THE ROLE OF GRAMMAR IN COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING

ETAP 550- PRESENTATION

DIANA LONG

WHAT IS COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING?

- The fundamental goal of CLT is to develop learners' communicative competence in L2 through communication and interaction with others (Brown, 2002; Canale & Swain, 1980).

- The term communicative competence was first used by Hymes (1972,1974) to refer to a speakers' capability to speak a language with linguistic proficiency and to use language appropriately in different social contexts (Yin Wong & Barrea-Marlys, 2012, p. 62).

- Wong and Barrea-Marlys (2012, p. 62) took ideas from Canale and Swain where it was thought that in order to achieve communicative competence, learners need to be competent in four aspects: linguistic, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competence (Canale, 1983; Canale & Swain, 1980; Swain, 1985).

- The purpose of communicative language teaching is to "…enhance not only the sociolinguistic ability but also the linguistic ability of the students (Zhong-guo & Min-yan, 2007, p. 63).

4 AREAS OF ACHIEVING COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE

1. Grammatical or linguistic competence (ability to create grammatically correct utterances or using the proper language on different occasions)

2. Sociolinguistic competence (ability to produce sociolinguistically appropriate utterances)

3. Discourse competence (ability to produce coherent and cohesive utterances)

4. Strategic competence (ability to solve communication problems as they arise)

According to Merrill Swain (1985), these are needed so that people can use language in a real communicative environment where there is a spontaneous interaction with people.

GRAMMAR LANGUAGE APPROACH

- "…Grammar is not only the core of a language, but a theoretical tool in regulating language" (Zhong-guo & Min-yan, 2007, p. 63).

- "Early approaches to foreign language instruction, including the Grammar Translation Method (GTM), often taught grammar separate from the larger contexts in which language is used. While these approaches were often effective for developing a receptive (reading) knowledge of a language, they sometimes failed to provide students with the ability to use language communicatively in speaking and writing" (American English, n.d.).

GRAMMAR COMPETENCE AND COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE

- According to the TEFL Training College (2016), "research and communicate language teaching practice would suggest that grammar is included in a general language course and as a component of communicative competence instead of approaching it as a separate skill. Teaching grammar separately may prove useful when teaching intermediate to advanced learners, where a certain degree of fluency is already apparent".

- "Grammar competence and communicative competence is that between 'absorbing' and 'practicing'. First knowledge comes before practice" (Zhong-guo & Min-yan, 2007, p. 64).

INPUT VS. OUTPUT

Acquiring the target language, which only happens when we understand the language, is also known as comprehensible input. This is achieved through listening and reading.

The output is what the student has learned by producing language based on what you have learned through speaking and writing.
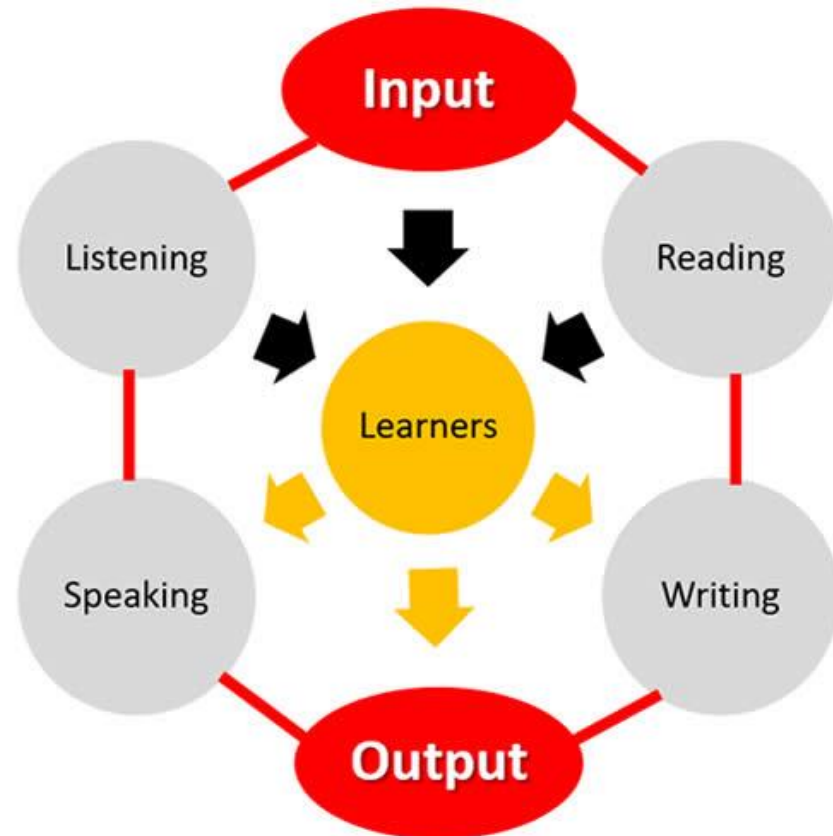
WHAT DO THE SCHOLARS SAY?

- Stephen Krashen's (1982, 1985) hypothesis of acquisition versus learning has had an influence on the notion that focuses solely on meaning is sufficient for SLA (second language acquisition).

- Also, Krashen's Monitor Hypothesis proposes that explicit form teaching **_only_** serves as a tool for monitoring learners' language.

- Krashen emphasized meaningful input and communication instead of focusing on rules of grammar and memorization and believes in the natural approach "…whose premise is that acquisition can take place in the classroom by providing an acquisition like environment to the learners" (Yousaf, Umar & Habib, 2017, p. 118).

- Michael Long (1991) differentiates between focus on forms and focus on form. He defines focus on forms as learning grammar rules and focus on form as drawing learners' attention to grammar in activities and tasks (Yin Wong & Barrea-Marlys, 2012, p. 63).

- British linguist H.G. Widdowson points out that "…speech activity has two levels, one is to regard listening, speaking, reading and writing as a means by which the students can grasp the rules of the language after related practices. The other is to regard listening, speaking, reading and writing as the ultimate purpose of teaching by which the students can use the language in communication in reality"(Zhong-guo & Min-yan, 2007, p. 63).

The Comprehensible Input Umbrella

Embedded Reading
TPR: Total Physical Response
Reader's Theatre
Read & Discuss
Content-Based Instruction
The Natural Approach

Movie Talk
TPRS: Teaching Proficiency through Reading & Storytelling
Picture Talk
PQA: Personalized Questions & Answers
Listen & Draw

Based on Dr. Krashen's Theory.
Visual concept inspired by Diana Noonan & expanded with ideas from The Georgia Classicist.

Designed by Elizabeth Dentlinger and shared at Srafcentinger.wordpress.com.

INDUCTIVE APPROACH IS BEST WHEN TEACHING GRAMMAR IN CLT

- The inductive approach is allowing students to learn for themselves. This is done by analyzing different grammatical structures and then being able to figure out the rules on their own. This is preferred over the deductive approach which is the drill and kill of rules followed by examples.

- "Brown (2001) notes that the inductive approach is more appropriate in most cases for a number of reasons:
  - It follows the process of natural language acquisition, with rules being grasped subconsciously.
  - It is consistent with the notion of interlanguage development with learners acquiring rules at different rates.
  - It provides learners with a communicative sense of the language before being confronted with complicated grammatical explanations
  - It creates intrinsic motivation with learners attempting to discover the rules for themselves."

HOW SHOULD WE BEGIN TO EXPLAIN GRAMMAR TO STUDENTS?

Brown (2001) offers a few simple guidelines when providing grammatical explanations to learners:

- Explanations should be short and simple

- Use visual stimuli and graphical depictions

- Illustrate by using clear and unambiguous examples

- Consider the cognitive styles of your learners, remembering that analytical learners find it easier dealing with grammatical explanations compared to holistic learners

- Do not concern your learners with 'exceptions' to rules

- If a student asks about a grammar point that you are unsure of, tell them that you will get further clarification and 'shed some light' on the language item during your next meeting.

A **communicative grammar lesson** gives students the opportunity to practice the target grammar item through specific communicative tasks and activities

HOW CAN WE TEACH GRAMMAR COMMUNICATIVELY AS OPPOSED TO IN ISOLATION?

- One way to present grammar communicatively is through structured input activities (Lee & VanPatten, 2003).

- Games, Role Plays, Discussion Activities

- For instance, if students are practicing the present simple for routines, they might practice the grammar point in class. Later, for homework, write a short paragraph about their daily routine.

- Through listening and reading activities, since this is where they will see new sentence patterns and grammar.

- "The idea of practicing while learning and learning from practicing will make students use language to communicate more effectively" (Zhong-guo & Min-yan, 2007, p. 65).

TEACHING GRAMMAR IN THE CLASSROOM

- The conditions for such grammar teaching are outlined by Brown (2001) as follows:
  - The grammar course should be integrated into the overall curriculum, not taught in isolation or separately.
  - The curriculum determines the content of the grammar course. This means looking at the whole (curriculum) to determine the important parts (grammar topics to be discussed).
  - Grammar is contextualized in meaningful language use and taught through an authentic context.
  - The grammar course is designed to deal with specific problems the learners may have encountered in the curriculum.
- According to the TEFL Training College (2016), "assessing the success of such grammar courses should be evident from the learners' performance outside of the grammar class and not by grammar tests".

CONSCIOUSNESS-RAISING

- Consciousness-raising is a related aspect to teaching grammar in context. Consciousness-raising means making students aware of the properties of a certain grammatical feature by highlighting them or helping students to notice them in some way (Ellis, 2015).

- This is to create autonomous learners, but we have to be careful because there are variables that can affect this, such as the level of the learner. It may be too complex or difficult to make an analysis that is meaningful on their own.

- An example of this would be having students decide how a tense is formed and when it is used after reading a given text.

VARIABLES THAT AFFECT THE ROLE OF GRAMMAR IN LANGUAGE TEACHING

According to the TEFL Training College (2016), these variables affect the input and output of grammar, language and consciousness-raising.

- Age

- Proficiency level

- Educational background

- Language skills

- Register (the formality we use when we write and speak)
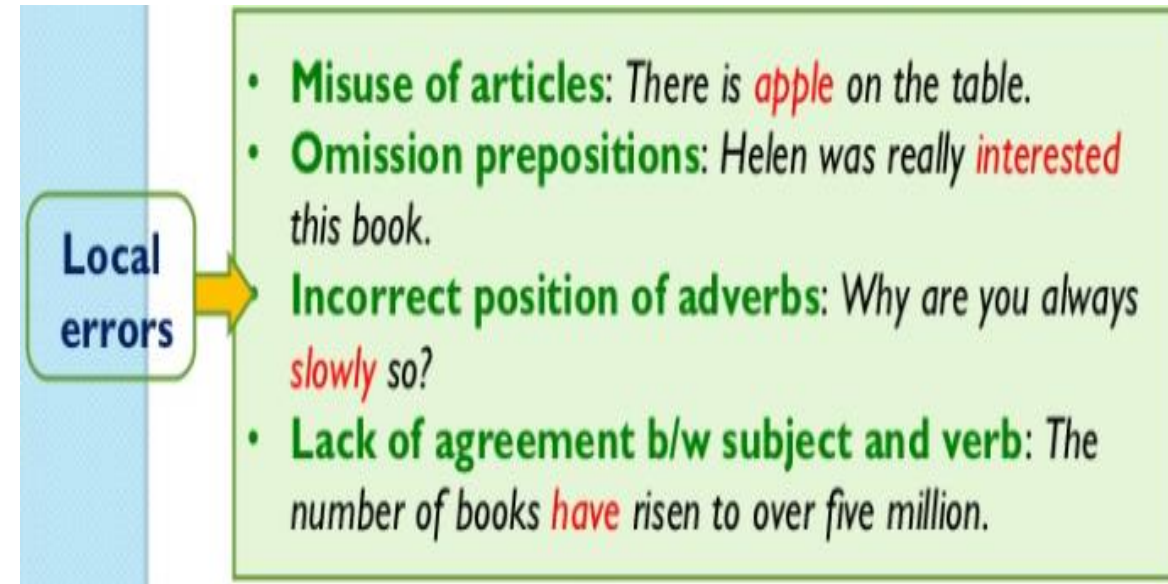
- Needs and goals of the learner

THE BIG DEBATE: HOW TO TEACH GRAMMAR

- According to the TEFL Training College (2016), some teachers think that an effective way to teach grammar is to provide students with explicit explanations, examples, and activities related to the grammar points. Other teachers clearly expressed that a communicative way of teaching, such as introducing grammar points through examples and activities, as well as using structured input, followed by communicating and interacting with others, is an effective method for grammar instruction. Again, we have the debate of inductive vs. deductive and do we focus on correcting grammar or not.

Question: Do you think we should teach grammar inductively or deductively?

THE BIG DEBATE: CORRECTING GRAMMAR?

- "Although evidence shows that overt correction of grammar does little to improve language, there is evidence which demonstrates that certain attention and treatment of grammar errors does have an effect. Vigil and Oller's feedback model implies that cognitive feedback should be optimal in order to prove effective. An excess of negative cognitive feedback (interruptions and corrections) may stifle a learner's attempts at communication. At the other end of the scale, an excess of positive feedback (little correction) may reinforce errors and could eventually lead to the fossilization of such errors. It is important therefore to evaluate when and how to deal with errors in the classroom environment. Hendrickson suggests that teachers attempt to differentiate between global and local errors. A local error does not usually have to be corrected as the message is clear and correction may impede communication flow" (TEFL Training College, 2016).

Local errors

- **Misuse of articles:** There is *apple* on the table.
- **Omission prepositions:** Helen was really *interested* this book.
- **Incorrect position of adverbs:** Why are you always *slowly* so?
- **Lack of agreement b/w subject and verb:** The number of books *have* risen to over five million.

THE BIG DEBATE CONTINUES

- Global errors need to be corrected as the message is incomprehensible as it is. The crux of this issue is that teachers should avoid overcorrecting learners' attempts at productive communication, even though students generally expect errors to be corrected in the classroom. The language teacher should attempt to find an optimum medium between overt correction and ignoring errors (TEFL Training College, 2016).

Question: Should we correct grammar or not? And to what extent?

Global errors →

- **Misuse of connectives/ conjunctions:** *Although* the train arrived late, we *missed* the last bus to the city.
- **Misuse unnecessary insertion of relative pronouns:**
  → *He received a low mark for his essay, who was only one page long.*

IN CONCLUSION

- "The treatment of grammar errors and attention to language forms are clearly most effective when integrated into a communicative, learner-centered curriculum and least effective when the error correction takes central dominance in the classroom" (TEFL Training College, 2016).

- TEFL Training College (2016) quoted Larsen-Freeman (1997) which aptly sums it up by saying that 'if the goals of language instruction include teaching students to use grammar accurately, meaningfully, and appropriately, then a compelling case can be made for teaching grammar. Instead of viewing grammar as a static system of arbitrary rules, it should be seen as a rational, dynamic system that is comprised of structures characterized by the three dimensions of form, meaning and use,' therefore bringing to the conclusion that grammar would be best taught using a communicative language approach, embedding grammar, discovery of rules, and communicative practice.

QUESTIONS

Do you personally think that correcting grammar aides in the communicative language teaching approach?

***Any other questions you have from the presentation?

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