



Students' Difficulty In Learning Tenses

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ABSTRAK

Bahasa Inggris adalah bahasa internasional yang digunakan oleh banyak negara luar. Di Indonesia penggunaan bahasa Inggris sangat minim peminatnya dikarenakan banyak dari kalangan masyarakat khususnya para pelajar enggan untuk mempelajari bahasa Inggris. Untuk dapat mempelajari bahasa Inggris, perlu lah mengetahui pelajaran dasar-dasar supaya memudahkan untuk memahami pelajaran yang dimaksud. Tenses adalah salah satu contoh bentuk dasar pelajaran dalam bahasa Inggris. Melalui tenses, kita dapat membedakan bentuk-bentuk kalimat dengan menyesuaikan waktu yang ditetapkan. Penggunaan tenses juga menyesuaikan dengan waktu ketika digunakan dalam percakapan. Dengan memahami tenses sebagai dasar penguasaan bahasa Inggris, maka akan memudahkan dalam berkomunikasi dengan warga negara asing, memudahkan dalam mendapatkan informasi yang berkaitan dengan pendidikan yang berbahasa Inggris sehingga wawasan yang kita dapat bukan hanya berasal dari bahasa negara sendiri saja melainkan kita memiliki wawasan dari luar negeri. Penguasaan dalam pembelajaran tenses sangat sedikit yang benar-benar faham. Hal ini dikarenakan dari segi penyampaian materi yang kurang menarik, sehingga peserta didik juga enggan memberikan minat mereka terhadap bahasa Inggris. Untuk itu, kami mengumpulkan beberapa mahasiswa untuk mengetahui sejauh

mana pemahaman tentang tenses. Melakukan sebuah diskusi akan membuat teman-teman sebaya lebih mengerti tentang pembelajaran yang kurang dipahami saat dikelas. Melalui teman sebaya memungkinkan untuk mendapatkan pemahaman yang lebih efisien.

ABSTRACT

English is an international language used by many foreign countries. In Indonesia, there is very little interest in the use of English because many people, especially students, are reluctant to learn English. To be able to learn English, you need to know the basics to make it easier to understand the lesson in question. Tenses are an example of the basic forms of learning in English. Through tenses, we can differentiate sentence forms by adjusting the time specified. The use of tenses also adapts to the time when used in conversation. By understanding tenses as the basis for mastering English, it will make it easier to communicate with foreign citizens, make it easier to get information related to education in English so that the insight we gain does not only come from our own country's language but we have insight from abroad. Very few people really understand mastery in learning tenses. This is because the delivery of the material is less interesting, so students are also reluctant to express their interest in English. For this reason, we gathered several students to find out the extent of their understanding of tenses. Having a discussion will make your peers understand more about learning that is not understood in class. Through peers it is possible to gain more efficient understanding.

PENDAHULUAN

Education is one of the supporting aspects in human life which is a very basic need. Educational institutions in Indonesia are divided into three groups, namely formal education, non-formal education and informal education. These three groups of education are educational pathways that complement and enrich each other (Law No. 20/2003 on the National Education system). Through various types of educational pathways, a human being will be able to gain a lot of knowledge that is very useful and can be applied in his social life. Education in the era of globalisation must be balanced with seeking or gaining knowledge as widely as possible and from a variety of reading sources. Reading sources are also expected to be found in various languages, not sticking to everyday language. Reading material found in foreign languages is one of the means that greatly facilitates the addition of insights and learning from foreign

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sources. A German tohoh named Johann Wolfgang Von stated that “*Those who know nothing about foreign languages, they know nothing about their own*” (Handayani, 2016).

The above statement means that learning a foreign language is an interest and a necessity apart from learning the national language of one's own country. One of the foreign languages familiar in educational institutions in Indonesia is English. English is a widely used language, known as a *lingua franca* (Tamrin & Yanti, 2019). English has useful feedback in learning, which can affect various aspects, both social and academic (Kartakusumah et al., 2022).

Being able to master English is an added value for a person in competing and will greatly facilitate in getting opportunities to find jobs, overseas scholarships, and international friendships. In Indonesia, English is a foreign language that can be said to be little mastered and studied and applied in everyday life, but English turns out to occupy a very important need in everyday life in society, especially in educational institutions. English is one of the subjects taught to students starting from elementary schools to senior high schools and even in universities. The government in Indonesia began to introduce English as early as possible for primary level learners (SD/MI) in the 1994 Basic Education Curriculum.

Learning English can also be linked to communication learning. Communication learning can be applied both orally and in writing. This language is a means of oral communication, where the target of this oral communication is the interlocutor who can understand the culture of the perpetrator (Husein & Dewi, 2019). By understanding the interlocutor, it will open the way in taking new information and knowledge. When the learning process takes place, a variety of learning types are needed to get the interest of students. This is a challenge for an English teacher to get students' interest in learning. So, it requires continuous innovation from teachers so that students can be actively involved during the teaching and learning process. Currently, the lack of ability to understand and master English is one of the obstacles for students in accessing various information obtained in English.

To be able to master English both orally and in writing, it is necessary to learn the basics of English first. If you already understand and master the basics, it will be easier to form more complex sentences. Starting from learning basic word forms, sentences, pronunciation to writing (Manik et al., 2021). One of the ways to understand English is by learning tenses (Sari & Hartanto, 2016).

Tenses are part of English grammar and one of the most important components of language. It is undeniable that through mastering tenses, students will be able to communicate well in accordance with the use of time in effective English. There are so many forms of tenses that students have difficulty in differentiating their usage and usage. The students have difficulty because they do not find the materials in Indonesian lessons, because in Indonesian language use there is no provision that if the time statement used is different, then the verb used will also vary according to the use of time. These different changes in verbs make it very difficult for students to know how to use them. This difficulty causes learners to be lazy or reluctant to understand English language learning. Students' motivation and enthusiasm for learning decreases because the delivery method is too monotonous and boring. Some students are bored in learning tenses because the learning methods and techniques used are not interesting and challenging. The method used by the teacher so far is only the lecture method and doing exercise questions.

RESEARCH METHOD

The research carried out is qualitative research, where researchers go directly to the field and conduct interviews with sources. In this research, we conducted in the environment of campus II UINSU against peer students, namely several students from MPI 2 class. After the interview was completed, we did not forget to take some documentation to complement the accuracy of this data. The purpose of this research is to analyse students' difficulties in learning tenses and being able to distinguish the types of tenses.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

English must be actively mastered both orally and in writing. English is a means of global communication, it is not impossible that the development of increasingly advanced technology requires us to be more active in responding to global information flows as an asset to meet market needs. To master English properly and correctly must go through a teaching and learning process that emphasises the training aspect so that it will be actively involved in expressing opinions freely according to existing conditions. Basically, English mastery consists of listening, writing, speaking, and reading. Through good and correct English language skills, it will open up many opportunities, especially in the field of education. Learning English is quite complicated if the basic understanding is not good, but when we really understand from the basics then learning English is much easier. One example of a basic form in learning English is learning tenses.

Tenses are an important element that is fundamental to learning English. The concept of tenses in English is the method we use to refer to time in the past, present and future. Tenses are verb-based methods used to indicate the time of an action or state related to the time being spoken about. The time used can be past, present and future.

Tenses based on events are divided into 4 parts namely *Simple, Continuous, Perfect Continuous, and Perfect*. While tenses based on time are also divided into 4 parts namely *Past, Past Future, Present, and Future*. After looking at the tenses based on the form, there are 16 tenses obtained after the division, namely *Simple Present Tense, Present Continuous Tense, Present Perfect Tense, Present Perfect Continuous Tense, Simple Past Tense, Past Continuous Tense, Past Perfect Tense, Past Perfect Continuous Tense, Future Continuous Tense, Simple Future Tense, Future Perfect Continuous Tense, Future Perfect Tense, Past Future Continuous Tense, Simple Past Future Tense, Past Future Perfect Continuous Tense, Past Future Perfect Tense*. In the research conducted, we only took 4 forms of Tenses namely Present Perfect Tense, Present Continuous Tense, Past Continuous Tense, and Simple Past Tense.

After conducting interviews with the students involved, it turned out that they experienced a little confusion to distinguish between the four tenses. At first, they thought that there are not as many tenses as mentioned, because not all tenses are used in daily life. To know the basics, we gave some definitions to the students to better understand the parts of tenses.

1. Simple Past Tense

According to Hornby (1975:85), Simple Past Tense is a tense used to describe an activity or condition that occurred in the past, without showing a time attachment to the present. Simple past tense is a verb form used to show activities or situations that occurred at a certain time in the past. The past tense is used as an action that has been completed in the past, and to stop an ongoing action in the past. The simple past shows that an activity began and ended at a specific time in the past (Azar, Betty Schramfer, 2002:27). Then, in one form of tenses, it is divided into 3 types of sentences, namely positive, negative, and interrogative sentences. Positive sentences are sentences commonly used in English statements. This sentence is also commonly used in everyday speech. Negative sentences are sentences that are commonly used to express untruths or state an action that has not been done by the perpetrator. While an intogative sentence is a sentence used to make a question about the statement that has been conveyed. Formula:

(+) S + Verb 2 + Obj.

(-) S + Didn't + Verb 1 + Obj.

(?) Did + S + Verb 1 + Obj.

Example:

- She drank a glass of milk one hours ago (*dia telah meminum segelas susu satu jam yang lalu*).
- She didn't drink a glass of milk one hours ago (*dia tidak minum segelas susu satu jam yang lalu*).
- Did she drink a glass of milk one hours ago? (*apakah dia minum segelas susu satu jam yang lalu?*).

2. Present Continuous Tense

This tense is a verb form used to describe an ongoing event. It is used to describe events that are taking place at the time of speaking, about a period around the present, and to talk about changes in situations (Rahmah, 2010). Formula:

(+) S + Tobe + V.ing + Obj.

(-) S + Tobe + Not + V.ing + Obj.

(?) Tobe + S + V.ing + Obj.

Example:

- We are studying english right now (*kami sedang belajar bahasa inggris sekarang*).
- We are not studying english right now (*kami tidak sedang belajar bahasa inggris sekarang*).
- Are we studying english right now? (*apakah kami sedang belajar bahasa inggris sekarang?*).

3. Present Perfect Tense

This tense describes an action that took place in the past and continues into the present, an unfinished action, or an action that has just been completed. (Rahmah, 2010). More simply, this present perfect tense leads to the impact of an action that has been done and its effects can be felt until now. Formula:

(+) S + Have/Has + Verb 3 + Obj.

(-) S + Have/Has + Not + Verb 3 + Obj.

(?) Have/Has + S + Verb 3 + Obj.

Example:

- She has gone to Ambon (*dia pergi ke Ambon*).
- She has not gone to Ambon (*dia tidak pergi ke Ambon*).
- Has she gone to the Ambon? (*apakah dia pergi ke Ambon?*).

4. Past Continuous Tense

This tense is also known as the past progressive tense, which refers to a situation that happened in the past when another event was also taking place. This past continuous tense can be used when describing an activity that took place in the past, setting the background in a story, explaining two activities that are happening simultaneously, and clarifying the time of an activity. Formula:

(+) S + Was/Were + V.ing + Obj.

(-) S + Was/Were + Not + V.ing + Obj.

(?) Was/Were + S + V.ing + Obj.

Example:

- They were playing football in the yard while mother was cooking a soup (*mereka sedang bermain bola kaki di lapangan ketika ibu sedang memasak sop*).
- They were not playing football in the yard while mother was cooking a soup (*mereka tidak sedang bermain bola kaki di lapangan ketika ibu sedang memasak sop*).
- Were they playing football in the yard while mother was cooking a soup? (*Apakah mereka sedang bermain bola kaki di lapangan ketika ibu sedang memasak sop?*).

After seeing the definition above, the students began to understand the 4 tenses. The use of these tenses is also adjusted to the time when the interlocutor is inviting communication. Of the four tenses used, Present Continuous Tense is the most commonly used form of tenses, because the form of tenses is to express activities that are currently taking place. It is easier to understand because it simply uses a verb whose ending is added with the word -ing as a marker that the activity being done is actually being done in the present. Students also agree that the use of these tenses is very easy to understand and easy to remember, and the formula for using the sentences is also not complicated.

Then, the difference with Present Perfect Tense is in the time used. This tense shows work that has been done in the past and continues to the present. So it can be concluded that this tense is a type of activity that continues from the past (in the sense that it is not far away) to the present. It means that these activities are close together so that the time distance is very close and can be one unit. To distinguish with Present Continuous Tense is simply by looking at the word in the middle. Continuous means the present and Perfect means explaining the time more perfectly, from the past to the present. Then, Simple Present Tense is even easier to understand. This tense focuses on the past only, because this tense describes events that have taken place in the past and have nothing to do with the present. This tense really shows events that have happened in the past. Finally, the Past Continuous Tense. This form of tense can be used in several conditions, one of which is to explain past events and is accompanied by activities that are taking place at that very moment. Both tenses focus on the past, but this tense is associated with events that happened at the same time as the activity being described. More simply, this tense is used to beautify the language by adding activities that are happening at that very moment.

Through our discussion, it turns out that students understand more about some of these tenses, because through discussion with their own language friends are considered easier to understand. These four forms of tenses are very easy to understand and their use is also quite often applied in everyday life so it does not make forgetting in its application.

CONCLUSIONS

Understanding tenses is essential for basic learning in English. After fully mastering tenses, it is necessary to apply them in daily life. Through small communication, it will make the lessons learnt easy to remember and will not be easily forgotten. Mastery of the forms of tenses needs to be improved so that it is not difficult to distinguish them starting from similar sentence forms, and the most important thing is to master the tenses formula. Formulas are very helpful in distinguishing tenses that are very similar. Through formulas, it will be answered where the difference in the form of a sentence is.

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