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## The Ability of Student in Mastering Simple Past Tense at Politeknik Negeri Ujung Pandang

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### Abstract

This research covers the ability of the student at Politeknik Negeri Ujung Pandang in mastering simple past tense. The problem statement of this research is How is ability of the student at Politeknik Negeri Ujung Pandang in Mastering Simple Past Tense?. This research used descriptive research method. It is used to describe the ability of the student at Politeknik Negeri Ujung Pandang in mastering simple past tense. The instrument used in this research is test through completing uncompleted short story. The research is focused on the student at Politeknik Negeri Ujung Pandang. There are 20 students as sample, which were taken by using random sampling. The collection data is done by asking the students to complete the uncompleted reading story. The students were given forty minutes to complete the story. In analyzing data, the writer scores the students' test. Then, the researcher calculating the means score of students. After that, the researcher categorizes the students' scores. The result of the research shows that the ability of the student at Politeknik Negeri Ujung Pandang in mastering simple past tense is bad. The mean score was 2.9. This implies that the students' ability should be improved through more intensive material on simple past.

**Keywords:** *ability, simple past*

## Introduction

English grammar involves some forms, such as a term of tense. The forming sentences based on time, and the definition is the description or exploration of when an accident, an activity and an action is happened. Furthermore, tense is difficult for Indonesian students because in Indonesia, we do not have know about tenses or changing of verb especially simple past tense. Simple past tense is tenses where the verb must be changed. Where it is uses the past form of word either irregular verb and regular verb and it is difficult for the students to differentiate them.

With regard to the instruction of the sentence form of these tenses, most of English learners still encounter some problems in understanding and also in mastering of these specially the form of activity happens. According to English learners, still frequently produce errors in using of the tenses within a paper or a thesis.

Tense refers to verb that related to time. In the sentence the verb and the time are used coherently it is very important to master it. However, it is not easy to learn tenses. In addition, the students are difficult to express their emotion, ideas and feelings through writing and speaking if they do not know about tenses.

Therefore, the learners can use many ways to develop their tenses skill, for example English meeting program, English zone, English camp, and the most common ways is attending English course. English course program provides many time in learning tenses in the English course than learning only in formal class or in the school. In studying English, tenses are one of the main parts which have to be studied by students. It is the changing of verb in English which refer to when the accident happened.

Lou (2004:13) state simple past tense is sentence which changing verb state a condition or situation that happen in the past. Giles (2004:55) Simple Past Tense shows the action, which took place in the past. Thomson and Martinet (1980:147) Simple Past Tense is the normally used for the relation of past events. According to Djauharie (2004:41) Simple Past Tense is an accident which need a verb in the past. Based on the statement above, the writer concludes that Simple Past Tense is an accident that happens in the past and uses verb in the past.

Simple Past Tense in one of the tense form. Which is it draws an action that happens in the past time. Many authors deliver some concept about this Simple Past Tense. Budi (1989:39) Simple Past Tense, is used to say an action that is happened at definite time in the past and it is used to say an action that is habitual actions in the past. Aik and Kam Kai Hui (1992:279) Simple Past Tense refer to actions that happened at a definite time in the past, action which is happened over a period of time in the past and to refer to a past habit. Arsyad (1998:17) Simple Past Tense is

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used to express an activity is happened in the past time. And now it is not happened anymore. Widodo (1998:13) Simple Past Tense is a sentence. Pattern is used to say activity / accident that. Beaumont and Colin Granger say that, we use the Simple Past Tense to talk about action and situations in the past.

Based on some opinions about the function of simple past tense. It is clear that Simple Past Tense says or talk about something that is happened in the past time and about the time is definite so that we can know when the activity happened.

The writer believes that the Simple Past Tense is one of tenses which it is important to be understood by students. Furthermore, sometimes many students are difficult to differentiate the regular verbs and irregular verb. However the form of verb in sentence simple past tense is very important. So, the writer discuss the ability of the student in Mastering Simple Past Tense. Therefore the writer will discuss about this problem through the field research, especially in the student at Politeknik Negeri Ujung Padang.

Some people assume that there are some differences between the ability of the students in who have taken course and the students who have never taken course in using Simple Past Tense, it is because the students who have taken course have more time to practice their English structure in the course and learn English in the school or formal class, in which structure predominate automatically to be learn.

Based on the explanation above, the writer formulates the research question is how is ability of the student at Politeknik Negeri Ujung Padang in Mastering Simple Past Tense? Then, the objectives of this study is to find out the ability of the students in Mastering Simple Past Tense.

The result of study is expected to be useful information. Especially for the English lecturers, to measure the ability of the student at Politeknik Negeri Ujung Padang, in Mastering Simple Past Tense. And for the researches who want to conduct the further study, to add knowledge about tenses, especially Simple Past Tense. For the students feed back for their competencies. The researcher limits the research to the ability of the student at Politeknik Negeri Ujung Padang, in using Simple Past Tense. Especially in using regular and irregular verb and the time signal.

## **Method**

In this research, the writer used field research. The method will be used analyzing data is descriptive analysis. It is used to know the ability of the student at Politeknik Negeri Ujung Padang in mastering simple past tense. In addition, it used quantitative method for knowing the ability of the student at Politeknik Negeri Ujung Padang in study about Simple Past Tense by using

completing uncompleted short story. The population of this research the student at Politeknik Negeri Ujung Pandang. The sample of this research 20 Students. The researcher took 20 students by using random sampling. In collecting the data, the researcher carries a research of the English teacher of the student at Politeknik Negeri Ujung Pandang. The procedures are follows: (1) Before the writer distributed the instrument, the writer take ten minutes to explain how to do the test. (2) The writer distributed the instrument to the students. She distributed incomplete reading story. The allocated time answering is forty minutes for complete uncompleted reading story. (3) Finally, the writer collected the instrument from the respondents.

The writer analysis the data of the test by using descriptive analysis. In this case, the writer percentage the second year student of SMP Negeri 9 Palopo in Mastering Simple Past Tense and the rule as follows:

a. Scoring

$$Score = \frac{\text{student 'correct}}{\text{total number of items}} \times 10$$

b. Classifying the score of the students into the following

criteria:

Mark	Category
0% - 34 %	Classified as very bad
35% - 54%	Classified as bad
55% - 64%	Classified as fair
65% - 84%	Classified as good
85% - 100%	Classified as very good

(Depdikbud, in Kartini, 2003:26)

c. Calculating the rate percentage of students score by using the

following formula:

$$\frac{n}{N} \times 100\%$$

Where n : Frequently

N : The total (number of students)

(Gay L.R:1996)

d. Calculating the mean score the students by using the following

the formula:

$$X = \frac{\sum x}{N}$$

Where: X : mean score

$\Sigma x$  : Total score

N : Total Sample

(Gay L.R. 1996:361)

## Results

Students' ability in mastering simple past tense by using descriptive statistic can be seen in the table 1 as follows:

Table 1. The student's ability score in mastering simple past tense.

Statistic	Statistic Mark
Sample measurement	20
Average score	2,9
The highest score	4,7
The lowest score	1,3
Score extension	3,4
Standard deviation	0,90
Variance	0,82

Base on the table 1.1 is known that average score of students' ability finish the test Simple Past Tense is 2,9 from ideal score 4,7 with standard deviation 0,90. It means that from 20 students as sample, the result is 5% is classified very bad, 40% is classified bad, 20% is classified fair, 10% is

classified good and 25% is classified very good of their ability in mastering simple past tense.

The next table shows the classification of students' score in mastering simple past tense which is classified in five categories.

Table 2. The distribution frequency and percentage of student's ability score in mastering simple past tense.

Score ability level	Category	Frequenc y	Percentag e
0,0 – 1,5	Very bad	1	5%
1,6 – 2,5	Bad	8	40%
2,6 – 3,0	Fair	4	20%
3,1 – 3,9	Good	2	10%
4,0 – 4,7	Very good	5	25%

Table 2 shows that the highest number of students' ability in mastering simple past tense is in the bad category. From the data can be the concluded that majority the ability of the student at Politeknik Negeri Ujung Pandang in finishing the test of simple past tense is classified bad. This case is caused by the reality that the students do not really understand and master about simple past tense.

Based on the data analysis result, it is found that that mean score of students' ability in finishing the test of mastering simple past tense is 2,9 from ideal score 4,7 and standard deviation 0,8. It means that the ability of students in Mastering of Simple Past Tense that have only reached for 40% is classified bad.

From the data, students' ability in mastering simple past tense especially the student at Politeknik Negeri Ujung Pandang, is still needed to be developed. It is clear that there is a problem in students' competence especially in mastering the simple past tense. And from the table is got average score is 2.9 from ideal score 4.9 . Based on the results of the research, the ability of the student at Politeknik Negeri Ujung Pandang is categorized bad.

### Conclusion

The ability of the student at Politeknik Negeri Ujung Pandang in Mastering Simple Past Tense is classified as bad. It is showed from the table that average score is 2.9 from ideal score 4.9 with standard deviation 1,11.

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In the relation to those problems, the writer puts forward the following suggestions:

1. In studying about Simple Past Tense, students must pay attention to the rules and patterns of simple past tense
2. The lecturer who teach English have to explain the subject to her / his students carefully and give practicing a lot in order the students can improve their ability in using simple past tense in both written and oral expressions.
3. In addition, all of lecturers must give motivation to the students to improve their basic ability in English.

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