

Teaching of Transformational-Generative Grammar for Developing Communicative Skills

Dr. Mangesh R. Adgokar
Assistant Professor
Department of English
G. S. Tompe Arts, Commerce & Science College, Chandur Bazar.

Abstract:

The study focuses on the perceptions of teachers and students in learning TG grammar. It is also tested the pre and post ability of the learners through questionnaire. The result will be analysis after comparison the both tests. It has been suggested that one of the causes of the lack of improvement in students and awareness among the teachers to develop communicative skills may be the present syllabi and insufficient training programme for teachers. The study based on teaching TG grammar to develop communicative skills at UG level. Therefore, the present study is an attempt to examine the relevance of TG grammar to develop the communicative skills among the students. This study was designed as an investigation of the claims of developing communicative skills of student with transformational generative grammar. It's essential purpose was to explore the effects of direct instruction in the kernel sentences of transformation generative grammar and in parallel concepts of traditional grammar upon students' performance.

Key words: Grammar, Teaching, Transformational, communication, English, TG Grammar, UG Level, develop etc

Introduction:

English is an international language, spoken in many countries both as a native and as a second or foreign language. It is taught from the primary level in school to college level in almost every country of the world. It is living and vibrant language spoken by over 300 million people as their second language. Millions more speak it as an additional language. As a rough estimate, 1000 million or one billion people around the world have some knowledge of English either as a native language, as a second language or as a foreign language. English is taught as a compulsory subject to all courses for the first year of the degree and it is compulsory for all three year to B.A., B.com., BBA, B.A. (social work) etc.,. But the researcher focuses his study only to B.A considering the scope and limitation of the topic. The course which was introduced for B.A. (compulsory English) from 2009 onward is continued and it gives basic directions to teacher for teaching the course. It includes warm up, reading, listening, speaking, vocabulary, writing, study skills, reading aloud and focus on language.

Purpose of teaching Transformational Generative Grammar:

The main aim of this study is, therefore, to understand the present scenario of grammar teaching and suggests possible way of introducing theory and practices of Transformational Generative Grammar as a new way of methodology for English as a foreign/second Language in classroom in order to improve the quality of

current English Language Teaching (ELT) in the future. The present study focuses its attention on new methods of teaching grammar basically Transformational Generative Grammar

Statement of problems:

It is concerned with examining current teaching methods of English grammar in the selected colleges and to introduce TG grammar to improve communicative skills of the students. It is the aim of the present study to envisage the possibility of raising awareness about TG grammar and its use by the learners. The present study is an experiment in the area of teaching TG grammar to assist to improve communicative competence of students. It does not claim to find a solution once and for all to the vexed question of poor communication skills in learners despite long years of schooling. It is only an exploratory study that makes recommendations which one hopes will aid teachers and students in learning grammar and developing communicative competence. The problem to be investigated would be on failure of teaching of traditional grammar to develop communicative skills in students and experimentation of TG grammar to improve communicative skills with selective students.

Signification of the present study:

In this context, this study is an attempt to help teachers as well as the learners on their understanding of Grammar to develop their communicative competence. It also enables them to examine and improve their teaching / learning English through TG Grammar. An attempt was also made to develop a pedagogic framework for the teaching of TG grammar. The present study assumes that the introduction of TG grammar to the learner certainly improves the communicative skills. The transformation and generation of new sentences will wake a confidence among the students. To reach the objectives of the study the researcher administers tests and deals with the comparative analysis of pre-test questionnaire and post-test questionnaire of 30 students instructed in traditional grammar and in transformational generative grammar.

Hypothesis:

Teaching of Transformation Generative Grammar will help the students in developing communicative skills. It will help them to improve their language proficiency. This is based on Transformation Generative Grammar of Noam Chomsky's Nativist Theory. It determines the merit of transformational-generative grammar in relation to develop communication skills among the students.

Major Objective

The main objective of this study is to examine the changes in communicative skill of the students after introducing them with TG grammar. It is hoped that this study will help to bring about changes in teaching/learning ways of grammar to develop the communicative skills of the students.

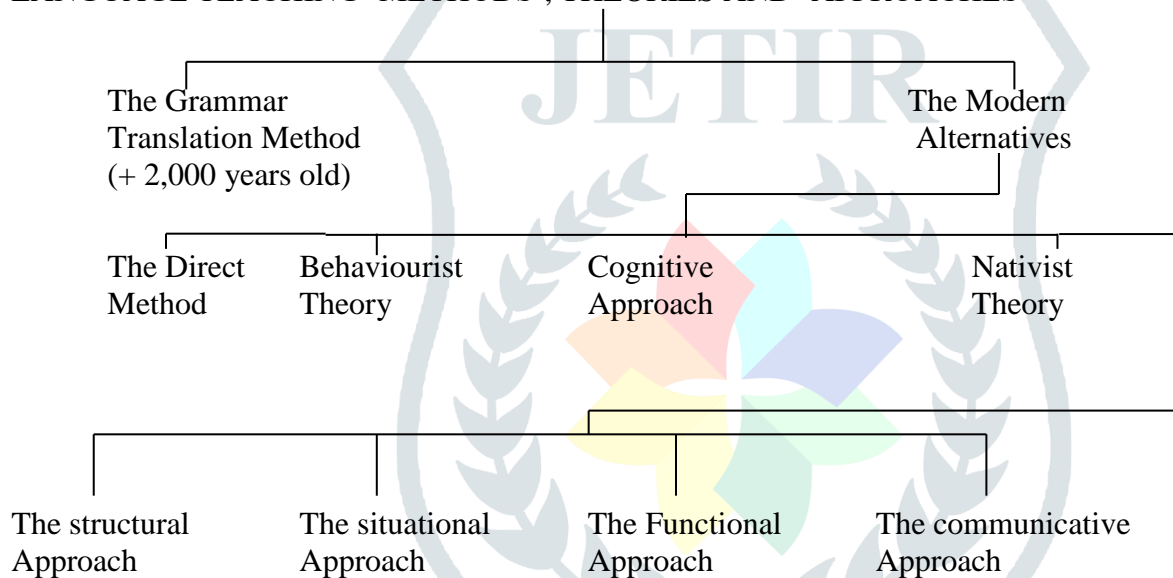
The concept of Grammar and teaching of English Grammar:

The term 'grammar' comes from the Greek word 'gramma' which meant alphabetic letter. The craft of lettering in those days in Greece was 'he grammatike tekhne' i.e. the technique of writing. The Greek considered grammar to be a branch of philosophy concerned with 'the art of writing.' The Roman in due course of time translated the Greek term as 'ars grammatica.' In medieval French the 'ars' (art) was dropped and the remaining word was 'gramaire.' In modern French 'm' was reinserted, so the modern term is 'grammaire' The

English term is derived from French. But in the term grammar included all subjects like grammar, logic, metaphysics, rhetoric or literature. Grammar is the system of rules governing the conventional arrangement and relationship of words in a sentence. Grammatical competence occupies a prominent position as a major component of communicative competence. Organizational competence is an intricate, complex array of rules, some of which govern the sentences (grammar), while others governs how we string sentences together (discourse).

Research in the field of second language learning has been extremely dynamic and enterprising in the recent decades. The numerous theories of language learning have each tried to enunciate reasons why a second language cannot be learnt with the same ease with which the mother is acquired. A better understanding of second language learning and the processes in second learning result if theories are formulated based on data generated, which account for the learning processes in a learner's mind.

LANGUAGE TEACHING 'METHODS', THEORIES AND 'APPROACHES'



Transformational Generative Grammar:

A mathematician, psychologist, sociologist, philosopher, linguist, Noam Chomsky is the most dynamic, influential and revolutionary linguist of today. He is the linguist among mathematicians and a philosopher among the linguists. He has become on the greatest masters of human thought in our age. His transformational-generative grammar has transformed the whole concept of grammar, and generated new currents of thoughtful water. The name 'transformational-generative' suggests that there are two aspect of this theory. The grammar it provides is both 'transformational' and 'generative'. Transformational suggests the transformation of one sentence to another grammatical structure, while generative suggests all and only the possible set of grammatical sentences of a language. It means Transformation generative grammar is not concerned with any observed sentences that have occurred, but rather with those that can, or could have occurred.

Chomsky's new approach to the study language is found in his book, *Syntactic Structure* (1957) which was based on his Ph.D dissertation, written in 1955 at the University of Pennsylvania under the direction of Zellig Harris. This newer grammar has gone under various names: generative, transformational, generative-

transformational, and transformational-generative. Although the term ‘transformation’ was first used in grammar by Harris, it was Chomsky who gave this idea a theoretical form. He has suggested means of correcting weaknesses of both the traditional and descriptive grammar. He points out that transformational-generative grammar gives simple rules that eliminate many of the irregularities of traditional grammar; this is the kind of gain that brings language operations into systematic and conscious form. Chomsky further states:

“A grammar of a language should at least be expected to offer a characterization of the set of objects that are sentences of this language, i.e., to enable its user to construct a list or enumeration of these utterances.’ Chomsky, Noam, Third Texas Conference on Problems of Linguistic Analysis in English (University of Texas Press, Austin, Texas, 1962) p. 125-126)

Thus, transformational-generative grammar constructs a system of rules that allows the user of language to arrange these rules in new and previously untried combinations in forming and interpreting sentences. These rules specify the structure of each sentence of the language; conscious control of the sentences underlies mastery of the language. Chomsky has defined a generative grammar as an explicit account of an ideal speaker-hearer’s intrinsic competence. This is equivalent to a system of rules that assign structural description to each of the infinite sentences of a language. Such a grammar can be considered to have attained the level of ‘descriptive adequacy.’ A generative grammar simply means that generates sentences. This doesn’t mean that it is a mechanism for producing sentences. When we say that a grammar generates the sentences of a language, we only mean that the grammar specifies or enumerates the sentences of a language and assigns structural description to each specified sentences. These two tasks are in effect accomplished simultaneously. The rules of the grammar are the structural descriptions of sentences, and these structural descriptions automatically specify the sentences of the language. That is, the sentences are specified by assigning them structural descriptions. Therefore, a generative grammar is neither a model for the speaker who produces sentences, nor a model for the hearer who understand them. It is simply a description of the various structure of sentence that can be either obligator or optional

Before presenting a model for the third level of his transformational-generative grammar, Chomsky presents his views about ‘the goals of a linguistic theory.’ In his view, the grammar of a particular language ought to meet two conditions if it is to be an adequate theory:

1. It will have to generate only sentences which are considered acceptable by the mature native speaker. He labels this goal external condition of adequacy.
2. It will have to be constructed according to a general theory of language structure – one which defines such terms as phoneme, phrase, and so on, independently, without exclusive reference to a particular language. He calls this goal the condition of generality.

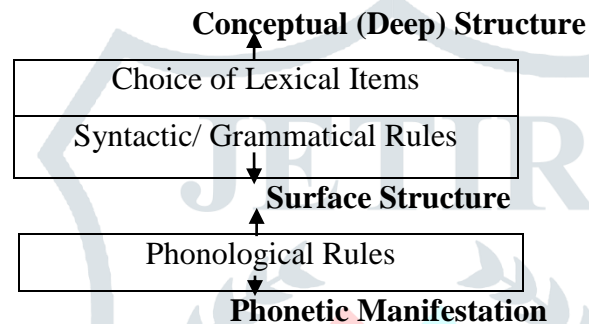
According to Chomsky’s three levels TG grammar, the sentence derivation process can be generally outlined as follows:

1. Beginning with the abstract concept Sentence, we apply all of the PS rules to construct an extended derivation. When the PS rules are exhausted, we have a terminal string whose constituents are words and morphemes.

2. Next, we apply T rules to the terminal string of the PS component of the grammar. At this point, we must perform whatever obligatory transformations are called for by the constituent structure of the string. We may or may not choose to apply one or more additional optional transformations.

3. Last, we apply whatever M rules are required to convert the string of morphemes into a string of phonemes. The final result is an actual grammatical English sentence.

The organization of a complete grammar according to the Transformational-generative grammar may be as follows:



A generative grammar that contains transformational rules is called a transformational generative grammar. A transformational rule (T-rule) operates on a given string with a given constituent structure and converts it in to a new string with a new derived constituent structure. It constructs a system of rules that allows the user of language to arrange these rules in new and previously untried combinations in forming and interpreting sentences. There are a number of transformations of sentence into sentences. It begins with number transformation, auxiliary transformation, verb-particle separation transformation, emphasis transformation, do-emphasis transformation, word order transformation, imperative transformation, negative transformation, Yes-No question transformation, there-expletive transformation, passive transformation, Wh question transformation, relative clause transformation, that-clause nominating transformation, gerund phrase nominalizing transformation, infinitive phrase nominalizing transformation, determine transformation, noun suffix transformation, etc., But one must keep in mind that transformations are considered to be of two basic types: obligatory and optional. The simplest grammar discussed by Chomsky that are capable of generating an infinite set of sentences by means of a finite number of recursive rules operating upon a finite vocabulary are what he calls finite state of grammar.

According to this model of generative grammar different types of simple sentences are accounted for by means of optional transformational rules. For example, all the following sentences are related in that they derive from the same underlying string:

1. The man opened the door.
2. The man did not open the door.
3. Did the man open the door?

4. Didn't the man open the door?
5. The door was opened by the man.
6. The door was not opened by the man.
7. Was the door opened by the man.
8. Wasn't the door opened by the man?

Of these eight sentences, the first is defined by Chomsky as a kernel sentence. It should be emphasized that non-kernel sentences, such as (2)-(8), are not derived from kernel sentences, such as (1), but from a common underlying string.

To specify a transformational explicitly, is to give the structural description of the string to which it applies and the structural change that is effected on this string. For example, the passive transformation (T-passive) applies to string having the structure NP-Aux-V-NP, and has the effect of interchanging the two NPs, adding 'by' before the final NP, and adding 'be+en' to the auxiliary. There are three aspects of sentence which are universal – syntactic structure, semantic structure and phonological structure. So a generative grammar should have three components, namely, syntax, semantics, and phonology. There are the examples of sentences that appear as having the same structure being understood differently. This shows that the structure that appears on the surface is of no consequence in understanding the meaning of a sentence.

1. The horse is too tired to run.
2. The tree is too tall to climb.

Det – N- Aux– Adv- Adj – infinitive

In sentence (2.1) the horse is very tired and so it cannot run. In sentence (2.2) the tree is very tall and so someone cannot climb it. Apart from the lexical meaning, the sentences have different grammatical meanings. So, different grammatical meanings can be expressed by the same structure. So also, different structures can express the same meaning. For example, an active sentence and its corresponding passive express the same meaning, although they are different structured.

3. Cows eat grass.
4. Grass is eaten by cows.

Different types of complementisers can be used in the same sentence without change of meaning to the sentence.

5. It is surprising that John is afraid of his father.
6. For John to be afraid of his father is surprising.
7. John being afraid of his father is surprising.
8. That John is afraid of his father is surprising.

Therefore the syntactic structure of a sentence described in terms of word classes or form classes, leaves unexpressed certain important facts about the sentence. The following two sentences can determine the sort of structural description that reveals the ideal speaker-hearer's perception of them.

9. I persuaded a specialist to examine John.

10. I expected a specialist to examine John.

Consider also the following transforms.

11. I persuaded John to be examined by a specialist.

12. I persuaded John to be examined by a specialist.

If sentences (9) and (10) have the same structure, then the same transformation should produce the same change in both. Here we find that there is meaning difference between (9) and (11), but (10) and (12) have the same meaning. This means that sentences (9) and (10) have different structures and are to be described differently. In (9), 'specialist' is subject of 'examine' and object of 'persuaded'. In (11) 'specialist' is subject of 'examine', but not 'object' of 'persuaded'. 'John' is the object of 'persuaded' in (11). In (12) also 'specialist' is subject of 'examine', but not object of 'expected'. The object of 'expected' is the phrase 'John to be examined by a specialist.'

Therefore although the two sentences (9) and (10) appear to have the same structure on the surface, they actually have different structures which can be represented as

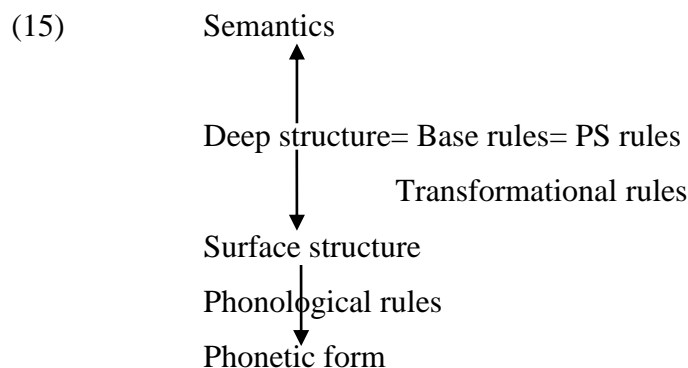
(13) NP- V- NP- S

(14) NP - V- S

That is in (9), after the NP 'a specialist', there occurs the transformed form of the sentence 'a specialist will examine John', with 'a specialist' deleted. In (10), the transformed form of the sentence 'a specialist will examine John', without 'a specialist' deleted, occurs as the object of 'expected.' The meanings of sentences (9) and (10) are explained in terms of the structures (13) and (14) respectively. At the same time we cannot exclude the structure that appears on the surface, because this explains the physical form of the sentence, namely, N- V – Det – N- infinitive – N.

Grammar should explain both meaning and physical form. So a sentence should have two kinds of structural descriptions on the syntactic level – one explains the meaning and the other explains the physical form. The former is called deep structure, and the latter, surface structure. The deep structure underlies the surface structure. Or, the deep structure is transformed into the surface structure.

As mentioned earlier, a transformational generative grammar has three components – syntax, semantics, and phonology. Syntax has two parts- one is the base subcomponent that generates the deep structure of sentences. The deep structure is the basis of the sentence which can be generated by phrase structure rules. The other part of syntax is called the transformational subcomponent. It transforms or converts the deep structures, by the application of transformational rules. Therefore the base of syntax is a system of phrase structure rules, and the transformational part is a set of transformational rules. The semantic component interprets the meaning of sentences in terms of their respective deep structures, and the phonological component interprets the phonetic form of sentences in terms of their surface structures. Thus, syntax connects semantics with phonology.



Of the three components of a transformational generative grammar, syntax alone is productive. The other two components are only interpretive, one interpreting the meaning of sentences and the other interpreting their phonetic form, in terms of structures generated by syntax. This explains the centrality of syntax in a generative grammar.

Chomsky's generative grammar this is 'not a large collection of neatly organized examples, supplemented with comments about these examples and hints as to how to construct similar ones. Nor is it a discussion of efficient and compact notations, categories or construction types... A generative grammar is a system of explicit rules that assign to each sentence of phones... a structural description that contains all information about how this sequence of phones is represented on each of the several linguistic levels. (Chomsky: 1971:174-5) Further this grammar is a device to generate all and the only grammatical sentences of a language, is not only explicit but also precise, and is full of observational, descriptive and explanatory adequacies. Chomsky's idea of transformation generative grammar can be thought of as the act of transforming one sentence into another, the deep structure into surface structure. Whereas the active sentences are 'kernel' sentences, passives are the transforms. These transformations can develop the communicative skills and competence of the learners of second language.

FINDING, SUGGESTIONS AND LIMITATIONS:

The aim of the study was to examine the teaching of transformational-generative grammar to develop communicative skills at UG level. In this paper, a comprehensive and integrated picture of the study, based on the conclusion drawn from the finding of the study is presented. Implications are presented followed by suggestions for further research. It also incorporates information gathered informally from the teachers who answered the questions. The purpose of the research was to discover the relative effectiveness of two methods in the teaching of grammar of many specific items of sentence structure for developing communicative skills in students: (1) a grammar method, with stress on Teaching of Transformational generative grammar concepts, principles combined with attention to thought; (2) a traditional grammar translation method, with emphasis on the expression of ideas with no teaching grammar whatsoever. Conclusions of the study were:

- i. The students in the transformational-generative grammar classes showed more knowledge of grammar than those in the thought classes.

- ii. Through general pre-test about their previous knowledge of grammar and post-test covering the six designed lessons on transformational-generative grammar, the post-test on transformational-generative grammar classes showed superior results in sentence structure.
- iii. The post test result shows comparative better than the pre test.
- iv. The pre-testquestionnire response of the students about grammar and post-test questionnaire have tremendous changed.
- v. The study shows that there is improvement among the student after intervention of the design lessons.
- vi. The result of the study further shows that students's communicatie competence /skills have shown no improvement after an exposure to new textbooks in the university for five years.
- vii. Personal experience and observation reveals that most of the teachers are not able to teach new ways and methodology of grammar teaching.
- viii. Teachers are not keen observer of students errors.
- ix. Few teachers do not know the basic concept of Transformational Generative Grammar and Few of them never listen the words Transformational Generative Grammar.
- x. Very few teachers read books apart from the syllabus to teach grammar and they do not know more than two grammar books.
- xi. Most of them prefer to keep books with them while teaching the grammar parts.
- xii. The teachers do not give exercise to the students.
- xiii. Mismatch between the requirement of the students and the types of activities that students are expected to do in the classroom as well as in viva-voce.
- xiv. The annual evaluation methods of the learners is not satisfied.
- xv. The teachers role play the most important part in improving communicative skills of the students.
- xvi. The materials will reflect the issues for which language is used in natural communication, but the material used by the teachers is insufficient for the needs of the students.
- xvii. Traditiaonl langauge testing systems which seems to inappropriate to achieve the target.
- xviii. The students are weak in the four basic skills of English Language (LSRW)
Teaching and learning methods are insufficient in the curriculum to develop communicative skills.
- xix. The annual exams pattern does not really serve the purpose to develop communicative skills in student and even it does not really tests the students' knowledge of language usage and application.
- xx. The researcher lessons increased awareness about the development of communicative skills through Teaching of Transformational Generative Grammar
- xxi. The lesson of the researchers provided opportunities for practice of TG Grammar

Limitations:

The finding of this study could be more generalizable, if it had been extended to other colleges and a few more regions in the university domain. The numbers of the student for the experiment have been restricted to only 20 as it was difficult to administer questionnaire, interviews and pre-test and post-test to more students.

The teachers for a detailed understanding were also restricted to 4 only to be more convenience. This study was limited to techniques like questionnaire, classroom observation, informal discussion, interviews and pre-test and post-test. A pedagogic intervention using the framework to teach transformational-generative grammar could have given better insight if the research himself developed it rather than to adopt from some others study, but due to time, the researcher adopted it for his research study.

Conclusion:

Since the study was limited to a small sample group, generalizability of the finding can be enhanced if a similar study was carried out in various college extending the scope of the study. A similar study can be carried out on comparative basis between rural and urban students, between the students of one degree to another degree. A descriptive study could be conducted in a similar context. Even the same kind of study can be done in the tribal areas. The research of teaching of transformational-generative grammar can be carried out for specific skills as speaking, writing, reading and writing. The list of the research is exhaustive and extensive depends on the scope of the study. The paper is dealt with and discussed the major findings of the study, implication and suggestion, limitation, problems of the researchers to implement the research and recommendation for the further study.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Agnihotri, R. K. and A. L. Khanna eds. *English Language Teaching in India*, Sage Publication, New Delhi, 1995
- Bateman, Donald R., and Frank J. Zidonis, *Effect of Knowledge of Generative Grammar Upon the Growth of Language Complexity*, Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio, 1964, project 1746.
- Borg, S., *Teachers' Theories in Grammar Teaching*, *ELT Journal*, 53/3 1999.
- Chomsky, Noam, "A Transformational Approach to Syntax" *Third Texas Conference on Problems of Linguistic Analysis in English* (The University of Texas Press, Austin, Texas, 1962)
- , *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax* (The Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, Cambridge, 1965).
- , *Current Issues in Linguistic Theory* (Mouton & Company, The Hague, The Netherlands, 1964).
- Christensen, Francis, "A Generative Rhetoric of the Sentence" *Teaching English in Today's High Schools: Selected Readings*, Dwight Burton and John S. Simmons, Editors (Holts, Rinehart, Winston, In c., NY, 1965)
- Corder, S. P., *Introducing Applied Linguistics*, London: Penguin Education, 1973.
- Cullen, R., *Teaching of grammar as a liberating force*, *ELT Journal*, 62/3, 2008.
- Davis, Marianna w., *Transformational Grammar and Written Sentences*, Mouton, The Hague, Paris, 1973.
- Freeman and Larsen, *Techniques and Principles of Language Teaching*, Oxford, 2000.
- Fotos, Sandra, *Structure-based interactive tasks for the EFL grammar Learner*, New Jersey, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2002.

Gupta, D., *ELT in India: A Brief Historical and Current Overview*, Asian EFL, Journal. 7/1, 2005.

Harmer, J., *The Practice of English language Teaching*, England, Pearson Longman, 2007.

Hiept, H. P., *Communicative Language Teaching: Unity and with diversity*, ELT, Journal, 61/3, 2007.

Hymes, D. H., On communicative competence, in J. B. Pride and J. Holmes *Sociolinguistics Selected Readings*, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1972.

Mitchell, R. *Theories of Second Language Learning*, London Edwin Arnold, (1998)

Mellon, John, *A Grammar for English Sentences: The Basic Sentence Types and their Simple Transforms* (Culver Military Academy Press, Culver, Indiana, 1954).

Pooley, Robert, *Teaching English Usage* (Appleton –Century-Crofts, New York, 1946)

Thomas, Owen, *Transformational Grammar and the Teacher of English* (Holt, Rinehart Winston, Inc.; NY, 1965).

