


Teaching the Past Form to the Students of SMAN 5 Palu through Group Work Learning

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A B S T R A C T

Grammar mastery, particularly in the use of past forms, is essential for developing students' writing skills. However, many students still experience difficulties in applying regular and irregular verbs correctly. This study aimed to examine the effectiveness of group work in improving students' mastery of past forms. The research employed a quantitative approach with a quasi-experimental design involving an experimental class and a control class, each consisting of 23 tenth-grade students of SMAN 5 Palu. Data were collected through pre-tests and post-tests consisting of multiple-choice and essay questions. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, the Shapiro-Wilk normality test, Levene's Test of Homogeneity, and the Mann-Whitney U Test with the assistance of IBM SPSS Statistics version 29. The pre-test results showed that both groups had relatively similar initial abilities, with mean scores of 78.91 for the experimental class and 80.21 for the control class. After six meetings of treatment using group work activities, the experimental class achieved a higher post-test mean score (87.39) than the control class (81.19). The Mann-Whitney U Test showed a significance value of 0.000 (Asymp. Sig. 2-tailed < 0.05), indicating a statistically significant difference between the two groups. These findings reveal that students taught through group work performed better in understanding and using regular and irregular verbs. Therefore, group work is effective in improving tenth-grade students' mastery of past forms in writing at SMAN 5 Palu.

Keywords: *Grammar, Writing, Past Form, Regular Verbs, Irregular Verbs*

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INTRODUCTION

Language is an essential part of human life because it enables people to connect and convey meaning to one another. Demir & Erdogan (2018) explain that language, which serves as a means of communication among people, is a dynamic and evolving system. Its main function is to convey information, while communicative competence refers to the ability to use the grammar of a language appropriately in social contexts to achieve communication goals. Moreover, language not only functions as a tool for sharing ideas and emotions but also reflects cultural values, social identity, and the way individuals interact within their communities. Therefore, mastering language involves not just understanding its structure, but also knowing how to apply it effectively and meaningfully in real communication situations. In addition, language learning also helps students develop critical thinking and social interaction skills in both academic and daily contexts.

Grammar plays a crucial role in language learning, serving as the framework that allows learners to communicate ideas accurately and effectively. According to Holandyah et al. (2021), language can be compared to a highway, where words are like vehicles and grammar serves as the signs and markings that guide them. Without grammar, communication becomes disorganized and unclear, just as a highway without signs would lead to confusion. The position of grammar in language learning is very important because many students still face difficulties in using it correctly. Learners may be able to form simple sentences, but they often struggle to express more complex ideas.

The learning goal of English grammar based on the Merdeka Curriculum is that students can use appropriate grammatical structures, including verb tense, to communicate their ideas effectively in both spoken and written forms. Zaki et al. (2025) explain that the Merdeka Curriculum, introduced by the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture, emphasizes flexibility, student-centered learning, and the integration of technology in the learning process. It represents a major shift in Indonesian education towards a more progressive model. The key objective is to prepare students for the challenges of the twenty-first century by equipping them with the knowledge, skills, and values necessary to succeed in a rapidly changing world.

However, many students still face challenges in learning English grammar, especially in using the correct past forms. This problem often appears when they write or talk about past experiences in the EFL classroom. Errors in verb forms can reduce clarity and make their ideas less precise. Because the past tense is an important part of the English curriculum, students are expected to use it accurately in common tasks such as recount texts. In reality, many students still struggle to change verbs from the base form (Verb 1) into the past form (Verb 2), particularly when dealing with regular and irregular verbs. This condition shows a gap between the expected learning outcomes and the students' actual performance in the classroom. According to Seftiani et al. (2024), Indonesian students who learn English as a foreign language frequently face challenges in using correct grammar, particularly when constructing sentences in the past tense. These challenges arise from the natural difficulties of acquiring a new language, which are further intensified by a limited understanding of vocabulary and grammar.

In the teaching and learning process, classroom interaction and students' self-esteem play an important role in supporting students' learning success. Wahyuningsih (2018) states that one solution to address these issues is the use of group work. Group work is a teaching and learning technique in which students work collaboratively in small groups to complete classroom activities. It also increases students' satisfaction with their learning and creates a shared purpose that can enhance morale and motivation. In addition, group work encourages active participation, enables students to exchange ideas, and helps them develop communication and collaboration skills. Through this process, students become more confident in expressing their opinions and more actively engaged in learning activities. As a result, group work is more effective than traditional teacher-centered methods for tenth-grade students because it allows them to learn through peer correction and discussion, while also reducing anxiety and increasing self-esteem. By working together, students can identify and correct grammatical errors, support one another, and practice using English in a less stressful and more interactive environment. Based on the explanation above, the researcher is interested in conducting a study entitled "The Effectiveness of Group Work in Teaching Past Form to the Tenth-Grade Students of SMAN 5 Palu.

Definition of Grammar

In learning English as a foreign language, understanding grammar plays a crucial role in developing students' overall language competence. Ramadhanti & Haryudin (2021) explained that grammar provides the structure that helps learners express ideas in a clear and organized way. However, learning grammar is often a demanding process because students need time and effort to understand and analyze its rules. One important part of grammar in English is the past form. The past form is used when students want to describe actions or events that already happened. For example, regular verbs usually end with -ed, while irregular verbs must be memorized because they do not follow the same pattern. In EFL learning, the ability to use the past form correctly is very useful because it allows students to retell experiences, narrate simple stories, and explain past events clearly. By mastering the past form, students can improve their grammatical accuracy and also build confidence when expressing ideas both in spoken and written English. In addition, a strong understanding of grammar supports students in developing better writing skills and improving their ability to communicate ideas effectively in various contexts.

Word Classification

In the study of grammar, understanding how words are categorized plays an important role in analyzing sentence structure and meaning. Polinsky (2004) explained that the concept of word class is quite complex because classifying words depends not only on their formal features, such as how they are used in sentences, their grammatical roles, and related structural patterns, but also on certain meanings that may exist independently of the specific language being analyzed. In this context, word classification in grammar refers to the process of grouping words based on their grammatical functions and meanings in a sentence. It involves dividing words into categories such as nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, pronouns, prepositions, conjunctions, and interjections. Each class has its own role—for instance, nouns name things or people, verbs express actions, and adjectives describe nouns. This classification is essential for understanding how words work together to form meaningful and grammatically correct sentences in English. Moreover, understanding word classification helps students recognize patterns in sentence construction and improves their ability to use language accurately.

Verbs

Language functions as a system of meaning in which every element contributes to expressing experience and ideas. As stated by Rahmasari (2018), verb is defined as the main element that determines a process in a clause. It can be understood as a word or a group of words that expresses an activity, an event, or a particular state of being. In functional grammar, verbs serve as the main indicators of processes that occur within a clause. They function not only to show what happens but also to reflect the relationship between participants in a situation. Through verbs, it is possible to identify what kind of process takes place, such as actions, perceptions, thoughts, or states of being. Each process type, for example material, mental, verbal, or relational, is recognized through the different kinds of verbs used in a sentence. This means that verbs are essential elements in constructing meaning because they represent how language users experience, understand, and interpret the world around them through actions, processes, and states of being. In addition, mastering verbs allows learners to express ideas more precisely and effectively in communication.

Regular Verbs

In learning English, understanding verb forms is an essential part of mastering grammar and effective communication. According to Fitria (2021), regular verbs form their past tense by adding “d” or “-ed” to the base form of the verb. The past form may also be indicated by a d, t, or ed sound, which is represented in written form by the ending “-ed.” This means that regular verbs follow a consistent and predictable rule when changing from the present form to the past form. For example, verbs such as play, work, and clean become played, worked, and cleaned when used in the past tense. This regularity makes them easier to learn and use compared to irregular verbs, which change forms in different ways. As a result, students often find regular verbs easier to understand and apply in sentences.

Irregular Verbs

Mastering different types of verbs is a fundamental aspect of learning English grammar, as it helps learners construct correct and meaningful sentences. Afifah & Kamaruddin (2023) stated that irregular verbs are verbs that do not follow the normal rule of adding “-ed” to make the past tense or past participle. They change in different and sometimes unpredictable ways, so their forms must be learned one by one. For example, the verb go changes to went, and see changes to saw. These verbs are often more difficult for students to remember because there is no clear rule to follow. This means that students need more attention and practice in learning irregular verbs. Regular exposure, repetition, and contextual exercises can help them remember the correct forms. Understanding irregular verbs enhances grammatical accuracy and confidence in English use. In addition, practicing irregular verbs continuously will help students become more familiar with their forms.

Definition of Group Work

One of the effective strategies to enhance students' participation and interaction in the classroom is group work. According to Lan & Van (2021), group work plays an important role in the teaching process. It not only helps students perform communicative tasks more effectively but also creates a positive and friendly classroom atmosphere between teachers and students. Through group work, learners are encouraged to collaborate, share ideas, and support one another in solving problems. This method also helps students build confidence in using English because they can practice in smaller, less formal settings before speaking in front of the whole class. At the same time, group work provides opportunities for students to develop both social and academic skills. These include cooperation, responsibility, and communication which are important not only for learning but also for personal development. In conclusion, group work is a useful strategy to support students in mastering grammar, especially the use of past forms, through collaborative and interactive learning

Hypothesis

In order to establish a clear direction for the study, systematically examine the relationships between variables, and provide a structured framework for analysis, the researcher presents the hypotheses as follows:

H_0 (Null Hypothesis): *The use of group work is not effective in teaching the past form to the students of SMAN 5 Palu.*

H_1 (Alternative Hypothesis): *The use of group work is effective in teaching the past form to the students of SMAN 5 Palu.*

METHOD

This study used a quantitative approach with a quasi-experimental design involving an experimental group and a control group. The research was conducted at SMAN 5 Palu from January 5, 2026, to February 6, 2026. Two classes were selected as the sample through cluster random sampling. Class X A, consisting of 23 students, was assigned as the experimental group, while Class X B, also consisting of 23 students, was assigned as the control group. The experimental group received treatment through group work activities for six meetings, with each meeting lasting 2×45 minutes, while the control group was taught using traditional instruction. In the group work activities, students worked in small groups to discuss regular and irregular verbs, complete grammar worksheets, construct sentences, write a recount text, and correct each other's answers through peer discussion and peer editing. These activities encouraged active participation, collaboration, and greater confidence in using the past form. Meanwhile, the control group learned the same material through teacher-centered instruction and individual exercises.

The research procedure consisted of three stages. First, both groups were given a pre-test to measure their initial ability in using regular and irregular verbs in the simple past tense. The test consisted of multiple-choice and essay questions. Second, the treatment was administered to the experimental group, while the control group received conventional teaching. Third, after the treatment was completed, both groups were given a post-test with the same format as the pre-test to measure students' achievement after the learning process.

The study focused on collecting and analyzing numerical data to measure students' learning outcomes. The data obtained from the pre-test and post-test were analyzed quantitatively using SPSS version 29. Descriptive statistics were used to calculate the mean, minimum score, maximum score, and standard deviation. Before testing the hypothesis, the data were examined through the Shapiro-Wilk normality test and Levene's homogeneity test. Since the post-test data were not normally distributed, the Mann-Whitney U Test was used to determine whether there was a significant difference between the learning outcomes of the experimental and control groups. The significance level was set at 0.05. If the Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) value was less than 0.05, the alternative hypothesis (H_a) was accepted and the null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected, indicating that group work was effective in teaching the past form to the students of SMAN 5 Palu.

Table 1. Research Design

Group	Pre-test	Treatment	Post-test
Experimental	O ₁	X	O ₂
Control	O ₃	–	O ₄

The population of this research is the tenth- grade students of SMAN 5 Palu. The total population is around 190 students. There are nine classes (A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H), and each class consists of about 23- 24 students.

Table 2. The Population of the Students

NO	Class	Student
1	X A	23
2	X B	23
3	X C	25
4	X D	23
5	X E	24
6	X F	23
7	X G	26
8	X H	23
	TOTAL	190

This study used a cluster random sampling technique, in which every student in the population has an equal chance of being selected. Two classes will be randomly selected: Class X A with 23 students will be served as the experimental group, and Class X B with 23 students will be served as the control group because both classes have similar learning conditions. This sampling technique was used to ensure that the groups are comparable and that the results are more reliable.

Variable

The variables in this study consist of an independent variable (X) and a dependent variable (Y). The independent variable (X) is the implementation of group work in teaching the English past form, while the dependent variable (Y) is the students' learning outcomes in mastering the English past form.

Instruments of the research

The test served as the main tool for collecting data in this research. It was designed to assess students' understanding of the past tense, covering regular verbs and irregular verbs. The test included essay questions and multiple-choice questions. Its main goal was to measure students' ability to recognize, understand, and apply these verbs correctly.

Procedures

Tecnique of Data Collection

Pre-test

The pre-test was administered before the group work activities to assess students' understanding of the past tense. The test was composed of two types of questions: essay questions and multiple-choice questions. This test helped determine students' level of past tense mastery before group work, and the results served as a baseline to compare their progress after the learning activities.

Post-test

This post-test assessed the students' mastery of the past tense after participating in the group work activities. The test included two formats: essay questions and multiple-choice questions, allowing for a comprehensive evaluation of students' skills and understanding.

Table 3. Scoring System of Test

NO	Types of Item	Number of Item	Score of items	Total Score
1	Multiple choice	20	2	40
2	Completion Test	10	4	40
3	Total	20	6	80

The researcher used the scoring rubric to determine the students' scores based on their performance.

Table 4. Scoring Rubric Category

Score	Classification
81.-100	Excellent (A)
71 - 80	Good (B)
61 -70	Fair (C)
0 -60	Poor (D)

Data Analysis

In this research, SPSS version 29 was used to analyze and compute the data obtained from the study. The data were organized and processed carefully to ensure accurate results. In addition, the use of SPSS version 29 supported the researcher in presenting the findings clearly and systematically in line with the research objectives.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this study, the researcher presents the results of the research conducted. The research was carried out at SMA Negeri 5 Palu from January 5, 2026 until February 6, 2026. The data were collected using tests consisting of multiple-choice and essay questions. The test was divided into two parts, namely pre-test and post-test. The pre-test was given at the first meeting to determine the students' initial ability. Meanwhile, the post-test was given at the last meeting to see the students' improvement after the learning process. This research involved two classes. Class X A was used as the experimental group, and Class X B was used as the control group. The results of the tests were then analyzed to find out the difference between the students' scores in the experimental group.

Result of Pre -Test and Post Test of Experimental Group

Prior to conducting the learning treatment, the researcher first gave a pre-test to both the experimental class and the control class. The purpose of this test was to identify the students' initial ability before the implementation of the learning process in the classroom. The instrument used in this research consisted of multiple-choice questions and essay tests related to the learning material. The topic of the test was Regular Verbs and Irregular Verbs. During the research process, the experimental class received the treatment using the teaching strategy applied by the researcher, while the control class was taught using the regular teaching method used by the teacher in the classroom.

For the presentation of the data, the researcher organized the results into two sections. The first section presents the pre-test scores of the experimental class (X A), and the second section shows the pre-test scores of the control class (X B). The data obtained from the test were analyzed using SPSS version 29 in order to determine the mean score, highest score, lowest score, and standard deviation.

Table 4 The Result of Pre Test Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pre Test Experimen	23	55.00	95.00	78.130	8.42163
Pre Test Kontrol	23	50.00	92.50	80.2174	13.35514
Valid N (listwise)	23				

Based on the descriptive statistics presented in the table, the mean score of the pre-test in the experimental class was 78.91, while the mean score of the control class was 80.21. The difference between the two averages was relatively small, around 1.30 points. The lowest score in the experimental class was 55.00, and the highest score was 95.00. Meanwhile, in the control class, the minimum score was 50.00 and the maximum score reached 92.50. In addition, the standard deviation of the experimental class was 8.42, while the control class had a standard deviation of 13.35. This indicates that the spread of students' scores in both classes was not very different, although the control class showed slightly greater variation.

From these results, it can be understood that the initial abilities of students in both the experimental and control classes were relatively similar before the treatment was implemented.

Therefore, the researcher could continue the research by applying the treatment to the experimental class while the control class continued learning using the usual teaching method. These findings also show that the data from both groups are suitable to be analyzed further using inferential statistical analysis in order to determine whether the treatment given to the experimental class has a significant effect on students' learning outcomes.

The Result of Post-Test Experimental and Control Groups

After the treatment was implemented in the experimental class, the researcher conducted a post-test to measure the students' learning outcomes after the learning process. Similar to the pre-test, the post-test consisted of multiple-choice questions and essay tests. The test was related to the topic Regular Verbs and Irregular Verbs, which had been taught during the research. However, the questions in the post-test were different from those used in the pre-test. To present the data clearly, the researcher divided the results into two parts. The first part shows the post-test results of the experimental class, while the second part presents the post-test results of the control class.

Furthermore, the data from the post-test were analyzed using SPSS version 29. The analysis focused on several descriptive statistics, including the mean score, maximum score, minimum score, and standard deviation. These statistical results were used to describe the students' achievement after the learning treatment was conducted. The complete results of the post-test analysis can be seen in the following table.

Table 5 The Result of Post Test Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Post Test Experimen	23	60.00	95.00	87.3913	8.83814
Post Test Kontrol	23	55.00	90.50	81.1957	7.1543
Valid N (listwise)	23				

Based on the descriptive statistics of the post-test, the experimental class obtained a mean score of 87.39, while the control class obtained a mean score of 81.19. This shows that the average score of the experimental class was higher than that of the control class. In the experimental class, the minimum score was 60.00 and the maximum score was 95.00. Meanwhile, in the control class, the lowest score was 55.00 and the highest score was 90.00. The standard deviation of the experimental class was 8.83, while the control class had a standard deviation of 7.18. This indicates that the distribution of scores in both classes was relatively similar. From these results, it can be seen that the students in the experimental class showed better results compared to the control class after the post-test. This result indicates that the treatment given in the experimental class helped improve students' learning outcomes.

Test of Normality

Normality test is conducted to examine whether the research data are distributed normally or not. When the data show a normal distribution, parametric statistical analysis such as the t-test can be used. In contrast, if the data are not normally distributed, non-parametric statistical methods are required. One of the tests that can be used in this situation is the Mann-Whitney U test. In this study, the normality test was analyzed using the Shapiro-Wilk test through the SPSS version 29 program. The interpretation of the results is based on the significance value (p-value). If the significance value is greater than 0.05 ($p > 0.05$), the data are categorized as normally distributed. Meanwhile, if the significance value is less than 0.05 ($p < 0.05$), the data are considered not normally distributed. The results of the analysis are presented below.

Table 6 Tests of Normality

	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Pre Test Experimen	.191	23	.030	.926	23	.090
Pre Tost Kontrol	.355	23	.000	.706	23	.000
Post Test Experimen	.185	23	.039	.839	23	.002
Post Tost Kontrol	.181	23	.050	.787	23	.000

Based on the results of the normality test using the Shapiro-Wilk test in SPSS version 29,

the significance value of each group can be explained as follows. The pre-test data of the experimental class show a significance value of 0.090. Since the value is greater than 0.05, the data can be considered normally distributed. Meanwhile, the post-test data of the experimental class have a significance value of 0.000. Because the value is less than 0.05, the data are not normally distributed. For the pre-test data of the control class, the significance value is 0.002, which is less than 0.05. This indicates that the data are not normally distributed.

Similarly, the post-test data of the control class show a significance value of 0.000. Since the value is also less than 0.05, the data are not normally distributed. Based on these results, it can be concluded that only the pre-test data of the experimental class are normally distributed, while the other data are not normally distributed. Therefore, the data analysis can be continued using a non-parametric statistical test.

Test of Homogeneity

After the normality test was conducted, the next step was the homogeneity test. This test aims to determine whether the variance of the data from the experimental group and the control group is the same or not. The homogeneity test in this study was carried out using Levene's Test with the help of SPSS version 29. The decision is based on the significance value. If the significance value is greater than 0.05 ($\text{sig} > 0.05$), the data from both groups are considered homogeneous. However, if the significance value is less than 0.05 ($\text{sig} < 0.05$), the data are considered not homogeneous. The results of the homogeneity test are shown in the table below.

Table 7 Tests of Homogeneity

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Nilai Post Test	Based on Mean	.699	1	44	.408
	Based on Median	.048	1	44	.828
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	.048	1	40.034	.828
	Based on trimmed mean	.360	1	44	.552

Based on the results of the homogeneity test using Levene's Test in SPSS version 29, the significance value of the post-test score based on the mean is 0.408. Since the significance value is greater than 0.05 ($0.408 > 0.05$), it can be concluded that the data from the experimental group and the control group are homogeneous. In addition, the significance values based on the median (0.828), median with adjusted df (0.828), and trimmed mean (0.552) are also greater than 0.05. This indicates that the variance of the data in both groups is the same. Therefore, it can be concluded that the post-test data of the experimental class and control class are homogeneous.

Mann-Whitney U Test

Since the data were not normally distributed, parametric tests could not be applied to examine the research hypothesis. Therefore, a non-parametric test, specifically the Mann-Whitney U Test, was used to determine whether there was a significant difference between the post-test scores of students in the experimental class after receiving the treatment and the post-test scores of students in the control class. The results of the Mann-Whitney U Test are presented in the table below.

Table 8 Test Statistics

	Nilai Post Test
Mann-Whitney U	101.000
Wilcoxon W	377.000
Z	-3.634
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.000

Based on the results of the Mann-Whitney U Test, the test statistics for the post-test scores are as follows: the Mann-Whitney U value is 101.000, the Wilcoxon W value is 377.000, and the Z value is -3.634. The two-tailed significance (Asymp. Sig.) is 0.000. Because the significance value is less than 0.05 ($0.000 < 0.05$), it can be concluded that there is a significant difference between the post-test scores of students in the experimental class and those in the control class. This indicates that the treatment given to the experimental class had a meaningful effect on students' learning outcomes.

Hypothesis Testing

The purpose of this hypothesis testing is to examine whether the use of peer feedback can improve students' grammar skills, specifically in using regular verbs and irregular verbs. This test also aims to determine whether the research hypothesis can be accepted or rejected. The criteria used to evaluate the hypothesis are as follows:

If the significance value (Asymp. Sig. 2-tailed) is less than 0.05, the alternative hypothesis (H_a) is accepted, and the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected. This indicates a significant improvement in the grammar skills of X grade students at SMAN 5 Palu in using regular and irregular verbs correctly.

If the significance value (Asymp. Sig. 2-tailed) is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis (H_0) is accepted, and the alternative hypothesis (H_a) is rejected. This shows that there is no significant improvement in students' grammar skills.

Based on the results of the Mann-Whitney U Test from the post-test data, the significance value is 0.000, which is less than 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis (H_a) is accepted. This demonstrates that the use of peer feedback has a significant effect on improving the grammar skills of X grade students at SMAN 5 Palu, particularly in mastering regular and irregular verbs.

Discussion

Learning activities focused on improving grammar and writing skills, particularly in using regular and irregular verbs accurately through group work in learning. The school emphasized active engagement in tasks, where students worked collaboratively in groups to discuss, practice, and construct clear and correct sentences. Daiyah et al. (2024) state that students are expected to not only learn academic knowledge but also to work well with others, adapt, and contribute in social settings. Collaboration is an important skill that helps individuals succeed in both work and social life. Learners also needed to improve their grammar and writing skills, especially in using regular and irregular verbs correctly. Knowing verb forms was important for writing clear and correct sentences.

Students at SMAN 5 Palu practiced using past tense, present perfect, and past participle verbs in their writing tasks to make their texts more understandable. Through guided exercises and group work in writing activities, students were able to identify mistakes, correct them, and learn the proper verb forms. Respati (2018) states that active learning encourages students to participate directly in learning activities, making the process more interactive and effective. These collaborative activities helped students write more accurately and feel more confident in expressing their ideas on paper. In particular, during the group work sessions, students in the experimental group showed significant improvement in their ability to convert verbs from the base form (Verb 1) to the past form (Verb 2), for both regular and irregular verbs. Students were guided to identify the correct pattern for regular verbs, such as adding "-ed" to the base form, while also learning the unique changes required for irregular verbs. Irregular verbs were more difficult because they did not follow a fixed pattern and therefore had to be memorized individually. By reviewing and discussing their classmates' sentences during group work, students could analyze which verbs were used incorrectly, suggest the correct past forms, and test one another on verb changes. This peer-testing process helped students memorize irregular verbs more effectively and strengthened their understanding of how to use them accurately in writing.

In the learning process, group work plays an important role in facilitating students' interaction and knowledge development. Chiriac (2014) states that group work is commonly implemented as a learning approach at all levels of education, ranging from compulsory schooling to higher education. Its primary aim in educational settings is to promote and motivate student learning. In grammar learning, group work also helps students understand how to change verbs from the base form (verb 1) into the past form (verb 2), as they can discuss, practice, and correct each other collaboratively.

The implementation of group work played an important role in enhancing students' understanding of grammar. According to Alamsyah (2025), group work encouraged students to

actively participate in grammar discussions and work together to accomplish assigned tasks. This finding was relevant to the learning of regular and irregular verbs, particularly in transforming verbs from the base form (verb 1) into the past form (verb 2). Through group activities, students were able to share ideas, compare answers, and correct each other's mistakes when identifying the correct verb forms. As a result, the collaborative process helped students better understand the differences between regular verbs, which followed predictable patterns, and irregular verbs, which required memorization, thereby improving their accuracy in using past tense forms. Moreover, this understanding also contributed to students' writing skills, as they were able to apply the correct verb forms when constructing sentences and paragraphs, leading to more accurate and coherent writing.

Based on the results of the Mann-Whitney U Test, the Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) value was 0.000, which is lower than 0.05. This means that H_0 was rejected and H_a was accepted, indicating that the implementation of group work had a significant effect on improving students' grammar skills, particularly in using regular and irregular verbs. The experimental group obtained a higher mean score on the post-test (87.39) compared to the control group (81.19), showing that students who learned through group work achieved better results than those who learned through the conventional method.

The experimental group performed better because group work provided students with opportunities to discuss grammar rules, exchange ideas, and correct each other's mistakes. Through collaborative activities, students were able to identify the correct forms of verbs, understand the differences between regular and irregular verbs, and practice applying these forms in meaningful contexts. This interactive learning process reduced students' anxiety, increased their confidence, and encouraged active participation. As a result, students developed a deeper understanding of grammar and were more successful in using past forms accurately in their writing.

Therefore, it can be concluded that group work is an effective teaching strategy for improving students' grammar mastery at SMAN 5 Palu. In addition to enhancing students' understanding of regular and irregular verbs, group work also promoted cooperation, communication skills, and self-confidence. These findings suggest that English teachers can use group work as an alternative strategy to create a more engaging and supportive learning environment, especially when teaching grammar and writing.

During the research conducted at SMAN 5 Palu, several problems were identified that affected students' learning process. These problems are described as follows: (1) Some students often left the classroom while the lesson was ongoing, which disrupted the learning process and made it difficult for both themselves and their classmates to focus. To address this problem, the researcher encouraged students to stay in the classroom consistently and provided motivational guidance. As a result, students were able to participate more actively in learning activities, particularly in practicing grammar skills, including the correct use of regular and irregular verbs. (2) Some students caused disturbances by talking or making noise during lessons. This behavior distracted other students and reduced the overall effectiveness of teaching. To overcome this issue, the researcher implemented group work activities. These activities helped students focus their attention on productive learning tasks, encouraged collaboration, and created a more structured and supportive classroom environment. (3)

Some students were slower in understanding how to change Verb 1 to Verb 2, including both regular and irregular verbs. This made it more challenging for them to apply grammar rules correctly in writing. To support these students, the researcher encouraged active participation through group work, where students reviewed, corrected, and discussed each other's sentences. This approach gradually helped them identify common errors, internalize the correct verb patterns, and improve their ability to use regular and irregular verbs accurately in writing tasks.

CONCLUSIONS

This study concludes that the implementation of group work significantly improved the grammar skills of tenth-grade students at SMAN 5 Palu, particularly in mastering regular and irregular past-form verbs. The experimental group achieved a higher mean post-test score (87.39) than the control group (81.20), while the Mann–Whitney U Test showed a statistically significant difference between both groups with an Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) value of 0.000, which was lower than 0.05. These findings indicate that group work effectively enhanced students' grammar mastery. Through collaborative learning activities, students were able to discuss grammar rules, identify errors, exchange ideas, and support one another in understanding verb transformations from Verb 1 to Verb 2. In addition, group work increased students' participation, confidence, and motivation during the learning process. Overall, group work created a more interactive and supportive learning environment that encouraged active engagement and independent learning in grammar instruction.

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