in students' works can be explained in the table below:

Table 5
The Recapitulation of Students' Errors in the Second Test

No.	Students' Number	Types of Error	
		Verb <i>be</i>	Verb Agreement
1	Student 1	3	6
2	Student 2	8	6

3	Student 3	1	6
4	Student 4	3	6
5	Student 5	3	6
6	Student 6	-	6
7	Student 7	1	6
8	Student 8	-	6
9	Student 9	3	6
10	Student 10	5	6
11	Student 11	1	6
12	Student 12	6	6
13	Student 13	-	6
14	Student 14	3	6
15	Student 15	3	6
16	Student 16	-	6
17	Student 17	8	6
18	Student 18	6	6
19	Student 19	3	6
20	Student 20	5	6
21	Student 21	2	6
22	Student 22	2	6
23	Student 23	8	6
	TOTAL= 212	74	138

From the table above, the researcher calculated the percentage of errors, the result is as follow:

1. The errors of the Verb *be* = $\frac{74}{212} \times 100\% = 35\%$
2. The errors of Verb Agreement = $\frac{138}{212} \times 100\% = 65\%$

Table 6

The Recapitulation of Error Types, and its Percentage

Types of Errors	Verb <i>be</i>	Verb Agreement
Total Occurrences	74	138
Percentage	35%	65%
Total	212 = 100%	

Based on the table above, it can be concluded that errors in the second test have increased. The highest number of errors was verb agreement errors with 138 or 65% of the total percentages. The lowest was the verb *be* with 74 or 35% errors from the overall percentages.

From the first and second test that done by the researcher about errors in writing simple present tense in simple sentences, it can be concluded that verb agreement errors were always in the highest number of errors in students' works. Furthermore, the verb *be* error has significantly increased from 28.5% to 35%. It means that the increment of the errors is about 6.5%.

The Description of Data Analysis on Students' Errors of the First and Second Test

To find the most errors of the first until the last test, the researcher combined all test results into one. The result can be seen in the following table:

from 1st to the 2nd Test

Types of Errors	Verb <i>be</i>	Verb Agreement
Total Occurrences	55 + 74 = 129	138 + 138 = 276
Percentage	31.85%	68.15%
Total	405 = 100%	

Based on the table above, it is known that the highest number of errors is in verb agreement errors, and the lowest number is in verb *be*. It can be seen as well that from a total of 405 errors, 276 or 68.15% made by students fell on verb agreement errors. It means that more than half of the total errors came from verb agreement. The lowest number of errors was in verb *be* with only 129 or 31.85% from 405 total percentages errors. Furthermore, based on the calculation, the highest number of errors that the students made was in verb agreement with 68.15% from total percentages, verb agreement error is considered as the most errors among the types of errors found in students' work.

Discussion of Research Findings

As stated before, there were two types of errors that the researcher wanted to know in students' works. There was a verb *be* and verb agreement errors. In the first test, the

highest number of errors was verb agreement errors. On the other side, the verb *becomes* the lowest error. In the second test, errors in verb *be* have increased, but it still has a smaller number of errors than verb agreement errors

The Source of Errors

The researcher analysed source of error on the theory of Brown (1987) which stated that the learners' errors arise from several possible sources, namely Interlingual error, Intralingual error, Context learning, and Communicative strategy. However, from the data analysis, the researcher only found two sources of errors, which are Interlingual error and Intralingual error.

Interlingual Error

Interlingual error based on Mackey (in Fatchul Mu'in and Sirajuddin Kamal 2006:61) defines interference as the use of features belonging to one language while speaking or writing another. In other words, we can say interlingual errors are errors that occur as a result of transfer from the native language into the second language. Most of the students conducted at least one error in writing sentences due to this error. For Indonesian students, they just translate their L1, Indonesian, into English without knowing the grammatical structure first.

From the data, the researcher found these errors in the sentences written by the students.

(1a) Miya not watch TV every day.

(1b) Miya tidak menonton tv setiap hari

The sentence "Miya not watch tv every day" seemed to be directly transferred from "*Miya tidak menonton tv setiap hari*". The former is not accepted because it is not constructed based on the English Language Grammar. This negative sentence is derived from the positive one, namely: "Miya watches TV every day. If it is constructed in the negative form, it will be : "Miya does not watch TV every day. The sentence "Miya not watch TV every day" needs to be fixed since it is wrong in term of grammatical rule. A first sentence is a negative form of verbal sentence in the simple present tense, the students should put new infinitive "does" since the subject is third-person singular.

(2a) She in the classroom

(2b) Dia di dalam kelas

As for the second sentence, it is a nominal sentence in the simple present tense, thus the students should put "to be" in the sentence, and make it into "She is in the classroom". We should use "is" because the subject is third-person singular.

Based on Mu'in and Kamal (2006), interference mostly occurred due to speakers' failure to transfer from the native language into the second language. The degree of the failure will be different based on how bilingual the speaker is. It is also stated that the aspects of bilingualism (compound, coordinate, or subordinate) will determine whether or not the interference phenomenon occurs in the language user (Fatchul Mu'in and Sirajuddin Kamal, 2006:60). Furthermore, Troike and Blackwell (in Fatchul Mu'in and Sirajuddin Kamal, 2006:61) mentioned that the concept of interference itself can be referred to the usage of formal elements, such as the phonological, morphological, lexical, or syntactic

element in a given language that could be explained by the effect of contact with another language.

Weinreich (in Fatchul Mu'in and Sirajuddin Kamal, 2006:61) also stated that interference occurred since the user of the language have a higher degree of familiarity with one language than the other language they know. The different degrees of familiarity may occur due to the first language overwhelm the second language that the speaker has, since the first language usually learned from the speaker's environment, whether it is from parents, family, or friends and acquaintances.

Since a language is a tool used by a society to communicate and interact with each other, it is something that was agreed by the whole members of said community, which is the reason why they have their own rules which are affected by the values and other cultural aspects of that community (Fatchul Mu'in and Sirajuddin Kamal, 2006:24). Thus, every language tends to have its own specific rules, and those said rules can interfere with the usage of new language learned by the speaker.

The interference itself can be reduced or deleted if the speaker becomes more bilingual. Bloomfield considered bilingualism as "*the native-like control of two languages,*" and he states: "In the extreme case of foreign-language learning the speaker becomes so proficient as to be indistinguishable from the native speaker around him" (Fatchul Mu'in and Sirajuddin Kamal, 2006:40). However, since the samples of this research are still at the beginning of their study, and just learned English in a short and limited time, they only had superficial knowledge related to English and seem to have a limited vocabulary still, even some of them always cannot distinguish between verb and noun. Besides, their first language, the Indonesian language is also used daily. Therefore, the speakers tend to create some habits which usually led to interference, which happened automatically. Thus, we can say that they have not reached the level of bilingualism stated by Bloomfield yet.⁴

Intralingual Error

As for the intralingual error, Richards (2008) stated that the intralingual error is the negative transfer of items within the target language. Furthermore, he noted that the intralingual error could be divided into four kinds. They are an overgeneralization, ignorance of rules restriction, incomplete application of rules, and false concept hypothesized. However, only overgeneralization, incomplete application of rules, and wrong notion hypothesized that were found in the tests conducted.

a. Overgeneralization

Overgeneralization was found on item number 3. In this case, students failed to move on to the new situation. The material they learned before the simple present tense was about simple past tense. It made the answer of item number 3 sometimes included elements of simple past tense. For example, student 5 answered with, "Bruno and Alves were football players." While the answer should be, "Bruno and Alves are football players." Since they learned that nominal sentences in simple past tense should use "to

⁴ An elaborative description on bilingualism can be read in : Fatchul Mu'in (ed). 2019. Sociolinguistics, a language study in sociocultural perspectives. Banjarmasin:Jurusan PBS FKIP Universitas Lambung Mangkurat.

be” *was* or *were* based on the subject, they just overgeneralized it and used *were*, even though the instruction clearly stated that they should make simple present tense sentences

b. Ignorance of Rule Restriction

As stated in chapter two, Ignorance of Rules Restriction is the students’ failure to observe the restriction of the existing structure. That is the application of rules to the context where they do not apply. This error was found on item number 2, and student 11 answered with “She not is in the classroom,” while it should be “She is not in the classroom.” The student does not know the correct grammatical rules for this kind of sentence. The grammatical form of this sentence should be using S + be + not + adverb or adverbial phrase.

c. False Concept Hypothesized

Some results of students’ work also showed signs of false concepts hypothesized. For example, most of them answered test item number 4 using the verb *be*. While it was supposed to be verb agreement. It happened because the previous item of the test was using the verb *be*, and students borrowed the element of the last item to the next item which is the usage of the verb *be*. Therefore, most of the students conducted an error on this item; for example, student 17 answered with, “He is send the shuttlecock high above the net.” While the correct answer should be, “He sends the shuttlecock high above the net.”

Thus, we can say the result of this study was in line with finding that found on errors in tenses of Writing IV students of English Department of FKIP Unlam Banjarmasin (Ima Natria, 2007; Noor Aisyah, 2014). The difference was at the types of errors. The first study that was conducted by Natria (2007) was to find out three types of errors undertaken by the students at the Writing IV class of English Department of FKIP Unlam Banjarmasin. There are three types of errors that were researched, and those are the omission of *be*, wrong use of the verb, and errors in the suffix *-s* or *-es*. The second research was conducted by Aisyah (2014) who conducted an error analysis research with the subject from the Writing IV class of English Department of FKIP Unlam Banjarmasin. The errors that she tried to be analyzed were *errors in addition*, errors in omission, and errors in misformation. Even though the focus of two pieces of research above is a little bit different from the writer’s, all three pieces of research have similarities in the finding since all researches stated found out that the most errors occurred was in the verb agreement error. Most of the sentences made by students were similar to the following examples. Student 17 answered with “He is send the shuttlecock high above the net.” While the answer should be “He sends the shuttlecock high above the net,” and the other example was from student 8 who answered with “He send the shuttlecock high above the net,” when it should be “He sends the shuttlecock high above the net.” Therefore, it can be concluded that most of the students still could not find a deal between subjects and verbs.

COMCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion

This study has the aims to find the most subject-verb agreement errors in writing simple present tense in simple sentences by the eighth-grade students of SMPN 13 Banjarmasin. Based on the research finding from two times the test given, it can be

concluded that the highest number of errors was in verb agreement errors, and the verb *be* as the lowest number of errors from the total percentages.

In the first test, the total errors were 193 errors. The students made one hundred thirty-eight errors (71.5%) in verb agreement. Followed by the verb *be* with 55 errors (28.5%) as the lowest number of errors. In the second test, from a total of 212 errors, the students made 138 (65%) errors in verb agreement, and 74 (35%) errors in verb *be*. From the first to the second test, the rank of the total errors each type was always the same. The highest number was verb agreement, and then the verb *be* as the lowest number of errors. As the highest number of total errors, verb agreement was considered as the most errors among the types of errors that occurred. From the test, it was revealed that most of the students made simple sentences that should use verb agreement by using the verb *be*. Most of it happened because the previous item of the test was using the verb *be*, and students borrowed the element of the last item to the next item. Thus, they generalized that all sentences using the same pattern.

Suggestions

Errors in the teaching-learning process of a foreign language are something unavoidable. Although it seems natural, students should learn more about vocabulary and grammatical functions to improve their writing skills. Based on the result of the research, the researcher would like to offer some suggestions as follow:

1. Since most of the students make errors in verb agreement, the students should pay attention to the rules of the simple present tense, especially the rules of adding *-s* or *-es* to the verb when the subject is the third person. The students should practice grammatical rules in the simple present tense to minimise the errors as well.
2. The teacher has to make the students aware of their mistake by conducting a discussion session with the students by using their wrong answers as examples. Thus, they can realise their own error.
3. The other researchers are suggested to conduct further research about the error in tenses more with details to explore more about the field of grammar, mainly related to techniques to increase students' mastery of simple present tense.

REFERENCES

- Aisyah, Noor. 2014. *Simple Past Tense Errors In Recount Text Written By The Eighth Grade Students of SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Banjarmasin*. Banjarmasin: S1 Program of English Department, Faculty of Teachers and Education. Lambung Mangkurat University.
- Azar, Betty. 2002. *Understanding and Using English Grammar*. Longman Group.
- Brown, D. H. 1987. *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching*. Regenes Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall.
- Brown, James Dean. 2005. *Testing in Language Programs: Comprehensive Guide to English Language Assessment*. Singapore: McGraw Hill Companies, Inc.
- Byrne, Donn. 1997. *Teaching Writing Skills*. New York: Longman, Inc.
- Diana, Linnie. 2014. *An Analysis of Errors in Tenses of Writing IV Students of English Department*. Banjarmasin: S1 Program of English Department Faculty of Teachers Training and Education. Lambung Mangkurat University. Unpublished *Sarjana's* Thesis.
- Ellis, R., 1997. *Second Language Acquisition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Fraenkel, Jack R., and Norman E. Wallen. 2006. *How to Design and Evaluate Research in Education*. New York: The McGraw Hill Companies, Inc.
- Grose, M. Lois. 2013. *Teaching Writing in Junior High School*. English Journal. (Online). Vol. 49. No. 2, pp.89(www. jstor.org, retrieved on November 15, 2017)
- Harmer, Jeremy. 2001. *The Practice of English Language Teaching*. London: Longman Group Limited.
- Hill, McGraw. 2001. *Grammar Practice Book Grade 3*. The McGraw Hill Companies, Inc., Two Penn Plaza, New York.
- Hubbard, P., Jones, H., Thornton, B., & Wheeler, R., 1983. *A Training Course for TEFL*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Joshi, Manik. 2014. *Simple, Compound, Complex, Compound-Complex Sentences, English Sentence Forms*.
- Leech, Geoffrey. 1982. *English Grammar for Today*. The Macmillan Press Ltd.
- Leech, Geoffrey. 1989. *An A-Z of English Grammar & Usage*. Longman Publish Group.
- Mu'in, Fatchul. 2017. Phonemic Interference of Local Language in Spoken English by Students of English Department of Lambung Mangkurat University. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research* , 8 (1). ISSN 1798-4769.
- Mu'in, Fatchul, Arini, Dini Noor, Amrina, Rosyi. 2018. *Language in Oral Production Perspectives*. CV. Rasi Terbit.
- Mu'in, Fatchul and Kamal, Sirajuddin. 2006. *Sociolinguistics: an Introduction*. Banjarmasin: PBS FKIP UNLAM
- Mu'in, Fatchul. 2008. *Interference and Integration*. Prodi Bahasa Inggris ...<https://english.fkip.ulm.ac.id> > 2008/10/18 > interference-and-integration
- Mu'in, Fatchul (ed). 2019. *Sociolinguistics, a language study in sociocultural perspectives*. Banjarmasin: Jurusan PBS FKIP Universitas Lambung Mangkurat.
- Mu'in, Fatchul. 2019. *Theory of Sentences*. Banjarmasin: Universitas Lambung Mangkurat.
- Natria, Ima. 2007. *Students' Errors In Writing Descriptive Texts*. English Department Faculty of Language and Arts Semarang State University.
- Norrish, John. 1983. *Language Learner and Their Error*. New York: Macmillan.
- Raimes, A., 1983. *The technique in Teaching Writing*. Oxford University Press.
- Ramadan, Mu'in, Fatchul and Arini, Dini Noor. 2019. Types, Functions and Factors of Code-Switching as Teaching Technique conducted by English Department Lecturers in ULM Banjarmasin in *Lingua Educatia Journal*, Volume 1, September 2019.
- Richards, J. C., 2008. *Second Language Acquisition: Error Analysis*. London: Longman Group Limited.
- Seliger, Herbert W. And Shohamy, Elana. 1989. *Research Methods*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Sudjiono, Anas. 2010. *Pengantar Statistik Pendidikan*, Jakarta: PT. Raja Grafindo Persada, 2010. USA: Pearson Education.
- Tongco, M. D., 2007. *Purposive Sampling as a Tool for Informant Selection*. Ethnobotany Research and Applications. Department of Botany, University of Hawai'i.