

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Research Background

The mastery of English is highly necessary because English is the major language spoken in most countries in the world. It is used as a means of communication in politics, economy, social, culture, and other fields. English also plays roles in exploring various realms of knowledge and science. Consequently, English education becomes a must to teach. In Indonesia, English has been considered of the primary languages to be taught and learned.

Having a good English command, students have to master four basic language skills. They are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Besides language skills above, students also have to master grammar properly. According to Clark (1972, p.112), grammar is the set of formula pattern in which the words of a language are arranged in order to convey larger meanings. This statement above shows that grammar is as the basic knowledge and important role in understanding the English grammar. Grammar has a lot of language elements. One of them is degrees of comparison.

In learning English, some students often consider it boring and a difficult subject. Even, when they learn English, they try to avoid the grammar. English can be a difficult subject; because students frequently get confused to comprehend

grammar. Students find it hard to understand the patterns or formula that the result expected from the process of teaching and learning activities in the class is not optimal.

At SMPN 184, most students consider grammar, as the most difficult aspect to learn. They argued that grammar contains a great deal of complex rules to remember and use. To them, degrees of comparison is the most difficult sub-grammar to learn. For instance, to junior high students, they find it difficult how to transform the positive degree to comparative degree to superlative degree. Besides, they still do not know how to identify the adjectival words.

To help students solve this problem, the teacher has to make the learning process or situation in the classroom creative and interesting, the teacher should use suitable techniques to interest the students to avoid boredom. According to Sumardi (1974, p. 13), technique depends on the teacher, the imagination, his/her creativity and the condition of class. A certain problem can be solved with various techniques. A good technique may make the students understand and master the lesson. To make students' interest in English teaching learning process especially in grammar lesson, there are many ways. One of the ways is by using pictures as a teaching media or medium.

Media are very useful in teaching English, especially for young learners. By using media, the teacher can get more attention from the students and it can motivate the students to be creative in the classroom. As Finochiaro (1989, p. 34) argued that media can make class situation more alive and active. The class can

be more alive and active if the media can interest and motivate students' attention. Then, students will give the response to the interesting things.

One of the media is picture. Picture is of the commonly-used media. It uses general language; so it can be understood and enjoyed everywhere. Boggs (1989, p. 81) stated that picture can help students to get the clear perception. Real objects are in many ways to easiest kind of visual aids to use in class, as they need no special preparation or material. By using pictures, teacher can give information to the students clearly. Besides, students can get the information easily and pictures also make the students' interest to learn English especially in grammar.

This research also did by previous researcher. Munajah (2011, p. 52), her title was the effectiveness of using pictures in reinforcing degrees of comparison of adjective. Munajah concluded that picture help the students to understand the difficult of reinforcing degrees of comparison of adjective by looking at the pictures. Munajah also stated that the use of pictures makes the reinforcing degrees of comparison of adjective become enjoyable and interesting.

Based on the description, the researcher was motivated to investigate how significant pictures as a teaching medium could affect the eighth graders' competences in Degrees of Comparison at SMPN 184 Jakarta. Besides, based on my observation and the English teacher's experiences teaching eighth graders, the students experienced confusing in Degrees of Comparison. The researcher expected that the research could become a solution to the problem.

B. Research Problem Statement

Based on the described background, the researcher formulated the problem of this researcher as: “Does pictures affect significantly the eighth graders’ competence in Degrees of Comparison at SMPN 184 Jakarta?”

C. Research Objective

The research was conducted to find out whether pictures as a teaching media significantly affected the eighth graders’ competences in Degrees of Comparison at SMPN 184 Jakarta.

D. Research Significances

The results of this research were highly expected to give benefits to students, teachers and other researchers, as follows:

1. To students, to improve students’ mastery about degrees of comparison by using pictures.
2. To teachers, to inspire English teachers in teaching degrees of comparison or other materials of grammar through pictures.
3. To other researcher, to provide some information for conducting further researches on degrees of comparison and other related areas of teaching and learning English

E. Research Scopes

This research was focused on teaching degrees of comparison using still pictures to eighth graders at SMPN 184 Jakarta of the academic year 2013/2014 in second semester. The areas of degrees of comparison taken into this research covered the positive, comparative, and superlative degrees transformation in adjectival both in regular and irregular degrees of comparison. The research was conducted using experimental method.

F. Operational Definitions

1. Pictures: The most commonly media in teaching English, especially for grammar lesson.
2. Degrees of Comparison: One of the grammar cores related to the comparison levels of two or more aspects shared by subjects.