A QUALITATIVE STUDY : UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' BOOK CHOICES FOR GRAMMAR IN THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2023/2024

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Abstract

Abstract_ This study aims to analyze and identify students' needs related to their choice of grammar books, focusing on the analysis of the target situation (necessities, lacks, and wants) to develop an ideal English grammar book that meets students' needs. The subjects of the study were undergraduate students from five universities: Universitas Doktor Nugroho Magetan, Universitas STAIM Ma'arif Magetan, Universitas IAIN Ponorogo, Universitas UIN Malang, and Universitas UNU Surakarta. The research method used is descriptive-qualitative. Data collection was carried out through observation, questionnaires, and semi-structured interviews, and data were analyzed using data reduction, display, and conclusion verification techniques. The results show that several main factors that students consider in choosing an English grammar book are clear language, suitability to learning objectives, cultural relevance, appropriate examples, neat structure, availability of print and digital formats, variety of materials, and coverage of topics such as punctuation, capitalization, tense consistency, and technology integration.

Keywords: Evaluation of Grammar Assessment, Need Analysis,Teaching, Grammar, Textbook.

I. INTRODUCTION

Grammar is an important factor in learning English. Grammar is defined as the arrangement of words to form a correct sentence (Ur in Purnomo et al.,2023:9381). Alifah (2020:2-4) in his book entitled 'Education Language English: Grammar' wrote a number of definitions of grammar according to world grammar experts such as Swan (2005:19), who defines grammar as "rules that show how words are combined, arranged, or changed to show certain types of meaning." Meanwhile, according to Jeffrey Coghill and Stacy Magendanz (2003:16) in the book entitled 'English Grammar', "The grammar of a language is a set of rules that govern its structure. Grammar determines how words are arranged to form meaningful units." Therefore, grammar is considered important because it controls the sentence structure and ensures coherent and consistent sentences. This is because language is a means of communication, and proper use of language is needed for two-way communication.

For vocational students at university, learning English is a very valuable skill and will help them in facing various obstacles in the world of work. Hasbiyallah and Al-Ghifary (2023:474) define learning as a system, which means a whole consisting of components that include educational and teaching objectives, learners and students, education personnel, especially teachers, teaching planning, teaching strategies, teaching media, and teaching evaluation that interact with each other to achieve previously set teaching objectives. as stated in Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System Article 1 Paragraph 20 (in Hasan et al. 2019:24), which states that learning is a process of interaction between students and lecturers and learning resources in a learning environment.

Learning is a process to help students acquire knowledge, skills, and habits, as well as the formation of attitudes with the help of an educator so that they can learn well. In other words, learning is a process to help students learn well. Thus, in the learning process, several components interact educationally, namely educators, students, and learning resources. Therefore, of course, the role of lecturers, the suitability and quality of teaching materials, and learning strategies are very important in helping students develop adequate English language skills.

Learning strategies, according to several experts (in Hasbiyallah and Al-Ghifary, 2023:475) are: Kemp explains that learning strategies are a series of activities that need to be carried out by teachers and students to achieve learning goals effectively and efficiently. Meanwhile, according to J.R. David, a learning strategy is a plan that includes a series of activities designed to achieve certain educational goals. Then Dick and Carey define learning strategies as a series of materials and procedures in learning that are used to achieve predetermined learning goals. Therefore, strategy can also be interpreted as a way of determining all aspects related to achieving learning goals, which include planning, implementation, and assessment.

Evaluation comes from English, namely evaluation, which means assessment. According to Ramayulis (in Hasbiyallah and Al-Ghifary, 2023:475), evaluation means assessment, which involves two aspects: *measurement* and *evaluation*. *Measurement* produces data in the form of numbers or individual levels, while

evaluation involves the process of collecting, analyzing, and interpreting information to assess the achievement of goals.

Table 1. Grading Rubric: Grammar Conventions

Score	Explanation
A	Paragraph breaks reinforce the organizational structure.
B	Basically sound paragraph breaks that reinforce the organizational structure.
C	Paragraph sometimes run together or begin at ineffective places.
D	Paragraph breaks may be highly irregular or so frequent (every sentence) that they bear no relation to the organization of the text

Table 2. Explanation of Scores from the Dimension Structure

Score	Explanation
A	All sentences are well-contructed with varied structure.
B	Most sentences are well-constructed and there is some varied sentence structure in the essay.
C	Some sentences are well-constructed, but others are fragments or run-on.
D	Most sentences lack proper construction; there are frequent run-on or fragmented sentences.

Table 3. Explanation of Scores from the Dimension Sentence Structure

Dimension	A	B	C	D	Score
Structure	Exemplary	Competent	Emerging	Falling	20
Sentence Structure					20
Punctuation					20
Spelling					20
Sentence Parts					20
Total					100

Table 4. Explanation of Scores from the Dimension Punctuatin

Score	Explanation
A	Proper use of commas, semi-colons and end of sentence punctuation. No errors in capitalization.
B	Occasional errors in the use of commans, colons, semi-collons and end of sentence punctuation. Few errors in capitalization
C	Frequent errors in the uses of punctuation such as comma splices, misuse of commas, colons or semi-colons, and apostrophe disrupt the flow of the text. Frequent errors in capitalization
D	Repeated errors in the use of commas, colons, semi-collons, apostrophes, and end of sentsnce punctuation impede understanding of the text. Repeated errors in capitalization.

Luthfi (2014). The following is an explanation of the components of the grading rubric: grammar conventions, which include: structure, sentence structure, punctuation, spelling, and sentence parts.

Table 5. Explanation of Scores from the Dimension Spelling

Score	Explanation
A	Correc spelling, even of more difficult words.
B	Spelling that is usually correct, especially of common words occurs.
C	Spelling errors distract the reader; misspelling of common words occurs.
D	Frequent spelling errors significantly impair readability.

Table 6. Explanation of Scores from the Dimension Sentence Parts

Score	Explanation
A	Parallelism in verb use, noun-pronoun agreeement; proper use of adjectives, adverbs and prepositions.
B	Occasional errors in verb use, noun pronoun agreement, adjectives, adverbs or prepositions.
C	Errors in verb use, noun pronoun agreement, adjectives, adverbs or prepositions that distract and confuse.

D	Excessive errors in verb use, noun pronoun agreement, adjectives, adverbs or prepositions that distract and confuse.

Meanwhile, learning is defined as a process of change that occurs within an individual, reflected through improvements in various aspects such as skills, knowledge, attitudes, and abilities. In other words, learning evaluation refers to the process of collecting, analyzing, and interpreting information to assess the achievement of learning objectives. This process includes measuring individual learning outcomes through quantitative data as well as assessing qualitative changes in learners' skills, knowledge, attitudes, and abilities. Therefore, learning evaluation is an integral part of the learning process and cannot be separated from teaching and learning activities.

Learning resources are also essential components that play a significant role in improving learning quality. Degeng (in Samsinar S., 2019:195) defines learning resources as all sources that can be used by students in the learning process, whether in the form of objects, data, facts, ideas, people, and others that can facilitate learning, such as textbooks, modules, and student worksheets (LKS). Samsinar S. (2019:197) explains that the use of learning resources can increase productivity for both educators and students, enhance motivation and learning interest, help achieve optimal learning outcomes through individualized learning, and support systematic learning management through the use of various media and multimedia technologies.

In English language learning, grammar books serve as an important learning resource because grammar forms the foundation for all English language skills— listening, speaking, writing, and reading. American (in Sari et al., 2021:88) defines textbooks as the central component of all teaching and learning programs. Rahmawati (in Sari et al., 2021:88) states that textbooks are systematically arranged books based on descriptions and materials in a specific field of study. Textbooks are written by authors, researchers, or educators and then distributed to the general public (Sari et al., 2021:88). Grammar, meanwhile, is a set of rules used as a guideline in learning a language to produce cohesive and understandable sentences and paragraphs, thereby reducing miscommunication in both spoken and written forms.

Based on these theories, a grammar book can be understood as a systematically arranged textbook that contains rules for learning a language. Such a book functions as a guide for composing cohesive and easy-to-understand sentences and paragraphs, helping

to minimize miscommunication in oral and written communication.

An effective teaching and learning process, therefore, requires proper delivery of material by the teacher, in which learning resources play a crucial role. Teacher creativity in selecting appropriate learning resources significantly influences learning success. In choosing learning resources, educators must consider learning objectives as well as economic, practical, availability, and flexibility aspects to achieve optimal results (Samsinar S., 2019:198). Hasan et al. (2019:26) further emphasize that in designing or developing teaching materials—whether for classroom or higher education contexts—students' needs and characteristics must be taken into account.

Thus, an ideal English grammar book should be designed based on the results of a needs analysis. Khasinah et al. (2022:841) define needs analysis as a process of gathering information about students' needs by identifying their goals, weaknesses, interests, or desires. Needs analysis involves a series of procedures used to collect data related to learning needs, which can then be utilized for various purposes such as developing textbooks or designing curricula (Iwai et al., in Widiarini et al., 2023:284). Hutchinson and Waters (in Febriyanti, 2017:126) define needs as *"the ability to understand or produce linguistic features of a target situation."* They categorize needs into two types: learning needs and target needs. Learning needs include preferences for learning styles and methods, whereas target needs include necessities, wants, and deficiencies.

In this study, the researcher conducted a needs analysis to identify students' target needs in selecting English grammar books, focusing on target situation components that include students' necessities, lacks, and wants, as described by Hutchinson and Waters (in Febriyanti, 2017:126).

II. METHODOLOGY

This research was conducted at Universitas Doktor Nugroho, located in Maospati District, Magetan Regency, East Java, from early July to early August. The subjects of the study were undergraduate students from five universities: Universitas Doktor Nugroho Magetan, Universitas STAIM Ma'arif Magetan, Universitas IAIN Ponorogo, Universitas UIN Malang, and Universitas UNU Surakarta. This study employed a descriptive-qualitative research method. Data were collected through observation, questionnaires, and semi-structured interviews. The collected data were then analyzed

using data reduction, data display, and conclusion verification techniques

III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this study, the researcher identified university students' target English language needs when selecting an English grammar book by focusing on target-situation needs—necessities, lacks, and wants—for the purpose of developing an improved grammar book. As stated by Hutchinson and Waters (in Alqunayeer & Zamir, 2016:86), target-situation needs consist of three components: necessities, lacks, and wants.

Table 7. Percentage of Grammar

No.	Name	Score	Indicators
1	Hanisa Kusdiana	63,83%	Medium
2	Abdul Rahman.	76,23%	Good
3	Afiatul Badriyah	58,18%	Poor
4	M.Rijal Fauzi	86,96%	Very Good

Necessities refer to what learners should know in order to function effectively in the target situation (Hutchinson & Waters in Febriyanti, 2017:126). In the present study, several necessities emerged regarding students' preferred characteristics of grammar books. Students require books that support both academic and non-academic language needs, are easy to understand, and provide comprehensive explanations of grammatical topics. This aligns with Makrifah et al. (2024:277), who emphasize that English is essential not only for academic achievement but also for the development of pedagogical competence. Meliawati and Hamied (2020:84) also note that an ideal textbook should meet the standards established by the National Agency for Standard National Education (BSNP), including content appropriateness, achievement alignment, and linguistic accuracy.

Lacks describe the gap between what learners currently know and what they need to know (Hutchinson & Waters in Alqunayeer & Zamir, 2016:86). Students reported several shortcomings of existing grammar books, including overly theoretical explanations, difficult language, monotonous examples and exercises, inflexibility, and poor structural organization. The P3AI Team (2017:3) states that textbooks should be systematically arranged for use by lecturers and students throughout the learning process. Therefore, grammar books—as primary instructional materials—must be flexible, accessible, and easy to understand for independent learning. Furthermore, Ningrum (2019:15) highlights that textbooks should provide information, discussion, and

evaluation; hence, varied examples and practice activities are essential to support students' comprehension.

Wants refer to learners' personal desires or preferences (Hutchinson & Waters in Alqunayeer & Zamir, 2016:86). Students expressed several expectations for an ideal grammar book, such as availability in both print and digital formats, technological integration, more relevant and varied exercises, and affordable pricing. Mulyasa (in Hasan et al., 2019:26) categorizes teaching materials into printed, audio, visual, audiovisual, and multimedia formats, suggesting that the availability of print and digital versions facilitates learning anywhere. Rudi Susilana (in Hasan et al., 2024:27) further explains that textbooks are designed to assist teachers and students in achieving learning objectives. Thus, technology-integrated features—such as interactive tasks, discussion forums, and explanatory videos—can enhance student engagement and understanding.

IV. Conclusion

The findings of this study reveal several important considerations for university students when choosing an English grammar book. These include clarity of language, relevance to learning objectives, incorporation of cultural context and examples, systematic organization, availability in both print and digital formats, a variety of materials and practice tasks, comprehensive coverage of topics such as punctuation, capitalization, and tense consistency, and the integration of supportive digital technology.

Suggestions

The results of this study are expected to assist lecturers in understanding students' needs, enabling them to recommend grammar books more appropriately. For institutions and future researchers, these findings can serve as a reference for developing textbooks, curricula, or other instructional materials.

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