

## **STUDENTS AND TEACHERS' PERCEPTION OF THE USE OF EXPLICIT GRAMMAR INSTRUCTION IN TEN GRADERS' WRITING CLASS IN SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL IN INDONESIA**

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### **Abstrak**

Pengajaran tata bahasa eksplisit merupakan jenis pengajaran yang populer di berbagai negara dan diketahui untuk menunjukkan hasil yang positif serta memberikan pengaruh baik kepada prestasi akademik siswa. Hal tersebut dikarenakan instruksi tata bahasa penting, khususnya bagi guru bahasa Inggris, dikarenakan ada penggabungan penilaian menulis, pengetahuan tata bahasa, dan akurasi untuk menyelesaikan seluruh skor penilaian. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk memenuhi kebutuhan dengan mempelajari penggunaan eksplisit grammar instruction di kelas EFL di Indonesia. Penelitian ini akan menggunakan teknik penelitian kualitatif dan empat instrumen pengumpulan data: wawancara, catatan lapangan, lembar observasi, dan angket. Pengumpulan data dilakukan di kelas siswa SMA kelas X. Dari hasil penelitian mengenai persepsi siswa, ditemukan bahwa 35 peserta menunjukkan persepsi positif mengenai penerapan instruksi tata bahasa secara eksplisit yang digunakan dalam teks naratif. Mereka juga mengklaim bahwa penggunaan instruksi tata bahasa secara eksplisit di dalam kelas untuk mempelajari teks naratif dapat membantu mereka memahami materi dengan lebih mudah. Selanjutnya, dari persepsi guru, terlihat bahwa guru merasa bahwa pengajaran grammar secara eksplisit sangat penting, terutama dalam pengajaran teks naratif dikarenakan banyaknya penggunaan grammar yang harus diperhatikan dalam teks-teks tersebut. Ini membantu siswa memahami teks dan memahami fitur bahasa dalam teks naratif.

**Kata Kunci:** Instruksi Grammar Eksplisit, EFL, Menulis.

### **Abstract**

Explicit grammar teaching is a popular type of teaching in many countries and is known to show positive results and have a positive effect on students' academic achievement. This is because teaching grammar is important, especially for English teachers, because there is a combination of writing assessment, grammar knowledge, and accuracy to complete the entire assessment score. The purpose of this research is to fill a need by studying the use of explicit grammar instruction in EFL classes in Indonesia. The study used a qualitative research technique and four data collection instruments: interviews, field notes, observation sheets, and questionnaires. The data collection was conducted in the classroom of tenth students at Senior High School. The results showed that the instructor believes that specific grammar instruction is vital. From the results regarding students' perception, it was found that 35 participants showed positive perceptions regarding the application of grammar instructions used in narrative texts. They also claim that using grammar instructions to study narrative texts can help them understand the material more easily. Further, from the teachers' perception, it can be known that the teacher feels that explicit grammar instruction is very important, especially in teaching narrative texts, because there are many uses of grammar that must be considered in such texts. It helps students understand the text and understand the language features in the narrative text.

**Keywords:** Explicit Grammar Instruction, EFL, Writing.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Among all the well-known teaching methods, explicit grammar instruction is developed to facilitate teachers to teach grammar rules to the students. It is due to the use of

explicit instructions given to conduct a survey of students' language development and to find out whether the development achieved the target given by the teacher. In providing explicit teaching, the teacher can provide activities that first focus on an explanation of grammar,

which can be given by learning about the terms used in it. It makes teaching grammar given explicitly a method that allows teachers to, it is known, be more successful because the grammar rules are given directly (Ling & Quan-feng, 2015). Many classrooms have used this explicit instruction because teachers feel that students are helped by achieving the target language in an effective form and having a full and expected understanding of grammar.

According to Ling (2015), explicit grammar as a teaching method is a method that focuses on the language center by studying grammatical rules as essential learning, so that language learning is very theoretical, accurate, and efficient. The scientific literature on the efficacy and role of explicit grammar instruction, especially when it comes to writing to target students who are EFL, has become scientific literature that still lacks information, regardless of how grammar is a subject that continues to be controversial and a topic of debate in the curriculum school, and how it continues to be a material that, for EFL students, is difficult, and for teachers, required for them to put more effort into teaching. Andrews et al. (2006) stated that this gap is a recurring gap, and difficulties in teaching, as well as learning grammar, have been recorded for more than 50 years, so it is worth emphasizing the area of investigation and evidence that is less reliable. An analysis conducted by Penn et al. (2013) emphasized how none of the 238 empirical studies attempted to explore the relationship that explicit grammar teaching methods have and writing.

In the Indonesian context, explicit grammar instruction would be needed where many shortcomings are given regarding teaching and language construction so that explicit grammar as a teaching method becomes a method that shows high urgency. The method indicates a predominance of points, which can be language complex but conforms to international standards. Students also have good performance skills, especially writing skills, where student competence is needed to provide academic writing that demands perfect grammar.

Apart from teaching and learning methods, students' opinions are also needed to find out whether they are motivated or happy in learning by using the methods used. This makes research on students' perception a broad and widely carried out study to find out how each of the methods championed matches the motivation and desires of students. In this study, perceptions are also taken into account, which is not only about the perceptions of students but also the perceptions of teachers, so that there is a balance regarding the perception of how each side is. Perception is defined as a person's ability to see and understand a phenomenon by using their senses. Vasanthi et al. (2015) classify perceptions into two categories. Perceptions in the first category are perceptions related to

dimensions, sensations, and images, in providing accuracy regarding height, width, depth, and position. Perceptions in the second category are perceptions related to the point of view and attitudes held about a phenomenon. This study specifically chose the meaning or the second category of perception, namely the views, opinions, attitudes, and desires of the teachers in conveying their opinions regarding the use of explicit grammar instructions in classrooms in teaching writing.

The methods used in teaching explicit grammar are offered in different forms so that instructors can use various methods according to their needs and objectives. The first method introduced is that context and form are separated before being isolated and presented in teaching for the learner to see. It can be used in meaning-focused teaching, and this method is given in the early learning phase (Klapper & Rees, 2003). The second method is introduced by giving a meaning-focused activity presentation, but instructions have not been given in this case. It is known as the reactive focus-on-form method, and learning is carried out ostensibly by accident when the instructor provides feedback to students when they make mistakes. The last method is a method known as the PPP Presentation-Practice-Production (PPP) model. This method is used by instructors when they try to re-emphasize the grammatical knowledge of students (Khatib and Nikouen in Williams, 2013). This method is used by providing layered material. It means that there is an explanation of the instructions given to students, asked to answer questions, given communicative exercises, and given special assignments that aim to map form to meaning so that there are many paths to be followed, some of which offer many variations.

EFL teachers around the world have widely implemented explicit grammar instruction. Rahman & Rashid (2017) shared the result of their study, which utilized a semi-structured interview with five teachers from some private colleges in Malaysia, in which all the teachers admitted that they prefer to use explicit grammar instruction in their classroom. Sari et al. (2017) also completed quantitative research using modified questionnaires, which were then delivered to teachers and EFL students at Turkey State University. They further explained that teachers and students prefer to implement explicit grammar instruction in their EFL classrooms based on their data analysis. Another study in the context of Turkey's non-native English teachers was conducted by Onalan (2018), where 75 non-native speaker EFL teachers participated in completing the questionnaires. An interesting result from Onalan's study showed that teachers believed it would be better to use implicit or indirect grammar instruction to enhance students' academic proficiency. However, they admitted to often using

explicit grammar instruction more in their EFL classroom, even more when it comes to advanced levels of learning and older students.

Marashi & Mirghafari (2019) conducted an experimental study combining explicit grammar instruction with task-based language teaching for 60 male students from an Iranian intermediate EFL class for 15 sessions. Marashi & Zargari's experimental study showed that students taught using the explicit grammar instruction method outperformed the participants who were taught using implicit grammar instruction. Altun & DİNÇER (2020) also delivered the result of their study in regards to the use of explicit grammar instruction in teaching writing to intermediate EFL learners in Turkey. Students who were taught by explicit grammar instruction produced better writing compared to others who were taught by implicit grammar instruction. Based on the previous research about explicit grammar instruction mentioned above, it could be seen that this method has been implemented widely around the world.

Some recent studies on using explicit instruction in grammar teaching were mostly conducted in another country. While looking for the previous study on the implementation of explicit grammar instruction in the context of Indonesian EFL classrooms, only one recent related study could be found. The study was conducted by Aprizani et al. (2018) with an experimental approach that divided 40 students into two groups: the control group and the experimental group. This study showed that explicit grammar instruction could improve students' cognitive aspects of their writing skills. Upon realizing there is limited knowledge about the use of explicit instruction in grammar teaching in Indonesia, this research aims to fill the gap and conduct a thorough observation about the implementation of explicit instruction in grammar teaching in Indonesian EFL classrooms.

The focus on writing is significant because it raises the issue of teaching explicit grammar instructions in teaching and learning, which provides great benefits in foreign language writing pedagogy, especially when the target students are EFL students (in the Indonesian context). Most senior high school students in Indonesia are required to study hard in writing essays when they graduate or in senior high school exams due to their lack of mastery in English grammar, which makes them produce many errors in it. Unfortunately, there are still many students and even English instructors or English teachers in the classroom who tend to think that students have mastered grammar, so they pay more attention to other aspects, such as paragraph organization in an essay when grammar and sentence structure are one of the most important points in writing, especially in narrative writing.

Then, placing teacher perceptions in this research study

is based on the idea that one of the success factors teachers cannot ignore in teaching students is students' knowledge and character. Therefore, education must be built on the foundation that today's students are different from their predecessors. However, it is crucial that the need for teacher perceptions is explored, identified, and addressed before carrying out educational reform to determine policies to achieve the goals. The assumption can be built to understand who their students are and how and what they learn, encouraging teachers to take advantage of it (Dopo & Ismaniati, 2016).

From the previous studies provided, the researcher realizes that there are a few gaps that are expected to be filled in the current study. The first gap is that there is no previous research that focuses on teachers' and students' perceptions as well as on knowing their opinion about the use of explicit grammar instruction in the classroom. The second gap, there is still only one study (Altun & DİNÇER, 2020) that applies writing skills as skills that are still lacking in writing, especially in grammar, so an explicit method of grammar instruction is needed. The third gap is that only one previous study (Aprizani et al., 2018) used the Indonesian context or was conducted in Indonesia in connection with the explicit use of grammar instruction in the classroom. By combining these various gaps, the researcher is interested in filling each gap and proposes research that focuses on students' and teachers' perceptions, focuses on grammar in writing skills (narrative text), and conducts research in the Indonesian context to make a better contribution major in research under the umbrella of English teaching or the English teaching method.

Realizing there is little knowledge about the use of explicit instruction in grammar teaching in Indonesia, this study aims to fill the gap and conduct research about the use of explicit instruction in grammar teaching for Indonesian students. Hence, this study investigated the implementation of explicit grammar instruction in EFL writing classes in Indonesia. The result of this study is expected to provide new and broader insights and understanding regarding the use of explicit grammar instruction in the context of Indonesian EFL learners.

Based on the background of the problem that has been described, the researcher formulates two problem formulations which are classified into: a) how the use of explicit grammar instruction can develop positive improvement in the writing class of narrative text based on the teacher's perception? and b) how the use of explicit grammar instruction can develop positive improvement in the writing class of narrative text based on the student's perception? Further, based on the formulation of the problem, the researcher presents the research purpose, which is described as follows: understanding the use of

explicit grammar instruction in writing class can affect the ten graders in senior high school. Finally, the indicator chosen by the researcher is the indicator adopted from (Altun & Dincer, 2020), which is categorized into students' knowledge regarding explicit grammar instruction in narrative text and the application of writing explicit grammar instruction in narrative text)

## **METHOD**

This study employed a qualitative research design in gathering and analyzing the data. Four main instruments are utilized in this study: in-depth interviews, field notes, observation sheets, and a questionnaire. The data are collected from a non-participant observation, meaning that the researcher did not influence or involve in the teaching-learning process in one classroom.

The data was collected using interviews, classroom observation, field notes, and questionnaires. First, the interview instrument was used to obtain information about the teachers' perception of the use of explicit grammar instructions in the writing class. Second, the classroom observation instrument was used to provide context about learning and teaching in the classroom so that it can be seen whether the results are mutually sustainable and in accordance with what is in the atmosphere in the classroom. Third, the field-notes instrument was used together with observation, in which the researcher did not only observe with the sense of sight but also took notes using notes. Finally, a questionnaire instrument was used to determine students' perceptions regarding the use of explicit grammar instructions in the writing class.

In this research, the first step is to conduct in-depth interviews with key informants who are English teachers to find out how the teaching process and the influence of the explicit grammar in narrative text learning on students' abilities in writing class.

Next, the researcher did an observation. The observation took place in the classroom of ten graders. The observation occurred in the classroom of ten graders or first-year Senior High School students. Each classroom has 35 students, and the students had a writing lesson during the observation.

Then, field notes are used to take notes on every step the teacher uses in implementing explicit grammar instruction during the observation. An observation sheet was also employed to gather more data about the teaching activity in the classroom.

This study adopted the classroom observation sheet constructed by Ferdinand (2012). This observation sheet consists of a rubric of general teaching activities in the classroom.

The last instrument is a questionnaire for ten graders or

first-year students of Senior High School, which aims to find out what effects are obtained by students related to explicit grammar in narrative text learning.

The data used as documentation can be used again during data analysis if the researcher misses things during direct observation.

All data acquired from the observation was analyzed and discussed descriptively, which means all the data was presented in words. Some steps in analyzing the data include data reading and filtering, data classification or categorization, and data description or reporting (Creswell, 2014). Data obtained from the in-depth interview was transcribed for analysis to enrich the discussion in this study. This study used the triangulation technique to check data credibility. Triangulation has been known as a technique to strengthen data credibility in a qualitative study. When all the data match and are coherent, the data can be considered credible (Carter et al., 2014).

The data analysis was done with the help of descriptive discussion and interpretation and the use of tables to facilitate classification. Discussion and interpretation assistance was given to the interview instrument. The results of the interviews were analyzed descriptively and interpreted according to the subtopics or answers to the problem formulation that was expected to be obtained. The use of tables is given to field notes and questionnaires. The field notes contain a table that is given checking on a score of 1 - 5 to find out how the teacher's performance in the classroom is in carrying out explicit grammar instructions. The table was also used for the questionnaire results from students, which contained questions and the percentage of students who agreed (Yes) and disagreed (No) with the items from the questionnaire provided. After that, the results of the field notes and questionnaire were also described in the form of words to find out how the results of the data obtained from the use of the two instruments were and whether the two instruments were able to find data that answered the problem formulation.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Teachers' Perception**

The first finding is regarding teachers' perception. In this case, the researcher tried to collect information about the process and the strategy before diving into the perception to provide context for teaching in the classroom and provide a relationship of results with the context presented (background context).

After conducting the interview and observation, the researcher finds out some results on the teaching process and strategy. The teacher said she used curriculum to guide her in teaching explicit grammar. According to her, it is

important to teach grammar explicitly when teaching "narrative text." She explained that teaching grammar explicitly would help the students easily understand the text, especially the language feature of narrative text. She also said about the objective of teaching explicit grammar in her class. She expects the students to understand simple past tense. Unfortunately, Main Teacher did not explain the objective of the material to her students.

***"At least students know the simple past and how to tell a story or dialogue"*** (Main Teacher, English teacher).

The main teacher also usually asks the students to write the text about their daily activities so that they can feel the realness of the material with their real life.

score of 1 in most (2 of 3 indicators), which indicates that the teacher does not explain the aim of using explicit

To teach explicit grammar, Main Teacher tried to explain the narrative text structure first. Then, she explained the language feature, including the grammar used in narrative text. She usually highlighted the sentences containing the grammar so that the students found out how the tense is implied in the sentences. The teacher said it could be caused by the students' afraid of making mistakes when answering the question.

Hence, to solve this problem, she tried to approach the student and give her or him motivation that it is okay if they are making mistakes when answering the question.

Table 1. Interview

No	Indicator	Observed Aspects	Score				
			1	2	3	4	5
1.	Convey aim and prepare student-related learning explicit grammar in narrative text.	The teacher explains the destination of learning explicit grammar in narrative text.	v				
		The teacher explains the importance learn explicit grammar in narrative text.	v				
		The teacher prepares the student to follow learning explicit grammar in narrative text.				v	
2.	Represent Theory learning explicit grammar in narrative text, good theoretical nor applicable.	The teacher represents declarative-related learning of explicit grammar in narrative text.			v		
		The teacher presents the Theory of learning explicit grammar in narrative text systematic.					v
3.	Guide students in the application process from learning explicit grammar in narrative text.	The teacher has prepared teaching materials to give training for students related to learning explicit grammar in narrative text.					v
		Teacher gives bait come back in the form of the task to be conducted student-related learning explicit grammar in narrative text.					v
4.	Check to understand and give bait come back.	Teacher checks circumstances and suitability of activity student in doing duty.					v
		The teacher gives bait to come back to tasks that have been completed by students.					v
<b>Total Score</b>			<b>2</b>		<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Total</b>			<b>34</b>				

In classroom teaching, it is shown how the indicators related to "conveying aim and prepare student-related learning explicit grammar in the narrative text" receive a

grammar in the classroom when teaching and learning narrative text writing. The teacher did not explain, according to the observations made, but the teacher

prepare the student to follow the learning session (indicator 1, observed aspect 3, score 4). The second indicator shows how the represent theory is implemented well by the teacher, in which declarative-related learning receives a score of 4, and the theory of learning is implemented perfectly, according to observations made by the researcher.

In the third indicator, it is shown how, in the narrative writing class, the teacher guided her students to implement the teaching and learning process using explicit grammar instructions. The teacher was shown to have excellent preparation before class which was implemented well in the class; it is known that the score from the observation

sheet shows that this section received a score of 5 (excellent). Furthermore, the comeback verse is given by the teacher in the form of an assignment that receives a score of 5 (excellent).

In the last indicator regarding "check to understand and give bait come back," it can be known that the teacher checked the suitability of the assignment to the level of the students who received a score of 5, and the teacher also discussed again the assignment given in the form verse come back on the last observed aspect item which also received a perfect score of 5.

Table 2. Observation Sheet

No	Indicator	Observed aspects	Score				
			1	2	3	4	5
1.	Convey aim and prepare student-related learning explicit grammar in narrative text.	The teacher explains the destination of learning explicit grammar in narrative text.	v				
		The teacher explains the importance learn explicit grammar in narrative text.	v				
		The teacher prepares the student to follow learning explicit grammar in narrative text.				v	
2.	Represent Theory learning explicit grammar in narrative text, good theoretical nor applicable.	The teacher represents declarative-related learning of explicit grammar in narrative text.			v		
		The teacher presents the Theory of learning explicit grammar in narrative text systematic.					v
3.	Guide students in the application process from learning explicit grammar in narrative text.	The teacher has prepared teaching materials to give training for students related to learning explicit grammar in narrative text.					v
		Teacher gives bait come back in the form of the task to be conducted student-related learning explicit grammar in narrative text.					v
4.	Check to understand and give bait come back.	Teacher checks circumstances and suitability of activity student in doing duty.					v
		The teacher gives bait to come back to tasks that have been completed by students.					v
Total Score			2		1	1	5
Total			34				

**Students' Perception**

The next findings are about the student's perception of the learning strategy and process. These findings are concluded by the questionnaire. To support the descriptive the percentage of the responses can be seen below:

results of the statement support this statement, "Did using grammar instruction to learn about narrative text can help you understand the writing class easier?". This statement receives 94% "YES," which means that 31 students agree that grammar instruction can help them understand the material easier. Hence, all the students claimed that

Table 3. Questionnaire

Question	Percentage (35 students)	
	Yes	No
Do you understand the grammar instruction on narrative text?	97%	3%
Did you have any problems understanding the grammar instruction in the narrative text?	26%	74%
Did you enjoy the learning process of grammar instruction in the narrative text?	86%	14%
Do you able to implement the use of grammar instruction in your narrative text?	94%	6%
Do you able to implement the use of grammar instruction on narrative text in your real life?	91%	9%
Did using grammar instruction to learn about narrative text can help you improve your writing performance?	94%	6%
Did using grammar instruction to learn about narrative text can help you understand the writing class easier?	94%	6%
Did using grammar instruction to learn about narrative text affects your writing performance?	100%	0%
Do you think it is important to learn grammar instruction on narrative text?	100%	0%

The first statement was, "Do you understand the grammar instruction on narrative text?". Of 35 participants, 33 students, or about 97% of participants, showed that they understood the grammar instruction in the narrative text that the teacher had already taught. This result might be caused by the teacher who already prepared the material well.

Next is the statement that asks the students whether they enjoyed the learning process and did they face any problems during the class. The results showed that most students wanted the learning process and did not face any significant problems during the learning process. This result is supported by the results where 30 students answered "YES" for the statement "Did you enjoy the learning process of grammar instruction in the narrative text?". This result existed because most students did not find any significant problems during the learning process of writing class.

Following findings from the questionnaire is that 31 students claimed that they could implement the grammar instruction on narrative text in their daily lives. They also claimed that using grammar instruction to learn narrative text can help them understand the material easier. The

learning grammar instruction affects their writing skill and help them get better results in writing class, especially in writing narrative text.

**Discussion**

This study aims to discover the teachers' perceptions and strategies in teaching explicit grammar and the students' perceptions of it. To answer these research questions, the teacher conducted the data gathering through interviews, observation, and questionnaires. Through this data collecting process, there are several findings.

First, by interviewing Main Teacher, the English teacher, the researcher concluded that the teacher thinks that learning explicit grammar is important. The teacher statement and students' questionnaire results showed that explicitly learning the grammar instruction can help students understand the material, in this case, narrative text, easier. This finding is in line with Rahman & Rashid (2017), where participants of their study claimed that explicit explanation saves time because grammar is not learned naturally. Thus, it should be taught separately. The students also claimed that grammar instruction in a narrative text affects their writing performance.

The well-prepared material by the teacher not only helps the students enjoy the learning process but also helps the students perform better in the specific skill. In this case, most students agree that using grammar instruction can help them achieve better in writing class, especially in writing narrative text. This finding is in line with Marashi & Mirghafari (2019), where the participants who taught explicit grammar performed better than those who did not.

This study also found how the teacher was satisfied with implementing explicit grammar instructions, which stated that the teacher knew that students could understand the simple past, which is an important element in writing narrative text. This is in line with the results found in the study of Sari et al. (2017), who found how, in using a questionnaire to collect data, teachers applied explicit grammar instruction in the classroom and found that they had that method better than other methods. However, the results of this study are slightly different from what was stated in Onalan (2018), which found that teachers believed more in the use of implicit grammar instructions, even though it was known that they also often used explicit grammar instructions in their teaching, and this was often used in teaching grammar to older students or to students at a higher level.

From the students' perception, it is known that the results of this study found that students agreed more about the use of explicit grammar instructions, especially in learning to write narrative text. This is a result similar to what was found by Altun & DİNÇER (2020), which showed that students agreed to be taught using explicit grammar instructions because they knew that they had better writing performance when compared to students taught using grammar instructions implicit language. This result is the most similar result because the study uses writing as the focus of the research, similar to this study with the context of EFL students, even though the research is research from Turkey and this study is research from Indonesia.

## CONCLUSION

There are two conclusions drawn from the study's findings, notably: a) according to the students' perception, 35 participants were found to have positive perceptions of the use of explicit grammatical instructions in narrative texts. In addition to that result, they also think that learning narrative texts in class with explicit grammar instructions will make it easier for them to comprehend the topic, and b) according to the teacher's perception, it would seem that the teacher believes that explicit grammatical instructions is crucial, particularly when teaching narrative texts due to the numerous grammars uses that must be taken into account in these texts. This aids students in comprehending the text and the narrative text's language elements.

This study is significant as it suggests that grammar training in the form of self-study workbooks may be just as beneficial to foreign language writing instruction as non-embedded explicit grammar instruction. Further investigation is obviously required to investigate this association between specific grammar teaching and writing growth because the study's sample size and scope were relatively constrained. This research also fills a gap in the literature by describing how Indonesian teachers and students view the influence of explicit grammar teaching on their writing skills. Last but not least, the positive impression offered by the students can inspire schools to wish to set explicit grammar instruction in class so that students can study grammar and like doing it.

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