THE POSITION OF GRAMMAR IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

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Abstract
The main objective of this paper is to discuss the position of Grammar in English Language Teaching. English Grammar as one of the subjects in schools, always plays a good role in helping students of English language in order to have better understanding of the language. Today, the role of English grammar in teaching children at their schools should not be neglected because, grammar represents the students' linguistic competence. The pupils who speak and learn English language should know English grammar in order to know the English rules to get better meaning of words and sentences in their language. Language is used as one of the important features of human life in order to help human beings to communicate with other people in their society. Grammar is a key to their understanding of verbal communication, and helps people understand themselves and how to communicate. This paper examines the methods of English Language teaching grammar in detail: deductively and inductively, with focus on form, and meaning. The paper also examines briefly Descriptive and Prescriptive grammars.
Key words: English Language, Methods of English teaching Grammar, Descriptive and Prescriptive grammars

Introduction
In this paper we have to examine the role of grammar in language before, we can consider the position of grammar in English language teaching; every language has its grammar. The grammar of the language is important. Therefore, Grammar is primarily concerned with the study of language. It explains to us the difficulties and problems involved in learning a language and it guides us to know how language is effectively used in our day-to-day life. Grammar tells us how words are formed and why they are classified into various categories. It also instructs us how words are combined and grouped into sentences. Grammar makes us familiar with sentence structure. It enables us to understand how sentences are patterned and how they are used in our practical life for proper and effective communication.

Grammar has been defined by many scholars in different ways. Tomori (1977:1) as cited in Oboko (2014:578) looks at grammar from four different dimensions, 'as a quality of the knowledge of a language possessed by a native speaker, and as a book embodying the morphological and syntactic rules of a particular language. He also sees grammar as the body of descriptive statements about the morphological and syntactic structures of language and finally, grammar according to him is the body of prescriptive statements about usages that are considered acceptable and those that are considered unacceptable in a particular language.

Yule (1985:87) in addition, points out that grammar involves what might be considered "linguistic etiquettte",that is the identification of the 'proper' or 'best' structures to be used in a language. In his final definition of grammar, Yule states that grammar involves the study and analysis of the structure found in language. Boadi et al (1981:8-9) define grammar as a particular branch of the study of language in general. In another definition, they see grammar as the set of patterns in which the words of a language are arranged in other to convey meanings. In their opinion, the second definition is the concern of teachers and students, especially, where a language is taught or learnt as a second languge. Grammar as conceived in this study is a rule that governs the internal structure of a language.

The Word Grammar

In the history of human being, grammar has been discussed by different teachers, research scholars and linguists from the early days of language knowledge. Varshney (1998) opines that the term *grammar* came from a Greek word "*grammatkia* or *grammatikatechne*" which may be translated as the art of writing. Jackson (1985:1) said that "the English word "grammar" derives ultimately from the Greek *gramma*, meaning a "letter". In classical Greek and Latin the word *grammatica* referred to the general study of literature and language. When the word *grammar* came into English in the medieval period, it was used to refer only to Latin grammar; and it was not until the seventeenth century that the term took on a more general meaning and so had to be prefaced by 'Latin,' 'English,' or 'French', etc.

Grammar as Rules

Verghese (1989) in his argument says that grammar is defined in order to lead us to the fact that grammar consists of certain rules and that it is these rules that govern the system of language units and structures by which we communicate with each other. Khansir (2008) mentions that grammar has a crucial role in language teaching. He added that language teachers and specialists are of the view that grammar can help first, second and foreign language learners develop linguistic competence as part of communicative competence. Richards, et al. (1985) assert that grammar is a description of the structure of a language and the way in which linguistic units such as words and phrases are combined to produce sentences in the language.

Grammar as Analysis of the Structure of a Language

The indication of Nunan (2001) is that grammar is an analysis of the structure of a language , either as encountered in a corpus of speech or writing (a performance grammar) or as predictive of a speaker's knowledge (a competence grammar). Singh (2008:98) in his discussion of teaching grammar, posits that "the teaching of grammar is the teaching of the rules of grammar as part of language education. In the context of the second language instruction, the teaching of grammar is generally aimed at imparting the learners' knowledge and ability to use the language grammatically correctly ".

Role of Grammar in Language Teaching

In English language teaching, the role of grammar in the learning of English language is still a controversial subject, many English language teachers and language experts argued that grammar can be used as an essential subject for learning English in ELT setting. If we come to language teaching methods, the grammar translation method is still taught by many English language teachers. In many EFL classrooms for instance, Iran, Arab countries, and Germany, grammar is taught deductively and there is less and almost no, emphasis on listening and speaking skills.

It is grammar that surveys and defines various parts of speech in detail and studies their functions elaborately. Grammar is essential and beneficial for writers, journalists and poets who are engaged in literary field. It creates proper opportunities for those who wish to perfect their written languages. Grammar is a science which equips us with the powerful communicational abilities and aids. It tells us how to impress people with our speech and conversation. According to Freeman (2003:13) "grammar is an area of knowledge that linguists and language teachers study". In the words of Ur (1996:75) he argued that "grammar is sometimes defined as the way words are put together to make correct sentences". Falk (1978) mentioned that" the end product of the linguistic investigation of competence is a systematic description of linguistic knowledge, called the grammar of the language".

Considering the importance of grammar in English language learning, Otagburuagu et al (2007:165) as quoted in Oboko (2014:580) make the following assertion, "even if we are not learning it at school, we still need formal moments of instruction to perfect our understanding of the new language; its speech, grammar and usage". To this effect, it is clear that grammar cannot be brushed aside as far as English language teaching is concerned.

Generating Sentences

Zimmermann (1984:40) as (cited in Khansir and Tabande, 2014) argued that"research in Germany has revealed that in fact forty to sixty percent of teaching time in EFL lessons is spent on grammar". Today, what is important to note is that the rules of English grammar should be necessary for English learners to communicate in English language. The knowledge of English grammar should be guided to help the English learners in making sentences even though the learners are unconscious of them as they speak and write their hundreds of sentences every day of their lives.

According to this definition, Chomsky (1965) indicated that grammar is a system of rules that in some explicit and well-defined way assign structural descriptions to sentences. Koutsoudas (1966) informed that a grammar is a device that generates an infinite number of correct sentences of a given language and no incorrect ones.

Descriptive and Prescriptive Grammar

Here, we begin by considering the definition of grammar and then directly discuss descriptive and prescriptive grammar. According to Matthews (2007) grammar of a language is any systematic account of the structure of a language; the patterns that it describes; the branch of linguistics concerned with such patterns. In the discussion of descriptive and prescriptive grammar, there has always been a contrast between a descriptive grammar , which provides a precise account of actual usage, and a prescriptive grammar, which attempts to establish rules for the correct use of language in society (Crystal , 1992).

Richard, et al. (1992) mentioned that descriptive grammar is a grammar that describes how a language is actually spoken and or written, and does not state or prescribe how it ought to be spoken or written, whereas prescriptive grammar is a grammar that states rules for what is considered the best or most correct usage. In the history of English grammar, prescriptive grammar is a traditional grammar comes back to Latin and its aim is to focus on the correct English rather than current English.

According to Bose (2005), prescriptive grammarians like to ignore speech and the current English in use and so their grammar is full of rules, some of which are not in accordance with the way the language functions. On the other hand, he added that descriptive grammar states how the native speakers of the language use a language. It describes rather than prescribes. It recognizes the fact that English being a living language tends to accept deviations from the rules to fulfill the needs of its users; these deviations get accepted in due course and become rules themselves. He argued that English language like any other languages has different standards of usage for formal and informal styles of speech and writing. The grammar that ignores these factors is not very useful to the learners and teachers of that language.

However, descriptive grammar concentrates more/ focuses on the current English in use, and takes into account the English written and spoken forms. In the end of this discussion regarding to differences between descriptive and prescriptive grammar; is better that we get idea of Fromkin, et al. (2003) regarding to descriptive and prescriptive grammar in language. They assert that descriptive grammar does not tell you how you should speak; it describes your basic linguistic knowledge. It explains how it is possible for you to speak and understand and it tells what you know about the sounds, words, phrases, and sentences of your language, whereas, they argued that prescriptive grammar is grammar that attempts to legislate what your grammar should be.

Approaches to the Teaching of Grammar

Grammar has been used by second language teachers and researchers for a long time in the history of language teaching. According to this sentence, Ellis (2006) indicated that there have always been a lot of debates and controversies among many scholars about the effective approach to teach grammar instruction. In general, the aim of teaching grammar is to help learners to learn the language structures and they can produce the structures correctly when they use them to communicate in written and spoken language. Before inquiring directly in to this discussion, let us investigate implicit and explicit

knowledge as two types grammatical instruction can be helpful for us to discuss approaches to the teaching of grammar in this paper.

Ellis (1994,p.1) mentioned that implicit learning is acquisition of knowledge about the underlying structure of a complex stimulus environment by a process which takes place naturally, simply and without conscious operations. Ellis (2003) differentiated between implicit and explicit knowledge, thus, implicit knowledge refers to that knowledge of language that a speaker manifests in performance but has no awareness of, whereas explicit knowledge refers to knowledge about language that speakers are aware of and, if asked, can verbalize. One of the language methods that focuses on explicit knowledge regarding to the teaching grammar is Grammar Translation Method (GTM). In 1960, Generative Transformation Grammar appeared and in this time, explicit knowledge used in order to the teaching grammar.

There are many approaches to the teaching of grammar: inductive, deductive, focus on form, focus on meaning, etc. First of all, inductive and deductive approaches to the teaching of grammar are discussed in this part. According to deductive approach to the teaching of grammar, Bose (2005) mentioned that grammar rules are presented to the learners first and the examples illustrating the rules later. Therefore, the learners memorize the rules and understand them with the help of examples, and then they practice the rules with further examples.

In English language, for example, an English teacher teaches 'the present tense' in English classroom. First, the teacher gives out 'the present tense' rule: "the present tense' is used in order to express an action that takes place at present. For example, *he speaks English well*. In this we come back to language methods that used the deductive approach in teaching grammar of languages all over the world.

The two methods such as Grammar Translation Method (GTM) and Cognitive Code have taught deductive approach. On the other hand, inductive approach to the teaching grammar is used based on this technique: grammar rules are not presented to the learners first. According to this definition, Gollin (1998) indicated that in this approach, learners are exposed to have more responsibility for their own learning and grammar rules are not presented to them. He added that the learners must therefore induce grammatical rules from selected materials of the target language within a context are supplied. Language rules are induced from carefully graded exposure to and practice with examples in situations and substitution tables.

Bose (2005) added that in inductive approach, we present the example sentences first, and then encourage the learners to discover the rules from the examples, for example, an English teacher teaches English learners in ELT classroom, first present a number of examples illustrating 'the present tense' rule on the blackboard: *Fatima cooks soup every morning*, or *Mary goes to school every day*. Another approach that is used by many research scholars and teachers is focus on form. "The term focus on form is used to refer to an approach that involves an attempt to induce incidental acquisition through instruction by drawing learners' attention to linguistic forms while they are communicating" (Ellis, 2012:272). This approach is contrasted with focus on forms.

According to (Ellis, 2012), the aim of this approach is to help learners master the structural features listed in the syllabus by making the linguistic target of each lesson quite explicit. Thus, focus on forms instruction involves intentional learning on the part of the learners. Ellis also added that in focus on form the syllabus is task-based while focus on forms depends on a structural syllabus.

Long (1991) differentiated between **focus on forms** and **focus on form**, he believed that focus on forms includes per-selection and identifying features within linguistic syllabus and systematic and intensive instruction for teaching them. Schmidt and Frota (1986) as cited in (Carter and Nunan 2001) mentioned another benefit of focusing on form is to help students' notice the gap between new features in a target language's structure and how they differ from the learners' interlanguage. Sheen (2005) indicated that

there is a fundamental difference between focus on forms and focus on form. She added that focus on forms approaches take place as follows:

(1) Learners should try to understand grammatical points by overt grammar explanation , which involves explaining language features in first language and comparing the first and target language forms;

(2) Practicing targeted grammatical forms in communicative and non-communicative exercises;

(3) Using the target grammatical structures and finally using those forms automatically and accurately.

Focusing on Meaning

The last approach to the teaching grammar is **focusing on meaning**. What is a meaning? Meaning is the mental image or comprehension that is generated by the grammar or vocabulary. In the grammar of a language, learners connect the grammar structure with the use of the meaning. Richards, et al. (1992:223) argued that "(in cognitive psychology) learning in which learned items become part of a person's mental system of concepts are thought processes". They added that meaningful learning is said to be important in classroom language learning. One of the aims of the English teacher in this approach is to teach English structures such as tenses to his/ her students with the meaning. For example, when an English teacher teaches past tense, he /she should talk about the meaning too. One of the important methods focusing on meaning is the Natural Approach of Krashen and Terrell (1983).

Conclusion

For the past 50 years, Approaches to the Teaching of English Grammar have attracted the attention of second and foreign language teachers, research scholars, curriculum developers and linguists worldwide. However, the role of grammar in the learning of a language is still a controversial subject. Some scholars as opined by (Bose, 2005) support the view that grammar is essential for learning a language while some other scholars support the view that grammar has no significant role in the learning of a language.

The place of grammar in English language teaching is controversial. Many researchers believe that knowledge of grammar is needed to teach English language in ELT classrooms. They added that the formal rules of English language need to be learned. Within the perimeter of this brief article, from what has been discussed about approaches to the teaching of grammar such as inductive, deductive, focus on form, focus on meaning and even implicit and explicit knowledge can be considered as important factors in learning English language over the world.

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