Part of Speech Classification by EFL Students': A Review about their Familiarity

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ABSTRACT

This study is the reflection of part of speech classification by EFL students. This study intended to deduce the students' familiarity of parts of speech in the EFL Context. The study was accomplished in Universitas Sulawesi Barat, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, English education department in the academic year 2023-2024. The sample was 97 students of the third semester in English Education department who will begin intermediate grammar class. The instruments used to collect data were tests that contained two types. The first test was the students chose the part of speech of 24 words while the second test was the students answered 14 multiple choices. The result of this study revealed that students'familiarity about part of speech was still fair. This was evidenced by the data that has been analyzed that the percentage of students who categorized words into the correct part of speech only reached an average of 40%. Besides, the results of multiple choices showed that the most comprehended part of speech was pronoun. It was around 21.6% - 22.7% of the errors found in the students' answers and the least comprehended part of speech was adverb and preposition that reached the correct answer around 25.8 %– 29.9%. Thus, it was suggested that the students should learn more about parts of speech. The lecturer must pair the topics taught in class with part of speech so that students became familiar with it and can ultimately differentiate.

1. Introduction

Nowadays, English becomes an investment for everyone in this world. Since, it is well-known as an international language that has been conquered by many people around the world, people aware of the use of English itself. Even though, It may not be the most spoken language in the world, but it is the official language of 53 countries and is spoken by around 400 million people across the globe (Ilyosovna, 2020). English has also become a requirement in various ways, for instance, continuing school, looking for a job, looking for scholarships, etc. Added to this the empirical fact, most of the reference books used in the higher education environment in Indonesia are still written or published in foreign languages, especially English (Putri 2018). Thus, English has been assumed such a major role, several researchers have tried to coin a term by considering the various aspects of the use of English in diverse settings (Rao, 2019).

However, learning English is not as easy as one might think because many things must be learned and it is possible that the things that have been learned may be unnecessarily wordy because English is not a mother tongue or a second language, but a foreign language studied by students in our country (Aswad et al., 2019; Rahman, 2018;Hasnia et al., 2022; Said et al., 2021). One aspect that must be conquered in learning English is proficiency in grammar which is the most prominent element of this language. Overpowering the grammar will affect the mastery the skills in English like listening, writing, reading even speaking. Therefore, in studying language formally, grammar is a subject that should be studied in depth. Grammar is a substantial English element commonly considered as a challenging component (Aniuranti, & Wulandari 2021). Utomo and Ahsanah (2020) also mention that mastering grammar assists the learners in constructing better language structure and create meaningful messages. The other opinion from Huddleston and Pullum (2007) argues that the grammar of Standard English is much more stable and uniform than its pronunciation or word stock: there is remarkably little dispute about what is grammatical (in compliance with the rules of grammar) and what isn't. According to Amaral and Roeper, (2014), it was found that grammar refers to the set of rules that allow us to combine words in our language into larger units. Thus, it can be said that grammar is an English element

where the students will learn about rules which can be used to construct sentences and try to show why a sentence can be acceptable.

In general, grammar is viewed by many students as a challenging and uninteresting topic. The fact that they have to commit the rules to memory makes them dislike learning grammar. As a result, they are unable to learn well, particularly when it comes to basic tasks like writing or using proper language while presenting information to a friend. One of the reasons why students make mistakes with grammar is that they don't grasp the fundamental concepts of grammar, such as parts of speech. In Effendi et al., (2017), Ellis states that there are three categories of obstacles that might be linked to learning grammar: linguistic, psychological, and environmental issues. Language factors describe the structure of a language's grammar, environment factors deal with how much information is gathered from the outside world, and psychological variables deal with learning capacity. The ability to master parts of speech is one of the linguistic components of grammar.

One of the grammatical concepts that serves as the ground and foundation for a further study of grammar is part of speech. Similar to a building, if the foundation is solid, the walls and roof will likewise be sturdy even under the force of heavy winds. Similar to this, if students have mastered this content, their mastery of grammar will be even more remarkable. This is because, in order to write or speak in English, we must be aware of the word's class so that we don't put it in the incorrect position, which will not be supported by grammar. If that occurs, it may indicate that the intended meaning is not implied by the statement as written.

The phrase "part of speech" refers to how words are categorized according to their roles in conventional grammar (Nordquist in Ramadhani, 2022). Learning the morphology and grammatical structure of a portion of speech is a prerequisite for understanding it (Maili et al., 2022). Eight parts of speech—noun, pronoun, verb, adjective, adverb, preposition, conjunction, and interjection—each have their own word members. To create the greatest phrase, the pupils need to be proficient in each one. They cannot include any word in the rules even if they have learned every grammatical rule by heart and neglect to study about parts of speech. Furthermore, a word may have two or more parts of speech. For example, the word "over" can be an adverb or a preposition. Book is the other word. It is both a verb and a noun. As a result, if children do not grasp portion of speech, they become perplexed about how to insert the word in the sentence. According to the findings of the first meeting's observation in the intermediate grammar class, many third-semester students in the English education department of the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education were still unable to form sentences flawlessly. They put the word no to the function. For example, they said "I will presentation and I should determination, etc. This is a proof that probably almost all students still do not understand the part of speech.

Hence, the researchers intend to find out how deep the students' familiarity with the part of speech in order the lecture can adapt it to the teaching material in the intermediate grammar class because it is feared that students have leveled up, but in reality, their abilities are still minimal, especially in the part of speech which is the basic material. Therefore, in this research, the researcher attempts to review students' understanding in classifying parts of speech to find out the best way in teaching method.

2. Methodology

The design of this research was interpreting a quantitative data into a descriptive form in seeking to acquire relevant data on the English students' familiarity with part of speech.

The participant of this research is ninety-seven students in the third semester of English Education Department, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Sulawesi Barat in the academic year 2023-2024. They joined in intermediate grammar class as one of the obligation subjects in their bachelor's degree technique study program. The participants were chosen purposively around 97 students. They were chosen because they have learned about parts of speech in the first semester.

The instruments used in this research were the specific English tests about parts of speech classification. The test was used to investigate closely how students' familiarity with parts of speech that had learned in the first semester. There were eight parts of speech that the students investigated namely noun, pronoun, verb, adjective, adverb, preposition, conjunction, and interjection. The test consisted of two parts; the first was the students chose or determined the part of speech of 24 words. On the second test the students answered 14 multiple choices that related to each part of speech.

In collecting data, this research applied a quantitative descriptive method which was taken by using the test. The researcher gave some tests for the students about part of speech on 21 August 2023 via google form. Allocation of time 20 minutes to finish this test.

The data was analyzed using Descriptive Analysis Percentage. This percentage descriptive is processed by frequency divided by the number of respondents and multiplied by 100 percent, as follows: P = f/N x 100%

Description:

P = Percentage

f = Frequency

N = Number of Respondents

100% = Constant Number The calculation of this descriptive percentage is as follows

After the calculation, the researchers illustrated the result in descriptive form to make a discussion for each part of the topic that was discussed in this research.

3. Result and Discussion

The result and discussion are illustrated based on the data from the test namely the test in classifying the part of speech and the test in multiple choice. All the results were representative of the student's familiarity with part of speech which was explained and reviewed in detail below.

3.1. The students' familiarity with part of speech by classifying words into the function

In this part, the students were given some words, then they determined part of speech of those words whether the word was a verb, noun, adjective, adverb, pronoun, preposition, conjunction, or interjection.
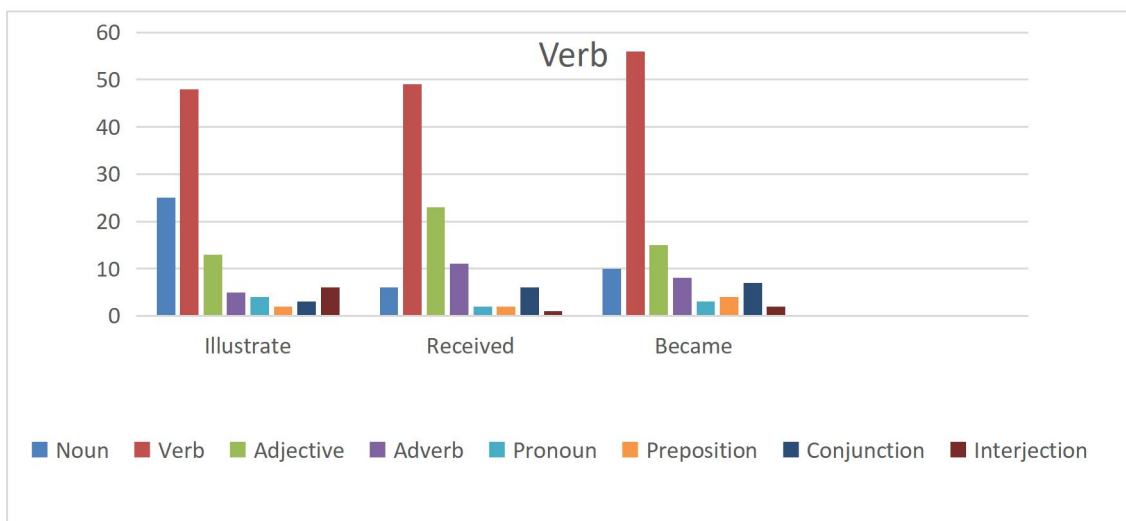

Figure 1. Students' familiarity in categorizing Verb

Based on the graph above, there were three verbs that the students must determine. Those words were Illustrate, Received, and Became. From 97 students, 48 students determined illustrate as a verb. While there were 58 students chose "Illustrate" as a Noun, pronoun, preposition, adjective, conjunction, and interjection. In the other situation, 9 students chose two parts of speech for the word "Illustrate". It meant that the student's familiarity with part of speech of "Illustrate" as a verb just attained 49.48%. The second word was "Received". In this part, 49 students determined Received as a verb. While there were 51 students chose "Received" as the other part of speech. It was also noted that there was a student who chose two to three parts of speech of Received. It meant that the student's familiarity with part of speech of "Received" just attained 50.51%. The last word was "Became". It could be seen that 56 students considered Become as a verb. While there were 49 students chose "Become" as the other part of speech. It was also noted that 5 students chose more than one part of speech of Become. It meant that the student's familiarity part of speech of "Become" just reached 57.73%. Therefore, it can be concluded that the ability of the students to recognize the verbs was still on average.

Based on the result, it was argued that people found it difficult to recognize the verb because the word was similar to a noun. Besides, the word was also difficult to recognize because it was not a pure verb or first form verb. Moreover, when the word stood alone. It was in line with what palmer in Halimi (2011) who said that learning a language is to a very large degree learning how to operate the verbal forms of that language. It was also known that verbs can be modified into some form that sometimes students feel confused.
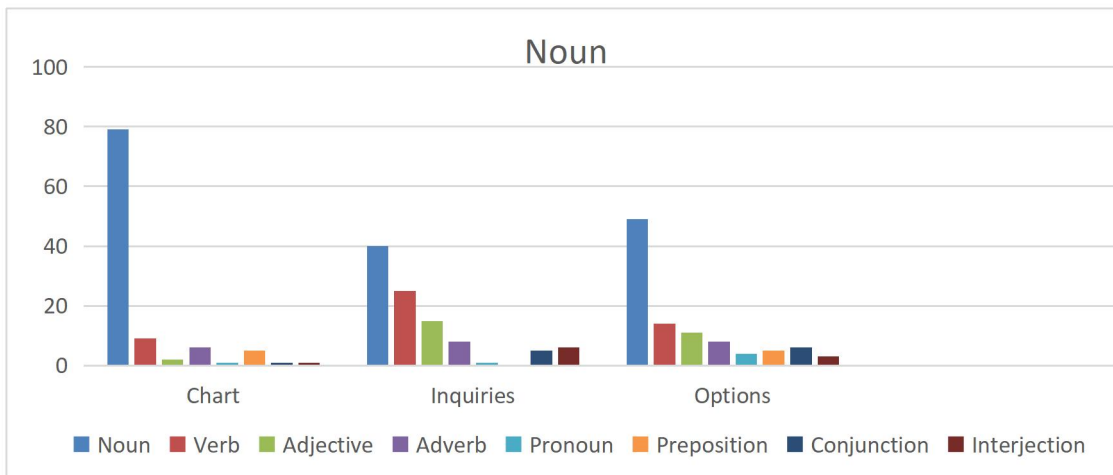

Figure 2. Students' familiarity in categorizing Noun

Graph 2 showed three nouns that the students must determine. Those words were chart, inquiries, and Options. The first word was "chart" which was determined by 79 students as Noun. While 25 students categorized "chart" as the other parts of speech. In the other situation, 5 students chose two parts of speech and 1 student chose three parts of speech for the word "Chart". It meant that the student's familiarity with part of speech of "chart" as a verb just attained 81.44%. The second word was "Inquiries". In this part, 40 students determined this word as Noun. While 60 students chose "inquiries" as the other parts of speech. It was also noted that 3 students chose two parts of speech of inquiries. Thus, it can be concluded that the students' familiarity with part of speech of "inquiries" just attained 41.23%. The last word was "Options". It could be seen that 49 students considered this word as Noun. While there were 51 students chose that "Options" as the other part of speech. It was also noted that 2 students chose more than one part of speech of "Options". It meant that the student's familiarity with part of speech of "Options" just reached 50.51%. Therefore, it could be concluded that the ability of the students to recognize the Noun was still on average.

However, if we compare with the verb, the students were easier enough to recognize nouns by meaning like "chart". Nouns also can be recognized by looking at the suffix "s" at the end of the word like "options", but this did not apply to the word "inquiries" because many students think that the word is a verb. After all, it was ended by "s". Thus, it could be argued that suffixes in a word can have impact on people's perception to part of speech.
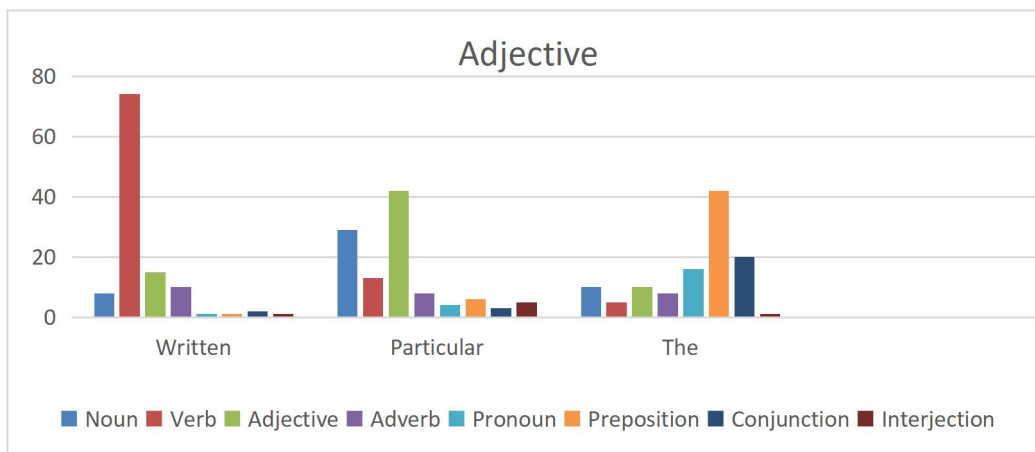

Figure 3. Students' familiarity in categorizing Adjective

Based on the graph above, it could be seen that three adjectives have been analyzed by students, namely written, particular, and the. The first word was "written". From 97 students, it was found that only 15 people decided that the word has a function as an adjective, while the others chose other parts of speech. Even, 74 students decided that the word "written" was a verb. This happened because students equated the written with write. Whereas written was past participle. Thus, it could be said that the percentage of students who understood that written as an adjective was only around 15.46%. The second word was "particular". This word was quite recognized by the students as an adjective because 42 students decided that the word particular was an adjective, while the rest chose another part of speech. Although the percentage of students who chose the word particular as an adjective was only 43.29%, it was still more than the word written. The last word was "The" which was as an article. 42 students predicted that "the" as a preposition. This happened because students thought that the word "the" always appears in front of other words (nouns) so students misunderstood and thought that it was a preposition. In the survey process, students should not choose any of the function words provided for the word "the" because it was a determiner that always appeared before a noun. It was in line with what Parisse and Maillart (2017) argued Determiners, by definition, are always attached to a noun. They are not used in isolation. If this is the case, then it is not a determiner but a pronoun (see "Nouns and pronouns").
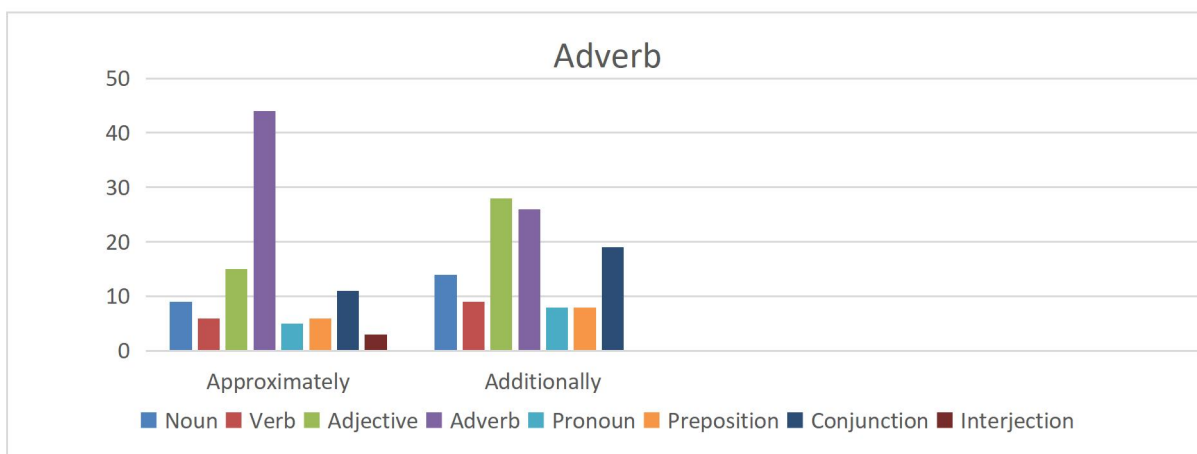

Figure 4. Students' familiarity in categorizing Adverb

Based on the graph above, it could be seen that two adverbs have been analyzed by the students. They were approximately and additionally. The first word was "approximately". From 97 students, it was found that only 44 people decided that the word has a function as an adverb, while the rest had wrong choice. It was also noted that 2 students chose two parts of speech of the word "Approximately". Thus, it could be said that the percentage of students who understood approximately as an adverb was only around 45.36%. The second word was "Additionally". This word made the students confused to decide. Some of them chose this word as an adjective for around 28 people, and some of them chose "Additionally" as an adverb for around 26 people, while the others chose the other part of speech. It meant that the percentage of students who are familiar with the word 'additionally'' as an adverb only 26.80%. The result is too low whereas categorizing adverbs was easier enough. Some people would recognize them by looking at the suffix –ly if the word of adverb of manner.
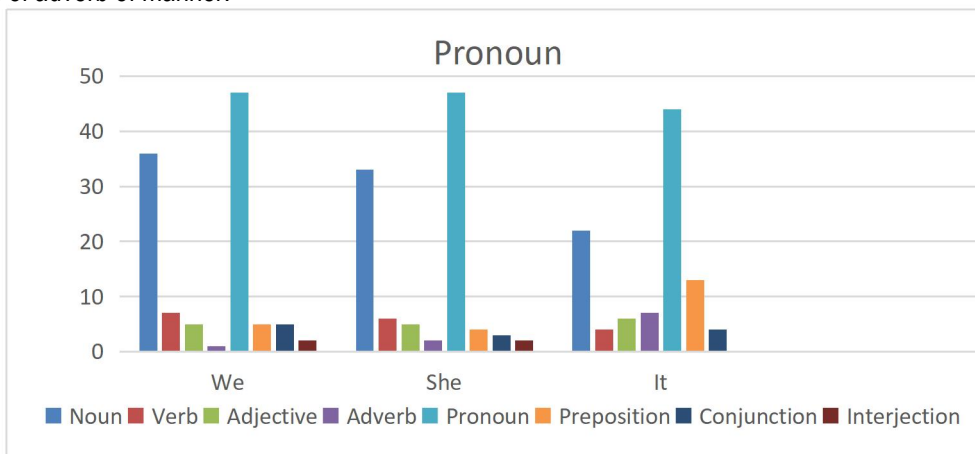

Figure 5. Students' familiarity in categorizing Pronoun

The graph above showed that three pronouns have been determined by the students. They were we, she and it. It could be seen that all of the words were chosen by students as pronouns in the range of 47, 47, and 44 people. In other words, approximately 40% of students understood that those words are pronouns. Although there were still many students who chose another part of speech, it did not mean because of their ignorance, but because of their inaccuracy in choosing. This part of speech is the easiest to analyze because it has been known that pronouns are words used to refer to a person, place, or thing.
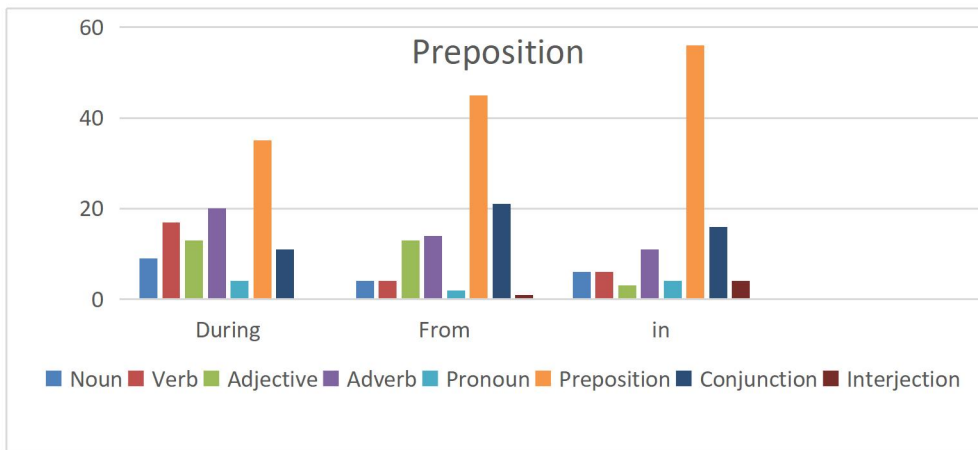
Figure 6. Students' familiarity in categorizing Preposition

Based on the graph, it could be seen that three prepositions have been analyzed by the students, namely during, from, and in. The first word was "during". From 97 students, it was found that only 35 people decided that the word has a function as a preposition, while others chose another part of speech around 74 people. It was noted that 9 students chose more than one part of speech of the word "during". Thus, it can be concluded that the percentage of the student's familiarity with the word "during" as a preposition was around 36.08%. The second word was "from". This word was quite recognized by the students as a preposition because 45 students decided that the word was a preposition, while, the rest chose another part of speech. Although the percentage of students who chose the word from as a preposition was only 46.39%, it was still more than the word during. The last word was "in" which most familiar to the students because there were 56 students chose it as a preposition. It meant that the percentage of the student's familiarity with the word attained 57.73%. All percentages were above average.
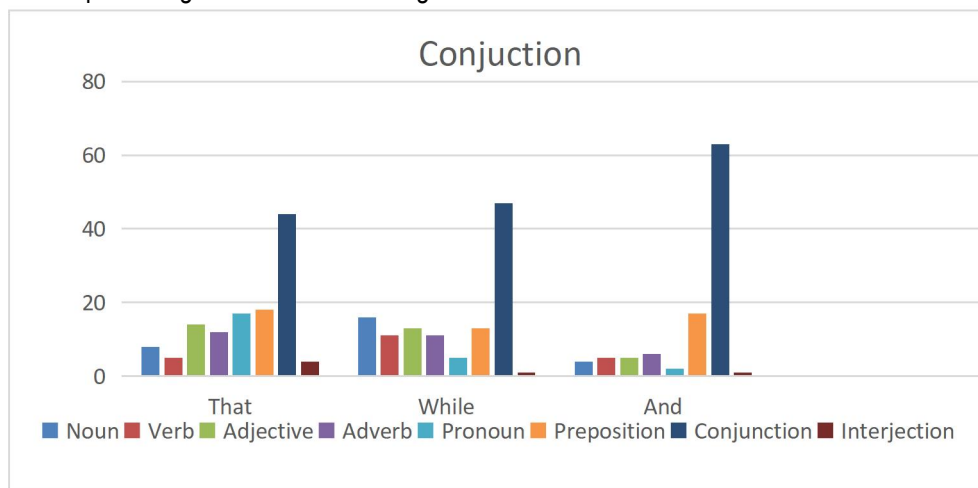
Figure 7. Students' familiarity in categorizing Conjunction

Based on the graph, it could be seen that there were three conjunctions that have been determined by students, namely that, while, and and. It illustrated that the students' familiarity with the conjunction. The word "that" attained 45,36%, "While" attained 48,45%, and "and" attained 64,94%. The word "and" was the most familiar among all of the words because this word was always used in daily conversation.
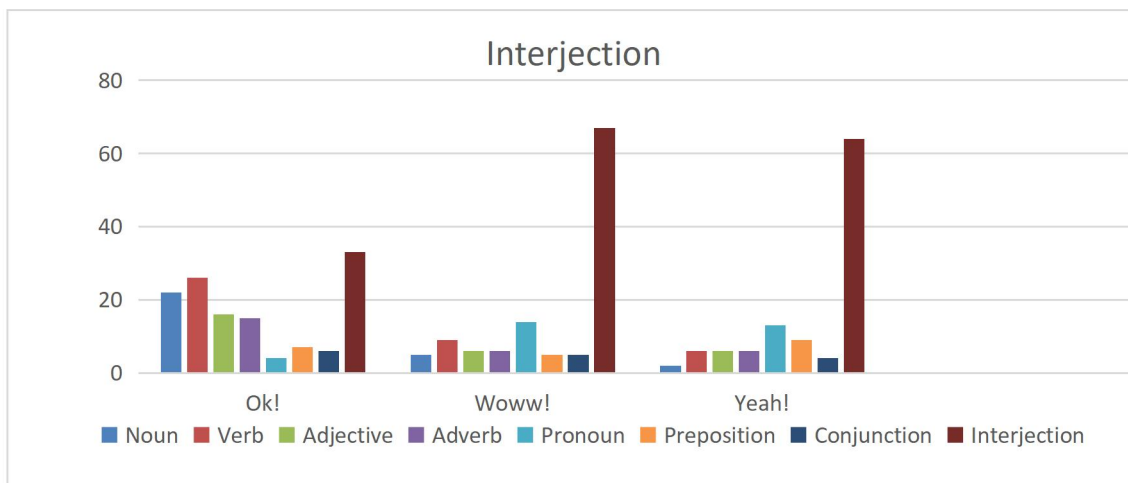
Figure 8. Students' familiarity in categorizing Interjection

Based on the graph, it could be illustrated that interjection is the most familiar part of speech. The word ok!, woww!, and Yeah! reached 34.02%, 69.07%, and 65.97%. The word woww! and yeah! was on average.

Therefore, the results that have been obtained related to the categorization of part of speech, it was found that there are still students who did not fully understand the concept of part of speech. They were still confused about determining the function of each given word. This would affect their ability to master other skills in English.

3.2. The students' familiarity with part of speech by answering the multiple choices

The other ways to determine the students' familiarity with part of speech can be illustrated based on the result of answering the multiple choices. Thus, in the research process, the students answered 14 questions related to part of speech. The results were elaborated below:

Table 1. Students' familiarity with part of speech by answering the multiple choices

No.	Part of Speech	Correct answer	Precentage (%)	Incorrect Answer	Precentage (%)
1	Verb	40	41.2 %	57	58.8%
2	Adjective	73	75.3%	24	24.7%
3	Verb	38	39.2%	59	60.8%
4	Adverb	61	62.9%	36	37.1%
5	Adverb	29	29.9%	68	70,1%
6	Noun	72	74.2 %	25	25.8,%
7	Adjective	34	35.1%	63	64.9%
8	Prepisition	25	25.8%	72	74.2%
9	Conjunction	52	53.6 %	45	46.4%
10	Pronoun	76	78.4 %	21	21.6%
11	Pronoun	75	77.3%	22	22.7%
12	Noun	57	59.4%	40	40.6%
13	Conjunction	64	66%	33	34 %
14	Preposition	40	41.2%	57	58.8%

Table 1 illustrated that the easiest part of speech for the students was pronoun. The students attained 77.3% and 78.4% correct answers and only 21.6% and 22.7% incorrect answers. The most difficult parts of speech to analyze were adverbs and prepositions which attained 29.9% and 25.8% correct answers.

If we looked at the two results, namely the results of classifying words and answering multiple choice questions, students tended to easily analyze the part of speech when answering multiple choice questions. It happened because students were given other words as a complement. Thus, they could consider what word was suitable for the sentence. However, because word classes are created using three different types of criteria — notional (meanings), morphological (forms), and grammatical (relationships with other words and larger units) (Abrar et al., 2020), students found it extremely challenging to choose a word based on its function.

4. Conclusion

After conducting the study and analyzing the result of the research, it can be concluded that students' familiarity with parts of speech for the candidate intermediate grammar students was fair. This was evidenced by the data that has been analyzed that the percentage of students who categorized words into the correct part of speech only reached an average of 40% with the results of the analysis that the most understood part of speech in this research was pronoun because there were only around 21.6% - 22.7% of the errors found in the students' answer of multiple choice and the least understood part of speech was adverb and preposition because the students only reached the correct answer in multiple choice around 25.8 %– 29.9%. Thus, the solution for the whole class, the students should learn more about parts of speech. This material must always be paired with the topics taught in class so that students become familiar with it and can ultimately differentiate. Apart from that, at every meeting, the lecturer must explain the part of speech of each word so that students understand better.

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