A CREATIVE APPROACH TO TEACHING ENGLISH GRAMMAR

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Cercetarea prezentă analizează eficacitatea predării creative a gramaticii limbii engleze, explorând relația dintre gândire critică și însușirea structurilor gramaticale. Ipoteza cercetării susține că instruirea gramaticală creativă, prin activități precum jocuri de cuvinte, exerciții de scriere creativă, personalizare și prezentări multi-media, poate îmbunătăți rezultatele învățării, inclusiv prin dezvoltarea competențelor gramaticale ale elevilor. Rezultatele studiului cvazi-experimental demonstrează eficiența abordării creative și a strategiilor de exersare a gramaticii în mod inovativ.

Grammar instruction has long been a staple of language education, but recent criticisms of traditional rote memorization methods have led to a shift towards more innovative methods. According to Maley and Peachey, “as technology advances and pedagogy evolves, teachers are incorporating creative approaches to prioritize learners’ critical thinking skills and enhance engagement” [1, p. 51]. This shift can lead to improved learning outcomes and more effective language skills development.

The **aim** of the research is to explore the effectiveness of creativity on grammar acquisition and investigate possible ways of developing learners’ grammatical competence employing their creative thinking skills. The **hypothesis** of the research states that creative grammar instruction, including activities as word games, storytelling, role-playing, and creative writing exercises require critical thinking and boost students’ imagination and motivation, therefore leading to improved grammar acquisition, increased internalization and appropriation of grammar structures and meaningful communication. In order to achieve the aforementioned targets, several **objectives** were set to be fulfilled, as follows: to identify the relationship between creativity and grammar acquisition; to determine the relevance of the creative approach to teaching grammar; to evaluate the effectiveness of the creative activities in developing learners’ grammatical competence; to develop a range of strategies and techniques for practicing grammar in a creative and motivating way.

The **theoretical value** of this paper lies in the considerable amount of scientific studies aimed to contribute to the development of effective and creative teaching methods which are oriented to help students in grammar acquisition. The **practical value** of the research resides in the analysis of how creative approaches to grammar teaching can positively influence the effective acquisition of English language skills, including grammar acquisition, and other language competencies, ultimately leading to improved language proficiency and enhanced learning outcomes in EFL classrooms.

In the course of performing the research, several **methods** have been implemented, such as synthesis, correlation, quasi-experimental design, comparison, analysis, administration of pre- and post-test, and questionnaire. The comparison and evaluation were involved in the quasi-experimental design conducted throughout the survey. Regarding the literature review, it is worth being mentioned the significant number of notable authors who studied the importance of creativity and its impact on the effective acquisition of language, specifically grammar, as well as its interconnection with the educational process, such as Scott Thornbury, Herbert Puchta, Alan Maley, Nik Peachey, etc.

The practical part of the research was pursued in an educational **setting**, more precisely the Heritage International School from Chisinau, during a 6-week pedagogical practice, in which one of the applied research methods was the quasi-experimental design. Speaking about the **participants** in the quasi-experiment, it would be relevant to mention that the study took place in two parallel classes, 7 "A", the treatment group, consisting of 13 students and 7 "B", the control group which numbered 12 students. The textbook used in the control group was Close-Up B1+, whereas in the treatment group several additional **resources** replaced it, such as Thornbury's *Teaching Grammar Creatively*, Sargeant's *The Basic Grammar Book 2*, Scrivener's *Teaching English Grammar* and other multimedia resources, including British Council, Blooket, JeopardyLabs, etc. The quizzes in the form of online games lend themselves to a better internalization of grammar rules due to the repeated exposure and increased motivation catalysed by the contest-like aspect of the activities.

Schematically, the stages of the quasi-experiment are represented in the chart illustrated below:

Chart 1. Stages of the quasi-experimental design

Treatment Group 7th "A" form	Pre-test	Treatment	Questionnaire	Post-test
Control Group 7th "B" form	Pre-test	-	-	Post-test

It can be clearly seen that the experiment group was exposed to the **treatment**, that is the selected tasks and activities involving and fostering creativity, followed by the administration of a **questionnaire** aimed at assessing the effectiveness of the creative approach on grammar acquisition, whereas the control group was exposed to the textbook students were used to learn from previously. Pre-tests and post-tests were applied to both of the groups. The activities which shaped the treatment required creativity, imagination, and personalization [2, p. 5-12]. Some examples of such activities are the following: skeleton text completion and creation, information transfer, picture description, story writing, personalization, dialogue writing and performing, multimedia presentations, etc.

The dynamics of the results of the **quantitative assessments** is vividly represented in the following diagram (Diagram 1):

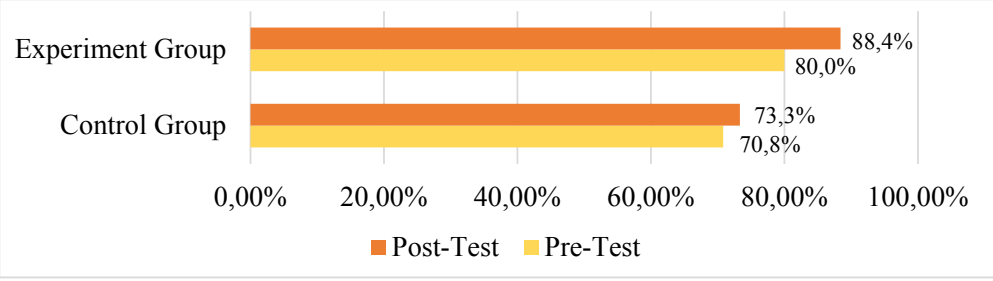


Diagram 1. The representation of the quantitative assessments’ dynamics

Overall, the results of the pre-test and post-test assessments in both the control group and the experiment group highlighted the positive impact of creative teaching approaches on grammar instruction and acquisition. The higher improvement seen in the experiment group suggests that the innovative approach can be effective in enhancing students’ understanding and retention of grammatical concepts. The analysis of the data about the percentage of students’ answers to the questionnaire regarding the impact of the creative approaches on students’ English grammar acquisition allows us to conclude that the majority of respondents had positive experiences within the 12 English grammar lessons conducted. More exactly, the majority of respondents, specifically 84.61%, strongly agreed, 7.69% agreed, and the rest were neutral about the raise of motivation due to the creative grammar teaching methods.

To conclude, creativity, motivation, and critical thinking are interconnected components that can significantly enhance language acquisition, and developing creativity is crucial for fostering resilience and growth among learners. It is therefore recommended that curriculum developers integrate creative and personalized teaching approaches into grammar instruction to promote and enhance learner-centred, as well as communicative language learning. Moreover, future research can investigate the long-term effects of the creative approach on language skills and grammar acquisition.

Bibliography:

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Recomandat
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