"ENGLISH TENSE PRACTICE" APPLICATION FOR FOSTERING THE STUDENTS' FAST AND CRITICAL THINKING ON ENGLISH GRAMMAR

Barotun Mabaroh[*1]**, Lestari Setyowati**[*2]
[*1]Universitas PGRI Wiranegara, Indonesia
[2]Universitas Negeri Malang, Indonesia
Email: barotunmabaroh@yahoo.com, lestari.setyowati.fs@um.ac.id

Abstract. The adjustment to the digital era must be accommodated for quality education. Due to this statement, English Language Teaching (ELT) in higher education should be able to lead the implementation of optimizing learning with technological support. Thus, grammar lecturers are to recognize "English Tenses Practice" application to foster the students' fast and critical thinking. The present research was qualitative description (QD). The researchers knew the lecturer had taught the students using constructive approach throughout the ice breaking **Grammar on my fingers**, playing "English Tenses Practice" application, and discussion. In the discussion, the lecturers fostered the students' critical thinking by asking the objective reasons for their answers. The researchers could also describe the application provides a flash review of the twelve English tenses (not sixteen), examples, practices, and multiple choice and arranging sentence tests. The application demanded the students to fast thinking through both tests since the application provides them with a limited duration. With many facts regarding the implementation, the researchers could highlight the advantages and disadvantages of using the application. The researchers also verified that technology needs to develop more for giving chances to elaborate the students' reasoning skill rather than instant answering which eventually allow cheating among them. Last, lecturers and further researchers should read this research results to take the best future actions both for their teaching and analytical studies.

Keywords: *Application; Critical; Grammar; Fast; Thinking*

A. INTRODUCTION

Experts and scholars are diverse in defining the digital era, but they can still be concerned with current phenomena. Historically, the digital era was symbolized by the emergence of digital, computer and information technology, and internet networks (Setiawan, 2017). People then turn to new media and adopt a new culture for sharing information which is easier, faster, but manipulable. Danuri et al., (2019) explains that technology in the digital era is used to achieve efficiency and effectiveness in every action, it offers simple processes for a high level of satisfaction and quality. Regarding this, it is absolute to have adequate knowledge and experience in using technology to adjust to the quality of education nowadays (Ma'rifatullah and Siswanto, 2020). English Language Teaching (ELT) in higher education as one of the educational processes should be able to lead the implementation of optimizing learning with technological support.

In ELT, grammar is one of the complex language elements which needs to be taught efficiently and effectively. Old-fashioned teaching makes grammar more complex to master since teachers/lecturers merely implement a direct method or the audio-lingual method which limits the

students to use language grammatically (Putry, 2015). As believed that technology promises efficiency and effectiveness, grammar lecturers are to recognize some technological teaching supports. Mabaroh and Suryatiningsih (2019) state that many applications can be used to support learning grammar thus grammar lecturers must also be able to consider the trusted application based on research studies, ratings, or contributions of users so the application chosen satisfies the student needs. "English Tenses Practice" application by MagikHub is recommended to use for learning English tenses because it has a 4,5 star rating, 11 hundred reviews, and more than 1 million users. Besides, the application has been developed continually with many updated versions since 2016.

Studying "English Tenses Practice" application by MagikHub for ELT will be a great chance for the researchers because it has not been observed and reported by any research yet. Whereas, the application was used and confirmed by some lecturers able to make the students think fast and critically in English Grammar, especially in the twelve tenses. Therefore, to confirm this claim, this research will describe the implementation of using "English Tenses Practice" application by MagikHub thoroughly.

The researchers realize that even with good quality, there are certainly limits to the advantages and disadvantages of "English Tenses Practice" application by MagikHub for ELT. This research will also show those objectively and logically. Grammar lecturers may figure out whether to use the application or not based on objective findings in this research. Last, other researchers may confirm or evaluate this research's findings for their future research so that the stakeholders can take policies for using and or developing similar applications.

B. METHODS

In this section, the researchers explain the method used for exploring how to implement teaching grammar using "English Tenses Practice" application by MagikHub which was confirmed able to make the students think fast and critically in English Grammar, especially in the twelve tenses. The researchers used qualitative description (QD) for conducting the present research. According to Kim et al., (2017), QD is a branch of study in which researchers generally examine a phenomenon naturally and draw conclusions using a naturalistic perspective. The nature of this research was drawn from the research setting. The researchers had observed the implementation of teaching grammar using "English Tenses Practice" application by MagikHub. The use of the application for teaching was done naturally by the lecturers; the researchers did not give any recommendations nor interfere with the teaching process.

Hill and Knox (2021) state that QD poses exploratory research questions to define domains of investigation, reports experiences or observations, and organizes the understandings critically with the awareness of disclosing domains of investigation, prior expectations, and concepts of coherent story or model. Based on this view, the researchers used observation as the main instrument. It aimed at gaining data about empirical activities of teaching grammar using "English Tenses Practice" application by MagikHub. The researchers came to a face-to-face Critical Grammar class and did the observation in four meetings. Next, (Smit & Onwuegbuzie, 2018) recommend QD extols the virtues of observations regarding rich descriptions of research phenomena which then should be reinforced with interviews. Therefore, the researchers also considered that an interview is needed to confirm the researchers' understanding of observation because there must be "something" behind the facts during the lecture. The interview was done to the lecturer and the students in semi-structured way; hence both the lecturer and the students can express their impression of joining the lecture by using "English Tenses Practice" application by MagikHub freely.

The researchers also used documentation as instrument. As stated by Bowen (2009), document analysis is a part of the qualitative methodology. The rationale for document analysis lies in the immense value and its usefulness for qualitative research. Yet, the researchers must guard against relying too heavily on documents so the researchers had limited collecting documents on the photos of lecturing process, screenshot of the application display, and the students' score.

An inductive exploration of the data in QD is to identify recurring themes, patterns, or concepts and then describing and interpreting those categories (Nassaji, 2015). The data in this research were analysed inductively as in a QD researchers generate ideas and develop explanation, interpretation, and conclusions from the collected data (Harding & Whitehead, 2012). Based on both views, the researchers would generate ideas from the teaching observation, the interview, and the documents for making comprehensive understanding and conclusion of how "English Tenses Practice" Application is valuable in fostering the students' fast and critical thinking.

C. RESULT & DISCUSSION

In this part, the researchers assert that to avoid repeating research results and discussion the researchers combined both sections at once. First, the observation had resulted that the lecturer and students in Critical Grammar class used "English Tenses Practice" Application for mastering twelve tenses (not sixteen tenses). Based on the observation, the lecturer started teaching by an ice breaking namely **Grammar on my fingers.** The lecturer felt it was necessary to do (related) ice breaking before real learning. Reflecting the lecturer's statement through the interview, an ice breaking can actually be done with less effort and preparation. However, thinking of related ice breaking will make the subject interrelated so students will get impressed both by the joy of ice breaking and the learning material. For this finding, Rusman (2022) states lecturers who give ice breaking can build an atmosphere of joy and intimacy as well as feelings of happiness among all, the lecturers and students. Astuti et al., (2020) also report that using ice breaking is recommended because it can increase students' motivation and interest so they will not feel bored quickly and become feel more enjoyable and focused in the learning process. Sofyan et al., (2021) add that ice breaking is effective to make the students enjoyable, active, energized, happy, and focused during learning process. The researchers then understand that other lecturers should also be able to design an ice breaking as teaching creativity for current pedagogy.

The ice breaking namely **Grammar on my fingers** was originally designed by the lecturer of Critical Grammar course. It required the students to sing and move their fingers based on the tense sequence. The students sang by mentioning the sixteen tenses; from present until past future. Here is the technique of ice breaking **Grammar on my fingers.**
1) Checking the Student Readiness
    Checking the student readiness can refer to listing their presence in general. Meanwhile, based on the observation the researchers saw that the lecturer also asked for the condition of some students who still looked reluctant. Not only that, she also motivated them to encourage spirit because it will make health of body and mentality. Regarding to this action, the researchers believed that the lecturer gave motivation in order to engage the students. It is relevant with what the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2004) statement that subject motivation is often regarded as the driving force behind learning. It can build the students' interest and enjoyment hence unstrengthens sense of belonging. Therefore, the other lecturers should not neglect motivation phase for the students because it can also show cares each other.

2) Modelling **Grammar on my fingers**

Since **Grammar on my fingers** is unfamiliar method of ice breaking, the lecturer exemplified how to perform it well. The lecturer provided list of sixteen tenses on screen and stood in front of the class, singing and moving her fingers. The students observed her and required to follow her singing by reading the screen and moving their fingers. Modelling like what had been done by the lecturer is urgent because it involves not only about how to copy the lecturer's behaviour but also constructs refinement and validation (Constantinou et al., 2019).

3) Practicing **Grammar on my fingers**

In practicing **Grammar on my fingers,** the lecturer set the students in pairs so that each student can learn from each other through the ice breaking especially when they forgot some tenses name. Tullis and Goldstone (2020) also support that pairing involves deep processing as peers actively challenge each other, then it supports long-term retention of errors that are corrected by peers. For practicing **Grammar on my fingers,** each student must look at the criteria of the fingers' movement as the following

Table 1. The Finger Movement

1	Past Simple	Right Single Thumb	9	Future Simple	Left Single Forefinger
2	Past Continuous	Right Single Forefinger	10	Future Continuous	Left Single Thumb
3	Past Perfect	Right Single Middle-finger	11	Future Perfect	Double Thumbs
4	Past Perfect Continuous	Right Single Ring-finger	12	Future Perfect Continuous	Double Forefingers
5	Present Simple	Right Single Pinkie-finger	13	Past Future	Double Middle-fingers
6	Present Continuous	Left Single Pinkie-finger	14	Past Future Continuous	Double Ring-fingers
7	Present Perfect	Left Single Ring-finger	15	Past Future Perfect	Double Pinkie-fingers
8	Present Perfect Continuous	Left Single Middle-finger	16	Past Future Perfect Continuous	Applause

4) Asking the Student Impression

After practicing **Grammar on my fingers,** the lecturer asked the students' impression. She claimed that it is urgent to know the students' feedback of learning process through knowing ttheir impression because somehow lecturers may assume giving the best while the students receive the opposite. By asking the students' impression, the lecturer of Critical Grammar can be sure that the students got really happy with the ice breaking and thus it engages them emotionally. This fact is relevant with Mashaan (2020) that it is recommended to know the student's feedback in order to improve the teaching quality and develop the knowledge and skills needed for learning.

Next, the lecturer instructed the students to open "English Tenses Practice" application. As mentioned before, the application contained only twelve tenses while the students need to master sixteen tenses. This was one of the disadvantages of the application besides it has more advantages. Below is the display of the application
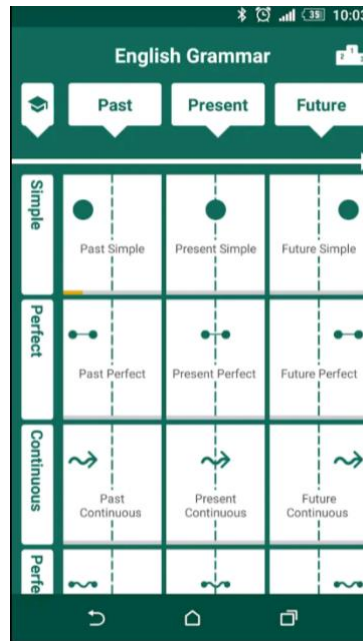
Picture 1. The Display of "English Tenses Practice" Application

On the picture 1, it is brief that the application has a systematic display in which it posts three tenses above all parts and the four forms in the right side; simple, perfect, continuous, and perfect continuous. The display also shows illustration of how a certain tense should be used due to its timing and contexts. The display also records personal achievement in the button symbolized by the graduation cap, while the ranks of 1,2,3 shows the best scorer among all its users. The application will also show the yellow line in various length which represents how the students finish the multiple choice and arranging sentence tests in a best duration; the shorter line is the quicker duration the students perform the tests.

The lecturer taught English using the application gradually. She taught all past forms, then the present forms, and last the future forms. Since the application did not cover the past future forms, so the lecturer explained it conventionally and close the discussion about English tenses by a grammar song which enable them aware about all different forms. The lecturer gave lots of instruction for understanding every tense. First, the lecturer asked the students to tap on a certain tense. After that, the application would display three parts as the following picture
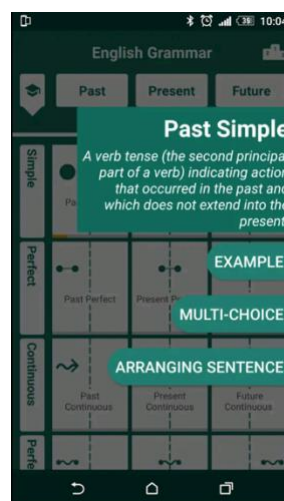
Picture 2. The Display in Every Tense

The lecturer asked one student to read the simple definition of every tense on the application loudly and lead the peers to follow. After that, all students must tap on "example" and the lecturer assigned the other students to read that part. The "example" on the application does not cover sentences to exemplify only but it also provides some contextual context for using a certain tense. This is another advantage of the application. The lecturer confirmed often after the students got information from the application. She taught more constructively by several questioning strategies so that the students seemed very active in the class. This fact confirms what had been proposed by Alanazi (2016) who argues that students construct knowledge using common instruction to guide them in how to learn and perform. Olusegun (2015) also assert that the importance is on how students construct knowledge in their own minds. Therefore, Dagar V & Yadav (2016) recommended turning teaching from filling one's mind to producing knowledge by integration of formal, theoretical, practical, and self-regulative knowledge. So, it is acceptable when the lecturer facilitated the students and not explicitly taught them. The researchers found the implementation flew smoothly and the application made it easier.

The next play of the application was doing the multiple choice and arranging sentence tests. The application has set the time for every test, so the lecturer needed less effort to control them. In other words, the application was effective to use for managing time of teaching. As known time management becomes the big problem which cause the low performance (Onuka & Junaid, 2008). Moreover, Mehta (2019) argues that teachers often feel that it is impossible to fit everything into the allotted time including in managing teaching and taking exams on the lesson plans. Thus, the use of application with the time setting is advantageous for the lecturers.

After finishing the tests, the lecturer asked the students to report the score then discuss their mistaken answers. Some of the students claimed that they were mistaken because of their errors, but some reported that the application required a very stable connection until no body lost parts in arranging-sentence test. This became another disadvantage of the application beside the lack of past future material. To respond the students, the lecturer did not directly state reasons of why they made wrong but she reminded logics of every test item to them. Recalling that the researchers had promoted using the application because it fostered the students' fast and critical thinking, it was shown from how the students pursued to finish tests before the time got over and how the lecturer gave chances for the students to elaborate their reasons in giving answers. Reminding grammatical logics of every test item can be the best choice to recall the students short- and long-term retention about the test item issue. Again, this fact describes how the lecturer intensively approached the students to optimize their constructed knowledge. This research result will be different when the lecturer used the application with different teaching approach. It is then become more valuable if the future researchers can take this emptiness and contribute to this research conformity.

D. CONCLUSION

In this section, the researchers succeeded investigating how "English Tenses Practice" application by MagikHub was confirmed able to foster the students' fast and critical thinking. It must be supported by constructive teaching and learning activities like what had been done by the lecturer and students in Critical Grammar course. The lecturer started teaching with a related ice breaking namely **Grammar on my fingers** which made the students aware about the name of English sixteen tenses. Next, the lecturer taught the students using the application by accessing three parts (definition, example, and multiple choice and arranging sentence test) on every tense. The lecturer did not focus on herself during teaching but she invited the students to read, explore

their understanding, and state reasons for giving certain answers to the test on the application. From the implementation, the researchers found the advantages of the application. They are 1) the application was displayed systematically, 2) the application provided contexts of every tense, 3) the application had time setting for doing the tests on the application. Meanwhile, the researchers discovered some needs that were not fulfilled by the application so that becomes the disadvantages of the application. First, the application did not cover material for sixteen tenses. Second, the application must be developed with more friendly connection so the users will not get lost some parts while answering arranging -sentence test. Third, the application needs to develop more for giving chances to elaborate the students' reasoning skill rather than instant answering which eventually allow cheating. Overall, using technology in ELT can support the student's achievement even some roles of teacher/ lecturer can be replaced by its existence.

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