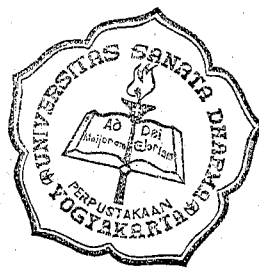


A PRELIMINARY STUDY ON  
THE PROBLEMS OF THE INDONESIAN STUDENTS  
IN USING ENGLISH TENSES

A Thesis  
presented to  
the English Department  
Sanata Dharma  
Teachers' Training Institute

in partial fulfilment of the  
requirements for the  
Sarjana Degree

by  
Trisnowati Soetrisno

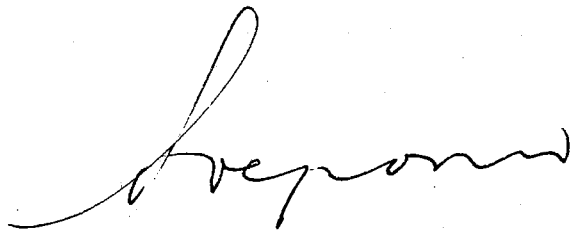


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Yogyakarta

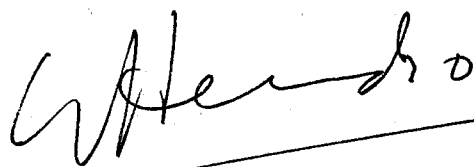
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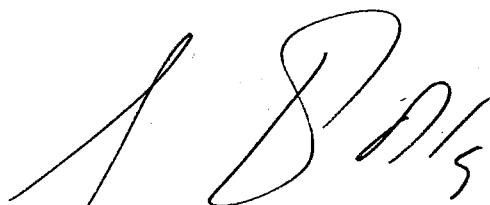
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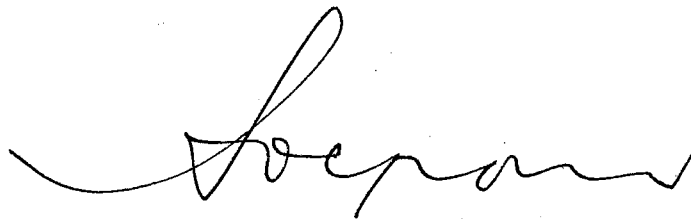
(Drs. W.J. Hendrowarsito)

Rector of the I.K.I.P.  
Senata Dharma

Head of the Department  
of English



(Mrs. J.I.G.M. Drost S.Y.)



(Dr. Soepomo Poedjosoedarmo)

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## CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

English tenses are always a problem to Indonesian students. Students may understand the grammatical verb forms and have read quite a bit the "rule" to use tenses, but they may still have difficulties in applying those tenses.

This paper is a study of the nature of problems involved in the learning of English tenses by the Indonesian students. I wish to uncover the types of problems the students generally face, and the seriousness of each of the problem.

For this purpose, I have given some tests to a number of students of different levels of the English Department of I.K.I.P. Sanata Dharma, in Yogyakarta. There are basically two types of tests. The first type (Test I, test II, and test III) is a completion type of test. In test I, students have to fill in blanks found in isolated sentences. In test II and test III, the blanks that the students have to fill in with the correct tense are found in pieces of dialogues. With these tests I intended to find out the ability of the students to apply various forms of tenses. The second type of test is a translation test from English into Indonesian (Test IV and test V). With that type of test I intended to find

out the ability of students in understanding tenses. Furthermore, I have also done some interviews with some of the students who did the tests to find out the problems that they feel they have in their efforts to learn English tenses. These interviews seem to have complemented the results of the written tests. There may be other types of tests we can use to check the students' mastery on the use of tenses, such as comprehension test on a passage of reading, writing composition, conversation, etc. However, I chose to give the two types of tests mentioned above, because they are easy to administer, economical and the results can give a fairly good picture on the thing that I intend to find out.

There are 776 students who did the tests. They include first year students of I.K.I.P. Senata Dharma, English Department, second year students, third year students and graduate students. These students have been studying English for several years, so we expect that they somehow already learn the concept of English tenses. The results of the tests show that some students still have difficulties in using the correct tenses even after studying English for several years. A list of students' common errors in using tenses is presented in Chapter II of this paper. Their errors include:

1. Errors involving simple present tense;
2. Errors involving present continuous tense;

3. Errors involving simple past tense;
4. Errors involving past perfect tense;
5. Errors involving past perfect continuous tense;
6. Errors involving past continuous tense;
7. Errors involving present perfect tense;
8. Errors involving perfect continuous tense;
9. Errors involving simple future tense;
10. Errors involving future perfect tense;
11. Errors involving conditions;
12. Errors involving modal auxiliary.

Students of different levels face similar problem; errors are basically the results of lack of clarity on the idea of tenses. Besides, interference of the mother tongue seems to have caused a lot of problems. And not infrequently, carelessness happens. The analysis on causes of errors in using the proper tense are presented in details in Chapter III. Chapter IV discusses the translation work done by the students. Chapter V contains my general conclusion on the problem of the learning of English tense system.

## CHAPTER II COMMON ERRORS IN USING TENSES

I have given some tests on tenses to a number of students of the English Department of I.K.I.P. Sanata Dharma. The results of the tests show that students of different levels face similar problem. When they fail in grasping the idea of tenses, they tend to make the same errors. From the tests I have found out that the students' common errors in general can be classified into the following classifications:

1. Errors involving simple present tense. Students use some other tenses instead of the correct simple present tense. They may use:
  - a. Simple past tense (Test I, item numbers:1;35. Test III, item II, item number 6. Test III, item IV, item number 15);
  - b. Present continuous tense (Test I, item number 11);
  - c. Present perfect tense (Test III, item IV, item numbers:14;16;17;18).
2. Errors involving present continuous tense. Students use some other tenses instead of the correct present continuous tense. They may use:
  - a. Simple present tense (Test III, item II, item number 7. Test III, item III, item number 9);
  - b. Present perfect tense (Test III, item IV, item number 16);

c. Simple future tense (Test II, item III, item numbers:22;23).

3. Errors involving simple past tense. Students use other tenses instead of the correct simple past tense. They may use:

- a. Present perfect tense (Test I, item numbers:27; 29;33;36. Test II, item IV, item number 26);
- b. Past continuous tense (Test I, item number 21);
- c. Simple present tense (Test II, item I, item numbers:1;2;3;4;5;6. Test II, item II, item numbers:10;11;12;13;14;15. Test III, item I, item numbers: 1;2;3;4;5. Test III, item II, item number 8. Test III, item III, item number 11.)

4. Errors involving past perfect tense. Students use other tenses instead of the correct past perfect tense. They may use:

- a. Present perfect tense (Test I, item number 12);
- b. Simple past tense (Test I, item number 19).

5. Errors involving past perfect continuous tense. Students use present perfect tense instead of the correct past perfect continuous tense (Test II, item IV, item number 32).

6. Errors involving past continuous tense. Students use simple past tense instead of the correct past continuous tense (Test II, item III, item number 21).

7. Errors involving present perfect tense. Students use other tenses instead of the correct present perfect tense. They may use:
  - a. Simple present tense (Test I, item numbers:5;6;13;14;16;23;24;38. Test II, item II, item numbers:8;9. Test II, item IV, item numbers:24;25);
  - b. Simple past tense (Test I, item numbers:17;34).
8. Errors involving perfect continuous tense. Students use present perfect tense instead of the correct present perfect continuous tense (Test I, item numbers:3;4; Test II, item IV, item numbers:27;28;31).
9. Errors involving simple future tense. Students use simple present tense instead of the correct simple future tense (Test I, item numbers:18;20;32. Test III, item III, item number 13).
10. Errors involving future perfect tense. Students use present perfect tense instead of the correct future perfect tense (Test I, item number 22).
11. Errors involving conditions. Students use simple past tense for the conditional with a main clause and a conditional perfect (Test I, item numbers:27;28).
12. Errors involving modal auxiliary. Students use shall instead of should (Test III, item III, item number 12). Students use may instead of might (Test III, item IV, item number 19).

The following chapter will present the tests that are used as the data of analysis.

### CHAPTER III ON THE USE OF TENSES

#### THE TESTS

I have given some tests on tenses to 450 students of the English Department of I.K.I.P. Sanata Dharma. The results of the tests are used as the data of analysis.

There are three kinds of tests of the same type, the 'fill in the blank' type to make the students think of the appropriate tenses that fit the given patterns. As Robert Lado says:

We test him on his comprehension of the grammatical meaning of the sentences, or we test his ability to express a grammatical meaning through the patterns of the foreign language. <sup>1)</sup>

The items of the tests are about daily affairs that may occur in students' mother tongue. This means less problem in considering the intended meaning. The students put the appropriate tense to fit the given patterns by noticing the suggested meaning of each simple sentence.

I have given the tests to students of different

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1) Robert Lado, Linguistics Across Cultures, p.6.

levels for the assumption that in learning a foreign language individuals of the same speech community tend to have the same problems. As Charles C. Fries says:

individuals tend to transfer the forms and meanings, and the distribution of forms and meanings of their native language and culture to the foreign language and culture - both productively when attempting to speak the language and to act in the culture, and receptively when attempting to grasp and understand the language and the culture as practiced by natives. 2)

#### AIMS

The aims of this study are to find out the common errors and analyze causes of the problems.

The procedures to discover the results are as follows:

1. Correcting;
2. Finding the typical errors of each individual and as a whole;
3. Providing a list of the typical errors as well as the correct ones;
4. Getting the number of students who make the particular errors;
5. Grouping of the common errors;
6. Analyzing the common errors.

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2) Ibid, p.2.

## ANALYSIS

The analysis was made in the following ways:

1. Assumption on causes of the problems;
2. Contrastive analysis of the particular items;
3. Some interviews with students of different levels to check causes of the problems;
4. Use of reference books;
5. Consultation with a linguist;
6. General conclusion of the results of analysis.

## TEST I

Test I was selected from Living English Structure 3) by W. Stannard Allen as the book is widely available and used as one of the reference books for teaching English as a foreign language in Indonesia. There were 156 students of the English Department of I.K.I.P. Sanata Dharma who were tested. They are:

|                      |   |             |
|----------------------|---|-------------|
| First year students  | - | 29 students |
| Second year students | - | 65 students |
| Third year students  | - | 39 students |
| Doctoral students    | - | 23 students |

---

|                 |              |
|-----------------|--------------|
| Total in number | 156 students |
|-----------------|--------------|

The following is the test given.

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3) W. Stannard Allen, Living English Structure, pp. 148-152.

## TEST I

### SUPPLY THE CORRECT TENSES

- 1 . When water (boil) the liquid (change) to vapour that (be called) steam.
- 2 . I (see) that you (buy) a new hat. How much you (pay) for it ?
- 3 . I (learn) English for the last two years, and now I (study) Russian, too.
- 4 . The sun (shine) for the last half-hour and the wind (drop).
- 5 . " You (read) that book yet ? " " No, I only just (begin) ".
- 6 . I (hear) the news last night, but I (not hear) it today.
- 7 . You (see) a good film lately ?
- 8 . " Where is Mr. Green ? " " He (go) out ten minutes ago ".
- 9 . No, he isn't here. He just (go) out.
- 10 . By the end of last year he (read) four Shakespeare plays, and by next year he (read) two more. I (not see) him since last Monday, but I believe he (write) an essay on Hamlet at present.
- 11 . You forever (misunderstand) what I (explain) to you ! Why you (not listen) while I speak to you ?
- 12 . He (study) Chemistry for three years and then (give) it up.
- 13 . When your train (leave) ? You (pack) your bags yet ? Here are some sandwiches I (make) you for the journey.
- 14 . At present he (read) a Biography; it is the third Biography he (read) this year.
- 15 . " What you (look) for ? " " I (lose) my purse near here and (want) to find it before it (get) dark. " " When you (lose) it ? " " I think that I (drop) it when I (go) to school this morning. "
- 16 . " We (wait) here for half an hour now, so I (not think) she will come. She always (arrive) late, or you (think) something (happen) to her ? " " I (not know), but I (think) we (wait) long enough.
- 17 . They just (decide) that they (undertake) the job.

- 18 . I (come) as soon as my work is finished. You (be) ready ?
- 19 . He (not arrive) when I (write) my last letter to you.
- 20 . I never (forget) what you (tell) me.
- 21 . When I last (stay) in Cairo, I (ride) to the Pyramids on a camel that my friend (borrow) the day before.
- 22 . I (finish) the book before my next birthday.
- 23 . He (be) so good to me when I was a boy, that to this day I (not forget) his kindness, and I hope that I (never forget).
- 24 . After leaving school he (study) French in Paris for two years then (move) to America where he now (live). He (visit) England once or twice and (know) English well, but (not have) yet the opportunity of visiting European countries yet.
- 25 . I always (have) trouble with my carburettor whenever I (decide) to go home by car.
- 26 . I wonder why I always (have) trouble with the carburettor whenever I (decide) to go home by car.
- 27 . I'm sorry you (get) lost coming here. I (go) to meet you at the station if I (know) you (want) me to.
- 28 . He (play) the part now if he (not offend) the producer at the last rehearsal.
- 29 . What you (do) just now while I (wash) the dishes ?
- 30 . When he grew old he often (think) of all the things he (do) when he (be) young.
- 31 . She just (come) in and (see) you in five minutes.
- 32 . When he (grow) old he often (think) of all the things he (do) when he (be) young.
- 33 . If I (be) a ghost, I (try) to frighten all the people I dislike.
- 34 . I (go) to Portugal five years ago. Since then I (not speak) Portuguese, and (forget) nearly all I (learn) there.
- 35 . In a few minutes time when the clock (strike) six I (wait) here for three hours.
- 36 . " I (go) to the Zoo tomorrow. You ever (be) there? "  
" Yes, I (be) there last Sunday. I (go) nearly every week-end ".
- 37 . Whenever he (go) to town nowadays, he (spend) a lot of money.
- 38 . You (remember) my name , or you (forget) it ?

## COMMON ERRORS:

## TEST I

The students made various types of errors. The following are errors most commonly made.

1. Errors involving simple present tense.

a. Students use simple past tense instead of the correct simple present tense. The following are errors most commonly made:

Item number 1: When water boilt the liquid changed to vapour that was called steam. (12) \*)

Item number 35: When the clock stroke six, I have been waiting here for three hours. (11)

The following is the analysis on each of the common errors.

Item number 1

Correct: When water boils the liquid changes to vapour that is called steam.

Incorrect: When water boilt the liquid changed to vapour that was called steam.

## Analysis :

Students may think of the context a past occurrence. There is also a failure in recognizing the different use of simple present tense and simple past tense to state a general truth. In simple past tense the occurrence refers to a definite time in the past.

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\*) The number put between brackets after the incorrect sentence, hereafter, refer to the number of students who made the errors.

Item number 35

Correct: In a few minutes time, when the clock strikes  
six I'll have been waiting here for three hours.

Incorrect: In a few minutes time, when the clock stroke  
six I've been waiting here for three hours.

Analysis :

There may be some interpretation for the given context  
as follows:

- (1) Dalam beberapa menit lagi ketika jam berdenting enam  
kali saya akan telah menanti disini selama tiga jam.
- (2) Dalam beberapa menit tadi ketika jam berdenting enam  
kali aku telah menanti disini selama tiga jam.

The first sentence has the equivalent meaning of simple  
present tense. Students may produce the correct tense  
when they translate the first sentence into English.

The second sentence is an acceptable Indonesian saying,  
but it does not exactly point to the suggested context.  
Here, students think the clock stroke six a few minutes  
ago.

Conclusion

Misuse of simple past tense for simple present tense  
may occur when students fail in recognizing the different  
use of the two tenses to state a general truth (Item num-  
ber 1). Secondly, there may be misinterpretation of the  
context. Students put word for word translation from the  
Indonesian saying with a difference in meaning (Item number  
35).

1. Errors involving simple present tense.

b. Students use present continuous tense for the correct simple present tense. We see errors in item number 11:

You forever misunderstand what I explain to you. Why aren't you listening to me while I'm speaking to you?(14)

The following is the analysis of the common errors.

Correct: You're forever misunderstanding what I explain to you. Why don't you listen while I speak to you?

Incorrect: You forever misunderstand what I explain to you. Why aren't you listening to me while I'm speaking to you?

Analysis :

The following are some Indonesian sentences to suggest the context:

- (1) Mengapa tak kau dengarkan ketika aku berbicara padamu?
- (2) Mengapa tak kau dengarkan sewaktu aku sedang berbicara?

Errors may occur for word for word translation of the second sentence into English when the students thought of themselves in the speaker's position while the person was speaking to somebody. The continuous nature of listening may be thought of the same occurrence with the state of listening. As C.A.Mees says:<sup>4)</sup>

When an action is thought of still in progress at the moment of speaking, one is likely to consider the action more as a state than an action.

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4) C.A.Mees, Tata Bahasa Indonesia, p.215.

So, present continuous tense is used to express the state of action of an Indonesian meaning.

### Conclusion

Misuse of present continuous tense for simple present tense may occur when students consider the occurrence more as a state than an action. While simple present tense fits to the given context, students use present continuous tense to express the state of action of an Indonesian meaning.

2. Errors involving present continuous tense. This will be discussed in Test II and Test III. There are no errors involving present continuous tense in Test I.

### 3. Errors involving simple past tense.

a. Students use present perfect tense instead of the correct simple past tense. The following are errors most commonly made:

Item number 27: I'm sorry you've got lost coming here. (67)

Item number 29: What have you done just now while I washed the dishes?

Item number 30: When he grew old he often thought of all the things he has done when he was young. (30)

Item number 36: Yes, I've been there last Sunday. (34)

The following is the analysis on each of the common errors.

Item number 27

Correct: I'm sorry you got lost coming here.

Incorrect: I'm sorry you've got lost coming here.

Analysis :

Simple past tense is used when a person is interested in the action, event, or situation that took place at a particular time in the past. Present perfect tense is used when the person is not interested in the action that took place in the past but in the completion of the action considered at the moment of speaking. The adverb sudah or telah in the sentence may be associated with present perfect tense. An Indonesian may or may not use sudah or telah in the sentence when he is interested in the present state of completion as well as the time when the action took place. The common way of expressing the above idea in Indonesian language may cause difficulties in learning the idea of simple past tense and of present perfect tense.

The following sentences are identical in meaning:

- (1) I'm sorry you got lost coming here.
- (2) Kasihan engkau teresat dalam perjalanamu kemari.
- (3) Kasihan engkau telah teresat dalam perjalanamu kemari.
- (4) Kasihan engkau telah teresat dalam perjalanamu kemari tadi.

The students are likely to make errors when they put word for word translation from the third or fourth sentence because they may associate it with present perfect tense.

Item number 29

Correct: What did you do just now while I was  
washing the dishes?

Incorrect: What have you done just now while I was  
washing the dishes?

Analysis :

The context may be understood as follows:

- (1) Apakah yang kau kerjakan baru-baru ini ketika  
aku mencuci piring?
- (2) Apakah yang telah kau kerjakan baru-baru ini ketika  
aku mencuci piring?

The same principle applies here. Students are likely to make errors when they put word for word translation from the sentence with the adverb telah (the second sentence). Present perfect tense is wrongly used when students are interested in the completion of the action (indicated by the word telah) as well as the time when the occurrence took place (indicated by the time adverb baru-baru ini).

Item number 30

Correct: When he grew old he often thought of all the  
things he did when he was young.

Incorrect: When he grew old he often thought of all the  
things he has done when he was young.

Analysis :

By noting the words grew old, thought, was young,

We may expect that the students know simple past tense to be used in this context. But, there is confusion of the logical sequence of tense. Students may also have difficulties when they attempt to put an Indonesian sentence into English. The use of telah in the sentence may be thought of as present perfect tense:

Bila ia tua ia akan memikirkan segala sesuatu yang telah dilakukannya ketika ia masih muda.

Such may be one of the causes of errors in using present perfect tense.

#### Item number 36

Correct: Yes, I was there last Sunday.

Incorrect: Yes, I've been there last Sunday.

Analysis :

The context may be said as follows:

- (1) Yes, I was there last Sunday.
- (2) Ya, saya kesana Minggu yang lalu.
- (3) Ya, saya telah kesana Minggu yang lalu.

Misuse of present perfect tense for simple past tense is likely due to word for word translation of the third sentence into English when the students are interested in noting the time when the occurrence took place as well as paying attention to the completion of the action.

#### Conclusion

Misuse of present perfect tense for simple past tense may

occur when students put word for word translation from the common Indonesian sentence when they are paying attention at the completion of the activities considered at the moment of speaking (often indicated by the use of sudah or telah in the sentence) and at the time when the occurrence took place (usually indicated by time adverb). The problem is that sudah can be used to suggest either present perfect tense or simple past tense (Item numbers:27;29;30;36).

### 3. Errors involving simple past tense

b. Students use past continuous tense instead of the correct simple past tense. Errors are found in item number 21 as follows: When I last stayed in Cairo, I was riding on a camel that my friend borrowed the day before. (12)

The following is the analysis of the errors.

#### Item number 21

Correct: When I last stayed in Cairo, I rode to the Pyramids on a camel that my friend borrowed the day before.

Incorrect: When I last stayed in Cairo, I was riding to the Pyramids on a camel that my friend borrowed the day before.

#### Analysis :

By noticing the right use of stayed and borrowed in the sentence, we can see that students know the event as past occurrences.

At the same time students may have a picture in their mind of the speaker riding on a camel when he was in Cairo. Errors are likely to occur when the mental picture does not point to the correct grammatical forms. For example, students consider past continuous tense can be a substitute to simple past tense.

#### Conclusion

There may be misassociation of the mental picture of the occurrence suggested by the context with the right grammatical forms that it causes errors in using past continuous tense for the correct simple past tense. Students consider past continuous tense can be a substitute to simple past tense (item number 21).

#### 4. Errors involving past perfect tense

a. Students use present perfect tense for the correct past perfect tense. We see errors in item number 12: He has studied Chemistry for three years and then gave it up. (57)

The following is the analysis on the common errors.

Correct: He had studied Chemistry for three years and then gave it up.

Incorrect: He ha studied Chemistry for three years and then gave it up.

Analysis :

There may be confusion in the use of past perfect tense as well as present perfect tense. This confusion

may occur as follows:

- (1) Students may understand that they are talking about two events, one coming after another in a particular time in the past.
- (2) The idea that a person gave up studying Chemistry is understood by the right use of tense.
- (3) In some respects students see a perfect action, but there is still confusion in the use of past perfect tense.
- (4) Students think of a single tense separately from the context that they fail to grasp the full meaning that is intended. They use perfect tense instead of past perfect tense.

#### Conclusion

There may be confusion in learning past perfect tense and present perfect tense that students use unlogical sequence of tense. Present perfect tense is wrongly used instead of the correct past perfect tense (Item number 12).

#### 4. Errors involving past perfect tense

b. Students use simple past tense instead of the correct past perfect tense. We see such errors in item number 19:

He didn't arrive when I wrote my last letter to you. (30)

The following is the analysis on the common errors.

Correct: He hadn't arrived when I wrote my last letter to you.

Incorrect: He didn't arrive when I wrote my last letter to you.

Analysis :

By noticing the words my last letter, students know the situation past activities. They use the proper tense in when I wrote my last letter to you. But they still have difficulties in learning past perfect tense that is ordinarily used in relation to another past activity. They put the same sequence of tenses instead.

Conclusion

Lacking of the idea of past perfect tense, students tend to put the same sequence of tenses. This causes errors in using simple past tense for the correct past perfect tense (Item number 19).

5. Errors involving past perfect continuous tense will be discussed in the other tests given. There is no error involving past perfect continuous tense in Test I.
6. Errors involving past continuous tense will be discussed in the other tests given. There is no error involving past continuous tense in Test I.
7. Errors involving present perfect tense
  - a. Students use simple present tense instead of the correct present perfect tense. The following are errors most common-

ly made:

Item number 5: Have you read that book yet? No, I only  
just begin. (77)

Item number 6: I heard the news last night, but I don't hear  
it today. (65)

Item number 13: Here are some sandwiches I make you for  
the journey. (43)

Item number 14: At present he's reading a Biography; it's  
the third Biography he reads this year. (25)

Item number 16: Does she always arrive late, or do you think  
something happens to her? (73)

Item number 23: He was so good to me when I was a boy, that  
to this day I don't forget his kindness and  
I hope that I never forget. (75)

Item number 24: He visits England once or twice and has known  
English well but doesn't have the opportunity  
of visiting European countries yet. (80)

Item number 38: Do you remember my name or do you forget? (67)

The following is the analysis on each of the common errors.

Item number 5

Correct: Have you read that book yet?

No, I have only just begun.

Incorrect: Have you read that book yet?

No, I only just begin.

Analysis :

The following sentences are of the same meaning:

Have you read that book yet?

Sudah kau bacakah buku itu?

They are questions of a resultative perfect, a term used by Zandvoort.<sup>4)</sup> The results of the tests show little difficulties in the use of resultative perfect of this kind. The adverb sudah in the Indonesian sentence may be used to denote the completion of an action that is thought of at the moment of speaking.

Belum is the opposite meaning of sudah. Yet, it is not easy to associate belum as a negative form of present perfect tense. Students may have difficulties in saying a negative sentence with present perfect tense:

No, I have only just begun.

Belum, saya baru saja mulai.

#### Item number 6

Correct: I heard the news last night, but I haven't heard it today.

Incorrect: I heard the news last night, but I don't hear it today.

#### Analysis :

There is little difficulty in using simple past tense that is indicated by the time adverb last night. We know teachers at the S.M.P. usually introduce and give practices on simple past tense with the cue words last night.

The time adverb today is difficult for some students. Students may associate the word today with sekarang that may be connected with the words hari ini so that they think

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4) R.W. Zandvoort, A Handbook of English Grammar, p.74.

they can use present tense in this situation. They also have difficulties in learning the meaning of tidak mendengarkan and belum mendengarkan in English.

Item number 13

Correct: When does your train leave? Have you packed your bags yet? Here are some sandwiches I have made you for the journey.

Incorrect: Here are some sandwiches I make you for the journey.

Analysis :

The following sentences have the same meaning:

- (1) Inilah beberapa roti yang kubuat untukmu.
- (2) Inilah beberapa roti yang telah kubuatkan untukmu diperjalanan. The meaning of telah is implied in the first sentence.

Students are likely to make errors when they put word for word translation of the sentence that does not use the adverb telah. They tend to substitute the Indonesian meaning of telah into the stem of English verb, ignoring the correct grammatical forms. Secondly, there may be misinterpretation on the occasion in which the action takes place. Considering that the offering of sandwiches occur at the moment of speaking, students think they can use simple present tense.

Item number 14

Correct: At present he's reading a Biography; it's

the third Biography he's read this year.

Incorrect: At present he's reading a Biography; it's

the third Biography he reads this year.

Analysis:

The context can be expressed as follows:

- ini adalah biografi ketiga yang ia baca;
- ini adalah biografi ketiga yang telah ia baca;

The same principle applies here. The chance to make errors in using simple present tense for the correct present perfect tense is greater when students put word for word translation of the sentence that does not include the adverb telah (the meaning of telah is implied).

#### Item number 16

Correct: We've been waiting here for half an hour so

I don't think she will come. Does she always arrive late or do you think something has happened to her?

Incorrect: Does she always arrive late or do you think something happens to her?

Analysis :

The same principle applies here. Students are likely to make errors when they put word for word translation of the sentence that does not use the adverb telah or sudah. This occurs, for instance, when students put word for word translation from the following Indonesian sentence into English: Apakah ia sering terlambat atau sesuatu terjadi padanya?

Item number 23

Correct: He was so good to me when I was a boy that  
to this day I haven't forgotten his kindness  
and I hope that I'll never forget.

Incorrect: He was so good to me when I was a boy that  
to this day I don't forget his kindness  
and I hope that I'll never forget.

## Analysis :

Students cannot immediately recognize the use of  
the adverb to this day in connection with present  
perfect tense. It is also possible that students know  
present perfect tense to be used in this situation.  
But the students have difficulties in learning tidak  
melupakan and belum melupakan in English:

- to this day I haven't forgotten his kindness;
- sampai saat ini aku tidak melupakan kebaikannya
- sampai saat ini aku belum melupakan kebaikannya

The second utterance seems to be the Indonesian meaning  
of the given context. Yet, it is not used because to  
say so would be considered inappropriate as it shows  
an attempt to disregard someone's kindness. The first  
utterance is likely used, but students may use simple  
present tense instead of the correct present perfect  
tense when they put word for word translation of the first  
utterance into English.

Item number 24

Correct: After leaving school he studied French in Paris

for two years then moved to America where he's now living. He has visited England once or twice and know English well but hasn't had the opportunity of visiting European countries yet.

Incorrect: He visits England once or twice and has known English well but doesn't have the opportunity of visiting European countries yet.

Analysis :

The principle of the analysis of item number 23 applies here. There maybe a problem in translation. The students may have difficulties in learning the following sentences in English:

- (1) Ia mengunjungi negara Inggris sekali dua kali dan telah tahu berbahasa Inggris dengan baik tetapi belum mempunyai kesempatan untuk mengunjungi negara Eropa.
- (2) Ia mengunjungi negara Inggris sekali dua kali dan telah bisa berbahasa Inggris dengan baik tetapi tidak mempunyai kesempatan untuk mengunjungi negara Eropa.

Item number 38

Correct: Do you remember my name or have you forgotten it?

Incorrect: Do you remember my name or do you forget?

Analysis :

The following are some Indonesian sentences to suggest the given context:

- (1) Kau ingatkah akan namaku atunkah sudah lupa?
- (2) Masih ingat namaku atau sudah lupa?



(3) Ingatkah kau akan namaku atau lupa?

Errors are likely to occur when students say the third sentence and put word for word translation of the sentence into the stems of the English verbs.

### Conclusion

#### Misuse of simple present tense for present perfect tense

- (1) Mostly errors come from word for word translation of the common Indonesian saying into English when the meaning of telah or sudah is implied in the sentence - the adverb sudah or telah is not included in the sentence (Item numbers:5;16;13;14;38).
- (2) The rule may be understood but ignored because of differences in expressing a certain idea (Item numbers:23;38).
- (3) There is a problem in translation. It is not always easy to translate tidak and belum into English (Item numbers:6;16;23;24).
- (4) There is sometimes misinterpretation of the context in which the action takes place that makes a complete distortion (Item number 13).
- (5) There is a problem in learning time adverb in connection with tenses (Item numbers:6;14;23).
- (6) There is confusion of terminology namely present tense and at present (Item numbers:6;13).

#### 7. Errors involving present perfect tense

- b. Students use simple past tense instead of the correct

present perfect tense.

The following are errors most commonly made:

Item number 17: They decided that they undertook the job. (34)

Item number 34: I went to Portugal five years ago. Since then, I didn't speak Portuguese and forgot nearly all I learnt there. (39)

The following is the analysis of each of the common errors.

Item number 17

Correct: They have just decided that they will undertake the job.

Incorrect: They just decided that they undertook the job.

Analysis :

When students fail to say the right tenses they attempt to understand the context in their mother tongue.

The context can be expressed as the following:

- (1) Mereka baru saja memutuskan untuk menerima tugas tersebut.
- (2) Mereka baru saja memutuskan akan menerima tugas tersebut.
- (3) Mereka baru saja telah memutuskan akan menerima tugas tersebut.

The students are likely to say the right tenses when they translate the third sentence into English. The adverb telah in the sentence clearly states the completion of an action considered at the moment of speaking. However, the uses of the Indonesian adverb like sudah or telah vary. One may think it necessary to use it and others may think it unnecessary.

The first and the second sentence may also be used to denote

present perfect tense. The problem lies in fact that the first and the second sentence can also be used to indicate the past activities of simple past tense. This is one of the difficulties of the Indonesian students in learning the different uses of present perfect tense and of simple past tense.

Item number 34

Correct: I went to Portugal five years ago. Since then I haven't spoken Portuguese and have forgotten nearly all I learnt there.

Incorrect: I went to Portugal five years ago. Since then I didn't speak Portuguese and forgot nearly all I learnt there.

Analysis :

The students may understand the context in their own language:

Saya pergi ke Portugis lima tahun yang lalu. Setelah itu saya tak berbahasa Portugis lagi dan sudah lupa.

And the students may have difficulties in learning since then as a time adverb to denote present perfect tense. When they use simple past tense in the first sentence they are likely to put the same tense for the whole context and they make errors in doing this.

Conclusion

Misuse of simple past tense for present perfect tense

Students may use simple past tense instead of present perfect tense because the two kinds of tenses can be indicated by the same Indonesian sentence whether it uses the adverb telah or not (Item number 17).

They tend to use the same sequence of tenses when they cannot find the appropriate tenses that fit to the given context (Item number 34).

#### 8. Errors involving present perfect continuous tense

Students use present perfect tense instead of the correct present perfect continuous tense. The following are errors most commonly made:

Item number 3: I've learnt English for the last two years. (40)

Item number 4: The sun has shone for the last half hour. (39)

The following is the analysis of each of the common errors.

##### Item number 3

Correct: I've been learning English for the last two years,  
and now I'm studying Russian, too.

Incorrect: I've learnt English for the last two years  
and now I'm studying Russian, too.

##### Analysis :

There are some ways in the Indonesian language to suggest the same context given:

(1) Saya belajar bahasa Inggris selama dua tahun terakhir ini dan sekarang juga belajar bahasa Rusia.

(2) Saya telah belajar bahasa Inggris selama dua tahun terakhir ini dan sekarang juga belajar bahasa Rusia.

- (3) Saya telah belajar bahasa Inggris terus-menerus dua tahun terakhir ini dan sekarang juga belajar bahasa Rusia.

The above three sentences are correct Indonesian sentences. A combination of the adverb terus-menerus in addition to its verb may be used to suggest the continuous nature of an action. The meaning of terus-menerus is implied in the first and the second sentence. People do not always use the adverb terus-menerus unless they consider it necessary to put emphasis. We can see that the third sentence is less acceptable than the others. This may cause difficulties for the students in learning the uses of present perfect continuous tense and present perfect tense.

#### Item number 4

Correct: The sun has been shining for the last half hour and the wind has dropped.

Incorrect: The sun has shone for the last half hour and the wind drops.

#### Analysis :

The same principle applies here. People do not always think it necessary to show the idea of terus-menerus in a certain context. The following are some sentences to suggest the same context:

- (1) Matahari bersinar setengah jam terakhir ini dan angin berhenti bertiup.
- (2) Matahari telah bersinar setengah jam terakhir ini dan angin berhenti bertiup.

- (3) Matahari bersinar terus-menerus setengah jam terakhir ini dan angin berhenti bertiup.

The meaning of terus-menerus is implied in the first and the second sentence. This may cause difficulties for the students in learning present perfect continuous tense.

### Conclusion

#### Misuse of present perfect tense for present perfect continuous tense

The continuous nature of an activity in the Indonesian language may be indicated by the adverb terus-menerus in addition to its verb. This, however, is not always stated. Errors are likely to occur when students put word for word translation of the common Indonesian saying that does not include the adverb terus-menerus in the sentence. (Item numbers:3;4)

### 9. Errors involving simple future tense

Students use simple present tense instead of the correct simple future tense. The following are errors most commonly made:

Item number 18: I'll come as soon as my work is finished.

Are you ready?(112)

Item number 20: I never forget what you just told me.(82)

Item number 32: When he grows old he often thinks of all the things he did when he was young.(76)

The following is the analysis of each of the common errors.

#### Item number 18

Correct: I'll come as soon as my work is finished.

Will you be ready?

Incorrect: I'll come as soon as my work is finished.

Are you ready?

Analysis :

In Indonesian sentences, the adverb akan may or may not be used to suggest futurity. The following are some Indonesian expressions that may be used to suggest futurity in this context:

- (1) Siap ya?
- (2) Bersiap-siaplah!
- (3) Siap ya nanti?
- (4) Nanti sia ya?
- (5) Akan siapkah kau nanti?

We can see that the fifth sentence is of less frequent use. But, students are likely to use the correct simple future tense when they translate the fifth sentence into English. The adverb akan is not necessarily used in this context. The meaning of akan is implied in other sentences. This, however may cause errors in using simple present tense instead of simple future tense when the students put word for word translation of the sentence that does not use the adverb akan into English.

#### Item number 20

Correct: I will never forget what you've just told me.

Incorrect: I never forget what you just told me.

Analysis :

The use of the adverb akan in addition to its verb is

necessary in this context:

- (1) Saya tak akan pernah melupakan apa saja yang kau katakan baru-baru ini padaku.
- (2) Saya tak pernah melupakan apa yang baru saja kau katakan.

The first sentence is commonly used . The second sentence needs the adverb akan to make the context clear. The second sentence may be said in a careless way. This may cause errors when the students put word for word translation from the incorrect Indonesian saying into English.

#### Item number 32

Correct: When he grows old he'll often think of all the things he did when he was young.

Incorrect: When he grows old he often think of all the things he did when he was young.

Analysis :

The same principal applies here. Problems in learning simple future tense may be due to students' carelessness in speaking their own language. There is a difference in meaning in saying the following sentences:

- (1) Bila ia tua kelak ia akan sering memikirkan semua yang dikerjakannya ketika ia masih muda.
- (2) Bila ia tua ia sering memikirkan semua yang dikerjakannya ketika ia masih muda.

The first sentence is commonly used. The second sentence needs the adverb akan to make the context clear. Students are likely to make errors in using simple present tense instead of simple future tense when they put word for word translation

from the Indonesian sentence that does not use the adverb akan.

### Conclusion

#### Misuse of simple present tense for simple future tense

The uses of the adverb akan to suggest futurity vary according to the context. In a certain occasion akan is to be used (Item numbers:20;32). In other situations akan is not necessarily used (Item number 18). Students are likely to use simple present tense instead of simple future tense when they put word for word translation from the Indonesian sentence that does not use the adverb akan to suggest futurity.

#### 10. Errors involving future perfect tense

Students use present perfect tense instead of the correct future perfect tense. Errors occur in item number 22 as follows: I've finished the book before my next birth-day.(31)

The following is the analysis of the errors.

#### Item number 22

Correct: I shall have finished the book before my next birth-day.

Incorrect: I have finished the book before my next birth-day.

#### Analysis :

The students may understand the context as follows:

- (1) Saya akan menyelesaikan buku tersebut sebelum ulang tahunku mendatang.

(2) Saya akan telah menyelesaikan buku tersebut sebelum ulang tahunku mendatang.

(3) Saya telah menyelesaikan buku tersebut sebelum ulang tahunku mendatang.

The three sentences above may be used to suggest future perfect tense. The first sentence may also be used to indicate simple future tense. We can see the results of translation test (Test IV, Chapter IV) show that students commonly use the adverb akan in addition to its verb to suggest future perfect tense. The second sentence that is of the same meaning with future perfect tense is of less frequent use. The third sentence can be used to suggest the same context, but translation of this sentence may produce the incorrect English sentence I have finished the book before my next birthday.

#### Conclusion

##### Misuse of present perfect tense for future perfect tense

One of the Indonesian expressions to suggest future perfect tense may cause the students use present perfect tense instead of future perfect tense. This may occur when the students put word for word translation from the sentence concerned into English (Item number 22).

#### 11. Errors involving conditions

Students use simple past tense instead of the conditional with a main clause and a conditional perfect. The following

are errors most commonly made:

Item number 27: I'm sorry you've got lost coming here. I would go to meet you at the station if I knew you wanted to. (58)

Item number 28: He would play the part now if he didn't offend the producer at the last rehearsal. (59)

The following is the analysis of each of the common errors.

Item number 27

Correct: I'm sorry you got lost coming here. I would have gone to meet you at the station if I had known you wanted to.

Incorrect: I'm sorry you've got lost coming here. I would go to meet you at the station if I knew you wanted to.

Analysis :

It is hardly possible to learn conditional sentences unless one has adequate knowledge of tenses and their usage. The idea of conditional sentences as well as the grammatical forms may cause difficulties. The conditional sentence indicates past time and treats an unreal and unfulfilled situation. The past perfect tense is used in the if-clause, and would have is used in the main clause. Students use simple past tense instead of the correct past-unreal condition.

Item number 28

Correct: He would have been playing the part now if he had not offended the producer at the last rehearsal.

Incorrect: He would play the part now if he did not offend the producer at the last rehearsal.

### Analysis:

The same principle applies here. Students have difficulties in learning the past-unreal condition. The idea of conditional sentences as well as the grammatical forms may cause difficulties. Students use simple past tense instead of the correct past-unreal condition.

### Conclusion      Errors involving conditions

Conditional sentences are much more difficult for the students who still have difficulties in learning tenses. Students may have difficulties in learning the difference between present-unreal condition and past-unreal condition. They tend to make errors by using simple past tense instead of the past-unreal condition. (Item numbers:27;28)

### TEST II

The following is another test for further analysis.

The second test was selected from English for You from Radio Australia.<sup>6)</sup> The test consists of some dialogues with several items that students must fill in the appropriate tenses.

Test II were given to 92 students of the English Department of I.K.I.P. Sanata Dharma. They are:

|                      |   |             |
|----------------------|---|-------------|
| First year students  | - | 30 students |
| Second year students | - | 12 students |
| Third year students  | - | 39 students |
| Doctoral students    | - | 11 students |

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Total in number              92 students

The following is the test given.

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6) The Commonwealth Office of Education, Sydney, VII, 4-12; VIII, 12

## TEST II

PUT THE VERB IN BRACKETS INTO THE CORRECT TENSE

I ( Margaret is sitting on the grass in the sunshine  
at the university. Paul has just come out of the  
library and is walking towards her. )

Paul : Margaret! Hey, Margaret!

Margaret, what's the matter?

Margaret: Oh, hullo, Paul. I (not see) (1) you.

Paul : And, you ( not hear ) (2) me.

Margaret: You ( call )(3) me before?

Paul : I (do) (4) several times. What (be) (5)  
the matter? What you ( think ) (6)about?

Margaret: I (consider) (7) changing my family.

Paul : Oh, is that all?

II ( Betty is rather worried, because Jim is nearly  
half an hour late. Then we hear Jim's car. )

Jim : Hullo, darling!

Betty : Jim? Where (be) (8) you?

Jim : But I (be) (9) not anywhere, Betty. Why  
(be) (10) you worried?

Betty : You (be) (11) terribly late. It's half past  
six. I (can't) (12) help worrying. I  
(can't) (13) stop thinking about road accidents!

Jim : Oh darling, you must stop being so silly!  
Nothing (be) (14) wrong.

Betty : That's all right for you. Anyway, why (be)  
(15) you so late?

Jim : I saw George - George Baxter - and I (stop)  
(16) to speak to him for a minute. But you  
(know) (17) him, he never (stop) (18)  
talking ...

### III

Betty : Some more bread, Jim ?  
Jim : No, thanks Betty. I (must tell)(19)  
you about something I (see)(20) at lunch-  
time today. I (walk)(21) along the street  
when ...  
Betty : Which street ?  
Jim : Oh, I forget. It doesn't matter.  
Betty : Well, go on.  
Jim : I (try)(22) to "go on".  
Betty : All right, darling. I (listen)(23)  
to you.

### IV ( Jim is sitting in a coffee lounge when Margaret comes in and sees him. )

Margaret: Oh, hello Jim ! You (finish)(24) your  
coffee ! You (be)(25) here long ?  
Jim : I've been here since soon after ten o'clock,  
Margaret. I (decide) (26) to sit here for  
a while, because I (feel)(26) a little  
tired.  
Margaret: Well, you (feel)(27) tired for a long time.  
It's nearly eleven o'clock ! What you (do)  
(28) since you finished your coffee ?  
You (be) not bored ? (29)  
Jim : No, Margaret, I (be)(30) not bored. I (sit)  
(31) here thinking.  
Margaret: Well, well ... And you (do) (32) that for more  
than half an hour when I (come)(32) in ?  
What were you thinking about ?  
Jim : Oh, various things. For the last few minutes  
I have been wondering what Carol will be  
doing at this time next year.  
Margaret: She will probably be having a meal in some  
foreign restaurant.

## COMMON ERRORS

## TEST II

The students made various types of errors. From the test I have found out that the students' common errors in general can be classified as follows:

1. Errors involving simple past tense. Students use simple present tense instead of the correct simple past tense (Item I, item numbers:1;2;3;4;5;6. Item II, item numbers:10;11;12;13;14;15. Item IV, item numbers:26;29;30).
2. Errors involving present perfect tense. Students use simple present tense instead of the correct present perfect tense (Item II, item numbers:8;9. Item IV, item numbers 24;25).
3. Errors involving past continuous tense. Students use simple past tense instead of the correct past continuous tense (Item III, item number 21).
4. Errors involving present continuous tense. Students use simple future tense instead of the correct present continuous tense (Item III, item numbers:22;23).
5. Errors involving perfect continuous tense. Students use present perfect tense instead of the correct perfect continuous tense (Item IV, item numbers:27;28;31).
6. Errors involving past perfect continuous tense. Students use present perfect tense instead of the correct past perfect continuous tense (Item IV, item number 32).

The following is the analysis of the students' common errors in Test II.

Common errorsItem I

( Margaret is sitting on the grass in the sunshine at the university. Paul has just come out of the library and is walking towards her. )

Paul : Margaret! Hey, Margaret! Margaret, what's the matter?

Margaret : Oh, hello, Paul. I don't see you (Item number 1:45).

Paul : And you don't hear me. (Item number 2:41)

Margaret : Do you call me before? (Item number 3:14)

Paul : I do several times. (Item number 4:12)

What is the matter? (Item number 5) What do you think about? (Item number 6:34)

Margaret : I'm considering changing my family. (Item number 7)

Paul : Oh, is that all?

We find errors involving simple past tense in Item I.

Students use simple present tense instead of the correct simple past tense. The following is the analysis of the errors.

Analysis

Students may understand that the actions refer to past activities. In the Indonesian language, past activities may be indicated by an adverb (sudah or telah) or a time adverb (tadi, kemarin and so on), or a combination of both in a sentence.

We can also get the meaning of past activities from the verbs in the sentences. The following are some Indonesian sentences to suggest the given context that refer to past activities:

(1) Aku tak melihatmu.

(2) Dan kau tak mendengarku.

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a) The number put between brackets here refer to the number of students who made the particular errors.

- (3) Apa kau memanggilku sebelumnya?
- (4) Ya, beberapa kali.
- (5) Ada apa?
- (6) Apa yang kau pikirkan?

The students may fail to keep the idea of past activities from the above sentences. They may use simple present tense instead of simple past tense when they substitute the meaning of the Indonesian verbs into the stems of English verbs.

### Conclusion

#### Misuse of simple present tense for simple past tense

One may use an adverb (telah, sudah) or a time adverb (tadi, kemarin, sebelumnya etc.), or a combination of both in a certain context to indicate past activities of simple past tense. In other context, the Indonesian verbs and other words may also indicate past activities of simple past tense. One may fail to keep the idea of past activities when he put word for word translation from the sentences with the verbs or other words that indicate past activities into English. He may use simple present tense instead of the correct simple past tense. (Item numbers:1;2;3;4;5;6)

### Common errors

Item II ( Betty is rather worried, because Jim is nearly half an hour late. Then we hear Jim's car.)

Jim : Hullo, darling!

Betty: Jim. Where are you? (Item number 8:40)

Jim : But, I'm not anywhere, Betty. (Item number 9:36)

Why are you worried? (Item number 10:53)

Betty : You are terribly late. (Item number 11:75)

It's half past six. I can't help worrying. (Item number 12:44) I can't stop thinking about road accidents! (Item number 13:45)

Jim : Oh, darling, you must stop being so silly!

Nothing is wrong. (Item number 14:64)

Betty : That's all right for you. Anyway, why are you so late? (Item number 15:69)

We find errors involving simple past tense in Item II (Item numbers:10;11;12;13;14;15). Students use simple present tense instead of the correct simple past tense. The following is the analysis of the errors.

#### Analysis

It is the same principle with the analysis on students' errors in using simple present tense instead of the correct simple past tense. Errors may occur when students substitute the meaning of past activities from the Indonesian sentences into English. They may fail to keep the idea of past activities that are indicated by the context. Errors may occur when students put word for word translation from the following sentences into English:

(10) Mengapa khawatir?

(11) Kau terlambat sekali.

(12) Aku tak tahan khawatir.

- (13) Aku memikirkan kecelakaan lalu lintas!  
 (14) Tak apa-apa.  
 (15) Yah, tapi mengapa kan begitu terlambat?

### Conclusion

#### Misuse of simple present tense for simple past tense

The Indonesian verbs and other words may indicate past activities. Students may fail to keep the idea of past activities when they put word for word translation from the sentences in the context into English. They may use simple present tense instead of the correct simple past tense (Item numbers:10;11;12;13;14;15).

We also find errors involving present perfect tense in Item II (Item numbers:8;9). Students use simple present tense instead of the correct present perfect tense. The following is the analysis of the common errors.

#### Analysis

There may be difficulties in learning present perfect tense when the meaning of sudah is implied in the Indonesian sentence. The meaning of sudah is implied in the following sentences:

- (8) Darimana?  
 (9) Aku tak dari mana-mana.

Errors may occur when the students put word for word translation from the common Indonesian saying of which the meaning of sudah is implied. They may use simple present tense instead of the correct present perfect tense.

### Conclusion

#### Misuse of simple present tense instead of present perfect tense

Students may use simple present tense instead of present perfect tense when they put word for word translation from the Indonesian sentence of which the meaning of sudah is implied (Item numbers:8;9).

### Common errors

#### Item III

Betty : Some more bread, Jim?

Jim : No, thanks Betty. I must tell you about something I saw at lunch-time today. I walked along the street when ... (Item number 21:56)

Betty : Which street?

Jim : Oh, I forget. It doesn't matter.

Betty : Well, go on.

Jim : I'll try to go on. (Item number 22:28)

Betty : All right, darling. I'll listen to you. (Item number 23:36)

We find errors involving past continuous tense in Item III. (Item number 21) Students use simple past tense instead of the correct past continuous tense. The following is the analysis of the errors.

### Analysis

Students may think that simple past tense and past continuous tense are of the same past time. They do not think the contin-

uous nature of an action makes a difference in tense.

Such is carelessness of the students that they use simple past tense instead of past continuous tense.

#### Conclusion

Misuse of simple past tense for past continuous tense may occur when students think simple past tense can be a substitute to past continuous tense (Item number 21).

We also find errors involving present continuous tense in Item III (Item numbers:22;23). Students use simple future tense instead of the correct present continuous tense. The following is the analysis of the errors.

#### Analysis

There may be misinterpretation of the context. Students use simple future tense instead of the correct present continuous tense. They say, for instance, I'll listen to you instead of I'm listening to you. The act of listening in this context is in actual progress at the moment of speaking. Students use simple future tense, instead, to express a pure intention.

#### Conclusion

Misuse of simple future tense for present continuous tense

There may be misinterpretation of the context that students use simple future tense instead of the correct present continuous tense (Item numbers:22;23).

#### Common Errors

##### Item IV

( Jim is sitting in a coffee lounge when Margaret comes in and sees him.)

Margaret: Oh, hello Jim! Do you finish your coffee?

(Item number 24:10). Are you here long? (Item number 25:22).

Jim : I've been here since soon after ten o'clock, Margaret. I have decided to sit for a while, because I feel a little tired. (Item number 26:27).

Margaret: Well, you have felt tired for a long time. (Item number 27:37). It's nearly eleven o'clock! What have you done since you finished your coffee? (Item number 28:43). Aren't you bored? (Item number 29:70)

Jim : No, Margaret, I'm not bored. (Item number 30:77) I sit here thinking. (Item number 31:44).

Margaret: Well, well ... And you have done that for more than half an hour when I came in. (Item number 32:37) What are you thinking about?

We find errors involving present perfect tense in Item IV.

Students use simple present tense instead of the correct present perfect tense (Item numbers:24:25). The following is the analysis of the errors.

#### Analysis

It is the same principle with the analysis on students' errors in using simple present tense instead of present perfect tense. Students may have difficulties when they translate an Indonesian sentence of which the meaning of sudah is implied.

The students may understand the context as follows:

(24) Habiskah kopimu?

(25) Apakah kau lama disini?

Students may fail to keep the idea of sudah from the above sentences, and they substitute the meaning into into the simple forms of English.

### Conclusion

#### Misuse of simple present tense for present perfect tense

may occur when students put word for word translation from the common Indonesian saying of which the meaning of sudah is implied. (Item numbers:24;25)

We also find errors involving simple past tense in Item IV. Students use present perfect tense for the correct simple past tense (Item number 26). Students also use simple present tense instead of the correct simple past tense (Item numbers:29;30). The following is the analysis of each of the common errors.

The analysis of errors in using present perfect tense instead of simple past tense proceeds as follows:

The adverb sudah or telah in the Indonesian sentence is often associated with present perfect tense. The same adverb may also be used to indicate past activities of simple past tense. The following sentence of the given context may be used to indicate present perfect tense as well as simple past tense: Aku telah memutuskan untuk duduk-duduk sebentar karena aku merasa lelah.

This may cause difficulties for the students in learning the difference between present perfect tense and simple past tense.

#### Conclusion

Word for word translation of the common Indonesian saying with the adverb sudah or telah in the sentence may cause errors in using present perfect tense instead of the correct simple past tense (Item number 26).

The following is the analysis on students' errors in using simple present tense instead of the correct simple past tense:

Students may say the context as follows:

(29) Apa kau tak bosan?

(30) Tidak, aku tak bosan.

Students may not think of a specific tense for the above sentences. They think that they are just saying an ordinary question that does not refer to the time of its occurrence. Errors may occur when they substitute the Indonesian meaning into the stem of English verb.

#### Conclusion

The chance to make errors in tenses is greater when students put word for word translation from the interpretation of the context in the mother tongue into English (Item numbers: 29; 30).

We find errors involving present perfect continuous tense in Item IV. Students use present perfect tense

instead of the correct present perfect continuous tense (Item numbers:27;28;31). The following is the analysis of the errors.

#### Analysis

The continuous nature of present perfect continuous tense may be indicated by the use of the adverb terus-menerus in addition to its verb. This, however, is not always stated. The idea of terus-menerus is implied in the following sentences:

(27) Memang sudah lama kau merasa lelah.

(28) Apa saja yang sudah kau kerjakan sejak kau menghabiskan kopimu?

(31) Aku telah duduk-duduk sambil berpikir-pikir.

Students may fail to keep the idea of terus-menerus when they put word for word translation from the above sentences into English. They may use present perfect tense instead of the correct present perfect continuous tense.

#### Conclusion

Misuse of present perfect tense for present perfect continuous tense may occur when students put word for word translation from the common Indonesian saying that does not include the adverb terus-menerus in addition to its verb. They may fail to keep the idea of the continuous nature of the action that is not stated in the Indonesian sentence (Item numbers:27;28;31).

We also find errors involving past perfect continuous tense in Item IV. Students use present perfect tense

instead of the correct past perfect continuous tense (Item number 32). The following is the analysis of the errors.

#### Analysis

The past perfect expresses activities that existed or occurred either before another activity in the past or before a point of time in the past. The past perfect continuous tense expresses activities similar to past perfect tense; the continuous form emphasizes the continuous nature of the activity. Students have difficulties in learning the idea of past perfect continuous tense. There is also confusion in learning the proper sequence of tenses. The given context is said:

And you have done that for more than half an hour  
when I came in.

The students use present perfect tense instead of the correct past perfect continuous tense.

#### Conclusion

There is a lacking of the idea of past perfect continuous tense that students use present perfect tense instead of the correct past perfect continuous tense (Item number 32).

#### TEST III

The third test were given to the same students for further analysis on their common errors. The test consists of some dialogues with several items that the students must

fill in the appropriate tense. The items were selected from an article on "30 Dialogues for Classroom Use", taken from a journal English Teaching Forum. 7)

There are 202 students of the English Department of the I.K.I.P. Sanata Dharma that were tested. They are:

|                      |               |
|----------------------|---------------|
| First year students  | - 74 students |
| Second year students | - 59 students |
| Third year students  | - 45 students |
| Doctoral students    | - 24 students |

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Total in number                      202 students

The following is the test given.

### TEST III

#### FILL IN THE APPROPRIATE TENSE

##### I MISTAKES

Bruce : Where did John go?  
 Laura : He went to the drugstore. (Pause)  
 Bruce : To the bookstore?  
 Laura : No, I (say)(1) to the drugstore.  
 Bruce : Oh, I (misunderstand)(2) you. I (think) you (say)(3) bookstore.  
 Laura : How (can)(4) you make a mistake like that? You (pay)(5) not attention?

##### II HEALTH

Jane : I (hear) you (be)(6) ill.




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7) "30 Dialogues for Classroom Use", English Teaching Forum, K, 3, (May-June, 1972), pp.2-7

Cathy : Well, I had the flu for a couple of weeks,  
but I am fine now.

Jane : You (look)(7) well. By the way, did you hear  
about Mrs. Jackson?

Cathy : No. What about her?

Jane : She (have) such a bad case of the flu that they  
(have)(8) to take her to the hospital.

Cathy : Oh, I am sorry to hear that!

### III SAFETY

Peter : There's the shoe store we (look)(9) for.  
It's just across the street.

Gail : Wait! You (can)(10) not cross the street in the  
middle of the block! You have to cross at the  
corner.

Peter : Oh, come on. Let's go across here.  
(Sound of car screeching)

Gail : Look out! You nearly (get)(11) hit by that car!  
Now you (see) why you (shall)(12) cross at the corner?

Peter : I guess you're right. I (be)(13) more careful  
after this.

### IV EFFORT

Debbie: I (give)(14) up! I simply can't learn French!

Helen : Why you (say)(15) that? I think you (make)(16)  
a lot of progress.

Debbie: No, I (be)(17) not. I (try) and (try)(18) and still  
can't speak it very well.

Helen : Learning any language takes a lot of effort. But  
don't give up. Why don't we practise these dialogues  
together?

Debbie: Good idea. That just (may)(19) help.

## COMMON ERRORS:

## TEST III

The students made various types of errors. From the test I have found out that the students' common errors can in general be classified as follows:

1. Errors involving simple past tense. Students use simple present tense instead of the correct simple past tense (Item I, item numbers:1;2;3;4;5. Item II, item number 8. Item III, item numbers 11).
2. Errors involving simple present tense.
  - a. Students use simple past tense instead of the correct simple present tense (Item II, item number 6. Item IV, item number 15);
  - b. Students use present perfect tense instead of the correct simple present tense (Item IV, item numbers:14;16;17;18).
3. Errors involving present continuous tense.
  - a. Students use simple present tense instead of the correct present continuous tense (Item II, item number 7. Item III, item number 9);
  - b. Students use present perfect tense instead of the correct present continuous tense (Item IV, item number 16).
4. Errors involving simple future tense. Students use simple present tense instead of the correct simple future tense (Item III, item number 13).
5. Errors involving modal auxiliary. Students use may instead of might (Item IV, item number 19). Students use shall instead of should (Item III, item number 12).

The following is the analysis of the students' common errors in Test III.

Common ErrorsItem I - Mistakes

Bruce : Where did John go?

Laura : He went to the drugstore.

(Pause)

Bruce : To the bookstore?

Laura : No, I say to the drugstore. (Item number 1:42<sup>a</sup>)

Bruce : Oh, I misunderstand you. (Item number 2:45)

I think you say bookstore. (Item number 3:45)

Laura : How can you make a mistake like that. (Item number 4:45) Don't you pay attention? (Item number 5:45)

We find errors involving simple past tense in Item I. Students use simple present tense instead of the correct simple past tense (Item numbers:1;2;3;4;5). The following is the analysis of the common errors.

Analysis

The students may understand the context as follows:

- (1) Tidak, aku mengatakan toko obat.
- (2) Oh, aku salah dengar.
- (3) Kukira kau mengatakan toko buku.
- (4) Bagaimana kau bisa keliru?
- (5) Apa tidak mendengarkan?

The above Indonesian sentences refer to past activities.

There is no particular adverb to suggest past activities.

We can understand the meaning of past activities from the whole context. Errors may occur when students do not

think the meanings in terms of tenses. They put word for word translation from the Indonesian sentences above into the stems of English verbs.

### Conclusion

Students may use simple present tense instead of the correct simple past tense when they put word for word translation from the Indonesian sentences that do not use a particular adverb to suggest past activities (Item numbers:1;2;3;4;5).

### Common Errors

#### Item II - Health

Jane : I heard you were ill. (Item number 1:167)

Cathy: Well, I had the flu for a couple of weeks, but  
I'm fine now.

Jane : You look well. (Item number 7:58) By the way,  
did you hear about Mrs. Jackson?

Cathy: No. What about her?

Jane : She has such a bad case of the flu that they have  
to take her to the hospital. (Item number 8:72)

Cathy: Oh, I'm sorry to hear that.

We have found errors involving simple present tense in Item II. Students use simple past tense instead of the correct simple present tense (Item number 6). The following is the analysis of the errors.

### Analysis

There may be misinterpretation of the context.

Students think the activities existed in the past, so they

use simple past tense instead of the correct simple present tense. There is a difference in meaning in the following expressions:

I hear you've been ill.

I heard you were ill.

Simple present tense is used for the given context because the focal point is the immediate present. Simple present tense expresses perceptions, feelings, or states that occur or exist at the moment of speaking. The perceptions, feelings, or states may, of course, extend somewhat beyond the moment of speaking, but the focal point is the immediate present. 8)

#### Conclusion

##### Misuse of simple past tense for simple present tense

Students may have difficulties in learning the idea of simple present tense that expresses the situations that may extend somewhat beyond the moment of speaking (Item number 6).

We find errors involving present continuous tense in Item II. Students use simple present tense instead of the correct present continuous tense (Item number 7). The following is the analysis of the errors.

#### Analysis

There may be a lacking of the idea of present continuous tense for the given context. Present continuous tense may

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8) Rebecca E. Hayden, Mastering American English, p.71

express activities that began a relatively long time before, and that will probably end a relatively long after, the moment of speaking. These activities are not necessarily taking place at the moment of speaking.

The context may be said as follows:

You are looking well.

Kau nampaknya baik-baik saja.

Saat ini kau nampaknya baik-baik saja.

Students may use the right tense when they put word for word translation from the second Indonesian sentence into English. The use of the time adverb saat ini may show the continuous nature of the situation. The continuous nature of the situation in the first sentence is understood from the context. Students may use simple present tense instead of the correct present continuous tense when they put word for word translation from the Indonesian sentence that does not state the continuous nature of the situation into English.

#### Conclusion

There may be a lacking of the idea of present continuous tense that expresses an activity that began a relatively long time before, and that will probably end a relatively long after the moment of speaking (Item number 7).

We find errors involving simple past tense in Item II. Students use simple present tense instead of the correct simple past tense (Item number 8). The following is

the analysis of the errors.

### Analysis

The students cannot find the given cue words in the context Did you hear about Mrs. Jackson? They may understand the context as follows:

Kau dengarkah tentang Mrs. Jackson?

Ia sakit flu yang parah sehingga mereka harus membawanya kerumah sakit.

The above Indonesian sentences are ambiguous. Students may not be sure whether Mrs. Jackson is still sick or not at the moment of speaking. Errors may occur when the students put word for word translation from the above Indonesian sentences into English.

### Conclusion

There is a failure in recognizing the given cue words for the appropriate tense. Students use simple present tense instead of the correct simple past tense when they put word for word translation from their interpretation in the Indonesian language into the stems of English verbs (Item number 8).

### Common Errors

#### Item III - Safety

Peter : There's the shoe store we look for. (Item number 9: 58). It's just across the street.

Gail : Wait! You can't cross the street the street in the middle of the block! You have to cross at the corner.

Peter : Oh, come on. Let's go across here.

(Sound of car screeching)

Gail : Look out! You nearly get hit by that car.

(Item number 11:90) Now, do you see why you  
shall cross at the corner. (Item number 12:85)

Peter : I guess you're right. I'm more careful  
after this. (Item number 13:60)

We find errors involving present continuous tense in  
Item III. Students use simple present tense instead of  
the correct present continuous tense (Item number 9).  
The following is the analysis of the errors.

#### Analysis

The students may understand that Peter and Gail are  
looking for a shoe store:

Peter dan Gail sedang melihat-lihat (mencari)  
sebuah toko sepatu.

The Indonesian sentence may use a particular adverb sedang  
to show that an action is in progress at the moment of  
speaking. Sedang may not be used when the action in  
progress is understood:

There's the shoe store we're looking for.

Itulah toko sepatu yang kita cari.

Students, however, are likely to use simple present tense  
instead of the correct present continuous tense when they  
put word for word translation from the Indonesian sentence  
that does not use the adverb sedang into English.

### Conclusion

Misuse of simple present tense for present continuous tense may occur when students put word for word translation from the Indonesian sentence of which the meaning of sedang is implied (Item number 9).

We find errors involving simple past tense in Item III. Students use simple present tense instead of the correct simple past tense (Item number 11). The following is the analysis of the errors.

### Analysis

The students must know the person nearly got hit by a car. This may be said as follows:

You nearly got hit by a car.

Kamu hampir saja terlanggar mobil.

When students think of the meaning in the Indonesian language they may put word for word translation of the meaning of the sentence into the stems of English verbs. Students may use simple present tense instead of the correct simple past tense.

### Conclusion

Students may use simple present tense instead of the correct simple past tense when they interpret the context in the mother tongue and put word for word translation of the meaning of the Indonesian sentence into the stems of English verbs (Item number 11).

We find errors involving simple future tense in Item III. Students use simple present tense instead of the correct

as a modal auxiliary (Item number 12). Should, in this context, is not used as the past tense of shall.

Students may have difficulties in learning the idea of should as a modal auxiliary to indicate a suggestion. Students say, for example, "Now, do you see why you shall cross at the corner?" Students are likely to use simple present tense when they have difficulties in using the appropriate tense.

#### Conclusion

Students may have difficulties in learning the idea of should as a modal auxiliary. They may use simple present tense when they have difficulties in using the appropriate tense (Item number 12).

We find errors involving simple future tense in Item III. Students use simple present tense instead of the correct simple future tense (Item number 13). The following is the analysis of the errors.

#### Analysis

The adverb akan in addition to its verb in the Indonesian sentence may or may not be used to indicate an activity that will take place in future time. The following sentences express activities that will take place in future time:

I'll be more careful after this.

Saya akan lebih hati-hati setelah ini.

Saya lebih hati-hati setelah ini.

Students may produce the right tenses when they put word for word translation from the Indonesian sentence that uses the adverb akan. Students may use simple present tense instead of the correct simple future tense when they put word for word translation from the Indonesian sentence that does not use the adverb akan into English. They may say "I'm more careful after this" instead of saying "I'll be more careful after this".

#### Conclusion

Students may use simple present tense instead of simple future tense when they put word for word translation from the common Indonesian saying of which the meaning of akan is implied. (Item number 13).

#### Common errors

##### Item IV - Effort

Debbie : I have given up. (Item number 14:70)

I simply can't learn French.

Helen : Why did you say that? (Item number 15:56)

I think you have made a lot of progress.

(Item number 16:59)

Debbie : No, I haven't. (Item number 17:59) I have

tried and tried and still can't speak it

very well. (Item number 18:59)

Helen : Learning any language takes a lot of effort.

But don't give up. Why don't we practise

those dialogues together?

Debbie : Good idea. That just may help.

(Item number 19:21)

We find errors involving simple present tense in Item IV. Students use present perfect tense instead of the correct simple present tense (Item numbers:14;16;17;18). Students use simple past tense instead of the correct simple present tense in Item number 15.

The following is the analysis of errors in using present perfect tense.

#### Analysis

Telah in the Indonesian sentences may be used to indicate activities that have been completed a relatively short time before the moment of speaking. The same meaning can also be expressed without the use of sudah or telah. Students may interpret the context as follows:

- (14) Saya telah menyerah.
- (16) Kukira kau telah membuat banyak kemajuan.
- (17) Oh, tidak.
- (18) Aku telah mencoba terus dan tetap tak dapat berbicara yang baik.

Errors in using present perfect tense for simple present tense is likely due when students put word for word translation of the common Indonesian saying that uses the adverb telah in the sentence.

### Conclusion

Telah or sudah may be used to indicate activities that have been completed a relatively short time before the moment of speaking. Students may use present perfect tense instead of simple present tense when they put word for word translation of the Indonesian sentence that uses the adverb telah (Item numbers:14;16;17;18).

Students use simple past tense instead of the correct simple present tense. The following is the analysis of the errors.

### Analysis

There maybe misinterpretation of the context. Students think the activities existed in the past, so they use simple past tense instead of the correct simple present tense. Students say, "Why did you say that?" instead of "Why do you say that?" Simple present tense is used for the given context because the focal point is the immediate present.

### Conclusion

Students may have difficulties in learning the idea of simple present tense that expresses the situations that may extend somewhat beyond the moment of speaking. They may use simple past tense instead of the correct simple present tense (Item number 15).

We find errors involving present continuous tense

in Item IV. Students use present perfect tense instead of the correct present continuous tense (Item number 16). The following is the analysis of the errors.

#### Analysis

Students may have difficulties in learning present continuous tense when it is used to denote an activity that began a relatively long time before and that probably end a relatively long after the moment of speaking. The activity is not necessarily taking place at the moment of speaking. Students say, for instance,

I think you have made a lot of progress.

Kukira kau telah membuat banyak kemajuan.

Students use present perfect tense instead of the correct present continuous tense when they put word for word translation of the above Indonesian sentence into English.

#### Conclusion

Students may not understand the idea of present continuous tense to be used in this situation. The mother tongue may also cause difficulties when students use it not for understanding but as a base of word for word translation into English. Students may use , for instance, present perfect tense instead of the correct present continuous tense (Item number 16).

The following is the analysis of errors involving might as a modal auxiliary (Item number 19). Might, in this context, is not used as the past tense of may.

Students may have difficulties in learning might to indicate possibility. Might and may are usually interchangeable, but might expresses possibility which is considerably weaker than that expressed by may. Students are likely to use simple present tense when they have difficulties in using the proper tense. They say, for instance, " That just may help," instead of saying, " That just might help."

#### Conclusion

Students may have difficulties in learning the idea of might as a modal auxiliary. They use simple present tense instead. (Item number 19)

## CHAPTER IV - ON THE UNDERSTANDING OF TENSES

## TRANSLATION TEST

I have also given translation tests to the same students to see the way they understand tenses. There may be some other tests we can use to find out how students understand tenses, such as for example the type of comprehension questions on a given passage of reading, or a writing composition, however, the test I decided to give was the translation test. It is easy to administer, economical in terms of time, and it gives us a fairly clear picture of what we want to find out. Test IV, below, consists of items with the correct tenses of Test I to be translated into Indonesian. Test V consists of items with the correct tenses of Test II to be translated into Indonesian.

The results show that there are several ways that students use to express a certain meaning indicated by the English tenses. Many students make a word for word translation by which sudah, sedang, or akan is used in the sentence to get the equivalent meaning with a particular tense. I have the impression that students who translated with sudah, sedang, or akan are those who tend to do better on tests I, II and III. A few other students do not state sudah, sedang, or akan, and the sense of the translation seems to be alright. Here lies one aspect of the problems of the Indonesian students in learning tenses. There is no exact point of similarity to use as a base of comparison. The number of errors in

translation are relatively small. Errors in general are the results of inappropriate use of choice of words. For this, I put asterisk (\*) on the sentence that I consider ambiguous, uncommon, or incorrect. The following are the results of translation tests in details.

TEST IV

TRANSLATE

1. When water boils the liquid changes to vapour that is called steam.
2. I see that you bought a new hat. How much did you pay for it ?
3. I have been learning English for the last two years, and now I am studying Russian, too.
4. The sun has been shining for the last-half hour and the wind has dropped.
5. " Have you read that book yet ? " " No, I have only just begun. "
6. I heard the news last night, but I have not heard it today.
7. Have you seen a good film lately ?
8. " Where is Mr. Green ? " " He went out ten minutes ago. "
9. No, he is not here. He has just gone out.
10. By the end of last year he read four Shakespeare plays, and by next year he will have read two more. I have not seen him since last Monday but I believe he is writing an essay on Hamlet at present.
11. You are forever misunderstanding what I explain to you ! Why do you not listen while I speak to you ?
12. He had studied Chemistry for three years and then gave it up.
13. When does your train leave ? Have you packed your bags yet ? Here are some sandwiches I made you for the journey.
14. At present he is reading a Biography; it is the third Biography he has read this year.
15. " What are you looking for ? " " I lost my purse near here and want to find it before it gets dark. " " When did you lose it ? " " I think that I dropped it when I went to school this morning. "
16. " We have been waiting here for half an hour now, so I do not think she will come. Does she always arrive late, or do you think something has happened to her ? " " I do not know, but I think we have waited long enough. "

17. They have just decided that they will undertake the job.
18. I will come as soon as my work is finished. Will you be ready ?
19. He had not arrived when I wrote my last letter to you.
20. I shall never forget what you have just told me.
21. When I last stayed in Cairo, I rode to the Pyramids on a camel that my friend borrowed the day before.
22. I will have finished the book before my next birth-day.
23. He was so good to me when I was a boy, that to this day I have not forgotten his kindness, and I hope that I will never forget.
24. After leaving school he studied French in Paris for two years then moved to America where he is now living. He has visited England once or twice, but has not had the opportunity of visiting European countries yet.
25. I always have trouble with my carburettor these days.
26. I wonder why I always have trouble with my carburettor whenever I decide to go home by car.
27. I am sorry you got lost coming here. I would have gone to meet you at the station if I had known you wanted me to.
28. He would have been playing the part now if he had not offended the producer at the last rehearsal.
29. What did you do just now while I was washing the dishes ?
30. When he grew old he often thought of all the things he did when he was young.
31. She has just come in and will see you in five minutes.
32. When he grows old he will often think of all the things he did when he was young.
33. If I were a ghost, I would try to frighten all the people I dislike.
34. I went to Portugal five years ago. Since then I have not spoken Portuguese, and have forgotten nearly all I learnt there.
35. In a few minutes time , when the clock strikes six, I will have waited here for three hours.
36. " I am going to the Zoo tomorrow. Have you ever been there?"  
" Yes, I was there last Sunday. I go nearly every week-end"
37. Whenever he goes to town nowadays, he spend a lot of money.
38. Do you remember my name, or have you forgotten it ?

## TRANSLATION TEST

## TEST IV

Test IV was given to 166 students of the English Department of I.K.I.P. Sanata Dharma. They are:

First year students - 52 students  
 Second year students - 54 students  
 Third year students - 35 students  
 Doctoral students - 25 students

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Total in number 166 students

The following are translation of Test IV. The results can be grouped as follows:

1. Simple present tense

Item number 1

When water boils the liquid changes to vapour that is called steam.

Bila air mendidih cairannya berubah menjadi gas yang disebut uap air. (138)\*

Bila air direbus cairannya akan berubah menjadi gas yang disebut uap air. (28)

Item number 11

You are forever misunderstanding what I explain to you!

Why do you not listen while I speak to you?

Kamu selamanya salah mengerti apa yang kuterangkan kepadamu! Mengapa tak kau dengarkan ketika aku bicara padamu?(166)

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\*) The number put between brackets here refer to the number of students who did the translation.

Item number 25

I always have trouble with my carburettor these days.

Aku selalu mendapat kesukaran dengan karburettorku  
akhir-akhir ini. (166)

Item number 26

I wonder why I always have trouble with the carburettor  
whenever I decide to go home by car.

Aku heran mengapa aku selalu mendapat kesukaran  
karburator bila kuputuskan pulang dengan mobil. (166)

Item number 37

Whenever he goes to town nowadays, he spends a lot of  
money.

Bila ia pergi kekota akhir-akhir ini ia banyak  
berbelanja. (166)

2. Present continuous tenseItem number 15

What are you looking for?

Apa yang kau cari? (100)

Apa yang sedang kau cari? (66)

3. Simple past tenseItem number 2

I see that you bought a new hat. How much did you  
pay for it?

Kulihat engkau membeli sebuah topi baru. (137)

Aku telah melihat engkau membeli topi baru. (13)

Aku melihat engkau telah membeli topi baru. (16)

Berapa kau bayar untuk itu? (166)

Item number 21

When I last stayed in Cairo, I rode to the Pyramids on a camel that my friend borrowed the day before.

Ketika terakhir aku tinggal di Kairo aku telah ke Piramida naik unta yang dipinjam temanku sehari sebelumnya. (42)

Ketika terakhir aku tinggal di Kairo aku ke Piramida naik unta yang dipinjam temanku sehari sebelumnya. (124)

Item number 23

He was so good to me when I was a boy.

Ia sangat baik padaku ketika aku masih muda. (150)

Ia telah sangat baik padaku waktu aku muda. (16)

Item number 24

After leaving school he studied French in Paris for two years then moved to America where he is now living.

Setelah meninggalkan sekolah ia belajar bahasa Perancis di Paris selama dua tahun dan kemudian pindah ke Amerika dimana ia hidup sekarang. (166)

Item number 27

I am sorry you got lost coming here.

Kasihan engkau tersesat sampai disini. (26)

Kasihan engkau telah tersesat sampai disini. (140)

Item number 30

When he grew old he often thought of all the things he did when he was young.

Bila ia bertambah tua ia sering memikirkan segala sesuatu yang dilakukannya ketika ia muda. (166)

Item number 34

I went to Portugal five years ago.

Saya pergi ke Portugis lima tahun yang lalu. (148)

Saya telah ke Portugis lima tahun yang lalu. (18)

Item number 36

Yes, I was there last Sunday.

Ya, aku disana Minggu yang lalu. (150)

Ya, aku telah disana Minggu yang lalu. (16)

4. Past perfect tenseItem number 12

He had studied Chemistry for three years and then gave it up.

Ia belajar Kimia selama tiga tahun dan kemudian  
menyerah. (30)

Ia telah belajar Kimia selama tiga tahun dan kemudian  
menyerah. (130)

Item number 19

He had not arrived when I wrote my last letter to you.

Ia belum datang ketika aku menulis suratku  
yang terakhir padamu. (104)

Ia tidak datang ketika aku menulis suratku yang  
terakhir padamu. (62)\* incorrect

5. Past perfect continuous tense

We find items of past perfect continuous tense in Test V.

6. Past continuous tenseItem number 29

What did you do just now while I was washing the dishes?

Apa yang kau lakukan baru-baru ini ketika aku  
sedang mencuci piring? (146)

Apa yang telah kau lakukan baru-baru ini

sewaktu aku menenungi piring? (26)

## 7. Present perfect tense

### Item number 5

" Have you read that book yet? " " No, I have only just begun. "

Sudah kau bacakah buku itu? Belum, saya baru saja mulai. (145)

Belum kau bacakah buku itu? Belum, saya baru saja mulai. (11)

Sudah kau bacakah buku itu? Tidak, saya baru saja mulai. (10)\* (incorrect)

### Item number 6

I heard the news last night, but I have not heard it today.

Kudengar berita itu tadi malam, tapi aku belum mendengarnya hari ini. (143)

Kudengar berita itu tadi malam, tapi aku tidak mendengarnya hari ini. (23)

### Item number 7

Have you seen a good film lately?

Apakah kau melihat film yang baik akhir-akhir ini? (145)

Sudahkah kau melihat film yang baik akhir-akhir ini?(21)

### Item number 9

No, he is not here. He has just gone out.

Tidak, ia tak disini. Ia baru saja pergi. (127)

Tidak, ia tak disini. Ia baru saja keluar. (39)

### Item number 10

I have not seen him since Monday, but I believe he is writing

an essay on Hamlet at present.

Saya tidak melihatnya sejak Senin tapi kurasa ia sedang menulis sebuah essay mengenai Hamlet sekarang.

(103)

Saya belum melihatnya sejak Senin tapi kurasa ia menulis sebuah essay mengenai Hamlet saat ini. (63)

Item number 13

When does your train leave? Have you packed your bags yet? Here are some sandwiches I have made for the journey.

Kapan keretamu berangkat? Sudahkah kau kemas barangmu?

(166)

Ini beberapa roti yang telah kubuat untukmu di perjalanan. (132)

Ini beberapa roti yang kubuat untukmu di perjalanan.

(34)

Item number 14

At present he is reading a Biography; it is the third Biography he has read this year.

Saat ini ia membaca biografi; itu biografi ketiga yang dibacanya tahun ini. (60)

Saat ini ia membaca biografi; itu adalah biografi ketiga yang telah dibacanya tahun ini. (106)

Item number 16

Does she always arrive late, or do you think something has happened to her?

Apakah ia selalu terlambat atau kau rasa sesuatu terjadi padanya? (89)

Apakah ia selalu terlambat atau kurang sesuatu  
telah terjadi padanya? (77)

Item number 17

They have just decided that they will undertake the job.

Mereka baru saja memutuskan bahwa mereka akan  
menanganitugas itu. (148)

Mereka baru saja telah memutuskan bahwa mereka akan  
melaksanakan tugas itu. (18)

Item number 20

I shall never forget what you have just told me.

Aku tak akan pernah lupa apa yang kau katakan  
padaku. (138)

Aku tak akan pernah melupakan apa yang telah kau  
katakan padaku. (28)

Item number 23

He was so good to me when I was a boy, that to this day  
I have not forgotten his kindness, and I hope that I  
will never forget.

Ia sangat baik padaku ketika aku masih muda, sehingga  
sampai saat ini aku tidak lupa akan kebbaikannya dan  
kuharap aku tak akan pernah lupa. (129)

Ia sangat baik padaku ketika aku masih muda, sehingga  
sampai saat ini aku belum lupa akan kebbaikannya dan  
kuharap aku tak pernah lupa. (37) \* uncommon

Item number 34

I went to Portugal five years ago. Since then, I have not  
spoken Portuguese, and have forgotten nearly all I learnt  
there.

Saya pergi ke Portugis lima tahun yang lalu.

Sejak saat itu aku tidak lagi berbahasa Portugis dan hampir lupa semua yang kupelajari disana. (135)

Sejak saat itu aku belum lagi berbahasa Portugis dan hampir lupa semua yang kupelajari disana. (31)\*

uncommon

Item number 36

I am going to the Zoo tomorrow. Have you ever been there?

Saya akan ke kebun binatang besok. (123)

Sudah pernah kesana? (145)

Saya ke kebun binatang besok. (43)

Pernah kesana? (21)

Item number 38

Do you remember my name, or have you forgotten it?

Ingatkah kau akan namaku atau lupa? (26)

Masih ingat namaku atau sudah lupa? (140)

6. Present perfect continuous tense

Item number 3

I have been learning English for the last two years and now I am studying Russian, too.

Saya belajar bahasa Inggris selama dua tahun akhir-akhir ini dan sekarang belajar bahasa Rusia juga. (41)

Saya telah belajar bahasa Inggris selama dua tahun terakhir ini dan sekarang belajar bahasa Rusia juga. (125)

Item number 4

The sun has been shining for the last half hour and the wind has dropped.

Matahari telah bersinar selama setengah jam terakhir

ini dan angin berhenti bertiup. (120)

Matahari bersinar selama dua setengah jam terakhir

ini dan angin berhenti bertiup. (46)

#### 9. Simple future tense

##### Item number 18

I will come as soon as my work is finished.

Will you be ready?

Saya akan segera datang setelah pekerjaanku selesai.

Siap ya? (130)

Saya segera datang begitu pekerjaanku selesai.

Bersia-siaplah! (30)

Saya datang segera setelah kerjaku selesai.

Apa kamu akan siap? (6) \* uncommon

##### Item number 31

She has just come in and will see you in five minutes.

Ia baru saja masuk dan akan menemui lima

menit lagi. (129)

Ia baru saja datang dan menemui lima menit lagi. (37)

##### Item number 32

When he grows old he will often think of all the things

he did when he was young.

Bila ia bertambah tua ia akan sering memikirkan segala yang dilakukannya ketika ia masih muda. (132)

Semakin tua ia sering memikirkan segala yang telah dilakukannya sewaktu muda. (34)

#### 10. Future perfect tense

##### Item number 10



By the end of last year he read four Shakespeare plays,  
and by next year he will have read two more.

Pada akhir tahun yang lalu ia membaca empat drama  
Shakespeare, dan tahun berikutnya ia akan membaca  
dua lagi. (124) \* ambiguous

Pada akhir tahun yang lalu ia telah membaca empat  
drama Shakespeare, dan tahun berikutnya ia akan  
telah membaca dua lagi. (42)

Item number 22

I will have finished the book before my next birth-day.

Saya akan menyelesaikan buku tersebut sebelum  
ulang tahunku kelak. (95)

Saya akan sudah menyelesaikan buku tersebut sebelum  
ulang tahunku mendatang. (60)

Saya harus sudah menyelesaikan buku itu sebelum  
ulang tahunku mendatang. (5)

11. Conditions

Item number 27

I would have gone to meet you at the station if I had  
known you wanted me to.

Aku akan menjemputmu di stasiun jika aku tahu  
engkau menghendakinya. (130)

Aku akan sudah menjemputmu di stasiun bila kutahu  
engkau menghendakinya. (26)

Aku telah pergi menjemputmu di stasiun seandainya  
aku tahu engkau menghendakinya. (10)

Item number 28

He would have been playing the part now if he had not

offended the producer at the last rehearsal.

ia akan memainkan bagiannya seandainya ia tidak  
menyinggung hati produsernya pada latihan terakhir.

(16)

ia akan telah memainkan bagiannya bila ia tidak  
menyinggung hati produsernya dilatihan terakhir.(130)

ia telah memainkan bagian tersebut jika ia tidak  
menyinggung hati produsernya pada latihan terakhir.(20)

Item number 33

If I were a ghost, I would try to frighten all the people  
I dislike.

Jika aku menjadi hantu aku akan menakut-nakuti  
orang-orang yang tak kusenangi. (67)

Seandainya aku hantu aku akan menakut-nakuti  
orang-orang yang tak kusenangi. (99)

TEST V

Test V was given to 160 students of the English Department  
of I.K.I.P. Sanata Dharma. They are:

|                      |   |             |
|----------------------|---|-------------|
| First year students  | - | 69 students |
| Second year students | - | 25 students |
| Third year students  | - | 42 students |
| Doctoral students    | - | 24 students |

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|                 |              |
|-----------------|--------------|
| Total in number | 160 students |
|-----------------|--------------|

The following is the test given.

TEST V

TRANSLATE

I ( Margaret is sitting on the grass in the sunshine at the University. Paul has just come out of the library and is walking towards her. )

Paul : Margaret! Hey, Margaret!

Margaret, what's the matter ?

Margaret: Oh, hullo, Paul. I didn't see you. (1)

Paul : And, you didn't hear me. (2)

Margaret: Did you call me before ? (3)

Paul : I did several times. (4) What is the matter ? (5) What were you thinking about? (6)

Margaret: I'm considering changing my family. (7)

Paul : Oh, is that all ?

II ( Betty is rather worried, because Jim is nearly half an hour late. Then we hear Jim's car. )

Jim : Hullo, darling!

Betty : Jim ? Where have you been ? (8)

Jim : But I haven't been anywhere, Betty. (9)  
Why were you worried ? (10)

Betty : You're terribly late. (11) It's half past six. I couldn't help worrying. (12)  
I couldn't stop thinking about road accidents. (13)

Jim : Oh, darling , you must stop being so silly ! Nothing was wrong. (14)

Betty : That's all right for you. Anyway, why were you so late ? (15)

Jim : I saw George - George Baxter - and I stopped to speak to him for a minute. (16) But you know him, he never stops talking ...(17)

### III

Betty : Some more bread , Jim ?  
Jim : No thanks, Betty. I must tell you something I saw at lunch-time today. (18)  
I was walking along the street when ... (19)  
Betty : Which street ?  
Jim : Oh, I forget. It doesn't matter.  
Betty : Well, go on.  
Jim : I'm trying to go on. (20)  
Betty : All right, darling. I'm listening to you . (21)

### IV

( Jim is sitting in a coffee lounge when Margaret comes in and sees him. )

Margaret : Oh, hello, Jim !  
You've finished your coffee ! (22)  
Have you been here long ? (23)  
Jim : I've been here since soon after ten o'clock, Margaret. (24) I decided to sit for a while because I felt a little tired. (25)  
Margaret : Well, you've been feeling tired for a long time. (26) It's nearly eleven o'clock.  
What have you been doing since you finished your coffee ? (27) Weren't you bored? (28)  
Jim : No, Margaret, I wasn't bored. (29) I've been sitting here thinking. (30)  
Margaret : Well, well ... And you had been doing that for more than half an hour when I came in. (31) What were you thinking about ?

## COMMON TRANSLATION

## TEST V

The following is the translation done by the students on Test V. All the translation of each item is listed with the number of students who did the translation. It is presented here to give the real picture of the way the students translate tenses.

Item 1Item number 1

I didn't see you.

Aku tidak melihatmu tadi. (4)

Aku tidak melihatmu barusan. (3)

Aku tidak melihatmu. (153)

Item number 2

And you didn't hear me.

Dan kau tak mendengarku tadi. (9)

Dan kau tak mendengarku. (151)

Item number 3

Did you call me before?

Apakah kau tadi memanggilku? (36)

Apakah kau memanggilku sebelumnya? (93)

Kamu memanggilku? (31)

Item number 4

I did several times.

Aku memanggilmu beberapa kali. (104)

Aku sudah memanggilmu beberapa kali. (13)

Ya, beberapa kali. (43)

Item number 5

What is the matter?

Ada apa? (140)

Ada persoalan apa? (20)

Item number 6

What were you thinking about?

Apa yang kau pikirkan? (122)

Apa yang sedang kau pikirkan? (38)

Item number 7

I'm considering changing my family.

Aku sedang memikirkan untuk merubah keluargaku. (129)

Aku lagi memikirkan untuk merubah keluargaku. (11)

Aku memutuskan untuk merubah keluargaku. (20)

Common translationItem IItem number

1. Aku tidak melihatmu. (155)
2. Dan kau tak mendengarku. (151)
3. Apakah kau memanggilku sebelumnya? (93)
4. Aku memanggilmu beberapa kali. (104)
5. Ada apa? (140)
6. Apa yang kau pikirkan ? (122)
7. Aku sedang memikirkan untuk merubah keluargaku. (129)

Item IIItem number 8

Where have you been?

Darimana? (89)

Kemana saja kamu? (30)

Telah kemana saja? (10)

Dimana kamu? (21) \*incorrect

Item number 9

I haven't been anywhere, Betty.

Aku tidak dari mana-mana. (15)

Aku tidak kemana-mana. (140)

Aku belum kemana-mana. (5) \*incorrect

Item number 10

Why were you worried?

Mengapa cemas? (95)

Mengapa khawatir? (25)

Mengapa gelisah? (40)

Item number 11

You're terribly late.

Kau terlambat sekali. (144)

Kau datang terlambat sekali. (16)

Item number 12

I couldn't help worrying.

Saya tak dapat menahan cemas. (130)

Bagaimana mungkin aku tak khawatir. (10)

Aku khawatir terus tadi itu. (20)

Item number 13

I couldn't stop thinking about road accidents.

Aku tak dapat berhenti memikirkan kecelakaan di jalan. (140)

Aku mau tak mau memikirkan kecelakaan lalu lintas. (10)

Aku terus-menerus memikirkan tentang kecelakaan. (10)

Item number 14

Nothing was wrong.

Tak ada apa-apa. (143)

Tak ada yang perlu dikhawatirkan. (7)

Semuanya beres. (10)

Item number 15

Anyway, why were you so late?

Bagaimanapun juga kenapa terlambat?(40)

Bagaimanapun juga mengapa terlambat? (120)

Item number 16

I stopped to speak to him for a minute.

Aku berhenti sebentar untuk berbicara dengannya.(160)

Item number 17

But you know him he never stops talking.

Kau tahu dia tak pernah berhenti bicara.(30)

Kau mengerti ia tak pernah berhenti kalau sudah bicara.(130)

Common translationItem IIItem number

8. Darimana? (89)

9. Aku tidak kemana-mana. (140)

10. Mengapa cemas? (95)

11. Kau terlambat sekali. (144)

12. Saya tak dapat menahan cemas.(130)

13. Aku tak dapat berhenti memikirkan kecelakaan.(140)

14. Tak ada apa-apa. (143)

Item number

15. Bagaimanapun juga mengapa terlambat? (120)  
 16. Aku berhenti sebentar untuk bicara dengannya. (160)  
 17. Kau mengerti ia tak pernah berhenti kalau sudah bicara. (130)

Common errorsItem IIItem number

8. Dimana kamu? (21)\* incorrect  
 9. Aku belum kemana-mana. (5)\* incorrect

Item IIIItem number 18

I must tell you about something I saw at lunch-time today.

Aku harus mengatakan sesuatu yang saya

lihat makan siang tadi. (127)

Aku akan bercerita mengenai sesuatu yang saya lihat waktu makan siang tadi. (13)

Aku mau menceritakan sesuatu yang saya lihat waktu makan siang tadi. (20)

Item number 19

I was walking along the street when ...

Aku sedang menyusuri jalan ketika ... (147)

Saya tadi sedang berjalan ketika ... (13)

Item number 20

I'm trying to go on.

Memang saya sedang mencoba melanjutkan. (147)

Aku mencoba untuk melanjutkan. (10)

Memang sedang akan melanjutkan. (3)

Item number 21

I'm listening to you.

Aku mendengarkannya. (102)

Sayapun sedang mendengarkan. (45)

Aku dengarkan. (13)

Common translation

Item III

Item number

18. Aku harus mengatakan sesuatu yang saya lihat  
makan siang tadi. (127)

19. Aku sedang menyusuri jalan ketika ... (147)

20. Memang saya sedang mencoba melanjutkan. (147)

21. Aku mendengarkannya. (102)

Item IV

Item number 22

You've finished your coffee!

Sudah selesai minum kopi? (13)

Kopimu telah habis! (72)

Kamu telah menghabiskan kopimu. (55)

Habiskah kopimu? (13)\* incorrect

Sudah selesaikan kopimu? (5)\* incorrect

Sudah minum kopi? (2)\* incorrect

Item number 23

Have you been here long?

Sudah lama disini? (133)

Telah lamakah kau berada disini? (7)

Apakah kamu telah lama? (20)

Item number 24

I've been here since soon after ten o'clock.

Aku berada disini sejak selewatnya jam 10.00. (75)

Aku sudah disini sejak jam 10.00. (85)

Item number 25

I decided to sit for a while, because I felt a little tired.

Aku tadi bernaksud duduk-duduk sebentar karena merasa sedikit lelah. (5)

Aku memutuskan untuk duduk-duduk sebentar karena merasa sedikit lelah. (128)

Aku telah memutuskan untuk duduk-duduk sebentar karena merasa sedikit lelah. (27)

Item number 26

Well, you've been feeling tired for a long time.

Memang sudah lama kau merasa lelah. (102)

Ya, kau selalu merasa lelah sejak lama. (58)

Item number 27

What have you been doing since you finished your coffee?

Apa saja yang kau kerjakan setelah kopimu habis? (47)

Apa saja yang sudah kau kerjakan setelah kau menghabiskan kopimu? (113)

Item number 28

Were you not bored?

Apa kau tak bosan? (160)

Item number 29

No, Margaret, I wasn't bored.

Tidak, Margaret, aku tak bosan. (160)

Item number 30

I've been sitting here thinking.

Aku duduk-duduk disini sambil berpikir. (120)

Aku telah duduk-duduk dan berpikir. (35)

Aku telah sedang duduk-duduk untuk berpikir. (5)<sup>\*</sup> uncommon

Item number 31

and you had been doing that for more than half an hour  
when I came in.

Kau telah melakukan itu lebih dari setengah jam  
ketika saya datang. (70)

Kau telah melakukan itu lebih dari setengah jam  
sampai saya masuk. (67)

Kau melakukan itu lebih dari setengah jam sejak  
saya masuk. (13)<sup>\*</sup> incorrect

Common translationItem IVItem number

22. Kopimu telah habis. (72)

23. Sudah lama disini? (133)

24. Aku sudah disini sejak jam 10.00. (85)

25. Aku memutuskan untuk duduk-duduk sebentar karena  
merasa sedikit lelah. (128)

26. Menang sudah lama kau selalu merasa lelah. (102)

Item number

27. Apa saja yang sudah kau kerjakan setelah kau menghabiskan kopimu? (113)
28. Apa kau tak bosan? (160)
29. Tidak, Margaret, aku tak bosan. (160)
30. Aku duduk-duduk disini sambil berpikir. (120)
31. Kau telah melakukan itu lebih dari setengah jam ketika saya datang. (70)

Common errorsItem IVItem number

22. Habiskan kopimu? (13) \*incorrect
30. Aku telah sedang duduk-duduk untuk berpikir.  
(5) \*incorrect
31. Kau melakukan itu lebih dari setengah jam sejak saya masuk. (13) \*incorrect

## CHAPTER V CONCLUSION

It is necessary to pay attention to the concept of the formation of English tenses at the beginning stages of learning. This involves selecting the best teaching materials and presenting the items at the best possible order. Students must have the items in their proper context so that they are familiar with the situation in which a certain tense is used.

Usually students learn tenses by their terms. The terms simple present tense, present perfect tense, simple past tense and so on are taught to show the various kinds of tenses. Students also pay attention to the use of time adverb that may show the time of the state or occurrence indicated by the verbs given. Students may understand that each tense has its own peculiar context. Students have lots of practice in using the correct grammatical verb forms.

We see students' common errors in using tenses from the preceding analysis. Students of different levels show similar problems. When they fail in grasping the idea of tenses, they tend to make the same errors. They use other tenses instead of the correct one. Their errors include the following:

1. Misuse of simple present tense for present continuous tense;
2. Misuse of simple present tense for simple past tense;

3. Misuse of simple present tense for present perfect tense;
4. Misuse of simple present tense for simple future tense;
5. Misuse of simple present tense for modal auxiliary;
6. Misuse of present continuous tense for simple present tense;
7. Misuse of simple past tense for simple present tense;
8. Misuse of simple past tense for past perfect tense;
9. Misuse of simple past tense for past continuous tense;
10. Misuse of simple past tense for present perfect tense;
11. Misuse of simple past tense for past-unreal condition;
12. Misuse of present perfect tense for simple present tense;
13. Misuse of present perfect tense for present continuous tense;
14. Misuse of present perfect tense for simple past tense;
15. Misuse of present perfect tense for past perfect tense;
16. Misuse of present perfect tense for past perfect continuous tense;
17. Misuse of present perfect tense for perfect continuous tense;
18. Misuse of present perfect tense for future perfect tense;
19. Misuse of simple future tense for present continuous tense;
20. Misuse of past continuous tense for simple past tense.

The preceding analysis shows some of the causes of errors in using tenses. Problems in using tenses exist

particularly when students lack the idea of tenses and do not know exactly in what situation a certain tense is used. Besides, students may have difficulties in learning the grammatical verb forms. There may be difficulties in learning the connection of time adverb with tenses. Students may also have difficulties in finding the suggested meaning of a given context. The terminology of English tenses may cause difficulties, too. Above all, interference of the students' mother tongue prevails; and not infrequently, the errors are caused by sheer carelessness.

It seems natural if a learner interprets the forms of the foreign language with the system of expression, association and content of the language he has already mastered. Dr. Soepomo says about linguistic interference caused by the use of the first language in learning a foreign language: "Interference of the first language on the target language always happens when a learner is in the process of learning a foreign language".<sup>9)</sup> The problem is that there is no exact point of similarity to use as a base of comparison. When students have difficulties in using the appropriate tense they try to find the meaning of the context through their mother tongue. Some students may get the correct interpretation of the suggested meaning of the context. Others may have incorrect interpretation. Students, then,

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9) Soepomo, "The Role of Mother Tongue", pp. 66-74.

supply the Indonesian meaning word by word using the English structure, aiming to produce the correct tenses.

We can see from the preceding analysis the use of the adverb sudah, 'already', sedang, 'in the process of', or akan, 'will', in the Indonesian sentence when we want to get the equivalent meaning with a particular tense in a given context. Students with the correct interpretation of the context may find it easy to produce the correct tense when they make a word for word translation from the Indonesian sentence that has the adverb concerned into English. Sudah in the Indonesian sentence may refer to present perfect tense. Sudah may also refer to simple past tense. Sedang usually refers to present continuous tense. Akan usually refers to simple future tense.

When these students translate, the literal translation of a given context may not be commonly used. Sudah, sedang, akan or a combination of these may be implied in the context. The adverbs are not always stated to get the equivalent meaning. We can gather the meaning from the context. Students with their correct interpretation of this kind of utterance may find it difficult to find the correct tense. They may fail to show the relationships between the events and time when they translate the Indonesian sentence concerned into English.

Thus interference from the mother tongue into English abounds even if the students know the meaning of the particular tense. Besides, sheer carelessness also seems

to have caused a lot of problems. These are shown in the preceding analysis as follows:

1. Errors involving simple present tense

- a. Students may use simple past tense instead of simple present tense when they fail in recognizing the different use of the two tenses to state a general truth.
- b. Students may use present continuous tense for simple present tense when they consider the occurrence more as a state than an action.
- c. Students may lack the idea of simple present tense that expresses the situations that may extend somewhat beyond the moment of speaking. They may use simple past tense instead of simple present tense.
- d. Students may use present perfect tense instead of simple present tense when they put word for word translation of their interpretation that uses the adverb sudah.

2. Errors involving present continuous tense

- a. Students may use simple present tense instead of present continuous tense when they put word for word translation of the Indonesian sentence of which the meaning of sedang is implied.
- b. Students may lack the idea of present continuous tense that expresses an activity that began a relatively long time before, and that probably end a relatively long after the moment of speaking. They may use simple present tense instead of present continuous tense.

### 3. Errors involving simple past tense

- a. Students may use simple present tense instead of simple past tense when they fail to keep the idea of the past activities and make word for word translation from the Indonesian sentence concerned into English.
- b. Students may use present perfect tense instead of simple past tense when they are interested in the completion of the activities at the moment of speaking as well as the time when the occurrence took place. The problem is that sudah or telah can be used to suggest either present perfect tense or simple past tense.
- c. Students may use past continuous tense instead of simple past tense when they consider past continuous tense can be a substitute to simple past tense. There may be misassociation of the mental picture of the occurrence suggested by the context with the right grammatical forms.

### 4. Errors involving past perfect tense

- a. Students may use present perfect tense instead of past perfect tense when there is confusion in learning the logical sequence of tense.
- b. Students may use simple past tense instead of past perfect tense when they lack the idea of past perfect tense.

### 5. Errors involving past perfect continuous tense

Students may use present perfect tense instead of past perfect continuous tense when they lack the idea of past perfect continuous tense.

6. Errors involving past continuous tense

Students may use simple past tense instead of past continuous tense when they think that simple past tense can be used as a substitute to past continuous tense.

7. Errors involving present perfect tense

- a. Sudah in the sentence may be used to show the completion of an action considered at the moment of speaking. This is not always stated in the sentence. Students may use simple present tense instead of present perfect tense when they put word for word translation of the Indonesian sentence of which the meaning of sudah is implied.

In another instance, students have difficulties in translating tidak and belum that refer to present perfect tense. There may be misinterpretation of the context, difficulties in learning the use of time adverb, and confusion of terminology.

- b. Sudah in the sentence may refer to past activities.

Students may use simple past tense instead of present perfect tense when they put word for word translation from the Indonesian sentence of which the word sudah is used to indicate past activities.

8. Errors involving present perfect continuous tense

Students may use present perfect tense instead of present perfect continuous tense when they fail to keep the idea

of the continuous nature of the action that is not usually stated in the Indonesian sentence.

9. Errors involving simple future tense

Students may use simple present tense instead of simple future tense when they put word for word translation from the Indonesian sentence of which the meaning of akan is implied.

10. Errors involving future perfect tense

Students may use present perfect tense instead of future perfect tense when their interpretation in the Indonesian language uses the word sudah. The word akan sudah that may be used to indicate future perfect tense is not commonly used.

11. Errors involving condition

Students who still have difficulties in learning tenses may find it difficult to learn conditional sentences. They may use simple past tense instead of the correct past-unreal condition.

12. Errors involving modal auxiliaries

Students may have difficulties in learning modal auxiliaries. They may use may instead of might. They may use shall instead of should.

Some students still have difficulties in using the correct tenses even after studying English for several years. The second year student of the English Department may be correct in his use of tense in a given context while a doctoral student fails. I refrain myself from suggesting

the ways to teach tenses in this matter. I am not trying to discuss the problem in teaching tenses either. But I think students will learn with benefit if right from the beginning stage of learning they are taught clearly. After they learn the idea of a particular tense and know the grammatical forms they must also learn the proper situation to say the appropriate tense. Students will find the 'rule' as well as the grammatical form meaningless unless they know exactly the situation to use the particular tense. It is also good to show the similarity and dissimilarity in form and meaning between the English tense items with those of the Indonesian language. This is good to prevent the possible interference as well as wrong interpretation when learning a particular tense. However, this should not be used for practices in using tenses. With good models and adequate examples with the necessary information and lots of practice in using them, students can finally grasp the idea of English tenses and will eventually be able to use the foreign language with pleasure.

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