2. A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF PAST TENSES IN ENGLISH

2.1. SOME DEFINITIONS OF TENSE IN ENGLISH

Tense is a way language expresses the time at which an event described by a sentence occurs. In English, this is a property of a verb forms, and expresses only time related information. Tense, in the grammar of many languages, is a category of time distinctions expressed by any conjugated form of a verb, in Latin inflection the tense of a verb is indicated by suffix that also indicates the verb voice, mood, person and number. Tense specifies whether the verb refers to action in the past, present or future.

According to Grain (2006) tense is a tool that English speaker use to express time in their language so you learn to think like a native speaker. Furthermore, (Riyanto,2006:15) states that tense is used to show the relation between the actions or state described by the verb and the time, which is reflected in the form of the verb, and used to locate an event or state to a point of time.

2.2 Simple Past Tense

2.2.1 The Definition

Simple Past Tense is a tense, which shows the event, or the action, activity or work, which is done in the past, in the simple form and known the time when the event or the work happened. (Riyanto,2006:165)

Simple Past Tense is used to talk about many kinds of past events, short, quickly, finished actions and happening, longer situation, and repeated events. And it is used to
discuss activity or situation began and ended in the past, for example: yesterday, last night, two days ago, in 1990. Grain (2006).

From the definition above, I may conclude that Simple Past Tense is used to talk about activities or situations that are began and ended at a particular time in the past.

2.2.2 Forms

Before I explain about the uses of Simple Past, We have to know the forms of simple past proposed by Riyanto (2006:165) which are given in the following:

1. **Positive: S + V2**

   Examples:
   - I went to Jakarta two days ago
   - He played in the school yard
   - She stayed at home last night

2. **Negative: S + Did Not + V1**

   Examples:
   - I did not go to Jakarta two days ago
   - He did not play in the school yard yesterday morning
   - She did not stay at home last night

3. **Interrogative: Did + S + V1**

   Examples:
   - Did you go to Jakarta two days ago?
   - Did he play in the school yard yesterday morning?
   - Did she stay at home last night?
To answer the interrogative question, the form of the answer is

4. **Short Answer: Yes, No + S + did, did not**

Examples:

- Did they play in the yard?
  
  **Yes, they did**

- Did you go to school yesterday?
  
  **No, I did not**

According to Grain (2006) the forms of Simple past tense with the verb “to be” are:

- **I/she/he/ + was + O**
- **We/you/they + were + O**

1. **Positive: S + was + O**

Examples:

- She was the top student in her class
- We were in the Singapore last week
- She was happy last night

2. **Negative: S + was + not +**

Examples:

- You were not funny last night
- He was not happy about failing the test
- I was not tall as a child

3. **Interrogative: was/were + S + O**

Examples:
- **Were** you the tallest in your class?
- **Was** she a good runner in high school?
- **Was** she a lot of fun as a child?

### 2.2.3 Functions

According to Riyanto (2006:166) there are two functions of Simple Past. They are:

1. Simple Past Tense is a verb form that is used to express one action which happened or took place at a particular time in the past.

   Examples:
   - He **was** in Japan last month
   - They **went** to China last night
   - You **were** there yesterday

2. Simple Past Tense is a verb form that is used to express repeated, habitual actions in the past.

   Examples:
   - He **used to** have five goats and two cows
   - She always **went** to Mosque at night

While Grain (2006) proposed different functions of simple past tense. They are:

1. It is used for action completed in the past at a definite time for a past action when the time is given.

   Examples:
   - She **met** her friends two days ago
   - Jhon **died** in 2000
- When did the Jhon die?
- When did she meet her friend?

2. It is used to list a series of completed actions in the past.

Examples:
- I finished work, walked to the beach, and found a nice place to swim
- He arrived from the airport at 8:00, checked into the hotel at 9:00, and met the others at 10.00
- Did you add flour, pour in the milk, and then add the eggs?

3. It is used to describe past facts or generalizations which are no longer true.

Examples:
- She was shy as a child, but now she is very out going.
- He didn’t like tomatoes before
- Did you live in Texas when you were a kid?

4. It is also used for past habit

Examples:
- He played the piano
- She studied French when she was a child

The Simple past Tense is usually used with a time expression such as

1. Yesterday

Examples:
- She didn’t come to my house yesterday morning
- My father went to my uncle’s house yesterday afternoon

2. Last
Examples:
- His teacher didn’t come last week
- She bought her bag last month

3. In

Examples:
- He was born in 1978
- She taught physics in 2006

4. At

Examples:
- She went to his house at 7:30
- He arrived at home at 7:00

5. From…to…

Examples:
- She taught in our school from 1998 to 2005

6. When

Examples:
- When I was young, I played Violin
- When she was young, she went to Singapore

The Principal Parts of a Verb

According to Grain (2006) English verb has four principal form or parts. They are:
1. The simple form: the simple form is the form that is found in a dictionary. It is the base form with no ending on it (no suffix -s, -ed, or -in).

2. The simple past: the simple past is the form ending -ed for regular verbs. Most verbs are regular, but many common verbs have irregular forms.

3. The past participle: the past participle also ends in -ed for regular verbs. Some verbs are irregular; it is used in perfect tense.

4. The present participle: the present participle ends in -ing (for both regular and irregular verbs). It is used in progressive tense (e.g. the present progressive and past progressive).

This is a table of principal parts of a verb; it is used to compare the simple present, simple past, the past participle, and the present participle in regular verbs and in irregular verbs.

**Alternatively, look at the table below:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REGULAR VERBS</th>
<th>Simple form</th>
<th>Simple past</th>
<th>Past participle</th>
<th>Present participle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Finish</td>
<td>Finished</td>
<td>Finished</td>
<td>Finishing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stop</td>
<td>Stopped</td>
<td>Stopped</td>
<td>Stopping</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hope</td>
<td>Hoped</td>
<td>Hoped</td>
<td>Hoping</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wait</td>
<td>Waited</td>
<td>Waited</td>
<td>Waiting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play</td>
<td>Played</td>
<td>Played</td>
<td>Playing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Try</td>
<td>Tried</td>
<td>Tried</td>
<td>Trying</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRREGULAR VERBS</td>
<td>See</td>
<td>Saw</td>
<td>Seen</td>
<td>Seeing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make</td>
<td>Made</td>
<td>Made</td>
<td>Making</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sing</td>
<td>Sang</td>
<td>Sung</td>
<td>Singing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.3 Past Continuous Tense

2.3.1 The Definition

Past Continuous Tense is a tense that is used for actions in progress at a certain time in the past, and for actions in progress when another past action begins. (Riyanto, 2006: 169). Further more Grain (2006) states that Past Continuous Tense is a tense that is used to say that something that is in progress (going on) around a particular past time and to stress that an activity is was in progress at every moment during a period of time. Past Continuous Tense is a construction. It is made up of the past tense of the auxiliary be + the-in (present participle) form of the verb. It is used to emphasize the progressive nature of an action that is happening over a period of the in the past.

2.3.2 Forms

The Forms of Past Continuous Tense Riyanto (2006:168) are as follows:

1. **Positive: S + was/were + present participle**

   Examples:

   (I / she / he / it) was working

   (You / we / they) were working

2. **Negative: S + was/were + not + Present Participle**

   Examples:

   (I / she / he / it) was not working
(You / we / they) were not working

3. **Interrogative: was/were + S + Present Participle**

Examples:

- Was (I/ she/ he/ it) working?
- Were (You/ we/ they) working?

And the form of the **Short Answer** is **Yes/no + S + was/were (not)**

Examples:

- Was she a teacher?
  
  Yes, she was

- Was he your uncle?
  
  No, he was not

- Were they a rubber?
  
  No, they were not

- Were they a student?
  
  Yes, they were

**2.3.3 Functions**

According to Riyanto(2006:169) there are two functions of Past Continuous Tense.

1. To express an action that was taking place simultaneously when it was interrupted another activity in the past. This tense is rarely used by it self.

Examples:

- Rini **was watching** TV when some one knocked the door

- I met Tom when **he was attending** a party.
2. To express an action which was occurring at some specific time in the past.

   Examples:
   - Jane was watching TV at 8:00 last night
   - What were you doing at 9:45?

   Besides that, Grain (2006) purposes some functions of Past Continuous Tense.

   They are used:

1. To indicate gradual development

   Example:
   - It was getting darker. The wind was rising.

2. To indicate that an action was in progress at a definite time in the past.

   Examples:
   - What were you doing at 10.00 last night?
     - I was studying.

3. To indicate the progressive nature of an action that was happening at the same time as another event in the past.

   Examples:
   - When the telephone rang, I was taking a shower
   - While I was taking a shower, the telephone rang
   - While I was studying, I felt a sleep.

4. To indicate that two continuous activities were going on at the same time.

   Example:
   - I was studying while he was reading.
5. To indicate that an activity was going on between two points of time in the past.

Example:

- Between June of 1995 and December of 1966, he **was writing** a novel.

**Expressing past time: using time clauses**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time clause</th>
<th>Main clause</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. When I went to Singapore, I visited my aunt</td>
<td><strong>When I went to Singapore</strong> = a time clause*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>I visited my aunt</strong> = a main clause*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(a) and (b) have the same meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. I visited my aunt when I went to Singapore</td>
<td>A time clause can:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. come in front of a main clause, as in (a);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Follow a main clause, as in (b).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. <em>After Jane ate lunch</em>, she went to the library.</td>
<td><strong>When, after, before, and while</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Jane went to the library <em>after she ate lunch</em>.</td>
<td>Introduce time clauses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>When</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>After</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. <em>Before she went to bed</em>, she finished her homework.</td>
<td>before + Subject &amp; verb = a time clause while</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. She finished her homework <em>before she went to bed</em>.</td>
<td><strong>PUNCTUATION</strong>: put a comma at the end of a time clause comes first in a sentence (comes in front of the main clause):</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. <em>While I was watching TV</em>, the phone rang.</td>
<td><strong>Time clause + comma + main clause.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. <em>The phone rang</em> while I was watching</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When the phone rang, I was watching TV.

When the phone rang, I answered it.

In a sentence with a time clause introduced by When, both the time clause verb and the main verb can be simple past. In this case, the action in the “when clause “happened first.

2.4 Past Perfect Tense

2.4.1 The Definition

There are definitions of Past Perfect:

Past Perfect Tense is also the past equivalent of the simple past tense, and is used when the narrator or subject looks back on earlier action from a certain point in the past. Grain (2006). While Riyanto (2006:171) states that Past Perfect Tense is used for an action which has been completed before some definite time in the past.

2.4.2 Forms

According to Riyanto (2006:171) the forms of Past Perfect are:

1. Positive: S + had + past participle

Examples:
- They **had studied** English before they moved to New York

- She **had cleaned** the home before her sister arrived

2. **Negative: S + had + not + past participle**

   Examples:
   - They **had not studied** English before they moved to New York
   - She **had not cleaned** the home before her sister arrived
   - He **had not been** 19 years when He entered university

3. **Interrogative: Had + S + Past participle**

   Examples:
   - **Had** they studied English before they moved to New York?
   - **Had** she cleaned the home before her sister arrived?
   - **Had** He been 19 years when He entered university?

And the time expressions used in the Past Perfect Tense are:

1. (Past perfect)…..when…… (Past tense)

   Examples:
   - She **had been** a nurse **when** I **was** in Junior high school
   - You **had been** a teacher **when** I **was** in Elementary school

2. (Past perfect)……before….. (Past tense)

   Examples:
   - We **had been** at home **before** he **left**
   - They **had been** at Library **before** I **left**

3. After… (Past perfect), …. (Past tense)

   Examples:
After I had graduated Senior High School, I continued to university.

After she had finished her work, she went to Library.

2.4.3 Functions

According to Riyanto (2006:172) Past Perfect Tense is used:

1. To express an action that had happened or was completed in the past before another action in the past.

Examples:

- All ministers had arrived at the Presidential Palace before Mr. President came.

- She went to Galeria Mall after she had finished her homework.

According to Grain (2006) some functions Past Perfect Tense are used:

1. To complete an action before something in the past or show that something happened before a specific time in the past.

Examples:

- I had never seen such a beautiful beach before I went to Kutai.

- I did not have any money because I had lost my wallet.

- She only understood the movie because she had read a book.

2. Past perfect Tense is used to provide the main event in the past.

Examples:

- She had attended many interviews before she found the right job.

- I had seen the film six times already and I didn’t want to see it again.
3. With Non–Continuous Verbs and some non-continuous uses of Mixed Verbs to show that something started in the past and continued up until another action in the past.

Examples:

- By the time Alex finished his studies, he had been in London for over eight years.
- We had had that car for ten years before it broke down
- They felt bad about selling the house because they had owned it more thirty years.

2.5 Past Perfect Continuous Tense

2.5.1 The Definition

Past Perfect Continuous Tense is used for an action beginning in definitely in the past was still continuing at the past moment. Grain (2006) and as what Riyanto(2006: 197) states that Past Perfect Continuous Tense is a verb form that is used to express an activity which is in progress in the past.

2.5.2 Forms

According to Riyanto (2006: 173) there are the forms of Past Perfect Continuous Tense.

1. **Positive: S + had been + present participle**

   Examples:

   - She had been living in this town for ten years
   - George had been working at the PT. Gobel for twenty years
   - They had been moving for three years
2. **Negative: S + had + not + been + present participle**

Examples:

- She **had not been living** in this town for ten years
- George **had not been working** at the PT.Gobel for twenty years
- They **had not been moving** for three years

3. **Interrogative: Had + S + been + present participle**

Examples:

- **Had** she **been living** in this town for ten years?
- **Had** George **been working** at PT. Gobel for twenty years?
- **Had** they **been moving** for three years?

### 2.5.3 Functions

According to Riyanto (2006:174) there are two functions Past Perfect Continuous Tense is used to express:

1. A longer action that had happened and continued up to the past moment, ended or stopped just before something else in the past.

   Example:
   
   - James **had been working** at the Pluit Hospital for fifteen years before he died.

2. An activity which is in progress in the past

   Example:
   
   - When he got home, he was very tired because he **had been working** all day.

   And the time markers that are usually used in the Past Perfect Continuous Tense are before and for.
Examples:

- She had been living in this town for 5 years
- He had been working at PT. Niaga before he died

According to Grain (2006) there are the functions of Past Perfect Continuous Tense. They are used:

1. To talk about a continuous temporary event which started happening in the past before another past event.

   Examples:
   
   - She had been learning English for six years before she went to England.
   - They had been living in Paris for some time when they met.

2. To state the first action had been happening over a period time, when more than one or more actions occurred.

   When 2 actions happened in the past, the past perfect continuous tense is used to clarify which action happened first.

   *The first action is clarified by using the past perfect continuous tense
   *The second action is clarified by using simple past tense

   Examples:

   - Jane looked tired. I could see that she had been studying for her English test recently
   - The children were soaking wet. I knew they had been swimming in the lake
3. To make conclusions.

   Example:

   - The teacher looks very tired. She **has been marking** tests all day.

4. To state actions repeatedly

   Examples:

   - The bus **had been coming** for two hours

   - The teacher **had been giving** us exams for the past few weeks