

ENHANCING GRAMMAR TEACHING IN AN INDONESIAN SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL THROUGH THE USE OF GRAMMAR WHEEL

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Abstract: Attaining proficiency in grammar is crucial for students as it serves as the foundation for language use. However, many individuals shy away from learning it, perceiving it as a daunting and challenging task. This research is aimed at enhancing grammar teaching by applying Grammar Wheel. It focuses on the active and passive voice mastery of three forms of tenses including simple past tense, past continuous tense, and past perfect tense. Conducted in an Indonesian Senior High School in Yogyakarta, this study was participated by 35 students and an English teacher. Having troubles in comprehending grammar, the teacher needed media and activities to deliver the grammar materials interestingly. Two cycles of Classroom Action Research (CAR) were implemented. The data were collected using observation sheets, field notes, video recordings, interview guidelines, and exercise sheets. The analysis was carried out qualitatively following the steps proposed by Creswell and Creswell (2018). The results revealed that grammar teaching had been successfully improved and students were more motivated to engage in the learning process being in a comfortable and supportive learning environment. Furthermore, learners' knowledge in mastering the three types of tenses increased significantly as evidenced by the decline in the number of grammatical errors in the sentences they made. Hence, the Grammar Wheel has proven to be an effective tool for teaching grammar in the classroom.

Keywords: *Grammar Wheel; grammar; past tense.*

INTRODUCTION

In the field of language teaching, the position of grammar instructions holds a crucial component in a language. Weaver (1996, as cited in Hervina, 2022) believed that language is an ultimate human accomplishment that is worthy to be learned. This

view signifies that principles are required to underlie language learning. The essential of this language component lies in its function to bring meaningful utterances (Hervina, 2022). As English grammar is a rule that comprises the structure of a language, it is considered the

fundamental of four English language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). Hence, teaching grammar is important in the learning of language as grammar encompasses the rules of a language and delivers meaning through sentences. Undisputedly, grammar provides a clear context and makes a sentence or text meaningful and relevant.

Despite its significance, however, the portrait of teaching grammar in Indonesian high schools seems challenging as grammar itself often stands as a frightening specter for most students. The existence of the doctrine that learning grammar means learning a lot of confusing English tenses appeared since the Indonesian language is tenseless. Consequently, the students found that they have difficulty in differentiating tenses as their first language doesn't have this kind of distinction (Listia and Febriyanti, 2020). Iman (2020) provides specific proof by pointing out that Indonesian students have difficulty with past tense verb forms due to their variability. As a result, the students' perspective on grammar that has such complex rules lead them to have a low motivation to learn grammar (Sorohiti, et al., 2024).

In regard to the challenges in teaching grammar, the right teaching method has been a subject of discussions among EFL teachers and practitioners. Benitez-Correa et al. (2019) highlights that there has been an ongoing debate on whether grammar should be taught inductively or deductively. When teachers teach grammar inductively, they try to make the students discover the grammatical rules. Such that, students are given the opportunity to deduce the rule from the examples presented to them. Some researchers argue that this method allows better retention (Obeidat & Alomari, 2020). Whereas, in a deductive classroom, teachers teach grammar by presenting and explaining concepts to students (Andriani et al, 2021). The students are then expected to complete exercises or assignments to practice these concepts. This method is often criticized for its more teacher-centered nature. However, it has been around for many decades and serves many advantages. Yakubova (2022) elaborates that this method allows more time efficiency in terms of preparation and benefits students as they know what they are expected to do. Regardless of the distinction between the two, several studies (Hejvani & Farahani, 2018; Nur, 2020; Shirav & Nagai, 2022) have revealed that inductive teaching and deductive teaching of grammar are equally beneficial.

Moreover, there is a notion that grammar is "boring". Yakubova (2022) notes that the methods and strategies to teach it must be properly and deliberately constructed so that students would enjoy the process. However, equally important, engaging students in learning should be the priority of education. Unfortunately, in the Indonesian context, the teaching and learning process is still dominated by teachers trying to deliver materials through conventional lectures. A research conducted by Komara & Tiarsiwi (2021) found that out of 500 samples of Indonesian students at various levels spread across the country, the majority encountered various obstacles in learning grammar. They highlighted the limited diversity in teaching methods employed by teachers and the lack of clarity in explanations. This resulted in students demanding more varied learning methods.

Meanwhile, studies have revealed that students in Indonesia need a friendly learning atmosphere and effective learning strategies that are not fixated on a teacher-centered approach (Nurhayati, 2020; Yunita, et al., 2018). That is to say, English teachers are advised to seek for more enjoyable methods and strategies to teach grammar. Aside from those aforementioned methods and strategies, some researchers (Afidah et al., 2021; Rhovaidah, Hadi, & Mutiarani, 2021; Islami, 2020) have proved that choosing the right learning media can be promising to aid the teaching of grammar. This should prompt educators across the country to cultivate a new learning environment that fosters student comfort and instills confidence in the notion that mastering grammar is achievable.

To address these issues, teachers in Indonesia need to adopt a different method of teaching grammar. One effective solution to overcome this hurdle, accessible to all learners, is the Grammar Wheel. This educational tool, which can be individually designed by the teachers, remains pertinent in language learning today (Yacob & Yunus, 2019). It serves as a tool for learners to engage with proper sentence structures in an enjoyable manner. Research in different areas have proven that the use of the Grammar Wheel improved students' understanding and abilities not only in grammar but also their writing skills (Saputra et al., 2019; Chambers & Yunus, 2017). Utilizing the Grammar Wheel fosters greater confidence among students in comprehending and crafting sentences.

However, prior studies have predominantly concentrated on constructing sentences in the present tense (Saputra, et al., 2019; Chambers &

Yunus, 2017; Batubara & Mahardhika, 2020). The development of an instructional tool aimed at enhancing students' comprehension of past tense usage, particularly in active and passive forms, remains unexplored. Given the emerging challenges in grammar instruction and the limited effort to offer a thorough explanation of different tense forms, the present study advocates for the implementation of the Grammar Wheel for grade X students at a senior high school in Bantul, Indonesia. As an advancement in utilizing this tool, the present study aims to assist students in not only comprehending the rules of sentence structure but also in distinguishing and constructing three distinct tenses: the past perfect tense, past continuous tense, and past simple tense.

METHOD

This research focuses on enhancing the teaching of grammar, especially on the use of past tense. Therefore, Classroom Action Research (CAR) was conducted to achieve the research objectives. According to Burns (2010), CAR is aimed at identifying problems that may come from the teacher, student, manager, administrator, or parents in order to make an improvement in practice. In collecting the data, researchers collaboratively carried out the CAR and worked hand in hand with a teacher. A class consisting of 36 students in grade 10th of one of the Senior High Schools in Yogyakarta was involved in the research. The selection of this class was based on the identification of an urgent need for assistance in teaching grammar among the students. Such concerns were directly expressed by the teacher in the class. Before the research was carried out, the authors ensured that students understood and agreed to the interference from researchers during the learning process.

The cycle steps of this research are following the CAR model from Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) which consist of the plan, action, observation, and reflection. The reconnaissance step was conducted before implementing the cycle to identify the problem. It was done by doing two preliminary observations and interviewing students and the teacher. After that, the researchers designed the plans based on the discussion results. The plans were implemented by the teacher while the researchers conducted the observations. After completing the implementation in the cycle, the researcher and the teacher reflected and evaluated the process of teaching. In total, the researchers conducted this research in 2 cycles.

Two types of Grammar Wheels are utilized: one for active voice and another for passive voice. Below is the design of the Grammar Wheel for active voice:



Figure 1. Grammar Wheel active voice

The wheel has four colors comprising blue, orange, green and yellow. Each color represents a different type of tenses. The color blue is for the simple past tense, orange is for the past continuous tense with a single subject, green is for the past continuous tense with a plural subject, and yellow is for the past perfect tense. Furthermore, each circle represents a different part. The first circle is for the subject, the second one is for to be, and the third is for the verb.

To use the wheel, students are divided into five to six groups of four to five. Sticky notes are given to each group, which they use to write new words on before attaching them to the wheel to create new sentences. Due to its convenience, the use of the Grammar Wheel can be integrated with other activities. In Cycle 1, the active voice structure was practiced via a game called 'silly sentence'. Students were allowed to construct sentences that are structurally correct but do not necessarily make sense. The main goal in using this method is for students to first understand and master the grammatical structure.

Since the data gathered in this research are qualitative, they were analyzed using the steps elaborated by Creswell and Creswell (2018). The steps consist of: 1) organizing and preparing the data; 2) reading or looking at all the data; 3) coding all the data; 4) generating a description and themes; and 5) representing the description and themes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Reconnaissance

Twice classroom observations and interviews with both students and the teacher were conducted in the beginning. The teacher implemented Genre Based Approach (GBA) as the teaching method to deliver the structure of recount text materials. During the first observation, there was no crucial problem in relation to the teaching process. The teacher had done the steps of Building Knowledge of the Text (BKoF) by discussing some vocabulary and famous figures and Modeling of the Text (MoT) by deconstructing a biography text. Thus, the researchers then managed the second observation. For the time being, the materials were the use of grammatical structure in recount text.

Students' lack of engagement

Most of the students looked confused when the teacher asked them to identify tenses in a paragraph. Moreover, some were not engaged in the teacher's explanation as they were talking in the back. This view was supported by the interview result with two of the students. One student revealed that *"that one (tenses) I still don't understand"* (I1/P3/03.02/CH) and *"sometimes it is still difficult to distinguish verb one and verb two"* (I1/P3/03.25/CH). She also reasoned that *"It's really hard to understand the material because it's in English, so the language is different"* (I1/P3/03.06/CH). In short, they found it difficult to understand the tenses and to differentiate the verb forms since there are no tenses in the Indonesian language. Indeed, the difference between grammatical rules in English and in the students' first language can cause confusion and even errors. As revealed by Linarsih et al. (2020) grammatical errors produced by students while learning English can

be caused by the interferences of the Indonesian grammar.

Students' needs for more grammar explanation and practice

Regarding teaching grammar, the drawback was that the explanation delivered by the teacher is brief and prompt, as one of them commented *"so far, sometimes the explanation is just written on the board and then explained briefly, then not studied further"* (I1/P3/04.10/TM) because the teaching method *"often focused on project task"* (I1/P1/05.46/TM). Meanwhile, from the teacher's perspective, she expressed that an activity to help her explain the grammar material is required to make the learning varied and not monotonous. In terms of learning needs, students noticed that they still need more explanation and practice to deepen their understanding as two students confessed *"...I want to learn more about grammar and vocab"* (I1/P3/03.19/LN) and *"I'd rather be given a task (activity) and later we can find out more deeply"* (I1/P3/05.30/LN). Students' comments highlighted the significance of a method that can both provide them with thorough explanations and keep them engaged.

Students' lack of grammar mastery

To check and identify the actual students' English grammar mastery, the researchers tried to get their sample writing. They were asked to do initial exercises on writing two sentences in each three tenses, those are simple past, past continuous, and past perfect tense. From the initial exercise result, the researchers detected that almost half of the class were having trouble with those three tenses. Moreover, their awareness of writing the article is also low:

Table 1. *Initial exercise result*

	Sentences			Number of Errors		
	Simple Past Tense	Past Continuous Tense	Past Perfect Tense	Noun	Verb	Article
Total Sentences	70	70	70	70	70	70
Incorrect	24	30	33	1	7	27
Incorrect %	34%	43%	47%	1%	10%	39%

After the investigations were done, the researchers discussed the result with the teacher as the collaborator to obtain more perspectives in finding the solution. Finally, the researchers and the teacher agreed to employ the Grammar Wheel to facilitate learners in understanding tenses.

Cycle 1

Implementation of the first cycle was carried out after the MoT step in the previous class. In this cycle, grammar teaching was focused on the mastery of the active voice. The primary objective of the activity was to enable students to comprehend and construct active voice sentences using three different types of past tense accurately. During the lesson, the researchers conducted

classroom observations to see and ensure that students clearly understood what to do with the Grammar Wheel. The teacher remained in primary control of the class and the researchers continued to act as observers.

Improved students' centeredness through practice with Grammar Wheel

Analysis showed that at the beginning of the lesson, students did not fully understand the delivered explanations and instructions for the Grammar Wheel. Only after the researchers and the teacher went around the class to explain the

instructions did the students completely understand and started to get excited. Throughout the learning activity, students accumulated a variety of new vocabulary knowing that they could make any sentences, even the ones that did not make sense, as long as the structure was correct. The class continued to gravitate more on learner-centered learning. Students had direct experience with learning media and succeeded in making sentences using the three forms of past tense. The following table exhibits a summary of the work of all six groups:

Table 2. Practice results of active voice

Group	Number of Sentences						Number of Errors		
	Simple Past Tense		Past Continuous Tense		Past Perfect Tense		Noun	Verb	Article
	T	C	T	C	T	C			
A	3	3	3	3	3	3	-	1	2
B	6	4	6	5	6	6	-	3	8
C	3	2	3	3	3	3	2	1	5
D	5	5	5	5	5	4	-	1	4
E	6	5	6	6	4	4	-	1	4
F	2	2	3	3	2	2	-	-	4

T: the total number of sentences written

C: the number of sentences written correctly

The figure displays that regardless of the different sentences each group composed, all of them provided satisfactory answers. The errors lied in the improper form of verbs as students were still learning and memorizing regular and irregular verbs. These were visible from how the students wrote the words "faught" instead of "fought" and "was caughting" instead of "was catching". Septianasari, et al. (2019) stated that the influence of mother tongue is generally found during the learning process. The fact that Indonesian does not have tenses may contribute to the underlying factor as students do not need to change the verb in their native language. This difference can lead to generalization of word forms or spellings by the students. Subsequently, the second type of error that appeared most frequently in student worksheets was the lack of articles. Rules regarding this particular aspect was indeed not explicitly conveyed in class that only a few were aware of its use. Although some problems related to grammar rules were found, most of the sentences the students constructed were grammatically correct and they had understood the structures.

Increased awareness of sentence

In addition to the aforementioned points, students even knew how to differentiate the three types of

tenses. While observing activities in class, the researchers found that a student was able to correct the wrong sentence one of her friends made. "Hey! You shouldn't use 'was' there! It should be 'She wrote' not 'She was wrote!'". This particular action indicated the student's increasing awareness of grammar. Alizain (2019) mentioned that grammar awareness has a significant role in language learning and the Grammar Wheel had successfully facilitated it in this context. This finding indicates that the use of the Grammar wheel is effective in helping students understand grammar structures and further supports previous findings (Saputra, et al., 2019; Chambers & Yunus, 2017). Students were able not only to understand sentence structure but also to distinguish and make three forms of active past tense sentences.

The process in cycle 1 indeed exhibited students' mastery of the three types of active past tense sentences. However, as the initial purpose of this activity was only for students' understanding, students were allowed to construct silly sentences which in terms of content did not really reflect the topic of their learning. Hence, reflection needed to be conducted to improve the learning process for the next stage. To facilitate students in the next meeting, the use of silly sentences was eliminated and the material continued with passive voice

forms. The new Grammar Wheel with passive voice structure was designed for this purpose. Mastery of the passive voice structure would be useful for students to write historical recount text as the next topic.

Cycle 2

Based on the evaluation of the first cycle, the teacher and the researchers agreed that another cycle was necessary to be conducted, especially because the next topic still concerned recount text which involved several tenses. In the second cycle, a new Grammar Wheel was designed and created since different tenses, i.e., passive voices were discussed. However, they were still associated with the simple past, past continuous, and past perfect. The learning activities in the second cycle were almost similar to the ones implemented in the first cycle, with the “silly sentence” part being omitted to avoid confusion and the possibility of students creating sentences with inappropriate meanings.

At this point, students had understood how the Grammar Wheel works. Thus, they could enjoy the activities and understand the materials better as the teacher noted, “...they could understand the materials better, compared to when we did not

use the learning media...” (I4/T/04.08/IM), which one of the students acknowledged, “(in terms of understanding) there is an improvement” (I2/P2 P4/04.15/IM). In fact, some researchers (Afidah, Hanifah, & Alkhoyath, 2021; Rhovaidah, Hadi, & Mutiarani, 2021; Islami, 2020) believe that the right learning media could enhance grammar teaching. The aforementioned teacher and student’ testimonies confirm that Grammar Wheel as the learning medium in this study is beneficial in improving students’ understanding of grammar.

The students’ understanding was reflected in the results of their group practices. Each group produced six up to fifteen passive sentences comprising simple past, past continuous, and past perfect. Two out of five groups had created completely correct sentences for all tenses. The other three groups made some errors in the past perfect sentences, but still managed to write the simple past and past continuous sentences correctly. Their errors were mainly related to the use of articles (a, an, the) and some are related to verb choices as they thought that it was okay to write silly sentences like they did in the first cycle. The detailed analysis on the practice results can be found in the table below:

Table 3. Practice results of passive voice

Group	Sentences						Number of Errors		
	SimplePast Tense		Past Continuous Tense		Past PerfectTense		Noun	Verb	Article
	T	C	T	C	T	C			
A	3	3	3	3	3	2	-	1	2
B	5	5	5	5	5	5	-	-	-
C	2	2	2	2	2	2	-	-	-
D	4	4	4	4	3	1	-	2	-
E	3	3	3	3	3	1	-	4	5

T: the total number of sentences written

C: the number of sentences written correctly

The table indicates that students showed significant improvement in understanding and producing passive voice in addition to the active voice one. The number of errors in the parts of speech also appeared to decrease. The errors found in the second cycle included the improper choice of words. Groups D and E respectively wrote “died by” instead of “killed by” and “stolen” instead of “kidnapped”. Nevertheless, besides promoting better understanding, the use of Grammar Wheel had enhanced students’ vocabulary as one of the students commented, “my teammates gave different words, so it (vocabulary) improves” (I2/P4/04.58/IM). Other aspects of the use of Grammar Wheel that gained

positive responses from the teacher and the students were its ease of use, its interactivity, as well as its ability to allow students to experiment and write their sentences in an enjoyable way. In other words, the claims of previous studies regarding the advantages of utilizing Grammar Wheel (Chambers & Yunus, 2017; Saputra, et al., 2019; Yacob & Yunus, 2019) were proven in this study.

More enjoyable learning through collaboration

Additionally, the activities integrated with the Grammar Wheel were able to facilitate collaboration. Working collaboratively with peers was considered helpful by the students because

they “...could easily share...” (I3/P5/00.18/ST) their understanding and they “...had more fun in doing the practices” (I2/P2/00.52/ST). This finding confirms Vygotsky’s (1962, as cited in Lailiyah et al., 2021) theory that collaboration can enable students to obtain a cognitive growth that they could not achieve in their individual endeavors.

The teacher also agreed that the students seemed more enthusiastic when they did group work. All in all, the learning atmosphere became more enjoyable. It also became more student-centered as more time was spent for group work. It is in line with the suggestions from some researchers (Nurhayati, 2020; Yakubova, 2019; Yunita, et al., 2018) in regards to appropriate teaching practices that could satisfy the students’ needs.

Indeed, after the implementation of the two cycles, there are some suggestions obtained. For instance, it would be better if students do more practices, including spoken practices. The teacher mentioned that “*the practices do not have to be writing, students can also practice the grammar through spoken practices*” (I4/T/08.33/SU). Furthermore, for more advanced development, the teacher noted that it would be great if the Grammar Wheel can be made into an application (I4/T/01.59/SU). According to Traxler (2016 cited in Criollo et al (2021), applications, being a part of technology, possess the capacity to enhance teaching and are easily accessible. The claim emphasizes that it empowers learning facilities to make use of a set of features such as flexibility, ubiquity, and portability in an attempt of learning that will significantly advantage both teachers and students in the emerging digital age (Briz-Ponce, 2017).

In other words, the utilization of Grammar Wheel has brought about positive results, namely better understanding of different tenses, a more student-centered instruction, and a more enjoyable learning atmosphere. However, there is still a room for improvement in relation to the utilization of Grammar Wheel and the teaching and learning in general. Unfortunately, the teacher and the researchers could not proceed with a follow up cycle because of the time constraint as the students were about to have final term exams.

CONCLUSION

This research was undertaken to determine the results of using Grammar Wheel in an attempt to improve grammar teaching in an Indonesian Senior High School. While prior research has

concentrated on enhancing comprehension of the present tense, this study represents a significant advancement by introducing innovative methods for teaching three distinct past tenses. Utilizing the Grammar Wheel as the primary instructional tool, this approach can be tailored to suit student needs.

One of the most significant findings to emerge from this study is that the teaching of grammar was enhanced. The teacher was able to explain the grammar in a fascinating way. Furthermore, the classroom atmosphere was delightful as students appeared eager and enthusiastic in utilizing the Grammar Wheel. The students' confusion in understanding grammar was reduced after the implementation. It was proven that the total of students' errors in every writing activity dropped gradually.

In conclusion, this study underlines the fun method of teaching English grammar to students in an effective way. The outcomes have clearly demonstrated the effectiveness of the employed media and method, contributing to their versatility in the realm of English language teaching.

Given the limited adoption of the Grammar Wheel in Indonesia, there is an expectation for educators outside the research setting to broaden their experiences and engagements by introducing this media to students. This exposure will allow them to delve more deeply into various past tense types and foster meaningful discussions among them. The result also recommends the use of Grammar Wheel in teaching tenses combined with group activities that follow in order to facilitate the students to do some practices. This method is particularly effective for individuals facing challenges in grasping grammar rules, whether in formal or informal learning environments. Moreover, teachers can also use this medium to focus on other aspects of grammar such as sentence structure and the use of parts of speech in association with word order.

Despite its effectiveness, this research is constrained by time limitations and the use of less sophisticated media. The media's usage is restricted to a specific timeframe, leading to challenges such as student confusion about the Grammar Wheel's application, inadequate explanation of the entire activity, and insufficient follow-up for evaluation. To address these challenges effectively and witness genuine improvements in students' understanding, skills, and independence within a reasonable timeframe, thorough preparation is essential beforehand. Additionally, the current reliance on printed

materials limits the sophistication of the media. Developing the digital version can modernize and enhance this learning tool significantly. A digital Grammar Wheel application can reach a broader audience of learners and educators while enhancing teaching and learning efficiency.

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