The Use of Snakes and Ladders Game to Improve Students' Grammar at The Second Grade of Mts DDI Baru

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Abstract

The second graders of MTs DDI Baru face several issues in learning English. Those become obstacles for them to get good achievement in the subject. One of the most difficult issue for them is they could not even compose a simple sentence properly using basic tenses such as simple present and simple past tense. The researcher tried to use game-based learning, in this case, using Snakes and Ladders game to solve the problem. So that, this research aims to find out the significant effect of using of snakes and ladders game in improving students' grammar ability. This research design applied research with one pre-test and one post-test design in the experimental and control class. From 5 classes, the researcher chose 2 classes as sample by using cluster random sampling. The data analysis result revealed that the post-test mean score (74.07) is greater than the pre-test mean score (37.24) in experimental class. The results of the t-test also confirm that the p-value is 0.001, or smaller than 0.05, whereas the t-value is 8.87 or greater than t-table 2.048. So, by considering the p and the t value, the reseacher withdraw conclusion that H_1 is accepted which states that the use of the Snakes and Ladders game can improve students' grammar. However, another interesting finding reveals that there is also improvement of students' scores in the control class but not as significant as in the experimental class. The mean score increased 15.86 points while in the experimental class it increased 36.83 points.

Keywords: Students' grammar; Game-based learning; Snakes and Ladders game

1. INTRODUCTION

As international language that is globally spoken in numerous countries around the world. English is used as a first language, as a second language, and as a foreign language. In Indonesia, English is studied as a foreign language. It is taught from junior high school and senior high school to the lecture level. It has become a mandatory or has to be learned by the students at every level of education (Taslim, 2016). Students learn the four skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing in English. The four skills listed above require students to understand grammar because grammar is necessary for speaking, reading, writing and listening. Additionally, having an adequate understanding of grammar could assist people communicate in appropriate, meaningful and accurate way (Susanti & Trisnawati, 2019). Jufrizal (2010) emphasizes that we need grammar to have linguistic competence in communicative skills.

In learning English, grammar is the main foundation, which is the system of language rules (Chang, 2011). Grammar is the rule for forming a word and building a sentence. Therefore the students need grammar in communication both in oral form and spoken form. The students will not be able to produce good writing without understanding the grammar. As well, when speaking, understanding the grammar will make it easier for students to communicate orally. Also, it will support the students in mastering the other skill such as reading and listening (Susanti & Trisnawati, 2019). Thus, the students have to understand the grammar because it is important to communicate in English.

Using grammar is not easy for students. Based on preliminary research conducted by the researcher, it was found that students at MTs DDI BARU still had difficulties understanding the use of grammar, especially tenses. Even the use of simple present tense and simple past tense as basic tenses are failed to be understood by the students. They are still confused about subject-verb agreement, auxiliary verbs, and their usage. The issue is a problem that is frequently encountered in schools. As a result, most students feel learning English is hard, especially grammar. Based on the researcher further observation, those problems above arose due to several causes. The first reason is the method used by the English teacher at MTs DDI Baru. The teacher more often applied the lecturing learning method. The teacher gave a note, gave examples, and explained the examples. The second is the ineffective use of media in learning. The last is the students were only given a few exercises in written form so they did not get enough practice in the real context. Therefore, the students felt grammar was hard and they were not interested in learning grammar. So, most of the students followed the learning process without understanding the material well.

Based on this issue, the teacher should think about how to find a creative method to make students easier in learning grammar and ensure they can understand it well. Also, it is a challenge for the teacher to create a more fun and meaningful classroom atmosphere. One of the best methods for teaching English grammar can be applied in games. Mohamad & Amin (2009), states that teachers can always design course materials and content in a creative way to make teaching and learning more meaningful. Grammar can be learned effectively and attractively by students using games and with the guidance of a skillful teacher.

According to Wright et al., (2006), learning a language is difficult work, and the learner must exert maximum effort at all times and for an extended period of time. The game can assist and encourage the students to maintain their interest and effort. Games can also assist the teacher in creating an environment in which the language is helpful and meaningful. In short, using game-based learning in the classroom can assist students and teachers in dealing with the problem. The game can be a useful tool in learning and teaching language. It can increase students' learning interests. Students can learn in a fun way, and the most important thing is for the students to be able to do meaningful practice for all language skills. It is proven by the findings of several studies. They have tried to use game-based learning as a medium of learning in several subjects and it was effective. Jumaida (2020) tried to improve Students' Grammar Ability by Using Board Game at The Eight Grade of SMP Negeri 4 Malangke Barat and found that teaching grammar by using board game was effective to improve students' grammar ability. In addition, the research result of Nur 'Aini (2018) revealed that Game-based learning has positive effect on both students' learning interest and learning outcome in Economics. Another finding from Asmaka (2019) found that there was a significant effect of game-based learning models on students' Mathematics learning achievement at SMP Negeri 2 Balen.

Considering the explanation provided above, the researcher suggested a treatment using game-based learning for the students' difficulty in learning grammar at MTs DDI Baru, particularly in simple present tense and simple past tense; In this case, the Snakes and Ladders game. The researcher chose the game as a learning medium because it is a famous traditional game and easy to play. Besides that, Snakes and Ladders game can encourage a kinesthetic learning style and require more students' involvement or active participation (student-center learning) so that the researcher expected that students become more interested in learning and then could affect their understanding to the material.

2. METHODOLOGY

The research employed a quasi-experimental research design and a quantitative method using one pre-test and one post-test design in the experimental and control class. The population in this research were the second-graders at MTs DDI BARU during the academic year 2022–2023. The students are split up into 5 classes, labeled VIII A through VIII E which consist of 22-29 students each class. In this research, cluster random sampling was the method of sample selection. The researcher used two classes from the five classes at the second-grade. The researcher takes VIII B consisting of 29 students as the control class and VIII C consisting of 29 students as the experimental class.

The technique of collecting the data was using some steps which were pre-test, treatment, and post-test. The pre-test was conducted before doing the treatment. It was conducted in experimental class and control class to know the students' prior knowledge simple present tense and simple past tense. After giving the pre-test, the control class was taught by using lecturing method meanwhile the treatment using Snakes and Ladders game was conducted in the experimental class. The researcher prepared a very large game board put it on the floor so, students can play on the game board and these following steps was the treatment procedure in Experimental class:

a. Opening
1) The researcher opened the class
2) The researcher asked the students to pray together.

b. Main activities
1) The researcher explained the material.
2) The researcher divided the students into 5-6 groups.
3) One player from each group became a pawn and start the game first.
4) Each pawn of the group rolled the dice in turn. After that they moved based on the dice they get.
5) Each pawn answered the first question. When the player finished answering the question, the teacher confirmed the answer. If the answer was correct then they can draw the dice and moved based on the number of dice obtained. If the answer was wrong, they stayed at their place.
6) There were snakes and ladders on the game board. When the player was in a box with a snakes' head, the player had to go down to the end of the snakes' tail, while if the player got a box containing a ladder, the player goes up.

7) Each player took turns with their group in answering the next questions and played the game in the board game.

8) The first group to reach the finish box was the winner.

c. Closing

1) The researcher asked the students to explain the conclusion of the lesson.

2) The researcher asked the students about their difficulty during the learning process.

After performed the treatment, the post-test was administered. It was conducted both in the experimental and control class. The function of the post-test is to determine the students' achievements after doing the treatment by using game-based learning. The Pre-test and post-test given to the students in expreimental class and control class were the same test. It consisted of 25 questions and has been validated before they are distributed to the students. The result of the post-test compared to the result of the pre-test to figure out whether or not there is significant effect of Snakes and Ladders Game on Students' grammar ability improvement and to determine which hypothesis should be accepted or rejected. The hypotheses of the research are formulated as follows:

1. H_1: Teaching grammar by using snakes and ladders game can improve students' grammar.

2. H_0: Teaching grammar by using snakes and ladders game cannot improve students' grammar.

In this study, the researcher used SPSS to find out the significant difference between the students' score of their pre-test and post-test and to answer the hypothesis.

3. FINDINGS

This quantitative research was performed in experimental class and control class. Each class took six meetings for the test and treatment. Each meeting consumed 80 minutes. The result of this research was the result obtained from pre-test and post-test of students in the experimental class and control class. The final result was obtained by comparing the results of the students' tests using the independent sample t-test.

3.1 Pre-test and Post-test Result in Control Class

The control class was the class taught without using the Snakes and Ladders game. The subjects in the control class were 29 students. The following is data from the result of students' pre-test and post-test.

Table 1 The Comparison between pre-test and post-test in the control class

Descriptive analysis		
	Pre-test	**Post-test**
Valid N	29	29
Minimum	20	32
Maximum	64	84
Mean	40.14	56.00
Std. Deviation	10.169	12.739

Based on the data presented in the table 1, the mean score of pre-test in the control class was 40.14. Meanwhile, the mean score of post-tests in the control class was 56.00. As a result, the mean score of post-tests was higher than the mean score of pre-test. It means that there was still improvement after the learning process.

Furthermore, there was an improvement in students' scores on pre-test and post-test in the control class. The lowest score in the pre-test was 20 and the lowest score in post-test was 32. Also the higher score in pre-test was 64 and the higher score in post-test was 84. In summary, there was an improvement in students' grammar in the control class after using the lecturing method in teaching grammar, especially, simple present tense and simple past tense. Whereas, the improvement of students' grammar in the control class was not significant.

3.2 Pre-test and Post-test Result in Experimental Class

The Snakes and Ladders game was used to assist students in understanding grammar in experimental class. The subjects were 29 students. To figure out whether the use of the snake and Ladders game can improve students' grammar, the students were tested using a pre-test and a post-test in this case, about the use of simple present and past tense. The following table contains the data of pre-test and post-test in experimental class:

Table 2 The comparison between pre-test and post-test in the experimental class

Descriptive analysis		
	Pre-test	**Post-test**
Valid N	29	29
Minimum	12	36
Maximum	60	100
Mean	37.24	74.07
Std. Deviation	13.185	17.876

Based on the data presented in the table 2, the mean score of pre-test in the control class was 40.14. Meanwhile, the mean score of post-test in the control class was 56.00. As a result, the mean score of post-test was higher than the mean score of pre-test. Furthermore, there was an improvement in students' scores on experimental class pre-test and post-test. The lowest score in the pre-test was 12 and the lowest score in the post-test was 36. Also, the higher score in the post-test reached 60 and the higher score in the post-test reached 100. In summary, there was an improvement in students' grammar in the experimental class after using the Snakes and Ladders game in teaching grammar, particularly in the use of simple present tense and simple past tense. It means students' understanding improves significantly.

3.3 T-Test Result

Paired sample t-test is used to figure out whether or not there is a difference in the average of two paired samples. The paired sample t-test in this research was used to answer the problem statement "Does the Use of Snakes and Ladders Game Improve Students' Grammar in The Second Grade of MTs DDI Baru?" To respond to the problem statement, the data from the pre-test and post-test in the experimental class were analyzed using the paired sample t-test. Then, the paired sample t-test was carried out on the data of pre-test and post-test in the control class. The results of paired sample t-test revealed that the t value for experimental class and control class respectively reached 8.87 and 6.74. the t-table value for the sample was 2.048, it means that t value of both classes are greater than t- table. Furthermore, the p value for both classes reached 0.01; which is lower than 0.05. so, it shows that there is a significant difference in the mean score of students' grammar for pre-test and post-test in the experimental class annd control class.

In brief, based on the result of those outputs, the researcher can claim that there is an influence of the using Snakes and ladders in teaching grammar to the improvement of students' grammar in the second grade of MTs DDI Baru. Or on the other words, H_0 is rejected and H_1 is accepted. As a result, it can be concluded that the use of Snakes and Ladders games is effective to improve students' grammar at the second-grade of MTs DDI Baru.

4. DISCUSSION

The first step of collecting data was pre-test. The test was administered by the researcher to both the experimental class and control class. Pre-test was carried out to figure out the students' prior knowledge. The Pre-test results revealed that none of the students had mastered the use of simple present tense and simple past tense. The mean value in the control class was 40.14, meanwhile the mean value in the experimental class was 37.24. After completed the pre-test, the researcher performed the treatment that comprises of four meetings.

In the experimental class, the researcher administered the treatment by employing the snakes and ladders game as game-based learning. Throughout the learning process, the students concentrated on the explanation that the researcher provided. Following the teacher's explanation of the content, the students were separated into numerous groups. Then, all the groups played the game. Each group got a chance to answer the selected question. They were given the chance to roll the dice and move if they answer correctly. Meanwhile, if they are wrong they stay at the place. This was done in turn so that students had the same chance to play the game.

All of the students were animated and engaged in the game while it was going on. They participated in their learning process by playing the game. As a result, they did not experience any tension during the learning process. Additionally, because they were challenged to compete with other groups, they likely to learn more. In other words, the game has the potential to engage and motivate students. In accordance with Susanti & Trisnawati (2019), this is valid. They argue that as players are motivated to defeat their opponents, games may motivate and excite students to participate in the activity. Ait Hajji & Kim (2019) also conclude games offer students a good environment to practice the target language and may assist to improve EFL learning. Games should therefore be utilized frequently in the classroom for teaching and studying English.

Furthermore, the snakes and ladders game used by the researcher can also stimulate the students' kinesthetic learning style. Students not only stayed at their place and learned but also learned by moving around. Thus, the students did not feel bored in the learning process. It also has a positive effect on students' achievement in learning grammar. This is in line with Tanta (2010) that states learning by doing can encourage students to remember the learning experience and will have a positive impact on their learning achievement. As well as, learning by doing can encourage the students to remember 80% of what they do themselves, even if it is just a simulation (Asmaka, 2019).

The researcher further administered the treatment to the control group. The experimental class had a distinct method of treatment than the control class. The researcher delivered the material by using lecturing method in order to teach grammar. The researcher explained the forms and the rules of simple present tense and simple past tense then assign some exercises to students. Only a small number of students participated actively in class during the process of learning by asking and responding to questions. Some of them were also distracted by boredom and did not follow the teacher's instruction. Susanti & Trisnawati (2019) confirm this up. They came to the conclusion that the typical method of teaching grammar, which involves describing the rules and forms and drilling the students, was boring and unsatisfying.

After treatment test was administered by the researcher to those in the experimental class and the control class. The objectives of the post-test is to determine the student's achievement and the improvement following the treatment. Utilization of the snakes and ladders game can enhance students' learning results in grammar, according to the findings of the post-test in the experimental class. The outcome reveals that the experimental class's students gain score rose by 36.83 points. This is similar to Tuan & Doan (2010), who claim that games appear to be an effective strategy used frequently in language learning. Games give students a class that is both very motivating and pleasant, but above all, they give them valuable practice in all language skills. Games can thereby inspire students, encourage student interaction, enhance student learning, and boost the achievement of students. In the same way, it may be said that using the game Snakes and Ladders as a game-based learning tool can assist teachers create more interesting lessons and considerably increase the achievement of their students in learning grammar.

Additionally, the control class's post-test results also showed improvement. Nevertheless, the improvement was not as significant as in the experimental class. The gain score in the control gave it away. In contrast to the experiment class, it increased by 36.83 points as opposed to merely 15.86 points. It indicates that the experimental class's gain score was higher than the control class's. Therefore, it can be said that utilizing snakes and ladders game were more effective in teaching grammar than using the lecturing method. It is supported by Nguyen (2008) that emphasized a teacher who just follows the textbook's directions and does not create any games brings a boring, hard-to-digest language lesson to his students, and this does not meet the need for grammar classes that are more engaging and effective (Tuan & Doan, 2010).

The following is the improvement in the pre-test and post-test of control class and experimental class.

Chart 1 pre-test and post-test improvement

In summary, the researcher recommends using the snakes and ladders game as game-based learning in teaching grammar in the classroom.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the data analysis result, using the Snakes and ladders game in teaching grammar, especially simple present tense and past tense that conducted at the second-grade of MTs DDI Baru, The researcher comes to the conclusion that there is significant effects on students' grammar ability. It is obvious from the data that illustrates the differences in the experimental class's mean score between the pre- and post-tests. The post-test mean score is greater than the pre-test mean score. In contrast to the mean score of pre-test, 37.24, the post-test mean score was 74.07. The results of the t-test also confirm it. it shows that the p value is

0.001, and 0.001 < 0.05, whereas the t value is 8.87 and it is greater than t-table 2.048. So, by considering the result of the p and the t value, the reseacher may withdraw conclusion that H_0 is rejected and H_1 is accepted which states that the use of the Snakes and Ladders game can improve students' grammar.

However, another interesting finding reveals that there is also improvement of students' scores in the control class but not as significant as in the experimental class. It is indicated from the gain score in the control class. It increased only 15.86 points while in the experimental class it increased 36.83 points.

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