

## DIFFERENT APPROACHES OF STUDYING GRAMMAR

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### **Анотація**

*Викладанню граматики іноземної мови завжди приділялася велика увага. В ході історії було розроблено декілька підходів до навчання граматики. На сьогоднішній день комунікативний підхід до навчання іноземним мовам і навчання, що базується на виконанні поставлених завдань визнані як такі, що сприяють формуванню комунікативних навичок у студентів, як усних так і письмових, роблячи акцент на спілкуванні наближеному до реального життя..*

### **Ключові слова**

*Викладання граматики, формування граматичних навичок, граматики-перекладний метод, аудіо-лінгвальний метод, комунікативний підхід, навчання, що базується на виконанні поставлених завдань, контрольована діяльність, контрольована практика*

### **Abstract**

*Much attention has always been paid to teaching grammar of a foreign language under study to students. Different approaches have been developed throughout the historical timeline. But as for now, Communicative Language Teaching and Task-Based Language Teaching are considered to be the ones that facilitate communication both written and oral. These approaches put focus on communication related to the realistic use of language in context.*

### **Keywords**

*Grammar teaching, grammar skills development, Grammar-Translation Method, Audio-Lingual Method, Communicative Language Teaching, Task-Based Language Teaching, controlled activities, controlled practice*

The study of any foreign language is inseparably connected with mastering the grammar of the language under study. To begin with, let us answer the questions “What is grammar?” and “Why people who learn English as a Second Language need it?”, “What works in teaching grammar?”

On the one hand, grammar is the system of a language. But no commonly spoken language is fixed. All languages change over the time. What we call grammar is simply a reflection of a language at a particular time.

Teachers and researchers agree that effective grammar pedagogy should support the process of second language learning. Larsen-Freeman believes that people need grammar in real-life situations to express meanings, therefore the goal of teaching grammar should be successful communication. In order to meet that goal, it is important to let the students practice grammar in meaningful communicative contexts so drilling grammatical structures is not enough. This way they can transfer the skills learned in the classroom to everyday situations in the real world outside the classroom setting. [1]

It is interesting to note that Larsen-Freeman does not consider grammar as an area of knowledge but actually as a skill or a dynamic process whereby the students learn how to use grammar meaningfully and communicatively. She argues that teachers should educate their students about the appropriate use of grammatical forms and why certain forms are more appropriate than others in different situations. That way they can ensure that their students also know how to use language appropriately and not just accurately. [2]

How does grammar practice help students? According to Scott Thornbury [3], grammar practice helps students:

1. Improve their accuracy (use correct grammar);
2. Improve their fluency (speak and write without pauses and get their meaning across);
3. Reorganize their knowledge, integrate new knowledge into old ones.

Grammar has always held a central role in EFL classrooms but the ways of teaching it have varied significantly throughout the timeline. There have been some main approaches of the grammar teaching. For example, Grammar-Translation Method was the most common way of learning languages for hundreds of years. In a typical grammar translation lesson, grammar is taught deductively: the teacher presents the grammar rules, provides long and detailed explanations and gives examples (usually a list of isolated sentences), and students study the rules and practice grammar through translation exercises. A lot of attention is paid to reading and writing; little attention is paid to speaking and listening. Most of the interaction is from the teacher to the student; there is very little student-student interaction. The ultimate goal is to achieve accuracy, that is, to produce grammatically correct sentences.

On the contrary, Audio-Lingual Methodology gave students a lot of speaking practice by using habit-formation drills. Students repeated sentences again and again until they were memorized. One of the main components of audio-lingual – language drilling – is still used in many lessons because many teachers and students believe that frequent repetition is a key to successful learning.

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) focuses on the idea that people learn language if they have opportunities to use it, and that if students have a desire to communicate and a purpose for communicating (rather than just practicing a grammar item), and then the language learning will take care of itself. In CLT, students do many speaking and writing tasks, trying to use any and all of the language that they can. CLT focuses more on content than on form; it puts focus on communication related to the realistic use of language in context. It concentrates on how successfully students can communicate, rather than on whether they are speaking or writing correctly. Correction often takes place after the students have tried to speak or write communicatively.

A more recent version of CLT, Task-Based Language Teaching, deals with grammar through focus on form. ‘Focus on form’ refers to bringing grammar to the attention of language learners as a part of communicative language practice. Focusing on grammar for grammar’s sake does little to contribute to correctness during communication. On the other hand, making students aware of grammar structures or helping them notice certain grammatical features while they are engaged in completing communicative tasks can contribute to the development of greater accuracy during communication.

In their practice most teachers don’t follow the only one method, but use elements of many different approaches.

Linguists and researchers in the field of the languages teaching have developed a number of tips of the successful grammar teaching:

- Grammar is brought to students’ attention as a part of communicative language practice.
- In a communicative lesson, the target grammar structure is a vehicle for communication, not just the object of study.
- The students are primarily focused on the message - on ‘what’ is said rather than ‘how’ it is said.
- The students feel a desire to communicate because they are asked to talk about themselves and contribute their ideas.
- Communicative grammar tasks also contain some kind of ‘gap’ - information, opinion, affect or reason - which students seek to bridge.
- The teacher’s role is to make students aware of grammar structures or help them notice certain grammatical features while they are engaged in completing communicative tasks.
- The teacher is also facilitator establishing situations likely to promote communication and the use of target grammar structures.
- Communicative grammar teaching is not mechanical. Rather than asking students to focus on definitions and rules, teachers may focus on imparting instructional strategies where the focus is on creative usage of grammar.

It is for the teacher to decide what grammar practice activities he will choose to master this or that grammar structure. On the whole all grammar practice activities to be applied at the lessons can be subdivided into controlled activities and controlled practice. Controlled activities include repetition and drills which presupposes - repeating structural patterns through oral practice. While performing controlled practice students have freedom to somewhat personalize the language and the target grammar structure, contribute their own ideas.

Overall, to achieve success in grammar teaching, teachers should provide students with frequent practice in both understanding and producing the newly learned forms; practice activities should be meaningful and

engaging, students should use the target structure to engage in communication or express their own views. Practice activities should help the students overcome learning difficulties.

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