

PROBLEMS DONE BY THE MICRO TEACHING STUDENTS IN TEACHING THE GRAMMAR FOR A COMMUNICATIVE PURPOSE

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Abstract

The role of grammar cannot be ignored in the language use. The ungrammatical use of language may result in the misunderstanding between the speaker (also the writer) and the listener (also the reader) because grammar also determines the meaning of the language used. Considering its important role, the designers of the SMP and SMA curricula still include the grammar as one of the language features in the curricula. Unfortunately, from long observations in many Micro Teaching classes, it has been found that students still do several problems in teaching grammar deviating from the theory. It seems that it is difficult for the students to practice the theory suggested. This paper discusses the problems done by the Micro Teaching students in the Micro Teaching practice of teaching the grammar of English.

Key words: *teaching problems, micro teaching, grammar*

1. Introduction

As I mentioned in my paper for SELT (Seminar on English Language Teaching) 2014 also held by the English Department of FBS of Universitas Negeri Padang on June 11-12, 2014, the attention to the grammar in the English language teaching has always been serious. The attention to include the grammar in the teaching of English (and in other foreign languages) can be traced back from the oldest and the most traditional method or approach, the grammar-translation method/ approach to the latest and the most communicative approach for the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT).

The "aroma" of grammaticality shown by the popular methods/ approaches was very strong, even though, it was treated differently. The methods or approaches were the Grammar – Translation Method (GTM), the Direct Method (DM), the Audio-lingual Method/ Approach (ALM) and the other methods/approaches emerging in the seventies and the eighties. The methods/approaches emerging in the nineties are, also named the Designer Methods of the Spirited of the Nineties were the Community Language Learning (CLL), the Suggestopedia (SP), the Silent Way (SW), and the Total Physical Response (TPR), (Brown, 1994). There were also two other popular methods/approaches of the eighties, namely, the Natural Approach (NA) and the Communicative Language Learning (CLT).

In the GTM, the grammar became a very important element in its teaching a foreign language. The grammar-even-was discussed and the taught explicitly often called the deductive teaching of the grammar. The explicit teaching of the grammar was aimed at helping the learners to master the grammar of the language being learned well. The good mastery of the grammar was to help the learners able to translate literature (texts) of the foreign language into the learners own language and vice versa.

The DM also treated the grammar as an important factor in mastering a foreign language by treating it in a different way in its teaching. The DM appeared as a reaction to the weakness of the GTM which did not give any attention to the production of oral speech of the learners. Because the DM was aimed at providing the learners with the ability to speak, it maintained the importance of the grammar and the pronunciation. Unlike the GTM, the DM taught the grammar inductively to the learners which means that grammar was not explained but the learners are expected to grasp it from example sentences uttered or used by the teacher in the target language directly.

The ALM which was formerly originated from the Army Method, the method of teaching a foreign language for the US Army during World War 2, also stressed on the accuracy of the grammar through its intensive use of the pattern practice.

The "Designer Methods of the Spirited of the Nineties" comprising of the Suggestopedia (SP), the Silent Way (SW), and the Total Physical Response were also grammatical to some extent. The CLT also taught the grammar but in more humanistic way by letting any device to use as long as it helped the learners in their struggle to communicate.

From the explanations about the methods/approaches above, the grammar was actually never neglected, (even in nowadays' practice of language teaching/learning) it was regarded important in mastering a language and it was taught either deductively or inductively. In line with the methods/approaches mentioned, the grammar (of English) has always been in the school curricula from the senior high school to the university level in Indonesia. Even the three latest curricula of our schools, either the junior high schools

and seniorhigh schools: The KBK curriculum, the KTSP curriculum and the 2013 curriculum have put the grammatical contents as a part of the curricular contents. Until now, however, in general, Indonesian schools' curricula still include the grammar of the English as an important part of this curricula.

This paper discusses the teaching problems done by the students in Micro Teaching classes in teaching the grammar of English. The data were taken from 70 students of both State University of Padang (UNP) and Bung Hatta University (UBH).

II. Discussion

A. Why Grammar Should be Introduced

From the explanation in Part 1, it can be understood that--in general--the grammar of the target language being taught--is introduced in two ways: deductive/explicit and inductive/implicit. According to Diaz-Rico (2012:16and30), native speakers are not necessarily able to explain a grammatical point because to them, the grammar is acquired as "just the way it is". However, to understand how they must begin to understand how the language functions to acquire both the written and spoken competence to match the form and functions, Diaz-Rico (2012:212) adds that to promote the learner language development, current research emphasizes the use of meaningful and purposeful communicative interactions for both oral and written.

Jufrizal (2014:273-274) emphasizes that a language user has to have grammatical competence and language awareness for full communicative competence and understanding on the tenses and aspects for EFL learners in Indonesia is essential. There are 4 reasons that he proposes, as follows:

1. English is typologically designed as tenseness language; and there is no clause or sentence is free from and/or aspect in English.
2. Language awareness, among others, is fundamentally built and strengthened by grammatical competence; and one of the components of the grammatical competence and aspect. He stresses that successful EFL learners should have sufficient language awareness and language competence for the communicative competence.
3. Tenses and aspects are not only theoretical – conceptual phenomena, but also practical ones, therefore, ELF learners have to know the nature of the grammatical features psychologically and academically to be used in actual verbal communication.
4. English is learned and taught as a foreign language. The EFL language learners in Indonesia are not well provided with the environment and society to use the language being learned outside the classroom. Consequently, they do not have sufficient opportunity to practice or use it outside the classroom.

Jufrizal (2014) as mentioned above emphasizes that learners need to have grammatical competence to have the communicative competence.

From the explanation above, we learn that grammar has been regarded as an important language element to teach to promote the learners language development; and to teach it, we have to use meaningful and purposeful communicative interactions. Beside that, a language user has to have grammatical competence.

B. How Grammar Has Been Introduced

In relation to the status of English as a foreign language, expert in language teaching or language teaching methodologists have proposed, at least, two general ideas about how the grammatical competence should be introduced : deductively and inductively.

Nunan (1991:156) says that deductive learning is an approach to language teaching in which learners are taught rules and given specific information about language. The learners are expected to apply the rules taught explicitly when they use the language. In this way of presenting or teaching, the teacher explains the grammar in details before letting the learners practice it in language use. The methods designed to study the grammatical rules of a language make use the deductive principles.

In relation to deductive teaching, Diaz-Rico (2008: 269-270) states 2 benefits, as follows:

1. Second language acquisition, as a domain of learning, is difficult. Precise control of meaning, careful attunement to intonation, and mastery of behavioral subtlety are needed for linguistic and cultural proficiency.
2. Explicit teaching may be required when some basic feature of English is so illogical or dissimilar to the L1 that is not easily understood, even in context, for example, use of word order, determiners, prepositions, auxiliaries and phrasal verbs.

In contrast, the inductive teaching does not teach grammatical or other types of rules directly but it lets the learners discover or induce rules from their experience of using the language (Richards et al in Nunan, 1991:156).

Rutherford (in Nunan: 1991) sees that classroom activities are basically inductive rather deductive. He says that there are two benefits of these activities: to facilitate the learning process by providing data through which learners may form and test hypotheses and by helping learners link the new with what they already know.

According to Brown (1994: 351) in most context, for the teaching of grammar, an inductive approach is more appropriate. He bases the belief on four reasons:

1. It is more in keeping with natural language acquisition, where rules are absorbed subconsciously with little or no conscious focus.
2. It conforms more easily to the concept of inter language development in which learners progress, on possible, through stages of rule acquisition.
3. It allows students to get a communicative feel for some aspect of language before possibly being overwhelmed by grammatical explanations.
4. It builds more intrinsic motivation by allowing student to discover rules rather the being told them.

Roza (2014: 464) adds that in the inductive approach there is noticing which is the process of students to become aware of something in particular. Noticing, according to her, can be used to teach a grammar concept when students are given examples and they come to understand the rule by noticing what those examples in common. However, she claims – based on her observation that the common approach to grammar instruction in English classroom is teacher centered where the teacher plays the role of knowledge provider and learners role is limited to receivers.

In general, the explanation above tells us that there are two alternative ways to choose to teach the grammar: deductive or inductive.

C. Teaching English for a Communicative Purpose

The first thing that must be clear when a teacher wants to teach a language, such as English, is the goal to achieve. The goal, of course, must be clearly and appropriately defined because it is vital to success of the teaching and learning of the language (Davies and Pearse in Saun, 2014 :389). According to them, to achieve the ultimate goal of teaching and learning English, that is, to enable learners to communicate effectively and, as far as possible, accurately, short-term objectives are very important to define or formulate in order to make it easy for the teachers and the learners to have a feeling of progress. (Saun, 2014).

The short-term objectives of the English language teaching at our junior and senior high school can be read in the statement of the basic competencies (usually shortened to KD's) in the syllabi of the two levels of school. Below are examples of KD's taken from KTSP (Curriculum of 2006) and Curriculum of 2013 for the senior high schools.

KD 1.1 *Merespon makna yang terdapat dalam percakapan transaksional (to get things done) dan interpersonal (bersosialisasi) resmi dan tak resmi yang menggunakan ragam bahasa lisan sederhana secara akurat, lancar dan berterima dalam konteks kehidupan sehari-hari dan melibatkan tindak tutur: berkenalan, bertemu/berpisah, menyetujui ajakan/tawaran/undangan, menerima janji dan membatalkan janji.*

KD 1.3 *Mengungkapkan makna yang terdapat dalam percakapan transaksional (to get things done) dan interpersonal (bersosialisasi) resmi dan tak resmi yang menggunakan ragam bahasa lisan sederhana secara akurat, lancar dan berterima dalam konteks kehidupan sehari-hari dan melibatkan tindak tutur.* (BNSP, 2006)

KD 3.1 *Menganalisis fungsi social, struktur teks dan unsure kebahasaan dari teks pemaparan jati diri, sesuai dengan konteks penggunaannya.*

KD 4.1 *Menangkap makna pemaparan jati diri lisan dan tulisan.*

4.2 *menyusun teks lisan dan tulis sederhana, untuk memaparkan, menanyakan dan merespon pemaparan jati diri, dengan memperhatikan fungsi social, struktur teks, dan unsur kebahasaan, secara benar dan sesuai dengan konteks.* (Kemendikbud, 2014).

From the KD's of the two curricula above, it can be understood that the statements of KD's of Curriculum of 2006 do not explicitly state the language features, such as grammar as a part of the teaching materials but it is just understood from the expression "secara akurat" (accurately). In contrast, in curriculum of 2013, it is clearly or implicitly stated that the language features (such as grammar) are apart of the teaching materials of the English teaching in our schools.

The problem now is not whether the language features (in this paper: the grammar) is included in the teaching materials in our junior and senior high schools but how to introduce it to the students. In my mind, the teacher of English has to present/introduce/teach it in such a way that the learners find it easy and comfortable to learn it. By this, we want the learners to agree or want to use English, not like the situation we have seen so far where very many (even most) students seem not to want to use English. One of the possible problems is that they are worried and ashamed of making mistakes/ errors, especially grammatical ones which are more easily traced.

In part B above, it was expressed that in general there are two alternative ways of introducing the grammar, namely, deductive and inductive. After teaching for a long time, I have made a belief that, if the aim of teaching English is for a communicative purpose, the inductive way is better because it gives less burdens or problems to the learners. This condition can make learners feel that learning English is easy and enjoyable.

In relation to this goal, Brown (1994: 349) suggests some techniques to teach grammar which he named the "appropriate grammar focusing techniques". According to him, the techniques chosen should:

1. Be embedded in meaningful, communicative context
2. Contribute positively communicative goals
3. Promote accuracy within fluent, communicative language
4. Not overwhelm students with linguistic terminology
5. Be as lively and intrinsically motivating as possible.

Brown (1994: 352) also provides foreign language teachers with simple rules of thumb for grammatical explanations, as follows:

1. Keep explanations brief and simple; use the mother tongue if students cannot follow the explanation in English.
2. Use charts and other visuals whenever possible to graphically depict grammatical relationship.
3. Illustrate with, unambiguous examples.
4. Try to account for varying cognitive styles among the students.
5. Do not get yourself tied up in knots over so called "exception to rules".
6. If you do not know how to explain something, do not risk giving false information.

In brief, the ultimate goal of teaching and learning English, that is, to enable learners to communicate effectively and, as far as possible, accurately. To achieve the final goal, short-term objectives are very important to define first. In addition, it is better to use the inductive approach to achieve the objectives.

D. Problems Done by the Micro Teaching Students in Teaching

As mentioned in Introduction, the sources of the data for this paper are 70 English students of micro teaching of state University of Padang (UNP) and Bung Hatta University (UBH) in Padang. The sources consisted 33 students of UNP and 37 students of UBH.

From the data, there were 7 serious problems found in teaching the grammar/structure by the micro teaching students, as follows:

1. Overwhelming the learners with (linguistic) terminologies.
2. Beginning with the theory, definition or concept of the grammar/structure.
3. Not providing learners with sufficient example sentences.
4. Not beginning with examples of regular or from general forms but mixing them.
5. Writing the sentence formulas.
6. Not making the meaning of the words in the example sentences clear/understood.
7. Not providing the example sentences with the adverb of time/time signal, especially, in the teaching of the tenses.

Below are the explanations of each of the problems above based on the highest to the lowest percentage of the data:

1. Overwhelming the learners with the linguistic terminologies

The main points to make clear when a teacher teaches a grammatical point/structure to the learners are the form and the usage/ meaning of the form. Very often that teachers as it is also reflected in the students' practice of micro teaching. They often overwhelm their learners with linguistic terminologies. Overwhelming the learners with linguistic terminologies in their teaching

of a grammatical point or structure, the teachers use the names of the grammatical topics, such as *simple present, regular verbs, gerunds and prepositions*.

In teaching the simple present tense, a teacher, for example, often and even almost always uses the terms 'simple present' repeatedly, instead of 'verb 1'. If he uses the term 'simple present', it does not give a precise understanding of the form being learned, at least, this does not make the learners think or 'see' or imagine the form of the verb directly. Even though, 'verb 1' is also a common term in teaching English but using it will give a clearer understanding about the form of the grammar being taught to the students.

To make this point more clearly understood, let's take another example: teaching the gerunds. Some teachers (maybe 'many') uses the term "gerund or the gerund" in their explanation about the example sentences. They will say: "*we use gerund in this sentence because it functions as the subject*". In my mind, to help the learners find it easy (easier) to understand and-even-to remember, it will be better if they use the term 'verb plus-ing'. This term (verb plus-ing) will make the cognitive association to the form of the grammar directly and easily, more directly and more easily than using the linguistic term 'gerund'.

There were 34 students (48.57%) did this problem. There were two types of using the terminologies in their teaching. *First*, the use of the terminologies when they were teaching orally in the explanation, there were 18 students (25.71%) did this problem and, *second*, 16 students (22.86%) who use the terminology in their written examples either on the board or on the slide shows, see the examples below:

- He studied English last night
S V2 Complement
- She will go to Paris Tomorrow
S aux V1 object

2. Beginning with the theory, definition or concept

As described above, the inductive teaching starts with example sentences in context. It does not teach grammatical or other types of rules directly but it lets the learners discover or induce the rules from the experience of using the language. In the classroom setting, the experience is primarily attained from the example sentences from the teacher. By this approach the learners will have less burden in acquiring the language because they will feel that they use the language by "imitating" the example sentences. Through this experience, the learners do not have to have (to use) a careful monitor on the language form/rules, consequently, they do not have think of the grammatical form/structure to use when they want to use the language.

In contrast, beginning with the theory, definition or concept really contradicts with the inductive way of teaching the grammar. This way is purely deductive. A deductive teaching will make the learners focus on the form of the grammar being learned. This will lead the learners to highly monitor the language form to use when the want to use the language. This kind of monitoring will not make the student feel 'safe' when the have to communicate. There were as many students as in the first problem above for this problem, namely, 34 students (48.57%).

3. Not providing learners with sufficient example sentences

In teaching a language, especially, a teacher has to provide the learners with sufficient examples. The provision of sufficient quantity of examples will help the learners to get comprehensible inputs of the language or the grammatical form easily. In the practice of micro teaching observed, there were 32 students (45.71%) did this problem. Very many of them only presented 1 or 2 examples and then after explained the form, they move to teaching a new form. This way will make the learners understand or internalize the form easily and, consequently, they will not use the form easily either. For example, with the topic of 'wish' sentences, a student began with this shown in a slide show, as below:

"wish" is used to describe:

- Impossibility or improbability
- Imaginary
- Contrary to fact
- Special verbs forms is used after wish

After the show of the theory, she gave a few examples with some explanation and then continued to giving some exercises.

4. Not beginning the teaching with examples of regular or from general forms, but mixing them.

The introduction of a new grammatical form will be better if it is introduced in its regular/general form first with sufficient example because cognitively a learner (anybody) will find it easy to understand the whole lesson about a topic if the presentation of the forms begins with the regular one or the general one. When teaching 'the simple past tense', for example, the learners will find it easy to understand the whole lesson about the forms of the tense if the teacher begins with introducing the example sentences having the regular verbs (verbs with-ed ending) before introducing those with the irregular forms (verbs without-ed ending).

In contrast, if the teaching of the simple past tense begins with the introduction of example sentences with the irregular verbs, it will be difficult (more difficult) for the learners to understand the tense because the brain will catch the message or information better if beginning with regularity rather than irregularity.

There were 22 students (31.43%) did the problem of this case.

5. Providing the sentence formulas

The old tradition of teaching grammar/structure seems to be still used nowadays. Seventeen students (24, 29%) provided their teaching of grammar/structure with the sentence formulas, not only to show to highlight the grammatical form being taught or introduced. The following are two examples that they made:

For the simple present tense:

a. $S + V + S + D + \text{adverb of time}$

b. $S + \text{to be} + D/\text{comp/time}$

This kind of teaching the grammar/structure make the learners find it difficult to remember the rules/grammar and--intum--can make them discouraged and unmotivated to learn and, moreover, to use it. About this (Using the sentence pattern or formulas), I wrote/presented my paper entitled "The Sentence-Pattern Approach in Teaching the English Tenses : Problems in Achieving the Communicative Goals" for SELT 2014 (Seminar on English language and teaching, 2014) hosted by English department, faculty of languages and Arts, State University of Padang, held on June 11-12, 2014.

Here, I rewrite the problems caused by the use of the sentence - pattern approach in achieving the communicative goals again as presented in the paper (with some correction to relate it to this point):

- a. The number of patterns to memorize
If all tenses are taught to the learners and each of the tenses introduces 4 patterns: the positive, negative and the interrogative (yes/no and wh-question), there will be 64 patterns to memorize. This number is only for the active sentences; if the patterns of the passive sentences are include, so there will be other 64 patterns for this type. To sum up, there are 128 patterns to be memorized altogether. The transitive the intransitive cases
Transitive verbs need an object whereas intransitive verbs do not need an object of the verbs. Consequently, there will be sentence patterns to teach by the teachers and to learn by the learners.
 - b. Using (long) sentence - patterns in the teaching of grammar, especially the tense of English will make the learners see that learning of language forms, structures and rules as the main purpose of the course (Davis and Pears, 2008). If the learners think that these are the main purpose, they will, of course, pay their attentions to them. Consequently, their communication will not be fluent or even 'fail'. Whereas in a communicative class, fluency and accuracy of the language use must be balanced because fluency and accuracy are important goals in communicative language teaching (Brown, 1994:254).
 - c. The sentence elements which are made in the sentence pattern approach do not represent all the elements human beings use in the communication.
6. Not making the meaning of the words of the example sentences clear understood to by the learners
One of the teacher's tasks in teaching a language is to make the students want to use the language. To make them want to use it is by making them have the communicative competences. One of the competences is the grammatical competence (as one of the linguistic competences)

which can help a language user use the language accurately. The English grammar that also determines the meaning is not easily understood by the learners if they do not know the words in the example sentences used by the teacher.

The learners' understanding on the grammar of English depends very much their understanding on the words used in the example sentences. It means to have a meaningful teaching, the teacher has to make the meaning of the words clear/understood by the learners. This is necessary because by knowing the meaning of the words, the learners understand how the language works through the teacher's examples. The data proved that there were 16 students (22,86%) did not make the meaning of the words clear/understood to the students. There was no effort by the students to check the meaning of the words when they were introducing the example sentences.

7. Not providing the adverb of time/time signal in the example sentences when teaching the tenses

When a teacher teaches a tense, he has to make the form and the usage/meaning of its form clear/understood. The absence of the adverb of time/time signal, the usage/meaning of the form (tense) cannot be understood by the learners because the understanding on the form depends on the form-usage/meaning relationship. That is why, when the teaches a tense, he has to provide the examples with appropriate adverb of times/time signals in the example sentences to make the teaching meaningful.

For example, when he teaches the simple present tense, he has to give examples like the ones below:

. I go to school on foot everyday.

. They play football every week.

The data proved that there were 13 students (18,57%) did this problem in their micro teaching practice.

In conclusion to the explanation above, there were seven problems done by the students of the State University of Padang and Bung Hatta University in Padang in the teaching or presenting of the grammar in in their Micro Teaching classes.

III. Conclusion and Suggestion

From the descriptions of the main problems discussed above, it was found that there were seven problems done by the Micro Teaching students of UNP and UBH, as follows:

1. Overwhelming the learners with (linguistic) terminologies.
2. Beginning with the theory, definition or concept of the grammar/structure.
3. Not providing learners with sufficient example sentences.
4. Not beginning with examples of regular or from general forms / but mixing them.
5. Writing the sentence formulas.
6. Not making the meaning of the words in the example sentences clear/understood.
7. Not providing the example sentences with the adverb of time / time signal, especially, in the teaching of the tenses.

Therefore, it is suggested that the teachers of English (both classroom teachers and micro teaching students) avoid those problems in teaching the grammar in order to help learners find it easy (easier) to achieve the communicative purpose.

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