

STUDENTS' ABILITY FOR USING ELLIPTICAL CONSTRUCTION IN SENTENCES

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Abstract

Grammar is a fundamental thing in a language. The researcher assumes based on her observation that the hardest part of making and writing sentence is to arrange the words in a good sentence. Students are still confused when they are going to arrange the words in right grammar. In mastering grammar, students need time, opportunity, exercise and good teaching of grammar. Unfortunately, grammar skill is still lack attention in teaching and learning process. This research is intended to investigate and describe students' ability for using elliptical construction in sentences. In this research, the researcher used descriptive method. The data was evaluated and analyzed to find out students' ability for using elliptical construction in sentences by using percentage formula. There were 34 of 73 students who were in very low category with percentage 46.5%. The result of this research showed that students' ability for using elliptical construction in sentences to the fourth semester students of English Study Program at Muhammadiyah University of Bengkulu was very low. It meant that the fourth semester English students still had lack knowledge and understanding about grammar: elliptical construction.

Keywords: *Students' Ability, Elliptical Construction, and Sentences.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Every human language has grammar indeed without exception. Grammar is a fundamental thing in a language, because it includes many elements in language itself, such as words, meaning of sentence, and kinds of sentence. In addition, Bygate (1994:2) supposes grammar is important to help the students in thinking critically and in improving the students' ability to arrange words into sentences well.

The researcher assumes the hardest

part of making and writing sentence is to arrange the words into a good sentence. Students are still confused when they are going to arrange the words in right grammar. In mastering grammar, students need time, opportunity, exercise and good teaching of grammar. Unfortunately, grammar is still lack attention in teaching and learning process.

In interviews, most of students get C for grammar subject. They assume that grammar was a hard subject for them.

From this phenomenon, teaching grammar must be noticed. The lecturer should think how to motivate and let the students to learn grammar. In brief, English teacher or lectures should be creative in developing their teaching learning process to create good atmosphere, improve the students' grammar ability, and give attention to the grammar elements. There are many elements in teaching grammar; one of them is about elliptical construction.

Lado (1986:78) explained that elliptical construction is used for avoiding repetition words in a sentence. In other words, in an elliptical construction a writer omits some words from two sentences and finally they have same meaning. Based on Lindell (1990:154) there are two kinds of elliptical construction, they are (1) agreement in affirmative sentences with *too* and *so*, then negative sentences with *either* and *neither*; (2) disagreement with *but*.

From the observation, the researcher found students were difficult to learn elliptical construction because it has rules which must be obeyed. In addition, they were asked to write elliptical construction in sentences

correctly. They often made misunderstanding and failed to express their ideas accurately. In fact, as learners of English they have to use the correct grammar for all elements of English, because grammar plays an important role in writing and speaking. The reader and listener will understand clearly of someone writing and speaking if the grammar is correct.

Based on the background above, this research was intended to investigate and describe students' ability for using elliptical construction in sentences to the fourth semester students of English Study Program at Muhammadiyah University of Bengkulu.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

The design of this research was descriptive. According to Fraenkel and Wallen (1990:368) descriptive method is used to describe events as they naturally occurring settings. Azwar (2003:77) states that population is defined as a group of subject that has generalization to the result of result. Therefore, the population of this research was taken from the fourth semester students of English Study Program at Muhammadiyah University of Bengkulu, and it consisted

of five classes with 146 students. Table. 1 shows the population of the study:

Table 1. Population

Semester/ Class	Number of Students
IV A	29
IV B	33
IV C	32
IV D	26
IV E	26
Total	146

Source: English Study Program Office of Muhammadiyah University of Bengkulu.

The sample used was random sampling. Random sampling is the process of selecting a sample in such a way that all individuals in the defined population have an equal and independent chance of being selected for the sample (Gay, 1990:104). The samples were 73 students by putting their names into a glass and then the researcher took their names randomly. In this research, the researcher used a grammar test. The test was purposed to determine the students' ability for using elliptical construction in sentences. The test was completion test and consisted of 30 items.

The steps in collecting data were: (1) the researcher came to the class; (2) the researcher prepared the students are ready to take the test; (3) the researcher gave

the paper of test; (4) the researcher explained to the students how to do the tests; (5) the researcher instructed the students to do the test with 45 minutes for 30 items; (6) the researcher submit the paper test, when they have finished the test.

The techniques in analyzing the data were: (1) the researcher checked the students' answers; (2) the researcher counted the percentage of students' correct answers with formula:

$$P = \frac{F}{N} \times 100\%$$

P = Percentage

F = The total number of students' correct answer

N = The total number of students (Herzberg,

1983:20)

(3) the researcher determined the criteria of students who got correct answers. The criterion was classified with the interval that was proposed by Arikunto (2002:245).

Table 2. The interval

Interval	Alphabet	Classification
80 – 100	A	Very High
66 – 79	B	High
50 – 65	C	Medium
40 – 49	D	Low
30 – 30	E	Very Low/ Fail

(4) Finally, the researcher made the conclusion.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

From the data that has been collected and counted, the researcher found the students' ability for using elliptical construction in sentences can be described in percentage as follows. The test was contributed to 73 students, and the percentage was calculated based on the students' score in the table 4.1.1 below:

Table 3. Students' Score for Using Elliptical Construction in Sentences

Criteria	Frequency	Percentage
Very High	6	8.2%
High	21	28.7%
Medium	6	8.2%
Low	6	8.2%
Very Low/ Fail	34	46.5%
Total	73	100%

From the data that had been calculated in the findings above, it can be discussed further as follows.

The Very High Criteria of Students' Ability in Using Elliptical Construction

The students who were categorized into *very high* criteria for using elliptical construction in sentences were 6 students with scores: one student got score 92, it

means the student could answer 46 of 50 questions correctly; in addition, one student got score 84, it means 42 of 50 questions were answered by the student correctly; furthermore, there were two students got score 82, where the students could answer 41 of 50 questions correctly; finally, two students got score 80, it means there are 40 of 50 questions were answered by the students correctly. The students had difficulties for using elliptical construction *neither* or mostly incorrect for using auxiliary verb in this category.

The High Criteria of Students' Ability in Using Elliptical Construction

The students who were categorized into *high* criteria collected scores in range 68 to 78. There were eight items which could not be answered correctly by the students; it is known that the students in high category had the most incorrect in using auxiliary for *neither*, *either*, *so*, and *too*. They were wrong in putting the auxiliary, and they also did not put the auxiliary verb for some items.

The Medium Criteria of Students' Ability in Using Elliptical Construction

The students who were categorized into *medium* criteria achieved scores in range

52 to 64. There were six items which could not be answered correctly by the students; From the students' answers, it can be observed that they had many incorrect answers in using *neither* because they did not change the auxiliary verb into affirmative auxiliary verb when they used *neither*. According to Azar (1993:230) the using of *and neither*: after *and neither...*, has the auxiliary verb come before the subject; an affirmative auxiliary verb is used to *and neither*.

The Low Criteria of Students' Ability in Using Elliptical Construction

The students who were categorized into *low* criteria got scores in range 40 to 46. There were 14 items which could not be answered correctly by the students; From the students' answers in *low* category, it can be concluded that they had many incorrect answers in using *neither*, *either*, *too* and *so* because they did not use the auxiliary verb for the use of elliptical construction.

The Very Low Criteria of Students' Ability in Using Elliptical Construction

The last, students who were categorized into *very low* or *fail* got scores in range 6 to 38. From the students' answers it is known that students had difficulties or

mostly incorrect in using the elliptical construction *too*, *so*, *either*, and *neither*. They did not use the auxiliary verb for stating the elliptical construction. Lado (1986:78) adds that elliptical sentence is stated by using auxiliary verb. In this case, the students were not serious and regard that it is not important to study elliptical construction. It is also common used by them, but in fact they could not answer it correctly. The student got difficulties how to use the elliptical construction in sentences.

In addition, the researcher interviewed the students to know what are the problems faced in order that they had most incorrect for using the auxiliary when they used *neither*, *either*, *so*, and *too*. They said that they were confused to define the using of them in sentences. They assumed that the explanation was not clear from the grammar discussion class about elliptical construction. It confused them, because it just explained generally, not in detail as the result they did not understand clearly. Teaching grammar typically starts with very simple constructions, introducing measured quantities of vocabulary along the way and gives the examples (Hurford, 1994:89). The phenomena above could

be caused by the lack of knowledge of the students because the elliptical construction were not habitually by students, and the teaching learning process of elliptical construction was unclear. It needs more attention and explanation about the using of elliptical construction by giving them many examples and exercises, beside the students also must study hard about it.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research, it can be concluded that students' ability for using elliptical construction in sentences at the fourth semester students of English Study Program of Muhammadiyah University of Bengkulu were categorized into *very low*. The most scores are achieved by the students for using elliptical construction in sentences was in range of 6 – 38 with percentage 46.5%. Then, most of the students were correct for using elliptical construction disagreement *but* (an affirmative statement with a negative statement in one sentence). There were 70 of 73 students that answered the question with elliptical construction disagreement *but* correctly. However, they were poor in using elliptical construction agreement in

negative sentences *neither*. There were only 7 of 73 students that answered the questions with elliptical construction *neither* correctly. They did not change the auxiliary into affirmative form in using *neither*, and most of them also did not use the auxiliary for stating the elliptical construction.

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