

TEACHING GRAMMAR THROUGH SNOWBALL THROWING TECHNIQUE IN EFL CLASSROOM

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Abstract

Teaching grammar had been a crucial aspect of foreign language teaching because grammatical competence is important for communication. However, learning grammar is difficult for most Indonesian students because of the monotonous techniques implemented by the teachers. Snowball throwing is one of the creative techniques in teaching grammar. Further, tense is one of the objects to learn by students in structure. Therefore, based on the description above, the aims of this study were to describe the implementation of snowball throwing technique in teaching grammar, the students' response towards the implementation of the snowball throwing technique, and the benefits of applying the technique. The method applied in conducting this study was descriptive qualitative analysis. Particularly, the participants of this study were 100 first semester students of English department in Universitas Pamulang taking the subject of Basic Grammar. In order to support the study finding, the writers taught grammar using snowball throwing technique, and the participants were selected based on the purposive sampling. The data were achieved from classroom observation and students' interview through questionnaire. Further, the findings showed that there were nine stages in implementing snowball throwing in teaching grammar. The stages consisted of preparing teaching material, forming group, explaining the material to the leader of the group, re-explaining the material to the members of the group, formulating question, tossing the ball, answering questions, evaluating teaching and learning process, and giving conclusion. After finishing the learning, the writers distributed the questionnaire. These instruments were administered to analyse and obtain the findings of study. Practically, the writers expected that the study will enrich the benefits of snowball throwing technique in learning grammar, such as improving students' comprehension in learning grammar, creating enjoyable learning atmosphere, developing students' cooperation skill, and increasing students' participation in the class.

Keywords: *Game, Grammar, Snowball Throwing*

INTRODUCTION

It cannot be argued that English is widely used both spoken and written by people around the world. Further, English nowadays is taken as a mean of international communication in practically all fields of life: economics and business, media, and even education. Thus, the urge to learn and master English has become a must. Since English language learning is one of the important factors that affects international communication activities, it is very essential for students to master the English language skills such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing for their communication purposes. In addition to

this, it cannot be denied that grammar is needed in order to master those English basic skills. Bradshaw (2013) stated "Grammar, regardless of the country or the language, is the foundation for communication. The better the grammar, the clearer the message, the more likelihood of understanding the message's intent and meaning". Based on Bradshaw's statement, it can be said that the message transferred in good grammar can be accepted better by the readers or listeners.

As one of the sources of information, teachers or lecturers hold an important role in learning English. Pardiyo (2010) mentioned that teaching is the way of the

teacher to give the students' knowledge. During the learning process, teachers or lecturers are not only transferring the materials, but also sharing new knowledge and information to the students. Furthermore, grammar structure is essential in learning language. By mastering English structure, students are able to learn English easier and transfer what they think effectively. This means that teaching grammar has always been a crucial aspect of foreign language teaching because grammatical competence is important for communication.

However, learning grammar is difficult for most Indonesian students. Onesty and Fitrawati (2013) stated that grammar is the central of the teaching and learning languages, yet it also one of the most difficult aspects of language that is hard to be taught. It is added by Cahyono and Widiati (2011, p. 87), they mentioned that "Grammar is considered the most important as it serves as the foundation for more advanced language learning. Making analogue of language learning as the building of house, grammar serves to be the foundation of the house." From the statements above, it can be inferred that grammar is a crucial subject to learn by students, for it is a basic knowledge that should be mastered by the English learners. Further, there are a bunch of materials in grammar structures, and tense is one of them to be specific. Tense is assumed as one of the difficult materials to learn by students. As the students of English Department, tenses must play an important role for them to learn all basic skills in English.

In addition to this, particularly the 1st semester students of English Department faculty of letters at Universitas Pamulang have some problems in understanding tenses. They come from different background, and they are also heterogeneous. Not all of them are very good in English grammar, especially tenses. Its difficulty might because English has different structures from Indonesian,

and the students' native language gives some influences in constructing English sentences. For instance, in Indonesia there are no changes of verbs caused by time. Meanwhile, some of the grammar lectures keep implementing monotonous techniques while teaching; they just tell the students about the structures, and then ask them to do some exercises. As result, the students get bored easily and cannot understand the materials well. Therefore, it can be inferred and the teaching of grammar must be meaningful and fun, if it is to be successful.

However, the successful of teaching and learning process could not be separated from the strategy which is applied and implemented by teachers themselves. O'Malley and Chamot (1990) defined learning strategy as internal cognitive or affective action taken by the teacher or learner in order to learn both simple and complex material. It is supported by Wenden (1991) who defines learning strategy is mental step or operation that learners use to learn knowledge and to regulate their efforts to do so. The writers conclude that strategy is mental step in form of internal cognitive.

Because of the problems above, it can be stated that the lecturers need alternative ways in teaching in order to make the students learning tenses easier. Game is assumed as one of the solution in teaching. It is expected to be one of the teaching techniques that can create fun and enjoyable atmosphere during the learning process. Actually, there are a lot of games can be used in teaching tenses, and snowball throwing is one of them.

Snowball throwing is one of the cooperative techniques that asks students to be active during the lesson, they can discuss with their friends about the materials. It also allows the students to work together, pay attention to each other, and also share information or knowledge in groups. Suprijono (2013) stated that the snowball throwing technique (STT) is used to train students to be more responsive to

receive messages from other students in the form of snowballs made of paper and to convey messages to friends in their group. Based on Suprijono's statement, it can be seen that the snowball throwing technique is implemented by a student throwing a paper ball to another student in the group without expostulation. So that, the students must listen carefully to what their friends are saying because they can suddenly be asked to answer a question. Whenever a student gets the paper ball from another student, he must answer the question written on the paper ball. Snowball throwing technique brings the students in the situation in which they have to understand the tenses studied and prepare to ask and be asked by other students in the learning process. In that interesting activity, the students become more attentive to the materials given by the lecturers and they do the best they can.

Further, according to Suprijono (2015), the steps of snowball throwing are preparing teaching material, forming group, explaining the material to the leader of the group, re-explaining the material to the members of the group, formulating question, tossing the ball, answering questions, evaluating teaching and learning process, and giving conclusion. Therefore, it can be seen that the activities included in snowball throwing encourage the students to involve more during the lesson.

The writers chose snowball throwing (STT) because there were some previous studies that proven the effectiveness of snowball throwing technique in Indonesian teaching context (Darusmin, Delfi & Masyhur, 2012; Sudewo, 2014). In those studies, they showed that snowball throwing technique is effective for teaching English to Indonesian students.

Further, the next related study is entitled "The Effectiveness of Snowball Throwing Technique in Teaching Reading Comprehension" by Gani, Yusuf, and Erwina (2017). It was published on Proceedings of the 1st National Conference on Teachers' Professional

Development on September 30th 2017, Banda Aceh, Indonesia. This study focused on applying snowball throwing technique in teaching reading and to figure out whether snowball throwing technique can improve students' reading comprehension skill for the 10th grade students at a senior high school in Nagan Raya, Aceh, Indonesia. This technique has shown that the activities could build the students' ability in reading comprehension and further increase their social interactions among peers.

Finally, Garrett (2003) wrote the study that is entitled "Teaching Grammar in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Context" which was published on Australian Journal of Indigenous Education. In this study, it is found that understand what grammar truly means gives a new insight and deeper understanding to language. Within each cultural, certain sets of rules are required for effective, and meaningful communication. The study also found that one of the factors students had difficulty in learning grammar was due to differences in language structure.

In order to prevent misperception and misunderstanding rise up in this study, the writers give scope and limitation. The scope of the study covers the interesting method or strategy used by the lecturers in teaching. Then, the writers limit the study to the implementation of Snowball Throwing technique in teaching grammar According to Suprijono (2015).

Based on the background above, the writers are interested in describing the implementation of snowball throwing technique in teaching grammar. Further, this study aims to describe the students' responses towards the implementation of snowball throwing and the benefits of applying it.

The study is intended to give some contributions for societies specifically lecturers and college students. The writers believe that as one of the game modifications, snowball throwing

technique is useful for teaching and learning English. Further, the writers expect that the study will enrich the benefits of snowball throwing technique in learning grammar, such as improving students' comprehension in learning grammar, creating enjoyable learning atmosphere, developing students' cooperation skill and increasing students' participation in the class. Moreover, the lecturers can apply some more interesting techniques in teaching, while the students can be more attentive and active during the learning process.

METHOD

In this study, the writers applied descriptive qualitative research. The purpose of this descriptive qualitative approach was to explore, describe, and understand the implementation of snowball throwing in teaching grammar and its benefits. As defined by Merriam (2009, p. 46) "A qualitative case study can be defined in terms of the process of actually carrying out the investigation, the unit of analysis (the bounded system, the case), or the end product". In addition, Patton (2002) stated that qualitative research mostly used to comprehend social phenomenon from participants' perspective. Therefore, it can be said that qualitative research is a type of social study in which the writer collect the data without considering the numerical results, and it assists people to understand social situation.

The writers took place the study at Universitas Pamulang, Tangerang Selatan, Banten. Universitas Pamulang has several faculties, such as letters, economy, management, law, engineering, and other faculties. To be more specific, the writers conducted the study in the English department faculty of letters. There were many reasons why the writers conducted their study at Universitas Pamulang. One of those reasons was that there were several difficulties and obstacles in learning grammar that the writers have

known well because the writers were actually the lectures in this university who have been teaching grammar at this university for some years.

Specifically, the participants of this study were about 100 students from 3 different classes in Universitas Pamulang. They were the first semester students of English department taking the subject of Basic Grammar. The writers conducted the study for about six months and focused on gaining the data from all students as the participants.

Furthermore, in collecting the data, the writers used observation analysis and questionnaire given to the students. In observation, the writers observed the implementation of snowball throwing technique during teaching grammar tenses. In this observation, the writers focused on several aspects. Those aspects were the students' interest in learning grammar tenses, the students' activity during the lesson, the attention given by the students, and also the benefits towards the implementation. After that, the writers distributed the questionnaire to the students, who are the participants in this study. The questionnaire consists of some questions that were related to the students' response and attitude toward the implementation of snowball throwing technique in teaching grammar tenses in their classrooms. It was done not only to answer the research questions, but also to find whether the students have positive response, attitude and feel the benefits toward the technique applied. Lastly, the writers interpreted the results descriptively using qualitative method.

As mentioned above, the writers gained the data from three different classes. In order to support the study finding, the writers taught grammar using Snowball throwing technique in those classrooms. Then, the data were achieved from classroom observation and students' interview in the form of questionnaire.

Practically, the writers who are also the lecturers of Basic Grammar subject

observed the students' problems in understanding grammar for about 2 months. After noting the students' problems, the writers introduced and described the procedures of conducting the snowball throwing technique during the lesson. Next, the writers implemented the snowball throwing technique by grouping the students in teaching tenses in the classroom. During the implementation, as facilitators, the writers assisted the students who had problems. Moreover, the snowball throwing technique by Suprijono (2015) was implemented in the Basic Grammar class within 2 months. At the end, the writers evaluated the learning process. Next step, the writers distributed questionnaire to each student. The questionnaire distributed contains specific information concerning the students' responses, feelings, and opinions through the implementation of snowball throwing technique in learning grammar tenses. Further, the writers analysed the benefits of snowball throwing felt by the students. After gaining the data, the writers noted them in research findings.

Referring to the time of the study, the writers conducted their study in September 2019 – February 2020. The first step has done by the writers was deciding the theme and title of the study. This step was done by observing the students problems in learning tenses in the subject of Basic Grammar. After that, the writers prepared the instruments for the study and collected the data. After the data are collected, the writers processed the data by analyzing them. The data were taken from the implementation of snowball throwing technique during the learning process and the questionnaire given to the students. Further, the writers find the benefits and describe them in this study at the end.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study was conducted in three different classes studying Basic Grammar

subject in English department faculty of letters to reach the main data. The results focus on the implementation of snowball throwing in teaching grammar which consists of nine stages of snowball throwing technique as mentioned by Suprijono (2015). The stages done are described in the following;

Stage 1: Preparing the Material to be Presented

The lecturer prepared the grammar material to be taught, which was about tenses using Snowball Throwing Technique. It discussed eight tenses, including simple present, present progressive, past tense, past progressive, present perfect, present perfect progressive, past perfect, and simple future. Those tenses are divided into eight meetings. The lecturer also introduced the lesson plan.

At the beginning, the lecturer explained how the game is played to the students. In order to make clear explanation, the lecturer also gave demonstration of applying snowball throwing by writing some questions in a piece of paper and rolled it into a ball. Then, she threw it to a student. The student who got the question in a ball had to answer it.

Stage 2: Grouping the Students

The lecturer divided the students into eight groups which was suitable with the eight tenses to discuss as the material. The member of the group consisted of four students. Then, the lecturer asked each group to choose the leader.

Stage 3: Explaining the Material to the Leader

The lecturer invited the leaders of the groups and explained the patterns of the tenses to them; one tense per meeting. The teaching materials are related to the tenses informed in stage 1.

Stage 4: Transferring the Explanation to the Members of the Group

After the lecturer had finished explaining the teaching materials, the

leaders looked back to the group respectively. They transferred the explanation given by the lecturer. The leader had responsibility to convey the teaching material to the member of the groups.

Stage 5: Formulating Questions

Then each student was given a worksheet to write down a question concerning any matter that has been described by the leader of the group. There were four questions formulated by the four members of the group. The question written on paper was rolled into a ball. This activity made the students became more active and creative in formulating the questions, and it also made the students involve themselves more during the lesson. The observation data revealed that before creating a question, the students tried to pay more attention to the explanation, so they could get deeper understanding.

Stage 6: Tossing the Ball

Furthermore, the worksheet containing question was rolled like a ball and thrown from one student to another member of the group for approximately 15 minutes. The student who got the ball had to answer the question written on the paper. The observation data showed that the activities of tossing the ball made them actively communicate to other students.

Stage 7: Answering the Written Question

After the student got one ball or one question, she or he was given the opportunity to answer question written in the form of a ball. The data from observation revealed that when the students got the chance to answer the questions, they were able to express their ideas. Moreover, it showed the active condition and the atmosphere in the class.

Stage 8: Evaluating Teaching and Learning Process

Each member of the group had to answer the question. The lecturer wrote notes of errors when the students had some

mistakes in answering. The group that gave incorrect answers and got the lowest score was given a penalty. This activity made the students try to study harder for the upcoming meeting.

Stage 9: Conclusion of the learning program

The lecturer gave flashback about the tenses and discussed the mistakes they made when the game was over. Moreover, the lecture gave opportunity to the students to ask some questions. In this stage, the students were also allowed to express their feeling towards the activities they have done.

Therefore, from the result of the classroom observation, it can be seen that the activities provided in Snowball Throwing technique help the students to improve their personal skills.

In addition to this, the following table is the result of the questionnaires given to the students.

Table 1. The percentage of the students' responses toward Snowball Throwing Technique (STT) in Learning Grammar

No.	The Statements	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)
1.	The STT helped me to understand Grammar better.	86	9	5
2.	The STT made me feel more interested to learn grammar.	90	7	3
3.	The STT made learning grammar enjoyable and fun.	88	6	6
4.	The STT made learning grammar boring.	10	18	72
5.	The information provided by the STT was not enough for me to fully understand the material of grammar.	12	8	80
6.	The STT made me easier in remembering the tenses pattern.	93	4	3
7.	The STT improved my motivation to learn grammar.	87	12	1
8.	The STT was not useful for me to learn grammar.	15	7	78
9.	The STT increased my grammar score.	73	9	18
10.	The implementation of STT was tiring.	30	2	68
11.	The STT made me able to be more active during the class.	95	0	5
12.	The STT was interesting.	87	10	3
Total		766	92	342
Average		64%	8%	28%

From the table 1 above, it can be seen that the students actively gave

responses to the items in theme 1; The Snowball Throwing Technique (STT) in Learning Grammar. It displays that almost all of the students agreed using Snowball Throwing technique (STT) as one of the interesting techniques in teaching grammar. Exactly 86% of the students agreed that STT really helps the students to understand grammar better and 90% of the students agreed that STT made the students feel more interested in learning grammar. It is supported by the responses of the next statements that there is 88% of the students agreed that learning grammar is enjoyable by using STT technique, at least 72% of the students disagree to the statement “The STT made learning grammar boring”, and there is only 12% of the students agreed that STT was not enough for learning grammar.

Further, from the above table, it was found that STT is helpful to improve the students’ grammar because exactly there is 93% of the students feel easier in remembering tenses patterns, 87% of the students feel that their learning motivation is improved because if this STT, and 73% stated their grammar score is increased after implementing this STT. Further, 78% of the students agreed that STT is a useful technique to implement in grammar class, 95% agreed that STT made them more active, and only 3% disagreed that STT is interesting. Actually, this STT technique encourages the students to move more during the lesson, yet the students don’t really think that it is tiring because there is at least 68% of the students disagree with the statement “The implementation of STT was tiring”.

Therefore, from the data described, it can be concluded that the Snowball Throwing Technique (STT) is one of the interesting and fun techniques that can motivate the students to learn grammar, and it is very helpful for them in enhancing their English grammar.

However, the students gave responses toward the lecturer’s

performance during the lesson, as described in the following table.

Table 2. The percentage of the students’ responses toward the lecturer’s performance in implementing Snowball Throwing Technique (STT).

No.	The Statements	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)
1.	The teacher/lecturer/instructor gave brief explanation on how to apply the STT technique.	94	4	2
2.	The teacher/ lecturer/ instructor implemented the STT attractively.	90	3	7
3.	The teacher/lecturer/instructor assisted me a lot to implement the STT in grammar class.	89	1	10
4.	The teacher/lecturer/instructor doesn’t motivate me to learn tenses using STT.	5	3	92

The table 2 above is the overall percentages of the students’ responses to the items in theme 2; the lecturer’s performance in implementing Snowball Throwing Technique (STT). It shows that the students agreed that the lecturer showed great performance when implementing this STT. Around 94% of the students agreed that the lecturer gave clear explanation about the procedure of implementing STT. Additionally, Snowball Throwing Technique is a fun game that encourage the students to be more active and attractive during the lesson, at least 90% of the students were in agreement that the lecturer implemented the STT attractively in the grammar class.

In applying STT, the lecturer plays an important role to encourage and motivate the students to join the game, and the lecturer also helps the students to apply the technique properly. Moreover, from the table above, it was also found that there is 89% of the students agreed that the lecturer assisted the students to implement STT in their grammar class. They also claimed that the lecturer motivated them to learn about tenses using STT by showing

their strong disagreement (92%) to the statement “The teacher/lecturer/instructor doesn’t motivate me to learn tenses using STT”.

Therefore, based on the data in the table, it can be inferred that besides the interesting technique chosen, the lecturer is also the pioneer in applying it in order to reach the goal of learning.

Further, based on the result of the questionnaire, it can be seen that the students showed their opinion about learning grammar, as the following.

Table 3 the percentage of the students’ responses toward grammar.

No.	The Statements	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)
1.	Grammar is difficult.	83	5	12
2.	Learning tenses matched the STT.	84	0	72
3.	Grammar is boring.	64	14	22
4.	Tenses is easy to understand.	20	7	80

The table 3 above is about the students’ responses toward grammar. Grammar is seen as one of the most difficult subjects to learn by the students of English Department in Universitas Pamulang. The data above show that exactly there is 83% of the students were in agreement to the statement “Grammar is difficult”, and there is around 80% of the students disagreed that tenses is easy to understand. Further, by looking at the difficulties faced by students in learning grammar, tenses to be specific, the Snowball Throwing Technique applied provided assistance for students to learn the tenses better.

Therefore, from the data described above, it can be stated that Snowball Throwing Technique provides certain positive benefits that can handle the students’ difficulties in learning tenses.

According to the data analysis, it can be inferred that as one of the fun and interesting techniques in teaching, the well-implemented Snowball Throwing Technique could enhance the students’ English grammar.

Moreover, the data from questionnaire and classroom observation revealed that there are several benefits of using snowball throwing as described in the following;

1. Improving the Students’ Comprehension in Learning Grammar

Applying Snowball Throwing in learning Grammar improved the students’ comprehension in grammar because they feel easier in remembering the tenses patterns. The data taken from the observation revealed that the students looked very serious when created a question for others. Some of them attempted to create the challenging questions that are difficult to be answered. This showed that the activity makes students become concentrate more in learning, and they try to formulate the questions themselves as good as they can. When the students got the chance to answer the questions, most of them were able to answer the question related to simple present, present progressive, past tense, and simple future properly and correctly. This means that this activity helped students to get better grammar understanding. It is also supported by the data collected from the questionnaire, it stated that the students agreed that STT improved the students to understand grammar (86%), STT is helpful to improve the students’ grammar because the students feel easier in remembering tenses patterns (93%), and their grammar score is increased after implementing this STT in the class (73%).

2. Creating Enjoyable and Lively Classroom Atmosphere

Furthermore, The STT improved learning motivation in grammar. The data observed showed that there were activities of tossing the ball during the implementation of Snowball Throwing technique. The students had different reaction when they got the ball. Most of them were very surprised and confused and some of them looked enthusiastic in

reading the question after they got the ball. This activity brings enjoyable atmosphere in the class. Further, the data from the questionnaire said similar thing, the students agreed that STT made the students feel more interested in learning grammar (90%). Therefore, it can be stated that the activities in Snowball Throwing Technique created enjoyable learning atmosphere.

3. Developing of Students' Ability

STT had developed the students' leadership, creativity and cooperation skills. In leadership skill, it can be seen from the situation in which the leader was chosen to lead his or her friends. The leaders had responsibility to transfer material to the members of the group. This indicates that snowball throwing technique improves leadership skills amongst students. In term of creativity, This STT trains students to be more independent because each student is given the assignment to create a question to be delivered to another student. Lastly, in cooperation, each student also had a responsibility to answer a question from one of his or her friends.

4. Increasing the students' participation in the class.

Snowball Throwing Technique increased of students' participation in the class. During the implementation of STT, the students were forced to actively ask and answer the question. It made them involved more during the learning process. The data from the questionnaire also revealed that the students agreed that STT is a useful technique to implement in grammar class (78%), and they also agreed that STT made them be more active (95%). Therefore, it can be said that they were more active in learning process because snowball throwing technique gave much more opportunity to coordinate with friends and presented their answer to the class.

CONCLUSION

Learning grammar is not easy for most Indonesian students. Grammar is the

central of the teaching and learning languages, yet it also one of the most difficult aspects of language that is hard to be taught. Snowball Throwing is one of techniques of teaching grammar that is creative and innovative. It is a kind of interesting game modification in which the students mutually throwing snowballs contain questions to fellow classmate that focus on the ability to formulate questions. Furthermore, this is used to train students to be more responsive to receive messages from other students in the form of snowball made of paper, and to convey message to friends in their group. Therefore, the students become more active, and the classroom's atmosphere is also more enjoyable.

After conducting this study, it is also found that Snowball Throwing Technique is very useful in learning grammar. Focusing on the implementation of the STT in English department students, it is revealed that the STT consists of nine amazing stages that help students to be more active and creative during the lesson. Further, based on the analysis of the classroom observation and the questionnaire delivered, it is found that Snowball Throwing Technique helps students to get better understanding about the grammar material given.

Hopefully, this study can be useful for further researchers, teachers, and students. For the further researchers, they should do similar research on Snowball Throwing Technique for deeper examination. Besides, the teachers or lecturers who are interested in teaching grammar in fun ways, they should try to introduce the Snowball Throwing technique and find its benefits to the students in order to reach the goal of learning. They also should apply this STT to their class to create more enjoyable learning atmosphere. For English department students of Universitas Pamulang, they should learn and comprehend more about grammar tenses and actively involve more during the

lesson using Snowball Throwing technique to get better understanding about the grammar material delivered.

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