



THE ANALYSIS OF TENSES USED IN THE ENGLISH FOR NUSANTARA TEXTBOOK FOR JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

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Abstract

This study investigates the kinds and functions of tenses used in the English for Nusantara textbook for Grade VII Junior High School (SMP/MTs). The research aims to identify which tenses appear in the textbook and to analyze how their functions are presented in relation to students' learning needs under the Kurikulum Merdeka. This study employs a descriptive qualitative method with content analysis techniques. The data consist of sentences containing verb tenses collected from all chapters of the textbook. The analysis is based on grammatical theories proposed by Swan and supported by Hermann Ebbinghaus's theories of the Forgetting Curve and Spacing Effect. The findings reveal that five types of tenses are used in the textbook: Simple Present Tense, Present Continuous Tense, Present Perfect Tense, Simple Past Tense, and Simple Future Tense. Among these, the Simple Present Tense is the most dominant and is presented with relatively complete functions, while other tenses appear with limited frequency and incomplete functional coverage. This uneven distribution indicates that the textbook does not yet provide sufficient and balanced exposure to all tense forms, which may affect students' long-term retention and mastery of English grammar. Therefore, it is recommended that future textbook development distribute tense usage more evenly to support effective grammatical learning.

Keywords: tenses, kinds of tenses, functions of tenses, English for Nusantara textbook, Kurikulum Merdeka

1. Introduction

Grammar is a fundamental component of English language learning, particularly in developing accurate and meaningful communication. One essential aspect of grammar is tense, which functions to express time and the relationship between actions and events. In the Indonesian EFL context, tenses are often perceived as difficult because Indonesian does not employ verb inflection to indicate time. As a result, students frequently struggle to understand and apply English tenses correctly.

Textbooks play a crucial role in supporting grammar instruction, especially under the Kurikulum Merdeka, which emphasizes contextual and meaningful learning. English for Nusantara is an official textbook designed for Junior High School students and is widely used in Indonesian classrooms. However, the effectiveness of this textbook in presenting tense forms and

their functions has not been sufficiently examined. Therefore, this study focuses on analyzing the kinds and functions of tenses found in the English for Nusantara textbook for Grade VII students.

The research questions addressed in this study are: (1) What kinds of tenses are found in the English for Nusantara textbook? and (2) What functions of tenses are presented in the textbook?

2. Review of Literature

2.1 Tenses

Tense is a grammatical category that indicates the relationship between time and an action or event. In English, tense is primarily marked through verb inflection to show whether an action takes place in the present, past, or future. Declerck states that tense functions to locate a situation in time in relation to the moment of speaking or another temporal reference point. This temporal positioning enables speakers and



writers to convey meaning accurately and coherently.

Swan explains that English tenses are not only formal grammatical structures but also carry specific communicative functions depending on their context of use. For instance, the Simple Present Tense is commonly used to express habitual actions, general truths, instructions, and scheduled events, whereas the Simple Past Tense is used to describe actions that were completed in the past. Other tenses, such as the Present Continuous and Present Perfect, are used to indicate ongoing actions and actions that have relevance to the present time.

In the context of English language teaching, particularly in EFL settings, mastery of tenses is essential because learners must understand both their forms and functions. Since Indonesian does not use verb inflection to indicate time, English tenses often present challenges for students. Therefore, systematic and balanced presentation of tenses in textbooks is necessary to support students' grammatical understanding and effective language use.

2.2 Theory and Method

This study is grounded in grammatical theory and qualitative research methodology. The primary theoretical framework is derived from English grammar studies, particularly the theory of tenses proposed by Swan. According to Swan, tenses in English function not only as grammatical forms but also as tools to express time, aspect, and contextual meaning in communication. This theory is used to identify and classify the kinds of tenses as well as to analyze their functions as presented in the textbook.

In addition, this study is supported by Hermann Ebbinghaus's theories of the Forgetting Curve and the Spacing Effect. These theories explain how information is retained or forgotten over time and emphasize the importance of repeated and distributed exposure in learning. The theories are applied to interpret how the frequency and distribution of tense usage in the textbook may influence students' long-

term retention and mastery of English grammar.

Methodologically, this study employs a descriptive qualitative approach with content analysis techniques. The data are taken from sentences containing verb tenses found in the English for Nusantara textbook for Grade VII Junior High School. The analysis focuses on identifying the kinds of tenses and explaining their grammatical functions based on the selected theories. This approach allows for systematic examination of grammatical content as it appears in authentic instructional materials.

3. Findings And Discussion

3.1 Simple Present Tense

The Simple Present Tense is the most frequently used tense found in the *English for Nusantara* textbook for Grade VII Junior High School. This tense appears consistently across chapters and is used to introduce basic grammatical concepts to beginner learners. According to Swan, the Simple Present Tense functions to express habitual actions, general truths, instructions, and scheduled events. These functions are clearly reflected in the textbook materials.

In the textbook, the Simple Present Tense is commonly used in sentences describing daily activities and routines, such as students' habits at school or at home. This usage aligns with the learners' real-life experiences, making the grammatical concept easier to understand. In addition, the tense is used to express general facts and universal truths, which supports students' comprehension of factual statements in English.

The textbook also employs the Simple Present Tense in instructional sentences, particularly in classroom commands and exercise directions. This function is important because it familiarizes students with imperative-like structures and commonly used instructional language. Furthermore, the Simple Present Tense is used to describe scheduled events, such as school timetables and regular activities, reinforcing its practical communicative function.



Although the functions of the Simple Present Tense are presented relatively comprehensively, the textbook tends to rely heavily on this tense compared to others. From the perspective of Ebbinghaus's Forgetting Curve and Spacing Effect, frequent exposure to the Simple Present Tense may support students' retention of this form. However, the dominance of this tense may also limit students' opportunities to practice other tense forms in a balanced manner.

Therefore, while the presentation of the Simple Present Tense in the *English for Nusantara* textbook is effective for introducing basic grammar, its overwhelming frequency suggests a need for more proportional distribution of other tenses to ensure comprehensive grammatical development.

3.2 Present Continuous Tense

The Present Continuous Tense is the second type of tense identified in the *English for Nusantara* textbook for Grade VII Junior High School. This tense is generally used to express actions that are happening at the moment of speaking or around the present time. According to Swan, the Present Continuous Tense functions to describe temporary actions, ongoing activities, and situations in progress.

In the textbook, the Present Continuous Tense appears in limited contexts, mainly in dialogues and short descriptive texts. It is commonly used to describe activities that students are doing at the time of speaking, such as studying, playing, or working on tasks. This usage helps learners understand the concept of actions in progress and distinguish it from habitual actions expressed by the Simple Present Tense.

However, the analysis shows that the functions of the Present Continuous Tense are not presented comprehensively. The textbook does not include examples of the tense being used to express repeated temporary actions or changing situations, which are also important functions of the Present Continuous Tense. As a result,

students are exposed to a narrow range of usage.

From the perspective of Ebbinghaus's Forgetting Curve and Spacing Effect, the limited frequency and restricted functional range of the Present Continuous Tense may reduce students' ability to retain and apply this tense effectively. Without sufficient repetition and variation, learners may struggle to differentiate this tense from other present forms. Therefore, although the Present Continuous Tense is introduced in the *English for Nusantara* textbook, its presentation remains insufficient. A wider distribution of examples and functions is necessary to strengthen students' understanding and long-term mastery of this tense.

3.3 Present Perfect Tense

The Present Perfect Tense appears very rarely in the *English for Nusantara* textbook for Grade VII Junior High School. This tense is generally used to express actions that occurred in the past but still have relevance to the present. According to Swan, the Present Perfect Tense functions to indicate experiences, recent actions, and actions with present results.

The analysis shows that the textbook provides only a limited number of examples of the Present Perfect Tense. The tense is not introduced explicitly, and its functions are not clearly explained to students. As a result, learners may have difficulty understanding the difference between the Present Perfect Tense and the Simple Past Tense.

From the perspective of the Forgetting Curve, minimal exposure to this tense may cause students to quickly forget its form and function. The lack of repeated and spaced examples reduces the effectiveness of learning. Therefore, the presentation of the Present Perfect Tense in the textbook is considered insufficient and requires further development.

3.4 Simple Past Tense

The Simple Past Tense is used in the *English for Nusantara* textbook to express



actions that happened and were completed in the past. According to Swan, this tense functions to describe past events, finished actions, and sequences of events in narratives.

In the textbook, the Simple Past Tense appears in short recount texts and simple dialogues. Students are introduced to past activities such as holidays and personal experiences. However, the range of functions presented is limited, and the tense is not explored in depth.

The limited distribution of the Simple Past Tense may affect students' ability to construct accurate past narratives. Based on the Spacing Effect theory, insufficient repetition can hinder long-term retention. Therefore, more varied and frequent exposure to the Simple Past Tense is necessary.

3.5 Simple Future Tense

The Simple Future Tense is the least frequently used tense found in the *English for Nusantara* textbook. This tense is commonly used to express future plans, predictions, and intentions. Swan explains that future meaning in English is often expressed using auxiliary verbs such as *will* and *be going to*.

The analysis indicates that the Simple Future Tense is presented in very limited contexts, mostly in expressions related to plans or intentions. Other important functions, such as predictions based on evidence or spontaneous decisions, are not adequately introduced. From the perspective of the Spacing Effect, the limited appearance of the Simple Future Tense may prevent students from developing a clear understanding of future time expressions. Therefore, the textbook should provide more balanced exposure to future forms to support students' grammatical competence.

4. Conclusion

This study concludes that the *English for Nusantara* textbook for Grade VII Junior High School contains five kinds of tenses, namely Simple Present Tense, Present Continuous Tense, Present Perfect Tense,

Simple Past Tense, and Simple Future Tense. Among these, the Simple Present Tense is the most dominant and is presented with relatively complete functions, while the other tenses appear with limited frequency and restricted functional coverage.

The findings indicate that the presentation of tenses in the textbook is not evenly distributed. Although frequent exposure to the Simple Present Tense may support students' understanding of basic grammar, the limited appearance of other tenses may hinder learners' ability to master a broader range of grammatical structures. From the perspective of Ebbinghaus's Forgetting Curve and Spacing Effect, insufficient repetition and variation can negatively affect students' long-term retention and application of tense forms.

Therefore, it is recommended that future textbook development provide more balanced and systematic exposure to various tenses and their functions. A more proportional distribution of grammatical forms is expected to support students' grammatical competence and improve the effectiveness of English language learning in junior high schools. Future researchers are encouraged to conduct similar studies on other textbooks or explore how tense presentation influences students' learning outcomes in classroom practice.

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