

INNOVATIVE TECHNIQUES FOR TEACHING GRAMMAR

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ABSTRACT:

Grammar is undeniably an essential component of effective communication (Vijayalakshmi, 2014). Ellis suggests that grammar has kept on holding a central place in English as Foreign Language (EFL) teaching.

However, both native and second language speakers get difficulties in learning English grammar since there are a great number of intricate, obscure, and exceptional grammatical rules. EFL students find this aspect of language the most difficult.

KEYWORDS: grammar, innovative, techniques, teaching, foreign, language, knowledge, songs, games, efl, multimedia, context

INTRODUCTION:

The grammar lessons at the secondary schools have the unfortunate reputation of being boring. They rely on traditional presentation methods, using the textbook and generalized fill-in-the-blanks exercises. The study of grammar has only enhanced knowledge about the English language but does not facilitate learners of EFL on how to use the language. This theoretical knowledge of the rules of grammar, however, is not going to be of any help for the learners. Instead, the students should be taught to understand how to use the grammar rules in a communicative situation.

Innovative Techniques of Teaching English Grammar Teaching of grammar refers to methods, i.e. systematic ways of grammar teaching, that are used to help learners develop competence in an unfamiliar grammar.

The following presents some innovative ideas that will help EFL teachers reinvent their grammar teaching methods and make their classes interesting.

Using songs and poems

Songs are one of the most enchanting and culturally rich resources that can easily be used in language classrooms. Songs provide an alternative classroom activity. They are resourceful tools to enhance the learners' abilities in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Learning English grammar through songs provides an enjoyable and relaxing classroom atmosphere for the learners. They may encourage extensive listening, and inspire creativity and use of imagination in the relaxed classroom atmosphere.

MAIN PART:

Utilization of songs for grammatical points can be revealed through the following popular songs. They are as follows:

- 1) Let it be by Beatles – present tense
- 2) Yesterday by Beatles – past tense
- 3) Sailing by Rod Stewart – present progressive

Similar to songs, poems have an enormous linguistic value as they provide authenticity and cultural views. Poems contextualize a grammar lesson effectively. They serve as an effective tool for practicing a specific grammatical structure, in particular structure, such as jazz chants (Graham, 1978)

Furthermore, the students can work in groups and share ideas on certain projects, but include solo activities that encourage them to find their own unique meanings of a particular grammatical pattern in song lyrics, poems, stories, and other literature as well. (Jandhyala, 2018)

The students' creativity can be developed through 1) writing another verse of lyrics maintaining the same mood and style as the original which can be done individually or in groups, 2) writing a response from the point of view of the person the song is being sung about , or any other protagonist, 3) having the learners plan a music video for the song in groups, 4) writing a diary entry for a character in the song to examine the thoughts and feelings that inspired the story being played out in the lyrics.

Heyer (2019) provides an example of teaching the future tense with "gonna". It uses two songs, "I'm gonna love you" (Meghan Trainor, 2015) or "When I'm gone"(Anna Kendrick, 2012). The official videos for both songs are appropriate for most classrooms. However, they show romantic kisses, so previewing is advised. In addition, a reference to whiskey in the lyrics may make this song inappropriate for some classes , otherwise, both the song and video are classroom-friendly. Both songs provide examples the use of "gonna" in informal speech to substitute for going to in future tense sentences only. The song "I'm gonna love you" repeats the phrase I'm gonna 21 times; the song "When I'm gone" repeats the phrase you're gonna 20 times. To teach grammatical item, the so-called Moving Line activity as presented below gives students multiple opportunities to practice this construction. First, ask several students, "What are you gonna do after class?" to model the exercise and make sure students understand how gonna is used. Then follow the steps below. This low-prep activity facilitates a lot of interaction in a short amount of time and gets students up and out of their seats. It is highly recommended. The Moving line activity can take several steps. They are:

- 1) Divide the class into two groups of equal numbers. Students form two lines facing one another.
- 2) Students ask the students facing them, "What are you gonna do after class?" The student

answers, "I'm gonna_____. What are you gonna do after class?" The student then answer, "I'm gonna_____." The one line shifts position so that each student has a new partner.

3) Students exchange the same information with their new partners.(having students recite the same lines with each partner, like actors in a play, keeps the activity-literally-moving along. The activity is not boring because students hear new information from each partner.) then they shift positions again.

4) The students in the moving line continue to interact with new partner and then move on. The activity concludes when the students in the moving line are back in their original positions.

USING GAMES:

Using games is a very interesting method of teaching for students , in particular young ones. They generally tend to like and play games better than sitting down to study. Traditional methods dictated for study and games to be separate but the fact remains that the students tend to be more interested in playing games rather than sitting down to study. Learning with games will usually be engaging for the students.

The games can be utilized to learn grammar. To understand the meaning of a particular structural pattern and to use them in day to day life is a very difficult task and games can help the students overcome this difficulty. Games like scrabble, housine etc. have been designed for this specific purpose. These games are just based on words and help the students develop their vocabulary as well. In addition to these very simple games can be played to help improve the word database of the students such as simple dictation competitions , synonym competitions , word puzzles, anagrams and hangman.

USING STORY TELLING:

Everyone loves a story. Stories form a very integral part of teaching a language. They

provide a realistic context for presenting grammar points. It can be used for both eliciting and illustrating grammar points. Storytelling is traditional and pervasive in almost all cultures. Storytelling is one of the versatile techniques to be employed as a convenient and natural grammar teaching tool. It is the technique that best makes the EFL learners stay focused as well as the one they enjoy most. Grammar points can be contextualized in stories which are engaging and entertaining. At this point the learners can help create stories and impersonate characters in them. They will also enjoy learning about grammar through the stories.

Using other media:

Media helps to kindle the learning interest of learners. The computer tools like internet , audio or video clips help learners to interact or listen to the native speakers , this increases the morale of learners. Using video , audio clippings in the classroom is a stimulus for students to communicate about anything interesting. Multimedia sources like songs , movies, TV series , magazines , newspapers play a very vital role in improving language. Such sources can be used it is very important that understand that fact so that they to help the students improve their language. But great precautions must be taken. They use colloquial English which is , in general , gramatically wrong and do not use that form of the language in their everyday usage. However, the students can very often engage with songs and movies. Through them , they can understand the meaning of expressions , usage of tools of the language like comparsons , personifications ets.

CONCLUSION:

To conclude , English grammar has been taught through chalk and board method. It has to be taught in innovative and creative way that it will help the students not just to speak and write and listen but to communicate through various engaging activities that emphasize form-

meaning, mappings for day-today communication. That is the purpose of the teaching of English grammar and that is what it must be used for. Innovative methods, therefore, help in bringing a change and most of the times for the better. It helps the students learn faster and in an efficient, interesting and an interactive manner and it is the teacher's responsibility to leave the traditional methods for the students benefit. Using innovative methodologies in teaching English grammar in the classroom will pave a positive way to stidents to learn the language meaningfully. The suggestions for further study, the grammar emphasis with a limited scope may be more effective; input enhancement may be more effective with grammatical features that are less essential for communication; output enhancement may be more effective with grammatical features that have many sailent lexical forms; and learners in EFL contexts can benefit more from grammar instruction.

10 techniques for teaching grammar

- 1) Boardwork presentations
- 2) Using the students and you , the teacher
- 3) Using realia
- 4) Dialogue building
- 5) Dictation
- 6) Dictogloss

BOARDWORK PRESENTATION:

For a quick and easy presentation of new language , the board is the obvious resource to exploit. Start by building a context. For example, a traveller's suitcase covered in stickers of places she's been provides an easy -to-establish context for the present perfect for experiences. Make sure you include on your board the affirmative , eg: a sticker saying "Mexico" elicits she's been to Mexico; the negative eg: she has not been to China; and question forms and short answers , eg: has she been to Malaysia? Yes, she has/ No she hasn't. Underline or use a different colour to

highlight the structure, ie has been, contractions I've, she's, etc., aspects of pronunciation.

1) Using the students and you, the teacher:

A direct context for language can often be found in the lives and experiences of the people in the room. Personal contexts immediately show how applicable the grammar is, and can also be more memorable than stories of people from outside the students' worlds. Throughout the book we suggest activities where students talk about themselves, their experiences, their lives, their opinions. Student photos can also be a great resource. Most students will have photos on their mobile phones that they can share with each other to support any number of practice activities.

2) Using realia:

Bringing objects into the classroom or using the objects you find in the classroom can help bring a grammar point to life and create a physical memory hook. Realia can be used to create a context for the target language. We can use such things as a bag of rice, a glass of water, a balloon and a tea bag to introduce the concept of countable and uncountable nouns.

3) Dialogue building:

This collaborative technique involves setting a scene and, with the students' help, writing a dialogue on the board including the language you want to focus on. A great way to push students towards memorising the language is to gradually erase the text, word by word, until the students are repeating the dialogue from memory.

4) Dictation:

With grammar points where the written form is already familiar to the students, but where meaning needs to be explored in more depth, a quick and effective means of introducing

the language is to dictate model sentences to the class. Dictation immediately gets students working with the language and tests listening skills and spelling, as well as grammatical knowledge. It also promotes conversation management skills such as asking to clarify and repeat: Sorry, could you say that again, please?

5) Dictogloss:

In a dictogloss, the teacher has a text prepared to dictate to the class, but instead of dictating it slowly to ensure students write a faithful copy, they read it at a more natural speed two or more times. Prepare a text of no more than 100 words. Read it out first for content, and check comprehension. Then tell students to write down keywords, such as nouns and verbs, as you read it out again. Explain that even though they will not be able to write every word, they should keep writing as much as possible. Using their notes, students in pairs or small groups reconstruct the text in complete sentences. The idea is not to reproduce the text verbatim, but to focus in on certain aspects of the language used.

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