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Language change and grammar teaching books in EFL

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Abstract: *The present study investigates the changes that English Grammar has undergone throughout the last four decades and how these alterations are depicted in Grammar Teaching Books. The conduct of the current study based not only on the analysis of printed material and electronic sources that examine language change and variation in contemporary English but also on the employment of actual Grammar Teaching Books, used for the acquisition of English as a second or foreign language. A vast number of valuable and reliable articles and books functioned as the theoretical background of the research Through the comparison and contrast between the presented theory and the grammatical exercises, it was found out that the English we speak now is not the same language with what speakers used some years ago. The fact that a language undergoes changes is an unavoidable process, which is marked by the emergence of some forms and the disappearance of the weaker and less common ones. Thus, the inevitable and continuous nature of such changes render their investigation as an effective and useful pedagogical tool that has to be taken into consideration in the learning and teaching process of English as a second or foreign language.*

Keywords: *Language Change, Grammar Teaching Books, EFL*

JEL Classification: *I20, I29*

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1   INTRODUCTION

The English language experiences a continuous process of changes which, though subtle, are reflected in the teaching material included in Grammar Teaching Books. Thus the study of the diachrony of English Grammar functions as a useful educational tool which enables learners and teachers to use the foreign language more effortlessly and naturally and to acquire at the same time a better understanding of English. These changes, namely the emergence of some forms, the prevalence of some structures over others or the disappearance of specific cases are all reflected in the teaching material included in Grammar Teaching Books published in different cases.

The position of the adverb can determine not only its syntactical and semantic behavior but also to alter the meaning of the sentence making it either grammatical or ungrammatical (Alexander 1988; Valachis et al., 2009). One basic rule of grammar refers to the prohibition of placing an adverb between a verb and its object (Christou & Sigala, 2002; Alexander 1988). Contrary to this, it is proposed that an adverb can separate a verb from its object when need be, such as in cases of lengthy phrasal verbs (Hernández 2006:

273). The placement of an adverb in a specific position in the sentence is determined by various factors such as the class and the register (Biber, Conrad and Leech 2002: 395). Circumstance adverbials, which add to the meaning of action or the described state are most commonly found in final positions, whereas stance adverbials which color speakers' comments are most of the times placed in a middle position (Biber, Conrad and Leech 2002: 360). Contrary to them, the most frequently position for linking adverbials which function as linking words is the initial position (Biber, Conrad and Leech 2002: 395). However according to these authors the most common position of the adverbial phrases is the final one. As a consequence, adverbs are good to be taught through meaningful sentences that are part of lengthier contexts and not in isolation.

2   THEORETICAL FRAMEFORK

The construction of full infinitive such as to go, to believe, to assert, to explain is not only widespread but commonly used by speakers of English as well. Although this structure of "to + verb" seems to be one inseparable unity, the so called phenomenon of split infinitive does really exist (Malone

1941: 52). The "split-infinitive" is a grammatical construction where the two parts of a full infinitive, "to" and "verb" is separated by a word or phrase (Malone 1941: 52). According to the author, this position of one or more words between "to" and the infinitive cannot actually be considered as a splitting because "to" is not part of the infinitive but a particle that accompanies it (Malone 1941: 52). As Malone (1941) points out, in his article "The Split Infinitive and a System of Clauses", even though this structure goes back at fourteenth century, it has been gradually become frequent and only recently gained a more professional status. However, the controversy surrounding the 'do not split the infinitive' rule still remains very much alike (Baker 1980: 90).

The gerund is used after certain phrases and verbs. From all these cases, the verbs that will be observed in this survey are the emotive, such as love, like, enjoy, dislike and the motion verbs such as go, start, begin, continue. This specific group of verbs is very frequently used in everyday English and the most interesting thing is that they can be accompanied either with infinitive or gerund, without any difference in meaning. Despite this general rule, Jespersen (1965) highlights that the most frequently used form after the verb "like" is the gerund. Furthermore, the author point out that whereas the verb "go" is accompanied by gerund such as "I go swimming", when the verb itself has been placed in a progressive form it is accompanied by an infinitive such as "I were going to cry". However, history of English has shown that when two structures used for the same purpose coexist then the one tend to fade away.

According to Dean (1993) most of the misunderstandings regarding the correct choice of the English verb forms are not due to the variation of the tenses but a matter of time. The concept "now" can be understood in two different ways; it can either refer to something short in duration, just a mere moment or to something extremely large such as the rising of the sun in the east (Dean 1993: 9). This binary of now is the reason why the English language has two different tenses to express the present, namely the present simple and the present continuous. According to the author, the present simple is formed with the inflection –s in the third person singular and it is used for universal laws and habits, whereas the present continuous is formed with the verb "be" and the inflection –ing and it is used for something happening right now (Dean 1993). Based on this, one can assume that present simple should be used much more than the present continuous and this notion is illustrated further by some scholars who refer to present simple as the "BASE TENSE", to which all the other tenses are oriented (Doff, Jones &Mitchell 1983: 15). However, the actual use of the two tenses proves not only that the sphere of utility of the present continuous is much broader, but that this sphere becomes larger and larger as time goes by.

Another issue of great significance is passive voice. The English passive is formed with an auxiliary, generally "be" and the past participle; other auxiliaries that can be used except be is also "get" and "become" (Jespersen 1974: 120). Thus, apart from forms like "they were fired", we can also find forms like "they got fired". The get-passive goes back at least three hundred years, but it has been on a rapid rise during the past 50 years (Jespersen, 1974). As Jespersen (1974) highlights in his book "Essentials of English Grammar" in a great many cases the distinction of the get-passive form and the be-passive form is of great significance, since they attribute to the sentences a different sense in the meaning. The be-passive form is considered to be more formal and thus it is more frequently used in military and bureaucratic correspondence and official policies (Warfel, 1953: 129). The get-passive structure is strongly associated either with situations which are bad news for the subject such as "getting fired" and "getting robbed" or with situations that give some kind of benefit such as "they got paid" (Jespersen 1974: 254).

Last but not least, according to Jespersen (1974), shall and ought to, are often treated as empty auxiliaries, namely a "grammatical implement" without any real meaning of its own. As the author demonstrates, their original meaning is gradually losing its force. Furthermore, as Jespersen (1974) declares, when shall is used to advocate a negative command or prohibition is no longer used with the meaning it had in the Bible. In the past the form "shalt not" was used such as in the examples "Thou shalt not kill". This structure is no longer active or used by the speakers. Another interesting case of a verbal auxiliary whose usage is gradually decreasing and its meaning tends to be marked is "ought to". From a historical point of you, "ought to" is a preterit of owe and for this reason it had the meaning of "had to" or "would have to", but today this conditional meaning does not exist anymore (Jespersen 1974: 258).

All things considered, the consistency of the previously mentioned statements of highly respected linguists would prove the existence and the gravity of these grammatical changes. However, the major question is whether these changes are actually incorporated in real teaching material specially designed for the acquisition of the English language, fact which will be investigated through this study.

3   METHODOLOGY

This survey examines the role of language change in actual Grammar Teaching Books aimed to the mastery and teaching of English as a Second/Foreign Language. To be more specific, it will be investigated how the English grammar, as it is taught in grammar teaching books for the intermediate and upper-intermediate learners has been altered and developed throughout the recent decades. For this purpose, the following research topics were addressed to guide this study:

Research Questions:
(a)   Changes regarding the correct order of the adverb
(b)   The correctness and acceptability of Split Infinitive
(c)   The contrast between Gerund and Infinitive
(d)   The rapid growth of the progressive forms
(e)   The progressive strengthen of the get-passive structure
(f)   The gradual disappearance of the modals: "Shall" and "Ought To"

Research Population

A vast number of educational material and linguistic papers regarding the language change and how language is taught in classrooms serve as the research population. Acknowledged articles about the diachrony of English Grammar and actual Grammar teaching books utilized in the teaching process came to the spotlight.

Sampling Method

One major difficulty in the preparation of this part was the appropriate selection of the teaching material. Official teaching material used for the teaching and learning of English in schools of English prove that language changes though difficult to be detected, they have actually been incorporated into Grammar Books. The teaching materials used in the research were selected according to three criteria, by date of publication, publisher's reputation and level of English. The study has been based on a huge range of Grammar Teaching books published from 1980 and after and which have been used for the teaching of English Grammar for B1-B2 and C1-C2 level. . Books of publication enterprises that have been revised over the years, were mainly selected so as the existence of changes in Grammar Theory due to the different publisher, to be eliminated. However, this was not always feasible. Furthermore, various Grammar Books from numerous and highly respected publishers are also included so as to be attributed to this research a more spherical view. The most striking examples of the publication enterprises used in the research are Burlington Books, Cambridge University Press, Grivas Publications, Oxford University Press, Express Publishing, Macmillan Publishers and Longman Group Ltd.

Data Collection

The aforementioned teaching materials derived from the decade of 1980s and after, published by a vast variety of acknowledged publishers and aimed at the teaching of lower and proficiency levels functioned as the data pool. The actual data derived from these sources were selected by linguistic phenomenon. Only those chapters related to the linguistic phenomena under investigation were taken into consideration for the purposes of this study.

Data Analysis

This study constitutes a qualitative research. It investigates the alterations that English Grammar has experienced the recent years in two levels, a theoretical and a practical one. As far as the theoretical background is concerned a vast variety of linguistic books, electronic articles, case studies and acknowledged scholars' texts have been studied, analyzed and reconsidered. When it comes to the practical part, the selected grammar books, both their theoretical parts and the exercises offered are compared and contrasted so as the differences in grammar rules and how they are presented in the chapters of these books to be highlighted.

4 RESULTS

(a) Multiple positions of the adverb are now considered as grammatically acceptable.

Contrary to the prevalent belief in the decade of 80's that an adverb should be found before a full verb and after an auxiliary, the position of adverbs has actually become much more flexible. Nowadays, adverbs can be found in almost any position. Finding an adverb in initial or final position is the rule rather than the exception. Learners of English are encouraged to use such structures since they are part of the theory of Grammar they are being taught.

Table 1: The position of adverbs

Decade of 1980	Decade of 1990	Decade of 2000	From 2011 and after
Main position of adverb: after an auxiliary and before a full verb.	The flexibility of adverbs triggered numerous and meticulous grammar rules.	A split decade and a turning point for grammar theory.	Great flexibility of adverbs.
The initial and final position of adverbs should be avoided and used only for emphatic reasons and cases of emergency.	Controversies among grammar books.	Emphasis placed on the formation and usage of adverbs.	Emphasis on the morpholog[y] adverbs and their relationsh[ip] the adjectives.
	Positions of adverbs deviated from standard structures made their appearance.		Adverbs of frequency can b[e] appeared after the verb "be" elliptic sentences without b[e] negatively criticized.
	"Still" started to be used in affirmatives.		

(b) Split infinitive is used in a correct and meaningful way that rendered it as grammatically acceptable.

A great deal of heated debate among scholars has taken place for the sake of the Split Infinitive. Although in the past, splitting the infinitive, namely to place an adverb between "to" and the infinitive was considered to be a bad and unacceptable style appropriate only for colloquial English, this notion changed as time went by. Nowadays, split infinitive structures are not only acceptable and frequently used by speakers, but also substantial for the attribution of specific kinds of meaning.

Table 2: Split Infinitive

Decade of 1980	Decade of 1990	Decade of 2000	From 2011 and after
The generic term infinitive equals with infinitive with to.	Early in the decade traditional rules of the inseparable infinitive retain their status.	Turning point of the grammatical focus.	Continuation of the previous decade.
The infinitive can be found far away from 'to' only in case of infinitives joined by 'and'.	In the middle of the decade, split infinitive started to be used more frequently, but it was advisable to be avoided in writing.	Emphasis on the linguistic environment where an infinitive can be placed.	Emphasis on the linguistic environment where an infinitive can be placed.
Late in the decade authors started mentioning that although splitting the infinitive form is a bad style, it can appear to colloquial English.	Late in the decade, split infinitive was considered to be essential and inevitable for the expression of the correct meaning of a sentence.	Distinguish between forms which go with infinitive with to or without.	Distinguish between forms which go with infinitive or gerund.
			Peculiarities of verbs which can be followed in some cases with infinitive and other with gerund.

(c) Prevalence of the Gerund form over the Infinitive – Gerund extensive usage.

Another major change of the English Grammar is the gradual prevalence of the gerund form over the infinitive. Whereas in the past, there were verbs and adjectives completely incompatible with gerund, the very same words started to be followed by an infinitive. In some cases the gerund structure had a completely different meaning from that of infinitive while in others the core meaning remained the same and only

a sense of it was the difference. However, even in cases where the infinitive and gerund appear to have an equal meaning, speakers of English have the tendency to use the gerund form.

Table 3
The Prevalence of Gerund over the Infinitive

The decade of 1980	The decade of 1990	The decade of 2000	From 2011 and after
Verbs with difference in meaning when they followed by infinitive or gerund. Verbs that supposedly have no difference in meaning appear to have a different sense: I would like to dance vs I wouldn't like lying. Adjectives typically followed by infinitive started being followed by gerund: He is happy to see her again vs He is happy seeing her again.	Structures with gerund seem to be more frequently used than those with infinitive: It won't be easy choosing the right color vs It won't be easy to choose the right color. Gerund structures are considered to be more appropriate for functioning as subjects: Heating a big house is expensive vs It's expensive to heat a big house. More adjectives typically followed by infinitive started appearing gerund complements: Many people are afraid to cross the road vs Many people are afraid of crossing the road.	A continuation of the previous decades. Verbs normally accompanied with infinitive, when they do not have an object are followed by a gerund: He allowed us to eat in the classroom vs He allowed eating in the classroom.	Gerund structures gain more and more room in the vernacular: The curtains need washing is a much more preferable structure than its corresponding one: The curtains need to be washed. Gerunds used to express various senses deviant from the prototypical meaning of phrases that is expressed with infinitive: He is used to waking up at six. He gets used to waking up at six. vs He used to wake up at six.

(d) The English Language is getting more progressive.
In previous decades progressive forms seem to have a rather limited usage. This fact has been completely reversed today. Progressive forms do not refer any more to the actions of the time of speaking. They can express future actions and plans or the background information of a narration. Another interesting case regarding the present's extended use of the progressive form is that nowadays the majority of the verbs the so called state verbs can be found in progressive tenses, fact which signals a difference in their meaning. Scarcely could such cases be found in Grammar Books of previous decades.

Table 4
Getting More Progressive

The decade of 1980	The decade of 1990	The decade of 2000	From 2011 and after
Basic rule: action at the time of speaking. For indicating an unfinished action. For purposes of intensions and plans. For definite arrangements. For actions being in progress for a limited period that exceeds the moment of speaking. For future arrivals and departures. For continually repeated actions	The special cases of the previous decade standardized as basic rules of the progressive form. Used for temporary situations and changing or developing situations. For the background of narrations. Stative vs Dynamic Verbs. First exceptions of state verbs found in progressive forms.	Continuous form with adverbs (always, forever) for a specific trait of person or group. To make an enquiry or statement of opinion more tentative. To sound more polite. For describing something we regularly do at a certain time (even with usually). State verbs with double meanings (think, have, taste, weigh). Late in the decade even more state verbs: see, forget, appear, mind. For expressing feelings for a specific period of time with verbs like and love found in progressive form.	Special cases: "She is being silly now". Structures with adverbs such as always and forever are used to indicate annoyance.

(e) The get-passive form is used nowadays to a larger area of contexts. Commonly found in everyday speech as well.
Get-passive form used to be a neglected part of the English Grammar. Some of the Grammar Books of the past did not use to make a specific reference for this structure. It was thought to be a peculiarity of the passive voice and it could only be found in a negative context. Throughout the decades, the get-passive form retained its status and speakers of English started incorporating it to their speech. Nowadays, it is indeed associated with negative meanings but it is more frequently used by learners of English and especially in oral speech.

Table 5
Get-Passive Structure

The decade of 1980	The decade of 1990	The decade of 2000	From 2011 and after
A limited number of references in Grammar Books. Get-passive structure is used in negative situations.	Get-passive structure considered to be a peculiarity of the passive voice by some authors. Other authors accept it as an equivalent form to the be-passive structure, but always in a negative context. Appearance of the special pattern "gets something done".	A turning point The Get-passive structure gained the status of a standardized form. Get-passive form is used for welcome or unwelcome events. A special case "get+ object+ past". The get-passive form is a quite informal and preferable structure for the oral speech.	The get-passive structure retained its status. It is used in informal English. It is not an appropriate form for the expression of deliberate and planned actions.

(f) Gradual diminishing of "Shall" and "Ought to".
Even though in the past the modal verbs "Shall" and "Ought To" used to be a distinct part of the English Grammar, nowadays most of the Grammar Teaching Books exclude them from their material. "Shall" could be found in all persons and both to affirmative and negative form. In the current period it has lost each previous impressive status and only a limited number of Grammar Books actually refer its existence. Nowadays "shall" is merely used as the question

tag of let's. Similar seems to be the history of ought to which in the past was more frequently used in positive and negative sentences and it could also be found in the structure "ought to +be +ing". It used to express strong advice in terms of duty and probability. Nowadays, it has lost most of its usages and it can only function as a synonym of should indicating advice or something that is good for the speaker. Even though it has the status of being a synonymous word for should, speakers of English actually avoid incorporating it in their speech.

Regarding the aforementioned issues, the present analysis indicates the following:

(a)   Contrary to the prevalent belief in the decade of 80's that an adverb should be found before a full verb and after an auxiliary, the position of adverbs has actually become much more flexible. Nowadays, adverbs can be found in almost any position. Finding an adverb in initial or final position is the rule rather than the exception. Learners of English are encouraged to use such structures since they are part of the theory of Grammar they are being taught.

Table 6: "Shall" and "Ought To"

	Shall	Ought to
The decade of 1980	Shall not or Shan't. It can be found in all persons. For purposes of politeness and making suggestions. It can indicate offer or suggestion. An equivalent form of the future will.	Oughtn't to or Ought not to. It expresses moral obligation or duty. Intense sense of obligation.
The decade of 1990	The negative forms of shall stopped being used for the most part. Shall: permission for the speaker to do something himself/herself vs Will: the speaker requires from somebody else to do something for him/her. Shall: used for asking for advice.	Ought to: a synonym of should. Special Case: ought to + be –ing form.
The decade of 2000	A turning point. Grammar Books of the decade include no reference regarding the utility of Shall. "Shall" is used as the question tag of let's.	Ought to is used interchangeably with should. "Ought to" is used to express strong advice and probability
From 2011 and after	"Shall" can be found either with first person singular or plural. Used for asking advice or directions For some authors, it is most commonly found in British rather than in American English. Ornamental and useless form.	"Ought to" is considered to be an equivalent form of should, but Grammar Books highlight that it is not used often. There are no explanatory examples expressed with ought to. Ornamental and useless form.

(b)   A great deal of heated debate among scholars has taken place for the sake of the Split Infinitive. Although in the past, splitting the infinitive, namely to place an adverb between "to" and the infinitive was considered to be a bad and unacceptable style appropriate only for colloquial English, this notion changed as time went by. Nowadays, split infinitive structures are not only acceptable and frequently used by speakers, but also substantial for the attribution of specific kinds of meaning.

(c)   Another major change is the gradual prevalence of the gerund form over the infinitive. Whereas in the past, there were verbs and adjectives completely incompatible with gerund, the very same words started to be followed by an infinitive. In some cases the gerund structure had a completely different meaning from that of infinitive while in others the core meaning remained the same and only a sense of it was the difference. However, even in cases where the infinitive and gerund appear to have an equal meaning, speakers of English have the tendency to use the gerund form.

(d)   In previous decades progressive forms seem to have a rather limited usage. This fact has been completely reversed today. Progressive forms do not refer any more to the actions of the time of speaking. They can express future actions and plans or the background information of a narration. Another interesting case regarding the present's extended use of the progressive form is that nowadays the majority of the verbs the so called state verbs can be found in progressive tenses, fact which signals a difference in their meaning. Scarcely could such cases be found in Grammar Books of previous decades.

(e)   Get-passive form used to be a neglected part of the English Grammar. Some of the Grammar Books of the past did not use to make a specific reference for this structure. It was thought to be a peculiarity of the passive voice and it could only be found in a negative context. Throughout the decades, the get-passive form retained its status and speakers of English started incorporating it to their speech. Nowadays, it is indeed associated with negative meanings but it is more frequently in oral speech.

(f)   Even though in the past "Shall" and "Ought To" used to be a distinct part of the English Grammar, nowadays most of the Grammar Teaching Books exclude them from their material. "Shall" could be found in all persons and both to affirmative and negative form. Nowadays "shall" is merely used as the question tag of let's. Similar seems to be the history of ought to. Nowadays, it has lost most of its usages and it can only function as a synonym of should. However, speakers of English avoid incorporating it in their speech.

5   CONCLUSIONS - DISCUSSION

The findings of this research made clear that the English language experiences a continuous process of changes that never ends. The English we speak know is not the same language with what speakers used three, two or even one decade ago. Grammar of English could not be unaffected by such tremendous alterations. Instead it steadily and gradually changes every day, without the speakers of English being able to actually realize it. These changes, namely the emergence of some forms, the prevalence of some structures over others or the disappearance of specific cases are all reflected in the teaching material included in Grammar Teaching Books published in different cases. For this reason, the investigation and monitor of such changes is not only well worth mentioning but also extremely useful for the correct use of English.

Finally it was proven that the present study, whose goal was to investigate the diachrony of English Grammar and how it has been changed throughout the recent decades, could be function as a useful educational tool. The grammatical changes that have been brought to the surface could help learners, teachers and speakers of English in general to acquire a better understanding of English. The highlighting

of these changes would enable them to use English more effortlessly and naturally, without being restricted by empty ornamental rules imposed in the past by Traditional Grammar.

However we should take into consideration that the data used in this study are limited to a specific period of time, explore only certain linguistic phenomena and derive from a restricted number of books and publication enterprises. Thus the investigation of the diachrony of the English Grammar and how English changes over time should be employed in further research covering more eras and more linguistic phenomena such as the role of prepositions in the sentence. Finally, due to the fact that the English language never ceases changing, this paper becomes automatically open to future investigation and research.

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