HOW TO TEACH GRAMMAR

Amonova Vazira

Abstract: Teaching grammar is seemed to be so demanding: memorizing lots of rules, using complex usages, facing vague and difficult structures. Grammar teaching has always been one of the controversial and least understood aspects of language teaching, Few teachers remain indifferent to grammar and many teachers become obsessed by it. This article attempts to shed light on the issues, and it is essentially a book about practice about "how" and the bulk of tbe book explores a range of grammar teaching options.

Key words: deductive and inductive approach, realia,

Introduction: Teaching grammar involves instructing students on the rules and structures of a language, including how words are used, how sentences are formed, and how different language elements interact. It encompasses teaching students about parts of speech, sentence structure, punctuation, verb tenses, word order, and other aspects of language that contribute to effective communication. Teaching grammar can involve a variety of instructional methods, such as explaining grammar rules, providing examples, engaging students in grammar exercises and activities, and giving feedback on their language usage. Effective grammar instruction helps students develop a solid understanding of how to use language correctly and appropriately in different contexts. In addition to teaching the technical aspects of grammar, educators also strive to help students understand the importance of grammar in effective communication. This includes teaching students how to use grammar to convey meaning, express ideas clearly, and communicate effectively in speaking, writing, and other forms of expression. Teaching grammar is an essential part of language education, as it equips students with the skills they need to become proficient communicators and to navigate the complexities of language in various personal, academic, and professional settings.

Effective communication is a cornerstone of language proficiency, and at the heart of this proficiency lies a solid understanding of grammar. Teaching grammar is a fundamental aspect of language education, as it equips students with the essential skills needed to communicate clearly and accurately. In this article, we will explore the significance of teaching grammar, the key components of grammar instruction, and its role in helping students become proficient communicators. By understanding the importance of grammar and how to effectively teach it, educators can empower students to express themselves with confidence and clarity in various contexts."

WHY WE SHOULD TEACH GRAMMAR?
There are many arguments for putting grammar in the foreground in second language teaching. Here are seven of them:

1) The sentence-machine argument

Part of the process of language learning must be what is sometimes called item-learning — that is the memorisation of individual items such as words and phrases. However, there is a limit to the number of items a person can both retain and retrieve. Even travellers' phrase books have limited usefulness — good for a three-week holiday, but there comes a point where we need to learn some patterns or rules to enable us to generate new sentences. That is to say, grammar. Grammar, after all, is a description of the regularities in a language, and knowledge of these regularities provides the learner with the means to generate a potentially enormous number of original sentences. The number of possible new sentences is constrained only by the vocabulary at the learner's command and his or her

creativity. Grammar is a kind of 'sentence-making machine'. It follows that the teaching of grammar offers the learner the means for potentially limitless linguistic creativity.

2) The fine-tuning argument

The purpose of grammar seems to be to allow for greater subtlety of meaning than a merely lexical system can cater for. While it is possible to get a lot of communicative mileage out of simply stringing words and phrases together, there comes a point where 'Me Tarzan, you Jane'-type language fails to deliver, both in terms of intelligibility and in terms of appropriacy. This is particularly the case for written language, which generally needs to be more explicit than spoken language. For example, the following errors are likely to confuse the reader: Last Monday night I was boring in my house. After speaking a lot time with him I thought that him attracted me. We took a wrong plane and when I saw it was very later because the plane took up. Five years ago I would want to go to India but in that time anybody of my friends didn't want to go. The teaching of grammar, it is argued, serves as a corrective against the kind of ambiguity represented in these examples.

3) The fossilisation argument

It is possible for highly motivated learners with a particular aptitude for languages to achieve amazing levels of proficiency without any formal study. But more often 'pick it up as you go along' learners reach a language plateau beyond which it is very difficult to progress. To put it technically, their linguistic competence fossilises. Research suggests that learners who receive no instruction seem to be at risk of fossilising sooner than those who do receive instruction.

HOW TO TEACH GRAMMAR FROM RULES

First of all, here are two important definitions:

- a deductive approach starts with the presentation of a rule and is followed by examples in which the rule is applied

- an inductive approach starts with some examples from which a rule is inferred

An example of deductive learning might be that, on arriving in a country you have never been to before, you are told that as a rule people rub noses when greeting one another, and you do exactly that. An example of inductive learning would be, on arriving in this same country, you observe several instances of people rubbing noses on meeting so you can conclude that this is the custom, and proceed to do likewise. In place of the terms deductive and inductive, it may be easier to use the terms rule-driven learning and discovery learning respectively. (Scott Thornbury, 2002)

Deductive approach

The deductive approach to teaching grammar involves presenting learners with a grammar rule or concept first, followed by examples and then practice exercises to reinforce the understanding of the rule. This approach is teacher-centered, as the instructor takes on the role of providing explanations and guiding students through the learning process. In the deductive approach, the teacher typically begins by introducing a specific grammar rule or concept, explaining its usage and providing examples to illustrate it. After this, students are given exercises or activities to practice applying the rule in context. This approach is often used when teaching grammar structures that follow clear and consistent rules, such as verb tenses, prepositions, or modal verbs. It allows for a systematic and structured presentation of grammar points, making it easier for students to grasp the underlying principles.

While the deductive approach can be effective in providing a clear framework for understanding grammar rules, some critics argue that it may not always promote active engagement and discovery in language learning. Additionally, it may not fully address the complexities of language use in authentic communication. Educators often combine the deductive approach with other teaching methods, such as inductive approaches or communicative activities, to create a more comprehensive and dynamic language learning experience for students.

Inductive approach

The inductive approach to teaching grammar involves presenting learners with examples of language use first, allowing them to observe patterns and rules on their own through guided discovery. This approach is student-centered, as it encourages active engagement and critical thinking as students work to identify and understand grammar rules themselves. In the inductive approach, the teacher typically begins by providing students with a set of examples that illustrate a specific grammar structure or rule. Students are then guided through a series of questions or activities that prompt them to analyze the examples, identify patterns, and infer the underlying grammar rule. Through this process of discovery, students develop a deeper understanding of the grammar rule and how it is used in context. This approach can help learners internalize grammar rules more effectively and apply them more naturally in their own language production.

The inductive approach is often used when teaching grammar structures that may not follow strict or predictable rules, such as phrasal verbs, word order, or idiomatic expressions. It allows students to explore language patterns and make connections on their own, fostering a sense of autonomy and ownership over their learning. While the inductive approach can be beneficial for promoting critical thinking and active engagement in language learning, some critics argue that it may not always provide clear and explicit explanations of grammar rules. Additionally, it may require more time and effort on the part of both students and teachers to navigate the process of discovery. Educators often combine the inductive approach with other teaching methods, such as deductive approaches or communicative activities, to create a balanced and effective language learning experience that caters to different learning styles and preferences.

HOW TO TEACH GRAMMAR FROM EXAMPLES

Teaching the present simple using realia

Using realia, or authentic materials from everyday life, can be a great way to teach the present perfect tense in a meaningful context. Here are some examples of how you can use realia to teach the present perfect:

1) Photos: Show students a picture of a friend or family member and ask them to describe what that person has done recently using the present perfect tense. For example, "She has traveled to Paris," or "He has eaten sushi."

2) Receipts: Bring in a receipt from a recent purchase and have students create sentences about what they have bought or done. For example, "I have bought a new book," or "We have had dinner at a restaurant."

3) Diary Entries: Provide students with diary entries or journal entries written in the present perfect tense. Ask them to read the entries and summarize the activities that have been done. For example, "I have studied for my exam," or "She has met her friends for coffee."

4) Travel Itineraries: Share a travel itinerary with students and have them use the present perfect tense to talk about the experiences they have had on their trip. For example, "I have visited the Eiffel Tower," or "We have taken a boat tour."

5) Social Media Posts: Show students social media posts or updates where people talk about recent activities using the present perfect tense. Have students create their own posts based on what they have done recently. For example, "I have watched a new movie," or "They have gone hiking."

By using realia in these ways, students can see how the present perfect tense is used in authentic contexts and practice forming sentences based on their own experiences. This can make learning grammar more engaging and relevant for language learners.

Conclusion

Teaching grammar is an essential component of language instruction. It helps students communicate effectively, understand the structure of sentences, and improve their writing skills. By incorporating various teaching methods, such as explicit instruction, interactive activities, and real-world examples, educators can create a dynamic and engaging learning environment for students to master grammar concepts. Additionally, providing opportunities for practice, feedback, and reinforcement can help solidify students' understanding of grammar rules and usage.

Overall, teaching grammar in a comprehensive and engaging manner can empower students to become more confident and proficient communicators in both written and spoken language.

References:

1. Thornbury, S.(1997) About Language: Tasks for Teachers of English, Cambridge University Press

2. Yule, G (1998) Analysing English Grammar. Oxford University Press.

3. Thornbury, S (2002) How to Teach Grammar

4. Collins COBUILD English Grammar. (1990) Collins ELT

5. Swan, M (1995) Practical English Usage (New edition). Oxford University Press.