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TEACHER'S GRAMMAR: TEACHING BELIEFS AND PRACTICES
A Research on What Second Language Teachers Think, Know, Believe and How It Tallies With Their Practical Methods, Approaches and Standards of Teaching

ABSTRACT. Mielnik Kamil, *Teacher's Grammar: Teaching Beliefs and Practices. A Research on What Second Language Teachers Think, Know, Believe and How It Tallies With Their Practical Methods, Approaches and Standards of Teaching* [Gramatyka nauczyciela: przekonania i praktyki nauczycielskie. Badanie tego, o czym myślą i co wiedzą nauczyciele języków obcych i stopnia odzwierciedlenia tego w praktyce metodycznej, podejściu i standardach pedagogicznych]. Studia Edukacyjne nr 33, 2014, Poznań 2014, pp. 367-392. Adam Mickiewicz University Press. ISBN 978-83-232-2879-0. ISSN 1233-6688

This study examines the relationship between grammar teaching beliefs and practices. The sample of teachers consists of thirty-tree foreign language teachers. They provided insights into how they are familiarised with teaching methods and approaches and how the grammar is taught in reality. Moreover, the study refers to The *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)*, according to which the practical knowledge should be measured. The nature of teachers' theories is illustrated with examples from classroom research on grammar teaching. The results suggest that the majority of these teachers possess clearly defined theoretical beliefs, which consistently reflect one particular methodological approach. Some implications of this study for language teacher education are also discussed.

Key words: grammar teaching, second language teaching, communicative language teaching, beliefs, practices

Introduction

Nowadays, English language has become extremely popular among the people around the world. It seems that everybody speaks or wants to use

this language to communicate, work abroad, do business or even just hang out with each other. Apparently, we can easily say that English is so common that everyone should know this language not to feel alienated from the current times. Unfortunately, it is not easy just to speak a foreign language, it is necessary to acquire or learn it. What does it mean to be taught and how to be taught successfully? Yet another question is whether there's one "correct" way of teaching a language. A lot of methodologists and teachers have been trying to respond to such questions for many years but the answers are still varied. As we all know, language is constituted by *Vocabulary and Grammar.* Grammar is considered to be the component of the language which requires a lot of effort put by the teacher to trigger learner's process of analysing and understanding the set of structural rules governing the composition of clauses, phrases and words. As we definitely assume teachers are called to teach and we expect them to perform this role to their utmost. We are all fully convinced that, in teachers' professional lives, there is no greater satisfaction when their students have learnt the language. Nevertheless, what are real teacher's grammar teaching beliefs and practices? In other words, how closely grammar teachers are to the main concepts of the methods and approaches that have been discovered or built up through the times and what is more the question is about whether the ways of teaching are parallel with a valid and contemporary standards of teaching grammar.

Theoretical framework

First of all, there is a need to define the grammar term and what it means to use language grammatically. According to Jeremy Harmer grammar is the system that describes the possibilities to what extent a particular word can be changed or combined into sentences. Inevitably, grammar seems to be an essential part of the language accusation. The process of learning or acquiring grammar requires a commitment on the side of the teacher and the student. Here, it is important to introduce the methods of teaching grammar. As we know the importance of teaching grammar has been changing according to what methodologists recognized as the best. The first method is *Grammar – Translation Method.* The main goal recognizes the mastery of grammar and vocabulary of a foreign language so that the learner was able to read independently and understand texts literary. As the name suggests, a learner translates into their native language texts and analyses the grammatical structures. Those of us who have studied Latin in school remember this way of learning well. The main efficiencies that the grammar – transla-

tion method puts emphasis on is therefore the ability to read and translate. The downside of this method is passive knowledge of grammar. It is worth mentioning here, the teacher's role is in the central position whereas the student's responsibility is to follow the teacher's instruction. Since the beginning, this method has been inscribed into behaviourism. According to the behaviourists, language is a habit or rather a habit formation that contains three stages: *stimulus, response* and *reinforcement.* In other words, learners get the linguistic input (*stimulus*) from speakers in the environment and they form 'associations' between the words and objects or events. These relations can become stronger by constant repetition (*response).* Learners obtain some kind of assessment of their imitations in a form of a descriptive mark or encouragement *(reinforcement).* Behaviourism perceives language development as the habit formation, it is assumed that *a person learning a second language starts off with the habits formed in the first language and these habits interfere with the new ones needed for second language.*[1] This approach is also inextricably linked to the *Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis* which conveys the theory that all errors are the result of the differences between languages and simultaneously, all the errors can be predicted and prevented. The behaviourists also say that the errors should be totally rejected as they may lead to bad habits formation. Furthermore, it is important to look at Chomsky's theory of language acquisition, Innatism. This is based on the hypothesis that language is an inborn activity. The innatists claim that Universal Grammar (UG) permits all children to acquire the language of their environment. On the whole, we need UG for SLA *(Second Language Acquisition)* and the input is a "trigger" that activates the inborn, inner knowledge – a linguistic structure (UG). Here, all errors are accepted. There is a connection between Nativism (Innatism) and Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH). Noam Chomsky says that language can be acquired during a limited period of human life (language acquisition). This period lasts up to puberty age. After that time SLA is not possible as the *lateralisation* takes place.

Another well-known method is a cognitive approach to grammar which is inextricably linked to Cognitivism. According to this, the process of learning is the transformation of *declarative knowledge* into *procedural knowledge* through the extensive practice. *Declarative knowledge* is a set of rules and definitions (memorised facts). It is definitely very static and conscious. This knowledge is sorted in our brain as *schemata*, whereas *Procedural knowledge* will be a set of procedures and actions, very dynamic and subconscious. This time, the knowledge is stored as *the production system*. Cognitive theory is

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[1] R. Lado, *Language teaching: a scientific approach*, New York 1964.

undoubtedly connected with Anderson's ADAPTIVE CONTROL OF THOUGHT MODEL (ACT) which elaborates how the process of learning takes place. Very often, if the learners are going to be taught, for example, The Present Perfect tense, the teacher will provide them with the definition and the knowledge about the tense (*declarative knowledge*). However, having these facts about syntax, semantics, and the phonology doesn't mean the learners know how to use the structure correctly, but after *extensive practice* those rules change into procedures (*procedural knowledge*). We consciously learn the information about The Present Perfect tense and subconsciously start to use it. "*The transfer of both declarative and procedural knowledge from L1 to the L2, as is required in the view of common underlying proficiency described by Cummins (1981)*".

First of all, it is worth explaining what meaning this term covers. Communicative Language Teaching is an approach to the SLA in which the interaction is emphasised as the final aim of learning a language. This method is also called as the "Communicative Approach". CLT is the alternative for the Audio – Lingual Method (ALM). The CLT puts great emphasis on helping students use the target language in different contexts and it also underscores the learning language functions. Unlike the ALM, this approach mainly focuses on helping learners to create the meaning, rather than helping them to develop perfect grammatical structures and the acquisition of the pronunciation similar to the native speakers' one. This means that the success of learning a foreign language is assessed by how well the learners have developed their communicative competence, which very easily can be defined as the ability to apply knowledge both as sociolinguistic aspects of formal language with sufficient proficiency in communication. In other words it is possible to say that In CLT the teacher seeks more clarity in communication rather than the full accuracy of the student's speech. The effectiveness and pace are more important here, and also he or she ought to take into account the rules of the language use. To support this statement, it is necessary to quote Littlewood.[2] "One of the most characteristic features of communicative language teaching is that it pays systematic attention to functional as well as structural aspects of language."

Second of all, the important aspect of this text is that the CLT went through the development process which was based on the work carried out in Europe. This investigation contributed to the definition of the functional and communicative aspect of language. A significant role in this area was Wilkins' (1976) *National Syllabuses*. Through the reading Richards and Rod-

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[2] W. Littlewood, *Communicative language teaching: An introduction*, Cambridge 1981, p. 1.

gers we discover two magnificent terms such as *nations*, which covers the concepts such as time, sequences, frequency and quantity as well as location; and *functions* by which we understand the categories such as requests, denials, offers, and complaintsx.[3] These two terms has their practicality in real teaching. If the teacher is responsible for choosing a relevant coursebook, he or she must take into consideration the fact that *notions* and *functions* should be included in the materials and activities. At the same time, it is worth stating that most of the teaching materials such as coursebooks, workbooks as well as the hand-outs are based on the multi-syllable. Furthermore, it is important to distinguish between "strong" and a "weak" version of Communicative Language Teaching. The goal of the "weak" approach to CLT is to create a situation in which the learner will be provided with communicative opportunities but the chances will be inscribed into a wider programmer of language teaching. This kind of CLT has become standard practice. On the other hand, there is the "strong" approach to CLT which states that SLA takes place through communication thus this is the emphasis of classes. This time there is not any integration into a wider programme, they do not constitute the most prominent part of the programme.[4]

Third of all, there is no doubt that for better understanding the CLT we will have to come across the term of *communicative competence*. The definitions of this term are varied. However, by and large we can say that this is simply the ability to communicate. According to Chomsky who had differentiates between *competence* and *performance*, competence is a theoretical linguistic ability of an ideal native speaker whereas the term of performance is defined as the competence under influence of the factors such as: tiredness, social context, memory lapses as well as distractions. The reaction to Chomsky's view was the coinage of the communicative competence term by Hymes (1972) criticising this theory as very limited and too idealistic. He added that not only linguistic ability should be considered but also communication as well as culture aspects. This view was the great threshold of the Canale and Swain's[5] definition of communicative competence which included four significant components: *grammatical competence* that covers the ability to use the language correctly, *sociolinguistic competence* which means the adjustment to the particular situation or surrounding, *discourse competence* that is the knowledge of how to interpret the larger context and how to

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[3] J. Richards, T.S. Rodgers, *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*, Cambride 2001, p. 153-155.

[4] A.P.R. Howatt, *A History of English Language Teaching*, Oxford 1984, p. 279.

[5] M. Canale, M. Swain, *Theoretical Bases of Communication Approaches to Second Language Teaching and Testing*, Applied Linguistics, 1980, 1(1).

construct longer stretches of language so that the parts make up a coherent whole, and finally the capability to use the language strategies to improve communication and it is defined as *strategic competence*. Canale and Swain's model has not been the final model of communicative competence as it has been extended and reshaped by some further linguists such as Bachman[6] or Byrman.[7] These remodelling leaded to *Intercultural Competence* (IC).[8]

Equally important to the question of what is understood by 'communicative language teaching' and how relevant this approach is for an English language teaching, are the activities used during the lesson. The task should involve the learners in realistic communication in which the accuracy will be predominated by the successful achievement of the communicative task. In other words learners should have a real task to do, for instance to book his or her holidays or to apply for a job (interview). Students should consider the content rather than the particular language form. Additionally, the students' role is to remember that they are supposed to use the variety of language not just one structure. Moreover, in CLT the teacher's role is significant. Mainly, the instructor should refrain himself from stopping the activity and correcting the mistakes. The teacher can note down the errors and provide with the suitable feedback at the end of the task. The preparation of the materials is also extremely important, not only they ought to involve the students in realistic communication but also they should not dictate what specific language forms the students use. According to Richards and Rodgers[9] the teacher has two significant roles. The first one is to facilitate the communication between the participants by the various activities and texts. The second role is to involve himself in these tasks by acting independently within the learning-teaching group.

Next, it is worth providing some concrete exercises that can be used during the lessons. According to Cook one of the most popular method is the *information gap exercises* in which provides the students with the opportunity to speak in the target language. Another activity mentioned by Cook is the *guided role play*, the students are supposed to improvise conversations around the issue.[10] Another communicative activities mentioned by J. Harmer are pair work, interviews and surveys.[11] The goal of all these tasks is to increase the

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[6] L.F. Bachman, *What Does Language Testing Have to Offer?* TESOL QUARTERLY, 1991, 25(4).

[7] M. Byrman, *Teaching and assessing intercultural communicative competence*, Multilingual Matters Ltd, Clevedon 1997.

[8] J. Richards, T.S. Rodgers, *Approaches and Methods*, p. 160.

[9] Ibidem, p. 167.

[10] V. Cook, *Second language learning and language teaching*, London 2008, p. 248-249.

[11] J. Harmer, *The practice of English language teaching*, Harlow 2009, p. 69-70.

communication. Additionally, in order to support communicative approaches to language teaching Richard and Rodgers[12] mention the activities such as: *cue cards, activity cards, "jigsaw"*. Moreover, "Finocchiaro and Brumfit offer a lesson outline for teaching the function "making a suggestion" for learners in the beginning level of a secondary school program that suggests that CLT procedures are evolutionary rather than revolutionary".[13] Furthermore, they enlist *presentation, oral practice, questions and answers, oral recognition, interpretative activities, oral production activities, evaluation of learning*.[14]

Yet another approach to the language learning and a method at the same time is TASK-BASED LEARNING (TBL). Here, we teach skills holistically. Teaching is based on tasks. TBL is goal-oriented and it leads to a particular "product" or a "solution". In this approach activities should be used for communicative approach in order to achieve an outcome. Nunan[15] differentiates between "real-world" and "pedagogical" tasks offering the definition of the communicative task:

> (…) a piece of classroom work which involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is principally focused on meaning rather than form. The task should also have a sense of completeness, being able to stand alone as a communicative act in its own right (…).

This definition formulates clearly the role of communication. It should be to get information gap and the purpose. Moreover, it is important to ask what the functions of the task are. It should motivate, engage attention as well as promote language development. The main concept of the task in this approach is positioning "task" as a central unit of planning and teaching.[16] The TBL lesson has three main phases:

1. The pre-task phase, which includes work on introducing the topic, finding relevant language and so on.

2. The task cycle itself.

3. Language focus.

In TBL approach it is worth to discuss each and every phase of the lesson as well as the role of the teacher.

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[12] J. Richards, T.S. Rodgers, *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*, Cambride 2001, p. 168.

[13] Ibidem, p. 170.

[14] Ibidem, p. 170-171.

[15] D. Nunan, *Communicative Language Teaching: Making it work*, ELT Journal, 1987, 41(2), p. 136-145.

[16] J. Richards, T.S. Rodgers, *Approaches and Methods*, p. 224.

Pre-Task Phase is the introduction to topic and task. Here, teacher explores topic with the class, his or her responsibility is to help students to understand instructions and prepare them for the entire project. Teacher should also highlight useful words and phrases. Learners may be exposed to examples.

Task Cycle Phase is divided into three subsections: *task, planning, report.* In *task* students do the task in pairs or small groups while teacher monitors the process. Here, mistakes do not matter. In *planning* accuracy is important. Students prepare to report to the whole class (oral or written) how they did the task, and what they decided or discovered. In *report* some groups present their reports to the class, or exchange written reports and compare results. Teacher listens and then comments.

Language Focus is constituted by *analysis* and *practice.* In the first one students examine and discuss specific features. In the second one, teacher conducts practice of new words, phrases, and patterns that occur in the data.

The key assumptions of task-based instruction are summarised by Feez as:[17]

– The focus is on process rather than product,

– Activities have purposes and tasks are oriented to communication,

– Learners being engaged in the task and interacting communicatively learn language,

– Task-based syllabus are sequenced according to difficulty.

How to teach grammar?

The flesh of prose gets its shape and strength from the bones of grammar.

Constance Hale

According to the curriculum, grammar should be taught in isolation from the main purpose of learning a foreign language – communication. The teacher shows students the practical application of the structure, for example, to make the request or illustration description. Entering a new grammatical issues takes place in stages. After the presentation of a new material and exercises, students perform tasks that require the use of known issues in practice. The teacher, after the process of diagnosis of students' abilities, decide whether to use deductive (teacher presents the rule) or inductive (students find out what the rule is) methods of presenting new grammatical

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[17] Feez, *Text-based syllabus design*, Sydney 1998, p. 17.

structure. To understand or realise whether teaching process is appropriate to the Polish students' needs we should find a suitable reference. Here, The *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)* will provide us with the specific information related to grammar teaching. It is necessary to explain what CEFR is. It is a guideline used to describe achievements of learners of foreign languages across Europe and, increasingly, in other countries (for example, Colombia and the Philippines). It was put together by the Council of Europe as the main part of the project "Language Learning for European Citizenship" between 1989 and 1996. Its main aim is to provide a method of learning, teaching and assessing which applies to all languages in Europe. In November 2001 a European Union Council Resolution recommended using the CEFR to set up systems of validation of language ability. The six reference levels (Table 1 – see APPENDICES) are becoming widely accepted as the European standard for grading an individual's language proficiency.

Thus, it is obligatory now to examine what CEFR says about teaching grammar. First of all, we need to know that there are different methods, patterns or models for the organisation of words into sentences. However, CEFR is not responsible for choosing the best one. On the other hand, the Framework is supposed to state which they have chosen to follow and what consequences their choice has for their practice. The Common European Framework covers the description of grammatical organisation which involves the specification of:

– elements, **e.g.:**	morphs morphemes-roots and affixes words
– categories, **e.g.:**	number, case, gender concrete/abstract, countable/uncountable (in)transitive, active/passive voice past/present/future tense progressive, (im)perfect aspect
– classes, **e.g.:**	conjugations declensions open word classes: nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, closed word classes
– structures, **e.g.:**	compound and complex words phrases: (noun phrase, verb phrase, etc.)

                                clauses: (main, subordinate, co-ordinate)
                                sentences: (simple, compound, complex)

– *processes* (descriptive), e.g.:
                                        nominalisation
                                        affixation
                                        suppletion
                                        gradation
                                        transposition
                                        transformation

– *relations*, e.g.:   government
                                        concord
                                        valency

Penny Ur[18] has collected some opinions about the teaching of grammar. They are as follows:

Extract 1

The important point is that the study of grammar as such is neither necessary nor sufficient for learning to use a language.[19]

Extract 2

The student's craving for explicit formulization of generalizations; pan usually be met better by textbooks and grammars that he reads outside class than by discussion in class.[20]

Extract 3

The language teacher's view of what constitutes knowledge of a language is...a knowledge of the syntactic structure of sentences... The assumption that the language teacher appears to make, is that once this basis is provided, then the learner will have no difficulty in dealing with the actual use of language...

There is a good deal of evidence to suggest that this assumption is of very doubtful validity indeed.[21]

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[18] P. Ur, *A course in English language teaching*, Cambridge 2009, p. 77.
[19] From L. Newmark, '*How not to interfere with language learning*', [in:] *The Communicative Approach to Language, Teaching*, eds. C.J. Brumfit, K. Johnson, Oxford 1979, p. 165.
[20] Ibidem.
[21] From H.G. Widdowson, '*Directions in the teaching of discourse*', in: ibidem, p. 49-60.

Extract 4

The evidence seems to show beyond doubt that though it is by communicative use in real 'speech acts' that the new language 'sticks' in the learner's mind, insight into pattern is an equal partner with communicative use in what language teachers now see as the dual process of acquisition/learning. Grammar, approached as a voyage of discovery into the patterns of language rather than the learning of prescriptive rules, is no longer a bogey word.[22]

As we realise all of these four extracts present different opinions concerning teaching of grammar. In the first extract, we experience that in order to learn language we do not need to learn grammar as such. More important here, is the dispute whether it helps or not. The second extract strongly suggests that grammar is better taught outside the classroom. The writer of the third extract claims that the knowledge of how to construct the grammatical structure does not enable learners to produce real-life discourse. It is disputable whether grammar is useful for the writer. The last extract suggests that the author is sure about the usefulness of grammar. At the same time he or she is convinced that grammar is very interesting. These extracts show clearly that teaching and learning grammar can be perceived differently. The necessity of teaching grammar can also be relative. Thus, there is a need to refer to CEFR and realise "how much" grammar a student should have to be qualified for the particular level of proficiency. Let us have a look at the CEFR Grammatical Accuracy (Table 2. – see APPENDICES).

In order to determine how reliable the foundation of the curriculum and teachers' practice are we should scrutinise the results of the study. The purpose of the study was to investigate how much teachers really know about the methods or approaches to teaching grammar and at the same time what is the actual role of grammar in the constant process of developing the language among students. Yet another important element of the language is grammatical or linguistic competence which can be simply defined as the knowledge of the language structures that every speaker has in their mindx.[23]

By 'grammatical competence' I mean the cognitive state that encompasses all those aspects of form and meaning and their relation, including underlying structures that enter into that relation, which are properly assigned to the specific subsystems of the human mind that relates representations of form and meaning.[24]

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[22] From E. Hawkins, *Awareness of Language: An Introduction*, Cambridge 1984, p. 150-151.

[23] V. Cook, *Second language learning and language teaching*, London 2008, p. 22.

[24] N. Chomsky, *Rules and Representations*, Cambridge 1980, p. 59.

The objective of the investigation was to identify the significance of this competence and what sort of materials the particular teacher uses. Grammar can be taught or practiced in a number of ways. It is not easy to indicate which one is the most "correct". Nevertheless, teachers are attached to their techniques, the ones they are mostly convinced to. The vast majority of course books suggests well-trodden notions of how to practise grammatical structures during a lesson, they may be as follows:

"Practise the dialogue with a partner"
"Ask you classmates…."
"Work in a group of four…."
"Give you story to someone else in the class to read"
"Do the quiz in pairs"
"What could happen next? Discuss in groups"
"Discuss you answers with other students"
"Choose a question, and ask as many other students as you can".[25]

The investigation looks through the techniques and tries to show what the tendency of teaching might be. Another aspect of teaching grammar is *individual learning differences*. These are a number of psychological dimensions of differences. Among them there are: *age, intelligence, aptitude, motivation, strategies*.[26] Thus there was a need to find out some more psychological and pedagogical details about learners and definitely how teachers organise their work.

Research methodology

The main study consists of thirty-three teachers who, in average, have had over four years of experience. Thirty one participants teach English whereas two remaining ones are French and German trainers. Nineteen teachers teach languages at universities. Another nine instructors work in lower secondary schools. Three of the participants are employed in secondary schools. The following two are teachers form a private school as well as a primary one. The purpose of this study was to juxtapose the standards of grammar teaching included in the curriculum or the Common European Framework of Reference for languages, with the reality of how the sample of teachers conduct grammar lessons. The survey was constructed with the use of the "eBadania.pl" – the internet service enabling comprehensive prepara-

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[25] J. McDonough, C. Shaw, *Materials and Methods in ELT*, Oxford 2009, p. 193.
[26] R. Ellis, *Second Language Acquisition*, Oxford 2012, p. 77.

tion and conducting online surveys. The respondents were sent the survey by email. The investigation consisted of twenty questions. Each and every question was obligatory which means it was impossible to omit a question and move on to another one. The types of the questions that the respondents had to go through were as follows: "multiple choice questions", "rating scales", "comment/essay box question". The questions were prepared and organised in a way to present how teachers organise they work. Here it was important how much time it is dedicated to grammar, if it is done systematically and finally whether the teacher conducts the entire lesson in English, exclusively. Yet another thing was to find out what opinions the teachers had about learning grammar and other skills. By these views it was significant to get to know what problems learners had with. The questions of the survey were supposed to provide us with the answers concerning the methods of teaching. Especially, if teachers are equipped with the practical knowledge of approaches to teaching grammar. What is more, the study was expected to show how important the grammatical competence is to teachers.

Findings

Here, it is important to realise if the role of teaching grammar really matters. As we know, the lack of theoretical and practical knowledge effects communication. It may lead to misunderstanding and fluency problems. It is highlighted that accuracy is equally significant to fluency.[27] According to the survey to the vast majority of teachers, grammar is not the most important skill to teach. It is evidenced by the results if we take into consideration the fourth and the fifth value of the survey (Question no. 4).

According to the investigation we appreciate quite equally vocabulary and speaking whereas reading seems not to be that important. If we compare these findings with the CEFR we should be convinced enough that in order to achieve the threshold of the B level, students should be able to use "reasonably accurately a repertoire of frequently used 'routines' and patterns associated with more predictable situations."[28] The key words are "routines" and "patters". Reading exercises can be used for elicitation but also consolidation of patterns. Reading is not only a part of sociolinguistic or cognitive process. Undoubtedly, readers must process the syntactic and se-

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[27] M. Komorowska, *Metodyka nauczania języków obcych*, Warszawa 2009, p. 165.

[28] Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, Language Policy Unit, Strasbourg 2009, p. 113.

mantics aspects of language.[29] Moreover, going deeper into the importance of the grammatical skill, over fifty-seven percent of the teachers admitted that they devote half of the time to teaching grammar (Question no. 7). This shows some inconsistency in comparison with the previous juxtaposition. However, this finding can be supported with the eleventh question of the survey. (Question no. 12).

By scrutinising these three sets of findings we can be sure that teachers are aware of the importance of grammar teaching, however, as it was written in the theoretical part they have different attitude towards coaching this. Now, it is important to discover the relationship between teachers' grammar teaching beliefs and practices. The following results will show what teachers acknowledge by teaching grammar and how students respond to this. The next collection describes how the grammar instructors practically understand by saying teaching grammar with the "communicative approach". The answers are as follows (Question no. 18).

- **"Presenting the structures in the dialogues, etc., and an immediate training of these structures in their own dialogues, etc."**
- **"Make students aware that in everyday situations all the time, we use a variety of grammatical form"**
- **"Context-based dialogs without a detailed translation of the rules of grammar, learning through conversation, reading, repeating sentences (drills)"**
- **"Grammatical structures are used and practiced by the students in situations requiring verbal communication"**
- **"Using grammatical structures in specific expressions used in a given context, in the case of a communication."**
- **"Teaching grammar in specific communicative situations, grammar is designed for the correct communication"**
- **"Understanding the structure of language and their proper application gives possibility to communicate correctly**
- **"In the dialogues using the given structures."**
- **"Discovering rules during communication."**
- **"The ability to properly react in different situations."**
- **"The use of grammatical structures in the dialogues, games and activities"**

With these examples, we can conclude that teachers are familiar with the communicative approach. Afterwards, we shall proceed to discuss the findings concerning the methods or techniques of teaching grammar. Let us focus on the opinions what the best way of teaching grammar is (Question no. 15). Here, we find out that the teachers are convinced that the most successful method of teaching grammar is to provide a student with a numerous

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[29] M.E. Brisk, M.M. Harrington, *Literacy and bilingualism: A handbook for all teachers*, Second Edition, London 2007, p. 83.

grammatical exercises and these ones should be contextualised. Although, this can be inscribed into the activities of the communicative approach, explaining rules in Polish or in a foreign language remain disputable.

There is also a need to look at the exercises and the materials. Constructing sentences on the basis of the model, sentence completion, filling the gaps and paraphrasing are the dominant ways of practice. Moreover, arranging dialogues, stories as well as translations are also very common. The teachers also admit students are supposed to analyse and formulate grammatical rules. The activities in which students are expected to substitute the elements of a sentences turns out to be the least popular method (Question no. 13). When we scrutinise the results of what way the teachers teach grammar we learn they explain the grammatical principles, sometimes the teachers encourage students to define the rules on their own. At the same time, we realise grammar is taught regularly and the rules are provided in Polish more often than in a foreign langue.

Another significant question is about what the teacher's reaction to grammatical mistakes is. We find out, here, the sample of teacher is divided into two main groups. The first group is convinced that grammatical errors or mistakes should be corrected when an expression is completed. On the contrary, the second one admits they correct most common errors very rarely. Very few grammar instructors correct every time when a student makes an error or a mistake in oral expressions (Question no. 10).

> (…) If the language teacher's management activities are directed exclusively at involving the learners in solving communication problems in the target language, then language learning will take care of itself (…).[30]

Taking into consideration Task-Based Learning, we can be sure that learners who are engaged into tasks learn better. With reference to Jeremy Harmer[31] we can extend the previous statement by saying that they learn better if they are engrossed in meaning based tasks. Here, we cannot say that learning "will take care of itself", but this strongly suggests that learning should be supported by communicative tasks.[32] On the other hand, teachers are used to well and old proven methods. We can see they are prone to be contextualising grammar, this method was discovered in the mid-nineteenth century by T. Prendergast (1806-1886). According to this finding, they are rather reluctant or sceptical to use new approaches. Another important per-

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[30] R.L. Allwright, *Language Learning through Communication Practice*, [in:] *The Communicative Approach to Language Teaching*, eds. C.J. Brumfit, K. Johnson, Oxford 1983.

[31] J. Harmer, *The practice of English language teaching*, Harlow 2009, p. 53.

[32] Ibidem.

spective is adoption of the materials, which means what materials teachers should use to make his or her teaching more successful. Teachers are not only those who chose the materials. Usually, the decision is influenced by the strategies for budgeting and purchasing the whole textbooks as well as policy set by the members of the Ministry of Education. This said, it reminds that teachers must evaluate the materials and be very selective in choosing them. The next finding shows clearly that the lion's share of the teachers use the course resources and expand them with additional grammar exercises (Question no. 14). This result is supported by the following ones in which we realise that textbooks as well as workbooks are chosen, preferably. The same collection underscores the value of supplementary grammar materials which are usually prepared independently or taken form the internet resources (Question no. 19). Many years back, methodologists started arguing about whether teachers should use the coursebooks or not. To some of them their role has been questionable[33], the others have defended their use.[34]

Now, let us move on to teacher's organisation.

The question whether the teachers teach grammar in systematic way provided us with the answer that grammar is thought regularly and this component of language is an inextricable element of each lesson (Question no. 6). Yet another finding to analyse is what the teacher's opinion is about learning grammar by students. The vast majority of teachers indicates that the reason why their students are succumbed to incorrectness of grammar can be attributed to the teachers' beliefs there are not enough exercises outside school activities and also linguistic correctness is not a priority for them (Question no. 9). Definitely it is significant to ask students what their attitude is to learning grammar, simply, if they like doing this or rather not. According to the sample, the general tendency is that students are not keen on learning grammar. What is more, they justify their opinions by saying that learning grammar is "boring and difficult", "it requires independent, painstaking work at home", "grammar is not needed for communication", "it is a difficult aspect of learning the language" (Question no. 17).

Conclusion

The study seems to support that teaching grammar is present in the process of language development and the instructors consider the structural

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[33] R.L. Allwright, *What do we want teaching materials for?* ELT Journal, 1981, 36(1), p. 5-18.
[34] R. O'Neil, *Why use textbooks?* ELT Journal, 1982, 36(2), p. 104-111.

part of the language as an inextricable element of teaching. Attention to this investigation allows to say that teacher's grammar teaching and their practices are not far and deeply divergent. What is more, if we refer to *CEFR* and reflect on the findings concerning systematic grammar teaching as well as types of the exercises, we can confirm that teaching is goal-oriented.

> They say they hate grammar. Anything, as long as it isn't grammar. One of them, Eric, came to me at the end of the lesson and asked why you can't say 'he doesn't writes. I took a deep breath. It's their sixth year of English and both the syllabus and the book assume that students can take part in discussions on the energy crisis using infinitive constructions. The class does not know about infinitives. Nor do they want to know. It's grammar. Funnily enough they can be very persistent when they there is something they don't understand, but you can never predict when this will happen. I usually try to explain, but of course there is never enough time, because I have to rush on the next class. When I saw them again today I put the form 'he doesn't write' on the blackboard, but Eric seemed to have forgotten his question. In any case, he no longer showed interest in the answer. Instead, someone else challenged me (who is the one being tested?) on 'They did not expect John to find a solution'. "Why "to"?' I managed to explain. It seemed to make a difference for the rest of the lesson.[35]

This excerpt taken from the collection of teacher's diary may indicate on how important the way of teaching grammar is as teachers are usually exposed to different expectations from students. What is more, the motivation and attitude of the student play a significant role as well. Unfortunately, the vast majority of students find grammar boring and difficult. They often claim it requires painstaking work independently at home and it is not needed for communication. Widely-held, they consider the structural component of language as a difficult aspect of learning. In this respect, teacher's role as a motivator and he or she should teach strategies is still an immutable and undeniable truth. Scrutinizing the findings we can be sure teachers use different materials. They do not limit themselves to the coursebooks or workbooks or even simple grammar exercises but they support their teaching with supplementary materials from the internet. The respondents extend grammar instructing by gamification and interactive, web-based educational platforms. Furthermore, the investigation proves that communicative grammar teaching approach is not a foreign term to the sample of instructors. Question no. 18 clearly presents the answers for the question of how teachers are familiarised with the concept of "communicative approach". Even though, the sentences do not sound academically and they are some-

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[35] J. Appel, *Dolmetschen als Ubungsform in der Oberstufe*, In Praxis des Neusprachlichen Unterrichts, 1985, 32(1), p. 54.

times awkward it is safe to say that they fall within the features of communicative language teaching.

The conclusiveness of the study is undermined by its limitations. The sample size is small and it cannot be used to generalise for all L2 teachers. Apart from the fact the sample of teachers is the collection of experienced grammar trainers, however they teach in different school types. This might mean that their ways of conducting the classes require coping with conditions such as difficult material conditions, not homogeneous groups, a limited number of hours or overcrowded groups Some of the findings contradict the hypothesis. A large group of the teachers claims there is too little time in the classroom to practice grammatical structures, on the other hand very few of them set grammatical exercises as a homework assignment. Furthermore, the results showed some inconsistencies in the teachers' stated beliefs, in particular in relation to when it is legitimate to correct the mistake communicative activity to focus on issues of form, and preferred error correction technique.

The results, as well as the limitations mentioned, highlight the need for further studies. Further research, even if does not succeed in providing clear-cut answers to the questions raised in this article, will deepen our understanding of the issues involved and afford better defined provisional specifications. Longitudinal studies that employ qualitative as well as quantitative methods will help to show to what extent there is a relationship between teacher's grammar teaching beliefs and practices.

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APPENDICES

Table 1

The Common European Framework divides learners into three broad divisions
that can be divided into six levels The CEFR describes what a learner is supposed
to be able to do in reading, listening, speaking and writing at each level

Level group	Level group name	Level	Level name	Description
A	Basic User	A1	Break-through or be-ginner	Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type.
				Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has.
				Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.
		A2	Way stage or elemen-tary	Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment).
				Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters.
				Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.
B	Inde-de-pen-	B1	Thresh-old or inter-	Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc.

Le-vel gro-up	Level group name	Level	Level name	Description
	dent User		mediate	Can deal with most situations likely to arise while travelling in an area where the language is spoken.
				Can produce simple connected text on topics that are familiar or of personal interest.
				Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.
		B2	Vantage or up-per inter-mediate	Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation.
				Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party.
				Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.
C	Profi-fi-cient User	C1	Effec-tive Opera-tional Profi-ciency or ad-vanced	Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognise implicit meaning.
				Can express ideas fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions.
				Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes.
				Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.
		C2	Mastery or pro-ficiency	Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read.
				Can summarise information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation.
				Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in the most complex situations.

Table 2

The Common European Framework Grammatical Accuracy

	GRAMMATICAL ACCURACY
C2	Maintains consistent grammatical control of complex language, even while attention is otherwise engaged (e.g. in forward planning, in monitoring others' reactions).

		GRAMMATICAL ACCURACY
C1		Consistently maintains a high degree of grammatical accuracy; errors are rare and difficult to spot.
B2		Good grammatical control; occasional 'slips' or non-systematic errors and minor flaws in sentence structure may still occur, but they are rare and can often be corrected in retrospect.
		Shows a relatively high degree of grammatical control. Does not make mistakes which lead to misunderstanding.
B1		Communicates with reasonable accuracy in familiar contexts; generally good control though with noticeable mother tongue influence. Errors occur, but it is clear what he/she is trying to express.
		Uses reasonably accurately a repertoire of frequently used 'routines' and patterns associated with more predictable situations.
A2		Uses some simple structures correctly, but still systematically makes basic mistakes - for example tends to mix up tenses and forget to mark agreement; nevertheless, it is usually clear what he/she is trying to say.
A1		Shows only limited control of a few simple grammatical structures and sentence patterns in a learnt repertoire.

Question no. 4

Question	SKILL	1	2	3	4	5
Determine the importance of taught skills (1 = least important 5 = most important)	*grammar*	0	1	8	15	9
	vocabulary	0	1	2	9	21
	Speaking	1	0	4	8	20
	reading	2	6	7	11	7
	Listening	0	2	9	8	14

Question no. 7

Question	Time	Respondents
During one lesson, how much time do you spend on teaching grammar	*Over 75%*	1
	About 50%	19
	Less than 25%	13
	I don't teach grammar	0

Question no. 12

Question	Answer	Respondents
I teach grammar because:	*"is a necessary and important part of language learning "*	15
	"teaching it, is included in the curriculum "	5
	"knowing it, is helpful for in language learning "	8
	"is a prerequisite for good communication"	5
	"it is hard to say "	0
	" I do not teach grammar systematically, because it is not relevant in the final language exams "	0
	"different reason"	0

Question no. 18

Question	Answer
In your opinion, what does it mean to teach grammar with the „communicative approach"?	*Presenting the structures in the dialogues, etc., and an immediate training of these structures in their own dialogues, etc.*
	make students aware that in everyday situations all the time, we use a variety of grammatical form
	Context-based dialogs without a detailed translation of the rules of grammar, learning through conversation, reading, repeating sentences (drills)
	Grammatical structures are used and practiced by the students in situations requiring verbal communication
	Using grammatical structures in specific expressions used in a given context, in the case of a communication.
	Means learning grammar, much less consciously and unconsciously, which in my opinion is not the best solution. The best solutions are compatible with the principle of the "golden mean"
	teaching grammar in specific communicative situations, grammar is designed for the correct communication
	Understanding the structure of language and their proper application gives possibility to communicate correctly
	In the dialogues using the given structures.
	Discovering rules during communication.
	Paying attention to basic principles
	The ability to properly react in different situations.
	The use of grammatical structures in the dialogues, games and activities

Question no. 15

Question	Answer	Choices
In my opinion the best way of teaching grammar is. (multiple choice)	"*to explain rules in Polish*"	12
	"*to explain rules in a foreign language*"	4
	"*to teach grammar by contextualisation*"	29
	"*numerous grammatical exercises* "	30
	"*different method (state here):*	depending on the group level , at the lowest levels , refer to the Polish language , to make them aware that how and what they say matters

Question no. 13

Question	Answer	Choices
What techniques/exercises do you use to teach grammar? (multiple choice)	*Paraphrasing/transformations*	17
	Analysing and formulating the rules of grammar	13
	substitution	6
	Constructing sentences on the basis of the model	19
	developing, sentence completion, filling the gaps	17
	translation of sentences	10
	arranging dialogues , stories using grammar rules	12

Question no. 11

Question	Answer	Choices
In what way do you teach grammar? (multiple choice)	*I organize regular lessons focused on selected aspects of grammar*	4
	I always explain rules and principles in Polish	3
	I always explain rules and principles in English	2
	I never explain grammatical rules, students discover them on their own.	0
	Sometimes I explain the rules , sometimes I encourage students to define the rules on their own	21
	Grammar is less important element in my method of teaching	1
	I regularly set grammatical tasks as a homework assignment	2

Question no. 10

Question	Answer	Choices
How do you react to students' grammatical errors and mistakes?	*mostly I correct every time, when a student makes an error or a mistake in oral expressions*	4
	mostly I correct the completed expression	16
	Hardly ever do I correct the most common errors	11
	more often I do not correct them, because the most important is communication	2

Question no. 14

Question	Answer	Respondents
Do you expand grammar exercises with additional materials or you teach with the course materials only?	*I only use the course materials (e.g. textbook and exercises)*	2
	I use the course materials and expand them with additional grammar exercises	31

Question no. 19

Question	Answer	Choices
What materials do you use in your work to develop linguistic correctness? (multiple choice)	"*textbook* "	31
	"*workbook* "	27
	"*supplementary materials from the internet* "	22
	"*grammar materials prepared for the students* "	24
	"*audio-video meterials* "	17
	"*other (please specify)*"	Exercises on edu platforms, language games, songs, stories, independently prepared materials

Question no. 6

Question	Answer	Choices
Do you teach grammar systematically	"*yes* "	30
	"*no* "	3

Question no. 9

Question	Answer	Choices
I believe that students who have problems with the correctness of language (grammar) (multiple choice)	„*too little practice in the classroom because there are not enough exercises in the coursebook*"	3
	" *not enough exercise outside school activities* "	21
	" *Too little practice in the classroom because there are too few hours of language a week* "	9
	" *linguistic correctness is not a priority for them* "	17
	" *are poorly motivated to learn language* "	8
	"*other (please specify)*"	

Question no. 4

Question	Answer	Choices
Do your students like learning grammar? And why (multiple choice)	*I don't know*	4
	"*yes*"	10
	"*no*"	18
	"*why?*"	find it boring and difficult, it requires painstaking work independently at home, they believe that grammar is not needed for communication Have deficiencies of they think that it is unnecessary, the majority considers it as a difficult aspect of learning the language