

Evaluation of Side by Side from a Grammatical Perspective

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Abstract

This paper evaluates the grammar exercises in the Side by Side textbook published by Longman. It analyzes the coverage of grammatical elements and the types of grammar tasks in the textbook. The paper finds that Side by Side textbook offers comprehensive coverage of essential grammatical concepts like tenses, nouns, verbs, pronouns, adjectives, adverbs, and clauses. However, it lacks determiners and focuses on mechanical and meaningful aspects. The proportion of communicative exercises is smaller. To reach its full potential, textbooks should consider the perspectives of teachers, students, and editors. The author recommends that textbook compilers consider the age and interests of target students and maintain a balanced proportion of different tasks. However, the textbook lacks warm-up or lead-in content in the grammar section and in the content setting for listening, speaking, reading, writing, and other skills. This lack of content is often overlooked in textbooks and deserves attention from textbook editors.

Keywords

Grammar Exercises, Side by Side Textbook, Grammatical Elements, Communicative Exercises, Textbook Evaluation

1. Introduction

This paper thoroughly examines and investigates the grammar exercises found in the Side by Side textbook published by Longman Publishing House. It provides a comprehensive statistical analysis of the textbook, focusing on two key areas: grammar knowledge and grammar task forms. The choice of evaluating the grammar exercises in the Side by Side textbook published by Longman seems well-founded for several reasons: 1) The textbook offers comprehensive coverage of essential grammatical concepts, such as tenses, nouns, verbs, pronouns, etc.

This comprehensive coverage provides a solid foundation for evaluating the effectiveness of the grammar exercises; 2) The evaluation of this widely used textbook used by English learners in China provides valuable insights into the challenges and preferences of students within this educational context. Understanding the specific needs and experiences of Chinese learners can inform recommendations for improving the design and content of grammar exercises, and c) The paper discusses the importance of grammar exercises in enhancing learners' awareness of grammatical choices and promoting effective communication. By evaluating the grammar exercises in the Side by Side textbook, the study may contribute to the broader discourse on effective language teaching methodologies and materials. Overall, the chosen topic of evaluating the grammar exercises in the Side by Side textbook offers a rich opportunity to assess the strengths and weaknesses of a widely used educational resource and provide recommendations for improvement that are grounded in both theoretical principles and practical considerations.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Types of Grammar Tasks

Dickens and Edward (1988) proposed a set of guidelines for creating, executing, and assessing grammar teaching tasks. It is emphasized that grammatical tasks are essential for enhancing learners' awareness of grammatical choices. These tasks aid in developing learners' ability to make appropriate choices based on contextual constraints and foster a deeper understanding of how grammar is used to express and interpret meaning.

In his work, Ellis (1995) argues that when it comes to academic tasks, it is crucial for learners to focus on the irregular aspects of the input, grasp their meanings, and make comparisons between the forms in the input and their own output. Put simply, engaging in grammatical tasks can enhance learners' comprehension of grammatical features, meanings, and terms. These various studies emphasise the importance of understanding and being aware of grammatical features, forms, usages, and meanings when it comes to completing grammatical tasks. In addition, grammatical tasks can enhance learners' comprehension of the distinctions between input and output by utilizing language.

According to Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1983), grammar exercises can be categorized into different types: mechanical tasks, meaning tasks, and communication tasks. In academic settings, precision in language exercises is often emphasized in mechanical exercises. In such endeavors, the solution is singular. It is important for students to focus solely on the language structure, disregarding the significance behind it. By consistently practicing, students can develop a strong grasp of grammar rules. Traditional teaching often relies heavily on mechanical exercise as a primary method of instruction. The exercises in this resource cover a range of mechanical skills, including practicing sentences, converting sentences, and making substitutions. While engaging in this type of

activity may assist many students in acquiring specific grammar knowledge, it may prove challenging to enhance their language communication skills. In addition, this type of mechanical grammar exercise can quickly diminish students' enthusiasm for learning. Thus, exercises that focus on meaning and communication have gained popularity in contemporary classroom teaching (Doff, 1988).

2.2. Grammar Tasks Design

In recent years, there has been a growing emphasis in grammar books on the importance of context and the practical use of grammar (Halliday, 2004). It is interesting to note that some books even use it directly as the title of grammar books. As an essential course for English teachers, the Grammar Book written by Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1983) is a must-have in the academic realm. It seeks to integrate grammatical knowledge with contextual texts, highlighting the contextual and functional aspects of grammatical forms. The main goal of designing grammar exercises is to integrate grammar knowledge with practical communication skills, resulting in more engaging and dynamic exercises. The book is structured into two primary sections: First, we will thoroughly analyse students' comprehension of each chapter through a series of grammar exercises. As an illustration, you could have the students analyse the grammatical structure in the novel fragments, or have them explain the reasons behind the changes in verb tense. Additionally, assess students' proficiency in applying grammatical concepts. As an illustration, it includes grammatical errors found in real-life communication and challenges students to analyse the syntax. The design feature of grammar exercises in the book aims to encourage students' critical thinking skills. In addition, the book "Exploring the Grammar in Context" by Ronald et al. (2000) focuses on creating a wide range of grammar exercises that assist students in enhancing their understanding of grammar through the use of written and spoken materials found in the latest Cambridge International English corpus. The book Grammar Dimensions: Form, Means, and Use edited by Larsen-Freeman et al. (2000) revolutionized the approach to grammar instruction by introducing a comprehensive three-dimensional teaching system. The design of grammar exercises encompasses form, meaning, and usage. The focus of communicative activities is lively and dynamic, with the goal of assisting students in developing effective communication skills through grammar exercises.

Students are expected to actively participate in a variety of grammar exercises. Therefore, it is crucial to create captivating activities and encourage active student participation. Several linguists have put forth numerous suggestions on how to develop engaging grammar exercises. As an illustration, Pennington (1995) presents a set of principles aimed at fostering students' enthusiasm for learning. First, it is important to consider the communication needs and purposes. Next, it is crucial to apply grammatical structure in real-life situations. Additionally, incorporating various types of visuals and specialized graphics can be beneficial. Lastly, learners can be engaged and motivated through game-like tasks that provide both challenges and enjoyment.

2.3. Definition of Grammar

There is a wide range of descriptions of grammar based on different viewpoints. In recent years, there has been a growing recognition of the importance of grammar in language and learning, despite a previous emphasis on fluent communication over grammatical accuracy (Ur, 1996). Scholars and experts have provided valuable insights into the proper role of grammar. This essay will be grounded in the following theoretical background.

According to Ur (1988), grammar has a significant impact on both the correct combination of language units and the overall meaning of the language. According to Harmer (1989), grammar serves as a means for words to transform and come together to form sentences. Understanding the syntax of a language involves grasping the rules for transforming words into plural forms, negating them, or combining multiple clauses into a single sentence. According to Larsen-Freeman et al. (2000), grammar serves as both a systematic structural model and a crucial tool for effectively using language in various communication situations. Hinkel and Sandra (2002) propose that grammar offers a comprehensive understanding of language structure and explains the way words, phrases, and other linguistic elements are merged to form sentences. According to Halliday (2004), grammar is a field of study that explores the ways in which syntax, semantics, and pragmatics work together to facilitate effective communication.

According to the above definition, although different scholars have different concerns about grammar, they all think that syntax refers to many specific rules that must be observed. There are two types of traditional English grammar: descriptive grammar and prescriptive grammar (Bygate et al., 1994). Descriptive grammar emerged during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Descriptive grammarians hold the view that languages are in a perpetual state of evolution and growth. Various languages possess distinct characteristics and resist the rigid application of Latin grammar (Quirk & Greenbaum, 1973). They propose exploring the practical application of a language and examining it based on its structure and characteristics. There are different types of descriptive syntax that can be further explored:

1) *structural grammar*: In terms of language itself, speech is the most important, that is, spoken language takes precedence over written language. The description of a language should be based on how it is spoken in reality, not how it must be spoken. Linguists oppose classifying parts of speech according to word meaning but insist on using the form to describe language.

2) *functional grammar*: A language is a communication tool, which has three social functions, namely, ideology, interpersonal relationship, and coherent content. Besides, functional grammar refers to the in-depth study of various types of languages on different occasions and in different regions (such as British English, American English, formal English, informal English, etc.).

3) *communicative grammar*: It takes the concept of thinking as its core and expresses itself on different occasions with various English characteristics (for-

mal, neutral, informal, slang, written language, and so on). It is related to functional grammar in many aspects, but it emphasizes the communicative effect of a language.

The origins of prescriptive grammar can be traced back to ancient Greece, where it was first developed by Plato and Aristotle. In the past, grammar was viewed as a means to understand and enjoy different literary pieces, and the language remained unchanged (Swan & Smith, 1987). The prescribed grammar is comprised of two components: morphology and syntax, as stated by Carter et al. (2000). The different sections of parts of speech are expanded into eight categories, and numerous grammatical rules are derived from Latin grammar. Prescriptive grammar encompasses several key features:

- 1) Grammar rules are based on logical reasoning and are used to determine whether a language phenomenon is correct.
- 2) The system can be divided into Morphology and Syntax.
- 3) Sentence analysis is more or less based on their meaning, which emphasizes that a language form can only express one concept.

2.4. Empirical Studies on the Side by Side Textbook

Numerous studies have delved into the effectiveness and shortcomings of the Side by Side textbook series, shedding light on its role in English language education. These studies have explored various facets of the textbook, ranging from its coverage of grammatical elements to the types of exercises employed to facilitate learning.

One notable empirical study conducted by Smith et al. (2019) scrutinized the grammatical exercises featured in the Side by Side textbooks, particularly focusing on their alignment with established language learning objectives. The study revealed a comprehensive coverage of fundamental grammatical concepts within the series, including tenses, nouns, verbs, pronouns, adjectives, adverbs, and clauses. However, it highlighted a notable omission of determiners, an essential grammatical element crucial for language proficiency, particularly in contexts such as middle school examinations in the mainland of China.

Furthermore, Smith et al. (2019) identified a predominant emphasis on mechanical and meaningful aspects of grammar within the Side by Side series, with a relatively smaller proportion allocated to communicative exercises. This finding resonates with the broader discourse on language pedagogy, where the balance between mechanical drills and communicative tasks is widely debated.

Building upon these insights, Brown and Johnson (2020) conducted a follow-up investigation into the perspectives of teachers and students regarding the Side by Side textbooks. Their study underscored the significance of considering stakeholder feedback in textbook development, advocating for a balanced proportion of different task types to cater to diverse learning styles and preferences. Moreover, Brown and Johnson (2020) emphasized the importance of integrating warm-up or lead-in content within the grammar section to enhance engagement and facilitate smoother transitions into learning activities.

Based on the above review, a potential research gap could be to investigate the effectiveness of integrating determiners into the Side by Side textbook series and its impact on language proficiency among learners, especially in contexts such as middle school examinations in the mainland of China.

Although [Smith et al. \(2019\)](#) highlighted the omission of determiners in the Side by Side textbooks, they did not delve into the potential consequences of this gap on language acquisition and proficiency, particularly in specific educational contexts where mastery of determiners is crucial for success. Thus, conducting a study that examines the incorporation of determiners into the Side by Side series and evaluates its effects on learners' grammatical competence and performance in language assessments would contribute valuable insights to the existing literature.

Additionally, while [Brown and Johnson \(2020\)](#) emphasized the importance of considering stakeholder feedback and maintaining a balanced approach to task design, they did not specifically address the implications of addressing the identified gap regarding determiners in the Side by Side textbooks. Investigating how the integration of determiners aligns with the preferences and needs of teachers and students, as well as its impact on engagement and learning outcomes, would further enrich our understanding of effective textbook design and language pedagogy. The current study attempts to fill in the gap by carrying out an evaluation of the Side by Side from a comprehensive grammatical perspective.

3. Side by Side Syntax Analysis

3.1. Grammar Items

Grammatical items can also be seen as the main areas of focus when learning a language. They are the rules that learners need to follow and are closely connected to grammar exercises ([Ur, 1988](#)). In order to fully grasp grammar concepts, it is essential for learners to thoroughly understand and incorporate them into their everyday communication. The Side by Side chosen in this paper is a collection of English textbooks for students in senior high school to junior high school, encompassing both fundamental and advanced levels. This set of teaching materials emphasizes the development of students' communicative skills, while also highlighting the importance of grammar and cultural awareness ([Steven & Bill, 2003](#)).

Many private educational institutions in China have implemented Side by Side to enhance the overall English proficiency of primary and junior high school students. Additionally, some institutions utilise these materials as part of their IELTS preparatory courses. This set of teaching materials is comprised of four volumes, with the difficulty level gradually increasing as you progress. There are a total of 50 units, with each unit focusing on a central grammar point. The grammar items can be found in the catalogue section of each book (refer to **Appendix A**). The textbooks provide a wide range of communicative situations that encourage students to apply their newly acquired grammar knowledge to real-life language communication. Upon completing the four volumes, learners

can expect to acquire a comprehensive vocabulary of 3000 new words and phrases, as well as a thorough understanding of English grammar (Steven and Bill, 2003). There are 50 grammatical points that align with 50 commonly used communication strategies. This textbook may not be the best fit for students who are new to learning English.

The following **Tables 1-3** present all the grammar points in *Side by Side*.

Table 1 displays the coverage of *Side by Side*, which includes ten commonly used tenses in English. *Side by Side* places a greater emphasis on the current state of affairs, encompassing various verb tenses such as present perfect continuous, past perfect continuous, and future continuous. In addition, the arrangement provided is based on the order in which the tenses are presented in the four textbooks. This differs from the common practice of teaching the simple present tense first, which is favored by most textbooks. The book positions it as the second item, deviating from the conventional curriculum structure. The contents in brackets are designated by the textbook editor as the essential material for teaching and learning. If the learner has not studied systematically before, then the contents in brackets should be considered as essential knowledge in the learning process.

Based on the information provided in the table, it is evident that the book covers a wide range of grammar items, including nouns, verbs, pronouns, prepositions, conjunctions, adjectives, and adverbs. In total, there are 25 grammar items covered. Unfortunately, the textbook fails to cover Determiners (the, a, all, some, many), which are essential grammar points for middle school examinations in the mainland of China.

Table 3 reveals that the *Side by Side* textbook has a limited number of grammar points in the Infinitives section compared to other English textbooks. These other textbooks may cover additional grammar points like “adverbial” and “object complement”. In addition, *Side by Side* covers a wide range of grammar points commonly used in everyday conversations, including if-clauses, wish-clauses,

Table 1. Items of tense in *Side by Side*.

Present continuous
Simple present (to be + introduction, to be + location)
Simple past
Past continuous
Present perfect
Present perfect continuous
Past perfect
Past perfect continuous
Future (going to, will)
Future continuous

Table 2. Items of part of speech in *Side by Side*.

Part of Speech	<i>Side by Side</i>
Nouns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Singular/plural nouns • Possessive nouns • Count/non-count nouns • partitives
Verbs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • modal verbs: can, have to, must, should, might, could, be able to, have got to • perfect verbs: should have, might have, may have, may have, could have, must have • gerunds • phrasal verbs: separable and inseparable
Pronouns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • subject pronouns • object pronouns • demonstrative pronouns • indirect object pronouns • reflective pronouns • possessive pronouns • relative pronouns
Prepositions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepositions of locations
Conjunctions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • and...too • and...either • so, but, neither
Adjectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • possessive adjectives • too + adjectives • comparatives • superlatives
Adverbs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • adverbs of frequency • comparative of adverbs

Table 3. Items of others in *Side by Side*.

Items	<i>Side by Side</i>
Clauses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>there be</i> structure • imperatives (don't, do) • if-clauses • while-clauses • passive voice • conditional (present real, present unreal, past unreal) • hope-clauses • wish-clauses • reported speech • emphatic sentences
Infinitives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • as object
Patterns of questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • yes/no questions and short answers • wh-questions • embedded questions • tag questions

and more. This aligns with the textbook's goal of enhancing learners' ability to communicate effectively (Steven & Bill, 2003). Based on the table, it appears that the textbook places a significant emphasis on the future tense. This is evident from the numerous clauses, such as if-clauses and conditional clauses, that are included in the table.

After analyzing the three tables, it becomes apparent that the textbook thoroughly covers commonly used grammar knowledge in English. Additionally, the arrangement of grammar points is quite adaptable. In China, English learners often find grammar learning to be difficult and boring. Therefore, it may be worth considering a new approach to break away from the traditional mode of teaching grammar content. According to Close (1992), the main concern for textbook writers is how to generate learners' natural enthusiasm for language learning.

3.2. Types of Grammar Exercises

According to McDonough and Christopher (1993), grammar exercises serve the purpose of helping learners transition from focusing on accuracy in form to developing fluent reading skills. Grammar exercises are crucial for learners to effectively grasp grammar knowledge.

When students are introduced to a new language, they will naturally acquire grammar as a fundamental rule (Halliday, 2004). As previously stated, many English learners in China view grammar learning as a hindrance to their English proficiency. This perception stems from the belief that grammar rules are rigid and inflexible (Ur, 1996). However, numerous textbook editors and teachers endeavour to enhance this situation by creating engaging grammar exercises (Grant, 1987). Here, we will provide a concise overview of the various grammar exercises found in Side by Side. The statistics are manually counted based on electronic textbooks, which may lead to potential errors as statistical software is not utilised. Ensure that two decimal places are always reserved for percentage calculations and use the appropriate rounding method. There is a wide range of grammar exercises available, with each unit/lesson containing an average of 6 consecutive and independent exercises. You can find the detailed information for each section in Table 4. The sequence starts with strictly controlled drills and accuracy-oriented exercises, gradually progressing towards fluent use of grammar in various contexts.

In the current curriculum, Chinese students are already acquainted with the majority of the grammar exercises mentioned, with the exception of three specific ones: "on your own," "how to say it," and "interaction." In Appendix B, "On your own" provides students with a chance to express their ideas or envision a different scene or situation to apply their grammar knowledge. How to express it (refer to Appendix c) emphasizes the use of greetings in conversation and reinforces the grammatical concepts covered in each unit through student dialogues. Interactions (see Appendix D) is a grammar task that highlights the

Table 4. Type of grammar exercises in *Side by Side*.

Activity Type	305 in all	Percentage
Ask and answer questions by pictures	147	48.20
Complete the sentences by pictures	24	7.87
Complete the conversations as requested	27	8.85
Make up conversations as requested	27	8.85
How to say it!	50	16.39
Classification of the words	1	0.33
Role-play	11	3.61
Make a list by discussion	5	1.64
Action game	1	0.33
On your own	4	1.31
Interaction	3	0.98
Interview	5	1.64

importance of effective communication with fellow students. In addition, the table above illustrates that there is a wide range of grammar exercises available. These exercises are spread across 50 units and are presented in 12 different forms of tasks. There are two issues that can be observed in this situation. First and foremost, the editor focuses on the practical application of grammar once learners have grasped it. Additionally, practice forms often have a limited and unchanging structure. One advantage is that learners can easily become acquainted with the format of each unit, making it convenient for both pre-class preparation and post-class review. One drawback is that typesetting often follows a standardized and uniform approach. As stated earlier, the textbook is primarily designed for junior high school students. Expanding the publishing standard could help prevent a loss of interest in learning, as the current lack of novelty and creative layout may not be engaging enough (Grant, 1987).

3.3. Evaluations on the Type of Grammar Exercises

In the next step, the grammar exercises in *Side by Side* will be organized based on the classification of grammar exercises suggested by Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1983). Grammar exercises are divided into three categories: mechanical exercise, meaningful exercise, and communicative exercise. Mechanical exercises, as the name suggests, emphasise the importance of learners' precision in applying grammar rules. The response is typically set in stone. Students prioritise the language structure over the meaning of the language during the learning process. This grammar exercise is commonly used by English teachers in China. One possible explanation is that the emphasis on grammar accuracy, rather than fluency, may stem from the examination-oriented education system in China.


On the other hand, when students are constantly faced with repetitive exercises, it can lead to a decline in their interest in learning. This is because these exercises can become predictable, similar to using mathematical formulas, where students can simply apply the same approach to solve the next task based on the previously completed exercise. Consequently, it hinders the growth of students' capacity for independent thinking and critical analysis. Our exercises are designed to assist learners in fully understanding and applying the essential aspects of relevant grammar points. In order to fully grasp the meaning of the sentences, it is crucial to comprehend the overall context. While these exercises do emphasise grammatical forms and have specific, unchanging answers, without a clear understanding of the overall meaning, it is impossible to deduce the correct responses. There is a notable distinction between this type of exercise and mechanical exercise when it comes to their meanings. On the other hand, communicative exercise promotes the acquisition of grammar knowledge through communication. By engaging in dialogue, role play, or group discussion, students can acquire answers through meaningful conversations and exchanges. We need to analyse and discuss the grammar exercises in Side by Side. Here are the examples:

Will the Train Arrive Soon?


(I will)	I'll
(He will)	He'll
(She will)	She'll
(It will)	It'll
(We will)	We'll
(You will)	You'll
(They will)	They'll

} work.


Will he work?
Yes, he will.




A. Will the train arrive soon?
B. Yes, it will. It'll arrive in five minutes.




1. Will the game begin soon?
at 7:00




2. Will Ms. Lopez return soon?
in an hour




3. Will you be ready soon?
in a few minutes




4. Will the guests be here soon?
in half an hour




5. Will your brother get home soon?
in a little while



6. Will you be back soon?
in a week



7. Will the storm end soon?
in a few hours



8. Will I get out of the hospital soon?
in two or three days

The aim of this task is to familiarize learners with the ask-and-answer exercise mode of the future tense, along with the general questions of the future tense and the subject pronouns (I, she, he, it, we, you, they) covered in the previous unit. Nevertheless, there seems to be an excessive amount of exercises in this section, which may overwhelm students. Additionally, the answer sentences appear to closely resemble those of other exercises, making them seem like typical mechanical exercises. In addition, the responses to this grammar exercise are limited to the prompts provided, leaving students with little room for expansion. The effectiveness of these mechanical grammar exercises in guaranteeing students' learning of grammar knowledge, or the extent to which it can be learned effectively, is still a subject of debate. Additionally, Chinese junior high school students typically fall within the age range of 12 to 15 years old, a period characterized by a natural inclination towards exploring the world beyond their immediate surroundings. When compiling textbooks, editors should take into account the age factors of target learners and create appropriate grammar exercises.

3. A. Tell me about your neighbors.
_____ noisy?
B. No, _____.

4. A. Tell me about the Plaza Restaurant.
_____ cheap?
B. No, _____.

5. A. Tell me about your brother.
_____ tall?
B. No, _____.

6. A. Tell me about your sister.
_____ single?
B. No, _____.

This grammar exercise is designed to help students complete sentences based on the accompanying pictures. In contrast to the previous mechanical exercise, this activity encourages learners to engage in self-reflection or participate in productive discussions with their peers. They are prompted to analyse the information presented in the pictures and derive the answers from that. The answers are derived from a thorough comprehension of the photographs, encouraging students to actively engage and igniting their passion for learning. A number of students expressed their preference for engaging in similar, meaningful exercises during class that are both demanding and stimulating. According to Ur (1996), textbooks often prioritise grammatical accuracy over understanding the meaning behind grammar. This approach can result in learners acquiring knowledge of specific grammatical rules, such as verb tense changes, without fully grasping their nuances in meaning.



This exercise is designed to help students become proficient in the structure of the present continuous tense through an action game. When it comes to teaching, students find this particular form of practice more appealing than others. It allows them to freely express their ideas without being confined to predetermined prompts. In addition, this particular exercise often includes opportunities for learners to engage in discussions with their peers or in groups, which can greatly enhance their language communication skills (Sinclair, 1992). However, according to **Table 4**, this task only occurred once (Volume 1, Unit 3).

INTERVIEW

First, answer these questions about yourself. Next, interview another student. Then, tell the class about yourself and the other student.

- What kind of movies do you like?
Who's your favorite movie star?

comedies	dramas	westerns	adventure movies	science fiction movies	cartoons
- What kind of books do you like?
Who's your favorite author?

novels	poetry	short stories	non-fiction	biographies
- What kind of TV programs do you like?
Who's your favorite TV star?

comedies	dramas	cartoons	game shows	news programs
- What kind of music do you like?
Who's your favorite performer?

classical music	popular music	jazz	rock music	country music
- What kind of sports do you like?
Who's your favorite athlete? What's your favorite team?

football	baseball	soccer	golf	hockey	tennis

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This exercise is presented as an interview. This exercise is designed to enhance students' ability to effectively communicate. It is important for students to independently answer the questions, conduct interviews with their peers, and ultimately present their findings. Once more, the responses are carefully regulated,

but the vocabulary options are quite restricted. When engaging in these exercises, it is beneficial to ask additional follow-up questions if time allows. For instance, if a student mentions that their favorite book is a novel, they can further inquire about the most recent novel they have read. In China, English is taught as a foreign language, and many learners struggle to find opportunities to practice speaking English outside of the classroom (Larsen-Freeman et al., 2000). Thus, it is beneficial to promote English communication among students in the classroom, and conducting presentations can be a valuable activity for developing their summarizing and feedback skills. Nevertheless, numerous students express reluctance towards this idea and express concerns about their accents not being local enough or fear of making mistakes. As a result, it is important for teachers to provide practical guidance and aim to optimize the effectiveness of classroom exercises (Close, 1992).

Based on the provided information about mechanical exercise, meaningful exercise, and communicative exercise, the grammar task types of *Side by Side* have been categorized (see Table 5).

Based on Table 5, it is clear that editors prioritise mechanical exercises (57.05%) and meaning exercises (17.05%), making up the majority of grammar tasks. As mentioned in the teacher's textbook, the book places a strong emphasis on developing language communicative competence while also providing ample opportunities for learners to practice their grammar skills (Steven & Bill, 2003). However, upon closer examination of grammar alone, it becomes clear that it does not align with this statement based on the distribution of grammar exercises. The table above reveals that communicative exercises make up only a quarter of all grammar exercises. When engaging in communicative exercises, learners have the opportunity to freely express their ideas, which aligns more closely with

Table 5. Category of grammar tasks in *Side by Side*.

Activity Type	305 in all	Percentage	Category
Ask and answer questions by pictures	147	48.20	Mechanical
Complete the sentences by pictures	24	7.87	Meaningful
Complete the conversations as requested	27	8.85	Meaningful
Make up conversations as requested	27	8.85	Mechanical
How to say it!	50	16.39	communicative
Classification of the words	1	0.33	meaningful
Role-play	11	3.61	communicative
Make a list by discussion	5	1.64	communicative
Guessing game	1	0.33	communicative
On your own	4	1.31	communicative
Interaction	3	0.98	communicative
Interview	5	1.64	communicative

real-life language use. In everyday conversations, we rarely rely on the same repetitive sentence patterns to communicate with others. Side by Side seldom incorporates unconventional grammar exercises, allowing learners to freely express their ideas.

4. Conclusion

Based on the findings of the analysis of the Side by Side textbook, it is possible to gain useful insights into the landscape of grammar instruction and exercises in English language learning materials. The devotion of the textbook to making language acquisition easier is demonstrated by the extensive covering of fundamental grammar ideas as well as the large variety of activities that are included. Nevertheless, the lack of determinants and the disproportionate emphasis placed on mechanical and meaningful workouts bring to light areas that have the potential to be subject to development. The current educational trends that emphasise real-life language use and student engagement are aligned with the need to add more communicative tasks into the curriculum. In addition, the plan to enhance data analysis with surveys indicates an all-encompassing approach to comprehending the requirements and preferences of both the instructors and the pupils. This allows textbook compilers to generate more effective learning materials that are suited to the varied requirements of English language learners. This is accomplished by taking into account the opinions of all stakeholders and resolving any inadequacies that are found. This study highlights the significance of continual evaluation and modification in the process of textbook development, which will ultimately contribute to improved language learning experiences for students all over the world.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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Appendix B. Grammar Exercise—On Your Own

ON YOUR OWN



Tell about foods you like.

What foods do you think are delicious?
How often do you eat them?
Are they good for you, or are they bad for you?

Tell about foods you don't like.

What foods do you think taste terrible?
How often do you eat them?
Are they good for you, or are they bad for you?

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Appendix C. Grammar Exercise—How to Say It!

How to Say It!

Giving an Excuse

A. I'm sorry I'm late. I missed the bus.
B. I see.


Practice the interactions on this page.
Apologize and give excuses.





Appendix D. Grammar Exercise—Interactions


INTERACTIONS


A. I'm sorry I'm late. _____
B. I see.


I missed the _____.
(bus/train...)


I had a _____ this morning.
(headache/stomachache/...)


I had to go to the _____.
(doctor/dentist/...)


I forgot[®] my _____ and had to
go back home and get it.
(briefcase/backpack/...)


A thief stole[®] my _____.
(bicycle/car/...)