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## **TEACHING GRAMMAR COMMUNICATIVELY: TASK-BASED TEACHING**

### **КОММУНИКАТИВНОЕ ОБУЧЕНИЕ ГРАММАТИКЕ: ОБУЧЕНИЕ НА ОСНОВЕ ВЫПОЛНЕНИЯ ЗАДАЧ**

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The paper considers a communicative approach to grammar as a means to develop learners' ability to communicate with one another concentrating on the language meaning rather than the form. The paper studies the main characteristics of the communicative approach and task-based teaching as a type of the approach. In the paper the concept of «task» is explained, and different task types with examples are presented. It is also concluded that teaching methods within this approach motivate authentic interpersonal interaction with the priority to fluency over accuracy.

В статье рассматривается коммуникативный подход к грамматике как средство развития способности учащихся общаться друг с другом, сосредотачиваясь на языковом значении, а не на форме. В статье исследуются основные характеристики коммуникативного подхода и обучения на основе задач. В статье дано определение понятия «задача» и представлены различные типы задач с примерами. Также сделан вывод о том, что методы обучения в рамках данного подхода мотивируют ау-

тентичное межличностное взаимодействие, развивая больше беглость речи, чем грамматическую точность.

*Keywords:* grammar; communicative approach; task-based teaching; task; task types.

*Ключевые слова:* грамматика; коммуникативный подход; обучение на основе выполнения задач; задача; типы задач.

The role of grammar teaching is of great importance in language teaching. There has always been a dilemma for a teacher when to introduce and teach it and how to do it right. Moreover, it should be done in an engaging and a natural way, and oriented to solving everyday tasks. It is a fact that only the right practice done at the right time improves performance and leads to success.

According to Johnson (1994), Ellis (1996), Scott Thornbury (1999), grammar practice helps learners:

- develop their accuracy (use correct grammar);
- improve their fluency (speak and write without pauses and get their meaning across);
- use language properly;
- restructure their knowledge, integrating new into old one;
- turn input to intake.

Grammar is taught in the form of various controlled practice and free practice activities. Controlled practice can be performed in such ways as story chains, two truths and a lie, quizzes, guessing games, etc. For free practice such activities as debates, discussions, case studies, role plays, simulations, composing and telling stories can be applied. So, what activities and when to choose? According to Larsen-Freeman (2003), there are two important criteria that should be taken into account when planning grammar practice activities. "First, the activities should be meaningful and engaging. Second, they should be focused. More specifically, practice activities should be designed in such a way that the learning challenge is in focus" [1]. Consequently, as soon as a learner's main challenge is a grammar form, then meaningful repetition is essential in the form of songs or games like *Find someone who*. If meaning appears to be a learner's trouble, then it is reasonable to practice linking form and meaning together. But when the hardest moment is the use of the form, a learner will have to make a choice, for example in using comparative or superlative degree when describing the most picturesque country he has ever visited or comparing the two countries he has recently traveled to.

In teaching practice, there are different methods that can be used in teaching and training grammar like grammar-translation and audio-lingual. A communicative approach has been paid much attention to recently. Each

method has its own pluses and minuses but all of them should be applied depending on the activities you plan, the stage of working with grammar you think about (presentation, training (controlled or free practice activities), and etc), the age of students, and their language level.

Applying a communicative approach in classes teaching a foreign language helps learners acquire grammar rules and patterns, either deductively or inductively, in a context by bearing in mind learning styles, levels, age, goals, techniques of error correction, engaging and interactive communicative activities, and practical tasks.

The key characteristics of a communicative grammar approach are the following:

- the target grammar structure is not the object of the class but 'a helping hand' of communication and task solution;
- learners mainly concentrate on how-to-solve and keep up a conversation than what to say;
- a teacher's main role is to facilitate the process and scaffold while paying learners' attention to grammar structures and making them aware of their usage.

However, a teacher should consider certain restrictions when applying this approach:

- the size of the class;
- the level of learners (elementary level learners might find it challenging since there is not enough knowledge);
- mixed-ability learners;
- course books don't meet learners' interests and needs.

Task-based teaching or task-based language teaching TBT (TBLT) is one of the types of a communicative approach. Grammar can be taught based on tasks as well. Here it is important to note what the concept "task" means in grammar teaching. Sometimes task means homework or home task, sometimes the word "task" is confused with a communicative task like a role-play or debates which are, as a rule, based on the usage of target grammar structure in context and held at the end of the class. In TBT (TBLT) case 'task' is a non-linguistic activity such as making a presentation, or a commercial, or even a brochure. Thus, learners' main goal is to solve a problem using a language.

So, when does the task appear to be the task? According to Willis (2007), there are some criteria in the form of questions that will help you identify the task. The more answers 'yes' you give, the likelier it is to be the task. Here they are:

- Is the activity engaging for students?
- Is there a primary focus on meaning?
- Is there a goal or an outcome?

- Is success judged in terms of achieving a goal?
- Is completion a priority?
- Does the activity relate to real world activities?"

Below, different task types that can be used for teaching grammar communicatively are presented [2]:

**Listing** (learners in pairs or groups can discuss and present the main characteristics of public administration in their country, they can also prepare a list of 5 most significant public administrators in the world/country and explain the reason why they have chosen them or make a list of all the things they did in your busiest day);

**Ordering and sorting** (learners can place pictures/sentences/paragraphs in the correct order, rank items according to different aspects like popularity, cost, people's satisfaction, and etc.);

**Comparing** (learners can compare systems, weather, traditions, education, and etc);

**Problem-solving** (learners try to find a solution to a problem: choose the best country to visit, think of the best ending to the story, resolve a conflict, give advice, select an employee, and etc.);

**Sharing personal experiences** (learners share memories, experiences, opinions);

**Creative tasks** (learners can make infographics, a diagram, a brochure, a commercial, a presentation, etc.).

In a task-based class, a teacher doesn't pre-determine what language will be studied, the goal of the class is to fulfill a task and the language studied is determined in the process of this task completion. To clarify how the task-based class should look like, here the stages of such a class are presented:

**Pre-task.** A teacher introduces the topic and gives detailed instructions on what the task stage will include, and exposes learners to the language that they may need to complete the task.

**Task.** Learners complete a task in pairs or groups using the language resources that they have as the teacher scaffolds troublesome moments and encourages them.

**Planning.** Learners prepare a short oral or written report to tell the class what they found out in the process of doing their task. Then in groups, they practice what they are going to present in class. At the moment the teacher should be available for the learners to ask for help in case if they need to clear up any language questions they may face.

**Report.** Learners can report to the class or read the written report. The teacher chooses the order of when learners will present their reports and, if necessary, may give some immediate feedback on their content. Then they compare their reports.

Analysis. During this stage, the teacher highlights the parts from the text which are necessary to analyze. Learners may be asked to notice some definite features within this text. The teacher can concentrate on the language that the learners used during the report phase for analysis.

Practice. Finally, the teacher selects those language areas/aspects to practice that appeared during the stages of task completion. In this way they will make a note of useful language and increase their confidence [3].

Thus, a communicative grammar approach is applied to develop learners' ability to interact with one another in context-rich environments. It makes classroom communication natural, creates conditions for self-realization, and motivation and meaningful language acquisition. Additionally, it motivates real-life interaction and authentic communication between learners, implies meaningful language use, and prioritizes fluency over accuracy.

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### **РОЛЬ СМЕШАННОГО ОБУЧЕНИЯ В ОРГАНИЗАЦИИ ВОСПИТАТЕЛЬНОЙ РАБОТЫ ПОСРЕДСТВОМ ИНОЯЗЫЧНОГО ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ**

#### **BLENDED MODE OF ORGANIZING EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES IN TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

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В данной статье рассматриваются преимущества использования технологии смешанного обучения при организации воспитательной работы в процессе преподавания профессионально ориентированного англий-