GRAMMAR AND SYNTAX IN LANGUAGE TEACHING

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Abstract: This article examines the importance of grammar and syntax in language teaching. It discusses their role in improving accuracy, fluency, and communicative competence of learners. The paper highlights practical methods, teaching strategies, and the integration of grammar within communicative approaches.

Key words: grammar, syntax, language teaching, communicative competence, fluency, accuracy, teaching methods, deductive approach, inductive approach, communicative approach, linguistic structure, language pedagogy

Language teaching is a complex process that involves the development of several linguistic components such as grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and syntax. Among these, grammar and syntax hold a central position because they define the structure and meaning of language. Without grammatical rules and syntactic organization, communication becomes unclear and ineffective. The role of grammar and syntax in language classrooms has evolved through various methodologies, from traditional grammar-translation approaches to modern communicative and task-based teaching. Today, educators aim to create a balance between accuracy and fluency, ensuring learners can both understand rules and use them in real communication.

Understanding grammar and syntax. Grammar refers to the rules that govern how words change form and combine to form sentences. Syntax, on the other hand, focuses on sentence structure and the arrangement of words to create meaningful expressions. Aspect Grammar Syntax. Definition Rules and forms Sentence structure Focus Tense, agreement, morphology Word order, sentence patterns Goal Correctness Meaning and clarity Grammar ensures correctness, while syntax ensures clarity and natural flow in speech and writing.

Importance of grammar in language teaching. Helps students speak and write correctly Prevents ambiguity and misunderstanding Develops academic writing skills Supports reading comprehension and translation. Traditional methods emphasized memorization of grammar rules. However, modern pedagogy integrates grammar within meaningful contexts to improve real communication.

Role of syntax in developing communicative competence. Syntax allows learners to build complex ideas using correct sentence patterns. For example: Simple: I study English. Complex: I study English because I want to become a teacher. Teaching syntax helps learners produce longer and more expressive sentences, improving both speaking and writing proficiency.

Teaching approaches to grammar and syntax. a) Deductive Method (Rule - Practice) Teacher explains the rule, then students do exercises. Advantage: Clear understanding Disadvantage: Less communicative b) Inductive Method (Examples - Rule) Students discover rules through examples. Advantage: Engaging and analytical Disadvantage: Time-consuming c) Communicative Approach Grammar is taught through speaking, dialogues, role-plays, and real tasks. Focus: Meaning, usage, and fluency.

Integrating Grammar in Language Skills. Skill Grammar Focus Speaking Fluency and correctness Writing Sentence structure, cohesion Reading Understanding complex text Listening Recognizing patterns and tense.

Challenges in Teaching Grammar and Syntax Overuse of theoretical explanation Lack of context in exercises Students' fear of making mistakes Balancing accuracy and fluency. Teachers must provide supportive feedback and encourage students to use grammar actively in communication.

Grammar and syntax are foundational concepts in linguistics and language pedagogy, each contributing to the development of communicative competence. According to Chomsky (1965), grammar represents the implicit knowledge that enables speakers to generate an infinite number of sentences, while syntax is the structural arrangement that ensures coherence and meaning. In language teaching, these components are not only descriptive but also pedagogical, shaping classroom practices and learning outcomes.

Grammar can be defined as the set of structural rules that govern word formation (morphology) and sentence construction. In pedagogy, grammar is generally classified into three main types: Prescriptive Grammar – focuses on correct usage and traditional norms. Descriptive Grammar – analyses how language is naturally used by native speakers. Pedagogical Grammar – adapted for teaching purposes, presenting rules in a simplified and practical way. Effective pedagogical grammar emphasizes not just memorization, but meaningful application, allowing learners to internalize structures through context and practice.

Syntax refers to the way words are combined to form phrases and sentences. It studies hierarchical structures rather than isolated elements. For example: SVO (Subject-Verb-Object) in English: "The student reads a book." SOV in some other languages: "The student a book reads." Teaching syntax is essential because learners must move beyond isolated vocabulary to produce coherent discourse. Syntax enables the construction of complex thoughts, conditional clauses, reported speech, and academic sentences.

While grammar includes rules of morphology and syntax, syntax specifically examines word order and sentence relations. In teaching: Aspect Grammar Syntax Focus Rules & forms Sentence structure Level Words & clauses Sentences & discourse Purpose Accuracy Clarity & cohesion A comprehensive approach requires both accuracy (grammar) and fluency (syntax), creating linguistically competent learners.

Several linguistic theories have shaped grammar teaching: Behaviorism (Skinner, 1957) – emphasizes repetition and habit formation. Generative Grammar (Chomsky, 1965) – views grammar as innate and rule-based. Krashen's Monitor Theory (1982) – distinguishes between acquired and learned grammar. Functionalism (Halliday, 1994) – focuses on grammar as a tool for meaning-making. Modern pedagogy synthesizes these theories, advocating for explicit grammar instruction supported by communicative practice.

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