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### Exploring the Effect of the Pace Model on Students' Grammar Mastery and Students' Voices on Its Usage

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#### ABSTRACT

Students commonly regard grammar as a challenging element of English. Therefore, every English teacher is always encouraged to use effective alternatives. Furthermore, the teaching and learning process that is still running online often causes many obstacles. One of the recommended teaching models for grammar class is PACE Model. This study explored the effectiveness of the PACE model to teach English grammar and students' voices toward this model. The method employed was pre-experimental research or one group pre-test post-test design. For collecting the data, the team employed a test and a questionnaire. The data were analysed using simple statistical calculations like average and percentage. The result revealed that the PACE model is an effective way of teaching English grammar because the average score of the post-test (52.33) was higher than the pre-test (24.67). There was a significant improvement in the test result. The data from the questionnaire also showed that most of the students had positive perceptions about the usage of the PACE Model. Overall, the PACE model was an adequate model to teach English grammar online because it received positive responses from the students.

**Keywords:** English grammar, PACE model, online class

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## INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, many teaching and learning processes are still running online due to Covid 19 pandemic. According to Efriana (2021), online learning can be defined as a part of distance education combining electronic technology and internet-based technology, and this learning is organized to reach a broad and large group of students. The platforms or applications utilized in conducting online learning can be very varied. The teachers can utilize *Whatsapp*, Zoom, Google Meet, Telegram, *Instagram*, Google Classroom, etc. In brief, online learning is a type of learning combining internet-based and electronic technology or the teaching and learning process that is not conducted face to face.

Even though there are many platforms possibly used in online learning, doing teaching and learning process in a new way has created some teaching challenges. According to Aniuranti (2021), many problems have appeared during online classes. Nartiningrum & Nugroho (2021) mention that there are several kinds of problems generally encountered by teachers such as difficulty in delivering the materials, poor internet service, students' slow responses, and problems in adjusting the lesson plans. Efriana (2021) even argues that the teachers normally have problems in using IT and supervising their students. Meanwhile, the students faced several obstacles such as passiveness during the class, internet service, and limited access to the supporting facilities. In addition, the parents have difficulty in accompanying their children during online classes. Overall, during online learning, the problems can be encountered by teachers, students, parents, and those problems may vary.

The problems happening might hamper the attainment of teaching goals especially in a significant yet difficult subject like grammar. Grammar is commonly considered an essential component of the English language (A'yun, 2019; Ameliani, 2019; Aniuranti et al., 2021; Aniuranti & Rizkina, 2019; Effendi et al., 2017; Handayani & Johan, 2018; Nawira et al., 2019; Yuliyanto & Fitriyati, 2019). Therefore, every English learner is encouraged to have a good understanding of structure. Furthermore, Yunita et al., (2018) argue that learning a language means learning its structure. Harmer (2003) mentions that if the grammatical rules is used too carelessly by the speakers, communication process may suffer. Utomo & Ahsanah (2020) also explain that the learners who master English grammar properly will use better language structure and create meaningful messages. Wang (2010) adds that in the teaching and learning process of foreign languages, structure is always essential. In conclusion, grammatical components are crucial for communication and teaching process.

Although the signification of structure is undoubted, many students frequently encounter difficulties in understanding grammar including university students. Utomo & Ahsanah (2020) argue that students mostly have recognized that learning English structure can be demanding for them. Effendi et al., (2017) even report that at the university level, plenty of students who have studied grammar for a long time of period still have dilemma arranging correct and good sentences. According to Yunita et al., (2018), the teaching and learning process of grammar is still regarded as problematic by the students who learn English as a foreign language like Indonesian. Al-mekhlafi & Nagaratnam (2011) even explain that in grammar classes, students might feel uncomfortable or completely afraid. After all, grammar or structure is troublesome yet essential to English learners.

Based on the situation above, the researchers agreed to find out an effective way for teaching grammar in an online class. One of the recommended models to teach grammar is the PACE model. The PACE model is a type of learning model which consisted of several phases. This model focuses on forms and meanings and tries to introduce grammar in the bigger pictures. Yunita (2016) mentions

that the PACE model formulated by Adair-Hauck & Donato consists of four phases called presentation, attention, co-construction, and extension. Adair-Hauck & Donato in González-Bueno (2021) is a top-down approach started with the presentation of a whole text that incorporates many instances of the target grammar, to later focus on the specific grammar instances. They also argue that introducing the lesson through texts is like giving direction to the grammar explanation. This activity will underline the vital grammar element taught.

Furthermore, González-Bueno (2021) explains that the PACE Model consists of four different stages. 1) Presentation: Students explore the meaning of the text in various passes to interact with the text; 2) Attention: The teacher then calls students' attention to the specific grammar topic on the text; 3) Co-construction: The teacher tries to elicit the rule from the students, with the help of the teacher only if necessary; and 4) Extension: Students engage in open-ended activities featuring the newly learned grammar, bringing the activity full circle. Furthermore, Yunita (2016) gives an example of the PACE model implementation in teaching English Pronouns. Here is the illustration.

#### 1. Presentation

The teacher reads an English short story (e.g. *Putri Serindang Bulan*), and the students listen to the teacher reading the story while trying to catch some pronouns they hear.

#### 2. Attention

The teacher gives the text of *Putri Serindang Bulan* to the students and asks them to highlight or underline the pronouns in the short story. This activity helps the students to understand the topic.

#### 3. Co-construction

The teacher guides the students to co-construct an explanation on English pronouns by asking some questions, for instance "Where is the position of the pronouns in a sentence?". In this stage, the students can construct an explanation about the position, type, and form of English pronouns.

#### 4. Extension

The teacher asks the students to do communicative activities such as conversation or writing a short story using the pronouns the students have learned. In this activity, a picture or a clue might be provided by the teacher.

Even though some earlier studies have examined the PACE model to teach grammar, this study is quite different from those researches. Firstly, there is an experimental study from Groeneveld (2011). She focused on the PACE model to teach adverbs and adjectives in offline classes. This study showed the effectiveness of PACE model to teach grammar elements like adverbs and adjectives. Secondly, Yunita (2016) conducted a descriptive qualitative study about the PACE model. In her study, she described some approaches in teaching grammar including a story-based approach. In her study, she described how several approaches could be employed in the teaching and learning process. Thirdly, there is also a study from Yunita et al., (2018). They did experimental research but in offline grammar classes. Their study revealed that the PACE model was effective to teach English structure. Fourthly, there is also a descriptive qualitative study conducted by González-Bueno (2021). He explained the PACE model and another modification of this model called S-PACE. He explained how those two models can be implemented in grammar classes. In conclusion, this study was quite different from the previous studies since in this research, the PACE model was implemented in an online class, and the grammar elements discussed were also different.

Based on the aforementioned explanations, the researchers agreed to do a pre-experimental study. This method was chosen due to the limitation of the class. There were two classes, but the

subject that achieved the minimum number of students for an experimental study (15 students) was only Class A. Therefore, this design chosen was a pre-experimental study. In this study, there were two different objectives. The first aim was to find out the effectiveness of the PACE model to teach grammar online. The second aim was to explore students' voices on the PACE model. The objectives can be accomplished by employing tests (pre-test and post-test) and a questionnaire. All of the instruments used were adapted from several sources like articles and books.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The method employed in this research was pre-experimental research. Sevilla in Suwartono (2014) explains that this type of experimental study only involves one group. The group is given a treatment chosen. Then, the result before and after the treatments is measured to see the enhancement. This type was selected due to the limitation of the groups. There are only two classes, A and B, but the number of students in Class B is fewer than 15 students as the minimum requirement of experimental study. Thus, the team only used Class A as the subject and used a pre-experimental model. The treatment was given in five meetings. The researchers used the PACE Model that consists of four stages namely presentation, attention, co-construction, and extension. The grammar topics taught were noun clauses, if-clauses, inversion, and wishes.

This study utilized two different types of instruments. The first instrument was a test. Ary et al., (2010) argue that a test is a set of stimuli shown to an individual to obtain answers based on which a numerical mark can be assigned. Suwartono (2014) explains that a test is a way to gather data connected to ability measurement, skill, mastery, or competency. Thus, the test is the most suitable instrument used to measure the improvement of grammar mastery. In this study, the test employed was multiple-choice items adapted from several relevant sources namely Azar (2000), Martin Hewings (2002), Murphy (2004), and Pyle & Page (2002).

The second instrument used was a closed questionnaire adapted from Yunita et al., (2018). The questionnaire was employed to explore the students' voices. According to Arikunto (2009), a questionnaire is some written questions utilized to gather information regarding respondents' personalities or other things they know. The items in the questionnaire were used to know the students' perception of grammar, stages in the PACE model, and PACE model in general. The questionnaire consisted of eight different items.

After collecting the data, the data obtained from the test were analysed by calculating the average score or pre-test and post-test results. Meanwhile, the data gathered from the questionnaire were analysed through several steps. Firstly, the data were summed up through tally. Secondly, the percentage of each item would be calculated. Then, all the results from those simple statistics calculations were displayed through words and tables.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **RESULTS**

Even though the PACE model is one of the teaching models assumed to be an effective model in teaching grammar, this model still needs a scientific study to prove the assumption. In addition, the teaching and learning process run online has led to new teaching challenges. That is why the researchers agreed to do an experimental study to uncover the effectiveness of the PACE model. Due

to the limitation of the class, this study was still at the pre-experimental level, yet the results showed significant proof.

In this study, the data were gathered in seven weeks. In the first meeting, the students did the pre-test. In the second meeting, the students learned about noun clauses, and in the third meeting, they learned about if-clauses. In the fourth and fifth meetings, the students learned about inversion, and in the sixth meeting, they learned about wishes. In the last lecture, the students did the post-test and completed the questionnaire. The platforms used were Google Meet and *Whatsapp*.

During the data gathering the lecturer did the teaching and learning process through four phases mentioned in the PACE model called presentation, attention, co-construction, and extension. Here is the general description:

1. Presentation Stage

The lecturer used texts and did a storytelling activity at the beginning of each class. The lecturer did not only read but tried to retell the stories, changing the voice, tone, and facial expression during the storytelling. Most of the students said it was very interesting and fun. While listening to the researcher, the students tried to find out the grammar element that was being taught during the day.

2. Attention Stage

After retelling the stories, the researcher asked simple questions such as *Have you ever heard this story? How many characters are there? Who are they? Did you find the clauses?* and so on. After discussing orally, the lecturer gave the text then asked the students to underline the grammar element that was being discussed.

3. Co-construction Stage

After the students finished finding the grammar element, we discussed the grammar topics deeply through the stories. In this activity, the lecturer guided the students to understand the function, the forms, the examples.

4. Extension Stage

After that, the students did some exercises related to the topics. Besides completing the exercises related to each topic, the students had to use the grammar elements to write sentences.

After the researchers did all the data gathering activities, the team analyzed the results. The results from the pre-test and post-test revealed that the PACE model was adequate to teach grammar even for such severe elements as noun clauses, if clauses, inversion, and wishes. The average score of the pre-test was 24.67, and the average score of the post-test was 52.33. There was a significant enhancement of student mastery of grammar. The students also seemed more enthusiastic about joining the class. They enjoyed the discussion of grammar topics through stories. They were happy when the teacher did a storytelling activity.

Besides the data from the tests, the student voices can be identified through the results from the questionnaire. The questionnaire asked student opinions about English grammar, stages in PACE Model, and the PACE model in general. Here are the results.

**Table 1. Students' Perception about Grammar**

No	Questions	Completely Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Completely Disagree
1	English grammar is important.	70%	30%	0%	0%	0%
2	English grammar has an important role in oral and written communication process.	40%	40%	10%	10%	0%

Based on the table above, it can be noticed that most of the students agreed that grammar was crucial and had a significant role in both types of communication. It can be viewed that 70% of the students completely agreed that grammar was essential, and 30% of them also agreed with that. 40% of the student also completely agreed that grammar was important in both types of communication, and 40% of them agree.

**Table 2. Students' Perception about PACE Model Stages**

No	Questions	Completely Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Completely Disagree
3	Learning English grammar through stories is challenging.	40%	40%	20%	0%	0%
4	Learning English grammar through stories is fun and helpful.	40%	30%	30%	0%	0%
5	The discussion session after learning from the stories is fun and helpful.	40%	60%	0%	0%	0%
6	The exercise activities in learning grammar are fun and interesting.	10%	50%	40%	0%	0%

Based on the table above, most of the students had a very positive response to PACE Model. The PACE model consists of four different stages namely presentation, attention, co-construction, and extension. Those four items asked about each stage. Most of the students agreed that learning through stories was challenging, yet all the activities were enjoyable.

40% of the students completely agreed that studying English structure through stories was challenging. Meanwhile, most of the students (40%) completely agreed that using stories in learning grammar was fun and helpful, and 60% of the students agreed that discussion session (co-construction phase) was also fun and helpful. In further, 50% of the students agreed that extension stage was fun and interesting.

**Table 3. Students' Perception about PACE Model in General**

No	Questions	Completely Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Completely Disagree
7	The whole steps of learning English are clear and make the students enjoy the learning process.	20%	50%	30%	0%	0%
8	The model promotes students' better understanding of English grammar.	20%	50%	30%	0%	0%

Table 3 shows that most of the students admitted that learning activities in grammar class were apparent. Those activities also assisted them to enjoy the teaching and learning process and even helped them enhance their grammar mastery. 50% of the student agreed that the phases in the PACE model were clear and made them enjoy the teaching and learning process. Besides, 50% of the students agreed that the PACE model assisted them to comprehend the grammar elements taught better. These findings were relevant to the results from the tests.

Given these points, The PACE model was adequate to teach grammar online. This model causes a significant improvement in students' understanding of some grammar topics such as noun clauses, if-clauses, inversion, and wishes. The results of the post-test was higher than the pre-test. Furthermore, this model also received positive responses from the students. All items in the questionnaire got positive responses from the students because most of the students chose agree or completely agree.

## DISCUSSION

The enhancement of the student scores has proven the effectiveness of the PACE model. This probably is influenced by the context given by the stories. In the teaching and learning process, the students seemed very enthusiastic about watching the lecturer do storytelling. They said it was fun. They also were interested in understanding the story and learning the grammar element from those stories. According to Groeneveld (2011), the PACE model encourages the pupils to see the structural elements in the bigger picture where grammar is viewed as part of a language, not as an isolated element. Yunita et al., (2018) add that the PACE model assists the pupils to study language rules, and at the same time using those rules in the communication process. Adair-Hauck and Donato in González-Bueno (2021) argue that introducing the lesson through texts is like giving direction to the grammar explanation. This activity will underline the vital grammar element taught.

The stages in the PACE model called presentation, attention, co-construction, and extension were attractive to most of the students. In the first three stages, the students learned the grammar

element through stories that give clear contexts where the students should use the grammar topics. In the last stage, the students had opportunities to do several different exercises leading to communicative skills like writing or speaking. Overall, providing a clear context of grammar elements promotes students' understanding of those elements.

The results from the questionnaire also showed several conclusions. The first finding was the students thought that structure was essential, and grammar had a significant role in communication. These findings are in line with the theories mentioned the importance of English grammar. Harmer (2003) mentions that if the grammatical rules is used too carelessly by the speakers, communication process may suffer. Utomo & Ahsanah (2020) also explain that the learners who master English grammar properly will use better language structure and create meaningful messages. Wang (2010) adds that in the teaching and learning process of foreign languages, structure is always essential.

The second result showed that students thought that learning grammar through the stories was a challenging activity, but it was very fun. Yunita et al., (2018) state that in extension stage the teaching and learning process probably become more challenging, interesting, and fun for the students. The last finding, most of the students thought that the whole stages in the PACE model were presented clearly, and they helped the student to enjoy the class and promoted their understanding of grammar elements taught. Groeneveld (2011) states that the PACE model of teaching grammar is not only effective but also enjoyable for both teachers and students. In the class, the students commented that they were happy especially when the lecturer was retelling the stories.

Besides providing clear context in learning grammar elements through stories, the PACE models possibly created comfortable teaching and learning process that led enjoyment for the teachers and the students. Although the teaching stages in this model might lead to learning challenging for some students, the results showed that they enjoyed the whole teaching and learning process in their grammar class. This fun situation might help the students to enhance their understanding of grammar elements taught.

## CONCLUSIONS

Every English teacher is always encouraged to use effective ways of teaching because it helps the teachers to accomplish the learning objectives. One teaching model recommended for teaching a troublesome subject like grammar is PACE Model. Although this model has been recommended by many researchers, the team agreed that this model still needs an examination like experimental study because nowadays the teaching and learning process is conducted online. Therefore, the team did a pre-experimental study. The team obtained the data through pre-test, post-test, and a closed questionnaire. The results revealed that the PACE model was adequate for teaching English grammar. The average score of the post-test (52.33) was higher than the pre-test (24.67). There was a significant improvement in the test result. This enhancement was assumed due to two factors. The first, learning structure elements by implementing stories might provide the clear context when students should use the grammar elements. The second factor was the comfortable teaching situation occurred due to the stages in the PACE model. The data from the questionnaire also generally showed the positive perceptions toward the PACE Model. Thus, the PACE model was effective to teach English grammar online, and this model received positive responses from the students.



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