

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the problem

English has become the language mostly used around the world. It has become the dominant language of science, technology, and communication. In Indonesia, English is learned from the Elementary School up to university levels. Although the learners have learnt English continuously, the result is still under the target. This condition might have been caused by several factors. One of them is because English sentence constructions have particular sentence structure. Every sentence as its own structure that uses certain tense for example present continuous tense applying personal pronoun, to be, and verb –ng form.

The fact above is also supported by the result of pre observation the researcher did at the first semester of class VII SMP 22 Bandar Lampung. The teacher gives students' works about producing some correct grammatical sentences to the researcher. Most students could not produce sentences correctly because of their lack of grammatical competence. This might happen because the teacher does not use appropriate technique in teaching grammar. As a result, most students think that studying grammar is boring and they are also confused to use verb forms such as auxiliary verb or modals.

Finochiaro (1973 :264) says that sentence by using pictures in teaching present continuous form, the teacher may be able to know that the teaching learning process can be more effective to encourage students to learn English and also more interesting. There are some considerations why the teacher uses the pictures in teaching present continuous tense: firstly, pictures can make students understand and retain the meaning of word when they see the object (Finochiaro 1973: 265). Secondly, pictures make the students remember the lesson better by seeing the object through them. The students' memories can be stimulated if there are some stimuli to activate them.

Finally the teacher uses present continuous tense because she sees that present continuous and simple present tense are the first pattern that the students had when they learn English either in school outside the school and teacher thinks that pictures will help the students catch the material explanation eagerly.

Considering the idea above, the researcher intends to improve students' mastery of present continuous tense by using pictures because it may help them memorize the concept of sentence and it may make the material stay longer in their mind, therefore the researcher implemented simple sentences by using pictures to improve students' ability of present continuous tense at students of SMPN 22 Bandar Lampung.

1.2 Formulation of research problem

The research problem is: Is there any significant improvement of students' ability in present continuous tense after they are taught by means of simple sentence exercises by using pictures at the first years of SMP 22 Bandar Lampung?

1.3 Objective

To find out whether of simple sentence exercises by using pictures is applicable at the first years of SMP 22 Bandar Lampung to improve the students' ability in present continuous.

1.4 The uses of the research

The results of the research are expected to be beneficial both theoretically and practically:

1.4.1 Theoretically

The result of this experiment is expected to support the theory about the improving of students' ability in present continuous Tense through constructing simple sentence exercises by using Pictures.

1.4.2 Practically

a. The teacher

Through this research, the teacher can apply pictures as one of media in teaching grammar that can improve his or her students' grammar.

b. The students

The implementation of picture in this research will make the students interested in learning grammar without memorizing the formula of tenses, so the students' grammar mastery and learning motivation will improve during teaching learning process.

1.5 Scope of the research

This quantitative research was conducted at the first year SMP 22 Bandar Lampung. The problem is the students could not produce present continuous sentences grammatically. The focus of this study will be on students' weaknesses in matching the subject with the sentences, changing the verb infinitive into verb-*ing*, and identifying the subject. The materials are adopted from 2006 curriculum of junior high school by using pictures, the pictures that are used in the research show some activities such as daily activity, family activity which enable students to produce the sentences in *ing*-form.

1.6 Definition of Terms

Definition of terms expresses the meaning of the present continuous tense and picture.

- a. Tense is a verb or series of verb form used to express time relation and indicate whether an action, activity, or statement in present and past time.
- b. The present continuous tense is sentence construction using subject, to be, and verb –ing sentence showing an action in progress at the moment of speaking or around the time of the speaking. The action is likely to continue after the time of speaking, but is likely to stop at some point, i.e. it is temporary.
- c. Simple Sentence contains a single subject and predicate. It describes only one thing, idea or question, and has only one verb - it contains only an *independent (main) clause*. Simple sentences contain one clause expressing a single main idea.
- d. Picture is one kind of visual aids that can help the teacher to teach the students at Junior High School level. Picture can encourage and motivate for learning English it is interesting and clarify the words that the students have not understood yet. Picture consists of meaning and messages, when it is presented in the class, each student has his or her own perception depends on her or his imagination or thought about the picture.