

The Groundbreaking Techniques to Assist Students in Learning Grammar

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Abstract

This research aims to determine the students' responses to the groundbreaking grammar teaching techniques after their boredom with conventional teaching methods. The digital learning platform of the British Council Learn English website combined with communicative games used by the researcher. This research is descriptive qualitative. Using purposive sampling, twenty-five students from the second semester in the English Study Program of STKIP PGRI Pacitan became the selected sample. The result of this study showed that 74% of students need breakthrough techniques to assist them in learning Grammar, 68% of students agree that the methods used by researchers make students understand grammar lessons, 80% of students argued that implementing the British Council Learn English website combined with communicative language game is quite effective in improving students' understanding of Grammar.

Keywords: groundbreaking, techniques, students, learning, Grammar

INTRODUCTION

Grammar is a "guide" used when learning a language. Not only English but every language must have Grammar. Grammar has always been an essential part of the language-learning process (Ilgūnaitienė, 2021). We will know how to speak correctly through Grammar so others can understand it. Understanding grammar is essential because a language cannot function without Grammar. Students' knowledge of Grammar can help them correct mistakes and improve their writing skills. Learning a foreign language is not only carried out through unconscious assimilation. However, using Grammar as a reference has a vital role for students. (Pradeep et al., 2013).

One of the reasons why we must continue to learn to understand the rules of Grammar is that Grammar is a tool for communicating. The message we want to convey could be correctly perceived by mastering Grammar. English learning at school related to Grammar will be more effective if it is connected to Grammar that can be used for communication (Amali & Mat Ibnu, 2018). English Grammar has more than twenty-five types relating to formulas that must be mastered (Nurdiawati, 2020).

Grammar teaching is essential for acquiring a second or foreign language. Unfortunately, in practice, many teachers who teach English as a foreign language still teach Grammar deductively. Students are given grammar rules and examples and then told to memorize them. Next, students are asked to apply these grammar rules to other models. It is believed that this teaching method will produce learners who need help to use language communicatively, even though they have sufficient knowledge of grammatical rules. The teaching method is also seen to contribute to passive participation and negative feelings of learners towards grammar learning.

Al-Mekhlafi and Nagaratnam (2011) stated that students consider teaching Grammar uncomfortable and sometimes even a threat or terror (Fithriani, 2018). The

grammar class activities are usually dominated by explaining grammar rules of the English teacher and her instructions for students to do the exercises based on the rules defined. Therefore, Baron (1982) argues that most students describe English teachers as uninteresting grammar dealers whose only pleasure in life is pointing out other people's mistakes (Fithriani, 2018).

A communicative game is a set of well-built-design activities that can stimulate classroom interaction. The games require the students to participate actively in the classroom by speaking and writing to express their point of view or give information. More than that, students' confidence will be automatically formed due to its concept of building interaction habits (Dewi et al., 2016). Communicative Games are a teaching method that uses games by applying communication rules. In language teaching at the basic level, students are considered lacking in mastering grammar and vocabulary. Therefore, communicative games are needed to help students in learning (Kurniati et al., 2020).

In communicative games, especially in English language teaching, the emphasis is more on fluency or achievement aimed at communicative communication between the parties involved in the communication. Language or linguistic accuracy is not emphasized in communicative games. For example, when someone asks another person to explain an address, even though the language used is inaccurate or even grammatically incorrect if he can explain it and it can be understood by the requester, then the communication is successful. Regarding communicative games in language teaching, two terms cannot be separated, namely communicative and games. The word communicative refers to a communicative approach where teaching and learning activities avoid concentrating on grammar and vocabulary and emphasize the importance of language functions (Harmer, 1999). In short, this activity emphasizes students' involvement in real communication, where the achievement of their communicative tasks is more important than the accuracy of the language they use.

However, in teaching English grammar, communicative games are expected to stimulate students to be more enthusiastic in learning grammar, so that grammar is no longer considered challenging for students. Communicative Games can be an alternative to overcome students' difficulties in learning English. Several studies have shown that communicative games can have a positive impact on the classroom atmosphere and increase students' learning motivation. Communicative games are used to increase emphasis on the importance of student motivation and an appropriate, positive, and effective learning atmosphere in the classroom (Wallace, 1987).

In this research, the researcher also chose the British Council Learn English website for combining communicative games to improve the students' grammar mastery. It is because both of them may allow students to practice their Grammar in different atmospheres. Besides, the students must have a good understanding of Grammar, and they also must speak to be able to finish their competition in communicative games in the digital learning platform of the British Council. Communicative games by combining the digital learning platform of the British Council also make the teaching-learning situation more enjoyable. The students are not in a monotonous condition where they sit and listen to the teacher's explanation, but they can interact with their friends and practice their grammar mastery. Lastly, communicative games by combining digital learning platforms of the British Council may boost students' confidence and motivation in learning English. So, it can be said that those teaching techniques can be used as groundbreaking techniques to assist students in learning grammar.

Considering the statements above and the benefits of the digital learning platform of the British Council Learn English website combined with communicative language games in improving students' grammar mastery, it is necessary to conduct this research.

METHOD

This research applied descriptive qualitative by focusing on a survey to determine the students' responses toward the digital learning platform of the British Council Learn English Web Platform combined with communicative games to expand their grammar mastery. The population was 109 PBI students in the academic year of 2022/2023. From that population, the researchers took a sample of the research. There were twenty-five (25) students as the sample. The researchers used a questionnaire from Google Forms and in-depth interviews as the research instrument. Survey techniques are used to gather information from the research sample. A questionnaire was utilized to collect data from the sample to describe students' points of view using the teaching technique used by the researcher. This questionnaire consisted of seven items, an open-closed-ended questionnaire. Google Forms obtained the analysis data by analyzing participants' respondents to know their perspective of the grammar teaching technique to get the data needed. The data were analyzed and described to obtain answers to questions. The questionnaire indicators consist of 1) the response of students' experiences in learning grammar, 2) Utilizing digital learning sources modified with communicative games to learn English Grammar, and 3) students' perceptions of grammar teaching techniques used by the researcher. Afterward, the researcher interviewed the students at the end of the grammar teaching-learning process.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

In this study, the researcher took twenty-five (25) as a research sample from 109 number of the population of PBI students in the academic year 2022/2023. The subject of the research is students of grammar class. It showed that students faced problems in learning Grammar. Most of them still depend on conventional learning by reading the materials in the PowerPoint given by the lecturer. Their classroom activities of learning English grammar seemed monotonous without exploring learning grammar from other sources. However, students can easily access several digital learning platforms for learning Grammar. Moreover, the students needed some effort to motivate their learning because they assumed that English Grammar is complex.

The grammar teaching innovation carried out by researchers is by utilizing digital learning platforms modified with communicative games. Students in various activities often use digital media but are rarely used for learning Grammar. Communicative games were chosen to improve students' English skills. In its application, researchers invite students to play competitively in games. They are required to answer the questions correctly. This teaching technique is an alternative for increasing students' motivation to study English grammar.

As displayed below, seven (7) statements describe the students' responses toward their learning grammar experiences. Statement 1 is whether learning English grammar still depends on conventional learning. Statement 2 is whether students assume they face difficulties studying grammar lessons. Besides, statement 3 is whether students think that learning grammar is boring. Statement 4 is whether the breakthrough technique used can assist students in learning grammar. Next, statement 5 showed that using the methods makes it easy to understand the grammar lesson.

Moreover, statement 6 is about whether students enjoy being taught by using these techniques. Furthermore, statement 7 is whether these techniques effectively strengthen students' grammar understanding. The students' responses to learning grammar experiences are distributed on a questionnaire. Their responses established the degree of agreement: strongly agree, agree, unable to judge, disagree, and strongly disagree.

Table 1. Students Respond in Learning Grammar

No	Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unable to Judge	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Learning English Grammar still depends on conventional learning	11	6	3	3	2
2	Students assumed that they faced difficulties in studying grammar lessons	3	9	10	3	0
3	Students think that learning Grammar is boring	7	6	7	4	0
4	The breakthrough technique used is capable of assisting students in learning grammar	11	9	6	0	0
5	Using the methods makes students easy to understand the grammar lesson	4	13	7	1	0
6	Students enjoy being taught by using these techniques	2	0	2	1	0
7	These techniques are effective in strengthening students' grammar understanding	7	3	5	0	0

Table 1 above shows students' responses to the grammar learning they experienced. As previously mentioned, grammar learning still uses the classical method, where students only use handouts from PPT material given by the lecturer. Besides that, they feel bored and have difficulty understanding Grammar. The alternative teaching provided by researchers proved suitable for assisting students in learning because it is fun and easy to understand. Therefore, this technique can improve students' understanding of English Grammar.

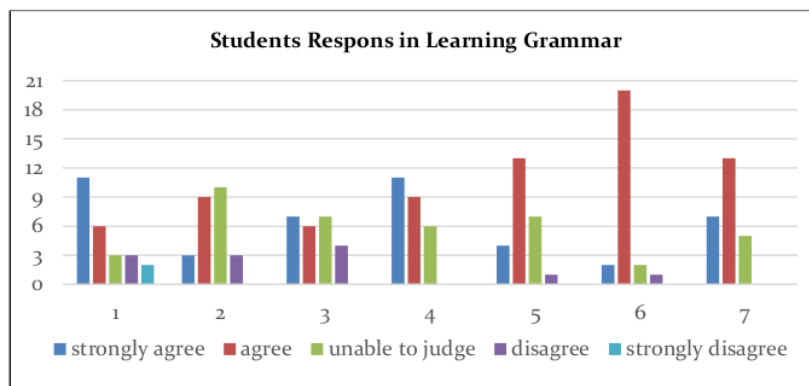


Figure 1. Students respond toward their learning grammar

Based on Figure 1 above, it can be seen that 17 students had positive responses, three were unable to judge, and five had adverse reactions toward the statement that learning English grammar still depends on conventional learning. While 12 students responded positively, 10 could not believe it, and three responded negatively to the report that students assume they face difficulties studying grammar lessons. In the third statement, students think that learning Grammar is boring. It was shown that 13 students had positive responses, seven could not judge, and four had adverse reactions. Besides,

20 students had positive responses, and six could not consider the statement that the breakthrough technique used can assist students in learning grammar. In the fifth statement, using the methods makes students understand the grammar lesson, it was shown that 17 students had positive responses, seven could not judge, and a student had adverse reactions.

Moreover, 22 students had positive responses, two could not judge, and one had adverse reactions toward the statement that students enjoy being taught using these techniques. Furthermore, these techniques effectively strengthen students' grammar understanding of the last word. It was shown that 20 students had positive responses, and five students could not judge the statement that these techniques effectively strengthen students' grammar understanding.

Discussion

The result of the research gained from questionnaires and interviews is presented as illustration figures. The percentage of students' responses toward each statement related to the researcher's technique used to overcome students' challenges in learning Grammar and their opinions is mentioned in this part. The percentage of students' responses is presented based on the degree of agreement: strongly agree, agree, unable to judge, disagree, and strongly disagree. The result can be seen as follows.

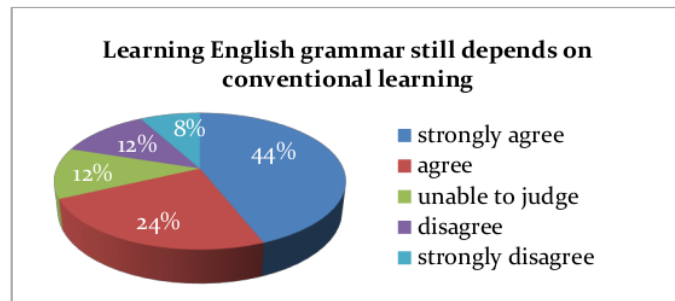


Figure 2. The first students respond to their learning grammar experience

Figure 2 above presents the percentage of students who respond to their learning grammar experience. It showed that 44% of students strongly agree with this statement, 24% or six students agree, 12% cannot judge, 12% disagree, and 8% strongly agree. The dominant percentage proved that most students agree that their learning of English Grammar still depends on conventional understanding. The interview results below showed that the students' opinions strengthened their responses to the questionnaire.

NEE (student) The lecturer gives the material in PPT, and usually, I only read the material on my smartphone.

R (researcher) Do you consistently access grammar material from other sources, such as the internet?

NEE (student) Sometimes, I skim through the material on the internet. However, I rarely try to study Grammar intensively through internet sources.

In the second statement, the percentage of students who responded to their learning grammar experience was 12% strongly agreed that they face difficulties in studying grammar lessons, 36% or nine students agreed, 40% were unable to judge, and 12% disagreed. Figure 3 illustrates the percentage of students' responses to their grammar-learning experience.

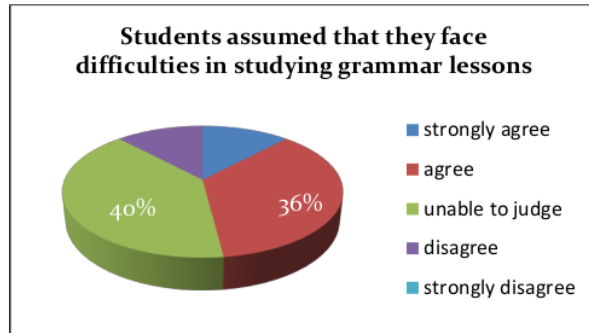


Figure 3. The second students respond to their learning grammar experience

The following result of students' responses to their learning grammar experience was that they had a perception related to their expertise that learning grammar is boring. More than half of the students agreed with this statement. The questionnaire results showed that seven students strongly agreed, six agreed, seven were still unable to judge, and four had different perceptions or disagreed that learning grammar was boring all this time. As follows, the illustration of students' responses percentage to their learning experience that learning grammar is boring.

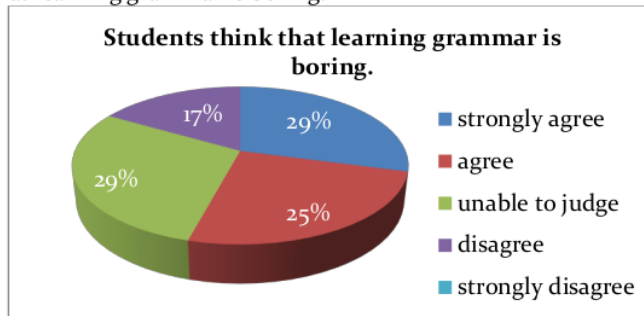


Figure 4. The third student's response to their learning grammar experience

As a further result of students' response to their learning grammar experience, they had a perception related to their expertise that the breakthrough technique can assist them in learning Grammar. The percentage result of this response can be seen in Figure 5 as follows.

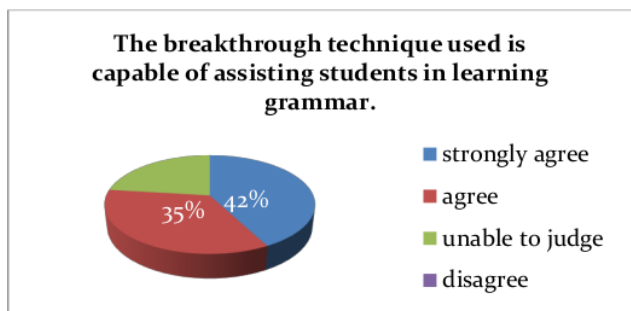


Figure 5. The fourth student responds to their learning grammar experience

Figure 5 above shows that 42% of students who responded strongly agree that the breakthrough technique used can assist them in learning Grammar. Besides, nine students, or 35%, approved, and six students, or 23%, were still doubtful or unable to judge. From this illustration, it is clear that students need breakthrough techniques to assist them in learning Grammar. Practically, the method applied by researchers is by utilizing the British Council Learn English website's digital learning platform combined with communicative games. The teaching procedure using this technique is that students randomly divide themselves into two groups. Then, the researcher appointed a student to lead the game. The British Council Learn English website provides complete grammar material on the digital learning platform, including explanations and practice question examples. Using this material and practice questions, students compete to understand the grammar material and collect many points for their group. At the beginning of the game, some children were having a little difficulty, but in the end, they enjoyed it and could follow the teaching techniques the researcher gave generously. By using Communicative games, students are not only required to understand Grammar but also be able to use oral-written English so that their abilities can be improved. Some opinions from students are shown as follows.

HRP (student) I can access various online courses designed to improve my English skills through the British Council website. The materials cover multiple levels, from beginner to advanced, and cover reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills. Each material has interactive learning materials, exercises, and assessment tests to ensure good understanding and progress.

SNR (student) I faced a problem when I needed help understanding the material before starting the game, so my results could have been better. In the game, some questions are sometimes almost the same but have different answers and the context in which words are used. Another problem is to stay on the internet when studying.

The fifth result of students' responses to their experience in learning grammar is related to the teaching technique used by the researcher. For grammar classes, utilizing digital learning platforms modified with communicative activities was implemented by the researchers. The students were familiar with digital media for many activities. However, they have yet to use it for their learning of Grammar. The researcher chose communicative activities to improve students' English skills. This teaching technique is an alternative for increasing students' motivation to study English grammar. In the implementation, the researcher invites students to play competitively in games, and they must answer the questions correctly. The percentage of students who respond to the technique used by the researcher is presented below.

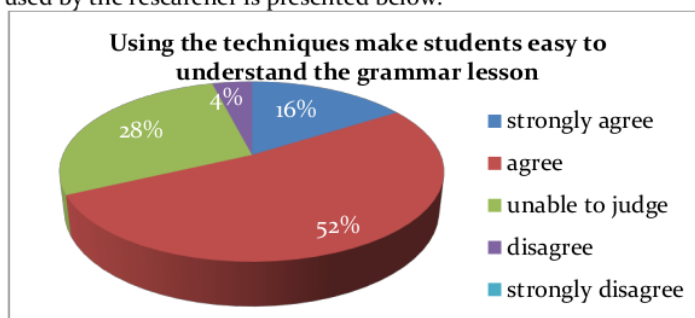


Figure 6. The fifth student responded to their learning grammar experience

Based on the Figure above, it can be seen that 16% of students agree and 52% of students strongly agree that the techniques used by researchers make it easy to understand grammar lessons. While 28% of students could not judge or still felt doubtful, and 4% disagreed with the statement.

Moreover, the sixth statement offered to the students is related to the teaching technique used by the researcher. It showed that two students, or 8%, strongly agreed, and 20 students, or 80%, agreed that they enjoyed being taught using the technique. However, three students had negative responses; two students, or 8%, were unable to judge, and one student, or 4%, did not enjoy being taught by using the technique used by the researcher. The following is the percentage of students who respond to illustrations toward the sixth statement.

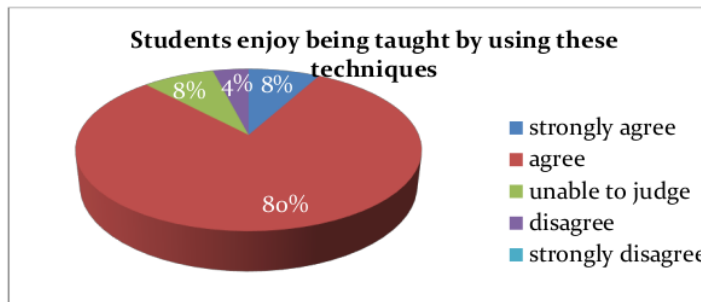


Figure 7. The sixth student responded to their learning grammar experience

The students' opinions strengthened their responses to the questionnaire that students enjoy being taught using these techniques, as shown in the interview results below.

FRA (student) The problem is that when I answer A, the others answer B during competitive games, but it does not matter. In the game, some enthusiastically participate, and some are just normal. However, the rest is enjoyable because the answers are together, so you panic when you check the points.

Furthermore, the last statement of questionnaire results is whether the technique effectively strengthens students' grammar understanding. Figure 8 shows that seven students, or 28%, strongly agree, and 13 students, or 52%, agree that the researcher's use effectively strengthens students' grammar understanding. However, five students, or 20%, were still doubtful or unable to judge. The result can be seen in Figure 8 as follows.

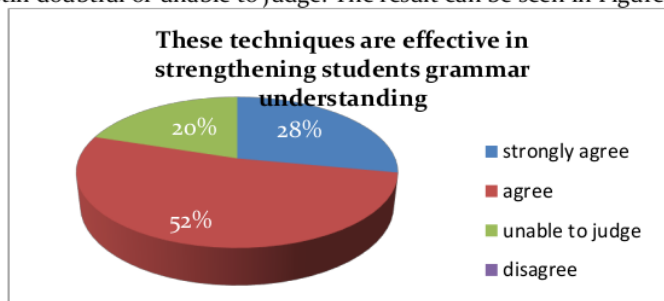


Figure 9. The seventh student responded to their learning grammar experience

Figure 9 above shows that dominant students responded positively to the teaching technique used by the researcher. They argued that learning the British Council Learn English website effectively improves students' understanding of Grammar. Initially, several students seemed curious when they first opened the website. It is easy to find and easy to access. After entering the website, students will be shown a display with many choices of learning material options in the corner of the three lines. All material is explained well, briefly, concisely, and clearly, and examples are given. Apart from that, there is a quiz for each material so that we can try our skills after studying the previous material. Each grammar material provided is relatively easy to understand, depending on the skills mastered, and there are also levels such as A1-A2 and B1-B2. The opinions of students are shown as follows.

ASDR (student) *The point is to learn using this website; we can learn wherever and whenever we want and hone our skills little by little.*

AA (student) *Our class was very enthusiastic about the game. There are still many who need clarification about which answer is correct. Even within one group, the answers are different. When we checked the score, it was pretty good. The situation differs from the first time I tried the quiz, with only two correct answers out of 8 questions. That was my experience using the British Council. In essence, the British Council combined with communicative games makes it easier for us to study material about Grammar and other English language skills.*

According to the completeness of the students' learning outcomes in learning English by using the British Council Learn English website combined with communicative language games as the groundbreaking techniques to assist students in learning grammar, can be seen that students were more enjoyable in learning grammar. Based on the results obtained, it is known that learning English using the British Council Learn English website combined with communicative games can improve student learning outcomes.

CONCLUSION

The choice of the British Council Learn English website combined with communicative games aimed to improve the students' grammar mastery because communicative games may allow students to practice their Grammar in different atmospheres. Besides, the students must have a good understanding of Grammar, and they also must speak to be able to finish their competitive game in the digital learning platform of the British Council. Communicative games also make the teaching-learning situation more enjoyable. The students are not in a monotonous condition where they sit and listen to the teacher's explanation, but they can interact with their friends and practice their grammar mastery. Lastly, communicative games may boost students' confidence and motivation in learning English. The result of this study showed that 74% of students need breakthrough techniques to assist them in learning Grammar, 68% of students agree that the methods used by researchers make students understand grammar lessons, 80% of students argued that realizing the British Council Learn English website combined with communicative language game is quite effective in improving students' understanding of Grammar. According to the results obtained, it is recognized that learning English using the British Council Learn English website combined with communicative games can improve student learning outcomes.

THANK-YOU NOTE

On this occasion, the researcher would like to thank all the students in the first-level English grammar practice class who agreed to be subjects in this research, without them, this research would not have been possible. Thank you to my fellow lecturers who have

motivated me to complete this research and write it in the form of an article. The researcher hopes that the results of this research can become reference material and reference material for future researchers who will research the same topic.

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