

GRAMMARING – THE FIFTH LANGUAGE SKILL

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Abstract: Traditionally, language instruction has centered around four core skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. However, recent developments in applied linguistics have proposed a fifth skill – grammaring – which highlights the dynamic and functional use of grammar in real-time communication. Coined by Diane Larsen-Freeman, grammaring refers to the process of using grammatical resources to convey meaning effectively and appropriately within specific contexts. This conceptual shift reframes grammar not as a static body of rules but as a skill that is actively developed and refined through usage. This paper explores grammaring as an emergent language skill, emphasizing its pedagogical implications in communicative language teaching (CLT) and task-based language learning (TBLL). Drawing on research in second language acquisition (SLA), the study investigates how learners internalize and manipulate grammatical structures in interaction, and how instruction can scaffold this development. It also considers the role of consciousness-raising, feedback, and repeated practice in promoting grammatical competence. The inclusion of grammaring as a fifth skill underscores the need for a more holistic and integrative approach to language education – one that acknowledges grammar as a process-oriented, meaning-making activity rather than a purely formal system. This reconceptualization holds significant potential for enhancing language learners’ fluency, accuracy, and communicative effectiveness.

Keywords: grammaring, language skills, pedagogical implications, challenges

1. Introduction

Grammaring, as defined by Larsen-Freeman [1], is the process by which language users apply grammatical knowledge dynamically and appropriately in real-time communication. Unlike the traditional view that sees grammar as a product to be learned, grammaring reframes it as a process – a skill that is continually developed through active use. It involves not only the accurate formation of sentences but also the ability to select and manipulate grammatical structures in ways that are contextually meaningful and pragmatically effective.

This reconceptualization of grammar has far-reaching implications for both language

teaching and learning. It situates grammar within the framework of communicative competence, aligning it with the broader goals of language education that emphasize meaning, interaction, and social context. In this view, grammatical structures are not ends in themselves but resources for creating and negotiating meaning. As such, grammaring becomes an essential component of communicative proficiency. Furthermore, grammaring underscores the cognitive processes involved in language use. It reflects the learner’s ability to internalize patterns, monitor output, and adapt language use to suit varying communicative demands. In this context,

grammaring is not only about correctness but also about appropriateness, coherence, and fluency. Therefore, it has been argued that fluidity and competence in a language cannot be fully reached without a solid base in grammar. Mamatoyibov [2] underlines that grammar acts as a backbone of linguistic fluidity, facilitating accuracy and consistency in communication both spoken and written. In addition, Minasyan and Midova [3] posit that grammar constitutes a key competence in the acquisition of language, underlining its importance in the development of the skills necessary for effective communication.

In educational contexts, the pedagogical meaning of grammar has been stated through various studies. For example, Lante [4] examines the grammar skills of the educators and their direct impact on the communicative competence of the students, suggesting that the teachers' understanding of the grammar directly influences the ability of students to transmit messages carefully. Myhill [5] underlines the importance of understanding the choice of the language in writing, suggesting that through solid grammatical education, students can make more intentional decisions and use more nuanced language in their communication. This perspective aligns with the argument of Abdushukurova [6] according to which innovative approaches to teaching grammar can transform traditional perceptions, facilitating a deeper commitment with the language that improves communication through more appropriate lexical and structural choices. In addition, Wijnands, van Rijt and Coppen [7] offer a pedagogical model that promotes cognitive and reflective thoughts of thought in the first language (L1) grammatical education. Their framework illustrates that when students learn to think critically about the language, they not only improve their grammatical competence, but also their ability to analyze and interpret communication more effectively.

In summary, a shift in the approach to grammatical education can produce benefits between multiple dimensions, improving the students' skills in different linguistic environments and supplementing the performance in the four language skills with a fifth dimension. Reframing grammar for communicative language teaching purposes not only bridges the gap between form and function but also enhances learners' capacity to navigate diverse linguistic landscapes.

2. Grammaring – the Linchpin between the Four Language Skills

A key contribution of grammaring to enhancing communication is its capacity to support both fluency and accuracy – two core dimensions of communicative competence. Fluency involves the ability to produce language smoothly and spontaneously, while accuracy refers to the correct and appropriate use of linguistic forms. Often seen in tension, these two goals can be mutually reinforcing when grammar is approached as a process.

Grammaring helps bridge the gap between declarative and procedural knowledge. DeKeyser [8] argues that fluency arises when explicit knowledge of rules becomes automatized through practice. In this view, grammaring is the vehicle through which such proceduralization occurs. Learners internalize grammatical forms not through abstract study alone but by actively using them in meaningful contexts.

Simultaneously, grammaring promotes accuracy by engaging learners in form-focused interaction. Through recasts, feedback, and guided tasks, learners can refine their grammatical choices while still prioritizing communication. As Ellis [9] notes, corrective feedback within communicative tasks can be particularly effective in enhancing grammatical accuracy without disrupting fluency. Thus, grammaring provides a balanced approach: it encourages learners to experiment with and refine their use of grammar as part of the

broad goal of communicative effectiveness.

Although grammaring is proposed as a fifth skill, it does not operate in isolation. Rather, it permeates and supports all four traditional language skills, enhancing learners' performance and development in each modality. The integration of grammar with the four linguistic skills is essential for full language learning. Akhmedova [10] pleads for a global approach to teaching which encompasses grammar in the context of integrated skills. This perspective encourages learners to practice grammar in the context of listening, speech, reading, and writing, ultimately facilitating a more holistic understanding of the use of language. For example, when learners engage with authentic materials, they not only strengthen their grammatical knowledge but also develop their listening and reading skills simultaneously. This interconnection reflects the true nature of the use of language in real situations, where grammar works dynamically.

2.1. Speaking and Grammaring

In speaking, grammaring is central to the formulation of utterances in real time. Fluent speakers must access and deploy grammatical structures under time constraints while also negotiating meaning with interlocutors. This requires not only knowledge of grammar but also the ability to apply it flexibly. Speaking tasks, particularly those involving interaction, offer fertile ground for developing grammaring, as learners must continuously adapt and monitor their grammatical output [11].

2.2. Listening and Grammaring

Although receptive, listening also involves grammatical processing. Listeners rely on grammatical cues – such as tense, aspect, and word order – to decode meaning and infer speaker intention. Effective grammaring allows listeners to anticipate structures and interpret nuances, thus enhancing comprehension. As Nation and Newton [12] suggest, listening tasks that

emphasize comprehension of grammatical constructions in context can strengthen both listening ability and grammatical awareness.

2.3. Reading and Grammaring

Reading exposes learners to a wide range of grammatical forms in authentic contexts, facilitating both recognition and acquisition. Through repeated exposure, learners notice patterns of grammatical usage, reinforcing the form-function connections central to grammaring. Grabe and Stoller [13] emphasize that reading promotes language development when learners are encouraged to analyze and reflect on grammatical usage in texts, making reading a valuable context for developing grammaring skills.

2.4. Writing and Grammaring

Writing allows for more deliberate grammatical choices and revision, making it particularly conducive to grammaring. Writers must consider audience, purpose, and genre, all of which influence grammatical choices. The process of drafting and revising enables learners to reflect on and improve their grammatical accuracy and appropriateness. Feedback on writing tasks also supports the development of grammaring by drawing learners' attention to errors and alternative structures [14].

The integration of grammar teaching with the four linguistic skills further enriches educational experience. For example, a lesson that combines understanding of reading with the practice of grammar not only helps learners to understand grammatical structures but also improves their global literacy skills. Listening exercises that focus on identifying grammatical forms in spoken language expose learners to the authentic use of language, strengthening their ability to apply grammar in real-time conversations. Consequently, grammar becomes a tool that unifies individual linguistic skills, creating a more cohesive learning experience.

3. Pedagogical Approaches to Grammatical Instruction in Language Teaching

Grammar instruction has long been a contentious topic in language education, oscillating between form-focused and meaning-oriented approaches. Defined as the active and context-sensitive use of grammar as a skill to be developed through meaningful communication, grammaring involves a shift of pedagogical perspective to language teaching, calls for didactic approaches that go beyond rule memorization, emphasizing functional and reflective engagements with the language.

Historically, grammar instruction was synonymous with the explicit teaching of rules, often divorced from communicative practice. This traditional approach, influenced by grammar-translation and structuralist methods, prioritized accuracy over fluency and treated language as a set of discrete items to be learned and mastered in isolation [15]. Lessons typically centered on mechanical drills, sentence transformation, and error correction, often neglecting the communicative function of grammar.

The limitations of this approach became apparent with the rise of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in the 1970s and 1980s. CLT emphasized interaction, real-life communication, and learner autonomy, often downplaying or even excluding explicit grammar instruction [16]. However, a complete neglect of form was found to be equally problematic, particularly for adult learners or those studying in formal educational contexts. As a result, grammar pedagogy began to evolve toward more balanced approaches that integrate form and meaning.

This evolution culminated in the emergence of *grammaring* as a pedagogical concept. Larsen-Freeman [17] proposed that grammar should not be seen as a static body of knowledge, but as a dynamic skill to be practiced and refined through usage. In this view, grammar is not merely about “knowing” rules, but about “doing” –

applying grammatical forms appropriately, flexibly, and fluently in context. This perspective aligns with more recent second language acquisition (SLA) research, which supports grammar instruction that is contextualized, usage-based, and developmentally sensitive [9].

One of the most effective pedagogical responses to the need for context-driven grammar instruction is the Focus-on-Form (FonF) approach. Coined by Long [18], FonF involves drawing learners’ attention to grammatical forms as they arise naturally during communicative activities, efficiently embedding grammar instruction within meaningful tasks.

The FonF approach is particularly compatible with the concept of grammaring, as it reinforces the idea that grammar is best learned through use. In FonF, instruction is reactive rather than preemptive – teachers respond to errors or emergent needs during task-based interaction, guiding learners toward more accurate or contextually appropriate language use [19]. This method is especially beneficial because it keeps the primary focus on communication, while also offering opportunities for grammar development.

Research supports the efficacy of FonF in improving both accuracy and fluency. Ellis, Basturkmen, and Loewen [20] found that learners exposed to FonF instruction were more likely to notice grammatical features and incorporate them into their interlanguage system. The strength of this approach lies in its ability to support incidental learning while still allowing for explicit attention to form when necessary.

FonF activities include corrective feedback (e.g., recasts, clarification requests), input enhancement (highlighting forms in reading or listening materials), and collaborative tasks that require grammatical negotiation. These techniques engage learners in grammaring by requiring them to monitor, adjust, and experiment with language in real time.

While task-based approaches such as FonF provide external scaffolding, the development

of grammaring also benefits from metacognitive strategies that cultivate learners' internal monitoring and control mechanisms. Metacognition involves awareness and regulation of one's own learning processes, including planning, monitoring, and evaluating performance [21].

In grammar instruction, metacognitive strategies encourage learners to reflect on their grammatical use, recognize patterns of error, and employ strategies for self-correction. These skills are essential for developing both fluency and accuracy, as they enable learners to adapt their language use across different contexts and over time. This kind of reflection is crucial in turning declarative grammatical knowledge into procedural, automatic use.

Examples of metacognitive strategies in grammaring include:

- ✓ *Error journals*: learners record and analyze grammatical errors.

- ✓ *Think-aloud protocols*: learners verbalize their grammatical decision-making during speaking or writing.

- ✓ *Peer review*: learners provide grammar-focused feedback on each other's output, promoting awareness of form.

- ✓ *Goal-setting and reflection*: learners identify specific grammatical targets and evaluate their progress.

Incorporating these strategies into instruction encourages autonomy and promotes a learner-centered classroom environment. As O'Malley and Chamot [22] argue, learners who are aware of their language processes tend to be more successful in achieving linguistic competence. Moreover, combining metacognitive training with communicative tasks reinforces the grammaring process by enabling learners to both *notice* and *act upon* grammatical features in use.

The pedagogical implications generated by the insertion to grammaring as a fifth language skill are multifaceted, combining contextualized input, communicative interaction, and learner reflection. First, curriculum design should move beyond

traditional grammar syllabi and instead integrate grammar instruction into task-based, content-rich activities. Tasks should be authentic, meaning-focused, and open-ended to allow for natural grammar emergence. Second, teacher intervention should be responsive and adaptive, utilizing FonF strategies to highlight and reinforce grammar points as needed. Teachers play a crucial role in creating opportunities for form-focused reflection without interrupting communication. Third, classrooms should cultivate metacognitive awareness. Teachers can model metacognitive strategies and provide structured activities that develop learners' self-monitoring and self-regulation skills. Embedding reflection into the learning process fosters learner autonomy and deepens grammatical competence. Lastly, assessment should align with these principles. Rather than relying solely on discrete-point grammar tests, assessments should include portfolios, reflective journals, and performance tasks that capture learners' ability to apply grammar meaningfully and accurately in context.

In conclusion, the evolution of grammar teaching methods reflects a broader pedagogical change towards the communicative approaches that prioritize the participation and interaction of the student. The integration of the focus on the form in these frames emphasizes the symbiotic relationship between grammar and communication, while metacognitive strategies support the autonomy and self-regulation of the student. As language educators continue to innovate and refine their practices, a commitment to integrate these principles will undoubtedly improve the general effectiveness of grammar instruction, preparing students to navigate the complexities of successful language use while promoting an appreciation of a lifetime by linguistic domain. The continuous dialogue that surrounds these issues remains vital for the future of language education, ensuring that grammar instruction adapts to the evolutionary linguistic landscape of the 21st century.

4. Overcoming Challenges in Teaching Grammatical

This section explores key barriers in teaching grammaring – namely, student attitudes and motivation, the tension between fluency and accuracy, and the cultural and contextual complexities of grammar instruction – while proposing strategies to effectively address them.

One of the primary challenges in teaching grammaring is the widespread perception among students that grammar is a secondary, less engaging component of language learning. Many learners view grammar as a set of abstract rules, disconnected from real communication. This attitude, often rooted in past experiences with traditional, form-focused instruction, can lead to low motivation and resistance to grammar-related activities [23].

To overcome this barrier, it is essential to reframe grammar as a communicative tool rather than a set of constraints. Teachers can foster a shift in perspective by embedding grammar instruction within meaningful contexts and tasks that highlight its practical utility. For instance, using grammar in storytelling, debates, or role-plays can help students see grammar as a resource for expressing ideas and intentions clearly and appropriately. In addition, gamification elements, such as quizzes and interactive activities, can promote a positive learning environment in which students feel encouraged to actively participate in their grammar learning journey.

Moreover, promoting learner autonomy and reflection can significantly enhance motivation. Encouraging students to set personal grammar goals, track progress, and reflect on their usage helps build ownership of their learning process [21]. When students recognize how grammar directly influences their communicative competence, their engagement with grammaring tends to increase.

Moreover, leveraging positive reinforcement and providing timely, constructive feedback can further boost motivation. Recognizing

students' grammatical successes, even when imperfect, helps shift the classroom focus from error avoidance to language development and experimentation.

Another major challenge in grammaring instruction lies in striking the right balance between fostering fluency and maintaining grammatical accuracy. Communicative approaches often prioritize fluency, encouraging learners to express themselves freely. However, this may sometimes result in fossilization of errors if attention to grammatical form is consistently overlooked [9]. Conversely, an overemphasis on accuracy may inhibit learners' willingness to take risks, thereby stifling natural communication.

To navigate this tension, a dual-focus approach is needed – one that values both fluent expression and grammatical development. The Focus-on-Form (FonF) approach offers an effective solution by integrating form-focused attention into communicative contexts [18]. Rather than teaching grammar in isolation, FonF allows teachers to address grammatical issues as they arise during meaningful language use, maintaining the flow of communication while providing timely guidance. For example, during a task-based discussion, a teacher may recast a learner's inaccurate structure or ask for clarification that prompts self-correction. Such strategies allow learners to notice gaps in their interlanguage and adjust accordingly without interrupting interaction [24].

Additionally, structuring lessons to include both fluency-driven and accuracy-focused components can help reinforce grammatical learning. Warm-up discussions can lead into focused grammar tasks, followed by production activities that allow students to apply grammatical structures in authentic contexts. This cyclical integration reinforces form-function relationships and enhances learners' capacity to grammar in real time.

Language classrooms vary greatly in their cultural and educational contexts, and these

differences can significantly affect the implementation of grammaring. Given that cultural diversity considerably influences the way students perceive and engage with grammar, we underline the importance of the teachers' ability to recognize that students come from various horizons, which can impact on and shape their understanding of linguistic structures and grammar rules. Effective teaching strategies must therefore be culturally sensitive. Alisherqizi and Baxodirovna [25] suggests that the recognition of students' mother tongue structures can help teachers explain English grammar more effectively. For example, the use of students' first languages to establish parallels between grammatical rules can improve their understanding. In addition, Sorohiti et al. [26] defend teachers to raise awareness of cultural differences in learning styles, which can shed light on the educational strategies adapted to the specific needs of students. By adapting education to respect and incorporate cultural contexts, educators can facilitate more effective grammar learning experiences.

In some cultures, for example, language education is still heavily influenced by exam-oriented, grammar-translation methods, where grammatical correctness is highly emphasized, and teacher authority is rarely questioned. In such settings, learners may be unfamiliar with communicative or inductive approaches and may initially resist grammaring-oriented methods [27].

To address these challenges, educators must adopt a culturally responsive pedagogy that respects learners' educational backgrounds while gradually introducing new methodologies. Bridging traditional and communicative approaches can ease the transition. For instance, starting with explicit explanations followed by inductive, discovery-based tasks allows learners to build confidence while adapting to new modes of learning.

Teachers should also be sensitive to learners' expectations and learning styles. In high-context cultures, where indirectness

and politeness are valued, learners may be hesitant to engage in error correction or peer feedback. In such cases, teachers can model metalinguistic feedback and create safe, supportive environments for learners to explore and discuss grammar without fear of judgment.

Furthermore, context-specific materials and examples can make grammaring more accessible. Using culturally relevant topics and authentic texts helps learners relate grammar instruction to their lived experiences and communicative needs. For instance, teaching narrative tenses using local news stories or past events can increase relevance and comprehension.

Teacher training is another crucial component. Educators need to be equipped with strategies for adapting grammaring pedagogy to diverse classroom contexts. Professional development programs that emphasize reflective teaching, cultural sensitivity, and flexible instructional design are key to ensuring successful grammaring implementation worldwide.

Grammaring represents a transformative approach to grammar instruction – one that repositions grammar as an active, communicative skill rather than a static body of rules. However, effectively teaching grammaring entails addressing several pedagogical challenges. Student attitudes and low motivation require a reconceptualization of grammar as an empowering tool for expression. The tension between fluency and accuracy calls for integrated instructional methods like Focus-on-Form, which maintain communication while addressing grammatical development. Lastly, cultural and contextual differences demand flexible, responsive teaching that respects learners' backgrounds and adapts instruction accordingly.

By and large, the challenges in the teaching of grammar involves multiple strategies which prioritize the motivation of students, the balance between mastery and precision and culturally sensitive adaptations.

Educators can improve motivation by creating significant learning contexts and introducing gamified elements into their grammar instruction. Attaining mastery while ensuring precision can be obtained through integrated educational approaches, and the recognition of the various cultural horizons allows tailor-made teaching strategies. Continuous formative evaluation practices, in parallel with the effective integration of digital technologies, further enrich the grammar learning experience. By using these strategies, educators can considerably improve their grammar teaching and effectively provide their students with the tools necessary to navigate the complexities of the English language. The ideas collected from literature underline the importance of innovative and adaptable teaching methods to meet the various needs of learners in the globalized world of today.

5. Conclusions

Grammaring represents a paradigm shift in how grammar is understood and taught. Far from being a static body of knowledge, grammar is a dynamic skill that learners must actively practice and refine. As a process that supports fluency, accuracy, and context-sensitive communication, grammaring plays an essential role in language acquisition. Moreover, its integration with speaking, listening, reading, and writing underscores its foundational importance. By embracing grammaring as a fifth skill, language educators can adopt more holistic, communicative, and effective approaches to grammar instruction – ones that truly empower learners to use language with precision, flexibility, and confidence.

Recognizing grammaring as a core language skill carries important pedagogical implications. First, instruction should move beyond decontextualized grammar exercises to integrated, meaning-focused tasks that engage learners in authentic use of grammar. Activities such as role plays,

problem-solving discussions, and collaborative writing foster the type of contextualized practice that develops grammaring. Second, assessment methods should reflect the process-oriented nature of grammaring. Rather than only testing rule knowledge, assessments should evaluate learners' ability to use grammar appropriately in communication. Portfolio assessments, task-based performance, and reflective journals can capture learners' progress in grammaring over time. Finally, teachers should adopt a facilitative role, providing scaffolding, feedback, and opportunities for noticing and restructuring grammatical forms. Instruction that draws attention to form while maintaining communicative intent – such as input enhancement or consciousness-raising tasks – can foster both awareness and automatization of grammar [28].

To elevate grammaring within language teaching, educators and curriculum designers must move beyond treating grammar as an isolated component. Grammaring should be embedded in communicative tasks that encourage learners to manipulate grammar meaningfully rather than mechanically. Teachers can employ task-based learning, focus-on-form techniques, and context-driven activities that help students notice, practice, and refine grammar in action. Additionally, assessment practices should reflect this shift by evaluating students' ability to use grammar effectively in real-world communication rather than simply testing rule recall. Professional development programs should also train educators to view grammar as a process and to integrate it holistically into all language instruction.

Ultimately, the argument for grammaring as the fifth language skill lies in its centrality to comprehensive language proficiency. Without the ability to flexibly use grammar in diverse contexts, learners may struggle to communicate ideas clearly, appropriately, and persuasively. Just as listening or

reading alone cannot ensure communicative competence, neither can speaking nor writing without the grammatical scaffolding that supports them. Grammaring provides this bridge, linking form and meaning in a way that allows learners to express themselves with both fluency and precision. Recognizing grammaring as a skill in its own right affirms its essential role in language education and ensures that learners are better equipped for the demands of real-world communication. In our experience, both as a language learner and as someone deeply engaged in

language education, we have seen how grammar often gets pushed to the background – treated as a supporting act rather than part of the main show. But when grammar is taught as a living process, something students can play with, explore, and use to express themselves, their confidence and communicative ability soar. They move beyond just getting their point across; they begin to shape their ideas with clarity, style, and nuance, ultimately becoming more confident when using the language and feeling increasingly empowered to communicate naturally.

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