

An Auto Ethnographic Study on Communicative Approach in Teaching English Syntax in a University Context

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Abstract

This research employed an auto ethnographic study. It is a method used to describe the journey of the researcher in teaching English Syntax for two years in academic years 2016 to 2017. The problem in this research is how the lecturer implemented the communicative approach in teaching English Syntax in a Higher Education Context. The Method used in this research is qualitative method. The subject of this research was the students and the lecturer of English department, Faculty of Language and Literature, Makassar State University. The instrument of the research was interview and auto ethnography reflection (lecturer personal reflection). Technique of the data collection used individual in-depth interview. The result of the data analysis indicated that the implementation of the communicative approach in teaching English Syntax run well because the students felt satisfy to join the class, from the class start until the end. The implementation was divided into three steps. The first is preparation; the lecturer has already prepared the teaching material well, the learning objective, and teaching method and strategy. The second is implementation the communicative approach in teaching English Syntax, and the third is evaluation. The all of the steps are run well in teaching English Syntax. It can be concluded that teaching English Syntax through communicative approach was very good and successful, and get a good impact for the students in improving their language knowledge and skills.

Keywords: an auto ethnographic study; syntax; and communicative approach

Introduction

The communicative approach is an approach in learning English, which emphasizes the ability to communicate and interact in everyday situations. Learning English, especially the English Syntax course, aims to make students able to communicate and interact using English properly and correctly, both sociolinguistically and grammatically. The concept underlying this approach explains that language does not only carry functional meaning, but also social meaning (Jabeen, 2014). The thing that needs to be considered in this communicative approach is the target of determining communication that needs to be considered, which includes who is talking to whom, purpose, place, time, cultural context and atmosphere, channels and media, language events (Djuanda, 2008).

In the teaching and learning process, a student is required to be able to express his opinion orally or in writing. Basically speaking skills must be possessed by all people who in their activities require communication, both one-way and reciprocal or both (Kusuma, 2008). Therefore, with a communicative approach to learning English syntax, students are expected to master communicative competence properly and correctly.

Basically, the communicative approach is a language learning approach that emphasizes learning on mastery of language skills without neglecting the mastery of language structure (grammar). For language learners, this results in an emphasis on a language's formal properties and the distinction between creating meaning from having meaning (Holme, 2009). The concept of communicative competence was coined by Hymes (1972) in response to Chomsky's (1965) linguistic competence. He argues that using language is not just about knowing grammatically correct sentence structures. Communication has many factors that determine the realization of common language use, called context. On the other hand, Waters (2009) explains that an imbalance of understanding involving language teaching leads to approaches that try to subvert teaching and the teacher's role, regardless of the pedagogical consequences. Wilkins (1972) suggests a functional and communicative definition of language that can be used as the basis for developing a communicative syllabus in language learning. According to Wilkins, an analysis of the communicative meaning that language learners need to understand and master.

The first is that all forms of language (words, phrases, sentences) and linguistic structures (word order, affixes, categories, and structures) must always be meaningful. In this case, the communicative approach still pays attention to grammatical aspects that are functional. The second thing is that the form and meaning of language are related to the situation and context of language use so that the sociolinguistic aspect becomes the background and situation. Communicative competence is the ability to apply the grammatical rules of a language in forming correct sentences and to know when, where, and to whom the sentence is said. These linguistic rules only serve to monitor a form of speech.

The definition of communicative approach

The communicative approach is an approach that aims to improve students' communication skills, emphasizing the development of students' communicative abilities. The application of the communicative approach is fully carried out by students (student center) while the lecturer only acts as a facilitator. Thus, students will be able to tell stories, respond to problems, and express their opinions orally in coherent and easily understood language. Furthermore Chang (2011), The Communicative Approach makes language teaching in the classroom become like in a real situation and has its own meaning.

A thought about the foundations of teaching methodology based on the principles of an approach called communicative language (Newby, 2015). The communicative approach can also be interpreted as an approach that is based on the nature of language as a means of communication, so that the teaching of English syntax, specifically and English in general, is directed at the use of English as a communication tool. The communication component includes elements of communication actors, ways of communicating, places of communication, and others; the communicative approach opens itself to a broad view in learning English in general. This raises awareness that learning English, especially English syntax, is not enough to give students how the forms of English are, but students must be able to develop ways to apply these forms according to the function of English as a means of communication in situations and situations. Right time; The difference between the communicative approach and the structural approach. Thus, learning English syntax specifically by using a communicative approach is more appropriate.

With this communicative approach, students can understand the changing view of teaching English in general from “structural” to “functional”. The difference between the communicative approach and the structural approach, in learning English in general and English syntax in particular. Thus, learning English syntax specifically by using a communicative approach is more appropriate to be seen as something related to what meaning can be expressed (nosi) through English, not with regard to grammatical (structural) items. This is in line with what was stated by Brumfit, (1986) that the ability to communicate is the ability to communicate in actual situations. Thus, the communicative approach is an approach to teaching language in general and English in particular whose ultimate goal is the ability to communicate, both orally and in writing.

Aspects relating to the communicative approach

Richards (2005) stated that the details of the objectives of the learner want to acquire language through a communicative approach through several aspects. Several aspects that must be considered in relation to the communicative approach are language theory, learning theory, objectives, syllabus, type of activity, role of lecturer or teacher, role of students, and role of material (Irmawati, 2012). Furthermore Al asmari (2015), State that as the language is used for expressing meaning, interaction, and communication, students’ needs should be given priority As for the application of this communicative approach, there are two things that must be considered, namely the learning objectives and the curriculum used. As for what is included in the English learning strategy, especially English Syntax based on a communicative approach is class organization and teaching and learning methods and techniques. It can be summarized in the following table;

No	Aspect related to	Communicative Approach
1	Language Theories	In essence, language is a system for expressing meaning, which emphasizes the semantic and communicative dimensions without ignoring the grammatical characteristics of language. Therefore, what needs to be shown is language interaction and communication
2	Learning Theories	A suitable theory is the scientific theory of second language acquisition.
3	Objectives	The general objective of language learning (English Syntax) is to develop students' ability to communicate (communicative competence and performance).

4	Syllabus	The general objective of language learning (English Syntax) is to develop students' ability to communicate (communicative competence and performance).
5	Types of activities	The learners are exposed to real communication situations, such as exchanging information, negotiating meaning or other activities that are real.
6	Role of the Lecturer	Lecturers act as communication facilitators, task and text participants, needs analyzers, counselors, and learning process managers.
7	Role of the students	Learners act as givers and receivers, negotiators, and interactors so that they not only master the forms of language, but also their forms and meanings.
8	Role of Materials	Materials are prepared and presented in a role as a supporter of efforts to improve language skills in real acts of communication

The concept of auto ethnography

Auto ethnography is a research approach aimed at systematically describing and analyzing the personal experiences of others in order to understand their cultural experiences, Ellis, (2004, Holman Jones, (2005), , 2001) Treating Research as Political, Socially Just and Socially Conscious Behavior, Adam and Jones, (2008).

Ellis and Bochner in Chang (2008) provide a model that explains the complexity of autoethnographic variations. They explain that in their writing, the autoethnographer must always adjust the emphasis in the research process (graphy), on culture (ethno), and on the self (auto), and that each writing result of autoethnographies is on a continuum between these three aspects.

From some of the explanations above, we can see that autoethnography has its own position in a study. It has its own complexity in looking at a problem, be it one's identity, life, relationships, and personal experience. An autoethnographic research design that is expected to reveal these complexities cannot only use a research design in the form of an experiment, survey, or list of questions.

Methodology

This research, the researcher employed auto ethnography. It is a method used in this research to describe the journey of the researcher in teaching English syntax for the two years later in academic years (2016 to 2017). The purpose of this description is to facilitate understanding by participants inside and outside the culture, and the inductive perception of patterns of cultural experience, recurring emotions, stories, and events, as evidenced by the field not, interview (Jorgenson, 2003). This method includes qualitative descriptive method. The qualitative method describes the characteristic on the literacy for teaching English as foreign language in a higher education context. This study is considered particularly valuable where the research context is to interpret social groups in their natural setting. The study is a strategy to answer the research questions, which aim for "a better and deep understand of the real-life events" (Yin, 1994).

A descriptive methodology describes a particular problem as completely and accurately as possible. The researchers believe that the most common descriptive method in educational research is case studies, in which researchers describe individual or group characteristics (such as skills, preferences, and behaviors), or (in some cases) the physical environment (such as school). (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2012). Qualitative approaches, such as ethnographic and historical methodologies are also primarily descriptive in nature.

The location of this research was in Makassar State University students and lecturer. The researcher used three instruments, namely, interview and an auto ethnography (self reflection of teaching) and documentation (lesson plan).

Subject of the research

The subject of this research was the students and the lecturer of English Department, Faculty of Languages and Literature, Makassar State University. The students of the fourth semester, (in academic years 2016 to 2017) who joined English syntax class (fully presence as a research subject criteria), and the lecturer who taught English syntax subject).

Technique of data collection

- a. Individual in-depth interview: (unstructure interview or open ended Interview, Thomas, 2009) this is to explore the students' perception, the students' respond, and the students' engagement, about teaching English syntax by using discovery learning model. The researcher used audio and video or picture to record the data
- b. The researcher focused to describe the personal reflection of the journey on teaching English syntax through discovery learning for the last two years (in academic years 2016 to 2017) by using an auto ethnographic study.

Technique of data analysis

There were three steps to data analysis qualitatively; they are (a) data reduction, (b) data display and (c) verification (Miles, et.al , 2014). These were used to reduce the amount of data (Qualitative form). The data were indexed after it has been coded. The next step is to display the data. Data display, consists of presenting data in a format that makes data interpretation easier. After all of the data has been coded, it was displayed in extract data. The last step was verification. The verification or conclusion drawing was the researcher expressed the conclusion from the data that have been obtained.

Findings

After transcribing the individual interview data, the researcher wrote down sentence notes based on the participants' responses, checked the administration to get the trustworthiness of the data, and grammatical errors might occur in the participants' initial responses because all participants used Indonesian, and they were not native English speakers. The researcher modified the initial students' responses accordingly without changing their essential meanings to be easy and helpful to write down themes and categories.

The structure of communicative approach implementation in teaching english syntax

Regarding the way of the lecturer constructs the Communicative Approach Implementation, some parts are divided into sub themes, they are: (1) Communicative Approach design, (2) Communicative Approach implementing steps, Several categories followed these sub-themes to give a detail explanation of the findings.

The way lecturer implemented Communicative Approach Design in the classroom activities, started with designing the Communicative Approach instruction itself. This theme was elaborated into three sub-theme, They are (a) Introduction/Preparation, ((b) Application, (c) Evaluation.

Preparation

In this part, the researcher introduces some steps of implementing Communicative Approach in teaching English syntax and data collected from the in-dept interview based on the problem statements and objectives of the research.

The data from the in-depth interview with the participants indicated that

Extract 1

“...Mengenai ini, perkenalan syntax di? Apa yang dibahas di syntax. Syntax pengertiannya ini, biasa di kasi pengertian yang lain”

“....About this, the syntax introduction at? What is discussed in the syntax. The meaning of this syntax is usually given another meaning” (Script record 4, Nita Wulandari, line 44; 20:17 minutes interview data)

The participant said that in the process of learning syntax for the first time, before starting to learn the material about syntax, it will be explained in outline so that students understand more about the next material which aims to provide a stimulus to the students and also that further learning will run effectively.

Extract 2

“... biasanya sebelum dimulai suatu materi dosennya selalu menanyakan apa definisi dari ini, silahkan cari referensi di internet atau dimana ” (Script record 18 Afifah Fitra, line 44, 25:24 minutes interview data)

“.... usually before starting a material, the lecturer always asks what the definition of this is, please look for references on the internet or where ” (Script record 18 Afifah Fitra, line 44, 25:24 interview data)

According to the participant, in the syntax learning activity the lecturer usually asks about the material to be studied, which will be discussed with the aim of identifying problems relevant to the course material, and then asking students to find their own answers or formulate problems and then determine temporary answers facilitated from various sources such as from the internet and books, after that they are appointed one by one to convey the results of the data or answers that have been obtained previously then it will be formulated and explained, then provide opportunities for students to choose the answers or opinions that they think are correct. According to the participants, this method is very complete because all students can take part in learning activities even though they already have a book, but the lecturer continues to explain the contents of the book without being blamed for giving an incorrect opinion and if something is added or asked, the lecturer tries to make all students active in giving opinion or ideas. In this learning process, the provision of material in the learning process is not complete but directly involves students in searching for concepts or principles that were previously unknown. The participants feel that in the learning process they are given the freedom to ask questions and express opinions according to their abilities. Participants assume that in learning activities, the classroom atmosphere in learning activities is very pleasant. In the learning process, lecturer is not only in one position but also change positions to ensure that all students can take part in learning activities. According to the participants, the assignments or feedback given by the lecturer was not difficult because the material course provided had been studied previously.

Extract 3

“iye sir, biasanya dosen ini masuk dikelas dan diawal pembelajaran pasti bertanya apa yang dipelajari minggu lalu..” (Script record 27, Suci Pole Mappaita, line 193; 24:36 minutes interview data)

“iye sir, usually this lecturer strats the class and at the beginning of the lesson, he must ask what was learned last week..” (Script record 27, Suci Pole Mappaita, line 193; 24:36 interview data).

The participant said that in the learning process for the syntax course, before starting the lesson, the lecturer reminded the previous teaching material, with the aim of strengthening memory again or brainstorming as a stimulus to the students.

Application

Extract 4

“Kita yang jelaskan sendiri dengan kata-kata ta”

"We explain it with our words"
(Script record, 4 Nita Wulandari line 48; 20:17 interview data)

According to the participant in the learning activities, the lecturer provides material to be discussed with the aim of identifying problems relevant to the subject matter, formulating problems and then determining temporary answers, then being asked to express opinions, after that they will be appointed one by one to communicate the results of the data that have been obtained previously. Then it will be formulated and explained by the lecturer by summarizing the results of the student's opinions, and also examples. This is called communicative Approach, where students are asked to find their own material to be studied. Where the main point of this approach is the provision of material in the learning process is not complete but directly involves students in searching for concepts or principles that were previously unknown. The participant also stated that in the learning process, the importance thing is a pleasant classroom atmosphere, and communicative so that the learning process is not stiff and tense. The lecturer also makes some humor in the class. Then, it's not monotonous just sitting in a chair and desk in front of the classroom but moving around with the aim that students can get overall attention and communication

Extract 5

“dan sisanya di beri ke mahasiswa?” (script record 6 A. Ni'ma line36, 12:47 minutes, interview data)

“and the rest is given to students?” (script record 6 A. Ni'ma, line36, 12:47 , interview data)

The participant said that in the learning activities the lecturer will explain the material then ask students to look for examples from those described previously, then ask students to express their own opinions from several sources, then they will be appointed one by one to communicate

the results of the data that has been obtained and will be explained by the lecturer by summarizing the results of student opinions. The main point of this approach is the provision of material in the learning process is not complete but directly involves students in searching for concepts or principles that were previously unknown.

Evaluation

In this part, the researcher assumed that Evaluation is a very important thing for each lecturer in teaching and learning process, because from the evaluation the lecturer can measure and know how far the students understand the lesson given, and also the successful in teaching and learning process.

Extract 6

".....Tidakji, karena di tau mi bilang kalau memang saya begini ka jadi dapat C." (Script record 4, Nita wulandari, line149, 20:17 minutes interview data)

".....No, because I know that if I was like this, you would get C." (Script record 4, Nita Wulandari, line149, 20:17 interview data)

This participant said that the assessment given by the lecturer was very objective because he did not only look from one part of the evaluation, but also from all parts, starting from attendance, discipline, and also the value of assignments as well as mid tests and final tests. Then participants said that if there were students who felt that their grades were not appropriate, they could complain to the lecturer and he would explain or correct if there were errors or mistakes in the evaluataion.

Extract 7

. ".....kan itu kembali lagi ke aturan ta dari kehadiran, yang paling utama itu kehadiran menurutku itu adil ji sir," (Script record 6, A. Ni'ma, line 47, 12:47 minutes interview data)

"...that goes back to the rule of attendance, the most important thing is that attendance is fair, in my opinion, sir," (Script record 6, A. Ni'ma, line 47, 12:47 interview data)

The participant felt that the evaluation given was very objective because he did not only look at one part of the evaluation, but also from all parts, starting from attendance, activities in class, discipline, as well as the value of assignments as well as mid and final tests.

The Application of Communicative Approach in teaching English syntax indicated that most of the participants said that teaching and learning English syntax by communicative approach is very good and challenge, because the students are required to be creative and innovative looking for answers. Themselves from the concepts given, then explain their opinions, one by one, then the other students respond and provide responses according to the concepts or theories they find, and if there is an error or mistakes in their opinion, the lecturer does not blame, but it is given the opportunity to the students correct it.

The application of the Communicative Approach helps students to express ideas or concepts related to the lecture material given, and also students are free to improve their ability to communicate with friends and lecturers in class, and in-class activities make students not tense,

because the class atmosphere is very pleasant, because lecturer provides humor. The lecturer explains the lecture material very clearly, and if there are students who find it difficult to understand the teaching material, the lecturer explains again.

Applying a communicative approach in teaching English syntax, students can share or communicate their ideas to their friends in cooperative discussions. In class activities, using a communicative approach, students feel happy, because if they make a mistake, in the teaching process, the lecturer does not blame them but re-explains, and he gives other students the opportunity to answer until the answer is correct, And in teaching Language Syntax In England, lecturers always provide opportunities for students to use books, journals on the internet (Google), and they feel that lecturers usually give them attention and control.

Discussion

In accordance with the applicable curriculum, in implementing the discovery learning in an higher education institution, the lecturer in teaching and learning process does not present as the whole material to the students, but only present a formulation of the problem that was prepared by the lecturer. Based on the extract data in the finding section indicated that in the learning activities, the lecturer provides material to be discussed with the aim of identifying problems that are relevant to the material, then formulating problems and determining temporary answers, then being asked to express the opinions of each student. In the Implementation of communicative approach, the connection activities are very important things because, the lecture remaindered to the students to remember the teaching material that has been given previously with the relation to next material which is going to begin. In syntax instruction in developing the communicative abilities of language learners (Liamkina, & Ryshina, 2012).

Based on the findings, the students' perceptions on implementing Communicative Approach in teaching English syntax can be divided into three categories, namely: Visual Perception, auditory perception, and speech perception. Richards and Schmidt (2013), state that perception is very important thing for the students in the teaching and learning process because they can receive the teaching material easily what they hear or listen. Furthermore, Eggen and Kauchack (2010) perception is a process by which people attach meaning to experiences speech perception is a method of understanding and recognizing spoken language, the process of hearing speech that starts with the level of the sound signal, and the audition process. The information from the speeches is utilized for higher-level linguistic processes such as word recognition. Based on the implementation of Communicative, the students' responses were taken in order to get information used to evaluate and give feedback to the implementation of Communicative Approach in the classroom activities. Students' response in teaching process are divided into three parts, they are: Cognitive response, Affective response, and Conative response.

The impact on students' cognitive engagement after being exposed through Communicative Approach is building the students' cognitive structures in making connections and finding the best patterns in completing their concept or theories. They processed information and designed their projects or tasks. McDevitt and Ormrod (2008) highlighted that the students develop their cognitive ability by the time they explore information and build schema of their project work. They discuss the steps of completing the project through platforms and analyze their progress. and the develop mental structures by dividing their roles and constructing their understanding with the lesson material (Ikebuchi & Rasmussen, 2014). The implementation of Communicative Approach in teaching English syntax has successfully increased the students' motivation and learning outcomes well. In this research finding shows that the students are emotionally engaged in this

Communicative Approach, in the way they share, express their ideas or opinion in discussing and also in doing their tasks

Conclusion and recommendation

These Conclusions are the main points of the findings and discussions regarding the objectives of the research that have mentioned in the previous chapter, namely the lecturers' implementation of Communicative Approach in teaching English Syntax, the students' response toward in implementing Communicative Approach, and also the students' engagement toward in implementing Communicative Approach in teaching English Syntax in the class room activities.

There are a number of methods that lecturer can use in the teaching and learning process in the classroom activities to improve students' knowledge of grammar, and skills, one of them is Communicative Approach. The researcher used this Communicative Approach in teaching English Syntax to help the students understand the teaching material easily in the teaching and learning process in the class room activities, because the students try to find the concept and theories by themselves through guiding and facilitating by the lecturer in the class room. One of the implementations of Communicative Approach is introduction or preparation, application, and evaluation, that might help the students more easily understand the teaching material given through the stage of inquiry the concept or theories to construct the words into phrases, clauses and sentences.

After exploring the Communicative Approach in teaching English Syntax at a university in Makassar, it was found that the application of the Communicative Approach in Teaching English Syntax in the classroom with the following steps, namely: introduction, application, and evaluation went well and the atmosphere of the classroom is very pleasant because the lecturer provides explanations and examples of teaching materials very clearly, and if there are some students who do not understand, the lecturer chooses one student who can explain the teaching material until the students understand clearly. Giving students lots of explanations and examples can also be effective in helping them construct phrases, clauses, and sentences.

In the application step, the lecturer tries to develop teaching materials in which students communicate and respond to other students. In this activity, the lecturer asked students to be creative to look for concepts or theories to find out their definitions by discussing them with their friends. In applying this communicative approach, in teaching English syntax, the lecturer motivates students to dare to answer the questions given, even though the answers are not complete or correct and students feel happy to join the class, because they are not tense, and the atmosphere in the classroom is very good because the lecturer sometimes makes humor. and funny stories. The application of a communicative approach in teaching English syntax is a very effective and fun, in-class activity. All participants in this study gave a positive response to the teaching and learning process by applying a communicative approach.

Declaration of conflicting interest

The authors declared that no potential conflicts of interest to the research, or publication of this article.

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