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COGNITIVE AND COMMUNICATIVE APPROACHES TO TEACHING GRAMMAR IN ESP CLASSES

Summary. *The paper considers the results of the analysis of cognitive and communicative approaches applied by educators to teach grammar in ESP classes. The development of grammatical competence is crucial for learning English, and it is especially important in ESP learning due to its objective to use English in specific professional or academic contexts with specialized terminology and complex syntax. There is a close connection between grammar knowledge and learning methods. By focusing on grammar, ESP learners can develop their competence through both procedural knowledge and declarative knowledge. Contemporary research on teaching grammar offers valuable insights into the methodology based on several approaches, among which cognitive (including both deductive and inductive learning) and communicative play the most important role in teaching grammar. Educators are using these approaches in teaching ESP.*

Key words: *ESP teaching, language acquisition, grammar knowledge, cognitive approach, communicative approach.*

Introduction. English for specific purposes (ESP) is a branch of applied linguistics, the purpose of which is to teach students how to use English as a foreign language in a particular domain. The content of ESP is oriented to the specific needs of the learners and focuses on the development of language skills appropriate to the specific activities in terms of vocabulary, grammar, writing, reading and listening comprehension. ESP is a specialized area that focuses on teaching English with the objective of enabling learners to use English in specific professional or academic contexts. A fundamental aspect of ESP courses is that they are designed around the specific linguistic and communicative needs of the learners. According to B. Paltridge and S. Starfield [1, p. 2], these courses concentrate on the particular language, skills, and genres that are essential for the learners' specific activities in English. From the point of view of T. Dudley-Evans & M. St. John [2, p. 5], a core characteristic of ESP is its emphasis on the language appropriate for these specific tasks, encompassing aspects such as grammar, vocabulary, study skills, discourse, and genre. The distinctive features of ESP language with specialized terminology, and complex syntax can influence learners' tolerance for ambiguity and levels of anxiety in learning.

Grammar, which involves the structural aspects of a language, is important for constructing meaningful sentences. Mastering grammar is essential for effective use of language skills such as reading, speaking, listening, and writing in the context of ESP. Therefore, it is important to give significant attention to grammar instruction in ESP courses. The aim of teaching grammar goes beyond general English learning and is also vital in the context of ESP. However, approaches to teaching grammar are often not given enough attention by teachers in ESP settings. This study seeks to offer useful insights and recommendations for ESP educators.

The role of grammar in acquiring ESP knowledge

In the context of ESP learning, grammar is essential for understanding the meanings and functions that sentences convey. According to V. Cook, regardless

of how important different elements of language may be, grammar serves as the connective framework that links them all [3, p. 14].

Grammar plays a significant role in several areas of ESP learning. R. Ellis [4, p. 25] outlines ten general principles for effective language learning, highlighting as the first principle the need for instruction to help learners develop both a broad set of formulaic expressions and a rule-based grammatical competence. The researcher also emphasizes that achieving proficiency in ESP requires from learners the development of skills that support fluency in communication, alongside a strong rule-based competence that involves understanding specific grammatical rules to ensure complexity and accuracy [4, p. 26].

Broadly speaking, grammar fulfils two primary functions in ESP learning: enhancing comprehensible input and monitoring effective output. Enhancing comprehensible input means that learners use their grammar knowledge to solve difficulties they encounter in reading comprehension. When faced with complex sentences that are hard to understand, learners need to analyse the structure, functions, and relationships between sentence components to grasp the meaning. Monitoring effective output, on the other hand, refers to overseeing the correctness of oral and written expressions. Even after studying ESP for several years, many learners still make errors in speaking or writing, indicating they have not fully utilized their grammatical knowledge to refine and adjust their language output. By focusing on grammar learning, ESP learners can develop their grammatical competence through both procedural knowledge (how to use grammar) and declarative knowledge (understanding grammar rules). Thus, grammar in ESP learning not only aids learners in forming more accurate sentences but also helps them use diverse structures to express ideas effectively in various communicative situations.

Effective approaches to grammar knowledge acquisition

Foreign Language Acquisition is known as a process of acquiring complex cognitive skills, with grammar learning playing a vital role, alongside learning strategies. The automated use of strategic components aids in the automatic application of grammatical knowledge, thereby enhancing language proficiency. According to J. O'Malley and A. Chamot [5, p. 196], learning methods have a direct impact on language acquisition and grammar acquisition. Conversely, a lack of grammatical knowledge can undermine the effectiveness of learning methods, which in turn can affect overall language acquisition. A. Cohen [6, p. 221] illustrates the relationship between grammar and learning methods, suggesting that employing appropriate methodology can lead to more grammatically accurate speech. He also notes that learners often identify necessary grammatical features as part of their speaking process. Besides that, V. Vicenta points out that learning strategies facilitate the acquisition of grammatical elements by enabling learners to notice them consciously, organize them in memory, and practice them until they become automatic and ready for spontaneous use [7, p. 12].

Learners initially focus on grammar rules to convert them into declarative knowledge. With sufficient practice and feedback, these rules are restructured and automated, transforming grammatical knowledge into procedural knowledge. This shift frees up cognitive resources to focus on other aspects of the foreign language. Learning methods themselves are viewed as complex skills, and their automation can support grammar acquisition. These methods must be applied throughout the process to ensure effective grammar and language learning.

Learning is fundamentally a cognitive process within the learner, and teaching serves to facilitate this process. From the point of view of H. Brown, it is crucial for teachers to understand how learning occurs to help learners manage key aspects of their learning journey [8, p. 2]. Therefore, contemporary research on teaching grammar offers valuable insights into the methodology based on

several approaches among which cognitive and communicative are the most effective.

Broadly speaking, there are two main methods of teaching and learning grammar in terms cognitive approach. The first is deductive method, which involves teaching grammar by presenting rules and specific information about the language upfront. Learners are then expected to apply these rules as they use the language. J. Richards et al. highlight that teaching methods, focusing heavily on grammatical rules, such as the Grammar Translation Method, are based on deductive learning principles [9, p. 123].

The second method is inductive method, where learners are not explicitly taught grammatical rules. Instead, they are encouraged to infer rules based on their experiences with the language. This method prioritizes the practical use of language over the direct teaching of its structure, with approaches like the Direct Method, Communicative Approach, and Counselling Learning employing inductive learning principles [9, p. 128].

The deductive method involves explicit grammar instruction, while the inductive method is more implicit. Ideally, grammar-focused exercises should evolve into meaningful activities and eventually lead to tasks that emphasize effective communication. The importance of grammar in language instruction suggests that a balanced approach, integrating both explicit and implicit grammar teaching, is necessary for effective learning.

Moreover, another approach to grammar teaching is the explicit inductive method, as suggested by V. Vicenta [7, p. 15]. In this approach, learners are given grammar explanations that they can refer to throughout their learning process, after they have had a chance to discover the rules for themselves. According to R. Ellis [4, p. 57], explicit knowledge can aid in the development of implicit knowledge by helping learners process and internalize language input.

W. Grauberg [10, p. 36) underscores the importance of learning grammar for effective communication, noting that misunderstanding the impact of word

form or position changes can alter the meaning of a message. Effective communication relies on the ability to construct sentences using internalized grammatical knowledge [10, p. 72].

The communicative approach is based on the idea that acquiring practical language knowledge is successful through real communication. When learners participate in communication, they practice their language skills. This helps them in developing knowledge acquisition in order to use the language for certain purposes.

The communicative approach to teaching grammar focuses on integration of general linguistic knowledge and an ability to use the language correctly. It also aims to strengthen fluency encouraging learners to encounter with real life situations based on appropriate grammatical structures.

Grammar and communication are interrelated and support each other. Errors stemming from interlanguage can lead to miscommunication, but it is important to recognize that fluency and accuracy should complement each other rather than be viewed as opposing goals.

Characteristic features of successful grammar learning

R. Ellis [4, p. 65] identifies several features of successful teaching and learning language: (1) attention to linguistic form, (2) focus on meaning and communication, (3) active engagement in the learning process, (4) awareness of how to learn, and (5) adaptability in using strategies that suit the specific tasks. Many researchers agree with these five distinguishing features.

J. O'Malley and A. Chamot [5, p. 206] explore the link between grammar learning and the strategies employed by successful learners, pointing out such methods as: deduction, induction, translation, and transfer. They suggest that more focus should be placed on how these methods are associated with learning grammar.

Thus, methods for successful learning grammar can include explicit deduction, implicit induction, communication, and a focus on both proficiency

and accuracy. Additionally, many English learners still recall the influence of the traditional grammar-translation method, which often emphasized learning grammar for its own sake. It is argued that grammar instruction should be connected to context and function, as grammar is fundamentally used to improve comprehensible input and to regulate effective output. Meaningful grammar learning occurs when connections between context and text, as well as function and form, are established. Effective use of methodology can enhance learners' acquisition of grammatical knowledge, helping them master the forms and functions necessary for understanding and producing language. However, there is a lack of research specifically focused on applying teaching strategies and learning methods to grammar acquisition.

Conclusion and recommendations. To summarize the research, it is worth pointing out that educators should recognize the importance of incorporating appropriate methodology in teaching grammar to ESP learners. They need to identify which methodological approaches are most effective for their learners. By doing so, teachers can guide students in selecting and mastering useful grammar learning methods. As B. Jones et al. [11, p. 56] suggest, it's crucial for teachers to help ESP learners understand that their challenges may stem from ineffective methods rather than from personal shortcomings or lack of effort. Consequently, training in grammar learning methods not only supports the ultimate goal of developing grammatical proficiency through both declarative and procedural knowledge, but also enhances learners' overall learning capabilities, which are essential for academic success.

Besides that, cognitive approaches should be applied in teaching ESP grammar. The deductive approach, or explicit instruction, involves teaching grammar rules and providing specific information about ESP, which learners then apply in practice. Conversely, the inductive approach, or implicit instruction, encourages learners to discover grammatical rules through their experiences with the language.

In addition, fluency and accuracy should be viewed as complementary rather than opposing goals, with grammar and communication influencing each other. Effective communication relies on internalized grammatical knowledge. Thus, not only cognitive but also communicative approach is recommended for teaching grammar. Teachers should design tasks that focus on specific grammatical forms and meanings, guiding learners to integrate these forms into their reading, speaking, listening, and writing skills, ultimately improving their ability to use grammar effectively in communication.

Moreover, while the use of the mother tongue can sometimes hinder practice in ESP, it should be used judiciously. The mother tongue can aid in turning input into intake and clarifying structural differences between it and ESP, but excessive reliance on it should be avoided to maximize opportunities for practicing ESP.

Finally, teachers should encourage ESP learners to develop positive attitudes towards grammar learning and to engage in both autonomous and collaborative study. This approach will enhance their skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing in specific professional or academic contexts, and contribute to overall improvement in their ESP proficiency.

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