



"2. Contemporary issues in the teaching of grammar in an EFL setting."

Question 1)

The most relevant contemporary issues in the teaching of grammar are technology and linguistic variations. As the British Empire enforced English in the colonies during centuries, several linguistic varieties emerged. Speakers from distant parts of the world, such as India, Nigeria, Jamaica and Australia, have different accents and may suffer influence from their contact with native languages.

As a consequence of colonialism, English has become a global language. Technology develops in English, generating a new kind of enforced language acquisition and impacting the teaching of grammar.

The concept of grammar is usually understood as the set of rules in a language. Nevertheless, as a living language, English evolves. As Liu and Nelson (2016) state, the proficiency level and background are important factors in the accessibility of the language. In a typical English classroom, students from various backgrounds and different levels of access to language meet, thus teaching meaningful and useful language is challenging.

A teacher must adapt lessons to involve all learners and learning styles. Vygotsky has studied the relationship between the environment and the learning process, so the more access to language a student has in his/her everyday life, he or she may develop more meaningful and useful learning strategies.

Video games, for example, are known as a source of interest in language acquisition. Players from different parts of the world connect, exchange tips, record and watch videos on YouTube and create online forums, using English as the main means of communication. Socio-economic issues determine access to technology and language. A family with the economic means to provide private English instruction and technological gadgets such as laptop, mobile phone, video game console, trips to English speaking countries, surrounds their children with privileges that most Brazilian families can not afford.



Question 2)

Portuguese and English grammars are quite different. The order of words, as noun and adjective, for example, is opposite. In Portuguese, the noun comes before the adjective, in English the adjective comes before the noun. A language provides a way of understanding and communicating. The way in which the world makes sense to an individual, a person's knowledge is expressed by language, as Eugenio Coseriu has highlighted in his linguistic studies.

Therefore, the role of grammar in the teaching of English for Brazilian learners is providing a new mechanism of understanding and communicating in a different logic pattern from their native language.

Teaching that the verb "to be" means two verbs in Portuguese ("ser" and "estar") is possible by clarifying the idea of context. Writing the sentences "I am a girl" and "I am at school" it becomes clear that one refers to a personal characteristic in the first sentence ("ser") and to a place in the second ("estar"). It is also by context that a student can understand when "read" is being used as present or past. The sentence "I read at night" expresses a habit, as for "I read that book a month ago" expresses a past action.

Grammar is key in language teaching. Brazilian learners tend to make a mistake when they first hear the question "How old are you?" They tend to reply by using the verb "to have", for, in Portuguese a person "has" an amount of years. It seems confusing to understand the different grammatical logic in this case. Indeed, as progress in the language happens, students apprehend the grammatical difference and use language properly.

Question 3) Lesson plan/topic: Present Simple

Warm-up Hangman game with the word India (-----), in this game, remember the alphabet in English and talk about what the students know about India. Make an interdisciplinary link with Geography: explain that India is a country in Asia where there are many languages spoken. Ask if students have seen the movies "Who wants to be a millionaire?" and "Lion". Ask if they have heard about yoga and make a joke, saying it is not "Yoda", the Jedi Knight from "Star Wars", Ask if they have seen an image of a man with the head of an elephant and explain that this image represents Ganesha, an Indian God. Ask if they like curry. Explain that, as in Brazil, there are a lot of very poor people in India and hand-out the text.

Before reading, ask students to fold the paper in half to enlighten the idea of "foldable" from the title. Read the text with students and check understanding. Write two sentences from the text on the board: "A group creates a handy desk for students in need" and "they carry their books in their arms or in bags". Underline creates and carry. Explain that both verbs are in the Present Simple. Show that "creates" has "s" because it refers to a group (it). Explain that for he, she or it the verb changes, but not for I, you, we, they, such as in "carry". Elicit examples of verbs and build sentences in the Present Simple using I, you, he, she, it, we, they.

If students do not mention the verbs fly, study, play, do, go, watch, wash, show the differences for he, she, it in those cases. flies, studies, plays, does, goes, watches, washes

Ask students to describe their school routine and write a sentence about it on a piece of paper and sign their names. Give a piece of paper from a different student to each and ask them to say what their friends do. For example, João writes "I go to school by bus". Maria picks João's paper and says "João goes to school by bus".

As homework, I would ask students to research interesting ideas to help people, such as "the shoe that grows" and show the video about it, if possible.