

Grammar Didactics through Ahmed Iskandar's How to Master Grammar: A Descriptive and Critical Study

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Abstract:

The Arabic language learning process depends heavily on grammar because it enables students to use the language properly in various communication situations. The teaching of grammar faces multiple obstacles which result from two main factors that include the uninteresting and theoretical aspects of grammar and the traditional teaching methods that focus on memorization instead of practical application. Students turn to additional textbooks because they need help learning grammar rules and using them in everyday situations. The present research investigates *How to Master Grammar* by Ahmad Iskandar as a modern educational resource which simplifies and makes Arabic grammar accessible to students. The research aims to analyze how this book supports grammar education while studying the teaching principles and methods used by the author and evaluating its main advantages and disadvantages. The research applies a descriptive-analytical method to present an unbiased summary of the book content while conducting an educational review of its teaching elements. The research demonstrates that the book follows multiple educational principles through its step-by-step approach and interconnected structure and functional design and its use of different teaching methods which include a modified deductive system and mind maps and tables to explain grammatical concepts. The material benefits from its use of basic vocabulary which students already know and its exercises that show how to use the words in real situations. The program shows three main weaknesses which include limited productive exercises and repetitive lesson patterns and restricted practical activity options.

Keywords: Grammar; Grammar Pedagogy; Educational Foundations, Strengths, Weaknesses.

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1. Introduction:

Grammar is considered one of the most challenging linguistic areas to teach across various educational stages. This difficulty arises from multiple factors related either to the content presented or to the methods of instruction themselves. Consequently, learners often turn to supplementary grammar books to simplify and facilitate their understanding of grammatical concepts. Among such works is *How to Master Grammar* by Ahmed Iskandar, which will be examined in this article to address the central research question:

How does the book How to Master Grammar contribute to the teaching of grammar to learners?

From this main question arise the following sub-questions:

- Which educational approaches and teaching methods does the author base his book on?
- Which methods does the book use to present its grammatical content to readers?
- The activities together with exercises serve what purpose to establish student comprehension?
- The book's method for teaching grammar shows which positive and negative aspects?

Based on these questions, the following hypotheses are proposed:

- The author employs a gradual approach in presenting grammatical concepts.
- The book uses modern teaching methods to present its grammatical content.
- The activities and exercises help students to build their understanding.
- The book uses everyday language examples to teach grammar which readers find beneficial yet the book fails to provide adequate exercises that let students practice creating their own text with the taught rules.

The research study focuses on the following objectives:

- The book of Ahmed Iskandar serves to identify his educational methods.
- The book presents various teaching methods and activities which help educators teach grammar.
- The activities together with exercises serve what purpose to establish student comprehension.
- The research study will evaluate which features of the book succeed and which fail.

The study uses a descriptive approach to analyze the book content by describing all its activities and methods and exercises. The research uses analytical methods to identify both the educational principles and the teaching approach which the author used to present grammatical material.

2. Theoretical Framework

Before addressing the book itself, it is necessary to examine certain theoretical aspects related to the topic.

2.1 The Concept of Grammar Didactics

The field of grammar didactics studies teaching methods for grammar rules and content adaptation techniques which help students reach language proficiency and real-world communication accuracy (Al-Abed, 2015, p. 23). The definition shows that grammar didactics goes past teaching basic grammatical rules. The research focuses on discovering the best teaching methods for language acquisition by understanding student learning needs and developing suitable activities to build their language abilities.

2.2 Objectives of Grammar Didactics

Grammar didactics aims to achieve the following objectives:

- The process of developing linguistic competence for learners involves teaching them to grasp grammatical rules and apply them effectively in both language and communication situations (Bouchmal, 2018, p. 62).
- The development of analytical and logical thinking abilities happens through students' work with language structures when they analyze them and establish grammatical rules by themselves (Bouras, 2016, p. 89).
- The educational focus requires moving students from memorization toward practical application of grammatical rules for their speech and writing skills rather than theoretical knowledge (Al-Hajj Saleh, 2014, p. 55).
- The process of learning grammar requires students to perform language activities which connect theoretical understanding to real-world language practice (Al-Hajj Saleh, 2014, p. 57).
- The educational method should use grammar rules to help students understand and produce language instead of treating them as the ultimate learning goal to improve their intellectual and communication abilities (Al-Alawi, 2019, p. 41).
- Students achieve independence in learning when they discover grammatical rules through themselves which allows them to build sentences and structures by using these rules (Bouras, 2016, p. 90).

2.3 The Development of Grammar Instruction

The teaching of grammar has progressed through multiple stages which directly relate to how linguistic and educational theories have developed. These stages can be summarized as follows:

- The Traditional Stage: This represents the earliest phase in the development of grammar and remained dominant for many centuries as the prevailing model of instruction. The teaching of grammar at this time depended on memorization and repetitive learning of abstract rules which ignored how language functions in real communication. The main source of information came from conventional grammatical texts which Haj Saleh discussed in his 2014 work on page 25.
- The Educational Reform Stage (Mid-20th Century): The era brought about efforts to make grammar simpler by eliminating complicated language which transformed rule presentation into real-world language application (Bouchmal, 2018, p. 58).
- The Communicative Approach Stage: During the 1980s and 1990s, the primary aim of grammar instruction became the enhancement of linguistic communication. Educational content and communication-based activities received grammatical rules for their implementation (Bouras, 2016, p. 85).
- The Competency-Based Approach Stage: The new millennium introduced this method which teaches people to develop their language skills and thinking abilities. The presentation of grammar occurs through genuine educational environments (Al-Alawi, 2019, p. 38).
- The Stage of Technological and Artificial Intelligence Integration: The twenty-first century has brought digital technologies and artificial intelligence to grammar instruction which now uses these tools for teaching rules and interactive correction exercises (Bouchmal, 2019, p. 91).

The evolution of grammar teaching shows a shift from traditional memorization methods toward developing language skills through modern technology tools like artificial intelligence and digital platforms.

3. The Applied Aspect:

The first element that should be addressed in describing the book is its general information, as this serves as an identifying profile of the work. It can be presented as follows:

3.1 Introduction to the Book *How to Master Grammar* by Ahmed Iskandar:

- Title: *How to Master Grammar?*
- Author: Ahmed Iskandar

- Publisher and Place of Publication: Al-Lu'lu'a Publishing and Distribution House, Mansoura (Egypt)
- Edition: Eighth
- Year of Publication: 1444 AH / 2022 CE
- Number of Pages: 552

3.2 Content of the Book:

The book consists of an introduction, chapters, and a conclusion. The contents of each component can be presented as follows:

Introduction: Upon examining the introduction, we observed that it includes a number of key elements, namely:

- Nature of the Book: It is devoted to the rules of Arabic grammar.
- Motives Behind Writing the Book: These can be summarized as follows:
 - Assisting students in understanding the Arabic language through grammar lessons.
 - Preserving the Arabic language.
 - The book presents Arabic grammar rules in an understandable way through its simple and straightforward writing style.
- The Methodology Adopted in Writing the Book.
- The Structure of the Book ([Iskandar, 2022, p. 04](#)).

The introduction contains all necessary elements which any book introduction requires.

3.3 Grammatical Lessons in *How to Master Grammar*:

The book consists of ten chapters which contain multiple sections throughout. The section structure divides into two main parts which include a theoretical segment that explains grammatical rules and an applied segment that presents examples from the Qur'an Hadith and Arabic poetry.

Figure 01: A mind map of the chapters of the book ([Iskandar, 2022, p. 06](#)).

الْفَصْلُ الْأَوَّلُ :	الْفَصْلُ الثَّانِي :	الْفَصْلُ الثَّالِثُ :	الْفَصْلُ الرَّابِعُ :	الْفَصْلُ الخَامِسُ :	الْفَصْلُ السادسُ :	الْفَصْلُ السَّابِعُ :	الْفَصْلُ الثَّامِنُ :	الْفَصْلُ التَّاسِعُ :	الْفَصْلُ الْعَاشِرُ :
إعراب الاسم الظاهر	المبتدآت	إعراب الفعل المضارع	المرفوعات	النواسخ	المنصوبات	الوابق	المخزورات	الأساليب	إعراب المنكلمات

It is observed that the content of the book adheres to the following pedagogical principles:

- The educational approach follows a systematic progression from basic to advanced concepts. The first lesson for students covers the inflection (i' rāb) of the overt noun which further breaks down into five categories including singular noun and dual and sound masculine plural and sound feminine plural and five nouns. These three elements are presented as individual sections. Chapter two shifts to a detailed examination of indeclinable nouns (mabnī forms). Students learn about both declinability and indeclinability as distinct concepts after mastering declension. The learners move on to study indeclinability after acquiring knowledge of noun declension. The study of indeclinability enables students to differentiate between declinable and indeclinable nouns.

The learning process follows a natural order from basic to advanced grammar concepts because students first learn declension before they understand indeclinability. The order of topics starts with nominative cases before moving to nawāsikh because students need to understand nominative cases before they can grasp how nawāsikh affect predicate structures (al-mubtada' wa al-khabar). The principle of gradation appears through the ordered sequence of grammatical categories which start with nominatives (marfū'āt) and continue to accusatives (manṣūbāt) and end with genitives (majrūrāt).

- The Principle of Continuity in Topic Presentation: Each chapter presents complete grammatical categories in an uninterrupted sequence. The chapter structure begins with the complete coverage of nominatives before moving on to accusatives and then genitives within one chapter. The educational materials in this textbook follow a different organizational approach because they do not divide single grammatical topics into separate sections. Learning through continuous practice helps students understand how grammatical rules function together which results in better sentence structure understanding.

- The Principle of Functionality: The book treats grammar as a tool which serves a functional purpose rather than being its own goal. The book demonstrates this principle through exercises and parsing tasks which require students to use their grammatical knowledge for practical application. The practice activities enable students to use grammar as a functional instrument for real communication which transforms it from an academic subject into a practical tool.

3.4 Method of Lesson Presentation:

The author starts by giving a definition of each grammatical term before showing examples which demonstrate its usage. The method starts with broad concepts before moving into specific details which follows the deductive approach that serves as a standard method for teaching grammar. Ahmed Iskandar transforms the traditional teaching method through his use of simple examples and visual diagrams and tables which make learning easier to understand.

The book presents most of its lessons through visual aids which include charts and schematic diagrams that help explain grammatical concepts and simplify complex rules.

Figure 02: Lesson on the Sound Feminine Plural (Iskandar, 2022, p. 22).

٤- جَمْعُ الْمُؤَنَّثِ السَّالِمِ هُوَ مَا دَلَّ عَلَى أَكْثَرِ مِنْ اثْنَتَيْنِ بِزِيَادَةِ أَلْفٍ وَتَاءٍ عَلَى مُفْرَدِهِ. مِثْلُ: مُسْلِمَاتٍ، زَيْنَبَاتٍ، سَمَاوَاتٍ.	
إِعْرَابُهُ:	
١- يُرْفَعُ بِالصَّمَةِ: مِثْلُ: حَضَرَتِ الْمُسْلِمَاتُ. ← فاعِلٌ مَرْفُوعٌ، وَعَلَامَةُ رَفْعِهِ الصَّمَةُ؛ لِأَنَّهُ جَمْعُ مُؤَنَّثٍ سَالِمٍ.	- قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا جَاءَكُمُ الْمُؤْمِنَاتُ مُهَاجِرَاتٍ فَاْمْتَحِنُوهُنَّ.....﴾ [المتحنة: ١٠] الْمُؤْمِنَاتُ: فاعِلٌ مَرْفُوعٌ، وَعَلَامَةُ رَفْعِهِ الصَّمَةُ؛ لِأَنَّهُ جَمْعُ مُؤَنَّثٍ سَالِمٍ.
٢- يُنْصَبُ بِالْكَسْرِ: مِثْلُ: أَكْرَمَتِ الدَّوْلَةُ الْمُتَقَفِّوَاتِ. قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿وَالَّذِينَ عَمِلُوا السَّيِّئَاتِ ثُمَّ تَابُوا مِنْ بَعْدِهَا وَآمَنُوا إِنَّ رَبَّكَ مِنْ بَعْدِهَا لَعَفُورٌ...﴾ [الأعراف: ٣] ← مَفْعُولٌ بِهِ مَنْصُوبٌ، وَعَلَامَةُ نُصْبِهِ الْكَسْرَةُ؛ لِأَنَّهُ جَمْعُ مُؤَنَّثٍ سَالِمٍ.	٣- يُجَرُّ بِالْكَسْرِ: مِثْلُ: لِلْأُمَمَاتِ مَكَانَةٌ زَفِيْعَةٌ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ.

Figure 3: Lesson on the Five Nouns (Iskandar, 2022, p. 30)

الْمَبْحَثُ الثَّانِي

٦- الْأَسْمَاءُ الْخَمْسَةُ: (أب - آخ - خم - فو - ذو بمعنى ضاحي)

أولاً: تُعْرَبُ بِالْخُرُوفِ: أَي تَزْفَعُ بِالْوَاوِ، وَتُنْصَبُ بِالْأَلِفِ، وَتُجْرُ بِالنِّيَاءِ.

شُرُوطُ إِعْرَابِهَا بِالْخُرُوفِ أَنْ تَكُونَ:

- ١- مُفْرَدَةً، أَي: غَيْرُ مُثْنًى، أَوْ جَمْعٍ.
- ٢- مُضَافَةٌ إِلَى اسْمٍ، أَوْ ضَمِيرٍ مَا عَدَا يَاءَ الْمُتَكَلِّمِ أَي: (مُضَافَةٌ إِلَى غَيْرِ يَاءِ الْمُتَكَلِّمِ).

١- تَزْفَعُ بِالْوَاوِ:

- مِثْلُ: رَجَعَ **أَبُوكَ** مِنْ سَفَرِهِ.

- قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿إِذْ قَالَ لَهُمُ **أَخُوهُمْ** نُوْحٌ أَلَا تَتَّقُونَ﴾ [شعراء: ١٠٦]

↓

ضَمِيرٌ مُثْنًى عَلَى السَّمِ فِي مَخَلٍّ جَزْ مُضَافٍ إِلَيْهِ، وَالْمِيمُ: عَلَامَةُ إِجْعَالِ الدُّكُورِ، فَاعِلٌ مَرْفُوعٌ، وَغَلَامَةُ رُفْعِهِ الْوَاوُ؛ لِأَنَّهُ مِنَ الْأَسْمَاءِ الْخَمْسَةِ، وَهُوَ مُضَافٌ.

٢- تُنْصَبُ بِالْأَلِفِ:

- مِثْلُ: رَأَيْتُ **حَمَالِكَ**.

- قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَى ثَمُودَ **أَخَاهُمْ** ضَاحِكًا أَنْ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ...﴾ [صافات: ١٥]

↓

ضَمِيرٌ مُثْنًى عَلَى السَّمِ فِي مَخَلٍّ جَزْ بِالْإِضَافَةِ، وَالْمِيمُ: يُجْعَلُ مَمْفُوعٌ بِهِ مَنصُوبٌ، وَغَلَامَةُ نَصْبِهِ الْأَلِفُ؛ لِأَنَّهُ مِنَ الْأَسْمَاءِ الْخَمْسَةِ، وَهُوَ مُضَافٌ.

٣- تُجْرُ بِالنِّيَاءِ:

- مِثْلُ: سَلَّمْتُ عَلَى **إِبْنِي مُحَمَّدٍ**.

Figure 4: Mind Map for the Lesson on Declension (*I'rāb* (Iskandar, 2022, p. 07).

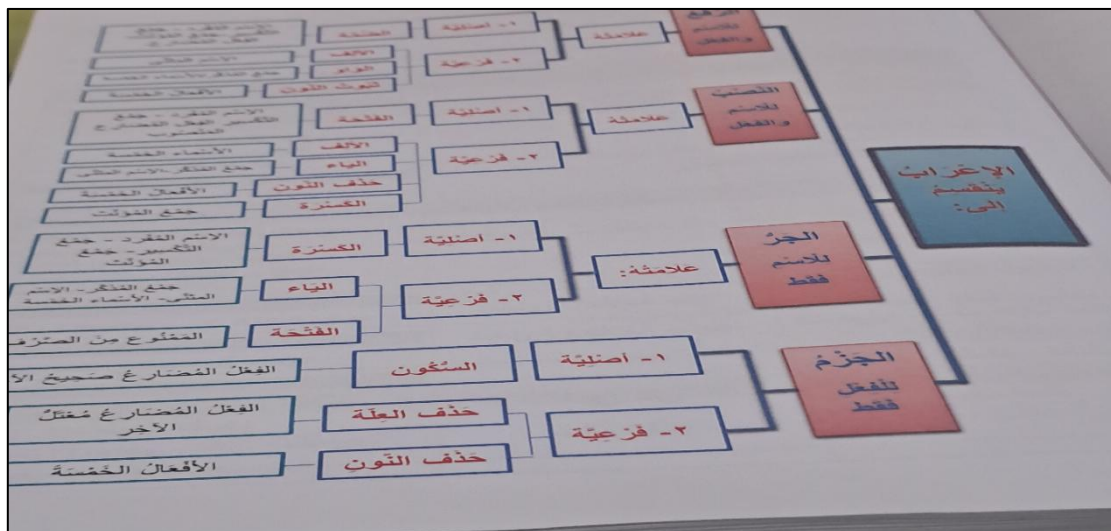


Table 1: Case Markers of the Noun (Iskandar, 2022, p. 36).

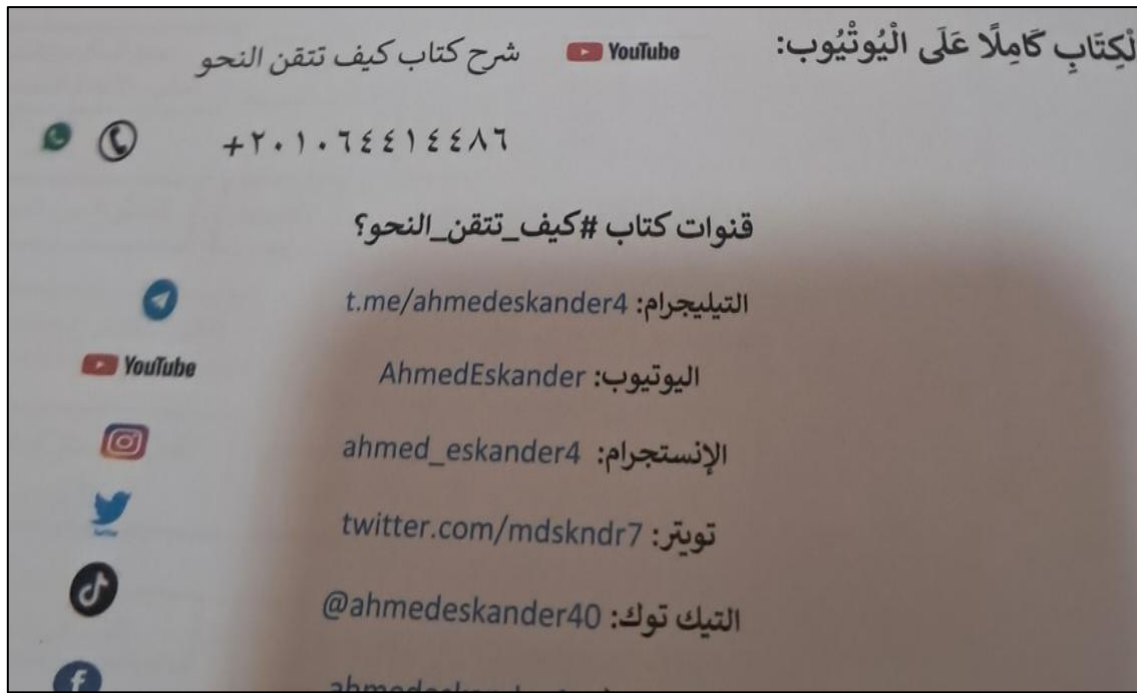
يُرفع بـ	يُنصب بـ	يُجر بـ	مثال
الضمة	الفَتْحة	الكسرة	طالِبًا - طالب - طَلات
الضمة	الكسرة	الكسرة	طالِبَات - طالبات
الألف	الياء	الياء	طالِبَان - طالبين
أَواو	الياء	الياء	مُعَلِّمُونَ - معلمين
أَواو	الألف	الياء	أَبُوك / حَمَاك / أَخِيكَ

Mind maps and tables play a significant role in grammar instruction, as they contribute to the following:

- These tools convert complex grammatical rules into visual representations which create simple and organized structures for better understanding. The mind map transforms grammar rules into visual diagrams which help students remember information better because they can recreate the map to write down the rules they cannot recall. The tables serve as an organizational tool which helps students grasp grammar rules by displaying them in an ordered structure that simplifies their complexity.
- Students need to connect theoretical knowledge with its practical applications for effective learning. Students move past theoretical knowledge of grammar because they practice it through book exercises which let them measure their understanding of grammar rules.

The book presents its content through modern technology by using online platforms which include Telegram and YouTube and Instagram and Twitter and TikTok to deliver extra explanations of the material. The figure below shows how these digital channels help students understand the material more effectively. The author includes these tools to show that modern educational technology serves as an essential teaching resource.

Figure 05: Social Media Channels Associated with the Book How to Master Grammar
(Iskandar, 2022, p. 06).



2.5 Exercises in the Book

The book includes two types of exercises: extraction exercises and parsing (i' rāb) exercises. The following observations present the content of these exercises and applications:

- The applications base their content on religious texts from the Qur'an and Hadith together with Arabic poetry samples which primarily focus on parsing because this skill requires learners to understand grammatical rules. A learner's knowledge of these rules helps ensure accurate parsing.
- Extraction exercises function to test learners about their knowledge of the grammatical terms they have learned. These exercises are often accompanied by answer keys that help learners correct their mistakes.
- The applications function as student-centered tools which place learners at the core of educational activities to develop their practical skills and complete understanding of grammar rules. The goal is not rote memorization of rules, but understanding them through explanations, tables, and conceptual maps.

4. Presentation and Discussion of Results

Based on our analysis of the book *How to Master Grammar*, the following findings were reached:

- The book *How to Master Grammar* bases its content on three essential principles which include progression and continuity and linguistic functionality.

- The teaching method uses a modified deductive approach which starts by showing grammatical rules through examples that come from the learner's environment. The resource uses tables and mind maps to present grammatical concepts in an understandable way.
- The book uses extraction and parsing exercises which work with different textual materials. The texts consist of various selections from the Holy Qur'an and the Prophet's Hadith and Arabic poetry.

4.1 Advantages of the Book:

- The book provides learners with examples that stem from their native language and their personal learning environment.
- The material presents basic explanations which avoid going into too much detail about grammatical terminology.
- The book contains multiple tables and mind maps which help readers learn grammatical rules effectively.
- The book features an attractive design with well-organized pages that include both organized headings and visually appealing color selections .
- The exercises contain various textual materials which include the Qur'an alongside Hadith and Arabic poetry.

4.2 Disadvantages of the Book:

The book provides various benefits to readers but it contains various flaws which restrict its overall quality:

- The activities focus mainly on individual work because they do not include many options for group learning or collaborative activities.
- The lesson structure contains repeated elements because several lessons follow the same sequence of presenting rules followed by examples and applications yet teachers need to create different types of activities.
- The program does not provide enough exercises which help students practice writing while using grammar rules.
- The exercises only focus on parsing and extraction tasks which limits the variety of available activities.

4.3 Discussion of Results

In this section, we aim to discuss the hypotheses in light of the results obtained from the description and critique of the book.

- The book *How to Master Grammar* bases its content on a step-by-step learning approach which introduces grammatical concepts progressively. The author presents continuity and functionality as essential principles which support this observation. The book creates its structure through these three principles to establish a methodical system for organizing grammatical rules. The educational principles help students create their grammatical knowledge through structured development which organizes related grammatical concepts by their natural groupings.
- The Second Hypothesis demands particular attention for its analysis: Modern teaching methods stand as the main framework for delivering grammatical content. The author of *How to Master Grammar* applies modified teaching methods through the deductive approach which shows real-life examples to explain grammar rules. The teaching method allows students to understand the material accurately. The traditional deductive method used complex examples which had no connection to the students' actual experiences. The author makes the content easier to understand through this method which uses examples from students' real-life experiences. The book uses social media platforms to help students who need extra help with grammar through technology integration. The complex grammatical rules become more understandable through the use of charts and tables which organize the information.
- The Third Hypothesis demands particular attention for its analysis: The book teaches students through parsing and extraction exercises which help them learn better by applying these exercises to different types of texts.
- The Fourth Hypothesis requires special attention for its evaluation: The book presents examples which use language that students encounter in their daily lives. The teaching resource contains a single productive exercise which requires students to create texts using the grammatical rules they have learned. The different lessons contain various strengths and weaknesses throughout their content. The examples in the book come from the students' own linguistic background which helps them learn grammar rules. The book provides multiple benefits through its use of tables and mind maps and authentic texts which help students learn grammar more effectively. The method delivers content through separate examples which lead students to memorize grammar rules instead of understanding them. The book identifies inadequate group interaction as its fundamental weakness. The exercises are designed primarily for individual work, whereas some activities should have been structured for collaborative learning. The teaching method would have become more successful at developing students' writing abilities through exercises which made students write texts while using the grammar rules they learned. The educational process faces limitations because students need to practice different tasks for grammar learning instead of relying on one type of assessment method. Students should complete two specific tasks which include creating sentences that show particular syntactic cases through short-answer questions and

adding diacritical marks to provided paragraphs. The design of exercises needs to include all these elements which should never be limited to only one or two types. The teaching method shows a consistent approach to all lessons. The book maintains a consistent structure throughout its entire length because it starts with rules which lead to examples and then to exercises that follow the rule. The teaching method would improve if lessons started with text presentation which students then analyze through questions about grammar to discover rules independently.

5. Conclusion:

The study of Ahmed Iskandar's *How to Master Grammar* demonstrates his effort to create new Arabic grammar teaching methods which aim to improve learning results for students. The rules became easier to understand through the step-by-step presentation which showed their practical use in real-world communication scenarios. The book aims to solve the problem of abstract and rigid grammatical material which students have struggled with by presenting concepts through straightforward explanations and practical examples and organized tables and mind maps for better understanding and memory retention.

The research presents a modern educational framework which demonstrates an effective approach to teaching grammar. The educational principles consist of continuity which sees learning as progressive knowledge accumulation and gradation which supports students through different learning stages and functionality which links grammar rules to actual language use and flexibility which enables teachers to modify activities based on student needs and skill levels. The book maintains a perfect equilibrium between theoretical knowledge and practical application which enables students to experience the material through real-world language practice.

The book provides clear explanations and smooth delivery through useful examples but it contains some flaws in its content. The limited number of free expression activities together with restricted exercise variety prevents students from creating authentic sentences and texts through real-life communication scenarios.

The book *How to Master Grammar* serves as a comprehensive educational resource which aims to transform Arabic grammar teaching methods through its development of new educational techniques. The field needs to continue its development through the combination of communicative and competency-based approaches with digital technology and student participation in real-life language experiences which position them as active learners instead of passive receivers.

The present educational system requires students to demonstrate their ability to use grammatical rules for comprehension and expression and production because this goal represents the highest standard of modern grammar education.

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