

RACE AND WIN WITH GRAMMAR

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Learning English can be a burden for some student. Most of the students are afraid of the subject. They think that learning English means facing numerous language rules and patterns. Moreover, due their limited knowledge of current teaching method such as communicative language teaching (CLT). Some English teachers teach the students grammar by using boring and uninteresting methods. These teachers argue that the teaching of grammar can only be effective if grammar is presented through repetition and rote drills. Misunderstanding of the nature of CLT may also lead to fallacies in the grammar instruction. Grammar might be considered unimportant since teachers have focus on how the communication occurs. Thus, accuracy is not taken into account. This chapter presents how to teach grammar using a fun game, race and win with grammar, a board game adapted this game, teaching and learning grammar can be very attractive, interactive, fun and effective.

THE TEACHING OF GRAMMAR

Grammar is defined as the study of what forms or patterns are possible in a language and grammar in conventionally seems as the study of the syntax and morphology (Thornbury, 1999 ;2). Meanwhile, Brown (2001: 362) mentioned that grammar is the system of rules governing the conventional arrangement and relationship of words in a sentence. Grammar is the mental system in human brain that enables human beings to produce and interpret the words and sentences of their language (O' Grady & Dobrovolsky, 1992 :

The teaching of grammar has become a controversial issue along with the occurrence of CLT. In its early years, some proponents of this approach refused grammar instruction in the teaching and learning process. They argued that explicit grammar teaching is incompatible with their communicative ideology. Sugiharto (2005 : 173, as cited in Collins , 2006 : 2) stated that competence cannot be neglected as it is one component of the components of communicative competence which should be acquired by language learners to have intelligible communication. Brown (2001 :362) argued that grammatical competence occupies a prominent position as a major component of

communicative competence. Without the knowledge of how to organize an intricate, complex array of rules into a permissible grammatical sentence, one's language would be simply chaotic. Meanwhile, Patchler (199:94) pointed out that "grammar allows us to generate an unlimited utterance with finite set of linguistic resources and to talk about the world beyond the here and now." Thus, the discussion of grammar instruction is not emphasized on whether or not grammar is important, but it focuses on how to teach grammar in order to build students' communicative competence.

In Indonesia, traditional grammar of grammar teaching can still be found in some language classrooms. The teaching of grammar falls into memorizing and drilling of producing grammatical sentences. In other words, grammar has been exclusively taught with merely analysis at the sentence level. Unfortunately, such grammar teaching is not a favourable for some of the students as these students find that studying rules and patterns such as those in tenses and word formation is like the formula in mathematics or physics. Thus, learning grammar is like learning mathematics and physics with stretched, complicated, and tiring repetitive drilling (Cahyono : 2009). The traditional way of teaching grammar can evoke bad impressions of learning a foreign language as students will get bored easily of the same repetitions and rote drills. Teaching grammar does not mean that there is no place for drills, but drills should be used in a meaningful and purposeful way (Larsen-Freeman, 1991)

Some misconceptions in current approaches, notably the CLT, discourage the teaching of grammar.. some teachers in Indonesia possessing the misconceptions tend to neglect the accuracy of the students' language competence in order to establish communicative teaching. They think that teaching grammar will hinder communicative activities among the students. In fact, teaching grammar is needed to build students' communicative competence. Communicative competence should be seen to count linguistic competence not to replace it (Larsen – Freeman : 1991). Teaching grammar means enabling students to use linguistic forms accurately, meaningfully, and appropriately. Thus, it is the teacher's responsibility to establish the teaching and learning process in such a way that grammar is presented in an effective manner which

can eventually help the students to use the linguistic forms accurately, meaningfully, and appropriately, and which can create a fun and enjoying classroom atmosphere.

GAMES IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING.

A game is basically a play governed by rules (Klauer, 1998). A language game is a language play governed by rules, but with clear linguistic rules to which all participants in the activity must conform. According to Klauer (1998), there are some characteristics of a good language game; namely, it is governed by rules; it has objectives ; it is a closed activity; and it needs less supervision from the teacher. Thus, not all play can be a game; a play with no rules and objectives cannot be regarded as a game.

Along with the development of teaching approaches, the teaching and learning process, methods, as well as strategies may also be made relevant to the approaches. Accordingly, game as one of activities in the teaching and learning process has become very popular. Many teachers, nowadays, equip their teaching devices, yet some of them often perceive games as mere time – fillers, a way of killing some times left in the teaching duration, or a break from the monotonous drilling. In fact, many textbooks and methodology writers have argued that games are not just time filling activities, but they have great educational values. Lee (1979) noted that games should be treated as central not peripheral to the foreign language teaching. More over , they are not just a diversion, a break from routine activities, but a way of getting the learner to use the language in the course of the game (Deesre 2002)

Using games as teaching and learning activities can expose the students' participation better and actively engage them in language learning (Ersoz 2000). Harmer (2007 ; 223) argued that games could engage students and encourage them to use the target structures with enthusiasm. By using games, the teaching and learning process are centered on the students, while the teacher acts as a supervisor and / or a facilitator. In other words, a game represents a learner – centered instruction, a technique in which it is the students who are actively engaged with the target language. According to Brown (2001 ; 46), learner- centered instruction is a technique which accounts learners' needs , styles, and goals. It is a technique that focuses on students' creativity, innovation, and

sense of self- competence. Games are effective because they arise students' motivation, lower their stress, and give them opportunities for real communication (Deesre :2002). In order to use language games effectively, the teachers should have a careful design of their lesson plan; thus a game is not used only for killing the time. Hadfield (1990, as cited in Deesre, 2002), suggested that " games can contribute to students' skills if they are incorporated into the classroom, particularly if they are used to reinforce or introduce a grammatical rules or structure. The way the teacher uses the language game will affect the ability of the students to use the language properly and meaningfully.

RACE AND WIN GAME

The race and Win game is a kind of board game adapted from Toth (1995;38). Toth's game is originally named as " Trying to get Home ". It aims to provide students with practices in making suggestions. In this case, the Race and Win game is aimed to let the students experience the use of subject and verb agreement in the present simple tense, particularly subject and agreement on the third-singular person subject and-s/es addition of verbs. As other board games, the Race and Win game is equipped with a board, counters and dice. The students use dice to move their counters along the path on the board (see Appendix I). The students, with their counters, race to the finish to win the game. To win the game, the students should be able to make grammatical sentences in the present simple tense. Yet, some rules should be allowed in order to be able to play it. The rules to play the game are as follows :

- To start playing the game, distribute the game board with its cards and dice to each group of four students.
- Ask the students to place their counters on START. Ask the student to take in turn to throw the dice and move along the number of squares shown.
- If a student lands on an instruction such as " Miss a turn " he or she must follow this instruction. If they fall on an action square, they should , make grammatical (positive) sentence in the present simple tense based on the picture. If he fails to make a grammatical sentence, he or she is not allowed to move the counter.

- If a player falls on a CARD square, he or she takes the top card from the pile of cards. If it is a question card, he or she should ask the questions, based on the former action square he or she fell on, to another player who holds an answer card. If he or she falls firstly on the CARD square, he or she can make his or her own interrogative sentence, not necessarily based on action squares. If there is no players who hold the answer card while one player has a question card, he or she can keep the question for later turn.
- The players who hold more than one answer card can use any card that he or she likes. He or she should give a grammatical answer, otherwise he or she should go one step back and make other players remain still.

TEACHING PROCEDURES

The Race and Win game can be presented through three-phase teaching, i.e. pre-teaching, whilst-teaching, and post – teaching activities.

- **Pre- Teaching Activities**
 1. Use some pictures to do the brainstorming
 2. Ask and lead the students to guess one's occupation based on the pictures presented in front of the class, such as :
 - a. Can you guess what his job is ?
 - b. He works in a restaurant, tastes some food, etc, so he is a/an
 3. Ask and lead the students to mention some daily activities by using the pictures, such as ;
 - a. What do you do every Saturday night ?
 - b. Do you brush your teeth before you go to bed ?
 - c. Let's see this picture. She has breakfast; what about this one ?
 4. Show the objective of the lesson, and tell the students that they are going to play a game.
- **Whilst-Teaching Activities**
 5. Group the students ; each group consist of four students.
 6. Discuss the rules of the game and how to play the game.
 7. Demonstrate to the students how to play the game

8. Distribute the game board with the dice and the cards.
 9. Ask the students to play the game.
 10. Distribute the activity report worksheet and explain the instruction (see Appendix 2)
 11. Ask the students to fill in the activity in the repor worksheet.
 12. Ask the students to discuss the worksheet done by the students.
- **Post – Teaching Activities**
 13. Ask the students to sum up what they have learned.
 14. As the students to have their reflection on the teaching and learning activities.

CONCLUTION

It is evident that games bring many benefits in the teaching and learning of a language, particulary English. Teachers can get mani benefits in using games in their class. This chapter presents the Race and Win game, a board, game that can help much in teaching the present simple tense. The strategy described here is to help students to use the game as a medium to practice the use of present simple tense to conctruct grammatical sentences, notably agreement of the subject of third singular person and the verd. By using this game, students are encouraged to practice the use of -s/-es addition on verbs in order to make grammatical sentences in the present simple tense. Through this game, students' motivation is increase due ti the sense of challenge and fun of the game. Therefore, it is very beneficial for teachers to use the game in the teaching of English.

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