

## An Investigation into The Occurrence of Speaking Errors in The Utilization of The Simple Present Tense Among Junior High School Students

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### ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengidentifikasi jenis kesalahan yang terjadi dalam bahasa lisan siswa kelas delapan di SMP Islam Pancor Kopong. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain penelitian kualitatif. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menganalisis kesalahan yang dibuat oleh siswa kelas delapan di SMP Islam Pancor Kopong ketika menggunakan simple present tense. Data dikumpulkan melalui tes lisan. Peneliti mengajukan pertanyaan kepada siswa mengenai kegiatan sehari-hari mereka. Evaluasi ini dirancang untuk mengidentifikasi kesalahan dalam produksi bahasa lisan. Temuan dari penelitian ini adalah sebagai berikut. Peneliti mengidentifikasi berbagai jenis kesalahan, termasuk penghilangan, penambahan, kesalahan pembentukan, dan kesalahan urutan. Jenis kesalahan yang paling umum adalah penghilangan, dengan 29 kesalahan, yang mencakup 39,19% dari total. Ini diikuti oleh kesalahan pembentukan, dengan 20 kesalahan, yang merupakan 27,03% dari total. Kesalahan tambahan meliputi penjumlahan, dengan 14 kesalahan, yang berjumlah 18,92%, dan kesalahan pemesanan, dengan 11 kesalahan, yang berjumlah 14,86% dari total.

**Keyword:** Aturan Tata Bahasa; Simple Present Tense; Kesalahan Siswa

### ABSTRACT

*This study identified the types of errors that occur in the spoken language of eighth grade students at SMP Islam Pancor Kopong. This study used a qualitative research design. The purpose of this study was to analyze the errors made by eighth grade students at SMP Islam Pancor Kopong when using the simple present tense. Data were collected through an oral test. The researcher asked students questions about their daily activities. This evaluation was designed to identify errors in oral language production. The findings of this study are as follows. The researcher identified various types of errors, including omissions, additions, formation errors, and order errors. The most common type of error was omission, with 29 errors, accounting for 39.19% of the total. This was followed by formation errors, with 20 errors, accounting for 27.03% of the total. Additional errors included additions, with 14 errors, accounting for 18.92%, and ordering errors, with 11 errors, accounting for 14.86% of the total.*

**Keyword:** Grammatical Rules; Simple Present Tense; Student's Errors

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Language is an indispensable aspect of human existence, serving as a primary medium for communication. Through language, individuals articulate their ideas, opinions, feelings, and thoughts. Typically, individuals convey messages through spoken language, employing direct communication. However, it should be noted that language can be conveyed through a variety of methods. In addition to direct speech, expression and body language are also means by which communication can be facilitated. The latter encompasses gestures, facial expressions, and signs, among other forms. The English language teaching (ELT) curriculum in Indonesia is formulated and overseen by the Ministry of Education, which establishes the

standards and guidelines for the instruction of English as a foreign or second language. Teaching English language is not an easy task for Indonesian teachers, who encounters a lot of difficulties such as understanding the characteristics of the students with diverse background, especially in teaching and learning process. One of the challenges in teaching English language is motivating the students to speak in English.

Grammar is a crucial component of language because it serves to create meaning. Proper usage of a language is contingent upon a comprehensive understanding of its grammatical structure and the nuances of its lexical components. Grammar is the study of the types of words and word groups that make up sentences in any language. Grammar can be conceptualized as a set of rules that govern the construction and analysis of sentences. Grammar is evidently comprised of rules that dictate the arrangement and construction of sentences. Additionally, grammars can be utilized for the analysis of words or sentences based on their form and function. English grammar encompasses a wide array of categories, including tenses, nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, pronouns, articles, and more. While both types of grammar are predicated on a set of established rules, they do so in distinct ways. The utilization of English grammar deviates from that observed in other languages. In the domain of writing, the employment of proper grammar is paramount, as it enhances the coherence and significance of the text. Adequate grammar facilitates comprehension by the reader, enabling them to discern the ideas and meanings articulated by the writer.

The vast majority of students do not take into account the intricacies inherent to the simple present tense. They demonstrate confusion regarding the application of plural and singular forms when employing the simple present tense. The influence of their mother tongue persists, as evidenced by the absence of verbal inflection in Indonesian. Moreover, students frequently commit errors in the application of tenses. The simple present tense was identified as a particular challenge. Their challenges encompassed comprehending sentences, recognizing the formula for the simple present tense, and mastering the rules governing verb conjugation in this tense. Specifically, the subjects demonstrated an inability to comprehend the sentence, the formula, and the rule of verb in the simple present tense.

For instance, the student articulated, "She runs so quickly" rather than "She is running so quickly." Consequently, a significant number of errors are frequently made when speaking in the simple present tense. Third singular persons, such as "he," "she," and "it," require the addition of the suffix –s or –es to the verb. This observation indicates that Indonesian students do not acknowledge the existence of singular or plural verbs in English. In the Indonesian language, the form of a verb is not influenced by the number.

The impetus for a researcher to examine students' errors in utilizing the simple present tense stems from the intriguing nature of the subject matter. Prior researchers have primarily concentrated on the analysis of student writing employing the simple present tense, a focus that this study aims to contribute to by offering novel insights. The analysis of errors in the use of the simple present tense can yield valuable insights into the common linguistic challenges encountered by learners. The importance of Tense in EnglishThe simple present tense is one of the fundamental tenses in English, employed extensively in daily communication. Proper usage is imperative for effective communication in English. Consequently, research findings can inform teaching methods, curriculum development, and language assessment strategies, thereby enhancing support for student learning and proficiency in English or other languages under study.

The importance of comprehending the errors made by students in the utilization of basic tenses in English. By recognizing these errors, educators can identify areas of challenge and develop more effective learning strategies to assist students in mastering these tenses. This is of particular significance in the context of enhancing students' communication skills in English, a domain that is particularly salient at the junior high school level.

The development of speaking skills in the context of foreign language learning has emerged as a pivotal focal point within the domain of language education research. Speech is a pivotal component of the language acquisition process, as it constitutes a primary means of communication that enables learners to engage and communicate effectively in diverse social settings.

Research by Johnson (2019) underscores the significance of structured speaking exercises in foreign language classes, emphasizing their efficacy in enhancing students' oral proficiency. Specifically, the integration of diverse speaking activities, including role-playing, group discussions, and simulations of real-life scenarios, has been identified as a pivotal element in fostering the development of confident and appropriate use of the target language among learners.

Furthermore, it underscores the significance of contextual learning in the acquisition of language skills. The integration of cultural contexts and authentic communicative situations into the language learning environment serves to render the learning process more pertinent and meaningful to students, thereby enhancing their motivation and interest in the subject (Dewi & Primayana, 2019). As Kazemi & Kalani (2013) have noted, "speaking is considered as an important and essential matter for foreign language learners or English as a foreign language of learners" (p. 123). Speech proficiency plays a pivotal role in the acquisition and comprehension of language. Speech is employed to articulate thoughts through verbal expressions. Speech

is considered a productive skill, or more specifically, an aural and oral skill. It encompasses systematic verbal utterances intended to convey meaning. Speech is a form of human interaction that facilitates the exchange of information among individuals. This dynamic process encompasses production, response, and information processing, as evidenced by Masuram and Sripada's seminal work in 2020.

Speech is a productive skill that facilitates communication with others. The primary objective of speech is to convey thoughts in an effective manner, ensuring that listeners comprehend the intended meaning. Consequently, educators strive to facilitate students' understanding of concepts and to enable effective communication.

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

This type of research is qualitative in nature, meaning that the collected data is in the form of words or pictures rather than numerical values. Consequently, this particular research paradigm does not lend itself to the utilization of quantitative methodologies. Murray's (2010) assertion underscores the qualitative research method's emphasis on systematic explanation and analysis. This approach has garnered increasing attention within the field. The present study will focus on investigating the error of using the simple present tense.

The participants are the eighth-grade students of SMP Islam Pancor Kopong. Data was collected by deep interview and survey which were the students and teachers as the object of the research.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### A. FINDINGS

The ability to utilize grammatical structures effectively is a fundamental component of successful communication in any language. Among these structures, the Simple Present Tense occupies a pivotal role in English, serving to express habitual actions, general truths, and current states. Nevertheless, numerous learners encounter difficulties in applying it, which results in a variety of errors that can hinder clarity and comprehension. This essay aims to undertake a thorough examination of the findings derived from a qualitative research study that investigated the errors committed by students in their utilization of the Simple Present Tense. The analysis categorizes these errors into four distinct groups: subject and verb agreement errors, incorrect negative usage, inappropriate use of time adverbs, and incorrect use of the verb "be."

#### 1) Subject and Verb Agreement Errors

A significant category of errors identified in the study pertains to subject and verb agreement. This error manifests when the verb form does not correspond with the subject in terms of number and person. Specifically, students frequently neglect to add the requisite "s" or "es" to the verb when the subject is third person singular (i.e., he, she, it). For instance, a common error observed was the statement, "She go to school every day," where the verb "go" fails to conform to the subject "she." The appropriate form would be "She goes to school every day." This error pattern suggests a fundamental misunderstanding of the rules governing subject-verb agreement, which is essential for grammatical accuracy in English.

#### 2) Incorrect Negative Usage

A notable category of error identified in the research is the incorrect usage of negative constructions in the Simple Present Tense. Students frequently encounter difficulties in correctly applying the auxiliary verbs "do" and "does" when formulating negative sentences. A paradigmatic illustration of this error is the phrase, "She don't like ice cream," which erroneously employs "don't" instead of the grammatically correct "doesn't." This error signifies a misapprehension regarding the rules that govern the negative forms of verbs, particularly the distinction between the first-person and second-person plural (using "do") and the third person singular (using "does"). Such misunderstandings can lead to a breakdown in communication and hinder the learner's ability to express negation accurately.

#### 3) Inappropriate Use of Time Adverbs

The study also highlighted students' difficulties with the appropriate use of time adverbs commonly associated with the Simple Present Tense. Adverbs such as "always," "usually," and "never" serve to indicate the frequency of actions; however, students often misuse them due to a lack of understanding of their contextual application. An illustrative example of this error is the statement, "He goes to the gym never," where the placement of the adverb "never" disrupts the grammatical structure of the sentence. The appropriate formulation would be, "He never goes to the gym." This error underscores a broader issue of comprehension regarding the temporal aspects of verb usage and the frequency adverbs that modify them.

#### 4) Incorrect Use of the Verb "Be"

Despite its status as one of the simplest verb forms in English, students often experience difficulties in the proper usage of the verb "be." Errors in this category frequently involve the incorrect selection of the form of "be" or its inappropriate combination with other verbs. For instance, the erroneous sentence "She are a good student" exemplifies the confusion surrounding the correct form of "be." The appropriate construction

would be, "She is a good student." This error suggests a potential gap in students' comprehension of verb forms and their proper applications within different contexts.

#### 5) An Examination of Errors in the Use of the Simple Present Tense Among Eighth Grade Students

The ability to comprehend and utilize grammatical structures is paramount for effective communication in any language, particularly in the context of English language acquisition among non-native speakers. This essay presents a qualitative analysis of the findings derived from observational and interview data concerning the persistent errors eighth-grade students exhibit when employing the Simple Present Tense. The study identifies several contributory factors to these errors, including mother tongue interference, inadequate understanding of grammatical rules, entrenched erroneous habits, and a lack of focus during learning. In addition, this essay will propose recommendations to improve students' proficiency in using the Simple Present Tense.

The observational results indicate that eighth-grade students frequently encounter challenges in their use of the Simple Present Tense, particularly in the areas of subject-verb agreement, negative constructions, and question formation. An in-depth analysis of these errors has identified four primary factors contributing to this phenomenon, in the following:

#### 6) Mother Tongue Interference

A substantial contributor to the observed errors is the influence of the students' native language, Indonesian. In Indonesian, verbs do not undergo morphological changes based on the subject; therefore, students develop a habit of applying a singular verb form across varying subjects. This linguistic transfer results in frequent omissions or inaccuracies in adjusting the verb form to align with the subject in English, particularly in the Simple Present Tense.

#### 7) Lack of Grammar Understanding

The findings further underscore a pervasive lack of comprehension regarding the grammatical rules governing the Simple Present Tense. A significant number of students demonstrate an absence of awareness regarding the necessity to modify verb forms for the third person singular, the role of auxiliary verbs in constructing negative and interrogative sentences, and the appropriate usage of time adverbs. This substandard command of fundamental grammatical principles considerably hinders their capacity to formulate sentences with precision.

#### 8) The Effect of Improper Habits

Another critical factor that has been identified is the persistence of incorrect habits among students. A significant number of students have adopted routines that involve the use of incorrect structures without receiving immediate correction or recognizing their errors. This absence of immediate feedback results in the solidification of these habits, thereby hindering students' ability to modify their linguistic behaviors over time.

#### 9) Lack of Focus on Learning

The qualitative data collected through interviews reveal that several students perceive the pace of instruction as excessively rapid. Many students indicated that they did not fully comprehend the concepts associated with the Simple Present Tense prior to the curriculum's progression to subsequent topics. This deficiency in comprehension contributes to their persistent challenges in employing the tense correctly.

#### 10) Difficulties in Utilizing the Simple Present Tense

The interviews indicate a range of challenges that students encounter when using the simple present tense. A recurrent theme in the students' responses pertains to the challenge associated with the conjugation of verbs, particularly in the third person singular. One student articulated this struggle, stating, "I find it difficult to remember when to add 's' or 'es' to verbs in the third person singular." This observation signifies a prevalent area of confusion among learners, underscoring the necessity for explicit instruction and deliberate practice in verb conjugation rules.

Additionally, students reported challenges related to auxiliary verbs and sentence structure. One participant noted, "I find it difficult to add 'to be' and use prepositions; it's difficult for me." This observation highlights the intricacy of formulating grammatically sound sentences in the simple present tense. Furthermore, another student articulated their struggle with sentence formation, stating, "I encounter challenges in constructing sentences. I am at a loss as to how to employ the grammar structure." Such statements indicate a more extensive challenge, namely the integration of various grammatical elements into coherent sentence construction.

#### 11) Sources of Errors in Simple Present Tense Usage

The students were also tasked with identifying the causes of their errors in utilizing the simple present tense. The responses indicated that confusion surrounding negative sentences and interrogative forms significantly contributed to the students' difficulties. One student noted, "I frequently encounter confusion when using negative sentences and interrogative forms, often neglecting to employ the appropriate 'do' or 'does' form, which results in errors." This observation underscores the significance of comprehending the structural distinctions between affirmative, negative, and interrogative sentences.

Another student concurred, stating, "I frequently neglect to include the 's' or 'es' suffix with the verb when the subject is third person singular. This tendency contributes to the imprecision of their sentences. This observation suggests that students may benefit from targeted exercises that focus specifically on the nuances of subject-verb agreement, particularly in the context of third person singular subjects.

#### 12) A Survey of Learning Activity Preferences

The interviews also revealed students' preferences for different types of learning activities. When asked to choose between written exercises, speaking, or listening tasks, responses exhibited variability. One student indicated a preference for speaking, asserting, "I prefer speaking because I can practice speaking English directly, and it helps me improve my pronunciation." This inclination is consistent with the concept that interactive speaking activities can facilitate language acquisition through real-time engagement.

In contrast, another student indicated a preference for written exercises, explaining, "I prefer written exercises because they allow me to develop my writing skills and acquire new vocabulary." This response indicates that students recognize the value of written practice in reinforcing grammatical concepts and vocabulary development. A third student articulated a balanced appreciation for all activities, yet ultimately demonstrated a predilection for speaking, underscoring the ease of self-expression through conversation.

#### 13) Perspectives on the Ease of Learning the Simple Present Tense

The students were asked to share their perceptions regarding the level of ease or difficulty associated with acquiring proficiency in the simple present tense. The responses obtained were varied, reflecting the intricacies inherent in mastering this grammatical structure. One student articulated their perspective with the following assertion: "Not invariably, given that at times the formation of sentences according to grammatical principles can prove challenging." This perspective was corroborated by another participant, who noted, "No, because there are grammatical rules that must be comprehended." Such responses suggest that students encounter the simple present tense as challenging due to its associated grammatical rules and contextual usage.

One student, however, offered a contrasting perspective, stating, "Yes, because it can facilitate the formation of sentences." This observation underscores the subjective nature of language learning experiences, wherein certain students may encounter greater accessibility in certain aspects of the simple present tense compared to others. However, it should be noted that another student has cautioned that the rules for using the simple present can be confusing in practice. This observation suggests that while the theoretical understanding may be attainable, practical application remains a significant hurdle.

#### 14) Challenges Identified by the English Teacher

An interview with a seasoned English teacher yielded further insights into the complexities of teaching the simple present tense. The teacher identified two primary challenges faced in this context. First, the distinction between the base form of verbs and the third-person singular forms, which include "s" or "es," proved to be a significant hurdle for many students. While the grammatical rule is often grasped at an abstract level, there is often a discrepancy between comprehension and application. This discrepancy between comprehension and application highlights a pervasive challenge in language education: students often grasp the theoretical concepts but encounter difficulties in applying them correctly in real-world settings.

The second challenge delineated by the instructor pertains to students' challenges in formulating negative and interrogative sentences. Many students are accustomed to positive sentence structures, which can lead to confusion when confronted with variations involving auxiliary verbs such as "do" and "does." The instructor has observed a tendency among students to incorrectly combine these auxiliary verbs with already modified main verbs. This suggests a misinterpretation of sentence construction, which further complicates the mastery of the simple present tense.

In this analysis, the errors made by eighth grade students in the use of simple present tense were identified and categorized based on four types of errors, namely omission, addition, mis-formation, and mis-ordering. The ensuing section presents the findings that emerged from a more detailed analysis.

Table 1. The Findings of the Errors

No	Type of Error	Total errors	Percentage (%)
1	Omission	29	39.19%
2	Mis-formation	20	27.03%
3	Addition	14	18.92%
4	Mis-order	11	14.86%
<b>Total Errors</b>		74	100%

##### 1. Error of Omission

According to Dulay, Burt, and Krashen (1982), omission is a type of error in which linguistic elements that should be in a sentence are not include. In this research, the researcher found there are 29 omission or 39.19% from 15 students.

Table 2. Example of Correction

Incorrect	Correct
I read before bed	I read <b>a book</b> before bed
I sleep in afternoon I scroll tiktok	I sleep in <b>the</b> afternoon <b>then after that</b> I scroll tiktok
My mother go super market at 6 a.m	I mother <b>goes to</b> super market at 6 a.m

## 2. Addition

According to Dulay, Burt, and Krashen (1982). Addition is an error that occurs when students add unnecessary elements to a sentence. In the type of addition error there are 14 errors from 15 students.

Table 3. Example of Correction

Incorrect	Correct
I <b>am</b> go to breakfast	I go to breakfast
I wake up at 05.00 then <b>for</b> I take a bath	I wake up at 05.00 then I go to take a bath
I go <b>to</b> home after study	We go home after study

## 3. Mis-Formation

According to Dulay, Burt, and Krashen (1982). Mis-formation as an error in which the form of a morpheme or structure is used incorrectly. In this research, the researcher found 20 errors in mis-formation or 27.03% percentage from 15 students.

Table 4. Example of Correction

Incorrect	Correct
I takes towel before take a bath	I take a towel before take a bath
I usually went to school at 06.30 a.m	I usually go to school at 06.00 a.m
I and my friend goes to canteen	Me and my friend go to canteen

**B. DISCUSSION**

## 1) Spoken Language

The development of speaking skills in the context of foreign language learning has emerged as a pivotal focal point in a substantial corpus of language education research. Speech has been identified as a critical component of the language acquisition process, given its role as a primary means of communication that enables learners to engage and interact effectively in diverse social settings (Onishchuk et al., 2020).

Research by Johnson (2019) underscores the significance of structured speaking exercises in foreign language classes, emphasizing their efficacy in enhancing students' oral proficiency. Specifically, the integration of diverse speaking activities, including role-playing, group discussions, and simulations of real-life scenarios, fosters the development of learners' proficiency in utilizing the target language with confidence and appropriateness. Additionally, it underscores the significance of contextual learning in the acquisition of spoken language proficiency. The integration of authentic cultural contexts and communicative situations into the language learning environment serves to render the learning process more pertinent and meaningful to the students, thereby enhancing their level of motivation and interest in the subject (Dewi & Primayana, 2019).

As Kazemi & Kalani (2013) have stated, "speaking is considered as an important and essential matter for foreign language learners or English as a foreign language of learners" (p. 123). Speech proficiency plays a pivotal role in the acquisition and comprehension of language. Speech is employed to articulate thoughts through verbal expressions. Speech is considered a productive skill, or more specifically, an aural and oral skill. It encompasses systematic verbal utterances intended to convey meaning. Speech is a form of human interaction that facilitates the exchange of information among individuals. This capacity for speech is an interactive process involving the production, response, and information processing (Masuram & Sripada, 2020).

Speech is a productive skill that facilitates communication with others. The primary objective of speech is to convey thoughts in an effective manner, ensuring that the audience comprehends the message. Consequently, educators should endeavor to facilitate comprehension and communication among students.

## 2) Definition of Error Analysis

Analysis is defined as the process of explaining the origin or structure of complex problems by selecting them one by one (Meisa, 2014, p. 12). Errors, as defined by Tarigan (2011, p. 126), are defined as defects in students' speech or writing. According to the aforementioned definition, error analysis can be defined as an activity that involves the explanation or description of the components of errors present in the learner's speech or writing.

**4. CONCLUSION**

The qualitative research findings elucidate the various errors that students make in employing the Simple Present tense, revealing significant patterns of misunderstanding in grammatical constructs. The categorization of these errors into subject and verb agreement, incorrect negative usage, inappropriate use of time adverbs, and incorrect use of the verb "be" providing valuable insights into the challenges faced by

learners. Addressing these errors through targeted instruction and practice is essential for enhancing students' grammatical competence and overall proficiency in English. By fostering a deeper understanding of the rules governing the Simple Present tense, educators can equip students with the tools necessary for effective communication and successful language acquisition.

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