



Inductive and Deductive Approaches to Teaching Grammar for Young Learners at Elementary School in East Lombok: A Teacher's Perspective and Practice

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Abstract

Teaching grammar to young learners is considered quite challenging for English teachers. Different characteristics between young learners and adult learners make teachers and academics less certain about how grammar should be presented, whether deductively or inductively. The purpose of this study was to gather information about the strategy of teaching grammar in three different elementary schools and how the teacher implements the strategy in the classroom. To this extent, interviews and classroom observation were used to obtain all the data required for the study. The result confirmed that 2 out of 3 English teachers teach grammar implicitly through fun activities because they believe that young learners learn the grammar better when they notice the rules themselves through fun activities. Meanwhile, the other one teaches grammar explicitly by giving simple grammar exercises. This study encouraged teachers to consider an inductive implicit grammar approach to maximize language acquisition, and it is also important for teachers to constantly check on learners' progress to help them achieve learning objectives on time.

Keywords: *Grammar Teaching Approach; Deductive and Inductive; Young Learner*

Introduction

Children learn new languages for communicative purposes; they are more interested in understanding what others say to them and how they can respond in conversation. Therefore, to be able to construct meaningful conversations, young learners should study grammar because it is believed that grammar knowledge will help them organize words and make meaningful messages. Meanwhile, in the EFL context, the urgency of teaching grammar to young learners is debatable. Some practitioners viewed grammar as less important to learn since grammar knowledge has little contribution to the process of language acquisition and communication. Furthermore, Krashen (1982) states that there is no need to directly teach grammar because the learners just need to be exposed to comprehensible, relevant, and meaningful materials. In addition, Brown (2007) argues that if grammar is the main focus in learning a language, it may delay the process of language acquisition because the learners are too concerned with the grammar form, which may make communication difficult.

On the other hand, those who agree with teaching grammar to young learners believe that introducing grammar earlier can positively affect learners' language production, so they will be able to construct understandable communication. Mart (2013) mentioned that to be able to use language effectively, learners should study grammar because it will help them create and organize meaningful and understandable words or messages. Thus, the learner will be able to choose a language for speaking or writing purposes. As supported by Lin et al. (2020), grammar has a crucial role in increasing language knowledge and skills that are very useful in understanding and expressing the language, both for listening and speaking skills. Moreover, teaching grammar not only has a positive impact on language acquisition, but it is also highly recommended to grow strong grammar awareness to help learners become aware of their language production (Indriyani, 2021). Besides that, proper grammar knowledge is very useful to give a strong foundation for language learning, so they will be ready to learn English at a higher level.

Regarding the positive impact of grammar on language acquisition, teaching grammar to young learners seems very challenging for the teacher. The different characteristics of adult and young learners mean that grammar must be taught in different ways. Student characteristics have a great influence in determining student needs and what kind of grammar instruction is most appropriate for students (Long and Robinson, 1998). Thus, the teacher must pay attention to the young learner's character, emotions, and interests. Young learners have a short attention span, which makes it easy for them to get bored and feel demotivated. As mentioned by Mutiah et al. (2020), young learners only have a 20-minute attention span during the learning process. Children like physical movements and real activities. They are more interested and excited if they are involved in fun activities. Then, teaching grammar by merely explaining the rules and doing static learning activities would easily bore them, and the knowledge could not be absorbed perfectly. In this case, the teacher should be able to provide various teaching techniques and fun learning activities to avoid boredom in class, and language can be absorbed perfectly (Mutiah et al., 2020). According to Scrivener (2003), the process of language acquisition will be successful if the learners are given the opportunity to notice, expose, and use the grammar through meaningful activities. Thus, in order to have a sufficient learning experience and achieve learning outcomes, teachers should consider all the unique characteristics of young learners. Since children are in their prime, there is no doubt that they still need constant guidance from their teachers. Therefore, teachers should try to choose appropriate approaches that can benefit learners (Cortez and Genisan, 2021).

In the field of EFL teaching, there are two main approaches that are mostly used to teach grammar, depending on how to present the grammar rules: deductive and inductive (Yoon and Lee, 2020). In the deductive approach, the teacher teaches grammar by presenting grammatical rules first; once learners understand the rules, they are told to apply the rules given to various examples of sentences (Serliah, 2020). It means that grammar teaching will focus more on the forms and rules of grammar. However, giving the grammatical rules means no more than directing learners' attention to the problem discussed by the teacher by directly delivering the rule or grammar form to students. Regarding this, deductive teaching is more suitable for adult learners, as the presentation of grammar rules is a priority for them. Meanwhile, young learners pay more attention to exploring grammatical structures from the examples rather than learning them deductively, since they are more likely to learn by doing because grammar rules are complex for them. As mentioned by Serliah (2020), beginning the lesson with a grammar presentation may be confusing for some learners; they may not be able to understand the concepts of the grammatical terms given, and a grammar explanation will limit learner participation and interaction in the classroom. Then, when the rules are presented, it is suggested that the teacher teach the rules using examples, make them short, invite students' participation, and give learners a chance to personalize the rules.

On the other hand, the inductive approach relates to subconscious learning processes similar to the concept of language acquisition. Then, learners learn the grammar in the same way as they acquire their first language. In other words, this approach attempts to highlight grammatical rules implicitly, and

the learners are encouraged to conclude the rules given by the teacher. In a language classroom, teaching by inductive instruction means that students are provided with texts and examples first. Then the teacher will guide them to discover the rule by providing the language and providing more opportunities for the learners to practice using the rule (Tribushinina et al., 2022). The learners are encouraged to use critical thinking, previous language knowledge, and language learning strategies to analyze the given examples and formulate a rule on their own (Anastasia, 2011). However, the inductive approach is time-consuming because it takes time for the learners to work out a rule themselves, especially if the teacher did not give the context first. In this case, teachers can choose simple grammatical structures to teach using this approach. Both deductive and inductive approaches have their advantages and disadvantages, and which approach we use is determined by the nature of the language, the learners' maturity, and the preferences of the teacher and learners. Nevertheless, a combination of both is probably more effective (Amritdinovna, 2022).

Relevant studies about teaching grammar have been conducted in different areas and on different topics. Milawati (2019) explored the current trend in EFL teaching. The study found that most Indonesian teachers use the Grammar Translation Method to teach grammar. In the same year, Benitez et al. (2019) conducted a comparison of the effectiveness of the deductive and inductive approaches in EFL classes. Based on the results of the pre-test and post-test, it is clear that the inductive approach showed a significant difference in scores. The same result was shown in Andriani et al. (2021) about the implementation of teaching English grammar at junior high school in Indonesia. This study found that in teaching grammar, teachers mostly focus on the form of language through task-based sentences and contextual materials. On the other hand, research conducted by Yoon and Lee (2020) found that low-level university students obtained better scores in the deductive approach. Meanwhile, high-level university students failed to show any differences in either approach. In addition, a quasi-experimental study conducted by Shirav and Nagai (2022) on the effectiveness of inductive and deductive instruction for complex grammar acquisition found that both types of instruction were beneficial for learners. However, students' preference indicates a positive view toward deductive instruction, as it is traditional and well-known. The results of the study suggest using inductive instruction to teach simpler grammar and deductive instruction for more complex grammatical structures.

Based on the previous studies above, It is seen that a great deal of research has been conducted on grammar teaching, but limited research has been conducted on the practice of teaching grammar in an EFL young learner classroom. This study will investigate the kinds of grammar instruction used by teachers in teaching grammar based on the explicitness of the grammar content taught, whether explicit or implicit. For that reason, the present study aims to shed light on the grammar instruction enrolled in young learner classrooms by looking for answers to the following questions: What kind of grammar instruction approach is used by teachers in teaching grammar to young learners? And how do they implement the approach to teaching grammar to young learners?

Research Methods

This study is descriptive qualitative research aimed at investigating the grammar instruction used by English teachers in three different schools. The subjects of this study were three English teachers from different elementary schools in East Lombok: SDN 1 West Aikmel, SDN 2 Aikmel, and SDN 2 Kalijaga. The instruments used to collect the data are interviews and classroom observation. Interviews were used to find out data about the approach used by elementary teachers to teach grammar. Whereas classroom observation is used to collect data about how teachers implement particular approaches to teaching grammar. The writer analyzed the data using the interactive analysis model according to Miles and Huberman theory (1992), starting with a summary and selection of the data that is related to the objectives of the study, then displaying the collected data and drawing conclusions.

Findings

The findings of this study are divided into two major points related to the approaches used by the teacher in teaching English grammar and the implementation of the approach in a young learner's classroom.

1. Grammar Instruction Approaches Used by Teachers in Teaching Grammar to Young Learners

The result of the interview indicates that the three participants have a positive view of the importance of teaching grammar to young learners. The teacher believes that grammar rules will improve young learners' ability to construct meaningful communication. However, each of the teachers has different views about which approach is more appropriate to teach grammar to young learners.

Teacher 1:

I teach grammar by giving several examples to the students; from those examples, the students will discover grammar rules themselves. I believe that an inductive approach can develop learners' critical thinking and make grammar knowledge remain in their brains for a longer time.

Teacher 3:

I basically teach grammar inductively by giving several examples before I formally introduce the grammar rule. I chose this approach because I want the students to become active thinkers who are aware of grammar features and how they apply for communication purposes.

Teachers 1 and 3 teach grammar inductively; they believed that letting the learners actively explore and expose themselves to English content would possibly make them more aware of grammar rules. Then, young learners will understand and use grammar better if they learn it by actively participating in the learning process. The important thing to be underlined is that in an inductive approach to grammar, rules are still taught by the teacher, but they are preceded by the process of learners noticing and discovering grammar rules. After learners get the point about grammar form, the teacher will start introducing the grammar form to them as a way to equalize learners understanding of the use of certain grammar forms. Another reason for using the inductive approach is the positive impact it has on learners' ability to be active thinkers in understanding the grammar rules involved in examples or practices. Finally, the teacher also assured that teaching grammar inductively will give learners a deeper understanding; thus, they will remember the grammar feature for a longer time and hopefully be able to apply it to construct meaningful communication.

On the other hand, teacher 2 prefers to use the deductive approach; he states that teaching grammar by the inductive approach is time-consuming because it requires a lot of time for young learners to recognize grammar rules by themselves, while the duration of English class is very limited.

Teacher 2:

I choose the deductive approach because it is more straightforward and timesaving. I think inductive approach will delay the process of accomplish learning goals on time.

The teacher also thinks that inductive teaching might confuse the learners if there are contrasts between their own understanding and the teacher's explanation of grammar rules. Finally, it will only delay the achievement of learning goals. Therefore, the teacher prefers to teach grammar deductively because it is more efficient and straight-forward to the grammar rule that the learners need to learn, and then it will lead the learner to accomplish the learning goals on time.

2. The implementation of Grammar Approaches to Teach Grammar to Young Learners

In obtaining data regarding the application of grammar teaching approaches, the writer conducted classroom observations and teacher interviews to gain reliable data related to the implications of grammar teaching approaches. Based on the results of classroom observations, it was found that each teacher taught grammar in a different way. For instance, teacher 1 teaches grammar inductively by giving contextual input and exercises as stimulus to grow students' ability to be active learners who will be able to discover the rule themselves.

Teacher 1:

I prepare the text or audio related to certain grammar rules and learners will gain their own understanding of the grammar rules included in the learning materials.

According to the results of classroom observation, teacher 1 teaches grammar by nursery rhyme. For instance, a teacher teaches about English prepositions by playing nursery rhymes on YouTube. This process continuously repeats itself until the learner notices and understands the rule. In this process, teachers sometimes help the learners by giving simple illustrations that can help them understand the rule faster. When the learners already notice and understand the rule, then the teacher explains the material about prepositions, starting with introducing the words that show prepositions and how to use the word to describe the position of things.

Meanwhile, teacher 2 explains the rules and functions of grammar in the textbook at the beginning of the class until they understand and master the usage of the rules. After that, the teacher asks the learners to accomplish activities provided in the textbook based on their understanding of certain grammar.

Teacher 2:

I introduce the grammar rule first. I mostly teach topic provided in the textbooks. So after I explain the grammar rule, including the function, I will directly ask the student to accomplish an activity in the textbook.

Based on the observation results, teacher 2 starts class by explaining the topic that the learner will learn in the textbook. For instance, when the teacher teaching how to use before and after in the simple present for daily routines, the teacher explains how to use before and after to describe daily routines. After learners understand where to use it, they are immediately asked to use the words before and after to explain their daily activities. Then, the last step is that the teacher asks learners to work in pairs when they can communicate to tell their daily activities to their pair.

On the other hand, teacher 3 implements an inductive approach by providing the learners with a variety of learning materials, such as audio or song recordings, short stories, and several exercises in the text book. The procedure is that the teacher provides the content first before giving an explanation about the grammar rule because learners will discover the rule by themselves.

Teacher 3:

Grammar teaching must be integrating with fun activities such as songs and short stories. I play the song or show the story first as a stimulus to build student intention about the topic they are going to learn. Then the student

The result of the observation shows that teacher 3 teaches grammar using realia. When a teacher teaches about plural and singular nouns, she brings several fruits as teaching aids. The teacher illustrates how to use the suffix *s* or *es* to designate plural nouns. After that, the teacher shows a banana and a mango, then two bananas and two mangoes, and so on. The teacher repeats this process until students get an idea of the use of plural and singular signs in nouns. Then, the teacher explains how *s* and *es* are used in nouns. The last stage is where students can practice making their own sentences using plural and singular nouns.

Discussion

1. Grammar Instruction Approaches Used by Teachers in Teaching Grammar to Young Learners

In language teaching and learning, the teacher's role is essential in teaching grammar. The appropriate learning method will affect the effectiveness of learning in the class (Amran et al., 2020). Based on the finding above, it is known that most teachers prefer to use an inductive approach to teach grammar to young learners. This preference is based on the benefits of an inductive approach to teaching grammar. Some of the benefits of the inductive approach are that it supports independent learning and student-centered learning. As explained by Mohammed and Khan (2017) in their inductive approach, learners are expected to learn through collaborative or cooperative learning to complete their tasks in and out of class. These aspects are in accordance with the characteristics of young learners who like to work together when learning or playing (Cortez & Genisan, 2021). Thus, with an inductive approach, teachers can provide an environment where learners can actively participate in teaching and learning activities in the classroom and can facilitate learners working in pairs or groups so that they can apply their grammar knowledge for communication purposes.

Another reason is that the inductive approach can activate and train learners to be active thinkers who are able to think critically by noticing and understanding the grammar rules involved in the examples before they are formally introduced by the teacher. Barra and Kuswanto (2019) mentioned that inductive learning can improve critical thinking skills. Inductive learning is a learning model where students are demanded to gather and filter the information to build ideas and test them carefully, and in the end, they can formulate and test the assumptions based on what they learned. This process is related to the characteristic of critical thinking, where students will try to digest the grammar rules involved in the examples or illustrations given. Moreover, Prince & Felder (2007) state that the inductive approach includes many aspects like discovery learning, inquiry-based learning, problem-based learning, project-based learning, and case-based teaching. If the learners are aware of all these aspects, there are better chances of learning.

On the other hand, there are some obstacles to the implementation of an inductive approach in a young learner's classroom. The inductive approach is considered time-consuming since the time is mostly spent on the process of discovering and noticing the rule (Serliah, 2020). According to the explanation above, in the inductive approach, the grammar rules are not explained directly to learners; instead, the rules are explained after the learners completely recognize them through examples. Therefore, this kind of teaching is considered less effective because it takes much time for learners to notice certain grammar rules, while the English class has limited time, which is only one meeting a week. Then, if the teachers continually use this approach, they will not be able to cover the entire list of topics that are already listed in the syllabus.

At this point, many experts have suggested using an eclectic approach to teaching grammar. An eclectic approach is a combination of two or more teaching methods or approaches. This approach facilitates the teacher's ability to address the different needs and learning styles of the learners. The

eclectic approach allows the teacher to combine activities from a variety of language methodologies and approaches. As stated by Schwarz (2014), in teaching grammar, the middle path is the best, as in all choices of pedagogy. Moreover, an eclectic approach allows the teacher to combine activities from a range of language methodologies and approaches (Shirav & Nagai, 2022). Thus, the teacher can use an inductive approach to teach simple grammar rules in order to help the learners discover the rule easily, then use a deductive approach to teach complex grammar rules in order to make it short and effective.

2. The Implementation of Grammar Approaches to Teach Grammar for Young Learner

Data on the implementation of the grammar teaching approach is obtained through teacher interviews and classroom observation. Based on the results of the observation, it was found that all the participants taught grammar in different ways. The most traditional way to teach grammar is by merely explaining grammar rules and mostly relying on activities based on the available textbooks. At each meeting, the teacher explains each grammar rule listed in the textbook.

After the learners understand the rules, then the learners will be guide to practice the rule through several exercises listed in the textbook. This kind of teaching was not suitable for young learners. Since young learners have a short attention span and, in general, are very active and imaginative, Kuchah (2013) stated that young learners like using participatory activities such as drawing, storytelling, and listening to music. Then, teaching English by only explaining the rule will easily take the learners into a boredom situation and cause learning demotivation (Mutiah et al., 2020). Therefore, it is important to involve learners in the learning process for effective learning (Podavets & Yerzhanova, 2021).

Another way of teaching grammar is to use songs, dialogues, realia, and role plays. These methods are used in inductive teaching to enliven the classroom atmosphere and maximize the process of absorbing knowledge. Yin (2022) mentioned that songs and rhymes are mainly used to achieve specific learning outcomes. Song is a great tool to motivate students while following English learning. As stated by Hamp (2019), besides being fun, the songs are a psychological resource to foster a positive attitude toward English. In this case, the teacher needs to choose songs that are appropriate for the children's level. Moreover, using dialogue is an effective way of teaching grammar. Meanwhile, the use of dialogues in grammar teaching is useful because the use of dialogues generally matches learners' expectations of how language is used in daily conversation. In addition, realia can be used to create a context for the target language. Bringing objects into the classroom or using the objects in the classroom can help bring a grammar point to life (Muxamedova 2020).

Conclusion

Teaching grammar to young learners has a positive impact on their communication skills. In this study, the teachers are divided into two camps: one side is pro-inductive, and the other side is pro-deductive. However, Experts suggest teachers teach grammar using an eclectic approach when they can combine both approaches and adjust them according to the learner's needs and abilities. At the end, it is the responsibility of the teacher to determine the approach that is suitable for their students. Lastly, the implementation of each approach must be integrated with a variety of learning activities that can balance young learners' characteristics and erase the boredom of English class.

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