

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

A. English Grammar Mastery

1. The Concept of Grammar

In English language learning, grammar is closely related to how learners understand and use language structures in meaningful contexts. Efrizal (2023) found that students in an Islamic boarding school context tended to prioritize grammatical structures in learning English. The study indicates that grammar remains an important aspect of English learning, although students should not only focus on memorizing grammatical patterns but also be encouraged to use English in meaningful and communicative contexts. This suggests that grammar learning involves not only knowledge of grammatical rules but also the ability to apply those rules appropriately in language use.

Similarly, Riswanto and Khermarinah (2025) investigated the development of English speaking and writing materials through a Problem-Based Learning (PBL) approach at Islamic universities in Bengkulu. The study found that existing English learning materials were often generic and heavily focused on grammar, while providing limited relevance to students' academic and contextual needs. The findings suggest

that although grammar is an important component of English learning, grammar instruction should be integrated with meaningful and contextual language use. These findings further highlight that grammar should not be taught in isolation but should support students' ability to use English appropriately in different communicative contexts.

Grammar is not merely a set of rules, but also a conceptual system that reflects how language functions in terms of form, meaning, and usage. According to van Rijt and Coppen (2021), grammar is part of Knowledge about Language (KaL), which encompasses an understanding of how sentences and phrases are constructed and how they function in communication. This perspective emphasizes that grammar should be viewed as a system of knowledge that helps learners understand the relationship between language structure and meaning.

Furthermore, grammar can be understood from two main perspectives, namely prescriptive and descriptive. Prescriptive grammar focuses on the rules that determine the correctness or incorrectness of language use, whereas descriptive grammar explains how language is actually used by speakers in real-world contexts. In modern linguistic studies, grammar is more often viewed as a descriptive system that explains patterns and regularities in language, rather than merely as rules that must be followed.

Van Rijt and Coppen (2021) also emphasize that grammar has conceptual significance that goes beyond its role in improving language skills. First, an understanding of grammar helps learners grasp how language functions as a system. Second, grammar provides insights into human cognition, as language is closely tied to the way humans think and process information. Third, learning grammar can develop students' critical thinking skills, as it involves analyzing and understanding patterns in language.

Furthermore, grammar is closely related to the broader field of linguistics, where it interacts with other aspects such as semantics, pragmatics, and discourse. Therefore, studying grammar is not merely about mastering sentence structure but also about understanding how language conveys meaning across various contexts. This conceptual understanding enables learners to use language more effectively and appropriately in real-world communication.

Based on these various perspectives, it can be concluded that grammar is a fundamental and conceptual component of language. Grammar is not merely a set of formal rules, but also a meaningful system that supports communication, cognition, and critical thinking skills. Therefore, grammar should be taught as a dynamic and functional system so that learners can understand and use language comprehensively

2. Components of Grammar

Grammar is a system that governs how language is structured and used to convey meaning. According to Betty Schramper Azar (2002), English grammar is not merely a set of rules, but a system that integrates form, meaning, and use. From a linguistic perspective, grammar consists of several interrelated components that together form a complete structure of language (Kerl, 1862).

a. Parts of Speech

The most fundamental component of grammar is parts of speech, which refers to the classification of words based on their functions in a sentence (Kerl, 1862). These include nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, articles, prepositions, and conjunctions. These elements serve as the basic building blocks of sentence formation.

b. Tenses

Tenses are used to indicate the time of an action or event. According to Azar (2002), tenses include present, past, and future time, as well as perfect tenses that connect different points in time. The appropriate use of tenses enables learners to express actions clearly and accurately.

In English grammar, tenses are generally classified into present, past, and future forms, each of which may include different aspects such as simple, continuous, and perfect (Azar, 2002). However, at the junior high school level, the focus is

usually limited to basic tenses that are frequently used in daily communication.

In this study, the discussion of tenses is limited to the simple past tense and past continuous tense. These tenses are selected because they are explicitly taught in the eighth-grade textbook, particularly in Units 5 to 8, and are commonly used in recount and narrative texts. Therefore, they are considered relevant and appropriate for measuring students' grammar mastery in this research.

c. Clauses

Grammar also involves the arrangement of words into larger units such as phrases and clauses. A clause is a group of words that contains a subject and a verb and can function as a noun clause, adjective clause, or adverb clause. Understanding clauses helps learners construct meaningful and grammatically correct sentences.

d. Auxiliary Verbs and Modals

Modal Verbs are used to express the speaker's attitude toward an action. They include expressions of ability (*can*), permission (*may*), obligation (*must*), and advice (*should*). These forms are essential for expressing intention, possibility, and necessity.

In the context of junior high school learning, modal verbs are often used in communicative expressions such as giving opinions, expressing agreement and disagreement, and

making suggestions. These functions are explicitly taught in the eighth-grade textbook, particularly in Unit 6, and are essential for students' communicative competence.

e. Other Grammatical Structures

English grammar also includes clauses and other grammatical structures, such as passive voice, gerunds, infinitives, and conditional sentences. However, these components are beyond the scope of the present study because the grammar test focuses only on the simple past tense, past continuous tense, and modal verbs.

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that grammar consists of interconnected components, ranging from basic word classes to more complex sentence structures. In this study, the focus is limited to tenses and modal verbs because these components are explicitly taught in the eighth-grade curriculum, included in the research instrument, and frequently used in classroom communication. Therefore, focusing on these components allows for a more specific and measurable analysis of students' grammar mastery.

3. Definition Of Grammar

In his study of second language acquisition, Rod Ellis explains that gra

mmar mastery is related to two types of knowledge, namely explicit knowledge and implicit knowledge. Explicit

knowledge refers to a conscious understanding of grammar rules that can be explained verbally, while implicit knowledge is the ability to use language structures automatically in communication. Ellis emphasizes that successful grammar learning depends not only on understanding the rules, but also on the ability to internalize these structures so that they can be used spontaneously in language use. Therefore, grammar mastery encompasses both conceptual understanding and practical skills in real communication contexts.

Grammar mastery refers to learners' ability to understand and use grammatical rules accurately and appropriately in communication. Understanding grammar helps learners understand how words, phrases, and clauses are arranged to form meaningful sentences that conform to the rules of the language. As part of the linguistic system, grammar not only serves to regulate the structure of language, but also as a tool for expressing ideas, emotions, and meanings clearly. Therefore, mastery of grammar is an important indicator of success in learning a foreign language, including English.

According to Alharthi (2025, p. 293), grammar is a linguistic system, namely a set of principles that enable language learners to form and organize sentences. This definition emphasizes that grammar acts as a set of rules that guide learners in understanding and producing language correctly. In the context of learning English as a foreign language (EFL),

understanding this system helps students distinguish between the correct word forms and sentence structures, enabling them to communicate well according to the applicable language rules.

Moreover, Ghafar and Sawalmeh (2024, p. 13) explain that grammar is considered an important component in language learning because it provides the necessary framework for learners to construct meaningful sentences and communicate effectively. This statement shows that grammar is not just a set of rules, but also the main foundation for communication skills. Without a good understanding of grammar, the message that learners want to convey can become ambiguous or misinterpreted. Therefore, grammar teaching in English classes needs to be designed so that students understand the communicative function of the grammatical structures they are learning.

Furthermore, Li (2023) emphasizes that grammar is related to patterns that can be generalized from language, where learners can construct new phrases and master grammatical features to express the correct meaning. This view highlights the role of grammar as a flexible and productive system. Learners do not just memorize rules, but also understand patterns that can be applied in various communication contexts. Thus, they are able to develop linguistic creativity, form new sentences, and adapt language structures to their desired communicative purposes.

Moreover, Arif et al. (2024) state that grammar plays a crucial role in English language learning because it provides a foundation for learners to construct meaningful sentences and communicate effectively. Grammar is not merely viewed as a set of rules, but also as a key component that supports language proficiency in real-world communication contexts.

Additionally, Burhanuddin and Nur (2025) explain that grammar proficiency must be viewed as a competency-based skill, where learners are not only expected to understand grammatical forms but also to be able to use them in meaningful and authentic communication. This perspective emphasizes that grammar learning is not limited to memorization but also encompasses the practical use of language in real life.

From these various perspectives, it can be concluded that grammar plays a vital role in language learning. Grammar is not just a set of formal rules, but also a dynamic system that enables learners to develop their language skills in a structured, meaningful, and communicative way. By understanding grammar as a living and contextual system, language teaching can be directed to help students not only master form, but also understand the function and meaning behind each grammatical structure used in everyday communication.

4. The Function of Grammar in English Language Learning

Grammar plays an important role in English language learning because it forms the foundation for the four language skills, namely speaking, writing, reading, and listening. Kulaeva and Kulaev (2023) emphasize that without an understanding of grammar, learners are unable to express ideas accurately or understand other people's language optimally. Grammar provides the underlying structure for constructing correct and meaningful sentences, allowing each language skill to develop in a balanced manner. Therefore, mastery of grammar not only improves communication skills but also strengthens learners' cognitive foundations in processing language systematically and effectively.

Additionally, teaching grammar in the context of a Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)-based curriculum has a strategic function in encouraging authentic language use. Zhang (2023) states that grammar helps balance accuracy and fluency, fosters independent learning, and is in line with the modern language competency perspective. With this approach, learners can use grammar as a guide to express ideas creatively and accurately, while enabling differentiated learning according to each student's needs, thereby improving the overall effectiveness of English teaching.

Empirical research shows that teaching grammar has a significant impact on improving language accuracy and fluency. Pereira Llor and Guevara Peñaranda (2025) reported a reduction in errors related to verb conjugation, article usage, and sentence structure. In addition, learners' writing became more coherent and natural. These findings indicate that grammar does not only function as abstract rules, but also as practical tools that support real communication. The integration of grammar teaching and communication practice enables learners to acquire language functionally and effectively.

Furthermore, mastery of grammar also strengthens learners' cognitive abilities in understanding language structure and its contextual use. With a good understanding of grammar, learners can identify patterns, analyze errors, and adjust their language use according to the context of communication. Kulaeva and Kulaev (2023) emphasize that this is important to ensure that learners are able to convey messages clearly and understand others' messages accurately. Thus, grammar becomes an important instrument in improving overall linguistic competence.

Moreover, grammar plays a crucial role in developing students' communicative competence, as it enables them to convey meaning accurately in various contexts. Grammar is not only about constructing correct sentences but also about selecting appropriate structures based on the situation, purpose,

and audience. Through grammar, students can express ideas more precisely and interpret messages more accurately. Therefore, grammar serves as a bridge between linguistic knowledge and effective communication in real-life contexts (Ellis, 2006; Larsen-Freeman, 2003).

Overall, the function of grammar in English language learning includes improving accuracy, fluency, and cognitive abilities in understanding the language. Effective grammar teaching does not only focus on rules, but also integrates them with authentic communication practices (Zhang, 2023; Pereira Loo & Guevara Peñaranda, 2025; Kulaeva & Kulaev, 2023). Thus, grammar becomes the main foundation that enables learners to express themselves accurately, understand the language deeply, and improve their overall language competence. Mastery of grammar is the key to success in teaching and learning English.

5. Grammar Mastery at the Junior High School Level

Grammar mastery refers to a student's ability to understand and use grammatical structures accurately and appropriately in communication. According to Rod Ellis, grammar mastery encompasses two types of knowledge: explicit knowledge (conscious understanding of rules) and implicit knowledge (the ability to use grammar automatically in real-life communication).

Grammar mastery at the junior high school level is an important aspect in developing students' English language skills. Grammar is the foundation that supports writing, speaking, reading, and listening skills. However, at the junior high school level, students often face various challenges, both cognitive and learning environment-related. Huang (2024) emphasizes that the application of associative memory methods in teaching grammar can increase students' interest in learning and memory efficiency, thereby optimizing learning outcomes. Appropriate teaching strategies are key to enabling students to deeply understand grammar rules and apply them in everyday communication.

According to Scott Thornbury (1999), grammar learning encompasses three key aspects: form, meaning, and usage. Form refers to the structure of grammatical patterns; meaning relates to the concepts or ideas being expressed; and usage relates to the appropriate application of grammar in various contexts. Therefore, students' mastery of grammar can be identified through their ability to understand grammatical forms, interpret meaning, and use structures accurately and appropriately in communication.

Junior high school students in rural areas face additional challenges in mastering grammar due to limited exposure to authentic English. Amadi and Togho (2024) state that interference from the mother tongue also affects students'

ability to understand and apply grammar rules. To overcome this, it is recommended to use consciousness-raising tasks that emphasize awareness of language patterns, as well as translanguaging strategies to utilize the mother tongue as a bridge for learning. This approach allows students to gain a better understanding of grammar even though their exposure to real English is limited.

In addition, developing appropriate intervention programs can help low-achieving students improve their grammar skills. Hu (2023) proposed a learning model that was tested on intermediate EFL students to support the improvement of grammar competence. This model emphasizes structured learning, repeated practice, and systematic feedback to ensure that students understand grammar concepts and can apply them correctly. This intervention-based approach is important for closing the ability gap among students, so that all learners have the same opportunity to master grammar effectively.

Grammar mastery at the junior high school level is also influenced by the teaching strategies and learning methods applied by teachers. Huang (2024) emphasizes the importance of using innovative methods such as associative memory and exercises involving authentic contexts to make learning more interesting and meaningful. The combination of theory, practice, and memory reinforcement strategies enables students to understand grammar rules more quickly and accurately. With the

right approach, students not only memorize the rules but are also able to use grammar functionally in both oral and written communication.

verall, grammar mastery at the junior high school level is influenced by various factors, including learning experiences, language exposure, instructional support, and students' learning strategies. Therefore, students need sufficient opportunities to practice grammar in meaningful contexts so that they can develop both grammatical knowledge and communicative competence.

B. Learning Strategies in English Grammar Mastery

1. Definition Of Learning Strategies

In the study of second language learning, Rebecca Oxford defines learning strategies as specific actions or techniques consciously used by learners to make the learning process easier, faster, more enjoyable, and more effective. Oxford classifies learning strategies into several categories, such as cognitive, metacognitive, affective, and social strategies. This theory emphasizes that learning strategies serve as tools that help students actively and independently manage the learning process. Thus, the success of language learning is greatly influenced by the ability of students to choose and use strategies that suit their needs.

In the context of grammar learning specifically, Mirosław Pawlak introduced the concept of Grammar Learning Strategies (GLS), which are specific strategies used to understand, remember, and apply grammatical structures. Pawlak explained that the use of appropriate strategies can help students develop both explicit and implicit knowledge of grammar. This perspective shows that learning strategies not only support general cognitive processes, but also have a specific role in grammar acquisition.

Learning strategies are a fundamental aspect of educational psychology and language acquisition. These strategies refer to the systematic behaviors and techniques that learners consciously employ to understand, retain, and apply knowledge. According to Olop, Granström, and Kikas (2024), learning strategies are goal-oriented activities that help students enhance their learning processes, acquire new skills, and retain information. These strategies involve not only the process of memorization but also metacognitive awareness, in which learners evaluate their understanding and adjust the learning methods they use. Therefore, effective learners are those who are able to select the appropriate strategies for specific learning tasks, which ultimately enhances their independence, self-regulation, and academic achievement.

According to Kikas, Puusepp, Granström, and Mädamürk (2024), learning strategies can be defined as a form

of procedural knowledge or as goal-oriented procedures that are deliberately applied to support the planning, execution, or evaluation of specific learning tasks. This definition highlights the cognitive and reflective dimensions of learning strategies, indicating that their use is a conscious and deliberate process involving motivation and self-regulation. Researchers also argue that knowledge and motivation to use learning strategies develop according to educational level, so understanding their procedural aspects is important for improving student engagement and achievement.

Li and Wang (2024) add that there is still no universally agreed definition of learning strategies, as researchers interpret them differently. Some view learning strategies as specific skills or techniques, while others interpret them as processes and steps in learning. Their research highlights the importance of recognizing learning strategies based on student behavior in digital environments, which shows that certain strategy patterns affect learning efficiency. The absence of a single definition indicates the complexity of the concept of learning strategies and the need for adjustments to the learning context.

In conclusion, learning strategies can be understood as a structured, deliberate, and flexible process that supports learners in achieving learning objectives. Although definitions vary, experts agree that learning strategies encompass cognitive and metacognitive dimensions that serve to enhance

understanding and retention. In line with the views of Olop et al. (2024), Kikas et al. (2024), and Li and Wang (2024), the essence of learning strategies lies in their goal-oriented nature and conscious application. Therefore, understanding and applying appropriate learning strategies is essential in improving academic achievement and shaping lifelong learning independence.

2. Types of Learning Strategies

Learning strategies consist of various types that help students achieve learning objectives effectively. These strategies are actions or techniques that students consciously use to facilitate understanding, remembering information, and overcoming difficulties in learning. In language learning, learning strategies are very important because they support thinking processes, self-management, social interaction, and emotional control. One classification of learning strategies that is widely used in language research was proposed by Rebecca L. Oxford (1990), who divided learning strategies into several main categories, namely:

a. Cognitive Strategies

Cognitive strategies are strategies used by learners to process, understand, and manipulate language directly. These strategies are related to mental activities such as: practice,

repetition, summarizing, note-taking, analyzing language structure, and translating.

b. Metacognitive Strategies

Metacognitive strategies are strategies used to regulate and control one's own learning process. These include: planning learning, monitoring understanding, and evaluating learning outcomes.

c. Social Strategies

Social strategies are strategies that involve interacting with others to improve language learning. These include: asking teachers questions, discussing with friends, working in groups, and asking for clarification.

d. Affective Strategies

Affective strategies are strategies used to manage emotions, motivation, and attitudes in language learning. These include: reducing anxiety, motivating oneself, controlling fear of making mistakes, and rewarding oneself.

e. Compensatory strategies

Compensatory strategies are used when learners experience language limitations and then look for ways to still understand or convey messages. These include: guessing meaning from context, using synonyms, using body language, and paraphrasing.

These categories were proposed by Rebecca Oxford (1990) as a comprehensive framework for understanding language learning strategies.

According to Wongdaeng and Higgins (2023), metacognitive strategies are proven to be effective because they enable students to plan, monitor, and evaluate their own learning processes. This approach strengthens self-regulation and reflective abilities that directly impact language proficiency. In EFL learning, students who use metacognitive strategies can more easily identify difficulties, choose appropriate learning methods, and adjust their approach to complex tasks. Therefore, metacognition is an important type of strategy that enhances learning effectiveness in various academic contexts, especially at the higher education level.

Tajeddin and Malmir (2024) mention that learning strategies can be grouped into six main categories, namely memory, cognitive, metacognitive, compensatory, social, and affective strategies. This classification refers to Cohen (2005, 2010) and Oxford (1990), who provide a general framework for language learning strategies. Memory strategies focus on storing and recalling information, while cognitive strategies emphasize mental manipulation of language material. Social and affective strategies support interaction and learning motivation, while compensatory strategies help students overcome language limitations in creative ways. These six categories

form a strong theoretical basis for understanding variations in student learning behavior.

Furthermore, Li and Li (2025) examined grammar learning strategies in a technology-based context and found that the use of these strategies was closely related to motivation and writing buoyancy. This study highlights how digital environments encourage students to use more independent and adaptive learning strategies. By utilizing technology-based platforms, EFL learners can access real-time feedback, strengthen self-regulation, and improve their grammatical skills. Therefore, the integration of technology-based learning strategies is becoming increasingly relevant in today's digital age.

In conclusion, various types of learning strategies contribute significantly to the effectiveness of language learning. Metacognitive strategies have been shown to increase learning awareness, while the categories of strategies proposed by Oxford (1990) and Cohen (2005, 2010) provide a systematic framework for understanding the learning process. The findings of Li and Li (2025) also expand our understanding that learning strategies are now evolving alongside technological innovations. Thus, the introduction and application of various types of learning strategies are key to improving language skills and shaping learners who are autonomous and adaptable to changes in the modern educational context.

3. Effective Learning Strategies for Grammar Mastery

Mastery of grammar is one of the main aspects of language learning that requires the application of appropriate learning strategies. Grammar learning strategies (GLS) help learners understand language structures both explicitly and implicitly. Pawlak (2024) researched strategies-based instruction (SBI) targeting GLS to develop grammar knowledge and found that a strategy-based approach can improve metacognitive awareness and linguistic accuracy. Thus, the use of targeted strategies not only strengthens grammar skills but also deepens conceptual understanding of linguistic rules in the context of foreign language learning.

Pawlak's (2024) research shows that SBI provides opportunities for learners to internalize grammar through exploratory and reflective activities. This approach allows students to link implicit knowledge gained from language exposure with explicit knowledge built through conscious analysis and practice. Thus, instruction-based strategies not only improve grammar skills but also help learners develop awareness of their learning processes. This reinforces the view that strategic and planned learning results in more comprehensive and lasting grammar comprehension.

Hanash (2024) found in his research that certain instructional approaches are closely related to students' use of grammar learning strategies. The empirical study suggests that

explicit instruction and strategy training improve the application of GLS and grammar performance. Learning that combines direct instruction with strategy practice encourages learners to actively control their learning process. Thus, teachers need to integrate strategy training into grammar teaching so that students are able to use various learning techniques flexibly according to their linguistic needs and learning context.

In addition to learning strategies, affective factors such as self-efficacy also play an important role in the successful mastery of grammar. Chen and Zhang (2024) emphasize that high self-efficacy helps learners develop a positive mindset toward learning, thereby contributing to improved learning performance. Strong self-confidence encourages students to use learning strategies more consistently and not give up easily when encountering grammatical difficulties. Therefore, increasing self-efficacy through positive feedback and small achievements is an important element in creating independent and effective language learners.

Overall, Grammar Learning Strategies (GLS) consist of various cognitive, metacognitive, social, affective, and compensatory strategies that help learners understand, practice, and apply grammatical structures. Previous studies suggest that the appropriate use of these strategies can support grammar learning. Therefore, Grammar Learning Strategies provide an

important theoretical foundation for understanding how students learn English grammar.

C. Gender Differences in English Grammar Mastery

1. Definition Of Gender

In his study of second language acquisition, Zoltan Dornyei explains that individual differences are an important factor that influences the success of language learning. These factors include motivation, learning style, learning strategies, personality, and gender. Dornyei emphasizes that gender is not merely a biological category, but part of a socio-psychological variable that can influence students' attitudes, engagement, and academic performance in language learning. In this context, gender differences can affect how students process linguistic information, choose learning strategies, and achieve grammar mastery.

Gender is an important concept in language and social studies because it influences social variations in language use. Hamzah (2025) states that men and women often develop in different subcultures, causing them to develop different linguistic systems. These differences can lead to incompatibility and misunderstanding in intergender communication. Studies on gender emphasize that gender identity not only reflects biological differences but also influences behavior, social interaction, and communication patterns. Understanding these

linguistic differences helps identify the social dynamics that occur in society and how language is used as a reflection of gender identity.

One important aspect of gender in linguistics is the difference in language expression patterns between men and women. According to Melekhin (2023), awareness of these differences can reduce stereotypes related to how women communicate and provide tools to combat gendered language. Systematic investigation of women's language shows that language usage patterns are often influenced by social norms, cultural pressures, and gender expectations. Understanding these patterns enables educators and language researchers to create more inclusive communication strategies and strengthen critical awareness of gender bias in language.

In addition to linguistic aspects, gender differences also affect individuals' psychological and cognitive conditions, especially among students. Elvira-Zorzo, Gandarillas, and Martí-González (2025) show that male students tend to exhibit higher autonomy, while female students experience more mental health difficulties. These differences are more pronounced in non-STEM fields and are influenced by parenting patterns. This confirms that gender is not only a social or linguistic category, but also influences psychological and learning aspects, which have an impact on academic ability and social interaction in educational environments.

Gender is also an important parameter in the study of social interaction and communication in various contexts. Hamzah (2025) emphasizes that gender differences in language influence word choice, intonation, and sentence structure. These differences are often reflected in everyday communication norms, where men and women express ideas, emotions, and opinions differently. Understanding the influence of gender on language helps researchers analyze communication patterns that may cause inequality, misunderstanding, or social stereotypes, while also providing insights to improve fair and inclusive communication in society.

Overall, gender is a multidimensional concept that influences language, behavior, and individual psychology. Research shows that awareness of linguistic and psychological differences between genders can reduce stereotypes and support more inclusive communication (Hamzah, 2025; Melekhin, 2023; Elvira-Zorzo, Gandarillas, & Martí-González, 2025). This understanding is important in education, social research, and everyday interactions, as it helps create an environment that is sensitive to gender differences. Thus, gender studies are not only relevant in linguistics, but also in social, educational, and psychological aspects.

2. Previous Research Findings on Gender and Grammar Mastery

Previous research on the relationship between gender and grammar mastery has shown mixed results. Alharthi (2025) found that there were no statistically significant differences between males and females in grammar proficiency. This suggests that factors such as student background, textbooks used, and uniform assessment standards can produce comparable performance between the two genders. These findings emphasize that gender is not always the main determining factor in grammar proficiency, but rather a complex interaction between the learning context, material, and teaching strategies.

However, some studies show performance differences based on gender. Alharbi (2022) reported that EFL learners in Saudi Arabia showed high awareness in developing grammatical forms, even though full proficiency had not yet been achieved. These findings also indicate that grammar competence and awareness levels are higher among female learners than male learners. This suggests that factors such as motivation, attention to detail, and engagement in grammar learning can influence performance, meaning that gender sometimes affects how students internalize language rules and patterns.

Locklear and Parker (2025) found that students enrolled in study abroad programs exhibit different patterns of language processing compared to students studying

domestically. This suggests that exposure to an authentic language environment may influence how male and female learners process grammatical structures. Consequently, differences in learning environments may contribute to gender differences in grammatical mastery.

Furthermore, gender differences can be mediated by students' cognitive strategies and adaptability to grammar material. Długosz and Olszewska (2024) emphasize that the internal gender cues of nouns modulate the effect of congruence, indicating the role of individual cognitive mechanisms. Students with effective processing strategies, both male and female, can reduce grammatical gender-related errors. These cognitive factors interact with language exposure, age, and learning environment to create variations in grammar mastery abilities between different genders.

Overall, factors influencing gender differences in grammar learning include proficiency level, language exposure, age, learning environment, word type, and individual cognitive strategies. These factors work in complex and interactive ways, so that gender differences in grammar mastery are not only the result of biological characteristics, but also of the learning context and linguistic experience. Understanding these factors is important for designing inclusive and adaptive grammar teaching strategies.

3. Factors Affecting Gender Differences in Learning Grammar

Gender differences in grammar learning are influenced by various complex factors, ranging from second language proficiency to learning context. Długosz and Olszewska (2024) found that the effect of gender congruence was limited to transparent nouns and was more pronounced in learners with low L2 proficiency. Contextual sentences do not eliminate cross-language effects, and the internal gender cues of individual nouns modulate the gender-congruity effect. These findings suggest that students with lower proficiency levels tend to rely more heavily on grammatical cues, which may account for differences in how male and female students process grammatical structures. Therefore, proficiency level is a key factor influencing gender differences in grammar learning.

Language exposure is also an important factor in gender differences. Baron et al. (2024) showed that children with higher cumulative English exposure saw target nouns less frequently overall, while older children saw target nouns more frequently than younger children. This confirms that linguistic experience, age, and amount of exposure to the target language can influence students' ability to process grammatical gender. These factors may explain the variation in ability between male and female students in understanding grammar rules. This suggests that more intensive exposure to the target language can

improve learners' understanding of grammatical structures, thereby reducing potential gender differences. Conversely, limited exposure may actually widen the gap in grammatical mastery.

The learning environment also influences gender differences in grammar mastery. Locklear and Parker (2025) show that students who participate in study abroad programs exhibit different gender processing patterns than students who study domestically. In addition, the type of noun also has an effect, as nouns with clear morphological markers are easier to process. These environmental and word type factors indicate that the learning context and material characteristics play an important role in bridging or widening gender differences in grammar mastery. This suggests that a learning environment that provides authentic input can support more balanced grammatical development among male and female students.

Furthermore, gender differences can be mediated by students' cognitive strategies and adaptability to grammar material. Długosz and Olszewska (2024) emphasize that the internal gender cues of nouns modulate the effect of congruence, indicating the role of individual cognitive mechanisms. Students with effective processing strategies, both male and female, can reduce grammatical gender-related errors. These cognitive factors interact with language exposure, age, and learning environment to create variations in grammar mastery

abilities between different genders. This means that effective learning strategies can minimize gender differences, as students who use the right strategies are better able to process and understand grammatical structures.

Overall, factors influencing gender differences in grammar learning include proficiency level, language exposure, age, learning environment, word type, and individual cognitive strategies (Długosz & Olszewska, 2024; Baron et al., 2024; Locklear & Parker, 2025). These factors work in complex and interactive ways, so that gender differences in grammar mastery are not only the result of biological characteristics, but also of the learning context and linguistic experience. Understanding these factors is important for designing inclusive and adaptive grammar teaching strategies. These findings also indicate that gender differences are dynamic and can be influenced or reduced through appropriate teaching strategies and learning support.

D. Some Related Previous Studies

Research on English grammar mastery and language learning strategies has received considerable attention in the field of language education. Learning strategies are considered one of the key factors influencing students' success in mastering grammar, as these strategies help learners understand, remember, and apply grammatical rules effectively. Therefore,

reviewing previous studies is essential to provide a theoretical and empirical foundation for this research.

Several studies have examined the relationship between learning strategies and grammar instruction. Girón Chávez et al. (2025) found that the use of game-based activities significantly improved students' grammar performance. Similarly, Eke and Ochuba (2024) reported that multimodal teaching strategies improved students' grammar learning outcomes, with female students demonstrating slightly better performance. Pawlak (2024) emphasizes the importance of strategy-based instruction in improving learners' grammar competence. Furthermore, Alnufaie and Alzahrani (2024) found that cognitive and social strategies are among the most frequently used strategies by English language learners. These findings suggest that appropriate learning strategies play a crucial role in facilitating grammar mastery.

Previous studies have also examined the relationship between learning strategies and gender. Le Thanh Thao et al. (2023) revealed that students' preferences for learning strategies are influenced by personality traits and gender. Similarly, Koka (2024) found that gender influences the selection of learning strategies in language learning applications. However, Abuzaid and Griffiths (2024) reported that although students used language learning strategies at moderate to high levels, no significant gender differences were found. Similarly,

Alshahrani (2023) found that compensatory strategies were frequently used by learners regardless of gender. These findings suggest that the influence of gender on strategy use remains inconclusive and requires further investigation.

Putra (2020) examined the influence of first language interference on English use among senior high school students in Bengkulu City. The study found that first language interference affected students' English production, with lexical interference being the most dominant type. The study also identified grammatical problems in students' English sentences, particularly in the use of pronouns and sentence structures. Putra further explained that English has relatively strict grammatical rules, including the use of appropriate verb forms and auxiliary verbs in the past tense. These findings indicate that students' English performance can be affected by their existing linguistic knowledge and difficulties in applying English grammatical structures. The present study differs from Putra's study because it focuses specifically on English grammar mastery and Grammar Learning Strategies based on students' gender among eighth-grade students

On the other hand, a number of studies have focused on grammar mastery among high school students. Sacal and Potane (2023) found that grammatical mastery is closely related to students' writing and speaking performance. Alova (2023) reported a positive relationship between grammatical

competence and academic writing achievement. Katemba (2024) identified grammatical difficulties, limited vocabulary, and first-language interference as the main obstacles faced by students in mastering English grammar. Additionally, Murtiningsih (2024) demonstrated that a web-based learning approach effectively improves the grammar skills of junior high school students. These studies highlight the importance of effective teaching approaches in improving students' grammar mastery.

Research has also examined gender differences in English language learning and grammar mastery. Zhichao Huang (2023) argued that understanding gender perspectives can help teachers design more appropriate instructional strategies. Saima Hassan and Aqsa Iqbal (2023) found that gender is a significant factor in language acquisition processes. In contrast, Izadpanah et al. (2023) revealed that metalinguistic feedback improved learners' grammar performance without significant differences between male and female students. Similarly, Alharthi (2025) concluded that an equitable educational environment can produce comparable grammar achievement among male and female learners. These findings suggest that the role of gender in grammar mastery remains open to further examination.

Based on the previous studies reviewed above, it can be observed that most research has examined grammar learning

strategies, grammar mastery, and gender differences separately. In addition, many studies have focused on college students or adult learners, rather than junior high school students. Research examining the relationship between grammar learning strategies and grammar mastery while simultaneously considering gender differences among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners at the junior high school level remains very limited, particularly in the Indonesian context.

Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by describing the Grammar Learning Strategies used by male and female students and comparing their English grammar mastery at SMP Negeri 03 Seluma. This study is expected to contribute to the existing literature by providing empirical evidence regarding students' Grammar Learning Strategies and gender differences in English grammar mastery at the junior high school level in Indonesia.

This study has novelty value because it combines two important variables, namely grammar learning strategies and gender differences, in the context of junior high school students in Indonesia, specifically at SMP Negeri 03 Seluma. Using a quantitative approach and the Grammar Learning Strategies Questionnaire instrument, this study is expected to provide new insights into learning strategies and gender differences in students' grammar mastery. The findings of this study are also expected to serve as a basis for teachers in designing more

effective and adaptive grammar learning for individual student differences.

Based on several previous studies, it can be concluded that there is still limited research comparing grammar mastery based on gender while considering learning strategies at the junior high school level. Therefore, this study was conducted to fill this gap by describing the Grammar Learning Strategies used by male and female students and comparing their English grammar mastery at SMP Negeri 03 Seluma.

E. Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is a logical description that explains the researcher's line of thinking in comparing variables based on relevant theories and previous research. In this study, the conceptual framework was developed to illustrate the Grammar Learning Strategies used by male and female students and to compare English grammar mastery between male and female students. With this foundation, the conceptual framework of this study is presented as follows:

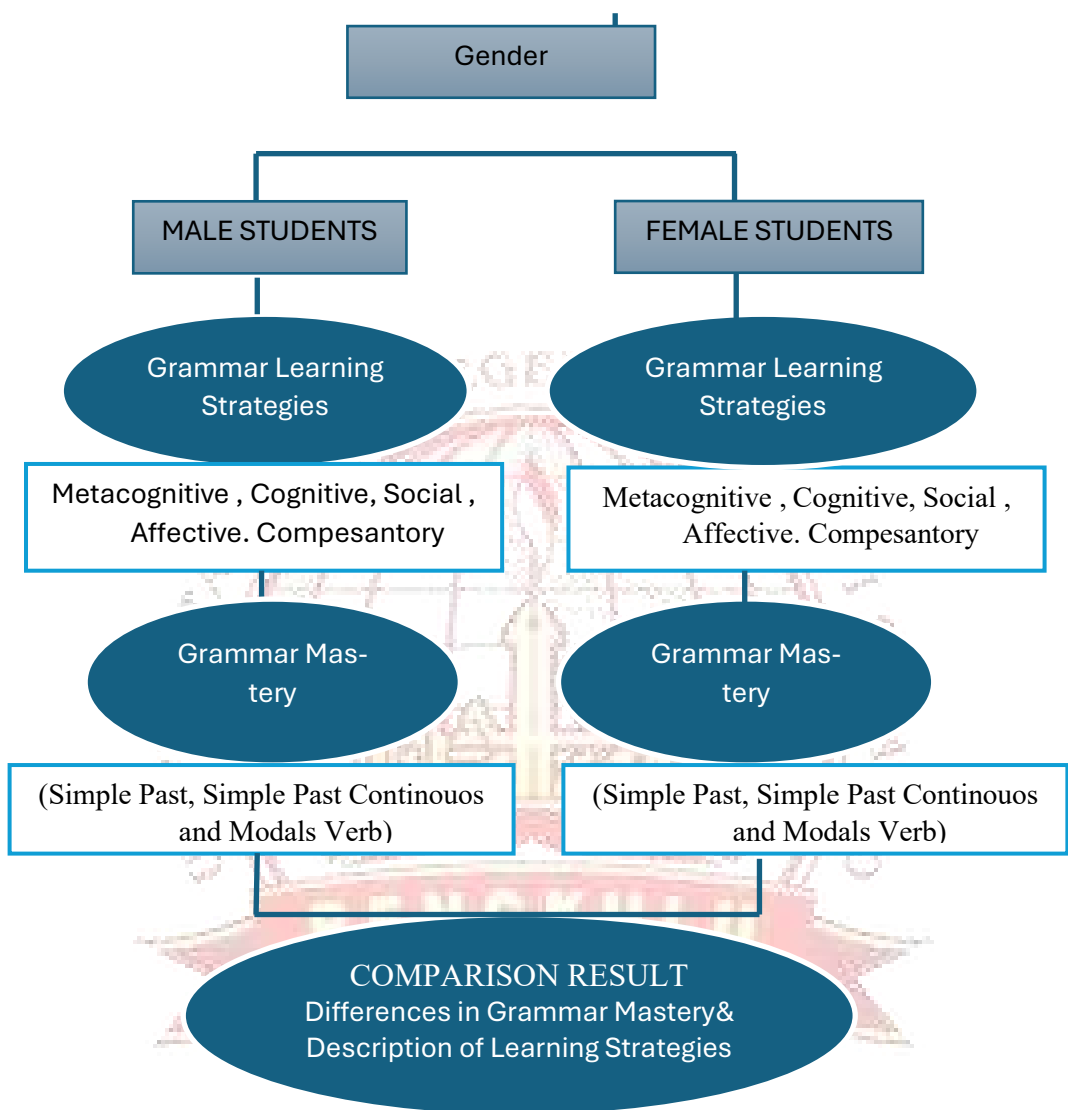


Figure 2.1 Framework of the research

The conceptual framework in this study outlines the logical relationship between gender, grammar learning strategies, and grammar mastery among eighth-grade students at

SMP Negeri 03 Seluma. This framework serves as a structured line of thinking that explains how gender functions as the basis for grouping students, how grammar learning strategies are described for each gender group, and how grammar mastery results are compared between male and female students in order to answer the research questions.

Conceptually, gender is positioned as the main distinguishing variable that divides respondents into two groups male and female students. This classification is intended for comparative analysis and does not indicate a cause–effect relationship. Gender differences are assumed to be related to variations in the ways students learn and understand grammar, given that each gender may demonstrate different cognitive tendencies, affective characteristics, and learning preferences. This line of thinking is supported by Alharthi (2025), who states that differences in grammar achievement between male and female students are often associated with the learning strategies each group uses when processing and understanding language structures.

Furthermore, Grammar Learning Strategies (GLS) in this study are described to identify and compare the grammar learning strategies used by male and female students. Based on Oxford's (1990) theory, GLS consist of five main types: cognitive, metacognitive, social, affective, and compensatory strategies.

Within this framework, male and female students may demonstrate different tendencies in their use of Grammar Learning Strategies. These possible differences are described based on the results of the Grammar Learning Strategies questionnaire rather than being assumed in advance.

Grammar mastery is the main variable compared in this study. It reflects students' English grammar mastery and was measured through a grammar test covering the Simple Past Tense, Past Continuous Tense, and Modal Verbs. The grammar scores were then compared between male and female students to determine whether a significant difference existed.

Accordingly, this framework supports the two main focuses of the study: (1) describing the Grammar Learning Strategies used by male and female students and (2) comparing their English grammar mastery. Therefore, Grammar Learning Strategies and grammar mastery are presented as two complementary aspects in understanding English grammar learning among male and female students. This framework also aligns with the comparative quantitative design employed in this study, in which the analysis focuses on describing Grammar Learning Strategies and comparing grammar mastery without examining causal relationships between the variables.

F. Research Hypothesis

Based on the framework described above, the research hypotheses are formulated as follows:

1. H_0 (Null Hypothesis):

There is no significant difference in English grammar mastery between male and female students in grade VIII at SMP Negeri 03 Seluma.

2. H_a (Alternative Hypothesis):

There is a significant difference in English grammar mastery between male and female students in grade VIII at SMP Negeri 03 Seluma.

