

UNIVERSITY OF TARTU
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH STUDIES

**USING AUTHENTIC MATERIALS TO TEACH EFL GRAMMAR AND
THEIR EFFECTS ON STUDENTS' TEST RESULTS AND
MOTIVATION**

MA Thesis

Linda Veski

SUPERVISOR: Teacher Ülle Türk

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ABSTRACT

The present master's thesis explores the use of authentic materials to teach grammar, specifically reported speech, and how they affect students' test results and motivation. Stemming from the author's experience, students rarely enjoy learning grammar and tasks that accompany it as its presentation can come across as dull. Therefore, an experimental study was conducted with basic school students in Estonia, where one group studied using non-authentic and the other authentic materials to see whether their perception of grammar could be changed without negatively affecting their acquisition of the topic. The results were measured using questionnaires and tests.

The thesis is comprised of a literature review and an empirical part. The literature review provides insights into the advantages and disadvantages of authentic materials as well as previous research done in the field. In the empirical part, the thesis details the implementation of the authentic materials in lessons and gives an overview of the results from tests and questionnaires. Additionally, the data will be analysed and discussed. The conclusion presents a concise summary of the primary findings derived from the study and offers a recommendation on whether it is preferable to use authentic materials alone or in conjunction with non-authentic materials in grammar instruction.

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INTRODUCTION

The right way of teaching grammar continues to divide the world of education. Some of the most popular approaches to language teaching are all grammar-based, like the Grammar-Translation, direct, Audio-Lingual and The Silent Way methods (Larsen-Freeman, 2000; Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

The Grammar-Translation method, developed in the 19th century, relied on learning grammatical rules, and translating sentences (Larsen-Freeman, 2000:11). The direct method succeeded and focused more on delivering meaning in the target language using visual aids and an inductive approach to teaching grammar (Larsen-Freeman, 2000:23). The Audio-Lingual method, developed in the 20th century, focused on attaining fluency while speaking and did that through drilling language patterns without much discussion of grammar rules (Richards & Rodgers, 2014:48). The Silent Way was effective in developing pronunciation and creative thinking while also having minimal teacher input (Richards, 1986). However, critics argued that students were isolated in the classroom, and grammatical instruction was never given, leaving it to the students to figure out grammar rules (Richards & Rodgers, 2014:49). All these methods were effective in developing linguistic competence, but in the end fell under scrutiny for not adequately advancing communication skills outside the classroom.

To combat the problem a new method emerged, the Communicative Approach. It is the result of collaborative efforts by linguists, like Dell Hymes, who came up with communicative competence, Wilga Rivers, who highlighted the importance of authentic materials as well as task-based language teaching, and teachers who were displeased with the traditional language teaching methods (Larsen-Freeman & Andersen, 2011). It emphasises the importance of using grammatically correct language appropriately in real-world and different social contexts

(Larsen-Freeman & Andersen, 2011). Estonian schools have also adopted this approach, which is highlighted in the national curriculum.

Nevertheless, grammar exercises and tasks presented in non-authentic teaching materials still mostly consist of mechanical drilling and isolated sentences. It cannot be denied that this approach is certainly beneficial if the sole purpose of learning is to successfully take a test on an isolated grammar topic. However, schools do not teach students to take tests; instead, they should teach them how to communicate; therefore, such an approach will not yield long term results.

It is also important to look at the students' perception of grammar and how it is taught in schools, since at the end of the day, they are the ones who benefit from it. For example, Loewen et al in 2009 and Incecay et al in 2011 interviewed students to find out their perception of grammar and the approaches used to teach it. The studies reported similar results that students value grammar and believe it is important, but schools should find ways to make the instruction more communicative and interesting. Consequently, to combat students' perception of grammar being dull, teachers have leaned into game-based learning, as it can introduce a change of scenery into the everyday learning activities. To illustrate, Brewster, Ellis, and Girard (2002) have argued that games are not just fun end-of-class activities, but they can also be effectively used to develop students' grammar competence. Games are student-centred and provide a meaningful context for language use, promoting communicative competence. In addition, games can help reduce language learning anxiety and enhance learners' participation in class.

Taking all this into account, the aim of this thesis is to explore other avenues for teaching grammar to students that would make them more motivated to learn and be active in the classroom, eliminating the traditional approach of drilling and isolated sentences. Since game-based learning is nothing new in EFL classrooms, and a series of online platforms are already

in use, such as Kahoot, Quizlet, Booklet, etc, the author decided to investigate adopting authentic materials for grammar teaching. Not only will the students learn grammar constructs in a non-traditional way, but also enhance other language skills, like reading, vocabulary, listening, writing, and speaking, since the language used in authentic materials is something that they will most definitely encounter in life after school. An experimental study was conducted with two sets of students. The control group was studying with non-authentic materials provided by the school and the experimental group was using authentic materials carefully selected by the author. Data was gathered through tests and questionnaires.

Based on the results of the study, this thesis aims to answer the following research questions: What is students' perception of grammar and its instruction in school? Will students feel more motivated when studying with authentic materials? How does learning with authentic materials influence test results? Which materials should be used to teach grammar? To frame the experimental study, the literature review discusses the advantages and disadvantages of authentic materials as well as previous research done in the field. The empirical section describes the research design of the study, its results, and analysis. Finally, the main findings are summed up in the conclusion.

1 AUTHENTIC MATERIALS IN EFL TEACHING: A LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter gives an overview of what authentic and non-authentic materials are. Additionally, their advantages and disadvantages are discussed. Finally, research already conducted in the field of authentic materials to teach different aspects of language in the EFL classroom are used to show how authentic materials have affected students' motivation, activeness, and test scores.

1.1 Advantages and disadvantages of authentic and non-authentic materials

Traditionally, non-authentic teaching materials have been used to teach English as a foreign language no matter the age of the student. Febrina (2017) suggests that non-authentic materials can be defined as resources that are created specifically for classroom use. English that is used throughout the material is adapted to suit the level of the student. She adds that the materials are approved by the school board who make sure that they are in accordance with the national curriculum outlined by the Education board. Some types of non-authentic materials, as reported by Gower et al (1995), include textbooks, workbooks, accompanying worksheets, and audio and video tasks.

In Estonia, EFL teachers can be considered lucky, since many non-authentic teaching resources developed by renowned academic publishers like Oxford University Press and Cambridge University Press & Assessment, or academic service Pearson Education, offer well-adapted and cohesive materials, such as the Solutions, Gold Experience or Complete First for Schools series, which are available for all language levels from A1 to C1. They are also

accompanied by iTools and teacher guidebooks, which offer already developed lesson plans and activities. All of this confirms Ur (1999), Scrivener (1994:43) and Gower et al. (1995:77) claims that using non-authentic teaching materials is especially beneficial for novice teachers who have just entered the school system as well as young learners, who might have not had that much contact with real-life everyday English.

On the other hand, not all teachers can use these efficient pre-designed teaching resources. As Marple et al. (2017) argues, quite often, the teaching materials that the teachers use are not up-to-date or lack sufficient practical tasks for the classroom. Moreover, teachers are left to their own devices, meaning they must do significant preparation work for lessons to find suitable materials themselves. There are many online platforms like TeachersPayTeachers, iSLCollective, etc. that are certainly helpful, but there is no way to know whether the materials there are adequate or even correct. Furthermore, on TeachersPayTeachers, most materials cost money.

To counter that, teachers could explore using authentic materials. There are many definitions provided over the years as to what authentic materials are. For example, Nunan (1999) suggests that authentic materials can be any material that has not been created for the sole purpose of teaching a language. Morrow (1977) and Harmer (1994) both state that authentic texts, spoken or written, are produced by native speakers to convey a real message to a native audience and, therefore, not doctored or simplified in any way. There are also many types of authentic materials, since almost everything can be interpreted as being such. Some examples of what the author is planning on discussing in the literature review and using in the study are films, TV-shows, documentaries, YouTube videos, books, songs, newspaper, and magazine articles. In addition to there being an almost endless supply, Thomas (2014) also states that authentic materials are mostly free and already widely available. Moreover, Breen (1985) and

Nunan (1999) suggest that there are many other positive aspects to consider with authentic materials. They can expose learners to real-life language use, including colloquialisms and cultural references that may not be included in textbook materials. Furthermore, when it comes to motivation, Gilmore (2007) and Sherman (2003) state that authentic materials have a significantly positive impact on it, which is a crucial factor in the success of language learning. The use of authentic materials can boost learners' motivation by providing opportunities to practise real-world language skills beyond the classroom, as noted by Kilickaya (2004). All in all, Swan (2005) argues that authentic materials can provide opportunities for learners to develop their language skills in a variety of contexts and registers, which can help them to become more competent and confident users of the language.

Of course, there could be disadvantages to using authentic materials, the most obvious of them being the issue of language level. Cunningsworth (1995) points out that since most authentic materials are meant to be used by native speakers, the use of language may prove to be too complex for the average EFL student. Moreover, Nunan (1989) and Harmer (2001) both add that the materials are often designed for a specific target group or field. Consequently, this will limit the way they can be used in language teaching, meaning the topics might turn out to be irrelevant for the needs of the students. Despite that, there are more advantages to using authentic materials in the classroom than disadvantages. The next section of the literature review aims to provide evidence of it by discussing research done in the field.

1.2 Previous research on using authentic materials in EFL classroom

When looking specifically at previous research on using authentic materials to teach grammar, not much has been done. However, since all language skills - reading, vocabulary,

grammar, writing and speaking - can be developed through authentic materials, the data pool is significantly larger. After all, when advancing students' level and understanding of English, all language skills are important and taught to students simultaneously. By giving an overview of other research done in the field, the author aims to show that authentic materials are indeed beneficial and can produce the same results as non-authentic materials.

1.2.1 Listening

A popular way of developing listening skills by using authentic materials is through authentic songs. According to neuroscientists Maess et al (2001), musical and linguistic syntax processing occur in the same area of the brain, and there appear to be similarities in how they are processed. In addition, Stansell (2005) suggests that tone, stress, pauses, timbre, and rhythm are some examples of language characteristics that music shares. Hancock (2010:27) mentions music and songs as part of the entertainment category and having the ability to attract the attention of students, engage and fascinate them. Researchers, such as Resti (2018) and Fajry et al (2016), used popular songs and narrative audiobooks respectively to improve students' listening comprehension skills. They all found that using a non-authentic dialogue or conversation between multiple people, as is often found in teaching materials in schools, have limited effects on students' advancement. The use of audiobooks or songs exposed students to more advanced vocabulary and real-life language rather than a controlled setting, which in turn improved their test scores.

Another highly effective way to advance students' listening skills is to watch films and TV-shows. Unfortunately, the act of watching films in class has always been viewed as a reward for students, or it is only done on special occasions. However, not only will the students be

exposed to real-life spoken English by native speakers, but they will also get used to the speed in which the characters speak, something non-authentic conversations lack. Furthermore, Rendaya and Jacobs (2016) state that visual aids are more helpful in deciphering context when the speech is not understood. Studies conducted by Chung (1999), Weyers (1999) and Lin (2002) provide us with similar evidence that the use of films helps improve language learners' listening skills.

1.2.2 Vocabulary

When it comes to vocabulary, various researchers have emphasised the importance of it; however, there is no consensus on how vocabulary should be taught. Some of the characteristics of real-life English is the use of idioms, phrasal verbs, and collocations. Although they can be learned by drilling or looking at them separately, it is more effective if students can see them in real-life context, which in turn allows them to make more connections when and where to use them. To illustrate, Ghanbari et al (2015) and Guo (2012) used authentic materials, such as newspaper articles, to enlarge students' vocabulary. Both studies measured students' advancement using pre- and post-tests as well as interviews and class observations. The students who had been learning with authentic materials reported higher scores on post-tests and felt that their motivation had increased; also, they took part in lessons more actively. This shows that using authentic materials to teach English goes beyond just learning new concepts in English. The students themselves report that they are enjoying the act of studying more and feel their knowledge of the target language increasing.

1.2.3 Reading

Like films and TV shows, different types of reading texts offer invaluable insights into everyday English. Through that, students are exposed to natural language. Furthermore, when texts are adapted for different language levels in non-authentic teaching materials, a lot can get lost in translation, so to speak. When dealing with authentic texts, all the social, cultural, and linguistic elements remain present, which in turn can present students with alternative perspectives and ideas. In addition, students will need to read newspaper and magazine articles, whether they are online or on paper, in the future, so it is more than logical to start getting acquainted with the specific texts during their school years. To illustrate, Lepa (2022) used a popular children's book to develop basic school students' reading skills. As the students' language level was A2, they did not have any experience in reading authentic texts, so the author used the guided reading method to help them. By keeping a reading journal, the students successfully developed their reading skills. Also, the students themselves noted that they had acquired such vocabulary that they would not have acquired if they had used an adapted version of the same text. Berardo's (2006) study participants were much more advanced than Lepa's A2 learners. Their language level was B2, borderline C1, but the results were still very similar. Students felt more motivated when dealing with authentic texts and felt "a sense of achievement" when they had finished reading and understood everything.

1.2.4 Writing

The largest benefit to using authentic materials to teach students about writing is real-world relevance. They will be able to see how language is used in the real world. Their essays, reports, letters should be on topics that they are interested in and are beneficial in their later life

as well. Chen (2006) used a children's literature magazine to teach writing skills to 43 Taiwanese university students. The magazine's language was clear and concise, demonstrating that stories do not need complex grammar or vocabulary. Participants read stories, wrote responses in a reading journal, and eventually wrote and published their own stories. Feedback showed the process to be valuable and helpful for studying English, especially improving students' writing skills.

1.2.5 Grammar

Nowadays, students tend to acknowledge the importance of grammar but find the instruction of it boring or confusing. However, using authentic materials to teach grammar can make the whole experience more engaging and fun for students. Additionally, authentic materials develop students' critical thinking and analysing skills, which in turn can help them gain a deeper understanding of grammatical constructions when they see them in context as well as improve overall language proficiency. Once again, films, TV-shows and literature are useful sources for developing grammar. Not only are they interesting and enjoyable, but they also feature grammatical constructs most often used in everyday English. Non-authentic teaching materials tend to introduce many grammatical topics that students might not use in real life at all. Although such structures may be important to know, teaching them is often impractical. To demonstrate, in 2008, Seeger used a popular film to teach future tenses and the results were positive. Students enjoyed the alternative approach, were more active in lessons, and showed acquisition of the new tense. Štaralová's (2016) study echoed Seeger's results. She used films and TV-shows to teach grammar to basic school students. The results showed that half of the students enjoyed the approach more than their average lessons. Moreover, they felt they now

understood the importance of grammar and have a new-found respect for it. Finally, she stated that using authentic materials in lessons was also beneficial to her professional development, especially in grammar teaching.

Films and TV-shows are not the only resources for real-life English. Krashen (1982) states that using children's literature in EFL classrooms is beneficial since it offers understandable language and engaging narratives. Furthermore, learners will have a better understanding and ability to use language when they encounter grammatical patterns in a meaningful and relevant context. For example, Malova (2016) used a popular children's book, cartoons, and games to teach primary level students' basic grammatical construction. Half of the students showed a high level of grammar acquisition. Her results are even more impressive since it is believed that literary texts are mainly meant to be used to widen students' vocabulary and cultural awareness. However, she emphasised the fact that the selection of literature is even more important when teaching children that are only in the beginning of their language learning journey.

1.2.6 Motivation

Students' motivation to learn a language is the key to everything. It is difficult to teach any aspect of language if students do not want to be active in the learning process. Non-authentic teaching materials can often leave students unmotivated since they believe that the whole point of them being in school is to take tests and get good grades. But as mentioned before, using authentic materials can spark students' interest and motivation to learn as they deal with language and tasks that are beneficial outside school as well.

To illustrate, Peter et al (2016) aimed to find out what effect the use of authentic materials in the classroom may have on students' learning motivation. The results of the study showed

that the students enjoyed studying with authentic materials far more than their normal lessons where they used text- and workbooks. The authors concluded that authentic materials should be integrated in the classroom and used regularly since they promote students' active participation and an increase in motivation in the subject. Similarly, Kılıç and Ilter (2016) taught students in Turkey through authentic and non-authentic materials. A pre-test showed that students were not particularly motivated to use the traditional approach of text- and workbooks. After the course, the post-test showed that one of the group's perceptions had significantly changed and the authentic materials approach was well received. They added that authentic materials should be brought into classrooms more frequently, as they can create a more relaxed learning environment, which in turn creates better learning opportunities for students.

1.2.7 Conclusion

All in all, as with all matters, there are advantages and disadvantages to teaching methods, and the debate of authentic vs non-authentic materials is no different. Although authentic materials have been around for many decades, not many teachers have adopted this approach in their own teaching. The previously mentioned studies were all small-scale ones, but with the help of researchers that continue their work to bring awareness towards the educational community, the use of authentic materials can be increased. Motivation and interest in topics introduced in lessons are the keys to unlocking students' minds and opening them up to more real-life experience.

The main conclusions to draw here are that the materials should be carefully selected depending on the language level and vetted before using them in the classroom. The author believes that with time, opting to teach with authentic materials will get easier and less time

consuming, as teachers will gain experience and will have managed to adapt the materials to the needs of their classroom.

2 EXPERIMENTAL STUDY OF USING AUTHENTIC MATERIALS TO DEVELOP GRAMMAR KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

This section of the thesis gives an overview of the conducted experimental study. Aspects such as the background of the participants, materials created for the lessons, and how data was collected are described.

2.1 Research design

An experimental study was conducted with two groups of eighth grade students to see whether the use of authentic materials and tasks to teach grammar influences students' motivation to actively participate in class and yield higher marks in tests. One grammar topic, reported speech, had been chosen as the main topic. Reported speech is a relatively broad topic and consists of many aspects and types. Since in the eighth grade the students are still familiarising themselves with it, the study focused on back shifting only, with an introduction to two reporting verbs - say and tell. Pronoun and time and place reference changes were also looked at, and only affirmative and negative statements were learned. The selected students were split into a control and experimental group. The first learned through non-authentic materials and the latter used authentic materials. The results were measured and compared using grammar tests and questionnaires.

2.1.1 Ethics and validity of the method

The question of ethics may arise during this study. Is it fair to the control group that they do not get the chance to experience authentic materials and tasks? This method was chosen due

to the study being short and detailed. Moreover, research and studies already done on the topic have also used the same method. Both groups are taught in school by the author, and they will have an opportunity with other topics to experience the use of authentic materials as well.

The question of the validity of this testing method may also emerge. How can the test results be trusted if the groups' language levels differ? Reported speech is a relatively difficult topic and students are not necessarily used to or have grammatical knowledge of it being used in real life before. Furthermore, the author has been teaching this grammar topic in the eighth grade for six years and in her experience the students rarely have prior knowledge of it. Therefore, all students were equal in this circumstance.

2.1.2 Background of the participants

The selected students have been studying English since the first grade and currently have three English lessons per week. Although the required language level for that class is between A2.2 and B1.1, most of the students have presented a higher level of understanding English. Based on that, the control group consisted of 13 students, 12 girls and one boy. Their English level is slightly higher than that of the experimental group, which consisted of 13 students, eight girls and five boys. Since this study aims to show that test results and motivation will be higher when using authentic tasks and materials to teach grammar, a slightly weaker group was chosen to be the experimental group.

2.1.3 Data collection

The main data for the study was collected from two different sources: answers to the questionnaires and test results. In addition, the author kept a journal and took notes on each lesson conducted. Lastly, students gave oral feedback after every lesson.

First, a pre-questionnaire was distributed to all students and was the same for both groups. The main reason for it was to get a sense of students' attitude towards grammar, and their perceptions of the materials and methods used in schools to teach it. Although similar research and results about students' perception of grammar were briefly discussed in the introduction part, it was vital to get opinions from the students who were actively participating in this study. A pre-test was administered to all students before the new grammar topic. The students did not have any prior knowledge of it, and they were not graded on it. The teacher gave a vague idea of what was expected from them to write. Moreover, they did not see their results. Once the grammar topic had been taught, the same test was distributed again.

After the final test, a post-questionnaire was distributed. This time the aim was to analyse whether the students' feelings towards grammar, the teaching methods and materials had changed. Some of the questions differed for the control group and the experimental group since their experiences were dissimilar.

2.1.4 Materials and activities used in class

Preparing lessons, materials and activities for the control group was relatively easy and did not require too much effort. The author has experience in working through the material and has made improvements; therefore, pre-existing lesson plans were used. The Solutions materials are cohesively structured and there is a logical flow from task-to-task. Reported speech is

divided into two parts. The first part focuses on three tenses: present simple, present continuous, and past simple. Pronoun, time, and place changes are also discussed. The second part consists of present perfect, and the modal verbs *will* and *can*. In both parts, the students can activate their grammar knowledge through reading, listening, writing, and speaking tasks. The workbook mimics the student book's structuring of exercises but does not include speaking activities. However, due to the difficulty of this topic, the provided materials are not enough, and extra materials must be used. For that, the author has created quizzes on Blooket, and will be using similar exercises that can be found on multiple online learning platforms. Students will be able to use computers as they are faster, additionally, it requires less work by the teacher to compile tasks. Finally, a deductive approach to learning the rules was adopted by the author and the students wrote the rules in their notebooks.

Preparing lessons, materials and activities for the experimental group was time consuming, since everything had to be done from scratch. An inductive approach was chosen to teach the students the rules of the grammar topic. The rules that the students came up with were written in the notebooks. The author decided to use newspaper articles, popular songs, videos and speaking tasks to teach reported speech. It took days to find appropriate, engaging, and authentic newspaper articles that had enough direct and indirect speech. Working with newspaper articles included tasks such as reading, detecting unfamiliar vocabulary, highlighting direct and indirect speech, and transforming them accordingly.

Finding songs that contained reported speech with back shifting was impossible, so only songs with direct speech in them were used. Tasks included the use of *Lyricstraining*, which is a platform where students get to fill in gaps based on the lyrics they hear in the song. There are many levels, and the most advanced version is missing about 70% of the words. After enough

training, the students filled in some gaps on the printed handout and transformed those lyrics into reported speech.

The following authentic tasks were included in the lesson plans: conducting an interview and a speaking task. For preparation, videos on how to properly conduct an interview were watched and discussed. Furthermore, some example interviews conducted by Vogue were looked at. Since there are about 100 interviews with celebrities available, the students could choose the ones they wanted to watch. The students could take notes on questions they found interesting, since the next task involved interviewing a person of their choice with questions they wanted to ask. The questions were written down in class, and the actual interview was a homework task. The final task was to report the information they had gathered to the others. The questions and answers had to be connected into one sentence using reported speech.

One final authentic task was done before the final test. Students played a game called “Go Betweens”. In groups of three, two people are in a quarrel and the third person must hear a complaint from one side and then report it to the other side. The complaints could be taken from real life or made up. In the end, the students who had been quarrelling had to make up. The teacher observed all groups and corrected any mistakes the students might have made.

3 RESULTS

This chapter focuses on reporting the results of the questionnaires and tests conducted before and after the study. Additionally, observations from the lessons, and students' oral feedback is discussed.

3.1 Questionnaires

The pre-questionnaire (Appendix 1) consisted of ten questions which were both closed and open-ended. The reason behind it was to get more detailed answers and insights. 21 students took part. For the experimental group, the post-questionnaire (Appendix 2) consisted of 12 questions. 13 students filled it in. The post-questionnaire (Appendix 3) for the control group consisted of 11 questions. 13 students responded. The narrative method was used to analyse the open-ended questions where key themes were identified. The questions were in Estonian to get the most accurate answers possible since important information may get lost in translation. One student did not answer in Estonian since she is originally from Thailand, and she felt more comfortable doing it in English.

3.1.1 Pre-questionnaire

The participants were asked to share their thoughts on why they think grammar was taught in schools (Q1). 14 students emphasised that grammar is crucial for effective communication in both written and spoken contexts. Furthermore, clear expression, including the use of proper grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation, helps to avoid misunderstandings and builds credibility in personal and professional situations. Four students believe that accuracy is

essential for conveying meaning and achieving success in higher education and employment. On the other hand, three participants suggested that other aspects of language learning, such as fluency and vocabulary, may be more important than grammar for effective communication.

Next, the participants were asked whether they view grammar as an important aspect in communication (Q2) and to justify their opinion (Q3). 18 students answered affirmatively. Reasons provided by the students mirrored the previous question's answers. For example, it is important to have clear communication in school, work, and social interactions. Poor grammar can make communication more difficult and lead to misunderstandings. Also, good grammar is necessary for tasks such as writing job applications and emails. Grammar was also viewed as an essential skill for certain careers, such as writing and teaching. However, it is important to note that while the majority viewed grammar as essential, three students believe that it is not always necessary for communication and that understanding is possible even with grammatical errors.

Q4 asked the students whether they thought that grammar and its explanation by the teacher is easy for them and for Q5 they had to provide reasons. 17 students answered yes and four answered no. The students who found grammar easy cited their good language intuition or having been taught grammar for a long time. Additionally, they found that effective teaching methods have had an impact on their understanding. The importance of focus, practice, and logical thinking was also noted in aiding comprehension. On the other hand, the students who had answered no mentioned the challenge of remembering too many rules associated with grammar and acknowledged that their understanding of grammar may depend on the complexity of the topic being taught. Furthermore, they think many teachers' explanations are confusing and ineffective.

Q6 asked the students to provide their opinion on the methods used to teach grammar in schools. The perceptions among participants were mixed. 12 participants felt that teachers are qualified and have enough knowledge of the subject they are teaching, while five cited negative experiences such as difficulty in understanding the instructions given by the teachers, which led them to believe that the teacher does not possess the necessary qualifications. Over-reliance on mechanical drilling and memorisation methods were also criticised. The three participants who maintained a neutral position suggested that motivated students are more likely to comprehend the topic regardless of who the teacher is. Additionally, one participant did not wish to comment, stating that they are not teachers, so they should not have an opinion on the matter.

Q7 was a multiple-choice question and students had to select tools that they prefer to learn grammar with (Figure 1). The choices were based on the non-authentic teaching materials that are currently provided by the school: student's book exercises, workbook exercises and worksheets respectively.

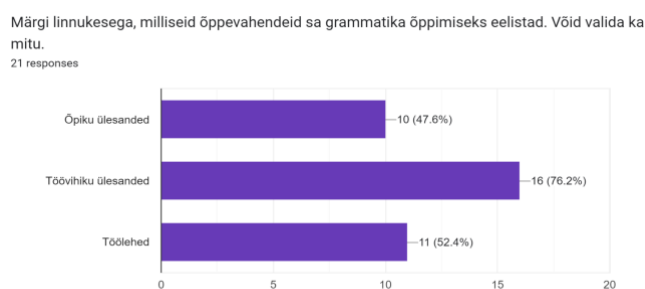


Figure 1. Question 7. Tick the tools you most like to learn with at school.

Q8 asked the students whether they would like to use any of the other methods, such as songs, games, videos, newspaper, and magazine articles, or none of them (Figure 2).

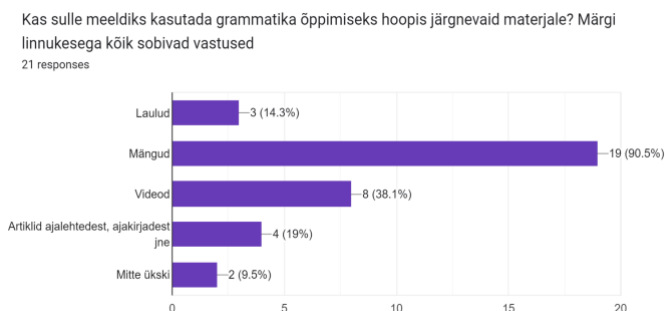


Figure 2. Question 8. Would you like to learn with the following tools instead? Tick all the relevant answers.

The responses reveal that the participants prefer learning grammar through games (19), videos (8), other non-written materials (4), songs (3), and two people did not choose anything. Q9 asked to provide reasons for their selection. Students cited the fun and engaging nature of these materials, which help increase motivation and interest in the topic. 13 participants also highlighted the effectiveness of games and videos in helping them retain the learned material, as well as the ease of participation and comprehension. Five respondents also mentioned the importance of different forms of learning, such as reading and listening, but noted that games and videos provide a more interactive and enjoyable learning experience. Overall, the participants believed that any effective grammar learning tool should be engaging and enjoyable, rather than boring.

The final question (Q10) asked the students to provide any suggestions on how grammar should be taught in the future. Four individuals suggested reducing the emphasis on grammar topics and the extent of grammar learning. Seven recommended enhancing engagement and the curriculum by eliminating boring lessons and hiring passionate teachers. Seven students proposed additional exercises and interactive activities like games. Finally, three students

expressed contentment with the current approach to grammar learning, finding it suitable and effective.

3.1.2 Post-questionnaire: control group

The post-questionnaire consisted of 11 questions. From the control group, 13 people answered. First, students were asked whether they thought the topic was difficult. Ten students said yes, and three said no. Additionally, they were asked what they thought was the most difficult (Q2, Figure 3) and the easiest (Q3, Figure 4) about the topic: tense, pronoun or reference to time and place changes. For nine students, the most difficult part was references to time and place changes. The remaining four students said tense changes. 11 students thought pronoun changes were the easiest, and two chose tenses.

Milline osa teemast oli kõige keerulisem?
13 responses

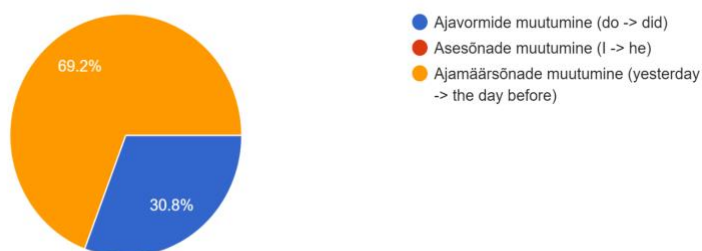


Figure 3. Question 2. Which part of the topic was the most difficult?

Milline osa teemast oli kõige lihtsam?

13 responses

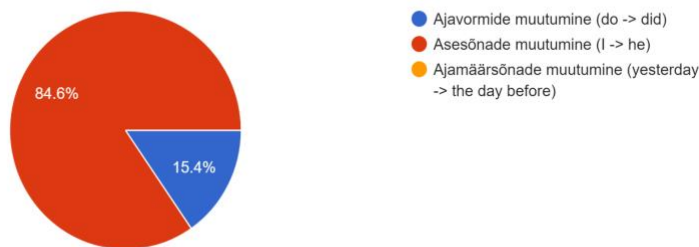


Figure 4. Question 3. Which part of the topic was the easiest?

Q4 asked the students whether it is important to know the correct terms of tenses in Estonian and English, e.g., *lihtminevik* is *past simple*, and Q5 to provide reasons. 11 students agreed that it was important. The following reasons were mentioned: it makes it easier to understand the topic if you know what it means in your mother tongue, additionally, it is possible to translate or make connections between the two languages, finally, their children might need help with their homework in the future. Some participants noted the significance of English as a global language and the need to understand its grammar rules correctly. Two students who disagreed said that they understand grammar regardless.

Q6 prompted students to pick which materials they preferred to learn and revise the grammar topic with and why: student's book and workbook written exercises (9), student's book, and workbook communicative tasks (2), Blooket (10) or written exercises on the computer (9) (Figure 5).

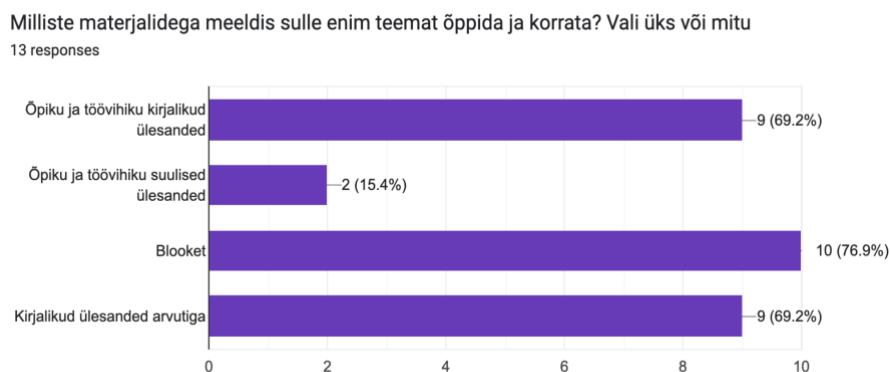


Figure 5. Question 6. Which materials did you like to learn most with?

In Q7, the participants had to provide reasons. They emphasised the importance of interactive and engaging learning methods that allowed them to learn at their own pace and see immediate results. They mentioned that using tools such as computer-based quizzes and online platforms like Blooket helped them to stay motivated and made learning more enjoyable. Additionally, nine participants mentioned that written exercises and workbooks were helpful in solidifying their understanding of grammar rules and concepts. The participants also noted the effectiveness of combining different learning methods, such as using both written and oral exercises, to enhance their language skills. They emphasised the importance of practising speaking to improve their ability to communicate effectively in the language they were learning.

In Q8, they were asked to explain why they did not pick the other choices. The answers were quite individual, some said that they enjoyed all of them but just preferred some more than others. For example, the learning platform Blooket is good for revising but not so good for getting acquainted with a topic. They cited speaking tasks as a problem since they do not like to talk in class, and the overall speed of learning would be too quick. On the other hand, some

mentioned that when they do tasks in the text- and workbook, they finish earlier and then get bored.

The next two questions' topic was motivation. Q9 asked the students whether they felt motivated once they learned they would be using text- and workbooks in the lesson. Q10 asked what their level of motivation was when they learned they would be using online learning platforms and computers. The results for the first question were quite even, seven students answered yes and six answered no. However, 12 students felt their motivation levels increased once they discovered that computers and Blooket would be used. one student thought the opposite.

For the last question (Q11), students had to offer any ideas how else the topic of reported speech could be learned in school. The majority did not have any ideas and thought that the methods and tools used regularly are sufficient. A few mentioned playing board games, such as Scrabble.

3.1.3 Post-questionnaire: experimental group

The post-questionnaire consisted of 11 questions. In Q1, students were asked whether they thought the topic was difficult. Eight students answered no, and five students answered yes. Additionally, students were asked what they thought was most difficult (Q2, Figure 6) and the easiest (Q3, Figure 7). Eight students said that tense changes were the most difficult, and five students thought that of references to time and place changes. Ten students said that pronoun changes were the easiest, two thought tense changes and one person chose references to time and place changes.

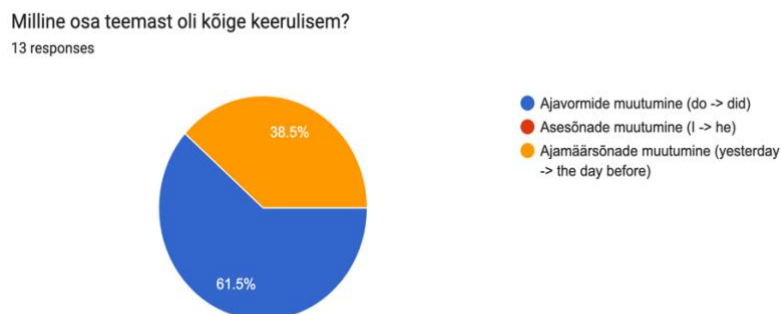


Figure 6. Question 2. Which part of the topic was the most difficult?

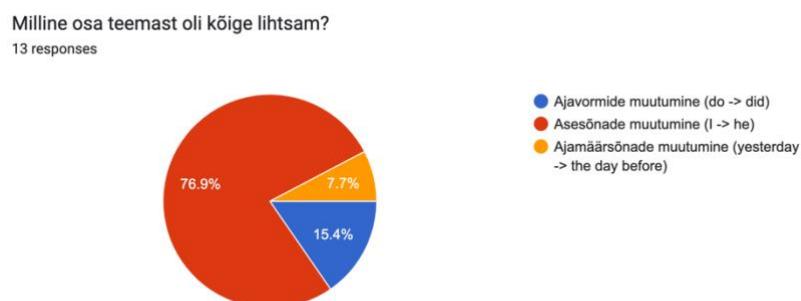


Figure 7. Question 3. Which part of the topic was the easiest?

Like the control group, the students in the experimental group were also asked whether it is important to know the correct terms of tenses in Estonian and English, e.g., *lihtminevik* is *past simple* (Q4) and why (Q5). The results were mixed, seven respondents view knowing tense names as essential, six suggest that it may not be as crucial for everyday conversation. It was also mentioned that knowing tense names can help in understanding which tense to use in a sentence, which can aid in communication and comprehension. Six students felt that learning tense names can sometimes be confusing, as there are so many, and make things more difficult.

However, it was generally agreed that understanding tense names is important for correct spelling, grammar, and effective communication.

In Q6, the students were quizzed on which materials and methods they most enjoyed learning with (Figure 8) and to justify their opinion (Q7).

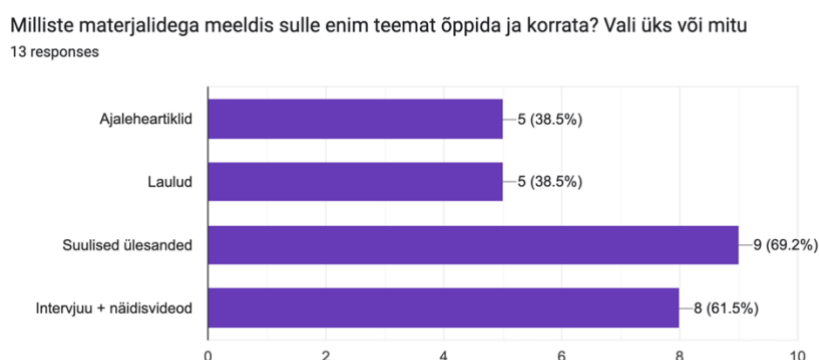


Figure 8. Question 6. Which materials did you like to learn most with?

The participants chose interviews and example videos (8), songs (5), newspaper articles (5) and communicative tasks (9). They found that these methods were easier and more fun than the usual writing assignments. A few noted that music was an effective tool for memorization. Interviews helped them to get to know the surveyed people better. Some said the topics of the news articles were practical and informative. All in all, it was the general opinion that all these materials were engaging and interactive.

They were also asked why they did not enjoy the ones they did not pick (Q8). Nine students did not know how to answer and said that all methods were helpful, but some were better. Four students mentioned that although the topic of the articles was interesting, they were too long and required a lot of writing.

The next questions (Q9 and Q10) focused on motivation. The students were asked whether they felt motivated once they learned that non-authentic materials were not used to study the

grammar topic. 11 students answered yes, two students answered no. Q11 asked whether their opinion had changed after learning with authentic materials and to justify it. All 13 students answered that it had not. Six students said that they do not like to study with non-authentic materials, since they can be tedious, and they prefer interactive methods more, such as songs and videos. Additionally, they do not encounter everyday English that way either. Five students said it was easier to learn with authentic materials. Two students mentioned that they have the motivation to learn English anyway or they did not see any difference.

For the final question, the students were asked which materials should be used to study English in the future (Figure 9).

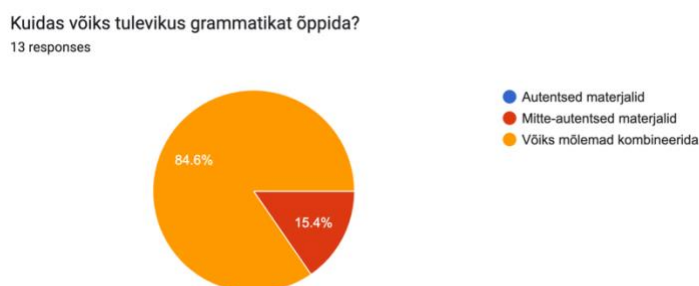


Figure 9. Question 12. How could we learn grammar in the future?

Although nobody mentioned authentic materials specifically, 11 students believe that the materials should be combined, and two students prefer non-authentic materials.

3.2 Lessons

Both groups had 12 lessons over a period of four weeks. In the first lesson, the topic was briefly introduced, pre-questionnaires and pre-tests were distributed. The next ten lessons focused on learning and practising. The final lesson was dedicated to the post-questionnaire and

-test. The following section focuses on observations made during the ten lessons that were used to learn and practise the topic.

3.2.1 Control group

A deductive approach to teaching was chosen for the control group. Since there are quite a lot of rules to reported speech: tense shifts, pronoun and references to time and place changes, they were written down in the notebook with example sentences. Based on the students' initial facial expressions and body language, it became evident that they were having a hard time understanding what was going on. However, the teacher assured that doing exercises would help students to grasp the topic better when they could see them in use.

In general, remembering rules can be quite difficult for students. The ones who are more advanced use their "gut feeling" while working on written exercises or speaking, so they rarely feel the need to learn them. The weaker students struggle to grasp the meaning of tenses, not only in English, but also in Estonian. For that reason, every lesson began with a revision of the rules that were learned in previous lessons. The students were encouraged to speak up and offer their insights. At first, most students could not remember the topic, and especially struggled with the names of tenses e.g., what is present simple etc. As time went by, the students felt more comfortable and were more confident in their answers. However, it must be emphasised that if a couple of days had passed since the last lesson, they struggled again.

Although the authors of Solutions materials have made sure that all aspects of language could be practised in every lesson, grammar topics still include significantly more written exercises, and unfortunately, they are not context-based tasks, but isolated sentences. Moreover, the reading tasks included are quite short and there are not that many. The texts can be listened

to but there are not any exercises on them, not even gap-fill. Speaking tasks are quite authentic since they require the students to come up with their own ideas.

Most errors during lessons occurred when an exercise included changing different present and past tenses from the first person into the third. For example: *walk* was changed into *walks* or *am* was changed into *is*. The students had understood that they cannot use the same verb in direct as well as reported speech, but they mistakenly thought that adding an *-s* would change the tense. In addition, references to time and place proved to be difficult as well. They rarely, if ever, use these phrases in real life, e.g., the day before, and for most of them they were completely new.

On a positive note, pronoun changes were the easiest, but mistakes were made in spelling. For example: *his* was written as *he's* or *their* as *they're*, since the pronunciation of these pronouns is the same.

In addition to the Solutions teaching materials, the students also practised the grammar topic on the computers by doing online exercises for 45 minutes. The sentences were also isolated and non-authentic. The exercises were divided into tenses, meaning one exercise consisted merely of present simple that had to be changed into past simple etc. Surprisingly, the students had quite many questions when they had made a mistake and needed clarification. This did not happen during other lessons.

3.2.2 Experimental group

An inductive approach to teaching was chosen for the experimental group. The students had to figure out the rules by themselves based on the sentences they were given. One was in direct speech and the other in reported speech. They were allowed to work in groups. The

stronger students did not have much trouble and easily figured out the tenses and other changes. The weaker students had to be helped and guided to the correct answer.

In the second lesson, the students were handed newspaper articles and tasked with getting acquainted with the text and identifying unknown vocabulary. The text was discussed together. Next, they were tasked with highlighting all direct speech in the text, reporting it, and vice versa. The students had quite a lot of trouble since the sentences were very long and contained many verbs and pronouns. Originally, working with newspaper articles was supposed to take one lesson but it ended up being three lessons. The fifth and sixth lessons focused on listening tasks, the students did exercises using the online platform Lyricstraining. They were asked to listen to three songs and do gap-fill exercises on them. After enough training, the same songs were played again, only this time the students had to write the missing words by hand. A short extract of each song was selected. Once they had successfully finished the gaps, all sentences had to be put into reported speech. Although the students liked the songs and were enthusiastic, they grew tired of listening to the same three songs repeatedly. On a positive note, they said that they liked reporting sentences from the song more since they were shorter and easier.

In lessons seven to nine the students were informed they would be getting the change to interview a person and with questions of their choosing. For inspiration, interviews with celebrities were viewed on Youtube. The purpose was for the students to see that, when interviewing a person, not all questions have to be written down. They need not stick to a script. In real-life people tend to have follow-up questions when speaking to each other. They do not move from topic to topic mechanically. The interview was then reported from direct speech. The question and answer had to be combined into one cohesive sentence. For example, the question was “What did you eat for breakfast?” and the answer was “I ate some eggs and bacon.” The students had to come up with this: She said she had eaten eggs and bacon for breakfast. At

the end of the lesson the students orally reported their interview to their classmates. They said that they enjoyed coming up with questions and interviewing a person of their choosing. Additionally, this task did not include that much writing since they could only put down notes of the answers if they wished.

In the two lessons leading up to the test, one final speaking task took place. In groups of three, students had to imagine two of them were in a fight about something and were not on speaking terms. One student had to act as the middleman and listen to both sides. They had to go back and forth reporting what the other student wanted to say to the person they were in a fight with. All students had the opportunity to be the middleman. Again, this was something the students enjoyed and there was constant laughter among them. They came up with funny reasons for being in a fight and threw playful insults at each other. The author was a bit worried about the fact that a real-life fight might break out but fortunately, the students were light-hearted and took the task as a joke.

3.3 Tests

Both groups took the same test at the beginning and end of the study (Appendix 4). It consisted of six individual sentences that had to be changed from direct speech into reported speech. Every sentence also contained at least one pronoun, time, or place reference change. The results can be seen in the following two tables (Table 1, table 2). Every student is measured separately in three categories. The column that is highlighted in grey indicates points given for a category in the pre-test and the second that is not highlighted the post-test. Every category was worth six points. The maximum points that could be achieved was 18. The total scores can be seen at the bottom.

3.3.1 Control group

13 students took both tests. In the tense category, the highest pre-test scores were achieved by S4, S10, S11, and S12, all scoring two points. S2, S6, S9 and S13 scored one point and S1, S3, S5, S7, S8 scored a zero. In the post-test phase, S2, S3, S4, S6, S7, S10, S12 and S13 scored six points, which was the maximum. S11 scored five points. S1, S5, S8 scored four points.

The pre-test scores in reference to time and place category were the lowest. Only S10 scored one point. All other students got a zero. In the post test phase S2, S3, S4, S7, S10, S12 and S13 got maximum points. S1, S6, S9 scored 5 points. S5, S8, and S11 scored three points.

Both pre- and post-test scores in the pronoun category were the highest. In the pre-test phase S1, S4, S7, S8, S9, S10, S11, S12, and S13 scored the maximum points. S3, and S5 got zero points, S2 one point, and S6 five points.

Overall, every student improved their test scores over the two phases. The biggest climber was S3 who originally scored zero points but, in the end, got a maximum score. S11 was the lowest with a six-point difference from the pre-test to post-test. The average score in the pre-test phase was 5.61 and 16.38 in the post-test phase out of a maximum of 18 points.

Table 1. Pre- and post-test results of the control group.

Student	Tense		Reference		Pronoun		Overall	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
S1	0	4	0	5	6	6	6	15
S2	1	6	0	6	1	6	2	18
S3	0	6	0	6	0	6	0	18
S4	2	6	0	6	6	6	8	18
S5	0	4	0	3	0	5	0	12
S6	1	6	0	5	5	6	6	17
S7	0	6	0	6	6	6	6	18
S8	0	4	0	3	6	6	6	13
S9	1	5	0	5	6	6	7	16
S10	2	6	1	6	6	6	9	18
S11	2	5	0	3	6	6	8	14
S12	2	6	0	6	6	6	8	18
S13	1	6	0	6	6	6	7	18
Total	12	70	1	66	60	77	73	213
Average							5,61	16,38

3.3.2 Experimental group

13 students took both tests. In the tense category, the highest pre-test scores were achieved by S1, scoring four points. S2, S6, and S7, and S10 followed with one point. S3, S4, S5, S8, S9, S11, S12, and S13 scored a zero. In the post-test phase, S5, S6, and S10 scored six points, which was the maximum. S1, S2, S7, S11, S12, S13 scored five points. S4 scored four points, S3 and S8 three points, and S9 one point.

The pre-test scores in reference to time and place category were the lowest. Only S1 scored four points. All other students got a zero. In the post-test phase S1, S5, and S7 got maximum points. S2, S6, and S10 scored five points. S4, S11, and S13 scored four points. S3, S8, and S12 scored 3 points. S9 scored two points.

Both pre- and post-test scores in the pronoun category were the highest. In the pre-test phase S1, S2, S5, S6, S7, S8, S10, and S11 scored the maximum points. S9 got four points, S3

three points, S13 two points, and S4 zero points. In the post-test phase, all students scored the maximum points.

Overall, every student improved their test scores over the two phases. The biggest climber was S4 who originally scored zero points, since they refused to take test because they did not understand what they had to do. In the end they achieved 14 points. The least improved was S8 and S9 who achieved a six-point increase over the two test phases. The average score in the pre-test phase was 5,69 and 14,92 in the post-test phase out of a maximum of 18 points.

Table 2. Pre- and post-test result of the experimental group.

Student	Tense		Reference		Pronoun		Overall	
S1	4	5	4	6	6	6	14	17
S2	1	5	0	5	6	6	7	16
S3	0	3	0	3	3	6	3	12
S4	0	4	0	4	0	6	0	14
S5	0	6	0	6	6	6	6	18
S6	1	6	0	5	6	6	7	17
S7	1	5	0	6	6	6	7	17
S8	0	3	0	3	6	6	6	12
S9	0	2	0	2	4	6	4	10
S10	1	6	0	5	6	6	7	17
S11	0	5	0	4	6	6	6	15
S12	0	5	0	3	5	6	5	14
S13	0	5	0	4	2	6	2	15
Total	8	60	4	56	62	78	74	194
Average							5,69	14,92

To sum up, the experimental group scored higher in the pre-test phase, whereas the control group scored higher in the post-test phase. The pronoun category proved to be the strongest for both groups in all stages, followed by tenses, and then references to time and place. All students improved their scores over the two test phases. In the end, no student scored a zero in any of the categories in the post-test stage.

4 DISCUSSION

This chapter focuses on analysing the results of the questionnaires, tests, as well as oral feedback and observations from the lessons by the author. The analysis is linked to previously done research and gives answers to the research questions posed at the beginning of the thesis.

4.1 Questionnaires

From the 21 students that answered the pre-questionnaire, 19 believe that grammar is important for various reasons. The most common ones are for effective and accurate communication in spoken and written form as well as for future employment opportunities. However, the opinions on the quality of teaching in schools are mixed. About half said that some teachers require them to study the rules by heart and do written text- and workbook exercises, which is boring and repetitive. These results add confirmation to the study conducted by Incecay, et al. (2011), who reported that students see grammar as being an important part of language learning but often find the instruction of it as tedious.

The other half believed that the way grammar is taught is adequate and there is not really anything they could wish for that was different or better. This confirmed Loewell, et al. (2009) study's results that students see grammar as well as its instruction as useful. Of course, these results can be influenced by the fact that many of those students answered another question that grammar and its rules come easily to them, or they are able to think logically, therefore, the instruction by teachers does not really matter, as the result is still the same.

Based on these results, the first research question, what is students' perception of grammar and its instruction in schools, does not get a definitive answer, since there are too many variables

to consider. Firstly, students do perceive grammar as being important but at the same time feel that effective communication can be achieved without it. Additionally, students are happy with the instruction of grammar rules by the teachers but state that this does not go for all teachers. Finally, it also depends on the difficulty of the grammar topic, and which materials are used to teach it.

When the students were asked which materials or methods they would like to learn grammar with instead of non-authentic materials, over 90% across both groups answered through games. The students justified their opinion by saying that nowadays, young people learn better through games, since they are so used to them outside of the classroom as well. Moreover, games are fun, engaging, and sometimes help them remember the topic better than text- and workbook exercises, which was also argued by Brewster, et al (2023). However, based on the results of the post-questionnaire, some students who had learned with non-authentic materials, stated that they liked doing written exercises in the student's book and workbook, as well as on the computer, as it gave them more time to think and not be worried about answering quickly, which happens when doing speaking tasks. As opposed to that, most students from the experimental group preferred communicative tasks for learning. It must be noted that the spoken tasks for each group were completely different. For the control group, only two short question-answer type exercises were used that could be found in the student's book, whereas in the experimental group, a whole 45- minute game was integrated into the lesson. Although both approaches are authentic, the ones offered by the student's book were not on the topics that students are interested in, while the game played by the experimental group required thinking about reasons for being in a fight with someone. Given the students' age, it is more than possible that they quarrel with each other from time to time. Also, it gave them the possibility to be more imaginative and creative.

Transitioning to students' thoughts on the grammar topic, reported speech could easily be thought of as being one of the most difficult ones. However, most of the students from both groups do not believe that. When asked which component of the topic was the most difficult, more than half of the students chose the changing of time and place references. This can be attributed to them not being used to using phrases like *the day before*, or *the day after*. Pronoun changes were thought of as the easiest, which is something that they do daily and do not give much thought to anymore. The pre-tests also confirmed this since this was one category in which they scored the most points and changing of time and place references was one of the worst.

Speaking on motivation, in the control group, over half the students answered that their motivation levels rose significantly when they found out that in that day's lesson, they will be playing games, which was also noted by Brewester et al (2002). There was a similar response from the experimental group: their motivation levels rose when they found out that non-authentic materials will not be used in class, which is consistent with previous research conducted by Ghanbari et al. (2015), Peter et al. (2016), and Kılıç et al. (2016) regarding the positive effects of authentic materials on student motivation in lessons. At the end of the study, 11 out of 13 students from the experimental group said that their opinion had not changed. Based on these results, the answer to the second research question, will students feel more motivated when studying with authentic materials, can be perceived as definitive, albeit only the experimental group can attest to that. Nevertheless, the post-questionnaire answers showed that they liked working with alternative methods and materials in class.

4.2 Tests

The pre-test results were somewhat expected but also offered some interesting surprises. Firstly, there were a few students who did not feel comfortable taking the test with so little instruction and knowledge of the topic, although the teacher assured that they would not be graded, and the results not discussed in class.

Secondly, reported speech is a difficult topic with many nuances, the students scored low in the tense and time and place reference change categories. Interestingly, there were a couple of students from the experimental group who managed to successfully use back shifting, even if the sentence contained two verbs, and change time and place expressions a couple of times. When asked about it later, the students did not know how they did it, they reported using their gut-feeling and logical thinking.

Unsurprisingly, the category that earned the students most points in both tests was pronouns. These results were somewhat expected since they deal with pronouns daily. Additionally, they do not necessarily have to use reported speech when changing pronouns in normal conversation. Again, students said that it just felt logical changing the pronoun from *I* to *she*, as they are not talking about themselves anymore but rather someone else. This was also reported in the questionnaires.

Based on the results of this study, the third research question on how authentic materials influence test results gets an answer, but not a definitive one. The control group, who had been studying with non-authentic materials, scored better than the experimental group, it was only by a small margin. In combined, the average score for the control group was 16,38 and the experimental group's score was 14,92 out of the possible 18, which means that the gap was only 1,46 points. Furthermore, not all students from the control group scored higher than the

experimental group. There can be many reasons why some of the experimental group's students had slightly lower scores. Firstly, as mentioned before, the language level of the control group is a bit higher than the experimental group. Secondly, there were students absent from some lessons in the experimental group, so they did not get as much practise as the others. Thirdly, although both groups had access to the rules of back shifting in their notebooks, only the control group had a list on how references to time and place changed in reported speech. The teacher did mention them in passing when students came across them in their tasks, but nothing was written down as a rule. Therefore, the results might have been different, had the students had them in their notebooks.

4.3 Lessons

The experimental group was very receptive of the non-traditional approach to learning and were quite happy to hear that the student's book and workbook would not be needed. Similarly, the control group enjoyed working on computers and playing games. The author had theorised before the study that the experimental group would not like reading newspaper articles as the language level was C1 and quite difficult to understand. To her surprise, most students said that the topic was interesting, and they understand that it helps them get acquainted with the language used in real-life, since it is not adapted. The use of songs and communicative tasks were well-received and seemed to help students practise the topic. Once again, one student (S14), who scored 14 points in the post-test, had never been more active in lessons. They asked many questions, offered to provide answers, and did not get discouraged when the answers were incorrect. Therefore, the answer to the fourth research question regarding which materials should be used to teach grammar is to combine non-authentic with authentic materials. As we

can see, students are very different and require alternative methods. One student thrived when studying with authentic materials, many enjoyed the communicative approach and not writing as much, whereas some students preferred non-authentic materials where they could work individually with no time pressure.

CONCLUSION

Over many years, there have been several attempts to perfect the way grammar should be taught in schools. They all lacked one important aspect: students did not acquire necessary communication skills needed outside of the classroom. Currently, the Communicative Approach, developed by linguists such as Dell Hymes, Wilga Rivers, and teachers all over the world, is the preferred method.

However, materials used in schools to teach grammar still mostly consist of drilling rules and completing exercises with isolated sentences. Students feel like they are only studying grammar to take tests, and for that reason, they do not see grammar instruction as attractive and tend not to be interested in learning it. What can be done to combat this? One solution is for teachers to lean more into game-based learning, which is already widely in use in EFL classrooms. However, it is also important to offer students variety, which brings us to the concept of using authentic materials.

The aim of the present thesis was to conduct an experimental study to teach grammar, specifically reported speech, with authentic and non-authentic materials. Previous research done by researchers such as Resti (2016), Guo (2012), Berardo (2006), or Chen (2006) has shown that by adapting authentic materials to teach all types of language skills, not just grammar, will yield higher test results as well as spark students' interest in the topic and raises their motivation to actively participate in class.

Two sets of eighth grade students were selected for the study that are also taught by the author at school. The group that presented slightly higher language levels learned with non-authentic materials, e.g., student's book, workbook, and accompanying worksheets provided by

the school. The other group learned with authentic materials developed by the author. These included newspaper articles, songs, videos, and real-life mimicking communicative tasks.

The thesis aimed to answer the following research questions: What is students' perception of grammar and its instruction in school? Will students feel more motivated when studying with authentic materials? How does learning with authentic materials influence test results? Which materials should be used to teach grammar? For the results to be obtained, students filled out pre-questionnaires at the beginning of the study to find out more about their perception of grammar, its instruction at school, and methods. They also took a pre-test that consisted of six isolated sentences that had to be reported from direct speech. At the end of the study, the students took the same test again, so results could be compared. Finally, a post-questionnaire was conducted to get a sense of how students felt about grammar now, its instruction, and what could be done in the future.

The results of the questionnaires showed that students believe grammar to be important, but sometimes have trouble with its instruction by the teachers or materials that are used for learning. They do not enjoy mechanically drilling rules and only doing student's book or workbook exercises. Students felt motivated when studying with both materials. Moving forward, they feel that a variety of tasks should be offered to make the learning experience more engaging and fun. Finally, the experimental group proposed combining authentic and non-authentic materials in the learning process.

The results of the tests showed that although the control group who had been studying with non-authentic materials scored higher than the experimental group, it was only by a small margin. Additionally, all students improved their test results, regardless of what materials they had used to study. S14 from the experimental group deserves a special mention. They scored zero points in the pre-test phase but significantly increased their scores in the post-test stage to

14. S14 was also more active and motivated in lessons than before. Normally, they feel very anxious to ask questions when something is confusing or if answers must be read out loud, but they felt more comfortable with authentic materials and tasks.

Based on the findings of this study, collective and individual, authentic materials should be used in combination with non-authentic materials to teach grammar. They offer an alternative and engaging experience to otherwise dull presentation of grammar. As noted by Breen (1985) and Nunan (1999), the students are more exposed to every-day language that also awaits them in their future life, something that the experimental group had mentioned in their post-questionnaire as well.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Pre-Questionnaire

1. Why do you think grammar is taught in schools?
2. Is grammar important to you?
3. Depending on your answer, justify your opinion.
4. Does grammar come easy to you? Meaning you always understand what the teacher is talking about, etc.
5. Depending on your answer, justify your opinion.
6. What do you think of grammar instruction at our school? Give reasons.
7. Tick the tools you most like to learn with at school
 - a) student's book
 - b) workbook
 - c) worksheets
8. Would you like to learn with the following tools instead? Tick all relevant answers
 - a) songs
 - b) games
 - c) videos
 - d) newspaper and/or magazine articles
 - e) none of these
9. Depending on your answer, justify your opinion.
10. If you could change anything about how grammar is learnt, what would it be?

Appendix 2. Post-Questionnaire (experimental group)

1. Was the topic difficult for you?
2. Which part of the topic was the most difficult?
 - a) changing tenses
 - b) changing pronouns
 - c) changing references to time and place
3. Which part of the topic was the easiest?
 - a) changing tenses
 - b) changing pronouns
 - c) changing references to time and place
4. In your opinion, is it important to know the names of tenses in Estonian and English?
5. Depending on your answer, justify your opinion.
6. Which materials did you like to learn most with?
 - a) newspaper articles
 - b) songs
 - c) communicative tasks
 - d) interviews and videos
7. Justify why you picked those.
8. Justify why you didn't pick the others.
9. Did your motivation levels and willingness to be active in lessons rise once you learnt that we won't be using any non-authentic materials to learn this grammar topic?
10. Has your opinion changed now?
11. Depending on your answer, justify your opinion.

12. How could we learn grammar in the future?

- a) authentic materials
- b) non-authentic materials
- c) we should combine the two

Appendix 3. Post-questionnaire (control group)

1. Was the topic difficult for you?
2. Which part of the topic was the most difficult?
 - a) changing tenses
 - b) changing pronouns
 - c) changing references to time and place
3. Which part of the topic was the easiest?
 - a) changing tenses
 - b) changing pronouns
 - c) changing references to time and place
4. In your opinion, is it important to know the names of tenses in Estonian and English?
5. Depending on your answer, justify your opinion.
6. Which materials did you like to learn most with?
 - a) student's book and workbook written exercises
 - b) student's book and workbook oral exercises
 - c) Blooket
 - d) written exercises on the computer
7. Justify why you picked those.
8. Justify why you didn't pick the others.
9. Did your motivation levels and willingness to be active in lessons rise once you learnt that today we will be working with student's books and workbook?
10. Did your motivation levels and willingness to be active in lessons rise once you learnt that today we will be playing Blooket and working with computers?

11. Do you think other methods or materials could be used to learn grammar? Justify your opinion.

Appendix 4. Pre- and post-test

REPORTED SPEECH

1 Eyewitness (he): 'I haven't seen anything unusual this morning.'

2 Police officer: 'We arrested the suspect a week ago.'

3 Reporter: 'The police need more witnesses to contact them.'

4 Robber (she): 'I'm climbing in through the window because I've forgotten my key.'

5 Criminals: 'The prison warden can't keep us in prison forever.'

6 Victim (he): 'I will wait here until the police arrive.'

RESÜMEE

TARTU ÜLIKOOL
ANGLISTIKA OSAKOND

Linda Veski

Using Authentic Materials to Teach EFL Grammar and Their Effects on Students' Test Results and Motivation [Autentsete materjalide kasutamine inglise keele kui võõrkeele grammatika õpetamises ja nende mõju õpilaste testitulemustele ning motivatsioonile]

Magistritöö

2023

Lehekülgede arv: 60

Käesolev magistritöö uurib autentsete materjalide kasutamist grammatika õpetamisel, seda konkreetsemalt kaudse kõne vallas, ning kuidas need mõjutavad õpilaste testitulemusi ja motivatsiooni. Lähtudes autori kogemusest, õpilased ei naudi grammatika õppimist ning sellega kaasnevat ülesannete lahendamist, kuna selle esitus tundub igav. Seetõttu viidi läbi eksperimentaalne uuring põhikooliõpilastega Eestis, kus üks grupp õppis mitte-autentsete ja teine autentsete materjalidega, et näha, kas nende suhtumist grammatikasse oleks võimalik muuta ilma, et see nende grammatilise teema omandamist negatiivselt mõjutaks. Tulemusi mõõdeti küsimustike ja testide abil.

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Õpilaste testitulemuste põhjal võib järeldada, et kuigi kontrollgrupp saavutas paremad tulemused, siis seda vaid marginaalselt. Õpilaste küsimustike tagasiside põhjal võib aga järeldada, et neile meeldis autentsete materjalidega töötada, nad usuvad, et need on kasulikud ning pakuvad võimalust tutvuda päriselus kasutatava inglise keelega. Õpilaste arvates võiks tulevikus mõlemaid materjale kombineerida, et õppimiskogemust rikastada.

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