

TEACHING GRAMMAR MATERIAL BY JOKES AND GAMES

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Abstract. *The article is devoted to investigation of the role of jokes and games in teaching English grammar. At first, theoretical principles of teaching grammar are analyzed, then, recommendation how to teach grammar material by games and jokes are offered.*

Key words: *grammar games, jokes, effective methods, improvement, methodological recommendations.*

The content of acquiring grammar mechanisms of speech includes assimilation of generalizations on the base of materials and actions. Generalization are learned inductively.

I. The process of learning structures consists of two stages: a) learning understand the rules in the process of doing exercises; b) the discover grammar actions and materials of speech as generalizations.

II. The principle of communicative orientation: a) grammar subskills are acquired in the content of speech activities; b) special grammar exercises can be used at the initial stage of the subskills development.

III. The principle of practical learning of grammar. It reveals learning structures that are important and sufficient for oral and written speech.

IV. The structural principle of teaching grammar. The structural approach to teaching grammar is a well-grounded instruction. A new vocabulary unit is presented in the known speech pattern, and the unknown pattern is presented on the base of acquired vocabulary material.

V. The principle of teaching grammar in speech situations. In teaching English it is referred as situational approach (in American methodology role-play).

VI. The principle of conscious acquisition of grammar. Consciousness presupposes a focus on some elements of the learned speech patterns (sentences).

VII. The principle of differentiated teaching grammar based on the assimilation of the active and passive units which are sorted into reproductive and receptive speech. There are different actions and operation for reproduction and reception.

Besides the aforementioned general principles there are also special principles of teaching grammar. The system of teaching grammar consists of developing grammar subskills, acquiring grammar material and learning generalization. In its turn it requires doing exercises aimed at developing skills and acquiring the material. In short exercises are means of overcoming difficulties of structures and assimilation of actions and generalizations [1, p.132].

Grammar has always been one of the mainstays in teaching foreign languages. From a historical perspective, there have been different views on the position of grammar and methods used in the overall process of foreign language learning. Social and historical factors have played a significant role. In ancient times languages such as Greek, French and Latin in particular had a great influence on language teaching including grammar. Emphasis was on learning grammar rules and vocabulary by rote, translations, and practice in writing sample sentences [2, p. 67-68].

The students can make use of the *mnemonic* quality of songs, which means that words and grammar structures are much more memorable in combination with rhythm and melody. Students can call given language forms to mind simply by singing the song

mentally, and this is something people even do involuntarily. That is why we should give students ample opportunity to practice, keeping in mind that they are dealing with tune, rhythm, and language all at once. Since repetition is helpful in teaching and expanding grammatical patterns this feature can be exploited for the practice of the imperatives, which frequently have the quality of repetitiveness.

Another characteristic feature that makes songs different from jokes is the organizational form of songs. It has to be said that a song is a much better organized expression than a joke. The contents are in the form of very transparent and neatly organized elements, that is, lines, verses and choruses. Jokes, in contrast, are pieces of simple text not having easily visible components. The discussed feature make songs very suitable for grammar practice within the regular lines, verses and choruses. Therefore, they are appropriate for any word-ordering exercises.

Having neatly organized elements in them, songs make a good basis for practicing English syntax and parts of speech. A line in a song tends to comprise one idea e.g.

*I know you've never seen my face
You've never heard my name
Although I've never talked to you
I've got you on the brain.*

Any idea has to be expressed mostly in the usual grammatical order of SUBJECT + PREDICATE + OBJECT. This order is essentially supplemented by many extra parts of speech such as pronouns, adverbs, possessive adjectives etc.

In terms of length jokes are generally shorter forms of expression than songs. Consequently, exercises made on the basis of jokes will be significantly shorter. This does not mean that it makes them easier. One has to agree that as far as songs are concerned we can find a number of very simple songs which can be used at the beginner's level and plenty of those at higher levels. In contrast, there is a virtual scarcity of jokes for the beginner's level. This is so because the language used in jokes is very different from that in songs. It is more authentic in a sense of being everyday language.

Everyday language bears the complexity of all the lexis and grammar simultaneously. It is also a reflection of the variety of everyday situations, which are often complex ones [3, p. 114]. So it is very hard to find simple language in them. Therefore, they should on the whole be used starting from pre-intermediate level. Nevertheless, they are undoubtedly one of the best sources of the authentic material in which the language used is the same as of everyday life. This attribute is an encouraging factor in foreign language learning.

The characteristics of jokes make them a better source for practicing the following particular grammar points:

1. Past Simple and Present Simple as narrative tenses (Present Simple often used as a substitute for Past Simple)
2. Reported Speech
3. Passive voice
4. Defining and non-defining clauses [4].

It is a common knowledge that teachers have to stick to the teaching syllabus at school but it is really worth finding time for songs and jokes in class as they can give a fresh perspective on the language we are teaching. Through them, the language we have been dissecting into a series of structural points becomes whole again. It should be our experience that songs and jokes in the classroom can revive our love and respect for English and can bring to mind the joy and exquisite beauty of the language we have chosen to teach, in a way that many of us have long forgotten.

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