

Pedagogical Grammar Approach to English Skill Development: A Case Study at Diniyyah Pekanbaru

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*Safriyani Novitri, Missi Tri Astuti, Yulianto, Nonik Widiya Jayanti, Ratu Ganisa

Auliana¹²³⁴⁵ 

¹²³⁴⁵Universitas Islam Riau, Indonesia.

Corresponding Author: safriyaninovitri@edu.uir.ac.id

A B S T R A C T

Effective English communication is essential for students at the Islamic Institute of Diniyyah Pekanbaru, yet traditional teaching methods have fallen short in developing practical language skills. This study explores the use of a pedagogical grammar approach that integrates grammar instruction with communicative activities to enhance English proficiency. Using a descriptive qualitative method, data were collected from 20 students through observations, interviews, and document analysis. Findings show that this approach boosts student motivation, participation, and practical language use. The study offers valuable insights into grammar-integrated instruction in Islamic education, highlighting its potential for long-term language improvement.

Keywords: *Pedagogical grammar approach; English language skills; Students' engagement*

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INTRODUCTION

The English language plays a vital role in academic and professional domains as a global means of communication, knowledge dissemination, and career advancement (Hekmatshoar Tabari & Rahimy, 2021). In Indonesia, English proficiency is increasingly viewed as essential, offering students greater access to academic resources, enabling international collaboration, and improving employment opportunities (Velasco, 2021). As a result, equipping students with strong English communication skills has become a key priority in language education to support academic success and future career development (Khalil & Kholofelo Semono-Eke, 2020).

However, English language learning at the Islamic Institute of Diniyyah Pekanbaru faces notable challenges. Many students show low motivation and engagement, often due to traditional teaching methods that emphasize rote memorization over meaningful interaction (Berezenko, Cherkhava, & Musiienko, 2022). Limited teaching resources further hinder the development of practical language use, making it difficult for students to apply English in real-life contexts (Mejang & Suksawas, 2023). To address these issues, researchers have suggested the need for instructional strategies that combine grammatical knowledge with real communication practice (Yang & Harbor, 2023; Shi & Lin, 2021).

Prior studies have pointed out the shortcomings of conventional grammar instruction, which frequently focuses on rule memorization without contextual use (Firman, 2022). This leads to poor student engagement and limited communicative competence (Curtin, 2021; Daif-

Allah & Aljumah, 2020). While communicative approaches have gained popularity, they sometimes neglect the structured learning of grammar, resulting in grammatical inaccuracies (Hardacre & Snow, 2020).

The pedagogical grammar approach addresses this gap by embedding grammar instruction within communicative, task-based activities (Jufrizal, 2014). It offers a more engaging and effective strategy by connecting grammar to real language use through interactive techniques such as discussions, role-plays, and simulations (Almazloun, 2018). However, existing research has largely overlooked the implementation of this method in Islamic educational settings, where more traditional pedagogies still dominate (Gray & Smithers, 2019).

This study addresses that gap by exploring the application of a pedagogical grammar approach in the context of the Islamic Institute of Diniyyah Pekanbaru. It examines how integrating grammar with communication-focused activities can enhance student engagement, motivation, and practical language use. By focusing on an under-researched educational context, this study contributes original insights into grammar teaching strategies tailored for Islamic institutions.

The English language plays a vital role in academic and professional domains as a global means of communication, knowledge dissemination, and career advancement (Hekmatshoar Tabari and Rahimy, 2021). In Indonesia, proficiency in English is increasingly regarded as a crucial skill that grants students greater access to academic resources, fosters international collaboration, and enhances employment prospects (Velasco, 2021). Consequently, Khalil and Kholofelo Semono-Eke (2020) states that equipping students with effective English communication skills has become a key objective in language education to support their academic success and professional development.

However, at the Islamic Institute of Diniyyah Pekanbaru, English language learning faces significant challenges. Berezenko, Cherkhava and Musiienko (2022) states that many students' exhibit low motivation and engagement, which is exacerbated by conventional teaching methods that focus on rote memorization rather than meaningful communication. Additionally, Mejang and Suksawas (2023) describes that limited instructional resources hinder the development of students' practical English skills, making it difficult for them to apply the language in real-life contexts. To address these challenges, it is essential to adopt a

The pedagogical grammar approach emphasizes grammar as a functional tool for communication rather than an isolated set of rules. Burton (2019) and Jufrizal (2014). Effective language instruction is grounded in six key principles that ensure grammar is both meaningful and applicable. First, truth emphasizes teaching grammar with a focus on correct usage in real-life communication. Demarcation ensures that instruction targets the most essential structures, avoiding cognitive overload from excessive rules. Through clarity, concepts are explained with precision and supported by detailed examples. Simplicity helps demystify complex rules, making them easier to understand and retain. With **conceptual parsimony**, efficient methods like interactive activities enhance learning outcomes. Finally, **relevance** anchors grammar instruction in real-world contexts, promoting practical use and deeper engagement.

By incorporating these principles, the pedagogical grammar approach fosters active participation and enhances students' ability to use English effectively in various situations Omar (2019) and Lähdesmäki and Maunula (2022). This study explores how this approach can be adapted to the context of the Islamic Institute of Diniyyah Pekanbaru, where students require both grammatical accuracy and communicative competence. This study aims to evaluate the impact of the pedagogical grammar approach on English language learning at the Islamic Institute of Diniyyah Pekanbaru by examining its effectiveness in several key areas. It

seeks to explore how this approach improves students' English language skills, enhances their motivation and engagement in the learning process, and compares to conventional teaching methods in developing students' practical English proficiency.

A descriptive qualitative research method will be employed, with 20 students participating in the study. Data will be collected through classroom observations, interviews, and document analysis to gain insights into teaching practices, student engagement, and learning outcomes. Previous research has highlighted the limitations of traditional grammar instruction in promoting student engagement and practical language use. The pedagogical grammar approach offers an alternative by focusing on contextual learning, yet its application in Islamic educational settings remains underexplored Mara and Saliés (2020); Thi Loan (2022). This study contributes new insights by evaluating the effectiveness of this approach at the Islamic Institute of Diniyyah Pekanbaru, providing a model for integrating grammar instruction with communicative activities in a faith-based learning environment curtin (2021); Soviyah and Fatimah (2021).

By implementing the pedagogical grammar approach, this study aims to enhance student engagement and motivation in learning English, improve practical language skills through interactive learning experiences, and develop innovative teaching materials tailored to students' specific needs. It also seeks to provide a comprehensive evaluation of the effectiveness of this approach within an Islamic educational setting. The findings are expected to offer valuable recommendations for improving English language instruction at the Islamic Institute of Diniyyah Pekanbaru and serve as a reference for other Islamic educational institutions across Indonesia seeking to refine and enhance their teaching methodologies.

METHOD

This study employs a descriptive qualitative research method to investigate the effectiveness of the pedagogical grammar approach in enhancing English language proficiency among students at the Islamic Institute of Diniyyah Pekanbaru. The qualitative method is chosen to allow for an in-depth exploration of classroom dynamics, teaching practices, and student experiences, emphasizing descriptive and interpretive data over statistical measurement (Kinet & Meunier, 2018).

Participants and Sampling Technique

A total of 20 students from various English proficiency levels were selected as participants using purposive sampling. This technique ensures that the participants are individuals actively involved in English language learning and can provide relevant insights into the implementation and outcomes of the pedagogical grammar approach (ER & Saritiken, 2022). The students came from different educational backgrounds within the institution, allowing for a diverse representation of learning experiences and challenges (Islam, 2011).

Variables

Aligned with the principles of qualitative research, this study employs conceptual rather than numerical variables to explore the dynamics of pedagogical grammar in English language instruction. The independent variable is the pedagogical grammar approach, defined by the integration of grammar instruction into communicative language activities such as discussions, role-playing, and collaborative tasks (Kaltsum & Hidayat, 2021). The dependent variables include observable changes in student engagement, motivation, and practical English proficiency, as documented through various data collection methods during and after the intervention (Berezenko, Cherkhava, & Musiienko, 2022).

Data Collection Technique

To ensure triangulation and enhance the validity of findings, the study employs three complementary qualitative data collection techniques (Wahyudiati, 2023). First, classroom observations are carried out across several weeks to capture student participation, interaction,

enthusiasm, and real-time application of grammar in communication. These observations are guided by a structured checklist to ensure consistency and depth. Second, semi-structured interviews with both students and instructors allow for in-depth exploration of their experiences, perceptions, and reflections regarding the use of pedagogical grammar. This method supports the collection of rich narrative data. Lastly, document analysis involves examining student outputs, worksheets, lesson plans, and classroom notes to trace how grammar is embedded in tasks and to evaluate the development of students' contextual language use.

Research Procedure

The research follows a systematic and cyclical procedure inspired by Bradley-Levine (2022). During the preparation phase, participants are selected based on purposive sampling criteria, and research instruments—including observation protocols, interview guides, and document analysis rubrics—are developed. In the implementation phase, multiple classroom sessions are observed during the pedagogical grammar intervention. Post-lesson interviews are conducted to capture reflective feedback, while relevant documents are collected for review. The analysis phase involves organizing, comparing, and synthesizing data from all sources to build a comprehensive understanding of the intervention's impact on student learning.

Data Analysis Technique

A thematic analysis approach is utilized to interpret and make sense of the collected qualitative data. The analysis begins with the coding of observation notes, interview transcripts, and collected documents to identify recurring themes and significant patterns. These codes are then grouped into broader categories that reflect key dimensions such as student engagement, motivation, and language development. The emerging themes are cross-checked with relevant literature to ensure credibility and to position the findings within the broader discourse on grammar pedagogy and communicative language teaching. This robust methodology enables a nuanced evaluation of both instructional strategies and student outcomes, offering valuable contributions to English language instruction in Islamic educational settings.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate that the pedagogical grammar approach significantly enhances student engagement, motivation, and practical language proficiency (Kobayashi, 2023). Based on classroom observations, interviews, and document analysis, three key themes emerged:

Increased Student Engagement and Participation (Baharom & Shaari, 2022).

Classroom observations revealed a marked increase in student participation during grammar-based communicative tasks, including role-plays, small group discussions, and real-life simulations. Students appeared more responsive, asked more questions, and showed a willingness to take risks in using English grammar in spoken interactions. The shift from passive learning to active involvement reflected a more engaging and interactive classroom environment.

Moreover, students demonstrated increased confidence in applying grammar structures in meaningful contexts. Their ability to initiate and sustain conversations using correct grammar improved, suggesting that the integrated approach fostered not only engagement but also linguistic accuracy.

Improved Motivation in Learning English (Wolfenden, Adinolfi & Cross, 2020).

Interviews with students highlighted a significant increase in motivation toward learning English. Many participants expressed that traditional grammar lessons had previously felt monotonous and disconnected from real communication needs. However, the integration of grammar into communicative activities made learning more relevant and enjoyable.

Students reported that being able to immediately apply grammar rules in practical speaking and writing scenarios increased their interest in classroom activities. This connection between grammar and communication helped learners recognize the value of English in everyday use, reinforcing intrinsic motivation.

Development of Practical Language Skills (Zeybek, 2022; Novitri, 2024).

Document analysis, including student writing tasks and oral performance records, showed clear improvements in both grammatical accuracy and language fluency. Students were able to construct more complex and correct sentences in writing, while their speaking reflected a more natural use of grammar.

These improvements suggest that the pedagogical grammar approach supports not just rule memorization, but also the internalization of grammar for real-life communication. Students were observed to use appropriate tenses, sentence structures, and word order with increased consistency across tasks.

DISCUSSION

The results align with previous studies highlighting the effectiveness of contextualized grammar instruction in promoting language proficiency. The pedagogical grammar approach differs from traditional methods by shifting the focus from rule memorization to interactive and meaningful language use, making learning more engaging for students Suprayetno and Syahrul (2022); Yıldırım (2022); Andrews (2023); (Stacer, Moll and Solinas-Saunders (2022). Ther results shows 1) Engagement and Motivation: The increased student participation suggests that when grammar is taught in communicative contexts, students are more likely to engage in learning. This finding supports the principle that context-based grammar instruction fosters deeper learning and retention. 2) Effectiveness of Grammar in Communication: The improvement in students' ability to apply grammar in real-life situations indicates that explicit grammar instruction, when integrated with interactive tasks, enhances both accuracy and fluency. This confirms that grammar should not be taught in isolation but rather embedded in meaningful activities that require students to use the language actively. 3) Application in an Islamic Educational Setting: The findings provide original insights into how this approach can be adapted to an Islamic educational institution. Students at the Islamic Institute of Diniyyah Pekanbaru benefited from a learning environment that respected their cultural and educational background while promoting practical language use.

These results suggest that implementing the pedagogical grammar approach in other Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia could enhance English language instruction, making it more engaging, relevant, and effective for students.

CONCLUSION

The study reveals that using a pedagogical grammar approach—where grammar is taught through interactive and communicative activities—significantly boosts student engagement, confidence, and language accuracy at the Islamic Institute of Diniyyah Pekanbaru. The integration of contextualized learning methods, such as role-plays and discussions, proved more effective than traditional instruction, fostering meaningful language use. The research also offers valuable insight into implementing this approach within an Islamic educational setting, suggesting its broader relevance and potential for adaptation across similar institutions.

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