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Paper Authors
Mushtariy Abdurahmanova

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TYPOLOGY OF GRAMMAR EXERCISES

Mushtariy Abdurahmanova

Student Fergana State University Fergana city, Uzbekistan

Abstract. The article is based on the detailed analysis of the notion "grammar". Special attention is paid to differentiating between the notions "test" and "testing" in a narrow and wide sense.

Keywords. grammar, grammar acts, grammar mechanisms, grammar phenomenon, factors, active and passive grammar minimum, productive and reproductive speech, speech patterns, grammar unit/item, criteria of selection, grammar subskills, grammar exercises.

I. Introduction.

There are a number of reasons why there occur different concepts about "grammar" when one comes across this term. While it is perceived as a part of Linguistics in the course of mother tongue at the secondary school, in teaching/learning foreign language, it is considered to be the grammatical side of speech. According to various scientific sources the word "grammar" could be limited in two notions: 1) the grammatical side of the speech – structural organization of ideas in speaking, listening, reading and writing (e.g., using articles; speech patterns; verb forms of the person adequately to the context) and 2) grammar phenomenon and abstractions (e.g., the first place of the subject in the sentence; the plural form of the noun).

There is a wealth of literature on methodology where one can see such terms as acquiring "grammar mechanisms" as developing grammar subskills and others. The term "mechanism" is used to describe the events in action. It is more decent to use in short "grammar mechanisms" (V.S. Setlin) than "using grammar elements in speech activity".

V.S. Setlin has divided the process of acquisition of the grammar mechanisms into three parts: 1) acquiring grammar actions; 2) studying/learning the suggested material; 3) mastering grammar generalizations.

Grammar actions have the leading position in the grammar mechanisms of speech. Assimilation of grammar actions is classified by the formation of automatized subskills of speech grammar. Learning the suggested material of grammar is defined by memorizing grammar forms. Memorizing and using notions and rules are called as a generalization mastering.

The study of the suggested material is called learning grammar units of the foreign language, mastering grammar actions, i.e. developing subskills. Linking (auxiliary) words and grammar morphemes are learned as a material whilst changing words, word combinations and adhering word order are acquired as subskill.

The notion of grammar material is not a form of grammar phenomenon. The term "form" is associated with the structure of a sentence or a word construction in the plan of the content and expression.

Thus teaching English grammar is associated with assimilation of grammar mechanisms.

The active and passive grammar had been the matter of discussion for a long period. I.V. Rakhmanov used the terms active and passive material in association with mastering the reproductive and receptive speech.

The active grammar means grammar phenomenon used in reproductive as well as in productive speech. In some sources the active grammar is called as "grammar of speaking".

The notion of passive grammar, according to the methodological doctrine of L.V Scherba, consists of grammar phenomena and their

abstractions used in speech perception (reading, listening). Grammar rules of the English language in our brains should be so automatic and familiar to us as to native speakers that we should know when the rules are being violated.

Micro-form, micro-meaning and micro-usage are recognized as the unit of grammar selection. The grammar phenomena for the oral speech of the learners are selected from the real live speech of foreign native speakers and fictions. The resource of selection active grammar is the spoken literary language. Passive grammar minimum is selected from the written texts for students' receptive speech development.

Active and passive minima do not differ very much as in vocabulary (active minimum is in the passive input), active minimum is selected for all stages of the secondary schools and passive grammar minimum is selected only for lyceums and colleges - for advanced students. The formation of grammar minima directly deals with the speech themes and vocabulary minima which impact on the grammar selection. The methodological criteria in preparation of educational grammar are classified as follow.

Criteria of selecting active grammar minimum:

1. Criterion of prevalence of grammar phenomena in oral and written speech. The most frequent phenomena in people's speech are «picked up» from the all grammar system or material.

2. Criterion of being grammar unit as a sample. It requires the ability to developing grammar subskills through given samples (e.g.,building noun, adjective, adverb with the help of suffixes).

3. Criterion of isolation of mono-semantic facts. With the aim to prevent difficulties the most frequent and stylistically appropriate units are selected, but only one of the grammar form to excluding synonyms is selected.

Criteria of selecting passive grammar minimum:

1. Criterion of wide usage in literary written style of speech.

2. Criterion of polysemantics.

The element of action and criteria of selecting grammar material are directly linked. Some of them function as the main, others as complementary. Types of speech activity need various language material input. The most demanding in them are reading and listening. The grammar input for speaking and writing is relatively less than for reading and listening. The preparation of the English language grammar material requires successful approaches to the selection, distribution and methodical typology of the content of grammar teaching. That's why the selection should be relevant to the above criteria. The next task of preparation of language material is the presentation of the selected minimum. The distribution of the grammar minimum requires functional approach (according to the communicative tasks). Grammar is divided into communicative units (sentence), so the speech pattern performs as a unit of distribution. The speech pattern embodies in itself all sides of speech, i.e. vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation and graphic aspects, as speech pattern is considered to be the unit of learning and distribution.

Reproductive way of learning English is based on speech patterns leading to expected results. The speech pattern means a model of a sentence/utterance which is recognized as a grammar unit/item.

Grammar was distributed in two ways: with the help of the rules and speech patterns. The third way is "lexical approach" which is used when the grammar phenomenon is presented in isolation: if it is used in the only sentence, it needs to be learned without a rule, it should be learnt as a word (lexical item).

According to the current educational requirements the method of grammar

distribution means using primarily speech patterns, and necessary grammar rules if it is necessary.

The process of distribution consists of three stages: 1) defining the general sequence; 2) distribution among the grades; 3) distribution in a school year. Each stage has its own methodological criteria.

General distribution is measured according to the criterion of importance of grammar phenomena. For example, in distribution of present indefinite and present continuous tenses of the English language, the first one is considered to be the most important for the speech process. The most important grammar phenomena are distributed at the initial stage of education. Besides, the importance of distribution of grammar among grades occurs when one takes into account the criterion of correlation of grammar with vocabulary. The vocabulary in this case is of primary significance which in its turn influences the distribution of grammar units.

The third stage is a very complex process of distribution. Here are detected the cases of positive or negative transfer of language experience of students. This instructional measure is a major factor of preventing difficulties, i.e. this criterion is directed to prevent the expected grammar errors in the language acquisition. It is called preventing difficulties appearing in the speech. The first and second distribution is presented in syllabus. The third one is reflected in the English language coursebooks. The result of analysis of translingual and intralingual comparison of the selected language material are the basis of the grammar typology determination.

It was emphasized in the typology of vocabulary material, that the grammatical facts for learning are also differentiated. The details of easy/difficult acquisition are looked thoroughly. Identification of difficulties and their typology give the opportunity to create a system of exercises, to work out ways of

teaching and assign the time period of assimilating the material. The typology of grammar material can be associated with the typology of difficulties in the process of assimilation. It is known that identification of the difficulties is a multistage instructional organization: analysis of language errors, comparison of the contacted languages (a foreign and native languages) and contrast of the dissimilar elements. The analysis of the errors, comparing and contrasting are organized according to grammatical meaning, form and usage.

Grammar phenomena are taught for developing grammar subskills with the aim to communicate. The process of developing students' grammar subskills is organized within three stages:

1. Presentation stage, in which we introduce the grammar structure, either inductively or deductively. There are a variety of techniques and resources that can be used during this stage. Selection of them should be made according to teacher strengths, student preferences, and the nature of the grammar phenomenon.

2. Focused practice stage, in which the learner manipulates the structure in question while all other variables are held constantly. The goal of this stage is to allow the learner to gain control of the form without pressure and distraction trying to use the proper form of communication.

3. Communicative practice stage, in which the learner is engaged in communicative activities to practice the structures being learned.

It is necessary to pay attention also to teachers' feedback and error correction which can take place throughout the aforementioned two stages, in particular, on the 2-d stage when correction should be predominantly straightforward and immediate; on the 3-d stage communication should not be interrupted, but the teacher should take notes of the errors and deal with them after the

communicative exercises. Moreover grammar facts presented in the speech patterns are introduced orally to learners at the lower and middle stages of education, and in written form at the middle and higher stages.

Grammar phenomenon is presented via speech pattern or a rule, or via lexical approach. There are two kinds of rules: rule-instruction and rule-generalization. The rule-instruction is a mental activity aimed at using or reading/listening comprehension of structures, in psycholinguistics the rule is studied in speech issues, this program is called algorithm. Introducing the rule is the advance guiding base directed to providing speech act. In other words, a rule can be defined as a base of speech practice. The rule-generalization is a simple theoretical information related to grammar material that was learned in the process of speech acquisition. The rule should be laconic, clear and accurately formulated directed to using or recognizing grammar phenomenon.

The methods of developing grammar subskills of English are connected with peculiarities of speech activity and difficulties of interrelations of grammar structures of the native language and second language/ foreign language.

Teaching grammar mechanisms of speech must be fulfilled by taking into account the mother tongue of students from the one side and secondly by overcoming negative influence of mother tongue to the English language speech process: a) the rule can be explained in the mother tongue, whereas the meaning of the structures and their usage should be expressed in English; b) the development of reproductive skills is achieved by regulation of grammar actions and cognitive operations, code switching and appropriate structure selection, all these in combination allow avoiding negative influence of the mother tongue. All these facts must be reflected in exercises and instructions (rules).

The content of the teaching grammar mechanisms of speech in English involves the study of linking (auxiliary) words and inflexions. Its acquisition requires creating exact and steady images in students' minds. It is achieved along with acquisition of the skills and also by creating an opportunity to memorize the material.

Content of acquiring grammar mechanisms of speech includes assimilation of generalizations on the base of materials and actions. Generalizations are learned inductively.

The system of teaching grammar consists of developing grammar subskills, acquiring grammar material and learning generalization. In its turn it requires doing exercises aimed at developing skills and acquiring the material. In short exercises are means of overcoming difficulties of structures and assimilation of actions and generalizations. There are some samples of exercises aimed at teaching EL grammar:

1. To discover the structure in the perceived text.

2. To differ new structure from the other known structures.

3. Naming the received/read structures.

4. To analyze the sentence from grammatical point of view.

5. To continue teacher's story using relevant structures.

6. To use the structure uttered by a students or a teacher.

7. To systemize grammar material (e.g., making up sentences in present, past and future tenses).

8. To use freely structures in speech situation.

9. To describe the picture in the present (past, future) tense in English.

10. To make up conversation using the appropriate structures.

11. To use didactic handouts for grammar exercises (individual approach).

12. To translate the sentence (paragraph) that contains difficult structure, etc.

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