

Improving the Eighth Year Students' Tense Achievement and Active Participation by Giving Positive Reinforcement at SMPN 1 Silo in the 2013/2014 Academic Year

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Abstract

The objectives of this research were: (1) to improve the eighth year students' active participation in the teaching learning process of tenses by giving positive reinforcement at SMPN 1 Silo in the 2013/2014 academic year, and (2) to improve the eighth year students' tense achievement by giving positive reinforcement at SMPN 1 Silo in the 2013/2014 academic year. Positive reinforcements used in this method were in the form of material and social reinforcement. The material reinforcement used in this research was in the form of candies, snacks, pencils and notebooks and for the social reinforcement used was in the form of praise and gestures. The results of this research showed that there were improvements on students' tense achievement and active participation from Cycle 1 to Cycle 2 after giving positive reinforcement. Students' participation increased from 76.34% to 80.13% and students' tense achievement increased from 75.67% to 81.08%. Based on that result, the hypotheses of this research were accepted.

Keywords: *Positive Reinforcement, Students' Tense Achievement Test, Students' Active Participation.*

Introduction

The target of teaching English for junior high school, as stated in the 2006 curriculum, is that the students can reach the functional level. It means that the students can communicate in written or spoken forms in order to solve the daily problems.

In order to communicate effectively, the language learners should master grammar. Crystal (1995) in Dykes (2007:5) states that grammar is needed to communicate in intelligible sentences. It means that grammar can make the message clearer so that the hearer can easily understand what the speaker means. One aspect of grammar that should be mastered well by the language learners especially for junior high school students is tenses. In the 2006 curriculum (KTSP) especially for the eighth grade students, it is stated that the students should master 3 types of text. They are descriptive, recount, and narrative. Related to the types of the text above, the students should master four tenses to master those types of text. They are simple present tense, present continuous tense, simple past tense and past continuous tense. Simple present and present continuous tenses are related to a descriptive text and simple past and past continuous tenses are related to a recount and a narrative texts. Although tense is not stated in the standard competencies and basic competencies in the 2006 curriculum, tenses are needed to master and understand the materials that are taught.

In one side tenses are important to master, on the

other side, however, there are still many students who do not master the use of tenses well. This situation also happens at SMPN 1 SILO. After the preliminary study, the researcher could find that there were still many students who did not master tenses. It was proven by the previous scores of tense test that was conducted by the English teacher of the eighth grade students at SMPN 1 Silo showing that there were still many students who got score lower than 75. Class VIII-A got the lowest mean score. In that class, there were still 15 students (41%) of 37 students who got scores lower than 75. Besides, after doing observation in class VIII-A, the researcher could see that there were still many students who were lack of motivation in learning English especially tenses. They seemed passive during the teaching learning process and they also had no interest in paying attention to the teacher's explanation.

To solve these problems, the researcher decided to give positive reinforcement to the students. Ormrod (1990:52) states that positive reinforcement involves the presentation of a stimulus after the response. Food, praise, a smile, and feeling of success are all positive reinforcement.

Some previous researches had been conducted related to give reinforcement to the students. Yuliane (2012) indicated that there was an improvement of the students' tense achievement and their active participation by giving non-verbal reinforcement at SMPN 1 Balung. Besides, Ma'ruf (2013) also reported in his research that there was an improvement of the students' speaking achievement by giving verbal and non-verbal reinforcement at SMN 1 Sukowono Jember.

Based on the background above, the researcher was interested in conducting the research entitled "*Improving the Eighth Year Students' Tense Achievement and Their Active Participation by Giving Positive Reinforcement at SMPN 1 Silo in the 2013/2014 Academic Year*".

Research Method

The design of this research was a classroom action research because the purpose of this research was to improve students' tense achievement and active participation at SMPN 1 Silo in the 2013/2014 academic year. Guy et al. (2011:509) state that the purpose of action research is to provide teacher researcher with a method for solving everyday problems in schools so that they may improve both student learning and teacher effectiveness.

The area determination method of this research was purposive method. SMPN 1 Silo was chosen because the eighth grade students of SMPN 1 Silo had difficulties in learning grammar especially tenses. In addition, it was possible to get permission from the headmaster of the school to conduct this research in the second semester of 2013/2014 academic year.

The subject determination method of this research was purposive method. Class VIII-A of SMPN 1 Silo was chosen because that class had the lowest mean score of simple past tense test that was conducted by the English teacher. At that class there were still 15 students (40%) who got score lower than 75.

There were 4 methods used in this research to collect the data. Test and observation was used to get the primary data. Meanwhile, interview and documentation were used to get the secondary data. Interview was done on 21 December 2013. It was conducted with the English teacher of the eighth grade students of SMPN 1 SILO. In this case, the list of questions had been prepared. The list of questions related to the curriculum, the books used, how the teacher teaches grammar especially tenses, and the kinds of reinforcement usually used by the English teacher. Documentation in this research was used to get data about the names of the subject, the total number of the subjects, and the eighth grade students' previous scores of tenses.

Discussion

This research was conducted in 2 Cycles. Each cycle consisted of three meetings, two meetings were used for the teaching learning process and one meeting was for the tense test. The first meeting in each cycle was used to teach simple past tense and the second meeting for each cycle was used to teach about past continuous tense.

In order to improve the students' tense achievement and their active participation during the teaching learning process of tenses, the researcher gave the students' positive reinforcement. It means that the researcher gave satisfying stimulus after correct responses that were given by the

students. It was relevant with the theory saying that positive reinforcement involves the presentation of a stimulus after the response.

In this research, the researcher gave positive reinforcement in the form of material and social reinforcement to the students. The material reinforcement given in this research was candies, snacks, pencils, and notebooks, and for the social reinforcement given was in the form of praise and gestures. The material reinforcements given in Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 were almost the same. The difference was only in the brand of snacks and candies given. In administering the reinforcement to the students, the researcher used continuous reinforcement schedule. It means that the researcher gave reinforcement to the students after every correct response that was given by the students. The researcher used continuous reinforcement schedule in this research because it was the first time for class VIII-A students at SMPN 1 SILO to receive material reinforcement and the researcher wanted to increase the students' response during the teaching learning process of tenses. It based on the theory saying that continuously reinforced responses are acquired faster than intermittently reinforced response (Ormrod, 1990:58).

Immediate reinforcement was used in this research to administer the reinforcement to the students. It means that the researcher gave reinforcement directly after every correct response that was given by the students. The researcher didn't delay to give reinforcement to the students. It based on the theory saying that reinforcement should follow behavior very closely (Lefrancois, 1982:85). Besides, Ormrod (1990:46) also says that reinforcement is less effective when its presentation is delayed.

While conducting the research, the researcher found some problems that occurred during the teaching learning process of tenses by giving positive reinforcement. The problems were: 1) Not all students will work for the same reinforcement, and 2) The teacher will spend more money to buy the material reinforcement for the students.

To overcome those problems, the researcher decided to do some actions, there were: 1) the researcher varied the reinforcement given. The variation here didn't mean that the researcher gave totally different reinforcement to the students. The researcher still gave candies and snacks as reinforcement but the researcher gave different brand of candies and snacks for each meeting, 2) the researcher bought reinforcement that not too expensive

In this research, positive reinforcement is effective to increase the number of students who wanted to give response during the teaching learning process and also to increase the students' response during the teaching learning process of tenses. It was proven by the improvement of the students' active participation from Cycle 1 to Cycle 2. In the Cycle 1, the result of observations showed that there were 76.34% students who could be categorized as active students and in Cycle 2, the result was increased to 80.13%. The result of this research was relevant with Thorndike's law of effect stating that behaviors followed by positive

outcomes are strengthened, whereas behaviors followed by negative outcomes are weakened (Santrock, 2005:278).

In addition, the presence of positive reinforcement could also improve the students' tense achievement. It happened because by giving satisfying stimulus, the students felt that they were being acknowledged by the teacher. Besides, the presence of positive reinforcement could also motivate the students to study harder because when they could answer the teacher's question correctly, they received specific reinforcement. It was proven by the improvement of the students' tense score from Cycle 1 to Cycle 2. In Cycle 1, the percentage of the students who got score ≥ 75 was 75.67% and in Cycle 2, the percentage of the students who got score ≥ 75 was increased to 81.08%. those result were relevant with the theory saying that positive reinforcement can enhance learning (Lefrancois, 1982:52) and it can also increase the students' motivation in learning (Uno, 2010:168).

Another advantage of giving positive reinforcement to the students was it could make a good relation between the teacher and the students. That situation could improve the students' participation during the teaching learning process of tenses. It happened because the students' felt comfortable to answer the teacher's questions or to ask question to the students when they had difficulties to understand the materials. It based on the theory saying that to increase the students' participation during the teaching learning process, the teacher needs to show a good relationship with the students while asking or receiving the students' answers (UPPL and Microteaching, 2013:2). That was another reason that affected the improvement of the students' active participation and the students' tense achievement in this research.

The result of this research showed that giving positive reinforcement could improve the eighth year students' tense achievement and active participation at SMPN 1 Silo in the 2013/2014 academic year. The result of this research was in line with the research conducted by Yuliane (2012) who reported that giving verbal and non-verbal reinforcement could improve the students' tense achievement at SMPN 1 Balung

Conclusion and Suggestion

Based on the result of data analysis, it showed that the result of the students' tense achievement test increased from Cycle 1 that was 75.67% to Cycle 2 that was 81.08%. Besides, the result of observations also showed an improvement on students' active participation. The result of observations increased from 76.34% in Cycle 1 to 80.13% in Cycle 2. Based on those results, it could be concluded that giving positive reinforcement can improve the eighth grade students' tense achievement and their active participation at SMPN 1 Silo in the 2013/2014 academic year.

As the result of the this research showed that giving positive reinforcement could improve the students' tense

achievement and active participation, the researcher gives some suggestions to the following people.

1. The English Teacher

Based on the research result, it is suggested to the English teacher to give positive reinforcement as reinforcement in teaching learning process. Giving positive reinforcement can increase the students' response and also their participation during the teaching learning process. It is suggested to the English teacher to use continuous schedule if it is the first time for the English teacher to give positive reinforcement to the students or to establish the students response. When the target has reached, the English teacher can use intermittent schedule to administer reinforcement to the students. Intermittent schedule can be used to minimize the teacher's money to buy material reinforcement for the students. Besides, intermittent schedule can also be used to decrease the students' dependence on reinforcement.

2. Future Researchers

It was suggested to the future researcher to conduct further research dealing with the use of positive reinforcement in the teaching learning process. It can be used in different research design, area or language skill. For example, the effect of giving positive reinforcement on students' reading comprehension achievement.

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