COVERT GRAMMAR IN TEACHING PASSIVE VOICE FOR STUDENTS AT SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Absharini Kardena
Institut Agama Islam Negeri Bukittinggi
absharinikardena@yahoo.co.id

Abstract: One of the central issues in teaching grammar for students at senior high school is students' inability in using correct grammar in oral or written communication. This problem can be analyzed from several points of views; one of them is the teaching technique used by the teacher. Therefore, this paper is aimed to explain one of the ways in teaching grammar that focuses on covert the grammar, especially for teaching passive voice as one of the central grammatical features for students at senior high school. The covert grammar is implemented through teaching grammatical points implicitly. As a result, the students' awareness should be built up in order to acquire the grammar point. This technique is expected to help the students to be able to notice the grammar rules used rather than only memorize the rules. Besides, the students are expected to be able to apply it on their oral or written communication.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Teaching grammar has been a part of language teaching since it is the main core of the language that provides rules and system of the language itself. Teaching grammar should also ultimately centre attention on the way grammatical items or sentence patterns are correctly used. In other words, teaching grammar should encompass language structure or sentence patterns, meaning and use. Because of that, it involves some considerations for teaching grammar, such as the techniques used by the teachers, teacher's roles, students' need, etc.

In the context of EFL, teaching grammar has a long history related to the method and techniques that are suggested to be used by practitioners. There have been many challenges in teaching grammar because the approach of teaching grammar has moved from the traditional one into a more declarative ways. The traditional one focused on sentence pattern so that the learners will be provided with a group of rules and forms that are given in terms of practicing drills. However, this approach could not give a significance input for the learners so that it has been replaced by the new one in which consciousness-raising of grammar becomes the center of teaching grammar. Consciousness-raising is explained by Ellis in Widodo (2006: 124) as "an attempt to equip learners with an understanding of a specific grammatical feature, to develop declarative (describing a rule of grammar and applying it in pattern practice drills) rather than procedural (applying a rule of grammar in communication) knowledge of it. " In other word, the new approach tends to focus on the instruction in grammar as a way of raising students' awareness of grammatical features of the language. It is expected that teaching grammar can help learners apply grammatical rules into communicative tasks (for example, writing and speaking).

Since students' consciousness- raising is needed in teaching grammar, building students' awareness of grammatical points becomes one of challenges in teaching grammar. This awareness refers to the ability of the students to notice the grammatical features given rather than produce the sentence patterns of the grammatical points itself. It encourages the teacher to find a

relevant and effective teaching technique that can help the students to aware on such kind of sentences given in order to notice the grammatical patterns used on those sentences.

However, most of the practitioners found a difficulty in building students' awareness in teaching grammar. This problem is usually caused by some causes. One of the causes is related to the roles played by teachers and students. Almost in all grammar classes, the teachers take a role in the central position to teach grammar. As a result, the students have almost never been given a chance to explore their ability in noticing the grammatical points by themselves. This propensity results a dilemma in which the students cannot build their consciousness of grammatical points learned. The other cause is on the tendency of the teachers to teach grammar in terms of covert grammar. In another word, the teachers explicitly explain the grammatical points that are taught to the students. Because of that, the students become passive participants. In fact, what those teachers do have decreased the possibility to build up students' awareness in learning grammar. The students will never be encouraged to notice the grammatical points that they need to acquire. Both of those causes will affect students' capability in acquiring grammatical features which have been planned for them.

This problem leads the experts and the practitioners to search out any problem solving so that the students can succeed in learning grammar. Therefore, the teachers, especially in the context of EFL, should find out some alternative teaching approaches for teaching grammar so that they can also integrate grammar or structure into other language skills. One of the solutions that are suggested is through implementing covert grammar in teaching grammar. Covert grammar points out the teacher to encourage the learners in order to observe the grammatical points stated in some examples or text given. The teacher will lead the students to build up their consciousness- raising so that they will not focus on producing sentence pattern by drilling, but they can explore the grammatical points provided for them in terms of contextualization.

Covert grammar can be applied to teach every part of grammatical features needed by the students. In this case, one of the important grammatical points that are taught for students at senior high school is passive voice. It is considerable important for the students at this level because this grammatical feature is common used in daily communication, whether it is written or oral communication as a whole. Because of that, this paper provides the concept of teaching passive voice by applying covert grammar.

2.0 TEACHING GRAMMAR

Teaching grammar has built its strong position in teaching English as second/ foreign language. It has been claimed important by most of experts who deal with TEFL/TESOL. Because of that, the term of teaching grammar has been discussed in a widely field of language teaching study.

In teaching grammar in classroom context, a teacher should consider a few components of teaching grammar that can give a good result for students' achievement. In a simple overview, Bourke (2005: 85) views the important points that should be thought about is more dealing to the content of pedagogical grammar points. He clarifies that there are such criteria of a good pedagogical grammar. It includes truth, clarity, simplicity, comprehensibility, process-oriented, and usefulness. Truth is dealt with conforming and not contradicting the real English usage. Moreover, in terms of clarity, Bourke (2005:85) proposes that a teacher should explain and exemplify in plain English and not confuse by unfamiliar meta-language. In addition, simplicity is explained as "revealing the critical features of the rules" (Bourke: 2005, 85). The other crucial

component is comprehensibility that is related to students' current competence and process-oriented that is also demanded to be concerned by the teacher through teaching grammar inductively. The last component according to Bourke (2005: 87) is usefulness that includes having predictive value, such as defining form-meaning relationship.

In a more detail explanation, Kao (1998: 258) proposes some points that can influence the successful of teaching grammar. Students' language proficiency level can be one of those factors. The teacher should be able to differentiate students' level, whether they are beginner, intermediate or even advanced. Those levels influence the teaching technique and syllabus that are going to be used by the teacher. In line with language proficiency level, Kao explains that learning style also has contribution to teaching grammar since each of the students has different learning styles. Such of the students tend to have analytical style in which they tend to learn best through formulating and testing rules. In another sides, there will be also some students who are categorized having holistic style; students who learn best through social interaction and experiences.

In addition, Kao (1998: 261) also explains that learners' needs are categorized important to be considered by the teacher. He proposes that the teacher should be able to balance the students' learning need and grammar instruction. It is caused by the purposes of the learners in learning process, whether they need the language for survival communication or for professional and academic communication. The last point explained by Kao (1998:261) is related to instructionally objectives that deal with teacher's decision in teaching grammar in integrating receptive and also productive skills.

Supporting Kao's ideas, Jun (2008: 31) also explains the points that should be pointed out by the teachers when they plan to teach grammar. He proposes that the main point is related to teachers' strategy in teaching. The first point is contextualizing the teaching of the grammar point. The contextualizing of teaching grammar can be done through several ways. In this case, Jun (2008: 31) suggests the teacher to try using texts, such as newspaper and students' own writing, as a source to study and discuss the grammatical point. In other words, the learners study the grammar without separating and isolating the grammar points from the real text.

Besides, teaching grammar communicatively is also an important point (Jun: 2008, 31). Language is about communication and teaching grammar should be aimed to teach the learner how to apply the grammar in their communicative purposes. As explained by Jun (2008:31), "grammar instruction is not for the students to learn grammar rules, but to do things in grammatically correct language." Because of that, there should be enough communicative activities in the classroom.

Teaching grammar based on sequence of acquisition is also proposed by Jun (2008:32) as one of the important factors in teaching grammar. It deals with the sequence of grammar points that are planned to be taught. The sequence should be arranged in terms of the easier to the more difficult one since the students cannot acquire one aspect of grammar if they have not mastered certain others. The last point offered by Jun (2008: 33) is the integration of meaning, context and form in teaching grammar. Those elements are integrated each other. It is what the teacher should aware about. One form of grammar can have several meanings. However, each of those meanings will be differed based on the context appears. It is explained more clearly on the following diagram
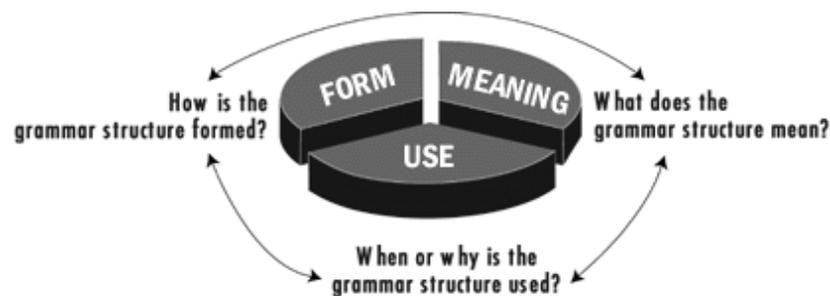
It could be seen that form, meaning, and use are interrelated each other. It could not be separated or isolated when the teacher teaches the grammatical features. Another point of view about the important factors that influence the successful of teaching grammar is teacher knowledge and experience (Tutunis: 2012, 120). Both of those factors prove that a teacher should acquire what they are going to teach. However, the fact that is revealed by Bryson in Tutunis (2012: 120) is most of the teachers do not consider arbitrariness and situational meaning in which a grammatical points is used. It causes a danger for the students since they cannot build a contextual meaning of grammatical features they learned. In his explanation, Bryson in Tutunis (2012: 120) explains that this condition is the result of lack of knowledge and experience having by the teacher.

Based on the explanations above, it can be concluded that teaching grammar involve many aspects that can influence the successful of teaching grammar. In general, it deals with teacher's strategy in teaching grammar and students' background knowledge. Those two main points are expanded into several factors, such as students' language proficiency, learning style, learners' needs, instructional objectives, contextualizing and communicative teaching, teacher's knowledge and experience, and also the integration of meaning, context, and form. Each of those elements can affect the grammar acquisition expected for the students. Because of that, the teacher needs to find techniques that may involve all of those elements in order to build students' awareness in learning grammar. One of the suggested techniques is by applying covert grammar.

3.0 COVERT GRAMMAR

Since teaching grammar nuances challenging in searching out the most applicable techniques for classroom activities, the practitioners are demanded to find such a way to teach grammar by focusing on building students' awareness of grammatical features. One of the techniques suggested by experts is teaching grammar through the concept of covert grammar.

Covert grammar is firstly used as a new term by Wilson (2005) who creates a new method in teaching grammar which is called Covert Grammar. The basic concept in constructing this technique is to build an effective effort to encourage students' implicit knowledge. This knowledge is supposed to be integrated in long-term memory. Because of that, covert grammar is expanded based on the fundamental principle of building students' implicit knowledge. This principle is applied through showing the grammatical patterns of language to the learners rather than telling them about it. In another word, the teacher allows the students to become aware of form and rules implicitly without a necessity to verbalize them (Wilson, 2005: 2). However, if in some conditions that the students get confused on the implicit knowledge they got, the students can ask a question or give comment so the teacher directs the learners by giving explicit

discussion of grammar points. Therefore, any explicit explanation is based on students' need (students-directed) and any implicit instruction is based on the core principle of covert grammar initiated by teacher (teacher-directed).

Covert grammar is implemented by involving cognitive processing and visual tactile processing. According to Wilson (2005: 2), cognitive processing can be activated by doing inductive learning. It refers to how the students learn a new grammatical point implicitly. It is expected that this learning process can be saved in long-term memory. Besides, visual tactile processing is implemented through color-coded grammar elements. It aims to attract students' attention to the color boxes so that they can focus on it. In other word, covert grammar is purposefully lead the students to discover the grammar rules and forms in terms of physical manipulation of color-coded grammar elements. Based on the core concept of covert grammar above, some important elements of teaching grammar through covert grammar can be generalized. It includes inductive teaching approach, contextualized grammar, and consciousness-raising.

Inductive learning approach

Inductive learning is introduced in a form of encouraging students to find out any specific features in a given context. In a simple definition, inductive learning can be inferred as observing a number of specific instances and from them infer a general principle or concept (Widodo: 2006, 6). The main point in inductive learning is the students try to discover grammatical rules by themselves. This approach involves learners' participating actively in their own instruction. In addition, the approach encourages a learner to develop her/his own mental set of strategies for dealing with tasks. In other words, this approach attempts to highlight grammatical rules implicitly in which the learners are encouraged to conclude the rules given by the teacher.

There are some advantages of applying inductive learning approach. According to Widodo (2006: 7), inductive learning can enhance learning autonomy and self-reliance. Besides, learners' greater degree of cognitive depth is exploited. In another word, the learners are more active in the learning process so that they are more motivated. The last one is it can also involve learner's pattern recognition and problem solving abilities.

Contextualized grammar

Strongly influenced by the concept of communicative language teaching, grammar is now viewed as one component in .the development of communicative competence, and thus it should be taught with reference to meaning, social factors, or discourse factors. Because of that, teaching grammar should be based on grammatical structures in the context of meaningful communication. It should involve communicative activities by considering the context, meaning, and social factors (Kao, 1998: 263). Myhill (2011: 1) also supports the ideas above by characterizing 3 components of teaching grammar through contextualization. It includes "(a) introducing grammatical construction and terminology at a point in teaching sequence that is relevant to the focus of learning, (b) focusing on effect and constructing meanings, not on the feature or terminology itself, and (c) opening up possibilities, not teaching about correct ways of writing.

The main concept of contextualized grammar is on looking at how language is used for different purposes in different context (Eun: 2010, 15). Because of that, a context can change meaning. It is what should be understood by the learners.

Consciousness-raising

Consciousness- raising is developed under many definitions proposed by experts. In a simple statement, Rutherod in Suter (2001: 3) defines it as "the drawing of the learner's attention to features of the target language." It reflects that the learners are the main participant who should do consciousness- raising in their learning process. However, it cannot be ignored that the teacher should also help and facilitate the learners in order to encourage their awareness of the target language structure. It is linear with the idea stated by Pallet in Widodo (2006) in which he says:

> It is an approach to the teaching of grammar in which instruction in grammar
> (through drills, grammar explanation, and other form-focused activities) is viewed
> as a way of raising learner's awareness of grammatical features of the language.
> This is thought to indirectly facilitate second language acquisition.

This grammatical consciousness- raising functions to highlight certain grammatical topics for the learner to develop his or her awareness of them for the moment he or she will be ready to insert this specific feature into the developing L2 system, thus to acquire it (Suter: 2001, 4).

In addition, Suter (2001: 5) also proposes 3 characteristics of grammatical consciousness-raising. The first one is it is aimed to produce long-term learning objectives of the target structure. Moreover, grammar does not have to be taught in explicit ways, but the learners can learn it implicitly. The last one is the focus of teaching grammar should include not only the forms, but also the meaning behinds the contexts.

Based on those elements, it can be analyzed that covert grammar combines such meaningful and communicative grammar. Because of that, some advantages of covert grammar can be generalized as follow: (a) It provides interactive activities that allow students simultaneously process form and meaning; (b) it promotes discovery learning and makes learning more interesting and effective; (c) it addresses the development of students' implicit knowledge; (d) it helps the students to notice the holes on their L2 competence through errors and mistake they make; and (e) it leads a restructuring an inter language system.

As a conclusion, covert grammar involves teaching contextualized grammar in a communicative term. It offers a new trend in teaching grammar in which the students will discover the grammatical features by implementing inductive learning and using color-coded grammar. By activating cognitive processing and visual tactile processing, the students are expected to learn the grammar implicitly through covert grammar.

4.0 COVERT GRAMMAR IN TEACHING PASSIVE VOICE

Curriculum applied in Indonesia has been designed to fulfill students' need differently based on their level. Students at senior high school are supposed to be able to acquire an intermediate level of grammatical features. One of them is passive voice that is one of the target structures in all the skills. This grammar point is considered to be one of compulsory features in grammar aspects because it is commonly used in students' daily life.

Passive voice functions differently to active voice. Passive voice primary focuses to the object of the sentence while active voice focuses on the subject of the sentence. In another word, the difference lies on the focus of the statement. The general form of passive voice is:

The form of passive voic[To be + verb 3]ated based on the tenses, whether it is past tense, present tense, or ev   those tenses will follow the general formulation above.

In some cases, learning passive voice is determined as one of confusing grammatical features since the students cannot differentiate the function of this feature in daily communication. Besides, the students should also consider the grammar rules and its formulation on their writing and speaking. Because of that, covert grammar as one of the techniques in teaching grammar can help the learners to discover the rules and formulate the forms based on the context given. The procedure of covert grammar can be elucidated as follow:

a.   Building students' knowledge of the rule and rule initiation.

The main step in covert grammar that allows the students to simultaneously discover the rules is on this step. The teacher may start the lesson by letting the students to notice some grammatical features on a paragraph provided for the students. On those paragraphs, there have been some color-coded grammatical features that involve active and passive voice. However, the color for active voice is made differently to the passive one, for instance the color for active voice is red and the color for passive voice is blue.

At this stage, the teacher leads students attention to this different color-coded and asks the students to discuss in pairs what the differences include between both of the colors on the paragraph. The important point is the teacher does not tell or even explain that they are going to learn about passive voice. It aims to direct the students to be more active in discovering the grammar rules on the paragraphs. Here is the example of the text in color-coded paragraph:

1st paragraph:
A visit to the areas worst affected by the flood was conducted by four teams from the state office and six affected districts were assessed. The observation was made that the government has sufficient teams and adequate materials are available in affected areas. A potentially dangerous situation for epidemics is posed by stagnant water and the extent of damage to health infrastructure will be known once the water recedes.

2nd paragraph:
Four teams from the state office visited the areas worst affected by the flood and assessed six affected districts. The team observed that the government has sufficient teams and that adequate materials are available in affected areas. The stagnant water poses a potentially dangerous situation for epidemics and we will know the extent of the damage to health infrastructure once the water recedes.

Those paragraphs show two different colors for active and passive voice. In this case, the teacher should be able to optimize the way to encourage the students to notice the differences between both of those paragraphs.

b.   Formulating the grammar rules by the students

At this stage, the students are asked to write down their conclusion of the differences between the red and blue sentences. The teacher leads the students to focus on formulating the rules between the red and blue sentences. It aims to easier the learners in understanding the grammar rules of passive voice. Besides, the teacher should also encourage the learners to see the different function that are shown by red and blue sentences.

c.   Class discussion

After the students finished their discussion on pairs, the teacher held a class discussion. This discussion functions to clarify any conclusion made by the students. However, the teacher is not going to explain the rules and judge what the students have concluded. In this step, the teacher give an egalitarian atmosphere to the students by offer a chance for pairs who would like to explain their conclusion. The students will have a larger discussion whether what they have made has been correct or not. It will be done till they find an agreement about the rules between those two colors statements. If they cannot make an agreement or even they make a wrong conclusion, the teacher handles the class by doing an explicit discussion of passive voice. It is expected to clarify any confusing or wrong conclusion made by the students.

At the end of class discussion, the teacher will state that what they have discussed is about the differences between passive voice and active voice.

d.   Familiarizing students with the rule in use through exercise or rule practice

The process followed in this step is that the teacher presents some exercises, checks for students' comprehension, and encourages active student involvement. The exercises given are in the forms of labeling which statements that is active and passive. It is done in pairs. When the students have finished this exercise, the students work in pairs in order to produce a writing that contains passive voice. In this exercise, they have to consider the communicative function of language so that they are suggested to write down something that is familiar to their life.

e.   Checking students' comprehension or rule activation

At this stage, the teacher provides an assessment of students' comprehension to gauge whether the students completely grasp what they have been taught. In this case, the students are asked to work individually a writing that contains passive voice. This exercise is used in order to have the students apply the concept of the passive voice learned productively, not receptively. This stage

can help the teacher redesign her or his further grammar teaching to facilitate the students' progress in applying the rule taught.

f.   Expanding students knowledge or rule enrichment

In this phase, the teacher employs other activities to reinforce the concepts of passive voice and even to relate new ones. S/he gives the students opportunities to do independent work and can set certain activities or tasks from the lesson as homework or an assignment. The homework or assignment given can be searching out any passive voice found in newspaper or magazine. The students should analyze the tenses used on those passive statements. It is expected to be able to expand students' knowledge and enrich the rule of passive voice.

        Based on the procedure above, it can be concluded that covert grammar can be done through inductive learning in terms of encouraging students' awareness of the grammatical features. The students are given a chance to observe and discover passive voice in the text given. Their conclusion, then, is discussed in class discussion and there will be a general conclusion and any reinforcing given by the teacher. It is expected that covert grammar can solve the problem that related to the technique in teaching grammar.

5.0 CONCLUSION

Since building students' awareness in learning new grammatical features is categorized crucial, there is a need for the teacher to find out any technique that can activate students' awareness. One of them is covert grammar. Because covert grammar involves inductive learning and consciousness- raising, students' awareness can be built up easily. In addition, covert grammar uses cognitive-processing which is implemented through inductive learning and also use visual-tactile processing which is used color-coded paragraph. Although the implementation stresses on the students, the teacher still has a part in facilitating, helping and organizing the discussion held. Although this paper only provides an example of applying covert grammar to teach passive voice, this technique can also be used to teach other grammatical features.

6.0 BIBLIOGRAFI

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