

English Grammar Teaching Strategies in a Limited-Resource Junior High School

Karina¹

UIN Palopo

42064801133@uinpalopo.ac.id

Andi Tenrisanna Syam²

UIN Alauddin Makassar

andi.tenrisanna@uin-alauddin.ac.id

Madehang³

UIN Palopo

madehang@uinpalopo.ac.id

Devi Ismayanti⁴

UIN Palopo

devi_ismayanti@uinpalopo.ac.id

Korespondensi: Andi Tenrisanna Syam, andi.tenrisanna@uin-alauddin.ac.id

Abstrak

Grammar instruction remains a fundamental component of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning. However, empirical studies that document how grammar-teaching strategies are implemented in junior high school classrooms, particularly in limited-resource contexts, remain relatively limited. This study aims to analyze the grammar teaching strategies implemented by English teachers at SMP Negeri Satap 2 Kolaka Utara. A qualitative research design was employed involving three English teachers selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected through classroom observations and semi-structured interviews and analyzed using the interactive model of data analysis, including data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings reveal that teachers implemented several grammar-teaching strategies, including interactive and student-centered activities, group-based learning, the integration of learning media and technology, contextual instruction, and adaptive teaching practices to address classroom challenges. These strategies encouraged greater student participation, supported students' understanding of grammatical structures, and fostered more positive attitudes toward grammar learning. The study also shows that teachers demonstrated pedagogical flexibility by adapting instructional practices to students' needs and to the limitations of available learning resources. This study contributes to the literature on EFL pedagogy by providing empirical evidence that communicative, collaborative, and contextual grammar-teaching strategies can be effectively implemented even in schools with limited instructional facilities. The findings highlight the importance of teachers' pedagogical creativity and adaptability in supporting effective grammar instruction and improving student engagement in EFL classrooms.

Kata Kunci: EFL Classroom, Grammar Teaching Strategies, Junior High School, Limited-Resource School

INTRODUCTION

English has increasingly functioned as a global lingua franca, making English language proficiency an essential competence for students in both academic and professional contexts (Seidlhofer, 2020). In Indonesia, English is taught as a foreign language (EFL) to equip learners with the communicative skills needed to participate in global interactions (Gayatri et al., 2023). Among the key components of English language competence, grammar plays a fundamental role because it provides the structural framework that enables learners to convey meaning accurately and coherently in both spoken and written communication (Seidlhofer, 2020). Without sufficient grammatical knowledge, students often experience difficulties in constructing sentences, interpreting meaning, and expressing ideas effectively.

Despite its importance, grammar remains one of the most challenging aspects of English learning for EFL students. Grammar instruction is often perceived as monotonous, rule-based, and disconnected from real communication, which may lead to low student motivation and limited learning outcomes (Tamam, 2025). These challenges are frequently intensified by the use of inappropriate instructional strategies, limited learning resources, and differences in students' readiness levels (Dzimar et al., 2025; Sorohiti et al., 2024). As a result, the effectiveness of grammar learning is strongly influenced by how teachers design and implement teaching strategies that present grammatical concepts in meaningful, engaging, and contextually relevant ways.

Teaching strategies play a crucial role in the teaching–learning process because they determine how instructional content is delivered and how students participate in learning activities. Effective grammar teaching strategies help students not only understand grammatical rules but also apply them in authentic communication (Aisyiyah et al., 2024). Therefore, teachers are expected to select and implement strategies that correspond to learning objectives, students' characteristics, and classroom conditions. Previous studies suggest that the use of varied instructional strategies, including group-based learning, contextual instruction, interactive activities, and the integration of technology, can enhance students' grammatical understanding and participation in learning (Aniuranti et al., 2021; Ismail & Dedi, 2021).

However, implementing such strategies may present particular challenges in schools located in developing or rural areas. In Indonesian junior high school contexts, limited instructional facilities, diverse student abilities, and restricted access to learning resources may influence the way teachers conduct grammar instruction. SMP Negeri Satap 2 Kolaka Utara, for instance, operates within a relatively resource-limited environment where teachers must adapt their teaching strategies to the available facilities and the diverse needs of students. Although grammar is a compulsory component of English instruction at this level, empirical evidence documenting how grammar teaching strategies are implemented in such contexts remains limited.

Previous research has examined grammar teaching strategies and teachers' perceptions of grammar instruction in EFL classrooms, highlighting approaches such as deductive and inductive instruction as well as form-focused teaching (Alfares, 2024; Li & Xu, 2023; Shirav & Nagai, 2022). However, many of these studies were conducted in urban schools, senior high school settings, or higher education institutions. Studies focusing specifically on grammar teaching practices in junior high schools located in underrepresented or resource-limited regions remain relatively scarce. This limitation indicates a need for context-specific investigations that document how teachers implement grammar teaching strategies in real classroom situations.

Therefore, this study aims to analyze the English grammar teaching strategies implemented by teachers at SMP Negeri Satap 2 Kolaka Utara. Through a qualitative approach involving classroom observations and teacher interviews, the study seeks to identify the types of strategies used in grammar instruction, examine how these strategies are implemented in classroom practice, and understand the considerations that influence teachers' instructional decisions. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to the literature on EFL pedagogy by providing empirical insights into grammar teaching practices in junior high school contexts, particularly in schools with limited instructional resources. In addition, the results may offer practical implications for teachers, school administrators, and curriculum developers in improving the effectiveness of grammar instruction.

METHODS

This study employed narrative qualitative research to explore English grammar teaching strategies implemented by teachers at SMP Negeri Satap 2 Kolaka Utara (Tomaszewski et al., 2020). A qualitative approach was considered appropriate because the study aimed to gain an in-depth understanding of teaching practices, instructional decisions, and classroom interactions as they naturally occurred, rather than to measure variables quantitatively.

The participants of this study were three English teachers teaching at SMP Negeri Satap 2 Kolaka Utara. They were selected using purposive sampling (Campbell et al., 2020), based on their active involvement in teaching English grammar at the junior high school level and their willingness to participate in the research. This selection enabled the researcher to obtain rich and relevant data on grammar teaching strategies from practitioners directly involved in classroom instruction within the research context.

Data were collected through classroom observations and semi-structured interviews. Classroom observations were conducted to examine how grammar teaching strategies were implemented in real instructional settings. The observations focused on teaching procedures, student engagement, instructional media, and classroom management during grammar instruction. Observation data were recorded in field notes using an observation checklist to ensure systematic documentation of classroom activities.

In this study, three English teachers were observed during grammar lessons to capture variations in instructional strategies used in the classroom. Each observation was conducted during regular English class sessions lasting approximately 60–90 minutes, in accordance with the school's instructional schedule. The research was conducted over approximately one month during the data collection phase, during which classroom observations and follow-up interviews with teachers were carried out.

Data analysis followed the interactive model proposed by Miles and Huberman, which consists of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. In the data reduction stage, observation and interview data were selected, simplified, and coded according to emerging themes related to grammar teaching strategies. The data were then organized and presented in narrative and tabular forms to facilitate interpretation. Finally,

conclusions were drawn by identifying recurring patterns and relationships across the data sources.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, data triangulation was applied by comparing information obtained from classroom observations and interviews. This process helped enhance the credibility of the data and ensured that the findings accurately reflected the actual grammar teaching practices at SMP Negeri Satap 2 Kolaka Utara.

RESULTS

Classroom Observation Results

Classroom observations revealed several grammar teaching strategies implemented by English teachers at SMP Negeri Satap 2 Kolaka Utara. The observed strategies included interactive learning activities, group-based learning, the integration of instructional media and technology, contextual grammar instruction, and adaptive strategies to address classroom challenges.

Table 1 summarizes the grammar teaching strategies observed in the classroom, including their implementation and the observed impact on student engagement and understanding.

Table 1. Grammar Teaching Strategies Implemented by English Teachers

Strategy	Classroom Implementation	Observed Impact
Interactive and student-centered strategies	Teachers used language games, role-play, guided exercises, and question–answer sessions to explain grammar concepts.	Students showed higher participation, increased confidence, and better understanding of grammar usage.
Group-based learning	Students worked in small groups to discuss grammar tasks, construct sentences,	Peer interaction supported understanding, particularly for lower-achieving

	and present answers collaboratively.	students, and improved classroom engagement.
Integration of learning media and technology	Teachers used PowerPoint presentations, animated videos, online quizzes, and printed worksheets depending on the available facilities.	Learning media increased students' motivation and helped clarify abstract grammar concepts.
Contextual and gradual grammar instruction	Grammar lessons began with simple explanations and examples related to students' daily life before moving to structured practice.	Students were able to apply grammar rules more accurately in speaking and writing activities.
Adaptive teaching strategies	Teachers varied activities, used games, provided real-life examples, and offered immediate feedback.	Students' boredom decreased and their difficulties in understanding grammar were reduced.

The observations indicated that interactive and student-centered activities were frequently used to engage students in grammar learning. Teachers used activities such as language games, role-play, and guided exercises to encourage students to participate actively in the learning process. These activities allowed students to practice grammatical structures in meaningful contexts and helped increase their confidence in using grammar.

Group-based learning was also frequently observed during grammar instruction. Students were organized into small groups to complete grammar tasks and construct sentences collaboratively. Through group discussion and peer interaction, students were able to support each other in understanding grammatical forms and reduce anxiety when participating in classroom activities.

The use of instructional media and technology was also evident during classroom instruction. Teachers utilized PowerPoint presentations, animated videos, and online quizzes when technological facilities were available. In classrooms with more limited technological access, teachers used printed worksheets and simple learning aids. These resources helped make grammar lessons more engaging and assisted students in understanding abstract grammatical concepts.

Grammar instruction was often delivered gradually and contextually. Teachers typically began lessons with simple explanations and examples related to students' daily experiences before introducing more complex grammatical structures. This step-by-step process helped students build foundational knowledge and apply grammar rules in speaking and writing activities.

Teachers also demonstrated adaptive strategies to address challenges encountered during grammar instruction. For example, teachers varied classroom activities, introduced game-based learning, provided real-life examples, and offered immediate feedback to students. These strategies helped reduce students' boredom and supported their understanding of grammar concepts.

The interview data provided further insights into teachers' perspectives on grammar teaching strategies, their implementation in classroom practice, and the challenges they encountered.

Teachers' Strategies in Teaching Grammar

Teachers reported using interactive and contextual approaches when teaching grammar. One teacher stated:

"I utilize interactive approaches, such as language games, group discussion, and hands-on exercises to teach grammar. This helps students understand grammar contextually, not just memorizing rules." (Teacher A)

Another teacher explained:

"I start with a brief explanation, then give examples in daily life. After that, students practice by making their sentences or role-playing." (Teacher B)

Similarly, another respondent emphasized the importance of adjusting strategies to students' needs:

“I choose strategies based on the difficulty of the material and the needs of the students. If the material is difficult, then I utilize more interactive exercises to improve students' understanding of grammar.” (Teacher C)

These responses indicate that teachers tend to apply interactive and student-centered strategies that encourage students to practice grammar in meaningful contexts.

Implementation of Grammar Teaching Strategies

Teachers explained that grammar instruction usually begins with basic explanations followed by practice activities. One teacher stated:

“I start with a brief explanation, then give examples in everyday life. After that, students practice by making their sentences or role-playing.” (Teacher A)

Another teacher explained:

“For certain materials, I teach the basic rules first, then ask students to make presentations or simple projects that involve the use of grammar.” (Teacher B)

Another teacher highlighted the gradual progression of learning activities:

“I start by giving simple instructions, increasing the complexity of the exercise according to the student's progress.” (Teacher C)

These responses suggest that grammar instruction is often implemented through gradual learning activities that move from explanation to practice and application.

Factors Influencing Strategy Selection

Teachers indicated that several factors influence their choice of grammar teaching strategies. One teacher explained:

“The main factors are the student's level of understanding, their engagement in class, and the resources available in the school.” (Teacher A)

Another teacher stated:

“An important factor is the student's initial ability and the availability of time to explore the material.” (Teacher B)

Another respondent added:

“The learning context and the material being taught are my main considerations.”
(Teacher C)

These responses show that teachers consider students’ abilities, classroom conditions, available time, and instructional resources when selecting teaching strategies.

Integration of Technology in Grammar Instruction

Teachers also reported integrating technology and multimedia resources into grammar teaching. One teacher stated:

“I often use animated videos and apps like YouTube to practice problems. This makes students more interested and understand grammar concepts in a fun way.”
(Teacher A)

Another teacher explained:

“I use PowerPoint and interactive videos as tools, especially to explain grammar concepts.” (Teacher B)

Another respondent reported using digital applications:

“I often use online grammar apps for individual students' practice.” (Teacher C)

These responses indicate that teachers attempt to incorporate multimedia resources to increase students’ engagement and support their understanding of grammar.

Challenges in Grammar Teaching

Teachers also described several challenges encountered in grammar instruction. One teacher explained:

“The main challenge is the limited technology facilities. The solution is to innovate with simple tools such as flashcards or board games.” (Teacher A)

Another teacher reported:

“Sometimes students feel bored with grammar material. I overcome this by providing game-based activities or competitions.” (Teacher B)

Another respondent stated:

“Students often have difficulty using proper grammar. I overcome it by giving real examples.” (Teacher C)

These responses indicate that teachers face challenges related to limited facilities, student motivation, and students’ difficulties in applying grammar.

Effective Grammar Teaching Strategies

Teachers also identified strategies that they considered effective for grammar learning. One teacher stated:

“In my opinion, the group discussion method is very effective. Students can learn from each other and understand grammar concepts from their friends.” (Teacher A)

Another teacher explained:

“Repeated drill exercises are quite effective for understanding simple sentence structures.” (Teacher B)

Another respondent highlighted the effectiveness of role-play:

“The role-play method is very effective because students can practice grammar in real situations.” (Teacher C)

These responses suggest that interactive, repetitive, and contextual strategies are considered effective in improving students’ grammar understanding.

Assessment of Students’ Grammar Learning

Teachers also described several approaches used to assess students’ progress in grammar learning. One teacher stated:

“I use weekly quizzes and writing assignments to assess students’ understanding. From this, I know the aspects that need improvement.” (Teacher A)

Another teacher reported using observation and feedback:

“I make direct observations during class activities and give immediate feedback.” (Teacher B)

Another teacher explained:

“I give a short assignment after each session to evaluate students' understanding.”
(Teacher C)

These responses indicate that teachers use various assessment methods, including quizzes, assignments, and classroom observation, to monitor students' grammar learning.

Role of Formative Assessment

Teachers also emphasized the importance of formative assessment in grammar instruction. One teacher stated:

“Formative assessment is important to see students' progress. I use the results to adjust the pace and methods of teaching.” (Teacher A)

Another teacher explained:

“Formative assessment results help me determine whether to repeat material or move on to new topics.” (Teacher B)

Another respondent stated:

“Formative assessment helps me identify student weaknesses and direct learning more especially.” (Teacher C)

These responses show that formative assessment plays an important role in guiding instructional decisions and improving the effectiveness of grammar teaching.

Overall, the interview results indicate that teachers apply interactive, contextual, and adaptive grammar teaching strategies. Teachers use a variety of instructional methods, including group discussions, repetitive exercises, language games, and role-playing activities to improve students' understanding of grammar. Strategy selection is influenced by students' needs, learning styles, instructional goals, and classroom conditions.

DISCUSSION

This study investigated the grammar-teaching strategies implemented by English teachers at SMP Negeri Satap 2 Kolaka Utara. The findings indicate that grammar instruction was delivered through interactive, collaborative, contextual, and adaptive

approaches. These strategies demonstrate that teachers attempted to move beyond traditional rule-based grammar instruction toward more student-centered learning practices, even within a school context with limited instructional resources.

The use of interactive activities during grammar instruction suggests that teachers attempted to involve students actively in the learning process. Classroom observations showed that activities such as role-play, language games, and guided exercises encouraged students to practice grammatical forms within meaningful contexts. Through these activities, students were required to construct sentences and respond to communicative prompts, which helped them perceive grammar as a functional tool for communication rather than merely a set of abstract rules. This finding is consistent with the principles of Communicative Language Teaching, which emphasize that grammar should be integrated into meaningful communication instead of being taught in isolation (Thornbury, 2016). Previous studies have similarly reported that interactive grammar instruction enhances learner engagement and promotes deeper understanding of grammatical forms when students actively apply language structures in communicative situations (Ramadhanti & Pratiwi, 2025; Syarani et al., 2025).

The implementation of group-based learning activities further highlights the role of social interaction in grammar learning. During collaborative tasks, students worked together to complete exercises, discuss sentence structures, and correct grammatical errors. These interactions allowed students to negotiate meaning and support one another in understanding grammatical patterns. Such practices reflect the principles of socio-constructivist learning theory, which views knowledge as something constructed through social interaction and shared learning experiences (Chuang, 2021; Zajda, 2021). Similar findings have been reported in previous research showing that peer collaboration can increase learner participation and reduce anxiety, particularly among students with lower language proficiency (Dewaele et al., 2024; Maican & Cocoradă, 2021). In the context of this study, collaborative learning appeared to create a supportive classroom atmosphere in which students felt more confident practicing grammar.

Another important finding relates to the use of learning media and technology in grammar instruction. Teachers utilized various media such as instructional videos, digital exercises, and visual materials to explain grammatical concepts. These media helped

make grammar explanations more concrete and easier for students to understand. The integration of multimedia resources also appeared to increase student attention and motivation during lessons. This result supports earlier studies suggesting that technology-assisted instruction can enhance students' comprehension of abstract grammatical concepts and make language learning more engaging (Nam et al., 2025; Shadiev & Wang, 2022). However, the findings also indicate that the effectiveness of grammar instruction in this context was not solely dependent on advanced technology. Instead, teachers' creativity in adapting available resources played a significant role in maintaining instructional effectiveness despite limited facilities.

The contextual and gradual presentation of grammar materials observed in this study further illustrates how teachers attempted to support students' cognitive development in learning grammar. Teachers introduced grammatical structures through examples related to students' daily experiences before moving toward more complex sentence constructions. This gradual progression helped students build understanding step by step and prevented them from becoming overwhelmed by complex grammatical rules. Such an approach aligns with cognitive learning theory, which emphasizes the importance of scaffolding and structured progression in learning processes (Oogarah-Pratap et al., 2020). Previous studies have also shown that contextualized grammar instruction improves learners' ability to apply grammatical rules in communication because it connects new knowledge with familiar situations (Chatterjee & Halder, 2022; Habiburrahman et al., 2025).

Despite the positive implementation of various strategies, teachers also encountered several challenges during grammar instruction. These challenges included varying levels of student motivation, limited learning resources, and students' difficulties in transferring grammatical knowledge into communicative language use. Such challenges are commonly reported in EFL learning contexts, particularly in schools with limited facilities. To address these difficulties, teachers adapted their instructional practices by varying classroom activities, providing immediate feedback, and using examples from real-life situations. These adaptive strategies demonstrate reflective teaching practices, in which teachers continuously adjust their teaching approaches in response to classroom conditions and students' needs.

From a broader perspective, this study contributes to the literature on grammar teaching in EFL contexts by providing empirical evidence from a junior high school located in a relatively underrepresented region. Many previous studies on grammar instruction have focused on urban schools or higher education institutions. In contrast, this study illustrates how teachers working in resource-limited environments are still able to implement student-centered grammar teaching strategies through pedagogical creativity and flexible instructional practices. This finding suggests that effective grammar teaching is not solely determined by technological availability or institutional resources, but also by teachers' strategic decisions in designing meaningful learning experiences for students.

Despite offering valuable insights into teachers' grammar teaching strategies, this study has several limitations. First, the research involved only three English teachers from a single school, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other educational contexts. Second, the data were primarily obtained through classroom observations and semi-structured interviews, which focused mainly on teachers' instructional practices and perspectives. Consequently, the study does not fully capture the long-term impact of these strategies on students' grammatical competence. Additionally, the relatively short observation period may not represent the full range of instructional practices used throughout the academic year. Future research is therefore recommended to involve a larger number of participants, include multiple schools, and incorporate additional data sources such as students' learning assessments in order to provide a more comprehensive understanding of effective grammar teaching strategies

CONCLUSION

This study examined the grammar-teaching strategies implemented by English teachers at SMP Negeri Satap 2 Kolaka Utara and found that grammar instruction was conducted through interactive, collaborative, contextual, and adaptive approaches. Teachers engaged students in grammar learning through group-based activities, varied learning media, and gradual instruction that connected grammatical concepts with students' daily experiences. These strategies helped increase student participation and

supported students' understanding of grammar as a functional component of communication rather than merely a set of rules.

The findings indicate that effective grammar instruction does not depend solely on traditional rule-based teaching or sophisticated technological facilities. Instead, teachers' pedagogical creativity, adaptability, and ability to select strategies that align with students' learning needs play an essential role in supporting grammar learning outcomes. From a theoretical perspective, these results support communicative language teaching, socio-constructivist learning theory, and cognitive learning theory, which emphasize interaction, collaboration, contextualization, and scaffolding as important elements in language learning.

Practically, the study highlights the importance of diversifying grammar teaching strategies by incorporating interactive activities, collaborative learning, and contextual instruction to enhance students' engagement and understanding of grammar. The study also provides empirical insights into grammar teaching practices in junior high school contexts located in resource-limited areas. Future research is recommended to involve broader educational settings, larger participant groups, and additional data sources, including students' perspectives and learning outcomes, in order to develop a more comprehensive understanding of effective grammar instruction in EFL classrooms.

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