

Some general principles of grammar teaching

Teaching grammar should be based upon the following principles:

Conscious approach to the teaching of grammar. This means that in sentence patterns teaching points are determined so that students can concentrate their attention on some elements of the pattern to be able to use them as orienting points when speaking or writing the target language. Conscious learning is also ensured when a grammar item is contrasted with another grammar item which is usually confused. The contrast is brought out through oppositions. Practical approach to the assimilation of grammar means that some grammar items needed for immediate use either in oral or written language are learned. Structural approach means that grammar items are introduced and drilled in structures or sentence patterns. In speaking the structural approach meets the requirements. Situational approach assumes the learning of grammar items in situations. Grammar items students need for conversation are taught by the oral approach, i.e. students listen to them, perform various exercises, finally see them printed, and write sentences using them. Grammar items necessary for reading are taught through reading. While preparing for the lesson at which new grammar items should be introduced, the teacher must realize the difficulties students will meet in assimilating this new element of the English grammar. They may be of three kinds: difficulties in form, meaning and usage. The ways to overcome these difficulties are: to convey the meaning of the grammar item either through situations or with the help of the mother tongue, to choose exercises, their types and number. Then the teacher thinks of the sequence in which students should work to overcome these difficulties, i.e. from observation and comprehension through conscious imitation to usage in conversation (communicative exercises). The form of presentation – orally, in writing, or in reading – should be considered then. Students' activity in the process of learning the definite grammar point should be planned as well, bearing in mind that for assimilation students need ample examples of the sentence pattern in which this grammar item occurs.