

# USING WORD BY WORD GAMES IN TEACHING GRAMMAR FOR JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Riri Onesty, Fitrawati

Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris  
FBS Universitas Negeri Padang  
Email: [Rhi2.Honesty@yahoo.com](mailto:Rhi2.Honesty@yahoo.com)

## Abstrak

Pada saat ini pelajaran bahasa Inggris telah diajarkan pada semua jenjang pendidikan seperti sekolah dasar, sekolah menengah pertama, sekolah menengah atas hingga universitas. Namun, hampir seluruh siswa beranggapan bahwa pelajaran bahasa Inggris merupakan mata pelajaran yang dianggap sulit sehingga mereka cenderung merasa bosan ketika berhadapan dengan mata pelajaran ini, terutama sekali pada saat belajar grammar. Untuk itu, guru harus dapat menggunakan cara yang tepat agar siswa dapat termotivasi untuk belajar bahasa Inggris. Salah satu cara yang cocok untuk memotivasi siswa sekolah menengah pertama untuk belajar grammar adalah dengan menggunakan sebuah permainan yang dikenal dengan "*word by word game*". *Word by word game* adalah sebuah permainan yang dilakukan oleh guru dan siswa agar siswa menyukai pelajaran bahasa Inggris. Pada permainan ini guru membagi siswa dalam beberapa kelompok dan memberikan sebuah kata kunci kepada setiap kelompok untuk dikembangkan kedalam sebuah kalimat dengan struktur atau pola yang benar. Permainan ini dapat memotivasi siswa dalam belajar bahasa Inggris sehingga mereka tidak mudah bosan dalam belajar bahasa Inggris..

Kata kunci: Motivasi, pengajaran, grammar, word by word game.

## A. Introduction

English has become an international language that is taught by many people in the world. By mastering English, people can communicate with other people especially with foreign people easily and it can reduce misunderstanding in communication. In Indonesia English now is the first foreign language which is taught to the students at school. Besides, English has been taught since the kindergarten to the university level in Indonesia. In teaching English there are four skills should be mastered by the students. They are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Mastering these four skills the students should have an understanding about the grammar of English itself. Therefore, grammar is very important within the English language. Using of incorrect grammar sentences can become meaningless and their message is unclear. This means that someone is not able to

communicate effectively and the person who is reading someone's work may well be quite confused as to the meaning.

According to Patricia in *Modules for the Professional Preparation of Teaching Assistants in Foreign Languages* (1998), Grammar is central to the teaching and learning of languages. It is also one of the more difficult aspects of language to teach well. Raymond (2001:115) states that grammar is a frame of work in a language use. Means that without grammar, the language learner will not master the language skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing. Meanwhile, teaching grammar for junior high school is not an easy thing, almost of students getting difficulties in learning grammar. There are some reasons that make the junior high school students difficult to learn grammar. Firstly, the students think that english is a difficult subject because it is a foreign language. So, they have low motivation in teaching english especially in teaching grammar. Secondly, Most of the students think that learning grammar is really boring and confusing. It has many rules that should be understood by the students. As a result, a teacher gets difficulties to encourage the students in teaching grammar.

Thirdly, junior high school students cannot focus when they are studying in long time. Nedomová (2007: 17) argues that “students are not able to pay their attention for more than 10-20 minutes and after that they start to be bored and tired. Therefore, the teacher should find the suitable strategies in teaching especially to teach grammar. Fourthly, teaching strategy or technique used by the teacher in teaching English especially grammar for junior high school students is not appropriate for them, for example, the teacher just focus to explain the material in front of class without paying attention to the students need in learning. As it is known, the students cannot learn a thing directly. They need something which can attract their interest; something that can make them enthusiastic. So that, one of the appropriate technique can be used is by using game. By doing fun activities the students will be more interested, motivated, and easy to understand about the materials.

Game is one of the ways that can be used in learning grammar. Gunn and McCallum (2005) express that game are another way to help the students to learn, to review, and to internalize various grammar structures. Beside, J.H. Hadfield (1998:4) who explains the game as “an activity with rules, a goal and an element of fun.” However the game in education must be more than just fun; learners have to learn through playing games too. Game is highly motivating because they are amusing and interesting. They can be used to give practice in all language skills and be used to practice many types of communication. Besides, games are emphasized to encourage students' solidarity in teamwork in which they have to try their best to do the tasks or maybe to code any requirements given in the games for their team spirit. Therefore, games comprise many factors such as rules, competition, relaxation, and learning. The main focus of using game in class is not only to help students to learn more effectively but also to have fun.

Based on the explanation above, the writer decides to use game in teaching grammar to Junior high school students. The game is *word by word game*. This game can engage the junior high school students in teaching English especially for teaching grammar through the activities during the game played.

Word by word game is a game done by the teacher with the students to motivate them in studying grammar. Here, the teacher divides the students into some groups. Each group makes a sentence based on the words said by the students in the group. The teacher then corrects each sentence whether it is true or not. They will have different interesting topic every week through *word by word games*.

Based on the background above, the writer would like to describe an activity that can motivate Junior high school students to study grammar by using *word by word game*.

Grammar is central to the teaching and learning of languages. It is also one of the most difficult aspects of language that is not easy to be taught. Some language teachers who adopt this definition focus on grammar as a set of forms and rules. Many linguists have tried to describe the definition of grammar. According to Radford (1997:1) he sees grammar as the principles which determine the formation and interpretation of words, phrases, sentences. Arndt et al (2000) states that grammar is the way group of words to make sentences. He also says grammar talks about how a word becomes plural or how to make negative or interrogative sentences.

Meanwhile, Ur (1994:1) states that grammar can be defined as the way of manipulating and combining words in order to make longer units of meaning. He also says that the knowledge about grammatical rules is essential for the mastery of a language. Someone cannot use words unless she or he knows how they should be put together. Similarly, Thornbury (1999:1) mentions that grammar is a description of rules that govern how sentences are formed. He adds that grammar communicates meaning. It is a process to make a speaker's or writer's meaning clear when contextual information is lacking. Thomas, et al. (2006) interprets grammar is a word with a number of distinct meanings. Grammar can refer to the linguistic system that presumably exist in the mind of the speaker.

In conclusion grammar is understood as a rule of system that establishes a language. A speaker of a language has to understand the rules so that she / he can produce acceptable and understand language. It is the grammar that controls the common arrangement and relationship of words into a sentence. Following the rules will create effective and efficient language. The language produced without following the rules will make meaningless and hard to be understand. Human beings are grown and develop with set systemic rules that are usually followed by the speaker of the language.

As it is known, teaching English in Indonesia has become a trend. In every school, English is taught as one of the main subject. In English there are four skills should be mastered by the students. They are listening, speaking, reading and writing. By mastering these four skills the students must know about the grammar of English first because grammar is one of central part of language learning. If learners do not know about the grammar, they will have difficulties in understanding what they see, read, hear and learn. Crystal (2004) says, "Grammar is the structural foundation of our ability to express ourselves". The more we are aware of how it works, the more we can monitor the meaning and effectiveness of

our way and others use language. Furthermore, teaching grammar is really important because it is the fundamental element in learning a language.

In junior high school teaching grammar is integrated through other skill such as listening, speaking, reading, writing skills. It means, when the teacher is teaching these four skills, he/she will reinforce students' understanding with grammar as an additional knowledge in order to increase students' ability to comprehend the whole English theoretically and practically. It is stated in *Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan (2006)* that grammar is done through four skills; listening, speaking, reading and writing. For example, in writing the students conduct a simple sentence like "she has long black hair" (Simple Present Tense). So, indirectly the students have learned make a sentence in correct grammatical order. Futhermore, teaching grammar for junior high school also needs seriously and appropriate technique. However, junior high school students still can be engaged in learning through playing. The teacher must make consideration in teaching to encourage students to learning english.

In conclusion, grammar is a central of the language that has been taught in teaching English. In case, teaching grammar for students is not easy thing even for junior high school students or to middle school students. Most of students assume that learning English is something boring and difficult especially for grammar which depend on rule. Therefore, the teacher must have some considerations and paying attention what the students need in teaching. The teacher needs appropriate ways that can be used in order to make the students easily catch the lesson up and also it needs careful in selecting the learning material which is appropriate with the curriculum given.

Games can be the media to teach Grammar to junior high school for some reasons. According to Wright, Bitteridge, and Buckby "games can be found to give practice in all the skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking), and for many types of communications (e.g. encouraging, criticizing, agreeing, explaining)". (1997:1). Games are used to make the children easier to understand and remember about grammar in some topics. By using games, the children do not feel that they learn something through that activity. Through games the students become active learners.

Games have become crucially important for English language learners and teachers not only because they provide enjoyment and relaxation, but also as they encourage the students to use their language in a creative and communicative manner. Game is a kind of play that can be used as a teaching technique in English classroom. Game is often associated with fun activities. Haycraft (1978: 94) said that games are the ways of class to make use their initiative in English. Through the games, the students can be creative and be motivated to learn English. Furthermore, "Children play and children want to play. Children learn through playing. In playing together, children interact and in interacting they develop language" (Brumfit, 1995:142).

Games provide language teachers with many advantages when they are used in classroom. One of these advantages is that learners are motivated to learn the language when they are in a game. McCallum (1980, p. ix) emphasizes this point

by suggesting that “games automatically stimulate student interest, a properly introduced game can be one of the highest motivating techniques.

Based on the explanation above, games are the most suitable instructional activities for Junior high school students are obvious because they are a natural part of their existence. Especially when grammar teaching is too dependent on rules and memorization, they start to lose their interest and motivation. By using a game in teaching process, the teacher can provide an enjoyment and relation for students. It is suitable with the characteristics of students who love studying through playing beside it also gives more advantages.

Word by word game is an interactive game to stimulate the students' willingness or motivation to study English. As Andrew (2006) said that this games is “a game which students making phrases and sentences orally, word by word, in cooperation with others, paying particular attention to grammar rules”. The writer focuses on elementary school students, in which motivation is very necessary. This game is interesting enough and can change untrue judgment that learning English is so complicated and boring.

Wright, et al (2006) state that there are some procedures should be done in using word by word game to motivate elementary school students in learning grammar. Firstly the teacher makes students in group which consists of four – six; the first player in each group will say a word. Then, one learner of group will act as secretary to write down the word as play advances. After that ask the next learner to add a word that will make some sort of sense when put either in front of the first word or after it, in addition, teacher encourage the learners to continue building the sentences orally, word by word, passing it round and round the group in this manner until they have made as long a sentence as possible.

For example:

1.
  - Learners 1: hobby
  - Learners 2: my hobby
  - Learners 3: my hobby is
  - Learner 4: my hobby is swimming
2.
  - Learner 1: study
  - Learner 2: study English
  - Learner 3: study English with
  - Learner 4: study English with Mr. John
  - Learner 5: we study English with Mr.Jhon

Then, teacher asks all the group secretaries to read out their completed sentences, and the rest of class should judge as to whether they are grammatically well formed even if incomplete and make sense.

From the other source ([http://www.visi.es/competition\\_games](http://www.visi.es/competition_games)) adds that the procedure of word by word games is before the games is started the teacher give some questions for the students related to the topic, based on the question the students can volunteer their answers by raising their hands. Another student can make a note of who gets more correct answers. After the games over, the teacher and the students discuss about the result.

Finally, word by word game can be applied in motivating elementary school students to learning grammar because it can make them be encouraged to learn when they play in group. So, the elementary school students learn English through an enjoyment activity – that is word by word game- not through a serious learning process that can make them easily get bored.

## **B. Teaching Implementation**

### **1. Teacher's preparation**

Before starting to teach, teacher should do some preparation so that teaching and learning process will run well.

#### **a. Selecting Material**

The first step before starting to teach, teacher has to prepare the material that is going to be taught because the material is the primary element in teaching. Teacher should be attention the material that will be given for student for example “my idol” (descriptive text, use simple present tense). The material should be appropriate with the student's level and knowledge and most important the material should suitable with the curriculum.

#### **b. Time**

Time is the most important in teaching by using games. Here, times means that how long games will played. Teacher must considered how long time will use to play games. It may be fifteen until twelve minutes playing games during teaching English.

Word by word games is played during whilst teaching because this game is to motivate the junior high school students to learning grammar and to help them enjoy learning English. So, the junior high school students do not easily get bored and think that English is a difficult subject.

### **2. Procedure of teaching grammar by using word by word games**

Generally, the activities in teaching and learning process are divided into three phases. They are: pre-activity, whilst activity and post activity. Here, to motivate students in teaching grammar, word by word games is done in whilst teaching activity. It is hoped that this game can activate and increase the motivation of clumsy students who are not ready yet to study. The game is played about fifteen to twelve minutes. Before playing the game, the teacher should ask about student's readiness.

Below is a model of grammar teaching procedure with the topic daily activity (using present tense) by using word by word games.

#### **a. Pre teaching Activity**

In this phase, the teacher checks the student's readiness to study, checks attendant list and builds knowledge of the students. In pre teaching activity, the teacher has to explore the students' background knowledge about what will be taught to them in order to make them understand the real world context of the lesson. In addition, the teacher builds knowledge of students first in order to make students ready to learn the topic and make them easier to explore more about the

topic in the next phases. For example, the topic is about my idol. So the teacher builds the students' background knowledge through asking about the students' Idol.

For example:

- Do you have an idol?
- Who is your idol?
- What does she/he looks like?
- Can you tell us about your idol?

#### **b. Whilst Teaching Activity**

After the teacher ask some question to the students, the teacher prepare a new topic which still related to "My Idol and comes to the game. Here the illustration:

First, the teacher tells the learners to form group which consist of five until six students each group. The students are grouped by the teacher in order to keep the class going well. The teacher should use the easy word to make the students easy to catch the teacher's instruction. For example, "stand up, please!". Then the teacher asks each group to choose one player as secretary to write down the word on the white board as play advances.

Second, the teacher arranges the students to sit or to stand based on the group. The students may sit or stand like a circle, rectangle or U letter. It depends on the learning material will be taught on that day.

Third, the teacher gives explanation about the rules of the game. The junior high school students should do the rules in order to play the game well. They should find appropriate word which is suitable to the key word given by the teacher to make a correct sentence.

Fourth, the teacher chooses randomly the group as the first player. Teacher has some key words which are suitable with the learning material. For example "hair", so the secretary the group writes the word "hair" on the white board. After that, the next students add a word to complete the word "hair". The students may add the word before or after the first word. For example "she", the secretary will link the word become "she hair..." It means the students add a word before the key word given by the teacher. Then the next students will add word again like "black", and secretary link the words again until "she black hair...". After that, the students add word "has". So, the secretary will make a sentence become "she has black hair". The last students add word again "long", and the secretary will write a complete sentence become " She has long black hair". The students work together to conduct a correct sentence. When one of the students write down a word to complete the first word, the other students also think what the next word which is appropriate to the word before. In this game, the group can make incorrect sentences. They may also do mistake in sentence structure. for example; the students may conduct a sentence such as "she has hair long black" or "has she long black hair"

During the game played, the teacher should pay attention to the students' word and how to arrange the word until in correctly grammatical sentences. The students may do some mistake in using word or arrange the word. In addition, the teacher also can see whether the students understand or not about the games and

how to make a grammatical sentences. For example when they give a key word they should know what is the word will be added and how to arrange it. If the students cannot do the instruction, it means they do not understand about the lesson. Here the teacher evaluates the students whether understand or not.

The game ended when all groups have completed the key words given to them become a sentence. The sentence should not be a correct one. The teacher then correct the sentence through discussing with all the groups. The teacher corrects each sentence and explains and then tell the students whether it is correct or not.

In conclusion, Word by Word game is played during whilst teaching activity to make the junior high school students motivated to learn grammar. This will make the students easily understand the lesson. They will learn through playing as they love to play. The junior high school students also do not easily get bored cause of remembering the complicated rules of grammar. So, they do not think English is a difficult subject.

### **c. Post Teaching-activities**

The post-teaching activities are the final activities of teaching learning process. This activity can help the students to remember the information about what they have learned. In this activity, the teacher let students work indenpedently by giving them another word and ask them to arrange until the correct grammatically sentence again. Here, the teacher can see the students understanding about the lesson.

### **3. The Advantages of Using Word by word games in Teaching Grammar for Junior High School Students**

Using word by word game offers some advantages, they are:

- a. Games are always loved by junior high school students. Games are related to fun, movement, and competition. Children can get bored easily if there is the same activity. So the teacher must apply a good and creative method to keep the student's concentration in learning the material.
- b. Word by word Games promote learners' interaction. Naturally when playing games, students are trying to win or to beat other teams for themselves or on the behalf of their team. They are so competitive while playing since they want to have a turn to play, to score points and to win. In the class, learners will definitely participate in the activities. Therefore, in groups or inpairs, they are more willing to ask questions, communicate and discuss with their partners and think creatively about how to use English to achieve the goal. The competition in the games gives students a natural opportunity to work together and communicate in English with each other a lot.
- c. Word by word Games motivate learners. The activities in a game get all the students to move around, activate their mental capacities and stimulate neural networks, students who are shy also attend the activities with fun, forgetting their shyness and feeling of fear.

- d. Applying word by word games in teaching grammar was the teacher didn't need to explain too many materials. The teacher just explained the materials needed by the students because they can understand the material on that day by doing the games.
- e. Word by word games can increase the students' achievement. Means that learners test score. Ability of communication, some skills, knowledge of vocabulary, or other language skills can improve. Riedel (2008) " we are teaching a new generation of students which require unconventional teaching strategies be put into practice in the classroom. And when school use the games, the students use benefits speak for themselves a greater desire to learn and higher test score.

### **C. Conclusion and Suggestion**

From the discussion before, it can be summarized that teaching English to young learners is not easy thing especially in teaching Grammar. Without Grammar a person cannot speak, read, or write and listen in English effectively. In short, grammar is central to the teaching and learning of languages. It is better to teach English Grammar since the earlier age to make the students easier to learn in the next level of their study.

There are so many ways that the teacher can be used in teaching English Grammar. One of them that have been written on this paper is by using word by word game to motivate young learners in teaching grammar. Using games in teaching learning process brings many advantages for both students and teacher. It creates a lively and enjoyable classroom that increase students' interest and motivation, familiarizes English to students' life and fulfills the learner's need to actively involving in the activity.

Based on the conclusion above, there are some suggestions to the young learner's English teacher.

- First, the teacher has to use a media to make the students more understand about the lesson they have learned.
- Second, the word by word game can be used to teach almost every topic in teaching grammar to junior high school students. Teacher can add some additional activity in order to avoid students bored of doing the same activity for many times
- Third, word by word game is not only played for motivating junior high school students to learn english but it can be played for motivating senior high school students to learn English . It depends on how the teacher applies i

**Note:** This article is arranged based on the writer paper with the advisor Fitrawati, S.S, M.Pd.

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