

Making Grammar Fun

By A. Khine Zin Aung

Learning Grammar is probably ranked as a pretty much less favorite activity among students. An ESL teacher, when it comes to teaching grammar lessons, spending ample time, getting very familiar with the points of grammar, and then figuring out how to communicate those to the students is an essential technique of teaching of grammar effectively.

Let me share my way of teaching grammar on a boring day for my students. One of the most important things to do if you are looking for more interesting ways to teach grammar is to teach it in context.

On a day of teaching grammar, for instance, I introduce "Conditional Sentences" to my students. I could start my lesson by writing a title on the board: "**Conditional Sentences**", followed by an example:

If he **prepares** well for a test, he **will get** a good grade.

Then, it is followed by an explanation:

"This type of conditional sentence means that every time the first action is done, the second thing will happen.

So, every time he doesn't study for a test,

After that, I will toss out some sentences for the students to finish:

"If Tom falls asleep in class, he¹,

"If I don't take regular physical exercise, I.....

"If I eat too much, I¹¹

I might need to wait for the answers out of them at first, but usually there will be one or two students who will catch on right away, even if some students have never heard that particular sentence structure. Then, the other students, after hearing a few answers, will get the gist pretty quickly, too. I let some weird answers come up, and have fun with it.

Once they have seen the particular grammar structure in context, I take a few moments to clarify and point out the structure, tense and usage. I make sure everyone understands, knows what it is called, and can identify and give examples of this particular sentence structure. After the lesson, I return to the game or activity briefly which can imprint the lesson in their mind and also it will drive the grammar point so that they can have a solid understanding.

When students see grammar in context first – through a game, an activity, or, a story, it lets their brains work a little bit to perceive the meaning before I formally explain it. That's how we naturally learn a language: by being exposed to it and picking up the meaning. It's more engaging; it develops an understanding that is grounded in context, and it also develops their critical thinking and comprehension skills.

It is essential to introduce various grammar points and topics so that students can have a richer understanding of the mechanisms of language. Games and activities are the perfect time to repeat the

lessons and emphasize grammar points with very little stress on their learning and a lot of fun for the students.

Stories are amazing teaching tools, too. After reading a story, I let students identify examples of grammar points that I have recently taught, or pick out sentence structures and patterns that are used frequently throughout the story.

The most important thing to remember when teachers are coming up with ways to teach grammar creatively is that grammar does not have to be dry and boring. If we teach it in context and incorporate grammar into stories, games, and other fun activities, our students will pick up grammar usage and structure relatively painlessly and they will probably have a lot of fun doing it.

The best approach is to make grammar exciting by incorporating games, fun activities, and stories. By doing so, all students will have opportunities to pick up proper grammar usage while having fun. In addition, the students learn how to use grammatically correct English in a safe, secure setting among peers. Best practices for the EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teachers is to engage the student into the classroom activities as much as possible.

There are just as many different opinions about teaching grammar as there are about learning grammar. Many teachers believe in the importance of grammar lessons devoted to a study of language rules and lots of practice exercises. Other teachers feel that grammar is best learned by doing different language activities without focusing so directly on the rules. Whatever teachers'

opinions are about grammar, and whichever way students are taught, here are some pieces of advice that may help the students to learn grammar more effectively.

- Be aware of grammar. Think about grammar. Notice the aspects of English grammar that are the same as or very similar to those in your language. (The use of the articles in German, for example, is similar to their use in English.) Notice also the way that English expresses an idea differently from how it is done in your language. If you notice the similarities and differences of the use of grammar in different languages, you will probably learn the rules more quickly.
- Read a lot of English books – All the time you are reading English books (and also listening to English), you are taking in models of correct grammar that will help you in your own writing and speaking. It will help you when you express your ideas and when you come to check your work. It is even better if you can read any type of articles, stories, a piece of news or information, etc. with grammatical awareness. By doing so, you may notice yourself learning correct grammar from time to time.
- Concentrate on the aspects of grammar you personally find most difficult. If you don't have any idea what aspects of English grammar cause you most problems, ask your teacher. Particularly in your writing, you can focus on these aspects for special care and attention when editing your work.

- If you don't like to do grammar exercises or to be taught grammar, then it's more important that you follow the advice in the paragraphs above. You should try to work out the patterns and rules of the language for yourself.
- If you do like to do grammar exercises, then go ahead. Nevertheless, being good at grammar exercises does not mean you will not make any mistakes in your own work. You could be like someone who has learned how to play tennis by reading a book, but once he is on the tennis court, he can't hit the ball properly. If you decide to do grammar exercises, try to go beyond just filling in gaps or doing multi-choice answers. Write out some sentences of your own that follow the same rule that you are practising.

Grammar is an aspect of language about which learners have different opinions. Some learners are very interested in finding out or learning grammar rules and doing lots of grammar exercises. Others dislike grammar and think it is the most boring part of learning a new language. Whatever opinion they have, however, they cannot escape from grammar as an English language learner. It is in every sentence they read or write, speak or hear and is simply the word for the rules that they must follow when they use the language. We need those rules in the same way as we need the rules in a game. If there are no rules, or if we follow our own rules, the game would soon break down. It's the same with language; without rules, we would not be able to communicate with other people.

Therefore, as we cannot escape from grammar when learning a language, what is the best way to learn grammar? It is like we can learn the rules of a game by simply playing the game. We will certainly make mistakes; we may even get hurt. However, eventually, we will know how to play the game. Of course, the rules of a language are very much more complicated than the rules of any game, but in fact, if we practice very often, we can be perfect language users and this is exactly how you learn a new language.

"Learning Grammar Must be Fun and Make Use of It To Be an Efficient Language Learner."

Bio-data:

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