Grammar teaching: what? how? And why?

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SPELT Post-Conference Institute
3 hrs
The session

Starter:
• Warmer – grammar tennis / what is grammar?

Main course:
• Types of grammar
• Lesson structures for teaching grammar

Dessert:
• Grammar practice tasks
Grammar tennis:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>a) Is this 'grammar'?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>b) Is this useful?</td>
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<table>
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<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am</td>
<td>going</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You</td>
<td>are</td>
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<tr>
<td>He</td>
<td>is</td>
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<tr>
<td>We</td>
<td>are</td>
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<td>They</td>
<td>are</td>
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<tr>
<td>going</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
a) Is this ‘grammar’?  

I would like to visit my daughter in Australia.

You would like to pick up a few new ideas about teaching grammar.

My husband would like to come to Pakistan.

b) Is this useful?  

We would like to be able to apply the new ideas to our teaching.

They would like us to leave the building on time today.
Tell a few people around you about what you wish - about NOW and about the PAST

eg.

I wish I didn’t need so much sleep.

I wish there was no corruption.

I wish it wasn’t quite so hot.

I wish I had come to Pakistan years ago.

I wish ....
Start every class with a class-generated grammar pattern:

Yesterday I ....
One day, I’d really like to ....
I love ..... but I really hate ...
If I hadn’t come to school/college today, I’d be ...
Tomorrow I’m going to ...
In five years’ time, I think I’ll be ...
Can you and your learners do this?

**Teachers might need:**
- Freedom to go ‘off-syllabus’
- Confidence to trust it will work
- Belief that learners can and will participate

**Learners might need:**
- Own ideas
- Confidence to express own and others’ ideas
- Independence
- Ability to personalise language
5 initials of people in each circle:

in the world:
in the country:
in the room:
in my head:
a) What are all these different types of grammar?
b) Which do we want our learners to learn?

- Prescriptive grammar
- Grammar of spoken English
- Grammar of standard British English
- De-contextualised grammar
- Descriptive grammar
- Grammar of written English
- Grammar of local variety of English
- Contextualised grammar
Now to the HOW – how can we teach grammar?:
What’s the difference between these two?:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Inductive grammar teaching</th>
<th>Deductive grammar teaching</th>
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Inductive or deductive? Which works best?

1) Here’s today’s grammar:
‘I wish + past simple’ to want to change a present state

Eg.
I wish I was on the beach
I wish I had black hair
I wish I lived in El Salvador

Now write some more sentences

2) What is he thinking?:

• Model sentence
• Concept check questions
• Stress marking and drilling
• Controlled / restricted practice
• Freer practice / personalisation
Let’s look at a sequence of a contextualised grammar lesson:

Grammar focus: **Passives**

• Structure of lesson?
• Context(s)?
What are the stories? 
Which countries are they from?
1. This country is protected by 10m fences, water and guards.
2. Many trees have been planted to protect against tsunamis.
3. People were arrested for killing elephants and rhinos.
4. 69 indigenous languages are spoken on one island.
5. Women have been discriminated against and abused for many years.
6. Far too many people have been put in prison for drug offences.
7. Young people, aged 8 – 16 are being trained to shoot and use weapons.
8. Boys hope they will be invited to travel and show their ninja skills.
9. Migrants have not been allowed to continue on their journey.
10. 17,000 homes were carried away in monsoon floods.

Look back at the 10 sentences (last slide) and discuss:

1/ Which grammar structure is included in all 18 sentences?
2/ Underline the example(s) in each sentence.
3/ Are all the examples the same? How are they different?
4/ Why is this grammar structure used?
1. This country is protected by 10m fences, water and guards.
2. Many trees have been planted to protect against tsunamis.
3. People were arrested for killing elephants and rhinos.
4. 69 indigenous languages are spoken on one island.
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Learner discovery from looking at examples:

Find examples in the 10 sentences of:
1/ Present simple passive
2/ Present continuous passive
3/ Past simple passive
4/ Present perfect passive
5/ Future simple passive
6/ A negative passive
The Passive: Who/what does what to who/what?

eg. a) The country is protected by fences, water and guards.
   b) 1,000 people were arrested.
   c) Trees have been studied.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who/what (subject)</th>
<th>does what (action)</th>
<th>to who/what (object)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) Fences/water/guards</td>
<td>protect</td>
<td>the country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Police ???</td>
<td>arrested</td>
<td>1,000 people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Scientists???</td>
<td>have studied</td>
<td>trees</td>
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In pairs, continue the table with the other examples from the 10 sentences – you can read the mini-texts again to find out ‘who/what does what to who/what?’.
Practice / activation / production / groupwork:

Choose 10 more stories to write passive sentences about from this link – more short news stories from 2015:

https://eewiki.newint.org/index.php/2015: news_from_around_the_world

Check all the passive sentences:

• Have part of the verb ‘to be’
• Have a past participle (check: regular or irregular?)
• Make sense! (check back: who/what does what to who/what?)
a) What are they?
b) Do we use them?
c) Which are most useful?
d) Match the lesson to the approach:

PPP  ESA
TTT  TBA
PPP – Presentation, Practice, Production

Advantages and disadvantages?

- https://scottthornbury.wordpress.com/2011/01/16/p-is-for-ppp/
**PPP**

**Presentation:** in context of my past habits when I was a child: ‘used to + infinitive’. Check form / structure, meaning (with concept check questions) and pronunciation (drill and mark stress)

**Practice:** Pairs write at least 10 sentences using target structure from photos of Karachi 100 years ago. Check.

**Production:** Role-play – famous local person interviewed by local radio about childhood. Post task error correction.

**TTT**

**Test:** pairs interview each other for local radio about what Pakistan was like 20 years ago

**Teach:** with some learner language from interviews, guide class to focus on form, meaning (concept check questions) and pronunciation (drilling) of ‘used to + infinitive’. If necessary, give more practice eg. pairs write 10 sentences from old photos

**Test:** learners in pairs, write up the interviews from beginning of lesson to create a class magazine ‘Pakistan 20 years ago’
TTT – Test, Teach, Test

1/ groups of 3 discuss and fill in at least 10 predictions on a timeline (2018 – 2030)
2/ T writes examples of future tenses to board and guides learners to self/peer correction. Further clarification and practice of specific tenses where needed.
3/ learners in different groups of 3 tell others about their predictions from stage 1 and agree on 6

TBA – Task-Based Approach

1/ groups of 3 to hold a planning meeting for a business of their choice to plan, predict sales and outcomes for 2018 – 2030. Groups present their ideas to class.
2/ T plays a recording of competent speakers doing the same task and guides learners to focus on target language (eg. future tenses). Clarification and practice where necessary.
3/ Repeat of stage 1 in different groups, this time holding a planning meeting for their school / college
Engage: get groups to predict front page world news items, then display: [http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world), or local alternative, to check which group predicted most correctly.

Study: class choose one news item – elicit criticism of action: X should have + past participle. Clarify form/structure, drill, mark stress, concept check. Elicit more examples, related to the other front page news items, and/or related to national / local news items. Guide and elicit correction until learners can use the structure.

Activate: learners each write down 5 mistakes they’ve made or missed opportunities. In groups of 4 or 5, they take turns to tell the others their list, and the others criticise action and suggest alternatives.
Grammar practice:

How much?
How often?
Alone or in pairs or groups?
How structured?
Mechanical or meaningful?
On paper or paperless?

How important are errors and correction?
What’s your favourite grammar practice task?
What’s more important?: form or meaning?
Background theory:

SFL – Systemic Functional Linguistics
(M. Halliday 1961)
Function of language (what language does, and how it does it), is much more important than structure.
eg. Context: Field (what is going on), Tenor (the social roles and relationships between the participants), and the Mode (aspects of the channel of communication)
and Semantics / pragmatics

Creative Automaticity
(Gatbonton, E. & Segalowitz, N. 1988)
‘The techniques for this approach are designed to provide students with ample opportunities for repetition and practice within a wholly communicative context, without the shortcomings usually characteristic of pattern drills or other more traditional methods.’

>>>>> computational linguistics
Can you explain....?

• Find someone who ....
• Group true/false dictation
• Spot the difference
• Noughts and crosses
In groups of 3: Create a meaningful, contexualised grammar practice task that you could use in class with your learners. SHARE!!
Questions?

Contact me: lindaruas@hotmail.com

• Materials / ideas / visuals from Easier English wiki New Internationalist: https://eewiki.newint.org/index.php/Main_Page
• Interested in Global Issues?: join IATEFL GISIG http://gisig.iatefl.org/

My books: