


The Application Of Simple Learning Strategies To Improve Students' Understanding Of The Present Continuous Tense And Present Perfect Tense

Zahra Meida Lutfiah¹, Eva Betty Simanjuntak², Elisa Rohali Hasibuan³, Christin Novstasya Saragih⁴, Elisabeth Nopianty S⁵, Rosa Caecilia Sitanggang⁶

^{1,2,3,4,5,6} Universitas Negeri Medan, Medan - Indonesia

Email: zahrameida5@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Kemampuan memahami grammar merupakan pondasi penting dalam proses pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris, khususnya pada jenjang sekolah dasar. Di antara berbagai bentuk tense, Present Continuous dan Present Perfect sering menjadi kesulitan utama bagi siswa sekolah dasar karena kompleksitas struktur dan makna waktunya. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji secara mendalam penerapan strategi pembelajaran sederhana dan kontekstual dalam meningkatkan pemahaman siswa terhadap kedua jenis tense tersebut. Dengan pendekatan deskriptif-kualitatif, penelitian dilakukan melalui observasi, wawancara guru, dan penyebaran angket kepada siswa kelas V SD Negeri 067694. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa strategi yang memadukan praktik langsung, pendekatan kontekstual, dan penggunaan media permainan seperti Tenses Box mampu meningkatkan partisipasi, pemahaman, dan antusiasme siswa dalam mempelajari grammar. Penelitian ini merekomendasikan penerapan pendekatan pembelajaran aktif dan bermakna sebagai alternatif solusi atas keterbatasan model pembelajaran tradisional yang cenderung mengandalkan hafalan.

The ability to understand grammar is an essential foundation in the English learning process, especially at the elementary level. Among the various forms of tense, Present Continuous and Present Perfect are often the main difficulties for elementary school students due to the complexity of their structure and the meaning of time. This study aims to examine in depth the application of simple and contextual learning strategies in improving students' understanding of the two types of tenses. With a descriptive-qualitative approach, the research was carried out through observation, teacher interviews, and the distribution of questionnaires to grade V students at SD Negeri 067694. The results showed that strategies that combined hands-on practice, contextual approaches, and the use of game media such as *Tenses Box* were able to increase students' participation, comprehension, and enthusiasm in learning grammar. This study recommends the application of active and meaningful learning approaches as an alternative solution to the limitations of traditional teaching models that tend to rely on memorization.



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INTRODUCTION

English as an international language has an important role in the basic education curriculum in Indonesia. One of the important aspects of mastering English is grammar, especially tenses, which is decisive in understanding the meaning of an action. However, it is undeniable that mastering tenses is still a challenge for most elementary school students.

Among the most difficult forms of tenses are Present Continuous Tense and Present Perfect Tense. Present Continuous is used to express an action in progress, while Present Perfect refers to an action that has been completed but is still relevant to the current condition. These two forms have no direct equivalent in Indonesian, making it difficult for students to understand the differences.

Various previous studies have shown that learning grammar that focuses only on formulas or grammatical theory is often ineffective for elementary school students. Therefore, a more contextual, fun, and appropriate approach is needed for children's learning styles. In this context, educational games and active learning strategies are considered to be able to bridge students' understanding of abstract grammatical concepts.

According to Azar (2016), the Present Continuous Tense is composed with the *pattern subject + to be (am/is/are) + V-ing*, and is used to express ongoing activities. While the Present Perfect Tense follows the *pattern of subject + have/has + V3*, and is used to convey events that have happened in the past but are still relevant today. This difference is often confusing for students, especially when they have to choose between the use of V-ing or V3, as well as the appropriate adjectives (have/has).

In the context of learning in elementary school, learning media plays a very important role in connecting abstract concepts with students' real experiences (Heinich et al., 2002). Therefore, contextual approaches and educational games are effective alternatives in delivering grammar material. One of the innovations used in this study is the learning media "Tenses Box" or *Executive Box Game*, which is a card-based educational game that involves a combination of subjects, verbs, and tense descriptions to form sentences according to the targeted tense (Pratama, 2021).

Tenses are an important aspect of teaching grammar because they function to indicate the time of an event. The Present Continuous Tense is used to express the action that is in progress at the time of speaking, while the Present Perfect Tense is used to indicate the action that has been completed but is relevant to the current situation (Azar, 2016).

According to Harmer (2001), the mastery of tenses is highly dependent on the ability of students to understand the function of time in a sentence and apply the appropriate form of verbs. Thornbury (1999) emphasizes the importance of a pedagogical approach that includes hands-on practice and contextual application in grammar teaching so that students not only memorize formulas, but understand the meaning behind sentence structure.

The communicative approach in learning grammar, as described by Richards and Renandya (2002), emphasizes the active and meaningful use of language in the context of real communication. This is in line with Vygotsky's (1978) view of the importance of social interaction and scaffolding in the development of children's language skills.

The use of learning media such as educational games is also an effective alternative. Arsyad (2015) stated that visual and kinesthetic media can help turn abstract concepts into concrete, especially in elementary school-age students who are in the concrete operational stage (Piaget). Educational games such as "Tenses Boxes" that combine visual, kinesthetic, and interactive elements are able to improve student participation and memory (Pratama, 2021).

Brown (2000) and Krashen (1982) also agree that grammar comprehension is easier to achieve when students learn in a supportive, non-intimidating atmosphere, and through enjoyable experiences.

METHODE

This study uses a descriptive qualitative method that aims to describe and analyze the process of implementing learning strategies in a real context. The subjects of the study were English teachers and grade V students at SD Negeri 067694, Medan.

Data is collected through three main techniques:

- Semi-structured interviews with teachers to understand the teaching approaches used as well as the challenges faced in teaching tenses.

- Questionnaires are distributed to students to measure initial understanding and response to the learning strategies applied.
- Direct observation in the learning process to record student interactions, responses, and participation during the activity.

The data obtained were analyzed thematically, focusing on the effectiveness of the strategies used, student involvement, and increased understanding of the Present Continuous and Present Perfect Tense.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Problems Faced by Students

Based on the results of interviews with teachers, it is known that many students experience confusion in remembering the formulas of Present Perfect and Present Continuous. The biggest difficulty is in the use of verb forms (V3 and V-ing) and the selection of auxiliary words such as *has/have* and *am/is/are*. The teacher also stated that the lecture method or memorization repetition did not help students much with their understanding.

The questionnaire distributed showed that only about 40% of students felt that they were sufficiently familiar with the Present Perfect Tense material, while most were not able to create sentences independently. However, more than 90% of students stated that they were more motivated to learn if the activities were presented in the form of games or group activities.

Implementation of Tenses Box Media

The strategy implemented involves educational game-based learning, namely *Tenses Boxes*. This medium contains picture and texted cards that combine to form sentences according to the requested tense. The activity was carried out in groups and students were asked to compose sentences and present them in front of the class.

The results of observations showed that students were more active, excited, and did not feel burdened when learning to use these media. Their ability to distinguish sentence structure between Present Continuous and Present Perfect improved significantly after several game sessions.

The Impact of Strategies on Student Comprehension

The application of simple, yet fun learning strategies has been shown to significantly improve student understanding. They become more confident, able to compose sentences correctly, and understand when to use each tense. More than that, students also show an improvement in general language skills, such as in speaking and writing.

CONCLUSION

The application of simple learning strategies combined with interactive media such as *Tenses Box* has a positive impact on students' understanding of learning Present Continuous and Present Perfect Tense. Learning based on activities, games, and real context has proven to be more effective than traditional theoretical methods.

This study recommends that English teachers at the primary school level apply more approaches that encourage active student participation, as well as utilize learning media that is relevant to children's worlds. In addition, learning grammar should not only focus on memorizing formulas, but also on applying and understanding meaning contextually.

For further research, it is recommended to conduct a longitudinal study to see the long-term influence of this strategy on students' grammar mastery, as well as its application in other tense forms such as *Past Perfect* and *Passive Voice*.

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