

IMPROVING THE SEVENTH GRADE STUDENTS' ACTIVE PARTICIPATIONS AND THEIR SIMPLE PRESENT TENSE ACHIEVEMENT IN WRITING A DESCRIPTIVE PARAGRAPH BY GIVING WRITTEN FEEDBACK AT SMPN 2 BALUNG IN THE 2013/2014 ACADEMIC YEAR

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ABSTRACT

This Classroom Action Research was intended to improve the seventh grade students' active participation and their simple present tense achievement at SMPN 2 Balung – Jember in the 2013/2014 academic year. It was conducted collaboratively with the teacher and it was done in two cycles by giving written feedback. The research procedures cover the planning of the action, the implementation of the action, the classroom observation and evaluation, and data analysis and reflection of the action. The result of the action in the first cycle showed that 64,9% of the students were active in the first meeting and 70,3% of the students were active in the second meeting. This showed that there was an improvement of the students' active participation from the first meeting to the second meeting. The total percentages of the students active participation in the first cycle was 67.6%. So, the result of the students' active participation did not achieve the target percentage. Then, the results of tense test in the first cycle showed that 73% of the students got score at least 71 on the tense test. It showed that the result of tense test achieved the target percentage. Therefore, the actions in Cycle 2 were needed to be conducted in order to improve the students' active participation. Then the action in the second cycle was conducted by revising several aspects in the first cycle and the result showed that 81% of the students were categorized to be active and 86,5% of the students were active in the second meeting. Then, based on the result of tense test in the second cycle 83,8% of students got score at least 71. This means that the actions in the second cycle achieved the criteria of success of the research and the percentage of students' active participation. Finally, conclusion can be made that giving written feedback to the students' work of English tense was able to improve the students' active participation and their simple present tense achievement at SMPN 2 Balung – Jember.

Keywords: Classroom Action Research, Written Feedback, Writing Achievement

INTRODUCTION

In Indonesia, English is a foreign language and it is the Target Language (TL) taught at the elementary up to the university level. It is used as communication in the school but it is not used actively. In school, English is taught as a compulsory subject to face a national examination in junior or senior high school, and it is taught as a local content subject in elementary school.

In schools, there are four language skills that must be learned by the students in learning English, they are speaking, listening, reading and writing. Besides, there are some language components that must be studied by the students, namely pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar.

Based on the result of interview with the English teacher of the seventh grade, he said that he taught English by using a handbook (BIMA) and workbook as a source of

teaching Simple Present Tense because it was easier for him to give the exercise and he said that his students had problem in structuring the sentences and 70% of their tense score under the passing grade. He also taught his students by explaining the material then the teacher gave the examples and asked the students to identify the example given. After that, he gave some exercises of tense and it was discussed in the class. In the last session, he gave homework and it was corrected in the next meeting. Here, the students of class VIIF were still confused in using the correct verb forms of the tense, especially the use of verbs added with *-s/-es* and they also had difficulties in using the auxiliary verb 'do' or 'does' in negative and affirmative sentences, and the use of *to be* (am, is, and are) in the sentences. Those difficulties appeared because the teacher only given an oral feedback to the students' work as written

feedback, so they did not know their errors and how to correct them.

In this research, the researcher offered one of the techniques that the English teacher could use in teaching tense that is giving written feedback to the students' writings. Garcia (1999:101) states that written feedback helps students to be aware of errors and other problems which cannot be recognized while doing their work. In this case, the function of written feedback was to solve the students' problem with tense mastery of Simple Present Tense.

Written feedback is the written comment given by the teacher about the students' work on the students' paper. It usually comes in the form of the tense errors made by students. Here, the comments will be in the form of correction indicating what is wrong (Keh, 1990:301).

In giving the written feedback, the teacher occasionally has at least two roles. The first is to get what the students would like to know. It often happens that the students do not want to get unclear or blind praise, such as 'good and excellent' since, it makes them still confused about what surely the problem is whether grammar errors or spelling errors (Keh, 1990: 303). Therefore, the teacher is required to give corrections which refer to specific problems. The second, the teacher has to tell the students about the thing that he/she thinks the students must do well. In this research, the researcher focused on giving the written feedback to the students' tense errors in their writings. It was used because the English teacher had never given the written feedback to the students' tense errors in the students' writings.

Wingersky (1999:4) mentions that writing is a process through which you discover, organize, and communicate your thoughts to a reader. It means that it is a process in which the writers discover, organize, and communicate their thoughts by using words in the written form. Furthermore, Fairbairn and Winch (1996:32) define writing as "about conveying meaning by selecting words and putting them together in a written or printed form."

In this research, writing was used as the medium for the students to use simple present tense in writing a descriptive paragraph. Then, written feedback was given to the students' writings about the tense errors and the researcher focused on the tense errors of simple present tense only.

Cambrooke (1999:231) stated that a descriptive paragraph describes a person, place or thing. It allows you to imagine the way a person felt, heard or saw the object or location at a particular time regardless if the writer explains a real or imagined circumstance. Additionally, a descriptive paragraph gives readers a vivid image of a person, place or thing. This type of paragraph uses multiple sentences to convey a single clear image of a person, place or thing therefore; descriptive paragraph writing was chosen in this research.

Simple present tense is used to indicate a regular/habitual action. The simple present of all verbs, except be, is based on the simple form. According to Azar (1989:2), simple present tense expresses events or situations

that exist always, usually, habitually; they exist now, have existed in the past, and probably will exist in the future. In line with this, Comrie (1985:38) states that present tense is a situation holding at present moment, even where that situation is part of larger situation occupies more than just the present moment. In addition, simple present tense is used to talk about things in general. Or to say about things that happen all the time or repeatedly, or that something is true in general (Murphy: 1987:4). From the previous definitions, it can be concluded that simple present tense is used to talk about the activities that happen in the present time.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The Classroom Action Research (CAR) design was chosen in this research as it was aimed at improving the VIIIF grade students' active participations and their tense achievement in writing a descriptive paragraph by giving written or oral feedback at SMPN 02 Balung. It applied the cycle model that was developed by Lewin (in Elliot, 1991:70).

The classroom action research was conducted collaboratively with the English teacher who taught English to the seventh grade students in SMPN 2 Balung. The collaboration was focused on constructing lesson plan, identifying problems, implementing the action, observing the action, and analyzing the data and doing the reflection of the actions. The research procedures were:

- a) Choosing the topic based on the Basic Course of English Institutional Based Curriculum for grade VII of Junior High School.
- b) Preparing the teaching materials about simple present tense and the students' work sheet.
- c) Constructing the lesson plans (meeting 1 and meeting 2).
- d) Constructing the observation guide in the form of checklist containing the indicators to be observed, namely focusing to the lesson, asking the questions about the materials have been taught, answering the teacher's oral questions, participating in answering the exercises given on the white board, doing the tasks given individually.
- e) Constructing the tense test of Simple Present Tenses.

There were two kinds of data in this research, namely, primary and supporting data. The primary data were collected by using observation and tense test, especially on the use of Simple Present Tense in writing a descriptive paragraph. The supporting data were collected by using interview and documentation.

As stated by Arikunto (2006:150-151), a test is a set of questions or exercises or other instruments which are used to measure skill, knowledge, intelligence, and aptitude, of an individual or group. While observation is an activity of observing and systematic record keeping toward the phenomenon under investigation (Hadi, 1973:159).

According to Arikunto (2006:158), documentation is used to get the data from the written documents, such as: books, magazines, reports, daily notes, etc. In this research, the data from documents were used to get the supporting data about the names of the research subjects and the scores of the tense test done by the teacher.

RESEARCH FINDING AND DISCUSSION

After conducting the action in two cycles in this classroom action research, it could be claimed that the use of giving written feedback could improve the students' active participation and their tense achievement. The following table presents the percentage of the improvement of the students' active participation and their tense achievement in the first cycle.

The Improvement of the Students' Active Participation and Their Simple Present Tense Achievement in Cycle 1

Action	The Percentage of the Students' Active Participation.	The Percentage of the Students who got scores at least 71 in the tense test.
Cycle 1	Meeting 1 : 64.9%	73%
	Meeting 2 : 70.3%	
Average	: 67.6%	73%

From the above table, it showed that the result of the average of students' active participation in cycle 1 was 67.6%. It did not achieve the target of the percentage (70%). Then, the result of tense test showed that 73% of the students got score more than the passing grade 71. However, the action in cycle 1 was needed to continue to cycle 2 because the average of the students' active participation < 70%.

The Improvement of the Students' Active Participation and Their Simple Present Tense Achievement in Cycle 2

Action	The Percentage of the Students' Active Participation.	The Percentage of the Students who got scores at least 71 in the tense test.
Cycle 2	Meeting 1 : 81%	83.8%
	Meeting 2 : 86.5%	
Average	: 83.7%	83.8%

From the above table, it showed that the result of the average of the students' active participation in meeting 1 and meeting 2 were 83.7% and their tense achievement was 83.8%. It achieved the target percentage (at least 70%). It could be concluded that the use of giving written and oral feedback could improve the students' active participation and their tense achievement. It was relevant with the theory of Keh (1990:303) who stated that written feedback is

useful for pointing out specific problems by giving the correction. So, the students could learn from their errors.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the results of the actions in two cycles, it could be concluded that the giving of written and oral feedback on the students' tense writing could improve the students' active participation and their tense achievement at SMPN 2 Balung. The improvements above suggest that might be useful for the English teachers, the students and the future researchers, as follows;

1. the English teacher is suggested to give written and oral feedback to the students' writings as an alternative technique to improve the students' tense mastery of simple present tense and their active participation.;
2. the students are suggested to increase their English tense mastery of simple present tense by doing a lot of exercises of writing and share their ideas with their friends.;
3. the future researchers who have the same problem with the teaching of tense are suggested to apply written and oral feedback in the teaching and learning process of tenses using the same research design on different subjects and schools.

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