

Rethinking Grammar

JoAnn Miller,

miller@room20.org

www.eftasks.net

Question 1

What is grammar?

Question 2

What is vocabulary (the lexicon)?

Lewis' Taxonomy of Lexical Items

- Words (book, pen)
- Polywords (by the way—bytheway, I don't know—I dunno, *ni modo--nimodo*)
- Collocations (community service)
- Institutionalized utterance
(I'll get it.., If I were you..., *Mucho Gusto*)
- Sentence frames and heads
(The fact/suggestion/ danger was...
In this paper we explore...
Por medio de la presente...)

Question 3

Where does grammar stop and vocabulary begin?

The first two of Michael Lewis' key principles

(1) Language consists of grammaticalized lexis, not lexicalized grammar

(2) The grammar / vocabulary dichotomy is invalid; much language consists of multi-word chunks.

Question 4

What do we teach?

Question 5

How many "grammar structures" that we teach are really parts of the lexicon?

Question 6

Which "structures" require "analysis"
and which are really just sentence
patterns?

Patterns or ?

What do you?

Have you ever...?

Why don't we...?

One of the major disadvantages is...

*The results of the investigation have
shown that...*

Question 7

Why can't I say *he don't* if I always hear Americans say it on the TV?

Question 8

What is more important—the correct form of a verb or knowing what the tense means and being able to use it when it's needed?

- Clerk. Yes, I know her.
- Julius. (1) What does she works?
- Clerk. (2) She works in palace downtown.
- Julius. (3) What does she do?
- Clerk. (4) Work with help people.
- Julius. (5) Are you close friend?
- Clerk. Yes, (6) she is funny.
- Julius. (7) Do she practice sports?
- Clerk. Yes, (8) she plays tennis.

Question 9

What happens if I am a beginning English speaker and I forget the -s on the verb? Won't people understand me?

Question 10

In what order are "grammar" items taught and in what order are they learned?

Question 11

What "grammar" items really need to be taught?

Question 12

How did people learn other languages before "grammar" was invented?

Question 13

How do illiterate people learn another language today?

Questions 14 and 15

Is "grammar" stored in the same place in the brain as a second language is? And if it isn't, is it at least accessible?

Question 16

How do we learn languages?

Question 17

Are all those grammar drills and practices doing more for language learning than just giving the student exposure to the language that could be given in a more pleasant way?

Question 18

If, as Michael Lewis says, the lexicon is everything, how can we teach vocabulary more efficiently and in a more interesting way?

Question 19

How do we learn vocabulary in our native language or as an advanced student in a second language?

Noticing Language

- How do we learn new lexis in our native language?
- Encourage students to **NOTICE** language
- "involves the intake both of meaning and form, and it takes time for learners to progress from **initial recognition to the point where they can internalize the underlying [form]."**

Question 20

Why did I ever start asking questions?

Thank you very much

JoAnn Miller

miller@room20.org joannmillerj@gmail.com

Twitter: jabbusch

Secondlife: Ann Mulberry

Copies of the handout are available at:

www.eftasks.net (Presentations)