

**GRAMMAR AND FUNCTION IN COMMUNICATIVE
TEACHING**

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the role of grammar and function in communicative language teaching (CLT), emphasizing how grammatical competence and functional language use interact in real-life communication. The paper argues that grammar should not be taught as an isolated system of rules but as a meaningful resource that supports learners in expressing intentions, performing social actions, and achieving communicative goals. It highlights the importance of integrating form, meaning, and use, and demonstrates how contextualized grammar instruction enhances fluency, accuracy, and pragmatic competence. The study also examines challenges teachers face in balancing communicative activities with explicit grammar instruction and proposes practical strategies for effective classroom implementation.

Main body

Communicative language teaching has fundamentally transformed the way grammar is perceived and taught in modern classrooms. Traditionally, grammar was viewed as the backbone of language learning, often presented through rigid rules, memorization, and repetitive exercises. However, within the communicative approach, grammar is no longer an end in itself but a means to achieve communication. This shift reflects a broader understanding of language as a dynamic system where form, meaning, and function are inseparably connected.

Grammar in communicative teaching is not ignored or diminished; rather, it is redefined. It becomes part of a larger framework that includes discourse, context, and interaction. Learners are encouraged to use grammatical structures to express intentions, negotiate meaning, and participate in authentic communication. For example, instead of merely learning the past tense as a rule, students are guided to use it in storytelling, sharing experiences, or discussing past events. In this way, grammar becomes functional and purposeful, aligning closely with real-life language use.

The concept of function plays a central role in communicative teaching. Language functions refer to the purposes for which language is used, such as requesting, apologizing, inviting, suggesting, or expressing opinions. These functions are essential for effective communication because they reflect how language operates in social contexts. Teaching language through functions allows learners to understand not only how to form sentences but also when and why to use them. This pragmatic dimension is crucial, as communication is not just about correctness but also appropriateness.

One of the key principles of communicative teaching is the integration of form and function. This means that grammar instruction should be embedded within meaningful contexts rather than taught in isolation. For instance, when teaching modal verbs, a teacher might design activities where students make requests or give advice, thereby practicing both the grammatical structure and its communicative function simultaneously. Such an approach enhances retention and helps learners develop a more intuitive understanding of the language.

Another important aspect is the balance between fluency and accuracy. In communicative classrooms, fluency is often prioritized to encourage learners to express themselves freely and confidently. However, this does not imply that accuracy is neglected. Instead, errors are seen as a natural part of the learning process. Teachers provide feedback in a supportive manner, helping students refine their grammatical usage without discouraging communication. This balance is delicate and requires careful planning and sensitivity to learners' needs.

Authentic materials and tasks are also essential in linking grammar and function. Role-plays, discussions, problem-solving activities, and real-life simulations create opportunities for students to use language meaningfully. Through these activities, learners practice grammar in context, making it more relevant and memorable. Moreover, such tasks promote interaction, which is a key driver of language acquisition.

Despite its advantages, integrating grammar and function in communicative teaching presents several challenges. Teachers may struggle with time constraints, large class sizes, or varying proficiency levels among students. Additionally, some learners may feel uncertain without explicit grammar explanations, especially if they are accustomed to traditional methods. Therefore, a flexible approach is necessary, combining inductive and deductive techniques. Teachers can introduce grammar through examples and context, followed by clear explanations and practice to consolidate understanding.

Furthermore, teacher competence plays a significant role in the successful implementation of communicative teaching. Educators must be able to design meaningful activities, manage classroom interaction, and provide effective feedback. Continuous professional development and reflection are essential to adapt teaching strategies and meet the evolving needs of learners.

In conclusion, grammar and function are not opposing elements but complementary components of communicative language teaching. When integrated effectively, they enable learners to use language accurately, fluently, and appropriately in various contexts. The communicative approach recognizes that knowing a language involves more than mastering its rules; it requires the ability to use those rules to convey meaning and achieve social

purposes. By focusing on both form and function, teachers can create a more engaging and effective learning environment that prepares students for real-world communication.

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