

Students' Ability in Learning Simple Present Tense at PGSD – Universitas Cokroaminoto Palopo

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Abstract

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Introduction

In times of globalization, English is one of six languages recognized by the United Nations for use in various contexts, such as economics, defence and education. In the world of education, language skill consists of four skills namely listening, speaking, reading and writing. The aim of teaching English is to improve spoken and written communication skills.

English, as an international language, has many benefits for learners worldwide. According to Grubber and Miller (Maranatha, 2023) learning English is an integrative process that relies on the real world give and take of interpersonal interaction, interpreting discourse, presenting stories ideas, and arguments. In particular, Abid (2020) said that learning English helps students go abroad for further education. As a result, from elementary school to university, practically all Indonesian schools offer English language instruction.

The aim of English learning is to improve students' language skills, namely reading, writing, speaking and listening. Each tertiary institution makes their study programs in accordance with National Education Standards. Teaching English in non-English language study programs has not focused on the ability of graduates to communicate. According to research conducted in a number of elementary schools, some teachers concentrate on teaching grammar and vocabulary.

Based on Long & Richards (Lestari & Nabah, 2019), grammar is an important component of four language and vocabulary skills for completing communicative tasks. Therefore, the students must have a good knowledge of grammar before they can master these four skills.

Moreover, grammar based on Fowler & Thompson (Lestari & Nabah, 2019), is the system and structure of language as a whole, which usually comes from syntax and morphology or a set of ideas about appropriate language use. Grammar itself, however, is inherently difficult and confusing. Grammar is very difficult for many students. They must understand sixteen tense rules, one of which is the simple present tense. Eastwood (Lestari & Nabah, 2019) stated that the simple present tense is used to describe thoughts, feelings, conditions, permanent facts, routines and repetitive action. In other words, we can say that the simple present tense is one of the simplest in grammar.

Nowadays, English is very important lesson that needs to be understood not only by English students but also for all students including primary school teacher education students (PGSD). Therefore, this research investigates the students' ability in learning simple present tense at Primary School Teacher Education Study Program in University of Cokroaminoto Palopo.

Based on the background above, the researcher formulates research question is "How is the students' ability in learning simple present tense at PGSD UNCP?" Related to the

research question above, the researcher formulates the research objective is “To find out the students’ ability in learning simple present tense at PGSD UNCP.”

Overview of Tense

According to dictionary of contemporary English (Ismayati, 2018) the term of “tense,” derived from the Latin word “tempus,” the meaning is “time.” The word of tense stand for a verb form used to express a time relation. The similar concept was expressed by Hornby (Yuliawati, 2022) stated that tenses are any of the forms of the verb that may be used to indicate the time of the action or stated expressed by the verb. In other words, the tense requires a sentence pattern, where the verb can change according to its pattern and timing.

Moreover, that opinion is in line with the concept expressed by Nainggolan (2021) that a tense in English is important because all events or actions submitted must match to the time of occurrence. Furthermore, to reinforce all the opinions above here is the opinion comes from the concept expressed by Yuliawati (2022) that tense is a part of grammar that is mostly considered difficult by many students because there are many kinds of it in English. Students have to consider what kind of tense should be used anytime they want to speak or write. They also have to know the various characteristics of tenses such as when each of them should be used and how to use it in a sentence. Thereby, it can be concluded that tense is a verb form or form of time to indicate the time of the action happened.

Overview of Simple Present Tense

Reutzel & Schoenberg (Yuliawati, 2022) declares that simple present tense is used to show actions, events, or states that happen habitually or as a general rule. There are some rules that must be followed in creating sentences using Simple Present Tense. Students must know whether the Subject is singular or plural so that they can decide whether or not they have to add suffix after the verb 1. Then students also have to know the suffix should be used (-s or -es). In addition, they also have to understand about the use of ‘do’ and ‘does’ in negative and interrogative form.

Another opinion is coming from Murphy (Indriani, 2019) expressed that the simple present tense is used to talk about things in general, say something happens all the time, or something is true in general (general statement of fact). Then Azar & Hagen (2017) stated that simple present tense is also used to express habitual or everyday activity. The simple present is used with a non-action verb to indicate something that is happening right now. The simple present tense is used to show some actions, such as habitual action, custom, fact, and future action. The sentence that shows actual habit can be seen from this example; “She works in the hotel.” For the custom, it can be seen in this example; “Most Indonesian eats rendang on Ied Day.” The next is the example sentence that shows the fact; “The earth revolves around the sun.” If a time reference is included, the simple present can also be used to indicate future time. Future action can be seen in this example; “The movie starts in ten minutes.”

Based on the experts' explanations above, it can be inferred that the simple present tense is a form of time that is used to express an event, activity or action that is happening at this time in a simple form. In other words, this means that an event, activity or action that is carried out now, or repeatedly or is a daily habit.

Usage

Hinkel (Yuliawati & Nuriyanti, 2020) said that the usage of simple present tense is focus on a word or phrase or sentence. The rules of usage in simple present tense are:

Auxiliary verb + main verb

Do/Does Base

There are exceptions:

- 1) For sentence in positive form, we cannot use the auxiliary
- 2) He, she, it used for the 3rd person singular, must add -s or -es for main verb and -es for auxiliary in the form of negative and questions.
- 3) For the verb to be, don't use an auxiliary, even for a negatives and question.

Meaning

Furthermore, Hinkel (Yuliawati & Nuriyanti, 2020) also mentions that there are three meanings of simple present tense as follows:

- 1) A present state
 - a) This tense indicates a state exist now and refers to a fact (always true).
For example:
The sun rises in the east.
This tense refers to states that change the meaning of sentence. For instance: *Where does your aunt work? I'm sorry, I don't know. I think she works in a cosmetic company.*
- 2) A present habit
 - a) This tense refers to an action that repeated regularly in a habit or custom.
For example:
Danu chats.
Yuri plays basket
 - b) This formula can also be used with adverb of frequency such as *always, sometimes, never, usually, often, etc.*
For example: *Roy sometimes goes swimming in the autumn*
- 3) A present event
The meaning of simple present tense is easy to understand. It refers for event which happens in the moment of talking.
For example:
You regret that you made a mistake
You beg us to be more careful

Forms

Swan (Siswoyo, 2016) said that the simple forms of the simple present tense is as follows:

Affirmative	Question	Negative
I work	Do I work?	I do not work
You work	Do you work?	I do not work
He/she/it works	Does he/she/it work?	He/she/it does not work
They work	Do they work?	They do not work

Previous Studies

1. Ismiyati (2018) "Freshman of Grammar: Students' Ability in Using Simple Present Tense at Batanghari University." Based on the research findings, the 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.
2. Yulia (2017) "Kebutuhan Mahasiswa PGSD terhadap Mata Kuliah Bahasa Inggris." According to the result shows that English is learnt to develop their teaching professionalism, pursue further study as well as to gain knowledge. In relation to goal, students need to learn not only to know the language but also how to teach English in primary schools.

The two researches above have the same point with this research that is investigating English. Nevertheless, both researches have a little bit different. The first research was analyzing about the students' ability in using simple present tense and the second one was researching about the students' needs toward English. Dealing with the two researches above, this research tried to combine or unify between the first and the second researcher above. Thereby, this research tried to find out the students' ability in learning simple present tense at PGSD UNCP.

Method

The design of the research was descriptive research. It aims to describe the students' ability in learning simple present tense at PGSD UNCP. This research was conducted in September – December 2023 in University of Cokroaminoto Palopo

The population and sample of this research was the first-year students of PGSD students in academic year 2023/2024. The total number of populations was 243 students. The sample was taken by using purposive technique. One class was chosen as the sample which consisted of 40 students that was class IC. To obtain the data, this research used test about the students' ability in learning simple present tense which consist of 20 questions about simple present tense.

The test was given to the first-year student of PGSD students after learning simple present tense. The test aimed to find out the students' ability in learning simple present tense. To analyze the data, this research used the following steps:

Table 1. Test Specification

Simple Tense	Present by Using "am, is are"	Sentence Form	Number of Item	Total Item
Simple Tense by Using "am, is are"	Present	(+) Affirmative	3,5,7	3
		(-) Negative	1,2,6	3
		(?) Interrogative	4,8,9	3
		(+) Affirmative	13,11,14,19	4
Simple Tense by Using "do, does"	Present	(-) Negative	10,12,16, 20	4
		(?) Interrogative	15,17,18	3

Source: Surakhmad (Ismiyati, 2018)

The formula used as follows:

$$X = \frac{R}{N} \times 100$$

In which:

X = The ultimate result of the students' score

R = The correct answer

N = The number of test items

$$X = \frac{T \times 100\%}{Ns \times 100}$$

In which:

X = The percentage of the students who answer correctly each item

T = The average of the students who answer correctly each form

Ns = The number of the students

Table 2. The Classification Score for the Students' Ability in Learning Simple Present Tense

No	Score Range	Classification
1	91-100	Excellent
2	81-90	Above Average
3	71-80	Average
4	61-70	Below Average
5	51-60	Insufficient
6	41-50	Poor
7	Less than 40	Very Poor

Source: Sudjana (Ismiyati, 2018)

Results

1. Analyzing of the Students' Ability in Learning Simple Present Tense at PGSD UNCP

The test was given to the students as the sample of this research to find out the students' ability in learning simple present tense. The test was designed with 20 numbers about simple present tense namely by using "am, is, are, do and does" in affirmative, negative and interrogative sentence.

In calculating and analysing the data, the students' answer was calculated and analysed through table below:

Table 3. The Students' Ability in Learning Simple Present Tense at PGSD UNCP

No	Score Range	Classification	Number of Students & Percentage	
			Number of Students	Percentage (%)
1	91-100	Excellent	-	-
2	81-90	Above Average	-	-
3	71-80	Average	-	-
4	61-70	Below Average	-	-
5	51-60	Insufficient	-	-

6	41-50	Poor	1	2,5
7	Less than 40	Very Poor	39	97,5
Total			40	100

The table above shows that only 1 student (2,5%) was in poor classification with the score was 45, meanwhile the rest was 39 students (97,5%) were in very poor classification with the score was 40 and less than 40. Thus, it indicates that the students' ability in learning simple present tense at PGSD UNCP was very poor classification.

Discussion

This part aimed at investigating the findings of this research which had been presented in the previous part of this chapter. The discussion of the findings covered the further explanation and interpretation about the findings. In addition, this part was provided to answer the research question in chapter 1. In this case, there was one research question that had to be answered that is to find out the students' ability in learning simple present tense at PGSD UNCP.

This section was a description about the students' ability in learning simple present tense. The result from the test indicated that the students' ability in learning simple present tense at PGSD UNCP was very poor classification with score range most of them was less than 40. There was only 1 student who got a score of 45 and that was still in poor classification. The result of this research is proven from the result of the test to the students gained very poor classification and it revealed most of students do not understand simple present tense especially when to use verb 's' and also when to use non-verb form in a positive, negative and interrogative sentences. As Yuliawati (2022) said that tense is a part of grammar that is mostly considered difficult by many students because there are many kinds of it in English. Students have to consider what kind of tense should be used anytime they want to speak or write. They also have to know the various characteristics of tenses such as when each of them should be used and how to use it in a sentence.

The results of this research are also supported by the previous study, such as conducted by Ismiyati (2018) about the students' ability in using simple present tense at Batanghari University. Based on the research findings, the 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%). 'ly, the researcher concluded that the students' ability in learning simple present ti t PGSD UNCP classified as very poor classification.

Conclusion

This research had explored the students' ability in learning simple present tense at PGSD UNCP. Based on the research findings discussed in Chapter IV, the conclusion can be drawn that the students' ability in learning simple present tense at PGSD UNCP was very poor classification. It revealed the score range most of students was less than 40. In other words,

only 1 student (2,5%) was in poor classification with the score was 45, meanwhile the rest was 39 students (97,5) were in very poor classification with the score was 40 and less than 40. Finally, the researcher concluded that the students' ability in learning simple present tense at PGSD UNCP classified as very poor classification.

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