

A SURVEY OF

GRAMMAR PRESENTATION TECHNIQUES AND GRAMMAR PRACTICE ACTIVITIES USED BY TEACHERS IN THE UPPER PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN

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Abstract

The pendulum of second language teaching has swung back in favour of grammar teaching. However current pedagogical practice is no longer focused on traditional isolated grammar exercises but on communicative grammar teaching. The study presented here is a survey of what English Language teachers do when teaching grammar to Primary 4, 5 and 6 learners of SK and SRK schools in the state of Sabah. The four research questions addressed are: what are the techniques and activities frequently used in grammar teaching; to what extent is the teaching of grammar integrated with other language skills; to what extent is the teaching of grammar related to communicative practice; and, is there any difference between the techniques/activities used by teachers in schools with better exam results and those used by teachers from schools with poorer results. Data relating to the techniques and activities employed by teachers are collected through a pre-coded, self completion structured questionnaire directed at 132 teachers in 33 schools in the districts of Kota Kinabalu, Tanjung Aru, Likas, Inanam, Putatan and Penampang. The limited results of this study suggest that teachers, by and large, are still very dependent on traditional techniques and activities such as grammar explanation, drills and isolated exercises; there is little integration of the teaching of grammar with the other language skills; the teaching of grammar is related to communicative practice to a small extent and the most important difference between the techniques and activities employed by teachers in schools with better results and those in schools with poorer results is that the former use much more English in the class. The study concludes by showing that not only is it possible to integrate the teaching of grammar with other language skills and to relate the teaching of grammar to communicative practice at the primary school level, it is desirable to do so in order to sustain learners' interest and to accelerate the acquisition of implicit knowledge necessary for improving the learners' communicative competence.