

Teaching grammar using the PPP model

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Annotation. *This paper reviews the Presentation, Practice, Production (PPP) model in grammar instruction, evaluating its strengths, limitations, and adaptability in modern language classrooms. The PPP model is recognized for its structured approach to teaching grammatical forms, but it has been criticized for its rigid progression and overemphasis on form over communicative meaning. The paper explores how the PPP model can be modified to meet contemporary pedagogical needs, including integrating technology, enhancing communicative tasks, and fostering learner autonomy. By blending the PPP model with other teaching approaches, educators can create a more dynamic, communicative, and learner-centered framework for grammar teaching.*

Keywords: *PPP model, grammar teaching, communicative tasks, learner autonomy, language pedagogy, grammar acquisition, modern classrooms.*

Grammar teaching has been a fundamental aspect of second language acquisition (SLA) for decades, undergoing numerous changes in approach and methodology. Historically, the Grammar-Translation Method dominated language instruction, focusing on explicit rule learning and translation exercises (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). Although effective in imparting grammatical knowledge, this method faced criticism for its lack of emphasis on communicative competence and real-world language use (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). The rise of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in the late 20th century signaled a shift away from grammar-focused instruction, emphasizing fluency and meaningful interaction (Harmer, 2015). However, this shift often resulted in the marginalization of explicit grammar teaching, which led some researchers to argue that grammar remains a necessary component for developing accuracy alongside fluency (Ellis, 2006).

In this context, the Presentation-Practice-Production (PPP) model emerged as a structured approach to grammar instruction that seeks to balance the need for explicit teaching with opportunities for communicative practice. The PPP model involves three stages: Presentation, where the target grammar structure is introduced in a controlled context; Practice, where learners engage in drills and exercises to reinforce the rule; and Production, where learners use the structure in freer, communicative activities (Skehan, 1996). Despite being considered somewhat traditional, the PPP model remains widely used in language classrooms, particularly in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts, due to its clear structure and adaptability (Ur, 2012).

Origins and Theoretical Foundations of the PPP Model

The Presentation, Practice, Production (PPP) model, widely used in language teaching, has its roots in behaviorist and structuralist approaches to language learning. The PPP model was initially developed as part of the structural-situational teaching method, which gained popularity in the mid-20th century. It draws heavily on the idea that language learning follows a linear process, where learners move from understanding linguistic forms (presentation), to controlled practice of those forms (practice), and finally to independent production (production) (Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

Understanding the Three Phases of the PPP Model

The Presentation, Practice, Production (PPP) model is one of the most widely adopted approaches for teaching grammar and other language structures in foreign language classrooms. It provides a structured, step-by-step process that moves learners from being introduced to new language items, through controlled practice, to independent language use. The three distinct phases – *Presentation, Practice, and Production* – are designed to scaffold learning in a way that supports gradual mastery, ensuring that learners understand grammatical rules and can use them fluently in

real-life contexts (Harmer, 2007). This section explores each phase in detail, highlighting their significance and how they contribute to effective grammar instruction.

Presentation

The Presentation phase is the starting point of the PPP model, where new grammar points are introduced and explained to learners. This stage is typically teacher-centered, with the instructor playing a central role in delivering clear, concise explanations of grammatical rules and structures. The language item being taught, such as a specific tense, modal verb, or sentence structure, is presented in a controlled and contextually appropriate manner, often using examples or situations that learners can relate to (Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

In this phase, learners are not yet expected to produce the language actively; their role is primarily receptive. Teachers may use various tools, such as visual aids, real-life examples, or texts, to demonstrate the form and meaning of the language point. For example, in teaching the past simple tense, a teacher might use a timeline to show how the tense relates to past events, accompanied by model sentences such as, "Yesterday, I visited the museum." The goal is to give learners a clear understanding of both the form (structure) and function (usage) of the language (Thornbury, 1999).

The Presentation phase often draws on explicit instruction techniques, where the teacher provides clear explanations and examples, ensuring that learners comprehend the grammatical rules before moving on to more interactive stages. This approach aligns with cognitive theories of language acquisition, which emphasize the need for learners to first process and internalize new language items before they can use them (Anderson, 1983).

Practice

The Practice phase is where learners begin to apply the grammatical rule or structure they have been introduced to in the Presentation phase. This stage is typically more controlled and structured, with the teacher guiding learners through exercises designed to reinforce their understanding and promote accurate language use. Practice activities often include drills, fill-in-the-blank exercises, sentence transformations, or controlled dialogues, all of which focus on getting learners to use the new grammar point correctly (Ellis, 2006).

This phase emphasizes accuracy over fluency, aiming to help learners build confidence with the new language item. The activities are designed to minimize errors by providing clear models and controlled contexts in which learners can practice. For example, when practicing the past simple tense, learners might be given a set of sentences with missing verbs, and their task is to fill in the correct past form (e.g., "Yesterday, I ___ (visit) the museum"). The repetitive nature of these tasks reflects the behaviorist influence on the PPP model, where habit formation through repetition is seen as key to mastering language (Skinner, 1957).

Despite its controlled nature, the Practice phase also allows for some variation in activities, moving from more mechanical drills to semi-structured tasks. This gradual increase in complexity prepares learners for the next phase, where they will use the language more freely and creatively. Effective practice is essential for solidifying grammatical knowledge and ensuring learners are ready to move on to independent language production (Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

Production

The final phase of the PPP model, Production, is where learners are given the opportunity to use the new language item more freely in communication. This phase shifts the focus from accuracy to fluency, allowing learners to produce language in more spontaneous and less controlled contexts. At this point, learners are expected to internalize the grammatical rule and apply it in real-life scenarios, such as role-plays, group discussions, or writing tasks (Willis & Willis, 2007).

Unlike the controlled nature of the Practice phase, Production activities encourage learners to integrate the newly learned grammar into their active language use. For example, after learning and practicing the past simple tense, learners might engage in a role-play where they describe what they did over the weekend, or write a short story about a past event. The Production phase is often

communicative in nature, requiring learners to focus on meaning rather than form, which aligns with the principles of communicative language teaching (CLT) (Skehan, 1996).

This phase is crucial because it bridges the gap between classroom practice and real-world language use. By encouraging learners to use grammar in authentic communicative tasks, the Production phase helps to develop fluency and ensure that learners can apply their grammatical knowledge in varied contexts. The feedback provided by teachers in this phase is often less focused on immediate correction, instead emphasizing successful communication and meaning-making.

Conclusion

The Presentation, Practice, Production (PPP) model has remained a foundational approach to teaching grammar in language instruction for several decades. Its structured methodology and clear progression from form-focused learning to communicative practice make it an appealing choice for language teachers, especially in contexts where explicit grammar teaching is a priority. This section discusses the pedagogical rationale for the PPP model, highlighting its advantages for both learners and teachers in grammar instruction.

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