GRAMMAR INSTRUCTION IN THE COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH
CLASSROOM: FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF NON-ENGLISH-MAJOR COLLEGE
STUDENTS IN CHINA

Approved: ___Ray Spoto______________  Date: __05/01/2014_____________
GRAMMAR INSTRUCTION IN THE COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH CLASSROOM:
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Abstract

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Zhang Hui

Under the Supervision of Raymond Spoto, Ph. D

The value of grammar instruction in EFL has been questioned for several decades both at home and abroad with the advent of the communicative approach. Grammar teaching has undergone a change from playing central a role to virtually no role. This paper makes a brief overview on three major grammar instructions that have greatly influenced English teaching in China, namely, the Grammar-Translation Method, the Audio-Lingual Method, and the Communicative Approach. By reviewing current English teaching in college, grammar teaching needs to be brought back into the classroom to facilitate students’ communicative competence. In fact, the communicative approach does not mean to expel grammar teaching from classroom. Therefore, the argument has shifted from the issue about whether grammar should be taught, to how to teach grammar in the framework of communicative language teaching, or how traditional grammar teaching is integrated into the communicative approach. An empirical study is conducted to explore the existing problems in grammar teaching in the framework of the communicative approach, in particular from the perspective of non-English-major students who are supposed to well master the basic grammar knowledge and demand for communicative competence. It draws conclusions that grammar teaching should be student-oriented through engaging students in meaningful and motivating activities.
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Chapter I Introduction

The trend of EFL (teaching English as a Foreign Language) in China has reached a special status within the last 30 years. EFL has been listed as a required course in the nine-year compulsory education system in China and it is one of the four major mandatory subjects in National College Entrance Examination. Although EFL enjoys prominent status, the result of English learning has been far from being satisfactory. Students are frequently unable to use a given grammatical rule correctly in spontaneous utterance even after repeated explanation, drill and apparent mastery as demonstrated on tests (Kao, 2007). Therefore, English teaching approaches are widely criticized. With regard to English teaching approaches, an article in the TESOL Quarterly noted that “the teaching of grammar (i.e. the teaching of morphological inflections, function words, and syntactic word order) was a central concern in English teaching (Celce-Murcia, 1991, P.459).” In fact, when we say to teach English, traditionally, has been synonymous with teaching English grammar in China. Now that grammar teaching, to great extent, has dominated the whole content of English teaching, how should grammar be taught has become the central issue. Influenced by linguistic and psychologists’ concepts on grammar, some grammar teaching methods have been widely applied in the classroom, such as Grammar-Teaching Method, the Audio-Lingual method and the Communicative Language Teaching or Communicative Approach (Sun, 2009). However, in the past decades, in China there has been an underlying change in English teaching. Thus, grammar instruction has moved from its dominant role to playing virtually no role. This change occurred since the communicative approach came into prominence in China, which claims that classroom teaching should be conducted around facilitating language
use and communication rather than the form of language, grammar. Some linguists believe learning grammar doesn’t seem to help students achieve the goal. Therefore, a debate on whether grammar should be taught in the classroom, in particular the college classroom where the communicative approach is prevalently conducted, has become a major concern. There are several reasons accounting for this.

First of all, non-English-major college students have learned English for six years in secondary schools, so they are expected to lay foundations which prepared them for further English learning in college. Secondly, for many learners, language is an instrument of communication and their ultimate goal of learning English is to communicate. Therefore, in order to help college learners to achieve successful communication, college English teaching should center on developing communicative competence other than grammar. Likewise, the College English Test (CET-4 and CET-6) which is designed to test college English proficiency has exerted such influence on college English teaching that English teaching is CET-oriented to a large extent. Before 2005, the test of grammar knowledge (which took the form of multiple choices) occupied a relatively large proportion in CET; but since the reform of CET, the ratio of grammar test has sharply decreased, which discourages grammar teaching in the college English class. However, the reality does not achieve the goal that it is assumed to do, which rouses English teachers’ concern on why the communicative approach does not function as effectively as it is expected?

Many researchers from home and abroad have used questionnaires and interviews to elicit data on teachers’ opinions on grammar teaching, teachers’ language awareness and the way their beliefs interact with and influence grammar teaching (Petraki & Hill), or the
grammar pedagogies in itself (Celce-Murcia, 1991), while few gain an insight into learners’ point of view. This paper will conduct an empirical study from the students’ point of view on how should grammar be taught in the college English class. Centered on this point, this paper will be developed into four parts. The first part is to focus on a review of major grammar pedagogies that have implications on English teaching in China. The second part is to display an overall current situation about English teaching. The third part involves the empirical study, including research questions, data collections and data analysis. The fourth part deals with conclusions and discussions drawn from the results of the empirical study.

**Statement of the Problem**

The problem to be addressed is “How should grammar be taught to non-English major students in the communicative approach classroom?”

**Purpose of the Study**

This paper is intended to explore the necessity of traditional grammar instruction in the college classroom and find out a possible means that integrate grammar teaching into the communicative approach classroom through an empirical study from the learner’s views on grammar.

**Definition of Terms**

Grammar: Originally, grammar was a central part of the entire English when in the middle ages the main focus was on the Latin language, stylistics and rhetoric. The term is presently used to refer to various areas of study. Grammar as the knowledge and study of the morphological and syntactic regularities of a natural language, in this traditional sense, grammar caters to the formal aspects of language, excluding phonetics, phonology
and semantics as specialized areas of linguistics (Bussmann, P.194).

Traditional Grammar: is the grammar early derived from Greek or Latin. It highlights correctness, literary excellence, the use of Latin models and the priority of written language. It favors the detailed language points instead of the function of grammar in the context (Hu, 2001).

Structuralism: is a collective term for a number of linguistic approaches in the first half of the twentieth century, all based on the work of F.de Saussure, but strongly divergent from one another. Depending on theoretical preconceptions, it is used in several ways. In its broad sense, it refers to all linguistic theories which focus on an isolated investigation of the language system, which would include generative transformational grammar. (Bussmann, P.457)

Grammar Translation Method: the foreign language is learned principally by studying its syntax and morphology and by translating from one’s native language into the foreign language and vice versa. The emphasis is on the acquisition of reading and writing skills with the goal of reading literary texts. (Bussmann, P.195)

Audio-Lingual Method: it is based on structuralism principles and drawing on stimulus-response theory. Its proponents believed that language learning is primarily a matter of developing proper mechanical habits, through positive reinforcement of correct utterances; that target language should be presented in spoken form before introducing their written representation; that analogy is a more effective mode of language learning than analysis, and that linguistic forms should be presented in context rather than as isolated items. (Bussmann, P.42)

Communicative Competence: a set of strategies or creative procedures for realizing
the value of linguistic elements in contexts of use, an ability to make sense as a participant in discourse, whether spoken or written, by the skillful deployment of shared knowledge of code resources and rules of language use. (Widdowsons, P.248)

**Method**

1. A brief review of literature on the grammar pedagogies based on linguistic views will be conducted.

2. As a part of this research seminar paper a plan for questionnaires, data collection and analysis will be executed.

   The plan will include instrumentation and approval from the University of Wisconsin-Platteville Institutional Review Board (IRB) using the Teaching Improvement Form.
Chapter II Review of Literature

Major Grammar Pedagogies in China

Grammar-Translation Method

In western countries, linguists proposed various grammar pedagogies based on the nature of grammar. Among them, the Grammar-Translation Method, the Audio-Lingual Method and Communicative Approach have taken a leading role successively during different periods in China. The first two here are classified into Traditional Methods. The subsequent part is a brief outline of various grammar pedagogies.

What we call traditional English grammar is essentially a translation of traditional Latin grammar. It highlights correctness, literary excellence, and the use of Latin models and the priority of written language. It favors the detailed language points instead of the function of grammar in the context (Hu, 2001, P.354). The Grammar-Translation Method (GTM) derived from this theory is characterized by presentation of explicit grammatical rules (memorization of vocabulary and translation from one’s native language into the foreign language and vice versa. The emphasis is on the acquisition of reading and writing skills with the goal of reading literary texts (Bussman P.195), which produces learners’ knowledge of grammatical forms and the ability to read and write but little communicative ability. This method, has governed foreign language study for a long time and has exerted far-reaching influence both overseas and in China. As a mainstream, it was widely applied in English teaching in 1950s in China. In the 1960s, with the urge to improve oral communication, the grammar-translation approach was replaced by audio-lingual method.

Audio-Lingual Method
The Audio-Lingual Method (ALM) was built on structuralist principles (or structuralism) and drawing on stimulus-response theory (Bussman, P.42). One of the representatives of American Structuralism, Boas holds that language consists of three parts: the phonetic system of languages, the semantic categories of linguistic expression, and the process of grammatical combination in semantic expressions (Hu, 2001, P.425). As the concept suggests that structuralist linguistics emphasizes on the systemic nature of English, which is a view traditional grammar simply ignores. Based on this perception, acquiring a language means to learn these three parts and master such technique as sound system, word formation and grammatical structures. Yet a step further, studying the current spoken language which people use in communication is the major focus of structural grammar. Compared with grammar-translation approach, ALM attaches more importance to develop language learners’ listening and speaking of target language than on reading and writing. In teaching practice, proponents believe that language learning is primarily a matter of developing proper mechanical habits, through positive reinforcement of correct utterances (Bussman, 2000). “Thus mimicry of forms and memorization of certain sentence patterns were used extensively to present rules inductively (Celce-Murcia, 1991)”, so that learners can be expected to develop automatisms for language forms. This method is beneficial to language learners at the primary stage, because they can acquire some language ability through repeated sentence pattern drills.

The Audio-lingual method differs in the treatment of grammar from grammar-translation approach in the audio-lingual method is based on an inductive approach in which rules are “caught” rather than “taught” (Nunan, 2001), while
grammar-translation approach involves in excessively deductive grammar explanation. Despite their distinct difference, these two methods share one thing in common. The grammatical form is separated from communicative meaning in these two methods. In the grammar-translation method classrooms, students are taught to memorize and repeat a set of rules; in audio-lingual classrooms, “learners are expected to come to an inductive understanding of the rule through processes of analogy” (Nunan, 2001, P.78). Pattern drills and memorization might lead to learning language like behavior but they fail to produce learner’s competence. In both approaches, learners have difficulty in making the connection between different parts of the grammatical forms and applying the grammar they have learned in communication. For example, words are listed individually in the glossary so that learners do not develop an understanding of how they are grouped by their meanings into semantic sets.

All in all, importance is greatly attached to grammar teaching. Thus, teachers are viewed as the “knowledge-imparting” dispensers, because English teaching activities are mostly involved with explaining the general rules of grammar and requiring students to master them by leading students to produce sentences containing the targeted structures, meanwhile, Students are considered to be the passive “knowledge-receiving” collectors, because their learning hours are spent in practicing patterns, memorizing grammatical rules and vocabulary as well as translation exercises (Yang, cited by Kao, 2007, P.1).

**Communicative Approach**

Under this background, the Communicative Approach took a dominant role in the 1970s. This approach derives from Halliday’s functional grammar and Hymes’ theory of communicative competence. Hyme (cited by Zheng, 2010, P.12) stated that
communicative competence includes grammar competence with which a speaker can comprehend and form grammatically correct sentences to be applied appropriately in real communicative situations. In his view, two dimensions of language ability are addressed: one is grammar competence and the other is communicative competence. Language is viewed as an instrument of communication and communication is the goal of foreign language teaching, so if learners achieve communicative skills, their grammar competence in most areas will naturally follow. Thus, what we should develop is one’s communicative competence through language rather than language for communication. Supporters believe that learners could simply absorb all the grammar they need from communicative activities (cited by Zheng, 2010, P.12). Based on this perception, in teaching practice, language course should not revolve around grammar instruction, but around how the learner uses the language in unrehearsed situation. For instance, functional activities and social interaction activities are carefully selected depending on how they engage learners in meaning and authentic language use. In other words; language instruction should be content-based, meaningful, contextualized and discourse-based. As for grammar instruction, there is little or no place in a communicative classroom.

In contrast with traditional method, communicative approach is learner-centered while teacher share different roles, like communication facilitator, independent participants (Sun, 2009).

Although these three grammar approaches are characterized by giving due weight to grammar teaching methods, they essentially represent two opposing attitudes toward grammar teaching, known as “pro-grammarians” and “anti-grammarians”
(Nazari&Allahyar, 2012). Supporters of the former one claim that direct grammar instruction helps significantly with accuracy and speeds language learning, whereas advocates of the latter one doubt the role grammar instruction plays in language learning.

**Explicit Grammar Instruction versus Implicit Grammar Instruction**

The above reviews suggest grammar has fallen into the lowest ebb with the popularizing of the communicative approach. As a compromise between total-grammar and “zero-grammar” approaches, the focus-on-form approaches seems to take a balanced view, claiming that grammar instruction should be integrated into communicative approaches. However, even if grammar instruction is incorporated in the communicative classroom, other specific problems arise in teaching practices such as whether grammar should be taught explicitly or implicitly.

Language scholars from different theoretical schools have argued that L1 acquisition relies principally on processes of implicit learning, whereas the acquisition of an L2 often relies on both implicit learning and explicit learning (Wang, 2012). Different theories tried to explore the process of second language learning, among which Krashen’s Monitor Model and Bialystok’s Theory of L2 Learning contrasted sharply.

Explicit grammar instruction, mainly presented by grammar-translation method, involves practices that grammar rules are taught in a logical order directed by the teacher through demonstration, explanation and drills. Bialystok’s model of second language learning “acknowledged that it is possible to know some things about a language explicitly, and others only implicitly” (Stern, 1999). Ellis (1993) in the *weak interface position* argues that explicit knowledge can convert into implicit knowledge if the learner
is ready to acquire the targeted feature and that this conversion occurs by priming a number of key acquisitional processes. Ellis’ view resembles Andringa’(2005) belief that explicit instruction does not lead to explicit learning only; it may lead to concomitant implicit learning effects as well. However, a series of studies conducted by Reber indicates that explicit instruction works when the material to be learnt is relatively “simple”, but not when it is “complex” (Li&Tian, 2008). Even worse, there is some evidence that teaching explicit knowledge by itself is not effective. Research by Vanpatten and Oikennon (1996) have suggested that experimental groups that received explicit information alone performed no better on interpretation and production tests than a control group did.

Implicit grammar teaching involves teaching certain grammar rules in suggestive or implied manners through content-based activities, so that learners are expected to acquire grammatical structures unconsciously. According to Doughty (2007), implicit instruction makes no overt reference to rules or forms. In Krashen’s Monitor Theory he distinguished “acquisition” and “learning”, the distinction of which “mirrors the implicit/explicit distinction” (Ellis, 1999). He (1981) argued that “although second language (L2) learners might be exposed to explicit rules in classrooms and textbooks, they rely on implicit knowledge and implicit processing to comprehend L2 inputs”, and “complex rules can only be learned implicitly”. Current connectionist theories of EFL learning give priority to implicit learning processes based on massive exposure to the target language when learners are at the beginning stage. Nonetheless, no empirical studies can provide convincing evidence of which one is better, because many variable factors such as valid measures of second language implicit and explicit knowledge, the type and complexity of
target structures to be addressed might affect the validation of investigations about implicit and explicit teaching (Li & Tian, 2008).

**Current Situation of College English Teaching in China**

In 1992, a functional syllabus that set the goal of communicative teaching and listed the communicative syllabus was introduced (Sun, 2009). Some people including both the teachers and learners believe that college English teaching should be elevated to a high level, i.e. focusing on cultivating students’ communicative competence, so they subjectively resist teaching grammar in college classroom, while others consider grammar learning as what should be completed in the period of secondary school. The views mentioned above plus other reasons, such as declining status of grammar in CET-4 result in the concept that grammar teaching should be excluded from the classroom. But that is so far from the truth. There are several reasons leading to that fact: in a long term, college English teaching has focused on grammar. This is because most teachers are products of traditional methods, and they view it as a matter of course; traditionally, students in their middle schools learn grammar in the way, so that they consider it as a routine and naturally follow the suit.

Subsequent exemplification concerning how I learned English is to specify how traditional method is applied in class teaching.

At the initial stage of learning English, each unit in the textbook begins with such short dialogues as

1 A: “What’s this in English?”

B: “It’s an orange. What’s this in English?

A: “It’s a map.”
Then, with the given situation, students were asked to make up a similar dialogue to practice the sentence patterns by substituting “orange” or “map” with other words so that they learned to grasp the sentence pattern “what’s this…” and some nouns. While learning those simple structures, students were learning to listen to identify and write letters as well as how to read English phonetic systems. In introducing grammar structures, taking passive voice as an example, there was a short passage involving several sentences with passive voice to which learners were exposed and explained by teacher. More exercises were followed thereafter in order to master its usage and formation, which indicated that the major grammar knowledge in the unit was concerned with passive voice. Apparently, the above teaching activities were arranged based on the structural syllabus that phonetic system is prior to other tasks and sentence patterns are expected to be acquired through students’ repeated drills; grammatical structures are presented explicitly and deductively. This is a procedure in which learners are expected to accumulate pieces of vocabulary and grammatical forms, combine them into sentences and thus acquire communicative competence. But it is not unusual to see a learner respond to greetings “How are you?” by saying “I am fine, thank you, and you?” even he felt depressed that day. A phenomenon reveals that learners might produce an appropriate sentence by virtue of its form, but still inappropriate in a particular situation in spontaneous utterance. This is because learners learn English through mechanical practices and their language competence in a changing situation is overlooked or not fully developed.

Obviously, in most cases, grammar teaching is involved in the classroom and the value of grammar in English teaching has never been ignored under the background that

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1 This short dialogue derives from Students’ Book—starter unit2, published by People's Education Press in 2006
the communicative approach gains prominent status nationwide. However, the communicative approach does not facilitate non-English-major students’ grammar competence.

The table1 below, specifying the frequency of grammar mistakes students often makes, reveals the problem by eliciting data from corpus of CLEC. CLEC is a corpus of English which includes over one million words of middle school students, non-English-major students from grade one to grade four who pass CET-4 and CET-6, as well as English major students from grade one to grade four.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>St2</th>
<th>St3</th>
<th>St4</th>
<th>St5</th>
<th>St6</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Form</td>
<td>3752.5</td>
<td>4068.1</td>
<td>2957.3</td>
<td>2747.7</td>
<td>2190.0</td>
<td>15715.6</td>
<td>26.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word</td>
<td>2684.6</td>
<td>4438.0</td>
<td>3811.0</td>
<td>1881.4</td>
<td>1410.5</td>
<td>14225.5</td>
<td>23.81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentence</td>
<td>2809.5</td>
<td>2006.3</td>
<td>2079.5</td>
<td>1393.0</td>
<td>673.6</td>
<td>8962.9</td>
<td>15.01%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verb phrase</td>
<td>1910.5</td>
<td>1480.8</td>
<td>1873.7</td>
<td>799.2</td>
<td>829.5</td>
<td>6893.7</td>
<td>11.54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None phrase</td>
<td>814.0</td>
<td>1009.6</td>
<td>819.9</td>
<td>744.5</td>
<td>595.0</td>
<td>3983.0</td>
<td>6.67%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Annotation: st2=middle school students, st3=college students who pass CET-4, st4=college students who pass CET-6, st5=English majors in grade one and grade2, st6=English majors in grade three and grade four.)

It is worthy noticing that non-English-major college students who have passed CET-4 and CET-6 made more grammar mistakes in forms, words and noun phrases than they did in middle school, which is assumed to have no need to repeat them in the college
class as college students are supposed to master the basic grammar knowledge. In contrast, statistics suggest that it is not always the case.

Possibly, the major concern has been moved to how to teach grammar, the answer to which depend on certain variables, such as the learners variables and instructional variables. Just as Celce-Murcia (1991) believes that teaching grammar teaching is more important for adults than for children.

**Chapter III Empirical Study**

**Purpose**

Since the Communicative Approach thrives in China, a student’s English ability in general has been improved, especially his or her communicative ability. However, some problems still exist, among which is the accuracy of English use. Ideally, the Communicative Approach is assumed to help learners acquire grammatical competence, but the truth is that non-English-major students did worse in written English test; as the figures show in table1. This study is intended to explore students’ views on grammar instruction under the communicative approach in classroom by dealing with the following questions:

1. What is the effective method of grammar instruction from the learners’ point of view?

2. What are the merits and defects of grammar teaching from the learners’ point of view?

**Subjects**

The subjects involved are 138 non-English-major students in grade one. Considering generalization of the survey, students are randomly selected from two colleges, among
which is the Business College of Hubei University of technology which ranks as an average-level college and Wuhan University ranks as a top-class university.

**Instrument and Data Analysis**

The questionnaire adopts the closed form and is designed in Chinese, so that participants can easily perceive the theme of each question, avoiding misconception. It consists of eight questions. All the answers are multiple choices and participants are only allowed to make one choice based on their own situation. There are 108 participants in total with 120 valid questionnaires. The data is collected and processed in the form of percentage.

Table 2 is the questionnaire translated from Chinese and statistics on students’ perceptions concerning grammar teaching

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NO.</th>
<th>Contents</th>
<th>Quantities</th>
<th>Percentages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Generally speaking, the grammar method English applied in classroom teaching is helpful to your English learning?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a. Agree</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. disagree</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>How do you evaluate your level of English grammar?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a. good</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. average</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c. poor</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>From my English learning experience, My English teacher will do in most circumstance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a. They teach grammatical rules explicitly by giving more detailed explanation.</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. They seldom explain grammatical rules but often encourage students to explore and master grammar by being immersed in language materials.</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I think teacher teach grammar clearly in class is</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a. necessary</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. unnecessary, I think I mainly depend on the language materials to learn grammar</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>What teaching methodology facilitates my grammar knowledge most effectively?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. to explain grammar rules which are separated from language material to all us and then we do practices and drills one by one.</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. grammar practices and drills are not necessarily separated from language materials, grammar instruction is needed when encountering some grammatical points.</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 When my English teacher teaches English grammar rules, What methodology does he favor?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Firstly illustrates some grammar rules, and then gives some examples.</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Firstly provide us with some examples, and then encourage us to induce grammar rules.</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Which method is most helpful for me?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Firstly illustrates some grammar rules, and then gives some examples.</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Firstly provide us with some examples, and then encourage us to induce grammar rules.</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 What defect do you think exists in current grammar teaching?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. the teacher over-teaches the grammatical rules and ignores bridging the gap between training communicative ability and writing ability.</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. the teacher only pays more attention to practical application of English and ignores teaching grammar.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Results and Discussion**

Overall, most students hold a positive attitude toward present grammar instruction, as it is suggested in the first question and the second question that 75% participants think their grammar competence is beyond the average level. However, there is much room for teachers to improve. Specific aspects should be paid attention to:

1. Data from the 6th question shows that teachers are used to teaching grammar by explaining and providing examples. This indicates that teachers play a vital role in grammar teaching and they regard themselves as a distributor of grammar knowledge, while, students are recipients, so their motivation is largely constrained. In the
communicative approach classroom, grammar instruction should also be student-centered.

2. By contrast, students favor the inductive approach to learn grammar, as revealed in the 7th question. Being exposed to language materials in which grammar rules are included, students try to induce these grammar points under the teacher’s guidance. Students are involved in a systematic process in which they observe language phenomenon, set hypothesis and testify hypothesis. Learners participate in learning activity vigorously, leading to effective learning.

3. The data from 5th question suggests students prefer to learn grammar rules based on a context rather than study them isolated. This is much the same with the view proposed by the psychologist, Ausubel (1978) who compared meaningful learning with rote learning, drawing the conclusion that comprehensive learning plays a more critical role in classroom language learning. That is to say, students can better comprehend the usage of grammatical structures which are placed in a given context.

4. More efforts need to be exerted on students’ grammar internalization. Though the communicative approach has come into prominence in syllabus design and book compiling, it is not the case in teaching practice. Just as the third question discloses that 84% of students think that teachers tend to teach grammar knowledge explicitly, and this indicates that teachers fail to incorporate grammar rules into the communicative classroom teaching.

**Chapter IV Conclusions and Recommendations**

We need set up an overall and scientific view on the relationship between grammar teaching and communicative language teaching. In a sense, grammatical competence
must be an integral part of communicative competence, so the communicative approach
does not mean to eliminate grammar instruction completely; instead, grammar teaching
should enjoy its due value in the communicative approach classroom. Just as
Larsen-Freeman (2000, P.133) points out that acquisition of grammatical forms “must
entail more than learning how to form the structures. It must also including learning what
they mean and when and why to use them as well”. Aspects of grammatical competence
should be taught in the context of meaningful communication.

Now that grammar teaching and the communicative approach are not on opposing
sides, it can be inferred that effective grammar teaching might facilitate communicative
competence. What are the more effective and less effective approaches of teaching
grammar is still the major concern. Specifically, teachers should explore the way of
integrating grammar into communicative approach, and adhere to the principle that
grammar instruction should be students-centered through engaging students in
meaningful and motivating activities.

Owing to my limitation on linguistic theories and confined to analytic skills, the
paper only explores the grammar instructions in a very broad sense. It does not put
forward specific feasible ways teaching grammar under CLT. Other questions are worth
further study, such as what grammar items should be given priority so as to contributing
to effective communication for non-English-majors, or how to conduct grammar teaching
in CLT classroom by presenting vivid illustrations.
References


