



Status of Grammar in English Language Teaching

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ABSTRACT

This paper deals with the previous literature related to the significance of grammar in English language instruction. To this end, an overview of teaching grammar in foreign language education is clarified. Furthermore, the reasons of teaching grammar in context are explained. The role of input and output tasks in grammar instruction is also illuminated. Additionally, a discussion about Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) and Presentation-Practice-Production (PPP) methods is provided. Besides, theoretical basis of consciousness-raising tasks and grammar practice is clarified. Finally, the previous empirical studies in this area are reviewed.

Keywords: Teaching Grammar, Input Task, Output Task, Consciousness-Raising Task, Grammar Practice

1. INTRODUCTION

In the last decade foreign language instructors have come to agree almost that communicative competence should be the goal of language learning, that process will be pleasurable and the result would be enduring when the learner can communicate spontaneously with other people rather than being able only to translate a given text. Grammar teaching has recaptured its correct place in the language curriculum. People now agree that grammar is too important to be ignored, and that without a good knowledge of grammar, learners' language development will be severely constrained and unnatural (Garrett, 1986). Grammatical curriculums have been replaced by communicative ones based on functions or tasks; grammar-based methodologies underlying the Situational Approach gave way to function- and skill-based teaching and accuracy activities like grammar drills were replaced by fluency activities based on interactive small-group work. This led to the emergence of a 'fluency-first' education (Brumfit, 1979).

According to VanPatten (1993), Classrooms are becoming acquisition-rich, context-rich, fluid, and learner centered. But these changes in language teaching have created a struggle for many teachers and curriculum directors. While goals and methods of language teaching have evolved, approaches to the explicit teaching of grammar have hardly changed at all. Consequently, teachers are encouraged to get more communicatively based input into the classroom, to make their classrooms more interactive, only to find that much of the grammar instruction found in textbooks is out of synch with the communicative trends. The question that guides this paper is "What kind of grammar instruction fits with our newer context and input-rich communicative classrooms. students are frequently unable to use a given grammar point correctly in spontaneous utterances even after repeated explanation, illustration, drill, and apparent mastery as demonstrated on tests. Jimenez and Murphy (1984) claimed that paying attention to grammar actively blocks the effort to achieve communicative competence, because the learners' attention is deflected from the expression of meaning, which is the point of communication, to the consideration of form. Higgs and Clifford (1982) stated that some of the rhetoric on the subject of communicative competence has caused anxiety among some instructors that the baby of grammatical competence is being thrown out with the bathwater of the grammar- translation method, with the result that pupils who have been allowed or encouraged not to worry about grammar may develop a kind of inaccurate fluency.

2. GRAMMAR

Grammar is rules of a language. Grammar is a system of meaningful structures and patterns that are governed by particular pragmatic constraints (Larsen-Freeman, 2001). English grammar involves the way in which meanings are encoded into wordings. This comprises the structure of words, phrases, clauses, and sentences, right up to the structure of whole text. Thornbury (1999, p.13) stated that grammar is a description of the rules for forming sentences, including an account of the meanings that these forms convey. According to Debata (2013), the word grammar means different



things to different people. To the ordinary citizen, it connotes to correctness or incorrectness of the language that he or she speaks. To a school student, it means an analytical and terminological study of sentences. Knowledge of grammar helps the student in the correction of mistakes and improvement of written work. Grammar is a sure ground of reference when linguistic habits fail us. Accordingly, grammar is indispensable for the student.

3. AN OVERVIEW OF GRAMMAR INSTRUCTION IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING

3.1 Accuracy Without Communication

Concerning the position given to grammar knowledge and grammar instruction in textbooks, language classrooms and methodology, the history of EFL teaching has gone through different phases. The grammar age and grammar-based approaches produced methods which consisted in teaching rules, concepts and structures of grammar which aided understanding the target language (Sogutlu, 2014). The aim of EFL teaching was for the learners to acquire ability to read and write in the target language. Language learning was viewed as hypothesis formation and rule acquisition rather than habit formation (Celce-Murcia, 1991), which resulted in learners being unable to communicate fluently. The learner was viewed as a passive entity waiting to be programmed thus little or no attention at all was paid to the possibility that learners might contribute to the programming process (Griffiths & Par, 2001).

Inadequacies of grammar-based methods in offering learners communication gains paved the way to communication-based approaches. Although intended to make a contribution to enhancing learners' communicative competence some of them, such as PPP (presentation-practice-production) method, were not successful and remained very grammatical. Thornbury (1997) emphasized that attempting to move from accuracy to fluency this method only pretended to engage learners in freer practice activities because it required learners to imitate model texts or pre-selected structures. In traditional EFL textbooks, grammar was treated separately with explicit explanations of language forms, accompanied with various types of exercises (gap-filling, sentence-completion, etc), which required immediate (usually written) practice of the rule. This was done with the assumption that explicit knowledge would later turn into communicative competence (Millard, 2000). However, research has shown that this knowledge does not always lead to the assumed result.

3.2 Communication Without Accuracy

According to Howat (1997) and Nassaji (2000), the introduction of communicative language teaching pedagogy led teachers and researchers towards developing tasks and activities based on communication and interaction, which usually meant paying little or no attention to language forms and patterns. Other approaches with a focus on communication such as content-based instruction or task-based instruction also disregard accuracy of linguistic forms. These approaches' tendency not to focus on linguistic forms leads to downplaying of grammar teaching as well (Nassaji, 2000). Various studies have shown that lack of or insufficient instruction of language forms and grammar structures do not help development of learners' accurate knowledge of fluency in L2 (Celce-Murcia, 1991). A lot of research has also been conducted in immersion contexts, which offer a theoretically optimal context for language learning due to their sustained exposure to and authentic communication in the target language. Although the main focus on meaning in these classrooms encourages the overall development of communicative ability, there are linguistic gaps regarding grammatical accuracy (Lyster, 2004b).

4. WHY WE SHOULD TEACH GRAMMAR IN CONTEXT

Across the many languages and subsystems of grammar, perhaps the most practiced traditional approach to grammatical instruction has been the three Ps- present, practice, produce (Larsen-Freeman, 2009, p.523). Some scholars believe that the traditional approach has some disadvantages. One of the criticisms of this approach is that students cannot apply their knowledge of grammar when they are communicating. Students know the rules explicitly, but they fail to apply them in communication. This problem has been discussed by others as the "non-interface" problem, in that there is no obvious connection between explicit knowledge of the rules and implicit control of the system, and the "learnability problem" following from the observation that grammar is not learned in a linear fashion (Long & Doughty, 2011, p. 523). In this approach students are unable to use the grammar rules in speech. They do not understand how grammar rules work in a sentence. Learning grammar in context will allow learners to see how rules can be used in sentences. Language is sensitive to context. It means that, if the context is absent, it is very hard to recover the intended meaning of a single word or phrase (Thornbury, 1999, p.69).

When teaching grammar, the teacher should indicate the students what the language means and how it is used; and must also show them the grammatical form of the new language and the way it is said and written (Harmer, 2001, p.56). Teaching grammar in context will provide the students with an opportunity to comprehend how language works and this will increase their communication skills. Students have to get an idea of how the new language is applied by



native speakers and the best way of performing this is to present language in context. Accuracy in language acquisition plays an important role to appreciate both speaking and writing performances. Context provides a more thorough understanding of how to apply grammar and presents accuracy in the studied language both in oral and written skills (Wajnryb & Maley, 1990, p.6). Presenting grammar in isolated sentences will not permit pupils to see how grammatical structures function in sentences. By dealing with related units of information rather than isolated bits, more efficient processing becomes possible. Context-based teaching has always been useful for learners. Students need to learn language in logical contexts, either via authentic discourse-length input or via language learning materials that encourage authentic input applying sentences that follow in logical sequence (Hadley, 2003, p.152).

5. THE ROLE OF INPUT AND OUTPUT TASKS IN GRAMMAR INSTRUCTION

5.1 The Role of Input

According to Carroll (2001), input is the raw language data that learners hear or read and entails a specific communicative intent. Corder (1967) makes a distinction between input and intake. He defines input as what is available to the learner, whereas intake refers to what is actually internalized by the learner and eventually becomes part of the interlanguage system. In all contemporary SLA theories input plays a key role. For universal grammar (UG) theory for example, input interacts with UG principles and internal mechanisms (Whong, Gil, & Marsden, 2013).

In Krashen's (1982, 2009) *monitor theory*, input is a key factor, and acquisition requires first and foremost exposure to comprehensible input (input that is easily processed). According to Krashen's input hypothesis, acquisition takes place when the learner understands input that contains grammatical forms that are at a higher level than the current state of the learner's interlanguage. For SLA to take place, learners must be exposed to comprehensible and message-oriented input. Input is the primary data base on which learners build a linguistic system.

In VanPatten's (1996, 2004, 2015a) model of *input processing*, only part of the input is filtered through intake into the developing system and eventually becomes available to the learner for output purposes. Changing the way learners process input and enriching their intake might have an effect on the developing system that subsequently should have an impact on how learners produce the target language. Input processing is concerned with those psycholinguistic strategies and mechanisms by which learners derive intake from input. In Van- Patten's theory, when learners attend or notice input and process the message, a form-meaning connection is made. Developing the learners' ability to map one form to one meaning is therefore essential for acquisition.

In the *interaction hypothesis* (Gass, 2003; Gass & Mackey, 2006), input is seen as a major element for acquisition without which learners cannot acquire a language. Ellis (1997) distinguishes two types of input: interactional and non-interactional. In the case of interactional input he refers to input received during interaction where there is some kind of communicative exchange involving the learner and at least one other person (e.g., conversation, classroom interactions). In the case of non-interactional input, he refers to the kind of input that occurs in the context of nonreciprocal discourse where learners are not part of an interaction (e.g., announcements). In the former case, learners have the advantage of being able to negotiate meaning and make some conversational adjustments. This means that conversation and interaction make linguistic features salient to the learner. All in all, input is necessary and there is no theory or approach to SLA that does not identify the importance of input. Collins and Ellis (2009) stated that there are a number of factors which affect the acquisition of linguistic constructions: the frequency and saliency of features of forms in oral input, their functional interpretations, and the reliabilities of their form-function mappings. Generally, language instructors should consider the use of tasks devised in a way that, on one hand, increase the grammatical structures in the input, and on the other hand, provide learners with opportunities to focus on meaning.

5.2 The Role of Output

Output is the language that L2 learners produce, and it can be both written and oral. Output is the ability to express a specific meaning by regaining a specific form or structure and the ability to string structures and forms together. For *monitor theory* output plays little role in acquisition as the key component is input. *Universal grammar* maintains that a good deal of competence cannot come from learner production and can only come from input activating universal mechanisms.

The *interaction hypothesis* has examined interactions with and between non-natives to explore what kinds of modifications are made during conversations and how this might impact learner development. Output causes changes in the input learners receive. Feedback could also act as a signal that pushes learners to scan the input so that language is better comprehended. Thus, there seems to be an indirect causal link between output and acquisition, with input appearing again as a major and critical intervening factor (Benati, 2017).



Swain (1985, 1995) has developed a hypothesis called the *comprehensible output hypothesis*, according to which language production (oral and written) can help learners to generate new knowledge and consolidate or modify their existing knowledge. Swain (1995) assigns several roles to output:

- Output practice helps learners to improve fluency.
- Output practice helps learners to check comprehension and linguistic correctness.
- Output practice helps learners to focus on form.
- Output helps learners to realize that the developing system is faulty and therefore notice a gap in their system.

Swain has pointed out that comprehensible input might not be sufficient to develop native-like grammatical competence and learners also need comprehensible output. According to Swain (1995, p. 249), producing the language forces the learners to pay attention to the means of necessary expression in order to successfully convey their own intended meaning. Therefore, the four functions of output in SLA based on Swain's ideas are: (a) testing hypotheses about the structures and meanings of the target language, (b) receiving vital feedback for the confirmation of these hypotheses, (c) making a shift from more meaning-based processing of the second language to a more syntactic mode, and (d) developing fluency and automaticity in interlanguage production.

According to *processability theory* (Pienemann & Lenzen, 2015), L2 learners draw upon our vast network of connections (access) to retrieve words and forms (e.g., access morphological inflections) to express meaning. The last significant function of output is to create greater automaticity, which is one pedagogical goal in SLA. Little effort is required to execute an automatic process, when the learner carries out the task without awareness or attention, as it has become routinized and automatized just as the steps involved in walking towards a bike, getting out the key, unlocking it, pushing it, getting on it and riding it, requiring little thought and less time (Benati, 2017). Skehan (1996) proposed a series of possible contributions for output: Output produces better input (learners have the opportunity to negotiate meaning and provide input for somebody else); output promotes syntactic processing (learners have the opportunity to pay attention to the means by which meaning is expressed); output helps learners in their hypotheses about grammar (learners have the opportunity to try out hypotheses); and output helps the development of discourse skills (learners have the opportunity to move from sentence to discourse production). The ability to produce forms and structures in output does not necessarily mean that forms and structures have been acquired. We need to distinguish between output as interaction with others and output as practice of forms and structures.

According to VanPatten (2003), learners' implicit system develops as learners process the input they receive. Output promotes noticing of linguistic features in the input and conscious awareness of language and language use. It can also provide additional input to learners so that they can consolidate or modify their existing knowledge. In VanPatten's (2003) view, the role of output is important as it promotes awareness and interaction with other learners, but it does not play a direct role in the creation of the internal linguistic system. Benati (2017) stated that conscious presentation and manipulation of forms through drills and output practice might help learners to develop certain skills to apply certain forms properly in controlled tasks, but it has very little influence on the development of the implicit system (mental representation) responsible for acquisition. All in all, language teachers should consider grammar output tasks which are meaning-based. During effective grammar output tasks learners must make output that encodes a specific message.

6. THE TBLT VS PPP DEBATE

TBLT and PPP (Presentation-Practice-Production) have rarely been seen as mutually beneficial strategies for language teaching (Sato, 2010). Consciousness-raising tasks fall under the broader umbrella of TBLT, whereas grammar practice activities fall under PPP. However, there is some debate as to whether PPP is an approach or a pedagogical strategy (Criado, 2013). According to Richards and Rodgers (2014), an approach to language teaching involves a philosophy of the nature of language and the nature of language learning. Ellis (1993) stated that there's plenty of evidence to recommend that we are able to do PPP until we're blue in the face, but it doesn't necessarily result in what the PPP was designed to do. Ellis was one of a number of critics who was skeptical of PPP. Other notable criticism comes from Scrivener (1994) who proposed his alternative to PPP, for use in teacher training. He refers to it as ARC, which stands for authentic use, restricted use activities, and clarification and focus. Scrivener gives a list of reasons to be critical of PPP and a shortlist of SLA researchers who have also questioned PPP. He argues that PPP is not based on any coherent theory of learning. It is based on a highly questionable sentence level theory of language, and it confines teachers leaving no room for growth or exploration. Willis (1994) suggested task based learning and teaching replace PPP as the dominant model for teacher training.



Many of these criticisms were published nearly a decade after the rise of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). CLT is a matter of skill acquisition and the automatization of grammatical rules, vocabulary, and social conventions. Positive criticism of PPP argues that the benefits of practice are aligned with skill acquisition theory (SAT) (Dekeyser & Solkalski, 1996; Sato, 2010). Those who see grammar practice as beneficial to learners view it as a means and for proceduralizing declarative knowledge. From this perspective, PPP seems to be in line with CLT. However, grammar practice was also a major, if not the foremost component of the predecessor to CLT, situational language teaching. The changes between SLT and CLT were theoretically a departure from structuralist views of language towards more authentic interactive and ideally communicative learning. Where practice had a strong role in situational language teaching, it was refined in CLT and some forms of TBLT were seen as a part of fine tuning the principles of CLT (Richards & Rodgers, 2014, p. 86). It follows that these criticisms of PPP in favor of TBLT could have been a result of the attempts of foreign language teachers to push the field forward.

7. THEORETICAL BASIS OF CONSCIOUSNESS-RAISING TASKS AND GRAMMAR PRACTICE

Ellis (2002) contextualized the need for consciousness-raising against the framework of Krashen and Terrell (1983) and Prabhu (1987). Krashen is known for promoting a naturalistic approach to language instruction. Prabhu is known for TBLT. Ellis (2006) described Krashen's approach to grammar instruction as noninterface, where explicit and implicit knowledge are completely separate. He described his own position as a weak-interface position and claimed that explicit knowledge can become implicit if learners are ready to be taught a form and they notice that form. PPP and grammar practice reflect the interface position, assuming that explicit practice of the form directly proceduralizes it. Goldschneider and Dekeyser (2005) show in their meta-analysis of the effects of instruction on order of acquisition that certain factors (perceptual salience, semantic complexity, morpho-phonological regularity, syntactic category, and frequency) are strong predictors as to how instruction can affect acquisition. It seems that Ellis is trying to present a middle-ground for grammar teaching, calling for those who might have abandoned grammar teaching to rethink its usefulness but in a different context than practice. Ellis's ideas about grammar practice were met with criticisms. Hopkins and Nettle (1994) argued that Ellis makes false assumptions about grammar teaching and that the alternatives he proposes to grammar teaching are already embedded in contemporary practices. Addressing Ellis's weak-interface position, it is difficult to differentiate between consciousness raising and grammar practice if learners can be primed by meaningful grammar practice and also notice the form in a PPP lesson.

8. REVIEW OF PREVIOUS EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

Fatemipour and Hemmati (2015) carried out an experimental study to consider the efficiency of grammar consciousness-raising activities on the improvement of young EFL learners' grammar performance and also to study the appropriateness of consciousness-raising for young learners. The participants were 60 young Iranian male and female pre-intermediate students with the age range of 11 to 16. The participants were randomly assigned to two groups. The Experimental group received grammar consciousness-raising activities based on three techniques of Recall, Reconstruction, and Bolding-Underlying. The control group was taught via deductive grammar instruction. A grammar test was administered to the participants before and after the treatment as pretest and posttest. Moreover, a questionnaire was administered to the experimental group and the participants indicated their attitudes toward consciousness-raising. The findings showed that grammar consciousness-raising activities have a significant effect on the development of young learners' grammar performance and consciousness-raising is appropriate for young learners.

Saadi and Saadat (2015) attempted to compare the effect of direct and metalinguistic written corrective feedback on Iranian EFL learners' grammatical knowledge. The participants were a suitable sample of students in two intact writing classes. Both groups received similar instruction; however, the students in one group received direct feedback and the students in the other group received metalinguistic feedback in the form of error codes on writing accuracy of their in-class written texts. Furthermore, all the students took a grammar test serving as pre- and posttests before and after the treatment. In addition to the computation of gain scores, descriptive statistics and a mixed between-within subjects ANOVA were run to analyze the data. Descriptive statistics showed that the grammatical knowledge of the learners in both groups developed because of the two types of feedback; but, there was not a statistically significant difference between the students' performance on the grammar test before and after the treatment. Additionally, the direct feedback seemed to be more effective in developing grammatical knowledge; but, no statistically significant difference was found between the two groups' gain scores on the grammar test. Therefore, the results revealed that either of the feedback types may be employed to effectively improve EFL learners' grammar knowledge.

Nazari (2013) performed an experimental study to investigate the impacts of implicit and explicit language teaching on students' ability to learn grammar and apply it properly in their writing. To this purpose, two intact classes of 30 adult learners were selected for teaching the targeted structure (present perfect) via different methods of teaching.



The findings displayed the outperformance of the participants in the explicit group over the performance of implicit group in both productive and receptive modes.

A study was carried out by Amirian and Abbasi (2014) to investigate whether Grammar Consciousness Raising (GCR) tasks can have a more significant impact on grammatical knowledge of learners than Presentation-Practice-Production (PPP) approach. To this aim, 62 female pre-intermediate students assigned to two groups. The students in the experimental group received GCR treatment while the students in the control group received a Presentation-Practice-Production (PPP) method of grammar instruction. The results showed higher development of learner's knowledge of grammar in the experimental group.

A study was run by Nosratinia and Roustayi (2014) to investigate the effect of grammatical consciousness-raising tasks on EFL learners' reading comprehension and writing ability. The participants were 60 female intermediate EFL learners with age range of 20-35 who were divided into two groups of control and experimental after being homogenized by a piloted PET test and two piloted researchers-made reading comprehension and writing ability tests. After the treatment, the piloted researchers-made reading comprehension and writing ability post-tests were administered. To investigate the two research questions of the study, two independent *t*-tests were conducted. Furthermore, the inter-rater reliability for the pretest and post-test of writing was calculated through Cornbach's Alpha. The results showed that the improvement occurred in the reading comprehension and writing ability of the participants of experimental group, in comparison to their previous stage, was due to grammar consciousness-raising tasks. Additionally, the findings indicated that grammar consciousness-raising tasks result in a better performance on writing than reading comprehension.

Amirian and Sadeghi (2012) attempted to investigate different approaches in grammar instruction and compare the traditional approaches with Consciousness-Raising (CR) tasks. The author applied some CR tasks in the classroom during the second semester of educational year, one session each week and investigated the effectiveness of these tasks. The participants were female senior high school students in Sabzevar, Iran. The findings were compared with a control group who were taught based on the pattern drill practice and traditional approaches. Analysis revealed that applying CR tasks in grammar teaching is significantly more effective than the traditional approaches.

Jahangard, Moinzadeh, and Karimi (2012) carried out an experimental study to investigate the effect of grammar and vocabulary pre-teaching, as two types of pre-reading activities, on the Iranian EFL learners' reading comprehension from a schema-theoretic perspective. The sample consisted of 90 female students studying at pre-university centers of Isfahan. The participants were randomly divided into three equal groups. They participated in a test of overall language proficiency, and the results showed that they were linguistically homogeneous. Then, the three groups received different treatments. Group A received grammar pre-teaching, group B received vocabulary pre-teaching, and group C (the control group) received no pre-teaching. The participants of the experimental groups took reading comprehension posttests. The findings indicated no significant difference among the three groups though the vocabulary group performed slightly better than the other two groups, and the performance of the grammar group was apparently worse than the control group.

An experimental study was carried out by Sadeghi and Dousti (2013) to investigate the possible effects of the integration of CALL technology on young Iranian elementary EFL learners' grammar gain. Furthermore, the role of length of exposure to find an optimum balance for the proper amount of CALL integration to language activities was examined. One control and two experimental groups, each consisted of 15 participants, were engaged. One of the experimental groups applied CALL technology for twice as long as the other group. *'Family and Friends 2'* with its accompanying MultiRom was utilized in the experimental groups. This software presented computer-based grammar activities. All the participants tried their answers in separate immediate as well as delayed post-tests. The results of one way ANOVA demonstrated significant differences between control and experimental groups in the immediate post-test. The findings of the delayed post-test indicated that a significant difference did exist between the control group and the second experimental group. Additionally, the length of exposure was found to be influential.

Dang and Nguyen (2013) attempted to explore the effects of indirect explicit grammar teaching on EFL learners' mastery of English tenses. To this purpose, 94 eleventh-graders were conveniently selected and randomly assigned into either the experimental group (EG) or the control group (CG). A pre-posttests design was applied to gather the data. Before and after the treatment, the following tests were administered: rule analysis, grammar, and speaking. A delayed written test was provided to both groups to assess students' retention of structure acquired. Additionally, a questionnaire was provided to the EG to investigate their opinions on the treatment. The results indicated that the EG significantly outperformed the CG in the analysis of grammar rules and the oral proficiency, except for the use of grammar structures in a pre-defined context. Convincingly, there was a positive correlation between the grammar rules and their subsequent use. This validated the cause and effect of grammar rules' acquisition and their use in receptive and productive stages. Furthermore, the EG had favorable attitudes towards the instruction.



Idek, Fong, and Sidhu (2013) attempted to investigate the application of two types of Consciousness-Raising (CR) tasks in learning Subject-Verb Agreement (SVA). The sample consisted of 28 Form 2 students who were divided into two groups. Group 1 was assigned with Grammaticality Judgment (GJ) tasks and Group 2 received Sentence Production (SP) tasks for eight weeks. Learners were given a pretest before the treatment and a posttest once they completed the tasks. They were also required to answer questionnaires and some were interviewed. The findings showed that the two CR tasks promote SVA learning among students but SP tasks are descriptively better than GJ tasks in terms of gain scores.

Huang (2019) aimed to explore the potential use of sentence tree-structure in English grammar teaching in college. After combining Schema Theory and Lexical Chunk Theory, the writer proposed the sentence tree-structure tool and tried to apply it in one of her grammar classes in college. During the teaching process, students were asked to analyze long and complex sentences from IELTS reading texts and to write paragraphs and essays for IELTS writing task two topics, with the purpose of applying the new tool in productive activities. Data collection instruments included a pretest, a posttest, questionnaires and interviews. Both quantitative and qualitative analysis of the data was employed. The difference in students' performance in the pretest and the posttest revealed that the majority of students showed improvement in their ability to analyze long complex sentences and there was an obvious decline in the number of sentence structure-related grammar errors in their writing. Students' responses in questionnaires and interviews showed a growth in their study motivation and positive perceptions towards the use of this new tool in their grammar learning.

A quasi-experimental study was carried out by Al-Naabi and Nizwa (2020) to investigate the impact of flipped learning on Omani EFL learners' grammar and to examine students' perceptions on the flipped classroom. An intact group of students (n=28) enrolled at the foundation program in Arab Open University-Oman was randomly selected. Seven videos on English grammar were developed and shared with the students prior to the class. A variety of activities were conducted in the class following task-based language teaching. Students met for 8 lessons over the period of 8 weeks. Pretest, posttest and semi-structured interviews were used in the study. The findings indicated that flipped learning had a positive impact on students' understanding and usage of English grammar. Moreover, students' perceptions on the flipped approach were positive.

Pishghadam, Khodadady, and Rad (2011) attempted to investigate the effect of form versus meaning-focused tasks on the development of collocations among Iranian Intermediate EFL learners. To this end, 65 students of Mashhad High schools in Iran were selected as the participants. A general language proficiency test of Nelson (book 2, Intermediate 200A) was used to measure their general language ability. Moreover, a teacher-made collocation test was implemented to examine the participants' collocation knowledge. Participants were divided into: form-focused instruction group (FFI), meaning-focused instruction (MFI) group, and a control group. The FFI group performed dictogloss task (DT) which focused on both target items and meaning. The MFI group assigned communicative task (pair /group discussion task) which did not required attention to the target items. The control group was designated as the *Conventional Group*, simply to reflect the fact that they did not receive focus-on-form instruction but rather received combination of explaining collocation or new vocabulary and reading a text silently to mention its main idea or answer to comprehension questions. The results revealed that FFI group (dictogloss task) significantly outperformed the other two groups on the collocation test.

Khatib and Alizadeh (2012) examined the effects of using two different types of output tasks on noticing and learning the English past tense. To this purpose, 60 female school-age EFL learners were divided into groups of 18, 19, and 23 participants. A pretest was administered at the outset of the study the scores of which proved that all the participants equally lacked the required accuracy in using the target structure. Hence, five treatment sessions followed, during which the first two groups were given picture-cued writing tasks and reconstruction tasks respectively. The comparison group, however, did comprehension check-up tasks. Finally, a posttest was given. The results of the statistical analyses revealed that only the reconstruction group improved in their noticing of the target feature. However, both experimental groups equally promoted their learning of the form.

9. Conclusion

Grammar instruction is vital in English language teaching field. Grammar is the base of English language. It is not acquired naturally. It needs to be instructed. Traditional grammar training is not an effective and appropriate pedagogical intervention in grammar teaching. Hadley (2003) stated that grammar teaching is a difficult issue in language teaching. Teaching grammar through context will help learners perceive the structures of the language effectively. If learners are provided with grammatical structures in context, they will be able to master the language better. Teaching grammar in context will help learners to acquire new grammar structures and forms. Learners will apply grammatical conventions more successfully in communication if they learn them in context.

Grammar has a positive and real effect on all the four language skills. Although the advantages of grammar on instruction and developing writing skills have been better accepted, its impact on reading, listening and speaking is also



now being seen to be noticeable. According to Celce-Murcia (1991), grammar is the base of English language. English as a foreign language is not acquired naturally; instruction and structured learning are significant. Through grammar, an EFL learner finds out how to operate at the sentence level and studies the power of the syntax or word orders that are the rules of English language. All in all, grammar as a set of rules for selecting words and putting words together to make sense, plays a major role in language education. Without grammar, language does not exist. Furthermore, it is difficult for students to speak English well without learning English grammar.

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