AN ANALYSIS OF THE THIRD GRADE STUDENTS' PROBLEMS IN UNDERSTANDING PAST CONTINUOUS TENSE AT SMPN 5 LAREH SAGO HALABAN

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Abstract

The purpose of this research was to describe the third grade students' problems in understanding past continuous tense. Descriptive method was used as the design of this research. The population of this research was the third grade students of SMPN 5 Lareh Sago Halaban Academic Year 2014/2015 (44 students).The researcher used cluster random sampling to select the sample. The total number of sample was 22 students; class IX.2 (22 students) was as the class of real test. The researcher used split-half method to make test reliable. The result of the test was reliable with coefficient correlation.93. It was categorized as very high correlation. The test was valid in terms of content validity because it had covered all materials which students had learnt. Generally, the result of analyzing data showed that the problem of the third grade students in understanding past continuous tense in using positive, negative and interrogative form was had problems. Specifically, 12 students (54.55%) had problem in using positive form, 16 students (72.73%) had problem in using negative form, and 14 students (63.64%) had problem in using interrogative form . Based on the result, the English teachers are suggested to give more contextual examples in the class practice past continuous tense. A consequence, the students are going to be familiar with past continuous tense and are going to practice past continuous tense in daily activity too. The students are suggested to do a lot of practice to increase thus understanding about past continuous tense. For the next researcher, it is suggested to study about some factors that cause students have problem in understanding past continuous tense such as differentiate between past tense and present continuous tense.

Key words: Students' Problem, Past Continuous Tense

Introduction

English is important to learn in various fields, such as economic, social, education and many others. In economic affair, people need English in order to make their business run well. For example; English is needed for export and import business. English is also used for social life such as traveling abroad and direction in public place. For education, English is studied in all majors and levels, especially in formal education.

Most of the students think that learning English is aproblem. Sofa (in Pratama, 2012) states that the sources of the students' problem in learning English are the lack of motivation, negative attitude toward English, being introvert and lack of perseverance. Furthermore, they cannot speak English fluently; they are confused on how to use appropriate tenses when they have to write sentences or paragraph or to analyze the kind of tenses used in the paragraph.

In Indonesia, English has been taught to students from junior high school up to university level. In junior high school and senior high school, students are taught to write a simple sentence and to speak in short conversation in English. In other words, students also learn four language skills. They are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. In addition, students also study language components. They are vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation.

Learning grammar includes learning sentence construction and the relationship of word in the sentence. When the students analyze sentence or paragraph they have to master tenses first. Students sometimes are confused about the containing of few tenses such as using verb, adverbs of time, conjunction.

Pardiyono (2007: 81) he states that past continuous tense is one the tenses included in the past tense. It means to show that one type of activities is in the progress in the past. The students have the problem in understanding the meaning past continuous tense. The students often make the sentence in the form of present continuous tense. Actually, they are asked to make simple sentences using past continuous tense.

For examples:

1. I am studying past continuous.
2. She is eating fried chicken.

It may be caused by the limited materials of this topic. Besides that, the students also have less exercise.

Then, the researcher concluded the students had trouble in write a simple sentence using positive, negative and interrogative form. First, the students still confused about the containing of few tenses such as verb, to be and adverb. Second, they also write simple sentence in form present continuous tense. actually, they should write in form past continuous tense.

Based on the problems above, the researcher had to prove it scientifically.

Because of that, the researcher was interested to describe the problem in understanding past continuous tense.. The researcher chose the third grade students of SMPN 5 Lareh Sago Halaban as sample for this research because they had learnt about past continuous tense

Generally, the purpose of the research was to describe the third grade students' problem in understanding past continuous tense. Specifically, the purposes of the research were follows:

1. To find out the third grade students' problems in understanding positive form in past continuous tense.
2. To find out the third grade students' problems in understanding negative form in past continuous tense.
3. To find out the third grade students' problems in understanding interrogative form in past continuous tense.

Research Method

Descriptive method was used as the design of this research. Gay (1987:189) states descriptive method involves collecting data in order to answer question concerning the current status of subject of the study. She also adds the descriptive method determines and reports the way things are.Therefore, this research just described the problem of the third grade students in understanding past continuous tense.

According to Gay (1987:102), population is a group which the researcher would like the result of the study to be generalized. The population of this research was the third grade students at SMPN 5 Lareh Sago Halaban Academic Year 2014/2015. The number of population was 44 students. Here is the distribution of the population shown in the Table 3.1 below:

Table 3.1

The population of the Third Grade Students of SMPN 5 Lareh Sago Halaban Academic 2014/2015

Class	Population
IX.1	22
IX.2	22
Total	44

Source: SMPN 5 Lareh Sago Halaban

Gay (1987:103) explains a sample is representative of the population from which is selected.The researcher used cluster random sampling as sampling technique. It was used because of some reasons. First, the population was distributed in groups or classes and all of populations have the same chance to be selected as sample in this research. Second, the students in three classes have the same curriculum, teaching

material, and allocation of time. The last, it was difficult to gather them on the same occasion.

In selecting the sample, the researcher prepared one piece of paper. Then, she divided the paper into two small pieces. After that, she wrote class IX.1 in the first piece, and class IX.2 in the second piece. Then, the papers were rolled, and they were put into the box. Next, the researcher shook them. The last, she took one pieces of the paper. As the tryout class, and the rest as the sample. The first paper taken was class XI.1 as the try out, and the second paper taken was class IX.2 as the sample There are 22 students. In fact, when the researcher did try out test in class IX.1. In addition, the total number of class IX.2 was 22 students.

3.2 Instrumentation

Grammar test in the form of multiple choices was used in this research to collect the data. Brown and Abeywikrama (2010: 295) state multiple choice is the most common and popular task for the test-takers because it is easy to administer and to give score. It became the researcher's reasons why she used this form of the test. The specification of the test can be seen on Table 3.2.

Table 3.2

Item Specification of Test

No	Research Indicators	Item Numbers	Total
1.	Positive sentence	1,4,7,10,13,16,19,22,25,28,31,34,37,40,43,46,49,52,55,58	**20**
2.	Negative sentence	2,5,8,11,14,17,20,23,26,29,32,35,38,41,44,47,50,53,56,59	**20**
3.	Interrogative sentence	3,6,9,12,15,18,21,24,27,30,33,36,39,42,45,48,51,54,57,60	**20**
TOTAL			**60**

Based on Table 3.2, total of items is 60 items which are divided into three parts. They are positive, negative, and interrogative form. ***There are 20 items using positive form, 20 items using negative form and 20 item using interrogative form***. These items were constructed from books , internet, thesis (*Metode Bimbel Privat Kuasai Bahasa Inggris Kelas X,XI,XII*; *Fundamental of English Grammar 2nd. English, A Practical Reference Guide; Directive Conversation & Idioms; Barron's Students' #1 Choice TOEFL*) and the researcher's modification.Every item was given 1 point for the correct answer and 0 for wrong answer (Arikunto, 2012: 90). The maximum score is 60 and the minimum score is 0. According to Arikunto (2012: 213), multiple choice test form could be finished about ½ - 1 minute for every item.

Because of that, the researcher gave the students time about 60 minutes to do the test because it was estimated enough to do the multiple choice test with 60 items.

The try out was done in November21th 2014 at 08.00 a.m. The sample for try out was classIX.I. She did it because she wanted to standardize her test. In addition, it was also used to make sure the students understand about the instructions of the test given and to determine the affectivity of time during the students do the test. It was also conducted to find out item difficulties and item discrimination to select good items as test items of the real test.

Next, the researcher analyzed the item difficulty of the test to find out the index of item difficulty, the researcher used the following formula suggested by Arikunto (2012: 233).

$$P = \frac{B}{JS}$$

Where:

P   : Item difficulties

B   : Sum of the students who answer
        correctly

JS   : Sum of the students who follow the
        test

The item difficulty range between 0.00 – 1.00 and it is symbolized as "P" that refers to "Proportion" in the evaluation term. The classification of the item difficulties is as follow:

P: 0.00 – 0.30   = difficult

P: 0.31 – 0.70   = moderate

P: 0.71 – 1.00   = easy

Brown(2010:71) explain appropriate test items will generally have item difficulty that range between 0.15 and 0.85. Based on these statements, the researcher took the test item which had range item difficulty index between 0.15 until 0.85. After the researcher calculated the item difficulty, she got 12 items were above .85 and items number 3, 4, 5, 10, 12, 14, 20, 25, 35, 37, 45, and 55. Therefore, these items were not good test items.

The researcher also analyzed item discrimination. The item discrimination is a test measurement which separates the students into high and low group. The researcher arranged the student's score from the high score into low score, and divided them into two groups: high group and low group (Arikunto, 2012: 227). The researcher used the following formula to define item discrimination of the test (Arikunto, 2012: 228):

$$D = \frac{BA}{JA} - \frac{BB}{JB}$$

Where:

D: Item discrimination

JA: Sum of the students in high group

JB: Sum of the students in low group

BA: Sum of the students in high group who answer correctly

BB: Sum of the students in low group whoanswer correctly

In the evaluation term, item discrimination is symbolized as "D" that refers to "Discrimination". The range of item discrimination is between 0.00 and 1.00. The result of the item discrimination is classified into the following:

D   : 0.00 – 0.20: Poor

D   :0.21 – 0.40: Satisfactory

D   :0.41 – 0.70: Good

D   :0.71 – 1.00: Excellent

From the range above, the researcher chose the item that has D between 0. 21 – 1.00 because it was good range for the good item tests. Then, the item was included as test item for the real test (Arikunto, 2012: 232).

The result of try out test, the researcher got items were 42 items and items number 1, 2, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 13, 15, 16, 18, 19, 21, 23, 24, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 34, 36, , 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 47, 48, 49, 51, 52, 53, 54, 56, 57, 58, and 59, were accepted since the value of item difficulty and item discrimination of these items could be accepted. Furthermore, items 3, 4, 5, 10, 12,14, 17,20,22, 25,33,35,37, 45,46,50, 55, 60 were discarded because the researcher got the value of item difficulty and item discrimination of these items could not be accepted as good items based on the criteria suggested by Arikunto. Based on the result of analyzing item difficulty and item discrimination of try out test, the total questions for real test became 42 items because there were 18 items discarded.

Arikunto (2012:72) says that a good test must be valid and reliable. Arikunto (2012: 82) also explains one of the validity of the test is content validity. The content validity means that the items analyzed cover the syllabus and teaching material which have been learnt by the students. Because of this reason, the researcher used content validity to show the validity of the test. The items consisted of 60 items because they represented all the research questions. The

materials had been consulted with the advisor.

The researcher used split-half method to find out the reliability of the test.Gay (1987:138) explains that this method divides the items of the test into first half group and second half group. To analyze the correlation coefficient between first half and second half test items, Pearson Product Moment Formula was used. According to Arikunto (2012:87), the formula is as follow:

$$r_{xy} = \frac{n\sum xy - (\sum x)(\sum y)}{\sqrt{\left\{(n\sum x^2) - (\sum x)^2\right\}\left\{(n\sum y^2) - (\sum y)^2\right\}}}$$

Where:

r_{xy}= The correlation coefficient between variable x and y

X   = The scores of first half items

Y   = The scores of second half items

N   = The total number of students

Furthermore, Gay (1987:139) states that to determine the total reliability of the test, Spearman Brown Formula is used to analyze the result.

$$rii = \frac{2rxy}{1+rxy}$$

Where:

r ii= The reliability coefficient for the total test

r_{xy}= The correlation of the two halves of the test

Last, the researcher used the degree of correlation coefficient based on Arikunto's idea (2012:89) :

0.81-1.00 = very high correlation

0.61-0.80 = high correlation

0.41-0.60 = enough correlation

0.21-0.40 = low correlation

0.00-0.20 = very low correlation

Based on the result of try out test, the researcher found that the degree of correlation coefficient of the test was .87, and the reliability of the total test was .93 It means that the reliability coefficient of the total test was very high. It means the test was reliable.

After doing try ou test, the researcher did real test to class IX.2 as class chosen for the real test on November 24th 2014 at 08.00 a.m. Based on the result of try out test, the researcher had 42 items to be tested. In order to be clear, it can be seen in the following table:

1. The researcher gave the test to the students.
2. The researcher explained the instruction of the test to the students.
3. The researcher asked the students to do the test in 42 minutes.
4. The researcher collected the students' answer sheet.
5. The researcher checked out the students' answers.
6. The researcher gave 1 point for the correct answer and 0 for wrong answer.

The researcher used these steps followed in analyzing data:

1. The researcher presented the raw score of each sample.
2. The researcher calculated Mean (M) by using formula suggested by Arikunto (2012:299):

$$M = \frac{\sum x}{N}$$

Where:

M = Mean

$\sum x$ = The total number

N = Number of students

Table 3.3

Item Specification of Real Test

No	Research Indicators	Item Numbers	Total
1.	Positive sentence	1, 4, 8, 10, 12, 18, 21, 23, 27, 30, 34, 36,41	13
2.	Negative sentence	2, 5, 7, 13, 14, 16, 19, 22, 25, 28, 31, 32, 37, 39, 42	15
3.	Interrogative sentence	33, 6, 9, 11, 15, 17, 20, 24, 26, 29, 33, 35, 38, 40	14
	Total		42

The researcher gave 1 point for the correct answer and 0 for wrong answer. Therefore, the maximum score is 42 and the minimum score is 0. Based on the researcher's experience while having try out test, the students could finish the test only less than one hour. Because of that, the researcher gave 42 minutes for the real test.

The data of this research were the students' scores in past continuous tense. They were gathered through the use of grammar test in multiple choice form. The researcher gathered the data based on the steps followed:

3. The researcher calculated Standard Deviation (SD) by using formula suggested by Arikunto (2102: 299):

$$SD = \sqrt{\frac{\sum x^2}{N} - \left(\frac{\sum x}{N}\right)^2}$$

Where:

SD = Standard Deviation

$\sum x$ = The total number

$\sum x^2$ = The total of x^2

N = Number of students

4. The researcher classified the students' score based on Nasoetion's idea (in Pratama, 2012) below :

Having no problem at all >M+ 1.5 SD

Having no problem = M+ 0.5 SD - <M+ 1.5 SD

Having small problem = M − 0.5 SD - <M +0.5 SD

Having problem = M − 1.5 SD- < M- 0.5 SD

Having big problem < M − 1.5 SD

After calculating the mean of every indicator, the researcher divided the students into classification, they are:

a. Students who have no problem at all, no problem are classified into having no problem

b. Students who have small problem, have problem, and have big problem are classified into having problem.

5. The researcher calculated the percentages of the students who have problem and who have no problem. The following formula is used :

$$P = \frac{F}{N} \times 100\%$$

Where:

P = percentage of the student's who have/ have no problem

F= frequency of students who have/ have no problem

N = Thenumber of the students

6. Finally, after getting the result of analyzing the data by using the formula above, the researcher described the third grade students' problem in understanding past continuous tense at SMPN 5 Lareh Sago Halaban.

Findings and Discussion

Findings

Students' Problems in UnderstandingPositive, Negative, and Interrogative Form in Understanding Past Continuous Tense

After checking the students' answer the researcher found that the lowest score for understanding past continuous tense was 13 and the highest score was 42. From the data analysis, the researcher found that Mean was 29, 40 and SD was 7.54. . The following table will show the classification of the students' problem in understanding past continuous tense in using positive, negative and interrogative form:

Table 4.1

Students' Problems in Understanding Positive, Negative, and Interrogative Form in Understanding Past Continuous Tense

Classification	Number of students	Total of students	Percentage of students	Explanation
Having no problem at all	2			
Having no problem	5	7	31.81%	Having no problem
Having small problem	9			
Having problem	3			
Having big problem	3	15	68.19%	Having Problem
Total	22		100%	

Students' Problem in Understanding Positive Form in Understanding Past Continuous Tense

From the data analysis, it was found the lowest score was 4 and the highest score was 13. Then the researcher got mean 8.81 and standard deviation 2.36. Based on the result of data analysis as shown in appendix 20 it was found that the third grade students' of SMPN 5 Lareh Sago Halaban had problem in understanding past continuous tense. Researcher counted the students' score, there were 12 students (54.55%) having problem in understanding past continuous tense.The following table will show the classification of the students' problem in understanding past continuous tense in using positive form:

Table 4.2

Students' Problems in Understanding Positive Form in Understanding Past Continuous

Classification	Number of students	Total of students	Percentage of students	Explanation
Having no problem	1			
Having no problem	9	10	45.45%	Having no problem
Having small problem	5			
Having problem	5			
Having big problem	2	12	54.55%	Having problem
Total		22	100%	

Students' Problem in Understanding Negative Form in Past Continuous Tense

The data on students' problem in using negative form in past continuous tense demonstrated that the lowest score was 5 and the highest score was 15. They also revealed that the mean was 11.04 and the standard deviation was 2.59. The result of data analysis, there were 16 students (72.73%) having problems. The following table will show the classification of the students' problem in understanding past continuous tense in negative form:

Table 4.3

Students' Problems in Understanding Negative Form in Understanding Past Continuous Tense

Classifica tion	Number of students	Total of students	Percentage of students	Explanati on
Having no problem	2	6	27.27%	Having no problem
Having no problem	4			
Having small problem	11	16	72.73%	Having problem
Having problem	2			
Having big problem	3			
total	22		100%	

Students' Problem in Understanding Interrogative Form in Understanding Past Continuous Tense

From the data analysis, it was found the lowest score was 2 and the highest score was 14. Then the researcher got mean 9.54 and standard deviation 3.24.The following table will show the classification of the students' problem in

understanding past continuous tense in interrogative form:

Table 4.4

Students' Problems in Understanding Interrogative Form in Understanding Past Continuous Tense

Classifica tion	Number of students	Total of students	Percentage of students	Explanati on
Having no problem	0	8	36.36%	Having no problem
Having no problem	8			
Having small problem	8	14	63.64%	Having problem
Having problem	4			
Having big problem	2			
Total	22		100%	

Conclusions

Generally, the third grade students' of SMPN 5 Lareh Sago Halaban in academic 2014/2015 had problem. It was proved by the fact that 68.19% students had problemin understanding past continuous tense focusing on using positive, negative and interrogative form. Specifically, it can be concluded that:

1. The third grade students' of SMPN 5 Lareh Sago Halaban in academic 2014/2015 had problem in using positive form in past continuous tense. It was shown by the fact that 54.55% students had problem.

2. The third grade students's of SMPN 5 Lareh Sago Halaban in academic

2014/2015 had problem in using negative form in past continuous tense. It was shown by the fact that 72.73% students had problem.

3. The third grade students's of SMPN 5 Lareh Sago Halaban in academic 2014/2015 had problem in using interrogative form in past continuous tense. It was shown by the fact that 63.64% students had problem.

Suggestions

Based on the conclusions above, the researcher proposes several suggestions as follows:

1. **For the teachers**
   - The teachers are suggested to explain more about the positive, negative and interrogative, especially in Past Continuous Tense.
   - The teachers are suggested to give exercise more the positive, negative and interrogative, especially in Past Continuous Tense.
   - The teachers are suggested to review about the use of tenses, especially Past Continuous Tense
   - The teachers are suggested to review teaching material about subject – verb ing, to be and conjunction.

2. **For students**
   - The students are suggested to study harder and learn more about the positive, negative and interrogative, especially in Past Continuous Tense.
   - The students are suggested to review their lesson about tenses, especially the tense, past continuous tense
   - The students are suggested to review their lesson about subject – verb ing, to be and conjunction.

3. **For further researcher**
   - The further researchers are expected to find and analyze the factors which cause the students had problem in understanding past continuous tense

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