

ANALYSIS OF GRAMMAR ACTIVITIES

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Annatation: Grammar activities are essential in language learning as they help students comprehend, apply, and internalize various grammatical rules and structures. These activities aim to enhance language skills, improve accuracy, and foster effective communication. In other words, grammar activities play a crucial role in language learning by enhancing students' understanding, retention, and application of grammar rules. An effective mix of activities, including worksheets, games, role-playing, error correction, writing tasks, and discussions, can cater to different learning styles and help students develop well-rounded proficiency in grammar.

Key words: communicative skills, application, language skills, grammar as product, grammar as process, presenting skills.

Grammar as Product. Having applied three different textbooks in my teaching process I have selected six different activities two for each teaching grammar as a product, teaching grammar as a process and as a skill. Firstly, an activity from the book “Grammarway 4” by Jenny Dooley and Virginia Evans (1999, p. 50) attracted my attention. This activity which requires to read the text and fill in the word that fits best each space and asked to use only one word is an obvious sample for product based teaching of grammar. Since the learner is given the activity after input process with teacher’s explanation, that can be considered in the bottom-up process of teaching grammar. As only particular expressions such as “the, than, a” are requested to put

being connected with the theme “Degrees of the adjectives”; the activity mainly focuses on the form, as students are involved in gap filling task and they are intended to guess the correct word looking at the expressions and phrases. Following the required word, the task might have “noticing” the form by the learners. In the task based learning classroom it is likely to guide students to discover the grammar elements however before this activity there is an explanation which provided the rules of the theme. The task itself is not time consuming and practicable as it has got the definite answers to check. Besides, this exercise provides some information about New York city which may be useful for future travelers which identifies the task’s authenticity. (Brown, 2015). Similarly, the second task for the same pedagogy of teaching grammar chosen from “Successful writing: Proficiency” (Evans,1998, p.35) sustains the product learning style. Exercise 2 requires to read two types of essays thoroughly and come up with the idea what tenses have been used and explain why those tenses are used there. Following the task in the 3rd exercise it is asked to rewrite the model essay which is given in the previous task. As Batstone (1994) stated noticing and re-noticing the grammar topic is effectively sorted out by higher level learners, on the contrary, it might be challenging for the low level learners. If two activities investigated carefully it becomes clear that the former is focusing on the form while the latter mainly deals with the meaning. Self- discovery is essential key term in terms of the second activity.

Even though tasks are designed by professionals I would suggest several additions to improve efficiency of the activities. Firstly, in order to clarify the instruction of the first activity particular expressions is preferable to be included as a result that can avoid the confusion of the learner. The instruction would look as follows: Read the text and fill in the gaps with best appropriate ones from the list of the words: the (2x), than, better, much, far, a, an, so, even, not. Subsequently, I would add questions for discussion at the end of the activity, such as: Why is the used before best? What is difference between “better” and “much better”. Teacher’s guidance or

following – up questions to notice the grammar would be better to be added in the second activity instead of just asking what tenses are used along with the reasons.

Grammar as Process. The following two language-teaching- process activities are also have been selected from “ Grammaway -4” (Dooley & Evans, 1999, p. 53). The first activity provides a learner an opportunity to practice his/her speaking skill keeping in my comparative and superlative degree of the adjectives. A student is asked to interview three candidates and after interviewing to make comparison of the them. The three candidates’ data is included in the activity. The second activity is logical continuing of the first one where a language learner has to write a report to the boss comparing those three candidates. In order to support a learner, the authors have included the report form itself where a student only needs to write comparative sentences. As Batstone (1994) assured process based grammar activities may appear after product based ones as it was organized in “Grammarway -4”. With the intention of enhancing productive language skills, it is required to organize interview and write a report to engage learners into process of communicating as well as authentic writing process which may be handful in learner’s future career. Brown (2015) advocated the authenticity of the task is one of the main five principals of organizing an effective task for language learners. One of the most valuable advantages of the process grammar activities is to make learners available practice their communicating skills rather than just structuring the knowledge. However, if time is not strictly controlled by a teacher these type of activities may turn time consuming ones as Batstone (1994) advised to regulate the time to achieve the intended result. It would be advisable if the candidates which were illustrated in the activity were samples and learners are asked to create their own answers while interviewing, consequently, the next activity would also require student’s own report rather than ready-made one.

Grammar as skill. Product and process learning grammar activities can be followed by the skill activities which have been selected from “ Grammaway -4” (Dooley & Evans, 1999, p. 97). The activity follows the product based activity which might serve as a hint for fulfilling the

target one. It is required to write a passage on Forbidden City which has been introduced in the previous activity. The second I have selected from the Textbook “New Headway” (Soars & Hancock, 2013, p. 20) is divided into pre, while and post stages. In pre-stage the activity requires to do the Multiple Choice³ quiz on various general knowledge topics, the verbs are highlighted indicating different tenses, students are asked to answer or guess the answer then, while stage is listening part. Here, students listen and check their answers. Then students are encouraged to do some discussion on the tenses of the questions and in the last part they are asked to make their own quiz using present and past simple which is followed by asking those questions each other.

It is obvious students are required to notice on their own by guessing and researching furthermore, they are assigned to listen and check their answers which can be evident for Batstone’s (1994) view of “listening and reading tasks which encourage them to listen and read, formulating predictions” (p. 101). Clearly, the first activity where reflective writing with passives is another sample for “reflection” in grammar teaching as a skill. At the same way, making their own quiz at the end of the of the activity is an indicator for reflecting their predicted and analyzed knowledge on present and past simple tenses. Batstone (1994) claimed that learner’s critical approach to formulate both meaning and form is crucial in this reflection stage rather than teacher’s instruction.

These activities possess positive and negative consequences as it is observed in all concepts of the language. First advantage of the skill enhancing activities are fruitful approaching to teach not only grammar but also to help a learner to interact and comprehend the language. Secondly, metalanguage process will be fixed in for a long period if learners discover the rules by themselves while doing activities. As Chen (2011) mentioned self-discovery is one of the necessary elements of the grammar activities for long term memorization of a grammar concept. Meanwhile, noticeable drawbacks can be viewed while conducting those activities, such as time pressure. If a teacher sets fluid amount of time the lesson may never end, rather it is suggested to control the time as Batstone (1994) advised. Moreover, one of the disadvantages of the activities,

selected by me, is they cannot be implemented for all levels. Every time before applying them for the class specific changes must be done by a teacher to adapt them for the level of the learners.

Evaluation. Definitely, a teacher cannot choose one of those activities to conduct a lesson relying on that particular type of grammar activity. To start a lesson with an activity grammar as a product, following with process grammar task and ending the set of activities with a skill based activity or mix them conversely for teaching grammar would be best option for me to reach the efficiency in my grammar teaching process. As Batstone (1994) counted the three: product, process and skill based grammar activities most effective types to sort out grammar concepts and asserted that those are interrelated with each other in the same lesson.

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Appendices

Read the text and fill in the word which best fits each space. Use only one word in each space.

New York City is one of **1)** largest cities **2)** the world. It is also one of the most densely populated, with an estimated 7,400,000 inhabitants. Manhattan is the **3)** popular area of the city with tourists and has **4)** interesting sights. There is also **5)** a large number of businesses in this area of the city, including the head offices of some of the world's leading companies. New York's subway system provides transport for more **6)** 33% of the city's work force.

New York is also regarded **7)** a centre of entertainment. Broadway is the scene of many box-office hits, Carnegie Hall is one of the **8)** famous concert halls in the world and the city is also the home of several opera and ballet companies.

With **9)** choice of food, entertainment and social life than any other city, it is **10)** any wonder that people flock to New York to experience life in the Big Apple.

- 2 Read the models and give the paragraph plan for each. What tenses have been used? Why? Where could you find such pieces of writing?

MODEL A

Describe an annual event that you attended and explain why you enjoyed it.

About four years ago I was invited to a Halloween party at the home of a friend. I was reluctant at first but I decided to go to help out with the arrangements.

On the afternoon of the party, I drove to my friend's house with a huge box of materials which I thought might be useful for the preparations. The children were full of enthusiasm as they worked on their masks and costumes. But the best part of all was making the lanterns. I was amazed at the imagination that the children showed when cutting grotesque faces out of the hollowed-out pumpkins. The mood of anticipation was so intense that, by the time the last costume had been made, I was as excited as the children.

By six o'clock, the party was well under way and the house was full of screaming children, with me running around in a mask trying to scare them. At one point during the evening, prizes were awarded to the children who had made the best costumes. Games were organised, including one where the children had their hands tied behind their backs while they tried to pick apples out of a barrel of water using only their teeth. When the party finally ended, the children left in a noisy group, running ahead of their parents and doing their best to scare any unfortunate passers-by.

Rediscovering what it is like to have fun without feeling embarrassed was a fantastic experience. My initial hesitation disappeared once I had decided to get involved. Helping with the children's games enabled me to enter into the party spirit. I saw it as an opportunity to experience the sheer joy that comes so naturally to children.

Another thing that made it a particularly enjoyable occasion was that it brought back memories of my own childhood experiences. I remembered my own excitement when we were dressing up in scary costumes, and the thrill of going from house to house, bags held open for whatever goodies would be put in when we shouted, "Trick or treat!" I also remembered the time we had been chased by a stingy neighbour after spraying his windows with shaving foam.

Since those days I had nearly forgotten about Halloween, but this party gave me so much pleasure that now it is a regular fixture in my diary. I think everyone should have the chance to feel like a child at least once a year.

MODEL B

Describe an annual event that takes place in your country.

Halloween, which takes place every year on 31st October, is an important event, particularly in America. It originated hundreds of years ago when it was believed that on this night the souls of the dead came back and walked among the living. Today, it is treated light-heartedly and celebrated mainly by children.

A certain amount of preparation is required of those who take part. Costumes and masks, typically of ghosts or witches, have to be made. Sweets are bought and parties are organised. Most importantly, a lantern is made. This is done by taking a large pumpkin and cutting out the inside, which is then used to make a pie. Next, holes are cut out of one side in the shape of an evil face, and a candle is placed inside the lantern so that the light glows through the eyes and mouth.

On the day itself, or rather in the evening, children wander around the streets dressed in their costumes. The custom is for children to knock on doors in their neighbourhood and say "Trick or treat". This means that their neighbours have to treat them to sweets or candies, otherwise the "ghosts and witches" will play a trick on them. Usually the adults offer them something, but if they fail to, then a practical joke might be played. This is usually something harmless such as putting shaving foam on the uncooperative neighbour's windows.

If a party has been arranged, then the lights are turned out and the children take part in a variety of activities. This might include anything from telling ghost stories to dancing. Although the parties are based on a rather frightening theme, the emphasis is, of course, on having fun. A typical party game for Halloween is played by putting apples into a barrel of water and inviting the children to pick them up with their teeth. Special drinks are made, which are served with the traditional pumpkin pie.

Many people enjoy Halloween as an excuse to dress up and have fun. It is unique in that its theme is essentially not a pleasant one. However, it remains popular and is eagerly anticipated every year by people of all ages.

3 Read the following topics and underline the key words. Which tenses should you use? What information will you include in each paragraph? How will you adapt the paragraph plan shown on p. 34 to organise your composition?

- 1 Is there a festival in another country that you would like to attend? Describe it explaining why it is important to you.
- 2 Describe a religious ceremony in your country.
- 3 Describe a celebration you attended as a child. Why do you remember this one especially?
- 4 Describe the ceremony of a national event and explain its importance to the people in your country.

Activity for grammar as product. Evans, V. (1998). Successful Writing: Proficiency.

UNIT 3

jectives - Adverbs - Comparisons



You are interviewing people for a position within your company. Look at the information below and make comparisons using the adjectives and adverbs in the list, as in the example.

qualified, fluently, experienced, reliable, friendly, fast

e.g. *Miss Houston is more qualified than Mr Spencer.*

Mrs Thompson is the most qualified of all.

Qualifications: Bachelor of Arts
Experience: 3 years in similar position
Languages: fluent French
Skills: types 100 words per minute
Personality: very reliable. quite friendly



Miss Houston



Qualifications: 4 A-levels
Experience: 1 year in similar position
Languages: a little French
Skills: types 80 words per minute
Personality: not very friendly. quite reliable

Mr Spencer

Qualifications: Bachelor of Arts.
Master of Arts
Experience: 2 years in similar position
Languages: working knowledge of French
Skills: types 120 words per minute
Personality: very friendly. not very reliable



Mrs Thompson

Activity for grammar as process. Dooley, J & Evans, V. (1999). *Grammaway 4*. Berkshire, Great

Britain: Express Publishing, Liberty House, Newbury, Berkshire RG 19 6 HW

A banner with the word 'WRITING' in a large, green, serif font, arched over the word 'Activity' in a smaller, green, sans-serif font. The banner has a light green background and a dark green border.

You now have to write a report for your boss, comparing the three candidates. Look at the Oral Activity again and complete the report below.

TO: Mrs K. Athow
FROM: Miss R. Allchin
DATE: 3rd June

I interviewed three candidates for the position of Personal Assistant to Head of Sales in France: Miss Houston, Mr Spencer and Mrs Thompson. Miss Houston is more qualified than Mr Spencer, but Mrs Thompson is the most qualified of all as she has a Bachelor of Arts and a Master of Arts Degree.

.....
I personally believe that Miss Houston is the best candidate for the job, as she has all the necessary qualifications.

Activity for grammar as a process have been extracted from Dooley, J & Evans, V. (1999).

Grammaway 4. Berkshire, Great Britain: Express Publishing, Liberty House,
Newbury, Berkshire RG 19 6 HW

WRITING
Activity

Now write a passage about the Forbidden City using passive sentences, as in the example.

e.g. *The Forbidden City is situated in Beijing, China.*

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Activity for grammar as a skill have been extracted from Dooley, J & Evans, V. (1999).

Grammaway 4. Berkshire, Great Britain: Express Publishing, Liberty House,
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I didn't know that!

- 1** Try to answer the questions in the *Language Quiz*.
If you're not sure, guess. Discuss your ideas with a partner.
- 2**  **2.1** Listen and check your answers. Make notes about the extra information you hear.
- 3** Discuss your notes as a class. Does anything surprise you?

Language Quiz

1 Which six of these languages **does** the UN use for official business?

- a English e French h Chinese
- b Russian f Portuguese i Arabic
- c Japanese g German j Hindi
- d Spanish

2 At what rate **are** languages **disappearing** around the world?

- a one every two weeks
- b one every two months
- c one every two years

3 In Britain, which sounds **do** ¹ bees and ² cats **make**?

- a ¹ sum and ² miau
- b ¹ bun and ² nyan
- c ¹ buzz and ² miaow



4 On which continent **have** languages **developed** clicking sounds as consonants?

- a Asia b South America c Africa

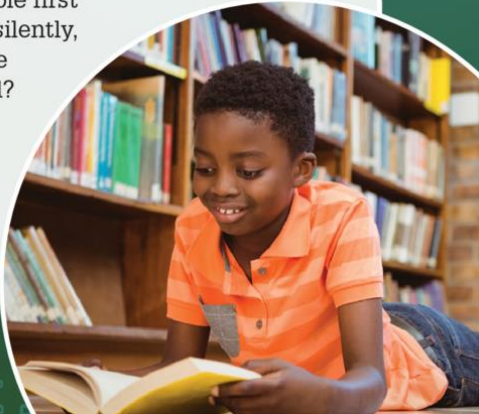
5 Where **are** you **standing** if you are using an ATM in Latin?

- a in Vatican City
- b in the University of Oxford
- c in Rome city centre



6 When **did** people first **begin** to read silently, and not say the words out loud?

- a in 400 BC
- b in the 1st century AD
- c in the 10th century AD

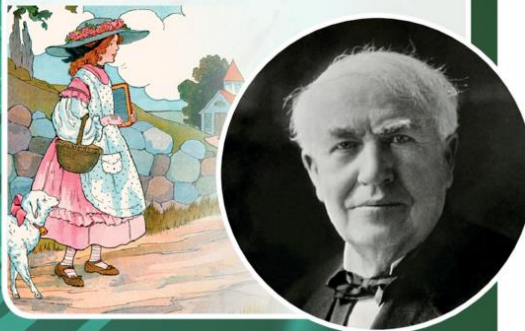


7 English has taken words from different languages, including gendered nouns (masculine and feminine). Why **didn't** English **keep** the gender?

- a** Because English never had gendered nouns.
- b** Because the different languages had a different gender for the same nouns.
- c** Because gendered nouns were difficult to pronounce.

8 What **was** Thomas Edison **doing** when he recited the nursery rhyme, 'Mary had a little lamb'?

- a** making the first telephone call
- b** making the first sound recording
- c** making the first moving pictures



9 The *Chicago Tribune* newspaper **has** often **tried** to simplify English spelling. Which of these examples **have become** standard American English?

- a** bureaucrat and definitely
- b** iland and det
- c** catalog and program

10 How long **have** people **been using** the acronym OMG (Oh My God!)?

- a** since 1917
- b** since 1985
- c** since text messaging began

11 How many new words **are added** to the Oxford English Dictionary every year?

- a** 500 **b** 1,000 **c** 3,000

12 What language **was** commonly **spoken** by well-educated Ancient Romans?

- a** Latin **b** Greek **c** Hebrew

Write your own quiz

4 Work in groups.

- Write five questions on general knowledge about the world, past and present. Do some research if necessary.
- Ask and answer the questions with another group. Which group knew the most answers?

Activities for grammar as a skill. Extracted from Soars, J&L. & Hancock, P. (2013). *New*

Headway 5th ed. Intermediate. Student's e-book