The Challenges and Positive Effects in Implementing Strategies in Teaching Tenses

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ABSTRACT

Implementing certain strategies in teaching tenses often brings certain challenges as well as positive effects. This research aimed to explore the challenges faced by English teachers and the positive effects they experienced in implementing strategies they chose in teaching tenses based on teachers' perception. This qualitative research was conducted at a Language Training Center (LTC) of a private university in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Interviews were administered to three female and one male English teachers with two to seven years of teaching experience to explore their experiences in implementing strategies in teaching tenses. The findings revealed that technical problems, unsuccessful responses, time constrain for preparing the strategies and proper material selection were the challenges the teachers faced in implementing the strategies. Meanwhile, the increased students' motivation, improved students' attitude and understanding towards tenses, accomplished teachers as well as student's awareness of the importance of tenses were claimed as the positive effects of implementing the strategies in teaching tenses.

Keywords: tenses, teaching strategies, teaching challenges, positive effects

INTRODUCTION

Lack of various teachers' strategies in teaching tenses may lead to the lack of students' mastery of tenses. According to Vijaya and Viswananth (2010), when teachers do not apply appropriate ways to facilitate students in learning tenses, the students will likely get confused to use proper tenses and mix up the tenses in the wrong way. Their confusion is potential to fail them to master tenses. Therefore, a certain strategy to make students understand tenses better is needed in teaching tenses. Iskandarwassid and Sunendar (2009) stated that a strategy is a useful way used by teachers to facilitate students in teaching process and ease the teachers to develop students' competence in learning process. They further explained that related to teaching tenses, a strategy refers to ways of teaching chosen by a teacher to deliver tenses materials to be meaningful and understandable. They are purposefully selected or determined by teachers to make their students understand the materials. Therefore, when teachers are able to determine appropriate strategies in teaching tenses, students will more likely understand the materials better.

In implementing certain strategies in teaching tenses, teachers might experience choosing strategies that at first are considered appropriate, but then turn out to be inappropriate ones. The strategies purposefully chosen and planned to facilitate the teaching and learning process might not work effectively as well as efficiently as expected. In other words, English teachers may face various challenges. As an example, Ludescher (2006) illustrated that when teachers were explaining the tenses materials by using videos, it was found that not all students were interested in watching the video. This means, when teachers teach tenses using videos, there is a challenge when the students do not pay attention to the videos and care to what the teachers are explaining or reviewing. Similarly, when teachers are trying to use more various technologies to teach tenses, instead of driving students' excitement to learn tenses, using technology is potential to bring problems in the classroom. Moreover, there are always students who do not follow the teachers' instruction (Young, 2008). Therefore, a careful anticipation of the challenges likely to happen when applying certain strategies in teaching tenses is required.

Despite the challenges, the implementation of teaching strategies can bring positive effects to both teachers and students. As an example, the implementation of teaching strategy of Inquiry-Based Learning provides advantages to students and teachers (Guido, 2017). For students, it promotes a deeper understanding of content, makes learning rewarding and builds initiative and direction. It also benefits teachers as it offers differentiated instruction as well as can be applied in any classrooms regardless of students' different skill levels. Another example can be seen in the implementation of a contextual teaching and learning strategy. According to Ovalna (2010), when English teachers use a contextual teaching and learning strategy for teaching tenses, the teaching process is easier for teachers since students will understand the materials more by seeing the context around them directly. At the same time, students also improve their tenses mastery and their understanding of the current tenses issue through relating it to the real context (Ovalina, 2010). Thus, implementing the strategies in teaching tenses is beneficial for both English teachers and their students.

Since the challenges and the positive effects in implementing the strategies in teaching tenses are closely related, English teachers need to be aware of the possible challenges which lay ahead when they are trying to implement a certain strategy and realize the promising positive effects expected to happen. Based on the researchers' informal observation at a Language Training Centre in a private university in Yogyakarta, not all English teachers were aware of particular challenges. In addition, not all English teachers in this LTC realized the positive effects of implementing strategies in teaching tenses. As a teachers' reflection, the teachers' perception on the challenges and positive effects in the implementation of tenses teaching strategies needed to be explored.

Based on the explanations above, the researchers conducted research focusing on the teachers' perception on the challenges and positive effects the teachers experienced when implementing certain strategies they chose in teaching tenses. Understanding the challenges can make teachers anticipate the problems and negative responses that may appear during the implementation, so the teacher can prepare more solutions. Meanwhile, realizing the positive effects the teachers experienced during the implementation may motivate them to apply the same strategies in different occasion. Therefore, the findings of this research can be used especially by novice teachers in taking some consideration and making decision in their teaching practices

LITERATURE REVIEW

Teaching Method

Most of teachers think about how to teach their students using the best way to facilitate and succeed the teaching and learning process. A lot of teaching procedures appropriate to students' need, aims, and students' learning style are implemented. For example, when the students want to learn tenses well and to write using correct grammar, the teachers may teach them using structural approach. If English teachers want to focus on teaching tenses, they use a structure approach as this approach discusses the grammatical structure or is grammar-based. The structure approach can be suitable for students, since the teachers can facilitate them to focus on learning tenses. Based on Geyser (2006), a structural approach focuses on "grammatical structures and vocabulary items that will form the primary focus of English language instruction" (p.33). Geyser (2006) said that the characteristics of a structural approach are teacher-centered, grammar-based, lots of drill, and controlled and predictable learning. The example of this approach is an "Audio-Lingual Method" (Geyser, 2006, p.33).

Meanwhile, if students want to speak English fluently in daily life, a communicative approach might be the most beneficial approach. Geyser (2006) stated that a communicative approach focuses on "meaningful communication to be the primary focus of language instruction" (p.33). Also, Geyser stated that the characteristics of a communicative approach are "students-centered, communication based, lots of students' interaction (pairs, groups, whole class), and variable rate of acquisition" (p.33). Total Physical Response (TPR) is an example of a communicative approach. From determining the teaching method used, English teachers might develop the strategy in teaching tenses.
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Strategies in Teaching Tenses.

In applying a teaching method, English teachers implement teaching strategies to make teaching and learning process successful. For example, English teachers can teach tenses using various teaching media, such as texts, songs, poems, stories, games, audios, and videos (Hayat, 2011; Ludescher, 2006; Robertson & Acklam, 2000; Witchukriangkai, 2011; Yassaei, 2012). An illustration of teaching tenses using text can be seen in the classroom in which the teacher gives her/his students texts containing past tense and past progressive tense. The students are asked to identify the grammar rules and the sentence structure in the texts. Meanwhile, Hayat (2011) and Ludescher (2006) said that English teachers can use songs, poems, stories, and games to teach tenses to gain students' interest. By using songs, poems, stories, and games, the teachers can create classroom activities, such as singing songs, reciting poems, retelling stories, and playing games. Those activities are specially designed by the teachers to facilitate their students to learn tenses. The teachers look for the songs, poems, and stories that contain the tenses they are going to teach that day. Hayat (2011) stated that the teachers also use games such as scrabble word games that involve the students to indirectly apply the proper tenses. Besides, the teachers use audios and videos when teaching tenses (Robertson & Acklam, 2000 and Yassaei, 2012). The students are asked to listen to the audios and to watch the videos. Then, they have to analyze the tenses used. In addition, the teachers use technology such as the internet and Microsoft Office (Wang, 2012). Teachers present the tenses materials with the support of technology, such as using Microsoft Power Point to deliver the teaching materials. The teachers also use social networking platform like Edmodo when holding virtual class. All of those teaching strategies implemented are to make the students understand the materials and to make the teachers deliver the materials more easily.

The Challenges in Implementing the Strategies in Teaching Tenses

It is common for English teachers to face challenges in implementing certain strategies in teaching tenses. The challenges faced by the teachers in implementing the strategies in teaching tenses may contribute to the unsuccessful responses. Students might not give expected good responses on the teaching strategies (Ludescher, 2006; Witchukriangkrai, 2011; Young, 2008). They might not follow the procedures and pay attention to the teachers. When the teachers teach present tenses using videos or movie clips to get the students' interest, the teachers expect that the students enjoy the videos and can learn the tenses used in the videos or movie clips, so they can apply the use of tenses into real context. However, there is possibility that some of the students do not pay attention to the videos or movie clips and they talk to other students instead. The next possible challenge can occur when the teachers explain the tenses materials using Microsoft Power Point, some students might not pay attention and might not follow the teachers' instructions. Furthermore, selecting proper materials for preparing the strategies may also become a potential challenge in implementing the strategies in teaching tenses. The teachers are required to consider the content, students' need, and students' level when choosing the materials (Solak & Bayar, 2015). It becomes teachers' concern to see the content first whether the materials presented for example in the videos or movie clips are appropriate to the students' level, students' need, and also the students'

background before playing them in the classroom. Another potential challenge in implementing the strategies in teaching tenses is that preparing the strategy takes time (Ovalina, 2010). In a different time, when the teachers use games for teaching tenses, they have to provide more time to prepare the equipment, search the appropriate tenses materials, and design the concept (Hayat, 2011).

The Positive Effects in Implementing the Strategies in Teaching Tenses

Although there are challenges in implementing the strategies in teaching tenses, based on teachers' perception, the strategies give positive effects to teachers as well as students. Ludescher (2006) argued that there is an improvement of students' motivation and students' attitude in learning tenses. Ludescher added that the students enjoy the class, feel happy, feel interested, and are participative. Those reactions occur when the teachers implement the use of selected songs, stories, and poems which are interesting. The procedure involves the students being asked to pay attention to songs, stories, or poems and then analyze the tenses used in those songs, stories, or poems. After that, they are asked to apply the tenses in their own sentences. Ludescher further asserted that when the teachers teach tenses using the interesting strategies, such as using songs, stories, and poems specifically chosen based on the students' favorite, the students will feel unthreatened since the teachers wrap the classroom activities interestingly. In addition, by implementing teaching strategies, students get better understanding of tenses (Ovalina, 2010; Witchukriangkrai, 2011; Xin (2010). In explaining the concept of present tense, for example, the use of pictures will ease the students in understanding the concept. The pictures showing someone's

activity in the morning will help the students in describing the activities using present tense. The pictures help the students understand the context of the tense used. Another important thing is that successful strategies in teaching tenses give positive feelings to the teachers in teaching process (Ovalina, 2010). The teachers feel that they are successful in their teaching because they see the students understand what they have taught and explained.

METHODOLOGY

In conducting the research, the researchers used a qualitative research method. This research was conducted to discover the challenges and the positive effects in implementing the strategies in teaching tenses based on teachers' perception. This research included the description of the participants' view through words. The research design was the descriptive qualitative research. Through descriptive qualitative research, the researchers explained the findings related to the previous studies.

The research was conducted at a Language Training Center (LTC) of a private university in Yogyakarta. This Language Training Center was selected because teaching tenses is included in the teaching materials set by the institution. The English teachers in this language centre teach tenses every semester. Moreover, in this LTC the teachers teach university students from various majors except English language education major. Therefore, the challenges and the positive effects in implementing the strategies in teaching tenses might variously occur.

The researchers selected four English teachers of LTC. The criteria to be the participants were that they had experience in teaching tenses at least for two years, so they really knew the context of the chal

lenges and the positive effects in implementing the strategies. The four participants were three female English teachers and one male English teacher. All of them have experienced in teaching English at LTC for two to seven years. Two of the participants teach tenses in the basic level and two of them teach tenses in the intermediate level.

The researchers used an interview as the data collection method. Before doing the interview, the researchers involved expert judgment to validate the interview guideline as the instrument. Based on the expert judgement, there was no significant revison. The points of the interview guideline cover the questions asking the participants what strategies they used in teaching tenses, the challenges faced in implementing the strategies, and the positive effects they experienced when implementing the strategies. The researchers used Bahasa Indonesia in conducting the interview to prevent misunderstanding. The researchers interviewed the participants face to face. Member checking was administered to ensure what was transcribed from the recording was what the participants said during the interview. The result of the member checking was that all participants agreed that the data transcribed were exactly the same as they stated in the interview, meaning there was no manipulation of the data.

FINDINGS

In this part, the researcher provides the findings of the research. In addition, the researcher also presents the discussion supporting the findings of the research. The findings reveal the teachers' perception on the challenges and positive effects from the implementation of teachers' strategies in teaching tenses.

The strategies in teaching tenses

In the teaching and learning process at LTC, all the participants applied certain strategies in teaching tenses. The strategies they used included the use of technology, traditional drills, texts, stories, songs, poems, group work and giving exercises. The first participant mentioned, "I use power point to explain the materials." The similar answers were also revealed by the other three participants. In addition, participant two mentioned, "Sometimes, I use online exercises," while participant three said, "I once used video from Funny English website". A participant also mentioned, "I applied physical activities (a game)." These applied strategies in teaching tenses were perceived by the participants to have brought both the challenges and positive effects.

The challenges in implementing strategies in teaching tenses

The first research question was "what are the challenges faced by English teachers when implementing the strategies in teaching tenses?" Based on the participants' experience in teaching tenses, it was revealed that the challenges they faced were related to several conditions. They included technical problem, unsuccessful responses, managing time for preparing the strategies, and selecting the materials.

Finding 1: Technical problem

The strategies involving technology used by teachers to support their teaching brought some challenges to the teachers. The source of the challenges came from the laptop and the internet. This challenge was experienced by two participants. The first participant argued, "My laptop suddenly could not work (when I was teaching)." In

addition, the second participant said, "The students sometimes cannot access the internet." This challenge sometimes arises although the teachers have already prepared to use computer or the internet. There was a time when the teacher's laptop was broken while the materials needed were in the laptop. When the teachers showed the movie clip or the video relating to tenses used, the laptop suddenly could not work, so it could offend the teaching process. Another challenge was there was no internet connection when needed. The students could not access the internet for online teaching and learning platform.

The finding was in line with the Brändström's study. One of Brändström's findings was about disadvantages of using technology in teaching tenses. Brändström (2011) claimed that the technical problem was a challenge in using technology, especially when the teachers want to use technology as their strategy in teaching tenses. Sometimes, the teachers had lack of internet access. When teachers used the internet to teach students in the class, there was no internet connection. When students were asked to search for materials, they did not have internet connection. Moreover, Wang (2012) stated that sometimes, English teachers got a problem with their electronic files while they were teaching tenses in the classroom. Wang's statement was proven in the teacher's experience in this research when the teacher presented the past tenses using Microsoft power point, in the middle of presentation the teacher's laptop could not work and the learning audio played did not work.

Finding 2: Unsuccessful responses

Ideally, English teachers used strategies to teach tenses in order to succeed their aims and objectives. However, the strate-gies sometimes did not get successful responses from students. This finding was mentioned by three of four participants. The second participant argued, "Sometimes, we do pair work or group work to discuss tenses, but it did not work well because the students were not active or their level of vocabulary acquisition was low." In addition, the second participant stated, "When I applied physical activities (a game), the class became noisy." Moreover, the fourth participant also mentioned, "When the videos were played, there were some students who still talked to their friends." From the participants' statements, the challenge faced by the teachers was that the teacher received unsuccessful responses, such as the students refused to participate in the group discussion; the students did not follow the teachers' instruction when doing a game; the students did not pay attention either when the teachers showed the learning videos of tenses.

According to Ludescher (2006), some students were not interested in following the strategies being applied by the teacher; they did not pay attention to the teacher. They preferred to talk to their other friends to pay attention to the teacher's explanation. Those Ludescher's statements were reflected in the findings of this research which revealed the similar situation in which the students did not respond well as expected as seen when the teachers conducted group work, applied a game, and played a video. It showed that the teachers received unsuccessful responses from the students. Witchukriangkrai (2011) mentioned that the cause of unsuccessful response from students was that there were some low learners who could not follow up other fast learners, so they became demotivated and they were not interested to participate in classroom activities. Witchukriangkrai also added that since

students who were low learners were not able to follow the classroom activity, they distracted the attention. For example, they made the class become noisy and they talked to their other friends.

Finding 3: Time Constrain for preparing the strategies

When implementing the particular strategies in teaching tenses, the English teachers needed more time for preparation, but sometimes the teachers did not have much time to prepare everything. This challenge was claimed by three of four participants. The third participant admitted, "Since I must prepare the tenses materials that are appropriate with different students' characteristics, it takes time." In addition, the second participant mentioned, "When using Edmodo, it needs much time to prepare, so I sometimes have no time (for preparing)." The fourth participant also had the same statement. She said, "I must spend extra time to look for materials or video that is appropriate with the considerations."

The finding justified that when preparing the strategies to teach tenses the teachers needed much time. Ovalina (2010) revealed that teachers required much time for preparation. For example, teachers had to prepare the lesson plan and the materials which were appropriate with different characteristics of students. Moreover, according to Young (2008), the challenge of using technology was that "many teachers found it hard to find time in their overloaded work schedules to attend courses and to practice the new skill" (p.37).

Finding 4: Considering proper materials

The researcher found out that English teachers should consider the context when selecting the materials. It was pointed out by the fourth participant. She stated, "When we use the movie segment clips, we must choose the movie clips carefully whether the content and the tenses materials are appropriate to be used in our university because the (western) movie clips are culturally different from us." It means that the teachers were required to think about the content of the materials in teaching tenses. Moreover, the level of the materials whether it was appropriate with the students as well as the institution became the teachers' concern in teaching tenses. In other words, it also became the challenge faced by the teacher, since they need to consider the students' level in addition to the content.

This finding was in line with Solak and Bayar (2015). They gave suggestion that "the materials such as course book, video, and internet should be chosen carefully according to the students' interest and level" (p.114). This means that teachers must determine whether the materials fitted students' language level or not because it might be difficult for them. Thus, there was a consideration when selecting proper materials and it was challenging.

The positive effects in implementing the strategies

Based on the teachers' perception, during the implementation of certain strategies in teaching tenses, such as using text, stories, poems, pictures, novels, games, videos/audios, and technology, the teachers and the students got positive effects. In this part, the researcher provided five findings of the positive effects from implementing the strategies. The positive effects were related to students' motivation, students'

attitude, students' understanding, teachers' self-accomplishment, and significance for students.

Finding 1: The increase of students' motivation to learn tenses

The finding showed that students' motivation could increase after the English teachers implemented the strategies in teaching tenses, such as using songs and stories. This effect was highlighted by three of four participants. The second participant argued, "I use songs to introduce the verb form, such as the present and past forms." Further she claimed, "students' thought about tenses can change, so they do not think that tenses are difficult." The third participant added, "I use One Republic's songs and John Meyer's songs for teaching tenses. Students are happy and excited." In addition, the fourth participant also mentioned, "If the topic is narrative, I use a story and finally they identify the tenses in the story. Students look interested in learning the materials and they can look for what is required from the task easily." Those statements proved that students were being motivated. For example, students did not think that tenses were difficult. Students were happy, excited, and interested.

The finding showed that the students were being more motivated when the teachers implemented the strategy in teaching tenses. This finding was related to the previous study from Ludescher (2006). Ludescher found out that implementing strategy in teaching tenses, such as using stories, songs, and poems brought positive effect. As an illustration, students enjoyed when teachers used stories as the teaching strategy to teach tenses. The students were interested in analyzing tenses used in the stories. Besides, Ludescher also added that

using songs was easy for students to memorize and the songs made the students enjoy their learning tenses process. Students also did not feel threatened since they enjoyed the learning process and they did what they liked. Hence, using stories and songs as one of the strategies in teaching tenses could increase students' motivation in learning tenses.

Finding 2: The improvement of students' attitude toward tenses

Besides, there was also the improvement of students' attitude toward tenses. This finding was claimed by three of four participants. The second participant said, "All members of the class can participate in doing a task actively." The third participant added, "I create a game for students to make them not bored and not sleepy." Moreover, the fourth participant mentioned, "Because the strategy used visual things, the strategy makes students easier to look for verb form based on the event." From the statements, it seemed that students participated actively; students did not feel bored and sleepy; and students wanted to find out verb form through visual media, like videos and pictures.

From the finding above, the students had the improvement of attitude after the teacher applied the strategies. The improvement of the attitudes was that the students participated collaboratively with the teacher since they were not bored and sleepy. It was related to Ludescher (2006) who asserted useful effect of using strategies in teaching tenses. Ludescher stated that the implementation of strategies could encourage all students to participate actively in the classroom. The students were then involved in the whole activities. Another study also mentioned that the students felt interested to follow the teaching and learn

ing tenses because the teachers used visual tools like a picture and a video to teach tense (Krčelić & Matijević, 2015).

Finding 3: The improvement of students' understanding

Students got better understanding after English teachers taught tenses by implementing the strategies in teaching tenses, such as using texts, pictures, and videos. The four participants encountered the finding. The first participant stated, "Students can do self-correction although they are still guided." Moreover, the second participant said, "They can differentiate simple present and present perfect tense." The third participant added, "Using reading text, students might understand the context of tenses and how to use the tenses." Moreover, the fourth participant also mentioned, "The use of a video with subtitle makes them understand the use of the tenses." It could be concluded that students could use the proper tenses in appropriate context, and they could differentiate between one tense and the other tenses.

The finding showed that the strategies created the improvement of the students' understanding. The improvement of the students' understanding means that the students' knowledge about tenses improved. Based on the teachers' perception, they could understand how to use tenses properly by considering the time needed, such as present, past, and future. The finding was related to Krčelić and Matijević (2015). They highlighted that those visual tools, such as pictures, video, and power point, could be used to give a better understanding of tenses explained. They also mentioned that it helped to lighten the materials. After teaching tenses through using various teaching media, students could use the proper tenses in

appropriate context (Ludescher, 2006; Ovalina, 2010; Witchukriangkrai, 2011).

Finding 4: Teachers' self-accomplishment

English teachers also felt the positive effects after implementing the strategies, such as using movie clips, contextual teaching learning, and games. It was stated by three of four participants. The first participant admitted, "When I explained tenses to students and they understood, I felt satisfied or got self-accomplishment." The third participant also added, "Sometimes, from the activities, I find out new ideas, so it improves my teaching development." Moreover, the fourth participant mentioned, "There are many materials that discuss tenses in movie clips, so it is easy for me to teach tenses." The positive effects were that the teachers felt satisfied, and their teaching development improved.

Ovalina (2010) argued that the strength of contextual teaching learning strategy was that teachers taught tenses to be easier in achieving the goals of teaching process. That means that the teachers could develop their teaching, because they tried to learn more for preparing the materials or finding new strategies used to teach.

Finding 5: Student's awareness of the importance of tenses

Based on the teachers' point of view, when students could understand how to use tenses correctly, they might use the proper tenses in the daily conversation and it is useful for developing their speaking skill. This finding was highlighted by the first participant. She stated, "If students can use the correct tenses in appropriate context, it will be significant for them."

The finding was related to Ovalina (2010). Ovalina pointed out that students could improve their communication skill and enhance their understanding about current issues that were related to their lives. Ludescher also added that using authentic text could show how the item was used in real context. Thus, it was significant for the students.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, the certain strategies applied by the LTC teachers in teaching tenses brought both the challenges and the positive effects. The challenges in implementing the strategies in teaching tenses were related to technical problem, unsuccessful responses, time constrain for preparing the strategies and proper materials selection. Meanwhile, the positive effects were the improvement of students' motivation, the improvement of students' attitude toward tenses, the improvement of students' understanding, teachers' self-accomplishment, and significance for students.

As the findings revealed the challenges dealing with technical problems as well as non-technical problems, the teachers are accordingly required to manage their time wisely to prepare the strategies in teaching tenses especially when using games and using technology. Teachers also need to consider students' need, students' level, and students' context when implementing the strategies in teaching tenses, so that the positive effects can be successfully achieved. The teachers' skills in dealing with the challenges are accordingly needed to gain positive effects deriving from the implementation of teaching tenses.

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