



PHONOLOGICAL AND GRAMMATICAL MASTERY FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS: PRACTICAL APPROACHES IN EFL TEACHING"

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Abstract. This article explores the teaching strategies used by me as an TESOL expert with examples and three elements. The first one-phonetics, phonology and morphology; the second- grammar and syntax, the last one is corpus based linguistic. The students, who study at Russian-language schools, face challenges in acquiring English due to the differences in grammar between English and their native languages. I employ a comparative approach, explaining English grammar in Russian to facilitate understanding. The article also discusses how lessons are structured, with an emphasis on grammar exercises, speaking, and listening activities to develop students' pronunciation, coherence, and communication skills.

Key words: language skills, syntax, corpus based linguistics, language acquisition.

I am an English teacher at a language center called "Polyglot" in Samarkand. My group consists of 16 B1-level learners, aged 15 to 18. The students' language proficiency varies due to differences in background knowledge and enthusiasm for learning a foreign language. At the A2 level, they have learned basic vocabulary and phrases needed for daily conversations and can answer the most common, predictable, and memorized questions (The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages). According to the Can-Do statements produced by the members of ALTE (1999-2002), B1 learners are at Level 2 ALTE (Threshold level). They can describe or express familiar situations, but their vocabulary is still limited. The students in my group are of Uzbek and Tajik origin, but they attend Russian-language schools and lyceums. Therefore, I teach English rules in Russian and compare similarities and distinctions between English and Russian grammar to make topics more understandable, as they are already familiar with Russian grammar. According to IELTS criteria, B1 learners (with a 4-5 band score) are not able to use complex language but can communicate at a basic level. In Uzbekistan, English is a foreign language, and language acquisition can be challenging. For example, in Uzbek and Russian grammar, there are only three tenses, while in English there are 16. This requires students to learn and practice distinguishing between tenses. My students are able to communicate to meet their basic needs and can make self-corrections. Each lesson lasts for 2 hours. In the first part of the lesson, I explain grammar rules, and the students do exercises to master the topic. The rest of the time is dedicated to speaking and listening activities to improve their pronunciation, cohesion, coherence, and flexibility.

Element 1: Phonetics, Phonology, and Morphology

Topic 1. Plural noun formation

The plural version of nouns can be formed in various ways according to the rules. This topic is essential for students to avoid basic grammar and pronunciation mistakes, since after forming plural version sometimes the letter -s should be pronounced as [z]. In order to sound more

natural and enhance reading this topic is compulsory. As my students are B1 level learners I decide to use sources from Kachalov, K.N.,&Izrailevich, E.E. (2011).*Practical English Grammar*.

The plural noun generally formed by adding **-s** to the singular, which is pronounced as **[z]** after voiced consonants and as **[s]** after voiceless consonants:

year	years	[jə:z]
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Nouns ending in the singular with the sibilant letters **s, ss, x, sh, ch**, form plural by adding the ending **-es** which is pronounced as **[iz]**:

class	classes	[klɑ:siz]
box	boxes	['bɒksiz]

Nouns ending in the singular with mute letter **e** preceding letter **s, c, z, g**, form plural by adding the ending **-es** pronounced as **[iz]**:

place	places	['pleisiz]
prize	prizes	[praiziz]
judge	judges	['dʒʌdʒɪz]

Nouns ending in the singular with letter **-y** preceding with consonants, form plural be adding the ending **-es** and **-y** changes to **i** pronounced as **[iz]**:

city	cities	['sitiz]
army	armies	['ɑ:rmiz]
factory	factories	['fæktərɪz]

If before the letter **-y** in singular form of nouns comes vowel pluralization will be without changing letter **-y**:

Day	days	['deiz]
boy	boys	['bɔɪz]
key	keys	['ki:z]

If the noun ends with **-o** in singular, plural version of the word will be by adding ending **-es** pronounced as **[z]**:



tomato	tomatoes	[tə'ma:təʊz]
hero	heroes	['hiərəʊz]

Exception: piano-pianos

Photo-photos

If the noun ends with **-f** and **-fe** in singular form, in the plural version we add ending **-es** and the letter **-f** will be changed to **-v**:

leaf	leaves	[li:vz]
wolf	wolves	[wʊlvz]
wife	wives	[waivz]

However, not all nouns ending with **-f** and **-fe** form plural version by changing **-f** and **-fe** to **v**:

chief	chiefs	[tʃi:fs]
roof	roofs	['ru:fs]

Some nouns can be pluralized not by adding the ending **-s** but by changing the root vowels and the vowel sounds will be changed as well while pronouncing a word:

man	[mæn]	men	[mən]
foot	[fʊt]	feet	[fi:t]
woman	['wʊmən]	women	['wimin]

Topic 2. Suffixes of adjectives

This topic is very helpful to enhance learners' vocabulary, since if they know suffixes they simply can create adjectives from nouns they know. From my own experience I can say that we can enhance our vocabulary very quickly. I will use the same book (Kachalov, K.N., & Izrailevich, E.E. (2011). *Practical English Grammar*.) while teaching because everything explained clear.

Adjectives can be formed from other parts of speeches by adding suffixes:

1. From verb by adding suffix **-able, -ible**

to change	changeable
to compare	comparable

2. From noun by adding suffix **-al**

culture	cultural
intellect	intellectual



3. From verb by adding suffix **-ant, -ent**:

To differ	different
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4. From verb and noun by adding suffix **-ive**:

To act	active
effect	effective
To talk	talkative

5. From noun by adding suffix **-ful** (from full/ having characteristic of):

beauty	beautiful
fruit	fruitful

6. From noun by adding suffix **-less** (without):

fruit	fruitless
shame	shameless
use	useless

7. From noun by adding suffix **-ous**:

danger	dangerous
fame	famous

8. From noun by adding suffix **-y**

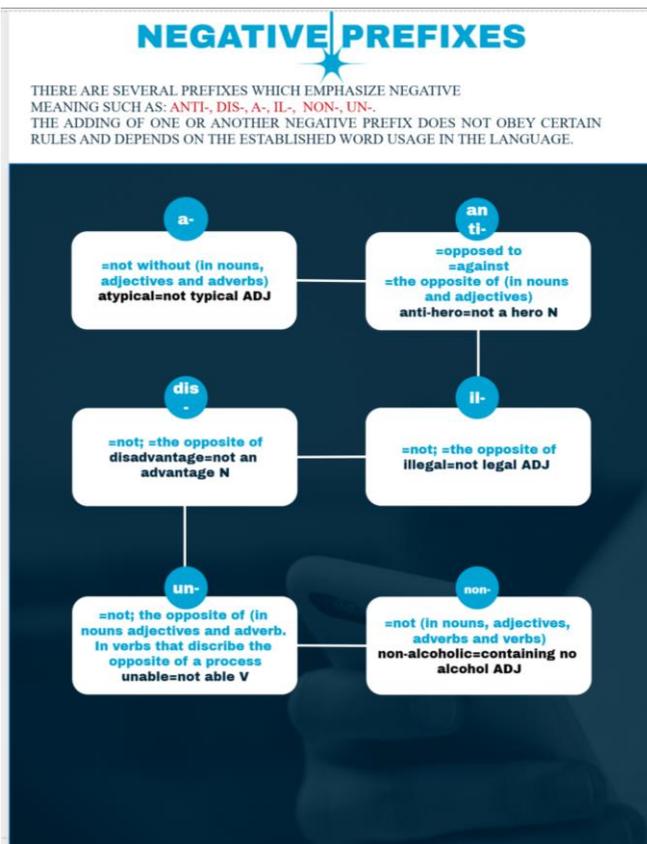
cloud	cloudy
dirt	Dirty
fog	Foggy
thirst	Thirsty
sun	sunny

9. Suffix **-ish** emphasize the a) nationality; b) low degree of quality:

Dane	Danish
red	reddish

Topic 3. Negative prefixes

Most of B1 level learners do not know about usage of negative prefixes.”. The adding of one or another negative prefix does not obey certain rules and depends on the established word usage in the language. That is why using handouts and brief explanation will help to conduct fruitful lesson. According to Fromkin, V., Rodman, R.,&Hyams, N.(2014) we “cannot buy a dictionary or phrasebook of any language with all sentences of the language...knowing language means being able to produce and understand new sentences never spoken before. This is the creative aspect of language.”



After studying psycholinguistics, I have learned how the process of language acquisition occurs and realised the value of right approach and teaching methodology. From my own experience, I can assert that mastering a foreign language is not easy. As Moskowitz, B. A. (1978) claimed “Each person speaking the language knows when to speak, how to construct the strings and how to interpret other people's strings, but the individual who does not know anything about the language cannot pick out separate words or sounds, let alone discern meanings.” My students mostly feel themselves unconfident while speaking in English because they hesitate and think that they not sound like native speakers. For example, the first topic I have chosen about pluralization of nouns. In most cases the sound [s] has been replaced by [z] in plural noun forms, however learners continue pronouncing sound [s] and forget about rules. When it comes to morphology, there is an another issue with vocabulary. Most of B1 level learners say “I do not agree” instead of “I disagree”. That is why I think learning negative prefixes and other features of morphology has a significant value on enhancing vocabulary and also developing language skills.

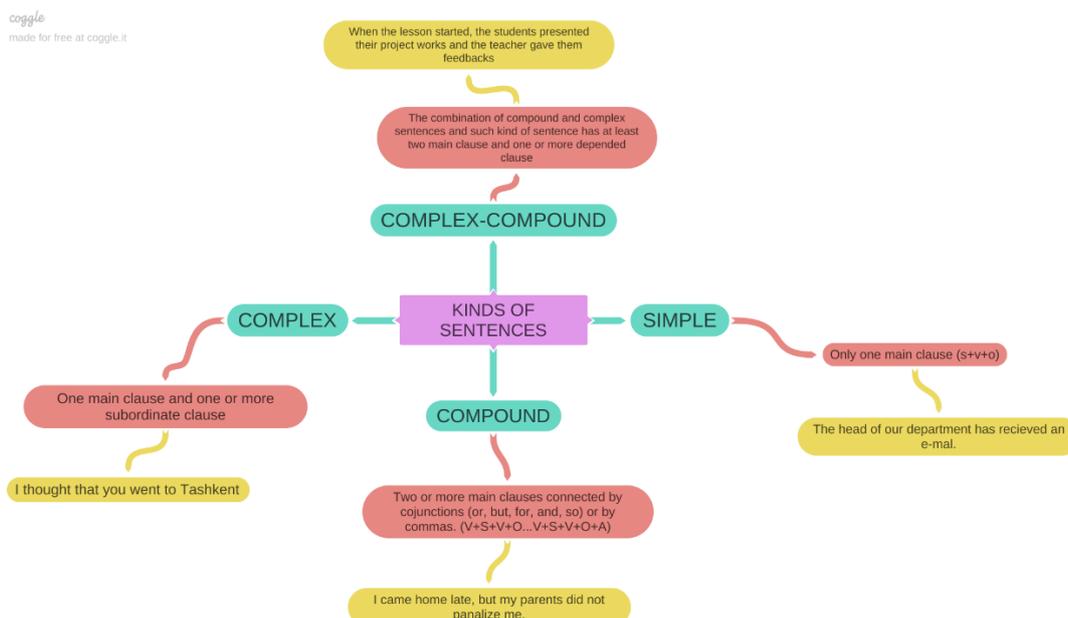
Before studying for a master's degree and studying linguistics I used materials provided by language centre. While studying linguistics I was interested to use my new findings in practice. I was not familiar with tools and methods which help conduct productive lessons. Working on formatives greatly opened my eyes and played a big role on creating my own teaching methodology. And now I use such tools like COCA and videos provided there. Video materials make our lessons interactive, especially when it deals with pronunciation. Such kind of investigations for productive teaching made my methodology completely different from methods of teaching and teaching materials provided by my workplace. I started to use tongue twisters to improve learners' pronunciation. As McMahon (2020) noted “...phonetics can provide much more information than learners may seem to use or need”. When staging English pronunciation, an important place is occupied by the skills of speech movements, the

basis for the development of all other speech skills. At the initial stage of the implementation of the provoking action, the formation of an articulation pattern occurs. It is necessary that the articulatory movement be unlearned first without connecting the voice, like a muscle movement (Yavas,2016) and the development in students of speech movements characteristic of a number of high significance of the technical nature of the language features of the English articulatory base which is differ from Russian articulatory base. Prevention of errors of the attendant gymnastics for the lips and tongue. When teaching pronunciation, it is necessary not only to mechanically repeat the situation, imitate the pronunciation of the teacher, but also their conscious application, based on certain rules. It is necessary to develop and apply rules for the transition of articulating organs from one language to another. The rules should differentiate the sounds in such a way that the basic structures of the organs of speech are assimilated when pronouncing the sounds of the English language. The formation of complex, lexical and grammatical skills should go on simultaneously, since teaching a foreign language is the formation of a communicative qualification. It is necessary to pronounce sounds clearly and distinctly, since students perceive the initial sensations of a new speech pattern. I believe that, it is necessary to include possible phenomena in contexts, situations, dialogues. Situations stimulate the use of intonational structures and stresses, facilitating their relief. Some students have increased visual memory, others remember better by ear, there are those who remember well with the help of movements and sensations. Students who are good at listening have good pronunciation. Most teachers only teach pronunciation by ear, thus helping only those students who have good auditory memory. In order to help students with noted visual memory and a theme that describe sounds and pronounce them, accompanying actions, learns to enjoy pronouncing relationships, some discuss that solve this problem.

Element 2: Grammar and Syntax

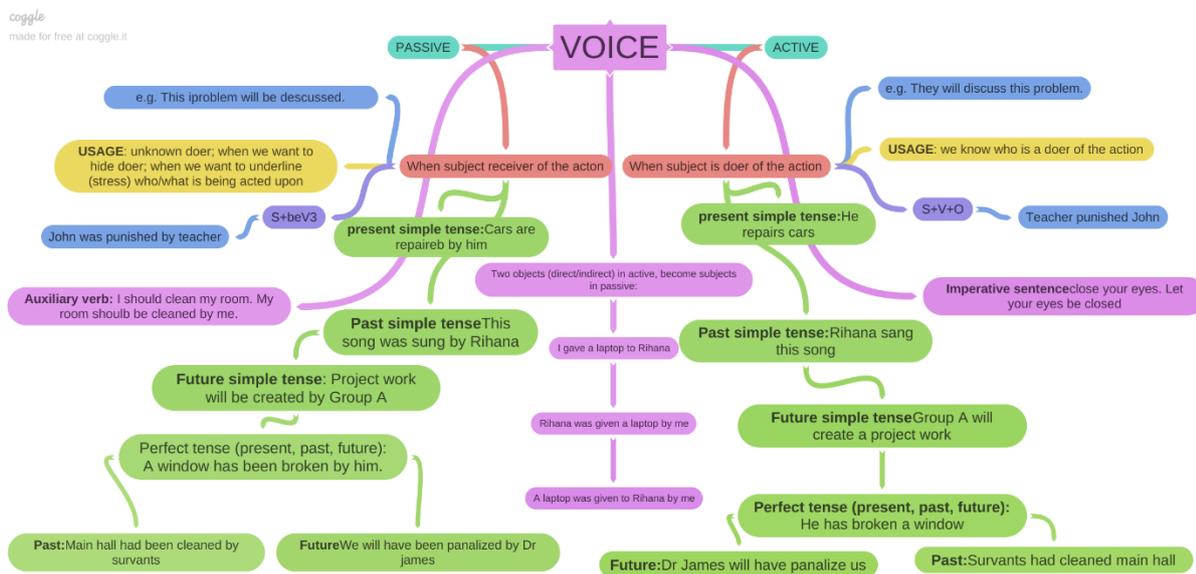
Topic 1. Kinds of sentences

Aman, Norhaida, Tan, & Ludwig. (2018). *med.* Marshall Cavendish International.



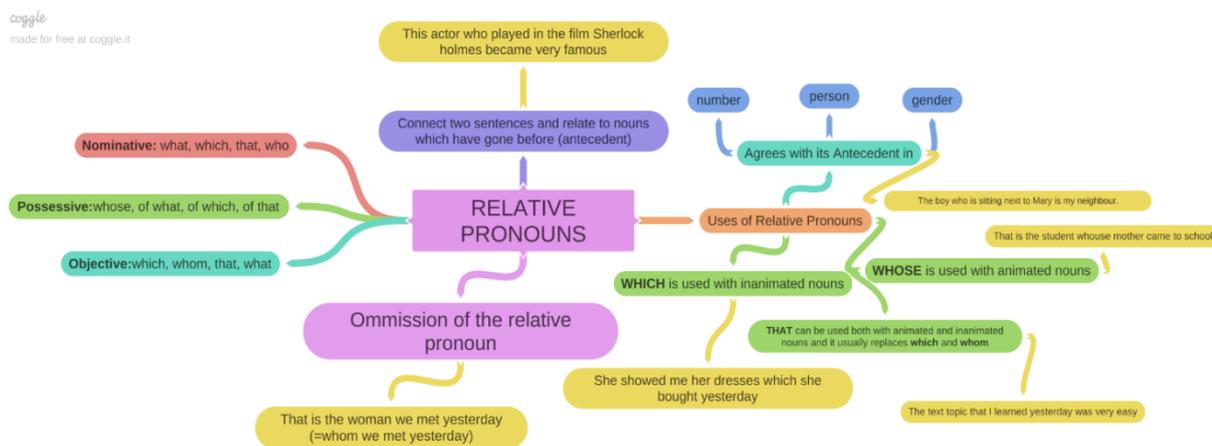
Topic 2. Passive and active voice

Parsoon, & Shirkant. (2015). *English Grammar and Usage*: [Electronic Source] Read Swiftly, Speak Fluently and Write Correctly. V&S.



Topic 3. Relative pronouns

Parsoon, & Shirkant. (2015). *English Grammar and Usage*: [Electronic Source] Read Swiftly, Speak Fluently and Write Correctly. V&S.

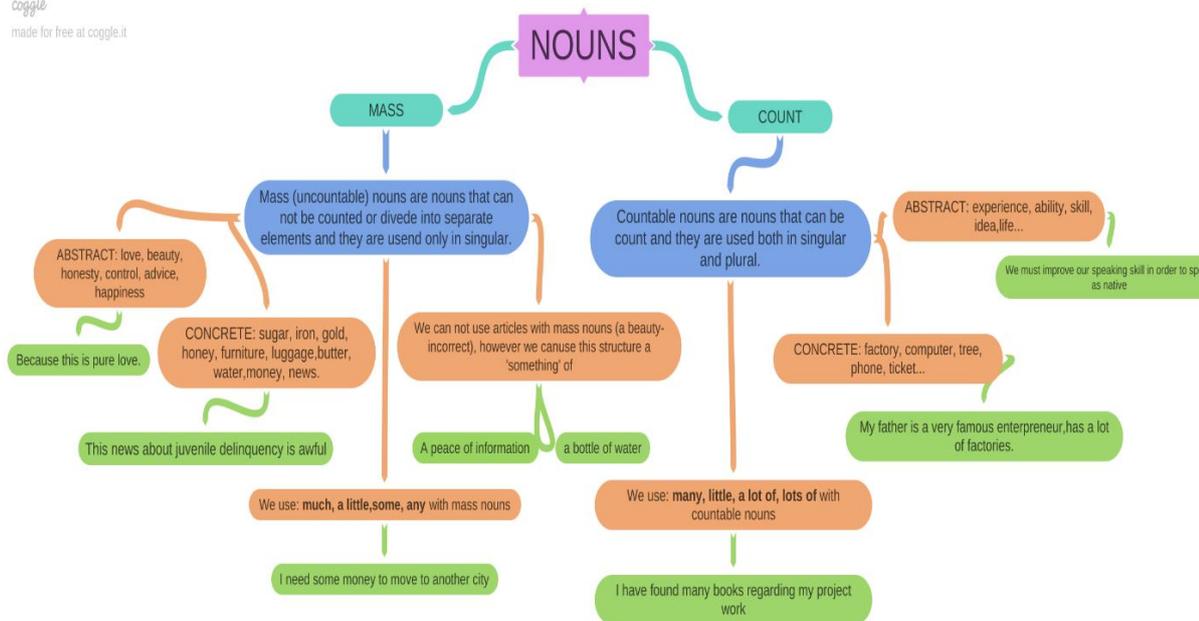


Topic 4. Mass and Count nouns

Parsoon, & Shirkant. (2015). *English Grammar and Usage*: [Electronic Source] Read Swiftly, Speak Fluently and Write Correctly. V&S.

Medley, M. J. (2010). *Linguistic Perspective in English Grammar*: [Electronic Source] a Guide for EFL Teachers. Charlotte, NC.

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There is evidence that grammar plays a crucial role in learning foreign language, since adequate communication cannot be applied in the absence of grammar. “The grammar, together with a mental dictionary (called a lexicon) that lists the word of the language, represents our linguistic competence. To understand the nature of language we must understand the nature of grammar (Fromkin, V., Rodman, R., & Hyams, N. (2014). All four language skills (speaking, writing, reading, listening) depend on grammar and as Folse (2009) noted “Grammar has been at the heart of learning languages for centuries”. As I work with students, I see how mastering foreign language is challenging for them. They have to learn not only new words or idioms, but also should be able to correctly compose phrases and sentences. Native speakers do not need grammar to speak in English fluently, since they already speak, and ELL should at least be able to perform without hesitation and deliver their thoughts. From my own experience I can say that, not everyone can teach English even if his level is advanced, because I had studied at language centre and my teacher got a very good result on IELTS exam, but he could not able to share his knowledge in proper way. According to Folse (2009) it is incorrect belief that English-native speaker can teach English without teaching trainings. However, it seems to me that there are trends towards a decrease in the role of grammar in teaching a foreign language, since, based on numerous observations especially when it comes to teach adults, it turned out that students do not master the practical knowledge of grammatical phenomena. But anyway, the role of grammar in the organization of communication remains one of the most important and dominant.

Learning proper approach of teaching grammar in linguistics course and course-based sources, creating visual materials and finding examples from reliable sources such as COCA, motivated me to create my own teaching method. While working with students I did not pay much attention on errors made by learners in their speaking. Folse (2009) noted the reason of such situation “Because the act of speaking a message happens very quickly, once the words are spoken, they are gone.” The most common grammar mistakes learners make is connected with tenses. Sometimes even if learners speak about the past they use present tense or they

use continuous tense very rarely. After reading the article written by Folse (2009) about grammar for English language learners I started to pay more attention on their speaking and errors the make.

As I have mentioned above ELL should not only learn new vocabulary but also correctly construct sentences. According to Valjin (2001) “syntax deals with how sentences are constructed, and users of human languages employ a striking variety of possible arrangements of the elements in sentences” and as we know in English we should follow to the word order, while in Russian language there is not word order rules. My learners mostly use simple sentence and hesitate to compose complex or compound sentence. That is why at first I teach them basic word order and at the end of our course I teach them inversion and constructing compound sentences as well. As a teacher I can support my learners to develop their grammatical knowledge by teaching students to grammatically correctly formulate their oral-speech statements and to recognize grammatical phenomena when reading and listening, directing the main content to extract meaningful information.

Element 3: Corpus Linguistics

I have searched examples for relative pronouns in COCA. This is very convenient tool and has huge database. It shows the frequency of usage of word or word combinations, in which genres they are mostly used (fiction, news, blog, etc.). The only disadvantage of this tool is the limit of search numbers (only 20 searches).

which	And then there is water, which is a sign of renewal and nature.
who	The person who was in the car with Brown was interviewed by detectives and released.
whom	Was it her two best friends, Hermes and Hercule, with whom she spoke to every day without a response.
whose	Find a couple whose children you admire, and ask them to come and talk to you.
that	So we're actually giving people the ability to do something that they haven't been able to do anytime in the past.
of what	I don't think you understand the magnitude of what we're getting into, here.
of which	Journalism is now explicitly a political job, the point of which is to enforce cultural orthodoxies and punish enemies.
who	Many years ago there was a Canadian boxer named George Chuvalo, a man who was never knocked down in ninety-three professional fights.
whom	Kevin is survived by his precious wife Becky, whom he married on June 2, 1973.
what	Have you done any thinking about what we discussed last week?

In today’s modern world we cannot imagine our life without modern technologies. They are widely used in education sphere as well. There are lots of materials and free books about language learning and linguistics. And one of the most popular is corpus linguistic. vas Corpus linguistics is a large, usually electronically presented, unified, structured, labeled, philologically competent array of linguistic data, designed to solve specific linguistic problems (Green,2018). According to the Green’s (2018) clarification “Corpus-based pedagogy helps the learners understand and work through these sometimes subtle meaning differences in

language structure. It also allows them to inductively discover rules and patterns which govern language use. An additional component of corpus-based pedagogy is its ability to enable teachers and learners to look beyond the sentence level to patterns found in extended discourse." Teachers can use corpus in order to create informative and productive syllabus and design clear learning materials. It also can be helpful for teacher-student collaboration (Sripicharn,2003 as cited in Green, 2018) we can examine the language data together. After using some of corpus-based tools I decided to strongly encourage students to use corpus for learning English, as this is a huge source of language data that students can use in order to be informed about how language is used in real-life situation.

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