

THE EFFECTIVE TEACHING GRAMMAR ACTIVITIES WITH NO RESOURCES

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Abstract:

Teaching grammar with no resources to be great challenge for many teachers because it is so difficult to be conducted. But there are many ways can be done by the teacher to teach grammar although resources unavailable. This article would like to explain kinds of effective activities in the teaching grammar with no resources. It can help the teachers who will teach grammar by using no resources. Besides that, it also proposes the procedure and variations of theme. Each activity is completed by level, language context of grammar, and age of the learners.

Keywords:

Effective Activities, Teaching Grammar, No Resources

1. Introduction

Teaching grammar is not something new for teachers especially for the language teachers. It already has been done for many years by the teacher at the educational institutions. The teacher teaches grammar not only at the junior high school up to college, but now it is taught by the teacher from the beginning up to high level such as at the kindergarten up to college. The teacher who teaches grammar has different style, strategy, and method. It depends on the material and the student's level.

Most teachers use the teaching resources in their teaching and learning process such as book, pen, whiteboard, laptop, LCD projector, etc in order to get successful in their teaching process.

Unfortunately, not all of the schools have the complete resource. In fact, there are many schools that still have incomplete one. It will bring some effects to the teaching learning process at the classroom especially for the teacher's activity at the class.

Teaching grammar with no resources becomes a great challenge for the teacher. In this case, the teacher has to have good treat and trick in the presenting material. It is also heavy duty for the teacher because the teacher must be creative in her/his activity at the classroom. Unavailable resources are not being obstacle for the teacher in the teaching learning process especially in teaching grammar. But it should become good motivation for the teacher to find out the effective activities which is

appropriate in teaching grammar. In this article, I want to discuss the effective activities in teaching grammar with no resources for any level. In this case, I also explain about the procedure, teaching variation, level, language context, and the age of learners from each teaching activity.

2. What Is Grammar?

Grammar is fundamental to language. It is also as the center of language pedagogy. Without grammar, language does not exist.¹ However, nothing in the field of language pedagogy has been as controversial as the role of grammar teaching. The controversy has always been whether grammar should be taught explicitly through a formal presentation of grammatical rules or implicitly through natural exposure to meaningful language use. This controversy has existed since the beginning of language teaching. However, whatever position we take regarding grammar instruction, "it is bound to be influenced by the recent history of grammar teaching".²

Most people think that grammar is perhaps so serious and central in learning another language that usually focuses on the students' energy on the task of mastering and internalizing it. Grammar is a central in the teaching and learning process of language. It is also

one of the more difficult aspects of language to teach well.³ "The *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* defines grammar as the rules by which words change their forms and are combined into sentences. There are two basic elements in this definition: the rules of grammar; and the study and practice of the rules. The rules of grammar are about how words change and how they are put together into sentences. The knowledge of grammar also tells the learner what to do if he wants to put the some phrase into the sentence. Grammar should be called the way in which words change themselves and group together to make sentences."⁴

Furthermore, grammar is partly the study of what forms (or structures) are possible in a language.⁵ Here, I write down about the other definition of grammar is as follow:

- a. Grammar is a description of the rules for forming sentences which convey the meaning in different contexts.
- b. Grammar adds meanings that are not easily inferable from the immediate context.
- c. Representational - that is, grammar enables us to use language to describe the world in terms of how, when, and where things happen.

³ Ur, Penny. 1988. *Grammar Practice Activities: A Practical Guide For Teachers*. Cambridge University Press. p. 5.

⁴ Harmer, Jeremy. 1989. *Teaching and Learning Grammar*. London: Longman. p. 18

⁵ Ibid; Nassaji, Hossein and Fotos, Sandra. 2011. p. 3

¹ Nassaji, Hossein and Fotos, Sandra. 2011. *Teaching Grammar In Second Language Classroom*. Routledge: Taylor & Francis. p. 1

² Ibid.

- d. Interpersonal- that is, grammar facilitates the way how we interact with other people and when we need to get things done using language.
- e. Grammar can be organised into a teaching syllabus according to such criteria as complexity, learnability, and teachability.
- f. Grammar rules can be formulated, according to whether they are prescriptive, descriptive or pedagogic, and whether they focus on form or on its use.
- g. Grammar regard to the contextual information that plays a key role in our interpretation of what a speaker means.⁶

3. Defining Grammar Teaching

Traditionally, grammar teaching is viewed as the presentation and practice of discrete grammatical structures. This is the view promulgated in teacher handbooks.⁷ Ur (1996), for example, in her chapter titled "Teaching Grammar" has sections on "presenting and explaining grammar" and "grammar practice activities." Hedge (2000) in her chapter titled "Grammar" similarly only considers "presenting grammar" and "practicing grammar." This constitutes an overly narrow definition of grammar teaching. It is certainly true that grammar teaching can consist of the presentation

and practice of grammatical items. *First*, some grammar lessons might consist of presentation by itself (i.e., without any practice), while others might entail only practice (i.e., no presentation). *Second*, grammar teaching can involve learners in discovering grammatical rules for themselves (i.e., no presentation and no practice). *Third*, grammar teaching can be conducted simply by exposing learners to input contrived to provide multiple exemplars of the target structure.⁸ Here, too, there is no presentation and no practice, at least in the sense of eliciting production of the structure. Finally, grammar teaching can be conducted by means of corrective feedback on learner errors when these arise in the context of performing some communicative task. The definition of grammar teaching that informs this article is that *grammar teaching* involves any instructional technique that draws learners' attention to some specific grammatical form in such a way that it helps them either to understand it metalinguistically and/or process it in comprehension and/or production so that they can internalize it.⁹

4. What Are Resources?

Resources are tools or anything which the teacher uses to help students learn.¹⁰ Every school has resources as

⁶ Thornbury, Scott. 1999. *How To Teach Grammar*. London: Longman. Page 13.

⁷ Fotos, S. 1994. *Integrating Grammar Instruction and Communicative Language Use Through Grammar Consciousness-Raising Tasks*. TESOL Quarterly 28, 323-351.

⁸ Ibid

⁹ Ellis, R. 1998. *Teaching And Research: Options In Grammar Teaching*. TESOL Quarterly. Page 3

¹⁰ Ummah, Sumihatul. 2007. *Jurnal Okara Vol.III, Tahun 2, Mei 2007: Improving In*

tool in teaching and learning process in the class, but not all of schools have complete resources such as blackboards, textbooks, dictionaries, tape recorders, radios, television sets, video players, computer, etc. But there are also many schools have incomplete resources such as blackboards and a few books or sometimes without using resources. The resources can help the teacher in the teaching learning process. By having resources, the teacher can present the material effectively.

Furthermore, many teachers face difficulty in teaching and learning process with limited or no resources in the classroom, especially in teaching grammar. To solve this problem, they must develop ways of their teaching grammar in an interesting, motivating, creative, and effective way. The ways can make the teaching and learning process of grammar more effective although by using limited or no resources.

5. Effective Activities In Teaching Grammar With No Resources

Teaching grammar with no resources seems so difficult for the teacher because the teacher seem to teach the English material especially grammar unsuccessfully. Here, I want to release the teacher's negative perception about teaching grammar with no resources. There are some effective

activities that can be used by the teacher in teaching grammar with no resources.

a. **Action mime**

Language : Continuous tense

Level : Elementary upwards

Age : Young adult

This is a popular drama warm-up exercise which is usually done in a circle, but which can be easily used in any situation where students have at least some space in which they can stand up. It is especially useful for the initial presentation of tense forms, and subsequent revision and comparison. In this activity, the teacher does not use resources in teaching grammar. It means that, there is no teaching resource. The procedure of this activity will be explained below.

Procedure

1. Establish a set sequence in which students take their turn-along rows or around a circle, for example. for example. If concentrating on the present continuous tense, the teacher begins with a target sentence like '*He is playing tennis.*'
2. The next student in the series then mimes playing tennis, and thinks of another sentences such as '*She is typing a letter.*'
3. This then passes on to the next student to mime, and so on. Encourage correct usage of 'he' and 'she'.

Variations

1. The mime is done first, and the next person guesses what the mime represent. This is particularly useful for demonstrating the use of other, awkward, continuous tenses, such as:

'He was riding a bicycle.'

'She has been behaving like a monkey.'

2. Instead of using 'he' and 'she' use real names to indicate who should perform the action, therefore breaking the usual set sequence. This keeps every one on their toes, and is a good 'getting-to-know-you' exercise with a new class.

b. Adverb game

Language: Adverb

Level : Elementary

Age : Any

This activity is appropriate used by the teacher who teaches grammar in the context of adverb. If you are doing this activity with a class for the first time, it might be worth having a small 'stock' of adverbs and commands ready to give them. Here, I give possible examples of adverb and command at this early stage.

- Examples of adverb
Angrily Happily Slowly
Badly Lazily Stupidly
Carefully Painfully Violently
Carelessly Quickly Dangerously
Crazily Quietly Sadly

- Examples of command
Do your homework, eat breakfast, feed the dog, get dressed, go for a walk, hitch a lift, play the violin, read a book, smoke a cigarette, take a shower, wait for a bus, watch TV.

Procedure

1. One student leaves the classroom, or moves out of earshot. The rest of the class decides on an adverb of action.
2. When the class has thought of suitable adverb, bring the first student back. The teacher must now discover what the chosen adverb is by asking other students to perform actions in the manner of that adverb.
3. It will probably be impossible for students to guess the adverb first times.
4. So, the teacher continues by asking a different students to perform a different action using the same adverb. This carries on until the adverb is guessed correctly, or until the teacher decides that this will not happen (possibly after six or seven attempts).
5. Another student then leaves the room, the class decides on a new adverb.
 This is an effective activity, but it still produces some memorable and original sentences for students:

'Please blow your nose.'

(Answer: romantically)

'Please stroke the cat.' (Answer:

violently)

Variation for large classes

An alternative method of presenting the exercise if you have a large class is to arrange students into sets of competing group, which must then compile lists of adverbs for the other teams guess. When the lists are ready, go to the first team, and allow any member of any other group to select an action for a member of that team to perform. Then the first person to guess the adverb being demonstrated wins a point for his or her team. Move on to the next group. Alternatively, you may wish to have every member of the selected group performing the adverb, which removes the pressure from any one individual in that team.

c. Alibi

Language : Question and answer forms (past tenses)

Level : Intermediate-Advanced

Age : Adult upwards

This parlor game will be familiar to many teachers in some form. A crime (usually a hideous murder) is said to have been committed the previous evening. Build the tension by suggesting that three students in the class are suspected. Choose the students and name them.

Procedure

1. The teacher asks three students to leave the classroom (or move out of earshot) and devises their 'alibis' for the previous evening.
2. The teacher stresses to the students that they must know the *exact* details of what they did and where they went. Also stress that they must claim to have been together the whole time.
3. While the three students are deciding on their story, split the rest of the class into three groups, each of which will interview each suspect in turn.
4. If the students have a pen and piece of paper, they can nominate a note-taker; otherwise the whole group will, like good detectives, have to rely on memory. Together, group members decide on some good questions to ask.
5. The students can also decide who will ask the question, and where the suspect will sit (or stand).
6. After 5-10 minutes, bring the three suspects back into the classroom. One goes to each group for questioning, which can last for about five minutes, and then the groups swap suspects. All three groups get

the chance to question all three suspects separately.

7. Any difference between the suspects' stories will be seen as proof of guilt. Maybe not all the suspects are guilty. It is up to the interrogating groups to decide. At the end of the questioning sessions, gather the evidence from the three groups orally, and take a class vote to decide which (if any) of the students is guilty.
8. If you have any time remaining, the class may wish to decide on a suitable punishment.

d. Change it

Language : Any

Level : Elementary upwards

Age : Any

This activity is a substitution drill. Drills can be very good if used occasionally for revision purposes, but should probably not be relied on too heavily as this could lead to demotivation. The "change it" activity can be an effective activity of getting students to focus on and internalize particular constructions, examples of which are given below. Such drills can be done in a circle if desired.

Procedure

1. Begin with a single sentence, using the target language pattern such as *'The*

newspaper said the situation was unstable.'

2. In turn, students change any word in the sentence, and say the new sentence aloud. Anything which is both grammatical and comprehensible is permitted.

'The newspaper said the mountain was unstable.'

'The scientist said the mountain was unstable.'

'The scientist thought the mountain was unstable.'

etc.

Variations

1. If you wish to concentrate on adjective prefixes, for example, feed in a positive adjective, such as 'moral'.
2. The next student repeats the initial sentence, but using the opposite of that adjective, for example *'The newspaper said the situation was immoral.'*
3. Students change other words in the sentence to fit the new adjective, for example *'The judge said the criminal was immoral.'*
4. If revising vocabulary sets such as 'food', start with *'Alan will take an apple on the picnic.'*
5. Give another name, for example Brian, and the next student must repeat the whole sentence using a food which

begins with the same letter as the new name, for example 'Brian will take a banana on the picnic.'

Possible language practice topics by using the "change it" activity are comparatives, irregular verbs, opposites, prepositions of place (in the box, on the wall, etc.), pronouns, tenses and time phrases (last week, tomorrow, etc.), vocabulary sets.

e. Clapping verbs

Language : Irregular verbs

Level : Elementary upwards

Age : Any

Procedure

1. Set up the four-beat rhythm as described above, but the teacher should be ready to speak on every third turn, using the list of irregular verbs below.
2. The teacher starts by calling out the infinitive of a verb.
3. In time with the rhythm, the first student in the sequence calls out the past simple form, and the second calls out the perfect form.
4. Then the teacher calls out another infinitive. The pattern continues around the 'circle'.
5. The teacher encourage students to identify mistakes. Younger groups might like the idea of paying a forfeit for missing a turn or getting a word wrong. If your class is

arranged in a real circle, running once around the circle might be a good energy-raising possibility. Otherwise some other suitable physical exercise (such as five press-ups) could be used, but it would probably be better to keep the verb sequence going while such forfeits are paid.

This is an excellent way of revising irregular verb forms so that they become an automatic part of students' language. The teacher does not be afraid to repeat the same verb during a session. It can only help students to memorize the form. The example of irregular verbs as follows:

- hit (hit, hit)*
- leave (left, left)*
- spend (spent, spent)*
- fly (flew, flown)*
- beat (beat, beaten)*
- meet (met, met)*
- swim (swam, swum)*
- lay (laid, laid)*
- choose (chose, chosen)*
- blow (blew, blown)*
- hide (hid, hidden)*
- tear (tore, torn)*
- eat (ate, eaten)*
- lie (lay, lain)*
- throw (threw, thrown)*
- rise (rose, risen)*
- teach (taught, taught)*
- dig (dug, dug)*
- stick (stuck, stuck)*

fall (fell, fallen)
mean (meant, meant)
sing (sang, sung)
bite (bit, bitten)
wake (woke, woken)
sell (sold, sold)
wear (wore, worn)
hold (held, held)
hang (hung, hung)

Variation for advanced students

For advanced groups, you can add other verbs to this list. You can even include regular verbs. So that, the students have to remember it if the form is '-ed' or not. But you have to be sure to prepare your list in advance. So, you can keep up with the pace of exercise.

f. Conditional string

Language : 1st and 2nd conditionals
 Level : Intermediate – Advanced
 Age : Any

Procedure

1. The teacher can do the activity at the classroom in a fixed sequence like a 'circle' exercise.
2. The teacher begins to give an example of the conditional sentence, for example: *'If I won the lottery, I'd buy yacht.'*
3. The next person in the sequence then changes the

'would' part of the sentence to a new 'if' clause. *'If I bought a yacht,'*

4. The teacher asks students to finishes the sentence in a suitable manner, such as *' I'd sail to Australia.'*
5. This continues around the class with as much speed as possible.

Variation

In this activity, I give some examples of the opening sentences that is possible to be used by the teacher. The Possible opening sentences are:

- 'If I won the lottery, I'd have a lot of money.'*
- 'If I become president, I'd be in charge of the country.'*
- 'If I met a genie, I'd have three wishes.'*
- 'If I moved abroad, I'd live in france.'*
- 'If I was richer, I'd buy a new house.'*

Students could be encouraged to use the 1st and 2nd conditionals according to how likely they feel the events which they suggest are: *'If I bought a new house, I'd get a pet dog.'*

'If I get a pet dog, I'll go for more walks.'

'If I go for more walks, I'll lose some weight.'

The exercise could then be used to introduce the differences between conditional types and extended to serve as early practice in these structures.

g. I can I can't

Language : Can/ can't

Level : Elementary intermediate

Age : Any

This is the best done in small, fast-moving groups (or circles) of between six and eight people. So, if your class is larger, you can do one test run with the whole class. Then, you can divide the class into some groups.

Procedure

1. The teacher asks the students to tell the person on left something which you can do. For example: *'I can swim.'*
2. The sentence 'travels' all the way around the class with students using 'can/can't' as appropriate to themselves. The objective is to find as many things as possible which everyone in the group *can or can't* do.

Variations

1. This activity is also a useful exercise for introducing the present perfect tense as an expression of experience. You can start with a sentence such as: *'I've been to Canada.* The objective is then to find things

which either everybody or nobody in the group has done.

2. You start the activity in the same way. You tell the person on your left something which you can do, such as *'I can drive a car.'* In this version, however, all 'can' sentences go clockwise, and all 'can't' sentences go anti-clockwise. Therefore if the student can also do this thing. He/she repeats the same sentence to the next person in the sequence, and so on. If they can't, they say back to you *'I can't drive a car.'* No person is allowed to use the same main verb twice. So, you must then think of something you can't do and tell this to the person on your right, for example the next person anti-clockwise in the sequence such as *'I can't speak Italian.'* They either continue anti-clockwise with the same sentence, or, if they can speak Italian, they return it to you as a new 'I can' construction. By changing the direction of the sequence as indicated, the opposite nature of 'can' and 'can't' is reinforced for students. The objective now is to find verbs which can travel all the way round the circle in either direction.

h. Simon says

Language : Imperatives

Level : Beginner – Elementary

Age : Children

Procedure

The teacher shouts of instructions which should only be obeyed if they include the words 'Simon says'. The example instructions are:

'Simon says "Raise your right hand".'

'Simon says "Hop on your left foot".'

'Touch your toes.'

'Simon says "Kneel on the knee".'

'Turn around.' etc.

The activity can be competitive between teams or individuals, with the winner being the last student to get an instruction wrong. Alternatively it can be decided on a point basis (add points for each mistake: the lowest total wins).

Variations

1. Instead of using 'Simon says' as the key words to listen for, use 'please', or polite forms such as 'could you'.
2. As you give an instruction, perform an action yourself. This action might or might not correspond with the instruction. Students should obey your words, not necessarily copy what you are doing.

3. The class is divided into groups. Within each group students give instructions to each other, leaving the teacher free to observe and note any mistakes for later correction.

i. Tableaux

Language : Present perfect

Level : Intermediate

Age : Any

This activity can work as an extension of 'statues'. However, instead of a sculptor working with a single partner, a scene is devised and shown by a small group. It can also be appropriate used by older learners.

Procedure

1. The teacher decides the students into some group.
2. The teacher gives a present perfect sentence on a piece of paper to the students in each group.
3. The teacher also asks the students in each group to illustrate it.
4. Then, the teacher decides on a group 'statue' to represent the sentence. The example of sentences as follow:
'A policeman has just told a group of children to stop smoking'.
'A woman has just seen two cyclists have an accident.'

'Two old friends have just met for the first time in five years.'

'A man has just had his umbrella stolen by two youths.'

'A child has just been stung by a bee.'

'A man on a train has just been caught without a ticket.'

'A waiter has just spilt soup down a customer's new suit.'

In this activity, there is no need to have a nominated sculptor in the group, although this is possible. Instead, all the members of the group contribute their ideas of what the tableau should look like. The visual aspect of the activity should help each individual to focus on the meaning of the sentence which is being worked on. When all the tableaux are ready, the other group tries to guess each other's sentences.

Variation

This activity can be easily and profitably extended. The teacher asks each group to produce a different tableau showing the same people ten seconds after the moment depicted in the first tableau. They could produce a series of about five or six such tableaux, and then present them to the class in the manner of a slow motion film. The class then decides what the situation in

each 'film' is, and can even be asked to provide a running 'news' commentary.

j. What use is it?

Language : Modal verbs

Level : Elementary upwards

Age : Any

Procedure

1. The teacher asks to students to choose any familiar object, such as a pen. (You don't even have to have one available, although if you do then it can be used for demonstration).
2. The teacher asks the students how this object can be used in any ways other than the conventional way.
3. The teacher may have to give a couple of examples to get students going:
'It could be used as a back scratcher.'
'It might be good as a tooth-pick.'
4. The teacher divides the class into some groups, and she/he gives each group the name of one household item. The examples of household items such as gloves, matchbox, cigarette, papeer clips, string, key-ring, cap, bottle, knife, fork, spoon, toothbrush, etc.
5. Then, the teacher asks to students to find as many

different uses for this item as possible. Encourage the use of modal verbs.

Variation

The imagination of the class can be stimulated further by presenting this activity as one entitled 'Aliens'. Tell the class that they are all from the planet Zoltan, and that they have discovered some strange objects on planet Earth, and want to know what they are used for. If you can find enough 'strange' objects, individually or in small group students all receive an item which they then have to describe in detail. Otherwise just use the relevant vocabulary as above. Students then present their theories about the possible uses of those objects, and demonstrate what people on Earth might do with them. If you can get gold of them, kitchen utensils such as a sieve, corkscrew, can-opener, and so on are often useful for this exercise. Be prepared to look around for any small item with strangely shaped. Flexible or moving parts, as these would be quite challenging.¹¹

learning process because they can help the teacher in explaining the certain material effectively especially in teaching grammar. In opposite side, teaching grammar with no resources is heavy duty for the teacher. It is as a great challenge for the teacher because the teacher must present the material without using resources. For most teachers who usually teach by using resources is a main problem. They must be creative in their teaching learning process especially in the teaching grammar. In this article, there are some effective activities in the teaching grammar with no resources. These activities are action mimes, adverb game, alibi, change it, clapping verbs, conditional string, I can I can't, Simon says, tableaux, and what use it?. I hope those can help the teacher in teaching grammar although unavailable resources at the school.

6. Conclusion

Teaching resources are so important for the teacher in the teaching

¹¹ Marsland, Bruce. 2009. *Lessons From Nothing: Activities For Language Teaching With Limited Time And Resources*. Cambridge University Press. p. 6-17.

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