

# **CHAPTER I**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **A. Background of Study**

People in this world are not separated with language. For instance, English which becomes a foreign language. Learning a foreign language is an integrated process as Tarigan (1985) stated that “students should develop and master four skills in learning English, they are: listening, speaking, reading and writing”. In other words, the learners may not ignore one or more aspects of those four basic skills for mastering English.

When we learn English, basically we need those four skills to complete communication. The elements of English given in classroom like grammar, vocabulary, spelling and pronunciation are supposed to support the mastery and the development of the four skills above. All these language skills and components are related to each other. We usually learn to listen first, then to speak, then to read, and finally to write. The four language skills are related to each other in two ways: 1. The direction of communication (input or output), 2. The method of communication (spoken or written). The direction of communication means that receptive and productive skills, how we receive and produce sentences in a language. Listening and reading are receptive skills (input), while speaking and writing are productive skills (output). Then, the method of communication means language is delivered in two ways, spoken and written way. Speaking and

reading are delivered by spoken way, while writing is delivered by written way. In all aspects of life, we mainly use spoken communication to talk to other people instead of to write. Therefore, speaking is fundamental to human communication.

According to Harris (1969, p. 9) “speaking is the ability of conveying the message orally”. English Club has defined the meaning of speaking. “Speaking is the productive skill in the oral mode which is deliver language through the mouth. To speak, we create sounds using many parts of our body, including the lungs, vocal tract, vocal chords, tongue, teeth and lips”. It, like the other skills, is more complicated than it seems at first and involves more than just pronouncing the words. Vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar all play a role in effective English communication.

As we know, the goal of language is communication and the aim of speaking in a language context is to promote communicative efficiency. Moreover, success of students in learning language firstly determined by student’s ability in speaking skill because the primary function of language teaching is for interaction. Thus, students should be able to use the language as correctly as possible and with a purpose. They need to see how grammar fits into the speaking skill as William (1999, p. 4) said “the study of grammar is viewed as the bridge to speak and write standard English”. Grammar is also viewed as resource for creating meaning in spoken and written discourse. Good speaking skills is the act of generating words that can be understood by listeners. Suppose, if your speaking ability is full of grammatical errors, your listener will not get across the idea so

easily. Thus, Speaking by grammar is important. Studying grammar rule will certainly help us to speak more accurately.

Grammar as a role of language is one of important component that should be mastered in speaking English, because someone is impossible to speak English correctly without understanding the grammar of the language. According to William (1999, p. 5) “students study grammar in order to understand the terms and certain rules that are supposed to be associated with correctness and acceptable to other people”. Moreover, Standard conversations by using grammar are more appropriate than nonstandard because they are more acceptable to a wider range of people.

According to Lock ((1997, p. 1), “grammar as a set of rules specify all the possible grammatical structures of the language. It also deals with the analysis of sentences”. Sentences are made up of individual words, and these words are divided into some categories. A word like *Guava*, for example, is a noun. A word like *green* is an adjective. A word like *fall* is a verb and so on. Supplies information about, stating or describing what they do, in this instance, verbs. “Verbs are the words we use to signify an action or a state of being” (William, 1999, p.23). They make up the head of the predicate and convey so much information in sentences for example according to the time frame, actions can occur in the past, present, or future (*Heather MacFadyen, Using Verb Tense*) and verbs commonly change in relation to the time an action occurred. We call this feature as *tense*.

Tenses is part of grammar. By understanding the tenses students will be able to speak English correctly. In this case, verb tense have essentials role, the mastery of tenses in speaking English is needed in understanding the communicative meaning, and in order to express a verb in appropriate place and condition by using correct verb tense. It relates to the Holy Qur'an, Al-Isra : 53 as follows:



The verse above explains that Allah instructs people to say the right speech to other people. When conveying information, someone expects the person or people he is addressing to understand precisely what he mean. Since It has a purpose that it will help someone to be able to make the sentences grammatically correct, especially in speaking that used to be understood by other people.

A verb tense is a verb indicate the time of an action, event or condition by changing its form. Through the use of a sequence of tenses in a sentence or in a paragraph, it is possible to indicate the complex temporal relationship of actions, events, and condition. They also tell readers when actions are taking place. Careful and accurate use of tenses are also important to clear our speaking; for instance, when we speak to other people about our past experience in some places.

In accordance with the way we utter the story, the proper verb we use should be past tenses, thus we use the verb that refers to past activities or actions, so the appropriate tenses are past tenses. For example the story will run like this;

*Friends, last holiday, I went to some beautiful places. I found myself very glad about them. One of them was beach. There were many tourists there. At that time, I was sunbathing at the beach when someone came. He asked me about my holiday. He was so friendly and I told that my holiday was awesome. We came a friend. We talked many things. We felt hungry after conversing so long because the time was 2 p.m. Then, we decided to buy some foods at 2.30 p.m but the store had closed. That was fine. We thought another alternative and we found it, that was not too far from the beach. We had been enjoying the moment all day, so we felt happy.*

That example story is about past experience at the beach. The writer tried to represent the four past tenses in that story. Therefore by looking at the story above past tenses here are consist of simple past tense (*I went to some beautiful places*), past progressive tense (*I was sunbathing at the beach when someone came*), past perfect tense (*we decided to buy some foods at 2.30 p.m but the store had closed*) and past perfect progressive tense (*We had been enjoying the moment all day, so we felt happy*).

Talking about university students, they are seen as people who has mastered past tenses properly. They study those materials from Junior high school until university. Then, the students in the University precisely fourth semester students of English Department are expected more capable than junior

and senior high school in mastering tenses as well as applying them in speaking English. The writer assumes that they have learnt and mastered tenses and as consideration that they are now in Speaking I course that past tenses obliged to be applied for telling the past activities and events accordance with the syllabus.

In fact, based on pre-observation the writer found that students of fourth semester in English Department face problem in applying tenses in appropriate way and events. For instance, telling about past events and actions in their speaking. They seem ignore the proper tense which is used to express past activities.

According to the background above, the writer is interested in conducting further research entitled: The Correlation Between Students' Mastery on Past Tenses And Their Ability in Speaking English at The Fourth Semester Of English Department Of IAIN Antasari Academic Year 2012/2013.

## **B. Statement of Problems**

Concerning with the topic, the problem in this research is about correlation between students mastery on past tenses and their ability in speaking English. To understand well the problem, it is formulated as follows:

1. How do the students master past tenses at the fourth semester of English Department of IAIN Antasari Academic Year 2012/2013?
2. How is the students' ability in speaking English?
3. Is there any correlation between the students' mastery on past tenses and their ability in speaking English?

### **C. Objective of Study**

There are the purposes of this research:

1. To know how well the students master past tenses at the fourth semester of English Department of IAIN Antasari Academic Year 2012/2013.
2. To find out the student ability in speaking English.
3. To identify whether or not there is a correlation between students' mastery on past tenses and their ability in speaking English.

### **D. Assumptions**

There are two basic assumptions in this research. They are as follows:

1. Each student has different ability in mastering past tenses.
2. Each student has different ability in speaking English.

### **E. Hypothesis**

Based on the assumptions, then the writer want to verify the Hypothesis (Ho), that is:

“There is no significant correlation between students' mastery on past tenses and their ability in speaking English at the fourth semester of English Department of IAIN Antasari in academic year 2012/2013”

However, since the way of testing is conducted by using statistics, the statement above is changed into Hypothesis (Ha) as follows:

“There is a positive correlation between the students' mastery on past tenses and their ability in speaking English at the fourth semester of English Department of IAIN Antasari in academic year 2012/2013”

## **F. Significance of Study**

1. Remembering that speaking English is pivotal in this modern era. So that, we must understand how to speak English well in line with grammar. Our speech will be understood by others.
2. The study will be useful for the students to see their mastery on past tenses and ability in speaking English. By that, expected that they could improve their grammar mastery as well as their speaking skill in the future.
3. This study will be benefits for the English teacher to know their mastery to both grammar and speaking skill and teach them better.
4. Providing information and considerations for future researchers.

## **G. Definition of Key Terms**

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

1. Correlation : According to Advance American Dictionary (Longman, 2007) Correlation means relationship between two ideas, facts, etc, and the process of correlating two or more things especially when one may be the cause of the other. Suharsimi Arikunto also said that correlation research attempt to determine whether there is any relationship or not and to what extent a relationship between two more variable exist. In this research, the correlation means the variables of students' mastery on past tenses and their ability in speaking English.

2. **Mastery** : Mastery is the great skill/knowledge (Bull, 2010, p. 271).  
To gain control of something is to overcome something, able to control other; dominating, very skillful, and great skill. In this research, it means the ability on tenses which is taught at the fourth semester of IAIN Antasari, that is speaking.
3. **Past Tenses** : Past tenses is one of the forms indicating an activity or situation that began and ended at particular time in the past (Betty, 2005, p. 2). Then tenses here are tenses in the past, it means the students ability to understand and to apply past tenses in speaking English, they are simple past tense, past progressive tense, past perfect tense and past perfect progressive tense.
4. **Speaking** : Speaking means the art of communications and one of four productive skills that must be mastered in learning foreign language. Good speaking skills is the act of generating words that can be understood by listeners.