

PEDAGOGIC FALLACIES, PROBLEMS IN TEACHING L2 AND SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS

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ABSTRACT: *The paper gauges the tutorial practices and arrives at a certain fallacies committed by the teachers known as 'Pedagogic fallacies'. Fallacies are the practices commonly followed by the pedagogic community in the period of the Pre Independent period when English was taught as a language of correspondence and a Library language. That was a period when English was meant for the study of literature so as to propagate English culture. Now that the language has transformed into an international medium it has to be utilized as a language for specific purposes. It is natural to absolutely revamp the methods of teaching in the status of Second Language (L2) in Indian context. They make English a difficult language. The presentation lists out such fallacies and the problems that follow. The solution to the problems are furnished in the paper while a suggested management of easy, precise and short way of teaching / learning of English through Functional Grammar based on structural Method in order to ease the burden of too many definitions and rules to be recorded which will frighten the learner.*

KEY WORDS: *Management of grammar, vernacular equivalents. structural approach .*

INTRODUCTION

There has been much debate on Teaching of Grammar. The modern trend is not to teach Grammar in the traditional way. The Direct Method of arriving at the principles of grammar through Inductive Method (from examples to formulation of rules). Grammar Translation Method too has its effect if it is used as a wing of Linguistics. In this process, the abuse has crept in and the students and teachers have to unlearn the old and to learn the modern. This paper delves deep into the problems and their solutions. The pedagogic practices have to be flexible so as to be convenient to the learner without resorting to the blame of going against the well known contribution of the writers of Textbooks of Grammar. The avoidance of certain chapters proposed in the paper have to be viewed sympathetically in view of their utility exposed after a careful experimentation.

PEDAGOGIC FALLACIES

1. Teaching of Grammar based on the vernacular
2. Order of the words-Giving meaning of each word.
3. Lack of sufficient background in the grammar of the vernacular but presuming that they do have in order to compare and contrast

4. Giving meanings to Prepositions supplying their equivalents in the vernacular.
5. Ignoring the grammatical verbs (verbs showing position- be forms) or giving meanings to be forms
6. Paying no attention to the preposition that follows a verb used with a particular meaning and English idiom.
7. Giving no drilling in structures
8. Ignoring the appropriate complements in Conjugation of a verb.
9. Trying to rush through the informal usage of a particular Tense- 'My father is going to Delhi tomorrow'.
10. Not dwelling on the context while dealing with Transformation of sentences- A V, P.V and other chapters under the heading
11. Following Deductive Method (Rule to example)
12. Ignoring the touch of grammar while teaching the textbook

PROBLEMS THAT CROP UP AND THE REMEDIES SUGGESTED

1. The Indian Languages follow Sanskrit model in dealing with grammar .Almost all Indian Languages give stress on the meaning then and there alone. Following this pattern, sentences like 'I water plants' carry no meaning. The method of giving meaning at the word level will work in the case of say, from Telugu to Hindi, the Indian languages. But the teacher can take the help of Hindi in arriving at the grammatical words (am, is, are, etc;). The notation is the same for example 'Vah gaaya hai' (That is a cow). 'Vaha gaaya nahi hai. (That is not a cow). But it always confuses an Indian learner in the beginning why 'a' is used before a singular noun. So, giving meanings in the vernacular will not come to the help of a teacher of English.
2. In primary stages of teaching the prepositions are illustrated. Instead of giving scope for imagination of a student the teachers ask the meaning of that preposition giving the learner a clue that he is not to miss any word without giving its equivalent in the vernacular. This will lead to a common error, 'I am suffering with fever'
3. The 'be forms' are to be known by usage in understanding the tense but not to be given the equivalent in the vernacular. While supplying the meaning we cannot indicate the true one because the 'be' form may mean differently at different levels. Hence, the avoidance of vernacular equivalent. The auxiliaries should be dealt with separately showing the context under which they are used.
4. In English language usage a preposition followed by a verb has to be kept in mind as far as its usage is concerned.. But the teacher is hurried to jump at the conclusion that the preposition is known to the learner. This situation is not found in the case of the vernacular usage. The preposition that follows the verb gives a distinct sense to the action proposed. The usage forms part of English idiom or the way of putting things.

In the vernacular such practice is not to be found. For example in the sentence, 'We should look after our old parents', the clear meaning is shattered. The verb itself is 'look after' at semantic level. It stands as the synonym of 'protect'. This variation is well understood when the teacher controls herself and abstains from giving the meaning of the verb without its appended preposition or the adverb particle.

An article helps the learner to find out the difference between these two sentences;

Sun rises in the east. The sun rises in the east.

The homophone (sun-son) may lead to the misinterpretation that a son is not born to his mother but he merely automatically rises in the direction of east. Hence , ' a son ', and 'the sun'.

Regarding the be form 'hai' in Hindi and the one in English be form 'is', strike similarity. There is no harm in stepping into linguistics as such.

In Indian vernacular preposition- like particles are common according to the rules of grammar. For example in the usage ' Ram ne Ravan ko maar daala'. The 'ne' support and the 'ko' support are needed in Hindi. They are called " Vibhakti Pratyayas" or the connection particles among the Subject, Verb and Object according to the structure that is meant for the past actions in transitive usage of the verb 'maar daala'. The juxtaposition of the words in English avoids such appendages. 'Ram killed Ravana' conveys the idea. The peculiar nature of the usage should be made clear to the learner. Instead the teacher gives the vernacular equivalent to add to the confusion of the learner.

5. It will be a good idea to take a sentence as a unit of speech. Every sentence can be divided into structural segments like subject, verb, object and the complement. Under each segment the words should be identified with reference to their function, namely, the parts of speech they belong to. This process should lead to the understanding of the function the word plays giving a clue to the mechanics of the language. The behaviour of the functional words is thus made to be understood. For that matter the transformation of sentences, say from active to passive or the direct to reported speech can be attributed to a structure with the general knowledge of the tense and the other common principles of grammar the student can discover given a chance to discover the principle behind the usage by means of close observation. For example bring in the sequence of tense in an informative tone is what makes a direct speech in to the reported form.

6. While drawing the attention of the student towards the usage of a verb in the present or the past situation the different verb forms are to be made to be observed under Conjugation. The folly creeps in this particular chapter of grammar that all the sentences though different in the usage of verb forms cannot establish the time under which the action has taken place namely the non-availability of the complement suited to the verb pattern used in that particular format. For example the sentence, 'I have passed B.A. in 2006' is incorrect. The time reference is suitable to

the usage, 'I passed B. A. in 2006' It is now appropriate because the complement is not suited to the Present Perfect tense. So care must be taken to affix the complement till the student learns the fundamentals. The variations in tense like, 'My father is going to Delhi tomorrow' can be taken up later when the learner grapples with fundamentals of the Tense.

7. All the chapters under Transformation of Sentences are taken up for learning grammar but the objective of the transformation is not made to be realized. So the stray sentences like 'Rama killed Ravana' are followed by those like 'Ravana was killed by Rama' do not carry any motivation for the student to learn the sentence patterns. As far as the change from Active to Passive voice is concerned the teacher can give instances when the actual doer's mention is implied or unknown or purposefully avoided thinking it is not important in order to make a statement brief and meaningful and precise. The sentence, 'The Controller of Examinations (of a particular University or the Board) announced the results (of a particular course of study)' can be neatly put in the passive form as 'The results were announced' which suits the situation to state in brief because circumlocution is not expected in saying things following the dictum, 'Brevity is the soul of wit' The pause after the reporting clause in a Direct Speech can be avoided changing it into the Reported form following the sequence of Tense using the actual words of the speaker combining with a conjunction while changing the pronouns suitably. The Direct speech is better employed in conversations that happen in a story or narration for a variety in expression'. Now the students know about its utility. It is so with all the other ways of Transformation of sentences.

The purpose of exposure to grammaticality is to make the student understand the mechanics of the L2. Close observation is needed to discover the intricacies of the usage of L2, English. To make it possible the student should be asked to observe correct sentences and to arrive at a general rule. Repeated exposure to erroneous sentences is expected to be taken up when the learner grapples with the dicta or the rule. We go by Common Error approach very soon and confuse the student only to blame him / her as a slow learner. So the Deductive Method _ going from examples to rule making is the most scientific way indeed! The deductive way of furnishing the rules of Grammar followed by the examples is not a sure way of inculcating the power of analysis in learning a language with the 'self learning strategies' to be developed at a later stage.

8. Unfortunately, we give the rules of grammar in a separate class in the name of special attention but we go on with a lesson paying no attention to the grammaticality that lies within the narration of the text. This will lead to the non-employability of the rule of grammar contextually and the rule is given a holiday leading to the theory of disuse .The rules that have been learnt are often forgotten by the students and they never analyze the statements rationally according to the discipline of Grammar.

The teacher is expected to touch the grammar point at least when a new idiom or structure appears in the textbook.

Management of functional grammar

The teachers of English are confronted with a new role of administering Functional Grammar leading to English for Specific Purposes. Grammar is learnt as a whole. According to Francis Beacon, it is learnt once in one's life time and it will not be forgotten. In order to make the teaching of English an easy task we can avoid certain chapters found in the traditional books on grammar. They are:

1. Subject and Predicate

Traditional grammar opens the chapter only to send a message to the beginner that something is told about a person or thing in a language. The predicate is just a part minus the subject. The best way would be to divide the sentence into the subject, verb, object if any and the complement which can be carried over all along the teaching of grammar. So it forms an unprofitable chapter and it can be avoided to minimize the burden of too many grammatical terms.

2. Definitions of the Parts of Speech

Noam Chomsky made us realize that no definition can satisfy the term 'the one' 'The Noun is the name of a person, place or thing'. The function is more important than the description. So the teacher is at liberty to avoid definitions in order to make the student learn grammar, with an analytical power needed for concept formation.

3. The case

The S V O C division places the nouns in proper cases. The nomenclature as Dative, Accusative, etc., can be avoided.

4. The Mood

The Mood is an extra chapter of grammar because a simple demonstration can be made meaningfully to recognize the moods. Requests, orders, or statements are common to all the languages.

5. The Parsing of Sentences

Parsing, the description of the word according to grammar in a given sentence does not form the need of the hour because the learner visualizes it in S V O C separately. The structural base gives out the knowledge of recognizing the word power based on its place of usage.

6. The Verb of Incomplete Predication as the third one after vt.(Verb Transitive) and vi,(Verb Intransitive) can be grouped under Intransitive Verbs.The Verb of Incomplete Predication, 'seem' in 'He seems to be insane' can be grouped into the Verb Intransitive

in order to avoid the burden of so many terms of grammar. The exclusion will not be against the spirit of 'Functional grammar.

CONDUCT OF FUNCTIONAL GRAMMAR

The burden of a number of rules covered under the above chapters can be eased by following the Structural Method. The following series of items can be taken up:

1. Division of a Sentence into S V O C.
2. Coming across the words under each such division to know about their function – (old Parts of Speech and new method of division made by Chomsky.
3. The Tense –compulsorily sticking to suitable complement.
4. The list of Pronouns in a table in their objective and other forms covered under the old headings of Accusative, Nominative, Dative and so on.
5. The Adjective –Degrees of Comparison as structural items
6. Adverb Position (Before a 'be- form', after an 'action verb' and before the 'actual action verb' with two helping verbs but between the two- an auxiliary and the main verb.)
7. Conjunctions in structures e.g., 'either—or', or; 'neither—nor'; etc.,
8. Transformation of Sentences observed on the basis of structures
9. Synthesis of Sentences and Analysis of Sentences will be taken up as structural items again. Any other variation can be grouped under structures based on a particular usage leading to the understanding of English idiom e.g, 'I could not help laughing'.

CONCLUSION

The Grammar of one's behavior is discipline. It is the way of life to observe discipline. The very purpose of teaching is to promote analytical power among the taught. All other means of spoon feeding are of no help. They will result in making the 'BOOK OF GRAMMAR' bulky only to confuse the taker of grammar. We see the Methodologists add pages together to the passages prescribed for intensive study, sticking to the present day dictum that grammar should not be taught. The structural approach is very useful to a learner at least before beginning the Undergraduate Course.

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