

Using Diary in Improving Students' Grammar Ability

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ABSTRACT

Grammar mastery supports in several aspects. For example, for translating a sentence into English or vice versa, grammar is needed so that the meaning of the sentence is clear as well as easy to understand. Grammar is also one aspect of language that is difficult to teach. Therefore, the teacher must have a solution so that learning grammar becomes more interesting and easy to understand. The teacher must have some good grammar teaching techniques, especially the past tense. The current study explores the effectiveness of teaching English Past Tense through the diary writing technique was conducted in the third grade of an elementary school in Bogor. Data collection was carried out by observation, interview, teaching and learning process, pre-test and post-test. The implementation of the technique is that students must write down their activities that they have done. Then the results of their writing will be analyzed together. Using this technique makes it easier for the students to understand and use the past tense correctly. Students can also do a post-test which is a means to evaluate teaching and learning techniques and processes properly and to be more active in the teaching and learning process. The post-test findings demonstrate that teaching English past tense through the approach of journal writing is an effective way to increase students' comprehension of past tense.

Keywords: Teaching, Past Tense, Diary, Young Learners, Grammar

INTRODUCTION

Language is an essential tool for social development. As an international language, English is a communication between people worldwide to achieve socio-cultural, scientific, and technological goals. English competence is also needed in career development. Therefore students need to understand and use English to increase their confidence in facing global competition.

In elementary schools, English is taught as a formal subject. Improving English language proficiency is the goal of elementary English teaching and learning (reading, writing,

speaking, and listening). Teaching is a process that aims to optimize children's abilities. It is a highly complex and dynamic interactive process between child and teacher. Early childhood educators must consider how the kids reacted to their program and respond in a way that they feel will best support the kids' learning (Glenda and Gillian: 2004). Instructors must use innovation to run the class. According to Johnson (2010), creative teachers are those who can offer unique and innovative activities, have a real impact on the students they teach, and have exceptional subject-matter and

pedagogical knowledge as well as pedagogical abilities. Besides, they have an infectious spirit that motivates children; provide a learning environment that meets the individual needs of children, involving children as active participants in their learning. Grammar is one of the parts of speech that students must learn. Some problems consistently arise in learning grammar. The problem is some students still think that mastering grammar is complicated. In addition, each student has different abilities in understanding the material. Harmer (2004:197) says, "One of the biggest problems teachers face is the classroom where students are at different levels, some English is quite competent, some English is not very good, and some English is just starting." In this situation, the teacher plays a big part in piquing pupils' interest in grammatical instruction. The truth is that the kids are still unsure of how to utilize and comprehend the past tense in normal conversation. Students typically describe their past experiences in the past tense. In order to encourage pupils to participate and communicate more in class, the author chose to employ the diary writing technique.

Why does it choose third-graders? It is because the third-grade students are completely under the teacher's authority. The purpose of this analysis is to evaluate the efficacy of teaching third-grade children English past tense using the diary writing method. Young learners are those students in elementary school who are between the ages of six and eleven. The five to seven-year-olds and the eight to ten-year-olds were the two main age

groupings Scoot and Lisbeth (2004) divided the children into throughout the book. They presume that all children aged five to seven are at the level one, or starter stage. There are both level one and level two students in the eight to ten age range because the children may also be novices or have been studying a foreign language for some time.

Children between the ages of 8 and 10 have the following characteristics:

1. Having developed fundamental ideas,
2. Able to distinguish between reality and fiction,
3. Frequently ask questions,
4. Have strong opinions about what they enjoy and dislike doing, and
5. Can collaborate with others and pick up knowledge from others.

Indrawati and Wawan Setiawan, (2009) stated that learning is said to be fun if an atmosphere is relaxed, free from pressure, safe, interesting, awakened interest in learning, full involvement, students' attention is devoted, the learning environment is interesting and enthusiastic, and feelings of joy and high concentration. On the other hand, learning becomes unpleasant when the atmosphere is depressed, feeling threatened, scared, helpless, unenthusiastic, lazy/uninterested, bored/bored, the learning atmosphere is monotonous, and learning does not attract students.

To create fun learning, several things that the teacher must do:

1. Greet students in a friendly ways

Creating a memorable start is important because it will influence

the rest of the process. The learning process will be more lively and exciting if the start is good, interesting, and enthralling.

Therefore, always start learning activities by giving warm greetings to students. Warm greetings and bright facial expressions reflect positive energy that can affect students' enthusiasm. We can imagine if a teacher starts learning with a complicated face, doesn't smile, and looks disheveled; of course, the class atmosphere becomes tense and scary.

2. Using ice breaker

In lessons, sometimes we see the emergence of an atmosphere that needs to be more supportive to cause the goals of learning not to be achieved. The atmosphere in question is stiff, cold, or frozen so learning at that time becomes less comfortable. Ice breaking is useful for increasing the degree of attention of the trainees (training). Based on research results, the average time for each person to concentrate on one particular focus is only about 15 minutes. After that, one's concentration can no longer focus. The teacher must be sensitive when he sees symptoms that indicate that students can no longer concentrate by doing ice breaking so that students become refreshed and concentrate again. Ice breaking can be yells, applause, singing, movements and songs, body movements, and games.

3. Using a variety of methods

Individuals are unique creatures with different inclinations, intelligence and learning styles. There are at least four student learning styles, as stated by Howard Gardner, namely Auditory, Visual, Reading and Kinesthetic. Teachers

need to realize that students in one class have different learning styles. Therefore, teachers can use various methods to accommodate all students learning from different backgrounds.

Research conducted by Gülin Yolageldi and Arda Arikan (2011) showed that Games are one of the best ways to direct young learners' energy into language learning because they like to be physically active; moreover, they are imaginative and creative, and they learn subconsciously. Grammar learning becomes enjoyable and permanent due to games providing learners with a meaningful context for practising grammar communicatively.

Another study by Pabayo (2022) showed that animated movie media could increase students' grammar knowledge of simple past tense in narrative text. Animation movie helps the student memorise, maintain, and understand the material they have learnt.

METHOD

This study used mixed methods. According to Creswell (2013), mixed methods research is a research approach that combines or associates qualitative forms and quantitative forms. This approach involves the function of two research approaches collectively, so the research power is getting bigger. This method is used because they want to produce more facts about the research problem, complete the picture of the study results regarding the phenomenon studied, and strengthen the research analysis. Data collection was carried out using interviews and conducting pre-tests and post-tests. Interviews were conducted after the post-test was carried out. Interviews were

conducted to explore students' opinions about the techniques used in this study. The pre-test and post-test are in the form of multiple choice questions related to the past tense and a written test in the form of a student diary. 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 a diary to teach past tense for thirds

grade students. The step taken is to analyze the pre-test score (the multiple choice question and the diary). The second is to analyze the teaching-learning process. Then, analyze and compare the result of the pre-test and post-test. The last is to analyze the result of the interview. The respondents of this research are the third-grade students of Elementary School in Bogor. There are 20 students, consist of 12 female students and 8 male students.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Before the teaching English to the third grade is started, several things must be prepared, such as the lesson plan, the exercises, and the questionnaire. In the beginning, the class was started by praying together and checking the students' condition. Praying activities before and after lessons can foster students' sense of divinity. Prayer activities are usually led by students elected as class leaders for one week. The election of the chairperson every week is intended so that every student has the opportunity to become a leader. It aims to foster students' interpersonal intelligence and teach them how to manage and control the classroom. Kids also pick up leadership and responsibility skills. Greeting students is an obligation. This

activity is done to check the student's condition before starting the lesson and to ensure that the student is ready to start the class. If students still need help or are uncomfortable, they will usually be given time to solve their problems first. Researchers make sure all students feel relaxed and ready to receive lessons. This activity is generally done on the carpet or so-called carpet time. The students and researchers sat on the rug in a semicircle so that researchers could easily supervise all students. Carpet time also makes the relationship between students and researchers closer.

The following action is warming-up activity. Then move to the main activity was explaining the material that is simple past tense. The picture is used as a medium to show past activity. Next, the researcher asked the students to write their activities on Saturday and Sunday in their books. The students went back to sit on their chairs. When finished, students will read their writing one by one. After students have presented their writings, the researcher will choose several writings to be analyzed together, whether the vocabulary, the time information used, and the past tense form are appropriate. If it is inappropriate, the researcher will try asking other students how the structure or sentence should be. This activity made the students learn from their mistakes and accept critical advice. After being read and analyzed, the writing results will be displayed in class. Students will feel satisfied and proud when researchers and students display their work in the classroom. When parents visit school, they believe they may show off all of their hard work to their

classmates, teachers, and parents. The author requests that pupils display their writing because of this.

This activity is carried out every week for a month, so there are four meetings. In the fourth week, students were asked to do a post-test. Then after getting the results from the pre-test and post-test comparisons, the interviews were conducted to explore how effective they thought the media was and whether students felt more interested in learning grammar using diary-writing media. The comparison between the pre-test and post-test showed that most of the students experienced an increase in scores. Judging from the results of their diary writing, 85% of the students used the vocabulary, both verbs and adverbs of time, correctly. But there are still three students who still need to show significant improvement. From the interview results, three

students have problems. Two students had difficulty in putting the story into writing, while one student still experienced confusion about the use of verbs in the past and present tenses

CONCLUSION

According to the research, it is optimal to teach English grammar, particularly the past tense, in situations where students feel secure, comfortable, and while using straightforward explanations. Fun activities, a variety of teaching methods, and informal settings must be used to teach students. Students' grammar and writing abilities are improved when they adopt diary writing approaches, particularly when writing in the past tense.

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