

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter elaborates on the study's background, research questions, research objectives, research significance, theoretical framework, and previous studies related to the use of the substitution drill in teaching the simple present tense. It sets the stage for the investigation of how this technique contributes to EFL students' mastery of grammar, specifically in the context of seventh-grade learners at SMP YABAFA II Garut.

A. Background of the Study

This research investigates the effectiveness of substitution drills in teaching the simple present tense mastery. Simple present is part of the tenses and is a basic structure in tenses. As Azar (2002) describes, the simple present tense is used to describe habitual actions, general truths, and daily routines, making it fundamental for effective communication in everyday life. On the other hand, the simple present is also easy to understand because it has a base form that simplifies the learning process, especially for beginners, according to Richards and Schmidt (2010). Regarding the simple present, it touches on the understanding use, which is very simple because it just uses basic verbs (verb 1) with minimal changes for third-person singular subjects, as highlighted by Murphy (2019).

Based on the researcher's experience teaching English tenses at YABAFA II Junior High School to grade 7 students, an interesting phenomenon was found that was quite concerning. Almost all students revealed that they felt unmotivated to learn tenses, even though tenses have a crucial role in determining their success in writing skills. This disinterest is evident from the students' low enthusiasm during the learning process, as well as their lack of effort to understand the basic concepts of tenses, which should be the main foundation in the use of English in writing. This condition is a big challenge for teachers because an understanding of tenses is not only important to support writing skills but also a fundamental

component in the structure of the English language as a whole. Therefore, this research seeks to explore the factors that cause students' low motivation and find a more effective and suitable teaching approach to increase their interest in learning tenses.

Moreover, it is helpful to consider research on learning the simple present tense using the substitution drill method to support the motivation for using the simple present tense in the classroom. Several factors contributed to the lack of student motivation in the learning process, especially in their learning of the simple present tense. First, the students found themselves uninterested in learning the simple present tense. Second is the lack of learning tools. Third, the method is still less varied. The effect is that the student's interest in learning decreases, resulting in students' learning tenses (Simtiyah, 2019).

Several factors contribute to this issue. One significant factor is the traditional approach to teaching grammar, where teachers primarily focus on providing explanations and assigning exercises. This method often fails to engage students, making grammar lessons boring and unappealing. As a result, students lose interest and feel uncomfortable with the subject. To address these challenges, creating a more engaging learning environment that fosters interest, motivation, and a deeper understanding of grammar, particularly the Simple Present Tense mastery, is essential. One effective strategy for achieving this is the use of Substitution Drills.

Fakhrunnisa (2019) described a Substitution Drill as a technique where students incorporate vocabulary or phrases into a sentence while conjugating verbs. It consists of replacing one part of a sentence with another. Fakhrunnisa (2019) also highlighted that this method employs various elements such as sentences, pictures, numbers, and names. For instance, a teacher might present an image with a word beneath it. Students repeatedly say the word and then modify the verb or subject according to the tense pattern. This approach helps boost students' confidence and enthusiasm, particularly in mastering the Simple Present Tense.

Maharida (2014) emphasized that Substitution Drills can be an effective classroom technique for practicing a new language. This approach involves the systematic practice of specific syntactic structures, helping students internalize the target language. Substitution Drills utilize simple text structures that are easy for beginners to practice and retain. According to Maharida (2014), the primary purpose of these drills is to identify and correct students' errors in writing or using the target language. Additionally, they can help improve pronunciation, making Substitution Drills a valuable tool for refining language skills and minimizing errors in the target language.

As we know, the substitution drill also has some weaknesses. The first is that the substitution drill is often conducted without regard to meaningful context. As a result, students tend to have difficulty applying the learned language structures to real situations. When context is not provided, learning tends to become less relevant to students' daily lives, thus limiting the development of communicative competence.

The repetitive nature of substitution drills can make students feel bored. When this technique is overused, students may lose interest in learning, which in turn can negatively impact their engagement in the teaching-learning process.

The third, Substitution drills, can encourage students to memorize patterns without really understanding the underlying grammatical rules. As a result, when students are faced with more complex language structures, they often struggle due to a lack of deep understanding of the language mechanism.

The last main focus of the substitution drill is on accuracy and language structure. This neglects the opportunity for students to develop spontaneous and creative speaking skills. The ability to communicate naturally and flexibly is crucial in real-world language use.

This research aims to identify the limits of specific academic contexts and cognitive outcomes. They overlook the integration of gamification and

digital tools, and their impact on speaking and writing skills is underexplored, requiring comprehensive research.

B. Research Questions

Thus, several questions arose regarding the study of the research:

1. How does the EFL students' mastery of the simple present tense before using the substitution drill?
2. How does the EFL students' mastery of the simple present tense after using the substitution drill?
3. How is the substitution drill effectively used in the EFL students' mastery of the simple present tense?

C. Research Objectives

From the research questions above, this study is aimed at obtaining the following purposes:

1. Finding out EFL students' English simple present tense before using the substitution drill.
2. Finding out EFL students' English simple present tense after using the substitution drill.
3. Finding out EFL students' mastery of using the simple present tense before and after using the substitution drill.

D. Research Significance

The research will be helpful theoretically and practically:

1. Theoretical Significances

This research is expected to contribute to knowing that the substitution drill is a good technique in teaching tenses, especially the simple present tense. It supports the theory that repetitive, focused practice can improve grammatical proficiency among EFL learners.

2. Practical Significance

- a. Students

This research is expected to enhance the students' learning of the simple present tense using the substitution drill method.

b. Teachers

This research helps English teachers by providing research-based methods for using the substitution drills, resulting in more engaging and practical sessions.

c. Future Researcher

Future researchers will expect this research to make a valuable contribution to education, especially for developing teaching simple present tense using substitution drills, and it may support or verify previous research.

E. Research Scope

This study explores the effectiveness of the substitution drill technique in teaching simple present tense mastery. The research conducted at SMP YABAFA II in Garut focuses on 25 seventh-grade students selected through purposive sampling. The scope includes assessing students' understanding and applying the simple present tense mastery before and after employing the substitution drill method. By integrating this structured and repetitive approach into grammar instruction, the study aims to evaluate its impact on enhancing students' motivation, participation, and learning outcomes in English grammar.

F. Theoretical Framework

The Simple Present Tense is used for descriptions, definitions, and statements of universal truths. According to Azar (1989), this tense conveys events, perceptions, emotions, or states that consistently occur or exist, whether in the present, past, or future. Aitken (1992) adds that the Simple Present Tense helps express actions that are always, repeatedly, or generally true, as well as actions happening at the moment of speaking without reference to past or future contexts.

According to Azar (1989) and Aitken (1992) in stating that the Simple Present Tense expresses general truths, habitual actions, and consistent states. For example, Sholihin (2023) highlights its use in describing daily activities and facts, the simple present tense plays a crucial role in academic

writing by allowing writers to state general facts and universal truths clearly and precisely. As noted by Walden University's Academic Guides, this tense is commonly used to describe truths that are valid in the past, present, and future and is essential for factual communication in scholarly contexts

When students acquire many terms, it becomes easier to understand the English language. If students have an excellent command of the simple present tense, they can easily express themselves orally and in writing and understand what others say. So, the simple present tense is important as the basic rule for students to use sentences to communicate in their daily lives.

According to Richards and Rodgers (2001), substitution drills are particularly beneficial for teaching grammar because they isolate particular forms, allowing students to become proficient with them before applying them in conversational situations. This systematic approach is consistent with behaviourist learning theories, which stress the importance of reward and repetition in obtaining new abilities. Additionally, substitution exercises are a scaffolded approach to learning since they let students concentrate on certain grammatical elements without being forced to deal with the cognitive strain of creating whole new sentences.

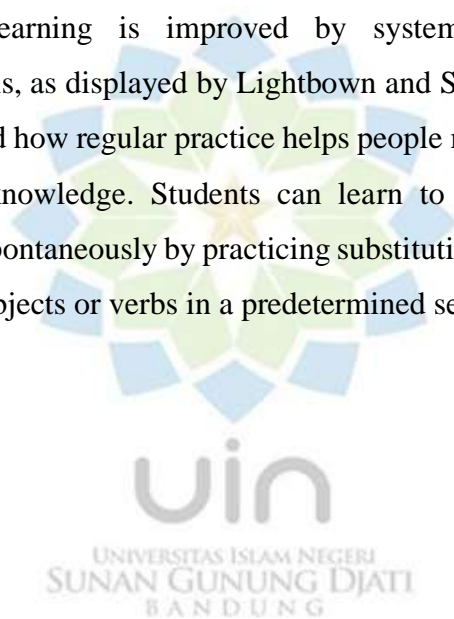
Substitution drills can give advantages in teaching grammar, and this technique helps the teacher to teach Grammar, especially for teaching tenses Simple Present Tense. Substitution drills are a teaching method used to practice a new language. The process begins with the teacher demonstrating a word or sentence for students to repeat. The teacher then replaces one or more keywords or modifies the prompt, prompting students to produce the updated structure.

Studies show that substitution drills are effective for teaching grammar, especially the Simple Present Tense. Lutfiyah (2022) found that these drills help students internalize sentence patterns through repetition. Zumrah and Manurung (2021) also confirmed that substitution drills strengthen grammar skills by providing structured practice.

Richards (1976) promoted the use of structured practice in grammar instruction. He underlined that because substitution drills give students a

clear framework for building sentences, they are helpful in teaching grammar, especially the Simple Present Tense. According to Thornbury (1999), substitution drills provide a targeted method of teaching grammar. It is argued that substitution drills are effective because they combine repetition with variation, allowing students to internalize grammar rules naturally. This is supported by Lutfiyah (2022), who found that students using substitution drills showed improved mastery of the Simple Present Tense through structured repetition. Similarly, Dewifartina (2011) reported that students' grammar scores increased significantly after using these drills in class.

Language learning is improved by systematic repetition using substitution drills, as displayed by Lightbown and Spada (2013). Anderson (1983) described how regular practice helps people move from declarations to procedural knowledge. Students can learn to employ the Imperfect Present Tense spontaneously by practicing substitution drills, which include changing the subjects or verbs in a predetermined sentence structure.



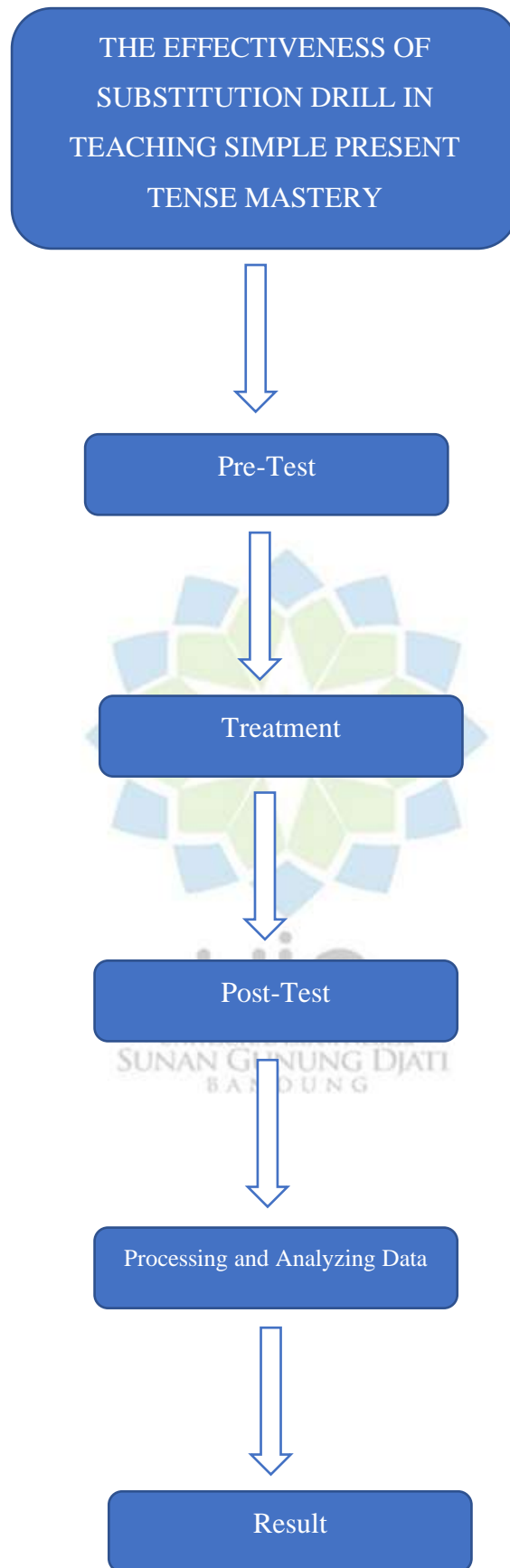


Figure 1. 1 Scheme of Research

G. Previous Study

The researcher has selected some previous studies related to this study. The study, conducted by Lutfiyah (2022), concluded that this method can enhance Students' comprehension skills and sentence structures, increase self-confidence, and improve pronunciation. However, this research focuses on eighth-grade students and does not consider broader language skills, long-term retention, or the use of modern teaching tools.

Maharida (2014) studies that the substitution drill facilitates methodical syntactic structure practice, making it easier for students to remember the target language. In addition, this method also helps students improve their speaking skills with more accurate pronunciation. Jubhari (2018) added that this technique is effective for certain tenses and strengthens students' understanding of various aspects of grammar.

Andries (2019) indicates that the drill technique improves students' English competence and performance. Unfortunately, this research did not explore other aspects like speaking, writing and listening skills and less explored how drill techniques affect students' motivation, confidence or attitude toward grammar learning. There is also a lack of evaluation of the relative advantages of drill techniques over other methods.

According to Andries (2019), the consistent use of drill techniques can build students' confidence in applying grammar in everyday situations. In addition, this technique encourages students to learn actively through structured repetition, thus minimizing errors in constructing sentences in the simple present tense.

The study conducted by Fakhrunisa in the 2019 academic year emphasized the increase in students' motivation and confidence in understanding and using grammar correctly. This study proves that the substitution drill method can effectively improve student learning outcomes, especially in mastering English grammar.

Fakhrunisa's research focuses on the substitution drill method as a solution to students' difficulties in understanding grammar, particularly the

simple present tense. However, the study's limitations include evaluating cognitive outcomes, learning activities, and student responses, and not examining the long-term impact of the method on speaking or writing skills. The need for a more comprehensive approach is highlighted, with further research testing the effectiveness of the method on students from different backgrounds, education levels, and English language abilities.

According to the research mentioned above, the effectiveness of using substitution drills in teaching the simple present tense can help students' ability in English learning. The study underlines the importance of implementing drills as a pedagogical approach to improve students' grammar and overall language skills.

Technology integration is also not discussed in the application of substitution drills. There is an opportunity to explore how technology, such as learning apps or digital platforms, can enhance the effectiveness of this method. The students who are given a substitution drill with the chance to use technology will show more interest than students who do not use technology in using the substitution drill.

This study identifies whether there is a difference in the application of the substitution drill method in teaching the simple present tense. Additionally, the time and methodology used differ from those in previous studies. The sample consists of 25 students from the VII class, selected to participate based on specific criteria relevant to the research's objectives. By examining this particular group, the study aims to provide insights into how the substitution drill method may be applied in this context, which has not been extensively explored in prior studies. Furthermore, the methodology and the timeline employed in this research are distinct from those in earlier investigations, allowing for a fresh perspective on the topic and the potential for new findings in the area of grammar instruction. This study offers a comparative analysis of different approaches, contributing to the existing body of knowledge on effective language teaching strategies."