

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

Speaking, writing, listening, and reading are the four language skills in English. These abilities are linked together, and mastery of one facilitates the growth of the others. Writing and reading, for example, go hand in hand since writing skills can be improved through reading comprehension. Speaking and listening are also related since good listening can lead to better speaking. According to Sadiku (2015), there are four language skills in language learning, they are reading skill, writing skill, listening skill and speaking skill. The four skills play a vital role in the task of learning any languages. For a successful English learning, the four skills should be mastered in order to be used effectively.

Sadiku (2015) also has the same opinions about the importance and the connection between the listening skill and speaking skill, saying that the listening skill and speaking skill are highly connected. The proficiency on those two skills are important in the effectiveness of oral communication. Sadiku also had an opinion on the reading and writing skills, saying that the two skills are connected. This is similar to the relationship between the speaking skill and listening skill. If the mastery of listening and speaking skills lead to an effective oral communication, then the mastery of reading and writing skills lead a better written communication. Learners need to be stimulated gradually to gradual

difficulty of reading and writing materials in order to help the learners develop their skills.

In high school level, one of the texts that is used in teaching is narrative text. Narrative text is often used in the teaching, especially at the tenth grade level. Narrative text is a kind of writing that tells a tale or describes a sequence of events. Characters, a setting, a plot, and a point of view are usually included. There are a number of studies that concentrate on teaching English by using texts as the media, narrative texts included. According to Lukens (2004), a narrative text is a story that tells a sequence of events in a logical order, with causes or experiences linked together.

At the tenth grade of senior high school, one of the most important aspect of learning English is the knowledge of grammar. Grammar is important because it helps students write engaging and grammatically correct texts, such as writing narrative text which requires the knowledge of how to form a base verb into the past verb which is required in narrative text. Understanding grammar also helps the students in understanding text. Without the proper knowledge of grammar, students will have a hard time in answering tests. Students who have strong grammar knowledge will be able to organize ideas coherently and according to the grammar rules. According to Hadfield et. al. (2008), A grammar serves as a description of a language system, revealing the principles governing the arrangement of words in sentences, their combinations, and the alterations in word forms to convey varying meanings.

Simple Past Tense is used in writing a Narrative text. Simple Past Tense is used to describe an event that started and ended at the time before the present time. Adelaide (2014) also stated similar definition, saying that the past simple tense is a tense that is used to talk about something that started and ended in the past. It is one of the most commonly used tenses in English because it is used to indicate something that has already happened. Mastering this tense is essential for students to effectively communicate stories, anecdotes, and personal experiences and therefore write a better narrative text.

Based on findings from observations the researcher had during the Field Training Practice at the seventh semester in 2023, the researcher discovered that the tenth grade students of SMAN 8 Muaro Jambi were not aware of how the tense forms of irregular and regular verbs differ in simple past tense. For example, during an assignment where the students are required to change the base form (V1) of verbs into the past forms (V2), most students confused the use of the suffix “-ed” by putting it on irregular verbs such as the word "sleep," which is supposed to be written in the past tense form as "slept", is changed by students to "sleped" despite the fact that the word “sleep” is not a regular verb. Another example is writing “studyed” instead of “studied”, which means that they do not know that when a regular verb ends with the letter “Y”, then it must be changed into the letter “I” before adding the suffix -ed. All of these mean that they do not understand the difference between the irregular and regular verbs and how they are different as the past verb.

Another difficulty that students of the tenth grade of SMAN 8 Muaro Jambi face is in using the past “to be” was and were. For example, in the same assignment as mentioned above where the students are required to write the appropriate verb according to the context provided, many students still confused the use of ‘was’ and ‘were. Such as by writing “She is busy”, using ‘is’ after the subject ‘she’ which is the V1, not V2. The other example is by writing ‘they are..’, which means that they do not know the appropriate ‘to be’ for the subject ‘they’ in past tense, which is supposed to be “they were...”.

Therefore, the researcher conducted this research entitled "Students' Difficulties in Using Simple Past Tense in Narrative Text at Tenth Grade of Senior High School 8 Muaro Jambi". The researcher will conduct a test in the form of a fill-in-the-blank in narrative text and requires the changing of verb from the base form into the past form in order to find out the level of difficulties of the tenth grade students of SMAN 8 Muaro Jambi in distinguishing the simple past tense in narrative text.

1.2 Problem Identification

Based on the explanation of the background above, the researcher formulates the problems such as:

1. The tenth grade students of SMAN 8 Muaro Jambi are unable to change the base form verb (V1) into the past verb (V2) in writing simple past tense.
2. The tenth grade students of SMAN 8 Muaro Jambi are unable to differentiate between the past forms of regular verbs and irregular verbs.

1.3 Limitation of the Research

To limit the area of the research, the following limitations were set for this research: it focused on finding the difficulties of the tenth grade students of SMAN 8 Muaro Jambi in changing the verb 1 into verb 2 and differentiating the verb 2 of regular and irregular verbs. The instrument of the research used was a Narrative text as the media for answering a fill in the blank test.

1.4 Problem Formulation

The problem of the research is formulated as the following, "What are the level of difficulties in using simple past tense in narrative text at the tenth grade of Senior High School 8 Muaro Jambi?".

1.5 Objective of the Research

Based on the formulation of the problem above, the purpose of this research is to find out the level of difficulties in using simple past tense in narrative text at the tenth grade of Senior High School 8 Muaro Jambi.

1.6 Significance of the Research

This research is intended to have two advantages, theoretically and practically. Explained as follows:

1. Theoretically

The result of this research is intended to provide data for the level of difficulties that the tenth grade students of SMAN 8 Muaro Jambi face.

2. Practically

- a) For the students, to realize their difficulties in using Simple Past Tense. It can help them in improving their grammatical knowledge, especially in using verb 2 of regular and irregular verbs.
- b) For the teachers, to provide important information to educators about the difficulties faced by tenth grade students in using simple past tense in narrative texts.
- c) For the next researcher, to use the result of this research to conduct further research.

1.7 Definitions of Key Terms

The following definitions of the important key terms from the research "Students' Difficulties in Using Simple Past Tense in Narrative Text at Tenth Grade of Senior High School 8 Muaro Jambi" are explained as follows:

1. Difficulties in this research refers to the inability to change V1 into V2 and the inability to differentiate between the regular and irregular verbs. The result is displayed as numerical data.
2. Narrative Text is a type of text in which a tale is told or a series of events is described. There are aspects such as characters, setting, plot, and a point of view are frequently included. It is one of the taught materials at the high school level at SMAN 8 Muaro Jambi.
3. Simple Past Tense is a grammatical English tense that is used to describe past actions or to indicate past status. It is an English tense that is used to give indication of time in the English language.