



THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SNAKES AND LADDERS GAME TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' MASTERY OF SIMPLE PAST TENSE IN CONSTRUCTING RECOUNT TEXTS (A Quasi-Experimental Research of the Eighth Grade Students of SMP N 2 Demak in the Academic Year of 2013/2014)

Ulil Albab ✉

English Department, Faculty of Languages and Arts, State University of Semarang, Indonesia

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Abstract

This study concerns with the use of snakes and ladders game as a medium to improve students' mastery of simple past tense in constructing recount texts. The purposes of this study are to show whether snakes and ladders game gives contribution to improve the students' mastery of simple past tense in constructing recount texts and to find out whether snakes and ladders game gives the significant difference or not. Quasi-experimental research was used. The population of this study was the eighth grade students of SMP N 2 Demak. The experimental group consisted of 30 students and the control group also consisted of 30 students. There were four meetings during the experiment. Before the experiment was conducted, a pre-test was given to both groups. A post-test was given after the experiment was done. To find out the significant difference statistically, $t_{\text{-test}}$ formula was used. Before applying the formula, the data were checked by using normality and homogeneity. The result shows that the data have normal distribution and homogeneity. The result of $t_{\text{-test}}$ is 3.41, for $\alpha = 5\%$ with $df = 58$, $t_{\text{-table}} = 2.002$. It means that the $t_{\text{-value}}$ is higher than the $t_{\text{-table}}$ ($3.41 > 2.002$). The purposes of this study are achieved because the students' mastery of simple past tense in constructing recount texts improve. Then, the $t_{\text{-value}}$ of the post test is higher than the $t_{\text{-table}}$; it means that the use of snakes and ladders gives the significant difference. In fact, based on this study the use of snakes and ladders game is effective and applicable enough as a teaching medium to be used in improving the students' mastery of simple past tense in constructing recount texts.

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✉ Correspondent Address:

B3 Building, FBS Unnes

Sekaran, Gunungpati, Semarang, 50229

E-mail: uuliilalbab@gmail.com

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INTRODUCTION

Grammar is very important in spoken and written language. As a result, students are not supposed to understand only the theories and knowledge of grammar, but in practice, they also have to know how to apply it in both oral and written form. As a matter of fact, written communication is partly different from spoken. In written, students generate their ideas and thoughts into readable texts and they also have to pay attention to spelling, punctuation, word choice, and so on. However, in spoken, they express their ideas and thoughts orally.

In the level of eighth grade students, there are text types or genres that have to be learnt by the students in English writing. Two main categories of text types that have been learnt by them are literary and factual texts. For instance, narrative belongs to literary texts; whereas, factual texts include descriptive, recount, and procedure. Each text has its own language features, such as tenses that are used in different texts. Simple present tense is used in the form of descriptive and procedure text; on the other hand, simple past tense is used in recount and narrative text. In fact, students have already been familiar with writing text in learning English. However, they sometimes face some difficulties. They understand the generic structure in certain text types and have many ideas to express in written texts, but they feel difficult to write because their mastery of tenses in certain text types or genres is weak. In conventional teaching, teachers usually have explained the generic structures of the text and tenses of the language features before starting writing. In fact, there are still some errors that can be found from their result of writing practice, such as the grammar construction of the tenses in sentences.

In order to solve the problems of the students' grammar in writing, especially in constructing a text, the writer has an innovative and attractive method, especially for teachers in teaching English. Harmer (2001:1) stated that "they should make their lessons interesting so you do not fall asleep students." Thus, teachers as the main actors in the classroom can look for

other methods of teaching to design an interesting and attractive learning activity. As a result, the writer tries to combine teaching using some methods; they are pictures, videos, or games. By using one of those attractive media, students will be enthusiastic and they also will understand the lesson easily.

In this research, the writer would like to focus in improving student's mastery of simple past tense to construct recount texts by using snakes and ladders game. As we know, simple past tense belongs to language feature of recount text. In addition, snakes and ladders grammar game is used in this research through a quasi-experimental research to find out how effective it contributes in improving the students' past tense competence. Hopefully, their writing skill, especially in writing recount text will be improved.

REVIEW RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Snakes and Ladders Game

In *Science and Technology Education* book, the definition of "snakes and ladders is a popular game for children in many countries of the world. It is easy to make from basic materials and can be adapted to suit many learning situations." This game also "can assist in developing basic arithmetic such as counting, addition and subtraction, communication, as well as the concept for which a game has been developed" (Lowe, 1988:27).

2.2 Simple Past Tense

In *Modern English* book, the definition of simple past tense is explained that "both forms (simple past tense and past progressive tense) of the past tense represent definite past. They refer to events that were completed before the statements is made. They are often accompanied by such expressions of definite past as yesterday, last year, two weeks ago" (Frank, 1972:49).

2.3 Recount Text

In *Text Type in English 1* book, the definition of recount text "is a piece of text that retells past events, usually in the order in which

they happened. The purpose of a recount is to give the audience a description of what occurred and when it occurred” (Anderson and Kathy, 1997:48).

RESEARCH DISCUSSION

3.1 Research Design

The research design that was used in this study was an experimental research and it was conducted in the classroom. Ross (2005:3) stated that “experimental research is used in settings where variables defining one or more ‘causes’ can be manipulated in a systematic fashion in order to discern ‘effects’ on other variables.” Furthermore, specifically the writer chose quasi-experimental research in the form of non-equivalent control group design.

This design is often used in classroom experiments when experimental and control groups are such naturally assembled groups as intact classes, which may be similar. Best (1993:151) stated that “quasi-experimental design provides control of when and to whom the measurement is applied, but because random assignment to experimental and control treatments has not been applied, the equivalence of the groups is not assured.”

The design of quasi-experimental research can be described as the following:

$$\frac{O_1 \quad X \quad O_2}{O_3 \quad C \quad O_4}$$

(Best, 1993:151)

in which:

O1 = pre-test for the experimental group

O2 = post-test for the experimental group

O3 = pre-test for control group

O4 = post-test for control group

X. = exposure of a group to an experimental by giving treatment using snakes and ladders game

C = exposure of a group to the control

3.2 Theoretical Framework

In this study, the writer wants to find out how effective snakes and ladders game to

improve students’ mastery of simple past tense in constructing recount texts. Hence, the research design that is going to be used this study is a quasi-experimental research.

The writer will use two classes from the population. One class will be the control group and the else will be the experimental group. Before the treatments are conducted, first, the writer gives pre-test for the students. Then, the treatments are given for the students. There are two meetings for each the control and experimental groups during the research. The experimental group is the group which is the treatment of snakes and ladders game will be delivered. After all the treatments were conducted, the writer gives post-test for the students. The last activity, he analyses the result of pre-test and post-test by comparing the mean using t-test formula to find out the significant different of the experimental and control groups. The scheme of the quasi-experiment can be described as the following diagram:

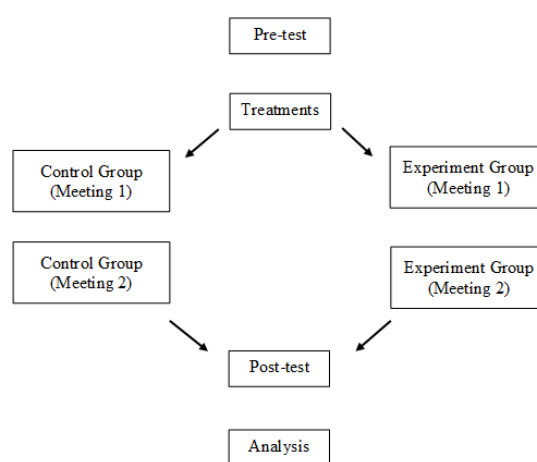


Diagram 2.1 Scheme of Quasi-Experimental Research

3.3 Pre Test

After conducting the try-out test and revising the instrument, the writer gave the pre-test for the experimental and the control groups for the next activity on March, 27th 2014. In the instrument of pre-test, there were 20 items of

sentence constructions and picture-cued story sequences in constructing recount texts. In doing the test, the writer gave 40 minutes for the students. The following is the chart of the result from the pre-test of the control and the experimental groups:

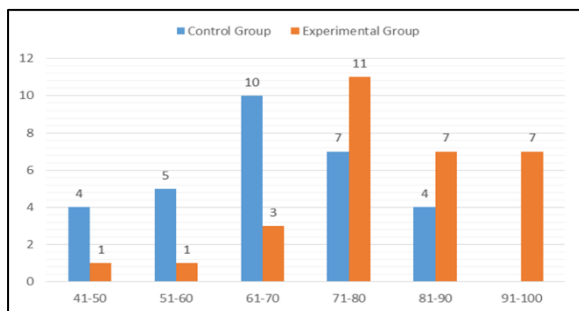


Chart 4.1 Pre-test Comparison of Experimental and Control Groups

Based on chart 4.1, there were 6 students who got 31-40 in the control group and in the experimental group was just 1 student. Then, there were 2 students in the control group and 5 students in the experimental group who got 41-50, 11 students in the control group and 9 students in the experimental group who got 51-60, 14 students in the control group and 7 students in the experimental group who got 61-70, 4 students in the both groups who got 71-80, and 4 students in the experimental group who got 81-90. As a result, there was no significant improvement between the scores of the students in the control and experimental groups.

3.4 Post Test

After the treatment was done in the experimental and the control group, the writer gave a post-test for both groups on April, 19th 2014. The instrument was the same test item as the pre-test. This last activity was done to find out the result of the students' achievement of simple past tense in constructing recount texts after they were given treatment of snakes and ladders game. The following is the chart of the result from the post-test of the control and the experimental groups:

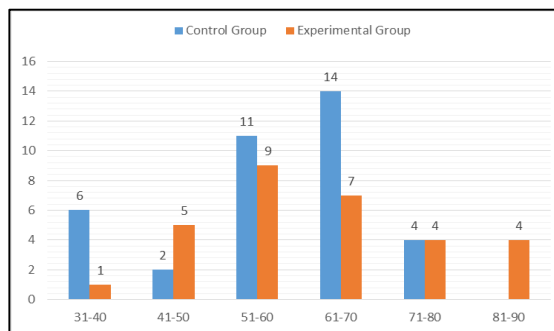


Chart 4.2 Post-test Comparison of Experimental and Control Groups

Based on the chart above, there were 4 students in the control group and there was 1 student in the experimental group who got 41-50. There were 5 students and in the experimental group was just 1 student who got 51-60. Then, there were 10 students in the control group and 3 students in the experimental group who got 61-70, 7 students in the control group and 11 students in the experimental group who got 71-80, 4 students in the control group and 7 students in the experimental group who got 81-90. The last, there were 7 students in the experimental group who got 91-100. Thus, based on the data of the result of the post-test in both groups, it can be concluded that the scores of the students of experimental group were higher than those of control group.

3.5 Test of Significance

The following table is the mean scores of the pre-test and the post-test from the students:

Group	The Mean Score of the Pre-Test	The Mean Score of the Post-Test
Experimental Group	63.08	81.25
Control Group	56.75	67.83

Based on the table above, it can be seen the means of pre-test and post-test for the experimental and the control groups. After that, the writer compared between the two means. The post-test of experimental group was higher than that of the control group. The difference between

the two mean is $(81.25 - 67.83 = 13.42)$. It indicates that the treatment is effective because there is an improvement in the experimental group than in the control group. However, the writer could not conclude that the difference between the two means above were significant. Thus, to make the analysis be more reliable; the writer proved it by using t-test formula to determine whether the difference between the two means was statistically significant.

The writer analyzed the data using t-test. Before applying the t-test formula, S had to be found out first. The step of the computation is as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} S &= \sqrt{\frac{(n_1 - 1)s_1^2 + (n_2 - 1)s_2^2}{n_1 + n_2 - 2}} \\ &= \sqrt{\frac{(30 - 1)119.90 + (30 - 1)36.97}{30 + 30 - 2}} \\ &= \sqrt{\frac{3477.1 + 1072.13}{58}} \\ &= \sqrt{\frac{4549.23}{58}} \\ &= \sqrt{78.44} = 8.86 \end{aligned}$$

After getting the standard deviation (S), the computation of t-test can be done as the following:

$$\begin{aligned} t &= \frac{X_1 - X_2}{S \sqrt{\frac{1}{n_1} + \frac{1}{n_2}}} \\ &= \frac{18.17 - 10.33}{8.86 \sqrt{\frac{1}{30} + \frac{1}{30}}} \\ &= \frac{7.84}{8.86 \times 0.26} \\ &= \frac{7.84}{2.30} = 3.41 \end{aligned}$$

Before the computation above was concluded by the writer, the final result of t-test would be compared to the critical value of t-table to prove whether the difference was significant or not. In this experiment, the writer used $\alpha = 5\%$. Furthermore, the number of samples in this experiment for the experimental and the control group were 30 students with the degree of freedom (df) that was $(N_1 + N_2 - 2 = 30 + 30 - 2 = 58)$. For $\alpha = 5\%$ and $df = 58$, the writer checked

the degree of freedom in the t_{table} . The result was 2.002.

The t_{value} was 3.41 and the t_{table} was 2.002. Thus, the t_{value} was higher than the critical value, $(3.41 > 2.002)$. It can be concluded that the result of the test after getting the treatment between the experimental and the control group was significantly different. Furthermore, teaching simple past tense by using snakes and ladders game in order to construct recount texts was more effective and got higher grades than the students who were taught without snakes and ladders game.

CONCLUSION

According to the result of this research, the writer can conclude as the following:

- (1) There were improvement of scores after the students were taught by using snakes and ladders game. It is proven by the t_{value} which is higher than t_{table} , $(3.41 > 2.002)$.
- (2) This game makes the students active in discussing simple past tense because there is an interaction and communication while they are playing the game.
- (3) Snakes and ladders game is a new game for the students in learning simple past tense; thus, the students are enthusiastic to study grammar, especially simple past tense.
- (4) This game can ease the students to correct and find out some common errors in making simple past tense.
- (5) This game provides language practice in various skills – listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

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