

HOW TO TEACH ENGLISH GRAMMAR FOR B2 LEVEL LEARNERS.

Sarvinoz_Komiljonova

Abstract: *This article explores the crucial role of teaching the grammar process and how to explain the grammar drills to intermediate students intelligibly. The target of this article is to provide sufficient information about the fields of grammar and the methods of teaching grammar. Suggesting methods cannot be a good option for improving teaching grammar; consequently, this paper includes some interactive activities relying on the learners' needs and today's teaching development by using digital tools.*

INTRODUCTION

The phrase “teaching English grammar” is not only a challenging procedure but also a consistent process that includes steps for learners to establish their foundational knowledge in learning a second language. To achieve this aim, both the instructors and acquirers need to pursue learning and overcome all difficulties. Cowan’s book, “The teacher’s grammar of English: A course book and reference guide,” can be the best choice for those enrolled in teaching and learning English, as it includes fruitful structures for enhancing grammar for the students and appropriate methods to develop teaching grammar for the teachers. Especially, teaching grammar for B2 level learners is considered an exacting operation since it consists of correcting their grammar drills that were required in past courses instead of explaining new ones. Hence, this will lead to some complications for the instructor’s teaching context. This article explores how to settle these problems and ways to teach grammar for intermediate-level students based on Cowan’s principles.

What does the word “Teaching Grammar” mean?

Some students and instructors think that grammar is a combination of fixed grammar drills, but actually, grammar covers rules describing how words and groups of words can be arranged to construct sentences in a particular language (Cowan, 2018, p 3). Furthermore, grammar includes three dimensions: form (accuracy), meaning (meaningfulness), and use (appropriateness) are interconnected with each other as Larsen-Freeman (2016) claimed that EFL/ESL educators should teach the learners how grammar is constructed, what it means, and why the speaker prefers using one form rather than others. Acquiring grammar structures is a primary skill for students in the productive skills. A student who desires to develop accuracy in writing or fluency in speaking needs to learn valuable grammar drills and an experienced instructor to explain those grammatical concepts. Consequently, the English instructors should know English grammar as they provide “the key to understanding the language and applying it to interact” (Cowan, 2018, p. 2). Moreover, since there is so much misleading information about grammar in coursebooks, teachers can fix those errors by using their grammar concepts. Lastly, an educator who has a great background knowledge of grammar can supply primary knowledge about that to the adult learners.

On the other hand, grammar can be explained through 2 ways: implicit and explicit ways. In an implicit grammar teaching context, the teacher does not explain any rules directly: on the contrary, the students learn grammar through a range of activities or authentic

materials. For instance, the instructor can give an authentic text for the students about “The Future of Technology” by Muhammad Tuhin to review, and the students can discover the grammar rule by themselves after the teacher’s noticing questions about “The Future Simple Tense”. Teaching grammar implicitly can enhance the students’ fluency and input.

However, if the instructor teaches the grammar structures directly by explaining the rules, examples, and exceptions, this is called explicit grammar teaching. For example, the teacher explains “The Future Simple Tense” first by giving them the structure of it, meaning, usage, and gives example sentences such as “The robots will be able to do all individuals’ housework accurately in the near future”. Then, the students can practice making sentences including “The Future Simple Tense.” This style of grammar teaching is the most appropriate way to teach grammar, especially for adolescents (Larsen-Freeman, 2016). Overall, choosing the best method for teaching grammar depends on the teacher’s experience, students’ levels, and the teaching context, but balancing both ways creates a strong learning environment.

Pedagogical Implication

A teacher who desires to teach grammar to their B2 level learners needs to analyze their learners’ weaknesses and needs first. For instance, intermediate learners often make mistakes unconsciously, as they have already acquired adequate grammar structures in their previous courses. Occasionally, B2 students may struggle with advanced sentence structures such as conditionals, degrees of modal verbs, overusing connectors, or conjunctions. Although they are able to clarify the grammar rules in receptive skills, they cannot apply them in productive skills, probably owing to time pressure or anxiety. Considering the learners’ challenges, the instructors should use a multidimensional approach that utilizes various teaching methods for explaining the aspects of the three dimensions. (Larsen-Freeman, 2016) Furthermore, the instructor may use a range of interactive activities or scaffolding to explain those dimensions. For example, to explain the form of the sentence, the teacher can give some mixed example sentences for conditionals and ask the students to put the words in the right order and which can be the most suitable activity for them. If the teacher desires to explain the second dimension meaning, he can use “Simon says” by adapting this activity to the topic, such as phrasal verbs: give up, break down. On the other hand, PPP is the most relevant for intermediate learners to acquire the third feature of use.

However, there are two types of activities to teach grammar: form-focused and meaning-focused. The minor but significant difference between form-focused grammar instruction and meaning-focused instruction was explained by Storch (2018). Although Krashen's input theory has long dominated communicative techniques, studies such as Storch's have demonstrated that grammatical development requires more than just exposure to meaning. This strengthens the teachers’ conviction that a well-rounded, research-based combination of communicative activities and carefully considered attention to form is necessary for effective teaching. The instructors should employ Ellis's (2006) explicit form-focused stages, especially collaborative reformulation and post-task corrective feedback, which let students evaluate their work without compromising their ability to execute the task fluently. However, meaning-focused activities will continue to be a major part of the classroom, particularly those that involve peer collaboration, authentic input, and output tasks like role-playing, debates, and storytelling.

On the other hand, in our digitally developed world, technology can impact teaching grammar effectively if the instructor knows how to use the most convenient digital tool for the students. To meet this objective, the instructors need to choose a synchronous (communication in real-time) such as Zoom sessions, video conferences, or an asynchronous (non-interactive in real-time) tool, such as blogs, discussion boards (Bikowski, 2018). Additionally, if there is enough equipment to connect to the internet for teachers and students, the educators can create interactive activities through Kahoot, Padlet, Quizlet, Wordwall, Mentimeter, and other useful websites. Hanson-Smith (2018) claims that “given the ease of and wider access to digital tools, language teachers are increasingly developing their own online teaching and learning materials, tailored to their students’ and classes’ particular needs, and encouraging students to create their own” (p. 1). In other words, the teachers can create an interactive and engaging environment for students using CALL, where they are able to acquire adequate knowledge in their field.

Conclusion

Principled grammar instructions play a crucial role in all branches of the English Language system. If the educator has enough experience in teaching grammar, s/he will develop the students’ concepts about grammar or solve their problems that the students are overcoming during the learning process. Instead of choosing one method or task to teach grammar, balancing both explicit and implicit instructions through digital tools will work effectively for the B2 level learners.

REFERENCES:

- Cowan R. (2008). *The teacher's grammar of English: A course book and reference guide*. Cambridge University Press.
- Ellis, R. (2006). The methodology of task-based teaching. *Asian EFL Journal*, 8(3), 19-45.
- Hanson-Smith, E. (2018). CALL environments: Research, practice, and critical issues. In J. Egbert & E. Hanson-Smith (Eds.), *CALL environments* (2nd ed., pp. 1-27). TESOL International Association.
- Larsen-Freeman, D., Celce-Murcia, M., Frodesen, J., White, B., & Williams, H. (2016). *The grammar book: Form, meaning, and use for English language teachers*. (3rd Ed.). Heinle Cengage Learning.
- Storch, N. (2018). Meaning-focused versus form-focused instruction. In J. I. Liantas (Ed.), *The TESOL Encyclopedia of English Language Teaching* (pp. 1-6). Wiley.