



INDUCTIVE AND DEDUCTIVE TEACHING APPROACHES

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ABSTRACT

In this article, deductive and inductive approaches and methods of teaching grammar in their context, as well as their advantages and disadvantages are reflected.

KEYWORDS

Teaching English grammar, inductive approach, deductive approach, students' preference.

INTRODUCTION

The term mother tongue refers to the language that is acquired firsthand, in pedagogical context, named as the native, base, or sourcelanguage. A foreign language is a language taught at school as a subject, as well as the one that is not used either as a language of teaching at school or the language of communication in a certain community. In pedagogical context, it is referred to as a foreign, goal or target

language. In linguistic literature it can be noticed that different scholars have treated the distinction between the terms “learning” and “acquiring” in numerous ways. American linguist Krashen insists that those are two completely different processes. According to him, the acquisition is a process of learning a mother tongue which is considered unique by its own nature. Learning in a broader sense can be



defined as “acquiring or getting of knowledge of a subject or a skill by study, experience and instruction.” On the other hand, some linguists claim that there exists no fundamental distinction between the two terms . Further in the text, the term grammar acquisition will be used, for the fact that in pedagogical and psycholinguistic literature it is often used in alternation with the term learning.

There are at least two approaches to acquisition of grammar in teaching foreign languages: inductive and deductive. When grammar is taught inductively, a teacher allows students to, on the basis of assumptions, induce and formulate a rule by themselves. Namely, students produce rules indirectly, applying a rule to exercises from a text. The teacher’s task is to provide the appropriate context where a certain rule is used, together with the appropriate context for communication. The main advantage of the inductive approach, according to Hinkel and Fotos , is fostering the mental effort and enabling development of students’ mental capabilities, analysis and making connection between the segments of speech, thus participating actively in the teaching process. They also assert that the knowledge acquired by unconscious process of identification and acquisition of the presented grammar rules can be stored for a longer period of time and implemented in practice without the conscious questioning of context which can be time-

consuming. Naturally, the efficiency of the method is highly dependent on the teacher for it is highly demanding to find examples relevant for the given problem which will lead to the desirable conclusion. Moreover, the method could be time-consuming, wasting precious time that could otherwise be used for the reproduction of the learnt material, especially in the case when, for instance, the students are unable to produce a certain rule. The second approach is the deductive approach of acquiring grammar rules. According to Thornbury’s three basic principles, a teacher provides clear definitions and explanations of a certain grammar point. The next step is to provide examples of sentences where the grammar point is usually used, as a means of presenting the students with the most frequent usage of a rule in a certain context. Then students practice the rule providing their own examples at the end of a lesson .

The deductive method is easier to apply than the inductive one, leaving little space for mistakes, provided it is explained in a correct and precise way. The deductive approach encourages students’ confidence through numerous examples, at the same time stating clearly what students are expected to learn. In addition, a teacher is not required to prepare much when teaching in this manner. The main task of a teacher is to provide students with comprehensible explanation which could be easily applied to the exercises that follow. However, one of



the main disadvantages of the deductive approach is the lack of students' participation in the teaching process which leads to the lack of creativity and degradation of the thinking process because everything is clear, already given and there is no opportunity for critical thinking. Teacher's inability to present a rule in a clear and unambiguous way, to provide relevant examples and adjust them to the capabilities of the students could be another disadvantage of the approach. In that case, even the simplest rule can seem difficult and confusing to the students.

Deductive and inductive grammar learning. These two approaches have been applied to grammar teaching and learning. A deductive approach involves the learners being given a general rule, which is then applied to specific language examples and honed through practice exercises. An inductive approach involves the learners detecting, or noticing, patterns and working out a 'rule' for themselves before they practise the language.

Both approaches are commonplace in published materials. Some course books may adhere to one approach or the other as series style, whereas some may be more flexible and employ both approaches according to what the language being taught lends itself to. Most inductive learning presented in course books is guided or scaffolded. In other words, exercises and questions guide the learner to work out

the grammar rule. The following course book extracts illustrate the two different approaches. The subsequent practice exercises are similar in both course books.

First and foremost, it is perhaps the nature of the language being taught that determines if an inductive approach is possible. Inductive learning is an option for language with salient features and consistency and simplicity of use and form. The basic forms of comparative adjectives, as shown above, is an example of this. Conversely, teaching the finer points of the use of articles (a/an, the) inductively, for example, would most probably be problematic. The metalinguistic tools that the learners will need to accomplish the task is also a factor.

However, the learner-centered nature of inductive teaching is often seen as advantageous as the learner is more active in the learning process rather than being a passive recipient. This increased engagement may help the learner to develop deeper understanding and help fix the language being learned. This could also promote the strategy of 'noticing' in the student and enhance learner autonomy and motivation.

On the other hand, inductive learning can be more time- and energy-consuming and more demanding of the teacher and the learner. It is also possible that during the process, the learner may arrive at an incorrect inference or produce an incorrect or

incomplete rule. Also, an inductive approach may frustrate learners whose personal learning style and/or past learning experience is more in line with being taught via a more teacher-centred and deductive approach.

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