

**Problems in Learning Grammar at an English Course in Yogyakarta:
Teachers' Perspective**

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Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the students' problems in learning grammar at an English course in Yogyakarta based on teachers' perspective. In addition, this research was to find out more about the students' problem when they learnt about the English materials. In this study, the participants mention the students' problem caused by the material problems faced by the students. To accomplish the objectives of this study, the researcher conducted a qualitative research design. The data were obtained by interviewing four teachers of English grammar at one of English courses in Yogyakarta. Following this, they were the teachers who had taught the grammar in a monthly program. The findings revealed that there were four findings towards the problems faced by the students when they learnt grammar. The problems is related to the linguistic problem,. There were also more explanations about the students' problems in learning grammar which occurred in the linguistic problems. On the part of the problems, there were four problems experienced by the students. Additionally, the problems are divided into four sections based on the syllabus at that course. Therefore, those problems were learning part of speech, sentence, tenses and WH question.

Keywords: Grammatical problem, linguistic problem, teacher perspective

Introduction

Wahyuningtyas and Bram (2018) as cited in Lie (2007) argued that in all education levels in Indonesia, the students should learn English started from elementary school, junior high school and senior high school. At the school, the students have to learn speaking, listening, reading and writing. As the reason, all these skills can not be separated from grammar as one of the aspects in a language learning. English teaching and learning context in Indonesia have been focused to understand about the grammar as the main objective of the learning process. Besides, grammar is one of important aspects which should be mastered by the students in learning English in order to be able to use English language accurately in accordance with the order and rules in English language itself. Areni (2013) argued that grammar is a basic element in language learning to master English language skills such as speaking, writing, reading, and listening. Kiruthika (2016) said that grammar is intended to form a sentence and utterance. Therefore, according to Ali (2018), language will be more structured and understood using appropriate grammar in the learning context (as cited in Brown, 2007).

In addition, grammar consists of forms which have comprehensive different functions. According to Zuhriyah (2017), grammar has many rules for forming words and sentences which automatically have different functions ranging from easy to complex rules. Grammar can also be referred as the procedure or structure of language. In English, there are eight basic points of learning grammar called as parts of speech, and those are pronoun, noun, verb, adjective, conjunction, interjection and preposition. Kiruthika (2016) stated that there are two important basic forms in English grammar such as syntax as the arrangements of items and morphology as the structure of word. Hence, basic form and aspect of grammar are fundamental knowledge in learning English. Besides, Nunan (1991) as cited in Joshi (2018)

argued that by knowing basic knowledge of grammar, the students are able to communicate with the others using English well.

Methodology

This research used the qualitative research approach in gathering the data. Creswell (2012) stated that the qualitative research is to explore a case and give clear information of a phenomenon. Therefore, qualitative research was appropriate for this study to gather the data of the teachers' perspective towards the students' problems in learning grammar. Besides, the qualitative research focused on investigating the activity, answers, and habit so that the researcher should pay attention to the participants' reaction.

This research was conducted at one of English Courses in Yogyakarta as a setting of this study. The researcher exercised the research at that course owing to that fact that the course had a grammar class more than one class. Automatically, this course had more than one of teachers who had taught grammar. This course also had a different level of time in each program of grammar. There was a regular program which was taken for two weeks, one month and three months. The one month class program became the sample for the data collection in this research. The regular program was not taken as a sample because it had a limit time to give or explain the material to the students.

This study involved the teachers in one of English course in Yogyakarta as the participants of this research. There were five teachers who taught grammar in this course, but the researcher invited only four teachers to be the participants because only four teachers who had taught grammar in the program of one month class. Besides, they taught grammar five days in a week. Also, they taught in the different classes so that they had different students who allowed them to face more students with the different problems.

This research used an interview as a technique to collect the data. Cohen et al. (2011) stated that in order to gather complete and rich data, interview is available to use. The instrument of this research was interview guideline. Interview guideline consisted of some questions about this research topic. This interview guideline contained some questions to be asked to each participant in order to obtain the valid data. The researcher interviewed the participants alternately. Following this, each participant spent around 15-20 minutes to answer all questions in the interview session. Hence, the researcher recorded the interview process with the participants using the audio recorded on the researcher's smartphone.

Finding and Discussion

The Problems Faced by The Students in Learning Grammar at One of the English Courses in Yogyakarta Based on the Teachers' Perspective

In addition, some of the findings obtained from the interviews showed that the problems faced by the students when learning grammar came from linguistic problems. The problems faced by students in this course occurred in the difficulties of the students to learn language in terms of the smallest aspect to larger aspects such as word and sentences. Therefore, the researcher concluded that all of problems were included in the linguistic components of morphology and syntax because those component were the linguistic in language learning. Besides, those linguistic in language learning discussed about linguistics as the basic units of grammatical arrangements such as verb, adjective, word, phrase, clause and sentence. Lumiwu (2017) stated that morphology and syntax are the components of English linguistic which examine about the formation of words and sentences such as the composition, function, and meaning. All of the students' linguistic problem were divided into four findings, and those were part of speech problem, sentence problem, WH question, and

tenses problem. For more detailed information, each finding is explained in the following paragraphs.

Problem in using noun. In part of speech problem, the students faced the difficulty to distinguish the use of countable and uncountable nouns. Rahmat said “Students cannot distinguish between countable and uncountable nouns (P1.3)”. From the statement mentioned, it conveyed about the students' problems when learning part of speech in terms of nouns. Noun is a word that mentions a thing such as table, eraser, house, salt and so forth.

Problem in using pronoun. Another problem in learning grammar was about pronoun. There were three participants who gave their opinions in this problem. Rahmat argued “Students often do incorrect placement about the use of the subject and object of the pronoun (P1.4)”. Dinda also stated “Students feel the difficulty to distinguish between the use of a subject, object, possessive 1 and possessive 2 in pronoun (P2.3)”. Beni gave three answers about this term. Firstly, he argued that the students are confused to distinguish the pronouns as the subject or object (P3.4). Then, the participant three said that the students often the mistake when changing possessive adjective and possessive pronoun (P3.12). Lastly, he said “The students also sometimes replace the reflexive pronouns incorrectly (P3.6)”.

Problem in using verb. As the following problem in the use of part of speech, it was found the students' problem in learning verb. In this part of problem, there were three participants who gave their opinions towards this problem. Rahmat said “Students are confused in distinguishing verbs whether those have the activities or not (P1.6)”. Regarding the statment mentioned, this opinion was already explained by Widianingsih and Gulo (2016) who asserted that in making sentences, sometimes the students do not write substitute verbs such as was and were because they do not understand these words can be verbs or not. Dinda added “Students are confused about the addition of the letter "s" in the third singular person

(P2.1)” and “Students are still confused in using verb 1, verb 2 and verb 3 (P2.7)”. The last opinion came from Beni who said “Students are confused about adding "s" in verb one (P3.3)”.

Problem in using adverb. The fourth problem in learning part of speech occurred in the understanding of the adverb. The only one participant gave the answer to this problem. Dinda said “Students are still confused in distinguishing the adverb of manner from adjective (P2.6)”. The second participants’ opinion was supported by Hernandez (2006) who mentioned that one of the mistakes made by the students when making sentence structures is about using the adverbs.

Problem in using adjective. The fifth problem found was about the understanding an adjective. All the participants gave their opinion towards this problem. Rahmat said “Students feel difficult to rank adjectives (P1.5)”. Besides, Dinda said that “the students feel difficult to distinguish between adjective and adverb (P2.4)”. Beni also mentioned “The students do not understand the order or arrangement in the use of adjective (P3.7)”, and the students cannot place the adjective positions (P3.8)”. Lastly, Gatot said “Students face the difficulty to sort when composing words in making phrases or sentences (P4.4)”.

Problem in using preposition. The sixth problem was found in the use of preposition. Two participants argued in this problem. Dinda said “Students are confused in the use of in, on, and at as the prepositions (P2.8)”. Besides, Gatot also said “Students are confused to use prepositions (P4.5)”. This opinion was an incident as the prove that the use of preposition occurred as the problem for the second language learners. As the second language learners, it might be the difficulty for them to use the prepositions because in their first language, they did not usually use those kinds of word.

Problem in using conjunction. The last problem faced by the students in terms of part of speech in learning grammar was the use of conjunction. Dinda gave the opinion in this part, and she said “Students are still confused about the use of the correlative conjunction (P2.5)”. This problem happened because the students were not familiar with kind of conjunction in English. According to Budiarjo (2018), the students can understand the material of conjunction, but they still get the difficulty to practice in daily life context because the use of conjunction has different rules between mother tongue and English.

Finding 2: Sentence problem. The second linguistic problem faced by the students in learning grammar was about sentence. In this part, most of students still did not understand about the meaning, function and application of sentence. There were some participants who gave their opinions about sentence problem. Rahmat said “Students cannot distinguish verbal and nominal sentences (P1.2)”. Dinda said that the students were still confused to use verbal and nominal sentences (P2.9). Gatot stated “The students feel confused to distinguish the positive, negative and interrogative sentences (P3.2)”. Besides, he also added “Students have wrong understanding about verbal and nominal sentences (P3.9)”. Those problems showed that they were still confused to make a correct sentence because they did not understand about the meaning and function of verbal, nominal, positive, negative and interrogative sentences. According to Silalahi (2017), the students often make the mistakes in making a sentence when designing interrogative sentences.

Finding 3: WH question problem. WH question problem arised as one of the problems in learning grammar. Some of students made the errors or mistakes when they made the question sentences. Beni shared his experience occured towards his students. He said “Students are confused about the function of who and whom (P3.10)”. The problem mentioned was in line with Silalahi (2017) who expressed “ The worst problem came up in mkaing the question sentences when the students made a wrong choice in picking up the

suitable question words for a certain purpose. For example, the students generally mixed to use either “Who” or “Whom” for formulating a question which required an object as the answer”. (p.157).

Finding 4: Tenses problem. The use of tense came as the last problem in part of linguistic aspect in the English grammar learning faced by the students. There were some opinions conveyed by all participants. Rahmat gave four answers about this problem. Firstly, he said “Difficult grammar tenses make the students feel lazy to learn it (P1.1), students are lazy to learn tenses because they feel distressed (P1.7), and the students do not memorize tense formulas and functions (P1.8)”. Dinda also gave her opinion, and he said “Students feel confused in understanding the formula (P2.2), and they are confused about learning tenses because of the changing forms (P2.10)”. According to Wahyuningtyas and Bram (2018), the students have the difficulty in remembering the formula from each tenses. They also said that the students feel the difficulty to analyze the present continuous tense, the present perfect tense and the present perfect continuous tense.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Learning grammar at this course is divided into three programs. The first program is grammar class of two weeks, the second program is one month, and the last program is three month learning program. The researcher chose the program class of one month in this course as a setting of this study. There were four teachers in this course who taught grammar in program of one month. This study adopted the qualitative research approach. Hence, the interview was the instrument used to obtain the information about the students’ problems in learning grammar from the participants in order to gain the in-depth and complete data.

Furthermore, the findings of the research showed that there was one problem faced by the students at that English course when they learnt grammar. In general, the students’ problems

in learning grammar were caused by the linguistic problem. The linguistic problem faced by the students in learning grammar in this course were caused by the students difficulties in learning part of speech, sentence, WH question, and tenses. Besides, the students' problems in learning part of speech occurred when the students learnt the use of pronoun, adverb, conjunction, adjective, verb, and preposition. The interjection came as the one of aspects which never became a problem in the parts of speech when the students learnt this part at this course.

The researcher found that when learning pronoun of parts of speech, some students felt the difficulty to distinguish between the use of a subject, object, possessive 1 and possessive 2 in pronoun. Also, the students were confused in distinguishing pronouns which could be subject or object. In the use of adverb, the students were still confused to distinguish the adverb of manner from adjective. In learning noun, the students felt confused to determine nouns which became the countable or uncountable nouns. In the use of conjunction, the students were still confused about laying on correlative conjunction. The use of adjective problem showed that the students faced the difficulty to rank the adjective forms, and they got the difficulty to distinguish between adjective and adverb. Following this, the students could not place adjective positions, and they got the difficulty to sort when composing words in making phrases or sentences. In the use of verb, there were some students who were still confused to distinguish the verbs whether those had the activities or not. Additionally, the students were confused about adding "s" in verb one, and they were still confused in using verb 1, verb 2 and verb 3. At last, in the problem of the preposition use, the students felt confused to use the prepositions of "in, on, and at", and they were still confused to use prepositions.

The other problems of learning grammar were understanding sentence, WH question, and tenses. In learning sentence, the students were not able to distinguish the verbal and nominal

sentences, the students are still confused about verbal and nominal sentences, and they were confused in distinguishing positive, negative and interrogative sentences. Following this, the students had different understanding about verbal and nominal sentences. Otherwise, in learning WH question, the students felt confused about the function of who and whom. As the last problem in learning grammar, learning tenses became as the general problem faced by some students especially in memorizing formulas. Besides, they felt confused in applying tenses formula in their speaking skill of daily conversation. Because the students got the difficulty to memorize the tense formulas, they felt confused to learn each tense use especially in changing forms. Also, the students forgot about the function of each tense, and they did incorrect selection the use of to be such as is, am, are in the use of tenses.

Recommendation

Based on the findings of this research, the researcher proposes some recommendations for some parties related to this research. The recommendations are intended for teachers, students, and other researchers.

For the teachers. Based on the result of this research, the teachers can know the problems faced by the students in learning grammar. By knowing the students' problems in learning grammar, the researcher recommends the teachers to implement the appropriate strategies to solve and minimize the problems in learning grammar. Therefore, learning grammar is the crucial aspect which the teachers should highlight in order to help the students to learn English aspects in speaking, writing, listening and reading well.

For the students. From this research, the students can find out the problems faced by the students in learning grammar. From those grammar problems, the students can be aware of which parts of the grammar need to learn repeatedly. Besides, the students can develop knowledge, experience, recognition, and understanding of information based on the problems

of learning grammar. Also, the students can also know which materials should be memorized in learning grammar as the main aspect of grammar rule. From the results of this study, the students are expected to manage their time and ways to learn more so that they can learn grammar effectively. After the students know about all of the problems in learning grammar, they are able to take a wiser action when they want to learn grammar easily. Therefore, The researcher recommends all students who want to achieve good both spoken and written should know English component such as mastering part of speech, how to write correct sentences, and tenses well.

For other researchers. Regarding the research findings, other researchers finally know the students' problems in learning grammar. In addition, the other researchers may use this research dealing with the students' problems in learning grammar in the future researches. Moreover, the other researchers hopefully find out more detailed information and expand toward the problems in learning grammar in English context. This research can also help the other researchers to develop this research to be more deeper in order to investigate the same topic of the research. Therefore, the researcher also recommends for other researchers to start working on other topics dealing with the grammar problems such as the use of tense, passive voice, and part of speech in terms of grammar both speaking or writing in order to know how the problems occur in learning those kinds of grammar.

