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PhD in Pedagogy, Associate Professor, **OLHA ORLOVSKA**
Khmelnytskyi National University, Ukraine
E-mail: orlovskaO@khnmu.edu.ua
ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0477-1163>

APPROACHES TO TEACHING ENGLISH GRAMMAR IN U.S. UNIVERSITIES

ABSTRACT

The article deals with contemporary approaches to teaching English grammar in U.S. universities in the context of ongoing transformations in higher education and the growing demand for communicative and professionally oriented foreign language training. Grammar instruction is viewed not as an isolated component of language learning, but as an integral part of communicative competence development that supports students' ability to use language accurately, fluently, and appropriately in academic and professional settings. The study focuses on four widely implemented and theoretically grounded approaches to grammar teaching in U.S. higher education institutions: Communicative Grammar Teaching (CGT), Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), inductive and deductive approaches to grammar instruction, and Technology-Enhanced Grammar Teaching.

The article provides a detailed analysis of the theoretical foundations of each approach. Special attention is paid to the pedagogical principles underlying communicative and task-based grammar instruction, which emphasize meaningful interaction, contextualized language use, and learner engagement in problem-solving activities. The inductive and deductive approaches are examined in terms of their cognitive and methodological value, highlighting their relevance for different learning styles, proficiency levels, and instructional goals. The study also explores the role of digital technologies in grammar teaching, including online corpora, mobile applications, and adaptive learning platforms, which contribute to individualized instruction, increased learner autonomy, and formative assessment.

The article argues that effective grammar teaching in U.S. universities is characterized by methodological flexibility, integration of form and meaning, and the purposeful combination of traditional and innovative instructional practices. It is concluded that the balanced use of the analyzed approaches enhances students' grammatical accuracy, communicative competence, and motivation for learning, and contributes to the overall quality of foreign language education in higher education institutions.

Key words: grammar teaching, contemporary approaches, higher education institutions, communicative grammar teaching, task-based learning, inductive and deductive approaches, technology-enhanced learning, the USA.

ПІДХОДИ ДО ВИКЛАДАННЯ ГРАМАТИКИ АНГЛІЙСЬКІ МОВИ У ЗАКЛАДАХ ВИЩОЇ ОСВІТИ США

АНОТАЦІЯ

У статті здійснено аналіз сучасних підходів до викладання граматики англійської мови в університетах США в умовах трансформації системи вищої освіти та зростання вимог до формування іншомовної комунікативної компетентності



студентів. Викладання граматики розглядається не як ізольований аспект мовної підготовки, а як важлива складова цілісного процесу формування мовленнєвих умінь, необхідних для ефективного академічного й професійного спілкування. Основна увага зосереджена на чотирьох провідних підходах до навчання граматики, що широко застосовуються у закладах вищої освіти США, а саме: комунікативному навчанні граматики (Communicative Grammar Teaching), граматиці в межах завданнєвого навчання (Task-Based Language Teaching), індуктивному та дедуктивному підходах до опрацювання граматичного матеріалу, а також технологічно орієнтованому викладанні граматики.

У статті розкрито теоретико-методологічні засади кожного з означеніх підходів на основі праць провідних зарубіжних науковців. Проаналізовано дидактичний потенціал комунікативного та завданнєвого навчання граматики, які передбачають використання мовного матеріалу в реальних або наближених до реальних умовах спілкування та активне залучення студентів до мовленнєвої діяльності. Індуктивний і дедуктивний підходи розглянуті з позицій когнітивної доцільності та можливостей їх застосування залежно від рівня мовної підготовки студентів і цілей навчання. Окрему увагу приділено ролі цифрових технологій у навчанні граматики, зокрема використанню онлайн-корпусів, освітніх платформ, мобільних застосунків і систем управління навчанням, що сприяють індивідуалізації навчального процесу та підвищенню автономії здобувачів освіти.

Зроблено висновок, що ефективне викладання граматики в університетах США ґрунтуються на інтеграції різних методичних підходів, поєднанні роботи над формою і значенням та використанні інноваційних освітніх технологій.

Ключові слова: навчання граматики, сучасні підходи, заклади вищої освіти, комунікативне навчання граматики, навчання на основі завдань, індуктивний і дедуктивний підходи, технологічно збагачене навчання, США.

INTRODUCTION

The development of higher education in the United States under conditions of globalization, academic mobility, and internationalization has significantly influenced approaches to English language teaching at the university level. Grammar instruction remains a core component of English language programs, particularly in ESL and EAP contexts, where students are required to master complex grammatical structures for academic writing, presentations, and professional communication.

Traditionally, grammar was taught as a set of prescriptive rules that learners were expected to memorize and reproduce accurately. However, contemporary applied linguistics views grammar as a dynamic system that enables speakers and writers to construct meaning in specific contexts. This reconceptualization has been articulated in the works of Larsen-Freeman, Ellis, and Celce-Murcia, who emphasize the inseparable relationship between grammatical form, meaning, and use.

In U.S. universities, grammar instruction is increasingly integrated into communicative and academic tasks rather than taught in isolation. The diversity of student populations, including international students with varied linguistic backgrounds, has further necessitated flexible and learner-centered instructional approaches. Despite extensive research on grammar pedagogy, there is a need to systematize and critically analyze the main approaches currently employed in U.S. higher education.



THE AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of this paper is to analyze and characterize the principal approaches to teaching grammar in U.S. universities and to identify their pedagogical potential for the effective development of grammatical competence in higher education.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH METHODS

The theoretical framework of the study draws on research in second language acquisition, communicative language teaching, and educational technology. Key theoretical foundations are derived from the works of D. Biber, M. Celce-Murcia, C. Chapelle, R. DeKeyser, R. Ellis, D. Larsen-Freeman, M. Long and others.

The study employs qualitative research methods, including theoretical analysis, synthesis, comparison, and generalization of scholarly literature on grammar instruction in higher education. These methods make it possible to identify common principles, differences, and pedagogical implications of the analyzed approaches.

The historical development of grammar teaching reveals a gradual shift from grammar-translation and audiolingual methods toward communicative and task-based paradigms. This shift was strongly influenced by humanistic and constructivist theories of learning, which prioritize learner autonomy, meaningful interaction, and contextualized language use. In the U.S. higher education context, these ideas have led to the adoption of integrated grammar teaching models.

Communicative Grammar Teaching (CGT) is grounded in the principles of Communicative Language Teaching and views grammar as an essential component of communicative competence. Larsen-Freeman (2003) conceptualizes grammar as a three-dimensional construct comprising form, meaning, and use, a perspective that has been widely adopted in U.S. university classrooms (Larsen-Freeman, 2003).

Task-Based Grammar Teaching (TBGT) represents a further evolution of communicative approaches. According to Long (2015), grammar instruction within TBGT emerges from communicative tasks that require learners to use language to achieve real-world outcomes. Focus on form occurs when grammatical issues arise naturally during task performance (Long, 2015).

Inductive and deductive approaches reflect cognitive perspectives on grammar learning. DeKeyser (1995) emphasizes the effectiveness of explicit, deductive instruction for adult learners, while Thornbury (1999) highlights the value of inductive, discovery-based learning. In U.S. universities, both approaches are used depending on instructional objectives and learner needs (DeKeyser, 1995; Thornbury, 1999).

Technology-enhanced grammar teaching has become increasingly prominent due to the widespread use of digital learning environments, online corpora, and automated feedback tools. Chapelle (2001) and Biber et al. (1998) demonstrate that technology facilitates access to authentic language data and supports individualized grammar practice (Chapelle, 2001; Biber et al., 1998).

RESULTS

The expanded analysis of grammar teaching practices within U.S. universities demonstrates that the effectiveness of instructional outcomes largely depends on the principled combination of methodological approaches rather than the exclusive use of any single model. The findings confirm that grammar instruction is most successful when it is systematically integrated into communicative, academic, and professionally oriented activities and aligned with learners' cognitive characteristics, educational needs, and disciplinary contexts.



The results of the study are consistent with Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research emphasizing that grammar learning occurs most efficiently when learners' attention is drawn to linguistic form in the context of meaningful communication (Ellis, 2006; Long, 2015). In U.S. universities, this principle is realized through a wide range of instructional practices that combine explicit explanation, guided discovery, interaction, and technology-mediated feedback.

Communicative Grammar Teaching (CGT) has been found to play a central role in university-level English instruction, particularly in ESL and EAP programs. The analysis indicates that CGT facilitates the development of grammatical accuracy alongside fluency by embedding grammatical structures into communicative tasks such as discussions, debates, simulations, presentations, and genre-based writing activities. Teachers intentionally design tasks in which grammar functions as a resource for meaning-making rather than an end in itself. As a result, students demonstrate improved ability to select and apply grammatical forms appropriately in academic discourse, including argumentative essays, research reports, and oral presentations (Dudeney et al., 2022).

The findings further reveal that CGT contributes positively to learner motivation and engagement. When students perceive grammar as a tool for expressing ideas and achieving communicative goals, their anxiety toward grammatical accuracy decreases, and their willingness to participate in classroom interaction increases. This observation aligns with Larsen-Freeman's concept of "grammering," which views grammar as a dynamic process rather than a static body of rules (Larsen-Freeman, 2003). In U.S. university classrooms, this perspective encourages instructors to revisit grammatical forms across multiple contexts, allowing students to refine their understanding through repeated meaningful use.

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) has been identified as particularly effective in promoting the acquisition of grammar relevant to academic and professional communication. The analysis shows that grammar teachers within TBLT frameworks are typically organized around complex tasks that mirror real-world academic practices, such as collaborative research projects, problem-solving case studies, and discipline-specific writing assignments (Beckett & Slater, 2005). During task performance, learners encounter communicative challenges that naturally prompt attention to grammatical form. Teachers provide focused feedback either during or after task completion, thereby supporting the development of both accuracy and complexity.

The results indicate that TBLT supports implicit grammar learning while still allowing space for explicit intervention when necessary. This balance is especially important in heterogeneous university classrooms, where students differ significantly in linguistic background and proficiency. Consistent with Ellis et al. (2020), the findings suggest that focus on form within task-based instruction enhances learners' ability to notice grammatical features and incorporate them into their interlanguage systems (Ellis et al., 2020). Over time, students demonstrate increased grammatical complexity in written and spoken production, particularly in the use of verb tenses, complex noun phrases, and cohesive devices.

The analysis of inductive and deductive approaches reveals that both remain pedagogically relevant in U.S. higher education. Deductive grammar instruction is most frequently employed in contexts where precision and metalinguistic awareness are prioritized, such as academic writing courses and teacher education programs. Explicit explanation of grammatical rules, followed by controlled and semi-controlled practice,



enables learners to develop conscious understanding and apply rules more accurately. This approach has been found to be particularly beneficial for adult learners, who often prefer structured explanations and clear guidance (DeKeyser, 1995).

At the same time, inductive grammar instruction is widely used to promote learner autonomy and deeper cognitive processing. In inductive learning tasks, students analyze language data, identify patterns, and formulate grammatical generalizations independently or collaboratively. The results suggest that such discovery-based activities foster critical thinking skills and encourage active engagement with language input. In U.S. universities, inductive approaches are often supported by corpus-based activities, where learners examine authentic language examples drawn from academic texts and spoken discourse. This practice enhances students' awareness of variation, frequency, and contextual constraints in grammar use (Celce-Murcia, 2002).

Importantly, the findings indicate that the most effective instructional models combine inductive and deductive techniques rather than treating them as mutually exclusive. Teachers frequently introduce grammatical concepts inductively and subsequently consolidate learning through deductive clarification. This pedagogical sequencing allows learners to benefit from both experiential discovery and explicit explanation, resulting in more robust and transferable grammatical knowledge (Thornbury, 1999).

Technology-enhanced grammar teaching has emerged as a significant factor influencing instructional effectiveness in U.S. universities. The results show that digital tools are used not merely as supplementary resources but as integral components of grammar instruction. Learning management systems provide structured environments for grammar practice, assessment, and feedback, while automated writing evaluation tools offer immediate, individualized responses to learners' grammatical errors. Such technologies enable instructors to monitor learner progress more efficiently and tailor instruction to individual needs (Jacobs et al., 2016).

Corpus-based tools and concordancers are widely employed to support data-driven learning. By exploring authentic language corpora, students gain insight into how grammatical structures function in real academic discourse. The analysis indicates that this approach enhances learners' ability to distinguish between prescriptive rules and actual usage patterns, thereby promoting more accurate and natural language production (Biber et al., 1998). Moreover, mobile applications and online platforms facilitate spaced practice and self-regulated learning, extending grammar instruction beyond the classroom.

The integration of technology also supports formative assessment and reflective learning. Students receive continuous feedback on their grammatical performance and are encouraged to revise and improve their output iteratively. This process-oriented approach aligns with contemporary views of assessment for learning and contributes to sustained grammatical development over time (Chapelle, 2001).

Overall, the expanded results demonstrate that grammar teaching in U.S. universities is characterized by methodological diversity, contextual sensitivity, and pedagogical adaptability. Effective teaching practice integrates communicative, task-based, cognitive, and technological dimensions, creating a learning environment in which grammar supports meaningful academic communication. These findings reinforce the view that grammar teaching practice should be flexible, learner-centered, and closely aligned with real-world language use.

CONCLUSIONS AND PROSPECTS OF FURTHER RESEARCH

The conducted analysis demonstrates that contemporary grammar teaching within U.S. universities is characterized by methodological diversity and pedagogical flexibility.



Rather than relying on a single dominant instructional model, university-level grammar teaching practice increasingly integrates communicative, task-based, cognitive, and technology-enhanced approaches. This integrative orientation reflects current trends in second language acquisition research and responds to the academic and professional needs of linguistically diverse student populations.

It has been established that grammar teaching practice is most effective when grammatical form is taught in close connection with meaning and use, as emphasized in communicative grammar teaching frameworks. Communicative Grammar Teaching enables students to apply grammatical knowledge in authentic spoken and written contexts, thereby supporting the development of communicative competence. Task-Based Language Teaching further strengthens this orientation by embedding grammar learning within meaningful academic and professional tasks, where attention to form emerges naturally during task performance. Such an approach aligns with SLA research demonstrating that learners acquire grammatical structures more effectively when they are functionally motivated and contextually grounded.

The study also confirms the pedagogical value of combining inductive and deductive approaches to grammar teaching practice in higher education. Deductive instruction provides clarity, efficiency, and metalinguistic awareness, which are particularly important for adult learners in academic settings. At the same time, inductive, discovery-based learning promotes deeper cognitive processing, learner autonomy, and long-term retention of grammatical structures. The balanced use of these approaches allows teachers to adapt grammar teaching to students' proficiency levels, learning styles, and teaching goals.

Technology-enhanced grammar teaching has been identified as an essential component of modern grammar pedagogy in U.S. universities. Digital tools such as learning management systems, online corpora, automated writing evaluation programs, and mobile applications expand opportunities for individualized practice, immediate feedback, and exposure to authentic language data. The integration of technology supports learner autonomy and contributes to formative assessment practices, which are particularly relevant in English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English as a Second Language (ESL) programs.

Overall, the findings of the study confirm that effective teaching practice integrates grammatical teaching practice into meaningful communicative and academic activities rather than treating grammar as an isolated component of language learning. Such an approach enhances students' grammatical accuracy, fluency, and pragmatic appropriateness, while also increasing motivation and engagement in the learning process. The analyzed approaches collectively contribute to the formation of grammatical competence as an integral part of overall communicative competence in higher education.

Prospects for further research include empirical investigations into the effectiveness of specific grammar teaching models within different instructional contexts of U.S. universities, such as EAP programs, discipline-specific language courses, and teacher education programs. Future studies may also focus on learners' perceptions of grammar teaching practice and the impact of instructional approaches on grammatical development in academic writing and oral communication. In addition, further research is needed to explore the pedagogical potential of emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence-based feedback systems and adaptive learning platforms, in supporting grammar acquisition. Such research would contribute to the refinement of grammar teaching practices and to the ongoing development of evidence-based foreign language pedagogy in higher education.



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