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Importance of English grammar to EFL learners at university level

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Abstract

English grammar is considered very important in learning English language without accurate use of grammar English language will become meaningless. Therefore, this study aimed to investigate the importance of English grammar to EFL learners at university level. The study adopted the descriptive analytical method. The data of the study were collected by means of a questionnaire. The sample of the study consisted of (50) EFL learners at university level, Gezira University, Faculty of education, Department of English language, Hassaheisa City. The statistical packages for Social Science Program (SPSS) was used for analyzing the data. The study reached many important results: The most important ones are: many of EFL learners face difficulties in learning English grammar. Also communication in English language requires at least some understanding the essential principles of grammar or structure: Based on these findings the study recommended that: EFL teachers should help EFL learners to overcome the difficulties in learning English grammar. Moreover, EFL learners should at least understand some of the essential principles of grammar because they are required for a good communication.

Key words: Essential, English language grammar, communication, difficulties.

Introduction

Grammar is an important aspect of a language where learners and teachers' opinions vary. Some students love to find out or learn the proper usage of grammar while some wanted to do grammar exercises. While some love grammar, other hate it and think that it is the most boring part of learning a new language. Whatever your standard is you cannot escape from learning grammar, it is vital in every sentences you read or write, speak or hear. Grammar is simply the word for the rules that people follow when they use the language. We need those rules in the same way as we need the rules in any game. https://englishclub.com.equiz-me-tefl.net

Statement of the Problem

There is a common feeling among students of English as a foreign and other language EFL, that English is difficult language with lots of complicated rules to master so they neglect these rules or a void using most of them such as phrasal verbs or gerund as example of complicated grammar items. Therefore, the main objective of this study is to shed light on the importance of English grammar in learning and teaching English language.

Objectives of the Study: The study has the following objectives:

1. To cast some light on the importance of English grammar.
2. To investigate the difficulties that face EFL learners in learning grammar.
3. To provide EFL learners with strong command of the spoken and written language.
4. To enable students to read, write and communicate effectively.

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1.3 Questions of the Study: The study has the following questions:

1. To what extent can a full knowledge of grammar help EFL learners to write, read and communicate effectively?
2. Is grammar considered necessary for the mastery of English language?
3. Do EFL learners find difficulty in learning grammar?
4. To what extent can language become meaningless without grammar?

Hypotheses of The Study: The study has the following hypothesis:

1. A full knowledge of grammar can help EFL learners to write, read and communicate Effectively.
2. Grammar is considered very necessary for the mastery of English language.
3. EFL learners find many difficulties in learning grammar.
4. Language can be meaningless without grammar rules.

Significance of the Study: The study were be of great value to both English language learners and teachers as it carries the idea of developing students grammar knowledge and consequently competence. Also hope that this study will bring change in students' understanding of these rules. It will also be addition to syllabus designers and all those who are interested in English grammar.

Methodology of The Study: The study adopted the descriptive analytical method. A questionnaire was used as a tool for data collection. The sample were consisted of (50) EFL learners from faculty of education – department of English language – Gezira university – Sudan. The collected data was analyzed by using (SPSS) statistical package for social science program.

Limits of the Study: The study will be limited to the importance of English grammar to EFL learners at university level, Gezira university, Sudan 2023.

Definition of Key Grammar Concept

English grammar is the set of structural rules of the English language. This includes the structure of words, phrases, clauses, sentences, and whole texts. Grammar is the foundation for all of our writing and speaking in English. Having a solid foundation makes it easier to achieve fluency. Native speakers can benefit from a refresher on English grammar basics, which they may have forgotten over time. Refreshing the basics is one way to help break bad habits in writing. Learnenglish.britishcouncil.org

Grammar (Noun): the structure and system of a language, or of languages in general, usually considered to consist of syntax and morphology. Grammar is a system of language people sometimes describes grammar as the "rules" of language, but in fact no language has rules. If we use the word "rules" we suggest that somebody created the rules first and then spoken language like a new game. But language didn't start like that. Languages started by people making sounds which involve into words phrases and sentences. No commonly spoken language is fixed. All languages change overtime. What we call "grammar" is simply a reflection of a language at a particular time. http://learningenglish.britishcouncil.org.

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The importance of English grammar

According Berk (1999), Languages are natural form of communication, children quickly learn to communicate using their native language, and soon master the main rules of expression without being taught. As they learn their mother tongue, children acquire an intuitive understanding of grammar, generally without realizing it. This intuitive grammar awareness is perfectly adequate for the communication requirements of a young child, but it soon reaches its limits. Going beyond the needs a young child, communication, specially written communication, soon requires at least some understanding of the essential principles of grammar or syntax if we imagine language as a big highway, the words are the cars and trucks, but the grammar is the road signs and markings that tell people driving on it where to go and how to drive (Brinton, 2000). Without readings, a big high would quickly descend into total confusion without any grammar, we could manage to produce some sorts of elementary communication such as "Me Jack, you Jane", but we would be unable to form any more complex ideas into words. It follows therefore, that to progress beyond fairly basic levels of expression, learners of any language – whether it be their native language or a foreign language – need to master the essential grammatical rules and principles. That being said, it is generally possible to communicate orally, notably through dialogue, with just a minimal mastery of grammar, since oral communication and in particular dialogue are bilateral processes.

Grammar in daily life

Brojars (2001) mentions In our everyday lives grammar is everywhere, we use it at home, in school, at work, and in the streets. It is the core of a language regardless of one's culture., mastery and understanding of it. Being able to use grammar also widens one's vocabulary. It opens doors of opportunities for us to be able to communicate freely, with no barriers and hesitations. In teaching grammar plays a vital role in how effectively a teacher conveys his lessons: knowing the highs and lows of the language could make or break a lesson. In one instance, a teacher could adjust the level of difficulty of words to be used if he is familiar with grammar. This could lead to a more enjoyable experience for both teachers and students. One more thing being able to express yourself confidently as a teacher with the right grammar commands respect and positive outlook from your students. Mastering proper grammar could inspire your students to also strike harder in learning the language.

The Role of grammar in English language

Austin (1965), add grammar is important because it is the language that makes it possible for us to effectively talk about language. Grammar names the words and groups that make up sentences not only is English but in almost any language as humans, we can put sentences together even as children. But to be able to talk about how sentences are built, about the types an word groups that make up sentences that is knowing grammar. Knowing about grammar opens the human mind and open our complex mental capacity of knowing and learning a specific language. We always

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associate grammar with errors and correctness. But knowing about grammar also helps us understand what makes sentences and paragraphs clear and interesting pleasant and precise.

Sample of the Study

The sample of this study consisted of (50) EFL learners they were chosen randomly from faculty of Education – department of English language Hassaheisa city – Gezira university - Sudan.

Procedure

The data of this study were collected by using a questionnaire which was distributed to (50) EFL learners at university level. Then was analyzed by using the statistical packages for social science program (SPSS).

Validity and Reliability

To test the reliability of the questionnaire Pearson's correlation is used the statistical treatment. Here the researcher followed and applied the "product-moment" correlation (Pearson's) by means of the split plot and the formula is.

$$R = \frac{40(61356) - (2250168)}{\sqrt{40\left((59880 - 2143296)(63615 - 2362369)\right)}} = 0.95$$

$$R = \frac{N(\sum Xy - \sum X \sum Y}{\sqrt{N(\sum X^2) - (\sum X^2)(\sum y^2) - (\sum XY^2)}}$$

$$\text{Rlia} = 2*r/1+r \quad = \quad (2*0.95)/(1+0.95) = 0.98$$

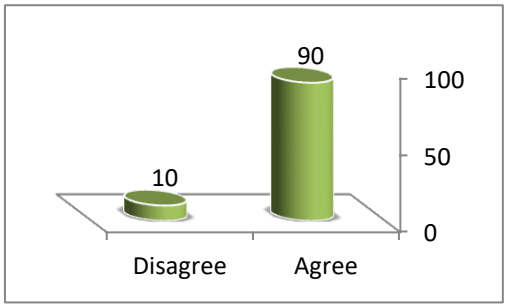
$$Val = \sqrt{reliability} \quad = \quad \sqrt{0.98} = 0.99$$

The calculated coefficient of correlation reached 0.95 which indicates agreement in results for reliability. This shows that this instrument of the test as a whole is reliable and stable.

Data Analysis and Discussion

Table (1) English grammar is considered very necessary for the mastery of English language.

	Frequency	Percent
Agree	45	90.0
Disagree	5	10.0
Total	50	100.0



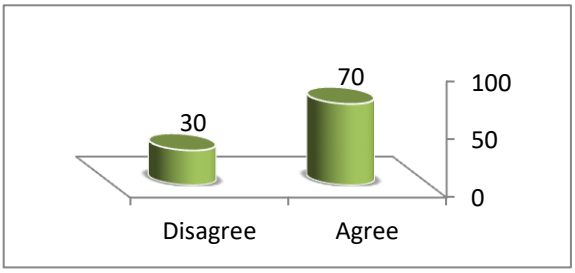
Source: Prepared by researcher, 2023.

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According to the above table (10%) of the respondents disagrees with statement. Whereas, (90%) the majority of them agree that English grammar is considered very necessary for the mastery of English language. Thus this statement it accepted.

Table (2) Many EFL learners find difficulties in learning English grammar.

	Frequency	Percent
Agree	35	70.0
Disagree	15	30.0
Total	50	100.0

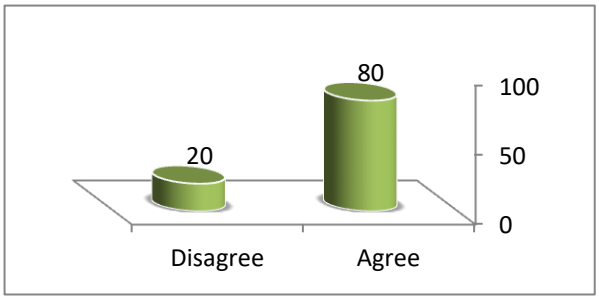


Source: Prepared by researcher, 2023.

(30%) Percent only of the respondents disagree with the statement. While (70%) of them agree that many EFL learners find difficulties in learning English grammar. Therefore, this statement is proved.

Table (3) Mastery of English grammar provides EFL learners with strong command of The spoken and written language.

	Frequency	Percent
Agree	40	80.0
Disagree	10	20.0
Total	50	100.0



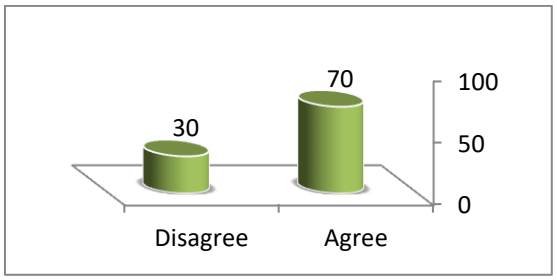
Source: Prepared by researcher, 2023.

It is cleared from the above table (20%) of the answers disagree with the statement. While the highest numbers of answers (80%) agree that the mastery of English grammar provides EFL learners with a strong command of the spoken and written language. So this statement is accepted.

Table (4) English language will become meaningless without appropriate use of English grammar

	Frequency	Percent
Agree	35	70
Disagree	15	30
Total	50	100.0

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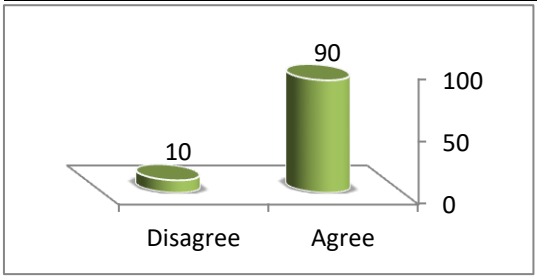


Source: Prepared by researcher, 2023.

The above table shows that only (30%) only of the respondents disagree with the statement, whereas, (70%) the majority of them agree that English language, will become meaningless without appropriate use of English grammar. Thus this statement is accepted.

Table (5) Communication in English language requires at least some understanding of the essential principles of grammar of syntax

	Frequency	Percent
Agree	45	90.0
Disagree	5	10.0
Total	50	100.0

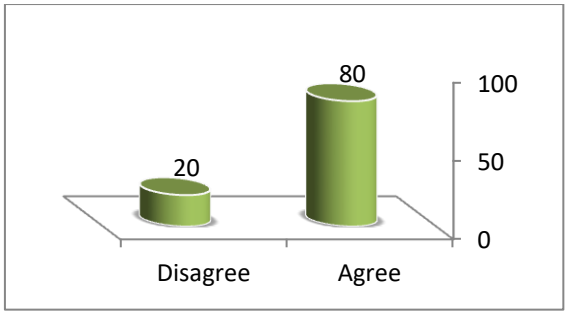


Source: Prepared by researcher, 2023.

From the Preceding table it is clear that (10%) only of the respondents disagree with the statement, while, (90%) the highest number of them agree with the statement. So, this statement is accepted.

Table (6) A full knowledge of English grammar can help EFL learners to write, read and communicate easily

	Frequency	Percent
Agree	40	80.0
Disagree	10	20.0
Total	50	100.0



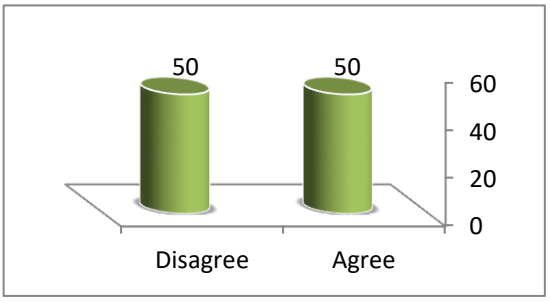
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It is clear from the above table that (20%) percent of the answers disagree, with the statement, whereas, (80%) of the majority of them agree that a full knowledge of English grammar can help EFL learners to write, read and communicate easily. Thus, this statement is accepted.

Table (7) Without any grammar we could manage to produce some Sort of elementary communication

	Frequency	Percent
Agree	25	50.0
Disagree	25	50.0
Total	50	100.0

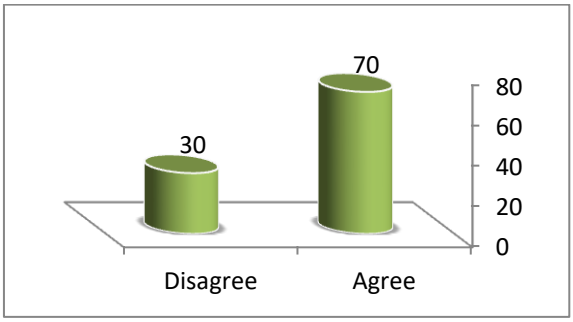


Source: Prepared by researcher, 2023.

It is noticed from the above table that the answers with agree are (50%) and the answers with disagree are (50%) they are equal. This means that some respondents agree with the statement, while, some of them disagree that without any grammar we could manage to produce some sort of elementary communication. So, this statement is accepted.

Table (8) As they learn their mother tongue, EFL learners acquire an intuitive understanding of grammar without realizing it

	Frequency	Percent
Agree	35	70.0
Disagree	15	30.0
Total	50	100.0



Source: Prepared by researcher, 2023.

The above table shows that (30%) of the respondents disagree with the statement, while, (70%) the majority of them agree that as they learn their mother tongue, EFL learners acquire an intuitive understanding of grammar without realizing it. Therefore, this statement is accepted.

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Conclusion

Good grammar knowledge enables you as a writer to understand what makes a piece of writing successful, so that it will capture both the interest and understanding of the readers, it helps you to know how to craft words into coherent sentences into paragraphs that successfully convey our meaning. Punctuation is an aspect of grammar that should never be underestimated. Correctly used, it can clarify meaning while, on the other hand, lack of use can cause ambiguity. Finally, a mastery of English grammar can provide EFL learners with strong command of the spoken and written language on the contrary English language will become meaningless fragmental peace without appropriate use of English grammar.

Findings of the Study: The study has the following findings:

1) English grammar is considered very necessary for the mastery of English language.
2) Most EFL learners find difficulties in learning English grammar.
3) English language will become meaningless without appropriate use of English grammar.
4) Mastery of English grammar provides EFL learners with strong command of the spoken and written language.

Recommendation of the Study: Based on findings the study recommended:

1) Both EFL teachers and learners should concentrate and give extra time for learning grammar for its importance in English language learning.
2) EFL teachers should help EFL learners to overcome the difficulties in learning English grammar.
3) EFL teachers should encourage students to pay attention to English grammar because English language will become meaningless without English grammar.
4) EFL learners should concentrate and be attentive to English grammar because it is very important for the mastery of English language.
5) EFL learners should at least understand some of the essential principles of English grammar because are required for a good a communication.

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