

Students' Difficulties in Using Nominal Sentences of Simple Present Tense at SMP Negeri 3 Duhuadaa

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate the difficulties faced by the students in using nominal sentences of simple present tense. The research was conducted at SMP Negeri 3 Duhuadaa with 20 students participating. The study employed a descriptive qualitative approach, with data collected through tests. The findings revealed that students struggled with constructing declarative, negative, and interrogative sentences, particularly with subject-verb agreement, verb forms, and sentence structure. The study also identified factors contributing to these difficulties, including limited practice, lack of understanding grammatical rules, and language interference. The results of this study can inform teaching practices and materials development to better support students in mastering nominal sentences of simple present tense.

Keywords: Nominal Sentences; Simple Present Tense; Junior High School Students; Language Difficulties.

Introduction

English as an international language is used to communicate. It means that someone uses language to communicate and to share information among all countries in the world. As stated by Fauzianti, (2002) that, some countries consider English as the second and foreign language to be learnt.

Considering English has been the most important foreign language in the world. People from various non-English speaking countries including Indonesia learn English. "Having proficiency in English, people will be able to face the over-changing world easily." Thus, it is not surprising if the number of people who are interested in learning English is getting increased from time to time.

Students are expected to be able to communicate in English using correct structure or grammar because grammar is part of English language.

There is no language without grammar (at least no live or oral language). Cam et al. (2017:55) claimed that students must be able to master grammar as well as other people in other to make it easier to communicate. Grammar is important for students who are learning English, because it can help them to develop their communicative skills in both written and spoken English. In addition, the language components-structure, vocabulary, spelling, and pronunciation are not separately taught. The students would be easy to learn if they master grammar, not only in writing but also in speaking.

One of the basic grammars that are used to communicate in the daily activities is the Simple Present Tense. Grammar is very essential to develop language skills. Grammar enables the students known the rules, norms and the sciences of the combination of words. Grammar is one of the

important elements that language learners should know in learning language. Hornby (1995) asserted that tenses are any of the forms of verbs that may be used to indicate the time of the action or state expressed by the verb. One of the most difficult tenses to use correctly is Simple Present Tense. Coffin, et al, (2014: 334) the Present Tense describes or talks about ways, activities, things, or habits that occur regularly.

Furthermore, Sukmawaty, et al., (2022) the problem seems to many students have difficulty using the Simple Present Tense, as well as having difficulty distinguishing between verbal and nominal sentences using in the Simple Present Tense. Azar (1993) nominal sentence in the Simple Present Tense used as complements adjectives, noun, and verbs. Basically, nominal sentence was included into the present and the past tense. The Present Tense

indicated the present time and the past tense indicated the past time.

Syah, M (2001) in his book entitled "*Educational Psychology with a New Approach*" asserted that learning difficulty consists of two kinds. They are students' intern factor and students' extern factor "*Students' internal factors include students' psycho-physical disorder or deficiencies*". While students' external factors include situations and environmental conditions that do not support students learning activities. From the explanation above it can be interpreted that learning difficulty not only from the internal factors such as cognitive limitations, motivations and engagement but also from the external factors like environmental distractions, teaching method, less family economy life and low learning instruments quality.

In teaching learning process, not all of students are be able to

understand the material which is taught by the teacher. It could be seen when the teacher gave some exercises or some items, not all of students could be able to, answer the items. It may because of students' inability or students' difficulty in understanding the material which is taught.

Thus, in this research, the researcher focused on students' difficulties in using nominal sentences of simple present tense. It means, the researcher did the research in difficulties that happen when the students used nominal sentences of present tense as they had taught by their teachers.

The description of simple present tense, Hornby in *Oxford Dictionary* (1995: 205) who said that the simple present tense is the tense that is given by express an action or a state happening or existing at the time of speaking).

According to Betty Schramper Azar, (1993: 3) that Simple Present is used in express daily habits or usual activities, general statement of fact, and the simple present is used for evens or situations that exist always, usually, or habitually in the past, present, and future. While Rudy. H. (2002: 64) Simple Present Tense is a form of time used to declare a job or event conducted or daily (every day) or has to happen event that you talk or in other words, stating the job or event that has become a habit.

As indicated by Paradiyo (2003) that, present tense is one form of the present tense and the most to get servings of use. It is frequently used, so it is not surprising that almost all expires sentences delivered in the form of Present Tense, although it should have in the past tense or in other forms of group Present Tense. The group we have been hit Present Tense, Present

Continues Tense, Present Perfect Tense, and Present Perfect.

Further explanation of Simple Present Tense Paradiyo (2003) expressed that simple present tense concerns only state the fact of the action without reference to time. The simple present tense has two primary functions.

1. To talk about 'general truth', that is, to talk about something that was true in the past, is true now, and will be true in the future (e.g. The sun rises in the East. Nurses work hard. Water boils at 100 °C).
2. To talk about habits or ritual (e.g. I pay income taxes every year. She drinks coffee. We watch TV all time. The simple present can also indicate the speaker believes that a fact was true before, is true now, and will be true in the future.

Simple Present Tense was used to express or to show perception, feeling, states or actions that exist in the time of

speaking; the use of the Simple Present Tense was to describe habitual actions or routine actions and general. The Simple Present Tense indicates the present time and the past tense indicates the past time. The two tenses were developed by combining them with the simple, continuous, future, and the perfect form. The following was kinds of the tense which commonly appear in English sentence.

The Present Tense designated action occurring at the time of speaking or writing: He *lives* in Jakarta. It is used to indicate habitual actions: *I exercise every morning*. It is also used to express general truths (time file) and scientific knowledge (*light travels faster than sound*).

Sentence is a group of words have a sense consist a subject and predicate. Some opinions quoted from some experts which stated about definition of the sentence:

Oshima and Hogue (1983) declared that, "a sentence is a group of words that you use to communicate your ideas in writing or in speech. It is a complete, independent unit of thought and consists of two main parts: a subject and a predicate. An oral and written communication is made up of one or more unit called sentences.

Based on the Experts insight, the researcher concluded that sentence was a group of words that expresses a complete idea and that includes a subject and a predicate. The sentences could be analyzed base on the aim of the kinds of sentences. Sentences divided into declarative sentence, interrogative sentence, exclamatory sentence and imperative sentence.

Howard, S. (2007) in his book 'Basic English grammar' that there are four kinds of sentence, there are declarative sentence, interrogative

sentence, exclamatory sentence, and imperative sentence.

1) Declarative sentence.

A declarative sentence makes a statement. A declarative sentence ends with a period name else declarative sentence is positive sentences.

For Example:

1. It is raining.
2. Dinda is a beautiful girl
- 2) An interrogative sentence.

An interrogative sentence asks a question. An interrogative sentence ends with a question mark (?) instead of a period.

For Example:

1. Where is my English book?
2. Why is the sky blue?
3. An exclamatory sentence.

An exclamatory sentence makes a very strong statement called an exclamation. It shows a strong feeling such as surprise or anger. An

exclamatory sentence ends with an exclamation point (!) instead of a period.

For Example:

1. What a beautiful day it is!
2. How amazing she looks!
3. An imperative sentence

An imperative sentence gives an order. An imperative sentence can end with an exclamation point (!) if the order is very firm. Name else of an imperative sentence is negative sentence.

For Example:

1. Close the door
2. Turn off the light

From the explanations above, it can be deduced that sentence is a unit of language that expresses a complete thought or idea. It typically consists of a group of words that are grammatically related and convey a meaningful

message. Sitompul, J.M. (2007) asserted that based on the predicate of a sentence, a sentence can be classified two classifications, they are nominal sentence and verbal sentence.

Definition of Nominal Sentence

Nominal sentence is a sentence without verb. As indicated by Novia, W. (2009) Nominal sentence is "sentence which the predicate is not a verb but it is joined to the subject by a copula containing a verb". It means that nominal sentence is a sentence that has predicate not a verb, but can be an adjective, noun or adverb, then the nominal sentence should be inserted auxiliary verb to be like 'is, am, are, in simple present tense and was, were as simple past tense. From the description above, it can be summarized that simple present tense is a tense that was used for expressing events or situations that exist always, usually, or habitually in the present, past, and future. Thus, some

definitions of simple present tense above, Purnomo, W (2005) explained that Simple present tense in nominal can be divided into three forms on the formula. They can be seen in the formulation of simple present tense in nominal provides below:

Forms of Nominal Sentence

Nominal sentence divided in three forms they are positive, negative and interrogative sentence.

1) Declarative nominal sentence in Simple Present Tense

For Example:

a. Positive

Formula: **Subject + to be (am is are) + Complement**

1) *He is a student.*

2) *We are students.*

3) *It is a flower.*

2. Negative nominal sentence in Simple Present Tense.

This will be negative sentences by adding 'not' after to be.

For Example:

b. Negative

Formula: **Subject + to be (am is are)**

+ not + Complement

Example:

1. *He is not a student.*

2. *We are not students.*

3. *It is not a flower.*

Interrogative nominal sentence in Simple Present Tense. Interrogative nominal sentences are form by putting 'to be' at the beginning of the sentence.

For Example:

c. Interrogative

Formula: **To be (is am are) +**

Subject + Complement. Example:

1. *is He a student?*

2. *are We students?*

3. *is It a flower?*

Concerning nominal sentences explain above, it signifies that nominal sentence are sentences that contain a

linking verb (usually a form of "to be") connecting the subject to additional information, such as an adjective, noun, or prepositional phrase. They describe the subject without expressing an action.

RESEARCH METHOD

The researcher used qualitative method to find out the students' difficulties in using nominal sentences of simple present tense at SMP Negeri 3 Duhiadaa. Qualitative research is designed to obtain information concerning the current status of phenomena.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

FINDINGS

The result of the research "Students' difficulties in Using Nominal Sentence of simple present tense at the eight grade students of SMP Negeri 3 Duhiadaa. The students' mean score in Nominal Sentence of Simple Present Tense was 49,3. It is categorized into enough category based on the score

classification theory by Arikunto (2012). This suggests that, the students still need improvement in nominal sentence of Simple Present Tense.

1. Students' Difficulties in using to be Nominal Sentence of Simple Present Tense in Declarative

No	Indicators	Students	Correct	Score	Fault	Total score
1	Am	20	10	50	50	100
2	Am	20	10	50	50	100
3	Is	20	11	55	45	100
4	Is	20	10	50	50	100
5	Is	20	9	45	55	100
6	Are	20	10	50	50	100
7	Are	20	9	45	55	100
TOTAL				345	355	700

The first was nominal sentence of

Simple Present tense in Declarative Sentence indicated that, the test number 1 using "am" the correct answer was 10 out of 20 students and the total score was 50%, it denoted that the students didn't recognize the pattern of to be "am" in the sentence and lead to difficulties for students in constructing the correct sentences, the students' answers "I are a student" it should be "I am a student".

The same with the test number 2 using “am” the correct answer was 10 out of 20 students and the total score was 50%, students find difficulties to arrange the sentences, what to be that suitable with the subject, “I is happy today”. It should be “I am happy today”. Test number 3, 4 and 5 using “is”, the total score was 45%, it indicates that, they still struggle with using correct verb form of to be dealing with singular and plural subject, “She are a good girl”. It should be “She is a good girl”, and test number 4 using “is” the correct answer was 50%, it indicates that, the students still didn’t understand the meaning of the sentence and test number 5 using “is” the total score was 55%, the test “She are here today”. It should be “She is here today”. In this case, the students still didn’t know which pronoun or subject used with to be is, are, am and some of them used two auxiliary verbs or to be in the sentence.

Furthermore, test number 6 using “are” the correct answer was 10 and the total

score was 50%, and test number 7, the correct answer was 9 and total score was 45%, "They is smart". It should be "They are smart". In addition, students didn't recognize the rules of nominal sentence of simple present tense and they also sometimes omit parts of the verb. It signifies that, most of them didn't understand the meaning of the sentence. Thus, the students' difficulties about nominal sentence of simple present tense in declarative sentence were 49,3%.

Students' Difficulties in Using to be in Nominal Sentences of Simple Present Tense in Negative

No	Indicators	Students	Correct	Score	Fault	Total score
8	Am not	20	10	50	50	100
9	Am not	20	9	45	55	100
10	Is not	20	11	55	45	100
11	Is not	20	9	45	55	100
12	Are not	20	8	40	60	100
13	Are not	20	10	50	50	100
14	Are not	20	9	45	55	100
TOTAL				330	370	700

The next aspect was Nominal Sentence of Simple Present Tense in Negative. From the data above, it can be described that the students' difficulties about using to be in nominal sentence of simple present tense in negative sentence can be seen from the test number 8 using "am not" the correct answer out of 20 students was 50%, it can be highlights that the students' still didn't recognize the formula of negative sentence and they didn't know that they should add not after to be "am" in negative nominal sentence, "I am sick". It should be I am not sick. Test number 9 and test number 10 using "is not" the correct answer was 10 out of 20 students, and the total score was 55% and 45%, most of them didn't add not after to be in negative nominal sentence, in this case, students didn't know the formula of negative sentence, "She is a nurse" it should be "She is not a nurse". Test number 11 also using "is not" the total score was 55%, the

students didn't add "not" in the sentence, "She is smart, it should be "She is not smart". In this case, it should be added not after the auxiliary verb of to be. While, test number 12, 13 and 14 using to be "are not" were 60%, 50% and 55%. The students used double to be simple present tense in negative sentence, also they didn't understand the meaning of the sentence. In this case, students still didn't know the formula of nominal sentence in negative and still lack of vocabulary. Therefore, it can be determined that students still have difficulties in using nominal sentences of simple present tense in negative, it was proved with the results of test were 47,1%.

Students' Difficulties in Using to be Nominal Sentences of Simple Present Tense in Interrogative

No	Indicators	Students	Correct	Score	Fault	Total score
15	Am I	20	11	55	45	100
16	Am I	20	9	45	55	100
17	Is she	20	10	50	50	100

18	Is she	20	9	45	55	100
19	Are you	20	10	50	50	100
20	Are you	20	9	45	55	100
TOTAL				290	310	600

The last aspect was nominal sentence of Simple Present Tense in Interrogative. From the data above, it can be explained that the students' difficulties about using to be in nominal sentence of simple present tense in interrogative test number 15 by using "am" the score was 45%. In this case, the students used to be didn't suit with the subject, they didn't know what kinds of to be should be put before the subject in the sentence. For examples "are she beautiful?" it should be "is she beautiful?". The same with the test number 17 by using "is" the score was 50%, students did not recognize what subject came after to be, while test number 18 using "is" was 45% the students didn't answer the test because they didn't understand the meaning of the sentence and they forgot the patterns of nominal sentence in

interrogative, "are she very happy?". It should be "Is she very happy? the same with the test number 19 by using "are" the total score was 50%, students didn't use to be in the sentence. For examples "I beautiful?", it should be "am I beautiful?". Therefore, students' difficulties about using to be in interrogative in nominal sentence of simple present tense were categorized enough with total mean score was 48,3%

Based on the result of the students' difficulties in Nominal Sentence of Simple Present above, it was categorized in the middle or enough category. It means, the students still need more improvement in nominal sentence of Simple Present Tense.

DISCUSSION

The students' difficulties in using to be in nominal sentences of simple present tense due to the students still lack of understanding the pattern of

simple present tense. In this case, the students struggle with using the correct form in nominal sentences, dealing with singular and plural subjects. Limited grammar skills, including the use of auxiliary verbs, verb forms, and sentences structures. they were not able to comprehend the rules of nominal sentences. The students didn't understand the meaning of the sentences and still lack of vocabulary. To overcome the students' difficulties, the English teacher should provide enough opportunities to practice nominal sentences in simple present tense, teacher should employ strategies like drilling, brainstorming, role-playing, and providing motivation to help students build confidence and improve grammar skills.

CONCLUSIONS

The Students' Difficulties in Using Nominal Sentence of simple present tense at the Eight Grade Students of

SMP Negeri 3 Duhuadaa categorized into middle or enough category. The study identified several key areas of difficulty, including: the students' difficulty with subject-verb agreement, leading to grammatical errors. Students' lack of understanding of sentence structure and limited vocabulary. To address these difficulties, teachers can implement strategies such as providing clear explanations and examples of nominal sentence structures, including subject-verb agreement, vocabulary building and practice and reinforcement. By recognizing the students' difficulties in using nominal sentences, the teachers can tailor their instruction to meet the students' needs ultimately improving students' outcome in language learning.

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