

YOUNG LEARNERS' ACHIEVEMENT TOWARDS THE USE OF TEAM-GAMES-TOURNAMENT (TGT) TECHNIQUE AND FLASHCARDS TEACHING TECHNIQUE IN LEARNING GRAMMAR

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Abstract

Teams-Games-Tournament, being one of cooperative learning method, is carefully structured sequence of teaching-learning activities, a blend of three educational techniques-small groups, instructional games, and tournaments. Therefore, this present study aims to investigate the young learners' achievement towards the student-centered approach through Team Games Tournament (TGT) technique and teacher-centered approach through flashcard teaching technique in learning grammar. A quasi experimental was employed in this study. The writer used two classes as the experimental and control groups. The writer also developed a research instrument which contains fifteen items. After the meetings of the treatment, the writer administered a post test to both classes. Having collected the data, the writer analyzed the mean scores of post-test using independent sample t-test. From the statistical data, the study reveals that there is a significant difference on the students' grammar achievement between those taught using TGT technique and that taught using Flashcard teaching technique.

Keywords: *Teams-Games-Tournament, flashcard, learning grammar*

Introduction

Over the years the role of grammar has been one of the most controversial issues and much disputed subject within the field of second and foreign language teaching. Stevick (1982, p.82) reported that it is not easy to make students understand about grammar with the explanations since grammar is a difficult and boring lesson for the learners. The controversy over techniques of teaching grammar has developed in the recent past, but the question remains as to the relative effectiveness of different techniques. In the teaching and learning grammar, there are several techniques for teachers to use to achieve the objectives. Some teaching techniques have been studied by many researchers, but there was no conclusion of which technique is the best to teach grammar.

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In a traditional setting, teaching grammar is basically teaching the language rules, also known as the sentence patterns, which are essential to define the meaning and use. That belief was challenged by the notion stated by Richards & Renandya (2002) that "Knowledge of the grammatical system of the language is one of the many components which underline the notion of communicative competence." It suggests that being a communicative speaker/ writer, one should not only master the rules of the language (the language patterns), but also know how these rules are put together in real communication to convey meaning.

One of the teaching methods which can be implemented in the teaching and learning process is cooperative learning. It is not a new idea in educational world. Cooperative learning, according to Campbell and Rutherford (2000, p. 164), is believed to be an effective way to increase learning and improve students' achievement. Teachers, in cooperative learning, function as facilitators. Meanwhile, students are more active in developing their own learning. Some techniques in cooperative learning are Students' Team Achievement Division (STAD), Jigsaw, Teams Games Tournament, Team Accelerated Instruction (TAI) and so forth.

Furthermore, there are various techniques of cooperative learning which can be implemented in teaching grammar and one of them is TGT. Students at different ability level work together in teams to review the concept and help each member of the group solve the problem in their learning. TGT uses an academic tournament which allows a representative of teams to compete with the other team's representative in order to achieve certain outputs or achievements.

Therefore, the present study aims to investigate the young learners' achievement towards the student-centered approach through Team Games Tournament (TGT) technique and teacher-centered approach through flashcard teaching technique in learning grammar. In line with the background, the problem is stated as follows: Do the students who are taught using Team Games Tournament (TGT) technique show higher grammar achievement than students who are taught using Flashcards teaching technique?

What is Grammar?

In general, grammar is defined as the study of how rules are applied to combine words in order to form sentences. Hence there are two types of grammar: practical and theoretical. Practical grammar gives practical rules of the use of the linguistic structures whereas theoretical grammar gives an analysis of the structures in the light of general principles of linguistics and the existing schools and approaches. By studying grammar, the structures are recognized as the foundation of language and tools to talk about the system of language (de Silva Joyce & Burns, 1999, p. 4-5).

According to Thornburry (1999), grammar is the study of forms governing sounds, words, and sentences in a language to convey meaning. Grammar has the basic function which is to make the meaning clear to between the speaker and the audiences. It is supported by the statement of Canale and Swain (1980: 27) who consider the concept of grammatical structures as a basis of the communicative competence. In line with Canale and Swain, Long and Richards (1987) also stated that how importance of grammar to play a role in four language skills involving listening, reading, speaking and writing and another language component, vocabulary, in establishing communicative task.

The Role of Grammar in Teaching Young Learners

In absorbing new language, young children are incredibly wonderful. They can get maximum of language through games and activities that they find interesting and funny. Their success in learning foreign language does not depend on their knowledge of grammar. As Pinter (2006) stated that children can use grammatical structures very well, they can speak language clearly, but they are not able to say why they use particular structure. Teachers, of course, should be aware of grammar and structures that they want to introduce to their children. But they should teach just a minimum of grammar since mastering grammar is to help them speak with organized sentence structures in order to make themselves understood.

In introducing new grammatical items, it is very important for the teachers to do it in context. For children it is necessary to have lots of opportunities and chances to use the new language in their real lives. Children have to learn new structures and rules in depth; they should feel that they can use what they have learnt for everyday communication (Phillips, 1993).

Cooperative Learning

Cooperative Learning is defined as a teaching arrangement that refers to small, heterogeneous groups of students working together to achieve a common goal (Kagan, 1994). Students encourage and support each other, assume responsibility for their own and each other's learning, employ group related social skills, and evaluate the group's progress. Cooperative learning has become one of the main stream instructions used in the language learning classroom to promote student motivation, and student-student interaction (McCafferty, 2006).

A cooperative learning environment will exist if groups are structured in such a way that group members coordinate activities to facilitate one another's learning (Ballantine & Larres, 2007). Therefore, in

order to engage students in learning, five elements: positive interdependence, face-to-face interaction, individual accountability, interpersonal & social skills, and group processing, must be present in the cooperative classroom (Johnson & Johnson, 2008).

Team-Games-Tournament

According to Kagan (1994), Teams-Games-Tournament, one of the cooperative learning techniques, is defined as “a carefully structured sequence of teaching-learning activities, a blend of three educational techniques-small groups, instructional games, and tournaments”. It is designed to complement regular instruction in upper elementary, junior and senior high school classrooms. The purpose of TGT is to create an effective classroom environment in which all students get actively involved in the teaching and learning process and consistently receive encouragement for a successful performance. The TGT structure exhibits both competition and cooperation in a way that promotes peer group rewards for academic achievement. It is demonstrated by altering the social organization of the classroom in two ways. First, it creates interdependency among students. Second, it makes it possible for all students, despite different learning rates, to have an equal chance to succeed at an academic task.

TGT provides a flexible design which can be implemented for individualized learning, independent learning, and group instruction. Its focus is on individual performance, which in turn contributes to group performance.

As quoted from DeVries (1980: 5), TGT works for several reasons as a teaching technique. First, it capitalizes on the cooperative aspects of small groups, the motivational nature of instructional games, the competitive spirit of tournaments and the students’ familiarity with all of these. Second TGT is inexpensive. It does not require costly materials or special facilities. TGT uses only materials and equipment available in most schools – even those whose budgets are limited and it is at home in any kind of physical classroom structure. Third, TGT is easy to implement. It is designed to be used in 30-to-45-minute class periods, in any subject, with elementary and secondary school students, in conventional and experimental classroom arrangements.

Flashcards

Flashcards are one of visual aids which can be used in teaching and learning process. It helps the students to understand the material given by their teacher. According to Kasihani, flashcards are cards which have big size, and it usually uses thick paper, stiff, and the size is A4. It contains of picture and words. Moreover, Wright (1968:73) also states

that flashcard is printed with words and picture which can be handled easily by the teacher. It means that the teacher could create the flashcards and the size of the flashcards could be determined. Therefore, in using flashcards, it requires considerable attention about how to handle and move when we want to introduce certain concept to the learners. The pictures have to be clear enough as they are seen by the students. They are moved from the back side to the front side.

Previous study

Several studies have been conducted to investigate which technique was better to teach grammar. According to the study conducted by Fitriyanto (2014), the implementation of TGT technique in teaching Simple Past Tense to the eighth grade students of MTs N 13 Petukangan South Jakarta was successful. The data which was analyzed showed that the scores of experimental group taught using TGT technique was higher than the control group. It means that the use of TGT technique in teaching grammar is effective to improve students' achievement in learning Simple Past Tense.

A study, conducted by Belinda (2015), investigated the teaching of English tenses using TGT (Team-Game-Tournament) technique and deductive application of rule. The target tenses were present perfect tense and simple past tense. The subjects were the ninth grade students. The final result showed that the students' result taught using TGT were higher than those who are taught using deductive application of rule.

On the other hand, another study was conducted by Lin (2007) who recruited 64 elementary school students in Taiwan. The subjects were assigned to either the experimental group in which the students are asked to figure out the grammatical patterns through the examples given or the control group implemented teacher-centered approach. They received a 12-week English verb tenses teaching, including the teaching of simple future tense, simple present tense, and simple past tense. The result of the study showed that the teacher-centered approach was more effective to assist students' grammar learning.

Research Methodology

The study is a quasi-experimental research applying a non-randomized a pre-test-posttest control group design. It means that the writer does not randomize the subjects, but she uses the intact classes as they are. There are three classes used in this study. The two classes become the real samples as the experimental group and control group.

Then one class becomes the pilot group which the grammar test is tried out first to discover the validity and reliability.

The population of this study was young learners at one of private schools in Surabaya. Two classes were purposefully selected as the experimental and control group respectively and one class was selected as the pilot group. The sample was consisted of 74 students, which were 25 students from experimental group, 25 students from the control group and 24 students from the pilot group.

The research instrument was in the form of structure test. The test was used to know the students' grammar achievement and measure the students' grammar mastery throughout the treatments. For the pre-test and post-test, they had the same items. The test was a subjective item which consisted of three parts. The target structures were about Preposition words. The first part consisted of eight questions. It was about writing down choosing the correct answer. The second part consisted of 4 questions. In this part, the students were asked to write the correct preposition word. The last part consisted of 6 questions. In this part, the students were assigned to cut and paste the picture based on the sentences. The total numbers of all the items were fifteen items and the students should complete it in thirty minutes.

The treatments were divided into two parts: the treatments for the experimental group and the treatments for the control group. The experimental group worked with TGT Technique and the control group worked with Flashcards teaching Technique. The treatments were given in three meetings applying the target structures. Both experimental and control groups received the same teaching period. The teacher or the instructor here is the writer herself.

The Result of Data Analysis

The study reveals that there is a significant difference between the grammar achievement of the second-grade students who are taught using TGT technique and those who are taught using flashcards teaching technique.

To draw such a conclusion above, several analyses were done. First to find out whether there was a significant difference before and after the treatment, the writer analyzed the pre-test and post-test scores of both groups by using paired sample t-test. The data obtained of pre-test and post-tests showed that the significant value of the experimental group is .000 and the significant value of the control group is .003. The result indicated that the Significance Value of both classes is less than .05. Since the significance value is $< .05$, the H_0 is rejected. It can be concluded that both TGT and flashcards teaching techniques are effective to reinforce the students to master the concept of preposition words.

The Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores

Group	Pre-Test	Post-Test	Sig. Value	Conclusion
II-A (Experimental group)	9.52	13.52	.000	Significant
II-C (Control group)	10.4	12.96	.003	Significant

Second, after the writer found that the TGT and flashcards teaching techniques were effective techniques to teach grammar, she investigated which technique was better than the other. Therefore, the writer compared the gained scores of the pre-test and post-test scores between experimental and control groups using independent sample t-test.

The summary of the statistical calculation for the gained scores between pre-test and post-test is presented in the table below:

The Calculation of the Gained Scores

Group	Pre-Test	Post-Test	Gained Scores	Significant Value	Conclusion
II-A (Experimental group)	9.52	13.52	4	.001	Significant
II-C (Control group)	10.4	12.96	2.44		

From the data above, the significant value is found to be .001. Since the significant value is $< .05$, the H_0 is rejected. Gained scores of both groups are significantly different. So it can be concluded that there is a significant difference in the grammar achievement of the second-grade students who are taught using TGT technique and who are taught using Flashcard teaching technique.

Discussion

The present study is focused on determining whether there would be a significant difference on the grammar achievement of the students taught using TGT technique and those who are taught using Flashcard teaching technique. As the findings demonstrate, all students participating in this study showed overall improvement in their grammar achievement. Furthermore, the overall results of the statistical data analysis prove that there is a significant difference on the second-grade students' grammar

achievement between the students taught using TGT technique and those taught using Flashcard teaching techniques.

The result of this study is supported by the research conducted by Fitriyanto (2014) and Belinda (2015) which findings show that TGT was a good technique to improve students' English learning abilities. Through the statistical data analysis in this study, it has been proved that the Team Games Tournament to be an effective technique over Flashcard Teaching Technique to increase the students' grammar achievement of Preposition words. There are some explanations related to the findings. First, the developments in educational theory are promoting the value of what came to be known as cooperative learning. The five principles underlying the cooperative learning are individual accountability, positive interdependence, promotive (Face to face) interaction, interpersonal & social skills, and group processing (Johnson & Johnson, 1989, 2005). In fact, these five elements distinguish cooperative learning from other forms of group learning. To be cooperative, to reach the full potential of the group, five essential elements need to be carefully structured into the situation. A cooperative learning environment will exist if groups are structured in such a way that group members coordinate activities to facilitate one another's learning (Ballantine & Larres, 2007).

The students in experimental group which were taught using Team Games Tournament (TGT) technique were instructed to apply the cooperative learning in which all students are actively involved in the teaching and learning process and consistently receive encouragement for successful performance. The TGT structure embodies both competition and cooperation in a way that promotes peer group rewards for academic achievement. Moreover, the teacher forms the class into groups consisting of four to five students with heterogeneous academic achievements and gender. Each group discusses and learns the provided materials from the teacher's presentation. The students, moreover, are expected to reinforce, review and study the material cooperatively in the group.

The success could be reached due to the involvement from teacher and the approach to the students to ask the questions in doing the activities. Teachers' encouragement in assigning the students to join a grammar quiz and games and also giving the reward made the students enjoy, ready, and had more experiences in process of teaching and learning. The significant progress in students' grammar achievement would also be determined by a learning situation and the technique implemented to teach them, it should be appropriate with the level of the learners. For instance, the use of TGT has been actually proven in this study that it is completely able to create such a learning situation which promotes the students' academic achievement and thinking skills, enhance positive learning attitudes and learning motivation, increase higher-order learning, serve as an alternative to grouping,

remediation, or special education, improve interpersonal relations, and prepare students for collaborative work.

The less significant progress of the control group might be related to the grammar presentation, in the form of flashcards, which encourages a teacher-fronted and the teacher explanation which is at the expense of the students' involvement and interaction. It seems that such technique encourages the belief that learning a language is simply a case of individual learning.

In learning English, particularly grammar, students need to realize that the learning is not a one-way process. To accomplish the goal of learning, students should involve themselves in the classroom activity built by the teacher. By taking part in the activity, students not only improve their ability in English but also their social skills. Students' ability in learning grammar is not solely teacher's responsibility; it also depends on students' active role in learning English.

Suggestions for English Teachers

There are some suggestions that the writer would like to contribute to English teachers, especially in teaching grammar to young learners. Firstly, the teachers should vary their teaching techniques which can avoid the students' boredom and difficulties in learning grammar. Generally, English teachers were likely to use traditional way in teaching grammar. Regardless of the difficulties, the teachers need to vary the techniques by using cooperative learning, TGT technique, to teach new grammatical points. Next, teachers should be able to deliver enjoyable grammar lessons using some materials like story telling containing the target structures. Teachers could also create an innovative and creative classroom for the students to enjoy the learning environment by applying varieties of quizzes or tournament as a review of the grammar material.

Last but not least, teachers should raise awareness on the grammar errors made by the students in order to anticipate typical problems to maximize learner success. In order to motivate the students, teachers could give rewards as the symbol of teacher's appreciation.

Suggestions for Further Researches

For further research, the writer would also like to give some suggestions, so that other researchers can get a better result in conducting similar studies. Nevertheless, she also hopes that this study can be used as a reference for other researchers who will carry out further research in improving students' grammar achievement through Team Games Tournament technique compared to Flashcard teaching technique.

Firstly, the suggestion will be related to the treatments. Due to the time given by the school to do the research, the writer limited her

treatments to only three meetings, 35 minutes for each meeting since the students need to deal with their exam. The writer suggests that the next researcher will have more time and opportunities to conduct his or her treatments in more than three meetings so that the students will have enough time in adjusting the new technique and the result of the study will become more valid.

The next suggestion will be about the subject of the study. More samples from different grade of students would improve the generalization of the research findings. In order to ensure the finding of this study, it's better for the next researchers to carry out the experiment to the different grade of students.

The last suggestion is concerning about the instructor who does the treatment. In conducting this study, the instructor was the writer herself. Regarding to the fact in conducting a research, the instructor who does the treatments has to be objective so that there are no other elements which can influence the result of the study. However, to avoid that interpretation, the writer asked the classroom teacher to accompany her during the treatments both in experimental and control groups. It was done to ensure that the instructor treated both groups in the same way which means that there was no desire to win one of the techniques.

Therefore, it is better for the next researcher to ask another person to do the treatments in order to avoid the bias.

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