INVESTIGATING TEACHER’S LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE IN TEACHING ENGLISH FOR ACADEMIC PURPOSES

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Abstract
Being a language teacher means they are not only fluent in using the target language but also possess competence in the study of language. Hence, linguistic knowledge is one essential skill a language teacher needs to possess. Using a descriptive qualitative research design of content analysis, this article aimed to investigate the linguistic competence of an English teacher and its implementation in the classroom. The recordings of online classroom sessions of an English for Academic Purposes course were observed. The teacher, as the main object of the study, was also interviewed to enrich understanding through open-ended questions. The collected audio-visual data was then analyzed and categorized based on the linguistic features employed by the teacher. While existing studies focus on the linguistic competence of pre-service teachers, the findings are inclined to negative results. Hence, by investigating the teaching practice of a teacher with 30 years of experience, the findings revealed the descriptions of linguistic features evident in the data and explained how those features helped the teacher in carrying out the teaching and learning session. Subsequently, it is recommended that English teachers increase their language awareness as well as linguistic competence so that they can perform better in meeting the students’ needs in acquiring and improving English language skills.

Keywords—Content analysis; English for academic purposes; language awareness; linguistic competence; linguistic knowledge

Introduction
As a science of language, linguistics plays a significant role in English language teaching. Of the components of English language teaching, such as classroom management and teaching methodology, the target language as the key point of teaching and learning experience is not commonly studied (Faez, Karas, & Uchihara, 2019). Despite its less attention, teachers’ understandings of language content reflect their linguistic competence. Hence, having linguistic competence is a foundation and the desired quality of any language teacher. This means not only that the teacher is proficient in using the target language; rather, it shows how the teacher understands the concept of the language and is able to explain it to the learners in a more understandable way.

Several studies have been conducted on the importance of linguistic competence in English language teaching. Most of the studies are in the context of teacher training or in English language education programs to prepare and equip prospective teachers with the appropriate knowledge needed to help learners (Bouguebs & Idri, 2021). These studies examine prospective or pre-service teachers’ awareness of the role of linguistic competence in their professional development as English teachers. The results show that despite the high awareness of the importance of linguistic competence, some still faced difficulties and did not have adequate linguistic competence to teach accurately. The struggle was shown in handling students’ questions and giving spontaneous responses regarding the language-related problems that emerged during teaching practice. This demonstrates how linguistic competence should have played its role in helping to prepare teachers to overcome issues in classrooms.
Similarly, the awareness of linguistic competence among teachers still requires greater attention (Almusawi, Ali, & Bin Alqallaf, 2019), both to accommodate the learners’ needs as well as the teacher’s professional development. Many English teachers focus more on teaching media and techniques while putting aside the significant role of linguistic knowledge in conducting effective teaching and learning practice (Anwar & Rosa, 2020). Moreover, studies on the relationship between a teacher’s language competence and their teaching practice are still underdeveloped. In addition, the attention to a teacher’s language competence has primarily focused on teachers with limited experience or perspective or pre-service teachers; hence, the discussions mostly lead to the teacher’s deficiency in language competence, showing a negative trend (Andrews & McNeill, 2005). Therefore, to fill this gap, the data source of this study was an English lecturer in a higher education institution with 30 years of teaching experience and a master’s degree in Teaching English as a Foreign Language. This article has the context of adult learners in a tertiary institution, specifically in an English for Academic Purposes classroom.

The research questions are as follows:
1. What are the descriptions of a teacher’s linguistic competence in teaching English for academic purposes?
2. What is the applicability of a teacher’s linguistic competence in teaching English for academic purposes?

Literature Review

Being a good language teacher means that one should have a prominent level of language awareness. It reflects teachers’ ability to make use of language in the learning materials to support students’ language learning process, particularly in handling difficulties and reflecting on their learning. A study that analyzed teachers’ language awareness practices showed that there is still potential to promote teachers’ language awareness, as it is deemed incomplete and insufficient (Broek, Marchand, Kemenade, Meijer, & Unsworth, 2022). Therefore, due to its importance, exploring teachers’ language awareness may give insight on how it contributes to their teaching practices.

Moreover, language awareness and language content are closely related as they determine the quality of teachers’ practices. In handling language content, linguistic knowledge is crucial. Some scholars have pointed out the key role of linguistics within the context of English language teaching (Abdulrahman & Abu-Ayyash, 2019). They see how these two concepts are interrelated. The scholars also highlight the urgent need for language teachers to improve their knowledge of the target language. Language teachers deliver comprehensible explanations of grammatical structures as well as respond to errors made by learners (Hayati, Vahdat, & Khoram, 2017). Therefore, teachers with knowledge of linguistics are expected to have better practice in teaching language.

This article has the context of adult learners in a tertiary institution, specifically in an English for Academic Purposes classroom. English for Academic Purposes is a subset of English Language Teaching that focuses on language use in academic contexts such as lectures, seminars, and research. Students are expected to be able to perceive and produce the target language in the formal context. Hence, the focus is on reading and writing skills. Reading and writing are complex learning processes, so it is important to stimulate students’ linguistic cognitive abilities to achieve meaning construction and production (Finkbeiner & Schluer, 2018). Therefore, the teacher’s language awareness and linguistic knowledge play a significant role in accommodating the students’ needs. To explore further on this matter, descriptions of linguistic features identified in a teaching practice are ways to reflect a language teacher’s linguistic competence.

The basic components of linguistic features to be analyzed in one’s linguistic competence include morphology, phonology, syntax, and semantics (Wachyudi, 2019). These terms, respectively, refer to how one can form words and modify word structures; how one pronounces words; how one constructs sentences; and how one discovers meanings and communicates ideas. These features also demonstrate “how languages are structured, how languages are used, and how they change” (Akan, Hassan, Islam, & Abdelmajd, 2017). In describing the findings,
this article refers to some established scholars in the field of linguistics to support the explanation; i.e., English morphology (Carstairs-McCarthy, 2002), English phonology (McMahon, 2002), English semantics (Kreidler, 2002), and English syntax (Miller, 2002). It is expected that by describing the linguistic features visible in teaching practices, we will gain insight into their applicability in assisting learners in acquiring a second or foreign language.

This article primarily adopts the framework offered by (Liddicoat & Curnow, 2004) on the main dimensions of linguistic descriptions and key concepts. They divide language descriptions into four categories: 1) sounds of language (phonetics and phonology); 2) word structures (morphology); 3) language structures (syntax), and 4) meanings in context (semantics). Phonology is defined as the study of a language’s sound system (Carstairs-McCarthy, 2002); thus, it covers how specific sounds are produced and used in the English language. Hence, morphology is a study of the internal structure of words (Öz, 2014), and it covers the formation of words and their use in the English language. Meanwhile, syntax refers to a set of rules that indicate how to form grammatically correct sentences (Zipoli, 2017); it highlights the use of grammatical rules, types of sentences, and sentence constructions. Lastly, the study of semantics discusses word meanings, sentence relationships, and discourse and context (Alsayed, 2019).

These are the theoretical frameworks adopted in this study. Hence, in presenting the findings, the framework is used to explain the practical use of linguistic knowledge and competence in teaching English for Academic Purposes.

Research Method

This descriptive, qualitative research used content analysis in investigating the object of the study. This approach was selected as it explores a phenomenon from an individual’s perspective and constructs an understanding of classroom practice (Broek, Marchand, Kemenade, Meijer, & Unsworth, 2022). Content analysis aims to interpret the textual meaning within texts—whether in the form of scripts, images, symbols, or audio (Gheyle & Jacobs, 2017). In this study, the text was in the form of audio-visual data containing recordings of online teaching practices held by a teacher. The data collected were five video recordings with a duration of 90 minutes each. The recordings showed the teacher and students’ interactions and lesson activities. The data source was an English for Academic Purposes course consisting of twenty postgraduate students and one English instructor. The teacher was selected due to her role as the program coordinator with thirty years of English language teaching experience. However, this study only limited its focus to the teacher’s verbal explanation and responses to examine her linguistic competence as reflected in the teaching practice. This means that students’ responses were excluded from the data.

After collecting the data, the recorded teaching practices were observed. The content was then categorized based on the linguistic features, and the categories were categorized, presented using tables, and explained. The results were analyzed using descriptive qualitative analysis, followed by a concluding remark. Moreover, to support the data, the teacher was also given some open-ended questions to confirm what was found in the data and to provide a better understanding of the role of linguistic competence in her teaching practice. The questions were directed based on the findings of the analysis. The teacher’s responses are presented in relation to the findings.

Results and Discussion

Descriptions of teacher’s linguistic competence

This study aims to explore the descriptions of the subject’s linguistic competence in the context of an English for Academic Purposes classroom. Linguistic competence consists of knowledge about morphological rules, syntax, phonology, and semantics (Syarif, 2016). Hence, these four linguistic features are identified and elaborated in this section in accordance with their use in teaching English for Academic Purposes.
Table 1. Teacher’s Phonological Knowledge

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phonetics and Phonology</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
<th>Note</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pronouncing the sound of /-ed/ in past tense</td>
<td>1.</td>
<td>“The word {improved} should be pronounced, /im pjuv-ed/, do not say /ved/ at the end. So, remember, it is not /im pjuved/, but /im pjuv-ed/.”</td>
<td>Pronunciation modeling and correction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.</td>
<td>“This one (word: stimulated), you must make the final ed sounds [tɪd], so it’s /stɪmjuletɪd/, not only /stɪmjulet/. Next time you see a word ends with [ted], you can make it sound /tɪd/; such as {started}, {pointed}, {shifted}, and so on.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pronouncing diphthongs</td>
<td>1.</td>
<td>“When you say the word, {town}, the vowel sound is not s[o], but [au]. So, it’s /təʊn/. It is the same as {down}, {crow}, {frown}, you pronounce them as /dəʊn/, /краʊn/, /fraʊn/.”</td>
<td>Pronunciation modeling and correction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.</td>
<td>“Wait, do not say /drʌvɪŋ/ (word: driving). It is not [ɪ], but it should be [aɪ]. Now say it, /drʌvɪŋ/.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pronouncing the sound of open-mid back rounded vowel [ɔ]</td>
<td>1.</td>
<td>“The word {pause} is pronounced /paʊz/, not /pauz/. Remember, not [au], but [ɔ].”</td>
<td>Pronunciation modeling and correction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.</td>
<td>“Do not be tricked with the letters in the word, when we see the word {caught}, we say /kɔːt/. You can ignore the letters [g] and [h] because they are silent.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pronouncing voiced sound</td>
<td>1.</td>
<td>“If you see the letter [v], the way you say it has to be different from the letter [f].”</td>
<td>Differentiating voiced sound from voiceless sound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- {Save} is pronounced /seɪv/ not /sef/.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- {Waving} is pronounced /weɪvɪŋ/ not /wɛfɪŋ/.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 shows that the teacher’s phonological knowledge is evident in the recordings. It can be inferred that the phonological knowledge was not explicitly displayed; rather, it functioned mostly to model the correct pronunciations as well as to correct students’ pronunciation errors. Some of the common phonological errors pointed out by the teacher, in this case, were: 1) the variation of the [ed] sound in the past tense; 2) mispronounced diphthongs; 3) mispronounced vowels; and 4) inaccurate voiced and voiceless sounds. Firstly, in relation to the theory, the inflectional ending of [-ed] to mark the past tense has some variations in terms of its sound (McMahon, 2002). If the verb ends in a voiced consonant {b, g, l, m, n, r, v, z} or vowel, the [-ed] ending is pronounced /d/, such as {developed, improved, obtained}; if it ends in a voiceless consonant {ch, f, h, k, p, s, sh}, the [-ed] is pronounced /t/, such as {matched, walked, abolished, developed}. If the verb’s final letter is [d] or [t], the [-ed] ending is pronounced /id/ (Oz, 2014). According to the findings, the teacher did not distinguish between the /d/ and /t/ sounds. However, the teacher pointed out the more basic mistakes that occurred in students’ pronunciation; i.e. [-ed] in [ped] sounds /ped/ instead of /pt/; and [-ed] in [ved] sounds /ved/ instead of /vd/. The teacher also emphasized that the past tense verbs ending in the letter [t] should sound like /tɪd/, such as {started and shifted}.

The next highlighted point is pronouncing diphthongs. A diphthong is a syllable that is generated by merging two vowels such that the sound starts with one vowel and progresses to another. The two most common diphthongs in the English language are the letter combinations [oi], as in choice, noise, and voice, and [ou] whose sound is /aʊ/ as in found, count, south, and
about. Similarly, the teacher also clarifies the vowel pronunciation, such as pronouncing [au] as [ɔ]. This is particularly important because according to the teacher, adult learners tend to follow the way their mother tongue pronounces words, which is the same as the letters on which the words are written. Another is distinguishing the sounds /f/ and /v/, which the teacher pointed out several times. [f] is a voiceless labiodental fricative, while [v] is a voiced labiodental fricative where the sounds are produced by the top teeth and bottom lip, leaving a friction of air coming through a narrow gap between the lips (McMahon, 2002). The only difference is between their voiced and voiceless manners. The teacher corrected the students on this aspect, as well as modeled the sound to demonstrate it to them. Therefore, out of these three points, without mentioning any phonological jargon, the teacher transferred her linguistic knowledge in terms of how sounds should be produced to have accurate pronunciation in the English language. In addition, the teacher also gave comments regarding the use of phonological knowledge and stated that:

“It is important to correct the pronunciation mistakes made by students, especially to avoid catching different meanings.”

The teacher highlighted how different sounds may cause others to mishear the words and result in different meanings and perceptions. Since the English language is a means of communication, it is important to be clear to use the language effectively. It can also be inferred that English teachers are strongly encouraged to develop their phonological competence and knowledge to set a good example for their students in producing sounds and pronouncing words in the English language.

Table 2. Teacher’s Morphological Knowledge

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Morphology</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
<th>Note</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Item</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparative and Superlative</td>
<td>1. “If the syllables are three or more, like {beautiful}, {interesting}, {confusing}, we need to use {more}. It is {more beautiful than}, {more interesting than}.”</td>
<td>Rule explanation and modeling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. “You need to be careful with the irregulars. Remember the most common ones are [good, better, best], and [bad, worse, worst].”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compound word</td>
<td>1. “Here we have a sentence: {the biosphere is the thin layer of soil, water, and air in which all life exists}. Can you guess what {biosphere} is? To guess the word, we can break it down. {Bio} means life, and {sphere} means surface or area. Now, we can get the meaning of the word. In English, some words are a combination of two different words.”</td>
<td>Understanding compound words by breaking them down and finding meanings to enrich vocabulary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Derivational suffixes</td>
<td>1. “Suffixes can help you answer questions related with vocabulary. It would be great if you could memorize this list. For example, the word {communicate} is a verb. If it is added with the suffix {-ion}, it becomes a noun, {communication}.”</td>
<td>Strategies in vocabulary building</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In linguistics, a morpheme is conventionally indicated between braces. For example, the word {recreating} consists of {re}, {create}, and {ing}. Hence, table 2 uses these braces to highlight the words and morphemes being pointed out. Morphological knowledge is important as it serves as the basis for both reading and writing. It contributes mostly to the development of students’ vocabulary knowledge. This is in line with (Juliana, 2018), (Anwar & Rosa, 2020), and (Sulistyawati, Nugroho, & Bram, 2021), highlighting the relationship between vocabulary knowledge acquired through morphological knowledge and reading comprehension. Understanding how words are formed and their construction of meanings is believed to increase...
one’s reading comprehension.

The descriptions of morphological knowledge found in this study include comparative and superlative, compound words, and derivational suffixes. In studying Academic English, students learn about paragraphs of comparison and contrast. Hence, the morphological process within the formation of comparative and superlative adjectives is evident in the data. The teacher explicitly stated the rule and modelled the examples, including when to use {-er} and {more} in forming comparative adjectives, {-est} and {most} in forming superlative adjectives, as well as the irregularities. The second point is compounding or forming compound verbs. As the name suggests, compound means consisting of two or more separate words to form one meaningful word. One example presented in this study is noun-noun (NN) compounding (Carstairs-McCarthy, 2002), in which the meanings of the compound words are determined by the morphemes constructing them. A simple illustration would be the word {readable} whose meaning is derived from the meanings of {read} and {able}; i.e., to be able to be read easily.

Table 2 shows how the teacher picked up some terms and analyzed the words to decipher their meanings based on the morphemes that form them. The teacher suggested that meanings can be derived by looking at the individual words. Hence, the teacher used her morphological knowledge to demonstrate how one can guess meanings from compound words and how to form one by combining two morphemes to construct a meaningful word. The other highlighted points in morphological knowledge are derivational suffixes. Derivational suffixes are commonly used to transform a word from one lexical category into another. Hence, the grammatical class of the world changes. The examples can be seen in Table 3. It shows how the teacher intentionally explained the use of suffixes in changing and forming words. There is also a pattern indicating what lexical category a word belongs to that can be recognized by students.

In terms of the linguistic description, the findings are in line with (Öz, 2014), stating that our morphological knowledge consists of affixes and compounds. Moreover, the importance of derivational and inflectional processes in forming words is also highlighted by (Anwar & Rosa, 2020), which should be explicitly introduced to students. This has been done by the teacher in this study. Similarly, the morphological strategies to increase students’ vocabulary development can be enhanced through affixes (Sulistyawati, Nugroho, & Bram, 2021). In addition, in terms of its importance and urgency, when morphological and lexical knowledge are rarely applied, particularly in teaching vocabulary, students will struggle more in developing their vocabulary acquisition (Jiang, 2020). Therefore, to support her students in exploring a wide range of academic texts, the teacher in this study applied her morphological knowledge into applicable strategies for students’ vocabulary building and understanding of contextual clues. These help students face unfamiliar words in reading and answer comprehension questions that follow.

### Table 3. Teacher’s Syntactic Knowledge

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Syntax</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
<th>Note</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Part of Sentences</td>
<td>“Now, let’s identify the subject, verb, object, and complement in each sentence.” Q1. {Some scientific journals (subject) are (verb) now available online (complement)}. Q2. {Memorizing difficult words (subject) takes (verb) time (object)}.</td>
<td>Monitoring students’ progress in identifying part of sentences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentence structure I: Simple Sentence</td>
<td>“Let us look at the sample sentence: {Relations between the European Union (EU) and Indonesia are now more than three decades old and have been influenced by the EU’s partnership with the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN)}. This sentence is quite long, but is there more than one subject? There is only one, {relations between the EU and Indonesia}, so this is a simple sentence. A simple sentence has at least one subject.</td>
<td>Identifying types of sentences</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sentence Structure II: Compound Sentence

“Let us do this activity of identifying types of sentences, \{sweat glands are coiled tubes in the dermis, and they have little ducts\}. This is a compound sentence. Why? Because there are two sentences connected with \{and\}.”

Sentence Structure III: Complex Sentence

“By changing the position of the subject and verb, we can transform a question into a noun clause to make a complex sentence. Let us practice.”

Q: \{How can we evaluate our ecological impacts?\}
T: \{The officials want to know how we can evaluate our ecological impacts\}. Change the position.

Active to passive voice

“We can change the sentence structure from active to passive voice to do paraphrasing. We can modify the position of words to avoid plagiarism. For example:

1. \{Alfred Nobel left money to be awarded to people who have done important things to help humankind\}. This is an active sentence:
\{Alfred Nobel left money\}.
2. People who have made significant contributions to humanity are granted financial awards from a legacy left by Alfred Nobel. This is a passive sentence: \{people are granted… by Alfred Nobel\}. Pay attention to the pattern and position of subject and verb.”

While morphology covers words as units of meaning, syntax covers units of sentence structure. It primarily deals with sentence construction (Miller, 2002). Thus, the descriptions of syntactic knowledge in Table 3 include parts of sentences; three sentence structures (simple, compound, and complex); noun phrases, and active-passive voice. These are reflected in the teaching practice explicitly. Parts of sentences, or lexical categories of subject, verb, object, and complement, are evident. These were used to check students’ understanding and monitor their ability to identify parts of sentences. According to the teacher, this is one of the basics that must be acquired by students. This is also important as it serves as a basic understanding of sentence construction in the English language. Therefore, the teacher felt the need to emphasize this language point and make sure that the students grasped the concept. The teacher also introduced the three sentence structures, i.e., simple, compound, and complex. Not only are the students expected to identify each sentence structure, but they can also form proper sentence structures by following the rules and principles demonstrated by the teacher. The teacher also used scaffolding strategies in transferring her syntactic knowledge to help learners understand the concepts, starting from the simplest ones to the more complex ones. In other words, the teacher started with simple sentences, then compound sentences along with coordinating conjunctions, and the last was complex sentences with subordinate clauses. The teacher also gave opportunities for students to create their own sentences based on the concept.

In addition, the concepts of noun phrases, noun clauses, and active and passive voices were also introduced to equip students to improve their writing skills as the output of the course. Sentences with passive voice and clauses are among the most difficult types of sentences (Zipoli, 2017). Similarly, the central concept of the main clause and subordinate clause is necessary to make up effective writing. Therefore, it is in line with this study as the teacher also perceived the concepts as important to be introduced and clarified, particularly in the context of academic English in which sentence complexity is expected.
The teacher confirmed the students’ understanding, clarified misunderstandings, and gave feedback for improvement. A linguistically aware teacher understands not just how language works but also how students struggle with language (Wright, 2002); the teacher also has the same opinion in which she puts effort into seeing the challenges and difficulties faced by students and tries to produce an easy-to-understand explanation regarding the lexical and grammatical concepts. This demonstrates the importance of syntactic knowledge, and it also supports the findings that knowledge of syntax can strengthen and enrich teachers’ linguistic knowledge (Adityas, Oktavianti, & Prayogi, 2019).

### Table 4. Teacher’s Semantic Knowledge

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>Semantics</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
<th>Note</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lexical relation (synonymy)</td>
<td>1.</td>
<td>“To paraphrase and avoid plagiarism, we can use synonymy for words by finding words with similar or identical meanings. For example, you can replace: {report} with {state}; {decide} with {determine}.”</td>
<td>Strategies in Paraphrasing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammatical semantic</td>
<td>1.</td>
<td>“These pairs of words can be either verbs or nouns depending on the context. {Increase – increase}, {decrease – decrease}, and {rise – rise}. Look at the sample sentences: {The sales numbers increased greatly over the last year}. {Increase} functions as a verb. The word is in the past form with {-ed}. So, it must be a verb.”</td>
<td>Describing graphs and charts using proper nouns and verbs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signal words</td>
<td>1.</td>
<td>“Markers for cause-and-effect text organization are {due to}, {as a result of}, {the effects of}, {since}, {because}, {because of}, {the causes}, {thus}, {therefore}, and {hence}. If you can remember these, it will help you when you write this type of text organization.”</td>
<td>Making sure that the students are aware of the meanings of the signal words to help them identify the text organization</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Semantics is an area of linguistic competence that covers word meanings and senses (Alsayed, 2019). Table 4 shows that the semantic knowledge covered in this study includes lexical relations, grammatical semantics, signal words of text organizations, and contextual meanings in text. Having semantic knowledge allows teachers to understand how words mean and how words and syntax are combined to make sentences meaningful (Curzan & Addams, 2014). Recognizing the complexity of meanings in words is necessary (Kreidler, 2002). Semantics is not only interrelated with both morphology and syntax, but it is also equally as important.

Based on the findings, semantic knowledge has its role, particularly in facilitating reading comprehension, as it was found in (Setiyadi, Muhammad Sukirlan, & Maphul, 2018) that students can identify markers or transition devices to help them comprehend a reading lesson. The semantic knowledge demonstrated by the teacher was intended to offer strategies in paraphrasing by searching for synonymous words; describing graphs and charts in writing practice; identifying text organization to be familiar with various texts; and identifying meanings from context clues to support reading comprehension. Learning the meanings of lexicons has a meaningful relationship with learning the language (Dehghan & Soleimani, 2021). Hence, semantic knowledge has its role in facilitating learners’ development of their vocabulary acquisition. In addition, understanding the meanings of a word accurately is the
essential aspect of vocabulary development (Jiang, 2020). As Table 4 shows, the teacher also attempted to introduce the concept of contextual meanings in her teaching. This is in line with (Wangru, 2016) and (Boran, 2018), who claimed that word meanings are always relational and context-sensitive. Therefore, through the teacher’s semantic knowledge, she was able to clarify the concept and demonstrate how students could perceive meanings from the contextual clues.

### The Applicability of the Teacher’s Linguistic Competence

Subsequently, the applicability of the teacher’s linguistic knowledge is shown in the classroom acts and strategies conducted by the teacher, which are in line with (Richards, 2017). These strategies can be seen from the recordings as she interacted with her students. It also reflects how linguistic competence plays its role in English language teaching. Hence, by using her linguistic knowledge, she is capable of:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5. Applicability of teacher’s linguistic competence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Modelling the pronunciation of words and sentences ☑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Asking and answering students’ questions ☑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Using terminology related to language ☑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Giving explanations ☑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Providing corrective feedback ☑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Explaining the meaning of words or sentences ☑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Providing examples of how words and other items are used ☑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Checking students’ understanding ☑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Giving feedback on the accuracy and appropriacy of students’ language ☑</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 demonstrates the applicability of the teacher’s linguistic competence as proposed by (Richards, 2017). These findings are in line with and supported by some previous studies. Based on the data in this study, nine functions were identified. As previously discussed, the teacher used her linguistic competence to model the pronunciation of words and sentences [1]. This can be seen in the discussion of phonological and morphological knowledge as it is related to how words are pronounced. The applicability of asking and answering students’ questions, giving explanations, providing corrective feedback, checking their understanding, and giving feedback on the accuracy and appropriacy of students’ language [2, 4, 5, 8, and 9] can be applied to all the linguistic aspects. Linguistic competence helped the teacher solve the students’ problems in understanding and practicing the language points. The role of linguistic competence in solving students’ problems (Sulistyawati, Nugroho, & Bram, 2021). The problems faced by students include a lack of vocabulary knowledge and writing skills. They reveal that the use of morphological and syntactical knowledge leads to the strategies in word-formation and the rules of grammatically correct sentences contribute to enhancing students’ reading comprehension and writing skills.

Using terminology related to language [3] was also evident in this study, and one of the terms used by the teacher was suffixes. In vocabulary learning, the teacher intentionally used this term to point out its function to the students so that they could apply it. Similarly, the roles of morphology in learning English were examined and revealed that they positively affect the teaching and learning process (Anwar & Rosa, 2020), particularly in helping students form words in a language process based on patterns such as the use of prefixes and suffixes. Recognizing morphemes in suffixes allows students to guess the meanings of words and be aware of how words can be transformed, which leads to better reading comprehension (Öz, 2014). Furthermore, the teacher stated in the interview that a variety of linguistic terminologies can sometimes be overwhelming to students. However, she was sure that it was important for students to know and be familiar with those terms to help them understand English vocabulary and language eventually. Therefore, aside from introducing the terms and concepts, practicing using the language is equally important and required.
Moreover, explaining the meaning of words or sentences and providing examples of how words and other items are used [6 and 7] are also evident as an attempt to facilitate students’ vocabulary development. Considering that vocabulary teaching consists of three elements of form, meaning, and usage (Jiang, 2020), this supports the notion that the teacher’s morphological, syntactical, and semantic knowledge is valuable and plays a role in the teaching and learning process. Moreover, pedagogical intervention is needed to enhance students’ cognitive ability in perceiving word meanings with their appropriacy in each context. However, it is also important to note that linguistic knowledge may not be the only factor that contributes to the teacher’s teaching practice. In this case, the teacher already has 30 years of teaching experience. Hence, in the interview, the teacher stated that:

“As much as linguistic knowledge is necessary, having experience is also important. Throughout my experience, I encountered interesting questions from students, for which at that time I might not have known the answers yet. I learned a lot from my students, through their problems and challenges, so that I could help solve them.”

As some previous studies examined the linguistic knowledge of prospective teachers, and the results’ tendency was negative, such as teachers still faced difficulties in solving students’ problems and did not have adequate linguistic competence to teach accurately despite high awareness of the importance of linguistic knowledge to a teacher’s professional development. Hence, this study contrasted them by showing that one of the practical solutions to the problems they stated would be to obtain more teaching experience while constantly demonstrating their linguistic competence as well as actively interacting with students so that the teachers can identify students’ common problems and produce proper solutions.

The findings have shown the significant role of a teacher’s linguistic competence in facilitating learners’ language development. The teacher in this study also commented that her explanations of grammatical features, for instance, are intended to recall what the students have learned throughout their lives. The teacher also applies her linguistic knowledge to model and illustrate examples of the correct form of words or sentences and to give corrective feedback to the students for their personal improvements. This statement supports the idea that language teachers equipped with linguistic knowledge will handle students’ issues better and provide a better explanation because they are aware of their teaching content. In addition, linguistic knowledge also makes the teacher more confident. Teachers’ confidence in their subject-matter knowledge has risen because of enhanced language knowledge and the capacity to apply that knowledge to pedagogical practice (Andrews, 2007). This is in line with the teacher’s statement, claiming that her confidence increased along the way as she picked up questions and problems from the students, reflected on them, and enhanced her knowledge of language even more.

Conclusion

Linguistics, as a study of language, has influenced the realm of English language teaching. A teacher’s linguistic competence has benefits for supporting their teaching performance and facilitating students’ cognitive learning. Teachers with linguistic knowledge can break down and simplify the rules of the English language for students. Linguistics' real contribution to language teaching is to raise awareness and skills to be a better language teacher. The knowledge of linguistics can also be applied in carrying out teaching and learning strategies to accommodate the students’ needs. The findings of this study exemplified how the linguistic competence of a teacher is applied in the classroom, consisting of phonological, morphological, syntactic, and semantic knowledge. Since the class is specified for an Academic English course in higher education, the dominating linguistic feature is syntactic knowledge, as it covers the lexical and grammatical points required in reading comprehension and academic writing.

In addition, there are nine demonstrations of linguistic competence identified in this study, i.e., modeling the pronunciation of words and sentences, asking and answering students’ questions, using terminology related to language, giving explanations, providing corrective feedback, explaining the meaning of words or sentences, providing examples of how words and other items are used, checking students’ understanding, and giving feedback on the accuracy and appropriacy of students’ language. Therefore, it is recommended that language teachers, be
they novice or experienced, strengthen their knowledge of the language system. As the world rapidly grows along with the advancement of technology, teachers should never stop learning and improving their skills to meet the needs of today’s learners.

**Suggestion**

Further research can be demonstrated by exploring the wider context of English teachers’ linguistic competence, including at various educational levels, such as primary and secondary school. Different students’ needs may result in different findings in looking at the portrait of the teacher’s language awareness, linguistic knowledge, and linguistic competence. Studies with more subjects can also be carried out to provide more comprehensive results in understanding the practicality of linguistics as a study of language to facilitate language learning effectively. More subjects can be studied to provide more comprehensive results in understanding the practicality of linguistics as a study of language to effectively facilitate language learning. In addition, studies that examine the level of linguistic competence of language teachers in Indonesia in specific context may also be needed, so that improvements can be proposed to ensure the teachers’ professional development.

**Reference**


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