EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES FOR TEACHING GRAMMAR

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Grammar is the system of a language. People sometimes describe grammar as the "rules" of a language; but in fact no language has rules. If we use the word "rules", we suggest that somebody created the rules first and then spoke the language, like a new game. But languages did not start like that. Languages started by people making sounds which evolved into words, phrases and sentences. No commonly-spoken language is fixed. All languages change over time. What we call "grammar" is simply a reflection of a language at a particular time [4, p.155].

Brown defined grammar as a set of rules that show how words are used in a language through both writing and speaking. It sets a standard for how words or groups of words and sentences should be arranged together *[1, p.78]*. Grammar rules allow for better comprehension as they help to eliminate issues of miscommunication, which will arise without a standard *[3, p.123]*.

Larsen-Freeman stated that grammar is the way in which linguistic units such as words and phrases are combined to produce sentences in the language. It considers the meanings and functions the sentences have in the overall system of the language *[7, p.154]*. As an important element of language grammar has a big role in making up learners' language skills.

Grammar shows the rules that inform how people use language (e.g., written or spoken English, body language, or visual language) to communicate *[9, p.94]*.

Grammar is a system or the rules of a language. **Fortune** is of the opinion that grammar as the business of taking a language to pieces, and people must admire how it works *[6, p.236]*.

Ellis also underlines that grammar is a system of rules that show us how words are combined to produce sentences *[5, p.75]*.

In addition, **Larsen-Freeman** outlines grammar "an internal mental system", "a set of prescriptions of language forms", "a description of language behavior", "the major structures of a language", and finally "rules for instructional and assessment purposes " *[9, p.123]*.

In linguistics' point of view, grammar is a set of rules speakers use for generating and interpreting language. From this point of view, grammar is not learned by instruction and conscious training. **Rutherford** defines grammar as the language element, specially the words, phrases and clauses that build sentences *[8, p.178]*.

Grammar is a framework for the analysis of languages. It can motivate students and improve their skills. Nowadays, due to widespread use of tests, programs, students have a big possibility to familiarize with correct grammar *[2, p.65]*.

Good Grammar knowledge is usually a sign of education but poor communication skills will lead to the formation of negative impressions in the interlocutors. In addition, correct writing and speaking give you confidence and credibility.

IDENTIFICATION OF RULES AND STRUCTURES

White believed that a teacher should identify the rules and structures of English grammar and provide practice in their use. The rules which have a greater frequency in use should be taught first and emphasized by a teacher and the rules of peripheral nature which represent the exceptions, irregularities, and anomalies should be taught at a later stage when a learner acquires competency in the use of core rules and structures *[10, p.234]*.

The teacher must teach rules and help the learners in learning a language. The aim of teaching grammar is to provide the necessary exposure to the learners in the learning of a language. *Thornburry* underlined that teaching only rules without providing sufficient practice in their use will not contribute to the learning of a second language *[9,p.120].* The rules should be taught simultaneously with their uses. The teacher must use interesting and effective strategies. He can use games to introduce new structures or reinforce what you've just examined, or both!

Ellis, Corder and *Fortune* suggested some examples of effective strategies of teaching grammar. Some of them are: *Board Race, Learning through writing, Pair visuals with communicative opportunities, Create context through role-playing.*

The strategy,, Board Race"

Divide your students into small groups and have them congregate in different corners of the room. Place index cards with clearly-written past tense irregular verbs in a common space. Say a word out loud in the present tense, and have students chat with their peers to figure out what past tense verb they need to locate on the board. Have students send one representative to the board to grab the word before the other teams do *[5, p.132].* This strategy is effective.

Pair visuals with communicative opportunities

Fortune underlined that visuals can serve as wonderful aids to teach English grammar, spelling out rules for students explicitly (deductive teaching) or demonstrating the use of a particular structure in context and asking students to notice structures and draw their own conclusions about the rules (inductive teaching) *[6, p.99]*. If you're using a deductive approach, you might show your students a simple chart with two columns for the simple present and the simple past tenses. You'd explicitly tell students that when a verb is regular in the present tense, you simply add an -ed (or just the -d, if the base form ends in 'e') to make it past tense.

An inductive approach might be that you show sets of images with short sentences underneath narrating what's happening in the images. For example, the first picture in a set might show little boy sitting with a bowl of ice cream, with the subtitle "This boy likes ice cream." The second picture in the set might show little boy again, this time with ice cream all over her face and an empty bowl. She has a satisfied grin on her face and the subtitle reads "The boy liked her ice cream a lot." Students would see that the past tense is indicated by the -ed ending (and the empty bowl).

Another effective strategy is ***Create context through role-playing.*** A teacher has to create opportunities for his students to engage with language in scenarios that mimic real life, or better yet, have them create and perform those scenarios themselves through role-play! Debrief on language use after their performances.

Brown outlined that the strategy *Learning through Writing* encourages the students to explore the language through creative writing and reading, picking up correct grammar usage along the way *[1, p.211]*. An emphasis is placed upon language acquisition over language learning, as learning grammar by memorization only does not work well and that students are better able to recognize and understand grammatical rules when lessons are more interactive.

Another useful strategy for teaching grammar *is* **I Spy With My Little Eye.** It is effective for beginners. Use the phrase "I spy with my little eye, something beginning with…" followed by the first letter of a noun that is in the room. The other students have to guess what the word is *[7, p. 10]*.

Subject: Nouns

Example:

Student 1 "I spy with my little eye something beginning with 'c'."

Student 2 "Is it a child?

Student 1 "No."

Student 3 "Is it a copybook?"

Student 1 "Yes!"

An interesting game *is Whose Is It*? It improves the pupils' grammar skills.

Subject: Possessives

Give an object (e.g. a book) to a student and ask the others whose it is ("his", "John's", etc). Repeat this a few times and then move on to splitting the class into groups so that this time it is now "theirs" / "ours" etc.

Interview

Pair the students up and one can be the interviewer while the other can be the interviewee. The aim is to find out what the person being interviewed "likes to …" After they have a few answers, students swap roles [4, p.157]. This is designed to test "to-infinitives" so make sure the students use the "to verb" format in their answers.

Example:

"What do you like to eat?"

"I like to eat fruits."

Delegation

Split the students into groups of three: the boss, the boss's assistant, and the worker. The boss needs to get the assistant to ask the worker to do a task [8, p.164]. *Subject: Causative Verbs*

Example:

Boss: "Have Student C stack the documents."

Assistant: "Stack the documents."

Worker: "Ok."

Rotate this so everybody gets a turn.

You can also have the students use "get" after a few repetitions. (Make sure to explain that "get" is more casual.)

The strategy **Simon Says**

This is a great one for getting the attention of younger learners when teaching verbs. Say the sentences "Simon says…" and then add a phrase after it such as "jump up". The students then have to do what you say *[5, p.178]. Subject: Verbs and Verb Tenses*

Example:

"Simon says 'stand up'"

*Class stands up

"Simon says 'clap your hands'"

*Class clap their hands

Asking Concept Questions (Checking Understanding).

Write a sentence on the board containing the grammar structure. For example, this sentence uses the past simple: *He visited his grandparents last week*. Next, ask the students concept questions which check their understanding of when the action happened.

ex. *T: Is he at his grandparents now?*
- *SS: No.*
- *T: Was the action in the past?*
- *SS: Yes.*

Using Objects (Presenting the Meaning).

Sometimes using objects can work as quickly as anything to present the meaning *[7, p.144]*. For example, if you want to present the comparative form (… is bigger than …), the simplest way is to find two objects and contrast them. Alternatively, ask two students to stand up and compare their height to produce a sentence like: John is shorter than Tim. Write the sentence on the board and underline the comparative form so the students notice the construction.

Based on the article, we can conclude that:

Developing an appropriate understanding of grammar is essential today, as it allows pupils to communicate their ideas effectively verbally and in writing. One way to make learning grammar fun involves using effective strategies like *Board Race, Pair visuals with communicative opportunities, I Spy With My Little Eye, Create context through role-playing*

These effective strategies improve the pupils' writing skills.

These strategies have many advantages. First, they improve pupils' self-confidence in speaking and writing. These strategies help pupils develop the ability to structure their writing creatively and dynamically convey their ideas better, which ultimately leads to greater clarity of thought. Second, they develop Creative Thinking Grammar. It requires pupils to think critically and creatively about communication, an essential skill for career success.

The use of these strategies makes the class more active and alive.

The use of these strategies could attract the students' curiosity in process of learning grammar.

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