

## Learning English Grammar through Jazz Chants viewed from students' attitude in SD IT Hidayatullah, Kota Bengkulu

Lisa Rakhmanina

English Education Study program Universitas Prof. Dr. Hazairin S.H Bengkulu

Email: [lisarakhmanina83@gmail.com](mailto:lisarakhmanina83@gmail.com)

### Abstract:

*Grammar teaching has always been a controversial issue of language teaching, since the teaching technique seems tense and boring. Here the researcher's focus is a way to learn grammar through rhymes and chants to young learners. The researcher presents a technique through Jazz Chants that involving the learners to identify and understand the grammatical point in content. Jazz Chants is a rhyme and repetition in a situational context based on everyday life situation. Each of the chant is accompanied by the target structure that indicates the specific focus of the material. The study is aimed at comparing the students' grammar aspect through Jazz Chants and understanding the attitude of the students in teaching English grammar through Jazz Chants. The sample is the students of the sixth grade consisted of 50 students in SD IT Hidayatullah, Kota Bengkulu. The design of the study was mixed method design. The quantitative data were carried out from grammar test and the students' attitude toward teaching English grammar. The qualitative data came from a learning log, an interview, and teacher's journal. A pre-test and post-test design, 8 lesson plan, and an attitude questionnaire were applied in the study. Percentage, mean, standard deviation, and t-test were used to analyze the data quantitatively. The study findings were as follow: 1. The students' English grammar ability after using Jazz chants were significantly higher than before their use. 2. The students' attitude toward teaching English grammar were rated as good.*

**Keywords:** English Grammar, Jazz chant, language, teaching technique

### Background

Teaching English grammar has always been being a hot debate in English language teaching. Many students feel tense and lazy to learn English grammar because of the rules and the teacher's technique. It has often been regarded as a structure based, and a formal activity. The teaching grammar technique is one of those that teachers need to be explored, since it has often been regarded as a structure based, and a formal activity. English grammatical rules are intricate and beginning-level students or young learners are weary of taking grammar classes with rote memorization and drills which they find both boring and difficult to understand or appreciate. Something important that teachers must bring into consideration is that teaching grammar to young learners is completely different from teaching to adults. If the learners are very young, teacher can make them learn grammar indirectly. We must not say "OK. Today we are going to work on grammar." They will be

confused if their teacher says so. Instead, a good teacher must apply different methods which can be really fun.

Nowadays, many English teachers have used music, songs, short stories, folktales, poetry that are considered as good strategies in teaching English grammar in the classroom, especially to the young learners. Using music and song is a good way to motivate and stimulate students to learn English. They will feel happy and energetic when they learn English. They do not seem to become bored with rhymes, chants and finger play songs while they are acquiring language (Duk-ki, 1996). A good method will have a great influence in teaching learning process. Since teaching is a developing art which requires innovative and creative ideas to enrich its effectiveness, we must not hesitate to use such resources in our classroom, (Saricoban & Metin, 2000)

The Jazz Chants in English classroom are very fascinating, fruitful and entertaining especially when they are given to young learners. Jazz Chants provide an innovative and exciting way to improve your students speaking and listening comprehension skills while reinforcing the language structures of everyday situation (Tang, 2002). Therefore, the researcher assumes that by having grammar instruction using rhymes and chants, the grammar teaching will be more interesting to the students. These Jazz Chants give some grammatical words so that the students will help grammar explanation from the teacher. Jazz Chants are communicative, interactive and creative way. They include repetition given in a situational context based on everyday life situation. In addition, they are highly motivating because students will not get bored easily with them. As Graham (1978: ix) points out, Jazz chants are highly motivating because of their rhythms and humor. Then, the students also respond more positively to the lessons.

Jazz Chants require students to do some physical movement. The students nod their head, give mimes based on the ideas of the jazz chants in order to make the students get the grammar indirectly and make the situation in the classroom more cheerful and alive. These structures are introduced through TPR activities to give young learners a measure of control over both form and function (Linse, 2005). This is especially true of children who developmentally have shorter attention spans and need to wiggle.

Based on the discussion above, the researcher was interested in building up young learners abilities in grammar through Jazz Chants. The researcher did the research to the fifth grade students in SD IT Hidayatullah, Kota Bengkulu.

## **The Objective of the Study**

The objective of this study was studying and comparing English grammar abilities through Jazz Chants to the sixth grade students of SD IT Hidayatullah Kota Bengkulu before and after learning, and studying about the students' attitude in learning process.

## **Literature Review**

### ***The Concept of Grammar***

Language is organized according to rules (Peck, 1988 : 127). All human languages are structured and related to certain rules called grammar. If we don't know the rules, we cannot communicate. Without them, it seems that speech is no more than sounds; writing is no more than hieroglyphics.

Hornby (1995: 517) says that grammar is the rules in a language for changing the form of words and combining them into sentences. In addition, grammar is the structure of a language. It refers to the rules and conventions that govern how words, phrases, and sentences may be connected, combined, and ordered so as to convey the meaning intended (Ollila and Margie, 1992:45).

Cameron (2001:96) states that grammar is something much more than the lists of labels and the rules found in grammar books and that grammar is closely tied to meaning and use of language and use of language, and if interconnected with vocabulary.

Learning English grammar means learning the grammatical items, such as tense, preposition, conjunction. Teachers should note the structures, functions and the grammar items which teachers want the pupil to learn as well as those they have already known. In other words, teachers should give and explain them the structures, the function and the grammatical items clearly as well as their knowledge that they have already known before.

Furthermore, Scarcella and Oxford (1992:174-175) state that teachers do not attempt to teach all the grammatical properties of the English language rather they focus on grammatical features that are useful to students. According to them, for beginning ESL learners, teachers select the most basic rules of English grammar and the most common exception to these general rules. In this study, the selection of materials for teaching English grammar is chosen based on the Competency-based curriculum for English Junior High School students. According to the curriculum, the grammatical items which should be learned by the first year students are as follows: *simple present tense, simple past tense, present*

*progressive tense, singular and plural noun, personal pronoun, Wh-questions, conjunction, imperative, preposition, and filler subject.* Therefore, the researcher took the items above as the materials in doing the research.

### **Jazz Chants**

According to Tang (2002), Jazz chants are Carolyn Graham's snappy, upbeat chants and poems that use jazz rhythms to illustrate the natural stress and intonation pattern of conversational of American English. Graham (1978: ix) states that jazz chants are the rhythmic expression of standard American English as it occurs in situational context. Bridges and Wright (2000) also state that jazz chants are snappy, rhythmical poems that can be said with a swinging rhythm. The jazz chants recorded on the accompanying tape designed as a language acquisition tool to develop the student's appreciation of the rhythm and intonation patterns of Spoken American English. It is important to remember that jazz chanting is not a distortion for poetic affect such as occurs in rapping, nursery rhymes, or songs. The rhythm, stress, and intonation pattern of the chant should be an exact replica of what the students would hear from a native speaker in natural conversation.

Jazz chants stimulate and appeal to multiple senses of learning. Students do speak, sing, tap, stamp, and move while chanting. Thus jazz chants coupled with musics and songs, offer students an enjoyable way to learn English (Tang : 2002).

We can use these Jazz Chants in many ways. We can use it to teach pronunciation, grammar, speaking, and listening. Although jazz chant's primary purpose is the improvement of speaking and listening comprehension skill, it also works well in reinforcing specific structures used in a situational context (Graham, 1978:ix). Amato as cited in Tang (2002:2) also states that jazz chants can be used to teach multiple aspects of language: sounds and intonation, rhyming, structure, vocabulary, idiomatic usage, language function, and American culture.

The students that learn Jazz Chants express their feeling through stress and intonation while building a vocabulary appropriate to the familiar rituals of daily life. The chants are a reflection of basic human emotion which occurs in specific situation. Each of the chants is accompanied by the target structure that indicates the specific structural focus of the material.

Here are two examples of Jazz Chants entitled *Do You Know Mary* for present tense and *I Got Engaged in January* for past tense.

### **Do You Know Mary**

*Do you know Mary?  
Mary who?  
Mary McDonald  
Of course I do  
Do you know her little brother?  
Yes, of course I do  
I know her brother, and her mother  
and her father too.  
Do you know her older sister?  
Yes, of course I do  
I know her older sister, Betty  
and her younger sister, Sue.  
Do you know her Aunt Esther?  
Yes, of course I do.  
I know her aunts and her uncles  
and her cousins too.  
Do you know her husband Bobby?  
Yes, of course I do  
I know her husband and his brother  
and his father too.*

*Taken from:*  
Graham, Carolyn. 1978.  
*Jazz chants*. New York: Oxford University Press.

### **I Got Engaged in January**

*A: Did you hear the gossip? Did you hear the news?  
B: No, I didn't, what's the story? Tell me all the news!  
A: Well, Mr. Smith retired last month.  
B: Mr. Smith retired?  
A: And Mrs. Jones moved last week.  
B: Mrs. Jones moved?  
A: Mr. Green got married in June.  
B: Mr. Green got married?  
A: And a week ago, Dick Harper died?  
B: Dick Harper died?  
A: I think that's it. I'd better go! I have a lot to do.  
B: Well, thanks a lot. It was really good to talk to you.*

*Taken from :*  
<http://www.onestopenglish.com/jazzchants.html>

### **The Use of Jazz Chants in Teaching English Grammar**

In order to use a language well, people need to have a good grasp of the grammatical system of that language, as well as its vocabulary and pronunciation. With

young learners, however, the traditional ways of presenting grammatical structures are not always effective or appreciated. Moreover, we need to use some variations in teaching grammar. In this study, the researcher considers Jazz chants as one of the most interesting techniques to teach grammar. Jazz chants offer a change from routine classroom activities such as explaining and doing exercises to the more real life and relax learning activity. They also provide a non-threatening atmosphere for students, who usually are tense when speaking English in a formal classroom setting. The jazz chants chosen in this study are to focus on the grammatical items stated in the curriculum since the researcher intends to emphasize on the grammar instruction only.

According to Tang and Loyet (2002:3), the use of jazz chants in grammar classroom provides many advantages:

- a. Jazz chants stimulate and appeal to multiple senses of learning, offers students an enjoyable way to learn English.
- b. The rhythmic presentation of the natural language makes the chants stick in one mind. Make the students easily to memorize the point of grammar
- c. Jazz chants are meaningful and communicative. Chanting resembles pattern drills in some ways because it is based on the combination of repetition and learner response. It avoids the pitfall of mechanical drills because it is meaning-based.
- d. Jazz chants are interactive, the repetition in jazz chants always involve the students to give the response to other students or the instructor.
- e. Jazz chants can be used to teach sound and intonation, stress, vocabulary and American culture.
- f. Jazz chants can be used to with students of proficiency levels. It means that Jazz Chants can be used in all levels such as beginners, intermediate, and advanced. Richard Amato as cited in Tang and Loyet (2002: 4) points out that although Jazz Chants are generally oriented to beginners, intermediate and advanced students are exposed to idiomatic expression through this means.
- g. They entertain and relax the learners while they are learning or practicing a structure, and they often eliminate the students' negative attitude towards learning,
- h. Through providing authenticity and situational context, jazz chants make the grammar points more understandable and easier.

According to Bridges & Wright (2000:3) the teacher can use these jazz chants in a variety of fun ways. Here is the procedure in using jazz chants in teaching grammar in the classroom.

Step 1: Check the grammar focus for each jazz chant and choose one you want to teach based on the material on the curriculum.

Step 2 : Let the students listen to the jazz chants, give the script and practice it together.

Step 3: Ask the students to discuss the situational context of the jazz chant, underline the grammatical words in the song so that the students can easily notice them, then give some explanations and meaningful questions about the jazz chants.

Step 4 : Give the formula of the grammar point and additional explanation about it.

Step 5: Give the students grammar worksheet that contains the jazz chants with the grammatical word blanks in the transcription to fill the missing words in the blanks as they listen to the jazz chants.

Step 6: Let them practice and memorize the jazz chants in a well stress and rhythm. The teacher can divide the class into two groups, and have each group do the different section.

Step 7: Keep the pace of the class quick and lively, and try to always make sure students join in the practice.

In addition the teacher can use this way to review grammar through jazz chants (Bridges & Wright, 2000:4)

Step 1: Check the grammar focus for each jazz chant and choose one that you want to discuss or review. Make one copy of the recording script for every two students in your class.

Step 2: Write the grammar focus on the board and put students into pairs to make a few example of sentences using the grammar.

Step 3: Play the recording and have students note all the words how many times they hear the target grammar.

Step 4: Give each students a copy of the recording script, and play the recording again as they listen and read at the same time. Tell them to underline each example of the target grammar.

Step 5 : Finally, play the recording one more time and have students sing along.

As follow up activities, the researcher also gives them exercises in oral or written such as essay, fill in or matching test based on the grammar point that we focus on.

## **Research Methodology**

### **A. Samples**

The samples were 50 students from grade sixth of SD IT Hidayatullah Kota Bengkulu. And the target group were 12 students divided into 3 English proficiency levels (high, medium, and low), using purposive sampling.

**B. Variables**

Independent variables were students' English grammar abilities and attitude towards teaching English grammar through Jazz Chants. The dependent variable was teaching English grammar through Jazz Chants.

**C. Instrument**

The instruments used were the lesson plans, test of English grammar ability, a questionnaire, students' learning log and a teacher's journal.

**D. Data Collection**

Eight lesson plans were applied in 50 students after the pretest done. In the meantime, the students are asked to write their learning log, and the researcher wrote the teacher's journal. The students were interviewed by using a semi structured form after the teaching completed. Finally, the questionnaire of attitude was employed. The quantitative analyses were from a test of English grammar test ability and an attitude questionnaire. The qualitative analyses were drawn from students' learning log, a semi structured review, and a triangulation method teacher's journal.

## **FINDING AND DISCUSSION**

This study produced several important results. The posttest mean score (85.63 percent) of the students' English grammar abilities was significantly higher than the pretest one (60.80 percent) after the Jazz Chants technique applied. The students' attitude towards teaching English grammar was rated as good.

Characteristics of the activities may have encouraged interaction among the students in the language classroom. This could afford opportunity for language practice. Jazz Chants can be used to give students more authentic and rhythmic input since more opportunities for practice can be generated. Mimes, gestures and the students' physical response create a fun atmosphere in the classroom. They enjoy learning English grammar while having the chants. The students' attitude towards teaching English grammar using Jazz Chants activities was rated as good. This may result from having been provided adequate language functions in situations that occur in real communication leading to their confidence in practicing. They felt energetic and motivated to learn English grammar when using Jazz Chants. In addition, the students could develop their pronunciation since they could imitate the standard American intonation, pronunciation and its rhymes.



## SUGGESTION

Teacher should construct a variation of English grammar activities which motivate the students to learn. Teacher roles should be changed as a provider, an assistant, a consultant to increase effectiveness in the learning environment. Interaction in the language classroom can decrease students' anxiety in learning English grammar. Students should change the role from passive to active learners. Jazz Chants as one of alternatives in teaching English grammar to their students since learning English through Jazz Chants is a great and fun activity for them. In students' attitude side, It makes the students to respond the material better. They behave well during the class, since it has changed their views that learning English grammar is an enjoyable thing and not a bored and tense one. Besides that, Jazz Chants also help the students to improve their pronunciation, their listening skill and also to enlarge their vocabulary. In addition, the researcher would like to suggest other researchers to discuss other functions of Jazz Chants in teaching and learning process in the future

## References

- Best, J.W. and James V.K. 1993. *Research in education*. Boston, MA : Allyn and Bacon
- Bridges, LaVon. & Wright, Alice. 2000. Using Jazz Chants for Bilingual/ESL Students, available (online) <http://www.Oup.com/elt/catalogue/guidance-articles/jazzchants.htm>. Accessed on July 26<sup>th</sup>, 2005
- Cameron, Lynne. 2002. *Teaching Languages to Young Learners*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Duk-ki, Min. 1996. *Teaching English to Children: Focus on Listener's Response*, available (online) <http://www.Csusm.edu/structuresecond.htm>. Accessed on August 20<sup>th</sup>, 2005
- Graham, Carolyn. 1978. *Jazz Chants*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Hornby, A.S. 1992. *Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary of Current English, 5<sup>th</sup> ed.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Linse, Caroline. 2005. The children's response TPR and beyond. *Forum English teaching, vol 43 number 1*
- Ollila, Lloyd O and Margie I., Mayfield. 1992. *Emerging Literacy: Preschool, kindergarten, and Primary School*. Needham Heights, MA : Allyn and Bacon.
- Peck, Antony. 1988. *Language Teachers at Work: a description of Methods*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: prentice Hall Regent.

- Saricoban, A. and Metin, E. (October 2000). *Songs, Verse and Games for Teaching Grammar*, The Internet TESL Journal, Vol. VI, No. 10, October 2000 <http://iteslj.org/Techniques/Saricoban-Songs.html>. Accessed on July 26<sup>th</sup>, 2005
- Scarcella, Robin C. and Rebecca L. Oxford. 1992. *The Tapestry of Language Learning: The Individual in the Communicative Classroom*. Boston, MA: Heinle&Heinle Publishers.
- Tang, Frank. 2002. *Celebrating Twenty Five Years of Jazz Chants*, available (online). [http://www.nystesol.org/pub/idiom\\_archive/idiom\\_fall2003.html#jazzchants](http://www.nystesol.org/pub/idiom_archive/idiom_fall2003.html#jazzchants). Accessed on July 25<sup>th</sup>, 2005.
- Tank, Frank, and Loyet, Diane 2002. *Jazz Chants for Holiday*, available (online). [http://www.nystesol.org/pub/idiom\\_archive/idiom\\_fall2003.html#jazzchants](http://www.nystesol.org/pub/idiom_archive/idiom_fall2003.html#jazzchants). Accessed on July 25<sup>th</sup>, 2005.
- Wallen, Norman E., and Jack R. Fraenkel. 1991. *Educational Research: A Guide to the Process*. New York, NY: Mc Grow – Hill Inc.