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a. Excuse me, sir.

b. I am sorry, sir.

2. Semantic factors. To make students conscious of how the verb "agree" is used, the teacher can provide them with the following pair.

a. Do you agree with me on this plan?

b. Are your agree with me on this plan?

3. Discourse factors. As an important discourse factor, the teacher can make them aware of the fact that in English sentences new information follows old information. So b is a more appropriate reply to the question than A (Widdowson 1978:2).

- What happened to the crops?

a. The rain destroyed the crops.

b. They were destroyed by the rain.

Summary

I began my arguments with the claim that basically there is no enmity between grammar and the communicative approach. Then I talked about the role grammar plays in second/foreign language instruction. Afterwards, I described three groups of scholars. Finally, I brought the paper to an end by suggesting that meaning-focused and conscious-raising grammar activites are two powerful devices which respectively promote fluency as well as accuracy.

special uniform?", and so on. In this way, most of the students get a chance to form a meaningful question. Meaning-focused activities of this sort are not few. Any English teacher after attending to a particular form can reinforce his teaching through a meaningful activity of any sort.

How to promote accuracy

In the final part of this paper, I would like to elucidate the concept of conscious-raising, recently used in the literature of ELT. According to Rutherford (1987) consicous-raising is the process whereby the learner's attention is drawn to certain features of the target language. Put in simpler words, grammatical conscious-raising is an aid to L2 development, and should not be equated with traditional methods of grammar instruction. In addition, it is a powerful device which helps the students avoid many typical pitfalls.

A very useful type of conscious-raising activity which works very well with intermediate and advanced students would involve presenting them with a pair of similar sentences, one of which is grammatical, and the other ungrammatical. In this apparently simple, yet very productive activity, students are asked to pass their judgment on the grammaticality of the sentences they read. After listening to the students' conmments on the sentences, it is then the teacher's role to make the students conscious of the part where the problem lies. As mentioned before, grammar interacts with social, semantic, and discourse factors. Now, I would like to argue how a simple conscious-raising task of this sort could be applied in any of these three levels.

1. Social factors. Which of the following expressions would you choose if you stepped on someone's foot?

from. meaning and pragmatics. Larsen-Freeman argues that the teaching of grammar involves three phases: first, students should be given some information about how a certain structure is formed; second, they should be informed of where and why this particular form is used. Seen in another light, this pie chart deals with both use and usage.

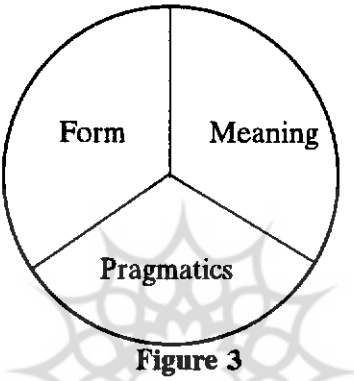

Figure 3

As mentioned previously, moderate grammarians are in favor of contextualized, meaningful grammar exercises. Here, I would like to mention one kind of such activities, which is more like a game. Imagine that you have taught your students how to form yes-no questions by using ***do*** or ***does***. Imagine, too, that you have given them some mechanical drills on how to form such questions. Now, in order to make this structure more meaningful and at the same time more tangible to your students, you can try the following game. You might ask one of your students to come in front of other students and imagine a job for himself (maybe his friends already know his job). After he has chosen a particular job in his mind. it is time to direct other students to ask him a yes-no question so that they can guess his job. One of them might say, "Do you work with a computer?". Another might say. "Do you wear a

Different views toward grammar

I hope the part you have just read has not given you the impression that I am calling for a regression to the time when grammar was an essential, if not the most essential, subject of ELT classes. My arguments were addressed to those who had falsely assumed that they could perfrom a miracle in their classes by abolishing grammar teaching of any sort.

I believe the history of ELT has introduced three groups of scholars to us with respect to the teaching of grammar: programmarians, antigrammarians, and moderate grammarians. (Figure 2).

Programmarians Moderate grammarians antigramarians

Programmarians are those teachers who have been tranied under a grammar-translation or an audiolingual atmosphere. These teachers believe that the mastery of grammatical structures per se can lead to effective communication. Antigrammarians are those teachers who have been trained under the supervision of the natural approach practitioners. The advocates of the natural approach Krashen and Terrel (1983) maintain that grammar teaching should play no role in language teaching classes. Last but not least are moderate grammarians. These scholars advise teachers to include a bit of contextualized. meaningful grammar teaching in their classes. I think Larsen-Freeman is one of these scholars. Her pie chart framework of grammar instruction (1991:281) illustrated below takes care of three interrelated aspects:

Hilles (1988) put it "defining these words semantically is less than satisfying and often leads to a great deal of frustration and confusion for both students and teachers" (p.10). Nevertheless, presenting these connectors in a piece of discourse along with a bit of grammar teaching would remove many problems that students might have in confusing cases such as the difference between ***however*** and ***although***.

2. Richards (1985) refers to grammar as an important component of communication and argues that knowledge of grammar contributes to higher levels of languge proficiency. "It is not simply a case of 'more grammar=more proficiency'; grammar skills interact with other language skills and together determine what learners can do at any given level of proficiency and how well they can do it" (p.148). In addition, Richards reports the result of a study by Higgs and Clifford (1982) who claim that grammarless classes often lead to a lot of fossilization and pidginization among students as a result of which they may not be able to move beyond a certain level of language proficiency.

3. Bowen etal. (1985) consider grammar "as a traffic officer, whose signals and rules will help keep a student on the right road". In other words, having a good command of grammatical knowledge serves as a monitor to check every sentence that we say, write or even hear (p.163).

To bring this part of the paper into a final conclusion, let me quote a few lines from Swan and Walters (1997):

> Grammar is not the most inportant thing in the world, but if you make a lot of mistakes you may be more difficult to understand, and some kinds of people may look down on you or not take you seriously (p.2).

motto of second/foreign languge teaching was: Take care of the usage and the use will take care of itself. However, after the emergence of the communicative approach, the general consensus among many language teachers changed to this: Take care of the use and the usage will take care of itselt. It was this trend of thought which persuaded most language teaching professionals to emphasize communicatve functions, instead of linguistic forms in second language classes, as a result of which grammar teaching was ignored so much so that even some language teachers resolved to pick up a knife and kill this goose that at times would lay golden eggs!

The importance of grammar

In this part of the paper, I would like to throw some light on why language learners need to know some grammar.

1. Celce-Murica and Hilles (1988) argue that grammatical points interact with three aspects of language: social factors, semantic factors and discourse factors. As an example of grammar contributing to social aspects of language, let's consider the use of different modals like would, will, can, etc. in making requests. While teaching modals, teachers should make their students aware of the degree of politeness expressed by each of these modals so that they won't sound offensive to their native inerlocutor. As an example of grammar used in the service of semantic factors, let's consider the case of comparatives or superlatives. In order to indicate a greater or the greatest degree of height, weight, length, etc. knowing a little grammar would be indispensable. And finally, the relationship between grammar and discourse factors can be illustrated through the use of different connectors like although, however, moreover, etc. As Celce-Murcia and

him. Speaker A, obviously, is not interested in B's ability in opening the doors; he is just making an indirect request. Speaker B's reply indicates that he is grammatically competent yet communicatively incompetent.

Evidently enough, it was the concept of C.C. which, among other things, led to the development of CA. The supporters of CA realized the importance of appropriate communication and decided that the goal of second language instruction should be production of learners who are communicatively competent.

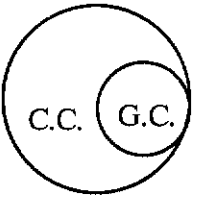

Figure 1

It is important to note that G.C. and C.C. are not contradictory terms; instead, it is better to think of C.C. as a set of skills with G.C. as one of them. Figure 1 shows a better picture of the matter.

Usage Vs. Use

Widdowson (1978) Coined the terms usage and use to give us a better understanding of the relationship between G.C. and C.C.; usage refers to our ability in copmosing "correct" forms, while use refers to our ability in using "appropriate" forms in "appropriate" situations. For example, knowing how to make present perfect tense by adding have/has + past participle of a verb reveals our knowledge of present perfect usage, yet knowing that present perfect is used to give new information or to announce new events indicates our knowledge of present perfect use.

Hence, according to Widdowson (1978) the teaching of usage does not guarantee a knowledge of use, but the opposite is true since use is a necessary part of usage. Put in another way, for many years the general

CA, puts it:

> A communicative approach, properly conceived, does not involve the recognition of grammar. On the contrary, it involves a recognition of its central mediating role in the use and learning of language (p.98).

In order to pursue the facts which gave rise to this fallacy, ie CA is in favor of grammarless classes, we have to take a look at the theoretical rationale underlying the communicative approach.

Grammatical Competence Vs. Communicative Competence

About three decades ago, Noam Chomsky, the well-know nAmerican linguist, used the term grammatical competence (G.C.) to describe the unconscious knowledge which enables a native speaker to speak and understand his language fluently (Falk 1978, Radford 1988). In other words, the ability to create well-formed senteces is determined by one's grammatical competence. A few years later, some other scholars expressed their dissatisfaction with inadequacy of the concept of G.C. They argued that the ability to produce well-formed, grammatical sentences is only part of what we do with language. That is, a native speaker knows how to use correct linguistic forms in appropriate situations for different purposes. Thus the term Communicative Competence (C.C.) was coined to cover both linguistic and sociolinguistic knowledge (Hymes 1972). To make the case clear, let's look at the folowing dialog.

A: Can you open the door?

B: Of course, I can. I am strong enough to do everything.

As you see, although speaker B's reply is a correct, grammatical sentence, it is not an appropriate answer to the request addressed to

Don't kill the goose that lays golden eggs: A brief look at the current state of grammar ELT

by Sasan Baleghizadeh

Introduction

In recent years, the teaching of grammar and the importance attached to it has become a bone of contention among language teaching professionals. The emergence of the communicative approach (CA) in second or foreign language teaching has been one of the most important factors leading to this controversy. Since the advent of CA in the second half of the 1970's grammar which had always occupied a central role in language teaching classes became a matter of peripheral imporatnce. As a result, many teachers who did not have a deep understanding of CA, began to do away with the teaching of grammar in their classes. But as Henry Widdowson (1990), one of the advocates of