

**ENGLISH LEARNING GRAMMAR STRATEGIES :  
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**ABSTRACT**

English learning grammar strategies can be an issue that students and lecturers face in the university. This study aimed to find out the students' achievement, obstacles and solution in learning grammar by using English grammar strategies. Mixed method was employed to gain the research objectives. Thirty three students were selected as the respondents of this research. The instruments were grammar test and interview. The data were analyzed by using descriptive statistics for quantitative data and qualitative data were analyzed by using qualitative analysis with several steps, such as data reduction, display and conclusion for qualitative data. The results showed that students got enhancement in terms of their grammar ability. It can be proved by looking at their pretest and posttest. Moreover, students faced obstacles in implementing grammar strategies namely poor understanding about grammar, difficult to memorize the rules, grammar anxiety, seldom to work in group, and time limitation. The possible solution can be extra lesson from the lecturer or discussing with their friends, more practice in grammar, giving reinforcement and motivation, working in group, and be smart in managing time for learning grammar.

*Keywords:* English grammar strategies, achievement, obstacles, solution

**A. INTRODUCTION**

Grammar in English is one part of language skills that is considered difficult for students (Iqbal, Akbar & Ahmad, 2017; Renandya, 2020). Some students face problems in learning grammar such as tenses, auxiliary modal, pronouns and other problems. The problem must be solved by the lecturer or educator concerned because grammar is one part of English language skills that supports other English skills, such as listening, speaking, reading and writing. This is in line with Debata (2013) who stated that grammar is an important skill in learning English because grammar is able to help students master other language skills. Dalil (2013) added that grammar has a role in implementing language in life. In addition, he explained that there are three important roles of grammar in teaching or learning English, namely, grammar allows language users to process and produce correct sentences both orally and in writing and supports four other language skills. Grammar also conveys meaning to the reader or audience, and grammar also builds sentences based on the structures and rules that apply in English. Based on initial observations of English Education students at Bengkulu University in semester 3 conducted at the end of 2021, students feel that grammar is one of the subjects that requires high analysis to be studied. In addition, they feel that

grammar is very important to learn even if they have difficulty or have problems in learning English grammar. Therefore, they think they need strategies and tricks to support learning.

In learning grammar, students need learning strategies to improve their understanding of English grammar material. English learning strategies are needed as one of the strategies that can help students or learners in learning English. Oxford (1990) suggests several strategies in learning English such as cognitive, affective, socio, and metacognitive strategies. These strategies can be applied to English language skills. Many studies related to grammar learning strategies from 2015 to 2019. Rohmatin (2015) found that students applied direct and indirect learning strategies in learning grammar, but he did not mention which strategy was more dominantly used in helping university students to learn grammar. Furthermore, Stavre & Pashko (2016) and Chen (2016) conducted research on grammar learning strategies. The result is that they only use literature studies or literature studies. They write all kinds of learning strategies that can be applied by teachers or lecturers. Then, Zuhairi & Suhartoyo (2020) found that students used social strategies more often than other strategies. However, another study by Zhou (2017) suggests that cognitive strategy is the most dominant strategy, followed by meta-cognitive strategy and social-affective strategy. In addition, he stated that learning strategies have no relationship with students' learning outcomes of English grammar. Putri & Damayanti (2017) and Abri, et.al. (2017) found that students used social and metacognitive strategies.

In addition, Supakorn, Feng & Limmun (2008) showed that Thai students tend to use social and affective strategies, while Chinese students tend to apply memory, cognitive, and metacognitive strategies. While, Alsied et al. (2018) studied Libyan students and found that most students used memory strategies in learning grammar. Another study by Pawlak (2018) developed an instrument to assess grammar learning strategies. In 2019, there was a study which found that the compensation strategy was the dominant strategy used by students, while the affective strategy was the one that was less used by students in learning grammar (Mulugeta & Bayaou, 2019). Furthermore, Juniar & Carissa (2020) found that social strategy was the most dominant strategy used by students while memory strategy was the least strategy for the intermediate class. In addition, Go, Zhang, & Rahardjanti (2019) found that the language learning strategies used by most students were metacognitive strategies and the test results showed that there was no relationship between students' language learning strategies and learning outcomes. In contrast to Zekrati (2017) who found that there was a positive relationship between language learning outcomes and the use of grammar strategies.

Referring to previous research, the proposed research is slightly different from previous research because the current research uses the new grammar learning strategy inventory (GLSI) which was pioneered by Pawlak, while most previous studies use Oxford theory. In addition, the current research does not only identify students' English grammar learning strategies, but also the challenges faced by students and lecturers in implementing these English Grammar learning strategies. This research is expected to be useful for several parties. First, for students because this strategy can be a way to improve students' abilities in learning English grammar. Second, it is also useful for lecturers or teachers because the English grammar learning strategy is one of the teaching strategies that can be used to teach English grammar. Third, this research is also useful for future researchers because future researchers can make references to carry out further research with almost the same focus but different scopes. Therefore, this study aims to find out the results of learning grammar after

the grammar learning strategy is applied, to find out the problems and solutions to these problems.

## B. METHOD

The mixed method design with sequential explanatory design is a research design that will be used by the researcher to carry out this research related to the analysis of English grammar learning strategies by students and the challenges faced in implementing these strategies in learning English grammar. This method is a combination of qualitative and quantitative (Creswell, 2014; Ary, et al., 2010; Fraenkel, et.al., 2012). In this case, the first research question was measured quantitatively through a survey, while the second research question was measured qualitatively through interviews. Research subjects were selected based on purposeful sampling in accordance with the research objectives. In this case, fourth semester students who were taking Structure 2 selected as the respondents of this research.

The research instrument used was a grammar test and an interview guide. The test was used to measure the students' ability in grammar after using the grammar learning strategy. Furthermore, interviews were used to find out the problems faced by students in learning grammar and their solutions. The procedure of this research was (1) to ask permission from the head of the English Education study program; (2) prepare the instrument; (3) validate the instrument; (4) perform a grammar test; (5) interviewed several students and lecturers about the challenges and solutions in learning English grammar for students in teaching for lecturers.

The data analysis technique in this research was using quantitative and qualitative analysis. SPSS was used for quantitative analysis, while qualitative data analysis was using the theory of Miles, Huberman & Saldana (2018) namely data reduction, data presentation, conclusion drawing and verification. The first stage is reduction. In this case, the reduction is obtained from the collection of existing data. At this stage, the researcher reduced the data from the instrument by summarizing the results of the interviews. Next, the researcher coded the summarized data to find things that were considered important. The second stage is data presentation or data analysis after data collection. At this stage, the presentation of data can be in the form of a diagram or matrix, or a clear description of the data regarding interviews or questionnaires or the results of teaching materials tests that have been carried out. The next stage is the stage of drawing conclusions. At this stage, the researcher must be able to draw conclusions based on the data analysis that has been made or presented.

## C. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### **Student grammar learning outcomes on the implementation of grammar learning strategies**

The results of students' learning grammar were obtained from the results of the grammar tests conducted by the lecturers. The learning results can be seen in table 1.

**Table 1.** Grammar learning outcomes

<b>N=30</b>	<b>Pre test</b>	<b>Posttest</b>
Total score	2006	2321
mean score	66.86667	77.36667

Table 1 shows that the results of the pre-test and post-test of English education students who took grammar courses were 66.86 and 77.36. These results indicate that there is an increase in scores from before being given grammar learning strategies and after being given various learning strategies. This increase is an achievement for the student. The result of the study were based on the first objective, namely that students experienced increased learning outcomes of grammar. This result was proved by the increase in the results of the pre test to the post test. The result was an increase of 10 points. This study is in line with Harmer (2007) who said that the application of learning strategies can improve students' abilities in all skills including grammar. The increase in learning outcomes of grammar is certainly caused by learning strategies that are able to motivate students in learning grammar. In addition, with this strategy, students feel enthusiastic because of the effect of implementing cognitive, metacognitive, social, and affective strategies. This finding is in line with Ismail and Dedi (2021) who found that grammar learning strategies had positive impact on students' grammar achievement.

### **Challenges in the Implementation of Grammar learning Strategies**

The challenges faced by students were obtained by conducting interviews with several students. The number of students who were interviewed were six people. The first and second students had almost the same answers regarding the challenges faced during the implementation of grammar learning strategies. They said that they rarely repeat the grammar material at home, so it is difficult for them to understand the rules in English grammar. They think that it is rather difficult to do that. As students 1 and 2 said, *"I don't often repeat study materials at home and I always don't understand grammar and I always forget."* In addition, student 3 thinks that he is hesitant in applying affective strategies in learning grammar because he feels it is rare to express his feelings when learning grammar by himself. He may be afraid of being known by others that he does not understand some parts of English grammar. For example, when the material is type 3 (conditional sentence type 3), he is wrong in using the past perfect and modal perfect. This is supported by student 3 who said, *"To be honest, sir, I don't really understand how to implement affective strategies because I'm embarrassed with friends or other people who know that I don't understand the material because sometimes my friends laugh at me when I'm wrong."*

Furthermore, the fourth student argued that the challenge in applying grammatical strategies was when he worked in small or large groups to find the rules or grammatical formulas because he thought that he was not used to working in groups and finding grammatical formulas, as he said, *"I'm not used to it, sir, working with other people to find formulas or grammatical patterns because I realized I couldn't do it, I had a hard time doing it."* This is different from the fifth student who has problems in asking the lecturer because he rarely asks when he doesn't understand grammar. As a result, he did not understand the material and was unable to apply it in speaking and writing. In addition, he is also embarrassed to ask students or friends who are smarter than him, as he said, *"I can't ask the lecturer about grammar or I never ask a friend who is smarter, sir, because sometimes my friends ignore me and didn't know it."*

The sixth student had a different statement from the previous student. He argues that the challenge he faces in implementing grammar learning strategies is the commitment to apply these strategies in learning grammar because he thinks that his time to study is limited because he has to do side work. In addition, he rarely works in a team or group with his friends to discuss the problems he faces in learning grammar, even during the pandemic, he

finds it difficult to study together in one place with his friends. As he said, “The challenge is commitment, sir. Sometimes I have a strong commitment to applying grammar learning strategies, but sometimes I break it because I'm busy at work. During the pandemic, I never met my classmates because we were from different districts”

In short, although most students implement these strategies in learning grammar, students still have problems or challenges in implementing them. Some of the challenges faced by students are difficulty in understanding the material, lack of time management and not optimal for independent study. In terms of understanding grammar, some students are not optimal in getting an understanding of grammar material because they are lazy to repeat it at home. Furthermore, time management becomes one of the problems for students in learning grammar and implementing these strategies because some students have part-time jobs. In addition, some students cannot work independently. They need discussions with friends, but they are difficult to meet because of the Covid 19 pandemic. Some students are still embarrassed to ask their lecturers and friends if they have problems. This finding is almost the same as Widianingsih & Gulo (2016) and Effendi et al., (2017) who found that there were several problems in learning grammar such as student aspects, time, lack of knowledge, and grammar material. In short, student problems can be categorized as cognitive and social problems because they are related to understanding the material and social life of students themselves.

### **Solution of students' challenges in implementing learning grammar strategies**

Based on the results of interviews with lecturers and students, some possible solutions to the challenges faced by students in implementing grammar strategies can be seen in table 2.

**Table. 2** Possible solutions to student challenges in using grammar learning strategies

No.	Problem	Solution
1	Low understanding of English grammar	Students get additional lessons from lecturers or students learn from smarter students
2	Difficulty in remembering English grammar rules	Students can practice more often and take notes on English grammar rules
3	Fear and shame to get negative evaluation from friends and lecturers	Lecturers must provide reinforcement to students and build their confidence in learning grammar by motivating.
4	Rarely work in groups during the pandemic	The lecturer instructs the students to have a zoom meeting in groups and the lecturer supervises the group's study virtually
5	Students have odd jobs and have limited time to study grammar.	Students should know how to manage time by making an English grammar study schedule. Then, students must have a strong commitment.

The solution to the problems faced by students in implementing grammar learning strategies can be done in several ways. First, if what is being faced is the problem of low knowledge of grammar, then what can be done is to provide additional lessons regarding which parts of grammar are not mastered because by providing additional lessons, the lecturer will focus on the students being taught. In this case, the number of students being taught is not as much as the number of ordinary or regular students. In addition, lecturers can also provide motivation by providing an overview of the benefits of studying grammar and mastering it.

By mastering grammar, this will support other English skills such as speaking, writing, reading and listening. This is in line with Harmer (2007) who said that learning grammar is one of the important things to help students in supporting other English skills.

Second, if there is a problem regarding difficulties in remembering the rules of English, then the solution that can be given is for students to take notes and practice as often as possible in order to be able to remember the rules. Another thing that can be done is with case studies, where students analyze text in which there is text that contains grammatical rules, so that students are able to analyze grammar and it becomes a learning experience that they can remember. Third, if the problem faced is related to anxiety in getting negative evaluations from friends or teachers, this can be overcome by providing reinforcement and building self-confidence by not feeling ashamed to make mistakes in doing grammar. In addition, the lecturer gives an understanding that wrong is one of the processes leading to the right thing in learning. However, it should be informed that the fear experienced regarding the negative response from friends must be anticipated by studying hard and not giving up.

Fourth, if group discussions are rarely carried out during a pandemic, the lecturer is able to instruct students to study in groups during zoom because at the zoom cloud meeting there is a breakout room and the lecturer can monitor students in group discussions regarding grammar. With sharing between individuals or groups, students are able to share knowledge with one another. In this case, students who have more knowledge are able to provide information or teach students with less abilities. Fifth, if a student has a side job and limited time to study, then the student must be able to divide his time. In a sense, students must be committed to making a schedule for work and study. With a strong will and commitment, students will be able to maximize their time to study. Findings regarding solutions to problems faced by students in implementing grammar learning strategies are in line with Harmer (2007) and Brown (2007) which stated that the solution to lack of grammar knowledge, learning anxiety and time problems is to be able to read theories about grammar, practice, and able to manage time well. Lecturers must also motivate students in learning.

#### **D. CONCLUSION**

Based on the results of the research, the existence of strategies that are known by students in learning grammar can improve their ability in learning English grammar. This is proved by the increase in grammar scores from pre-test to post-test. Although student learning outcomes have increased, there are still problems faced by students in implementing strategies in learning grammar. For example, time problems, lack of knowledge, difficulty studying in groups, embarrassment if incorrectly answered grammar and difficulty remembering grammar rules. These problems can be overcome by always practicing, being able to manage time well and having high motivation and commitment to learning. This study has limitations in terms of the research subject which is only limited to one university in Bengkulu and the number of samples only uses one class of 30 people. In addition, there is only 1 lecturer who teaches. Furthermore, there is a need for a high level of depth to strategies in grammar because the data is taken only based on a questionnaire. To support it, other instruments such as observation should be needed. As a suggestion, the next researchers are able to develop research on the same topic based on the shortcomings. Lecturers must also be able to use strategies optimally in teaching grammar.

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