

THESIS FOR THE ANALYSIS OF GRAMMAR ACTIVITIES

Akhmadjonov Avazbek

Teacher of Foreign Languages Department at Kokand University,
Kokand, Uzbekistan

***Abstract:** over the years, teaching grammar has been one of the debatable arguments whether it is of key features in teaching and learning a language or using modern teaching methods like SCL (student-centered learning) and Technology Based Learning can save students from going through tons of grammar rules and eventually lose their interest in learning languages.*

Proponents of teaching English and other languages directly pointed out at approaches that without learning grammar, students can enhance their language learning skills. In contrast, individuals supporting teaching grammar have proved that this skill can be taught using different techniques that will be analyzed in this thesis with examples and explanations.

Introduction

Teaching grammar in the classroom has never lost its importance, despite criticism throughout the years has only increased towards it. As it has been argued over and over again, teaching grammar is not just explaining the set of rules to students, but also teaching them how to focus on the forms, meanings, and uses of those rules. Activities that are designed for teaching grammar help students to better practice, process and product what they learn. In this analysis there are 6 activities that match three different approaches, namely, product, process and skill.

When we focus on the specific grammatical forms and the meanings that are associated with them this is referred as teaching grammar as product. As Ortega (2017) notes “clear framework, focus on specific aspects, quite rapid learning of explicit grammatical rules” are the strengths of this approach.

However, when we directly engage our learners in the procedures of the language use, it is called process (Batstone, 1994, p.74). Strengths of this approach are again mentioned by Ortega (2017) as follows: self-discovering, consciousness-raising, self-expression of language use.

When it comes to teaching grammar as skill, students develop such skills as: noticing, grammaticizing, reflecting, and restructuring (Ortega, 2017). In this approach students are carefully guided to use grammar for communication.

Below are the activities of three approaches and possible recommendations on how to make them more effective and student friendly.

Grammar as Product.

The activity is aimed for Pre-Intermediate level students and focuses on forms of passive voice Present and Past tenses. Students need to choose appropriate options to successfully convert the sentences from active to passive voice. In this activity noticing is one of the main features as students must differentiate the tenses and voices, do self-discovery on what they know about them.

The second activity of this group is also from the same textbook as the previous one, Headway Pre-Intermediate 5th Edition. Like the first one, in this activity students must understand the meaning of the statements given in lines to add the correct form of adverbs. By giving this activity to students, teachers can check background knowledge of students about Present Perfect adverbs.

What can be recommended:

1. Before asking students to do this activity, to promote noticing, teachers can read a story using passive voice about someone popular and/or record it before the lesson and play that recording during the lesson. This goes as pre-teaching activity and can help with analyzing how students are using the noticing feature.
2. But it is not only about noticing, structuring also plays a great role here and for this reason a story can be created with students about one of their peers.
3. In the second activity there is no example given for students to use and it can be a bit difficult to identify where the given adverbs go. In this purpose, an example should be provided at the beginning of the activity either by the teacher or in the textbook to make the instructions more clear.

Grammar as Process.

This TESOL organization recommended activity can be a real fun and based on the communication of students in the group. As Candlin (1987) offered “these tasks can be challenging, yet not excessively demanding”, in this activity students can describe a movie based on their lexical resource and there are no strict rules towards language use. The only rule in this activity is using Past Simple tense for a 30 second movie-describing part.

The next activity of this group is called “Never Have I Ever” and focuses on the language use of the students. Instead of overloading the students with rules and drills,

teachers can let them work in pairs and groups giving them the freedom of using the language based on their personalities. This activity focuses on the use of Present Perfect and inversion (instead of saying I've never ever, they start with Never Have I ever) in the answers of students.

Recommendations:

1. For the first activity, time limit should be either omitted or prolonged as students may spend more than a minute to think, process, translate and express their answers to the group.
2. In the second activity, the statements mentioned by students may not match with others' at all and take more time than expected. The limit in responses are also disadvantage of this activity because one answer may not be enough for the teacher to evaluate student's knowledge about Present Perfect Tense.

Grammar as Skill

In this approach student use not only grammatical knowledge, but also integrate other skills like reading and listening. With this approach, students grammaticize, reflect and notice. They keep balance between product and process in skill approach. In the first activity (Appendix V), students read and discuss the use of *have got* in the text with their partners. This is done in a limited time which is set by the teacher. Students improve their ability of being involved in conversations and don't focus on the grammar only.

The second activity (Appendix VI) can be done both in groups or individually where students discuss the text and the sequence of the events and put them in the right order. They then reflect on what they and other students did with teacher's explanations.

Recommendations:

1. As the first text was big it was extracted from the original version and this kind of long texts can be exhausting for the students no matter their level of proficiency.
2. In the second activity main events should be underlined instead of enumerating them in the boxes. The activity looks like a matching task but students are expected to find the charitable events in the text.

Personal evaluation

I chose most of the activities from the textbook I use at university with Pre-Intermediate groups and it is because this level eagerly tries to learn the language and its specifications. Students can be easily directed, are able to use enough range of

structures and forms in both speaking and writing activities. As an optimal approach it is preferred using Process approach where students can communicate, work in groups, notice, self-discover and reflect. Of course, students needs should be taken into consideration, but according to the regulations set by the University, students must demonstrate high speaking and communicative abilities at the end of the academic year to successfully pass the grade. As for the time management, activities in this level are designed based on the level of students that makes them time friendly. Most units have revision part before students start any activity which works as pre-teaching activity where students can get familiarized before moving to the main activities.

References

- Batstone, R. (1994). Grammar. Oxford University Press.
Ortega, H. (2017). Teaching Grammar.