

A word cloud on a black background with various grammar terms in different colors and sizes. The most prominent words are 'verbs' in large red letters, 'sentences' in large blue letters, and 'tense' in large orange letters. Other visible words include 'subject', 'relating', 'phrases', 'complex', 'modal', 'reversal', 'adverbial', 'noun', 'simple', 'nouns', 'past', 'formation', 'adjectives', 'conjunctions', 'connectives', 'question', 'present', 'prepositional', 'articles', 'adverbs', 'action', 'sentence', 'compound', 'pronouns', and 'formation'.

What do teachers need to know about grammar?

Sue Edwards Waikato Institute of Technology (Wintec), Hamilton

Overview

- Define: 'teachers', 'grammar', 'know',
- Previous research in this area
- Methodology
- Findings
- Conclusions and Further Research

Defining terms



- Which teachers?
- What is grammar?
- What does it mean to 'know about' grammar?

Which teachers?



Mainstream primary school teachers in New Zealand

Why?

- There are more ELLs in NZ primary schools than in secondary schools
- ELLs spend most of their time in the mainstream classroom



Grammar in context

- “Teacher knowledge about language can be supplemented with information from grammar texts which promote learning and teaching at **whole text level**, rather than isolated sentences and words which are divorced from curriculum-related texts” (ELIP, p. 5).
- “All texts promote a focus on **word, sentence** and **whole text** analysis.” (ELIP, p. 4)

What does it mean to ‘know’ something?

	To know THAT	To know HOW	To know WHEN and WHY
Biggs & Moore (1993, as cited in ELLP, 2008)	Declarative knowledge	Procedural knowledge	Conditional knowledge
Shulman (1987)	Content knowledge	General pedagogical knowledge	Pedagogical content knowledge

What knowledge should teachers have?

Have **content and pedagogical content knowledge** for supporting English as an Additional Language (EAL) learners to succeed in the curriculum.

(NZ Graduating Teacher Standards, 2007).

Proposed framework for mainstream teachers' grammatical knowledge (Myhill, Jones & Watson, 2013, p. 80)

Grammatical Content knowledge (declarative)	Metalinguistic pedagogical content knowledge	Grammatical pedagogical content knowledge (procedural)
Teachers' explicit knowledge of grammar in terms of morphology and syntax. It is declarative knowledge, which is conscious and can be articulated, and uses the metalanguage of grammatical terminology.	Teachers' knowledge about how to teach language in order to address learners' needs.	Teachers' knowledge about how and when to teach grammar in order to address learners' language needs. This includes procedural knowledge of the inter-relationship between grammatical constructions and how texts work to shape meaning.

What do teachers need to know about grammar?

What grammatical content knowledge are mainstream primary teachers in New Zealand expected to possess, in order to effectively utilise Ministry of Education resources for supporting ELLs?



Previous studies of teacher Knowledge about Grammar (KAG)

Jones & Chen (2012)

- How prepared are teachers to enact the (new) curriculum in terms of their knowledge of grammar and their related teaching practices?

Myhill, Jones & Watson (2013);

- How does teachers' grammatical knowledge impact on the teaching of writing?

Teacher KAG: New Zealand

Jeurisson (2010)

Overview of implicit and explicit references to grammar in:

- The NZ Curriculum (English) (2007)
- The Literacy Learning Progressions (2010)
- The English Language Learning Progressions (2008)

(2012)

- Study of teacher KAG (42 primary teachers)

The current study

Scope of investigation

Findings



Scope: I looked at...

- (MOE, 2008) □ ELLP: English Language Learning Progressions
- (MOE, 2008) □ ELIP: English Language Intensive Programme (Primary_
- (MOE, 2009) □ SELLIPS: Supporting English Language Learning in Primary Schools

Scope: I looked for....any reference to:

Word Classes

- e.g. nouns, verbs, adjectives

Word structure

- e.g. plurals, comparative adjectives, verb tenses

Phrases

- e.g. noun phrases, adverbial phrases, prepositional phrases

Sentence (and clause) structure

- e.g. compound sentences, question formation, relative clauses

Findings

Number and density of grammatical references

→ How often are grammatical words referred to?

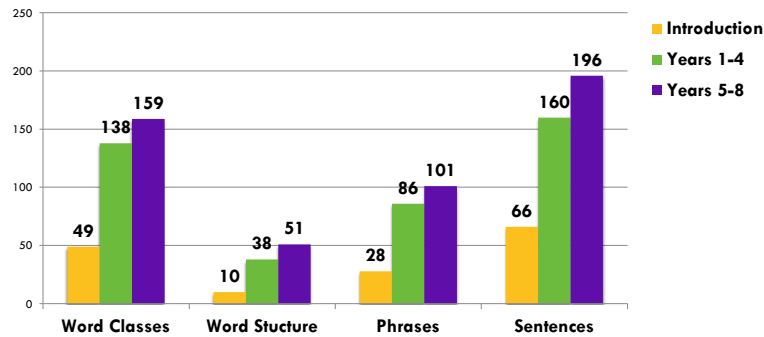
Number of different grammatical items

→ How much do I need to know?

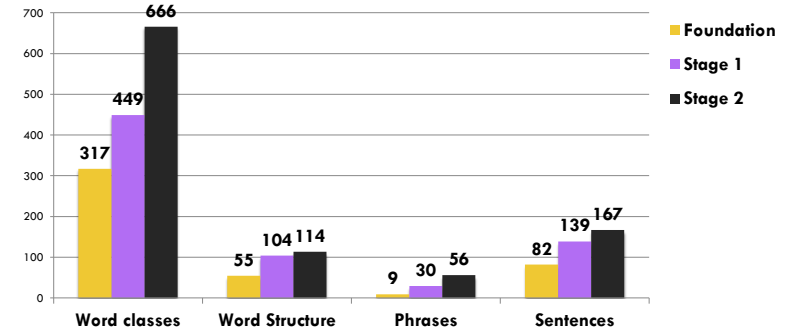
Frequency of reference to grammatical items

→ Which bits of grammar are most important?

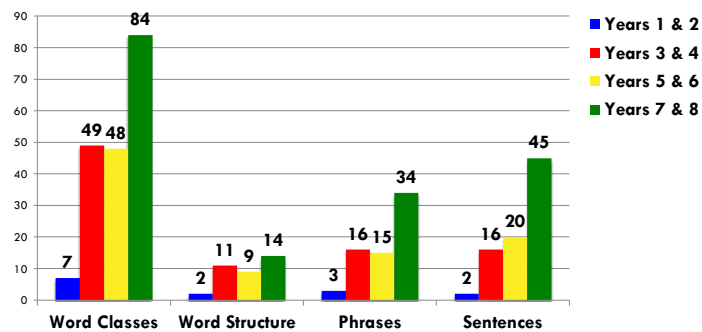
Number of grammatical items: ELLP (2008)



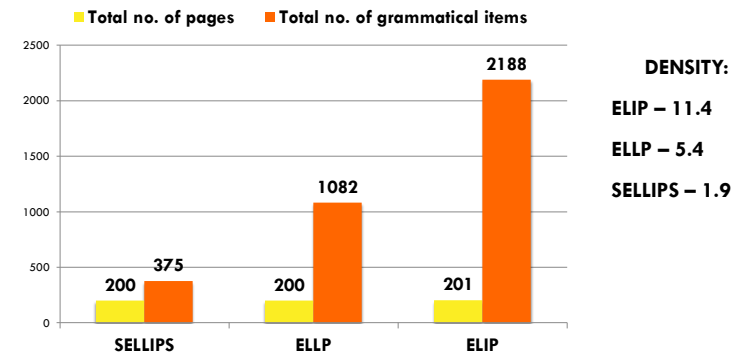
Number of grammatical items: ELIP (2008)



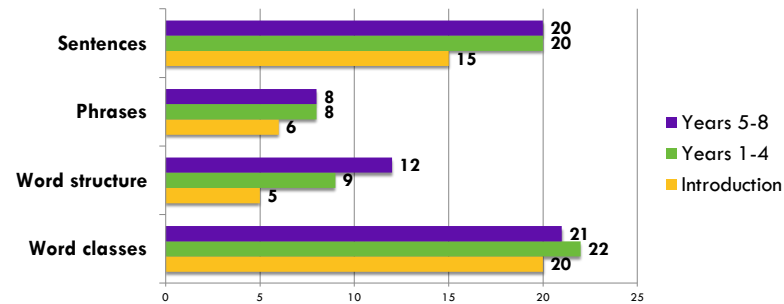
Number of grammatical items: SELLIPS (2009)



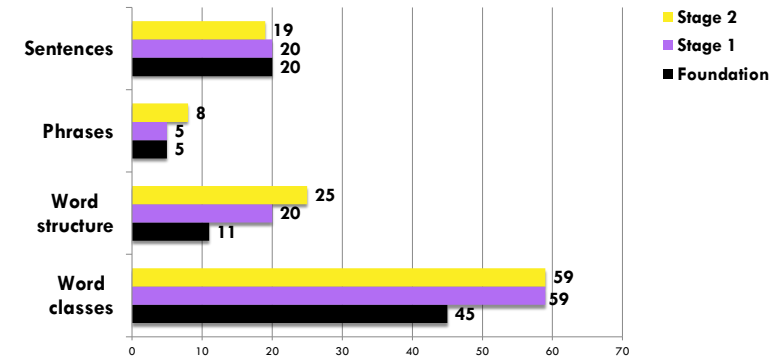
Density of grammatical items



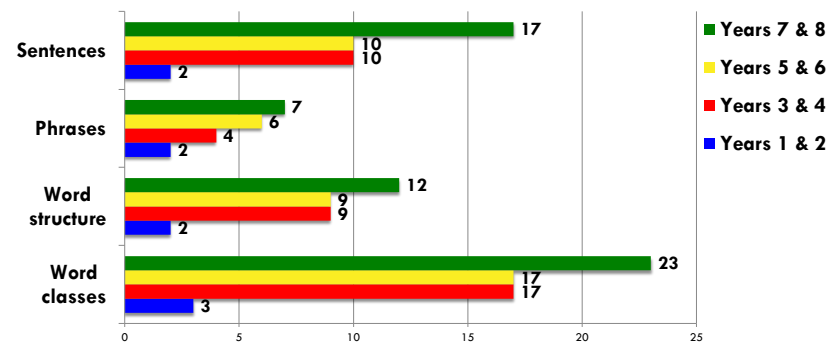
No. of different grammatical items: ELLP



No. of different grammatical items: ELIP



No. of different grammatical items: SELLIPS



Most frequently used grammatical items

Rank	ELLP	No.	ELIP	No.	SELLIPS	No.
1	nouns	69	nouns	109	noun phrases	32
2	simple sentences	61	adjectives	90	nouns	26
3	phrases	54	pronouns	64	adjectives	24
4	verbs	53	action verbs	64	verbs	21
5	compound sentences	49	adverbial phrases	61	adverbial phrases	19
6	noun phrases	38	wh' questions	56	modals	18
7	verb phrases	38	articles	55	adverbs	16
8	complex sentences	36	present tense	52	conjunctions	13
9	articles	27	prepositions	51	simple sentences	13
10	pronouns	27	definite articles	51	pronouns	10

Conclusions

- There are differing amounts and density of grammatical terminology in the three documents
- The ELIP document contains more terminology and has the highest density of terminology
- The SELLIPS documents has the least amount and density of terminology
- Grammatical terminology related to word classes and sentences is the most frequently occurring
- Grammatical terminology related to word structure and phrases is the least frequently occurring
- Certain grammatical items appear more frequently than others

Lack of information in documents

Adverbial phrase

Source	Definition	Example/s
ELLP (n=18)	A group of words functioning as an adverb in a sentence	e.g. I'm going to the shop to buy a drink.
SELLIPS (n=19)	Not provided	e.g. The small snail crawls onto the leaf
ELIP (n=61)	Not provided	e.g. on the beach

Where do teachers go to increase GCK?

- ▣ ELLP – contains a glossary – 33 items of syntax & morphology
- ▣ SELLIPS – ‘refer to Exploring Language (1996)’ (p. 6)
- ▣ ELIP – ‘a select list of helpful grammar texts can be found on ESOL Online’ (p.5)
- ▣ Are these adequate? Do they contain the same information?

What is an adverbial phrase?

Source	Definition and examples
ELLP (MOE, 2008)	A group of words functioning as an adverb in a sentence e.g. I'm going to the shop to buy a drink.
Exploring Language (MOE, 1996)	Just as an adjective can have accompanying modifiers, so an adverb can also e.g. She smiled at him very sweetly indeed.
A Grammar Companion for Primary teachers (Derewianka, 1998)	Adverbial phrases are expressed by a group of words generally beginning with a preposition e.g. near the house.

Use of different terminology

ELIP	ELLP
Possessive pronouns e.g. my name, your name (Foundation, Oral Interaction, p, 2b)	Possessive adjective: a word that occurs before a noun and indicates the possession of this noun – “his”, “her”, “their”, “your”, “our” (Years 1-4, Glossary, p. 68)
Use of detailed noun groups to build up the description, e.g. front right hand corner (Stage 2 Writing, p. 19c)	The writer uses some expanded noun phrases – <i>big stong hen; the old cane; littel chics.</i> (Years 1-4, p. 61)

Something to aim for?

- **Teachers who are:** “successful in integrating grammar into a content-based instructional framework”
- **Teachers who know:**
- “how to mine a content-area text for potential grammatical and lexico-grammatical items to teach; how to explain and practise structures within the rich context in which they were found; how to achieve a proper balance between letting content or letting student error patterns drive the selection of grammar structures to be taught” (Petraki & Hill, 2010, p.249).

Further research

- **Confirm levels of teacher GCK**
- **How much PGCK do teachers have?**
- **How can teachers develop their GCK and also their PGCK?**
- **Provide more materials or ways for teachers’ to develop knowledge of grammatical terms (in context)**
- **Develop a common understanding among teachers of grammatical terms**

Selected references

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