

TEACHING GRAMMAR THROUGH READING SHORT STORIES

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Abstract

The goal of this article is to analyze the role of reading short stories in teaching grammar for EFL students. This article will cover: advantages of using literary texts to teach grammar, teaching grammar structures through short stories.

Key words: grammar, learner's age, role, motivation, tasks, methods, approaches, context, contextualized materials, argument, participants

ОБУЧЕНИЕ ГРАММАТИКЕ ЧЕРЕЗ ЧТЕНИЕ РАССКАЗОВ

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Абстрактный

Цель этой статьи - проанализировать роль чтения коротких рассказов в обучении грамматике для студентов, изучающих английский язык. В этой статье будут рассмотрены: преимущества использования художественных текстов для обучения грамматике, обучение грамматическим структурам с помощью коротких рассказов.

Ключевые слова: грамматика, возраст учащегося, роль, мотивация, задания, методы, подходы, контекст, контекстуализированные материалы, аргументация, участники.

Many students find learning grammar a strong and difficult battle. Every teacher can use a short story in order to spice up grammar lessons and beat boredom. The two highlighted causes of ineffectual grammar teaching are: inappropriate grammar teaching approach and lack of authentic and contextualized learning materials.

The article demonstrates that some grammar teaching approaches, such as Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), positively impact grammar instruction and

learning. But traditional teaching methods that teach grammar in isolation through decontextualized forms are still very popular in many countries. To solve this problem, teachers should understand the benefits of materials and curriculum that help them create interesting authentic and contextualized grammar learning opportunities. The new national curriculum in Uzbekistan requires teachers to teach English grammar, starting in primary school. We pay much attention to reach different levels of the Common European Framework of References for languages (CEFR). Under the influence of that project, curriculum and methods in teaching English have undergone changes. Still, most of our people cannot speak or write English properly because of poor grammar. Grammar in our country and the purpose of learning grammar is very much exam-oriented. So, we can perceive that there are some problems in the procedure of the English language teaching and learning, particularly in the method of grammar teaching, in our country.

The recommendations given in this article will help to demystify teaching English grammar and ensure it plays a creative and rewarding role in our English classroom teaching. Among literary genres, short stories seem to be the most suitable choice for this due to its potential to help students enhance the four skills—listening, speaking, reading and writing—more effectively because of the motivational benefit embedded in the stories.

The article will familiarize EFL instructors with the effectiveness of using short stories in EFL instruction. We can point different ways in which stories help students to learn grammar: they enhance the memory through the identification of patterns, they develop the imagination. Stories can be used for both eliciting and illustrating grammar points. In addition, a well told story is the perfect context for a structure-discourse match, but the technique can also be used effectively for a structure-social factor match. A short story can in many ways expand the process of language learning. We paid attention to the two well-known stories: “A Cup of Tea” by Katherine Mansfield and “The Luncheon” by W. Somerset Maugham. They are often used in different grammar books to set exercises. They are worthy enough to interest the students who took part in the survey. We focused more on the following

aspects of the target students as well as of the content itself: language level of the target students, needs and interests of the learners, cultural appropriateness of the text.

Methods

Our research-work consisted of both qualitative and quantitative statistics to help us to prove the correctness of our study. The following sources for research questions were used in the study: books, journals, web pages, conducting and observing classes of another teacher.

Participants

We have chosen two groups of students from Samarkand Institute of Veterinary Medicine, Animal Husbandry and Biotechnology.

Results and Discussion

We collected the data through questionnaires and got the results of the quiz test at the end of the classes in the two groups. After that we were confident in the fact that we must rise the interest of the students through the usage of short stories as authentic texts in our grammar classes. We had a discussion with our English teachers and they agreed that literature and short story in particular could be a great tool to be used in teaching grammar. But we should pay attention to some limitations prevalent in an institution like ours: students are required to finish a board prescribed syllabus within a certain period of time and they mostly think about getting good marks in the exam than about learning something with interest for better understanding. Carefully analyzing data and other, we have reached the following findings: for most of the students, texts that are given to them during the lessons are not interesting and comfortable. Students are waiting for the introduction of interesting and not dull contextual materials. They want innovations. Those students who like reading short stories found it easier to elicit grammar points from a story which are elaborately discussed in the class. Students are ready to accept creative changes in the materials if it is done by their teachers meaningfully. Short stories provide the learners with enough language input to help them derive the underlined grammar items used in it. The students who learned only grammar rules without

learning them in context often cannot solve exercises given in full contexts. Though they can easily solve exercises given in single sentences based on the individual grammar rules, but those students who are taught through contexts by using short stories become able to solve both exercises given in contexts and the single sentence ones.

Teachers in this research use different methods of grammar presentation, they attach different value to grammar, they work with different aids and textbooks and they have also different opinions about these books. There is only one thing that seems to connect them. All of them realize that funny and interesting activities and materials should be a part of grammar presentation and practicing. And in our opinion this is a very positive finding out.

Conclusion

Most of pupils seem to be satisfied with English lessons. They appreciate their teachers and understand the importance of learning English as well as the importance of grammar in the learning process. The conditions at college and institute also seem to be good. The only big negative aspect is the number of students in one language class but this thing can be influenced neither by teachers nor by pupils.

We have mentioned some of the limitations that we faced during the research. Teachers can take them as cautions if they want to proceed further. As we have got a positive result though not excellent, teachers can try for a comparative study between a traditional rule-based grammar class and a class in which grammar is taught contextually through a short story.

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