The Analysis of Students' Grammar Mastery in Tenses at SMK Sinar Husni Medan

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Abstract

This research aims to analyse the level of students' grammar mastery in tenses at SMK Sinar Husni Medan. The study focuses on evaluating students' proficiency in understanding and applying grammatical tenses, a crucial aspect of language learning. The research employs a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative data through assessments and qualitative insights gathered from interviews and observations. The sample comprises twelfth grade students in SMK Sinar Husni Medan. Data was collected from tests, classroom observations, and interviews with both students and teachers. Qualitative data are gathered through classroom observations and interviews with students and teachers. Observations focus on instructional methods, classroom dynamics, and students' engagement with grammar-related activities. Interviews with students explore their perceptions in learning grammar, while teacher interviews provide insights into the teaching methodologies employed. The findings of this research contribute to the knowledge on language education, specifically in the context of grammar mastery in tenses. The results can inform educators about the effectiveness of current teaching methods. Additionally, the study may shed light on individual and contextual factors influencing students' grammar proficiency, thus providing valuable insights for future language education strategies. Ultimately, this research aims to enhance the quality of language education at SMK Sinar Husni Medan and contribute to the broader discourse on effective language teaching and learning strategies.

Keywords: students' grammar mastery, English tenses.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis tingkat penguasaan tata bahasa siswa dalam tenses di SMK Sinar Husni Medan. Penelitian ini berfokus pada evaluasi kemahiran siswa dalam memahami dan menerapkan tata bahasa, sebuah aspek penting dalam pembelajaran bahasa. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan metode campuran, menggabungkan data kuantitatif melalui penilaian dan wawasan kualitatif yang dikumpulkan dari wawancara dan observasi. Sampel terdiri dari siswa dari berbagai kelas 10 di SMK Sinar Husni Medan. Data dikumpulkan dari tes, observasi kelas, dan wawancara dengan siswa dan guru. Data kualitatif dikumpulkan melalui observasi kelas dan wawancara dengan siswa dan guru. Pengamatan berfokus pada metode pembelajaran, dinamika kelas, dan keterlibatan siswa dalam kegiatan yang berhubungan dengan tata bahasa. Wawancara

dengan siswa mengeksplorasi persepsi dalam mempelajari tata bahasa, sementara wawancara dengan guru memberikan wawasan tentang metodologi pengajaran yang digunakan. Temuan dari penelitian ini berkontribusi pada pengetahuan tentang pendidikan bahasa, khususnya dalam konteks penguasaan tata bahasa dalam tenses. Hasil penelitian ini dapat memberikan informasi kepada para pengajar mengenai keefektifan metode pengajaran yang digunakan saat ini. Selain itu, penelitian ini dapat menjelaskan faktor-faktor individual dan kontekstual yang mempengaruhi kemahiran tata bahasa siswa, sehingga memberikan wawasan yang berharga untuk strategi pendidikan bahasa di masa depan. Pada akhirnya, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk meningkatkan kualitas pendidikan bahasa di SMK Sinar Husni Medan dan berkontribusi pada wacana yang lebih luas tentang strategi pengajaran dan pembelajaran bahasa yang efektif.

***Kata Kunci**: penguasaan tata bahasa, tenses bahasa Inggris*

Introduction

English is a universal language. This means that every language in the world has the same characteristics. For example, the most general universal characteristic of a language is that it has language sounds consisting of vowels and consonants. Even though other languages have more speakers, English is a universal language. This is because, at one time, the British Empire had a great influence on the world (Leech, 2004). Thus, the language spread to many continents. By the end of the 18th century, the British Empire had spread the English language through its colonies and its geopolitical domination. Trade, science and technology, diplomacy, the arts, and formal education have all contributed to making English the first global language.

Crystal (2000; 1) states that English is a global language. This statement represents the meaning that English is used by various nations to communicate with nations around the world. So, English is an international language as well as a global language. English is also often the language of instruction at many prestigious universities around the world. Those who are proficient in English can pursue higher education opportunities abroad or in English-speaking countries, which can broaden academic horizons and improve career prospects (Hunston et al., 1997).

In learning English, there are four skills, namely listening, speaking, reading and writing. These four skills can be mastered by studying linguistic elements. Namely grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation and spelling. To further master skills, grammar is needed. Therefore, according to Goeffrey Leech (1982:3), grammar is the structural rules that regulate the composition of clauses, phrases and words in any given natural language. Grammar is a science that studies how a language works to communicate. Grammar is also important for students to master. In Indonesian, grammar is grammar. Language cannot function without grammar. In English, what is studied in grammar is verb forms, adjectives, interrogative sentences, and much more. Actually, grammar is something that is learned in everyday life. Studying grammar can increase our knowledge in writing, speaking and interpreting English properly and correctly, even if it is not used for everyday activities.

Roberts (1962:3) states that grammar is a set of rules for making sentences. Meanwhile, Francis (1970: 8) states that grammar is an explanation of methods, which are sometimes also called rules or laws, which use patterns of word arrangement to form sentences. Structure and grammar are different. The main difference between structure and grammar is that structure is related to the order of words in a sentence, while grammar is related to the grammatical rules used to

form grammatically correct sentences. Grammar is a type of language rule that regulates the criteria for using words and sentences (Juliana, 2018). The position of grammar studies is the main one in language learning, especially in the structural approach. Grammar is a study material for teachers and language learners. What material is in grammar? English grammar material starting from the alphabet, punctuation, words, phrases, clauses, sentences, including tenses (Roberts & Holmberg, 2011).

Quoted from the book English Grammar in University by Agus, grammar is a set of structural rules that regulate the composition of clauses, phrases and words in a language. This term also refers to the study of rules in the field of language which includes syntax, morphology and phonology. Correct use of grammar will produce clear sentences and paragraphs. Sentences and paragraphs are neatly structured. So, what is meant in sentences and paragraphs can be understood. Apart from its function in writing, of course grammar also has a great function in communication (Juliana, 2016). The function of grammar is also to help in composing sentences clearly and neatly. It becomes easier for the person you are talking to understand the meaning or message you want to convey. Grammar functions to provide a clear meaning of the words. Continuing the previous point, grammar makes sentences or paragraphs clear. Thus, grammar has an influence in making each other understand when communicating (Juliana & Army, 2021).

Mastery of grammar is important to convey ideas clearly and precisely in the language used. To improve your grammar mastery, you can read a lot of material, do writing practice, learn grammar rules, practice speaking and take grammar courses. The benefits of using grammar are developing the art of translation, helping to acquire vocabulary, increasing knowledge of understanding actual sentences, and building conceptual thinking about the structure of the English language. Mastery of grammar can be done through tenses. Tenses are part of grammar, namely a grammatical category that focuses on differentiating verb forms (verbs) to express differences in time or duration of actions or situations. In this study, researchers examined students' grammar mastery abilities in the Simple Present Tense (Yuliawati, 2018).

Simple present, present simple or present unlimited is one of the verb forms associated with the present tense in modern English. It is usually referred to as tense, although it also encodes certain information about aspects other than the present time. Eastwood (2002: 49) states that the simple present tense is used to express repetitive actions, thoughts, feelings, conditions, permanent facts and routines.

Lado (2008:46) argues that, "The simple past tense is a form of time that is used to explain events or actions carried out at a certain time in the past in simple form." Past tense can be used to talk about habits that were carried out in the past and are no longer carried out in the present (Made, 2021).

Simple future tense is a tense to explain an event that has not yet started and will occur in the future. Sentences in the simple future tense can be marked by the use of the words will, shall, and going to. The simple future tense is also used to express a prediction or wish (Puspitaloka, 2019).

Based on initial observations made at SMK Sinar Husni, students experienced several difficulties in mastering grammar. Some of the difficulties they experience are first, students have difficulty understanding complex grammar rules, using appropriate tenses, and understanding the differences

between vocabulary in the context of sentences. And also, a lack of practice in speaking and writing can be a factor that influences students' ability to use grammar correctly. There are no specific study groups or discussion forums available to improve students' ability to master grammar. And finally, the lack of student interest and motivation in learning English means that students always have difficulty pronouncing and constructing sentences correctly. Therefore, students must master grammar well because without mastering this aspect, it is impossible for them to be able to compose sentences correctly both in writing and orally. Grammar is an important point and foundation of a language. A way is needed to help students master grammar easily, and one approach is to apply grammar mastery methods in the teaching process. This research aims to analyze students' grammar knowledge in Simple present tense (King, 1973).

In the discussion of Grammar, Tenses are used to discuss differences or changes in form in sentences which are related to the time when the event expressed in a sentence occurs. Therefore, learning tenses is very important in identifying sentences in a conversation. Simple present tense is a form or sentence construction that states the current tense. Apart from that, simple present tense is used to express facts, habits, or events that occur repeatedly (Nurlaili, 2021).

By using this learning method, researchers will conduct research to improve students' grammar mastery to recognize tenses so that they have a greater impact by automatically improving their speaking ability in English. Based on the background above, researchers are interested in conducting research entitled: The analyze of students' grammar mastery in tenses at SMK Sinar Husni Medan (Van Den Branden, 2016).

Method

This research method uses qualitative research methods. Qualitative research methods involve descriptive and interpretive approaches. This method is often used to gain an in-depth, contextual and descriptive understanding of the phenomenon under study. Qualitative research is research that is descriptive and tends to use analysis. Process and meaning are more emphasized in qualitative research. The theoretical basis is used as a guide so that the research focus is in accordance with the facts in the field (Creswell et al., 2007).

According to Adiputra et al., (2021) Descriptive research is research that aims to describe existing phenomena, namely natural phenomena or man-made phenomena, or that is used to analyze or describe the results of the subject, but is not intended to provide wider implications. The descriptive method is a method of researching the status of a human group, an object, a set of conditions, a system of thought, or a class of events in the present (Leech, 2004)(Creswell, J. W., & Poth, 2007).

Result and Discussion

a. Students' Ability in Mastering English Tenses of SMK Sinar Husni Medan

In this study, the researcher has identified the students' grammar mastery and gave a score for each test done by the students. This data was obtained through a tenses test that the researcher distributed to 20 respondents of 12th grade students of SMK Sinar Husni Medan. Researchers gave multiple choice type questions to students totaling 10 questions with 5 simple present tense questions, 3 simple past tense questions and 2 simple future tense questions. Then the researcher compiled the calculation results into a table and converted them into letters. Then, the researcher interpreted the data after

processing the data obtained from the research results. Based on the results of the research, it can be said that some of the students are quite good at mastering the grammar of the tenses test questions given. There are 5 students who answered wrong in simple present tense, 8 students answered wrong in simple past tense and 7 students answered wrong in simple future tense.

b. Students' Problems in Using English Forms of Time Signals at SMK Sinar Husni Medan

The researcher determines the average score as follows:

Table 1: *Students' Scoring Rubric*

Score	Symbol
90-100	A
70-89	B
50-69	C
0-49	D

Students' problems in understanding some tenses were identified from the test results. The test results show the following:

Table 2: *Students' Total Scores*

Present	Past	Future	Total	Score
50	30	20	100	A

Students' problems in understanding some tenses were identified from the test results. Students experience problems in tenses that are rarely used, it can be seen from the test results above that students have difficulty in understanding simple future tense and simple past tense test questions but students are quite capable of answering simple present tense test questions. The researcher concluded that students understand the structure in

forming a sentence based on tenses, but 12th grade students of SMK SINAR HUSNI experience confusion to apply it correctly in the right situation. The test results show the following:

Table 3: *Students' Test Results*

No	Students' initial	Present	Past	Future	Score
1	DA	40	10	10	B
2	AIA	50	30	0	B
3	MH	50	0	0	C
4	DA	50	0	0	C
5	NAN	50	20	20	A
6	DS	50	30	20	A
7	NY	40	30	20	A
8	CS	50	20	10	B
9	DSA	50	30	20	A
10	WA	40	30	20	A
11	GH	50	30	0	B
12	LD	30	30	20	B
13	FD	50	30	20	A
14	RA	50	30	20	A
15	SS	50	0	20	B
16	AA	50	30	20	A
17	FH	50	0	0	C
18	WD	30	20	20	B
19	TD	50	20	20	A
20	PA	50	20	20	A

c. Students' Ability in Using 3 Tenses

In this section, the researcher will explain in detail the students' ability to use tenses in English namely simple present tense, simple past tense and simple future tense in grade 12 SMK Sinar Husni Medan.

The data analysis shows the students' test results in tenses. In the data from 20 students who took the test, there were 5 students who answered incorrectly in the simple present tense test. On the other hand, 8 students answered wrong in simple past tense and 7 students answered wrong in simple future tense. The researcher

conducted an overall assessment. Some of these students, totaling 10 students, were classified as getting an A. 7 students got a B and the rest got a C. The finding data also found that there were 3 students who got a C grade.

The test results show that twelfth grade students of SMK Sinar Husni Medan are quite good at simple present tense because it uses a structure that is not too complicated and still uses first form verbs and students have problems using simple past tense. Students have difficulty in changing verbs into the second form. This happens because students do not really master the first, second and so on verb forms. In the simple future tense, some students are quite confused, due to the presence of "will" as one of the mandatory formulas in forming the simple future tense. Students have difficulty determining after the word "will" whether to put the first or second form of the verb. Overall, students are quite proficient in using the present tense and have difficulty in changing the verb into the second form in the past tense.

In the last data analysis of the findings above, it shows the value of students in using English tenses. Students' ability to use some of these tenses is in the middle, not too bad and not too good for the standard of vocational students. This can be seen from 10 students getting A grades, 7 students getting B grades and 3 students getting C grades. that means there are no students who get D grades. In short, it can be concluded that related to students getting intermediate grades, caused by students who have difficulty using verbs and auxiliary words correctly according to the tenses used.

Conclusion

Related to the findings and interpretations in the previous chapter, the researcher can draw a conclusion that the students of grade 12 RPL 1 first semester at SMK Sinar Husni Medan with a total of 20 students. The students have intermediate ability in using English tenses. In the last data analysis, the students' total score in using English tenses is shown in the assessment table.

The research showed that there were ten students who got the classification with grade A (90-100), seven students who got the classification of grade B (70-89), 3 students got the classification of grade C (50-69) and there were no students who got the classification of grade D. Based on the data, the cause of the students' ability in using English tenses is that they got the classification of grade A (90-100). Based on the data, the cause of students getting intermediate ability is in using verb forms and auxiliary words in tenses. The students are wrong in understanding the form in using tenses.

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