The Place of Grammar in Standards-based Adult ESOL

CATESOL 2018

BETSY PARRISH
HAMLINE UNIVERSITY
Fist to Five

Fist = Strongly disagree
Five = Strongly agree

Adult learners can figure out grammar rules and patterns through context.
Grammar instruction should derive from a learner’s need to communicate for meaningful purposes.
Learners often express a need and desire to develop competence in grammar.
What does research say?

• Importance of complementing meaning-focused instruction with form-focused instruction (Lightbown & Spada 2013; Ellis, 2007)

• A place for focus on form in “principled communicative” approach (Dörnyei, 2013).
Focus on **form** is not the same as focus on **forms**

- Extensive- several forms could be focused on in one lesson
- Usually occurs interactionally (T-sts or sts-sts)
- Is driven by learners’ need to communicate (in speech or writing)
Where does grammar fit in the landscape of ELPs and new NRS descriptors?

• complex, informational texts
• supporting claims with reasoning and evidence.
• exchanges (spoken and written) of ideas, information, and analyses
• conducting research
• communicating findings to answer questions or solve problems
9. create *clear and coherent* level-appropriate speech and text.

10. demonstrate command of the *conventions of standard English* to communicate in level-appropriate speech and writing.
Informed by Task-based Instruction

1) a pre-task to introduce the topic and the task;

2) the task cycle where learners engage in the task, and

3) language focus where learners analyze and practice further the language generated by the task.

Willis & Willis (2007)
Steps

Step 1: Learners engage in a rigorous, interactive task

Step 2: Teacher elicits language forms used to complete the task

Step 3: Highlight and check understanding of the linguistic feature(s)
Sample 1 One-question interview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>All of the time</th>
<th>Some of the time</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>I don’t think about it</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Do you use plastic straws when you go to take-out restaurants?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Do you bring your own bags to the supermarket?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Do you take advantage of your city’s recycling program?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Do you choose paper over plastic bags when given the option?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Analyze and talk about the data

Most people in class...
Some people...
Half the class...
Three-quarters of the class...

Use Plastic Straws

<p>| | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All the time</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some of the time</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't think about it</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Elicit and highlight patterns

Most people in class bring their own bags to the store.

Nearly half of the students use a plastic straw all the time.

Half the class take/takes advantage of a city recycling program.
Grammar present?

• Simple present tense to talk about habits and routines

• Adverbs of frequency

• Quantifiers - words and phrases

• Subject-verb agreement with complex noun phrases

• Reporting with simple past (we found) or simple present (our data/results show)
Sample 2 Jigsaw task

What can we do to boost our happiness? Read about your assigned happiness technique and complete your row of the chart.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technique</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Technique A: Gratitude Journal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technique B: Acts of Kindness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technique C: Gratitude Visit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technique D: Three Blessings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Technique A
Gratitude Journal

A psychologist in the United States suggests different kinds of happiness enhancers. One is called the gratitude journal—a diary in which people write down things for which they are thankful. In her study, she found that taking the time to count one’s blessings once a week significantly increased a subject’s overall satisfaction with life during a course of six weeks, whereas a control group that did not keep journals had no such gain.

Notice academic language that is underlined (giving definitions) and bold (reporting results).
Grammar present?

- Relative clauses for defining terms (which means...; which is...)
- Defining by example with “such as”
- Reporting with simple past (The researcher found) or simple present (The data/results show)
- What else?
Sample 3 Information Gap

What skills are employers looking for in today’s workplace?

Mingle and ask class colleagues what skills are valued in these areas:

• Analytical
• Communication
• Interpersonal
• Leadership
• Teamwork
• Technical
Language you will need...

Ask:
What ________________ skills are employers looking for?

Answer:
They want someone who is....
They want workers who are....
They appreciate when workers are....
They like workers who can....
Grammar present?

• Wh-question formation
• Adjective clauses
• Subject-verb agreement in those adjective clauses
• Anything else?
## Sample 4 Interview Grid

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In your community....</th>
<th>Interview 1</th>
<th>Interview 2</th>
<th>Interview 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. How do people greet one another?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. How far apart do people stand when they’re talking to one another?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. How much time do teenagers usually spend with their family?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Where do elderly people usually live?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Who pays when you go out for a meal?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. How do you address a teacher or supervisor?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Elicit and highlight patterns

Teacher asks:

*How far do people generally stand apart in the US?*

*What about in Ecuador?*

*How about in Laos?*

(Invite students to come to front to demonstrate)

So, how can we describe these differences?

*People in the US generally stand closer together than people in Laos.*

*They seem to stand the closest together in Ecuador.*
Grammar present?

• Comparatives and superlatives
• Simple present to describe routines
• Wh-question formation
• What else?
Sample 5 Interpreting Informational Graphic

Informational texts
Authentic materials

AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD EXPENSES IN THE US 2015

- Housing: 33%
- Transportation: 17%
- Food: 13%
- Personal Insurance: 11%
- Healthcare: 8%
- Other expenses: 5%
- Entertainment: 5%
- Cash Contributions: 3%
- Apparel and services: 3%
- Education: 2%
- Other expenses: 5%
- Other expenses: 5%
- Other expenses: 5%
- Other expenses: 5%
- Other expenses: 5%
Co-construct grammar learners need

1) How does spending on housing and transportation compare to all other expenses?

*People spend as much on housing and transportation combined as on all other expenses.*

2) How does spending on transportation compare to spending on education?

*People spend (much, considerably) more on transportation than on entertainment.*

3) How do cash contributions compare to entertainment?

*People spend (a little, a bit) more on entertainment than on cash contributions.*
Co-construct grammar learners need

What factors might affect people’s expenses for these categories?

*Employment status *might affect health care costs.*

*Location in the US could affect the cost of housing.*

Follow this with giving reasons using “because of” or “due to”
What are our spending habits?

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you spend more on</td>
<td>Tally the responses you hear.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_______ or on _______?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>transportation</td>
<td>housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cash contributions (charity)</td>
<td>utilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>food</td>
<td>transportation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>entertainment</td>
<td>transportation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Grammar present?

- Comparatives
- Modals for speculation (might, could)
- Adverbial clauses with “because of” or “due to”
- What else?
Adult learners can figure out grammar rules and patterns through context.
Grammar instruction should derive from a learner’s need to communicate for meaningful purposes.
Grammar has a place in standards-based Adult ESOL.
Wrap Up & Questions

Thank you!