

TAKING ADVANTAGE OF STUDENTS' NATIVE LANGUAGES, ACTIONS, PICTURES, AND QUESTIONS TO HELP STUDENTS MASTER PRESENT PROGRESSIVE

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Abstract

Teaching English Tenses to Indonesian students is not easy. It is even a quite more challenging task for a teacher who teaches grammar when the teaching of grammar is aimed at making the students able to use the Tenses to communicate in the foreign language. The different grammar systems that Bahasa Indonesia and English have, have caused difficulties for the English teacher to teach English Tenses to Indonesian students. What should the teacher do to overcome the difficulties? There are many possibilities that he or she can do. Yet, as a good teacher, he or she should try to find effective approaches to help his or her students master English Tenses. One of the Tenses that EFL students should master is Present Progressive? How to teach the Tense to make the EFL students master the Tense (can use the tense in communication)? Based on the writer's experience in teaching the Tense, students' native language, actions, pictures, and questions help very much. This paper, therefore, is written to show the readers the way to teach Present Progressive by taking advantage of the students' native language, actions, pictures, and questions.

Keywords: teaching *Present Progressive*, students' native language, actions, pictures, questions

1. INTRODUCTION

Teaching English Tenses to Indonesian students is not easy. It is even a quite more challenging task for a teacher who teaches grammar when the teaching of grammar is aimed at making the students able to use the Tenses to communicate in the foreign language. The different grammar systems that Bahasa Indonesia and English have, have caused difficulties for the English teacher to teach English Tenses to Indonesian students. What should the teacher do to overcome the difficulties? There are many possibilities that he or she can do. Yet, as a good teacher, he or she should try to find effective approaches or methods to help his or her students master English Tenses. McKay (2002: 116) rightly notes, "There is no one best method, and no one method that is best for a particular context".

One of the Tenses that EFL students should master is *Present Progressive*? How to teach the Tense to make the EFL students master the Tense (can use the tense in communication)? Should the mother tongue be used in language classrooms? Is it useful to use the mother tongue in language classrooms? In foreign language education, such questions are often raised and debated. Should the teacher use pictures to help the students? Should the teacher use actions? Should the tense be explained or taught through questions? Based on the writer's experience in teaching the Tense, students' native language, actions, pictures, and questions help very much. This paper, therefore, is written to show the readers the way to teach *Present Progressive* by taking advantage of the students' native language, actions, pictures, and questions. In other words, the students' mother tongue, actions, pictures and questions will be used to teach *Present Progressive* how

A. Why Using Native Languages, Actions, Pictures, and Questions?

Maybe, you will question why students' native languages, actions, pictures, and questions should be used. To convince the readers, the writer will show some advantages of using students' native languages, actions, pictures, and questions to teach *Present Progressive* in the following part and each will be presented in turn.

There are disputes among scholars whether to teach English as a foreign language by using the students' mother tongue or avoiding using it. Many suggests that English teachers just use English itself. Yet, the writer tends to use students' native languages to foster their English learning.

Deller and Rinvoluceri (2002) list over a hundred teaching ideas involving the use of the students' native language or mother tongue.

There are several reasons why the students' mother tongue or their native language is used. *First*, "In fact, if we did not keep making correspondences between foreign language items and mother tongue items, we would never learn foreign languages at all" (Swan 1985: 85). We are able to draw on our existing knowledge as a point of comparison, rather than having to learn to understand the world and everything in it all over again. *Second*, the key for the teacher seems to be using the mother tongue appropriately and avoiding the over use which will make learners feel that they cannot comprehend the input of the foreign language until it is translated into their native language (Atkinson, 1987). Recent studies demonstrate that the appropriate use of L1 has a facilitating role in L2 classroom (Mart:2013). Studies confirm that complete removal of native language in foreign language classrooms is not appropriate (Damra and Al Qudah: 2012). *Third*, in another study by Tang (2002) about the use native language of students in EFL classes, it was found that the use of L1 does not reduce students' exposure to the target language; on the contrary, it aids the learning of the foreign language. *Fourth*, Brooks and Donato (1994) encourage the use of L1 as it helps students with comprehension and communication effectively. *Fifth*, the use of translation provides students an opportunity to notice similarities and differences between L1 and L2. Ross (2000:63), particularly, points out the importance of translation in foreign language learning as: "Translation holds a special importance at an intermediate and advanced level: in the advanced or final stage of language teaching, translation from L1 to L2 and L2 to L1 is recognized as the fifth skill and the most important social skill since it promotes communication and understanding between strangers". He continues to states that translation develops three qualities essential to all language learning: accuracy, clarity, and flexibility (Ross, 2000:61) that will help students learn effectively. *Sixth*, students' native language is "of great help in stimulating the learning of a foreign language" (Bowen, 1982, p.1).

In her article, Auerbach (1993: 9) in Mahmutoglu and Kicir (2013) listed the reasons of using mother tongue. They are: 1. Negotiation of the syllabus and the lesson. 2. Record keeping. 3. Classroom management. 4. Scene setting. 5. Language analysis. 6. Presentation of rules governing grammar. 7. Phonology, morphology and spelling. 8. Discussion of cross-cultural issues; instructions of prompts. 9. Explanation of errors. 10. Assessment of comprehension.

Samadi (2011) in Mahmutoglu and Kicir (2013), also mentioned the role of L1 and the benefits on foreign language learning. Samadi (2011: 17) stressed that the teachers used the L1 mostly for establishing a non-threatening classroom environment, explaining grammar, translating vocabulary, managing the classroom, and giving instruction.

Besides, Harbord (1992: 352) in Mahmutoglu and Kicir (2013) gave the following reasons for the teachers' use of the mother tongue:

1. Facilitating teacher-student communication.
2. Facilitating teacher-student rapport.
3. Facilitating learning.

In his article, Atkinson (1987: 242), Mahmutoglu and Kicir (2013) states that "another important role of the mother tongue is to allow students to say what really want to say sometimes (surely a valuable 'humanistic' element in the classroom)". The purpose of such exercise is to provide the students with the occasion to express themselves more efficiently. Especially, the learners who have limited vocabulary of the target language need opportunities to express themselves. Forcing the students to speak English in the classroom may prevent them from participating in the conversation. It is essential in learning that the students volunteer to speak. Teachers should always encourage students to articulate their opinions in mother tongue when students show difficulty doing so in the target language.

To use the students' native language, an English teacher should consider the students' level of learning, whether they are still at early levels, at intermediate levels or at advanced levels. Atkinson (1987: 243-244) provided extensive knowledge on where to use mother tongue in language classrooms:

1. Eliciting language (all levels)
2. Checking comprehension (all levels)

3. Giving instructions (early levels)
4. Co-operation among learners.
5. Discussions of classroom methodology (early levels)
6. Presentations and reinforcement of language (mainly early levels)
7. Checking for sense
8. Testing

After describing several reasons why the students' native language, it is appropriate to talk about the use of action in teaching English as a foreign language. The use of action is in line with Total Physical Response (TPR). TPR is a language teaching method which is built around the coordination of speech and action; it attempts to teach language through physical (motor) activity. Developed by James Asher, a professor of psychology at San Jose State University, California, Imperative drills are the major classroom activity in Total Physical Response. They are typically used to elicit physical actions and activity on the part of the learners.

Besides taking advantage of the students' native languages and action, the writer also uses pictures to help the students master *Present Progressive*. There are several reasons why pictures are used. *First*, the use of pictures is common nowadays in teaching English. They help teachers to teach better and students to learn better. *Second*, according to Brown (2001: 143), posters, charts, and magazine pictures also represent old-fashioned but effective teaching aids. It means by using pictures, a foreign language teaching will be aided. Harmer (2007:178) says that pictures can be in the form of photographs or illustrations (typically in a textbook) and facilitate learning. *Third*, in his opinion, he continues mentioning that pictures can be stimulating and can engage students emotionally. Harmer (2007: 52) emphasizes that Engagement of this type is one of the vital ingredients for successful learning. Activities and materials which frequently *Engage* [sic] students include: games, music, discussion, stimulating pictures, etc. *Fourth*, colourful pictures and illustrations are often entertaining and beautiful to look at. Pictures as ornamentation (Harmer, 2007: 178-179) appeal to students and *engage* them in their learning. It should be remembered that if the pictures are interesting, they will appeal strongly to at least some members of the class. In other words, They have the power to engage students. *Fifth*, pictures and illustrations are useful for getting students to predict what is coming next in a lesson. Thus students might look at a picture and try to guess what it shows (Harmer, 2007, 179). *Sixth*, 'This use of pictures is very powerful and has the advantage of engaging students in the task to follow' (Harmer, 2007: 179). When a teacher uses pictures in teaching a foreign language, she or he should convince herself or himself about two things: the benefit of pictures that prompt prediction on the part of learners, and the students' true understanding of English. *Seventh*, visual aids are also useful for 'communication activities' such as describing and discussing pictures between pairs of students or in small groups (Harmer, 2007: 178-9). His conviction that pictures are useful in learning was already stated by Broughton et al. (1978, 1980: 107) who said that devices which may help to foster better understanding are those which involve the use of pictures, diagrams, charts and models. *Eighth*, Wright states that pictures can play a key role in motivating students contextualizing the language they are using, giving them a reference and helping to discipline the activity. (Wright, 1989:2). *Ninth*, according to Hill (1990: 1) pictures bring not only images of reality, but can also function as a fun element in the class. Sometimes it is surprising, how pictures may change a lesson, even if only employed in additional exercises or just to create the atmosphere. In line with him, Danan (1992) stipulates, language teachers use different visual materials so that they can increase students' interaction and motivation in the classroom. The use of different types of visual materials can be helpful for teacher, too (Horn, 1998). Visual aids can provide useful and suitable solutions for problems of language teachers. If teachers use visual and verbal aids together, the students' learning is better (Mayer & Sims, 1994). Visual elements such as pictures can be an important and suitable solution for many problems (Horn, 1998). Visual elements increase students' learning because there is more concentration for them (Mayer, 1993).

After describing the use of pictures, in this part some advantages of question in teaching English as a foreign language. Why should an English teacher use questions to teach *Present Progressive*? Cline (2016) points out several advantages of good questions. They can:

First, motivate student learning and fuel curiosity; *Second*, foster intellectual development and stimulate critical thinking; *Third*, Assess student understanding; and *Fourth*, Guide discussion and shape a positive learning environment.

To use questions as techniques or strategies of teaching, The Teaching Centre (2016) suggests general strategies for asking questions, as follow:

First, when planning questions, the English teacher should keep in his or her mind his or her course goals. He or she should ensure about the core concepts he or she wants students to master. She or he should be sure about what questions to ask? The teacher should develop the students' critical thinking skills. The questions you ask should help them practice these skills, as well as communicate to them the facts, ideas, and ways of thinking that are important to their learning in your course.

Second, Avoid asking "leading questions." A leading question is phrased in such a way that it suggests its own answer and therefore discourages students from thinking on their own.

Third, follow a "yes-or-no" question with an additional question. For example, follow up by asking students to explain why they answered the way they did, to provide evidence or an example, or to respond to a yes-or-no answer given by another student.

Fourth, aim for direct, clear, specific questions. During class discussions, rather than beginning with a single question that is multilayered and complex, use a sequence of questions to build depth and complexity. Essay questions on exams or paper assignments, on other hand, often provide an appropriate opportunity to ask multi-layered questions. If your exam will include multi-layered questions, use questions during class time to walk students through the process of answering multi-layered questions.

Fifth, in class discussions, do not ask more than one question at once. When you ask more than one question, students often do not respond because they are unsure which question you want them to answer. When you plan each class session, include notes of when you will pause to ask and answer questions. Asking questions throughout the class will not only make the class more interactive, but also help you measure and improve student learning. Do not save the last two minutes of class for questions. Students are unlikely to ask questions when they know that only a few minutes remain.

Sixth, ask a mix of different types of questions. To test students' comprehension and retention of important information, an English teacher should use "closed" questions, or questions that have a limited number of correct answers. The teacher should also ask managerial questions to ensure, for example, that his or her students understand an assignment or have access to necessary materials. "Open" questions, which prompt multiple and sometimes conflicting answers, are often the most effective in encouraging discussion and active learning in the classroom. For examples of "open" questions and the purposes they can serve.

The explanation above show you how students' native language, action, pictures, and questions can help in a foreign language teaching. In the following part, the writer will show the readers how to teach *Present Progressive* by taking advantage of students' native languages, actions, pictures, and questions.

2. HOW TO TEACH *PRESENT PROGRESSIVE* BY TAKING ADVANTAGE OF STUDENTS' NATIVE LANGUAGES, ACTIONS, PICTURES, AND QUESTIONS

How to teach *Present Progressive* by taking advantage of students' native languages, actions, pictures, and questions?

1. To introduce *Present Progressive*, the teacher first mentions some actions that are happening in the classroom. For instance, *I am sitting, You are sitting. (mentioning the name of a student) is writing. They are talking.*
2. The teacher, then, asks one student to come to the front of the class. The teacher the students to do some actions based on the commands given by the teacher. The teacher uses the students' native language or mother tongue. While the student is doing actions, the other students are paying attention to the student performer and answering the questions addressed to them based on what they see or what is happening. For instance, the teacher says "Tutup pintu itu!" While the student is closing the door, the teacher ask "What is she doing at the moment?". The other students wil respond by saying "She is closing the door". Then, she is asked to open the door by

saying "Buka pintu itu!". Then the teacher asks the other students to answer "What is she doing at present?" They will say "She is opening the door". Then, the teacher asks the student performer to write on the board by saying "Tulis namamu di papan tulis! And then ask the other students "What is she doing right now?" The students will answer by saying "She is writing her name on the board? This kind of activity can be done by two or three more students.

3. The teacher, then, asks a student to come to the front of the classroom. The teacher writes something or "an action that the students should act" on a piece of paper. Then, the student says "Can you guess what I am doing?" while acting the word. The other students try to guess what he or she is doing and say "You are swimming" for instance. If their guessing is true, the student will say "Yes, you are right. I am swimming". But if they are wrong, the student (performer) will say "I am not....." Please guess what I am doing by still continues doing the action until the other students say the correct answer. This kind of activity is repeated for five to six new words.
4. After this activity is finished, the teacher will show some pictures to the students while asking yes/no questions. The teacher should ensure that the students will answer the question by "NO". For example, "Is the man running?" The students will answer by "No, he is not. He is not running. He is walking." The teacher can show different pictures and asks the same type of questions.
5. The teacher divides the students into several groups. Each group consists of three to four students. In each group, one or two students are asked act something, one student asks "What is s(he) doing/What are they doing?" Another student will answer the question.
6. The students are, then, asked to work in pairs. One student is asked to act another student asks "Are youing?"
7. The students are asked to fill in a guided conversation given by the teacher to check their understanding.
8. After doing the exercise, the students' answers are checked together.

3. CONCLUSION

Teaching *Present Progressive* can be done by taking advantage of the students' mother tongue, action, pictures and question. The use of the students' mother tongue will help the students know what is happening. The actions and the pictures will help the students understand the tense better. The questions will provide the students with vehicles to master the tense better. The combination of the students' mother tongue, action, pictures and questions will make the students master the tense well.

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