



1) With the surge in popularity of the communicative approach in the last two decades or so, there's been a shift in teaching methods for English as a foreign language, both in schools and in language courses, where grammar has gradually lost its prominent focus in the classroom and even, in extreme cases, has been nearly neglected. Several factors are at play there: the longstanding notion among students that grammar is "boring", and "useless"; an increased demand for more "utilitarian" approaches to language teaching, ones focused on oral communication and ~~producing~~ ~~producing~~ producing instant results, as opposed to a gradual skill development; and a higher exposure to ~~real~~ English content, such as songs, movies and series - that is, "real" language - may often lead to dissatisfaction with older, more traditional material - that is, "book" language.

At its core, the issue revolves around the opposition between prescriptive linguistics, which sets rules and standards for language usage, and descriptive linguistics, which argues that language usage is what should define its rules and standards. Is it wrong, for instance, for students to ask if they "can" drink some water instead of if they "may"? Considering how even native speakers often prefer to use "can"? In addition, grammar study is necessarily linked to normative grammar, which, as pointed out by scholars such as Michel Foucault and Marcos Bagno, can ~~be~~ ~~be~~ ~~be~~ be used (and often is) to engender linguistic prejudice and ~~to~~ ~~to~~ ~~to~~ portray cultural, social and regional linguistic variants (such as Ebonics in the United States or the Scottish accent in England) as inferior or inadequate; that is, language is often used as a tool in power struggles and the establishment of hegemonies (see Norman Fairclough's work), and normative grammar is one of the means by which that is done.

Does that mean EFL teachers should throw the baby out with the bathwater and disregard traditional grammar entirely? I'd argue against that. While it may be difficult to teach, for a variety of reasons, a solid understanding



OF GRAMMATICAL STRUCTURES GREATLY HELPS WITH LANGUAGE LEARNING. THE CHALLENGE, THEN, LIES IN HOW TO PRESENT GRAMMAR STUDY AS SOMETHING THAT IS "MEANINGFUL AND USEFUL" FOR STUDENTS, TO QUOTE LEU AND NELSON.

2) ~~THE~~ THE FIELD OF GENERATIVE GRAMMAR IN GENERAL AND NOAM CHOMSKY'S WORK IN PARTICULAR HAVE THEIR DETRACTORS, BUT BOTH HAVE MADE GREAT CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE FIELD OF APPLIED LINGUISTICS, TO THE POINT CURRENT SCHOLARS SUCH AS KANAVILIL RAGAGOPALAN QUOTE THEM EVEN ~~WHEN~~ WHEN THEY'RE NOT BUILDING ~~ON~~ ~~THEM~~ ON THEM DIRECTLY. AS I SAID ABOVE, UNDERSTANDING THE GRAMMAR BEHIND THE LANGUAGE HELPS STUDENTS ABSORB NEW TOPICS AND ALSO PRODUCE CONTENT OF THEIR OWN. FOR EXAMPLE:

- THE SIMPLE PAST. TO HELP STUDENTS LEARN WHEN THE SIMPLE PAST TENSE IS USED AND HOW IT'S FORMED, THE SONG "I'M A BELIEVER", BY ENGLISH ROCK GROUP THE MONKEES, CAN BE USED. SINCE IT WAS HEAVILY USED IN THE "SHREK" MOVIE SERIES, THE TOPIC OF FAIRY TALES CAN ALSO BE PRESENTED TO THE CLASS, WITH AN EMPHASIS ON HOW THE SAME SENTENCE STRUCTURES CAN BE USED TO TELL ANY STORIES, NOT JUST FICTIONAL ONES. FROM THERE, STUDENTS CAN PRODUCE THEIR OWN STORIES.

- CONDITIONAL SENTENCES. FOR MORE ADVANCED STUDENTS. EXCERPTS FROM THE NOVEL "THE WIZARD OF OZ" CAN BE USED TO TALK ABOUT CONDITIONAL SENTENCES ("IF I ONLY HAD A HEART", "IF I ONLY HAD A BRAIN", ETC.). THERE CAN BE A DISCUSSION ABOUT THE STORY AND ITS ADAPTATIONS TO OTHER MEDIA; DEPENDING ON THE MATERIALS AVAILABLE, SCENES FROM THE JUDY GARLAND MOVIE CAN BE SHOWN. STUDENTS CAN THEN PRODUCE SOME CONDITIONAL SENTENCES OF THEIR OWN.

3) PRESENTED IN BULLETIN POINTS:

- FIRST, I WOULD TALK TO THE STUDENTS ABOUT SOME ENGLISH-SPEAKING COUNTRIES

OTHER THAN ENGLAND AND THE UNITED STATES, ~~AND~~ LIKE INDIA, AUSTRALIA, AND NEW ZEALAND. THIS ^{COULD} BE TURNED INTO A GAME OF HANGMAN. (5 min.)

• THEN, I WOULD ASK THEM TO READ THE TEXT SILENTLY, WRITING DOWN ANY ~~WORDS~~ WORDS THEY DIDN'T UNDERSTAND. (3 min.)

• THEN, I WOULD LEAD THE CLASS INTO A DISCUSSION ABOUT THE TEXT.

I WOULD ASK THEIR OPINIONS ON THE TEXT AND ASK THEM TO SHARE ANY STORIES THEY HAD THAT WERE SIMILAR. IT'S ALSO AT THIS POINT THAT I WOULD EXPLAIN ANY WORDS THEY DIDN'T UNDERSTAND AND PRACTICE THEIR SPEAKING SKILLS. (12 min.)

• TEACHING POINT: COMPARATIVES AND SUPERLATIVES. AFTER DISCUSSING THE ~~TEXT~~ TEXT, I WOULD ~~POINT~~ HIGHLIGHT THE COMPARATIVES AND SUPERLATIVES PRESENT IN IT (EASIER, HARDER, POOREST) AND, FROM THERE, I WOULD TEACH THEM ^{STONE} WHY AND HOW THEY ARE USED. (8 min.)

• AFTER THAT, I WOULD PRESENT THE STUDENTS WITH A VARIETY OF EXERCISES BASED ON THE TOPIC. I WOULD ALSO TAKE THE OPPORTUNITY TO PRACTICE THEIR SPEAKING SKILLS FURTHER BY HAVING THEM READ THE QUESTIONS AND THEIR ANSWERS ALOUD. (15 min.)

• FINALLY, I WOULD END THE CLASS WITH A GAME OF Pictionary USING SCHOOL SUPPLIES (BACKPACK, NOTEBOOK, DESK, ETC.) AS THE TOPIC.