

PEDAGOGICAL GRAMMAR AS THE FRAMEWORK OF TEFL RESEARCH. PART 20. REQUIREMENTS TO THE RULES OF PEDAGOGICAL GRAMMAR

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This latest article in the series continues the discussion of the relationship between linguistic (LG) and pedagogical (PG) grammars when developing foreign language grammar skills. The author examines the requirements for PG rules and how they differ from LG rules. They seek to answer questions about the criteria for selecting information from LG, the configuration of LG and PG in comparison, the principles of chunking pedagogical information (PI) when developing grammatical skills, the content of PI, the degree to which PG depends structurally on LG, and how PI is applied. Despite a wide range of theories, an analysis of the current literature shows that explicit approaches based on the use of rules remain predominant in the practice of grammatical skills development. However, at the declarative level, teachers predominantly employ rhetoric leaning towards implicit learning. The paper formulates a series of assumptions that require further research. According to the author, the configuration of PG differs from LG in that it has a concentric rather than linear structure, and material is presented within each concentric zone according to the principle of chunking. In other words, only the amount of information that is minimally sufficient to ensure communication at the corresponding stage of learning is introduced in each concentric zone. This leads to the requirement of minimal sufficiency in terms of the scope of PI. The sequence of its presentation must consider psycholinguistic data regarding the sequence in which the relevant grammatical structures are learnt during native language acquisition, as well as didactic and general methodological principles. Other requirements include the structural independence of PG rules, their accuracy, comprehensiveness and orientation capacity, the possibility of materialisation, and the expansion and condensation of their explicitness, as well as skipping the memorisation stage. The paper outlines prospects for further research.

Keywords: *development of foreign language grammatical skills, linguistic grammar, pedagogical grammar, requirements for rules of pedagogical grammar.*

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 requirements to the rules of the pedagogical grammar. Thus, the *object* remains the analysis of the correlation of linguistic and pedagogical grammars with the *subject* being the specification of the requirements to PG rules. Its *aim* is to suggest a list of the abovementioned requirements. This is the twentieth (see the previous issues of this journal [5]) in a series of articles focusing on the Pedagogical Grammar issue [3; 4; 6], where the author, basing on the theoretical models and research data, is discussing the various aspects of the problem.

An analysis of the current research. Although some types of pedagogical information, such as speech patterns, are implicit, PG rules generally refer to an approach based on explicit grammar teaching and should therefore be regarded as part of the 'implicit versus explicit' debate. This opposition has been the focus of language pedagogy research for at least a century. Over the past decade, Kumar and Ilankumaran [9] have emphasised the ongoing importance of explicit grammar instruction while acknowledging the increasing popularity of hybrid approaches that combine explicit and implicit learning. They emphasise the growing use of digital tools for grammar practice and advocate a balanced approach to grammar teaching that combines structured, rule-based instruction with communicative tasks and technological resources. They also advocate adaptable, student-centred methodologies in grammar instruction. Some authors claim that explicit (rule-based) grammar teaching improves both accuracy and fluency when integrated with communicative practice. In particular, explicit rule instruction has been found to enhance writing skills, especially when linked to real-world tasks [16]. Okičić and Osmankadić [12] also claim that teaching grammar with contrastive rules reduces errors and

improves grammar and translation competence for non-native English learners at university level. Rivera et al. [15] found that explicit teaching improves the learning of grammar rules, and that individual differences in executive functioning predict successful learning.

However, others [7] argue that traditional rule-based teaching can hinder communication, whereas game-based activities can improve students' attitudes and skills. Another group of authors [18] advocate a hybrid approach, combining explicit rule-based teaching with implicit exposure to authentic language use as the most effective way of improving students' accuracy and fluency. Further researchers [17] argue that both explicit and implicit methods can be effective depending on the context and learner needs. In their search for new approaches, Lin and Lee [11] found data-driven learning to be an innovative and effective, albeit somewhat problematic, method of teaching EFL grammar. This approach transforms passive students into active learners and reduces workload. Nevertheless, Pawlak [13] claims that, despite its benefits for learners, new solutions to grammar instruction in second or foreign language pedagogy have not significantly improved its effectiveness.

In general, it can be concluded that explicit, rule-based instruction remains central to EFL grammar teaching. This is often combined with communicative and technology-enhanced methods to increase effectiveness. Hybrid approaches, which integrate explicit rules with communicative, inductive or game-based activities, are widely recommended to improve accuracy and fluency. However, teachers' beliefs and practices sometimes diverge. While many endorse communicative/contextualised grammar, explicit rule teaching remains common in classrooms. The choice and success of rule-based grammar instruction is influenced by many factors, including the requirements of the PG rules. Thus, in the following section of this paper, we attempt to explicitly formulate these requirements.

Main content of the study. As mentioned earlier, information about the structure, formation and use of grammatical phenomena undoubtedly contributes to effective learning. This is because students' perception is selective, and they actively seek information about the structure of the language they are learning (1). Such information is contained in linguistic grammars (LG), which should

be extremely explicit and accurate, use the most generalised terms possible and generate combinations of elements that constitute correct sentences in the given language. However, it is not advisable to use the full range of such maximally explicit, generalised and accurate rules for language teaching. Firstly, such LG rules contain information that is redundant from the point of view of PG, since the latter's primary task is to develop skills, not to acquire knowledge. Secondly, any training course must set limited goals, and the more factors that negatively affect the learning process (such as lack of time, too many students in a class, age and individual differences), the more limited these goals will be. Therefore, it is inevitable that the amount of grammatical material necessary to achieve the set goals will be limited to the so-called sufficient minimum level.

The criterion for selecting information from the LG for subsequent processing in the PG is its potential positive impact on the skill development process. From this point of view, linguistic classification, for example, of pronouns, including such terms as personal, objective, reflexive, relative, etc., is unlikely to be of great value for PG. Such terms do not convey any practically-oriented information to most students and only increase their entropy instead of reducing it in the learning process. Thus, such terms belong to the level of LG, not PG. There are quite a few taxonomies of this kind in the LG, such as the classification of adjectives (attributive, predicative, qualitative, classifying, intensifying), adverbs, subordinate clauses, etc. This does not mean that the information related to these and other such categories should not be used in the PG at all. However, in this form, it simply does not make sense.

When selecting information from the LG, it is advisable to consider the learning goals, timeframe, and stage. At a specific stage of the learning process, it is probably sensible to introduce PG rules only to the extent necessary to overcome the associated learning difficulties. We can call this requirement 'chunking' of PG. This means that PG rules are not presented in their entirety immediately, but are introduced in chunks, corresponding to the stage of learning.

Another requirement related to chunking could be called 'minimal sufficiency', meaning that the scope of a PG rule should be minimal yet sufficient to achieve the learning objectives at a

given stage. PG is not about memorising any systematic information about the structure of the language; it is about developing the student's communicative ability. PG has a concentric structure, not a linear one, which is different to LG. This means that, at each stage, learners may not be given comprehensive information about the grammatical structure that is the object of acquisition. The scope of this information is dictated by the tasks of the particular stage and their importance in terms of communication. In other words, this scope should be sufficient to enable communication, albeit at a basic level. A schematic representation of the PG structure is shown in Fig. 1.

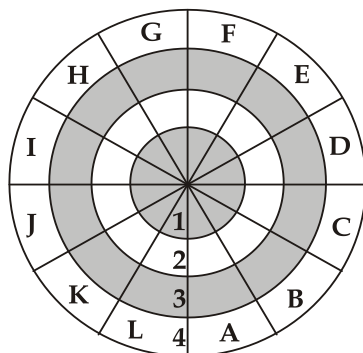


Fig. 1. Concentric structure of pedagogical grammar: 1, 2, 3, 4 – stages of learning; A-L – grammar categories

As can be seen in Fig. 1, even within the first concentric zone, students are expected to acquire a sufficient grasp of grammar for communicating at an elementary level. At each subsequent stage, the scope of pedagogical information within each category gradually expands. For example, in the first concentric zone, the development of skills in using interrogative and negative structures may be limited to those where the operator is present in affirmative sentences (structures involving 'be', 'have got', 'there is/are', 'be going to' and modal verbs). This standardises the mechanism for using interrogative and negative structures by establishing the underlying principle that: (1) To form an interrogative structure, move the operator to the front of the sentence (e.g. 'They are going to play chess after school' – 'Are they going to play chess after school?'). (2) To form a negative structure, place 'not' after the operator (e.g. 'They are going to play chess after school' – 'They

are not going to play chess after school?'). – They are not going to play chess after school?'). This standardisation fosters the development of automatic skills with regard to the aforementioned structures before students move on to those without operators in affirmative sentences (Present and Past Simple).

The sequence of presentation of grammar structures and, accordingly, the rules of PG within each concentric zone, might consider the data of psycholinguistic studies (e.g. the sequence of acquisition of such structures in the first language acquisition – see the preceding papers in this series), as well as the didactic and methodological principles (from simple to complex, meeting communication needs, etc.). This sequence may also take into account the structure of students' grammatical mechanisms at a given stage. For example, let us assume that the set of students' grammatical structures in their minds within the first concentric zone corresponds to the one described in the previous paragraph. Then, when we decide which structure (from among simple tenses and the *Present Continuous*) should be introduced first in the next concentric zone, the preference should be given to *Present Continuous*. This is because its formation of interrogative and negative structures fully corresponds to the configuration of students' grammatical mechanisms at this stage. Thus, the introduction of *Present Continuous* will not result in a need to restructure the students' grammatical mechanisms. The latter will inevitably happen if *Present Simple* structure were introduced instead of *Present Continuous*. In the latter case, the students' grammatical mechanisms will have to be restructured twice, first after the introduction of the *Present Simple*, and then again after the introduction of the *Present Continuous*.

The configuration of the PG and LG rules may differ in terms of how specific information is correlated with grammatical structures. For PG, it is important to identify what needs to be taught in each case, while for LG, the logical validity of classification is more important. For instance, in LG, information about restrictive and descriptive phrases is introduced in the Syntax section (Types of Subordinate Clauses), whereas in PG, it is presented in the Articles section (Specifying and Descriptive Attributes). For example, consider *The letter I received yesterday upset me* vs *A letter written*

in pencil is difficult to read. Thus, we can speak of the structural independence of PG rules from LG rules.

Another important requirement of PG rules is that they should be unambiguous, meaning they should not allow different users to interpret their content in different ways.

PG rules should contribute to developing the formal and functional aspects of grammatical skills. Accordingly, they should provide information on the form and function of the grammatical structure being learnt. This PG requirement is known as *comprehensiveness*.

In terms of form, PG rules should provide students with full orientation at all stages of learning. As previously mentioned (see the preceding papers in this series), this orientation can be provided through various types of pedagogical information, which can differ in explicitness. However, in most cases, PG rules take the form of instructions, either with or without schematic elements. These rules ensure that the configuration of the grammatical structure (based on a model) and the grammar action being acquired (based on an algorithm) are perceived simultaneously. This ability of PG rules to provide orientation may be referred to as the *orientation ability*.

Finally, the PG rules should eliminate the need for a separate memorisation stage, as they are presented in the form of models and algorithms. This allows memorisation to take place directly during the performance of exercises or tasks. Additionally, it enables more time to be devoted to speech practice. Memorisation is known to be more effective when students focus on the goal rather than their actions during exercises and tasks. This requirement may be referred to as 'convergence', since the executive and orientational phases of the action merge in this case, facilitating the involuntary memorisation of the PG rule content.

PG rules (types of pedagogic information) can be more or less explicit, and this provides the basis for another requirement for PG rules: they must be able to adapt the degree of their explicitness depending on specific learning conditions.

The final requirement to PG rules is accuracy. In other words, the rule should provide accurate information about the conditions and sequence of operations of the grammar action being acquired. This is not always the case, as demonstrated by the example of the rule

for the use of passive constructions in the preceding papers in this series.

Conclusions. In essence, the information presented in this paper can be summarised as follows:

Information from the LG is included in the PG according to the criteria below:

(a) its potential to positively impact the development of grammatical skills.

(b) consideration of the goals, objectives, timeframe and stage of learning.

The purpose of using the PG in the learning process is to foster the development of communicative ability, i.e. the aspect of communication controlled by grammatical mechanisms.

Unlike LG, PG has a concentric rather than linear structure. The first requirement is therefore information *chunking*: within each concentric zone, students receive only those fragments of information from each LG category that are necessary for communication within a specific learning stage. The sequence in which PG rules are presented within a concentric zone is determined by psycholinguistic research data, general didactic principles and the principle of considering the structure of students' grammatical mechanisms at a given stage.

PG rules must also meet the minimal sufficiency requirement, which is related to the chunking principle. According to this requirement, the scope of a PG rule must be minimal yet sufficient to achieve the learning objectives at a given stage.

PG rules must also meet the requirements of *simplicity* meaning that they must be simple and clear. They should have a simple structure and not contain excessive information. The terminology used has to be clear and appropriate for the level of the students' conceptual development. The PG rules themselves must be *unambiguous*; they should not allow for different interpretations by different users. They also have to use terminology appropriate to students' level of intellectual development, considering the configuration of their grammatical and cognitive mechanisms at this stage.

When designing PG rules, it is also necessary to ensure that PG is structurally independent, which means that, due to the different purposes of LG and PG, their configurations may not coincide. In

other words, PG can ignore the structure of LG, selecting information from different sections (and even theories) of LG and rearranging it in a new way. PG can also chunk its content according to its own goals and objectives. For instance, the organisation of specific information in relation to the corresponding grammatical structure may differ between PG and LG. For illustration, in LG, particular information may be found in the section entitled *Syntax*, while in PG it may be employed to instruct students in morphological phenomena.

PG rules must be *comprehensive*, i.e. they must contribute to the development of both the formal and functional aspects of the skill. When designing PG, the other requirements that must be met are as follows: *orientation ability* (PG rules must enable students to fully orient themselves concerning the learning tasks); the *possibility of materialisation* (PG rules must allow them to be presented in a material form); the *ability to expand or condense explicitness* (if necessary, PG rules should allow them to be expanded or condensed according to specific learning conditions); *convergence* (PG rules should enable their implicit acquisition directly during the performance of exercises and tasks, bypassing the stage of special memorisation through mnemonic actions); and *accuracy* (correspondence to reality).

Sometimes, the necessary information is simply unavailable in the LG, in which case it may be necessary to conduct independent socio-linguistic research to obtain it.

Verification of the validity of the above list of requirements for PG rules, their refinement and possible expansion of this list constitute the prospect for further research.

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ПЕДАГОГІЧНА ГРАМАТИКА ЯК ФРЕЙМОВЕ ПОНЯТТЯ ДЛЯ ДОСЛІДЖЕНЬ У ГАЛУЗІ МЕТОДИКИ НАВЧАННЯ ІНОЗЕМНИХ МОВ. ЧАСТИНА 20. ВИМОГИ ДО ПРАВИЛ ПЕДАГОГІЧНОЇ ГРАМАТИКИ

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Чергова стаття серії продовжує обговорення співвідношення лінгвістичної (ЛГ) та педагогічної (ПГ) граматики у процесі формування іншомовних граматичних навичок. Автор розглядає вимоги до правил ПГ та їх відмінності від правил ЛГ, прагнучи відповісти на низку питань, пов'язаних із критеріями відбору інформації з ЛГ; порівняльною конфігурацією ЛГ та ПГ; принципами дозування педагогічної інформації (П) у процесі формування граматичних навичок та її змісту; ступенем структурної залежності ПГ від ЛГ; особливостями застосування матеріалізованих форм П. Аналіз сучасної літератури засвідчив, що незважаючи на широкий діапазон підходів, експліцитні теорії, що ґрунтуються на використанні правил, залишаються головними в практиці формування граматичних навичок, навіть незважаючи на те, що на декларативному рівні вчителі переважно вживають риторіку, що тяжіє до імпліцитного навчання. За результатами дослідження автор формулює низку припущень, що потребують додаткового вивчення. На його думку, конфігурація ПГ, на відміну від ЛГ, має концентричну, а не лінійну будову, внаслідок чого презентація матеріалу в межах кожного концентру здійснюється за принципом дозованості. Тобто в кожному концентрі вводиться лише той обсяг інформації, який є необхідним і мінімально достатнім для забезпечення комунікації на відповідному етапі навчання. Звідси виникає вимога мінімальної достатності стосовно обсягу педагогічної інформації. Послідовність введення такої інформації має враховувати психолінгвістичні дані щодо етапів засвоєння відповідних граматичних структур у процесі оволодіння рідною мовою, а також дидактичні та загальнометодичні принципи. Інші вимоги передбачають структурну незалежність правил ПГ, їхню комплексність, орієнтувальну здатність, можливість матеріалізації та розгортання і згортання експліцитності, точність правила та відмову від спеціального етапу його запам'ятовування. Стаття також окреслює перспективи подальшого дослідження.

Ключові слова: вимоги до правил педагогічної граматики, лінгвістична граMATика, педагогічна граMATика, правила, формування іншомовних граматичних навичок.

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Автор засвідчує, що, незважаючи на те, що він є головним редактором цього збірника, процес рецензування, прийняття рішення щодо публікації та редагування проводилися незалежно, без його участі чи впливу. Будь-які потенційні конфлікти інтересів були повністю усунені шляхом зовнішнього контролю процесу.

У роботі не використано ресурс штучного інтелекту.