

How Basic Grammar Learning Supports Kindergarten Teachers' Confidence in Classroom English Use

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Abstract: English is increasingly important in early childhood education, yet many kindergarten teachers in Indonesia lack confidence in using it due to limited grammar knowledge. This study explores how learning basic grammar supports teachers' confidence in classroom English use. Five kindergarten teachers participated in a short grammar-focused professional development course, after which they provided written reflections on their confidence, helpful grammar areas, and remaining challenges. Thematic analysis revealed three key findings: teachers reported greater confidence in using English for greetings and instructions, mastery of simple tenses and pronouns was most supportive, and challenges such as limited vocabulary and fear of mistakes persisted. The study concludes that grammar learning enhances teacher confidence, though continued support is needed for sustainable classroom practice.

Keywords: Education, English Learning, Kindergarten Teachers.

INTRODUCTION

English has become an essential language in early childhood education, serving not only as a global means of communication but also as a tool to introduce children to basic language skills. English should be taught to children from an early age because of the impact of globalization, as it has also become the international language (Nasution & Sarah, 2016). For young children, language primarily serves as a tool for oral communication (Sukmawati et al., 2023). Previous study highlight a shared consensus among stakeholders regarding the significance of English education for young learners (Husna et al., 2025). Kindergarten teachers, therefore, play a central role in modeling and

using English in classroom interactions. Teachers are required to possess the necessary competencies so that the knowledge they deliver can be effectively understood (Triyanto & Astuti, 2021). However, many teachers at the kindergarten level in Indonesia report feeling insecure when using English with their students. Anxiety and vocabulary mastery are the factors most frequently expressed or demonstrated by prospective early childhood educators (Nurul Aini et al., 2023) (Az Zahra et al., 2023). There are also concerns arising from the lack of appropriate teaching methods and learning materials that teachers can use in schools (Nurul Hasanah, Nur Afrida, 2023). One of the key reasons is their limited knowledge of English grammar, which often reduces their confidence in applying the language during teaching activities such as giving instructions, greeting children, or leading classroom routines.

Teacher confidence is an important factor that influences the extent to which English is used in the classroom. It is recognized that teachers' perceptions of teaching English on young learner can affect how it is implemented in the classroom (Listyariyani, 2018). Teaching English to children, should be enjoyable, interesting, repetitive, and understandable (Hashemi & Azizinezhad, 2011). In their essential role, teachers should be able to encourage students to learn English in an engaging manner (Yulia, 2013). For kindergarten teachers, whose role involves introducing English in simple and meaningful ways, confidence in using the language is as important as grammatical accuracy. As one study revealed that one of the key challenges for kindergarten teachers, including limited preparation and training, curriculum gaps, and low English proficiency (Alenezi et al., 2023). Teaching a language can be challenging, especially when teachers lack confidence in their knowledge or face stereotypes about native versus non-native speakers (Wyatt, 2022).

This study explores the connection between grammar learning and teacher confidence. By focusing on kindergarten teachers who participated in a short English grammar course, this research seeks to understand how learning basic grammar supports their confidence in using English in classroom situations. Specifically, the study addresses the following research question: How does learning basic grammar support kindergarten teachers' confidence in using English in class?

METHOD

This study involved five kindergarten teachers from Tangerang, Indonesia, who participated in an English class. The participants had limited prior exposure to formal English training and many of them initially expressed low confidence in using English during classroom activities. The course was designed to address these challenges by focusing on basic grammar areas that are closely related to classroom communication.

The course content included the simple present tense, the simple past tense, subject and object pronouns, and possessive forms. These topics were chosen because of their direct applicability to daily teaching practices, such as giving classroom instructions, greeting students, and describing routines.

At the end of the course, data were collected through simple survey. The teachers were asked to respond to three open-ended questions about their experiences: their level of confidence before and after learning grammar, the specific grammar areas that helped them feel more confident in speaking English, and the challenges they still faced in using English in class despite the training. These answers provided qualitative insights into the ways grammar learning influenced their confidence as English users in the kindergarten classroom.

The data were analyzed thematically. First, the responses were read several times to identify recurring ideas. These ideas were then coded into categories such as increased confidence, specific grammar support, and remaining challenges. Finally, the codes were organized into broader themes that represented the overall patterns in the teachers' reflections. This process made it possible to connect their experiences of grammar learning with their perceptions of classroom confidence.

RESULT AND DICSUSSION

The findings of this study reveal that learning basic grammar contributed positively to kindergarten teachers' confidence in using English in the classroom, although challenges remained. Teachers' reflections demonstrate three important patterns.

First, in terms of confidence development, most teachers indicated partial improvement, describing that they could use English for certain materials or specific sentences only. This shows that grammar learning gave them a foundation to start using English, though

not yet consistently across all classroom interactions. One participant, however, reported a “full increase in confidence,” suggesting that individual differences played a role in how grammar knowledge translated into confidence. Previous study also confirmed that grammar is a key element in English instruction (Saengboon et al., 2022).

Second, regarding helpful grammar areas, teachers frequently mentioned mastery of basic vocabulary and expressions, along with sentence structure. These elements supported their ability to use English for practical classroom purposes such as greetings and instructions. The emphasis on everyday expressions indicates that when grammar is connected to real teaching contexts, it enhances teachers’ willingness to apply it in practice.

Third, teachers highlighted ongoing challenges despite the training. The most common obstacles were fear of making mistakes, lack of vocabulary, and limited practice. For instance, several teachers reported that they were still “afraid of being wrong” and struggled with insufficient exposure to English. This suggests that grammar knowledge alone does not fully eliminate barriers to confidence. Instead, continuous opportunities for practice and vocabulary development are necessary.

Taken together, the results suggest that while basic grammar learning strengthens teachers’ initial confidence, especially for simple communication, confidence is not sustained without additional practice and language enrichment. Professional development programs for kindergarten teachers should therefore integrate grammar instruction with continuous opportunities to practice real classroom English, alongside vocabulary expansion and supportive feedback. Previous study also said that teachers mainly struggled with limited training, weak curriculum design, and low English proficiency (Alenezi et al., 2023).

CONCLUSION

This study revealed that learning basic grammar can enhance kindergarten teachers’ confidence in using English, although the improvement was mostly partial and limited to certain classroom contexts. Vocabulary, simple expressions, and sentence structures were

the aspects most helpful in building confidence, supporting teachers in using English for greetings, instructions, and short interactions. However, challenges remained, particularly fear of making mistakes, limited vocabulary, and lack of practice opportunities, which continued to hinder consistent English use in the classroom. These findings suggest that grammar training should be complemented with more practice-based and supportive activities to sustain teachers' confidence and foster regular English use in early childhood education settings. Previous findings indicate that the low-confidence group would benefit from additional training in understanding and delivering lesson content beyond what the course provided (Gu et al., 2016).

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