



Original Research Article

Utilizing Magic Finger Method in Grammar Class

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of current study is improving student grammar ability by applying magic finger method. The strategy is implemented during five meetings, and in the end of meeting the grammar test is administered to get the data. After implementing the strategies in four meetings, grammar test was administered, and the result of the test was more than a half of the students can mention 16 tenses and write simple sentence both in active and passive form. Since the result of the test has met the criteria of success so that the research can be stopped in the first cycle. Another researcher can continue this study in another research design such as experimental or research development study or in another level as like on secondary level.

Keywords: grammar; magic finger; cognitive

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1. Introduction

An English teacher, of course, has various teaching models in delivering the material during language instruction especially in grammar course, a course that is admitted as burden by some students in any level. Grammar class is known as some formula that should be memorized by learners in each meeting. It caused grammar course is frightening for some students. Ban (2000) revealed that Some problems faced by EFL learner and the teacher of EFL in grammar lesson learner involved; students do not have any basic grammar knowledge whereas they will be bored if the teacher explains the basic rules and structural patterns of grammar. Next, grammatical lesson is difficult and boring by some students. English preposition that are different from their native language. Moreover, students get difficulty in arranging the sentence form. In this case the role of the teacher is to provide joyful environment on the grammar class.

The preliminary study is conducted on the beginning meeting. On the first meeting of Grammar class, it is conducted pretest to identify their raw score and their background knowledge especially related to competence in Grammar score. From the test it is found that

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the students cannot mention kinds of tenses and they cannot construct both active and passive sentence in 16 tenses. Due to those problems, the researchers tried to improve their Grammar ability especially on tenses by using an effective strategy.

In the current study, the researcher applied strategies so that the students can memorize the whole sixteen tenses and their forms without any burden since this strategy is packaged in game activity. The researcher named it as magic finger method which is underlined on cognitive strategy theory. Magic finger that is applied in this study is a combination of three cognitive strategies, keyword, understanding, and imagery.

The researcher decided to utilize magic finger method because of some reasons. Cohen (2000) revealed that by applying cognitive strategy, students will obtain some benefits such as they can improve both their learning skills and language skills. Next, they become more aware on the most effective strategy that can help them in learning. Moreover they can evaluate their performance by themselves. Then they can apply successful strategies to new learning context.

Richards, Guan, Platt, & Platt (2000) stated that in grammar instruction, there are two various models of Cognitive Approach that can be used by the teacher. The first is deductive learning. In this method the students are introduced to the rules and specific information of the language. Then they are asked to apply the rule to the task. The example of deductive learning implication is GTM.

Another way that can be applied in grammar class is inductive learning. It is the opposite of the previous method, deductive learning. In this method the students are asked to explore their experience in using the language then it is continued by learning the grammatical aspects. Some methods that apply inductive learning are Direct Method, Communicative Approach, and Counseling Learning (Richards et al., 2000). In this study the Cognitive approach applied is deductive since the students are told the form of the tenses and its form, then the students are asked to construct it into passive and active forms.

Under the heading of grammar, the mentioned techniques are following rules given in texts, inferring grammar rules from texts, comparing L1 and L2, and memorizing structures and using them often (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990). The following table is their Grammar strategy classification.

Table 1. O'Malley and Chamot's Grammar strategy classification (1990)

Strategy	How to apply
Preparation	Preparing themselves before learning grammar
Attention to form	Paying attention on certain aspect of Grammar
Thinking	Thinking about grammar
Key word	Recalling Grammar knowledge by correlating new Grammar knowledge to some images
Understanding	Comprehending and restructuring Grammar material and keeping in long term memory
Induction and deduction	understanding English by generalizing Grammar rules
Correction	Learning Grammar by correcting some error analysis
Translation	Understanding Grammar rules by translating into mother tongue
Imagery	Visualize new information to visual concepts in memory
Resourcing	Using some references of Grammar materials to expand Grammar knowledge
Transfer	Facilitating a new language learning task by using background knowledge
Inference	Analyzing the Grammar rules of a text
Elaboration	Combining new information to the existing Grammar knowledge
Repetition	Rehearsing Grammar knowledge by repeating or imitating
Contextualization	Applying Grammar rule in a language sequence
Note-taking	Writing down some important points by summarizing or reciting the main idea

Several researchers had studied by some researchers. Saricoban (n.d) investigated some strategies employed by the EFL in Turkey in English grammar by using survey research. He found that most of them used cognitive strategies subconsciously. The researcher added that socio-affective strategies cannot be neglected in grammar instruction. Because of the reason he suggested that teachers need to build some strategic techniques so that the students can have a better learning environment. For instance teachers need to; a. lower inhibitions, b. encourage risk-taking, c. build students' self-confidence, and d. get students to make their mistakes work for them.

Vicenta (2002) conducted study related to Grammar strategy Training on secondary level. She trained them by using metacognitive and cognitive strategies. After had been

trained, the students especially fair and poor learners be more autonomous than students who do not join the instruction.

2. Methods

The subject of the present study is 27 learners that, most of them, had studied English for, minimally, 6 years. The criteria success of this study is 70 of the students can mention 16 tenses and write them both in active and passive form. In this study each cycle consists of 4 meetings. In each meeting students are trained to use magic finger method. In the end of the meeting the students are given test to check whether their score improve or not.

Latief (2011) stated that procedures of conducting action research consisted of four steps, planning the action, implementing the planning, observing and reflecting. Since this study belongs to Class action research, the following steps need to be carried out. Planning, implementing, observing, and reflecting.

Before doing those steps, it is preceded by preliminary study. The aim of preliminary study was to identify and analyze the problems that should be overcome and to obtain their raw score of grammar. On the preliminary study it is found that the students cannot mention the whole tenses and their formula. However as English students they were insisted to have that capability. Because of that reason the researcher tried to find the way to solve the problem. Knowing the benefits of magic finger method, the researcher wanted to implement the method in grammar class.

After finding out the problems, the researcher constructed the general planning such as material, teaching scenario and test. The material involves 16 tenses both in active and passive forms and the test used is short answer questions.

In implementing phase the students are taught by using magic finger method during for meetings. During those meetings the students are expected can mention 16 tenses and can construct a sentence in 16 tenses both in active and passive form, and in the end of the meeting they are given grammar test. Here are the steps of magic finger method, a) Students write the code of each tenses on their finger as the teacher assigned, b) teacher explains the meaning of each code, c) Students are trained to remember the code by using drill method, d) Students are trained how to read the code so that they can mention 16 tenses using the code on their finger, e) While the teacher check the students to mention 16 tenses using the code on their finger, another students are asked to draw their right finger on a paper along

with the code, f) After ensuring the whole students can mention 16 tenses using the code on their finger, teacher shows the next magic formula how to change a sentence into 16 tenses in active form, g) Students are trained to change a sentence into another tenses active form, h) The representative of students are asked to change a simple sentence into another tenses that is assigned by the teacher on the whiteboard, so another students can check whether it is correct, i) To check students understanding, Each student is given a simple sentence and they are asked to change it into another 15 tenses in active form, j) Then teacher shows the next magic formula how to change a sentence into 16 tenses in passive form, k) To check students understanding, Each student is given a simple sentence and they are asked to change it into another 15 tenses in passive form.

In the last step, or reflecting, the result of the test is compared to the criteria of success. The purpose is to identify whether the study can be stopped or need to be continued to the next cycle.

3. Findings and Discussion

On the first meeting, the learning objectives are students can mention the whole sentences. Students are recognized to the code written on their fingers and they are trained to mention the whole tenses by using that code. To check whether they have memorized the whole tenses, students are asked to mention them and it is checked by their peers.

Moreover the learning objective in the second meeting is the students can construct active sentences in 16 tenses. In this meeting the code of each tense is introduced to the students and they are trained to construct sentence in sixteen tenses. To create the learning environment being joyful, the activity in assessing is designed in game tournament.

The learning objective of the third day is students can construct passive sentences in 16 tenses. The activity is not different from the previous meeting. To create the learning environment being joyful, the activity in assessing is designed in game tournament.

On the last meeting the students are reviewing both in active and passive. In this meeting students are divided into some group and they are assigned to challenge another group to construct a sentence in certain tenses. A group with the highest score is the winner.

After implementing the strategy in four meetings, grammar test is administered. It consists of 10 true false and 10 essay questions, and the result of the test is more than a half of the students can mention 16 tenses and write them both in active and passive form. The

result of the test is above the criteria of success which means the study can be stopped on the first cycle since the criteria of success have been achieved.

From the observation, it is found that after implementing magic finger method, their grammar ability is better than before. It is in line with Cohen's statement. He revealed that by applying cognitive strategy students can improve both their learning skills and language skills. However, the Cognitive approach applied in magic finger is deductive since the students are told the form of the tenses and its form, then the students are asked to construct it into passive and active forms. As Richards et al. (2000) stated that the steps in deductive learning is by introducing the rules and specific information of the language then applying to the task.

4. Conclusions

After implementing the strategies in four meetings, grammar test was administered, and the result of the test was more than a half of the students can mention 16 tenses and write them both in active and passive form so that the research can be stopped in the first cycle.

This study is addressed to tertiary level. The next researcher can apply it in another level such as secondary level or integrated level. The teacher can used this strategy as alternative one in teaching grammar material so that the students are easier to memorize and practice the Grammar material.

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