



Most difficult grammar contents for future teachers to cope with

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Background

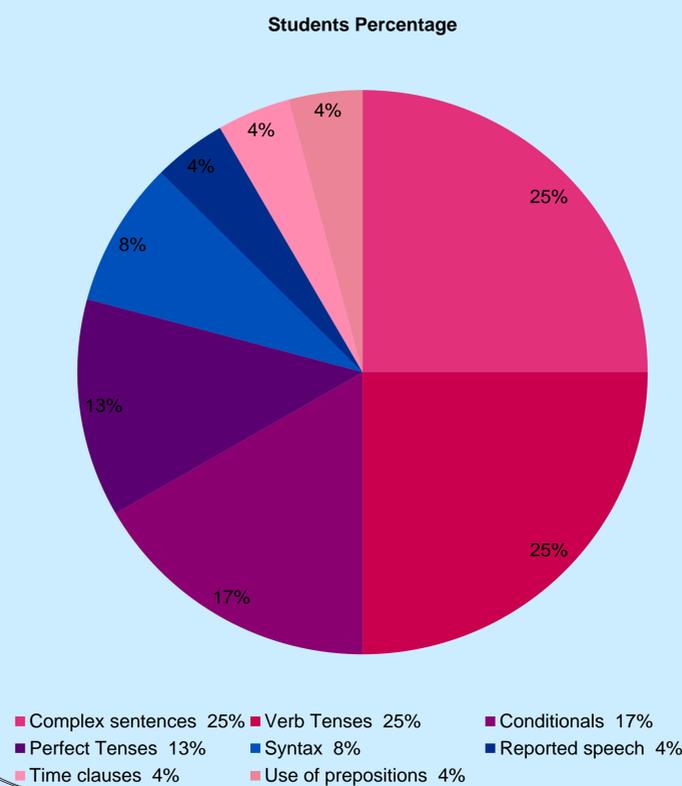
Grammar is considered a supportive element of communication in meaningful and contextualized English language use. It contributes to the achievement of communicative purposes in the learning and teaching process. However, grammar difficulty is one of the factors that affects second language acquisition. In an attempt to identify the problems future teachers face on their route to mastering the English language, research on the most difficult grammar contents for them to acquire was carried out at Universidad de La Frontera, Chile.

This research presents the results of a survey assigned to pre-service teachers of English enrolled in the Universidad de La Frontera's English Teacher Education Programme.

Findings

The following graph shows responses of students from a Morph-syntax class given in a survey answered at the end of the first term, 2016

Graph: Morph-syntax class



Reflections

The responses as indicated in the graph show that verb tenses, complex sentences, conditionals and perfect tenses are the most difficult contents for students to learn.

The information provided in the survey was confirmed in a focus group.

As possible reasons for these findings, students point out the fact that perfect tenses are not commonly used in their first language. Thus, first language interference seems to be the main problem.

In the case of complex sentences, verb tenses, conditionals and passive voice, students state that these contents were first introduced in college, and require more practice and time to be acquired.



Research Methods

An open exploratory survey was developed and applied to 24 students from an English Teacher Program at Universidad de La Frontera, after a series of four Grammar courses (July 2016).

Students were asked about the most difficult grammar contents they had to learn from the perspective of future English teachers.

The most difficult grammar contents for pre-service teachers were identified, decoded and quantified.

Students participated in a focus group to confirm the responses given in the exploratory survey. (December 2016)



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