

Assessing Grammatical Comprehension Capabilities of 2nd Semester English Class Students

Muji Endah Palupi

English Department
ABA BSI Jakarta

Jl. Salemba Tengah No. 45 Paseban, Jakarta Pusat

muji.mji@bsi.ac.id

Abstract - Nowadays, English is becoming an important language in the world. Most people use it for any disciplines. It is not only English for them, but also to comprehend its grammar. Then, comprehending English grammar it is not so easy, sometimes. For the English students it is a must. This makes them to be aware of English language in usage. English grammar it is like skeleton to strengthen making an English sentence, without it, nonsense. The goal of this study is to assess grammatical comprehension capabilities of second semester English class students at the collage. The writer uses Grammar Translation Method to assess the students' grammatical comprehension capabilities, how do they comprehend and solve the exercises that given by the lecturer, it would be seen their comprehension. The result of this analysis is expected to be a reference to other analyses to analyze students' English grammatical comprehension capabilities or other objects.

Key Words: English grammar, grammatical comprehension capabilities, Grammar Translation Method

I. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, English is becoming a trend for most people. Talking English is not easy as we think. We have to learn it intensively to gain the result. As we know that the foreigners also must learn its language as Indonesian people learn Indonesian. They have a tool to assess their language capabilities. In American it has TOEFL (Test of English as Foreign Language, and in Britain it has IELTS (International English Language Testing System). The most important thing to be learned is grammar. This section is to become requirement for a student to assess its grammatical comprehension. And, Indonesian also has a tool to assess Indonesian language capability through UKBI (*Uji Kemahiran Berbahasa Indonesia*) held by *Badan Bahasa* (Language Board) of Ministry of Education and Culture.

Comprehending English grammar is something that cannot be separated from 'parts of speech', the basic things of English grammar knowledge for every learner. Then, 'tenses', the basic formulas to form proportional sentences as well. Some people think that to learn grammar is something bored, because we must memorize the confused formulas that we do not know before. Actually, it can be resolved as a piece of cake. We must be patient to conquer it and find the unique slot to form a better sentence. It is required more times to comprehend grammar professionally.

Then, sentence is formed by combination of words. So, we cannot separate them from its esthetic form grammatically. To form a sentence esthetically and grammatically we must comprehend its

fractions. There are simple, compound, and complex sentences. So, do not forget the types, such as declarative, imperative, interrogative, and exclamatory sentences. Those are 'dead' requirements for us to conquer grammar basically.

As our English teacher taught us that grammar could be comprehended as long as we had curiosity to learn it. The curiosity brings us to dig the grammar's root comprehension. The ways to comprehend grammar could be started from the basic structure of sentence. They could be combined by parts of speech and strengthened by tenses. Over all, the composed sentence could be seen and accepted by the readers. A good composition is seen though the writer's skill to provide best words, so the readers "sunk" to the writer's work.

Grammar competence should be owned by English students. Grammar such a bone in English, it is strengthening English composition and other writing. This thing is absolutely important for them, as they required finishing the final task. So, they have signs or thing to alert in English writing. The lecturer just gives input to correct the writing. So, the heavy task is taken by students. Even the computer helps them in typing sometimes. But the students still have responsibility to give good writing.

After providing the reason, the writer gives this analysis by the title; **Assessing Grammatical Comprehension Capabilities of 2nd Semester English Class Students**. As we know that English students must conquer grammar or structure of English. It is a preparation for them to have higher level test, such as TOEFL or IELTS preparation. The material is taken from the subject of Pre-

Intermediate Grammar in second semester of English class. The writer tried to assess students' grammatical comprehension through Grammar Translation Method (GTM). This method expected to be a tool to measure how far the students could comprehend their grammatical comprehension.

II. THEORETICAL REVIEW

In this section, the writer would elaborate the theories those used in this analysis. There are teaching, English grammar, and Grammar Translation Method (GTM).

1. Teaching

As we know that he had been taught the teachers for many years. It started from primary till higher education. There many uncountable merits that cannot be mentioned given by the teachers. Gage (1962) said that teaching is form of interpersonal influence aimed at changing the behavior potential of another person. So, the duty of teacher is very heavy, he or she must change the students' behavior to be good and potential. It is not easy to make them changeable. A teacher must have "an iron mental" and unworn off patience to face them up to be changed properly.

According to Brubacher, teaching is an arrangement and manipulation of a situation in which there are gaps and obstructions which an individual will seek to overcome and from which he will learn in the course of doing so. Obviously, in every situation the teacher must handle various problems that made by the students. They need more attentions from the teacher, they make any noise, they do another thing outside the course, and they ask many useless questions. Actually, they can be handled as long as the teacher knows how to overcome it, and the students would obey the teacher's instructions directly.

Teaching has also concept to the teachers to understand teaching proportionally. There are traditional and modern concepts of teaching as seen on the table below:

Table 1. Teaching Concepts

Teaching Concepts	
Traditional	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Teaching is the act of imparting instructions to the learners in the classroom situation. The teacher gives information to the students, or one of the students reads from the text-book, while the other students silently follow him in their text-books
Modern	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Teaching is to cause the student to learn and acquire the desired

knowledge, skills and also desirable ways of living in the society.

- It is a process in which learner, teacher, curriculum and other variables are organized is a systematic and psychological way to attain some pre-determined goals.

Through these concepts, the teachers expected to have preparation for teaching and learning in order to face various obstacles that would probably happen in class. So, the performance of teaching should be advanced to keep the students develop all powers to attend. These concepts are intending to produce good learning for the students. Eventually, the relationship between teacher and student could be merged proportionally.

A key aspect of effective teaching is having a plan for what will happen in the classroom each day. Teaching and learning should be well planned with clear objectives that are understood by learners. The approaches to teaching and learning should engage all learners, encouraging them to be active partners in the process. The activities should be relevant to the needs of learners and to the program they are following. Creating such a plan involves setting realistic goals, deciding how to incorporate course textbooks and other required materials, and developing activities that will promote learning.

Therefore, the teaching should have the importance of teaching. The teacher should understand what he or she to provide to the students. As pictured on the diagram below:

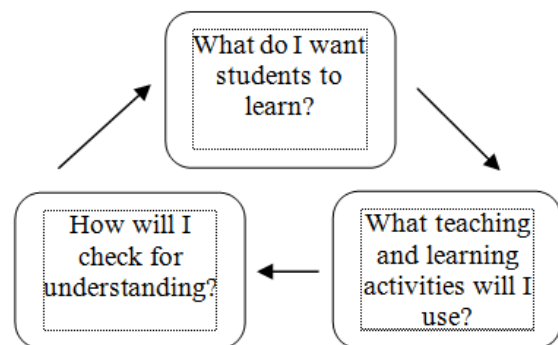


Figure 1. The Importance of Teaching

First, the teacher should know that the students' subject to learn. This is important for them to extend learning activities in the class. Second, the teaching aid should be prepared well. This thing is important to help the students comprehend the material that taught by the teacher. Finally, after doing those activities, the teacher must check and recheck the result of learning. It could be from the given exercise or task that provided by the teacher.

2. English Grammar

In English, grammar is like mortar that holds the bricks of vocabulary together. Without it, obviously the bricks to become tumbling down and that can cause embarrassing misunderstandings. People think that learning English grammar is hard, but it is a lot easier than many other languages. Surely, English is more than just memorizing grammar rules, the grammar must be inserted into our everyday use of the language. Theory and practice should always go proportionally.

One of the most fundamental claims of modern linguistic analysis is that all languages have a grammar. It could not be any other way. If a language is spoken, it must have a phonetic and phonological system; since it has words and sentences, it must also have morphology and syntax; and since these words and sentences have systematic meanings, there must obviously be semantic principles as well. Of course, these are the very things that make up a grammar.

Ancient attitudes to grammar still survive: many people are in awe of it, know little about it, tend to fear or dislike it, often find it baffling or boring if exposed to it at school, and yet a minority is fascinated by it: a field in which precise scholarship and nit-picking pedantry have co-existed for centuries.

Table 2. Grammatical Study Applications

Applications of Grammatical Study	
1	A recognition of grammatical structures is often essential for punctuation
2	A study of one's native grammar is helpful when one studies the grammar of a foreign language
3	A knowledge of grammar is a help in the interpretation of literary as well as nonliterary texts, since the interpretation of a passage sometimes depends crucially on grammatical analysis
4	A study of the grammatical resources of English is useful in composition: in particular, it can help you to evaluate the choices available to you when you come to revise an earlier written draft

Studying grammar should be equalized to the application of it. Grammar has structure that often to require punctuation. This thing is very essential for the foreign student to learn grammar, and it is a must. Learning grammar helps the students to interpret the sentence structure easily, or even hardly, it depends on the grammar level. To create a composition required grammar knowledge to be aware of mistaken words, clauses, or sentences. This could be an evaluation for the teachers who teach grammar professionally to the students. And the output could be seen from the students' composition or writing in any languages.

3. Grammar Translation Method (GTM)

As we know that grammar is "patent pattern" used in language structures. More than that, grammar is also being a method to teach foreign or second language. As Richards and Schmidt (2002), said that a method of foreign or second language teaching which makes use of translation and grammar study as the main teaching and learning activities. This method is expected to make the translation and grammar as main media in teaching and learning.

Grammar Translation Method (GTM) was originally used to teach Latin and Greek in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Latin stemmed from the Indo-European language family, is an ancient language spoken during the Roman Empire. Although writings in Latin still exist, it is referred to as an extinct language without a community of native speakers. As other languages in the world gradually evolve, Latin does not change owing to the fact that it is not spoken by people except for some groups of the Roman Catholic Church. Latin too was a lingua franca during the medieval period in Europe and it was categorized into two sub-branches: classical Latin and Vulgar Latin. It is from the Vulgar Latin that modern languages like French, Italian, Spanish, etc. Latin language uses a writing script known as the Latin alphabet.

Greek is the language principally spoken in Greece. It is also the native language to the southern Balkans, the Aegean Islands, western Asia Minor and Cyprus. Greek, which is also the official language of Greece and Cyprus, is known as the language with the longest history. The writing system of Greek, the Greek alphabet, stemmed from the Phoenician scripts. Greek language encompasses a very strong Greek literature of which the history runs back approximately to fourth century BC. Greek language was also the lingua franca (any language used for communication among speakers of other languages) during the times of the classical period. With regard to the history of the Greek language, six sub-periods can be identified: Proto-Greek, Mycenaean Greek, Ancient Greek, koine Greek, Medieval Greek and Modern Greek. In terms of the linguistic nature of Greek, it is acknowledged as a language with triglossia: the state of having different varieties for written and spoken. With its phonology, morphology, syntax and vocabulary, Greek is commonly acknowledged as an opulent language.

Based on Rahm (2009) in his online article, Grammar Translation Method is an old method which was originally used to teach dead languages which explains why it focuses mainly on the written form at the expense of the oral form. It was designed according to the faculty psychology approach which was very popular during the eighteenth and nineteenth century. It contended that "mental discipline was essential for strengthening the powers of the mind". The way to do this was through

learning classical literature of the Greeks and Romans.

The essentials could be viewed on the table below:

Table 3. The Essentials of GTM

The Essentials of Grammar Translation Method (GTM)	
Method	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use of mother tongue. - Vocabulary items are taught in the form of word lists. - Elaborate explanations of grammar. - Focus on the morphology and syntax. - Reading of difficult texts early in the course. - Practice focuses on exercises translating sentences or texts from mother tongue to the target language and vice versa.
Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Translation is the easiest and shortest way of explaining meaning of words and phrases. - Learners have no difficulties to understand the lesson as it is carried out in the mother tongue. - It is a labor-saving method as the teacher carries out everything in the mother tongue.
Criticism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What the method is good at is “teaching about the language”, not “teaching the language”. - Speaking or any kind of spontaneous creative output was missing from the curriculum. - Students lacked an active role in the classroom. - Very little attention is paid to communication. - Very little attention is paid to content. - Translation is sometimes misleading.

Those essentials of GTM has method to focus on vocabulary, morphology, syntax etc. To practice those things, the students should elaborate the explanations proportionally. So, between source and target language are balanced and accepted. The advantages of these essentials, the students could accept the easiest way to explain meaning and words. The difficulties could be solved by students. Mother-tongue is very important to be used in this thing. So, for the critics is how to teach the languages. Actually there are drawbacks in these essentials. And the duty of teacher is to bring the students to comprehend well the GTM.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this analysis, the writer uses Grammar Translation Method (GTM) to assess students' grammatical comprehension capabilities as the main object of this analysis. Beside that, the writer also searches for any valuable resources or even surfs on the internet.

IV. DISCUSSION

In this section, the writer is going to discuss the output that the writer did in teaching. It is begun from preparation, process, and evaluation in teaching. As seen on the diagram below:

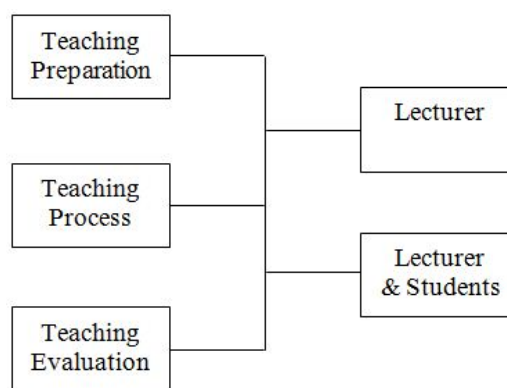


Figure 2. Teaching Participation

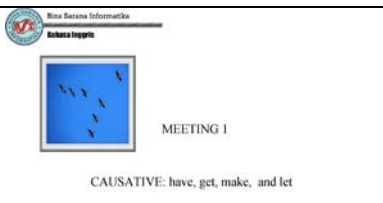
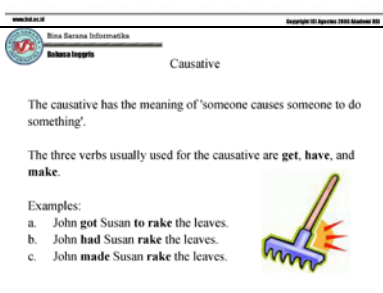
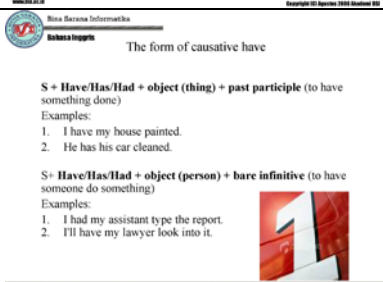
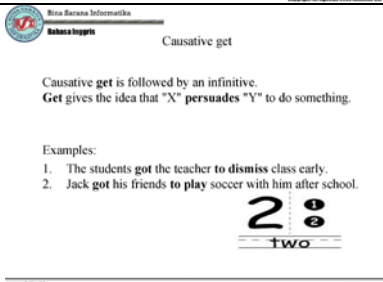
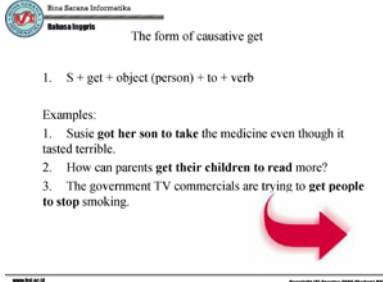
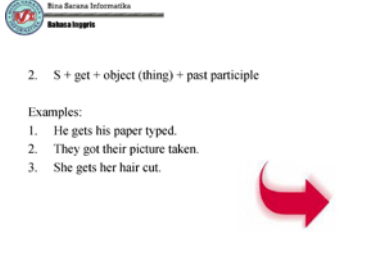
Started from the preparation of teaching, the teacher should have prepared the material of teaching. This part was really important for the writer to teach. Then, the lecturer to teach students in the class. The subject had already prepared well. The students had the handout slides that taken from the website. The lecturer began from the first meeting, explained the materials slide by slide. Gave them exercises, they tried to do them. The lecturer instructed one of them to come forward to do the exercise. After all, the lecturer evaluated the exercises that done by them. The lecturer corrected their exercises, and gives them the best answers of the exercises.

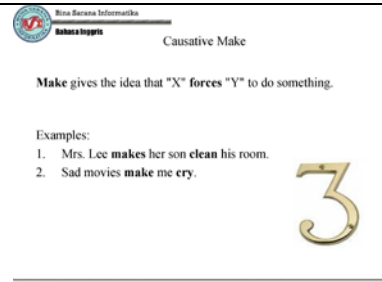
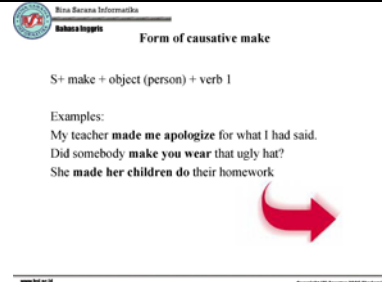
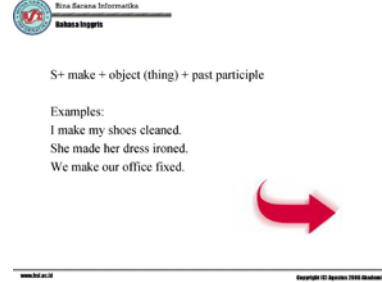
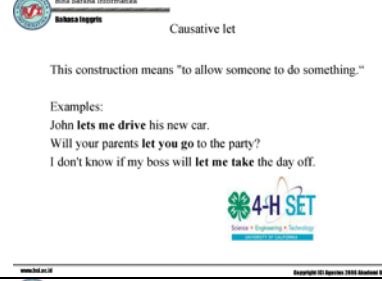
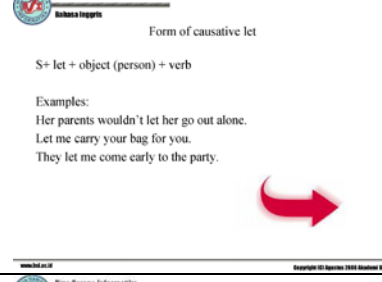
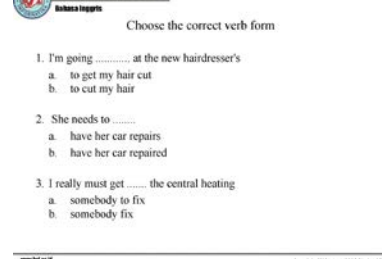
1. Teaching Preparation

The course taken on meeting 1 from the subject of Pre-Intermediate Grammar in second semester of English class. The writer as lecturer had already prepared the material before going to teach. This subject was the extension of grammar subject previously, it was basic grammar. The students should have comprehended the basic one. So, the lecturer just had to extend the next material.

Pre-Intermediate Grammar was the next level grammar material. The contents of this subject was discussing about verbs, clause, conjunction, and preposition. In this analysis, the writer chose the first

slides meeting as material, as seen on the table below:

Slide	Content
	Opening Slide
	Introduction to causative verbs
	Sentence form 1
	Sentence form 2
	Sentence form 3
	Sentence form 4

	Sentence form 5
	Sentence form 6
	Sentence form 7
	Sentence form 8
	Sentence form 9
	First Sentence Exercise - 1






 <p>Rina Sarana Informatika Bahasa Inggris</p> <p>Choose the correct verb form</p> <p>4. They ought to have replace the broken windows a. somebody b. somebody</p> <p>5. He while he was away on holiday a. had his flat burgled b. burgled his flat</p>	<p>First Sentence Exercise - 2</p>
 <p>Rina Sarana Informatika Bahasa Inggris</p> <p>Use the words in brackets to complete the sentences.</p> <p>1. We ... (the house/paint) at the moment. 2. I lost my key. I'll have to (another key/make). 3. When was the last time you ... (your hair/cut)? 4. This coat is dirty. I must (it/clean). 5. If you want to wear earrings, why don't you (your ears/pierce). 6. The teacher made Juan (leave) the room. 7. Toshiko had her car (repair) by a mechanic. 8. Ellen got Marvin..... (type) her paper. 9. I made Jane(call) her friend on the telephone. 10. We got our house.....(paint) last week.</p>	<p>Second Sentence Exercise - 1</p>
 <p>Rina Sarana Informatika Bahasa Inggris</p> <p>Choose the correct answer!</p> <p>1. George's nose was broken in a fight. What happened to George? a. he has his nose broken b. his nose brake down c. he had his nose broken d. she has his nose broken</p> <p>2. Sarah's bag was stolen on a train. What happened to Sarah? She a. has made someone stolen her bag b. has get someone to steal her bag c. had her bag stolen d. had his bag stolen</p>	<p>Third Sentence Exercise - 1</p>
 <p>Rina Sarana Informatika Bahasa Inggris</p> <p>Choose the correct answers!</p> <p>3. Fred's hat was blown off in the wind. What happened to Fred? a. he had his hat blown b. he made his hat blown c. he had someone blown his hat d. he got his hat blown</p> <p>4. Diane's passport was taken away from her by the police. What happened to Diane? a. she has got her passport take away b. she make her passport took away c. she got her passport takes away d. she got her passport taken away</p>	<p>Third Sentence Exercise - 2</p>
 <p>Rina Sarana Informatika Bahasa Inggris</p> <p>5. Rita didn't repair the roof by herself. She a. suggested someone to repair it b. had someone repair it c. confirmed someone to repair it d. choose someone to repair it</p>	<p>Third Sentence Exercise - 3</p>

Figure 3. Course Material of Pre-Int. Grammar

These slides had already downloaded by the students on BSI student website. The lecturer just extended to next step. This material had already prepared well, it had been revised by the team of English learning. It started from the opening of slide, introduction to causative verbs, sentence forms by using causative verbs, exercises. Causative verbs stood for get, have, and make. This form is to make someone to do or to make or to get something.

2. Teaching Process

In this section, the writer tries to explain how did teaching process run in the class. First, the writer as lecturer opened the course by greeting with Islamic greeting: "Assalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakaatuh?" and the students answered: "Walaikum salaam warahmatullahi wabarakaatuh!" The lecturer asked the students their news and the preparation of study in this semester. After small talking, the lecturer started to explain the materials.

Begun from the first slide, it was first meeting, talking about causative verbs, stood for get, make, and let. The causatives have each functions to someone causes someone to do something.

First: Causative "get" (gives the idea that "X" persuades "Y" to do something)

Examples:

1. The students got the teacher to dismiss class early.
2. Jack got his friends to play soccer with him after school.

Second: Causative "make" (gives the idea that "X" forces "Y" to do something)

Examples:

1. Mrs. Lee makes her son clean his room.
2. Sad movies make me cry.

Third: Causative "let" (allows someone to do something)

Examples:

1. John lets me drive his new car.
2. Will your parents let you go to the party?

The lecturer explained them slowly but sure. They got to comprehend well the functions, verbs, and examples. After that, lecturer gave the first exercise of multiple choices:

Choose the correct verb form:

1. I'm going at the new hairdresser's
 - a. to get my hair cut
 - b. to cut my hair
2. She needs to.....
 - a. have her car repairs
 - b. have her car repaired
3. I really must get the central heating.
 - a. somebody to fix
 - b. somebody fix

4. They ought to have.....replace the broken windows.
 - a. somebody to
 - b. somebody
5. He while he was away on holiday
 - a. had his flat burgled
 - b. burgled his flat

Most of them answered it correctly:

1. a. to get my hair cut
2. b. have her car repaired
3. a. somebody to fix
4. a. somebody to
5. a. burgled his flat

But while they were given to second exercise, it seemed to get difficulties.

Use the words in brackets to complete the sentences!

1. We(the house/paint) at the moment.
2. I lost my key. I'll have to (another key/make).
3. When was the last time you (your hair/cut)?
4. This coat is dirty. I must (it/clean).
5. If you want to wear earrings, why don't you (your ears/pierce).

Answers:

1. We paint the house at the moment.
2. I lost my key. I'll have to make it another key.
3. When was the last time you your hair cut?
4. This coat is dirty. I must have clean it.
5. If you want to wear earrings, why don't you pierce you ears.

True Answers:

1. We have to paint the house at the moment.
2. I lost my key. I'll have to make another key.
3. When was the last time you to cut your hair?
4. This coat is dirty. I must get clean it.
5. If you want to wear earrings, why don't you get pierce you ears.

The lecturer gave the correction directly number by number. Those first and second five numbers could be benchmark of students' capabilities to comprehend grammar. This material was the second level of parallel grammar subjects. The first one, they could answer almost correctly. But, on the second five, they found any difficulties to make it.

So students must be provided blank filling exercise to rehearse their skill in grammar. Most students just waited any answers on the exercise. The lecturer instructed one them to come forward to show his task, it could be seen the output. Actually, that was

poor act to do. The best was act was to provide another one such blank filling questions. It was to make them to be creative to find answers through designing or completing grammatical sentence forms.

After teaching, the lecturer closed the lecture of subject. The lecturer asked to the students to learn more about grammar. It was not only to do some exercises, but also to find out any resources of grammar knowledge well. So, the lecturer greeted the students by saying: "Wassalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakaatuh?" and the students answered: "Walaikum salaam warahmatullahi wabarakaatuh!".

3. Teaching Evaluation

After all, students had already shown their capabilities in comprehending grammar. The exercises those given by lecturer number by number were being a benchmark of students' grammatical capabilities. They could do the multiple choice exercise, but while give the blank filling one, they found any difficulties. This could be a note for the lecturer as the provider of materials.

The English students must have more knowledge in any English fields. They have been prepared as agents of change in the future through language skill. English language could be a media for them to conquer an international world. So they are expected to do more, or to act more. They must correct their own difficulties in English; even English is sometimes to be hard or to be easy.

This section is a note to lecturer and students that learn grammar. The capability must get rehearse mostly. It could be left or forgotten, time passes by quickly. Actually the power of grammar attached on three; parts of speech, tenses, and sentences. They could empower the learner of English. So, the final task of English learner is to learn harder to fill any English fields to complete or to improve the capability.

V. CONCLUSION

Grammar is an important thing for the students. A grammatical capability to be a measurer for them to students especially English. Grammar is such a bone to form a sentence. As we know that the power of grammar could be grabbed from the three; parts of speech, tenses, and sentences. Parts of them empower each side to form a sentence. Therefore, this analysis focuses on the students' capabilities to comprehend grammar.

The three parts seen in the theories show that teaching, English grammar, and Grammar Translation Method (GTM) is empowering this analysis. The lecturer has to know the essentials of teaching and how to teach well as a teacher or lecturer. Then, the

English grammar fills the knowledge of this analysis. The most important is Grammar Translation Method (GTM) that brings the lecturer how to provide and measure the students' grammatical capabilities.

So, the lecturer began from opening the material that provided by team learning that taken from students' website. It is a media for students to have course materials online. Then, the lecturer explaining and giving exercises. Those exercises are to measure their grammatical skill. At first, they could handle it, but in the second one they found any difficulties to answer them. It could be concluded that, the students must be given filling blank exercise to rehearse their own grammatical capabilities.

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