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## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF VOCABULARY GAMES IN ENGLISH GRAMMAR CLASS

**Lungguh Halira Vonti, Abdul Rosyid**

English Education Study Program,  
Faculty of Teachers Training and Educational Sciences

### ABSTRACT

The study is aimed to investigate the effectiveness of giving vocabulary game on students' ability in grammar class. The study was conducted to the first semester of English Education Study Program students in Faculty of Teachers Training and Educational Sciences, Pakuan University.

The population of the study is the first semester students of the English Department, Faculty of Teachers Training and Educational Sciences, Pakuan University. From the population, the sample of the study is one experimental class consisted of 25 students. The method of the study is quasi experimental research. The instruments used by the researcher are test and non test. The test instruments are questions about tenses and the non test is in forms of questionnaire. From the study, it can be concluded that the students' ability in using new verbs in constructing sentences based on tenses taught has significantly been increased. It is shown from the high score of students' test. The calculation of  $df$  (degree of freedom) is gained from  $df = (N-1) = 11-1 = 10$  and concern with the  $t$  table value with  $df = 11$ , the value of  $t$  table degree of significance 5% is compared to  $t_0$ . The  $t$ -table is 2.21 and with  $t_0 = 11,2$  which is greater than  $t = 2,04$  we can see that  $H_0$  is rejected so there are significant differences between pre-test and post-test. Based on the data calculation above, it is found out that there are significant differences mean between pre-test and posttest. Therefore, the writer concludes that the use of throwing words games as one of vocabulay games is effective in teaching grammar.

Keywords: vocabulary games, grammar

### ABSTRAK

*Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui tingkat efektivitas pemberian permainan kosakata terhadap kemampuan mahasiswa dalam kelas tata bahasa. Penelitian dilakukan terhadap mahasiswa semester satu Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris di Fakultas Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan, Universitas Pakuan. Populasi penelitian adalah mahasiswa semester satu Program Studi Bahasa Inggris, Fakultas Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan Universitas Pakuan. Sample dalam penelitian ini adalah satu kelas eksperimen yang terdiri dari 25 orang mahasiswa. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah quasi experimental. Instrument dalam penelitian ini adalah tes dan non tes. Instrument yang berupa tes adalah soal mengenai tenses sedangkan non tes berupa kuesioner. Berdasarkan hasil temuan, dapat disimpulkan bahwa kemampuan mahasiswa dalam menggunakan kata kerja baru dalam membuat kalimat berdasarkan tenses yang diajarkan mengalami peningkatan secara signifikan. Hal ini terlihat dari nilai tes mahasiswa yang termasuk tinggi. Perhitungan  $df$  (derajat bebas) diperoleh dari  $df = (N-1) = 11-1 = 10$  dengan nilai  $t$  table dan  $df = 11$ , nilai derajat signifikan  $t$  table 5% dibandingkan dengan  $t_0$ . Nilai  $t$ -table adalah 2.21 dan dengan  $t_0 = 11,2$  yang nilainya lebih besar dari  $t = 2,04$ . Dengan demikian dapat dilihat bahwa  $H_0$  ditolak sehingga disimpulkan terdapat perbedaan yang signifikan antara pre tes dan post tes. Berdasarkan perhitungan data tersebut, ditemukan perbedaan mean yang signifikan antara pre tes dan post tes. Oleh karena itu, dapat disimpulkan bahwa penggunaan permainan lempar kata efektif dalam pembelajaran tata bahasa.*

*Kata kunci: Permainan kosakata, tata bahasa*

## INTRODUCTION

### A. Background of the Study

The students of English Education Study Program are required to master and use four skills in English language learning: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Besides those four skills, they also are required to understand sentence structure in English. In English language teaching and learning process, the ability to construct sentences based on the pattern is the key to the language skills ability. In writing skill, the students are required to be able to write start from the sentence, paragraph, text, and essays in correct pattern and tenses. In speaking skill, one of the assessed elements is the grammatical aspects used, including the patterns and tenses.

In Indonesia, students start learning English as a Second Language (ESL) as early as kindergarten. When they enter college, especially when they take English Language Study Program, they have had wide exposure to traditional grammar-based

approaches to language instruction. At Pakuan University, especially at faculty of Teachers Training and Educational Sciences, English is a prescribed general education course for freshmen. Moreover, in English Language Study Program, the students are given many different subjects related to English language skills; some of them are about English grammar.

The lessons of grammar subjects are mechanical and quite predictable—the teacher presents rules, gives exercises for students to work on, and administers tests to assess learning. Most of the classroom activities are the teachers explaining while the students listen, take notes, or give one-word or one-sentence responses. The ideal grammar class should be more than that activities. According to Martin (2000), English-language instructors should be careful about monopolizing a class with too much teacher-talk— for speaking and writing activities, more than

15 percent of the time is probably excessive. Obviously, English grammar classes need to be more interactive to keep students interested in the lessons. English need not be a boring subject; on the contrary, it can be fun if teachers supplement the formal lessons with alternative methods and techniques. For example, teachers regularly use games to review and practice the language skills that the class is currently studying.

Using games in teaching English, especially grammar, can be problematic since the objectives of the study is more than the ability to write sentences in correct pattern or sentence structure. Another problem is mainly about the students' lack of vocabulary in constructing sentences. One example is when the students are given the lesson about tenses, and they have to construct some sentences in certain kind of tenses by using certain verbs. Most of them tend to use the same common

verbs such as go, study, eat, etc. This condition can surely be an obstacle since they are forced to practice writing grammatical components in a form of sentences. The students need a very creative and enjoyable way to learn about patterns and tense. They also need immediate practices after being given the theory so that they are able to apply the knowledge in an easy and fun way. Thus, there are so many techniques and method that the teacher can use to improve the students ability to construct sentences with correct pattern and tenses. However, there are still many students think that the subjects are difficult and no fun. One of the ways to overcome this condition, there are so many games that we can use in teaching grammar. However, the researchers are curious about using one of vocabulary teaching game in grammar class. The game used is throwing words games which involves the students in most of the activities.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

### A. Grammar

#### 1. Definition of Grammar

Grammar is defined as a description of rules for forming sentences. Scott Thornbury stated that grammar adds meaning that are not easy inferable from the immediate context. The term grammar is often used to refer to the complete set of rules needed to produce all the regular patterns in a given language. Another, perhaps older, way in which the term grammar is sometimes used means roughly “all the structural properties of the

language except sound structure (phonology),” i.e. the structure of words, phrases, sentences, texts, etc. Ellis’s (2006:84) consider grammar teaching as the use of “any instructional technique that draws learners’ attention to some specific grammatical form in such a way that it helps them either to understand it meta-linguistically and/or process it in comprehension and/or production so that they can internalize it.”

#### 2. Teaching Grammar

In teaching and learning languages, grammar becomes the central of the learning process. Grammar is also assumed as one of the difficult aspects of language to teach. The definition of grammar itself is defined in many ways; one of them is by *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*. It defines grammar as the rules by which words change their forms and are combined

into sentences. Based on the definition above, there are two basic elements of grammar; first, the rules of grammar; and the second is the study and practice of the rules. The first element defines how words change and how they are put together into sentences while the second element tells the learner what to do if he wants to put the some phrase into

the sentence. (Jeremy Harmer, 1991, p. 1)

In language teaching, grammar has always been the least understood aspect of the language, and the most controversial teaching subject. CelceMurcia's (2001:3-11), Hinkel and Fotos' (2002:1-12) and Tejada et. al.'s (2005:159) overviews, the 9 main approaches that language learning and teaching has (and still does) received.

The approaches of teaching grammar has always been improved based on how is the position of grammar teaching in language learning and teaching. Since grammar is usually considered as least interesting componen in language teaching and grammar, the classroom environment needs to be set as fun as possible.

There are several possibilities how to teach grammar. There are also a number of techniques for presenting and practicing grammar. According to J. Harmer, the grammatical information can be given to students in two major ways; extremely covert and extremely overt. Covert grammar teaching

means that the children learn grammar implicitly. Students may be asked to do any activity where a new grammar is presented or introduced, but their attention will be drawn to this activity not to the grammar. Overt grammar teaching means that the teacher actually provides the students grammatical rules and explanations.

Techniques that can be used by teachers in presenting grammar in language teaching and learning are divided into discovery and practice technique. In this paper, the writer described the practice technique. Practice technique focuses on activities in which pupils do exercise through the techniques which get them to practice grammatical item. Harmer described four different types of oral practice and written practice. The first is drilling. Drilling activities are often done with the whole class; students are given sentence with a new grammatical item and they are asked for right repetition. The aim of drilling activity is to give students rapid practice in using a structural item. The advantage is that the teacher can

correct any mistakes, and can encourage learners to concentrate on difficulties. The second is interaction activities in which learners often work together in pairs or in groups. They exchange information in the purposeful and interesting way. They are given some materials (text, picture, map) and asked for some tasks when they use the grammatical item that is introduced. Disadvantage of this activity is that the teacher has no control over all students. They can't be sure that all students understood the grammar. The third is the personality. It is the way when

learners do the exercise and at the same time talk about themselves. They are asked to discuss things that involve their personality and to use this subject matter as a focus for grammar practice. Chain drill is one way of making a practice drill. It is closely drill but in more funny and enjoyable way. It is more interesting than usual, because students are asked for speaking about themselves. Forth is through games. Games are very useful for grammar work. Students are given a new grammatical item through the game, which is exactly the most natural way especially for children.

## **B. Games in EFL Classroom**

For many students, learning a foreign language is not easy. The use of games in our lessons increases motivation for learning and make of it a memorable process. Games provide language teachers with many advantages when they are used in classroom. One of the advantages is

that the students can practice the language they are learning in a very enjoyable way.

To sum up, games have a great pedagogical value providing language teachers with many advantages when they are used in foreign language classes.

### C. Vocabulary Games

Language learning can sometimes be frustrating. To understand, produce and manipulate the target language need constant effort. The teacher sometimes is required to apply activities that are enjoyable, interesting, and fun. One of common ways that usually saves the boring classroom environment is by using games. Well-chosen games are invaluable as they give students a break and at the same time allow students to practice language skills. Since games are amusing and challenging, they can highly motivate the students and also encourage cooperation among students.

To enrich students' vocabulary, the teacher can play interactive games in the classroom. Vocabulary game is essential since the primary goal is to enrich students mastery of target

language. By mastering many vocabularies in target language, it is hope that when the students are learning grammar, it will be easier for them to practice the rules and pattern from the grammar teaching and learning class. The term approach, method and technique themselves have many differences in meaning. In some sources, approach is defined as a "certain theory"; secondly, a method is "a set of procedures" that can be compatible with several approaches and a technique is "a classroom device or activity" (CelceMurcia, 2001:5-6).

In this research, the writer is experimenting one technique in teaching grammar, related to the students vocabulary mastery, so the game which is used is related to vocabulary teaching.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In relation to the problems of the study, the researchers conducted the research in experimental research. The investigation is quantitative, of experimental type since it investigates

the relationship between cause– effect (the use of vocabulary games – English grammar class, respectively) of the manifestation of two variables of study. The current study used a

quasi experimental approach which required one experimental group. The vocabulary games were administered to the experimental group to verify the results. In the research design, one group pre test-post test was conducted to get the significant different of the students' score before and after the treatment.

The participants of the study were the first semester students of English study program in FKIP, Pakuan University. The population of the research is 95 students divided into four classes. one class composed of 25 students was selected randomly assigned as experimental group and was taught grammatical material by using games.

This study was designed as an experimental study with the aim to

see if teaching grammar using vocabulary game is effective or not. At the end of the treatment session, the students were asked to answer a questionnaire in order to get their impression and perception about learning grammar using a vocabulary game.

Class A is an experimental group, in which before the students were explained about tenses, they were given vocabulary games for a re-inforcement for about 15 minutes in the beginning of the lesson. A throwing word game was administered for three meetings (100 minutes each). In order to carry out this study the instruments such as pre and post-test were employed and a throwing word game.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

The pre-test was taken at the beginning of the semester by giving the students grammar test. The test covered present tenses such as simple present tense, present progressive tense, and perfect tense.

Result of pre test showed that only two students got high score

(80) and seven students got average score (70-75). The rest of the students got low score (65 and under). The mean of the pre test result was 65,2, meaning that most of the students had low understanding about the tenses tested.



After given the treatment in a form of vocabulary game, the students were given the same test as the pre test. From the post test, the data of the students score showed that there was significant increase of the score. The highest score was 97 which was gained by 10 students and the rest varried from 90-78 which was the lowest score. The mean of the post test was 91,8, increased from the mean of the pre test.

Standar deviation is used to measure how spread out numbers are. It is usally used in quantitave research data anaysis. A low standard deviation means that most of the numbers are very close to the average. A high standard deviation means that the numbers are spread out. From the data, we can see that the standard deviation score was high, meaning that the numbers are spread out.

A t-test is a type of inferential statistic used to determine if there is significant difference between the means of two groups or two kinds of test, which may be related in certain features. It is used to prove that there

was significant different between the test before and after the treatment. The result will be compared with the result of degree of freedom (*df*) in order to know whether the alternative hypothesis is accepted or not.

Based on the data calculation, it shows that t-test is 22.57. The result will be compared with the result of degree of freedom (*df*) in order to know whether the alternative hypothesis is accepted or not. The result shows that the degree of freedom is 24. Based on the t-table, the degree of freedom of 24 at significant level 0.05 is 2.037 Based on the calculation; it is found that t-test value is 14,17.

Based on the result of the t-test above, it is found out that there are significant differences mean between pre-test and posttest; therefore, the  $H_0$  was rejected aand alternative hypothesis was accepted.

Based on the data analysis above, it is find out that the students' score after the treatment are increased. The mean of the score after treatment is 91,84. Based on the data calculation above, it is found out that there are significant differences

mean between pre-test and posttest. Therefore, the writer concludes that applying vocabulary game is significantly effective to students' grammar ability.

Subjects also had highly positive attitudes towards the use of vocabulary games in teaching and learning process. In particular, they stated that the use of vocabulary game benefited in several aspects. In they could enrich their understanding vocabulary and they could also learn to improve their ability in constructing sentences. Based on the questionnaire, about 92% of the samples or most of the students agreed that the use of vocabulary game could enrich their vocabulary in applying verbs sentence construction. The data was gained from the calculation of the question about their perception toward the use

of the game. It is proved by the data analysis from the questionnaire distributed to 25 samples for 1 class. It is found out that the use of games, especially vocabulary games, highly contributed the students' score in grammar test. The scores obtained by the students in their grammar test were significantly explained by their score in the questionnaire results about their perception. The students with positive perception in the questionnaire got higher score in grammar test.

They felt challenged and interested while thinking and finding out some verbs based on the letters spelled by their friends. It is also easier for them because they have clear and direct guidance in using and correcting the verbs in the sentences.

## CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Based on the result and the findings of the study, it can be concluded that the use of vocabulary game in teaching grammar, particularly in teaching tenses is effective to improve the students' ability to construct sentence. The students also gave positive respond to the use of method in teaching and learning process. However, there is still barrier in the use of this method. If the method is used in larger class, it will be a bit difficult because not all the students will be assigned to

find out the verbs. Therefore, further study may be conducted to overcome the problem.

To improve students' ability in any grammatical context, the teachers must be creative to find new and more interesting and effective technique or method. Grammatical topics still become the most difficult elements in language teaching and learning. Therefore, as teachers we have to read more resources and find out new technique and method.

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