

CONSCIOUS GRAMMATICAL ANALYSIS IN LEARNING ENGLISH AND GERMAN: A CONTRASTIVE APPROACH

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The aim of the study is to substantiate the role of grammatical structure as an object of conscious analysis in learning English and German and to reveal the didactic potential of a contrastive approach for developing grammatical competence among philology students. The research is based on a theoretical synthesis of works in linguodidactics, applied linguistics, and second language acquisition, combined with elements of contrastive analysis of the grammatical systems of English and German. The methodology includes descriptive, analytical and contrastive methods, as well as generalisation of current approaches to language awareness and metalinguistic competence.

The scientific novelty of the study lies in treating grammatical structure not merely as an instrument of language use but as an independent object of conscious cognitive analysis. The article demonstrates that systematic engagement in conscious grammatical analysis contributes to the formation of stable mental representations of grammatical relations, increases linguistic accuracy and develops learners' ability to interpret syntactically complex academic discourse. It is shown that contrastive comparison of English and German activates analytical thinking, enhances sensitivity to different grammatical encoding strategies and promotes a structurally oriented approach to language analysis.

The conclusions indicate that conscious grammatical analysis is an effective means of developing linguistic and metalinguistic competence in philological education. Prospects for further research include empirical investigation of the impact of conscious grammatical analysis on academic reading, writing and syntactic processing speed.

Key words: grammatical structure, conscious grammatical analysis, conscious cognition, grammatical awareness, contrastive approach, teaching English and German.

Пономаренко Олена. Шишко Анжеліна. Свідомий граматичний аналіз у процесі вивчення англійської та німецької мов: контрастивний підхід

Мета роботи полягає в обґрунтуванні ролі граматичної структури як об'єкта свідомого аналізу у процесі вивчення англійської та німецької мов та у виявленні дидактичного потенціалу контрастивного підходу для розвитку граматичної компетентності студентів-філологів. Дослідження ґрунтується на поєднанні теоретичного аналізу праць із лінгводидактики, прикладної лінгвістики та теорії засвоєння другої мови з елементами контрастивного аналізу граматичних систем англійської та німецької мов. Методологію становлять описовий, аналітичний і зіставний методи, а також узагальнення сучасних підходів до розвитку language awareness та metalinguistic competence.

Наукова новизна дослідження полягає у розгляді граматичної структури не лише як інструмента мовленнєвої діяльності, а й як самостійного об'єкта свідомого пізнання, що потребує цілеспрямованої аналітичної роботи з боку здобувачів освіти. У статті доведено, що систематичне звернення до свідомого граматичного аналізу сприяє формуванню стійких ментальних репрезентацій граматичних відношень, підвищує точність мовного оформлення та розвиває здатність до інтерпретації складних синтаксичних конструкцій академічного дискурсу. Показано, що контрастивне зіставлення англійської та німецької мов активізує аналітичне мислення студентів, допомагає усвідомлювати різні способи граматичного кодування відношень і формує структурно орієнтований підхід до мовного аналізу.

Висновки засвідчують, що свідомий граматичний аналіз є ефективним засобом розвитку мовної та метамовної компетентності у підготовці філологів. Перспективи подальших досліджень пов'язані з емпіричною перевіркою впливу свідомого граматичного аналізу на читання академічних текстів, письмо та швидкість синтаксичної обробки.

Ключові слова: граматична структура, свідомий граматичний аналіз, свідоме пізнання, граматична усвідомленість, контрастивний підхід, навчання англійській та німецькій мовам.

Introduction. In contemporary philological education, grammar is increasingly viewed not merely as a set of formal rules to be memorised and reproduced, but as a complex system of structural relations that requires

conscious understanding and analytical interpretation, as noted by Larsen-Freeman [1, p. 258].

This shift is closely connected with the competence-based paradigm in higher education, which emphasises not

only procedural skills but also cognitive and metalinguistic awareness as essential components of professional language training.

Despite the long-standing tradition of teaching grammar in foreign language classrooms, a significant gap persists between intuitive language use and conscious grammatical processing. Many students demonstrate a satisfactory level of communicative fluency while experiencing persistent difficulties in analysing complex grammatical structures, especially in academically and professionally oriented texts. This problem becomes particularly evident in the context of advanced language learning, where the ability to interpret, decompose and restructure syntactically and morphologically complex constructions plays a crucial role in achieving high levels of linguistic accuracy and stylistic adequacy.

The relevance of conscious grammatical analysis is further reinforced by current trends in linguodidactics, which increasingly focus on developing language awareness and metalinguistic competence. These concepts imply not only the ability to use grammatical forms correctly, but also the capacity to reflect on language as a system, to recognise structural patterns and to understand the functional motivation behind grammatical choices.

In the context of the present study, the key concepts are interpreted in light of contemporary approaches in linguodidactics and second language acquisition. Conscious grammatical analysis is understood as a type of analytical language activity that involves the deliberate identification, interpretation and explanation of grammatical structures through learners' explicit awareness of form-meaning relationships and their functional use in context, as emphasised by Larsen-Freeman, Schmidt and Ellis [1; 4; 6]. Conscious cognition is regarded as a form of cognitively controlled processing that presupposes focused attention, awareness and reflective engagement with linguistic input, enabling the transformation of input into intake and the formation of explicit grammatical knowledge, which aligns with the views of Schmidt and Ellis [4; 6]. Grammatical awareness is interpreted as the ability to consciously recognise, analyse and reflect on grammatical forms and structures, as well as to understand their functional role in communication within the broader framework of language awareness, as discussed by Carter and Ellis [5; 6].

In this perspective, grammatical structure ceases to be merely an object of automatised usage and becomes an object of deliberate cognitive processing.

The contrastive study of languages offers particularly favourable conditions for the development of such analytical skills. English and German, despite belonging to the same Germanic language family, demonstrate significant differences in their grammatical organisation, especially in word order, syntactic framing, inflectional morphology, and the structure of verbal and nominal complexes. These differences make the two languages methodologically complementary and highly productive for training students' ability to identify, compare and interpret grammatical structures in a conscious and systematic way, as noted by Ekkehard König and Volker Gast [2, p. 243].

In the context of philological education, the contrastive perspective does not serve merely as a descriptive tool but functions as an important didactic instrument for sharpening grammatical awareness. The need to compare structurally different yet typologically related languages encourages students to move beyond surface-level pattern recognition and focus on deeper syntactic and morphological relations. As a result, grammatical structure is no longer perceived as a set of isolated forms, but as an internally organised system whose elements interact according to specific rules and principles.

Moreover, the growing complexity of modern academic and professional discourse places additional demands on learners' analytical abilities. Texts characterised by high degrees of nominalisation, syntactic compression, extended attributive groups and complex verbal constructions require not only a good command of vocabulary but also a well-developed capacity for structural analysis, as highlighted by Biber, Conrad and Reppen [3]. In this respect, conscious grammatical analysis becomes an indispensable component of advanced language proficiency.

Thus, the problem of treating grammatical structure as an object of conscious analysis in the process of learning English and German appears highly relevant from both theoretical and practical perspectives. It reflects the general tendency towards cognitively oriented language teaching and responds to the urgent need to develop learners' analytical and metalinguistic competences alongside their communicative skills.

Recent scholarship in second language acquisition and linguodidactics has increasingly foregrounded the role of consciousness, attention, and analytical reflection in the development of grammatical competence. One influential line of research is associated with the idea that successful acquisition of grammatical form is closely connected with learners' ability to notice and consciously register relevant features of input. R. Schmidt's formulation of the noticing hypothesis positioned awareness as a central condition for converting input into intake and, consequently, for the development of accurate grammatical representations. In this framework, grammar learning is not reduced to mechanical practice; rather, it presupposes directed attention to form and the ability to treat linguistic patterns as objects of reflection, as argued by Schmidt [4, p. 132].

A related strand of work addresses language awareness as an educational goal and a pedagogical tool. R. Carter's discussion of language awareness in ELT highlights the importance of cultivating learners' sensitivity to the forms and functions of language, thereby promoting a mode of learning in which grammatical structure becomes available for conscious inspection and interpretation rather than remaining implicit habits [5, p. 64]. This perspective is especially relevant for advanced learners in philological programmes, where accuracy, syntactic control, and the ability to explain structural choices are integral to professional language training.

Within instructed SLA, the distinction between implicit and explicit knowledge has also become a key conceptual

axis for understanding grammatical competence. Research synthesised in work associated with R. Ellis and colleagues has demonstrated that explicit knowledge (declarative, verbalizable understanding of form) and implicit knowledge (automatized, procedural control) contribute differently to performance and may be fostered through different instructional options. Importantly, these approaches do not frame explicit grammar work as inherently opposed to communicative teaching; instead, they suggest that carefully designed instruction can support both conscious understanding and eventual proceduralisation, as argued by Ellis, particularly when learners are expected to process structurally complex academic and professional discourse [6].

Against this theoretical background, contrastive linguistics provides a productive methodological lens for developing conscious grammatical analysis. In applied linguistics, contrastive analysis has been treated not merely as a tool for listing differences between languages, but as a mediator between linguistic description and pedagogical decision-making. C. James's foundational work on contrastive analysis argues for its applied value, especially where learners' difficulties can be linked to cross-linguistic contrasts and to the organisation of grammatical systems. For the purposes of philological education, the contrastive perspective is particularly valuable because it encourages learners to move beyond surface-level pattern recognition and engage with deeper structural relations (e.g., syntactic dependency, grammatical marking, and the distribution of functional categories) [7].

The English-German pairing is methodologically significant in this context. Although both languages are Germanic, they differ substantially in grammatical organisation: English relies more strongly on fixed word order and analytic means, while German exhibits richer inflectional morphology and structurally constrained word-order patterns (including sentence "framing" effects). These typological contrasts make English and German especially suitable for training grammatical awareness through systematic comparison, since learners must identify the structural "signals" that encode grammatical relations in each language. From a didactic standpoint, contrastive work therefore functions as a form of guided analytical practice that strengthens learners' capacity to interpret grammatical form as meaningful structure.

At the same time, recent pedagogical discussion cautions against oversimplified interpretations of consciousness-based models (e.g., treating noticing as a simplistic "proof" of traditional rule teaching). Instead, current views tend to emphasise that consciousness, attention, and explicit instruction interact in complex ways and are most effective when embedded in tasks that require learners to analyse, predict, and justify grammatical choices. This implies that the pedagogical value of conscious grammatical analysis lies not in isolated rule explanation, but in constructing learning conditions in which grammatical structure is repeatedly foregrounded as an object of inquiry.

Overall, the reviewed research supports the central premise of the present study: treating grammatical structure as an object of conscious analysis is theoretically grounded

(via the constructs of noticing, language awareness, and explicit/implicit knowledge) and methodologically strengthened by a contrastive perspective. The convergence of these approaches provides a solid foundation for examining how English and German grammar can be taught to develop learners' analytical skills, metalinguistic sensitivity, and structurally informed language competence within philological education.

The aim of this study is to substantiate the role of grammatical structure as an object of conscious analysis in the learning of English and German, and to demonstrate the didactic potential of a contrastive approach for developing students' grammatical awareness and analytical skills.

To achieve this aim, the following objectives are set:

- to clarify the theoretical foundations of conscious grammatical analysis in the context of modern concepts of grammatical competence and language awareness;
- to define the notion of grammatical structure as an object of analytical reflection rather than merely an instrument of language use;
- to identify the most relevant structural features of English and German that are particularly suitable for contrastive analysis in the learning process;
- to demonstrate how contrastive work with English and German grammatical structures contributes to the development of conscious language processing;
- to outline the didactic implications of treating grammatical structure as an object of systematic analysis in advanced foreign language teaching.

Materials and methods. Within the framework of contemporary linguodidactics, treating grammatical structure as an object of conscious analysis presupposes a fundamental reorientation of learners' cognitive activity. Instead of perceiving grammar as a set of automatised patterns or prescriptive rules, students are encouraged to view it as a structured system of relations whose elements interact at the syntactic, morphological, and functional levels. This approach is particularly relevant in philological education, where the ability to analyse and interpret complex linguistic forms constitutes an essential component of professional competence.

Discussion. From a theoretical point of view, grammatical structure may be understood as a multi-layered construct comprising syntactic organisation, morphological marking, and functional distribution of forms within an utterance. Conscious analysis thus involves several interrelated operations: identifying structural constituents, determining grammatical relations between them, and interpreting the communicative and semantic functions encoded by formal means. Such analytical activity transforms grammar from a background mechanism of language use into a foregrounded object of intellectual inquiry.

One of the most important domains for conscious grammatical analysis is sentence structure, especially in texts characterised by syntactic complexity. Academic and professionally oriented discourse frequently relies on extended clause structures, embedded constructions, and dense nominal groups, all of which require the reader to reconstruct hierarchical relations between constituents.

In this context, the ability to recognise syntactic heads, modifiers, and dependency relations becomes a prerequisite for adequate comprehension. Conscious attention to syntactic organisation enables learners to decompose complex structures into interpretable components and to reconstruct their internal logic.

At the morphological level, conscious analysis focuses on the grammatical marking of categories such as tense, aspect, voice, number, and case, as well as on the functional load carried by inflectional and derivational morphemes. In this perspective, grammatical structure appears not merely as a formal shell, but as a system of meaningful oppositions and contrasts. The learner's task is not only to recognise the presence of a particular form, but also to understand why this form is selected in a given context and what functional or semantic nuance it contributes to the utterance.

In this respect, the contrastive perspective plays a crucial methodological role. The systematic comparison of English and German grammatical structures creates favourable conditions for the development of analytical thinking, since the two languages encode grammatical relations by partially different means. English, with its predominantly analytic character, relies heavily on fixed word order and functional words to express syntactic relations, whereas German, being more inflectional, makes extensive use of morphological marking and allows for greater variability in constituent order within a rigid structural frame.

One of the most illustrative examples of this contrast is the organisation of the verbal complex and the overall sentence frame. In German, the finite verb occupies a structurally determined position (typically second in main clauses and final in subordinate clauses), which creates a characteristic "frame" structure. This feature forces the reader to retain and integrate information over longer syntactic distances, thus making sentence processing an inherently analytical activity. English, by contrast, tends to maintain a more linear and predictable word order, in which syntactic relations are signalled primarily through position rather than inflection.

The pedagogical value of this contrast lies in compelling students to pay conscious attention to structural signals that might otherwise go unnoticed. When working with German sentences, learners must actively reconstruct the syntactic skeleton of the utterance to identify the relations among its parts. This habit of structural reconstruction can subsequently be transferred to the analysis of complex English sentences, especially those containing multiple embeddings, extended attributive groups, or non-canonical word order patterns typical of academic prose.

A similar contrast can be observed in the domain of nominal structures. German is well known for its productive compounding and for the frequent use of extended nominal groups with multiple modifiers, while English often relies on sequences of premodifying nouns and adjectives to achieve syntactic compression. In both cases, the surface linear arrangement conceals a hierarchical internal structure that must be unpacked through conscious analysis. The ability to identify the semantic core of such groups and to determine

the scope and hierarchy of modifiers constitutes an important component of grammatical awareness.

Another area that benefits from conscious contrastive analysis is the system of verbal categories. Although both English and German possess rich tense and aspectual resources, their distribution and functional load differ significantly. English makes extensive use of periphrastic forms to encode aspectual and temporal distinctions, whereas German relies more heavily on contextual interpretation and on a more limited set of morphological tense forms. Comparing these systems encourages learners to reflect on the relationships among form, meaning, and function rather than memorising isolated paradigms.

From a didactic perspective, treating grammatical structure as an object of conscious analysis implies a rethinking of typical learning tasks. Instead of focusing exclusively on form reproduction or gap-filling, instruction should systematically include tasks that require learners to explain, justify, and compare grammatical choices. Such tasks may involve structural parsing of sentences, identification of syntactic dependencies, comparison of parallel constructions in English and German, and reconstruction of implicit grammatical relations in compressed academic texts.

Importantly, this approach does not contradict the goal of developing fluent and automatic language use. On the contrary, conscious analysis provides a cognitive foundation for more stable and flexible grammatical control. By repeatedly engaging in analytical operations, learners gradually build more differentiated and reliable mental representations of grammatical structure, which can later support faster, more accurate processing in real communicative situations.

Thus, presenting grammatical structure as an object of conscious analysis may be seen as a bridge between declarative knowledge of language and procedural mastery of linguistic forms. In the context of learning English and German, the contrastive perspective enhances this process by sharpening learners' sensitivity to structural variation and by fostering a habit of reflective, structurally informed language processing.

Results. The study has demonstrated that treating grammatical structure as an object of conscious analysis represents a theoretically grounded and methodologically productive approach to learning English and German in philological education. Rather than being reduced to a set of automatised patterns or prescriptive rules, grammar is shown to function as a structured system of relations that requires reflective interpretation and analytical processing.

The analysis has confirmed that conscious attention to grammatical structure enhances learners' ability to identify syntactic relations, interpret morphological marking, and reconstruct the internal organisation of complex utterances. The contrastive perspective, based on comparisons between English and German, has been shown to be particularly effective in fostering grammatical awareness, as it directs learners' attention to different ways of encoding grammatical relations, thereby strengthening their sensitivity to structural variation across languages.

It has been argued that the pedagogical value of conscious grammatical analysis lies not in isolated rule explanation, but in systematic engagement with grammatical structure as an object of inquiry. Such engagement supports the development of stable, differentiated mental representations of grammatical form and contributes to more accurate and flexible language processing at advanced stages of learning.

From a broader perspective, the proposed approach helps to bridge the gap between declarative knowledge about language and procedural mastery of linguistic forms. By integrating analytical reflection into the learning process, students acquire not only greater control over grammatical structures but also a deeper understanding of the principles underlying their use.

The aim of the study has been achieved, as the role of grammatical structure as an object of conscious

analysis has been substantiated, and the didactic potential of the contrastive approach has been demonstrated. The results obtained through descriptive, analytical and contrastive methods confirm that conscious grammatical analysis enhances grammatical awareness and analytical language processing.

As for prospects for further research, future studies may empirically investigate the impact of conscious grammatical analysis on various aspects of language proficiency, including reading comprehension, academic writing, and syntactic processing speed. Another promising direction is the development and evaluation of instructional models that systematically integrate contrastive analysis into advanced grammar teaching. Such research would enable refinement of the theoretical assumptions outlined in the present study and assessment of their practical effectiveness across diverse educational contexts.

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Дата першого надходження статті до видання: 20.02.2026

Дата прийняття статті до друку після рецензування: 18.03.2026

Дата публікації (оприлюднення) статті: 25.05.2026

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