

## AN EVALUATION OF COLLEGE STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF ENGLISH GRAMMAR TEACHING STRATEGIES

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### Abstract:

Nowadays, the centre of the teaching and learning process is the students. Their opinions or perceptions about the teaching and learning process are always considered essential. This research explores the students' perceptions of the strategies implemented in English Grammar class. This study employed the quantitative approach. The researchers delivered a closed questionnaire to the students to explore their perceptions. The results revealed a positive perception of the teaching strategies implemented by the lecturers in teaching English grammar. It can be seen from the results of the questionnaires that the students dominantly agreed with the questionnaires. 52.9% of the students agreed to the Inductive Approach, 52.9% agreed to Text-Context, 50% agreed to Interactive Activities, 52.9% strongly agreed to Games, and 47.1% agreed to Written Practice.

### Keywords:

English Grammar;  
Students' Perception;  
Teaching Strategies



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## INTRODUCTION

In achieving the goals of education, every teacher including English teacher can apply different types of teaching strategies, and these strategies can be varied. Strategy is a pattern that is planned and set deliberately to carry out activities or actions. Brown (2004) points out that a strategy is a particular way of going about a task or problem in order to accomplish a particular objective. According to Sarjan & Mardiana (2017), teaching strategy is a broad lesson plan that incorporates the structure and desired behaviour of the students. Haidir & Salim (2014) state that the term "strategy" is frequently understood to mean "technique" or "method," which refers to a means of communicating a message—in this case, the subject matter—to students in order to meet the specified learning objectives.

Employing certain strategies is important to assist the achievement of learning objective. Sanjani (2021) states that applying strategy in teaching is essential to achieve learning goals. Warini et al., (2020) point out that the teaching strategy is an interactive activity between students, a teacher, and an environment as a learning resource. Khasanah et al., (2022) argue that to meet learning goals and create pleasure in the teaching and learning

process, a well-prepared teaching strategy is essential. It is the responsibility of each instructor to select the best teaching strategies.

When strategies are not used in delivering material, the teaching and learning process tends to be ineffective, and the students can be bored easily. Therefore, a teacher is required to be creative and able to choose teaching strategies in accordance with the goals to be achieved. Warini et al., (2020) explain that teaching strategies are techniques that a teacher and prospective teacher must possess. The learning process necessitates art, competence, and knowledge to convey material to students according to goals, efficiently, and effectively. This is why it is necessary and determines the credentials or whether being a teacher is practicable. Thus, every teaching process need suitable teaching strategies including teaching English sub-skills like grammar.

English grammar or structure is one of the most important subskills. Grammar is necessary for the four fundamental skills of speaking, writing, listening, and reading. Grammar or structure is one of the components of English and is often seen as an important one (Aniuranti & Rizkina, 2019). Without grammar, it is feasible to investigate how words and language components work together to generate meaningful language. Al-Khresheh & Orak (2021) argue that learners can effectively acquire language abilities to achieve their desired learning goals when form and meaning are given enough attention. Grammar proficiency has a big impact on language learning. According to Utomo & Ahsanah (2020), learning grammar helps students organise their words more effectively and produce meaningful messages. If speakers or learners apply grammatical rules too loosely, communication may suffer. In short, acquiring knowledge of grammar is crucial for enhancing students' English proficiency and improving their communication skills.

In fact, learning English grammar is not that simple. According to Aniuranti (2021), structure is still thought to be a troublesome aspect of English. Effendi et al., (2017) add that some students find learning grammar difficult, and some of them think it's a tiresome, dull, and difficult activity. Because grammar has so many patterns, it is one of the subjects that English language learners struggle with the most. Additionally, they must comprehend each pattern individually before applying the principles to a text. Yusnitasari & Suwartono (2020) add that faults in structure are common. Thus, grammar plays a vital role in English, yet mastering it requires significant work.

The difficulties in comprehending English grammar is also encountered by English students in Universitas Nahdlatul Ulama Purwokerto, Banyumas, Central Java. In the first semester, the students have a grammar lecture called Fundamental Grammar. The Fundamental Grammar lecture is the first grammar class for the students who just enrolled in the English Education Study Program. The transition from high school students to university students takes a lot of effort in studying. On the other hand, teaching many students with different backgrounds of study, skills, and abilities in understanding English grammar makes the lecturers must have a variety of strategies for teaching grammar to the starters.

The researchers as the lecturers of Fundamental Grammar class used several different strategies namely inductive approach, text-context, interactive activities, games, and to

written practice. After implementing the strategies in fourteen meetings or one semester, the researchers delivered a closed questionnaire to the students to find out their perceptions of the strategies implemented.

There are a number of earlier relevant studies when discussing perception in grammar classes. First, Navaz & Sama (2017) explored how teachers and students view grammar. Second, Nur (2020) described how students perceived the deductive and inductive approaches employed in teaching English grammar. This study differs from earlier research. The study was carried out at the English Education Study Program, Universitas Nahdlatul Ulama Purwokerto, Banyumas, Central Java. Additionally, the study examined how students perceived the five distinct strategies employed by the lecturers in the Fundamental Grammar class—the inductive approach, text-context, interactive activities, games, and written practice.

Based on the explanation above, the research was still needed to be done to explore deeply about the university students' perceptions of teaching Grammar strategies. According to Qiong (2017), perception is the process via which individuals become aware of or comprehend sensory data. Individuals typically have their own opinions and ideas about the information or objects in their environment. Sometimes, they may be different from each other and it can be a way for people to judge things. Studying students' perceptions on teaching English grammar can bring some benefits. First, it showed the feedback about teaching-learning activities that had been done by the teachers. Second, it gave the students a chance to voice their fair opinion of the lecture. In addition, it gave the lecturers a chance to consider the best strategy for teaching Fundamental Grammar.

## **METHOD**

Since the goal of the study was to investigate how students perceived the teaching methods used in a grammar class, it was a descriptive quantitative study. Mohajan (2020) asserts that quantitative research employs precise, static numerical data that is assessed scientifically, particularly through the use of statistics that provide answers to the following questions: who, what, when, where, how much, how many, and how. A quantitative study, according to Creswell & Cresswell (2017), is a unique type of investigation in which the researcher selects the topic of interest, formulates specific research questions, gathers quantifiable information from participants, uses statistics to evaluate the information, and carries out the study in an objective and neutral manner. This study uses a descriptive, non-experimental methodology. According to Mohajan (2020), the descriptive technique examines a phenomenon that is occurring at a specific place and time and is focused on the conditions, traditions, configurations, differences or connections, beliefs, and processes that are easily noticeable. Descriptive research is a type of quantitative study that focusses on one or more independent variables; in this form, the researcher will not compare or determine the association among variables, according to (Sugiyono, 2019).

### ***Participants***

The subjects of the research were the students of the English Education Study Program of UNU Purwokerto batch 2022 and the lecturers who taught in the class. There were 17 students in the class.

### ***Instrument***

Sugiyono (2019) defines questionnaire as a technique for collecting data in which participants are given a list of questions or written statements to fill out. The questionnaire's question types are separated into two categories: open-ended and closed-ended. Because the responder only needs to mark one response as accurate, the questionnaire type was a closed questionnaire.

In this study, the researcher used closed-questionnaire adapted from Male (2011). In adapting process, the team used two different theories of teaching strategies in English grammar from (Harmer, 2001; Thornbury, 1999). To keep the validity of the data, the first author prepared the instrument, then checked by the other authors. The questionnaire consisted of six statements used to explore students' agreement or disagreement to each statement on a 5-point Likert scale that ranged from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Thus, this research employed theoretical and investigator triangulation to keep the validity of the data.

### **Data Analysis Procedures**

The researcher used the blueprint to identify and categorise the data when assessing the questionnaire. To make the data more comprehensible, the questionnaire responses showed a table with a description. By computing the percentage, the researcher displayed the questionnaire data in a table. The researcher employed the % method by Arikunto (2014), which mentions the following formula to calculate the percentage, in order to determine the most prevalent perception among students.

$$P = \frac{F}{N} \times 100\%$$

**P** = Percentage

**F** = Number of the students choosing the item

**N** = Total number of the students

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### ***Results***

After teaching the students in Fundamental Grammar class for one semester using several different strategies, the research team gave questionnaire to the students. Here are the results of the questionnaire:

**Table 1** The Results of the Questionnaire

NO	STATEMENTS	RESPONSES				
		SA	A	N	D	SD
1.	Memorisation of a series of dialog could improve grammar understanding.	17.6%	52.9%	29.4%	0%	0%
2.	Understanding English massages (Oral and written) could help students enhance grammar item.	29.4%	52.9%	17.6%	0%	0%
3.	Lecturers taught English grammar through real communication activities (Conversation).	17.6%	52.9%	2.5%	5.9%	0%

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4.	Learning English grammar through grouping was an interesting way.	17.6%	47.1%	23.5%	5.9%	5.9%
5.	Games in learning English grammar were useful and fun to help students in understanding English grammar items.	52.9%	29.4%	11.8%	0%	5.9%
6.	Grammar practices were done through writing activities.	29.4%	47.1%	23.5%	0%	0%

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The first question is about how memorizing a dialogue can improve the students' grammar understanding. In Fundamental grammar class, the lecturers used dialogues from a film to teach grammar rules. The students studied the pattern or formula through the dialogue. They learned the examples first, then concluded the formulas by themselves. It indicates the usage of inductive strategy. The students' highest response was 52.9% Agree, followed by 29.4% Neutral, 17.6% Strongly Agree, 0% Disagree, and 0% Strongly Disagree.

The second question is about how understanding English messages (Oral and written) can help students enhance grammar items. In the class, the lecturers used oral and written messages or short text as learning media to learn English grammar formulas. It indicates the usage of text context. The students asked to understand the contexts or meanings of the texts besides comprehending the patterns. To the second question, the students' highest response was 52.9% Agree, followed by 29.4% Strongly Agree, 17.6% Neutral, 0% Disagree, and 0% Strongly Disagree.

The third to the fourth items indicate the usage of interactive activities employed by the lecturers in teaching grammar items. For the third question, the students' highest response was 52.9% Agree, followed by 23.5% Neutral, 17.6% Strongly Agree, 5.9% Disagree, and 0% Strongly Disagree. Following the results of the questionnaire, the students showed a positive perception of teaching English grammar through a real communication activity. The fourth question is about an interesting way of learning English grammar through grouping. The students' highest response was 47.1% Agree, followed by 23.5% Neutral, 17.6% Strongly Agree, 5.9% Disagree, and 5.9% Strongly Disagree. Pursuant to the results of the questionnaire, the students showed a positive perception of learning English grammar through grouping was an interesting way.

The fifth question is about the use of games in learning English grammar. To the tenth question, the students' highest response was 52.9% Strongly Agree, followed by 29.4% Agree, 11.8% Neutral, 5.9% Strongly Disagree, and 0% Disagree. According to the results of the questionnaire, the students showed a positive perception that games in learning English grammar were useful and fun to help students understand English grammar items.

The last question is about grammar practice was done through writing activities. The students' highest response was 47.1% Agree, followed by 29.4% Strongly Agree, 23.5% Neutral, 0% Disagree, and 0% Strongly Disagree. In accordance with the results of the questionnaire, the students showed a positive perception of grammar practice through writing activities.

### ***Discussion***

One of the strategies implemented by the lecturer in teaching Fundamental Grammar was the inductive approach. Thornbury (1999) states that the inductive approach starts with an example and is followed by rules. The lecturers clearly implemented this approach in teaching Fundamental Grammar. The learner studies examples and from these examples derives an understanding of the rules. Based on the results of the questionnaire, 52.9% students agreed that learning from the dialogs could enhance the grammar understanding. The dialogue used in Fundamental Grammar class taken from films, then the students learnt from the dialogues first before they concluded the rules by themselves. This finding is in line with Abdugarimova & Zubaydova (2021) who explain that when the students are given some prompts to learn how language functions on their own. They therefore find learning English to be far more engaging and participatory. Morganna (2016) argues that inductive education not only helps students acquire grammatical knowledge but also psychologically prepares them to use their predictive analysis to solve associated grammatical difficulties.

The second strategy employed was text-context, and the students gave positive opinion of this strategy. The highest response was 52.9% Agreed, followed by 29.4% Strongly Agreed. According to Thornbury (1999), this text-level perspective on language has at least two implications. First, students must be introduced to grammar and its usage contexts, which at the very least entails texts, if they are to be able to understand it. Second, learners must be able to comprehend and generate entire texts in that language, not simply individual sentences, if they are to develop a functional command of the language.

The next strategy used was interactive activities (conversation and group work). The students showed a positive perception of this strategy because 52.9% of the students agreed with the usage of conversation. Then, 47.1% of the students agreed with the usage of group work and 17.6% of the students completely agreed. Harmer (2001) argues that one of the strategies to create fun and meaningful class activities is using interactive activities. These are intended to motivate students to collaborate and share knowledge in an engaging and intentional manner.

The next strategy was using games. Game is a creative activity in teaching English Grammar. Harmer (2001) mentions games as one method of teaching English grammar. Games have long been utilised in language instruction and are particularly helpful for teaching grammar. Fithriani (2022) points out that students can use language in a stress-free manner while concentrating on the language and the content by playing games. Based on the results of the questionnaire about the use of games in learning English grammar. The highest response was 52.9% Strongly Agreed, followed by 29.4% Agreed. The students showed a positive perception of this strategy.

Written practices were the final tactic employed. Writing is a common method of practicing grammar. According to Harmer (2001), homework assignments that require students to practise particular tasks are commonly assigned. Even while the writing is still intended to practise a particular grammatical item, students typically begin with the most controlled type and finish with something a little freer. 47.1% of students believed that

written exercises might be employed in grammar classes, according to the questionnaire's results.

## CONCLUSION

In this study, the findings showed that students had positive opinions of the lecturers' methods for teaching English grammar. Students agreed with the questionnaires, as evidenced by the results: 52.9% of students agreed with the inductive approach, 52.9% agreed with text-context, 50% agreed with interactive activities, 52.9% strongly agreed with games, and 47.1% agreed with written practice.

Based on the results of the study, there were five different strategies employed by the lecturers, and they were viewed positively by the students. Consequently, the researchers recommend every English teacher or lecturer to employ teaching strategies in English grammar classes. The strategies found in this study can also be tested in an experimental study. The other researchers or teachers can also implement the strategies to solve grammar problems through action research.

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