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## STUDENTS' VOICES ON EFFECTIVE TEACHING METHODS FOR GRAMMAR LEARNING IN PEER TUTORING PROGRAM

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**Abstract:** This research investigated students' perceptions of tutors' teaching methods applied in one of grammar tutoring classes in an English Education study program at one of the universities in Yogyakarta. The students' preferences on grammar teaching methods were also discovered. This research employed a quantitative approach. Fifty-seven students participated in this study and filled out the questionnaire. Their activities during tutoring program were observed. Then, the interview was used to gather further information. The result of the questionnaire revealed a mean score of four point twenty-nine. It showed that the participants of this study shared their positive perceptions of tutors' teaching methods in grammar tutoring classes. They felt that the tutors were able to build a comfortable learning experience and

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motivate them to have a language exposure. Additionally, the students desired to learn grammar by using the audio-lingual method and communicative language teaching (CLT) method. This study implies the need for a well-prepared peer tutoring program to help students effectively. Additionally, the administrators can address individual learning differences and provide insights for improving grammar instructions.

**Keywords:** *grammar teaching method, grammar tutoring program, students' perceptions*

## INTRODUCTION

Peer tutoring programs have been proven to be one of the effective ways to help students learn (Ali et al., 2015). Their study showed that tutoring programs positively impact students' learning process. Additionally, peer tutoring has a major positive impact on developing self-concept in learning English which could boost students' motivation in learning, encourage them to persevere when facing challenging tasks, and lessen students' test anxiety (Alrajhi & Aldhafri, 2015). Peer tutoring could help students with difficulty following the course nurture study habits and learning style, reinforce and strengthen personal learning and understanding of topics (Tan & Genevera, 2020), improve students' academic performance and clarify confusion, gain confidence, and improve their writing skills (Zhang, 2021). More importantly, peer tutoring is a sustainable and effective solution to help Higher Education (HE) solve issues in productivity, especially those impacting first-year students (Arco-Tirado et al., 2020). Therefore, to provide the best learning experience, selection and training for tutors are necessary (Weigle & Nelson, 2004; Zhang & Bayley, 2019). Moreover, by identifying suitable teaching methods for students in peer tutoring programs, organizers and tutors can create an effective learning process that meets learning objectives (Paragae, 2023).

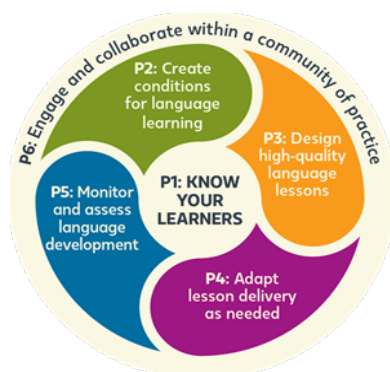
At one of the private universities in Yogyakarta, the English Language Education Study Program (ELESP) provides a grammar

tutoring program to help first-year students better understand grammar. Mastering grammar is crucial in assisting students to understand and produce the language and urged educators to solve the issue (Murtini, 2021; Refat, et al., 2020). This issue is becoming more concerning since ELESF students had problems mastering some basic knowledge of grammar, i.e. participle -ed and -ing (Bintoro, 2016). To solve this issue, the department proposed Cross-Age Peer Tutoring (CAPT), where the senior students become tutors of junior students (Ali et al., 2015). The senior students assigned as tutors are usually the third-semester or fifth-semester students who have passed grammar classes in the previous semester well.

Nevertheless, creating effective peer tutoring to help the students achieve their learning goals is such a challenging thing. Based on some students' comments on this program, this program was run ineffectively in three aspects: unprepared materials, unclear explanations by the tutor, and the tension in their relationship that made them unable to enjoy the learning process with the tutor. The students' comments on the grammar tutoring program became one of the underlying reasons why the researchers decided to investigate how this program is conducted, especially the effectiveness of teaching methods used in class, and investigate suitable teaching methods for students. In addition, the researchers also acknowledge the complexity of grammar teaching involving how teachers choose approaches, methods, and techniques of teaching grammar (Ellis, 2006) that eventually determine the success of teaching and learning.

The researchers used Six Principles for Exemplary Teaching of English Learners (TESOL International Association, 2018) and principles of teaching grammar methods (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011; Setiyadi, 2006) as the guidelines for analyzing methods used by tutors. The Six Principles for Exemplary Teaching of English Learners are to know your learners, create conditions for language learning, design high-quality lessons for language development, adapt lesson delivery as needed, monitor and assess student language development, and engage and collaborate within a community of practice. These six principles are believed to help

English teachers provide a more effective learning process, and these principles can be used in this research to examine whether tutors' teaching methods used in the grammar tutoring program have resulted in an effective learning process (TESOL International Association, 2018).



**Figure 1.** The 6 Principles for Exemplary Teaching of English Learners (TESOL International Association, 2018)

Some teaching methods can be used to teach grammar to English as foreign language learners. Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2011) and Setiyadi (2006) explained that these methods are the grammar-translation method (GTM), direct method, audio-lingual method, total physical response method, and communicative language teaching method. Grammar tutors can use some methods to teach their students and make the grammar tutoring programs run more effectively.

There are some studies researching tutoring programs in different contexts. Ali et al. (2015) showed that peer tutoring helps student-to-student learning more effectively. Alrajhi and Aldhafri (2015) showed students had developed self-concept in English language learning which enhanced their motivation, perseverance, and reduced test anxiety and especially helpful for first-year students Arco et al. (2020). Wang et al. (2023) conducted a large-scale study to investigate the effectiveness of different tutoring approaches within a larger Intensive English Program context, emphasizing the benefits of multimodal instruction and mentor support for students' progress. Lastly, in the Indonesian context, Sembiring (2021) found that peer

tutoring could enhance students' understanding of conditional sentences and motivate students to learn more of the topic. In the larger scale, Mulatsih's (2018) study showed students agreed that grammar peer tutoring programs could help them improve their competence, study more intensively, and increase their understanding.

While peer tutoring programs have been recognized as one of the effective learning strategies to support students' language learning, comprehensive research focusing on the specific teaching approaches, methods, and techniques used by tutors is still limited. Therefore, the researchers addressed two research questions:

1. What are the perceptions of tutees regarding tutors' teaching methods in the Grammar Tutoring Program at ELESP? and,
2. What teaching methods are preferable for grammar tutoring program tutees to teach grammar?

Exploring the approaches, methods, and techniques used could potentially give valuable insights into the instructional strategies and practices that could effectively support students' grammar mastery, address students' different needs, and contribute practical insights to the ongoing debate on optimal grammar instruction in various EFL settings. Additionally, the researchers hope the department/study program could equip the tutors with evidence-based pedagogical approaches tailored to the context of grammar learning and peer tutoring.

## **METHOD**

This study used quantitative research to inquire about the data. According to Goertzen (2017), quantitative research is a very effective method to answer research questions of "what" or "how". The quantitative method was selected to investigate the patterns and behaviors shown in the class and generalize tutees' perceptions related to the teaching method used in grammar tutoring classes. Specifically, the researchers distributed questionnaires, observed how grammar tutoring classes ran, and interviewed some tutees representing each tutoring class.

## **Research Setting and Participants**

This research was conducted at one of the private universities in Yogyakarta. The participants of this research were first-semester students from ELESP batch 2023 who joined the grammar tutoring program from December 2023 to January 2024. They were selected based on their pre-test score and their willingness to join this program. This tutoring program was designed by the university to help students who were considered to have problems with their grammar (considering CEFR level, they were mostly A1+ and A2+).

Fourteen male students and forty-three female students ranging from 19-20 years became the participants of this research. Forty-two students were from Java Island; the rest were from Kalimantan, Sulawesi, and Sumatra. Four grammar tutoring groups or classes consisting of eighty-six students were chosen. By using Cochran's (1977) formula, fifty-seven students were selected to participate in this research. The calculation of this sample size was available in this site <https://www.socscistatistics.com/tests/samplesize/default.aspx>.

## **Data Collection**

The close-ended questionnaire using Likert scale was administered to the students. The questionnaire of this research adapted six principles for exemplary teaching of English learners (TESOL International Association, 2018) and principles of teaching grammar methods (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011; Setiyadi, 2006). The first section of nine closed-ended questions investigated the students' perceptions on the effectiveness of tutors' teaching methods in helping them master grammar i.e. "The tutor considers the possible reasons and adjusts the lessons when we are struggling or not challenged enough." The second section comprised 18 closed-ended questions revealed students' preferred grammar teaching methods i.e. "I like it when the tutor teaches grammar by giving conversation drills using simple dialogue."

Additionally, the observation in one session for each tutoring class was done to confirm participants' questionnaire answers. It could show how four different tutors taught their students. The next

observations were conducted in the last two sessions of the grammar tutoring program. Six principles for exemplary teaching of English learners (TESOL International Association, 2018) and principles of teaching grammar methods (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011; Setiyadi, 2006) became the guidelines for observing the classes. The observation checklist consisted of statements extracted from the blueprint i.e. "The tutor monitors students; understanding and responses to determine whether they are reaching the learning objectives.", accompanied by two columns for marking either "Yes" or "No" during the observation, i.e. "The tutor knows students' backgrounds (academic goals, interests, learning preferences, etc.) and can engage them in the classroom and prepare and deliver lessons effectively".

The last step of the research procedure was interviews to strengthen the gathered data. Eight students who accepted the request of being the participants were chosen as the participants. Four students were categorized into A1-A4" for active students and the rest were "PS1-PS4" for passive students. These codes did not refer them to the classes they belonged to maintain the participants' anonymity.

### Data Analysis

The mean score of each statement in the questionnaire was calculated by using the Jamovi and categorized them based on themes. Table 1 establishes the benchmarks for interpreting perception levels through mean values.

**Table 1.** Positive and Negative Criteria (Field, 2024)

Mean score	Class
$\bar{x} \leq 3$	Negative
$\bar{x} > 3$	Positive

Cronbach's Alpha result in Table 2 shows that the data of this research are good, consistent, and reliable since it measured the same characteristics (Miller, 1995; Zeller, 2005).

**Table 2. Reliability Analysis**

<b>Scale Reliability Statistics</b>	
Scale	Cronbach's $\alpha$
Scale	0.893

Besides the reliability analysis, the data from the interviews and observations were employed to support the results of the questionnaire and enhance the credibility and validity of the findings. The interviews were transcribed. The transcription was coded and categorized based on the themes namely the principles used by the tutors, route of learning, teaching methods, and language of instructions. Then, the results were rechecked to ensure the validity of the analysis. The results of the analysis were validated to the participants. When they approved the results of interview analysis, all data from the questionnaire, interview, and observation were displayed.

## FINDINGS

### The Perceptions of Students Regarding Tutors' Teaching Methods in the Grammar Tutoring Program

Students' perceptions of tutors' teaching methods were examined by integrating and comparing the data. Table 3 presents the result of the students' perceptions of tutors' teaching methods in the grammar tutoring program.

**Table 3.** Statements in the First Section of the Questionnaire

No.	Statement	Mean
1.	The tutor wants to know our background (academic goals, interests, learning preferences, etc.) to engage us in the classroom and prepare and deliver lessons more effectively.	4.3
2.	The tutor creates a classroom culture to ensure we feel comfortable in the class by creating the teaching setting, a place where we are motivated to learn, practice, and take risks with language.	4.54
3.	The tutor plans meaningful lessons that promote language learning and help us develop learning strategies and critical thinking skills.	4.39
4.	The tutor develops the lessons based on the learning objectives.	4.53



5.	The tutor monitors our understanding and responses to determine whether we are reaching the learning objectives, for example, by asking what we have learned today at the end of the lesson.	4.58
6.	The tutor considers the possible reasons and adjusts the lessons when we are struggling or not challenged enough.	4.37
7.	The tutor assesses our progress, notes and evaluates the types of errors that we make, and offers strategic feedback (e.g. gives the feedback in front of others or personally).	4.19
8.	The tutor uses a variety of assessment types to measure our outcomes, like observations, tests, exercises, quizzes, etc.	4.12
9.	The tutor collaborates with other tutors to provide the best support (e.g. learning materials) for us.	3.67

Table 3. shows that all students gave positive responses to all of those questionnaire statements ( $\bar{x} > 3$ ). It indicates that the students considered their tutors had a desire to understand their background, created suitable conditions for language learning, designed high-quality lessons for language development, adapted lesson delivery as needed, monitored and assessed students' language development, and collaborated within a community of practice.

Additionally, most students appreciated their tutors' efforts in monitoring their progress. Two participants told that the tutors monitored their understanding by asking questions related to the materials. That statement is shown in the interview results below:

*[...], "we kept being asked, "Do you understand or not?" If we didn't understand, it could be repeated. At the beginning and the end of the tutoring session, we were always asked about the previous week's material, like a review. Then, at the end of the tutoring session, we briefly discussed and reviewed what was learned that day. We were also given important notes and highlights that we should take note of in each session."*(AS3)

*[...], "after each lesson or exam, we were given a review of the material. The tutor also provided us with questions and sometimes asked us to answer them one by one. Sometimes, we were called upon to answer directly. So, indirectly, it also served as a test. The tutor also reviewed the learning material at the end of the session."*(AS2)

The interview results proved that the tutors monitored students' understanding and responses to recognize whether they had reached the learning objective. One of the students stated that the tutor kept asking whether they understood or not and would repeat the material if they had not understood yet. Another student declared that the tutor provided some questions to be solved by them to check their understanding. Based on the observation result, all tutors showed that they monitored students' understanding during the lesson by approaching the students to check their work and asking questions related to the material.

Then, the second highest result is achieved by the second statement ( $\bar{x}$ : 4.544). The students believed that tutors had successfully created a classroom culture to ensure students felt comfortable and motivated to learn and practice. One of the interview participants who was categorized as an active student said that the tutor often motivated the student to learn and made the student feel comfortable. Another interview participant who was categorized as a passive student also said that the tutoring program made her more interested in delving deeper into grammar courses. The interview answers from both participants are described below:

*[...] "The tutor is a realistic person, you know. She often says that we have to be able to do it because we need to, and all that stuff. So, honestly, for me, it boosts my motivation to realize that I need to know (learn), not just because I'm taking PBI (English Language Education). And (she) creates a comfortable environment because when I'm with the tutor, it feels like being with a friend" (AS1)*

*"With the presence of this tutoring program, we become more (...) interested in delving deeper into the subject" (PS3)*

Those interview data strengthened the result of the second questionnaire statement and showed that the tutors had succeeded in creating conditions for language learning for the students. The observation results also showed that all of the tutors created classroom conditions where the students could engage with the tutor and the lesson. The tutors also cared about students' condition and struggles.

This result aligned with Blok et al.'s (2020) principles that stated effective teachers are those who can create a learning environment where students are comfortable interacting with one another, want to develop their skills and be honest about their needs.

Then, the statement that received the lowest mean score was statement number nine ( $\bar{x}$ : 3.667). Most students agreed that their tutors had collaborated with other tutors to provide the best support. Even though that statement received the lowest score, the students gave positive responses for that in the interview. One of the students said that the tutor had collaborated with the other tutors. It was shown that when one of the tutors had to go abroad to do a campus activity, the other tutors helped that tutor teach the tutoring class. The participant stated that,

*"Yes, actually you can see it from our grammar tutoring class, (...). The tutor has been changed multiple times. But the material they provide remains the same. Even though I don't see it myself, I feel like the tutors can support each other to deliver the best material." (AS2)*

The interview result shows that the tutors in the grammar tutoring program collaborated to give meaningful lessons to the students. They collaborated in teaching the students. Ultimately, the interview result strengthened the result of the questionnaire.

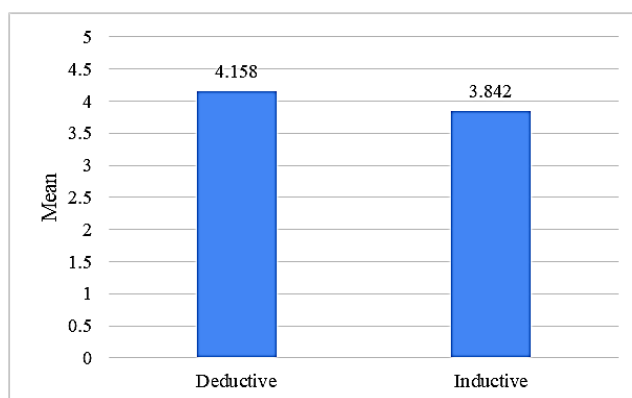
From the findings, it can be seen that the majority of students had positive perceptions toward tutors' teaching methods used in the grammar tutoring program. The salient findings showed that tutors monitored students' understanding and responses to determine whether students were reaching the learning objectives, and tutors created a classroom culture to ensure students felt comfortable in the class by creating a teaching setting a place where students were motivated to learn, practice, and take risks with language. Further, students also gave positive responses for how collaborative the tutors in the grammar tutoring program were in providing the best learning experience for students even though this statement received the lowest mean score.

## Students' Perceptions of Suitable Teaching Methods for Teaching Grammar in Grammar Tutoring Program

From the second section of closed-ended questions, the researchers were able to collect data on students' preferred teaching methods based on their perceptions. In this section, the researchers present the histogram of the data from the four criteria for defining suitable teaching methods and preferred teaching. There are some considerations to determining teaching methods to teach grammar namely, the route of learning, defining the language of instruction, and considering the skill that needs to be emphasized in the learning process (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011; Setiyadi, 2006).

### *Route of Learning*

According to Takala (2016), investigating the chosen route of learning, whether the tutors teach grammar rules inductively or deductively, helps identify the grammar teaching method. The researchers allowed students to share their perceptions of the two learning approaches, deductive and inductive. Figure 3 displays the result of students' perceptions on the route of learning.



**Figure 3.** Students' Preferred Route of Learning

Figure 3 presents the questionnaire results that the students gave positive responses for both deductive and inductive routes of learning. The students agreed that it was easy to follow the lesson when the tutor started with the introduction, possibly including explicit rules

of the topic, followed by examples and practice. However, they also agreed that it was easy to follow the lesson when the tutor started the lesson by giving many examples and expected the students to find out the topic by themselves and later give confirmation about the knowledge that they found. The interview results from both passive and active students below support those statements:

*"(...) If we were given an introduction, we got to know what the basic Grammar is like, so we didn't directly jump into the material or given exercises. (...) we were given the basics. We didn't understand what it was in the basics and it's like we were introduced to it as well. It's the same as what is taught in class. We were just taught the basics first, and then, if we understood, we were given more difficult questions. Later, we were given various exercises." (PS3)*

The interview result aligns with Takala's (2016) study which found the deductive approach is related to explicit teaching, which has significant evidence in leading to successful learning results. However, AS1 said that the inductive approach also helped them to understand the material more.

*"Firstly, because at that time, it was about revisiting the simple past, present, future, continuous tenses, and all that. Honestly, I (...) only understood like two out of ten, (...). Then, coincidentally, when Kak G was making a sentence, she asked us to guess the formula or which tense it belonged to. Secondly, we were also asked to create random sentences. Then, we had to identify them ourselves. And also, Kak G would create formulas, and we had to make the sentences. Through exercises like that, I felt like my understanding increased a lot. I became more knowledgeable and understood better." [...] (AS1)*

That interview result proves that the inductive approach, which is related to implicit teaching (Takala, 2016), is also successful in providing effective grammar lessons. The students said that their understanding increased a lot when the tutor used the inductive approach as the inductive teaching approach fosters' students' critical thinking by analyzing real-life examples and students' active engagement (Raxmonovna, 2023). Additionally, some studies show students taught grammar using inductive approaches outperformed

significantly the students taught using deductive approaches (Benitez-Correa et al., 2019; Obeidat & Alomari, 2020; Shirav & Nagai, 2022).

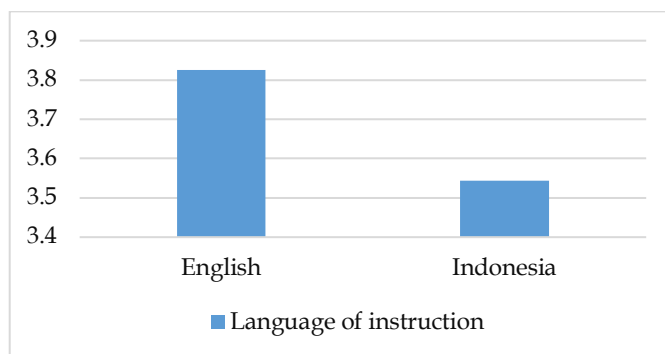
Apart from the positive perception of the inductive approach, AS2 said,

*"(...), I'm being neutral because, for me, whether the tutor starts with explicit grammar rules or starts with examples first, it's the same. What matters is the overall content of the tutor." (AS2)*

The interview result shows that deductive and inductive routes benefit different students. The other said that the route of learning chosen by the tutor does not matter because what matters is the content of the lesson. From all of that evidence, it can be concluded that both deductive and inductive learning routes could lead to successful learning results. According to the observation result, three out of four tutors applied the deductive approach to teach the students. They introduced the material, and then they asked students some questions related to the materials. On the other hand, the other tutor applied the inductive approach by giving students exercises for final test preparation, and after that, they discussed it together.

#### *Language of Instruction*

Two language options that can be used to teach grammar in the grammar tutoring program for Indonesian students are students' first language, Indonesian, or English. Figure 4 presents the result of the students' preferred language of instruction.



**Figure 4.** Students' Preferred Language of Instruction

Figure 4 shows that students gave positive responses to Indonesian and English as the languages of instruction. According to the gathered data, the participants gave three different responses when choosing the preferred language of instruction.

The student who preferred Indonesian as the language of instruction stated that the Indonesian language would help students to understand the material and tutors' words better (PS2).

*"Okay. First, using the Indonesian language is easier to grasp. It's easier to understand. And I can also understand what Ka I means."(PS2)*

On the other hand, a student who preferred English as the language of instruction said that using English would make them accustomed to listening to new English vocabulary and pronunciations and would help those who were taking the English Language Education Study Program (AS4).

*"Yes, of course, because we are in the English study program, I believe it's better to stick with English. As you mentioned, it helps us practice and exposes us to new vocabulary and pronunciation. By using English more often, we can better understand English words and enhance our ability to communicate in English as well." (AS4)*

There was also one participant who said that it would be better if the tutor combined English and Indonesian to teach grammar (PS4).

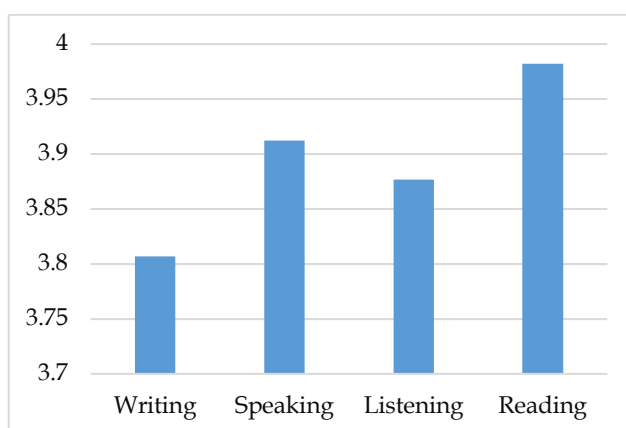
*"Actually, I like it when the tutor explains in English, but it's also helpful when they combine it with Indonesian. This is because, as I mentioned earlier, my English language proficiency is not very strong. So, having a combination of English and Indonesian explanations is beneficial for me." (PS4)*

The interview results above give more in-depth information on how students' preferred language instructions. Using Indonesian language as the language of instruction would help the students who still have difficulty in English understand the material, and using English as the language of instruction would help other students learn and practice their listening and speaking skills. Another student also

shared her opinion that combining Indonesian and English as the language of instruction was beneficial for her. Additionally, the result of class observations showed that all of the tutors used a combination of Indonesian and English as the language of instruction to teach the students. Most tutors used English as the dominant language but sometimes used Indonesian to re-explain complex ideas or rules.

### *Preferred Emphasized Skills*

To identify suitable teaching methods, investigating the preferred emphasized skill is necessary as different skills would impact the approach tutors/teachers would use. Takala (2016) stated that determining the primary important skill(s) can reveal the underlying teaching method. Figure 5 presents the result of students' preference on the emphasized skill.



**Figure 5.** Students' Preferred Emphasized Skill

Figure 5 shows that students responded positively to all statements regarding their preferred emphasized English skills. The sequence of English skills ranked from the highest to the lowest score is reading ( $\bar{x} = 3.982$ ), speaking ( $\bar{x} = 3.912$ ), listening ( $\bar{x} = 3.877$ ), and writing. ( $\bar{x} = 3.807$ ).

One of the students who preferred reading skills told that the tutoring program helped her analyze sentences with correct grammar in reading class.



*"It also helps me not only in the grammar class but also in other courses like Basic Writing and Reading. There were times when we practiced analyzing sentences that had errors, whether it was a grammar mistake or an error within the sentence structure. With the presence of a grammar tutor, I can analyze those sentences and transform them into grammatically correct ones. (PT3)*

Students who preferred listening and speaking skills said that, they could receive feedback when she used incorrect pronunciation.

*"Because of that, we can see that the tutor is also able to provide feedback. For example, if we make a mistake in our pronunciation, the tutor will correct it for us." (PT4)*

Another student who preferred writing skills said that grammar has a relation with writing, and doing writing tasks helps the student to understand grammar concepts more effectively.

*"Yes, that's right. It might be related to grammar because grammar is more about written expression. So, when the tutor assigns us writing tasks, I believe it further enhances our understanding of grammar. It helps the students grasp the concepts of grammar more effectively." (AT4)*

Then, there was a statement from one of the tutees that said her tutor taught her that English consists of not only one aspect, so by mastering grammar, the other skills will be mastered more easily.

*"That's true. In tutoring, we were taught that English encompasses not just one aspect like speaking or writing alone. It all comes together as a whole. It's like they are interconnected. If we have a good understanding of grammar, it will make it easier for us to learn writing, listening, and reading as well." (AT3)*

The interview results above strengthened the questionnaire result presented in Figure 4. The interview results show that the four English skills chosen by students had their benefits for the students. Emphasizing reading skills helped them in reading class, emphasizing listening and speaking skills helped them use correct pronunciation, and emphasizing writing skills helped them understand grammar concepts more effectively. In reality, based on the class observation, all

tutors trained students' writing, speaking, and reading skills and used quite different approaches for teaching those skills i.e. when the focus in on writing, the tutor spent more time discussing the grammar rules and error analysis. However, none of them emphasized students' listening skills during the learning process.

### *Preferred Teaching Techniques*

The researchers also investigated tutees' perceptions of certain grammar teaching techniques drawn from some grammar teaching methods, such as grammar translation method, direct method, audio-lingual method, total physical method, and communicative language teaching method. Here is the result of tutees' perceptions of certain grammar teaching techniques.

**Table 4.** Students' Preferred Techniques from Grammar Teaching Methods

No.	Statement	Mean
1.	I like it when the tutor explains the materials by translating the content.	4.28
2.	I like it when the tutor teaches grammar highly focusing on grammar rules and patterns (form-focused).	4.18
3.	I like it when the tutor provides listening and imitating sound activities to teach grammar so that I can automatically produce the sounds.	3.91
4.	I like it when the tutor explains materials (sentences) by presenting physical objects or abstract ones through some ideas or thoughts instead of translating the sentences.	4.05
5.	I like it when the tutor teaches grammar using repetition and drilling.	4.3
6.	I like it when the tutor teaches grammar by giving conversation drills using simple dialogue.	4.25
7.	I like it when the tutor teaches grammar through commands and physical actions.	3.61
8.	I like it when the tutor teaches grammar while learning vocabulary items, especially verbs.	4.49
9.	I like it when the tutor teaches grammar focusing clearly on meaning.	4.3
10.	I like it when the tutor teaches grammar by giving real-life situations practice in the classroom (e.g. giving authentic problem-solving tasks).	4.28

Table 4 shows the result of questionnaire data on students' perceptions of certain techniques of grammar teaching methods, i.e. grammar translation method (1-2), direct method (3-4), audio-lingual method (5-6), total physical response (7-8), and communicative language teaching (9-10). The figure shows that the eighth statement received the highest mean score ( $\bar{x}$ : 4.49). One of the students said that learning vocabulary can help them understand part of speech, which is learning about verbs and adjectives. That statement is shown in this interview result. The teacher said that,

*"The thing is, when it comes to the part of speech, I sometimes still get confused about which ones are verbs. And there are various types of verbs, right? I'm still confused about distinguishing them. Whether it's an adjective or a verb like that." (PT4)*

The interview result supports the questionnaire result where students mostly agreed that they like it when the tutor teaches grammar while learning vocabulary items, especially verbs and directly practicing those verbs. According to the observation results, three out of four tutors had taught vocabulary implicitly through reading books and working on exercises.

The statements that received the second-highest mean score were statements number five and nine ( $\bar{x}$ : 4.298). The statements "I like it when the tutor teaches grammar using repetition and drilling" and "I like it when the tutor teaches grammar focusing clearly on meaning". One of the students said that drilling helps them understand the material more deeply and master it. Another student said that by focusing on meaning, the student can immediately learn the essence of the material. Those statements are shown in the interview results below:

*"Because with drilling, we can understand the material more, go deeper, and through drilling exercises, the material will be ingrained in our minds. With more practice like that, it becomes more ingrained, and eventually, it will be memorized." (AS4)*

*"I agree more because it can be more, (...) direct to the point, like that. Not too much running around (...). If there's too much running around, I'll end up getting confused." (AS2)*

The interview results show that using drilling and repetition and focusing on meaning when learning grammar help students understand the material. Those techniques helped students master the material and focus on the essence of the material. However, the observation result shows that only one of the three tutors used drilling and repetition techniques. For the technique of teaching grammar by focusing on meaning, all tutors applied that technique in class. The tutors emphasized the importance of understanding the meaning of the sentences they presented in the lesson.

Then, the statement that received the lowest mean score was statement seven ( $\bar{x}$ : 3.614), "I like it when the tutor teaches grammar through commands and physical actions." It turned out that students did not like learning grammar through command and physical actions. One of the students said it because it feels like they are being forced to do that. That statement is supported by the interview result below.

*[...] "I don't really like it, it feels like it's too forced. But Kak M rarely gives commands like that." (AS3)*

The interview results show that teaching grammar through commands and physical actions, which is one of the techniques in the total physical response method, has low interest. In addition, the observation results show that tutors rarely used the aforementioned technique to teach grammar in the tutoring class.

## **DISCUSSION**

The findings show two major themes. First, the majority of the students considered tutors' teaching methods had succeeded in producing effective learning which is in line with Ali et al.'s (2015) study. As in Tan and Genevera's (2020) and Sembiring's (2021) studies, students could understand the materials better on account of tutors' explanation. In addition, students appreciated their tutors who always

monitored their comprehension, one of the crucial aspects of TESOL International Association's (2018) principles. It aligns with Hattie and Timperley's (2007) study which highlights the importance of formative and/or ongoing assessments and feedback to support students' learning as what the tutors did by monitoring students' understanding and responses, assessing students' progress, evaluating the types of errors students made, offering strategic feedback (i.e. gives the feedback in front of others or personally), and using various assessment types to measure students' outcomes. Additionally, the researchers noted classroom culture created by the tutors also made students feel comfortable and motivated to learn (Blok, et al., 2020) as some students mentioned that their tutor was their friend in understanding grammar principles and clarify some confusion (Zhang, 2019 & Zhang, 2021). A positive learning environment could positively enhance students' psychological factors which later could influence students' language acquisition (Dörnyei, 2005) and enhances learning effort and the perception of peer tutor scaffolding which contributes to students' willingness to continue learning English (Wang, et al., 2023).

Second, grammar tutoring students had some preferences in terms of learning approaches, methods, and techniques. Participants of this study shared that both deductive and inductive approaches were helpful. It is in line with the suggestion in Ellis (2006) research and the research finding by Norris and Ortega (2000), with a slight preference for the deductive approach. The preference for deductive approaches among Indonesian students may be attributed to their familiarity with this method in their previous educational experiences (Ajisuksmo & Vermunt, 1999; Nur, 2020) ) as it happened to other countries like Japan (Shirav & Nagai, 2022), Ecuador (Benitez-Correa et al., 2019) and Jordan (Obeidat & Alomari, 2020).

However, giving students some challenges by changing the approach can give them more meaningful experiences and better understanding and eventually result in better test scores as some studies suggest (Male, 2016; Tanihardjo, 2016; Wardani & Kusuma, 2020). This suggests that while students might prefer a more familiar method, giving exposure to varied approaches can enhance their

learning outcomes. Then, the combination of English and Indonesian languages as a language of instruction with more emphasis on English was considered by the grammar tutoring program more helpful than solely utilizing one language of instruction. This preference reflects the importance of comprehensible input and scaffolding in second-language learning (Krashen, 1985; Vygotsky, 1978) as students need to understand basic principles first which was normally taught in simple English and reemphasized using Indonesian. Further, students desired to learn the four English skills in the grammar tutoring program to accommodate various contexts of language usage (Hinkel, 2006) and did not wish to learn solely the principles without contexts. Students seemed to be aware of the tutors' approaches when they were dealing with different topics or skills. This aligns with Widodo's (2006) study that suggests EFL teachers integrate grammar or structure into other language skills in such a way that the goal of learning language is achieved.

Lastly, students favored learning grammar using the audio-lingual specifically the repetition and drilling techniques as it helps students learn materials in a tangible context, and building speaking and listening habits is one of the techniques to improve writing and listening abilities especially related to their accuracy (Keo & Lan, 2024; Suhartini, 2022). Learning grammatical patterns using repetition can boost students' confidence in using these structures as they have recognized the patterns in different settings (Richards & Rodger, 2014; Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011). In addition, students also prefer communicative language teaching methods. Communicative language teaching (CLT) methods provide situation-oriented language teaching (Dos Santos, 2020) where students can find grammatical items that are naturally introduced via realistic topics such as school life, home life, etc. and at the same time could improve students' grammar-paper test and oral test (Ho & Binh, 2014).

## CONCLUSION

The findings of this research showed that despite previous comments regarding the ineffectiveness of the tutoring program,

participants in this study showed positive perceptions toward tutors' teaching methods. The students felt that the tutors were able to create a classroom culture that made them feel comfortable in the class and motivated to learn, practice, and take risks with language. Additionally, the findings showed students desired to learn grammar by using the audio-lingual and CLT methods. Second, indeed, students had positive perceptions of the two routes of learning, however, they expressed a greater preference for the deductive approach. Then, students preferred English but wanted the tutors to still use Indonesian in the grammar tutoring class. They also had positive perceptions of the four English skills, which means they would like the tutors to emphasize them in the grammar tutoring class. Therefore, the findings of this study encouraged the administrators to prepare the tutors (Weigle & Nelson, 2004) and recognize the diverse students' learning preferences, and be able to adopt flexible learning approaches in grammar learning tutoring programs.

Finally, this research still has some limitations in collecting the data. First, the observation was only done in the final meeting of the tutoring classes which may have impacted the data's representativeness. Then, the purposive sampling for the interview was only based on one observation. It is necessary to consider these limitations in interpreting this research's findings and conducting future research.

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