

TEXT ANALYSIS AND TEXT CREATED IN GRAMMAR LEARNING

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Abstract

The complain of the lecturers on English students' grammar reflected in their understanding of reading text and their writing product stimulated grammar lecturers to find out the ways to make students use the grammar learned. The paper aims at exploring the learning tasks of text analysis and text created assigned to students of undergraduate level. This activity is the stepping stone to get the rank scale of the clause structure in inductive way. The topics discussed can be in the level of phrase, clause, or clause complex. After comprehending the level of scale structure, the students are directed to identify the rules they have learned by analyzing the text. To use what they have learned, students are assigned to create the text related to the topics. There are various activities that can be done, such as individual, pair-up, or group activities. Practices may be in spoken and written activities.

As it was implemented in my grammar class, the result indicates that students were motivated and reflective in using the language. In the low level of structure, such as phrases and simple clause, it worked quite well. It didn't take much time for the students to analyze the text for the rules and created the text assigned. In clause complex structure, however, it took a little longer for them to do the analysis. But the result is good. It is also a challenge for students to create independent activities outside the class, especially for the bright students.

Keywords: *grammar teaching, text analysis, text created, inductive way*

Introduction

The developing of teaching English as a foreign language in higher education emphasizes on building and improving students' competence in using the language, both productive and receptive skills. One of the significant requirements is to build students' competence in using English for their real life by considering the functions and contexts of language use. As stated in the curriculum, each of language functions can be interpreted in different ways based on the context. Since the focus of teaching English as a foreign language is on the use (of students' own real life in a certain functions), the demands to have a good ability cannot be ignored.

It's been a complain of English lecturers on the result of English grammar teaching, more or less, in graduate level of students of Padang State University (called UNP Padang). It is reflected in students' understanding of reading texts and writing product. The result of studies on both reading and writing shows the tendency of unsatisfying. From the findings of my studies, as an example, firstly, on students' English critical reading at English Department UNP and UBH Padang (Syarif (2013), it is seen from

the three skills assigned, namely, paraphrasing, summarizing, and reviewing, their critical reading ability is categorized *fair* (not satisfying). And as the matter of fact, this is mostly caused by grammatical incompetencies, for they could not get the way how the strings of word groupings work in texts, which automatically effect their comprehending of text. As a result, their lack competence on it causes the incapability of paraphrasing, summarizing, and reviewing.

Related to writing ability, this case is also seen in her studies on the cohesiveness of students' writing (Syarif, 2010) and grammatical interference (Syarif and Wahyuni, 2013). The degree of the inappropriate use of cohesion devices influences the meaning of the text written. And the interference on the English writing of English department students (the later research finding) is mostly as the result of their incompetence on using English rules. The intertwined problems (more cases of linguistic elements found in a single sentence or writing) make the interference more complicated. As a matter of fact, grammatical interference is mostly caused by the lack competence of the students in English.

The phenomena from the studies above have also been debated in the scope of teaching grammar for the sake of development of linguistic theories and language pedagogies. The primary focus of the debate has recently shifted from whether the grammar of the target language should be taught (Fotos & Ellis, 1991) to how it is taught. In recent years language teachers and researchers are thus developing various ways to teach grammar. For example, Ellis (1995) and Wen (2001) employ interpretative tasks in grammar teaching. They “emphasize helping learners to notice grammatical features in the input, comprehend their meanings, and compare the forms present in the input with those occurring in learner output”. Another kind of grammar teaching is to put discourse analysis into grammar teaching (Hughes & McCarthy, 1998). They claim “there are very good reasons for developing discourse grammars for L2 teaching and exemplify the criteria for moving from sentence-based grammar to the discourse level”. Thornbury (1999), then, proposes several strategies in teaching grammar to EFL students. He discusses the reasons for teaching grammar, teaching grammar from rules, teaching grammar from examples, and teaching grammar through texts.

Concerning the focus of learning English, that is on use, teaching grammar through text may become very closer to the aim. Agustien (2006) says that text is a semantic unit, a unit of language that makes sense. The straight structure of speech, text perception and analysis are related to good knowledge of grammar. Then, anything you want to express, to comprehend should be related to text. So, analyzing text to get the rules of English used is needed for the purpose of comprehending the message being read or listened.

Commonly, the way of analyzing text is based on the rules governed in the language analyzed. Grammar being understood is as the analysis of the properties characterizing well-formed sentences of the language (Jacobs, 1995). So, it will be easier for the students to create their own text whenever they are competent in analyzing grammar of text. It can be assumed that the more competent someone in analyzing grammar of the text the easier he/she can create his/her own text.

Despite various ways of learning activities done in grammar subjects, such as question and answer, small group work, pair work, they were still not really effective. Not all of students were actively involved in teaching learning process. Thus, it can be seen that students still had difficulty in using the grammar rules in the language skills (especially in English reading and writing).

Then, it is very essential to find the appropriate technique that can be used in grammar instruction and overcome problems faced by students. Of possible applied model, text analysis and text created with problem-solving technique as the learning task was the choice. Problem solving is a technique in which the lecturer gives an opportunity to students to work in small groups, in pairs to solve problem, share information and opinions on problems, which are meaningful to them.

So, students are asked to analyze text by solving problems through question-answer, group discussion or pairs. This technique is an inductive learning, in which students get the rules from text analysis. Moreover this technique involves collaboration and self initiated in language learning. In group, students share ideas with their friends, and it can avoid monotony. Still to avoid boredom, students get new text each week. Hence, they can actively be involved in teaching learning process and understand the material in grammar subject. For that reason, this research will find out *how text analysis and text created works in learning grammar in Grammar subject at State University of Padang*.

Bygate (1994) states that grammar in language teaching mirrors its centrality in structural linguistics, which was increasingly called on to validate language teaching method. He then claims that the study of language means primarily the study of its grammar, by which learners may have the ability to read and to write.

Language experts, in numbers of books, articles, and journals define grammar variously, depending on their experience in teaching and learning. Ur (1991) for example, states that grammar is the way words are put together to make correct sentences. For him, the specific instance of grammar is usually called a structure. In different way, Nothen (2005) says it is the study of words and their component parts which are combined to form

sentences. While Konar (2005) is in the opinion that grammar is the knowledge of a person and the use of a language. Those all ideas go to the same direction.

Murcia (1990) proposes three dimensional frameworks as the approach to teach or to learn grammar dealing with the complexity of language. They are form/structure, the semantics meaning, and pragmatics condition. These three dimensional framework can be described in this following pie chart::

The structure wedge tells about how a particular grammar structure is constructed. It consists of morphemes, phonemics/graphemic pattern and syntactic pattern of the language. In the semantics, it deals with what the grammar structure means. There are grammatical and lexical meanings. While, pragmatics deals with all aspects of meaning. There are social context, linguistics context, and presupposition context.

These framework are interconnected each other. In teaching pragmatics, the students need to be able to select the right structure for a particular context. It also happens with the semantics, the meaning of the sentence depends on the form of the sentence and when the sentence is delivered. Simply, the teacher needs to ask these questions for any given grammar point: how is the language formed?, what does that language form mean? And when or why is that language used?. In summary, she says that it is not true to teach grammar only focus on the form or the structure, but also the semantics meaning and the pragmatic conditions.

Grammar does not only affect how units of language are combined in order to look right, it also affects their meaning. In simple word, it gives meaning to the person who uses it in listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

People who are very good and brilliant in speaking or writing usually start their lesson from the way they combine the words become the sentences, and then becomes text or discourse. Finally, they deliver it in writing or speaking. Thus, people have to understand grammar of the language in order to make a correct and meaningful sentences or utterances.

There are some reasons why gram-

mar appears in teaching a foreign language. Vygotsky (2005) states that grammar affects written performance. In writing, people have more control over the grammar they use because they have more time and the option of revising. Then, bad grammar will make the reader confuse in understanding their meaning of written performance.

Teaching grammar also gives effect to the students by promoting understanding, and knowing that language. By learning grammar, the students are able to understand how language works, how the sentences are organized, and how they are used to achieve particular effects. It is relevant with Smedley's (1983) statement, that grammar gives insight into the way language works. Also, the students are expected to be familiar with the grammatical term and concepts related to word, sentence and whole text structure in English program of study.

Concerning the text, there are many question to answer why people analyze text. First is to explicate or give a close reading of the text. Second is to find a sub-text (or the meaning beneath the obvious meaning of the text). Third is to bring background to bear upon the text (for example, if people know something about the author, they can understand the text in a deeper way). Fourth, it is to compare with other texts. Fifth, it is to place the text within a context (of the author's life, for example, or the historical period in which the text is created, or of a certain literary or artistic movement). Finally, it is to use the text to prove a larger thesis (about a writer's motivation, for example, or the themes that interest a certain group of writers at a certain time).

As this importance of the text analysis, grammar course should be learned through it. It is focused on the structure of written language in order to provide a detailed linguistic analysis of texts. The students as readers are able to analyze the text with questions in their mind, such as "How good is the grammar in the text?" They analyze the text in order to get the understanding how words can be put together to have meaning. Then, the task is that the students will be asked to break down the sentences in text and analyze them based on the grammar rules.

According to Woods (2006), using text analysis in teaching English can engage stu-

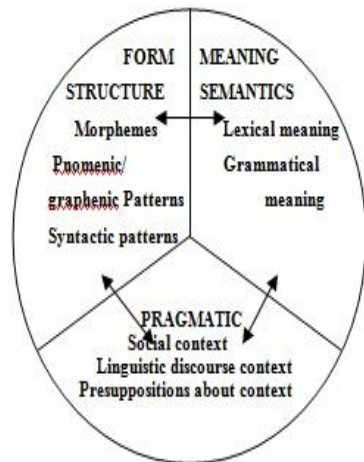


Figure 2.1. Dimensional Grammar Framework. (Murcia: 1990)

dents and tutors in the exploration of texts. Furthermore, analysis of texts also encourages students to reflect upon and critically evaluate knowledge acquired in the study of, for example, grammar and semantics as well as naturally drawing students to the investigation of socially-situated language use. Even it provides students with the opportunity to examine how meaning is constructed and negotiated in texts and to reflect on the role that language plays in social life. It means that the students do not only try to find the rules to get meaning in the text but also to know the role of the language.

Text analysis technique contributes to the students' understanding about the meaning of the text. The students can be good writers if they understand the construction of the text, how words combined together to achieve well-formed and meaningful sentence. Moreover, they can also understand the function of the text. This technique will motivate the students to be critical thinkers because they examine, identify, and analyze the rules.

The conclusion can be drawn that text analysis is very probable to make students gain the rules of English from the text in grammar course comprehensively. Intensive practice through text analysis leads to the mastery of linguistics unit. By finding examples of the rules in the text (all the words/phrases/clauses/clause complex in the text connected to the rules), the students will have the opportunity to look into the texts to examine what types of grammatical structures are used. In the next turn, they may apply them for producing /creating the text.

How text analysis works

The framework of this text analysis adapts the view of interaction of *input*, *language*, *content*, and *task* proposed by Djiwandono (1995), in which *task* is changed by *text analysis* as seen in the following frame.

Text analysis, in the frame, is the center focus of the activities. *Language* and *content* drawn from the *input* and selected based on the topics being talked lead the students to do the analysis. To run this analysis, many techniques could be varied in the classroom, such as, question-answer, pairwork, and groupwork discussion as the description of the activity. Operationally, the phase of introductory activities is suited to the theories referred. In formulating the implementation of the action, the improvement of delivering instructional materials is *from the concept* (rules) to the *use* of the rules in *Grammar* subject.

The activities of the students to use information-processing skills in their first start of learning are regarded as an input. This input produces language items, the topic, and stimulus materials for next activities. There are four kinds of activities done in this model Figure 2 shows the sample of model in which the activities vary based on the techniques used.

Activity 1: Information transfer

Reading the material(s) of the topic in the syllabus is as the process of getting the information as the input. The information obtained *from* the book is transferred into the rule(s). This activity is done by analyzing the sentences (text) prepared through question-answer, pairwork, or small group discussion until they get the rule(s) asked.

Information transfer, in daily communication, is a routine activity, in which the literate people put the information obtained into various forms of format, such as note, diagram, table, or graph. In the case of communicating grammar in the real use, students are trained to get in touch with comprehending text through analysis for the rules. This information transfer should be done for several reasons.

Firstly, one needs to consider the target situation where students would eventually use English. When our students enter the work world, a part of their daily routine will be to attend to information transmitted orally

or in written in memos or letters. Later they must transfer this information to another intelligible format.

Secondly, the activity fosters the development of new learning skills. Part of the content that the students have to learn is the grammar rules, and to some extent this requires a degree of repetition combined with attention (Nation, 1990:67). This requirement is sufficiently met in the information transfer activity because it incorporates repetition of certain structures (Palmer, 1982: 29).

Another advantage is that the students' mind. Clearly, when pre-occupied with the listen and transfer task, students proceed in a thinking fashion. Finally, the information transfer activity carries potential for subsequent activity. As Palmer (1982:300) notes, it forms a kind of pivot around which any of the language skills may revoke.

Figure 2. Text Analysis Model

Activity 2: The language focus

After getting concept (the rule) of the topic discussed, students continue the activities with searching the rule from other sentences of the text assigned. This practice is undertaken by sharing ideas in form of having question and answer, discussing in pairs, or in small group discussion to reach the accuracy. It is the instructor's time to give the feedback and reinforcement on students work at the end of their activity.

Activity 3: Having use of the rule(s)

This activity is going on with creating new sentences (text) based on the rule discussed. Unlike in activity 2, students do it individually. Any text they make always refers to their existing knowledge on grammar patterns. Besides, their experience, the background knowledge, will help them write accurate sentences or text. Then, they exchange their work and discuss for the correctness. Again, the role of the instructor is headed for feedback and reinforcement.

Activity 3: Analyzing sentences (text)

As a post activity, the students are assigned to analyze the text taken from the newspaper. The texts prepared are varied for the purpose that more text analysis emerges from students learning activities. Since the text does not always consist of the pattern having been discussed, the students are asked

to analyze the learned rules from the text. Generally, this activity is done as the homework. As the feedback, the chance is given to the students with the confusion on the task before the next meeting starts.

Method

As the application of the techniques, the group of students who took English Grammar 3 in a certain class was taken as a subject of the study. In the process of learning, the technique used was text analysis, in which the students are required to analyze the text to get the rules in the process of learning and create the text of their own based of the grammar patterns discussed.

To get the data, *Pre-Post test* were prepared to see the improvement of students ability, and *field note* to know how eager students to find rules from the text by observing the activities. Informal interview was also conducted to make sure the data obtained.

Finding and Discussion

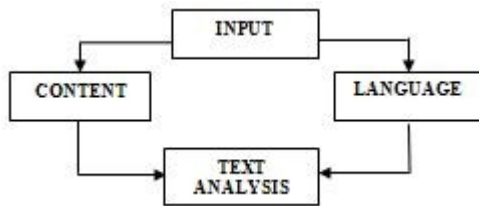
Since the model is applied in the classroom activities, the findings shown rely on the activities done. Because the students were already assigned to read the concept before coming to the classroom, at least they have got general concept about the topic discussed. Probing questions to call forth their comprehension to what they have read got good response. The students were enthusiastic in answering questions. The questions led them to get the true concepts of the rules.

Before starting to analyze text, general description on the activities was explained. It included the materials and some examples of the sentences, phrase or clause analyzed, and how they did the activities (question-answer, pair-work, or small group work). This general explanation could help the students comprehend the materials before doing the analysis. It is also seen from the sample of students response in the interview as follows.

Interviewer : *Can the lecturer's questions lead you to get the rules discussed?*

Student 9 : *Sure. It does. The questions really give us the clue to get the patterns of Adjective Clause, such as asking us to identify subord. conj., underline the clause followed, and get the noun modified.*

It appears in line with Bertrand's opinion (2009), stating that the instructor has to explain the procedure and demonstrate what activity should be in pair-work and



group-work activity.

From the findings, it was found that most of the students like analyzing text in learning the rules of complex sentences. While trying to comprehend the meaning of the text, many of them said it could help them find the rules in sentences. Determining rules seems motivating to them. From the data observed it could be found that most of students looked serious in doing the analysis and were motivated enough in doing this activity (78.5%). In doing pair work activity, for example, monitoring was always done and students relaxedly asked the questions on the problem they faced. Their enthusiasm also emerged because the result of their analysis was discussed, so that they convinced themselves to have done it well. They have transferred the information of the text to the form of the language (rules).

However, some of the students who have low ability in learning grammar sometimes looked confused in analyzing text and breaking complex sentence into its components (independent and dependent clauses). It could be seen from their overall activity. The text to them was difficult to be analyzed. It can be caused by the student's ability in mastering previous grammar lesson. Since they did not have well self-concept and interest, they were not motivated in learning. By giving them special attention in remedial work was the solution of the case.

The response of the students on the text assigned analyzed was good. 77.3% of students showed their good responses on the text used to find the concept of the topic. Text to them was media that helped them understand the materials. It can be understood that text gotten from newspaper could be easily comprehended since it is authentic, related to real use. This made them easily get

the rules of sentence and its components in the text. Students felt convenient and helpful by the activities of sharing ideas with friends whether in pairs or in small groups as well as the feedback and/or reinforcement from me as the instructor at the end of the activity. In other words, text was really helpful for the students in studying grammar. This is in line with Thornbury's and Harmer's, (1999:73) saying that using text for learning grammar is better and very challenging for students. However, it cannot be avoided that some students still did not really care about the task given through discussion since they had lack competence in grammar.

Related to the application of concept, that is to create the text on the rules governed, some of students could not finish their job on time. They had to stop their work though they haven't finished yet. Since the time provided was limited, this seemingly becomes the problem. Besides, their individual difference in getting ideas is also problematical, while it is assumed that time-on-task contributes to individual differences in academic skills.

Nevertheless, the text they constructed were mostly accurate. As an example of two sentences written within different texts on *The Indonesian Parliament Election* created is as follows:

Concerning with the individual task assigned, students with their searched text were eager to analyze it for the patterns at home. Their eagerness might have also increased because of the peer correction and feedback given. 73 % of students completed their analysis at home with the accuracy of 80%. Meanwhile, students achievement on the materials given was high enough. The average was 79 %, the percentage that is good for Grammar 3 class along my experience teaching this subject. The very important things to note down is that students have already realized that grammar can give them confidence in constructing well-formed sentence or text.

As a whole, the felt needs (as Morrison, at al., 2004 claims to improve the individual performance and wants by their motivated desire) of the students in learning activities of grammar has come to the reality. Not to think much of their fantastic improvement on their achievement, they have got something to react on the text that should be analyzed.

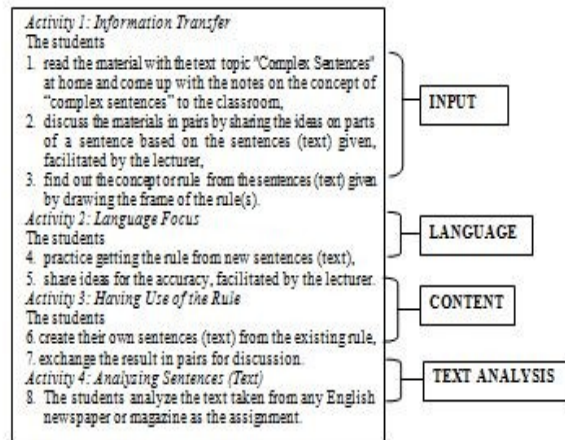


Figure 2. Text Analysis Model

Conclusion

This article has described text analysis as model of English grammar learning process. From the model implemented, it has been found out that in every segment of learning (input, language, and content), text analysis appears. Students enjoyed doing it through any kind of cooperative technique such as pair work, small group discussion, as well as question-answer. Eventhough this model consumes more time, the way students did the activities make them come up with their ideas, and it can gradually increase their ability to use the patterns of the English language.

Since grammar is one of the components of language having complicated rules, it implies that lecturers should work hard for students creative activities on learning. By considering appropriate time, this model will be one of the workable solution, particularly in studying content subjects of English, and other languages generally.

The teaching methods are different, there are also differences among approaches. This article is hoped to fill the gap which is common today in all universities and helps specialists to reach to some results by using the model suggested. This model can also be useful in other language studying process.

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