

Exploring the Needs and Challenges in Teaching English Grammar Communicatively in Albanian Context

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Abstract

This study aims to explore through details of teaching English grammar communicatively within the Albanian context. With the global trend for communicative language teaching, Albanian teachers of English as a foreign language face specific challenges in attempting to integrate this approach effectively in their classes. The research applies a mixed-methods approach, including a questionnaire and structured interviews with teachers from several districts in Albania. Both cases intend to assess the actual situation of teaching grammar of English as a Foreign Language, identify main obstacles, and highlight opportunities for integrating communicative grammar. Findings indicate that even though the teachers are aware of the theoretical aspects of communicative methods, sometimes they find it hard to implement them due to limited resources, insufficient teacher training, and traditional teaching curricula. Additionally, the study emphasizes the need for professional development programs and appropriate classroom materials that align with the communicative approach. By addressing these challenges, the research aims to provide concrete recommendations for teachers and policymakers to improve English grammar teaching in Albanian schools, and to improve language proficiency and communicative competence among learners of different ages and educational levels in a larger context.

1. INTRODUCTION

Taking into consideration a retrospective view of foreign language teaching, including grammar instruction (Larsen-Freeman, 2000; Richards, 2001; Richards & Renandya, 2002), it should be noted that the role of grammar and the approach to teaching grammar of English as

a Foreign Language (EFL) have changed. Various teaching methods have assigned different roles to teaching grammar structures in the target language.

The traditional approach, focusing on the form, emphasized the impact of teaching grammatical rules in isolation, providing classroom activities that encourage learning grammatical rules, and analyzing their reflection on language forms, providing, in the meantime, few opportunities for the students to use them in real-life communication. (Nassaji & Fotos, 2011).

In the 1970s and the 1980s, as shifting from a structure-centered approach to a communicative approach to language teaching and learning, a new approach to grammar instruction consisted of fluency-based activities that focused on conveying meaning in a communicative context, paying, however, little attention to the usage of the linguistic forms. (Nassaji & Fotos, 2011)

Because of this limitation, another approach was developed intending to draw learners' attention to linguistic forms in the context of meaningful communication aiming to help them develop simultaneously accuracy and fluency in the target language. In the course of its development, the importance of grammar in teaching and learning a foreign language for communicative purposes has been proved indisputable; effective teaching and learning methodology to get to such an aim is still a matter of research (Richards & Renandya, 2002, p. 145; Ellis et al., 2009).

Since the early 1990s, this has been the aim of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), another distinct approach developed from communicative teaching tendencies. In TBLT, a task is seen as central to the learning cycle. According to Willis & Willis (2007), a task has a number of defining characteristics, ranging from engaging the learner's interest, giving primary focus to the meaning, to measuring success in terms of non-linguistic outcomes rather than formal linguistic accuracy, and relating to real-world activities (p. 13).

Larsen-Freeman (2003, 2014) offering the term *grammaring* as "the ability to use grammar structures accurately, meaningfully, and appropriately" (p. 264), proposed a communicative model of grammar teaching, which included three dimensions:

- *the form*, regarded as the accurate use of a grammatical feature;
- *the meaning* regarded as understanding the message encoded by a lexical-grammatical feature; and,
- *the pragmatic use*, defined as the proper application of the lexical-grammatical feature in a context.

According to the author, a grammar feature can be easily related to one aspect, but difficult to another. Thus, it is challenging for foreign language learners to learn to use grammar structures accurately, meaningfully, and appropriately in a given communicative context.

Another controversial issue related to grammar in language teaching is whether grammar should be taught "explicitly" (through the formulation of rules) or "implicitly" (through natural exposure to meaningful language use). It is noted that a grammatical feature may be difficult to learn as explicit knowledge, but easy as implicit knowledge, and vice versa (Ellis et al., 2009, p. 164; DeKeyser & Sokalski, 1996).

Foreign language acquisition theory and research informs that there are many issues for teachers to consider in deciding on the right instructional strategy in teaching grammar effectively for communicative purposes, namely: *educational objectives* (Celce-Murcia, 1991), *native language influence* (Spada & Lightbown; 2008, Nassaji & Fotos, 2011), *salience and frequency of the grammatical feature in the input* (Ellis et al., 2009: 144; Akakura, 2012; Ellis, 1997: 80; Nassaji & Fotos 2011: 136; Spada & Lightbown 2008; Burgess & Etherington, 2002), *the complexity of the grammatical feature* (DeKeyser 1995; Ellis, 1997; Ellis et al., 2009; Nassaji & Fotos, 2011; Spada & Lightbown, 2008; Andrews 2007), *learner developmental level* (Ellis, 1992, 2006; Li & TIAN 2008; Nassaji & Fotos 2011; Spada & Lightbown, 2008), *individual learning styles* (Celce-Murcia 1991; Celce-Murcia & Hilles, 1998: 5; Nassaji & Fotos, 2011), *learners' age* (Celce-Murcia 1991; Li & TIAN, 2008; Nassaji & Fotos, 2011; Spada & Lightbown, 2008), *learner and teacher preferences* (Celce-Murcia, 1991; Spada & Lightbown, 2008; Borg, 2003 as cited in Spada & Lightbown, 2008), *teacher's*

metalinguistic knowledge and previous language learning experience (Dörnyei, 2005 as cited in Spada & Lightbown, 2008; Spada & Lightbown, 2008).

Considering all these issues, teachers need to be eclectic in their grammar instructional approach. They have to maximize opportunities for the students to encounter the target forms in communicative contexts, combining form-focused and meaning-focused activities depending on the needs of both, the curriculum and the learners, the particular instructional context, and the aim of empowering learner autonomy. In this respect, the research must focus on EFL teacher's awareness of the above, to be able to build on the gaps reflected in this teaching and learning context.

2. METHODOLOGY

This study aims to assess the current situation of grammar teaching in the Albanian EFL context, identify existing challenges and needs, and highlight possible recommendations for integrating communicative grammar teaching.

In order to provide specific analyses and identify the need for intervention related to the communicative approach in teaching EFL in Albanian pre-university education, a survey questionnaire and structured interviews were designed, which were conducted with EFL teachers in primary and secondary education.

Focus groups were selected in line with the age groups and levels involved in the Albanian pre-university education system, respectively:

1. primary education (grades 1-5), learners aged 6/7-11 years old
2. lower secondary education (grades 6-9), learners aged 12-15 years old, and
3. upper secondary education (grades 10-12), learners aged 16-18 years old.

The aim was to research the impact of the following variables on the actual grammar teaching methodology:

- learners' age/proficiency level
- educational context/EFL curricula/EFL textbooks
- teachers' age, gender, and working experience

Other aims were also:

- to identify the gaps between the teaching and learning aspects outlined in the literary review and the actual state-of-art in the Albanian educational context;
- to provide a correlation between the gaps and the research variables above; and,
- to specify the needs for training or further intervention in the current situation (which would constitute either the starting point of policy-making concerns or further deeper research related to any of the more specific variables).

The questionnaire was distributed via Google Forms to 100 teachers in seven geographically spread districts in Albania (Korçë, Durrës, Kukës, Tiranë, Vlorë, Shkodër, and Gjirokastër), to ensure inclusive feedback on an educational context (larger than regional) 70 of the teachers provided feedback (66% being EFL teachers in lower secondary education, and 34%, in upper secondary education).

In the second stage of the research, structured interviews were conducted with teachers at different education system levels and schools in the southeastern urban and non-urban areas (Appendix 2). The interviews were conducted with 14 teachers from the district of Korçë (9 being EFL teachers in lower secondary education, and 5 in upper secondary education).

Exploring the Needs and Challenges in Teaching English Grammar Communicatively in Albanian Context

Both, the questionnaire and the interviews aimed the quantitative and qualitative analysis of the current situation of the grammar teaching approaches in the Albanian context. They were designed based on the main aspects revealed by the literary review, including:

- The view is that Task-based Instruction involves a number of teaching characteristics to be taken into consideration by a teacher of EFL, such as: giving primary focus to meaning rather than form, by relating grammar instruction and learning to real-world activities (Willis and Willis, 2007).
- The pragmatic aspect of language use is the focus of grammar teaching activities, to comply with the interchangeably related “form-meaning-pragmatic use” (Larsen-Freeman 2014).
- Aspects of teaching approaches to be taken into consideration by the teacher, such as educational objectives, native language influence, learner’s age, learning context and teacher’s metacognitive knowledge and previously learned experiences (Spada &Lightbown, 2008).

Following the above the main aspects that were aimed to be analysed either by the questionnaire or the interviews were:

1. *The level of English proficiency taught as a foreign language, gender, age, and district in which the teachers actually teach.*
2. *Teacher’s meta-knowledge about EFL communicative teaching.*
3. *The space that textbooks offer regarding teaching grammar communicatively and the need for additional resources.*
4. *The impact that this approach has on the learning outcomes, the language skills it integrates, and the inclusion of “real” situations in it.*
5. *The role of “task-based” teaching/learning and key application/teaching challenges.*
6. *The need for further training regarding the above-mentioned aspects.*

3. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

In this section data collected by the questionnaire are reviewed in line with the information provided in the interviews. Each finding is supported by respective theoretical backing in the previous research presented in the literary review, and finally, an analysis is carried out with the aim to provide interpretation of the above-intertwined information.

1. Table 1 outlines **quantitative information about the teachers** who participated in the survey: age, teaching experience, gender, and EFL teaching level.

Age	25-30 years	13%	Teaching exper.	5-10 years	28%	Gender	Female	EFL teach. level	Elem.	7%	
	30-40 years	33%		10-15 years	21%				Pre-inter.	20%	
	40-50 years	52%		15-20 years	26%		Male		16%	Interm.	43%
	over 50 years	2%		over 20 years	25%		Upper-inter. / Advanced		24%/6%		

Table 1. Quantitative data

3.1. Teachers’ knowledge about EFL communicative teaching of a foreign language

All teachers admitted being aware of the concept “EFL communicative teaching,” emphasizing that this concept aims at developing communicative skills in a foreign language, using the language in real communication contexts, and encouraging students to speak, listen, read, and write to communicate in various life and professional situations effectively.

97% of the teachers rate their knowledge of communicative language teaching as *Very good* and *Good*. They seem to be aware of the methods, strategies, and goals of this approach and their implementation in the classroom. This knowledge has been developed through their teaching experience and/or individual work.

39% of the respondents believed that their current grammar teaching relies solely on teaching rules and linguistic structures.

54% deny this stance, suggesting a perception that grammar teaching encompasses more than just learning language rules, recognizing the need to include context and practice other language skills as essential parts of language learning.

Only 7% chose the option *Other*, without providing further specifications.

Based on interview data as well, it can be said that some teachers include both *explicit* and *implicit* elements in their teaching, depending on students’ needs and preferences and the hindrances or familiarity with a particular grammatical issue. When deemed necessary, teachers attempt to reinforce students’ knowledge with explanations and examples of certain grammatical rules but also integrate implicit explanations, which help the students to use grammatical concepts naturally, making grammar learning as comprehensive and meaningful as possible for them.

Following this, based on the given responses, it appears that 41% of the teachers preferred a more communication-focused approach in class through communicative contexts, without entirely excluding grammar rules teaching. This strategy combines learning grammar rules with practising communication in real contexts, allowing students to learn and apply the language in real communication situations. This aligns with the goal of foreign language teaching to develop students’ communicative skills, mentioning here Nunan (1998) recognizing it as an approach through which learners can learn how to form structures correctly, and also how to use them to communicate meaning. He states that “If learners are not given opportunities to explore grammar in context, it will be difficult for them to see how and why alternative forms exist to express different communicative meanings” (p. 103).

Additionally, 30% of teachers prefer a combined approach, which starts with explaining grammar rules and then practising through exercises and their uses. This matches the more traditional way of language learning, emphasizing the knowledge and use of grammar rules in line with Weaver’s stating that “teaching traditional grammar in isolation is not a very practical act” (Weaver et al., 2001, p. 18).

This is supported by the finding that 27% of the teachers prefer to provide examples of grammar rule usage in real contexts and then encourage logical understanding of these rules, making them more understandable and applicable to students. On the other hand, only 2% of teachers encourage classroom communication without focusing on the grammar rule (a task-

based approach), which “is very much towards the meaning-based end of the spectrum” (Willis & Willis, 2009, p. 4).

The above is directly linked to the approach teachers have to EFL teaching within the classroom. 96% of the respondents believe that grammar teaching varies in several ways, expressing a broad consensus in line with the idea that the approach and methodology used in the classroom significantly impact how grammar is presented and adapted for students. Further explained in interviews, this variation in teaching is an outcome of using different pedagogical approaches, integrating technology, involving learning activities, as well as teacher's preferences and experiences. These variations can affect the effectiveness of grammar teaching and students' acquisition of grammatical knowledge.

Finally, 89% of the respondents did not consider the current structure of the foreign language curriculum an obstacle regarding communicative grammar teaching. They believe that it is suitable to allow flexibility in different teaching approaches. The fact that only 6% of the respondents did not agree with the above, seems to be related to individual pedagogical experience (respondents' age 40-50 years), lack of resources, time constraints, or the way teaching content is handled within the curriculum framework (comments provided in the interviews).

3.2. The space textbooks offer regarding teaching grammar communicatively and the need for additional resources

Another important aspect relates to the way EFL textbooks influence the teacher's choice on their approach to grammar teaching. The overwhelming majority of respondents state that the textbooks they work with provide space for this communicative approach, although they comment that they need frequent updates to the functions of language learning for young people, including technology, and knowledge about society and nature as activities of concrete language use.

Respondents choose the following aspects as most supported by the textbooks they work with during grammar teaching (in descending order):

- Practicing grammar exercises based on meaningful contexts of language use: 77%.
- Practising grammar with exercises: 71%
- Integrating grammar with other language skills: 52%

These percentages suggest that a significant part of grammar teaching in the EFL context of this research focuses on applying rules through exercises and different situations, which encourages students to apply grammar rules in real-life contexts and develop overall language skills. It goes in line with Thornbury, who states: “If learners are going to be able to make sense of grammar, they will need to be exposed to it in its context of use, and, at the very least this means in texts” (Thornbury, 1999, p. 72).

Teachers report, however, a noticeable gap in textbooks related to information presented in grammar sections. 88% of respondents state that they use extra sources of information (apart from the textbook) in the English language, such as articles, songs, videos, and stories, as well as interactive methods, mainly games, worksheets, etc. It supports Nunan's view that “in textbooks, grammar is very often presented out of context. Learners are given isolated sentences, which they are expected to internalize through exercises, involving repetition, manipulation, and grammatical transformation” (Nunan, 1998, p. 102).

During focused interviews, teachers expressed that additional sources aim to encourage communication and application of grammatical knowledge in real contexts, more specifically:

- Activities aiming at communication and integrating grammatical knowledge in question: 52%
- Activities encouraging oral application of grammatical knowledge: 45%
- Practice exercises in writing: 49%.

The fact that teachers choose to bring additional materials into the classroom also supports the choice of 83% of the respondents that integrated grammar teaching is currently treated as the presentation and practice of linguistic structures. Most teachers in this context prefer an integrated approach to grammar teaching, which includes presenting linguistic structures and then practising them in real communication contexts.

Almost all interviewed teachers emphasize that bringing authentic materials into the classroom allows students to witness the natural use of grammar in daily communication. In genuine communication beyond the classroom, grammar and context are so closely intertwined that appropriate grammatical choices can only be made with reference to the context and purpose of the communication. (Nunan, 1998, p. 102). Students are often asked to perform speaking scenarios, write a paragraph, or do a short project where they use a specific grammatical structure.

Interviewed teachers also believe that integrating grammar into listening and speaking activities makes students more engaged in discussions where they use and reinforce grammatical concepts. Previous research shows that “the use of dialogues generally matches learners’ expectations of how language is used in the real world” (Thornbury, 1999, p. 76), and that “well-planned games can teach and reinforce grammar points very successfully if the activities are geared to students’ proficiency, age, and experience and are not presented condescendingly” (Celce-Murcia & Hilles, 1988, p. 133). In line with this, interviewed teachers believe that grammar-related games and activities are a way to keep students not only motivated but also allow them to practice more while having fun.

3.3. The impact of the communicative approach on the learning outcomes

Based on the given responses, there is a logical explanation for the reason why 56% of the teachers agree that practising grammar exercises helps *Significantly* (and 40% that it influences *Greatly*) in achieving learning outcomes for students.

Language acquisition aspects that are more easily acquired by the student if grammar is integrated with classroom communicative activities are evaluated as follows:

- 56% of the respondents believe that overall language *accuracy* is better achieved when grammar is integrated with various communication activities, helping the student understand and use grammatical rules accurately and effectively. Learners need to value accuracy. That is, they need to see that without it, they risk being unintelligible. (Thornbury, 1999, p. 92).
- 50% of the respondents believe that understanding explained grammatical structures is easier when these are integrated into concrete language use situations.
- 59% admit that this integrated approach of grammar with other language skills significantly impacts *restructuring*, which involves integrating new knowledge into old (Thornbury, 1999), creating a more inclusive context for the student.
- 40% think this is closely related to the development of the student's ability to generate language structures, and their application becomes easier in concrete situations, including the appropriate vocabulary as well.

The main goal of using grammatical structures communicatively is precisely related to the student's ability to express fluently the messages they convey, regardless of any mistakes during the process. Therefore, practice activities aimed at developing linguistic *fluency* need to divert attention away from the form. One way of doing this is to design practice tasks where the focus is primarily on meaning. (Thornbury, 1999, p. 93). This approach is also supported by the fact that 94% of respondents believe that integrated grammar teaching supports the development of communicative competence in a foreign language because it involves not only learning grammatical rules but also applying them in real communication contexts, thus developing their listening, reading, writing, and speaking skills in that language. This shows that teachers believe in the effectiveness of such an approach and see it as an important tool to improve students' communicative skills in English. Using language in a real communication context ensures more effective learning and a richer linguistic experience for the students. Teaching grammar in context provides a meaningful framework that connects to reality in the targeted language. (Anderson, 2005).

More specifically, the above idea is reflected in the aspects most frequently chosen by the respondents regarding the issues that communicative grammar teaching impacts the most:

- 84% of the respondents think that integrated grammar teaching promotes more practical learning of the foreign language because it encourages the use of language in real communication contexts, making it easier for the student to learn and use the language in real situations.
- 77% think that integrated grammar teaching deeply affects the improvement of the student's language skills in using the foreign language effectively and understandably.
- 46% think that this approach increases the student's confidence in using English outside the classroom, in real situations, allowing the student to use the language in various ways and encouraging them to communicate actively.
- 37% believe it promotes independent learning.
- 30% believe it facilitates teacher-student communication, and
- 6% think it enables easier classroom management.

From a broader perspective, which also includes teaching objectives, this integrated way of EFL grammar teaching is evaluated as follows by EFL teachers:

- 50% of the respondents believe that this approach to grammar teaching requires the lesson to be more creative and inclusive, because, it encourages the teacher to use different pedagogical methods to ensure students' participation during the lesson.
- 57% of the respondents believe that this approach requires a commitment to using grammatical knowledge in concrete communication situations. Involving the student in real communication situations helps in acquiring grammatical knowledge naturally and effectively and, as a result, helps in the overall use of the language.
- 53% think that integrating grammar is a real challenge for teachers due to the different learners' proficiency levels in the classroom. This challenge requires a differentiated approach on behalf of the teacher, as well as a teaching adaptation to meet all learners' needs at their level of skills and knowledge, their learning styles and expectations regarding EFL acquisition.

Other challenges faced by teachers, based on their experience, relate to limited resource availability, insufficient time available, and the sceptical attitude of parents and students toward transitioning from one way of teaching to another.

Similarly, assessment methods of this grammar teaching form are complex; fair and accurate assessing tools to measure the learner's performance in communicative grammar teaching can be challenging to find, in order also to keep them motivated along the way. According to Brindley (2001), "with experience, many teachers become skilled judges and observers capable

of evaluating the quality of language performances and making fine-grained diagnoses of learners' difficulties" (p. 128).

3.4. The role of "task-based" teaching/learning and key application challenges

In order to complete the focus of this research, it was also thought necessary to find out teachers' opinions on the impact that task-based teaching could have in the current context of foreign language learning. In the TBL approach proposed by Willis and Willis (2007) there is ample opportunity for learners to pay careful attention to language within the task cycle, and an explicit focus on form after the task cycle.

- 53% of respondents consider integrating task-based teaching as possible and demanding in the actual context of foreign language teaching.
- 39% consider this approach difficult, but not impossible.
- 8% see integrating task-based teaching as easily applicable in their teaching EFL context.

The main challenges teachers face when applying task-based teaching are:

1. The large number of students in classes and, as a result, their various levels of English language proficiency are reported to be the main reason why teachers find it very demanding to prepare and find tasks appropriate for all students and their learning styles. According to Willis & Willis (2009), "a successful task starts with a basic idea but it is the way that idea is exploited that helps to ensure real learner participation" (p. 4). This also relates to the difficulty in using authentic language to complete concrete tasks in English since fluent communication is more important than grammatical accuracy. "We need to shift the emphasis on teaching foreign languages to a focus on understanding and expressing meanings. This almost certainly entails beginning with a more lexical approach and gradually integrating grammar once learners have a wide enough vocabulary to be able to see how grammar can help fine-tune their message" (Willis & Willis, 2009, p. 4).
2. Teachers also encounter students' lack of flexibility towards this different teaching style (very different from the traditional one they are used to). Ellis (1994) states that giving beginner learners opportunities for meaningful communication in the classroom helps to develop communicative ability and also results in linguistic abilities no worse than those developed from through the more traditional form-focused approaches (p. 604). Interviewed teachers accept that additional resource materials are a must when it comes to the accurate acquisition of grammatical knowledge by the average and lower-level students since some of the textbooks they work with do not provide updated materials in this aspect. Students need to learn "through language learning materials that stimulate authentic input using sentences that follow in logical sequence" (Hadley, 2003, p. 152).
3. Finally, teachers report that the lack of technological equipment is another challenge. Actual school ICT infrastructure does not always respond to the needs of the teachers and students to implement new approaches in English language teaching (e.g., lack of labs, internet access, and other digital tools). Using technology would encourage students to be more interactive during the learning process.

3.5. Further training needs

The final aspect to be covered in the research was whether EFL teachers would suggest further training needs regarding communicative teaching in grammar acquisition. They reported the following:

- 41% of the teachers accepted further training needs in specific aspects, such as more knowledge about integrating language skills in class, i.e. listening, reading, speaking, and writing in grammar teaching, based on content/meaning/tasks. Training in this field

would help them develop a wide repertoire of methods and strategies to encourage the acquisition of various grammar aspects in EFL classes.

- 39% of the respondents state that the selection of teaching materials and information technology is crucial to the integration of language skills in grammar teaching, as well as to adapting them to improve grammar and vocabulary skills.
- 47% believe that further training would also help them develop skills to use learning strategies that enhance learners' performance in more than one skill, and grammar acquisition in a communicative context.
- 26% of the respondents need further training in assessment tools of task-based teaching.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the above analysis, the research carried out among Albanian pre-university EFL teachers reflects a strong correlation between the quantitative data obtained from the questionnaire and the qualitative data provided during the focused interviews. The detailed interview questions were designed to complement the more general survey questions, aiming to ensure the reliability of responses and minimize the likelihood of random answers or errors.

1. The survey findings within the framework of this study highlight the significance of integrated grammar teaching in the context of EFL communicative learning. It can be observed that *there is a growing understanding that grammar teaching extends beyond simple explanation of language rules*. Instead, it encompasses contextual inclusion and the practice of other language skills as crucial components of language learning.
2. The survey also indicates that *the approach to grammar teaching varies based on factors such as teaching hours, pedagogical models and skills, integrating technology, teaching activities, as well as teachers' preferences and experiences*. Interestingly, the current EFL curriculum and textbooks used in Albanian pre-university education are considered *partly supportive of communicative grammar teaching; teachers use additional resources to provide opportunities for practical application of grammatical rules in different contexts and to encourage the development of general language skills*.
3. EFL teachers face challenges such as *the need for a differentiated approach to deal with students with varying proficiency levels, learning styles, and expectations*. Additionally, *the limitations of time and methods of assessing student performance in communicative grammar teaching are noted as areas of concern*.
4. Identified training needs mainly focus on *integrating listening, reading, speaking, and writing into grammar teaching, as well as selecting and adapting teaching materials and information technology to enhance grammar and vocabulary skills*. Moreover, there is a strong demand for training in *learning strategies that improve students' performance across multiple skills in communicative contexts, by assessing learners' performance in task-based teaching training*.
5. Since no such wide-range focused research was not carried out in the Albanian educational context regarding communicative grammar teaching/learning aspects, the applied methodology aimed to intertwine data from both sources, which can be further analyzed to provide insights into future expectations regarding EFL grammar teaching. This includes exploring correlations such as *the relationship between teaching in urban and non-urban areas and specific training needs, the influence of respondents' ages on their approach to communicative grammar teaching, the connection between learning styles and language skills, and the impact of teachers' and students' age groups and native language use on integrated grammar teaching*.

Following the above, recommendations focus on several key areas for improving EFL grammar teaching.

- First of all, it is suggested that mechanisms to boost integration of communicative grammar teaching in the EFL classrooms should be generated. They need to practically combine elements of *implicit* and *explicit* grammar teaching methods.
- Secondly, specialized training sessions need to be designed and conducted by educational institutions to provide teachers with strategies, methods, and resources to develop integrated teaching that includes grammar within the context of the other listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills.
- Thirdly, it is recommended that the educational institutions that offer lifelong learning services raise awareness among pre-university teachers about the possibility of integrating EFL grammar teaching through real-life situations and practical communication, as well as task-based teaching/learning methods.
- Finally, research recommendations call for the creation of manuals, specific modules, and structured webinars with special focus on overcoming challenges encountered in the process of communicative grammar teaching, taking into account factors such as *students' proficiency levels, class size, learning styles, the availability of additional resources and computer programs aimed at facilitating the teaching process and assessment tools of learner's linguistic performance during communicative grammar teaching/learning.*

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Exploring the Needs and Challenges in Teaching English Grammar Communicatively in Albanian Context

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Appendix 1 – Results from the Questionnaire

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1oB5zaWVhN7YxjC7Fl_g-
vdizQ4YUPiL_5_ccrTFMk8M/edit#responses](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1oB5zaWVhN7YxjC7Fl_g-vdizQ4YUPiL_5_ccrTFMk8M/edit#responses)

Appendix 2 - Interview Questions (translated in English)

Teacher's Profile:

- a. Years of experience in teaching English as a foreign language:
- b. Educational level:
- c. Current teaching context (e.g., class level, type of institution):

1. What do you think the role of grammar is in teaching / learning English?
2. How would you describe your approach to teaching English grammar (traditional / explicit or implicit, integrated)?
3. Do you believe it is important to integrate the teaching of grammar with other language skills? Why or why not?

4. How do you usually integrate the teaching of grammar with other language skills (speaking, writing, reading, and listening)?
5. Can you provide an example of a lesson where grammar teaching can be successfully integrated with other language skills: speaking, writing, reading or listening?
6. What benefits do you see in integrating grammar instruction with these skills?
7. How much do you think integrated grammar teaching affects students' language ability? How much does the textbook allow you to do that?
8. How can you assess students' progress if you integrate grammar with other language skills?
9. What feedback do you think you can get from students about integrated grammar teaching?
10. How do you think you can improve your teaching based on students' feedback and performance?
11. What key challenges do you think you might face?
12. Have you received any professional development or training on integrating grammar teaching with other language skills? If so, please describe.
13. What resources (e.g., textbooks, online materials, professional journals) do you find most helpful? How much space do you find in the structure of the foreign language curriculum in relation to this aspect?
14. How do you stay up to date on best practices for communicative grammar teaching?
15. What improvements or changes would you like to see in the materials available for integrating grammar with other language skills? What about the current curriculum?
16. How do you think you can overcome these challenges in your teaching context?