International Journal of Education and Humanities
ISSN: 2770-6702 | Vol. 25, No. 2, 2026

Practical Reflections on Integrating English Grammar Teaching into Reading Classes

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Abstract: How to integrate English grammar teaching in reading classes without reducing texts to collections of isolated sentence patterns is presented in this paper. It provides a concept and practice of reading where the aim is still comprehension; therefore, only some grammatical features are used as means to achieve the goal of meaning construction. The stages of the lesson sequence are linked to discourse cohesion, noticing, focus on form, input processing, interpretation tasks and communicative practice. First, set a reading goal; then, have students observe a feature of the text that will affect their comprehension, determine how this feature relates to the content, and finally return to the text for comparison, reconstruction or a short answer. Text selection, differentiation, evaluation and general application risk of the paper. It is not an empirical report, and there are no original participants, classroom data, test scores, or statistical results. Therefore, the above procedures are pedagogical choices rather than guarantees of improvement, and their actual effectiveness needs to be tested in particular teaching situations.

Keywords: Grammar Teaching, Reading Instruction, Focus on Form, Noticing, Input Processing, Form-Meaning Connections.

1. Introduction

Grammar and reading are often separated in English classrooms. A reading lesson can focus on vocabulary, fact-finding questions and general comprehension, and grammar will be taught later through explanation and decontextualised exercises. Thus, the system of grammar may seem to be distant from real-life language use. It may also prevent the reading instruction from determining whether, for example, the tense or reference or modification or clause relation etc., needs to lead to a particular interpretation.

Integration does not need to wait for labelling of a grammatical category in every paragraph. Text is a way to present grammatical features, but it can also be employed in other ways. The first goal of productivity is communication and understanding in a text. Then, the teacher selects a small number of forms that are frequent, easy to learn, relevant to the lesson and necessary for learning. Briefly, these forms are shown to gain a better understanding of the message by the learners.

The following is an excellent system of this integration. Explore the theoretical relationship between grammar and text meaning; present criteria for material selection and learning objectives; design a multi-stage classroom process; and discuss evaluation and application risks. It is theoretical in nature, not experimental. There are no original participants, observations, test results or statistical analyses in this study, and it has not been shown that the proposed sequence produces a measured effect in all classrooms. The goal is to provide defensible options for teachers based on their adaptation and assessment of learners, curriculum and local conditions.

2. Grammar as Meaning in Text

Reading is the decoding of sentences and the understanding of connections among clauses and paragraphs in a text. Halliday and Hasan list the resources of cohesion as reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction and lexical ties [1]. Therefore, based on the above resources, grammar should be taught in reading classes: Pronouns refer to the previous participants; conjunctions indicate contrast or cause and effect; tense selection shows when something happened. Have students observe these characteristics in daily life, ask themselves why a particular kind of message is used, and not just know the name of that type of message.

Attention is still limited. The reader will know the general content but will not learn low-salience information. Schmidt's theory of attention suggests that conscious awareness is required to process some information from the environment in daily life [2]. Reading tasks in the classroom can also be designed to highlight features of language through questions, comparisons, spacing, etc. Be aware on purpose. Stress the ending of every verb to increase visual noise, but draw attention to the two different tenses that show changes in the order of events to give a reason for learning.

Long's idea of focus on form provides an effective organisation system. It refers to the linguistic characteristics of activities whose main purpose is to convey meaning or communicate, rather than organising the whole lesson according to individual forms [3]. Therefore, the reading class can begin with prediction, purpose and understanding. A short video can be made to teach the functions of some features, explain some inference methods, present high-frequency vocabulary, and help students improve the accuracy of their expression.

Interpretation usually occurs before mechanical production. Ellis believes that learners are engaged in interpretation activities, observe a target feature, and based on this observation, learn the meaning without having to create it themselves [4]. Students can match sentences with relative clauses to possible referents, organise events based on tense and aspect, and determine whether a modal expresses obligation, possibility, advice, etc. The above tasks help students learn the content better and reduce the problem of 'rote learning' of rules.

3. Processing Form and Meaning

The other is that students may use words and their world knowledge but not learn grammar. VanPatten's input-processing model proposes that learners organise their attention and construct meaning through organisation in learning [5]. This way supports the organised input activity that requires the target form for an appropriate response. If the learners can identify a familiar noun in their answers, this activity will not need grammar instruction. If the response needs to identify who performed the action, when it took place, or whether it is hypothetical, then the form will be informationally necessary.

Research synthesis does not advocate for the exclusive use of explicit grammar and meaning-oriented exposure. Norris and Ortega's meta-analysis found advantages for focused second-language instruction but also listed deficiencies in the evidence base and the impact of outcome measures [6]. Limited class application: Although teaching can help students learn difficult forms, fluency in reading cannot be achieved with just a short explanation. The Design should provide several occasions for form to connect with meaning in different places.

Larsen-Freeman believes that grammar is a kind of general ability to be accurate, appropriate and relevant, and he does not propose a fixed list of rules for it [7]. A 3D model is convenient to observe visually. Form refers to the organisation of something, meaning is the specific differences that are displayed, and use shows why a particular speech was employed. For example, a passive construction can be formally identified as referring to an event and has a certain textual value due to the omission of the agent or the use of impersonal language.

No single instructional technique resolves all grammar-learning questions. Ellis has continuously studied the problem of whether, what, when and how to teach grammar, and second-language acquisition research has been troubled by simplistic prescriptions [8]. Integration should be limited accordingly. Teachers do not need to introduce all unknown structures, and learners do not need to know all the terms beforehand. Given the above circumstances, forms with an obvious connection to the current text and suitable for learners' development and study are to be prioritised.

4. Text and Target Selection

Select text based on the criteria of readability, interest, purpose, curriculum relevance, etc. The selected passage should provide rich background information for the learners to form an initial concept and, at the same time, have advantages for study. Authenticity is not required; an unmodified public text may have cultural value but is linguistically inaccessible, and a well-adapted text can achieve the aim of credible communication. Teachers need to make substantial modifications when necessary and should avoid simplifying the language of all forms of genre.

Four questions are used to select target features. First, does the form affect learning of this text? Second, how frequently should it be activated to enable comparison without rewriting all the sentences? Thirdly, does it align with the goals of teaching and address students' problems? Fourthly, do I need to read the whole thing? Commonly, there are reference chains, connectors, tenses and aspects, mood, relative clauses, conditional relations, passive voice, nominalisation, patterns of modification, etc. They are all good in their own places, so there is no single best one.

The proportion of integrated and independent work will change. Spada and Lightbown believe that both integrated and isolated form-focused instruction can be effective in different learning environments for various languages and learners [9]. A reading lesson in practice may have a short integrated episode, and a recurring difficulty is offered additional practice before or after the lesson. Integration should not be seen as a lack of explicit explanation; instead, it can be viewed as one of the advantages that draw people's attention to learning and provide new inspiration.

Reading ability also includes various lower- and higher-order processes. Grabe's idea of second-language reading links language knowledge, fluent processing, strategic comprehension and discourse organisation [10]. Grammar work should support this coordination and not be reduced to sentence-by-sentence translation. A specific case can be selected for detailed investigation. The others can be read for fluency, main ideas, evaluation, or pleasure. A lesson will be deemed uneven if students cannot complete the reading of the text because every single line requires explanation.

5. A Staged Classroom Procedure

The first stage produces a need for reading. The teacher may present a title, picture, problem or short question to stimulate students' interest in learning the new grammar. Then, quickly, learners will read to achieve a general goal, such as identifying the author or discovering changes in narration, selecting an effective summary, etc. The first meeting maintains the status of a lesson in reading and offers an overall plan for the following study of language.

The second part is the Introduction. Focus the questions on the connections among objects and do not ask for isolated facts. Learners can find the reasons, compare the contents of various works, and present relevant evidence for an inference. According to what the student does not understand, the teacher will choose to continue teaching the original grammar point. If the learners have already been taught this type of relationship, the stage episode can be reduced; otherwise, if an unexpected structure is shown, a short correction instruction may be necessary.

The Third Stage is Guidance. Instead of informing the students directly of the rule, the teacher provides two or more examples from the text and has the students observe the differences among them, find any recurring patterns, or connect forms with meanings. Visual Additions should be infrequent and random. Colour, underlining, and spacing can be used to organise the content; otherwise, without a reason, decoration will not attract attention. First, the learners can work alone to compare the explanations in pairs, and the teacher will hear some hypotheses without judging them as correct or incorrect.

The Fourth stage is the Form-Meaning-Use connection. The Introduction can present the general trend, introduce an exceptional case, and connect this characteristic feature with the reason for selection by the author. A timeline shows a span; an arrow points to what a pronoun refers to; a clause map shows modifications; a contrast table lists modal meanings. Terminology is helpful if it can provide learners with a reusable tool; otherwise, it is not needed. What is the purpose of the selection in building the meaning of this section?

The Fifth Stage will be organised. The student reads the corresponding content and then fills out the form to complete the task. They can organise activities, find the origin of a

problem, select from several interpretations of paraphrases, add missing connectors, or explain how different tenses change meaning. Distractors should be reasonable enough to test understanding, not random. Provide the reason and supporting evidence from the text for a specific interpretation in the feedback.

The last step is to produce and distribute intentionally. Based on the reference pattern in the text, learners can write a short summary of the text, modify a paragraph and discuss the change in focus, or create a response using one or two examples of the target feature. China's four-strand model links meaning-oriented input and output with language-oriented learning and fluency development [11]. Not all the lessons need to cover all the content evenly; otherwise, in order to save time for extended reading, communication and speed training, prolonged grammar explanations should be avoided.

6. Task Design and Interaction

Integrated grammar work is effective when there is a lack of information or understanding. In a split-text activity, partners receive different sections of the story and determine the sequence of events by using tense and time expressions. In a reference-tracking task, the group explains what each pronoun or demonstrative word refers to. Learners use modal verbs and reporting expressions to rank the certainty of claims in a stance task. These activities still have the idea of negotiability and require grammatical evidence.

Nassaji and Fotos have investigated how to add form-focused instruction in a communicative setting by studying processing instruction, textual enhancement, interactional feedback, structured tasks and collaborative output [12]. The above options can be used together to achieve a particular learning objective. Enhancement can motivate attention, organised input aids in organisation of thought, and collaborative output exposes shortcomings. All of the above methods would be too numerous and unrelated in a single place.

Teacher-student Interaction should be brief and diagnostic. If the student does not know what the sentence means, the teacher can have the student explain it or refer to other parts of the text for reference. Direct Explanation is used when discovery is not convenient or clear. Distinguish between a grammatical error that changes the meaning in the present and an error not related to the reading goal for feedback. Correcting every spoken response will inhibit the flow of conversation and reduce the effect of meaning-oriented learning.

Differentiation can be achieved by adjusting the difficulty of the tasks. Students who need assistance can use a glossary, clause boundaries, reference arrows, etc., and have fewer choices. High-achieving students are introduced to other applications of rhetoric, debate, ambiguity and changes in formality. Mixed-proficiency pairs are suitable for productive activities, but the stronger student should not just provide answers. Ask the students to find reasons and work together.

7. Evaluation and Reflection

Evaluate according to the overall purpose. A single-item test can only ascertain whether the learners have understood the form of the grammar, and it is impossible to evaluate their application in reading and comprehension. A representative case is to provide a short reading passage, pose an interpretation question about the target feature, have students find textual evidence, and then briefly paraphrase or summarise. Grading can differentiate between understanding, grammatical application and expression accuracy, and prevent the loss of learning outcomes due to a single minor error.

Formative Assessment can be light. Exit tickets can have students explain a grammatical choice in the reading material, find an unknown word in the text, or compare the two meanings. Think-aloud modelling by teachers can show proficient readers' use of grammar without requiring learners to voice every thought process. Learner annotations, sentence sorting and revised summaries can be used to plan the research, but they should not be treated as learning outcomes without proper verification.

Teacher reflection should be rational and practical. A good question is one that can help the learner grasp the whole content of the text, inspire their thoughts through a specific feature, is not too brief in its answer, and requires follow-up tasks involving re-reading. The teacher can see who participated in the discussion and if any absent students were excluded. Alterations in classroom results can inform instructional changes; however, the increase in performance may not be due to a single lesson but also to practice, text familiarity, peer support, etc.

Representative risks include excessively goals-oriented movement, selection of odd examples, treatment of authorial choices as absolute rules, and belief in "noticing as mastery". Design Comprehension Questions that are too simple and do not test grammar. On the other hand, the tasks may be too technical and lack social purpose. Alignment is the practical norm; therefore, the purpose of reading, target form, interpretation task, feedback and assessment should all be in line with the same limited goal.

8. Summary

Grammar teaching in reading classes is most effective when grammar is used as a tool to facilitate the understanding of reading materials, rather than being taught in isolation. Select a good text and set a clear goal for the reading lesson; optionally introduce the general structure first, and then conduct the learning activities of review, comparison, and restricted output. The goal of the above sequences is to help students learn how to observe the arrangement of speakers, time, stance, connections and emphasis in texts using certain tools.

The way is limited. Set several goals and, according to the extent of learning and retention, communicate them to the students. Combined work can be used with some separate practices based on the needs and structure of the learners. Tests should be based on how students can apply them in daily life, and not merely rote memorisation of grammar rules followed by filling in the blanks.

The above structure is a teaching plan, not an experiment. No classroom data, experimental comparison or measured learning outcomes are presented. Therefore, we cannot expect students to have gained certain amounts of knowledge or skills. Teachers can use this framework to guide their planning, observation and local assessment work, and future studies will explore how different types of texts, different groups of learners and task sequences affect reading and grammar development over time.

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