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THE EFFECTIVENESS OF TEACHING ENGLISH GRAMMAR THROUGH COMMUNICATIVE ACTIVITIES TO INTERMEDIATE LEARNERS

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Abstract. Many intermediate learners know grammar rules but cannot use them in real conversation. This article is literature-based: it reviews what well-known scholars say about teaching grammar through Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). It answers three questions: who is taught (intermediate learners), what is taught (English grammar structures) and how it is taught (communicative activities). The article argues that grammar is best learned when learners use it to share real information, and that a short focus on form after the activity keeps their language accurate. No new test results are presented. The article only discusses ideas from the literature and gives practical proposals.

Keywords: grammar teaching, Communicative Language Teaching, communicative activities, intermediate learners

Introduction

Many students study grammar for years, yet they make mistakes or stay silent when they speak. This is a common problem at the intermediate level (B1–B2). These learners already know basic grammar, but they often use it only in exercises, not in real communication.

How can communicative activities help intermediate learners learn and use English grammar structures effectively? The article follows the rule of a literature-based

paper: it compares ideas from scholars and gives reasoned arguments. It does not claim any experiment results.

Intermediate learners can understand everyday English and talk about familiar topics, but their speech is often slow and has errors. Richards (2008) describes this stage as a time when progress can feel slow. For these learners, it is important to give chances to use grammar in meaningful situations. It is also useful to remember that these are only general characteristics, not fixed labels. Each class is different, so the teacher should check learners' needs and motivation.

At this level, the grammar content includes structures that learners often know in theory but use with difficulty, such as:

- past simple and present perfect
- conditionals (first and second)
- comparatives and superlatives
- modal verbs (should, must, might)
- passive voice
- reported speech

These structures should connect with the course outcomes and the learners' real needs. For example, the present perfect is useful for talking about life experience, and the second conditional is useful for giving advice and talking about imaginary situations.

CLT is an approach where the main goal is communicative competence, which means the ability to use language for real communication. Richards and Rodgers (2014) describe CLT as an approach that starts from a view of language as communication and focuses on meaning and function, not only on structure. In the classroom, this means learners do activities such as role-plays, information-gap tasks, interviews and problem-solving, instead of only doing drills.

In Communicative Language Teaching Today, Richards explains that the goal of CLT is communicative competence. He says that grammar is important, but knowing the rules of sentence formation is not enough, because a learner can know the rules and still be unable to use the language for meaningful communication. He also corrects a popular misunderstanding: CLT does not mean that grammar is no longer important. This opinion supports the main idea of this article: grammar and communication should work together.

In Communicative Language Teaching: An Introduction, Littlewood presents CLT for classroom teachers and stresses that knowledge of grammar remains essential for effective communication. He also separates activities into functional communication activities (for example, sharing information to solve a problem) and social interaction activities (for example, role-plays and discussions). This helps teachers to plan communicative practice step by step.

Thornbury, in How to Teach Grammar, discusses different ways of teaching grammar and suggests that teachers should connect grammar with meaningful use and give learners opportunities to notice and practise forms in context. This supports a balanced lesson in which learners first communicate and then reflect on the language.

Putting these sources together, four main ideas appear. Richards (2006) shows that the goal of CLT is communicative competence, and that grammar still matters. This means grammar and communication are combined in this article. Richards and Rodgers (2014) explain that CLT sees language as communication and focuses on meaning and function. This gives the theoretical base of the approach. Littlewood (1981) states that grammar knowledge remains essential and describes functional and social interaction activities. This gives the types of activities used in section 4. Thornbury (1999) connects grammar with meaningful use and context. This supports the noticing and practice stages in the lesson model.

The following activities fit the CLT approach and the grammar structures above.

1. Information-gap tasks. Student A and Student B have different information and must ask questions to complete the task. Grammar: question forms, present perfect, past simple.

2. Role-plays. Students play real situations, for example, giving advice to a friend or planning a holiday. Grammar: modals, conditionals, future forms.

3. Interviews and surveys. Students ask classmates about experiences and report the results. Grammar: present perfect, reported speech.

4. Problem-solving and decision-making tasks. Groups choose the best solution to a problem and explain their decision. Grammar: comparatives, superlatives, conditionals.

5. Storytelling. Students create a story in a chain, each adding one sentence. Grammar: past tenses, linking words.

6. Discussion with a language focus. After the discussion, the teacher shows common errors and the class corrects them together.

5. A Practical Lesson Model

1. Lead-in (5 min). Students discuss “What would you do if you won a million dollars?”

2. Noticing (7 min). The teacher writes 3–4 student sentences on the board, and the class finds the pattern If + past simple, would + verb.

3. Controlled practice (8 min). Students complete short sentences in pairs.

4. Communicative task (15 min). In groups, students role-play giving advice about a problem (“If I were you, I would…”).

5. Feedback (10 min). The teacher shares good examples and corrects 3–4 common errors.

This model starts with meaning, then focuses on form, and ends with communicative use. It follows the ideas of Richards (2006), Littlewood (1981) and Thornbury (1999).

Discussion

Why this approach is useful. Communicative activities give learners a reason to use grammar, help them remember structures, increase speaking time and make lessons more interesting. Based on the scholars' views, grammar practised in meaningful situations is more likely to be used in real life. Possible problems. Several issues need attention.

Learners may use simple language or their first language to complete the task.

- In large classes, pair and group work is harder to control.
- Without a language focus stage, errors may stay uncorrected.
- Teachers need time to prepare good communicative tasks.

These problems can be reduced with clear instructions, a specific grammar target for each task, and a feedback stage at the end. Unresolved question. This article is based only on literature. It does not measure how much students' grammar improves. Future research could test the approach in real classes with pre- and post-tests.

Conclusion

For intermediate learners, grammar is not only a set of rules to memorize. It is a tool for communication. The scholars reviewed in this article (Richards, Littlewood and Thornbury) agree that grammar remains important, and that it should be taught together with real communication. Communicative activities such as information-gap tasks, role-plays and problem-solving help learners use grammar naturally, and a short focus on form after the task helps them improve accuracy. Therefore, combining CLT activities with a clear grammar focus is a reasonable and effective approach for intermediate classes, although classroom research is still needed to measure the results.

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