

**IDENTIFYING NON-ENGLISH DEPARTMENT STUDENTS' WEAKNESS
POINTS ON COMMONLY FOUND EPT GRAMMAR PROBLEMS
(A STUDENTS' NEEDS ANALYSIS)**

**IDENTIFIKASI KELEMAHAN MAHASISWA NON-BAHASA INGGRIS
PADA MASALAH GRAMMAR YANG SERING MUNCUL DI EPT
(SEBUAH ANALISIS KEBUTUHAN)**

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Abstract

The EPT test is a test that measures the academic English proficiency of a non-native speaker of English. This research is aimed at identifying the students' weakness points on commonly found grammar problems in EPT. The identification is then used as the basis for constructing a syllabus that meets the students' need. In general, the students' needs based on the analysis are as follows: 1. Incomplete sentences: conjunctions, comparisons, subject missing, adjective clauses, 2. Underlined words: count/non-count nouns, banana rule, adjectives, prepositions, noun-pronoun agreement, singular/plural nouns; 3. Reading Comprehension and Vocabulary: References, passage organization, exception, inferences, topics, main ideas.

Keywords: EPT, students' needs, grammar problems

Abstrak

Tes EPT adalah sebuah tes standar bahasa Inggris yang mengukur kemampuan berbahasa Inggris akademik para petutur non bahasa Inggris. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi kelemahan-kelemahan siswa pada masalah-masalah umum tata bahasa yang sering ditemukan di EPT. Identifikasi tersebut kemudian digunakan sebagai dasar untuk membangun sebuah silabus yang memenuhi kebutuhan siswa. Secara umum, kebutuhan siswa berdasarkan analisis yang telah dilakukan adalah sebagai berikut: 1. Incomplete sentences: conjunctions, comparisons, subject missing, adjective clauses, 2. Underlined words: count/non-count nouns, banana rule, adjectives, prepositions, noun-pronoun agreement, singular/plural nouns; 3. Reading Comprehension and Vocabulary: References, passage organization, exception, inferences, topics, main ideas.

Kata kunci: EPT, kebutuhan siswa, masalah tata bahasa

A. INTRODUCTION

The EPT (ENGLISH PROFICIENCY TEST) is a test of standard English that is used to measure the academic English proficiency of a non-native speaker of English. EPT is organized by UNIPDU to measure the ability of its students to use and understand English as it is spoken, written and heard in college and university settings. EPT uses PBT TOEFL format as the model of the test. It consists of three Sections: Section 1. Listening Comprehension, Section 2. Structure and Written Expression, and Section 3. Reading Comprehension and Vocabulary.

In preparing non-English department students for the EPT test, the EPT trainers at UNIPDU often face some difficulties. First, they come from different English language background and, by and large, have insufficient English skills. Second, there are so many topics or problems to discuss while the time allotted for the class preparation is limited. At UNIPDU, the EPT training is only conducted in 20 and 30 hours (13 – 19 meetings). Such situation, of course, often makes EPT trainers at UNIPDU have difficulty deciding which topics should be addressed in the training and which ones should not. As a result, the students often do not get what they actually need which in turn makes their scores on EPT remain low. Therefore sound syllabuses and teaching materials which comply with the students' needs are urgently needed.

The first and most important factor to be considered when constructing teaching materials is the learners. If the points of the materials are relevance, interest, motivation, and meeting specific students' needs, then clearly syllabus developers must ensure they know their learners well. Any consideration of syllabus or materials design must begin with a needs analysis.

Meeting students' or learners' needs is one of the effective and efficient

ways in ESL teaching (Richards, 2003: 51). Students' needs are often described in terms of linguistic deficiency, that is, as describing the difference between what a learner can presently do in a language and what he or she should be able to do. One of the basic assumptions of curriculum development is that a sound educational program should be based on analysis of learners' needs (Richards, 2003: 51).

Procedures used to collect information about learners' needs are known as needs analysis.

This research is aimed at identifying the common EPT grammar problems and identifying the students' weakness points on commonly found grammar problems. The identification is very important to be used as the basis for constructing a suitable syllabus that meets the needs of non-English department students at UNIPDU with low level of English proficiency. An important advantage of specifying the target readers is contextualization. A key criticism of commercial materials, particularly those produced for the world-wide market is that they are necessarily generic and not aimed at any specific group of learners or any particular cultural or educational context. Thus by specifying the target readers, the problem of lack of 'fit' of the course book will be able to overcome.

B. FINDINGS

1. The results of question items analysis

1) Incomplete Sentences

Questions number 1 to 15 in Structure and Written expressions section are called 'incomplete sentences'. Here the test takers are required to complete a sentence with one of four possible answers provided. In this type of question, out of 150 questions analyzed, 35 problems are identified and nine problems can be categorized as commonly found problems: Adjective clauses, conjunctions, verbs, subject missing, S+V missing,

comparisons, adverbs, participial phrases, and appositives.

The problems in this type of questions can be classified into five groups: sentence construction, phrasal construction, connectors, degrees of comparison, and classes of words.

a) Sentence Construction

The sentence construction is represented by the questions on subject missing and S+V missing. The first problem deals with subject missing. Here the test takers are required to fill out the blank with the correct word or noun phrase which acts as a subject of the sentence/clause. There are 5 questions (3.33 %) dealing with this problem.

For example:

A regional writer with a gift for dialect, _____ peoples her fiction with the eccentric, comic, but vital inhabitants of rural Mississippi.

- (A) and Eudora Welty
- (B) Eudora Welty
- (C) because Eudora Welty
- (D) Eudora Welty who

The second problem dealing with sentence construction is Subject+Verb missing. This problem requires the test takers to identify not only the right verb but also the right subject based on the context of the sentence. Among the questions analyzed, Nine questions (6.00 %) deal with this problem.

For example:

_____ initial recognition while still quite young.

- (A) Most famous scientists achieve
- (B) That most famous scientists achieved
- (C) Most famous scientists who achieved
- (D) For most famous scientists to achieve

b) Phrasal Construction

The questions that have to do with phrasal construction are those on appositives and participial phrases.

An appositive can also be regarded as common problem in this section. 6 questions (4.00 %) deal with this problem. An appositive is a word or phrase that follows a noun and defines it. An appositive usually has a comma before it and a comma after it.

For example:

Speciation, _____, results when an animal population becomes isolated by some factor, usually geographic.

- (A) form biological species
- (B) biological species are formed
- (C) which forming biological species
- (D) the formation of biological species

The next problem related to phrasal construction is participial phrases. Among the questions analyzed in this section, 7 questions (4.67 %) are concerning this problem. A participial phrase is a word group consisting of a present participle or past participle, plus any modifiers, objects, and complements.

For example:

_____, the hummingbird gets its name from the sound that its wings make during flight.

- (A) Has a brilliant color
- (B) The brilliant color
- (C) Which is brilliantly colored
- (D) Brilliantly colored

c) Connectors

The questions on adjective clauses and conjunction assess the test takers' knowledge of English connectors. The problem on adjective clauses is the most commonly found one. Out of 150 questions analyzed, 21 questions (14.00 %) are about this problem. The questions

mainly relate to the relative clauses (e.g. who, which, that, etc) that should be used in a certain context of sentence.

For example:

Algonkian-speaking Native Americans greeted the Pilgrims _____ settled on the eastern shores of what is now New England.
(A) to whom
(B) of which
(C) who
(D) which

Another problem dealing with connectors is conjunctions. Conjunctions are words or phrases that clarify relationships between clauses. "Conjoin" means "to join together." There are 12 questions (8.00 %) dealing with this problem. The questions ask the test takers to choose which conjunction best completes a sentence. The conjunctions can be in form of coordinating conjunctions, subordinating conjunctions, and paired conjunctions. The following is an example of questions dealing with conjunctions.

The chair may be the oldest type of furniture, _____ its importance has varied from time to time and from country to country.
(A) but when
(B) until then
(C) in spite of
(D) although

d) Degrees of comparison

Eight questions (5.33%) out of 150 assess the ability of the test takers on comparison problems. More frequently the questions deal with comparatives, double comparatives, and superlatives. The test takers are often asked about the comparative pairs such as *more...than...*, *less...than...*, and *-er...than...*; or double comparatives such as *the more...the more...*. Besides, the superlative forms such as *the most...* and

the least..., are often found. The following is the example of questions dealing with this problem.

The knee is _____ most other joints in the body because it cannot twist without injury.
(A) more likely to be damaged than
(B) likely to be more than damaged
(C) more than likely to be damaged
(D) to be damaged more than likely

e) Classes of words

In incomplete sentence type of question, the problems related to word classes commonly deal with verb and adverb forms. Some questions will require the test takers to identify the correct form of a verb and some ask which verb agrees with the subject. This problem is sometimes called verb missing because the test takers must fill out the blank with one of the verbs provided. Out of 150 questions, 9 questions (6.00 %) have to do with this problem. For example:

After the Second World War the woman wage earner _____ a standard part of middle-class life in the United States.
(A) who became
(B) becoming that which
(C) became
(D) to become

The next problem dealing with word classes is adverbs which accounts for 4.67 % (7 questions) of the incomplete sentence questions analyzed. An adverb is a part of speech. It is any word that modifies any part of speech or other verbs other than a noun. Adverbs can modify verbs, adjectives, clauses, sentences and other adverbs. Adverbs typically answer questions such as *how?* *in what way?* *when?* *where?* and *to what extent?* This function is called the adverbial function, and is realized not just by single words (i.e., adverbs) but by adverbial phrases and adverbial clauses. Some questions address

the adverb of manner (how?), while some address the adverb of time (when?).

For example:

Helicopters can rise or descend vertically, hover, and move forward, backward, _____.

- (A) *they move laterally*
- (B) *and are lateral*
- (C) *or lateral motion*
- (D) *or laterally*

Taken as a whole, the common problems found in Section 2: Incomplete Sentences can be listed as follows.

The commonly found problems in Section 2: Incomplete Sentences

No	Problems	Occurrence	Percentage
1	adjective clauses	21	14.00
2	conjunctions	12	8.00
3	verbs	9	6.00
4	S+V missing	9	6.00
5	comparisons	8	5.33
6	adverbs	7	4.67
7	participial phrases	7	4.67
8	appositives	6	4.00
9	subject missing	5	3.33

2) Underlined Words

Questions number 16 to 40 are underlined words. The test takers are to choose the incorrect words/phrase among four underlined words/phrases. There are 250 questions analyzed. Out of them 37 problems are identified. 16 problems can be said as commonly found problems. They are adjectives, prepositions, noun forms, singular/plural nouns, articles, adjective clauses, passive voice, adverbs, subject-verb agreement, conjunctions, noun-pronoun agreement, count/non count nouns, banana rule, word order, tenses and phrasal verbs. The problems can be grouped into seven groups: sentence patterns, phrasal construction, connectors,

verb tenses, preposition, word classes, and agreement.

a) Sentence patterns

Passive voice is the problem that deals with sentence pattern found in the word type of question. The questions mainly concern with the rule to form English passive voices (be + verb III). The questions sometimes deal with the be and sometimes with the verb III.

To be able to answer the questions well, the test takers must consider the context of the sentence. Out of 250 questions analyzed, 14 questions (5.60 %) are dealing with this problem. The following is an example of the question addressing this problem.

Rainbows in the shape of complete circles are sometimes seen from airplanes because they are not cutting off by the horizon.

A
B
C
D

b) Phrasal construction

The first problem that relate to phrasal construction in the underlined word type of questions is phrasal verbs. Five questions (2.00 %) deal with this problem. Commonly a phrasal verb is a combination of a verb and a preposition. Phrasal verbs are particularly frequent in the English language. A phrasal verb often has a meaning which is different from the original verb (e.g., take off). Similarly, an adjective preposition is a combination of an adjective and a preposition, and this combination is unchanging (e.g. dependent on).

For example:

*The ease of solving a jigsaw puzzle
A
depends on the number of pieces, their
B
shape and shadings, and the design
C D of the picture.*

Word order is another common problem in the underlined word type of question that deals with phrasal construction. Word order is very important in English. The wrong word order may result in different meaning or even make a sentence meaningless. The primary word orders are the *constituent order* of a clause—the relative order of subject, object, and verb; the order of modifiers (adjectives, numerals, demonstratives, possessives, and adjuncts) in a noun phrase; and the order of adverbials. There are 7 questions (2.80 %) addressing this problem.

For example:

*The walls around the city of Quebec,
which was originally a fort military,
A B still stand, making Quebec
the only
C D walled city in North
America.*

c) Connectors

In the underlined word type of question, the problem of adjective clauses commonly deal with the use of connectors. Out of 250 questions, 14 are addressing this problem. The questions, as in incomplete sentence type, usually require the test takers to decide whether the relative pronouns used have already been correct or not or whether a certain clause needs a relative pronoun or not.

For example:

*Ripe fruit is often stored in a place
A B
who contains much carbon dioxide
C D
so that the not decay too rapidly.*

Besides adjective clauses, conjunction is the common problem that has to do with connectors. As in the incomplete sentence, the questions on conjunctions are commonly about the coordinating conjunctions, subordinating conjunctions, and paired conjunctions used in the sentences. There are 9 questions out of 250 dealing with this problem.

For example:

*Despite television is the dominant
A
entertainment medium for United
States households, Garrison
Keillor "s
Saturday night radio show
B
of folk songs and stories is heard by
C
millions of people.
D*

d) Verb tenses

Questions on tenses are common in this type of question. Usually the questions are dealing with the following tenses: the simple present, simple past, present and past perfect, and future. The test takers must be able to choose the correct tense based on the time signal that exists in the sentence. Among the questions analyzed, 7 questions are dealing with this problem.

For example:

*In the 1800's store owners sold
A
everything from a needle to a plow,
B
trust everyone, and never took
C D
inventory.*

e) Preposition

Many questions deal with English prepositions. Prepositions are words or phrases that clarify relationships. Prepositions are usually followed by nouns and pronouns. In grammar, a preposition is a part of speech that introduces a prepositional phrase. For example, in the sentence "The cat sleeps on the sofa", the word "on" is a preposition, introducing the prepositional phrase "on the sofa". In English, the most used prepositions are "of", "to", "in", "for", "with" and "on". The following is a question dealing with this problem.

*Homo erectus is the name
commonly given into the primate
A B
species from which humans
C are
believed to have
D
evolved.*

f) Word classes

The most common problem in this group is the questions on adjectives. Adjective is the most commonly found problem in this type of question. An adjective is a word that modifies a noun. Out of 250 questions, 27 questions (10.80 %) deal with this problem. The questions commonly require the test takers to identify the correct form of the adjective. This problem is sometimes difficult because there are many ways to form adjectives in English such as adding the inflectional endings of -ful (e.g. beautiful), -ish (e.g. childish), -ly (e.g. manly) or -al (e.g. rectal). The following is an example of question dealing with this problem.

*Chocolate is prepared by a
complexity process of cleaning,
A
blending, and roasting cocoa beans,
B
which must be ground and mixed
C D
with sugar.*

Another common problem in this group is noun forms. Often the test takers are required to identify the correct form of a noun. The questions commonly pose the test takers to nouns which are constructed through inflectional endings such as development, trial, correctness, etc. Such questions are quite tricky because, besides there are many kinds of noun endings (e.g. -ness, -ing, -ment, -al, -er), not all words need an inflectional ending to become a noun like increase and decrease. There are 19 questions out of 250 questions (7.60 %) concerning this problem.

For example:

*According to most psychological
A B
studies, body language expresses a
C
speaker's emotions and attitudes,
and it also tends to affect the
emotions and attitudes of the listen.
D*

The problem of singular/plural nouns is another problem that can be classified into this group. There are 17 questions (6.80 %) which address this problem. The test takers are to identify whether they have to use a singular or plural noun in a sentence based on the quantity marker that exist (e.g. a, some, various, 4, 5, etc).

For example:

*Although pure diamond is colorless
A
and transparent, when contaminated
B
with other material it may appear in
C
various color, ranging from pastels
D
to opaque black.*

Questions on articles are also common in EPT. An article is a word that combines with a noun to indicate the type

of reference being made by the noun. Articles specify the grammatical definiteness of the noun. The articles in English are the and a/an. There are 16 questions (6.40 %) out of 250 which deal with this problem.

For example:

All nations may have to make fundamental changes in their

A

economic, political, and the

B C *technological*

institutions if they are to

preserve the environment.

D

The next common problem in this group is adverb. However, in the underlined words the questions mainly deal with the correct form of adverb of manner. As can be seen in the table above, 11 questions (4.40 %) have to do with this problem.

For example:

Although they reflect a strong social

A

conscience, Arthur Miller's stage works are typical more concerned

B

C

with individuals than with systems.

D

The next common problem is dealing with countable/uncountable nouns. The questions sometimes ask the test takers to identify whether a certain noun can be categorized as a count noun or a non count noun. And at another time, the questions focus on the quantifiers (e.g. few, little, much, and many) that should be used before a certain noun. There are 8 questions (3.20 %) which deal with this problem.

For example:

Of the much factors that contributed

A

B

to the growth of international

C

tourism in the 1950 " s, one of the

D

most important was the advent of jet travel in 1958.

The last common problem in this group is the banana rule. One of the most important rules on English is this: A singular count noun cannot stand alone. The test takers must understand that if they see a singular count noun with no determiner, then it is wrong. This problem is very tricky, and many test takers failed on this problem. The following is an example of the question addressing this problem. Among the questions analyzed, there are 7 questions (2.80 %) dealing with this problem.

For example:

The manufacture of automobile was

A

extremely expensive until assembly-

B

C

line techniques made them cheaper

D

to produce.

g) Agreement

There are two types of agreement found: subject-verb agreement and noun-pronoun agreement. In subject-verb agreement, the test takers are required to identify whether the subject of the sentence (in the main or sub-clause) has already agreed with its verb. The subject and verb must agree in number: both must be singular, or both must be plural. Problems occur in the present tense because one must add an **-s** or **-es** at the end of the verb when the subjects or the entity performing the action is a singular third person: **he**, **she**, **it**, or words for which these pronouns could substitute. Among the questions analyzed, 10 questions (4.00 %) address this problem.

For example:

Several million points on the human
 A B
body registers either cold, heat, pain,
 C D or touch.

Besides subject-verb agreement, noun-pronoun agreement can also be categorized as one of the common problem. 8 questions (3.20 %) address this problem. Here, the test takers must be able to identify whether the pronouns used have already agreed with the nouns referred or not (e.g. plural noun with they/'we'). The agreement may deal with two things: number (singular/one or plural/more than one) and gender (male, female, neutral). The following is the example of a question dealing with this problem.

For most of their history, especially
 A B *since the 1860's,*
 C
New York City has
 D
been undergoing major ethnic
population changes.

The commonly found problems in
 Section 2: Underlined Words

No	Problems	Occurrence	Percentage
1	adjectives	27	10.80
2	prepositions	21	8.40
3	noun forms	19	7.60
4	singular/plural nouns	17	6.80
5	articles	16	6.40
6	adjective clauses	14	5.60
7	passive voice	13	5.20
8	adverbs	11	4.40
9	subject-verb agreement	10	4.00
10	conjunctions	9	3.60
11	noun-pronoun agreement	8	3.20
12	countable/uncountable nouns	8	3.20
13	banana rule	7	2.80
14	word order	7	2.80

15	tenses	7	2.80
16	phrasal verbs/adjective prepositions	5	2.00

2. The Students' Weakness Points on EPT Structure and Written Expression

1) Incomplete Sentences

The students' weakness points in
Incomplete Sentences type of questions

No	Problems	Number of students	Percentage
1	participial phrases	2	4.55
2	comparisons	8	18.18
3	subject missing	12	27.27
4	conjunctions	13	29.55
5	adjective clauses	14	31.82
6	S+V missing	16	36.36
7	appositives	18	40.91
8	adverbs	20	45.45
9	verb missing	23	52.27

As can be seen from the table above, the most problematic question for the respondents is that on participial phrases. There were only 2 students (4,55 %) who could answer the questions well. Constructing a participial phrase is one of difficult rules in English and is of advanced level. The knowledge on -ed and -ing is a must to be able to answer the questions of this problem.

The next difficult problem is comparisons. Out of 44 respondents, only 8 who could handle such problem well. This finding indicates that most students did not understand the concept of English degree of comparisons.

Subject missing is also difficult problem for the respondents. Their inability to identify the subject of the sentences or clauses is a sign that they did not have sufficient knowledge of the

elements of a sentence/clause in English. The counting shows that only 27.27 % of the respondents who did not have trouble on it.

Another problematic question is on conjunctions. The different concept of conjunctions in English and Bahasa Indonesia may be contributable to their difficulty. As we know there are two types of conjunctions in English, coordinating conjunction and subordinating conjunction, where each type has its own constituents. Only 13 students out of 44 could answer the questions on conjunctions quite well.

The table also shows that for incomplete sentences many respondents did not have sufficient knowledge on adjective clauses. There were only 14 students (31.82 %) who could manage the problem well. The concept of relative pronouns (who, which, that, etc) seems troublesome for them. This is due to the fact that many questions on adjective clauses deal with the correct relative pronouns to use.

S+V missing was another difficult problem for many respondents where only 16 students were able to answer the questions well. As in case of subject missing, the students did not understand very well the concept of sentences/clauses in English. As a result, they had difficulty identifying the correct subject and verb that are missing.

Some respondents had no problem on the problem of appositives or noun clusters. At least 40.91 % students could handle such question well. This question is relatively easy for some of the students because such concept is similar to that in Bahasa Indonesia. What the students need is only to find a noun phrase that modify the noun and to be put between two comas.

Another problem which doesn't seem quite troublesome is adverbs. At least 20 students (45.45 %) could manage the questions well. However, more respondents still had trouble on it. The

concept of English adverbs is relatively easy in English. To form adverbs of manner, mostly we just need to add -ly after an adjective. For adverbs of time, we need to identify the words which express the time, and for adverbs of place, we need a spatial expression.

The least troublesome problem is verb missing. Some questions ask the correct form of the verb and some ask which verb that agrees with the subject. On this problem, many respondents (52.27 %) could handle the problem suitably.

2) Underlined words

The students' weakness points in Underlined Words type of questions

No	Problems	Number of students	Percentage
1	count/non count nouns	1	2.27
2	noun-pronoun agreement	3	6.82
3	adjectives	4	9.09
4	prepositions	5	11.36
5	banana rule	5	11.36
6	tenses	5	11.36
7	singular/plural noun	6	13.64
8	articles	7	15.91
9	phrasal verbs	8	18.18
10	word order	9	20.45
11	conjunctions	9	20.45
12	adverbs	10	22.73
13	noun forms	11	25.00
14	adjective clauses	16	36.36
15	passive voice	17	38.64
16	subject-verb agreement	25	56.82

The table shows that the most challenging problem in underlined words type of question is count/non-count nouns. Out of 44 respondents, only 1 student (2.27 %) could answer the questions. This means that their knowledge of countable and uncountable nouns in English is very low. This is not surprising because the concept of countable and uncountable nouns is not recognized in Bahasa

Indonesia. Therefore Indonesian students are often failed on the questions of this problem.

The same situation occurs in the problems of noun-pronoun agreement, adjectives, prepositions, banana rule, tenses, singular/plural nouns, articles, phrasal verbs, word order, and conjunctions where there were only 3 to 9 students who could handle the questions. Their difficulty is due to the fact that such rules are more marked (more complicated) in English than in Bahasa Indonesia. For example, The concept of adjectives in English seems problematic because forming adjectives in English can be done in some different ways such as adding the inflectional endings of *-ful* (e.g. beautiful), *-ish* (e.g. childish), *-ly* (e.g. manly) or *-al* (e.g. rectal) to the base words. As a result, this situation often makes them confused and failed on such questions.

Another problem which seems troublesome is adverbs and noun forms. There were only 10 and 11 students who could manage the questions on adverbs and noun forms, respectively. Again, the *'markedness'* of the rules in English is often contributable to the errors they did. As we know there are many ways to form adverbs and nouns in English. And these many ways often make non native speakers of English confused and in turn make errors.

As can be seen in the table above, many students were able to answer the questions on adjective clauses and passive voice. For adjective clauses 16 students could handle the problem. In some cases this problem is relatively easy because many questions concerning adjective clauses focus only on the use of the relative clauses of *'_who'*, which is used for human beings, and *'_which'*, which is used for things. The same thing occurs in passive voice in which the rule the students need to remember is the *'_be + verb III'* rule.

The least troublesome problem is subject-verb agreement. Here 25 students

(56.82 %) could answer the questions well. In this problem the students need to identify the disagreement between the subject and its verb. This finding is in line with the problem of verb missing in *'_incomplete sentence'* type of question on which many students do not have difficulty handling the questions.

E. CONCLUSION

The main problem faced by the teachers in giving training on EPT is the time constraint. They usually have very limited time to teach while at the same time they have many topics to deliver. Therefore they often have difficulty deciding which topics that should be given and which ones are not. The problem is even worse when the students have low proficiency of English.

In relation with the nature of EPT questions, it can be concluded that the questions are aimed at assessing the readiness of the students in studying in college or university. The listening and reading sections concern with three academic skills: taking notes, paraphrasing, and summarizing. The grammar section tests the knowledge of the students in building good English sentences.

This research is aimed at identifying the students' weakness points on commonly found grammar problems in EPT. The identification is then used as the basis for constructing a syllabus that meets the students' need. In general, the students' needs based on the analysis are as follows: 1. Incomplete sentences: conjunctions, comparisons, subject missing, adjective clauses, 2. Underlined words: count/non-count nouns, banana rule, adjectives, prepositions, noun-pronoun agreement, singular/plural nouns; 3. Reading Comprehension and Vocabulary: References, passage organization, exception, inferences, topics, main ideas.

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