

Utilizing Teams-Game-Tournament (TGT) to Enhance Students' Grammatical Understanding in Online Learning Setting

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Abstract

Studies have revealed various methods for teaching grammar. However, research on cooperative learning methods with game-based techniques to improve students' grammar knowledge, especially in an online learning environment, is still limited in evidence. Taking this into account, this present study is proposed to find out the effectiveness of an innovative pedagogical strategy namely teams-game-tournament as the type of cooperative learning model to teach grammar in an online learning setting. This study utilized a quasi-experimental research design involving ten graders of senior high school (N=56). They come from two groups: the experimental group using teams-game-tournaments and the control group with only the traditional in-class lectures. The results obtained from the t-test using SPSS confirmed that there is a significant difference in students' grammar scores that were taught using the strategy compared to students' scores in the control group without the treatment. In other words, the given strategy is more effective to enhance students' English grammar knowledge, particularly in the correlative conjunction topic. Based on this finding, this present study proceeds to add the alternatives of appropriate teaching methods for teaching English grammar to EFL learners, particularly in an online learning setting.

Keywords: cooperative learning, English grammar, online learning, teams-game-tournament



Introduction

The inclusion of the COVID-19 pandemic has led education around the world to a sudden shift from face-to-face to online learning. As a response to this changing learning system, adaptation needs to be conducted in order to keep the education process going on (Almaiah et al., 2020; Yen, 2020). As the adaptation of this online education happened, many parties including authorities, students, teachers, and parents also have to face its challenges. Students as the center of education need to be more concerned about the problems, they face in enrolling the online classes. Maqbulin (2021) in his research reveals the main problem that students encounter with online learning during the pandemic lies in understanding the material, followed by a load of tasks, and the economic problems related to the Internet fees.

English as one of the vital aspects that allow its users to expand themselves in many fields has encouraged the authorities, particularly in non-English speaking countries including Indonesia to make the language a compulsory subject at various education levels. There are several valuable reasons why people should learn English including it opens new career opportunities, it is the top language on the internet, it is the language of the media industry and business, and it may give the learners access to multiple cultures (Ilyosovna, 2020). As a part that cannot be separated from English itself, therefore, while learning English, people will learn grammar. Thornbury (1999) stated that “grammar is partly the study of what forms (on structures) are possible in language”. It means that grammar is the part of the language which is related to the form or sentence making.

As a foreign language learner, learning English especially English grammar can be more challenging since the language may be very different from their mother tongue, making them learn at least the basics of the language. However, it is still necessary for English language learners to master grammar to be competent in the four language skills because incorrect use or lack of understanding of grammar might hinder communication either in speaking, writing, listening, or reading. Utomo & Ahsanah (2020) mention that mastering grammar assists learners in constructing better language structure and creating meaningful messages. In other words, grammar is a crucial part of the communication process and language learning itself. Harmer (2003) argues that communication may suffer if the grammar rules are used too carelessly. Thus, the presence of problems in learning English grammar plays a critical relation to the process of language acquisition.

There are several problems that students encountered when learning English grammar, Nasir (2019) in his study found that students got some grammatical difficulties related to problems of meaning complexity, form complexity, and form-meaning mapping relationship. Moreover, Indonesian students are confused by the difference between Indonesian sentence form and English sentence form, so sometimes they use Indonesian sentence form when making English sentences (Ameliani, 2019) which creates inappropriate meaning from what is intended. After conducting a grammar pre-test about correlative conjunction topic in two classes of ten graders of senior high school, the researcher found that the average score of the pre-test merely achieved 75.71 for the first class and 73.36 for the second class, and it was still C level according to the minimum learning mastery standard. According to Utomo & Ahsanah (2020), mastering grammar might be effortful for the students. Even many students who have studied grammar at the university level for



several years still struggle to generate correct and good sentences (Effendi et al., 2017).

In a nutshell, grammar is crucial in a language, yet understanding English structure takes a lot of time and work. It is well-known that in an ESL/EFL context, teachers and students confront numerous challenges when it comes to grammar instructions (Al-Mekhlafi & Nagaratnam, 2011). Furthermore, the emergence of online learning also has added new challenges, particularly for the students who found online learning made them difficult to understand the material (Maqbulin, 2021); getting interacted due to the limited social interaction, unfit housing situations, insufficient data bandwidth, and an overall sense of reduced motivation and effort (Almendingen et al., 2021). In their study investigating problems in teaching and learning grammar in online classes, Halim, Wahid, and Halim (2021) discovered that students were dissatisfied with online grammar lessons because they found it difficult to concentrate throughout the online lectures. Because of the online classes, they were also less involved in pair and group work. This research supports the researchers' field observations, which revealed that students are less interested in online class activities and had difficulty comprehending the materials.

Based on this problem, the researchers decided to conduct experimental research, applying a strategy that expected could help students enhance their grammatical understanding in an online learning setting. The researcher determined to utilize a strategy namely teams-game-tournament, as a part of the cooperative learning model. According to Melian & Solihat (2019), cooperative learning is a term for a set of general learning strategies aims to increase students' cooperation in the classroom. Slavin (2011), cited in Tran (2019), highlights that cooperative learning is a teaching method in which students work together in small groups to assist each other understand the lessons. There are various sorts of cooperative learning that can be implemented in the classroom, including the Teams Game Tournament (TGT).

TGT was developed by David DeVries and Keith Edwards after it was first initially introduced by Johns Hopkins. In TGT, each member of TGT was assigned to study the topic in advance alongside the other members, and they were then independently tested through the academic game. Shoimin (2014), the TGT model is a form of cooperative learning model that is easy to adopt, involves all student activities regardless of status, involves students acting as peer tutors, and includes game and reinforcement aspects. With this strategy, students are divided into small groups of three to five people who are heterogeneous, both in academic achievement, gender, race, or ethnicity. TGT enables the students to compete as a representative of their team against the other team members who accomplish similar achievements previously. The elements in the TGT are the presentation of the material, teams, games, tournaments, and team recognition.

There have been abundant studies that prove the benefits of implementing teams-game-tournament in English language teaching and learning in the EFL context, starting from grammar, vocabulary, reading, writing, and speaking as well as improving students' motivation. Munawir, Irmayanti, and Ridwan (2018) on their pre-experimental research design found that utilizing the TGT strategy to learn simple present tense enhanced students' simple present tense mastery in seventh graders. The strategy was also found to improve students' vocabulary mastery



(Karman & Indriani, 2021). In addition, Gani (2019) discovered that implementing a teams-game-tournament (TGT) improved students' classroom engagement and reading comprehension concerning self-efficacy. Astria & Maisaroh (2021) also reported positive results, indicating that TGT improved students' English writing scores. It was also revealed that when this learning model is used in the teaching-learning process, it improved students' speaking skills and created a favorable atmosphere (Meiliawati, 2021). Moreover, related to learners' motivation, studies revealed that TGT could promote students' motivation to learn English (Pransiska, 2021), particularly in learning English grammar in higher educational context (Hasanah, 2021).

Given the aforementioned concerns regarding students' challenges in learning grammar, particularly in online learning settings, and the potential benefits of teams-game-tournament, this study sought to determine the effectiveness of the strategy to promote students' understanding of English grammar knowledge, specifically in the correlative conjunction theme. Furthermore, to bridge the gap left by previous research, the researchers filled it by applying this method in senior high school context using a quasi-experimental research design with two separated intact groups, conducting the learning activity and implementing the teaching method through a *WhatsApp* group, in which research in these contexts has not been undertaken. Furthermore, the researchers considered the use of *WhatsApp* as it has been proven by numerous studies to be effective alternative of the media for English teaching and learning in online learning environment (Ahmed, 2019; Maghfira, 2021; Malilla & Irwandi, 2022; Mashuri & Hasanah, 2021; Muslimin & Harintama, 2020). The use of *WhatsApp* for learning also enables students to save more on their internet fees. The researchers then define the main research question as: 'Is there a significance difference in students' grammar scores when they are taught utilizing the teams-game-tournament?'

Method

The present study employed a quasi-experimental research method with the pre-test and post-test nonequivalent control design in order to explore the effect of using teams-game-tournament (TGT) as the type of cooperative learning model in teaching grammar in an online learning setting. There are two groups involved in this study: an experimental group that was treated by utilizing teams-game-tournament and the control group that was treated with strategy. In the experimental class, the researcher taught grammar with the topic correlative conjunction by integrating the strategy starting from presenting the materials, dividing the teams, providing teams' discussion, holding educational games, making the tournaments, and the teams' recognition. The researchers taught grammar by using conventional strategy in the control class, starting by explaining the materials, showing the examples, and ending by giving the assignments. The involvement of the control group in the study is aimed to know whether the new treatment, teams-game-tournament (TGT), is more effective than the use of the unusual one. These two groups have been given the same length of time and the same teaching materials. Furthermore, the use of a pre-test is proposed to determine students' background knowledge or preparation for an educational experience, and a post-test to know whether there would be differences in the students' grammar mastery.

The population in this study were tenth graders of one of the senior high schools in Magelang, which comprised nine classes. Purposive sampling was used



to choose the sample for this study, which consisted of two classes. They are chosen based on specific qualities, such as having similar levels of English proficiency as measured by their English scores and the perspectives of their teachers. The instrument utilized in this study was a grammar test on the topic of correlative conjunctions that consisted of multiple-choice and short-answer questions and was divided into two sections: the experimental and control class's pre-test and post-test. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and t-tests in SPSS 25 for Windows. Before evaluating the data on students' grammar scores, an assumption test was conducted to decide if parametric or non-parametric statistics should be utilized. A test of data normality and homogeneity should be used to ensure that the parametric statistic meets specific requirements. The results of this testing were used to direct the next testing phase, which was the t-test, in this case, to find out if there was a difference in students' grammar achievements when they were taught using the treatment versus when they were not.

Findings and discussion

This section presents the finding and discussion of the present study starting from the descriptive statistics, assumption test, the results of t-test, and the discussion on the investigation of the effect of teams-game-tournament on students' grammar achievement.

Descriptive Statistics of Students' Scores

Table 1. The Descriptive Statistics of Grammar Scores in Experimental and Control Groups

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pre-test Experiment	28	66	83	75.71	4.537
Post-test Experiment	28	75	100	88.00	4.722
Pre-test Control	28	60	83	73.36	5.244
Post-test Control	28	70	95	83.18	5.644
Valid N (listwise)	28				

The table displays the descriptive statistics of students' pre-test and post-test scores in the experimental and control group. In the experimental group, the data demonstrate a difference in students' grammar scores with the mean values of 75.71 for the pre-test and 88.00 for the post-test score, showing that there is an improvement in students' recount text grammar skills taught using teams-game-tournament. Furthermore, for the control group, the table displays that the mean of students' grammar scores obtained in the pre-test is 73.36 while the post-test is 83.18. It reveals that there is also a difference in students' grammar scores in the pre-test and post-test. Nevertheless, compared with the control group, the grammar scores of students in the experimental group are higher than the mean scores in the control class, which was not given distinguished treatment or only used the conventional teaching grammar method. Besides, the statistics reveal that the standard deviation values of the experimental group (4.537 for pre-test and 4.722 for post-test) and control group (5.244 for pre-test and 5.644 for post-test) were lower than the means scores, signifying that the population came from the identical variety.



*Results of Assumption Test***Table 2. Tests of Data Normality**

		Tests of Normality					
		Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	Df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Students' Scores	Pre-test	.113	28	.200*	.958	28	.308
	Experiment						
	Post-test	.157	28	.074	.942	28	.126
	Experiment						
	Pre-test Control	.156	28	.079	.968	28	.539
	Post-test Control	.108	28	.200*	.986	28	.967

The test of data normality is proposed to find out whether the sample of the study came from a normal distribution of population or not. Since the number of samples is not more than 50, the Shapiro-Wilk statistic was referred. Table 2 indicates that the significance values (Sig.) of both the experimental and control groups are more than 0.05. It denotes that the data are derived from the normally distributed population.

Table 3. Tests of Data Homogeneity of Variance

		Test of Homogeneity of Variance			
		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Students' Scores	Based on Mean	1.745	1	54	.192
	Based on Median	1.722	1	54	.195
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	1.722	1	53.998	.195
	Based on trimmed mean	1.716	1	54	.196

The data homogeneity test was used to determine whether the data in this investigation had the same variance. The data is considered homogeneous if the significant value is greater than 0.05. As seen in the table above, the significant value is 0.533, indicating that the data in this study is homogeneous. The data on students' grammar came from a normal population distribution with the same variance or were homogeneous, according to the results of the assumption test. Parametric statistical analysis with paired sample t-test and independent sample t-test can be utilized to answer the first research question.

The Progress Analysis of Students' Grammar Scores in the Experimental and Control Group (Paired Sample t-test)

Table 4 illustrates the results of paired sample t-test, which exposes that the Significance value (2-tailed) of the experimental group is 0.000, lower than α 0.005; hence, it indicates that there is a significant difference between the means of students' grammar scores in the experimental group with the improvement of the mean score of 12.286 from the pre-test to post-test results. In a similar vein, the value of Sig. (2-tailed) in the control group is 0.000, which denotes that it is lower than 0.05, which also reveals a significant difference between the means of



students' grammar achievement with the improvement of the mean score as 9.821 for pre-test and post-test in the control group.

Table 4. The Progress Analysis of Students' Grammar Scores

		Paired Samples Test				
		Paired Differences		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation			
Pair 1	Pre-test Experiment - Post-test Experiment	-12.286	4.036	-16.109	27	.000
Pair 2	Pre-test Control - Post-test Control	-9.821	5.229	-9.940	27	.000

The Difference Analysis of Students' Grammar Scores of the Experimental and Control Group (Independent Sample T-test)

The independent sample t-test is utilized to address the main research question of whether there is a significant difference in students' grammatical achievements who were taught using the teams-game-tournament versus students who were taught using traditional lectures. The following criteria are used to test the hypotheses: H₀ is accepted if the significance value (Sig. 2-tailed) is greater than 0.05, while H₀ is rejected if it is less than 0.05. Table 5 reveals that the obtained value of Sig. (2-tailed) is 0.001, which is less than 0.05. As a result, it is reasonable to conclude that H₀ is rejected and H₁ is approved, or that there is a significance difference in grammar scores between students who learned the teams-game-tournament technique and those who learned the traditional method.

Table 5. The Progress Analysis of Students' Grammar Scores

		Independent Samples Test					
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means			
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Students' Scores	Equal variances assumed	1.745	.192	3.467	54	.001	4.821
	Equal variances not assumed			3.467	52.368	.001	4.821

Studies reveal that whether in a traditional classroom setting or an online learning environment, students learn better when they can interact with teachers, other students, and subject matter (Hussin et al., 2019). Students' interaction during online learning amid the Covid-19 pandemic is still present, however, it is limited



due to many conditions. One of the challenges is the diversity of teachers' technological literacy skills, as well as the fact that this learning model necessitates more preparation. Furthermore, all areas are accessible via internet access, and students' various financial and economic situations pose a challenge in this learning system (Munfangati, 2020). The lack of interaction has a negative indirect impact on student's motivation to learn, which then contributes to the disparity in students' learning outcomes. As a result, researchers are growing concerned about student interaction during online learning.

In response to the aforementioned challenges, the present study investigated the potential benefits of the implementation of teams-game-tournament as the type of cooperative learning model to teach grammar. TGT involves students working together in small groups, acting as peer tutors to help each other understand the lessons, and includes game and reinforcement aspects. This learning model, therefore, encourages students to get interacted and have discussions with their peers more massively. According to the findings elaborated in this study, students who were taught utilizing teams-game-tournament (TGT) in this study were proven better at comprehending the English lesson related to grammar, particularly on correlative conjunctions topic compared to students who were not taught using the strategy. The result of data analysis reveals that the obtained value of Sig. (2-tailed) is 0.001, which is less than 0.05, indicating that there is a significant difference in grammar scores between students who learned using the teams-game-tournament technique and those who learned with the traditional method. The mean post-test score of the experimental class was revealed to be higher than the control class's (88.00 > 83.18). In other words, the treatment implemented in the experimental class is more effective in promoting students' grammatical knowledge in an online learning setting.

This finding echoed the previous studies on the effectiveness of teams-game-tournament in promoting students' English knowledge and abilities (Astria & Maisaroh, 2021; Gani, 2019; Karman & Indriani, 2021; Pransiska, 2021) particularly English grammar as the study conducted by Munawir et al. (2018) and Hasanah (2021), adding new insights that teaching grammar using the given strategy through *Whatsapp* group is effective in advancing senior high school students' grammar understanding. The results from this study will contribute to the existing literature on the advantages of TGT as a type of cooperative learning model to teach grammar where it enables students to have more interactions during online learning, which in turn increases their understanding of the materials that are proven by the enhancement of their grammar test achievement. The researchers expected that this study can add a practical reference for English teachers of appropriate teaching methods for teaching English grammar to EFL learners, particularly in an online learning setting.

Conclusion

As grammar is one of the crucial aspects of learning English, particularly for foreign language learners, therefore, teaching and learning grammar needs to be conducted as effectively as possible so that learners can understand and make use of it properly. Additionally, the inclusion of online learning has come to add both challenges and opportunities to explore the strategies to provide appropriate English language teaching and learning, including in grammar class.



Based on the findings and the discussion presented, the researchers conclude that teams-game-tournament as a type of cooperative learning to teach grammar to the tenth-grade senior high school students has a significant effect on improving their grammar mastery in an online learning setting. It is supported by the data that TGT improved students' grades and understanding of English grammar, especially on correlative conjunction compared to students who were taught using traditional lectures. Further, the researchers suggest future research to explore the potential benefits of the TGT in another aspect along with students' perceptions of the strategy so that a deeper understanding can be obtained.

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