

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ESA METHOD IN TEACHING GRAMMAR POINT OF COMPARISONS FOR NON-MAJOR HUFU STUDENTS

Nguyen Giang Huong

University of Ho Chi Minh Food Industry

Email: ghuongbillion@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

As all of us know, grammar plays a really important part in learning foreign language. Without grammar, learners can't produce the language correctly or transfer their thinking so that the listeners can understand what the speaker means. Most of learners considered that grammar periods are boring because of traditional teaching method which sticks to the black board and can't make students speak out after the teacher's presentation. Therefore, the question: "What may be the suitable methods of teaching grammar in a class of 60-non-English major students?" is raised. There have been many ways to transfer grammar to learners so far such as deductive, inductive approach, PPP or ESA method. In this paper, I would like to apply ESA method to the presentation of grammar point of comparisons in Unit 7 in A2 level of Life, published by National Geographic Learning. The purpose of this appliance is to estimate the effectiveness of the ESA method on non-English major HUFU student based on their preferences, understanding the lesson and their ability to apply the grammar point in real life.

Keywords: Comparisons, ESA method, students' preferences, implementation, motivated.

1 INTRODUCTION

Teaching grammar of second or foreign language is changing much in term of approaches and methods nowadays. These approaches gradually change from more teacher-centered to more student-centered which are evaluated to be effective for learning.

Non-English major students are one who actually consider English as a burden in their knowledge pursuit journey. As a result, their learning is somewhat compulsory and so hard. They learn English mostly for the purpose of passing exams at universities or colleges, career opportunity and international communication. As Nguyen (2015) viewed, students who don't specialize in English just "concentrate on English for the external needs for higher education and future career. The other typical reason to motivate them to be with English is from the pressure of getting high marks in university examination". This seemed that English is a subject that they are not much interested in and they are forced to study it with high pressure to get enough marks and then they can pass exams. Due to these temporary purposes, non-English major students usually don't set their own study schedules and they also lack self-actualization which demotivated them to learning.

I sometimes heard from students that they feel grammar periods are boring and some are even scared of grammar. Why is that? Is it because of teacher's teaching methods which affect students' learning or because of any other reasons? In fact, there are many factors affecting learners' learning, for example; language learner's ability, learner's background, attitude, motivation, age,

learning environment, teaching strategies, etc. Obviously, it can be recognized that teaching method is one of the prerequisites for learning success.

How about teaching grammar for non-English major students in Ho Chi Minh University of Food Industry (HUPI for abbreviation)? How do students feel in grammar periods? Can students apply any grammar points to reality? These issues will be discussed throughout the study.

There have been many methods applied to help students approach grammar point in HUPI. This paper is to evaluate the appropriateness of using ESA method in teaching grammar point of comparisons in unit 7 of Life course book published by National Geographic Learning. This study is done with 100 non-major English students divided into 2 classes at HUPI. The result would be evaluated in terms of student's understanding about the comparison, their motivation to acquire knowledge and their application ability in real life.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

There have been many methods of grammar teaching so far in the world in general and in Ho Chi Minh University of Food Industry in particular. It depends on the levels and backgrounds of learners that the teachers can apply different methods for different classes.

2.1 Teaching Status for Non-English -Major students in HUPI

The coursebooks used for Non-English -Major students in HUPI are sets of "National Geographic Life" published by Cengage Learning. Students have to pass A0, A1, A2, B1 and B2 to complete the English syllabus here. The teachers who are in charge of these courses are from Departments of English, most of them obtained Master degree. All the course books from A0 to B2 of "Life" taught at HUPI consist of 12 units including grammar, vocabulary, real life function, pronunciation, listening, reading, critical thinking, speaking and writing.

Hughes (2012), the author of Life said that due to designing the coursebook systematically, the authors want to help students to access, explore, learn, practice, and apply their new language in real-world contexts. Also, due to connecting of Grammar to Writing, students will develop writing skills including writing academic paragraph and writing essays.

The reason why the department of English of HUPI using this set of textbooks is that the book tends to use communicative teaching approach, which is considered one of the effective ways of teaching second language. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is an approach to the teaching of second and foreign languages that highlights the interaction as both the means and the ultimate goal of learning a language. Language learners in classrooms or environments which have CLT techniques always learn and practice the target language through interaction with their friends and partner or with their instructor, they study the language via authentic texts, and they both use the classroom language combined with the outside classroom language. Nunan (1991) discussed five features of Communicative Language Teaching as follows:

1. An emphasis on learning to communicate through interaction in the target language.
2. The introduction of authentic texts into the learning situation.
3. The provision of opportunities for learners to focus, not only on language but also on the Learning Management process.
4. An enhancement of the learner's own personal experiences as important contributing elements to classroom learning.

5. An attempt to link classroom language learning with language activities outside the classroom”.

In English class at whatever background and level, most of the students are less attention and passive attitude when they join the class. That’s because many teachers still used lecturing method and quite based on the book (Hidayah & Harjali, 2017). They added that if the teachers still used like methods above, the students would get little progress in learning and understanding of the lesson, especially English subject. As a result, the teacher must make changes in teaching methods and ESA is the method they both suggested so that the class became interesting and can take the students attention.

2.2 What is ESA method and its benefits?

E.S.A developed by Jeremy Harmer is a teaching method which stands for Engage, Study and Activate. They are phases which are presented in a language classroom to help students to learn effectively. Harmer (2001) explained the three stages of E.S.A. are as follows.

The Engage phase:

This is the first phase of ESA procedure. The purpose of this phase is to help students pay attention and feel involved in the lesson. In this phase, the teacher will start the lesson by getting the students involved to participate in the lesson. During the Engage phase, the teacher tries to arouse and stimulate the students' curiosity by showing pictures, stories, discussions with the whole class, miming and acting, prompting the students to answer, and using questions to get students think and speak English. The creator of this method claimed this phase is extremely important because it helps students feel more comfortable and ready to learn.

The Study Phase:

The next phase after engaging students is the Study phase. In this phase the teacher can add or design many activities in order to help students easily access and understand how the new points are formed. In other words, this phase much emphasizes on language construction. These activities may include texts and dialogues, example sentences, crosswords, gap-fill exercises, word searches, matching games, and drilling. Students will learn by working in group to discover the information via teacher’s materials then teacher will take notes and correct mistakes. This is the phase where teacher corrects the students’ mistakes in applying new points.

The Activate Phase:

The Activate phase consists of tasks and activities designed to help students speak out the language as freely and communicatively as possible; for example, group or pair discussions, role-play, story building, tasks such as posters or advertisements, simulations, writing and debates. With these activities, each pair or group of students will work together, use the language to discuss and present the topic in class. As a result, a good point of this phase is that they can use peer correct of the mistakes before they talk in front of the class. The objective of this phase is not to focus on language construction but to use any language which may be appropriate for a given situation or topic. Activating the students will help the teacher know how well the learners have understood and mastered knowledge.

The ESA sequence can be described in the following way:

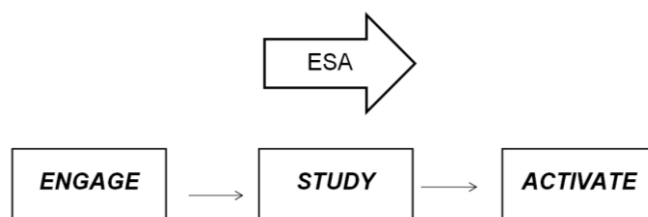


Figure 1.1. ESA sequence

Having the same idea as Harmer, Dunsmore (2018) said that by using ESA, teacher can have flexibility to conduct a classroom in an organized and productive way. ESA is extremely important because it keeps the students interested, motivated, and eager to learn new language.

3 EVALUATION METHOD

3.1 Techniques of collecting data

There were several instruments used by the writer to collect the data including classroom observation, group work and quick questionnaires.

Classroom observation is a method of evaluating and recording specific information about what is going on within a classroom. Administrators often implement observation periods in order to improve classroom models. Halim (2018) stated the importance of classroom observation as follows.

It provides teachers with constructive critical feedback in order to improve their classroom management and instructional techniques. For teachers it is important to observe the interaction between teacher-learner within the classroom because it can determine the learning opportunities that students get.

In this study, the observation will take place before, during and after the ESA teaching performance so that there would be a comparison among these stages.

Group work of 5 students is conducted after the Study phase and move to Activate phase. Teacher asked groups of students to choose one of these topics like describing their family members, the seasons or things they like best and why. They were required to use at least 5 sentences of comparisons. After fifteen minutes, each group presented in front of class.

Questionnaires were given to the two classes of 50 students each after the ESA phases had finished in order to evaluate their interest of new teaching method and their understanding. These are the questionnaires.

How do you feel about the period?

- Boring OK exciting memorable

How much do you understand the comparison lesson?

- <50% 60% 70% >80%

What makes you remember the lesson?

- Nothing Teacher’s friendliness and helpfulness
 Lively slides with formulas Story

3.2 Implementation ESA in teaching comparisons

The first step was opening, greeting the students, checking students' attendance, reviewing the previous material, focusing the topic of the lesson, explaining the purpose of the lesson, and explaining the advantages of the lesson.

The second step was the main activity. In this step, the teacher makes performance of the lesson by using ESA. In the Engage stage, the teacher showed some slides about countries and rivers, then ask students to preview and answer the questions related to the pictures.

After they were engaged, the teacher performed the second stage, the Study stage. In this stage, the teacher told a story about animals named "Who Should Be the King?" on slides. This was based on a Vietnamese story so students could easily recognize it and understand the plot. In each slide, the teacher both made questions and explained the grammar structure clearly.

WHO SHOULD BE THE KING?

In a certain forest, there were a lot of animals living together peacefully. However, one day, they gathered and discussed to choose the King of the forest.

The lion said: "I'm the strongest animal, I'll be the King."

Monkey said: "But I'm the most intelligent animal, I'll be the King."

"No, I am the biggest one," the elephant said.

"I'm the friendliest animal. I will be the king," the giraffe said.

There were so many ideas, but no one knew which animal was the best to be the King

After all, the writer went on to the last stage, Activate stage. The teacher asked students to do the writing task which put the adjectives in the correct form individually. This took about 10 minutes, and then asked students to work in groups of 5. These groups of students would choose one of these topics like describing their family members, the seasons or things they like best and why. They were required to use at least 5 sentences of comparisons. After fifteen minutes, each group presented in front of class. This activity gave chance to the students to use the language freely and communicatively.

4 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Before doing the ESA method, the writer found that in most grammar periods, students looked stressed, bored, less attention and sleepy because they just sat, listened, took notes and did exercises. It seemed that very rare interaction between teacher and students happened. However, with ESA, the classroom environment changed: the classroom was very good, innovative, attractive, creative, and enjoying, which can be seen through students' funny face, smiles, and enthusiastic group works. This meant there was an improvement on students' attitude of learning which might lead to their enhancement in their language acquisition.

When asked to work in groups of 5 or 6, at first students maybe ignore from the group. However, the teacher and the others in group encouraged him or her to join and discuss. As a result, all members in groups join and finished the assignment on time. Most of the groups use the comparison forms very well although there were still some minor mistakes. The purpose of this activity is that teacher could evaluate quickly how students could understand the lesson and it can

be seen that students on the one hand, they produced the related topics rather well, on the other hand, they felt confident in front of class.

Again, questionnaires were given to the two classes of 50 students each after the ESA phases had finished in order to evaluate their interest of new teaching method and their understanding, and here are the results.

Table 1. Questionnaire Results

How do you feel about the period?	<input type="checkbox"/> Boring	<input type="checkbox"/> Ok	<input type="checkbox"/> Exciting	<input type="checkbox"/> Memorable
	0%	0% (0 St)	70%	35%
How much do you understand the comparative lesson?	<input type="checkbox"/> <50%	<input type="checkbox"/> 60%	<input type="checkbox"/> 80%	<input type="checkbox"/> > 90%
	0%	5%	65%	30%
What makes you remember the lesson?	<input type="checkbox"/> Nothing	<input type="checkbox"/> (A) Interesting stories, slides with formulas	<input type="checkbox"/> (B) Teacher – students interaction	<input type="checkbox"/> Both A & B.
	0%	10%	7%	83%

As shown in table 1, no students felt bored with the lesson via ESA method. 70 percent of students felt that the lesson was exciting and 35percent thought that it was memorable. When asked the reasons that made them remember the lesson, 83 percent agreed that was due to teacher and students interaction and interesting stories and lively slides with formulas. Responding to the question “How much do you understand the comparative lesson?” no answer is ticked in the column of below 50 percent. In addition, 65 percent of students noted that they could master 80 percent of the whole lesson. This is a wonderful number which showed that ESA method made a lot of positive changes from the previous situation in the classroom.

5 CONCLUSION

By doing ESA technique, the grammar point of comparisons of A2 level at HUF1 changed positively. Students' behaviour from low motivation of learning has changed to high motivation, and students have been more motivated to attend the class. It was because they felt to be motivated by teacher's teaching method. The students have to pay much attention and focus on the instructions given, so there were very few students who disturb or interrupt the process of teaching and learning such as making noise, bothering other students, etc. The students were very enthusiastic and motivated to do the task and the instruction given. Although this research was done with a small amount of students at HUF1, it showed that ESA method was an appropriate and effective way in changing the students' attitude and motivation. As a result of this, the teacher hopes that these elements will help them feel that English is a little bit easier to learn and then they can plan their study of English to obtain a better expectation. Finally, the writer is pleased to have more suggestions and contribution from everyone for the improvement of later paper.

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