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Teaching German Grammar Through Communicative and Task-Based Approaches

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Abstract

Grammar instruction in German as a foreign language must help learners understand how grammatical forms express meaning and use those forms in interaction. This article examines how communicative language teaching and task-based language teaching can be combined to teach German grammar without reducing lessons to isolated rule explanation or unstructured conversation. A focused narrative review synthesizes research on task-based instruction, focus on form, German grammar learning, corrective feedback, learner motivation, mobile-supported language education, and individual differences in second-language processing. Three questions guide the analysis: how communicative tasks can make grammatical forms necessary for meaning; how teachers can balance explicit support with learner interaction; and how instruction can respond to differences in proficiency, working memory, confidence, and access to learning resources. The synthesis indicates that grammar can be integrated into meaningful tasks when the task outcome depends on the target form, attention to form is brief and responsive, and learners receive opportunities to notice, retrieve, revise, and reuse language. German word order, case marking, articles, tense, and modal constructions provide productive contexts for information-gap, decision-making, narrative, and collaborative writing tasks. The article proposes a staged instructional framework and illustrative task sequence for German classrooms. Because this is a literature-based conceptual analysis rather than a classroom experiment, the framework requires empirical evaluation across learner groups and educational settings.

Keywords: *German grammar; communicative language teaching; task-based language teaching; focus on form; foreign language education; corrective feedback; learner differences*

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1. Introduction

Grammar remains a central concern in foreign language education because learners need more than an ability to identify rules: they must select grammatical forms that convey intended meanings in real time. This challenge is visible in German, where word order, grammatical case, article forms, verb placement, inflection, and the relationship between clause structure and information structure can affect both accuracy and interpretation. Learners may be able to state a rule yet avoid using the relevant structure in spontaneous speech or writing. Conversely, learners may communicate successfully while relying on a narrow set of familiar forms. Effective instruction must therefore connect grammatical knowledge with comprehension, production, and interaction.

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Communicative language teaching (CLT) frames language as a resource for accomplishing social purposes, while task-based language teaching (TBLT) organizes learning around activities in which learners use language to reach an outcome. In TBLT, a task typically includes a primary focus on meaning, a gap or problem to resolve, and an outcome beyond the display of a particular grammatical form. Grammar is not excluded; rather, attention to form is integrated with communication when a structure becomes relevant to expressing or understanding meaning (Ellis et al., 2020; Long, 2015). The central instructional issue is how to make that integration deliberate. If a lesson merely adds a speaking game after a grammar lecture, the activity may remain task-supported rather than task-based. If learners are left without useful input, feedback, or planning time, a task may also fail to generate attention to the target form.

Research on German as a foreign language supports the need for this balance. German learners encounter persistent difficulty with several structures, and difficulty can vary by form, meaning, prior knowledge, and instructional context. Windham and Lange (2024), for example, report variation in intermediate learners' outcomes across grammar topics and argue for using local learning evidence when sequencing and assessing grammar. Studies of German learners in task-based environments have tested feedback, task repetition, and form-focused support with structures such as the dative after prepositions, comparatives, and word order (van de Guchte et al., 2015, 2016). More recent work on German task-based teaching also describes learner preferences for writing and problem-solving tasks when practicing complex structures (Kovač, 2025). These studies suggest that the communicative task should be designed around a specific language function and should provide opportunities to revise output.

The relevance of this discussion extends beyond German-language departments. In many educational settings, grammar teaching is shaped by curriculum coverage, examination requirements, class size, limited exposure to the target language, and learners' unequal prior preparation. A communicative approach must be feasible within these conditions. Research on motivational and practical frameworks for learners with lower prior achievement emphasizes the importance of manageable instruction, feedback, and learner engagement (Mammadova, 2024). Work on smartphone integration in language education highlights opportunities for extending practice beyond class while also noting the need for pedagogical guidance and training (Alisoy et al., 2024). Research on individual differences in online L2 form recognition further draws attention to working memory and aptitude as factors relevant to how learners process language forms (Mammadova, 2025). These studies concern language education broadly rather than German grammar specifically; they are used here to inform transferable design considerations, not as direct evidence of German-specific effects.

The purpose of this article is to develop a research-informed framework for teaching German grammar through communicative and task-based approaches. It addresses three research questions: (1) How can communicative and task-based instruction make German grammatical forms functionally necessary for meaning? (2) How can teachers balance explicit explanation, focused practice, interaction, and corrective feedback within a task cycle? (3) How can task design accommodate variation in learner proficiency, motivation, and cognitive processing? The article contributes a practical synthesis and sample task sequence rather than reporting new experimental data.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Communicative language teaching and task-based instruction

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CLT and TBLT share the premise that learners develop communicative ability through meaningful language use, but they do not prescribe identical lesson structures. CLT can include communicative activities within a broader syllabus organized by grammatical items or functions. TBLT gives tasks a stronger organizing role: learners encounter language as they work toward a defined outcome, and instructional attention to form is linked to the demands of that work (Ellis et al., 2020; Long, 2015; van den Branden et al., 2009). Task-based courses may select and sequence tasks according to learners' needs, whereas task-supported courses may retain a structural syllabus and use tasks to practice forms already presented. This distinction is useful for teachers because both approaches can be communicative, but they make different claims about what organizes the curriculum.

The task itself should have a purpose that learners can understand. A pair may compare two travel plans and agree on one; a group may reconstruct a story from distributed information; or students may write a message explaining a changed appointment. Such tasks create a reason to exchange information, clarify meaning, and make decisions. Skehan's (1996) framework links task implementation to the relationship among meaning, form, and processing demands. Task complexity should not be increased without considering learners' available language resources: when a task places heavy demands on planning, memory, and interaction at once, learners may prioritize message completion and avoid less familiar grammar. The teacher's role is to shape conditions under which communication and form can support one another.

Evidence on TBLT implementation is generally positive but also cautions against assuming that any activity labelled a task will have the same effect. Bryfonski and McKay's (2019) meta-analysis of implemented TBLT programs reported positive learning outcomes across programs, while also identifying implementation and contextual characteristics as relevant. Li et al. (2016) show that the distinction between task-based and task-supported instruction matters in experimental grammar learning. In school settings, teachers may need to adapt task principles to examination expectations, learner beliefs, available contact hours, and institutional routines (Carless, 2007; Ji & Pham, 2020). For German grammar instruction, the practical implication is not to choose between communication and structure, but to plan their relationship explicitly.

2.2. Focus on form and the role of explicit explanation

Focus on form refers to learners' attention to linguistic features that arises while the primary orientation remains communicative. This differs from focus on forms, in which a lesson isolates and presents predetermined structures as the main objects of study. Ellis (2016) reviews how focus-on-form instruction can involve brief teacher interventions, corrective feedback, input enhancement, learner-initiated questions, or post-task reflection. TBLT can incorporate planned attention to a form when teachers anticipate a likely communicative need, as well as reactive attention when a difficulty emerges during interaction. Both planned and reactive attention can help learners notice a gap between an intended message and available linguistic resources.

Explicit explanation can be useful, particularly when a German structure is difficult to infer from examples or when learners need a concise representation of a pattern before using it. The key question is timing and proportion. A short pre-task explanation may clarify a high-value distinction; a mid-task prompt may direct attention without ending communication; and a post-task mini-lesson may address a recurring pattern observed in learner output. Meta-analytic evidence also indicates that instructional effects can vary with the type of grammatical feature being taught (Spada & Tomita, 2010). Pawlak (2021) argues that grammar instruction continues to face practical questions concerning how form-

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focused work can contribute to communicative use. The evidence does not support a rigid rule that explanation must always occur before or after a task. Instead, teachers can align explanation with the target form, learners' readiness, and the specific demands of the task.

Task-based German studies provide direct examples of this principle. Van de Guchte et al. (2015) compared prompts and recasts while learners worked on German dative and comparative structures and found benefits from feedback relative to a control condition, with prompts especially useful for eliciting learner repair. In a subsequent study, van de Guchte et al. (2016) examined task repetition after attention had been directed to form; repeated tasks improved written accuracy and metalinguistic knowledge on the target structures, although effects were not uniform across oral measures. These findings do not imply that prompts or repetition work identically for every structure. They show that a task sequence can incorporate feedback and another opportunity to use the form rather than treating first production as the only learning event.

2.3. Grammar as a form–meaning resource in German

German grammar is best taught as a system of choices that help speakers organize meaning, not as a set of arbitrary labels. Verb position, for example, contributes to clause organization and the relationship between main and subordinate clauses. Case marking signals grammatical relations and interacts with articles, pronouns, prepositions, and lexical patterns. Articles and adjective endings convey information about gender, number, and case. Tense and modal constructions locate events and express possibility, obligation, intention, or reported perspective. When instruction emphasizes only memorized endings, learners may not understand why a form changes or how a choice affects the listener's interpretation.

German-specific studies illustrate that learners can benefit when form is connected with function. Fehrmann (2016) examines teaching German prefield elements through form–function mapping, focusing on how sentence-initial constituents contribute to information structure. Windham and Lange (2024) show that intermediate grammar topics differ in relative difficulty and recommend using learning evidence to guide sequence and instructional time. Kovač (2025) reports learner preferences for writing tasks when addressing complex German subordinate-clause word order, in part because writing allows planning and self-monitoring. These findings support tasks that make information structure, reference, or temporal meaning visible in the communicative outcome.

A form–meaning approach also helps prevent false simplification. For example, a teacher may initially explain the verb-second pattern in German main clauses as a reliable starting point, but authentic messages include varied sentence openings and discourse functions. Similarly, learners may practice articles as isolated vocabulary items without applying case marking in a sentence. Tasks can bring these relationships into view by asking learners to compare alternatives, identify a referent, report an event, or explain a decision. A brief rule summary may then name the pattern that learners have encountered. The objective is not to avoid grammatical terminology but to ensure that terminology helps learners interpret and use language.

2.4. Interaction, feedback, and learner differences

Interaction makes grammatical choices consequential because a listener may need clarification, correction, or more precise reference. Peer interaction can create opportunities for learners to negotiate meaning, produce modified output, and attend to form (Sato & Ballinger, 2016). Tang et al. (2020), synthesizing empirical work on task-based interaction and L2 grammar acquisition, report an overall

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positive relationship while noting variation by task type, task essentialness, test format, and learning environment. Thus, tasks should be designed so that an information gap genuinely requires learners to exchange or clarify content rather than merely recite prepared sentences.

Learners differ in prior knowledge, confidence, working memory, pace, and willingness to take risks. These differences should inform the amount of planning time, visual support, task complexity, grouping, and feedback. Mammadova's (2025) discussion of working memory and aptitude in online form recognition raises a relevant design question: how can a teacher make form easier to notice without overloading learners during communication? The article does not test German grammar tasks, so the connection is pedagogical rather than causal. One practical response is to stage tasks, reduce unnecessary information load, provide brief reference aids, and gradually remove those aids as learners gain control.

Motivational support matters as well. Learners who have experienced repeated difficulty may interpret grammar as a test of failure rather than a resource for expression. Mammadova (2024) examines motivational and practical frameworks for English learners with weaker prior performance; the study's language context differs from German, but its attention to accessible instruction and learner engagement is relevant when planning inclusive task cycles. Teachers can set attainable outcomes, make progress visible, use supportive feedback, and offer more than one way to contribute. These supports should not lower the linguistic goal; they make participation and subsequent practice more achievable.

3. Methodology

This article uses a focused narrative review and conceptual synthesis. The review was guided by the three research questions stated in the introduction. It drew on peer-reviewed studies and scholarly books concerning TBLT, communicative grammar instruction, focus on form, task interaction, corrective feedback, and grammar learning in German. Sources were included when they provided empirical findings, theoretical accounts, or classroom design implications relevant to at least one of these areas. Particular attention was given to direct German-language studies, including research on German case, comparative forms, word order, and intermediate grammar learning. Broader L2 studies were used where they addressed transferable instructional mechanisms, such as interaction, feedback, task repetition, motivation, or cognitive processing.

The review is selective rather than systematic. It does not claim an exhaustive search, formal quality appraisal, pooled effect estimate, or complete coverage of all research on German pedagogy. The evidence was organized thematically: (a) task purpose and communicative necessity; (b) timing and form-focused support; (c) interaction, feedback, and repetition; (d) German-specific form–meaning challenges; and (e) learner differences and technology-supported practice. The proposed instructional framework was derived by comparing how these themes appear across theoretical, empirical, and applied sources. It is a practice-oriented synthesis that requires classroom testing; it should not be interpreted as a report of an intervention conducted by the author.

4. Results and Analysis

4.1. A task should make the target form useful for achieving an outcome

The first theme is the need for alignment between a grammatical target and the outcome learners must achieve. A task can be communicative in appearance yet place no demand on the form the lesson is intended to teach. For example, learners can discuss weekend plans using simple present-tense

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expressions even when the instructional target is subordinate-clause word order. In this case, the structure may be bypassed. Task design should make the target form useful or necessary, while still allowing learners to express their own content. This does not mean forcing every learner to repeat the same sentence frame; it means choosing information, roles, and outcomes that create a natural reason to use the target structure.

For German word order, partners might each receive different event cards and collaboratively build a timeline. To complete it, learners must report which events occurred before others, combine main and subordinate clauses, and verify that the sequence is accurate. For case and articles, one learner might describe objects in a room while another identifies and places them on a map, requiring reference to objects, locations, and recipients. For modal verbs, groups can compare rules for a shared trip and agree on what participants must, may, or should do. Each task creates a semantic purpose for grammatical choices. A short post-task discussion can then draw attention to the forms that enabled clear or precise communication.

This principle aligns with research suggesting that task essentialness can matter: a target structure is more likely to receive attention when the task cannot be completed as effectively without it (Tang et al., 2020). The teacher should nevertheless avoid artificial task design in which the form is merely inserted into a script. A useful diagnostic is to ask whether learners could reach the task outcome while avoiding the target form altogether. If they could, the teacher can adjust the information gap, role allocation, or output requirement. If the structure is essential but too difficult for learners to use, the teacher can add scaffolding rather than remove the communicative purpose.

4.2. A staged cycle can connect preparation, interaction, and reflection

The second theme is that grammar learning benefits from opportunities to prepare, attempt, receive support, and reuse a form. A practical cycle can begin with a short context that activates meaning, followed by a task in which learners notice a problem, exchange information, and produce an outcome. The teacher observes, notes recurring gaps, and offers brief prompts or clarification when appropriate. After task completion, learners review a small number of examples, articulate or compare patterns, and repeat or extend the task. The sequence makes communication the organizing activity while providing planned opportunities for explicit learning.

Pre-task support should be limited to what learners need to enter the task. It may include a model text, a few lexical items, a visual timeline, or a short reminder about verb placement. If the teacher explains every rule and provides a complete sentence model before the task, learners may simply reproduce the model without processing the communicative problem. If no support is provided, beginning learners may retreat to simpler language. A calibrated pre-task phase can therefore introduce meaning and useful resources while leaving a real decision for learners to solve. Ji and Pham (2020) document challenges that arise when classroom expectations and learner habits do not align with TBLT assumptions, including the need for explicit grammatical input and reluctance toward group work. This underscores the importance of gradual implementation and teacher guidance.

During interaction, feedback can be brief and contingent. A prompt such as “Who receives the book in that sentence?” may encourage a learner to reconsider case marking while keeping the conversation active. A recast may model a more target-like form without requiring the learner to stop and explain. The teacher can decide between these options according to the goal, learner proficiency, time, and the type of structure. Van de Guchte et al. (2015) provide direct evidence that prompts and recasts can support learning of German structures in a task-based setting, with prompts yielding stronger effects

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in some comparisons. However, learners may need more explicit attention when a form–meaning relationship is not transparent. Post-task work can make that attention systematic without interrupting every message during fluency practice.

Task repetition is especially useful when learners have already experienced the task and received feedback. Repeating a similar task with changed details can free some attention from understanding instructions and planning content, allowing more resources for accuracy and fluency. The German study by van de Guchte et al. (2016) found advantages for repeated tasks on written accuracy and metalinguistic knowledge, but not on every oral measure. Teachers should therefore define the expected outcome of repetition: improved accuracy, more complex language, faster retrieval, or greater confidence. A repeated task should involve a meaningful variation in content so that it remains communicative rather than becoming mechanical drilling.

4.3. German grammar can be taught through communicative task families

German grammar instruction is not limited to one task type. Information-gap tasks are useful when learners have different pieces of information and must ask questions, identify references, and report relationships. Decision-making tasks can elicit modal verbs, comparatives, conditional expressions, and reasons. Narrative tasks encourage temporal forms, sequencing, subordinate clauses, and reference tracking. Collaborative writing tasks give learners planning time to test, revise, and discuss forms. These task families can be adapted to different proficiency levels while maintaining a meaningful outcome.

For word order, learners can reconstruct a short narrative from mixed sentence strips, compare two accounts, or write a message explaining a sequence of events. The task can highlight how a subordinate clause changes verb position and how sentence openings organize information. Fehrmann's (2016) study of German prefield elements is relevant because it presents sentence structure as a form–function relationship rather than a purely positional rule. For case, students might plan a small event using a list of participants, objects, and locations. To confirm who gives what to whom, they must use nouns, articles, pronouns, and prepositions in context. Because case marking interacts with lexical patterns, practice can combine explicit explanation with repeated meaningful use.

For article and adjective endings, learners can describe, compare, and select items for a shared purpose—for example, choosing equipment for a hiking trip based on size, color, weight, and function. The information gap can require agreement and clarification instead of a simple sequence of isolated adjective forms. For tense and aspect, learners can compare a daily routine with a recent event, interview a partner about an experience, or prepare a short report contrasting what had been planned with what actually happened. Modal verbs can be embedded in rules, recommendations, permissions, and negotiation. In each case, a final product—an itinerary, written report, group decision, or spoken explanation—helps make grammar visible and assessable.

Table 1 presents illustrative task designs. The examples are proposals derived from the review and have not been evaluated experimentally. Teachers should adapt the target structure and support to local curricula and learner proficiency. The assessment should examine both whether the task outcome was achieved and whether learners could use the intended forms accurately enough for the message to be understood.

Table 1

Illustrative communicative tasks for selected German grammar targets

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German grammar focus	Communicative task and outcome	Evidence to assess
Main-clause and subordinate-clause word order	Reconstruct an event sequence from partner-held cards and produce a short written account.	Correct verb placement in clauses; sequence accurately conveys the events.
Case and articles	Plan a classroom event by assigning people, objects, and locations from separate information sheets.	Appropriate article/case forms in requests, descriptions, and final plan.
Modal verbs	Negotiate group rules for a trip and present a jointly agreed recommendation.	Modal choice matches obligation, permission, advice, or possibility.
Tense and temporal reference	Interview a partner about a completed experience and report it to another group.	Consistent temporal reference and intelligible sequencing of events.
Adjective endings and comparison	Select equipment or accommodation against shared criteria and justify the choice.	Form agreement where needed; comparative forms support the decision.

4.4. Differentiation should support participation without lowering the learning goal

The third theme is the need to vary scaffolding while retaining the same communicative purpose. Learners can differ in prior German study, literacy, confidence, processing speed, and experience with collaborative learning. A teacher can maintain a common task outcome while offering optional supports: a visual organizer, a short phrase bank, extra planning time, a more structured role, or a challenge card that invites more complex language. This design avoids assigning some learners permanently simplified objectives. Instead, supports are adjusted as temporary access tools and can be faded when learners demonstrate greater control.

Mammadova (2024) discusses motivational and practical frameworks for English learners with lower prior achievement. Although the study does not examine German grammar, its attention to accessible instruction and motivation supports a cautious pedagogical implication: tasks should have a clear purpose, attainable steps, and feedback that helps learners see progress. The teacher may also allow learners to rehearse in pairs before reporting to the whole class. This reduces performance pressure while preserving the need to formulate an accurate message. Peer support can be especially useful when students are asked to explain why a form was chosen rather than merely supply a correct answer.

Cognitive load should also be considered. A complex task can require learners to understand new vocabulary, hold multiple facts in memory, monitor word order, and negotiate disagreement. If all demands are introduced at once, the intended grammar may receive little attention. Mammadova (2025) examines working memory and aptitude in online form recognition; while its findings should not be generalized directly to classroom task performance, it highlights the value of considering how learners process forms under time and attention demands. Teachers can reduce irrelevant load by supplying key vocabulary, segmenting instructions, using clear visuals, and giving learners time to plan. As competence grows, supports can be withdrawn and task complexity increased.

Differentiation should also include varied participation modes. Some learners may contribute more confidently in writing before speaking; others may need repeated oral rehearsal. A task can include

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individual preparation, pair negotiation, and a group product so that learners have more than one entry point. Assessment can distinguish communicative success from grammatical accuracy and then use both to plan instruction. If learners reach the outcome but repeatedly avoid the target structure, the task design may not make that form necessary. If learners attempt the form but make a common error, the next lesson can address that pattern explicitly. This creates a responsive cycle rather than labelling learners by weakness.

4.5. Digital tools can extend practice when they serve a pedagogical purpose

Mobile devices can support the task cycle through audio recording, shared notes, dictionaries, image prompts, polls, and short follow-up exercises. For example, learners can record a first oral report, receive a short teacher prompt, and record a revised version after discussing a grammar pattern. Shared digital documents can make peer editing visible during a collaborative writing task. Smartphone-supported activities can also provide practice outside class when learners have limited contact with German. Alisoy et al. (2024) discuss curriculum integration of smartphones in language education and emphasize that technology requires instructional planning, clear expectations, and user guidance. Their work is not a German-specific test of grammar learning; its relevance is in framing mobile devices as part of a designed curriculum rather than as an automatic source of improvement.

Digital practice should complement human interaction. Automated quizzes can provide retrieval practice for articles, endings, or word order, but they may not show whether a learner can select a form appropriately in a conversation. Voice recording and shared writing may preserve communicative context more effectively if learners have a real audience and a clear outcome. Teachers should also consider device access, privacy, distraction, and digital literacy. A task can be completed without requiring every student to own a high-end device; pairs or a shared classroom device may suffice. Technology is most useful when it gives learners another opportunity to notice, use, revise, or reflect on a form that matters to the task.

5. Discussion

The review suggests that the debate between grammar instruction and communication is poorly framed when it assumes that one must displace the other. Grammar is necessary for communicative precision, but the presence of a grammar explanation does not guarantee that learners can use a form. Likewise, an activity that promotes conversation does not necessarily direct attention to structures that learners need. The instructional challenge is to design a sequence in which the communicative goal and grammatical focus are related. TBLT offers one way to organize this relationship, while focus-on-form techniques help teachers address linguistic needs that arise before, during, or after interaction (Ellis, 2016; Ellis et al., 2020; Pawlak, 2021).

The German-specific evidence supports a selective and evidence-informed approach. Learners do not find all structures equally difficult, and the same form may behave differently across written and oral production. Windham and Lange (2024) recommend local learning evidence for decisions about sequence and instructional time. Research on prompts, recasts, and repetition shows that feedback and task design can affect accuracy, but outcomes vary by structure and measure (van de Guchte et al., 2015, 2016). Thus, teachers should avoid treating a broad method label as a ready-made recipe. They need to monitor learners' actual performance, decide which form is causing difficulty, and respond with the least disruptive support that is likely to help.

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This responsive position is also consistent with research comparing task-based and task-supported instruction. A strong task-based syllabus may integrate grammar through needs-driven tasks, but local constraints may require a task-supported approach in which a prescribed syllabus remains in place and meaningful tasks are used to develop use. Li et al. (2016) provide evidence that the distinction can matter for instructed grammar outcomes, while Ji and Pham (2020) show how learner expectations and classroom routines can complicate implementation. In practice, German teachers can begin with task-supported cycles and gradually increase the role of tasks in selecting and sequencing language content. Program-level change is more likely when teachers share examples, assessment criteria, and planning time (Bryfonski & McKay, 2019; Carless, 2007).

A key implication concerns assessment. Traditional grammar tests can measure explicit knowledge and controlled accuracy, but they may not show whether learners can use a structure under communicative conditions. Task-based assessment can capture whether the learner completes an outcome, uses a suitable range of language, maintains intelligibility, and revises when communication breaks down. It should not, however, discard accuracy. A balanced rubric can distinguish task achievement, grammatical control, fluency, and interactional strategies. Tang et al. (2020) note that reported task-based grammar effects vary according to test format, a reminder that assessment design influences what appears to have been learned. Teachers can combine brief form-focused checks with samples of writing, pair interaction, and revised task output.

The framework also has implications for motivation and equity. Learners who see grammar only as correction may avoid complex language or interpret errors as evidence that they cannot learn. If tasks have a meaningful outcome and learners receive supportive feedback, form-focused work can become part of problem solving rather than a separate test. The relevance of motivational support is particularly clear for students who enter a course with lower confidence or prior achievement (Mammadova, 2024). At the same time, differentiation should not reproduce deficit labels or permanently lower expectations. It should provide temporary scaffolds, varied participation routes, and gradual release of responsibility.

Individual differences require attention but should not be used to sort learners into fixed categories. Mammadova (2025) focuses on working memory and aptitude in online L2 form recognition. This research can prompt teachers to consider the demands of noticing grammar while processing meaning, but the article's findings do not establish a specific task treatment for German. Future classroom studies should test whether planning time, repeated tasks, visual support, or feedback type interacts with learner differences and particular German structures. Such studies should report both accuracy and communicative performance, and should avoid inferring a stable learner trait from one task or test.

Technology can support continuity of practice but requires a clear learning function. A mobile task may extend a classroom interview by allowing learners to record and revise a report, yet a phone-based quiz alone cannot establish communicative competence. The educational value of technology depends on the quality of the activity, inclusion of learners with different access conditions, and integration with teacher feedback (Alisoy et al., 2024). Research could compare paper-based and mobile-supported versions of the same task to determine which affordances matter, rather than assuming that digital delivery itself improves learning.

Taken together, the findings support a practical instructional sequence: identify a meaningful function; select a German form that helps realize it; design an outcome that makes the form useful; provide only the support needed to enter the task; observe learner language; respond with prompts, recasts, or

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focused explanation; and provide an opportunity to revise and reuse the form. This sequence does not eliminate explicit grammar teaching. It makes explicit teaching accountable to communicative use and creates a bridge from declarative knowledge to performance. It also offers a framework that can be adapted to secondary, university, and adult language programs while leaving room for local curricula and assessment requirements.

6. Conclusion

Teaching German grammar through communicative and task-based approaches is most effective in principle when grammar is treated as a resource for meaning and when tasks create a genuine reason to use the target form. German word order, case, articles, tense, and modal constructions can be integrated into information-gap, decision-making, narrative, and collaborative writing tasks. Explicit explanation remains valuable when it is concise, responsive, and followed by opportunities to use the form. Feedback and task repetition can support noticing and revision, although their effects may differ by structure and skill.

The article has proposed a staged instructional framework that connects task purpose, form-focused support, interaction, differentiation, assessment, and optional technology. Its recommendations derive from a focused narrative synthesis and have not been tested as a single intervention. Future research should examine the framework with German learners across proficiency levels, track both communicative outcomes and grammatical development, and report how task type, feedback, learner differences, and assessment format shape results. For teachers, the immediate priority is to align each grammar objective with a communicative purpose and use classroom evidence to refine that alignment.

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