

DAHA ETKİLİ YABANCI DİL EĞİTİMİ İÇİN GEÇMİŞ DİLBİLGİSİ VE KELİME ÖĞRETİM UYGULAMALARI ÜZERİNE DEĞERLENDİRMELER

A RETROSPECTIVE EVALUATION OF GRAMMAR & VOCABULARY TEACHING PRACTICES FOR MORE EFFECTIVE FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION

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ÖZET

Dilbilgisi bir zamanlar dil eğitiminin özü olarak düşünüldüğünden yabancı dil öğretmenleri, öğrencilerinin İngilizce'yi doğru bir şekilde öğrenmelerine olanak sağlamak amacı ile derslerinin büyük bir bölümünü dilbilgisi kurallarını öğretmeye ayırıyorlardı. Zaman içerisinde dil derslerinde dilbilgisi kurallarının vurgulanması tepkilere neden olmaya başladı. Yabancı dil derslerinde dilbilgisi kurallarının ön planda olmasına ilk tepki bağlamın, zihnin veya algının dil eğitiminde daha önemli olduğunu iddia eden metin dilbilimcilerinden geldi. Metin dilbilimcilerinin eleştirilerini takiben derlem çalışmaları yürüten dil araştırmacıları büyük boyutlu derlem analiz sonuçlarına dikkat çekerek, bugün halen devam etmekte olan 'dilbilgisi mi yoksa kelime öğretimi mi?' tartışmalarına ön ayak oldular. Bu çalışma, yabancı dil eğitim-öğretim uygulamalarının tarihsel süreçlerini değerlendirerek bu iki karşıt görüşü incelemektedir. Bu bağlamda dilbilgisi öğrenmek kelime öğrenmekten veya kelime öğretimi dilbilgisinden daha önemlidir gibi ikilemlerle ilgili farklı görüşleri paylaşan bu değerlendirme çalışması dil eğitiminde dilbilgisi ve sözcük öğretiminin eşit öneme sahip olması gerektiğini yabancı dil eğitimdeki gelişmeler ışığında açıklamakta ve 'lexicogrammar' diye literature geçmiş dilbilgisi ve sözcük öğreniminin harmanlaşmış olduğu uygulamaların bilimsel verilere dayanarak bütünsel yaklaşımlarla yürürlüğe konmasının artık günümüzde çağdaş dil eğitiminin bir gereği olduğunu tartışmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yabancı Dil Eğitimi, sözcük-dilbilgisi, dilbilgisi öğretimi, sözcük öğretimi

ABSTRACT

As grammar was once perceived to be the essence of language instruction, for many years foreign language teachers have emphasized grammar rules in their English lessons. This practice was first challenged by text linguists who claimed that the context, the mind or achieving meaning are significant factors that need to be considered in language teaching. The second challenge came from researchers who conducted corpus studies. Their findings, based on the analysis of large sizes of corpora, started the ongoing 'grammar' or 'lexis' debate which is still valid today. This study investigates these two opposing views by providing a historical review of grammar and vocabulary teaching practices in foreign language education.

By sharing different views related to the ‘grammar over lexis’ or ‘lexis over grammar’ dilemma, this reflective review discusses that grammar and vocabulary teaching should have equal importance in language classes in light of recent developments in foreign language education. To this end, this article discusses that in this era undertaking a lexico-grammatical approach, which blends grammar and vocabulary teaching with holistic attitudes, is a prerequisite for evidence-based contemporary foreign language teaching practices.

Keywords: Foreign Language Education, lexico-grammar, teaching grammar, teaching vocabulary

1. INTRODUCTION

Although different approaches have been used in language teaching over the years, the perception that grammar is the essence of language learning has not changed much. Research studies reveal that traditional ways of teaching grammar have been challenged by text linguists and also by researchers who conducted corpus studies. Last decades have witnessed educators’ arguments which claimed that “without grammar very little can be conveyed” but also arguments which asserted that “without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed” (Lewis, 1993, p. 115). These discussions have led to the never ending ‘grammar’ or ‘lexis’ debate in language teaching with Krashen’s supporters on the one hand arguing for the need to acquire language structures and Lewis’s supporters on the other hand arguing for the acquisition of lexical chunks (Scheffler, 2015). This review explores these two opposing views by retrospectively evaluating the developments that chronologically took place in foreign language education and discusses the influence of these developments on teaching practices. Also, sharing different views on the ‘grammar over lexis’ or ‘lexis over grammar’ dilemma, it advocates that the two should have an equal place in language teaching practices.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Grammar, which has originated from the ancient Greek word ‘Grammatike’, was once held synonymous with learning classical languages of Latin or Greek (Burton, 2020). As accuracy was held important in those days, language teachers were required to teach rules that would enable their students to use the language correctly. In the 1990s, language educators started “to focus on describing language as it is used, rather than prescribing how it should be used” (Nunan, 1999, p. 97). Thus, there was a shift from prescriptive grammar to descriptive grammar (Burton, 2020). Prescriptive grammar was basically popular when grammar translation method was used. At the time, grammar was taught deductively following a rule-based curriculum and there was “little consideration of how theory-driven findings about grammatical meaning can be exploited in the language classroom” (Marsden & Slabakova, 2019, p. 148). Similarly, in the audio-lingual approach grammatical structures were very carefully sequenced from basic to more complex and “mimicry of forms and memorization of certain sentence patterns were used extensively” (Celce-Murcia, 1991, p. 460).

In the early days, linguists were only concerned with formal relations and they overlooked the meaning or the function of language structures. However, this view was later challenged by text linguists who claimed that confining language in only form meant limiting the scope of linguistics as several factors like the context, the mind, or achieving meaning are equally important for language learning (Marsden & Slabakova, 2019). According to text linguists, “when we receive a linguistic message, we pay attention to many other factors apart from the language itself” (Cook, 1992, pp. 9-10). For example, when we are talking to people, we pay attention to what they are doing with their faces, eyes, or body. The setting also plays an important role in sending or receiving messages as it determines our cultural and social relationship with the person we are communicating with (Cook, 1992). Cook (1992) explains the importance of these factors with the following words:

These factors take us beyond the study of language, in a narrow sense, and force us to look at other areas of inquiry-the mind, the body, society, the physical world- in fact, at everything. There are good arguments for limiting a field of study to make it manageable; but it is also true to say that the answer to the question of what gives discourse its unity may be impossible to give without considering the world at large: the context. (Cook, 1992, p. 10)

This explanation clarifies that grammar is more than the explanation of certain rules as it involves recognizing the examples of the structure when spoken, identifying a structure in written form, understanding its meaning in context, producing both the spoken and written form of a structure as well as producing meaningful sentences with that structure. Celce-Murcia (1991) also states that “communication is the goal of second or foreign language instruction and that the syllabus of a language course should not be organized around grammar but around subject matter, tasks/projects, or semantic notions and/or pragmatic functions” (p. 461). In light of these explanations, today language is perceived “as a system that is used to communicate rather than an abstract entity that exists independently from human experience” unlike past language teaching practices which emphasized the theoretical aspects of the language ignoring its practical use in authentic communication (Matsumoto, 2021, p. 116).

A lot of research studies have been conducted to explore how languages are learnt and the role of input-output activities in the language learning process. Studies which intended to investigate whether input affects second language acquisition and how it affects it have revealed different views on the effects of input in second/foreign language acquisition. For instance, Krashen has asserted that second language (L2) acquisition takes place when input contains forms and structures that are just beyond the learner’s current level of competence in the language (Ellis, 1997). Related to this perception, researchers also note that acquisition may not take place unless input is processed by the learner’s internal mechanisms. In other words, they clarify that for language learning to take place input should become intake. Ellis (1985) explains the difference between input and intake in the following way: “Input is the L2 data which the learner hears; intake is that portion of the L2 which is assimilated and fed into the inter-language system” (p.159).

Although there is a need for further research to understand the cognitive processes that the learners go through when they are exposed to input, many theorists draw attention to the importance of comprehensible input. For example, Micheal Long states that comprehensible input is the “most effective when it is modified through the negotiation of meaning”. Evelyn Hatch, another theorist who underlines the significance of input, explains that syntactic structures can be derived from the process of building discourse. According to Hatch, one way this may occur is through scaffolding as “learners use the discourse to help them produce utterances that they would not be able to produce on their own”. Likewise, Vygotsky notes that “development manifests itself first in social interaction and only later inside the learner” (Ellis, 1997, pp. 47-49). As highlighted by these theorists, input has a very significant role in second language acquisition or foreign language learning, but output is equally important in fostering language learning as discussed below:

It is important to recognize that the output Hypothesis in no way negates the importance of input and input comprehension. The intention is to complement and reinforce, rather than replace, input- based approaches to language acquisition so that learners will go beyond what is minimally required for overall comprehension of a message. (Izumi & Bigelow, 2000, p. 244)

The above explanation clarifies that output cannot replace input, but it should rather complement it. It is reported that the role of output in second language acquisition (SLA) has not been explored enough since so far it has only been assumed that output is “only an indication of SLA that has already taken place and does not play any significant role in language acquisition process”. As noted in the literature, output functions as a facilitator of implicit knowledge by making the learners aware of linguistic features in the input which they might otherwise ignore.

Therefore, it is important to provide opportunities to enable language learners to test out their hypotheses while learning the target language (Borg, 1999; Ellis, Baştürkmen & Loewen, 2001; Hughes & McCarthy, 1998; Nobuyoshi & Ellis, 1993).

When communication opportunities are provided, learners can integrate the structures they have learnt into a creative system for expressing meaning. In other words, conscious and sub-conscious learning “are activated when learners are involved in communication with the second language” (Littlewood, 1984, p. 91) because in communicative activities learners focus not only on the language itself but also the communication of meanings. Hence, educators involved in language teaching need to integrate communicative tasks into the syllabus as well as assessment procedures. In this way, students can be encouraged to use the language productively and through tests a wash back effect on teaching can be created. This experience may also have a positive effect on students’ overall language learning processes as it enables them to bring real language use to the fore instead of exams which are over-emphasized in centralized education systems. Despite the emphasis on both grammatical and communicative competence in the literature, in some educational contexts teachers and learners have continued to face difficulties in language teaching-learning processes. These difficulties instigated ELT practitioners to question their own practices related to foreign language teaching.

When natural language acquisition processes are considered, it can be realized that children learn to speak in isolated words first and then in chains of nouns and verbs. This is similar in second or foreign language learning since second or foreign language students tend to pick up vocabulary first and then develop more complex sentences. Although it is assumed that words form an essential part of the language learning process, a historical overview of language teaching shows that teaching of vocabulary has not been a central concern in English language teaching for many years. Lewis (1993) draws attention to this fact by quoting from Summers: “There have been changing trends- from grammar translation to direct method to the communicative approach- but none of these has emphasized the importance of the learner’s lexical competence over structural grammatical competence” (p. 115). Likewise, in many foreign language teaching contexts grammar has been considered as the essence of language learning and very little attention has been paid to vocabulary teaching.

According to Widdowson, focusing only on grammar and paying very little attention to vocabulary teaching is wrong because “lexis is where we need to start from, the syntax needs to be put to the service of words and not the other way round.” (Lewis, 1993, p. 115). As English consists of several hundred thousand words and knowing a word involves understanding it when it is written or spoken, recalling it when needed, using it with the correct meaning in a grammatically correct sentence, pronouncing or spelling it correctly, knowing which other words you can use it with, using it in the right situation and knowing if it has positive or negative associations, how are language learners or teachers supposed to approach learning or teaching of the infinite English corpus?

A review of vocabulary teaching over the past years discloses that the attitudes of second or foreign language teachers and learners towards vocabulary teaching have changed with the advent of every new approach in language teaching methodology. As different skills have been emphasized with each emerging approach, language education has witnessed the swing of the pendulum in the past decades. A historical analysis of methods used in second or foreign language teaching practices reveals that vocabulary played a different role in each approach.

Grammar-Translation Approach

The main focus of Grammar-Translation approach was teaching grammatical rules. Students were asked to do lengthy translation exercises by using word lists or dictionaries, so the main emphasis in this approach was on the recognition of written words or production of written translations and not on their communicative use (Palmborg, 1986; Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011).

Reading Approach

Primary aim of the Reading approach was intensive-extensive reading skills so it can be stated that this approach assigned a central role to the teaching of vocabulary (Palmberg, 1986; Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011).

Direct Method

The implementation of Direct method did not involve the use of the native language. Hence, learners were expected to learn vocabulary in context as an integral part of each lesson (Palmberg, 1986; Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011).

Audio-Lingual Method

In the Audio-Lingual method, vocabulary teaching was kept to the minimum to enable learners to develop a firm control of the basic structural patterns and concentrate on pronunciation (Palmberg, 1986; Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011).

Cognitive Approach

In the Cognitive approach, vocabulary was emphasized only after teaching grammatical rules, sounds, structures. Thus, it is possible to say that in this approach there was a renewed interest in vocabulary, especially in the expansion of passive vocabulary for reading (Palmberg, 1986; Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011).

Communicative Approaches

(Suggestopedia, Community Language Learning, Communicative Method)

As Communicative approaches, namely the Suggestopedia, Community Language Learning and the Communicative method, considered communication important, they made considerable use of vocabulary activities in the language classroom in order to provide learners the opportunity to interact with each other (Palmberg, 1986; Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011).

Eclectic Method

Another method that has been used by many teachers is the *Eclectic Method* (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011). The implementation of the Eclectic method in the classroom requires attention as it can result in the creation of hybrid syllabi which can include the use of clashing materials and methods from different approaches. An overview of all the approaches used in English language teaching over the years reveals that like other methods, eclecticism has not provided the answer to the following question yet: How can vocabulary teaching be realized in a successful way so that students do not drown in the so-called lexicon chaos?

Lewis (1997) helps us to answer this question by stating that lexis should be “integrated fully into the learners’ linguistic resources so that it is spontaneously available when needed” (p. 117). Similarly, Nation (2002) underlines the significance of learning vocabulary in language learning by explaining that vocabulary teaching “deserves to be planned for, deliberately controlled and monitored” (p. 267). Research studies show that perceptions and practices regarding vocabulary teaching have changed greatly with computer aided research. As these research studies have disclosed how language is used in real life, how learners process and store vocabulary and which strategies can be used for vocabulary teaching and learning (Ooi & Kim-Seoh, 1996), they have enabled language teachers and applied linguists to recognize the significance of vocabulary learning in language teaching and learning processes.

Researchers report that an average educated native speaker of English knows around 20,000-word families (Nation & Waring, 1997). Since a word family includes not only the word but also its inflected and derived forms, we can say that 20,000-word families is around 30,000 individual words or may be even more (McCarthy, O’Keeffe & Walsh, 2010).

This is an incredibly huge number for foreign language learners especially for those living in an EFL context. Since there are so many words to be learnt but no sufficient time or opportunities for foreign language learners to learn such a high number of English words, language educators' first task should be identifying the words their students will need to use the most by considering their needs and interests. Frequency studies are a great help in this respect. Researchers report that the most frequent 2000 words in English are the most useful because knowing these words enable learners to understand about eighty per cent of what they hear or read.

Several wordlists have been published for the most frequently used words. However, the most well known one is the 'General Service List' (GSL) by West, also known as "West List". GSL was published in 1953 and it is the result of almost three decades of major work in English lexicometrics. Carter and McCarthy (1997) report that "the list consists of 2,000 words with semantic and frequency information drawn from a corpus of two to five million words" (p. 7). They claim that when students know these words, they can understand about eighty per cent of the words in a text. Related to this explanation, it is reported that being able to understand most of the lexical items in a text is likely to increase students' motivation because the words they have learnt can make almost an instant contribution to their language learning endeavors by enhancing their foreign language competence and/or performance.

It can be stated that the use of GSL has become popular in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts because it is possible for EFL students to discover all common words in English in a random or natural way. Fortunately, researchers have made very positive remarks related to the use of GSL in learning English. For example, finding out that GSL meets the needs of ESL/ EFL learners in a lot of situations, Harlech-Jones (1983) claimed that GSL is a vital tool which should be used by not only syllabus and material designers but also classroom teachers. Similarly, Nation (2001) has proposed that teachers and learners place considerable emphasis on these high frequency words in direct or spontaneous learning experiences and planned vocabulary learning activities. Over the years, a lot of discussions have been held to find out whether explicit or incidental exposure to vocabulary leads to more effective learning. It can be stated that the tendency in language teaching today is towards a more balanced approach that acknowledges the role of explicit instruction together with providing opportunities for learners for incidental vocabulary learning, unlike 1970s and 1980s when incidental learning was thought to be the only approach to vocabulary acquisition (Scheffler, 2015).

As it is not logical to expect teachers to come up with their own lexical approach or "leave lexis to take care of itself in this random fashion and assume that students would acquire the vocabulary which best suits their needs" as noted in the literature (Gairns & Redman, 1991, p.1), explicit vocabulary instruction seems to be essential in language learning for all learners of English but especially for beginner learners because their insufficient vocabulary can have a negative impact on their reading comprehension (Hunt & Beglar, 2002). Related to the challenges of beginner level foreign language learners, Hunt and Beglar (2002) state that it is necessary to scaffold their vocabulary learning processes by teaching them the most frequent 3,000 words until they start recognizing their form and meaning automatically. Similarly, Decarrico (2001) states that explicit instruction and practice should be given to learners related to the most frequent words because these words constitute a very high percentage of words in a text and knowing these words enable learners to guess the meaning of new words from context. According to DeCarrico (2001), the 2000 to 3000 word-base is "a minimum threshold that enables incidental learning to take place when reading texts" (p. 289).

Considering research findings related to explicit vocabulary instruction, Sökmen (1997) provides a list of suggestions which include integrating new words with the old, providing a number of encounters with a new word, promoting deep level processing, employing a variety of techniques or using independent learning strategies.

Since knowing a word requires much more than knowing only its translated meaning or its synonyms in the target language (Hunt & Beglar, 2002), researchers advise language teachers to create opportunities for their students to meet new or recently learnt words in new contexts with their collocations in their lessons. There are different kinds of activities which teachers can employ for this purpose. Some of these activities which are suggested in the literature are sorting lists of words and deciding on their categories, making semantic maps with lists of words, generating derivatives, inflections, synonyms, and antonyms of a word or making trees that show the relationships between ‘superordinates’, ‘coordinates’, and specific examples (Hunt & Beglar, 2002; McCarthy et al., 2010). To this end, Nation (2002) suggests the use of productive activities such as speaking and writing:

It may seem a little strange to see meaning-focused speaking and writing as ways of expanding learners' vocabulary, but the most exciting findings of recent research on vocabulary learning have revealed how spoken production of vocabulary items helps learning and how teachers and course designers can influence this spoken production. (Nation, 2002, pp. 268-269)

In a similar vein, Newton (2001) notes that these tasks enable learners to develop strategies for managing learning of new words while maintaining a communicative focus. He explains how these activities foster vocabulary learning with the following words: “In such tasks, learners meet language in ways that encourage the construction of multiple associations between old and new knowledge in their lexical systems” (p. 36). Hence, by using these tasks, teachers working in EFL contexts can provide their students with a variety of vocabulary learning opportunities.

When we review traditional language teaching practices, we can see that in many institutions students were given a list of words to be learned. These wordlists by themselves were not helpful for learning the target language as students were simply left alone with these long lists of words to memorize and there was no interaction between the teacher and learners or amongst learners to facilitate the process of learning new words. According to Lindstromberg (1985), learning thousands of words is a manageable job if teachers prioritize the words to be taught and categorize them in terms of meaning areas and sense relations rather than teaching them randomly. However, as discussed in the literature, learners should be provided with ample opportunities for practising unknown or newly learnt words (McCarthy et al., 2010). This can be realized through the use of various activities which contextualize these words and enable students not only to understand the relationship between words but also internalize them. Hatch and Brown (1998) state that “motivation depends on many accompanying activities and intangible qualities, including teacher enthusiasm and preparation and individual student enjoyment of the activities” (p. 421). Thus, while designing vocabulary activities, it is important to consider factors like student motivation and interest, usefulness of words, knowledge of word features and functions, and acquisition of vocabulary learning strategies.

3. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

An overview of literature and research studies on foreign language education reveals that for many years language courses have been organized around a set of grammatical structures (Richards, 1995; Scheffler, 2015). However, with the use of word frequency as the organizing principle in syllabus design (Willis, 1990; Lewis, 1993) this practice has changed. Research has been effective in the consideration of lexis as a starting point in syllabus design based on “an analysis of a corpus of natural language of twenty million words” (Willis, 1990, p. 124). Through research the most common meanings and patterns in English were identified and students were offered a syllabus based on authentic language use. According to Willis (1990), lexical syllabus offers “a more complete pedagogic description of the language and also a better-balanced description” (p. 129).

Thus, it can be stated that after the advent of lexical syllabus and the use of computer technology for collating corpora, more emphasis has been put on learning vocabulary and the techniques and methods used in language teaching have changed extensively (Scheffler, 2015). Lewis (1997) reports that the lexical approach “in no way denies the value of grammar, nor its unique role in language” (p. 41). Likewise, researchers note that the Lexical approach acknowledges the fact that “lexis is not enough and that courses which totally discard grammar are doing learners a serious disservice” (Lewis, 1997, p. 211). Researchers also state that the use of only the lexical approach in language teaching may create the risk of fossilization as students can be too dependent on the use of lexical chunks (Scheffler, 2015). Considering all these explanations and research findings, language educators need to revisit their perceptions which are founded on the belief that language is only lexis or that it is only grammar. As language is comprised of both lexis and grammar, rather than contrasting lexical and grammatical language items, language professionals should aim to focus on the relationship between lexis and grammar as suggested in recent literature (Marsden & Slabakova, 2019). To this end, language educators need to understand that grammar and vocabulary are certainly not two distinct systems as they are inherently connected to each other. Thus, employment of an integrative approach, also called lexico-grammatical approach, is essential in language syllabus design and teaching practices.

Although effectiveness of a lexico-grammatical approach has been confirmed by corpus studies (Zhang, 2021), we still see that course-books have separate sections on grammar and vocabulary as well as language curricula. In some contexts, it is also possible to see that grammar and vocabulary are taught and tested separately. As “all words can be shown to have patterns, and words which have the same pattern tend to share aspects of meaning, separation of grammar and vocabulary in teaching is an “artificial divide” (Hunston, Francis & Manning, 1997, p. 208). According to Scheffler (2015), adopting only the lexical approach in language teaching is like “going on a long and dangerous journey without maps” (p. 438). He notes that grammar is the map in this analogy and as learners are pretty good at learning how to use this map, language educators should not let their students travel without it.

Various strategies can be used to acknowledge the benefits of integrative approaches and use them for fostering vocabulary learning. One way of doing this is using ‘Computer Concordancers’. These are programs that store large bodies of texts, written and spoken, in electronic form. When a word needs to be examined, for example, the program scans the texts in its storage, locates all the occurrences of the word under examination, and lists these words on the screen in the form of a list within their immediate context. These compiled concordance lists enable teachers and learners to examine words in their natural contexts, so they can see how they collocate with other words, which patterns they follow, which prepositions they go with, and so on (McCarthy et al., 2010; Willis, 1990).

Another possible way for using lexico-grammatical approach in the language classroom is focusing on patterns. Researchers claim that “patterns are the building blocks of language” which remove the artificial vocabulary and grammar distinction. According to them, “each word has its associated patterns, and it is these patterns that go together to make idiomatic English” (Hunston et al., 1997, p. 215). It is also possible to integrate grammar and lexis by adopting the lexical approach in teaching practices as it is based on Observe-Hypothesize-Experiment cycle (Scheffler, 2015). The use of input and output activities enables the completion of this cycle because while receiving input learners observe and hypothesize and when they are involved in output activities they experiment with the language. The use of output activities in the language classroom also makes learners’ implicit knowledge and skills more explicit and observable. Observing students’ performance is considerably important for teachers but learners’ being aware of their own performance is even more important.

Through output activities learners' awareness of their own performance can be raised and a sense of involvement can be created by making learners more active in the learning process. Hence, to create the appropriate circumstances for maintaining a dual focus on grammar and lexis input and output activities should be used in an integrated way in the language classroom.

Clearly, success in language learning depends on both teachers and learners.

On the one hand, teachers need to be well-informed about when and how to make use of appropriate teaching approaches and techniques for scaffolding students in their language learning experiences but on the other hand, students should try to assimilate and practise new language structures and words using learning styles and strategies that suit them the most. In other words, as outlined in the literature "the teacher has to present meaning in a way that is comprehensible to learners, and learners have to relate new meanings to ones already known" (McCarthy, 1994, p. 121) using their personal learning styles and strategies.

To conclude, language is not only grammar, nor is it only vocabulary: it is the integration of the two (Littlewood, 1984). As "grammar rules are real as descriptors of language: as evidenced in countless grammar books that have been produced" and "lexical phenomena are real", it is logical "to first explicitly teach language in chunks and then later look at these as exemplars of particular aspects of grammar" as suggested in the literature (Scheffler, 2015 p.439). Based on these recommendations, language teachers should teach grammar and vocabulary in an integrated way in their language classes in order to be safe rather than sorry; however, while doing so, they should constantly be questioning whether what they are teaching is addressing what their learners really need to learn as suggested in up-to-date research (Burton, 2020).

4. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

For many years, the important role of lexis has been ignored. Thus, there is a need for further research that will focus on how vocabulary teaching can be an integral part of English language lessons. Although there is a growing interest in lexis in the recent years and more and more teachers are realizing that their students will be able to use the language actively only if they are lexically competent, there are still many teachers who do not feel confident in using the lexico-grammatical approach. Future studies can therefore investigate how teachers can be empowered in applying the lexico-grammatical approach in their practices. Further studies can also suggest some new ideas for teaching grammar and vocabulary in an integrated way. Most significantly, future studies can focus on how findings of corpus studies can be used to challenge existing perceptions and practices by making 'what language is not' clearer in language educators' minds (Lewis, 1993). In this regard, it may be beneficial for second and foreign language teachers to take the following advice into consideration: "the pedagogic process should be informed by the corpus, not driven or controlled by it" (McCarthy & Carter, 2003, p. 338).

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