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A Constructing and Analyzing Model for the Teaching of Grammar

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Abstract

Facilitating students to succeed in learning grammar has received a lot of critical attention from teachers. Grammar mastery is perceived as a determining aspect for the students to communicate accurately in a written form, yet they often encounter problems to acquire it. Students may have basic knowledge of the rules or of sentence structures, but most of them still make frequent mistakes as well as errors in their subsequent writing although teachers have provided adequate feedback. This notion attracts the writers to propose an alternative model, called Constructing and Analyzing Model (CAM). Substantively, this model comprises five major steps; composing sentences, peer review, self-review, teacher's feedback, and concluding the concept. It is asserted that CAM is one of the communicative ways in teaching grammar that facilitates students not only to learn it effectively but also assist them in constructing their own understanding, making use of their knowledge in an acceptable context, and developing their writing skill. Engaging students in various grammar activities using CAM enables them to be able to (a) integrate the concept of grammar into writing, (b) become interactive and collaborative learners, and (c) sharpen high-order thinking skills. The writer's two-valuable-semester experiences have shown that CAM is appropriately applied in a grammar class for it increases students' scores in grammar quizzes and learning involvement. In this regard, the current article is intended to overview the concept and theoretical framework of the teaching of grammar using CAM, the five major steps to implement it, the model, and its benefits.

Keywords: *Analysing; Constructing; Grammar; Model; Writing*

INTRODUCTION

English grammar is one of the vital language components that needs to be learned and mastered by students who learn English as the target language. At the university level, in designing the curriculum, grammar is taught in the early semester since it is the basic foundation for students to learn the four skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. In his book review, Wa-Mbaleka and Austin (2008) conclude that, while learning a second language entails a specific focus on various language skills, both second and foreign language learners frequently place a special interest on the mastery and accurate use of the grammar of the target language. Further, they confirm that English as a second language (ESL) and English as foreign language (EFL) curriculum specialists, teachers, and learners are constantly in search of effective and efficient approaches for teaching or learning English Grammar.

Mbaleka and Austin (2008) also conclude that while learning a second language entails a specific focus on various language skills, both second and foreign language learners frequently place a special interest on the mastery and accurate use of the grammar of the target language. Further, they confirm that English as a second language (ESL) and English as foreign language (EFL) curriculum specialists, teachers, and learners are constantly in search of effective and efficient approaches for teaching or learning English Grammar to help them.

Learning English grammar is hard for Indonesian students due to the immense different patterns between the two languages. A study about students' perception toward grammar conducted by Chowdhury (2014) in Jayan University, particularly the students of PYP (Preparatory Year Program), reveals that students are not naturally motivated to learn language because the teaching model mostly used by the teachers are grammar drills. In such a way, the students get a proper discourse less which results in frustration when attending grammar lessons. Habitually, in composing sentences, students are still influenced by Indonesian language. Mantasiah et.al. (2018) state that Indonesian students tend to use the grammar rules of Bahasa Indonesia to produce English sentences where they write, translate, and speak. In other words, once they write, translate and write they tend to use the rules of Bahasa Indonesia, not the academic rules of the English language. As a result, they tend to use informal or daily words in producing sentences compared to the academic ones (Sukirman, 2018).

Besides, English grammar is categorically complex. It cannot be negated that the use of Indonesia-verb compared to English-verb has vast differences in which in English-verb, the form

of verbs has variation forms based on the time and the subject. As the example, the word 'eat' turns into 'eating' when the speaker expresses the idea that something is happening now, at this very moment, it turns into 'ate' when the speaker expresses idea about the past happening, it turns into 'eaten' when the speaker says an action happened at an unspecified time and it changes into 'eats' when the subject of the sentence is singular. The example illustrates that the verb 'eat' can be changed into four forms or even more. It differs with the Indonesia-verb that 'time and subject' does not influence the form of the verb such as; the word '*makan*' does not need to be adjusted with another forms; '*makaning*', '*makaned*', *makans* even though it is used for different time and subjects.

Principally, the function of giving grammar in language class is to support the language skills especially speaking and writing. In other words, to produce acceptable and correct sentences or utterances, people ought to acquire grammar. It is the basic persistence of learning grammar. Inasmuch as the reason, students should learn grammar with the precise aim so they can use their grammar mastery to communicate both in spoken and written. A better approach is perhaps to see grammar as one of many resources that we have in language which helps us to communicate (Al-Mekhafi and Nagaratnam, 2011). Likewise, the idea of communicative language teaching and the belief to that language is best learned when it is being used to communicative messages, therefore, kind of communicative task has been a prominence role in syllabus design organization (Birjandi and Ahangari, 2008). We should see how grammar relates to what we want to say or write, and how we expect others to interpret what our language use and its focus. It is said that grammatical rules are nothing but hypothetical codes to initiate the process of communication in an orderly manner (Chowdhury, 2014). Moreover, he clearly expresses the need of grammar for students are to protect the beauty of the language.

Numerous strategies have been applied to help students understand and revel in learning grammar, such as 'group discussion,' 'everybody is a teacher here', 'game', 'running dictation' or just do exercises in a text book provided by the teachers. Thus, these strategies can improve the students' score on grammar. However, the use of these strategies results limited ability. It means that these ways merely enable students to remember the pattern of grammar and understand the function of each pattern. These strategies cannot make the students write and speak using correct and proper grammar. They cannot apply their grammar ability to write and to speak. Accordingly, it can be assumed that students failed to use grammar in the context of speaking and writing communication. For many L2 learners, learning grammar is often meant learning the rules of grammar and having an intellectual knowledge of grammar. Further, they explain the believing of

the teachers' perception that this will provide the generative basis on which learners can build their knowledge and will be able to use the language eventually 2.

Based on the overview above, this paper familiarizes a new model that appropriate to teach integrated grammar. This strategy integrates grammar into writing skill. The name of the strategy is 'Constructing and Analyzing Model' (CAM) in which this model comprises five major steps; composing sentences, peer review, self-review, teacher's feedback and concluding the concept.

GRAMMAR IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

Facilitating students to succeed in learning grammar has received a lot of critical attention for teachers. Mastering grammar is perceived to serve as a predetermining aspect in which students can communicate accurately in written form, whereas they often encounter problems to acquire it. Students may have basic knowledge of the rules or sentence structures, but most of them still make frequent errors in terms of grammar on their subsequent writing although teachers have provided adequate feedback. However, grammar is one of the English language components that must be learned and mastered by L2 learners to grasp for the target of English skills (speaking, writing, listening and reading) acceptable. Grammar is the sound, structure, and meaning system of language. He continued saying that all languages have grammar, and each language has its own grammar in which people who speak the same language are able to communicate because they intuitively know the grammar system of that language; that is, the rules of making meaning (Chin, 2000). Anyway, teaching grammar both in school and universities level is still separated with four English skills. Teachers tend to teach grammar by giving the topics of grammar and giving the patterns of grammar. Teaching as the example; simple present tense, conjunction, article, singular and plural and other grammar materials will not be given integrated with the language skills. Besides, grammar books mostly contents of the formula of grammar and provide the example in the form of sentences than integrating grammar with language skills. These activities will behave the students to learn grammar separately with language skills. As a result, whenever the students write sentences, they cannot recall their understanding on grammar so that their writings are unacceptable. In fact, grammar has function if it used in language skill. Lots of researchers show that teaching grammar on the writing context is more effective than teaching grammar separately from four skills (Calkins, 1980; DiStefano and Killion, 1984; Harris, 1962)

Moreover, studies conducted since 1960 showed that teaching grammar separated from writing skill could not improve the students' writing ability (Hillock, 1986). These researches recommended teacher and grammar book writers not to separate grammar along with writing skill.

It is supported with what Weaver did in his teaching that he used writing context approaching in teaching grammar (Weaver, 1998). Hence, it can be concluded from the previous studies and based on the writer's best practice in grammar class at the university level that teaching grammar cannot be separated from other language skills. Even though at the university level, grammar stands on its own as a course, but it is suggested to teach grammar by using writing approach.

CONSTRUCTING AND ANALYZING MODEL (CAM)

The previous explanation describes that teaching grammar should be integrated with other language skills, as the example in writing. One of teacher's responsibilities is to facilitate learners with communicative class models to succeed them engaging with English. Teachers also are believed as the source of learning in which to them students expect to communicate with in class (Mufanti, 2014). In line with this, the writers have enabled their learners with an appropriate model of teaching and have been the learning source for their learners in learning grammar by designing an alternative model, as mentioned before the name is Constructing and Analyzing Model, in which this model has been applied since 2016. This model was given for the students in university level who join grammar class. The writers' experiences of using CAM in teaching grammar have shown that CAM is appropriately applied in the grammar class. Students' comments toward CAM show that they got benefits from it, such as they are able to use grammar in real context and their understanding on grammar is better. Moreover, their final score on grammar also shows improvement.

Principally, this model comprises five major steps; composing sentences, peer review, self-review, teacher's feedback and concluding the concept. CAM is designed as the new teaching model in English teaching area enabling teachers to integrate grammar along with writing context. CAM has attested that teaching grammar using it is able to integrate grammar into writing. The writer's experience in using CAM for teaching grammar indicates good improvements on students' grammar and writing, such as; the students score in grammar improves significantly, students' writing quality especially on the use of grammar indicates that the grammar used is correct, students realize the function of learning grammar, improving students' critical thinking, building their own knowledge of grammar and others.

The systematic practice of combining sentences can improve students' knowledge in the grammar domain as well as to improve the ²quality of student sentences (Hillocks and Smith, 1991). This theory proves that an appropriate model to teach grammar using writing approach is required to design with the intention of English teachers can use this model. Some reasons presented why

CAM is believed to be very effective for teaching grammar, such as; it can improve students' understanding of English grammar, behave students to work their writing using correct grammar, students' performance in writing has a good quality, and students can accumulate their grammar knowledge in writing. Many studies on exercises combining sentences result in significant improvements in the maturation of student sentences (Hillock, 1986).

Broadly speaking, constructing and analyzing model is a model for teaching strategy in which students are asked to compose one or more paragraph (based on their level) then the result of the sentences are analyzed by other students (peer review), their selves (self-review), teacher's review (teacher's feedback) that from the analyzing they know the errors made. This strategy is completely simple but not many teachers realize to use writing as the approach of teaching grammar. This model is appropriate used in higher level.

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CONSTRUCTING AND ANALYZING MODEL (CAM) IN TEACHING GRAMMAR

Constructing and Analyzing Model (CAM) is a new teaching model based on teacher's best practice in teaching grammar class recently at the university level. So, the implementation of how this model used need to described detail so that people are easy to adapt it. However, a research relating to Constructing and Analyzing Model has just been conducted in one university in Indonesia. In their research, they involved two intact classes consisted of 49 students at the age around 19 years old who have similar background in which those groups were chosen randomly. Further, they revealed two findings related to this issue. The first finding is this model could assist learners to understand grammar easier and also use their mastery in writing context. The second finding is most of research participants perceived positively towards this model (Mufanti et.al., 2019).

Hence, this part describes how CAM is implemented in grammar class. CAM is designed to integrate grammar with other language skills, in this case, writing. The writing approach is believed able to improve students' grammar not only at the level of recognizing and answering grammar questions but capable of synchronizing the grammar into writing. As we know, that usually students can answer grammar questions easily, however, their ability on grammar cannot make them able to use grammar in real context. Based on these problems, CAM is a new teaching model that is able to synchronize grammar in the writing context. As mentioned before that CAM is divided into five major steps in which each step is discussed below;

1. *Composing Sentences*

This step is the first step to start using this model. In this step, students are asked to compose paragraph based on the topic given by the teacher. The number of paragraphs is decided by the teacher, it can be one paragraph, two paragraphs, three paragraphs or even more depends on the student level. Then, the teacher decides the minimum and the maximum words in each paragraph. The time allotment in composing a paragraph is decided based on the length of the words given. After finishing in composing the sentences, the students are asked to submit the paper to the teacher. The last activity in this session is distributing the students' paper randomly. Teacher must be sure that every student does not get and analyze their own paper.

2. *Peer Review*

The second step of CAM is peer-review in which in this step, teacher asks students to analyze his/her friend paper in using grammar by giving comments. Teacher has to explain to the students how to give comments and what subject is analyzed. There are two ways in analyzing the paper. First, the student must analyze, decide and write what grammar used in each sentence if the grammar used is correct or wrong. Second, if the grammar used is wrong, the student must give comments why the grammar used in the sentence is wrong without giving correction. After analyzing, the students submit the paper back to the teacher. Then, the teacher gives the analyzing paper to the student who writes it.

3. *Self-Review*

The third step is self-review. In this step, the teacher asks the students to analyze their own paper, analyze the comment given and correct the wrong grammars. In this case, the student can ask for clarification if she/he thinks that the analyzer is wrong in analyzing her/his sentences. Moreover, if the students are confused to the comment given by the analyzer, they also can ask for clarification or questions. Then, the teacher asks the students to recompose and revise their writing using correct grammar. The last activity of the step is students are asked to submit two papers; the original paper with comments from other friend and the revising paper.

4. *Teacher's Feedback*

The forth step is teacher's feedback. After the students submitting their paper, teacher must analyze the students' paper. Teacher must notice how the students work between the original paper with comments and the revising paper. The teacher provides comments and corrective feedback to the students' paper focusing on grammar. ⁹ Corrective feedback in the writing context is known as the strategy used by a teacher to correct errors made by students in writing (Mufanti, 2016: 20).

Furthermore, she said the ⁸ underlying assumption for giving corrective feedback is that it supposes to help students notice their errors and, subsequently, produce the correct forms.

5. *Concluding the Concept*

The fifth step is concluding. In this last step, the teacher gives the paper back to the students, and opens class discussion session or question and answers session. This step aims to build the students' critical thinking since the teachers facilitate and guide the students to think the concept of grammar used in the sentences. In the end, the teacher gives conclusion so that the students having the same perception on the concept.

The procedures above illustrate how the CAM model work start from asking students to compose sentences in the paragraph, analyzing sentences, and giving feedback and concluding. Composing sentences in this process is called constructing and the analyzing process is called analyzing. The procedures also show that in teaching grammar the teacher does not give topics of grammar such as tenses, article, conjunction, conditional sentences, gerund as given in the ordinarily grammar books. So that, it is assumed that these activities are able to make students to recognize the grammar used, understand how grammar used and how to synchronize their knowledge of grammar into writing. CAM is also believed able to facilitate students to conclude and arrange the kinds of grammar used by them. Teacher's clarification and feedback are also able to apprehend students what kinds of grammar used in their writing and how to use grammar in a real world. Unconsciously, students learn and use grammar for real activities.

THE BENEFITS OF CAM

Engaging students in various grammar activities using CAM benefits them from gaining abilities to:

1. *Integrate the Concept of Grammar Into Writing*

This model brings the students to understand that grammar learned is not only for the reason of doing grammar exercises but also to support their four skills, especially for writing and speaking. To build the students' thinking, facilitating with an innovative teaching model that can integrate grammar and writing is crucially needed. Therefore, CAM offers this integration. CAM behaves the students to write using correct grammar. These as the one benefit of CAM. Nowadays, grammar test in one of standard International test such as IELTS, is not own stand but it is integrated in four skills; speaking, writing, listening and reading. It means that in this test, grammar is not presented as the test items, but it is counted in the language skills. However, grammar is

one of indicator to assess those skills. Teaching grammar with direct practice through writing makes it possible to familiarize students with the correct grammar. It can be emphasized that one of the advantages of using CAM is to drill students to think integrated. Moreover, it makes the students apprehend that the function of learning grammar is to support their English skills.

2. Become Interactive and Collaborative Learners

The characteristic of successful learning is able to make students active. Hence, a teacher should be able to make the class interactive and collaborative. In this regard, CAM is a teaching model that can create the interactive and collaborative class. A paper analyzing activity makes the students interactive, in another hand, correcting the paper, giving comment and asking for clarification creates collaborative activity among them. In other words, analyzing activity in CAM creates interactive and collaborative activity and brings the students active.

3. Sharp High-Order Thinking

In this regard, constructing and analyzing activity on CAM sharp high-order thinking. It builds students' critical thinking. In analyzing activity, there are three analyzing activities. First analyzing happens when students are asked to analyze the other student's paper by giving comments whether the sentences are correct or wrong and putting notes. Second analyzing happens when students getting back their own paper and analyze their friend's comments. In this case, if the comments are not clear or they think the comments are not correct, they can ask for clarification. Third analyzing happens when students get corrective feedback from their teacher. From the three activities of analyzing, it can be said that this analyzing activities arouse student to think critically.

CONCLUSION

CAM is one of the communicative ways used for the teaching grammar. It facilitates students not only to learn grammar effectively, but also assists them to construct their own understanding, makes use of their knowledge in an acceptable context, and develops their writing skill. Engaging students in various grammar activities using CAM helps them (a) gain abilities to integrate the concept of grammar into writing, (b) become interactive and collaborative learners, and (c) sharpen high-order thinking skills. It also proves that the two-valuable-semester experiences of the writers have shown that CAM is appropriately applied in the grammar class.

¹
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