

How is English Grammar Taught in Terms of Focus on Forms, Form, and Meaning?

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ABSTRACT

Approaches to teaching a second language can differ. One of the most contentious issues in second language acquisition (SLA) research is whether the emphasis should be on explicit or implicit grammar or communication in the language. It is essential to differentiate between these three teaching methods in second language classrooms. The paper aims to illustrate how grammar is taught in terms of focus on forms, form, and meaning for older pupils at primary schools in various cultural contexts (e.g., Vietnam and Sweden). Classroom extracts and examples from Grade 5 English lessons (Son, 2018) are recycled to examine these three teaching orientations more closely. The analysis is based on the classroom observation using the communicative orientation of language teaching (COLT) observation scheme. The findings will shed light on a better understanding of how these teaching orientations (focus on forms, form, and meaning) were carried out and help language teachers to differentiate these three teaching orientations. Pedagogical implications will be further discussed.

Keywords: forms, form, meaning, grammar, older learner, English, language learning and teaching.

1 Introduction

Learning a second language is becoming a frequent requirement in an increasingly globalized world, and approaches to teaching a second language might vary. The focus could be on explicit and implicit grammar or communication in the language. The choice or balance between the teaching of grammar and communicative language teaching (CLT) has always been a subject of controversy in language teaching and learning, and SLA research. This relates to teaching methodologies and to the extent to which, when, and how we should focus on it. Directing students' attention to linguistic forms during communication activities is useful for language learners when they learn a target language. It is more effective than for those who do not or only do so during decontextualized grammar activities (Lightbown, 1993; Spada & Lightbown, 1993). CLT should also introduce grammar instruction (Nassaji, 2000; Spada & Lightbown, 1993, 2009; Williams, 1995). Additionally, some studies have discovered that language learners who receive form-focused instruction perform better on the targeted forms than those who do not (Doughty, 1991; Doughty & Williams, 1998; Lightbown, 1991; Trahey & White, 1993; White, 1991). It is worth mentioning that little research has been done on the role of form-focused instruction involving children learning a foreign language (Pinter, 2011). Moreover, grammar can give many people negative thoughts since the grammatical system could be a challenge to understand, learn and teach in the language classroom. However, grammar is essential and has meaning, and it can be fun when teaching a language (Vannestål, 2016). Three aspects to be included in grammar teaching and learning suggested by Larsen-Freeman (2001) are *form* (how the grammatical feature is formed), *meaning* (what the grammatical feature means), and *use* (when the grammatical item is used). However, it is not always easy to differentiate between these three teaching orientations.

In this paper, different approaches to grammar instruction (focus on forms and form), and focus on meaning will be explored based on the teaching practices in some English lessons for older learners in



primary education (Grade 5) in Sweden and Vietnam (Son, 2018). The findings will contribute to a better understanding of how these teaching orientations (focus on forms, form, and meaning) were carried out and help language teachers differentiate between these three teaching orientations, in order to navigate English language teaching methods. A research question is: How is grammar taught in terms of focus on forms, form, and meaning in English lessons for older learners at primary schools in various cultural contexts, namely Sweden and Vietnam?

2 Literature Review

2.1 Contextual Background

Studies from Sweden regarding English classrooms for young learners (Källkvist & Petersson, 2006; Malmberg, Bergström, Håkanson, Tornberg, & Öman, 2000; Son, 2018) point to a focus on meaning. Meanwhile, studies from Vietnam on English in primary education (Bui, 2005; Khuong, 2015; Le, 2000, 2019; Le & Do, 2012; Moon, 2009; Phuong, 2019; Son, 2018) point to a prevalence of focus on grammatical forms.

According to the syllabus for English education laid out by the Swedish National Agency for Education, pupils should be given the opportunity to develop communicative skills (Skolverket, 2020, 2022). This syllabus is based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR₁), which focuses on developing communicative competence. However, linguistic structures should also be introduced to a small degree as an operational base to promote a communicative approach (Skolverket, 2020). As exposure to English is common in Sweden (cf. Son, 2018; Sundqvist, 2011), learners should receive formal instruction at the end of their primary education (e.g., Grades 5 and 6) to some extent to promote language awareness and metalinguistic competence.

The new curriculum for English language teaching in Vietnamese primary education (MOET, 2010) highlights communicative competence. Bolton, Botha, and Kirkpatrick (2020) also point out that communicative competence has been promoted in teaching English in Vietnam although the grammar-translation method is used to a certain degree. In addition, a prevalence of focus on grammatical forms in English language teaching from primary education in the Vietnamese context has been found (Bui, 2005; Khuong, 2015; Le, 2000, 2019; Le & Do, 2012; Moon, 2009; Son, 2018).

Apparently, to some degree, the teachers might include the forms in the language because they are inclined to these tendencies (forms, form, and meaning) in their teaching practices. However, it is unclear what the focus on 'meaning', 'form' and grammatical 'forms' means and how these concepts are used in the activities. This paper highlights these approaches and examines how teaching grammar to children (as older learners in Grade 5) can be fun and meaningful.

2.2 Theoretical Background

Knowing how children learn the language is crucial before discussing language teaching methods. Furthermore, communicative competence and different teaching approaches (focus on form, forms, and meaning) are also reviewed briefly in this section.

How do children learn the language?

According to constructivism, learning is an active process. Children are active learners and thinkers (Piaget, 1923). Piaget suggests that children construct knowledge for themselves by actively making sense of their environment. They are actively involved in learning when they are interested in the tasks, e.g., games and stories. They assimilate information and accommodate new ideas in the learning process. Additionally,

1 <https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages>

social interaction and the influence of peers, teachers, and parents engaged in the interaction (Vygotsky, 1978) and scaffolding (Bruner, 1983) are also significant sources of learning and development. Therefore, when it comes to grammar teaching for children, it should be meaningful and interesting as meaning-focused input (Pinter, 2017). With language, the pupils should be experiencing lots of meaningful exposure and input. Social interaction is important because language is all about communication. Children absorb and understand grammar implicitly by reproducing the language in a meaningful context rather than through grammatical explanation. "Learning grammar is a messy process requiring the teacher to provide lots of meaningful practice, recycling, and guidance in attending to language structure" (Pinter, 2017, p.99).

Learning-centred grammar teaching (Cameron, 2001) is also vital as teaching should be matched with how pupils learn. Teaching grammar in contexts helps young learners notice certain grammatical features in use. "Children see the foreign language 'from the inside' and try to find meaning in how the language is used in action, interaction, and intention, rather than 'from the outside' as a system and form." (Cameron, 2001, p. 107). According to the Noticing Hypothesis (Schmidt, 1990, 2001), noticing is the crucial first step in acquisition.

Communicative Competence

Communicative competence contrasts with a grammar teaching view, which is restricted to mastery of linguistic structures. Communicative competence involves three parts - grammatical competence (pronunciation, vocabulary, syntax, morphology), strategic competence (using strategies for communication such as recasts, questions, and body language), and sociolinguistic competence. Sociolinguistic competence includes sociocultural competence and discourse competence: Sociocultural competence (also referred to as pragmatic competence) focuses on how language is used in different social settings. Discourse competence deals with combining words and sentences to produce coherent language (Lundahl, 2012, pp. 138-141). The CEFR also emphasizes the importance of the communicative process: the language user must use his / her linguistic skills to participate in the communication. "In the communicative classroom, teachers must learn to suppress the desire to assist students in producing grammatically accurate communication." (Cowan, 2008, p. 33).

Communicative language teaching is inclined towards communication in the target language. Language is social, and the approach explores how words have different meanings in different contexts. The focus is on facilitating communication rather than correcting errors, but corrective feedback is served as a secondary aspect to make the language functional for communication.

It is assumed that the content of a language course will include semantic notions and social functions, not just linguistic structures; The teacher's role is primarily to facilitate communication and only secondly to correct errors.

(Celce-Murcia, 2001, p. 8)

Focus on form, forms, and meaning

'Focus-on form' (FonF) is a critical concept in task-based language instruction. Long (1991) coined the term to describe a method in which learners' attention is drawn to language forms as they engage in task performance. This can be accomplished by focusing on grammar in communicative activities and tasks and "overtly draw students' attention to linguistic elements as they arise incidentally in lessons whose overriding focus is on meaning, or communication" (Long, 1991, p. 46). On the contrary, 'Focus-on-forms' (FonFs) is a structure-based approach in which specific linguistic forms are taught directly and explicitly "to overtly draw students' attention to linguistic elements as they arise incidentally in lessons whose overriding focus is on meaning, or communication" (Long, 1991, p. 46). In other words, in FonF, teaching is task-oriented, whereas a focus on forms instruction is based on a structural syllabus (Ellis, 2012, p. 273). Ellis (2006) also holds that a focus on form "involves a focus on meaning with attention to form arising out of the

communicative activity" (p. 100). According to Ellis (2002) and Doughty and Williams (1998), this can be purposeful or unintentional. There are three different approaches to language teaching (focus on form, forms, and meaning). *Focus on forms* - is limited to a focus on formal language features (grammar, vocabulary, phonemes, etcetera) through transformation drills, for example. *Focus on meaning* – excludes formal language aspects. There is no specific grammar or vocabulary focus, e.g., through communication tasks. *Focus on form* – includes formal features of language within meaning-based activities, e.g., through dictogloss, grammar games, and corrective feedback.

A focus on forms refers to the approach focusing on language analysis, while the focus on form emphasizes language use (Larsen-Freeman, 1997, 2001). A widely practiced product approach to teaching grammar is widely known as Presentation, Practice, and Production (PPP) according to Cullen (2012)

Presentation - examples of new grammatical structures are presented in context (e.g., a dialog or text).

Practice - controlled practice exercises where the focus is on accurate production of the structure (e.g., oral drills, gap-filled exercises).

Production - freer activities where learners are encouraged to express their own meaning and use of forms (e.g., discussion, role-play, guided writing tasks).

This common approach can also include an inductive or a deductive activity. Students infer the rule or generalization from different instances in an inductive activity. When students are given a rule, they must apply it to examples in a deductive task (Brown & Lee, 2015).

3 Methodology

3.1 Classroom Data

The schools in Sweden and Vietnam were located in urban areas, and all five classes had five different teachers. The older learners in the two Swedish classrooms (class 1= 20 and class 2=21) and the three Vietnamese classes (class 1= 35, class 2= 36, and class 3 = 38) were in Grade 5 and 11-12 years old. They all started English instruction at primary schools from Grade 3. As a result, they all got two years of English instruction before commencing the fifth grade, when the data was gathered (See further in Son, 2018).

3.2 Classroom Observation

Classroom observations “permit researchers to study the processes of education in naturalistic settings” and “provide more detailed and precise evidence than other data sources” (Waxman, Tharp & Hilberg, 2004, p. 3). This paper uses conversation analysis to study language practices in the English classroom (McKay, 2006). The lessons were narrated, and the activities for different teaching orientations (focus on forms, form, and meaning) were documented using the communicative orientation of language teaching (COLT) observation method (Spada & Fröhlich, 1995).

The main objectives of this scheme are to capture differences in the communicative orientation of classroom instruction (for example, form-focused versus meaning-focused) and to examine their effects on learning outcomes. This scheme is different from most other interaction schemes in two crucial respects: it is designed for real-time coding and analysis of recordings of lessons, and it connects directly to communicative methods of language teaching and form-focused feedback. However, there are still some limitations, the typical one being that it does not focus on a “detailed discourse analysis of the conversation interactions between teachers and students” (Spada and Fröhlich (1995, p. 10). Additionally, the paper focuses on the approaches (focus on forms, form, and meaning); therefore, only the feature 'Content' (e.g., classroom activities in the observed lessons focusing on these approaches) is described and analysed.

3.3 Procedure: English Lessons

Classroom observations and audio and video recordings of five English lessons from two Swedish classrooms and six English lessons from three Vietnamese classes were made after the parents' consents had been obtained. Based on the observations, notes were gathered of all activities throughout the lessons. During the observation period, each activity and episode was documented in the scheme, and checkmarks were inserted in all relevant categories (Spada & Fröhlich, 1995). Each activity's start and end times were recorded. Simultaneously, recordings of the classroom interactions were made for eventual verification of the coding. The CHILDES system (Child Language Data Exchange System) (MacWhinney, 2000) was used to transcribe the activities in the lessons. The excerpts from classroom activities given as examples in the paper have been reduced from the original ones. A star precedes each speaker line, followed by a three-letter code identifying the speaker (e.g., *TEA: Teacher, *CHI: Child, *CLA: Class).

4 Results

4.1 English lessons in Swedish classrooms

Focus on form and focus on meaning dominated in Swedish classrooms despite a minimal degree of focus on forms. The teacher reviewed the glossaries that they learned from the previous week to warm up the class during the first lesson. Next, the pupils were instructed to read the sentences aloud and translate them into Swedish. Some difficult terms were explained and discussed, and the teacher occasionally provided pronunciation suggestions (see Extract 1). Finally, the pupils were given the words for the week and read them aloud together. This activity focused only on forms, where they learnt new vocabulary and pronunciation.

Extract 1

- TEA: Let's read the words altogether first: 'Consider- considering'
CLA: Consider- considering
TEA: These two words are almost the same, as you can see, but they have different meanings, and they are used differently.
CLA: Yes
TEA: The next one: 'author.'
CLA: author
TEA: lyric
CLA: lyric
TEA: 'record' - one word but two different pronunciations: record /'rekɔ:d/ - record /ri'kɔ:d/
CLA: record /'rekɔ:d/ - record /ri'kɔ:d/
TEA: This one is a tricky one to pronounce. How do you pronounce it? Do you have any suggestions?
CLA: bear
TEA: Yes, it's very common- Swedish says 'bear' /beə(r)/ instead of 'beer' /biə(r)/. It is very tricky to know as they are very similar. But they sound rather silly when saying 'I want a beer' instead of 'I want a bear'.
TEA: and this last one- it does not have much to do with music. I want you to have challenging words since some of you complained that the words are too easy - 'astonish' - 'you may be astonished if you see your favourite artist'. Right?

At the end of the lesson, the teacher asked the pupils some questions to make them talk in the target language, e.g., "Now, let's talk about something else. How about the population in Sweden and the USA?... Was it like that in China- that they talked about ABBA?" This piece of the activity focused on 'meaning' as

task-free activities to promote communication in the topics the learners enjoy talking about in the target language.

In another lesson of class 1, the pupils reviewed the email they had received during the second class using the digital pen pal network, ePals. They then composed a response, utilizing a scaffolding approach to aid them in writing a long text on a specific topic. Each pupil was given a computer and instructed to check in to epals.com. According to the teacher, the students seemed to learn a lot of English in writing and reading skills. The focus was on the form where the teacher guided the pupils how to write a letter in coherent sequences. The teacher collected some difficult words, errors and explained them in class afterwards.

The teacher designed the third lesson as a speaking activity. The learners performed a play, rebuilt a series of dialogues into a logical arrangement, and produced extended texts. This activity focused solely on meaning, where the teachers encouraged the learners to communicate and speak the target language. As a result, they were fully engaged in the task and became excited and active in communicating in the target language. In addition, they worked in small groups where they could act as scaffolders and support each other in role-playing.

In class 2, the emphasis was on the form. The teacher, for example, asked the students how they spent the previous weekend and required them to use the simple past tense. The teacher sometimes used recast in the correct form of simple past as feedback on the learner's speech but still encouraged the communication, as seen in Extract 2. They were also asked to communicate in pairs by talking about the past activities of a famous person they liked. Writing about these past activities was the homework afterwards.

Extract 2 (Son, 2018, p. 112)

- TEA: So, we are talking a little bit about what you were doing this weekend out in the sun. I hope you were outside in the sun, right?
- CLA: Yes
- TEA: So, could anyone tell me something you have done, please?
- CHI1: I play football this weekend. It was on the early evening.
- TEA: You played football with your team or..?
- CHI1: Yes, with my team. Then on Sunday, I was visiting my friend, and then we were outside and played football.
- TEA: That's nice!
- CHI2: On Sunday, I go to see the match.
- TEA: You went to see the match outside or inside?
- CHI2: Inside
- CHI2: But then I walked outside with my dog, and I bike yesterday.
- TEA: You went biking yesterday. That's nice!
- CHI3: I also went biking, and I was babysitting.
- TEA: Okay.
- CHI: I went to Stockholm, and we visit my brother.
- TEA: Was it as nice weather in Stockholm as it was here when you visited your brother?
- CHI4: Yes, very, very nice.

In short, these lessons do not necessarily look like grammar lessons, but these types of classroom activities are used for teaching some new words and grammatical features in meaningful contexts and in real-world contexts and tasks in which the pupils enjoy being engaged. They could be used as a warm-up and the main activity in English lessons. These are integrated into different skills: reading, listening, writing, and speaking as communicative language teaching. Corrective feedback was sometimes used to get the

pupils' attention on some features without interrupting ongoing communication. Providing feedback is an essential function of language teaching.

4.2 English Lessons in Vietnamese Classroom

A focus on form and forms was prominent in Vietnamese classrooms. Below are some typical examples of the PPP approach in the Vietnamese classes. The teachers first let the pupils read a text in the textbook and present examples of how new grammatical structures are presented in context through the dialog. Then the teachers asked them to practice through gap-filled exercises and oral drills. In the end, they were provided with free activities where they talked about their family members (e.g., sister or mother or father) and their daily activities.

The 'Presentation' Stage

This was where the language was introduced to the learners. The teachers first let the pupils read a text in the textbook about 'My house.' Then, the teacher showed the pupils different pictures of the furniture and rooms in the house, e.g., *table, chair, TV, picture, kitchen, bedroom, and bathroom*. This aim ensured the pupils understood the new words in context. This stage also helped them recall the vocabulary they already knew about the topic.

The 'Practice' Stage

The 'practice' stage occurred when the pupils used English in controlled and freer practices. For example, the pupils did the gap-fill exercises about 'the house,' and they worked in pairs to ask and answer the questions about the house described in the textbook. The teacher walked around listening to the pairs and gave some corrective feedback about pronunciation. This stage involved correction and accuracy. The teacher also collected the common errors and explained them to the class after the activity. In this stage, she explained the grammatical aspect of the grammatical structure to describe where the furniture was located in the house (see Extract 3).

Extract 3 (Adapted from Son, 2018, p. 131)

TEA: 'I am going to review the structures "there is, there are" for you. Do you still remember them?'

CLA: 'Yes'

TEA: 'We use "there is" with singular nouns. Is that correct?'

CLA: 'Yes'

TEA: 'How about "there are"?''

CLA: 'Plural nouns'

TEA: So, here is the formula: *There is + N (singular)...; There are + N (plural)*.

The 'Production' Stage

The activities in the last stage involved the production of the target language as fluently and naturally as possible. The pupils were asked to describe their own houses in groups of four, and the homework was to write about the houses. In this case, the linguistic forms were chosen based on the topics.

In another class, the focus on form was introduced in a meaningful context. The teacher let the pupils listen to the song 'I can' as a warm-up activity in a fun way, and the pupils could sing along with the music. The teacher then introduced new terminology using limited visual materials (e.g., pictures). The teacher, for example, used pictures of people and animals executing various verbs such as *run, fly, walk, talk, swim, and climb* to introduce the new vocabulary to the class. He explained the new words in Vietnamese. The activity was followed by iterations for all words. The teacher prompted verb usage in sentences, e.g., *He can swim; The bird can fly*. Then they sang the song about these words, where they could learn vocabulary, intonation and notice the grammar in the lyrics. In another activity, as a reviewing/recycling of the previous lesson on past tense, the teacher warmed the class up with a ball game. The pupils added their own words to the sentences as the ball was caught and thrown or bounced back: "I played football yesterday" (CHI1);

"I played football and cooked yesterday" (CHI2); "I played football, cooked and watched TV yesterday" (CHI3).

Another activity showed a focus on forms. The teacher started an inductive way of teaching subject-verb agreement, where the pupils first listened to a story about Linh's Sunday (see Extract 4). Then, the teacher tried to ask questions about different people in their daily activities.

Extract 4

TEA: Linh has such a nice Sunday. She does fun activities every Sunday.

CLA: Yeah, exciting!

CHI1: I also visit my grandparents on Sunday.

TEA: Great! How about your younger brother? Does he also visit your grandparents on Sunday?

CHI1: He also visits my grandparents with me.

TEA: How about the others? What do you do on Sunday?

CHI2: I often watch TV.

TEA: How about your mother? What does she often do on Sunday?

CHI1: My mother cooks a lot on Sunday.

TEA: That is nice! Do you notice any grammatical structure in this text?

The lesson was followed by the teacher introducing the grammatical points, as in Extract 5. The pupils were then asked to fill in the blanks for subject-verb agreement. Finally, as homework, they were asked to use this grammatical structure when writing a diary about themselves and their favourite person, e.g., mother, father, or brother. On another occasion, the focus was only on forms when the teacher introduced a new grammatical structure before other activities as a deductive method, as in Extract 6.

Extract 5 (Adapted from Son, 2018, pp. 129-131)

TEA: 'How do you say "I wake up at 7 am" in English?'

CHI1: I get up at 7 am.

TEA: Yes, correct. "I" is subject, the verb is "get up," and the rest is the object, so here is the structure we have learned.' (Writes the formula S+ V+ O on the board and continues)

TEA: 'When we use plural subjects, what happens to the verbs? Plural or singular?'

CLA: Plural

TEA: 'Correct, when plural subject, we use plural verbs, and the verbs are infinitive, nothing special, for example, "we wake up".'

TEA: 'When we mention singular subjects, such as "she, he, it", what happens to the verbs?'

CHI2: 'An "s" must be added.'

TEA: Yes, here is the formula. (Writes the formula I, We, You, They + V infinitive; He, She, I + Vs-es on the board and continues)

TEA: 'Now, if we want to say "we learn English", how do you say that in English?'

CHI3: I learn English.

TEA: 'Good, how about "That lady learns English"?'

CHI4: She learns English.

TEA: 'Yes, we must add an "s" to the verb "learn" when the singular subject "she" is used. Okay?'

CLA: 'Yes'

Extract 6 (Adapted from Son, 2018, p. 126)

TEA: 'Who can find a new structure in this conversation?'

CHI1: going to do it tomorrow.

- TEA: That is right! Thank you.
- TEA: 'If we have a sentence like "what are we going to do tomorrow?", then what is the word "we" in the sentence?'
- CLA2: 'The word "we" is a subject.'
- TEA: Yes, correct. What is "are"?
- CHI3: "'Are" is a "to be" verb.'
- TEA: 'Yes, subject and verb need to be in agreement, and then we add "going to" followed by a bare infinitive verb as in the following formula.'

In sum, in this more active role, the teachers used a mix of strategies to focus students' attention on grammatical forms and vocabulary and expand grammatical knowledge through listening, speaking, reading, and writing besides explanations of grammar rules. The games, role-play and songs were also introduced as an integral part of the class in the form-focused instruction, which created the opportunities for language production and also a lot of fun.

5 Discussions and Conclusions

This paper focuses on various grammar teaching activities to navigate several language teaching methods. From what we could see from the activities in Swedish and Vietnamese classrooms, the teacher contextualized the grammar, used real-world contexts and different kinds of tasks, and practiced the grammar using four skills, not just one. In this way, grammar is 'noticed' (Cameron, 2001; Pinter, 2017). In addition, Swedish and Vietnamese teachers occasionally used the recast as feedback on the learner's speech while encouraging communication. Providing feedback is in line with Schmidt's Noticing Hypothesis. According to this hypothesis, second language learners must pay attention to and identify details and discrepancies between the target language and their production of target language knowledge to learn (Schmidt, 1990, 2001). Thus, noticing is necessary for learning to occur.

The teachers also used different activities (songs, games, storytelling, role play) and group work to make the pupils interested and engaged in English lessons. These activities were fun and effective ways to recycle the language, as "recycling is key in both vocabulary and grammar teaching for all children" (Pinter, 2017, p. 108). Additionally, collaboration helps the children minimize their anxiety while communicating in a foreign language (Pinter, 2017). Authentic text types like emails, letters, diary were also used in these English grammar lessons where the teachers were scaffolders. Children learn effectively through scaffolding by adults and teachers (Bruner, 1983).

There was a greater focus on meaning for communicative purposes in the Swedish classroom than in the Vietnamese classroom (Son, 2018), where the focus on forms was introduced to some extent. Swedish education is more about contextualized language learning to use language communicatively (Skolverket, 2020, 2022). When it comes to Vietnamese contexts, the teachers introduced the focus on forms with the explanation of grammatical aspects in English lessons (presenting grammar points, doing grammar exercises, and practicing grammar in context) (cf. Bui, 2005; Khuong, 2015; Le, 2000, 2019; Le & Do, 2012; Moon, 2009; Phuong, 2019; Son, 2018). They also employed several approaches to teaching English where the PPP (Cullen, 2012) was introduced. Apart from the different traditions and contexts where English is less prevalent in Vietnamese society than in Sweden, it probably makes sense to give more input on grammar to Vietnamese learners whose mother tongue is very different from English as a foreign language.

A range of methods should be considered to promote flexibility in language teaching rather than rigidly adhering to one specific teaching approach. Language teaching should align with how children learn language, in which teaching grammar should be fun and meaningful to children (Cameron, 2001; Pinter, 2017). In this case, the older children are Grade 5 in primary education. According to Pinter (2017), older

learners (e.g., Grade 5) are different from younger learners (e.g., Grade 1). Older learners show a growing interest in analytical approaches and an ever-increasing level of language awareness, so they are likely to be interested in noticing the grammar in communicative language teaching. Children can also reflect on language, but they do not always know the grammatical terminology. When examining procedural and declarative knowledge of grammatical aspects, Son (2022) claims that young language learners are not expected to analyse all grammar rules; linguistic elements should be introduced mainly to make communication functional. The thing is that teachers can make language awareness activities for younger and older learners, but of course, adjust the content to the age group. As evidenced in the syllabus for English in Swedish primary education (Skolverket, 2020, 2022), Lundahl (2014) points out that a focus on Forms is also necessary for teaching English to Swedish learners, provided that the main focus is on function. “In modern CLT, a focus on function does not have to mean that we forget about form, and in many communicative situations, not least in writing, accuracy is an essential criterion of success (p. 29).

Despite different traditions, it is still essential to consider the student's needs in their language learning- for what purpose in a particular lesson, examine instructional constraints: time, classroom, attitudes, and learning styles, and identify different activities and text types for their learning activities and specify how the language learning will be assessed. Adapting our teaching to our learners and the syllabus is important, not adopting a single approach (Celce-Murcia, 2001, pp. 10-11).

In conclusion, this paper analysed some classroom activities on grammar language teaching for older learners in primary education in different traditions. These three teaching orientations have been analyzed in different extracts of classroom activities, which provide insights into the teaching practices. It is important that the teacher plans and strategizes the activities based on the pupils' prerequisite skills, motivation, and learning process. Creating a safe and fun learning environment is essential to motivate learners to learn grammar in a foreign language. Furthermore, these grammar activities and tasks should be served as an operational base that helps to promote the learners' fluency and accuracy in the four skills (Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing) in communicative situations. Future research will look into a larger sample size of different classrooms from cross-cultural and cross-linguistic perspectives to provide further information regarding different teaching approaches.

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