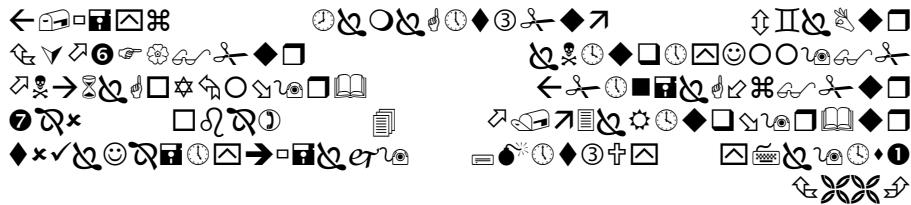


CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Allah creates human in the world with various nations, ethnics, and customs. Even so the language, one country and another country have different language. Allah states about the variety of language in surah Ar-Rum verse 22:



“And of His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the diversity of your tongues and colors. In that surely are signs for those who possess knowledge.” (Ar- Rum: 22)¹

In surah above, Allah shows us the signs of His authority through differences of tongue. Tongue means a language. There are no people who have the same language in the world. It is influenced by the location. People who live in difference location have difference language. They have to cooperate with one another to complete the necessities in their life.

According to Charles W. Kreidler, language is a system of symbols through which people communicate. The symbols may be spoken, written, or signed with the hand.² According to Wardhough, language is a system of arbitrary vocal symbols used for human communication.³ And Janet Holmes explain that language is a valuable source of insight into the perception, values,

¹ A. Yusuf Ali, *The Holy Qur'an, Text, Translation and Commentary*, (Maryland: Amana Corp, 1983), Page.1056

² Charles W. Keidler. *Introducing English Semantic*.1999. New York: The tailor and Francis Group. Page 3.

³ Djoko Srijono . *An Introductory Course of Linguistics*. 2001.Surakarta: Muhammadiyah University Press. Page 1

beliefs, and attitudes of community.⁴ Furthermore according to Lim Kiat Boey, language is social phenomenon. It is a means of communication between individuals. It also brings them into relationship with their environment⁵.

Language is very important to express something and to communicate with other. As everybody knows, language is a tool to convey ideas, opinions, and feelings among people by oral or written ways. One of the languages which are often used in communication is English. It becomes the dominant language around the world, and more people use English than other language respectively as an international language.

English as a foreign language has important role in Indonesia compared by language countries others. English has reached almost all aspects of modern life, such as, education, business, trade, science, technology, and many others. Above all, English has opened up the hurdle of people from different states and different language to associate, to communicate, and to develop cooperation with each others.

In Indonesia, English as one of foreign language to be taught in the schools since English has become an internasional language and used by most communities in the world. In order to make English teaching successfully, some factors such as, quality of the teacher, students' interest and motivation, school buildings, the teaching method, book, etc have to be considered.

Recently, English is taught at school from Elementary School (SD) Junior High School (SMP), Senior High School (SMA) and university. There are four skills of language: Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. Beside those, spelling, grammar, and pronunciation must be taught to learners in order to the achievement of the four skills above.

One of the language skills is grammar. Grammar is considered important, because grammar is a basic knowledge of language to understand English perfectly. But in fact, students have difficulties in learning grammar.

⁴ Janet Holmes. *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics*. 2001. Malaysia: Longman Group UK. Page 338.

⁵ Lim Kiat Boey. . *An Introduction to Linguistics for the Language Teacher*.1997. Singapore: Singapore University Press.

Many people think of grammar as a rather boring school subject which has little use in real life. According to Brown, in Communicative Language Teaching, grammatical explanation and terminology are used in classes teach grammar but any grammatical explanation undertaken may be enhanced, if the English teachers use charts and other visuals aid whenever possible to graphically depict grammatical relationship.⁶

Grammar covers tenses, words order, modals, preposition, adjective and other structure items. There are 16 tenses in English.⁷ As we know so far, each tense has rules of its own. It makes the students confused and frustrated to use tenses correctly and also there are no tenses in Indonesian language. It is one of difficulty problem in studying English.

Present Continuous Tenses is one of tenses. Betty Schramper Azar explained that Present Continuous Tenses is one of tenses which give the idea that an action is in progress during particular time.⁸ As said by Brown above that if use charts and other visuals aid whenever possible to graphically depict grammatical relationship, Because of the reason how important visual aids are in teaching grammar to make students more interested and enjoyed, media was used interest strategy by the researcher in teaching process. There are so many media that can be used to learning tenses for example song, flashcard, newspaper, and others. So flashcard was used as media to improve students' understanding on Present Continuous Tenses by the researcher.

According to Merriam and Webster, flash card is a card bearing words, number or pictures that briefly displayed (as by a teacher to a class) use as a learning aid.⁹ In addition flashcards are very simple but very effective way for an individual to study a particular topic. This study focuses on flashcard as media in teaching Present Continuous Tenses. An action research was

⁶ Douglas Brown, *Teaching by Principles an Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy*, (New York: San Frasico State University) P.365

⁷ George Wilkinson and Deny Hariyanto, *Complete English Grammar*, (Jakarta: Pustaka Indonesia). Page 272.

⁸ Betty Schramper Azar, *Understanding and Using English Grammar Second Edition* (New Jersey: United States of America,1989) P,3

⁹ Merriam and Webster, *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, (USA: Merriam-Webster's inc, 2003), Page. 476.

conducted by the researcher to improve students' understanding on Present Continuous Tenses for the seventh Grade Students of MTs YAMIDA Grobogan using flashcard in academic year 2009/2010.

B. Reasons for Choosing the Topic

The topic was chosen to improve students' understanding on present continuous tense using flashcard, for the following reasons:

1. Grammar was important to be learnt because correct grammatical sentences should be used to communicate with other people in order to make the meaning clearly.
2. Considering the importance of grammar, the teaching grammar must be improved. Flashcard was used as teaching media, because flashcard was an interesting aid in teaching to activate the students in learning process.
3. Present Continuous Tense was chosen as a topic because it includes grammar and it was interesting to know how students' understanding on Present Continuous Tenses.
4. To know the improvement of students' understanding on Present Continuous Tenses using flashcard at the 7th grade students of MTs YAMIDA.
5. An action research was conducted as an on the job task for the sake of effectiveness and efficiency in teaching English. By doing action research, the researcher intends to improve the quality of teaching Present Continuous Tenses.

C. Research Questions

The study is aimed to answer the following question:

1. How is the implementation of flashcard in teaching Present Continuous Tense?
2. How is students' understanding on Present Continuous Tenses before the use of flashcard?
3. How is students' understanding on Present Continuous Tenses after the use of flashcard?

4. Can flashcard improve students' understanding on Present Continuous Tense?

D. Objective of the Study

Based on the problem above, the aims of this study are as follows:

1. To describe the implementation of flashcard in teaching Present Continuous Tense.
2. To find out students' understanding on Present Continuous Tenses before the use of flashcard.
3. To find out students' understanding on Present Continuous Tenses after the use of flashcard.
4. To identify the improvement of students' understanding on Present Continuous Tense.

E. Significant of the Study

This study gave some significant values. They were:

1. Student

The use of flashcard improved students' understanding on Present Continuous Tense. They were not bored in learning process, and it motivated them to learn English well.

2. Teacher

- a. Flashcard helped teacher to improve students' understanding easily. Having understood, students learned Present Continuous Tense easily.
- b. Flashcard was one of good media the information for teacher, good learning strategy with using media was interesting.

3. Teaching process

Flashcard made classroom situation more interesting. Students learned in an interesting situation, in order that they were understood easily. In addition, it made teaching process more efficient because flashcard helped teacher describing the topic through their picture.

4. Researcher and Reader

This research was hoped to be able to improve the knowledge about teaching Present Continuous Tense. The results of the study were useful for readers. The findings of this research may be used as a reference to understand more about method of teaching English.

F. Limitation of the Study

This study was conducted at MTs YAMIDA Grobogan. Not all of classes at MTs YAMIDA Grobogan were investigated, but only the seventh grade students. The English subject taught for the seventh grade was limited on Present Continuous Tenses based on the students need and level. Participants were students of seventh grade. Total numbers of students were 41.

This research emphasized in improving students' understanding on Present Continuous Tense by using flashcard as media in learning teaching process.

G. Definition of key term

1. Using flashcard to improve students understanding on Present Continuous Tense

“Use” is do something with a machine, a method, an object, etc for particular purpose.¹⁰

“Flashcard” is small cards that have picture, word, text or symbol for individual to study a particular topic or describe something.¹¹

In this study, flashcard was used as media in teaching Present Continuous Tense in order to make classroom situation more interesting.

According to Oxford Dictionary, “Improve” is become or make something better, to increase good qualities.¹²

¹⁰ Oxford, *Oxford Learners Pocket Dictionary* New Edition (New York: Oxford University Press,2000) P.475

¹¹ Arsyad Azhar, *Media Pembelajaran*, (Jakarta: PT Raja Grafindo Persada,2002) P.110

¹²Oxford, *op cit* P.216

“Students” are person who is studying at a college or university, person studying at secondary school, any person interested in a particular subject.¹³

In this study, flashcard was used to improve students’ understanding on Present Continuous Tense.

“Understanding” also called intellection is a psychological process related to an abstract or physical object, such as a person, situation, or message whereby one is able to think about it and use concepts to deal adequately with that object.¹⁴

“Present Continuous Tense” was used for an action which is going on at this moment.¹⁵ It describes present time and it is used for actions which are happening in the present and for a period of time which includes the present.¹⁶

In this study, understanding on Present Continuous Tense was the psychological process to understand on Present Continuous Tense.

2. Action Research.

“Action research” is one of problem solving strategy which provides real action in the form of innovative development process that “tried while continue” or “on going job” to detect and to solve problem.¹⁷

3. Seventh Grade of MTs YAMIDA Grobogan in the Academic Year of 2009/2010.

The phrase “the seventh grade students” refers to the students who have been studying at MTs YAMIDA Grobogan

¹³ Ibid, P.429

¹⁴ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Understanding> accessed on 13/11/2009

¹⁵ A. S. Hornby, *Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary of Current English*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), P.1331

¹⁶ Alexander Mongot Jaya, Agus Siswanto, and Rahmadi AF. *English Revolution*. Jepara: Mawas Press. Page 138

¹⁷ Suharsimi Arikunto, *Prosedur Penelitian: Suatu Pendekatan Praktek*, [Jakarta: PT. Rineka Cipta, 2002], p. 82

It was institution in which the object in this study and where the writer held his research. It is located on Jono Kec. Tawangharjo Kab. Grobogan Purwodadi 58191.

The phrase “the Academic Year of 2009/2010 means the duration time for teaching and learning and other academic activities that consist of two semesters, had been started on July 2009 and would have been completed on July 2010.