

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

A. Rationale

The national development of Indonesia is directed toward the improvement of the quality of human resources as a means to achieve a better life. The development of knowledge and technology happens extremely fast, calling for skills in language, because with language knowledge is conveyed and interpreted. People use language as media in interacting in international society, such as, in international conferences, trading, activities, and culture, it is in harmony with Allah’s command in the verse below:



The verse says that people must know one another. The variation of languages forces people to learn these languages because learning the language is one way to know each other. Nowadays, to be able to communicate with other countries is crucial. Thus, learning foreign language is not only a kind of necessary, but also a necessity.

An aspect of this improvement is the mastery of a foreign language. The need for foreign language mastery especially English is felt to be more important. For that reason, the government tries to apply English education at every level in the school. It involves the four language skills as well as structure, vocabulary, pronunciation and spelling are.

Grammar is essentials as the rules least students have to master not only vocabulary but also grammar well. The words which are uttered by someone who are learning the language will not be meaningful without having them arranged in a certain grammatical pattern appropriately. In this case, tenses have essentials role, because they tell readers about when actions are taking place. Careful and accurate use of tenses is important to clear writing and spoken. For instance, if the verbs in a passage refer to actions occurring at past actions, then the past tense is definitely needed to be used.

Grammar as the one of the language element is essential for the mastery of English because students' ability in grammar supports the four English skills. Even nowadays, some people assume that as long as people understand what they say they don't have to follow the rules, but we have to face the reality that using English incorrectly can lead us to the misunderstanding. Perhaps in an informal case, we can communicate however we like, but in a formal case, especially in written form we have to follow the rules.

English, like other languages has its own unique characteristics. It has rules that are quite different from other languages. English has unique ways of expressing the time, such as, in expressing the past, present and future, and each include specific rules for use. Tenses show the time when an action happen at now, past or future.

Present Continuous Tense expresses an activity that is in progress (is occurring, is happening) right now. The event is in progress at the time the speaker is saying the sentence. The event began in the past, is in progress now, and will probably continue into the future.¹ Based on the curriculum, tenses learned in junior high school are simple future tense, present continuous tense, present perfect tense and present perfect continuous tense.

Present Continuous Tense is one of basic tense of sixteen tenses in English that must be mastered by the students of the seventh-grade, because by mastering this tense, the students will be able to use the statement in an affirmative form, negative form and interrogative form in continuous or present time. When the students understand it well early on, it will help them in mastering other tenses related to continuous time, either past form or past future form. This is because these two past forms must be learned based on the understanding of the present continuous tense. Therefore, the students must master this tense before continuing to other tenses (especially past form and past future form).

¹ Betty Schampfer Azar, *Fundamental English Grammar*, (New Jersey:1992), P.3.

Based on the pre observation that the writer conducted in junior high school by students to change the Present Continuous Tense into its affirmative, negative and interrogative form, it is found that there are many mistakes when the students construct it. Theoretically, when the students understand the Present Continuous, they must also be able to construct them into affirmative, negative, and interrogative form.

According to the explanation above, it is very important to conduct research focusing on the students' issues in constructing the Present Continuous Tense. For this reason, the writer attempts to research that aspect and poured into a research entitle: **“The Difficulties in Learning Present Continuous Tense at the Seventh-Grade Students of SMPN 2 Panyipatan Academic Year 2010/2011”**.

Then, to avoid any misinterpretation regarding the title adopted in this research, the writer feels necessary to explain some forms as follows:

1. Difficulty is the trouble or effort that something involves; the state or quality of being difficult.² It refers to situation, condition, or issue that is still unresolved.
2. Learning is a change in human disposition or capacity which persists over a period time, and which is not simply ascribable to processes of growth.³ Moreover, Harold Spear points out that learning is how we use our five senses optimally like observing, reading, imitating, trying

² A S Hornby, *Oxford: Advance Learner's Dictionary Of Current English*, (Oxford University Press, 1995) P.

³ Abd. Rohman Abror, *Psikologi Pendidikan*, (Yogyakarta: PT Tiara Wacana, 1993), P.67

something, listening and following the direction.⁴ So from all of the opinions above, we can conclude that learning makes a change to the actual and potential behavior of the people caused by new talent or skill that they have got from the intended efforts.

3. Present Continuous Tense is commonly used in English for actions happening right now, or in near the future.
4. The seventh grade students here are the students who study at SMPN 2 Panyipatan academic year 2010/2011. It is located at Abdul Kadir Batakan street, Panyipatan, Pelaihari.

Therefore, the title above means research that intends to describe the difficulties in learning the Present Continuous Tense by the students. So that we can find what are students' difficulties in learning it.

B. Problem Limitation

This research states a problem limitation in order not to be far from what will be described, the problem is what are the students' difficulties in learning the Present Continuous Tense of the seventh-grade students at SMPN 2 Panyipatan?

⁴ Suryabrata, *Psikologi Pendidikan*, (Jakarta: Rajawali, 1990), p.247

C. Reasons for Choosing the Title

Based on the background, there are certain reasons for choosing this title:

1. Grammar is important to master should in English because it supports four skills, and it helps student to construct a grammatically correct utterance and also in writing.
2. Based on the curriculum, Present Continuous Tense is one of tenses learned in the seventh-grade. It also helps students to understand other tenses related to continuous time, either past form or past future form. This is because these two past forms must be learned based on the understanding of the present continuous tense.
3. Based on Pre observation, the writer found many mistakes are made by students in constructing the Present Continuous Tense.

D. The Purposes of the Research

The purpose of this research is to better understand the students' difficulties in learning Present Continuous Tense of the seventh-grade students at SMPN 2 Panyipatan.

E. The Significance of the Research

This research is expected to:

1. Obtain the difficulties in learning the Present Continuous Tense at SMPN 2 Panyipatan in order to develop the students' language mastery, especially about tenses.
2. Obtain feedback for English teachers in order to develop the teaching and learning process, especially regarding tenses.
3. To enrich the writer's knowledge and experience about the related field, and also to benefits future researchers who want to conduct work on the same or similar study.
4. The result of this research will add to the collection and substance of literature in the field of education, especially in State Institute for Islamic Studies Antasari Banjarmasin.

F. Organization of Writing

This research consists of five chapters, they systematically arranged in this thesis as follows:

The first chapter contains the introduction, which is consist of background, problem limitation, reasons for choosing the title, research purposes, research significance, assumption and hypothesis, and organization of writing.

The second chapter contains the theoretical review of related literature, which discusses about definition of learning, definition of Present Continuous Tense and its usage.

The third chapter contains the research method, which is consist of subject and object of research, data and sources of data, techniques of the data collecting, design measurement, basic framework of research , techniques of data processing and analysis and research procedure.

The fourth chapter contains the report of research result, which consists of general description of research location, description of data presentation and data analysis

The fifth chapter contains the closure, which consists of conclusion and suggestions.