

The Challenges of Teaching Grammar at the University Level: Learning From the Experience of English Lecturer

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ABSTRACT

Grammar overall, is a challenging language skill. Even experienced English lecturers may face difficulties in explaining grammar to students. Grammar is the primary skill to be developed when learning English as a foreign language. Yet, when other languages' skills gained more attention, grammar came to be seen as the least important skill. Without using proper assessment to reduce student understanding, this is frequently explained in a straightforward manner by means of other skills. This study focuses on the challenges English language teachers use when teaching grammar at the second-grade level. In this essay, every single English language teacher participates. The researchers interviewed them, copied, and analysed the data obtained from the interview. Problems and difficulties of students are no less important for lecturers to know in teaching grammatical structures. In this case, English lecturers are challenged to find more strategic and creative ways of teaching grammar. Mastery of good grammar guarantees students' ability to master other skills such as writing and speaking. Due to this, the study may benefit other English language teachers and lead to new ideas for addressing the problem at hand. Everyone agreed that she experienced three challenges while they were learning grammar. This study can be a good reference for other English lecturers and students, and parents in overcoming these challenges.

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INTRODUCTION

The process of teaching and learning in the world of education does not always run smoothly, especially for those who do not like some of the subjects they have to study. There are always obstacles in the teaching and learning process in

every place of education (Lumentut & Lengkoan, 2021). These learning difficulties will also have an impact on decreasing the academic achievement of students who are currently studying. Learning English as a foreign language still becomes a burden for most students in Indonesia (Gunawan Tambunsaribu & Yusniaty Galingging, 2021). Learning grammar has been part of language skills since grammar is a fundamental feature of a language. If learners fail to understand grammar rules, they will fail to communicate effectively in that language.

Grammar learning is currently greatly assisted by sophisticated and interesting media and applications such as research (Zarzycka-Piskorz, 2016), whereas using game in motivating learning games. Traditional teaching and learning process referring to chalk-and-talk has become outdated in lessons. Teachers and learners are exposed to various task-based process to encourage a better participation among learners throughout the lesson (Mathematics, 2016). Grammar problems are indeed one of the most complex problems in learning English, this has also been proven in research on grammar problems in TOEFL test results (Hampp et al., 2021).

The relationship between grammar problems in learning outcomes and their difficulties, is also an interesting topic when researched and looking at the challenges experienced by teachers in teaching grammar because learning outcomes are closely related to situations in the teaching and learning process where the teacher is involved. Therefore, the study intends to investigate the following research questions: What do English lecturers in teaching grammar face the challenges?

RESEARCH METHOD

The study will employ a method of qualitative research with an interactive component in which data will be obtained through semi-structured interview. Interview was first translated before analysis was done. After the transcription process is complete, the data listed in a table to analysed further based on the problem raised. The results of the Interview then used to answer the two questions raised by the survey. In relation to that, in the study, 10 English lecturers from a university will be served as participants. They have different backgrounds in regard to the teaching of English at the tertiary level. Five of them are male lecturers, while the remaining 5 are female lecturers. Their years of teaching experience also varied; 3 of them had less than five years of teaching experience and 7 of them with 15-19 years of experience.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The teacher said that, especially in semester one, the average student is significantly lacking in simple grammar, which they actually have to master when they are in junior high or high school; for example, there is very little understanding of parts of speech or tenses, so the lecturer must be more required to explain again after giving the test and the results are sometimes satisfying, sometimes not as expected, so some have been able to get there, maybe some are already bored, but sometimes most of them don't show progress at all, maybe someone wants to add, namesake or something else. In (Gunawan Tambunsaribu & Yusniaty Galingging, 2021). The problem is not only at the junior or senior high school level, but rather that it has to be taught from elementary school, why is English in elementary schools needed in learning English: because first, at an early age, learning the language is easier to grasp; secondly, in today's all-digital era where all life systems use English, with English in elementary schools.

Teacher said that according to her experience, besides the comprehension of different students, it is understandable that our students come from various regions. Also, the class capacity is often uneven and uneven because we use a class select system. Finally, the last is the lack of motivation from students to study. (Safitri, 2022) in his research showed that the factors causing low student motivation were intrinsic factors including interest in learning, expectations and grades, and learning objectives that students had were still low. While extrinsic factors include the family environment and school environment. Low motivation to learn causes students not to focus on participating in learning and spending time studying with things that are not productive.

The challenge faced by a lecturer in teaching grammar is basic knowledge of grammar which is lacking when graduating from high school. Different abilities of each student influences when delivering material or topics, students are not proactive, the number of students is too large and the rooms and supporting facilities are inadequate. Facilities have an important role in supporting student learning activities because facilities are facilities and infrastructure that can support student learning activities both at home and at school (Paranduk, Rombepajung & Karisi, 2021). The existence of complete learning facilities when used properly will facilitate and expedite the ongoing learning process. Under these circumstances, the learning achievement obtained will also be maximized. Five benefits of complete

school facilities is the first helping students to focus more on learning, secondly improving time and space efficiency, thirdly supporting students to sharpen their potential, fourthly improving student learning experience and finally making the learning environment more comfortable.

The ability of students is not at the same level of ability so that the learning method becomes less precise (Liando, Tatipang & Lengkoan, 2022). (A placement test is needed to determine the right level according to student abilities) The purpose of this Placement test is to determine each student's ability in class placement according to level. By knowing the level of ability of each according to the level of both standard and higher levels, students will not get material that is so complex as at the advanced level. Some students do not intend to register in English, but when the test comes in their names actually come out in that department.

The previous research related to the challenging in teaching grammar structure have been done before (Insights, 2018), (Halim et al., 2021), (Nurfitri Nurfitri, Regina Regina, 2020), (Karagul & Yuksel, 2014), and (Yusob, 2018). Grammar overall, is a challenging language skill. Even experienced English lecturers may face difficulties in explaining grammar to students, teaching grammar via online and onsite, and in online Teachers should be more trained to conduct online classes and they should be familiar with various applications to make the learning process effective, in one research not only identified teachers' beliefs on grammar instruction, it has also provided insights on the influence of those beliefs on instructional practices, in (Kadwa & Alshenqeeti, 2020) if grammar and vocabulary are exposed through real-life tasks in the classroom, the learners would be able to acquire these micro-skills of the English language more effectively.

Discussion

What do English lecturers in teaching grammar face the challenges?

In answering the research question, the data obtained were categorized into three different challenges; experiences, students, and lessons. Grammar is one of the challenges for students because they are still lacking, not even able to compose each sentence to write assignments so many grammatical errors are found in writing both independent and group assignments. Grammar is the structure of the arrangement of sentences. By using the correct structure, a sentence will be perfect. This structure is also used in all languages, not just in English. Why is grammar so important in learning English, this is where grammar functions to give clear meanings to these words. Continuing the previous point, grammar makes sentences

or paragraphs clear. Thus, grammar has an effect on making each other understand in communicating. At the tertiary level, especially those who choose to major in English education, will feel the difference in learning English at the elementary, junior high, or high school levels because English is studied in one package of English courses, while at the tertiary level, learning English is divided more specifically according to level. components and skills in English. Especially the grammar structure which is always referred to as a component or part that is difficult to learn and when it is difficult to learn it is also a challenge for lecturers in teaching English. This is one of the challenges for lecturers to teach and improve grammar to students because students don't really pay attention to grammar and don't really use it in everyday life, both in activities and other matters. It is not an easy thing to teach students in a grammar class, with the many different ways of capturing the material presented by the lecturers and the students' mindsets in each material presentation. First, there are students who quickly catch and respond to lecturers when asking questions or discussions, secondly, there are students whose way of grasping is weak when given questions or presentations in class. Very interesting in class. This is a factor when students do not know enough about grammar preparation.

The challenges in teaching grammar to students also need things that can make them interested and enthusiastic in learning in language class, to attract students' enthusiasm for learning in class, the lecturer can add fun activities to make them happy for example playing which contains a lot of meaning from Grammar class is like giving one word and giving them the opportunity to arrange that one word into a sentence using grammar and appreciate every answer given by students to improve the grammar words written by their students. An approach with students to get them interested in learning grammar is when the lecturer is able to win the hearts of his students to enter the class that the lecturer teaches; students will not forget the fun teaching patterns in the class. It could also be when the lecturer approaches students in casual discussions about anything; wherever the conversation can contain grammar learning, students will freely talk about the experiences taught by the grammar lecturer, what makes them interested and what makes them not interested. Material or teaching methods and even the presentation of the material provided by the lecturer. Being a lecturer who is close to students but accompanied by humility, discipline, firmness, and authority, firmness so that students also do not view lecturers as trivial.

Teaching English grammar is one of the essential things when having experience and observations in teaching to support the lecturer's understanding of the students he teaches so that they can measure their way of composing grammatical sentences in their writing, even independent assignments and group assignments. The lecturer's struggle to gain experience in teaching grammar is also tricky as the lecturer has to observe student patterns in class. Lecturers must also learn or improve their grammar rules before entering class and practice before teaching them. Quite a lot of experience and observations make lecturers not overwhelmed in teaching them. Still, the lack of experience and observations of English grammar will overwhelm lecturers in teaching in the classroom because they do not know the teaching pattern they will teach their students.

Dropping out in grammar lessons may be more challenging than some people think. In the learning process, student skills greatly influence the success of the learning process. Grammar skills are determined primarily by students' individual skills because students can improve their learning outcomes without learning methods if they have above-average skills. Skills Spending time studying grammar is a factor in the lack of skills of these students. the real core problem in learning is the commitment of the student himself; online or offline is not a problem in the learning process, in fact, online learning is very helpful in this day and age. Online learning resources are widely available such as pictures, applications, and YouTube videos.

For students in Indonesia, there are indeed many problems in learning grammar structure because Indonesia it does have grammar, but it is different from English, where there are tenses, while in Indonesia, there are no tenses. Actions and events carried out yesterday, today and tomorrow will remain the same and will not experience any form of change, especially in verbs, for example eating will experience changes such as being eaten, ate, eating, requires adjustments in learning grammar structures, especially tenses and also changes in verbs depending on the subject of the sentence. In Indonesia there will be no change even if the subject is one person or more than one person. In particular, students who study English and do not know tenses since childhood are indeed an obstacle for teachers in teaching tenses and coupled with the commitment of the students themselves who do not want to really learn English and do not want to master tenses or grammar structures in English.

Conclusion

The findings and explanations above clearly explain that lecturers who are experienced in teaching English, especially grammar, also face difficulties in

teaching grammar. Students come from different regions and from different school backgrounds, which means that lecturers face different difficulties. Problems and difficulties of students are no less important for lecturers to know in teaching grammatical structures. In this case, English lecturers are challenged to find more strategic and creative ways of teaching grammar. Mastery of good grammar guarantees students' ability to master other skills such as writing and speaking.

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