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# PRODUCT, PROCESS, AND SKILL: A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO GRAMMAR TEACHING

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## Abstract

This paper explores a multifaceted approach to grammar teaching based on Batstone's (1994) classification of grammar instruction into three categories: product, process, and skill. It analyzes and evaluates a series of grammar teaching activities from coursebooks, providing modified versions to better meet learners' needs across different proficiency levels. Each approach is examined for its pedagogical effectiveness, student engagement, and contextual applicability. The modifications suggested aim to increase interactivity, relevance, and student motivation. The study concludes that a balanced combination of all three approaches—product, process, and skill—enhances both grammatical understanding and practical language use. Emphasis is placed on the role of context, creativity, and learner involvement in grammar instruction.

**Keywords:** Grammar teaching, product approach, process approach, skill approach, Batstone, language pedagogy, grammar activities, learner engagement, contextual learning, grammar instruction strategies.

## Introduction

Teaching grammar might be one of the boring aspects for teachers, and learning it may be challenging for students. According to Batstone, there are 3 approaches, *product, process and skill* (Batstone, 1994) in conducting grammar according to the aim of the lesson. Teachers should be able to choose the appropriate approach, considering all factors such as students, the lesson aim, and the topic. This paper provides examples for those 3 approaches and explains activities with a modified version.



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### Teaching grammar as a product

Teaching grammar as a **product** is one of the effective ways of familiarising students with form and meaning, where a “noticing” task is important in applying this approach to the practice. **Activity 1** (Appendix 1) is designed to teach forms of “have” and “have got” in question, negative and short-answer sentences. Originally, the activity contains two steps for practising the form and learning it. While in the first activity, students read the provided dialogue in order to notice a rule, in the latter, they are supposed to make their own conversations by using a structure of “have /have got” in question and answer. The task which requires noticing the rule without deductive explanation may not be sufficiently understandable, as learners might soon forget it; that is the reason learners have to learn the structure in the second stage (Batstone, 1994). These activities might be a bit complicated for the first time as students usually mix the *question* and *negative* forms of “have” and “have got” with each other often (Ortega, 2014); in order to support students and make the leaning process smooth I would modify the task a bit by adding pictures to describe the listed themes in task two where the activity could become more colourful since Hasanah (2015, p.112) states that “Using pictures can make exercises and activities more interesting and more interactive”.

**Activity 2** (Appendix 1) is designed to teach future forms “will” and “to be going to” by involving students in noticing their differences. Students first look at the pictures and statements, and then they analyse sentences with “to be going to” and “will” in order to distinguish them. In the next step, students make a rule based on their notice. In this activity, “form” is emphasised more as students don’t produce and practice their knowledge. The main purpose is to explain the difference between those 2 forms of future tense, where they don’t work on meaning deeply. After guessing and understanding the rule, learners fill in the “grammar spot table”. Here, students have to notice the rule only by guessing, which makes learning successful. The activity is effective as it is concise and gives the most significant rule; on the other hand, it needs to be improved. I would add a task with a story where “future forms” would be used with more examples in the context. Students will be expected to read sentences and underline future



forms and discuss the reason for applying “to be going to” and “will” in the text so that they can learn how to apply the language meaningfully. As process teaching requires careful awareness in developing activities, decisions on task influence on the learner can be made (Batstone, 1994). After, learners should create their own sentences by using future forms in pairs to make sure that they can apply the learnt rule correctly. It can be observed that the modified version of tasks also serves for learners’ language development.

### **Teaching grammar as a process**

**Appendix 2 Activity 1** is an example task for teaching grammar as a process. This approach involves learners in the process straight; however, they are directed and guided (Batstone, 1994). After learning the structure of several tenses and understanding their differences, in the first stage of the activity, students are supposed to create questions in order to ask their partners. The first step of the activity is guided a bit by providing some ideas to ask. Then, students give questions to each other questions. After that, they tell about their partners to the group and practice their language. In the third stage, students write several sentences about a person that they know and share their ideas with their partners. It is obvious to see that during the activity, learners get several opportunities for language use by asking questions of each other and speaking to their pairs. Learners are supported at the beginning by being provided some thoughts to create questions and one sample to direct them. The activity is very useful as students have a chance to apply their knowledge into practice by questioning, answering and composing sentences about the person that they know. Although this activity is intended for intermediate-level students, it seems a bit simple and boring. I would change some parts of it by asking students to compose a story about one of the famous people and read it in front of everyone. “It is also revealed that the implementation of the model (teaching language through stories) makes the process of learning more interesting and enjoyable, motivate the students to learn grammar outside the classroom more, and change the students’ perceptions on grammar from a negative to a positive one” (Yunita & Emzir, 2019). Other students’ task would be to guess the person who has been described.



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In this way, everyone would be more involved in the process, and the task would become more interesting.

**The second activity** for the process approach is intended for pre-intermediate level students. According to the task, by looking at the pictures, learners are asked to continue the given ideas using linking words “when” and “as soon as” properly. After finishing the ideas, students are asked to compare their answers with the book version. This activity does not provide opportunities for language use since students don’t read their answers and discuss. Students are supported a lot by being given the first part of sentences in the task. That is why the task is rather easy for pre-intermediate level students. Disadvantages of this activity are that students do not practice language as much as needed since they have to compare the answers with the model one. Though the activity is interesting, it needs to be improved. According to Batstone, learners should be involved and take each opportunity to practice their language, especially “to deploy grammar in their talk, stretching their linguistic resources so that they use language which is grammatically rich” in *process* teaching. It would be more beneficial if students would perform a role-play in groups by creating a story while using 6 pictures and applying linking words “as soon as” and “when” in their speech. By doing this activity, learners would be able to work on their grammar, utilise new structures and experience language use.

### **Teaching grammar as a skill**

“Though a combination of product and process teaching, teachers can give their learners both a focus on specific grammatical forms and opportunities to deploy these forms in language use” (Batstone, 1994). **The first activity** in Appendix 3 is a sample for teaching grammar as a *skill*. This activity is intended for intermediate-level students to teach *state and activity verbs*. In this task, students first read the article, and then work on verbs from the reading material by deciding if verbs are used only in simple form or in simple and continuous forms. In the following step, students compare 2 pairs of sentences and translate them into their native language in order to understand the differences in meaning. In the last stage, students complete the gaps with words from the text. In the reflection part,



students just work on grammar; nevertheless, they do not practice their gained knowledge and language in a real-life situation after completing all tasks. However, attention to grammar is important to accomplish tasks after reading. All tasks are based on grammar knowledge, and they are connected with reading material. This activity is helpful as learners learn new topic “state and activity verbs” through context which gives more opportunities to learners to understand the usage of certain grammar rule better. The disadvantage of the activity is that some of students may not be interested in reading material; as a result, they may benefit little in terms of understanding the grammar topic. Even though the activity is authentic since the grammar topic is connected with reading material, practicing the language in real life is missing. In modifying this activity, I would add an extra activity where students would be supposed to research other types of adventures and write a report about them by applying *state and activity* verbs in practice. “Unless learners know how to apply grammatical concepts in language skills, knowledge of grammar will not be useful” (Mart, 2014, p.126). That is why students should practice their grammatical knowledge by applying it in context after gaining it. As Wajnryb (1990) claims that “Context gives a more precise understanding of how to use the grammar, and provides accuracy in the studied language both in oral and written skills (p.6)”.

**The last activity** is designed for upper-intermediate level students for reviewing all types of questions and negatives, and that is a sample for the grammar a *skill*. First, students discuss the reasons for lying and speak about people in cartoons. Then they listen to the recording and find out why those people lie to somebody. After it, in the main part of the activity, learners are supposed to match questions with the sentences of the people in the cartoon. This activity gives a chance to students to identify which question is used when and how to reply to them correctly. Students do not reflect much, except for matching; they don’t have any other tasks. For the listening task to be completed, grammar knowledge, questioning are needed. Advantages of the activity are that listening and matching questions are interesting and practical, as they teach students everyday issues. Moreover, they may improve their critical thinking skills since they are supposed to analyse each question before matching it with statements. However, this





activity is simple and needs to be improved. I would modify by adding one more task at the end. After completing a matching task, students would be asked to produce a dialogue where they would be required to use as many types of questions as possible. Thornbury (1999) states that applying dialogues in language teaching is effective and matches with needs of learners.

### Personal evaluation

While selecting activities, I reviewed several course books and chose tasks for different levels in order to pick appropriate ones for the 3 approaches. The described activities are helpful to learners to advance their grammar knowledge and also to work on other skills as well. Grammar as a process approach is more acceptable for language use, taking into consideration factors like preparation time, the regulation of shared knowledge, and familiarity with topics involved. According to Candlin (1987), good tasks are ones which motivate learners to use language, involve students in solving problems, and engage learners with their personalities; moreover, those assignments are challenging and encourage learners to reflect on their language use. Modified versions of process activities would match all criteria mentioned above. "In process teaching we don't only want them (learners) to achieve the self-discovery which is facilitated by consciousness-raising, but also the self-expression of language use" (Batstone, 1994)

### Appendix 1 (Product)

#### Activity 1:

**PRACTICE**  
**Talking about you**

**1** Practise the forms of *have* and *have got* in the question, negative, and short

Do you have a car?	Yes, I do.	No, I don't.
Have you got a car?	Yes, I have.	No, I haven't.
I don't have a computer.	I haven't got a computer.	

**1 2.2** Listen and repeat.

**2** Ask and answer about these things with a partner, using *have* or *have got*:

• a computer	• a credit card	• brothers and sisters
• a stereo	• a Walkman	• your parents/a holiday home
• a camera	• a mobile phone	• your sister/a car
• a bicycle	• a pet	• your brother/a motorbike

Soars, J. New Headway. Elementary (2013). Oxford : Oxford University Press



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**Activity 2:**

• Grammar: Future

**12** Study the examples, and complete the rules.

**be going to - will**

- We use ..... to talk about **future plans** and **intentions**. We also use ..... to make **predictions** based on **what we can see**.
- We use ..... for **on-the-spot decisions**. We also use ..... to make **predictions** based on **what we think or imagine**.

Evans, V. & Doole, J. (n.d.) Enterprise 1. Berkshire: Express publishing



## Appendix 2 (Process)

### Activity 1

**7** Work in pairs. Use the cues below to write your travel questionnaire. Then ask your partner questions about his/her life. Add more questions if you like.

- 1 ever travel abroad?
- 2 ever live abroad?
- 3 how many countries/be to?
- 4 like travelling?
- 5 plan a trip/holiday anywhere at the moment?
- 6 how many languages/speak?
- 7 how many languages/learn at the moment?
- 8 interested in any country/culture?

#### Questions

- 1 Have you ever travelled abroad?

Now tell the class what you have learned about your partner.

**8** Work in pairs. Think of a person that you know. Write sentences about what he/she does, is doing and has done in his/her life. Tell your partner.

Harris, Mower, D., & Sikorzynska, A. (2006) Opportunities, Intermediate. London: Longman

### Activity 2:

**PRACTICE**  
when, as soon as

1 Complete the sentences with your ideas.

When I get home...	As soon as this lesson finishes...	If I win,...
After I leave school...	While I'm in New York...	... before I get too old.

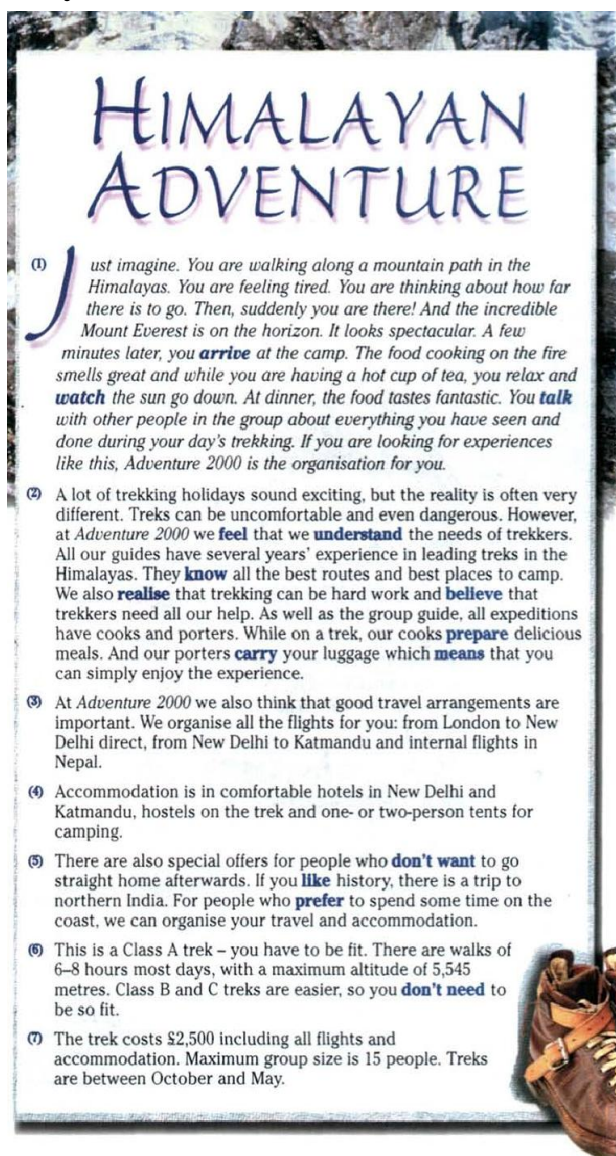
**1.2.3** Listen and compare your answers.

Soars, J. New Headway. Pre intermediate (2013). Oxford : Oxford University Press



## Appendix 3 (Teaching grammar as a skill)

### Activity 1



**HIMALAYAN ADVENTURE**

① Just imagine. You are walking along a mountain path in the Himalayas. You are feeling tired. You are thinking about how far there is to go. Then, suddenly you are there! And the incredible Mount Everest is on the horizon. It looks spectacular. A few minutes later, you **arrive** at the camp. The food cooking on the fire smells great and while you are having a hot cup of tea, you relax and **watch** the sun go down. At dinner, the food tastes fantastic. You **talk** with other people in the group about everything you have seen and done during your day's trekking. If you are looking for experiences like this, Adventure 2000 is the organisation for you.

② A lot of trekking holidays sound exciting, but the reality is often very different. Treks can be uncomfortable and even dangerous. However, at Adventure 2000 we **feel** that we **understand** the needs of trekkers. All our guides have several years' experience in leading treks in the Himalayas. They **know** all the best routes and best places to camp. We also **realise** that trekking can be hard work and **believe** that trekkers need all our help. As well as the group guide, all expeditions have cooks and porters. While on a trek, our cooks **prepare** delicious meals. And our porters **carry** your luggage which **means** that you can simply enjoy the experience.

③ At Adventure 2000 we also think that good travel arrangements are important. We organise all the flights for you: from London to New Delhi direct, from New Delhi to Katmandu and internal flights in Nepal.

④ Accommodation is in comfortable hotels in New Delhi and Katmandu, hostels on the trek and one- or two-person tents for camping.

⑤ There are also special offers for people who **don't want** to go straight home afterwards. If you **like** history, there is a trip to northern India. For people who **prefer** to spend some time on the coast, we can organise your travel and accommodation.

⑥ This is a Class A trek – you have to be fit. There are walks of 6–8 hours most days, with a maximum altitude of 5,545 metres. Class B and C treks are easier, so you **don't need** to be so fit.

⑦ The trek costs £2,500 including all flights and accommodation. Maximum group size is 15 people. Treks are between October and May.

### STATE AND ACTIVITY VERBS Presentation

④ Look at the blue verbs in the text. Can they be used in simple and continuous tenses or only in simple tenses? Copy and complete the table.

Only simple tenses	Simple and continuous tenses
realise	carry

Can you add more verbs to each column?

⑤ Read these pairs of sentences. Translate the verbs. Does the verb mean the same in both sentences?

- All our guides *have* several years' experience in leading treks in the Himalayas.
  - You *are having* a hot cup of tea.
- You *are feeling* tired.
  - At Adventure 2000 we *feel* that we understand the needs of trekkers.
- We also *think* that good travel arrangements are important.
  - You *are thinking* about how far there is to go.

⑥ Complete these sentences from the text. What word follows the verbs of sense?

- It *looks* \_\_\_\_\_ (paragraph 1).
- The food cooking on the fire *smells* \_\_\_\_\_ (paragraph 1).
- The food *tastes* \_\_\_\_\_ (paragraph 1).
- A lot of trekking holidays *sound* \_\_\_\_\_ (paragraph 2).

➡ Grammar Summary 2, on page 124.

Harris, Mower, D., & Sikorzynska, A. (2006) Opportunities, Intermediate. London: Longman

## Activity 2

### TELLING LIES

#### Questions and negatives

1 Think of some lies that these people might tell.

a teenage girl to her parents a car salesman  
a student to the teacher a politician  
a husband to his wife

2 All the people in the cartoons are lying. Who to? Why?

3 **T41** Listen to what the people are really thinking. What is the truth? Why *did* they lie? Do you think any of the people have good reasons to lie?

4 Which question was each person asked before they lied? Put a-f in the boxes.

- 1 ☐ What did you make that face for? Doesn't it look good?
- 2 ☐ Can I speak to Sue Jones, please? It's urgent.
- 3 ☐ How come you're ill today? You looked just fine yesterday!
- 4 ☐ Who gave you that black eye? Haven't I told you not to get into fights?
- 5 ☐ Where are you going? How long will you be? I hope you won't be late.
- 6 ☐ I want to know if you'll marry me. I don't think you will.



Soars, J. Headway. Elementary (2003).  
Oxford : Oxford University Press





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