THE UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

English Language & Applied Linguistics

<u>FIRST TERM ESSAY</u>

Student Number: 1277536

MA – TEFL/TESL

Year 2012/2013

Title of Module: Inroduction to Language

Question: With particular reference to the teaching of grammar, explain the main differences between an inductive and a deductive approach. To what extent do you think it is possible to combine the two approaches?

Choose one particular grammar point and describe how you would teach the item. Explain why you have decided to teach the item in this way.

Number of words: 3773

DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I declare:

a.   that this submission is my own work;

b.   that this is written in my own words; and

c.   that all quotations from published or unpublished work are acknowledged with quotation marks and references to the work in question.

Date: 05.12.2012

INTRODUCTION

Teaching grammar in foreign language classes has always been a main issue which is disscussed among language teachers. Each language has unique grammar and native speakers acquire their mother tongue without learning the grammar rules. This is the reason that approaches to teaching grammar are debated.

"Grammar is partly the study of what forms (or structures) are possible in a language. Thus, grammar is a description of the rules that govern how a language's sentences are formed" (Thornbury, 1999: 1). Harmer (1987: 1) defines grammar by saying "The grammar of a language is what happens to words when they become plural or negative, or what word order is used when we make questions or join two claueses to make one sentence."

In the past grammar, teaching was seen as the fundamental goal in foreign language classrooms. It was taught to produce correct sententes both written and orally. It was presented directly in text books so that the learners obtained the rules of language first. This type of teaching approach is called deductive teaching which was applied mostly in grammar translation method. However, grammar teaching approaches have been largely changed from deductive to inductive, because when pupils are taught in a deductive approach their attention is directed to grammar the rules rather than understanding the language. In an inductive teaching, learners are taught grammar rules as well. However, the aim is allow students to discover the rules themselves from the provided examples. Nowadays an inductive teaching approach is more preferred by language teachers as it is more student-centered. Even though the objective of both approaches is teaching grammar, they differ in the ways of teaching. (Rutherford and Smith, 1988)

This paper is divided into four sections. In the first part brief definitions and principles of these approaches will be provided. Next, the main differences between a deductive and an inductive teaching will be highlighted. Then the possibility and the case of combination of a deductive and an inductive approach will be analysed. In the last section of paper an inductive grammar lesson will be presented and explanation of the teaching approach will be analysed.

1.THE MAIN APPROACHES TO TEACH GRAMMAR

In the case of grammar teaching there two main approaches. These are deductive approach and inductive approach. Notwithstanding the fact that deductive and inductive approaches have the common goal of teaching grammar they seperate from each other in terms of way of teaching.

1. 1. A Deductive Approach

Deductive teaching is a traditional approach in which information about target language and rules are driven at the beginning of the class and continued with examples. The principles of this approach are generally used in the classes where the main target is to teach grammar structures. For instance, these principles are convenient for the classes that grammar transtlation method is applied (Nunan, 1991). According to Thornbury's three bacic principles a deductive lesson starts with presentation of the rules by the teacher. Secondly teacher gives examples by highlighting the grammar structures. Then students make practise with the rules and produce their own examples at the end of the lesson (Thornbury, 1999).

1.2. An Inductive Approach

Nunan (1999) identifies inductive approach as a process where learners discover the grammar rules themselves by examining the examples. In a inductive approach it is also possible to use a context for grammar rules. That is to say, learners explore the grammar rules in a text or an audio rather than isolated sentences. Thornbury (1999) notes that in an inductive approach learners are provided with samples which include the target grammar that they will learn. Then learners work on the examples and try to discover the rules themselves. When students obtain the grammar rules and they practice the language by creating their own examples.

2. THE MAIN DIFFERENCES BETWEEN A DEDUCTIVE AND AN INDUCTIVE APPROACH IN GRAMMAR TEACHING

A deductive and an inductive approach basically differentiate in lesson procedures, learner roles, teacher roles and usage of metalanguage in the teaching process.

A deductive approach is based on the top-down theory which the presentation and explanation of grammar rules take the presedence over teaching. The language is taught from the whole to parts so learners understand the grammar rules and structures firstly. Next, they see the examples provided by teacher and finally they begin to produce their own examples. In contrast to this an inductive teaching is based on the bottom-up theory which accepts the view that language learners tend to focus on parts rather than the whole. For this reason teaching process begins with a text, audio or visual in a context. Secondly learners work on the material to find the rules themselves . In the final stage, they give their own examples. (Block, 2003)

In a deductive approach learners are passive recipients when teacher elicits the rule on the board. However, in an inductive approach they are active as they are responsible for exploring the rules themselves. That is to say, while the process of learning is experiental in inductive approach it is more traditional and descriptive in deductive approach. According to Thornbury (1999), the class where students involve in the lesson actively is quite reasonable since it provides more comfortable and motivating environment for them. He also remarks that an inductive teaching supply more profound knowledge of language as learners study cognitively in order to discover the rules. It has been pointed out that when learners take place in the learning process actively so as to discover the rules they develop their authonotmy which makes them good language learner (Hinkel and Fatos, 2002).

Additionaly it has been suggested (Shaffer, 1989) that when grammar is presented deductively it will be easier for learners to understand the written or spoken form of language as learners aware of the rules. For example, when learners reads a text with present continuous they are able to comprehend the text deeply since they have known the rule of present continuous tense. Also it is remarked that it is unnecessary to apply inductive approach if the grammar rules are quite simple, but complex grammar items should be taugth inductively in order to demonstrate usage of the rules in sentences clearly (Larsen-Freeman, 2003).

One another significant difference is the role of the teacher. In a deductive teaching teacher is the authority in the classroom. The main role of teacher is to present the new grammar item to the learners. Second role is to prepare exercises for the students. Teacher is the organiser and controller of the classroom. Conversely in an inductive teaching teacher behaves as a guide and helper while students study the grammar rules themselves. It appears that while deductive approach is teacher-centered and traditional, inductive approach is student-centered.

In a deductive approach when the grammar item is presented with metalanguage such as, name of the tense, subject or object is often used. On the other hand in an inductive approach since students discover the rules terminology of language is not used. Moreover learner's conscious awareness raises by means of metalanguage. Consciousness-raising is defined as "helping to raise students' awareness about grammatical feaures" (Larsen-Freeman, 2003: 79). It is also identified as " … the deliberate attempt to draw the learner's attention specifically to the formal properties of the target language" (Rutherford and Smith, 1988: 107). It has been argued by Brown (1994) that to raise learners' consciousness awareness by using terminology during learning process might be confusing for learners as it leads to focus on these particular terms rather than understanding the rules and use the language properly. In addition to this it has been pointed out that a deductive approach makes language too descriptive by using language terminology. This leads to the perception that language is only a tool for making descriptions (Rutherford and Smith, 1988). That is to say, while grammar is learnt consciously in deductive approach, it is learnt subconcsiously in inductive approach. Therefore, it seems that an inductive approach is more natural and parallel to the language acqusition process.

Applying deductive or inductive approach while teaching grammar depends on student variety in the classroom. All learners are different and they learn in different ways. For instance their needs, ages, backgrounds and levels are the factors that are taken into consideration by the teacher for choosing suitable teaching strategy. To illustrate this, Brown (1994) remarks that adult learners are tend to deal with the rules when they use target language since their mentality is able to think abstract items. He has pointed out that deductive teaching is more appropriate for adult learners and meet their expectations as they give more importance to rules when they use the language so presentation of grammar rules firstly is more useful for them. On the other hand young learners are successful in exploring

grammar structures from the examples rather than learning them deductively since they are more likely to learn by doing because grammar rules are complex and abstract for them .

3. COMBINATION OF DEDUCTIVE AND INDUCTIVE APPROACHES

In my paper I have mentioned about the differences between deductive and inductive approaches so far. Now I will discuss the case of combination of these two approaches. Also will the explain the pros and cons of this combination in grammar teaching.

It has been known that comparison of these two approaches is the topic which has commonly discussed among language teachers but there is no certain answer for the question that which is more useful in teaching grammar. The reason why there is no definite response for this question is the diversity in teaching and learning settings. Today one another issue discussed by language teachers is the applicability of combination of deductive and inductive approaches in one grammar session.

Each method is based on different teaching approaches For example, while grammar translation method is based upon deductive teaching, direct method relies on inductive teaching. According to Andrews (2007), the audio- lingual method could be condisered as a method where the grammar is taugth both deductively and inductively. To illustrate this, in the audio- lingual method drills are used the basis of learning process. Pupils are engaged with drills until they learn by heart them. During this process they are not provided any information about grammar structures. However, the main objective of this method is to be able to speak accurately in target language. Thus, in spite of the fact that drills are taught inductively, learners need to memorise grammar items in order to speak accurately.

According to Brown (1994: 351) " There may be some occasional moments, of course, when a deductive approach -or a blend between the two- is indeed more appropriate". For example, to teach the simple past tense, the teacher begins a conversation with a student. The teacher asks students to tell his last summer holiday. Student answers by using simple present tense as he has no informaiton about past tense. Later, teacher corrects him by using past tense. Then, student repeats the correct sentence. After that teacher writes the past forms of some verbs on the board to make learners practice. In this process grammar is taught by using a deductive and an inductive approaches at the same time. It is deductive by the aspect of

writing the past forms of the verbs on the board. It is also inductive since students practice the past tense by giving their own examples (Brown, 1994).

Furthermore, it has been stated that it is highly probable to teach grammar by combination of deductive and inductive teaching . It is more intensifier for as pupils' attention is both directed to grammar rules and meaning at the same time (Mac Whinney, 1997 cited in Larsen-Freeman, 2003).

From my point of view utilising these two approches together might be proper in some circumstances. However, learner profile is a crucial factor in this situation beacause this kind of lesson can be found complicated by the students and combination might make harder to understand the grammar. To exemplify this, primary school children might be incapable of understanding the grammar in this way as their brain have tendency to focus on one thing at one time. When they are taught by combination they need to follow the teacher and the examples simultaneously and this might result in confusion (Brown, 1991). Therefore I consider that to combine these approaches is more applicable for adult learners rather than young learners. The reason why young learners are incapable of understanding the rules in this way is they have tendency to learn effectively by engaging with the tasks during the learning process.

One another point that I would like to discuss is the grammar item which is taught in this way. In my opinion this is not a proper way of teaching which could be used in all grammar structures. As it is mentioned above it could be used so as to teach simple past tense but it is difficult to apply it for the present perfect tense as the meaning would not be as clear as the past tense since they might not have a tense which has the same meaning with present perfect tense in their native languages. Therefore I believe that these types of grammar items should be taught deductively in order to make the meaning clear.

In a nutshell to combine deductive and inductive teaching it is not always an effectual way of teaching grammar. As a teacher, I consider that preference of deductive or inductive approach in grammar teaching depends on learners and the grammar item. Therefore it seems to me that even though it is possible to make a combination in some cases, teaching by applying only one approach is more feasible since it enhances the clarity of learning process.

4. TEACHING "USED TO" INDUCTIVELY

My learner group is 5th grade primary school students from Turkey. They are 10 years old and their level is pre- intermediate. The number of students is 10. They have four English sessions in a week. This is the first session of the week and I would teach only positive form of "used to". In the next three sessions I would teach the negative and question form of "used to". Duration is 45 minutes.

Step 1 *(10 minutes)*

First of all I would intoduce the lesson by saying: "Today I am going to show you some pictures about my childood." I would show them pictures from my childhood years such as, my favourite cartoon character, sport, cloth, food and drink.

Next I would write example sentences on the board:

- I used drink milk every morning when I was a child.
- I used to play basketball with my friends every weekend.
- I used to watch cartoon on tv everyday.
- I used to wear sleeper at night.

Step 2 *(15 minutes)*

In this step to make students to explore the rule of "used to" I would ask students to work in pairs and underline new structure that they have learned in the sample sentences. They would work with their partner and discuss the rule of positive form of "used to". They can speak in their mother tongue as their level might be inadequate for discussing in English. I would make guidance and monitor them while they study the rule.

Step 3 *(20 minutes)*

In the last step I would ask them to work in groups of four and I would give them activity sheets. In the activity sheet students see a famous person and a pictures from his/her childood. For example, they see the picture of Britney Spears singing in the church when she was ten

years old. Then students make sentences by looking at the pictures. When they finish I would write the some of the sentences that they have produced on the board. For instance,

- Britney Spears used to sing in the church.
- Shania Twain used live in Canada.
- Jennifer Lopez used to be fat.

In my grammar lesson I decided to use an inductive approach for teaching "used to". The first reason why I chose this approach is the age and level of my learner group. As they are 10 years old pre-intermediate learners I believe that inductive way is more fruitful for them.

I started the lesson by calling their attention to my childhood. I consider that using pictures about my childhood would be interesting. As Harmer (1987) notes that students needs to find teacher's introduction stimulating because this encourages them to learn and they can remember the grammar rules easier in the future. One more futher point that I have take into account is to provide lexically simple examples to make the meaning clear.

In the next step I encouraged them to discover the rules themselves from the sample sentences by pair work. In this process students had opportunity to participate the lesson actively to deduce the rule from the examples. While they were work on the grammar item, their ability of problem solving could enhance due to the responsibility of their own learning while finding the rule. Whilst they work with the grammar it is crucial to make them guidance to understand the grammar correctly so I controlled and helped them, if they needed. According to Nunan (1999) during the process if learners are give have chance to engage with the grammar items themselves, they are able to understand profoundly and memorise the grammar rules easily. Therefore it appears to me that it is possible to provide permenent information through an inductive approach.

In the last step of my lesson, I gave them hand outs with celebrities' childhood. I think that pupils find this task intersting since they are familiar with the people on the activity sheet. As Harmer (1987) has emphasized that it is very probable for young pupils to learn grammar effectively if they are provided with enjoyable tasks. In addition to this when teacher organises students to work in pairs or groups, a more interactive area could be created. This is beneficial for learners to share their ideas with each other and makes learning consistent and

fruitful. Besides these points motivation is the one another significant factor that effects pupils learning. It is possible to increase pupils' motivation by colloborative work. (Thornbury, 1999). For this reason I organised group work activity to enhance their motivation in the third part of my lesson.

From my pespective an inductive approach would obtain more deeper knowledge of grammar to learners as it is based on discovery technique. As it is postulated by Hall (2011) that to the deduce rules from the examples makes them more autonomous learners who are responsible for their own learning while working with the target language. Also this approach has positive affect on pupil's analytical and cognitive skills by means of the process of discovery. Moreover, it is possible to enhance learners' both grammatical and communicative competence by means of activities which students actively participate. To illustrate this, Hinkel and Fotos (2002) suggest that during the learning process learners might find more reasonable to talk about grammar structures rather than general topics as the grammar is integral part of language. For instance, if the learner level is intermediate or above, they might discuss the grammar rules in the target language. This not only helps them to learn the grammar but also contributes their speaking skills. In addition to this teacher could organise communicative tasks such as, problem solving, role play or information gap activities for pupils to practice the rules at the last part of lesson. Therefore, it is possible to create a communicative class while teaching grammar in an inductive way.

In addition to these points above the approach that I selected for my teaching was effected by my own experinces as a foreign language learner. When I was learning English at primary school most of my teachers used deductive method to teach English grammar and this made a negative impact on my learning. For instance, I always felt that I had to learn by heart the grammar rules to be able to produce correct examples after learning. However, this caused me to perceive the language just as a concept which consists of certain rules and patterns. The lesson was always in the same procedure which was followed by fill in the blanks worksheet after presentation of the grammar item. Therefore English language was very unattractive for me in those days. By taking into consideration all my expreince as a foreign language learner I preferred to teach the grammar inductively in my lesson.

CONCLUSION

The major aim of grammar teaching is to make students aware of how language is constructed and how to produce accurate sentences both verbally and written. The common goal of deductive and inductive approaches is to teach grammar but in different ways. While in the former the teaching process is descriptive and traditional in the former, the latter is totally experiental.

Learner-centered approaches are more desirable in these days for the reason that pupils learn more effectively when they actively participate the lesson. Therefore it is obviousley seen that an inductive approach is more ideal. Nevertheless, it is not always possible to use this approach in all classrooms due to some resons. For example, in an inductive approach students work in pairs or small groups to find the grammar rules but when the number of students is high it is hard for teacher to control learners while they work on the rules.

Additionaly, it has been argued by Brown (1987) that it is feasible to increase the success of teaching and learning both deductive and inductive approaches by choosing the right approach by taking into account the learner profile and teaching setting. It is understood that there is no certain result for usefullness of these two teaching approaches. It is also indicated that "There is no necessary or logical connection between an inductive and deductive approach to teaching and any particular grammar model. One may believe that the learning of the grammar if fundementally an inductive process, and yet believe that the most adequate accounts the of grammar of a language are for example, transformational" (Rutherford and Smith, 1988: 131). Therefore it is seen that it depends upon people's personal choices or their learning style as well.

Overall, I can sum up by saying that a deductive and an inductive approach differ in terms of learner and teacher role, lesson procesures and usage of metalanguage language for teaching the grammar item. In addition to this it is possible to combine these approaches for teaching grammar in terms of the grammar item, learner profile and setting. It is also teacher's decision to choose the suitable approach in terms of learner needs.

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