An Evaluation of Methodologies for Teaching Grammar in the EFL Classroom

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Abstract

Each language including English has a system in order to form an accurate communicative speech. The system which enables the human to form words and sentences correctly is called grammar. Learning the grammar rules involve both learning process and teaching process techniques. The teaching strategies and approaches assist the students and the teacher to clarify the idea of grammar effectively and efficiently. The contribution of this work is to evaluate the methods of teaching grammar in the English foreign language (EFL) classroom by examining existing issues.

1. Introduction

Intensive studies have been published and issued in the last decades that defined the teaching grammar techniques and methods. All the academic articles and books that titled grammar teaching approaches aimed to copious support for both teachers and learners in the ESOL environments. Therefore, academic writing is a complex skill to be learned and taught Al Badi (2015). Several techniques and procedures in teaching grammar have been applied and practiced in grammar classes lessons. This paper has been organized as follows. In section 2, an overview of the related work discussing task-based language (TBL) and presentation practice production (PPP) methods is
presented. Section 3. Evaluate some of the known methods for teaching grammar whilst conclusion and future work and references are presented in section 4 and section 5 respectively.

2. Related Work

English language teachers are looking for the most appropriate and suitable approaches to EFL learners to accomplish productive results. Thus, today we are investigating a diverse of learning approaches in second language acquisition like task based learning, presentation practice production (PPP) and inductive and deductive approaches. Al Fadda (2012) stated the basics of the academic writing as the learners' skills to evaluate and create the words and opinions of others and built it by their own voice academically.

2.1. Task-Based Language

A task- basic language (TBL) roots to the eighties and its origin is to communicative language teaching (Willis & Willis, 1996). Educational researchers characterize TBL approach in terms of the learners and the teachers and gave the description of the task definition. Jane Wills and Dave Wills (1996, ch6) defined task as 'a goal-oriented activity in which learners use language to achieve a real outcome'. In other words, the students apply the language resources to access the activities aims and solve problems. For example, the students learn a topic about transportation, which could provide different activities according to the student's level. In these activities, learners can name, draw, speak and compare the idea that they have and share personal experience. Both, David Nunan (2004) and Jane Wills and Dave Wills (1996) partly agreed that the task form-work is divided in to three main stages. First, pre-task where the teacher introduce the topic, highlight
the main idea and help student to brainstorm the subject. Second, Task-cycle or empirical study, in this phase the teacher walk around to support and encourage the learners. Also in this stage, the teacher plan for the next stage, report the learners work by asking and discuss the answers and do post-task if necessary. Third, the tutors analyze the language usage, practice it and give follow up activities. TBL approach gives the learners the zeal and the opportunity to communicate liberally (Wills, 1996). It focuses on learning through communication by using the target language in each activity. Furthermore, it emphasizes on both learning process and language by linking learner's personal experience and classroom materials (Nunan, 2004). Considering all of this evidence, it seems that TBL lesson is built on a central task and the language is learned by students' actions and participations in the class.

2.2. Presentation Practice Production Approach

Maftoon, and Sarem, (2012, p31) defined the presentation practice production approach (PPP) as 'a three-part teaching paradigm: Presentation, Practice and Production; based on behaviorist theory which states that learning a language is just like learning any other skill'. The learners can understand the language clearly through the small units of language which are presented by presentation, production and practice.

Willis and Willis (1996, ch6) affirmed that the PPP has three main stages, Presentation stage, Practice stage and Production stage. In the first phase, the teacher introduces the unit of the language through the context or presenting short sentences and dialogs. The second step shows the student work by repeating the
context, model sentence or short dialogues. Finally, the learners are encouraged and supported by the tutor to practice free language structure or similar to the task that they have learnt. However, PPP approach has been attacked by academic researchers (Ellis 2003, Richards and Rodgers 2014 and others).

They claimed that learners after the lesson will not be able to remember and produce the language correctly. Moreover, the PPP asks the students to perform and produce the language distinct than the natural environment. At the end, PPP approach needs to be modified and adapted to overcome the previous drawback.

2.3. Inductive Approach

Larsen-Freeman (2001, p264) acknowledged the inductive approach as ‘one in which students infer the rule or generalization from a set of examples’. It is clear that the teacher in the inductive approach gives the student different examples for the new concept and the student figure out the rule. In summary, the inductive approach starts with specific examples and ends by discovering the rules.

3. Evaluation of Grammar Teaching Approaches

The two main approaches in grammar teaching are deductive and inductive approaches. It is important to mention that both of these methods can deal with teaching grammar (Mahmadova, 2016) and they equally sharing advantages and disadvantages. As highlighted above that deductive approach is when the rule is presented at the start stage and then language practice at the end. The major advantages of deductive approach is time saving and it goes straightforwardly to the rule and practice it. Therefore, it is more
clearly and simply clarified (Widodo, 2006).

On the other hand, the disadvantages of deductive approach are grammar terminology and concepts may confuse and led to misinterpret young learners. Moreover, the learners' reactions are hinder at the end of the task. That is to say, deductive approach is suitable for young learners but adult (Thornbury, 2005). In like manner, the main drawbacks of inductive approach are energy and time-consuming, it is a teacher role in the lesson by carefully preparation materials and planning lesson (Thornbury, 2005). One question can be asked at the end, which method is the best for the learners? In fact there many factors should be considered by the teacher in teaching grammar like the learners experience knowledge, time of the lesson and the students willing. These factors may clarify the pest approach.

4. Conclusion and Future Work

This paper presents an evaluation of methods of teaching grammar. In this context, the two main approaches in grammar teaching are deductive and inductive approaches and they equally sharing advantages and disadvantages. If the learners have a good learning experience and actively involved and participated in the lesson, then choosing the inductive approach is the appropriate option. Otherwise, if a deductive approach is selected, the teacher needs to organize the learning experience to acquire a good learner's involvement. Using deductive approach make the progress of teaching new concepts and facts faster. In summary, good teachers may balance between them to obtain the benefits of both approaches.

In future, we will be conducting further studies to examine some crucial topics associated with the methodologies for grammar in ESL.
We are committed to share our findings with the ongoing research in this area.

5. References


