Enhancing Student's Speaking Skills Through the use of Adjectives in Prsent Tense Non-Verbal Sentence to Grade 5 Students at SD Negeri 091608 Sinaksak

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
Article history: Received May 23, 2025 Revised June 17, 2025 Accepted July 6, 2025 **Keywords:** Grammar-Translation Method, Speaking Skill, Elementary Students	This study aims to improve the speaking skills of fifth-grade students at SD Negeri 091608 Sinaksak through the implementation of the Grammar-Translation Method (GTM). The main problem faced by the students was their low ability to speak English, especially in constructing simple sentences and expressing them confidently. The subjects of the study were 19 fifth-grade students. The instruments used included observation sheets, speaking tests, and documentation of teaching activities. The results showed that the use of GTM helped students better understand sentence structure through simple translation exercises from Indonesian to English. This positively impacted their speaking abilities. In conclusion, the Grammar-Translation Method can be considered an effective alternative teaching strategy to enhance English speaking skills among elementary school students.

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INTRODUCTION

Humans are individual beings who frequently communicate with others to fulfill their daily needs (Eny, 2020). In order to convey intentions clearly, people need a way to communicate. Language serves as a medium in the form of sound symbols for interaction among members of society, produced by human speech organs (Eny, 2020).

In social life, people always need help from others, from small matters to major issues. It is undeniable that humans cannot live alone. Therefore, language is essential for society to live in peace, harmony, and safety. In the era of globalization, technology is advancing rapidly and competition among countries is becoming more intense, making communication increasingly important in society. The ability to master English is actually influenced by several variables (Masduki, 2016).

Language is the primary tool humans use to communicate. Each region has its own language for communication, and since English is considered an international language, it is the most commonly used language globally (Rahman et al., 2021). Language, as a communication tool, can be learned optimally if one prepares properly (Nurani et al., n.d.). It is the most important and universal means of communication (Saleh, 2015). Given the importance of English in teaching and

learning, a proper approach that enhances students' English proficiency while offering enjoyable and engaging learning activities needs to be designed (Widyasari, 2016). Proficiency in English communication has become a necessity (Anisa & Febriani Sya, 2022).

In this era of globalization, one important priority is English learning in schools, as mastering English opens up many opportunities in various fields. English is a compulsory subject in junior high and senior high schools and is widely used in international schools across different aspects of global life. It also serves as a tool for sharing knowledge globally. This should signal to teachers to improve the quality of instruction to help students learn better (Amaniarsih & Nafisah, 2023).

As it evolves, Indonesia has implemented curricula that include English as a foreign language, taught from elementary school to university. Students are expected to learn and understand English as best as possible (Elipudin et al., 2019). Teaching English to elementary school students is considered beneficial because they are at an age where language acquisition is easier and more memorable (Ajiza & Rahman, 2023). Teaching English from an early age has helped students master the language. However, schools often lack teachers who can meet the needs of elementary students, who have different characteristics from older learners (Septiara et al., 2022).

In terms of methodology, a good method is one that matches the students' level. Each method has its strengths and weaknesses, and it is up to us as future or current teachers to choose the appropriate method and adapt it to the level of students being taught. A method is used in the teaching process to deliver learning material. Sometimes, simple material becomes difficult for students to learn due to poor delivery methods. On the other hand, even difficult material can be understood if delivered clearly, accurately, and engagingly (Wahyuni et al., 2020). One major factor that contributes to successful language learning is the teaching method (Amertawengrum, 2019).

A teacher's creativity plays a key role in whether the learning material is delivered according to the expected outcomes. Various teaching methods and strategies used in each learning session reflect the teacher's creativity (Meliyawanti & Dewi, 2020). Teaching is not just giving instructions; it is a process of changing students' behavior to achieve specific objectives (Yamin, 2017).

English instruction in elementary schools has been part of local content since the 1994 curriculum. Local content can be defined as topics that help enhance the potential of the area where teaching takes place (Sya & Helmanto, 2020). In daily life, speaking or communicating is a way to convey our ideas to others (Zulfitri, 2019). Speaking is the process of conveying information verbally using language as a tool. It is a crucial component of language skills (Noviani, 2019). It also involves the use of different languages depending on the speaker (Lindawati & Sengkey, 2017). Language skills are essential for elementary school students, as language is the most important asset for communication (Dalilah & Sya, 2022). According to Yuwono & Triono (2024), there are four aspects of language skills: receptive skills (listening and reading) and productive skills (speaking and writing). Additionally, there are three essential language elements that support these skills: accurate pronunciation, broad vocabulary, and proper grammar (Dalilah & Sya, 2022). In English learning, pronunciation is undeniably important. If the pronunciation is unclear or incorrect, it may confuse the listener and hinder comprehension, leading to miscommunication (Aflah, 2022).

When teaching grammar, the Grammar Translation Method focuses on translation and memorization of verb forms. During the lesson, teachers explain the material in the local language (Tyara Murti, 2018). Speaking a foreign language like English requires proper pronunciation. With accurate pronunciation, communication in English becomes easier to understand. Many schools now recognize the importance of English and have introduced new policies such as increasing English lesson hours and encouraging teachers to use effective methods to enhance student learning (Amelia & Dwi Basuki, 2022).

To teach English effectively, it is important to understand the various methods used in elementary school English instruction, one of which is the Grammar Translation Method. The writer believes that this method is important to apply to elementary school students to examine how the Grammar Translation Method is implemented and which skills can be improved through its application in English learning at the elementary level.

METHOD

The type of research used in this study is qualitative with a phenomenological design. The phenomenological approach was chosen to produce statements about events or phenomena that are genuinely related to the issues being investigated. This research was conducted at SD Negeri Sinaksak, located on Jl. Medan Km 10.5, Tapian Dolok, Simalungun. The study was carried out on May 5, 2025, in the 2024/2025 academic year and took place in class 5C of SD Negeri Sinaksak during lesson hours.

The students of class 5C were involved in this study. They were still experiencing difficulties in expressing ideas. A total of 19 students participated in this activity, consisting of 9 female students and 10 male students. Before the treatment began, a pre-test was conducted (the facilitator asked how well they knew adjectives and asked for relevant examples). This was done to determine their level of speaking ability. Each treatment period followed the same learning procedure pattern, which involved discussing grammar and implementing it into speaking practice

The implementation was structured into two main sessions: material presentation and interactive writing practice. In the material presentation session, the facilitator delivered content related to the definition of adjectives, examples of adjectives, and how to use them in structured sentences. This was done through lectures using a whiteboard and direct explanation. The material covered included: the characteristics of adjectives, examples of adjectives, and correct word structure. Special emphasis was placed on the technique of grouping as a pre-writing strategy to help students generate and organize relevant vocabulary. Students were shown how to use the correct word structure based on the simple present tense non-verbal formula (for example, "My mother is beautiful" — "my mother" as the subject and "beautiful" as the adjective).

In the second session of the activity, students participated in structured exercises that emphasized the understanding and application of adjectives in English. The activity began with a discussion in their native language, where students were asked to mention and describe objects or personal experiences using various adjectives. Afterward, they were trained to translate sentences containing adjectives from Indonesian to English, and vice versa.

Adjective vocabulary was grouped according to categories, such as adjectives for size, color, shape, and character traits. The teacher provided explicit explanations about the position of adjectives in a sentence, grammatical rules, and their usage in noun phrases. The activity continued with guided writing, in which the teacher and students constructed sentences using the adjectives they had learned.

Next, students were asked to write sentences containing adjectives independently (individual writing), focusing on the accurate use of adjectives. The teacher provided direct correction of structural errors or inappropriate adjective choices. A discussion and Q&A session was held to clarify grammar concepts and deepen the students' understanding of adjective usage in sentences.

The aim of this activity was to improve students' ability to understand and use adjectives correctly in sentences, as well as to strengthen their speaking skills using the Grammar Translation Method approach.

Figure 1. Stages of Method Implementation

Phase 1: Preparation

The initial stage of this community service activity involved several preparatory steps to ensure smooth implementation. These steps included:

1. Coordinating with the supervising lecturer to confirm the objectives, framework, and expectations of the activity.
2. Holding a meeting with the principal of SD Negeri Sinaksak to discuss the goals and schedule of the writing skills improvement program.

3. Collaborating with the homeroom teacher to identify students in Class 5C who would participate in the activity.

4. Preparing the necessary teaching tools and materials, such as lesson content, handouts, and worksheets tailored to learning through the Grammar Translation Method.

Phase 2: Implementation

The application of the Grammar Translation Method (GTM) in this program was primarily aimed at improving writing skills. While GTM traditionally focuses more on reading, writing, and text translation rather than speaking, it can be adapted to enhance speaking skills through the following modified stages:

1. Learning Grammar and Vocabulary Structure

Students study grammar rules and vocabulary through translation exercises from the target language to the native language and vice versa. This understanding forms the basis for constructing grammatically correct sentences.

2. Practicing Oral Sentence Construction

After grasping grammar and vocabulary, students are encouraged to construct simple sentences orally based on previously translated texts. Teachers may provide example sentences and ask students to repeat or modify them verbally.

3. Structured Examples Based on Translation

The teacher provides translated examples, and students take turns reading them aloud.

4. Repetition and Correction

Repetition of sentences and examples is carried out to reinforce the mastery of language structures. The teacher offers corrections on grammar and pronunciation to help students speak accurately.

5. Evaluation through Presentation or Q&A Sessions

Speaking abilities are assessed through short presentations or question-and-answer sessions using the target language, allowing students to practice speaking directly.

Phase 3: Evaluation

The final phase of the program involved reflection and feedback. Students were invited to participate in an open discussion about the challenges they faced when writing structured sentences. Questions were asked about word choice and sentence structure. The facilitator and students evaluated the writing products together based on structural completeness, language use, and clarity of ideas. Field notes and observations were also recorded to document student participation, engagement, and progress throughout the activity.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

After the presentation and socialization session on the use of adjectives and their application in sentences, in addition to interactive discussions and direct writing practice, several important findings emerged. These findings highlight the effectiveness in improving students' ability to organize ideas and expand vocabulary in writing new sentences especially when applied in the Grammar translation method.

1. Phase 1. Preparation

The initial stage of the community service activity focused on thorough preparation to ensure effective implementation of the writing skills improvement program at SD Negeri Sinaksak. The evaluation of this phase reflects the success and challenges encountered during the preparatory steps.

1. Coordination with Supervising Lecturer

Coordination with the supervising lecturer was successfully carried out, ensuring that the objectives, framework, and expectations of the activity were clearly defined. The supervising lecturer provided valuable guidance that helped align the activity with academic standards and community

needs. To maintain smooth implementation, it is recommended to keep regular communication with the supervising lecturer so that any emerging issues can be promptly addressed

2. Meeting with the Principal of SD Negeri Sinaksak

The discussion with the principal was productive and resulted in a shared agreement regarding the objectives and timeline of the program. The principal's support was instrumental in securing institutional endorsement and easing access to the school's resources. It is advisable to plan regular follow-up meetings to track the program's progress and make adjustments to the plans as needed.

3. Collaboration with the Homeroom Teacher

The identification of students from Class 5C who would participate in the program was carried out effectively, ensuring that the activity targeted the appropriate learners. The teacher's valuable insights contributed to customizing the program according to the students' current skill levels and learning needs. It is recommended to maintain ongoing engagement with the teacher to gather feedback throughout and after the activity for continuous improvement.

4. Preparation of Teaching Tools and Materials

Teaching materials such as lesson content, handouts, and worksheets were prepared following the Grammar Translation Method. These materials were relevant, well-structured, and aimed at systematically improving the students' writing skills. However, some of the materials needed adjustments after initial trials to better match the students' levels of understanding. It is recommended to conduct pilot testing of the materials before full implementation and to incorporate feedback from the students to further refine the content.

2. Phase 2. Implementation

The application of the Grammar Translation Method (GTM) in this speaking enhancement program focused on the use of adjectives in present tense non-verbal sentences. Although GTM is commonly associated with reading and writing, its adaptation in this context showed that it could also effectively support the development of students' oral communication skills when properly structured.
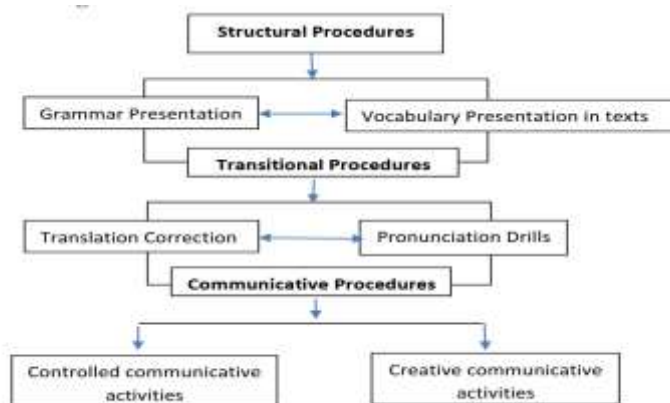

Figure 2 : Communicative Grammar Translation Method Framework

Learning Focus:
- Grammar Topic: Present Tense Non-Verbal Sentences (Subject + to be + adjective)
- Vocabulary Topic: Common adjectives (e.g., happy, tired, angry, tall, beautiful, kind, friendly, smart, clean, strong)

Implementation Process and Student Engagement
1. Grammar and Vocabulary Introduction through TranslationStudents began by translating lists of adjectives from English to their first language and vice versa. This allowed them to understand the meaning of each word in context. The teacher explained the sentence structure using to be verbs (am, is, are) with various pronouns and proper adjective placement.

Class Activity Example:
- Translate: "happy" → "senang"
- Construct: "I am happy." → "Saya senang."

  This initial stage helped students connect vocabulary with grammatical structure in a meaningful way.

Figure 3,4 : discuss and conveying material about adjectives in present tense non verbal

2. Oral Sentence Construction Practice

  After translation and understanding the rules, students were encouraged to orally construct and recite sentences using the learned adjectives. The teacher provided prompts such as:
- "Describe how you feel today."
- "Make a sentence about your best friend."

Student Responses:
- "I am tired."
- "My mother is beautiful."
- "They are funny and kind."

  This stage bridged the gap between translation and verbal communication.

3. Structured Example Recitation

  The teacher provided example sentences both in English and the native language. Students were asked to read them aloud and translate them back and forth. This repetition reinforced their memory and pronunciation.

Example Sentences:
- "She is angry." → "Dia marah."
- "The classroom is clean." → "Ruang kelas bersih."

  Paired and group reading helped boost students' speaking fluency and intonation.

4. Repetition and Error Correction

  Through repeated oral drills, students gained confidence and fluency. Teachers closely monitored pronunciation, subject-verb agreement, and correct adjective use. Immediate feedback was given when errors occurred.

Common Errors and Corrections:

- ❌ "He are tall." → ✅ "He is tall."
- ❌ "They is kind." → ✅ "They are kind."

Students were encouraged to repeat corrected sentences to reinforce accuracy.

5. Evaluation: Speaking through Mini Presentation and Q&A

At the end of the session, students participated in individual or pair presentations, describing people or situations using adjectives in the target sentence structure.

Presentation Example:
- "This is my sister. She is smart. She is also friendly and helpful."

Q&A Example:
- Teacher: "How do you feel today?"

Student: "I am excited."

This activity measured the students' ability to independently use the learned structure in spontaneous speech.

Figure 5 : teacher checks students' work

3. **Phase 3. Evaluation**

The evaluation of speaking skills in this material aims to assess students' understanding and ability to express ideas verbally using non-verbal sentences that contain adjectives in the present tense. Through this evaluation, teachers can identify the extent to which students are able to apply correct sentence structures, particularly in using "to be" and adjectives appropriately within context. Additionally, the evaluation provides an overview of students' speaking development, the challenges they face during the learning process, and the effectiveness of the teaching methods implemented in achieving the learning objectives.

a. Evaluation of the Material Delivery Process

Students demonstrated enthusiasm and active engagement throughout the learning process, responding promptly to questions asked during the lesson.

The majority of students were able to understand the concept of using non-verbal sentences containing adjectives in the present tense effectively.

The learning activities successfully supported students in constructing more structured and easily understood oral descriptive sentences.

b. Evaluation of Speaking Skills Outcomes

Approximately 95% of students were able to deliver oral descriptions accurately using non-verbal sentences that were appropriate to the present tense context.

The use of linking verbs such as "is," "am," and "are," as well as the correct choice of adjectives, was consistently evident in the students' spoken outputs, with clear and logical flow in their delivery.

Students who previously had difficulty selecting appropriate vocabulary showed significant improvement in their ability to express ideas and opinions verbally.

c. Reflection on Challenges and Progress

Some students initially lacked confidence and had limited vocabulary. However, through continuous learning and the provision of clear examples, they were able to gradually improve their speaking skills.

This learning process contributed not only to the enhancement of their spoken language abilities but also helped build their confidence and independence in expressing ideas verbally.

This progress indicates that with the right approach, initial obstacles in speaking can be overcome, enabling students to communicate more comfortably and spontaneously in English.

Figure 6,7: The teacher administered interactive quizzes and conducted direct assessment

4. Challenges in Implementing

During the implementation of this learning program, several challenges were encountered by the students. One of the most prominent issues was a lack of self-confidence, which directly affected their ability and willingness to speak or provide oral examples. Some students chose to remain silent and showed little curiosity or initiative to try.

In addition, a number of students struggled to maintain focus when constructing sentences, particularly in selecting appropriate vocabulary and forming grammatically correct structures. They tended to hesitate while speaking due to a fear of making mistakes.

Another significant challenge was related to pronunciation. Many students had difficulty pronouncing words correctly, especially less common adjectives or those with irregular spelling-to-sound patterns. This often led to uncertainty when speaking, affecting both fluency and clarity of expression. Some students were also unable to distinguish correct syllable stress or apply appropriate intonation, which sometimes made their spoken messages hard to understand.

The combination of low confidence, difficulty in sentence construction, and pronunciation issues became key areas of focus during the guidance and support provided throughout the program.

5. Steps to Overcome the Challenges

To address these challenges, the teaching team adopted several targeted strategies.

1. Formation of Study Groups

Creating study groups so that students can discuss and practice speaking more interactively, thereby reducing the monotonous nature of learning and increasing students' interest in learning.

2. Choosing the Right Strategy and Media

Using varied and interesting learning media, such as podcasts, short stories, and conversations that can help students understand grammar while practicing listening and speaking skills contextually.

3. Developing Reading and Listening Skills as Support

Improving students' reading and listening skills first to support improving speaking skills, because GTM focuses more on understanding grammar and translation, so other skills need to be developed in parallel.

4. Combining GTM with Other Learning Methods

The combination of GTM with other methods such as the Audio-Lingual Method or Direct Method can help students be more active in speaking and applying grammar in oral communication.

5. Maximum and Structured Learning Planning

Designing learning with careful planning, including action cycles such as planning, action, observation, reflection, and revision so that the GTM method can be applied effectively and learning outcomes increase.

6. Focus on the Use of Spoken Language in Stages

Although GTM focuses on grammar and translation, teachers need to provide simple and gradual speaking exercises so that students can apply grammatical structures in everyday conversation.

7. Providing Motivation and Building Self-Confidence

Providing encouragement and confidence to students to dare to speak in the target language, for example through dialogue exercises and small presentations in class.

With these steps, the challenges in implementing the Grammar Translation Method in improving speaking skills can be overcome effectively, so that students not only understand grammar but are also able to use oral communication

Figure 8: Documentation with students after socialization and give the rewards

CONCLUSION

The purpose of learning a language is to be able to communicate in that language. People interact with each other when they use it. Students often have difficulty using it to communicate their views. Grammar norms, vocabulary, and pronunciation make it difficult for them to have a conversation. Using a grammar-translation approach is one strategy to help students improve their grammar comprehension. They will be able to understand how grammar rules work effectively. The use of podcasts is needed to adapt it to real-life situations. Short story scripts and conversations can be used by students. Their vocabulary and grammar usage can be developed by incorporating them into the teaching and learning process. In the therapy program, this type of learning is used. The program was attended by students from three schools. There were 19 students in the class. Each school was randomly assigned ten students. They were able to communicate their clear intentions to others, use the right tone, and construct phrases. This type of finding would benefit both teachers and students if used in the classroom to teach speaking or other relevant disciplines. This finding also

encourages other academics to conduct additional research to discuss the process of learning to speak or other related topics.

Thank You Note

The community team would like to express our sincere gratitude to SD 091608 Negeri Sinaksak for the opportunity and support given during the implementation of the program entitled "Enhancing Students' Speaking Skills through the Use of Adjectives in Present Tense Non-Verbal Sentences."

We extend our heartfelt thanks to the Principal of SD 091608 Negeri Sinaksak for Him kind permission, continuous support, and encouragement, which greatly contributed to the smooth and successful execution of this program.

This activity was designed to assist students in improving their English-speaking abilities, particularly in accurately using adjectives within non-verbal sentence structures in the present tense.

We also wish to thank all the teachers, staff, and members of the school community for their warm welcome and cooperation throughout the program. Most importantly, we express our deepest appreciation to all students who actively participated, engaged with enthusiasm, and showed a willingness to learn in every session. Your involvement was crucial to the success of this program.

We sincerely hope this activity has provided a meaningful and enjoyable learning experience that will support your continued growth in English language proficiency.

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