

LEARNING GRAMMAR FOR LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

РОЛЬ ГРАМАТИКИ В ОПАНУВАННІ МОВОЮ

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Along with speaking, reading, writing and listening, grammar is one of the most important skills in the acquisition of a foreign language. It helps people gain new knowledge, keep in touch with friends, and immerse themselves in the fascinating world of literature, history, and other achievements of human intellect. This article draws special attention to learning grammar as the most essential vital skill, crucial in learning English or any other foreign language. The article emphasizes the importance of grammar in a well-rounded education and foreign language learning, considering it as a powerful contributor to learning, personal and intellectual growth. The article describes the importance and necessity of mastering grammar. It also identifies approaches to the teaching and learning of grammar that contribute to the achievement of proficiency. It shows how grammar relates to other skills and how they depend on each other. The article introduces various strategies in teaching grammar and their specific features. All grammar teaching strategies have a specific place and role in achieving fluency, so they are all important for language acquisition. The misconceptions associated with mastering grammar are also discussed in the article. It pays attention to specific steps in teaching and learning grammar. The article highlights the role of grammar in fluency acquisition, particularly accuracy and clarity of communication. The article shows that there is a correlation between language fluency and the level of grammar acquisition. Those who have mastered grammar are good at writing and are successful in any learning process. That's why the level of grammar acquired is so important in language learning. It is also seen as one of the most challenging areas that needs more attention at all levels of education.

Key words: grammar, fluency, language skills, teaching strategies, language acquisition.

Поряд з говорінням, читанням, письмом та аудіюванням, граматики є однією з найважливіших навичок у вивченні іноземної мови. Вона допомагає людям здобувати нові знання, підтримувати зв'язок з друзями, занурюватися у захоплюючий світ літератури, історії та інших досягнень людського інтелекту. У цій статті особлива увага приділяється вивченню граматики як життєвоважливої навички, що має вирішальне значення у вивченні англійської чи будь-якої іншої іноземної мови. Стаття підкреслює важливість граматики у всебічній освіті та вивченні іноземних мов, розглядаючи її як потужний фактор навчання, особистісного та інтелектуального зростання. У статті описано важливість і необхідність оволодіння граматику. Вона також визначає підходи до викладання та вивчення граматики, які сприяють досягненню високого рівня володіння мовою. Показано, як граматики пов'язана з іншими навичками і як вони залежать одна від одної. Стаття знайомить з різними стратегіями викладання граматики та їхніми специфічними особливостями. Усі стратегії навчання граматики мають певне місце і роль у досягненні вільного володіння мовою, тому всі вони є важливими для оволодіння мовою. У статті також обговорюються помилкові уявлення, пов'язані з опануванням граматики. Звертається увага на конкретні кроки у викладанні та вивченні граматики. Підкреслюється роль граматики в оволодінні вільним володінням мовою, зокрема, точністю і ясністю спілкування. У статті показано, що існує кореляція між вільним володінням мовою та рівнем засвоєння граматики. Ті, хто опанував граматику, добре пишуть і досягають успіху в будь-якому навчальному процесі. Ось чому рівень засвоєння граматики так важливий у вивченні мови. Вона також вважається однією з найскладніших сфер, яка потребує більшої уваги на всіх рівнях освіти.

Ключові слова: граматики, вільне володіння мовою, мовні навички, стратегії викладання, вивчення мови.

Problem setting. Grammar is the backbone of language. It determines the structure and function of language expression. Using the correct grammar helps to communicate clearly and accurately. Incorrect grammar can be a source of misunderstanding and misinterpretation and a barrier to effective communication. Speakers with a good command of grammar are able to express more complex ideas. Without it, a person's language may be limited to simple and often fragmented sentences. Learning grammar is the foundation for acquiring fluency and other language skills. In professional and academic settings, correct grammatical structure is a sign of authority and intellectual ability. A lack of knowledge of grammar can have a negative impact on the

image of a person and on the effectiveness of his or her communication in this environment. Knowing the rules of grammar helps students understand complex sentences and texts. It also improves reading comprehension. An understanding of the way grammar works is of fundamental importance to all writers. It is true for any kinds of writing, from a simple sentence to a complex report or a narrative. A systematic understanding of grammar gives learners a basis for organizing and processing new information. It makes language learning more effective and sustainable.

Listening comprehension is the cornerstone of language fluency. Grammar helps students decode spoken language, which often includes colloquialisms and acronyms that can be confusing. Fluency is more

than just vocabulary; it's about being able to express what you're thinking in a structured and coherent way. An advanced level of grammar allows students to formulate their thoughts more quickly and articulate them more smoothly, which is essential for fluency.

Using the correct tense, gender and conjugation in speech affects the accuracy and appropriateness of the language used and how the speaker's message is perceived. Despite its importance, learning grammar can sometimes be frustrating for students because of the misconception that grammar is too complex. They believe that mastering grammar is one of the most difficult parts of language learning. Teaching grammar is indeed a challenging activity that requires patience and professionalism on the part of the teacher. In this article, the author is going to look at why it is important to master the grammar of a new language for those who want to become fluent in it.

Analysis of recent research and publications.

When learning a language, it is often the case that people try to master each skill separately. But language mechanisms are not so easy to separate. Only by working together can they fulfil their mutual responsibility. As Gregg MacMillan said "When learning English, learners should be able to use appropriate structures, good grammar and vocabulary. Grammar shows the forms and structure of words and how they are organized in sentences. In other words, grammar provides the rules for the common use of both spoken and written language so we can more easily understand each other. And grammar is an important language component for forming words and constructing English sentences". [3, p. 126]

At the beginning of the 20th century William Frank Webster said that people "study grammar because a knowledge of sentence structure is an aid in the interpretation of literature; because continual dealing with sentences influences the student to form better sentences in his own composition; and because grammar is the best subject in our course of study for the development of reasoning power" [6, p. 13].

Although the methods of studying grammar have recently undergone significant changes from the years when William Frank Webster lived, the reasons for studying grammar have remained essentially the same. As it was stated on NCTE's Assembly for the Teaching of English Grammar, 2002, grammar "is important because it is the language that makes it possible for us to talk about language. Grammar names the types of words and word groups that make up sentences not only in English but in any language. As human beings, we can put sentences together even as children – we can all do grammar. But to be able to talk about how sentences are built, about the

types of words and word groups that make up sentences – that is knowing about grammar. And knowing about grammar offers a window into the human mind and into our amazingly complex mental capacity" [5, p. 225].

"The study of language is a part of general knowledge" state Sidney Greenbaum and Gerald Nelson. They compare studying grammar with studying the complex working of a human body. To do so people want to understand themselves. They consider the same reason should attract learners "to studying the marvelous complexity of human language..." [4, p. 96].

They also assert that if student understands the nature of language, he/she will realize the ground for their linguistic prejudices and perhaps moderate them. They "will also more clearly assess linguistic issues of public concern, such as worries about the state of the language or what to do about the teaching of immigrants. Studying the English language has a more obvious practical application: It can help you to use the language more effectively" [4, p. 68].

According to linguist David Crystal, "grammar is the structural basis of our ability to express ourselves". The more we are aware of how it works, the more we can monitor the meaning and effectiveness of the way we and others use language. It can help foster precision, detect ambiguity, and exploit the richness of expression available in English. And it can help everyone – not only teachers of English but teachers of anything, for all teaching is ultimately a matter of getting to grips with meaning" [3, p. 146].

He also claims that grammar "is the study of how sentences mean. And that is why it helps. If we want to understand the meaning conveyed by sentences, and to develop our ability to express and respond to this meaning, then the more we know about grammar, the better we will be able to carry out these tasks..." [3, p. 132].

By looking at these explanations of why grammar is important from various English language and education experts, we can realize its nature and its crucial importance.

Setting objectives. It is generally accepted that a mastering of grammar is the fundamental skill in studying as well as in everyday life. Grammar skills are essential basic skills for learning English. While mastering English learners need to practice four language skills for successful communication: reading, speaking, listening and writing. And for mastering all of them grammar knowledge is fundamental. Apparently, it is the grammar that is considered the most important, difficult and challenging skill among all of them. Besides, grammar is a challenging goal

it is also a means of learning. It contributes to the development of other language skills and to overall cognizance. It helps learners to accumulate vocabulary. This process can be voluntary or unintentional. Besides, grammar improves reading and helps in improving writing as there is a special link between reading, writing and grammar. When students read a text in a foreign language and answer the questions or express their opinion about what they have read, they improve their speaking skills. In order to understand what they read better and more fully, and to express their thoughts clearly, they need an appropriate level of grammar. After all, the better they learn grammar, the better their language skills and fluency will be. Therefore, mastering grammar improves all language skills. A good knowledge of grammar is not just a formal detail.

Presenting the main material. Learning grammar can sometimes be a frustrating task for students because of the mistaken belief that grammar is too difficult. The rules and exceptions in grammar can be overwhelming for a great number of students. In reality, however, with the right approach and resources, grammar can be broken down into manageable segments that can be successfully mastered with enough effort.

Another misconception is that grammar is not considered to be necessary for communication. Some people believe that communicative competence can be achieved without a thorough understanding of grammar. While basic ideas can be conveyed without a deep knowledge of grammar, a good knowledge of grammar is necessary for deeper expression and nuanced understanding. In order to overcome the difficulties of learning grammar, here are a few effective strategies:

1. Context Learning. Grammar is more effective to be learnt in context. Some advanced practicing linguists are of the opinion that grammar should only be studied in context. Teacher can use real-life situations, such as in books, films or conversations, for presentation and practice. In this way, students will have a better understanding of the real place of grammar in communication.

2. Regular practice. Regular practice is a must. Grammar can be consolidated and improved through exercises, language apps and interaction with native speakers if any. Textbooks usually have a number of exercises. However, these are usually not enough for full practice. Language applications can test grammar, reading, listening and writing skills. They have a mistake correction and explanation function so they are very helpful.

3. Feedback is required: Corrections and feedback, especially from native speakers, if available, or from language teachers, are invaluable in the acqui-

sition of grammar. Feedback is a formative assessment tool. It uses descriptive, constructive and non-judgmental language. Effective feedback is achieved through a friendly, supportive atmosphere. It helps to overcome shortcomings by establishing a positive interpersonal relationship between the person giving feedback and the person receiving it. It is preferable to provide iterative feedback. This gives learners the opportunity to improve their knowledge before taking the next test.

4. Using technology: There are many apps and online resources designed specifically for learning and practicing grammar that can provide interactive, engaging and fun ways to improve. An example of an application of this type is Test English or Perfect English and others. The benefits of technology in learning English include the ability to do coding, practice online tests or quizzes, improve the speed of answering questions, and improve English test scores.

Understanding grammar is therefore not just a matter of memorizing rules, but of unlocking the potential to make full and effective use of the language. Whether for personal enjoyment, academic success or professional growth, a solid understanding of grammar is undoubtedly crucial to language fluency. The study of grammar is an integral part of language learning and is decisive to the development of language skills. Grammar gives learners an understanding of how words are used to construct sentences and convey meaning.

The ability to express thoughts with accuracy and clarity comes from understanding the mechanics of grammar. Mr. Crystal notes that knowledge of grammar gives us the skills to monitor the meaning and effectiveness of language, so we hear what is being said more clearly and respond accordingly. Furthermore, a strong knowledge of grammar gives people pleasure in the process of expression, response and creation in every human interaction. This simply means that more effective communication is achieved [3, p. 128].

Grammar is not just a matter of avoiding mistakes. And it will not make writing mistakes go away. Brock Haussamen noted that people associate grammar with errors and correctness. Knowledge of grammar can help us to understand what makes texts clear, interesting and precise. When students carefully read sentences in poems and stories, grammar can become part of literary discussions. And knowing grammar means: All languages and all dialects follow grammatical patterns [2, p. 62].

An understanding of the way grammar works is of fundamental importance to all those whose profession is connected with writing, i.e., writers, jour-

nalists, editors etc. The grammar is a very important part of any language. It is important to give students opportunities to express themselves appropriately and to formulate and communicate accurately. Grammar is not just about spelling or punctuation. It is an integral part of language because it allows students to construct sentences and write coherently.

Two more important things about grammar are as follows:

1. *Correctness*: An understanding of the rules of grammar can help students to speak more accurately by using the correct sentence structure, verb forms and word order. People whose language is characterized by correctness use the most appropriate language and the best form of communication for the messages they want to convey. Correctness also means having no grammatical, spelling or other inaccuracies. It is very important to understand the importance of using the right language as it directly affects the dynamics of communication and relationships.

2. *Clarity*: The correct use of grammar contributes to clarity in communication, helping learners to communicate their ideas more effectively. The first important element of language is clarity, or the use of language to make sure the audience understands a speaker's ideas in the way the speaker intended. In order for pupils to progress confidently and take responsibility for their learning, it is essential that teachers and pupils are clear about what they need to learn. They should be clear about the whole concept of learning and the daily steps to achieve it.

Grammar is the way you put words together to make a sentence. This is important because it helps you understand what people are saying and makes what you write and speak clearer. Grammar can be difficult at first, but it gets easier with practice. By learning the rules and patterns of grammar, students can systematically develop their language skills. This helps them build appropriate sentences, expand vocabulary and apply correct grammar, improving their overall language skills. You need to learn grammar if you really want to learn a language.

There are two main approaches to learning grammar: deductive and inductive. The deductive approach is more traditional. The teacher explains the rule and the students do exercises to practice it. The inductive approach is when students themselves come to conclusions about grammatical phenomena through guided discovery. The teacher manages the process of cognition and gives students the opportunity to create a rule on their own.

The former approach is more teacher centered and the latter is more learner centered. There are advantages and disadvantages to both of these methods.

Teacher centered approach saves time, leaving more time for training and practicing. This is why it is a more effective method for lower-level students. An inductive approach is often more engaging and therefore more useful, as it encourages students to draw their own conclusions based on existing knowledge.

A deductive approach is appropriate for a lesson structured as PPP (present, practice, produce). The teacher introduces the target language, then students are given the opportunity to practice it with a series of exercises to consolidate their knowledge. They match sentences with pictures, do substitution exercises, fill in the blanks, and transform sentences. At this stage, when students are just getting acquainted with the new language, it is necessary to control their activities.

Once students have a certain level of proficiency in the use of the target language, they can do more creative exercises, such as: finding someone who..., interviews, filling in information gaps, role playing, problem solving. All these are appropriate activities that give students the opportunity to practice the language in creative ways.

Guided Discovery is aligned with more modern language learning theories that advocate student participation and the development of critical thinking skills and autonomy. It relates to analytic learning and problem solving. It helps learners engage in the learning process and thus make personal connections that anchor their learning.

It is a learner-centered approach that increases participation and fosters collaboration. It empowers learners towards assuming responsibility for their own learning and becoming more autonomous. It is therefore a valid and useful way of approaching language instruction at all levels of language ability

Depending on the complexity of the material, each step may take 20–25 minutes. Although all teachers try to use only English in the classroom, sometimes it is useful for students to compare grammar material with the L1 at the presentation stage. This is especially the case for problematic grammatical structures that the students are not able to transfer into their own language so it is more effective to use L1 for presentation. It is less applicable at higher levels when learners need to compare and contrast several grammatical elements simultaneously and when their linguistic abilities are much less homogeneous. It is important to note that the use of the PPP model does not necessarily preclude the use of inductive approach; some form of guided, learner-centered discovery can be built into the presentation phase. PPP is only one of the models for planning a lesson. Other models are: TTT (Test, Teach, Test), ARC (Authentic

use, Restricted use, Clarification and focus) and ESA (Engage, Study, Activate). Since all the models have their advantages and disadvantages, teachers usually use different models depending on the lesson, grade, level, and student style and so use deductive or inductive approach for teaching grammar.

Conclusion. The importance of learning English grammar is therefore reflected in all aspects of life – from academic success to professional achievement and relationships with friends and family. A lot of practical linguists in their publications emphasize the fundamental role that grammar plays in effective communication. To be effective language users, learners need to learn grammar because grammar skills help

them to organize words and messages and give them meaning. Knowledge of grammar will enable learners to construct better sentences when speaking and writing. Good grammar allows them to express themselves accurately in a variety of contexts, from casual conversation to academic writing. Good grammar also enhances their credibility as writers and communicators because it shows attention to detail and respect for language. Ultimately, as students embark on their educational journeys and professionals build their careers, a strong command of English grammar is key to success. At all levels of education, grammar is one of the most challenging areas that needs more attention.

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