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**THE OPTIMUM WAY FOR TEACHING ENGLISH GRAMMAR**

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Анализ строения английского языка позволил выявить закономерность усложнения английского сказуемого и на основе этой закономерности разработать оптимальную последовательность изучения английского языка, которая представлена в виде схемы с пошаговым описанием последовательности. В основе изучения английского языка лежит изучение его грамматики с одновременным закреплением всех грамматических нюансов в разговорной речи. Сначала изучается базовая грамматика на основе глаголов *to be* и *to have*, затем изучаются модальные глаголы и только после этого изучаются видовременные формы английского глагола. Практическое использование данной последовательности показало значительное сокращение сроков обучения.

*Ключевые слова:* английский язык; грамматика английского языка; закономерность усложнения грамматики английского языка; оптимальная последовательность изучения английского языка.

**Introduction**

Having started teaching English language at higher educational establishments (Institutes and Universities, i.e. higher school) at different faculties using different textbooks, the author of this article was surprised to learn that there is no unified system of teaching of the English language. Children in our country study English at secondary and higher school more than 10 years, and as a result they are able neither to talk, nor to translate. Japanese linguists came to the conclusion, that the English language can be mastered over a period of 6.5 years.

In conditions of intensive multicultural communication in the modern world, where the English language is at the global level now, it is necessary to raise the process of teaching English language, as a foreign language, to a higher level.

The author of this article, having also higher technical education, has decided to try to optimize the process of the English language teaching. Simply speaking, optimization of technological processes shows what minimum quantity of components should be used and in what sequence they must be used so that a product of the best quality could be obtained. According to this rule the author has decided to define: 1) What minimum quantity of words and of English grammar is necessary to start talking, and 2) In what sequence it is necessary to study grammar rules so that a person could speak at a more and more high grammatical level.

The analysis of grammatical structure of the English language and application of optimization methods to the process of complication of English grammar have allowed to reveal natural logic of English grammar.

**Theoretical framework**

First let's consider a structure of any language. As oral speech is primary, a language, first of all, consists of sounds, sounds are combined into words. A certain sequence of words makes a sentence. As a rule, in the English sentence there must be both a subject and a predicate, and a subject always precedes a predicate, unlike the Russian sentence which can consist of one noun, for example: «Ночь. Фонарь. Аптека.», or one verb: «Светает.». Thus, the minimum English sentence consists of two words – a subject and a predicate (Figure 1):

An elementary subject is a noun. As a rule an English noun is accompanied by an article. A noun, an adjective, a pronoun, a numeral and a participle can be attributed to a noun. The English noun does not change according to a gender or a case, therefore if the noun is not a subject in the sentence it is preceded by a preposition (Figure 2).

The right part of the scheme with an article, attributes and a noun describes a subject. When we add a preposition in front we have an object – a minor part of the sentence.

It is known that in Russian philology there is still no general opinion which part of the sentence is senior – the subject or the predicate. My practical experience of being a professional translator of English scientific and technical texts has allowed me to come to the conclusion that in the English sentence the predominant role is played by a predicate.

In the English sentence a predicate can contain from one to four parts (verbs and participles).

The gradual complication of the English verb forms and of the English predicate has a character of a law that was studied earlier [1, 2499].

### A language structure

Sounds → Words → A sentence

The minimal English sentence = a subject + a predicate

Figure 1

### A noun

A noun is governed by a preposition: of place  
of direction

in genitive case by - **of**

in instrumental case by - **by**

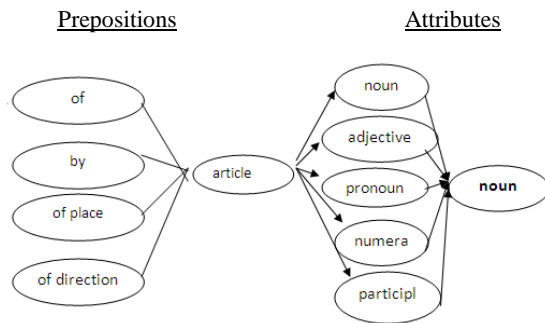


Figure 2

### The optimum way of teaching English grammar

On the basis of the revealed Principle of inherent complication of the English predicate and the carried out linguistic optimization we suggest the following consecution of teaching and studying of English grammar with step by step complication (Figure 3).

Explanations to the scheme (Figure 3): When an adult person begins to study a foreign language, first of all he is given an alphabet to show the system of letters by which the sounds of the given language are designated. When studying the English language, where one sound can be designated by several letters or one letter depending on its position in a word can designate several different sounds, it is necessary to study transcription, i.e. the phonetic script.

As the role of a subject is most often played by a noun we must begin studying English with a noun in the singular form. Then we must explain the concept of an article. After that we explain that a noun may be given attributes by another noun, an adjective, demonstrative pronouns *this* and *that*, the simplest possessive pronouns *my*, *his* or a noun in the possessive case: 's.

The next stage is a construction of a sentence – now we need a predicate. The revealed principle shows that the main predicate of the English lan-

guage is the verb *to be*. For nouns in third person singular the verb *to be* has the form *is*. Using the verbal form *is*, at this stage it is already possible to make 4 types of affirmative sentences answering the following questions:

1. **Who or what is the subject in this world?**

For example: a) *This is a man. That is a book.* b) *The Earth is a planet.* Both a noun, and a demonstrative pronoun can act here as a subject.

2. **What kind of thing is it?** For example: c) *The man is clever. The Earth is round.* To construct such sentence we need an adjective.

3. **Where is it?** For example: d) *The man is on the Earth. The Earth is in space.* To construct such sentence we need a preposition.

Hence, to construct an elementary English sentence we need a noun, an article, a preposition of place, a demonstrative pronoun, an adjective and a verb. For example: a) *This is a man. That is a woman.* b) *The Earth is a planet.* c) *The bag is big.* d) *The pen is on the desk.*

The further gradual, step-by-step complication of English grammar requires “stringing” of grammatical rules into sentences with the verbal form *is*. At this stage of teaching and studying different variants of sentences with the given set of parts of speech are studied and some adverbs are added.

The previous 4 types of sentences can be transformed into interrogative («the general question», demanding the answers “yes” or “no”), and negative sentences, that is: *Is this a man?*, - *This is not a man.*, *Is the bag big?* – *The bag is not big.*, *Is the pen on the desk?* – *The pen is not on the desk.* We can also construct alternative questions: *Is the pen in the box or on the desk?* and negative interrogative sentences: *Is the bag not big?* = *Isn't the bag big?*

The following stage is the complication of the previous elementary sentences by means of the adverb *like*, pair conjunctions *as ... as*, *not as ... as*, degrees of comparison of adjectives, the combination *the ... the ...* and substitutes of the previous noun *one* and *that*. The preposition *for* requires the study of personal pronouns in the oblique case: *me*, *him*, *us*, *them*.

Next it is necessary to study personal pronouns *he*, *she*, *it*. They allow construction of short answers “yes” and “no”, tail-questions and impersonal sentences. After this special questions are studied. Then it is possible to study the emphatic construction *It is ... who (that) ...*

Further, the names of the days of the week and of the months are learned, followed by cardinal and ordinal numerals. With their help it is possible to speak about dates, time and age.

At this stage, we finish studying that part of grammar which can be used with the verbal form *is*, i.e. sentences in the third person singular.

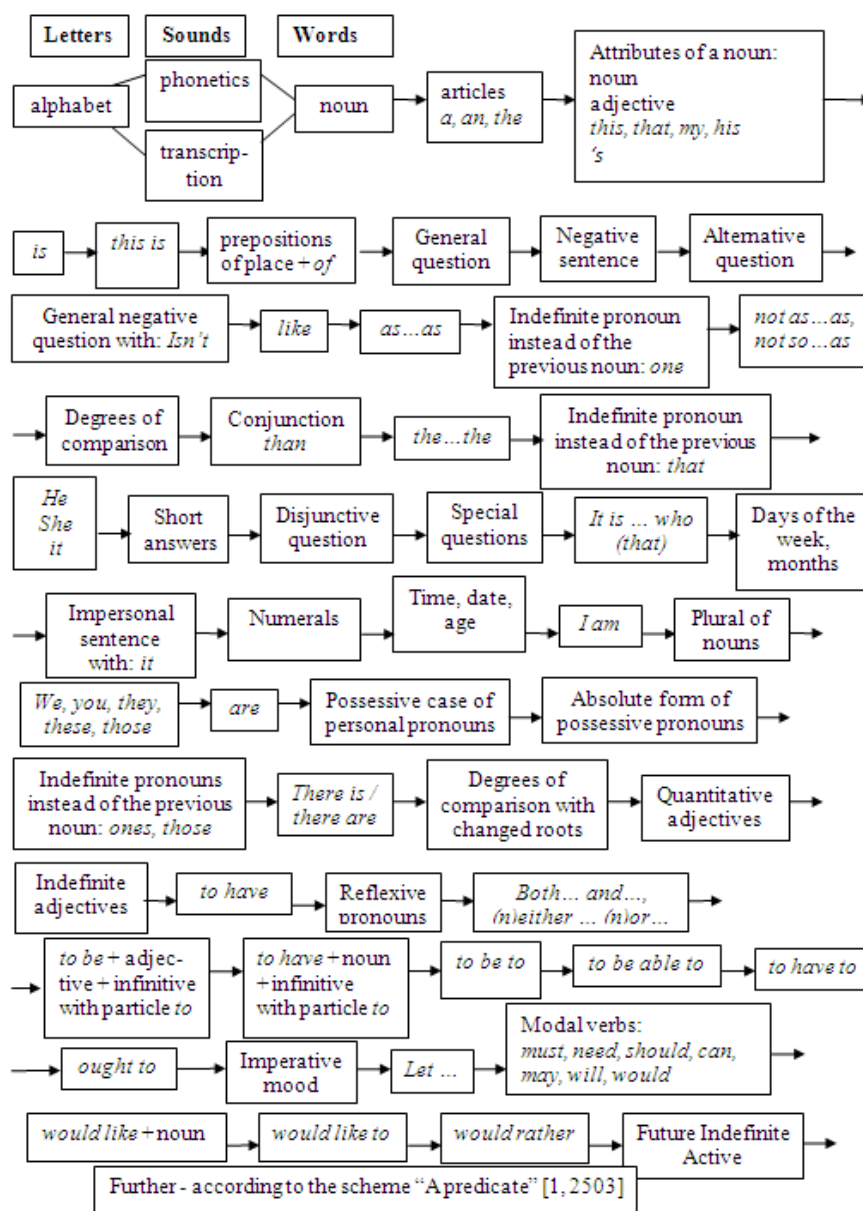


Figure 3

Subsequently, we study sentences in the first person singular – *I am ...*. Here we have a chance to review all the previous grammar in the new type of sentences.

By this time all the grammar pertaining to the singular comes to an end, and it is necessary to examine the plural. Plural nouns, plural demonstrative pronouns, plural personal pronouns in nominative, oblique and possessive cases, and substitutes of the previous noun *ones* and *those* in plural are studied. Correspondingly the verbal form *are* is studied. At this stage all the previous grammar is reviewed taking into account plural number.

By that time students achieve good knowledge of the studied grammar material and can use it fluently enough in their speech.

All the grammar that can be studied with the verb *to be* comes to an end here. Now we can study

the turn of speech *there is / there are*. Using it we can study quantitative and indefinite adjectives. At this stage the part of grammar where the verb *to be* acts in the role of a predicate comes to an end.

After this we pass to a new predicate – the verb *to have*. With it the conjunction pairs *both ... and ...*, *either ... or ...*, *neither ... nor ...* and reflexive pronouns are studied.

All the previous grammar, that we have studied, may be called **basic English grammar**. It includes all parts of speech except verbs. We have studied only one adverb, *like*, that influences a sentence structure. Other adverbs are minor parts of speech. In principle they must be studied after studying all kinds of a predicate. But in practice, to enrich speech, they may begin to be studied at any stage.

Now we begin to study notional verbs of action. First we study them in sentences in their simplest

form – in the form of an infinitive, for example: *It's good to read a lot. I have some letters to write.* Then we study a combination of equivalents of the modal verbs *to be to, to have to, ought to, to be able to* with an infinitive (with the particle *to*). After that, we study an infinitive without the particle *to*: the imperative mood, the verb *to let*, a combination with modal verbs *must, should, can, may, will, would*, and with the expression *would rather*. When we know the modal verb *would*, we may study the expression *would like smth.* and the more complex combination *would like to do smth.*

The following stage entails the study of *the Future Indefinite Active Tense* i.e. a combination of auxiliary verbs *shall* and *will* with an infinitive without the particle *to*. Here we also study *the Future Tense* of impersonal sentences, of the speech turn *there is / there are*, of the equivalents of modal verbs *to be able to* and *to have to*.

After that, it is possible to move on to studying various forms of the verbs of action.

All the tense-aspectual forms of the English verb are studied in the following consecution:

1. The Present Indefinite Active Tense (verbs have an ending -s).
  2. The Past Indefinite Active Tense (regular verbs have an ending *-ed*, here we study the 2<sup>nd</sup> form of irregular verbs).
  3. The Future Indefinite Active in the Past Tense (we study the new meanings of the verbs *should* and *would*).
  4. Participle I (verbs have a new ending *-ing*).
- Further, the verb combination of the verb **to be** with **Participle I** of a notional verb is studied.
5. The Present Continuous Active Tense.
  6. The Past Continuous Active Tense.
  7. The Future Continuous Active Tense.
  8. The Future Continuous Active in the Past Tense.
  9. Participle II (the 3rd form of a verb is studied).

The following stage is a verb combination of the verb **to be** with **Participle II** of a notional verb.

10. The Present Indefinite Passive Tense.
11. The Past Indefinite Passive Tense.
12. The Future Indefinite Passive Tense.
13. The Future Indefinite Passive in the Past Tense.

Then we move on to the verb combination of the verb **to be** with **Participle I** of the verb **to be (being)** + **Participle II** of a notional verb.

14. The Present Continuous Passive Tense.
15. The Past Continuous Passive Tense.

After that the verb combination of the verb **to have** with **Participle II** of a notional verb is studied.

16. The Present Perfect Active Tense.
17. The Past Perfect Active Tense.
18. The Future Perfect Active Tense.

19. The Future Perfect Active in the Past Tense.

The next stage is a verb combination of the verb **to have** with **Participle II** of the verb **to be (been)** + **Participle I** of a notional verb.

20. The Present Perfect Continuous Active Tense.
21. The Past Perfect Continuous Active Tense.
22. The Future Perfect Continuous Active Tense.
23. The Future Perfect Continuous Active in the Past Tense.

Further, the verb combination of the verb **to have** with **Participle II** of the verb **to be (been)** + **Participle II** of a notional verb is studied.

24. The Present Perfect Passive Tense.
25. The Past Perfect Passive Tense.
26. The Future Perfect Passive Tense.
27. The Future Perfect Passive in the Past Tense.

It is significant, that in the course of studying each tense-aspectual form of a verb, all possible grammatical nuances for using of the given tense are studied. For example, when studying the Present Indefinite Active Tense we look at the following: 1) the place of adverbs in sentences, 2) interrogative and 3) negative forms: a) of word-combinations of the type *to have dinner* and b) of obligation expression *to have to*, 4) the negative form of an imperative mood, 5) impersonal sentences of the type *It rains*. In addition, complex object with the verbs *to make, to want, to expect*, subjunctive mood with the verb *to wish*, conditional sentences, direct and indirect speech are studied.

When studying the Past Indefinite Active Tense the behaviour of all the studied verbs in the Past Tense is studied. In addition, subordinate clauses with the conjunctions *so that, so as, as if*, with the turn of speech *used to* are studied. The sequence of the Present and the Past Tenses is studied; the subjunctive mood expressing an unreal condition, concerning the Present or the Future Tense and the subjunctive mood after the verb *to wish*, expressing regret concerning the Present Tense, are studied.

Participle I is studied as a definition, as an adverbial modifier. Translation of the *-ing*-form verbal noun and of gerund is given. The word-combination *would you mind* for expressing a polite request is studied.

When studying the Present Continuous Active Tense sentences with the expression *to be going to do something*, the use of the Present Continuous Tense for expressing the Future Tense, sentences with an infinitive in the *Continuous* form and a combination of modal verbs *can, must* and *may* with an infinitive in the *Continuous* form are studied.

Participle II is studied as a definition, then complex objects with Participle II are studied. Sen-

tences with an infinitive of the type *to be* + *Participle II*, and combination of the construction *to be* + *Participle II* with modal verbs are studied.

When studying the Indefinite Passive Tense the equivalent of the modal verb *may* – *to be allowed to* is examined, followed by compound sentences with verbs in the passive voice.

At present instead of the term *Indefinite* which was used when I studied English the term *Simple* is used. But it is not simple at all for beginning students to understand and to master the usage of the auxiliary verb *to do* in the Present and Past Indefinite Tenses. Examples of the sentences in the Indefinite Passive Tense clearly demonstrate their uncertainty. The sentence *This grammar material was explained*. has two meanings: 1. *This grammar material was explained at several lessons last month but the explanation was not finished*. The sentence demonstrates regularity of the action and that it is not finished. 2. *This grammar material was explained to me yesterday and I understood it at once*. The action was finished and it took place only once. We see here the uncertainty of the time and uncertainty of the action and this is distinctly reflected in the term *Indefinite* which I prefer to use.

When studying the Present Perfect Active Tense, the word combination *to have got* is studied, followed by combinations of verbs in the Present Perfect Active with modal verbs *must, need, should, ought to, would, can, could, may* and *might*. An infinitive in the form of *to have* + *Participle II*, and *Participle I Perfect* – are studied.

When studying the Past Perfect Active Tense subordinate clause of comparison with the conjunction *as if* and the subjunctive mood in the form of the Past Perfect are studied. Besides the subjunctive mood in the form of the Past Perfect is studied in the combination with modal verbs.

When studying the Future Perfect Active in the Past, all variants of the subjunctive mood of corresponding complexity are studied.

When studying the Present Perfect Continuous Active Tense, combinations of modal verbs with

verbs in the given tense and an infinitive of the Perfect Continuous in compound sentences are studied.

When studying the Present Perfect Passive Tense combinations of modal verbs with verbs in the given tense are also studied.

We have described above the revealed consecution of inherent development (complication) of English grammar. To my mind that is an **optimum** consecution of teaching and studying English grammar. This consecution is revealed basing on the peculiarities of the English language itself. That's why we suppose that English grammar should be studied in this optimum scientifically proved way by students all over the world no matter what native language they speak.

### Conclusion

The described consecution of teaching English grammar became the basis of "Lexico-grammatical manual on the English language" written by the author of this article for the Russian speaking students [2-5]. The first part of this manual is also written for the Tatar speaking students.

Practical work with students groups showed that English grammar may be studied during the period of three years. Besides the students master spoken English and translation of texts on their speciality from English into Russian.

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### THE OPTIMUM WAY FOR TEACHING ENGLISH GRAMMAR

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By analyzing the English language structure, we have revealed the pattern of inherent development (increasing complexity) of the English predicate. Based on this pattern, the optimum sequence for learning English has been developed, which is presented as a diagram, with a step-by-step description of the sequence. The basis for learning English is the study of its grammar and consolidation of grammar rules in colloquial speech. First, the basic English grammar is studied with the help of the verbs **to be** and **to have**. Next, all the modal verbs are introduced, and only after that the tense and aspect forms of the English verb are studied. Practical application of this sequence of teaching English has demonstrated that the duration of training can be reduced significantly.

*Keywords:* English, English grammar, principle of inherent development (increasing complexity) of English grammar, optimum sequence for teaching English grammar.

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