

УДК 378.016:[811.161.2'243]

TEACHING BASIC UKRAINIAN GRAMMAR THROUGH PROCESSING INSTRUCTION

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This article discusses the application of the pedagogical approach of processing instruction to the teaching of basic Ukrainian grammar – particularly, at the initial stage of this process. Grounded in SLA theory and found to be very effective for the acquisition of various grammatical aspects of English, Spanish, French, and other commonly taught languages, processing instruction is only beginning to be applied to Ukrainian. The article summarizes the theoretical premises of this approach, which come from B. VanPatten's model of input processing. This model describes how learners derive linguistic information from what they hear and read in the L2 and what can hinder their noticing of grammatical features in the input. The approach of processing instruction, which aims to help learners overcome their faulty processing tendencies, is then discussed. The article proposes using processing instruction as an effective alternative to mechanical drills, which are still often deemed to be a necessary first step in grammar learning. It summarizes the theoretical arguments against mechanical drills and for beginning grammar instruction with input-based activities, as is done in the processing instruction approach.

The general applicability of processing instruction to Ukrainian is illustrated through a series of activities from the open-access online textbook of basic Ukrainian grammar *Dobra Forma* by O. Wallo, which utilizes this approach. The article explains the structure and benefits of these activities and addresses several challenges of using processing instruction (as formulated by VanPatten) for the teaching of Ukrainian grammar. They include the complex morphology of Ukrainian, which makes teaching only one grammatical form at a time impractical, and the existence in the Ukrainian language of many grammatical forms of low or no communicative value. Practical ways of dealing with each challenge are suggested and illustrated with specific examples from *Dobra Forma*.

Key words: teaching the grammar of Ukrainian, basic grammar, input processing, processing instruction, mechanical drills.

DOI:

Formulation of the problem. Mastering basic grammar takes up a lot of learners' time and effort in the early stages of learning a foreign language. When studying Ukrainian as a foreign language, learners face a special challenge of internalizing its complex morphology and often continue to make numerous errors in case endings and verb forms even after many months of classroom instruction. For decades, researchers in the field of instructed second language acquisition (ISLA) have been investigating the effectiveness of various methods of teaching grammar of a foreign or second language. While there is no universal agreement regarding the best methods, there are some fundamental principles of second language acquisition which the field as a whole recognizes. To be as effective as possible, any approach to grammar instruction should take these principles into account. Among them, for example, is the understanding that input (the language learners hear or read for its message) is essential for language acquisition. An important part of this principle is the fact that learners' "internal grammar is built up via exposure to comprehensible, communicatively oriented input – a position that is unquestioned in the field of SLA after four decades of research" [15 : 418]. This overall principle underlies, for instance, a widely accepted belief, including

among those studying the acquisition of Ukrainian, that new grammatical structures are best introduced to learners in a meaningful context rather than in isolation [3 : 144].

Processing instruction is one of the pedagogical approaches to teaching grammar that is deeply grounded in SLA theory. This approach further builds on the principle of internalizing grammar through work with communicatively oriented input and follows a specific model of input processing by learners. According to this model, which is described in greater detail below, learners often do not adequately process or even notice grammatical forms, especially those of little communicative value, in the input they receive because their attention is overwhelmingly focused on lexical elements and understanding the overall message. Such a tendency in learners' input processing hinders and delays their acquisition of the L2 grammar.

Analysis of recent research and publications. Both the model of input processing mentioned above and the pedagogical approach of processing instruction were first formulated by the American SLA researcher Bill VanPatten and his colleagues in the early 1990s [12, 9]. Since then, the effectiveness of this approach has been investigated through numerous empirical studies (see R. DeKeyser and G. P. Botana [7] for a review), although only a few of these studies focused on the application of this technique to Slavic languages [6, 13] and none of them looked specifically at using processing instruction to teach Ukrainian grammar.

VanPatten defined input processing as the way in which “learners initially perceive and process linguistic data in the language they hear [or read]” [9 : 137]. In his view, “processing involves both perception and noticing and also assigning meaning to the form” [10 : 21]. Relying on ideas about the limited capacity of human attention and memory, VanPatten formulated a series of principles that govern input processing by learners of a foreign language. He called the first principle “The Primacy of Meaning Principle,” which refers to the fact that “during the act of comprehension learners will do whatever is necessary to grasp whatever meaning they can from the input” [9 : 138–139]. What follows from this are several subprinciples relevant for the acquisition of grammar:

(1) learners tend to focus on lexical cues, especially content words, to derive meaning from the input before they process the grammar that conveys the same information;

(2) learners tend to notice and process grammatical forms of high communicative value in the input before they notice and process forms of low communicative value [9 : 139].

In the context of grammar acquisition, the term “communicative value” is defined by VanPatten as “the meaning that a form contributes to overall sentence meaning (...) based on two features: [+/- inherent semantic value] and [+/- redundancy]” [9 : 139]. To give an example from Ukrainian, the endings **-в**, **-ля**, **-ло** and **-ли** on Ukrainian verbs have inherent semantic value because they indicate that an action took place in the past. However, this way of conveying pastness in a sentence can be redundant if the sentence also includes a lexical cue of pastness, such as the adverb **вчора**. Such redundancy decreases the communicative value of a past-tense verb ending. This is so because according to VanPatten's model of input processing, learners are much more likely to derive the meaning of pastness from the lexical item **вчора** rather than from the past-tense ending on the verb – if both are present in a sentence. However, the communicative value of a past-tense ending is high when it is the only indicator that the action took place in the past, as in the following sentence: *«Ми дивилися новий український фільм»*.

Besides “The Primacy of Meaning Principle,” VanPatten also formulated a second major principle that operates in learners' processing of input – namely, “The First Noun

Principle” [9 : 139]. It refers to the learners’ tendency to assign the role of the subject to the first noun or pronoun in a sentence and points to the difficulty that learners often have with the target language structures that do not follow the subject-verb-object word order. Because the Ukrainian language has a lot of such structures, this principle is very relevant for the acquisition of Ukrainian.

The pedagogical technique of processing instruction (PI) aims to counteract the learners’ processing tendencies described above and thereby enable learners to notice and process the target grammar in the input correctly, aiding its acquisition. Hossein Nassaji and Sandra Fotos summarize the main components of PI in the following way:

- “1. Learners are provided with information about the target linguistic form or structure.
2. They are informed of the input processing strategies that may negatively affect their processing of the target structure.
3. They carry out input-based activities that help them understand and process the form during comprehension” [10 : 24].

The third component is the most important one of the three for the acquisition of grammar. These special input-based activities were called by VanPatten “structured input” and defined as “input that is manipulated in particular ways to push learners to become dependent on form and structure to get meaning and/or to privilege the form or structure in the input so that learners have a better chance of attending to it” [9 : 142]. The sentence *«Ми дивилися новий український фільм»* given above illustrates how input can be adjusted to compel learners to depend on the grammar – in this case, the ending *-ли* on the verb – to get the meaning of pastness from this sentence. In a structured input activity, learners would be asked to do something with such a sentence and other sentences of a similar kind – for example, listen to a series of past-tense and present-tense sentences about a person’s routine and write down which actions characterized this person’s routine in the past. All lexical cues of pastness or presentness would be removed from the sentences to push learners to process the semantic meanings of the verb endings – and therefore link these meanings to the forms of the endings.

Numerous examples and detailed analysis of such activities for the acquisition of Ukrainian grammar follow below. What is important to highlight here is how such activities differ from the standard grammar exercises that make up the majority of grammar-focused tasks in traditional textbooks for many foreign languages. In a critique of traditional grammar instruction, VanPatten underscored the continued widespread use of mechanical drills as one of the first steps in the teaching of foreign language grammar [15 : 406–407]. He persuasively argued that such decontextualized drills in which learners are simply asked to manipulate the grammatical forms without having to pay any attention to their meanings do not help the acquisition of grammar. He also criticized the immediate focus on the production of form in the drills: “Drills ask learners to produce a structure or form in order to learn it. But where is the input required for internalization of that structure or form?” [15 : 409]. Yet, pedagogical literature, including on Ukrainian as a foreign language, continues to advocate for the necessity of mechanical drills or imitative exercises at the initial stage of grammar learning (see, for example, articles by N. Yeshchenko [1] and O. Turkevych [4]). Such exercises are often described as necessary for developing learners’ automaticity in producing new forms. As VanPatten noted, this reasoning likens language acquisition to skill development; he offered a useful analogy to demonstrate why such reasoning was faulty:

“...in a classic skill theory scenario such as learning chess, the novice chess player

does not sit around drilling moves. *All chess moves occur in the context of playing a game*. Thus, whatever chess players learn about playing and however they automatize their moves happens as a result of playing chess, not practicing chess. If we were to apply this to language learning, then the correct application would be that learners do not learn to use forms and structures to express meaning by first practicing them. Instead, learners acquire those forms and structures by consistently using them in communicative situations in which they are required” [15 : 426].

This quotation underscores the role of output – that is, communicative speaking and writing in L2 – for the learning of grammar. While PI as a pedagogical approach focuses mostly on comprehending grammar correctly while listening or reading in the target language, it does acknowledge the important function of output in helping learners increase their grammatical accuracy and fluency. However, the fundamental premise of PI is that output-focused activities must come only after extensive input, which develops learners’ internal L2 grammar by helping them connect the grammatical forms to the meanings they convey [15 : 418].

The part of the main issue that has not been studied enough. While PI has been extensively studied in the West and successfully used by instructors to teach the grammar of languages such as English, Spanish, French, and German, its application to Slavic languages, Ukrainian in particular, has been very limited thus far. At the same time, some pedagogical literature on Ukrainian does acknowledge the problems inherent in the traditional approaches to teaching grammar. For instance, I. Zozulia [2] notes the ineffective nature of decontextualized drills: “The practice of isolated forms in mechanical tasks before their use in speaking is not considered effective. From the very beginning, exercises must introduce the form in action.” [English trans. by OW; 2 : 26]. Yet, there is a lack of theoretically grounded and detailed proposals of alternative pedagogical approaches to Ukrainian grammar instruction.

The aims of this article are to propose PI for the teaching of Ukrainian L2 grammar, explaining its theoretical basis and benefits; to discuss the general applicability of this technique to Ukrainian; and to illustrate it with examples of existing structured input activities for Ukrainian from the open-access online textbook *Dobra Forma (Good Form)* by O. Wallo [14].

Main body. The free online textbook on basic Ukrainian grammar, *Dobra Forma*, was developed by the author of this article in collaboration with the Open Language Resource Center at the University of Kansas as a supplementary resource for instructors and learners of Ukrainian as a foreign language. It makes use of several methods of teaching L2 grammar, but its main approach is processing instruction (PI). The author relied on research that demonstrated the effectiveness of teaching L2 grammar online with this approach (see, for example, J. Lee and A. Benati [8] and T. Robayna [11]) and followed VanPatten’s guidelines for designing structured input activities [9 : 154–165] – at least, to the extent to which it made sense to do so for Ukrainian.

One of these guidelines is to avoid presenting to learners entire paradigms of grammatical forms and their various functions at once; instead, the recommendation is to focus as much as possible on “one function and one form” at a time [9 : 154]. According to VanPatten, such presentation makes the learning of the target form most efficient. However, because of the complex morphology of Ukrainian, in which, for example, there is a whole range of noun endings for the same case, treating every possible case ending separately

would be impractical. Research on the use of PI for teaching Russian case endings [6] has demonstrated that this approach is effective even when as many as five morphological forms that encode the same meaning are in focus at the same time. Therefore, the decision was made to divide the grammatical paradigms into smaller clusters of a few endings that fulfill the same function and treat each cluster in a separate module. For example, vocative case endings are covered in three separate modules in *Dobra Forma*: 3.1 Vocative Case (Feminine Nouns), 3.2 Vocative Case (Masculine Nouns), and a very short module of 3.3 Vocative Case (Plural Nouns) [14]. By contrast, the more complex instrumental case is treated in seven different noun modules (9.1-9.4 and 10.1-10.3), two pronoun modules (14.1, 14.2), and one adjective module (19.1). Within each major section of *Dobra Forma* on a specific part of speech (The Noun, The Pronoun, The Verb, etc.), grammatical material was carefully sequenced to allow users to build on what they have already learned from one module to the next.

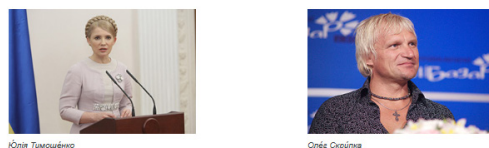
Module 16.1 on the adjectival endings in the nominative case can illustrate how the PI approach is incorporated in *Dobra Forma*. 16.1 is the first module on adjectives, so it is assumed that it would be used by learners early on in their program of learning basic Ukrainian. For this reason, it utilizes very simple vocabulary and short sentences. Explicit information about the targeted forms – in this case, the four nominative-case endings of hard-stem adjectives **-ий, -а, -е and -і** – is presented in the first task, but it is done through the guided discovery technique. The four endings are introduced in a minimal authentic context through images of Ukrainian signs and advertisements that include these adjectival forms: «Національний музей “Чорнобиль”», «Бургер? Гарна ідея!», «Чоловіче та жіноче взуття» and «Пузата хата: Українські страви». In the instructions to the task, learners are asked to select the most appropriate caption for each image choosing from several options, such as «Тут є борщ і вареники.» **This is done to focus the learners’ attention on the overall meaning of signs and advertisements.** Learners are also instructed to pay “careful attention to the different endings on the adjectives, which agree in gender and number with the nouns they modify” [14 : mod. 16.1] and utilize what they notice about the endings in the second part of task one. In this part, learners have to answer questions such as “What is the ending of the adjective that is used with a masculine noun?” Learners’ responses in all *Dobra Forma* activities are machine-graded, so they receive immediate feedback on how well they performed each task and grasped the given information. While VanPatten’s illustrations of the PI approach usually give explicit information on the target form more directly than in my example above, the technique of guided discovery is very suitable for introducing simple and straightforward grammatical forms and has the advantage of being a form of active learning. It is therefore often used in *Dobra Forma* to present new grammatical information.

The introductory task in module 16.1 is followed by structured input activities on these adjectival forms, aimed at helping learners pay attention to and process the semantic meanings of the adjectival endings. As such, these activities address VanPatten’s Primacy of Meaning Principle. The difficulty with designing structured input activities for these grammatical forms lies in the fact that in Ukrainian, adjectival endings are rarely the only indicator of the nouns’ gender and number, since they are almost always used together with the nouns themselves. As a result, adjectival endings normally have low communicative value in a sentence and can be easily ignored by the learners. This is in part the reason why learners often forget to make adjectives agree with the nouns in their own sentences

in Ukrainian, as these endings are perceived to be redundant. To increase the communicative value of adjectival endings, Task 2 limits the audio input to stand-alone adjectives and makes learners match each descriptor with a famous Ukrainian of either male or female gender (see Figure 1). As learners hear adjectives “український,” “відома,” “активна,” etc., which are equally appropriate for both Yuliia Tymoshenko and Oleh Skrypka in their lexical meaning, they must pay attention to the adjectival endings in order to decide to whom each descriptor applies. As a result, they begin to internalize the links between the forms **-ий/-а** and the meanings “male”/“female.”

Завдання 2

Listen to the descriptions of Yulia Tymoshenko and Oleh Skrypka below. Based on the gender of the adjective you hear, select the person who is being described.



Choose the correct answer.

☐ Oleh Скрипка

☐ Юлія Тимошенко

Progress indicator: 1 of 5 questions completed.

Figure 1. Screenshot of Task 2 from *Dobra Forma* Module 16.1

The process of internalizing these particular form-meaning connections continues as learners complete Task 3 (see Figure 2). In this task, they have to process the meaning of the entire passage, as well as the lexical meanings of the adjectives in front of the blanks AND the semantic meanings of their endings – in order to fill in the blanks with the correct words.

Завдання 3

Your friend received a letter in the mail from an older Ukrainian relative. Unfortunately, part of the letter got water damaged. Help your friend reconstruct the missing sections based on the content and the grammar of the passage.

Fill in the blanks with the appropriate answers.

Моя старша [] вже на пенсії. У мене також є молодший []. Він вчитель. Мій чоловік теж вчитель. У нас четверо дітей. Старша [] і старший [] вже студенти. Молодший [] – школяр, а молодша [] ще дуже маленька.

Figure 2. Screenshot of Task 3 from *Dobra Forma* Module 16.1

The tasks described above are fully in keeping with VanPatten’s guidelines for structured input activities. They have learners process a very small subset of grammatical forms

at a time (in this case, only two adjectival endings **-ий** and **-а**); they focus the learners' attention on the meaning of forms in context; and they gradually increase the quantity of input, moving from individual words or sentences to paragraph-level discourse [9 : 154]. Most importantly, these activities do not ask learners to produce the targeted forms themselves right after being introduced to them. Instead, these tasks give the learners oral and written input in which the target forms have communicative value and compel the learners to process these forms for their meaning, thereby internalizing these form-meaning connections.

According to the PI approach, only after these connections have become part of the learners' internal grammar should the learners proceed to output activities in which they produce the target forms themselves. In *Dobra Forma*, such output activities come at the end of each module, in the section called «А тепер тест!» These “tests” are not mechanical drills: they are still structured in such a way as to compel the learners to pay attention to both meaning and form within a context. The test from module 14.1 on the instrumental-case forms of personal pronouns after the preposition **з** can serve as an example (see Figure 3). In this task, learners have to read a realistic dialogue and type in the missing personal pronouns in their correct forms. The choice of pronouns depends on a careful processing of the overall conversation and in one instance, on the learners' ability to recall from the earlier activities in the module that only the pronoun form **мною** is used after the preposition variant **зі**.

А тепер тест!

Complete the dialogue below by providing the appropriate personal pronouns based on context.

Fill in the blanks with the appropriate answers.

- Привіт, Мирославо! Дуже добре, що ти тут. Ти знаєш мого брата?
- Ні, але дуже хочу з познайомитися. Я багато чула про нього.
- Він теж хоче познайомитися з . Ви ж працюєте в одній компанії.
- Так, але ми з ніколи не бачилися, тому що у нас різні офіси. Але я знаю його дівчину, Мар'яну. Вона працює зі в одному офісі.
- Так, Мар'яна говорила... Знаєш, ми з часто ходимо на обід разом. Хочеш піти з наступного разу (next time)?
- Так, гарна ідея! Радю піду на обід з .

 Check

Figure 3. Screenshot of the final test from *Dobra Forma* Module 14.1

To demonstrate how the PI approach can be applied in Ukrainian to address VanPatten's second principle of input processing, the First Noun Principle, let us examine a portion of module 11.3 Dative Case (Animate Masculine Nouns). It is important to note that the dative case is the last case to be introduced in *Dobra Forma*, so it is assumed that learners are familiar with all the other Ukrainian cases when they work on the dative case modules. The concept of the indirect object for which Ukrainian uses the dative case is covered in the earlier module, 11.1, as are all the feminine, neuter, and inanimate masculine noun endings in the dative (modules 11.1 and 11.2). In the beginning of module 11.3, learners are introduced to and practice processing the three animate masculine noun endings, **-ові**, **-еві** and **-єві**. The second part of this module presents to learners the grammatical structure with **подобатися**, in which the dative case is used, and because this is a less straightforward construction for many learn-

ers of Ukrainian as a foreign language, the explicit information about it is given very directly, in a «Важливо!» box (see Figure 4). The last sentence in this box advises learners on how to best process input with **подобатися**, urging them to rely on the case endings to correctly understand who likes whom. Thus, in this instance all three steps of VanPatten's PI approach (explicit information, warning about processing strategies, and structured input activities) are present – to ensure learners' success in internalizing this grammatical structure.

Важливо!

To say that somebody likes someone or something, Ukrainian uses a special construction with the verb **подобатися**. The noun indicating the person who likes must be in the dative case, whereas the object being liked is in the nominative case:

Остапові подобається Яріна. – Ostap likes Yaryna.
(Literally: To Ostap Yaryna is pleasing.)

Note that the word order in such sentences is flexible: they can begin either with the person doing the liking or with who/what is being liked:

Остапові подобається Яріна. = Яріна подобається Остапові.

The only way to determine who likes whom in such sentences is to pay close attention to the case forms!

Figure 4. Screenshot of explicit information on the structure with **подобатися** from *Dobra Forma* Module 11.3

After this explicit information, structured input activities follow, in which learners have to rely on the case endings to correctly interpret the sentences with **подобатися**. In Task 5, learners see a series of amusing cartoon images in which one person is shown to like the other person pictured (see Figure 5 for a portion of this task). Two possible captions with the verb form **подобається** are given under each image, and the only difference between them are the case endings on the names of the two individuals, which indicate who likes whom. In order to select the correct caption, learners must pay attention to the dative-case endings and correctly process them as indicating the person who is “doing the liking.”

Завдання 5

Select the best caption for each picture.



1.

☐ Василеві дуже подобається Наталія.

☐ Василь дуже подобається Наталі.

Figure 5. Screenshot of Task 5 from *Dobra Forma* Module 11.3

Task 6 then embeds the same processing issue in a larger context and asks learners to process a number of sentences with **подобається** that indicate likes and dislikes within a group of people (see Figure 6). Learners must correctly process a whole series of both feminine and masculine dative-case endings, including within sentences with **не подобається**, in order to select the best dancing partners for individuals within this group.

Завдання 6

Read the sentences below to figure out who likes and dislikes whom. Based on this information, create a list of dancing partners by matching up individuals who like each other.

1. Маркові подобається Олена.
2. Володя не подобається Насті.
3. Максимові подобається Настя.
4. Андрієві подобається Ольга.
5. Сашко подобається Ользі.
6. Володі не подобається Настя.
7. Олені подобається Марко.
8. Андрій подобається Софії.
9. Ользі не подобається Володя.
10. Ольга подобається Сашкові.
11. Максим подобається Насті.
12. Софія подобається Андрієві.

Drag the answers to the appropriate blanks.

1. Сашко буде танцювати	<input type="text"/>	сам
2. Максим буде танцювати	<input type="text"/>	з Софією
3. Андрій буде танцювати	<input type="text"/>	з Оленою
4. Марко буде танцювати	<input type="text"/>	з Настєю
5. Володя буде танцювати	<input type="text"/>	з Ольгою

Figure 6. Screenshot of Task 6 from *Dobra Forma* Module 11.3

All the activities described thus far have been structured in such a way that the learners cannot complete the task without paying attention to and correctly linking the target forms to the meanings they encode. In other words, these forms are essential to the task. Such feature of an activity is known in the PI literature as “task-essentialness” [5]. Empirical research on PI has found that structured input activities are most effective in helping learners internalize the target forms only when these forms are task-essential [5]. It is easy to make grammatical forms of high communicative value task-essential in activities, but the problem that exists in many languages, the Slavic ones in particular, is the presence of many redundant and non-meaningful grammatical forms. And while redundancy can sometimes be dealt with through structuring tasks in a way that would minimize it, as in the examples of structured input activities on the adjectives described above, the forms that have little or no inherent semantic value present a much greater challenge. Examples of such forms in Ukrainian include, for instance, plural genitive-case endings after many numerals, as in the phrases **п’ять доларів** or **вісімнадцять книжок**. It is difficult for learners with no prior knowledge of any Slavic languages to understand and remember that numerals **три** and **шість**, for example, demand the use of different cases. Such a grammatical rule seems pointless to learners since there is no inherent difference in the semantic meaning of the noun endings in

the phrases **три гривні** and **шість гривень**. What should be done with such forms then?

VanPatten's model of input processing does not imply that such forms never get processed and therefore internalized by learners – only that they might be harder and take longer to internalize. While it is next to impossible to design task-essential structured input activities that would target such forms, all other principles of PI can still be applied in the teaching of these forms to make them clear and easier to process and remember. These principles include providing straightforward explicit information about such forms, giving learners plenty of input full of the target forms, and using any possible means to compel learners to notice these forms in the input. These principles have been used, for instance, to design Task 2 in module 6.1 on the plural genitive-case nouns after numerals and other expressions of quantity (see Figure 7). The task comes right after a clear explicit explanation of the rule on when to use genitive plural after numerals. The activity itself provides oral input consisting of simple sentences with expressions of quantity, such as «Цей костюм коштує 120 доларів» and «Ви ще маєте 3 підручники». The sentences are intentionally kept very short, with the quantities being the most important information in them. The learners' attention is focused on the numerals/quantifiers and the endings on the nouns that follow because the task requires learners to select the expression of quantity they hear AND the noun ending they hear in each sentence. Finally, the overall meaning of the sentences is kept in focus because the learners are also asked to select the location in which each sentence is most likely to be heard.

Завдання 2

You will hear eight sentences. For each sentence, first select the number (for ex., 12) or the quantifier (for ex., **мало**) used. Then choose whether the noun after the numeral or the quantifier ends with the nominative plural **-и/-і** or with the genitive plural **-ів**. Finally, choose in what context/location this sentence is most likely to be used. The first one has been done for you as a model.

Select the appropriate answers from the pull-down menus.

1.	120	-ів	в магазині
2.	5	-ів	в університеті
3.	3	-и or -і	в бібліотеці
4.	багато	-ів	на екскурсії
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			

[Check](#)

Figure 7. Screenshot of Task 2 from *Dobra Forma* Module 6.1

It goes without saying that the types of activities presented above, of which *Dobra Forma* consists, constitute only the first stage of grammar learning. They must be followed by many more output activities in which learners use the target forms themselves to communicate orally and in writing. Such activities, of course, are best done in the classroom because they require communication partners as well as the help of an instructor who can monitor learners' performance and provide the kind of corrective feedback that a machine

cannot. By utilizing *Dobra Forma* outside of the classroom for the initial stage of learning specific grammatical forms and functions, learners and instructors can free up valuable class time that can instead be used for communicative activities.

Conclusions. This article presented a less well-known approach to the initial stage of grammar acquisition that for many learners still consists of unhelpful and uninspiring mechanical drills. The pedagogical approach of processing instruction, which is grounded in SLA theory and supported by research conducted with learners of English, Spanish, French, and other commonly taught languages, is only beginning to be applied in the teaching of Ukrainian as a foreign language. *Dobra Forma*, a recently released free online textbook of basic Ukrainian grammar, which is gaining popularity among users in Ukraine, the United States, Canada, and other countries, relies heavily on this approach. Therefore, a detailed explanation of its theoretical basis and the peculiarities of its application to Ukrainian grammar may be helpful to instructors and learners of Ukrainian who are already using or considering adopting *Dobra Forma* as one of their instructional resources.

In the future, it will be important to verify the claims of effectiveness for processing instruction through empirical research involving learners of Ukrainian. While this approach has been found to be highly effective for learning various grammatical forms and structures of Germanic and Romance languages, PI studies on Slavic languages are very scarce, and non-existent for Ukrainian in particular. As discussed above, the abundance of non-meaningful grammatical forms in Ukrainian presents a challenge for designing task-essential structured input activities targeting these forms. It would therefore be very instructive to investigate the effectiveness of the existing *Dobra Forma* activities that focus on such forms.

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РЕЦЕПТИВНИЙ ПІДХІД ДО ВИКЛАДАННЯ БАЗОВОЇ ГРАМАТИКИ УКРАЇНСЬКОЇ МОВИ

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У цій статті розглядаємо та рекомендуємо застосування рецептивного підходу до викладання базової граматики української мови як іноземної, зокрема, на першій стадії цього процесу. Рецептивний підхід ґрунтується на аспектах теорії опанування другої мови. Його ефективність для вивчення різних граматичних форм англійської, іспанської, французької та інших популярних іноземних мов підтвердили емпіричні дослідження, проте його лише починають застосовувати для вивчення української. У статті коротко викладені теоретичні підвалини цього підходу, а саме модель рецептивного засвоєння Б. Ван-Петтена. Ця модель описує, як саме студенти отримують лінгвістичну інформацію з того, що вони чуять або читають іноземною мовою, а також, що саме може не дати їм зауважити певні граматичні нюанси при читанні чи слуханні. Рецептивний підхід має на меті допомогти студентам подолати ці труднощі у сприйнятті. Стаття пропонує цей підхід як ефективну альтернативу механічним вправам, які часто досі вважаються необхідним першим кроком у вивченні граматики. У статті викладені теоретичні аргументи проти механічних вправ та на користь того, щоб починати викладати граматику з рецептивних вправ – так, як це пропонується у рецептивному підході.

Можливість застосування рецептивного підходу у викладанні граматики української мови проілюстровано серією вправ з відкритого електронного підручника базової української граматики «Добра форма» О. Валло, де використано цей підхід. Стаття пояснює структуру і переваги таких вправ та описує деякі труднощі застосування цього підходу (у первісному його варіанті, сформульованому Ван Петте-ном), що зумовлені специфікою української мови. Серед них – складна морфологія та існування багатьох граматичних форм, що майже або зовсім не мають комунікативного значення. Запропоновано практичні способи подолання цих труднощів, які проілюстровані конкретними прикладами з «Доброї форми».

Ключові слова: викладання граматики української мови, базова граматика, рецептивне засвоєння, рецептивний підхід, механічні вправи.

Стаття надійшла до редакції 29.01.2026

доопрацьована 01.02.2026

прийнята до друку 05.02.2026