CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter contains the research background, research questions, research purposes, research significance, research scope, conceptual framework, and previous studies.

A. Research Background

This research examines English pre-service teachers' experiences and beliefs about grammar instruction in senior high schools.

Grammar has long been regarded as a central component of English language teaching, as it provides the foundation for learners to communicate effectively in both spoken and written forms (Sibarani & Nurjannah, 2025). The language cannot convey essential meaning without the concept of grammar (Djurayeva et al., 2020). Without sufficient grammatical knowledge, learners may experience difficulties in expressing ideas clearly and interpreting messages appropriately, even when their vocabulary knowledge is adequate (Thornbury, 1999). Thus, teaching grammar to the students will assist them in improving their effective sentence and confidently expressing their idea.

Nowadays, there are some issues with teaching English grammar in the classroom. For instance, the difference between English and Indonesian grammar. English is a tense language, whereas Indonesian is a tenseless language. According to Listia & Febriyanti (2020), most students in Indonesia who struggle with English have difficulty understanding and using English tenses and aspects appropriately because English and Indonesian differ significantly in their grammatical structures and constructions. The most significant issues are that some students dislike the teaching of grammar, and wherever the term "grammar" is used, because it is tedious and rarely taught enthusiastically in the classroom (Kosar, 2022). The students are confused when they make grammatically correct sentences because the sentence structure is different from their own language. The rules are taught one after another, which forces students to memorize many terms and rule definitions, making language knowledge the most boring lesson in school because it is taught

in detail (Fuangkarn & Rimkeeratikul, 2020). Next issues are the differences between independent curriculum and the 2013 curriculum. In the 2013 curriculum, the teacher can teach grammar separately, but it cannot be done in the independent curriculum. The teacher must teach grammar integratedly with other English skills. As the fact, English grammar is very different from Indonesian grammar and Indonesian students rarely speak English daily outside the class. Such condition makes them difficult to study grammar. This is the reason why grammar is considered as the most complicated part of learning English for students. Therefore, teachers should be able to identify the most common grammar problems and adapt their teaching methods accordingly. This effort should be done by the English teachers in order to create a meaningful teaching process and achieve the goal of teaching itself.

To address these challenges, appropriate grammar teaching remains an essential concern in English language education. In the Indonesian context, grammar instruction has always been a controversial issue in education, and the main problem is how grammar should be taught and acquired (Rohma & Arifin, 2025). Scholars have long debated whether grammar should be taught explicitly or implicitly for language learners (Al Abri et al., 2022). It is considered a fundamental element to mastering the structural rules of a language, and its role in fostering communicative skills remains contested (Graus & Coppen, 2016; Şahinkaya, 2024). Vera et al. (2024) view grammar not merely as a set of rules but as the underlying structure that supports language and enables effective meaning-making. Nevertheless, they argue that acquiring grammar naturally through exposure or incidental learning is often insufficient for most learners, as implicit exposure alone tends to result in limited grammatical competence. Empirical evidence also suggests that teachers who introduce grammar in contextualized ways are more successful in maintaining students' attention and fostering interest and mastery than those who rely on traditional deductive methods (Arifin, 2023). In contrast, Alzahrani (2024) emphasizes the importance of conscious attention to grammar in second language acquisition, arguing that without explicit focus on grammatical structures, learners may struggle to internalize the patterns that govern sentence

formation, and lack of explicit attention can hinder learners' ability to produce clear and accurate language. This tension between explicit and implicit grammar instruction continues to shape classroom practices and teachers' pedagogical decisions.

Given the complexity of grammar teaching, the way English teachers present grammar lessons can be affected by their beliefs about how grammar should be taught (Tarigan & Stevani, 2022). Teachers' beliefs play a pivotal role in shaping instructional decisions. According to Borg (2003), beliefs are defined as personal "deeply held convictions about teaching and learning" that guide teachers' choices and actions in classrooms. Research indicates that these beliefs are influenced by multiple factors, including prior educational experiences, teacher training, classroom realities, and individual confidence in subject knowledge. Therefore, teaching practice is one of important of the initial stage for shaped beliefs of teacher may guide how they perceive the role of grammar, select teaching methods, and respond to students' needs in real classroom situations.

Prior to teaching, pre-service teachers' beliefs arise from both their personal experiences as students and their formal training in a teacher education program (Choo et al., 2019). In addition, pre-service teachers' grammar instruction also shaped by personal beliefs, and teaching contexts, which influence how they interpret and implement pedagogical practices (Borg, 2003). In teacher education programs, pre-service teachers are typically introduced to various theories of grammar instruction, including form-focused instruction, communicative language teaching, and task-based learning. However, when pre-service teachers encounter real classroom situations during their practicum particularly in senior high schools they may face contextual constraints such as limited time, mixed-ability students, exam-oriented curricula, and students' low motivation toward grammar learning. These conditions may create tensions between what pre-service teachers believe should be done based on theory and what they feel is possible or necessary in practice (Mattheoudakis, 2007). In this case, teacher education programs should aim to form and modify these beliefs early, as they will shape pre-service teachers' understanding of language teaching and learning, influence teaching practices, and

also prior beliefs influence responses to teacher education (Johnson, 1994; Merisi & Pillay, 2020). Therefore, supporting the development of pre-service teachers' pedagogical beliefs is central to improving teachers' professional practices and addressing challenges in grammar instruction.

The relationship between teacher education and belief development has become an area of particular interest in recent research. According to Dang et.al (2024), studies suggest that pre-service teachers' beliefs may shift during their teacher education programs and teaching practicum experiences, as they reflect on theory-practice tensions and encounter real classroom contexts. Although research on belief change has been more frequently reported in broader teaching language contexts, the mechanisms by which pre-service teachers' grammar-specific beliefs evolve remain understudied. Nonetheless, evidence from related domains highlights the importance of reflective practice and contextual experience in shaping belief systems over time.

Based on preliminary observation, pre-service teachers face difficulties in pedagogical grammar instruction. These include text-based instruction and the use of perfect tenses. For example, in narrative texts, the past tense is commonly used, but in dialogue or other parts of the plot, the tense may shift depending on the context. As for the present, past, and future perfect tenses, pre-service teachers often see them as rarely used and struggle to explain them clearly due to misunderstandings.

Several previous studies have investigated pre-service teachers' beliefs about grammar instruction. For example, Merisi and Pillay (2020) focused on the influence of personal learning experiences and sociocultural backgrounds, showing that pre-service teachers often construct their beliefs about grammar teaching based on how they themselves were taught as learners and the educational norms within their social contexts. These prior experiences tend to shape whether teachers favor explicit rule-based instruction or more communicative, contextualized approaches to gramma. Similarly, Wijayanti (2020) investigated the relationship between theoretical knowledge gained through teacher education programs and actual classroom experience. The study found that while solid theoretical understanding

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contributes to more informed beliefs about grammar teaching, hands-on teaching experience plays a crucial role in strengthening or reshaping those beliefs. This study also emphasized teacher confidence as a key factor, noting that pre-service teachers with higher confidence levels were more likely to experiment with varied grammar teaching strategies. Hu & Liu (2021) explored various internal and external factors affecting beliefs about grammar instruction and recommended a balanced approach that combines form and meaning. Aeny and Yanto (2021) investigated the techniques pre-service teachers used during the COVID-19 pandemic and the challenges they faced due to limited experience and technical issues. Their study revealed that limited teaching experience, combined with technological constraints, affected how grammar instruction was implemented. Despite these challenges, the study also showed that pre-service teachers attempted to adapt their techniques, indicating that beliefs about grammar teaching are dynamic and responsive to contextual demands.

Although studies have investigated pre-service teachers' beliefs and classroom practices, the research about their lived experiences and beliefs regarding teaching grammar in the context of senior high schools, especially during in teaching practicum remains underexplored. By examining pre-service teachers' teaching stories, reflections, and experiences, this study seeks to provide in-depth insights into how beliefs about grammar teaching are formed, challenged, and enacted in real classroom settings. The findings are expected to contribute to the literature on teacher beliefs, grammar pedagogy, and English teacher education, as well as to inform teacher education programs in preparing pre-service teachers for effective and reflective grammar instruction.

B. Research Questions

This research develops two research questions based on the background described above:

1. What are the English pre-service teachers' experience**s** in teaching grammar in senior high school?

2. What beliefs do English pre-service teachers hold teaching grammar in senior high school?

C. Research Purposes

According to the mentioned research questions, this research has two purposes:

1. To figure out English pre-service teachers' experiences in teaching grammar in senior high school.

2. To find out what beliefs English pre-service teachers hold teaching grammar in senior high school.

D. Research Significances

This research is expected to make several contributions, both theoretical and practical.

Theoretically, the findings can expand the literature on English language teaching by examining the influences that shape English pre-service teachers' beliefs about grammar instruction based on their prior secondary school experiences.

Practically, this study offers several contributions. It helps English pre-service teachers reflect on and improve their beliefs and practices in grammar teaching. For the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, the findings may support better implementation of the teaching practicum. For the English Education Program, the study contributes to curriculum improvement, especially in preparing students to teach grammar more effectively. Additionally, it serves as a valuable reference for future research on grammar pedagogy and teacher beliefs.

E. Research Scope

Through a qualitative design and narrative inquiry approach, this research examines the beliefs of English pre-service teachers regarding the teaching practicum about grammar in senior high schools. The participant is seventh-semester students in academic year of 2025/2026 at Islamic State University Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, who have experience in teaching grammar during practicum in senior high school contexts and were selected through a pre-survey. The research focuses on their teaching grammar practicum experiences, perceptions of grammar teaching, and their beliefs about teaching grammar.

F. Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this research is based on several theoretical perspectives that support its key components.

1. Pre-service Teachers

A pre-service teacher is someone undergoing teacher training, typically through a bachelor's degree or certification program (Asman et al., 2023, cited in Pakpahan, 2023). Teaching practicum equips them with the required skills (Pakpahan, 2023). During practice, they gather information, observe real classroom instruction, and teach under the guidance of mentors and supervisors (Atar & Bağci, 2019). While gaining knowledge, they also shape their professional identity through these experiences (Pratiwi, 2020). This indicates that experiences are essential for developing teaching competencies, as they help pre-service teachers construct their career identities, thereby reinforcing the need for significant, reflective practicum experiences in educator training.

In the process of becoming professional teachers, English pre-service teachers often encounter various difficulties during their teaching practicum. According to Pakpahan (2023), pre-service teachers' challenges in teaching English can be categorized into external and internal factors. External factors refer to conditions beyond the teacher's control, such as school infrastructure, student-related issues, and institutional policies. These include student motivation issues, inadequate facilities, and the Management of student behaviour (Pakpahan, 2023; Abdullah & Basthomi, 2020; Fadillah et al., 2024). Meanwhile, internal factors arise from pre-service teachers themselves, including a lack of confidence, struggles to adapt to the school environment, limited teaching competencies and proficiency, a lack of mentoring support, the gap between theory and practice, and the transition to becoming a teacher (Abdullah & Basthomi, 2020; Ag-ahmad et al., 2020; Pertiwi et al., 2022; Pakpahan, 2023 Fadillah et al., 2024).   These challenges illustrate the complex realities faced by English pre-service teachers during their practicum, where external constraints and internal struggles often intersect. As a result, the teaching practicum becomes a critical period in which these difficulties surface and shape pre-service teachers' experiences, perceptions, and development as future

educators.

Understanding pre-service teachers' beliefs is closely related to their personality characteristics (Decker & Rimm-Kaufman, 2007). Research suggests that personality traits can play an important role in shaping how pre-service teachers respond to teacher education programs. The most common characteristics are extroversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and neuroticism (Decker & Rimm-Kaufman, 2007). Moreover, a pre-service teacher is characterized by self-doubt and fear of lacking confidence (Latta & Kim, 2024). These individual characteristics may impact teachers' beliefs about teaching, including: level of education, the level at which the pre-service teacher plans to teach, any prior teaching experience, and whether teaching is only a first step toward another career (Decker & Rimm-Kaufman, 2007). Therefore, individual personality differences could help explain why some pre-service teachers benefit more from training programs than others.

2. Beliefs

Belief is "an individual's judgment of the truth or falsity of a proposition, a judgment that can only be inferred from a collective understanding of what human beings say, intend, and do" (Pajares, 1992). Beliefs are foundational and influential in teacher education, shaping behavior, organizing knowledge, and impacting teaching practices (Pajares, 1992). Furthermore, beliefs are personal judgments and deeply connected to how individuals interpret and act upon their teaching experiences.

Teachers' beliefs begin to form during their educational training and continue to evolve throughout the process (Ammon & Levin, in Levin, 2015). Teachers' beliefs are influenced by facilitators, content knowledge, experience, and self-confidence in teaching English (Rohma & Arifin, 2023). Teachers strive to develop a comprehensive set of beliefs and knowledge they intend to use post-graduation. Thus, teacher-training programs must undergo constant evaluation due to their profound effect on teaching practices (Freeman, 1994, in Peacock, 2001). Such evolving factors contribute to establishing a framework for developing future perspectives and decision-making in teaching.

Teachers' beliefs are shaped by various factors, such as teaching and learning experiences, teacher motivation, collaboration with other teachers, and school facilities (Sahfira, 2023). Additional factors, such as teachers' facilitator roles, subject knowledge, teaching experience, and self-efficacy, shaped teachers' beliefs (Rohma & Arifin, 2023). Prior learning experiences, instructional materials, context-specific factors, and socio-cultural factors also impact educators' beliefs (Chong & Low, 2009; Gabillon, 2012) as cited in Sahfira (2023). Therefore, these factors contribute significantly to how teachers develop their beliefs and apply them in classroom settings.

3. **EFL Grammar Teaching**

a. **Definition of Grammar**

Grammar teaching in the EFL context can be theoretically grounded in multiple interrelated perspectives, each addressing a core aspect of language learning. First, from the standpoint of definitions of grammar, grammar is understood not merely as a set of prescriptive rules, but as a system that integrates form, meaning, and use to enable learners to construct coherent and meaningful messages (Halliday, 1994; Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999 Thornbury, 1999). This view positions grammar as a central component of linguistic competence that mediates comprehension and communication, forming the foundation for all language skills.

b. **The Principles of Grammar Teaching**

Thornbury's (1999) principles of grammar teaching provide a theoretical foundation for instructional decision-making. The E-Factor (Efficiency) emphasizes economy, ease, and efficacy in grammar teaching. Economy refers to selecting essential grammatical content, ease concerns the practicality of implementing activities, and efficacy relates to the extent to which grammar teaching leads to meaningful learning outcomes. In contrast, the A-Factor (Appropriacy) emphasizes that grammar instruction must be tailored to learners' age, proficiency level, motivation, and cultural context. This theory positions grammar teaching as a context-sensitive process that requires teachers to balance instructional effectiveness with learners' needs and classroom realities.

c. The Importance of Grammar Teaching

Concerning the importance of teaching grammar, theoretical perspectives from Systemic Functional Linguistics (Halliday, 1994) and communicative competence frameworks (Canale & Swain, 1980; Hymes, 1972) highlight grammar as a meaning-making resource that supports learners' cognitive development, linguistic accuracy, and ability to communicate effectively. Grammar enables learners to express temporal, causal, and logical relationships within language, forming the structural basis for integrated development of listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills (Burns, 2009; Lakhoua, 2012). In this sense, grammar cannot be viewed merely as a set of isolated rules, but as a central component of language use that underpins meaningful communication. Its role in shaping how learners construct and interpret meaning reinforces its significance within broader language learning and teaching practices.

d. Teaching Grammar in an Indonesian Context

Theoretical perspectives on EFL learning explain why grammar plays a central role in Indonesian classrooms. Madya (2002) notes that English in Indonesia functions as a foreign language learned primarily through formal instruction rather than daily communication. In Indonesian EFL context, theories of language transfer and sociocultural pedagogy (Borg, 2006; Cahyono & Widiati, 2008) suggest that L1 interference, teacher-centered instruction, and exam-oriented methods shape grammar learning. The disconnect between policy-oriented communicative approaches and traditional practices indicates that effective grammar teaching must consider students' linguistic background, classroom culture, and attitudes toward learning grammar, integrating accuracy and meaningful communication in a context-sensitive manner (Marcellino, 2008; Musthafa, 2010). Within this context, grammar instruction emerges as a prominent feature of EFL classrooms, reflecting both theoretical considerations and longstanding instructional practices. These conditions position grammar not only as a pedagogical focus but also as a lens through which broader tensions between communicative ideals and classroom realities in Indonesian EFL settings can be understood.

e. Approaches, Methods, And Techniques of Teaching Grammar

Regarding approaches, methods, and techniques, EFL grammar teaching is underpinned by dual theoretical paradigms: explicit instruction, rooted in cognitivist and rule-governed learning theories, facilitates conscious knowledge of grammar through teacher-led explanation, modeling, and structured practice (Scott, 1990; Ling & Quan-Feng, 2015), whereas implicit instruction, informed by Krashen's input hypothesis, sociocultural theory, and communicative language teaching, promotes grammar acquisition through meaningful interaction, exposure to comprehensible input, and task-based learning (Krashen & Terrell, 1983; Ellis, 2009; Lightbown & Spada, 2013). Deductive approaches (rules-first) and inductive approaches (examples-first) further illustrate the spectrum from teacher-centered to learner-centered instruction, emphasizing either structured guidance or discovery learning (Nunan, 1999; Thornbury, 1999). Techniques, ranging from the Grammar-Translation Method and Direct Method to Communicative Language Teaching and Task-Based Learning, operationalize these approaches, ensuring that learners engage with grammar in ways that support both accuracy and fluency (Willis & Willis, 2007; Richards & Rodgers, 2014). This diversity reflects ongoing debates about how grammar is best learned and highlights the need to understand grammar teaching as a flexible, context-dependent pedagogical choice rather than a fixed set of procedures.

G. Previous Studies

In this case, several relevant studies have examined English pre-service teachers' beliefs about teaching grammar, which is relevant to the research.

The first study by (Merisi & Ansurie Pillay , 2020) examined pre-service teachers' beliefs regarding the teaching and learning of grammar. This study aims to examine the impact of these beliefs on their future teaching practice. This study employed a qualitative approach, utilizing a narrative inquiry design. Data were collected through open-ended questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and narrative accounts with fourth-year students studying English education at the university under study. The study finds that pre-service teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning grammar are influenced by their experiences with grammar

instruction and by their cultural and social backgrounds. The study found that most participants believed grammar should be learned explicitly. The study results show that pre-service teachers have varying beliefs about grammar teaching and learning. Most lack a sound knowledge of grammar, which they attribute to the lack of explicit grammar teaching in schools and universities.

Second is the thesis by Wijayanti (2020), which focuses on pre-service teachers' beliefs about EFL grammar learning and teaching, the significance of these beliefs in the teaching process, and their impact on student learning. The participants were EFL pre-service teachers, and a quantitative survey design was adopted, with a questionnaire as the primary data collection instrument. The study finds that their theoretical knowledge and teaching practices influence pre-service teachers' beliefs about grammar. The study results also show that pre-service teachers' beliefs about grammar learning and teaching can influence their teaching practices and that teacher cognition plays a crucial role in shaping their instructional decisions. Teacher confidence is a significant factor in the grammar learning process. The study finds that testing grammar is the most effective aspect of grammar teaching and learning. In addition, pre-service teachers prefer a balanced approach to teaching grammar, combining traditional and communicative methods.

The third study by Hu & Liu (2020) examines pre-service teachers' beliefs about teaching grammar instruction, investigates the factors that influence these beliefs, and identifies the pre-service English teachers' beliefs regarding teaching grammar instruction and the factors that affect their beliefs. The study employs a mixed-methods approach comprising two parts: the first involves a questionnaire survey to collect quantitative data, and the second involves in-depth interviews with 17 pre-service teachers. The study's findings conclude that both external and internal factors influence pre-service teachers' beliefs about teaching grammar. The study suggests that a balanced approach to grammar teaching, considering both form and meaning, is necessary. The study concludes that the beliefs of pre-service English teachers about grammar instruction are influenced by various factors, including their learning and teaching experiences and examination systems, and that these beliefs have implications for pre-service teacher training programs.

The last study by Nita Nur Aeny and Elih Sutisna Yanto (2021) aims to identify the approaches and techniques pre-service English teachers employed in grammar instruction during the COVID-19 pandemic and to examine the benefits and challenges of grammar instruction in this context. The study employs narrative inquiry to collect and analyze data, drawing on the stories of two pre-service English teachers. The study finds that pre-service English teachers face challenges in teaching grammar, including technical difficulties and limited experience, and that teaching grammar helps them improve their knowledge and skills. The study revealed that pre-service English teachers employed various approaches and techniques to teach grammar, including integrated and separate teaching methods and deductive approaches. It also found that teaching grammar was beneficial for both students and teachers, yet posed challenges, such as students' limited understanding and technical issues. Additionally, pre-service English teachers face challenges in teaching grammar, including technical difficulties and a lack of competence.

These studies provide a valuable foundation for understanding pre-service teachers' beliefs about teaching grammar. Based on the previous research discussed above, the studies have explored pre-service teachers' beliefs about teaching grammar but have not specifically examined how these beliefs are formed and applied during teaching practicum in secondary schools, especially in the context of Islamic universities in Indonesia. Most studies employ a survey approach or focus on the pandemic period, so they have not provided in-depth descriptions of the transition of students' beliefs from theory to post-pandemic practice. This study fills the gap by employing a narrative inquiry approach and narrative frames as one of the instruments providing insight into how the teaching practicum experience shapes pre-service teachers' beliefs and practices regarding grammar teaching.