

TEACHING LANGUAGE SKILLS

PART 3- GRAMMAR & VOCABULARY

A. GRAMMAR TEACHING:

*GRAMMAR RULES:

→**Prescriptive Rule:** a principle or order which guides behaviour, says how things are to be done etc,

Ex: Do not use different to and never use different than. Always use different from.

Never use the passive when you can use the active.

Use shall for the first person and will for second and third persons.

→**Descriptive Rule:** the usual way that something happens.
generalisations about what speakers of the language actually do.

Ex: You do not normally use the with proper nouns referring to people.

We use used to with the infinitive (used to do) (used to smoke) etc. to say that something regularly happened in the past but no longer happens.

→**Pedagogic rules** - rules that make sense to learners while at the same time providing them with the means and confidence to generate language with a reasonable chance of success.

Rules of form and rules of use.

*DEDUCTIVE AND INDUCTIVE APPROACH:

First of all, here are two important definitions:

- **a deductive approach** starts with the presentation of a rule and is followed by examples in which the rule is applied. (**rule-driven learning**)

- **an inductive approach** starts with some examples from which a rule is inferred. (**discovery learning**)

1) DEDUCTIVE TEACHING:

The deductive (rule-driven) approach to language teaching is traditionally associated with Grammar-Translation.

(-)Disadvantages of a deductive approach:

- Starting the lesson with a grammar presentation may be off-putting for some students, especially younger ones.

- They may not have sufficient metalanguage (i.e. language used to talk about language such as grammar

terminology).

- A teacher-fronted, transmission-style classroom

- No student involvement and interaction.

- Explanation is not as memorable as other forms of presentation, such as demonstration.

- The belief that learning a language is simply a case of knowing the rules.

(+)The advantages of a deductive approach :

- * It gets straight to the point

- * Time-saving

- * Many rules - especially rules of form - can be more simply and quickly explained than elicited from examples. This will allow more time for practice and application.

- * It respects the intelligence and maturity of many students,

- * The role of cognitive processes in language acquisition.

- * It allows the teacher to deal with language points as they come up, rather than having to anticipate them and prepare for them in advance

→ Explain and Practise

'explain and practise' approach = deductive approach, = PPP = straight arrows

Students are given explanations or grammar rules and then, they make phrases and sentences using the new language. (seems somewhat unhelpful)

Repetition, drilling and controlled practice is designed to foster accurate reproduction of what the teacher is introducing.

Immediate creativity : where students use the new language to talk about their lives or actions of people they know.

:

**** **Lead-in → Elicitation → Explanation → Accurate Reproduction → Immediate Creativity.**

2) INDUCTIVE TEACHING:

The advantages :

- more meaningful, memorable, and serviceable.

- mental effort which, again, ensures greater memorability.
- Students are more actively involved in the learning process - more attentive and more motivated.
- favours pattern-recognition and problem-solving abilities - suitable for learners who like this kind of challenge.
- the opportunity for extra language practice.
- greater self-reliance and therefore conducive to learner autonomy.

The disadvantages :

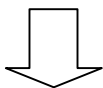
- The time and energy spent in working out
- Students may hypothesise the wrong rule,
- It can place heavy demands on teachers in planning a lesson.
- An inductive approach frustrates students who would prefer simply to be told the rule.

→ Discover and Practise

Students see examples of language and try to work out how it is put together.

Ex:

After students have read a text, we can ask them to find examples of different past tenses and say how and why they are used.



Boomerang-type lesson : appropriate where language study arises out of skills work on reading and listening texts. (inductive)

***HOW TO PRACTISE GRAMMAR**

3 main purposes of practice:

Accuracy → **precision** at applying the system
 Fluency → **automisation** of the system.
 Restructuring → **integrating** new knowledge into old.

ACCURACY:

A practice activity for accuracy will have these characteristics:

Attention to the form → (get it right) It is difficult for learners to focus on form and meaning at the same time.

The practice activity should motivate learners to want to be accurate, and they should not be so focused on what they are saying that they have no left-over attention to allocate to how they are saying it.

Familiarity → learners need to be familiar with the language that they are trying to get right (through reading and listening tasks)

Thinking time → monitoring for accuracy is easier and more successful if there is sufficient time available to think and reflect. They can use this time to plan, monitor and fine-tune their output. So drilling activities may be counterproductive for accuracy practice.

Feedback → learners need unambiguous messages as to how accurate they are- this traditionally takes the form of correction.

FLUENCY:

- Fluency is a skill: it is the ability to process language speedily and easily.
- Fluency develops as the learner learns to automatise knowledge.
- One way they do this is to use pre-assembled chunks of language.

To summarise: where fluency is the goal, practice activities should have these characteristics:

Attention to meaning → Too much attention to form may jeopardise fluency. So practice activities aimed at developing fluency need to divert attention away from form. the practice activity should encourage learners to pay attention less to the form of what they are saying (which may slow them down) and more to the meaning.

*** One way of engineering a focus on meaning is through the use of **information gap tasks**. Real communication is motivated by the need to bridge gaps.

Authenticity → the activity should attempt to simulate the psychological conditions of real-life language use. That is, the learner should be producing and interpreting language under real-time constraints, and with a measure of unpredictability.

Communicative purpose → to help meet these last two conditions, the activity should have a communicative purpose. That is, there should be a built-in need to interact.

***Purposefulness, reciprocity, mutual intelligibility, and unpredictability - are features of real-life communication.

Classroom tasks that incorporate these features are known as communicative tasks and help prepare students for the cut-and-thrust of real communication.

Chunking → at least some of the language the learners are practicing should be in the form of short memorisable chunks which can be automatised.

Repetition → for automatised to occur, the practice activity should have an element of built-in repetition, so that learners produce a high volume of the targeted forms.

RESTRUCTURING:

Restructuring involves integrating new information into the old.

Traditionally → restructuring was meant to happen at the presentation stage.

More recently → there is a belief that restructuring can occur during the practice activities (communicative activities may provide a fertile site for restructuring)

Practice activities designed to aid restructuring might have these characteristics:

Problematising → having to deal with a problem often seems to trigger restructuring. For example, when learners are put in a situation where the message they are trying to convey is misinterpreted, they may be forced to reassess their grasp of a rule. Moreover, the input they get as they negotiate the meaning of what they are trying to express may also help reorganize the state of their mental grammar.

Push → the activity should push learners to outperform their competence- that is, to produce or understand language that is a notch more complex than they would normally produce or understand.

Negotiation of meaning – the collaborative work done to make the message comprehensible- is thought to trigger restructuring.

Scaffolding → there should be sufficient support (scaffolding) to provide the security to take risks with the language. This means the practice activity should try to balance the new with the familiar. Scaffolding could, for example, take the form of telling a familiar story but from a different perspective. Teachers often provide students with

scaffolding in the way they interact with them, repeating, rephrasing or expanding what they are saying in order to carry on a conversation.

*HOW TO INTEGRATE GRAMMAR

→THE PPP MODEL:

→Typically, lessons followed the pattern:

grammar explanation followed by exercises. Or, what came to be known as **presentation** and **practice**.

*The practice stage was aimed at achieving accuracy.

When it was recognised that accuracy alone is not enough to achieve mastery of a second language, a third element was added - **production**, the aim of which was fluency.

*The standard model for the language lesson became:

PRESENTATION → PRACTICE → PRODUCTION

-This kind of organisation is typical of many published English language teaching courses.

-It has a logic that is appealing both to teachers and learners.

-it reflects the way that other skills - such as playing tennis or using a computer - are learned.

-That is, knowledge becomes skill through successive stages of practice.

-Moreover, this model allows the teacher to control the content and pace of the lesson,

-It (new teachers in particular) helps them cope with the unpredictability of classroom life.

-It provides a convenient template onto which any number of lessons can be mapped.

!!! Nevertheless, the PPP model has been criticised because of some of the assumptions it makes about language and language learning:

→ It assumes, for example, that language is best learned in incremental steps, one 'bit of grammar' at a time.

→and that the teacher, by choosing what bit of grammar to focus on, can influence the process.

***However, research suggests that language acquisition is more complex, less linear, and less amenable to teacher intervention.

→ The PPP model also assumes that accuracy precedes fluency.

***However, all learners go through a long stage of making mistakes. Meanwhile they may be perfectly capable of conveying their intended meanings fluently.

As in first language learning, accuracy seems to be relatively late-acquired - a kind of fine-tuning of a system which is already up-and-running.

Delaying communication until accuracy is achieved may be counterproductive.

!!! So, rather than as preparation for communication, it seems that it is by means of communication that the learner's language system establishes itself and develops.

→ TASK-BASED MODEL:

PPP represents an accuracy-to-fluency model of instruction.

****An alternative model stands this progression on its head, and adopts a fluency-to-accuracy sequence.

Put simply;

→ the learning cycle begins with the meanings that the learners want to convey.

→ They try to express these meaning using their available resources.

→ Then they are given guidance as to how to do this better.

→ This guidance may include explicit grammar instruction.

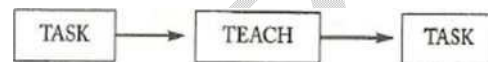
→ Through successive stages of **trial, error, and feedback**, the learners output is fine-tuned for accuracy.

****Proponents of the communicative approach proposed a fluency-first model of instruction that is called **task-based**:

1- first the learners perform a communicative task that the teacher has set them;

2- the teacher then uses this to identify language features learners could have used in order to communicate their intentions more effectively.

3- These features are taught and practised, before students re-perform the original (or a similar) task:



!! In this kind of lesson, the language items that are selected for special attention arise solely out of an assessment of the learners' communicative difficulties, rather than having been predetermined by a grammar syllabus.

*HOW TO DEAL WITH GRAMMAR ERRORS:

WHAT ARE ERRORS?

Learners may make mistakes at the level of individual words, in the way they put sentences together or at the level of whole texts.

At the word level, learners make mistakes either because they have chosen the wrong word for the meaning they want to express These are **lexical errors**. Lexical errors also include mistakes in the way words are combined.

Grammar errors, on the other hand, cover such things as mistakes in verb form and tense and in sentence structure.

There is also a category of errors called **discourse errors** which relate to the way sentences are organised and linked in order to make whole texts.

The following categories of errors have been identified:

- lexical errors
 - grammar errors
 - discourse errors
- and, in the case of spoken language:
- pronunciation errors

Some instances of L1 influence on L2 production are examples of **transfer** (positive transfer and negative transfer – interference)

Some errors derive from over-applying (or **overgeneralising**) an L2 rule. ~

Some errors seem to be influenced not by factors external to the second language such as the learner's first language but by the nature of the second language itself. These are the **developmental errors**.

****These two kinds of errors (transfer and developmental) are most (bulk) of the errors learners make.

****It is probably these **systematic errors**, rather than the random ones, that respond best to correction.

→ In summary, there are many complex decisions that teachers have to make when monitoring learner production. It is not surprising that the way they respond to error tends to be more often intuitive than consciously considered.

Negative feedback is simply indicating when a learner makes an error.

Positive feedback is when learners are told when they are right.

*****Focus on form** is necessary in order to avoid fossilization.

*HOW TO TEST GRAMMAR:

GRAMMAR TESTING:

Grammar is typically tested by means of what are called **discrete-item tests** → the individual components of the learners knowledge

****To test ability communicate and use the language → **performance tests!**

**** there are six factors that need to be taken into account when assessing the value of a test:

- Its **practicality** - how easy is it to set up, administer, and mark?
- Its **reliability** - does it give consistent results, e.g. do the results tally with those of similar students, and when marked by different people?
- Its **validity** - does it test what we want to test, and not something else?
- Its **face validity** - do the students recognise it as a fair test, and will they therefore perform to their ability?
- **Backwash** - does it positively influence the teaching that will be done in preparation for it?
- **Spin-off** - can the test be used subsequently for review and remedial teaching?

B.VOCABULARY TEACHING:

*WHAT IS IN A WORD?

A **word** is a microcosm of human consciousness (Vygotsky).

-WORD CLASSES-

Nouns
Pronouns
Verbs
Adjectives
Adverbs
Prepositions
Conjunctions
Determiners

Some verbs can belong to two or more word classes. In terms of the meanings associated with these word classes, we can divide words into two groups:

- a) **Grammatical Words (Function Words):**
contributing to the grammatical structure,
-prepositions
-conjunctions
-determiners
-pronouns

They are a closed set (rare addition of new words).
They belong to grammar teaching.

b) Content Words:

contributing to the meaning,
-nouns
-verbs
-adjectives
-adverbs

They are an open set (addition of new words is regular). They belong to vocabulary teaching.

-WORD FAMILIES-

Root → *play*

Affixes (add-ons) → *playing, plays, player*

Suffixes → *player, plays*

Prefixes → *replay*

The different grammatical forms of a word are called **inflexions** →
plays

played

playing

A word that results from the addition of an affix to a root, which has a different meaning from the root is **derivative** →

Play + **er**

Re + play

Play + **ful**

Root → *understand*

understands

understanding

understood

understandable

misunderstand

misunderstood

-WORD FORMATION-

A) Affixation: adding affixes to the words: *player*

B) Compounding: the combining of two or more independent words: *second-hand, paperback*

a) Noun + Verb + er:

-record player

-screensaver

-bus driver

-dishwasher

b) Noun + Noun:

-classroom

c) Noun + Noun + Verb + er:

-candlestick-maker

-windscreen-wiper

C) Blended Words: Blending words to form a new one (called blend)

-breakfast + lunch = brunch

D) Conversion: from one part of speech to another

Brunch → *noun*

Let's brunch tomorrow → *verb*

Up → *preposition*

She upped and left → *verb*

E) Clipping: shortening or clipping longer words

flu → *from influenza*

email → *from electronic mail*

-MULTI-WORD UNITS-

Groups of more than one word can function as a meaningful unit. These are called **multi-word units** or **lexical chunks**.

-for years

-year after year

-day by day

-laying off

-the end of the year

-well and truly

-a lot of

The chunks vary in terms of being fixed and idiomatic.

***Idiomatic chunks:** the meaning is not easily recoverable from the individual components (*out of the blue*)

***Fixed chunks:** the words cannot be changed (*well and truly- you can't say truly and well*)

Sentence frames are also multi-word units. They provide a structure on which to 'hang' a sentence: *It's amazing how....*

The reason why....

Phrasal verbs (multi-part verbs) are multi-word units, too.

-COLLOCATIONS-

Two words are **collocates** if they occur together with more than chance frequency. When we see one, we can predict the following word. For example,

Record → world record, set record, record player

Get → get up, get away, get used to

We can check the collocations with **corpus data**.

-HOMONYMS-

Words that share the same form but have unrelated meanings are called **homonyms**.

like (verb), like (preposition),

well, left, fair

Words that have the same sounds but different spellings are called **homophones**.

meet- meat aloud-allowed

tail- tale

Words that are pronounced differently but spelt the same are **homographs**.

A live concert - Where do you live?

A lead pipe - a lead singer

-POLYSEMES-

These are the words that have multiple but related meanings. *Fair (there is an explanation about this in your book, page 8, Polysemes)*

-SYNONYMS AND ANTONYMS-

Synonyms are words that share a similar meaning.

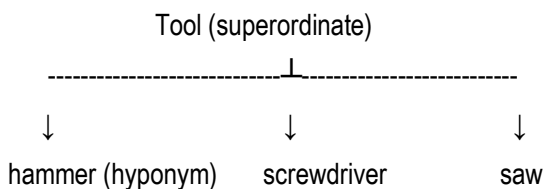
Old= ancient =antique =aged =elderly

Words with opposite meanings are **antonyms**.

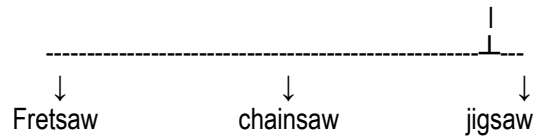
old X young white X black small X big

-HYPONYMS-

Hyponyms are the words with related meanings which occur in the same category. **Co-hyponyms** share the same ranking in a hierarchy. The word which is at the top of the ranking words is called **superordinate**.



hammer, screwdriver, saw= co-hyponyms



-LEXICAL FIELDS-

Words that have a kind of thematic relationship belong to the same **lexical field**.

Winter, snow, cold, fireplace, snowboard...

Christmas Eve- The Christmas tree, lights, carols...

Window, stereo, fireplace, yard, grass....

-STYLE AND CONNOTATION-

Style → a formal written style?
an informal spoken style?

Variety → British English?
American English?

Register → specific contexts?
Legal English?
Academic English?
Technical English?

Words that are synonyms but each evoke quite different associations are **connotations**.

famous- notorious

chat – gossip

slim – skinny

bachelor- spinster

False friends: these are words that may appear to be equivalent, but whose meanings do not in fact correspond.

Pupil (pupil in Polish is a “pet” or “favourite”)

History (historia in Polish means “story”)

Real friends: languages that share words with similar forms (cognates).

English → garage Italian → garage

English → apartment Italian → appartamento

Strangers: words that have no equivalent in the L1.

Acquaintances: the words a person has met, know them by name, even understands them but never finds them as familiar to them as their mother tongue equivalent.

-HOW IS OUR WORD KNOWLEDGE ORGANISED?-

Our mind stores words neither randomly nor in the form of a list, but in a highly organized and interconnected way- in what is called the **mental lexicon**.

Words with similar sound structure are closely interconnected, so that the search for one may sometimes activate its neighbor. The effect of this kind of mistake is called **malapropism**.

Finding a word through the network in mental lexicon is a process called "**spreading activation**."

-HOW IS VOCABULARY LEARNED?-

1) **Labeling:** mapping words on to concepts

-seeing a dog and calling it as "dog"

2) **Categorizing:** replacing common words by superordinate terms

-fruits-animals-tools...

3) **Network building:** constructing a complex web of words

-black/white fingers/toes family/brother

Either knowing a word or not knowing it (or knowing it to some extent) is called **vocabulary depth**. According to the vocabulary depth, we can categorize vocabulary into groups:

- a) **Receptive vocabulary** (we just understand- recognize the words)
- b) **Productive vocabulary** (we both understand and use the words)

-HOW ARE WORDS REMEMBERED?-

Memory work goes through the following stores:

- 1) **The short-term store (STS):** brain's capacity to hold a limited number of items of information for a few seconds.
- 2) **Workings memory:** reasoning, learning and understanding depend on the working memory.

Materials remain in working memory for about twenty seconds. This capacity is made possible by the existence of the articulatory loop-a process of subvocal repetition. It enables the short-term store to be kept refreshed. The longer the loop, the better the learner.

- 3) **Long-term memory:** permanent memory-has an enormous capacity and its contents are durable over time.

-quickly forgotten knowledge

-never forgotten knowledge

For moving the vocabulary knowledge to the permanent long-term memory:

***Repetition:** rehearsal of the word while it is still in working memory- letting the articulatory loop just run and run- should be organized-repetition of encounters with a word

***Retrieval:** retrieval practice effect- recalling the new words in different sentences and keeping in mind readily

***Spacing:** distributed practice- distribute memory work across a period of time than to mass it together in a single block

***Pacing:** giving the opportunity to students to pace their own rehearsal activities, allowing learners to do "memory work"

***Use:** Use it or lose it! Putting words to use frequently

***Cognitive depth:** the more cognitively demanding decisions the learner makes about a word, the better the word is remembered. Such as;

using the word to complete a sentence

***Personal organizing:** personalized words- making your own sentences containing the new words

***Imaging:** associating words with some mental images- matching the words with pictures in mind

***Mnemonics:** "tricks" to retrieve items- key word technique- coding words in mind using some tricks

***Motivation:** a strong motivation makes the learner spend more time on rehearsal and practice

***Attention/ Arousal:** no learning without attention and arousal- high degree of attention correlates with improved recall

***Affective depth:** learner's affective/emotional judgements about the new word

Do I like the sound and look of the word?

-CLASSROOM SOURCES OF WORDS

-LISTS-

-COURSEBOOKS-

-VOCABULARY BOOKS-

-THE TEACHER-

-OTHER STUDENTS-

-SHORT TEXTS-

-BOOKS AND READERS-

-DICTIONARIES-

-CORPUS DATA-

HOW TO PRESENT VOCABULARY

-PRESENTING VOCABULARY-

We present;

-the form

-the meaning of a word

.

→ Then, we decide the means of presentation, of meaning:

*translation

*real things

*pictures

*actions/gestures

*definitions

*situations

Presentation of form:

*spoke form, or

*written form

-HOW TO ILLUSTRATE MEANING-

If it's possible, illustrate the meaning with pictures, real objects and mime. Using realia, pictures and demonstration was a defining technique of the **Direct Method**. A similar method that supports illustrating meaning instead of using translation is **Total Physical Response (TPR)**. In that method, learners response to commands (*point to the door, give the book back to Judy*).

*Visual aids for illustrating meaning can be;

Flashcards,

Wall charts,

The overhead projector,

Board Drawings,

Projections on the board

-HOW TO EXPLAIN MEANING-

If it's not possible to illustrate the meaning, explain the meaning with the following ways:

-providing an example situation

-giving several example sentences

-giving synonyms, antonyms, or superordinate terms

-giving a full definition

-HOW TO HIGHLIGHT THE FORM-

*Highlighting the spoken form of a word:

-listening drills

-oral drills

-boardwork

a) Listening drills: teacher repeats the words 2-3 times, so as to accustom the learners to the phonological features of the word.

"Listen....."

b) Oral Drills (mumble drill): students repeat the words on their own, and then they repeat aloud.

c) Boardwork: the words stresses are highlighted on the board by the teacher. Students are provided with phonemic script.

Spelling→ must be highlighted just after highlighting the pronunciation of the word.

-HOW TO INVOLVE THE LEARNERS-

*Following ways can be used to involve the students in their own learning during presentation:

a) Elicitation: to present the meaning of a word and asking learners to supply the form, or supplying the form, and eliciting a definition.

→ involves learners actively

→ speaking opportunity for students

→ keeps students attentive

→ challenges better learners

→ checks understanding

b) Personalization: Students personalize the new words through making sentences with them or association network. For example;

word → frightened

The last time I was frightened was when

-Association network:

darkness ← Frightened → horror film → ghost

↓
Loneliness

c) Peer teaching: learners teaching each other vocabulary through an information gap activity. They work in pairs or groups.

HOW TO PUT WORDS TO WORK

-DECISION- MAKING TASKS-

-cognitively demanding-brainwork

a) Identifying tasks: simply finding words where they may otherwise be hidden.

b) Selecting Tasks: recognizing words and making choice among them.

c) Matching Tasks: recognizing and pairing words.

d) Sorting: sorting the words into different categories.

e) Ranking and sequencing: putting the words into some kind of order.

-PRODUCTION TASKS-

-Completion

-Creation

a) Completion /Gap-filling: usually as writing tasks, learners complete the sentences-easy to design/mark

b) Creation Tasks: no context- learners create the context for the given words by;

-using word to make sentence which clearly shows the meaning,

-choosing a few words from the list and writing sentences with them,

-using word to write a true sentence about themselves,

-writing a short narrative including the words

-GAMES-

Used for the young learners-both enjoyable and useful for learning

TEACHING WORD PARTS AND WORD CHUNKS

a) Teaching Rules/ Rule-based Approach:

→ highlighting regularities, etc. For example;

Grouping words according to their word formations: Compounding? Affixation? Affixation with prefixes? Prefixes with negative meaning?

*Disadvantage of rule-based approach: rules are not always clear!

b) Item-learning Approach:

→ exposing learners to lots of correct examples

→ learning as an individual item (the way words are required naturally)

*Disadvantage of item-learning approach: it requires a great deal of exposure!

BUT; with **consciousness raising** (helping learners to notice the regularities) learners get a feel for the words and learn easier.

-A LEXICAL APPROACH-

*Principles of Lexical Approach:

1) syllabus → organized around meanings

2) most frequent words encode → most frequent meanings

3) words occur with other words (as chunks)

4) chunks develop → fluency

*Lexical Syllabus (Dave and Jane Willis):

-based around the most frequent words with the most frequent meanings

-uses corpus data to find high frequency words