O. Myronchuk

MAIN STAGES OF GRAMMAR TEACHING METHODS EVOLUTION

The following article deals with grammar teaching methods designed for learners of English as a Foreign Language. The aim of the article is to analyze the main stages of grammar teaching methods evolution. It also provides the analyses of both advantages and disadvantages of each method under discussion It is very controversial as well, since the question of what method is to be considered the most efficient remains unanswered. The topicality of the paper, thus, lies in the fact that it presents the most concise review of the main grammar teaching methods. The ideas of such scholars as Noam Chomsky, Stephen Krashen, Scott Thornbury and Jeremy Harmer were taken into consideration.

Key words: teaching method, deductive approach, inductive approach, communicative language teaching, grammar-translation method, audiolingualism.

Grammar teaching has always been one of the most controversial and least understood aspects of language teaching. Few teachers remain indifferent to grammar and many English language inatructures become obsessed by it. The paper does not aim at establishing the most appropriate and efficient approach to teaching grammar: there are as many ways of teaching grammar as there are teachers. The aim of the paper is to analyze the most significant stages of grammar teaching methods evolution.

The on-going debate in teaching English as a foreign language is based on the numerous arguments as to how much attention should be paid to teaching grammar. Throughout the history the scholars' views on the problem have changed drastically. Starting with the Grammar-Translation Method, in which the main emphasis was made on grammar, teaching soon appeared in a form of Audiolingualism and the Direct Method where grammar was less stressed and finally shifted to Communicative Language Teaching, where teaching grammar was rejected altogether. In this paper we will briefly analyze each of these methods.

The Grammar-Translation Method is not new. It has had different names, but it has been used by language teachers for many years. At one time it was called the Classical Method since it was first used in teaching the classical languages, Latin and Greek. According to teachers who use the Grammar-Translation Method, a fundamental purpose of learning a foreign language is to be able to read literature written in the target language. To do this, students need to learn about the grammar rules and vocabulary of the target language. The teacher is the authority in the classroom. The students in their turn do as she/he says so they can learn what she/he knows. Students are taught to translate from one language to another. Students study grammar deductively: that is, they are given the grammar rules and examples, are told to memorize them, and then are asked to apply the rules to the examples. The biggest emphasis is made on grammar and vocabulary. Reading and writing are the primary skills that the students work on. There is much less attention given to speaking and listening; pronunciation receives little, if any, attention. The teaching techniques applied within this method include translation of literary passages, reading comprehension questions, deductive application of rules, fill-in-the-blanks tasks, memorization, using words in sentences, writing compositions [5].

Communicative Language Teaching was developed in 1970s within the framework of communicative approach. The development of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) was motivated by developments in the new science of sociolinguistics and the belief that communicative competence consists of more than simply the knowledge of the rules of grammar. Nevertheless, CLT, in its shallow-end version at least did not reject grammar teaching out of hand. In fact, grammar was still the main component of the syllabus of CLT courses, even if it was dressed up in functional labels: asking the way, talking about yourself, making future plans etc. explicit attention to grammar rules was not incompatible with communicative practice, either. Chomsky, after all, had claimed that language was rule-governed, and this seemed to suggest to theorists that explicit rule-giving may have a place after all. This belief was around at about the time that CLT was being developed, and was readily absorbed into it. Grammar rules reappeared in course books, and grammar teaching re-emerged in classrooms, often, it must be said, at the expense of communicative practice [1].

Deep-end CLT, on the other hand, rejected both grammar-based syllabuses and grammar instructions. A leading proponent of this view was N.S. Prabhu, a teacher of English in southern India.in his Bangalore Project, he attempted to replicate natural acquisition processes by having students work through a syllabus of tasks for which no formal grammar instruction was supposedly needed nor provided. Successful completion of the task – for example, following a map – was the lesson objective, rather than successful application of a rule of grammar. The Bangalore Project was the predecessor of what is now known as task-based learning [4].

The goal of Communicative Language Teaching is to enable students to communicate in the target language. To do this, students need knowledge of the linguistic forms, meanings, and functions. The teacher facilitates communication in the classroom. In this role, one of his major responsibilities is to establish situations likely to promote communication. During the activities he acts as an advisor, answering students' questions and monitoring their performance. He might make note of their errors to be worked on at a later time during more accuracy-based activities. The most obvious characteristic of **CLT** is that almost everything that is done is done with a communicative intent. Students use the language a great deal through communicative activities such as games, role plays, and problem-solving tasks (Using authentic materials, scrambled exercises, language games, picture strip story, role play etc) [1].

Another teaching method we are going to stress our attention on is the Direct Method, which emerged in the mid-to late-nineteenth century, challenged the way that Grammar-Translation focused exclusively on the written language. By claiming to be a "natural" method, the Direct Method prioritized oral skills, and, while following a syllabus of grammar structures, rejected explicit grammar teaching. The learners, it was supposed, picked up the grammar in much the same way as children pick up the grammar of their mother tongue, simply by being immersed in language [5].

Audiolingualism, a largely North American invention, stayed faithful to the Direct Method belief in the primacy of speech, but was even stricter in its rejection of grammar teaching. Audiolingualism derived its theoretical base from behaviorist psychology, which considered language as simply a form of behavior, to be learned through the formation of correct habits. Habit formation was a process in which the application of rules played no part. The Audiolingual syllabus consisted of a global list of sentence patterns, which, although not necessarily labeled as such, were grammatical in origin. These patterns formed the basis of pattern-practice skills, the distinguishing feature of Audiolingual classroom practice [5].

Noam Chomsky's claim, in the late 1950s, that language ability is not habituated behavior but an innate human capacity, prompted a reassessment of drill-and-repeat teaching practices [2]. The view that we are equipped at birth for language acquisition led to Krashen's belief that formal instruction was unnecessary. His Natural Approach does away with both a grammar syllabus and explicit rule-giving. Instead, learners are exposed to large doses of comprehensible input. Innate processes convert this input into output, in time. Like the Direct Method, the Natural Approach attempts to replicate the conditions of first language acquisition. Grammar, according to this scenario, is irrelevant [3].

All teaching methods with either heavy or little emphasis on grammar fall into one of two main groups: those where the deductive approach to grammar teaching is applied and those where inductive approach prevails. Now, there is a need to define each of the two approaches and single out the advantages as well as disadvantages of both of them [5].

Deductive approach is the one that starts with the presentation of a rule and is followed by example in which the rule is applied (the so-called "rule-driven" learning). This inevitably implies that the presentation stage of the lesson is teacher-fronted i.e. teacher explains the rule while students listen passively. As any other approach or method it has its advantages and disadvantages. Lets us first drive our attention to the positive aspects of the deductive approach. First of all, it gets straight to the point, and can therefore be time-saving. Many rules – especially rules of form – can be more simply and quickly explained than elicited from examples. This will allow more time for practice and application. Then, it respects the intelligence and maturity of many – especially adult –

students, and acknowledges the role of cognitive process in language acquisition. Another positive feature of the deductive approach is suggested by the fact that it confirms many students' expectations about classroom learning, particularly for those learners who have an analytical learning style. Also, it allows the teacher to deal with language points as they come up rather than having to anticipate them and prepare for them in advance. Despite of numerous advantages of the deductive approach one should also consider its drawbacks. To start with, grammar explanation in the deductive approach encourages, as it was already mentioned, a teacher-fronted, transmission-style classroom and therefore teacher explanation is often at the expense of student involvement and interaction. Furthermore, explanation is seldom as memorable as other forms of presentation, such as demonstration. Also, starting lesson with a grammar presentation may be off-putting for some students, especially younger ones. They may not have sufficient metalanguage (terminology) or they may not be able to understand the concepts involved. And the last but not least shortcoming lies in the fact that such an approach encourages the belief that learning is simply a case of learning a rule [5].

Having briefly discussed the essence as well as advantages and disadvantages of the deductive approach to teaching grammar we may now proceed to the inductive approach, which is proved to have gained a huge popularity since the late ninetieths. Unlike the deductive, the inductive approach starts with some examples from which a rule is inferred (the so-called discovery learning). The students play the role of a kind of discoverers, which as a result minimize the role of a teacher in a learning process. Despite its growing popularity, there are a number of factors for and against this approach.

We are going to start with discussing the advantages of the inductive approach. First of all, rules learners discover for themselves are more likely to fit their existing mental structures than rules they have been presented with. This in turn will make the rules more meaningful, memorable, and serviceable. Then, the mental effort involved ensures a greater degree of cognitive depth, which, again, ensures greater memorability. Moreover, students more actively involved in the learning process, rather than being simply passive recipients: they are therefore likely to be more attentive and more motivated. It is an approach which favors pattern-recognition and problem-solving abilities, which suggests that it is particularly suitable for learners who like this kind of challenge. And, if the problem-solving is done collaboratively and in the target language, learners get the opportunity for extra language practice. And the last but not least positive factor is that working things out for themselves prepares students for greater self-reliance and is therefore conducive to learner autonomy [1].

We will now focus our attention on the negative features of the inductive approach. First of all, the time and energy spent in working out rules may mislead students into believing that rules are the objective of language learning, rather than a means. Also, the time taken to work out a rule may be at the expense of time spent in putting the rule to some sort of productive practice. Furthermore, students may hypothesize the wrong rule or their version of the rule may be either too broad or too narrow in its application: this is especially a danger where there is no overt testing of their hypothesis, either through practice examples or by eliciting an explicit statement of the rule. Another drawback is that it can place heavy demands on teachers in planning a lesson. They need select and organize the data carefully so as to guide learners to an accurate formulation of the rule, while also ensuring the data is intelligible. But, again, however carefully organized the data is many languages areas such as aspect and modality resist easy rule formulation. This fact contributes greatly to another drawback of the inductive approach. Also, it frustrates students who by dint of their personal learning style or their personal learning experience (or both) would prefer simply to be told the rule.

Research findings into the relative benefits of deductive and inductive methods have been inconclusive. Short-term gains for deductive learning have been found and there is some evidence to suggest that some kinds of language items are better "given" than "discovered". Moreover, when surveyed, most learners tend to prefer deductive presentations of grammar. Nevertheless, once exposed to inductive approaches, there is often less resistance as the learners see the benefits of solving language problems themselves. Finally, the autonomy argument is not easily dismissed: the capacity to discern patterns and regularities in naturally occurring input would seen to be an invaluable tool for self-directed learning, and one, therefore, that might usefully be developed in the classroom.

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О.П. Мирончук

ОСНОВНІ ЕТАПИ ЕВОЛЮЦІЇ МЕТОДІВ ВИКЛАДАННЯ ГРАМАТИКИ

У даній статті мова йде про методи викладання граматики, розроблені для учнів англійської мови як першої іноземної. Метою даної статті є висвітлення основних етапів еволюції методів викладання граматики. Стаття також містить аналіз переваг і недоліків кожного з наведених методів. Проблема викладання граматики широко обговорюється. Це є досить суперечливе проблема, оскільки питання про найактивніший метод викладання граматики залишається відкритим. Актуальність даної статті полягає в тому,що вона пропонує стислий огляд основних методів викладання граматики. Стаття ґрунтується на роботах таких вчених як Стефен Крешен, Ноем Чомський, Скот Торнбері, а також Джеремі Хармер.

Ключові слова: метод викладання, дедуктивний підхід, індуктивний підхід, комунікативний метод, аудіолінгвалізм.

А.П. Мырончук

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В данной статье речь идет о методах преподавания грамматики, разработанных для учеников английского языка как первого иностранного. Целью данной статьи является обзор основных методов преподавания грамматики. Статья также предлагает анализ преимущества и недостатки каждого обсуждаемого метода. Данная проблема является одной из самых обсуждаемых в методологии, поскольку вопрос о том, какой метод можно считать самым эффективным остается открытым. Актуальность статьи, таким образом, состоит в том, что она предлагает краткий обзор главных методов преподавания грамматики. Статья базируется на работах таких ученых, как Стэфэн Крэшэн, Ноэм Чомский, Скот Торнбэри и Джэреми Хармер.

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