

AN ANALYSIS OF THE FIRST YEAR STUDENTS' DIFFICULTIES IN WRITING SIMPLE SENTENCES IN SIMPLE PAST TENSE AT SMA ADABIAH PADANG

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Abstract

This research attempted to describe the difficulties of the first year students who registered in academic year 2013/2014 to write simple sentences in simple past tense. The design of this research was descriptive research. The total number of population was 288. They were distributed in nine classes. The number of samples was 32 students. The researcher used cluster random sampling technique to choose sample. Based on the result of data analysis, the researcher found that the students' difficulties of the first year students at SMA Adabiah Padang to write simple sentences in simple past tense is 16 students (51,07%). It was proved by the fact that 15 students (46,89%) had no difficulties in writing affirmative sentences. It was proved by the fact that 19 students (58,8 %) had difficulties in writing negative sentences. It was proved by the fact that 15 students (46,91%) had no difficulties in writing interrogative sentences. Based on the result of data analysis, a simple conclusion could be drawn that the of the first year students at SMA Adabiah Padang had difficulties to write simple sentence in simple past tense. Dealing with the conclusion, the teachers and the students were suggested to give more attention to the aspect of grammar because there were (51,07%) students got difficulties. For students, they were suggested to do exercises to increase their ability in writing simple sentence in simple past tense.

Key words: Students' Difficulties in Writing Simple Sentence in Simple Past Tense

A. Introduction

In globalization era, people need some languages to communicate each other in the world. One of the languages is English. It has been used as a means of communication all over world. In Indonesia, English is one of compulsory subjects that is taught to learner for senior

high school up to university, while in elementary school it is local content.

In teaching and learning English, students are expected to master the four English skills; such as listening, speaking, reading and writing. Among the four skills, writing is a kind of complex process especially for non native speakers. Writing activities are the transformation of thought into the word to sentence using structure

and coherent organization and need control for several variables like content, vocabulary, and etc.

Based on the curriculum of English for senior high school (Kurikulum 2013), the teaching of English for students is aimed at achieving the functional level namely the students are expected to be able to communicate in oral and written form. In oral communication they are expected to communicate orally with other people in certain appropriate manners according to the situation of the discourse, while in written form they are also expected to be able to convey their ideas or message through word by word, sentences to sentences until short paragraph.

In this curriculum, the learners are also expected to be able to produce sentence. To achieve this purpose, it is necessary for the students to know the strategies in writing sentences in order to produce the sentences well. However, in fact the researcher found some problems in teaching writing to first grade students of SMA Adabiah Padang. The students have difficulties to write sentences correctly. They thought that writing is a complicated skill. If they have a writing test or assignment, most of them had got confused of choose a words, organizing their ideas, developing the topic, and arranging the words in grammatical sentences. They

thought it is a hard task for them. However, as far as the writer knows, there is no research that studied about the students' difficulties in writing sentences in simple past tense at SMA Adabiah Padang.

Based on the researchers' observation with some of first grade of SMA Adabiah Padang, it was found that they got difficulties in writing simple sentence in simple past although they have practiced to write it. The results of the observation were supported with what the researcher got when checking or correcting their writing exercises. Many students still made mistakes in writingsimple sentence in simple past. The students still confuse use irregular verb and regular verb, use capitalization in front of sentence.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher was interested in conducting a research entitled: "An Analysis of the First Year Students' Difficulties in Writing Simple Sentences in Simple Past at SMA Adabiah Padang".

B. Research Method

This researcher useddescriptive design. It described the difficulties of students in writing sentences. According to Gay (1987:186), descriptive research involves collecting data to test hypothesis or to

answer the question concerning the current status of the subject of the study.

Based on the definition above, it could be concluded that descriptive research is used to measure or describe the problem in the field in order to get fact or real information. So, the researcher used this descriptive research design to know the students' difficulty in writing sentences.

Population is the group of interest to the researcher Gay (1987:102). The population of this research is the first year students of SMA Adabiah Padang. The researcher chose the first year students of SMA Adabiah Padang, because they have studied simple past tense and simple sentence. The distribution of the members of the population can be seen in the following table:

In the research, the researcher used writing test as the instrument to collect the data. Here, the students write 30 simple sentences using simple past tense that consists of 10 positive sentences; 5 sentences using verbal and 5 in nominal, 10 negative sentences; 5 sentences using verbal and 5 using nominal, and 10 interrogative sentences; 5 sentences using w-h question and 5 using yes-no question. To do the test, the researcher given the students time 60 minutes. A good test should be valid and reliable. A test is valid if it measures what is supposed to be measured. In order to see

the validity of the test, the researcher use content validity. Arikunto (2012:72) states that one of the characteristics of that test validity is content validity. It means that the test is valid if it fixes with the materials that have been given to the students. Thus, the test constructed based on syllabus and teaching materials used at SMA Adabiah Padang.

Table 3.2 Specification of the test

No	Component	Number of item
1.	Positive sentence in nominal sentence	5
2	Positive sentence in verbal sentence	5
3	Negative sentence in nominal sentence	5
4	Negative sentence in verbal sentence	5
5	Interrogative sentence in yes-no question	5
6	Interrogative sentence in w-h question	5

	Total	30
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Reliability is the degree to which a test consistently measures what is supposed to be measured (Gay, 1987:135). To know the reliability of the test, the researcher used inter-rater technique. It means that he used assessors and the writer found out the consistency of two assessors by using Product moment formula(Arikunto,2012:87):

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

Where:

r_{xy} = The coefficient correlation between x and y variables

n = the total number of students

x = the total number of difficulties found by first assessors

y = the total number of difficulties found by second assessors

$\sum xy$ = the total score of cross product xy
The researcher used the classification of correlation based on Arikunto (2012:89)

0.81 – 1.00 = very high correlation

0.61 – 0.80 = high correlation

0.41 – 0.60 = moderate correlation

0.21 – 0.40 = low correlation

0.00 – 0.20 = very low correlation

C. Findings and Discussion

Findings

Based on the indicator stated in the previous part, the students are said have difficulties when there are more than 50% students who have difficulties. Generally, the students had difficulties in writing simple sentence in simple past tense. It is supported by the fact that 16 students (51,07%) found difficulties in writing simple sentence in simple past tense. But in detail the students still had difficulties in writing w-h question such as in using subject verb-agreement, verb, question word, etc. 15 students (46,89%) found difficulties in affirmative sentence, 19 students (59,4%) found difficulties in negative sentence, 15 students (46,91%) found difficulties in interrogative sentence.

The students had no difficulties in writing affirmative sentence in simple past tense. It is supported by the fact only 15 students (46,89%) found difficulties (see

Appendix 4). The writer explains about students' difficulties in writing affirmative sentence in simple past tense in nominal and verbal form.

The students had difficulties in writing negative sentence in simple past tense; it is supported by the fact 19 students (58,8 %) found difficulties (see Appendix 5). The writer will explain about students' difficulties in writing negative sentence in simple past tense in nominal and verbal form.

The students had no difficulties in writing interrogative sentence on past tense. It is supported by the fact only 15 students (46,91%) found difficulties (see Appendix 6). The writer explained about students' difficulties in writing interrogative sentence in simple past tense.

Discussion

Based on the findings, the writer found that the students had difficulties in writing simple past tense. The students also had difficulties in writing negative sentence.

Based on data analysis, the writer found that the students had no difficulties in writing affirmative sentence, but they still made mistake in using subject-verb

agreement, subject be agreement and punctuation.

Based on data analysis, the writer found that the students had difficulties in writing negative sentence in simple past tense, they will made mistake in using subject auxiliary agreement, verb, subject-be agreement, adjective/adverb/noun and punctuation.

Based on data analysis, the writer found that the students had no difficulties in writing interrogative sentence in simple past tense, but they will made mistake in using question word, auxiliary subject agreement, verb/noun/adjective/adverb, and punctuation.

D. Conclusions and Suggestions

Conclusions

Based on the findings, the writer concludes:

1. Based on the indicator stated in the previous part, the students are said to have difficulties when more than 50%. Generally, the students had difficulties in writing simple sentence in simple past tense. It is supported by the fact 16 students (51,07%) found difficulties in writing simple sentence in simple past tense. The students still had difficulties in writing negative

sentence in simple past tense such as in using subject verb agreement, verb, question word, etc.

2. The students had no difficulties in writing affirmative sentence in simple past tense. It is supported by the fact only 15 students (46,89%) found difficulties in writing affirmative sentence in simple past tense. In nominal form the students had no difficulties. It was proved by the fact that 6 students (18,76%) found difficulties. In verbal form the students had no difficulties. It was proved by the fact that 9 students (28,13%) found difficulties.
3. The students had difficulties in writing negative sentence in simple past tense. It is supported by the fact only 19 students (58,8 %) found difficulties in writing negative sentence in simple past tense. In nominal form the students had no difficulties. It was proved by the fact that 7 students (21,89%) found difficulties. In verbal form the students had no difficulties. It was proved by the fact that 12 students (37,51%) found difficulties.
4. The students had no difficulties in writing interrogative sentence in simple past tense. It is supported by the fact only 15 students (46,91%)

found difficulties in writing interrogative sentence in simple past tense. In w-h question the students had no difficulties. It was proved by the fact that 6 students (18,77%) found difficulties. In yes-no question the students had no difficulties. It was proved by the fact that 9 students (28,18%) found difficulties.

Suggestions

Based on the conclusion above, the writer would like to give several suggestions to the teacher and students.

A. For the Teacher

1. The students had difficulties in writing simple sentence in simple past tense. And the students also had difficulties in write negative sentence. The teacher should give more explanation about grammar especially in simple past tense and writing subject.
2. Since the students had difficulties in writing negative sentence, teacher should give more explanation about grammar in writing negative sentence.

B. For the Students

The students were expected to pay attention to the teachers' explanation about appropriate vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics in writing simple sentence. They were also suggested to do more exercises to write simple sentence in simple past tense. Besides, it was suggested to pay attention to the aspect of grammar.

E. References

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