

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

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1.1. Background of the Study

Tenses hold an important part in teaching and learning English. When someone is using the wrong tenses, the other person will have misinterpretation. For example, someone said that "I was looking for a new book" instead of "I am looking for a new book", the person (the addressee) will think that now he is not looking for a new book anymore. It means that the speaker was looking for a new book in the past. This idea is supported by Kriedler (1968 : 27), who said :

"the goal of those learning English is to be able to manipulate the structural patterns of English in real situations - to attain the ability to understand, to reply, to take part in a conversation, in short, to react correctly in an English language situation. Vocabulary is important because different meanings are expressed by different words, and pronunciation is important because words and phrases must be said intelligibly in order to be understood. But both of these are incidental to the grammar of English. Stringing words together haphazardly, even if they are pronounced correctly, is not speaking English. The words must follow in certain forms".

The way of teaching tenses also holds an important part, because, in fact, many people do not like to learn tenses. It is established by Stevick's statement (1982 :

82) which said :

"if you were to interview a hundred people on their feelings about the study of foreign languages, I doubt that many would pick the study of grammar. If you then turned to another group, and asked them what they disliked most in languages, I suspect that grammar would be mentioned more frequently than anything else."

Based on the reality in the schools that grammar is a boring and difficult subject, the writer suggests to use enjoyable activities in teaching English tenses, because when someone is learning tenses without any enjoyment he will hardly learn the tenses, and he will drop it as soon as he can. J.A. Bright (1970 : 5), in his book which is entitled "Teaching English as a Second Language", said :

"enjoyment ought to be one of the foremost aims and effects of education, particularly in schools, partly because what we enjoy we feel inclined to go on with, and what we have disliked we drop as soon as we can"

This idea is conformed by Maria Eugene Monreal (1982 :

2) who said that :

"it is a common perception that all learning should be serious solemn in nature, and that if one is having fun and there is hilarity and laughter, then it is not really learning. This is a misconception. It is possible to learn a language as well as enjoy oneself at the same time".

Every teacher should realize that each lesson must have some variety in its presentation. One can imagine how boring a class is, if the lesson is presented monotonously without any variation. Therefore teachers should vary the way of teaching in order to help the students to learn tenses without any pressure. This idea is supported by Monreal (1982 :44) who said that :

"variety is one of the most important factors in maintaining a high level of motivation and interest among your students".

Allen (1959 : VII) said that English can only be achieved by constant practice of exciting forms, with some rational explanation of the grammatical devices employed, whenever this is possible.

In an English class the variation is mainly provided by presenting surprising items such as anecdotes, games, songs, story telling, physical response activities. From those many kinds of activities, the writer chooses games and songs as her object of observation. Games and songs as the enjoyable activities, in fact, provide an enjoyable atmosphere with as good result as drills and exercises. It is true that drills and exercises are very useful, but sometimes they are boring. The students get bored easily. Games and songs, however, can replace those boring drills and exercises, and help the teacher as well.

By having games and songs , the strained and tense atmosphere in the classroom can be eliminated. Both the teacher and the students can enjoy a relaxed situation; meanwhile, the students are coincidentally learning the language. Sometimes they really do not feel that the process of learning is implied in the games and songs. Indeed, those activities can make the students enjoy learning and help them arrive quickly at the real aim of studying the language, that is to be able to use it in a proper situation.

Based on the reasons above, the writer wants to observe an English course especially the elementary level classes that consist of eleven to twelve year old students, at Jl. Taman Darma Permai Selatan II/21 Surabaya. The reason why the writer observes the course is because it teaches tenses to the students, through enjoyable activities. Here, the writer wants to make (a) comparison(s) between the theories provided and the practices, in order to prove that games and songs are applicable to the students at the elementary level and more successful than the traditional one.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Based on the above background, the central question in this thesis is "Can the English tenses be taught to the elementary students through enjoyable activities,

especially games and songs ?”

1.3. Objective of the Study

By doing some observations in the private English course, the writer wants to know the activities that happen in the classroom when the teacher teaches English tenses through games and songs and the teachers' and students' reaction.

1.4. Significance of the Study

The writer hopes that this study will give some contributions to English teachers, especially in teaching tenses to the elementary level students. It is also expected that this study can motivate the teachers to use enjoyable activities, so they may make teaching - learning activities more lively, enjoyable, and successful.

1.5. Definition of the Key Terms

Before the writer comes to further discussion, it is better to clarify some key terms applied in this thesis.

Elementary Level

According to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary: Elementary level is a level which has an equal ability in the beginning stages (Oxford Advanced Learner's

Dictionary, 1990)

Tense

According to Webster (1986) :

"Tense is a distinction of form in a verb to express past, present, or future time or duration of the action or state it denotes".

Enjoyable Activities

The exertion of energy or action that is capable of being a source of pleasure or enjoyment (Webster, 1986).

Game

A form of play or sport with rules (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 1990)

Song

A musical composition made up of mutually dependent words and music which together produce a unique aesthetic response (Webster, 1986)

1.6. Scope and Limitation of the Study

In order to achieve the purpose of this study, the writer does an observation to one of the English course classrooms which consists of eleven to twelve year old students. The writer does the observation in a private English course at Jalan Taman Darmo Permai Selatan II/21 Surabaya. She chooses that course because that course teaches tenses to the students through enjoyable activi-

ties.

1.7. The Research Method

In this study, the writer does a non-participant observation. The writer observes an elementary level class in a private English course. The writer observes the way the teacher presents the materials, the students' reactions, the effectiveness of games and songs in improving the students' ability in using correct tenses.

1.8. Organization of the Study

This study consists of five chapters. Chapter I deals with the introduction of the study including the background of the study, statement of the problem, objective of the study, significance of the study, scope and limitation of the study, the research method, and the organization of the study. Chapter II concerns with review of related literature which includes the theories of Behaviorist Theory, classroom interaction, the importance of tenses, the importance of games, the importance of songs, teaching tenses through games, teaching tenses through songs. Chapter III is methodology. Chapter IV concerns with the report of the observation. Chapter V deals with the conclusion which includes summary and suggestion.