

**TOPICAL PROBLEMS OF
LINGUODIDACTICS AND
TRANSLATION STUDIES**

**AKTUÁLNE PROBLÉMY
LINGVODIDAKTIKY A
TRANSLATOLÓGIE**

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Collection of Scientific and Methodological Papers

AKTUÁLNE PROBLÉMY LINGVODIDAKTIKY A TRANSLATOLÓGIE

Zbierka vedeckých a metodických článkov

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Collection of research and methodological papers is intended for researchers, students, postgraduates and doctoral students investigating the issues of linguodidactics and translation studies.

TEACHING AND USING THE “THE THE” STRUCTURE

Students should gain a good command of English. To express themselves with facility, clarity and elegance students of English should practice its use daily, Involving different grammar phenomena and rich lexis.

Whereas those perennial headliners such as the present perfect continuous, reported speech and question tags never seem to struggle for the limelight, other lesser known but equally important structures will be barely mentioned.

- The more I see you (the more I love you)
- The more you can justify your opinion, the more entitled you are to it
- Popular playground saying.

Q: ‘What is the difference between your dog and your wife?’

A: ‘The later you get home, the happier your dog is to see you’.

I feel that this piece of grammar is underrepresented in course books and resource books. That is shame because without it learners come out with statements such as:

- ‘How much more English you speak, least embarrassed you have’. Manuel waiting to say, ‘the more English you speak, the less embarrassed you feel’.
- ‘How much more I listen it, more I like’. Felipe talking about the new Keane album.
- How much more late you arrive at home, more happy your dog is for to see you’. Sara recalling the above joke. As a starting objective, it may be enough if we can get our learners to remember to include the two the’s while producing the structure. This should cvertainly reduce instances of miscomprehension.

How to teach the ‘the the’ structure

Here is an activity that can be used to consolidate learners’ awareness and understanding of the “the the” structure once they have been introduced to the semantic and grammar of it.

Write the following unfinished sentences on the blackboard, your students copy them down and complete them in any way they like.

The more opinions you have...

The more you know...

The more you chase money...

The longer I live...

The richer your friends...

The more sand that has escaped from the hourglass of our life...

Offer grammatical help and then allow students compare their answers.

Let students know they have been given quotations and that they now have a chance to correct them with their own sentences. Photocopy the following seven cards and cut them out.

The less you see

The harder it is to catch it

The more beautiful life becomes

The more they will cost you

The more brain you will have to use

The clearer we should see through it

Quickly stick these cards up around the classroom. Students then go around the sentence gallery, attempt to match the answers pre-printed on the cards on the wall with the unfinished sentence ‘beginnings’ on the board, and copy down the complete sentences. Once this has

been done, go over the answers, ask each student to choose the quotation that he/she connects with most and invite them to say why.

The best way to teach any structure with the complexity of the “the the” structure is to wait until your students try to use it (through speaking or writing). As soon as this happens, throw your net at it and catch it like a butterfly (or rather, just take a mental note of).

When you have drawn your students’ attention to and collected between four and six “the the” structures (over different ways) you can do a reactivation activity. Firstly, make your students a spaghetti match exercise that looks something like this:

The later you get home...	...the meaner they are.
The older I get...	...The happier your dog is to see you.
The more English you speak...	...the more I love you.
The more money people have...	...the more I like it.
The more I listen to it...	...the less tolerant I become.
The more I see you...	...the less embarrassed I feel.

Then

1. Get students to match the sentence halves.
2. Have students translate all structures into their own language on a separate piece of paper.
3. Confiscate the original match sheets and see if they can translate their L1 sentences back into L2 (in pairs perhaps).
4. Let them correct their mistakes by looking back at the original match sheets.
5. Drill as much as possible.
6. Pair up students and have them recite the structures from memory to each other. Student A has the sheets and student B doesn’t. A reads out sentences in L1. B recites back in English. A then takes the teacher’s role as the ‘corrector’. Roles reverse.

Conclusion

The ‘the the’ structure is just one of many that often seem to take the back seat. Standard grammar syllabuses are discriminatory in selecting the structures that should be addressed in a course. This is inevitable, however. There is simply far too much grammar and not enough time for everything to be dealt with.

If we bear this in mind, we can see the benefits of an emergent approach to language teaching. If we address and deal with the language that arises naturally in class through speaking and writing, we ensure that the most important stuff gets covered. With comprehension as a guide, we can focus in on what needs to be worked on.

Whatever aspect of the language you take, it is quite important to use the “the the” structure in describing characters, people, nature as well as political events, even countries. It enriches the vocabulary of students and makes their speech picturesque, vivid and brilliant.

Sources:

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