Chapter One

Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher describes the background of the study. It deals with the topic of the study and the reason why the researcher chose the topic. The identification of the problems is also discussed in this chapter. The limitation of the study is included to make the study more specific then it is followed by research questions. After that, the researcher explains the objectives of the research and significance of this research. Finally, the researcher presents the outline of the research.

Background of the Research

Grammar is a part of English lessons which is needed to be learnt. One of the reasons is because mastering grammar is the foundation in the proficiency of language (Wang, 2010). It means by mastering grammar, students will be able to comprehend the language well. In addition Wang's (2010) said that grammar is an association of regulations for taking and placing words together to make sense. This infers that without grammar, it will be difficult to understand the language. Therefore, it is necessary for students to master grammar well.

One of the challenging parts in grammar is tenses-aspect systems (Larsen-Freeman, Tom Kuehn & Mark Haccius, 2002). The reason is perhaps students cannot distinguish which tense-aspects that should be used. In addition, Larsen-Freeman et al. (2002) added that many tenses-aspects are related to other grammatical structure. The students who do not really comprehend the structure of tenses-aspects perhaps feel difficult. Consequently, many students perhaps fail to understand tense-aspect systems.

Tenses as part of grammar play important roles in language proficiency. Tenses are important because of the high frequency of use. As Dang and Nguyen (2013) stated tenses are related to other grammatical structure and used in many occasions. Students will use tenses in daily communication and academic activities. Hence, the high occurrence of use become the reason why tenses are important to make students' language proficiency.

Tenses are important grammatical category that should be mastered by students. The reason is sentences in English including simple sentences always use tenses. Many sentences in daily communication follow the rules of simple tenses or past tenses both in written and spoken. In addition, the sentences may also use tenses-aspects combination for some conditions or events.

Other time signal in grammar is aspects. Aspect "is grammatical category that reflects the way in which the action of a verb is viewed with respect to time" (Greenbaum and Quirk, 2003, p.51). An event can be seen from two ways based on its aspects. There are two types of aspects. The event is in progressive time or in perfect time. Therefore, aspect shows an event in more spesific time.

As a grammatical category, aspects appear with tenses. Some books in school perhaps do not include aspects as grammatical category. However, aspects indeed is part of tenses although most of school books do not include it in tenses lesson. According to Greenbaum and Quirk (2003), there are two categories of tenses; the present tense and past tense. Hence, other categories of tenses such as present perfect, past perfect, present progressive, past progressive, present perfect progressive and past perfect progressive are combination of basic tenses and aspects (Greenbaum & Quirk, 2003).

It is necessary to teach about aspects to students. Aspects as part of tenses talk about in what way students perceive an activity (Rahman & Ali, 2015). Aspects appear in all of tenses. Each tenses are always followed by one or two aspects. Aspect makes tenses clear in terms of time. It is one of ways to help students understand more about grammar especially on learning tenses. Hence, it will be easier for them to decide which tenses that should be used in certain time.

Many students do not understand the differences between tenses and aspects. The differences that may be difficult to them are about the concept of time in using tenses and aspects. It will be beneficial for them if they know the concept of tenses and the concept of aspects. The concept of tenses and aspects is used to show event or action in exact time. Therefore, students can express an action correctly by using appropriate time signal.

Another problem about tenses-aspects in Indonesia is the difference between *Bahasa Indonesia* and English. *Bahasa Indo*nesia does not have tenses, whereas when students learn English, they should understand about tenses. This difference makes students confused. The result is many Indonesian students do not know what tenses that they should use. This will lead to problems in communication. Thus, if students fail to understand the difference between Bahasa Indonesia and English, they are unsuccessful to master tenses-aspects.

Mastering tenses-aspects is important for English Education Department students. The first reason is it will support students to acquire other lessons. The second is many students of English Education may become a teacher in the future, so they should become proficient in tenses-aspects. The last reason is students will

communicate with other well since they use good grammar, especially on using time signal. If they do not understand well the concept of tenses-aspects, they perhaps fail to acquire other lessons. As future teachers, they perhaps cannot teach the concept well to their students in the future. If they do not understand the concept well, they perhaps make mistakes. Then, they may fail to communicate with others because of misunderstanding. Therefore, this research is important to be done to see whether English Education students have already mastered the concept of tenses-aspects or not.

Statement and Limitation of the Problem

Tenses-aspects are important part in written and spoken English language. If students understand, it perhaps can minimize their mistakes.. Tenses-aspects are used for academic purpose and communicational purpose therefore students must be able to speak and write using correct tenses-aspects. However, the researcher finds many college students face problems in using tenses-aspects. The problems are based on the researcher's observation and experience. The first problem is many students feel confused to distinguish structure of each tenses-aspects. The second problem is many students fail to use correct tense-aspect. The third problem is students do not realize whether they are correct or not in using tenses-aspects. In this research, the researcher wants to investigate students' ability in using tenses-aspects.

Tenses-aspects can be widely researched, such as focusing on 16 tenses-aspects concept, tenses-aspects error or factors that influence students' ability. In this research, the researcher only focused on investigating students' ability in using tenses-aspects using 10 combinations of tenses-aspects used both in daily and academic

communication. Therefore, the students' ability was only reflected in 10 combination tenses-aspects.

Research Questions

Based on the problem above, the research questions of this research is:

1. How is the EED of UMY students' ability in using tenses-aspects?

The Purpose of the Research

According to the research question above, the purpose of this research is:

1. To find out the EED of UMY students' ability in using tenses-aspects.

Significance of the Research

There are three significant points in this study which provide the valuable contribution to the students, the lecturers or teachers and other researchers.

For the students. This research is beneficial in providing information about students' ability. By knowing the result of this research, the students might be more aware on their ability in using tenses-aspects.

For lecturers or teachers. This research will be useful for lecturer or teachers as their reference. Some lecturers or teachers may want to know whether their students' ability in using tenses-aspects is good or not. Then, lecturers or teachers can decide what tenses-aspects they should teach or how they teach the tenses-aspect.

For other researchers. This research can be an initial study for other researchers who want to conduct similar research. They can use the result of this research as their review of related study. Also, other researcher can use the result of this research to do research using different research designs.

Outline of the Research

The first chapter of the research describes background of the research, identification of the problem, limitation of the problem, purpose of the research, significance of the research and outline of the research. The second chapter will be the literature review and the conceptual framework. The third chapter discusses methodology of the research, research design, research setting and research participants, techniques of data collection and data analysis of the research. In the fourth chapter the researcher will discuss the findings of this research, and then the researcher will provide discussion about the findings. The fifth chapter will be the conclusion and recommendation.