

# DEDUCTIVE AND INDUCTIVE GRAMMAR TEACHING

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## I. Introduction: What is Grammar Teaching and Why?

In traditional setting, grammar teaching is seen as the presentation and practice of discrete grammatical structures. More comprehensively, Ellis<sup>1</sup> (2006) defines grammar teaching as:

Grammar teaching involves any instructional technique that draws learners' attention to some specific grammatical form in such a way that it helps them either to understand it metalinguistically and/or process it in comprehension and/or production so that they can internalize it.

Further, Ellis (2006) points out some key concepts in teaching grammar. First, some grammar lessons might consist of presentation by itself (i.e., without any practice), while others might entail only practice (i.e., no presentation). Second, grammar teaching can involve learners in discovering grammatical rules for themselves (i.e., no presentation and no practice). Third, grammar teaching can be conducted simply by exposing learners to input contrived to provide multiple exemplars of the target structure. Here, too, there is no presentation and no practice, at least in the sense of eliciting production of the structure. Finally, grammar teaching can be conducted by means of corrective feedback on learner errors when these arise in the context of performing some communicative task.

The notion that grammar should be carried out in instruction (grammar teaching) are explained by these four reasons, based on Nassaji and Fotos<sup>2</sup> (2004) research on teaching grammar.

- 1) the 1980s hypothesis that language can be learned without some degree of consciousness has been found theoretically problematic. “noticing” is necessary in language learning to understand the form.
- 2) L2 learners pass through developmental sequences. This suggests that it needs a teaching process to facilitate and scaffold this sequences.

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<sup>1</sup> Ellis, R. Current Issues in the Teaching of Grammar: An SLA Perspective. *TESOL Quarterly*, Vol. 40, No. 1 (Mar., 2006), pp. 84

<sup>2</sup> Nassaji, H. & Fotos, S. Current Developments in Research on the Teaching of Grammar. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics* (2004) 24, pp. 126-145

- 3) a large body of research pointing to the inadequacies of teaching approaches where the focus is primarily on meaning-focused communication, and grammar is not addressed. In this case, learners could produce meaningful understandable language, but lack of accuracy.
- 4) evidence for the positive effects of grammar instruction. In some researches, grammar teaching improves accuracy, rate and the ultimate level of L2 acquisition.

These reasons suggest that grammar teaching is essential and should be considered in second language learning. The following discussions will describe the historical background of grammar and grammar teaching, the place of grammar teaching in early approaches and methods, explicit and implicit grammatical knowledge, as well as deductive and inductive approach in teaching grammar.

## **II. Historical Background of Grammar and Grammar Teaching**

Grammar teaching holds a crucial role in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching, as without good command of grammar, the language use will be constrained. Teaching grammar is basically teaching the language rules, also known as the sentence patterns, which are essential to define meaning and use. For the decades, grammar teaching has been through some debates which can be described at the following discussion.

Before 1970s, grammar was the essential part of language instruction as it was believed that without knowing the grammatical rules of the language, ones will not be able to communicate well. This belief was then challenged by the notion that "knowledge of the grammatical system of the language....was one of the main components which underlay the notion of communicative competence." (Richards & Renandya, 2002<sup>3</sup>). This shift suggests that to be a communicative speaker/ writer, one should not only master the rules of the language (the language patterns), but also should know how these rules are put together in real communication to convey meaning. Within this period, grammar was abandoned.

However, the language users now agree that grammar is too good to be abandoned, as without good command of grammar, language development will be constrained. Besides,

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<sup>3</sup> Richards, J.C. & Renandya, W.A (eds). *Methodology in Language Teaching: An Anthology of Current Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2002. p.145

language within a good grammar is a requirement for someone to be accepted in certain social contexts, says academics, law, medics, and such where the use of language. Since then, the issue does not ask whether to teach grammar or not, but it shifts to: how should we teach grammar? should we teach it deductively or inductively? which grammar should be taught? It implies that “the controversy has always been whether grammar should be taught explicitly through a formal presentation of grammatical rules or implicitly through natural exposure to meaningful language use.” (Nassaji & Fortos<sup>4</sup>, 2011)

Further, the most current issue in grammar teaching mentions that the main issues of grammar and grammar teaching covers three major problems, which are: “ ... beginning with those that conceptualized teaching in terms of methods with an exclusive focus on grammar, continuing later as types of exposure to meaningful communication, and emerging more recently as a set of instructional options with a focus on both grammar and meaning.” (Nassaji & Fortos<sup>5</sup>, 2011).

### III. The Place of Grammar in Earlier Approaches and Methods

Over the decades, the methods and approaches in teaching grammar evolved which every method and approach have their own advantages and disadvantages. This following table overviews the place of grammar in earlier methods and approaches, taken from Richards and Rodgers<sup>6</sup> (2001).

Table 1. Grammar Status in Early Approaches and Methods

Approaches/ Methods	Advantages	Disadvantages
Grammar Translation Method (nineteenth – mid-twentieth centuries)	Explicit teaching of grammar rules; attention paid to language forms	Absence of communicative practice, which is an immediate need for new immigrants.  Reliance on translation, which is impractical in

<sup>4</sup> Nassaji, H. & Fortos, S. *Teaching Grammar in Second Language Classroom: Integrating Form-Focused Instruction in Communicative Context*. New York: Routledge. 2011. p. 1

<sup>5</sup> *ibid*

<sup>6</sup> Richards, J.C & Rodgers, T.S. Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching. 2001. In Savage, K.L, Bitterlin, G. & D. Price. *Grammar Matters: Teaching Grammar in Adult ESL Programs*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010, p.5-6

		<p>classes having students with many different first languages</p> <p>Focus on reading and translating texts; some adults students can't read in their first language</p>
<p>Direct Method (first part of twentieth century)</p>	<p>Grammar is taught</p> <p>Lessons begin with dialog or a story in the target language</p> <p>Use of visuals (actions, pictures, objects) to convey meaning</p>	<p>Inductive presentation is unsuitable for some adult students, who may benefit from overt explanations of Rules</p> <p>Minimal reading and writing, which is needed by immigrant students with work or academic goals</p>
<p>Audiolingual Method (ALM) (1950s–1970s)</p>	<p>Emphasis on oral Production</p> <p>Teacher models pronunciation</p> <p>Use of drills to reinforce grammatical patterns</p>	<p>Rote exercises reduce cognitive engagement</p> <p>Activities are designed to prevent learner errors, which reduces the need for students to negotiate meaning</p>
<p>Cognitive Approach (1970s)</p>	<p>Grammar must be taught, either inductively or deductively</p>	<p>Emphasis on analyzing structure at the expense of communicative practice</p> <p>Pronunciation is de-emphasized</p>
<p>Natural Approach (1980s)</p>	<p>Language is presented in a “natural” sequence: listening, speaking, reading, writing</p> <p>Use of a communicative syllabus</p>	<p>Grammar is not overtly taught, yet many adult learners need and want grammar instruction</p> <p>Focus on input (listening) can delay output (speaking) that adults need immediately</p>
<p>Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) (1970s–today)</p>	<p>Communication is the goal of instruction</p> <p>Emphasis on meaningful interaction</p> <p>Course syllabus includes language functions</p> <p>Use of authentic texts and contexts</p>	<p>Focus on communication can result in ignoring grammar</p> <p>Emphasis on fluency at the expense of accuracy can result in many students never attaining correct grammar</p>

#### IV. Explicit and Implicit Grammatical Knowledge

In the grammar learning process, there are two major processes that might happen, namely explicit and implicit grammatical knowledge. Explicit grammar knowledge “refers to a conscious knowledge of grammatical forms and their meaning” (Purpura<sup>7</sup>, 2004). This knowledge helps the intake and the development of implicit language, and is used to monitor language output. Explicit knowledge is commonly accessed slowly through controlled processing although at some extent it can be automatized. DeKeyser<sup>8</sup> (1995) indicates that this ‘explicit’ grammatical instruction involves the explanation of rule or request to focus on grammatical feature. The instructions can happen both deductively, where the learners are taught rules and asked to apply them in practice; or inductively, where the learners are presented examples first then to generate rules and make generalizations. Widodo<sup>9</sup> (2006) puts an example of Ahmad, who knows the rules of past tense, can explain how present tense sentences look like (he has explicit grammatical knowledge about simple present tense). However, in speaking and writing, he (Ahmad) often makes mistakes, inspite he is able to explain deductively from present tense rules to the examples.

On the other hand, implicit grammatical knowledge refers to “the knowledge of a language that is typically manifest in some form of naturally occurring language behavior such as conversation (Ellis<sup>10</sup>, 2001b). In line with this, Brown<sup>11</sup> (2007) “Implicit knowledge is involves conscious awareness and intention.” This process is commonly unconscious and accesses quickly. DeKeyser (1995) posits that implicit grammatical instruction does not involve any explanation of rule presentation or a request to focus on form in the input. It occurs “without intention to learn and without awareness of what has been learned.”

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<sup>7</sup> Purpura, J.E. *Assessing Grammar*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004, p. 42

<sup>8</sup> DeKeyser in Purpura, J.E. *Assessing Grammar*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004, p. 42

<sup>9</sup> Widodo, H.P. Approaches and Procedures for Teaching Grammar. *English Teaching: Practice and Critique*. May 2006, Volume 5, Number 1. p. 125

<sup>10</sup> Ellis, R. Some thoughts on testing grammar: an SLA perspective. In C. Elder, A. Brown, E. Grove, K. Hill, N. Iwashita, T. Mc Namara, K. O’Loughlin (eds.), *Experimenting with Uncertainty: Essays in Honour of Alan Davies* (pp.252-69). Rowley, MA: Newbury House, 2001b, p. 252

<sup>11</sup> Brown, H. D. *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching 5th Edition*. New York: Pearson Education. 2007, p.291

(Brown<sup>12</sup>, 2007). Again, Widodo (2006) gives an example of Jack, who speaks and writes well in simple present tense, cannot explain how present tense sentences should be. He has no idea about the grammatical rule behind it.

Mostly, explicit grammatical knowledge is instructed to second or foreign language learners, while the implicit grammatical knowledge is acquired by the native language learners. To sum up, the difference between explicit and implicit grammatical knowledge is presented below.

Table 2. The Difference between Explicit and Implicit Grammatical Knowledge

<b>Explicit grammatical knowledge</b>	<b>Implicit grammatical knowledge</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conscious knowledge</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unconscious/ subconscious knowledge</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requires awareness and intention</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not need awareness and intention</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessed through explicit learning instruction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessed through the acquisition in natural setting (spontaneous language tasks)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessed through controlled processing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessed through uncontrolled processing</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessed slowly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessed quickly</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involves the explanation of grammatical rules</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not involve the explanation of grammatical rules</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Happens both deductively and inductively</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mostly happened inductively</li> </ul>

## **V. Two main approaches of Grammar Teaching**

### **Deductive Approach**

The deductive approach derives from deductive reasoning where the concept goes from general to specific. Rules, patterns, principles are presented first, then moves to the

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid. p. 292

examples. Deductive approach is also known as rule-driven teaching. The most favourable method for this deductive teaching is Grammar Translation Method where the grammar instruction is commonly initiated by an explanation (basically in learners mother tongue) about the grammar points. This is followed by practice activities involving translation to/from the target language. This practice involves only reading and writing, and little attention to speaking and pronunciation. For this method, a teacher is highly required to master both learners' mother tongue and the target language. Surely, this is unapplicable for multilingual classes.

Some possible activities in deductive approach are:

- a) rule-explanation
- b) translation
- c) doing worksheet
- d) self-study grammar

Below is an example of a deductive grammar approach.

Figure 1. Example of deductive grammar approach (Walker and Elsworth<sup>13</sup>,1986)

## Nouns, adjectives and adverbs

1

Subject and object pronouns

*Subject pronouns*

I	you	he	she	it	we	you	they
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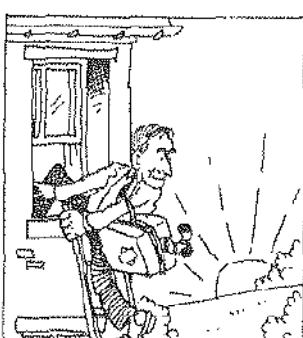
*Object pronouns*

me	you	him	her	it	us	you	them
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- The subject is the person or thing doing the action:  
*I left early.*  
**She** went home.  
**We** said goodbye.
- The object is the person or thing receiving the action:  
*She telephoned **me**.*  
*I hit **him**.*  
*We saw **her**.*

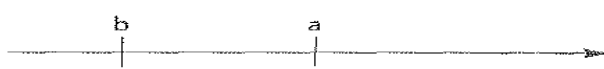
Write the correct *pronouns* for these sentences:

1 . . . . telephoned yesterday. (she)



The example of the instruction is below.

Figure 2. Example of Instruction in Deductive Grammar Teaching (Thornbury<sup>14</sup>, 2002)

T: Right. The past perfect.	(cueing)
T: The past perfect is formed from the past of the auxiliary 'have', plus the past participle.	(rule of form)
T: For example, 'everyone had left', 'the film had started'.	(examples)
T: So, what's the past perfect of 'they go'?	(check)
ST: 'They had gone.'	
T: Good.	
T: It is used when you are talking about the past, and you want to refer to an earlier point in the past.	(rule of use)
T: For example, 'We were late. When we got to the cinema, the film had already started.'	(example)
T: Did the film start after we arrived, at the same time as we arrived, or before we arrived?	(check)
ST: Before.	
T: Right.	
T: So, it's like this. [draws]	
	(illustration)
T: We arrived at this point in time (a). But I need to refer to an earlier point in the past, when the film started, here (b).	

There are some advantages and disadvantages of this deductive approach as presented below.

Table 3. Advantages and disadvantages of the deductive approach to teaching grammar (Widodo<sup>15</sup>, 2006)

<sup>14</sup> Thornbury, S.. *How to Teach Grammar 5th Edition*. Essex: Pearson Education. 2002, p. 33



Advantages	1. The deductive approach goes straightforwardly to the point and can, therefore, be time-saving.
	2. A number of rule aspects (for example, form) can be more simply and clearly explained than elicited from examples
	3. A number of direct practice/application examples are immediately given.
	4. The deductive approach respects the intelligence and maturity of many adult learners in particular and acknowledges the role of cognitive processes in language acquisition.
	5. It confirms many learners' expectations about classroom learning particularly for those who have an analytical style.
Disadvantages	1. Beginning the lesson with a grammar presentation may be off-putting for some learners, especially younger ones.
	2. Younger learners may not be able to understand the concepts or encounter grammar terminology given.
	3. Grammar explanation encourages a teacher-fronted, transmission-style classroom, so it will hinder learner involvement and interaction immediately.
	4. The explanation is seldom as memorable as other forms of presentation (for example, demonstration).
	5. The deductive approach encourages the belief that learning a language is simply a case of knowing the rule.

## Inductive Approach

An inductive approach starts with some examples from which a rule is inferred. In grammar teaching, teachers present the examples at the beginning then generalizing rules from the given samples. Inductive grammar learning is commonly happen for a native speakers of English, where they can produce a grammatically correct utterance but they do not know the rules underlie it. Inductive approach is often correlated with Direct Method and Natural Approach in English teaching. In both methods, grammar is presented in such way the learners experience it. "In Direct method, therefore, the rules of the language are supposedly acquired out of the experience of the understanding and repeating examples which have been systematically graded for difficulty and put into a clear context." (Thornbury<sup>16</sup>, 2002). Here is an example of teaching present continuous tense by using Direct Method.

1 Walk from one side of the classroom to the other, and, while you are walking, say two or three times to the class:  
I am walking. I am walking. I am walking.

2 Select a student. Tell him to walk across the room. Indicate that he must say the sentence as you did:  
I am walking. I am walking. I am walking.

3 Tell him to walk across the room again. Indicate that he must be silent and you say to the class:  
He is walking. (three times)

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M

16

id Critique.

Another example of inductive approach in teaching perfect tense. (Thornburry<sup>17</sup>, 2002)

Study these two sets of sentences:

- a Chris has lived in Cape Town for ten years.  
Andrew has been learning to drive for six months.
- b Wendy has lived in Edinburgh since 1995.  
David has been out of work since January.

They are then invited to choose *for* or *since* to complete the following sentences:

- 1 Anna has been married \_\_\_\_ seven years.
- 2 Jeff has been studying French \_\_\_\_ 1990.

This is fairly straightforward. The next three test items, however, challenge the learner to refine their initial hypotheses, since the clues are not so easy to interpret:

- 3 Chris and Jim have been together \_\_\_\_ a long time.
- 4 I have been living here \_\_\_\_ last summer.
- 5 They have been going out together \_\_\_\_ they met five weeks ago.

Below is a full lesson using inductive grammar approach, taken from Mapple<sup>18</sup> (1988).

**5**  
**Find the rule**  
Look at these sentences:  
You **know** Norma and Joe, don't you?  
They **work** every day.  
Joe **talks** to tourists, and Norma **writes** letters.  
We always **go** to their travel agency.  
The agency **offers** tours to many different countries.  
I **like** the service there too.

► There is a final s on the verb only with certain subjects. What are they?

I  you  he  she  it  we  they

**Now apply the rule!**  
Circle the right verb.  
I **see/sees** Norma almost every day, or she **call/calls** me. She and Joe sometimes **come/comes** to my house on weekends.  
Joe usually **tell/tells** us some funny stories

<sup>17</sup> Thornb

<sup>18</sup> Mapple

Some advantages and disadvantages of Inductive grammar approach are:

Table 4 The Advantages and Disadvantages of Inductive Grammar Approach

(Widodo<sup>19</sup>, 2006)

Advantages	1. Learners are trained to be familiar with the rule discovery; this could enhance learning autonomy and self-reliance.
	2. Learners' greater degree of cognitive depth is "exploited".
	3. The learners are more active in the learning process, rather than being simply passive recipients. In this activity, they will be motivated.
	4. The approach involves learners' pattern-recognition and problemsolving abilities in which particular learners are interested in this challenge.
	5. If the problem-solving activity is done collaboratively, learners get an opportunity for extra language practice.
Disadvantages	1. The approach is time and energy-consuming as it leads learners to have the appropriate concept of the rule.
	2. The concepts given implicitly may lead the learners to have the wrong concepts of the rule taught.
	3. The approach can place emphasis on teachers in planning a lesson.
	4. It encourages the teacher to design data or materials taught carefully and systematically.
	5. The approach may frustrate the learners with their personal learning style, or their past learning experience (or both) would prefer simply to be told the rules.

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<sup>19</sup> Widodo, H.P. Approaches and Procedures for Teaching Grammar. *English Teaching: Practice and Critique*. May 2006, Volume 5, Number 1. 2006, p. 129

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