THE ROLE OF GRAMMAR IN LANGUAGE TESTING

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Abstract:The aim of this paper is to provide a very useful over-view of the various approaches and techniques that teachers can use in teaching grammar.I focus on the practice rather than the study of grammar and the way in which students can learn and acquire a knowledge, and how to get them to think about grammatical areas and how to test it.

Keywords:English grammar,language testing, drills, interaction,

I.Introduction

There is now a general feeling that students do need to learn how to perform the functions of language, but they need a grammatical base as well. Modern courses often teach a grammatical structure and then get students to use it as part of a functional conversation. There are many books about activities like role playing, problem-solving, discussions, games, and project work which encourage students to communicate because allow both students and teachers to see how well the students are doing in their language learning.

The most important part of teaching is to decide what the precise learning aims are: specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timed. After setting learning goals, teachers should transform them into an instructional program with the timing of activities. Selecting, designing and organizing course materials, supporting the students in their efforts, and providing them with feedback on their progress are the main tasks of a successful course. Teachers' knowledge of students' potential is central in designing a syllabus with realistic goals that take into account the students 'concern in the learning situation. A good teaching is about how teachers and students related to (and interact with each other) and how teachers can help students get remember knowledge. Students learn better when they have opportunities to understand and work with language in a context that they comprehend grammar.

The Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English defines grammar as "the study and practice of the rules by which words change their forms and combined into sentence". There are two basic elements in this definition of grammar: the rules of grammar; and the study and practice of the rules.

II. Meaning and use

It is obvious that when teachers introduce a new piece of grammar we must teach the form, its functions, the meaning and the use. They plan activities differentiate between different students because managing mixed ability is very important. When there are students in the class who are at different levels of proficiency, teacher should try to make this situation manageable by giving students placement test.

A good presentation should be clear, lively, interesting, appropriate and productive. Students should have no difficulty in understanding the situation or what the new language means. A teacher who can anticipate the problem that students are going to have, then, is in a better position to deal with these problems when they occur.

When teaching grammar, in order to help students, teachers should use charts, dialogue, texts for contrast. Texts for grammar explanation is another way of getting students to discover new

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grammar. Students can be asked to identify the verb (in each sentence) that refers to time/events *before* and the action and the verb which refers to time during the action.
Classes are sometimes criticizes because there is too much teacher talking time and not enough students talking time. Speaking activities provide rehearsal opportunities. The more students have opportunities to activate the various elements of language they have stored in their brains, the more automatic their use of these elements become. While students are involved in an oral activity, it is easy for teachers to choose the mistakes that are most frequent and write them on the board when students have finished. Teachers follow up each presentation to correct mistakes, suggest and work over any language point that appear to have been misunderstood:

- Money are important
- You must to tell me
- I haven't seen him yesterday
- I am not agree

This discovering of grammatical facts involves students in a fairly analytical study of the language. Encouraging students to discover grammar for themselves is one valuable way of helping them to get to grips with language. It is important to correct students without offending them.
There are four different types of oral practice:

- **Drills**. The great advantage of drill is that teachers can correct any mistakes that the students make and can encourage them concentrate on difficulties at the same time. Drills are mechanical ways of getting students to demonstrate and practise their ability to use specific language items in a controlled manner.
- **Interaction** activities are designed so that students work together, exchanging information in a purposeful and interesting way. Charts are very useful to promote interaction between students; in order to complete them the students have to question each other and note down the replies.
- **Involving the personality**; involving the students themselves in what they are talking about, the activities are likely to be more meaningful. In this case, students should be mature enough to handle such activities and they need to be sensitive to the students' reactions to such exercises.
- **Games** of various kinds have been used in language teaching for a long time and they are especially useful for grammar work.

Grammar practice is often done through writing. Students are given exercises which ask them to practise specific language items.

III. Testing grammar

The aim of the tests is to see if students have learnt the language they have been studying. We can test the students 'ability to speak or write. We can test students 'reading or listening comprehension skills. But marking written tests is easier than marking oral tests. Writing gives them more "thinking time than they get when they attempt spontaneous conversation". The value of writing is very important. When students start to write, they find another way to express themselves. They have the chance to think about language and this helps their grammar and linguistic development. Teachers should test the students 'knowledge of English, not their general knowledge of the world. It is important that an achievement tests examines the students' ability to use language, not just their knowledge of grammatical accuracy. In this case, students must be given a chance to write a letter, a description or an essay some stage in the test. When students write things down, it helps to consolidate their knowledge of the language they have been learning. There are a number of items that test a student at his knowledge of grammar:

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Multiple choice

In multiple choice items, students have to choose the correct answer from a number of alternatives. At the most simple level, multiple choice can be used to test the students 'grammatical knowledge.

1.The money ……all here.

a) are b) were c) is.

2. Physics ….. a very difficult subject.

a) are b) will be c) is

3. We must…..quickly or we'll be late.

a) to walk b) walk c) walking

4. She asked me where ……

a) I had been b) had I been c) I have been

5. They …..me to go home.

a) told to b) told c) said.

Fill-ins

Fill-ins are those items where students have to fill a blank with a word or words. Often students see five separate sentences and have to fill in a word for each. This is a good test of students 'comprehension as well as of their knowledge of individual grammatical items. It is sometimes difficult to ensure that students can put in only one answer.

Early 1)……the morning, 2) ……the girl woke 3)…….she saw that it had been raining outside and because there were plenty 4)……clouds 5)…..the sky she decided to cancel the trip.

Sentence completion

Students have to fill in a blank and/or complete a sentence with more than one word. There will often be more than one way of doing this. Obviously students who complete this task successfully show that they have a lot of grammatical knowledge and that they are able to use the right vocabulary and grammar to complete the task.

1. Jack……..to be home before 10.00
2. Emma……swim very well for a child of her age.
3. Students……not to leave coats in this room.
4. We …….to get up before 6.00 tomorrow.
5. I think we ……go home now.
6. Sandra……..to leave early in the morning.
7. You don't ……to do this if you don't want to.

Sentence reordering

This type of test item explores the students 'knowledge of syntax and is a useful addition to a test. Teachers should be sure that if more than one order is possible all possible orders should be marked as correct.

1. our/ smoke /not /teachers /do / school/at?
2. live /Halen /where /does/?
3. often / fruit /not/ we/ eat
4. not / live / house/ my / my / near / house / friends
5. ride / Vlad / does / bike / a

Transformation

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In this test students have to rewrite sentences so that they have the same meaning but different grammatical structure. Students should have practised transforming the sentences correctly certainly implies quite a lot of grammatical knowledge.

1.The teacher graded the papers.
The papers……..

2.If you don't hurry you will miss the plane.
Unless ……

3.That girl is less beautiful than you are.
That girl is not…….

4.It's not pleasant when you have to take a test.
Taking…….

5.I lost my keys because I was not careful.
If……..

Sentence writing

This type of activity tests the students 'ability to write correct sentences. Students can practise their sentence writing by describing a picture. They should write four-five sentences about a given picture using "there is"/ "there are". This activity tests the students 'ability to write correct sentences.

Parallel writing

Here the students have to use their knowledge of grammar and vocabulary to piece they have read. The students are given notes to help them to write their own paragraph. The teacher can include in this test the grammar he wants students to produce in the original paragraph hope that the students will reuse it in their own piece of writing. In order to complete this task successfully, students need to understand the paragraph, its form and its grammar.

IV. Conclusion

All these tests should encourage the students' written production as well as items which concentrate on accuracy because it is important for students to be aware of grammatical facts.As a result, students gradually become language users and more confident speakers.

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