

EFFECTIVE APPROACHES TO TEACHING ENGLISH GRAMMAR IN THE EFL CLASSROOM

ABORDĂRI EFICIENTE PENTRU PREDAREA GRAMATICII LIMBII ENGLEZE ÎN CLASA DE ENGLEZĂ CA LIMBĂ STRĂINĂ

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Abstract: *The present paper deals with various approaches to teaching English grammar. Its main purpose is to determine whether traditional or modern methods of teaching English grammar in the EFL classroom are more effective. The research starts from the general hypothesis that the mixed application of teaching methods has a significant role in increasing the quality of school performance and the level of motivation for learning among students. From a methodological point of view, the study is based on a quantitative approach, using the questionnaire-based survey method. The sample consists of teachers and students from general and vocational education. The results obtained highlight the fact that interactive activities and games have a positive impact on students' motivation to learn grammar. Finally, the study provides strategic directions for further investigation in the field of grammar teaching, as well as suggestions for maximising efficiency.*

Keywords: *EFL Classroom, modern and traditional methods, approaches, teaching grammar*

Abstract: *Prezenta teză tratează diverse abordări ale predării gramaticii limbii engleze. Scopul său principal este de a stabili dacă metodele tradiționale sau cele moderne de predare a gramaticii limbii engleze în sala de clasă de limba engleză ca limbă străină sunt mai eficiente. Cercetarea pornește de la ipoteza generală conform căreia aplicarea combinată a metodelor de predare joacă un rol semnificativ în îmbunătățirea performanțelor școlare și a nivelului de motivație pentru învățare în rândul elevilor. Din punct de vedere metodologic, studiul se bazează pe o abordare cantitativă, utilizând metoda sondajului bazat pe chestionar. Eșantionul este format din profesori și elevi din învățământul general și profesional. Rezultatele obținute evidențiază faptul că activitățile interactive și jocurile au un impact pozitiv asupra motivației elevilor de a învăța gramatica. În final, studiul oferă direcții strategice pentru investigații ulterioare în domeniul predării gramaticii, precum și sugestii pentru maximizarea eficienței.*

Cuvinte-cheie: *clasa de limba engleză ca limbă străină, metode tradiționale și moderne, abordări, predarea gramaticii*

Grammar is indispensable for success at school, as it enables students to express themselves clearly and be correctly understood. In the current reality of the development of education, the diversification of traditional and modern teaching methods is a topic of major interest for both researchers and experts in the field. Grammar is a fundamental component of the educational process, essential for effective understanding and for oral and written communication in English lessons.

Grammar is the sound, structure, and meaning system of a language, a set of rules defining how language is structured. If there were no rules for structuring, sentences would

not have coherence, and effective conversation would not be possible. Knowledge of grammatical rules helps people express their thoughts and correctly understand the message conveyed to them. Some teachers may have a less positive attitude toward teaching grammar, as they consider it not essential for students' language development in today's era of communicative language teaching. However, the main goal should be to develop communication skills and use the language in real situations, rather than students memorising grammar mechanically.

There are three basic approaches to the learning and teaching process referring to the grammatical component: the inductive approach, the deductive approach, and the communicative language learning- approach to learning a language in general. The deductive approach focuses on the explicit exposition of structures and the mastery of grammatical rules. This approach starts with the rule and then applies it through practical examples helping students understand the rules before using them in practice. The inductive method means that teachers first present authentic language materials to students, and then students summarise the rules reflecting a language phenomenon after observing, analysing, and synthesising language phenomena. The Communicative Language Teaching is defined as an approach of teaching a second or a foreign language that focuses on learners' interaction whether as the means or the ultimate goal of learning a target language.

The research aims to analyse the students' and teachers' perceptions regarding the use of three traditional methods of teaching grammar (Grammar Translation Method, Direct Method and Audiolingual Method) and three modern methods (Flipped Classroom, Task Based Language Teaching, Digital learning) in the context of English as a foreign language. To this end, the questionnaire method was used. A number of 352 students aged between 12-19, who study at Vocational School No. 2, Mihai Eminescu Theoretical High School, and Ioan Vodă Theoretical High School in Cahul participated in the research. Additionally, a number of 35 English language teachers, with diverse teaching experience, were included in the research. The questionnaires were specifically designed to collect quantitative data. Data were collected using an online tool, namely Google Forms.

The questionnaires comprised the following sections: general data of the participants, teaching strategies for introducing grammar, learning experience, activities for practicing and memorising grammar rules, classroom management, feedback, teacher competence and confidence, application of knowledge of grammar rules, difficulties in teaching and learning grammar, modern methods, evaluation, motivation, satisfaction, improving grammar lessons, effectiveness of teaching methods and improvement of grammar lessons.

The data collected indicates that the majority of students study English language for more than 6 years (39.8%). 37.1% of the students responded that they understand grammar rules better through the teacher's explanations and examples. The most common difficulty students encounter is applying grammar rules in sentences. Nonetheless, they report that interactive activities and games are the most effective way to cope with the difficulties in learning grammar.

From the analysis of teachers' responses, the most frequently applied strategy for memorising grammar rules is written exercises (85.7%), followed by interactive games and activities (77.1%). Written exercises are a predominantly traditional method of learning and assessing students' knowledge, while interactive games and activities are a relatively modern method of teaching grammar. According to the results of the survey, traditional methods are more frequently used in school than modern ones, but students' preference is for modern methods such as interactive games. Consequently, teachers tend to employ modern methods of teaching grammar as well, since the most motivating factor for them is receiving positive feedback from students. Furthermore, the findings demonstrate that the vast majority of

teachers (77,8%) use different combinations of traditional and modern methods of teaching grammar depending on the lesson topic and objectives.

The frequency of grammatical errors during the teachers' foreign language lessons are often corrected, which demonstrates that students receive feedback. The teacher and the student maintain an active communication, without being constantly interrupted. The approach avoids overloading the students and is balanced due to the accuracy and development of fluency.

As far as the level of confidence in explaining grammar rules is concerned, almost a half (48.6%) of teachers reported being confident or very confident. These results seem to demonstrate that teachers have extensive experience and receive continuous professional training. Despite the high level of confidence in explaining grammar rules to students, some teachers still encounter difficulties in teaching more complex grammar topics.

The students who completed the questionnaire noted that practical exercises help them significantly in learning grammar. It is worth mentioning that, although written exercises are important, they are not sufficient for complex grammar learning. They should be accompanied by speaking exercises involving real-life communication for better results. Some students may need additional explanations from teachers to combine grammar theory and practice. Moreover, boring activities can reduce students' interest and involvement during classes. In the future, teachers have the opportunity to introduce engaging activities using interactive whiteboards in the classroom. By using technology, student involvement and motivation increases.

The paper highlights the need to combine traditional and modern methods to ensure a more efficient educational approach adapted to the individual needs of students. The integration of interactive and student-centred activities increases motivation and improves academic success. To help students develop the ability to apply grammar rules, it is necessary to increase their motivation and encourage teachers to use real communication situations, more speaking-based exercises, and interactive activities through technology. Individualised feedback and differentiated correction from the teacher are an opportunity for students to reduce errors and apply grammar skills correctly.

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