

AN ANALYSIS OF THE SECOND YEAR STUDENTS' PROBLEMS AT SMPN 1 PARIAMAN TO UNDERSTAND ARTICLES AND PREPOSITIONS IN SIMPLE SENTENCE

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Abstract

The purpose of this research was to know the problems of the second year students to understand articles and prepositions of SMPN 1 Pariaman. The design of this research was descriptive research. The population of this research was the second year students of SMPN 1 Pariaman. The number of the population member was 148 students. Thirty of them were taken as sample of this study by using simple cluster random sampling. The instrument used to collect the data in this research was grammar test in the form of completion test. From the result of research, the researcher found that the problems of the second year students of SMPN 1 Pariaman to understand articles and prepositions in simple sentence as follows; there were three problems faced by the students to understand articles. They were article 'a' (22.7%), article 'an' (27.8%), and article 'the' (50.7%). There were three problems faced by the students to understand time prepositions. They were time preposition 'in' (20%), time preposition 'on' (20%), time preposition 'at' (60%). And there were three problems faced by the students to understand place prepositions. They were place prepositions 'in' (41.3%), place prepositions 'on' (33.3%), and place prepositions 'at' (45.3%). Based on the results above, it is suggested that the teacher should give more exercises, especially about articles and prepositions to the students. And it is suggested to the students that they should pay more attention to understand articles and prepositions in simple sentence.

Key Words: Problem, Structure, Articles and Prepositions

Introduction

English is an international language that is used by many people in the world and in many areas of everyday life. As we know, in Indonesia English is used obligatory in many levels of school from junior high school until university. Therefore, using English is the easiest way to communicate with people from other countries about many aspects in

human life such as technology, economy, social, education and politics. As we know, in Indonesia English is used obligatory in many levels of school from junior high school until university. In elementary school, its status is as local content. In junior high school and senior high school, English is taught by using an integrated teaching. All of the language skills are learned together under the English subject.

It is relatively difficult for most students to understand it, so English should be taught to the student intensively.

To study English, the students are expected to master language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) and language components (structure/grammar, vocabulary). Structure is one of the aspects of language that should be learned by the students in order to be able to use English for communication. Structure is used in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Structure is the rule of the word arrangement in sentences to create meaningful pattern. In other words, structure is the way to put words together in good order to make the correct sentences (Klamer and Schulz, 1996).

Structure explains about many components and rules that have to be used in English. Thomson and Martinet (1986:5) state that there are several aspects of structure, for example: tenses, chronological connectives, adjectives, articles, prepositions, adverbs, verbs, and conjunctions. Article and preposition are one of the structure topics that should be mastered by students.

Article is a word that is used before noun. Articles are divided into two. They are indefinite article (a, an) and definite article (the). Kurniawati (2011:10) says that the words 'a', 'an', and 'the' are called articles. They modify noun. Moreover,

according to Wikipedia (2012), articles are words that are used with a noun to indicate the type of reference being made by the noun. Articles specify the grammatical definiteness of the noun, in some language extending to volume or numerical scope. In addition, Wikipedia (2012) states that articles are considered a special category of adjectives. Some modern linguistics prefer to classify them within a separate part of speech, determiner.

Alter (1991:1) states that articles are divided into two. The first is that article 'a' or 'an' are indefinite article. We use them to refer to any one kind of thing or person. We use 'a' before a noun with a consonant sound. 'an' is used before a noun with a vowel sound or one which starts with a silent 'h'. And the second is article 'the' is definite article.

Articles modify noun and we use them before noun. For example; an apple, a book, a pen, etc. Prepositions modify the link between noun and another noun. For example; I play badminton on Friday. Sometimes articles and prepositions are used together in a sentence, for example ; He buys a novel in the store.

Frank (1972: 163) states that a preposition is a word to connect a noun or a pronoun to another word, usually noun, verb or adjective. Moreover, Wikipedia (2012) states that a preposition may be defined as connecting word showing the

relation of a noun or a noun substitute to some other words in the sentence (the squirrel in the tree; the preposition in shows the relationship between the squirrel and the tree). A preposition is always followed by an object, either a noun or pronoun. Prepositions come before a noun or pronoun. The noun or pronoun preceded by a preposition is known as the object of a preposition.

Frank (1972: 163) states that prepositions are divided into three types. The first is preposition of time. Prepositions of time are prepositions that are used to describe the time. The words that are often used of preposition of time are; on, in, at, during, since, etc. The second is the prepositions of position. The preposition of position is to show the location of the noun, person or object. The words that are often used in preposition of position are; in, on, at, over, above, under, near, among, etc. Example, he puts the small cat on the floor. The third is the preposition of direction. The preposition of direction is to show the direction of the someone or something. The words that are often used in preposition of direction are; from, to, into, around, up, down , away from, etc.

Article and preposition can be used in all kinds of sentences (simple, compound, complex, compound-complex)

in all the tenses. Oshima and Hogue (1981: 122) state that sentence is divided into four categories, namely: simple sentence, compound sentence, complex sentence, compound-complex sentence. Simple sentence is a sentence that has only one independent clause. Examples:

- I enjoy playing tennis with my brother.
- He writes a letter.
- Ana likes banana.

Compound sentence is composed of two or more simple sentences joined by coordinating conjunction. By a coordinating conjunction: Examples:

By a sentence connector:

- I love singing; however, I hate dancing

By a semicolon:

- I love singing; I hate dancing.

By a semicolon:

- I love singing; I hate dancing

Complex sentence is a sentence containing at least two clauses: one independent clause and one or more dependent clause.

- Ana was watching a film while the others were sleeping.
- When she comes to my house, I am in the Mall.

Complex-compound sentence is sentence containing two or more

independent clauses and at least one dependent clause.

- When I read a new book, My friend called me, She want to borrow my book.

Based on the researcher's interview with English teacher at SMPN 1 Pariaman, it was indicated there many students had problem to understand articles and prepositions when they expressed them in simple sentence. They were confused about understanding articles and prepositions , especially articles 'a', 'an' and 'the', and prepositions 'in', 'at', 'on'.

The research focused on the problems of the second year students' at SMPN 1 Pariaman to understand *articles* and *prepositions* in simple sentence. The researcher limited the articles, they were indefinite article and definite article (*a*, *an*, and *the*). In addition, the prepositions were limited on preposition of time (in, on, at) and preposition of place (in, on, at).The purpose of the research was to describe the students' problems to understand articlesand prepositionsin simple sentence.

Methodology

This research was a descriptive research. Descriptive research involves collecting data in order to answer questions concerning the current status of the research (Gay, 1987: 189). This research was designed to describe and analyze the second year students' problems at SMPN1

Pariaman to understand articles and prepositions in simple sentence.

The population of this research was the second year students of SMPN1 Pariaman. The total number of populations were 148 students. The population was distributed in five classes: VIII I, VIII 2, VIII 3, VIII 4, and VIII 5.

In this research, to select the sample, the researcher used cluster random sampling because the students have the same teaching English materials and learning process. To select the sample, the researcher used lottery system. The ways of the lottery systems are follows: the researcher wrote the name of each class on five pieces of paper, where a pieces of paper was given class VIII I, VIII 2, VIII 3, VIII 4, VIII 5 and put them in the box and shake the box. The researcher took one piece of paper as sample, class V111 2 as the try-out sample and class VIII 3 as the real test sample. To collect the data, the researcher used grammar test. It was usefull to know the students' problems to understand articles and prepositions in simple sentence. The researcher gave the students a test in the form of completion test. The students were given 60 minutes to do entire test. Before doing the test, the students were given the instruction of how to do it. And before giving the real test, the researcher did the try out test first. It is useful to know the reliability of the test, to

see whether the time allocation is enough or not, and to see whether the students understand the instruction or not.

The researcher used content validity. According to Arikunto (2008:62), a test is valid if it measures what is supposed to be measured. It means that the test is valid if it fixes with the material that was given to the students and it is based on the curriculum or syllabus.

To find out the realibility of the test, the researcher used split half method by using Pearson Product Moment formula as suggested by Arikunto (2008: 72). According to Gay (1987: 139), to know the coeficient of correlation of the test, the result is analyzed by using Spearman Brown formula.

In the process of gathering data, the researcher used grammar test. To do this, there were several steps gathering the data. They were as follows:

- The researcher gave the test to the students who were as sample.
- The researcher asked students to complete the test in 60 minutes.
- The researcher collected the test.
- The researcher identified the students' problems based on the answer of students.

For example:

- I open a window. (P)
- She saw him on Saturday. (NP)

Notes: P= Problem

NP= No Problem.

In analyzing the data, the researcher used the procedures as follow:

- The researcher prepared a frequency table.
- The researcher classified the students' problems in using definite 'a' in simple sentence, students' problems in using definite 'an' in simple sentence, students' problems in using indefinite 'the' in simple sentence, students' problems in using time preposition 'in', 'on', 'at' in simple sentence, students' problems in using place preposition 'in', 'on', 'at' in simple sentence by using the frequency table.
- The researcher counted the students' problems by using percentage formula as follow:

$$\text{Percentage} = \frac{F}{N} \times 100\%$$

P = percentage of the students who have problem.

F = the sum of the total articles problem/prepositions problem.

N = the sum of articles/prepositions.

Findings and Discussion

Findings

1. Students' Problems to Understand Articles in Simple Sentence

Based on the data analysis, it was found that there were three problems faced by the students to understand articles. They were article ‘a’ (22.7 %), article ‘an’ (27.8%), and article ‘the’ (50.7%) see Appendix I. The result of the research can be seen in the following table (Table 1.1)

Table 1. The students’ problems to understand articles in simple sentence.

| Components | Indicators | Percentage % |
|------------|--------------------------|--------------|
| Article | Definite article (a) | 22.7 % |
| | Definite article (an) | 27.8 % |
| | Indefinite article (the) | 50.7% |

2. Students’ Problems to Understand Time Prepositions in Simple Sentence

From the data analysis, it was found that there were three problems faced by the students to understand time prepositions. They were time preposition ‘in’ (20%), time preposition ‘on’ (20%), time preposition ‘at’ (60%) see Appendix J. The result of the research can be seen in the following table (Table 2.1):

Table 2. The students’ problems to understand time prepositions in simple sentence.

| Component | Indicators | Percentage % |
|------------------|------------|--------------|
| Time preposition | In | 20 % |
| | On | 20 % |
| | At | 60 % |

3. Students’ Problems to Understand place Prepositions in Simple Sentence

Based on the data analysis, it was found that there were three problems faced by the students to understand place prepositions. They were place prepositions ‘in’ (41.3%), place prepositions ‘on’ (33.3% %), and place prepositions ‘at’ (45.3%) see Appendix K. The result of the research can be seen in the following table (Table 3.1):

Table 3. The students’ problems to understand place prepositions in simple sentence.

| Component | Indicators | Percentage % |
|-------------------|------------|--------------|
| Place preposition | In | 41.3 % |
| | On | 33.3 % |
| | At | 45.3% |

4. Students’ Problems to Understand Articles and Prepositions in Simple Sentence.

Based on the data analysis, the researcher found that there were three problems faced by the students to understand articles. They were article ‘a’ (22.7 %), article ‘an’ (27.8%), and article ‘the’ (50.7%). The researcher also found that there were three problems faced by the students to understand time prepositions. They were time preposition ‘in’ (20%), time preposition ‘on’ (20%), time preposition ‘at’ (60%). The researcher found that there were three problems faced

by the students to understand place prepositions. They were place prepositions 'in' (41.3%), place prepositions 'on' (33.3% %), and place prepositions 'at' (45.3%) see Appendix L. The result of the research can be seen in the following table (Table 4.1):

Table 4. The students' problems to understand articles and prepositions in simple sentence.

| Component | Indicators | Percentage % |
|-------------------|------------|--------------|
| Article | The | 50.7 % |
| | A | 22.7 % |
| | An | 27.8 % |
| Time preposition | In | 20 % |
| | On | 20 % |
| | At | 60 % |
| Place preposition | In | 41.3 % |
| | On | 33.3 % |
| | At | 45.3% |

Discussion

Students' Problems to Understand Articles in Simple Sentence

Based on the result of the research, it was found the students had problems to understand indefinite articles. Students' Problems to Understand Articles in Simple Sentence.

Based on the data, the students did not understand and confuse about the use of definite article 'the'. This example of the test that can not be answered by some students:

- He needs an cup of tea. (Incorrect article)

He needs a cup of tea. (Correct article)

- A bird is a animal. (Incorrect article)

A bird is an animal. (Correct article)

- I open a window. (Incorrect article)

I open the window. (Correct article)

Students' Problems to Understand Time Prepositions in Simple Sentence

Based on the result of the research, it was found the students had problems time prepositions 'in', 'on', 'at'. Based on the data, there were many students did not understand about the use of time prepositions. This examples of the test that cannot be answered by some students:

- I was born at 20 March. (Incorrect time preposition)

I was born on 20 March. (correct time preposition)

- They bought the old house at 1998. (Incorrect time preposition)

They bought the old house in 1998. (Correct time preposition)

- My father is sleeping on the moment. (Incorrect time preposition)

My father is sleeping at the moment. (Correct time preposition)

Students' Problems to Understand place Prepositions in Simple Sentence

Based on the result of the research, it was found the students had problems place prepositions 'in', 'on', 'at'. Based on the data, there were many students did not

understand about the use of time prepositions. This examples of the test that can not be answered by some students:

- My mother cooks on the kitchen. (Incorrect place preposition)
My mother cooks in the kitchen. (Correct place preposition)
- Take the book at the desk. (Incorrect place preposition)
Take the book on the desk. (Correct place preposition)
- He lives in 20 Mawar street. (Incorrect place preposition)
He lives at 20 Mawar street. (Correct placepreposition)

Students' Problems to Understand Articles and Prepositions in Simple Sentence.

Based on the result of data analysis, the researcher found of the samples got problems to understand articles 'a', 'an', 'the' and prepositions 'in', 'on', 'at' in simple sentence. The data also exhibited that the students had problems to understand articles and prepositions. It means that many students had problems about understand of articles and prepositions in simple sentence.

Conclusion

Based on the result, the researcher draws some conclusions as follows:

1. The second year students of SMPN 1 Pariaman had three problems faced by the students to understand articles. They were article 'a' (22.7 %), article 'an' (27.8%), and article 'the' (50.7%). It means that the students had more problem to understand article 'the' than article 'a' and article 'an'.
2. The second year students of SMPN 1 Pariaman had three problems faced by the students to understand time prepositions. They were time preposition 'in' (20%), time preposition 'on' (20%), time preposition 'at' (60%). It seems that most of students not understand about time preposition 'at'.
3. The second year students of SMPN 1 Pariaman had three problem faced by the students to understand place prepositions. They were place prepositions 'in' (41.3%), place prepositions 'on' (33.3% %), and place prepositions 'at' (45.3%) see . It showed that many students can not answer the questions about place prepositions 'at'.

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