# A STUDY ON THE ABILITY OF USING QUESTION TAGS BY THE SECOND SEMESTER STUDENTS OF ENGLISH STUDY PROGRAM FKIP UNIVERSITAS RIAU

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***Abstract:*** *This research was aimed at finding out the ability of using question tags by the second semester students of English Study Program FKIP Universitas Riau. The population of this research was the second semester students of English Study Program FKIP Univeristas Riau. The number of the sample was 37 students selected by using cluster random sampling technique. The instrument to collect the data was multiple choice test items with 50 questions. The data were analyzed by classifying them into five levels of ability: very poor, poor, mediocre, good and excellent. The finding of this study tells that there are 12 students (32,43%) are in excellent level, 21 students (56,75%) are good in level, 3 students (8,10%)are in mediocre level and 1 student (2,70%) is in poor level. Based on the finding of the research, it was found that the students' ability of using question tags by the second semester students of English Study Program FKIP Universitas Riau was in good level with the mean score was 72. The implication of this research is that the second semester students of English Study Program FKIP Univeritas Riau have a good ability in using question tags.*

***Key Words:*** *Students' ability, Study, Question Tags*

# STUDI TENTANG KEMAMPUAN MAHASISWA PENDIDIKAN BAHASA INGGRIS SEMESTER DUA DALAM MENGGUNAKAN TANDA TANYA DI FKIP UNIVERSITAS RIAU

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**Abstrak:** Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui kemampuan penggunaan question tag oleh mahasiswa semester dua Program Studi Bahasa Inggris FKIP Universitas Riau. Populasi dalam penelitian ini adalah mahasiswa semester dua Program Studi Bahasa Inggris FKIP Univeristas Riau. Jumlah sampel adalah 37 siswa yang dipilih dengan menggunakan teknik cluster random sampling. Instrumen untuk mengumpulkan data adalah soal tes pilihan ganda dengan 50 soal. Data di analisis dengan mengklasifikasikan ke dalam lima tingkat kemampuan: sangat buruk, buruk, sedang, baik dan sangat baik. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa terdapat 12 siswa (32,43%) berada pada level sangat baik, 21 siswa (56,75%) berada pada level baik, 3 siswa (8,10%) berada pada level sedang dan 1 siswa (2,70%) berada pada tingkat kurang baik. Berdasarkan hasil penelitian diketahui bahwa kemampuan penggunaan question tag oleh mahasiswa semester dua Program Studi Bahasa Inggris FKIP Universitas Riau berada pada tingkat yang baik dengan nilai rata-rata 72. Implikasi dari penelitian ini adalah bahwa mahasiswa semester dua Program Studi Bahasa Inggris FKIP Univeritas Riau memiliki kemampuan yang baik dalam menggunakan question tag.

**Kata Kunci:** Kemampuan, Kajian, Tanda Tanya

**INTRODUCTION**

Grammar is one of the language aspects which are taught to every language learners. Grammar improves students' communication skills. Being able to communicate more effectively will help us build stronger relationships and effectively communicate our ideas to those around us. According to Coghil and Magendanz (2003) grammar is a structured set of rules in a language. The statement above shows that grammar is a basic knowledge to learn about English sentence structure and also keeps an important role in learning and understanding the English language. Sometimes students who learn English find many problems, especially with grammar.

One aspect that we need to learn to become proficient in English is grammar. Grammar will help students understand the structure of sentences and construct good sentences. It will be easier for them to communicate in everyday life by understanding grammar, therefore they will be able to use appropriate sentences either orally or writing. To do so, some of the things students must learn are word classification and how to use words correctly in a sentence. Interrogative sentences are one of the most fundamental types of sentences. Hurford (1994 in Afrita 2019) states that an interrogative sentence is a type of sentence typically used to ask question. It is used in oral communication to ensure that information is communicated clearly. The process of constructing questions in order to obtain information from someone is known as questioning. While responding to someone's question is a process.

Question can be divided into three major classes according to the types of answer that expect (Qirk, 1973), they are yes-no question (that expect only affirmation or rejection), W-H question (that expect a reply supplying an item of information), and question tag (that invite the listener to respond the question). From the three types of questions, the researcher wants to discuss about question tag. The question tag is one of the most important English sentence patterns of speech in people's communication. One of the grammar rules that students should understand is the question tag. Byrd and Benson (2001) say that questions tag are formed by adding a "tag" to a statement. It means that a question is added in statements or sentence usually at the end. Question tags do not use question word forms such as who, what, when, where, why, whose, how, and so on. Tag questions are typically used to seek confirmation or agreement on a statement or sentence. Soegeng (2005) said, when a statement is positive, the tag is negative. And when a statement is negative, the tag is positive. For example: You are student, aren't you? (positive statement) or she can't drive a car, can she? (negative statement). In Indonesia, these tags are known as "kalimat pengukuh.". "Ya kan?" or "bukan?" are frequently used phrases.

In the English Study Program, the material about question tag is learned in the first semester. The purpose of learning question tag as one of the system of a language in order to interact with other people. This is very useful. Considering, we often talk to ask information or agreement with other people in daily communication. Using question tag can help a person keep the conversation going

because it can encourage a response from the listener. The students are expected to apply question tags in this situation so that they are able to make the conversation goes smoothly. However, some students neglect question tags since it looks easy even though it is useful in conversation. This research can't be considered as easy for students before conducting the test. After conducting the test, the writer will find whether the students mastered the topics or not. Those are the reasons why the writer is motivated to conduct a research entitled: A Study on the Ability of Using Question Tags by the Second Semester Students of English Study Program FKIP Universitas Riau.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research is a descriptive research. There is only one variable that describes the ability of using question tags by the second semester students of English Study Program FKIP Universitas Riau. Gay, Mills, and Peter (2009) states that descriptive research is the collection and analyses of numerical data to describe, explain, predict or control phenomena of interest. According to Gall (2005), descriptive research involves the collection and analysis of quantitative data in order to develop a specific description of a sample's behavior or personal characteristics. Descriptive research includes observation studies, correlation research, developmental designs and survey research. All of these approaches yield quantitative information that can be summarized through statistical analysis.

The population of this study is the second semester students of English Study Program FKIP Universitas Riau in the academic year 2021/2022, which consists of 3 classes. The total member of the population is 119 students. Class A consists of 41 students, class B consists of 40 students and class C consists of 37 students. According Arikunto (2002) population is the entire subject is being researched that have one or more attributes of interest.

Arikunto (2002) states that sample is a small part of the population that will be researched. In order to decide the sample, the writer used cluster random sampling technique. Cluster sampling selects group, not individuals. All the members of selected groups have similar characteristic. According to Gay & Airasian, (2000), cluster sampling usually involves less time, less expense and is generally convenient. The techniques in deciding the sample are by using lotteries. The writer divided the lotteries into 3 categories (sample, try out, and none). In doing this research, the writer used cluster random sampling by using lottery system.

In collecting the data, the writer used only one type of the test that is multiple-choice test. The test consists of 50 items to real test and 62 items for try out. The writer distributed a set of the test to the sample and try out by using Google form. The link of Google form was sent from WhatsApp online application to get the faster and easier process of answering the questions from the question tags test. Nitko (1983) defined test as a systematic procedure for observing and describing one or more characteristics of person with the aid of either a numerical or category system. The test focusing on simple present tense, simple past tense, present perfect and modal auxiliaries.

After distributing the test to the students by link Google Form to the class who will be chosen as the samples, the writer analyzes the data in order to know their ability in using question tags. Furthermore, the level of the student's score in using question tags can be classified into five levels of mastery. The classification can be seen in this following table:

**Table 1 The Classification of Students' Ability**

| Classification Score | Ability Level |
|---|---|
| 81 – 100 | Excellent |
| 61 – 80 | Good |
| 41 – 60 | Mediocre |
| 21 – 40 | Poor |
| 0 -20 | Very Poor |

(Harris (1974 in Afrita 2019))

## RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

**Research Findings**

The specific objective of this research is to find out the ability of using question tags by the second semester students of English Study Program FKIP Universitas Riau. The writer classified the questions in some components that help students in using question tags. There are simple present tense, simple past tense, simple perfect tense, and modal auxiliaries of question tags. The result of the research can be described as follows:

**Table 2 Percentage of the Student' Ability in Using Question Tag**

| No | Range Score | Frequency | Percentage % | Ability | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 81-100 | 12 | 32.43 | Excellent | |
| 2 | 61-80 | 21 | 56.75 | Good | |
| 3 | 41-60 | 3 | 8.10 | Mediocre | 72 |
| 4 | 21-40 | 1 | 2.70 | Poor | |
| 5 | 0-20 | - | - | Very Poor | |
| | Total | 37 | 100 | | |

Table 2 shows that 12 students (32,43%) are using question tags in excellent level, 21 students (56,75%) are in good level, 3 students (8,10%) are in mediocre level, 1 student (2,70%) is in poor level and no one student to get very poor level. In short, the mean score of the students in using question tag is 72. The ability of the second semester students of the English Study Program FKIP Universitas Riau in using question tags can be described as good. It means that most of the students are classified into a good level.

**Table 3 Students' Scores and Their Level of Ability in Simple Present Tense**

| No | Range Score | Frequency | Percentage % | Ability | Mean |
|----|-------------|-----------|--------------|-----------|------|
| 1 | 81-100 | 8 | 21.62 | Excellent | |
| 2 | 61-80 | 15 | 40.54 | Good | |
| 3 | 41-60 | 10 | 27.02 | Mediocre | 66 |
| 4 | 21-40 | 3 | 8.10 | Poor | |
| 5 | 0-20 | 1 | 2.70 | Very Poor | |
| | Total | 37 | 100 | | |

Table 3 shows in simple present tense forms of question tag, 8 students (21,62%) are in excellent level, 15 students (40,54%) are in good level, 10 students (27,02%) are in mediocre level, 3 students (8,10%) are in poor level and 1 student (2,70%) is in very poor level in this test. The researcher finds out that the students' mean score in simple present tense is 66. It can be concluded that the ability of the second semester students of English Study Program FKIP Universitas Riau in using simple present tense forms of question tags is in good level.

**Table 4 Students' Scores and Their Level of Ability in Simple Past Tense**

| No | Range Score | Frequency | Percentage % | Ability | Mean |
|----|-------------|-----------|--------------|-----------|------|
| 1 | 81-100 | 11 | 29.72 | Excellent | |
| 2 | 61-80 | 13 | 35.13 | Good | |
| 3 | 41-60 | 10 | 27.02 | Mediocre | 71 |
| 4 | 21-40 | 3 | 8.10 | Poor | |
| 5 | 0-20 | - | - | Very Poor | |
| | Total | 37 | 100 | | |

Table 4 shows that in simple past tense forms of question tag, 11 students (29,72%) are in excellent level, 13 students (35,13%) are in good level, 10 students (27,02%) are in mediocre level, 3 students (8,10%) are in poor level and (no one student get very poor level in this test. From the data above, the researcher can find out that the students' mean score in simple past tense in 71. It can be concluded that the students' the ability in using simple past tense forms of question tag is in good level.

**Table 5 Students' Scores and Their Level of Ability in Present Perfect Tense**

| No | Range Score | Frequency | Percentage % | Ability | Mean |
|----|-------------|-----------|--------------|-----------|------|
| 1 | 81-100 | 13 | 35.13 | Excellent | |
| 2 | 61-80 | 9 | 24.32 | Good | |
| 3 | 41-60 | 15 | 40.54 | Mediocre | 70 |
| 4 | 21-40 | - | - | Poor | |
| 5 | 0-20 | - | - | Very Poor | |
| | Total | 37 | 100 | | |

Table 5 shows in present perfect tense forms of question tag, 13 students (35,13%) are in excellent level, 9 students (24,32%) in good level, 15 students (40,54%) are in mediocre level, 3 students (8.10%) are in poor level and no student are in very poor level. The researcher finds out that the students' mean score in present perfect tense is in 70. It can be concluded that the students' ability in present perfect tense forms of question tag is in good level.

**Table 6 Students' Scores and Their Level of Ability in Modal Auxiliaries**

| No | Range Score | Frequency | Percentage % | Ability | Mean |
|----|-------------|-----------|--------------|---------|------|
| 1 | 81-100 | 21 | 56,75 | Excellent | |
| 2 | 61-80 | 25 | 67.56 | Good | |
| 3 | 41-60 | - | - | Mediocre | 80 |
| 4 | 21-40 | 1 | 2.70 | Poor | |
| 5 | 0-20 | - | - | Very Poor | |
| | Total | 37 | 100 | | |

Table 6 shows that in modal auxiliaries forms of question tag, 21 students (56,75%) are in excellent level, 25 students (67,56%) are in good level, 1 student (2,70%) is in poor level and no one student get mediocre and very poor level in this component test from using question tag. From the data above, the researcher finds out that the students' mean score is in 80 that means good level.

**Table 7 The Classification of Students' Mean Score in Using Question Tag**

| No | The Classification of the Questions | Mean Score | Level of Ability |
|----|-------------------------------------|------------|------------------|
| 1 | Simple Present Tense | 66 | Good |
| 2 | Simple Past Tense | 71 | Good |
| 3 | Present Perfect Tense | 70 | Good |
| 4 | Modal Auxiliaries | 80 | Good |
| | Mean Score | 72 | Good |

Table 7 shows that of the 4 classifications of question tag, the mean score for simple present tense (66) is classified into good, the mean score of simple past tense (71) is classified into good, the mean score of present perfect tense (70) is classified into good again and the mean score from modal auxiliaries (80) is classified into good. Besides that, the students' mean score of the overall ability in using question tag is good. According to all of the data, it can be inferred that the ability in using question tags by the second semester students of English Study Program FKIP Universitas Riau is in good level.

**B. Discussion**

In using question tag test, the mean score of the second semester students of English Study Program FKIP Universitas Riau in using question tags is 72 and was analyzed by Heaton (1975) formula. Besides that, 12 students were in excellent

level. Then, there were 21 students categorized into good level, 3 students were categorize into mediocre level, 1 student was categorized into poor level and no one student get very poor level in using question tag. It means that they classified into had good ability in using question tag. The students can do effort in understanding the use of question tag by learning the rules.

In this research, the students' ability from each question tag can be described as follows: all components are at the good level. The students get the highest score when they use question tag with Simple Past Tense, Present Perfect Tense and Modal Auxiliaries. The average score for this component of the question tag test is 80. Students have the lowest question tag scores in Simple Present Tense. The average score was 66, indicating a high level of ability. Although the average score in the use of question tags in data is good, the scores in this component are lower than the other three components in this question tag test.

In this case, they got the lowest score in simple present tense because question tags in simple present tense are more difficult to identify. Students must know whether the subject is singular/plural, regular/irregular in order to decide whether to use 'do/does'. Item numbers 10, 11, 12, 34 and 45 are the most difficult for the students. They are in the present tense, the past tense, and the present perfect. When negative words are used in question tags, it indicates that the student is having difficulty using the question tag.

To the context of this study, the finding reflects on Swan's theory (1980). He states that there are 9 rules of question tags. Those are:
1. If the statement is positive, the question tag must be negative.
2. If the statement is negative, the question tag must be positive.
3. The tense of the tag is the same as the tense of the statement.
4. To be and modal auxiliary, are repeated in question tags in contrary form.
5. If the verb of the statements is "am", the auxiliary in the tag is "aren't".
6. In imperative sentence, the tag question used are "will you, can't you, won't you, shall we".
7. "There" can be a subject in question tag.
8. Non-negative tags are used after sentences containing negative words like "never, no, nobody, hardly".
9. Nothing, nobody, somebody, etc.
   a. We use "it" in question tags refer to "nothing".
   b. We use "they" to refer "nobody, somebody & everybody (and no one, etc.)".

He says that people who master the rules will be easier in using question tags. The finding of this study shows the students 'ability in using question tag. Because they understand the rules of question tags, the students can answer the test and get a good mark.

This research findings are also in line with the previous researcher from Kartika Dwi (2010) with the title A Study on the Ability of the First Year Students of English Study Program of FKIP Riau University in Identifying Question Tags. In this related study also showed the lowest score is the ability of students is simple present tense.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Conclusion

After conducting research entitled *A Study on the Ability of Using Question Tag by the Second Semester Student of English Study Program FKIP Universitas Riau,* the conclusions can be drawn. The writer gets the score of the students from the results of the test. The score of students falls into good level. It can be concluded that of the 37 students, 12 students were in excellent level, 21 students were in good level, 3 students were in mediocre level, 1 student is in poor level and no one student get very poor level in this case.

The students' ability to use question tag has a mean score of 72. It means that the ability of using question tags by the second semester students of English Study Program FKIP Universitas Riau is in good level. On the other words, there is difference frequency between students ability in using question tags (in present, past and present perfect tense). People may think that past tense is more difficult but from this research, the writer found the reverse. It is because the forms of past tense and present perfect tense are simpler to identify. So, the students are not too difficult to using question tag in those kind of tenses.

### Recommendations

Based on the result of the research 72% of the students' ability in using question tags is in good level. Although the students' scores are above average, they should learn and review the study again, particularly about question tags with negative words. So, in this thesis the writer would like to propose some recommendations as follow: first, the students they will be provided information about there are students' ability in learning English, especially in using question tags. Question tag are in important part of everyday communication and perform for many different functions. For example, they can be used to get a conversation started or keep it moving, they can be soften an order to do something or they can be a more polite way to request information. With this information, students will know how far their ability in using question tags, so it can motivate them to improve their understanding and knowledge. Second, for the researcher it will help the research in improving the knowledge about the ability students in using question tags. It will be valuable experiences for the preparation to be a good English teacher. Third, for the readers it is hoped that this study will be helpful for readers to improve their English knowledge, especially about question tags.

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