

Learning Strategies and Gender Differences In English Grammar Mastery : A Comparative Study Of The Eighth Grade Students At Smp Negeri 03 Seluma

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ABSTRACT

Grammar mastery is an important aspect of English language learning. The purpose of this study is to identify the Grammar Learning Strategies (GLS) used by male and female students, describe their grammar mastery, and determine whether there are significant differences in grammar mastery between male and female students. This study employed a quantitative comparative design with 81 eighth-grade students. Data were collected through a Grammar Learning Strategies Questionnaire and a Grammar Test, then analyzed using descriptive statistics and an independent samples t-test. The results of the study indicate that both male and female students use all categories of grammar learning strategies, with cognitive strategies being the most frequently used. The average score for grammar proficiency was 53.88 for male students and 53.89 for female students, indicating a low level of grammar proficiency. The results of the independent samples t-test showed a Sig. (two-tailed) value of 0.997 (> 0.05), indicating that there was no significant difference in English grammar proficiency between male and female students. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_0) was accepted and the alternative hypothesis (H_a) was rejected.

Keywords: Grammar Learning Strategies, Gender Differences, Grammar Mastery, Comparative Study.

ABSTRAK

Penguasaan tata bahasa merupakan salah satu aspek penting dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi Grammar Learning Strategies (GLS) yang digunakan oleh siswa laki-laki dan perempuan, mendeskripsikan tingkat penguasaan tata bahasa mereka, serta mengetahui apakah terdapat perbedaan yang signifikan dalam penguasaan tata bahasa antara siswa laki-laki dan perempuan. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain kuantitatif komparatif dengan melibatkan 81 siswa kelas VIII sebagai sampel penelitian. Data dikumpulkan melalui Kuesioner Strategi Belajar Tata Bahasa (Grammar Learning Strategies Questionnaire) dan Tes Tata Bahasa (Grammar Test), kemudian dianalisis menggunakan statistik deskriptif dan uji independent samples t-test. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa baik siswa laki-laki maupun perempuan menggunakan seluruh kategori strategi belajar tata bahasa, dengan strategi kognitif sebagai strategi yang paling sering digunakan. Rata-rata nilai penguasaan tata bahasa siswa laki-laki adalah 53,88, sedangkan siswa perempuan adalah 53,89, yang menunjukkan tingkat penguasaan tata bahasa yang masih rendah. Hasil uji independent samples t-test menunjukkan nilai Sig. (two-tailed) sebesar 0,997 ($> 0,05$), yang berarti tidak terdapat perbedaan yang signifikan dalam penguasaan tata bahasa bahasa Inggris antara siswa laki-laki dan perempuan. Oleh karena itu, hipotesis nol (H_0) diterima dan hipotesis alternatif (H_a) ditolak.

Kata Kunci: Strategi Belajar Tata Bahasa, Perbedaan Gender, Penguasaan Tata Bahasa, Studi Komparatif.

A. Introduction

Grammar is an important component in language learning because it provides a structural framework that enables learners to construct meaningful sentences and communicate effectively (Ghafar & Sawalmeh, 2024). In addition, grammar contributes to literacy development by helping students make grammatical choices that are appropriate to the context (Xavier, 2023).

Mastery of grammar rules also boosts confidence and has an impact on students' academic achievement (Ghafar & Sawalmeh, 2024). However, grammar remains a challenging aspect for learners, mainly because applying grammar rules requires adequate knowledge (Azizova, 2025). Grammar errors can have long-term consequences, ranging from lower academic grades to reduced professional credibility (Omonova, 2024; Dinh, 2023). These conditions show that mastery of grammar is an important pillar of students' communication and literacy competencies.

One important factor related to students' grammar learning is the use of Grammar Learning Strategies (GLS). Learning strategies describe how students approach, understand, and manage their learning process when dealing with grammatical materials. Learning strategies are conscious and purposeful actions taken by learners to manage, understand, and retain information more effectively (Olop et al., 2024; Kikas et al., 2024). Previous studies have shown that metacognitive, cognitive, and instruction-based strategies can improve language skills, including grammar mastery (Wongdaeng & Higgins, 2023; Pawlak, 2024). Learning strategies have also been shown to mediate the relationship between motivation and language acquisition success (Li, 2024). These findings indicate that learning strategies are closely related to how students process grammatical input and develop their understanding of grammar.

In addition to learning strategies, gender differences also have a significant contribution to language learning patterns. Research

shows that male and female students often differ in terms of motivation, engagement, self-regulation, and learning behavior (Saxena et al., 2024; Koka, 2024). Li, Wang, and Shen (2025) found that female students tend to show higher motivation and emotional engagement than male students. Meanwhile, Sandsør and Brevik (2024) revealed changes in L2 English achievement dynamics based on age and learning context, where at certain stages male students may excel, although female students generally show more stable achievement. Östling and Jeppsson (2023) also emphasized that gender gaps are dynamic and influenced by the learning context. These findings indicate that gender differences can influence students' choice of learning strategies and approaches to grammar learning.

Research on grammar mastery also highlights the importance of individual differences in learning. Pawlak (2024) asserts that Grammar Learning Strategies (GLS) contribute significantly to both explicit and implicit grammar knowledge and can be influenced by motivation and learning style. Zhong and Wakat (2023) show that corpus-based learning through an

inductive approach can also improve students' grammar mastery. Research by Ebadi and Raygan (2024) adds that technological experiences, particularly in mobile-assisted language learning (MALL), influence students' perceptions of grammar learning. In addition, external factors such as the level of difficulty of the material, teaching methods, and intentional or incidental learning conditions also have an impact on grammar learning outcomes (Daskan, 2023; Rivera et al., 2023). This confirms that grammar mastery is influenced by a combination of internal and external factors, including learning strategies and gender-based tendencies.

Several previous studies have examined grammar learning strategies and gender differences in English language learning. Pawlak (2024) found that the use of Grammar Learning Strategies (GLS) contributed significantly to grammar mastery, both explicitly and implicitly.

The study confirmed that students who actively used cognitive and metacognitive strategies demonstrated better mastery of grammatical structures. In line with this, Alharthi (2025) reported that female students tended to

demonstrate better English achievement and more consistent learning than male students. These findings suggest that gender differences may be observed in certain learning contexts.

In addition, Wongdaeng and Higgins (2023) emphasize that metacognitive awareness and strategy regulation play an important role in improving grammatical accuracy in the context of EFL. However, most of these studies were conducted at the university level and have not specifically examined junior high school students in Indonesia. Furthermore, studies that simultaneously examine Grammar Learning Strategies (GLS) and gender differences in relation to grammar mastery are still limited, particularly among junior high school students.

Although various studies have discussed grammar learning and gender differences in English language learning, studies that simultaneously examine Grammar Learning Strategies (GLS) and gender differences in grammar mastery among junior high school students in the Indonesian EFL context remain limited. Most previous studies have focused on university students,

technology-assisted language learning, or language skills in general rather than grammar mastery. Consequently, little is known about how male and female junior high school students differ in their use of Grammar Learning Strategies and their grammar mastery. This research gap highlights the need for the present study.

Although grammar is an important aspect of learning English, many junior high school students still have difficulty mastering it. This can be seen from the initial observations conducted on November 20, 2025, at SMP N 03 Seluma, which showed differences in participation and learning behavior in grammar learning between male and female students. Female students were seen to be more active in asking questions, answering, and using more varied learning strategies, such as taking detailed notes and practicing sentence construction. In contrast, some male students tended to be more passive and relied on memorization without deep understanding. In addition, students still had difficulty understanding specific grammar materials such as the simple past tense, past continuous tense, and

modal verbs. This condition indicates that differences in learning strategies and gender may be associated with students' grammar mastery.

Based on the research gap and actual conditions in the field, there is still a need to compare grammar mastery between male and female students and to describe the Grammar Learning Strategies used by each group. Understanding how male and female students differ in their use of learning strategies and their levels of grammar mastery in simple past tense, past continuous tense, and modal verbs will help teachers design more effective and responsive learning approaches. Therefore, this study aims to compare the grammar mastery of male and female students and to describe the Grammar Learning Strategies used by each group at SMP Negeri 03 Seluma.

B. Research Method

This study employed a comparative quantitative research design to compare English grammar mastery between male and female students and to describe the Grammar Learning Strategies (GLS) used by both groups. The research was conducted at SMP Negeri 03 Seluma,

Bengkulu Province, during the 2025/2026 academic year.

The population consisted of 120 eighth-grade students. The sample was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan table, resulting in 92 selected students through proportional stratified random sampling. However, only 81 students participated in the study, consisting of 34 male students and 47 female students.

Data were collected using a 35-item grammar test and a 35-item Grammar Learning Strategies (GLS) questionnaire. Both instruments had been piloted and were found to be valid and highly reliable before being administered to the participants.

The collected data were analyzed using SPSS version 25. Descriptive statistics were used to describe students' grammar mastery and Grammar Learning Strategies, while the Independent Samples *t*-test was employed to determine whether there was a significant difference in grammar mastery between male and female students after the assumptions of normality and homogeneity had been satisfied.

C. Results and Discussion

1. Result

a. Descriptive Statistics

This study involved 81 eighth-grade students of SMP Negeri 03 Seluma, consisting of 34 male students and 47 female students. Data were collected using a grammar test and a Grammar Learning Strategies (GLS) questionnaire. The results are presented as follows.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics English Grammar Mastery of Male and Female Students

Report					
Grammar_Score					
Gender	MeanS	N	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
male	53,88	34	12,701	20	77
female	53,89	47	13,352	31	83
Total	53,89	81	13,002	20	83

Table 1 shows that the mean grammar score of male students was 53.88, while female students obtained a mean score of 53.89. The difference between the two groups was only 0.01 points, indicating that both groups had almost identical levels of English grammar mastery. Based on Arikunto's (2013) classification, both mean scores were categorized as Poor, indicating that students' grammar mastery still needs improvement.

Table 2. Grammar Learning Strategies Used by Male Students

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
TOTAL_X1	34	12	40	27,91	6,365
TOTAL_X2	34	12	31	22,65	4,935
TOTAL_X3	34	8	34	21,82	6,230
TOTAL_X4	34	11	21	15,88	2,567
Total_X5	34	10	31	21,32	4,977
Valid N (listwise)	34				

Based on the table, presents the Grammar Learning Strategies (GLS) used by male students. The results of the study indicate that Cognitive Strategies had the highest mean score (M = 27.91), followed by Metacognitive Strategies (M = 22.65), Social Strategies (M = 21.82), and Compensatory Strategies (M = 21.32). Meanwhile, Affective Strategies had the lowest mean score (M = 15.88). These findings indicate that Cognitive Strategies are the most frequently used among male students, while Affective Strategies are the least frequently used.

Table 3. Grammar Learning Strategies Used by Female Students

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
TOTAL_X1	47	15	42	31,83	5,210
TOTAL_X2	47	9	35	26,34	5,545
TOTAL_X3	47	10	33	25,34	4,838
TOTAL_X4	47	8	23	17,83	3,088
Total_X5	47	12	32	23,81	3,932
Valid N (listwise)	47				

Based on the table, presents the Grammar Learning Strategies (GLS) used by female students. The

results show that Cognitive Strategies had the highest mean score ($M = 31.83$), followed by Metacognitive Strategies ($M = 26.34$), Social Strategies ($M = 25.34$), and Compensatory Strategies ($M = 23.81$). Meanwhile, Affective Strategies had the lowest mean score ($M = 17.83$). These findings indicate that Cognitive Strategies were the most frequently used strategies among female students, whereas Affective Strategies were the least frequently used.

According to the research findings, both male and female students most frequently used cognitive strategies and least frequently used affective strategies when learning English grammar. However, female students achieved higher average scores in all strategy categories than male students. This indicates that female students reported using grammar learning strategies more frequently than male students.

b. Normality Test

A normality test was conducted using the Shapiro–Wilk test to determine whether the grammar mastery scores of male and female students followed a normal distribution.

Table 4. Test of Normality

	Gen-der	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statis-tic	Df	Sig.	Statis-tic	df	Sig.
Gram-mar_Score	1	,097	34	,200 [*]	,977	34	,678
	2	,099	47	,200 [*]	,969	47	,242

Based on the table, shows the results of the normality test using the Shapiro–Wilk test. In this study, code 1 refers to male students and code 2 refers to female students. The p-value for Group 1 (male students) was 0.678, while the p-value for Group 2 (female students) was 0.242. Since both p-values were greater than 0.05, the data were normally distributed. Therefore, the assumption of normality was met, and the data could be further analyzed using the Independent Samples t-Test.

c. Homogeneity Test

A homogeneity test was conducted using Levene's test of equality of variances to determine whether the variances in grammar mastery scores between male and female students were equal.

Table 5. Test of Homogeneity of Variance

		Levene Sta-			
		tistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Gram-mar_Score	Based on Mean	,117	1	79	,733
	Based on Median	,114	1	79	,736
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	,114	1	78,875	,736
	Based on trimmed mean	,130	1	79	,720

Based on the table, shows the results of the homogeneity test using Levene's test of equality of variances. The significance value based on the mean is 0.733, which is greater than 0.05. Therefore, the variances in the grammar mastery scores of male and female students are homogeneous. Thus, the assumption of homogeneity is met, and the data can be further analyzed using the independent samples t-test.

d. Hypothesis Testing

An independent samples t-test was conducted to determine whether there was a significant difference in English grammar mastery between male and female students. After the assumptions of normality and homogeneity were met, the independent samples t-test was applied to compare the mean grammar scores of the two groups.

Table 6. Independent Samples t-Test

		t-test for Equality of Means		
		Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Gram-mar_Score	Equal variances assumed	,997	-,011	2,946
	Equal variances not assumed	,997	-,011	2,922

Based on the independent samples t-test, the significance value (two-tailed) was 0.997, which is greater than 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_0) is accepted and the alternative hypothesis (H_a) is rejected. It can be concluded that there is no significant difference in English grammar mastery between male and female eighth-grade students at SMPN 03 Seluma.

2. Discussion

The results of the study indicated that both male and female students used all five categories of Grammar Learning Strategies (GLS). Cognitive strategies were the most frequently used by both groups, suggesting that students tended to learn grammar through practice, analysis, and the application of grammatical rules. This finding supports Oxford's (1990) theory that cognitive strategies facilitate language processing directly through practice and analysis. It is also consistent with

the findings of Alnufaie and Alzahrani (2024), who reported that cognitive strategies were among the most frequently used strategies by English language learners.

The results also showed that female students reported higher mean scores across all categories of Grammar Learning Strategies than male students. This finding suggests that female students tended to use grammar learning strategies more frequently when learning English grammar. The result is consistent with the findings of Le Thanh Thao et al. (2023), who reported that gender may influence learners' preferences in using language learning strategies. Similarly, Koka (2024) found that gender can affect learners' strategy selection in language learning contexts. These findings indicate that female students were generally more active in employing learning strategies to support their grammar learning. However, differences in strategy use do not necessarily indicate differences in grammar achievement.

With regard to grammar mastery, the findings indicated that students' overall English grammar mastery still needs improvement. The mean score of male students (53.88)

and female students (53.89) were both classified as "Poor" based on Arikunto's (2013) classification. According to Ellis (2006), grammar mastery involves not only understanding grammatical rules but also applying them appropriately in communication. Therefore, continuous grammar practice remains important for improving students' grammar mastery.

Furthermore, the results of the independent samples *t*-test revealed that there was no significant difference in grammar mastery between male and female students. Although female students reported more frequent use of Grammar Learning Strategies, the statistical analysis showed that both groups achieved comparable grammar test scores. This suggests that the frequency of strategy use alone was insufficient to produce significant differences in grammar mastery. These findings indicate that gender was not a determining factor in students' grammar mastery. This finding is consistent with the study conducted by Alharthi (2025), who also found no significant difference in grammar mastery between male and female students.

Although the present finding is consistent with Alharthi (2025), it differs from the findings of Alharbi (2022), who reported that female EFL learners demonstrated significantly higher grammatical competence than male learners. This discrepancy may be explained by differences in the research context. Alharbi (2022) conducted the study with university students enrolled in an EFL program at Qassim University, Saudi Arabia, whereas the present study involved eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 03 Seluma. In addition, the present study focused only on three grammar topics, namely the simple past tense, past continuous tense, and modal verbs, while Alharbi (2022) examined grammatical awareness and grammatical competence more broadly. These differences in participants, educational level, and research focus may have contributed to the contrasting findings regarding gender differences in grammar mastery.

In addition, the absence of a significant difference in grammar mastery may also be explained by the similar learning experiences shared by both male and female students. Since they studied under the same teacher,

curriculum, instructional materials, and assessment standards, they were provided with equal opportunities to develop their grammar mastery. As a result, both male and female students achieved relatively similar levels of grammar mastery despite differences in the frequency of strategy use.

Overall, the findings indicate that female students reported using Grammar Learning Strategies more frequently than male students. However, no significant difference was found in English grammar mastery between male and female students.

D. Conclusion

Based on the results of the study and the discussion presented in the previous chapter, several conclusions can be drawn. These conclusions are organized according to the research questions of the study in order to provide a clear and systematic summary of the research findings.

Based on the first research question, both male and female students employed all five categories of Grammar Learning Strategies (GLS), namely cognitive, metacognitive, social, affective, and compensatory strategies. Among

these strategies, cognitive strategies were the most frequently used by both groups, while affective strategies were the least frequently used. In addition, female students reported higher mean scores across all five categories of Grammar Learning Strategies than male students, indicating that they used grammar learning strategies more frequently.

Based on the second research question, the level of English grammar mastery of both male and female eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 03 Seluma was classified as Poor according to Arikunto's (2013) classification. The mean score of male students was 53.88, while the mean score of female students was 53.89. These findings indicate that the overall English grammar mastery of both groups still needs improvement, particularly in the areas of the Simple Past Tense, Past Continuous Tense, and Modal Verbs.

Based on the third research question, the results of the Independent Samples *t*-test showed that there was no significant difference in English grammar mastery between male and female students. The significance value (Sig. 2-tailed) was 0.997, which was higher than the

significance level of 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_0) was accepted and the alternative hypothesis (H_1) was rejected. These findings indicate that male and female students achieved comparable levels of English grammar mastery, despite differences in the frequency of Grammar Learning Strategies used by each group.

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