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IMPROVING GRAMMAR SKILLS BY USING AUTHENTIC MATERIAL

Education was always regarded as the education of comprehensively developed personality, including authentic materials. The surprising success of it must prove that most learners encourage their teachers to continue seeking, selecting, and using relevant authentic materials. We can find a lot of literature and resources related to effective techniques when teaching grammar. Most of them mention such traditional strategies as reference book usage, which is considered to be the most popular way among teachers. But we have to admit that relying on reference books only is still a common mistake.

It is important to understand that having good grammar skills compared with relevant authentic materials enables you as a writer or speaker to understand what makes a piece of writing or oral communication successful so that it will capture both the interest and understanding of the reader or listener.

Good grammar knowledge helps us to know how «to craft» words into coherent sentences, and how to form those sentences into paragraphs that successfully convey the meaning. Another important aspect of grammar is punctuation which should never be underestimated or ousted. Correctly used, any grammar structure can clarify the meaning while, on the other hand, lack of use or confusion can cause ambiguity. Following a rich palette of grammar structures in an appropriate context will help everybody to enrich his writing and communication.

We should say that we are not satisfied with «the mismatch between the way we teach in the classroom and the way assessment is conducted» [1, p. 85]. Most often it is connected with grammar problems and items of writing and the fact that formal assessment does not always meet the five principles of assessment. Therefore, we have completely realized that «there does not exist a perfect test to assess student's ability in mastering a language and that continuous assessment is more important. Moreover, our decisions should not rest on simple test scores» [3, p. 17].

Following the traditional way of teaching grammar or implementing interactive ways to improve grammar skills, each teacher has to remember that most students should learn from mistakes. That is why it is important to specify objectives, develop appropriate scoring guidelines and rubrics, involve learners more actively, and pay more attention to clear and exact instructions. Having appropriate grammar skills the learners are provided choice and ownership of a project, task any other activity aimed at grammar and they can express themselves, their interests and their talents. We as EFL teachers have to remember that many school learners who are not otherwise successful will choose to take the time and effort to excel [2, p. 102].

We are going to apply some interactive ways of teaching grammar and improving grammar skills by using authentic material. They are the following:

1. *Reading authentic material.*

Reading is considered to be the first and the main step to improving grammar skills. We completely agree with Hanna Yang who mentions that «this tip might seem obvious, but it's the most important one. Read written English. You can read novels, textbooks, or newspapers anything that makes you excited to keep reading and learning» [4]. It is also important to highlight the role of authentic materials in improving grammar skills. Readers typically make use of background knowledge, including grammatical. Even beginning students with a limited vocabulary can benefit from reading, by accessing *graded readers* (books where limited vocabulary and a limited range of grammatical structures are used).

2. Grammar manual consulting.

A grammar manual can help learners understand why English grammar works the way it does and why it follows another pattern. Knowing the rules is not just a replacement for having a natural intuition for grammar; the learners need to build both simultaneously, but it can certainly help them avoid written mistakes (which is still a common practice nowadays). If some learners don't have a grammar manual yet, there are a lot of series and interactive tools to be used. For example, they can try the Grammar in Use series (by Raymond Murphy) or Garner's Modern English Usage (by Bryan A. Garner). They can also use a common style guide like *the Chicago Manual of Style* or *the Associated Press Style* [4].

3. Grammar checker using.

A grammar checker can help the learners improve their grammar skills, study and analyze the mistakes they have made and make their writing sound fluent and professional, even if they are still learning the rules (it may include Gerund or Non-Finite Form of the Verbs). Again both the teachers and the learners are provided with lots of platforms to be used.

4. Parts of speech learning.

We have to remember that there are nine types of words in the English language: nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions, interjections, and articles. The learner has to study these parts of speech and how they link. They will need to know which role each word plays to use it correctly in a sentence. The next game involves using several sheets of paper marked with the parts of speech. Each part of speech needs to have its color.

5. Sentence structure learning.

Sentence structure encompasses many topics, from the difference between independent and dependent clauses to the necessary elements that comprise a complete sentence. Both the teacher and the learner have to remember that learning these rules will help create more complex sentences in writing.

6. Punctuation rules learning.

Many grammar mistakes involve improper punctuation and it happens too often. Correct punctuation shows how written thoughts stop, pause, or connect. Also, the learners will need to know how to use punctuation marks like commas, periods, semicolons, colons, apostrophes, dashes, and more. Correctly punctuating sentences will make the work easier to read.

7. Grammar games playing.

It is a well-known fact that most children learn better by playing games than by studying. Both the teacher and the learners are provided with plenty of grammar games online which put learners' skills to the test in an exciting way. Teachers can try *the Quiz Your English app* when improving grammar skills, which allows

competing against other learners [4]. If there are students who are at a more advanced level, they can try *Proof It*, a game where learners look for grammar and punctuation mistakes in English sentences. But we are speaking about middle school students who «learn English as a second language, and that is why they can try *FluentU*, which takes real videos and turns them into games» [4].

8. *Writing practice with correct grammar.*

Writing practice is considered to be one more important step in improving grammar skills. Written discourse tends to use both a wide variety of vocabulary and grammar structures, making it a better source for acquiring a broader range of language.

9. *Reading out loud.*

Reading learners' writing out loud is useful for proofreading. When they have finished a first draft, they have to try reading their work out loud. When the learner reads his writing on the page, everything might look correct, because the brain will correct misspellings and fill in the gaps. But when the learner reads the writing out loud, he will be able to tell if something sounds wrong. Along with other useful activities for improving grammar skills reading aloud helps to build a strong emotional bond between teachers and students.

10. *Class investment.*

Compared to other steps for improving grammar skills, this one is no less important. If the teacher wants to make sure his learners' grammar is improving, it may be worth investing in a class. We mean offering language courses that both the teacher and the learners can enroll in. An effective and interesting experience is when the teacher asks native speakers if they would be willing to tutor the learners one-on-one for an hourly fee.

Choosing interactive ways is a great chance for teachers to make their lessons more interesting, modern, exciting and knowledgeable. Innovative teaching methods are used to serve a variety of functions in training and helping to explore new skills and improve acquired ones, promoting self-esteem and seeking to change attitudes towards grammar. It is the teacher to choose the most effective way of improving his learners' grammar skills, to follow traditional learning methods, interactive ones (with relevant authentic material), or a combination of both.

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