FACTORS OF STUDENTS' SUCCESSFUL LEARNING GRAMMAR IN THE PROCESS OF STUDYING ENGLISH

Pukaliak M.V., Soroka L.T.
Lviv Polytechnic National University

The article provides a brief survey of the notion of grammar in the context of English learning. We know that grammar is the mental system of rules and categories that allows humans to form and interpret the words and sentences of their language. The paper discovers factors that influence English language teaching and learning. Grammar adds meanings that are not easily inferable from the immediate context. Also pure grammar teaching presupposes the theoretical approach to grammar teaching.
Keywords: grammar, teaching, language, rules, motivation, methodology, approach.

Formulation of the scientific problem. Teaching grammar is actually not an easy task. It is one of the most difficult aspects in English language teaching. This article provides solutions to some tasks that are raised by teachers in concept of grammar.

Analysis of the latest investigations of the question. The British linguist D.A. Wilkins published a document that proposed a radical shift away from the traditional concepts of grammar and vocabulary to describe language to analysis of the communicative meanings that learners would need in order to express themselves and to understand effectively.

Outlining still unsolved aspects of the problem. When investigating grammar still there are some issues that must be discussed. Grammar is a structure of language that will be discussed all the time. Different researches have different thoughts, even making investigation and looking at different aspects of grammar.

The aim of the article. The process of teaching grammar is very complicated and requires a lot of endeavors from students as well as teachers it is very relevant to divide the whole concept of teaching grammar into pure grammar teaching and grammar testing. Pure grammar teaching presupposes the theoretical approach to grammar teaching which was described in the article.

Presentation of the basic material and interpretation of the results of the investigation

«Grammar is the business of taking a language to pieces, to see how it works.»
(David Crystal)

Grammar is the system of a language. People sometimes describe grammar as the «rules» of a language; but in fact no language has rules. If we use the word «rules», we suggest that somebody created the rules first and then spoke the language, like a new game. But languages did not start like that. Languages started by people making sounds which evolved into words, phrases and sentences. No commonly-spoken language is fixed. All languages change over time. What we call «grammar» is simply a reflection of a language at a particular time.

Some students learn a new language more quickly and easily than others. This simple fact is known by all who have themselves learned a second language or taught those who are using their second language in school. Clearly, some language learners are successful by virtue of their sheer determination, hard work and persistence. However there are other crucial factors influencing success that are largely beyond the control of the learner. These factors can be broadly categorized as internal and external. It is their complex interplay that determines the speed and facility with which the new language is learned [16].

Internal factors are those that the individual language learner brings with him or her to the particular learning situation.

Age: Second language acquisition is influenced by the age of the learner. Children, who already have solid literacy skills in their own language, seem to be in the best position to acquire a new language efficiently. Motivated, older learners can be very successful too, but usually struggle to achieve native-speaker-equivalent pronunciation and intonation.

Personality: Introverted or anxious learners usually make slower progress, particularly in the development of oral skills. They are less likely to take advantage of opportunities to speak, or to seek out such opportunities. More outgoing students will not worry about the inevitability of making mistakes. They will take risks, and thus will give themselves much more practice.

Motivation: Intrinsic motivation has been found to correlate strongly with educational achievement. Clearly, students who enjoy language learning and take pride in their progress will do better than those who don't.

Extrinsic motivation is also a significant factor. ESL students, for example, who need to learn English in order to take a place at an American university or to communicate with a new English boy/girlfriend are likely to make greater efforts and thus greater progress.

Experiences: Learners who have acquired general knowledge and experience are in a stronger position to develop a new language than those who haven't. The student, for example, who has already lived in 3 different countries and been exposed to various languages and cultures has a stronger base for learning a further language than the student who hasn't had such experiences [9].

Cognition: In general, it seems that students with greater cognitive abilities will make the faster progress. Some linguists believe that there is a specific, innate language learning ability that is stronger in some students than in others.

Native language: Students who are learning a second language which is from the same language family as their first language have, in general, a much easier task than those who aren't. So, for example, a Dutch child will learn English more quickly than a Japanese child.

External factors are those that characterize the particular language learning situation.

Curriculum: For ESL students in particular it is important that the totality of their educational experience is appropriate for their needs. Language learning is less likely to place if students are fully submersed into the mainstream program without any extra assistance or, conversely, not allowed to be part of the mainstream until they have reached a certain level of language proficiency.

Instruction: Clearly, some language teachers are better than others at providing appropriate and effective learning experiences for the students in their classrooms. These students will make faster progress [17].

The same applies to mainstream teachers in second language situations. The science teacher, for example, who is aware that she too is responsible for the students' English language development, and makes certain accommodations, will contribute to their linguistic development.

Culture and status: There is some evidence that students in situations where their own culture has a lower status than that of the culture in which they are learning the language make slower progress [18].

Motivation: Students who are given continuing, appropriate encouragment to learn by their teachers and parents will generally fare better than those who aren't. For example, students from families that place little importance on language learning are likely to progress less quickly.

Access to native speakers: The opportunity to interact with native speakers both within and outside of the classroom is a significant advantage. Native speakers are linguistic models and can provide appropriate feedback. Clearly, second-language learners who have no extensive access to native speakers are likely to make slower progress, particularly in the oral/aural aspects of language acquisition [18].

Grammar is a language user's subconscious internal system. It is the system of a language. People sometimes describe grammar as the «rules» of a language; but in fact no language has rules. If we use the word «rules», we suggest that somebody created the rules first and then spoke the language, like a new game. But languages did not start like that. Languages started by people making sounds which evolved into words, phrases and sentences. No commonly-spoken language is fixed. All languages change over time. What we call «grammar» is simply a reflection of a language at a particular time [15].

Grammar adds meanings that are not easily inferable from the immediate context.

The kinds of meanings realised by grammar are principally:

· representational − that is, grammar enables us to use language to describe the world in terms of how, when and where things happen

e.g. *The sun set at 7.30. The children are playing in the garden.*

· interpersonal − that is, grammar facilitates the way we interact with other

people when, for example, we need to get things done using language.

e.g. There is a difference between:

− *Tickets!*

− *Tickets, please.*

− *Can you show me your tickets?*

− *May see your tickets?*

− *Would you mind if I had a look at your tickets.*

Grammar is used to fine-tune the meanings we wish to express [10].

There are many arguments for putting grammar in the foreground in language teaching. Here are seven of them:

1) The sentence-machine argument

Part of the process of language learning must be what is sometimes called item-learning − that is the memorisation of individual items such as words and phrases. However, there is a limit to the number of items a person can both retain and retrieve. Even travellers' phrase books have limited usefulness − good for a three-week holiday, but there comes a point where we need to learn some patterns or rules to enable us to generate new sentences.

2) The fine-tuning argument

The purpose of grammar seems to be to allow for greater subtlety of meaning than a merely lexical system can cater for. While it is possible to get a lot of communicative mileage out of simply stringing words and phrases together, there comes a point where 'Me Tarzan, you Jane'-type language fails to deliver, both in terms of intelligibility and in terms of appropriacy. This is particularly the case for written language, which generally needs to be more explicit than spoken language. For example, the following errors are likely to confuse the reader:

Last Monday night I was boring in my house.

After speaking a lot time with him I thought that him attracted me.

We took a wrong plane and when I saw it was very later because the plane took up.

Five years ago I would want to go to India but in that time anybody of my friends didn't want to go.

The teaching of grammar, it is controversial, serves as a corrective against the kind of ambiguity represented in these examples.

3) The fossilisation argument

It is possible for highly motivated learners with a particular aptitude for languages to achieve amazing levels of proficiency without any formal study. But more often 'pick it up as you go along' learners reach a language plateau beyond which it is very difficult to progress. To put it technically, their linguistic competence fossilises. Research suggests that learners who receive no instruction seem to be at risk of fossilising sooner than those who do receive instruction [14].

4) The advance-organiser argument

Grammar instruction might also have a delayed effect. The researcher Richard Schmidt kept a diary of his experience learning Portuguese in Brazil [18]. Initially he had enrolled in formal language classes where there was a heavy emphasis on grammar. When he subsequently left these classes to travel in Brazil his Portuguese made

good progress, a fact he attributed to the use he was making of it. However, as he interacted naturally with Brazilians he was aware that certain features of the talk − certain grammatical items − seemed to catch his attention. He noticed them. It so happened that these items were also items he had studied in his classes. What's more, being more noticeable, these items seemed to stick. Schmidt concluded that noticing is a prerequisite for acquisition. The grammar teaching he had received previously, while insufficient in itself to turn him into a fluent Portuguese speaker, had primed him to notice what might otherwise have gone unnoticed, and hence had indirectly influenced his learning. It had acted as a kind of advance organiser for his later acquisition of the language.

5) The discrete item argument

Language seen from 'outside', can seem to be a gigantic, shapeless mass, presenting an insuperable challenge for the learner. Because grammar consists of an apparently finite set of rules, it can help to reduce the apparent enormity of the language learning task for both teachers and students. By tidying language up and organising it into neat categories (sometimes called discrete items), grammarians make language digestible. (A discrete item is any unit of the grammar system that is sufficiently narrowly defined to form the focus of a lesson or an exercise: e.g. the present continuous, the definite article, possessive pronouns).

6) The rule-of-law argument

It follows from the discrete-item argument that, since grammar is a system of learnable rules, it lends itself to a view of teaching and learning known as transmission. A transmission view sees the role of education as the transfer of a body of knowledge (typically in the form of facts and rules) from those that have the knowledge to those that do not. Such a view is typically associated with the kind of institutionalised learning where rules, order, and discipline are highly valued. The need for rules, order and discipline is particularly acute in large classes of unruly and unmotivated students − a situation that many teachers of English are confronted with daily. In this sort of situation grammar offers the teacher a structured system that can be taught and tested in methodical steps.

7) The student expectations argument

Regardless of the theoretical and ideological arguments for or against grammar teaching, many students come to language classes with fairly fixed expectations as to what they will do there. These expectations may derive from previous classroom experience of language learning. They may also derive from experience of classrooms in general where (traditionally, at least) teaching is of the transmission kind mentioned above. On the other hand, their expectations that teaching will be grammar-focused may stem from frustration experienced at trying to pick up a second language in a non-classroom setting, such as through self-study, or through immersion in the target language culture. Such students may have enrolled in language classes specifically to ensure that the learning experience is made more efficient and systematic. The teacher who ignores this expectation by encouraging learners simply to experience language is likely to frustrate and alienate them

[12]. In many parts of the world, English language teachers have changed, or are changing, from a traditional approach to teaching formal grammar rules to a more communicative approach to teaching how to use grammar meaningfully in context. When asked why this is happening, English teachers studying in the UK answered as follows:

− A new series of textbooks was introduced, and we had to use them.

− I noticed that children in my class can do the grammar exercises, but they don't use this grammar well if they want to say something for themselves.

− I wanted the children in my class to enjoy grammar more. Most of them don't like rules very much. They find them boring.

− I was very good at English at school, but when I came to England I couldn't understand what people said, and I often didn't know what to say.

− In my country we need better English to develop international business contexts.

− In my country we want to expand tourism, so the government wants more people to be able to use English to speak to tourists from many countries.

− My department head studied in England and she taught us all about the communicative approach.

The Ministry of Education told us we have to change the way we teach.

Interestingly, in some countries there is change towards teaching English grammar more explicitly, and with more of a focus on form [1].

Levels of change: Materials, approaches and beliefs

Just as there are many different reasons for change, so too are there many different kinds, or levels, of change that can take place. Three important levels of change are:

a) Materials, text books, and syllabus: for example, the prescribed textbook might change;

b) Teaching behaviour: a new methodology might be adopted;

c) Knowledge, understanding and belief: a new approach, or philosophy might gain acceptance. It is possible for change to occur in any one of these, or in any two of these levels, but full and meaningful change involves all three working together [2].

First, teachers survey and compare a wide range of materials and resources for teaching grammar so that they learn to identify and critique different syllabuses and activities. Second, they are required to teach a range of activities to their peers. They are given not only the materials to use with the 'students', but also a step by step procedure which states what they should do and say. Many experienced teachers find this hard because they have to change their teaching behaviour. For example, they may be used to telling students rules, but the instructions might be to ask specific questions so that the students tell the teacher the rules in their own words. In this way, teachers on the course experience not only how to teach the activities, but also what it feels like to be a student in such classes. Following the microteaching, we reflect on the experience, what we've learned, what worked, what issues arose and why. Third, we read and discuss research and theories about teaching and

learning grammar to develop an understanding of concepts, processes and issues related to how grammar is learned.

For example, *in the present simple tense, regular verbs in English take an 's' on the 3rd person singular (he walks, she walks, it walks). This kind of information is very useful, but it doesn't tell you when to use the present simple, or what it means.* Communicative approaches to presenting grammar usually include a focus on meaning and use as well as form. Grammar can be taught in many ways − there is no 'best' way that suits all grammar points.

Using personalisation to practise grammar

In class, as in ELT coursebooks, grammar presentation is typically followed by grammar practice [13]. Here is an example of a grammar practice activity from Ur [12, p. 358] that involves creating personal meanings. This exercise assumes that relative clauses have been presented, and are now being practised.

Likes and Dislikes

On a piece of paper write down and complete the following sentences according to your opinion:

1. I like people who ....;
2. I dislike people who ....;

Once everyone is finished, get students to tell each other in groups what they have written and discuss. Write up some on the board to get a profile of the class!

Variations:

3. I like teachers who ....;
4. I dislike teachers who ....…....;
5. I like places where ....;
6. I don't like places where ....…;
7. I like days when ....;
8. I dislike days when ....…;

This activity involves the use of the relative clause to define nouns; composing sentences based on a set pattern; writing and oral interaction. It is simple to prepare, simple to do, can be great fun, but in order to really understand how and why it works, teachers need to DO it. It is not as simple as it may look, particularly when the relative pronoun is not the subject of the relative clause, as in 5−8 When I have used this in class, teachers have realised that this simple but powerful activity has generated the desire to create specific meanings, it has capitalised on the inherent motivation in learning about the values and preferences of others; and is communicative in its creation of information gaps [3, p.56].

Conclusion. The most common reason for teaching grammar as a system for analyzing and labeling sentences has been to accomplish some practical aim or aims, typically the improvement of writing. For decades, however, research has demonstrated that the teaching of grammar rarely accomplishes such practical goals. Relatively few students learn grammar well, fewer retain it, and still fewer transfer the grammar they have learned to improving or editing their writing.

The research surrounding grammar is often conflicting. Grammar, including many aspects of linguistic knowledge-phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics and lexis, is viewed as a tool or an instrument to create comprehension in oral and written discourse rather than something to be learned only at the sentence level. Teaching grammar to is aimed at helping them internalize rules and patterns that can be applied in language use. In so doing, grammatical forms are no longer taught in isolation but in relation to meaning and social functions in context. Grammar instruction is presented both inductively and deductively with concern for such factors as learners' needs, objectives, educational level, learning styles, the frequency and salience of input, the error correction feedback, and the need for varied-meaningful communicative activities and authentic tasks.

References:

1. Biber D., Conrad S., Leech G. Longman Student Grammar of Spoken and Written English / Douglas Biber, Stig Johansson, Geoffrey Leech. − Essex: Longman, 2002. − 313 p.
2. Carter R., McCarthy M. Cambridge Grammar of English: Written and Spoken Grammar and Usage / Ronald Carter, Michael McCarthy. − Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006. − 150 p.
3. De Boer J. Grammar in language teaching: Elementary English / Jan de Boer. − National Council of Teachers of English, 1959. − P. 413-421.
4. Eastwood J. Oxford Practice Grammar / John Eastwood. − Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999. − 434 p.
5. Barham W., Lamb H., Wyllie M. The role of grammar in a secondary English curriculum. Research in the Teaching of English / Warwick Elley, Horace Lamb, Matthew Wyllie. − New York: Macmillan: Encyclopedia of educational research, 1960. − P. 5-21.
6. English Grammar Exercises: [Електронний ресурс]. − Режим доступу: http://www.englisch-hilfen.de/en/exercises_list/alle_grammar.htm
7. English Grammar Reference and Exercises: [Електронний ресурс]. − Режимдоступу: http://www.ego4u.com/en/cram-up/grammar
8. Grammar Exercises: [Електронний ресурс]. − Режим доступу: http://www.english-4u.de/grammar_exercises.htm
9. Hillocks G., Smith M. Handbook of research on teaching the English language arts / George Hillocks, Michael Smith. − New York: Macmillan, 1991. − P. 591-603.
10. Hudson R., Walmsley J. The English Patient: English grammar and teaching in the twentieth century / Richard Hudson, John Walmsley // Journal of Linguistics. − 2005. − P. 593-622.
11. Mc Quade F. Examining a grammar course: The rationale and the result / Francis Mc Quade // English Journal. − 1980. − Vol. 69. − P. 26-30.
12. NCLRC: Essentials of Language Teaching: [Електронний ресурс]. − Режим доступу: http://www.nclrc. org/essentials/grammar/grindex.htm
13. Nelson G., Wallis S., Aarts B., Exploring Natural Language: Working with the British Component of the International Corpus of English / Gerald Nelson, Sean Wallis, Bas Aarts // Varieties of English Around the World series. − 2002. − Vol. 29. − 338 p.

ФІЛОЛОГІЧНІ НАУКИ

14. Nitta R., Gardner S. Consciousness-Raising and Practice in ELT Coursebooks / Ryo Nitta, Sheena Gardner // ELT Journal. – 2005. – Vol. 59. – P. 3-13.
15. Parrott M. Grammar for English Language Teachers Cambridge / Martin Parrott // Cambridge University Press, 2000. – 477 p.
16. Quirk R., Greenbaum S., Leech G., Svartvik J. A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language / Randolph Quirk, Sidney Greenbaum, Geoffrey Leech, Jan Svartvik // London: Longman, 1985. – 128 p.
17. Teaching grammar: [Електронний ресурс]. – Режим доступу: https://www.udemy.com/blog/how-to-teach-grammar/
18. Thornbury S. How to Teach Grammar / Scott Thornbury. – Harlow: Longman, 1999. – 189 p.
19. Thornbury S. Uncovering Grammar / Scott Thornbury. – Oxford: Macmillan Heinemann, 2001. – 20 p.
20. Ur P. Grammar Practice Activities / Penny Ur. – Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988. – 285 p.

Пукаляк М.В., Сорока Л.Т.
Національний університет «Львівська політехніка»

ФАКТОРИ УСПІШНОГО ЗАСВОЄННЯ СТУДЕНТАМИ ГРАМАТИКИ В ПРОЦЕСІ ВИВЧЕННЯ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ

Анотація
У статті подається короткий огляд поняття граматики в контексті вивчення англійської мови. Відомо, що граматика є системою розуміння правил і категорій, яка дозволяє людям створювати та інтерпретувати слова і фрази власної мови. У статті проаналізовано дослідження праць Д. Бібера, С. Конрада, Р. Хадсона, Дж. Уомслі у галузі методики викладання іноземних мов. У статті виявлено фактори, які впливають на викладання та навчання англійської мови. Граматика додає значення, які не легко розпізнати безпосередньо з контексту. Крім навчання граматики передбачається теоретичний підхід до викладання граматики у процесі вивчення англійської мови.
Ключові слова: граматика, навчання, мова, правила, мотивація, методологія, підхід.

Пукаляк М.В., Сорока Л.Т.
Национальный университет «Львовская политехника»

ФАКТОРЫ УСПЕШНОГО УСВОЕНИЯ СТУДЕНТАМИ ГРАММАТИКИ В ПРОЦЕССЕ ИЗУЧЕНИЯ АНГЛИЙСКОГО ЯЗЫКА

Аннотация
В статье представлен краткий обзор понятия грамматики в контексте изучения английского языка. Известно, что грамматика является системой понимания правил и категорий, которая позволяет людям создавать и интерпретировать слова и фразы собственной речи. В статье проанализированы исследования трудов Д. Бибера, С. Конрада, Р. Хадсона, Дж. Уомсли в области методики преподавания иностранных языков. В статье выявлены факторы, которые влияют на преподавание и обучения английского языка. Грамматика добавляет значение, которое не легко распознать непосредственно из контекста. Кроме обучения грамматике предполагается теоретический подход к преподаванию грамматики в процессе изучения английского языка.
Ключевые слова: грамматика, обучение, язык, правила, мотивация, методология, подход.

ФІЛОЛОГІЧНІ НАУКИ