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Testing & Teaching Grammar

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DEDICATION

- *To the fountain of patience and optimism and hope.*
- *To each of the following in the presence of God and His Messenger, my mother dear.*
- *To those who have demonstrated to me what is the most beautiful of my brother's life.*
- *To the big heart my dear father.*
- *To the people who paved our way of science and knowledge
All our teachers Distinguished.*
- *To the taste of the most beautiful moments with my friends.*

I guide this research

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SECTION 1

1.1 Introduction

The concept of "Grammar" is viewed differently by the various schools of linguists . According to the traditionalist it is collection of rules and principles ; while to the structuralists , it is the study of how sentences are arranged and formed . The transformationalists consider it as the rules that generate infinite sentence and allow speakers to understand utterances they have never heard of ; whereas to some exponents of the communicative approach , it is the functions and notions of language as opposed to structural patterns .Whatever concept is utilized , grammar remains the internal organization of the language . A language cannot be learned without learning its grammar because it is the element that makes meaning in language use . The issue with grammar is not whether or not it should be learned , but rather how it can be presented to learners . This chapter thus aims at developing a knowledge of grammar for use . pupils should understand and produce linguistic forms as part of a purposeful activity , not just as an exercise in language practice .

These linguistic forms which are referred to as "Grammar " involve language morphology and syntax .

The former shows the changes in word form resulting either from inflections (such as plurality , verb tense , aspect, possession ,etc..) or from derivations as in prefixes or suffixes. On the other hand , syntax deals with word order and how words combined to make sentences.

1.2 Definition of grammar :

The term grammar has been used by different people to mean different things :

1 . some used grammar as a term to refer to group of rules that instruct learners , speakers, and writers on what to say and what not to say or what is right and what is wrong . with this meaning , grammar takes a prescriptive role .

2. some used the term grammar to refer to a set of summarizing generalization on the existent behavior of language. With this meaning , grammar takes merely a descriptive role .

3 . some used the term grammar to mean a theory on the structure of language , a book on grammar , or a teaching lesson where grammar is focused on. (AL-Khuli ,1996, p. 32)

The term grammar will be used with the second meaning in mind . This meaning implies that grammar is nothing more than record of language habits at certain period of time . such implication is obviously in line with the view of structuralists , who hold that grammarians are not , nor have they to be , guardians of linguistic correctness .

1.3 What is grammar

Grammar is the set of rules for choosing words and putting words together to make sense every language has a grammar and we all know , roughly , what is good grammar, and what is not , in our own language . this is true even if we find it difficult to express the rules in words it has been said that

if a language is a building , thee words are the building blocks (or bricks) and the grammar is the architect's plan . you may have a million bricks, but they do not make a building without a plan . similarly , you can know a million English words but if you do not know how to put them together you can not speak English . Rules can be learnt in two ways. One way is for the teacher to give a rule , like this :

" most English verbs in the past tense end in _ed. To make the present tense you remove the _ed or the _ed . Here are some examples : *walked* walk , *closed* close . In the second case pupils are given so many examples that they can work out the rules for themselves . This is like the way we learn language when we are children : we here a lot of language and gradually , without realizing it , we work out what the rules are . An important part of this natural process is the correction made by everyone around us . A teacher must not be afraid of correcting pupils . Correction is a normal process . The rules for putting words together can be quite rigid . If you have the words : 'elephant ' , 'bigger' , 'than' , ' the ' , 'an' , largest' , ' is' , 'rat'(Sesnan ,1997,p.78)

1.4 Structural grammar

This type of grammar is descriptive . It postulates that language has a set of a grammatical patterns in which words are arranged to convey meaning which is determined by word form , function words , word order ,and intonation patterns such as stress , pitch and juncture . Moreover , structural . Linguists classify the parts of speech according to form and according to function , i.e. syntactic position. Class words involve nouns , verbs, adjectives , and adverbs. They carry the basic lexical meaning and inflect to make meaning ; e.g. *Boy –Boys , Do-Does- Done, Happy-happiness-Happily,*

Great-Greatness-Greater, etc.. However, such definition has its own limitations . Not all nouns ending in *S* are plurals (e.g. *chaos , loneliness*) and not all nouns

take *S* in the plural (e.g. *sheep, deer*). Also, not all adjectives make the comparative in

(*_er*) , nor do all adverbs end in (*_ly*) as in fast and hard which function as different parts of speech with own change in form .

Defining words by form is impossible , and the part of speech of a word varies according to its function in a sentence . When analyzing parts of speech , close attention should be paid to grammatical signals and to word order in addition to inflectional and derivational suffixes . Considering words in isolation is not an indication of their grammatical function ; as they should be seen in the prescriptive of phrases and sentences . descriptive grammarians have extensively studied question of the structure of sentences and their constituents of lexical or functional forms. They have developed several strategies for this purpose such as immediate constituent analysis .Often called IC grammar . Another is phrase structure grammar which involves systemic grammar (Hailliday) . In addition there are tagmemic grammar (Pike and Fries) and stratifcational grammar. All these varieties of structural grammar of English are concerned with language performance- spoken or written – and not with competence . Each part can be divided into further words . (O'Sullivan, 1993,p.45)

1.5 The role of grammar

In the teaching of grammar, the teacher is advised to bear the following points in mind :

a. Explanation in itself has a little value and certainly does not result in the learning of the language . there are teachers who spend hours and hours explaining to their pupils how for example , a passive sentence is composed they also make their pupils memorize the pertinent rules , yet when it comes to

make a single passive sentence their pupils fail miserably . The teacher is advised to minimize the role of explanation and lecturing in rules of grammar .

b. the best way to acquire mastery of the grammar of a language is by repetition of examples and by continuous drill. Present four pupils with as many sentences on the passive voice as you can and make them change many sentences into the passive voice and then you discover your pupils have learnt subconsciously the use of the passive voice and thus they can construct the required sentences automatically . (Al-Hamash, 1970 , p.p:14-15)

brief explanations are useful at the beginning of the drill if the teacher wants to tell his pupils what their work is all about or at the end of the drill as a kind of summary to the activity presented.

The text-books dealing with grammar can never be sufficient . the teacher can make his pupils read the grammatical notes presented in the textbook , he can also explain whatever is difficult but he must make sure that his pupils do all the exercises in class or at home and he may supplement the books with more examples of his own .Here , the use of oral work is very useful . Not every sentence should be written down on the board or in the notebook and corrected by the teacher . Most exercises can be done orally and quickly.

d. the teacher is not to shy away from drill and even chorus drill in the secondary school. An intelligent teacher notices that his pupils make mistakes in one area repeatedly .He, then, prepares an exercise and makes his pupils repeat the material after him orally one by one or in chorus . (Ibd, 1970, p:16)

e. Grammatical points are best presented to pupils in contrastive pairs rather than in the form of an inventory like a shopping list .If, for example the teacher is to present English tenses , he is advised to present two tenses at a time rather than take tenses one by one . For instance , the simple present tense becomes clearer when contrasted with the present continuous than when presented

alone . Items in pairs are easier to grasp by the learner . This conforms to the nature of language since all languages are systems of contrasts.

The role of the subject –matter

Undoubtedly we are concerned with the teaching of English. Yet, English, or any other language, can not be taught in a vacuum . It has to be taught and learnt through some kind of material , i.e., we have to use it in relation to some kind of subject. Some teachers confuse the language with the subject-matter of the reading material. Such teachers stress the mastery of the subject-matter and neglect, the language .

The teacher is to bear in mind always that the aim is the teaching of the language , not the teaching of certain stories. (Ibd,1970, p:17)

1.6 Visual grammar

It is also a advisable that the teacher visualizes grammatical facts and relationships, such visualization may take the form of diagrams drawn on charts or the chalkboard to summarize. Contrast , or synthesize patterns already learned by students. In addition, demonstrating examples of some grammatical patterns by writing them on the chalkboard is another way of visualization, which is certainly an aid to learning .

Visualization facilitates learning a new material or reviewing on old material by passing the learning material through the eye gate. As a result this visual perception will reinforce the previous aural perception . For example, in teaching tenses , a line representing time may be drawn and divided into three units for past ,present, and the future extensions ; each extension is then divided into three units of simple, perfect, and continuous aspects. Similarly in teaching or reviewing propositions , a circle maybe drawn and propositions may be placed outside, on, and

inside the circle to show visually how prepositions contrast with each other.
(AL-Khuli, 1996, p 32)

1.7 Traditional grammar

Traditional grammar generally tended to be prescriptive by trying to impose some rules of language correctness and to protect language from so-called corruption and impurity . To put it differently , traditional grammar had tendency to plan for language instead of just reporting how it actually goes .

Traditional grammarians established the famous eight parts of speech: verb , adverb, noun , pronoun. Adjective, preposition, conjunction ,and interjection . This classification has often been criticized by neo – grammarians for inconsistency and inaccuracy : some definitions do not define well because they do not exclude members of other classes ; some definitions are based on semantic consideration whereas others are based on functional ones , which means that there is no unified criterion for defining or classifying ,however, there may be on room here to argue for or against these points because the focus of this book is methods of teaching .

Further, traditional grammar employs parsing, which is a categorization of words within a certain sentence into subject , object, verb, direct object, indirect object, complement ,and so on .(Ibd , 1996 ,p33)

This type of grammar, i.e , Traditional grammar, may be helpful in teaching foreign languages owing to its relative simplicity , practicality ,and usefulness . Its eight parts of speech plus functional categories with the so-called rules have proved to be pedagogically beneficial despite the criticism of some modern linguistics against this grammar.

In addition , when a traditional grammarian gives the rules of a language , let the teacher look at those rules as guides to students and not as superimposed in instructions on who a group of people ought to use that language . Further , the need for rules by foreign –language learners is certainly more urgent than the need of native speakers . The learners of foreign languages often express their satisfaction with knowing the patterns and regularities of the target language because such generalizations make the learned material controllable and retainable. (Ibd,1996p.p ,33-34)

1.8 Immediate constituent grammar

Immediate constituent (IC) grammar is absolutely descriptive and has nothing to do with how a language should be. Its main concern is to analyze sentences as they actually are.

The IC theory assumes that every English sentence can be divided in to two units , each of which can be divided into further two . This process of bi-division is to continue till the word level is reached , where on more cutting can be carried on .

In teaching a foreign language , the teacher may make use of this grammar by substituting one unit for two units and by repeated substitution until a sentence is reduced to its two minimal components , i.e. ,

subject and predicate .Of course , this depends on the students' level and on how much the teacher himself knows this grammar theory and on how intelligently he can apply his theoretical knowledge for practical and educational objectives . (AL-Khuli, 1996 , p . 34)

General remarks 1.9

While teaching grammatical structure , it is recommended to remember these remarks:

1. Generalizations, which are often called rules, are helpful to both teachers and students' provided they are given in the proper time and manner . These generalizations summarize the behavior of language and help students to control their usage of the foreign language.
2. Concepts such as subject and object maybe given in the secondary stage , but not to beginners . These concepts are in fact needed in phrasing and generalizations.
3. Comparing related patterns some strengthens learning because it helps the learner see where those patterns are similar and where they are different.
4. The meaning of a pattern is not to be sacrificed for the sake of the form.
5. Written exercises should play their role in reinforcing oral drills on grammatical patterns.
6. The variation of teaching methods and techniques is necessary for maintaining students' attention and motivation and for attacking the learning target from all possible sides.
7. Continual reviewing is essential for optimal and permanent learning. It is also essential for working against the inevitable effect of time . i.e., Forgetting.
8. In large classes .Choral repetition may replace group and individual repetition for obvious practical reasons. In small classes, chorus repetition is followed by group repetition , which is followed by individual repetition .
9. While teaching patterns , vocabulary has to be controlled or kept easy. When the teacher is a presenting new patterns , he has to use familiar words. Similarly, when he is presenting new words, he has to use familiar patterns .

That underlying principle is to teach one new thing at a time so as to control the difficulty level of the taught material . (Ibd, 1996, p.p:49-50)

1.10 Function words

Words may be classified into two types : content words and function words. Content words constitute the main body of words in language . Such type of words includes nouns , pronouns , objectives , verbs, and adverbs.

On the other hand m function words are a closed class of words . The number of such words in English is about two hundred out of the half million words of that language. Function words include auxiliaries , prepositions, conjunctions, relatives , interrogatives , articles , and adverbs of degree. Concerning meaning , content words express the major part of it whereas function words add to it some clarifications and relations that are essential. In the sentence , *The boy will go to the school*, *The* marks nominality and denotes definition; *will* marks verbality and denotes futurity ; *to* marks nominality and denotes direction . However, if the sentence is made to contain through the hypothetical sentence of *boy go school*.

In teaching , function words are to be taught as parts of grammatical structures. This means that the method of teaching function words is quite different from that of teaching content words . While teaching function words , we emphasize a certain pattern , whereas while teaching content words, we emphasize the words themselves , which may be used in a variety of patterns . To put it differently. When we teach a grammatical structure , we keep the pattern constant and vary words in drilling that structure . In contrast , when we teach a content word , we keep that word constant and vary patterns in drilling that word . (Ibd, 1996, p.36)

1.11 Transformational grammar

Transformational grammar is a modern linguistic theory which appeared in the 1950's and was established by an American linguist called Noam Chomsky and modified by several other linguists later .

This theory represent reaction to all previous grammar theories . Such a reaction manifests itself in many ways:

- 1. According to transformational grammar every sentence has a deep structure and a surface structure .**
- 2. The deep structure is turned into a surface one through optional and obligatory transformational rules .**
- 3. This grammar is characterized by explicitness, which means the grammar accounts for all linguistic facts explicitly without leaving some facts to the readers' intelligence .**
- 4. This grammar is supposed to be formal, i.e., symbolized and quasi mathematical because it uses symbols , abbreviations, formula –like descriptions , numbers , and the like . (Ibd, 1996,p.35)**

The teacher who is familiar with such grammar can make use of it in teaching a foreign languages . Personal experience has shown that students find great interest in formalized transformational rules provided that such rules are given in the right way and doses that suit the learners' level. Relations such as active-passive , statement –interrogation , affirmative-negative , simple-compound , simple – complex structures . (Ibd, 1996,p.36)

SECTION 2

Presentation 2.1

When teaching a new pattern , one may follow these steps:

- 1. Example . Write on the chalkboard an example of the pattern you want to teach.**
- 2. Focus. Draw the learners' attention to the specific structure you want them to learn by underlining that structure or by using colored chalk .**
- 3. Meaning. Present the meaning of the structure preferably through a situation , action, dramatization , or a context. However , the native language may be used , if necessary , to present meaning or to check understanding of the presented meaning .**
- 4. Form . After the presentation of meaning , discuss with your class the form of that pattern . form may involve factors such as concord , order of words ,inversion , inflection, or some function words.**
- 5. Contrast. Explain or discuss with your class how this new pattern is different from a similar to another related pattern or patterns already learned . Such a comparison may handle both areas of meaning and form.**
- 6. Reinforcement . Give more examples to reinforce their comprehension of both meaning and form.**
- 7. Parallel examples . Let your students give parallel structures , i.e . , examples similar to the new pattern in the form . You may ask them questions that lead to those parallel sentences.**
- 8. Generalization . Help your class derive any possible generalization especially regarding the pattern form . You may ask them to take note of those generalization .**

9. Oral drills . Start some suitable oral drills on the new pattern such as substitution drills with their various types , chain drills , loop drills , and four-phased drills . Here the teacher's cues and student's response and conducted orally .

10. Visual exercises . The textbook usually contains at least one exercise on each new pattern . Let students do the related exercise orally . In contrast with oral drills , in the visual exercise , the stimulus is given by the textbook but the response is oral.

11. Written exercise . After doing the textbook exercise orally , let the class write down the exercise in their exercise books . Such writing process is an additional source of reinforcement to learning obtained through aural , oral , and visual media.(Ibd, 1990 . p.p:50-51)

2.2 Rules and explanations

Many of the pros and cons of a rule- driven approach hinge on the quality of the actual rule explanation. This in term depends on how user – friendly the rule is . What , then , makes a rule a good rule ? Michael Swan , author of teachers' and students' grammars, offers the following criteria :

*** Truth : rules should be true while truthfulness may need to be compromised interests of clarity and simplicity , the rule must bear some resemblance to the reality it is describing.**

*** Limitation : rules should show clearly what the limits are on the use of a given form. For example , to say simply that we use**

Will to talk about the future is of little use to the learner since it does not show how will is different from other ways of talking about the future (e.g. going to).

*** Clarity : rules should be clear . Lack of clarity is often caused by ambiguity or obscure terminology. For example :**

"Use will for spontaneous decision ; use going to for premeditated " .

*** Simplicity : rules should be simple . Lack of simplicity is caused by overburdening the rule with sub-categories and sub-sub-categories in order to cover all possible instances and account for all possible exceptions . There is a limit to the amount of exceptions a learner can remember.**

*** familiarity : an explanation should try to make use of concepts already familiar to the learner . Few learners have specialized knowledge of grammar, although they may well be familiar with some basic terminology used to describe the grammar of their own language (e.g. conditional , infinitive, gerund). Most learners have a concept of tense (past , present ,future), but will be less at home with concepts such as deontic and epistemic modality , for example .**

*** Relevance : a rule should answer only those questions that the student needs answered . This questions may vary according to the mother tongue of the learner . For example , Arabic speakers, who do not have an equivalent to the present perfect , may need a different treatment of this form than , say , French speakers, who have similar structure to the English present perfect , but who use it slightly differently.**

But rules are only one component of an explanation . Here , for example , procedure a teacher might use to give a grammar explanation (t=teacher , st = student). In the right –hand column the different stages of the explanation are identified .(Thornbury, 1999 ,p.27)

2.3 A deductive approach

***Deductive approach starts with the presentation of a rule and is followed by examples in which the rule is applied .**

***An inductive approach starts with some examples from which a rule is inferred.**

An example of deductive learning might be that , on arriving in a country you have never been to before ,you are told that as a rule people rub noses when greeting one another , and so you do exactly that .An example of inductive learning would be , on arriving in this same country , you observe several instances of people rubbing noses on meeting so you conclude that this is the custom , and proceed to do likewise . In place of the terms deductive and inductive, it may be easier to use the terms rule-driven learning and discovery learning respectively .

The reasons why Grammar-translation has fallen from favour are worth briefly reviewing . typically , a grammar- translation

Lesson started with an explanation (usually in the learners mother tongue) of a grammar point . practice activities followed which involved translating sentences out of and into the target language. The problem is that since classes were taught in the students mother tongue , there was little opportunity for them to practice the target language . what a practice they got involved only reading and writing , and little attention was given to speaking , including pronunciation. Moreover , the practice sentences were usually highly contrived and any texts that were used were treated solely as vehicle for grammar presentation.

However, it does not require great deal of imagination to envisage a 'new, improved ' version of grammar-translation in which many of its weaknesses

have been righted . Its not the case , for example that the whole lesson need be conducted in the students' mother tongue . Speaking (including work on pronunciation) and listening practice can easily be incorporated into the basic lesson framework , and the translation exercises could just as well involve authentic texts . What this approach does require is teachers with sufficient proficiency in both languages – the learners' language and the target language – to make it work . Needless to say , grammar- translation is not viable in multilingual classes . Its important to stress that the deductive method is not necessarily dependent on translation . In fact , many popular student grammar practice book adopt a deductive approach , with all their explanations and exercises in English . For example:

See the extract from *grammar practice for intermediate students opposite* .

Before looking at some examples of deductive (rule- driven) lessons , it might pay to summarize the arguments against and in favour of such an approach . To start with , here are some possible disadvantages:

- * Starting the lesson with a grammar presentation may be off – putting for some students , especially younger ones . They may not have sufficient metalanguage (i.e , language used to talk about language such as grammar terminology).

Or they may not be able to understand they concepts involved .

- * Grammar explanation encourages a teacher-fronted , transmissions-style classroom .Teacher explanation is often at the expense of student involvement and interaction.

- * Explanation is seldom as memorable as other forms of presentation, such as demonstration .

- * Such an approach encourages the belief that learning a language is simply a case of knowing the rules.

The advantages of a deductive approach are :

- * It gets straight to the point , and can therefore be time –saving . Many rules- especially rules of form – can be more simply and quickly explained than elicited from examples . This will allow more time for practice and application.**
- * It respects the intelligence and maturity of many – especially adult – students , and acknowledges the role of cognitive processes in language acquisition .**
- * It confirms many students' expectations about classroom learning , particularly for those learners who have an analytical learning style.**
- * It allows the teacher to deal with language points as they come up rather than having to anticipate them and prepare for them in advance .(Thornbury , 1999,p.p:29-30)**

2.5 Seven bad reasons for teaching grammar-and two good ones

Too much grammar

Grammar is important; but most of the time, in most parts of the world, people probably teach too much of it. I think we can identify at least seven reasons for this.

1. Because it's there

Asked why he tried to climb Everest, George Mallory famously replied 'Because it is there'. Some teachers take this attitude to the mountain of grammar in their books: it's there, so it has to be climbed. But the grammar points in the course book may not all be equally important for a particular class. The book may have been written for students with different purposes from our students, studying in a different environment, perhaps with different mother tongues and different problems. It may have been designed for learners with more time to spend on grammar than we have. The book may simply have

been written by a grammar fanatic. It is important to choose grammar points relevant to our students' needs, rather than blindly going through the syllabus from left to right.

In a well-known experiment (Hughes and Lascaratou 1982), mistakes made by Greek secondary-school children were shown to Greek teachers of English, British teachers of English, and British non-teachers. Members of each group graded the mistakes on a scale from 1 (least serious) to 5. Interestingly, the mistakes which the Greek teachers regarded as most serious were often those that troubled the native speakers least, and vice-versa. Some examples, with the average gradings given by the Greek teachers ('GT') and the British non-teachers ('BN'):

*We agreed to went to the cinema by car. (GT4.6; BN2.2)

*We didn't knew what had happened. (GT4.4; BN1.8)

*Dizzys from the wine we decided to go home. (GT4.2; BN2.1)

The native speakers generally gave higher marks to mistakes which impeded their understanding: discussing the reasons for their assessments, many mentioned 'intelligibility'. The non-native teachers seemed more disturbed by infringements of common grammar rules; in discussion they referred frequently to 'basic mistakes'. They seemed most upset by the fact that learners continued to break rules which had been taught at an earlier stage of the course and which they 'should' therefore have mastered. They were, effectively, teaching grammar 'because it was there'.

2 .It's tidy

Vocabulary is vast and untidy. We may attempt to systematise it by teaching semantic fields, superordinates and hyponyms, notional/functional categories and the rest, but ultimately vocabulary remains a big muddle. Pronunciation is more easily analysed (if you leave out intonation and stress), and it can be presented as a tidy system of phonemes, allophones, syllable structure and so

on. However, in Tom McArthur's immortal words, pronunciation is that part of a student which is the same at the end of a language course as at the beginning. That leaves grammar. Grammar looks tidy *and* is relatively teachable. Although English grammar does not have the kind of inflectional apparatus which makes German or Latin look so magnificently systematic, there are still many things in English that can be arranged in rows or displayed in boxes. Grammar can be presented as a limited series of tidy things which students can learn, apply in exercises, and tick off one by one. Learning grammar is a lot simpler than learning a language.

3. It's testable

Many students like tests. It is hard to gauge your own progress in a foreign language, and a good test can tell you how you are doing, whether you have learnt what you wanted to, and what level you have reached. Educational authorities love tests. They show (or appear to show) whether children are learning and teachers are teaching properly; they rank learners; and (if you incorporate a pass-mark) they can be used to designate successes and create failures. Unfortunately it is time-consuming and difficult to design and administer tests which really measure overall progress and attainment. On the other hand, grammar tests are relatively simple. So grammar is often used as a testing short-cut; and, because of the washback effect of testing, this adds to the pressure to teach it. So we can easily end up just teaching what can be tested (mostly grammar), and testing what we have taught (mostly grammar).

4. Grammar as a security blanket

Grammar can be reassuring and comforting. In the convoluted landscape of a foreign language, grammar rules shine out like beacons, giving students the feeling that they can understand and control what is going on. Although this feeling is partly illusory (structural competence only accounts for a proportion of what is involved in mastery of a language), anything that adds to learners' confidence is valuable. However, the 'security-blanket' aspect can lead students

and their teachers to concentrate on grammar to the detriment of other less codifiable but equally important aspects of the language.

5. It formed my character

As a student, I worked hard to learn the rules governing capitalisation in German. The authorities have now changed them, without consulting me, in the interests of ‘simplification’, and my investment has gone down the drain. I am not pleased: if you have struggled to learn something, you feel it must be important. Many foreign-language teachers spent a good deal of time when younger learning about tense and aspect, the use of articles, relative clauses and the like; they naturally feel that these things matter a good deal and must be incorporated in their own teaching. In this way, the tendency of an earlier generation to overvalue grammar can be perpetuated.

6. You have to teach the whole system

People often regard grammar as a single interconnected system, all of which has to be learnt if it is to work properly. This is an illusion. Grammar is not something like a car engine, where a fault in one component such as the ignition or fuel supply can cause a complete breakdown. It is more realistic to regard grammar as an accumulation of different elements, some more systematic than others, some linked together tightly or loosely, some completely independent and detachable. We teach – or should teach – selected subsystems, asking for each: 1) How much of this do the students know already from their mother tongue? (A German speaker, unlike a Japanese learner, knows the main facts about English article use before his/her first lesson.) 2) How much of the rest is important? 3) How much of that have we got time for? To try to teach ‘the whole system’ is to ignore all three of these questions.

7. Power

Some teachers – fortunately, a minority – enjoy the power. As a teacher you can get a kick from knowing more than your students, from being the

authority, from always being right. In language teaching, grammar is the area where this mechanism operates most successfully. A teacher may have a worse accent than some of her students; there may be some irritating child in the class with a vast vocabulary of pop-music idiom or IT terminology of which the teacher knows nothing; but there is always grammar to fall back on, with its complicated rules and arcane terminology. Even if you have a native-speaking child in your class, he or she won't be able to talk coherently and confidently about progressive infinitives or the use of articles with uncountable nouns. If you can, you win.

Societies like grammar. Grammar involves rules, and rules determine 'correct' behaviour. Education is never neutral, and the teaching methods in any society inevitably reflect attitudes to social control and power relationships. In countries where free speech is valued (up to a point), language classes are likely to let students talk, move about, and join in the decision-making (up to a point). In more authoritarian societies, students are more likely to sit in rows, listen, learn rules, do grammar exercises, make mistakes and get corrected (thus demonstrating who is in control). Examination design follows suit, showing whether the authorities want future voters who are good at expressing themselves or ones who are good at obeying rules. (Guess which.) Examination syllabuses the world over also generally include a component which requires great mental agility, is of doubtful value to most people, and is regarded as a touchstone of intellectual capacity. In Western societies maths has taken over this responsibility from Latin, but the grammar of foreign languages plays a useful supporting role. (*Richards and Renandya, 2002, pp.148–152*)

the results: teaching grammar instead of English

Where grammar is given too much priority the result is predictable and well known. 'Course books' become little more than grammar courses. Students don't learn English: they learn grammar, at the expense of other things that

matter as much or more. They know the main rules, can pass tests, and may have the illusion that they know the language well. However, when it comes to using the language in practice they discover that they lack vital elements, typically vocabulary and fluency: they can recite irregular verbs but can't sustain a conversation. (As J K Jerome put it a century ago, few people care to listen to their own irregular verbs recited by young foreigners.) Such an approach is also psychologically counterproductive, in that it tends to make students nervous of making mistakes, undermining their confidence and destroying their motivation.

The other extreme

There are bad reasons for *not* teaching grammar, too. When, as sometimes happens, there is a reaction against grammar-heavy syllabuses, people often tend to fly to the other extreme and teach little or no grammar. This happened during the 1970s and after, when the communicative approach (in itself an excellent development) was widely taken as a justification for teaching 'functions and notions' or 'skills' *instead of* grammar. One of the results of this unfortunate trend was the appearance of a generation of British teachers and teacher trainers many of whom were seriously ignorant of the structure of the language they were professionally concerned with teaching. Doing too little grammar (whether out of misguided principle or sheer ignorance) is of course as damaging as doing too much.

Good reasons for teaching some grammar

There are two good reasons for teaching carefully selected points of grammar.

1) *comprehensibility* Knowing how to build and use certain structures makes it possible to communicate common types of meaning successfully. Without these structures, it is difficult to make comprehensible sentences. We must, therefore, try to identify these structures and teach them well. Precisely what they are is partly open to debate – it is difficult to measure the functional load of a given linguistic item independently of context – but the list will obviously include

such things as basic verb forms, interrogative and negative structures, the use of the main tenses, and the grammar of modal auxiliaries.

(But we also need to remember that even minor mistakes, which do not affect comprehensibility on their own, can do so if they cluster – so we may need to address some of our students' most frequent errors as well as their most serious errors.)

2) *acceptability* In some social contexts, serious deviance from native-speaker norms can hinder integration and excite prejudice – a person who speaks 'badly' may not be taken seriously, or may be considered uneducated or stupid. Students may, therefore, want or need a higher level of grammatical correctness than is required for mere comprehensibility. Potential employers and examiners may also require a high – often unreasonably high – level of grammatical correctness, and if our students' English needs to be acceptable to these authorities, their prejudices must be taken into account. (*Ibd*, 2002, pp.148–152)

What points of grammar we choose to teach will therefore depend on our circumstances and our learners' aims. Whatever the situation, though, we must make sure that we are teaching only the points of grammar that we need to in the light of these factors, and – of course – that we are teaching them well. If we can manage to focus clearly on these principles, we have a better chance of teaching English instead of just teaching grammar. (Hughes, , and Lascaratou. (1982) 'Competing Criteria for Error Gravity' *English Language Teaching Journal*, 36/3, 175–182).

Grammatical Meaning 2.6

Recognition of the function of each element is essential for comprehending an utterance , as each word , phrase or notion in it plays a certain role in conveying its message . Content words, in the first place , provide us with the

lexical meaning (I.e. dictionary meaning) which is basic in understanding the general meaning of the sentence . On the other hand , grammatical meaning is determined by word order within the sentence , (inflection , structure words , syntax) , concord or arrangement , and intonation and stress .

Inflections These are of two types : inflectional suffixes and derivational affixes . The former refers to a change in the form of a word to show different syntactical relationships . The latter refers to word formation where new words are formed by addition of prefixes or suffixes or both . Inflectional suffixes are limited in number and do not change the part of speech of a word . They can be classified as follows :

a) **Plural of nouns . This form has several varieties as follows :(**

Singular	Plural	Phonetic Transcript	Suffix
—			
Cat	cats	/kæts/	_____s
Ball	balls	/bɔ:lz/	_____z
Dish	dishes	/dɪʃɪz/	_____iz
Wife	wives	/waivz/	_____vz
Ox	oxen	/oksən/	_____en

(b) The possessive of nouns : The ('s) that forms the possessive of nouns in English follows the same pattern /s/ , /z/ and /ɪz/ that conditions the plural form . Examples :

/s/	/z/	/ɪz/
Jack's	Fred's	Rose's
/dʒks/	/fredz/	/rəʊzɪz/

(c) The third person singular present tense of verbs : The s – ending that occurs in the third person singular of the simple present tense follows also the same pattern that conditions the plural morpheme . Examples :

/s/	/z/	/ɪz/
Eats	sees	dresses
/i:ts/	/si:z/	/dresɪz/

(d) The past –tense form : The markers of the past form of regular verbs are /t/ , /d/ , or /ɪd/ , while irregular formations of the past tense and of the past participle have different inflectional endings. Examples :

	/t/	/d/	/ɪd/
Regular	lick/licked	rub/rubbed	want/wanted
Verbs	/lɪkt/	/rʌbd/	/wɒntɪd/
Irregular	write	wrote	written
Verbs	/raɪt/	/rəʊt/	/rɪtn/
	Sleep	slept	slept

/sli:p/

/slept/

/slept/

(e). The progressive form : The suffix (-ing) is used with the helping verb (be) to form the continuous tense . Example : Ali is playing football . It may substitute for an adjective e.g.: Cars are fascinating creatures ; or it may function as a gerund , e.g.: Swimming is a good exercise.

(f) The past participle form : The (ed) ending is added to the verb to form the past participle with its perfective and passive functions .Example : has written , was cleaned .

(g) The comparative and superlative markers (er) and (est) : These occur with adjectives and are also inflectional suffixes .Examples : taller , tallest .

Derivational affixes , on the other hand , are numerous and mark a change in the word class : noun to verb , verb to noun , noun to adjective , adjective to adverb and so on . This device of word formation is an effective means of increasing vocabulary and of identifying the functional use of a word. (O'Sullivan ,1993,p.p:76-77) .

some common suffixes and their use are :

Suffix	signal	example
-ize	verb	realize
-tion	noun	preparation
-en	verb	shorten

The following list illustrates some of the most common affixes :

1. Verb	adjective	noun
Act	active	activity/actor

Describe	descriptive	description
Depend	dependent	dependence
2- Noun	verb	adjective
Shortness	shorten	short
Courage	encourage	courageous
Horror	horrify	horrible
Form	formalize	formal
3- Adjective	noun	verb
Real	realization	realize
Simple	simplification	simplify
Dark	darkness	darken
Clear	clarity	clarify
4. Verb	noun	adjective
Amuse	amusement	amusing
Accept	acceptance	acceptable
Like	likeness	likely
5. Noun	adjective	adverb
Fortune	fortunate	fortunately

Happiness	happy	happily
Kindness	kind	kindly

2.7 Grammar and communicative approach

Communicatively –taught grammar is a modern linguistic approach that emerged in the late 1970s as a reaction against prevalent structural grammar . It was established by British linguists, namely Wilkins, Hymes , Candlin , Widdowson , and others . This approach tries to reconcile language usage with use. That is , to acquire grammar not simply as linguistic forms (e.g., present perfect , present progressive , past tense , phrasal verbs, relatives , etc.) , but also as a communicative resource . While the structural technique concentrates largely on the form of the items, communicatively –taught grammar gives prominence to the meaning of the grammatical forms as specified by the functional tags. The main characteristics of this treatment of grammar can be summed up as follows:

a. It involves the use of the form and meaning of language items simultaneously. It takes into consideration knowledge of linguistic rules, that is rules of construction of the language, and the ability to manipulate this knowledge for communicative purpose. Grammatical forms, therefore, are taught not for their own sake as in structural or traditional grammar, but as a means of carrying out communicative acts.

However, this approach does not focus on the grammatical form of items, nor does it give abstract descriptions or definitions .Instead, its concentrates on the meanings or the notions underlying those forms. This is followed lest the communicative aspect of the language be lost in the effort of mastering the grammatical form through conventional practice or manipulation of sentences.

The main purpose is to help the learners build up language competence through use, and not through knowledge of linguistic rules.

b. Through its emphasis on meaning, this approach assumes that incorrect grammatical forms (e.g. I have speak. she go everyday to school, etc.) can be eradicated gradually as the learner advances in learning and in using the language. Confusion in the conceptual meaning (i.e., of grammatical notions) is more difficult to overcome in later stages. Hence, notions and functions should coexist with structures. The learner should know first which notions or ideas he wants to communicate. Subsequently he expresses these notions or concepts through communicative functions, i.e. Speech acts encoded into grammatical forms.

c. It tries to express the various notions or meanings that may belong to a single grammatical form as it introduces them separately and in different situations or stages in order to highlight their meaning and use. The meanings of verb tenses and modals are good examples of this grammar. For example, the different grammatical notions of the modal 'will', namely: willingness, polite requests, intention, insistence and prediction can best be taught at different stages since the situations in which these notions are used differ greatly. This strategy of presenting one notion at a time ensures that all possible notions are introduced as separate teaching objectives.

d. Another feature of this approach is connected with the process of learning. It is less teacher centred. The communicative activities associated with it make pupils less dependent on the teacher as the giver of knowledge. Pupils are encouraged to recognize for themselves grammatical forms as they are working out activities in groups, pairs or individually. (Ibd,1993,p.p:74-75).

Despite all these merits, the communicative teaching of grammar suffers from the followings:

a. To each linguistic forms and language functions together as linked pairs might confuse pupils and might lead them to overgeneralize or draw wrong conclusions. Thus they may believe that each linguistic form can only express one particular function.

b. Too much emphasis on functional meaning would not give pupils sufficient knowledge of the linguistic rules (i.e. system of the language) to carry out or extend a communicative task efficiently. A structural /notional grammar would be more appropriate to avoid the danger of focusing on form or meaning.

c. Too many teachers, communicatively –taught grammar does not seem systematic or coherent as it is restricted to the notions and functions of the language. This usually occurs randomly rather than logically consequently this grammar is not clearly defined or expressed through a convenient system because grammatical forms are encoded into communicative functions.

d. Grammar taught in this way requires a competent teacher, so that he can create appropriate communicative situations to provide the pupils with the opportunity to practice the grammar points in a natural interesting way, and not through the manipulation of linguistic exercises or sentences. Such an EFL teacher is difficult to find in a foreign context where all FL teachers are non-native speakers of the target language.(Ibd,1993,p.76)

2.8 Testing grammar usage

In order to understand and use a foreign language students must be able to recognize and produce the patterns of that language , although the ability to identify the grammatical structures of language does not by itself imply the ability to use these structures in actual writing or speaking. It is , however, true that unless the students can recognize these structures , they will not be able to use them accurately . In beginners classes , its essential to test the pupils' ability to recognize the basic grammatical patterns of the foreign language . Only later they should be tested by the real production.(Darwesh. 1997,p.33)

Techniques for testing

the multiple-choice Items (completion)

One of the commonest techniques of testing grammatical structures at the elementary stage is the multiple-choice techniques

The test item usually presents a statement or a question followed by four or more choices . The examiner has to select the correct choice , e.g .

Instructions: Encircle the letter of the most suitable choice. (Ibd . 1997, p:34)

2.9 Teaching cultural features

The learning of subsystems of the language , namely sounds, vocabulary and grammar is inadequate for the acquisition of communicative competence unless we know their appropriate use within each situation . That is , when to use them and under what circumstances they are appropriate .This social use of the language involves , among other things , cultural allusions or conventions such as ways of thinking, custom ,mores, art forms, idioms , etc. It also involves paralinguistic features like tone of voice ,gestures and facial expression. Such

cultural features are essential to understand the ideas and meanings entailed in speech acts . For example , a foreign language learner should comprehend references or expressions that often occur in the written or the spoken language such as : 'He's as old as the hills' , 'pretty as a picture' , or proverbs like , 'more haste , less speed ' , etc. The learner must also be able to interpret the figurative use of the language , e.g. ' He's the lord of the road' , 'Fair as a star when only one is shining in the sky' , or expressions like ' the bar' for lawyers collectively , etc. He must also conform to norms of English culture , knowing which expressions are polite , acceptable , formal , informal , etc..

Both in speaking and writing . In addition , he needs to understand nonverbal communication such as nods , smiles and the like.

The ignorance of such cultural features would create misunderstanding between a listener and a speaker , or a writer and a reader . In terms of foreign language learning, this situation (i.e. Being unaware of cultural content) indicates incapacity to use the language appropriately .

Hence gaining cultural knowledge of the target language is an integral part of the learning process . (O'Sullivan , 1993 p.77) .

2.10 Conclusion

The concept of Grammar according to traditionalist it is collection of rules and principles ; while to the structuralists , it is the study of how sentences are arranged and formed . Grammar involves language morphology and syntax . The term grammar has been used by different people to mean different things such as it is used as a term to refer to group of rules that instruct learners , speakers, and writers on what to say and what not to say or what is right and

what is wrong, it's used to refer to a set of summarizing ,and it's used to mean a theory on the structure of language. Traditional grammar, may be helpful in teaching foreign languages owing to its relative simplicity , practicality ,and usefulness . Its eight parts of speech plus functional categories with the so-called rules have proved to be pedagogically beneficial despite the criticism of some modern linguistics against this grammar. The IC theory assumes that every English sentence can be divided in to two units , each of which can be divided into further two . This process of bi-division is to continue till the word level is reached , where on more cutting can be carried on .

In teaching grammatical structure , it is recommended to remember these remarks such as Generalizations, Concepts, Comparing related patterns, The meaning of a pattern is not to be sacrificed for the sake of the form, written exercises should play their role in reinforcing oral drills on grammatical patterns, The variation of teaching methods and techniques, Continual reviewing, Choral repetition, and vocabulary has to be controlled or kept easy.

Deductive approach starts with the presentation of a rule and is followed by examples in which the rule is applied .

An inductive approach starts with some examples from which a rule is inferred. Recognition of the function of each element is essential for comprehending an utterance , as each word , phrase or notion in it plays a certain role in conveying its message, and also In order to understand and use a foreign language students must be able to recognize and produce the patterns of that language and the best technique for testing Grammar is the multiple-choice Items (completion).