Freshman of Grammar: Students’ Ability in Using Simple Present Tense at Batanghari University

Yanti Ismiyati
FKIP Universitas Batanghari, Program Studi Bahasa Inggris

ABSTRAK
Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk menyelidiki kemampuan siswa di Universitas Batanghari Jambi dalam menggunakan Simple Present Tense. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah kuantitatif dengan menggunakan pendekatan survey. Smaple penelitian terdiri dari 88 orang siswa dengan menggunakan purposive sampling. Data diambil dengan menggunakan test pilihan ganda. Peneliti menggunakan total rata rata untuk mengetahui persentasi mahasiswa dalam menggunakan simple present tense. Berdasarkan hasil analisis, peneliti menemukan bahwa sebagian besar mahasiswa dalam menggunakan simple present tense (do dan does) rata rata adalah (41%) dan di bawah rata rata adalah (20%). Terutama, kemampuan mahasiswa dalam menggunakan am, is are adalah di atas rata rata (31.8%) dan kategori di bawah rata rata adalah (28.4%). Berdasarkan hasil penelitian ini maka dapat di simpulkan bahwa kemampuan mahasiswa Unbari Semester pertama adalah sedang dalam menguasai present tense. Bedasarkan hal ini maka disarankan kepada para pengajar khususnya Bahasa Inggris (grammar) untuk memberikan tidak hanya penjelasan serta materi tetapi juga mengajak mahasiswa berpartisipasi aktif baik lewat diskusi maupun perorangan.

Kata kunci: kemampuan, simple present tense, grammar

INTRODUCTION
Language has been analyzed as being composed of skills, They are listening, speaking, reading and writing, Harris (1975). They are lacked for reach two objectives, those are oral language production and written language production. In addition of four language skills, English also has some language sections or components. As mention the following below are: grammar vocabulary, pronunciation and spelling. One of the important sector that should be mastered by the students is grammar. It must be understood by the students in both targets such as oral language production and in written language production. Beside has four language learning skills, English also has some language components.

Undoubtedly, structure or grammar is a wide study which has many aspects about role of using language. Grammar explains about sentence pattern. In grammar students can find any concept of using tenses in English. Furthermore, through grammar students can get important rules of using modals, auxiliaries, prepositions, adverb of frequency and so on. It can be said that the grammar of a language covers all of grammatical rules which have important function in constructing sentences.

According to Huddleston and Pullum (2007), grammar is a describe that relation if the categories of grammatical form are clearly defined in the first place, and defined separately from the kinds of meaning that they may or may not sometimes express. Thornbury (1999) says that “grammar is description of the rules for forming sentences, including an account of the meanings that these forms convey”. Larsen-Freeman (2001) claims that grammar is a system of meaningful structures and patterns that are governed by particular pragmatic constraints. The other definition Altenberg and Vago (2010), describes that grammar is simply labeling words to an understanding of how the differences pieces of a sentence fit it together. Ansell (2000) claims that grammar is an analysis of the various function performed by the words of the language, as they are used by native speaker and writers.

Grammar instruction is one of the most difficult issues of language teaching. Grammar which in composed of tenses which an indispensable part of a language and it constitutes the bone of the body language. So, if we want to master English, we should know about the
grammar and also the tenses. Making the students to interested in learning is not easy, especially learning about grammar. It is challenge to the lecturer who teach English. It has many reason of the lack of students to interested in grammar. They have no idea how to understand about it. There are some tenses in grammar, such as simple present tense, past tense, future tense, present progressive, and so on. Another statement about grammar comes from Greenbaum & Nelson (2002). They state that the several applications of grammatical study. First, recognatin of grammatical structures is often essential for punctuation. Second, a study of one’s native grammar is helpful when when one studies the grammar of a foreign language. And then, knowledge f grammar is a help in the interpretation of literary as well as nonliterary texts, since the interpretation of a passage sometimes depends crucially n grammatical analysis. Last, a study of the grammatical resources of English is useful in composition. From that statement, it is clear that grammar is important to be mastered by the students in order to be able to express their feelings, emotions, and to be able t use English appropriately in many aspects.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher will be interested in analyzing styudents’ ability in usin.

Limitation of the Problem

Based on background that mention above , the problem in this research will be limited by analyzing students’ ability in using simple present tense and the use of am, is are and do does.

Formulation of the Problem

The researcher is focused on the freshman students’ ability in using simple present tense at Batanghari University .

The Purpose of the Research

In line with the question above , this research aimed to analyze the students’ ability 1 using simple present tense.

Benefits of the Research

The significant of this research is expected to give valuable information whether the students can mastery the use of simple present tense or not. The result of this research showed the students’
Before the teacher introduce any new language the teacher should have analyzed the form that he/she wants to teach. One of teacher’s job is to show the new language is formed—how the grammar works and how it is put together. One way to do this to explains the grammar in detail.

In this research the word pattern refer to the form of modal auxiliary, in other words, the arrangement of words which form a correct sentence.

Language Learning

Learning a foreign language is, of course, different from learning one’s mother tongue. There are three types of language items, which are introduce to a learners, first, phonological items which cover sound of the language. Second, lexical items, which discuss frequent repetition and exposure, and adopt memorization strategies when learning the lexical items. Third, structural items which include the rules of constructing sentences. Hubbard(1998).

In learning English, the learners have difference ability in comprehending the structural items. The learners are given the chance to apply their knowledge in grammar based on their ability.

“The aim of teaching grammar should ensure that students are communicatively efficient with grammar they have at their level. We may not teach them the finer points of style at the intermediate level, but we should make sure that they can use what they can use what they know” Jeremy Harmer (1999).

The Definition of Simple Present Tense

Ansell (2000) claim that simple present tense is refer to actions which occurs at regular intervals.

e.g. They come here everyday
         Ani buys a candy one a week

We take holiday every year
The simple present is also use in stating general truths.

   e.g. Cat has four legs
         Ball is round
         Borobudur is the biggest temple
in Indonesia

The Simple Present Tense of the Verb To Be

A conjunction of a verb is a list showing the different forms a verb may take. When a verb is conjugated, it is usually accompanied by all of the personal pronouns which can act as a subject of a verb. Thus, a conjunction can show the different forms a verb must take when it is used with different subjects. Such as:

   I
   You
   They
   We
   He
   she
   It

Furthermore, the simple present of the verb to be is conjugated as follows:

   I am
   You are
   They are
   We are
   He is
   She is
   It is

Alexander (1998) says that simple present tense has seven basic uses. We use it for:

1. Permanent truths: Summer follows spring
2. The present period’ (=’this is the situation at present’): My mother works in a hospital
3. Habitual actions: I have breakfast at 7:45, I sometimes go to cinema
4. Future references (for timetable, etc.): The new movie begins at 8:00 next Saturday evening.
5. Observations and declarations: I hope so, It says here that…I love you. I hate him
6. Instructions: first you weight the ingredients
7. Commentaries: Ronaldo serves to Messi

Krohn (1971) describes about the following rule in simple present tense, as the following below:

Am , is , are for examples:

1. Substitutes adjective (green, old, new, etc.) I the proper position. For example:
   Green
   Old
   New
   The book is green
   The man is old
   They are new students

2. Substitutes noun phrases in the proper position in statements. For example:
   The pencil
   The watch
   The pencil is new
   The watch is new

Freshman of Grammar: Students’ Ability in Using Simple Present Tense at Batanghari University

492
3. Substitutes adjective (green, old, new, etc.) in the proper position (at the end) in questions. For example:
   - Green: Is the book green?
   - Old: Is the book old?
   - New: Is the book new?

4. Substitutes noun phrases in the proper position in question. For example:
   - The pencil: Is the pencil new?
   - The watch: Is the watch new?

**Negative of simple present tenses:**

A. The simple present tense: third person singular does not/doesn’t + infinitive; other person do not/don’t + infinitive. Contractions are usual in speech:
   - He does not/doesn’t answer the letter
   - They do not/don’t play football

B. Negative contraction
   - The auxiliaries be as follows:
     - Am not, ‘m not
     - Is not, isn’t or ‘s not
     - Are not, aren’t or ‘re no

**Interrogative for questions and request:**

A. Simple present tense interrogative: does he/ she/ it + infinitive; do I/you/we they + infinitive. Does Akhmad enjoy parties?

B. Contractions of auxiliary used in the interrogative
   - Am, is, are. After how, what, ho, where, why, these can be contracted as shown belows:
     - What’s the colour of the book?, where’re yu?

**Be as an ordinary verb**

Be to denote existence, be + adjective

A. Be is the verb normally used to denote the existence of, or to give information about a person or thing:
   - Tom is a carpenter. The dog is in the garden
   - Bali is an island. Gold is shine

B. Be is used to express physical or mental condition:
   - I am cold
   - She is sad

C. Be is used for age:
   - How old are you? I am ten years old
   - How old this temple? It is 500 years old.

**METHODOLOGY**

**Design of the Research**

The research was designed as a quantitative research by using survey approach. Johnson & Christensen (2008) explains that quantitative research is research that relies primarily on the collection of quantitative data. In relation to definition above, this research was attempted to describe the student’s mastery with regard to their comprehension toward I simple present tense. Descriptive research is a research that answer question concerning the current status of the subject of the study (Gay,1987). In accordance to analyze students’ ability in using simple present tense.

**Population and Sample**

**Population**

Croswell (2012) claims that population is a group of individuals who have same characteristic. In addition, Fraenkel and Wallen (2008) say that population is totally of all the value which possible, result of counting or calculating or measurement, qualitative and also quantitative hit
the certain characteristic from all clear and complete corps member is which wish learned from the nature. Johnson & Christensen (2008) claim that the sample which is a set of elements taken from a larger population.

The population consist of four classes of law faculty. From the four classes the researcher takes one class by using Purposive sampling technique.

| No | Class | Students |
|----|-------|----------|
| 1  | A     | 27       |
| 2  | B     | 28       |
| 3  | C     | 28       |
| 4  | D     | 40       |

Sample

A number of students is taken as sample which represent the population. In this research, the sample is selected by using purposive random sampling technique. Fraenkel & Wallen claim that the purposive sampling is different form convenience sampling in that researchers do not simply study whoever is available but rather use their judgment to select a sample that they believe, based on prior information.

Instrument of the Research
Test

In this research the researcher will use a test as an instrument to collect the data. Hitchcock and Highes (1989) claims that test is a set of questions and exercises used to measure the achievement or capability of the individual or group. In this research the researcher will take the test from some books at the student’s level then modified them. Furthermore, some of the them have added by the researcher. The test consists of 40 items, the forms of the test are in the form of multiple choices, the score of each number was 2,5 points. For correct answer and 0 point for the incorrect answer. They were 20 items of simple present of “am, is are” and 20 items of “do does”. Each of tense consist of affirmative, negative and interrogative sentence forms.

Technique of Data collection

According to Johnson and Christensen (2008) there are several ways to collecting the data such as questionnaire, observation, interview and test. In this research, the researcher will use to test to collect data. The form of the test is multiple choice test, that divided into three part they are part A for positive sentences, part B for negatives sentences and part C for interrogative sentences.

| Present Tense | Sentence Form | Number of Item | Total Item |
|---------------|---------------|----------------|------------|
| Simple Present Tense by using "am, is, are" | (+) Affirmative | 3,10,12,13,19,20,30 | 7 |
| | (-) Negative | 8,16,24,2,29,33 | 6 |
| | (?) Interrogative | 1,5,7,21,23,31,32 | 7 |
| Simple Present Tense by Using “do, does” | (+) Affirmative | 9,11,14,25,35,36,37 | 7 |
| | (-) Negative | 2,15,27,28,34,40 | 6 |
| | (?) Interrogative | 4,6,17,18,22,38,39 | 7 |

Validity of the test

Christensen and Johnson (2008) say that validity is the accuracy of the inferences, interpretations or actions made on the basis of the test scores. Creswell (2011) clarifies that the extent to which an instrument measure what it should be measure.

Reliability of the Test

Johnson and Christensen (2008) claims that reliability refers to the consistency with which it measure whatever is measured. To measure the reliability of this test, the test will distribute for one class in law faculty.

Method of Data analysis

\[
R = \frac{X}{N} \times 100
\]

In Which:

\[X=\text{the ultimate result of the students’ score}\]

\[N=\text{the number of test items}\] (Surakhmad,1990)

\[T \times 100\%\]

\[X = \text{--------}\]
Freshman of Grammar: Students’ Ability in Using Simple Present Tense

\[ \text{Ns} \times 100 \]

In which:
\[ X = \text{the percentage of the students who answer correctly each item} \]
\[ T = \text{the average of students who answer correctly each form} \]

\( \text{Ns} = \text{The number of students} \)
(Sudjana, 1998)

**FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

**Students Ability in Comprehending Present Tense**

| No | Score Range | Classification | Number of Students |
|----|-------------|----------------|--------------------|
| 1  | 91-100      | Excellent      | -                  |
| 2  | 81-90       | Above average  | 6                  | 6.8% |
| 3  | 71-80       | Average        | 36                 | 41%  |
| 4  | 61-70       | Below average  | 18                 | 20.4%|
| 5  | 51-60       | Insufficient   | 11                 | 12.5%|
| 6  | 41-50       | Poor           | 17                 | 19.3%|
| 7  | Less than 40| Very poor      | -                  | -    |
|    | Total       |                | 88                 | 100% |

**Discussion**

The findings of the research were discussed in this sub chapter. After analyzed the data, the researcher found that the ability of the freshman students in Batanghari University in using simple present tense based on the data showed that generally classified as average (4%) and below average category (20.4%). The fact can be seen from the result of the score distribution of the test at table 14 which showed that a half of them scored more than or equal to 70.

In particularly, students’ ability in using simple present tense belonged to above average as many as 31 students (35.2%) and average category as many as 31 students (35.2%). A common problem among ESL/EFL students in using simple present tense when referring to something happening now. EFL/ESL students’ problems were using the do auxiliary correctly. To recap briefly, learners frequently forget to insert do in questions and negatives, and or to inflect do and the main verb correctly (De Capua, 2008). His statement regarding this matter can be seen from the percentage of incorrect answers of students about the usage of do auxiliary on the test items as the table below.

**Number of Incorrect Answer of do Auxiliary Item**

| Kind of Present Tense | Sentences Form (do auxiliary) | Test Items | Number of Incorrect Answer | Average of Incorrect Answer for Sentence Form |
|-----------------------|------------------------------|------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
|                       | Item no 16                   | 27         |                            |                                             |
|                       | Item no 24                   | 22         |                            |                                             |
| Negative              | Item no 29                   | 22         |                            | 24 Students (27%)                           |
|                       | Item no 33                   | 25         |                            |                                             |
| Simple Present Tense  | Item no 7                    | 22         |                            |                                             |
|                       | Item no 21                   | 45         |                            |                                             |
| Interrogative         | Item no 23                   | 33         |                            | 25 Students (28%)                           |
|                       | Item no 24                   | 24         |                            |                                             |

**CONCLUSION**

Based on the data analysis from the freshman of Batanghari University, the researcher wants to present the conclusions. Based on the research findings written in previous chapter, researcher concludes that generally, the majority of students’ ability of freshman in Batanghari University in using simple present tense classified as average (41%) and below average category (20.4%). This conclusion is based on the calculation of finding from the test that the students’ ability in using simple present tense.
REFERENCE
Al-Mekhlafi, Abdu Mohamed and Nagaratnam, Ramani Perur, 2011. Difficulties in Teaching and Learning Grammar in an EFL Context. International Journal of Instruction. e ISSN:1308-1470. www.e-iji.net
Ansell, Mary, 2000. Free English Grammar. Seyfihoca. (2nd Ed). New York: McGraw-Hill International Edition.
Ary, Donald, et al, 2002. Introduction to Research in Education. (6th Ed). USA: Wadsworth
Azar, Betty Schrapther, 1989. Understanding Using English Grammar. (2nd Ed). New Jersey, USA: Prentice Hall Regent
Ansell, Mary, 2000. Free English Grammar. (2nd Ed). Jakarta: Binarupa Aksara
Fraenkel, Jack R & Wallen, Noeman E. (2008). How to Design and Evaluate Research in Education. (7th Ed)
Gay, L.R. (1992). Educational Research: Competencies for Analysis and Application. 4th Edition. New York: Macmillan Company
Harris, P. & David, D. 1975. Guide to Pattern and Usage I English. Oxford University Press: Great Britain. Second Edition
Hornby, A.S. 1995. Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary. Oxford University Press
Hubbard, Peter, et al, 1993. A Training Course for TOEFL. London: Oxford University press
Krohn, Robert, 1971. English Sentence Structure, USA: The University of Michigan Press
Khotari, (2004). Research Methodology. 2nd Revised Edition. New Delhi: New Age International Publisher.
Murphy, Raymond, 2002. Essential Grammar in Use. Cambridge. Third Edition
Nelson, S. & Greenbaum, G. (2002). An Introduction English Grammar. Great Britain: Longman.
Pullum, Geoffrey K & Altenberg, Evelyn P. 2010. English Grammar understanding the Basic. Cambridge
Rahimy, Ramin. (2012). The Effect of Using Grammatical Judgement Task on Iranian EFL Learners’ Knowledge of Grammatical Patterns. Tonekabn Branch: Islamic Azad University.
Thomson, A J & Martinez, A V. 1990. A Practical English Grammar Combined Exercises. Oxford University Press