INTERACTIVE APPROACH TO ENGLISH GRAMMAR TEACHING IN THE ESL
CLASSROOM

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Abstract

The ultimate goal of language teaching is to cultivate students' ability to communicate information and exchange ideas, while grammatical knowledge is traditionally viewed as the most important element of second language acquisition so that grammar has been the emphasis in language teaching. Due to the long period of dominance of the traditional approach in the language classroom, grammar has always been taught as product to the students, teaching activities have been designed to be teacher-centered and examination-oriented, and interaction has often been neglected or paid little attention. Hymes believed that linguistic rules were connected with language in use and proposed the concept of communicative competence, pointing out that the competent speaker must have the knowledge of how to use a language both appropriately and effectively (Hymes, 1971). Since then, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) or the Communicative Approach has begun and developed on the basis of the theory of communicative competence. However, in the practice of adapting CLT in foreign language teaching, there exist some misconceptions and misimplementations. Whether to teach or how to teach grammar has been the focus of debate by linguists and language teachers for many years. And it is still a stubborn problem for English teachers nowadays.

This paper explores a possible methodology of teaching English grammar in the ESL classroom. It presents the importance of grammatical instruction and compares grammar teaching in different language teaching methodologies, then points out that the interactive approach is a new but effective way. In order to enhance the understanding of the interactive approach, a review of literature on grammar teaching was conducted. A second review of literature relating to interaction and advantage of interactive approach was conducted. The last part of the literature review is about the qualities of interactive grammar teaching. Based on the above literature review, the author puts forward five recommendations: 1) teaching grammar in communicative context; 2) designing meaningful and purposeful grammar tasks; 3) giving opportunities for students to use the language to express their own personal meanings; 4) providing a proper guide on grammar when necessary. and 5) promoting students' intrinsic motivation.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE

CHAPTER

          Introduction

          Statement of the Problem

          Definitions of Terms

          Delimitations of the Research

          Method

          Grammar and Grammar Teaching

              Definition of Grammar

              The Place of Grammar in Language Teaching

              Studies on language grammar teaching

          Interaction and Interactive Approach

              Definition of Interaction

              The Components of Interaction

              Studies of Classroom Interaction

              Advantages of Interactive Approach

          Interactive grammar teaching

              What is Interactive Grammar Teaching?

              Importance of Interactive Activities in Grammar Teaching

              Advantages of Interactive Activities in Grammar Teaching

Chapter One: Introduction

Language is seen as a structural system whose primary function is to enable human communication to take place (Richards, Platt, & Platt, 1992). The ultimate objective of foreign language teaching is to enable the learners to use the target language both correctly and appropriately in social communication. Grammar, to many linguists, is a system that links sounds and meaning in the human mind. It is the study or use of the rules by which words change their forms and are combined into sentences. The teaching of grammar has always been a central aspect of foreign language teaching (FLT). For centuries, in fact, the only activity of language classrooms was the study of grammar (Cook, 2000). However, the twentieth century, especially the last half, has changed all that dramatically. And grammar teaching became the focus of arguments among linguists and language teachers about whether grammar should be taught or not, to when, what and how to teach.

For decades, English teaching in China has been dominated by a teacher-centered, examination-oriented, grammar-based method. Teachers explain grammar rules in detail, and students are busy taking notes and have few opportunities for meaningful practice. Memorization and rote learning are used as basic acquisition techniques. This method is greatly influenced by the Grammar-Translation Method, which emphasizes the teaching of the second language grammar; its principle practice technique is translation from and into the target language. As a result, though most students in China have learned English for at least six years in middle schools, the outcome is far from satisfying.

This paper searches for an alternative approach to teach English grammar by demonstrating the following concepts:

The first concept, grammar, refers to a vital device and resource for comprehending and using language, and teaching grammar is the prerequisite to gain accurate linguistic knowledge and fluent communication. Language without grammar would be chaotic, and grammar teaching is indispensable in foreign language teaching.

The second concept, interaction, is an important aspect being studied by western researchers. It is the heart of communication because "communication derives essentially from interaction" (Rivers, 1987). Research shows that interaction contributes to successful participation in productive classroom learning, and provides opportunities for foreign language acquisition. Most of all, it puts communication on a par with correctness, turns classroom language learning into social activities and promotes students' interactional competence. With the development of Chinese education, many scholars and educators also highly advocate active interaction between teacher and students in the field of English teaching these days. Interaction does not preclude the learning of the grammatical system of the language. In fact, we interact better if we can understand and express nuances of meaning that require careful syntactic choices. Interactive grammar teaching stresses the teaching of grammar through mutual participation, usually in groups. "It is through the interactive approach, with its emphasis on playful group activities, that a simple grammar point or group of related grammar points can be revitalized and, above all, personalized" (Rivers, 1987, P. 65).

The paper aims to offer a more appropriate and effective way to teach English grammar in the ESL classroom in China with the hope that the teachers may improve it during implementation.

Statement of the Problem

The problem to be addressed is "what is the positive role of the interactive approach in English grammar teaching for the ESL learner?"

Definition of Terms

Grammar. In linguistics, grammar is the set of logical and structural rules that govern the composition of sentences, phrases, and words in any given natural language. The term refers also to the study of such rules, and this field includes morphology and syntax, often complemented by phonetics, phonology, semantics, and pragmatics. (Retrieved February 3, 2010, from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grammar)

Interaction. Interaction is the collaborative exchange of thoughts, feelings, or ideas between two or more people resulting in a reciprocal effect on each other. It is the heart of communication; it is what communication is all about. Theories of communicative competence emphasize the importance of interaction as human beings use language in various contexts to "negotiate" meaning, or simply stated, to get one idea out of your head and into the head of another person or vise-versa (Brown, 2001).

ESL. English as a second language, i.e., studying English as a non-native speaker in a country where English is spoken. Depending on where you are from, the term ESL may be more inclusive and includes EFL (Thu, 2009).

Delimitations of the Research

The research will be conducted in and through the Karrmann Library at the University of Wisconsin-Platteville and the Library at SCUN, over a period of days (90 days). Primary searches will be conducted via the Internet through EBSCO host with ERIC, Academic Search Elite and

Google/Google Scholar as the primary sources. Key search topics include "grammar", "grammar teaching", "interactive approach", "ESL".

Method

      A brief review of literature on the studies of the relationship between grammar teaching and interactive approach will be conducted. The findings will be summarized and recommendations made.

<center>**Chapter Two: Review of Related Literature**</center>

Grammar and Grammar Teaching

  The Definition of Grammar. Grammar has been defined in different ways by many linguists. John Lyons defines grammar as a "branch of the description of languages which accounts for the way in which words combine to form sentences" (as cited in Stern, 1992, p.131). Brown (2001) regards grammar as "a system of rules governing the conventional arrangement and relationship of words in a sentence" (p. 159). Grammar can be classified into detailed types such as linguistic grammar, pedagogical grammar, communicative grammar, comparative grammar, etc. This paper will deal with pedagogical grammar, which is intended to provide those involved in language teaching (including learners) with information on the grammar of the foreign language for the purposes of teaching and learning. Besides the correctness of language behavior, the pedagogical grammar considers the learners' background. It aims at internalizing the grammar by the students, and acquainting students with the rules by which the students can generate their own language. According to Shu and Zhuang (2008), pedagogical grammar may include the following contents: communicative principles, grammar rules (including semantics, syntax and phonology) and discourse principles.

  The role of grammar in language teaching. Generally speaking, mastery of a language means mastery of the component parts of the language such as rules, lexis and phonetics; of the linguistic skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing; and of pragmatic functions such as greeting, apologizing and transferring information to achieve effective social communication by applying the language as a tool correctly (Hu, 2004). The ultimate aim of learning a language is communication. Each communicator has some message in his mind to convey which has to be expressed by words with suitable forms. If not put together in appropriate grammatical

<center>5</center>

construction, the words and sounds become a heap of nonsense, which makes communication impossible.

According to Woods (1995), "Nobody can doubt that a good knowledge of the grammatical system is essential to master a foreign language and it is also one of the most important parts of communicative competence." Proposed first by Dell.Hymes, communicative competence, was later developed by a number of linguists. They attempted to clarify and refine the notion. Among them, Canale and Swain's findings are the most influential in guiding foreign language teaching and learning. They examine the relationship between theory and practice. In Canale and Swain (1980), communicative competence is understood as the underlying systems of knowledge and skill required for communication. They propose a theoretical framework to describe it, and it contains four competences: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence. Among them, grammatical competence occupies a prominent position as a major component of communicative competence. Grammatical competence refers to the mastery of language code, such as features and rules of vocabulary, and linguist semantics. It focuses directly on the knowledge and skills that are required to understand and express the literal meaning of utterances. This is equal to what Noam Chomsky calls "linguistic competence" and what D. Hymes intends by what is "formally possible" (Richard & Rodgers, 1986).

Therefore, grammar teaching should have its own status in English language teaching. According to Canale and Swain (1980), there are rules of language use that would be useless without rules of grammar. No one can say that grammar is irrelevant, or grammar is no longer needed in language teaching. No one doubts the prominence of grammar as an organizational framework within which communication operates.

Studies on language grammar teaching.

Theoretical review of grammar teaching. Varied opinions can be found in the literature on teaching foreign language grammar. Historically, grammar has been central, but in the recent decades, a few extremists have advocated against teaching grammar whatsoever. Regarding this, Widdowson (1983) holds that the major weakness of grammar-based instruction is not that the focus of attention is on structure, but rather that, in teaching, structures are often not represented as a resource to communicate meaning. We should take the students' communicative attempts in the target language as the starting-off point for our instruction, rather than the rules or the structure of the language.

Celce-Murcia (1991) offered six easily identifiable variables that can help people to determine the role of grammar in language teaching (see Table-1)

Table 1

Variables That Determine the Importance of Grammar (Celce-Murcia, 1991, P.465)

	Less Important ← Focus on Form → More Important		
Learner Variables			
Age	Children	Adolescents	Adults
Proficiency level	Beginning	Intermediate	Advanced
Educational background	No formal education	Some formal education	Well educated
Instructional Variables			
Skill	Listening, reading	Speaking	Writing
Register	Informal	Consultative	Formal
Need/Use	Survival	Vocational	Professional

These six categories should be looked on as general guidelines for judging the need for conscious grammatical focus in the language classroom. Notice that for each variable, the continuum runs from less to more important; however, it does not say that grammar is unimportant for any of the six variables.

The need for teaching English in English second language(ESL) learning requires not only the knowledge of grammatical rules, but also the rules of how to use the language properly, for example, how to start or end a conversation appropriately. For these students, the question is not whether to teach or not to teach grammar, but rather what are the optimal conditions for overt teaching of grammar.

Ellis (1993) thinks that the key question is "How can we teach grammar in a way that is compatible with how learners acquire grammar?" He presents three principles of grammar teaching as follows: Learners need to attend to both meaning and form when learning a second language; New grammatical features are more likely to be acquired when learners notice and comprehend them in input than when they engage in extensive production practice; Learners' awareness of grammatical forms helps them to acquire grammatical features slowly and gradually (Ellis, 1993). These three principles have guided his approach to teaching grammar.

According to Brown (2001), appropriate grammar focusing techniques:

1. are imbedded in meaningful, communicative contexts,

2. contribute positively to communicative goals,

3. promote accuracy within fluent, communicative language,

4. do not overwhelm students with linguistic terminology,

5. are as lively and intrinsically motivating as possible.

Grammar teaching in different language teaching methodologies. For centuries, the

dominant trend of foreign language teaching was a non-communicative approach. In the past 100

years, however, the language teaching methodology has changed a lot in regards to grammar.

The historical sequence of the main approaches and methods, and some of the methodological

options available today are presented in the following table (see Table-2):

Table 2

Historical Sequence of the Main Approaches and Methods (Davies & Pearse, 2002, p.187)

1850 1860 1870 1880 1890 1900 1910 1920 1930 1940 1950 1960 1970 1980 1990

G-TM→　→ → 　→→ 　 → → 　→ … 　… 　… … 　… 　…

DM 　→ →→ 　→ 　… 　… … 　…

SLT→ 　→ 　→ 　→ 　→ …

ALM→ → → …

AMs → →

CLT →

G-TM　The Grammar-Translation Method

DM　　The Direct Method

SLT　　Situational Language Teaching

ALM　The Audiolingual Method

AM　　Alternative Methods

CLT　Communicative Language Teaching

→ widespread use

… less widespread use

The table shows that foreign language teaching has evolved since the middle of the nineteenth century; however, "new approaches and methods have never totally invalidated or replaced previous ones" (Davies & Pearse, 2002, P, 187). All the above-mentioned approaches and methods have contributed potentially useful ideas to the teaching of English.

Celce-Murcia (1991) has summarized various approaches in Table.3 which distinguishes more effective and less effective ways of teaching grammar.

Table 3

More effective and less effective ways to teach grammar

More effective	Less effective
Communicative activities	Manipulative drills
Context-embedded practice	Context-free practice
Text-based exercises	Sentence-based exercises
Cognitively demanding activities	Cognitively undemanding activities
Authentic materials	Contrived materials
Interesting and motivating content	Dull or neutral content

Teaching English in China has been greatly influenced by the Grammar-translation Method for a long time. Though numerous approaches and methods, especially Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), have developed and been practiced in some language classrooms these years, none of them seems to have become a prevailing one. As a result, the Grammar-translation Method is still popularly employed in the teaching of Chinese language.

There is evidence that the teaching of grammar and translation has occurred in language instruction through the ages; but the regular combination of grammar rules with translation into

the target language as the principle practice technique became popular only in the late eighteenth century. As its name suggests, the G-T method emphasizes the teaching of the second language grammar; its principal practice technique is translation from and into the target language. The language is presented in short grammatical chapters or lessons, each containing a few grammar points or rules which are set out and illustrated by examples. The grammatical features that are focused upon in the course book and by the teacher in his lesson are not disguised or hidden. Technical grammatical terminology is not avoided. The learner is expected to study and memorize a particular rule and examples, for instance, a verb paradigm or a list of prepositions. No systematic approach is usually made to vocabulary or any other aspect of the second language. Exercises consist of words, phrases and sentences in the first language which the learner, with the help of a bilingual vocabulary list, translates into the target language in order to practice the particular item or group of items. Other exercises are designed to practice translation into the first language. As the learner progresses, the teacher may advance from translating isolated sentences to translating coherent second language texts into the first language or first language texts into the second language. One of the features of grammar-translation is to increase the complexity of the learning task by constructing practice sentences illustrating a number of rules simultaneously. There is little or no emphasis on the speaking of the second language or listening to second language speech.

This method has experienced many ups and downs. For many years it was right at the heart of language teaching, and indeed it was one of the basic elements of language in the medieval universities and schools. However, in the final decades of the nineteenth century, the "Grammar-translation Method was attacked as a cold and lifeless approach to language teaching,

and it was blamed for the failure of foreign language teaching" (Stern, 1983, p. 454). Up to now, many linguists and language teachers still hold different views on it.

Positive views on the G-T Method. Stern (1992) believes that the first language as a reference system is indeed very important for the second language learner. Translation, in one form or another, or other crosslingual techniques can play a certain part in language learning. Finally, grammar-translation appears didactically relatively easy to apply.

As the comparative linguistics studies, "is indeed very important for the second language learner. Therefore, translation in one form or another can play a certain part in language learning" (Stern, 1992). Smith (as cited in Gua, 1988) adopted two different approaches, the audio-lingual method and the grammar-translation method in two EFL classes respectively. After a year's instruction, the study found that compared with the class used the audio-lingual method, students instructed by traditional grammar-translation method received better grades in grammar, reading comprehension, and translating activities, but in the listening and speaking grades, no significant difference showed between the two classes. The study results changed researchers' negative perspective on grammar-translation method. Luo and Shi (2004) confirm that grammar-translation method can enhance learners' awareness of using grammar correctly, and help learners develop knowledge of grammar rules which play an important role in communication.

Negative views on the G-T Method. The Grammar-Translation Method may affect learners' continuity of thinking in using the foreign language because it inserts a intermediate process between the concept and the way expressed in that language (Rivers, 1987). This intermediate process, with its occasional misapplication of L1 (first language) rules to L2 (second language), is sometimes referred to as interference. An overreliance on the first language may lead to the fossilization of an interlanguage (Selinker & Lakshamanan, 1992). Brown (2001)

states "It does virtually noting to enhance a student' communicative ability in the language."

Richards and Rodgers (2000) argue that the G-T Method mainly focuses on reading and writing, but "little or none systematic attention is paid to speaking or listening." For ESL learners, learning language by the G-T method means memorizing numerous unusable grammar rules and translating stilted or literary prose, which is a tedious experience (Richards & Rodgers, 2000).

In brief, the major defect of grammar-translation lies in the overemphasis on the language as a mass of rules (and exceptions) and in the limitations of practice techniques which never emancipate the learner from the dominance of the first language. Besides, "the sheer size of the task of memorization and the lack of coherence with which the language facts have been presented to the learner invalidate the claim, made in the nineteenth century, that this method provides a safe, easy and practical entry into a second language" (Stern, 1983, p. 456).

Interaction and Interactive Approach

The definition of interaction. The word "interaction" was first used by German sociologist Simmel in his book *Sociology* published in 1908, in which he wrote that our society came into being because of people's interaction (Jiang, L & Lin, M, 2006). According to the *New Oxford Dictionary of English*, "interaction" means "mutual or reciprocal action or influence ("interaction")". From the definition, we can infer the following nature of interaction:

(1) The two-way relationship is emphasized,

(2) Equality and co-operation are valued,

(3) Individual contributions are stressed,

(4) Personal participation and experience are required.

These qualities such as cooperation, equality, individuality, and interpersonal participation are what the educational profession expects and advocates these days. This is why "interaction" has spread rapidly in the ESL teaching and learning field.

The components of interaction. Interaction involves not just expression of one's own ideas but comprehension of those of others. One listens to others; one responds (directly or indirectly); others listen and respond. The participants work out interpretations of meaning through this interaction, which is always understood in a context, physical or experiential, with nonverbal cues adding aspects of meaning beyond the verbal. Whether in oral or graphic form, comprehension and expression of meaning are in constant interaction in real-life communication. According to Straight (1985), "The best way to acquire a language is to acquire the skills needed to comprehend it fluently, and… everything else will follow, if not automatically, at least far more easily and effectively." (as cited in Rivers, 1987, p. 6)

Studies of classroom interaction. The interaction analysis done by Waller is the beginning of studies of classroom interaction. In 1970s, British scholar Blacklynch summarized classroom interaction as a process applying strategies and negotiating. Brown is the main advocator of interactive language teaching (Shu, D & Zhuang, Z, 2008). According to his theory, classroom interaction is one kind of face-to-face communication between teacher and students, whose features include providing answers to students' questions, explaining students' confusion or repeating the points (Allright & Bailey, 1991).

As to the reason why interaction in classroom is so important, Rivers interprets that students can enhance their knowledge of the language when they receive language information by reading and communicating with others, during which they listen to others, discuss with others, and also take part in some tasks, etc. In addition, during the interaction, they apply what

they have learned or picked up in their lives to express their intentions, which is very significant. Rivers here points out clearly that interaction plays an important role for the students to learn a language (Rivers, 1987).

Some other researchers also elucidate the pedagogical importance of interaction. Malamah (2004) identified several important factors for interaction, which contains learners, mentors, learners' affective or cognitive needs, and other variables such as the mentors' and peers' acts, the mentors teaching methodologies, and teaching equipments, etc. Person-to-person interaction is the important part of a lesson. A lesson cannot happen without person-to-person interaction (Allwright, 1984). Swain (1995) holds the view that, interaction gives L2 learners opportunities to output, urging them to command the elements of the new language and apply them, which promotes the chances that students can use them freely and unconsciously. Pica (1994) also promotes that interaction creates the opportunity to negotiate, providing learners with increased chances for comprehension of the target language, and to acquire target discourse conventions and practice higher level academic communicative skills. Kasanga (1996) further claims that students would acquire more English through more interaction in English. So we get to know that interaction is an important work for language teachers. Douglas Brown (2001) gives a description of interaction as follows:

> In the era of communicative language teaching, interaction is, in fact, the heart of communication; it is what communication is all about. We send messages, we receive them; we interpret them in a context; we negotiate meanings; and we collaborate to accomplish certain purposes. (p.159)

In a second-language situation, interaction has become essential to survival in the new language and culture, and students need help with styles of interaction. Meanwhile, classroom

interaction has become the topic of classroom management research, educational psychology and second language acquisition research.

Advantages of interactive approach. The communicative approach emphasizes that the most important function of a language is communication. It stresses the need to teach what is needed and when it is needed to give learners the flexibility to learn in their own way, at their own pace, rather than to follow a pre-determined syllabus. The teacher rarely engages in long, elaborate explanations, but rather concentrates on a specific need as it arises. The opportunities for learners to use English for communicative purposes should be adequately provided so that English can be acquired easily through verbal communication. Comparing CLT to other approaches, one of the primary characteristics of CLT is that the target linguistic system is learned best through the process of struggling to communicate. This approach contributes greatly to language teaching, and it has been adopted widely in some countries and language schools.

The interactive approach and the communicative approach have some similarities that cannot be denied. Both of them emphasize the learners' personal participation and experience in the language. That is, language learners acquire English by using and practicing it in contexts. However, as time goes by, more and more English teachers have found the defects of the communicative approach.

The communicative approach can often work among the intermediate and advanced learners effectively (Beale, 2002). Communication in English among learners cannot be carried on smoothly and successfully without considerable English grammar and vocabulary. When required to communicate with one another in English, the beginning English learners, in most cases, may feel tongue-tied because of their limited linguistic knowledge and their worrying about making too many linguistic mistakes. Even though their teachers give them some

instructions in the process of communication now and then, the incomplete and broken sentences that they say discourage them from communicating in English. Under this circumstance, the communicative approach will be an ideal way for the beginning English learners to learn English well.

The communicative approach is, for the most part, applicable to listening and speaking. In a typical communicative English class, students are mostly organized to do some pair or group work orally. Thus students' listening and speaking ability are necessarily involved and promoted. However, the other aspects of English, reading and writing, seem to be seldom or hardly practiced and improved (Littlewood, 1981).

The communicative approach targets fluency more than accuracy. Undoubtedly, both fluency and accuracy are very important to the beginners, intermediate, and the advanced English learners (Brumfit & Johnson, 2000). In the communicative English teaching practice, students' English fluency can be improved, but meanwhile it is difficult to ensure that accuracy can be achieved.

Much research has been carried on to verify the above argument. Firstly, is seems inappropriate for teachers to cut in to correct mistakes when students are involved in communication. In many cases, students communicate with one another blindly, not knowing whether they are right or wrong (Ji, 2002). Secondly, the limited time (40-45 minutes for each period) doesn't allow teachers to give enough input and to correct students' mistakes one by one when up to 50 or more students are crowded in a classroom; so this approach seems somewhat a waste of time (Lim, 2003). Finally, the seats in many classrooms are arranged inconveniently. For example, the chairs and desks are fixed onto the ground row by row, with a narrow space left

between two rows of chairs and desks. This makes teachers struggle to walk around the class to give instructions (Harmer, 2002).

However, to English teachers, beginners particularly need some help to improve accuracy. Johnson (2000) suggests that if errors are left uncorrected they will always be present. Selinker and Lakshamanan. (1992) believe that fossilization may result from reinforcement derived from successful communication and lack of correction, either from native speakers or learners themselves. Brown (2001, p. 262) holds a similar view: "Fossilization may be the result of too many green lights when there should have been some yellow or red lights."

With regards to the above beliefs, the communicative approach is challenged and cautiously applied by many English teachers. Under such a circumstance, some teachers hold that interaction can be more helpful in the practice of teaching English. The interactive approach stresses not only learners' personal participation and the cooperation between English learners in the process of learning English, but also individual learners' unique devotion to English acquisition and learners' mutual influence. In contrast, the communicative approach places more weight on the conveyance of meaning and the exchange of information. That means it is inclined to the function of English as a communicative tool, more than learners' individual values in English context. This is the critical difference between these two approaches. Furthermore, some so-called communicative activities (sentence pattern activities) prepared by English teachers to develop students' English competence and performance are not real communication; instead, they belong to interactive activities.

Interactive Grammar Teaching

  What is interactive grammar teaching?

As Raymond F. Comeau tells us: the word interactive is derived from the Latin verb "to agree", which means "to do", and the Latin preposition "inter", which means "among" (Rivers, 1987). Teaching in the interactive class may include the following characteristics:

1. Doing a significant amount of pair work and group work

2. Receiving authentic language input in real-world contexts

3. Producing language for genuine, meaningful communication

4. Performing classroom tasks that prepare them for actual language use "out there"

5. Practicing oral communication through the give and take and spontaneity of actual conversations.

6. Writing to and for real audiences, not contrived ones.

(Brown, 2001, p.81)

The interactive grammar teaching approach, therefore, stresses the teaching of grammar through mutual participation, usually in groups. It is active rather than passive, student-centered rather than language-centered, cognitive rather than behavioristic, indirect rather than direct, and personal rather than manipulative. It puts communication on a par with correctness, turning the study of grammar into a social activity (Brown, 2001).

Importance of interactive approach in grammar. According to study of Byrnes and Kiger (1997), teaching interaction is the key to teaching language for communication. Students achieve ability in using a language when their attention is focused on conveying and receiving authentic message (that is, message that contain information of interest to speaker and listener in a situation of importance to both). Canale and Swain (1980) claimed that grammatical competence should be taught in the context of meaningful communication. Batstone (1994) pointed out that grammar is a combination of phonetics, phonology, morphology, and semantics,

any teaching with the aim of training competent users should overlay all of them, instead of only morphology and syntax, which were the focal points in traditional grammar-translation methods. When teaching grammar, teachers should emphasize all of them by using the interactive approach. Similarly, Shahidullah (2002)   emphasized that grammar should be presented in a way that assists students in using it in real-life communication; it is important to recall and put grammar in use in the context of meaningful and sustained communicative interactions. Rivers (1997) states that through interaction, students can increase their language store as they listen to or read authentic linguistic material, or even the output of their fellow students in discussions, skits, joint problem-solving tasks, or dialogue journals. (As teachers, we frequently overlook how much students learn from their peers.) In interaction, students can use all of the language that they have learned or casually absorbed in real-life exchanges where expressing their real meaning is important to them.

Advantages of Interactive approach in Grammar Teaching.

To create more opportunities for participants. In traditional classrooms, the teacher's talk is dominant. Teachers lecture, explain grammatical points, conduct drills, and at best lead whole-class discussions in which each student might get a few seconds to talk. Since there are more and more large classes, many students even don't have the opportunity to speak English in class. The interactive approach helps to solve the problem. With traditional methods, language tends to be restricted to initiation only by the teacher in an artificial setting where the whole class becomes a "group interlocutor".The Interactive approach provide in negotiation of meaning, for extended conversational exchanges, and for student adoption of roles that would otherwise be impossible.

To improve learning motivation.   The second important advantage offered by the interactive approach is the security of the students where each individual is not so starkly on public display, vulnerable to what the students may perceive as criticism and rejection. The interactive approach becomes a community of learners cooperating with each other in pursuit of common goals. Thus, there is an increase in student motivation.

To promote learner responsibilities.   Even in a relatively small class of 15 to 20 students, traditional ways often give students a screen to hide behind. But in the interactive approach, the relationship between teacher and students and among students themselves is friendly and cooperative. Cooperative learning provides opportunities for face-to-face interaction among students in school tasks, which is considered important for second-language acquisition (Allright, 1984). Studies indicate that cooperative learning develops general mutual concern and interpersonal trust among students (Canale, 1980). So in interactive activity, students are aware that they "sink or swim" together, that each member is responsible for and dependent on all the others.

To promote students' communicative competence. Communicative competence is the ability not only to apply the grammatical rules of a language in order to form grammatically correct sentences but also to know when and where to use these sentences and to whom (Celce-Murcia, 1991). "Classroom communicative competence is essential for second language students to participate in and to learn from their classroom experiences" (Johnson, 2000, p. 6).

Chapter Three: Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the related theories and an analysis of the present English grammar teaching situation in the ESL classroom, we get a general idea about the positive role of the interactive approach in English grammar teaching for the ESL learner. It demonstrates that grammar is very important in language teaching and that grammar needs to be taught in the classroom as it has a close relationship with communicative competence and language proficiency. However, it cannot be taught in isolation from the other language aspects and components, and the teaching of grammar does not mean a return to the traditional treatment of grammar rules. The focus now has moved away from the teacher covering grammar to the students discovering grammar. Although many methods and techniques have been studied in this field before, interactive grammar teaching was designed in terms of interactive principles that were proved to be useful for students.

Combining the current English teaching situation in the ESL classroom with the theories mentioned, some recommendations were put forward in this paper.

First of all, teaching grammar in the communicative context. Howatt (1984) stated that language is acquired through communication, so that it combines the activating an existing with inserting knowledge of language. Interactive grammar teaching follows the student-centered approach, centers on learners' needs, and lays emphasis on developing the communicative competence. Instead of an explicit focus on language itself, there has been an emphasis on learners' expressing their own meanings through language. It emphasizes on the process of communication, rather than mastery of language forms. In grammar teaching of communicative class, grammar exercises can be integrated into group activities, such as interviews, group games, dialogues, dramas and some other forms of role play so that encourage communication

between students or between the instructors and students. Teachers and students should cooperate reciprocally to complete the specific group activities. The relationship between teachers and students is cooperative. The aim of English teaching is the communication between teachers and students, students and students, and is not just teachers teaching and students learning.

Secondly, designing meaningful and purposeful grammar tasks. Canale and Swain(1980) stated that foreign language learning may be more effectively when grammatical usage is not abstracted from meaningful context. It means that teachers should be design activities in which language is used for carrying out meaningful and purposeful tasks, so that students can take an active part in the meaningful communicative activities in the process of using language, which may make them more absorbed and learn the grammar point more naturally, almost without having to think specifically about it.

Thirdly, providing a proper guide on grammar when necessary. In the interactive English classroom teaching, teachers are considered to be guides. We advocate that the classroom teaching should be "student-center", that is not to say the students can dominate or control the whole classroom teaching. In order to help students master the grammar knowledge well, it is really important for the teacher to give the students appropriate explanation as to how a grammatical rule is actually used in communicative situations. When teaching the students grammar in the communicative way, explanation is not strictly prohibited. The teacher should provide explicit explanation for the students especially when they have made many grammatical mistakes in the performance of the activities. These explanations may be in English as well as the native language. When and how to give the students timely explanation largely depends on the levels of the students, and the difficulty of the grammar learnt by the students.

Fourth, giving opportunities for students to use the language to express their own personal meanings. The input of teachers is to all the students. But every student will receive different message in that they are different from each other. Different students have different experiences that affect them in different aspects. The output of the students is just a kind of expression of their experience and feelings. Teachers should deal with these differences in a correct way in order to give them more opportunities to show their own thoughts and opinions instead of testing them with "filling blanks" "true and false". Johnson (1995, as cited in Ellis2005) suggested that teachers should give learners more opportunities to express their own individuality in English, which make them more emotionally secure. Teachers can make the students work in pairs and groups which can reduce the speakers' anxiety. These advantages can make the students speak more fluently. The pair work and group work can provide the students with a setting which facilitates the students to learn to cooperate.

Finally, promoting students' intrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation is the most powerful because the behavior stems from needs, wants, or desires within oneself, the behavior itself is self-rewarding; therefore, no externally administered reward is necessary at all' (Brown, 1994: 20). If all learners were intrinsically motivated to perform all classroom tasks, teachers might not even be needed! But the teachers can perform a great service to learners and to the overall learning process by first considering carefully what the intrinsic motives of our students are and then by designing classroom tasks and activities that feed into those intrinsic drives. The students perform tasks and activities because it is fun, interesting, useful, or challenging, and not because they anticipate some cognitive or affective rewards from the teacher. As students become engaged with each other in speech acts of fulfillment and self-actualization,

their deepest drives are satisfied. And as they more fully appreciate their own competence to use language, they can develop a system of self-reward.

In conclusion, the purpose of English teaching is not only to let the learners accept the knowledge and skills, but also to manage the skills and apply them to the reality, exploit the ability of language and cultivate the communicative ability. However, the traditional teaching didn't meet the trend of such theory. It takes students several years to learn English, but always fails to communicate. They only know some vocabularies after they graduate from the university without communication. As China entered the WTO, English has been playing a more important role. More and more people begin to learn English. We should always put the cultivation of students' communicative and applied competence as the ultimate of English teaching. Interactive teaching can improve classroom communication; arouse the students' interests in learning English and turning the mechanical drills into the flexible application. Interactive teaching conforms to the logical process of language study. It can improve the students' ability of English communication, and the applied competence, and conduce effective learning. In the interactive teaching, the students will participate in all the activities actively, and the success that students get will also encourage them to participate in the activities in class They may take this enthusiasm outside classroom and learn more. We can encourage students to make full use of every opportunity to communicate. Students can communicate in English during the break between classes. Students can greet in English or telephone or ask for leave in English. We can encourage them to participate in activities, such as English corner .free talk with foreigners and so on. Interactive teaching can improve the students expression competence and English ability. In a word, interactive teaching should be carried out in English language education.

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