

TEACHING PAST TENSE THROUGH DISCUSSION TECHNIQUE

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ABSTRACT

Grammar is central to the teaching and learning of languages. Grammar helps us in several phenomena. For example, if we want to translate sentence or paragraph into English, we need grammar in order to the meaning is clear and easy to understand. Grammar is often taught and learnt by every grade or level at a school or a course. Grammar is also one of difficult aspects of language to teach well. Because of that, the teacher must have the solution. Teacher has a significant role for this case because he or she is one of mediator of students getting knowledge. Teachers must have some good techniques for teaching grammar especially past tense, for example discussion. A research to know the effectiveness of teaching English Past Tense through Discussion technique has been conducted at the third grade of SD Pelita Insani Bogor. The data were collected through observation, interview, teaching-learning process, pre-test and post-test. The implementation of technique was the students had to discuss about past tense material which has been prepared by the teacher in a group. Discussion technique makes the students share their knowledge with their friends. Using discussion can make the third grade students in SD Pelita Insani Bogor more easily understanding and using past tense correctly. The students of Pelita Insani also can do the post-test which is a mean to evaluate the technique and teaching-learning process well and become more active in the teaching-learning process. The result of the post-test showed that teaching English past tense through discussion technique is one of good solution to improve the Pelita Insani's students' comprehend about past tense.

Key words: teaching past tense, discussion technique

I. INTRODUCTION

Language learning is important for human's social development. As a language which is used by more than a half of population in the world, English holds the keys as international language. English is a tool of communication among people of the world to get trade, social cultural, science, and technology goods. English competence also important in career development, therefore students need to understand and use English to improve their confidence to face global competition.

Today, based on School based Curriculum (Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan) English as a formal subject is given to Elementary School level start from fourth grade, but some school have taught English from first grade. The goal of teaching and learning English in elementary level is

improving the English skill (reading, writing, speaking and listening) within a specified word level and relevant grammatical structures and notions, in the context of the specified themes which are enclosed for elementary students. It means grammar is also important.

There is a problem that always appears in learning grammar. That problem is Some students still consider that it is difficult to master grammar. Moreover, each student has different capability to comprehend the material. As Harmer (2004:197) said that "one of the biggest problems teacher face is classes where the students are at different levels some quite competent English, some whose English is not very good, and some whose English is only just getting started." In this case, teacher has a significant role to make students interest to learn grammar.

The writer found that students still confused how to use and comprehend past tense in the daily life. Usually, the students use past tense to tell about their experiences in the past. The writer decided to use discussion technique to make the students will become more active and communicative in the class. Discussion will make the students understand the material easily because they share their knowledge with each other and the class becomes more active.

In this analysis, the writer chooses the third grade students because the third grade students can be controlled easily. The writer also wants to make an innovation in teaching grammar by using discussion. That is why the writer chooses **TEACHING PAST TENSE THROUGH DISCUSSION TECHNIQUE; A Field Research at SD Pelita Insani..** The purpose of this analysis is to know the effectiveness of teaching English Past Tense through discussion technique at the third grade students of SD Pelita Insani Bogor. Based on the title above, the writer would like to analyze the following problems:

1. How to teach simple past tense to students effectively?
2. What kinds of technique are some English teachers used to teach simple past tense in SD Pelita Insani?
3. How does the writer apply the discussion technique to teach past tense?
4. How effective is teaching simple past tense through discussion technique?

II. THEORETICAL REVIEW

2.1 Teaching Theory

Teaching is a process which aims to optimize children's learning. It is an interactive process between child and teacher that is extremely complex, dynamic, and demands that early childhood staff reflect on children's response to their program and respond in the ways that they believe will most assist children's learning (Glenada and Gillian:2004). Teacher should be creative in managing class. Johnson (2010) explained that creative teachers are teachers who: are able to provide original and creative activities, make real impact on the children they teach, have good subject and pedagogical knowledge and pedagogical skill, have an infectious enthusiasm that motivates children, provide learning environment

which meet children's individual need, involve children as active participants in their own learning.

2.2 Past Tense Theory

There is a set of rules which govern how units of meaning may be constructed in any language: we may say that a learner who 'knows grammar' is one who has mastered and can apply these rules to express him or herself in what could be considered acceptable language from. (Penny:2006)

Tenses are parts of grammar. Tenses commonly refers to the time of the situation which relates to the situation of the utterance or at the moment at speaking. King (2003) divided tense become three different times or aspects, that are:

1. NON-PAST time
2. PAST time
3. UNREALITY

Non-past may be taken to mean present or future, through to all tenses and purposes predominant sense in which inflections are used nowadays is future. Some instances of this ending with present meaning will be pointed out. Past carries the sense not only of time, but also of completion of the action. Unreality is used in hypothetical situation, or where the action is thought unlikely to happen, or is impossible. So, past tense is tense that used to express idea or action or event that started and completed or finished at specific time in the past.

2.3 Discussion Technique Theory

Discussion is one of teaching technique that can be used in teaching-learning process. Discussion in the teaching learning process is divided into two, discussion between teacher and students or discussion among the students. Research done by Hallam *et, al* conclude that teacher should consider forming specific group for the task at hand, so as to suit both those who benefit from mixed ability learning, equally with those who are better suited when learning with their academic peers. (Scoot:2009).

There are some principles that teacher should pay attention,:

1. Friendship

A key consideration when putting students in pairs or groups is to make sure that we put friends with friends, rather than risking the possibility of people working with others whom they difficult or unpleasant.

2. Streaming

Much discussion centers whether students should be streamed according to their ability. One suggestion is that pairs or groups should have mixture of weaker and stronger students.

3. Chance

One way of grouping people is to have students who are sitting next or near to each other work in pairs or group.

4. Changing Group

Just because the teacher put the students in group at the beginning of an activity does not mean that they have to stay in these group until end.

Discussion as the teaching technique can develop linguistic intelligence and interpersonal intelligence (there are eight intelligences based on Gardner). The students develop their ability using language to express their idea. Their interpersonal intelligence also will develop because they learn how to interact with the others and how to comprehend their friend. Whitebread (2008) stated that relationship between peers were described as relationship of co-operation, typified by reciprocity and mutuality and seen by Piaget as being conducive to the co-construction of new ideas and meanings usually in the form of open-ended problem solving. The co-operation between students is needed to create new knowledge.

Constructivist theories of learning also underlie the discussion technique. Students must construct knowledge in their own minds. The teacher can facilitate this process by teaching in ways that make information meaningful and relevant to students, by giving the students opportunities to discover or apply their ideas (Slavin:2006). In addition Piaget stated that social interaction with peers, especially argument and discussion, help to clarify thinking, and eventually to make it more logical. The students actively build systems of meaning and understandings of reality through their experiences and interaction. The students construct knowledge by continually assimilating and accommodating new information.

2.4 Characteristic of Young Learners

Students in elementary school are between six and eleven years old. It can be concluded that the elementary students are young learners. Scoot and Lisbeth (2004) divided the children into two main groups throughout the book- the five to seven year olds and the eight to ten year olds. They are assuming that the five to seven year olds are all at level one, the

beginner stage. The eight to ten year olds may also be beginner, or they may have been learning the foreign language for some time, so there are both level one and level two pupils in the eight to ten age group.

Children of eight to ten have characteristics:

1. Their basic concepts are formed.
2. They can tell the difference between fact and fiction
3. They ask questions all the time
4. They have definite views about what they like and do not like doing
5. They are able to work with others and learn from others

III. METHOD OF RESEARCH

a. Method

This research uses a descriptive method because it describes situations when the writer taught in the classroom. The writer also uses field research method because the writer taught and observed students in the classroom by herself.

b. Data Source

This research studies the effectiveness of discussion technique to teach simple past tense to third grade students Pelita Insani Elementary School Bogor.

c. Data Collection

In this research, the writer uses the primary source, that is documents that made by the writer when the writer observed and taught the students. There are steps that the researcher takes to analyze the data:

1. Observing the students
2. Conduct the pre-test
3. Teaching the students through discussion technique
4. Conduct the post-test
5. Analyzing the result of pre-test and post-test

d. Data Analysis

The data analysis is the process of identifying and classifying the data. As mentioned before, the main objective of this research is to know the effectiveness of discussion technique to teach past tense for third grade students Pelita Insani elementary school.

For these reasons, there are several steps taken in analyzing the data. The first is to analyze the observation report that the writer has arranged. The second is to analyze the pre-test score. The third is to analyze the teaching-learning process where the writer using discussion technique to explain about simple past tense. And the last is to analyze and compare the result of pre-test and post-test.

IV. DISCUSSION

4.1 Teaching Description

There are several things which must be prepared when the writer started to teach English in third grade at SD Pelita Insani Bogor. First, the writer prepared lesson plan. The writer made lesson plan based on syllabus and curriculum that are given by the original English teacher. The lesson plan was content of the title of meeting, the subtitle meeting, and basic competence, learning material, media and learning process. The writer has read in syllabus that the school applies thematic curriculum and School Based Curriculum. Thematic curriculum is a curriculum which students learn a theme for two months. This theme will be applied for all subjects. The theme for July and August is environment. A theme consists of many topics. The topic changes every week or a topic is used for week.

Grammar also inserted in each topic, but it was just an introduction. Each month the students learn one material. The writer taught grammar as interesting as possible so the students could understand it and the motto of school which is to make fun, warm and interesting atmosphere could be created.

Beginning the class, the writer gathered the students into the classroom, made a line and checked the uniform, after that, the students sat nicely on the carpet (usually called by carpet time). The students and the writer sat and made a big semicircle. The class started with praying that led by one student who has chosen as the leader of the week. After praying together, the writer greeted the students and asked the students about their condition and feeling. From this activity the writer knew the students' mood and if there was a problem with the students, the writer would solve the problem first.

Next activity, the writer did warming up activity. The writer usually sang a song, or played game as the warming up activity. This activity would make fun and warm atmosphere in the class.

The main activity was explaining the material. The writer explained the simple past tense through picture first. The picture shown about past activity. The writer tried to make discussion with the students through the picture. The writer asked about the picture and pattern of simple past tense.

After giving the explanation, the writer asked to the students about her explanation. The purpose was to identify that the students have been understood the material or the students have not understood the materials yet.

Then, the writer gave the story to the students and asked the students to read the story and look for the simple past sentences in that passage and retell the story whether use English or bahasa Indonesia. The students have to work in a group. Each group consists of three students. The writer walked around the class to check each group. The writer came from one group to another group and evaluated their discussion. The writer also would help the group if there was a problem. Sometimes, there were some students who can not cooperate with their friend. They disturbed their friend and did not want to discuss the material.

The students could do the task well. They discussed the passage, and wrote the result in the paper. They have been confident to share their opinion. Group discussion made the students sharing their knowledge to another. Usually, the students feel afraid to ask question to their teacher, so the writer made group discussion in order to make the students ask the question to their friends. The discussion activity also helped the students to construct and to build their own comprehension.

After finishing the discussion, the students sat on the carpet and presented the result of discussion in the front of classroom. The writer would discuss all results that have been presented by the students. Sometimes, the writer gave additional information to the students and evaluated the presentation.

The writer gave exercises about simple past to measure the student's comprehension. The result was good and satisfying. It is better than the pre-test result. Most of

students got a good score; it meant that the students have understood simple past tense.

The writer closed the class with games. They played “the whispering game”. While playing a game, the writer asked their feeling after learning the material. Some of them said that they were enjoy the class and could understand the material easily. The rest enjoyed the class but they have not understood the material. The writer realized that each students has different ability to absorb the material.

4.2 Teaching Analysis

Everything has each reason. Everything that the writer applied or did in the teaching-learning proces has reason. Every classroom activity from greeting until closing that had been done also has reason.

The first thing done by the writer was asking the students to enter the classroom. The students made a line and entered the classroom orderly. Students learned to be disciplined and the classroom will not be chaotic and noisy from this activity. The students from the habit of praying before and after doing something. The praying activity is usually led by the student who has been chosen as the leader of the class. every students has their own chance to be leader. It purposes to drill the students managing and controlling the class. it will improve their interpersonal intelligence. They also learn how to be a leader and to responsible. The writer tried to build their leadership spirit. Then, the writer opens the class through greeting the students.

Greeting the students is a must. It can make the students’ mood increase. Greeting also is done gloriously and with a smiling face. The writer made the students felt as comfortable as possible. Greeting the students is usually done on the carpet. It is called carpet time. The students and the writer sat on the carpet. The students made a semicircular and the writer sat at the tip of semicircular. It made the writer could keep eyes on all students. Carpet time also makes the relationship between students and the writer closer.

The writer also asked about their condition and their feeling. If there is student who feels unhappy, the writer tried to make the student happy and interested to teaching-learning process. The writer gave warming up activities such as singing, playing games, and story telling.

After getting the students’ attention, the writer reviews the last material. It intends on measuring the students’ comprehension. The

writer will know whether the students understand and remember the last material or not. It also can be instrument to measure whether the teaching- learning process is successful or not.

The main activity was analyzing passage in group. The purpose of this activity is to measure the students’ comprehension. They have known the formula of the past tense and the writer would know whether they could apply their knowledge to analyze passage in past form or not. The students also have to explain the reason and the characteristics, if the passage is in the past tense form. They did this exercise in group, so they could share their knowledge each other. They also could interact with their friend. They learn to respect their friends and to accept the critical. They could ask about the material that they have not understood to their friends, if they felt shy to ask to the writer or the teacher. They sat on the chair with their group.

After the students finished the discussion, the writer asked the students to sit on the carpet. Each group should present their result of discussion. Then, the other group gave comment about the result. This activity made the students learning from mistake that they did and accepted the critical and advises.

Display plays an important part in the organization of primary classroom. When the writer and the students decorate the class with the students’ work, the students feel satisfied and proud. They think that their effort can be showed off to their friends from the other class, their teachers, and their parents when parents visit day. That is the reason why the writer asked the students to displays their diary.

Usually the writer made game after the teaching-learning process to refresh the students’ mind. The game was still related with the material. It purposed to recall the students to the material.

4.3 Teaching Evaluation

In this chapter, the writer gives the report concerning the data description. The writer compares the achievement of the pre-test and post-test, to know whether discussion technique is effective in teaching past tense. The scores will be calculated and analyzed.

The writer has done post-test twice and the result are most of the students got better score after learning past tense used discussion technique. Although most of the students got good score, the writer still consider to some students who got bad

score. The writer has to find the reason why they got poor score. The writer did personal approach to each student. The writer has to find the reason why they got poor score. The writer did personal approach to each student.

Some students prefer if the teacher explains the material to the students. They prefer to be focus of the material to the students. They do not like work in group because they like work alone. They get difficulty to interact with their friends. The writer tried to make them familiar with work in group.

Some students, who are slow to understand the material, need individual treatment. The writer should explain to those special students individually and in many times. The writer usually used more simple exercise to test those students. The writer also had given more exercises to be done at home. The writer wrote a message that informs the exercises to their parents on their communication book. It purposed asking the parents to help the teaching-learning process at home. The students' achievements are result from cooperation between itself, teacher, and parents.

V. CONCLUSION

After getting the result, the writer concludes that teaching English Grammar especially past tense should be in the ideal condition where the students feel safe and comfort, and use simple explanation. The students should be taught with fun activities and relax situation. The writer have proved that if the writer taught the material with long and complicated explanation, the students will be confuse and bored because the writer should teach the students based on their capacity and capability. However, if the writer taught with simple explanation and use activities such as group discussion, song, story, etc, the students could understand the material easily.

The writer found that the teachers in SD Pelita Insani still used long explanation with full English and many exercises to teach past tense to the students when the writer did training job in SD Pelita Insani. The teaching aids that the teacher used are good but it is better if the teachers combine English with students' native language which is Indonesia because each student has different ability to comprehend the material. Long explanation

also makes the students confuse and bored because the students still moody and their feeling are changeable.

Teaching past tense through group discussion is one of alternative ways to teach grammar at elementary school. The writer gives the students passage or question. Then, the students discuss it in group discussion. Finishing their discussion, the students present their discussion result. After that the writer and students evaluate and discuss the presentation from every group. This activity helps the students to adapt and get long with their friends. The students could share their knowledge with their friend and they could express their ideas to their friends.

Based on the analysis of the data, the writer concludes that teaching past tense through discussion in SD Pelita Insani is effective. More over discussion makes the students feel enjoy and do not feel bored. Most of them have increasing score after getting material by group discussion. They also could apply the theory of past tense to write their diary or retell their experience.

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