Summary of Chapter 1
Teaching Grammar in Second Language Classrooms

Changing Views of Grammar Teaching

- Grammar is **essential to language**, but how it should be taught has long been debated.
- Historically, teaching focused **mainly on grammar rules and structures**.

Traditional Grammar-Based Approaches

- **Grammar Translation Method**: explicit rule teaching, translation, memorization.
- **Audio-Lingual Method**: drills and repetition to build habits.
- Language taught **structure by structure**, often separate from real communication.

PPP Model (Presentation–Practice–Production)

- Very common teaching model.
- Steps: **present rule → controlled practice → freer production**.

Criticisms of Grammar-Based Teaching

- Learning rules **does not automatically lead to communication ability**.
- Language acquisition is **slow and developmental**, not linear.
- Practice alone **does not guarantee mastery**.

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

- Focus shifted toward **meaning, communication, and real-life language use**.
- Goal: develop **communicative competence**, not just grammatical accuracy.

Problems with Purely Communicative Approaches

- Students may gain **fluency but weak grammatical accuracy**.
- Exposure to communication **alone may not develop full grammar knowledge**.

Focus on Form (Modern View)

- Best approach: **combine communication with attention to grammar**.
- Grammar is addressed **within meaningful communication activities**.

Key Idea

- Effective teaching integrates:
  - **Meaning (communication)**
  - **Form (grammar)**
  - **Context and interaction**.

Recent Developments in Grammar Teaching

Research in second language acquisition began to show that **explicit grammar instruction can help learners**, especially when it supports communication rather than replacing it. Studies found that:

- Instruction can help learners **notice grammatical forms** in input.
- Teaching grammar can improve **accuracy and speed of acquisition**.
- Instruction is most effective when **combined with meaningful communication activities**.

Large reviews of research suggested that **form-focused instruction helps learners develop accuracy**, even though it may not completely change the natural order in which learners acquire structures.

Another key finding is that **explicit knowledge can support implicit learning**. For example:

- Learning rules can help learners **monitor their speech**.
- Producing language can help learners **notice gaps in their knowledge**.
- Interaction and output help learners **develop implicit knowledge over time**.

Because of this, modern research suggests learners need **both exposure and instruction**, including opportunities to:

- receive input
- practice language
- interact with others
- receive feedback.

Focus on Form (FonF)

To address the limitations of both traditional grammar teaching and purely communicative approaches, researchers proposed **Focus on Form (FonF)**.

Core Idea

Learners primarily focus on **meaning and communication**, but the teacher **briefly draws attention to grammar when needed**.

Grammar is therefore **integrated into communicative activities**, rather than taught in isolation.

Example:

- Students are doing a discussion task.
- A student says *"He go yesterday."*
- The teacher briefly highlights the past tense form.

This allows grammar to be **noticed within meaningful language use**.

Differences from Earlier Approaches

Focus on Forms (traditional grammar teaching):

- Teach grammar items one by one.
- Rules are the main focus.

Focus on Meaning (pure communication):

- Grammar is largely ignored.
- Emphasis on fluency.

Focus on Form:

- Communication remains central.
- Attention to grammar happens **when relevant during communication**.

Researchers argue that this approach better reflects **how language is actually learned**.

Current Views of Focus on Form

Researchers later expanded the concept of FonF and described **different ways it can occur in classrooms**.

Reactive Focus on Form

Grammar attention happens **in response to a problem during communication**.

Example:

- A student makes an error.
- The teacher gives feedback or reformulates the sentence.

This type is **spontaneous and brief**.

Proactive Focus on Form

The teacher **anticipates grammar problems** and plans activities to draw attention to them.

Example:

- A task designed to encourage use of past tense.
- Students communicate, but the task makes the structure noticeable.

Planned vs Incidental FonF

Researchers also distinguish between:

Planned FonF

- Teacher intentionally designs tasks to highlight certain forms.

Incidental FonF

- Grammar focus appears naturally during communication.

Both are considered useful.

Communicative Approaches Revisited

Modern communicative teaching now generally accepts that **grammar cannot be ignored**.

Even strong advocates of communicative language teaching recognize that:

- learners benefit from **explicit attention to form**
- grammar teaching should support **meaningful language use**

Research suggests that communicative teaching should integrate:

- **meaning-focused communication**

- **attention to grammatical form**
- **interaction and feedback**

Some communicative frameworks therefore include grammar awareness activities such as:

- noticing tasks
- consciousness-raising activities
- brief grammar explanations
- corrective feedback.

Task-Based Approaches Revisited

Task-based language teaching (TBLT) originally emphasized **communication tasks without grammar instruction**. However, newer views argue that:

- grammar focus should also be included within tasks.

Teachers may do this by:

- designing tasks that **naturally encourage certain grammar structures**
- providing **feedback during task performance**
- including **brief grammar work before or after tasks**

Researchers emphasize balancing three aspects of performance:

- **accuracy** – correct grammar
- **fluency** – smooth communication
- **complexity** – sophisticated language use.

Effective instruction should support **all three**.

Overall Modern View

The current consensus in language teaching research is:

- Grammar teaching **is necessary**.
- Grammar should **not be taught only as isolated rules**.
- The most effective approach integrates grammar with **meaningful communication**.

Good grammar instruction therefore combines:

- **communication tasks**
- **attention to form**
- **input, interaction, and feedback**
- **both explicit and implicit learning opportunities**.

Difference Between Focus on Form (FonF) and Focus on Forms (FonFs)

Focus on Forms (FonFs)

- Traditional grammar teaching approach
- Grammar **taught as separate items** (tenses, articles, prepositions, etc.)
- **Explicit explanation of rules**
- Practice often through **drills or exercises**
- Language taught **structure by structure**
- Communication is **not the main focus**

Example:
Teacher explains the **present perfect**, gives exercises, then students practice sentences.

Focus on Form (FonF)

- Grammar taught **within communicative activities**
- Primary focus is **meaning and communication**
- Teacher briefly **draws attention to grammar when it arises**
- Grammar attention is **short and integrated into tasks**

Example:
Students are discussing travel experiences.
A student says: *"I go to Japan last year."*
Teacher briefly highlights the past tense: *"Oh, you **went** to Japan last year?"*