An Investigation of Teaching English Grammar through Distance Learning at SMAN 1 Samarinda

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Abstract

The purposes of this study were to know how the teacher teaches English grammar through distance learning and investigate the problems during implementation of teaching English grammar through distance learning. The design of this study was qualitative research design which was characterized by a case study. The participant was selected through purposive sampling. The data were analyzed by using the interactive analysis model. The researcher used the triangulation by data source, triangulation by method, and triangulation by theory to check the validity and reliability of this study. The findings revealed that the English teacher applied teaching grammar in context, inductive and deductive approach and integrated grammar with language skills. In addition, the English teacher used flipped-classroom model a form of blended learning that combines synchronous and asynchronous online learning with WhatsApp, Google Meet, and Google Classroom as the teaching platforms. In its implementation, the English teacher faced some problems in the process of teaching English grammar through distance learning. Those problems were student discipline, limited time, teacher's extra workload, distance between teacher and students, classroom management and technical problem. In conclusion, teaching English Grammar through distance learning can be conducted and maximized by having well preparation on learning activities, well communication and collaboration between the teacher and students in teaching ang learning process to achieve the learning objectives.

Key words: Teaching English Grammar, Teaching Problems, Distance Learning

INTRODUCTION

Grammar is an important thing to be taught to students of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Grammar is not only the formula or structure but also the basis for language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Swan (2005) defined grammar as "the rule that shows how words are combined, arranged or changed to show certain kinds of meaning" (p.19). In other words, certain sets of rules are required for meaningful and acceptable sentences. Whyldeck (2003) also stated understanding grammar could help people to be better in speaking and writing. Nunan (1991) supported grammar teaching because grammar helps learners to be better at performing their target language. He also adds that students can communicate well if they have a fundamental level of grammar.

The syllabus of the 2013 curriculum teaching grammar is integrated. Grammar does not become the most essential element to be learned, because teaching English grammar merely supports certain skills taught by the teacher. Therefore, teaching grammar is not taught apart. Although grammar is not the most essential element to be learned, but grammar is important. Because to reach the English learning objective the students should produce the genre text (written or oral) and the students should master the use of grammatical patterns in the following context to help them in those four language skills.

Moreover, Traxler (2018), in formal distance education, there is enormous potential for widening access to higher education and increasing the diversity of student population since online technologies provide opportunities to learn anywhere, anytime from anyone. In Indonesia, distance learning is applied when students and teachers cannot face to face in class because of unexpected obstacles. As has been experienced by the people of Indonesia today and even the world, namely the COVID-19 pandemic which led to the implementation of distance learning.

This study focuses on teaching English grammar through distance learning at SMAN 1 Samarinda. In addition, there are two reasons for doing this research. The first one is teaching English grammar aims to support the students in communication and prepare the students for further activities (i.e produce oral and written discourse). The second one is the researcher had a difficult experience during her teaching practice at a senior high school especially in teaching English grammar. The researcher focused too much on the rules of grammar and not on practice how to use it in communication. So, the students were difficult to understand. Thus, it becomes important to make research because as a student teacher, the researcher has to know how to teach English grammar in the classroom as well as through distance learning.

Some studies have been conducted related to teaching english grammar through distance learning. Mahmoudi (2020), this research investigated the effectiveness of online learning via smart phone on Iranian EFL learners' grammatical accuracy improvement. Second, Shaari et al. (2021), this research was conducted to identify the significance of flipped classroom model in the 21st-century classroom and its implementation in teaching verb tenses to a group of dual language learners in Malaysia. Third, Erkulova et al. (2020), this research was conducted to discuss the role of ICT and ways of using of ICT in teaching English grammar in secondary schools. In contrast to all the research above, this study focused to find out how the teacher teaches English grammar through distance learning and the problems that the teacher faces in teaching English grammar through distance learning.

The researcher chose a senior high school-SMAN 1 Samarinda as the research site. The reasons for choosing this school are because of the following reasons: 1) this school applies distance learning within virtual classes to ensure the continuity of the educational process

during Covid-19 pandemic, 2) this is a state school which has an A accreditation in Samarinda. So, the researcher concludes that this school has sufficient learning facilities in applying distance learning.

METHOD

The design of this study is qualitative research design which is usually characterized by a case study. According to Fraenkel, Wallen, and Hyun (2011), a qualitative case study is a detailed study of one or (at most) a few individuals or other social units, such as a classroom, a school, or a neighborhood. It can also be a study of an event, an activity, or an ongoing process. In addition, qualitative case study methodology provides tools for researchers to study complex phenomena within their contexts. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the distance learning activity, especially how the English teacher teaches English grammar through distance learning, and also to investigate the problems that the English teacher faces in teaching English grammar through distance learning. It allows the researchers to conduct study by using document, observation sheet, interview, and field notes to get a closer look related to the issues addressed. The techniques for analizing data in this research are reduction the data, display the data, drawing conclusion. The subject of this study is a senior English teacher who has more than twenty years of teaching experience, understands well and interested in the teaching English grammar at SMAN 1 Samarinda and only focus on teaching English grammar through distance learning in the academic year 2020/2021.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this research are divided into two parts. The first part is teaching English grammar through distance learning and the problems of teaching English grammar through distance learning.

1. **Teaching English Grammar through Distance Learning**
a. **Preparation**

Before conducting a teaching and learning practice, the English teacher prepared what media and platforms that would be used and what activities would be carried out during the teaching and learning process. It is important to give a proper time when preparing lessons to guide the students through the process and have proper closure to the lesson with the student's full understanding about what being taught.

In teaching English grammar through distance learning the teacher was preparing some teaching materials for the teaching and learning practice to make students easily gathering information during the distance learning. Some teaching materials that the English teacher

prepared were video, PowerPoint, and worksheet which are adjusted with the basic competency of the meeting. In the selection of teaching materials such as learning videos about related English grammar from You Tube the teacher adjusted to the student's level and also properly to be shown to students. In addition, during distance learning there was a slight change in the learning materials where in offline classroom the teacher focused on a reading from textbook, while during distance learning the teacher used a reading in the form of learning videos. This finding is in line with Bikowski (2018) explaining that using technology to teach grammar can be the most effective way integrated to the curriculum and lesson. To facilitate it, students need to be given appropriate activities or tasks.

b. While Implementation

In teaching English grammar through distance learning, the teacher used flipped-classroom model, a form of blended learning that combines both of synchronous and asynchronous online teaching. Moreover, during teaching English grammar the teacher applied teaching grammar in context, inductive and deductive approach, and also integrated grammar with language skills.

Flipped-Classroom

To start the basic competency which would be taught, the teacher began it from the asynchronous learning on Google Classroom. Firstly, the teacher informed the students on WhatsApp group to attend the learning activities on Google Classroom.

Furthermore, in asynchronous learning on Google Classroom in teaching English grammar, the teacher gave students a PowerPoint or learning video from YouTube about the grammar material that would be discussed. on the PowerPoint, it included the explanations of grammar material such as the example, the use, the structures, and the exercises. After that, the teacher gave instruction for students whether they have to self-study or discuss it in comment section. When it came in the discussion, the teacher's role was to lead the discussion.

Moreover, in the next meeting, the teacher conducted teaching and learning activities through synchronous learning on Google Meet. Before starting the synchronous learning, firstly the teacher informed the students on WhatsApp group to get ready for the meeting and gave the Google Meet meeting codes that had been scheduled by the teacher. It was done by the teacher to deepen the learning material which was given from asynchronous learning.

Hereinafter, in the beginning of synchronous learning on Google Meet in teaching English grammar, the teacher waited for all of the students first to be ready for teaching and learning activity and then greeted the students. The teacher also reviewed materials that were

discussed in the last meeting of asynchronous learning on Google Classroom. The teacher asked the students to mention what they learned in the last meeting. In addition, the teacher also used the feature that is provided by the application such as share screen. The teacher could display power point or videos from YouTube about the grammar material to be taught.

Moreover, the teacher made an engagement with students by a question and answer about the grammar topic being discussed in one basic competency. Firstly, the teacher usually invited students to explain or answer the questions related to the grammar topic on PowerPoint. Otherwise, the teacher would appoint students one by one. This way was done by the teacher aims to make students active when learning English grammar, especially through distance learning. This result is in line with the research by (Guth and Petrucco, 2008; Tabak and Rampal, 2014; Watkins, 2005) found that the most frequently used method is question and answer activities in synchronous virtual classrooms.

On the next meeting in asynchronous learning on Google Classroom, the teacher gave students grammar task which were a fill-in-the-blank and writing assignment. In the second, fourth, and eighth observation, the teacher gave students grammar task which was a fill-in-the-blank for students related to vocabulary and grammar being discussed in the form of worksheet file. These assignments must be done by students and collected on the same day. Thus, in one basic competency there were two assignments given by the teacher, such as the structure of grammar and also writing assignment.

The teacher was aware of the advantages and disadvantages of the asynchronous and synchronous learning. Thus, to maximize the teaching of English grammar through distance learning the teacher combined both synchronous and asynchronous learning models. The need for a combination of synchronous and asynchronous E-learning activities as a part of the English language pedagogy can create an ideal learning environment and seems to be more comprehensive than the use of one single E-learning mode activities as a part of the English language pedagogy seems to be more comprehensive than the use of one single E-learning mode (Perveen, 2016; Memari, 2020).
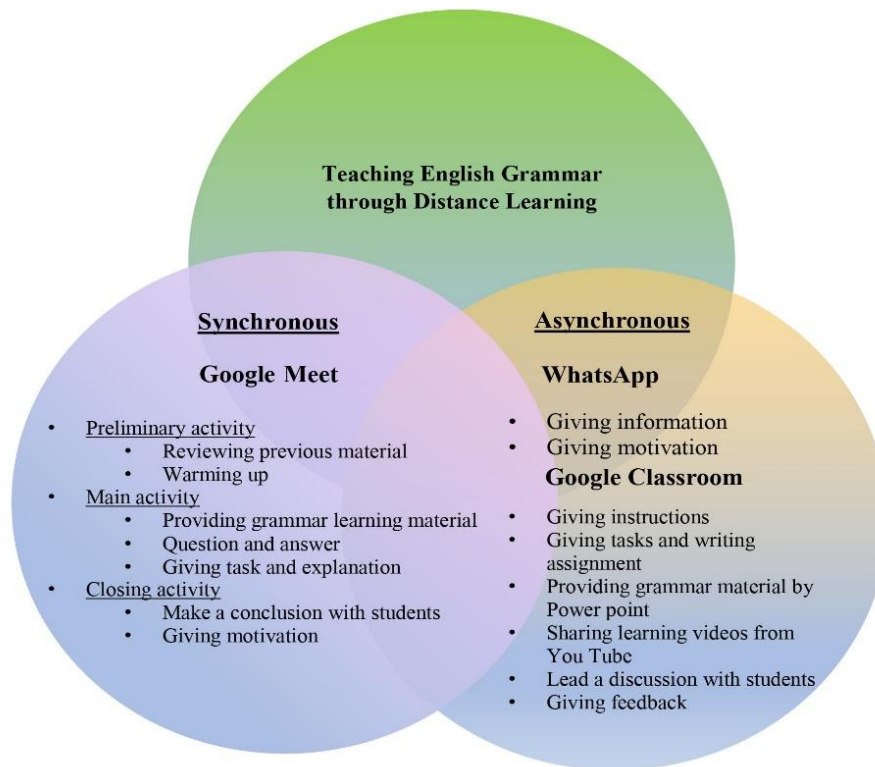
Figure 1: Teaching English Grammar through Distance Learning by the teacher

Teaching Grammar in Context

In teaching English grammar through distance learning the teacher used teaching grammar in context through song, dialogue and sentences that related to the English grammar. The teacher used authentic materials which were music videos obtained online from YouTube such as song Count on Me by Bruno Mars when teaching conditional type 0 and type 1, and If I Were a Boy by Beyonce when teaching conditional type 2. In addition, in every meeting on Google Meet, the teacher used PowerPoint to give several sentences for students as the example and followed by the explanation of grammatical structure and function. Moreover, the teacher also highly recommended the benefit of teaching English grammar in context. She argued that the main purpose of teaching English grammar is to communicate meaning and information for real communication rather than to teach language. The teacher also used more authentic material in providing grammar learning through distance learning.

Sharaf (2011) confirmed that exploring grammar in context is a guide to some key features of English grammar. Exploring Grammar in context is different from traditional grammar books because many of the examples are taken from real contexts of grammar in use.

These authentic examples show speakers and writers use the language to communicate in a wide variety of contexts.

According to Minister of Education Regulation number 37 of 2018, In 2013 Curriculum, material scope including various types or genres of texts include three aspects, namely social functions, text structures, and linguistic elements, all of which are determined and chosen according to the purpose and context of the communication. Then, Language elements include markers of discourse, vocabulary, grammar, speech, word stress, intonation, spelling, punctuation, and handwriting neatness. Thus, grammar learning is the one of main factors to achieve the curriculum's competence and grammar is not taught separately, but it has to be related in a certain context.

Using Inductive and Deductive Approach

Furthermore, in every synchronous learning, when started to teach new grammar material that was future perfect tense, the teacher asked students one by one about the function of future perfect tense that was discussed in the previous meeting on Google Classroom. Then the teacher made a conclusion of the function of future perfect tense based on students' answers. The teacher also answered a question from a student about the pattern of future perfect tense related to the subjects. She explained the pattern briefly and clearly so that it was easy to understand. Besides, at the end of learning the teacher also gave some sentences for the example of future perfect tense on Power Point and then invited students to examine the grammatical pattern of sentences.

In addition, in synchronous learning, the teacher gave a song video that related to the grammar material and asked the students to find the particular grammatical pattern on the lyrics. After that, the teacher gave some sentences for students to be analyzed and compared with the song. Moreover, the teacher also provided an explanation about the usages, the rules, and the structure of the grammar material.

Almost similar to the whole previous synchronous learning observation, the teacher gave a song video that related to the grammar material and asked the students to find the particular grammatical pattern on the lyrics. But here, the teacher has prepared a worksheet first for students and asked them to fill in the missing lyrics. After it was done, the teacher continued the learning process by giving them sentences like the example and then explained the usage and grammatical pattern. The teacher also explained the differences in the usage and grammatical pattern of conditional type 2 between the last material that were conditional type 0 and 1.

The teacher was very aware and understand the students' needs. It was done to make all students more understand and clearly about the grammar material. From the interview, the teacher said that she used both approaches in teaching English grammar, the inductive approach, and the deductive approach. It was based on the different levels of the students' English competence and also their learning styles.

This condition is in line with Ellis and Shintani (2014), the learning of grammar is a complex, multifaceted, and lengthy process and no single pedagogical approach can claim priority in teaching. Moreover, approaches to teaching grammar need to acknowledge that learners have different learning style preferences when it comes to the learning of grammar. Some students like explanations and others are more tolerant of ambiguity and do not feel the need for detailed explanations (Richards and Reppen, 2014).

Teaching English Grammar Integrated with Language Skills

In teaching English grammar through distance learning the teacher used teaching grammar in context through song in the form of music video from YouTube and dialogue in the form of learning video from YouTube. In the main activity, the teacher integrated grammar with listening skill. Then, the teacher gave instructions about the activities that would be carried out and asked students to prepare their worksheet which was previously uploaded by her on Google Classroom. After that, the teacher played a song from YouTube titled If I Were a Boy and asked students to listen the song carefully and then fill in the missing lyrics that related to the particular grammar which was Conditional type 2.

In addition, in asynchronous learning on Google Classroom, the teacher shared a learning video from You Tube that contains a dialogue and asked students to focus on the nature and the idea of the dialogue by asking two questions such as: "Is Saukina a president?"; "Does Abderahim have a million dollars?" That can be used to draw attention to grammatical choices in the dialogue. The students' responses were good, some students answered the questions on comment about the dialog and also discuss the use, the structure, and the pattern of conditional type 2. In conclusion, the teacher did not teach grammar separately, but it was integrated with other skills, such as listening by using songs and reading by using dialogue related to the grammar material.

Moreover, at the end before completing one basic competency the teacher gave students a writing assignment as an application of the grammar material that was studied before. The writing assignment was taken from the student's textbook. The teacher asked students to write a magazine article by taking into account of using particular tenses such as past perfect, present perfect and future perfect and advertisements by using conditional type 1. The teacher also

provided clear instructions on how to do it. As the researcher investigated, the teacher connected the particular grammar material that was taught with writing assignments. By giving this writing assignment, the teacher provided the opportunity for students to apply the grammar material in writing. From the interview, the teacher was aware of the importance of applying grammar in language skills and at that moment the teacher integrated grammar in writing skill as a product. Thus, at the same time, the teacher gave thoughts to students about the benefit of learning grammar. As mentioned by Richards and Reppen (2014), in order to develop grammar as a communicative resource it needs to be taught and assessed as a component of communicative ability and performance – particularly in relation to the productive skills of writing and speaking

From the result of observations and interview, it can be concluded that during the implementation of teaching english grammar through distance learning the teacher used flipped-classroom method in order to develop teaching English grammar contextualy and communicatively by applying teaching English grammar in context, inductive and deductive approach, and integrated with language skills. It was done by the teacher to provide students with the ability to use language communicatively in speaking and writing. So that, students are be able to apply English grammar to support language skills especially in communication.

2. The Problems of Teaching English Grammar through Distance Learning

There are several problems that arise during the teaching and learning process that can be classified into two sections such as internal problems consist of student discipline, and teacher's extra workload and external problems consist of distance between teacher and student, class management, limited time, and technical problem. Further explanation of these findings is shown in the following section, as follows:

a. Students discipline

From the data observation on Google Meet, the teacher had to wait for the students first before she started the teaching and learning process. It took at least ten until fifteen minutes for students to get ready to start teaching and learning activities. Thus, it also reduces the lesson time. Moreover, not all students actively participated in the discussion activities conducted by the teacher. For every student who actively participated in the discussion, the teacher gave appreciation and gratitude. While students were not active the teacher provided the opportunity for them to be more active in the next meeting on Google Meet.

Research by Musonef et al. (2020) found that the series of student activities during the pandemic period between students is different. There is no specific rule that can control students while at home for discipline. Jacob and Radhai's (2016) found that students may need extra motivation and self-discipline to be successful in online learning.

b. Teacher's Extra Workload

The teacher's duties and responsibilities became more complex than usual in offline class. Because during this distance learning the teacher had to responsible for providing learning material and learning media by own self such as learning video, teaching material, and worksheet. In addition, the teacher had to grade all students' homework, tests, and assignments by herself which are usually there are several tasks that can be discussed and corrected together in an offline class. However, due to the large number of classes taught by the teacher, she did not have enough time to make her own learning video.

This result in line with Lai et al. (2015); Yamagata-lynch (2020) they said that teachers and students have to adapt to some changes in their teaching and learning activities, such as the use of technology, designing of online materials, and assessing students' works online. Research by Nugroho et al. (2020) found that time consuming to prepare online learning materials become one of the primary problems of online teaching amidst the global pandemic. Moreover, Sun et al. (2020) added that in online learning it becomes another great challenge, to check students' tasks daily, give scores and feedback is hard for the teachers.

c. Distance Between the Teacher and Students

This condition makes a new experience for both teacher and student because usually teaching and learning activities are carried out in the classroom. Therefore, there are several different conditions before and after distance learning is applied during the teaching and learning process. The teacher paid attention to students' problems in learning especially in the classroom. However, because of distance learning, the teacher felt difficult to know the whole problems that students had. In addition, before carrying out the teaching and learning process, the teacher had to prepare the learning objectives for students. In this distance learning, the teacher could not force students to actually achieve the learning objectives.

In this case, the researcher argued that these conditions occur because this is the first experience of applying distance learning. The basis of applying distance learning also due to the emergency situation of the pandemic. Therefore, the teacher is aware of the situation and try to understand the limitation in teaching through distance learning.

One study found that evaluation of learning difficulty is one of the problems of distance learning (Supratiwi et al., 2021). Research by Efriana (2021) found that teachers are limited in conducting the control during online learning. This condition is in line with Efriana (2021), distance learning during the Covid-19 pandemic should pay attention to several points, one of them is teachers should have a realistic expectation of what can be achieved by distance learning, and use professional judgment to assess the consequence of the lesson plan.

d. Limited Time

The allocation of time for each English lesson during distance learning is 60 minutes for a meeting. Whereas, in the offline classroom took 90 minutes, so that sometimes the teacher had difficulty in adjusting the time when conducting teaching English grammar process on synchronous learning on Google Meet with the specified time by school policy. The teacher felt that it was quite difficult to adjust the lesson time when teaching English grammar contextually and inductively. Thus, the teacher had a touble and limitation in the planning and delivery process of English grammar material. Nunan (2005) said that the time spent in working out a rule may be at the expense of time spent putting the rules into productive practice.

e. Class Management

Based on observation on synchronous online learning and data interview, grouping became difficult activity to do in teaching English grammar through distance learning because there was a gap between the teacher and students and also the time was limited. Thus, it also affected the learning process, which should be carried out in group discussions but conversely the teacher provided more material explanation to students.

Research by (Supratiwi et al., 2021) found that in distance learning teachers need to make adjustments in terms of implementing the curriculum or their teaching methods. In addition, (Lewis et al., 2011) stated that the development of learning strategies needed for teaching and learning online requires an understanding of learning styles and how teachers can deal with problems that arise in the online environment.

f. Technical Problem During Online Class Session

Some of the students were not provided with the strong internet connection that online class requires. Besides the internet connection was either unstable, sometimes some of them run out of internet quota or did not have enough internet quota to cover the progressive online class needs. It can be conclude that little can be done to resolve the connectivity problem during the online class session. And then, it can also distract the student's focus during the English grammar learning process. In addition, the technical problems were not only faced by students but also the teacher. Sometimes there was a power breakdown when the teacher used to teach at home.

Research by Zalat et al. (2021) found that technical problems were the highest problem for adapting to e-learning. Sadeghi (2019) added that online learners may easily get distracted, lose focus, or miss deadlines. Distance learning is dependent on technology: the internet and computers, which students may not have access to, and interruptions or other system errors may appear during courses. The researcher argued that the technical problem is one of the

disadvantages of online learning which makes the teaching and learning process does not run optimally.

The researcher continued that on the data interview, the several problems faced by the teacher did not disrupt the teaching and learning process. Thus, the researcher concluded that the problems faced by the teacher did not really difficult for her to deal with during teaching English grammar through distance learning. The teacher argued that from the result of students' learning outcomes, most of students reached the *KKM (Kriteria Ketuntasan Minimal)* and only some of them had to get remedial test. Because the teacher was also willing to answer students' questions via chat or call even though it was out of the lesson times.

CONCLUSION

From the explanation above, the researcher drawed the conclusion that in teaching English grammar the English teacher applied teaching grammar in context and integrated with language skills in activities by using songs for listening, dialogue for reading, and writing assignment for writing to finished the basic competency.

The teacher used the flipped-classroom model, a form of blended learning that combines synchronous and asynchronous online learning. She used WhatsApp and Google Classroom for asynchronous learning and Google Meet for synchronous learning. Starting from teaching and learning preparation on WhatsApp, giving grammar material on Google Classroom, and then material reinforcement on Google Meet. Afterward, giving structure or grammar task and also writing assignment on Google Classroom.

Secondly, the English teacher faced some problems in teaching and learning activities. Those problems are clasified into the internal and the external problem; a) student discipline related to students' involvement in the learning process, b) teacher's extra workload c) the distance between teacher and students which has an impact on the teacher in knowing the whole students' problems in the learning process, d) limited time related to learning lesson time in a meeting, which the teacher has an extra workload in designing learning materials and also student assessment, e) class management which is grouping students were difficult to do during distance learning and f) technical problem during the online class session which has a major impact on the success of teaching and learning process. To overcome some of problems above, the teacher was willing to answer students' questions related to the learning material via chat or call even though it was out of the lesson times.

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