

# UNVEILING THE ROLE OF GRAMMAR MASTERY: HOW SENTENCE STRUCTURE, VERB, AND SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT SHAPE TENSES USAGE IN ENGLISH LEARNING

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**Abstract:** *This study explores the grammatical proficiency of bilingual primary teacher candidates, emphasizing fundamental sentence structure, appropriate verb usage, subject-verb agreement, and tense usage. This study intends to evaluate students' grammatical proficiency and investigate the links among four key components, given the essential significance of grammar in English instruction, especially for prospective educators. Data were gathered from 117 bilingual students utilizing a descriptive correlational methodology and Structural Equation Modeling-Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) via a structured questionnaire. The results indicate that appropriate verb usage exerts the most significant direct influence on tense proficiency ( $\beta = 0.376$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), highlighting the importance of verb selection in grammatical precision. Subject-verb agreement substantially influences tense proficiency ( $\beta = 0.343$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), suggesting that errors in agreement lead to tense abuse. Third, basic sentence structure exerts a diminished direct benefit ( $\beta = 0.197$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) yet indirectly facilitates tense mastering by enhancing verb correctness and agreement proficiency. Ultimately, the collective impact of these three elements accounts for 67% of the variance in tense proficiency ( $R^2 = 0.670$ ), illustrating their interrelatedness. The results underscore the necessity for comprehensive grammar instruction in teacher education programs to enhance bilingual teacher candidates' proficiency in tense, hence assuring efficient English language instruction at the basic level.*

**Keywords:** *Bilingual Teacher Education; English Learning; Grammar Proficiency; Structural Equation Modeling; Tense Mastery.*

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## INTRODUCTION



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Proficiency in English grammar is essential for language learning, especially for prospective elementary school instructors tasked with cultivating fundamental language abilities in young learners. Prior research has demonstrated that grammatical proficiency directly affects linguistic accuracy and fluency in both written and oral communication (Köhler et al., 2005; Ruivivar & Collins, 2022). Research has consistently demonstrated that comprehension of sentence structure, verb application, subject-verb concord, and tenses is crucial for efficient language instruction (Guo & Wang, 2020). Furthermore, research by (Clegg & Milligan, 2021) highlights that multilingual learners frequently encounter distinct obstacles in understanding these elements due to interference from their primary language.

Despite these findings, a substantial vacuum persists in research concerning the interconnection among these four grammatical components and their cumulative effect on tense proficiency among bilingual elementary teacher candidates (Enesi et al., 2023; Vural et al., 2022). Although numerous research has investigated specific facets of grammatical proficiency (Albus & Vogt, 2021), empirical information about the interaction and mutual influence of various variables in bilingual education remains scarce. Moreover, the majority of current research emphasizes general English learners instead of potential educators, who necessitate specialized linguistic proficiency to fulfil their teaching responsibilities (Arcodia, 2023a; Truong, 2022).

This study proposes a novel approach utilizing Structural Equation Modelling - Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) to quantitatively analyze the relationship among sentence structure, verb usage, subject-verb agreement, and proficiency in tenses. Truong et al., (2022) stated that, in contrast to prior studies that analyzed these components separately, this research presents a holistic model that delineates both direct and indirect interactions among these factors (Guo & Wang, 2020; Packard et al., 2023). This study elucidates the degree to which mastery of one grammatical component enhances competency in another, yielding significant implications for bilingual teacher education (J. Hair & Alamer, 2022).

The key aims of this study are: 1) to evaluate the grammatical skill levels of bilingual elementary teacher candidates, concentrating on sentence structure, verb usage, subject-verb agreement, and tenses. 2) To analyze the interrelations among these four grammatical components and ascertain their direct and indirect impact on proficiency in tenses. 3) To offer recommendations for teacher education programs that incorporate focused grammar instruction to improve the pedagogical and linguistic competencies of bilingual educators.

This study seeks to address the existing research gap, so contributing to the formulation of more effective grammar training methodologies for bilingual teacher candidates, ultimately improving their proficiency in teaching English at the primary level.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **The Role of Grammar in English Language Learning**

Grammar constitutes the structural foundation of any language, facilitating clear and successful communication. Numerous studies underscore that a robust understanding of grammatical principles is crucial for attaining competency in English, especially for bilingual learners who may encounter linguistic interference from their native language (Antón-Méndez, 2020a; Arcodia, 2023b). In grammar training, four essential components—fundamental sentence structure, appropriate verb usage, subject-verb concord, and tense application—significantly influence students' overall language proficiency. (Albu et al., 2024; Mathwin et al., 2024; Wu et al., 2024).

These aspects are essential for prospective elementary school teachers, as they are tasked with imparting fundamental language skills to young learners (Lane & Sorby, 2022). Although the significance of these grammatical elements is acknowledged, studies reveal that bilingual students frequently have difficulties in understanding them owing to the disparities in syntactic structures between their primary and secondary languages (Arcodia, 2023; Truong et al., 2022). This section examines prior research on each of the four grammatical components, emphasizing their importance in English language acquisition and pinpointing the gaps this study intends to fill.

### **Basic Sentence Structure**

Basic sentence structure pertains to the arrangement of words and phrases within a sentence to communicate meaning efficiently. Research indicates that sentence structure is fundamental to grammatical precision, affecting learners' ability to formulate clear and logical sentences (Rustipa et al., 2023). The predominant structure in English—Subject-Verb-Object (SVO)—diverges from the sentence patterns prevalent in numerous other languages, potentially resulting in structural problems among bilingual learners (Ruivivar & Collins, 2022). Prior studies demonstrate that bilingual pupils frequently have difficulties with syntax as a result of first-language interference. Languages with alternative word orders, such as Verb-Subject-Object (VSO) or Subject-Object-Verb (SOV) patterns, may lead learners to incorrectly position sentence elements in English (Alhothali, 2021; Boyd et al., 2009; Corcoran & O'Flaherty, 2022; Tafazoli & Meihami, 2023). These structural discrepancies can affect both grammatical precision and pupils' proficiency in tense usage, as the placement of auxiliary verbs and modifiers relies on precise sentence form (Kantola et al., 2023). To tackle these issues, researchers propose that explicit training in sentence structure, incorporating contrastive analysis between English and students' native languages, can enhance grammatical accuracy (Ma & Vanek, 2024; Müller & Schroeder,

2024). This study aims to investigate the little empirical research on the direct influence of sentence structure mastery on tense proficiency in bilingual teacher candidates.

### **Proper Verb Use**

Verbs are the essence of English sentence formation, functioning as the principal markers of action and temporal reference (Fishman, 2023). Research underscores that appropriate verb usage entails not only the selection of the suitable verb for a certain context but also its accurate conjugation according to tense, aspect, and subject (Kantola et al., 2023; Héois, 2020). A main challenge encountered by bilingual learners in the accurate use of verbs is differentiating between regular and irregular verbs. Regular verbs adhere to consistent conjugation patterns (e.g., "play" → "played"), whereas irregular verbs display erratic forms (e.g., "go" → "went"), frequently resulting in errors among learners (Bardach & Klassen, 2020; Hu et al., 2021). Bilingual students often misapply modal verbs like can, must, may, and should, which are crucial for conveying tense and modality (Antón-Méndez, 2020b; Dündar-Coecke et al., 2020; Goldin et al., 2023). Research has also emphasised tense-related inaccuracies resulting from incorrect verb choice. Research by Rathert & Cabaroğlu, (2020) discovered that multilingual children frequently encounter difficulties with verb consistency, resulting in discrepancies among subject, verb tense, and temporal reference. These errors can be ascribed to language transfer—a phenomena in which learners apply grammatical rules from their home language to English, frequently leading to improper tense usage.

Notwithstanding these insights, prior research has predominantly concentrated on verb usage in isolated circumstances, rather than exploring its interplay with other grammatical elements, such as subject-verb agreement and sentence structure. This study examines the correlation between appropriate verb usage and tense proficiency in bilingual teacher candidates.

### **Subject-Verb Agreement**

Subject-verb agreement is a fundamental grammatical principle that mandates the verb form to correspond with the subject in both number (singular/plural) and person (first/second/third) (Sagarra & Rodriguez, 2022). Studies demonstrate that errors in subject-verb agreement rank among the most prevalent grammatical errors committed by bilingual learners, primarily attributable to discrepancies between English and their native language (Deniz et al., 2023). For example, in languages that do not necessitate verb inflection according to subject number (e.g., Indonesian, Chinese), learners may neglect the -s in third-person singular present-tense verbs (She run instead of She runs) (Sagarra & Rodriguez, 2022). Moreover, collective nouns and indefinite pronouns (e.g., everyone, team,

family) can generate ambiguity, as their singular or plural designation is contingent upon context (Vural et al., 2022). Previous studies have investigated subject-verb agreement within general grammar education but have inadequately addressed its significance in tense proficiency. This study examines the impact of subject-verb agreement proficiency on students' accuracy in tense usage, as agreement errors directly influence tense precision.

### **The Use of Tenses**

The use of tense is essential for temporal precision in communication, enabling speakers to convey events in relation to time (past, present, future) (Antón-Méndez, 2020; Goldin et al., 2023). Research indicates that bilingual students often encounter difficulties with tense selection, especially when their primary language possesses different or fewer tense distinctions (Arcodia, 2023; Enesi et al., 2023). A significant obstacle in tension acquisition is differentiating among the simple, gradual, and perfect features. Research by Rustipa et al. (2023) and Dündar-Coecke et al. (2020) indicates that multilingual learners frequently misconstrue the subtleties of continuous vs simple tenses, resulting in erroneous verb forms (e.g., I am go to school instead of I am going to school).

Moreover, inaccuracies in sentence structure, verb choice, and subject-verb concordance lead to tense inconsistency, underscoring the necessity for a holistic approach to grammar education (Truong et al., 2022). This study extends previous research by analyzing the interaction of various grammatical components in shaping students' overall tense proficiency.

### **METHOD**

This study employs a correlational descriptive methodology and a quantitative technique to examine the impact of specific aspects in English learning on the skills of Elementary Teacher Education students. The quantitative method uses numerical data and statistical analysis to objectively examine the relationships among variables, allowing the results to be generalized to a broader population. This study examines the relationship among complex variables utilizing the Partial Least Squares (PLS) method and Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) technique (Afthanorhan et al., 2020; Dash & Paul, 2021). SEM PLS is a statistical technique that enables researchers to simultaneously examine the relationships among latent variables and the impact of those factors on one another (J. F. Hair et al., 2019). This strategy was selected due to its efficacy with models characterized by several complex variables and limited sample sizes. We can enhance our understanding of the interactions among the variables in our study.

## **Sample**

The sample for this study consisted of 117 students enrolled in the Elementary Teacher Education Study Program at Makassar State University, all of whom engaged in English courses. The sample selection utilizes a purposive sampling method, whereby students are selected based on specific characteristics relevant to the study objectives. The principal criteria for sample selection are students who have participated in comprehensive English learning within the curriculum and those who possess proficiency in acquiring the grammatical elements of the English language. The selected students are multilingual, demonstrating competency in both spoken and written Indonesian and English.

Table 1. Characteristic Demography

<b>Characteristic Demography</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Number of Students</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<b>Gender</b>	Man	45	38.46%
	Woman	72	61.54%
<b>Age</b>	18 - 19 years old	60	51.28%
	20 - 21 years old	57	48.72%
<b>Language Status</b>	Bilingual (Indonesian & English)	117	100%
<b>GPA</b>	3.00 - 3.49	60	51.28%
	3.50 - 4.00	50	42.74%
	Below 3.00	7	5.98%

Table 1 above outlines the demographic characteristics of the 117 students involved in this study. By gender, there were 45 male students (38.46%) and 72 female students (61.54%). Of the students surveyed, 60 (51.28%) were aged 18 to 19 years, while 57 (48.72%) were aged 20 to 21 years. All research participants are bilingual students proficient in both Indonesian and English. A total of 60 students (51.28%) possess a GPA between 3.00 and 3.49, 50 students (42.74%) have a GPA ranging from 3.50 to 4.00, and 7 students (5.98%) have a GPA below 3.00.

## **Research Instruments**

A questionnaire was employed to gather most of the data for this investigation. The questionnaire was designed to assess four critical dimensions of English learning related to grammar proficiency. The initial indicator is Basic Sentence Structure, which evaluates pupils' proficiency in assembling words according to the correct format, such as the SVO pattern (Subject, Verb, and Object). The second indicator is Proper Use of Verbs, which

assesses students' ability to select and employ appropriate verbs for the context and distinguish between regular and irregular verbs. Topic-verb agreement is the third indicator of students' ability to ensure that the subject and verb in a sentence correspond appropriately. Finally, the Tenses Usage indicator evaluates students' proficiency in accurately employing several tenses in both spoken and written forms, including Present Simple, Past Simple, and Future Simple. Students were instructed to evaluate each signal on a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5, where 5 signifies "strongly disagree" and 1 denotes "strongly agree." The words constituted the question items. This quiz aims to provide a clear assessment of the PGSD students' comprehension of several aspects of the English language.

### **Research Procedure**

The research begins with an examination of English in the classroom, focusing on four essential components: Basic Sentence Structure, Proper Use of Verbs, Subject-Verb Agreement, and The Use of Tense. The learning method includes lectures, debates, practical exercises, and individual projects aimed at improving student understanding. Upon completing the learning procedure, the researcher distributed a questionnaire to 117 students to evaluate their understanding of the subjects learnt. The SEM PLS (Partial Least Squares) method was utilized to analyze the data obtained from the questionnaire to examine the association between the independent variable (basic sentence structure, correct verb usage, subject-verb agreement) and the dependent variable (tense usage). SEM PLS was chosen for its ability to elucidate complex correlations among variables in multivariate data without requiring normal distribution assumptions. The researcher assessed the model's validity and reliability by Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability, and Outer Loadings (Wang et al., 2022). The findings of the SEM PLS analysis, encompassing path coefficients, T-statistics, P-values, and Confidence Intervals, are analyzed in the final step to assess the influence of each element on students' skill in tenses.

### **Data Analysis Techniques**

This study used the Structural Equation Modelling - Partial Least Squares (SEM PLS) method to analyze the data and ascertain the relationships among the elements. A statistical technique known as SEM PLS is employed to ascertain the relationships between independent variables (such as sentence structure, proper verb usage, and subject-verb agreement) and dependent variables (such as tense usage). It can process data with numerous elements and enable academics to explore intricate models with multiple variable interactions (J. F. Hair et al., 2019; Legate et al., 2023), SEM PLS is highly beneficial in social and educational research. SEM PLS enables researchers to assess the precision and validity of each signal employed to quantify variables inside the model. It also enables the

utilization of path coefficients to assess the strength of links among variables. Researchers can utilize SEM PLS to ascertain the extent of direct and indirect effects of independent variables on dependent variables. This provides a comprehensive overview of the measures PGSD students can undertake to enhance their proficiency in utilizing accurate English tenses. The researcher evaluated the R-squared value and T-statistics to assess the significance of the relationship between the variables in the SEM PLS analysis (J. Hair et al., 2017). The R-squared value indicated the extent to which variation in the dependent variable could be elucidated by the proposed model. This methodology enhances the accuracy and reliability of the study's results in demonstrating the interrelationships among the variables examined in English learning. This also elucidates how these variables influence PGSD students' proficiency in utilizing the past tense.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Results**

The examination of the study's findings is divided into two main sections: Measurement Model Results and Structural Model Evaluation. These components provide a thorough study of the variables involved, emphasizing their reliability, validity, and interrelations, while demonstrating how sentence structure, verb usage, and subject-verb agreement affect proficiency in English tenses.

#### **1. Measurement Model Results**

The Measurement Model Results section assesses the robustness and precision of the instruments employed in the study. This entails evaluating the reliability and validity of the constructs to ascertain their successful representation of sentence structure, verb usage, and subject-verb agreement in shaping proficiency in English tenses. Verifying the dependability of these instruments is an essential step in constructing a robust framework for comprehending the interrelations among the variables.

Table 2. Measurement Model Results

Variable	Measure	Indicator	Outer Loading	Cronbach Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
Use of Subject-Verb Agreement	SV1	I can use the correct verb form with singular subjects, such as "He runs" or "She studies."	0.758	0.818	0.873	0.579
	SV2	I know when to use the plural form of verbs, such as "They run" or "They study."	0.799			



	SV3	I can identify errors in Subject-Verb Agreement in simple sentences.	<b>0.743</b>			
	SV4	I can correctly change sentences from singular to plural subjects and vice versa.	<b>0.775</b>			
	SV5	I frequently apply Subject-Verb Agreement rules correctly when speaking in English.	<b>0.726</b>			
Tenses Usage	T1	I can use the Present Simple Tense correctly in daily conversations.	<b>0.807</b>			
	T2	I can use the Past Simple Tense to describe events that have already happened	<b>0.811</b>			
	T3	I know when to use the Future Simple Tense to talk about plans or future predictions.	<b>0.837</b>	<b>0.861</b>	<b>0.900</b>	<b>0.644</b>
	T4	I can identify and correct tense errors in sentences.	<b>0.822</b>			
	T5	I feel confident using various tenses in simple conversations.	<b>0.732</b>			
Basic Sentence Structure	BS1	I can create sentences in the correct order: Subject + Verb + Object (SVO).	0.804			
	BS2	I can construct simple sentences with the appropriate subject, verb, and object.	0.764			
	BS3	I know how to add direct and indirect objects to sentences with an SVO structure.	0.793	<b>0.846</b>	<b>0.890</b>	<b>0.618</b>
	BS4	I can transform passive sentences into active ones while maintaining the SVO structure.	0.787			
	BS5	I frequently create sentences with a clear and easy-to-understand SVO structure.	0.783			
Proper use of Verbs	V1	I can select verbs that match the appropriate tense in a sentence.	0.863	<b>0.808</b>	<b>0.867</b>	<b>0.569</b>

V2	I know the difference between regular and irregular verbs and can use them correctly.	0.785
V3	I can use the correct verb forms in positive, negative, and interrogative sentences.	0.773
V4	I know when to use the base form of a verb, like "go," or the past tense form, like "went."	0.674
V5	I feel confident in choosing and using verbs appropriately in the context of sentences when speaking or writing.	0.659

The signals of the four variables were determined to be usually valid and dependable, as evidenced by the model measurement analysis. The majority of indicators exhibit outer loading values exceeding 0.7, indicating a robust correlation between the indicator and the variable under measurement. Nonetheless, two indicators (V4 and V5) under the Proper Use of Verbs variable exhibit outer loading values of 0.674 and 0.659, respectively. This indicates that the convergence validity is suboptimal relative to other indices. This indicates that students require further development in comprehending the distinction between the base form of verbs and their application in phrases. All factors demonstrated reliability, as their Cronbach Alpha values exceeded 0.7, indicating internal consistency. The Composite Reliability (CR) value exceeds 0.7, indicating that the variable is reliable. The minimum requirement for the average variance explained (AVE) for each variable has been satisfied. This indicates that each variable can account for the majority of the variation in its indicators.

The variable demonstrating the most advantageous measurement results is Tenses Usage, defined by a Cronbach Alpha of 0.861, Composite Reliability of 0.900, and AVE of 0.644. This signifies that students exhibit remarkable competence in understanding and utilizing various tense forms in basic interactions. The Basic Sentence Structure variable exhibited positive results, indicating students' competence in forming simple sentence structures with subjects, predicates, and objects (SVO). However, the ability to transform passive assertions into active ones necessitates improvement. These findings demonstrate that pupils have a robust comprehension of English grammar, especially regarding tense usage and basic sentence structures.

Table 3. Latent Variable Correlations

	<b>Basic Sentence Structure</b>	<b>Proper use of Verbs</b>	<b>Tenses Usage</b>	<b>Use of Subject-Verb Agreement</b>
<b>Basic Sentence Structure</b>	1.000	0.734	0.708	0.684
<b>Proper use of Verbs</b>	0.734	1.000	0.761	0.700
<b>Tenses Usage</b>	0.708	0.761	1.000	0.741
<b>Use of Subject-Verb Agreement</b>	0.684	0.700	0.741	1.000

Table 3 above demonstrated that the correlation analysis among latent variables indicated a substantial positive relationship among the four components of English grammar examined. The correlation coefficients varied between 0.684 and 0.761. The correlation between Proper Use of Verbs and Tense Usage was the most robust (0.761). Students' understanding of right verb usage significantly influences their proficiency in employing tenses accurately. A robust correlation (0.734) existed between Basic Sentence Structure and Proper Use of Verbs, indicating that the ability to construct basic sentences was intricately associated with the correct usage of verbs.

Tense usage is intricately linked to various aspects, particularly subject-verb agreement (0.741), indicating that mastering tenses necessitates understanding subject-verb agreement. The correlation between Basic phrase Structure and Subject-Verb Agreement was less (0.684), indicating that the norms governing Subject-Verb Agreement were more explicit than those for basic phrase structure. The robust correlation among these concealed criteria indicates that pupils' proficiency in English grammar mutually benefits one another. Comprehending verbs and tenses is essential for enhancing your overall grammar.

Table 4. Fornell-Larcker Criterion and Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

Fornell-Larcker Criterion

	<b>Basic Sentence Structure</b>	<b>Proper use of Verbs</b>	<b>Tenses Usage</b>	<b>Use of Subject-Verb Agreement</b>
<b>Basic Sentence Structure</b>	0.786			
<b>Proper use of Verbs</b>	0.734	0.755		
<b>Tenses Usage</b>	0.708	0.761	0.803	
<b>Use of Subject-Verb Agreement</b>	0.684	0.700	0.741	0.761

Heterotrait-Monotrait  
Ratio (HTMT)

	Basic Sentence Structure	Proper use of Verbs	Tenses Usage	Use of Subject-Verb Agreement
Basic Sentence Structure				
Proper use of Verbs	0.876			
Tenses Usage	0.815	0.901		
Use of Subject-Verb Agreement	0.820	0.862	0.879	

Table 4, utilising the Fornell-Larcker Criterion, indicates that the discrimination validity study demonstrates robust discrimination validity for all variables. Each latent variable possesses a larger square root of AVE in comparison to its correlation with other latent variables. Regarding the variable Basic Sentence Structure, the square root of the AVE is 0.786, surpassing its associations with Proper Use of Verbs (0.734), Tenses Usage (0.708), and Use of Subject-Verb Agreement (0.684). Each indicates the fulfilment of the discrimination's validity; this also applies to supplementary variables such as Proper Use of Verbs (0.755), Tense Usage (0.803), and Use of Subject-Verb Agreement (0.761). This suggests that each factor may more effectively elucidate the variance of the indicator than its correlation with others.

Furthermore, the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) test indicates that the majority of the ratio values fall below the threshold of 0.9, hence demonstrating robust discriminant validity. The correlation between Basic Sentence Structure and Tenses Usage is 0.815, while the HTMT score between Basic Sentence Structure and Proper Use of Verbs is 0.876. One correlation between appropriate verb and tense usage results in an HTMT value of 0.901, just over the threshold. This indicates a somewhat substantial correlation between the two variables, maybe suggesting a content overlap between them. The Fornell-Larcker Criterion and HTMT results collectively affirm the discriminant validity of this model. To ensure that the measured material is not superfluous, specific attention should be directed towards the interplay between appropriate verb usage and tense application. The robustness of this distinction indicates that each variable in the model possesses a distinct yet complementary focus in assessing students' English grammar proficiency.

## 2. Structural Equation Modeling

Table 5. Path Coefficients

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics ( O/STD EV )	F Square	R Square
Basic Sentence Structure -> Tenses Usage	0.197	0.196	0.077	2.544	0.049	0.670
Proper use of Verbs -> Tenses Usage	0.376	0.380	0.082	4.597	0.170	
Use of Subject-Verb Agreement -> Tenses Usage	0.343	0.345	0.080	4.319	0.165	

The path coefficient in Table 5 indicates a significant relationship between dependent and independent variables. The coefficient value of 0.376 suggests that Proper Use of Verbs has the greatest impact on Tense Usage, followed by Use of Subject-Verb Agreement at 0.343 and Basic Sentence Structure at 0.197, as evidenced by the route coefficient (Original Sample/O). Based on an understanding of Subject-Verb Agreement and basic sentence structure, these numbers indicate that students' ability to employ verbs correctly significantly impacts their use of tense. A T-Statistics value of 1.96 at a 5% significance level signifies that all interactions among factors are significant. The robust correlation was evidenced by the highest T-Statistics value of 4.597 between Proper Use of Verbs and Tense Usage. Furthermore, the F-Square analysis indicates that the impact of Basic Sentence Structure is minimal (0.049), whereas the impacts of Proper Use of Verbs (0.170) and Use of Subject-Verb Agreements (0.165) on Tense Usage are moderate.

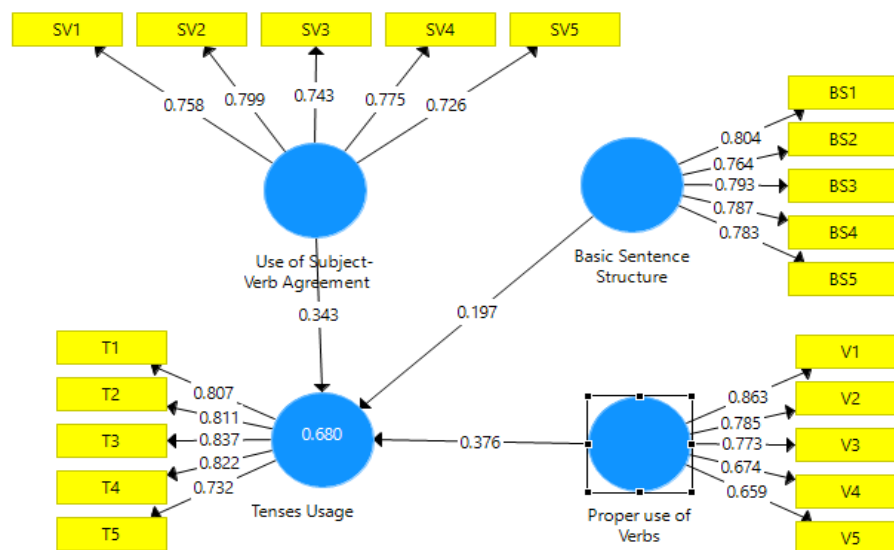


Diagram 1. Structural Equation Modeling

The Basic Sentence Structure, Proper Use of Verbs, and Subject-Verb Agreement variables account for 67% of the variation in the Tenses Usage variable, as indicated by an R-Square value of 0.670. This indicates that the three criteria collectively enhance students' ability to effectively employ tenses in English. This study provides an in-depth understanding of the educational factors that must be enhanced to improve students' proficiency.

**Table 6.** Confidence Intervals

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	2.5%	97.5%
Basic Sentence Structure -> Tenses Usage	0.197	0.196	0.047	0.343
Proper use of Verbs -> Tenses Usage	0.376	0.380	0.214	0.538
Use of Subject-Verb Agreement -> Tenses Usage	0.343	0.345	0.196	0.488

Table 6 of the Confidence Intervals analysis demonstrates a significant correlation between the dependent and independent variables in the model. Aligned with the Sample Mean (M) derived from the bootstrapping technique, the value of the starting Sample (O), representing the initial coefficient of the variable connection, demonstrates the reliability and stability of the results. The 95% confidence interval (2.5% - 97.5%) ensures that zero values are excluded, indicating that the variable association is substantial. The fundamental structure of sentences had a coefficient value of 0.197, with confidence intervals ranging from 0.047 to 0.343, indicating a modest yet significant influence on tense utilisation. The proper use of verbs demonstrated the highest association, with a coefficient of 0.376 and a confidence interval of [0.214, 0.538], indicating a significant impact of selecting the appropriate verb on tense usage. Moreover, a significant connection was established with a coefficient of 0.343 and a confidence interval of [0.196, 0.488], indicating that the correct use of the Subject-Verb Agreement rule enhanced the utilisation of tenses. This study generally corroborates the idea that students' proficiency in utilising relevant verbs, comprehending Subject-Verb Agreement, and constructing basic sentence structures enhances their ability to employ tenses by confirming that all variable interactions are significant. Of the three components, the appropriate utilisation of verbs exerts the greatest influence, succeeded by subject-verb agreement and fundamental sentence structure.

## Discussion

This research investigated the correlations between fundamental sentence structure, appropriate verb usage, subject-verb concord, and tense proficiency by Structural Equation Modelling - Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS). The findings demonstrate that these four grammatical elements are interrelated, with correct verb usage and subject-verb agreement exerting the most significant impact on tense proficiency. This section elaborates on each component comprehensively, utilizing SEM-PLS results to demonstrate their importance and interrelation.

### 1. Basic Sentence Structure and Its Influence on Grammar Mastery

The SEM-PLS findings indicate that fundamental sentence structure significantly enhances both appropriate verb usage ( $\beta = 0.734$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and subject-verb concord ( $\beta = 0.684$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Moreover, its direct impact on tense proficiency is less ( $\beta = 0.197$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), indicating that its effect on tenses is mostly mediated via verb usage and subject-verb concord. The fundamental structure of sentences underpins grammatical precision, affecting pupils' capacity to formulate correctly structured sentences. The results corroborate earlier research emphasizing sentence form as essential for proficient language utilization (Ruivivar & Collins, 2022). This study identifies a significant challenge: word order interference stemming from students' first languages, especially among those whose original languages adhere to SOV (Subject-Object-Verb) or VSO (Verb-Subject-Object) structures (Antón-Méndez, 2020a). This interference results in inaccuracies in auxiliary placement and tense formation, affecting overall grammatical proficiency. Considering that sentence structure affects verb usage and agreement, it is advisable to provide specific instruction on syntactic patterns, including comparative analysis with students' native languages, to enhance their grammatical foundation.

### 2. Proper Verb Use and Its Role in Tense Accuracy

The correct application of verbs demonstrates the most significant direct impact on tense proficiency ( $\beta = 0.376$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). It mediates the connection between fundamental sentence structure and tenses, underscoring the essential need of verb selection for temporal precision. The results indicate that verb selection is crucial for mastering tense, as verbs intrinsically convey temporal meanings (Fishman, 2023). A significant issue identified is pupils' inability to differentiate between regular and irregular verbs, resulting in erroneous past-tense forms (goed instead of went) (Moorhouse, 2024). A notable difficulty is the improper usage of modal verbs (e.g., can, must, should), wherein students erroneously conjugate them (He must went instead of He must go). These findings correspond with Deniz et al., (2023), who assert that modal errors frequently arise from first-language

transfer. Given that verb selection significantly influences tense correctness, context-driven grammar instruction, wherein students acquire verb forms through genuine communication instead of rote memorization, should be emphasized in bilingual teacher preparation.

### **3. Subject-Verb Agreement and Its Impact on Tense Selection**

The correlation between subject-verb agreement and tense proficiency is significant ( $\beta = 0.343$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). It exhibits a moderate link with appropriate verb usage ( $r = 0.700$ ), suggesting that pupils who experience difficulties with agreement are also prone to misusing verb forms. Subject-verb agreement errors are among the most common mistakes in English grammar (Sagarra & Rodriguez, 2022). The results indicate that the third-person singular present tense (-s endings) presents the most challenge, since numerous pupils neglect to include the suffix (She walk instead of She walks). Moreover, faults in subject-verb agreement frequently undermine tense consistency, especially in intricate formulations (He have went instead of He has gone). These findings corroborate prior studies indicating that mastery of agreement is crucial for the application of tense (Jessen et al., 2021). To mitigate these errors, explicit exercises concentrating on subject-verb agreement across several tenses should be incorporated into grammar education.

### **4. The Utilization of Tenses and Its Correlation with Other Grammatical Elements**

Tense proficiency is directly affected by correct verb usage ( $\beta = 0.376$ ) and subject-verb concord ( $\beta = 0.343$ ), although fundamental sentence structure exerts an indirect influence through these elements. The  $R^2$  result for tense proficiency is 0.670, signifying that 67% of its variance is elucidated by these three grammatical components. Tenses are crucial for temporal precision in communication (Antón-Méndez, 2020a). Nevertheless, the findings indicate that numerous children encounter difficulties with tense differences, especially for progressive and perfect characteristics (I was go to school instead of I was going to school). Furthermore, the overgeneralization of past tense rules is prevalent (He did not went instead of He did not go). This corresponds with previous studies indicating that bilingual students utilize simplified patterns from their primary language when confronted with intricate tense structures (Rustipa et al., 2023). Considering that tense errors are intricately associated with deficiencies in verb usage and subject-verb concord, a more cohesive methodology where tenses are instructed in conjunction with these components—would improve students' grammatical precision.



## **5. Pedagogical Implications**

The findings highlight the significance of comprehensive grammar education, especially for bilingual teacher candidates. According to the SEM-PLS findings, teacher education programs should prioritize enhancing sentence structure abilities to refine verb usage and agreement. Secondly, instructing verb conjugation within communicative situations instead than depending on rote memorization. Third, highlighting subject-verb agreement using interactive exercises to improve tense precision. Finally, executing a cohesive grammar methodology that interrelates sentence structure, verbs, agreement, and tenses.

The study's findings reveal that students with a strong understanding of sentence structure, verb usage, and subject-verb agreement exhibit improved skill in the correct application of tenses in both spoken and written communication. These findings support Yang, (2022) statement that a deep understanding of the underlying structure of language is essential for mastering additional linguistic aspects, such as tenses. This study's findings demonstrate that mastery of essential language elements, such as sentence structure, accurate verb usage, and subject-verb agreement, substantially affects bilingual students' ability to effectively employ tenses. This signifies that education in grammar, particularly focussing on the mastery of essential sentence structure and subject-verb agreement, must be prioritised in the training of English educators. Leijen et al., (2022) underscore the imperative of integrating pedagogical knowledge with content expertise, since grammatical competency is crucial for potential teachers to learn the language and effectively convey these concepts to elementary school students. By focussing on these areas, bilingual teacher candidates can cultivate a thorough comprehension of English grammar, so enhancing their confidence and precision in teaching within elementary classrooms.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study concludes that proficiency in essential grammatical components, including Basic Sentence Structure, Proper Use of Verbs, and Subject-Verb Agreement, significantly affects students' capacity to utilize tenses correctly. These findings highlight the significance of thorough grammar education for aspiring bilingual educators, particularly in the realm of instructing English in elementary schools. This study implies the necessity of developing a teacher education curriculum that prioritizes comprehensive and applied grammar instruction, ensuring that students comprehend theoretical concepts and can effectively teach English to their pupils. Recommendations for additional research include investigating more effective pedagogical approaches to enhance students' comprehension of the interplay between sentence structure, verb usage, and tenses, as well

as conducting studies with a bigger sample size to substantiate the generalizability of these findings.

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