

Exploring Types of Grammar in English

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ABSTRACT: This paper aims to examine five types of grammar in English. It sheds light on definitions of grammar based on different perspectives. Then, it presents five types of English grammar: prescriptive grammar, descriptive grammar, traditional grammar, pedagogical grammar, and generative grammar. The work focuses on definitions, rules, features or properties and advantages and disadvantages or weak points of each grammar, with examples.

Keywords: Grammar, descriptive, prescriptive, traditional, generative, pedagogical.

I. INTRODUCTION

In ancient times, grammar was taught in schools. It was affected by Latin and Greek. Latin had a substantial influence on English grammar for a long time. Then, it went through many changes and developments. Schools were revolting against Latinized English grammar because they were dissatisfied with it. At the end of the 19th century, English grammar took a new path away from Latin and Greek. The English language became an international Language. It is used widely, by billions around the world. Additionally, many schools of grammar appear as structural and transformational grammar which is more pedagogically effective (L.Liles, 1971, p.3).

This paper provides several conducted studies on five main types of grammar. It will start with presenting some definitions for grammar, and then it will discuss types of grammar.

II. WHAT IS GRAMMAR?

Crystal (1997:174) states that grammar is an essential part of linguistics, and it involves a wide range of phenomena. It consists of many types such as: "traditional, theoretical, comparative, competence, performance, and universal grammar".

Richards (1992:161) defines grammar as "the description of the structure of a language, and a way in which linguistics units, as word and phrases are combined to produced sentences in the language".

Grammar concerns with the structure (theoretical grammar) and describing that structure of language (descriptive grammar). It can be found in different areas of linguistics carrying more particular meaning. Broadly, it refers to several dimension of language such as semantics, phonology, morphology and syntax. Narrowly, it refers to syntax morphology (Swann et.al, 2004, p. 127-128).

However, grammar refers to the arrangement of words that expresses meaning (Hartwell, 1985, p.109). According to that, it is a branch of linguistics that is interested in the analysis and description of language (ibid).

Additionally, it is the science that is concerned with examining and categorizing elements of the English language such as rules, functions and their relationships in sentences (web source 1).

III. TYPES OF GRAMMAR

1. Prescriptive Grammar

This type of grammar aims to tackle the rules "which rules we should follow" (Huddleston, 1984, p.43). However, prescriptive grammar has several characteristics according to Valeika and Buikiene (2003:12):

1. Depending on Latin grammar in categorizing words and other grammatical classifications to make English batter.
2. It focuses on writing more than speaking.
3. Relying on functions and meaning in definitions.
4. Regarding correctness, it is logical and associated with Latin.

Schlenker (2003: 3) identified several rules of prescriptive grammar; these rules are listed as follows:

1. Infinitives should not be split.

Example 1: * "I wanted to carefully explain to her why the decision was made".

Correct: "I wanted to explain to her carefully why the decision was made"

2. Double negation should not be used.

Example 2: * "I did not do nothing"

Correct: "I did not do anything".

3. A sentence should not end with prepositions.

Example 3: * "That was the man I gave the money to"

Correct: "That was the man to whom I gave the money".

4. Who should not be used in place of whom.

Example 4: * "Who did you talk to?"

Correct: "To whom did you talk?".

5. Do not begin a sentence with "hopefully".

Example 5: "Hopefully Mary will win the race"

6. "only" should be next to the word to which it relates".

Example 6: * "I only saw Jane".

Correct: "I saw only Jane".

7. A plural verb should not be preceded by "none".

Example 7: * "None were left on the table".

Correct: "None was left on the table".

2. Descriptive Grammar

Huddleston (1984: 47) said that the main aim of descriptive grammar is to describe and explain how users of language use language. Moreover, the objective of this type of grammar is to show the "mental grammar" which presents the knowledge to the speakers (ibid).

▪ Rules of descriptive grammar can be presented as follows: (web source 2)

1. Nouns are preceded by articles, and adjectives are used to modify the nouns.

Example 8: "The short people moved".

2. "Demonstratives agree in number with the nouns they modify: '*this* and '*that*' goes with singular, and '*those* and '*these*' will go with plurals".

Example 9: "That dog is surprisingly found in these bones".

3. At the beginning of an English sentence, only one question word should be used.

Example 10: * "Who what said".

Correct: "Who said what?".

4. An objective pronoun is used after a copular verb.

Example 11: "It's me", "that is me", "I'm younger than him".

Furthermore, descriptive grammar does not prescribe rules, but it describes how language is used by speakers.

3. Traditional Grammar

Valeika and Buitkiene (2003: 8) clarify that it is a type of grammar that existed before structural linguistics. Therefore, it is possible to differentiate two periods of traditional grammar "prescriptive (pre-scientific) and descriptive (scientific)". The principles of traditional grammar came from Greek and Roman, based on the work of Plato, Aristotle, Dionysius Thrax and others.

However, in traditional grammar nouns are parts of sentences inflected for cases representing things or persons. While verbs are not inflected for case, but for tenses, numbers, and persons representing activity: participles are also part of sentences which has the features of the verbs and nouns: articles are case-inflected and presented or postponed to nouns; Nouns can be replaced by pronouns; prepositions are positioned before words; the adverbs are not inflected, but they work as a modifier or additions to the verbs; conjunctions or the linkers are utilized as connectors or joiners to fill the gaps and the meaning more clearer (ibid).

Radford (2004: 2) mentions that taxonomy is a term used to describe the syntax of language in this type of grammar. The supposition of syntactic analysis of this type is that there is a set of constituents called "syntactic units" in which phrases and sentences are made up. Each unit belongs to a particular grammatical category and performs a particular grammatical function.

Example 12: "Students protested".

The previous example shows the syntactic units in traditional grammar. The sentence has two components "*The students*' and '*protested*'", each of which belongs to the particular grammatical category: "*Students*' is a plural noun and '*protested*' is past tense". Moreover, the grammatical function of the sentence is that "*Students*' is the subject of the sentence, and '*protested*' is the predicate".

Words in traditional grammar are attached to "grammatical categories called part of speech" based on their semantic, morphological, and syntactic properties. Therefore, nouns and verbs have semantic properties such as the word '*bottle*' it's a noun that means a kind of object, and '*horse*' is a noun that is a kind of animal. Along

with that, the verbs "eat, sing, play, swim, and pull" are all verbs that carry the meaning of action. Morphologically, a regular verb such as "cry" has four distinctive forms "cries, crying, and cried" (ibid).

Example 13: "John smokes".

The noun is "John" which carries the function of the subject of the sentence, because he is the person who smokes (the act of smoking). Whereas, the verb "smokes" carries the function of predicate.

Example 14: "John smokes cigar".

"John" is the subject, "smokes" is the predicate, and "cigar" is complement direct object.

Example 15: "John smokes Cuban cigars imported from Havana".

"Cuban cigar imported from Havana" is complements phrase.

Example 16: "John felt removes".

There are two arguments in a two-place predicate in the sentence.

Example 17: "The press clearly thinks the president deliberately lied to congress".

The sentence has two clauses, "The press" is the subject and "Think" is the first predicate in the sentence, while "The president" is the second subject and "lied" is a predicate, "to congress" is the complement (ibid).

Additionally, traditional grammar shows the differences between non-finite clauses and finite clauses.

Example 18: "She asked where she had gone".

The main clause in the sentence is declarative.

Example 19: "Did you know that he has retired".

The main clause in the above sentence is interrogative and "know" is the complement.

Example 20: "What a great idea is that is".

The last sentence is explanative in force, it uses to show delight or surprise.

Weaknesses of Traditional Grammar

1. It focuses on the written and neglects the spoken form of language.
 2. In the linguistic analysis, meaning is the main tool in the traditional grammar.
 3. Colors such as "red, blue, yellow...etc" are not included as nouns.
 4. It is used analytical devices which are derived from Latin and Greek.
 5. Linguistic levels such as "phonetic, morphological, syntactic, and descriptive" are not distinguished in this type of grammar.
 6. The ambiguity in the grammatical forms cannot be fixed in Traditional grammar.
- Therefore, "traditional grammar is prescriptive, unscientific, informal, ambiguous, objective, and contradictory and lacks scientific accuracy" (web source 2).

4. Pedagogical Grammar

Newby (1989: 1) indicates that pedagogical grammar is a type of grammar that teaches language to foreign learners. It concentrates on two theories: grammar's descriptive models, and language acquisitions.

It is the grammar that examines more from learning and teaching and from language knowledge and learners competence in mental grammar (Thornbury, 2006, p.92).

Swan (1994: 45) illustrates six different norms for pedagogical rules: "truths, demarcation, simplicity, clarity, conceptual parsimony, and relevance, admitting certain overlaps between those categories".

The following rules for pedagogical grammar are illustrated by Murphy (2012: 24):

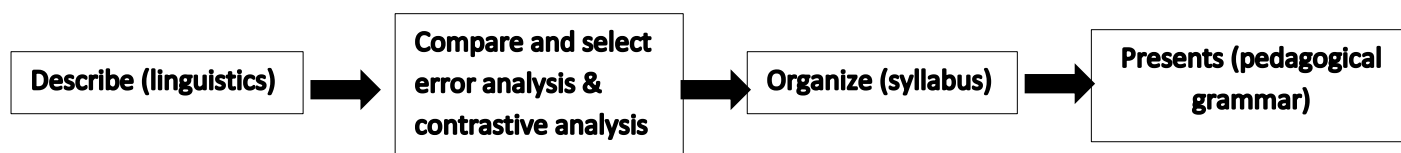
1. "How long...? + Present perfect (as opposed to when...? +past simple)".
2. "Since and for" are used to indicate how long something has been happening.
3. "For" is used in a period of time.
4. "Since" is utilized in a start of a period.

Swan & Walter (2003: 162) mention certain rules:

1. A sentence which has "since" is perfect tense, while past tense is probable in the time expression after since.
2. A sentence which has "for" is perfect tense when the meaning refers to time up to now.
3. "A sentence with "since" a present tense is something used in the main clause to talk about changes".

Pedagogical grammar can be considered as hybrid and electric. It depends on other sciences such as pedagogy and psycholinguistics. The kind of teaching methodologies also plays a significant role in enhancing learning. Moreover, the first language may play an important role in learning another language (Burner, 2005, p. 23).

Figure 1.1 shows the process from pure linguistics to pedagogical grammar:



5. Generative Grammar

According to Chomsky (1965: 16), generative grammar refers to a system of rules that can create a large number of structures. It is analyzed depending on three major components: phonological, syntactic, and semantics.

1. Phonological competence

Example 21: "THIS is a grammatical SENTence".

"This is a grammatical sentence".

2. Morphological competence

Example 22: "van - vans".

"Man - *mans".

3. Syntactic competence

Example 23: "Peter likes apples".

"*like Peter apples".

4. Semantic competence

Examples 24: "I thought that Mary was ill, but it turned out that she was not".

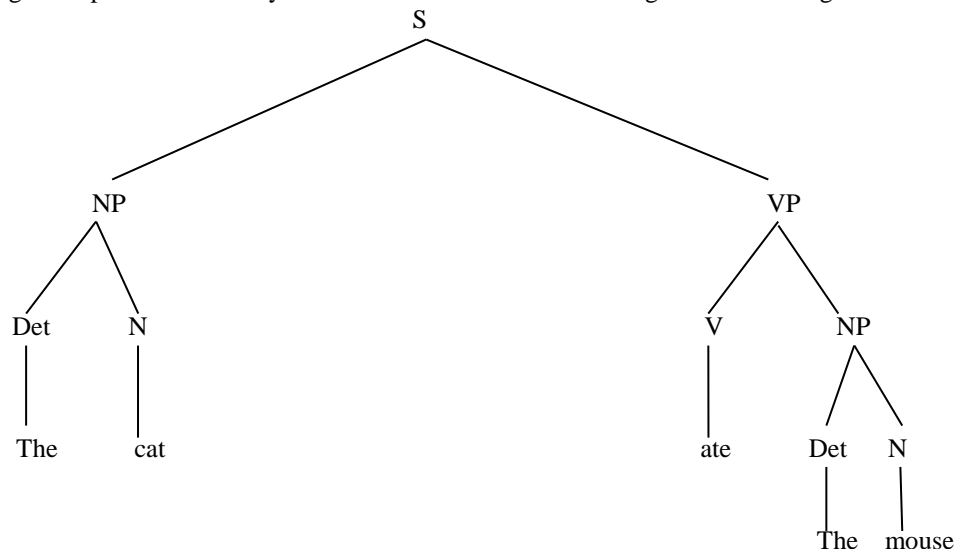
"*I realized that Mary was ill, but it turned out that she was not".

Moreover, Noam Chomsky presents generative grammar in 1950s. He was an American linguist, writer, a philosopher, and professor. He states that generative grammar comes from universal grammar. Grammar that is "common among all spoken and written forms". Chomsky's assumption is that, a person has surface and deep structure of language. "The way we say things in our head is called the deep structure". Deep structure is linked to the idea of "competence". There is a difference between what people think and what they say. In other words, they can produce sentences in their mind, but when they say them they may realize differently. Noam Chomsky developed a theory called universal grammar because he noticed that the structure of different languages have similarities. On the other hand, the surface structure is "the actual spoken sentences". Additionally, generative grammar has a feature of an "innate (language faculty)". The universal fundamental of language indicates the "intrinsic properties" of the language faculty. In the process of learning a native language, children obtain particular rules that allow them to learn with less time and effort. The rules of generative grammar may be applied positively in the study of music (ibid).

Furthermore, the rules of generative grammar represent the syntactical analysis or the description of structures for the grammatical sentences precisely more than the analysis of part of speech in the traditional grammar.

Example 25: "The cat ate the mouse".

The following diagram represents the analysis of the above sentence according to the Tree diagram:



Generative grammar found in different forms, and it consists of transformational grammar. It is also evolved by Chomsky. Theories of Noam Chomsky "opposed the theories of structuralism by refusing the idea that each language is different from the other. The analysis of language in the transformational grammar was based on specific universal tents in languages. This tradition of Chomsky affected greatly by the minimalist program (ibid).

Yule (1996: 101) elucidates some properties or strengths of generative grammar:

1. All the well-formed syntactic structures will be generated in generative grammar.

2. It has the property of productivity, which means the grammar will have a limited number of rules, but it will be able to generate a limitless number of well-formed structures.
3. "Recursion" is another property of generative grammar, which refers to the ability to produce structures more than once in generating a structure.
4. It also should be able to show the other two phenomena: the separate sentences are closely connected, and similar sentences are in fact separate.

Weaknesses of Generative Grammar

1. Teachers assumed that it could not be applied in language teaching.
2. It is directed to psychologists, linguists, and mathematicians rather than teachers.
3. It concentrates on syntax, and it ignores semantics and pragmatics.
4. It does not pay attention to language change.
5. Generative grammar suggests "an innate language faculty called universal grammar that exists in all humans". There was an argument that language learning is adopted and it is context dependent not innate (web source 3).

IV. CONCLUSION

This paper aimed to introduce types of grammar. Traditionalist grammarians began with words then they moved towards phrases and sentences. Prescriptive grammarians were interested in following Latin and Greek, and Roman grammar contributed to their grammar by giving the basic terms of grammar which are still used today. Descriptivists used different terms such as morphemes..... Transformation lists begin with sentences and they move down until they reach sounds. In the end, it should be an approach that brings these schools or types all together. An approach that balances theoretical and practical knowledge of grammar which is pedagogical grammar.

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