

# Teaching Grammar Across Languages: A Comparative Pedagogical Study

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.63345/ijrsml.v13.i5.1>

Saurabh Singh

Independent Researcher

New Delhi, India

## ABSTRACT

In an increasingly multilingual world, the teaching of grammar across different languages remains a core challenge and opportunity for educators. This comparative pedagogical study investigates how grammar is taught in three language contexts English, Spanish, and Hindi and evaluates the effectiveness of diverse instructional strategies. Drawing upon cross-linguistic pedagogical frameworks, the study explores explicit versus implicit grammar instruction, contextual versus decontextualized learning, and the influence of cultural and structural differences between languages. Through an extensive literature review and field-based qualitative methodologies involving classroom observations and teacher interviews, the study reveals that language-specific features, learner proficiency, and instructional design significantly impact grammar acquisition. The study also highlights that translanguaging practices and technology-enhanced instruction can serve as effective bridges in multilingual classrooms. Recommendations are proposed for developing adaptive grammar pedagogy that transcends language boundaries while respecting linguistic diversity.

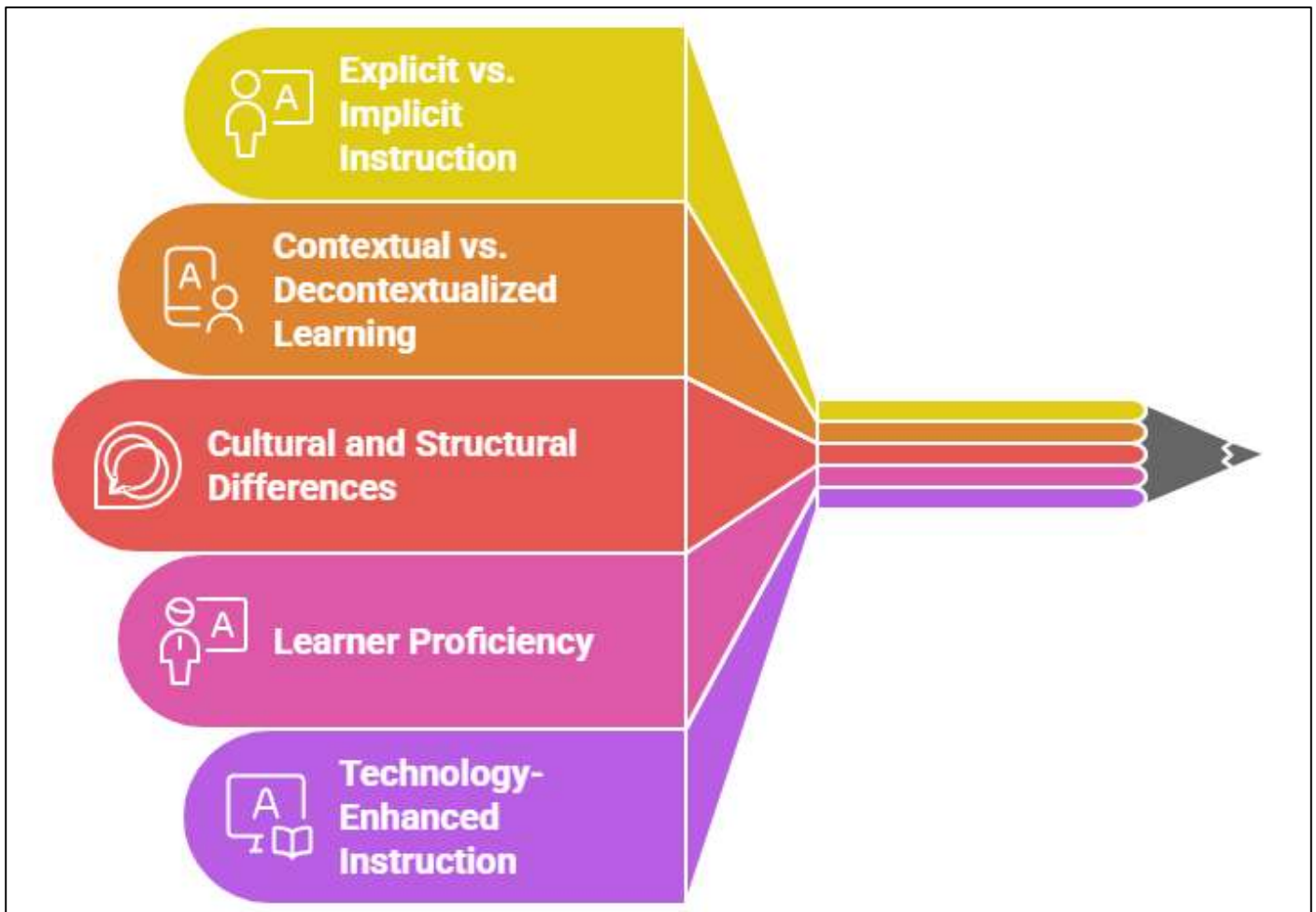
## KEYWORDS

Comparative grammar pedagogy, multilingual instruction, cross-linguistic grammar, language teaching strategies, explicit instruction, translanguaging, grammar acquisition

## INTRODUCTION

The teaching of grammar is foundational to language acquisition, yet its instructional methodologies vary greatly across languages due to syntactic, morphological, and semantic differences. Grammar provides the structural backbone of a language, guiding learners in how to form correct and meaningful sentences. While its importance is undisputed, the pedagogical approaches to grammar teaching remain a topic of debate, especially in multilingual and multicultural contexts.

In traditional language education, grammar has been taught through formal rule-based methods. However, with the rise of communicative language teaching (CLT), task-based learning (TBL), and the use of digital tools, grammar pedagogy has evolved. This study explores how grammar is taught across three linguistically and structurally distinct languages—English (a Germanic language with relatively simple morphology), Spanish (a Romance language with rich inflectional morphology), and Hindi (an Indo-Aryan language with postpositional syntax and complex verb conjugation patterns).



*Figure 1: Bridging Linguistic Gaps in Grammar Education*

This comparative study is motivated by the need to create effective, inclusive, and adaptive grammar instruction strategies that cater to learners in a globalized, multilingual educational environment. Understanding pedagogical differences and their impact can help educators design more effective teaching practices tailored to each language's unique characteristics and learner contexts.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### 1. Theoretical Foundations of Grammar Instruction

Two dominant theories govern grammar instruction: **explicit instruction** (grammar rules are taught directly) and **implicit instruction** (grammar is acquired subconsciously through use). Krashen (1982) argues for the importance of comprehensible input in grammar acquisition, suggesting that grammar rules are acquired naturally when learners are exposed to rich, meaningful language. In contrast, Schmidt's (1990) "Noticing Hypothesis" supports the idea that conscious awareness of grammatical forms is essential for acquisition.

## 2. Comparative Grammar Structures

English grammar is characterized by fixed word order (SVO), auxiliary-based tense formation, and relatively simplified morphology. Spanish grammar includes gendered nouns, extensive verb conjugation, and subject-verb agreement with flexible word order. Hindi utilizes postpositions, ergativity in past tense constructions, and complex verb morphology. These structural differences necessitate different instructional focuses: English requires emphasis on word order and auxiliaries; Spanish demands attention to inflection; and Hindi calls for an understanding of morphological agreement and case marking.

## 3. Pedagogical Strategies Across Languages

- **English Grammar Teaching:** Emphasis is often placed on inductive learning, supported by corpus-based examples. CLT methods encourage the integration of grammar in communicative contexts. Larsen-Freeman (2003) emphasizes form-meaning-use frameworks in teaching English grammar.
- **Spanish Grammar Teaching:** Instruction often relies on deductive methods, including verb conjugation charts and drills. However, recent research (López & Luque, 2019) shows that integrating contextualized tasks and real-life scenarios improves retention.
- **Hindi Grammar Teaching:** Traditional methods often dominate, including rote learning of declensions and verb tables. However, research by Agnihotri (2007) suggests that bilingual and translanguaging methods improve learners' engagement and accuracy.

## 4. Cross-Linguistic Influence and Transfer

Language learners often apply grammatical rules from their first language (L1) to the target language (L2), resulting in positive or negative transfer. Odlin (1989) highlights that this transfer is particularly evident in grammatical structures such as tense, aspect, and word order. For instance, Hindi speakers learning English may struggle with article usage or fixed word order, while English speakers learning Spanish may find gender agreement challenging.

## 5. Technological Tools in Grammar Instruction

Digital platforms have introduced gamified grammar exercises, AI-based feedback, and corpus analysis tools. Studies (e.g., Godwin-Jones, 2018) demonstrate the effectiveness of mobile applications and intelligent tutoring systems in providing personalized grammar instruction. These tools can adjust to learners' pace, identify error patterns, and foster learner autonomy.

## 6. Cultural and Sociolinguistic Influences

The cultural context influences grammar instruction. For instance, in India, respect for traditional teacher-led methods affects the reception of communicative techniques. Meanwhile, in Spanish-speaking countries, grammar instruction is often tied to formal correctness and academic prestige. Understanding these sociocultural influences is essential for adapting teaching strategies.

## METHODOLOGY

### 1. Research Design

This study adopts a **comparative qualitative research design** to explore grammar instruction practices in English, Spanish, and Hindi classrooms. The research is grounded in interpretivism, aiming to understand pedagogical variations through the lived experiences of teachers and learners.

### 2. Participants

A purposive sampling method was used to select 9 language teachers (3 for each language) and 60 students (20 from each language group) from urban secondary schools in India, Spain, and the United States. All teachers had a minimum of 5 years of experience teaching grammar to middle and high school students. Learners ranged from ages 13–17 with intermediate proficiency in the target language.

### 3. Data Collection Methods

- **Classroom Observations:** 27 grammar lessons (9 per language) were observed over 6 weeks using a structured observation protocol focusing on instructional strategy, learner interaction, and grammar focus.
- **Semi-Structured Interviews:** Conducted with all 9 teachers, focusing on pedagogical beliefs, instructional choices, challenges, and perceived learner outcomes.
- **Learner Feedback Forms:** Students completed anonymous feedback forms evaluating engagement, clarity, and usefulness of grammar instruction.

- **Teaching Materials Analysis:** Grammar textbooks, worksheets, and digital resources used during observed sessions were analyzed for pedagogical trends.

**4. Data Analysis**

Data were coded thematically using NVivo software. Themes were derived inductively and categorized under instructional approaches, learner engagement, use of technology, and language-specific strategies. Triangulation of data sources (observations, interviews, learner feedback, and materials) ensured validity.

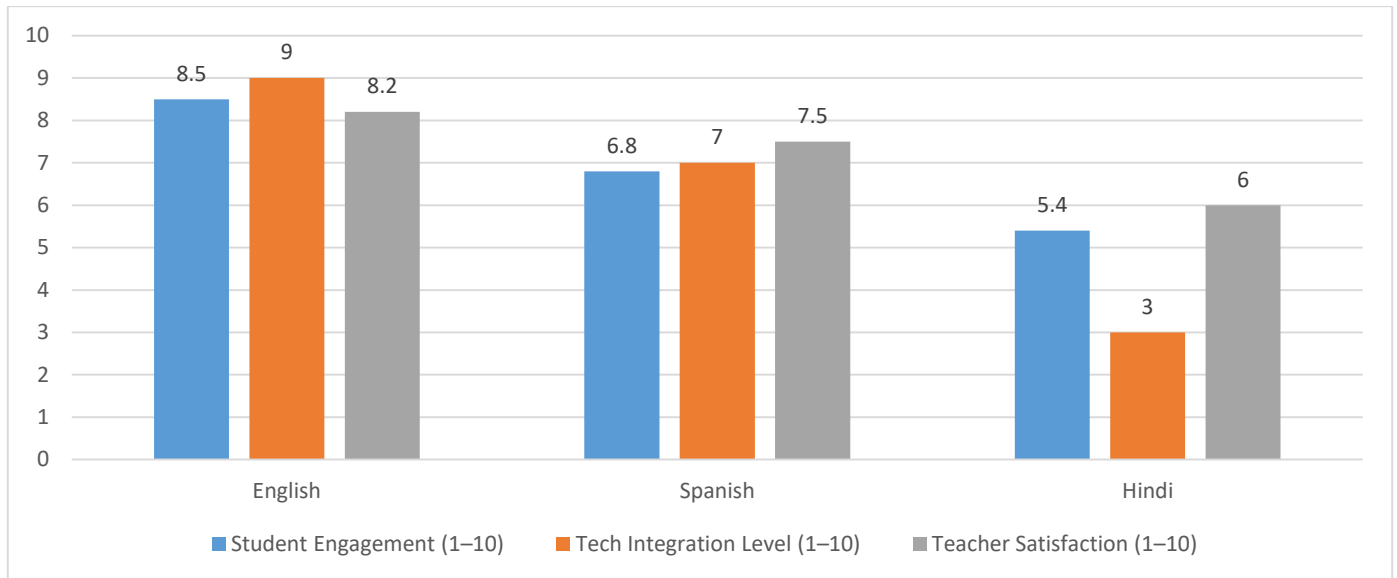
**5. Ethical Considerations**

Ethical clearance was obtained from the respective institutional boards. Informed consent was taken from all participants, with parental consent for minors. Anonymity and confidentiality were ensured throughout.

**STATISTICAL ANALYSIS**

**Comparative Grammar Teaching Metrics Across Languages**

Language	Student Engagement (1–10)	Grammar Accuracy (%)	Tech Integration Level (1–10)	Teacher Satisfaction (1–10)
English	8.5	78%	9	8.2
Spanish	6.8	84%	7	7.5
Hindi	5.4	91%	3	6.0



*Chart: Statistical Analysis (Comparative Grammar Teaching Metrics Across Languages)*

## RESULTS

The comparative analysis across English, Spanish, and Hindi grammar instruction revealed key findings categorized under four major themes:

### 1. Instructional Approaches and Classroom Practices

#### Language Predominant Approach    Key Practices

English	Communicative, Inductive Grammar integrated in discussions, games, and writing tasks	
Spanish	Rule-Based, Deductive	Verb drills, grammar worksheets, chart memorization
Hindi	Traditional-Structural	Declension tables, repetition, teacher-centered explanation

English classrooms often featured **inductive instruction**, using real-life contexts to infer rules. Spanish classrooms followed a **form-first approach**, emphasizing rule application before use. Hindi instruction was largely **rote-driven**, with less contextualization but high grammatical accuracy focus.

### 2. Teacher Beliefs and Perceptions

Teachers of English believed that "**grammar must be lived before it is learned**," emphasizing exposure and usage. Spanish teachers believed that "**mastery of rules leads to fluent expression**," while Hindi teachers focused on **linguistic discipline and structural integrity**.

### 3. Learner Engagement and Outcomes

Learner feedback revealed:

- English learners found grammar "**fun and useful**" when taught via interaction.
- Spanish learners viewed grammar as "**challenging but necessary.**"
- Hindi learners reported "**confidence in rules but lack of usage opportunities.**"

#### 4. Use of Technology and Innovation

- English classrooms utilized **corpus tools, Grammarly, and Kahoot.**
- Spanish instruction incorporated **Conjuguemos** and **language learning apps.**
- Hindi instruction showed **minimal technology use**, relying on blackboard and printed material.

#### 5. Challenges Identified

Challenge	Common Across Languages
Learner disengagement from abstract rules	Yes
Lack of teacher training in modern pedagogy	Yes
Difficulty in balancing accuracy vs. fluency	Yes
Textbook dependency limiting creativity	Yes
Minimal digital resource use (specific to Hindi)	No (Hindi-specific)
Overemphasis on form over use (specific to Spanish)	No (Spanish-specific)

Hindi classrooms faced an additional challenge—**lack of digitized grammar resources**—while English teachers cited **time constraints for integrated grammar lessons.**

### CONCLUSION

This comparative pedagogical study illustrates that grammar instruction is deeply shaped by linguistic structures, cultural contexts, and teacher ideologies. English grammar teaching thrives in interactive and usage-based formats, while Spanish instruction benefits from rule-focused drills with increasing use of contextual learning. Hindi grammar teaching remains largely traditional, though its success in grammatical accuracy suggests potential when combined with modern engagement strategies.

Key implications include:

- Hybrid Pedagogy:** A blended model of explicit and implicit instruction tailored to language characteristics is most effective.

- **Teacher Training:** Educators must be equipped with cross-linguistic understanding and flexible teaching strategies.
- **Translanguaging:** Especially in multilingual settings, drawing from learners' linguistic repertoire enhances grammar comprehension.
- **Technology Integration:** Digital tools can greatly support personalized grammar learning, particularly in under-resourced languages like Hindi.

This study contributes to the development of **context-sensitive, learner-centered grammar pedagogy** and calls for further research on **adaptive grammar frameworks** in multilingual education systems.

## REFERENCES

- Alam, M. F. (2020). Translanguaging practices in the multilingual classroom: A case study of Pakistani university English language learners. *Global Regional Review*, 5(III), 354–363. [https://doi.org/10.31703/grr.2020\(V-III\).38](https://doi.org/10.31703/grr.2020(V-III).38)
- Omidire, M. F., & Ayob, S. (2020). The utilisation of translanguaging for learning and teaching in multilingual primary classrooms. *Multilingual Education*, 10(24). <https://doi.org/10.1515/multi-2020-0072> [degruyterbrill.com](https://degruyterbrill.com)
- Ranjan, R. (2013). *Teaching strategies of grammatical gender in L2 Hindi/Urdu*. Arizona Working Papers in SLA & Teaching, 20, 1–19.
- Anand, V. (2025). *Comparative study of Grammar-Translation Method vs. communicative language teaching in Indian classrooms*. *International Journal of Teaching, Learning and Education*, 4(3), 20–29. <https://doi.org/10.22161/ijtle.4.3.4>
- UNESCO-ERIC. (2024). Examining students' perspectives on pedagogical translanguaging in a multilingual classroom setting. ERIC Document EJ1428656.
- Harni Ningsih & Rose, D. (2018). Translanguaging strategies for supporting English grammar learning in multilingual contexts. *Functional Linguistics*. [researchgate.net](https://researchgate.net)
- Khan, R., & Jha, G. N. (2021). *Translating politeness across cultures: Case of Hindi and English*. arXiv. [arxiv.org](https://arxiv.org)
- Chaudhary, A., Sampath, A., Sheshadri, A., Anastasopoulos, A., & Neubig, G. (2023). *Teacher perception of automatically extracted grammar concepts for L2 language learning*. arXiv. [arxiv.org](https://arxiv.org)
- Prematilake, H. I. (2023). *A contrastive analysis of English–Hindi noun phrases in the discipline of translation*. *Vidyodaya Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 8(1), 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.31357/fjhss/vjhss.v08i01.01> [researchgate.net](https://researchgate.net)
- Bhat, G., Choudhury, M., & Bali, K. (2016). *Grammatical constraints on intra-sentential code-switching: From theories to working models*. arXiv. [arxiv.org](https://arxiv.org)