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RESEARCH ARTICLE

INVESTIGATING PROBLEMS ENCOUNTER SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN USING ENGLISH GRAMMAR

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to investigate problems encounter secondary school students in using English grammar. The researcher has adopted the qualitative method as well as the test and test as tool for collecting data relevant to the study. To bring to the light the importance of English grammar in process of learning a language. The sample of this study comprises of (200) students. The marks obtained from the test were compared. From one hand, the results have revealed that the students encountered difficulties in using English grammar. The result has shown that the test significance indicates that there is highly difference among students. Therefore, this indicates that high secondary school students face difficulties in learning English grammar.

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INTRODUCTION

The term grammar has been used by different people mean different things; some used grammar as term to refer to group of rules that instruct learner speakers and writers on what to say and what not to say or what is right and what is wrong with this meaning grammar takes merely a descriptive role. Some used grammar a theory on the structure of language; a book on grammar or a teaching lesson where grammar is focused on. In this research the term grammar will be used in the meaning which implies that grammar is nothing more than a record of language habits at certain period of time such implication is not obviously in the line with the view of structuralisms which hold that grammarians are not guardian of linguistic correctness. Ali Alkhuli (1989).

The study also shows that grammar is related to competence and communicative competence, meaning and organization of grammar, types and theories of grammar show how each theory may affect methodology in the field of second language teaching (grammar plays important role in the field of second language teaching). Good teaching bases on effective teaching methods. Learning a foreign language is affected by the way it is taught. Grammar is the one of more difficult aspects of language to teach well. The major teaching methods are

grammar translation method, direct method, eclectic method and communicative approach. Teaching methods depends on appropriate techniques that manifested by the teacher in teaching grammar.

Most students have problems that hinder them to learn English grammar. Students' errors in speech or writing performance are grammatical. Grammatical errors have their own role in learning processes they may affect students' acquisition. There are many factors causing grammatical errors which affect students' in learning grammar.

Aims and Scope of the Study

This study aims to investigate the nature of the problems which hinder students in learning grammar. The scope of the study is limited to students of the third level who encountered problem in using English grammar in secondary schools at Umbada locality of Khartoum state, Sudan-2014-2015 which is composed from (200) students.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Grammar is the structure with in the sentence. According to Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language(11:88)says that it is

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difficult to capture the central role played by grammar in the structure of language, other than by using a metaphor such as a framework or Skelton. But no physical metaphor can express satisfactorily the multifarious kinds of formal patterning and abstract relationship that are brought to light in a grammatical analysis. Two steps can be distinguished in the studying of grammar; one is to identify units in the streams of speech unit such as (word and sentence) and the other is to analyze the pattern into which these units fall, and the relationships of meaning that these patterns convey. Depending up on which units, we recognize at the beginning of the study, so the definition of grammar alter. Richard (2002:231) defines grammar as "the speaker's knowledge of the language." It looks at the language in relation to how it may be structured in the speaker's mind and which principles and parameters are available to the speakers when producing the language.

Most approaches begin by recognizing the "sentence" and grammar is the study of sentence structure. A grammar of a language is an account of the languages as possible sentence structures organized according to certain general principles. Chomsky (1928:11) writes

"A grammar is a device of some sort for producing the sentence of the language under the analysis to which is added rider that the sentences produced must be grammatical ones acceptable to the native speaker".

There are two distinct applications of the term grammar, specific sense and general one. The specific sense is more traditional; grammar is presented as one branch of language structure distinct from phonology and semantics. Language structure Phonology Grammar Semantics This is the approach used in this Cambridge Encyclopedia.

The general sense of the term popularized by Chomsky subsumes all aspects of sentence patterning including phonology and semantic and introduced the term syntax as more specific notion. Chomsky (1957:p.11). Grammar Semantics Syntax Phonology In my point of view, I agree with Chomsky because he gives a wide knowledge about the definition of grammar.

The place of grammar

According to Brown (1994) states that grammar is a system of rules governing the conventional arrangement and relationship of words in a sentence. In place of words e.g. "I could", for more specificity, have said "morphemes", but for the moment just remember that components of words (prefixes and suffixes / roots, verb and noun endings, etc) are a part of grammar and, when we use the word grammar, we refer to sentence level rules. Yole (1996:75) states "morpheme is minimal unit of meaning or grammatical functions".

Grammatical competence occupies a prominent position as a major component of communicative competence. Organizational competence is an intricate, complex array of rules, some of which govern sentence grammar, while other

governs how we string sentences together "discourse". Grammatical competence is necessary for communication to take place, but not sufficient to account for all production and reception in language.(ibid:6).

Study of Grammar

According to Sidney (2002) states the study of language is a part of general knowledge. We study the complex working of the knowledge to understand our selves. In the study of language, grammar occupies central position. But there is also a practical reason to emphasize the study of grammar. It is easy to learn to use dictionaries by yourself to find the pronunciation, spelling or meaning of words but it is difficult to consult grammar books without considerable knowledge of grammar.

The sentence can be analyzed into three units. These units are called groups. The sentence consists of three groups each of which consists of a number of words. Sometimes the sentence consists of two clauses or more, each of which clause consists of a number of groups, each group consists of words. The analysis will take into account four ranks within grammar: word, group, clause and sentence.(ibid:5)

Class: terms like noun (N) and verb (V) are names of word classes (part of speech). The word in the sentence can be labeled according to their class. The two other major word classes are adjective (adj) and adverb (adv) and the same class labels are also used to label the groups. Phrase: the term group has been used here, some grammars use the term phrase, for example noun phrase, verb phrase and adverbial phrase for noun group, verb group and adverb group. Embedding: where one unit is used as constituent of another unit in the same or lower rank (ibid:8). I think that Lock and Cook points is correspondent.

Competence and Grammar

According to Chomsky (1999) states "Competence is in principle, independent of performance. As the result of accident or stork, people are often rendered speechless and appear to lose their language faculty, yet they may subsequently show no ill – effects of their trauma".

The investigation of competence is challenging because our knowledge of language is both complex and largely unconscious. Few people capable of understanding the sentence could give you a linguistic analysis of it, so the question of how such knowledge can be studied permits of no easy answers. To know language is to have mentally represented grammar, standard viewed consisting of a set of rules which conspire to define the individual's competence.

We can't just have memorized a huge list of words and sentences that we dredge from our memory on the appropriate occasion: we must have command of set of rules that constitute our grammar and by reference to which we can produce or understand or make judgments on any of an infinite set sentence. The use of language is creatively rule governed

comes from examples of overgeneralization particularly prominent in speech of children acquiring their first language (ibid). Such rules are part of our individual knowledge of language and this knowledge can be idiosyncratic and different from adult pattern that the child is acquiring. In any community, the rules we know are largely, shared, but they are properties of the individual, internal to his or her head. To reflect this fact or mentally represented grammar is now referred to as our I – language (first language) our individual, internal language as opposed to E – language outside our head, external to us. (ibid).

Grammar and Language Teaching

Grammar has been neglected in the field of second language teaching but for different reasons. Widdowson (1985:8) defines "language teaching as being a social and often in situational activity, brings theories of language and language learning into contact with practical constraints."

Functional grammar

According to Richard (2002) states that in general, any approach to grammatical description that attempts to describe the ways in which meaning and functions are realized in language. For example, instead of describing "tense" a grammatical notion, one can investigate the ways in which "time reference" a semantic notion, realized in language. The linguistic means for indicating time reference in English include not only tense and aspect, but also models, adverbs, adverbial phrases, and adverbial clauses.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The researcher uses sample for this study from students of the third level who encountered problem in using English grammar in secondary schools at Umbada locality of Khartoum state, Sudan-2014-2015 which is composed from (200) students.

Tools of the Study

The researcher used test as a tool to collect the information of the study. The test which was given to the students of the third level. The researcher chooses two hundred (200) students as the sample. They were tested in English grammar. The researcher used the descriptive analytical and qualitative methods as well as the test as a tool in the collection of relevant data and information in pursuing this study. Population of this study is drawn exclusively from students of the third level who encountered problem in using English grammar in secondary schools at Umbada locality of Khartoum state, Sudan-2014-2015 which is composed from (200) students.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The researcher used the test as tool in the collection of data relevant to this study. The researcher has designed test to identify the problems encountered by thirdlevel students in learning grammar so as to come up with solutions to solve

problems that encountered them. The table below is going to illustrate what has been stated earlier.

TEST DISCUSSION

Question One

The table above illustrate the percentage and frequency of the answers of the study sample that concern with the questions and shows that most of the sample answers were non-past which are represented by the percentage (85%). This justifies that students need to be trained and developed in how they can rewrite the verbs in their correct forms.

Question Two

The table above illustrate the percentage and frequency of the answers of the study sample that concern with the questions and shows that most of the sample answers were non-past which are represented by the percentage (87.5%). This justifies that students need to be trained and developed in how they can complete sentence that has similar meaning.

Question Three

The table above illustrate the percentage and frequency of the answers of the study sample that concern with the questions and shows that most of the sample answers were non-past which are represented by the percentage (76.5%). This justifies that students need to be trained and developed in how they can fill in the space with the suitable preposition.

Question Four

The table above illustrate the percentage and frequency of the answers of the study sample that concern with the questions and shows that most of the sample answers were non-past which are represented by the percentage (79%). This justifies that students need to be trained and developed in how they can generate words by using derivation in terms of prefixes.

Question Five

The table above illustrate the percentage and frequency of the answers of the study sample that concern with the questions and shows that most of the sample answers were non-past which are represented by the percentage (71%). This justifies that students need to be trained and developed in how they can generate words by using derivation in terms of suffixes.

The data collected was analyzed in relation to the study hypothesis. The data was collected by test which had been given to students exclusively, students of third level of secondary school at Umbada locality showed that there are difficulties in using English grammar..

Also analyzing the data collected from the test which had been given to students exclusively, students of third level of secondary school at Umbada locality showed that thereare difficulties in using English grammar. .

Questions	Question One		Question Two		Question Three		Question Four		Question Five	
200	Non-Pass	Pass	Non-Pass	Pass	Non-Pass	Pass	Non-Pass	Pass	Non-Pass	Pass
Frequencies	170	30	165	35	153	47	158	42	142	58
Percentages	85%	15%	87.5%	17.5%	76.5%	23.5%	79%	21%	71%	29%

The researcher used the test as a tool in the collection of data relevant to this study. The researcher has designed test to identify the problems encountered by third level students in using English grammar. So as to find out solutions to these problems.

The marks obtained from the test for all participants were analyzed and compared statistically by using frequencies and percentages. The analysis showed that the highest percentages which are represented the non-pass students are estimated by (85%,87.5%,76.5%,79% and71%) in contrast to the percentages of passed students which are estimated by (15%,17.5%,23.5%,21% and 29%). Accordingly, these justify that there is statistical difference between non-pass students and passed students.

REPORT DISCUSSION

After comparing and analyzing the results with the main hypothesis.

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The test significance indicates that there is highly difference among students Therefore, this indicates that high secondary school students face difficulties in learning English grammar.

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