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An Analysis of the Tenth Grade Students' Difficulties on Elliptical Constructions at MAN 1 Kota Tangerang Selatan

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Abstract

An analysis of the tenth grade students' difficulties on elliptical construction at MAN 1 Kota Tangerang Selatan become an issue in this study. The writers choose the 15 students randomly for sample. The method of the research is qualitative descriptive analysis where the data obtained from test, observation, and an interview. The primary data of the study is test about elliptical constructions. The test consists of 10 items in essay form of using *so, too, either* and *neither* in the sentences. The finding shows there are three difficulties of using elliptical constructions, namely 1) *elliptical connector* is 21 mistakes, 2) *auxiliary* is 15 mistakes, and 3) *omission the auxiliary* is 12 mistakes. It can be concluded that the tenth grade students of science 2 are difficult in using elliptical construction. It is because they are still confuse to determine the using of *so, too, either* and *neither* in the sentences. The most factors that affect students' difficulties are problems of meaning, form and form-meaning mapping.

Keywords: *Students' Difficulties in Grammar, Elliptical Constructions, Qualitative Research.*

INTRODUCTION

Language without grammar is misunderstanding like grammar error in sentences. The learners often make mistakes and feeling difficult in used the language especially in grammatically, when students want to arrange the words to make good sentence or still difficult to put the correct words. According to Harmer (2001) defines that the grammar of a language is the description of the ways in which words can change their forms and can be combined into sentences in that language (p.12). The reason why students should understand grammar is basic term of language that pointed the ways one word can be combined into other words.

One of the topics in learning grammar is elliptical sentence. According to Adibah (2013) stated that Elliptical Construction is a short sentence which misses some part because they are similarity with main sentence. Therefore, the sentence becomes more simple and effective. Elliptical Construction is to explain why some normally obligatory element of a grammatical sentence is missing; part of ellipsis which is omitting the verbs or complement, that are the combination from two sentence with different.

Furthermore, Based on the preliminary observation conducted by the writer on the tenth grade students at MAN 1 Kota Tangerang Selatan. The writers found they always make repetition sentence when the writer asked them to make sentence into two lines. Then they always don't memorize the vocabulary. In fact that, they

also do not interest to learn English. Moreover, the teacher English said that in learning process, it never focus on the grammatically sentence because the curriculum focused on the characterized students which is they are learned English only a week. The last, the writer gives them two sentences; she asked them to combine the sentence into elliptical sentence by using *so*, *too*, *either*, and *neither*. There are the sentences which the writer gave to the students: *they buy some vegetables. I buy some vegetables*. Based on these sentences, the writer found the students incorrect sentence such as *they buy some vegetables and I buy some vegetables too*. If this sentence change into *so* or *too* it means that it is positive statement. It can be *they buy some vegetables and so do I* or *they buy some vegetables and I do too*. We are using *so* before put the auxiliary verb and using *too* after put the auxiliary. For the negative statement, we can use *either* or *neither*.

In fact, the student had trouble in constructing the elliptical sentence. The students confusing used *too*, *so*, *either* *neither* in contrary elliptical construction. In this form, they may be mistaken to determine using *too*, *so*, *either*, *neither* based on the sentence. And they also difficulties to determine which auxiliary or to be they should use based on the subject in elliptical sentence form, and tense which was used in main sentence.

Therefore, the writers are interested to analyzed elliptical constructions, to identify students' difficulties on elliptical sentence, and the factors affect students' difficulties in elliptical constructions.

Difficulties in Learning Grammar

A grammar form may be difficult to learn if it contains non-essential communicative meaning. According to DeKeyser (2005) describes grammatical difficulty to three factors: 1) *Problems of meaning*; Arise from language features in a target language that don't exist in the first language. This can include articles, classifiers, grammatical gender, and verbal aspect. 2) *Problem of form*; aspect of target language' grammar that are highly complex and require a number of correct allomorphs and morpheme choices to be made and also to be in the right syntactic place in a sentence. While the acquisition of basic word order has been evidenced by advancing learners, these learners have consistently continued to struggle with elemental morphology. For example: the use of the allomorph -s. when it comes to verb agreement, if the subject is a multi-word abstract noun phrase, many students will mistakenly forget to add a necessary -s. 3) *Problems of form-meaning mapping*; the link between form and meaning are not transparent. A clear example of this can again be seen in the allomorph -s. this same morpheme can be used in three different places, but with different meaning each time. -s added to end of a verb to show agreement for third-person singular. (He plants); -s at the end of a noun to show plurality (many plants); and -s to show possessive nouns (the plant's food). It is supported to DeKeyser and Sokalski (1996) consider grammatical difficulty in relation to *comprehension* and *production*. They argue that some grammar structures are easy to comprehend, but difficult to produce, whereas others are easy to produce but difficult to comprehend.

Elliptical Constructions

According to Phillip and Parker (2012), elliptical Construction is linguistic phenomena where a sentence lacks material that would normally be obligatory, and the missing material is nevertheless semantically recoverable from the local syntactic or semantic context (p.3). Besides, Adibah (2013) stated that elliptical construction is a short sentence which misses some parts because they have similarity with main sentences. Therefore, the sentence becomes more simple and effective. (Ariani & Hanan, 2017, p.3).

The Structure of Elliptical Constructions

The structure of English elliptical construction that are stated by Mas'ud (1998) are as follow: (Haryanti, 2010, p. 56-50)

1. The elliptic structure

- a. Two positive statements that have same predicate (including object and complement) can be arranged as follow:

Table 1.
Pattern of Elliptical Positive Statement

positive sentence + and +	So + auxiliary + subject
	Subject + auxiliary + too

For examples:

He is busy. I am busy.

He is busy, and I am too. **Or** He is busy, and so am I.

- b. Two negative statements that have same predicate (including object and complement) can be arranged as follows:

Table 2.
Pattern of Elliptical Negative Statement

negative sentence + and +	Neither + auxiliary + subject
	Subject + auxiliary + Not either

For examples:

I don't like smoking. He doesn't like smoking.

I don't like smoking, and he doesn't either. **Or** I don't like smoking, and neither does he.

- c. Two negative statements which contain compound verb (auxiliary/modal + verb) can be arranged as follow:

For examples:

He can't play tennis. You can't play tennis.

He can't play tennis, and you can't either. **Or** He can't play tennis and neither can you.

RESEARCH METHOD

The writers use qualitative research method to be analyzed. According to Creswell (2007) defines that Qualitative writers tend to collect data in the field at the site where participants' experience the issue or problem under study (p. 37). This study has been conducted at MAN 1 Kota Tangerang Selatan which is located at Jl. Kademangan – Serpong Kota Tangerang Selatan. The writers selected that school because some students have still lack in grammar particularly elliptical constructions. In this study, the writers analyze the difficulties of students' elliptical construction in Senior High School and the factors that affect students' difficulties on elliptical constructions.

The participants of the study are the tenth grade students of Science 2 at MAN 1 Kota Tangerang Selatan.

Credibility is discussing how far the result of research can be believe, reach the things confidence to do. Patton (2015) explains that triangulation, in whatever form, increases credibility and quality by countering the concern (or accusation) that a study's findings are simply an artifact of a single method, a single source, or a single investigator blinders (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 245). In this study, the writers choose triangulation technique as validity instrument. A triangulation technique is cross checking data through observation, or data interview with different perspectives. Triangulation also can be said the multiple sources of data, multiple investigators or multiple theories that is a powerful strategy for increasing the internal validity. Using triangulation has three methods of data, by giving a test of students' difficulties, interview with the English teacher, and document analysis. The data collecting instruments are test, observation and interview. The test given by the writers is essay test that asked students to complete the sentence using *so*, *too*, *either*, and *neither* consisting of 10 questions. In doing observation, the writers observe the classroom activities. In doing interview, the students answered the questions which prepared by the writers related with students' difficulties on understanding elliptical sentence.

RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

The writers explain some difficulties that faced by students on elliptical constructions, as follow:

1. Difficulties of Using elliptical Connector

In the elliptical constructions there are four connectors to be used they are *so*, *too*, *neither*, *either*. *So* and *too* are used to connect two positive sentences, meanwhile, *either* and *neither* is used to connect two negative sentences. The students must be able to identify the sentence whether using positive or negative sentence.

The students' difficulties in this area, they are as follow:

a. *You are not hungry, so am I (Q.6, S9)*

In these sentences, there is a sentence above are caused by ignorance of rule restrictions. Students fail to identify the use of elliptical connector whether it is for positive or negative sentences. In sentence in point (a) for example, the students ignore the rule that in negative sentence the

connector to be used “neither or either” and is not so. If the students using connector “neither”, put the elliptical connector before auxiliary, and otherwise if the students using connector “either”, put the elliptical connector after auxiliary. So, the correct sentence is *you are not hungry and neither am I* OR *you are not hungry and I am not either*.

You should not overeat and your kids too (Q.7,S 13)

The sentence is using modal such as should and would which is it is different from other sentence. Here, the students make an error where they have to answer is neither instead of too or either. This is the students are influenced by their native language as the meaning of this sentence may sound better if they use *too*; “you should not overeat and your kids too” (*kamu tidak harus makan terlalu banyak dan anakmu juga*) whereas “you should not overeat and neither your kids” (*kamu tidak harus makan terlalu banyak and juga anakmu*”).

2. Difficulties of Using Auxiliary on Elliptical Sentence

In using auxiliary, there are some rules must be obeyed, such as: the form of auxiliary must follow the first auxiliary and consider the subject. These rules are sometime confusing so that the students often make mistake in this area. It is also determine what the tense is used in the sentences. Some of the difficulties are illustrated as follow:

a. *My mother likes to cooking and either is her mother*

The students fail to identify the rules restriction where the auxiliary must follow the first sentence or verb and consider the subject. For example, in the sentence point (a) the students put the auxiliary “is” instead of “does” where the first sentence pointed to verb *likes* it means that the auxiliary must follow tense of the verb of the first sentence. So, the correct sentence is “*my mother like cooking and so does her mother*”.

3. Difficulties of Omission the auxiliary

Some of students have got mistaken by omitting one or several parts of a sentence or do not complete the auxiliary. When a sentence loss one of parts; it may be understandable.

a. *I don't want these old clothes and they so (Q.10, S9)*

From the sentence above, the students may be caused by incomplete of rule. Students are failing to fully develop a structure and making an incomplete sentence. For example, the student do not added the auxiliary based on the following of the tense rule. The sentence (a) the students should complete with the appropriate auxiliary “don’t” and the students write the mistake elliptical connector is “too” instead of “so”. The correct sentence is “*I don't want these old clothes and don't either*”.

From the finding and analysis, it is the sequences of elliptical sentence are based on the highest to lowest frequency of difficulty. It can be seen in the following table:

Table 3.
Students' frequency of Difficulties

No	Students' difficulties on elliptical construction	Total of incorrect answers
1	Difficulties of using elliptical connector	21 mistakes
2	Difficulties of using auxiliary	15 mistakes
3	Difficulties of omission the auxiliary	12 mistakes

Based on the table 3, the highest total incorrect answers are difficulties of using *elliptical connector* with total 21 mistakes made by students. The second difficulties of using *auxiliary* are 15 mistakes and the last is *omission the auxiliary* is 12 mistakes. After analyzing the result data, the writer found that they have difficulties in elliptical students, and it is also supported by students after fill the test. The writer was done an interview some students about their difficulties to do test. They are still confused to determine using so, too, either and neither, and sometimes they also do not know what the sentence meaning so the answer is incorrect and then they are difficult to make elliptical sentence.

DeKeyser and Sokalski (1996) consider grammatical difficulty in relation to *comprehension* and *production*. They argue that some grammar structures are easy to comprehend, but difficult to produce, whereas others are easy to produce but difficult to comprehend. In this section, students can be applied the elliptical constructions if they answer the question together, but when they do the exercise by their self. In addition, the writer asked them to come forward to answer the question, some of them still confuse to combine the sentence using so, too, either and neither, but some students also can answer correctly. That's why they are understood about elliptical constructions but to produce elliptical sentences, it is still difficult.

Related to some difficulties that students have been doing in the test and an interview, DeKeyser (2005) describes grammatical difficulty to three factors: *problems of meaning, problem of form, and problems of form-meaning mapping*.

1. *Problem of meaning*, students answer the question about elliptical sentences where they should understand what the meaning sentence. For example: this is the students are influenced by their native language as the meaning of this sentence may sound better if they use *too*; "you should not overeat and your kids too" (*kamu tidak harus makan terlalu banyak dan anakmu juga*) whereas "you should not overeat and neither your kids" (*kamu tidak harus makan terlalu banyak and juga anakmu*). This error is similar with the sentence point (d) where the correct sentence is "they would not understand me and neither would you".
2. *Problem of form*, students should complete with the appropriate auxiliary "don't" and the students write the mistake elliptical connector is "too" instead of "so". The correct sentence is "I don't want these old clothes and don't either". In this sentence, students make mistakes to answer so that the composition in the sentence is not clear and also wrong to determine the sentence positive using too, so and negative sentence using either, neither.
3. *Problem of form-meaning mapping*, the students ignore the rule that in negative sentence the connector to be used "neither or either" and is not so. If the

students using connector “neither”, put the elliptical connector before auxiliary, and otherwise if the students using connector “either”, put the elliptical connector after auxiliary. So, the correct sentence is *you are not hungry and neither am I*.

From those factors, it is natural if most students still confuse of understanding the elliptical constructions. It is need more time for students to learn by themselves. Elliptical constructions help students to avoid a repetition unnecessary word in aural or oral sentence.

CONCLUSION

Based on the result data which has been analyzed and interpreted previously, the writers conclude that the students’ ability in understanding elliptical construction still not good. They still confuse to apply elliptical in the sentence. It caused most of students have difficulties on elliptical construction. There are three types of the difficulties that faced by students, 1) *elliptical connector* is 21 mistakes, 2) *auxiliary* is 15 mistakes, and 3) *omission the auxiliary* is 12 mistakes. It can be concluded that the tenth grade students of science 2 are difficult in using elliptical construction. It is because they are still confuse to determine the using of *so, too, either* and *neither* in the sentences. The most factors that affect students’ difficulties are problems of meaning, form and form-meaning mapping.

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