BEYOND SENTENCE TRANSFORMATION: TEACHING ENGLISH REPORTED SPEECH THROUGH ROLE-PLAY AND INFORMATION RECONSTRUCTION

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the use of role-play and information reconstruction in teaching English reported speech. Although learners often practise changing direct _____ _____ reported speech, they may struggle to use these structures in real communication. The article proposes a classroom framework based on listening, reconstructing information, reporting messages, and reflecting on grammatical choices. It also discusses assessment criteria and practical implications for English language teaching. The approach aims to connect grammatical accuracy with meaningful communication.

Keywords: reported speech, grammar instruction, role-play, information reconstruction, communicative language teaching.

АННОТАЦИЯ

В статье рассматриваются ролевые игры и восстановление информации как методы обучения косвенной речи в английском языке. Несмотря на регулярное выполнение упражнений на преобразование прямой речи в косвенную, учащиеся могут испытывать трудности при использовании этих конструкций в реальном общении. Предлагается модель обучения, включающая аудирование, восстановление информации, передачу сообщений и анализ грамматических форм. Также рассматриваются критерии оценивания и практическое значение данного подхода для преподавания английского языка.

Ключевые слова: косвенная речь, обучение грамматике, ролевые игры, восстановление информации, коммуникативное обучение.

INTRODUCTION

Reported speech is frequently used in everyday conversations, education, journalism, and professional communication. People regularly convey information originally expressed by others, adapting messages to new listeners and situations. For example, the statement “I am busy today” can become “She said that she was busy that day.”

Traditional grammar lessons often emphasize changes in verb tense, pronouns, and time expressions. Although these exercises develop grammatical accuracy, learners may struggle to report information spontaneously and preserve the original meaning. The purpose of this article is to examine how role-play and information reconstruction can connect the teaching of reported speech with meaningful communication.

METHODOLOGY

The article adopts a descriptive, practice-oriented approach based on grammar teaching principles and a proposed classroom framework. The framework consists of four stages: listening to a message, reconstructing information, reporting it in a new situation, and reflecting on grammatical choices.

The approach is intended for elementary-to-intermediate learners and can be adapted to different proficiency levels. It is a proposed teaching procedure rather than an empirically tested intervention.

DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

Grammar and communicative purpose

Reported speech requires learners to identify the original speaker, preserve essential information, and adapt a message to a new context. For example, “Anna said, ‘I live in Bukhara’” may be reported as “Anna said that she lived in Bukhara.” However, “Anna said that she lives in Bukhara” may also be appropriate when the information remains true and the speaker wishes to emphasize its present validity.

This example demonstrates that reported speech involves more than mechanical tense changes. Learners need to consider meaning, context, and communicative intention when selecting grammatical forms.

Role-play and information reconstruction

The proposed framework begins with listening activities in which students identify the speaker, main message, and important details. They then reconstruct the information and communicate it to someone who has not heard the original statement.

For example, a student hears the announcement, “The meeting will begin at ten tomorrow,” and reports it as “The teacher said that the meeting would begin at ten the following day.” This activity encourages learners to preserve the essential message while adjusting grammatical forms and time expressions.

Role-play extends this process to familiar situations, such as reporting a teacher's instructions to an absent classmate, passing on a telephone message, or explaining a colleague's request to a supervisor. These tasks give learners a practical reason to use reported speech.

After each activity, students review their language, checking pronoun references, verb forms, time expressions, and the accuracy of the reported information. This reflection connects grammatical analysis with the communicative task.

Assessment and teaching implications

Assessment should consider both grammatical accuracy and successful communication. Four useful criteria are information accuracy, grammatical control, reference clarity, and communicative effectiveness. Teachers may use the categories achieved, partly achieved, and not yet achieved to identify learners' strengths and areas for improvement.

The approach does not eliminate the need for explicit grammar instruction. Clear explanations and controlled exercises remain valuable, particularly when

learners are first introduced to reported speech. However, these activities should be complemented by contextualized practice.

Teachers should also distinguish between errors that change the meaning of a message and minor grammatical inaccuracies that do not prevent understanding. Tasks can be simplified for beginners or extended to interviews, discussions, and workplace instructions for more advanced learners.

The proposed framework provides a basis for classroom experimentation. Further research would be needed to determine whether it produces better learning outcomes than instruction focused mainly on sentence transformation.

CONCLUSION

Teaching reported speech requires attention to both grammatical form and communicative purpose. Although sentence transformation exercises help learners recognize grammatical patterns, they may not provide sufficient preparation for reporting information in real situations.

Role-play and information reconstruction offer practical opportunities to listen, interpret, report, and evaluate messages. By combining explicit explanation with meaningful communication tasks, teachers can help learners develop more flexible use of reported speech. Future empirical research could examine the effectiveness of this approach through assessments of grammatical accuracy, information retention, and spontaneous communication.

REFERENCES

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