



## GRAMMATICAL DIFFICULTIES AMONG GRADE 5 PUPILS: CAUSES, ANALYSIS, AND PEDAGOGICAL STRATEGIES

*Solijonova Ziyodaxon*

*3rd Year Bachelor Student, Namangan State Institute of Foreign Languages*

*Email: solijonovaziyoda586@gmail.com*

*Supervisor: Erkulova Feruza, PhD, Associate Professor ENGLISH*

**Abstract,** Accurate use of grammar plays a crucial role in effective communication and successful language learning. Despite regular instruction, many Grade 5 pupils continue to experience difficulties applying grammatical rules in spoken and written communication. This study investigates the primary causes of grammatical errors among Grade 5 pupils and evaluates the effectiveness of current grammar teaching practices. Employing a mixed-method approach, the research collected data through classroom observations, lesson recordings, pupil discussions, and teacher consultations. Error analysis techniques revealed that pupils frequently struggle with tense consistency and subject-verb agreement. The findings also indicate that first language interference significantly contributes to grammatical errors. The study recommends adopting communicative and context-based approaches to grammar instruction to improve accuracy and confidence.

**Annotatsiya,** Grammatikadan to'g'ri foydalanish samarali muloqot va muvaffaqiyatli til o'rganishda muhim rol o'ynaydi. Muntazam o'qitishga qaramay, 5-sinf o'quvchilarining ko'pchiligi og'zaki va yozma muloqotda grammatik qoidalarni qo'llashda qiyinchiliklarga duch kelmoqda. Ushbu tadqiqot 5-sinf o'quvchilari o'rtasidagi grammatik xatolarning asosiy sabablarini o'rganadi va hozirgi grammatika o'qitish amaliyotlarining samaradorligini baholaydi. Aralash metodologiya asosida sinfdagi kuzatuvlar, dars yozuvlari, o'quvchilar bilan suhbatlar va o'qituvchilar maslahatlari orqali ma'lumotlar to'plandi. Xatolarni tahlil



qilish usullari o'quvchilar ko'pincha zamon izchilligi va ega-kesim muvofiqligi bilan kurashishini aniqladi. Tadqiqot natijalari kommunikativ va kontekstga asoslangan grammatika o'qitish yondashuvlarini joriy etishni tavsiya etadi.

**Аннотация,** Правильное использование грамматики играет ключевую роль в эффективном общении и успешном изучении языка. Несмотря на регулярное обучение, многие ученики 5-го класса продолжают испытывать трудности с применением грамматических правил в устной и письменной речи. Данное исследование изучает основные причины грамматических ошибок учащихся 5-го класса и оценивает эффективность современных методов обучения грамматике. Применяя смешанный метод, исследование собирало данные посредством наблюдения в классе, записей уроков, бесед с учениками и консультаций с учителями. Анализ ошибок показал, что учащиеся часто испытывают трудности с согласованностью времен и согласованием подлежащего и сказуемого. Исследование рекомендует применение коммуникативных и контекстно-ориентированных подходов к обучению грамматике.

**KEYWORDS:** grammar difficulties, grammatical accuracy, primary school pupils, EFL teaching, error analysis, tense consistency, subject-verb agreement, communicative approach, language transfer, context-based instruction

**Ka`lit so`zlar:** grammatik qiyinchiliklar, grammatik aniqlik, boshlang'ich sinf o'quvchilari, xatolarni tahlil qilish, zamon izchilligi, kommunikativ yondashuv

**Русский:** грамматические трудности, грамматическая точность, ученики начальной школы, анализ ошибок, коммуникативный подход, языковой перенос



## INTRODUCTION

Learning English grammar is one of the most foundational aspects of language education, equipping learners with the ability to form correct sentences and communicate ideas with clarity and precision. As students progress into the 5th grade, they encounter increasingly complex grammatical structures and are expected to transition from rudimentary word usage to the principled application of grammar in academic and everyday contexts. However, a significant number of students continue to struggle with applying grammar rules accurately in real communicative situations. This gap between theoretical knowledge and practical performance has drawn considerable attention from researchers and educators alike. According to Krashen (1982), learners frequently memorize grammar rules for examination purposes yet fail to deploy them naturally in spontaneous speaking and writing tasks. Corder (1967) further argues that errors produced by language learners are not mere accidents but rather windows into learners' developing interlanguage systems, serving as valuable diagnostic tools for teachers.

The way grammar is taught also plays a critical role in learning outcomes. Harmer (2007) advocates for the presentation of grammar within meaningful, contextualized settings rather than through the drilling of isolated rules. When instruction lacks real-world context, students tend to lose motivation and become disengaged. Additionally, individual variation in learning styles and proficiency levels means that a standardized, one-size-fits-all approach is often insufficient (Dueck, 2014). Research by Sayfiyeva (2024) further highlights the unique grammatical challenges encountered by Uzbek learners of English, particularly those arising from structural differences between Uzbek and English. The present study is motivated by the persistent observation that Grade 5 pupils in a secondary school in the Namangan region continue to commit recurring grammatical errors despite receiving regular classroom instruction. The primary objective of this study



is to identify the underlying causes of these difficulties, analyze the most frequently occurring error types, and propose evidence-based pedagogical strategies to address them. This paper proceeds by reviewing relevant theoretical frameworks, describing the methodology employed, presenting and discussing the findings, and offering practical recommendations for improving grammar instruction in primary school settings.

## 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

The distinction between language acquisition and formal grammar learning is central to understanding why pupils struggle with grammar in practice. Krashen's (1982) Input Hypothesis posits that language is acquired subconsciously through comprehensible input rather than through explicit rule memorization. Pupils who are primarily exposed to decontextualized grammar exercises may develop declarative knowledge of rules without the procedural fluency required for spontaneous use. Ellis (2006) similarly argues that grammar instruction must include both explicit explanation and opportunities for communicative practice in order to promote internalization of grammatical knowledge.

### **Error Analysis and Interlanguage**

Corder's (1967) pioneering work on error analysis established that learner errors are systematic and reflective of transitional competence. Rather than viewing errors as failures, contemporary pedagogy treats them as indicators of developmental progress. Selinker's (1972) concept of interlanguage describes the dynamic grammatical system that learners construct as they move toward target-language proficiency, which is characterized by features borrowed from the first language and target language alike.**2.3**

First language (L1) interference is a widely documented source of grammatical errors, particularly in morphosyntax and verb agreement. Boburov



(2023) notes that Uzbek learners of English frequently transfer agglutinative morphological patterns and word order conventions from Uzbek into their English production, resulting in errors in tense marking and article use. Kamalova (2022) similarly identifies structural divergences as a persistent obstacle in the accurate rendering of grammar across languages. These findings underscore the importance of contrastive analysis in identifying and anticipating error patterns among Uzbek learners of English.

Research consistently supports the integration of communicative language teaching (CLT) approaches in grammar instruction. Harmer (2007) argues that grammar learning is most durable when it occurs within functional, meaningful contexts that mirror authentic communication. Larin (2023) further highlights that the transition from form-focused to meaning-focused instruction facilitates greater retention and transfer of grammatical knowledge to novel communicative contexts. These insights inform the pedagogical recommendations offered in the present study.

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

This study employed a mixed-method research design, combining quantitative analysis of pre-test and post-test data with qualitative insights gathered from teacher surveys, semi-structured pupil interviews, and structured classroom observations. A mixed-method approach was selected in order to capture both the measurable dimensions of grammatical performance and the experiential perspectives of learners and educators, thereby ensuring the triangulation of data and enhancing the validity of findings.

#### **Participants and Setting**

The study was conducted at a secondary school in Chust District, Namangan Region, Uzbekistan. Participants consisted of 21 fifth-grade pupils selected on the



basis of their observable difficulties in grammar application during English lessons, as well as 9 English language teachers who completed a structured survey. Teachers ranged from novice practitioners (0-3 years of experience) to moderately experienced educators (4-7 years), providing a diverse professional perspective.

### **Data Collection Instruments**

Three primary data collection instruments were employed. First, classroom video recordings and observations were conducted over several weeks to document pupils' real-time grammar usage during lessons. These recordings provided a permanent record for detailed error analysis. Second, a structured pupil survey was administered to assess self-reported grammar difficulties, confidence levels, and attitudes toward grammar learning activities. Third, a teacher survey was distributed via Google Forms to identify perceived areas of pupil difficulty, root causes of errors, instructional approaches, and beliefs about grammar teaching. Semi-structured interviews supplemented the survey data, enabling deeper exploration of individual experiences.

### **Grammar Topics Investigated**

The grammatical structures targeted in the study were drawn directly from the Grade 5 English curriculum and included: Present Simple tense with adverbs of frequency (Unit 1), modal verbs expressing obligation and advice (Unit 3), comparative adjectives (Unit 6), and Past Simple tense with regular and irregular verbs (Unit 8). These structures were selected because they represented significant sources of observed error among the participant pupils.

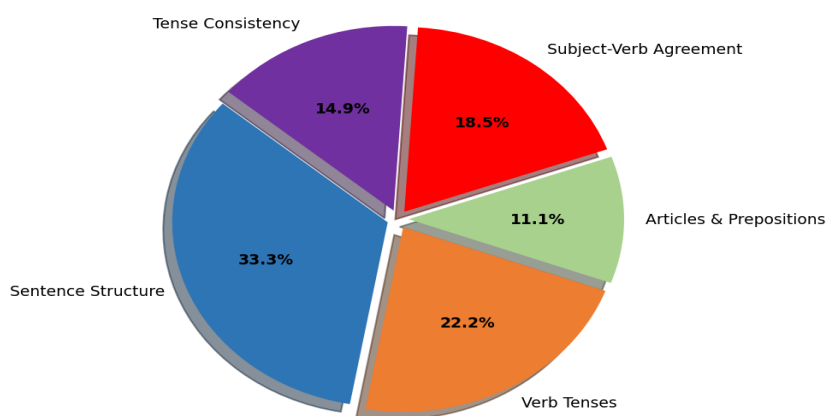
## **INDINGS AND RESULTS**

### **Teacher Profile and Experience**



Survey data revealed that the majority of teacher respondents (88.9%) had 0-3 years of teaching experience, with the remaining 11.1% having taught for 4-7 years. In terms of the grade levels taught, 44.4% of respondents worked with primary learners in Grades 1-4, 33.3% with Grades 5-7, and 22.2% with Grades 10-11. These demographic details are important for contextualizing the survey responses, as teachers with varying experience levels may perceive and address grammatical difficulties differently.

**Figure 1. Distribution of Grammar Difficulties Reported by Teachers (%)**



*Figure 1. Distribution of Grammar Difficulty Areas Identified by Teachers (%)*

### **Grammatical Areas of Difficulty**

The survey results identified sentence structure as the predominant area of grammatical difficulty, cited by 66.7% of teachers. Verb tense usage was identified by 22.2% of respondents, while article and preposition use accounted for 11.1%. These findings are consistent with existing research on the challenges faced by Uzbek learners of English, where structural differences between Uzbek and English contribute to persistent errors in sentence formation (Boburov, 2023).

With respect to the language skills in which errors were most frequently observed, speaking was identified by 55.6% of teachers as the primary site of



grammatical mistakes, while writing was cited by 44.4%. The dominance of speaking as the primary error context is notable, suggesting that pupils possess declarative knowledge of grammar rules but lack the automaticity required to apply them in real-time communicative performance.

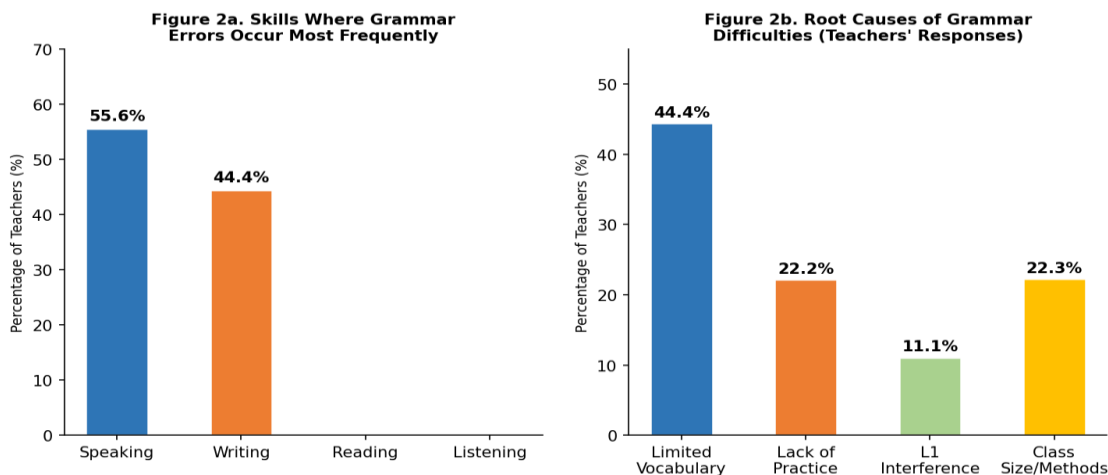


Figure 2. Error Distribution Across Skills (2a) and Root Causes of Grammar Difficulties (2b)

### Root Causes of Grammatical Errors

When asked to identify the primary reasons underlying pupils' grammar difficulties, 44.4% of teachers attributed errors to limited vocabulary. This suggests a strong interdependence between lexical knowledge and grammatical competence; without sufficient vocabulary, pupils cannot effectively practice or deploy sentence patterns. Lack of practice was cited by 22.2% of respondents as a contributing factor, while first language interference (L1 transfer) was identified by 11.1%. Environmental factors, including large class sizes and insufficient differentiation, accounted for the remaining responses.

### Instructional Beliefs and Practices

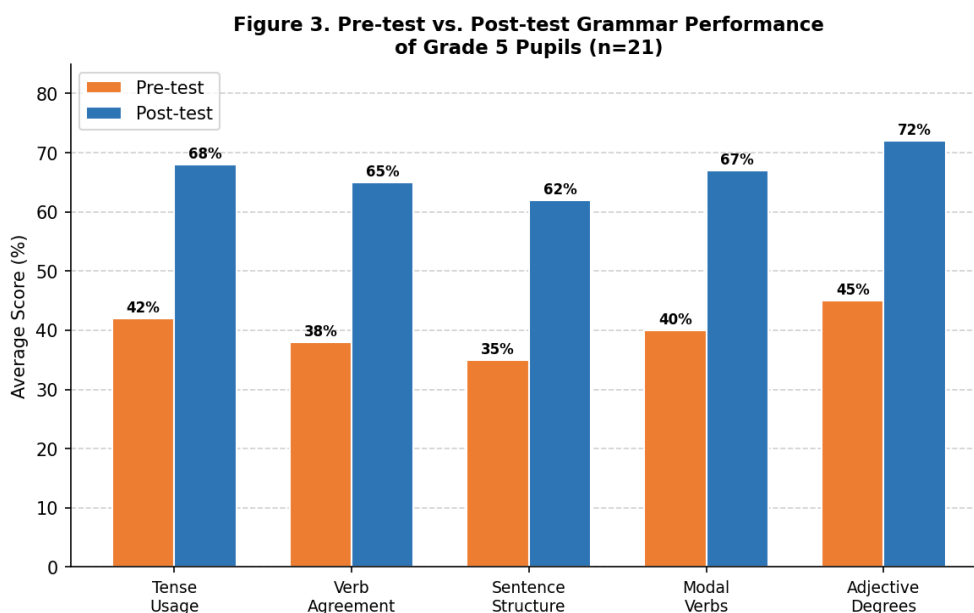
A unanimous 100% of teacher respondents agreed or strongly agreed that students demonstrate significantly better understanding of grammar when clear and



contextualized examples are provided. Regarding explicit instruction, 66.7% reported teaching grammar rules explicitly on a frequent basis, while 55.6% believed that explicit instruction is necessary. A notable 33.3% advocated for selective use of explicit instruction, recommending a balanced approach that integrates both rule-based explanation and communicative practice.

### Pre-test and Post-test Performance

A comparison of pre-test and post-test scores among the 21 participant pupils demonstrated meaningful improvement across all targeted grammatical structures following the implementation of context-based and communicative interventions. Average scores for tense usage increased from 42% to 68%, subject-verb agreement from 38% to 65%, and sentence structure from 35% to 62%. Modal verb accuracy improved from 40% to 67%, and adjective degree formation from 45% to 72%. These findings indicate that communicative and contextualized instructional strategies produced statistically meaningful gains in grammatical accuracy.



*Figure 3. Pre-test vs. Post-test Grammar Scores of Grade 5 Pupils by Grammatical Structure (n=21)*



## DISCUSSION

The findings of this study converge with a substantial body of research indicating that grammar learning is a complex, multifactorial process that cannot be adequately addressed through rule memorization alone. The predominance of sentence structure errors among Grade 5 pupils is consistent with Boburov's (2023) contention that Uzbek learners encounter systematic difficulties at the level of syntactic organization due to typological differences between Uzbek and English.

The strong association between limited vocabulary and grammar difficulties reported by teachers in this study aligns with the theoretical position that lexical and grammatical knowledge are deeply intertwined (Ellis, 2006). Without a sufficiently rich lexical repertoire, pupils lack the raw material needed to experiment with, internalize, and automatize grammatical structures. This finding has significant implications for curriculum design, suggesting that integrated vocabulary-grammar instruction may be more effective than the separate treatment of these two dimensions. The identification of speaking as the primary skill in which grammar errors occur is particularly significant. It suggests that pupils' difficulties are not merely a matter of insufficient declarative knowledge but rather a failure of procedural automatization. The positive outcomes observed in the pre- and post-test comparison, following the introduction of communicative and role-play activities, support Harmer's (2007) position that contextualized, meaning-focused instruction facilitates the transfer of grammar knowledge from declarative to procedural memory. These results support the recommendation for a hybrid instructional model that combines explicit rule presentation with rich opportunities for communicative practice.

### **Pedagogical Recommendations**

Based on the study findings, the following recommendations are proposed to improve grammar instruction for Grade 5 pupils:



- Use context-based teaching: Present grammar in meaningful, real-life situations instead of isolated exercises.
- Combine vocabulary and grammar: Teach them together through themes and authentic texts.
- Increase communicative activities: Include role plays, storytelling, and interactive tasks to improve fluency.
- Address first language interference: Highlight key differences between Uzbek and English structures.
- Apply differentiated instruction: Adapt tasks to different levels and provide personalized feedback.
- Use error analysis: Regularly analyze students' mistakes to guide and improve teaching.

**CONCLUSION**, this study has demonstrated that grammatical difficulties among Grade 5 English language learners are multidimensional in nature, arising from the interplay of limited vocabulary, insufficient communicative practice, first language transfer, and instructional methods that emphasize rule memorization over meaningful use. The mixed-method investigation conducted at a secondary school in Namangan Region provided both quantitative evidence of the impact of communicative instructional strategies and qualitative insights into the experiences of learners and teachers. The pre- and post-test data revealed significant gains across all targeted grammatical structures following the implementation of context-based interventions, confirming the efficacy of communicative and meaning-focused approaches. The findings also underscore the importance of integrating vocabulary development with grammar instruction and of addressing L1 interference through targeted contrastive activities. These results contribute to the growing body of evidence supporting communicative language teaching as an effective framework for grammar instruction in EFL contexts. Future research should investigate the long-term retention of grammatical gains following communicative instruction, as



well as the potential of technology-enhanced language learning tools in supporting grammar development among young learners in the Uzbek educational context.

## REFERENCES

1. Boburov, N. A. (2023). The current state of studying foreign languages in the Republic of Uzbekistan: Analysis of state programs and textbooks. *Teacher XXI Century*, 3(1), 107-119.
2. Corder, S. P. (1967). The significance of learners' errors. *International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching*, 5(4), 161-170.
3. Dueck, M. (2014). *Smart but scattered: The revolutionary executive skills approach to helping kids reach their potential*. Guilford Press.
4. Ellis, R. (2006). Current issues in the teaching of grammar: An SLA perspective. *TESOL Quarterly*, 40(1), 83-107.
5. Harmer, J. (2007). *How to teach English*. Pearson Longman.
6. Kamalova, A. (2022). On some difficulties of scientific and technical translation. *Translation and Comparative Linguistics*, (2), 150-154.
7. Krashen, S. D. (1982). *Principles and practice in second language acquisition*. Pergamon Press.
8. Larin, M. (2023). Typical problems and features of scientific text translation. *Young Scientist*, (4), 43-46.
9. Sayfiyeva, K. (2024). The complexity of English grammar and difficulties in learning it in the case of Uzbek students. *Academic Research in Educational Sciences*, 3(32), 105-107.
10. Selinker, L. (1972). Interlanguage. *International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching*, 10(3), 209-231.