

**AN ANALYSIS OF THE FIRST YEAR STUDENTS' DIFFICULTIES IN  
USING VERB AND TO BE OF SIMPLE PAST TENSE WHEN WRITING  
EXPERIENCES AT SMAN 11 PADANG**

**ARTICLE**

**CICI MAYRIL YANI**

**0910013121020**



**ENGLISH DEPARTMENT  
TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION FACULTY  
BUNG HATTA UNIVERSITY**

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# **AN ANALYSIS OF THE FIRST YEAR STUDENTS' DIFFICULTIES IN USING VERB AND TO BE OF SIMPLE PAST TENSE WHEN WRITING EXPERIENCES AT SMAN 11 PADANG**

Cici Mayril Yani<sup>1</sup>, Lely Refnita<sup>2</sup>, Lisa Tavriyanti<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>The Student of English Department, The Faculty of Teacher Training  
and Education, Bung Hatta University

E-mail: Cici\_mayrilyani@yahoo.com

<sup>2</sup>The Lecturers of English Department, The Faculty of Teacher Training  
and Education, Bung Hatta University

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## ***Abstract***

*This research aimed at determining the first year students' difficulties in using verb and to be of simple past tense when writing experiences at SMAN 11 Padang. The design of the research was descriptive research. The population of the research was the first year students of SMAN 11 Padang. They were spread over in eight classes. The writer used cluster random sampling technique in order to select the sample. She took thirty two students in one class as the sample of real test and twenty nine students in another class as the try out class of the research. The writer used writing test. The writer tried out the writing test to know whether the students could understand the direction or instruction of the test or not, whether the time to do the test was enough or not. The result of writing test showed that in general there were 78% (25 students) who had difficulties in using verb and to be of simple past tense when writing experiences. Specifically, there were 27 students (83%) who had difficulties in using verb of simple past tense when writing experiences and were 23 students (72%) who had difficulties in using to be of simple past tense when writing experiences.*

***Key words: Simple Past Tense, Writing Experience***

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## **INTRODUCTION**

There are four language skills that students learn in learning English. They are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Having skills in English language is an important factor that helps someone to communicate. To master those skills they should be supported by understanding grammar. Grammar is an important element in English that contains the rules

for making the sentences of a language. Robert (1962:1) states that an English grammar would be a set of rules for making English sentences. It is supported by Hariyono (2002:11) who states that grammar is a knowledge that teaches about the way to arrange words to become a sentence correctly.

Grammar has a big influence in learning and mastering language skills;

listening, speaking, reading and writing. In mastering listening skill, the learners are expected to master the grammar, so that they understand what messages or information that they heard. Then, in mastering speaking, we have to know the way to use the grammatical word classes, pattern, rules, etc. In mastering reading, the learners should understand about grammar because without understanding grammar they do not know what they have read. And the last, grammar gives an influence to writing, the learners can write well if they really know about grammar, like grammatical systems, sentence pattern, rules, etc. Writing is intellectual activity that related with English component. Writing should become familiar in students' daily life because writing practice can help students to improve their vocabulary and of course increase their ability in grammar. Oshima and Hogue (1991:16) state that writing is a skill that people can write their daily activity. In other word we cannot speak and write well and even we cannot understand what we have listened and read without understanding grammar.

There are sixteen tenses in learning English. They are simple present tense, past tense, future tense, future past tense, present continuous tense, present perfect tense, present perfect continuous tense, past continuous tense, past perfect tense, past perfect continuous tense, future continuous tense, future perfect tense, future perfect continuous tense, future past continuous tense, future past perfect tense, and future past perfect continuous tense. In this study, the writer focused on simple past tense.

At the first year students of SMAN 11 Padang the writer found that the students was difficult to understand simple past tense, for example they make errors in making sentences of simple past. They still got difficulty in using verb (regular or irregular) even they did not understand to use verb with auxiliary did in negative sentence of simple past tense. Moreover, there were some mistakes in using to be. They were still confused with to be that will be used for the first singular subject or for plural subject. And they were also confused in differentiating to be of simple past tense with to be of simple present tense.

Therefore, the writer was really interested to do the research to analyze and to find out the difficulties of the first year students at SMAN 11 Padang in using verb and to be of simple past tense when writing experiences.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

In this research the writer used descriptive method because it was designed to describe and analyze the students' difficulties in using verb and to be of simple past tense when writing experiences. Descriptive research is aimed at describing an accurate, factual, and systematic nature of a certain condition.

In collecting the data in this research the writer used writing test. The test consists of one part. It was in the form of paragraph writing. The students wrote their experiences in their past with their own topic.

The population of this research was the first year students of SMAN 11 Padang. The writer choosed them because they had learnt simple past tense even

since they were in junior high school. The total number of the population was 256 students.

In selecting the sample of this research, the writer used the cluster random sampling technique. Gay (1987:110) states that the cluster random sampling is sampling in which groups are randomly selected. The reason for choosing this technique was because the students had been grouped into several classes, and they had been taught with the same teaching materials.

Before giving the real test, the writer did the try out test. It was done to know whether the students could understand the direction or instruction of the test or not, whether the time to do the test was enough or not.

A good test should be valid and reliable. The writer used content validity. It means that the writer constructed the test based on curriculum and teaching materials. Then, to have a reliability for the real test, the writer used inter-rater technique. It means that there were two scorers. To calculate the coefficient correlation of two scores, the writer used the Pearson Product Moment Formula (Arikunto, 2012:8) as follow:

$$r_{xy} = \frac{n \sum xy - (\sum x)(\sum y)}{\sqrt{\{n \sum x^2 - (\sum x)^2\}\{n \sum y^2 - (\sum y)^2\}}}$$

Where:

$r_{xy}$  = the coefficient of correlation between variables x and y

n = the number of the students who follow the test

$\sum x$  = the sum score from the first scorer

$\sum y$  = the sum score from the second scorer

$\sum xy$  = the total scores of cross product xy

The writer used the degree of coefficient correlation based on Arikunto (2012:89):

.81 – 1.00 = very high

.61 – .80 = high

.41 – .60 = enough

.21 – .40 = low

.00 – .20 = very low

The result of  $r_{\text{calculated}}$  was .81. it means that the degree of coefficient correlation was very high.

In collecting the data there were some steps that the writer did, as follow:

1. The writer distributed the test to the students.
2. The writer collected the students' answer sheets.
3. The writer copied the students' answer sheets and gave them to the second scorer.
4. Criteria of giving score were given for both scorers
5. The first scorer and the second scorer read students' writing answer sheets one by one
6. The first scorer and the second scorer identified each students' sentences using verb and to be of simple past tense.
7. The first scorer and the second scorer gave score for each sentence following the criteria if the use of verb and to is correct the scorers

gave 1 but if the use of verb and to be is wrong the scorers gave 0. (Adapted from Brown, 2004:228).

8. The writer calculated the average score of two scorers.
9. Counting the total students' score.

In analyzing data, the writer used the procedures as follows:

1. The writer counted the total score for each student.
2. The writer found the percentage of the students' difficulties in using verb and to be of tense based on the formula below:

$$P = \frac{F}{N} \times 100\%$$

Where:

P = percentage

F = total correct verb and be

N = total sentences

3. The writer classify the result of percentage in two categories:
  - If  $P < 50\%$  = having difficulties
  - If  $P 50\% - 100\%$  = having no difficulties

## FINDING AND DISCUSSIONS

### Finding

From the table above the writer found the result about the difficulties of the first year students in using verb and to be of simple past tense at SMAN 11 Padang. In average, after analyzing there were 25 students (78%) who had difficulties in using verb and to be of simple past tense when writing experiences, and there 7 students (22%) who had no difficulties in

using verb and to be of simple past tense when writing experiences. And the writer also found 27 (83%) students of the first year students of SMAN 11 Padang had difficulties in using verb of simple past tense when writing experiences. And there were 5 students (17%) who had no difficulties. There were 23 (72%) students who had difficulties, and 9 (28%) students who had no difficulties in using to be of simple past tense when writing experiences.

### Discussions

From the data above, the writer found that there were difficulties made by the first year students of SMAN 11 Padang had difficulties in using verb and to be of simple past tense when writing experiences. Based on the students writing task, the writer found that the students had difficulties in using verb of simple past tense. There were 27 (83%) students who had difficulties in using verb of simple past tense when writing experiences. In this problem, in writing paragraph about experience, the students did not pay attention in changing basic form of verb to second verb. It means they did not pay attention to change the present form of sentences that they made to become past form of sentences. They were also confused in differentiating the use of regular verb and irregular verb.

There were students who had difficulties in using to be of simple past tense when writing experiences. Students who had difficulties in using to be of simple past tense was 23 (72%) students. In this problem, many students had problem in using to be of simple past tense, they were still confused with to be that will be used for the first singular subject or for

plural subject. And they were also confused in differentiating to be of simple past tense with to be of simple present tense.

## CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

After having finding and discussion, the writer concludes that:

1. In general the first year students of SMAN 11 Padang had difficulties in using verb and to be of simple past tense when writing experiences. The data described that 25 students (78%) had difficulties.
2. The first year students of SMAN 11 Padang had difficulties in using verb of simple past tense when writing experiences. There were 27 students (83%) who had difficulties.
3. From the number of students' percentage, the writer found 23 students (72%) of the first year students of SMAN 11 Padang had difficulties.

Based on the conclusion above the writer has several suggestion to be considered by the English teacher and the students:

1. The writer suggests the students to understand the concept of simple past tense especially in using verb and to be. By understanding the concept of simple past tense, they will know to use verb and to be it well. It will help students in making sentence correct even they will get high score in writing paragraph about simple past tense.

2. The writer suggests English teacher to give the students more exercises which focus on using simple past tense and are expected to review the material to improve students' ability in using verb and to be and that will add students' knowledge about simple past tense. The English teacher should have many strategies in teaching simple past tense so that the students are interest to learn about simple past tense more, and it will add their knowledge and their understanding in using simple past tense.

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