

# Insignificant Praxis of Grammar Teaching: Grounds of Fallacy

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**Abstract:** Grammar is the backbone of a language and without it any single thing you know may be in flux but it is said that one can master the English language in the same way that a child does, speak like a native and never study boring grammar rules. But practically grammar provides the structure needed in order to organize and put messages and ideas across. Through grammar, an ESL learner learns how to operate at the sentence level and studies the governance of the syntax or word orders that are the rule of the game in the language. It cannot be denied that if one hopes to acquire and use English language accurately and fluently, grammar learning is necessary that's why good command over English only can be possible by being at home with grammar rules and its usage.

**Keywords:** Classroom learning, Communication, Grammar, Practice, Second Language,

“Sentences exist to make sense of words; grammar makes sense of sentences.”

- David Crystal

A report published after a survey done by Ambedkar University, Delhi gave a picture of mayhem that English language and its learners are facing despite innumerable research has been done and still continue. Data reveal that approximately 76% students cannot speak or write correct English, 70% cannot read properly, 57% fail in this language and instead of toil and efforts the condition of the language is worse like in Delhi (48%), Odisha (82%), Rajasthan (84%), Madhya Pradesh (88%) and Jharkhand (91%) learners comes in the above mentioned category. What the data show proves that current methods and approaches practiced need reanalysis and the grounds which are responsible for this pitiable state of the language.

It's a common practice among some English teachers and English learning methods for telling students they don't need to study grammar. Do you think that's true? Though grammar is the backbone of a language and without it any single thing you know may be in flux but it is said that one can master the English language in the same way that a child does, speak like a native and never study boring grammar rules but practically it is possible for highly motivated learners with a particular aptitude for languages to achieve amazing levels of proficiency without any formal study. Moreover, it is often argued that one is able to share his emotions with some initial knowledge of grammar then what is the need of learning grammar? To the beginners it may be suitable but if one wants to stand among learned people then it is a hard need to attain efficient knowledge of grammar. Learning grammar has a positive and real effect on all the four skills (LSRW) of language though its benefits on teaching and improving writing skills have been better accepted, yet impact on reading, listening and speaking is also no less prominent. But more often 'pick it up as you go along' learners reach a language plateau beyond which it is very difficult to progress. To put it technically, their linguistic competence fossilizes. Research suggests that learners who receive no instruction seem to be at risk of fossilizing sooner than those who do receive instruction.

What if signs and symbols are removed from Mathematics though knowing numbers and counting, will one be able to reach the right result? So also it is quite hard to express the emotion without adequate knowledge of grammar no matter one master the vocabulary. In Indian context where English is learnt as a second language it becomes more important to make the students learn grammar since all languages follow grammatical patterns.

What is observed that the methods or approaches used either focus on to teach grammar almost exclusively, as if preparing the students to be grammarians of the second language rather than users or those “communicative” courses in which the only thing that is done is to talk about something or to read an article and comment on it. In many cases, what is seen in one class has no relation to what is done in the next. For beginners good command on grammar does not imply that the person is able to communicate effectively, as we usually see with students who have only been exposed to an all-grammar-oriented approach sometimes for many years. Many could recite the grammar by heart but if asked to express basic information, but hesitate too much and shuffle through all the grammar rules in their heads before utterance, or become dumb. So to solve the problem, grammar should be used with words similarly as railway track and the train where grammar works as track through which your messages will be transported. As a train cannot move without railways, you won't be able to convey your ideas to their full extension without a good command of the underlying grammar patterns and structures of the language.

How useful is grammar teaching in language acquisition? This question is an interesting issue worldwide, that the paper wants to explore with the current situation in language teaching.

The following are some grounds which are to be discussed

1. Language teaching: More dilemmas than clear goals.
2. Research into grammar teaching.
3. Classroom practice.
4. A short grammar test carried out with learners of English.

There is a common feeling among students of English as a foreign language (EFL), that English is a difficult language with lots of complicated grammatical rules to master. This is not really true. As a largely "analytic" language, English has tenses and endings and agreements, it has far less than many languages do, and the rules for using them are often quite simple and intuitive. This is probably one of the reasons for the success of English as a world language. Analytic languages like English need less grammatical inflexions (suffixes, prefixes), because they use other tools to express the relation between words. In English, the relation between words is often expressed by word order or by the use of prepositions, and the time context by the use of modal auxiliaries, rather than tenses with grammatical suffixes, as happens in many languages.

Although Krashen (1981) claimed that learned grammar knowledge cannot become acquired knowledge which can be used in free speech, other linguists do not agree [Sharwood Smith (1993), Ellis (1995) and DeKeyser (1998)] that grammar teaching plays no role at all in language learning. Ellis concedes that meaningful input might be the key to language learning: L2 classroom acquisition occurs when learners participate in interaction that affords comprehensible input and output. However, linguists also recognize that higher levels of grammatical competence require direct intervention. Lynne Cameron (2001) points out that without grammar teaching learners will not achieve the same levels of accuracy as natives do and learners' problems with basic structures may continue. Westhoff (2006), on the other hand, does recognize a role for unequivocal language instruction, but only for language learners beyond A2/B1 level.

Of course, language codes change. The standard pronunciation of British English in 2016 is quite a bit different from the standard pronunciation of 1942. Shakespeare is a bigger problem; Shakespeare's plays are full of words that are no longer used today, and there are many passages that are hard to follow for anyone who is not familiar with them already. Today, text messaging has brought in a whole new corpus of words and acronyms that are quite incomprehensible to people who are not initiated.

At any point in time, and for any group or nation of people, there will be normative codes of language that make communication not just possible but simple and unambiguous. For oral communication, the key parameters are vocabulary, syntax and pronunciation; for written communication they are vocabulary, syntax, spelling and punctuation.

The straightforward, pre-planned teaching of grammar in English language teaching has been under attack for years. Various alternatives have been proposed: to expose learners to language that is just a bit more advanced than what they currently produce; to wait until a communicative situation demands a certain structure before introducing it; to let the grammar emerge naturally from vocabulary learning, or from the lived context of the classroom. Each approach has been defended with carefully structured arguments, and some approaches have been embraced enthusiastically by ministries of education around the world.

One of the practices that are seen is that teachers assume that few of their learners develop highly advanced proficiency no matter how endeavor they put for it and feel that on the basis that teachers have been teaching grammar rules, and learners have not been reaching the desired proficiency, one conclusion is that teaching grammar rules is not working, and so other solutions must be sought. An alternative conclusion is that learning a language, especially in a low-exposure situation, is very difficult, and it may be the case that whatever teachers do, few learners will achieve high proficiency. This practice needed to be considered to improve the learning conditions in the classroom.

While correct grammar is a valuable tool for success in many areas of life. It is not a tool for segregation, but a tool to opening doors by being heard and understood more clearly. While correct grammar will offer confident communicative proficiency it won't be so obvious as to cause a separation from the masses in casual conversation.

We cannot communicate efficiently if we do not master the essential principles of grammar or syntax. Without any grammar, we could manage to produce some sort of elementary communication but we would be unable to form any more complex ideas into words. It follows therefore that mastering the essential grammatical rules is a vital skill that needs to be acquired by all learners of any language - whether it be their native language or a foreign language.

Language seen from 'outside', can seem to be a gigantic, shapeless mass, presenting an insuperable challenge for the learner. Because grammar consists of an apparently finite set of rules, it can help to reduce the apparent enormity of the language learning task for both teachers and students. By tidying language up and organizing it into neat categories (sometimes called discrete items), grammarians make language digestible. Grammar is a kind of 'sentence-making machine'. It follows that the teaching of grammar offers the learner the means for potentially limitless linguistic creativity. The teaching of grammar, it is argued, serves as a corrective against the kind of ambiguity

Grammatical rules, spelling and vocabulary, even pronunciation are codes for effective communication for writers and readers, speakers and listeners. When a writer uses one code, and a reader tries to use a different code to comprehend what is written, the reader may not understand, and the exercise in communication will fail, or partly fail. This happens all the time, when readers try to understand a message in a language that they do not master; since they don't fully share the same code, communication is at best incomplete, at worst ambiguous or impossible. Even if there are plenty of occasions where, with a bit of logical thinking, readers or listeners can make a sensible guess and imagine correctly what the speaker or writer is trying to say, this is not always the case.

Grammar is a startling puzzle that fits together in logical ways, leading to beautifully-crafted sentences and paragraphs. Once one make out the rules, can choose when and how to break them to suit the meaning. It is obvious there will be parts that seem difficult and as they stretch mind to new horizons, but the contentment that the learner will get from mastering new areas of grammar will far outweigh the frustration sometimes felt during the learning process. A sound understanding of one grammar rule is often a shortcut to understanding a different grammar rule, so the process becomes quicker as the learner goes along. Also the more grammar patterns one learns, the more similar or different aspects with native language can be learnt and this can mean that whole areas of English will suddenly become interesting and enjoying.

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