

METHODOLOGY OF TEACHING PRESENT PERFECT

Synthesis

- “Present perfect involves the use of auxiliary *have* or *has* (third person singular) + *-ed* participle of a lexical verb” (Carter & McCarthy, 2006, p.415). *-ed* participle can also be called *past participle* (Morenberg, 1997).
- Negative form: *haven't/hasn't* + *-ed* participle; interrogative form: *have/has* + *Subject*+ *-ed* participle (p.416).
- “Perfect aspect indicates that the action of a verb is completed” (Morenberg, 1997, p.55).
- “Present perfect verbs often refer to past actions with effects that continue up to the present time” (Biber, et al., 2002).
- “The time frame may be indicated explicitly by an adjunct indicating “time-up-to-now”. Such expressions include: *before, during, in the last x minutes/hours/days, etc., lately, recently, so far, this week/month/year, etc., to date, today, up to/until now/till, for, since, already, still, yet, ever*” (Carter & McCarthy, 2006, pp.614-615).
- Another use of present perfect is when a speaker considers an event to be still important or relevant to the moment of speaking (Carter & McCarthy, 2006).
- “In spoken and written journalistic styles, the present perfect is sometimes used to stress the current relevance of events, even though definite past time adjuncts may be present: A man *has been arrested* last night and will appear in the court tomorrow.
- “Perfect aspect is used in all registers, but it is somewhat more common in fiction and news. ...The present perfect is much more common than past perfect in conversation, news, and academic prose” (Biber, et al., 2002, pp.158-159).
- The most common verbs used in present perfect are *be, get*, and physical and communication verbs, verbs that “state that earlier findings or practices continue to be valid” (Biber, et al., 2002, p.160). Verbs that rarely occur with present perfect are verbs that “describe mental or logical state” (p.161).
- Both the present perfect and the simple past refer to an event or state in the past, or a state that existed over a period of time. The main difference is that in present perfect the situation continues up to present, when the simple past “describes an even that happened at a specific time in the past with usage of time adverbials”: *yesterday, at that moment, then, etc.* (pp.161-162).

Pedagogical application

This lesson is designed for 10 ESL intermediate students. Hours of instruction per week are 20. They already know past simple and that it is used for finished time in the past.

Warm-up

Review past simple.

The students are divided in 2 groups of 5 students in each. The teacher writes a sentence on the top of the paper for each group "Once upon a time, there lived a very lazy student Mark". Students have to continue making sentences in the group using past simple. Each student after making a sentence folds a sentence and writes only a past simple verb for the next student on the next line of the paper, so the next student get a slight idea of what happened in the previous sentence and then writes its own. After finishing passing the sentences to each other, the students unfold the whole paper and read their story to the class.

Presentation

Teaching present perfect in affirmative sentences with actions that continue up to the present time only.

The teacher is going to write the sentences below on the board.

I have sent many emails today.

We have taken 3 tests this semester.

I have visited my family only once this year.

Carlos (for example a student from the group) has lived in the US for 2 years.

Then, the teacher will ask a question for each sentence:

- 1) Is today finished?
- 2) Is this semester finished?
- 3) Is this year finished?
- 4) Is Carlos still living in the USA?

The students are supposed to say that those periods of time are not finished and Carlos is still here. And the teacher would say that all these actions can still continue as the time is not finished. The teacher will explicitly explain that if the action started in the past and is not finished and continues now, it is called Present Perfect and the students have to use the structure (and the teacher will use one color to underline have/has and another to underline the verb) to show the unfinished action. The teacher will also point out the difference of using irregular past forms and tell the students to use the third column in their table of irregular verbs for the present perfect.

Focused practice

1) The students practice forming affirmative sentences in present perfect

Put the verbs in present perfect form:

1. The doctor _____(see) many patients today.
2. This year _____(be) very difficult for the country.
3. Many people _____(die) of malaria this summer.
4. We _____(stay) in this hotel for a week.
5. They _____(go) to many places in the past 2 months.

The students will have more sentences like that to practice the form.

Communicative Practice

As Biber et al. (2002) report that perfect aspect is more common in fiction and news, I chose news register for the communicative practice.

The students will become reporters and have to write a piece of news about what has happened in the world this year.

You are a reporter at the major news station. Give the name of your news station and the time of the day you give the news. Think about all the major events that have

happened this year (2017)/or this month/or today (choose the time) in the world. Write at least 8 news. Use appropriate structure (have/have + ed/III column). You may use the internet resources to help you.

You are going to hand in your writing to the teacher and also pair up with another student and share your news with him/her and compare if you have the same or different news with your partner.

The constructive feedback will be given only if the mistakes interfere with the meaning at this stage. The students will not be corrected on misusing have/has. The future lessons will be dedicated to gradual introduction of negative and interrogative sentences and the other usages of present perfect.

REFERENCES

1. Biber, D., Corad, S., & Leech, G. (2002). *Longman Student Grammar of Spoken and Written English*. Essex, England: Longman Publishers.
2. Carter, R., & McCarthy, M. (2006). *Cambridge Grammar of English. A Comprehensive Guide: Spoken and Written English Grammar and Usage*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
3. Morenberg, M. (1997). *Doing Grammar, 2nd edition*. New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press.