Teachers' Perceptions of Teaching English Grammar in Macedonia and Slovenia Today

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Abstract

Grammar is usually that part of a language that is not enthusiastically included in the syllabus, and is, therefore, not comfortably taught by teachers, so that it is rather forcefully learned by students. The reasons for this are different: the teachers can feel they lack the proper education and experience to teach grammar successfully; sometimes the students' age and their language level can be determining factors in choosing how to teach grammar and which parts to emphasise particularly, but it is mainly up to the approach that the teachers should take in presenting this language segment in a way that, in the end, with grammar being properly integrated in the teaching process, the students learn to use the language accurately and speak it fluently. This paper aims to show the teachers' views on the best ways of teaching grammar, the parts of English grammar that are most difficult for the learners to master, as well as the structures that are the easiest to be learned. It presents the situation in Macedonia and in Slovenia, with answers provided by English teachers surveyed online, and with theoretical analysis of the given situations, along with results that aim to give practical implications. Thus, it especially explores the process of teaching English grammar in these two countries from the teachers' point of view, by collecting the teachers' perceptions, and by analysing the findings. The results tend to show and, hopefully, prove that English grammar teaching can be interesting, enjoyable and, for teachers, an extremely rewarding process when the students produce grammatically correct sentences and display educated expression. The findings can be applicable to all English teachers who might reflect on their way of teaching, but also provide teacher trainers with guidance on what should be emphasised in the teachers' professional development process.

Keywords: teaching, English grammar, Macedonia, Slovenia.

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Literature Review

There is nothing new in recognizing that general education studies agree with the fact that teaching is a cognitive ability and that teachers' beliefs impact on their instructional decisions in the classroom. This means that during one's career, in making decisions about the way of teaching, each teacher forms beliefs on the basis of their character and on the experiences they have had in the classroom, this being supplemented with the advice and lessons they are given when attending workshops, seminars, and conferences on teaching. In the course of their professional development, the approach that teachers take in their teaching is shaped by the practical results that those beliefs have when applied in a classroom setting.

According to Farrell and Poh's research (2005), it is believed that many of the teachers' classroom instructional decisions when teaching grammar were influenced by the time the teachers thought they would need to complete an activity outlined in the syllabus. What is more, one of the teachers they interviewed and observed in the classroom for their study, reported to prefer a deductive to an inductive approach when it comes to the teaching of grammar, not because she did not believe in the effectiveness of the inductive approach, but because the deductive one is more straightforward and requires less time for its implementation. In addition, the demand on their time was imposed by both the school and the administration (Farrell & Poh, 2005, pp. 9-10).

In Borg (2001, p. 21) it is said that many studies have been written about the effect the teachers' knowledge of a particular subject matter has on their instructional decisions. When English is concerned, this leads us to the fact that there is relationship between the teachers' perceptions of their knowledge of grammar and their instruction. He quotes Grossman, Wilson and Shulman's findings (1989, p. 28), who noted that in their sample of teachers, those who were uncertain of their knowledge of grammar tried to avoid teaching it whenever it was possible.

In ELT literature there is great interest in teacher cognition, but there are no explicit studies on the relationship between the teachers' perceptions of their knowledge of grammar and their actual instruction in the classroom. Yet, Numrich (1996), and Richards, Ho, and Giblin (1996), (as cited in Borg (2001, p. 22), both found that new teachers avoided teaching grammar, simply because they felt their knowledge of grammar was inadequate. Nevertheless, this claim has never been tested and proven in a classroom setting.

Borg (2001) himself conducted research on teachers who were observed teaching real classes and then interviewed about the reasons for the decisions they made while teaching grammar. That is how the teachers' perceptions of their knowledge of grammar emerged to be a factor that influenced their teaching. In the case of one of the two teachers that were observed and interviewed, the conclusion is that when certain of his grammar knowledge and asked a question, the teacher used the students' questions as a springboard for class discussion, meaning that one student's question to the teacher was freely directed to the other students, without fear of any additional questions that might arise, because the teacher was confident of his knowledge of the grammar. On the other hand, in cases when he lacked confidence, he avoided explaining by giving rules; instead, he relied on the actual situation in the language and the more frequent uses.

The other teacher, who was a non-native English teacher, had even more episodes of uncertainty when teaching grammar and avoided this whenever possible. However, he was quite confident in teaching vocabulary, because he had spent more time teaching it than he had done teaching grammar. He was not even behaving characteristically when asked for an explanation about grammar, but rather took a more defensive, abrupt and less polite stand to close the discussion, thereby discouraging the students from continuing to ask questions. When grammar questions were posed, this teacher collected the questions and postponed the explanations for the next class, so that he could refer to the grammar reference books or teaching materials in order to find reasons and rules that would explain the particular grammatical problem (Borg, 2001, p. 26). But when feeling confident, the teacher proceeded with an explanation, even though his answer might not have been satisfactory, which proves that confidence motivates behaviour.

Therefore, Borg (2001) maintains that future studies should concentrate on the following: to give teachers more opportunities to test their own knowledge of grammar so that they can realise the relationship between their perceptions and the instructional activities they engage in with their students. Teachers should increase their awareness of the importance of the effect that a knowledge of grammar has on their teaching, and this should consequently be revised with regard to the way that teachers teach grammar. Also, their willingness to engage in spontaneous grammar work should be reviewed, along with the way they respond to students' questions; the manner in which they react when students question their explanations, and the kind of the grammatical information they provide (Borg, 2001, p. 27).

Toska, Kadriu, and Vaneva (2011, p. 36) emphasise that teaching grammar should be directed towards teaching inductively: when students figure out the rules themselves, they are being supplied with rich structured input. When they recognise the grammar forms and learn to put them into adequate meaningful contexts, they are able to learn the target language by processing the input and increasing their own intake. It must be emphasised that the question is not whether or not to teach grammar, since grammar is an inevitable part of the language and it has to be taught, but how to teach grammar so that students can make real use of their instruction and accurately use the forms and structures in actual communication.

Due to the fact that language is context-sensitive, grammar is best taught in context, given that , no word or function can be learned when taught in isolation. But, as Kaçani and Mangelli (2013, p. 154) have commented, authentic texts show how a target structure can be used in communication, whereas if there is unfamiliar vocabulary and synthetic complexity, the structure will be rendered incomprehensible. Therefore, they cite Thornbury (2008), who says that simplified authentic texts should be used, because in that way the learnt forms are used properly and the new ones are better acquired.

Talking about the teaching of grammar, Ur (1996), (as cited in Thu, 2009, p. 4), says that the place of grammar in foreign language teaching is controversial, because each method or approach to language teaching gives the teaching of grammar a different, varying level of importance in the syllabi or classroom activities. On the one hand, Ellis (2002), (as cited in Thu, 2009, p. 5), claimed that in teaching methods such as grammar, translation, audiolingualism, total physical response, and situational language teaching, grammar has the central place. On the other hand, the place of grammar is challenged by the emergence of communicative language teaching and natural methods, since these require grammar to be taught alongside a communicative task-based component. Moreover, he goes on to say that grammar should be taught to learners who already have a substantial lexical knowledge, so that on the basis of their lexical knowledge they can upgrade the new, grammatical information and create meaningful messages. Ellis even argues that grammar should be taught separately, not integrated with task-based components, that areas of grammar that are known to cause problems to learners should be focused on, and teachers should help students develop explicit knowledge. It is more than evident that grammar teaching is a thorny problem and, it is because of its not too exhausted and not fully researched

character that, grammar remains the mainstay in English language training all over the world.

Yet, besides teaching methodologies and approaches, it is not only up to the students, but also to the teacher's education in grammar teaching which is also very important for preparing teachers to teach grammar effectively and confidently. Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1999), (as cited in Thu, 2009, p. 6-7), maintain that teachers would be better prepared to teach grammar and meet students' learning needs if they themselves have a firm grounding in the grammar of the language they teach. This implies that, first, teachers should master the grammar of the language they want to teach, and then use their mastery to teach. They explain that grammar can be taught explicitly – when rules are clearly stated and pointed out to the students, then implicitly – when rules are not pointed but they are expected to be understood through various forms of exposure offered to the students. Grammar can then be taught deductively – when students are told the rules first, and inductively – when students examine many examples to find out patterns. Also, grammar can be taught separately, whengrammar points and structures are taught in isolation, or integratedly – when grammar is 'integrated', or taught together with other learning activities. However, it is obvious that there is no single approach to grammar teaching that could apply in all contexts to all kinds of learners and teachers, but this would rather depend on different factors, such as the students' age, social background, interests, and previous education.

In Thu's study (2009), as stressed previously, the answers showed that grammar is better taught when real-life situations are simulated than when grammar patterns and structures are analysed. Also, by practising the grammar of the target language, the students' communicative ability improves more quickly, meaning that not only their grammar knowledge improves, but their overall language expression becomes more advanced (Thu, 2009, p.16).

As far as the role of L1 influence on L2 grammar is concerned, the study maintains that students' first languages have a significant influence on their ability to learn English grammar and they believe more in negative than in positive transfer, that is, the students' first language inhibits rather than facilitates L2 grammar learning (Thu, 2009, p. 19-20).

In Schulz's study (2001), 73% of teachers agree that studying grammar helps in learning a foreign or second language. Schulz also found that most teachers believed it is more important to practise language in situations simulating real life than to study and practise grammatical patterns.

A point made by Ellis (2008) about students' making mistakes is his claim that when students make mistakes in learning another language, the mistakes are due to the influence of their first language, and it is not that the second language grammar learning is helped or improved if their native language grammar is similar to English (Schultz and Ellis cited in Thu, 2009, p. 22-27).

Baron, (1982, p. 226, as cited in Al-Mekhlafi & Nagaratnam, 2011, p. 69), says that very often, an English teacher is portrayed as a person whose only pleasure is to point out the faults of others. Therefore, in classroom circumstances, the mention of grammar causes the student moments of discomfort and terror. For this reason and in order to feel comfortable in class, the students prefer explicit and formal grammar instruction; while the teachers favour communicative activities with less focus on grammar so that they can alleviate this emphatic effect and make the students positively experience the learning process.

Since the 1970s, the learning process has moved from teaching grammar to teaching learners to communicate, whilst grammar has been seen as a powerful demotivating force among L2 learners. When it comes to motivation and language success, it is believed that grammar prevents students from speaking fluently and, even when they know the rules perfectly, they cannot apply them properly, thus their language use is diminished. Burgess and Etherington (2002), (as cited in Thu, 2009), point out that teachers have identified this problem – the fact that the transfer of declarative to procedural knowledge is a big problem.

Savignon (2002, as cited in Wong & Barrea-Marlys, 2012, p. 62), makes the difference between communicative competence and communicative ability. The first refers to the ability to interpret information, express oneself, and negotiate meaning. The latter refers to the ability to comprehend meaning and use forms appropriately. This implicitly means that grammar learning is extremely important in achieving a higher level of communication.

There are scholars who think the grammar and communicative approaches should be combined and, as Lee and VanPatten, 2003 (as cited in Wong, 2012, p. 63) say, grammar can be taught communicatively through structured input activities. This occurs when students are being given input, meaningful context and their attention is drawn to the target language, that is, they are asked to encode grammatical forms through meaningful context. The purpose of this kind of instruction is to raise the learners' awareness of the target structures with meaning.

All participants in Wong's study agreed that there is a place for grammar instruction in an L2 classroom, yet, some believed that grammar should be taught explicitly, being convinced that it improves the students' communicative ability, while others believe that explicit grammar instruction would only help students get good grades on tests but would not facilitate their communication with others.

Starting with these above-mentioned authors and their views, who are just a portion of all those people that have researched on grammar teaching, this paper will continue by illustrating the research conducted on non-native English teachers in Macedonia and Slovenia and their perceptions of teaching grammar.

Method

Participants and the research tool structure

This study comments on a research survey in which data has been obtained by administering a questionnaire to participants. Namely, in the period between June and November 2013, a 40-item, web-based questionnaire, designed by the researcher, in the form of an electronic link was sent to English language teachers in Macedonia and Slovenia. The participants are English language teachers who teach English at different levels, to different age groups of students, in different sectors and levels of education , with their own, different levels of education.

The questions in the questionnaire were divided into 13 sections: the first one giving the researcher's introduction; the second - looking for the respondents' biographical information; the third - looking for information about their experience and qualifications; the fourth - asking the respondents for information about English grammar teaching in their country; the fifth - about their school or workplace; the sixth; the seventh and eighth are about their classes but grouped differently according to the questions; the ninth - about their lesson planning; the tenth; eleventh and twelfth require the teachers' opinions; while the last one asks those teachers who want to be contacted about the results of the survey, once it is finished, to leave their contact details.

Results

The total number of teachers who responded to the questions in the survey is 74, of whom 41 (55%) are Macedonian, 23 (31%) Slovenian, 6 (1%)

Albanian, only 1 American, 2 hold double citizenship - from Macedonia and Albania, and 1 is both Macedonian and Australian. When it comes to the teachers' gender, 6 teachers were male, while the remaining 68 were female. The teachers' age was distributed in the following way: 14 (19%) teachers were between the the ages of 19 to 29, 39 (53%) - from 30 to 39, 12 (16%) - from 40 to 49, 9 (12%) - from 50 to 59, and there were no teachers older than 60. As regards the country of origin , 51 (69%) teachers were from Macedonia and 23 (31%) from Slovenia, while in the question about the number of years of experience, 24 (32%) teachers had worked for more than 20 years , 23 (32%) had between 10 and 14 years' experience, 12 (16%) had between 5 and 9 years experience, 8 (11%) teachers had between 0 and 4 years experience, whilst 7 (10%) had between 15 and 19 years experience.

With regard to the teachers' highest level of education, a little less than a half held a Bachelor's degree, that is, 35 out of the 74 respondents, which amounts to 47% of the cohort; those with a Master's degree were 24 (32%); whilst there were 6 PhD holders – 8%. (The others did not provide any information on their qualifications.) The teachers' level of English, according to their own, self-assessment criteria is 33 (45%) advanced, 26 (35%) with native-speaker competence, and 5 (7%) native speakers. The teachers' highest qualification in terms of teaching English is 41 (55%) university graduates, and 20 (27%) university postgraduates; numbers that add credibility to the answers received from the respondents. Asked whether the teachers had received training in teaching English before starting work, a high number of 39 (53%) respondents answered negatively, while 30 (41%) had been provided with this kind of professional development, but after starting work these numbers changed so that even 55 (74%) answered affirmatively - that they had been trained, while 14 (19%) had not experienced that, unfortunately.

The survey showed that all teachers who responded to the questions are qualified in teaching because the types of training that they mentioned were the following: seminars and workshops at their own institutions, webinars and conferences, British Council certificates, Comenius Teacher training, Methodology courses, e-courses, several weeks' training in England, Cambridge CELTA certificate, professional development online courses, professional development in English language teaching from Indiana University, finishing with an MA in TESOL. 41 (55%) teachers came from private institutions, and 26 (35%) from state ones; 65 (88%) came from urban surroundings, and 28 (38%) of all teachers, which is the highest number of answers to the question about the number of students in class, had between

21 and 30 students. As far as the students' age is concerned, most of the teachers - 37 (50%) worked with teenagers, while 14 (19%) with adults and 9 (12%) with young learners. 34 (46%) teachers reported that for them there is a specific age group of students that they feel most comfortable with when teaching English grammar and, when explaining the answer to this question, different elaborations were given. Since this was an open-ended question, most of the answers had rather long explanations, combining the age groups and elaborating on the comments given. Some said they did not have problems teaching any age group, because they applied different methods and approaches that they chose and adapted according to the students' needs. In addition, there was an answer that stated an experienced teacher should be able to teach learners of any age. One teacher reported that grammar is essential for learning a foreign language so that it should be taught to every age group. Yet, there were teachers who answered that they preferred teaching grammar to young learners, but no explicit explanation was offered for this kind of answer. On the other hand, most of the teachers replied that they preferred teaching grammar to teenagers (mostly) and adults, saying that it is due to the fact that teenagers have already learned grammar by the time they reach that age and they are more capable of learning and understanding the new rules, while adults are chosen as a preferable group by some because they are more determined to achieve their goals and, if taught communicatively, they share views more skillfully on various topics.

When asked about the level of students they feel most comfortable with when teaching English grammar, 27 (36%) answered that the students' level was important to them, and the answers mostly ranged from intermediate to proficient students, explaining that the higher the level, the smoother the teaching and the easier the learning. Moreover, the more advanced students should have already been faced with the rules of grammar before and they can easily upgrade what they have learned, trying to perfect their knowledge of English grammar. This is understandable since it is indeed more likely that comfortable teaching and fruitful learning happen in higher level classrooms, taking into consideration that this category of student tends to polish their English (reflected in the use of grammar), while the lower level or beginner students' aim is to first learn the language base.

When asked about the age of the students in the class they teach most often, 20 (27%) teachers reported it to be the age between 16 and 20, while only 9 (12%) said it was between 21 and 30; another age group was not offered.

The question that asked about the language that teachers mostly use when they teach English grammar received an answer that 28 (38%) used English, 22 (30%) used a mix of two (English and the students' first language), while only 1 teacher answered that the students' first language is used.

There was a question that asked about the most difficult grammatical structure to be presented to the students and again the answers varied, saying that it is the present perfect, passives, conditionals (including mixed and third conditional), articles, prepositions, reported speech, indirect questions, participle clauses, the causative 'have', the subjunctive, but basically tenses and their use. It is important to note that 2 teachers said there is no grammar structure that is difficult to be presented, since its presentation depends on the situation, method, and approach. In addition, some teachers thought that structures that do not exist in the students' native language are more difficult to present, implying that the students have nothing with which the new structure from the target language can be compared.

When the teachers were asked to explain why the students found it difficult to learn that particular structure, the answer that was most often given was because they had no such form, tense, or structure in their native language and therefore it seemed to be too abstract to them. The main problems reported were in distinguishing between simple and continuous aspects, and between the past simple and past perfect.

Questioned about the part of English grammar where the students make the most mistakes, the teachers' answers mainly referred to tenses: variety and sequence of tenses, along with sentence structure.

About the level of frequency at which teachers correct their students' mistakes, 30 (41%) said they corrected them *often*, 14 (19%) - *sometimes*, 6 (5%) - *always*, and 1 does that *rarely*.

In explaining how the teachers decide when to correct the students' mistakes, they said they correct if the focus is on accuracy and not fluency, mostly when it is a written and not a spoken activity, if the same mistake is repeatedly made, if it tends to become an error, if a new rule is being learned and, finally, if it is a structure that has already been learned and the students are expected to have mastered it.

In the question where the teachers were asked to mark each given activity with one of the suggested options: *every lesson*, *often*, *sometimes*, *rarely*, or *never,* of all the activities, the one that had the most answers - 18 (24%) - *every lesson* is 'students filling gaps/blanks in exercises', the activity 'role-play practising corresponding structures' received 32 (43%) answers with

often, 'students watching videos/TV' had 18 (24%) *sometimes*, 'teacher dictating rules to the students' had 18 (24%) answers with *rarely* and, considering the nature of the activity, 'students copying sentences from the book', quite expectedly, received 28 (38%) answers with *never*.

They have also been asked about other activities they use regularly and have stated that they use online exercises, make students correct grammar mistakes in authentic students' essays, have students write words on the board and combine them to make sentences, watch videos/TV, translate, make students present a grammar issue or topic so that they are directly and interactively involved in the teaching-learning process and experience it personally.

From the activities that respondents were asked to mark on a scale from 1 to 12, in which case 1 was the most useful and 12 the least useful in their teaching practice, the results showed that 11 (15%) teachers saw 'lesson plans' as the most useful element, while 18 (24%) teachers marked 'the national curriculum/syllabi from the government/ministry' as the least useful. In this way, only the extreme grades (1 and 12) have been taken into consideration, as at this stage the analysis intends to give preliminary results in terms of the surveyed teachers' perceptions.

34 (46%) teachers regarded students' good command in another foreign language as helpful in understanding and learning English grammar, while only 9 (12%) declared that they thought negatively about this. The explanations they gave are: that by knowing another language and its grammatical rules students can more easily compare and contrast as well as apply them; because certain language concepts are universal; they more easily recognise structures and assign grammar theory; because English has many common things with other languages; languages borrow from each other; and, the students have created their own way of learning a foreign language. The transfer of knowledge happens: once they understand one language, they can follow the same patterns of learning and understanding, and thus the prerequisites for learning another language are met. On the other hand, those with negative answers said that grammar is quite difficult and having a good command in another foreign language does not mean you can learn grammar more easily, since every language is a different structure, and confusion is caused when faced with different languages and different grammatical rules. They say it depends which foreign language is in question, but basically the grammar points and structures differ from language to language.

From the twelve activities the teachers were asked to grade from 1 to 12 according to the importance those activities have in the teaching-learning process, in other words, which activities would help most in improving grammatical skills , the activity that received most answers – 9 (12%) with 1 as the most important one is 'more communication activities', while quite understandably, even 14 (19%) teachers marked 'more translation exercises' as the least important.

The teachers explained their most important choices by saying that the earlier students start learning the language, the better their understanding of the language is and consequently they approach the learning process more easily. Also, when they go to study abroad, they are motivated to learn more in that setting. Moreover, if the teaching happens in a smaller class with fewer students and if there is practice and communication, then the learning truly happens. Clearly, if students have more exposure to the language, they learn the rules unconsciously. More classes a week, more training, visiting an English-speaking country or being part of it are all prerequisites that may lead to better learning results.

Talking about the skills that are most important in enabling students to learn and understand English grammar, the teachers had to choose from 'writing', 'reading', 'speaking', 'listening', and 'use of English' and order them in terms of their importance. From those who responded to the questions, 16 teachers claimed 'use of English' to be the most important, whereas 6 teachers believed 'listening' to be the least important.

When the teachers were asked to explain their answers, those who thought 'reading' was the most important activity for students to learn and understand English grammar, their explanation is that the more students read, the better their understanding is, because that passive knowledge that they gather through reading can be used for processing the information and for using grammatical rules in practice. Those who thought 'speaking' was the most important activity claim that for the other skills students can be helped from outside, but speaking is something that should be practised inside, when used and developed in class by speaking on different topics.

Asked about what gives teachers the most satisfaction when teaching English grammar, they mentioned several aspects. Namely, the teachers commented that it is to see that the students make their own sentences, which are grammatically correct; when the students can use the sentences in real communication and outside of the classroom; when they feel that they have understood the rules; when they use the structures confidently and

unconsciously, without stopping to think which form to use in a certain context, but freely applying the rules; when they confidently use the concepts taught; when they understand the rules, use them, recognise them when used, and when they are pleased with themselves, realising they have learned the target form. Besides this, one teacher gave credit to the mother tongue as an element that adds to satisfaction in teaching English grammar and noted that the interference between English and the mother tongue is quite challenging, as well as the good translation from the students' native language into English. Another one stressed that the satisfaction comes when students say they had thought grammar was more difficult than that, or that they are starting to use grammar for the first time.

The teachers' biggest challenge in teaching English grammar is to give simple explanations when teaching difficult areas and yet make students understand the rules and use them correctly. Others have noted it is connecting communication with grammar, getting students talking, teaching unmotivated students, making grammar interesting for them, teaching the students a structure they do not have in their L1, keeping students' attention, making students realise that grammar is important, by making classes interesting, but still pointing out that grammar is an important part of the language. The last should be dealt with very carefully since students who struggle with grammar should not be intimidated.

When asked about the things the teachers would like to change in their English grammar teaching, again various answers were given. Some declared that they were happy with the way they currently teach and they would not change anything, but others chose that they would apply a more interactive approach; make their teaching more user-friendly; wished to work with small groups; to have more time to practise; to use more games; even use the mother tongue so that the grammar explanation is more successful, when using the source language as a basis in explaining the grammar rules; to have more classes per week and smaller groups of students; to try different approaches; to use technological aids; without translating and explicitly explaining rules, but letting students elicit the rules; and one being a state to the teacher wished he/she would not be obliged to follow the curriculum so that that teacher can decide on the number of hours spent on a certain grammar structure, be more persistent with students who are not that good and even devote more time to teaching grammar. Organising speaking hours with English native speakers has also been suggested along with more learning games.

Additional comments about any aspect of teaching English grammar that have not been mentioned in the questionnaire focused on the students' negative attitude towards grammar and their unwillingness to learn which interferes with the teachers' success of conveying English grammar. Therefore, the teachers suggested they should not teach grammar rules but use them in speech so that the students are able to learn a whole phrase or sentence instead of a memorised grammatical rule. It was even stipulated that English grammar is not the issue that causes difficulty, but it is the Slovene grammar which the students do not learn and then they have problems with English.

Conclusion

The aim of this study was not to determine how Macedonian and Slovenian English language teachers separately perceived the process of teaching grammar, but to research the perceptions and impressions of teachers from both nationalities, shared from their own teaching experience and summarise them in a preliminary account of what activities or methods the teachers prefer to use in their teaching practice so that the students learn more effectively. I have therefore presented the results generally, showing the Macedonian and Slovenian teachers' perceptions together. The research shows that teenagers and adults are the most preferable age groups to be taught grammar; with regard to language level, these are the more advanced students; English is mostly used as the language of instruction; and the most difficult grammatical structure is the one that is different from the structures and forms in the student's mother tongue, or a structure which they do not have at all in their source language. To the satisfaction of all proponents of effective and objective-aimed grammar instruction, this study ends with the conclusion that, fortunately, most respondents believed grammar can be most effectively taught in authentic, context-provided situations, by emphasising the communicative and implicit language teaching. It is an undoubted fact that more successful learning takes place when English grammar is taught communicatively, when students are actively involved in the learning process, when rules are not explained but elicited from the students, and when the students' native language is used minimally, or not used at all (all this is documented in the result's section). Other factors, such as having fewer students in a group and using technological aids, add to effective teaching, but cannot always be provided. Therefore, the teacher's success should be measured by managing the classroom with the resources that are available,

and using the most advanced learnt teaching methods and approaches. Thus, this all-embracing view can be used as a strong recommendation when it comes to teaching English grammar generally – given that this study is being specifically inferred from the teachers in Macedonia and Slovenia.

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