

CONCLUSION

The treatise deals with acquisition of grammar in English as a foreign language trying to contribute to what has already been discovered in the field. Similarly to other works, it attempted to further explore possible links among selected acquired aspects of English grammar studied by Slovak learners. It discusses the possibility of the existence of a general factor underlying grammar acquisition by means of studying the performance of the research subjects in the research tasks.

The **aim of the research** was two-fold: (1) To find out to what extent the formation and use of active verb forms, auxiliary verbs, modal verbs, conditional clauses, passive voice, countability in nouns, articles and prepositions are interconnected in English grammar when acquired by Slovak learners and (2) To find out the possible existence and number of underlying factors influencing the acquisition of the grammatical aspects listed in 1.

As characterised in **Chapter 2**, those grammatical areas were selected for the research, which the students at the target level were expected to be familiar with. A group of 143 students (60 boys and 83 girls) aged 15 attending 8-year secondary comprehensive schools in Slovakia were examined by means of a test specially compiled for this purpose. The students were subjected to a detailed process of selection (based on a questionnaire) to guarantee the highest possible homogeneity of the target group. The results of these were subjected to statistical analysis (cf. **Chapter 3**), by means of which all grammatical subtests were correlated against each other, attempting to find out how closely they are interconnected. The aim was achieved by finding out that significant and considerably high correlations (found by applying correlation analysis) exist among most of the observed grammatical aspects. As expected, in those aspects which concern correct use of verb structures (**active verb forms**, **passive voice**, **auxiliary verbs** and **modal verbs**), the highest correlations were observed. However, high correlations were also calculated between such aspects of grammar which do not necessarily show an explicit relationship (e.g. **prepositions** with **auxiliary verbs** and **passive voice**), which suggests the existence of a common intrinsic factor underlying the use of English grammar as such determining individual performance.

The only grammatical aspect seemingly isolated from the others is **conditional clauses**. This could, however, be caused by inappropriate

composition of the tasks aimed at this aspect of grammar or form of testing this aspect (multiple choice). This is why further research would be useful in this area to find out more about how it is related to other aspects of grammar.

Summarising the above findings, the following **conclusion** can be drawn: The observed grammatical aspects (**active verb forms, auxiliary verbs, modal verbs, conditional clauses, passive voice, countable/uncountable nouns, grammatical articles and prepositions**) are mutually interconnected from the viewpoint of performance (and, by implication, acquisition). Even though interconnections among some of them are obvious, other correlations could not be predicted, which implies that the process of acquisition of particular aspects in English grammar is influenced by a common intrinsic factor, which, in the thesis, was named **grammatical performance (GP) factor**.

Although the determined aim was achieved, there is still much more yet to be explored. In the same field, the following suggestions can be considered and studied further:

- (1) The same age group of students could be subjected to tests of cognitive processes in order to find out whether and, if so, which of these are interconnected with performance in the grammatical aspects tested. Applying factor analysis, these could be inspected in greater detail.
- (2) To involve students who use English significantly in their leisure time (computer games, using English-language media, chatting on the internet, etc.) in the research to find out if passive acquisition of language enhances performance in grammatical subtests.
- (3) Using two groups of students, one with considerably high levels of academic achievement, the other one with low academic achievement, to find out whether this characteristic is connected with the results in English grammar performance.
- (4) By means of further research to find out why *conditional clauses* reached correlation coefficients so much different when compared to the other variables, which caused considerable isolation.

In writing this treatise I attempted to contribute to an area of linguistics which has been the source of many works and many theories. I hope that, in some way, it will help to explain how language structures are interconnected when acquired by learners and how competence in some aspects can enhance students' skill in other areas.