

The English Teaching of Tenses, Aspects, and Moods in Senior High Schools in Padang

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ABSTRACT

The description of Tense, Aspect and Mood (TAM) varies from Grammar to Grammar based on the author's preference. The researchers want to study and compare the description of TAM in Teaching English in senior high schools in Padang City, West Sumatra, with theories from modern syntactic books. The steps in conducting this research are collecting data, analyzing data, and presenting the results of the analysis. The researchers conducted observations and interviews with five teachers as the informants from 5 different high schools in Padang City. We also interviewed 50 new entrance of 2019 year students at Universitas Andalas from various faculties/departments such as Medicine, Chemistry, Information Technology, Accounting, Management, and Animal Science, who came from Senior High School in Padang. The researcher then studied all the data and analyzed them using the theory proposed by some experts. The results showed that English Grammar was not discussed in depth. In general, the teachers assumed that there were 16 tenses in English; thus, first-year students also understood that there were 16 tenses. The study of tenses was usually embedded when studying the text. The teachers also did not understand the term and concept of aspects in the form of internal time tempo (progressive and perfect), so that the new entrance students in some faculty of Universitas Andalas were not familiar with the term aspects. In general, these tenses were taught with the mood constructions: Positive +, Negative -, and Question?. It could be interpreted that the English teaching patterns of TAM in High Schools were by giving formulas and memorizing and not by giving concepts.

Keywords: *Tenses, aspects, mood*

1. INTRODUCTION

As almost any lecturers of English notify the current realities of 'tense', 'aspect' and 'mood' shift enormously from Grammar to Grammar contingent upon factors, for example, the sort of Grammar chosen, author preferences, the structure of the work and the age of the content. For instance, in certain language structures of English, tense is a genuinely comprehensive term and can incorporate different blends of tense, aspect and modality, therefore including classifications of perfect tenses, and future tenses. For other people, particularly more current ways to deal with Grammar, tense is utilized undeniably more prohibitively to cover just those cases where an action word expression is utilized to pass on a worldly area on an apparent course of events – in such a tough methodology, English is decreased to just two tenses: 'past' and 'present'.

Ones really want to see the apparently unnecessary contrasts in phrased shows while exploring a large example of English grammar. Sometimes similar phenomena are allotted various marks by different grammarians (for example past tense may also be referred to as 'the imperfect' or 'preterit') and in some occasion a similar term will be used to cover various ideas; for example, in many grammars the phrase

'simple tense' is used to mean 'non-progressive', while in others this is similar expression is used to allude to a predicator comprising of a single verb, and subsequently 'simple tense' stands out from 'compound tense', for example a predicator consisting of a mix of aspectual auxiliaries and a main verb.

In connection with the explanation of the phenomenon above that the descriptions of Tense, Aspect, and Mood (TAM) vary from Grammar to Grammar based on the preferences of the authors, the researchers want to study and at the same time compare the descriptions of TAM teaching in high school. Teaching English with syntax theory or modern theory. The research question in this research is to what extent is the difference in the description of TAM in high school learning by teachers compared to books or modern or universal syntactic theory?

1.1. Verbs and their grammatical categories

The auxiliary or modal verbs are used to make other verb phrases, but they are considered incomplete because they only have the present and the past tense. Common modal forms are can / could; will / will, may / may; must / must. The verb phrase is the essence of the sentence. Verbs carry a lot of information to describe actions, events, and circumstances and place

them in a time frame; they tell whether the action or event has been completed or is in progress [1].

Verb in English have five forms. They are usually listed in a dictionary [2].

Base (bare infinitive): *dream, be, have*

Present: *dream/dreams, am/is, have/has*

Past: *dreamed, was, had*

Present Participle (-ING): *dreaming, being, having*

Past Participle (-EN): *dreamed, been, had*

The verb phrase is the essence of the sentence. Verbs carry information such as describing actions, events and circumstances and placing them in a time frame; they also tell whether the action or event has been completed or is in progress [1].

According to [3], time cannot be separated from human activity. Therefore, languages have developed complex systems for expressing time. Basically, there are six devices used for encoding time such as tense, aspect, lexical aspect, temporal adverbials, temporal particles, and discourse principles

1.1.1 Tense

[4] 's definition of tense is "the grammaticalization of location in time". Meanwhile, Salaberry and Shirai [5] define in more detail the tense as "a deictic category that places a situation at a time in relation to another time, usually a speech moment" [6].

When linguists speak of tense, they are referring to a particular set of inflectional affixes that communicate information about the time frame in which something exists or occurs. Some languages, like English, mark only two tenses—present and past; others have a future tense marker as well. In English, tense is usually but not always communicated by the use of suffixes. The {-s} suffix in walks is a present tense inflection, while the {-ed} suffix in walked and the vowel change in rang are both considered past tense markers [6].

The strategies that English speakers employ to communicate future time is a good example of this phenomenon. Different from Spanish or Greek, English has what we call as future tense. No suffix can be attached to make a future verb. English speakers must employ one or more of a variety of periphrastic constructions, i.e., they must employ extra words to communicate in future time. Most English speakers think of will as the primary tool for communicating future time, but it is only one of many [1].

[7] formulated three hypotheses about how English tenses were used to report on previous studies: If the author wants to claim something unusual for the facts given to support the core idea, the information will be conveyed in the past tense. If the author wishes to convey to the reader that the information supports the core idea but does not want to commit to future events, the information will be in the present perfect tense. If the author wants to claim something general, the information will be in its current form.

1.1.2 Aspect

Aspects have been defined in various ways. Bernard Comrie, describes the subject as "a different way of looking at the internal temporal constituency of a situation" [8]. Aspect systems are much more varied in form than tense systems. Most linguists use the term tense to label only the inflected form. So, the suffix {-ed} in walking is a marker of tense but the auxiliary will in will walk is not. Yet linguists label it as an aspect marker of both inflected and periphrastic forms.

English has two aspects. Grammarians traditionally call this progressive and perfect. Progressive in English requires the verb form be, followed by a present participle. The present participle in English is the {-ing} form of the verb. Like progressive, the perfect is a combination of a separate auxiliary verb and an inflected morpheme, usually a suffix. Perfect requires an auxiliary form followed by a past participle [1].

Tense and aspect in English are the most common morphosyntactic categories associated with verbs, and, it is surprised to learn that morphologically (in terms of the tensed forms) English verbs have only two tenses, namely present and past [9]. Tense is found in almost all main clauses (except for imperatives). There are two present tense forms, the third person singular present (Vs) and the general present [10]. The examples are as the followings:

- 1.a. Kim helps Lee every day.
- b. Kim and Jong help Lee every day.

In 1.a, inflection -s located at the end of the word *help* is a marker of present tense. This only occurs on the third person singular form, so that in a sentence *I help Lee*, the verb *help* has no suffix. This tense is sometimes called as 'non-past', because most 'present' tense verbs don't always refer to something that is happening right now. So (a), for example, refers to a habitual event. The past tense in (b) is marked with the -ed suffix. For person and number there is no changing in the form of word such as *Kim* into *Kim-s* or *Kim-ed*. These -s and -ed endings can be applied to regular verb that represent tense in English, although -s actually has a dual role [11]

What about the future tense? English has certain ways to utter the future time: one of them is using an AUXILIARY *will* such in *She will help Lee tomorrow*. But the main verb, *help*, doesn't inflect here. There is no 'future' verbal as the equivalent to the -s for present tense or -ed for past tense endings. The present tense of a verb can also refer to future time – as in *She leaves the country tomorrow* – or we can say *She is leaving the country tomorrow*, using another auxiliary, *is*. Suffix -ing here isn't a tense marking, it can occur with any time reference, as in *She was leaving, She will be leaving*.

According to [12] Traditional grammars of English consist of past, present and future tense. Past and present tense go together, since they are both formed from verb stems plus the suffixes -s and -ed. (irregular verbs such as *swim* and the suffix-less present-tense

forms are ignored.) Meanwhile for future tense is formed by adding auxiliary verbs *shall* and *will* plus the verb stem (*shall* is rarely use by the speaker). That is, the traditional future tense is a syntactic construction but the past and present tenses are single words. It is suspected that the 'future tense' is not a tense at all but has some other meaning.

Tense is defined by [8] as the 'grammaticalized expression of location in time'. The point is that different languages have their own grammatical marker to indicate time (past, present and future). This does not mean that a language can only refer to the points in time for which it has a morphological marker for tense, as we've already shown for 'future' in English.

A category closely related to tenses is aspects. Aspects mark properties as to whether the action is in progress or completed. For example, in *Kim ate dinner*, the verb is past tense but we understand that the meal is not over yet. This sentence has a progressive aspect, marked in English partly by the suffix *-ing* in the main verb, *eat*, but also with the addition of a auxiliary, a form of *be*. In *Kim has eaten his dinner*, we have a perfect aspect, referring to the action that has been completed. Again, this is indicated partly by changing the form of the verb itself (to be eaten) and partly by adding another auxiliary, this time having the form [9].

Mastering the temporal system of English and being able to properly apply this knowledge especially in spontaneous production is a challenging thing to do. Most students often have problems using the appropriate tenses both spoken and written [6]. In fact, English tense and aspect are described as the "traditional stumbling-block for learners" [13]

The correct use of the tense-aspect system of the English language is a problematic aspect for most students, especially in spontaneous spoken production. They may have a good knowledge base about the temporal system of English but may find it difficult to apply this knowledge to practice [14].

This is something that is complicated by students. Some students feel confused when using tenses [6]. Some of them also find English difficult because of the tenses. In fact, students must master the tenses in order to master English. English tenses require verb changes and the use of several elements, such as to be, auxiliaries and others. The pattern in tenses is considered complicated by students because it has no rules in their language [15].

The use of the simple past aspects, and the perfect and imperfect aspects by students is limited by their first grammar and semantic interpretation of the verb. In addition, some inconsistent forms are associated with the omission or addition of the third person singular-s and the omission of copula and auxiliary verbs. Some of the main factors for student error, namely, inherent inconsistencies in English rules, limited exposure of learners to (authentic) English, overgeneralization, reduced redundancy, and language transfer [15].

One study showed after years of studying and using English, advanced students may have difficulty with the use of conventional tenses, and aspects [16]. That

is what makes this area open to research [3]. It is suggested the need to introduce a suitable pedagogical method to present the rules of the target language well. However actually there are some students who are successful in learning tenses [14].

1.1.3 Mood

Mood is a grammatical category which marks properties such as possibility, probability and certainty. Languages tend to distinguish between actual events, as in (2.a), and hypothetical events, as in (2b):

- (2) a. Kim goes to Greece tomorrow.
b. Kim would go to Greece tomorrow if she were wealthy enough.

The MOOD refers to verb category or form to indicate what are expresses by the verb such as fact (indicative mood) command (imperative mood), question (interrogative mood), condition (conditional mood) and wish or possibility (subjunctive mood). The mood in *Kim went to Greece yesterday* is indicative mood. It entirely separates property from tense. The hypothetical event in *Kim would go to Greece tomorrow* is expressed in English by a separate auxiliary element, *would*, rather than by a change in the form of the main verb go itself. Such auxiliaries (*would, could, should, might and so on*) are termed MODAL (i.e. 'mood') auxiliaries. >>Some languages have specific verbal morphology which is used for hypothetical events, termed the SUBJUNCTIVE mood. English has the remnants of such a system, although not all speakers use it.

2. METHODS

The steps in conducting this research are collecting the data, analyzing the data, and presenting the results of the analysis. In order to be able to collect the data for this research, the researchers do observations and interviews to SLTA's English teachers and Universitas Andalas students from 5 departments such as: chemistry, animal science, information system, international economics, and medicine. The researcher then studies all of the data and analyzes them by using [1]; [10]; [9]; and [12].

The researcher follows some steps in analyzing the data. First, the researcher analyzes the descriptive concepts of TAM described by the SLTA's English teachers and students erferred to grammar or syntax books cited by the different authors. Then, the researcher compares them with the concepts of TAM from the up dated or modern grammar books of theory. After comparing the data, the researcher makes the interpretation about the teachers' concepts or perspectives. Lastly, in presenting the result of data analysis, the researcher uses figures and descriptively verbal language.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The following are the results of interviews of some teachers from different high schools in the city of Padang, West Sumatra about the description of

methods of teaching English in general and teaching grammar related to TAM in particular.

3.1 Teaching Strategies

There are some teaching and learning strategies applied when teaching English in Senior High School by the Teachers. First, the questions and answers are carried out directly in the classroom. In addition, students are also asked to complete assignments in accordance with the learning topics taught. The teacher admitted that this method was more effective, because students who felt they did not understand a learning topic, could ask directly to the teacher. Second, giving games at each meeting. It aims to make students enjoy and participate more in class. So, students do not only listen to the teacher's explanation, but students also compete to participate in completing the given game. While applying this method, students find it easier to understand the subject matter. Third, applying K13 (Curriculum 13) with lecturing and discussion methods. Teacher explains the material to the students, then asks the feedback from the students, after that students are given an assignment to make them more understand about the topic being taught. The assignment can be in the form of writing the sentences, reading a text and telling a story.

3.2 Tense

In general, almost all teachers in Senior High Schools said that there are 16 tenses in English but not all of the tenses were taught in the school. As they said, most of the tenses which are taught to the students are present, past, future and modal. The pattern of learning tenses to students is explained about the tenses material and working on the problems or given the questions first then explained about the tenses themselves. First, students will be brainstormed, and then they are asked about tenses. When the students understand the tenses, students are invited to make sentences. After students finish writing sentences, the teacher will explain the material. Another learning strategy applied in Senior High Schools is when students want to focus on past tense, the teacher gives

the narrative text. If students want to focus on imperative sentences, they will find these forms in the procedure text.

Learning tenses in senior high school is not specific but integrated with the text such as text procedures, narrative texts, and other texts. It is not mentioned the specific number of tenses in the text or course books which in general these schools apply the 2013 curriculum.

During their teaching, the teachers use some books as the references such as "Pathway to English", English Zone, Academic Literacy, English Alive, and English Language and Literature Student Books. The TOEFL book is also used in Senior High School such as Clifts TOEFL Preparation Guide by Pyle and Muno. The book from the Ministry of Education and Betty Schramper's Grammar are also used.

3.3 Time, Aspect and Mood

Talking about time, aspect and mood, the researcher finds different answer from the teachers. First, the teacher defined time as the location of time in a sentence. Meanwhile, the mood is more towards the atmosphere, the situation in a statement in the sentence. It also needs to be taught to students to understand aspects and moods in a sentence, even in the text. Second, the teachers are not familiar with the concept of time, aspect, and mood. Third, the teacher said aspect is the times that occur in English namely present, past, and future tenses. Mood relates to positive, negative, and interrogative sentences.

3.4 The Students Point of View

The researcher also interviewed 50 persons of the first-year students in Universitas Andalas coming from different Senior High School in Padang about their understanding and the teaching of TAM in their former high schools in Padang city.

The followings are the the findings from the recapitulated answers form the students studying at Universitas Andalas from 5 different faculties.

Table 1. The number of students per department and number of tenses studied during high school

The name of SMAN in Padang	Department of Animal Sciences	Department of General Medicine	Department of Chemistry	Department of Economics	Department of Information System	Number of Students
SMAN 1		3 students (12,16,16 tense)		3 students (12,3,12 tenses)	3 students (8-16-8 tenses)	9
SMAN 2				1 student (16 tenses)		1
SMAN 3		1 student (3 tenses)	1 student (3 tense)	2 students (12,10 tenses)	3 students (6-6-6 tenses)	7
SMAN 4		2 students (12,16 tenses)		3 students (16,12,12 tenses)	1 student (16 tenses)	6
SMAN 5	1 student (3 tenses)			1 student (16 tenses)	2 students (16-16 tenses)	4
SMAN 6				1 student (16 tenses)	1 student (16 tenses)	2

SMAN 7	1 student (16 tense)	1 student (16 tense)			2	
SMAN 8			1 student (7 tense)		1	
SMAN 9	2 students (16,4 tenses)	2 students (16,16 tenses)	1 student (16 tenses)		5	
SMAN 10		1 student (16 tense)	1 student (16 tenses)	2 students (16,16 tenses)	3 students (5-16- number of tenses is not mentioned)	7
SMAN 11					1 student (16 tenses)	1
SMAN 14			3 students (8-16-16 tenses)			-
SMAN 15	1 student (13 tenses)					1
SMAN 16	1 student (16 tenses)					1
Total	5	10	8	13	14	50

The table above shows from a total of 50 students from 5 different majors, giving answers knowing the number of Tenses 16 there are 27 students; the number of Tenses 3 are 4 students; the number of Tenses 5 is 1 student; the number of Tenses 6 are 4 students; the number of Tenses 7 is 1 student; the number of Tenses 8 are 3 students; the number of tenses 10 is 1 student; the number of tenses 12 are 6 students; and number of tenses 13 is 1 student. The 16 tenses intended by the school teachers and the fresh university students are the main ones: Present, Past, and Future. Then the three can be broken down into 16. The number of 16 tenses with each function and pattern Each tense will be followed by verb changing and appropriate time signal [14].

Based on time, there are four divisions; *present, past, future* and *past future*. Viewed from event, each tense has four ways: simple, continuous, perfect and perfect continuous. Thus, there are sixteen kinds of tenses. Next, the following is a recapitulation of English Language Learning Processes based on schools delivered by Unand students from 5 different faculties who attended at *SMAN Kota Padang*:

Table 2. The recapitulation of English Language Learning Processes based on some high schools in Padang

SMAN 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Teachers focus on doing LKS or workbook by the Padang city MGMP team. -Students read a lot of texts and answer questions and practice listening, -Students do not get much learning tenses and Grammar. -Students only discuss topics according to textbooks such as giving advice, offering help. -Students discuss texts or paragraphs, -Students fill the blank for grammar. -Students watch videos, -Teacher gives materials and examples for grammar using Power point, e learning, English web, -The students use photocopy material for studying grammar. -Teacher ask grammar during the UAS, -Teacher explains tenses gradually along with the book chapters
SMAN 2	-Students study in accordance with the handbook
SMAN 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Students have fun learning, -Students study using presentations, story-telling, drama, PPT, videos, study groups, listening, group assignments, work book, games, -Students focus on the material according to the curriculum and they have less practice -Students compose sentences using cardboard, -Teacher intersperses materials with Grammar. -Teacher does not explain tenses specifically
SMAN 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Students learn modestly, -Students memorize vocabularies -Students learn how to ask and how to give -Teacher does not explain the concept of Grammar,

	-Teacher explains with the teacher's guide, -Teacher gives assignments,
SMAN 5	-Students learn speaking, reading, and writing, -Students write essays with tenses, -Teacher gives formula to each tense, and aspects are not studied, -Students study by using video animation and games, -Students translates tasks, -Students record incomprehensible words, -Students study according to 2013 curriculum, -Students search a lot information
SMAN 6	-Students study by group presentations, chapter presentations, drama, and singing -Students study tenses with formulas, -Teacher tells students to exemplify,
SMAN 7	-Students study reading, writing, and speaking, -Students do presentation, dialogue practice, and discussion, -Teacher gives tense formulas, but aspects are not taught
SMAN 9	-Students have power point presentations and quiz applications -Students search for videos, -Students study tenses a little explained in general and inserted when discussing text -Students do not study aspects -Students are not allowed to speak Indonesian, -Teacher explains on the board and writes examples,
SMAN 10	-Students study in accordance with the guidance of workbook, -Students have debate, roleplay, online games, group learning, quizzes, English practice, discussion, answering questions, direct conversations, -Students have fun learning, -Students make sentences, and do exercises, -Students rarely discuss Grammar, -students look for tenses in the textbook -Students display group dialogues in front of the class, Touched a little in dialogs, -Students also discuss UN, -Students do not study aspects -Teacher explains with power points, -Teacher teaches with different methods, -Teacher explains tenses per chapter, and give examples
SMAN 11	-Students have presentations, quizzes, and games, -Students watch movies, -Teacher gives examples of tenses,
SMAN 14	-Students have discussiona and practice -Teacher explains with a direct example of daily life, -Students use worksheets, teacher notes, -Teacher explains and students notes, Voice aspects are not learned, Pursuing worksheets, tenses are taught a little, tenses are made formulas,
SMAN 15	-Teacher explains the material and determines the language pattern
SMAN 16	-Students study the material through worksheets, -Teacher gives more assignments, -Teacher does not give special language learning, and only change sentence patterns

From the table above about how English lessons are taught in general, teachers generally practice a variety of ways of learning so that students feel interested in participating in lessons, including through games, online learning, quizzes, video screenings. The teacher also tends to follow the 2013 curriculum material and worksheets by explaining it and then giving practice.

Unfortunately, the Grammar, especially about TAM is not studied in depth, only slightly studied. And even then, they are learned in accordance with the topic of the chapter of the existing book. For the Aspect as a whole, the students did not get knowledge from the teachers.

4. CONCLUSION

In learning grammars of English at some Senior High Schools in Padang, generally, tense is a fairly inclusive term and can encompass various combinations of tense, aspect and modality, consequently including the categories of 'perfect' tenses, and 'future' tenses. So that high school teachers and first-year students generally know there are 16 tenses. However, not all of them are studied in depth but follow and adjust to the topic or text in the book. With so many tenses and not specifically studied, it makes it difficult for students to understand it so that it is often difficult for them when speaking and writing.

Unlike the more modern approaches to Grammar, tense is used far more restrictively to cover only those

instances in which an inflection is used to convey a temporal location on a perceived timeline - in such a stringent approach, English is reduced to only two tenses: 'past' and 'present'. While simple, progressive, and perfect are the internal temporal time of tenses called aspects. Whereas Future is only a form that can be expressed in various ways, such as with modals, present simple, present progressive, and be going to. By considering the concept of structure which appears sequentially, starting from the forms of Modals, 2 tenses and 3 aspects, it seems students will be easier to understand than memorizing the existing tenses pattern of 16.

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