

THE ELEVENTH GRADE STUDENTS' ABILITY IN USING QUESTION TAG IN SMA NEGERI 1 LINTONG NIHUTA

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ABSTRACT

Grammar is a description of certain organizing aspects of a written particular language. One of the grammar topic is question tag. Question tag is a mini question which we often put at the end of a sentence. The purpose of this study is to describe the ability of the eleventh grade students of SMA Negeri 1 Lintong Nihuta in using question tag. This study is a qualitative study with descriptive research. The population of this study is the eleventh grade students of SMA Negeri 1 Lintong Nihuta in Academic Year 2020/2021. The sample is 50 students. The instrument for collecting data is a test concerning question tag which consist of 20 multiple choice and 10 for completion form. The test is done in order to know the ability of students in using question tag. Based on result of the data analysis, the percentage of the student's ability is divided three parts high category, moderate category and low category. The result shows that 2 students (4%) belong to high score category, 40 students (80%) to moderate category, and 8 students (16%) to low category. The mean score is 83.56, it is 84% of the total students who can do the test well with 42 students who got score above 72. The writer concludes that the eleventh grade students of SMA Negeri 1 Lintong Nihuta are able in using question tag.

Keywords: *Grammar, Question Tag*

I. INTRODUCTION

Language is a means of communication among human being. By using language, we can easily communicate each other. Language is used to deliver messages, express ideas, thoughts, and one feeling towards others. There are so many languages that people used to express their ideas or to transfer messages and one of them is English. English is one of the International languages that have been used in most of countries in the world.

Language is also an instrument of communication among people. There are so many languages that people used to express their ideas or to transfer messages and one of them is English., some countries in the world use English as the formal and informal situation. People in the world speak the language (English) as their first language to communicate with each another in every international even like conferences, meeting, and commerce's or work shop

In addition, English is also as a foreign language in many countries, including Indonesia. In Indonesia, English is the first foreign language to learn in the school and very important to develop science, technology, art, and culture, beside for developing the relationship between another countries. Therefore, the students are expected to have knowledge of English components. The components are vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar. Grammar is the system of a language. It is an important language component in teaching and learning English. Grammar is the central think to be mastered, especially by the students of senior high school.

According to Geoffrey, et al. (2000:4) Grammar is mechanism for putting words together, but we have said little about sound and meaning. Hall (1993:1) also explains “a grammar is a description of certain organizing aspects of a particular language” . In addition, he says that grammar has its own system of organization. It can be concluded that its major parts are arranged according to the most important parts of English sentences, subject, verb, object, and so on.

One part of grammar is question tag. Question tag is one of the subjects learnt in grammar. According to Byrd and Benson (2001:191), “question tag is formed by adding a “tag” to a statement” . It means that a question is added in statement or sentence usually at the end. Primarily, question tag is used to seek confirmation or agreement in a statement or sentence. There are two forms of question tag; they are affirmative form and negative form. When a statement is positive, the tag is negative and when a statement is negative, the tag is positive.

The question tag in Indonesian is “*ya, kan?*” or “*ya, bukan?*”. This statement often happens in daily communication among human activities. “A question tag is a simple question about the statement which is made in order to make people agree with that statement “. Furthermore question tag is a question which contains a statement and it is ended with tag and it is translated with “*bukan?*” in bahasa Indonesia. Question tag is often used when we speak; it is formed with special finites.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A. The Concept of Grammar

Grammar is usually considered one of the language components besides the vocabulary and sound system which students should acquire. According to Diane (2003:11) knowing grammar means understanding what the text means correctly. Grammar gives language users the control of expression and communication in everyday life. It regulates how to form phrases sentence and discourses. Every sentence should be in accordance with grammatical rules. Therefore grammar deals with the form of sentences and smaller units such as clauses, phrases and words.

- 1) He go to church last Sunday.
- 2) The boy ran out from home.
- 3) The book is in the table

The underlined words above are not accepted informal English because they are not used the grammatical rules. The verb *go* should be *went* because of the adverb last Sunday. The phrasal verb *ran out* should be *ran away* because it shows a place. The preposition *in* should be *on* because a table has no space inside. Although those sentence are grammatically wrong they are still understandable in oral communication. However in written communication such a thing is not acceptable because written communication requires exact meaning. Readers can not ask or clarify something unclear in the written form since the writer is not present.

There are many definitions about grammar. In linguistics, according to Newson (2006:2) “grammar is a set of rules which tells us how to recognize the infinite number of expressions that constitute the language that we speak.” Meanwhile, Hall (2003:11) states that “grammar is a description of certain organizing aspects of particular language. It usually includes phonological (sounds), morphological (word composition) and syntactic (sentence composition) points.”

Grammar is one of the main factors for people to master language. Butterfield (2008:142) states that “grammar is often a generic way of referring to any aspect of English that people object to.” “The term refers also to the study of such rules, and this field includes morphology, syntax, phonology, semantics, and pragmatics. Grammar is also defined as the basis of the unlimited impressibility of human language” says Komarova (2001:15).

According to Penny (1991:76) grammar is one of the important things in English because it is not just to make the sentence good but also it will refer to its meaning. A knowledge of grammar in this sense is not just concerned with rules for what can and can't be done with the organization and use of words in English sentences, but also with the way written English function. Therefore, to write or to speak in a clearer and more effective manner, people have to study grammar. For the people who have unconscious knowledge of grammar it may be sufficient for simple language use. But the people who wish to communicate in the artistic manner with well-defined structures must go for the greater depth of understanding and proficiency what the study of grammar offers.

Cook and Suter (1980:10) also state that “grammar used a writer description of the rules of the language and a set of rules by which people speak and write.” Therefore, Veit (1986:1) defines the term grammar as “what enables someone of understand every word he is reading, and to speak and write words and sentences of his own.”

When teaching a language, teachers actually have a purpose; insure fluency and accuracy in all language skills. Fluency is the ability to speak fluently where as accuracy is ability to speak with correct grammatical structures, such as the using of verb forms correctly, phrasal verbs, preposition, etc. From those definitions the writer summarizes that grammar is the rule of a language, which help us to understand and also help us to produce utterance spoken and written.

B. The Concept of Sentence

According to Frank (1972:1) English sentence consists of predications something is said, or predicated about a subject. The subject is the word that name the person, thing, or place that a sentence is about. It is usually a noun or pronoun and the predicate makes a statement about the subject. It consist of verb and its modifiers or complements. The verb is the most important part of the predicate. It expresses action or state of being.

For example: The girl bought some books in the market.

The sentence consist of subject (the girl) and predicate (bough some books in the market) which consist of direct object and adverbial.

The sentence may be further divided according to the function each word has in the subject-predicate relationship. Each of these functions is classified as a different parts of speech. The words that form the central core of the sentence around which all the other words ‘cluster’ are the parts of speech are known as nouns or pronoun and verbs. The words that modify the central core words are the parts of speech called adjectives and adverbs.

Spring (1989:34) states sentences are divided into four categories: simple sentences, compound sentences, complex sentences, and compound-complex sentences.

1. Simple Sentence is s simple sentence contains one independent clause.

Example: The earth is round (independent clause).

2. Compound Sentences is two or more independent clauses. A coordinating conjunction (for, and but, or) often links the two independent clauses and is preceded by a comma.

Example: 1. By a coordinating conjunction.

I enjoy playing music, **but** I hate playing badminton

2. By a sentence connector

I enjoy playing music: **however** I hate playing badminton

3. By a semicolon

I enjoy playing music; I hate playing badminton

3. Complex Sentence is contains one independent clause and one or more dependent clauses. A complex sentence will include at least one subordinating conjunction.

Example:

1. Although I enjoy playing music, I hate badminton. “Although I enjoy playing music” (dependent clause), “I hate badminton” (independent clause).

2. I hate badminton Although I enjoy playing music. . “Although I enjoy playing music” (dependent clause), “I hate badminton” (independent clause).

4. Compound – Complex Sentence contains one or more independent clauses and one or more dependent clauses.

Example: I hate playing badminton, but I enjoy playing music eventhough I am not very good at it. “I hate playing golf” (independent clause), “but I enjoy playing tennis” (independent clause), “eventhough I am not very good at it” (dependent clause).

On the other hand, Wren and Martin (1989:1) state that a sentence can be classified into four kinds:

1. Declarative sentence is a sentence that makes a statement.

Example: - My dog is beautiful

- I do not like this book

2. Interrogative sentence is a sentence that asks a question.

Example: - Did you go yesterday?

- What time is it now?

3. Imperative sentence is a sentence that express a command.

Example: - Listen to me!

- Pay attention, please!

-

4. Exclamatory sentence is a sentence that express strong feeling.

Example: - How so beautiful you are!

- How so big this cat!

Based on these definitions above, the writer sums up that sentence is a group of words that you use to communicate your ideas in writing or in speech. It is a complete unit of thought and consists of two main parts: a subject and a predicate.

If there is no auxiliary in the statement, the auxiliary *to do* must be used like *do* or *does* for simple **present tense** and *did* for **simple past tense**.

Examples: 1) Mirna comes every Sunday, doesn't she?

2) we go to party together, dont't we?

3) Zion want to mall yesterday, didn't he?

In **present continuous tense**, the form of be: (is, am, are) are used in the question tag.

- Examples: 1) John is studying at school now, isn't he?
2) They are playing in the field, aren't they?
3) He is not reading in the library, is he?

In **present perfect tense**, the form *has* or *have* is used in question tag

- Example: 1) Peter has lived in Jakarta for a long time, hasn't he?
2) We haven't visited our friends in Bandung this year, have we?
3) They have gone to Medan, haven't they?

In **present future tense**, the form *will* is used in question tag

- Example: 1) You will go to Bandung next week, won't you?
2) She will be in Bandung tomorrow. Won't she?
3) He won't come next month, will he?

There are special rules in question tag:

1. Subject from the preceding statement is repeated with the form personal pronoun in the tag.

- Example: 1) Anton will be here, **won't he?**
2) The students are lazy to do the homework, **aren't they?**

2. Statement with subject everybody, everyone, everything, anybody, anyone, nobody, no one, is repeated in the tag with the pronoun "they"

- Example: 1) Everybody watched the movie, **didn't they?**
2) No one cares of me, **do they?**
3) Everyone is ready for the test now, **aren't they?**
4) Someone was here to see me this morning, **weren't they?**
5) Nobody is living in the old house now, **are they?**

3. For command and request, the tag uses the expression, **will you?**

- Example: 1) Come here, **will you?**
2) Be quite, **will you?**
3) don't be lazy, **will you?**
4) please don't go, **will you?**

4. For invitation (command and request) beginning with the words let us/let, the tag uses the expression, **shall we?**

- Examples: 1) Let's see the movie, **shall we?**
2) Let us pay attention to the the teacher, **shall we?**

The positive statement of I am, the tag is **aren't I?**

- Examples: 1) I am pretty, **aren't I?**
2) I am not bad, **am I?**

5. Positive sentences that using negative meaning sentences such as never, seldom, rarely, barely, and so on the tag should be in positive.

- Example: 1) Your father is seldom in the office on Saturday, **is he?**
2) They never go out on Sunday, **do they?**

C. The Concept of Ability

Ability is the capacity or power to competence in an activity or occupation. In another sense, Hornby (2005:17) says "ability is the quality of being able to do something, especially the physical, mental, financial, or legal power to accomplish something." In this study, the ability refers to students' skill in producing question

tag. What the writer means by ability in order to limit the writer's thesis is the quality of being able to understand and comprehend question tag. In conclusion, ability defined as the capacity of the individuals to perform various tasks in a specific job. Ability for basically mean that you have the potential to do something in other words talent.

D. Question Tag

Murphy (1994:102), states that question tag is mini question we often put on the end of a sentence in spoken English. Swan (1993:514) also states that a question tag is rather like a 'reply question'. It is made up of auxiliary verb + personal pronoun. It is used at the end of a sentence to ask for confirmation of something we are not sure about, or to ask for agreement here moreover.

Azar and Hagen (1989:89) states that question tag is a question added at the end of a sentence. Speakers use question tag mainly to make sure their information is correct or to seek agreement. Question tag is the small question that often come at the end of sentences in speech, and sometimes in informal writing.

Thomson and Martinet (1993:113-114) classify question tag under two main headings according to their function, they are asking for agreement, and confirmation. After a discussion of how they are formed, i.e. an affirmative statement is normally followed by a negative tag, and the other way around they describe patterns of intonation that will determine the function. In a successive point, they list the characteristic of comment tag, which may indicate among other things interest, surprise, delight, anger, suspicion, disbelief or nothing a fact.

Based on these definitions, the writer sums up that question tag is a short question which is put at the end of a statement and made up of auxiliary verb + personal pronoun, to ask for clarification, to confirm information or to make sure that information is correct.

E. Forms of Question Tag

According to Fuchs and Bonner (2000:91), forms of question tags are vary but their meaning is always similar. If the main clause is negative, the tag is affirmative; if the main clause is affirmative, the tag is negative. They added their explanation about the sentence or statement consisting of question tag. The statement expresses an assumption.

If the statement verb is affirmative, the tag verb is negative.

Example: 1) you work on Friday, don't you?

2) you like coffee, don't you?

If the statement verb is negative, the tag verb is affirmative.

Example: 1) you don't work on Friday, do you?

2) smoking is bad, isn't it?

When the subject of the statement is *that*, the subject of the tag is it.

Example: that is a good idea, isn't it?

The subject of question tag must be pronoun. If the subject in the statement is noun or proper noun, then it must be changed to pronoun in the question tag.

Here below, the forms and examples of question tag.

| | |
|--|---|
| AFFIRMATIVE STATEMENT Subject + Auxiliary | NEGATIVE TAG Auxiliary + Not + Subject |
|--|---|

| | |
|--------------------------------|-------------|
| You are a doctor | Aren't you? |
| He has been here for two years | Hasn't he? |
| They can move tomorrow | Can't they? |

| | |
|---|--|
| NEGATIVE STATEMENT Auxiliary + Not + Subject | AFFIRMATIVE TAG Subject + Auxiliary |
| You are not a doctor | Are you? |
| He has not been here for two years | Has he? |
| They can not move tomorrow | Can they? |

With do as an auxiliary verb

| | |
|---|------------------------------------|
| AFFIRMATIVE STATEMENT Subject + Verb | NEGATIVE TAG Do + Not + Subject |
| You live here | Don't you? |
| She decided to go yesterday | Didn't they? |

| | |
|--|---------------------------------|
| NEGATIVE STATEMENT Subject + Do + Not + Subject | AFFIRMATIVE TAG Do + Subject |
| You don't live here | Do you? |
| She didn't decide to go yesterday | Did they? |

If there is no auxiliary in the statement, the auxiliary *to do* must be used like *do* or *does* for simple **present tense** and *did* for **simple past tense**.

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F. Learning Difficulties

English is different from Indonesian especially in grammar. Question tag is one of the elements of English grammar which is taught in Senior High School. There are a number of difficulties which students face in learning question tag. First, the students have difficulties to remember the principles in using question tag such as if the statement is negative, the form of question tag is negative and vice versa. For example, *Ani is a teacher, isn't she?*. In fact, there are a lot of students answer *is she?*. It shows that they have difficulty. Second, the students are confused to determine the right of "be" in question tag. It is mentioned before, question tag is formed "be" from the statement. For example, *Rani and Tio sre not in the room now, are they?*. In fact, many students have difficulties to determine the right form of "be". The last is they do not know the proper question tag, if the statement does not use an auxiliary

III. RESEARCH METHOD

Research is the systematic, empirical, and critical investigation of hypothetical propositions about the presumed relations among natural phenomena"(Yusra, 2006:43). There are four steps in descriptive method : Participation in the setting, direct observation; dept interview, and analyze the data (Denzim, 2000: 129).

This is a descriptive research which is to describe the students' ability in using question tag. According to Arikunto 2012:3) descriptive research is the research that as intended to investigate the circumstances, conditions, or other things that have been mentioned. The result is presented by describing and analyzing the data.

The number of population is 320 students who are grouped into 10 classes. It consisted of 32 students in each of class. The writer takes 5 classes as try out and 5 classes as real test and the writer takes 30% of from 5 classes which consists 10 students each of class which amounts 50 students as a sample of real test. First, the writer give a try out test to the students. The writer uses a grammar test as the instrument for collecting the data in form of written test. The test are 40 questions consists of 30 questions for multiple choice and 10 questions for complete form. This study is a study which its focus in using question tag. The suitable study design to be used in this study is qualitative research design.

The qualitative research design in this study will be done descriptively by describing the result of this resut descriptively. The kind of study named descriptive qualitative study.

A good test should be valid and reliable. According to Arikunto (2012:82) to see the validity, the writer uses the content validity. Content validity was the degree to which a test measures an intended content area. Furthermore, one of characteristics of good test was content validity in which the test materials were constructed based on the curriculum. The test that the writer give to the students based on the syllabus and teaching materials that had been taught by the teacher to students. It means the test was valid.

The writer used split-half method to see the realibility of the test. Split-half method is a method that divides the items of the test into odd and even items by Arikunto (2012:107). It means that the test is grouped into odd items and even items and they are correlated. Their coefficient correlation is calculated by using Person Product Moment formula by Arikunto (2012:87) as follow:

$$r_{xy} = \frac{N\sum xy - (\sum x)(\sum y)}{\sqrt{\{N\sum x^2 - (\sum x)^2\}\{N\sum y^2 - (\sum y)^2\}}}$$

Furthermore, to know the index reliability of the test, the writer analyzes the result by using Spearman Brown based on Arikunto (2012:107) as follows:

$$r_{11} = \frac{2r_{1/2\ 1/2}}{(1 + r_{1/2\ 1/2})}$$

IV. RESEARCH FINDING

Realibility is the extend to which a test is consistent in the measuring whatever it does measure. Arikunto (2012:89) states that the categories of the reliability of the tests are as follows:

| | |
|-------------|----------------------------------|
| 0.80 – 1.00 | : the realibility is very high |
| 0.60 – 0.80 | : the realibility is high |
| 0.40 – 0.60 | : the realibility is significant |
| 0.20 – 0.40 | : the realibility is low |
| 0.00 – 0.20 | : the realibility is very low |

So, this is the result of reliability of the real test question tag in odd number and even number multiple choices and completion form by using Person Product the coefficient of realibility for total was 0.57) and the coefficient correlation of realibility for total is 0.72. It means the degree of coefficient correlation of the test was high and the test was ‘reliable’.

As a result of the test, the writer found out the highest score got by the students in using question tags was 100 and the lowest score was 33. Then the writer calculated for mean and standard deviation of the real test and the writer got 83.56 for mean and 15.54 for standard deviation.

Student's Score

| Score (x) | F | Fx | fx ² |
|-----------|-----------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| 100 | 2 | 200 | 20000 |
| 99 | 4 | 396 | 39204 |
| 98 | 4 | 392 | 38416 |
| 97 | 3 | 291 | 28227 |
| 92 | 2 | 184 | 16928 |
| 91 | 3 | 273 | 24843 |
| 90 | 5 | 450 | 40500 |
| 89 | 3 | 267 | 23763 |
| 88 | 1 | 88 | 7744 |
| 84 | 1 | 84 | 7056 |
| 83 | 5 | 415 | 34445 |
| 82 | 3 | 246 | 20172 |
| 81 | 4 | 324 | 26244 |
| 78 | 1 | 78 | 6084 |
| 72 | 1 | 72 | 5184 |
| 64 | 1 | 64 | 4096 |
| 57 | 1 | 57 | 3249 |
| 54 | 2 | 108 | 5832 |
| 53 | 2 | 106 | 5618 |
| 50 | 1 | 50 | 2500 |
| 33 | 1 | 33 | 1089 |
| | $\Sigma f = 50$ | $\Sigma fx = 4178$ | $\Sigma fx^2 = 361194$ |

According to Arikunto (2012:299) the students' ability can be classified based on their group. Students' ability was categorized as high if their scores were higher than 99.1 (M+1SD). Their abilities were categorized as moderate if their scores were in range 68.02 – 99.1 ((M-1SD)-(M+1SD)) and their abilities were categorized as low if their scores were lower than 68.02 (M-1SD) (see appendix VIII).. Then, the writer calculated the percentage of students who got high, moderate, and low ability. Finally, it can be seen in the table below.

| The Ability | Question Tag |
|-------------|--------------|
| High | 2 |
| | 4% |
| Moderate | 40 |
| | 80% |
| Low | 8 |
| | 16% |

Based on the above, the writer found there were 2 students (4%) got high category, 40 students (80%) got categorized as moderate, and 8 students (16%) got categorized as low.

Based on the categorization group, the writer can conclude that the students' ability in using question tags was moderate. It was on the fact that the majority of the students (80%) had moderate ability.

But based on the total number of the students the writer found mean 83.56 with 42 students who got score above 72 based on Minimal Criterion Mastery (KKM). The students were categorized 'able' in using question tag if 70% total students answered all item correctly. It means the using of question tag is able.

Discussion

As the result of the research showed that 2 students (4%) belong to high category, 40 students (80%) to moderate category, and 8 students (16%) to low category. Therefore based on the group, the ability of the eleventh grade students of SMA Negeri 1 Lintong Nihuta in using question tag was moderate (80%) (see appendix IX). But based on totality of the students the writer found 83.56 for mean and 15.54 for standard deviation. There were 42 students who got score above 72 who passed Minimal Criterion Mastery (KKM) from 50 students who followed the test. It means the using of question tag is able.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The conclusions of this research are presented based on the data which have been analyzed in the previous chapter. From all the data analysis about the ability of the eleventh grade students in using question tag, it can be concluded as follows:

1. Based on the total number of the students, the writer found out 40 students who got score above 72 and passed the Minimal Criterion Mastery (KKM). It means that the eleventh grade students SMA Negeri 1 Lintong Nihuta are able to use the question tag because 92% of the total students who can do the test well, and only 8% of the students can not do the test well. The regulation of saying *ability* is fulfilled if 70% of the total number of the students can do the test well.
2. Based on the ranking group the ability of the eleventh grade students of SMA Negeri 1 Lintong Nihuta in using question tag, the writer found out 2 students belong to high category (4%) with the score 100, 40 students moderate category (80%) with the score 68.02 – 99.1 and 8 students low category (16%) with the score 68.02.
3. Based on checking and analyzing the real test, only some students were not understand about the rule of question tag, they were able to apply it in the sentence and determine the appropriate pronoun and auxiliary.

Based on the findings of the research, some suggestions need to be put forward in order to have a good quality of teaching and learning process. The writer would like to give some suggestions as follows:

1. For the teacher

Based on the result that writer got, the students don not understand some of rules in using question tag so the teacher is expected to give the explanation about the topic. The teacher is expected to create the teaching strategy effectively and interestingly so the students can follow the lesson well.

2. For the students

The students are suggested to study more the lesson of question tags and do the assignment well and ask the teacher if do not understand the materials, so that it will not be difficult to continue the next materials.

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