

Three Methods of Teaching Post-Modification Forms

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This article attempts to explain and discuss how post-modification items are taught in three different methods: Graded Direct Method, Oral Method, and Oral Approach. Specifically, it focuses on three forms of post-modification that are supposed to be taught in Japanese junior high school: participial phrases (e.g. “the boy playing the guitar,” “the house built in 1985”); contact clauses (e.g. “the book I bought yesterday”); and relative clauses (e.g. “the man who saved the albatrosses”). Special focus is given to the order of introduction of the post-modification forms in these approaches.

文部科学省検定中学校英語教科書には、指導すべき5つの後置修飾の形が登場する。本稿ではそのうち3つ、すなわち、分詞句（例：the boy playing the guitar, the house built in 1985）、接触節（例：the book I bought yesterday）、関係節（例：the man who saved the albatrosses）による後置修飾が、代表的な3つの教授法（Graded Direct Method, Oral Method, Oral Approach）でどのように指導されることが想定されているか議論し考察する。特に、各指導法における後置修飾の指導順序に焦点をあてる。

1 Introduction

In the current Course of Study, the official curriculum guidelines for junior high schools set by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT, hereinafter referred to as “The Ministry of Education”), revised in 2008 and implemented since 2012, particular attention is given to “the differences between English and Japanese as found in word order and modifier usage” in the treatment of language materials. In fact, the sentence “The differences between English and Japanese as found in word order and modifier usage should be taught” was newly added to the Course of Study in this latest revision. The annotated Course of Study also states that it is necessary to keep in mind the differences between English and Japanese when teaching post-modification forms such as prepositional phrases, present and past participial phrases, and contact clauses.

In junior high school English textbooks authorized by the Ministry of Education, there are five forms of post-modification that are supposed to be taught: prepositional phrases (e.g. “the book on the table”); infinitival phrases (e.g. “something to eat”); participial phrases (e.g. “the boy playing the guitar,” “the house built in 1985”); contact clauses (e.g. “the book I bought yesterday”); and relative clauses (e.g. “the man who saved the albatrosses”).

There are six series of English textbooks for junior high school students authorized by the Ministry of Education, and in these textbooks, the contact clause, the relative clause, and the post-modification by present and past participial phrases have been historically presented in the

following order:

New Horizon

1966	participial phrase → contact clause → relative clause
1969	participial phrase → contact clause → relative clause
1972	participial phrase → contact clause → relative clause
1975	participial phrase → contact clause → relative clause
1978	participial phrase → contact clause → relative clause
1981	participial phrase → contact clause → relative clause
1984	participial phrase → contact clause → relative clause
1987	participial phrase → contact clause → relative clause
1990	participial phrase → contact clause → relative clause
1993	participial phrase → contact clause → relative clause
1997	participial phrase → contact clause → relative clause
2002	participial phrase → contact clause → relative clause
2006	participial phrase → contact clause → relative clause
2012	participial phrase → contact clause → relative clause

New Crown

1987	relative clause → contact clause → participial phrase
1990	relative clause → contact clause → participial phrase
1993	relative clause → contact clause → participial phrase
1997	relative clause → contact clause → participial phrase
2002	relative clause → contact clause → participial phrase
2006	participial phrase → contact clause → relative clause
2012	relative clause → participial phrase → contact clause

Sunshine

1987	participial phrase → relative clause → contact clause
1990	participial phrase → relative clause → contact clause
1993	contact clause → relative clause → participial phrase
1997	relative clause → contact clause → participial phrase
2002	participial phrase → contact clause → relative clause
2006	participial phrase → contact clause → relative clause
2012	participial phrase → relative clause → contact clause

Total English

1977	participial phrase → relative clause → contact clause
1978	participial phrase → relative clause → contact clause
1981	participial phrase → relative clause → contact clause
1984	participial phrase → relative clause → contact clause
1987	participial phrase → relative clause → contact clause

1990	participial phrase → relative clause → contact clause
1993	participial phrase → relative clause → contact clause
1997	participial phrase → relative clause → contact clause
2002	participial phrase → relative clause → contact clause
2006	participial phrase → relative clause → contact clause
2012	participial phrase → relative clause → contact clause

One World

1987	participial phrase → contact clause → relative clause
1990	participial phrase → relative clause → contact clause
1993	relative clause → contact clause → participial phrase
1997	relative clause → contact clause → participial phrase
2002	participial phrase → contact clause → relative clause
2006	participial phrase → contact clause → relative clause
2012	participial phrase → contact clause → relative clause

Columbus

1993	participial phrase → relative clause → contact clause
1997	participial phrase → contact clause → relative clause
2002	contact clause → relative clause → participial phrase
2006	contact clause → relative clause → participial phrase
2012	participial phrase → contact clause → relative clause

Table 1: Presentation Orders of Post-Modification Forms

This paper is intended as an investigation of methods of teaching these three post-modification forms: participial phrases, contact clauses, and relative clauses. Of course, there is a myriad of teaching methodologies available to teachers, and each teacher should devise the most appropriate strategies for his or her students; indeed, it is no exaggeration to say that there are as many teaching methods as there are teachers. It is, however, not feasible to examine every extant example. In this paper, therefore, we will discuss three well-known teaching methods and the order of introduction of the post-modification forms in those approaches. We will refer to Ito et al. (1976) for teaching plans suggested by each methodology.

2 The Graded Direct Method

The Graded Direct Method, more commonly known as GDM, was developed by I. A. Richards and C. M. Gibson during the 1940s to 1960s. This methodology has three distinctive characteristics: (1) grading of items, (2) direct method (3) voluntary/spontaneous utterance by students (Ito et al., 1976). In this methodology, post-modification forms should be taught as follows.

First, relative pronouns are introduced. The first relative pronoun to be taught in GDM is *which*. Teaching *which* as the first relative pronoun is not common, since junior high school

textbooks usually do not present *which* before the other relative pronouns. In order to follow this method, therefore, it is necessary to devise ways to reconcile it with the order of introduction found in the textbooks. Moreover, it should be noted that the relative pronoun *which* is associated with the interrogative *which* in this method, such as in the example below.

T: [holding Student A's book in one hand and the teacher's own book in the other] Which is your book, A?

PA: [pointing to A's book] This is my book.

T: Good. This is your book. It is in my right hand. [holding A's book high]

...

T: Which is my book?

PB: [pointing to the teacher's book] That is your book.

T: [pretending that he cannot understand which] This book? This book?

P: [in chorus] Which is your book?

T: The book [looking at one book and the other] which [showing he understands which]

Oh, the book which is in my left hand is my book.

(Ito et al., 1976, p. 859)

Subsequently, the relative pronoun *who* is introduced in a similar way. Here again, the use of *who* as a relative pronoun is introduced in relation to its use as an interrogative. The objective use of *which* is supposed to be taught after the subjective use of *which*. Ito et al. (1976) fails to specify whether the relative pronoun *who* or the objective *which* immediately follows the subjective *which*. Meanwhile, the contact clause is treated as a relative clause where the relative pronoun is omitted, and is therefore introduced after reviewing the objective relative pronoun *which*. The post-modification by present participial phrases is also introduced as a phrase in which relative pronouns are omitted. Therefore, "The girl who is writing a letter is Jane" is followed by "The girl writing a letter is Jane." The same strategy is applied to the introduction of post-modification by past participial phrases ("This is the letter which was written by Jane." → "This is the letter written by Jane.") (Ito et al., 1976).

Thus, in the Graded Direct Method, the subjective relative clause precedes the objective relative clause, and the contact clause and post-modification by present and past participles are regarded as contracted relative clauses.

3 The Oral Method

The Oral Method was advanced by Harold Edward Palmer, who came to Japan in 1922 and established the Institute for Research in English Teaching the next year.

As opposed to the Graded Direct Method, in the Oral Method, the relative clause is introduced on the basis of the modification of the present participial phrase; that is, "a boy who is playing tennis" is taught as having the same meaning as "a boy playing tennis" and leads to phrases that cannot be expressed by present participles (e.g. "a boy who can play tennis"). In other words, <noun(person)+present participle> (e.g. "a boy playing tennis") is introduced at the

outset, <noun(person)+who-clause(including present progressive)> (e.g. “a boy who is playing tennis”) is subsequently taught, and it ultimately leads to the relative clauses with verbs that are not present progressive form (e.g. “a boy who can play tennis”). The relative pronoun *which* (subjective) is introduced after the relative pronoun *who*. It should be noted, however, that the objective *which* is introduced after the contact clause, though it appears that the method does not present rigorous evidence for whether teaching the relative clause first and regarding the contact clause as the omission of the relative pronoun is better or not. The contact clause is taught in a setting where post-modification by past participial phrases has already been taught; that is, when being taught “a book Mr. Brown wrote,” the student taps into his or her knowledge about “a book written by Mr. Brown.” It follows that the Oral Method takes the stance that the post-modification by participles should be taught prior to the relative clause. In summary, in the Oral Method, the post-modification by present participles precedes the subjective *who*, followed by the subjective *which*; and in the meantime, the post-modification by past participles is applied in teaching the contact clause, which is in turn followed by the objective *which*.

4 The Oral Approach

The Oral Approach was one of the most prevalent methods of teaching English in Japan in the 1960s and 1970s. This approach was developed after the Second World War, and its origins are rooted in the teaching method used by the American army during the war. Behaviorist psychology and structural linguistics provided evidence to support the Oral Approach, which advocates repeated oral work called pattern practice. It places special emphasis on differences between the target language and first language and regards language learning as a process of forming habits by means of reinforcing responses to verbal stimuli.

In the Oral Approach, the relative pronoun *who* is introduced in a deductive way. At the beginning of this teaching plan, the author notes, “When introducing new items, it is not always appropriate to induce general principles from particulars like many examples and contexts. Sometimes, the deductive approach works” (Ito et al., 1976, p. 853, my translation). Thus, the relative pronoun *who* is introduced by combining two sentences:

Here is a girl. She can ride a horse.

Here is a girl who can ride a horse.

(p. 853)

As is also the case with the Graded Direct Method, the subjective forms are followed by the objective forms in this methodology.

It is worth noting that post-modification by past participial phrases is presented prior to post-modification by present participial phrases in the Oral Approach. The former is presented as being based on the passive voice, and therefore it is presupposed that the passive voice has already been fully understood by the learners. In the example of blackboard demonstration shown in the teaching plan, the pronoun and the verb “to be” are parenthesized as in the following:

This is a letter. (It was) written by Betty.
This is the letter written by Betty.
(Ito et al., 1976, p. 1495)

Since post-modification by past and present participles is not supposed to be taught on the basis of relative clauses, it is not clear which is supposed to be taught first in this methodology.

5 Conclusion

As discussed throughout the paper, in the Graded Direct Method, the subjective *which* is introduced first among relative pronouns—which is incongruent with the order found in most textbooks—and in association with the interrogative *which*. The subjective relative clause precedes the objective relative clause, and the contact clause and post-modification by present and past participles are regarded as contracted relative clauses. In other words, all three post-modification forms are treated consistently by taking advantage of students' knowledge of relative clauses. In the Oral Method, the post-modification by present participles precedes the subjective *who*, followed by the subjective *which*; and in the meantime, the post-modification by past participles is applied in teaching the contact clause, which is in turn followed by the objective *which*. In other words, the Oral Method takes the position that the post-modification by participles should be taught prior to the relative clause. In the Oral Approach, the subjective relative pronoun *who* is first introduced, deductively and by combining two sentences, and objective pronouns follow. We should note that the post-modification by past participial phrases is presented prior to post-modification by present participial phrases.

Questions remain regarding which of these three methodologies is the most effective. Furthermore, there is a need to illuminate whether these approaches are congruent with the treatment in the textbooks. As implied in the Introduction, the Course of Study suggests that post-modification forms are very challenging for Japanese students. In order to formulate a sound theory of teaching post-modification forms, such research is indispensable.

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