PEDAGOGICAL GRAMMAR
AS THE FRAMEWORK OF TEFL RESEARCH.
PART 4. FOREIGN LANGUAGE ACQUISITION:
STRATEGIES, PROCEDURES AND PROCESSES.

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The paper deals with the problems of the foreign language acquisition (FLA), focusing on the notions of 'build-up', 'breakdown', 'completion', 'pivot grammar', 'fronting' and 'telegraphic speech', as well as their role in the acquisition. The analysis showed that, similar to the native language acquisition (NLA), the purpose of the first three procedures seems to be the verification of the cognitive organizer's hypotheses concerning the underlying grammar rules. Using the data of the original experiments, the author analyses the mechanism of fronting, which is (in some aspects) similar to the pivot grammar, the child's first systemic grammar, a characteristic feature of the language development at the word-combination stage in the NLA. Basing on his own experimental observation, the author concludes that fronting is not an accidental sentence elements rearrangement, but a rule-governed communication behaviour, which reflects the individual's intuitive grammar composition at a particular stage of its development. This conclusion is supported by the fact that the same patterns were systematically used both by the same subjects and by other subjects in the same group. The author claims that such sentences indicate the intuitive grammar configuration. Basing on it, the students generate sentences of the similar structure, which they did not and could not hear or see in their environment, and which contradict the explicit grammar rules they had been given as the part of their formal tuition.The author corroborates the assumption that, similar to the NLA, the 'telegraphic speech' is a logical outcome of the students' intuitive grammar application, taking into account the distinctive feature of the latter – skipping function words and grammar morphemes. The paper argues in favour of further research directed at the establishment of the degree of similarity between

the native language acquisition, on the one hand, and the foreign language acquisition – on the other. The data obtained in such research could be taken into account in the process of Pedagogical Grammar development.

Key words: breakdown, build-up, completion, fronting, grammar acquisition, native and foreign language acquisition, pivot grammar, telegraphic speech.

Черноватий Л.М. Педагогічна граматика як фреймове поняття для досліджень у галузі методики навчання іноземних мов. Частина 4. Засвоєння іноземної мови: стратегії, процедури і процеси. Наведено результати аналізу даних оригінальних експериментальних досліджень у сфері засвоєння граматики англійської мови як іноземної. Розглянуто зміст понять «нарощування», «розчленування», «доповнення», «комбінування» та «телеграфне мовлення». Визначено їхню роль у засвоєнні граматики англійської мови як іноземної та їхні відмінності, порівняно з процесом засвоєння англійської мови як рідної. Окреслено зміст подальших досліджень, спрямованих на встановлення ступеня подібності між процесами засвоєння граматики рідної та іноземної мов з метою їх урахування при розробці педагогічної граматики іноземної мови.

Ключові слова: доповнення, засвоєння граматики, засвоєння рідної та іноземної мов, комбінування, нарощування, розчленування, телеграфне мовлення.

Черноватый Л.Н. Педагогическая грамматика как фреймовое понятие для исследований в области методики обучения иностранным языкам. Часть 4. Усвоение иностранного языка: стратегии, процедуры и процессы. Приводятся результаты анализа данных оригинальных экспериментальных исследований в области усвоения грамматики английского языка как иностранного. Рассмотрены понятия «наращивание», «расчленение», «дополнение», «комбинирование» и «телеграфная речь». Определена их роль в усвоении грамматики английского языка как иностранного, а также их отличия по сравнению с процессом усвоения английского языка как родного. Очерчено содержание дальнейших исследований, направленных на установление степени сходства между процессами усвоения грамматики родного и иностранного языков с целью их учета в процессе разработки педагогической грамматики иностранного языка.

Ключевые слова: дополнение, комбинирование, наращивание, расчленение, телеграфная речь, усвоение грамматики, усвоение родного и иностранного языков.

Introduction to the series. Numerous research in teaching foreign languages, specifically in the development of grammar competence, often seem to lack a common framework to integrate them into a single area with uniform approaches, terminology and criteria. It accounts for the *current importance* of the issue under consideration.

The **object** of this paper is the comparative aspect of the native (NLA) and foreign languages acquisition (FLA) with the **subject** being the characteristics of the FLA. The **aim** of this study is to analyse the latter with the purpose of its comparison with the NLA. This is the fourth (see [3; 4; 5]) in a series of articles focusing on the Pedagogical Grammar (PG) issue [7; 8], where the author, basing on the research data, is planning to discuss the various aspects of the problem.

As it was mentioned in the first article of the series [3], the development of an efficient PG should be based on an adequate FLA psycholinguistic model. Such PG has to take into account the regularities of the speech grammar mechanisms development in general and the foreign language grammar mechanisms in particular, specifically in the aspects where the NLA and FLA processes are different. In the previous paper [5], we examined several strategies, procedures and processes in the NLA, while in this article we are going to review the same phenomena observed in the acquisition of English as a foreign language, which would be used for the comparison with the NLA (see also [1]).

According to the findings reported earlier [5], the NLA involves certain strategies, procedures and processes, such as *build-up*, *breakdown*, *completion*, *pivot grammar* and *telegraphic speech*. The *build-up* procedure is characterised by adding one element at a time to the preceding word or word combination in the pauses that the child makes to repeat the sentence fragment from the very beginning (*baby… eat … baby eat … cookie … baby eat cookie*). In the course of *breakdown* the child splits the word combination into its constituents (*walking around… around, there baby … there*), while in *completion* he/she completes the grammatical subject to form a finished clause: *mommy … comb hair, cow …stand up* (all examples are from [6: 248]). The child's pivot grammar [2] includes a limited amount of pivot class words (divided into sentence-initial pivots (*P1*) and sentence-final pivots (*P2*)), as well as a larger open class category (O). The pivot grammar rules [2] allow such combinations as *P1+O, O+P2* and *O+O,* but do not permit the *P+P* or *P* sentences.

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Finally, the child's *telegraphic speech*, based on the underlying pivot grammar, is characterised by skipping function words and grammar morphemes. As it was mentioned in our previous paper [4], the presence of identical features in the FLA could be viewed as an argument in favour of the NLA and FLA processes similarity in this aspect.

For the sake of comparing the said processes, we analysed the data from the FLA research [1]. The subjects included over 180 Ukrainian adults learning English as a foreign language in various formal settings: group A (factory technicians and engineers), group B (university students and professionals), group C (individual classes). Neither of the subjects had had any command of English before the classes started. The observation period ranged from 9 to 24 months. The obtained data allows assuming that in spite of the substantial variability of the language acquisition environment, all NLA strategies, procedures and processes are present in the FLA as well.

Thus, the build-up procedure was quite common among all subjects without exception. For example, many group-A subjects, even after nine months of study, continued occasionally using it: *The…the tree…the tree is green, I've got… I've got… a living room… I've got a living room.* The extent of this strategy application varied, depending on the FLA stage, as well as on the subjects' individual characteristics. At the beginning, all subjects paused after nearly each fragment of their sentences, presumably to select their next elements. In due time, the amount of the build-up instances gradually decreased and finally the subjects abandoned this strategy altogether. Nevertheless, it took 7-8 months for group-B subjects and twice as long for some of the group-A students to get rid of it.

Completion turned out to be a more frequent strategy than the build-up. It had been applied to varying degrees by virtually all subjects and at all stages of acquisition. However, while at the more advanced stages, it is used for the reasons of higher order, such as the selection of a word or a structure for the better representation of the speaker's intention, the picture at the lower stages is completely different. At the beginner's level, the subjects' spontaneous utterances were almost entirely generated by means of build-up and completion. As a result, such sentences could be quite difficult to comprehend. The fact that the subjects often fell short of finishing their sentences, while skipping the sentence elements, did not make it any easier. To crown it all, it was accompanied by numerous

systematic and non-systematic substitutions and additions: subject 7 – *From the... from the...20 to 7... half...to 7... wait...bus (= From 20 past 7 to half past 7 I wait for the bus)*; subject 8 – *I am not go, it a... bank...wall the bank (= I can't go any further. There is a wall of the bank here)*; subject 9 – *But... we...you...we must... go home... morning (= But we must go home in the morning)*.

All subjects used the breakdown procedure (e.g. subject 4: *The old woman sit on a throne... throne...*; subject 5: *There are big carpet on the floor... on the floor*; subject 6: *It seemed... that the watch wanted... wanted... the watch wanted...*), but its frequency was relatively low as compared with the other two strategies.

Pivot grammar and the FLA. On their way towards the regular English grammar system, adults in the FLA go through a stage, which resembles the child's pivot grammar in the NLA. Fronting (moving the emphasised element to the front of the sentence) is the principal mechanism here. It may involve nouns, for example: *Andrew, husband is Mary (= Andrew is Mary's husband)*; *Husband is Linda name Nick (= Linda's husband's name is Nick)*; *Husband Linda's name is Nick (= Linda's husband's name is Nick)*; *Wife Adam name is Jane (= Adam's wife's name is Jane)*; *Name my son is John (=My son's name is John)*; *He name husband is Linda? (= What is Linda's husband's name?)*; *Name is father John (= Father's name is John)*; *Name Linda's husband is Jack (= Linda's husband's name is Jack)*. Another common type of fronting is location-oriented: *In the bottle, many shampoo? (= Is there much shampoo in the bottle?)*; *In the park, three bars (= There are three bars in the park)*; *Is at kitchen a hot water? (= Is there hot water in the kitchen?)*; *In our room has got a TV-set? (= Is there a TV-set in our room?)*; *In this bottle is many lotion? (= Is there much lotion in this bottle?)*; *Are downtown many people? (= Are there many people downtown?)*; *On the bookshelves some this is a brushes (= There are some brushes on the bookshelves)*. Fronting of other classes of words did happen, but it was less frequent, e.g. verbs: *Going to be? (= What is he going to be?)*; *Go how many stops can? (= How many stops should I go?)*; possessive pronouns: *I'm (= my) this is a flat (= This is my flat)*; negation: *No any brushes on the shelves is not (= There are no brushes on the shelves)*, etc.

Fronting is not an accidental sentence elements rearrangement; it is a

rule-governed communication strayegy, which reflects the individual's intuitive grammar composition at a particular stage of its development. The same patterns were systematically used both by the same subjects and by other subjects in the same group. For example, subjects 11 and 14 (group A) generated sentences using pattern 1, which may be represented in the form of a substitution table, and which generated sentences like *Husband Linda name Nick* (*=Linda's husband's name is Nick*).

Pattern 1.

Husband Wife Daughter Son	Helen Linda Adam Robert	name is	Nick Jane Ann John

Subject 13 used a similar pattern but placed the link verb *is* after the first element in the sentence: *Husband **is** Linda name Nick*. Subject 9 generated twelve questions based on pattern 2 (see below).

Pattern 2.

What colour	hair brows eyes etc.	has	he she Linda John

Subject 11 systematically used fronting patterns 3 and 4 shown below to generate sentences like *Have she got is daughter* (*= She's got a daughter*). (NB: those are not interrogative but affirmative sentences).

Pattern 3.

Have	they she Jane and John	got	a is are	daughter children

As you see, link verbs and the indefinite article are found in the same slot. Thus, their meanings had not been quite differentiated yet, which resulted in the sentences like *Have they got a children* (*= They've got children*).

Pattern 4.

Name is	father	John
	mother	Mary
	sister	Helen

Pattern 4 was systematically used to indicate persons' names, e.g. *Name is father John (= Father's name is John)*. To form interrogative structures, pattern 4 used to be modified: the subjects substituted the word group *What is* at the beginning of the sentence with the simultaneous elimination of *is* after the word *Name*. As a result, there appeared sentences like *What is name husband Linda? (= What is Linda's husband's name?)*.

In similar communicative situations, subjects 9, 10 and 13 used pattern 5, which resembled pattern 4, but was closer to the regular English, e.g. *Name Linda's husband is Jack (= Linda's husband's name is Jack)*.

Pattern 5.

| Name | Linda's husband | is | Jack |
| | my son | | John |

The various patterns could interfere. For example, subject 13, while trying to form a special question based on pattern 5 (e.g. *What is Linda's husband's name?*), put a question word *he* or *his*, which in his grammar stood for *what* or *what is*, in front of the sentence. The link verb *is* may be preserved or skipped: *His name daughter Andrew? (= What is Andrew's daughter's name?)*, *And he name husband is Linda? (=And what is Linda's husband's name?)*.

Such sentences reflect the individual's intuitive grammar composition. Basing on it, the students generate sentences of a similar structure, which they did not and could not hear or see in their environment, and which contradict the explicit grammar rules they had been given as a part of their formal training.

Telegraphic speech, which in the NLA is characterised by skipping function words and grammar morphemes, is a prominent feature of the FLA as well: (1) *I'm ... (here on a) private visit*; (2) *I'm (= my)... occupation (is a) businessman*; (3) *I'm (=I) work (at an) import company*; (4) *No, (this is my) second visit*; (5) *I'm (=I) stay (at my)*

friend's place; (6) *(It's) a good (visit)*; (7) *(Call me about) lunch (on) Wednesday in (the morning)*; (8) *Why is visit? (= What is the aim of your visit?)*; (9) *Where is (are you) stay (ing)?*

By way of preliminary generalisation, it seems that the subjects' acquisition of English as a foreign language in many ways is similar to its acquisition as a native language. The subjects apply the build-up, breakdown and completion strategies as a kind of exercising to develop their intuitive grammar. While exercising, the subjects' inner mechanisms are probably searching for the rules underlying the corresponding structures of the foreign language, checking them against the inner patterns developed due to the previous communicative experience. Like in the NLA, the cognitive organiser keeps fine-tuning the network of such patterns, gradually transforming it into a regular English grammar system (see [3]). Throughout this process, the subjects can hardly rely on their conscious mechanisms, as the latter operate under the conditions of considerable overload, trying to cope with substantial multilevel problems related to the generation of speech. That is why the subjects have to rely mostly on the intuitive FLA mechanisms to monitor the process. Because this monitor requires ever more input information to develop the inner patterns, it makes the subjects carry out the build-up, breakdown and completion operations to check the hypotheses, strengthen the existing patterns and the inter-pattern relations.

In the FLA, adults go through a stage, which slightly resembles the child's pivot grammar in the NLA. However, this first FLA grammar is much more complicated and may be represented in the form of substitution tables, which interfere with each other and undergo permanent changes to approach the regular native speaker's intuitive grammar.

There is little difference between telegraphic speech in the NLA and FLA in spontaneous communication. However, in prepared or semi-prepared situations, adults' speech in FLA looks much better than that of the children in the NLA. It may be accounted for by the adults' powerful compensatory strategies, specifically for their use of analogy and speech formulae, which would be discussed in our later papers. Because in spontaneous communication their use is limited, the ratio of telegraphic speech, especially at the beginning stages, significantly increases. However, in due time, most of the foreign language learners overcome the telegraphic speech period (which is generally shorter than in the NLA) and move over to the more advanced stages.

The research into those and other aspects of the PG issue is in **prospect** of the further research.

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