

Learning and teaching grammar in a foreign language has been a controversial issue since the onset of second language acquisition research. The views concerning the need to teach this language subsystem have evolved from the traditional model, implemented with the use of the grammar-translation method, to the “zero option” which rejected intervention targeted at grammatical forms altogether, in the hope that acquisition of grammar is possible in the course of performing communicative tasks. Nowadays, it is widely acknowledged that mere exposure to target language input does not guarantee the production of accurate, precise and appropriate utterances. As recent research findings demonstrate, form-focused instruction seems to be indispensable in developing communicative competence, and both explicit and implicit knowledge play a significant role in language production. The growing interest of researchers in the subject of teaching and learning of foreign language grammar stems from the fact that, despite many years of investigation, numerous issues remain unresolved, such as, for example, the choice of the forms to be taught, the applicability of explicit knowledge, the timing and intensity of grammar instruction, the place of grammar in the curriculum and, finally, the choice of specific instructional techniques.

Grammatical errors impede or hinder communication and they also stigmatize language users as incompetent or inadequately educated. Many educational systems, including the Polish one, assess and value grammatical accuracy at different proficiency levels and often look for the most effective tools and procedures supporting the development of students' mastery in this area. The researchers involved in the present study strive to analyze a host of factors that may be crucial in mastering the grammar of a foreign language. Thus far an effective model of teaching grammar has not been established, both with respect to the specific techniques and procedures used, the ways in which grammar-based lessons are conducted and the approach to the selection and ordering of the grammar features to be taught. For this reason, it can be assumed that success in this area may, to some extent, depend on the student's individual profile, which comprises a variety of factors, such as: 1) working memory, (2) motivation, (3) willingness to communicate, (4) grammar learning strategies, and (5) beliefs about grammar instruction. In order to conduct such an analysis, it is necessary to adapt and develop data collection tools capable of tapping into individual factors, taking into account the characteristics of the Polish educational context, and then correlating the results obtained in this way with attainment in learning grammar. In this case, such attainment is operationalized as the use of different types of English passive voice, with the caveat that the mastery of this feature is measured with respect to the productive and receptive dimensions of explicit and implicit knowledge.