

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES TO TEACHING GRAMMAR

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**Abstract:**

This paper examines the methodological approaches to teaching English grammar in elementary schools, focusing on strategies that enhance both understanding and engagement among young learners. It argues for a diversified approach, integrating direct instruction, inductive learning, and contextual activities. The effectiveness of these methods in fostering grammatical competence, while maintaining student motivation and accommodating diverse learning styles, is explored through a review of current educational practices and scholarly research. One of the main aspects of the language, which was subjected to intensive discussion for many years, is the grammar of a foreign language. The attitude to grammar determined the specificity of a particular method, the principles and method of teaching, what are the main approaches in teaching English grammar, what approaches are leading in the modern conditions of teaching English and what are the main methods they are realizing.

**Keywords:** inductive learning, direct instructions, games, interactive activities, Grammar-Bingo, competence

**Introduction**

**The Traditional Approach: The Grammar-Translation Method**

The Grammar-Translation Method (GTM) is one of the oldest and most traditional approaches to language teaching, with its origins dating back to the teaching

of classical languages like Latin and Greek in the 16th century. During that period, these "dead" languages were studied not for oral communication, but for intellectual development, access to their esteemed literature, and philological analysis. When modern foreign languages like French, German, and English entered European school curricula in the 18th and 19th centuries, they were taught using the same methodology applied to Latin. This method dominated European and foreign language teaching until the mid-20th century and remains influential in many parts of the world today, particularly in educational systems that prioritize rigorous academic study over practical skill.

## Core Philosophy and Goals

The fundamental principle of GTM is that language is a system of rules to be mastered, primarily through intellectual effort and memorization. The primary goals are:

1. To enable students to read and translate literary texts from the target language into their native language.
2. To develop students' mental acuity and intellectual discipline through the rigorous study of grammar and vocabulary.
3. To provide a deep understanding of the grammatical rules and structures of the target language.
4. To cultivate an appreciation for the literature and culture associated with the language, but only through written texts.

Instructional materials aimed at effectively addressing challenges related to the application of English verb tenses in spoken communication. The approaches and methods for teaching English, like those for any foreign language, are continually evolving as our understanding of language nature and study methods progresses. This adaptation will fulfill the global demand for more effective educational programs in institutions worldwide. English is widely used across geographical boundaries, facilitating its use both domestically and internationally. The number of individuals who speak English as a foreign language is steadily increasing, with non-native speakers now outnumbering native speakers in many contexts. A foreign language is one that is infrequently utilized in a learner's immediate social environment. It may be relevant for future travel or other intercultural exchanges. It is typically taught as either a mandatory subject or an optional course but is not immediately applied in practice.

When discussing methods, it is crucial to distinguish between the theoretical philosophy of language teaching and the practical procedures derived from it. Precision is essential in grammar instruction, and errors should be avoided at all costs. Situational language learning activities are integral to a set of standardized procedures endorsed by many contemporary educators. Textbooks that incorporate situational language learning remain prevalent globally. This method continues to be favored because its principles resonate with the instincts of many practice-oriented teachers, emphasizing oral practice, grammar, and sentence structures. Given the importance of structure in language, initial instruction should prioritize mastering grammatical frameworks. Verbal literacy encompasses accuracy in pronunciation, grammar, and the ability to respond swiftly and clearly in spoken situations. Teaching listening, pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary focuses on developing fluent speech. While reading and writing skills can also be taught, they largely depend on already established oral competencies. Language fundamentally revolves around speech, and the ability to communicate effectively relies on correctly understanding and reproducing the essential phonological features of the target language, fluently using basic grammatical structures in conversation, and possessing sufficient vocabulary to facilitate speech.

The role of English grammar has sparked intense debate over the years. In the modern era, the significance of grammar in foreign language instruction has fluctuated frequently, sometimes increasing or decreasing in prominence. Recently, there has been a trend toward diminishing the role of grammar, resulting in a notable rise in errors within student speech.

On one hand, efforts to eliminate grammar entirely or to overemphasize its importance can adversely affect practical language proficiency. The question of grammar's role and extent within an English course is not isolated; it varies across languages. In contrast to Russian courses, where grammar holds a primary status as both a theoretical and practical discipline fostering mental development, the English grammar framework should not merely aim at mastering grammatical rules but also support broader educational objectives. Analysis of various English grammars leads to a clear conclusion: English grammar exhibits a distinctly descriptive linguistic (and non-communicative) orientation, as evidenced by its theoretical presentations, tasks, and types of exercises. For instance, "There are various types of predicates in English that differ in structure (simple versus compound) and composition (compound nominal versus compound verb). A compound nominal predicate consists of an aspectual verb alongside a full-value verb." Additionally, "The main verbs in English include: to

begin, to continue, to finish," among others. Often, foreign language grammars do not effectively serve practical learning goals. Information regarding spontaneous parts of speech or types of predicates—similar to tasks focused on identifying, memorizing, and reproducing grammatical constructs— fails to cultivate speech skills related to specific linguistic mechanisms and concepts. Vitlin J.L. outlines certain conditions he deems essential for successfully achieving practical language proficiency: It is crucial to enhance differentiation in selecting materials for active versus passive grammatical minimums while employing diverse teaching methods to master these minimums (considering the unique characteristics of the students' native language). The formation of active grammatical minimum rules should particularly highlight common ways of expressing ideas in the mother tongue using the lexical and grammatical resources of the foreign language. Conversely, students must be guided on how to comprehend grammatical forms they encounter in foreign texts but may not utilize in their own speech.

The inductive method is particularly beneficial for cognitive development and fostering self-directed learning strategies among students. Material that is discovered through exploration tends to be retained more effectively. However, despite its advantages, the inductive method demands significantly more time and effort from educators, making it impractical as the sole approach in current foreign language teaching contexts at secondary schools and universities. Grammar teaching methods are guided by several well-established principles.

One key principle is sequential learning, where grammatical concepts are introduced in a specific order. For example, the continuous tense is typically taught after the present tense, followed by the perfect continuous tense. Similarly, tenses are introduced before passive voice and indirect speech. It is clear that variations in this sequence exist. When considering grammatical competence as an intuitive understanding developed through complex social and cognitive activities, grammar instruction aligns with a communicative approach. This perspective posits that grammar acquisition occurs through solving communicative challenges, emphasizing the practical use of forms in speech. This approach is regarded as more effective than traditional methods, which focus on imparting a fixed set of knowledge to specific student groups within defined learning environments. The traditional approach often aims at memorizing numerous rules, exceptions, categories, and paradigms without fostering independent adaptation of these rules to real-life speech situations. Conversely, the second approach to teaching English grammar emphasizes the

semantic aspects of language use. Relying solely on form-focused learning can hinder the development of communicative competence. Skills and competencies in language learning are often developed through the repetition and memorization of forms used in various speech contexts. The formation of grammatical expressions, however, occurs when learners adapt these forms to specific speech situations. Consequently, both approaches rely on just one of the potential mechanisms for developing grammatical competence: the first approach emphasizes passive conscious assimilation, while the second focuses on unconscious assimilation. In contemporary foreign language education, the communicative and cognitive approaches are considered paramount. The communicative approach entails a comprehensive systematization of the relationships among various components of the learning content. These components include: a general operating system; systems for speech activity and communication; the structure of the English language; deliberate comparative analysis between students' native languages and English; mechanisms of speech (such as production, perception, and interaction); systems of textual speech products; structural speech forms (including dialogues, monologues, and various message types); and the overall learning system for the English language. This holistic approach results in the development of a systemic understanding of English as a means of communication in its broadest context. The cognitive approach to grammar instruction encourages teachers to activate students' cognitive processes and to facilitate independent reflective activities. This leads to comparative analysis, comprehension, memorization, mastery, and appropriate use of grammatical structures in communication. However, traditional grammar exercises are not suitable for this method.

### **Conclusions**

Nowadays, grammar is being rehabilitated and recognized for what it has always been an essential, inescapable component of language use and language learning. Few would dispute that teaching and learning with a focus on form is valuable. Lately, there has been much research in the field of second language acquisition on whether noticing a particular linguistic form may promote the acquisition of that form. Noticing—a conscious attention to input—a linguistic form in the input is thought to operate as a necessary, though not a sufficient condition for processing. As stated by Robinson, Schmidt and Skehan, the success of learning seems to be correlated with learners' ability to recognize linguistic forms in the input. Of course, what people now put more emphasis on is to find and devise some appropriate approaches to breed and heighten the grammar awareness of language learners, instead of gaining this objective by means

of mechanical sentence drills. A logical result is that more and more importance has been attached to grammar instruction in the field of today's foreign language teaching.

As we navigate through the intricacies of methodology and pedagogy, it becomes evident that practical recommendations are essential to bridge the gap between theory and application. Practical suggestions for implementation include: To integrate adaptive learning technologies that tailor grammar exercises to individual learners' needs, allowing for personalized and efficient practice; To design language activities that involve real-world tasks, encouraging students to apply grammar rules in authentic contexts and fostering practical language use; To provide ongoing training for educators to stay abreast of innovative teaching methods, ensuring a dynamic and responsive English language curriculum. By incorporating these practical suggestions, educators can enhance the effectiveness of English grammar teaching, cultivating a more engaging and tailored learning experience for students.

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