

THE TECHNIQUES OF EXPLICIT GRAMMAR INSTRUCTION

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Abstract. *The article examines the main methods and techniques of explicit grammar instruction. The main goal here is to find a way to make the learners of foreign language be interested in grammar, understand its rules and use in practice. The significance of visual aids, such as PPT, as a part of grammar instruction is particularly explained in this article. Additionally, the paper discusses the effect of authentic materials when it is used while teaching grammar explicitly.*

Key words: *explicit grammar instruction, teaching, methods, techniques, language learning, visual aids, lesson.*

Introduction

Teaching is a difficult work, since it requires from teacher not only the knowledge itself, but also good skills as well as methods of its transferring to the students. Frequently, teachers and tutors face the problem of explaining grammar rules to the learners so that they could understand and apply them in practice. Therefore, teachers and linguists all over the world work on this problem, trying to find the best technique, applicable to everyone, or at least the majority of the language learners.

Literature review

Learning grammar is believed to be a boring part of language learning. Perhaps, it is a reason why a big number of people give up the study in the middle of the process. Surely, learners should be motivated enough in order to attend the lessons and be full of attention while explanation. Thus, Zheng Ling suggests the use of multimedia in the class. According to his opinion, visual aids are a good tool for attracting students' attention. Moreover, various types of multimedia can take the students' boredom away. Definitely, the set of rules, examples along with texts make lessons complicated. Consequently, the time which is spent for analyzing and comprehending the grammar may seem boring. Learners, who find grammar learning difficult, suppose that grammar lessons cannot be interesting. Which is why it is significant to capture their attention with something bright and fascinating. Usually, pictures along with videos are applied. Nowadays, the use of PPT is highly encouraged. Slides, that contain not only the useful information for the students, should be full of images and sounds. From the psychological point of view, people are prone to be interested in the material that offers some features of entertainment, that is to say, even memes and songs can be beneficial during grammar lessons, certainly, if they are appropriate to the topic. Additionally, presentations should contain various diagrams, charts and maps. All these means of multimedia are able to draw the learners' attention to the theme of the lesson, and moreover, improve their understanding of the rules. Having noticed the positive results of such kind of classes, students will definitely feel more encouraged to continue the language learning process. Needless to say, grammar lessons that contain the use of multimedia inspire students to attend the classes and be active in the learning process.

Main part

Explicit grammar instruction with the use of presentational techniques does not necessary require the learners' practice, but their attention is essential. In other words, teachers, who use different kinds of visuals expect their students' attention toward the explanation of the rules. The presentations, diagrams and charts are used in order to make the grammar rules more attractive for learners, but practice is another part of the learning process. Anyway, explanation of the rules and the practice are closely

connected with each other, firstly teachers should find ways of presenting grammar in an interesting way, after which learners can check their understanding by doing exercises. Ellis also suggests the use of guessing and discovering techniques, that is to say they should recognize the forms themselves and later be able to notice them in a context. This technique is good for future practice of grammar rules.

Another linguist, who has summarized several works dedicated to grammar teaching, including explicit instruction, Brown, has proposed the most important concepts. He claims that grammar teaching techniques should contain:

- “forms that do not overwhelm students with linguistic terminology, and
- forms that are as lively and intrinsically motivating as possible.”

In other words, first of all, the explanation of grammar should not be full of terminology. The content of various scientific words makes learners more confused. Which is why, while instructing grammar it is important to select the words as simple as possible. Furthermore, the material as well as the means that are used for grammar teaching should be motivating. The process of study should be involving for the learners. That is why the tutors' attention should be paid on the tools that are used by them during the class. Specifically, they should be enthusiastic and engaging.

According to Brown's opinion, “charts as a useful tool for clarification, the use of authentic objects to engage learners, maps and drawings used as visual aids, dialogues for students to practice linguistic forms in context, and written texts to process selected forms”. As it was mentioned above, different means of visuals help students to understand the material better. Having taken it into consideration, we may admit that Brown's suggestion for use of charts, maps and drawings is certainly useful. The demonstration of theories as a support plays an essential role in grammar instruction. In addition, authentic materials can immensely contribute to successful grammar teaching. As long as students are provided with discourses of native speakers, they are likely to achieve high results in practice, since they see how grammar structures are used in a context and looking at them it is easier to implement the same rules and structures in a real life. And, in order to practice the grammar rules that had been studied, Brown offers the use of dialogs. The first benefit from this can be the use of real-life situations. Such activities have a long-term effect, because learners can speak about the work that they are used to do often, or situations that surround people in their daily life. The second benefit is the process of practice itself. Two learners, who are discussing one theme and using the same grammar rules can evaluate each other. It is usually called as peer-evaluation. This technique is believed to be extremely useful since it is easier to notice the mistakes of others rather than your own ones. Coming out from this, students can have further discussion, correct the mistakes that had been noticed by them, and finally, make a conclusion for themselves. Thus, students will see that studying grammar rules with the use of visual aids and authentic material has a positive effect on their understanding. Moreover, having dialogs as an activity, masters the skills of practicing new grammar rules.

In the article, written by Roberta Stathis and Patrice Gotsch it is mentioned that instruction of the grammar should be accompanied with a meaningful context. It is teacher's work to organize good and appropriate to the themes visual aids, that will be interesting for students. The visuals should help in understanding the rules. Additionally, the learning process should include the practice, which can be done in small groups, in pairs or independently.

As we can imagine, teachers can apply different techniques for grammar instruction. According to the opinion of such linguists as Fotos, Celce-Murcia, and Ellis, all the used techniques in a class can be extremely important if they are used appropriately. Certainly, when teachers choose multimedia according to the topic of the lesson, it will have a good impact on the learning process. But, such characteristics as learners' levels, age and cultural background should be taken into consideration. For instance, the use of many charts during the lesson may confuse children. Therefore, in order to gain a

benefit from the visuals teachers should thoroughly select them for their students.

“Formal instruction may work best in promoting acquisition when it is linked with opportunities for natural communication”, write Ellis and Fotos (1999). The linguists claim that the grammar rules are effective when they are taught in a context. As an example, learners should be given texts where they can find the grammar structures that they are learning. This method is good in language acquisition because it provides the learners with the evidence how these grammar structures can be used in practice. The opportunity to see the context inspire students to use the rules that they have learnt in their spoken and written speech. This technique also makes the learners to be more confident while speaking and writing since they are sure that the structure they use is correct in a particular context.

Celce-Murcia (1991) agrees and comments, “if learners are presented with many fully illustrated and well-demonstrated examples and then asked to describe other similar situations, they have a basis for understanding and practicing the correct use of these forms”. In other words, the effect from teaching grammar rules can be seen if students are given a particular detailed situation as an example, and after this are asked to create their own similar to the given example situation. If students still have some difficulties, more examples can be provided. It is obvious that this method facilitates the students’ learning. Examples give more chances to get positive results from practice, with few mistakes, or even without them.

Zheng Ling also supports the idea of using multimedia in teaching process. He claims that sounds, images, texts and animation stimulate learners to study. He emphasizes its benefit in classes where foreign language grammar is taught since it creates an atmosphere of native environment. After explanation students should have a practice in a form of presentation, role-playing or discussion, to try utilizing the new grammar structures. In the author’s opinion, such methods inspire students for learning, and make learning grammar interesting. In the article we can find that the author suggests the use of newspapers and magazines in grammar teaching. The example of passive voice was given there. Namely, the titles in newspapers are usually written in passive voice, which is why they can be used when teaching this grammar rule. Certainly, magazine or newspaper articles can be quite interesting, and thus attractive for the learners. Thus, we can see that this kind of material can be motivating for the students.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that the first part of the lesson should be dedicated to the explanation of the theme. It is important here to use additional materials and visual aids, so that teachers can make the students be interested in grammar. The second part of the lesson should be a practice, which also should be fascinating. Such activities as role play and dialogs have a positive impact on learners’ study and make them motivated. Furthermore, we have come to the conclusion that there are various methods exist, but they should be chosen carefully. Such features as age of the learners should be taken into consideration. If the techniques are chosen appropriately, grammar lessons will be interesting and effective.

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