

THE USE OF FORMAL INSTRUCTION TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' UNDERSTANDING OF SINGULAR-PLURAL ON GRAMMAR ASPECT IN SPEAKING SKILL

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Abstract

English and Bahasa Indonesia had some differences dealing with the number of the objects. In English, using 's' or 'es' in the end of the word was used to differentiate if the noun was a singular or plural form. Moreover, some of EFL Indonesian learners in junior high school had some problems, especially in the speaking activity. Therefore, the researchers used formal instruction to solve this problem. The researchers also wanted to investigate whether this formal instruction could improve students' understanding, and how was their understanding of singular-plural on grammar aspect in speaking skill. This research used quantitative research which contained pre-experimental design, and 33 students of the eleventh grade in SMP PUI Gegecik Cirebon were used as the subject of the research. In collecting the data, the researchers used oral test which divided into two groups, in order to get the differences of students score of pre-test and post-test. After getting the data, it was analyzed by using the T-Test and SPSS applications. The result showed that the lower value was negative (-58.007) and the upper was also negative (-44.417) which meant that formal instruction could improve the students' understanding of singular-plural form on grammar aspect in speaking skill. In the teaching-learning process, the students got some explanations, material, some drills and practicees from the teachers which meant as the process of how they could improve their understanding of the singular-plural materials.

Keywords : *Formal Instruction, Grammar, Singular-plural Noun, and Speaking Skill*

INTRODUCTION

The structure of English and Indonesia are different, and there are also some differences in the application of grammar in English which is not used in Bahasa Indonesia. However, when the speakers speak ungrammatically, it sometimes makes the listener error of understanding. Moreover, it can be a problem for Indonesian learners to learn English, and sometimes they have some difficulties to apply "grammar" in speaking because there are some rules in English which is not covered in Bahasa Indonesia.

One of the problems in grammar is the application of 's/es' in. It is used to differentiate the number of noun (countable noun) such as cat (singular) and cats (plural), different in the verb of simple present tense based on the subject such as "I dance" and "she dances", use in possessive

such as "Andi's house", and problems while Indonesian learners speak spontaneously. They see the object such as *there are two apple*. It should be *there are two apples*. They sometimes forget the application of 's/es' for plural nouns in countable noun. The problem is in line with Iryani (2018:31) that some of Indonesian junior high school students are not able to apply well singular and plural form in countable noun in English rule. They need practice to be able to use 's' spontaneously. In this research, the researchers used Formal Instruction to solve the problem of singular and plural form in English. Formal instruction can be appropriate because it gives some explanation and practice for the students. The students need more explanation from the teacher about using 's/es' in singular and plural noun. In addition, the students also should have

understanding about regular and irregular in singular-plural word. The students also need more practice to create their own understanding in speaking skill especially in grammar aspect.

There are also some previous researchers who used formal instruction to foster L2 students' skill. One of them is Weda (2017) who tried to improve students understanding about pronunciation of consonants (tf) and (d3). The result was the students' pronunciation of consonant (tf) and (d3) improving. In this research the reseachers found a gap and had assumption to improvestudents understanding of using 's/es' in grammar.

In this study, the researchers want to know (1) weather formal instruction can improve students' understanding of singular and plural form in countable noun of grammar in speaking skill. In addition, the writers want to know (2) how the students' understanding of singular and plural form of countable noun of grammar in speaking skill improve after teaching by using formal instruction.

RELATED LITERATURE

Noun

Hornby (1987) defined Noun is a word which functioned as subject or object. It refers to name of someone, materials, things etc. based on Frank (1972), there are some kinds of noun such as:

a. Proper noun

It refers to personal names (Mr. George Bell), name of geography such as city, country etc and names of time (Saturday, march etc)

b. Concrete and Abstract Nouns

Concrete noun is a word with physical object that we can see, smell and touch for examples: banana and flowers. In contrast, abstract noun is an abstract word in mind such as (beauty and justice)

c. Countable and Uncountable Nouns

Countable noun is noun both singular and plural that you can count. We can count countable noun uses our fingers for example: cats, bananas and apples. Whereas, uncountable noun is a noun which does not have plural form such as soup, money and salt.

Form of Nouns

Based on Frank(1972), forms of noun can be divided into:

1. Inflectional Forms

It is indicates Gender for example (feminine, masculine), case (special endings of noun based on the function in sentence subject, object and verb for example (development-develop)

2. Plural Inflectional Forms

It indicates of general rules for writing plural of English nouns is to add s to the singular form to create become plural form (boy-boys). It is sometimes not easy because there are many exceptions that explained below:

- a. After sibilant sound spelled for s, ch, z , x, , we have to added es for examples (dishes, classes, and boxes)
- b. After y preceded by consonant, the y is changed to I and will add es for example (lady-ladies).
- c. word 'f' in final becomes 'ver' in plural form such as (wolf-wolves)
- d. After final o should be added "es" (hero-heroes)
- e. Irregular plurals such as (man-men, foot-feet, mouse-mice, child-children)
- f. Plural with the same form such as (sheep-sheep)
- g. Singular has same form with plural such as (series-series)
- h. In uncountable noun there is no plural form such as (salt, sugar)

Formal Instruction

According to Ellis (1995:611) formal instruction is referring to teaching

traditional grammar in SLA. It combines conventional method in teaching then give students to practice the language. The focus of formal instruction is phonology, lexis, grammar, and discourse. Formal instructions direct to help students practice in teaching and learning strategies in language.

Based on Ellis (1995:613), there are some major areas of formal instruction in research or the effect for the learners. They are:

1. The effects of formal instruction on general language proficiency
2. The effect of formal instruction on production accuracy
3. Formal instruction and the sequence of acquisition

It means that formal instruction can become suitable for solving grammar problems. Formal instruction focused on accuracy, not fluency.

METHOD

In this study, the writers used experimental research. The writers compared the result of oral test before and after taught using formal instruction. The aim is to prove whether formal instruction can improve students understanding of singular-plural in grammar aspect in speaking skill. The writers also used observation to check how students understanding of singular-plural in grammar aspect in speaking skill improve.

Research Design

The writers used pre-experimental design. It means that the writers only used one class to know the effect of formal instruction. The treatment in this research is using formal instruction which means that the teacher taught the students conventionally and gave students opportunity to practice. The teacher also applied drill to create students habitual action of understanding the material.

Subject of the Study

The subject of the study was the seventh-grade students of SMPN PUI Gegesik,

Cirebon. There were 33 students as needed for the subject of the research. The ranged age of the subjects were 12-14 years old.

Variables of the study

There were two variables in this research, like a dependent and independent variables. Formal instruction is as independent variable and students' understanding of singular-plural as dependent variable.

Data Collection

The data were collected by oral test. There are two oral tests in this research. They are pre-test and post-test. The teacher gave students a picture of singular/plural material. Then, the students speak to describe the number of materials. For example, *there is a banana/ there are seven bananas*. The writers also used observation. The writers used observation noted to note the process of how students' understandings of singular-plural in grammar in speaking skill improve during teaching and learning. The writers observed the students and the teacher.

Data Analysis

The writers used t-test to analysis the data of pre-test and post-test. Data were analyzed by using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). It will show the t-test, mean, standard and derivation,

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Based on the research, the data is the students' score of pre-test and post-test. The data is listed on the table below:

Student	pre-test	post-test
student 1	20	80
student 2	20	20
student 3	20	80
student 4	20	80
student 5	20	80
student 6	60	100
student 7	20	80
student 8	20	80
student 9	20	20
student 10	20	80
student 11	20	80
student 12	20	80
student 13	20	40
student 14	20	80
student 15	20	80
student 16	20	80
student 17	20	70
student 18	20	80
student 19	20	80
student 20	20	80
student 21	20	80
student 22	90	100
student 23	20	80
student 24	20	80
student 25	20	80
student 26	70	80
student 27	20	80
student 28	20	80
student 29	20	80
student 30	20	80
student 31	20	80

student 32	20	80
student 33	20	80
Mean	24.8485	76.0606

Based on the table of the data above, the mean of the pre-test was 24, 8485 and the mean of post-test was 76,0606. In pre-test, the students still had difficulty to distinguish singular and plural. Most students still pronounced without 's/es'. They were also could not pronounce exception form such as child to children etc. The problems come because the teacher never teaches the material before.

In the pre-test data, there were some significant differences. Most of the students got score 80 after they taught using formal instruction by the teacher. After the students were taught by using formal instruction, they got some understanding about singular and plural form.

In this research, the writers used T-test to get some significance improvement of students' understanding of plural and singular. The writers used SPSS software to make easier analysis. The data of the analysis could be explained bellow:

Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Pre	24.85	33	16.031	2.791
	Post	76.06	33	16.945	2.950

Paired Samples Correlations

		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	pre & post	33	.326	.064

Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences				t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower				Upper
Pair 1	pre - post	-51.212	19.163	3.336	-58.007	-44.417	-15.352	32	.000

Based on Sundayana (2015:128), H₀ will be accepted if the number of lower and upper is positive. On the paired sample test table of T-test, the lower is negative (-58.007) and the upper is negative (-44.417). It means that H₀ rejected and H₁ accepted. However, it can be concluded that there is some significance different between pre-test and post-test or after teaching using

formal instruction which is means formal instruction can improve students' understanding of singular- plural form. It is in line with Ellis (1995: 611) that formal instruction is one of the appropriate instructions to teach grammar.

Based on the observation, the improvement students' understanding comes because the teacher gives explanation to the students about the material. The teacher also gives some examples and gave students the opportunity to practices. It would be the reason how they improved their understanding of singular and plural in grammar aspect in speaking skills.

The teacher gave students an explanation about the material, and they listen and focused on the teacher's explanation about all the material of singular-plural. In addition, she taught the students about the exception of singular plural (using -es and irregular). It is one of the process how students improve their understanding because in this process created their knowledge about the materials.

Secondly, the teacher gave students to do exercise in written and spoken. The teacher wrote some vocabularies on the board then the students copy them and they did the

exercise in written form. The teacher controlled the students by walking around to check their understanding about the material.

Thirdly, the teacher gave students oral exercise. The teacher chose the students randomly and asked the students to answer the singular form into the plural form directly. The students answered the teacher's question spontaneously.

During the process of drilling, the teacher also corrected the students' error of singular and plural understanding. The teacher corrected the students' error directly to avoid fossilization. However, drilling can create the students habitual to do correct form in grammar. It created students understanding by practicing in habitual action.

Based on the data, most of the pre-test score was low because the students did not have knowledge of the material and the teacher also did not teach the material before. By using formal instruction, it created the students understanding because the teacher explained the form of the material and students opportunity to practice.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the research, the problem is the students' understanding of singular and plural on grammar. The problem had been solved by using formal instruction. It can be one of the appropriate techniques to teach grammar because based on the research, it can improve students' understanding of singular-plural in grammar aspect in speaking skill. Formal instruction gives students drill of explanation about the

material and gives students practice to create their understanding in the process of teaching and learning using formal instruction.

For the suggestions, during the learning process teacher should apply ice breaking for 2 until 3 minutes. Formal instruction drill students understanding of the material that sometimes make the students boring. It should be an ice breaking to make the students fresh to get the material.

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