



## An Analysis of Grammar Practice Activities in Elementary ELT Textbooks

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### Abstract

This study analyzed the grammar practice activities present in 12 recently published elementary English language teaching textbooks. This research investigated three topics; the types of grammar practice activities, the order or sequencing of these types, and the interrelated series of such activities. The findings indicated that, although there was great variability across the 12 books, mechanical activities were the most common grammar practice type, despite strong pedagogical criticism regarding its meaninglessness. It was also found that the grammar topics themselves varied greatly in the quantity and type of practice activities. Next, it was found that the grammar practice activities in a lesson largely progressed from focusing on the form to focusing more on the meaning. Lastly, this research found interrelated grammar practice activities were commonplace, constituting nearly half of all 185 grammar practice activities recorded. These findings suggest teachers should carefully examine textbooks before selection and should know that mechanical practice activities and interrelated series of grammar practice activities are common. Furthermore, these findings suggest textbook publishers should consider employing meaningful grammar practice instead of mechanical practice activities and to also consider the quantity and type of their grammar practice activities for each grammatical topic in the books.

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## INTRODUCTION

Grammar instruction is an extremely common component of foreign language courses. While a number of grammar instruction approaches exist, many researchers believe that formal grammar instruction is not only the most popular approach but also optimally beneficial to learning grammar structures (Herron & Tomasello, 1992). In formal grammar instruction, the rules and meaning of the grammar are first explained by the teacher inductively or deductively before the students practice the grammar by completing various grammar practice activities. Such grammar practice activities (GPAs) are defined in the current research as grammar activities “in the second language engaged in systematically, deliberately, with the goal of developing knowledge of and skills in the second language” (DeKeyser, 2007, p. 8). Since these GPAs are characterized by a variety of qualities, a categorization system has been proposed by Aski (2003) which clearly classifies

GPA into four distinct categories.

With a varied set of differing GPAs available, it would be beneficial to gain an understanding as to which GPAs learners are practicing. Since “teaching materials are extremely guiding in what happens in classrooms” (Tammenga-Helmantel & Maijala, 2019, p. 563), the GPAs in textbooks are likely to provide a representative sample of the GPAs that learners engage in. While foreign language textbooks exist for languages throughout the world, English language teaching (ELT) textbooks are especially prominent due to English’s status as a lingua franca. Nevertheless, to date, only four studies have examined the types of GPAs that occur in ELT textbooks. Three of these studies have examined intermediate ELT textbooks (Garth, 2022; Han, 2013; Nitta & Gardner, 2005), while the level of Gómez-Rodríguez (2010) is unclear. Thus, while the aforementioned research provides an understanding of intermediate ELT books, no research exists regarding books for a different level of learner, books for students at an elementary level. The current research is designed to address this research gap. Such research is necessary because elementary learners have distinctly different and more limited second language capabilities than intermediate learners, and thus, elementary textbooks may provide significantly different GPAs than intermediate textbooks (Garth, 2022). Furthermore, since a significant portion of learners are categorized as elementary learners, research into this topic will establish a greater understanding of the GPAs a large number of students experience while learning English grammar.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Grammar Instruction and GPA Types

Grammar instruction has historically been considered the heart of language teaching (Lee & Lee, 2012). Despite great historical changes in how grammar has been utilized in the language classroom, a number of studies have highlighted the role of formal grammar instruction which includes an explanation of the grammar followed by GPAs, as previously mentioned (Vogel et al., 2011). Indeed, there is increasing evidence that such grammar instruction has positive effects in both receptive and productive grammar knowledge (Larsen-Freeman, 2015), and thus, many researchers now agree that such grammar instruction makes “a difference and facilitate the learning of a foreign language” (Vogel et al., 2011, p. 354).

Considering the two components of formal instruction (i.e., explanation and practice), numerous studies have examined the role of the initial presentation of the grammar (Haight, 2008; Jean & Simard, 2013; Vogel et al., 2011), yet practicing the grammar is also extremely important. Though the explanation helps to establish declarative knowledge of the grammar, it is practice activities that proceduralize this grammatical knowledge into working memory and eventually, through extensive meaning-focused practice, into a level of automaticity (DeKeyser & Criado, 2013).

GPA types can be classified into four types; mechanical GPAs, meaningful GPAs, pre-communicative GPAs, and communicative GPAs. The following classification system, adopted from Aski (2003), is largely characterized as a spectrum of activities based on two criteria; whether it is controlled or uncontrolled, and also, its level of attention to the form or the meaning. However, a number of other characteristics also assist in delineating the different GPAs, such as its meaningfulness or lack thereof, whether it generates new content or not, and authenticity. In order to clearly distinguish the GPAs, it is easy to first separate them along lines of control. The first two GPAs to be explained (mechanical GPAs and meaningful GPAs) are controlled, meaning there is only one correct answer. An uncontrolled activity, on the other hand, allows for an array of correct answers. For example, if a book included an example with “He \_\_\_ tea (drink).”, the only correct answer is “drinks”. By definition, its one correct answer also stipulates that no new information can be generated, since the learner must answer in a prescribed way and is not free to use the grammar in any other way.

- 1) Excerpt illustrating a mechanical activity (Lantham-Koenig et al., 2018b, p. 135)

*Write sentences in the present perfect continuous.*

*How long / you / work here?*

*How long have you been working here?*

*1 She / study English for three years.*

*2 How long / they / watching TV?*

*3 It / rain / since lunchtime.*

The first controlled GPAs to be introduced are mechanical activities (MecAs). MecAs differ from the other controlled GPA, meaningful activities, in that MecAs place complete focus on form and are meaningless. Excerpt (1) above, which displays a MecA found in a modern ELT textbook, illustrates this point. The learners are tasked with mechanically transforming the sentence to include the present perfect continuous. In the first sentence, the learners must write “She has been studying English for three years.” However, an understanding of the meaning of the sentence is not necessary to arrive at this answer. In other words, it is possible for the learner to correctly answer without knowing the vocabulary words “English” or “years” by simply inserting the grammar where the slash is located. Likewise, an understanding of the meaning of items two and three is not necessary to write the correct answer. Despite strong criticism of MecAs due to its meaninglessness and inability to establish form-meaning connections (DeKeyser & Criado, 2013), MecAs were found to be ubiquitous and commonly found in textbooks two decades ago (Wong & VanPatten, 2003). It is unclear if more modern books have adopted such views and opted to employ alternative GPAs or have continued to utilize MecAs.

The other controlled GPA is a meaningful activity (MeaA). Similar to MecAs, MeaAs are completely controlled with one correct answer and no opportunity to generate new information. However, MeaAs differ from MecAs in that MeaAs are not meaningless. Learners must attend to meaning (as well as to form) to correctly complete the activity. Excerpt (2) below illustrates a MeaA located in a recent ELT book pertaining to a chapter on the present perfect form. In item one, the learner must understand the meaning of the gap-laden sentence and question to identify that “I have changed my mobile. Have you finished it anywhere?” would be incorrect due to its incoherent meaning and that “I have lost my mobile. Have you seen it anywhere?” would include correct use of the grammar and also includes a meaning that is comprehensible.

2) Excerpt illustrating a meaningful activity (Cunningham et al., 2013, p. 37)

*Complete these extracts from the conversations with the present perfect form of a verb in the box.*

*change finish not finish go (x2) lock lose (x2) meet see*

1 I \_\_\_\_\_ my mobile. \_\_\_\_\_ you \_\_\_\_\_ it anywhere?

2 You \_\_\_\_\_ your hair – it’s really nice.

3 You \_\_\_\_\_ weight, haven’t you?

The remaining two GPAs have a distinct difference from MecAs and MeaAs. While MecAs and MeaAs are controlled, pre-communicative activities and communicative activities are both uncontrolled, meaning there is not one correct answer for the activity. An example of an uncontrolled GPA is one where the learners practice the simple present by writing four sentences about the daily routines of their family members. In such an exercise, one person may write “My mother wakes up at 6” while another may write “My brother eats cereal every morning”. Instead of one correct answer such as in the controlled GPAs, an uncontrolled GPA may yield a virtual infinite number of correct answers.

The first of the uncontrolled GPAs to be addressed is pre-communicative activities (PCAs). Although a number of different labels have been applied to such GPAs, for the sake of clarity, this research will employ the term pre-communicative activities. In PCAs, the learners are prompted or spurred to generate language including the grammar. The previous example regarding daily routines provides an example. When PCAs are employed in a spoken manner, PCAs often appear as a series of questions that spur responses by the partner which should include the grammar being studied or to interview a partner with questions designed to elicit target language use (Garth, 2022). Excerpt (3) below displays a highly restricted version of a PCA. In this activity, the learner must understand the content and then answer whether he or she “used to play the piano” or “didn’t use to”. Although this is restricted in that the learner has only two choices, there is no wrong answer; it depends on the learner’s personal experience. Furthermore, it is generating previously unknown content for the partner. Last, an important characteristic of PCAs is that they are not authentic language tasks. Rather than imitate authentic language tasks that require learners to debate, role-play, or perform a task authentically in the target language, PCAs simply prompt language containing the target grammar devoid of any situational or real-life context.

3) Excerpt illustrating a pre-communicative activity (Cunningham et al., 2013, p. 21)

*Complete the sentences with “used to” or “didn’t use to” to make them true for you.*

*When I was 11 or 12...*

1 I \_\_\_\_\_ play the piano.

2 My parents \_\_\_\_\_ give me pocket money.

3 I \_\_\_\_\_ have a regular bedtime.

The last GPA to be outlined is communicative activities (CAs). Similar to PCAs, CAs are uncontrolled in that there is not one correct way to complete the activity. Similarly, CAs afford opportunities to generate new or novel information and content with the target grammar. However, CAs differ from PCAs in that PCAs lack an overall situational authenticity or meaningful context. For example, a list of disjointed interview questions starting with “Have you ever?” lacks authenticity in that there is no authentic context requiring students to interview another person in such a way. This is a PCA because the students generate new content in an uncontrolled activity in a meaningful way, but it does not resemble a real-life language task. On the other hand, a role-play where the learners pretend to meet long-lost friends and ask about their experiences, ideally with the present perfect, resembles a real-life authentic language task and, thus, would be categorized as a CA. Excerpt (4) below displays an example of a CA from a recent textbook. In this CA, the learners are practicing “future clauses with if, when, unless, etc.” and are given this context or situation in which it can be used naturally.

4) Excerpt illustrating a communicative activity (Cunningham et al., 2013, p. 51)

*Work in small groups. Take turns to talk about the plans or ambitions of someone you know. The other students listen and think of possible consequences.*

*Example:*

*A: My friend wants to be a writer.*

*B: If he wants to be a writer, he'll have to think of a good idea for a book.*

*C: It won't be easy unless he's really good.*

*D: He'll have to find an editor before he sends the book to publishers.*

Although CAs commonly occur as speaking activities such as discussions, role-plays, simulations, or information-gap activities, they can also occur in written form such as essays or other writing tasks (Garth, 2022). For example, in a recent ELT textbook's lesson on “used to” and “would”, the learners are instructed to write a short essay about their childhood and school life using the grammar topics. Once again, a context or situation is provided in the form of an essay, and the learners must write about the topic, which has been intentionally chosen to provide numerous opportunities for the learners to practice the grammar.

## Previous Studies of GPA Types in ELT Textbooks

To date, four studies have examined the GPA types in ELT textbooks. Table 1 below summarizes these studies by outlining the number of books examined, the number of grammar topics examined, and how the classification systems in each study compare with the classification system of GPAs previously outlined in the current research. The overall percentage of each GPA in each study is denoted within Table 1.

**TABLE 1**  
*Previous Research and Grammar Practice Activity Classifications*

Research	Level	Books	Items	Classification Label (%)			
				MecA	MeaA	PCA	CA
Nitta and Gardner (2005)	Intermediate	9	3	Grammar exercises (61.0)		Grammar practice activities (39.0)	
Gómez-Rodríguez (2010)	Unknown	5	3	Mechanical practice (34.9)	Meaningful practice (44.4)	Communicative practice (20.7)	
Han (2013)	Pre-intermediate/intermediate	4	3	Grammar exercises (79.2)		Grammar practice activities (20.8)	
Garth (2022)	Intermediate	14	3	Mechanical activities (9.3)	Meaningful activities (32.9)	Pre-communicative activities (37.4)	Communicative activities (20.3)

The first study, Nitta and Gardner (2005), examined the GPAs present in three grammar topics found across nine intermediate ELT textbooks and classified them into one of two types. A juxtaposition of their classification system of GPAs with the system employed in the current study clarifies that Nitta and Gardner essentially classified them into controlled GPAs, a category combining both MecAs and MeaAs, or uncontrolled GPAs, a category combining both PCAs and Cas. The result of this study was that slightly more controlled GPAs were present. Han (2013) adopted the classification system utilized by Nitta and Gardner (2005) as part of Han's study on the options for grammar teaching materials. Han's study examined how four different ELT textbooks practiced three similar grammatical items. Although the level of the books was not stipulated within the confines of the study, the textbook names and levels are provided, and they are of a pre-intermediate or intermediate level. The results of Han's study revealed many more controlled GPAs than uncontrolled GPAs.

Gómez-Rodríguez (2010) examined the GPAs in five books across three grammatical aspects. In this study, the GPA classification consisted of a group representing MecAs, another group for MeaAs, and a final group that encompassed both PCAs and CAs. The results of this study showed that a large portion of the GPAs were either MecAs or MeaAs. However, the grammar topics were not held constant across the three books as was in the other studies. Lastly, little information regarding the textbook is provided. Thus, it is unknown if the examined textbooks were for beginners, intermediate learners, or advanced learners.

Lastly, Garth (2022) examined three grammatical aspects found in common across 14 intermediate textbooks. This final related study endeavored to fill in a number of research gaps regarding the subject by providing a more comprehensive understanding of GPAs in ELT textbooks. First of all, the GPA classification system employed in this study (which mirrors the system in the current study) is more nuanced than the previous studies, which lumped GPAs of different characteristics into larger categories. Garth (2022) found that MecAs were least frequent with PCAs being especially prevalent. As mentioned, Garth's study examined other aspects of GPAs as well. First, the study examined the order of the GPAs within a lesson, finding the lessons generally progressed from most form-focused (MecAs) to most meaning-focused (CAs). Secondly, the study examined the prevalence of interrelated series of GPAs. Interrelated series of GPAs are cases where "a preceding GPA is necessary for a student to participate in a subsequent GPA" (Garth, 2022, p. 9). For example, if the first GPA requires learners to construct 10 "Have you ever" questions and the second GPA requires learners to interview a partner with these questions, this constitutes an interrelated series of two GPAs. The findings from Garth (2022) related to interrelated series showed that roughly half of all GPAs were part of an interrelated series of GPAs.

In reviewing the related studies, a glaring research gap is apparent; no research exists pertaining to elementary textbooks. Three of the four previous studies examined intermediate books, while the books in one study remain unclear. Since elementary books targeted for beginners with more limited linguistic abilities may differ from intermediate books, research that specifically addresses elementary books is warranted. Since no such research exists, all aspects pertaining to GPAs in elementary ELT books remain unknown. Due to Garth's (2022) comprehensive investigation of GPA types, order, and interrelated series in intermediate ELT books, the current study is modeled after Garth to provide a similar understanding of GPAs in elementary ELT books.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study is organized to address the following three research questions.

- Research Question 1. Which types of GPAs occur in elementary ELT student books?
- Research Question 2. What is the order of GPA types that occur in elementary ELT student books?
- Research Question 3. What is the prevalence and composition of interrelated GPAs series in elementary ELT student books?

### Textbook Selection and Grammar Topic Selection

The current study's method of selecting the textbook and grammar topics was as follows. First, catalogs of ELT textbooks from five major ELT publishers (Cambridge, Cengage Learning, Macmillan, Oxford, and Pearson) were acquired via the internet. This comprehensive list was then narrowed down to only include books for adults or young adults at an elementary or beginner level. The target age group of adult or young adult was selected because explicit grammar instruction (i.e., grammar presentation and GPAs) is effective for adults but is not appropriate for young children (Liu, 2013). Furthermore, all previous studies examined ELT books targeted for the adult and young adult age group. Another preliminary filter was



related to the type of book. Four-skill books were specifically selected for a number of reasons. In addition to these books dominating the market and publishers' catalogues, such books are commonly used in English classes and often employ explicit grammar instruction including GPAs, unlike other ELT books that focus on only reading or listening. Furthermore, books addressing only grammar, such as the common *Grammar in Use* series, are better suited for self-study with few interactive opportunities to complete PCAs or CAs. Last, all previous studies analyzed four-skill books, which allows for a more accurate comparison.

To ensure the books are contemporary and not outdated, only books published since 2012 were considered. In the event that a book had numerous editions, the most recent edition was considered. The next criteria for participation in the study was of a practical nature; accessibility. Both the student's book and the teacher's book must have been accessible at local municipal libraries, university libraries, or book stores. This resulted in a preliminary pool of 34 books eligible for participation. Since the previous research into GPAs examined three identical grammatical items, the current study opted to implement an identical approach. Thus, the grammar topics within the table of contents for these 34 books were recorded and cross-referenced to determine a set of three common grammar topics present in the maximum number of books. Lastly, during the process of finalizing the books and grammar topics, there was an attempt to select at least two books from each of the five publishers in order to provide a balanced set of books. The current study endeavored to find three grammar topics in at least 14 books to replicate Garth (2022). However, many of the books fragmented grammar topics into multiple sections, such as 1) simple present sentences, 2) simple present yes/no questions, and 3) simple present information questions, while many other books aggregated the topic into one, "Simple Present". This hamstrung the current study's efforts to find 14 books with identical grammar topics and resulted in only 12 books being eligible for participation in the current study. In the end, the three grammar topics selected were 1) adverbs of frequency, 2) can for ability, and 3) "There is/are". A profile of the books is presented in Table 2 below.

**TABLE 2**  
*List of ELT Textbooks for Current Study*

Book Label	Book (Author)	Publisher (Edition)	Unit of Grammar Topic		
			Frequency Adverbs	Can	There is
1	Empower A2 (Doff et al., 2022)	Cambridge (2)	3	8	5
2	English file elementary (Lantham-Koenig et al, 2018a)	Oxford (4)	4	5	8
3	Global elementary (Clandifield & Pickering, 2015)	MacMillan (1)	5	6	4
4	Insight elementary (Beddall, 2013)	Oxford (1)	2	3	3
5	Life elementary (Hughes et al., 2018)	Cengage Learning (2)	4	4	2
6	Live beat (Freebairn et al., 2015)	Pearson (1)	6	7	3
7	Navigate A2 elementary (Hughes & Wood, 2015)	Oxford (1)	2	5	4
8	Open mind elementary (Rogers et al., 2016)	Macmillan (1)	4	7	5
9	Outcomes elementary (Dellar & Walkley, 2017)	Cengage Learning (2)	2	3	1
10	Speakout 1 (Eales & Oakes, 2016)	Pearson (2)	3	4	4
11	Startup 1 (Currie Santamaria & Thompson, 2018)	Pearson (1)	3	7	9
12	Touchstone 1 (McCarthy et al., 2014)	Cambridge (2)	5	9	6

## Data Collection

The data collection method subsequently outlined below relied on two main evaluators, rater 1 and rater 2. However, a third rater was utilized in the case of disagreement between rater 1 and rater 2. All three raters were English language teachers. Raters 1 and 3 were native-speaking English language teachers with master's degrees in English education. Rater 2 was a Korean English language teacher who had graduated from a teaching university. Each of the three raters had more than 10 years of English teaching experience.

In order to first identify the GPAs to be classified, a simulation of each lesson was conducted by observing both the

teacher's guide and the student's book. After the section in the lesson that presented the grammar ended, the GPA type analysis began. Rater 1 highlighted all GPAs from the end of the presentation section through to the end of the lesson, documenting the order of these highlighted GPAs according to the instructions within the teacher's guide. Strictly following the instructions in the teacher's guide, this included GPAs within the chapter and also GPAs in the grammar reference section at the end of the book. All "optional" or "extra" GPAs included in the teacher's guide were recognized as GPAs for this study if it could be completed by the learners while only in possession of the student's book; GPAs from supplemental workbooks were not included. Therefore, a number of supplementary GPAs, such as discussion topics, provided in the teacher's guides were also included in this study. Having compiled the set of GPAs for analysis, rater 1 organized and provided these contents with the highlighted GPAs to rater 2. Subsequently, rater 1 and rater 2 separately categorized each GPA according to the system previously outlined above with four different GPA types. Since GPAs may be interrelated, as previously outlined, the raters were also asked to determine if successful completion of each GPA was dependent upon completing the immediately preceding GPA, which created a record of interrelated GPA series.

In total, 185 GPAs were evaluated across three grammar topics in the 12 textbooks by the two raters. In order to ensure reliable data, the researcher conducted a test of interrater reliability. Regarding GPA classification, raters 1 and 2 agreed 90.8% of the time, which corresponded to a Cohen's Kappa result of 87.5. In total, there were 17 GPA types on which rater 1 and rater 2 disagreed. In 14 of the 17, the differences manifested in one of two ways; whether the GPA was a MecA or MeaA, or whether the GPA was a PCA or CA. Thus, in 98.3% of all GPAs classified, raters 1 and 2 agreed on whether the GPA was of a controlled (i.e., MecA or MeaA) nature or uncontrolled (i.e., PCA or CA) nature. It appears that in these cases of disagreement, rater 2 collapsed the distinctions into an understanding that writing GPAs were MecAs and speaking GPAs were CAs, which, though often true, ignores the fact that writing GPAs often manifest in the form of MeaAs and speaking GPAs are often PCAs. However, it should be noted that 16 of the 17 disagreements occurred within the first six books of classification, and thus, it appears some of this confusion was worked out through the exercise of classifying, since only one disagreement existed in the final six books. In terms of GPA's being part of an interrelated series, the raters 1 and 2 agreed 93% of the time, which corresponded to a Cohen's Kappa result of .80. In total, there were 13 cases of interrelated series which were not agreed upon by rater 1 and rater 2. When queried about this, rater 2 responded that he/she felt there were grades to how interrelated GPAs are. In other words, he/she believed one preceding GPA may be helpful or should be completed before conducting the subsequent GPA which merited an interrelated classification. Thus, in many cases, rater 2 classified a GPA as interrelated since it may be helpful, whereas rater 1 classified them as unrelated since though completing the preceding GPA may be helpful, it was not essential to completing the subsequent GPA.

Since the aforementioned Cohen Kappa results indicated acceptable reliability, the study proceeded to rater 3. As previously noted, rater 1 and rater 2 disagreed about 17 GPA types and 13 cases of interrelated series. Rater 3's responsibility was to break this tie. Rater 3 was shown the identical contents rater 1 and rater 2 had previously evaluated and was asked to choose between rater 1's opinion and rater 2's opinion. Rater 3's decision became the official designation of that GPA for this study. Regarding the GPA types, rater 3 agreed with rater 1 regarding 16 of the 17 GPA types, which underlines the aforementioned overapplication of MecA to writing GPAs and CA to speaking GPAs by rater 2. Regarding interrelated series, rater 3 agreed with rater 1 about eight cases and rater 2 about five cases. Thus, it appears the strict definition of "necessary to complete the subsequent GPA" may ignore clear nuances regarding the relationship of GPAs and may need to be clarified in future research concerning interrelated series of GPAs.

## Data Analysis

The data analysis approaches for the current study's three research questions are outlined below. In order to determine the GPA types in ELT textbooks, a tally was conducted. This showed the total number as well as the percentage of each GPA type. In order to analyze the order of GPAs, a three-part approach was employed. To begin with, the initial, median, and final GPA type for all 36 lessons were recorded. Secondly, a tally of each GPA type occurring before the median GPA and also after the median GPA was observed. Last, all two-GPA progressions were tallied. For example, if a lesson included an initial MecA, a MeaA, and a PCA in such an order, this data analysis approach yielded two two-GPA progressions; MecA→MeaA and MeaA→PCA. Subsequently, the total number of each of the 16 permutations of two-GPA progressions were recorded. In order to address the final research question regarding interrelated GPA series, a tally was conducted to observe the total number of interrelated GPA series that occur and the composition of these interrelated GPA series. This approach perfectly replicated Garth's (2022) approach to intermediate adult ELT textbooks.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### GPA Types

Regarding the first research question pertaining to GPA types, Table 3 below displays the GPA types in the twelve textbooks analyzed.

**TABLE 3**  
*Tally of GPAs by GPA Type*

Book	MecA	MeaA	PCA	CA	Total
1	5	5	5	4	19
2	6	1	4	7	18
3	6	3	6	2	17
4	11	4	4	2	21
5	3	1	4	7	15
6	1	1	3	3	8
7	8	2	5	2	17
8	4	2	2	1	9
9	6	3	3	1	13
10	6	4	3	6	19
11	3	4	2	4	13
12	2	2	10	2	16
Total (%)	61 (33.0%)	32 (17.3%)	51 (27.6%)	41(22.2%)	185(100%)

### *MecAs' Plurality and Book Variability*

Most notably, the number of MecAs are significant. Although MecAs were far from a dominant plurality or majority, MecAs did constitute the largest share of any GPA type at 33%. Furthermore, while the difference between MecAs and the uncontrolled alternatives (i.e., PCAs and CAs) was smaller, the ratio of MecAs to MeaAs was roughly 2:1. It is notable that the role of MecAs found in the current study differed greatly from Garth (2022). Garth's study of intermediate books found only 9.3% of all GPAs were MecAs. Furthermore, the study of intermediate books had a ratio of 3.5 MeaAs to every one MecA. While it is understandable that intermediate learners would have the linguistic capabilities to complete more uncontrolled GPAs, it is not apparent why elementary learners are given more MecAs than MeaAs, relative to intermediate learners. Indeed, Aski (2005), VanPatten (2002), and Wong and VanPatten (2003) have adamantly argued that MecAs are inefficient because they do not link the grammar's meaning with the form of the grammar, and thus, strongly recommend using MeaAs instead. DeKeyser and Criado (2013), relatedly, emphasize that meaning is essential for the proceduralization of grammar. Interestingly, Wong and VanPatten's 2003 (p. 407) claims that MecAs can be found in "just about any textbook at the secondary or college level" seems much more true for elementary books 20 years later than intermediate books.

Another finding pertained to the great variability across books. First of all, there was a large range (5-21) in the number of GPAs each book contained across the three lessons. Nevertheless, nine of the 12 books fell within an average of between 4.3 and 6.3 GPAs per lesson. This variety is not surprising in that different books may focus on different language items such as grammar, thus inflating the number of GPAs, while others may focus on other language items such as pronunciation, thus deflating the relative emphasis on grammar and GPAs. However, this variability was not limited to the overall number of GPAs. There was also great variability in the types of GPAs employed by different books. To illustrate this point, consider Book 4 and 12. Of Book 4's 21 GPAs, 11 were MecAs. Book 12, on the other hand, clearly emphasized PCAs with 10 PCAs and only two of each of the other GPAs. When collected into subsets of similar characteristics, the twelve books roughly fell into one of three categories; focusing on controlled GPAs, focusing on uncontrolled GPAs, and a balanced approach. For example, Books 4, 7, 8, and 9 clearly focused on controlled GPAs with 2/3 of all GPAs in this subset controlled and roughly half of all GPAs classified as MecAs. In contrast, Books 2, 5, 6, and 12 clearly emphasized uncontrolled practice



with roughly 70% of all GPAs being uncontrolled and constituted by a relative split of PCAs and CAs. Lastly, Books 1, 3, 10, and 11 balanced controlled and uncontrolled GPAs. In this balanced subset group, 20 MecAs were tallied while there were 16 GPAs each for MeaAs, PCAs, and CAs. Thus, the aggregated distribution of GPA types and proliferation of MecAs outlined above should not be interpreted as neatly or even roughly applying to every book. In other words, considering such variability in total GPAs and the distribution of GPAs, any broad generalization of all elementary books would misrepresent the findings of this research. While the total sample size of this study is small at 12 books, it appears books vary greatly in their approach to practicing grammar and the GPAs chosen to be included.

### Variability Across Grammar Topics

Furthermore, during the analysis of the data, it was observed that the actual grammar topics varied considerably. Interestingly, there were exactly 54 GPAs for both the lessons on “can” and “frequency adverbs”, but there were 77 GPAs for “there is/are”. Thus, lessons related to “there is/are” had 40% more GPAs than the lessons on “can” or “frequency adverbs”, raising the question of whether some grammar topics are routinely practiced more than others in ELT books. This finding spurred an evaluation of previous literature to see if similar phenomena occurred. In Garth (2022), the data indicate one grammar topic (used to) yielded roughly 30% more GPAs than the other two grammar topics evaluated (modals and present perfect vs. simple past). The breakdown by grammar topic is not given by any other research. Instead, the other related research aggregated the data and did not delineate by grammar topic. Presumably, in the existing research, three grammatical topics have been used to make sure enough variety is analyzed. However, the finding that some grammatical topics appear to have more GPAs suggests that not all grammatical topics occur in similar amounts, and perhaps, a sample size of three grammar topics is possibly insufficient to generate general conclusions about grammar topics more broadly.

**TABLE 4**

*Tally of GPAs According to Grammar Topic*

Grammar Topic	MecA (%)	MeaA (%)	PCA (%)	CA (%)	Total
Frequency adverbs	16 (29.6)	10 (18.5)	24 (44.4)	4 (7.4)	54
Can	15 (27.8)	15 (27.8)	17 (31.5)	7 (13.0)	54
There is	30 (39.0)	7 (9.1)	10 (13.0)	30 (39.0)	77

Having discovered this difference in the total number of GPAs for each grammar topic, an analysis of each GPA item in the data of the current study was conducted according to grammar topic. The results are displayed above in Table 4. This resulted in shocking disparities. While all three grammar topics yielded roughly 30-40% MecAs and 47-56% controlled GPAs overall, the split between PCAs and CAs was quite uneven. Almost half of all GPAs across the 12 lessons on “frequency adverbs” were PCAs and less than 10% were CAs. The lessons on “can” were similar, though less drastic, with 31.5% of all GPAs being PCAs and 13.0% CAs. Surprisingly, this was completely inverted for “there is/are” where 13% of all GPAs were PCAs but 39% were CAs. This finding suggests certain grammatical topics may be practiced differently.

Once again, since data was presented at a grammatical level in Garth (2022) but not in any of the other related research, any comparison is limited to Garth’s study of intermediate ELT books. Indeed, the data from Garth also shows differences across grammatical topics, most notably, that the lesson on modals consisted of much fewer MecAs and significantly more CAs than the other lessons on used to and the simple past vs. present perfect. This finding lends credence to the notion that certain grammatical items are practiced differently.

Nevertheless, it is not apparent why one grammatical item (i.e., “there is/are”) appears to be practiced differently. “There is/are” is, at once, the grammar which utilizes the most controlled GPA (i.e., MecAs) and also the most uncontrolled GPA (i.e., CAs). One possibility is that the writers believed “there is/are” to be more complicated than frequency adverbs or “can” due to the need for conjugation and verb-inflection in question form. Indeed, perceptions of greater complexity of form would merit greater focus on that grammatical form with more controlled GPAs. However, as previously stressed, MecAs do not help to establish form-meaning connections, while MeaAs can be equally controlled but still help to proceduralize the grammar due to its inclusion of meaning. Regarding the quantity of CAs, it may be possible that “there is/are” can be more easily applied to create CAs than the other two grammatical items. This grammar item can be relatively easily applied to create discussion activities or information gap activities (both CAs) involving the learners’ rooms, houses, classroom, city or even illustrations provided in the book. Indeed, a majority of the CAs pertaining to “there is/are” involved an activity

of this nature. One preliminary theory was that a later placement within the book may afford more numerous and CA-centered practice due to a build-up of communicative competence via completing previous material. However, it is not the case that “there is/are” typically appears later in the textbooks than the other two grammar items. Indeed, in most of the books analyzed, frequency adverbs were covered first, with “there is/are” covered next, and “can” being covered last, yet the lessons on frequency adverbs and “can” provided fewer and less communicative GPAs. Further implications of this finding regarding suggested research methods of future research will be further addressed in the conclusion section.

## Order of GPA Types

**TABLE 5**  
*GPA Sequencing Summary*

GPA Type	Frequency of GPA Type as...			Percentage of GPA Type in...	
	First GPA	Median GPA	Last GPA	1 <sup>st</sup> Half of lesson	2 <sup>nd</sup> Half of lesson
MecA	20	12.5	4	42.5 (69.7%)	18.5 (30.3%)
MeaA	10	6.5	1	24 (75%)	8 (25%)
PCA	4	10	14	20 (39.2%)	31 (60.8%)
CA	1	6	16	6 (14.6%)	35 (85.4%)

Table 5 above displays a summary of the analysis pertaining to the order of GPAs within the 35 lessons analyzed. One of the 36 lessons participating in this study had only one total GPA, excluding it from participation in this part of the analysis. In general, the lessons began with more controlled GPAs (30 out of 35 lessons) and concluded with more uncontrolled GPAs (30 out of 35 lessons). This overall progression from controlled to uncontrolled can also be observed since around 70% of all MecAs and MeaAs occurred in the first half of the lessons. Alternatively, CAs were much more likely to occur in the second half of the lesson (85.4%). PCAs were relatively evenly split across the first half and the second half of the lessons.

The last data analysis approach for determining the order of GPAs throughout a lesson involved a tally of the total number of the 16 possible permutations of two GPA progressions (e.g., CA → MecA, CA → MeaA, CA → PCA, CA → CA etc.) that occurred across all the lessons in all the books. The contents from each possible permutation were then categorized into one of three categories to determine whether the second GPA in the sequence was equally meaning-focused (e.g., PCA → PCA), more meaning-focused (e.g., PCA → CA), or less meaning-focused (e.g., PCA → MecA or PCA → MeaA). These three groups were then tallied. In total, 64 two-GPA sequences had matching GPAs for the preceding and subsequent parts, and 59 two-GPA sequences had a more meaning-focused GPA as the subsequent GPA. Lastly, 26 two-GPA sequences represented a less meaning-focused GPA as the subsequent GPA in a pair. In total, 82.6% of subsequent GPAs were equally meaning-focused or more meaning-focused than the immediately preceding GPA. This result provides further evidence that GPAs largely proceed from more form-focused controlled GPAs to more meaning-focused uncontrolled GPAs.

As stated, the findings above suggest that GPAs tend to progress from GPAs focusing more on form and less on meaning to GPAs that focus more on meaning and less on form. Unfortunately, the limited number and scope of previous studies provides little context to juxtapose these findings. As mentioned, this is the first study to examine GPA sequencing in elementary ELT books. Furthermore, Garth (2022) was the only study to examine the order of GPA books in ELT books. Nevertheless, this finding from the current study aligns with the finding in Garth (2022) that found that the grammar sections in intermediate textbooks generally progressed to be more focused on meaning and less on form. To be clear, this finding from the current study is far from surprising. This general approach corresponds neatly with the latter two stages of Presentation-Practice-Production, a common technique that many books follow (Harmer, 2007). After the “presentation” stage of the grammar concludes, the “practice” commences with GPAs that emphasize pattern practice, drills, and controlled questions (Sato, 2010). Thus, these GPAs in the “practice” section have a relative imbalance in favor on the focus on form and less on meaning. In the “production” stage, the learners are given “frequent opportunities for communicative use of the grammar to promote automatic and accurate use” (Sheen, 2003, p. 22). To be clear, within the “practice” and “production” stages, there are no strict rules that GPAs must progress in meaning; rather, the types of GPAs included in the “practice” and “production” stages imply a general progression towards more of a focus on meaning, such as was seen in the results of this study.

## Interrelated GPA Series

Table 6 presents the composition of interrelated GPA series that appeared within the 12 lessons and the tally of how often each type of series appeared. The results are organized from the most frequently appearing type of series to the least frequently appearing type. In general, it was observed that interrelated series are extremely prevalent in elementary adult ELT textbooks. In total, there were 36 series of GPAs, which corresponds to an average of exactly 1 series per lesson. In aggregate, the 36 series constituted 82 total GPAs, meaning that 44.3% of all GPAs observed in this study were part of an interrelated series. As mentioned, among the limited previous studies pertaining to the topic of GPA types in ELT textbooks, Garth (2022) is the only research which examined interrelated GPAs. Thus, the current study's findings are relegated to only having Garth (2022) as context. Most generally, the current study's findings are aligned with Garth who found 1.3 series per lesson and 47.2% of all GPAs to be part of an interrelated series. Thus, while definitive comparisons cannot be determined due to the use of different books, it appears that elementary and intermediate books tend to approach the use of interrelated in similar ways. If this is confirmed in future research, this would imply that students' practice approaches are similar in this manner, and thus, intermediate learners may be well accustomed to interrelated GPA series since they have already encountered them on numerous occasions in lower-level classes.

**TABLE 6**  
*Composition and Prevalence of Interrelated GPA Series*

Series Composition	Frequency	Series Composition	Frequency
PCA → PCA	6	MeaA → MeaA → PCA	1
CA → CA	5	CA → CA → CA	1
MecA → PCA	5	MeaA → MeaA	1
MeaA → CA	3	MecA → PCA → PCA	1
PCA → CA	3	PCA → MeaA	1
PCA → CA → CA	3	PCA → PCA → PCA	1
MeaA → PCA	2	PCA → PCA → MecA → CA → CA	1
MecA → MeaA	2		

Regarding the composition of interrelated GPA series, there are a few interesting findings. First, the GPAs within a series generally proceeded in a manner where the subsequent GPA was more meaning-focused. This finding is clearly intertwined with the previously stated finding that GPAs in general proceed in such a fashion through the lesson at large. However, unlike the progression of unrelated GPAs towards more meaning-focused GPAs, the progression of interrelated GPAs in an increasingly meaning-focused manner suggests that the preceding GPAs may provide a scaffolding role for the subsequent GPAs. In the case of an interrelated series, the completion of the preceding GPA can prepare and assist the students to complete a more challenging interrelated subsequent GPA. For example, Excerpt (5) from book 9 below shows how the preceding GPA (exercise five) scaffolds the student by familiarizing the student in both the content and grammar to complete the subsequent GPA (i.e., exercise six). In the more form-focused preceding GPA, the students have become familiar with the content (i.e., news in the morning, coffee after lunch, etc.) as well as the grammar in the sense of its meaning and use in the sentence. Thus, when tasked with completing the more meaning-focused subsequent GPA, the preceding GPA has prepared and scaffolded the students to be able to complete this GPA.

5) Excerpt of Scaffolding in GPA Interrelated Series (Dellar & Walkley, 2017, p. 18)

5. Tick (✓) the sentences that are true for you. Change the adverbs in the other sentences to make them true for you.

1. I always watch the news in the morning.

2. I usually have a coffee after my lunch.

3. I never drink beer or wine.

...

6. Work in groups. Take turns saying your sentences. Who is most similar to you?

While interrelated series of GPAs appear to provide scaffolding for learners to complete more challenging tasks, drawbacks also exist. Simply put, interrelated series of GPAs restrict the ability of the teacher to freely choose appropriate activities. In the case of individual GPAs, the teachers can freely “mix and match” the activities to the learners’ needs and preferences (Masuhara et al., 2008). However, interrelated series of GPAs necessitate the completion of the preceding activity. For example, interrelated series of GPAs may complicate efforts for teachers to try to cater to advanced students who need less or no scaffolding by an inability to change the order to focus on the more meaning-focused activities. Such advanced learners may be able to accomplish the task of comparing how often they watch the news, have coffee, or drink beer or wine (i.e., complete exercise six) without having to first prepare the sentences (i.e., complete exercise five). Thus, for these learners, the scaffolding of the preceding GPA disallows the students from encountering a GPA more suitable to their development with the language.

Another interesting finding is that two-part series are by far the most common type of interrelated series. Out of the 36 interrelated series observed, 28 (78%) consisted of two GPAs. This finding roughly corresponds to Garth (2022) who found 87% of interrelated series in intermediate textbooks to be of a two-part composition. It is notable that such a large percentage of interrelated series consist of two GPAs, which is, by definition, the smallest possible interrelated GPA series. Indeed, the use of the smallest possible series provides a number of benefits. Longer interrelated series are clearly more complicated to complete since they rely on the successful completion and maintained interest in all preceding GPAs, and failure of any of the preceding GPAs would complicate completion of all of the subsequent GPAs. Furthermore, while interrelated series limit the teacher’s ability to freely select GPAs for the class, as mentioned, such limitations are kept to a minimum with smaller interrelated series. In other words, lessons with interrelated series consisting of two GPAs limit teachers less than lessons with longer series such as the five-part PCA → PCA → MecA → CA → CA interrelated GPA series found in book 12. In conclusion, two-part series allow for the potential benefit of scaffolding while minimizing the limitations imposed on the instructor’s ability to freely select GPAs.

Next, the role of PCAs within interrelated series should be addressed. Almost 2/3 of all PCAs occurred within a series. Furthermore, PCAs were present in 26 (72.2%) of the 36 series. In comparison, the other GPA types, MecAs, MeaAs, and CAs, were present in 25%, 30.5%, and 44.4% of the 36 series, respectively. Although it is impossible to definitively determine the reason so many PCAs exist in series, Garth (2022) proposed a theory that PCAs are an intermediate step between controlled GPAs and completely uncontrolled CAs. PCAs can be tacked on to a preceding MecA or MeaA to provide a meaning-focused GPA from the preceding GPA’s contents. Alternatively, PCAs could be used to provide either the informational content for subsequent PCAs or CAs or scaffolding to allow learners to complete more challenging subsequent PCAs or CAs. However, this role of PCAs within interrelated series should also be recognized as a limitation to using these PCAs when they are predicated on completing preceding GPAs in an interrelated series. In total, 19 of the 34 PCAs in an interrelated series are in a subsequent position in the series. Accordingly, 19 of the total 51 PCAs found in the current study cannot be completed without having previously completed the preceding GPA in its interrelated series. While this restriction is not limited to PCAs with numerous MeaAs and CAs also predicated on completing preceding GPAs in the series, PCAs may be of special importance to lower-level learners who are establishing form-meaning connections with a limited communicative competence and limited abilities to complete some of the more challenging CAs such as discussions, debates, extended role-plays or essays (DeKeyser & Criado, 2013).

Finally, in light of the aforementioned finding that GPAs varied greatly according to different books and grammatical forms, this research analyzed whether such differences extend to interrelated series of GPAs. In the case of the different books’ approaches to interrelated series, it does appear that books vary widely. Book 11 and book 12 clearly illustrate this point. Book 11 employed one interrelated GPA series which comprised of two of its total 13 GPAs. On the other hand, book 12 employed five interrelated GPA series which comprised of 13 of its total 16 GPAs. Thus, considering the previously outlined benefits and demerits of interrelated GPA series, book 11 allows teachers to more freely choose the GPAs for classroom use with minimal scaffolding from preceding GPAs, while book 12 provides more restrictions on teachers when selecting GPAs for classroom use but provides more scaffolding via preceding GPAs. It is recommended that teachers be aware of such differences so that they may select a book the most accurately reflects the teachers’ desire to balance scaffolding with the ability to freely choose GPAs.

Regarding the differences across grammatical topics, in total, the lessons on “there is/are” included 17 interrelated series comprising 40 GPAs. On the other hand, the lessons on “can” included 8 series comprising 20 GPAs, and the lessons on frequency adverbs included 11 series and 22 GPAs. While this difference seems rather significant, much of this imbalance may simply be a factor of the greater number of GPAs in general associated with “there is/are”. When taken as a percentage of the total GPAs within any grammatical form, roughly half of all “there is/are” GPAs belonged to interrelated series and approximately 40% of the GPAs in the other two topics occurred as part of an interrelated GPA series. Thus, while it appears grammatical topics differ in the number of GPAs and types of GPAs associated with them, it does not appear that there is

much difference in their use of interrelated series.

It was also noted that GPAs are not just interrelated with themselves. It was observed on numerous occasions that a GPA was interrelated with previously introduced contents that were not related to the grammar being practiced. Although this issue was not explicitly included in the research question, this observation was noteworthy and may be useful for future research. In at least five occasions, it was observed that the GPA is used to show how previously introduced vocabulary in the chapter is used. Excerpt (6) below displays one example of this case from the lesson on “can” from book 3. In this GPA, the students must construct sentences about themselves using the vocabulary that was introduced in a previous activity. Thus, in order to complete this PCA, the students must first have learned the vocabulary, making this GPA interrelated with a preceding vocabulary activity. The example below in Excerpt (6) is very much representative of this phenomenon, and resembles the other four GPAs, which were interrelated with previous vocabulary sections.

6) Excerpt of a GPA Interrelated with a Previous Vocabulary Activity (Clandifield & Pickering, 2015, p. 69)

*Examples: I can work with other people easily.*

*I can type, but not very quickly.*

*I can't answer the phone in English.*

Furthermore, there was another instance where a GPA of one grammar was interrelated with a GPA from a separate grammar topic that was introduced within the same chapter. Excerpt (7) below displays how book 12 makes one activity an opportunity to practice two different grammatical topics that were introduced in the chapter. In this activity, the students must use the grammatical topic “There is/are” coupled with appropriate use of articles (e.g., a or an), the other grammatical topic introduced in the chapter.

7) Excerpt of a GPA Interrelated with a Previously Taught Grammar Item (Clandifield & Pickering, 2015, p. 55)

*Add adjectives to these sentences. Change a or an if necessary. Then make the sentences true for your neighborhood. Compare ideas with a partner.*

*1 There are no movie theaters around here. (good)*

*2 There are a lot of fast-food places. (cheap)*

*3 There are a couple of clubs. (fun)*

Excerpts (6) and (7) illustrate how GPAs can also be used to recycle previous contents which may be of a vocabulary or grammatical nature. Regularly revisiting and recycling previously taught material is vital to acquiring the language (Masuhara et al., 2008), and the most effective forms of recycling involve processing the previously studied material in a novel way (Thornbury, 2006), such as Excerpt (5) with previously studied vocabulary or Excerpt (6) with previously studied grammar. Previous research has highlighted the lack of recycling within coursebooks both in the United Kingdom (Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2008), where many of the books in the current study were published, and also within coursebooks throughout the world (Tomlinson, 2008). To be clear, many low-level learners can be described as false-beginners who have passive knowledge of the language due to some classroom instruction (Thornbury, 2006). Despite the previous instruction, such learners failed to firmly proceduralize the basic grammatical forms in an elementary language classroom. For these students, considering their previous failure to attain competency in such basic forms, regularly revisiting the material may be especially useful. Furthermore, the basic grammar topics presented in an elementary language book are essential to developing a basic competence in the language and is often a prerequisite for the study of more advanced grammatical forms which are presented in intermediate or advanced coursebooks. For example, a knowledge of basic question-formation such as what is learned in elementary textbooks is necessary in order to learn indirect questions, a grammar topic often taught in intermediate textbooks. Thus, frequent recycling of previously taught material may be of particular importance to elementary learners to succeed where many false-beginners have previously failed and to establish a base for further language development.

## CONCLUSION

This research analyzed the types of GPAs in the lessons of three grammar topics found in 12 elementary adult ELT textbooks. The major findings of this study are as follows. First, this research found MecAs to be not only present but also the most



commonly appearing GPA, despite strong pedagogical criticism of MecAs. Next, it was found that that grammatical topics appear to differ greatly in the quantity and type of GPAs associated. Furthermore, great variability was found across the 12 books regarding the number and distribution of GPA types. In addition, this research found that GPAs tended to progress from being more focused on form to being more focused on meaning throughout the lesson. Last, this research found that interrelated series of GPAs are prevalent in elementary textbooks.

The findings of this research correspond to recommendations and implications for both textbook publishers and instructors. In terms of textbook publishers, there are two recommendations. First of all, the researcher recommends textbook publishers undergo a careful examination of whether MecAs are the most appropriate controlled GPA available instead of a similarly controlled MeaA. Strong arguments have been lodged against MecAs due to it being bereft of meaning. Such opponents (Aski, 2005; Wong & VanPatten, 2003) insist the learners should not solely focus on the form of the grammar in any GPA while completely neglecting the meaning, since meaning is integral. As outlined by Aski (2003), MeaAs can also be highly structured and may be easily developed from existing MecAs. MeaAs often employ a word bank with verbs where the learners must choose one verb and conjugate it to make the sentence portray a logical meaning rather than simply providing the verb to be conjugated. Such MeaAs can resemble the tight control of MecAs while also establishing form-meaning connections. Thus, the researcher recommends textbook publishers consider altering existing MecAs to include a pool to include choice, which would relatively easily convert the MecA to MeaA. Secondly, textbook publishers should be aware that there appears to be an imbalance regarding how some grammatical topics are practiced. As mentioned, “there is/are” included more numerous GPAs than the two other grammatical topics in this study. Furthermore, “there is/are” also varied greatly in the types of GPAs in comparison to the other grammatical topics analyzed. Accordingly, textbook publishers should be aware of such imbalances with the topics covered in the current study and to determine if such imbalances extend to other grammatical topics as well. Since books often employ a grammar reference section with GPAs, numerous additional partner-activities in the index, and numerous additional optional activities in the teacher’s book, providing additional GPAs for any grammar topic that is found to be less than optimally practiced should not be burdensome nor problematic for the layout of the individual chapters. While imbalances are not necessarily negative or detrimental, such decisions about how much each grammar topic is practiced should be intentionally made.

In terms of instructor recommendations, instructors should be aware of the following three things. First, instructors should know that books vary greatly in terms of the quantity of total GPAs and makeup the of GPAs. Instructors are advised to carefully consider any textbook’s GPAs and the goals of the class when selecting a textbook. Second, instructors should be aware that MecAs are prevalent. As noted, MecAs are associated with questionable pedagogical approaches and are not generally agreed upon to be best teaching practices. Should teachers who utilize a book with MecAs wish to include meaning in a controlled GPA, that is to say, use a MeaA, the teacher may have to skip to a MeaA within the lesson or provide alternative materials. Third, instructors should know that interrelated series of GPAs are prevalent. If a teacher chooses to skip a GPA due to time constraints or personal tastes, it is possible that this will create problems. Furthermore, instructors should be aware that the variability regarding GPA quantity and type across books previously mentioned extends to their approach with interrelated GPA series. As mentioned, interrelated series may provide scaffolding for more meaning-focused and less controlled subsequent GPAs but restricts the ability of the teacher to freely choose which GPAs to use in class and in which order. The researcher recommends teachers identify books in accordance with the teacher’s desired balance of freedom and scaffolding.

This research includes two notable limitations. The first limitation is that this research specifically examined elementary adult textbooks, a gap in the existing research. It does not represent books for younger or intermediate learners. Furthermore, it appears three GPAs may be insufficient for providing representative data since certain GPAs may skew data towards certain GPA styles. A larger number of grammar topics would provide a broader and more representative data set. The subsequent section regarding future research elaborates on this issue and provides suggestions for improved research methods for related future research.

Lastly, the current study will conclude by recommending future research. First of all, this research found the GPAs in elementary books to be different in its distribution by type from the intermediate books in Garth (2022). Nevertheless, it should be carefully noted that the books in this study and Garth were in different series, published by different publishers, and written by different authors. In other words, the results of this study cannot be used alongside Garth to reliably compare books of different levels. However, the researcher recommends that future research analyzes elementary and intermediate books within a series. Such a method may help to more reliably determine whether real differences exist between elementary and intermediate books.

In conclusion, the researcher recommends an alternative data collection process to include more books and grammar topics for future research. To date, all related studies have analyzed three grammar topics, presumably to create consistency within the analysis. However, this study found grammar topics can vary drastically. In the current study, “there is/are”

differed drastically from the other two grammatical topics regarding the number of GPAs and the types of GPAs practiced. This was also found to be the case in Garth (2022), where the GPAs in the lessons on “modals” deviated notably from the other two grammatical topics researched. With only three topics analyzed, the results may not be representative of the books. However, it seems dubious if future research could simply increase the number of grammatical topics. As mentioned, the current research cross-referenced 34 ELT books and the maximum number of books that shared three identical grammatical topics was only 12, the number of books analyzed in this research. Therefore, in order for future research to analyze more grammatical items in a practical manner, the researcher recommends creating a list of grammatical topics that are prevalent but not required across a larger set of books. By analyzing a prescribed number of grammar topics per book and analyzing each grammar topic a prescribed number of times, future research can replicate the consistency of this research and other previous studies and also expand the number of grammar topics analyzed, thus resulting in more representative data. Alternatively, future research that disregards the goal of a consistent number of grammar topics analyzed per book may also provide a larger and more robust data set for analysis.

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