

**TRADITIONAL VS COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING: A
SURVEY OF GRAMMAR TEACHING METHODOLOGY AMONG
GOVERNMENT SCHOOL TEACHERS IN VILLUPURAM DISTRICT**

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Abstract: Teaching grammar for school children is a challenging and testing profession. Respectively to students, it is s a boring and weary session in the language class. Grammar cannot be taught like Poem, Story, Drama, and it cannot be achieved effectively with power point presentation or chalk and talk method. Grammar acquisition should happen through a happy and joyful class environmental, but it is being taught in artificial and traditional and explicit teaching methodology. Communicative Language Teaching has been one of the innovative methods of teaching since the 1970s, but due to many valid reasons like time, exam-oriented training, unique syllabus framework, preparing modules for acquisition, teachers are not able to incorporate CLT in their teaching .Although CLT is a widely accepted and appreciated method of grammar teaching by language teachers in Villupuram, it is not used by them in classes. As a result, students do not show enthusiasm and interest when they attend the traditional method of grammar classes. This research surveys teachers' understanding of CLT, and students' reaction to grammar class in the traditional style of teaching. This research focuses on Villupuram Government school teachers.

Keywords: CLT, Traditional, Grammar, Villupuram, Class

I. Introduction

The classroom is the place where we find different groups of students from different backgrounds, and teaching English for everyone quite differs from student to student. From the history of English Teaching, teaching attained diverse dimensions; ESP, ESL, EFL, ELL, ESOL, English for first-generation students, English for Employable, etc. The main focus of language teaching is to develop the student's language skills: Listening, Reading, Writing, and Speaking, Employability skills, and Self-Confidence. With the structured class set-up and limited period, teachers are not able to focus on everyone and monitor their development, as an outcome many students fail to learn the language and other basic skills. Language should be taught and acquired in a proper channel through step by step process. To attain excellence in students learning, teaching should start from the school students, especially from 5th grade. Language cannot be acquired over the night and be mastered in short span, rather it needs a long span of period, interest and involvement from learners and teachers. In Language, grammar plays a predominant role in many aspects like speaking, writing, being confident, being employable, where mastering grammar will lead to mastering the language.

Grammar is an evaluation of language by dismantling it into small segments, to find and understand how it works in students learning methodology. It is the main part of the language consisting rules and regulation for flawless usage. Every language in the world is inbuilt with rules and regulations (Grammar). Crystal (2004) observes that the "psychological system of rules induces people to form, interpret the words and sentence of their language."

There are different approaches for teaching grammar. They are Inductive method, Deductive method, Functional method, Teaching grammar through Text, Teaching grammar through Stories, and Teaching grammar through Songs and Rhymes. The evolution of grammar teaching attained the highest reach by incorporating many new methodologies. In the initial, it was like the teacher's centre, where the teacher's role was predominant and blackboard dependent. Later in the 21st century, it became communicative and visual-aid oriented.

In India, English is the Associate language and Official language because of its wide usage in written and oral communication and in legal, business communication and educational contexts. English is the second largest spoken language next to Hindi. The History of English language teaching can be briefly divided into three-phases: The Colonial phase, Pre-Independence phase and Post-Independence phase. In each phase the English language was deconstructed and modified through Education Commission and Educational Policies and Acts: English Educational Act (1835), The University Education Commission (1949), The Secondary Education Commission (1953), The Official Language Commission (1955), The Kothari Commission (1964). Apart from these commissions, several measures have been taken to improve the language proficiency of the students. Prabu (1970) initiated the first experiment on ELT, called Communicational Teaching Project (CLP) and the duration of the project was four years. From that time many experiments and projects were conducted in the field of ELT to develop language skills of students. Crystal (2004) pointed out that “grammar is the structural foundation of our ability to express ourselves. The more we are aware of how it works, the more we can monitor the meaning and effectiveness of the way we and others use language. It can help foster precision, detect ambiguity, and exploit the richness of expression available in English”. This shows that grammar is considered to be the backbone of the language and it elaborates the rules of language, the arrangement of work and shapes of words. Grammar is a kind of instructor, which guides how to write a flawless sentence and impose rules and regulations to follow while speaking and writing. It is proven that communicative language teaching is mandatory to understand grammar, even though it is well stated that grammar is a basic oral format.

II. Review of Related Literature

Teaching and learning grammar through traditional method is always a hard task for teachers and students. Larsen-Freeman (2003) says that thinking about grammar is a dynamic process rather than a static area of knowledge, which is good for both explicit and implicit grammar acquisition. Teaching grammar widely differs with medium and background of the students. For the first-generation student (L1),

we need more concentration and refined methodology and for the second (L2) and third-generation student (L3), we need a different methodology for teaching grammar. Explicit grammar acquisition will not be suitable for all the students as I stated above. Some students may need more concentration and communicative based learning (Implicit acquisition) for easy understanding. Traditional Grammar teaching is based on explicit acquisition, where teachers use grammar-translation (Mother tongue to English) for teaching first-generation students (L1). Rothstein (2008) says that language teachers need to think of ways to make grammar teaching a fun, effective, memorable, and meaningful experience. In the 21st century, teaching is student-centred with activities, games, CALL and visuals. DeKeyser (1995) classified grammatical instruction as an implicit method of teaching, because it does not involve rules, but it focuses on the form of input. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is an implicit method of teaching, and it was developed in the 1970s. It initiates major shifts within language teaching in the 20th century. Littlewood (1981) describes that the characteristic feature of communicative language teaching is that “it pays systematic attention to functional as well as structural aspects of language.” This illustrates that Communicative Language Teaching is an integration of grammar and functional teaching, through which students from any medium can easily learn grammar and language without stress.

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has different phases for teaching. In the first phase: the need for a unique syllabus that was suitable with the conception of communicative competence. In the second phase: the role of teachers to identify the learners and their need to be analyzed. Third phase: to prepare classroom activities or create a module for teaching students, such as task-work, teamwork, games and presentations. Richards and Rodgers (1986:72) stated the elements for learning the theory of communicative teaching methodology:

- 1) Communication principle: Activities that involve real communication to promote learning
- 2) Task principle: Activities in which language issued for caring out meaningful tasks to promote learning (Johnson, 1982).

3) Meaningful principle: a language that is meaningful to the learners supports the learning process.

To promote students' learning, teachers should identify the learners and prepare syllabus based module by considering the real communication and joyful activities in the target language. Savignon (1972) classified the communicative competence as expression, interpretation and negotiation of meaning involving interaction between two or more persons or between one person and a written or oral (Savignon, Pg.249). Therefore communicative competence is the interconnection of grammar, cognitive psychology, society, and culture of a person. Littlewood (1981) categorized four skills for developing communication competence: "to attain as high a degree as possible of linguistic competence; to distinguish between the forms which he mastered as part of his linguistic competence, and the communicative functions that they perform; to develop; to develop skills and strategies for using language to communicate meaning as effectively as possible in a concrete situation; to become aware of the social meaning of language forms" (p.6). Through Communication Language Teaching, classrooms can blend language, grammar, society, and culture in the natural atmosphere, in which Traditional Language Teachings fails.

III. Hypotheses

The following hypotheses have been framed for the present study:

- ❖ Teachers have a favorable attitude towards Communicative Language Teaching Methodology.
- ❖ Teaching grammar through CLT has an approving view for teachers.

IV. Objective

- ❖ To Identify whether teachers in Villupuram are using CLT method in Grammar teaching
- ❖ Teachers' knowledge and perspective about CLT
- ❖ To identify teachers' opinion on traditional grammar teaching
- ❖ To find the reason for the downside in grammar teaching

V. Methodology

The present research is a survey study which aims to find out the current teaching methodologies for teaching grammar and opinion on communicative teaching methodology for teaching grammar. This survey research also finds out the effectiveness of traditional grammar teaching and its drawbacks. The researcher conducted a survey involving teachers from Government and Private sector schools in Villupuram.

VI. Survey Questionnaire

The survey questionnaire consists of three divisions: The first division is about Teacher's experience on traditional grammar teaching; the second division is about teacher's knowledge on CLT and their implementation in the classroom, and the last division is about the reason for downside of grammar teaching. The information collected through this questionnaire will be useful for choosing schools and designing grammar teaching modules for students. The main focus of this research is to assess the teachers' experience on the traditional method of grammar teaching and communicative method of grammar teaching, and feedback on grammar class especially among Tamil medium Government school teachers (remove anyone 'teachers') in Villupuram. The researcher circulated the questionnaire on Google Forms to one hundred and ten teachers for their valuable answers. The questions are appended in Appendix 1.

VII. The responses to students' understanding of grammar on Traditional Teaching method

Grammar Teaching is one of the trickiest and toughest teachings for teachers. Students show the least interest in grammar classes because it is not like science or history learning. They need to be more attentive and understand the basic concepts for better understanding, where the traditional method of teaching makes enables students acquire grammar knowledge partially. Figure 1 depicts the response of students' understanding on grammar in the traditional teaching method. About 41% of teachers say that students partially understand grammar. Then 30% of teachers say that not all the students understand grammar. Less than 20% of teachers say that students

understand thoroughly and 10 % of teachers admit that students don't understand grammar. The traditional teaching methodology is a teachers-centered acquisition and the below pie-chart depicts the hollowness in it.

Teachers in Villupuram follow many methodologies in teaching grammar for students. Figure 1.1 shows the response of grammar teaching methodology. About 41% of teachers follow chalk and board methodology for teaching grammar followed by communicative teaching method with 27%. Some teacher responded that they follow Grammar translation and Continues Teaching methodologies with a percentage respectively of 18% & 13%. Chalk and board methodology is an explicit method of teaching, where students are drilled to learn grammar. During Traditional grammar teaching, teachers says that 59% of students tends to be physically present and mentally absent, 24% of students can understand grammar and 16% of students fail to understand grammar, which can be identified from Figure 1.3. This clearly shows that traditional methodology is not suitable for all the students and they need to teach with activity-based or communicative based methodology, and individual attention is mandatory for the students' welfare.

Figure 1 Students' understanding on Grammar on Traditional Teaching Method

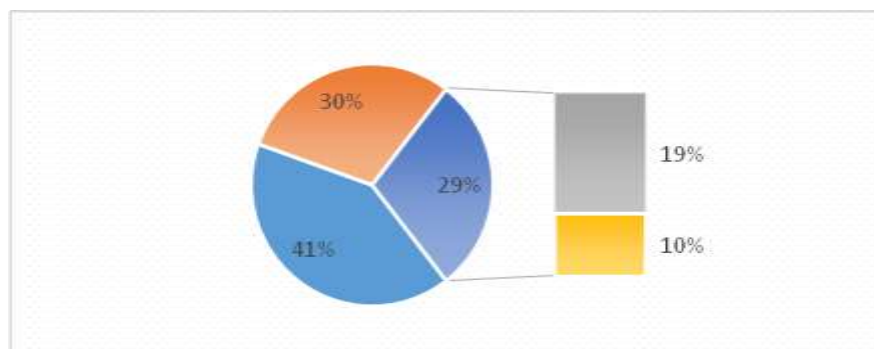


Figure 1.1 Teaching methods in Grammar Teaching

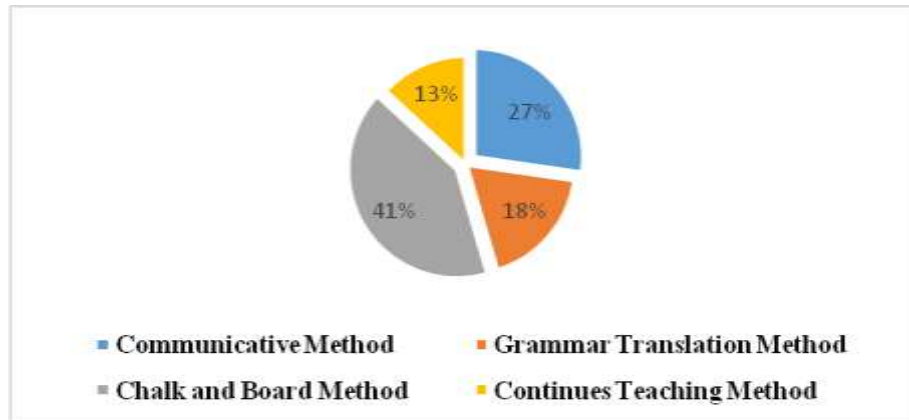
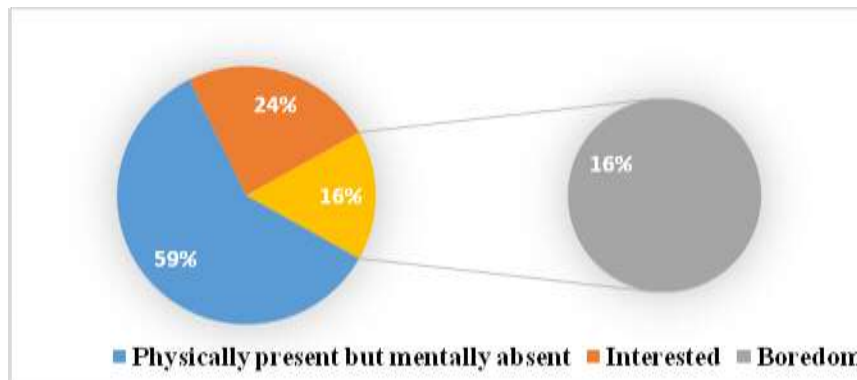


Figure 1.3 Students' mindset while learning Grammar in Traditional Teaching method



VIII. The response of Teachers on Communicative Language Teaching

Figure 1.4 shows that majority of teachers accept that Communicative teaching method will work effectively for grammar teaching especially for L2 learners and 20% of teachers say that communicative teaching can be used instead of traditional methodology. In general, students have multiple diversions and lack of concentration. Majority of the students do not like grammar classes because teachers do not use activities to teach grammar lessons and they rely on examination-oriented teaching. This highlights the fact that grammar teaching needs to undergo some changes to suit the expectation of the students.

In the 21st century, classrooms have become students-centered and the role of the teacher is to facilitate the students and to guide them with proper references. Today's education has become 'Google' system of education, with mobile access, students can read and learn from Google. But students with village background and L2 learners, (add comma) teachers are the only source (singular-source) of knowledge,

so teachers should take maximum effort to teach and develop their students' skills. From line chart 1.5, 59% of teachers say that teaching should be students-centered and 13% of teachers support for teacher-centered classroom.

Figure 1.4 Impact of communicative teaching methodology on Grammar teaching

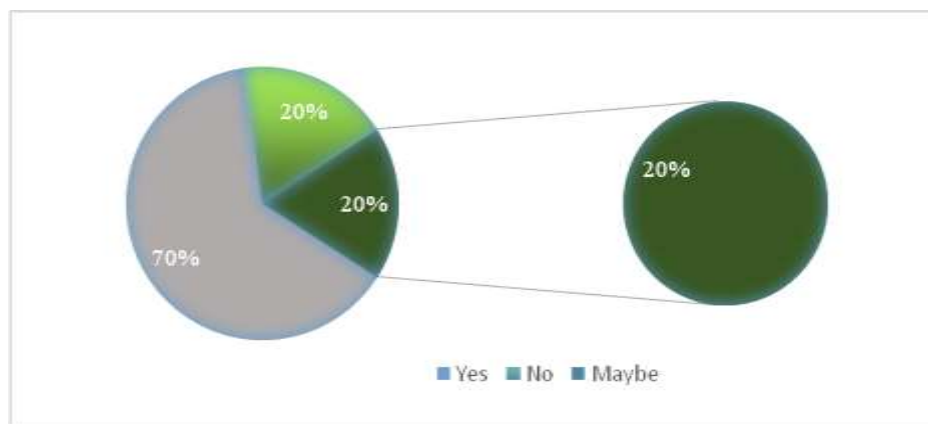
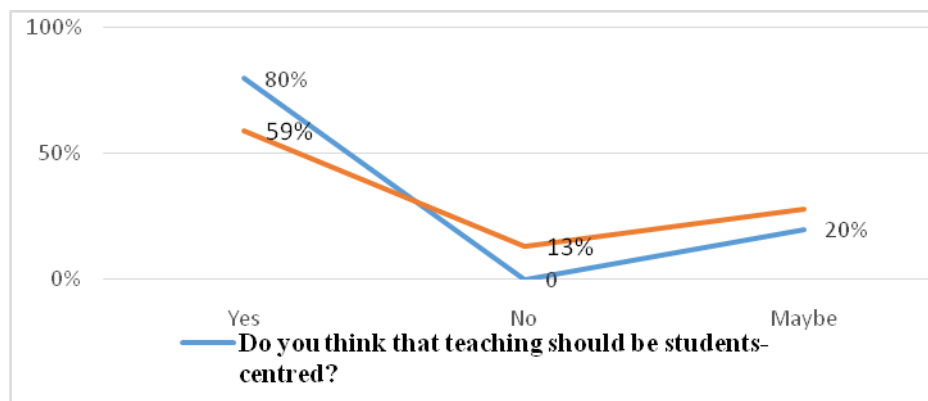


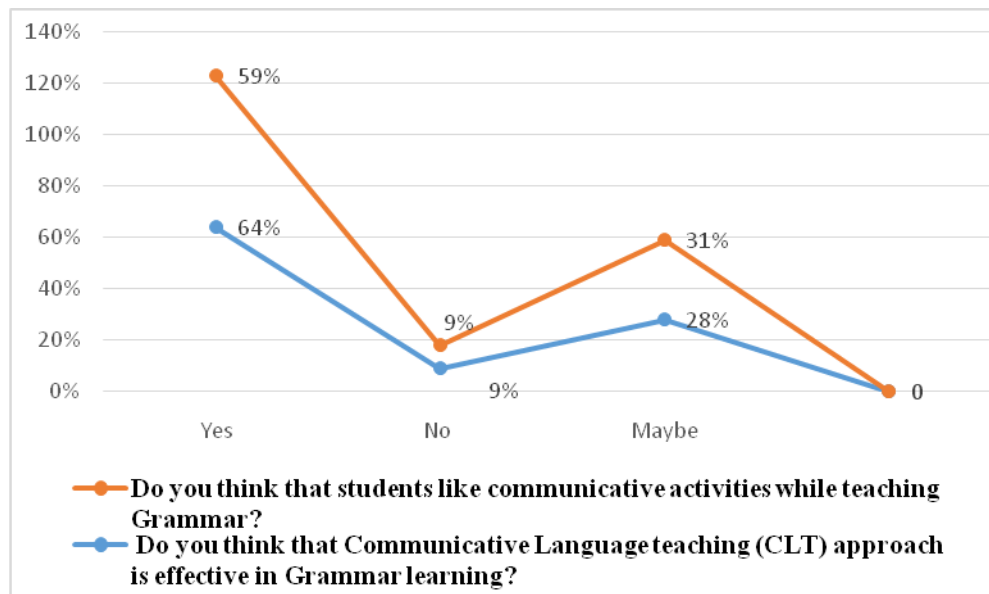
Figure 1.5



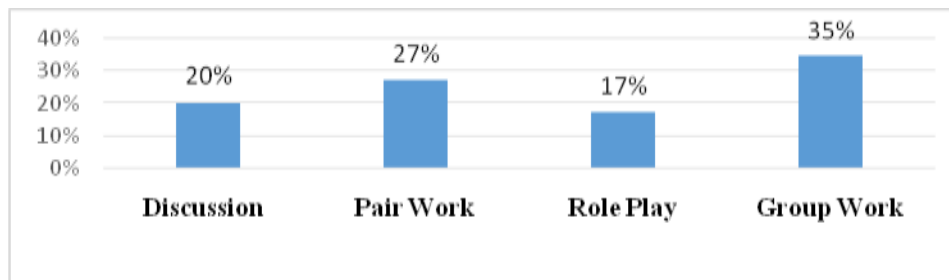
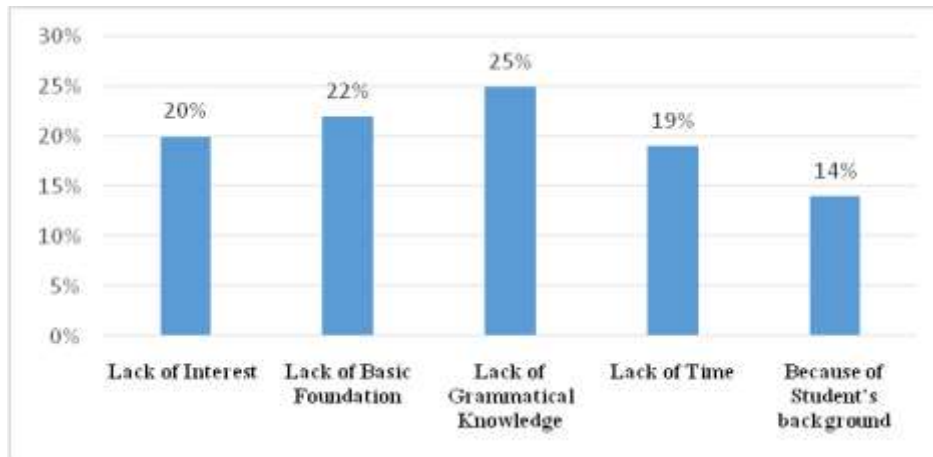
Though students need adequate knowledge in grammar, they do not exhibit any favour for grammar classes using the traditional method of teaching. Instead, they show interest in Communicative method. Figure 1.6 depicts that 64% of teachers find that CLT is an apt and effective method of teaching grammar, and from Figure 1.6, 59% of teachers say that students prefer activity-based learning. Learning should occur in a happy environment, but through the traditional method of teaching, the classroom becomes an artificial environment where students get detached from it. Teachers say that providing individual attention to students is impossible in Traditional teaching method. Figure 1.5 shows that 59% of teachers accept that they do not have enough time to concentrate on individual students. This has many reasons

like schools follow structured and time-framed syllabus, and teachers have to be exam-oriented. As a result students do not get enough time to understand and practice on it. From Figure 1.8, 19% of teachers say that they do not have enough time for teaching grammar. Teachers are time-bound; hence, students fail to get enough time for learning grammar.

Figure 1.6



In response to the activities used by teachers in teaching grammar (Figure 1.7), 53% of teachers use Group Discussion for teaching English followed by Pair Work with a percentage of 27. Then 20% of teachers find discussion as an effective activity for teaching language and 17% of teachers incorporate Role Play in their language teaching. This shows that activities can be extended to grammar teaching under controlled setup. The researcher also analyzed the main reason for students to fail in grammar from the teachers perspectives. Figure 1.8 shows that 25% of students fail due to lack of basic grammatical knowledge. Then 22% of teachers say that students fail due to lack of basic language skills. This shows that students do not give importance to grammar and 20% of students exhibit lack of interest in learning grammar.

Figure 1.7 Activities used in Teaching Language**Figure 1.8 Drawback of students to learn Grammar**

IX. Limitations of the Study

- ❖ The researcher has selected only the teachers' opinion due to the pandemic period
- ❖ The researcher has selected limited teachers for this survey

X. Finding of the study

- ❖ Students need activity-based classroom learning for grammar.
- ❖ Teachers should use some basic games modules in teaching.
- ❖ The traditional method of teaching seems to be ineffective for grammar teaching.
- ❖ Students and teachers do not prefer exam-oriented learning. For effective teaching, time should not be a barrier.
- ❖ Majority of teachers have a positive attitude towards Communicative language teaching instead of traditional language teaching.
- ❖ Communicative method of teaching grammar has a positive response from students.

XI. The validity of the Hypotheses

Based on the analysis of the responses of the teachers collected through questionnaire, the following hypotheses framed for the research proved right:

- ❖ Teachers have a favourable attitude towards Communicative Language Teaching Methodology.
- ❖ Compared to Traditional teaching, Communicative teaching of grammar has an approving view for teachers.

XII. Scope for Further Research

- ❖ The present research focused on the teacher's perspective. A study with a focus on student's perspective can be attempted to get productive results.
- ❖ Research can be extended to communicative teaching modules and games.
- ❖ The researcher can take matriculation and other aided schools for a better understanding of students' interest in grammar

XIII. Conclusion

Learning should be acquired with happiness and students should volunteer themselves in learning with interest. Grammar is basic and the backbone of language, if they master in grammar, they can easily master the language. To develop their interest in grammar, teachers should prepare the lesson plan by incorporating the communicative method of teaching. This research shows a positive attitude towards communicative teaching methodology from the teachers. With a change in teaching methodology, teachers can bring changes in students' learning. Today's learning focuses on language form, but not on meaning or content. Studying without understanding the meaning will lead to failure. Students are comparatively better in speaking than in writing; they find it difficult and hesitate due to lack of understanding. Students' confidence lies in grammar and they refuse to speak or write if they lack in grammar knowledge. Implicit grammar teaching (communicative grammar teaching) focuses on meaning or content, not on the language form. Therefore teachers should use the implicit method of teaching for a better understanding by the students.

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