

## Ananalysis Of Students'ability In Using Past Tense In Paragraph Writing (At the Third Year Students of MTsN Model Padang)

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### Abstract

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui kemampuan siswa kelas tiga pada MTsN Model Padang dalam menggunakan waktu lampau (*past tense*) didalam paragraph yang telah ditulis. Sampel dari penelitian ini adalah 39 orang siswa yang dipillih dengan menggunakan teknik pengambilan sampel acak berdasarkan kelas (*cluster random sampling*). Dalam pengumpulan data, digunakan *grammar tes* sebagai instrument. Kemudian data dianalisa dengan menghitung standar deviasi (*Sd*) dan rata-rata (*M*), kemudian siswa dikelompokkan berdasarkan nilai A, B, C, D, dan E dan dihitung persentase masing-masing nilai tersebut. Secara umum hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kemampuan siswa tingkat dua PGSD FIP UNP dalam menggunakan waktu lampau (*past tense*) didalam paragraf yang telah ditulis tidak cukup (*insufficient*) karena ada sembilan orang siswa (23,07%) mendapatkan nilai D dan enam orang siswa (15,38%) mendapatkan nilai E. Ini berarti bahwa ada 38,45% siswa yang tidak bisa menggunakan bentuk waktu lampau (*past tense*) dengan benar.

**Kata kunci** : past tense, paragraph, writing.

### INTRODUCTION

Writing is a combination of process and product. The process refers to the act of gathering ideas and working with them until they are presented in a manner that is polished and comprehensible to readers (Sokolik in Linse 2005). On the other hand writing as the product oriented approach focus on the activities in which the learners are engaged in imitating, copying, and transforming model of correct language.

Although English has been taught from Elementary School up to University, the learner still faces difficulties to write a paragraph. As it is stated by Tatang (1988) that students have always had problem in writing, as shown by errors they made both in organization of composition and language. The learner still assumes that writing is one of the difficult language skill to be mastered.

Actually there are some problems that influence the result of the students' writings. They are spelling, vocabulary, punctuation, and grammar. There are some aspects of English grammar namely: articles, nouns, passive voice, prepositions, personal and possessive pronouns, conditional sentences, type of sentences and tenses.

Tense is one of the difficult points in paragraph. If students do not master in using it the meaning of the sentences in the paragraph will be meaningless and if the students do not use it

appropriately the meaning of the sentences in the paragraph will be different. There are some tenses in English such as present tense, past tense, and future tense. Present tense is the tense that expresses an action or state in the present at the time of speaking. past tense is the form of a verb used to describe action in the past. While, future tense is used to express the action that will happen in the future.

According to Azar (1993) past tense consist of simple past, past progressive and past perfect. Then she explains that simple past indicates that an activity or situation began and ended at a particular time in the past.

For examples:

- *I walk to school yesterday.*
- *He lived in Paris for ten years, but now he is living in Rome.*

Wernet (1985) says that the simple past tense describes action or situation that began and ended (completed) in the past.

For examples:

- Six years ago, we bought a home in the suburbs.
- We moved there last year.

Furthermore, Hopkins (2005) states that simple past can be used as following:

- To talk about single past completed actions

For example:

- *A few weeks ago a woman called to report a robbery at her house.*
  - To give a series of actions in the order that they happened  
For example:
    - *The burglar came in through the front door, picked up the woman's handbag, emptied it out and stole her purse.*
  - To talk about past repeated actions  
For example:
    - *When her son got older her often went out to visit his friends after school*
  - To talk about long-term situations in the past which are no longer true  
For example:
    - *He worked for the police force for over 17 years*
- Moreover, Azar (1993) says that past progressive indicate that an action begun and continued over a period or time in the past. It is also used to describe an action that is going on at a particular time in the past.

For examples:

- *I was walking down the street when it began to rain.*
- *Last year at this time, I was attending school.*

Then, Hopkins (2005) mentions that the past progressive is used to provide the background scene to an action or event.

For examples:

- *It happened at five in the afternoon while she was watching the news on TV*
- *He was doing his homework in his bedroom when the burglar came into the house*

While, Werner (1985) says that the past progressive describes an action in the progress in the past, in the recent past at specific time or when another event occurred.

For examples:

- *Oh, you startled me! I was talking a little map.*
- *A year ago now, We were living in the Back Bay.*

According to Azar (1993) past perfect expresses an activity that was completed before another activity or time in the past.

For examples:

- *My parents had already eaten by the time I got home.*

- *The children had just begun school when their father received his transfer to another city.*

Furthermore, Smalley (1986) says that the past perfect tense indicates that one past even occurred before another past event. The past perfect is used to describe the event that occurred first.

For examples:

- *She did not give us the exam that she had planned for that day.*
- *After we had put on our hiking boots we set off down the trail.*

The past perfect is commonly used with the expressions *no sooner ... than ...* and *hardly ... when ...*

For examples:

- *I had no sooner begun to work than the telephone rang.*
- *We had hardly started to finish when it began to rain.*

Paragraph is refers to a basic and logical unit of organization in writing in which a series of closely related sentences supply the reader with detailed information. It is supported by Kolin (1986) that, a paragraph refers to a group of related sentences arranged in logical order supplying the readers with detailed information on a single important topic. In other words, a paragraph discusses a topic that is supported by sentences, related to the topic in logical order.

In addition paragraph is a group of sentences which develop one topic and consist of one main idea, several supporting sentences and concluding sentences. As it is stated by Oshima (1983) that paragraph is a group of related sentences that develop one main idea, and the paragraph should consist of three structural parts: a topic sentence, supporting sentences and concluding sentence. It can be conclude that in a paragraph there is only one topic that the writer wants the reader to know. It consists of related sentences that lead to the topic. In a paragraph there is also detailed information which gives enough explanation about topic.

The use of the appropriate tense is very important in writing a paragraph. It is necessary to find out and analyze the students' ability in using past tense in paragraph writing at the third year students of MTsN Model Padang.

The problem of this study is how is the third year students' ability in using past tense in paragraph writing. Generally the purpose of this study is to find out the students' ability in using

past tense. Specifically the purpose of this research is to describe the third year students' ability in using past tense in paragraph writing.

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research design was a descriptive quantitative. It described and analyzed the third year students' ability in using past tense in paragraph writing. Population of this research was the third year student of MTsN Model Padang in academic year 2005/2006. The total number of the population was 330 students spreading in eight classes. The sampling was chosen through cluster sampling technique, and the sample of this research was class III4. The instrument was used in this research was grammar test. In analyzing the data, the writer used a descriptive analysis. The writer calculate the average ability (M), and standard Deviasion (Sd), and determined the students grade then classified the students who got A, B, C, D or E using the formulas and criteria stated by Haris (1969). After that the writer calculated the percentage of the students' scores. Finally the

writer classified the students' ability into three categories: good (the students who got B - A), sufficient (the students who got C), and insufficient (the students who got E - D)

### FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

#### Findings

#### *Students' ability in using past tense*

The result of the test showed the students' ability to use past tense; simple past, past progressive, past perfect. It was measured by computing Mean (M) and Standard Deviasion (SD). It was got mean (M = 70.57) and Standard Deviasion (SD = 18.08).

It showed that there were no students (0%) got A, 13 students (33.33%) got B, 11 students (28.20%) got C, nine students (23.07) got D, and six students (15.38%) got E. It means that in general the ability of the third year students of MTsN Model Padang in using past tense in paragraph writing was insufficient. The data were presented in the table below:

Range of mark	F	Grade	Explanation	Percentage
≥ 97.69	0	A	Excellent	0%
≥ 79.61	13	B	Good	33.33%
≥ 61.53	11	C	Sufficient	28.20%
≥ 43.45	9	D	Insufficient	23.07%
≤ 43.45	6	E	Fail	15.38%

#### *Students' ability in using simple past*

To measure the students' ability in using simple past, the writer firstly counted the students score and gave mark. Then the writer counted Mean and Standard Deviation. It was got that Mean (M) was 14.24, and Standard Deviation (SD) was 4.97.

The students' ability in using simple past was good because there 23 students (58.97%) got A, six students (15.38%) got B, five students (12.82%) got C, four students (10.25%) got D, and one student (2.56%) got E. It can be seen in the following table.

Range of mark	F	Grade	Explanation	Percentage
≥ 21.70	23	A	Excellent	58.97%
≥ 16.73	6	B	Good	15.38%
≥ 11.77	5	C	Sufficient	12.82%
≥ 6.8	4	D	Insufficient	10.25%
≤ 6.8	1	E	Fail	2.56%

#### *Students' ability in using past progressive*

After analyzed the students' answer it showed that the students' ability in using past progssive as follow: one student (2.56%) got A, 20 students (51.28%) got B, seven students (17.94%)

got C, nine students (23.07%) got D, and two students (5.12%) got E (see the table below). From this result, it could be seen that the students' ability in using past progressive was good.

Range of mark	F	Grade	Explanation	Percentage
$\geq 22.68$	1	A	Excellent	2.56%
$\geq 17.46$	20	B	Good	51.28%
$\geq 12.24$	7	C	Sufficient	17.94%
$\geq 7.02$	9	D	Insufficient	23.07%
$\leq 7.02$	2	E	Fail	5.12%

### *Students' ability in using past perfect*

From the result of the test, the students' ability in using past perfect, the lowest score was 0 and the highest was 25. There were one student (2.56%) got A, 15 students (38.96%) got B, eight

students (20.51%) got C, 13 students (33.33%) got D, and two students (5.12%) got E. Based on the data analysis, the students' ability in using past perfect was good because there were 16 students got A - B. It can be seen in the following table.

Range of mark	F	Grade	Explanation	Percentage
$\geq 25.03$	1	A	Excellent	2.56%
$\geq 18.94$	15	B	Good	38.46%
$\geq 12.86$	8	C	Sufficient	20.51%
$\geq 6.77$	13	D	Insufficient	33.33%
$\leq 6.77$	2	E	Fail	5.12%

## DISCUSSION

Based on the result of the data analysis the use of past tense is one of the difficult points for the third year students at MTsN Model Padang. It was proved by the research result. In general, the data showed that 23.07% or nine students got D, and six (13.33%) of the students got E. It means that most of the students could not use past tense correctly and the rest could. The data also described that the students did not master the use of past tense. It can be seen from the number of the students who could not use past tense correctly.

The correct use of past tense is one of the difficult points in English grammar. It is not easy for the students to use past tense correctly. It can be assumed that most of the students did not understand the use of it. They did not know what kind of past tense that should be used. When the teacher explained the lesson, but the students, who did not understand, did not ask the lesson to their teacher. They kept silent and let it happen. Besides, the students are lacked of exercises in the class as well as outside the class.

Specifically, the students' ability in using simple past was good. The fact showed that most of the students got A and B. It means that the students

could use simple past correctly. They did not get any significant difficulties in using simple past. It was indicated by the large number of the students who got A and B. There were 29 students who could use simple past correctly.

The same with the previous fact, the students' ability in using past progressive was good. When it was compared to the students' ability in using simple past, it was worse. It is because the number of the students who could use simple past was larger than the number of the students who could use the past progressive. There were 29 students who could use simple past correctly while there were only 21 students who could use the past progressive. It means that it was easier for the students to use simple past than the past progressive.

The ability of the third year students in using past perfect, the result showed that the students' ability was good. There were 16 (41.02%) of the students could use past perfect while the rest could not. It probably happened because the students did not understand in using past perfect.

Over all, the ability of the third year students of MTsN Model Padang in using past tense was insufficient. Even though, the students' ability to

use simple past, past progressive, and past perfect were good.

## COCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

### Conclusions

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that in general, the ability of the third year students in using past tense in paragraph was insufficient. It means that the students did not have good understanding of using past tense. The data described that 14 (38.45%) of the students did not master the correct use of past tense.

Specifically, the third year students' ability in using the simple past was good because there were 29 (79.35%) of the students who could use the simple past correctly. The ability of the third year student in using past progressive was good. It can be seen that the students have good understanding of using past progressive. The fact showed that there were 11 (28.19%) of the students who could not use the past progressive. Then, the ability of the third year student in using past perfect was good. It was proved by the number of the students who got A – B. there were 16 (41.02%) of the students who could use past perfect.

### Suggestions

Referring to the findings of the research, the writer suggests as follow:

1. The students have to master in using past tense in the paragraph. In this case, the writer suggests the students to study carefully, and do not ignore the existences of past tense because it is one of difficult point of English grammar that should be learnt by the students.
2. The teacher should review the lesson related to the existence of past tense as part of grammar, in which the students probably have forgotten it.
3. The teacher should give enrichment and remedial teaching based on the students' ability in teaching past tense. The teacher

should give more exercises in using past tense. If the student makes incorrect use of past tense, show them the correct one. By doing practices like this, it is hoped that the students can apply it well.

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