

Inductive and Deductive Approaches to Improving Grammar Competence of English Learners

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ABSTRACT

Grammar is one of the foundational parts of the language learning process. It is clear that various methods have proven their efficacy in teaching foreign languages. This article is aimed to inform about inductive and deductive approaches and their significance in teaching grammar competence in EFL classes.

Introduction

Currently, tendency to learn English language is significantly increasing that requires to devise more efficacious and straightforward approaches to teaching languages. There are a number of effective approaches to teach grammar. For instance, The Grammar Translation Method, Communicative Approach, Inductive and Deductive methods have played crucial roles in teaching English language. All approaches are fruitful for learners that help develop the learners' general knowledge of English language. This article concentrates on the usage and effectiveness of Inductive and deductive methods in teaching grammar aspect of English language.

Methods and materials

There are two main ways that are used in teaching grammar: deductively and inductively. Both deductive and inductive teaching have their advantages and disadvantages and which approach we use when can depend on a number of factors, such as the nature of the language that is taught and the preferences of the teacher and learners. It is, however, maybe generally accepted that a combination of both methods is best suited for the EFL classroom.

Deductive reasoning is importantly a from top to down approach which moves from the more general to the more specific. In other words, we start with a general notion or theory, which we then make it narrow to specific theories, which are then examined. Inductive reasoning is more of a down to top approach, moving from the more specific to the more general, in which we make specific observations, detect patterns, formulate theory and make conclusions.

These two approaches have been implemented to grammar teaching and learning. A deductive approach includes the learners being given a general rule, which is then employed to specific

language examples and improved through practice exercises. An inductive approach involves the learners finding, or noticing, similarities and working out a 'rule' for themselves before they use the language.

The effectiveness of deductive and inductive approaches has been studied in thorough studies. Harmer (1989) found out that these two strategies encourage learners to fill for the gap in their second language knowledge by using various communication strategies. A number of studies, likewise, has informed that successful learners often gain certain learning strategies such as looking for practice opportunities or mouthing the questions put to other learners (Peck, 1988). Inductive and deductive models offer this chance to learners because these two models improve a cooperative atmosphere among students.

Results and Discussion

According to Celce-Murcia et al (1997), the communicative classroom provides a positive environment for target language learning than classrooms dominated by official instruction so learning deductively and inductively is among the communicative methods that encourage students to communicate fluently. The significance of students' active involvement in the learning process is increasingly growing in this era of information explosion. Educators continue to unravel ways to assist learners in developing their cognitive capability.

Deductive learning and inductive learning which help students articulate their mental processes seem to incorporate many of the research studies propounded by ESL practitioners. These approaches have established to give students the ability to rationalize what information is needed and, thereby, to make them conscious of the desire and content of the lessons showed to them.

Deductive teaching is a conventional method in which information about the target language and grammatical rules is given at the beginning of a class and supplemented with examples. The principles of this approach are mainly used in classes where the main goal is to teach grammar structures. For instance, these principles are appropriate for classes in which grammar translation method is implemented (Nunan, 1991; Shrum & Glisan, 2016).

In addition, in a deductive lesson the educator should first show the grammar rules. Then examples pointing the grammar structures should be given by the teacher. Finally, students use the rules in order to make their own examples. In fact, the expected result of a deductive approach sheds light on the need to teach grammar in an explicit way to assist learners to be aware of the grammar rules (Thornbury, 1999; Shrum & Glisan, 2016).

However, it is believed that in an inductive method, learners analyze examples in a context (e.g. text or audios) to ascertain the grammar rules by themselves. At the end of this process, after students have established the grammar rules, they make their own examples; thus applying the language (Nunan, 1999; Thornbury, 1999; Shrum & Glisan, 2016).

There is a viewpoint that young students are better at learning grammar structures from examples rather than learning them deductively; they would prefer to learn by practicing because grammar rules are complex for them to comprehend.

The effects of indirect explicit grammar teaching on EFL learners' use of English tenses have also been tested. The experimental group, who were taught grammar through the indirect approach, significantly showed better results than the control group, who studied with the direct approach, as to the analysis of grammar rules and the verbal proficiency, except for the use of grammar structures in a pre-defined context. Therefore, the findings indicated favorable results for indirect explicit grammar instruction. There was also a positive connection between the grammar rules and their use (Dang & Nguyen, 2012).

In the deductive approach group, grammatical rules were taught in class and students were permitted to ask questions; furthermore, direct feedback was provided for learners by underlining

the mistakes relating to the grammatical rules. The activities for teaching grammar in this group included filling handouts, making sentences on the board in order to teach grammar patterns, reading and writing passages, and making students do exercises using the grammar structures taught.

There was no significant distinction between the approaches of the deductive and inductive groups delayed restrictive production of verbs in the past perfect and past simple in the gap-fill exercise 10 days after the first explanation. There was also no significant difference between the types of the pooled inductive and deductive groups, and the group of learners that has missed the real inductive or deductive lesson. The null hypothesis was admitted: there was no considerable distinction between the average number of mistakes across groups with different teaching methods (inductive and deductive) and also the latecomer „new“ group during delayed written production.

In this regard, according to Richards and Schmidt (2010) language teaching methods that use the deductive approach accentuate the study of the grammar principles of a language (e.g. the grammar translation method). However, language teaching methods that implement inductive learning concentrate on the usage not on presentation of the language (e.g. the direct method, communicative approach, and counselling learning).

When comparing two approaches, the noticeable distinction in the scores of the groups indicate that the inductive approach was more efficacious than the deductive approach while teaching grammar to these students. These results are consistent with studies such as the one by Dang and Nguyen (2012), which favors an indirect approach over a direct one for teaching grammar principles.

However, other studies have given a superiority to the deductive method (e.g. Mohammed & Jaber, 2008; Deng & Lin, 2016; Negahdaripour & Amirghassemi, 2016) and others have established no major difference when implementing the two approaches into teaching grammar (e.g. Zamani & Mohammadi, 2014).

Learners mostly preferred the deductive approach, and were sure that they would perform considerably better through it; this was not so. The negligible differences between the inductive and deductive groups perhaps refer to the underpinning use of local contextualization for both groups.

Conclusion

In conclusion, both approaches are fruitful in EFL classes, but it should be selected according to learners' preferences and their performance results in lessons.

In spite of the fact that the present study favors the inductive approach as a more efficacious method to teaching EFL grammar, we have to consider the fact that this is a study done in one high school and may not be generalizable to other contexts. It is suggested continuing research on this contentious issue in different EFL.

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