HELLENIC REPUBLIC
National and Kapodistrian University of Athens

ELT Methods and Practices

Unit 3: Dealing with Grammar

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Contents

This Worksheet is designed to provide you with examples of grammar in use (contrasting use to show different meanings encoded). It shows how to provide support through guiding questions. When teaching grammar, by asking questions rather than explaining, we get learners to think about the form and notice how it is used. This is a reasonably effective way of encouraging noticing, however there is no guarantee that learners will remember. Learners also need opportunities to experiment, to find out what works, what doesn't work, discard and re-formulate to help them learn about how the language works.

Task 1

Numbers 1 – 4 are descriptions of four different ways of giving students examples of grammar points. Letters A – D describe the benefits of these different sources, while numbers i – iv mention possible drawbacks. Match the benefits and the drawbacks to their sources.

Sources of Grammar	Benefits	Drawbacks
1. Using texts as a source for a grammar point.		
2. Using examples of (in)correct student language produced during a speaking activity.		
3. Using examples that arise from a context (e.g. a picture story) together with students.		
4. Using sentences that are examples of the grammar point.		

Benefits

A. A freer practice activity will tell you how well students know the grammar point and provide you with many examples of their language that you can use to correct and clarify the grammar.

B. These are easy to create and are often simple and clear for students.

C. Often these situations can involve pictures and this helps students with a visual learning style. The stories you can create can also be entertaining.

D. Using reading or listening as a basis for clarifying a grammar point should provide you with plenty of examples.

Drawbacks

i. It can be hard finding a situation that generates the language naturally and easily.

ii. You need to be sure that what you use is either authentic or close to natural authentic language.

iii. This approach can mean that the context is not rich enough and the isolation of examples can make some grammar rules difficult to understand.

iv. The context of the activity needs to be communicative to be sure that it allows students to speak and produce a lot of language examples.

Task 2

Numbers 1 and 2 are two approaches of clarifying a grammar point: an inductive versus a deductive approach. Letters A and B are definitions of these approaches, while I to VI are examples of these approaches. Match the definitions and the examples to the correct approach.

	1. INDUCTIVE	2. DEDUCTIVE
definitions		
examples		

Definitions

   a. The teacher gives the rules of the grammar point.

   b. The student works out the rules of the grammar point.

Examples

   i. The teacher asks oral questions that check students' understanding of the meaning of the grammar point and its form.

   ii. The teacher provides students with written examples of their errors together with some questions that get students to correct the errors and work out the meaning and the form of the grammar point.

   iii. The teacher provides a translation of the grammar point into the students' first language. This is only possible in a monolingual situation.

   iv. The teacher asks students to read some grammar reference materials in order to understand the meaning and form of the grammar point.

   v. The teacher provides the students with a written task that guides students to understanding the meaning and the form of the grammar point.

   vi. The teachers gives an oral explanation of the meaning and the form of the grammar point.

Task 3

Below are a series of statements that highlight the strengths of both the inductive and the deductive approaches to clarifying a grammar point with students. Read the statements and decide which approach they are talking about. Write 'I' for inductive (student works out the rules) and 'D' for deductive (teacher gives the rules).

Strengths I or D?

   a. It can give students a sense of security.

   b. It encourages the students to refer more often to the context of the grammar point.

   c. Students can learn at their own rate, rather than that of the class.

   d. The teacher can get straight to the point.

   e. It is more student-centred.

   f. It allows the students to take a more gradual step-by-step approach to different aspects of the grammar point.

   g. It suits students who have a strongly accuracy-focused learning style.

h. It gives students time to think about the grammar point.

i. It can mean that students get extra speaking practice when they discuss the grammar with each other or with their teacher.

j. It gives the teacher a clear sense of having taught something.

k. It can help make students more independent in their learning.

l. It means a bit more mental effort for students and this can have the result that they engage more fully with the language.

Task 4

Numbers 1 to 6 below present the stages in a text-based grammar lesson. Letters a to f describe activities for each stage. They are in a different order. Match the activities to the stages

Stages

1. Students read (or listen to) the text that contain the target grammar.
2. Students highlight the target grammar in the text.
3. Students check the meaning of the target grammar.
4. Students check the form of the target grammar.
5. The teacher highlights the pronunciation of the target grammar (if it is typically used for oral communication).
6. The teacher provides controlled to freer practice of the target grammar.

Activities

a. The teacher provides an oral model of the target grammar point and then drills students chorally and individually.
b. The teacher gives comprehension questions that check the information in the text.
c. The teacher elicits information about how the target grammar is made using the white board. Alternatively, students can work on a student-centred task.
d. The teacher designs a variety of spoken and written activities, which allow students to use the target grammar.
e. Students are asked to underline examples of the target grammar or the teacher might point them out. If using a listening text, you can isolate examples of the target grammar on the tape.
f. The teacher gives learners a student-centred task that guides them towards an understanding of the use of the target grammar. The task might include questions, or clines, or grids. An alternative is for the teacher to ask oral concept questions about the target grammar

Task 5

Numbers 1 to 5 below present the stages of a lesson that teaches grammar by means of a communication activity. Letters a to e describe activities for each stage. They are in a different order. Match the activities to the stages.

Stages Activities

1. Students do a communication activity that requires use of a specific grammar point.

2. Teacher evaluation of student language.

3. Teacher-led error correction of student language.

4. Checking of meaning and form by teacher.

5. Students do a second communication activity.

Activities

a. The teacher writes up the collected errors on the white board. Corrections can either be elicited from learners, or students can be put in pairs or small groups to correct the language and conduct feedback.

b. The teacher gives students another communication activity that practices the target language point and asks them to do this activity and concentrate on using the target grammar point correctly. Alternatively, students could re-do the original activity.

c. Having elicited corrections of student language, the teacher uses oral concept questions to check the meaning of the target grammar point, afterwards checking the form by eliciting it and then writing it up on the white board.

d. The teacher monitors and listens carefully to the language that students are producing, particularly for the target grammar point, or its absence and finds out what incorrect forms students are using in its place. The teacher also notes other examples of incorrect language, noting these down on a piece of paper.

e. The teacher sets up the communication activity, but makes a point of not mentioning the target grammar point nor asking that students use it.

Notes

Note on History of Published Versions:

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