
GRAMMAR INSTRUCTION IN COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING CLASSROOMS: STUDENT TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to find out the teachers and students' perception toward grammar instruction in communicative language teaching classrooms. The participants of this study were two teachers and four students from an Islamic junior high school (*Madrasah*). We used a case study method to conduct this research to identify teachers and students' perception in teaching and learning grammar instruction in communicative language teaching classroom. The data were collected by using interviews. The data were analyzed by using thematic analysis. The findings indicated that there were five indicators on student teacher's perception; 1) grammar was a crucial component in improving English skills; 2) using classroom activities to promote communicative activities in the classroom; 3) error correction was seen as one of processes to create students in mastering materials; 4) teaching grammar instruction in CLT classroom, teachers act as motivator and facilitate all students' need; 5) students should take part on the process of learning.

Keywords: communicative language teaching, grammar, grammar instruction

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Introduction

Grammar is the language's framework and system of meaning. Every language seems to have a grammar and person speaking in similar language will communicate because they naturally understand the grammar structure which is the rules of meaning. According to Batstone (1994), language without grammar is going to be messy and it is harder to understand language without looking for this basic framework, so grammar language will be impossible to learn effectively without following structural rules (as cited in Ronald and Celia, 2017). They found that grammar plays a very important role in the study of language. The purpose of grammar is to educate those who use English to express their thoughts properly both in speaking and writing. Research by Azad (2013) indicated that grammar is as an essential and inseparable part in language teaching, so teachers have tended to use communicative activities in teaching grammar instructions in. It is meant that in teaching English as a foreign language it is necessary to consider not only how learners acquire grammatical competence, but also how they learn to communicate that is how they develop communication competence.

In the importance of teaching English grammar as a foreign language, various methods and approaches have been applied to enhance learner's competence. Savage, Bitterlin and Price (2010) recapitulate six approaches that have a significant impact on grammar instruction, including Grammar-Translation Method, Direct Method, Audio-Lingual Method, Cognitive Approach, Natural Approach, and Communicative Approach. Among them, the communicative approach commonly called CLT is one of the current trends of language teaching. According to Lopez and Agullo (2013), the main intention of CLT is designed to teach communicative competence, which involves parts of speech and tenses as a sentence construction, a teaching technique that refers to several aspects of language, include the use of language for multiple purposes and function, distinguish between formal and informal oral and written discourse (as cited in Bancole, 2018, p. 60). Based on the statement above it can be concluded that grammar should be thought in communicative ways which focus on developing the language to perform the skills.

Using CLT to teach grammar in the second-language classrooms is an effort to improve students' attitude towards language learning and to have positive affect on their learning process. Emphasis place on grammatical mistakes and fear of making grammar error has a negative impact on students. Those are related to the finding of a study conducted by Nurfakhara (2017). On his study, he revealed that students feel bored when learning English grammar because make them confused and lazy to learn. Further, Wilkins (1973) the one who providing Europe with a standardized program for foreign language teaching, proposed a national syllabus which did not organize the syllabus in terms of grammatical structure but rather defined in what learners needed to interact with each other (as cited in Savignon & Berns, 1984, p. 10). It means the focus of CLT is language learning through communication, not through mechanical presentation of grammatical form.

The use of CLT in teaching grammar in the second language classrooms is a means of changing the attitude of the students towards language learning and positively influencing their way of learning. Furthermore, Larseen-Freeman (2000); Richards and Rodgers (2001); and Harmer (2001) describe the key principle of CLT approach that can be summarized as follow: communicative competence is the primary goal, authentic materials are used to encourage students to use the language, the language learning is learned by trial and error, student mostly work in pairs

and small groups, grammar is best learned through the process of communication, teachers have a role as facilitator and monitor, and students as a negotiator are individually responsible to make themselves understand and be understood in the process of communication (as cited in Yanti, 2019, p. 2). From the statement, it can be concluded that using CLT provides students in repetition, accuracy and memorization grammar patterns, but they demand the students in order to negotiate meaning and connect meaningfully in foreign context, also teachers will need to build exercises in the CLT classroom that enable students to learn well in target language.

The changing of teaching culture from teacher centered to student centered caused by the CLT approach also brought a change the concept in how to teach. Moreover, Thornbury (1999) distinguishes there are two primary kinds of approaches to teaching grammar in CLT; the shallow-end approach and the deep-end approach. The shallow-end approach is taught grammar in a way that we can define as inductive, or it calls as consciousness-raising. The latter, the deep-end approach to CLT concerns the implicit learning of grammar in communicative contexts without any previous and explicit teaching. So, teaching grammar in communicatively means help students get used to the rules and patterns in contexts either consciously or unconsciously by paying attention to students need, also the application whether the teachers choose to teaching grammar in explicit or implicit ways it will depend on teacher's perceptions and knowledge. For example, some teacher's beliefs that teaching explicit grammar is helpful in CLT classroom but in contrast, a few of them do not think that it is effective. Teachers' belief has been expressed in grammar teaching activities and their beliefs have been influenced by their experiences. In the same way, according to Demuth (2013), teachers' perception is defined as the processes of opinion and understanding toward an object based on their experience.

The adoption of CLT in Indonesia language teaching curriculum has gone through several changes and development. Rahman (2017) stated that the latest curriculum in Indonesia which usually called as curriculum 2013 (K13) adopt CLT approach into its implementation (as cited in Yanti, 2019). Not only that the popularity of CLT keeps increasing as many teachers applied the concept of CLT in their classroom. From some previous related studies on learning English anxiety, a research study was conducted to find out student teacher's perception in teaching grammar instruction in communicative language teaching classroom.

Literature Review

The concept of communicative language teaching

Communicative language teaching (CLT) is one of approach to language teaching. This approach was found from the awareness that language as a system for communication, not just a set of the rules. It switched the emphasis of traditional language teaching to grammar and teacher-centred classes to the active use of authentic language in learning and acquisition. CLT is an approach that emphasizes communicative ability (Richards, 2006). Furthermore, Richards (2006) contends that "CLT describes a set of general principals grounded in the notion of communicative competence as the goal of second and foreign language teaching. A new approach that has evolved as our understanding of the processes of second language learning has developed". From the definition above, it can be conclude that communicative language teaching (CLT) is a language teaching that emphasize interaction as concept of means and final aim of language learning.

Role of student teachers and grammar instruction in CLT

Communicative language teaching emphasizes on self-direction for students. Teachers no longer rely on activities that involve repetition, accuracy and the memorization of sentences, they require students to communicate in context and communicate meaningfully in foreign language. As Oxford (1990) proposes that this is important for active development of a new language. In addition, Breen and Candlin in Richards & Rodgers (2001, p. 166) described the role of learners in CLT as a delegate towards themselves, the process of learning, and the objective of learning, emerging form and interacting in the role of the negotiator, both in groups and in classroom activities. In CLT students expected support in classroom activities. Students are recommended to using activities in pairs or groups. As research from Otha (2001) reported that when students act in pair of small group or pairs, they perform various tasks using the target language for numerous functions, e.g. responding to question, making demands, and giving feedback (as cited in Farid, 2017). From the statement it can be conclude that CLT allow students to interact more with other learners rather than with the teachers and working in pairs or small groups' one of effective method to boost student's communicative ability.

Communicative activities play an important role in teaching communicative language. As Richards (2001) stated, in communicative competence there are several approaches that help students involve learners in communication. Further, Littlewood (2002) differs types two main categories in communicative activities, there are functional communicative activities and social interaction activities. Approaches to teaching grammar have underground many changes. These changes have characterized grammar teaching to move from a grammar-based approach to a communicative approach. Larsen- Freeman (1986, pp. 132-133) discuss that grammar in Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is presented as a way to comfort students in deliver their meaning appropriately. Grammar instruction can be performed both deductively and inductively but focuses on the meaning and function of forms in the situational context and the role of the interlocutors (as cited in Lu, 2009: 24). In summary, inductively or deductively grammar can be taught in Communicative Language Teaching, some students learned with rules of grammar, while others need rules to understand the grammatical structure.

Methodology***Research design, participants, and locale of the study***

This study used intrinsic case study method as the way to collect the data. Creswell (2013) states case study is qualitative approach that involves the study about issue explored through one or more cases over time through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information. We used intrinsic case study because this study design was focus on the case itself, the case presents an unusual or unique situation.

This study was conducted in Islamic junior high school Palembang. We chose English teachers and students of the ninth grades at MTs N 2 Palembang by using purposeful sampling technique. The aim of purposeful sampling was to choose the individual that could provide the information-rich and the most detailed information to help the researcher answer the research question (Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtler, 2010).

Data collection and analysis

In this research, in order to find out the teachers and students’ perception in grammar instruction in communicative language teaching, we used interview in order to gain information about teachers and students’ perception toward grammar instruction in communicative language teaching classroom. To analyse the data of teachers and students’ perception toward grammar instruction in communicative language teaching classroom. The data from interview were analyzed to determine information about teachers and students’ perception toward grammar instruction in communicative language teaching classroom. After we collected the data, we analyzed the data by using thematic analysis. In this research, we used trustworthiness to evaluate qualitative data analysis to make sure that the findings were credible. Creswell (2012) defines validating is the researcher evaluate authenticity or credibility of the result through some techniques such as member checking or triangulation.

Findings

The data gained from interviews were analyzed by using thematic analysis. The descriptions of the finding were explained as follows:

Teachers’ perceptions

After analyzing the data from interview, we found that there was some teachers’ perception towards grammar instruction in communicative language teaching. The themes and codes gained from the analysis of qualitative data obtained from interview explained in table 1.

Table 1. *Themes and codes*

No	Themes	Codes
1.	The importance of grammar	A. The teachers agreed that grammar was a crucial component in improving students skills B. The teachers perceived that explicit grammar instruction was helpful in a CLT classroom
2.	Classroom activities	A. The teachers agreed that in learning processed group work or pair work was design to promote communication in the classroom. B. The teachers perceived that in applying group work students were able to interact well
3.	Quality and quantity of error correction	A. Error correction was one of processess to create students in mastering materials B. The teachers did not feel angry when students made a grammatical error C. Correction an errors or mistake was an obligation for teachers
4.	The role of teacher in classroom	A. Teachers also acted as motivator in the teaching learning process B. Training students to take responsibility and self-discipline to develop their activities
5.	The role and contribution of students in the learning process	A. In teaching English between task and activities must be balance B. Students not only mastering the theory but also practicing the theory

The themes and codes described in table 1 were fully explained as follows:

The important of grammar

Based on the data obtained from the interviews, we got some teachers' perception about grammar instruction in communicative language teaching. We found that most of the teachers agreed that the grammar was a crucial component in improving students' skills in CLT classroom. It was because grammar was very helpful for the students in improving English language. Teacher 1 said, *"yes, if the students well know about grammar in English, they will have good communication in English"* (interview, December 20, 2020). The data obtained from interview also showed that the teachers perceived that explicit grammar instruction was helpful in a CLT classroom. Teacher 2 claimed, *"in teaching grammar I clearly expressed that a communicative way in teaching, such as introducing grammar point through example and activities which it helps students feel a little safer and also increase students motivation"* (interview, December 20, 2020).

Classroom activities

Based on the data obtained from interview, it was found some perception toward grammar instruction in communicative language teaching. We found that most of the teachers agreed that in learning processed group work or pair work was design to promote communication in the classroom. However, all the teachers also perceived that in applying group work students were able to interact well. The data obtained from interview also showed that the teachers recommended pair/group work interaction was effective activities therefore; the teachers had to provide their learners with opportunities to engage in meaningful interaction. The teachers 1 and 2 claimed, *"in teaching English we had to make the class more lively, so group discussion are one of method that gave students opportunity to explore problem themselves"* (interview, December 20, 2020).

Quality and quantity of error correction

Based on the data obtained from interview, we found that most of teachers agreed that Error correction was one of processed to create students in mastering materials. However, the teachers also did not feel angry when students made a grammatical error. The teacher 2 claimed that *"error or mistakes in communicating in English is tolerated, so if the students make a mistake in learning process so we as a teacher can make it correct"*. (Interview, 20 December 2020). The data obtained from interview also showed that the most teachers believed that correction an errors or mistakes was an obligation for teachers. Therefore, the teachers should give the immediate correction feedback for students. Teacher 1 claimed, *"Correcting grammar mistakes is an obligation for English teachers, but in a good way without underestimates the students"* (Interview, 20 December 2020).

The role of teacher in classroom

The data obtained from interview showed that in teaching grammar instruction in communicative language teaching teachers act as motivator in the teaching learning processed. The teacher 1 claimed that *"Yes because teacher also act as motivator in the teaching learning process."* (Interview, 20 December 2020). However, we also found that most of the teachers train the students to take responsibility and self-discipline to develop their activities. Teachers 2 said, *"training learners to take*

responsibility and self-discipline are good to developed their ability, because every learners need to take the responsibility for their learning” (Interview, 20 December 2020).

The role and contribution of students in the learning process

The data obtained from the interviews also revealed that teaching grammar instruction in CLT classroom should be balanced. In teaching English between task and activities must be balanced, also in teaching English language students should not only mastering the theory but also practicing the theory. Teachers 2 expressed, *“if students mastered English grammar they will have good knowledge, but if the students are having lack of practice, of course they will still getting difficulty in communicating, so of course in learning English language theory and practice should be balance” (interview, 20 December 2020).*

The students’ perception toward grammar instruction in communicative language teaching

After analyzing the data from interview, we found that there was some students perception towards grammar instruction in communicative language teaching. The themes and codes gained from the analysis of qualitative data obtained from interview explained in table 2:

Table 2. *Themes and codes for some students’ perception towards grammar instruction*

No	Themes	Codes
1.	The importance of grammar	A. The students considered grammar important B. The students felt that grammar was the core of English
2.	Classroom Activities	A. The students agreed that using group work made it faster and more appropriate way to develop knowledge quickly
3.	Quality and quantity of error correction	A. The student agreed that by correcting an error has been considered helpful in achieving successful communicative competence
4.	The role of teacher in classroom	A. Teachers acted as an independent within the learning teaching group B. The teachers gave students motivation C. The teachers facilitate all students need
5.	The role and contribution of students in the learning process	A. The students took part on the processed of learning

The themes and codes described in table 1 were fully explained as follow:

The important of grammar

Based on the data obtained from the interviews, we found that some students perception about grammar instruction in communicative language teaching classroom. We found that most of students considered grammar as an important part in learning English language. Students 1 and 3 said that *“yes, because grammar important to mastering English language” (interview, 22 December 2020).* Then student 2 had the same opinion, they said, *“because with grammar we can communicate with the foreigner easier” (interview, 22 December 2020).*

The data obtained from interview also showed that students felt that grammar was core of English. Student 4 claimed, *“yeah, by learning English grammar we can produce good sentence”* (interview, 22 December 2020).

Classroom activities

Base on the data obtained from interview, it was found some perception toward grammar instruction in communicative language teaching. In learning process I found that most of the students agreed that using group made it faster and appropriate way to develop knowledge quickly. The student 1 said that *“yes it more understandable and the task finish quickly”* (interview, 22 December 2020). Moreover the student 3 claimed that *“studying in group is good, I can ask my friends and practice speaking more comfortable”* (interview, 22 December 2020). Then student 2 and 4 have same opinion, they said, *“In pair. Can know what I don't know before”* (interview, 22 December 2020).

Quality and quantity of error correction

Based on the data obtained from interview, we found that most of students agreed that by correcting an error has been considered helpful in achieving successful communicative competence. As the student 1 said *“Because the learners can know where the errors”* (interview, 22 December 2020). Then as the students 2 said *“Important, because by correction the learners know where the mistakes and can correct them”* (interview, 22 December 2020). The students 4 also said *“my teachers always correct my error clearly so I know and how to fix my mistakes”* (interview, 22 December 2020). However, the students also did not felt bad when the teachers corrected their mistakes. As the students 3 said, *“I often made a grammar mistakes when speaking English, but my teachers correct it in a good way”*. (Interview, 22 December 2020).

The role of teacher in classroom

The data obtained from interview found some students perception toward the role of teachers in teaching grammar instruction in communicative language teaching classroom, students argued that the role of teachers in the classroom are as an independent within the learning teaching group, gave motivation to students, and the teachers facilitate all students need. The students 1 claimed that *“the teachers don't much over control, let the students get the creativity if it is not out of lesson”* (interview, 22 December 2020). Then the student 2 said, *“the teacher giving the students motivation”* (interview, 22 December 2020). The students 3 also said, *“The teachers should facilitate all of students' needs”* (interview, 22 December 2020). The last one with the teachers 4 said, *“A good teachers explain the material interestingly”* (interview, 22 December 2020).

The role and contribution of students in the learning process

The data gotten from the interviews also revealed that the role and contribution of students in the learning process. The students perceived that the students should took part on the processed of learning, in addition students also argue that the role and contribution of students in the learning is as receiver the lesson. The students 1 claimed, *“As an active learner who ready to answer the teachers' question”* (interview, 22 December 2020). The students 2 also said, *“pay attention and understand the*

lesson” (interview, 22 December 2020). In addition students 4 said, “following the learning processed well” (interview, 22 December 2020).

Discussion

After analyzing the data by using a thematic analysis, it was found that there was several information about teachers and students’ perception toward grammar instruction in communicative language teaching classrooms, those consisted of (a) the importance of grammar, (b) classroom activities (c) quality and quantity of error correction (d) the role of teacher in classroom, (e) the role and contribution of students in the learning process. Therefore, the explanation of the factors was described as following in order to know further much information about them. The first was the important of grammar. Most of teachers and students perceived that grammar was important in learning English language. The teachers agreed that the grammar was a crucial component in improving students’ skills in CLT classroom. It was because grammar was very helpful for the students in improving English language. This finding is supported by Azad (2013) in his study. He found that the teachers believed grammar is an inseparable and essential component in language teaching. The teachers also preferred explicit grammar instruction and contextualized use of grammar within communicative activities. Farahian (2011) found in her research that most teachers value teaching grammar through meaningful communicative activities. However, the students also considered grammar as an important part in learning English language. This finding is supported by Mirazna and Hikmah (2019) in their study. They revealed that students were aware of the importance of grammar. They assumed that by learning grammar they can measure their English abilities.

The second was classroom activities. It was designed to develop fluency, enhances classroom interactions and increases motivation. The finding indicated that most of the teachers agreed that in learning processed group work or pair work was designed to promote communication in the classroom, so the teachers had to provide their learners with opportunities to engage in meaningful interaction. Beside that the students also agreed that using group work made it faster and appropriate way to develop knowledge quickly. This finding is supported by Eggen and Kauchack (2012) in their study affirmed the effects from group work that it can make the students have full of attention, learn about instruction, be able to deal with disagreement, use their mind to create a word and make agreement sentence and praises. In addition, Wright (2014) in his study found that the relationship which students get from group activities can actually reduce anxiety, increase confidence, and encourage the students to take risk to learn new language.

The third quality and quantity of error correction, the teachers used these to convey message to the students that their contributions were unacceptable of incorrect and that they should consider or clarify them. The findings indicated that most of teachers agreed that Error correction was one of processed to create students in mastering materials the teachers also state that correction an errors or mistakes was an obligation for teachers. The data obtained from interview also showed that most of students agreed that by correcting an error has been considered helpful in achieving successful communicative competence. This finding was an agreement with Yoshida (2008) that the teachers preferred using recast, repeating the students committed errors with the correct ones to deal with error. On the other hand, Katayama (2007) claimed students wanted to receive error correction to improve their accuracy in English.

The fourth was the role of teachers in classroom. In teaching grammar, instruction in communicative language teaching teachers act as motivator in the teaching learning processed. It was also found that most of the teachers train the students to take responsibility and self-discipline to develop their activities. The students perceived that the role of teachers in the classroom are as an independent within the learning teaching group, gave motivation to students, and the teachers facilitate all students need. As Huang (2010) says that being proficient in English and applying appropriate strategies to teach, teachers are also required to bring their own attitude and personality into their teaching class and realize good teaching through discussion, negotiation, be available for students and reliable source of information for students when needed.

The fifth was the role and contribution of students in the learning process. The result showed that teaching grammar instruction in CLT classroom should be balanced. In teaching English between task and activities must be balance, also in teaching English language students should not only mastering the theory but also practicing the theory. This finding was in agreement with previous research by Sukarno (2008) who found that the English teachers could determine how English to be taught to young learners learning English through activities in social context and teach their students naturally on the basic of social environment as result the students master English through acquisition. Otherwise, the students perceived that the students should taking part on the processed of learning. This finding was supported by Nasikah (2016). She found that the teachers in her study addressed the important of learner-autonomy in language learning process. It enable learners become autonomous when they charge of their own learning.

Conclusions

Based on the data analyzed by using thematic analysis, it was found teachers and students' perception toward grammar instruction in communicative language teaching. The first, teachers' perceptions in teaching grammar instruction in communicative language teaching classroom, (1) the teachers think that provide students with explicit explanation was an effective way to teach grammar instruction in CLT classroom. (2) In learning processed teachers using group and pair work was design to promote communication in CLT classroom. (3) Teachers claimed that in learning process error correction was one of processed students to mastering materials. So, correcting mistakes was an obligation for teachers. (4) Teachers perceived they should act as motivator in the teaching learning processed and training students to take responsibility in develop their activities. (5) in teaching grammar instruction in CLT classroom, students should not only mastering the theory but also practicing the theory.

The second, students' perceptions in learning grammar in communicative language teaching classroom. (1) Students considered grammar as an important part in learning English so they need to know and learning grammar. (2) Students claimed that learning grammar in CLT with group activities help them to learn and practice comfortable. (3) In learning students error has been considered helpful in achieving successful communicative competence so students did not felt bad when the teachers corrected their mistakes. (4) Students perceived in learning processed teachers should motivate students to more practice in using English language and explain materials interestingly. (5) Students argue that they should taking part on the processed of learning and following the learning processed well.

This research only focused to find out the teachers and students' perception in grammar instruction in communicative language teaching because the limitation of time. By knowing the

teachers and students' perception in teaching and learning grammar instruction in communicative language teaching because the limitation of time, we expected students considered grammar as an important part in learning English language. So, this study can inspire students to increase their interest in learning grammar in CLT classroom, so, it was better for students to start using the language communicatively at the grass root level. We hoped the teachers helped the students to consider a better way in teaching grammar instruction in CLT classroom, the teachers should know what the students need in improving students' skills. The teachers also should create an English environment in the class to promote communication in CLT classroom. Also the teachers should act as motivator in the teaching learning processed to increase student opportunities to practice English because in learning English language is not only mastering grammar but also to increase students' opportunity to practice English language. Last, we hoped hope that the present study can be useful for the next future researchers who are interested to excavate more information about teachers and students' perception in grammar instruction in communicative language teaching.

Disclosure statement

There is no conflict of interest reported by the authors.

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