**Difficulties Faced by the Students of English Education Study Program in Learning Present Perfect Tense**

*Kesulitan yang Dihadapi Mahasiswa Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris dalam Mempelajari Present Perfect Tense*

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**Abstract**
The purposes of this research is to find out the difficulties and the factors affecting the difficulties faced by the third semester students of English Education Study Program at Universitas Muhammadiyah Palu in learning Present Perfect Tense. This is a descriptive research. The subject is the third semester students of English Education Study Program at Universitas Muhammadiyah Palu. The number is seven students taken from one class by using total sampling technique. The data of the research were collected by carrying out an interview, questionnaire, observation and test. The result of this research indicates that the students faced several difficulties which include 1) Difficult to use regular and irregular verb/change verb-1 to verb-3; 2) Difficult to differentiate the correct auxiliary have/has; 3) Difficult to distinguish between Present Perfect Tense and Simple Past Tense; 4) Difficult to use correct formula or problem in forming affirmative, negative and interrogative; Furthermore, the factors affecting the difficulties include 1) A lot of tenses in English; 2) The differences between English structure and Bahasa Indonesia ; 3) The interference L1 (mother tongue) and 4) Lack of practice and repetition.

**Key words:** Difficultie; Grammar; Present Perfect Tense

**Abstrak**
Tujuan penelitian adalah untuk menemukan kesulitan dan faktor yang menyebabkan kesulitan tersebut yang dihadapi mahasiswa semester tiga program studi pendidikan bahasa inggris universitas muhammadiyah palu dalam belajar present perfect tense. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain deskriptif. Subjek penelitian adalah mahasiswa semester tiga program studi pendidikan bahasa inggris universitas muhammadiyah palu. Jumlahnya tujuh mahasiswa dalam satu kelas diambil dengan menggunakan total sampling technique. Data penelitian dikumpulkan dengan melakukan wawancara, daftar pertanyaan, dan tes. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa mahasiswa menghadapi beberapa kesulitan meliputi 1) kesulitan menggunakan regular dan irregular verb/chang verb-1 to verb-3; 2) kesulitan dalam membedakan kata bantu have/has yang benar; 3) kesulitan dalam membedakan antara present perfect tense dan simple past tense; 4)kesulitan dalam menggunakan membuat kalimat afirmatif, negatif dan interrogatif. Selanjutnya, faktor yang menyebabkan kesulitan diantaranya 1) banyaknya tenses dalam bahasa inggris; 2) perbedaan struktur bahasa antara bahasa inggris dan bahasa Indonesia; 3) interferensi bahasa pertama (bahasa ibu) dan 4) kurang praktik dan pengulangan.

**Kata Kunci:** Kesulitan; Tata Bahasa; Present Perfect Tense
INTRODUCTION

English language consists of four macro-skills namely speaking, listening, reading and writing; and three micro-skills to support the macro namely pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar. We need to understand the relationship among these language skills, especially for using it. To be a good English user, the basic thing we need to study is grammar proficient. Without the proper knowledge of grammar, students will find many problems to build up sentences and express their ideas for communication activities.

Grammar is the structure of sentence. It is necessary to understand and master grammatical rules. Newson (2007:2) notes, “Grammar is a (finite) set of rules which tells us how to recognise the infinite number of expressions that constitute the language that we speak”. By learning and understanding grammar, we can communicate our message clearly and precisely. In conclusion, grammar is a study about how to form words into sentence in grammatical order.

In understanding English, the students must understand the structure of English or grammar, and also need to use in oral or written text. One of the common problems is in learning tenses. Most students get difficulties to make sentences correctly with a tense. It usually happens in – the Past, Present or Present Perfect Tense. Richards and Schmidt (2002:545) state “tense is the relationship between the form of the verb and the time of the action or state it describes”. However, in fact, there are still many problems related to the learning tense.

As stated previously, Present Perfect Tense is one of the tenses that should be mastered by students. However, it often makes them confused. The effect is that they cannot use and understand properly the Present Perfect Tense. Even though they have learned it, they still find difficulty in understanding Present Perfect Tense, especially in using forms and usages. For example, the students cannot differentiate between Simple Past Tense and Present Perfect Tense sentence. They use verbs indicating Present Perfect Tense where its proper use is Simple Past Tense.

In this case, the students under the third semester in English Education Study Program of Universitas Muhammadiyah Palu who learn English have met a number of problems in learning grammar, especially the topic of Present Perfect Tense that can be confusing. They think of grammar as rather a boring subject. We all know that English is different from Bahasa Indonesia whether on the vocabulary, phonology or structure system those have great deal of influence to Indonesian students in learning English.

Based on the cases explained previously, the researcher intends to analyse the Students’ difficulties in understanding Present Perfect Tense. Therefore, the researcher investigated this under the title “Difficulties Faced by the Third Semester Students of English Education Study Program at Universitas Muhammadiyah Palu in Learning Present Perfect Tense”.

Based on the background, the researcher formulates the problem as follows:

a) What are the difficulties faced by the third semester students of English Education Study Program at Universitas Muhammadiyah Palu got in learning Present Perfect Tense? b) What are the factors that cause the student’s problem in learning Present Perfect Tense at the third semester students of English Education Study Program at Universitas Muhammadiyah Palu?

The objectives of this research are; a) to find out the difficulties encountered by the third semester students of English Education Study Program at Universitas Muhammadiyah Palu in learning Present Perfect Tense; b) to find out the factors that cause the students’ difficulties in learning Present Perfect Tense at the third semester students of English Education Study Program at Universitas Muhammadiyah Palu.

This research has similarities with some studies that have been written previously. The first research is from Maisari (2011) under the title “Some Difficulties Faced by Students in Learning the Present Perfect Tense”. This research took place at SMP Puspiat Bangsa Ciputat with third year students as the subject. The objective of the research is to find out the difficulties in learning grammar, especially Present Perfect Tense in terms of form or the usages and then can use in their daily life. The result shows that the students are still confused in the form and the usage of Present Perfect Tense. They got difficult in understanding when and how to use it correctly. It means the most problem is the meaning of Present Perfect Tense.

The second was conducted by Setiawan (2008) in his skripsi with the title “Students’ Difficulties in Learning Present Perfect Tense” that aims to find out some problems found by the third year students of Akuntansi at SMK Puspiat in learning Present Perfect Tense and to find out most
mistakes made by students in the area of Present Perfect Tense in form and usage respectively. The result of his research is that most students’ difficulties came from the usage. It is distinguishing in the usage of Present Perfect and Simple Past Tense has higher difficulty then the form. Based on the previous statements, the researcher concluded that both the researches above, the students’ difficulty is caused by the use of Present Perfect Tense.

Similarly with the two researches, in this current research, the researcher found that the students get difficult in the use of Present Perfect Tense; however, differently with the two studies, in this current research, the researcher will take university students as subject which is different with the two previous researches.

METHOD

In conducting this research, the researcher used descriptive research. The aims of this research are to find out the difficulties and factors cause the difficulties that encountered by the third semester students of English Education Study Program at Universitas Muhammadiyah Palu in learning Present Perfect Tense. The research subjects were the third semester students of English Education Study Program University of Muhammadiyah Palu in the academic year of 2018/2019 which consists of only one class. The total subjects were 7 students. The researcher employed total sampling technique.

FINDINGS

Findings Interview

There were two kinds of interviews that the researcher used. The first is interviewing the lecturer. He stated that during the teaching and learning process, the students got understand the material of Present Perfect Tense during the class. In case, the students got difficulties namely the students did not use the time signals or time change in English, different styles of mother tongue and English made them confused and they also ignored to change the verb form. The lecturer stated when the students got difficult; he gave an exercise about the Present Perfect Tense. The lecturer argued that there is no physical setting that influenced the students’ difficulty in learning Present Perfect Tense. He defined that the main problem of the students is they do not comprehend that English has time signals and verbs change in different situations. At the end of the class, the lecturer always motivates the students to study harder because they are English Education Department students. They should be great in 4 skills of English. The second was interviewing the students. The result showed that the students have learned the topic of Present Perfect Tense. But in case, they got difficulty in mentioning the formula of Present Perfect Tense. Meanwhile, they also did not know how to use the formula then make it an example. That is why the researcher concludes that some difficulties come from the students themselves.

Finding of Questionnaire

The questionnaire consisted of six questions already distributed to the students. The first question is about their interest in learning English subject. It shows that all students like learning English subject. Seven students selected “Strongly Agree”. It means that students are strongly interested in the English subject. The second statement is about how important is English subject in students’ opinion. The data shows two students selected “Agree” and five students chose “Strongly Agree”. It means that they do agree that English is an important subject. The third statement is about students’ interest in learning Present Perfect Tense. It shows that one student chose “Strongly Disagree”. Four students selected “Agree” and two students chose “Strongly Agree”. It means that mostly students like learning Present Perfect Tense. The fourth item of questionnaire is about the Present Perfect Tense material. It is divided into four options of opinion about Present Perfect Tense. The data shows that for option “a”, there are 3 students chose “Strongly Disagree” and “Agree”, and one student chose “Strongly Agree”. For the option “b”, four students chose “Strongly Disagree”. One student chose “Disagree”. Then two students chose “Agree”. The option “c” shows that four students chose “Strongly Disagree”. Two students chose “Disagree”. One student chose I “Agree”. The last, the option “d” shows four students selected “Strongly Disagree”. Two students chose “Disagree”. And one student chose “Agree”. It means that Present Perfect Tense is a rather interesting topic to learn. The fifth statement is about how often the students use Present Perfect Tense. The data shows that three students chose “Strongly Disagree” and “Disagree”. One student chose Agree. It means that the students did not use
Present Perfect Tense in daily activities. The sixth statement is the students’ reason about factors affecting difficulty in understanding Present Perfect Tense. There are eleven items that researcher have distributed. The main reasons why students encountered difficulty in learning Present Perfect Tense is a lot of tense of English at 57,14 % or four students. Three students claim for differences between English structure and Bahasa Indonesia, lack of practice and repetition and student’s confidence “ I fell doubt and afraid of mistake become second reason. They have same percentage, 42,86 % of Strongly Agree. Below is third – fourth reason of most dominant factors in which students answer Strongly Agree:

1) Third – less of textbook to support learning process and lack of motivation, each of them counted 28,57%

2) Fourth – interference L.1 (mother tongue), counted 14,28%

Meanwhile, on Agree option, the main reason is lack of vocabulary mastery at five students, 71,43%. In other hand, based on students’s opinion some factors provided in questionnaire is not including as factor that cause students’ problems in learning Present Perfect Tense. Those factors are a lot of students in the classroom, lack of interest in teaching learning process and lack of lecturer quality such as lecturer did not give more detail explanation and example.

Findings of Test
As mentioned in the previous chapter, one of the aims of this study is to find out the types of difficulty in learning Present Perfect Tense of the third semester students of English Education Study Program at Universitas Muhammadiyah Palu by using test. The result of this test shows that students got various types of difficulties in learning Present Perfect Tense. The researcher provided 20 questions in the test that students had to answer in learning Present Perfect Tense, also classified into each specific problem and analysed the errors based on their answers and used it as the data in this research. After analyzing the data, the researcher found there are six types of difficulties from the result of students’ test consisting of using incorrect formula or problem in forming: affirmative, negative and interrogative form of Present Perfect Tense, using of auxiliary that is frequently switched, selecting of the regular and irregular verb/ change Verb -1 to Verb-3, and the difficulties in distinguishing the use of Simple Past Tense and Present Perfect Tense.

DISCUSSION
After analysing the data completely; students’ test, questionnaire from the students, interview data, it is necessary to discuss the result of this research. The first discussion focuses on the analysis of students’ difficulty in learning Present Perfect Tense to find out types of difficulty encountered by students in learning Present Perfect Tense. The second discussion describes about the reason why the students tend to make the problems regarding students’ difficulty in learning Present Perfect Tense. This is along with discussion of the result of questionnaire administered to the students to know the factor of problem in learning present perfect.

The first discussion is about the result of a students’ test. After analysing test, the researcher found 6 types of students’ problem in using Present Perfect Tense. They are consisting of using incorrect formula or problem in forming : affirmative, negative and interrogative form of Present Perfect Tense, using of auxiliary that is frequently switched, selecting the regular and irregular verb/changing Verb -1 to Verb-3 and the difficulties in distinguishing the usage of past tense and Present Perfect Tense. This result also shows that the most dominant types of problems encountered by student in using Present Perfect Tense is regular and irregular verb/changing verb-1 to verb-3 with the total frequency of errors is 47 or 27%. Second, there is 37 or 21% errors in using auxiliary (have/has). Third is, distinguishing the use of Present Perfect Tense and Simple Past Tense with the total frequency of errors is 34 or 19,10%. The next rate is followed by affirmative, negative and interrogative with the total error 20 or 11, 23% for each item.

Based on the result of test in this research, it can be summed up that the third semester of English education study program of Univeristas Muhammadiyah Palu still encounter many grammatical error especially in using Present Perfect Tense. Although they have been taught about Present Perfect Tense before, they might still be confused.
The second discussion is about the reason why the students tend to make the problems in learning Present Perfect Tense. There are many factors that may cause students’ problem in using Present Perfect Tense, such as a lot of tenses in English, Interference L1, differences between English structure and Bahasa Indonesia, lack of vocabulary mastery, lack of textbook to support learning process, lack of interest in teaching learning process, lack of motivation, family’s background (economics, education, family’s structure), lack of English learning facilities or the instructional resources such as Grammar books, LCD/projector, English CD/movie, library, lack of practice and repetition, lack of explanation and details from lecturers, time provided in learning is inadequate, student’s confidence “I fell doubt and afraid of mistake”, lack of interaction between lecturer and students, Society, resident and school, lack of support, classroom environment is not suitable (crowded class, class temperature), students’ laziness, lack of concentration in class as the result students did not pay attention to the lecturer, and the last lack of lecturer’s explanation and details of material.

Due the fact, that 57.14% of students were Strongly Agree the large number of English tenses become the first factor, 42.86% Strongly Agree on the differences between English structure and Bahasa Indonesia, lack of practice and repetition and students’ confidence “I fell doubt and afraid of mistake” become second factors. They have same percentage for each item. The third, they were Strongly Agree on the lack of textbook to support learning process and lack of motivation, each of them counted 28.57%, interference L1 (mother tongue), counted 14.28%. In addition, they were Agree that lack of vocabulary mastery, counted 71.43%.

It can be explained based on the result of test and the researcher found six types of difficulties.. They used incorrect formula in forming affirmative, negative and interrogative form of Present Perfect Tense, used of auxiliary that is frequently switched, selected of the regular and irregular verb/changing Verb -1 to Verb-3 and difficult in distinguishing the usage of Past tense and Present Perfect Tense.

The researcher analysed the questionnaire to answer the second research. Based on data, many factors found that may cause students’ problem in using Present Perfect Tense. The factors; there are a lot of tenses in English, Interference L1, differences between English structure and Bahasa Indonesia, lack of vocabulary mastery, lack of textbook to support learning process, lack of interesting in teaching learning process, lack of motivation, family’s background (economics, education, family’s structure), lack of English learning facilities or the instructional resources such as Grammar books, LCD/projector, English CD/movie, library, lack of practice and repetition, lecturer didn’t give more detail example and explanation, time provided in learning is inadequate, student’s confidence “I fell doubt and afraid of mistake”, lack of interaction between lecturer and students, Society, residence and school, lack of support, classroom environment is not suitable (crowded class, class temperature), students’ laziness, and the last, lack of concentration in class as the result students do not pay attention to the lecturer.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Based on the data described in the previous chapter, the researcher draw a conclusion that there are eight the types of difficulty encountered by students at the third semester students of English Education Study Program at Universitas Muhammadiyah Palu. These types of difficulty consisting of using incorrect formula or problem in forming: affirmative, negative and interrogative form of Present Perfect Tense, using of auxiliary that is frequently switched, using no instead of not in negative sentence, spelling, selecting of the regular and irregular verb/ change Verb -1 to Verb-3 and the difficulties in distinguishing the usage of past tense and present perfect. The most difficulty comes from selecting the regular or irregular verb/ change Verb-1 to Verb 3.

Futhermore, based on students’ answers on the questionnaire, there are several factors that cause students’ problems in using Present Perfect Tense, such as : a lot of tenses in English, Interference L1, differences between English structure and Bahasa Indonesia, lack of vocabulary mastery, lack of textbook to support learning process, lack of interesting in teaching learning process, lack of motivation, family’s background (economics, education, family’s structure), lack of English learning facilities or the instructional resources such as Grammar books, LCD/projector, English CD/movie, library, lack of practice and repetition, lecturer did not give more detail examples and explanation, time provided in learning is inadequate, student’s confidence “I fell doubt and afraid of mistake”,
lack of interaction between lecturer and students, Society, residence and school, lack of support, classroom environment is not suitable (crowded class, class temperature), student’s laziness, and the last, lack of concentration in class as the result students do not pay attention to the lecturer. The most factor that affecting students’ understanding in English is a lot of tenses in English subject.

Based on the conclusion above, at the end of this research the researcher states that many students have difficulty with tense, especially Present Perfect Tense. Moreover those difficulties cannot be avoided in learning foreign language, in this term is English language. Because of those reasons, the researcher would like to serve some suggestions which can be useful for both the students and the English lecturer. First, the lecturers should give more guidance to the students in using Present Perfect Tense, in order to improve their grammatical understanding. They should give detail and clear explanation to the students about the form and usage of Present Perfect Tense. Second, the students should pay more attention when the lecturer explain about the Present Perfect Tense, the students should do more exercises in using Present Perfect Tense so that, they can distinguish between Present Perfect Tense and Simple Past Tense Tense. Third, the institution needs to provide textbook and instructional resources to support teaching-learning process.

REFERENCES


