

DEVELOPING A BOARD GAME FOR EIGHTH GRADERS' WRITING ACTIVITY IN THE FORM OF SIMPLE PAST TENSE: A PRELIMINARY STUDY

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Abstract: *This study aims to develop a board game as instructional media to teach the simple past tense, especially in changing regular and irregular verbs at junior high school students. The board game is named The Tense Tunnel that encourages students to make simple sentences in the form of simple past tense. The board game also will reduce students' fear in learning grammar. This study uses Research and Development (R&D) that is adopted from Latief (2017). The steps of R&D are: 1) Need analysis; 2) Product development; 3) Conduct a formative evaluation of instruction; 4) Revising instruction; 5) Expert validation; 6) First product revision; 7) Try out the product; 8) Revise and publish the product. The try-out product was done by ninth grade students in SMP Negeri 2 Pandaan. The elements of the board game are to make the students do the instructions, collect the different colour of cards, and write simple sentences in the form of simple past tense based on the cards they had. The Tense Tunnel Board Game is expected to provide an instructional media for English teachers in the classroom or can be played independently by students in their home.*

Keywords: *Writing, Simple Past Tense, Board Game*

INTRODUCTION

English is a compulsory subject to be taught in secondary school in Indonesia. Since English lessons in elementary school were abolished, most students learnt basic English in secondary school. In Learning English, there are 4 skills that students must learn, while in teaching English, there are four language skills that should be taught to the students. Those are listening, reading, speaking and writing. Sreena and Iankumaran (2018) proved that those four skills can be categorized into two main skills; those are receptive skills, and productive skills. Listening and reading belong to receptive skills, while speaking and writing belong to productive skills.

There are differences between receptive skills and productive skills. In receptive skills, students only receive the material and comprehend it. Therefore, in receptive skills, students are more passive, whereas in productive skills, students are required to be able to produce the language whether it is spoken or written. Hence, in productive skills students are required to be more active. Students must be taught receptive skills first then productive. This is, however both skills, receptive and productive are important because those skills support each other. Those four skills are essential in teaching and learning English, so students must have good mastery on them in order to be good English learners. As stated above, every skill is very important to be mastered, for example writing skill.

Before heading to the stage of writing sentences, students must learn grammar. Richard Amato (1988) cited by Widiati & Cahyono (2006) stated that as a foreign language, the teaching of writing started at the same time with the introduction of the Grammar Translation Method (GTM). Grammar is the concept of language of how language is put collectively and how it works. More particularly, it is used to learn about wording. Then, grammar has function to create appropriate and understandable sentences. Knowing how to construct and use certain structures makes it viable to talk frequently about types that mean successfully. Without structures, it is hard to make comprehensible sentences.

The problem faced by many students in Indonesia is the fear of making mistakes. Research by Paris and Yussof (2012) proved that one way to overcome the fear of learning grammar is by using games. There are several positive impacts when learning grammar by using board game. One of which is creating students' excitement in learning lessons. In addition, learning grammar by using a board game will reduce the sense of competitiveness towards other friends (Guterres & Soares, 2017).

After learning about grammar, students must know how to make a good sentence. There are four kinds of sentences in English. Those are simple sentences, compound sentences, complex sentences, and compound-complex sentences (Oshima, A., and Hogue, A.: 2007). However, in this study the researcher focuses on simple sentences.

There are 3 kinds of simple sentences that should be learned by the students. Those are positive sentences, negative sentences, and question or interrogative sentences. First, the formula of making a positive sentence is subject, verb, object, and adverb (place and time). Second, the formula of making a negative sentence is subject, verb, not, object, and adverb (place and time). Third, the formula of making a question or interrogative sentence is verb, subject, object, adverb (place and time) and question mark. In making sentences, there are several tenses that must be considered. Therefore, the use of verbs in every tense will not be the same.

In junior high school students must have mastered several tenses, among others, simple present tense, present continuous tense, simple past tense, past continuous, future continuous tense, present perfect tense (*Permendikbud No. 37 Tahun 2018*). Simple present tense is a verb tense that is used in general. It expresses events or situations that exist every day repeatedly. While present continuous tense is a verb tense that is used to express something that happened in the past but still in progress at the present time, and probably will continue. Simple past tense is a verb tense that is used to talk about something that has already happened or things that happened before now and finished before now. While past continuous tense is a verb that is used to express something that happened in the past but still in progress at a particular time in the past. Future continuous tense is a verb that is used to express something that will happen in progress at a particular time in the future. While present perfect tense is a verb that expresses something before now, the exact time is not important (Azar, Betty S. and Hagen. Stacy A:2009). Nevertheless, the researcher wants to focus on simple past tense in this study.

Widiati & Cahyono (2006) stated that students in Indonesia still have difficulty in English writing activities. According to Wallace (2004), EFL (English as a foreign language) students often face difficulties in various English competencies, such as ideas development, lack of vocabulary, and grammatical structures, etc. Those aspects in writing cannot be learned at the same time. Based on the information obtained in the observation on the English teaching and learning process conducted in eighth graders, the researcher found similar problems discussed previously by most of the eighth graders. The ability of the eighth grader students in writing activity is not satisfying yet. Accordingly, these problems commonly happened in eighth grade students of SMP Negeri 2 Pandaan. During an observation conducted by the researcher at the beginning of the study, 23 out of 34 the eighth grader students in SMP Negeri 2 Pandaan had difficulties in changing verb to verb₂ or changing infinitive into simple past.

Based on the explanation above, English teachers needed to find the solution to solve the students' problems in writing. There are several alternatives that can be used by teachers to improve students' achievement in writing. One of them is the use of media, such as board game. The board game that will be used by researchers in this study can increase student motivation in writing. Rofiqoh (2016) stated that the game is not only used as students' productive skills media, but also to increase student motivation. In addition, by using board games as instructional media, students can be directly involved in learning (Smaldino, Russell, & Heinich, 2004). Besides, boredom is one of the obstacles that every English teacher must be faced in teaching writing activities. So the researcher makes a board game that aims to overcome problems towards students in a more fun way.

According to the English teacher, the ideal number of groupings to be used in the class was 4-5 students. This is, however the game was developed to be used for four students maximum due to practical consideration. Advantages that can be obtained by the players include while playing this game are being able to improve English skills in terms of writing, being able to practice speaking / communicating in front of people by using English, being able to hone creativity and imagination in making simple sentences, being able to improve vocabulary, and can be played by child or even teenager independently, and another opportunity is to add more types of tenses to the board game that can be used for other grades. Another advantage is that students will have difficulty copying the answers of other friends in their groups because each card they took will be different.

For those issues, the researcher decided to develop the conventional board game because it is easy to apply in classes. It is a good chance to conduct research to see how board game works with writing activities in the development of students to change the infinitive into simple past in a fun way.

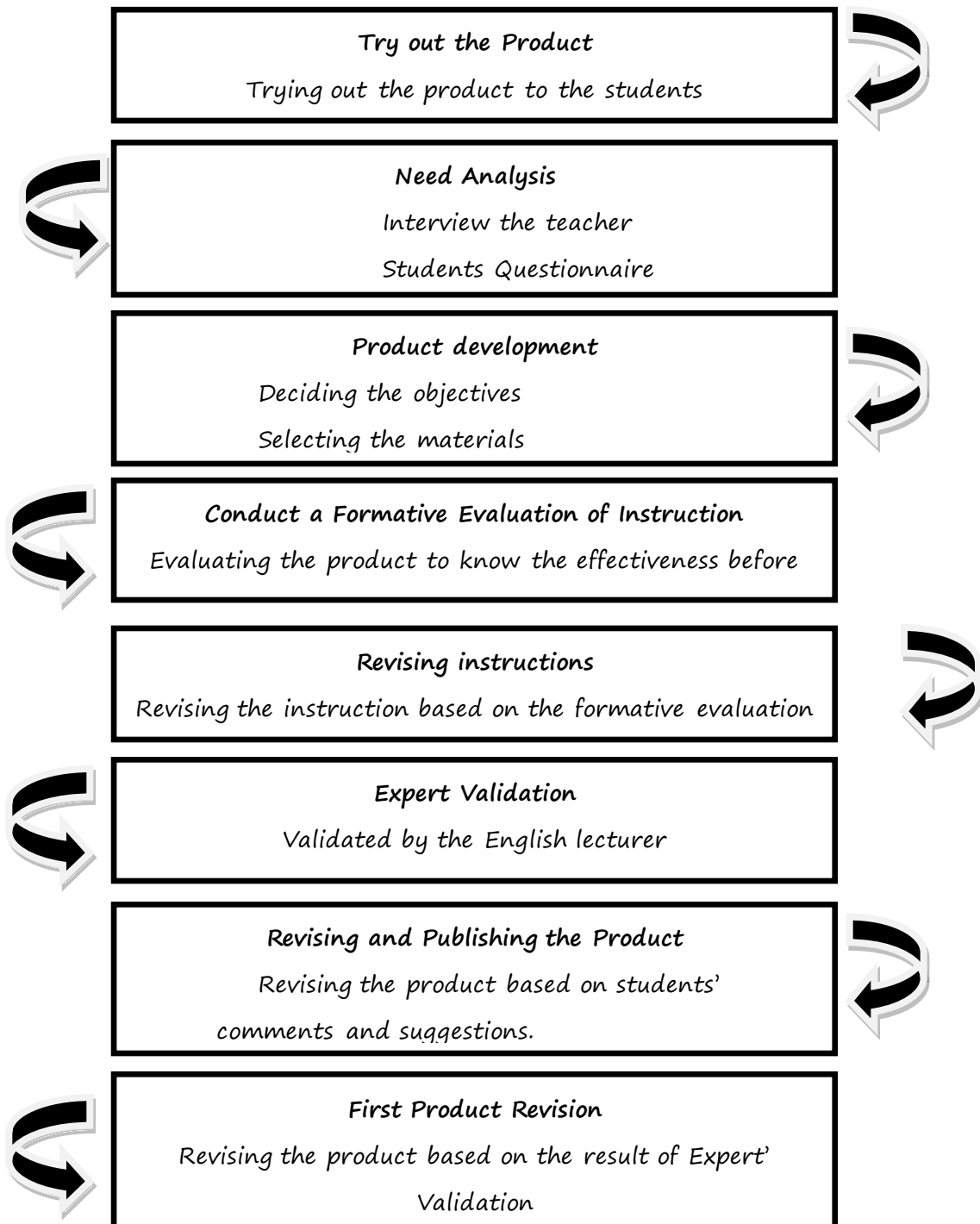


Figure 2.1 the R & D Procedure Adopted from Latief (2017)

METHOD

This study used Research and Development (R&D) that is adopted from Latief (2017). The steps of R&D are: 1) Need analysis; 2) Product development; 3) Conduct a formative evaluation of instruction; 4) Revising instruction; 5) Expert validation; 6) First product revision; 7) Try out the product; 8) Revise and publish the product. Those stages are shown in figure 2.1.

The first step in R&D is need analysis. In the need analysis the researcher visited SMP Negeri 2 Pandaan to conduct classroom observation and to collect data by interviewing the English teacher and giving the students' questionnaire to fill. The subject of this study is eighth grader students. The questionnaire used close-ended questions. All the questions covered their problem in writing activity. While students were filling the questionnaire, the researcher interviewed the English teacher to obtain more detailed information related to the strategies and techniques used in teaching writing. The researcher used an interview guideline which consists of 9 questions in total to be answered. The interview guidelines were used in Indonesia in order to make it more comprehensible and avoid teacher' misunderstanding and misconception.

After conducting a need analysis, the second step is product development. In this step the researcher was deciding topics and illustrations for the product. The researcher selected basic competence 3.10 and 4.10 about simple past tense or is a verb tense that is used to talk about something that has already happened or things that happened before now and finished before now. The researcher used the result of the several sources that have been obtained. The researcher made a product based on the result of the need analysis. The problem that had to be solved was how to develop the ideas. So in developing the product, the researcher made a board game based on the students' problem. After a board game sheet, papers, characters, mystery cards, verb cards, punishment cards, a dice and instruction guideline, and etc. on the board game were ready, the researcher started to develop the packaging of the board game.

The third step is conducting a formative evaluation of instruction. In this stage the researcher asked the college students, English Language Teaching (ELT) 2016 to try out the board game before asking validation of the board game to the expert. English Language Teaching students were chosen because they have learned writing simple sentences and simple past tense. They could be asked whether the board game is effective for eighth grader students to learn writing simple sentences in the form of simple past tense.

The fourth step is revising the instruction. In this stage, the result of formative evaluation is the instruction guidelines of the board game. The instruction is not clear enough for eighth grader students. Based on that point, the researcher revised the product.

The fifth step is expert validation. In the expert validation stage, the product was reviewed and evaluated by an expert. The expert is the lecturer from the English Department, State University of Malang who has experience in teaching Instructional Media and Activities in Language Teaching (IMALT). The rubric is used from Smaldino, et al. 2004. The rubric of product validation used the instruments which include the design, content, language, and pedagogy criteria to be evaluated. The rubric used close-ended questions to be answered. The answer uses 'Yes' and 'No' to simplify the answer. Moreover, there are column comments and suggestions in the rubric product validation.

The sixth stage is the first product revision. In this stage, the researcher revised the board game based on the expert validator's feedback. It included the comments and suggestions in order to decide which aspects that were really needed to be revised before try-out the product to the students in SMP Negeri 2 Pandaan.

The seventh stage is try-out the product. In this stage, after doing the first revision based on the expert validator's feedback, the researcher try-out the product to the ninth grader students in SMP Negeri 2 Pandaan. The researcher used 9A as the subject. It consisted of 36 students, 16 male and 20 female students who were willing to be subject to product try-out. This step was aimed to examine the properness of whether the product was suitable to be used by the students based on their needs and

interest. However, due to conditions that the eighth grader students learn the simple past tense in second semester which made it impossible to try the product for eighth graders. So the researcher tried the board game on ninth grade students which they have already learned about simple past tense.

Another reason is because the board game can be a medium for distributing the basic competence of narrative text. After trying out the product, the researcher gave the students a questionnaire to be filled. The questionnaire used the online form. The questionnaire was designed to obtain information about students' comments and suggestions. Next, the researcher also asked the English teacher to fill out the questionnaire product. The questions of the questionnaire consisted of 8 close-ended questions in total to be answered. It covered 5 aspects. Those are the difficulty of operating the board game, the suitable content for the students, board game' benefits, and student personal experiences, also teacher's comments and suggestions.

The eight step is revising and publishing the product. In revising and publishing the product is the last stage in R&D. The researcher analyzed the students' and teacher's feedback which aspects that were really needed to be revised based on the comments and suggestions had been filled out by them.

The final product of this study was named "Let's Explore the Tense Tunnel". This product was designed to help eighth grader students in writing activities, especially in simple past tense. In this product, students who had been playing games can improve speaking in English indirectly, even though this game was made to focus on improving their writing in English about making simple sentences in the form of simple past tense. In this product the researcher also used verbs that were relevant to everyday life. The verb that was made in this product was, would be used by the player to make a sentence later.

The sentences would be made by the player and consist of different types. For those who have collected five different colors of the cards, they must make sentences in positive form which means that in each sentence contains a subject, verb, object, and adverb (period of time). However, for those who are the last, they must take one punishment card before starting to write simple sentences in the form of simple past tense.

In the punishment card, there are 4 types of instructions. The first one is the students must make simple positive sentences in the form of simple past tense based on all cards they got. The second one is the students must make negative sentences in the form of simple past tense based on all cards they got. The third one is the students must make simple interrogative sentences yes/no questions in the form of simple past tense based on all cards they got. The last one is the students must make simple interrogative sentences 5W+H questions in the form of simple past tense based on all cards they got.

FINDINGS

In the need analysis, the researcher tried to find the students' problem by giving the questionnaires. The results of the questionnaires are presented in the following tables.

Table 1. Students' Problem in Simple Past Tense

Item	What problems do you usually face when learning simple past tense?
Understand the formula of Simple Past Tense (%)	8.8
Construct a positive sentence of Simple Past Tense (%)	5.9
Construct a negative sentence of Simple Past Tense (%)	8.8
Construct a question sentence of Simple Past Tense (%)	-
Differentiate the use of adjective and verb (%)	11.8
Change from V1 to V2 (%)	58.8
Use of "to be" in sentence (did/was/were) (%)	5.9

Use of adverb (period of time) (%)	-
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Table 1 showed that 8.8% students chose understanding the formula of Simple Past Tense as their problems when learning simple past tense. About 5.9% students chose constructing a positive sentence of simple past tense as their problems when learning simple past tense. Then about 8.8% students chose constructing a negative sentence of simple past tense as their problems when learning simple past tense. Next, about 11.8% students chose differentiating the use of adjectives and verbs as their problems when learning simple past tense. Then about 58.8% students chose changing from infinitive to past tense as their problems when learning simple past tense. The last one, about 5.9% students chose the use of 'to be' in sentences (did/was/were) as their problems when learning simple past tense. The following table is about students' problem in productive skills.

Table 2. Students' Problem in Productive Skills

Item	In Written (%)	In Spoken (%)
When answering questions, Do you feel confident answering in written or spoken?	97	3

Table 2 showed that 97% students chose "written" for feeling confident when answering the question. Then about 3% of students chose "spoken" for feeling confident when answering the question. The following table is about students' problems in writing English.

Table 3. Students' Problems in Writing English

Item	Obtain Some Ideas (%)	Develop Ideas (%)	Arrange Ideas (%)	Choose the Right Vocabulary (%)	Grammatically Error (%)
What difficulties do you face in writing English?	-	5.8	11.8	61.8	20.6

Table 3 showed that 5.8% students chose developing ideas in difficulties writing English. About 11.8% students chose arranging ideas in difficulties writing English. Then 61.8% students chose the right vocabulary in difficulties writing English. About 20.6% of the students chose grammatically error in difficulties writing English. However, based on the students' problem, students have problems in changing from infinitive to past tense and choose the right vocabulary. The following table is about students' enhancement in writing.

Table 4. Students' Enhancement in Writing

Item	Yes, I do (%)	No, I don't (%)
Do you think your writing skills using simple past tense need to be improved?	100	-

Based on table 4 100% students chose 'Yes' that their writing skills using simple past tense need to be improved.

After the interview with the English teacher, the students have problems in changing infinitive into past tense, especially regular and irregular verbs. The teacher agreed if the Simple Past tense material used games to increase students' enthusiasm for learning. However, she also said that not every basic competence can be used in games.

After conducting the need analysis, the researcher conducted a formative evaluation of instruction. In this stage the researcher asked the college students, English Language Teaching (ELT)

2016 to try out the board game before asking validation of the board game to the expert. Then, the researcher revised the instruction guidelines of the board game. The instruction is not clear enough for eighth grader students. Based on that point, the researcher revised the product.

After revising the instruction, the product was reviewed and evaluated by an expert. The expert is the lecturer from the English Department, State University of Malang who has experience in teaching Instructional Media and Activities in Language Teaching (IMALT). The rubric is used from Smaldino, et al. 2004. The rubric of product validation used the instruments which include the design, content, language, and pedagogy criteria to be evaluated. The rubric used close-ended questions to be answered. The answer uses 'Yes' and 'No' to simplify the answer. Moreover, there are column comments and suggestions in the rubric product validation.

After being reviewed and evaluated by an expert validator, the researcher revised the board game based on the expert validator's feedback. It included the comments and suggestions in order to decide which aspects that were really needed to be revised before try-out the product to the students in SMP Negeri 2 Pandaan.

After doing the first revision based on the expert validator's feedback, the researcher tried-out the product to the ninth grader students in SMP Negeri 2 Pandaan. The researcher used 9A as the subject. It consisted of 36 students, 16 male and 20 female students who were willing to be subject to product try-out. This step was aimed to examine the properness of whether the product was suitable to be used by the students based on their needs and interest. However, due to conditions that the eighth grader students learn the simple past tense in second semester which made it impossible to try the product for eighth graders. So the researcher tried the board game on ninth grade students which they have already learned about simple past tense.

After trying out the product, the researcher gave questionnaires to the students to be answered. The following table is about design and organization of the board game.

Table 5. Design and Organization of the Board game

Item	Yes (%)	No (%)
Do you think the design of board game is attractive?	97.2	2.8
Do you think the design of the board game is appropriate for 8th and 9th grade of junior high school students?	100	-
Do you think the language used in board game is easy to understand?	97.2	2.8

For more specific, 97.2% students agreed that the design of the board game is attractive. Then 100% students agreed that the design of the board game is appropriate for 8th and 9th grade of junior high school students. About 97.2% students agreed that the language use in the board game is easy to understand. The following table is about the content of the board game.

Table 6. Content of the Board Game

Item	Yes (%)	No (%)
Do you think the difficulty levels of the rules are suitable for eighth and ninth graders?	94.4	5.6

For more specific, 94.4% students agreed that the difficulty levels of the rules are suitable for eighth and ninth graders. The following table is about the benefits of board game.

Table 7. Beneficial of the Board Game

Item	Yes (%)	No (%)
Do you think the board game can help you	94.4	5.6

to understand Simple Past Tense better?

For more specific, 94.4% students agreed that the board game can help you to understand Simple Past Tense better. The following table is about board game operations.

Table 8. Board Game Operations

Item	Yes (%)	No (%)
Do you think the board game is easy to play?	94.4	5.6

For more specific, 94.4% students agreed that the board game is easy to play. The following table is about students' personal experience.

Table 9. Students' Personal Experience

Item	Yes (%)	No (%)
Do you think the board game is interesting to be played?	97.2	2.8
Do you think learning Simple Past Tense is more fun by using board games?	97.2	2.8
Do you think your English in terms of speaking improves better after playing board game?	80.6	19.4
Do you think your English in terms of writing simple sentences in the form of simple past tense improves better after playing board game?	94.4	5.6
Do you think your knowledge about changing V1 to V2 improves better after playing board game?	88.9	11.1

More specifically, 97.2% students agreed that the board game is interesting to play. Then 97.2% students agreed that learning Simple Past Tense is more fun by using board game. Moreover, about 80.6% of students agreed that their English in terms of speaking improved after playing board game. 94.4% of students agreed their English in terms of writing simple sentences in the form of simple past tense improved better after playing board game. Then 88.9% of students agreed that their knowledge about changing V1 to V2 improved better after playing board game. However, about 19.4% of students disagreed that their English in terms of speaking improved after playing board game. From this, the teacher has to watch the students to make it sure that the students talk by using English.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study is to develop a board game, which helps to encourage students to change the regular and irregular verbs into simple past tense. Also it encourages students to make simple sentences in the form of simple past tense. The product is developed based on basic competence of Curriculum 2013.

In this study, the researcher used material, technique, and media to deliver knowledge for students whether they achieve the objective of learning while playing or not. Students feel interested in playing the board game and wanted to try 'The Tense Tunnel' board game independently at home. The findings are comparable to the previous study conducted by Paris and Yusof (2012). They found that by using board game as a supplement to textbooks, students improve better by using board game because it helps students remember the grammar rules easily.

The strength of the product is that the students can improve their vocabulary especially in regular

and irregular verbs. The second strength is the students are able to improve their English speaking. The last one is, the students would have difficulty copying the answers of other friends in their groups because each card they took will be different. Also this board game is equipped with several mysterious cards that make learning even more fun. Unfortunately, the product still has some weaknesses. The main board game was printed from paper so when the students used the board game, the paper would leave creases.

After trying out the product to the students, they showed positive responses. Those students enjoyed learning simple past tense with the board game, then the students thought that they got new vocabularies, and students thought that their simple past tense improved better than before, especially in writing activities. Not only the students, but also the teacher said that the product was easy to operate, and suitable for the eighth grader students. Hence, the students and the teacher accepted the product to be an instructional media to improve simple past tense.

CONCLUSIONS

The TENSE TUNNEL board game is an instructional medium that has an essential part of learning writing simple past tense. The board game encourages students to change the regular and irregular verbs into simple past tense. Also students are asked to make simple sentences in the form of simple past tense in an enjoyable way. Besides, the board game can help students to improve their English writing.

Through this board game, students had to collect five cards of different colors in which each color has a different regular and irregular verb. After they collected the cards, the students made simple sentences in the form of simple past tense based on the verb cards they got. For the first three students who already collected five different cards must make simple positive sentences in the form of simple past tense. While the fourth or last students must take the punishment card and do the instruction behind it. Moreover, this board game reduces cheating between students because every card is different.

In this research, students feel more comfortable while playing the board game. Students made conversation with their friends by using English freely. They were not afraid to make a mistake while speaking English with their friends. However, due to the limited vocabulary, some students used Indonesian to communicate with each other.

Finally, the board game encourages students to change the regular and irregular verbs then make it into simple sentences in the form of simple past tense. Also, the board game has positive impacts on students; to boost students' motivation to learn independently, and dare to make a mistake while speaking English.

SUGGESTIONS

This part covers some recommendations for the teachers who are going to use the instructional media in teaching writing and the future researchers who are interested in developing a board game. For students, they can use the board game independently outside or inside the classroom. They can learn not only changing the regular and irregular verbs into past tense, but also learn how to make simple sentences. By using THE TENSE TUNNEL board game, the students can test themselves how much vocabulary they have known. For English teachers, THE TENSE TUNNEL board game can be used as an alternative way to teach the students about simple past tense, especially in writing simple sentences. Also, by using this board game teachers can test the students whether they understand about simple past tense or not. On the other hand, teachers can develop different materials and objectives by using THE TENSE TUNNEL board game as a reference. For other researchers, they can develop board game as instructional media for the development of different tenses based on the Basic Competence. However, future researchers should select carefully the vocabulary used for the level of students and needs because English is a foreign language which is not used for students' daily communication in Indonesia.

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