



COGNITIVE TEACHING OF THE PROGRESSIVE ASPECT IN THE ESP IN AUTOMOBILE ENGINEERING COURSE AT THE TODOR KABLESHKOV UNIVERSITY OF TRANSPORT

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Abstract: *The paper written in the perspective of cognitive instruction relevance treats essential language learning strategies in teaching the progressive aspect within the ESP in automobile engineering course at the Todor Kableshkov University of Transport. The material not only examines the periphrasis theoretically in terms of its underlying characteristics, but it also focuses on teaching procedures applied to promote learners' understanding, and, consequently, to enhance students' knowledge of the category. Implemented approaches are aimed at the formation of relevant mental representations of the progressive, its components, functions and related forms. Improved language awareness in progressive aspect, and in associated concepts of tense, aspect, progressive, non-progressive, perfectivity, imperfectivity, temporariness, permanence, habituality, non-habituality, stativity, dynamicity, is indispensable, leading to reduction of learning hardships within the periphrasis and also within a set of related categories, in general English as well as in ESP courses. For example, learners are prone to erroneously implement the -ing / -ed words, the verbids, formally and semantically interconnected with the periphrasis. Students likewise tend to mistakenly use tense and aspect, failing to discern properly the above enumerated concepts. Exemplifying instances are in line with contemporary specialized technical sources in English. Conclusion is made with respect to cognitive teaching beneficial outcomes.*

1. Introduction

Many EFL and ESP learners, likewise the ones involved in the ESP in automobile engineering course at the Todor Kableshkov University of Transport, experience hardships with respect to correctly using progressive / simple categories in a number of contexts. Frequently, aspectual markers, among which *now, at the moment, currently, presently, nowadays* or *usually, often, rarely, on a regular basis*, referring either to momentaneity, progressiveness and situation alteration, or, to stability, lack of change and habituality, are mistakenly interpreted and implemented. What is more, even though many learners are familiar in general with the existing dependencies between the continuous periphrasis progressiveness, related characteristics and aspectual markers, as well as between corresponding markers and simple categories stability and uniformity, and, thus successfully

combine *now* and the like with the periphrasis, and *regularly* and the like, with the simple, there still remain implementation problems, the essence of (non-)progressivity, and related aspectuality / temporality categories in general, not being understood. Thus, for example, *stative* verbs, in their basic acceptations, are incompatible with the progressive; some of them can though be compelled to significantly vary their values [1], when used with the periphrasis; typical stative verbs can by no means be modified by the category. On the other hand, the above mentioned adverbial progressive markers do not necessarily require ubiquitously a progressive category application as they cease to be *typically progressive* under specific circumstances, the whole utterance referring to long-term habituality and lack of change. Why must we strive to remedy the situation while teaching the ESP in automobile engineering course? There are two essential reasons: communication process failures, which may involve significant misunderstanding, should be prevented [2], [3], and, also, improved use of the category influences beneficially related forms implementation [4], due to enhanced comprehension.

The current paper will adhere to the following layout. Problem issues having been described, ideas as to error sources will be formulated and then, remedial strategies with respect to cognitive teaching will be put forward and considered. Finally, conclusion as to cognitive teaching results will be formulated. For conciseness and also, the past and other progressives displaying rather similar to the present periphrasis values, analysis and approaches will be limited to the present continuous.

2. Progressive aspect use sources of error

Error analysis reveals that basic error source in progressive periphrasis application resides in the low degree of grasping of its essence in terms of form and semantics, along with the weak understanding of related temporality / aspectuality concepts, amongst which, tense, aspect, progressive, non-progressive, perfectivity, imperfectivity, temporariness, permanence, habituality, non-habituality, stativity, dynamicity. Many ESP (and EFL) learners have acquired limited, if not wrong, to a great extent, inadequately built mental representations (MR)¹ with respect to the progressive and the above mentioned concepts. Thus, for example, a number of students estimate the continuous only refers to a current activity, having built almost no concept of process stages development or progressiveness, not only at the level of *markers*, but also of individual verb *aktionsart* and of the entire *utterance* aspectuality value, all these levels, functioning in compatibility and agreement.

3. Cognitive teaching approaches to remedy problem situation

Remedial measures to be taken with positive outcome proved by theory and practice [3], [5], [6], [7] need to be in terms of MR appropriate construction through the appropriate LLS implementation in the purpose of LA improvement. Fundamental strategies implemented are cognitive and metacognitive ones [3], [8], these being mutually connected, complementary, and this way, together pertaining to a larger group of cognitive approaches [8].

3.1. Cognitive strategies implementation

Crucial cognitive LLS to be examined here below are: (a) presenting the progressive periphrasis in terms of form / semantics and its teaching by means of related sub strategies; (b) concisely revealing, in a learner-friendly way, essential temporality / aspectuality concepts

¹ Rf. [5], [6], [7] as to the essence of MR, their construction at all levels of language description, not only at lexical one, and as to the beneficial role of MR building improvement through language learning strategies (LLS) teaching in language awareness (LA) enhancement, and thus, in language learning process.

features; (c) applying comparative teaching (CpT) of the progressive and –ing / –ed– verbids; (d) conducting contrastive teaching (CT) of the categories.

(a) Form / semantics presentation of progressive periphrasis

The progressive aspect values can be examined as logical corollary of the periphrasis formation, which consists of the *present participle*, predicatively linked to the subject through the most existential by meaning verb *to be* (rf. [4]). The present participle referring to processuality², in combination with *to be*, reveals an inherent *locative* meaning corresponding to *be in the process of doing something* [4]. As Cohen [9] states the “*I am in learning*” construction, counterpart of the French “*je suis en train de manger*”, was contemporary English progressive periphrasis predecessor [9]. Nowadays progressive locativity, equally supported by Comrie [10] is in line with Cohen’s [9] conception of progressive “concomitance” value, referring to considered category present connectedness.

Based on the cognitive sub strategy of progressive pattern observation, progressive category semantics are easily understood through accessible to learners ESP elucidation examples, the procedure being performed at two levels – componential analysis and study of the periphrasis, as a whole, in terms, of locativity³ and, thus, progressiveness. Pattern study and examination can be carried out through exemplifying utterances, such as the following ones:

- 1) “Which instrument shows that *you are indicating* to turn left or right? / “Which instrument shows how often *the engine is turning over*?”⁴ [11]
- 2) “We’re *launching* the model with a 3.7 and a 4.2-litre petrol engine.” [11]
- 3) “Other *car makers are* also *starting to* take aluminium seriously.” [11]
- 4) “A leading *car manufacturer is recalling* 70,000 models in the UK ...” [11]
- 5) “... *car makers and suppliers are developing* occupant-sensing systems.” [11]
- 6) “Automobiles *are facing* difficult times with challenges such as global warming, higher crude oil prices, and traffic accidents.” [12]
- 7) “Although *the major manufacturers are losing* interest in battery vehicles, *the new low speed vehicles and electric bikes are making* headway ...” [13]
- 8) “Most major vehicle manufacturers *are* also **currently** *making* developments in fuel cell vehicles.” [13]
- 9) “... efficiencies of solar photovoltaic cells [in automobile manufacturing] *are rising all the time* whilst their *cost is decreasing*.” [13]
- 10) “Your *mid-range model is now entering* the fourth year of its ... life cycle.” [11]
- 11) “... global *takeovers, mergers and partnerships are* **constantly** *reshaping* the car industry.” [11]
- 12) “When you arrive at the service station, *the spare parts are* **already** *waiting* for you.” [11]
- 13) “... technological *developments* for ... *are becoming* **increasingly** *important* for the whole auto industry.” [12]
- 14) “Mitsubishi ... *is* **now** *manufacturing* the sensors ... commercially.” [12]

To carry out pattern study, learners are referred to elucidation questions, such as “Which are the periphrasis components?”, “Can you read them aloud or underline them specifically?”, “What are they characterized by?”, “How is the present participle formed?”, “Can you think of any other forms it is similar to and which ones?”, “Does the present participle refer to stativity or dynamicity?”, “Can you make any conclusions as to the basic

² Rf. as to present participle values, in comparison with –ing –adjective and gerund, in cited authors in [8], [4].

³ Rf. [10], [4] as to locativity / progressiveness connection and [10] on spatial / temporal transpositions, underlying progressive essential and transpositional values.

⁴ Exemplifying instances italics, underlinings and bold characters are mine in examples all through the paper.

value of *be + present participle* periphrasis?”, etc. Students are guided into more enhanced understanding of examined category essence, *stativity* and *dynamivity* concepts having been understandably explained, this approach also facilitating (b) cognitive LLS (rf. 3.1.) implementation.

The above examples can be successfully used not only in pattern observation and, based on this, in progressive periphrasis formula elucidation, but also at further presentation stages, leading to enhanced LA of general, more specific and transposed semantic values.

ESP learners are asked to participate with ideas, based on the above exemplifying utterances and elucidation questions answers, in the periphrasis formula expression: *activity doer + finite linking verb to be + verb-ing (present participle) = imperfectivity, dynamivity, progressiveness with specific time reference, stage process, limited duration, situation alteration and, based on these, transposed values (repetitive events, planned future events)*⁵.

A cognitive sub strategy contributing to progressive category MR further elaboration is connecting periphrasis characteristics with corresponding examples and providing appropriate for learners explanation. Thus, for example, we can state that imperfectivity and dynamivity features are shared by all examples ((1) – (14)); current time reference is explicitly present in (8), (10), (14) and implicit across many others, with respect to context; some utterances may be interpreted as planned future events illustration in specific context ((2), (3)); stage processes are rather noticeable in (4) – (9), (11), (13), (14) utterances as a result of *plurality* (e.g. *models, systems, challenges, manufacturers, vehicles, bikes, developments, cells, takeovers, mergers and partnerships, developments, sensors*), additionally contributing to the construction of the concept of a non-homogeneous and gradual process; stage process concept becomes more intense when explicitly corroborated by intensifying adverbials such as *all the time* (9), *constantly* (11) and *increasingly* (13); process repetition value, frequently combined with habituality, though with no negative connotation, as usual, can be illustrated through both instances, in (1) and through (12), stemming from specialized knowledge about driving and engine functioning (1) and, from certainty expressed by “When you arrive ...” (12).

(b) Revealing essential temporality / aspectuality concepts features

This sub strategy implementation is most often closely intertwined with the previous one due to progressive periphrasis specific aspectual essence. Depending on the teaching circumstances, individual elucidation procedures may vary, though necessarily accompanied by exemplifying contextualized ESP instances. *Tense / aspect* concepts are accessibly revealed in terms of *deicticity / (im)perfectivity, ways of process development* (rf. to quoted in [4] authors); *(non)progressiveness* is presented in terms of *dynamivity (alterations, situation non-homogeneity), activities, accomplishments, achievements and statives* [1]; *(im)perfectivity* is considered through *(in)completeness; temporariness / permanence* – through concepts of *change / lack of change* valid for a longer time period; *(non)habituality* – across *process regularity*. Due to periphrasis MR more advanced elaboration by this strategy use, learners tend to more adequately implement the examined category and grasp aspectual differences between “*At the moment* your product range *consists* of a compact, a limousine, a large limousine and a convertible” [11], “*You now have* a joystick, steering-by-wire, braking-by-wire” [11] and the progressive in ex. (8) above.

(c) Applying CpT of the progressive and –ing / -ed – verbids

⁵ Rf. as to imperfectivity [4] and cited authors in it, imperfectivity, progressiveness at specific time of reference [14], imperfectivity and dynamivity combination [15], limited duration stemming from dynamivity [1], stage events [16], change susceptibility [17], planned events - considered in development [18], repetitive events [19]; [14], [15], [16], [18] and [19] are referred to in [1].

CpT, a powerful cognitive strategy, can be implemented in progressive periphrasis MR elaboration through presenting to learners, by means of appropriate illustrative utterances analysis, similarities and differences between the present participle, an essential periphrasis component, greatly determining its values, and related categories⁶ in terms of: (a) **diathetic affiliation** (*active - present participle and -ing adjective, passive - past participle and -ed adjective*), (b) **activeness degree** (*present participle (highest activeness), -ing adjective (lower activeness), gerund (lowest activeness), past participle and -ed adjective (absence of activeness, presence of passiveness)*) and (c) **aspectuality** (*-ing verbids - progressiveness, -ed verbids - perfectness*). Thus, categories permeability [8] elucidated, ESP students not only improve their LA, but also better differentiate in terms of form / semantics between “steering wheel”, “The driver *is steering* the car along the road” or “This model *steering* has been greatly improved”; “constantly *increasing* performance”, “*increased* performance”, “*Increasing* engine performance leads to better fuel consumption”, “Engineers *are increasing* this model fuel performance”.

(d) Conducting CT of the progressive and related categories

CT of the progressive and related forms can be performed through En ↔ Bg (and /or French) translation of exemplifying utterances, like the ones above, aimed at LA rising by means of better grasping of functional equivalents values. Frequently, adverbials such as, “сера”, “постоянно”, “постепенно”, “поэтапно”, “в скоро време” and verbs, e.g. “планира се”, logically appear in equivalents, along with imperfective verb aspect or “нсв. вид”; French equivalents quite often involve markers, among which, “être en train de + infinitif”, “être occupé, e à”, “graduellement”, “peu à peu”, “pas à pas”, “envisager de”, etc.

3.2. Metacognitive strategies implementation

Metacognitive strategies, interrelated with cognitive ones (rf. [3], [8]), represent specific questions to learners to assist their awareness of problem issues and easily grasped material, along with potential reasons for studied categories comprehension quality, this way facilitating students in setting their own adequate learning objectives; these questions answers are evidently precious to lecturers as well, leading them into more efficient teaching approaches not only in ESP, but also in EFL / ESL.

4. Conclusion

The implemented cognitive procedures within the ESP in automobile engineering course contribute to MR elaboration of progressive aspect, in general, and of present progressive periphrasis, to related categories more adequate grasping, in the context of acquired basic understanding of essential tense / aspect concepts, tightly related to (non-) progressivity, and, thus, to examined forms more successful use. LA enhancement also preconditions improved ESP (and EFL) studying motivation, along with better learner autonomy and learning responsibility.

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⁶ Rf. to quoted authors in [8] as to present / past participle, -ing/-ed adjective and gerund values.

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КОГНИТИВНОТО ПРЕПОДАВАНЕ НА ПРОГРЕСИВНИЯ АСПЕКТ В КУРСА ПО АСЦ В АВТОМОБИЛНАТА ТЕХНИКА ВЪВ ВТУ „ТОДОР КАБЛЕШКОВ“

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***Ключови думи:** когнитивно преподаване, езикова осъзнатост, стратегии за чуждоезиково изучаване, прогресивен аспект, време, аспект, автомобилна техника*

***Резюме:** Докладът, разработен в светлината на значимостта на когнитивното обучение, третира основни стратегии за езиково изучаване, прилагани при преподаването на прогресивния аспект в рамките на курса по АСЦ в автомобилната техника във ВТУ „Тодор Каблешков“. Материалът не само разглежда основните характеристики на перифразата в теоретичен план, но и се съсредоточава върху техниките на преподаване, прилагани с цел стимулиране на разбирането от страна на обучаемите и, следователно, повишаване на познанията на студентите по категорията. Използваните подходи целят изграждането на адекватни ментални репрезентации относно перифразата, компонентите ѝ, функциите и свързаните с нея форми. Подобряването на езиковата осъзнатост в областта на прогресивния аспект и на отнасящите се към него концепти за време, аспект, прогресивност, липса на прогресивност, перфективност, имперфективност, временност, постоянност, обичайност, липса на обичайност, статичност, динамичност, е належащо, тъй като то води до редуциране на трудностите при усвояването на перифразата и също така на множество свързани категории в курсовете по общ английски, както и по АСЦ. Например обучаемите са склонни да използват погрешно –ing / -ed думите, неличните глаголни форми, формално и семантично взаимосвързани с перифразата. Студентите също така често си служат с времената и аспекта неправилно, тъй като не отличават добре по-горе изброените концепти. Илюстрационните примери са в съответствие със съвременните специализирани технически източници на английски. Заключението третира ползите от когнитивното преподаване.*