

Using effective lesson plan in teaching grammar for ESL students

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Annotation: Making a lesson plan on the topic of grammar in the English language has always been a difficult task to accomplish. The presented paper analyzes one problematic grammar issue and one lesson plan as a solution to the problem based on the theory of prominent scholars. The article gives one grammar topic as an example and shows how to teach it effectively to students following certain stages. This article consists of 3 main parts, learner profile, theoretical part of the topic and lesson plan followed by conclusion.

Key words: Engage stage, noticing stage; activate stage, wrap-up, assessment, peer evaluation, reflection

Introduction

It is undeniable that grammar is an inseparable part of teaching English. Most people, when they hear about teaching grammar, the first thing that comes to their mind are certain rules, principles and boring lectures. However, grammar lessons are not always such a setting where teachers usually dominate and present grammar rules but it is a place where students can learn grammar rules in an interesting way that would be applicable later in their life. Actually, it all depends on a teacher how and in what ways he or she conducts the lesson. As Hedge [3;56] stated grammar is not only "Presenting" but also "Practicing". It can be seen from this evidence that grammar lessons can be conducted in a way that more engaging and communicative with the help of different approaches or by integrating more than one way of modes. For ex: in my lesson plan, I tried to use both deductive and inductive way of teaching grammar in order to make difference. As Celce-Murcia [1999; 2] stated currently, group work, task-based approaches and other communicative activities are more popular among instructors. So, we can make our grammar lessons more effective and interactive with the help of various approaches which focus on communication.

Learner profile

The student whom I chose is student M. She is in her teens and a school girl, 9th grade. Consent form signed by the participant. And for interview part, I still remember she came to the learning center with her brother to improve her English. She came from Uzbek traditional family where the Uzbek language is dominant. Nevertheless, student M is fluent at Russian as her grandparents often communicate with her in this language. So she is a bilingual who is able to speak in two languages and on the process of learning the third one. Her level is pre-intermediate. Actually she has just entered the English world and she has been learning the English language for 6 months on and off. Before she came to our learning centre, she had been learning the English language at school for 3 months. Her teacher was a Russian teacher who is fluent at English. She was learning this language with a focus of speaking not grammar. Therefore, she had problems with grammar mostly with tenses. She had difficulties differentiating past and present tenses. When she came to my classes for the first time I really admired the way she spoke because she had natural tone of voice just like native speakers. The way she pronounced English words were really attractive and easily captured the listener's attention. In our life, we meet such kind of learners who have distinguishing pronunciation which is liked by everyone. However the way she used grammar structures was really ridiculous and awful. I realized that she desperately needs some grammar lessons to make her grammar at much better level. Before she came to our educational centre, she was learning from headway book which focuses on improving four skills at the same

time together with sub-skills but less focus on grammar. Moreover, she is a visual learner who learns easily just by looking at given materials. I was so astonished by her performance for the first time when she attended my classes. When it comes to her qualities, she has outgoing personality. She can easily get on well with others. I consider her as an active learner as she participates in the lessons very actively. What's more, she is more than responsible. He never skips lessons unless she has some serious, undeniable reasons. She is always on time, even in time. I really respect her punctuality. Student M was one of these students. Despite all of her good qualities, I strongly believe that she needs some grammar lessons and I chose past simple. Because I think that if I teach her past simple tense then she will not only master this tense but also she will be able to differentiate between past simple and present tenses.

Theoretical Part

There is no doubt that grammar is a very important part of English. As Thornbury [5;97] stated even if one has a wide range of vocabulary, without knowing grammar rules, he will fail communicating and arranging words together. Actually, there are 12 tenses in the English grammar and past tense is one of the most commonly used tense. As Folse [7;65] stated in English grammar consists of twelve tenses that describe different combinations of time (present, past and future). This contrasts markedly with the opinion held by Gary [4;56] who considered there are only three basic tenses in English. There are different usages of past simple. a) We use past simple for actions that happened at a definite time in the past, here, time is more important. What makes it different from other tenses are it has no relationship with present, for ex: I finished school in 2010. Simple past tense mostly occurs in past time [7;89]. B) We use past simple for two actions or more that two actions that happened in the past immediately one after another. For ex: Tom got into the car and drove off. As Folse [6;52] mentioned past simple is the most used tense which describes sequencing of action by using time adverbials. C) For past habits or states which are now finished, in such cases we can also use the expression "used to" for ex: Tom drove a car. Moreover, past simple tense is used for actions that describe a definite even in the past [8;79]. As regards the forms of the above mentioned tense, it can be formed with the help of either verb-ed or irregular verbs. According to Azar [1;98], the simple past tense is divided into two types. They are simple past of verb "be" and using verb. The formula for each type can be categorized into three parts: affirmative, negative and interrogative. Moreover, Murphy [4;72] says that in most cases the past simple ends in -ed, however, many crucial verbs are irregular. Teaching past simple is one of the most challenging parts of teaching grammar especially when teachers are dealing with young-age groups. Most learners usually confuse them with present simple. They use present simple while they are talking about past events or they can not differentiate between did and was/were. They often say "I was did". Above mentioned problems are the most common ones among my own students as well. I tried to include different modes into my lesson plan. Because I wanted it to be different from typical lesson plans. Generally, I find a video very effective. Therefore, I use it more often in my classroom. As Cundell [2;78] mentioned one of the most powerful way of teaching grammar is using a video in the classroom. Moreover, media has a crucial role in educational programs including second language teaching. One further point to note is that I tried to integrate deductive and inductive way of teaching. Teachers should not stick up to only deductive way of teaching or inductive way of teaching. As Nunan [3;86] argued integrating deductive and inductive approach for teaching grammar will be more oriented and efficient. Despite the fact that CLT is popular nowadays among teachers, I did not ignore explicit way of teaching. Because I strongly believe that learners should know what they are doing. Lee and VanPatten [4;78] stated although classrooms are becoming more communicative, most teachers still prefer an explicit way of teaching. Besides that I tried to give ample input. Learners can acquire the language naturally if they are exposed to enough comprehensible input [5;87]. However, Ellis [7;85] believes that learners should be taught forms that are different from their first language. So, students should feel a real atmosphere where she will be able to communicate freely.

Lesson plan

Lesson title	Past simple	
Length	80 minutes	
Content information	Level -pre-intermediate Age -15	Course -EGP Setting - learning centre in Andijon
Objectives	<p>Language objectives Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Comprehend the usage of past simple ➤ Construct affirmative, negative and integrative sentences of past simple. ➤ Use time expressions of past simple in an appropriate and accurate way. <p>Content objectives Students will be able to :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Use past simple properly in their oral and written context. ➤ Use past simple precisely to tell about actions and states happened in the past. <p>Cultural objectives: Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Differentiate the usage and forms of past simple between their L1 and L2 	
Skills practiced		
Teaching aids	Teaching materials	Student materials
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Laptop ➤ Speaker ➤ handouts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Pen ➤ Laptop or phone notebook
Assessment methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Formative assessment ➤ Peer assessment 	

Lesson procedure

I. Engage stage

Activity 1. Warm up activity (10 minutes) “Find me” (W, S, L)

Objective: to attract students’ attention to the lesson and encourage them to adapt the lesson.

Teacher instructions:

- Ask students a sheet of paper and a pen
- Ask them to write 3 activities that they did yesterday
- Explain students that they have only 5 minutes to do this task
- Tell the students that they should use past simple while making up sentences
- Tell them not to show their paper to anybody
- Collect students papers after they finish
- Tell the students that you read each paper and activity anonymously and they should find out the person who did the activities

Student directions:

- Take a sheet of paper and write three most important activities that you did yesterday
- Make sure that you are using past simple

- Do not show your paper to your partner
- As soon as you finish, fold your paper and give it to your teacher
- Try to find out the person who did the activities when your teacher reads them.

II. Noticing Stage (10minutes)

Activity 2 Objectives: to let students notice the forms of past simple and how it is used in different contexts (F, L, W, R, S)

Teacher instructions:

- Distribute the students handouts where there is a small passage about Martin's vacation.
- Tell them to work individually and underline any sentences which include past simple
- Ask them to highlight affirmative, negative and question forms of past simple with different colors.
- Tell them to guess different usages of past simple.
- Remind them they have 5 minutes for that
- Ask them to work in pairs after finishing the task

Student directions:

- Listen to the instructions very carefully
- Work independently and underline any words that you think it is in the past tense
- Try to find out if the sentences are in affirmative, negative or question forms
- Pay attention to the situations where past simple is being used
- Keep it in your mind you have 5 minutes to complete this task
- After finishing the task, work with your partner and compare and evaluate each others' answers
- Feel free to ask questions from your instructor if you have any.

III. STUDY STAGE (15 MINUTES) (L, F, R)

Objective: to improve students' comprehension on the topic " past simple" and give them some input.

Teacher instructions:

- Show students the table where the forms of past simple are presented as a formula
- Make use of the whiteboard effectively writing the formula of past simple
- Attract students' attention to the table where all the usages of past simple demonstrated
- Explain each usage of it thoroughly and provide them with real-life examples
- After explain, ask some students to come up with some sentences that are similar with yours

Student directions:

- Look at the tables the instructor will show you and Listen to him/her very attentively
- Make some notes on your notebook in order not to get confused
- Try to make up some sentences with past simple
- Feel free to ask any questions on the topic.

We use Past simple:	
1.For actions that happened at definite time in the past	For ex: Lola got married last week
2.For two or more than actions that occurred in the past one after another immediately	For ex: Anvar came in and took off his shoes.
3. for past habits that no longer exist now. This usually gives the meaning of "Used to"	For ex: Yulduz went windsurfing when she was young
4.when we are talking about people who already passed away	For ex: Otkir Hoshimov wrote 10 novels.

IV. ACTIVATE STAGE (15 minutes)

Activity 3 past simple with picture (R, W, S, F)

Objective: to check if students learnt how to form past simple

Teacher instructions:

- Ask your students to look at the picture and fill in the gaps with appropriate form of past simple
- Tell them that they should work in groups
- After they have finished, check their answers as a whole group work.

Student instructions:

- Work in groups of 4 and fill in the gaps with appropriate forms of past simple
- Having finished your work, share your answers with the others.

Activities 4 (F, R)

Objective: to check if learners are able to differentiate different usages of past simple

Teacher instructions:

- Ask the students to fill in the gaps on the handout
- Tell them they should identify what use of past simple each sentence shows
- Elicit them if they are analyzing each sentence correctly or not

Student instructions:

- Fill in the gaps with correct forms of past simple
- Find out different usages of it
- Get feedback and work on that

V. COMMUNICATIVE STAGE (15 minutes) (S, L)

Objective: to make students to use what they have learnt communicatively (S, L,)

Activity 5 (watching video) <https://youtu.be/QDGgqPIH3QI>

Teacher instructions:

- Ask the students to watch the video where two different times are described (Tom and his grandfather)
- Tell your students that they should watch this video twice and make up 5 statements in past simple comparing to present simple

Student directions:

- Watch the video that will be demonstrated
- Make sure that you will watch it twice
- While watching take some notes and come up with 3 or 4 statements.

Activity 6 (game) (10 minutes) (R, L, F, S)

Objective: to consolidate what they have learnt.

Teacher instructions:

- Ask the students to be more active this time
- Make sure that all of them device and access to the internet
- Tell them they should watch this video and answer the quizzes

Student directions:

- Make sure you bring your device with you
- Do the quizzes while you are watching the video

VI. Wrap-up – Assessment / CCQs / Reflection and Revision / Home assignment (10 minutes)

Assessment: As it is not the end of the unit, it was impossible to use summative assessment. Therefore, the instructor uses formal and informal formative assessment.

Formative Assessment (FA)

The instructor gives oral feedback in each student's performance

Peer evaluation – after a pair work, learners evaluate each other's work

Assessment in the form of quizzes – students get scores based on their performance during the game.

Questions for reflection:

- What did you learn from the lesson?
- How do we form past simple?
- How many usages does it have?
- What would you like to learn?

Home assignment:

- Prepare a speech called " My last weekend". Use past simple while making up sentences.

Conclusion

All in all, teaching grammar is not so complicated but teaching grammar in engaging way is something most ESL teachers are struggling with. We cannot say this approach is good; this approach is acceptable or not acceptable. It highly depends on teachers who should integrate all modes of interactions and approaches into one classroom even if it is grammar lesson. Teachers should not stick up to only deductive way of teaching or inductive way of teaching. They should be more creative depending on the situation. Not only we should take into account their levels but also other factors, their learning styles and so on.

What I have learnt from doing this project is to be more responsible when it comes to planning a lesson. I have learnt what to pay attention to while adopting or creating a lesson plan. I have used one mode of lesson planning I have recently learnt. This includes warm up, noticing, activate, communicative and wrap up stages. This project helped me how to put what I have learnt into practice and I think the type of lesson planning I have used is more effective as it includes both deductive and inductive way of teaching. In the near future, I would like to develop a plan for my every grammar lesson which will make me more organized person.

It is expected that this project will be a great asset for those who have difficulties in learning this topic. It is hoped that this project will achieve its aim by suggesting solutions and providing them with enough evidence and examples.

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