

Student Organization Strategies and Challenges in Instructing Grammar for Students' Daily Communication: A Study of Language Institution

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the strategies and challenges faced by the NATO student organization in instructing grammar to support students' daily English communication at the Foreign Language Development Institute (FLDI) of Nurul Jadid Islamic Boarding School. Using a descriptive qualitative approach with semi-structured interviews and non-participant observations, the study identifies three instructional strategies: structured explanation and direct correction, communication-based instruction, and a blended approach. The main challenges encountered include low student interest and difficulty integrating grammar into everyday communication. These findings highlight the potential of peer-led instruction in non-formal educational settings.

Keywords: Student Organization, Grammar Instruction, Instructional Strategies, Instructional Challenges, Daily Communication

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INTRODUCTION

English language proficiency is an important requirement in today's era of globalization, including in Islamic boarding schools (Sholihah, 2024). Mastery of grammar is the foundation for clear and structured communication (Ismoilov, 2025). At Pondok Pesantren Nurul Jadid, language development is facilitated through the Foreign Language Development Institute (LPBA) with the support of student organizations such as NATO (*Nadhlatus Tholabah*), which organizes various language-based activities, including instructing, discussions, and language games.

However, many students struggle to use grammar correctly in their daily lives. Sentences such as “Where to go you?” or “You take my book yes?” are often found in communication between students (Hikmah dkk., 2021). This problem is not only caused by a lack of understanding but also by a low awareness of the importance of grammar in everyday verbal communication.

In this context, the role of student organizations is vital. They become facilitators of informal but in-depth learning outside the classroom. Therefore, this study examines the strategies used by NATO organizations in instructing grammar and the challenges they face in implementing them.

METHODS

This research used a descriptive qualitative approach. The research subjects consisted of four division coordinators in the NATO organization, namely the Language, Insist, Art, and Governor Divisions. Data collection techniques included non-participatory observation by using checklist record tool and semi-structured interviews. Data were collected over ten days in May 2025. Data analysis was conducted using a thematic approach through five stages: data organization, coding, categorization, interpretation, and verification (Çelik dkk., 2020). Data validation was conducted through source triangulation.

FINDING

After conducting observations and semi-structured interviews with student organization coordinators under the auspices of the Foreign Language Development Institute (FLDI), data was obtained on grammar instructing strategies and challenges faced in the context of everyday communication. The findings were analyzed thematically to answer the research questions.

1. Student Organization Strategies in Instructing Grammar

a. Observation Results

The observation results showed that the mentors from the NATO organization used explicit and implicit grammar instructing strategies. At the beginning of the session, the tutor explained grammar structures such as the simple present tense directly, then gave examples of their use in everyday sentences.

Grammar was also taught through communicative activities such as role-playing and situational dialogues, which allowed students to use grammar in meaningful communication. These activities reflect the Focus on Form (FonF) approach.

Grammar material is adapted to the context of the students' lives, for example through sentence examples related to daily or religious activities. Tutors also provide structured exercises such as worksheets and provide immediate correction when mistakes occur. Sessions usually end with a brief reflection between students and tutors.

b. Semi-Structured Interview Results

Table 4.1 presents the thematic results of interviews related to grammar instructing strategies by student organizations.

Table 4.1 Thematic Result for Research Question 1

THEME	SUBTHEME	DESCRIPTION	REPRESENTATIVE QUOTE
Student Organization's Strategies in Instructing Grammar for Daily Communication	Explicit Instruction	Explicit grammar instruction is an approach that emphasizes the direct delivery of grammar rules by the teacher. The learning process is done consciously and systematically, where learners receive explanations of language structures and are given directed exercises to help understand and apply these rules	"In FLDI learning context, the mentor or advance levels who teach students a grammar subject, then mentor also give some exercise of writing and speaking." (Governor)
			"I usually teach grammar during activity sessions such as debates and discussions. If there are students who make grammar mistakes when speaking, I immediately stop and correct them. Sometimes, I also ask them to repeat the sentence with the correct form." (Insist Coordinator)
			"In instructing grammar, I usually give grammar-related tasks, such as writing an outline, translating a text, or creating a short article. After that, I immediately give corrections, especially on sentence structure and grammar usage that are not appropriate." (Governor)
			"I usually check and give corrections to the assignments done by the students. If the use of grammar is not in accordance with the context, I correct it immediately." (Art Coordinator)
	Implicit Instruction	Implicit grammar instruction is an approach that allows students to understand grammar through engagement in real	"I instruct grammar by encouraging students to speak naturally like native speakers. This is usually done during formal activities such as speeches or debates, as well as in everyday

		communication without direct delivery of grammar rules. This approach emphasizes the understanding of meaning and fluency in language, rather than the analysis of grammatical forms	communication. If they make mistakes, especially in the use of tenses and prepositions, I immediately correct them without explaining the rules first.” (Language Coordinator)
			“I integrate grammar instruction into creative activities such as storytelling, diary writing, and making wall magazines. I don't explain grammar at the beginning, but after the assignment is collected or presented, I usually give feedback if there are any mistakes.” (Art Coordinator)
	Combination of Explicit & Implicit Instruction	Combining explicit and implicit grammar training provides a more thorough learning experience, allowing students to acquire communicative fluency and grammatical precision at the same time.	“Sometimes we explain the grammar rules before or after the activity, but usually we let the students use the language freely first. Afterwards, we reflect together on their grammar use.” (Governor)
			“In our training, students are usually given the opportunity to speak first. After that, we correct their mistakes. For example, during a story presentation, we focus on reviewing their use of the past tense.” (<i>Synthesis from Art Coordinator</i>)

In general, there are three main approaches used:

- a) Explicit Instruction, with direct explanations of grammar rules and targeted exercises.
- b) Implicit Instruction, with an emphasis on natural language use and correction after students speak.
- c) Combined Approach, which integrates both methods so that students can understand the theory and practice it in a real context.

The coordinator explained that although mentors provide direct instruction, their role is more about giving feedback during language practice.

2. Challenges Faced by Student Organizations in Instructing Grammar

a. Observation Results

Although the instruction strategy worked well, several challenges arose in the field. Some students found grammar boring and difficult, so they were less enthusiastic about attending classes. On the other hand, not all tutors were able to convey the material in easy-to-understand language, which caused students to become passive or unfocused.

Limitations in learning media also pose a challenge. During the observation, no visual aids such as slides or videos were used; tutors only used a whiteboard. This reduces the variety of instruction methods.

Additionally, although speaking activities have been conducted, the application of grammar in spontaneous conversations remains limited. The time allocated for grammar instruction is also relatively short (approximately 20 minutes), making it difficult to conduct in-depth discussions and adequate practice.

b. Results of Semi-Structured Interviews

Table 4.2 presents the thematic results of interviews regarding the challenges faced by student organizations in instructing grammar.

Table 4.2 Thematic Result for Research Question 2

THEME	SUBTHEME	DESCRIPTION	REPRESENTATIVE QUOTE
Student's Organization Challenges in Instructing Grammar for Student's Daily Communication	Student's Low Interest on Grammar Lesson	Grammar is often perceived as a boring and unpleasant aspect of language learning, leading to disengagement and a lack of interest among students.	"If the lesson is not fun, students easily feel bored. Grammar is sometimes seen as too difficult because it has many rules." (Governor)
			"There are students who do not listen to instructions from the NATO and this leads to them not progressing." (Language Coordinator)
			"FLDI students usually get sleepy during grammar lessons." (Art Coordinator)
			"Grammar is too technical, sometimes students feel that it is not a priority, they prefer to practice speaking right away." (LD Coordinator)
	Difficulties in Integrating Grammar into Communicative Learning	The difficulty of integrating grammar into communicative learning means that students understand the rules, but find it difficult to apply them when speaking due to lack of contextual practice.	"We try to get FDLI students to use grammar, but there are students who find it difficult to apply it in daily practice." (Language Coordinator)
			"The grammar they learn sometimes stops at theory. When speaking, they forget or lack confidence in using it." (Governor)
			"In speaking activities, grammar is often neglected because students focus on conveying the message, not the structure." (Insist Coordinator)
			"We want students to apply grammar when telling stories or giving presentations, but in reality, many still make mistakes." (Art Coordinator)

Two main challenges were identified in the grammar learning process:

- a) Low student interest, as grammar is considered difficult and boring. This leads to a lack of participation and attention during learning.
- b) Difficulty applying grammar in everyday communication, even though students understand the theory. Students focus more on conveying messages than on sentence structure, which often leads to grammar being overlooked in practice.

These findings suggest that grammar instruction approaches should be more communicative, contextual, and engaging. Additionally, mentors need specialized training to effectively and enjoyably deliver the material

DISCUSSION

1. Student Organization Grammar Instruction Strategies

The first strategy is explicit instruction (Focus on Forms), which involves directly conveying grammar rules through writing exercises, debates, and discussions. This strategy supports the views of Ellis (**Ellis, 2006; ŞahinKaya, 2024**), on the importance of structural awareness in grammar learning.

The second strategy is implicit instruction (Focus on Form), where students use language naturally, and corrections are made when errors occur. This aligns with (**Krashen, 1981**) theory, which emphasizes meaningful input and unconscious acquisition in second language learning.

The third strategy flexibly combines both, giving students the freedom to speak before joint corrections are made. This approach is considered capable of improving both accuracy and fluency in speaking (**Zheng Ling, 2015**).

This NATO strategy aligns with (**Woymodk., 2024**), who state that integrating grammar into communication can enhance speaking skills. These findings also indicate that community-based grammar learning in Islamic boarding schools can be effective when supported by communicative and interactive approaches.

However, this strategy lacks a clear evaluation system and does not directly involve students in the learning reflection process.

2. Challenges Faced by Student Organizations in Instructing Grammar

This study identified two main challenges in instructing grammar by NATO student organizations, namely low student interest and difficulties in applying grammar in everyday communication. Many students find grammar boring, leading to low motivation, consistent with the findings of (**Nawaz dk., 2022**). Additionally, students struggle to connect grammar theory with real-life language practice (**Rizqi, 2020**).

These challenges highlight the need for a more communicative and student-centered approach, as well as training for mentors to develop engaging instruction strategies. This study also acknowledges the limitations of the data due to the small number of informants and the lack of direct student perspectives.

CONCLUSION

Student organizations in pesantren play a strategic role in supporting santri grammar mastery through three main approaches, namely explicit, implicit, and combined strategies. All three are applied adaptively according to the context of santri activities and learning needs. The explicit approach strengthens theoretical understanding through structured explanations and exercises, while the implicit approach provides space for students to absorb grammar naturally in the context of real communication. The combined strategy integrates the strengths of both in order to create balanced learning between theory and practice.

However, the effectiveness of this strategy still faces various challenges, including the low motivation of students to learn, the gap between theoretical understanding of grammar and its application in daily communication, and limited resources and training for mentors. The findings indicate the need to increase the capacity of mentors through continuous training, the development of interesting and contextual learning media, and support from formal institutions to create a conducive learning environment.

The results of this study make a theoretical contribution to the study of community-based grammar **instruction** and offer practical implications for the development of language coaching policies and programs in pesantren. Strengthening the synergy between student organizations and formal educational institutions is also the key to successful grammar learning in non-formal environments such as pesantren.

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