

Abstract

EFL Students' Use of Tenses

by

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This study investigated the contexts of wrong use of tenses in EFL students' writing, and examined the contexts in which wrong use of tenses occur. Eighteen writing samples were collected from eighteen subjects who were first year graduate students of School of Language and Communication at the National Institute of Development Administration (NIDA). The findings show there were five types of contexts of EFL students' wrong use of tenses: a temporal frame from contexts, adverbial expressions of time, temporal conjunctions of time, an introduction to the theme, and a conformity to the main clause. The temporal frame from contexts is the crucial problem for these students in their wrong use of tense. In addition, the majority of tense errors committed by EFL students is past simple. These errors are caused by the different conceptual notions of time that EFL and English native speakers have. An implication for these findings is that tense instruction must be done, not in isolation, but in context. Also, students should be encouraged to take more consideration of temporal frame and time references appearing in contexts for their tense use.