

GRAMMAR GAMES: AN INNOVATIVE APPROACH TO TEACH ENGLISH GRAMMAR

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Abstract

English language is playing an important role in life of engineering students. A student should study English as a subject in his regular course as well as he should prove his excellence in the language at the time of campus placements. Though they studied English in their schooling, tested in the grammatical concepts, they could not master the grammar topics. They communicate ineffectively and improperly as their language contains many grammatical mistakes. They have not understood the grammar topics properly as they were taught in a conventional methods. But grammar is difficult and dry, it should be taught very interestingly. Students should be taught grammar in a different methodology. So, grammar teaching should be done by using interesting and effective methods. Here, Grammar Games can be successful in enlightening the students about grammar topics. This paper talks about an interesting game to explain “Simple Passive Sentence” structures.

Introduction:

Communication Skills play a crucial role in the life of an engineering student. Every engineering student needs to display his communicative competence in his college days as well as at the time of campus placements. Communicative competence is the need of the hour. One must improve all categories of skills to enhance one’s career. So, every student should focus on improving his communication skills for a successful career. Oral communication and written communication play a pivotal role to get a decent job. But, good communication requires a little mastery over grammar of English language. Grammar helps in speaking and writing English correctly and effectively. Most of the engineering students are very poor in English grammar. Though they

have been learning English since schooling, they are weak in grammar topics. They cannot pay attention to any grammatical topic either as it was taught in conventional methods.

English language teachers also face a lot of problems in teaching grammar to students. Grammar classes become a boring and exhausting thing for them because of conventional methods employed by the teachers. The teachers struggle very hard to make the students attentive, involved and understand grammar topics. They are looking for a new approach/method to teach grammar interestingly to students.

So, grammar should be taught innovatively and interestingly. The English teachers have to adopt a new method to teach grammar very effectively. Grammar Games can be a great help to the English language teachers to inculcate a grammar topic in the minds of the students

What is Grammar?

According to Dr. Sweet, “ The practical analysis of a language – its anatomy.”

Chapman says, “ Grammar is a study of language of specialists made in order to establish rules and principles which are followed more or less unconsciously or instinctively by the native speakers.

From the above definitions, we can say that grammar is nothing but a sum total of rules and regulations of the language. The word ‘Grammar’ denotes the rules which regulate words and sentences in a language.

Why should we use Grammar Games?

- To assess the existing knowledge of the students regarding the topic to be taught in class.
- To evaluate how much the students have understood the discussed topic.
- To revise the topic later in the class.
- To involve the students in the teaching learning process.
- To energize the classroom atmosphere.

Sentence structures are very important to write and speak the sentence correctly. Students should be taught the structures and given a good practice in developing various sentences by using the structures. We observe so many different structures in English. One model of structure is “ Present Simple Passive” structures.

For Example:

English is spoken by many people in the world.

The culprits are punished for their grave mistake.

In the above two sentences, the underlined parts show the simple present passive forms. We frequently use this structure in our daily communication.

In this paper, we are going to propose an interesting game “ Headless Sentences” to improve the usage of simple present passive structures among the students. This game suits for the upper-intermediate level students. The game takes 15 minutes to finish. For the game, the required material to be given one copy per three students of both the sentence bodies and the sentence heads.

Procedure:

Step 1: Organize the class in threes and tell them they are going to compete in finding appropriate ‘heads’ for 14 ‘headless’ sentences. Give out the sentence bodies. Set them a 7 minute time limit. Tell them to write in the sentence beginnings they think are correct.

Step 2: When time is up pick one person from each triad and give them the sentence heads. Ask them to go back to a triad that is not their own and score that group’s sentences.

Step 3: Ask the scorers to tell their scores to the class and adjudicate on any points of doubt.

Note:

This is a type of exercise in which the student is internalizing the target structure, in this case the passive, by silently reading it, mumbling it, reading it aloud and thinking about it. This kind of exercise facilitates production of the structure at a later stage in the learning process.

Now, the students should be provided a group of sentences which are to be matched to their Heads. Here, three students can be formed into a group and be given a sheet which contains both Headless sentences and Heads to be joined. The three students discuss thoroughly and learn the structure. It gives them an excellent practice to understand the structure.

A replica of the sheet with Headless sentences and Heads:

Sentence Heads

Tennis.....	Darts.....
Chess.....	Golf.....
Soccer.....	Horses.....
In rugby.....	The Japanese game ‘Go’.....
Table tennis.....	In boxing.....
The 100 meters.....	Mah-jong.....
Cricket.....	In bowls.....

Sentence bodies

- is played by two or four people, often on grass.
- is played with big men in parks in Germany.
- is watched by millions more than play it.
- a try can be converted into a goal.
- is dominated by the Chinese.
- is an event often won in the Olympics by black competitors.
- is enjoyed in countries that used to be directly oppressed by Britain.
- is/are played mainly by men in pubs.
- tends to be played by rich people with a small, pitted ball.
- are betted on by all sorts of people.
- is played with nothing but a simple board and small round counters.
- a man may not be hit below the belt.
- is banned in China, but the Chinese love to play it.
- the big balls have to end up as close as possible to the little ball.

Conclusion:

Innovation is the key to effective teaching. Teaching should also suit the present scenario. Every teacher should update himself with the latest techniques and incorporate them in their teaching process. Whether it is conventional or modern method, every student must learn the concept and use it in his day to day life. A teacher should be innovative and accept the latest techniques, approaches and methods and try to apply them in the teaching environment. As grammar concepts are dry and boring, students cannot pay any attention to it. They don't enjoy any grammar class and understanding nothing from it. so, it is a teacher's responsibility to make grammar class effective and enlightening. They should teach with a difference. Grammar Games will definitely bring the necessary difference to a grammar class.

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