

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Review of Previous Study

The literature review is a search for studies and previous works. The purpose of the literature review is to provide a reference for the report that will be made. Several previous studies have similarities and differences as follows.

1. Studies on MSAL for Vocabulary Learning

Several previous studies have discussed the application of mnemonic techniques and the use of songs in vocabulary learning. As found in previous studies, such as Mariana et al. (2021), Zaharani (2023), Magelang et al. (2023), Wahdian and Khoiri (2023), Anuyahong and Pengnate (2023), Rahayu et al. (2024), Octaviani (2024), and Sukha et al. (2025). In general, these studies indicate that elements of music, rhyme, and mental association can be effective tools for boosting students' memory and increasing their motivation in the learning process.

The majority of studies show significant improvements in learning outcomes after implementing song-based learning methods. A significant jump in average scores between the pre-intervention stage (pre-test or first cycle) and the post-intervention stage (post-test or second cycle) was reported by Mariana et al. (2021), Zaharani (2023), and Sukha et al. (2025). This increase not only indicates improved understanding but also helps students achieve the minimum

completion criteria. Besides that, it can reinforce the assumption that song-based learning can have measurable academic impacts.

Songs also give students psychological benefits. Studies conducted by Anuyahong and Pengnate (2023) and Rahayu et al. (2024) show that songs create a fun learning atmosphere. This makes students more motivated and active in the learning process. A classroom environment becomes more conducive and communicative, not monotonous. Furthermore, using music can reduce boredom for students learning English. Thus, indirectly, student participation increases naturally without excessive pressure. However, this study not only addresses psychological aspects but also optimizes cognitive functions by using mnemonic songs to ensure students can accurately master the English Past Tenses formula.

In addition, songs help students remember what they have learned for longer. Octaviani (2024) and Randy et al. (2025) explained that the combination of rhythm, repetition, and mnemonic strategies such as chunking or acrostics helps the process of encoding information into students' memories. Music creates a regular and memorable pattern, so vocabulary is saved in memory longer. It's more effective than conventional learning methods that are solely based on memorization. Thus, songs act as cognitive aids that strengthen the process of storing and recalling information.

Although these studies used different research methods, they reached similar conclusions. Zaharani (2023), Rahayu et al. (2024), and Octaviani (2024) used experimental designs, while Mariana et al. (2021), Magelang et al. (2023),

and Sukha et al. (2025) used Classroom Action Research (CAR). All concluded that using songs in learning is an effective strategy. These results indicate that using songs as a learning medium is valid and applicable across various levels of education, for example, to enrich vocabulary mastery.

Overall, these studies show that songs and mnemonic techniques are effective for improving students' vocabulary mastery. Despite the various research methods used, the results consistently show that music can significantly improve students' grades. Furthermore, the use of songs also creates a more relaxed, enjoyable, and interactive learning environment. Therefore, song-based learning and memorization techniques can be an effective and creative way to help students learn a language more easily.

Although previous studies have shown that MSAL can improve students' vocabulary, several limitations remain. First, most studies focused on vocabulary learning and did not explore the use of mnemonic songs for teaching English grammar. Second, the studies used different research designs, such as classroom action research, quasi-experimental, and experimental designs, and involved students from different educational levels. Because of these differences, it is difficult to compare the results directly. Third, most studies focused primarily on vocabulary test results and did not clearly explain how the learning activities were implemented in the classroom.

2. Studies on MSAL for Grammar Learning

Several previous studies have explored the use of mnemonic techniques and songs in grammar learning. As found in previous studies, such as Aniuranti (2021), Yeni et al. (2021), Embogama (2023), Asylva (2024), Hartiwi and Sutiwi (2024), Meisa et al. (2024), and Roxas et al. (2024). In general, these studies show that rhythm, repetition, and meaningful lyrics can help students understand grammatical patterns more easily, especially in mastering tenses. These findings suggest that MSAL has good potential to aid grammar mastery in the classroom.

Several studies have shown that using songs can improve students' understanding of tense structures. Aniuranti (2021), Asylva (2024), Hartiwi and Sutiwi (2024) demonstrated that the rhythm and repetition in songs help students distinguish verb forms more easily. The transition from verb 1 to verb 2 becomes more automatic because it is formed in a repetitive tone pattern. Thus, songs serve as a tool that simplifies grammatical formulas, which are typically taught conventionally.

Yeni et al. (2021) also found that songs had a positive impact on students' mastery of the Simple Past Tense. Their study used a quasi-experimental design with an experimental class and a control class. The results showed that the experimental class had a higher average score (71.97) than the control class (55.69). This shows that songs helped students remember grammar rules and sentence patterns more effectively.

The benefits of songs are not limited to the Simple Past Tense. There are the present perfect tense and various forms of continuous tenses. Research by Embogama (2023) and Meisa et al. (2024) shows that song lyrics create a more natural and communicative atmosphere. Students not only memorize formulas such as S + have/has + V3, but also understand situations and their functions in real conversations. Songs help connect grammatical rules to practical meaning, making learning more contextual and functional in everyday life. However, this study uses a song that focuses not on one tense but on four tenses combined in a song form.

Roxas et al. (2024) also reported that popular songs reduced students' anxiety during grammar instruction. The rhythm and repetition in songs helped students remember grammar patterns more easily. As a result, students felt more relaxed and confident during the learning process. Thus, songs not only play a role in cognitive aspects but also have a positive impact on students' affective aspects.

Although previous studies have shown that songs can help students learn grammar, several limitations remain. First, many studies focused on a single tense, especially the Simple Past Tense, rather than teaching the four English Past Tenses together. Second, these studies employed different research designs and involved different groups of students, making it difficult to compare their results directly. Third, most studies focused mainly on students' test scores and did not

clearly explain how the songs were used during the teaching and learning process.

In addition, only a few studies discussed the possible challenges of using songs in grammar learning. For example, students may find it difficult to remember the song lyrics, the melody may not suit all students, or some students may memorize grammar patterns without fully understanding how to use them in real communication. Therefore, more research is needed to explore a more comprehensive and effective approach to using MSAL while addressing these limitations.

To facilitate comparison with previous studies, Table 2.1 summarizes their main characteristics, including the researchers, sample, research design, research focus, instruments, main findings, limitations, and the position of the present study. The table shows that although previous studies generally found positive effects of MSAL on vocabulary and grammar learning, they employed different research designs, learning foci, participants, and educational settings. The table also shows the limitations of previous studies. It explains the research gap that this study aims to fill by using one mnemonic song to teach the four English Past Tenses in a pre-experimental research design.

Table 2.1 Comparative Analysis of Previous Studies on MSAL

No.	Researcher	Sample	Research Design	Focus	Instrument	Main Findings	Limitations	Position of This Study
1	Mariana et al. (2021)	Elementary school students	Classroom Action Research	Vocabulary	Observation, Tests	Mnemonic songs improved students' vocabulary mastery and classroom participation.	Focused only on vocabulary acquisition and did not examine grammar learning.	This study focuses on grammar, specifically the four English Past Tense forms.
2	Zaharani (2023)	Junior high school students	Quasi-experimental	Vocabulary	Pre-test and Post-test	Song-assisted learning significantly improved vocabulary achievement.	Examined vocabulary only and did not investigate grammar instruction.	This study applies mnemonic songs to grammar learning instead of vocabulary.
3	Anuyahong & Pengnate (2023)	EFL learners	Experimental	Vocabulary	Achievement Test	Songs increased vocabulary retention and learning motivation.	Did not investigate grammar structures or tense mastery.	This study investigates grammar mastery, particularly English Past Tenses.
4	Sukha et al. (2025)	Secondary school students	Experimental	Vocabulary	Vocabulary Test	Songs enhanced vocabulary learning and classroom engagement.	Limited to vocabulary learning and did not integrate grammar instruction.	This study integrates mnemonic songs into grammar learning.
5	Aniuranti (2021)	Literature-based study	Descriptive Qualitative	Present Simple Tense	Literature Review	English songs are beneficial for <i>teaching</i> tenses and increasing students' motivation.	Did not conduct classroom implementation or measure students' achievement.	This study empirically examines the effectiveness of mnemonic songs through classroom intervention.

No.	Researcher	Sample	Research Design	Focus	Instrument	Main Findings	Limitations	Position of This Study
6	Yeni et al. (2021)	Senior high school students	Quasi-experimental	Simple Past Tense	Pre-test and Post-test	Songs significantly improved students' mastery of the Simple Past Tense.	Focused only on one tense and did not cover other past tense forms.	This study integrates four English Past Tenses into one mnemonic song.
7	Embogama (2023)	Undergraduate ESL learners	Mixed Methods (Quasi-experimental)	Present Perfect Tense	Grammar Test and Focus Group Discussion	Songs improved grammar achievement and students' positive attitudes.	Focused only on the Present Perfect Tense and university students.	This study involves senior high school students and covers four English Past Tenses.
8	Asylva (2024)	Grade XI senior high school students	Quasi-experimental	Simple Past Tense	Pre-test and Post-test	English songs significantly improved students' mastery of the Simple Past Tense.	Investigated only one tense and used conventional songs rather than mnemonic songs.	This study develops a mnemonic song integrating four English Past Tense forms.
9	Meisa et al. (2024)	Senior high school students	Experimental	Grammar Learning	Grammar Test	Song-based learning increased grammar achievement and students' motivation.	Did not explain instructional procedures in detail and did not focus on specific tense integration.	This study explains the instructional procedures across multiple meetings and focuses specifically on English Past Tenses.
10	Roxas et al. (2024)	EFL learners	Experimental	Grammar Learning	Achievement Test	Songs promoted grammar understanding and active classroom participation.	Did not integrate multiple past tense forms into a single instructional medium.	This study integrates four English Past Tenses into one mnemonic song and evaluates its effectiveness using a pre-experimental design.

3. Gap Identification and Research Novelty

Previous studies have shown that using music in learning can strengthen memory retention, increase motivation to learn, and help students understand grammatical patterns in context. However, most research still focuses on vocabulary development or emphasizes a single tense in isolation. Therefore, although the effectiveness of mnemonic songs has been widely demonstrated. However, researchers have not yet found the mnemonic song designed to integrate multiple tense forms in a single song unit.

The novelty of this research arises from the development of a mnemonic song specifically designed to summarize the four types of past tenses in one song. This song is adapted from the tune of "*Laskar Pelangi*", and the lyrics have been changed to explain the formulas and functions of the Simple Past, Past Continuous, Past Perfect, and Past Perfect Continuous. In this way, students have a more connected and integrated picture of understanding tenses. The song serves as a memory aid, combining all forms of the past tense in a single medium. This innovation is expected to help students understand and remember the entire structure of the past tenses more easily.

B. Review of Related Literature

This section presents an overview of the theories underlying the application of mnemonic songs in language learning and students' mastery of English tenses.

1. English Tenses

a. Definition of English Tenses

Tense in English is a part of grammar. It is used to indicate when an action or event occurred, whether in the past, present, or future. In practice, tense is indicated through changes in verb form or the use of certain auxiliary verbs in sentences. For example, the verb play can be changed to played to indicate that the action occurred in the past. Furthermore, tense is also related to aspect, which is how an action is viewed in terms of time, whether it is completed, ongoing, or repeated (Adejare, 2022). By understanding tenses, English speakers can convey the time of events clearly and systematically, thus improving communication.

b. The Importance of English Tenses

Mastering English tenses is crucial because errors in the use of tenses can lead to misunderstandings and alter the meaning of the intended message (Hartiwi & Sutiwi, 2024). If students understand tenses well, such as the Simple Past Tense and continuous tenses, they can convey ideas and recount events in the correct chronological order, both in texts such as recounts and in everyday conversation (Asylva, 2024; Meisa et al., 2024). This understanding

helps students not only memorize formulas but also understand the function and logic of each change in sentence form.

2. English Past Tenses

a. Definition of Past Tense

The Past Tense is a grammatical category used to indicate that an activity or situation began and ended at a particular time in the past (Azar, 2014). Structurally, this tense is characterized by changes in verb form, either by adding the suffix -ed to regular verbs or by changing the form of irregular verbs. This is to provide accurate time information to the recipient of the message. In learning English, mastering the past tense is very important because it helps students tell experiences, write narrative texts, and compile reports of past events coherently and clearly.

b. Types of Past Tenses

In general, English grammar is divided into three main tenses: Past, Present, and Future. Each of these tenses has four aspects: Simple, Continuous, Perfect, and Perfect Continuous.

Focus on past tenses includes:

1) Simple Past Tense

The Simple Past Tense is used to talk about an activity or situation that began and ended at a particular time in the past. There are two kinds of sentences in the Simple Past Tense. There are verbal sentences and nominal sentences.

a) Simple Past Tense (Verbal)

Past tense sentences whose predicate is a verb

➤ Formula: S+V2+Object/Complement (verbal)

Example: She visited her grandmother yesterday.

The verbal sentences use two kinds of verbs. There are regular and irregular verbs.

- Regular Verb

A regular verb is a verb that adds –d or –ed. For example: accepted, arranged, played, replaced, started, studied, etc.

- Irregular Verb

An irregular verb is a verb that doesn't follow the general rules of verb form. For Example: be, bet, buy, drink, dig, draw, drive, eat, etc.

b) Simple Past Tense (Nominal)

Past tense sentences whose predicate is not a verb (non-verbal), but rather an adjective, noun, or adverb.

➤ Formula: S + was/were + Complement

Example: I was a teacher last year

2) Past Continuous Tense

It indicates an action that was ongoing in the past and often interrupted by another event.

- Formula: S + tobe + Ving + Object/Complement

Example: They were studying when the teacher entered the room.

3) Past Perfect Tense

It is used to express an event that occurred before another event in the past.

- Formula: S + had + V3 + Object/Complement

Example: He had finished his homework before dinner.

4) Past Perfect Continuous Tense

It describes an action that had been ongoing for a certain period before a specific point in the past.

- Formula: S + had + been + Ving + Object/Complement

Example: She had been reading for two hours before going to bed.

c. Students' Difficulties in Learning Tenses

Students' difficulties in mastering tenses are caused by several main factors. One cause is the numerous changes in verb forms and the differences in formulas for each tense, making it difficult for students to memorize and distinguish them. (Yeni et al., 2021). Obstacles also arise when the classroom learning process remains monotonous and emphasizes memorization over conceptual understanding. It quickly makes students bored and unmotivated. Therefore, a more engaging and structured learning approach is needed so that students can understand tenses comprehensively and no longer feel burdened.

3. Student Mastery in Grammar Learning

a. Definition of Mastery

Mastery in grammar learning refers to a student's ability to understand, apply, and use grammar rules accurately and consistently. Mastery means not only memorizing formulas, but also explaining concepts, recognizing errors, and using grammar structures correctly in both spoken and written contexts. In other words, mastery demonstrates that students have truly understand the material and can use it in real-life communication situations.

b. Indicators of Mastery

Indicators of mastery in grammar learning can be seen in several aspects. There is accuracy in using sentence patterns, the ability to differentiate functions across structures, and improved evaluation results, as shown in pre- and post-tests. Furthermore, students who have achieved mastery are usually able to apply grammar rules across various types of texts, such as conversations, narrative writing, and other functional texts. Consistency in using correct structures also indicates that students have not simply memorized but have grasped the concepts.

c. Factors Influencing Mastery

Several factors influence a student's level of grammar mastery. Internal factors include motivation, interest in learning, basic language skills, and self-confidence. Meanwhile, external factors include teaching methods, learning media used, the learning environment, and teacher support.

Therefore, to improve students' mastery of grammar, engaging, systematic learning strategies are needed that help students understand concepts comprehensively rather than simply memorizing rules.

4. Mnemonic Strategy in Language Learning

a. Definition of Mnemonic

Mnemonic techniques are strategies that help someone remember information more easily. Belleza (1996), classifies mnemonics as cognitive aids that organize information into something easy to remember. According to Seuleanu (2025), this technique works by creating strong connections or associations between new information and existing knowledge. Meanwhile, Siagian et al. (2023), explain that mnemonic devices can strengthen long-term memory by helping students organize and store information in a structured manner in the brain. It's easier for students to store and memorize the material. Through mnemonics, information such as grammatical formulas is transformed into simpler forms. This way, learning becomes more engaging, and the memory process becomes faster and more durable.

b. Types of mnemonic

Literature commonly identifies several types of mnemonic techniques. There are acronyms and acrostics (first-letter mnemonics), chunking, the method of loci, rhyme and rhythm, peg systems, imagery, and the connection and keyword methods. (Simbolon et al., 2022).

1) Acronym

An acronym is an abbreviation of a name, phrase, or word that is formed by taking the first letter of each word to be used as an abbreviation that is more familiar and easier to remember. The acronym FANBOYS can be used to list the conjunctions. This is a popular example of an acronym mnemonic device. An acronym is simply an abbreviation that puts together the first letters of other words and is then pronounced as its own word.

2) Acrostic (first letter)

Acrostics are similar to acronyms in that they use the first letter of each word to form a word or phrase that is interesting and familiar to students, making it easy to remember. Akpan et al. (2021) Acrostics form a sentence by taking the first letter of each word to be used as a new sentence.

3) Chunking

Chunking is a technique for grouping information into smaller parts to make it easier to remember. The human brain remembers data more easily in groups than in long lists. For example, the telephone number 0812 3456 7890 is easier to remember if it is divided into three parts rather than a continuous string of numbers. In the English context, teachers can divide a list of irregular verbs into groups with similar patterns, such as “begin-began-begun,” “ring-rang-rung,” and “sing-sang-sung.” This way, students don’t have to memorize each one individually, but recognize the recurring pattern.

4) Loci

The method of loci uses imagination to associate information with specific places. For example, students can imagine walking through their house and then place past-tense verbs in each room, such as went in the kitchen, ate in the dining room, and slept in the bedroom. When they want to recall these words, they visualize their route home. This technique is very effective because it combines visual and spatial memory, which is usually stronger than simple word memorization.

5) Rhyme

This technique uses sound patterns, rhymes, or songs to aid memorization. For example, teachers can teach irregular verb forms with memorable songs, such as singing “go - went - gone, see - saw - seen” to the rhythm of a children’s song. Using rhymes or songs not only helps students memorize more quickly but also creates a more enjoyable learning environment and reduces boredom. This technique has also been shown to strengthen long-term memory, as information accompanied by music tends to be easier to recall.

6) Peg system

The peg system works by linking new information to a list of familiar words or numbers. For example, the number 1 might be associated with the word “sun”, the number 2 with “shoe” the number 3 with “tree”, and so on. If students want to remember three verbs like write, read, and

sleep, they might create associations like: The sun helps me write, my shoe reminds me to read, and the tree makes me sleep. In this way, students can remember the order of words more systematically.

7) Imagery

Imagery techniques involve creating a vivid mental image to represent a concept. For example, when studying the verb “fly,” students can imagine a bird flying in the sky. In grammar, teachers can ask students to draw a situation that reflects the use of the past tense, such as a picture of someone “ate breakfast this morning”. Visual imagery helps students understand the meaning of words and the context in which they are used.

8) Keywords

This method connects new English words with similar-sounding words in their native language. For example, to remember the word “train,” Indonesian students might associate it with “bright” because the two words sound similar. Then, they might imagine a brightly colored train. This connection between sound and meaning makes the word easier to remember. This technique is especially effective for foreign language learners who are just learning a lot of new vocabulary.

c. Principles of Working Memory

In fact, Atkinson and Shiffrin (1968) stated that the human learning process is closely related to how information is processed through three main stages: sensory memory, short-term memory, and long-term memory. As for

the mechanism of how information enters, stays, and is retrieved from the brain, it is as follows:

1) Encoding

Encoding is the process by which the brain receives new information and transforms it into a form that can be stored. For example, a grammatical formula that initially seems complicated can be transformed into a song, rhyme, or abbreviation to make it easier to understand. Mnemonic techniques aid this process by making abstract information more concrete and memorable.

2) Storage

Storage is the process of storing information in memory, both short-term and long-term. For information to last longer, the brain needs to store it in an organized manner. Mnemonics aid storage by chunking, or grouping information into smaller pieces, making it easier to store and less taxing on the memory.

3) Retrieval

Retrieval is the process of recalling stored information when needed. Mnemonics serve as clues or “reminders” that help the brain find the information more quickly. Using a song, rhyme, or abbreviation can make it easier to recall previously learned material.

5. Song-Assisted Learning

a. Definition of Song-Based Learning

Song-based learning is a teaching method that uses songs as a medium for delivering lesson material. In the context of language learning, songs are used to help students understand vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and sentence patterns through rhythmic and memorable lyrics. Songs make the material feel more accessible because they are presented in a fun and relaxed format. Therefore, song-assisted learning is often used to create a more active and engaging learning environment.

b. Benefits of Music in Learning

The use of music in learning has many benefits. Music can increase motivation, capture student attention, and create a more relaxed and positive classroom atmosphere. The rhythm and repetition in songs help students retain information more easily, as they learn the material repeatedly without feeling bored.

c. Cognitive Theory of Music and Memory

From a cognitive theory perspective, music is related to how memory works. Rhythm, rhyme, and melody aid the encoding process, making information easier to store in memory. According to Paivio (2006), humans learn better if information is processed through two channels: verbal (lyrics) and non-verbal (melody). Repetition in songs strengthens the storage process, while melodies serve as cues to help retrieval of information when needed.

Thus, song-assisted learning is not only enjoyable but also supported by working memory principles, helping students remember material more effectively.

6. Mnemonic Song-Assisted Learning (MSAL)

a. Definition of Mnemonic Song-Based Learning

MSAL in this study is a learning method that combines mnemonic techniques with song media to help students understand and remember grammar material. The song used is the result of the researcher's innovation; the tune is adapted from the Indonesian pop song "*Laskar Pelangi*" by Nidji. The lyrics have been modified to fully explain the forms of past tenses, namely Simple Past, Past Continuous, Past Perfect, and Past Perfect Continuous. In this concept, the song serves not only as entertainment but also as a memory aid, systematically designed to present grammatical formulas and functions as a single, integrated unit. So, MSAL can be a fun, structured learning medium for mastering the Past Tenses.

b. Working Principle of the Method

The principles of MSAL are based on the use of rhythm, repetition, and meaningful association to strengthen student comprehension. The song's rhythm helps create a regular pattern, while repetition reinforces the memory of sentence structure. Furthermore, because the song's melody is already familiar, the learning process is absorbed more quickly and is less overwhelming. According to Paskalisa & Sadikin (2022), using familiar

audiovisual elements maintains student attention and creates a comfortable learning environment. With this principle, material previously considered complex becomes simpler and easier to remember.

c. Mechanism of Influence on Memory

MSAL influences memory through three main processes: encoding, storage, and retrieval. In the encoding stage, abstract past tenses formulas are transformed into rhythmic lyrics, making them easier to understand. In the storage stage, repetition of the song helps reinforce the storage of information in long-term memory. Meanwhile, in the retrieval stage, the song's melody serves as a cue, helping students recall tense patterns and functions when needed. According to Mariana et al. (2021), songs play a significant role in strengthening memory because music engages both the emotional and cognitive parts of the brain. Therefore, MSAL not only helps students memorize, but also makes it easier for them to remember.

C. Theoretical Framework

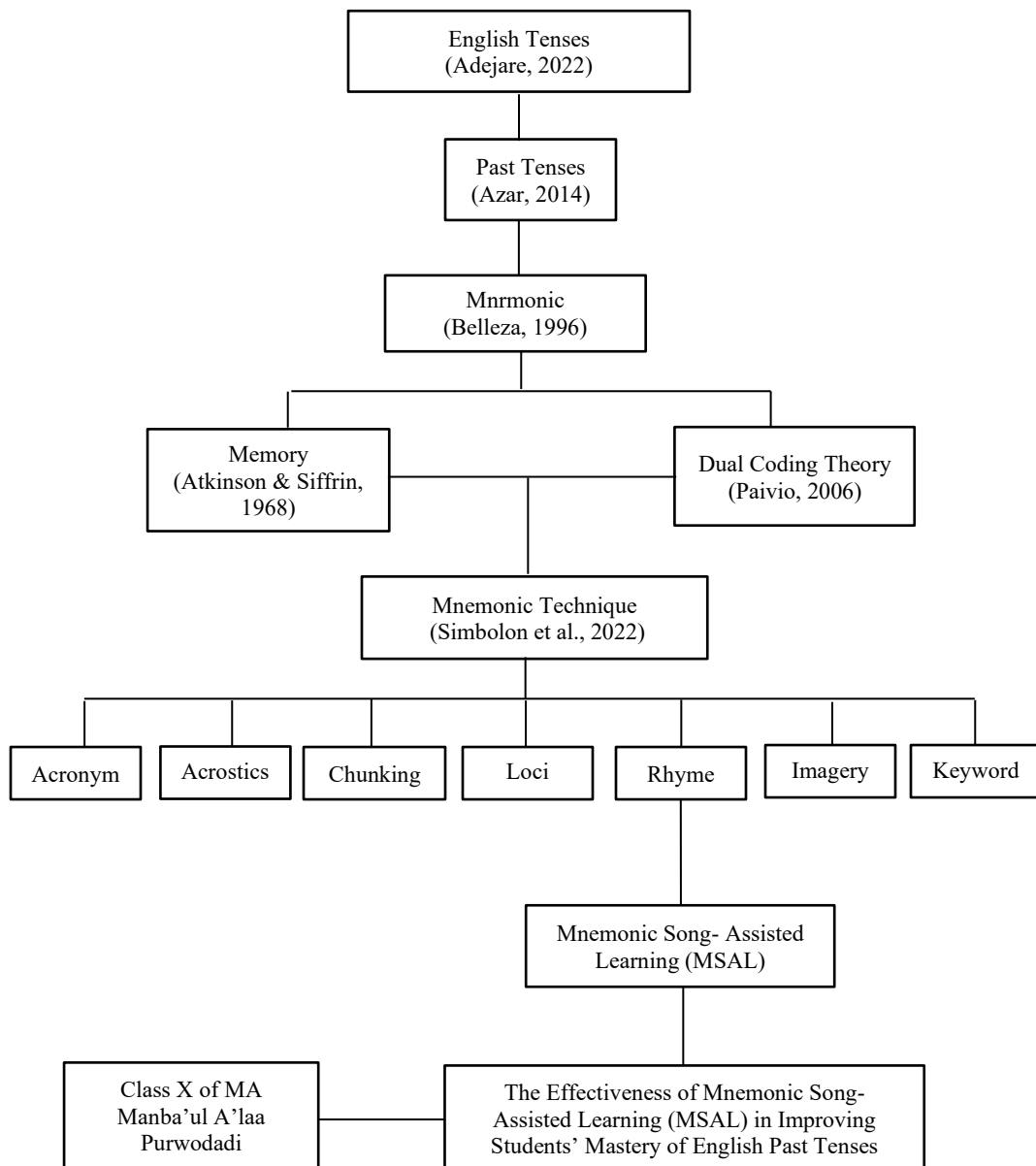


Figure 2.1 Theoretical Framework