

**IMPROVING THE STUDENTS' ABILITY IN CONSTRUCTING IF  
CONDITIONAL SENTENCES BY APPLYING THE TENSE KEY  
MATCHING TECHNIQUE AT THE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT OF  
STKIP INSAN MADANI AIRMOLEK**

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**Abstract:** *This study was conducted to improve the students' ability in constructing If conditional sentences by applying the tense key matching technique. This was a kind of Classroom Action Research. The subject of the study was the second semester students of the English Department of STKIP Insan Madani Airmolek in academic year 2019/2020. The total number of the students were 10. The objectives of the study was to improve the second semester students' ability in constructing If conditional sentences by applying the Tense Key Matching Technique at English Department of STKIP Insan Madani Airmolek. The study was divided into two cycles in which each cycle has four phases (planning, acting, observing and reflecting). Both quantitative and qualitative data were gathered in this study. Through the result of the study, it shows that there is significant improvement on the students' ability in constructing If conditional sentences. The mean score of the pre-test in cycle I was 60.7 and the post-test in the same cycle was 74.7. After the technique was applied during the process of teaching and learning, the mean score was higher (84.7).*

**Keywords:** *Tense key matching technique, If conditional sentences*

**INTRODUCTION**

**Background of The Research**

Learning a foreign language will always deals with sentences. And,of

course the setences depends on the correct grammatical usage. The same thing also applies to English learning. There is no doubt when someone learns

English, he has to be able acquire all of the tense formula of English sentences. This is not an easy thing to do and it often puts someone into frustrated situation and makes him discouraged because the wrong formula usage means wrong meaning. It also often happens when someone learns English, he writes or says the sentence in inverse order.

The situation becomes worse because the teachers or lecturers often do not apply the appropriate teaching techniques, methods, or approaches to their students in learning English especially in learning grammar. In other words, the teachers or lecturers also seldom use appropriate techniques and they also lack of grammar mastery. Contrary to this, Zulfiqar (2011:5) ever convinces that teachers are supposed to use simple language in explaining the learning materials relate to grammar, put the materials into order from the easiest to the most difficult to teach, and give contextual and relevant examples.

The students need to be able to construct sentences correctly by using correct formula in order that they can explain heir ideas, feeling and thought

in spoken or written form. Since the teachers or lecturers put less attention to their students' ability in constructing sentences, the students have less courage to know more in detail about the tense formula.

The problem above actually can be solved if the teachers or lecturers have willing to apply appropriate technique in teaching tense formula to attract the students' attention and interest. In this study, the writers would love to introduce a techniqe of teaching tense formula called "Tense Key Matching" to improve the students' ability in constructing sentences especially If conditional sentences. Based on the above description, the title of this study is "Improving The Second Semester Students in Constructing If Conditional Sentences by Applying The Tense Key Matching Technique at The English Department of STKIP Insan Madani Airmolek.

### **Identification of The Research**

Several issues relate to the problem background mentioned are identified, which are:

1. The students have low motivation in learning English.
2. The lecturers often do not improved their knowledge of grammar. Consequently, they give their students wrong understanding of the material.
3. The lecturers often do not try to find and improve their teaching method, technique and approach of grammar. For, the students feel uninterested in learning it more deeply.

#### **The Limitation of The Research**

To help the writers focus on the problem of the research, this is necessary to limit the study to focus only on “improving the students’ ability in constructing If conditional sentences by using the Tense Key Matching technique”. The reason why they chose it because they want to show and convince the students that constructing sentences is really easy. This is also believed that it would give the students the unforgettable moment to feel that constructing sentences was amazing as long as they know the right techniques.

#### **The Formulation of The Problem**

Considering the limitation of the study described above, it needs to formulate the problem into “How Is The Tense Key Matching Technique Conducted to Improved The Second Semester Students’ Ability in Constructing If Conditional Sentences at English Department of STKIP Insan Madani Airmolek in Academic Year 2019/2020?”

#### **The Objective of The Research**

The objectives of the study was to improve the second semester students’ ability in constructing If conditional sentences by applying the Tense Key Matching Technique at English Department of STKIP Insan Madani Airmolek in academic year 2019/2020.

#### **The Significances of The Research**

The study was expected to be very useful for:

##### *1. English lecturers*

The use of the technique will show them an alternative technique to teach tenses creatively to enhance their students’ enthutiasm in learning sentences.

2. *The students*

Through this study, it is expected that the students experience a new way of learning English. It is hoped that they have courage to improve their ability in constructing any sentences.

3. *The researchers*

The researchers have experience great things and gather more knowledge in the education research and English teaching.

- » Present = sekarang
- » Past = masa lampau
- » Future = masa yang akan datang
- » Past future = masa terencana di masa lalu

Considering the characteristics of the event:

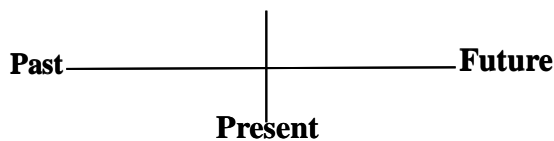
- » Simple = kebiasaan
- » Continuous = sedang terjadi
- » Perfect = sudah atau belum berlaku
- » Perfect Continuous = masih sedang berlangsung.

**REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

**Tense**

Writing or saying English sentences is determined by what type of tenses must be used. Brinton (2000:11) mentions that tense means the time of an event in respect to the moment of speaking (past time, present moment, and future time). Simply, tense depends on the change of verb which is based on the change of time and event.

Three groups of tense:



Considering the time of the event:

Sudirman (2014:157) explains that the combination of the change of time and event will create 16 tense:

	<b>PRESENT</b>	<b>PAST</b>	<b>FUTURE</b>	<b>PAST FUTURE</b>
<b>SIMPLE</b>	Simple Present	Simple Past	Simple Future	Simple Past Future
<b>CONTINUOUS</b>	Present Continuous	Past Continuous	Future Continuous	Past Future Continuous
<b>PERFECT</b>	Present Perfect	Past Perfect	Future Perfect	Past Future Perfect
<b>PERFECT CONTINUOUS</b>	Present Perfect Continuous	Past Perfect Continuous	Future Perfect Continuous	Past Future Perfect Continuous

### Subject-Verb Agreement

Sudirman (2014: 158) stresses one of the important things which must be taken into account in constructing sentences is subject-verb agreement. Subject-verb agreement is the verb in a sentence must agree with the subject. A singular subject will always need a singular verb. A plural subject needs a plural verb.

Examples:

- ◆ The cat runs. (cat = singular)
- ◆ The man has ended his own life. (man = singular)
- ◆ The people were so panic. (people = plural)
- ◆ There are three windows in this room. (window = plural)

### Tense Key Matching Technique

Grammar belongs to one of the language components. According to Brighton (2000:31), grammar is about rules or principles by which a language works with its system and structure. In grammar, the students also needs to understand how to use any kind of tenses. Each kind of tense has its own formula which puts students into trouble because they often forget the correct

usage of tense formula. Applying techniques, approaches and methods is really necessary for the students to be able to write or say sentences without feeling worried of making mistake of using sentence formula. In line with this, Azar and Hagen (2009:xi) believes that teachers need to use integrated tehniques, methods or approaches of teaching grammar to promote the students understand form and meaning in order that they can connect the ideas into real actions, real things, and their own lives in the classroom context.

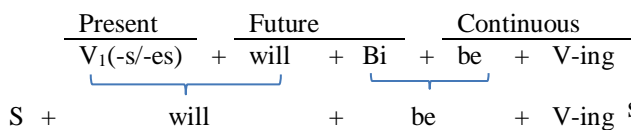
One useful technique applied in learning grammar in class is The Tense Key Matching Technique. In this techniques, the students are not forced to memorise all of the English sentence formula. What they have to remember are just 8 tense keys. The tense keys combined or matched then are based on the type of the sentence needed.

- There are 8 tense keys:
  1. Present =  $V_1(-s/-es)$
  2. Past =  $V_2$
  3. Continuous =  $be + V_{-ing}$
  4. Future =  $will + B_1$
  5. Perfect =  $have + V_3$
  6. Nominal =  $be + 3C$
  7. Passive =  $be + V_3$

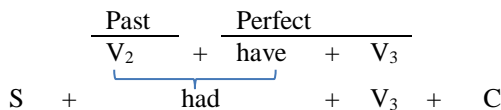
8. Modal = modal aux + B<sub>i</sub>  
 The tense key above will be useful to form the formula of English sentences in a very short time without memorising the tense formula. There are 16 active sentence type, 10 passive ones, and 8 nominal ones. Of course the students will find difficulties in memorising them. By using the technique, the students just have to keep in their mind these 8 tense keys. If they can match the tense keys based on the type of the sentence, they will find that constructing sentence is really easy as long as they remember the tense keys, the time changing and the event changing.

Examples of tense key matching:

1. *Present Future Continuous*



2. *Past Perfect*



Some advantages of using the Tense Key Matching Techniques:

1. It helps students remember the type, formula, and function of sentences quickly.
2. It gives intensive practice through repetition.
3. It provides opportunities for feedback and error correction.
4. It can develop the students' confidence in writing and speaking skill.
5. It encourages students to use the forms in expressing their own content.
6. It helps students see the usefulness of what they have learned.
7. The students can check what has been learned and diagnose problems in learning the tense types.

**Conditional Sentences**

Conditional sentence is a sentence which consists of a condition and the result of this condition. There are two kinds of conditional sentence: If conditional and wish conditional. There are 3 types of If conditional. Meanwhile, wish conditional are divided into two types only. This paper only talks about If conditional.

Type	Situation	If Clause	Result Clause	Example
Type 1	When we talk about something that is possible to happen in the present or future	Simple Present	Present Future	If we take the bus, it will be cheaper.
Type 2	When we talk about something that will not happen, or we don't expect that it will happen in the present or future	Simple Past	Past Future	If I <i>had</i> enough time, I <i>would come to the party</i>
Type 3	When we talk about something that would not happen, or we didn't expect that it would happen in the past.	Past Perfect	Past Perfect Future	If I had worn a jacket, I wouldn't have been so cold at the park.

Tense Key Matching for If Conditional Sentences

1. Type 1 = If Simple Present, Present Future

**IF CLAUSE**

$$\text{If } S + \frac{\text{Simple } 0 + \text{Present } V_1(-s/-es)}{V_1(-s/-es)} + C ,$$

**RESULT CLAUSE**

2. Type 2 = If Simple Past, Past Future  
**IF CLAUSE**

$$\text{If } S + \frac{\text{Simple } 0 + \text{Past } V_2}{V_2} + C ,$$

**RESULT CLAUSE**

$$S + \frac{\text{Past } V_2 + \text{Future } \text{will} + \text{Bi}}{\text{would} + \text{Bi}} + C$$

3. Type 3 = If Past Perfect, Past Perfect Future

**IF CLAUSE**

$$\text{If } S + \frac{\text{Past } V_2 + \text{Perfect } \text{have} + V_3}{\text{had} + V_3} + C ,$$

**RESULT CLAUSE**

$$S + \frac{\text{Past } V_2 + \text{Future } \text{will} + \text{Bi} + \text{Perfect } \text{have} + V_3}{\text{would} + \text{have} + V_3} + C$$

**Hypothesis**

The hypothesis of the study is needed to be describe to answer the problem of the research. The hypothesis in this study is that the tense key matching technique can

improve the second semester students' ability in constructing If conditional sentences at English Department of STKIP Insan Madani Airmolek in academic year 2019/2020.

## **METHOD OF THE RESEARCH**

### **Location of the Research**

The study was carried out at The English Department of STKIP Insan Madani Airmolek. There are 4 classes in the academic year 2019/2020. The study was conducted for the second semester students.

### **Type of the Research**

This is a class action research. Gory (2008) says for this research the lecturer becomes the one who conducts it. The aim of this sort of research is to make learning activity better because the research focuses on the process of teaching and learning in class. The class action research helps lecturers to detect and solve problem found during the process of teaching and learning takes time.

Some problems identified in this study are overcome by conducting 4 phases: planning, action, observing, and reflecting. The 4 phases are divided into

2 cycles which have 4 stages in each cycle: planning, acting, observing and reflecting.

In cycle I, the first stage is planning in which the writers analyze the students' problem in constructing If conditional sentences. After that, they conducted 2 meetings. For the early meeting they delivered the pre-test of conditional sentence and for the last meeting they used the Key Tense Matching Techniques before giving the test. Through this cycle the writers prepare the research instrument to gather data in the form of notes, observation, and interview sheet and documentation.

The second stage of Cycle I is acting in which the writers introduce the technique and ask the students to practice it. In the stage which is observation, the writers made notes about the evaluation of the students' ability in constructing If conditional sentences. Finally, in the reflecting stage, the writers were able to determine the extend to which media can enhance the students' ability in constructing if conditional sentences and to find out the



strengths and weaknesses of the tense key matching technique.

Meanwhile, the reflecting stage in cycle I becomes the base for the planning stage in cycle II. Next, in the acting stage, the writers designed how to apply the technique and developed it to improve the students' ability in constructing If conditional sentences. Still in cycle II, in the observing stage, they found out the change of the development of the students' ability in constructing If conditional. At last, in the reflecting stage, they disclosed the result of the observation and revealed the action in the class.

### **The Subject of The Research**

The second semester students of English Department of STKIP Insan Madani Airmolek academic year 2019/2020 became the subject of the study. There are 10 students in this class.

### **Time of the Research**

The research was conducted in the event semester in Academic Year 2019/2020 started from February to March 2020.

### **Procedure of The Observation**

Kemmis and Taggart design which consists of 4 phases was used in this class action research. The four phases are planning, acting, observing and reflecting. The phases would be in the cycle I. When there are still problems occur in the cycle I, the second cycle will then be conducted.

In planning phase, after organizing and diagnosing the students' problems in constructing If conditionals sentences, the writers then compiled the lesson material. Next, in the acting phase, they applied the technique of The Tense Key Matching to teach the material and observed the class during the process of teaching and learning. During the observing phase, they took notes all of the outcomes of applying the technique (lecturer's performance, class situation, students' responses and post-test data). In last phase called reflecting phase, the collected data was evaluated.

### **Instrument of The Research**

The writers used qualitative and quantitative data to obtain the result of the study. For the quantitative data, they delivered a test about If conditional

sentences to measure the students' score. Meanwhile, for the qualitative data, they use observation, interview, test, and documentation.

For qualitative data, during the observation, they took notes about situation in the class, analyzed the lecturer's teaching performance and how the students response it and take photographs and videos. They also interviewed the lecturer about the students' learning difficulties and condition and what strategies used by lecturer to overcome the problem. In the interview session, they tried to know how the lecturer reacted to the idea of implementing the tense key matching technique. The writers delivered two test to the students; pre-test and post-test. The pre-test was delivered before implementing the technique to measure the students' earlier ability in constructing If conditional. The post-test was delievered after applying the technique. Finally, they documented all of the activities during the process of teaching and learning.

#### **Technique of Data Analysis**

Quantitative and qualitative data were used in this study. The quantitative was used to analyze the students' score and the qualitative data was used to describe the teaching and learning process situation. The two kinds of data were used to get the satisfying result of improving the students' ability in constructing If conditional sentences by using the tense key matching technique. The qualitative data were taken from the instruments. The quantitative data was measured to see the improvement of the students' abilty in constructing If conditional sentences after implementing the these key matching technique.

The writers identified the mean of students' score per actions to find whether or not there might have students' improvement score on their ability in constructing If conditional sentences from pre-test and post-test score in cycle 1 and cycle 2.

#### **ANALYSIS OF THE DATA**

##### **The Data**

It has been told that the data were qualitative and quantitative data. The qualitative data were the interview

with lecturer and students, observation sheet and documentation. The quantitative data were measured to know the mean of the students' score in some tests. This research was conducted in second semester class with 10 students. This research was accomplished in two cycles. Each cycle consisted of four steps of action research (planning, action, observation, and reflection). The first cycle including pre-test and post test was conducted in two meetings, and the second cycle including pre-test post-test was conducted in three meetings.

**Data Analysis**

**Table 4.2 The Students' Score of The Cycle I**

No	Students	Score		Categories (>75)
		Pre-Test	Post-Test	
1	Reza Pernanda	57	67	Unsuccessful
2	Wasgigin W.D	64	74	Unsuccessful
3	Seila G. N	53	70	Unsuccessful
4	Fitri Candri M	47	66	Unsuccessful
5	Wirda Anisa M	70	83	Successful
6	Egi Lestari	47	66	Unsuccessful
7	Luvy Febriyeni	80	90	Successful
8	Riza Marwinda	53	73	Unsuccessful
9	Shinta Testi	66	75	Unsuccessful
10	Ratna K.S.	70	83	Successful
<b>Total Score</b>		607	747	
<b>Mean</b>		60.7	74.7	Unsuccessful

The mean of the students' score in Cycle I for the pre-test was 60.7 and the post-test was 74.7. The two results were taken unsuccessful because the mean score was below 75.

**Table 4.3 Distribution of Students' Ability in Constructing If Conditional Sentences for Post Test in Cycle I**

Criteria	Total Students	Percentage
Unsuccessful	7	70%
Successful	3	30%

From the table above, for the post-test in Cycle 1, only 30% (3 students) who could reach the point >75. Eventhough there is an increasing in the score for the post-test, the post-test is categorised unsuccessful.

**Table 4.4 The Result of Students' Score of The Cycle II**

No	Students	Score	Category (>75)
		Post-Test	
1	Reza Pernanda	83	Successful
2	Wasgigin W. D	89	Successful
3	Seila G.N	80	Successful
4	Fitri Candri M	73	Unsuccessful
5	Wirda Anisa M	90	Successful
6	Egi Lestari	80	Successful
7	Luvy Febriyeni	93	Successful
8	Riza Marwinda	80	Successful
9	Shinta Testi	83	Successful
10	Ratna K.S	93	Successful

<b>Total Score</b>	844	
<b>Mean</b>	84.4	Successful

Table 4.4 describes that the students' ability in constructing If conditional sentences through the application of the tense key matching technique increases. It can be seen that the mean of the score is 84.4.

**Table 4.5 Distribution of Students' Ability in Constructing If Conditional Sentences for Post Test in Cycle II**

Criteria	Total Students	Percentage
Unsuccessful	1	10%
Successful	9	90%

From the table above, for the post-test in Cycle II, only 10% (1 student) who could reach the point less than 75. There was a significant change of the students' score in constructing If conditional sentences through the application of the tense key matching technique. 90% of the students (9 students) reach the score above 75.

**Table 4.6 Students' Mean Score**

No	Students	Pre-Test	
		Score	Criteria (>75)
1	Reza Pernanda	57	Unsuccessful
2	Wasgigin W.D	64	Unsuccessful
3	Seila G.N	53	Unsuccessful
4	Fitri Candri M	47	Unsuccessful
5	Wirda Anisa M	70	Unsuccessful
6	Egi Lestari	47	Unsuccessful
7	Luvy Febriyeni	80	Successful
8	Riza Marwinda	53	Unsuccessful
9	Shinta Testi	66	Unsuccessful
10	Ratna K.S	70	Unsuccessful
Total Score		607	

		Mean	60.7	Unsuccessful
No	Students	Post-Test 1		
		Score	Criteria (>75)	
1	Reza Pernanda	67	Unsuccessful	
2	Wasgigin W.D	74	Unsuccessful	
3	Seila G.N	70	Unsuccessful	
4	Fitri Candri M	66	Unsuccessful	
5	Wirda Anisa M	83	Successful	
6	Egi Lestari	66	Unsuccessful	
7	Luvy Febriyeni	90	Successful	
8	Riza Marwinda	73	Unsuccessful	
9	Shinta Testi	75	Unsuccessful	
10	Ratna K.S	83	Successful	
No	Students	Post-Test 2		
		Score	Criteria (>75)	
1	Reza Pernanda	83	Successful	
2	Wasgigin W.D	89	Successful	
3	Seila G.N	80	Successful	
4	Fitri Candri M	73	Unsuccessful	
5	Wirda Anisa M	90	Successful	
6	Egi Lestari	80	Successful	
7	Luvy Febriyeni	93	Successful	
8	Riza Marwinda	80	Successful	
9	Shinta Testi	83	Successful	
10	Ratna K.S	93	Successful	

In cycle I, for the pre-test, the students's score was 60.7 (unsuccessful) and the mean score for the post-test was 74.7 (unsuccessful). In cycle 2, the students' mean score on the post-test increased, which was 84.4 (successful).

**Table 4.7 The Result of Students' Score for Pre-Test, Post-Test I and Post-Test II**

Cycle	Test	Score >75	Percentage
I	Pre-Test	1	10%
I	Post-Test 1	3	30%
II	Post-Test 2	9	90%

The result shows that the students' score increased from the pre-test to the post-test II. The deviation of the pre-test to post test 1 was 20%. And

the deviation from the post-test 1 (cycle I) to post-test 2 (cycle II) was 80%. It can be concluded that the technique of the tense key matching worked effectively and effeciently to improve the students' ability in constructing If conditional sentences.

### **Research Findings**

The indication shows that the students' ability in constructing if conditional sentences increased after the tense key matching technique was applied during the process of teaching and learning. The mean score in cycle I for the pre-test and post test were 60.7 and 74.7. The mean score of the post-test in the second cycle was 84.4. In the pre-test in cycle I, only 1 students got score higher than 75 and in the post-test of the same cycle, 3 students got scores which were higher than 75. However, after applying the technique in the cycle II, 9 students got scores which were higher than 75.

The qualitative data was also analized to support the research finding. The qualitative data was organized in the form of interview sheet and documentation. From those two kinds of data, it can be seen that the students

gave positive reaction to the technique applied. In other words, the technique applied is really helpful to improve the second semester students' ability in constructing If conditional sentences at English Department of STKIP Insan Madani Airmolek.

### **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

#### **Conclusion**

After analizing the data in the previous part, the writers drew the following conclusion:

1. When the technique of the tense key matching is applied in explaining the tense formula, there is improvement of the students' ability in constructing If conditional sentences. The improvement can be seen from the score of the post-test in the cycle II. They responded well to the technique and felt exciting to dig more about the lesson material.
2. The class became more active and all of the students participated in the process of teaching and learning. Therefore, the tense Key Matching Technique can be an alternative technique of teaching grammar. In cycle, when the students were given

the pre-test, only 1 students (10%) who can pass the test. Still in the same cycle, for the post-test, 3 students can do the test well (30%). There is a significant improvement on the students' score when the technique of the tense key matching is applied. 9 students (90%) can do the test well.

### **Suggestion**

The writers would love to give some suggestions to be considered after conducting the study, which are:

1. The Tense Key Matching Technique could be one of the helpful techniques to teach tense types to the students to encourage them that memorising tense formula is an easy thing to do.
2. The lecturers are supposed to give clear explanation and instruction in directing the students using this technique.
3. Although the technique used shows that there is improvement on the students' ability in constructing sentences especially If conditional sentences, the lecturers need to control their students' activity in

class to make sure that the technique is really effective and efficient.

The study is still far from perfect. Weaknesses and mistakes can still be found in this study. The writers would accept any constructive criticism and suggestion to make the study better in the future time.

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