

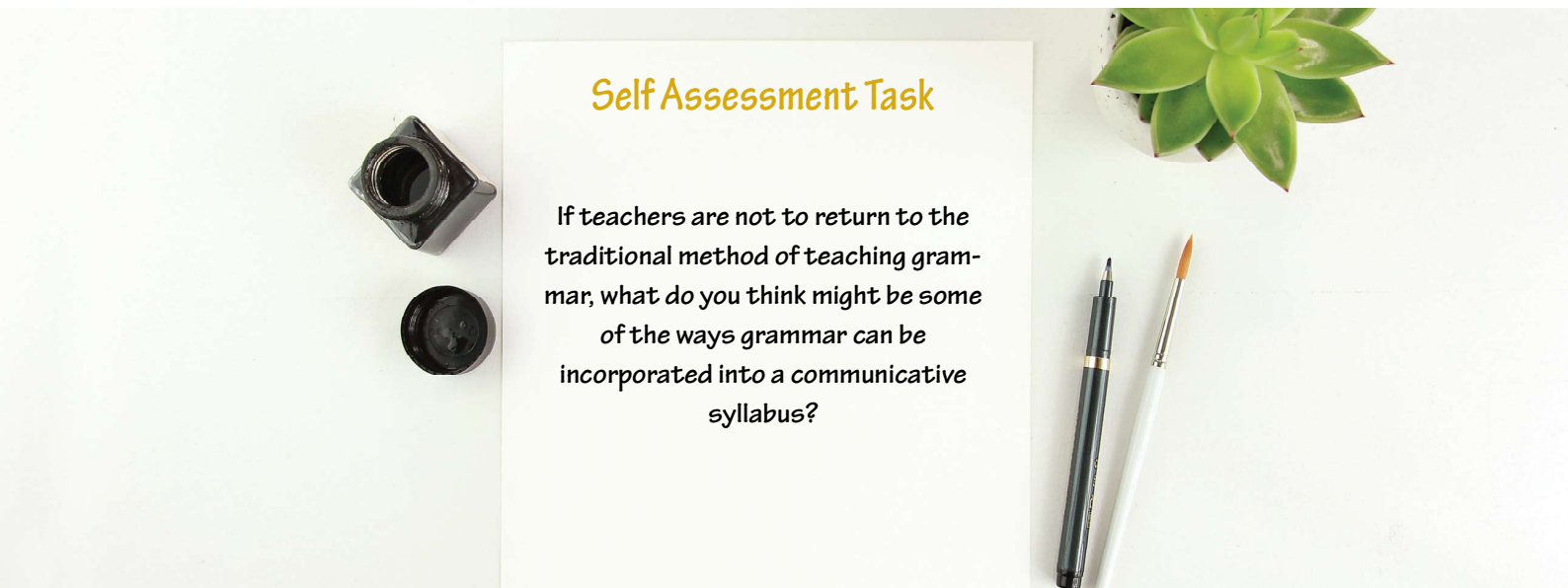


THE ROLE OF GRAMMAR INSTRUCTION IN EFL

Recent research by linguists has shown that grammar instruction can play an important role in fostering accuracy in AL (additional language) production.

Less certain is the knowledge of how grammar learned can be effectively transformed into grammar used. Unless the learner is at the right stage of language development, there is very little transfer from extrinsic knowledge about the language to intrinsic knowledge in which the language can be produced without conscious effort (as occurs in native speakers).

While there has been very little agreement on how grammar should be integrate into a communicative syllabus, the consensus is that it would be counterproductive to return to the traditional grammar method of teaching examples. In this, students learn about the language and are able to score well on grammar-based tests but are unable to produce the same grammar spontaneously in conversation.



Self Assessment Task

If teachers are not to return to the traditional method of teaching grammar, what do you think might be some of the ways grammar can be incorporated into a communicative syllabus?

PRESENTING GRAMMAR IN CONTEXT

In order to show students how the language operates in real-life communication, the grammar should be presented in situations that the students can identify with from their own life experiences. The more closely students can relate to the context and the more vivid and colourful the presentation, the better.

As learners cannot absorb what they haven't noticed, the teacher should be sure to extract the grammar from the situation and draw their attention to it. It should be clearly highlighted in written form with the rule and how the rule is applied. For example,

She has broken the record.
Present Perfect:
have or has + the past participle

This technique is called focus on form and is used to direct students' focus away from the meaning and towards the role that grammar plays in conveying the meaning. As grammar has the potential to be really boring for EFL students, it is imperative that the teacher spend some time engaging them in the topic. If the students are already involved and enjoying the lesson, they will be much more willing to pay attention when the grammar is extracted and presented for analysis.

Ways of presenting grammar in context:

- Through jokes and cartoons
- Through pictures, adverts, posters or any other visual images
- Through stories and teacher's anecdotes
- Through songs
- Through conversations
- Through reading passages
- Through sitcoms, comedy sketches, movie scenes etc.

Self Assessment Task

Using the focus on form technique, how would you present question tags as a grammar point in context?

(See the grammar glossary later in the module if you are uncertain about question tags).

GRAMMAR

TASK-BASED GRAMMAR LESSONS

Another effective way of incorporating grammar into a communicative lesson is by presenting groups (or pairs) of students with grammar problems that they must solve through collaboration. This could involve the best grammatical choice for a particular context or decisions as to why one form is better in certain passages than another. Students are required to think about the grammar and use their judgement.

This method is suitable for upper-level and highly educated students who enjoy talking about grammar. It would not be suitable for pre-literate people or for lower-level students who lack the necessary verbal skills to discuss such problems.

GRAMMAR GAMES, ACTIVITIES AND SONGS

At the moment there is a plethora of Grammar Activity Resource books on the market, catering for all ages and all levels of proficiency. There is also an endless supply of free downloadable resources on the Internet.

These games, which range from board games to competitions and memory games, are an entertaining and engaging way getting students to work with the grammar they are learning. They are particularly suitable for young learners and beginners.

Learning through error correction

Although the Communicative Approach is tolerant of learner errors as long as meaning is clearly conveyed, researchers have begun producing evidence that judicious error correction can direct students' attention to incorrect use of the language and help them monitor future production.

Tomasello and Herron conducted one particularly successful experiment in 1988.

They discovered that when a teacher led students towards making overgeneralisation errors and then gave instant corrective feedback, the students were successfully able to produce the correct form at a later date.

As much of language learning is hypothesis testing, it follows that AL learners' need the input of error correction if they are not to internalise grammatical errors.

PLANNING GRAMMAR ACTIVITIES

Teachers should take the following considerations into account:

- The topic should be relevant and interesting to the students.
- The students must be involved in the activity.
- The activity should encourage interaction between students.
- The activity should present opportunities for the students to practice the grammar.
- Instant mastery is unlikely. The same grammar item might have to be recycled many times before a student is ready to acquire it.
- Comparisons with similar or different grammar items in the students' own language can be helpful.

AN OVERVIEW OF ENGLISH VERB TENSES

1. THE SIMPLE TENSE

SIMPLE PRESENT 	a) It snows in Alaska b) It snows in Alaska everyday	In general, the simple present expresses events or situations that exist always, usually, habitually ; they existed in the past and will probably exist in the future.
SIMPLE PAST 	c) It snowed yesterday d) I watched television last night.	At one particular time in the past , this happened. It began and ended in the past.
SIMPLE FUTURE 	e) It will snow tomorrow. f) I will watch television tonight.	At one particular time in the future , this will happen.

2. THE CONTINUOUS TENSES

PRESENT CONTINUOUS 	a) He is sleeping.	His sleep began in the past, is in progress at the present time , and will probably continue.
PAST CONTINUOUS 	b) He was sleeping when I arrived.	His sleep began before and was in progress at a time in the past . It probably continued.
FUTURE CONTINUOUS 	c) He will be sleeping when we arrive.	His sleep will begin before we arrived and it will be in progress at a particular time in the future . It will probably continue.

3. THE PERFECT TENSES

PRESENT PERFECT 	a) I have already eaten.	I finished eating something before now. The time is not important.
PAST PERFECT 	b) I had already eaten when they arrived.	My eating was completely finished before another time in the past.
FUTURE PERFECT 	c) I will already have eaten when they arrive.	My eating will be completely finished before another time in the future.

4. THE PERFECT CONTINUOUS TENSES

PRESENT PERFECT CONTINUOUS 	a) I have been studying for two hours.	My studying has been in progress for two hours up to now.
PAST PERFECT CONTINUOUS 	b) I had been studying for two hours before my friend came.	My studying was in progress for two hours up until another event past.
FUTURE PERFECT CONTINUOUS 	c) I will have been studying for two hours by the time you arrive.	My studying will have been in progress for two hours before another event in the future.

GLOSSARY OF GRAMMATICAL TERMS

<i>Terms</i>	<i>Glossary</i>	<i>Examples</i>
1. VERB	A word used to express action or being	He speaks good English
<i>A. Regular verb</i>	A verb which forms its past tense and past participle with the stem + "ed"	walk - walked - walked
<i>B. Irregular verb</i>	A verb which does not follow the above rule	write - wrote - written
<i>C. Transitive verb</i>	A verb which is followed by a direct object	They built the house (V) (D.O.)
<i>D. Intransitive verb</i>	A verb which is followed by an indirect object	They spoke (to) me
<i>E. Infinitive</i>	That part of the verb which expresses the notion of the verb	hit, or to hit (<i>with or without to</i>)
2. NOUN	A word used to name a person, thing, quality or process	car, society, intelligence, development
3. ADJECTIVE (simple)	A word used to describe a noun	A lovely day (Adj.) (N)
<i>A. Comparative adj.</i>	The form of the adjective used when two things are being compared	This is longer than that
<i>B. Superlative adj.</i>	The form of the adjective used when more than two things are being compared	This is the longest
4. ADVERB (simple)	A word used to modify a verb in one of four ways (comparative + superlative as with 3.)	She came quickly (<i>adverb of manner</i>) She comes often (<i>adverb of frequency</i>) She came yesterday (<i>adverb of time</i>) She came here (<i>adverb of place</i>)
5. PREPOSITION	A word used with a noun or pronoun to show place, position, time or means	I wrote to him. I've got something for you. She comes here on Sundays.
6. CONJUNCTION / CONNECTOR	A word used to connect words, phrases or sentences	and, but, however, nevertheless
7. PRONOUN	A word standing in place of a noun	(A) He kicked the ball = He kicked it (B) She spoke to Fred = She spoke to him
8. POSSESSIVE ADJECTIVE	A word used before the noun to indicate possession	This is my laptop
9. POSSESSIVE PRONOUN	A word replacing possessive adjective + noun	This is mine
10. MODAL VERBS	A verbs which has only one form and is followed by an infinitive with or without "to". It imposes a "mood" on the following verb	I swim = I can swim I must swim I should swim

<p>11. PHRASAL VERBS</p>	<p>A phrase consisting of a verb followed by a “preposition” or prepositional phrase where the “usual” meaning of the words changes.</p> <p>NOTE: also the possible change in word order: He looked up the word in the dictionary.</p>	<p>COMPARE: He looked up the chimney. (not a phrasal verb as both “look” and “up” have their usual meaning)</p> <p>WITH: He looked up the word in the dictionary. (a phrasal verb because “up” does not, here, have its usual meaning)</p>
<p>12. RELATIVE CLAUSE</p>	<p>A clause modifying a preceding noun. There are two types.</p>	<p>DEFINING RELATIVE CLAUSE: The man who I told you about yesterday has died. (no commas, the clause is an essential part of the sentence)</p> <p>NON-DEFINING RELATIVE CLAUSE: My wife, who lives in Paris, has decided to divorce me. (commas, the clause provides “extra”, non-essential information)</p>
<p>13. RELATIVE PRONOUN</p>	<p>The word which introduces a relative clause.</p>	<p>The film that / which I saw... The girl who loves you... The person whose car...</p>
<p>14. CONDITIONAL SENTENCES</p>	<p>Sentences expressing a hypothetical state of affairs, usually expressed by “if” in positive sentences and “unless” in negative sentences. <i>There are 4 main type:</i></p>	<p>1) If you heat ice, it melts. (Pres.)</p> <p>2) If he comes, I’d see him. (past + cond.)</p> <p>3) If he came, I’d see him. (past+perf. + cond.)</p> <p>4) If he had come, I’d have seen him. (an impossible event)</p>
<p>15. GERUND</p>	<p>A verbal noun, formed by the stem of the infinitive + “ing”. Certain verbs are always followed by a gerund.</p>	<p>Walking is good exercise. I’m sick of doing this. I couldn’t avoid hitting it.</p>
<p>16. ARTICLE (A) DEFINITE (B) INDEFINITE</p>	<p>Item or thing.</p>	<p>The trees, a monkey, an ostrich</p>
<p>17. DIRECT QUESTIONS</p>	<p>The words of a question as it is spoken.</p>	<p>Do you understand all this jargon?</p>
<p>18. INDIRECT QUESTIONS</p>	<p>Re-telling the question after it has been spoken. This frequently changes the tense, as well as words of time and place.</p>	<p>He asked me if I understood all the jargon. (Past)</p>
<p>19. QUESTION TAG</p>	<p>Forming a question by repeating and inverting the subject and verb at the end of the utterance.</p>	<p>(Pos.) (Neg.) He can swim, can’t he?</p> <p>(Neg.) (Pos.) He can’t swim, can he?</p>

20. IMPERATIVE	This has the form of the infinitive and expresses a command.	Sit down and shut up.
21. ACTIVE / PASSIVE (VOICE)	An utterance in the active voice follows the pattern of Subj. + V. + Obj. ; in a passive sentence the object becomes the normal subject and the verb is formed by the verb “to be” + past participle.	<i>ACTIVE:</i> (S) (D.O.) He killed the pig. <i>PASSIVE:</i> The pig was killed.
22. REFLEXIVE VERB	A verb that has for its direct object a pronoun which is also the agent or subject.	I enjoyed myself. The child washed himself.
23. CONCORD	The inflective agreement between the subject and verb.	I smoke, he smokes.
24. AUXILIARY VERBS	A verb used to form the tenses and negative or question forms of other verbs.	
25. PERSONAL PRONOUNS	Subjective: Objective: Possessive: Reflexive:	I, you, he, she, it, we, you, they me, you, him, her, we, you mine, your, his, her, our, your myself, yourself, etc.
26. TENSE	Present Simple: Present Continuous: Present Perfect: Present Perfect Continuous: Future Simple: Future Continuous: Future Perfect: Future Perfect Continuous: Past Simple: Past Continuous: Past Perfect: Past Perfect Continuous:	I go to the office every day. I am washing the dishes. I have lost my watch. I have been losing my watch for years. I will go to the movies. I will be going. I will have gone. He'll have been speaking for ages. I dug in the garden yesterday. I was writing a letter. I had lost it but found it later. I had been waiting for ages.

The glossary and overview of the tenses are by no means comprehensive. They are provided as a quick reference for certain common grammar terms. Should you wish a more complete reference work and to improve your knowledge of English grammar, we recommend:

Parrott, Martin, Grammar for English Language Teachers, Cambridge University Press

Self Assessment Task

1. *Imperatives* – give three examples in sentences.

2. *Regular and irregular verbs* – give three examples each of regular and irregular verbs. Provide all three forms of the verb: infinitive, simple past and past participle.

3. *Passive voice* – give three examples: one each of the present passive, past passive and future passive.

4. *Prepositions* – give three examples in sentences: one each for position, time and means.

5. *Present continuous* – when is it used? Think of three different functions of this tense.

6. *Pronouns* – give three examples each of subjective and objective pronouns and use them in sentences.

7. *Nationality words* – these deal with countries and how we speak about them, for example: Britain (country), British (adjective), Briton (person) and British (people). What are the nationality words for The Netherlands/Holland, Turkey and Peru? Now give three other examples of your own.

8. *Phrasal verbs* – select a common verb such as get, take, put etc. Give three examples in sentences with phrasal verbs formed from this indicate the meaning of each, for example: She takes in (gives shelter to) stray cats.

9. *Adjectives* – strings of adjectives before a noun have a standard order. Put three adjectives in front of a noun and say what each describes, for example: ugly (opinion) Chinese (origin) plastic (material) shoes. Do this a few times with more adjectives (up to six or seven) and work out the standard order.

10. *Adverbs* – give three examples each, in sentences, of adverbs of time, place and manner.





CERTIFICATE ASSESSMENT TASK - 2

GRAMMAR

There are two parts to this CAT, each consisting of approximately 750 words.

PART ONE

Explain how you would teach phrasal verbs to an intermediate class.

PART TWO

Explain how you would teach the future perfect tense to an upper intermediate class.