

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

In this modern era, people are demanded to acquire more than one language. Language as a means for communication takes an important role in our daily activities. One of the important languages that should be mastered is English. There are many countries that use English as their first language and also their official language.

In Indonesia, English is one of the foreign languages that become the most important language to be taught. Indonesia as a developing country has realized that English as an international language should be mastered by the Indonesian. Furthermore, English is used as an international language that connects some countries in almost all over the world.

Considering the period of formal English learning at school it can be predicted that the students who have attended college or university should master any aspects of English lesson. In fact, most students who have learned the English grammar and structure are usually not able to write properly.

Tenses are an important part in learning English. Student can write good essay or can speak in English properly unless they remember and understand the tenses. The student should remember all the tenses in English and should be able to use it appropriate with the time and the purpose of the sentence they want to make.

The problem that might be arising is the use of appropriate tenses according to the sequence of time that they produce. We often hear the complaint from the teacher who said that the student seems to be easy to forget their new tenses that they have learnt although they have mastered the tenses at that time.

Teacher is one of the crucial factors that may develop students' ability. Teacher is the person who is actually responsible for educating the students through the teaching-learning process. In the case of transferring knowledge, teachers are required to design some incredible techniques that would make the students easy to capture and understand the lesson given.

Some researcher in English language learning in school indicated that the teaching and learning process that has been adapted in school was far from the objective goals that should be obtained by schools. The conventional method and technique still dominate the English language learning, for example in memorizing grammar, the teacher asks the student to remember the material conventionally and it makes the student easy to forget the material that they have been remembered.

The fact, most students in Indonesia have problems in mastering grammar which can be considered complicated. Grammar is essentials as the rules of wording to make meaningful utterances. In the skill of writing for instance, at least students have to master not only vocabulary but also grammar well. In this case, verb tenses have essentials role, because they tell readers when actions are taking place. Careful and accurate use of tenses is important to clear writing.

This condition invites some special attentions, because when we are reluctant to learn, it can be considered that some bad effects will arise, especially in the relation of their professional works. For this reason, the teacher should make some teaching models that will give some effective solutions for the problem above.

Mnemonic is one of the techniques of teaching-learning process that is usually used in mastering process. A mnemonic captures information in a memorable way to help a person remember something that is important. The characteristic of *mnemonic* is considered to lead us to achieve success in improving the students' achievement in English language.

Then a number of considerations are proposed to the importance of conducting this research. They are as follow: 1. Most of students still get difficulty in using tenses even they have been learning it since elementary school. 2. There are not so many studies which concern deeply about mnemonic in increasing students' mastery of past tense.

Based on the statement above, the writer is interested in implementing the *mnemonic* technique in junior high school. The writer is also interested in trying out this technique in mastering tenses at SMPN 19 Bandung. Further more the writer also wants to know the students improvement in their tenses ability through *mnemonic* technique rather than learning through the conventional technique.

Therefore the title of this research is:

**“The use of mnemonic technique in improving students' mastery of past tense”**

## 1.2 Research Questions

In relation with the above phenomenon, there are several questions to be answered in this research, those are:

1. Is the *mnemonic* technique significantly more effective to improve students' mastery of past tense than conventional approach?
2. What are the students' responses toward *mnemonic*?

## 1.3 Purpose of Research

In general, the purpose of the research is to analyze the influence of *mnemonic* as a technique for the students who learn English as foreign language especially in the students' tenses memorization. Particularly the research has some aims as follows:

1. To find out the empirical evidence in the effectiveness of *mnemonic* in mastering past tenses.
2. To find out the students responses toward the *mnemonic*

## 1.4 Scope of the Research

This research is limited to the eight grade of junior high school in using past tense. The writer consider that past tense has a lot of form; simple past tense, past perfect, past continuous and past perfect continuous. Moreover, in mastering past tense the students should master the word changing. Simple past tense is formed by using the simple past form of the verb.

## 1.5 Hypothesis

The writer purpose the following hypothesis in this research:

Mnemonic as a technique can be used to improve the student's comprehension in mastering past tense.

## 1.6 Research Methodology

### a. Design

The general approach that is used by this research is quantitative study and this research use the general view of experimental research. Further more, this research will be conducted based on quasi-experimental research. One of the most commonly used quasi-experimental designs in educational research is represented as:

X1e	T	X2e
X1c	O	X2c

X1e : Students' memorization test score of experimental group in pre-test.

X1c : Students' memorization test score of control group in pre-test.

X2e : Students' memorization test score of experimental group in post-test.

X2c : Students' memorization test score of control group in post-test.

T : Treatments using mnemonic technique.

Two classes are taken as the investigated classes. One class is for the experimental class that will have some treatments in memorizing tenses by using

mnemonic technique, and another class is for the control class that will have some treatments using conventional technique.

### **b. Sample**

The population of this research is the students of SMPN 19 Bandung. The writer uses two classes as the sample. He uses one class for control group and one class for experimental group. The samples of this research are selected based on the cluster random sampling. The population and the sample should come from the same level of grade and being taught by the same teacher.

### **c. Data Collection**

In collecting the data, the techniques that are used:

- Pre-test

This test is conducted to find out the initial abilities between the two groups.

- Post-test

After giving some treatments and exercises to the experimental group in a certain period of time, post-test carried out by giving the students a certain situation.

- Spread the questioners.

To gain the data for student's perception, the writer use questionnaires.

#### **d. Data Analysis**

In accordance with the method that is used in this paper, the data will be analyzed using T-test formula to find out the degree of students' ability in remembering word changes of past tenses. The significance of the test is analyzed using computer of statistics product and service solution (SPSS 11.0)

In the last of the process of data analysis, we will find the influences of mnemonic technique in memorizing word changing of past tenses by comparing the score improvement of students' achievement between the experimental group and control group.

#### **1.7 Significance of the Research**

The result of the research is expected to give some consideration for the teacher in giving some English lesson which is related to remembering something or in this case in remembering tenses. Furthermore, this research is expected to give some useful things for the next researcher in the same field.

#### **1.8 Clarification of the Terms**

Here is a clarification of the terms used in the title of this research paper:

1. **Mnemonic** According to Ruslan maserjacov (2006) mnemonic is an art of memorization, a set of methods and techniques that ease the memorization process and help increase memory volume by creating artificial association.
2. **Conventional approach** stands for the commonly used teaching technique that has been adapted in Indonesia.

3. **Tenses** are system which we use to refer to times; past, present and future  
Suryanto (2007). Hornby (1989:1324) assumes that tense is any of the forms  
of a verb that may be used to indicate the time of the action or state express  
by the verb.

4. **Improving students' past tense mastery** means to make something better  
(Oxford Pocket Dictionary). In line with statement above, improving  
students' past tense ability is defined as to make the competence or the  
quality of students better than before.

5. **Junior high school**

Junior high school is an institution which provides all or part of secondary  
education. This institution concerns with the students of age 12 and up and  
junior high students are those who had graduated from elementary school.

6. **Experimental research**

Experimental research is the study of testing or finding out whether or not  
two variables have a cause effect relationship. In the research, the dependent  
variables students contribution and independent variable consist of two  
method is called experimental group and another one which in contrary is  
called control group.



## 1.9 Organization of the Paper

The organization of this paper will be as follows:

- Chapter I is introduction. This chapter provides the background of the study. It also mentions various aspects related to the realization of the research.
- Chapter II is theoretical foundation. This chapter explains the theoretical framework that is relevant to the present study. It contains of several theories about mnemonic technique and past tense.
- Chapter III is research methodology. This chapter will discuss the methodology in conducting this research. It includes the preparation stages, instrument, method and procedures of the study.
- Chapter IV research findings and discussions. After conducting the research and the necessary data that are gained, then those findings are analyzed and presented in a systemic way.
- Chapter V conclusion and suggestion. This chapter will draw the important points of the research, whereas the suggestion will bring suggestion benefiting in common.
- This paper finally ends with references, bibliography and appendixes.