

## USING ADELE'S "SOMEONE LIKE YOU" TO TEACH VERB TENSES AND PASSIVE FORMS

Ariya Jati  
Diponegoro University  
ariyajati@undip.ac.id

### Abstract

This paper is about how to use Adele's "Someone Like You" to teach tenses and passive forms. Adele's song lyric was potentially used in an English-as-a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom. This study is to provide a practical alternative to the teaching of tenses and passive forms. The teaching is performed in three phases namely text completion, verb categorization, and sentence construction. The teaching is expected the students to demonstrate their receptive and productive skills in English language by using the lyric. (By such a teaching, the students are expected to be able to demonstrate their receptive and productive skills in English language by using the lyric.)

Makalah ini tentang penggunaan lirik "Someone Like You" karya Adele untuk mengajarkan kala dan bentuk pasif. Lirik lagu Adele tersebut dapat digunakan di dalam kelas dengan bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa asing. Kajian ini untuk memberikan alternatif praktis bagi pengajaran kala dan bentuk pasif bagi mahasiswa *EFL*. Pengajaran dilakukan dalam tiga tahap, yaitu: pengisian teks, kategorisasi kata kerja, dan penyusunan kalimat. Pengajaran ini diharapkan dapat memungkinkan mahasiswa menampilkan keterampilan reseptif dan produktif mereka dalam berbahasa Inggris melalui lirik tersebut.

**Keywords** : receptive and productive skills, teaching with song lyric, verb tenses, passive forms

### INTRODUCTION

This paper is concerned with using Adele's "Someone Like You" to teach tenses and passive forms. As a lyric, the words in Adele's song can be grouped into four parts: the verses, the bridges, the interludes, and the refrains. The lyric is structured in forty six lines. Almost all of the lyric's lines contain the four major word types (adjectives, nouns, verbs, and adverbs). The verbs in the lyric are selected to solely become the study of this paper.

The lyric has the potential for an English-as-a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom. The verbs in the lyric are considered to have more potential for the classroom than the other word types. The verbs are directly related to such aspects

of EFL usage as tenses and passive forms, whereas the others are not. The verbs, therefore, are selected to be used as the teaching material in this study.

This study is intended to provide a practical alternative to the teaching of the verbs to EFL university students. The aspects of the verbs which the teaching is concerned are verb tenses and passive forms. The teaching of the verb tenses and passive forms is performed in three subsequent phases. The phases comprise the text completion, verb categorization, and sentence construction. The text completion results in the missing verbs of the lyric. The verb categorization results in the verbs in the past, present, and future tense as well as the verbs in the passive forms. The sentence construction results in the new self-developed sentences which the EFL university students make. The teaching is expected to allow the students to demonstrate not only their receptive but also productive skills in English language by using the lyric.

### **A Song Lyric in an EFL classroom**

In an EFL classroom, a song written in English language can be played to aid the teaching of the language. EFL students enjoy not only listening to but also learning the foreign language through the song. The use of the song in the EFL classroom helps the students' language learning.

Using songs in the language-learning classroom gives students opportunities to express their personal likes and dislikes. This especially helps them to gain and show understanding of certain language items and structures (Lindsay, 2000: 259).

The EFL students may notice English sentence structures by listening to the song. The students may find that the sentence structures are the structures which the students have read in one of their textbooks. So, the song can actually be used to help the students learn English.

The song can be an aid in the classroom because it has two supporting elements: music and lyric. The song's music not only harmonizes the melody with the words in the song but also helps the word formation to be memorable. The words are arranged in a certain formation according to the music measurement so that they are easy enough to be memorized. When the words become memorable, they are relatively easy to be learnt. In this light, the music can overdrive English language learning "by providing a cueing system to access meaning and fostering classroom community" (Lems, 2010:2). The music systemizes the word formation so as for the words to be easily memorable to be learnt. Thus, the music can be helpful for the students in their classroom learning.

In the classroom a song lyric can be useful. The usefulness of the song lyric resides in the word power which it has. Basically, the lyric "is most itself when it goes beyond the self" (Brewster, 2009: 149). In order to get the most of the lyric, the lyric needs to be useful in the classroom. The lyric can potentially be utilized as a teaching material. So, Adele's "Someone Like You" can be useful when the song lyric is utilized as a teaching material.

When the lyric is utilized as a teaching material, the lyric may be intended for the students to “improve listening comprehension, reading, guessing, and composition skills” (Murphey, 1992:69). In so doing, the lyric is intended to improve the students’ receptive skills (listening and reading) as well as productive skills (guessing and composing). With regard to the students’ composition skills, the lyric may be utilized to “practice the use of tenses on authentic texts—not on textbook examples (Duff and Maley, 2007: 103). The use of verb tenses in Adele’s “Someone Like You” becomes the practice with which this study is concerned with. In addition, the practice in this study is also concerned with the passive form in the song lyric.

### **Verbs Tenses and Passive Forms in Adele’s “Someone Like You”**

To put the use of verb tenses and passive forms into practice, the song lyric needs to be organized into a practical organization of the teaching material. In the classroom practice, an EFL lecturer is in charge of this material organizing:

One of the most important roles that teachers have to perform is that of organizing students to do various activities. This often involves giving the students information, telling them how they are going to do the activity, putting them into pairs or groups, and finally closing things when it is time to stop (Harmer, 2001: 58).

In the classroom practice, the EFL lecturer may organize the material for an individual activity, explaining at the beginning that each of the students is going to individually practice the use of verb tenses and passive forms in Adele’s “Someone Like You”. Then, the lecturer can play the song for the students. Yet, the lecturer had better prepare her or his students well by giving them a warm-up activity prior to playing the song:

Before listening to a song, students need warm-up activities. These activities should prepare students to listen and they should include pre-teaching and checking vocabulary. The activity could be a discussion on the theme or topic of the song, a reading of some of the lyrics (probably not all), or a mime showing the feelings expressed (Lindsay, 2000: 261).

To warm up the practice, the lecturer may ask her or his students, for example, what the song is about, or what tenses in the lyric are mostly written in. This warming-up question and answer activity not only gets the students well acquainted with the song but also induces the students’ interest in the practice even more. Later on, the lecturer may proceed with a more challenging activity; she or he may:

Find a recording of it and type out the lyrics, leaving out some words or phrases. Try to space out the blanks in order to give students time to fill them in. You can, if you wish, focus on a

particular word-class (verbs, prepositions, adjectives, etc.) (Murphey, 1992:69).

In the activity the lecturer ought to bear in mind that she or he is expected to choose a topic for the practice, so the lecturer can effectively emphasize the activity on the topic. When the practice is set in a topic-based activity, the students' language learning is set to have a pathway to its objective. Thus, when the practice is focused on verbs, the students should be able to demonstrate their ability to use the verbs in their learning. In the practice, the lecturer may:

Remove some of the verbs, verbal phrases, or passive forms from the text, and replace them with the infinitive form of the verb in brackets. (Duff and Maley, 2007: 103).

The lecturer needs the topic to limit the students' learning because in practice she or he cannot teach all aspects of English verbs in only one activity. When the lecturer limits the practice to verbs usage, she or he is well aware that the students' learning objective needs to be their ability to make use of the verbs. So, when the objective is achieved, the students' learning becomes effectively purposeful.

### **The Three Phases**

The practice in this study comes into three phases, namely text completion, verb categorization, and sentence construction. While distributing the text of the song lyric which the lecturer has prepared, she or he can start the practice with the previously mentioned warm-up activity: a short and light discussion about Adele's "Someone Like You" with the students. She or he can, then, resume with the first phase, the text completion, by requesting the students to fill in the blanks in the text as they are listening to the song record. She or he may need to replay the record in order for the students to have more listening practice on the song; she or he decides when the record replay is sufficient for the classroom practice. The students are supposed to have more suitable words to be filled in the blanks with every replay they practice. The blanks in the text are presented as follows.

#### Someone Like You

I 1. .... that you're settled down  
That you 2. .... a girl and you're married now.  
I heard that your dreams 3. .... true.  
Guess she 4. .... you things I didn't 5. .... to you.

Old friend, why are you so shy?  
Ain't like you to 6. .... back or 7. .... from the light.

I 8. .... to turn up out of the blue uninvited  
But I couldn't 9. .... away, I couldn't 10. .... it.

I had 11. .... you'd 12. .... my face and that you'd 13. ....  
That for me it isn't over.

Never mind, I 14. .... someone like you  
I 15. .... nothing but the best for you too  
Don't 16. .... me, I 17. ....  
I 18. .... you 19. ....,  
"Sometimes it 20. .... in love but sometimes it 21. .... instead,  
Sometimes it lasts in love but sometimes it hurts instead"

You 22. .... how the time 23. ....  
Only yesterday was the time of our lives  
We 24. .... and 25. ....  
In a summer haze  
Bound by the surprise of our glory days

I hate to turn up out of the blue uninvited  
But I couldn't stay away, I couldn't fight it.  
I'd hoped you'd see my face and that you'd be reminded  
That for me it isn't over.

Never mind, I'll find someone like you  
I wish nothing but the best for you too  
Don't forget me, I beg  
I remember you said,  
"Sometimes it lasts in love but sometimes it hurts instead."

Nothing 26. ....  
No worries or cares  
Regrets and mistakes  
They 27. .... memories .....  
Who would 28. .... how bittersweet this 29. ....?

Never mind, I'll find someone like you  
I wish nothing but the best for you too  
Don't forget me, I beg  
I remember you said,  
"Sometimes it lasts in love but sometimes it hurts instead."

Never mind, I'll find someone like you  
I wish nothing but the best for you too  
Don't forget me, I beg  
I remember you said,  
"Sometimes it lasts in love but sometimes it hurts instead,  
Sometimes it lasts in love but sometimes it hurts instead."  
(Adele, 2011)

Next, the lecturer can resume with the second phase, the verb categorization, by requesting the students to categorize the words which they filled in the blanks into their tenses and forms. At this phase, she or he should remind the students that their practice is concerned with verbs usage, and the objective of the practice is for them to be able to use the verbs according to the verbs' tenses and forms. In the practice, the students are expected to notice that the missing words in the text belong to verbs, and the verbs come into the past and present tense as well as into the passive forms.

Finally, the lecturer can put the practice to an end with the sentence construction by requesting the students to write sentences using the categorized words in the previous phases. The lecturer may need to give a starting example for the students by writing a newly developed sentence in each category. There may be similarity in the structure of newly developed sentences to those of the original text, but the lecturer should not let the students carbon copy the sentences of the text completely. She or he should encourage them to write original sentences by themselves; she or he should remind them that the objective of the last phase of the practice is to develop their writing skill productively.

### **The Result**

The missing words in the text completion phase should appear as follows.

- |           |                 |                  |
|-----------|-----------------|------------------|
| 1. heard  | 11. (had) hoped | 21. hurts        |
| 2. found  | 12. (would) see | 22. know         |
| 3. came   | 13. be reminded | 23. flies        |
| 4. gave   | 14. (will) find | 24. were born    |
| 5. give   | 15. wish        | 25.(were) raised |
| 6. hold   | 16. forget      | 26. compares     |
| 7. hide   | 17. beg         | 27. are made     |
| 8. hate   | 18. remember    | 28. have known   |
| 9. stay   | 19. said        | 29. would taste  |
| 10. fight | 20. lasts       |                  |

The aforementioned missing words are verbs. The verbs in the text of Adele's "Someone Like You" fall into four verb forms: (1) present tense, (2) past tense, (3) future tense, and (4) passive. A simple present verb "has the same form but adds an 's' for the third person singular" (Thomson and Martinet, 1960:159). The text contains the following simple present verbs: give, hold, hide, hate, stay, fight, find, wish, forget, beg, remember, lasts, hurts, know, flies, and compares. A present perfect verb is formed "with the present tense of have + the past participle" (Thomson and Martinet, 1960:165). The text contains the following present perfect tense verb: have known.

An irregular past simple verb varies considerably in its simple past form (Thomson and Martinet, 1960:161). The text contains the following irregular past simple verbs: heard, found, came, gave, and said. A past perfect verb is formed "with had and the past participle" (Thomson and Martinet, 1960:175). Furthermore, the text contains the following past perfect verb: had hoped. In the text, the use of 'would' is considered to be equal to that of 'will'. Used to express

intention, “(would) similarly is the past equivalent of (will)” (Thomson and Martinet, 1960:207). In the text, ‘(would) see’ and ‘would taste’ are equal to ‘(will) find’ to become the verbs of intention. The passive form of a verb is formed “by putting the verb to be into the same tense as the active verb and adding the past participle of the active verb” (Thomson and Martinet, 1960:263). In the text, the passive voice is formed in the past tense (‘were born’ and ‘were raised’) and in the present tense (‘are made’). In brief, the verbs in the text may be categorized in a table to appear as follows:

Past Tense Verbs		Present Tense Verbs		Future Tense Verbs	Passive Voice
Simple	Perfect	Simple	Perfect		
heard	had	give, hold	have	(would) see	were born
found	hoped	hide, hate	known	would taste	were raised
came		stay, fight		(will) find	are made
gave		find, wish			
said		forget			
		beg			
		remember			
		lasts			
		hurts			
		know			
		flies			
		compares			

The sentence construction may vary individually among the students. This is because the students will write their own sentences grammatically. The students cannot rely heavily on the sentence structures in the text. The students are encouraged to develop their writing skill, so they will be able to write new sentences in compliance with standard English-sentence-structures by themselves. Thus, the sentences which the students write will be different from those in the text.

## **CONCLUSION**

Adele’s “Someone Like You” is helpful in an EFL classroom. The song’s lyric can be of help to teach EFL students verb tenses and passive forms. A lecturer may take three phases to teach, namely text completion (verb tenses and passive forms), verb categorization, and sentence construction. The text completion results in the missing words; the verb categorization results in (simple and perfect) present tense verbs, (simple and perfect) past tense verbs, future tense verbs, and passive forms; and the sentence construction results in newly developed sentences in accordance with standard English sentence structure. Therefore, the lyric is usable for the students to develop their writing skill.

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