AN EXPLORATION OF TEACHING ERRORS AND THEIR IMPACT ON STUDENTS' DIFFICULTIES IN UNDERSTANDING READING TEXTS PRESENT PERFECT TENSE AT MTS NW LIMBUNGAN

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ABSTRACT

Teaching grammar in reading classes requires not only the explanation of grammatical forms but also the integration of grammar instruction with reading comprehension. In learning the Present Perfect Tense, students often experience difficulties in understanding sentence meaning and connecting grammatical knowledge with reading texts. These difficulties may be influenced by the way the material is delivered in the classroom (Murti, 2024). Therefore, this study aimed to explore the teaching errors that occurred in the instruction of the Present Perfect Tense within reading texts and to examine their impact on students' difficulties in understanding reading texts at MTs NW Limbungan. This study employed a descriptive qualitative design involving one English teacher and students from Class 1, Class 2, and Class 3 of MTs NW Limbungan. The data were collected through classroom observations, interviews, and documentation. The findings revealed several teaching errors, including the absence of effective pre-reading activities, unclear or incomplete explanations, excessive emphasis on grammatical formulas without adequate contextualization, limited guidance during reading, limited use of contextual examples, and limited post-reading activities. These teaching errors contributed to students' difficulties in distinguishing the Present Perfect Tense from the Simple Past Tense, understanding sentence meaning, identifying time relationships within the text, and connecting grammatical knowledge with the overall meaning of reading passages. The study concludes that teaching errors in grammar instruction significantly influenced students' reading comprehension, particularly when the Present Perfect Tense was taught primarily as a grammatical formula rather than as a meaningful language structure within reading texts.

Keywords: teaching errors, Present Perfect Tense, students' difficulties

ABSTRAK

Pengajaran tata bahasa dalam kelas membaca tidak hanya memerlukan penjelasan mengenai bentuk-bentuk gramatikal, tetapi juga integrasi pengajaran tata bahasa dengan pemahaman membaca. Dalam pembelajaran *Present Perfect Tense*, siswa

sering mengalami kesulitan dalam memahami makna kalimat dan menghubungkan pengetahuan tata bahasa dengan teks bacaan. Kesulitan tersebut dapat dipengaruhi oleh cara materi disampaikan di dalam kelas (Anugrah, 2024). Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi kesalahan pengajaran yang terjadi dalam pembelajaran *Present Perfect Tense* pada teks bacaan serta mengkaji dampaknya terhadap kesulitan siswa dalam memahami teks bacaan di MTs NW Limbungan. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain deskriptif kualitatif yang melibatkan seorang guru bahasa Inggris dan siswa dari Kelas 1, Kelas 2, dan Kelas 3 MTs NW Limbungan. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi kelas, wawancara, dan dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian mengungkapkan beberapa kesalahan dalam pengajaran, termasuk tidak adanya kegiatan pramembaca yang efektif, penjelasan yang kurang jelas atau tidak lengkap, penekanan yang berlebihan pada rumus tata bahasa tanpa kontekstualisasi yang memadai, keterbatasan bimbingan selama kegiatan membaca, terbatasnya penggunaan contoh kontekstual, serta kurangnya kegiatan pascamembaca. Kesalahan-kesalahan pengajaran tersebut berkontribusi terhadap kesulitan siswa dalam membedakan *Present Perfect Tense* dan Simple Past Tense, memahami makna kalimat, mengidentifikasi hubungan waktu dalam teks, serta menghubungkan pengetahuan tata bahasa dengan makna keseluruhan teks bacaan. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa kesalahan dalam pengajaran tata bahasa berpengaruh signifikan terhadap pemahaman membaca siswa, khususnya ketika *Present Perfect Tense* diajarkan terutama sebagai rumus tata bahasa, bukan sebagai struktur bahasa yang bermakna dalam konteks teks bacaan.

Kata kunci: kesalahan pengajaran, *Present Perfect Tense*, kesulitan siswa.

A. Introduction

Reading comprehension is a core competency in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning, as it serves as the primary means for learners to access information and interpret various types of academic and non-academic texts. (Grabe, 2010) In the context of secondary education, reading proficiency extends beyond mere vocabulary recognition and encompasses a broader ability to process complex linguistic structures. Limited understanding of grammatical structures often restricts students' capacity to construct meaning from texts comprehensively, ultimately hindering their ability to identify both implicit and explicit information conveyed in a reading passage. (Fatma dkk., 2025) Therefore, mastery of linguistic components, particularly grammar, is a crucial determinant of successful reading instruction. Grammar serves as a systematic framework that governs the relationships among sentence

elements, thereby enabling the accurate interpretation of meaning. (Azar, 1982). However, grammar instruction in the classroom is often delivered mechanically and in a decontextualized manner, leading students to memorize structural patterns without understanding their functional application in authentic texts. (Anugrah, 2024). This condition limits students' ability to apply their grammatical knowledge effectively during reading activities. One grammatical aspect that is significantly relevant to reading comprehension is the present perfect tense. This grammatical structure is used to express experiences, changes, or events that began in the past but remain relevant to the present. In written texts, the present perfect tense frequently appears across various genres, including report texts, recount texts, and descriptions of personal experiences. However, its inherent characteristic of connecting past actions with present conditions makes it relatively complex for learners to understand. Consequently, many students encounter difficulties in accurately interpreting sentences that employ this grammatical structure. (Antula, 2016). Students' learning difficulties with the present perfect tense are further exacerbated by its similarities in form and function to the simple past tense. Many learners struggle to distinguish accurately between these two tenses, particularly in contexts where temporal markers are not explicitly stated in the sentence. (Anggraini, 2026).

Based on the preliminary observations conducted at MTs NW Limbungan, it was found that students continued to experience substantial difficulties in comprehending English reading texts containing the present perfect tense. Students tended to misinterpret sentence meanings and struggled to identify the temporal relationships embedded within the texts. Furthermore, the learning process indicated potential inaccuracies or deficiencies in the teacher's delivery of grammatical instruction. (James, 2013). These indications include explanations that are insufficiently organized in a systematic manner, examples that are not adequately contextualized, and limited variation in teaching methods. These conditions suggest the presence of teaching errors that are

suspected of significantly affecting students' overall comprehension.

The issue of teaching errors in grammar instruction is a critical concern that warrants serious investigation. Inaccuracies in the presentation of instructional materials may lead to persistent misconceptions among students. (Vananda dkk., 2025). These effects are not limited to errors in language use but also extend to a decline in students' overall reading comprehension. Previous studies have largely focused on language errors from the perspective of students' performance or learning outcomes, while the role of teachers' instructional practices as contributing factors has received very limited attention from researchers. (Sika dkk., 2025; Susanti, 2020). Several relevant studies, such as those conducted by (Putri & Sari, 2025) focus on students' difficulties independently, whereas Sari (2022) merancang strategi pembelajaran yang lebih efektif dan bermakna.

focus on students' individual difficulties, whereas others have explored teaching errors without specifically linking them to difficulties in reading comprehension. This indicates the existence of a research gap that requires further investigation.

Based on the aforementioned discussion, this study is essential for comprehensively investigating various forms of teaching errors in grammar instruction and examining their impact on students' difficulties in comprehending texts that incorporate the present perfect tense. MTs NW Limbungan was selected as the research site because English is part of its formal curriculum and preliminary observations have revealed that lower secondary school students experience considerable difficulties with this grammatical topic. The findings of this study are expected to contribute theoretically to the development of research in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching and provide practical implications for educators in designing more effective and meaningful instructional strategies

B. Research Method

Reading comprehension is a core competency in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning, as it serves as the primary means

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C.Result and Discussion

Briefly and clearly describe the results obtained, accompanied by a discussion that examines these findings in relation to the supporting theories employed.

Based on data collected through classroom observations (the first observation in Classes 1 and 3 and the second observation in Class 2), in-depth interviews with the teacher and six students, and document reviews, the researcher identified several findings related to the research questions. These findings were classified into three main categories: Instructional Teaching Errors, Grammatical Teaching Errors, and Contextual Teaching Errors.

Types of Teaching Errors

First, Instructional Teaching Errors. The field findings indicate that the teacher frequently neglected important activities in the stages of reading instruction. The observation sheets revealed the absence of adequate pre-reading activities. The teacher opened the lesson with a greeting and proceeded directly to grammar explanations without activating students' background knowledge related to the reading topic. In addition, there was a lack of guidance during reading activities. The teacher instructed students to read the text independently but provided assistance only when students explicitly asked for help. Post-reading activities were also very limited; lessons often ended immediately after students completed multiple-choice questions in their textbooks, without any discussion to reflect on the meaning of the text.

Second, Grammatical Teaching Errors. These errors concerned the conceptual explanations provided by the teacher. Two main findings emerged: unclear or incomplete explanations and an overemphasis on memorizing

grammatical formulas without contextual application. According to the teacher interview, the teacher stated, “I usually begin by explaining the formula S + has/have + V3 and writing it on the board...” Classroom observations confirmed that the teacher repeatedly instructed students to memorize subjects, auxiliary verbs, and past participles, while providing very limited explanations of why the tense was used in a particular text. Consequently, the actual meaning and function of language were neglected in the learning process.

Third, Contextual Teaching Errors. These errors were associated with the teacher’s failure to connect grammatical concepts with the actual text being discussed. The researcher identified a limited number of contextual examples. Examples were frequently presented as isolated sentences without any narrative connection to the reading text entitled “My Unforgettable Experience,” which was being discussed in class.

The Impact of Teaching Errors on Students’ Learning Difficulties

The aforementioned errors directly contributed to students’ considerable learning difficulties. Data from the student interview transcripts confirmed these effects. Students experienced fundamental difficulties distinguishing between the present perfect tense and the simple past tense. Student 3 (Class 2) stated, “I get confused about whether it refers to something that happened long ago or something happening now. I know it uses has/have, but I still often mix them up.” This confusion regarding temporal relationships stemmed from the teacher’s limited explanation of grammatical functions.

Furthermore, students struggled to interpret the overall meaning of sentences. Due to the absence of pre-reading activities, students encountered unfamiliar vocabulary without adequate scaffolding. Student 1 explained that they would remain silent when they did not understand a text: “I just stay quiet at first. If I still cannot understand it, then I ask a friend.” The lack of teacher guidance during reading activities made students passive, resulting in a highly mechanical approach to grammar learning. Student 6 (Class 3) stated, “I can remember the formula, but when I see it in a sentence, I get

confused... I know the formula, but I do not know why it is used in that sentence." This finding reinforces the conclusion that students failed to connect their grammatical knowledge with the overall meaning of the reading passage.

To summarize the findings, the following matrix presents the identified teaching errors and their impacts on students at MTs NW Limbungan.

The findings reveal that instructional practices at MTs NW Limbungan, particularly in teaching the present perfect tense through reading texts, remain dominated by less-than-optimal teaching practices. The six identified teaching errors indicate that instruction places greater emphasis on grammatical form and procedural knowledge than on developing students' functional reading comprehension. Consequently, students are not provided with sufficient opportunities to develop grammatical knowledge and reading competence simultaneously.

These findings support the theoretical foundation proposed by Harmer (2007), who emphasizes that effective grammar instruction in EFL classrooms should not be limited to transferring a set of structural rules but should instead be delivered through meaningful contexts. From the perspective of reading comprehension, Nuttall (2005) explains that reading instruction must incorporate the stages of pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading to activate background knowledge and monitor comprehension. The finding that teachers at MTs NW Limbungan neglected these essential stages corresponds with students' frustration and confusion when interpreting the content of reading texts. Students were left to struggle independently without adequate reading guidance.

Furthermore, the difficulties reported by the participants are consistent with the perspective (Grabe, 2010) which defines reading comprehension as an active process in which readers construct meaning by integrating linguistic knowledge with contextual information. When teachers focus excessively on rote memorization of grammatical formulas, such as has/have + V3, students lose sight of the essential temporal meaning conveyed by the

text. (Farrell & Farrell, 2024). Students no longer read to identify the message conveyed by the text; instead, they read merely to identify the presence of subjects and auxiliary verbs.

These findings also extend the results of previous studies. Putri (2024) found that the greatest challenges faced by ninth-grade students in learning the present perfect tense were the complexity of the grammatical structure itself and confusion regarding time expressions such as already, just, and yet. Hidayat (2020) also reported similar difficulties, particularly students' inability to distinguish the present perfect tense from the simple past tense due to limited vocabulary. Although previous studies emphasized students' internal factors, this study addresses the research gap by empirically demonstrating that these internal difficulties are substantially triggered and exacerbated by external factors, namely teaching errors (Sari, 2022). A rigid deductive approach with minimal contextualization makes learning feel outdated and hinders natural language acquisition (Celce-Murcia, 2014).

Overall, the analysis concludes that teaching errors resulting from the lack of an integrated approach to reading instruction create a domino effect. Teaching errors diminish the quality of students' cognitive engagement in the classroom, reducing them to mere memorisers of grammatical formulas who struggle when confronted with authentic and meaningful English reading texts.

D. Conclusion

Based on the findings and discussion presented above, it can be concluded that the teaching of the present perfect tense through reading texts at MTs NW Limbungan continues to be characterized by critical instructional weaknesses. Six dominant teaching errors were identified: (1) the absence of meaningful pre-reading activities, (2) incomplete or confusing grammar explanations, (3) an excessive emphasis on grammatical formulas, (4) very limited guidance during reading activities, (5) the presentation of examples with insufficient contextualization, and (6) the absence of evaluative activities during the post-reading stage. The teacher places excessive emphasis on structural

memorization, particularly sentence patterns, rather than developing students' understanding of how language conveys meaning in reading texts.

These errors have direct negative implications for students' comprehension. Teaching errors contribute substantially to students' learning difficulties, including the inability to distinguish between the present perfect tense and the simple past tense, difficulties in interpreting complex sentences, confusion in identifying the temporal references of events, and failure to connect grammatical theory with the meaning of the narrative message conveyed in a text. In short, although students can successfully identify sentence patterns visually, they fail to use grammatical knowledge as a tool for interpreting English texts.

To improve the quality of instruction in the future, several strategic recommendations are proposed. First, English teachers are strongly encouraged to avoid treating grammar and reading as separate components of instruction. Teachers should begin teaching the present perfect tense through a meaning-making approach in which the pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading stages are implemented consistently, accompanied by sentence examples closely related to the context of the reading texts. Second, students are expected to participate more actively and feel confident asking questions about the meaning and function of the grammatical structures being studied to avoid mere structural confusion. Third, future researchers are encouraged to replicate this study using different grammatical topics or at higher educational levels to enrich the body of research in applied linguistics. They may also develop classroom action research (CAR) instruments based on textual integration to address similar challenges in EFL classrooms.

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