

REINFORCING GRAMMATICAL STRUCTURE IN AUTHENTIC READING TEXTS

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The aim of this paper is to underline the importance of reinforcing grammatical structure in authentic reading texts in developing productive knowledge of the considered pattern.

The provided activities are directed towards the reinforcement of the highlighted structures functioning in an authentic context.

Keywords: grammatical structure, authentic reading text, reinforcement, productive knowledge.

Introduction

Reading is essential for the further development of the EFL in our country, where the possibilities of talking to the native speakers of English are limited. The more we read and listen, the more words we come to understand. But knowing the word means more than just its translated meaning or its synonyms (Snuviškienė 2004). Knowing grammatical patterns is one of the aspects of word knowledge.

According to M. Halliday's theory, grammar is a system which developed in order to help human beings operate in the world; which in some sense mirrors the world, and cannot be divorced from the social context. The new model of language learning sees the process as no different in principle from anything else (Low 2004). If you want to give a presentation to a conference, you make the ideas coherent, you identify the language to put the ideas over, and you practise your tenses and discourse markers. If you don't, the speech fails. In other words, system has to be studied or mastered before an effective communication can take place.

Main part

It has long been the practice for graded texts in coursebooks to contain numerous examples of the same grammatical structure in order to highlight the use of that structure in context. A graded text might contain several examples of the same grammatical structure. Typically, the text is then followed by comprehension questions that highlight the structure and various grammar-based practice exercises to reinforce its use.

In the case of authentic reading texts, however, the task of a teacher becomes a little trickier. It is rarely the case that such texts will have many examples of the same grammatical structure. The teacher will have to identify a structure that is useful for the learner. Therefore, he or she will have to produce exercises related to the example in the text to provide substantial practice of the particular structure.

Before taking to exercises, it is important that a chosen grammatical point be illustrated either by underlining it in the text or highlighting it in some other way. This has been successfully

practised with some groups of Business Management. They had to underline the passive sentences in the article (Review 1999: 2–4) dealing with the macroeconomic environment of our country, for example:

1. 147 short-term measures and 31 middle-term measures **have already been fully implemented**.

2. Efforts **will be made** to ensure that the measures provided ...cover all the acquis...

3. The Accession Partnership is the main guideline, ...objectives and priorities of which **are being implemented** through variety of programmes...

4. High investment growth rate **was conditioned** by ongoing restructuring...

5. The sale agreement **is expected to be signed** at the end of the year.

When looking at the meaning and use of the considered passives in more depth, the following questions were asked:

- Why is the passive voice used here?
 - we are more interested in the event or action than the person who did it;
 - with *by* when the agent is mentioned;
 - the speaker wants to be objective in a scientific report;
 - with verbs like *believe, consider, expect* (future reference), etc.
- Could the author use the active voice? If so, what would the sentence be like?
- Do you know that sometimes texts are abused with the passives?

Is this text abused with the passives?

Most technical writers use the passive sentences in their papers to sound intelligent, don't they?

Have you ever come across such a complicated text?

Then followed the questions related to tense and aspect, for example:

- What action does this type of present (1 and/or 3) indicate?

- Why is the action in the past (4) expressed with the *simple past*?

- Why is the present perfect (not the simple past) used in 1?

The grammar point having been illustrated, the teacher should give further practice of the particular structure. In our case of an authentic reading text, some exercises exploiting the passive structure were used for further related practice, for example:

1. Rewrite in the active voice, e. g.:

The list of objects slated for privatisation was approved by government.

The government approved the list...

2. Write further sentences from the given prompts, e. g.:

list/objects/slated for privatisation/ approve/ government

The list of objects slated for privatisation was approved by government.

3. Re-order the jumbled words to make accurate sentences, e. g.:

The integration radically was strategy for reviewed European.

The strategy for European integration was radically reviewed.

4. Choose the best from a series of options, e. g.:

The union of that country has adopted legislation designed to guarantee certain rights throughout the EU. You (to be/will be/have been/are/were) given the same help to find work as nationals.

5. Write the endings of the sentences related to the text, e. g.:

The strategy for European integration was radically reviewed and...

*The sale of... will be completed, which...
Efforts will be made to ensure that...
The authorities are believed to ..., etc.*

Conclusion

Focusing on a grammatical structure or structures in an authentic texts such as newspaper articles, scientific papers, documents, etc., enables the students to see these structures functioning in an authentic context. However, it is rarely the case that an authentic text will have numerous examples of the same grammatical structure. Therefore, the teacher will need to develop exercises for further related practice in order to reinforce the chosen grammatical structure. While exploiting the particular structure, the teacher might either employ the text or go be-

yond the actual text by using the same context. The produced exercises will certainly provide substantial practice of the particular structure and elaborate productive knowledge of the considered grammatical pattern.

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GRAMATINIŲ STRUKTŪRŲ ĮTVIRTINIMAS AUTENTIŠKOJE SKAITYMO MEDŽIAGOJE

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Remiantis populiarėjančia mokslinė teorija, norint išmokyti efektyviai bendrauti užsienio kalba, rekomenduojama mokytis konkrečios užsienio kalbos sistemos – ją studijuoti bei tobulinti, nes neįrodyta, kad kalbą galima išmokyti be „sąmoningo“ mokymosi („conscious“ learning). Bet kalbos mokėjimas – tai ir gramatinių struktūrų valdymas. Pasak įžymaus lingvisto M. Halliday, gramatika yra sistema, leidžianti žmonėms veikti pasaulyje.

Taigi studentams, besimokantiems anglų kalbos, labai svarbu tobulinti gramatikos žinias, įtvirtinti gramatinių struktūrų vartojimo įgūdžius. Tai įmanoma integruojant kalbinės veiklos rūšis. Straipsnyje rekomenduojama skaitomame autentiškame specialybės tekste išskirti svarbias gramatines struktūras, atkreipiant dėmesį į jų prasmę, vartojimo ypatumus. Be to, rekomenduojama studentams pateikti pratimų pasirinktiems gramatinių struktūrų vartojimo įgūdžiams įtvirtinti. Čia pateikiami pratimų pavyzdžiai pasyvo struktūroms, esančioms autentiškame tekste, įtvirtinti.

Reikšminiai žodžiai: gramatinė struktūra, autentiška skaitymo medžiaga, įtvirtinimas, įgūdžiai ir žinios.

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