

PEDAGOGICAL GRAMMAR AS THE FRAMEWORK OF TEFL RESEARCH. PART 18. FUNCTIONAL LINGUISTIC MODELS AND PEDAGOGICAL GRAMMAR

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The paper continues discussing the potential of various linguistic grammar (LG) theories, which the author began to analyse in the previous article in the series. The present paper is devoted to a general assessment of the functional approaches' relevance. Such an assessment is based on the opinion that the pedagogical potential of the functional models of the 1970s, in particular M. Halliday's theory, has been underestimated. The author shares the opinion of other researchers who believe that functional models are of special interest because, unlike traditional grammar, they study not only the surface structure of language, but also its relation to communication. Data on this relationship are important for the development of language skills in communicatively significant situations. Based on the functionalist view that the structure of language reflects the functions it is intended to perform as a means of communication, the author analyses the empirical, interpersonal and textual functions proposed by M. Halliday. On the basis of this analysis, the pedagogical potential of the information provided by the textual function of this model is demonstrated using the example of teaching the use of English passive structures. The article also highlights the value of research into the functional perspective of the sentence for pedagogical purposes. Starting from the assumption that the value of a particular linguistic theory for foreign language teaching depends on its proximity to the PRAXIS point in the model proposed by Titone, the author concludes that functional theories are probably closer to it than structural and transformational ones, but stresses the need for targeted experimental studies. Concluding the analysis of the prospects of using functional grammar data for foreign language teaching, especially for the development of foreign language grammar skills, the author suggests that, at

the present stage of linguistics as a science, it is likely that traditional grammar will continue to play an important role in such teaching, while pedagogical grammar will remain eclectic.

Keywords: *foreign language, functional models of grammar, linguistic grammar, pedagogical grammar, teaching.*

Problem statement. *Introduction to the series.* Numerous research projects 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 aim. The *object* of this part of the series is outlining the main approaches to teaching foreign language grammar, with the *subject* being the analysis of the correlation of linguistic and pedagogical grammar. Its *aim* is to outline a general approach to the solution of the abovementioned issue. This is the eighteenth (see the previous issues of this journal [8]) in a series of articles focusing on the Pedagogical Grammar issue [7], where the author, basing on the theoretical models and research data, is discussing the various aspects of the problem.

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An analysis of the current research and a presentation of the main material. Since 1970s, irrespective of the general approach (meaning-, interaction-, structure- or rule-oriented) to the teaching of foreign language grammar, there has been a growing global interest towards investigating the potential of functional approach. Some authors [9], keeping this approach in mind, attempted to prepare a list of functions relevant to the cultural, structural, operational and pragmatic aspects of language to be used in program development, material preparation, measurement and evaluation studies for teaching a foreign language (in this case, Turkish).

Other authors [22] assume that learning functional grammar may turn productive for ESP classes since the students outside English departments can use the specialized knowledge related to their field of study. Even younger schoolchildren are thought to benefit from functional approach as the theory of systemic functional linguistics [18] may provide useful metalanguage for exploring speech and meaning in curricular activities that also support other school disciplines [22].

The available research proved its advantage in teaching Sudanese students [1] as well as within the prospective teachers' professional development in a pre-service second language teacher education programme in Argentina [4]. Other proponents of the functional approach believe that it can sensitize students to the relationship between text and context, as well as develop their cultural and textual awareness [15]. Systemic functional linguistics of the Hallidayan type [14], in view of other authors [2; 11; 17], remained underestimated in teaching foreign languages and requires additional research. In order to assess the potential of functional grammar for current foreign language teaching, in particular for the development of grammatical skills, it seems appropriate to return to the origins of this model, which date back to the 1970s.

M. Holliday's functional grammar [13; 14] used an approach similar to the "case grammar" [12]. Some [3] believe that M. Holliday describes practically the same objects as Ch. Fillmore, but whereas the latter works with the grammatical notion of case, M. Holliday uses the sociological notion of "semantic role". However, Fillmore's "cases" and Holliday's "roles" are so similar that we can speak of their practical coincidence [3].

The functional model is of particular interest because it examines not only the surface structure of language but also the relationship between this structure and communicative activity. Data on this relationship are important for teaching practical language skills in communicatively relevant situations. Such an aim can only be achieved if the learner is clearly aware of the principles of function and morphology of the grammatical phenomenon being studied. While traditional grammar, on which most of Soviet-time textbooks have been based, provides fairly complete information on the latter, it may provide incomplete and sometimes inadequate information on function, as mentioned above. As a result, the explanations and exercises in such textbooks deal only with the form of the grammatical phenomenon, which means that only the formal component of the grammatical skill is learnt. The functional aspect is not and cannot be formed because the conditions of the grammar skills development do not correspond to the conditions of their functioning.

For example, in the Soviet-era textbooks [20], which were used exclusively in schools until the collapse of the USSR, when teaching the past passive voice (English), the explanations recommended by the

textbook authors are limited to an analysis of the direction of action in the active and passive voice. The analysis is based on examples from Russian, as the only language of instruction, and then the teacher is advised to mention that the same relationship is characteristic of English [20: 98]. Such an explanation does not give any information about the function of the passive voice, i.e. why it is used in speech. As a result, the recommendation to use passive constructions in situational conditions, which, according to the authors, are created in question-and-answer exercises based on sentences from the text [20: 99], becomes unrealistic.

In order to create situational conditions for the use of passive constructions, it is necessary to know what these conditions are. Traditional grammar does not provide this information, which inevitably affects the practice. In many textbooks, exercises for the acquisition of passive constructions have the character of transformations of the active voice into the passive and vice versa, or translation tasks are used. Sometimes students are asked to speak on a given topic using passive constructions. Such an activity with a purely grammatical task cannot contribute to the formation of the functional component of the grammatical skill.

In some cases, an attempt is made to explain the function of the passive in speech, but arbitrary criteria are chosen. As a result, students are given misleading information. For example, some works [5] claim that the use of the passive voice is explained by the interlocutors' desire to focus their attention on the semantic object, thus placing it in the position of the subject. However, even a superficial analysis of the situations refutes this hypothesis. For example, it is difficult to argue that in the sentence *The goal was scored by N* in the situation when we hear the announcer's voice in the stadium immediately after the goal was scored) the audience's attention is not focused on the semantic object (*the goal*). In this case, the semantic subject (*N*) is emphasised, because the spectators are primarily interested in who scored the goal, not in the fact that a goal was scored, as they can clearly see.

The inadequacy of the data of traditional grammar leads us to look for information on the function of the passive in other grammatical models. The most promising in this respect are probably the studies on the functional perspective of the sentence and the functional model of M. Halliday. According to the latter, the structure of a language reflects

the functions (experiential, interpersonal and textual) that it has to fulfil as a means of communication. Take two sentences:

John caught the shark (1)

The shark was caught by John (2)

In terms of the experiential and interpersonal functions, these sentences are identical, but it is the textual function that distinguishes them.

From the point of view of traditional grammar, the difference between the sentences lies in the different grammatical functions of the semantic subject and object. Whereas in sentence (1) the semantic subject is also a grammatical subject and the semantic object is a grammatical object, in sentence (2) the semantic object fulfils the function of a grammatical subject and the semantic subject performs the function of a grammatical object. This does not explain why sentence (2) required a change in the grammatical functions of the semantic subject and object. However, such information can be obtained by analysing M. Halliday's textual function. Text, in M. Halliday's understanding, is the basic unit of language, and the textual component of grammar is a set of elements by which a person creates texts, i.e. uses language in a way that is relevant in a given context. The textual function is realised through six elements, the most important of which (for understanding the difference between the sentences above) is the thematic element, which governs the arrangement of words in a sentence.

It is well known that in every sentence there is a distinction between *thema* and *rhema*. The first element of the sentence fulfils the function of the *thema*, i.e. what is already known to the listener (the starting point of the utterance), while the rest of the sentence is considered to be the *rhema*, i.e. what is new in the given sentence. Researchers of the functional perspective of the sentence [10] believe that the reason for the appearance of passive constructions in speech is the speaker's desire to emphasise a certain part of the sentence, which is placed in the rhematic position. The fixed word order in English leads to a change in the syntactic structure. Therefore, we can conclude that passive constructions are used when it is necessary to focus the listener's attention on the action or the subject of the action.

This should be considered when designing exercises for learning the passive voice. For example, in order to focus attention on the action, it is useful to create situations in which there is uncertainty as to whether

the action has taken place or not. Thus, it is feasible to model situations in which replication is possible and motivated, such as *I told N to come here – So he was told*. In order to focus attention on the semantic subject, a “false statements” exercise in particular can be used: *N wrote this book in 2011 – But it was written by S*. In such situations the use of the passive is communicatively justified and the motives for its use are clear enough for the students.

The same can be said of sentences *Mary was given a book* and *The book was given to Mary*. Despite the external similarity, they are different in terms of textual function. Firstly, they differ in terms of the thematic element (in the first case the rhematic position is filled by the word *a book*, in the second – by *Mary*), but they also differ in terms of their ability to form a text. Take the following sentences, for example:

Some children were given toys, others books (3)

You are mistaken about this book (4)

Mary was given a book (5)

The book was given to Mary (6)

Sentences (3) and (6) do not form a text, whereas sentences (3) and (5) are easily connected and form a semantically coherent whole. Again, sentences (4) and (6) form a text, while sentences (4) and (5) do not. M. Holliday calls it an identifying element. The choice of the element to be placed in the thematic position is dictated by the text, i.e. by the general intention of the speaker and the preceding sentences. This pattern can also be seen in the use of passive constructions, which should be considered when designing exercises.

When working with the structure *Mary has been given a book*, it is advisable to create situations in which attention is focused on the given object. The teacher can give a notebook to Mary and then comment on this action in the following way: *Mary has been given a book*, which implies the student’s reaction: *But she was given a notebook*. When practising the structure *The book was given to Mary*, the direction of the action should be changed, i.e. the teacher could, for example, give a book to Jane and comment on this with the incorrect statement *The book was given to Mary*. This gives the students the opportunity to modify the incorrect statement: *But the book was given to Jane*. In this case, changing the object is impossible, as well as changing the direction of the action in the first case, because such a change would make the situation inappropriate for using the learnt structure.

These exercises should also use the information element of M. Halliday's grammar, realised by phonological means. According to him, every text in oral speech is divided into blocks of information, within each of which there is an "information focus point". Such a point is emphasised by intonation and indicates the element that the speaker considers to be 'new' within a given block. Therefore, the use of intonation when teaching the passive is important in helping learners to see the function of this grammatical pattern. For example, when demonstrating the function of the structure *Mary was given a book*, it is advisable to intonate the element in the rhematic position, that is, to place a logical emphasis on it: *Mary was given a book* (not a *notebook*), which, together with the communicative situation and the teacher's actions aimed at focusing the students' attention on this element (facial expressions, gestures, etc.), can create favourable conditions for the awareness and assimilation of the function of the passive voice in speech.

Apart from the linguistic theories discussed above, there are other models such as speech act theory [19], functional semantic field theory [16] and others. Possible applications of some of these will be discussed in our other papers in this series. Here it seems appropriate to briefly characterise the potential value of linguistic theories for the construction of PGs and their ability to provide the minimally sufficient information for PG compilers.

In his time, R. Titone [21] on the basis of Fig. 1.1 (see also paper 1 in [8]) formulated a rule according to which the value of any linguistic theory depends on the degree of its approximation to the *PRAXIS* point.

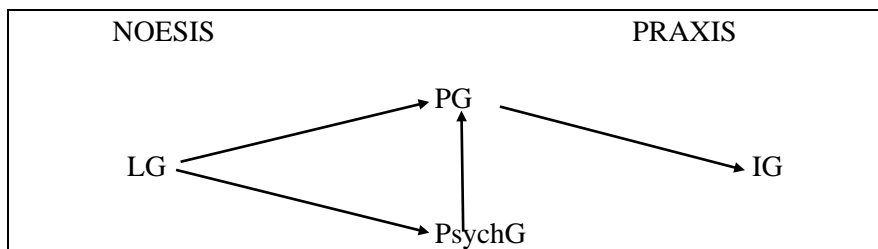


Fig.1. The correlation of linguistic, pedagogical, psychological and intuitive grammars (NOESIS – language structure knowledge, PRAXIS – language use, PG – pedagogical grammar, LG – linguistic grammar, PsychG – psychological grammar, IG – intuitive grammar) [21].

According to Titone's [21] assumption, the closer a given theory is to the PRAXIS point, the higher its value for the construction of the PG (if the aim of learning is the development of foreign language skills and communication). Since this scheme was proposed in 1970, the author has considered only structural and transformational models of grammar, which were new at that time. According to R. Titone [21], the transformational model is closer to the PRAXIS point than the structural model, i.e. it has a greater value for PG than the latter. There are probably quite good reasons for this conclusion, although the issue is controversial. At the present stage of development of linguistics, we can supplement this scheme with other linguistic theories (e.g. case grammar, functional grammar, semantic field grammar and others). Arguably, these theories are even closer to the PRAXIS point and therefore their importance for language teaching is growing. Of particular interest in this respect are linguistic models that study utterance and the patterns of its organisation as a function of the speaker's communicative goals.

Conclusions. Despite all the differences in the functional models discussed in this article, their common feature is the desire to study the regularities of the realisation of a proposition in the surface structure (in an utterance) depending on the specific conditions of communication. This direction is particularly promising for the construction of PG, which considers it important to separate the semiotic (illocutionary) act from the proposition and study the linguistic realisations of such an act independently [6].

On the other hand, an objective assessment of the scope of the results obtained within the framework of the new directions in linguistics should recognise that the most complete description is still that made within the framework of traditional grammar. That is to say, from a practical point of view, none of the models mentioned above can serve as a basis for the development of PG on its own. One cannot be guided by the opinions of linguists as to which model is the best. Firstly, because representatives of each school consider their own model to be the best, and secondly, because no single model can develop more than a few aspects that can be used in the learning process.

Thus, as Candlin notes, in the search for the "best" description, one can choose Chomsky's model because it analyses well the problems of deep and surface structure; the Prague School for developing the issue

of thema/rhema and the semantics of surface structure; case grammar for developing the semantics of deep structure; and functional grammar for determining the specific weight of certain semantic choices [6: 73]. This list can be supplemented by new models of grammar that have appeared recently.

Although some authors would object to such an eclectic PG, considering that in this form it contradicts a number of adequacy criteria, we can agree with the researchers [3; 6] who believe that at this stage PG can be eclectic. It can be added that at present, a PG aiming at maximising adequacy cannot but be eclectic, since none of the current linguistic models itself meets the adequacy requirements. Therefore, a view of PG as a kind of filter between LG and class [6] is perfectly reasonable. In this case, the task of PG should be to interpret data from different LG models for certain learning conditions. The main problem to be solved here is to determine the principles of processing linguistic information into teaching and learning information. This is one of the prospects for further research.

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ПЕДАГОГІЧНА ГРАМАТИКА ЯК ФРЕЙМОВЕ ПОНЯТТЯ ДЛЯ ДОСЛІДЖЕНЬ У ГАЛУЗІ МЕТОДИКИ НАВЧАННЯ ІНОЗЕМНИХ МОВ. ЧАСТИНА 18. ФУНКЦІОНАЛЬНІ ЛІНГВІСТИЧНІ МОДЕЛІ ТА ПЕДАГОГІЧНА ГРАМАТИКА

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Стаття продовжує аналіз потенціалу різних моделей лінгвістичної граматики (ЛГ), розпочатий автором у попередній статті серії. Цю статтю присвячено загальній оцінці корисності функціональних моделей ЛГ, виходячи з аналізу літератури, де висловлюється думка про недооціненість таких моделей 1970-х років, зокрема теорії М. Холідея. Автор поділяє думку інших дослідників, на погляд яких функціональні моделі становлять особливий інтерес, оскільки вони, на відміну від традиційної граматики, досліджують не лише поверхневу структуру мови, але і зв'язок згаданої структури з комунікативною діяльністю. Дані про цей зв'язок є важливими для розвитку мовленнєвих умінь і навичок у комунікативно значущих ситуаціях. Спираючись на ідеї функціоналістів про те, що мовна структура є відображенням функцій мовлення, які воно має виконувати як засіб комунікації, автор аналізує емпіричну, міжособистісну та текстову функції, запропоновані М. Холідеєм. На основі цього аналізу, на прикладі навчання вживання англomовних структур пасивного стану, показано педагогічний потенціал інформації, яку надає текстова функція цієї моделі. Стаття також показує цінність досліджень функціональної перспективи речення для методичних цілей. Виходячи з припущення, що цінність тієї чи іншої лінгвістичної моделі для навчання іноземних мов залежить від її близькості

до точки PRAXIS в моделі, запропонованій Тітоне, автор робить висновок, що функціональні моделі, вірогідно, є ближчими до неї, ніж структурні та трансформаційні, але наголошує на необхідності проведення цілеспрямованих експериментальних досліджень. Завершуючи аналіз перспектив використання даних функціональної граматики для навчання іноземних мов, зокрема для формування іншомовних граматичних навичок, автор висловлює думку, що на нинішньому етапі розвитку лінгвістики традиційна граматики, вірогідно, продовжуватиме відігравати значну роль у такому навчанні, а педагогічна граматики залишатиметься еkleктичною.

Ключові слова: іноземна мова, лінгвістична граматики, навчання, педагогічна граматики, функціональні моделі граматики.

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