

TEACHING CONDITIONALS FOR PROMOTING STUDENTS COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE

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Анотація. В статті розглядаються деякі аспекти вивчення граматичних конструкцій умовних речень з використанням комунікативної граматики для набуття мовних компетенцій. Пропонується низка практичних завдань для формування комунікативної компетентності студентів, поглиблення знань з граматики англійської мови, покращення професійних умінь і навичок іншомовного спілкування.

Ключові слова: : умовні речення, комунікативна граматика, мовна компетенція, семантичні зв'язки, підхід

Abstract. The article considers the importance of English language acquisition, explores some issues involved in the teaching of communicative grammar and gives a number of practical suggestions and useful resources for fostering students involvement. There are suggested some ways to improve students' proficiency in English using the grammar structures of conditional sentences.

Keywords : conditional sentences, communicative grammar, linguistic competence, approach, semantic relationships.

Introduction

Grammar is central to the teaching and learning of languages and is considered to be one of the most difficult aspects of language. Teaching grammar has always been controversial point of language learning. Grammar instruction occupies a prominent role in various language teaching methods and approaches. The current challenge for researchers and teachers is to find a way to integrate grammar instruction and grammar practice with a communicative approach to teaching. The purpose of the research is to design practice activities for conditional sentences learning as grammar structures representing difficulty to the learners of English.

Conditional sentences consist of two clauses and are therefore more complex syntactically than many other structures. The semantics of all the various types of conditional clauses are subtle and hard to understand even for native speakers. Good comprehensive descriptions are not readily available. Furthermore, students need a good grasp of the English tense system as well as the modal auxiliaries before they can cope with the full range of conditional sentences in English.

In this article we provide a semantic overview of conditional sentences that should help the teacher better understand this problematic topic.

English conditional sentences express three different kinds of semantic relationships: factual conditional relationships, future (or predictive) conditional relationships, and imaginative conditional relationships. We will discuss each of these types in turn.

The factual generic conditional, which is often used to express physical laws, is important for students majoring in the sciences. If the condition is satisfied, the result is automatic. Note that the simple present tense is used in both clauses, i.e., no modals. For example:

If you lower the temperature of water to 0°C., it freezes.

If you raise the temperature of water to 100°C., it boils.

Given the following conditions and results, have groups of students first match the appropriate A and B items and then generate all the possible factual generic conditional sentences:

A	B
heat water	it boils
boil water	it evaporates

The future or predictive conditional is often used to make plans for the future based on various contingencies. One good context for introducing this structure is a chart with information about students: their names, their grades. These students will either (a) pass, (b) fail, or (c) skip a grade at the end of the study year. The class can practice all the logical possibilities:

For practicing imaginative past conditionals use the concept of "hindsight." Have your students imagine themselves to be a famous person and describe what they would have done or would not have done, e.g.

If I had been George Washington, I would have fought for human rights.

Underlying each past conditional sentence, there are indirect messages about what really happened or what was really the case. Ask your students to work in small groups to figure out the reality underlying counterfactual conditionals like these.

I wouldn't have failed my exam If I had not been so lazy.

If I had not missed the train I would not have been late for work.

To contextualize imaginative conditional relationships have the class talk about Henry and everything that went wrong for him yesterday.

«Henry`s Bad Day»

Henry did not get up on time. → He had to rush to get to work.

He was in a hurry. → He did not lock his door properly.

He did not catch his train. → He was late for work.

Henry`s boss was angry. → The boss fired Henry.

A burglar entered his apartment. → All of Henry`s belongings were stolen.

Let students work in pairs and write out all the things that might have happened/not have happened if Henry had not made any mistakes yesterday, e.g.:

If Henry had got up in time, he would not have had to rush to get to work.

If Henry had locked his door properly, the burglar would not have entered his apartment.

Applying language teaching approach to teaching communicative grammar in proverbs, sayings, idioms and quotations promote successful language learning . The following series of contextualized exercises for reviewing and relating various forms of the conditionals to each other provides the teacher with a number of interesting teaching contexts The task of the teacher is to suggest situation in which these structures can be used.

Exercise 1. Comment on the use of the forms expressing non-facts In the following proverbs and sayings. Memorize them. Give their Ukrainian equivalents.

1. If wishes were horses, beggars would ride.
2. If there were no clouds, we should not enjoy the sun.
3. If the pills were pleasant, they would not be gilded.
4. If it were not for hope, the heart would break.
5. If each would sweep before his own door, we should have a clean city.

6. Many would be cowards if they had courage enough.
7. Pigs might fly if they had wings.
8. I wouldn't have it if you gave it to me.
9. If things were to be done twice all would be wise.
10. Nothing is so bad but it might have been worse.
11. Nothing is so good but it might have been better.
12. I would if I could but I can't.

Exercise 2. Complete the following proverbs and sayings supplying suitable conditions.

1. Many would be cowards .
2. Pigs might fly
3. Apothecaries would not sugar their pills...
4. I wouldn't have it .
5. I would... but I can't

Exercise 3. Complete the following proverbs and sayings supplying suitable consequences.

1. If there were no clouds...
2. If it were not for hope...
3. If things were to be done twice...
4. If wishes were horses...
5. If the pills were pleasant...
6. If each would sweep before his own door...

Exercise 4. Express the idea of the following by using appropriate proverbs and sayings with the required Subjunctive Mood forms of the verbs.

1. When things are very difficult what prevents us from giving up in despair is the hope that things will be better.
2. If we could achieve our aims by merely wishing, life would be very easy.
3. I don't want this at all, it's too bad to accept.
4. Wonderful and impossible things might happen, if the world were different from what we know it to be.
5. Happier times seem all the happier if they are interrupted now and again by gloomy spells.
6. The fact that they would be accused of cowardice if they showed signs of it in a dangerous emergency is enough to make most people act bravely, however scared they feel.
7. The welfare of society as a whole depends on the individual behaviour of those that make it up.
8. I would like to do sth worthwhile, but I am unable.
9. Bitter medicine is covered on the outside with sth to hide or sweeten its taste.

10. If a man were given a second chance he would act wisely, but a similar opportunity is unlikely ever to come again.

The activities being examined in the article are referred to communicative grammar tasks designed for the practice of grammatical structures. The experience shows that relevant grammar tasks appear to be a successful way to integrate communication and formal instruction, possess the necessary criteria to be motivating classroom activities and have lasting effects on learning.

Conclusion

A communicative grammar lesson gives students the opportunity to practice the target grammar item through specific tasks and activities. The learners are taught grammar forms and structures in relation to meaning and use for communicative activity to be completed. It is worth considering students' proficiency level and their experience with grammar structures. The learners therefore should be provided with up-to-date and accessible resources to help them use the language they are learning.

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