

THE ACQUISITION OF ENGLISH TAG QUESTIONS BY INDONESIAN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS : AN ERROR ANALYSIS

A THESIS

In Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for
the Sarjana Pendidikan Degree in
English Language Teaching



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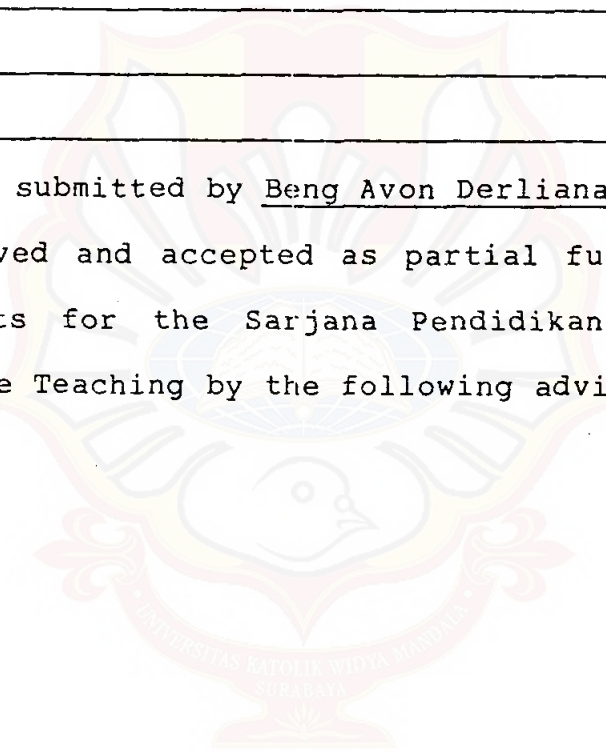
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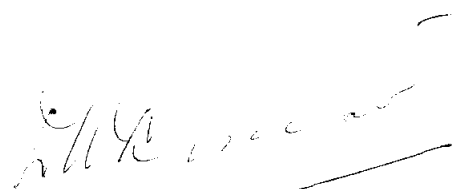
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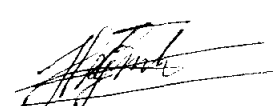
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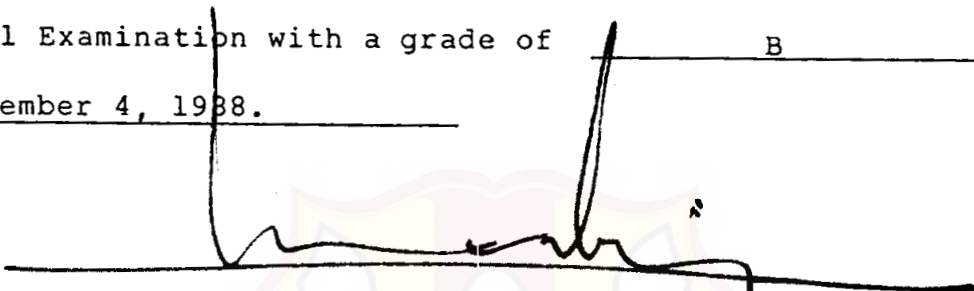

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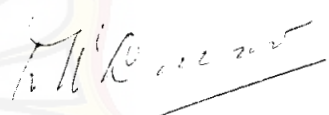
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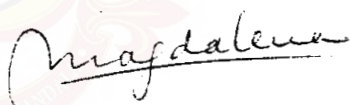
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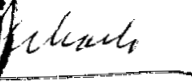
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

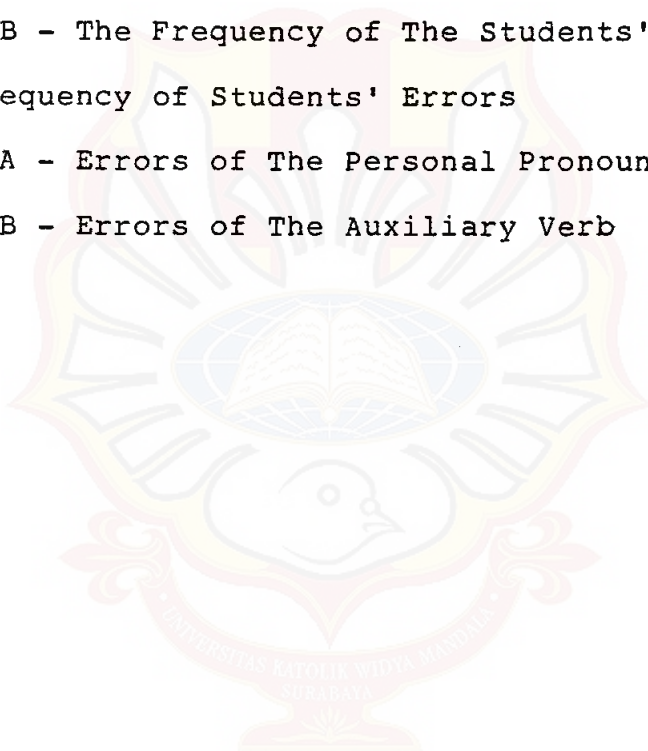
	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS	v
LIST OF APPENDIXES	vi
CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background of the Study	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem	3
1.3 The Objective of the Study	3
1.4 The Significance of the Study	4
1.5 The Limitations of the Study	4
1.6 The Assumptions of the Study	4
1.7 Definition of Key Terms	5
1.8 Organization of the Study	6
CHAPTER II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE	8
2.1 Contrastive Analysis	8
2.2 Error Analysis	13
2.3 Interlanguage	24
CHAPTER III. METHODOLOGY OF RESEARCH	28
3.1 Population and Sample	29
3.2 Instruments	30
3.3 Procedures of Collecting the Data	33
CHAPTER IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS	34
4.1 Types of Errors	34
4.2 The Examples of Students' Errors	37

	4.3 The Causes of the Errors	39
CHAPTER	V. CONCLUSION	45
	5.1 Summary	45
	5.2 Suggestions	47
BIBLIOGRAPHY		50



LIST OF APPENDICES

	Page
I. The Test Items Of The Research Test	52
II. The Reliability of The Test	
Table A - The Students' Scores of The Test	57
Table B - The Frequency of The Students' Scores	60
III. The Frequency of Students' Errors	
Table A - Errors of The Personal Pronoun	61
Table B - Errors of The Auxiliary Verb	71



ABSTRACT

English is taught and learned as a foreign language in Indonesia. The grammar of the English is taught to Indonesian students beginning from the Junior High School. The problem with the teaching of English grammar in Indonesia is that the students very often make errors throughout the learning process. Considering this fact, the writer through this study would like to help the students who get difficulties in learning and mastering the grammar. The focus of this study is on the students' errors in English Tag Questions.

With reference of the reason for choosing the topic, the statement of the major problem under study is formulated as follows :

"What types of errors do high school students make in the learning of English Tag Questions and what are the possible causes of the errors?".

There are three objective which should be achieved in this study, namely ; to identify the types of errors made by high school students in the learning of English Tag Questions; to find out the possible causes of the errors; and to suggest some techniques to minimize the errors.

To get the data for this study, the writer gave subjective test to the second year students of SMAK St. Stanislaus II Kalijudan Surabaya. Then she noted down all of the errors encountered, analyzed, classified, counted and put in rank order. Finally, she interpreted the finding based on the formulated problems and objectives. Based on the data, she classified the errors into two types, namely errors of the personal pronouns (= 42%) and errors of the auxiliary verbs (= 58%). Then she divided errors of auxiliary verbs into three sub-error types, namely : misuses of auxiliary verbs, addition and omission of negative markers after auxiliary verbs.

After the writer classified the errors based on the pattern occurrence, she tried to find out the causes of the errors made by the students. The findings and the causes are as follows :

- a. The students did not pay attention to the possessive pronouns of the subjects in the statement part. They use the wrong forms of the pronouns in the tag question. These errors might be caused by transfer of training.
- b. The students did not notice the use of "aren't" in the tag question after "I am" in the statement part. The cause of this error is intralingual transfer in false

concept hypothesized.

- c. The students were not aware of the rules of imperative sentences which should be followed by "will + you" in tag question. The cause of this error is Intralingual transfer because of their wrong strategies of language learning.
- d. The students overgeneralized imperative sentences beginning with "Let's" which should be followed by "shall + we". The cause of this error is intralingual transfer in over generalization.
- e. The students did not realize that sentences containing negative words like 'nothing' and 'nobody' are followed by affirmative question tags. The cause of this error is Interlingual transfer in language transfer.
- f. The students did not pay attention that "there" can be used as a subject in question tags. The cause of this error is intralingual transfer in over generalization.
- g. The students did not use the appropriate auxiliary according to the tense of the statement part. This type of errors might be caused by intralingual interference. Another cause of this error is that the students were not aware of the existence of modal auxiliaries in the statement part. They had false concept hypothesis that the form "could, would, might" were interpreted as a marker of the past tense and "can, will, may and shall" were understood to be the corresponding marker of the present tense.
- h. The students overgeneralized that all affirmative statements should be followed by negative tag. They used negative tag although the sentences containing negative words like 'nothing', 'nobody'.

The findings of this study show that English Tag Questions are still considered difficult to SMA students of Santo Stanislaus II Kalijudan Surabaya. Realizing that fact, the writer would like to suggest how to minimize the students' errors. The following are the suggestions. First, the teacher should emphasize the existence of auxiliary verb and personal pronoun in constructing English Tag Questions. Second, the teacher should explain the variable forms in constructing English Tag Question. They are :

- a. affirmative statement should be followed by negative tags and negative statements should be followed by positive tags;
- b. the auxiliaries repeat themselves in the tag.
- c. 'aren't' is used in the tag question after 'I am' in the statement part;
- d. the imperative sentences should be followed by 'will you' in tag question and 'shall we' for imperative sentence beginning with "Let's";
- e. sentences containing negative words like 'nothing',

'nobody' should be followed by affirmative tag question. The pronoun "it" is used to avoid repeating 'nothing' and "they" is used for 'nobody'. The pronoun "they" is used to avoid repeating 'somebody', 'someone', and 'everybody' ;
f. "there" can be used as a subject in tag questions.

Third, the teacher should encourage the students to find the real subject in the possessive form by using pictures or diagrams. If they cannot give the correct form of personal pronoun well, they cannot master the English Tag Questions well. Fourth, the teacher should give more exercises in constructing English Tag Questions to the students. Since the time allocated to practice English Tag Question in class is limited, it is beneficial for the students to get homework. Fifth, this study should be continued using more sophisticated instruments and research techniques to determine the elements of English Tag Question patterns which has been mostly misconstrued by the students of Indonesian High School. An excellent procedure is to use tape-recorder and make effort to help the students produce correct responses.