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A STUDY OF SIMPLE PAST TENSE ERROR AND ITS SOURCES IN FORM TWO STUDENTS' WRITTEN COMPOSITION

BY
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TANJONG MALIM
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PUNETHAWATHI A/P A. RAJAGOPAL

THIS ACADEMIC EXERCISE IS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT OF THE MASTER'S DEGREE IN EDUCATION

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PENGAKUAN

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the work in this dissertation is my own except for quotations and summaries which have been duly acknowledged.

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Abstrak

Pembelajaran tatabahasa Bahasa Inggeris sememangnya diakui sebagai sesuatu yang bermasalah kepada pelajar-pelajar di Malaysia. Pelajar-pelajar menghasilkan banyak kesalahan dalam tatabahasa Bahasa Inggeris yang melibatkan kedua-dua kemahiran penerimaan dan penghasilan. Kajian ini meneliti seramai 30 orang pelajar Tingkatan Dua dari Sekolah Menengah Raja Muda Musa, Teluk Intan, Perak untuk menentukan jenis-jenis kesalahan 'simple past tense'serta punca-punca kesalahan tersebut daripada dua jenis karangan. Terdapat tiga jenis kesalahan iaitu kesalahan 'penambahan', 'tertinggal'dan 'kesalahfahaman maklumat' telah dibuat oleh responden-responden kajian ini. Kajian ini juga mendapati punca utama kesalahan mereka adalah dari segi kekurangan asas pengetahuan mengenai 'simple past tense.' Di antara beberapa punca utama kesalahan mereka ialah pengaruh bahasa ibunda, kekeliruan penggunaan tatabahasa dan salah intepretasi tatabahasa. Beberapa kaedah pengajaran dan strategi pembelajaran untuk mengatasi masalah 'simple past tense' di cadangankan di akhir kajian ini.

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Abstract

The learning of English grammar, especially the tenses has been recognized as a problem area to ESL learners. Learners produce numerous errors in receptive and productive skills of the English Language. This study examined the categories, types and sources of simple past tense errors made by 30 form two students from Sekolah Menengah Raja Muda Musa, Teluk Intan, Perak. The rationale for this study was to help the researcher to extend knowledge about simple past tense error and its sources. The instruments were two sets of compositions. The errors have been classified under two categories, interlingual and intralingual. The findings of this study indicate that respondents produced three types of errors, namely misinformation, addition and omission. The most frequent were errors caused by intralingual interference. Besides that, this study also indicate the sources of errors which are mother tongue interference, over generalization and rule restriction or wrong application of rule. The researcher has focussed on SLA theory which relates how L2 learners acquire grammatical sub-system such as past tense. Several teaching approaches and strategies are recommended for example the integrated approach to teach simple past tense, focussed grammar practices and direct method at the end of this study to enhance the teaching and learning process of simple past tense.

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Abstrak

Pembelajaran tatabahasa Bahasa Inggeris sememangnya diakui sebagai sesuatu yang bermasalah kepada pelajar-pelajar di Malaysia. Pelajar-pelajar menghasilkan banyak kesalahan dalam tatabahasa Bahasa Inggeris yang melibatkan kedua-dua kemahiran penerimaan dan penghasilan. Kajian kes ini meneliti seramai 30 orang pelajar Tingkatan Dua dari Sekolah Menengah Raja Muda Musa, Teluk Intan untuk menentukan jenis-jenis kesalahan "Simple Past Tense" serta punca-punca kesalahan tersebut daripada dua jenis karangan. Terdapat tiga jenis kesalahan iaitu kesalahan "penambahan", "tertinggal" dan "kesalahfahaman maklumat" telah dibuat oleh responden-responden di dalam kajian ini. Kajian ini juga mendapati punca utama kesalahan mereka adalah dari segi kekurangan asas pengetahuan mengenai "Simple Past Tense". Di antara beberapa punca utama kesalahan mereka ialah pengaruh bahasa ibunda, jarang penggunaan Bahasa Inggeris, kekeliruan penggunaan tatabahasa (Grammar) Bahasa Inggeris dan salah penterjemahan. Beberapa kaedah pengajaran dan strategi pembelajaran telah dicadangkan di akhir kajian ini supaya dapat meningkatkan proses pengajaran dan pembelajaran

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Abstract

The learning of English Grammar especially the tenses has been recognized as a problem area to Malaysian English learners. Learners produce numerous errors in receptive and productive skills of the English Language. This study examined the categories, types and sources of simple past tense errors made by 30 form two students from Sekolah Menengah Raja Muda Musa, Teluk Intan, Perak. The rationale for this study was to help the researcher to extend knowledge about simple past tense error and its sources. The instruments used were two sets of compositions. The errors have been classified under two categories, interlingual and intralingual. The findings of this study indicate that respondents produced three types of errors, namely misinformation, addition and omission. The most frequent were errors caused by intralingual interference. Besides that, this study also indicates the sources of error which are mother tongue interference, over generalization and rule restriction or wrong application of rule. The researcher has focused on SLA theory which relates how L2 learners acquire grammatical sub-system such as past tense. Several teaching approaches and learning strategies are recommended for example the integrated approach to teach simple past tense, focused grammar practices and direct method at the end of this study to enhance the teaching and learning process of the Simple Past Tense.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

"*Errors"* are defined as something incorrectly done through ignorance, inadvertence, and a mistake for example in calculation, judgement, speech, writing and action (Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics, 1996). Errors in second language learning on the other hand arise basically through the inaccurate or inappropriate use of certain phoneme, syntactic or semantic items and the structures of the target language from the point of view of grammar and accepted usage. Error Analysis is concerned with the identification, description and explanation of errors made by language learners, either in spoken or in written form (Corder, 1974).

The study of language errors made by second language learners has been a subject of interest among linguists and language teachers. Language teaching approaches and methods are not shaped within a vacuum but is influenced by trends and research in various related disciplines as well as the socio-political context of a particular time. The relationship between all these factors similarly influence how

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grammar is presented in each method or approach. Kelly (1969) summarizes language teaching into three broad aims. The first aim, the social aim, demands that language be regarded as a form of social behavior and a type of communication. The second aim is the artistic or literary aim, which treats language as a vehicle of creativity. The third aim, the philosophical aim, demands training in analytical techniques and views language as structure. It becomes quite apparent from these three aims that grammar will be given varying and differential emphases according to the aim of language teaching which predominates.

Kelly (1969) summarizes the evolution of second language teaching into four eras. These are the 12^{th} to the 15^{th} centuries where language was taught for literary purposes; the renaissance era where language was translated into modern language for literary purposes; the 17^{th} to 19^{th} centuries where grammar was taught for social purposes of language subordinate and the introduction of the grammar translation evolution; and finally, the 19^{th} and 20^{th} centuries where natural and direct methods predominate the teaching of language. Kelly's (1969) historical survey of English language teaching provides an interesting description regarding how grammar instruction has been regarded during different periods of the long history of language teaching.

Although Latin may have lost some of its influence during this period, its impact on the educational framework of the time had already been firmly established in many aspects related to language education. This influence is evident in the grammar-translation method, the language teaching methodology that evolved from the individualized techniques used during the classical period. Numerous language reformers attempted to *"fix"* the orthography and grammar of the language and despite limited success, they contributed to a general outlook regarding the

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importance of good grammar. Undoubtedly, this too can be said to have some indirect effect on language teaching and the grammar translation method.

The grammar translation method employed the techniques of grammar presentation and translation not as new techniques but rather as familiar techniques that were used in individual instruction during the classical period. Howatt (1986) claims that the method was reformist motivated and was intended to make language learning easier. The grammar translation method retained the framework of grammar and translation simply because most teachers and learners alike were familiar with those techniques.

Probably the central feature of the grammar translation method that distinguished it from the earlier individualized techniques of the classical period was the replacement of the text with exemplary sentences. These sentences were disconnected sentences that focussed on particular grammatical structures. A common exercise in grammar translation was the translation into and out of the foreign language. The grammar translation method began innocently enough as each lesson had "*one or two new grammar rules, a short vocabulary list, and some practice examples to translate*" (Howatt, 1986, p. 136).

Grammar translation uses word class grammar and syntactic analysis was often restricted to "a few comments on word order and a lot of fuss about "local" problems such as making verbs agree with their nouns" (Howatt, 1986, p.137). Unfortunately, this approach encouraged the construction of sentences on a word by word basis with each word added to the one before in a linear, arithmetic fashion. As a result, awkward sentences such as " the book of my sister" could be grammatically constructed. The "*arithmetic fallacy*" as described by Henry Sweet (cited in Howatt, 1986, p.143), made it almost impossible to distinguish "*grammatical"* sentences from

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those that most native speakers would deem "*unacceptable*." Nevertheless, despite these weaknesses the grammar translation method existed in one form or another for at least a century until the mid to late 19th century.

The Direct Method was an amalgamation of the different ideas suggested by the individual reformers and the reform Movement of the 19th century. It represents " *a shift from literary language to the spoken, everyday language as the object of early instruction, a goal that was totally lacking in Grammar Translation "* (Stern, 1986, p. 458). The Direct Method focuses on oral presentation in the target language by the teacher in classrooms. Grammatical explanation was delayed or simply ignored as learners were expected to become aware of such 'rules" inductively, much like a child learning his or her first language. Whatever success the method may have had, it seemed to be more a result of the teacher's teaching abilities rather than the method itself. It involved the "art of teaching" rather than sound theoretical foundations, "performance ' rather than "actual hard science"(Stern, 1986, p. 456). It was due to this weakness in theory that the Direct Method gradually lost some of its popularity.

Unlike the Direct Method, the Audiolingual Method (ALM) which gained popularity beginning from 1940's was firmly grounded in linguistic and psychological theory. The strong focus on grammatical structures, yet ambivalent attitude towards explanation of grammatical rules, can best be understood by studying the theoretical principles that the ALM derived from both psychology and linguistics. The learning process in the ALM has been described as "one of habituation and conditioning without the intervention of any intellectual analysis" (Stern, 1986, p. 458). Active and simple practice through the use of memorization and repetition drills is the rule with the intention of making language learning "less of a mental burden and more a matter of relatively effortless and frequent repetition and imitation."

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(Stern 1986, p.465). These drills were an essential feature of audiolingualism in dealing with linguistic structures.

Audio lingualism's concern was primarily on the oral and aural skills. Syntax was avoided as a primary object of the study. Noam Chomsky's first work, Syntactic Structures, (Chomsky 1980), broke from the traditions of his time. Firstly, instead of examining the observable corpus of utterances as his initial starting point for describing grammar, Chomsky focussed on the inner "mechanism" underlying language use. Chomsky's ideas, despite having a strong impact on language teaching methodology, were not presented as part of a new methodology. As a result, numerous methods emerged in reaction not only to his ideas but also to the non-mentalistic approach of the Audiolingual method. In conclusion, it underscored the importance of both the fields of cognitive psychology and linguistics in the analysis of language development.

Pedagogical descriptions are "*aids to learning, not the object of learning"* (Corder 1988, p. 34). The express form of such a grammar is neither readily available not fully developed. Rutherford (1987 p.125) believes pedagogical grammar should address the following questions: What kinds of rules are we talking about? How much of what happens in language use can we account for through such rules? What does teaching a rule really mean? Rutherford's (1987) focus however, was not on "low-level syntax" such as subject-verb agreement, plural markers, and possessive statement but on the ways in which the target language conceptualizes reality and the grammatization of those concepts.

Halliday (1973) and Hymes (1977) considered Chomsky's description of competence as too abstract and limited to be of any practical use. Hymes (1977) in particular was convinced that Chomsky's notion of competence did not sufficiently

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account for the social and functional rules of language. Hymes (1977) suggested that it was important to distinguish between linguistic and communicative competence in order to distinguish between the knowledge "about" language forms and the knowledge that enables a person to communicate functionally and interactively. The work of Halliday (1973, p. 136) on the different language functions which describe the "purposive nature of communication" was to further emphasize the socio-linguistic outlook to the notion of competence.

The ideas of Krashen(1969),Halliday (1973) as well as Hymes (1977) led to the development of the communicative approach to language teaching. Communicative theory presents the second language in a more clearly specified social context and situation. Canale and Swain (1980), propose the idea that communicative competence is made up of four different competencies – grammatical competence, discourse competence, strategic competence, and socio-linguistic competence. Bachman (1990) suggested that grammatical competence make up a portion of overall language competence. As such grammar occupies a secondary role and as a result, grammar is taught incidentally.

However, the situation is not so in Malaysia ever since the introduction of the KBSM in 1987. Our English language syllabus for secondary schools gives equal emphasis to the oral language skills of listening and speaking and to the literacy language skills of reading and writing. Additionally, the components of language, the sound system, vocabulary, and grammar of the language, are integrated with language skills. The language skills of listening (aural), speaking (oral), reading and writing as well as language contents namely phonology (pronunciation), lexis (vocabulary), grammar and discourse are integrated. The four language skills and language content are closely linked to each other. Language content and language skills are divided for

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the purpose of analysis but they should not be regarded as separate items. In everyday communication language skills and language content are linked quite unconsciously. Integration in teaching is one way of trying to make language learning in the classroom more like the real life communication outside the classroom. Integrating two or more skills in the language class brings more benefits for both teachers and learners.

Mastering the mechanics of forming the letters of the alphabets and learning spelling and punctuation rules are needed when writing. Vocabulary needs to be improved in order to use appropriate words. The rules of grammar and syntax of the language are needed so that writing can be understood. While it may be true to say that the traditional role of writing is to monitor and test what has been taught, there are good reasons why writing has an important part to play in the language classroom. With students at the lower ability range, the teacher may need to concentrate on the mechanics of putting pen to paper, practicing letter formation, spelling, punctuation and grammatical structure. Many teachers feel that the writing skill cannot be fully developed until students are able to write correctly from a grammatical point of view. Communicative approaches towards language teaching methodology have brought changes in teaching writing. Poor punctuation, spelling and weaknesses in grammatical knowledge may impede students' writing. Teachers should plan a systematic approach to help students with spelling. Identifying and noting spelling errors in students written work is a good start. Any work that the teacher does in the area of grammar will help the students in all other language skills.

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Table 1.1

Time and Marks Allocated for composition questions

The written component questions for the *PMR* English language and Literature examination are allocated the following time and marks (Refer to Appendix D):

Question	Time allocated	Type of question	Marks
1	35 minutes	Guided Composition	30 Marks
2	35 minutes	Guided Composition	30 Marks
3	20 minutes	Question on novel	10 Marks

Since writing is an important examination component, therefore this study will investigate the difficulty in writing, focussing on the errors of students' English compositions.

1.2 Need for the study

The study will look into errors of simple past tense in written compositions through error analysis. The written compositions will be analyzed to identify the types of errors of simple past tense and the causes of errors. Error analysis will help teachers of second language to assess learners' competence in the usage and knowledge of second language. It also will assist teachers in focussing on specific elements rather than viewing or teaching the general aspect of the language. This study also hopes to suggest treatment of such errors. This would also enlighten the teachers of the causes of errors in order to plan suitable teaching strategies to overcome students' problems in simple past tense usage.

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1.3 Statement of the problem

"Grammar is to be incorporated into the language skills and should be taught in a meaningful context" (Curriculum Development Center, Malaysia, Ministry of Education, 2003, p. 4). However, teachers may be flexible and teach grammar items specifically, if they feel it is necessary to do so and later integrate grammar with other skills.

The aim of English Language taught in Malaysian schools is to enable learners to communicate effectively and efficiently in social situations. But, there are obstacles in the learning of English, especially grammar. Therefore, it is very important for teachers of English as a second language to identify learners' errors and their sources so as to find strategies to correct them. As the grammar aspect is varied, the researcher has only studied errors in the usage of simple past tense in students' written composition.

As the grammar aspect is varied, the researcher has only studied errors in the usage of simple past tense in students' written compositions. Even so simple past tense has categories of regular, irregular and stative verbs (Adrian,1992). In the simple past tense, the regular verbs has the "ed" form which is added to the base verbs for example, *work-worked, dance-danced, bake-baked.* Usually learners will add "ed" for all types of verbs, but there are rules of use for each category of verbs. The irregular form of verbs differ from regular verbs in that it is difficult to predict the past form from the base. There are two types of irregular verbs. The first type are verbs which are identical in the base form and the past form of the verb, for example, *cut-cut, hit-hit, shut-shut*. The second type are verbs that differ from the base form and the past tense form of the verb for example, *come-came, sing-sang, drink-drank*.

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Stative verbs in the past time are either the regular form or the irregular form for example, *appear-appeared, love-loved, see-saw, know-knew*. The changes of regular and irregular verbs cause learners' to make errors when writing sentences. Learners face problems in determining when to use the simple past tense.

The simple past tense is also to be used in a habitual or repeated action at a definite time in the past. Therefore, learners again make mistakes and errors while writing composition or sentences in the simple past tense. The tenses of a verb are the various forms that indicate primarily, though not exclusively, different relationships of events in time. To form this simple past, *"ed"* or *"d"* are added to the plain form of regular verbs such as, "*We asked him."* There are three irregular basic forms of verbs. There are changes that are difficult to schematize. Some examples are *run-ran* and *go-went*. Students need to pay attention to verbs of basic forms which may be confusing in spelling or in sound for example, *sink-sank, wear-wore*. There are also difficult forms for the same tenses, which correspond to differences in context or in meaning. For example, the verb "*hang"* takes a different form in these two sentences: *"The picture was hung." "The prisoner was hanged*." Some verbs have confusing doubles for example, *lie-lay-lain* . (Holden, 1992, p. 93). Errors are caused when students break the accepted rules of Standard English grammar.

Since grammar items are to be incorporate in the three areas of language use, (Malaysian Curriculum Development Centre, 2003, p.3) teachers must incorporate grammar items in teaching. But errors are caused when students break the accepted rules of Standard English grammar as explained in the previous paragraph.

1.4 Purpose of the study

This study is designed to explore the two following objectives :

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1) To identify the types of simple past tense errors made by form two students in written composition.

2) To identify the sources of simple past tense errors.

1.5 Research questions

The researcher has outlined three research questions to carry out the research on error analysis using the simple past tense in written compositions by form two English as a second language students.

The research questions are as stated below:

a) What are the types of simple past tense errors in students' written compositions?

b) What are the sources of simple past tense errors in students' written compositions?

1.6 Rationale

The rationale of the study is to make the researcher aware of the types of errors made so as to find out ways to help students overcome the problems of simple past tense usage in their composition writing. It is hoped therefore that this study would enable the researcher to identify simple past tense errors and also to find the sources why second language learners of English make simple past tense errors. This would enable the researcher to help second language learners to be aware of the reasons for and the sources of simple past tense errors.

1.7 Definition of terms

Errors are considered as "part of a composition that deviates from some selected norm of mature language performance or "a mistake; something done wrongly"

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(Dulay, Burt & Krashen, 1982, p. 277). Errors arise from the choice of material in teaching, from the teachers, from the techniques and the language. As a result teachers are considered as the main source in "affecting" the errors made by language learners. (Abbot and Wingard, 1981, p. 57).

Norish (1983) made a clear distinction between errors and mistakes. He stated errors as a systematic deviation when a learner has not learnt something and consistently gets it wrong. The writer added that when a learner of English as a second language or foreign language makes an error systematically it is because the learner has not learnt the correct form. Norish (1983) defined mistakes as "inconsistent deviation." When a learner has been taught a certain correct form and the learner uses one form sometimes and another at other times quite inconsistently, the inconsistent deviation is known as mistakes. This study is concerned with errors.

Error Analysis or "the significance of errors in learners' interlanguage system."(Brown, 1994, p. 204) is a type of linguistic analysis that focuses on the error learners make. It consists of a comparison between the errors made in the Target Language (TL) and that TL itself. The present researcher will use error analysis to detect the simple past tense errors made by students in written compositions.

Interference" is defined as the negative influence of the mother language (L1) on the performance of the target language learner (L2) (Lado, 1964). Interference of the first language or the mother tongue has negative influence on students' written composition. Students generalize and use translation in their composition writing because of interference of the mother tongue language.

Interlingual errors are due to "transfer errors attributed to the native language. Interlingual errors are when the learner's First Language (L1) habits

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(patterns, system or rules) interfere or prevent him or her to some extent, from acquiring the patterns and rules of the second language (Corder, 1974). ESL learners have limited knowledge of the rules and pattern of the grammar of the target language. Therefore simple past tense errors are made.

Intralingual errors are "errors made within the second language itself". (Brown, ibid, p. 201). They are items produced by the learners which reflect not the structure of the mother tongue, but generalizations based on partial exposure to the target language. These errors reflect the general characteristics of rule learning such as faulty overgeneralization, incomplete application of rule and failures to learning conditions under which rules apply" (Richards 1974, p. 76). The learner may develop hypotheses that correspond neither to the mother tongue nor to the target language" (Richards, 1974).

1.8 Limitations of the Study

This study only investigates the simple past tense errors made by a sample of 30 respondents. The sample is a group of form two lower secondary rural school students who therefore cannot represent all the students in Malaysia. This study does not determine the individual learners' factors such as interest, motivation, perceptions, beliefs and attitude that may also be factors contributing to the sources of the errors.

1.9 Summary

The background regarding grammar and the emphasis on the use of grammar in the examined writing component of the English Language school syllabus in Malaysian

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secondary schools has been presented. The rationale for this study is to help the researcher to extend the knowledge about the errors and the sources of simple past tense made by form two students in their written compositions. The researcher has defined some terms for data analysis. The researcher has also mentioned limitations of the study. The next chapter will be a review of literature regarding error analysis. The researcher will explain about the types of errors, the sources of errors, and related research studies conducted on error analysis.

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CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.0 Introduction

The review of literature focuses on the categories, types and causes of errors, and the related research on error analysis. The first section describes the categories and types of errors that learners make. The two categories are interlingual and intralingual. The three types of errors that are highlighted in this section are "omissions", "additions" and "misinformation". These three types of errors are emphasized because one of the instruments used in this study is written compositions, which may enable the researcher to identify these types of errors. The researcher has also highlighted error analysis to detect the types of errors made by learners.

The second section looks into the possible causes of errors made by learners. They include mother tongue interference, translation, over generalization, and ignorance of rule restriction. The third section looks into related research on error analysis.

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2.1 Categories of errors

The researcher will look into two categories of errors in this section. There are two categories, namely intralingual and interlanguage. Intralingual errors are due to three factors (Richards, 1974). They are over generalization, ignorance of rule restriction, and incomplete application of rules. Interlanguage is due to mother tongue interference and translation.

2.2 Types of errors

Learners' errors need to be identified in order to help overcome learning problems. This study looks into three categories of errors, namely, "omission", "misinformation" and "addition". Learners produce errors due to several reasons.

2.2.1 Omissions

Omissions are errors made by learners due to absence of an item that must appear in a well-formed utterance in second language (Dulay, Burt & Krashen, 1982). An example of omission error in a sentence is "*I gone".* In *Bahasa Melayu* it is "*Saya pergi." "Saya sudah pergi."* Such omissions may be due to the limitations of the learner's capacity in acquiring the rules of the target language. In other words, the meaning of the sentence is clear to the listener because learners have only simplified the utterance, which are manageable to them. However, the sentence is grammatically incorrect, as the auxiliary verb "*have"* is omitted from the sentence.

2.2.2 Additions

Additions are errors due to the presence of an item that must not appear in well-formed sentences in second language (Dulay, Burt & Krashen, 1982). An example of

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this error as seen in the sentence, " *I didn't ate the cake*". Littlewood (1982) stressed that this type of error occurs in the third stage of the development of negative and interrogatives of the English language where learners have not mastered the usage of "*do" and* either the "*be*" or modal verbs to suit the particular type of tenses.

2.2.3 Misinformation

Misinformation is the use of the wrong form of morpheme or structure on second language (Dulay, Burt & Krashen, 1982). An example of this type of error is identified in the sentence, *" I puted the book in the bag."* Misinformation is not limited to second language learners. First language or native language learners also have been found to commit such errors.

2.3 Sources of errors

The researcher will look into the sources of errors in this section. They are over generalization, ignorance of rule restriction, and incomplete application of rules. These are caused by intralingual factors. Secondly the researcher will look into mother tongue interference and translation which are caused by interlingual factors.

Ellis (1994) asserts that ESL learners produce numerous errors especially grammatical errors due to three major factors such as external, internal and individual learner. These factors are interrelated because external factors may influence the learning process especially when learning English as a second language. In addition, the individual learner's personality may have an effect on the external factors, for example by influencing the social settings experienced. The internal factors such as learner's knowledge of the native language will influence the external factors such as

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interaction in the society and individual learner factors such as self-esteem (Ellis, 1994).

Though these three major factors contribute to the causes of errors by ESL learners, the researcher will only study the internal and external factors such as mother tongue interference, translation, overgeneralization and ignorance of rule restriction.

2.3.1 Mother tongue interference

According to the behaviorist theory of learning, learning a language is essentially learning a set of habits (Norish, 1983). When learners try to learn a new language, the native language knowledge will interfere with new language utterances. This form of intervention is known as mother tongue interference. This process takes place unconsciously in the minds of ESL learners. Mother tongue interference is one of the main causes of errors (Mohideen, 1991). Learners are used to their own native languages and when they try to learn a new language, the rules and the structure of their native language instead of the target language influence them. An example of a sentence is " *We all go to Hutan Lipur to picnic.*" In Bahasa Melayu it is, "*Kami semua pergi ke Hutan Lipur untuk berkelah."* A Malay student will construct a sentence such as this as the word "all" follows a "pronoun" in Bahasa Melayu. Nevertheless, the example above is grammatically incorrect in the English language

Therefore L1 interference occurs in ESL learners. However, learners will be able to learn a second language proficiently over time since second language learning is a developmental process (Krashen, 1969).

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2.3.2 Translation

Another cause of learners' errors is translation. Unlike L1 interference, which takes place unconsciously in the learners' mind, translation is a conscious process. Translation occurs when the learners translate the words of the TL into L1. It involves the decoding process of the stimulus sentence and the encoding of the translation so as to help the learners to have a better understanding of the input as well as the output (Larsen – Freeman & Long, 1991).

Translation involves a word-for-word rendition. For example, the sentence, "He traced the footpath" can be translated into Bahasa Melayu as "*Dia telah guris tapak kaki."* Learners will be puzzled since the direct translation of the word "*guris"* means "*trace."* They cannot make sense out this direct translation of the word, *"guris*" because the action of trace cannot be associated with footpath. Thus learners will be confused and as a result, they will produce errors.

Learners also make errors that they translate from L1 into TL. For example, the sentence, *"Saya pergi ke sekolah bersama-sama dengan kawan."* will be translated into English as " *I went to school together with friend."* The translated version is incorrect, as the translated meaning is incorrect grammatically. Larsen-Freeman & Long (1991) discovered this type of translation errors in their study.

On the other hand, it cannot be denied that translation can be beneficial to ESL learners. Translation helps learners to understand TL. It is a learning strategy that helps learners to form the basis for understanding and producing the target language.

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2.3.3 Over generalization

One learning strategy is to categorize rules and language items. Language learners sometimes make errors by over generalizing the rules and thus make the wrong prediction. There are two reasons for learners to over generalize the rules (Littlewood, 1982).

The first reason is that the item belongs to a different category, which is covered by another rule (Littlewood, 1982). Learners who do not construct a new category and rule of simple present tense will make a sentence such as "John throws a ball" (Norish, 1983) when they see "John throwing a ball" (at the moment of the utterance), (Norish, 1983, p.14). This is because the use of continuous tense is more appropriate for the sentence. Thus, learners need to form a rule using the present continuous tense. The second reason is because the rule does not apply to a particular item even though the learners have allotted the item into the appropriate category (Littlewood, 1982).

Overgeneralization of constructed rules is clearly revealed when learners treat irregular verbs as if they were regular verbs. Some examples of verbs are *bringed, goed, singed.* In order to use the correct form, learners need to construct the rule and write *brought, went and sang.* The learners may not realize that there are exceptions to the general rule especially in irregular verbs.

2.3.4. Ignorance of Rule Restriction

It is widely known that ignorance of rule restriction is one of the causes of errors. ESL learners may have the knowledge of the English rules but not understand the rules completely because certain rules have exceptions. Learners who do not

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understand the exception to the general rule are bound to commit errors (Mohideen, 1991).For example, the sentence, " *I wish he were here"* may confuse learners because there is no agreement between the subject "*he*" and the verb *"were*". However learners may not realize that the sentence above refers to situations that are very unlikely to occur or that are contrary to the facts. Thus errors are produced if learners are not exposed to this type of situation.

2.4 Theoretical Background - Second Language Acquisition Theory(SLA)

Krashen (1969) has proposed a distinction between acquisition and learning. Acquisition is the process by which learners unconsciously acquire their L1. Learning is defined as conscious knowledge of L2, knowing the rules and being aware of them.

SLA is the theory of how learners learn an additional language after they have acquired their mother tongue. The focus of SLA has been on how L2 learners acquire grammatical sub-system such as past tense. This can be viewed by the internalized rule of learning. SLA refers to subconscious or conscious processes by which a language other than L1 is learning in a natural setting.

It also covers the development of grammar, lexis and phonology. SLA sets out to investigate how a learner performs when using L2. It is common among ESL learners to have interference of L1 because there were differences between L1 sand L2. Consequently, if L1 and L2 were similar, L1 would actively aid L2 learning but if there were differences then L1 would interfere with L2. In this study the respondents' L1 is *Bahasa Melayu* and English is the L2. Both languages have differences.

Dulay, Burt & Krashen (1982), raised doubts about negative transfer as a major factor in the process of SLA. A large proportion of grammatical structure errors including usage of past tense could be explained by L1 interference. For

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example, learners learning a different L1 would learn L2 in different ways, which may result in negative transfers. Errors are important sources of information about SLA because they demonstrate conclusively that learners do not simply memorize L2 rules and then produce sentences. L1 learners learning L2 would construct rules on the data which differ from L1.

SLA shows that mere exposure to L2 is not enough. Learners need L2 data that are specially suited to whatever stage of development they are at. Learners need to shift the input received to existing knowledge. Learning strategies enable them to operate on the input data in order to discover the L2 rules efficiently.

Loft (1983), distinguished three sets of learning strategies. Firstly learning strategies are conscious or unconscious, for example over generalization. Students over generalize the rules especially when they learn simple past tense and thus tend to make errors. Secondly, production strategies occur when learners attempt to use L2 knowledge already acquired. When learners use L2 knowledge there is interference of L1 which had already been learnt. Finally, communicating strategies are used when learners use language to communicate.

The study of interlanguage is within the area of SLA and this needs to be viewed in close connection with the concept of developmental errors. These are errors that are the result of overgeneralization or simplification or the wrong use of rule in context. These are errors of L1 learning onto learning L2. Developmental errors need to be distinguished from transfer, interference or contrastive errors, which are the result of consciously and most of the time unconsciously applying rules of L1 to L2.

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2.5 Related Studies on Error Analysis

O' Grady, Dobrovoisky and Katamba (1986) report that learners over generalize the regular rule for the past tense information by producing errors such as *breaked* and *goed*. It is assumed learners produce such errors because learners already know the regular verbs. The learners may generalize from an unknown form to the one being learnt. Since verbs especially the irregular forms are new, learners categorize these verbs in the same category as the regular verbs. For example, learners learn that the tense form of the past verb *climb* is *climbed*.

Ho (1971) investigated a total of total of 280 English compositions by pre-secondary school students from 13 Chinese medium schools. A total of 223 papers were test scripts and the rest were compositions written in classes. The researcher classified the errors namely, article, noun and verb usage. The researcher discovered that errors in verbs formed the largest single group followed by spelling errors and article errors. The researcher found out that 36% of the errors were misinformation errors, 34% were addition errors and 30% were omission errors. The researcher discovered that students apparently over generalize the regular rule for the past tense information for example, students added "*ed"* to verbs like, *breaked, goed, puted, cryed and buyed.* The researcher also discovered that students added the wrong form of the verb for example, "*He was felt hot*" and "*I was take the bag."* Ho suggested that in order to overcome the problem errors made in English by ESL learners, drills could be used in special remedial programs.

Menon (1983) used dictation on her sample of 80 first year students at a local university. Errors of wrong substitution, omission, unnecessary inclusion and wrong spelling were counted and categorized under headings, namely singular/plural, tenses, prepositions, adjectives, articles, adverbs, miscellaneous, mechanics of writing,

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pronouns, conjunctions and quantifiers. The subjects were reported to have made the largest number of errors in the use of singular or plural forms followed by the wrong use of tenses. The study also showed that although the two dictations were done in different settings and administered by different teachers, the errors were about the same. Menon (1983) attributed 38% of the errors to wrong substitution, 22% to omission and 23% to addition and the rest to spelling error. The researcher concluded that in the Malaysian school context, input like grammar rules are categorized in linguistic system when learners hypothesize which items are to be placed in which category. However, in the process of hypothesis testing, learners produce errors.

Lim (1976) conducted a study on the importance of error analysis in language teaching. The researcher stated that the lack of acquaintance with error analysis is the cause of failure in detecting errors made by students. The researcher studied the composition errors of 50 secondary school pupils and classified them under categories of tenses, articles, agreement, infinitive and gerundive constructions, pronouns, possessive and attributive structures, word order, incomplete structures, negative constructions, lexical categories, mechanics of writing, use of typical native language words and miscellaneous.

. Mohani (1983) focussed on the position of grammar in ESL learners. The researcher investigated the errors made by form four Malay rural school students in Selangor. The researcher found that students made many errors in the verb form. The researcher analyzed 1,304 verbs and it was found that 46% were wrongly used. These comprised of 654 regular verbs and 650 irregular verbs, which were wrongly used. The researcher concluded that about 34% of the errors were due to mother tongue

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interference. Learners tend to use the rules and the structure of their L1 instead of the TL.

Yap (1973) studied the compositions of 497 primary four, five and six pupils in Kuala Lumpur. The pupils were asked to write a 30-minute composition on topics such as "My Family" or "My Teacher". The types and frequencies of errors common to these pupils were examined and classified under categories namely, punctuation, capitalization, word form, structural errors and spelling. The researcher found that structural errors were the most frequent type of errors made by pupils.

Suraya (1992), conducted an action research on a sample of two subjects, one a Chinese Malaysian boy and the other, an Indonesian male studying in Malaysia. Both the subjects were 17 years of age. Subject A attended a local national-type primary school and subsequently enrolled in a private school for secondary education. Subject B attended primary school in Dumai in Indonesia. Both students L1 was *Hokkien* and both came from high socio-economic status families. The researcher carried out the study in response to the need to acquire simple past tense so that the subjects could write better composition. The researcher found that the subjects failed to change the form of the verb when referring to a past event. The researcher concluded that the subjects did not have any concept of when and how to use simple past tense verbs. The subjects were asked to write a short composition about childhood experience. The compositions were marked and the errors were tabulated. Suraya's (1992) findings showed that 60% of regular and irregular verbs in the simple past tense were incorrectly used by subject A whereas subject B had 88% of such errors. The researcher concluded that learner variables like interlanguage influence, attitude, aptitude and psychological factors hindered subjects' learning. The

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researcher recommended using language in a variety of communicative activities to make learning meaningful.

Habshah (1982) studied common errors in the use of English verbs in the written work of 10 students in grade 9 in Brevet, Jerusalem. The subjects had been studying English since nursery school and had been taught English by American and Canadian teachers. These subjects were asked to write about plans for the future in about 200 to 250 words. The compositions were analyzed under the categories of grammar, speech, syntactic, semantic and substance errors. The researcher classified the error sources into two, namely interlingual and intralingual. The total number of errors found in the ten essays was 214. The researcher concluded that the major cause of errors in the English writing of Brevet students was due to negative L1 transfer or interference. According to this study, Brevet students faced two problems in essay writing, firstly translation from Arabic to L1 and secondly, incomplete learning of essay writing rules and conventions. The researcher recommended to increase the number of assignments to enable students to do research and to encourage students to read widely in English. The researcher also recommended team work in the form of projects.

Correction of errors or false hypotheses implies the provision of more data, information and an adequate concept of the target language so that the learners perceive the subtleties and choices available to them. Choices must be made within similar categories. For example, if a student commits an error in the present tense, correction should also include the teaching of the past tense.

The importance placed on error analysis is its usefulness in providing feedback to a teacher. From such an analysis, a teacher can gauge teaching effectiveness, the adequacy of materials, the suitability of teaching techniques and the analysis could

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impart to him also the adequacy and inadequacy of the syllabus. Hence, it can be seen that error analysis would be of particular interest to designers of a remedial syllabus.

The related studies conducted on ESL students show that there is variety in the types of errors. Most researchers assert that the causes of errors are the L1 interference or intralingual interference. The most influential are errors caused by intralingual interference. The above studies imply that the present researcher can get a clear view on the types and causes of errors made in the simple past tense. Similarly, the researcher would be able to devise suitable strategies to overcome learners' errors.

The previous chapter explained the background of the study and the rationale for the research. This chapter explained the literature review on the categories, types and causes of errors, theoretical background of SLA and the related studies on error analysis .The next chapter will provide information about the research methodology used in this study. The procedures for sampling, instruments, data collection and method of data analysis will be discussed in detail in the following chapter.

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CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher describes the procedures that were used to solve the problems and to find out the answers for the following research questions:

1. What are the types of errors in the simple past tense in students written compositions?
2. What are the sources of errors in the simple past tense in students written compositions

This chapter also provides information on the sample population as well as the procedure for the selection of the sample. It describes the instruments used in the study, how the instruments were administered and how the collected data were analyzed.

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3.1 Research Design

For this study, the researcher employed a descriptive research methodology. Slavin (1992, p. 89) states that : "….descriptive research seeks to describe particular phenomena as they are."

Slavin (1992) also states that there are two types of descriptive research. They are survey research and assessment research. The survey research was chosen because it suited the need of the research . This research design was suitable to collect data from a large group of students and to analyze the data collected. Errors of simple past tense were attained from sample compositions. The independent variables were the students and the dependent variables were the errors and their sources.

The assessment research "is directed at determining how many students at a particular grade level knows a particular set of facts or are proficient in a particular sets of skills" (Slavin, 1992, p.89).

Therefore, this type of research was suitable for this study as it aimed at finding out descriptive phenomena. In this study, the phenomena were the types of errors in simple past tense, the frequency of occurrence of errors in writing and the sources of errors.

3.2 Sample and sampling procedures

Sample size is a critical element in any research design. The best way to reduce the possibility of false negative error without increasing the chance of false positive error is to increase the number of subjects involved in the study. Slavin (1992, p. 90) suggests "*a sample size of at least 30 in each group as a rule of thumb.*"

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For this study, the researcher chose a minimum of 30 students (Majid Konting, 1994) from a random population of 160 form two respondents (refer to table 3.1 below). The respondents were selected regardless of proficiency level.

Table 3.1

Data Sampling

Gender	*Total*	Percent (%)
Male	72	45
Female	88	55
Total	160	100

The sample therefore could not be grouped for comparison. This is because only 45% were males and 55% of the respondents were females. Most of the students were from middle-class homes . The majority of students were Malays as 90% of the total enrolment in Sekolah Menengah Raja Muda Musa in Teluk Intan comprise Malay students.

3.3 Instrumentation

Data were collected from two written English composition tests that required the use of the past tense titled "An Incident" and a picture composition titled "How I Spent My Holidays." These required the use of simple past tense verbs. The topics are congruent with the KBSM skills specified, namely items 3.9 and 3.10 which state……" write a description of scenes such as……" (Curriculum Development Center, 2003).

The researcher used three types of instruments. First was the criterion reference test. Criterion reference tests are built around a well-defined set of

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instruments and focus on students' scores with respect to some desired level of performance."(Slavin, 1992, p.94) Second was the individual error score sheet (refer to appendix 1-40, pages 103-140) and the group tally sheet.

For the first part of this stage, the instrument used was a criterion norm reference test consisting of two descriptive compositions. Criterion referenced tests would enable the researcher to describe respondents' scores without reference to the performance of the other respondents. Performance is reported in terms of the level of mastery of regular and irregular verbs in the simple past tense (Ary, 2002). These compositions followed the requirement of writing skills in accordance with the Paper 2 of the PMR examination. Students spent about 35 minutes to write these compositions.

3.4 Data Analysis Procedures

This study was carried out on 30 respondents' compositions. The researcher administered the test. The researcher selected the sample randomly because the results of school-based assessment indicated dissatisfactory students' achievement.

The researcher has followed the suggestion by Corder(1974):

1. Collection of sample compositions
2. Identification of errors
3. Description of errors
4. Evaluation of errors

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In analyzing errors, the researcher has followed three steps:

1. The total occurrence of errors were counted for each category namely; misinformation, addition and omission.
2. The total occurrence of sources of errors were counted for each heading namely; mother tongue, interference, over generalization and infrequent use of language .
3. The total number of errors for each type was converted into percentages.

The researcher conducted a test on 30 respondents. Before the onset of the test, formal instructions were addressed to the respondents. The writing task was distributed to each respondent. The respondents were required to write two compositions of not less than 120 words based on a guided format of a picture composition titled "An Incident" and "How I Spent My Holidays." The respondents were given 35 minutes to write each composition. The 60 scripts were collected and marked for error correction. The errors were recorded in individual tally sheets. Later the data were analyzed for the second time. The researcher used error codes (Lane & Lange,1993) namely, omission, misinformation and addition (refer to table 3.2 below).

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Table 3.2

Error Codes For Correction

Errors	Code
Misinformation	Mis
Addition	Add
Omission	Omi

3.5 Limitations

The researcher used only 30 students and not 160 (Refer to table 3.1). The instrument was only based on two descriptive compositions . The instruments did not test on other modes of the compositions. The scripts were corrected for three types of simple past tense errors, namely misinformation, addition and omission.

3.6 Summary

In the previous chapters, the researcher presented the rationale for the study and the related literature in Error Analysis. In this chapter the researcher has discussed the methodology used to conduct the study. These include the research design, method of sample collection, research instruments used and method of data analysis. In the next chapter, the researcher will present the data for analysis and discuss the findings.

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CHAPTER FOUR

DATA FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This is a study on simple past tense errors and the sources of errors identified in 60 compositions written by form two students. These essays were based on two topics titled "An incident" and a picture composition titled "How I spent my holidays."

Data are presented and analyzed in this chapter in order to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the types of errors made in the simple past tense in students written compositions?
2. What are the sources of simple past tense errors in students written compositions?

In the following sub-section, data are presented in tables and graphs to facilitate discussion of findings.

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Types of Simple Past Tense Errors

4.1.1 Interlingual and Intralingual Regular and Irregular Verb Errors

Data are tabulated in frequency count and percentages to show the simple past tense errors due to interlingual and intralingual in order to asnswer first research question. These are further classified under regular and irregular verbs identified in 60 compositions written by a sample of 30 form two students. (See table 4.1 below) .

Table 4.1

Interlingual errors of regular and irregular verbs

	Regular		Irregular	
	No	Percentage	No	Percentage
Compositions 1	10	42	14	58
Compositions 2	5	30	12	70

Table 4.1above shows that students made more errors in the usage of irregular verbs compared to regular verbs. In compositions 1, the errors in the usage of regular verbs were relatively less than 50% and it was recorded as 42% in compositions 1 and 30% in compositions 2 . Adversely, errors in the usage of irregular verbs were more than 50% which showed 58% in compositions 1 and 70% in compositions 2.

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Respondents made interlingual errors due to inability to use the TL. The data suggest that that ESL learners received input like grammatical rules and categorized the information in the linguistic system which was interlingual. Learners made hypothesis of which item to be placed in which categories. Therefore in the process of hypothesis testing, learners produced such errors. Corder (1974), asserts that, interlingual errors are due to transfer errors attributed to the native language. Interlingual errors are when the learner's L1 habits interfere or prevent him or her to some extent, from acquiring the patterns and rules of L2.

Table 4.2

Interlingual errors in regular verbs in compositions 1

Student	Interlingual errors in regular verbs	Correct form
4	He describe happen.	He described what happened.
6	He walk to the kitchen.	He walked to the kitchen
8	He go open switch lamp	He switched on the lamp
9	Then he switch on the light	He switched on the lamp

Table 4.2 above shows interlingual errors. These errors reflect transfer of errors attributed to L1. Students two, four and six had not acquired the rules of L2. Students eight and nine committed the errors due to transfer of L1 to L2.

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Table 4.3

Interlingual errors in irregular verbs in compositions 1

Student	Interlingual errors in irregular verbs	Correct Form
1	Then he going to the kitchen.	Then he went to the kitchen.
4	Then he going to the kitchen.	Then he went to the kitchen.
9	He go to the kitchen.	He went to the kitchen.

Table 4.3 above shows that students one and four made such errors when they tried to derive the rules of simple past tense (Corder, 1974).

Table 4.4

Interlingual errors in regular verbs in compositions 2

Student	Interlingual errors in regular verbs	Correct Form
3	We stop in half journey.	We stopped midway through the journey.
5	We also want to find food.	We wanted to find food.
5	Renjers came and save me.	Rangers came and saved me.
5	My friends want go there.	My friends wanted to go there.

Table 4.4 above shows that errors reflect students' limited knowledge of the rules and patterns of L2 (Lado, 1964).

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Table 4.5

Interlingual errors in irregular verbs in compositions 2

Student	Interlingual errors in irregular verbs	Correct form
1	My father and I were going home.	My father and I went home
3	We sleep have enough.	We slept enough.
3	Finally we very happy.	Finally we were very happy.
6	I and my father very happy.	My father and I were very happy.
9	Many animal can I look.	I could look at many animals.

Table 4.5 above are examples when ESL learners encounter a language form and infer rules from knowledge of L1 and transfer that knowledge into a hypotheses of L1 (Carson, 1992).

Table 4.6

Interlingual errors of regular and irregular verbs of misinformation

	Misinformation Regular		Misinformation Irregular	
	No	Percentage	No	Percentage
Composition 1	4	40	7	50
Composition 2	5	100	1	8

Table 4.6 shows the interlingual errors of regular and irregular verbs under misinformation . It was recorded that 100% of interlingual errors in compositions 2 were of misinformation type of regular verb forms. Only 8% of interlingual errors of

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misinformation of irregular verbs were recorded in compositions 2. The data showed that only 9 interlingual errors of misinformation of regular verbs were recorded in compositions 1 and 8 in compositions 2.

It was observed that interlingual errors were mostly misinformation. These were due to wrong usage of the regular form verb in the simple past tense. It was obviously common among ESL learners to produce this type of errors. It was found that FL or L1 learners made such errors when learners had internalized rules in English but had not yet mastered the limitation of the rules, as stated by Larsen – Freeman and Long (1991). There were at least two possible explanations not mutually exclusive. Firstly, learners apparently over generalized the regular rule for the past tense information by adding 'ed' to all verb forms and secondly, the learners made the wrong assumption of the TL as the respondents were mostly bilingual learners.

Table 4.7

Interlingual errors of misinformation in regular verbs in compositions 1

Student	Interlingual misinformation error	Correct form
2	Then he switch on the light.	Then he switched on the light.
4	He describe what happen.	He described what happened.
6	He walk to the kitchen.	He walked to the kitchen.
9	Then he switch on the light.	Then he switched on the light.

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Table 4.8

Interlingual errors of misinformation in irregular verbs in compositions 1

Student	Interlingual misinformation error	Correct form
1	Then he going to the kitchen.	Then he went to the kitchen.
4	Michael running quickly.	Michael ran quickly.
5	His father was sleep.	His father slept.
5	He is not frighten.	He was not frightened.

These errors reflect interference of L1 habits, patterns and rules from acquiring the rules and patterns of L2 (Corder, 1974).

Table 4.9

Interlingual errors of misinformation in regular verbs in compositions 2

Student	Interlingual misinformation error	Correct form
3	We stop in half journey.	We stopped mid journer.
3	We fishing.	We fished.
5	My friend and I want to go there.	We wanted to go there.
5	We also want to find food.	We wanted to search for food.
11	They pull us all up.	They pulled us all up.

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Table 4.10

Interlingual errors of misinformation in irregular verbs in compositions 2

Student	Interlingual misinformation error	Correct form
9	Many animals can I look.	I could see many animals.

These errors reflect that students use the wrong form of morpheme or structure on L2 due to interference of L1 (Dulay, Burt & Krashen, 1982).

Table 4.11

Interlingual errors of regular and irregular verbs of omission type

	Omission Regular		Omission Irregular	
	No	Percentage	No	Percentage
Composition 1	4	10	1	10
Composition 2	0	0	5	42

Only a small percentage of interlingual errors were of omission type and this was due to the wrong usage of regular form verb in the simple past tense in compositions 1. However there was no record of wrong usage of irregular form verb in the simple past tense in compositions 1 of omission errors. Obviously only a small number of errors of omission were made by learners. More pointedly, these errors were made due to absence of an item that must appear in a well-formed sentence. It was evident that such omissions were due to the limitations of the learner's capacity in acquiring the rules of the TL. As a result, it was noted that the sentences constructed by learners were grammatically incorrect. It was found that omission errors were

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made due to rule restriction and mother tongue interference, where the learners tend to over generalize the rules of simple past tense in the L1 (Dulay, Burt & Krashen, 1982).

Table 4.12

Interlingual errors of omission in regular verbs in compositions 1

Student	Interlingual omission error	Correct form
2	He very frighten.	He was very frightened.

It was found that none of the respondents made any interlingual omission errors such as wrong usage of irregular verb form in compositions 1. There were no errors for wrong usage of regular verbs in compositions 2.

Table 4.13

Interlingual errors of omission type in irregular verbs in compositions 2

Student	Interlingual omission error	Correct form
3	Finally we very happy.	Finally we were very happy.
6	I and my father very happy.	My father and I were very happy.
10	I very tired.	I was very tired.
24	I very happy.	I was very happy.
28	I and father happy.	My father and I were happy.

These errors are due to the limitations of the learner's capacity in acquiring the rules of the target language (Dulay, Burt & Krashen, 1982).

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Table 4.14

Interlingual errors of regular and irregular verbs of addition

	Addition Regular		Addition Irregular	
	No	Percentage	No	Percentage
Composition 1	5	50	7	50
Composition 2	0	0	6	50

There was a marked 50% interlingual addition errors in regular and irregular verbs in compositions 1 and 2. Littlewood (1982) stressed that this type of errors were made because learners lack the knowledge of the TL. It was obvious that learners over generalized the rules of the simple past tense when such errors were made. It was possible that learners lacked the rule restriction application which was evidently wrongly applied especially in the simple past tense.

Table 4.15

Interlingual errors of addition in regular verbs in compositions 1.

Student	Interlingual addition error	Correct form
6	He walk go to kitchen.	He walked to the kitchen.
8	He go went open switch lamp.	He went and switched on the lamp.
10	He going switch on the light.	He switched on the light.
13	He was call his father.	He called his father.
15	The big snake was died.	The big snake died.

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Table 4.16

Interlingual errors of addition in irregular verb form in compositions 1.

Student	Interlingual addition errors	Correct form
5	His father was sleep.	His father slept.
12	He want take food.	He took food.
21	He going sleep.	He slept.
25	I go sleeping.	I will go to sleep.
26	I going to sleep.	I will go to sleep.

There was no interlingual error of addition in the wrong usage of regular verbs in compositions 2. However there were six errors in the wrong usage of irregular verbs in compositions 2.

Table 4.17

Interlingual addition errors in irregular verbs in compositions 2

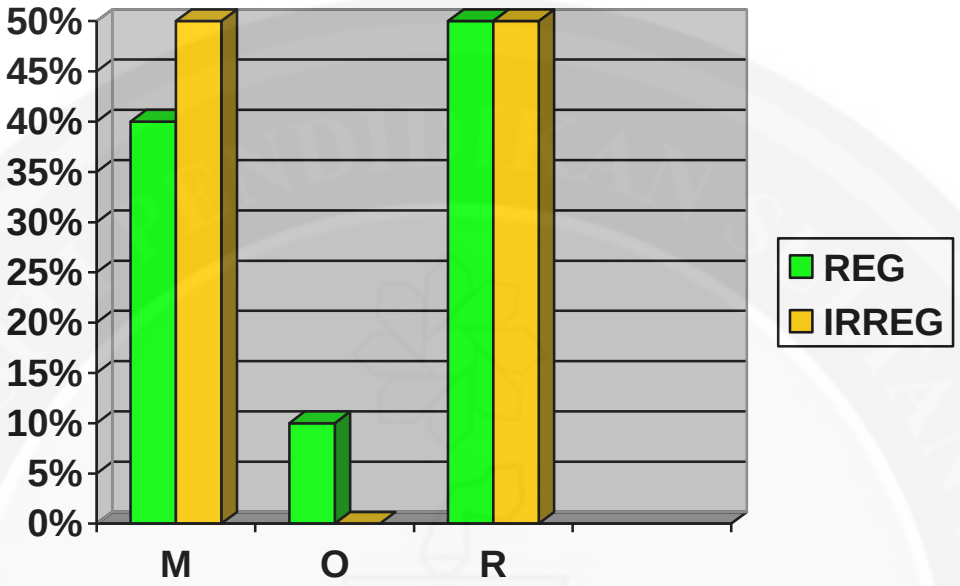
Student	Interlingual addition errors	Correct form
1	I want to saw the scenery.	I saw the scenery.
1	I was going to the picnic.	I went for a picnic.
2	I want to saw a beautiful nature.	I saw beautiful nature.
5	We went to found a firewood.	We found firewood.
29	I went to saw the scene.	I saw the scene.
30	Orang utan were eaten.	The Orang utan ate.

Littlewood (1982) stressed that addition errors occur in the third stage of the development where learners have not mastered the usage of "do" or the verb to be.

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Graph 1

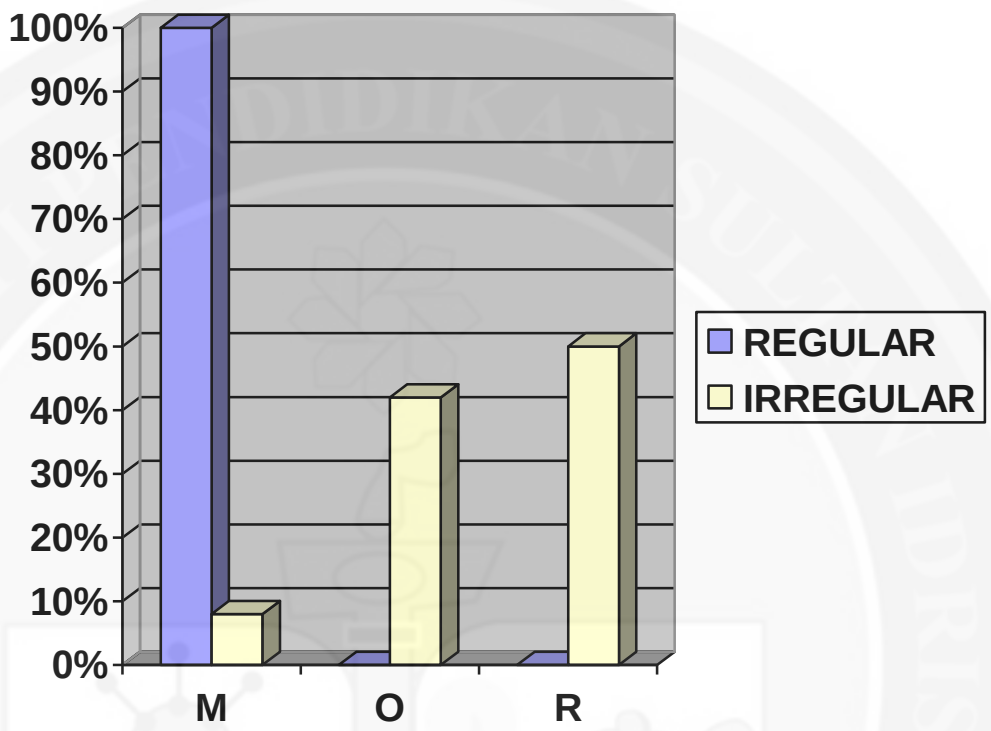


Interlingual errors of regular and irregular verbs of misinformation, addition and omission in compositions 1.

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Graph 2



Interlingual errors of regular and irregular verbs of misinformation, addition and omission in compositions 2

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The present researcher found that interlingual errors were mostly of the misinformation type. Similarly Ho (1971), also found that respondents' errors were mostly misinformation when 223 scripts of compositions were studies. It was concluded that respondents apparently over generalized the regular rule for the past tense information and tended to add "ed" to verbs like, *goed, cryed, buyed*. Menon (1983), reported that 38% were misinformation, 22% were omission and 23% were due to addition . The present researcher found that the majority of the respondents made misinformation errors followed by addition and finally omission which was less than 40%. Mohani (1983) found that out of 1,304 verbs analyzed, 654 regular verbs and 650 irregular verbs were wrongly used. The present researcher found that respondents made more errors in the wrong usage of irregular verbs, which were due to interlingual errors.

Interlingual errors occur when the learners L1 habits, patterns and rules interfere or prevent the learners from acquiring the patterns and rules of the second language (Corder, 1974). Students especially ESL learners have limited knowledge of the rules and patterns of the grammar of the TL and this is when they make errors especially in the simple past tense. Ellis (1994) stated that interlingual error is due to mother tongue interference and translation. Errors are caused when L1 students learn a second language and in the present study the respondents are L1 students and thus there were interference of L1 in learning the rules in L2.

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Table 4.18

Intralingual errors of regular and irregular verbs

	Regular		Irregular	
	No	Percentage	No	Percentage
Composition 1	84	48	91	52
Composition 2	60	27	168	73

Table 4.18 shows the intralingual errors in compositions 1 and 2. Respondents made more intralingual errors in the usage of irregular verbs. More than 50% of intralingual errors were wrong usage of irregular verbs and this was recorded as 52% in compositions 1 and 73% in compositions 2. Comparably there were more interlingual errors in compositions 1 to compositions 2. It was tabulated as 48% and 27% respectively.

Obviously the researcher can conclude that intralingual errors were caused by interference of L1. It was possible that the causes of errors were mostly intralingual as 90% of the respondents were Malay students. As stated by Selinker (1972), errors are due to language transfer of items and rules of L1 to TL. Therefore the bilingual respondents made such errors, as there was interference of L1 when using the TL. It was clear that respondents tended to over generalize the items and rules especially the simple past tense rules. Richards (1974), asserts that the errors reflect the general characteristics of rule learning such as faulty over generalization, incomplete application of rule and failure to learning conditions under which rules apply.

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Table 4.19

Intralingual errors in regular verbs in compositions 1

Student	Intralingual errors in regular verbs	Correct Form
2	He call his father.	He called his father.
5	He studies in the room.	He studied in the room.
6	He study at SM Raja Mahkota.	He studied in SM Raja Mahkota
8	He call his father.	He called his father.
9	He study at night.	He studied at night.

These errors reflect over generalization and this is when learners treat irregular verbs as if they were regular verbs (Richards, 1974).

Table 4.20

Intralingual errors in irregular verbs in compositions 1

Student	Irregular verbs-intralingual error	Correct Version
3	The time at about 12.30p.m	The time was about 12.30p.m.
5	The time at about 2.30pm.	The time was about 2.30p.m.
6	He hungry.	He was hungry.
8	Rahim and his father happy.	Rahim and his father were happy.
12	My father and I go to bed.	We went to bed.

The errors above reflect the general characteristics of rule learning such as incomplete application of rules and failures to learning conditions under which rules apply. (Richards 1974).

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Table 4.21

Intralingual errors in regular verbs in compositions 2

Student	Intralingual errors in regular verbs	Correct form
2	We arrival in 1.00p.m	We arrived at 1.00p.m.
3	My father booking two rooms.	My father booked two rooms.
3	The guide explain.	The guide explained.
6	I visit to Baiduri park.	I visited Baiduri park.
9	One monkey jump in my boat.	A monkey jumped into my boat.

These errors reflect the general characteristics of rule learning such as faulty over generalization (Richards, 1974).

Table 4.22

Intralingual errors in irregular verbs in compositions 2

Student	Intralingual errors in irregular verbs	Correct Form
1	I bring many bananas.	I brought many bananas.
2	I and my father go to restaurant.	My father and I went to a restaurant.
3	We sleep.	We slept.
4	They are in Melaka.	They were in Melaka.
4	Father goes with car.	Father went by car.

These errors showed that students had not acquired the rules of irregular verbs due to unawareness of exceptions to these rules (Carson, 1992).

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Table 4.23

Intralingual errors of regular and irregular verbs of misinformation

	Misinformation Regular		Misinformation Irregular	
	No	Percentage	No	Percentage
Composition 1	67	80	55	64
Composition 2	46	77	121	73

Table 4.23 tabulates data to show intralingual errors in regular and irregular verbs of misinformation. It was proved that most of the respondents made misinformation errors in both regular and irregular verbs. As indicated, more than 75% of intralingual errors were in regular verbs as indicated in compositions 1 as (80%) and in compositions 2 as (77%). In compositions 2 it was noted that intralingual errors were 121 (73%) compared with those in compositions 1 (64%).

It was common among ESL learners to produce misinformation errors especially due to intralingual factors. It was found that FL or L1 learners made such errors (Larsen – Freeman & Long1991), when learners had internalized rules in English but had not mastered the limitation of the rules. There were at least two possible explanations. Firstly learners' over generalized the regular rule for the past tense information by adding "ed" to all verb forms. Secondly, learners made the wrong assumption of the TL

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Table 4.24

Intralingual errors of misinformation in regular verbs in compositions 1

Student	Intralingual misinformation errors	Correct Form
1	Ali was study for his examination.	Ali studied for his examination.
2	He call his father.	He called his father.
4	He studies a long time.	He studied for a long time.
5	He studies in his room.	He studied in his room.
8	One night he studies at about 8pm	At night he studied at 8pm

Table 4.25

Intralingual errors of misinformation in irregular verbs in compositions 1

Student	Intralingual misinformation error	Correct form
3	His parents was sleep.	His parents slept.
4	Then he going to the kitchen.	Then he went to the kitchen.
5	His father wake up.	His father woke up.
6	He drink a water	He drank water.

These errors are due to wrong use of verbs or structure of the L2 (Dulay, Burt & Krashen, 1982).

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Table 4.26

Intralingual errors of misinformation in regular verbs in compositions 2.

Student	Intralingual misinformation error	Correct form
1	My father and I was looked.	My father and I looked.
3	My father booking two rooms	My father booked two rooms.
6	I visit to Baiduri Park.	I visited Baiduri Park.
8	When we arrive there.	We arrived there.
11	We want to see animals.	We wanted to see animals.

Table 4.27

Intralingual errors of misinformation in irregular verbs in compositions 2

Student	Intralingual misinformation error	Correct form
3	We sleep.	We slept
4	They are in Melaka.	They were in Melaka.
5	We are very happy.	We were very happy.
7	There are many fish.	There were many fish.

Richards (1974),state that these errors are committed when learners try to derive the rules which learners have not learnt previously.

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Table 4.28

Intralingual errors regular and irregular verbs of omission

	Omission Regular		Omission Irregular	
	No	Percentage	No	Percentage
Composition 1	2	2	12	13
Composition 2	1	1	10	4

The data tabulated shows that only a few respondents made intralingual errors of omission in both regular and irregular verb forms . It was noted that less than 2% of omission errors were recorded in both compositions in regular verbs. There were only 13% of errors in irregular verbs in compositions 1 and 4% in compositions 2.

A small number of errors of omission were made by learners. These errors were made due to absence of an item that must appear in a well-formed sentence (Littlewood, 1982). Such omissions were due to the limitations of the learners' capacity in acquiring the rules of the TL.

Table 4.29

Iintralingual errors of omission in regular verbs in compositions 1

Student	Intralingual omission error	Correct form
12	He on the switch.	He switched on the light.

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Table 4.30

Intralingual errors of omission in irregular verbs in compositions 1

Student	Intralingual omission error	Correct Form
3	The time at about 12.30pm	The time was about 12.30p.m.
5	The time at about 2.30pm	The time was about 2.30p.m.
5	His father surprised.	His father was surprised.
6	The snake a big.	The snake was a big one.
8	The snake very big.	The snake was very big.

Table 4.31

Intralingual errors of omission in regular verbs in compositions 2.

Student	Intralingual omission error	Correct form
9	I saved.	I was saved.
29	Luckily we save the people.	Luckily we were saved by the people.

Table 4.32

Intralingual errors of omission in irregular verbs in compositions 2

Student	Intralingual omission errors	Correct form
3	Finally we very happy.	Finally we were very happy.
4	The monkey so angry.	The monkey was so angry.
5	I felt that we lost.	I felt that we were lost

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These errors are due to the limitations of the learner's capacity in acquiring the rules of the L2 (Dulay, Burt & Krashen, 1982).

Table 4.33

Intralingual errors in regular and irregular verbs of addition

	Addition Regular		Addition Irregular	
	No	Percentage	No	Percentage
Composition 1	15	18	19	23
Composition 2	13	22	37	23

The data tabulated shows intralingual errors in regular and irregular verbs of addition. Compared to regular verbs, there were more errors in irregular verbs. There was 23% errors in irregular verbs in both compositions. Fewer errors were noted in both compositions in regular verbs, 18% in compositions 1 and 22% in compositions 2.

Littlewood (1982) stressed that this type of errors were made because learners lack the knowledge of the TL. It was obvious that learners over generalized the rules of the simple past tense when such errors were made. It was possible that learners lacked the rule restriction application which was evidently wrongly applied especially in the simple past tense.

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Table 4.34

Intralingual errors of addition in regular verbs in compositions 1

Student	Intralingual addition errors	Correct form
3	Azelan was thanks to the fireman.	Azelan thanked the fireman.
4	He screamed to woke up his father.	He screamed to wake up his father.
6	He walk go to kitchen.	He walked to the kitchen.
7	He was called his father.	He called his father.
8	He go went open switch lamp.	He switched on the light.

Table 4.35

Intralingual errors of addition in irregular verbs in compositions 1.

Student	Intralingual addition error	Correct form
4	He going to switch on the light.	He switched on the light.
5	He wants eating a something.	He ate something.
5	His father was sleep.	His father slept.
7	Then all family going to sleep.	Then they slept.
8	He went go to the kitchen.	He went to the kitchen.

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Table 4.36

Intralingual errors of addition in regular verbs in compositions 2.

Student	Intralingual addition error	Correct form
4	Boat happened overturned.	The boat overturned.
7	Boat happened overturned.	The boat overturned.
8	I want to go there.	I went there
12	Boat happened overturned.	The boat overturned.
20	I will finished my homework.	I finished my homework.

Table 4.37

Intralingual errors of addition in irregular verbs in compositions 2.

Student	Intralingual addition	Correct form
1	I to saw the scenery.	I saw the scenery.
1	My father and I were going home.	My father and I went home.
4	My father and I went go.	My father and I went.
6	I will see the beautiful scenery.	I saw the beautiful scenery.
6	I feel was lucky.	I felt lucky/I was lucky.

The errors shown in tables 4.34, 4.35, 4.36 and 4.37 are addition errors. It was found that addition errors are mostly intralingual. These errors are due to the presence of an item that must not appear in well-formed utterances in L2 (Dulay, Burt & Krashen, 1982). Examples are the following questions: 1) “He walk go to the

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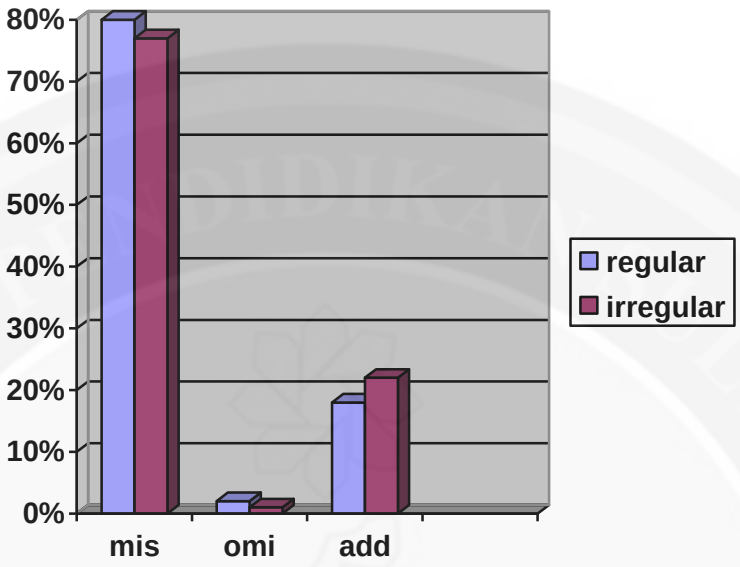
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kitchen." 2) "He was called his father." The respondent had used the double simple present and double past tenses. Littlewood (1982) stressed that this type of error occurs in the third stage of development of the negative and interrogatives of the English language. Learners have not mastered the appropriate rules of verbs that showed time. In other words, learners produce this type of error because they lack the knowledge of TL. Many of the respondents do not understand the exceptions to grammar rules.

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Graph 3

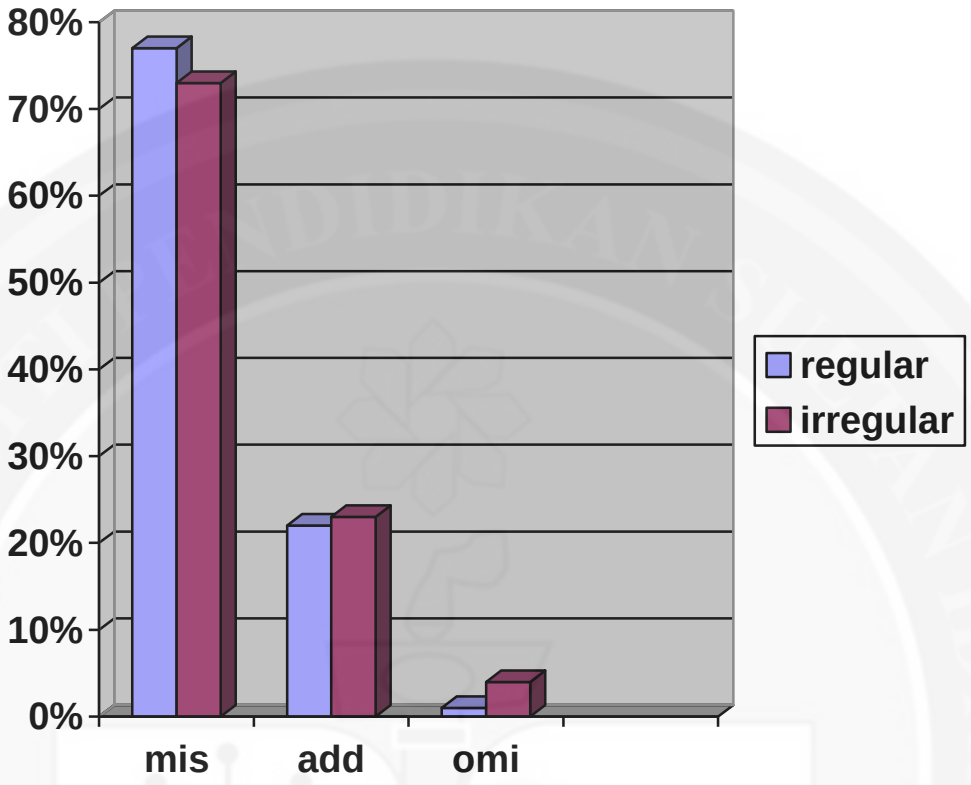


Intralingual errors of misinformation, omission and addition in regular and irregular verbs in compositions 1

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Graph 4



Intralingual errors of misinformation, addition and omission type of errors in regular and irregular verbs in compositions 2

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Omissions are errors made by learners due to absence of an item that must appear in a well-formed utterance in the second language (Dulay, Burt & Krashen, 1982). Omission may be due to the limitations of the learners' capacity to acquire the rules of the target language. Addition are errors due to the presence of an item that must not appear in well-formed sentences in the second language (Dulay, Burt & Krashen, 1982). Misinformation is the use of the wrong form of morpheme or structure on second language (Dulay, Burt & Krashen, 1982). Misinformation is not only common among ESL learners but also among L1 learners.

4.2 Sources of Simple Past Tense Errors

This section answers research question two. Learners made three types of errors namely, misinformation, omission and addition. These errors were made due to interlingual and intralingual factors. Misinformation type of error was due to both interlingual and intralingual factors. Omission type of error was mostly caused by the factor intralingual and only six were recorded due to interlingual factor. (refer table 4.38). Addition errors were mostly due to intralingual factor. The majority of the respondents made intralingual errors of misinformation, omission and addition.

Richards (1974) state that intralingual errors are due to over generalization, ignorance of rule restriction and incomplete application of rules. Ellis (1994) state that interlingual errors are due to mother tongue interference and translations.

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Table 4.38

Intralingual errors in regular and irregular verbs due to overgeneralization

	Mis R %	Mis Ir %	Add R %	Ir %	Omi R %	Ir %
Comp 1	3	2	100	79	50	0
Comp 2	0	0	62	49	0	0

The above table shows data tabulated for intralingual errors caused by over generalization in regular and irregular verbs in compositions 1 and 2. Table 4.38 above shows that additional errors were due to over generalization. Omission errors caused by over generalization was recorded as 50% in compositions 1 and 100% in compositions 2 (refer to page 155). However none of the misinformation errors were caused by over generalization as indicated in compositions 2 . It was also obvious that addition errors were caused by over generalization. As indicated by the data, 50% regular verbs and 100% of irregular verbs errors were due to over generalization.

According to Littlewood (1982), there are two reasons for learners to over generalize the rules. The first reason is that the item belongs to a different category, which is covered by another rule. As such, if the learners do not construct a new category and rule, learners will make errors when learners use that particular language

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item. The second reason is because the rule does not apply to a particular item even though the learners have generalized the item in the appropriate category. The learners may not realize that there are exceptions to the general rule.

Table 4.39

Intralingual errors of misinformation due to over generalization in regular verbs.

Student	Intralingual misinformation –overgeneralization	Correct form
1	Ali was study for his exam.	Ali studied for his exam.
2	He reading a book.	He read a book.

Table 4.40

Intralingual errors of misinformation due to over generalization in irregular verbs.

Student	Intralingual misinformation-overgeneralization	Correct form
2	He is very felt hungry.	He felt very hungry.

The errors in regular verbs are when learners over generalize the rules and make wrong predictions. Irregular verb errors are when learners do not construct a new category and rule (Littlewood, 1982).

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Table 4.41

Intralingual errors of addition due to over generalization in regular verbs

Student	Intralingual addition –overgeneralization	Correct form
3	Azelan was thanks to the fireman.	Azelan thanked the fireman.
4	He screamed to woke up his father.	He screamed and woke his father up.
11	Azwan was study for exam.	Azwan studied for exam.
13	His father was telephone.	His father telephoned.

Table 4.42

Intralingual errors of addition due to over generalization in the usage of irregular verbs

Student	Add-intralingual-overg-irregular	Correct Version
3	They wants to sleep.	They slept.
5	He was felt at his leg.	He felt something at his leg.
7	Then all my family going to sleep.	My family slept.
8	He father can sleep.	His father slept.

Littlewood (1982) stated that addition errors occur in the third stage of development when the learners may not realize that there are exceptions to the general rule.

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Table 4.43

Intralingual errors of omission due to over generalization in regular verbs.

Student	Intralingual omission –overgeneralization	Correct form
13	He very frighten.	He was frightened.

This error is because the learner did not apply the rule to a particular item (Littlewood, 1982).

Table 4.44

Interlingual errors of regular and irregular verbs due to over generalization

	Mis R %	Mis Irr %	Add R %	Irr %	Omi R %	Irr %
Com 1	0	0	60	43	0	100
Com 2	20	0	0	17	0	40

Table 4.44 above shows interlingual errors of regular and irregular verbs due to overgeneralization in both compositions. Only a few interlingual errors were caused by over generalization. In compositions 1 only 3(60%) errors of regular and irregular addition errors were due to over generalization. All the omission errors due to interlingual factor is caused by over generalization.

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Table 4.45

Interlingual errors in irregular verbs of misinformation.

Student	Interlingual misinformation	Correct form
5	My friends and I want to go there.	My friends and I went there

Table 4.46

Interlingual errors in regular and irregular verbs of addition due to over generalization.

Student	Interlingual addition-overgeneralization	Correct form
1	My father and I was climb.	My father and I climbed.
2	I to saw a beautiful nature.	I saw a beautiful nature.
5	His father was sleep.	His father slept.

Table 4.47

Interlingual errors in irregular verbs of omission due to over generalization

Student	Interlingual omission-overgeneralization	Correct form
15	He parents very happy.	His parents were very happy.
9	I very happy.	I was very happy.

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Errors in table 4.47 above were committed when L1 habits and rule interfere and prevented learners from acquiring the patterns and rules of L2 (Corder, 1974).

Table 4.48

Interlingual errors of regular and irregular verbs due to rule application

	Mis R %	Mis Irr %	Add R %	Irr %	Omi R %	Ir %
Com 1	13	21	0	0	0	0
Com 2	20	8	0	0	0	8

The data tabulated shows interlingual errors due to rule application of regular and irregular verbs in compositions 1 and 2. There were no interlingual errors of either omission or addition type caused by rule application. The interlingual errors caused due to rule application is mostly of the misinformation type. 13% was recorded in compositions 1 and 20% in compositions 2. There was only one omission error of wrong usage of irregular verbs which was caused by rule application.

Mohideen (1991) assert that learners may have the knowledge of the English rules but may not understand the rules completely because certain rules have exceptions. Learners who do not understand the exception to the general rule are bound to commit errors.

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Table 4.49

Interlingual errors caused by rule application of misinformation and omission errors

Student	Interlingual misinformation-rule	Correct Version
3	We sleep have enough.	We slept enough.
3	We stop in half journey.	We stopped mid journey.
9	He eat some food.	He ate some food.
9	Then he switch on the light.	Then he switched on the light.

Table 4.50

Intralingual errors in regular and irregular verbs due to rule application

	Mis R %	Mis Irr %	Add R %	Irr %	Omi R %	Ir %
Com1	77	65	2	3	1	7
Com2	87	71	7	6	2	3

Table 4.50 above shows that most of the intralingual errors were due to wrong rule application. 65% of misinformation errors were due to rule application. 2% addition and 1% omission errors were due to rule application. ESL learners have the knowledge of the English rule but do not understand the rules completely because certain rules have exceptions. However, learners who do not understand the exceptions to the general rule of the simple past tense usage of irregular verb form made errors.

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Table 4.51

Interlingual errors in regular and irregular verbs due to mother tongue interference or translation

	Mis R %	Mis Irr %	Add R %	Add Irr %	Omi R %	Omi Irr %
Com 1	60	42	40	21	10	20
Com 2	40	20	0	25	8	17

Table 4.51 shows that all the interlingual errors were due to mother tongue interference. The data indicate that there were more misinformation errors compared to addition errors due to mother tongue inteference. 42% of the interlingual errors were misinformation errors caused by mother tongue interference.

Norish (1983) assert that when learners try to learn a new language, the native language knowledge will interfere with the new language utterances. This form of intervention is known as mother tongue interference. This process takes places consciously in the minds of L2 learners. Mohideen (1991) states that learners are used to their native language and when they try to learn a new language, the rules and the structure of their L1 instead of the TL influence them.

However, there is no doubt that ESL learners will be able to learn second language proficiently since second language learning is a developmental process (Krashen, 1969).

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Table 4.52

Misinformation error in irregular verbs due to mother tongue interference- in composition 1

Student	Misinformation error- mother tongue	Correct form
1	Then he going to the kitchen.	Then he went to the kitchen.

Table 4.53

Addition errors in irregular verbs due to mother tongue interference composition 2

Student	Addition error-mother tongue interference	Correct Form
5	We to found a firewood.	We found firewood.

Table 4.53 above shows errors caused when learners used the rules and the structures of L1 instead of L2. This is shown in the following examples:

Student 1: Then he going to the kitchen.

Bahasa Melayu form: Kemudian dis pergi ke dapur.

Sentence: We to found a firewood.

Bahasa Melayu form: Kita pergi cari kayu api.

Table 4.54

Omission errors in irregular verbs due to mother tongue interference- in composition 2

Student	Omission error- mother tongue interference	Correct Form
10	I very tired.	I was very tired.

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Students omit the verbs, 'was' and 'were' as in *Bahasa Melayu* there is no verb form. This is seen in the following examples:

Student 10: I very tired.

Bahasa Melayu form: I sangat letih.

Student 20: We in National Park.

Bahasa Melayu form: Kita di Taman Baiduri.

The researcher has classified the errors in two categories namely, intralingual and interlingual under the regular form and irregular form of verbs in the simple past tense. These errors were further classified under the types of errors namely, misinformation, addition and omission under the regular and irregular form of the verbs. The researcher has also stated the causes of the three types of errors under the category of regular and irregular verb form in the simple past tense. It was concluded that errors are overt manifestation of learning, a system that arises from several sources. The researcher agrees with Brown (1994) interlingual errors are errors due to interference of L1 whereas intralingual errors are made within the TL.

In general, ESL errors are neither random, sporadic nor deviant. Instead they are systematic, regular and rule-governed (Kroll, 1991). Errors, the result of conscious or unconscious attempts by students to use what they have learnt, are influenced by three factors, L1 interference (MT), over generalization and rule restriction.

The previous chapter explained the background of the study, rationale and literature review on related studies of errors. This chapter discussed the findings of the study. The results were presented in tables and graphs. The conclusion, and implications of the study are discussed in the next chapter.

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CHAPTER FIVE

ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

5.0 Introduction

In this chapter, conclusion of main findings and implications are presented together with suggestions. The suggestions may be considered by those concerned with a need to improve the performance of students in composition writing.

5.1 Conclusion

The primary aim of this study was to identify interlingual and intralingual errors of regular and irregular form of verbs in the simple past tense under the category of misinformation, omission and addition. It was also to find out the causes of error namely mother tongue interference, over generalization and incomplete application of rule.

The analysis of the study proved that secondary form two students made errors in the simple past tense in the written compositions. The most common errors committed were the misinformation category for both the regular and irregular form

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of the verbs in the simple past tense and the cause found was due to over generalization. The data showed that respondents were confused with the English grammar rules and the over generalization factors took over as the main source for the errors.

5.1.1 Discussion of Findings on the Types of Errors in the Simple Past Tense

In addressing this research question, it was found that there were two categories of errors that the respondents made, namely, interlingual and intralingual. These errors were of misinformation, omission and addition. The researcher found out that the highest rate of errors were the misinformation errors. Addition is the second most errors done by the respondents. Lastly, there were only a few respondents who made the omission errors.

Most of the respondents always repeated the misinformation error due to the overgeneralization factors. The problems encountered by the respondents were transformation of the irregular verb into past verb form. Most of the respondents used the wrong form of morpheme or wrong sentence structures. The respondents over generalized the English grammar rules in the simple past tense. Respondents produced such errors because they made the wrong assumptions of the target language. Learners who had internalized rules in English but had not yet mastered the limitation of the rules made these errors.

The second frequent type of errors made by the respondents was addition errors. These errors were due to the presence of an item that must not appear in well-formed sentences. These type of errors occur in the third stage of development of negative and interrogatives of the English Language where learners have not mastered

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the usage of "do", either the "be" or the modal verbs to suit the particular type of tenses (Littlewood, 1982).

The omission errors were due to the limitations of the learners in acquiring the rules of the English language. The respondents always omitted the auxiliary verb 'was' or 'were' in the cloze passages and short essays. These errors were made due to absence of an item that must appear in a well-formed sentence. Such omissions may be due to the limitations of the learners' capacity in acquiring the rules of the target language. As a result, the sentences were grammatically incorrect (Dulay, Burt & Krashen, 1982).

It was concluded that most of the errors that learners produced are the results of their hypothesis formation and testing. The irregular past tense verb is in the second stage of language development (Brown, 1994). As a conclusion, many of the irregular form of the verbs in the simple past tense were not learnt until later years of schooling. As a result, ESL learners tend to memorize the irregular form of the verbs. Since ESL learners have learnt the regular form of the verb in the simple past tense which is to add "ed" to the regular form, learners over generalize the rules and apply the rule wrong by adding "ed" to irregular forms of the verbs. It was concluded that ESL learners made the intralingua errors in the wrong usage of irregular form of the simple past tense. ESL learners also made interlingua errors due to interference of L1 when using the TL. This is true in Malaysian context, where learners are bilingual and tend to transfer the rules and information from L1 to TL. Selinker (1972) stated that errors are due to language transfer of items and rules from L1 to TL.

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5.1.2 Discussions of Finding on the sources of errors

In addressing this research question, the study shows that factors that cause the errors were mother tongue interference, over generalization, ignorance of rules restriction and the infrequent usage of English. It was concluded that sources like mother tongue, over generalization, and rule restriction were obviously seen as the main causes of errors. It was believed that these three sources were interrelated. It was found that intralingual errors were due to overgeneralization and ignorance of rule restriction. Respondents used the wrong form of regular verbs and irregular verbs due to ignorance of rule restrictions and overgeneralization in both the compositions.

This proved Littlewood's (1982) belief is true because the respondents in the study have not mastered the simple past tense. These were the causes of the errors. It was found that ignorance of rule restriction involves the application of rules to context where they do not apply. As indicated by Richards (1974), one of the instances of learners being ignorant of the rule restriction was because the respondents were unaware of certain word transformation from present to past tense, for example, "see" to "saw".

The second cause of intralingual error was due to overgeneralization. The respondents over generalized the regular rule for the past tense information. The respondents produced such errors because of the wrong assumption of the target language.

Interlingual errors were due to mother tongue interference (Mohideen,1991). Mother tongue interference was prominent in the usage of regular and irregular forms of the simple past tense. The respondents relied too much on mother tongue thus made errors because mother tongue was different from English grammar rule. As a

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conclusion, this study discovered that the main source of errors was due to the respondent's lack of knowledge of English language.

5.2 Recommendation

The study had identify the frequent types of errors namely misinformation, omission and addition under the two categories, intralingual and interlingual. It had also identified the sources of errors made by the respondents namely, over generalization, mother tongue, interference, translation and infrequent use of language. Hence, below is some recommendation for consideration. First, for the purpose of improving students' writing skills, the researcher suggests teachers to carry out a process approach to writing. In this approach, the teacher is the resource and the facilitator. The teacher plans activities and chooses the topic. The teacher then responds to drafts and assist those who need help. The teacher then prepares individual editing session. Finally, the writer's product is read out in class. Abbott and Wingard (1981) asserted that errors arise from the choice of material in teaching. Teachers are considered the main source in "affecting" the errors made by ESL learners.

Recent researcher indicates that the major reason for correcting students' composition has no significant effect on reducing errors is because teachers are inconsistent in correcting errors. Allwright (1991, p. 87) states that

"Many teachers correct students' work for an example so, imprecisely and inconsistently that it is *often difficult for students to distinguish their major errors from their minor ones."*

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Therefore, in this chapter, the researcher suggests that a more systematic approach to error correction would be effective than random correction. This approach could be carried out in the process approach to writing. In this approach, students are required to write multiple drafts of their work, upon receiving feedback after each draft. Teachers give the feedback. In the final stage, the teacher should write meaningful comments, which serve as effective feedback to students.

The researcher also believes that the study should be done in a longer duration of time so that the number of writing task can be carried out frequently. The researcher believes that the greater the number of task, the more reliable it is. Finally, the researcher believes that the composition should be extended to students with lower proficiency level to represent a larger population. These students should benefit most, as the nature is to help them improve their performance in writing.

Teachers should make the lessons interesting and meaningful for students. Firstly the activities should be meaningful. The activities should relate to students' own needs and therefore engage them as people. Secondly, good learning activities should involve students' in doing things with language. Personal involvement is an important element in making the learning process interesting and successful. Thirdly, good learning activities give opportunities for interaction with other people. Next, provide plenty of practice to let learners use similar language in different ways. Celce-Murcia (1988) suggests that certain types of students need to learn grammar and should be able to cope and benefit from specially designed activities relating to language forms.

Teachers can develop the suggestions provided by several educationist who have provided classroom-based criteria for grammar activities. Larser-Freeman (1991) views grammar teaching within a three-dimensional framework involving

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form/structure, meaning/semantics and pragmatics. The writer argues that every grammatical structure can be analyzed according to these three dimensions and by doing so, the teacher will be able to organize the facts related to the structure as well as "more easily identify where the challenges will lie for their students." Ur (1988) believes that a well-designed grammar practice activity should be based on a task that has clear objectives and entails active use of the structures being practices. She also suggests that the activities be carefully planned in order to maintain interest and motivation. Suggested means for helping ensure interest and motivation include careful selection of the nonlinguistic topic of the activity; providing a visual focus, open-ended in response, information gaps, and games or competition like activities; building in an entertainment element into the activities as well as play-acting activities. In the classroom, a lesson that focuses on grammar may require a specific format as suggested by Celce-Murcia (1988). The grammar lesson consists four parts:

a) the presentation of the grammar structure
b) focussed practice for manipulating the structure
c) communicative practice where the structure is used in communicative activities
d) teacher feedback and correction.

A common approach taken in the teaching of grammar is to limit the amount of time spent on presenting the structure itself. Instead of an entire lesson on grammar, mini grammar lessons are embedded in different contexts. Celce-Murcia (1988), view them as important in error correction. Grammar lessons may be embedded another teaching contexts as well.

The integrated approach as recommended by Ellis (1994) where formal items of language instruction like the simple past tense can be adopted. Ellis (1994) suggested four options for teaching language. These are structured-input, explicit

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instruction, production and practice and negative feedback. According to Ellis (1994), structured-input is a teaching strategy in which the learner is asked to process input that has been specially contrived to induce comprehension of the target structure. Explicit instruction takes the form of oral or written explanations of grammatical phenomena in the form of exercises in which learners attempt to apply the rule learnt. Production practice involves the reproduction of target structures and which range on a continuum from highly controlled text-manipulation exercises like substitution drill to much freer text-creation tasks in which learners are guided into producing own structures using the target structures. Negative feedback is the errors made by the learners. It serves, therefore, to help learners notice the gap between learner's deviant productions and grammatically correction productions.

Grammar especially the regular and irregular form of simple past tense is to be taught deductively that is by presentation and study of grammar rules which are then practiced through exercises .

Teachers can use the Direct Method as one of the classroom instructional methodology. Instructions in the classroom are to be conducted exclusively in TL. New vocabulary can be introduced with reference to language items in the syllabus. In this method simple past tense form of verbs can be taught inductively through demonstrations and by association of ideas. Teachers should consider that correct grammar is to be emphasized.

Teachers can also use the Situational Language Approach methodology. Palmer (1938) viewed grammar as the underlying sentence patterns. The researcher analyzed English and classified the grammatical structures into sentence patterns call substitution tables. Teachers can adapt and adopt this method of using substitution table to teach simple past tense. Substitution tables are useful to help learners to

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internalize the rules especially simple past tense. It was found in this study that simple past tense errors were caused when learners are incapable to internalize the rules.

5.3 Research for Further Study

The researcher has suggested a variety of techniques that teacher may use to correct errors in simple past tense. It appears that continued research in this new area in Malaysian Education context would contribute to the development of additional practical methods for correcting errors effectively. Experienced research in this field of error analysis appears to be necessary. This type of research needs treatment during the process of experiment. Hence, the researcher corrects the students' error to find out whether this treatment will help or improve their ability to write composition.

Dickens Rea and Woods (1988) draw upon the communicative approach to teach grammar. It was argued that current pedagogical practice which places emphasis on communication has often ignored instilling in learners an understanding of why certain grammatical choices are made in favor of others in the expression of a given communicative function. Communicative grammar activities, should assist the learner "in developing a) an awareness of grammatical choice and b) the capacity to make the appropriate choices according to given contextual constraints" (Dickins Rea & Woods, 1988, p. 636).

Accordingly, substitution tables can still be used but in reference to an accompanying text which provides the context. Similarly, an activity, which involves turning active sentences to passives, can still be acceptable if the learners are required to discuss some aspect of the process. These activities are less likely to be mechanistically done and be used interactively.

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Teachers can introduce stative form of verbs in the simple past tense as the respondents did not use any form of the stative form of verbs in the simple past tense. Brown (1984) stated that there are five developmental stages of learning language. Learning stative form of verbs is the second stage of language development and it is progressive. ESL learners would progressively learn and utilize the new form of verbs developmentally.

5.4 Implication

Corder (1974) noted that learner's errors are significant in language learning and that it provides the researcher the evidence of how language is acquired and what strategies or procedures are applied. Error analysis techniques offer teachers an alternative approach to evaluate students' writing in formal English language. Error analysis is relatively a new concept in second language classroom. Most language teachers are concerned about the different errors that students produced and they want to understand how to deal with errors effectively.

Some implication of error correction and error analysis :

a) It appears that correcting students' errors improve their proficiency more than if their errors remain uncorrected.
b) Errors that students produce frequently should be given higher priorities for correction.
c) A suitable technique such as error code should be used when error correction is carried out.
d) Error analysis should be carried out on a process approach to writing.

Many applied linguists and teachers believe that L2 learner has his own hypothesis about the nature of the language learnt and that the errors are due to

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interference from L1 and wrong generalization of TL rules. Thus the ESL learner acquires the language in overt and covert ways.

This being the case, learning a second language could be more effective if the teacher would find out the needs, abilities and interest of the learners and model lessons and activities according to these. Teachers need to provide learners with more opportunities to use the TL in a meaningful and practical manner.

Asmah (1981) emphasized that it is obvious that students mainly from rural schools have serious problems in acquiring English skills especially in writing skills. It must be admitted that error analysis demands extra time and effort from teachers. If error analysis is used appropriately, it can help learners to be effective in writing composition. According to Yule (1995), errors made by ESL learners are not to be considered as a hindrance, but to help teachers to make learning active through progressive strategies. However, a teacher should see the errors of ESL students as evidence of learning or trying to learn, and that discovering the errors is an interesting and challenging experience. Therefore, correction of simple past tense errors should be done immediately to enable ESL learners to write effectively in compositions. Therefore we could say then that 'to err is language learning and to correct is language teaching'.

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