

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Since English is very essential for communication in many fields around the world, English becomes an important foreign language in Indonesia. With the purpose of providing qualified outputs, the Indonesian government has decided to insert English in the educational curriculum as one of the subjects to be taught in school.

That is why, English is now taught to students starting from the elementary school to the university. Many experts assume that younger students have a great tendency for learning and acquiring a new language more easily than adults. Kasbolah (1992:11) as quoted by Sidharta (2003:3) says that research on language development between 1950s and 1960s showed that the children possessed unique capacities for language learning. The main argument was given by psychologists and linguists who felt that the sooner the students learnt a language, the better. They should begin it as soon as they begin their formal education.

On the other hand, the students have to learn English in order to be able to develop themselves in science, technology, culture, arts and so on. It is because many books of science and technology are written in English. The learning of English is not only for developing themselves in those fields, but also to help them to get a job more easily since English is one factor to attain a good career. Kitao (1996) in the article entitled “Why Do We Teach English?” supports that, “...sixteen countries in Africa have retained English as the language of government. Now, Standard English is taught in schools in those countries because it is necessary for careers.”

Learning English means learning four language skills and four language components. According to Madsen (1983:11) language skills are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Language components or “subskills” includes vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation and spelling. Both of the English skills and components cannot be separated from one another.

The same thing happens that grammar cannot be separated from English because every language has grammatical patterns in order to make good and meaningful sentences. According to Carroll (1956:31) a grammar is a formal device with a finite set of rules that generates the sentences in the language. A similar statement comes from Brown (2001:362) who states that grammar is the system of rules governing the conventional arrangement and relationship of words in a sentence. In line with Carroll and Brown, the same definition in the article entitled “What Is Grammar?” (<http://www.englishclub.com/grammar/index.html>) cited that “Grammar is the system of a language that can help to learn a language more quickly and more efficiently.”

However, it is not an easy task for teachers to teach English grammar. Many problems have arisen in the teaching and learning activity since English is not the Indonesian native language and grammatically different. One of the problems is about whether to teach or not to teach grammar. If it is so, the next question is how grammar should be taught especially for young learners. According to Larsen-Freeman (1997) in the article entitled “Grammar and Its Teaching: Challenging the Myths” there is a misconception in the view of teaching grammar. The misconception is if grammar is taught, the lessons that ensue will be boring since grammar is a collection of arbitrary rules about static grammar in the language. Consequently, communicative and proficiency-based teaching approaches sometimes unduly limit grammar instruction.

In the teaching and learning activities, some English teachers usually teach the students English grammar deductively so far. It means that the teachers start the lesson with the presentation of a rule or explanation and is followed by examples in which the rule is applied. Sidharta (2002:4) in her thesis said that she found the fact that the English teachers still emphasized their teaching material with the traditional method or teacher-students interaction and drilling.

Having the same opinion as Larsen-Freeman and Sidharta, the writer also has an experience when she took a teaching practice as an English training teacher at SMAK St. Louis 1 Surabaya. She found that the students did not pay enough attention to the grammar explanation being taught. It happened since the writer gave the explanation verbally along with some sentences and examples written on the whiteboard. This verbal explanation made the students bored because they did not understand the long explanation.

In addition, the Indonesian students, especially young learners might find that English grammar is not easy to master. The students often feel confused to understand the pattern since English has different forms of verbs related with the time. The students have to change the verb forms, which are different when they are used in the present, past, and future time. One of the patterns of English grammar that the students have to learn is Present Continuous Tense. It also has different form of verbs. The students have difficulty to understand it when they are given only in a long verbal explanation and drilling. Present Continuous Tense is one part of English grammar which contains many rules which needs detailed explanations and examples. As a result, the students will enjoy doing their own activity more than giving attention to the teacher's explanation.

The problems might not happen if the teachers change the way of their teaching. Teachers must select appropriate method to be applied

which can bring good results in accordance with the objectives of the teaching itself. In the writer's point of view, English grammar should be taught to young learners since grammar can give impact on the language mastery. In addition, the teaching of English grammar is still considered the essential part of the teaching English in application to educational practice. Keately and Kennedy (2004) in the article entitled "Teaching Grammar" cites that "Grammar is central to the teaching and learning of languages." It means that grammar is the great foundation for learning and interpreting a language.

However, the teaching of English grammar should not be in conscious grammatical verbal explanation with linguistics terminology. It will make the students confused and reluctant in joining the teaching-learning activity. In this case, the teachers should teach English grammar to young learners in an interesting way. Actually, there are so many good methods which have been created and developed by a lot of English practitioners and teachers. One of them is Total Physical Response (TPR) method.

Total Physical Response method was created by Dr. James Asher in 1988. This method is developed in order to help people who have difficulties and to minimize the stress they feel when learning a foreign language. The way to do this is according to the way children learn their native language. As the originator, Asher invented the method which is based on the association between language and physical activity.

According to Asher (1977:43) in TPR method, what students do is a great deal of listening and acting. Learners listen to the teacher first and respond to the spoken utterances. In the TPR classroom activity, the teacher usually gives an oral command while she demonstrates it. After watching, the learners are expected to respond to the oral command physically or by using movements, gestures or facial expressions.

From that statement above, it is clear that the students are actively involved. As young learners, they are active. According to Scott and Ytreberg (1994:5) most activities for children should involve the sense because children's understanding comes through hands, eyes, and ears. This opinion is supported by Ur (1996) in Setiawati (2002:115) who adds that children learn a language well when they are active.

Therefore, in this study, the writer is interested to compare the results of teaching Present Continuous Tense using two different kinds of methods which are Total Physical Response (TPR) and Grammar Translation Method (GTM). Based on the theory of learning language acquisition, TPR method involves the right hemisphere and left hemisphere of human brain. The logical and optimal starting point in acquiring another language is to enter the strange language to the right hemisphere. The left hemisphere is verbal while the right hemisphere is non-verbal which means that it can communicate through physical behavior such as touching, drawing, singing and so on.

However, Grammar-Translation Method (GTM) gets straight to the point and therefore can be time saving. Many rules especially rules of form can be more simply and quickly explained than elicited from examples. Besides, classes are taught in the mother tongue.

The result of this study is to find out whether the teaching of Present Continuous Tense by using TPR method to the fourth grade of the elementary school students can finally make the students have better grammar achievement than through Grammar Translation Method.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Based on the background of the study, the writer would like to make a study on the effect of using two different methods, which are

GTM and TPR in teaching Present Continuous Tense on the grammar achievement of the fourth grade students of the elementary school.

The problem to be answered in this study is “Do the students who are taught by using TPR method have higher grammar achievement than those who are taught by using Grammar Translation Method in the teaching of Present Continuous Tense?”

1.3 Objective of the Study

This study is intended to find out whether the students who are taught by using TPR method have higher grammar achievement than those who are taught by using Grammar Translation Method in mastering the Present Continuous Tense.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study is expected to give some contributions to the teaching of English grammar, which is Present Continuous Tense in the English lesson to the elementary school students. In addition, it is expected that this study can provide some information about the various kind of methods and their application in the teaching of grammar for the English teachers. Hopefully, the use of Total Physical Response method and Grammar Translation Method can add the variety of methods used in the teaching of Present Continuous Tense in order to create an interesting teaching-learning activity.

1.5 Theoretical Framework

According to the background of the study, Total Physical Response method is used in teaching English grammar namely Present Continuous Tense to elementary school especially fourth grade students. The writer would like to use the method since the TPR activity involves

the students to be active and make learning activity more interesting and easily. This principle is based on a model of how children learn their first language. In child language learning, there is an intimate relationship between language and child's body (Asher, 1988:2-3). It means that, in learning the first language, children appear to do a lot of listening before they speak and their listening is accompanied by physical responses. As the inventor of TPR, Asher adds that orchestrating language production with bodily movements is thought to promote success in learning and this is the key of the method.

1.6 Hypothesis

In this study, the writer uses the Alternative Hypothesis (HA) and Null Hypothesis (HO). They are as follow:

a. The Alternative Hypothesis (HA)

There is a significant difference in the achievement of the fourth grade of elementary students taught Present Continuous Tense by using TPR method compared to the achievement of those taught Present Continuous Tense by using GTM.

b. The Null Hypothesis (HO)

There is no significant difference in the achievement of the fourth grade of the elementary students taught Present Continuous Tense by using TPR method compared to the achievement of those taught Present Continuous Tense by using GTM.

1.7 Limitation of the Study

The writer finds it necessary to limit the scope of her study. First, the writer only discusses and conducts her way in teaching English grammar namely Present Continuous Tense. Second, the subject of this study is the fourth grade students of elementary school. At this stage, the

students will learn Present Continuous Tense completely. The writer wants to conduct her study since these students do not have any background knowledge about Present Continuous Tense. Also, the writer focuses on the two different methods, which are Total Physical Response (TPR) method and Grammar Translation Method (GTM) to be applied in the classroom.

1.8 Definition of the Key Term

In order to give information more clearly, the writer would like to present the definition of the key terms used in this study, namely Present Continuous Tense, Grammar Translation Method and Total Physical Response method. They are as follows:

Present Continuous Tense

Raymond Murphy (1994:6) states that Present Continuous Tense is used for something that is happening at or around the time of speaking. The action is not finished.

Grammar Translation Method:

A method that is associated with formal rule statement. Learning proceeds deductively and the rules are generally stated by the teacher (Koolhoven, 1961).

Total Physical Response:

The method that introduces the languages through the use of commands in which the students listen to oral command and demonstrate their understanding through action responses (Asher, 1984:35).

1.9 The Organization of the Study

There are five chapters presented in this study with the following organization. Chapter one is the introduction. It deals with the

background of the study, statement of the problem, objective of the study, significance of the study, and organization of the study. Chapter two is review of related literature. It deals with the previous studies and related theories. Research methodology will be discussed in the third chapter. Next, data analysis and findings will be discussed in the chapter four. The last chapter is the conclusion which consists of the summary and suggestion for further study.