



Students' Perception and Teachers' Preference in English Grammar Teaching Methods at State High School 3 Jambi City

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze students' and teachers' preferences for learning methods in English Grammar in High School 3, Jambi City. Learning English grammar is often considered complex and less interesting by learners, so a well-designed pedagogical approach is needed to make the learning process more effective. This study uses a mixed-method approach. Quantitative Data were collected through the completion of questionnaires by 38 students of Class X, and qualitative data were collected through in-depth interviews with 2 teachers of Class X, Class observation, and documentation. Subjects consisted of students and teachers of English class X in SMA Negeri 3 Jambi City. The results showed that students responded positively to eight teaching methods. Then teachers tend to apply a communicative and deductive approach, using English as the main language of instruction, employing realia and diverse media, and adjusting error-correction strategies to students' needs. It found a gap between current teacher practices and students' preferences for a more interactive, emotionally supportive learning environment. This study emphasizes the importance of aligning grammar-learning methods with students' expectations to enhance teaching effectiveness in EFL contexts.

Keywords: Student Perception, Teacher Preference, Learning Method, English Grammar

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Introduction

English language learning at the high school level (SMA) has a strategic role in equipping learners with global communication competencies. One of the fundamental components in learning English is the mastery of English grammar (Sorohiti et al., 2024; Liu & Deris, 2023), because grammar is the basis for forming the correct sentence structure both orally and in writing (Hans & Hans, 2017). However, in classroom practice, grammar is often perceived as abstract, complex, and less interesting to students (Fitria, 2023; Sorohiti et al., 2024). Based on a report published by DataIndonesia.id, Indonesia ranks 13th out of 23 countries in the Asian region (Rizaty, 2023). This position places Indonesia among countries with relatively low English proficiency, as its score is still below 500. In addition, based on the annual trend of the English First English Proficiency Index (EF EPI) over the past five years, Indonesia's score has fluctuated. In 2021, EF EPI Indonesia's score was recorded at 466 points. The score increases to

469 points in 2022 and 473 points in 2023. However, in 2024, the score decreased by 5 points, returning to 468 (EF EPI, 2024b). Compared to other Southeast Asian countries, the achievement is still lagging. In 2024, Singapore scored 609 points, the Philippines 578 points, Malaysia 566 points, and Vietnam 505 points (EF EPI, 2024a). This comparison shows that Indonesia's English proficiency level is still below that of several neighboring countries in the same region.

The main problem that often arises in grammar learning is the discrepancy between the teaching methods used by teachers and students' needs and learning preferences (Alhourani, 2021). Teachers, when choosing learning methods, generally consider curriculum objectives, material characteristics, and learning conditions such as available time and learners' pedagogical needs (Hauer & Quill, 2011). The chosen method must align with the learning objectives and curriculum content to ensure an effective learning process (Hamid et al., 2025; Richards & Rodgers, 2014). In addition, teachers pedagogical decisions are influenced by contextual factors such as time, school routines, and teaching practices that develop within the educational environment (Collins-Warfield et al., 2025; Richards & Rodgers, 2014). On the other hand, students tend to expect more interactive, contextual, and communicative learning methods so that grammar material is easier to understand and not boring (Sorohiti & Aini, 2021). This condition raises significant pedagogical problems, namely the potential for perception gaps between students and teachers regarding effective grammar-learning methods (Alhourani, 2021).

If these gaps are not fully understood, grammar learning risks becoming suboptimal, which in turn can affect low learning motivation, student participation, and overall achievement of English language competence. In addition, most grammar learning practices in secondary schools still tend to be oriented towards conventional methods, such as lectures and written exercises, which emphasize purely structural aspects (Setiawan et al., 2026). This approach often leaves less room for students to associate understanding grammar with real language use. Therefore, a study is needed that can empirically describe how students perceive the grammar learning methods they experience and how teachers preferences in choosing and applying these methods. Given these conditions, research on students' perceptions and teachers preferences regarding English grammar learning methods is particularly important, especially within specific educational units, to provide a fuller picture of the dynamics of grammar learning in the classroom.

Literature Review

Previous research has shown that various learning methods are used to provide grammar material to students, both by teachers and students. However, studies that combine both perceptions and preferences between teachers and students have not been conducted. However, it requires research that examines both to obtain more in-depth results. Suhria and Ilmi (2023) found that students prefer the Grammar-Translation Method (GTM) because learning grammar through translation is easier, often involves using a dictionary, and appreciates the teacher's help with difficult words. In line with Mainandar and Suri (2022), GTM, in addition to being in demand among students, can also improve students' abilities in learning English. Vireak and Bunrosy (2024) found that the Direct Method (DM) is more efficient for teachers, as this approach of using little material is very beneficial in situations with limited resources and large class sizes. In contrast to the findings of (Dakhalan & Tanucan, 2024), the DM method suggests it may have difficulty with grammatical correctness in writing or difficulty applying language rules in formal contexts, especially at higher proficiency levels. In addition, if DM is used with a large number of students in a large classroom, students will have difficulty receiving instruction.

The Audio Lingual Method (ALM) is a pedagogical technique used to improve oral English skills (Bermeo Lima, 2023). The findings of Sihombing et al. (2022) show that, when using ALM in English learning, students find it difficult to distinguish words with almost the same pronunciation. In addition, the use of ALM in Vireak and Bunrosy (2024) research to increase effectiveness, teachers must combine technology, communicative teaching practices, and a student-centered environment. Another method used is the Total Physical Response Method (TPRM). TPRM can even be used across various levels of education, offering benefits such as stress reduction, improved comprehension, and enhanced memory. However, TPR has

limitations, including the need for teachers to follow the curriculum, which can cause stress and limit students' creativity, as the activity focuses on imitating the teacher rather than producing original sentences (Veren et al., 2024).

Furthermore, the Communicative Language Teaching Method (CLTM) can strengthen students' reading and English language skills and expand their knowledge of English language and culture (Dos Santos, 2020). In addition, the application of communicative teaching methods can also provide students with some practical opportunities, laying the foundation for their future integration into contemporary society (Zhang, 2023). However, Liu and Deris (2023) research conducted in China showed that an uneven distribution of teachers across cities, differences in textbooks used, and differences in students English language skills led to divergent views among the five teachers on the feasibility of CLTM. In addition, CLTM also needs time to practice speaking and communicating more. The Silent Way (SW) method is one of the approaches used in English language learning. Findings from previous studies have shown that SW improves students ability to understand English Vocabulary (Kasman & Ariza, 2023). The Suggestopedia method is a learning approach that integrates music into learning activities, creating a fun learning atmosphere (Sa'diyah & Rozi, 2023). The results of the Sa'diyah and Rozi (2023) study conducted in a high school showed that this method improved students understanding of grammar. Next, the Community Language Learning method, which is also implemented in English language learning in high school, shows significant positive results, improving students' skills (Ibrahim & Mursyid, 2018).

This research is important to do because, first, grammar is a crucial aspect. Grammar is a set of structural rules that govern how words, phrases, and clauses are arranged to form correct and meaningful sentences in a language. Knowledge of good grammar is the basis for students in constructing clear, correct sentences that are easy to understand and do not lead to double meanings. Second, differences in viewpoints between teachers and students regarding the selection and use of grammar learning methods. These differences have the potential to affect learning effectiveness but have not been extensively studied simultaneously by previous researchers. Third, teachers are often faced with a pedagogical dilemma: balancing the demands of the curriculum with adapting methods to students' needs. This study is expected to provide a reference in determining effective policies in the use of learning methods in providing grammar material to students.

Previous research has examined many similar topics, but has used only one perspective, either teachers or students. In general, previous research has examined only the student perspective, without involving teachers. The novelty of this study is: first, this study combines two main perspectives, namely student perception and teacher preference, in one integrated study. Second, the study focuses specifically on English grammar-learning methods, not on English learning in general. Third, this study focuses on the upper middle level. In previous studies, many were conducted at higher education institutions or English tutoring institutions. Fourth, the study was conducted in the context of a particular educational institution, namely the state high school (SMAN) 3 Jambi City, in addition to the selection of research locus in SMAN 3 Jambi City is also based on the reason to enrich the literature of the limitations of previous empirical research conducted in various locations, both rural and Urban with adequate resources or potluck. SMAN 3 Jambi City is geographically located in an urban area that should have access to adequate resources, including technology, materials, and adequate teacher training, so this study is expected to produce empirical findings that are contextual and in-depth. Thus, this study is expected to fill the void by presenting a comprehensive analysis of students perceptions and teachers preferences regarding English grammar learning methods, thereby making theoretical and practical contributions to the development of English learning at the high school level.

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researchers. Third, teachers are often faced with a pedagogical dilemma: balancing the demands of the curriculum with adapting methods to students' needs. This study is expected to provide a reference in determining effective policies in the use of learning methods in providing grammar material to students.

Method

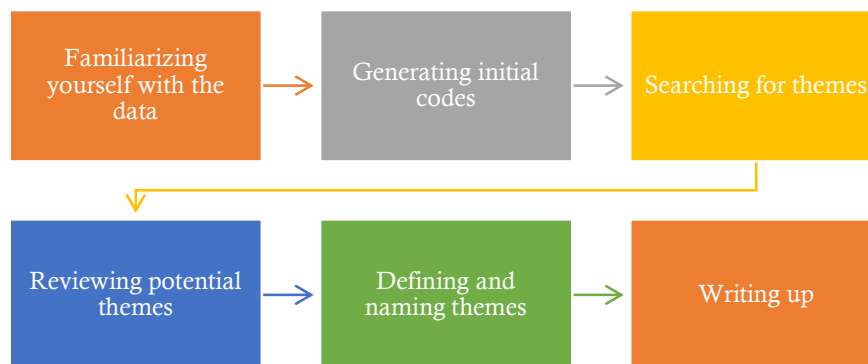
This study used a mixed-methods approach that integrates quantitative and qualitative approaches to gain a more comprehensive understanding through data triangulation, thereby enhancing the validity and reliability of the results (Creswell, 2011). Quantitative data were obtained from structured questionnaires given to 38 students, while qualitative data were collected through teacher interviews and supported by syllabus documents and lesson plans. Quantitative analysis was conducted using SPSS 20.0, focusing on average scores and percentages to identify students' preferences for grammar teaching methods. The research population is grade X students of SMAN 3 Jambi City using a saturated sampling technique due to the limited number of respondents. Data analysis includes tests of instrument validity and reliability, classical assumption tests (multicollinearity, autocorrelation, heteroscedasticity, and normality), as well as hypothesis testing. Data collection uses a 5-point Likert scale questionnaire ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

Table 1. Specification of the Questionnaire

Categories	Numbers
The use of the Grammar Translation Method	Question number 1.3.6
The use of the Direct Method	Question number 2,4,5,21,24,25
The use of the Audio Lingual Method	Question number 7, 10,27
The use of the Total Physical Response Method	Question numbers 8, 11, 14
The use of the Communicative Language Teaching Method	Question numbers 9, 12, 13
The use of the Silent Way	Question numbers 15, 22, 23
The use of Suggestopedia	Question numbers 17, 18, 26
The use of Community Language Learning	Question numbers 16, 19, 20

The qualitative research phase aims to explore the grammar teaching methods preferred by teachers and the pedagogical reasons behind them. Qualitative data are analyzed using thematic analysis, following the six-phase framework proposed by (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The analysis includes: familiarization with the data, generation of initial codes, identification of themes, review of themes, naming and defining themes, and production of the final report. The series of these phases is presented in the following figure:

**Figure 1. Steps of Thematic Analysis
(Braun & Clarke, 2006)**



(Students' Perception and Teachers' Preference in English Grammar ...)

This research went through six phases of qualitative analysis: (1) familiarization with the data through reading and noting, (2) initial coding, (3) searching for themes, (4) reviewing themes, (5) naming and defining themes, and (6) composing the final report that presents the findings coherently and connected to the literature. Qualitative data were obtained through interviews with English teachers at SMAN 3 Jambi City. In line with the mixed-method approach, this study also used a case study design to explore phenomena in depth within a real context (Creswell, 2009; Yin, 2018). The integration of quantitative and qualitative data results in a holistic understanding, where quantitative data shows student preferences, while qualitative data explains teachers' pedagogical considerations and contextual challenges.

Result and Discussion

Results

1. Students' Perceptions Of English Grammar Learning Methods

Quantitative Data obtained through the distribution of questionnaires to 38 students of Class X SMAN 3 Jambi City. Each item of the statement is measured using a Likert scale of 1-5. The descriptive analysis showed that students responded positively to the eight grammar learning methods.

Table 2. Average Score Summary

Metode	Mean	Categories
Grammar Translation Method (GTM)	3.87	High
Direct Method (DM)	3.68	High
Audio Lingual Method (ALM)	3.86	High
Total Physical Response (TPR)	3.58	High
Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)	3.85	High
Silent Way (SL)	3.64	High
Suggestopedia (STP)	3.79	High
Community Language Learning (CLL)	3.79	High
Overall	3.75	High

This finding shows that the Grammar-Translation Method (GTM) obtained the highest score, $M = 3.87$. That is, students really like methods that emphasize explicit explanation of grammatical rules, the use of the native language, and translation exercises. Contextually, the preference for GTM can be explained by several factors:

- a. The evaluation system in secondary schools is still oriented towards written exams.
- b. The study habits of students since the previous level who are accustomed to rule-based methods.
- c. Students' perception that the use of Bahasa Indonesia helps reduce errors in writing and understanding sentence structure.

Next, the Audio-Lingual Method (ALM) obtained the second-highest mean, $M = 3.86$, followed by Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), with a value of $M = 3.85$. This indicates that students do not completely reject the communicative approach, but rather seek a balance between the clarity of the rules and the practice of contextual language use. The results of the questionnaire analysis showed that students have a positive perception of the various methods of grammar instruction used in English instruction. Overall, the average (mean) student perception of grammar learning methods is 3.75, indicating a positive response to their use in learning.

The results showed that students tend to respond positively to grammar learning methods that clearly explain grammar rules and help them apply them in communication. This shows that students not only need an explicit explanation of grammar rules but also interactive, contextual learning activities. In addition, students showed a tendency to prefer learning that uses real

examples, language practice activities, and learning media that help them understand language structure more concretely.

2. Teacher preferences and practices in Grammar learning

Qualitative Data were obtained through semi-structured interviews with two English teachers teaching class X. The results of the thematic analysis showed several main patterns:

- a. The predominance of the deductive approach, teachers tend to start learning by explaining grammatical definitions and formulas, giving example sentences, and only then ask students to make sentences or dialogues. This approach reflects the characteristics of GTM and the deductive approach.
- b. The use of the language of instruction, the teacher states that English is used as the main language of instruction. However, in certain conditions, when students have difficulty, teachers use Indonesian to clarify concepts. This demonstrates pedagogical flexibility.
- c. Use of Media and Realia, teachers utilize timeline to explain tenses, gestures to clarify meaning, narrative and recount texts, drilling for pronunciation and spelling. These findings indicate the integration of elements of the Direct Method and communicative techniques, although it remains within the framework of structure-based learning.
- d. Error correction strategies, teachers apply re-drilling, peer modeling (peer tutor), paraphrase before translating. This strategy shows attention to the student's learning process, although it remains within the framework of accuracy-based learning.

The results of interviews with English teachers show that, in their teaching practice, they tend to use a deductive and communicative approach. Teachers usually begin by giving examples of language structures in a particular context, then ask students to identify and understand the grammar patterns in these examples. In the learning process, teachers also use various strategies to help students understand grammar concepts, such as the use of timelines to explain time differences (tenses), the use of narrative texts or recounts as examples of language structure, as well as the use of real objects or situations that exist in the classroom to provide a learning context.

In addition, teachers use various learning media, such as images, stories, and visual presentations, to help students understand grammar material. This is done because most students learn visually, so that the learning media can enhance their understanding of the material taught. In handling language errors (error correction), teachers adopt a flexible approach. In some situations, students' mistakes are corrected directly. In contrast, in others, the teacher notes mistakes first and discusses them after the learning activity is complete, so students do not feel pressured or lose confidence while learning.

3. Alignment analysis between student perception and teacher preference

The integration of quantitative and qualitative data shows:

- a. The Alignment. GTM is the preferred method among students and the most commonly used by teachers. Both assess the importance of explaining the rules and the accuracy of the structure. The use of Indonesian is considered helpful for understanding the concept.
- b. Partial Misalignment. Students showed high interest in communicative activities (DM and CLT). Teachers recognize the limited time and demands of the curriculum, so they rarely apply CLT optimally. Communicative activity is not yet systematically integrated.
- c. This finding confirms that a form-focused instruction approach, with an orientation toward the accuracy of the structure and exam readiness, still dominates grammar learning in SMA Negeri 3 Jambi City.

Discussion

The results of this study indicate that students have a positive perception of various grammar teaching methods used in English learning. Students' preferences for different grammar teaching methods are not dichotomous between structural and communicative approaches, but rather reflect an integrative tendency that combines the strengths of each approach. The Grammar Translation Method (GTM), as the method with the highest score, indicates that explicit-based learning still has strong relevance in the EFL context, especially in educational environments oriented towards linguistic accuracy and test-based evaluation. From the perspective of contemporary pedagogy, explicit approaches such as GTM have proven effective in developing metalinguistic awareness and helping students understand the system of language rules systematically, especially in the early stages of learning (Zhang, 2023). These findings are in line with the view that grammar teaching should not only focus on memorization of language rules but also provide opportunities for students to use language structures in meaningful communication (Abdelmageed & Omer, 2020; Alhourani, 2021).

However, the finding that methods such as the Audio-Lingual Method (ALM) and Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) indicate that students do not rely solely on a structural approach. Instead, they desire a balance between accuracy-oriented instruction and fluency-oriented practice. This is in line with Zhang (2023) findings, which emphasize that effective grammar learning in the context of CLT must be able to balance structural accuracy and communicative fluency, so that students not only understand the rules but are also able to use them in real contexts. CLT indicates the students need for learning that is interactive and meaningful. CLT, as an approach that emphasizes the use of language in the context of authentic communication, has been widely recognized as the dominant paradigm in modern language teaching due to its ability to enhance students engagement and communicative competence (Salam & Luksfinanto, 2024). In this context, students' preference for CLT reinforces the argument that grammar learning can no longer be positioned merely as the transfer of structural knowledge, but rather as a process of meaning construction through social interaction. Methods such as Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and the Direct Method (DM) allow students to practice language use directly, making grammar learning more contextual and communicative (Dos Santos, 2020; Ghafar et al., 2023).

The ALM and TPR methods show that aspects of habit formation, repetition, and kinesthetic learning still have a significant contribution in grammar learning. ALM, for example, supports the formation of language patterns through repeated practice, which from the behaviorist theory perspective, is still relevant in building automation in the use of language structures. Meanwhile, TPR provides an embodied learning dimension that can enhance retention and understanding through students physical involvement (Kuo et al., 2014). This indicates that effective grammar learning tends to be multimodal, integrating cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects.

The Suggestopedia, Silent Way, and Community Language Learning methods indicate the importance of the affective dimension in grammar learning. These three methods emphasize creating a comfortable, low-anxiety, and student-centered learning environment. Positive emotional conditions have been shown to enhance language learning success because they allow linguistic input to be processed optimally (Shao et al., 2020). Thus, students' preferences for these methods suggest that the effectiveness of grammar learning is determined not only by cognitive strategies but also by the quality of a supportive learning environment.

On the other hand, the interviews showed that teachers still use a deductive approach: they explain grammar rules explicitly before giving students exercises. This approach is commonly used in the context of foreign language learning because it is believed to help students understand language structure systematically. Nevertheless, teachers do not rely entirely on traditional methods. Teachers also integrate various learning strategies, such as visual media, contextual examples, and language practice activities, to increase student engagement in the learning process. This shows that the practice of grammar learning in the classroom is eclectic, combining several learning methods to adapt to students' needs. This integration of explicit and communicative approaches suggests that teachers are making an effort to create more effective

grammar instruction (Roeder et al., 2020). Teachers not only emphasize understanding language rules, but also encourage students to use language structures in real communication situations.

Conclusion

Based on the results of quantitative and qualitative data analysis, this study shows that grammar teaching practices applied by teachers tend to integrate GTM and the Direct Method DM. The selective use of the first language to explain grammatical concepts reflects the application of GTM principles, while the use of English as the main language of instruction, the inductive approach in explaining the structure of language, and the use of real-life context in learning show characteristics of DM.

Quantitative findings also show that students have a positive perception of the various methods of learning grammar, both structural and communicative methods. Methods such as GTM, DM, Communicative Language Teaching CLT, and ALM can help students understand grammar rules more systematically while using them in the context of communication. In addition, more student-centered approaches, such as Suggestopedia and Community Language Learning, received positive responses because they created a more comfortable learning atmosphere and supported student independence in learning. However, the results of this study also indicate a gap between the learning practices currently implemented by teachers and students' preferences for a more communicative, interactive, and emotionally supportive learning process. This gap indicates opportunities to develop pedagogical approaches that are more adaptive to students' needs and characteristics.

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