«THE ROLE OF GRAMMAR IN IMPROVING SPEAKING SKILL IN ENGLISH»

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Annotation: This study investigates the role of grammar in improving English speaking skills among EFL learners. It emphasizes that while fluency is essential for communication, grammatical accuracy is equally important for clarity and confidence. Using a quasi-experimental design, the research involved two groups of English major students—one receiving grammar-focused speaking instruction and the other practicing speaking without explicit grammar teaching. The findings revealed that grammar-based instruction significantly enhanced learners' speaking accuracy and moderately improved fluency. The study concludes that integrating grammar meaningfully into communicative speaking activities fosters balanced language competence and greater speaking confidence.

Keywords: Grammar instruction, speaking skill, fluency, accuracy, EFL learners.

Аннотация: Данное исследование посвящено изучению роли грамматики в повышении уровня навыков устной речи на английском языке у студентов, изучающих английский как иностранный. Подчеркивается, что, несмотря на важность беглости речи для успешной коммуникации, грамматическая точность столь же необходима для ясности и уверенности в высказывании. В исследовании, основанном на квазиэкспериментальном дизайне, приняли участие две группы студентов – одна получала обучение с акцентом на грамматику в процессе говорения, другая практиковала устную речь без явного изучения грамматики. Результаты показали, что обучение, основанное на грамматике, значительно улучшило грамматическую точность речи и умеренно повысило беглость. Сделан вывод о том, что осмысленная интеграция грамматики в коммуникативные виды деятельности способствует формированию сбалансированной языковой компетенции и повышению уверенности при говорении.

Ключевые слова: Обучение грамматике, устная речь, беглость, точность, изучающие английский язык как иностранный.

Annotatsiya: Ushbu tadqiqot ingliz tilini chet tili sifatida o'rganayotgan talabalarining gapirish ko'nikmasini rivojlantirishda grammatikani o'rganishning o'rni va ahamiyatini o'rganishga bag'ishlangan. Tadqiqotda nutqdagi ravonlik muvaffaqiyatli muloqot uchun muhim bo'lsa-da, grammatik aniqlik ham fikrni ravshan va ishonchli ifoda etish uchun zarurligi ta'kidlanadi. Kvaizi-eksperimental tadqiqotda ikki guruh talaba ishtirok etdi: biri grammatika asosida gapirish mashg'ulotlarini oldi, ikkinchisi esa grammatik qoidalarga alohida e'tibor bermasdan faqat kommunikativ gapirish amaliyotini bajardi. Natijalar shuni ko'rsatdiki, grammatika yo'naltirilgan ta'lim talabalar nutqining grammatik aniqligini sezilarli darajada oshirdi va ravonlikni ham biroz yaxshiladi. Xulosa sifatida aytish mumkinki, grammatikani kommunikativ faoliyatga ma'noli tarzda integratsiya qilish talabalar nutqida muvozanatli til kompetensiyasini va ishonchni rivojlantiradi.

Kalit so'zlar: Grammatika o'qitish, gapirish ko'nikmasi, ravonlik, aniqlik, ingliz tili chet tili sifatida.

The Role of Grammar in Improving Speaking Skill in English
Chapter 1. Introduction
1.1 Background of the Study
Speaking skill is one of the most essential components of English language learning because it enables learners to express thoughts, ideas, and opinions effectively. However, many learners

struggle to speak English fluently and accurately. While fluency helps communication flow naturally, accuracy ensures that meaning is conveyed clearly and without misunderstanding. Grammar, as the foundation of language structure, plays a vital role in achieving both fluency and accuracy.

In recent years, communicative approaches in English teaching have often minimized the importance of grammar instruction, emphasizing fluency instead. Nevertheless, without sufficient grammatical knowledge, learners' speech may become ambiguous or incorrect. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the role of grammar in improving speaking skills and to determine how grammatical competence contributes to effective oral communication.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Many EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learners can express simple ideas but frequently make grammatical mistakes that reduce clarity and confidence. Consequently, their speaking performance remains limited.

This study addresses the following central problem:

To what extent does grammar instruction contribute to improving speaking skills among English learners?

1.3 Research Questions

1. How does grammatical knowledge influence speaking performance in English?
2. Does explicit grammar instruction improve learners' speaking fluency and accuracy?
3. What are learners' perceptions of the importance of grammar in developing speaking skills?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the relationship between grammar mastery and speaking skill.
2. To analyze the effects of grammar-focused instruction on speaking fluency and accuracy.
3. To explore students' attitudes toward grammar learning in speaking development.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The study provides practical insights for English teachers, curriculum developers, and learners. It demonstrates how grammar can be effectively integrated into speaking lessons to achieve both fluency and accuracy. The findings may help teachers design balanced methodologies combining communicative practice with grammatical awareness, leading to more effective language instruction.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

2.1 The Nature of Speaking Skill

Speaking is one of the core skills in language learning and an essential component of communicative competence. According to Brown (2001), speaking is an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing, receiving, and processing information. Successful speaking requires not only linguistic knowledge but also sociolinguistic and strategic competence.

In the context of EFL learning, speaking is often considered the most challenging skill because it demands real-time processing and immediate feedback. Learners must manage pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and coherence simultaneously while maintaining fluency.

2.2 The Role of Grammar in Communication

Grammar is the system of rules that governs how words are combined to form meaningful sentences. It provides a framework that enables speakers to express precise ideas. Larsen-Freeman (2001) highlights that grammar is not merely a set of forms but a resource for creating meaning.

In spoken communication, grammar ensures clarity and accuracy. Without grammatical control, speech may become confusing or ambiguous, which can lead to miscommunication. Thus,

grammar serves as a bridge between language form and function, enabling learners to express themselves both accurately and effectively.

2.3 Speaking Accuracy and Fluency

Speaking proficiency is commonly evaluated through two main dimensions: **accuracy** and **fluency**.

- **Accuracy** refers to the correct use of grammatical structures, vocabulary, and pronunciation.
- **Fluency** refers to the smoothness and natural flow of speech without unnecessary hesitation.

As Richards (2008) states, both elements are equally essential for effective communication. Fluency without accuracy can cause misunderstanding, while accuracy without fluency can make speech sound unnatural or hesitant. Therefore, developing both aspects simultaneously should be a key goal in language teaching.

2.4 Grammar Teaching Approaches

Different approaches have been proposed for teaching grammar in EFL contexts.

- **Explicit Instruction** involves directly teaching grammatical rules and providing structured practice.
- **Implicit Instruction** encourages learners to notice grammatical patterns through exposure, interaction, and use.

Research by Ellis (2006) and Nassaji & Fotos (2011) indicates that a balanced combination of explicit and implicit methods produces the most effective results. Learners develop both grammatical awareness and the ability to use grammar appropriately in communicative situations.

2.5 Previous Studies

Several previous studies have investigated the connection between grammar instruction and speaking skill development.

Rahimi and Zhang (2015) found that explicit grammar teaching significantly improved EFL learners' speaking accuracy. Similarly, Ahmadi (2018) reported that integrating grammar-based communicative tasks enhanced learners' confidence and sentence complexity. These findings support the idea that grammar-focused instruction can contribute to more precise and confident oral production.

2.6 Research Gap

Although numerous studies have explored grammar teaching in general, relatively few have examined its direct effect on speaking performance within communicative classrooms. Many studies emphasize writing or reading outcomes rather than oral proficiency.

Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by analyzing both the **performance outcomes** (accuracy and fluency) and **learners' perceptions** regarding the role of grammar in improving speaking skills.

Chapter 3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study employed a **quasi-experimental research design** to examine the effect of grammar instruction on learners' speaking performance. The design involved two groups — an **experimental group** and a **control group** — both of which completed pre- and post-tests to measure improvement in speaking accuracy and fluency.

The experimental group received grammar-focused speaking instruction, while the control group participated in communicative speaking activities without explicit grammar teaching. This design allowed the researcher to compare the impact of grammar-based instruction on speaking outcomes.

3.2 Participants

The participants of the study were **30 undergraduate students** majoring in **English Education** at a university. Their English proficiency levels ranged from intermediate to upper-intermediate.

- **Experimental group (15 students):** received grammar-integrated speaking instruction.
- **Control group (15 students):** practiced speaking without an explicit focus on grammar.

All participants had previously completed general English courses but had limited experience with grammar-focused speaking activities.

3.3 Instruments

Three instruments were used to collect data:

1. **Speaking Tests:**
o Conducted before and after the treatment.
o Evaluated based on **fluency** and **grammatical accuracy** using a standardized speaking rubric.

2. **Questionnaire:**
o Designed to collect students' perceptions and attitudes toward the role of grammar in speaking improvement.

3. **Observation Checklist:**
o Used to monitor classroom participation, task engagement, and progress during speaking activities.

3.4 Procedures

The research procedure consisted of four stages:

1. **Pre-test:**
Both groups completed an initial speaking task (such as picture description or storytelling) to assess their baseline speaking ability.

2. **Treatment (4 weeks):**
o **Experimental Group:** received speaking lessons that integrated grammar instruction. Activities included error correction, sentence reformulation, and role-plays emphasizing specific grammatical structures (e.g., tenses, modals, conditionals).
o **Control Group:** practiced communicative tasks such as discussions and dialogues without explicit grammar explanation.

3. **Post-test:**
After the treatment period, both groups performed another speaking task using the same rubric as in the pre-test to measure progress.

4. **Questionnaire Administration:**
The experimental group completed a questionnaire to express their perceptions of grammar's role in improving their speaking performance.

3.5 Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed both **quantitatively** and **qualitatively**:

- **Quantitative analysis:** Paired sample *t-tests* were applied to compare pre-test and post-test scores of both groups to determine statistical significance in improvement.

- **Qualitative analysis:** Students' responses from the questionnaire were analyzed thematically to identify common perceptions, challenges, and attitudes regarding grammar-based speaking instruction.

Chapter 4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Results

After the four-week instructional period, both groups completed the post-test. The results demonstrated notable differences between the experimental and control groups.

- **Grammatical accuracy:** The experimental group's accuracy scores increased by approximately **20%** compared to the pre-test results, indicating a significant improvement.

- **Fluency:** Fluency scores improved moderately, by about **10%**, showing smoother speech and fewer pauses.
- **Error frequency:** The number of grammatical errors per minute decreased considerably in the experimental group.

In contrast, the control group showed only minor progress in fluency and almost no improvement in grammatical accuracy. These findings suggest that explicit grammar instruction had a direct positive effect on learners' speaking performance, particularly in accuracy.

4.2 Discussion

The findings of this study confirm that **grammar instruction plays a vital role in improving the speaking skills** of EFL learners. Students who received grammar-focused speaking instruction performed significantly better in grammatical accuracy and demonstrated greater confidence during oral tasks.

These results are consistent with previous studies. For example, Rahimi and Zhang (2015) reported that explicit grammar instruction enhances speaking accuracy and reduces hesitation. Similarly, Ahmadi (2018) found that grammar-based communicative activities increase learners' confidence and sentence complexity.

In this study, learners from the experimental group reported that understanding grammatical structures helped them organize their thoughts and express ideas more clearly. They also mentioned feeling more confident when speaking, as they were aware of how to form correct sentences. This suggests that grammar not only contributes to linguistic precision but also supports **psychological readiness** for communication.

On the other hand, the control group's progress was limited, showing that communicative practice alone, without grammatical awareness, may not be sufficient for substantial improvement in speaking accuracy. Therefore, the study reinforces the idea that **grammar and communication should not be treated separately**, but rather integrated in a complementary manner.

Chapter 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

This study examined the role of grammar in improving the speaking skills of EFL learners. The findings clearly demonstrate that grammar instruction has a significant positive impact on speaking performance, particularly in grammatical accuracy and overall communicative confidence.

Learners who received grammar-focused speaking instruction showed notable improvement in both the structural quality and fluency of their speech. This suggests that grammar serves as a foundation for clear and effective communication, supporting not only linguistic precision but also learners' confidence when expressing ideas.

Therefore, grammar should not be viewed as a separate component of language learning but as an integral part of communicative competence. When grammar is taught through meaningful speaking activities, learners can achieve balanced fluency and accuracy in their oral communication.

5.2 Pedagogical Implications

Based on the study's findings, several implications can be drawn for English language teaching and curriculum design:

1. **Integration of grammar and communication:** Teachers should combine communicative speaking tasks with focused grammar practice rather than teaching them separately.

2. **Contextualized grammar instruction:** Grammar rules should be presented within meaningful speaking contexts (e.g., role plays, discussions, debates).

3.   **Focus on form:** Teachers should help learners notice and correct grammatical errors during communication to strengthen awareness.

4.   **Confidence building:** Grammar-based speaking practice can reduce learners' anxiety and increase their confidence in oral communication.

5.3 Recommendations for Future Research

To build on the findings of this study, future researchers are encouraged to:

•   Investigate the **long-term effects** of grammar-based speaking instruction on learners' performance.

•   Examine how **digital tools or AI-based platforms** can enhance grammar awareness during speaking practice.

•   Conduct similar studies across **different proficiency levels, age groups, or learning contexts** to validate the results.

•   Explore the **interaction between grammar instruction and motivation**, focusing on how grammar learning influences learners' engagement in speaking activities.

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