

DESIGNING GRAMMAR INSTRUCTION BASED ON INTEGRATED CONSCIOUSNESS-RAISING ACTIVITIES

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Abstract

The paper is a theoretical framework on presents how to design grammar instruction by applying integrated consciousness raising activities. There are mountains of evidence that many learners, of whatever age or tendency in learning style, are unable to transfer good formal knowledge of grammar to effective use. Such discrepancy between knowledge and putting it to use had led us to look for alternative ways of helping teachers to manage the practice of grammar in a more efficient way. One possible way to do this is by using consciousness-raising activities integrated to the English skills; such as reading and writing. These activities provide students with the opportunity to interactively solve grammar tasks in a communicative way. It is hoped the model will be effective in increasing students' knowledge and in providing authentic opportunities for communication.

Key Words: Grammar Instruction, Integrated CR Activities

A. INTRODUCTION

Many adult learners have a very strong need to understand the rules by which grammatical structure are formed. They also frequently insist on being given rules about how and when a certain bit of language is used. For these learners, teaching with reference to explicit rules has definite advantages. There is practically no evidence, however, that the same is true for all adult learners, or for children and teenagers. Young learners especially and some adults too seem to be more ease at with holistic methods of learning grammar in which structures are acquired subconsciously. Additionally, there are mountains of evidence that many learners, of whatever age or tendency in learning style, are unable to transfer good formal knowledge of grammar to effective use. Such discrepancy between knowledge and putting it to use had led us to look for alternative ways of helping teachers to manage the practice of grammar in a more efficient way. One possible way to do this is by using consciousness-raising activities integrated to the English skills.

Regarding to the researcher's preliminary observation and interview toward Grammar lecturers and some English department students at State Islamic Institute of Bukittinggi, the researcher found a set of problems related to the method used by the lecturers to teach grammar that was still deductive method. They still explained the rules and then drilled those rules to the students. As the result, students were bored and frustrated when they learnt grammar. This fact is in line with the finding of ZhouKe (2008) that an inductive approach to English grammar teaching can help students to rediscover their subconscious knowledge of English grammar and bring it to consciousness, as the grammar of a language is acquired through abstracting a set of grammatical rules from language data, rather than through imitation or deductive one. While in Consciousness Raising activities students were encouraged to know the rules by discovering the rules though problem solving tasks.

The next problem is about the grammar instruction. The explanation of grammar was not integrated to the four English skills. The lecturers do not relate the grammar rules to the language skill; they focused on formulating the forms of language. Consequently, students did not know how to use the rules for the communication context. Lack of practice in contextual situation was also a problem in teaching grammar. Students did not get many opportunities to produce, practice and relate the grammar rules into real life situations after they learn it. Whereas in consciousness-raising activities, students got opportunity to relate grammar rules with other skills such as in speaking and writing.

In this paper the researcher focuses on one of the topic grammar "reported speech". The researcher also discusses how to design CR activities for the topic given. Grammar consciousness raising activities are excellent way to take the valuable elements of the communicative approach and apply them to teaching grammar.

B. REVIEW OF THE RELATED THEORIES

The Place of Grammar in Language Teaching

Grammar teaching has undergone a lot of rethinking in recent years. There are some theories such as Stephen Krashen who believes that it should be abandoned, or at least relegated to a very minor role in a

language program. The position of grammar in language teaching is debatable. Should we teach grammar? For most teachers, the main idea of grammar teaching is to help learners internalize the structure taught in such a way that they can be used in everyday communication. The writer herself feels the need to teach grammar. Here the writer teaches grammar through consciousness-raising activities which can be integrated to the English skills such reading and writing.

The Historical Background of CR Approach

CR is a cognitive approach to grammatical instruction developed by Sharwood-Smith (1981). It is compatible with research findings related to how learners acquire second /foreign language grammar. A learner-centered orientation, with emphasis on learning processes and strategies where the learners rely on their intellectual capacities and use their cognitive modes to learning the most important one being noticing leading to awareness about the use of a language structure.

If CR is seen from perspective of approach, it much deals Task-based language teaching. It is a logical development of Communicative Language Teaching (Willis, 1996). Task is a learning activity in solving a problem communicatively with its specific goal that should be achieved by the students through solving and engagement them to participate in the process of learning language actively.

Learning Grammar as Awareness Raising

There is an English saying that goes "You can lead a horse to water but you can't make it drink". The same could be said about teaching grammar. You can teach the students the rules but you can't make them learn them. There are many reasons for this. The students may simply not understand the rules; this is especially the case for younger learners. But even adult learners have trouble with terms like past participle, third conditional, inseparable transitive phrasal verb, and with concepts like indefinite past time or future in the past. Also, research suggests that the learning of some grammatical structures follows a predetermined order so the fact that they are not ready yet. Finally, teachers need to take account of the time lag between understanding grammar structures, and being able to produce them accurately. Some researchers claim that understanding is not only a necessary precondition for production, but that it often precedes production by a considerable length of time.

For all these reasons, many teachers now refer to the initial stages of grammar learning as awareness raising. Awareness raising is what happens when the current state of the learner's grammar knowledge re-organizes itself in response to new discoveries. Unlike traditional (teacher-led) presentation, awareness raising, but only the learner can discover the grammar. This is why we refer to this stage as discovery. Typical discovery processes include induction, where learners are given some language data such as examples of the target grammar item in context and are encouraged to work out the rules themselves.

The Stages of the Integrated Consciousness Raising Activities

According to Thornbury, et.al (2007) the stages of LA are divided into three sections: **Discovery, consolidation and use**. This three-way division may seem to reflect the traditional PPP format, namely Presentation, Practice, and Production. In fact, there are good reasons for rejecting these terms. As we say above, the term presentation implies that learners learn precisely what teachers teach or present to them. In fact, learning is much less mechanistic and much more learner-directed than this older model suggests.

Likewise, traditional Practice activities always involve the learners speaking-often simply repeating, the new grammar structure. There is good evidence to suggest that forcing learners to speak before they are ready may interfere with the mental grammar. For this reason, many of the activities you will find in the consolidation stage are not speaking activities but simply understanding tasks. For example, students may be asked to read or to listen to a series of sentences, some including structure x and some including structure y- to match these sentences with the appropriate pictures. These kinds of activities are sometimes called grammar interpretation tasks, because they require the learners to interpret the grammar item rather than simply produce it. Such activities involve what researchers all input processing as opposed to output processing.

Finally the third P in the equation we have called Use, but it is important to emphasize that the kind of use we are talking about it is personalized use. That is, learners are required to put new item to work in ways that are relevant to them and their world. This is consistent with the view that language is only memorable when it has been appropriated and put to use for the learner's own particular purposes. Asking learners to personalize new language is of course, not without its risks. In order to mitigate these risks, it is important to observe the following principles:

1. Be prepared to set an example yourself, that is don't ask learners to do things that you wouldn't do, or won't do,
2. Allow the learners the relative privacy of pair and or group work before asking them to personalize to the whole class,
3. Allow learners the right to pass if there are things don't want to talk about, there is still a lot of benefit to be gained from hearing other learners talking

4. Don't correct the learners' language errors without first providing feedback on what they have said or written. E.g. "That must have been exciting! By the way, we say I felt nervous, not I fell nervous. And always correct with discretion and sensitivity.

In relation to the title, integrated CR activities follow the next sequence of stages: Leading, presentation of the model text, reconstruction of the model text, text creation and text sharing. However, general adherence to this sequence has the following advantages: gradual lead-in to a lesson opens up a field of awareness, the model text, if conspicuously presented, affords intensive input of the target structures; reconstruction of the model text provides ample opportunity for guided practice, the writing phase text (text creation) gives students a highly motivating opportunity to express themselves creatively- and given the previous phases of the lesson accurately; the sharing of texts which follow injects the stimulating spark of the student to student communication.

Lead-in activities, these are for:

1. Generally warming up and getting them ready to work in a foreign language.
2. Developing awareness of and interest in the topic you are going to work with
3. Bringing known words back to mind and teaching new ones. A basic lead-in activity is brainstorming.

The next is presentation of model text. A model text is a short text which not only shows the written form of the target structure, but also clarifies its meaning/use/function. Presentation of the text is the process of familiarizing the students with the model text. This can be done in various ways. It begins with a gapped version and elicits the missing words from them.

After modelling text is reconstruction of the model text. Reconstruction of a model text can be done in spoken or written form. It is the process of eliciting from the students as accurately as possible the text presented to them earlier. The rationale of this stage is this: by remembering the model text the students can experience a feeling success and gain ability in using the structure accurately.

Furthermore, text creation is where your students create their own text within the framework of the model they have been working with. Naturally, your students will often want to know new vocabulary. Supply the words they ask for or make sure they have access to a bilingual dictionary. We have favored writing for this phase as experience has shown that students find it easier to be creative in writing. Writing also allows greater focus on accuracy since students have the time to reflect, correct, discard, and add. It allows text creation in pairs or small groups and can therefore generate much-task focused speaking. Finally the products can be displayed and or used in other ways.

Hence, it is clear that according to Thornbury there stages of CR activities; namely discovery, consolidation, use, lead in activities, presentation of model text and reconstruction of model text, text creation and presentation of text.

Ellis developed stages of CR in 1997 based on consciousness-raising sequence presented in Impact Grammar (Ellis, 1997, p. 3) in which the sequence of tasks are as follow:

- 1) Attending task: Students read/ listen to a text that they process for meaning.
- 2) Noticing task: Students read/ listen to the same text, which is now gapped, and fill in the missing words.
- 3) Analysis task: Students discover how the target structure works by analyzing the data provided by the text.
- 4) Checking task: Students complete an activity to check if they have understood how the target structure works.
- 5) Production task: Students are given the opportunity to try out or experiment with the target structure by producing their own sentences.

Based on two theories above, the researcher goes with new theory of steps of Consciousness Raising activities by Thornbury that the first three discovery, consolidation and use. It is continued by integrating CR activities with the English skills through lead-activities, presentation of model texts and text creation. Since it is more comprehensible and detail.

The Nature of Reported Speech

a. Definition

Reported speech is the way to tell about someone's statement. Beares states that reported speech refers to a sentence reporting what someone has said. In other words, reported speech is the form that we use to speak about what others tell us.

b. How to change direct speech into reported speech

1. Change the tenses, if the reporting verb is in the past tense. This form is usually one step back into the past from the original. For example:
 - a. She said, "I want to bring my children." (simple present)
 - She said (that) she wanted to bring her children. (Simple past)

- b. Jack said, "My wife went with me to the show". (simple past)
Jack said (that) his wife had gone with him to the show.
2. Change the pronouns. When changing from direct speech to indirect speech it is often necessary to change the pronouns to match the subject of the sentence.
For example:
a. She said, "I want to bring my children".
She said (that) his wife went with me to the show.
b. Jack said, "My wife went with me to the show"
Jack said (that) his wife had gone with him to the show.
3. Change the time signifier's time signals. It is also important to change time words (signifiers) when referring to present, past or future time to watch the moment of speaking. For example:
a. She said, "I want to bring my children tomorrow"
She said (that) she wanted to bring her children the next day.
b. Jack said, "My wife went with me to the show yesterday"
Jack said (that) his wife had gone with him to the show the day before.

C. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

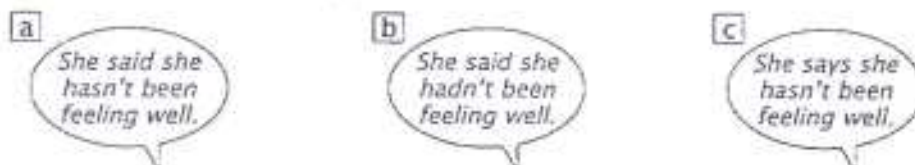
Here is the application of integrated CR activities in grammar topic Reported Speech. Based on theory that researcher refers to the Thorburry, the following is the procedures of CR activities.

A. Discovery

1. Copy and distribute - or project - these pictures and these speech bubbles.



2. Ask the students to match the speech bubbles to the pictures and to compare their answers with a neighbor. Check the answers in open class. The most likely answers are:



3. Ask students if they can explain the choice of tense, both of 'says/ said and hasn't/ hadn't in each case. They can discuss this briefly in pairs.
4. Elicit the students' ideas, and establish that the choice of tense depends on both the time of saying and the time of not feeling well. When reporting speech, the choice of tense depends on the relationship between a) the present moment, b) the moment of reporting, and c) the time of the events that are being reported. In (1) they are all the same, namely, now. In (2) the time of the event is the same as now, but the time of reporting is then. In (3) they are all different, namely, now and then and before then.

B. Consolidation

1. Copy and hand out or project the following jumbled dialogue. Alternatively, copy it and cut it into its individual lines, so that the students can physically manipulate it. You will need one set of jumbled lines for each group of three students.

*Well, I downloaded it myself.
You told me you had written it yourself.
What's wrong with it?
What's the problem?
No, you didn't. I found it on the internet.
It's about your English homework.
I did.*

The actual order is the following:

*What's the problem?
It's about your English homework.
What's wrong with it?
You told me you had written it yourself.
I did.
No, you didn't. I found it on the internet.
Well, I downloaded it myself.*

2. Once the students have ordered the dialogue, ask them to imagine the context in which it occurred.
3. Ask the students in pairs, to write, rehearse, and perform a similar dialogue based on one these situations
 - a. An employer discovers an employee has lied in his or her job interview.
 - b. A parent discovers their child was lying about what they did last Saturday night.
 - c. A customer complains to car salesman about the car that he or she bought, which was supposed to be new.

C. Use

1. Tell the class the story of how someone misled you, or lied to you, or tricked you in some way. For example:
Once, I rented a room in a flat. The person who rented it to me told me he owned the flat. In fact, I soon found out that he didn't. He was sub-letting it. What is more, he didn't have any money himself. He was depending on me to pay all the rent...
2. Invite the students to ask you more question about the situation.
3. Ask students to think of a something similar that happened to them, or to someone they know. In pairs or groups of three they take turns to tell their story. Encourage the listeners to ask questions about it.
4. Ask for volunteers to tell some of the best stories to the whole class.

D. Lead-in Activities

a. Spot the lies

Write some statements about yourself on the board and get your students to decide whether they think they are true or lies. You score a point when the students consider something that is true to be a lie and vice versa. If the group cannot decide, take majority vote. For example:
Teacher: *My grandmother was born in Ireland. When I was a child, we kept chickens in our cellar. I once travelled round Cornwall on a tandem bike. My favorite series on TV is... I hate spinach and would never eat.*

b. What is your score

1. Tell the students to pick a partner they do not know very well.
2. Both write down five sentences which they then read out to their partner, who guess whether the sentence is true or a lie. The one who guesses scores a point for each correct guess. For example:
Student 1: *When I was a child, I had a cat as a pet.*
Student 2: *True.*
Student 1: *No. It is a lie. I always wanted to have one but I was never allowed to keep a pet. (No point for student 2)*

3. Get the class into a circle. Each student reports their score and gives just one example of something they guessed wrong. It might be helpful to write the following on the board.

Htsako: Alain said she: he had... had met... had been to...
I thought it was a lie (true), but it is true (a lie).

E. Presentation of Model Text

1. Put three to six copies of the model text up on the walls around your room. There should be at least one copy for each three students. Ask your students to copy it onto sheets of paper which

they must leave at their desks or tables. That is, since the text is not in large setting, everyone has to get up, read part of the text, go back to their seat, write down what they remember, go back to the text and read a bit more, and so on.

Model text

He told us he had an uncle in Japan

and he said

they had spent their holidays in Hawaii

and he added that his father had bought a Porsche

and he told us that they had a house

as big as the school building but when found out

that he was just like us, but a liar.

2. When everyone has finished, read out the text. Students check their copies. (Perhaps, as you read, stroll around and check that everyone is producing an accurate copy).

F. Text Creation

Everyone writes their own text based on the model and presents it to the class.

a. Lies dont pay

1. Tell your class about a time you or somebody else told a lie and regretted having done so.
2. Write the key words from the story on the board.
3. Allow a few minutes for the class to think about a time somebody lied. It does not matter whether they experienced the situation themselves or whether they heard/ read about it or saw it in a film.
4. Tell them to write about the situation using key words only. Give an example.
5. Ask a student for his or her key words. Write them on the board. Invite the others to flesh out the story individually or in groups.

Variation

If you work with adults you may want to use the following model text: *My new acquaintance told me*

He loved parachuting

He said he went to the theatre

At least once a week

He added that he had played in an orchestra some time ago

And he mentioned that he had travelled all over the world.

But he forgot to tell me

That all these things had only happened inside his head.

By doing these activities, the learners of IAIN Bukittinggi are provided the opportunity to interactively solve grammar tasks in a communicative way. These activities are hoped to be effective in increasing students' knowledge about reported speech and in providing authentic opportunities for communication.

D. CONCLUSION

Lecturers should not merely teach their learners to be able to remember grammatical rules of English, but more importantly they also have to guide the learners to understand those rules and make them able to use those rules communicatively. One possible way to do this is by using consciousness-raising activities integrated to the English skills; such as reading and writing. These activities provide students with the opportunity to interactively solve grammar tasks in a communicative way.

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