

Teachers' and Students' Perceptions of Grammar Teaching in Curriculum 13

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ABSTRACT

This research is aimed at investigating teachers' and students' perceptions on the role of grammar in English teaching learning and how grammar is taught in curriculum 13. The research employed a qualitative descriptive design. The data were gathered through questionnaire and interview. The participants involved in this research were three English teachers and thirty students of grade X and XI in a private senior high school in Bandung. The findings revealed that the teachers and students had the same view about the importance of grammar both in language teaching learning and communication. Although the majority of them agreed that the knowledge of grammar is beneficial in both speaking and writing activities, there were a few of them who disagreed its importance in speaking. Furthermore, teachers and students in this research were aware that grammar in the curriculum 13 is more appropriate to be taught under Communicative Language Teaching (in which grammar is taught integrated into communicative activities, inductively, and with contextualized grammar practice) than under Grammar Translation Method (in which grammar is taught in separate lesson, in deductive approach, and emphasizing practice of patterns). From the findings, it was recommended that grammar needs to be taught in the current curriculum using Communicative Language Teaching method.

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Introduction

Considering the main objective of language learning in Curriculum 2013 which emphasizes language as a means of communication (Kemendikbud, 2013), language teaching that takes grammar as a primary focus seems to oppose the communicative objective. Even, there are some experts and teachers who regard that grammar should be eliminated entirely from language learning since language is acquired through natural exposure, not formal instruction. As stated by Krashen, (1985), grammar instruction is unhelpful and even harmful since learners acquire the language through natural exposure, not formal instruction. The formal grammar instruction only increases declarative knowledge of grammar structure, not the ability to use forms correctly. In addition, the focuses on the language accuracy will obstruct language fluency. In contrast, some others believe that grammar still need to be taught in language teaching learning because to make

the students use the language communicatively, they need to master linguistic competence (also called grammatical competence) dealing with how to use lexis, syntax, structures, and then apply them in communicative situation (Thornbury, 2011).

This condition leads to the uncertain place of grammar in language learning. Many teachers worried about its status within the process of language teaching and learning, whether or not grammar should be taught at all and how grammar should be taught. A number of researches have been conducted trying to answer these questions. (Long, 1983) argues that focus on 'form' may be well necessary for students to achieve accuracy as well as fluency. Cadierno (1995) and Carroll & Swain (1993) found the significant effects of grammar instruction on the attainment of accuracy. That statement is supported by Norris & Ortega (2000) who found that explicit instruction (presenting the structure, describing and exemplifying it, and giving the rules for its use) results in substantial gains in the learning of target structures in comparison to implicit instruction (consisting of communicative exposure to the target form alone).

The important place of grammar in language learning was also confirmed by the other research such as Azar (2007), Kao et al. (2022), Farrell & Patricia (2005) and Wong & Barrea-Marlys (2012) concerning teachers' perceptions of grammar teaching. The findings revealed that teachers view grammar as an inseparable part of language learning and formal grammar instruction has a facilitative role in language learning. The number of research dealing with teachers' perceptions on grammar teaching have been much carried out, but the research which tries to meet students' and teachers' perceptions of that issue is still rarely to conduct.

Therefore, this research paper is intended to investigate teachers' and students' perceptions of the role of grammar in English teaching learning and how grammar is taught in current curriculum. The findings of the research are expected to be able to enrich the literature of grammar teaching to EFL students especially in current curriculum applied in Indonesia and to give description of the role of grammar in English teaching learning and how grammar is taught in current curriculum

Method

This research used a qualitative descriptive design since it was suitable to give a complete description of teachers' and students' perceptions of the role of grammar in English teaching learning and how grammar is taught in current curriculum. As stated by Wu & Volker (2009), the qualitative descriptive design is used to give a description and explanation of beliefs, meanings in context-specific setting and behaviors. This research was undertaken at a private senior high school in Bandung. The participants involved in this research were three English teachers and thirty students of the tenth and eleventh grades.

To collect the data needed, a questionnaire was distributed to the participants and interview was conducted to confirm the data collected from the questionnaires. The questionnaire was consisted of twelve items which were adapted from Male (2011). The questionnaires with the same items were given to the teachers and students to find out whether there were different perceptions about the role of grammar in English teaching learning and how grammar is taught in current curriculum among them. The questionnaires had five-point scales in the Likert format (strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, and strongly agree) to indicate the teachers' and the students' agreement or disagreement with the statement. The interview was addressed to three English teachers who

taught in grade ten and eleven. The process of interview was audio-taped and transcribed. The interview was conducted in Bahasa Indonesia for better understanding.

As suggested by Alwasilah (2017), the data analysis of qualitative research commonly uses parallel flows, namely data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusion. All the data obtained from questionnaires and interview were selected and simplified into the data focus. All the irrelevant data would not be taken into account in order to get a clear picture of teachers' and students' perceptions of grammar teaching in the current curriculum. The data from the questionnaires were displayed in form of table while the data from the interview were presented in the form of text. Those displays were aimed at simplifying the data presentation regarding teachers' and students' perceptions of grammar teaching in the current curriculum. After the data from the questionnaires and the interview were reduced and displayed, the drawing conclusion was presented in the section of results and discussions.

Results and Discussion

Teachers' and Students' Perceptions of the Role of Grammar in English Teaching Learning

This section deals with the first research question of the research that is teachers' and students' perceptions of the role of grammar in English teaching learning. From twelve items included in the questionnaire, there are four statements intended to find out teachers' and students' perceptions of the role of grammar in English teaching learning and its importance in speaking and writing activities as presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Teachers' and Students' Perceptions of The Role of Grammar in English Teaching Learning

No	Statement	Teacher vs. Student	Agreement/ Disagreement (%)				
			Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	Grammar plays an important role in English teaching and learning as a foreign language.	T				100	
		S				76.7	23.3
2	The knowledge of English Grammar is needed to use the language in communication.	T				100	
		S				80	20
3	It is possible to speak English well without any grammatical knowledge	T		66.7		33.3	
		S	10	70	3.33	16.7	
4	It is possible to write English well without any grammatical knowledge.	T		100			
		S	23.3	76.7			

As shown in the table 1, the percentage of the respondents' perceptions of the role of grammar in English teaching and learning was very high. The finding revealed that all of teachers (100%) agreed with the statement that grammar plays an important role in English teaching and learning as a foreign language. In addition, the students had the similar perceptions of the role of grammar. It can be seen from the table that 76.6% of the students

agreed and 23.3% of them strongly agreed with that statement. Those findings were supported by the data from the interview, as shown in the excerpt below.

Excerpt 1.

Grammar is very important because by learning grammar the students know how to organize words and make meaningful sentences (interviewee 1).

The similar perceptions of teachers and students on the role of grammar in English teaching and learning were in line with theory of Larsen-Freeman (1991) who says that grammar is one of three dimensions of language which are interconnected one each other. Grammar deals with the form or the structures of language, but those forms are literally meaningless without semantics (meaning) that assign the context (pragmatics). In conclude, by keeping the interconnection of those three dimensions, the students can learn the language meaningfully.

The table also showed that the percentage of the respondents' perceptions of the importance of grammar in communication was very high. It revealed that all of teachers (100%) agreed with the statement that the knowledge of English Grammar is needed to use the language in communication. Similarly, 80% of the students agreed and 20% of them strongly agreed with that statement. Those findings were confirmed by one of the teachers' statements in the interview, as showed in the excerpt below.

Excerpt 2.

By knowing grammar, students can communicate and understand what people are talking to them well. Besides, it can avoid them from misunderstanding (interviewee 2).

The teachers' and students' perceptions of the role of grammar in communication is supported by Wong & Barrea-Marlys (2012) who state that grammatical competence also called linguistic competence is one of four aspects needed to develop one's communicative competence. The other aspects are sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competence. Grammatical competence concerns on the use of lexis, syntax, and structures. Sociolinguistic competence refers to the appropriateness of language use in different situations and settings. Discourse competence means the ability to form oral and written language appropriately and meaningfully. Strategic competence deals with the use of verbal and non-verbal communication strategies to enhance the efficiency of communication.

The respondents' perceptions of the importance of grammar in communication was in line with their disagreement with the statement that it is possible to speak English well without any grammatical knowledge. As shown in the table, 66.7% of teachers disagreed and only 33.3% of teachers agreed with that statement. Similarly, 10% of students strongly disagreed, 70 % of them disagreed, and only 16.7% of students disagreed with that statement. It revealed that the majority of them viewed the knowledge of grammar is important in speaking activity. It is supported by the data gained from interview, as seen below.

Excerpt 3.

In my opinion, the knowledge about grammar is needed in speaking because without grammar the students will not know how to combine words into sentence and how to make the sentence meaningful. Although sometimes we break the rules in speaking, but grammar is still needed as a basic knowledge to make meaningful sentence (Interviewee 2).

The importance of grammar in speaking is in line with findings obtained by Indriani & Sakina (2022) that showed that the lack of students' competence in English structure make

them produce English speaking with incorrect word structure and sometimes make the listeners cannot get the meaning. In other words, inadequate grammatical competence makes the process of making-meaning failed and hinder the process of communication. However, the teacher who disagreed with the statement viewed that grammar is not really important in speaking since fluency is more emphasized in speaking. It is confirmed by the teacher's statement in the interview, as shown in the excerpt below.

Excerpt 4.

In my opinion, grammar is not really emphasized during conversation since it can prohibit the students to speak fluently. They will think too much before they speak. Besides, because speaking is more spontaneous, sometimes little grammatical error is tolerated. Even, some native speakers also break grammar rules (interviewee 3).

Furthermore, the respondents' perceptions of the role of grammar in writing showed a high percentage. It can be seen from the table that all of teachers (100%) disagreed that it is possible to write English well without any grammatical knowledge. Similarly, 23.3% of students strongly disagreed and 76.7 of them disagreed with that statement. The data from interview, as shown in the excerpt below, supported their perceptions that grammar does play an important role in writing.

Excerpt 5.

Grammar is really important in writing. Different from speaking where little grammatical error can be tolerated. In writing, any little mistake in grammar is not permitted. Because we have more time to think in arranging sentence, our writing must be as perfect as possible (interviewee 3).

The different percentage between the role of grammar in speaking and writing revealed that there was different perception among teachers and students concerning that issue. Some of them concern on how to express their ideas effectively and fluently rather than accurately in speaking activities. But all of them emphasized accuracy in writing activities.

From the findings, it can be drawn two conclusions. First, teachers and students in this research had the same view about the importance of grammar both in language teaching learning and communication. Their awareness of the necessity of grammar in both activities showed their comprehension that to master a language, there is a certain structure that they should follow. Unless they understand it well, good communication will not be attained. Second, teachers' and students' perceptions of the role of grammar in speaking and writing activities were a little bit different. All of them agreed that grammar is very useful in writing but not all of them have the same opinion in speaking. The different perception among teachers and students concerning those issues revealed their belief that the good grammatical construction is a must in writing since the longer time the writer has to plan and produce the language in written form. In contrast, language in spoken form tends to be spontaneous so some ungrammatical constructions might appear more frequently and be more tolerated than in written form.

Teachers' and Students' Perceptions of How Grammar is Taught in Curriculum 13

This section deals with the second research question of the research that is teachers' and students' perceptions of how grammar is taught in current curriculum. From twelve items included in the questionnaire, there are eight statements intended to find out teachers' and students' perceptions of how grammar is taught in current curriculum including instructional

approach (deductive vs. inductive), grammar teaching in isolation or context, activities and techniques for its teaching: practice of structure, contextualized practice, the use of grammatical terms, the use of explicit explanation, and the role of grammatical correction.

The result of questionnaire about teachers' and students' perceptions of how grammar is taught in the current curriculum is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Teachers' and Students' Perceptions of How Grammar is Taught in Curriculum 13

No	Statement	Teacher vs. Student	Agreement/ Disagreement (%)				
			Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
5	Grammar is best taught integrated into communicative activities rather than in separate lesson.	T				100	
		S		3.3	10	56.7	30
6	Grammar is best taught inductively rather than deductively.	T				100	
		S		3.3	6.6	60	30
7	Practice of structures/ pattern is important in learning English grammar.	T	33.3	66.7			
		S		70	20	10	
8	Contextualized grammar practice in communicative activities is relevant in the learning of English grammar.	T				33.3	66.7
		S		10	3.33	56.7	30
9	The use of overwhelming terminology is irrelevant in learning English grammar.	T				100	
		S		20		60	20
10	Explicit explanation about grammar is helpful for students to produce grammatically correct language.	T				66.7	33.3
		S		6.7	3.33	70	20
11	Grammatical correction is important to improve language accuracy and to prevent fossilization of error.	T				66.7	33.3
		S		6.7		63.3	30
12	Accuracy activities are as important as fluency activities for language learning.	T				100	
		S		1	19	63.3	33.3

As shown in the table 2, the distribution of the respondents' perceptions of how grammar is taught in current curriculum revealed that inductive approach, grammar teaching in context, and contextualized practice within communicative activities were preferred by the respondents.

As seen from the table, all of teachers (100%) agreed, 56.7% of students agreed, and 30% of them strongly agreed with grammar is best taught integrated into communicative

activities rather than in separate lesson. Besides, all of teachers (100%) agreed, 60% of students agreed, and 30% of them strongly agreed with grammar is best taught inductively rather than deductively. Then, 33.3% of teachers agreed, 66.7 of them strongly agreed, 56.7% students agreed, and 30% of them strongly agreed with contextualized grammar practice in communicative activities is relevant in the learning of English grammar.

Teachers' and students' agreement with the inductive grammar teaching that is integrated in communicative activities and having contextualized grammar practice revealed that grammar in current curriculum is best taught in communicative language teaching. As stated by Thornbury (2011) in CLT classroom, especially with the shallow-end approach, grammar is taught inductively in which the students are first exposed to various language forms and then they are asked to discover or induce the rules and make generalization on their own (Azar, 2007; Brown, 2001; Ellis, 2006). That statement was supported by Schmidt (2001), who believed that language learning in CLT is facilitated by activities that involve inductive or discovery learning of underlying rules of language use and organization. The discovery learning tasks the teacher preferred allows the students to give more cognitive effort and understand the language more than given the materials by the teacher.

In addition, teachers' agreement with the integrated grammar teaching in communicative activities rather than in isolation was supported by Long (1983) who advised that the grammatical structure is better embedded into general language lesson rather than separate it in single lesson and treat it as discrete skill. Since grammar is best taught integrated in communicative activities, the good way to practice grammar is by using the grammar in contextualized practice within communicative activities. It is in line with Schmidt (2001) viewpoint about language learning in CLT that language learning is facilitated when learners are engaged in interaction and meaningful communication.

In relation with how grammar is best taught in current curriculum, the table showed that 66.7% of teachers disagreed, 33.3% of them strongly disagreed and 70% of students disagreed that practice of structures or patterns is important in learning English grammar. In addition, all of teachers (100%) agreed and 80% of students agreed and strongly agreed that the use of overwhelming terminology is irrelevant in learning English grammar. The data revealed that teachers and students had the same perceptions that the practice of grammatical structures and the use of overwhelming grammatical terms were not relevant any more in grammar teaching and learning in current curriculum. That statement was supported by the data gained in the interview, as shown in the excerpts below.

Excerpt 6.

As we know that curriculum 2013 emphasizes on language learning objective that is to develop students' communicative competence. So, the intention here is to encourage students to practice the language in communication. The practice of patterns in written form is not relevant with our objectives (interviewee 3).

Excerpt 7.

I think the use of overwhelming grammatical terms just makes the students confuse in learning English. I prefer to ask them to communicate than recalling rules and grammatical terms. They will be more enjoyed to have conversation by using the rules in it than learning grammar by rules and terms. It will be boring for them (interviewee 2).

Although both teachers and students preferred on grammar teaching in CLT, they agreed that the explicit explanation about grammar is helpful for students to produce grammatically correct language. As shown in the table, 66.7% of teachers agreed and 3.3% of them strongly

agreed with that statement. Similarly, 70% of students agreed and 20% of them strongly agreed with that statement. The similar perceptions of teachers and students on that idea were probably influenced by EFL context where the students hardly coped with natural language learning with zero position of grammar. The explicit explanation of grammar is still needed to help language learning process. Dewi et al. (2023) also found that the teacher explicitly explained some grammatical structures in teaching writing and this teacher's behavior demonstrates that she was conscious of the significance of writing grammar proficiency. This practice supported Khatib & Chalak (2022) claim that mastering grammar is important for students to deepen their comprehension of how to generate meaning from texts. Nevertheless, the explanation given should be brief and simple. It was supported by the data gained from the interview, as shown in the excerpt below.

Excerpt 8.

Somehow, our students still need grammar explanation. We cannot let them discover and infer the rules by themselves without any guidance from the teacher. Perhaps it can happen with high level of students, but I don't think so with the lower level. They still need grammar explanation. But when we explain the grammar, the explanation may not be too long and complicated. Just keep it short and simple (Interviewee 1).

The teacher's emphasis on a brief and simple explanation of grammar to students was in line with Brown (2001) statement that grammatical explanation can be occasionally given to adult when the explanation is short and simple, the teacher uses visual aids such as chart and graphic to show grammatical relationship, the illustration must be clear, the teacher uses varying cognitive styles among the students, the 'exceptions' of rule should not be explained, and the teacher is not allowed give false answer to the question that he or she does not know.

In addition, the table showed that 66.7% of teachers agreed and 33.7% of them strongly agreed that grammatical correction is important to improve language accuracy and to prevent fossilization of error. Similarly, 63.3% of students agreed and 30% of them strongly agreed with that statement. The teachers' and students' agreement to that idea revealed their awareness of the importance of language accuracy as well as fluency. It was in line with their affirmation to the statement of accuracy activities are as important as fluency activities for language learning. Based on the table, all of teachers (100%) agreed, 63.3% of students agreed, and 33.3% of them strongly agreed with that statement. The findings were confirmed by the data from the interview, as shown in the excerpt below.

Excerpt 9.

Grammatical correction is important because if we don't correct the error, the students will regard it is correct and they use the error form again and again, until they are permanent. So, it is important to correct the students' grammatical error. However, the way to correct them should be paid attention. The teacher can correct them after their performance finished and avoid the word 'wrong' since it will demotivate them (Interviewee 2).

The teachers' perception of the importance of grammatical correction in improving students' language accuracy might be influenced by the level of students' proficiency which is still intermediate. It is possibly that not all of them are aware of their ungrammatical errors and able to correct it by themselves. Therefore, instead of letting their errors become fossilized, the teachers prefer to give overt correction in a good way.

In conclude, the teachers and the students in this research were aware that grammar teaching learning under Grammar Translation Method (in which grammar is taught in

separate lesson, in deductive approach, and emphasizing practice of patterns) is not relevant any more in the current curriculum. They were more in favor to have grammar teaching learning under Communicative Language Teaching (in which grammar is taught integrated into communicative activities, inductively, and with contextualized grammar practice). Their tendency to have grammar teaching learning under CLT reflected their comprehension that grammar is not a matter of rules to be memorized or learnt as habits but it is an active system built up by the mind for constructing meaning and supporting the communication. In other word, grammar is as a means of communication. In fact, their belief about CLT as a good way to teach grammar was in line with the objective of language learning in Curriculum 2013 which emphasizes language as a means of communication.

Conclusion

As mentioned previously, this research is intended to investigate teachers' and students' perceptions of the role of grammar in English teaching learning and how grammar is taught in the current curriculum. The research found that these teachers and students had the same view about the importance of grammar both in language teaching learning and communication. Their awareness of the necessity of grammar in both activities showed their comprehension that to master a language, there is a certain structure that they should follow. Unless they understand it well, a good communication will not be attained. Although the majority of them agreed that the knowledge of grammar is beneficial in both speaking and writing activities, some ungrammatical constructions might appear more frequently in speaking than writing because it tends to be spontaneous and be more tolerated than in written form. Furthermore, it was found that generally teachers and students in this research were aware that grammar in the current curriculum is more appropriate to be taught under Communicative Language Teaching than under Grammar Translation Method. Their tendency to have grammar teaching learning under CLT reflected their comprehension that grammar is not a matter of rules to be memorized or learnt as habits but it is a means of communication.

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