

The Controversy of the English Sentence and Its Teaching Implication

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Abstract : The issue of the English sentence has remained controversial from Traditional Grammar to modern linguistics. The English sentence occupies the highest rank in the hierarchy of grammatical units. Its consideration is therefore very necessary in learning English as a second language. Unfortunately, divergent views by grammarians on the concept of the English sentence have generated much controversy. There seems not to be a unanimous agreement on what actually constitute a sentence. Some schools of thought believe that a sentence must have a subject and a predicate while some believe that it should not. The types of sentence according to structure are also not devoid of controversy as the views of several linguists have not been properly harmonized. Findings have shown that serious effort and attention have not been paid by previous linguists to clear these ambiguities as it has a negative implication in the learning and teaching of English language. The variations on the concept of the English sentence have become particularly worrisome as a result of the widening patronage of English as a global language. The paper is therefore interested in the investigation of this controversy and suggesting a solution to the problem. In doing this, data was collected from students and scholars that show lack of uniformity in what a sentence is. Using the Systemic Functional Model as theoretical framework, the paper launches into the views held by these various schools of thought with the aim of reconciling these divergent views and also an attempt to open up further research on what actually constitute a sentence.

Keywords : traditional grammar, linguistics, controversy, sentence, grammatical units

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