CURRENT PROBLEMS AND RESOLUTIONS OF TEACHING ENGLISH GRAMMAR

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ABSTRACT

Teaching grammar has been regarded as crucial to the ability to use language. For this reason, this article introduces a five-step procedure for teaching grammar.

Keywords: memorization-based techniques, diagramming sentences, learning through writing, deductive teaching, the eclectic way.

INTRODUCTION

English grammar is notoriously difficult to learn for both native and second-language speakers. There are so many intricacies, obscure rules, and exceptions that it comes as no surprise that different generations of teachers have used various approaches to teaching grammar to train literate English writers. In the past, memorization-based techniques that relied on repetition slowly gave way to more creative methods. Today, we live in a society that prizes literacy and is willing to adapt to more effective methods to achieve the best results in teaching grammar.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODOLOGY

Diagramming Sentences - One of the older forms of teaching grammar, diagramming sentences, first appeared in the 19th century. This method involves visually mapping the structures of and relationships between different aspects of a sentence. Especially helpful for visual learners, this method disappeared from modern teaching at least 30 years ago. Different forms of diagramming are used to visualize sentences, from the Reed-Kellogg System to dependency grammar, but all organize the functions of a sentence in a way that illustrates the grammatical relationships between words. More recently, diagramming sentences has had a small pop-culture resurgence in_prints of famous opening sentences and websites that allow you to diagram to your heart's content.

Learning Through Writing - This method is often used in schools in the U.S. and Canada. Students are encouraged to explore language through creative writing and reading, picking up correct grammar usage along the way. If there are specific

problems with certain grammatical rules, these are covered in a more structured lesson. An emphasis is now being placed upon language acquisition over language learning, as it has been observed that learning grammar by memorization does not work well and that students are better able to recognize and understand grammatical rules when lessons are more interactive (i.e., they have to apply these rules in their own writing). Repeated practice is also important and easily achieved through creative or personal writing exercises. This article, posted by *The Atlantic*, suggests that to better equip future adult writers, teachers in the 21st century should consider dropping outdated grammar teaching techniques in early education and opt for learning through writing techniques. Inductive Teaching - The inductive method of teaching grammar involves presenting several examples that illustrate a specific concept and expecting students to notice how the concept works from these examples. No explanation of the concept is given beforehand, and the expectation is that students learn to recognize the rules of grammar in a more natural way during their own reading and writing. Discovering grammar and visualizing how these rules work in a sentence allow for easier retention of the concept than if the students were given an explanation that was disconnected from examples of the concept. The main goal of the inductive teaching method is the retention of grammar concepts, with teachers using techniques that are known to work cognitively and make an impression on students' contextual memory.

Deductive Teaching - The deductive method of teaching grammar is an approach that focuses on instruction before practice. A teacher gives students an in-depth explanation of a grammatical concept before they encounter the same grammatical concept in their own writing. After the lesson, students are expected to practice what they have just been shown in a mechanical way, through worksheets and exercises. This type of teaching, though common, has many people—including teachers—rethinking such methods, as more post-secondary level students are revealing sub-par literacy skills in adulthood. As one former teacher states, deductive teaching methods drive many students away from writing because of the tediousness of rote learning and teacher-centered approaches. Interactive Teaching - Another method of teaching grammar is to incorporate interactivity into lessons. Using games to teach grammar not only engages students but also helps them to remember what they've learned. This method allows teachers to tailor their lessons to the different learning styles of students. For instance, each student can be given a large flashcard with a word on it, and the students must physically arrange themselves into a proper sentence. Other games can include word puzzles or fun online quizzes. Over the years, many methods have been developed for teaching grammar and have been built upon, abandoned, or combined, all with the same goal in mind—teaching students how to communicate effectively and

understand how to use the English language. Because of the grammatical complexity of English, each method has its pros and cons. Some lessons are less likely to be remembered, while others may require more in-depth explanation and practice. Regardless of how grammar is taught, a well-rounded understanding of English grammar is the most important factor in improving the literacy of students.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Both methods above offer advantages. The deductive method is quick and easy for the teacher. Where a difficult grammar point has to be presented, and perhaps explained because the concept is not one that is in the mother tongue, this is probably the better way. Where time is short, it is useful, even for a simple grammar point. Many learners, especially older ones, prefer the deductive approach because they want to know how the language works. The deductive method requires the students to identify the rule for themselves. It has the advantage of involving the students much more. The belief is that such learning will be more effective, though there is no certainty about this. This is probably the better approach for grammatical regularities which are easily perceived, understood, and applied. Eclectic teachers will use all three of these strategies at various times. This will make it easier to fit the lesson into the time available, as well as enabling them to suit the differing needs and learning styles of the students. Grammar points which do not appear very useful are best avoided. Just draw attention to their presence in the text and move on, having raised the students' awareness of the feature. If you do choose to teach a grammar point, use either the deductive or the inductive method, depending on the circumstances. When you yourself are talking, do not be afraid to use grammar forms that the students have not met. Provided the context makes the meaning clear, you are giving them valuable exposure and real life practice in decoding utterances which contain forms they do not know. Teachers need to know terminology in order to find helpful pages in reference book, but school children do not need to know words like auxiliary, preterit, reflexive pronoun and gerund in order to speak fluently. Teachers who use unnecessary terminology will appear pedantic, and most of it will be utter nonsense to the students anyway.

CONCLUSION

The ultimate goal of teaching grammar is to provide the students with knowledge of the way language is constructed so that when they listen, speak, read and write, they have no trouble applying the language that they are learning. Language teachers are, therefore, challenged to use creative and innovative attempts to teach grammar so that

such a goal can successfully be achieved. In other words, whatever exercises are given, the most crucial thing is that the teacher provide the students with an opportunity to be able to produce the grammatical item making use of syntactically and semantically correct examples of sentences comprised of appropriate and relevant vocabulary.

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