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"FOCUSING ON DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE GRAMMAR STRUCTURE OF ENGLISH AND CZECH
IN THE PROCESS OF TEACHING CZECH DEAF & HARD-OF-HEARING UNIVERSITY STUDENTS"

PRESENTED BY: MARIE DOLEZALOVA

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>> Hello, thank you so much for coming today for the presentation of Marie Dolezalova. She is giving her presentation on the differences between the grammatical structure of English and Czech.

I'm here to facilitate the workshop, and after she is done with her presentation, if you want, there is a paper hardcopy evaluation form, or you can fill something out online as well. Please enjoy the workshop.

>> MARIE DOLEZALOVA: Okay. Hello. I am a teacher of English a faculty of philosophy at the University in Prague, the Czech Republic. I have been involved in teaching English to deaf and hard-of-hearing since October of last year. At this presentation I shall be looking at English sentence structure, and the way to teach it to deaf and hard-of-hearing students.

First, I should compare written Czech and English sentence word orders which are very different. So my presentation might be pretty specific, or might look pretty specific, especially in the beginning. Nevertheless, in my presentation I would like to show that there can be a universal method of teaching the English structure regardless of language.

I want to stress that our first-year students have usually very little knowledge of English when they come to us from high school. They have been learning English for about four years or so, but we usually have to start with them from scratch.

They have a lot of problems with mastering English structure as it is very different from written Czech, and, of course, Czech Sign Language has also a completely different structure from the written English.

So I should first explain the differences between written Czech and English. Then I shall show the method which can be used for teaching the English structure. And then in the end's tie to explain how this method can be applied.

This is the title.

So, first, I would like to introduce the differences between Czech language and English. As you might know, or not, Czech language is a

synthetic language which means that it has suffixes and prefixes, whereas English is an isolating language.

These are the main differences between Czech and English. The Czech language has gender, inflexions, different tenses, conjugation, and also something that's called aspects.

For example, when we talk about gender, gender of the nouns must be learned word by word. So there is an example. I give here examples days of the week. So you have neutrum, some feminine, and some masculine. And you have to learn it. So it's pretty difficult.

And then about inflection. You have to -- in the Czech language you have to add the appropriate suffix to a noun, or objective pronoun or number according to the patterns for the respective gender.

Which means actually that for masculine nouns you have 6 patterns, three or animate, and 3 for inanimate nouns, which makes, if you counted, which makes like because we have 7 cases, so it's 42 different suffixes.

For feminine nouns you have 7 patterns, and that makes 28 different suffixes, and for neutra, you have four patterns which is also 28. So it's a lot to learn.

About tenses. As far as tenses are concerned, we have only three. So that's much easier than in English. We have just past, present, and future. So as you can see in Czech you have one word, but in English you can express it with six different tenses.

So we are lucky. This is easier.

For present tense you have one word, and in English you have three different -- you can use three different tenses.

And for future, again, you have one word and four different tenses in English.

About conjugation with the words, it depends on the person and the number, and if it's singular or plural. So, again, some examples I would like to give you. So as you can see, the endings, they change, suffixes change according to the person and number. So, again, you have to learn it.

The very quite important thing in Czech is also aspect of a verb. We talk about verbs that are perfective and imperfective. About perfective verbs they are one-time, finished, action. Whereas imperfective verbs it's supposed to be continuous action. And, again, it's formed by adding a prefix to the verb. So you actually add prefixes and suffixes and it changes the meaning completely. So this is an example. Again, some example of Czech and English. Maybe imperfective aspect is more like a continuous form but it's not always so. So it's pretty much difficult, for example, for a foreigner to learn these aspects. Even for Czech people sometimes.

Now I come to the core of my presentation, which is a word order. Again, there are many differences in English and Czech word order. Czech word order is more flexible as you'll see. For example, in declarative sentences, in English, you have subject, verb, and object usually. If it's not a deviated word order.

But in Czech you could have all possible word orders. Like you can say Charles came to me. Came to me Charles. To me came Charles. Or you don't talk about Charles, but somebody was like "he" you don't even have to express it. So you just came to me. Which is pretty difficult for students to understand and then to switch into English. That's why I am interested in word order and structure.

In Czech it's very flexible.

Questions usually have something like verb, which means auxiliary verb, subject, verb, and object.

In Czech, again, you can have all possible combinations. Some are more common and some are less, but all are possible, which means like students usually get confused.

And in negative sentences you, again, have subject, and then, for example, auxiliary verb which is negative verb and object. And in Czech, again, all possible combinations. The other problem Czech language has in comparison with English is that Czech can use negation this a sentence many times. But the result is sentence with a negative meaning. So you have the example. In Czech you can say nobody no knew, and this is how you put it in Czech, you put a negative to the verb, nothing about nobody, and it's a negative sentence. So that's why my students face so many problems when learning English.

Okay. So now I come to the method. I decided because I know my students are pretty visual, they remember more signs and symbols than words. So I decided to use a kind of symbols. These symbols can carry some information apart from symbols. They can represent something. Also, because my students are University students and they usually study linguistics, so I use some linguistics and morphologic terms. "S" means subject, and it can represent like these examples, a boy, dog, cats. So subject is represented by triangle.

Verb is represented by a rectangle, and, again, examples like "like," "sleep," "go," and "run."

Now, if we talk about subject-verb form, so you just put these, and there is an example of "I run." Because I believe for my students it's easier for students in general it's easier to remember symbols and visual things.

Okay. This triangle represents this "V" and "A" and+ means it's an auxiliary verb and it's positive. So there are, again, examples. I am not sure if they are all -- if these are all.

So actually these symbols carry a lot of information so you know it must be positive. You know it must be auxiliary verb.

So if we put it together, it looks like this. There is the example. I have run. He is skiing. So it makes this picture.

I use the same symbol for negative auxiliary verbs. Again, there are examples of these auxiliary verbs, and there is minus, of course.

And, again, it fits into the same pattern. You can see it instead of plus there is minus. So that's the basic symbol that you can use.

For questions, I use, again, I'm using the same symbol, only the mark changes, plus, minus, and then you have question. So, again, example, the "H" means like. So do you ski? Has he run? When did Peter come? So you see you put it in front, with a question mark, you put it in front of the subject.

Okay. These are objects, okay? And you can have indirect, direct, and prepositional object. These signs like O3, O4, OP, they mean that it's object. And in Czech I use it for Czech students, so 3 means like dated. Because we have cases, so it's like third and fourth case, and "P" means, of course, prepositional. So it means that you need some preposition.

So let me give you some examples. For example, Peter gave me a book. So you draw a triangle, rectangle, and then you have these two objects.

I usually use different colors as well so that they can recognize it.

This is another example. With prepositional object, "We listened to the radio." So they learn when they have declarative sentences they must be usually a subject at the beginning followed by a verb, and then you have object. That's proper word order if it's not deviated.

Now, adverbs, or I call them adverbial determinations. I use different symbols. They are not so -- they are not basic symbols, because I use basic symbols just for subject and verb because they are the most -- like they are the stones of the sentence.

So for place I use this sign. For time it's kind of representing a moon. And for manner it means like how. So it represents kind of like a flag or whatever. And "P" means place, "M" means manner.

So if we get this structure, so you have this example, "Yesterday I went with Jim to the pub."

So it means that they know that you can have time in front of the subject, but then you must have subject and a verb, and then object probably comes. And you usually put another adverbial at the end. So that's the structure.

Okay, this is another example. We have negative auxiliary verb. Like when you have luckily, he didn't kill me. So, again, they learn that sometimes you can put adverbial determination in front. And then it's followed by in declarative sentences it's followed by subject, and then auxiliary verb which must come in front of the verb, and then object.

That's basically all I wanted to show you. I would now like to explain how this method can be applied. Because I believe it can be universal. And I can use it with my students, but it can be applied or modified to not just postsecondary, but secondary and primary schools alike. So the kids can learn it. At University you can use it in online or you can use it in tests, or you can use it in class. So it means, for example, you build a sentence and you put the symbols together. Or you just have symbols and you write some sentence. Or you have symbols and you have to put them in the correct order, or there are symbols and something is wrong and so they have to put it in the correct order and write an example.

This is just to teach word order. It doesn't say much about like prepositions and determinators. But I believe that this is the basic structure. And when students start learning English usually it takes like half a year or even longer for them to become more confident with the structure.

And it can be used, you can make signs or models, and you can use it on a white board so when there are children and they make mistakes you can say, "Okay, put this in the correct order. Is this in the correct order? How would you put it, and is it correct?"

So that's basically how you can learn it. And as far as Deaf and Hard-of-hearing students are concerned, I believe that it has better impact than written English. I mean because they can see some pictures, they can see some symbols, and they can attach these symbols to words.

So that's basically all I wanted to tell you. I know if you have any questions, I know that similar but yet different system was developed at Gallaudet University, but it deals more with every word, or every part of speech. This is more about structure. I feel that it's very important to learn it. I don't know about your languages, but in Czech language it's really, really important because it's so different. So I believe if it works for Czech students, it can work for other students because English is pretty -- English structure is pretty set.

So that's why created this system, okay?

Do you have any questions?

>> Audience member: Well, in Sign Language the normal thing is object-subject-verb, and I didn't see that in Czech at all. That used in Czech?

>> MARIE DOLEZALOVA: Object-subject-verb.

>> Audience member: It wasn't on your list there awhile ago.

>> MARIE DOLEZALOVA: I think that it was there, I mentioned it. You mean in declarative sentence?

>> Audience member: Right, uh-huh.

>> MARIE DOLEZALOVA: Object-subject-verb. Let me think about it. No, no, you usually don't say it in Czech. I think it's partly influenced by German, the Czech language, I mean, because you have like -- you usually try

to push the verb to the beginning of the sentence because that carries the information that's important.

I think that you could use it, but it's very -- you wouldn't normally. It would sound a bit strange.

>> Audience member: What about adjectives?

>> MARIE DOLEZALOVA: What do you mean adjective?

>> Audience member: You didn't have a symbol for an adjective.

>> MARIE DOLEZALOVA: You are right. This is just a basic strike tour. And with adjectives it's different because usually I like to teach it differently because there is a special order. So there is a special -- like this is such the core, and then you add to it more and more. But that's a good question. Thank you. Thank you.

>> Thank you so much for coming to this presentation by Marie. We've learned a lot today this was a really good one. Thank you so much for presenting to us.

And as I said before, if you would like to fill out a hardcopy version of the evaluation, please see me, and then you can fill it out and give it to me before you leave. Or if you'd rather, you can fill something out online. We have that option available to you as well. Thank you!

There is a question from the audience about PowerPoints. Can we get a copy of the PowerPoints somehow? Do you have copies? So maybe through e-mail you could make these available?

>> Audience member: Is it online on the web?

>> MARIE DOLEZALOVA: It's not online. But you can put it online. If you go to the website of our University, and the faculty of philosophy and arts, I can put it there for to you see if you want.

>> Audience member: That would be great. Thank you.

>> Okay. Thank you. I guess that's it.

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