

Teaching grammar creatively at elementary level

Ismoilova Mamlakat Qurbonovna¹, Kamolova Shakhlo Ubaydillo kizi²

¹Karshi State University, O'zbekistan, Karshi

Phone number:(91) 963 06 09

²Karshi State University, Department of Foreign Languages and Literature. O'zbekistan, Karshi

Abstract— After independence of the Republic of Uzbekistan all spheres of life has been developed swiftly. Teaching grammar methods has also enhanced interests of researches and common people in a great extent. The translation, being one of the most important means of interlingua communication, is indispensable in the process of integration to the world community at all levels. In global life people always have interests to other communities' worldview. The deep penetration to cultural heritage of any country cannot exist without clear understanding of works of literature. English level A1 is the first level of English in the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), a definition of different language levels written by the Council of Europe. In everyday speech, this level would be called "beginner", and indeed, that is the official level descriptor in the CEFR, also used by EF SET. In practice it is possible to be at a pre-A1 level of English. A student who is just beginning to learn English, or who has no prior knowledge of English, is at a pre-A1 level.

Keywords— all levels, Language Awareness Activities , student, interlingua communication.

1. INTRODUCTION

Teaching Grammar Creatively is a practical new resource book that offers a variety of lessons and activities for everyday use in English language classes. It aims to stimulate students' imagination, humour and creativity and increase the effectiveness of grammar practice. The book offers more than 50 complete lessons covering a wide range of grammar structures, learner levels, and age groups. Each lesson is divided into two main sections: Language Awareness Activities and Creative Grammar Practice. The Language Awareness Activities are designed to introduce and provide initial practice of items that may still be unfamiliar to students. The Creative Grammar Practice section provides ideas for a deeper and more personalised familiarisation with these items, always with an element of individual creativity. Each lesson ends with the creation of a learner text - a permanent and original record of the grammar, in the form of a story or a poem for example¹.

2. MAIN PART

Teaching Grammar Creatively works without explicit grammar rules like class-books normally do. The idea behind it is that especially younger learners need to learn more subconsciously. This is called Awareness-raising, meaning the students discover the language and find the rules for themselves while the teacher only provides a frame in which the learners work. This learner-led method is said to be more efficient because these self-done discoveries of rules lead to a reorganisation of the learner's knowledge. Thus the learners have a higher possibility to remember the rules and apply them correctly. The ability of applying rules subconsciously, rather than knowing them by heart, is the main goal of the whole approach. 2 3. Language Awareness Activities The Language Awareness activities or lessons are divided into three sections called Discovery, Consolidation and Use. This model sounds like the traditional Presentation, Practice and Production method which is often used in schools today, but the authors explain the differences between both ideas. (Gernegross p.7 ff) Because of the learner-led approach, the term Discovery is more appropriate than Presentation is as the learners are given data or are confronted with problems and then discover the according grammar themselves, instead of learning precisely what a teacher "presents" to them. According to the author, Practice mainly involves the learners in repeating given structures without really realizing how the given structures work. This is where Consolidation uses another way. Instead of simply repeating things or having a speaking practice, students will be confronted with understanding tasks. "For example, students may be asked to read (or listen to) a series of sentences – some including structure X and some including structure Y – and to match these sentences with the appropriate picture." (Gernegross p.7) The last section is Use. Contrary to Production, Use means not only that learners produce something concerning the taught grammar, but develop a personalized use. This means students use the new learned item in a context that is important to them. According to the author, language is only memorable when it has been owned. 4. Creative Grammar Practice Creative Grammar Practice provides further practice of grammar with focus on the individual creativity of the learners. Thus, students are thought to be more motivated. This section is also divided into a total of four smaller sections: Lead-in activities, Presentation of model text, Reconstruction of model text and Text creation. Lead-in activities are meant to be a sort of warm-up for the students and for getting ready to work in a

¹ https://books.google.co.uz/books/about/Teaching_Grammar_Creatively_with_CD_ROM.html?id=3eAlsBBT9LoC&redir_esc=y

foreign language. Presentation of model text is the presentation of a short text which shows the target structure and clarifies its function. In the section Reconstruction of model text learners shall remember the model text and recreate it from a gapped version for example. "[...] By remembering the model text the students can experience a feeling of success and gain ability in using structure(s) accurately." (Gernegross p.9) Finally, Text creation lets students create their own texts within the frame of the model text. This can be done in several ways: groups, orally, written... 3 5. Theory in practice After briefly explaining the theory behind Teaching Grammar Creatively, there will now be a look on how a chapter of grammar looks like. For this purpose the topic Adjectives/Adverbs (Gernegross p.97 ff.) was chosen. Like most of the units, the topic is subdivided into sections A and B – analogue to Language Awareness Activity and Creative Grammar Practice. The suggested time of both sections is approximately 50 minutes, thus a little longer than the usual class session. Section A starts with the aims of the unit, followed by the first sub-section Discovery. Herein, the teacher is asked to write the words good and well on the board. Now, students shall fill the gaps of the sentences He cooks ____ and his food smells ____ with the two words. After this, other adjectives and adverbs shall be given that could fill the gaps. Now, the teacher is advised to "highlight the difference between the kind of words that go into the first slot [...] and the kind of words that go into the second slot [...]." (Gernegross p.97) After this explanation, the learners should complete other gapped sentences. Now the sub-section Consolidation starts. The teacher is advised to write down several adverbs and adjectives and read out a given text that includes gaps again. The learners are supposed to find appropriate adjectives or adverbs for the gap. This could also be done as a kind of competition between groups of learners. Finally, the sub-section Use concludes the first section. The teacher is supposed to write sentence frames on the board: What makes you feel...? / What makes you react...? And give a list of words that could complete each frame. After this, learners shall prepare questions to ask one another in pairs or groups and finally report on some of their conversation. This is the end of section A. Section B starts with advices for the teacher telling him which given texts should be copied. These texts are given on an accompanying CD. The four tasks of text work consist mainly in recreation and gap-filling. Concluding this section, the learners are supposed to go through the texts again and write out adjectives and adverbs. Finally, they shall write their own small texts similar to the ones they worked with. This completes the mainsection Adjectives/Adverbs.

Literature Review Most people, when they hear the word grammar, think of lots of useless, boring rules that they were forced to learn in school. However, recent studies in language teaching shows that if grammar is presented in a creative way it can be an enjoyable learning experience where learners subconsciously 'pick up' grammar of a language. Many educators and teachers now believe that grammar is a necessary and a desirable part of classroom language learning. Apart from the four language skills listening, reading, writing and speaking, grammar and vocabulary are considered as two more important skills. According to Davit Crystal, "grammar is the study of the way words, and their component parts, combine to form sentences"(Crystal 1985, p.141). This definition suggests that the vast majority of people of this world know grammar but they are not aware of it. According to Brumfit and Johnson, "The important point is that the study of grammar as such is neither necessary nor sufficient for learning to use a language" (Brumfit and Johnson, 1979,p.165). Therefore, grammar is the basic of any language and cannot be ignored in language teaching. In teaching grammar some general considerations are how to integrate grammar teaching into communicative methodology, which is aimed at developing ones competence, the level at which grammar is taught (elementary, intermediate, advanced), and what precise method the teaching should follow. And these have further implications about the choice of grammatical structures to present, what kind of grammatical description to use, whether to use an inductive or deductive approach, what the role of practice might be and what forms of practice are appropriate for different types of learner.

Effective and creative grammar teaching: One of the most important teaching tools is lesson plan. In case of teaching grammar creatively, the PPP framework is helpful. A PPP lesson is divided into three phases: Presentation, Practice and Production. So it is not only presenting the grammar item then practicing it and lastly producing it, but also doing it in a creative and effective way that makes the whole learning successful.

To sum up, rather than leading students towards memorizing and repeating rules, students should pick up the rules of the language on their own from the context. In that case, teachers should teach grammar in a creative way where real life situation or activities will take place. Here are some examples of creative activities for elementary level students, which incorporate not only grammar but other skills as well.

Interactive oral grammar exercises / Speaking

- dialogues
- interviews
- guessing games
- physical demonstration
- sentence completions
- contextual cues

Listening

- songs
- drama, movie
- news

Writing

-journal
-comprehension
-describing a picture
-shopping list

Reading

-story books

-magazines

-newspaper

(Soars and Soars 2000, p. 45-48)

Effective methods in teaching grammar. Today, we live in a society that prizes literacy and is willing to adapt to more effective methods to achieve the best results in teaching grammar. Through these methods learners can pay their attention, increase the vocabulary, effectiveness, quickness of wit, attentiveness and the main thing is to assimilate the lesson with the interest and learn by heart grammar rules and vocabulary.²

Diagramming Sentences. One of the older forms of teaching grammar, diagramming sentences, first appeared in the 19th century.³ This method involves visually mapping the structures of and relationships between different aspects of a sentence. Especially helpful for visual learners, this method disappeared from modern teaching at least 30 years ago. Different forms of diagramming are used to visualize sentences, but all organize the functions of a sentence in a way that illustrates the grammatical relationships between words. More recently, diagramming sentences has had small pop-culture resurgence in prints of famous opening sentences and websites that allow you to diagram to your heart's content.

Learning through Writing. This method is often used in schools in the U.S. and Canada. Students are encouraged to explore language through creative writing and reading, picking up correct grammar usage along the way. If there are specific problems with certain grammatical rules, these are covered in a more structured lesson. An emphasis is now being placed upon language acquisition over language learning, as it has been observed that learning grammar by memorization does not work well and that students are better able to recognize and understand grammatical rules when lessons are more interactive (they have to apply these rules in their own writing). Repeated practice is also important and easily achieved through creative or personal writing exercises. This article, posted by THE ATLANTIC, suggests that to better equip future adult writers, teachers in the 21st century should consider dropping outdated grammar teaching techniques in early education and opt for learning through writing techniques.

Inductive Teaching. The inductive method of teaching grammar involves presenting several examples that illustrate a specific concept and expecting students to notice how the concept works from these examples⁴. No explanation of the concept is given beforehand, and the expectation is that students learn to recognize the rules of grammar in a more natural way during their own reading and writing. The main goal of the inductive teaching method is the retention of grammar concepts, with teachers using techniques that are known to work cognitively and make an impression on students' contextual memory.

Deductive Teaching. The deductive method of teaching grammar is an approach that focuses on instruction before practice. A teacher gives students an in-depth explanation of a grammatical concept before they encounter the same grammatical concept in their own writing. After the lesson, students are expected to practice what they have just been shown in a mechanical way, through worksheets and exercises. This type of teaching, though common, has many people—including teachers—rethinking such methods, as more post-secondary level students are revealing sub-par literacy skills in adulthood. As one former teacher states, deductive teaching methods drive many students away from writing because of the tediousness of rote learning and teacher-centered approaches.

Interactive Teaching. Another method of teaching grammar is to incorporate interactivity into lessons. Using games to teach grammar not only engages students but also helps them to remember what they've learned. This method allows teachers to tailor their lessons to the different learning styles of students. For instance, each student can be given a large flashcard with a word on it, and the students must physically arrange themselves into a proper sentence.

Over the years, many methods have been developed for teaching grammar and have been built upon, abandoned, or combined, all with the same goal in mind—teaching students how to communicate effectively and understand how to use the English language. Regardless of how grammar is taught, a well-rounded understanding of English grammar is the most important factor in improving the literacy of students.

² Jie, X. (2008) Error theories and second language acquisition [Electronic version]. USChina foreign language, 6(1).

³ <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/effective-methods-in-teaching-grammar-4>

⁴ <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/effective-methods-in-teaching-grammar-4>

3. CONCLUSION

The value of grammar teaching is important in English language teaching field. Grammar is the base of English language. It is not acquired naturally, but learning, it needs be instructed. Grammar operates at the sentence level and governs the syntax or word orders that are permissible in the language. It also works at the sub sentence level to govern such things as number and person agreement between subject and verb in a sentence. To grammar learning, some students may have a more analytical learning style than others, but if one hope to use English language accurately and fluently, it is necessary for him to receive grammar rules instruction. Grammar is not different from anything else, it is likely that students will learn at different rates.

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