

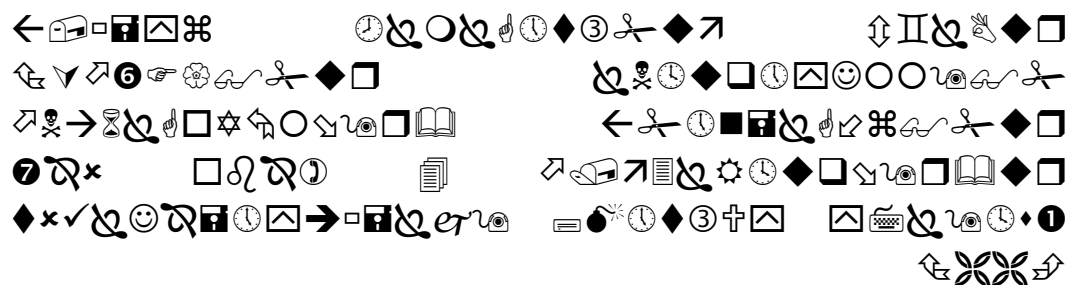
# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### A. Background of Study

Language is one of the communication instruments especially among human being. By using language, we can easily communicate each other. Language is used to deliver messages, express ideas, thoughts, and one's feeling toward others.

Allah the Almighty creates different languages for human as Allah says in the Holy Koran, Ar-Rum verse 22:



It can be understood from this verse that “Allah creates some variations of languages in order to be taught and researched by humans.” (Ali, 1983, p. 1056) There are many different people and nations in the world from the geographical aspects, and of course every nation has different cultures and languages, that is why there are many various languages in the world used for communication.

According to Hornby (1995, p. 662) in his dictionary entitled *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*, “Language is the system of

communication in speech and writing that is used by people in a particular country.” It means people use various kinds of languages based on the used language in their country, because language is the most important part in a social communication.

There are many languages in the world. One of them is English. English is one of the important languages and used by a lot of people around the world. The reasons are: firstly, English functions as a scientific key, because many books and science texts are written in English. Secondly, because English is so widely spoken, it has often been referred to as a global language. While English is not an official language in most countries, it is currently the language most often taught as a foreign language around the world.

In Indonesia, English considered as the first foreign language and taught formally from elementary school up to the university level. Among the institutions mentioned include Senior High School and Islamic Senior High School. In these institutions, English has included into school curriculum and become a compulsory subject which has to be learnt by its students. Moreover, English has become one of the national examination subjects which is used to decide whether students can pass or graduate from school or no. Therefore, all of Senior High School and Islamic Senior High School in Indonesia are now giving great attention to the English teaching and learning process as well as their students’ capability on this subject, in order to they can help students in the National Examination.

In teaching-learning process, Alexander (1975, p. viii) states that “English is intended to develop four skills.” The four skills are speaking, listening, reading, and writing. However, the students not only have to master those four skills, but they also have to master the language element of English that support those skills, they are grammar and vocabulary. As Thornbury (2002, p.14) says “without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed.” It means those elements are the basic for developing four skills above. Also, those elements play important role for mastering English.

One of the most important elements in mastering English is grammar. Penny (1990, p. 4) states grammar may be roughly defined as the way language manipulates and combines words (or bits of words) in order to form longer units of meaning. While, Sinclair et al., (2008, p. 403) defines grammar as the rule of a language, concerning the way that words can be put together in order to make sentences. Meanwhile, the function of grammar of a language is to specify which word sequences are and which are not, in the infinite set of its sequence. (Noel Burton – Roberts, 1998, p. 295) Grammatical patterns of the language are very important for mastery because with the use of incorrect grammar, sentences can become meaningless and the message is unclear. This means that we are not able to communicate effectively and the person who is reading our work may well be quite confused as to our meaning. Meanwhile, when we are using these four skills, the sentences that are decoded and encoded are arranged according to grammatical patterns of language. By mastering grammar, the learners will be able to create the sentences appropriately. Also, if just know about the words and

how to pronounce without know how to arrange it in grammatical form, it does not enough. Through grammatical patters, the interlocutors will easily understand rather than ungrammatical one. Moreover in written language, the writing has to be constructed in grammatically accepted form.

One of the contents of English grammar is question tag. It is part of grammar that has taught to eleventh grade students at MA Al-Islamiyah SMIP 1946 Banjarmasin. It is a basic knowledge of English that should be mastered by them. By learning question tag, the students can enrich their ability in English, especially grammar. Also, it can help the students in improving their speaking skill because the form of question tag is often used in simple short conversations as the writer found in some English textbooks for Senior High School or Islamic Senior High School.

Based on the writers' pre-observation when taught at MA Al-Islamiyah SMIP 1946 Banjarmasin, there were some students who had good ability in English grammar, but the other students had low ability in English grammar especially in using question tag. Question tag became a problem which was faced by the students on mastering English. Some of the students did not understand about the rule of question tag, how to apply it in the sentence because there are a lot of rules and exceptions in question tag. The students also had some difficulties in using question tag, such as to determine the appropriate pronoun and auxiliary in making question tag. Moreover, the student did not know the form of some tenses form such as simple present tense, past tense, perfect tense, etc. in order to

they could not know what is the appropriate question tag in every sentence. Because in making question tag, before they determine the question tag from a sentence, they should know even master the form of tenses. For example, “Lia went to Jakarta yesterday, didn’t she?” The students should know the tense form of that sentence is past tense so that they can determine the appropriate auxiliary or modal for its question tag is “did”. In fact, some eleventh grade students of MA Al-Islamiyah SMIP 1946 Banjarmasin did not know what the form of past tense, present perfect tense and other tenses form well so that they got difficult to determine what the appropriate question tag for every sentence.

Moreover, there are some exceptions in question tag, such as “am not I” changes to be “aren’t I”, positive sentence that contains negative meaning such as sentences that use seldom, never, rarely, hardly ever, few, little, etc. Also, some sentences that use subject like everyone, somebody, nobody, something, nothing, etc. which are each rule of them should be figured out by students in learning question tag. Those exceptions also often made the students were confused in making question tag sentence.

Based on previous information and observation that is explained above, the writer is interested in making a research about the analysis of the students’ ability in using question tag of eleventh grade students at MA Al-Islamiyah SMIP 1946 Banjarmasin academic year 2012/2013.

## **B. Statement of Problem**

An academic thesis requires a problem. The central problem which serves as the starting point of research, which backs up the thesis, has been formulized as follows:

1. How is the students' ability in using question tag of eleventh grade students at MA Al-Islamiyah SMIP 1946 Banjarmasin academic year 2012/2013?
2. What are the most students' common errors in using question tag of eleventh grade students at MA Al-Islamiyah SMIP 1946 Banjarmasin academic year 2012/2013?

## **C. Objective of Study**

Based on the statements of problem above, the objectives of the study are:

1. To know the students' ability in using question tag of eleventh grade students at MA Al-Islamiyah SMIP 1946 Banjarmasin academic year 2012/2013.
2. To know the most students' common errors in using question tag of eleventh grade students at MA Al-Islamiyah SMIP 1946 Banjarmasin academic year 2012/2013.

#### **D. Significance of Study**

The results of this study are expected to give significance as follows:

1. Enriching the writer knowledge and experience in this specific research.
2. As an input to improve and increase the quality of teaching, especially grammar.
3. Giving consideration about some factors that may cause and influence students' failure.
4. Giving information for designing materials in teaching grammar.
5. Providing information and considerations for the future researchers.
6. Enriching literacy sources of IAIN Antasari Banjarmasin.

#### **E. Definition of Key Terms**

There are some terms are used in this research. In order to avoid misinterpretation of them, some terms are defined as follows:

1. Analysis is study of something by examining its parts. (Manser, 2008, p.1)  
In this research analysis especially to know the students' ability in using question tag and students' common errors in using question tag.
2. Ability is the quality of being able to do something or a natural or acquire skill or talent. (Hornby, 1995, p. 1104) Students' ability is meant that the student has skill to do something. In this research especially the ability in using question tag.

3. Using that the writer means is the way to use question tag in English based on grammatical structure.
4. A tag question means a question added at the end of a sentence. Speakers use tag questions chiefly to make sure their information is correct or to seek agreement. (Azar, 1995, p. A15)