

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

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.

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.

Moreover, Cooperative Learning, throughout the years, has been widely implemented in various schools to teach different subjects including grammar. According to Alghamdi and Gillies (2013:19), previous studies have shown that students who are taught using CL obtain better results than students who are taught using conservative way. It means that students who are taught using CL perform better academic performance since they can learn effectively and actively during their discussion in group. CL can also help students to enhance their motivation and self esteem toward the learning activity. According to Johnson & Johnson (1994) as quoted by Alghamdi and Gillies (2013, p. 19), "Cooperative learning helps enhance thinking acquisition of information, communication and interpersonal skills, and most importantly, self-confidence."

Furthermore, there are various techniques of cooperative learning which can be implemented in teaching grammar and one of them is TGT. Teams-Games-Tournament (TGT) is one of the cooperative learning models that makes small groups within the class consisting of four or five heterogeneous students whether in academic achievement, genders, races, and ethnics. 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. During the tournament, students gain points for their teams by answering questions challenging other players' answer.

Team Games Tournament, which is one the cooperative learning technique, makes the students work in their group and have a competition in the tournament. In each team, there

are students who have different ability in learning English. Therefore, the students who have the higher ability can motivate their other friends and share their knowledge so that each member of the group can understand the material. And games, it makes students fun and interest in English class especially in grammar.

Furthermore, Team Games Tournaments optimizes content mastery through both competition and cooperation in which students at different ability level work together in their groups to review the key contents and cooperate with each other to solve the problem in their learning, then they leave their teams to compete in an academic tournament with students from other teams. Students, in the tournament, gain points for their own groups by answering questions and doing some tasks dealing with the targeted structure. Hence, the groups, the most cooperative ones, accomplish the best job in preparing all members to gain more points and compete successfully.

In recent years, grammar teaching has been through some debates. One of the controversial issues rests on the preference of student-oriented, or teacher-oriented. (Ellis, 2006; Shaffer, 1989; DeKeyser, 1995). Teaching grammar explicitly is more logical than implicitly and it, moreover, helps learners obtain more complete grammatical knowledge (Fischer, 1979). The study conducted by Lin (2007) 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.

However, in 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.

Referring to all the findings of the previous studies, none of them, however, investigate the achievements of young learners toward the learning using Team Games Tournament (TGT) technique since most of the studies usually only focus on the high school and university students' achievement. 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.

1.2 The Problem

Based on the background of the study, the writer states the problem 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?

1.3 The Objective of the Study

Based on the problem mentioned before, the objective of this study is:

To find out whether the students who are taught using Team Games Tournament (TGT) technique show higher grammar achievement than those who are taught using Flashcards teaching technique.

1.4 Theoretical Framework

There are several theories underlined in this study. The first theoretical framework is the theory of grammar. Grammar, according to Crystal (2004), “is the structural foundation of our ability to express ourselves”. In the English language learning, it is believed to be one of the essential parts which can help students to communicate effectively. However, it is also believed to be the most difficult language component to learn and to teach (Stevick, 1982).

According to constructivism theory, Vygotsky considered that the roles of culture and society, language, and interaction are important in understanding how humans learn. It is stated in this theory the interaction that happens in the social environment help human learn, develop, and grow. This theory also stated that social environment is an important tool for children to learn new knowledge available in their culture. Adults, parents, teachers, and peers play important roles in the process of learning new knowledge. (Li M.P & Lam, B. H, 2013)

Social Interdependence theory states that students should help each other learn the materials because they care about the group and each member of the group is essential due to their parts in contributing to the learning activity (Johnson and Johnson, 2005). It means that the interaction between the group members plays important part in the success of learning. Good interaction between the group members in which each member can work cooperatively to accomplish the shared goal will result in higher achievement.

Therefore, cooperative learning principles are believed to help students enhance the effectiveness of learning. The principles of the CL such as positive interdependence, individual accountability, equal opportunities for success, heterogeneous grouping, and collaborative learning can enhance the effectiveness of the learning activity and can

help the students to feel the enjoyment and usefulness during the learning activity. As one of the techniques in cooperative learning, Team Games Tournament (TGT) Technique is chosen to be implemented as a carefully structured sequence of teaching-learning activities, blending three educational techniques of small groups, instructional games and tournaments.

1.5 Hypotheses

A hypothesis is a tentative prediction of a problem. In this study, the writer provides 2 hypotheses. The hypotheses are:

- HA: There is a significant difference between the grammar achievement of the students taught grammar using TGT technique and those taught using flashcards teaching technique.
- HO: There is no significant difference between the grammar achievement of the students taught grammar using TGT technique and those taught using flashcards teaching technique.

1.6 The Significance of the Study

Practically, the data and information obtained from this study are expected to:

1. provide and give information to English teachers which approach is more effective in teaching grammar to elementary school students.
2. encourage teachers to vary their ways and activities in teaching grammar.

1.7 Scope and Limitation of the Study

The study is a quasi-experimental study within limited scope of sample using two classes of elementary school students. One class is the experimental group and another one is the control group. The techniques used for this study are TGT and

flashcards teaching techniques. The experimental group is taught using TGT and the control group is taught using flashcards teaching technique. It is mainly dealt with second grade students' grammar achievement toward the use of TGT and flashcards teaching technique in learning grammar.

1.8 Definition of Key-Terms

As a means of clarification, the following constructs and concepts to be defined are:

a) Teaching

Teaching means the process of giving instruction, guiding the study, providing the students with knowledge, and causing to know or understand (Brown, 1987).

b) Grammar

According to Thornbury (1999), Grammar is the way language is organized and patterned particularly at the level of the sentence in order to make meaning.

c) Cooperative Learning

Cooperative Learning is a teaching method that focuses on group work in which students work together to learn and are responsible for their teammates' learning as well as their own. (Slavin, 1990:3)

d) Teams Games Tournament (TGT)

Teams-Games-Tournament is one of the methods that are developed from cooperative learning. Teams where students are assigned to make a group consisting of 4-5 students in each team to discuss the given materials, Games which contains the questions relevant to the material discussed in the team to test their individual understanding. And Tournaments is the structure where the games take place (Slavin, 2002).

e) Flashcards Teaching Technique

It represents a more traditional style of teaching in that the grammatical structures or rules are dictated to the students first by using printed with words and picture which can be handled easily by the teacher. (Wright 1968:73)

f) Students' Achievement

Harris (1989:3) defines achievement as the extent to which an individual has mastered the specific skills or body of information acquired in the formal learning situation. In this study, the grammar achievement is shown in the progress of the students' scores.

1.9 Organization of the Thesis

This thesis will be presented in five chapters. Chapter I covers the introduction which explains about the background of the study, the problem statement, the objectives of the study, theoretical framework, the hypotheses, the significance of the study, scope and limitation of the study, definition of key terms and organization of the study. Chapter II reviews the theories related to this study. The research methodology is discussed in Chapter III. This includes the descriptions of the research design, variables, population and sample, research instruments, the treatment, data collection procedures and procedures of data analysis. While chapter IV, the core of the study, mainly presents the data analysis, interpretation of the findings, discussion and the pedagogical implication. Chapter V concludes the thesis. It consists of a conclusion and suggestions for English teachers and further researches.