



IMPROVING STUDENTS' ABILITY TO UNDERSTAND COMPARISON DEGREE BY USING STICK PUPPET

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Abstract

Learning grammar, particularly understanding tenses, poses challenges for students, often leading to boredom during lessons. To address this, researchers propose integrating new media, such as stick puppets, into grammar instruction to enhance student engagement. The aim is to cultivate enthusiasm, involvement, and a deeper understanding of English grammar. This study was conducted as Classroom Action Research (CAR) with tenth grade students of SMKN 3 Jember. It explored the efficacy of stick puppets as an alternative method to improve Grammar Comprehension. This research was spanning one cycle with three implementation meetings and a post-test. It utilized various data collection techniques was included; grammar scores, teacher observations, interviews, student questionnaires, and classroom observation sheets. From the implementation of stick puppets, the findings revealed notable improvement in the Grammar Comprehension of tenth-grade students at SMKN 3 Jember with a 95.65% success rate. The students demonstrated increased proficiency across vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar usage, and content which indicated that stick puppets not only enhanced comprehension but also fostered active participation and student interest.

Keywords: Stick puppet, Comparison Degree, Students' ability

INTRODUCTION

Basically, English is taught as a foreign language for students specifically in Indonesia. For EFL students English is difficult to understand, causing problems in their learning motivation. One of the challenges for many students in learning English is grammar. Grammar is an important component of language. From Larsen's argument, Grammar is a collection of explanatory codes in a language system. According to Chomsky (1965) grammar can be regarded as the theory of a language. Therefore, this aim is for foreign language teachers where the grammar is an indispensable part of language teaching. Deghani et al (2016) stated that, in the context of EFL, because students are not in a natural environment, the process of learning grammar becomes more difficult. Students often find it difficult and hesitant to express their English. This is due to their lack of understanding in the study of grammar. There are many parts about grammar. One of them is comparison degree. Comparison degree is a very important part of grammar in learning English. The concept of the comparison degree involves using adjectives in various forms to draw comparisons between one, two, or multiple nouns, where nouns are words that depict people, places, or things. However, many of the students have difficulties in using comparison degrees. They have difficulty in making comparisons or superlatives, even distinguishing forms and uses of each function which causes many errors.

The above grammatical problems were also experienced by students of the tenth grade of SMKN 3 Jember. Based on preliminary research, the researchers found a problem that becomes difficult students are students' difficulty in understanding grammar materials especially in comparison degree. In addition to difficulty students in understanding comparison degrees, students also experience boredom in the face of learning. In this case, teachers act an important role in identifying and optimally utilizing learning methods, materials, media, and other resources needed to support student mastery in speech. Educators need to understand the source of grammar difficulties that students may face and develop teaching strategies that involve active interaction and grammar practice in meaningful contexts (Johnson & Martinez, 2020).

According to Murcia (2001) stated that the media plays an important role in motivating the learning process of teaching. Therefore, the use of media that corresponds to the subject matter or subject matter as well as the characteristics of the student can be the key to the teacher in achieving the learning objectives. A variety of media including songs, pictures, flashcards, and others that can

be used to deliver teaching material. Besides, Utomo & Ahsanah (2020). They are mentioned that having a strong grasp of grammar helps learners build stronger language structures and craft more meaningful messages. Effendi et al. (2017) even suggested that despite years of university-level grammar study, many students still struggle to create accurate and well-formed sentences. Essentially, grammar plays a vital role in language, but achieving mastery in English structure demands considerable dedication. It asserts that students typically recognize that acquiring grammar knowledge can require significant effort. Researchers offer the use of new media in the form of stick puppets to increase students' interest in grammar lessons. It is hoped that by using stick puppets as learning aids, students can be more involved and enthusiastic in learning grammar, thereby increasing their understanding of English grammar.

Based on preliminary studies, it allows researchers to identify solutions to student grammatical difficulties. Therefore, researchers decide to incorporate the right media into the teaching learning process in creative way to solve problems experienced by students in the classroom. In this study, the researchers chose a stick puppet as the right medium to describe a person's physical appearance to teach grammar in the tenth grade in High School. Therefore, the anticipation is that students will actively participate in a enjoyable manner within the classroom setting. By using the stick puppet medium makes the teaching atmosphere entertaining and exciting. Dealing with the discussion above, the researcher suggested Stick Puppets as a suitable media choice due to its alignment with the strategy and the aspects that were targeted for students' improvement. This study aims to improve students' ability in understanding comparison degree by using stick puppet.

METHOD

This research uses classroom action research which involves several stages consisting of planning, implementing, observing and reflecting. The research methodology used here is Classroom Action Research (CAR), aligning with Kemmis and McTaggart's. The characterization as a type of inquiry carried out by teachers within classrooms to tackle specific issues or find solutions related to those issues. This particular study aims to assess students' oral communication development by comparing their use of stick puppets, representing different physical appearances, in exploring the topic of degree comparison. The research took place in a classroom setting due to English being a foreign language. A prevalent challenge in English learning for many students revolves around grammar usage, encompassing both word forms (morphology) and sentence structure (syntax), as defined by Linguists (1965).

The goal of this research is to find out which students' grammar is improved by using stick puppets. In the data collection process. This study aims to assess the improvement in grammar of students who use stick puppets, using primary and secondary data. Primary data includes speaking tests, while secondary data includes field notes, interviews, questionnaires and classroom observations.

To compute the students' grammar improvement based on the mean score, the data from the grammar test underwent analysis through a specific formula outlined by Sudjana (2002, p. 67).

$$Mx = \sum x/n$$

Mx : Mean

X : Individual Score

N : Total number of students in the class

To compute the total percentages of the students' passed the passing grade (KKM) with the formula (Sudjono, 2008):

$$P = F/N \times 100\%$$

P : The class's percentage

F : Percentage of the overall score

N : Total number of students in the class

As the result of the questionnaire (closed-ended question), the data was counted and formed into a percentage. Here is the formula:

$$\% = n/(N) \times 100$$

n : The count of students who answered the question

N : Total number of students in the class.

The assessment of the students' test was based on a minimum passing score set for tenth-grade students, which was 70. Essentially, any score below 70 was considered a failure to pass the test.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The study was a type of research done in a classroom setting, focusing on improving students' understanding of comparison degrees using stick puppets. The study was conducted within a cycle, comprising three sessions and one post-test. Its goal was to assess the advancement of tenth-grade students' grammar comprehension by employing stick puppets. The implementation of the research involved two main stages:

1. Planning

The researcher and English teacher collaborated to prepare research instruments. This included selecting a topic related to the syllabus, choosing stick puppets, discussing how to use them, designing lesson plans, creating learning resources on "Comparison Degree in Comparing People's Physical Appearance," making stick puppets, and establishing success criteria.

2. Acting

During this stage, the researcher assumed the role of the teacher and executed the outlined actions within the classroom setting. Additionally, the English teacher collaborated by observing this implementation. The procedures encompassed various activities such as utilizing stick puppets to engage students, introducing vocabulary, practicing pronunciation of acquired words, elucidating fundamental grammatical structures, demonstrating comparisons of physical appearances using stick puppets as examples, and facilitating student practice with these puppets.

a. Meeting 1

The first session, held on Tuesday, October 31st, 2023, from 08:00 to 09:00 am, the primary objective was to establish a foundational comprehension of comparing people's physical attributes using stick puppets in Bahasa. The researcher initiated this by engaging students directly in practicing comparisons, focusing on qualities like tallest, smallest, fattest, most silent, among others. The examples used were Indonesian motivator artists such as Celine Evangelista, Gilang Dirgari, Ivan Gunawan, Ruben Onsu, Wendi Cagur, Fiersa Besari, King Nazar, Ria Ricis, and more.

b. Meeting 2

The second session, on Wednesday, November 01, 2023, from 08:00 to 09:00 am, followed a similar teaching approach but introduced new lessons and a different set of stick puppets. In this session, students delved into vocabulary and grammar centered around the "Comparison Degree Formula" to describe people's physical attributes. The class focused on Indonesian comedian artists like Okky Lukman, Denny Cagur, Daus Mini, Andre Taulany, among others. The researcher employed stick puppets as visual aids to demonstrate and reinforce the learned vocabulary, thereby deepening the students' understanding.

c. Meeting 3

The third meeting, held on Thursday, November 02, 2023, from 09:30 to 10:30 am, followed teaching procedures similar to the second meeting, with a focus on comparing stick puppets' hairstyles. During this session, students were introduced to vocabulary associated with styles, encompassing terms like fast, charming, silent, fat, tin, tall, short, slow, handsome, and beautiful. The grammar lessons emphasized the comparison form within the Present tense, integrating the newly acquired vocabulary. The stick puppet theme revolved around Indonesian singers such as Happy Asmara, Ayu Ting Ting, Rizky Febian, Mahalini, Kevin Sanjaya, Denny Caknan, Salma, Iis Dahlia, among others.

Following these sessions, the researcher collected data through pre-tests and post-tests given to tenth-grade students at SMKN 3 Jember. The students actively participated in the teaching process using

stick puppets. After collecting and analyzing the data, the research results were presented as percentages, indicating the effectiveness of the teaching approach.

Table 1 the result of pre-test and post-test

NO	NAME	PRE-TEST SCORE	POST-TEST SCORE
1	YA	62	77
2	NH	66	71
3	RRS	77	87
4	FR	76	82
5	MF	75	78
6	AR	60	80
7	KP	50	65
8	FW	58	62
9	LW	65	75
10	IH	50	75
11	NH	60	70
12	MF	55	65
13	YFS	55	70
14	HS	58	75
15	IU	55	75
16	INF	60	70
17	FZ	65	75
18	NA	70	80
19	NF	50	60
20	UH	60	75
21	SW	55	70
22	MM	55	70
TOTAL		1337	1607
MEAN		60,77	73,04

From the data on the table above, it can be illustrated by the following figure

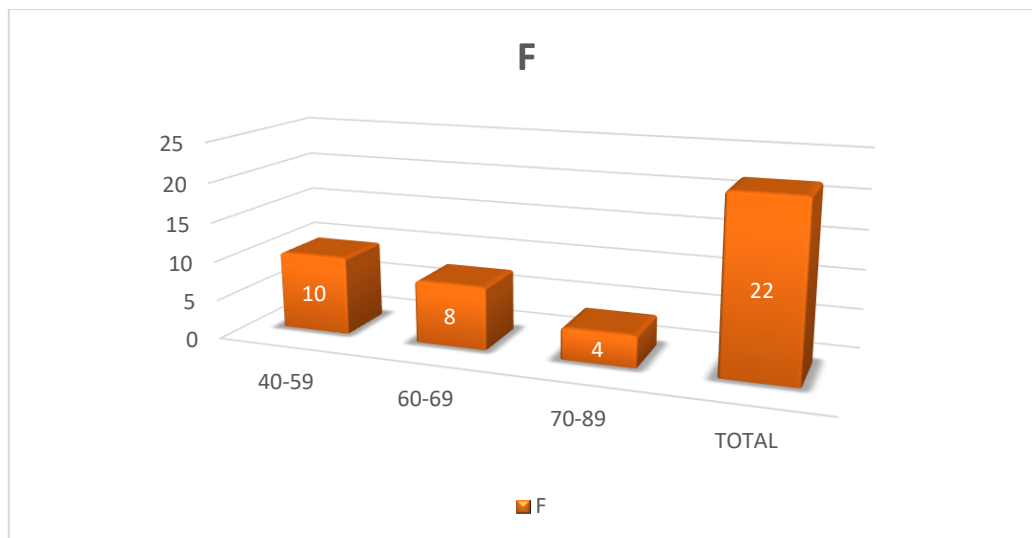


Figure 1 pre-test score

From the data of figure 1 it can be described that 10 students received scores in the range of 40 to 59. Meanwhile, there were eight students had marked at range of 60 to 69. There were four students then had received at range of 70 to 89. The data was displayed in figure 2 below.

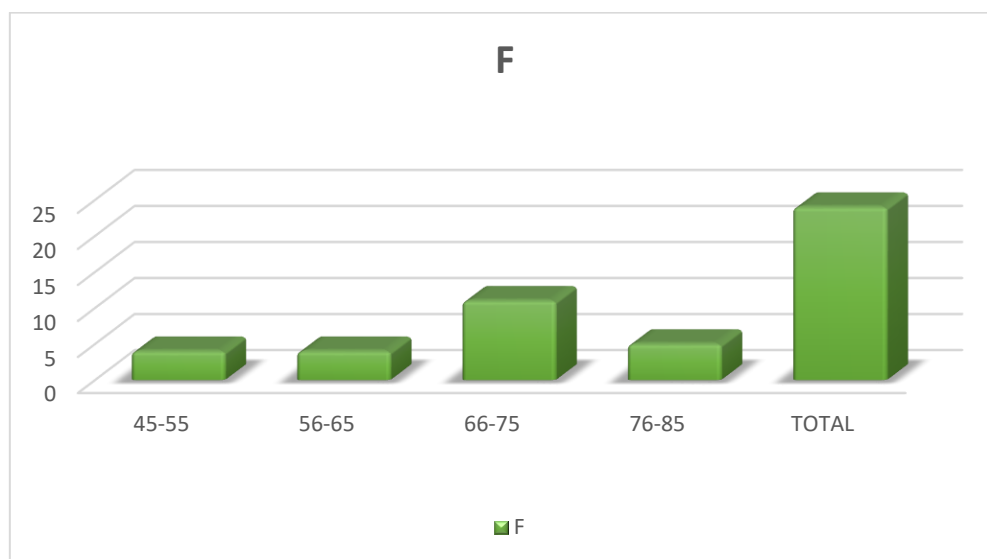


Figure 2 post-test score

From the data figure above that 4 students received scores in the 45–55 range. Four students, meanwhile, received results ranging from 56 to 65. Eleven students received scores ranging from 66 to 75. Five people then received ratings ranging from 76 to 85. This indicates that the students' English language competency is still below average. The figure below displays the data.

3. Observing

The grammar assessment occurred after completing the first cycle of classroom action research with stick puppets. On Thursday, November 02, 2023, a grammar test was conducted to evaluate students' progress. The test aimed to determine how effectively stick puppets contributed to students' grammar comprehension. During this phase, students were tasked with selecting a stick puppet and independently comparing a minimum of five physical characteristics linked to their selected puppet.

The subsequent grammar test evaluated vocabulary, content, pronunciation, and grammar, allocating a maximum of five points to each aspect.

4. Reflection

In the reflection stage of each cycle, the evaluation of outcomes and progress from the initial cycle took place. According to the teacher's field notes and the observations noted by the English teacher, students displayed heightened enthusiasm, concentration, and confidence while engaging with the stick puppets in the learning process. Out of the total number of students, 20 or 95.65% successfully met the minimum mastery level criterion (KKM), achieving an average score of 90.87. The grammar test outcomes substantiated the success of the research in this initial cycle.

DISCUSSION

The utilization of stick puppets elicited a positive reaction from students, evident in their active participation and enthusiasm throughout the learning process. Post-questionnaire findings indicated that 91.30% of students were active engaged in learning activities involving stick puppets. Their interest and mutual involvement underscored a positive and enriching learning experience. Psychological test results also showed students' confidence in practicing grammar with stick puppets.

Students actively memorized vocabulary through repeated pronunciation, and the use of stick puppets stimulated their interest. The physical interaction with stick puppets allowed students to use their imagination when comparing physical characteristics. Stick puppets facilitated the improvement of students' vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar skills. The research findings align with previous studies affirming the effectiveness of puppet play in language learning.

Briefly, the use of stick puppets not only enhanced grammar comprehension but also positively impacted students' psychological aspects of learning. Students were engaged, enthusiastic, and confident, demonstrating the success of the research in achieving its objectives in the first cycle.

CONCLUSION

The research result that was obtained from the implementation of Classroom Action Research undertaken in a single cycle, comprising three instructional meetings and one post-test session, revealed noteworthy advancements. The investigation demonstrated that the utilization of stick puppets had a positive impact on the grammar comprehension and understanding of tenth-grade students at SMKN 3 Jember. The improvement was particularly evident in the enhancement of students' grammar scores. Upon analysis of the research findings, it becomes evident that, subsequent to the implementation of stick puppets in the classroom action research, 95.65% of the students, equivalent to 22 individuals, successfully met or exceeded the Minimum Mastery Level (KKM) criterion. The slight exception was one student who fell slightly below the KKM threshold, achieving a score of 90.86%.

This outcome implies that the post-test results obtained in the first cycle surpassed the predefined success criteria established for this study. The success rate of 95.65% underscores the efficacy of the teaching approach involving stick puppets in enhancing students' grammar skills. The aspects of grammar that exhibited improvement encompassed vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar rules, and content comprehension. The comprehensive development observed in these linguistic elements underscores the multifaceted positive impact of incorporating stick puppets as a pedagogical tool in the language learning process. This outcome provides valuable insights into the efficacy of employing innovative teaching methods, such as stick puppets, in fostering a deeper and more nuanced understanding of grammar among students.

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