

## ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES OF TEACHING ENGLISH GRAMMAR

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### Abstract:

This article explores the multifaceted challenges teachers face in the field of English grammar teaching. It critically examines issues ranging from the diverse needs of students and the complexity of grammar rules to engaging teaching methods. The author explores strategies for adapting instruction to accommodate students with different language and proficiency levels. In addition, the article explores the complexities inherent in English grammar, looking at irregularities, exceptions, and nuanced usage. It discusses innovative and interactive approaches to teaching and emphasizes the importance of technology, games, real-life examples, and collaborative activities in creating a dynamic learning environment. Balancing teaching the form and function of grammar and assessing students' grammar skills is considered. The article also highlights the importance of continuing professional development for teachers and the role of cultural sensitivity in teaching English grammar. By providing insight into these issues, the article aims to provide teachers with valuable guidance on how to overcome barriers and improve the effectiveness of grammar teaching.

**Keywords:** grammar, principle, training, communication, student, teacher, fluent, method, vocabulary, forms of training

### Introduction

In the process of teaching and learning a foreign language, grammar has always been a significant issue in second and foreign language learning and teaching. It is also an area of some controversy as there is much debate regarding its role in language learning and teaching. Some specialists hold the view that grammar is not essential for second or foreign-language learning and therefore have a zero position in grammar teaching. On the contrary, some view that grammar is necessary for foreign language learning. Currently, grammar is reestablished in language teaching and there is no consensus among the theorists, language teachers and practitioners that some formal instruction on grammar is necessary in ESL classrooms. Teachers are also provided a number of approaches and strategies to choose in teaching grammar effectively in their classrooms. In case of grammar, it is deductively taught; that is, learners are provided the grammar rules and examples,



are told to memorize them, and then are asked to apply the rules to other examples. In our context, many teachers think that teaching grammar separately is not favorable to learners since learners only learn the way language is constructed, and very often when they are given grammatical rules, the learners work well on such cases. However, when the students write or speak, the learners make grammatical mistakes or even unnecessary ones. Helping learners apply grammatical rules into communicative tasks, for example, writing and speaking are very challenging. Therefore, teachers, especially in the context of EFL, could benefit from learning some alternative teaching approaches for teaching grammar so that they can integrate grammar or structure into other language skills in such a way that the goal of learning language is ultimately achieved.

One of the common challenges is the inadequate knowledge of grammar of students. Even students are uninformed of the common structural rules that are supposed to be learned at very initial level of their education. Therefore, when ESL teachers start teaching grammar at elementary stage, his efforts are in vain. Therefore, the teacher must know the current competence level of the students because he cannot build a structure on a weak foundation. This means that the teacher must teach each grammar element based on the students' past knowledge and their aptitude. According to Abrar (2016) the teacher must master the strategy of moving from a simple grammatical structure to a complex structure and from a known concept to an unknown concept. Muhsin (2015) argues that the attitude of learners and ESL instructors towards grammar is also a leading challenge, as many learners find grammar class challenging and tedious. Even many teachers find it a tough area and they themselves are not very good at teaching grammar. There is a requirement to create a possible and comfortable setting in the classroom for efficient and productive teaching of grammar by means of various activities and exercises. ESL teachers also need to increase their grammar knowledge (Kelly, 2018). There is a need to focus on the teaching methods and strategies which teachers can employ in the lessons of grammar teaching so that they can deliver the concept to the students. combined into sentences, or the study or use of these rules.” (Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, 2001, p. 619). Depending on one’s theoretical orientation, different According to Schwarz (2014), grammar teaching should be done as efficiently as possible due to the time constraints and the fact that it should be done by teachers. Prolonged attention to grammar is difficult to justify. Abdullah and Shah (2014) also stated that the study of grammar allows language users to analyze patterns and avoid making mistakes. In this way, it can lead to more accurate writing and speaking skills among the students. While there are teachers who prefer to use the structural method in teaching their students thinking that this method is the best to enhance the proficiency in the language, there are also some teachers who prefer to use the communicative method in teaching grammar to their students. Their belief is teaching grammar should be done in a communicative manner whereby the students will grasp the parts of speech without going through the tiring and boring way of learning the language. Moreover, according to Bebeniec (2015), these approaches are obviously represented in the construction and delivery, as for example evidenced by language users' ability to comprehend.

- **Deductive Approach:** The deductive approach to teaching English grammar involves the explicit presentation of grammar rules to students. The lesson begins with a clear explanation of the rule, followed by examples and exercises for practice. This method provides a structured and



efficient way to teach specific grammar rules. While it may lack the engagement of other approaches, it is particularly suitable for complex or abstract concepts.

- **Inductive Approach:** On the other hand, the inductive approach focuses on student discovery. Teachers present examples in context and guide students to observe patterns, allowing them to formulate grammar rules themselves. This approach encourages critical thinking, active participation, and a deeper understanding of language rules. However, it can be time-consuming and may require higher levels of student engagement and motivation.

Researchers have previously investigated the effect of English teachers' beliefs on grammar teaching and learning. The first research done by Buwono & Purbani (2020) indicate that many English teachers also stick to the traditional techniques of grammar despite emphasizing their teaching grammar in meaningful contexts. The second research conducted by Gilakjani & Sabouri (2017) found that the students were found to have more favorable attitudes towards learning formal grammar than the teachers. More students agree that they can improve their communicative ability more quickly if they learn and practice grammar. It also found that the majority of students and teachers believe that it is broadly more important to practice a foreign language in simulated real-life situations than to analyze and practice grammar patterns. The objectives of this research are twofold as follows. First, it hopes to uncover English teachers' beliefs about grammar teaching and learning. Second, it helps foreign language students and English teachers reflect on their beliefs. Such reflection can bring these beliefs to reassess and re-evaluate different grammar teaching techniques that students are unaware of so that the students can become aware of foreign language patterns while learning English grammar. Furthermore, the selection of grammar instruction for this research is based on the evidence that the use of correct grammar usage is primarily responsible for the students' effective communication in the target language (Saengboon, 2017). In addition, teaching and learning grammar at a conscious level gives English foreign language students a strong sense of achievement that helps them stay motivated, engaged, and participate in classroom activities and thus facilitate the process of learning the target language (Dos Santos, 2019).

While English grammar encompasses numerous rules, here are some key areas to focus on:

1. **Verb Tenses:** Mastering the various verb tenses is essential for expressing actions and states accurately in different time frames. Understand the distinctions between present, past, and future tenses, as well as their progressive and perfect forms.
2. **Subject-Verb Agreement:** Ensure that the subject and verb in a sentence agree in number and person. Pay attention to singular and plural nouns, as well as the use of singular or plural verb forms accordingly.
3. **Punctuation:** Learn the proper use of punctuation marks, such as commas, periods, question marks, and exclamation points. Understand how punctuation affects the structure and meaning of a sentence.
4. **Sentence Structure:** Familiarize yourself with different sentence structures, including simple, compound, and complex sentences. Understand how to combine clauses and phrases to convey meaning effectively.
5. **Modal Verbs:** Learn the functions and usage of modal verbs like "can," "could," "may," "might," "should," "must," etc. These verbs express possibility, necessity, permission, and ability.



6. **Prepositions:** Understand how prepositions indicate relationships between words and phrases. Learn common prepositions and their usage in expressing time, place, direction, and other relationships.

7. **Articles:** Grasp the correct usage of articles "a," "an," and "the." Understand when and how to use them to refer to specific or nonspecific nouns.

The role of grammar in achieving fluency in spoken language cannot be overstated. Grammar serves as the backbone of any language, providing a set of rules and structures that govern how words and phrases are organized to convey meaning. For individuals aspiring to speak a language fluently, a solid understanding of grammar is essential. It not only enables them to construct grammatically correct sentences but also allows for effective communication by ensuring coherence and clarity in speech. A robust grasp of grammar facilitates the articulation of thoughts and ideas in a manner that is easily comprehensible to others. It provides a framework for expressing complex concepts and emotions with precision, allowing individuals to convey their intended message accurately. Without a strong foundation in grammar, spoken communication may become disjointed, confusing, or prone to misinterpretation. However, the journey to mastering grammar is not without its challenges. Learners often encounter difficulties arising from the intricacies of grammatical rules, exceptions, and the nuances that vary across different languages. The sheer volume of information, coupled with irregularities in grammar, can be overwhelming for those embarking on the language-learning process. Additionally, the application of grammar in real-time conversation requires quick thinking and on-the-spot decision-making, posing an additional layer of complexity. Another common obstacle in learning grammar is the need for consistent practice. While understanding grammatical rules is crucial, the ability to implement them seamlessly in spoken language comes with practice. Learners may face challenges in incorporating grammar naturally into their speech, and overcoming this hurdle necessitates persistent effort and exposure to the language in diverse contexts.

Despite these challenges, the rewards of mastering grammar are substantial. Proficiency in grammar contributes not only to clear and effective communication but also enhances overall language skills. It empowers individuals to express themselves confidently, fostering a deeper connection with the language and its cultural nuances. In conclusion, while the difficulties of learning grammar are undeniable, the importance of grammar in achieving fluency cannot be overstated. The journey to mastering grammar may be demanding, but the benefits in terms of enhanced communication skills and linguistic proficiency make it a worthwhile endeavor. With dedication, practice, and a well-structured learning approach, individuals can navigate the complexities of grammar and unlock the full potential of their spoken language abilities.

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