TEACHING FRENCH GRAMMAR CREATIVELY: STRATEGIES FOR FLE CLASSROOMS

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Abstract: This article is devoted to the study of creative and effective methods of teaching French grammar in FLE classes. Traditional grammatical approaches often lead to boredom and loss of motivation in students. The study presents practical examples of learning grammar through text and their application in oral speech. The article also provides practical recommendations for FLE teachers.

Keywords: Morphological, syntactic and phonetic rules, traditional methodology, deductive and analytical approach, logical analysis, linguistic aspects.

Аннотация: Данная статья посвящена изучению креативных и эффективных методов преподавания французской грамматики на уроках английского языка. Традиционные грамматические подходы часто приводят к скуке и потере мотивации у учащихся. В исследовании представлены практические примеры изучения грамматики с помощью текста и их применения в устной речи. В статье также приведены практические рекомендации для преподавателей английского языка.

Ключевые слова: морфологические, синтаксические и фонетические правила, традиционная методология, дедуктивно-аналитический подход, логический анализ, лингвистические аспекты.

Annotatsiya. ushbu maqola FLE darslarida frantsuz grammatikasini o'qitishning ijodiy va samarali usullarini o'rganishga bag'ishlangan. An'anaviy grammatik yondashuvlar ko'pincha o'quvchilarda zerikish va motivatsiyani yo'qotishga olib keladi. Tadqiqotda grammatikani matn orqali o'rganish va ularni og'zaki nutqda qo'llashning amaliy misollari keltirilgan. Maqolada FLE o'qituvchilari uchun amaliy tavsiyalar ham berilgan.

Kalit so'zlar: morfologik, sintaktik va fonetik qoidalar, an'anaviy metodologiya, deduktiv va analitik yondashuv, mantiqiy tahlil, lingvistik jihatlar.

Introduction

Grammar acquisition is an essential step toward mastering a foreign language. It is the starting point for language proficiency. French grammar is characterized by its difficulty. To achieve this, teachers must do their utmost to help their learners acquire grammatical competence. This task is not easy. Therefore, teachers must use specific teaching methods to ensure the acquisition of this skill. The acquisition of grammatical competence is crucial for any learner wishing to learn a given

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language. This competence allows the learner to access other skills. For many experts in language teaching, there is no language without grammar. For Kerrouzi and Fari, grammatical competence allows the learner to develop written expression. (2017: 35) In an article entitled "Grammar" and "Representations" in the Language Classroom: The Case of Algerian High School Students, the author states that according to a survey conducted with learners, they are fully aware of the need to correctly manipulate grammatical structures in order to master the French language. (Bouthiba, 2018: 35). According to Anatole, grammar constitutes: "Not only fundamental processes of thought, transferable from one subject to another, but also encompasses all social, cognitive, affective, cultural, and psychomotor interactions between the learner and the reality around them". (p. 2). According to Fougerouse, for teachers, grammar is the most important linguistic component in the language classroom, ahead of vocabulary, civilization, and even phonetics. (2: 2001).

Therefore, it is essential to understand the meaning of the word grammar. In the 2012 Petit Larousse Illustré dictionary, the word grammar is defined as: "Set of morphological, syntactic and phonetic rules, written and oral, of a language; study and description of these rules". (2012: 512). Anselmi defines grammar as a branch of linguistics that includes phonology, morphology, and syntax: "A set of rules to follow to speak and write a language correctly. This is the part of linguistics that includes phonology, morphology, and syntax (according to the definition found in a dictionary of common nouns)". (2014: 9).

According to Benlehlouh, Besse and Porquier the term grammar has three meanings: *1. A certain internal functioning characteristic of a given language, which is called internalized grammar. 2. The methodical explanation of this functioning. For the authors, this is a reflective knowledge of regularities that conform to the norms of a given language. 3. The "continued method of explanation". According to Besse and Porquier, these are theories that attempt, from a particular perspective, to highlight the functioning and internal organization of a given language (2013: 10).*

Benlehlouh (2013: 10) also mentions that R. Galisson and D. Coste identify six meanings of the term grammar:

1. Description of the general functioning of a mother tongue.
2. Description of the morphology and syntax of a natural language.
3. Discipline studying the rules of the functioning or evolution of any natural language.
4. Set of normative prescriptions playing a role in sociolinguistic discrimination.

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5. Formal system constructed by the linguist.

6. System internalized by the speaker-listener of a language. (Benlehlouh, 2013: 10).

According to Özçelik, the most commonly used methods for teaching grammar in language classrooms are:

- active/passive grammar.
- contextualized/decontextualized grammar.
- deductive/inductive grammar.
- implicit/explicit grammar. (2012: 5)

According to Özçelik, active grammar or production grammar includes: "The set of linguistic rules that the learner masters at a level of active competence, defined as the learner's ability to reuse linguistic or cultural elements for their own personal expression". (2012: 5). Regarding passive grammar, also called recognition grammar, Özçelik defines it as: "The set of linguistic rules mastered by the learner at a level of recognition". (2012: 5).

Contextualized grammar, for Özçelik, is grammar taught in a context that refers to a communicative situation. (2012: 5). Decontextualized grammar is one that is taught outside of any context or communicative situation, such as in artificial exercises composed of isolated sentences. (2012: 5).

For Özçelik, deductive grammar refers to grammar teaching that moves from rules to examples, unlike "Inductive grammar, which moves from examples to rules, such as when the teacher asks learners to discover a rule from a series of sentences. Application exercises correspond to a deductive phase of grammar learning". (2012: 5).

Finally, regarding implicit and explicit grammar, Özçelik makes the following observation: "Implicit grammar means grammar teaching that ignores any explanation of rules in class, which is the main method of explicit grammar". (2012: 6).

METHODS

So, first of all, it would be better to shed light on the place grammar occupies in the different methodological approaches. Methodologies are classified according to the order of their chronological appearance.

- ***Traditional Methodology***

The traditional methodology, the grammar-translation method, or the classical method, was based on translation. For grammar teaching in this methodology: "The foreign language was dissected and presented as a set of grammatical rules and exceptions, which could be compared to those of the mother tongue." (2005: 4) In the 18th century, grammar was taught deductively: "that is,

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by presenting the rule, then applying it to specific cases in the form of sentences and repetitive exercises." (2005: 4)

In the 19th century, a major change took place in the teaching of grammar. When studying a foreign language text, it is broken down into parts. This text is then translated word for word into the learner's mother tongue. This translation was: "the starting point for a theoretical study of grammar, which no longer occupied a prominent place in learning. Consequently, grammatical points were addressed in the order in which they appeared in the basic texts." (2005: 4)

According to Özçelik, traditional grammar textbooks, designed using a deductive and analytical approach, were based on grammatical analysis or logical analysis. (2012: 6)

- ***The Natural Method***

According to Capré, the natural method, inspired by the work of Steven Krashen, strongly asserted that to learn any foreign language, grammar is useless, even harmful. "To support this assertion, Krashen demonstrated the inhibiting effect of grammar rules his nebulous hypothesis of affective filters on the speaker who wants to express themselves in a foreign language" (2002: 1).

- ***Active Methodology***

Active methodology emerged in response to teachers' rejection of direct methodology. With this methodology, we can observe a relaxation of grammar teaching. Reasoned learning is favored. According to this learning, the learner needs to understand the reasons for phenomena. Empiricism in grammar teaching is avoided. An inductive approach is used, which prioritized morphology over syntax. (Introductory Course on Teaching French as a Foreign Language in a Syrian Context, University of Aleppo 2005: 9).

For Anselmi, grammar teaching has been softened with the active method. (2014: 14).

- ***The Audio-Oral Method***

For Özçelik, this method prioritizes oral expression and the grammatical structures of everyday language. He also adds that grammar no longer consists of a set of rules, but rather a list of structures: "Language structures are practiced through structural exercises focused on syntax, substitution, or transformation, followed by intensive repetition and memorization of model structures, that is, automation exercises" (2012: 7).

- ***The structural-global audiovisual methodology:***

This methodology is based on the use of images and sound. This method: "will be applied equally to the teaching of vocabulary (without resorting to translation into the native language) and to grammar teaching (without the

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intermediary of rules, the learner grasps the rules intuitively)". (Introductory Course on the Teaching of French as a Foreign Language in a Syrian Context, University of Aleppo, 2005: 12).

- ***The communicative approach:***

All four skills are targeted by this approach since: "everything depends on the learners' language needs. Language is conceived as an instrument of communication or social interaction. Linguistic aspects (sounds, structures, vocabulary, etc.) constitute grammatical competence, which is in reality only one component of a more comprehensive skill: communication competence". (Introductory Course on Teaching French as a Foreign Language in a Syrian Context, University of Aleppo, 2005: 12).

- ***The Action-Based Approach***

The action-based approach emerged in the mid-1990s. This approach focuses on: "Tasks to be completed within an overall project. Action must encourage interaction that stimulates the development of receptive and interactive skills." (Introductory Course in the Teaching of French as a Foreign Language in a Syrian Context, University of Aleppo, 2005: 14).

According to Özçelik: "Managing the learning process requires the selection, organization, progression, and practice of new material ranging from simple to complex. Furthermore, the communicative productivity of grammatical categories, contrastive data, authentic oral and written discourse, and the natural order of the child's acquisition of foreign language must be taken into consideration when organizing and planning grammatical progression". According to this perspective, learners can develop their grammatical competence:

"*a. inductively through exposure to new grammatical data as they appear in authentic documents,*

b. inductively by introducing new grammatical elements, categories, structures, rules, etc., into texts specifically produced to demonstrate their form, function, and meaning,

c. as in b. but also followed by formal explanations and exercises" (CEFR, 2001: 116). (2012: 10).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

So, in one of the schools in the Bukhara region, an experiment was conducted to teach French grammar to students who were learning the French language. In particular, they managed to make the complex process much easier by learning grammar through text and using it in oral speech. In particular, the French language has the main verbs être and avoir and they can learn a lot about their conjugation, difference, and usage from the following text:

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A la cafétéria universitaire

- *Claire : Salut Julien ! Tu es en forme aujourd'hui ?*
- *Julien : Salut Claire ! Oui, je suis très content. J'ai eu une bonne note à mon examen de français !*
- *Claire : Félicitations ! Tu as bien travaillé, alors. Moi, j'ai étudié, mais je pense que je n'ai pas réussi l'épreuve…*
- *Julien : Oh, ne dis pas ça ! Tu as fait beaucoup d'efforts. Tu verras, tu as sûrement réussi mieux que tu ne le crois.*
- *Claire : Merci ! Hier, je suis restée à la bibliothèque pendant trois heures. Et toi, qu'est-ce que tu as fait hier soir ?*
- *Julien : Je suis allé chez mes parents. On a dîné ensemble et ensuite, j'ai révisé un peu.*
- *Claire : Tu es très organisé, dis donc. Moi, je suis rentrée tard et j'étais trop fatiguée pour réviser.*
- *Julien : Ça arrive. L'important, c'est que tu n'as pas abandonné. D'ailleurs, tu as déjà beaucoup appris depuis le début du semestre.*
- *Claire : C'est vrai. Et toi, tu es toujours motivé. C'est inspirant!*
- *Julien : Merci Claire ! Allez, on va manger ? J'ai faim, et il est déjà midi.*
- *Claire : Bonne idée ! Et après, on se retrouve pour réviser ensemble ?*
- *Julien: Avec plaisir!*

Through this dialogue, students learned to construct sentences based on the verbs avoir and être in oral speech. Because in this text they studied the following cases of these verbs:

a) phrases used with the verb être (être en forme, être content, être motivé)

b) phrases used with avoir (avoir une bonne note, avoir faim)

c) past tense verb conjugation and negative form

- J'ai eu une bonne note

- Tu as bien travaillé

- Je n'ai pas réussi l'examen

- Tu as fait beaucoup d'efforts

- Je suis allé chez mes parents

- J'ai revisé un peu etc...

d) necessary and frequently used phrases in oral speech (salut, oui, félicitations, merci, ça arrive, l'important, d'ailleurs, c'est vrai, c'est inspirant, allez, bonne idée, avec plaisir).

In addition, students participated in a survey to express their opinions on how difficult it is to learn French grammar and whether or not it is important to learn it. Based on the results of the questionnaire, the following points can be noted:

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Students consider French grammar to be difficult, even very difficult. They find it difficult to master. They often confuse it with English grammar, often considering it as a source of difficulty in acquiring French grammar. They consider it as a tool for teaching/learning French. Grammar allows them to understand how the language works. Given the importance they attach to French grammar in connection with other subjects such as literature, students would like teachers to vary the exercises in order to better grasp the grammar rule in question. Regarding the method to be adopted in class to approach grammar, students prefer the teacher; they start by giving examples that allow them to deduce the grammar rule. Others then do practical exercises.

For example: ***Le pauvre enfant***

Toujours, je rentre à la maison à cinq heures. Mais aujourd'hui, il fait un jour hivernal. Un éclair aveuglant (éclatant, éblouissant) zigzague dans le ciel. Le vent souffle violemment et une pluie se met à tomber de cordes. Sur le chemin, je rencontre un pauvre petit garçon ruisselant d'eau qui tremble de froid. Il a des cheveux frisés (bouclés) et sales. Son visage est blafard (pâle). Il a très faim. Ses vêtements sont déchirés (usés) et il est nu aux pieds. J'ai pitié de lui et je décide de l'aider. Je le prends à la maison et je le présente à mes parents. Maman est fière. Mon père est content. Depuis ce jour-là, nous sommes inséparables (liés, associés), nous jouons ensemble, nous amusons ensemble. Toujours je l'aide et une vraie amitié naît entre nous.

Through this text, students can learn the present tense conjugation of various groups of verbs, first through the text, and then further enrich and strengthen their knowledge through theoretical grammar. Finally, students recognize the usefulness and necessity of grammar despite their lack of understanding.

CONCLUSION

Grammar acquisition is fundamental to mastering a foreign language. Many educationalists give grammar a very special place: "No method of teaching French can dispense with grammatical reflection, regardless of the explicit role given to grammar in the classroom. But we don't teach grammar for the sake of learning grammar, but to acquire a certain grammatical competence, to internalize a certain grammatical knowledge in order to use the language adequately". (Osmani, M. 2009: 88). This research focused on certain aspects related to the teaching and learning of grammar in FLE classrooms. Several concepts directly related to grammar were defined. Particular attention was then paid to the role of grammar in various methodological approaches. A questionnaire was then developed to gather students' opinions and perceptions regarding the teaching/learning of grammar in the classroom. Didactic proposals were formulated to facilitate learners' acquisition

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of French grammar. The main objective of this study is to contribute to the improvement not only of grammar teaching, but also of the teaching/learning of French in French language departments in Bukhara. Several means of improvement have been proposed, including the diversification of exercises and teaching materials, the integration of fun activities, the use of ICT, the need for specialized training for teachers to better transmit grammatical rules, the moderate use of metalanguage, as well as reading as a tool facilitating grammatical understanding.

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ISSN 3030-3907