

THE ROLE OF PRESENT TENSES IN ENGLISH GRAMMAR

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This study aims to find out the common use of present tenses in the students' writings and the difficulties they faced in using those tenses. The students under concern were the first-semester students of the academic year 2016 taking "English 1" subject at Bali STIKOM Regular Program. This study used the theory of English Grammar and theory of Contrastive Analysis. The English Grammar theory was used to identify and analyze the use of present tenses in the students' sentences, while the theory of contrastive analysis was used to analyze the students' difficulties in using those tenses in their writings. The result of the analysis shows that of the 34 student writings under analysis, 77.4% use simple present tense, 10% present perfect tense, 6.9% present continuous tense, and 5.7% present perfect continuous tense. There are some difficulties faced when using the present tenses. The students seem to ignore the function of the adverb as the basis for deciding the proper forms of the verbs to be used.

The students also find it difficult to add „-s“ or „-es“ accordingly to the infinitive verbs to show agreement with the subjects of the sentences being constructed. In addition, they still show lack of understanding of the function of each type of the present tenses.

Keywords: *Sentence, Present Tenses*

I. INTRODUCTION

English is an international language used by the people around the world to communicate. This language has become very important to master in order to go international. English is taught in almost all countries in the world. It is started from the elementary school up to the university levels of learning.

The subject of English is given to the students of the first semester in STIKOM Bali. Although they have learned it in their previous schools, the fact is that many of them are still confused in using it, particularly in English writing. This phenomenon can be seen from their middle test results. It seems that it is very difficult for them to use the various types of present tenses in their writings. According to Shaw, (1986:, p.110),

“Tense shows the time of the action or state being expressed by a verb”. Since there is no specific rule about the time that affects the verb form in the students' first language system (Indonesian), it therefore becomes very difficult for them to construct correct English sentences. Besides that, there are also irregular and regular verbs in English that have to be considered in constructing a sentence, especially ones using present tenses.

Based on the above phenomenon, this study was focused on the use of the tenses, particularly the present tenses by the students.

II. MATERIALS AND METHOD

2.1 Research Design

Since this study is to identify and analyze the problems related to the students' assignment, it is then recognized as an experimental study. This study will apply the quantitative and qualitative methods. Bogdan and Taylor (Moleong, 2007:3) mention that qualitative methodology is a research procedure that produces descriptive oral or written data from the people and from the attitude of the person who is observed. In this study, the quantitative method is used to analyze the errors found in the students' assignment. The qualitative method is used to give the description to the students' errors already previously presented in the table.

2.2 TIME AND PLACE OF THE RESEARCH

This research took place in Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Komputer (STIKOM) Bali at Jalan Raya Puputan Renon No. 86 Denpasar, Bali. STIKOM Bali is the first computer learning institution in Denpasar. It was established in 2002 and has strong commitment to provide highly qualified teaching and learning programs. This study took about 4 months. The output is expected to have the necessary mastery of the English language knowledge and skills simultaneously.

2.3 DATA SOURCE

Data source is the subject from which the data is taken. The data in this study is primary data directly obtained from the result of the writing assignment of the students' intake of the academic year 2016 in Regular Program of STIKOM Bali. The total number of the students for this batch is 34 students. All students' writings in their middle test were used as the data analyzed in this study.

2.4 METHOD AND TECHNIQUE OF COLLECTING DATA

In this study, the method of documentation was used. Note-taking technique was used in recording the types of sentences in the students' descriptive writings whereby to find the common use of the present tenses in their writings. The recorded data was classified based on the types of tenses and presented in the form of table.

2.5 TECHNIQUE OF ANALYZING DATA

The sequence of the data analysis was done as follows. Firstly, the students' writings were evaluated to identify the tenses in use. Secondly, the sentences were classified according to the types of tenses. Thirdly, from the findings, the common types of tenses that the students used in their writings were determined in this study.

The last step was to analyze the students' difficulties in using the present tenses based on their writings.

As shown in the table 3.5, Present Tenses Observed in Students' Writing sample includes; (1) Simple Present Tenses, (2) Present Continuous Tense, (3) Present Perfect, and (4) Present Perfect Continuous. Simple Present is used to talk about the things in general, to say something happening all the time or regularly, and also to talk about a timetable. Present Continuous Tense is used to talk about something which is happening at or around the time of speaking. Present Perfect is used to talk about an activity that happened in the past but has a connection with the present time. Present Perfect Continuous is used to talk about an action which began in the past and has recently stopped or has just stopped.

Among the Present Tenses, the type of Simple Present takes the highest frequency (79.7%). Its predominance is significant compared to the other types of present tense, namely to the present perfect tense (9%), the present continuous tense (6.2%), and the present perfect continuous tense (5.1%). The frequency of each category is given based on the data found in the sample writings.

3.2.1 SIMPLE PRESENT TENSE

There are five out of thirty four students who made the most frequent use of the present simple tense. One of their writings is analyzed below for illustration.

WRITING 33: HANDPHONE AS PRIMARY DEVICE FOR US

1. Long time ago, when you wanted to talk with your friend, parent, family, and another person, you must come to their house and meet them there.
2. When you have a pen pal, you must write and send a letter to your pen pal.
3. Maybe you think there is another way to contact another person without meet or send a letter, but what is the solution?
4. Don't worry because you just need one device and you can solve that problem, and the answer is "handphone".
5. So, tell that to your Mom so you can contact any person as you want.
6. And of course your Mom will tell someone "He has not written letter since a month ago".

Besides that, the use of verb „stay“ is also not appropriate since the subject is a thing. It is better to replace the word „stay“ with „keep“ so that the sentence becomes, „His smartphone has been being kept in the safest place“. While in sentences number nine and twelve, there are no errors and mistakes.