

Grammar overview

Aims

- to reflect on the importance of language awareness for teachers of English as a foreign language
- raised our own awareness of English grammar, including parts of speech/word classes, 'tenses' and areas of syntax often taught in ELT
- (optional) considered which 'bits' of grammar often get contrasted in ELT and how this affects how we teach them

Which of these 3 teachers do you agree with?

“I learnt to speak English perfectly without knowing anything about grammar. So I don’t bother teaching it. Students can learn English just like they learnt their mother tongue, by listening, copying and learning from their mistakes.”



Clement

“Most students love grammar lessons. They think they are improving their English by studying it, despite the fact that they very rarely acquire what they study in a given lesson. So I teach it mainly to keep the students happy, not because it’s useful.”



Ursula

“If we don’t teach grammar, students will get into bad habits, learning more and more mistakes until they are pretty much unintelligible.”



Zach

Tense about tenses?

1. Do you like peacocks? (present simple)
2. I didn't know anything about his hobby. (past simple)
3. I've been singing all morning. (present perfect continuous)
4. We're getting married in the spring. (present continuous)
5. Unfortunately, she had already married the best man. (past perfect [simple])
6. I'll have removed them by 8 o'clock. (future perfect [simple])
7. They were planning a murder. (past continuous)
8. The coach will be leaving shortly. (future continuous)
9. Just call me Britney. (imperative)
10. I'll be twenty one in June. (future simple or will future)
11. I've never liked squid. (present perfect [simple])
12. I had been waiting for the train for hours. (past perfect continuous)
13. Would you like a cocktail? (modal auxiliary + infinitive)
14. You're gonna really get on with my brother. (going to [present continuous] for future)
15. I used to play the drums in a band. (used to [past simple] to express habitual action)

Parts of Speech

These are all 'things'; including objects, people, places, abstract things, such as states, activities, ideas, groups, etc.

London

These replace nouns or noun phrases to shorten sentences and avoid repetition.

they

These form the basis of all sentences, referring to actions or states.

buy

These describe nouns.

happy

These provide extra information about events, verb actions, adjectives and sentences. E.g. information about frequency, manner, location, time, attitude, intensity, etc.

sometimes

These provide information about nouns, often restricting or specifying what we are talking about. There are 4 types: possessives, demonstratives, quantifiers and articles.

the

These are usually followed by nouns/ pronouns, and denote location, time, movement, etc.

from

These link either clauses or phrases together to make longer sentences.

because

any your
 Simon's
John problem
 shoes
 through
 fishing
 where
 where
 here tomorrow
 to smile
quite yourself
 happily
were these
 slower
 if him
 is leaving
 but on
 blue

have been wondering

determiners

verbs

adverbs

nouns

conjunctions

prepositions

adjectives

pronouns

Parts of Speech

nouns

These are all 'things'; including objects, people, places, abstract things, such as states, activities, ideas, groups, etc.

London **John**
problem **shoes**
fishing

pronouns

These replace nouns or noun phrases to shorten sentences and avoid repetition.

they **him** **yourself**

verbs

These form the basis of all sentences, referring to actions or states.

to smile **is leaving**
buy **have been wondering**
were

adjectives

These describe nouns.

happy **slower** **blue**

adverbs

These provide extra information about events, verb actions, adjectives and sentences. E.g. information about frequency, manner, location, time, attitude, intensity, etc.

sometimes **happily**
tomorrow
quite
where **here**

determiners

These provide information about nouns, often restricting or specifying what we are talking about. There are 4 types: possessives, demonstratives, quantifiers and articles.

the
any
these
Simon's **your**

prepositions

These are usually followed by nouns/ pronouns, and denote location, time, movement, etc.

through
from
on

conjunctions

These link either clauses or phrases together to make longer sentences.

because **if** **but**

Verb phrases

(subject, verb, object, compliment, etc.)

1. I bought a new car.
2. She's a teacher.
3. Just take whatever you want.
4. He seems OK.
5. My mobile phone broke.
6. I found 20 lira when I was on my way to school this morning.

Beware of
adverbs!

Comparing grammar

- As well as teaching 'bits' of grammar separately, we often contrast 2 'bits' of grammar. Think of 1-2 possible contrasts for the following. Identify the level you're thinking of:
 1. Present perfect?
 2. 'Going to'?
 3. Present continuous?
 4. Past perfect?
 5. 2nd conditional
 6. Superlatives
 7. 'the'
 8. 'Used to'

When you're comparing grammar, how will this influence what you do and don't teach? **Think about prior knowledge.**

What's the longest sentence you can make in English using just one word?

Buffalo buffalo, Buffalo buffalo buffalo, buffalo Buffalo buffalo.



Longest word in Turkish?

- çekoslovakyalılastiramadıklarımızdanmısınız
- Muvaffakiyetsizleştiricileriveremeyebileceklerimizdenmişsinizcesine

Why is this possible in Turkish and not English, and the buffalo sentence possible in English and not Turkish?