

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

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1.1 Background of the Study

English is an international language. It is taught in schools in nearly every country around the world. Therefore, English is usually said to be the means of international communication. Besides that, every advance in science, engineering, trade, politics, and in every branch of human thought is discussed, printed, disseminated, and made available in English, too. (F.G. French, 1963:1).

However, many students, especially elementary students, often feel bored during the English lesson. They often think that English is a very difficult and boring lesson. As a consequence, they lose their motivation in learning the language. It is a fact that most language teachers have to face when they teach the language. There are two reasons why the students think this way: first, the teachers often teach them with traditional teaching method. Alan Chamberlain (1984 : 29) stated that “..... it is undeniably true that most of the English teaching procedure at school is still based on traditional books - books which are concerned excessively with an understanding of grammatical structure, an expanding of wordy vocabulary and a little knowledge of pronunciation and intonation”. This traditional teaching method makes the lesson

seem uninteresting and difficult to understand and to learn.

Second, the teachers often teach 'book sentences', not sentences used in real contexts or communication. As a result, the teaching learning process becomes very boring. Allan Chamberlain (1984:2) supports this opinion by saying, "Much of the English teaching that goes in the classroom (at school) does not encourage the students to speak the language being taught, while actually language is speech." One of the reasons is that the words and most of the sentences the students absorb from every lesson are 'book' words and sentences. In other words, they do not arise from real situations. The teachers do not teach the language communicatively. The consequence of this is that the language only makes little impression on the students' mind, and therefore the students easily forget it.

From those reasons, surely it is not the students' fault if they feel that an English class is boring. However, as has been explained above, English is a very important language in the world, but it must be admitted that the students, especially elementary students, are still not able to see the use of studying the new foreign language, which is, in consequence, difficult for them. As a result, they will lose their interest in the English lesson and the language as well.

The students might find that English grammar is the most difficult component to master compared to vocabulary, or listening, or the other skills and elements of the language. Therefore, many students, who at first have good intention in learning the

language, lose their interest after they find out that learning English grammar is quite difficult. If this happens, it is the teachers' duty to find ways to reinforce the students in learning, for no matter how difficult English grammar is, it still has to be learnt because it plays a very important role in mastering the English language.

English grammar is necessary to be taught to elementary school students, not only to secondary school students or adults. The reasons of teaching the students a foreign language according to M.A. Dawson (1963:14) are: first, English has been admitted as an international language-as has been stated before. Second, the students are expected to be able to practice English in a real communication. The third is because English is required in many occasions, such as business affairs, social affairs. It is also done since science and technology have developed so rapidly and the language used to communicate the findings and technology has been mostly the English language.

Another reason why it is very important for the teacher to teach English at the elementary school is because many experts assume that younger students have a greater tendency for learning and acquiring a new language more easily than adults. Kasbolah (1992:11-12) give statements which supports this idea as follows :

Research on language development between 1950s and 1960s showed that the children possessed unique capacities for language learning. The main argument was that psychologist and linguists felt that the sooner the student learned a language, the better. They should begin as soon as they began their formal education."

From those statements, it is clear that teachers should pay much attention on the language education on the elementary level and try to find ways to overcome the boredom in class. There are many techniques which can be used to teach structure. However, a teacher must select an appropriate technique to be applied in the teaching learning process, which can bring good results in accordance with the objective of the teaching itself.

One of the ways to lessen the boredom is by giving them a feeling of joy. When they feel happy, they will learn English grammar easily and they will be reinforced to learn, as stated by Robert F Biehler (1971:192). In other words, it means the happiness that the students feel when they learn the language will motivate them to learn the language. There are many devices that can help a great deal in motivating the students' interest toward the lesson, e.g. Folk songs, interesting short stories and language games, and drill.

Most language teachers usually use drills in the classroom to reinforce the students in understanding the structure being taught. Robert Lado (1977:105) stated that language is a habit, so we must practice it frequently until we are accustomed to use the language in communication with other people. In other words, if the students practice the language continually, they will be able to communicate by using the language. This can be done by using drill.

However, there is another technique that can be used to reinforce the structure

being taught, namely language games. According to W.R. Lee (1982:2) the situations which bring a foreign language to life in the classroom are provided by gestures, by handling and touching things, by incidents and activities, by pictures, by dramatisation, by interesting stories spoken or in print-and by certain contest and games. The last mentioned one is the most interesting device that can be used to motivate the students to learn the language.

Actually, both of those techniques of reinforcement provide active practice for learning the English grammar. Mary Finocchiaro (1974:263) stated that a successful learning depends much on the learner's attitude, motivation and interest, and that the achievement of foreign language can be achieved only through active practice, which is provided by drills and language games. Many teachers have used drills in teaching structure but not many of them have used games, while there are experts who stated that language games is the most interesting device that can be used to reinforce the students to learn the language, therefore the writer is interested to do a research on language games.

In this study, the writer is interested to find out whether language games is really more effective than drills in motivating the students to learn the lesson, which can finally make the students have better structure achievement.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Based on the above background, the writer wants to make a study on the effect of using structure games and drills as a means of reinforcement in teaching structure on the structure achievement of elementary students of grade four.

The problem to be answered in this study is “Do the students who are given grammar games as a reinforcement in the teaching of tenses have better structure achievement than those who are given drills as a means of reinforcement in the teaching of tenses?”

1.3. The Objective of the Study

The objective of this study is to find out whether the use of grammar games as a means of reinforcement in teaching tenses has a more positive effect on the students' achievement in mastering English structure, better than drills.

1.4. Significance of the Study

This study is expected to give some contribution in the teaching of English structure which is integratedly taught with the other skills and language elements in the English lesson to students of the elementary school. In addition, it is expected that this study can provide some information about the various kinds of language games and their application as a means of reinforcement in the teaching of structure for the English teachers.

1.5. The Scope and Limitation of the Study

There are various techniques used in improving students' ability in language structure such as songs, dialogues, and interesting short stories. Here the writer limits this study only to the use of some grammar games and drills as a means of reinforcement in teaching structure.

The materials used were some grammar games such as '16 Women', 'Scrambled sentences' and 'Guess The Mime' which are taken from ESL Teacher's Activity Kit by Elizabeth Claire; Index Card Game For ESL by Raymond C. Clark and Games and Activities For Language Learner by Michael Carrier, and some drills namely repetition drill, Alternative drill, and Syntactic drill. The Structural Pattern, which is going to be taught, is Present Continuous Tense.

The writer presents these games because they are interesting, enjoyable and they can help the students in learning and mastering the English structure, and also because they are easy enough to be played by children.

The population and the sample of this study are limited to the fourth grade students of Petra 7 elementary school at Kalianyar street of the school year 1999/2000. Each group, experimental and control, is given different treatments. The treatments given are limited to 3 meetings for each group. The theme of the material is limited based on the 1994 curriculum for elementary school.

1.6. Theoretical Framework

The theory which is used mostly in this study is the importance of teaching structure, and the importance of using games as a reinforcement in teaching the structure of language.

In learning English as a foreign language, the students have to understand the grammatical structure of the language because it is the foundation in learning the other skills namely, speaking, listening, reading, writing. Ho Shue Hsing (1980:33) says that grammar is a tool for learning English. Therefore, the teachers need to motivate the students in learning the structure of the language in order to master the other skills.

✓ W.R Lee (1982:1) stated that the learning situation must be joyful and enjoyable. If the students are in a relaxed condition, they will learn more easily, happily and thoroughly. Language games are very useful for creating this kind of condition. Further more, Language games can give 'hidden' practice of a specific language point, as stated by Michael Carrier (1980:10). This includes the structure points. Through games, the students will learn about the structure of the language without being aware of it.

1.7. Hypothesis

In this study the HA or the Alternative Hypothesis is there is a significant difference between the structure achievement of the students who are given grammar games as a means of reinforcement in teaching tenses and the structure achievement of the students who are given drills as a means of reinforcement in teaching tenses.

The Ho or Null Hypothesis is there is no significant difference between the structure achievement of the students who are given grammar games as a means of reinforcement in teaching tenses and the structure achievement of the students who are given drills as a means of reinforcement.

1.8. Definition of the Key Terms

Achievement : performance by a students in a course, quality and quantity of a student work during a given period (Webster 1986:724)

Teaching : showing or helping someone to learn how to do something, giving instruction, guiding the study of something, providing with knowledge, causing to know or understand. (H. Douglas Brown, 1987:6)

English structure : the study or the use of English language rules by which words change their forms and combined into sentences. (Longman, 1987:453)

Grammar game: a language game which concentrate on a certain grammar point. (Rodgers, 1981:2)

Effect: to bring about especially through successful use of factors contributory to the result (Webster, 1986:724)

Reinforcement: the consolidation of further learning or material. It also means the confirmation or reward which increases the likelihood of a student's giving a correct response again at another time.

(Mary Finocchiaro, 1974:191)

Drill: through training by practical exercises, usually with much repetition (A.S. Hornby, 1963:305)

1.9. Organization of the study

This study consists of five chapters. Chapter one is the introduction and Chapter two is review of related literature, while methodology is in Chapter three and data analysis and findings is in Chapter four. The last chapter, chapter five is about conclusion and some suggestions.