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TEACHING GRAMMAR AS A PART OF LEARNING FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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ABOUT ARTICLE

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Abstract: Before speaking about the selection of grammar material it is necessary to consider the concept “grammar”, i.e., what it meant by “grammar”.

By grammar one can mean adequate comprehension and correct usage of words in the act of communication, that is, intuitive knowledge of the grammar of the language. It is a set of reflexes enabling a person to communicate with his associates. Such knowledge is acquired by a child in the mother tongue before he goes to schools.

INTRODUCTION

This “grammar” functions without the individual’s awareness of technical nomenclature; in other words, he has no idea of the system of the language, and to use all the word-endings for singular and plural, for tense, and all the other grammar rules without special grammar lessons only due to the abundance of auding and speaking. His young mind grasps the facts and “makes simple grammar rules” for arranging the words to express carious thoughts and feelings. This is true because sometimes little children make mistakes by using a common rule for words to which that rule cannot be applied. For example, a little English child might be heard to say Two mans comed instead of Two men come, because the child is using the plural “s” rule for man to which the rule does not apply, and the past tense ed rule for come which does not obey the ordinary rule for the past tense formation.

By “grammar” we also mean the system of the language, the discovery and description of the nature of language itself. It is not a natural grammar, but a constructed one. There are several constructed grammars: traditional, structural, and transformational grammars. Traditional grammar studies the

forms of words (morphology) and how they are put together in sentences (syntax); structural grammar studies structures of various levels of the language (morpheme level) and syntactic level; transformational grammar studies basic structures and transformation rules.

Grammar teaching and learning, in the past years, has experienced a drastic change. The prominent position and prestige that grammar once enjoyed, in the traditional context of language teaching, is replaced by almost complete negligence in modern innovative approaches. Grammar, which held the central component of language instruction in the past, is now being frowned upon and holds no place in communicative approaches. Grammar instruction arouses mixed and even opposite attitudes and it is also one of the difficult aspects of language to teach well .

There exists a number of different assumptions and theories regarding the concept of grammar, which indicate the influence by the underlying approaches . A looking at these definitions illustrates the ambiguity present in these assumptions.

Grammar is the system or the rules of a language. David Crystal (1995) views grammar as the business of taking a language to pieces, to see how it works . In the same way, Penny Ur (2011) thinks of grammar as agreed upon rules that delineate how words are combined to produce acceptable meaningful language units .

However, grammar in a broader sense, is taken to mean: “an internal mental system”, “a set of prescriptions of language forms”, “a description of language behavior”, “the major structures of a language”, and finally “rules for instructional and assessment purposes” .

Linguists consider the concept of grammar in a very specific sense. In linguistics’ point of view, grammar is a set of internalized rules speakers use for generating and interpreting language. In this sense, grammar is mostly acquired and not learned by instruction and conscious training.

The teacher should formulate long-term goals, interim aims and short-term objectives. What changes he can bring about in his pupils at the end of the week, month, year, course, and each particular lesson. Hence, aims are planned results for pupils learning a FL.

The aims are stipulated by syllabus and other official directives. They are: practical, instructional, educational and developing (formative).

Practical aims cover habits and skills which pupils acquire in using a foreign language. A habit is an automatic response to specific situation, acquired normally as a result of repetition and learning grammar .

A skill is a combination of useful habits serving a definite purpose and requiring application of certain knowledge.

Instructional aims developed the pupils mental capacities and intelligence in the process of FLL (foreign language learning). Educational aims help the pupils extend their knowledge of the world in which they live.

Formative or developing aims help develop in learns sensual perception, motor, kinesthetic, emotional and motivating spheres. Principles are basic underlying theoretical provisions which determine the choice of methods, techniques and others means of instruction.

To Richards (1992), grammar is the organization of a language; it is the manner by which units of language like words and phrases are combined to form sentences. He defines grammar as the language element, specially the words, phrases and clauses that build sentences . Thus, grammar is the set of rules specifying the correct ordering of words at the sentence level or, similarly, the rules that govern how sentences are formed in a specific language .

To judge by the way some people speak, there is no place for grammar in the language course nowadays; yet it is, in reality, as important as it ever was exercise of correct grammar, if he is to attain any skill of effective use of the language, but he need not know consciously formulated rules to account to him for that he does unconsciously correctly.

In order to understand a language and to express oneself correctly one must assimilate the grammar mechanism of the language studied. Indeed, one may know all the words in a sentence and yet fail to understand it, if one does not see the relation between the words in the given sentence. And vice versa, a sentence may contain one, two, and more unknown words but if one has a good knowledge of the structure of the language one can easily guess the meaning of these words or at least find them in a dictionary.

No speaking is possible without the knowledge of grammar, without the forming of a grammar mechanism.

If learner has acquired such a mechanism, he can produce correct sentences in a foreign language. Paul Roberts writes: “Grammar is something that produces the sentences of a language. By something we mean a speaker of English. If you speak English natively, you have built into you rules of English grammar. In a sense, you are an English grammar. You possess, as an essential part of your being, a very complicated apparatus that enables you to produce infinitely many sentences, all English ones, including many that you have never specifically learned. Furthermore by applying you rule you can easily tell whether a sentence that you hear a grammatical English sentence or not” .

A command of English as is envisaged by the school syllabus cannot be ensured without the study of grammar. Pupils need grammar to be able to aud, speak, read, and write in the target language.

To develop one’s speech means to acquire essential patterns of speech and grammar patterns in particular. Children must use these items automatically during speech-practice. The automatic use of grammar items in our speech (oral and written) supposes mastering some particular skills – the skills of using grammar items to express one’s own thoughts, in other words to make up your sentences.

We must get so-called reproductive or active grammar skills.

A skill is treated as an automatic part of awareness. Automatization of the action is the main feature of a skill.

The nature of Automatization is characterized by that psychological structure of the action, which adopts to the conditions of performing the action owing frequent experience. The action becomes more frequent, correct and accurate and the number of the operations is shortened while forming the skill the character of awareness of the action is changing, i.e. fullness of understanding is paid to the conditions and quality of performing to the control over it and regulation.

To form some skills is necessary to know that the process of the forming skills has some steps:

- Only some definite elements of the action are automatic.
- The Automatization occurs under more difficult conditions, when the child can’t concentrate his attention on one element of the action.
- The whole structure of the action is improved and the automatization of its separate components is completed.

What features do the productive grammar skills have?

During our speech the reproductive grammar skills are formed together with lexis and intonation, they must express the speaker's intentions.

The actions in the structural setting of the lexis must be learnt.

The characteristic feature of the reproductive grammar skills is their flexibility. It doesn't depend on the level of Automatization, i.e. on perfection of skill here mean the original action: both the structure of sentence, and forms of the words are reproduced by the speaker using different lexical material. If the child reproduces sentences and different words, which have been learnt by him as "a ready-made thing" he can say that there is no grammar skill. Learning the ready-made forms, word combinations and sentences occurs in the same way as learning lexis.

The grammar skill is based on the general conclusion. The grammar action can and must occur only in the definite lexical limits, on the definite lexical material. If the pupil can make up his sentence frequently, accurately and correctly from the grammatical point of view, he has got the grammar skill.

Teaching grammar at school using the theoretical knowledge brought some critical and led to confusion. All the grammatical rules were considered to be evil and there were some steps to avoid using them at school.

But when we learn grammatical items in models we use substitution and such a type of training gets rid of grammar or "neutralizes" it. By the way, teaching the skills to make up sentences by analogy is a step on the way of forming grammar skills. It isn't the lexical approach to grammar and it isn't neutralization of grammar, but using basic sentences in order to use exercises by analogy and to reduce number of grammar rules when forming the reproductive grammar skills.

To form the reproductive grammar skills we must follow such steps:

- Selection the model of sentence.
- Selection the form of the word and formation of word forms.
- Selection the auxiliary words-preposition, articles, and etc. and their combination with principle words.

The main difficulty of the reproductive (active) grammar skills is to correspond the purposes of the statement, communicative approach (a question → an answer and so on), words, meanings, expressed by the grammatical patterns. In that case we use basic sentences, in order to answer the definite

situation. The main factor of the forming of the reproductive grammar skill is that pupils need to learn the lexis of the language. They need to learn the meanings of the words and how they are used.

We must be sure that our pupils are aware of the vocabulary they need at their level and they can use the words in order to form their own sentence. Each sentence contains a grammar structure. The mastering the grammar skill lets pupils save time and strength, energy, which can give opportunity to create. Learning a number of sentences containing the same grammatical structure and a lot of words containing the same grammatical form isn't rational. But the generalization of the grammar item can relieve the work of the mental activity and let the teacher speed up the work and the children realize creative activities.

The process of creation is connected with the mastering of some speech stereotypes the grammatical substrat is hidden in basic sentences.

Grammar is presented as itself. Such a presentation of grammar has its advantage: the grammar patterns of the basic sentences are connected with each other. But this approach gives pupils the opportunity to realize the grammar item better. The teaching must be based on grammar explanations and grammar rules. Grammar rules are to be understood as a special way of expressing communicative activity. The reproductive grammar skills supposed to master the grammar actions which are necessary for expressing thoughts in oral and written forms.

The automatic perception of the text supposes the reader to identify the grammar form according to the formal features of words, word combinations, sentences which must be combined with the definite meaning. One must learn the rules in order to identify different grammatical forms. Pupils should get to know their features, the ways of expressing them in the language. We teach children to read and aud by means of grammar. It reveals the relation between words in the sentence. Grammar is of great important when one teaches reading and auding.

CONCLUSION

The forming of the perceptive grammar and reproductive skills is quite different. The steps of the work is mastering the reproductive skills differ from the steps in mastering the perceptive skills. To master the reproductive grammar skills one should study the basic sentences or models. To master the perceptive grammar skills one should identify and analyze the grammar item. Though training is of great importance to realize the grammar item.

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