DEVELOPING GRAMMAR EXERCISES BY USING HOT POTATOES AUTHORING SOFTWARE

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Abstract

Grammar is the mental of rules and categories that allows humans to form and interpret the words and sentences of the language. Grammar can also be regarded as a necessary “master” skill that enables competence to develop in the areas of listening, speaking, reading and writing. When grammar is incorrect or misunderstood in any of these areas, communication may disrupt. In teaching grammar, the teacher should give some grammar activities to evaluate their comprehending. Sometimes, the students felt bored with it. Therefore, the teacher should establish conditions which make teaching grammar interesting. The use of computer can motivate the students to learn because the audio-visual is more joyful and more interesting to be a teaching media. Hot Potatoes Authoring Software Program is one of teaching media to create computerized grammar exercises such as gap filling, multiple choice, and matching exercise.

Keywords: grammar exercises, teaching media, hot potatoes authoring software.

Introduction

Grammar relates to four skills namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Grammar as an element of language is considered as the most important factor in increasing mastery of those skills. Grammar facilitates the way we interact with other and also enables us to use language to describe the world in terms of how, when and where things happen.

Sometimes the students felt bored when they are given some grammar exercises. Therefore, the teacher should establish conditions which make teaching grammar interesting. One of the techniques that can be used to make the students interested and easy to understand the material is the use of computer as a media of teaching.

The use of computer in language teaching is called as CALL. It should be timetabled and implemented as any other new component of a course would be. According to Hanson and Smith in January (2001), learning by using computer which is known as CALL, students spent less time replying items because they could guess answers and receive immediate feedback. One of the CALL Programs is Hot Potatoes Authoring Software.

Hot potatoes is an authoring packages program (software) which includes six applications enabling us to create interactive multiple choice, short answer, jumbled sentences, cross word, matching and gap fill exercise. Teachers use the Hot Potatoes programs to create educational materials, especially exercises and tests. All these materials can be produced in the form of web pages. Therefore, we can create interactive grammar activities to make the students interesting in learning grammar.
Computer Assisted Language Learning

Computer-Assisted Language Learning defined as the search for and study of application of the computer in language teaching and learning. It covers a broad spectrum of concerns, including the pedagogies implemented through technology. Januarty (2007) states that there are seven terms widely used to describe the way computer lessons in any field can be conducted: tutorial, drill and practice, problem solving, contextualized activities, tool program, simulation, and games. The advantages of CALL in learning English bring the learning process to be more dynamic. Some reasons that stated by Lee (2000) about why use CALL:

1) Experiential learning. The World Wide Web makes it possible for students to tackle a huge amount of human experience. In such a way, they can learn by doing things themselves. They become the creators not just the receivers of knowledge. As the way information that presented is not linear, users develop thinking skills and choose what to explore.

2) Motivation. Computers are most popular among students either because they are associated with fun and games or because they are considered to be fashionable. Student motivation is therefore increased, especially whenever a variety of activities are offered, which make them feel more independent.

3) Enhanced student achievement. Network-based instruction can help pupils strengthen their linguistic skills by positively affecting their learning attitude and by helping them build self-instruction strategies and promote their self-confidence.

4) Authentic materials for study. All students can use various resources of authentic reading materials either at school or from their home. Those materials can be accessed 24 hours a day at a relatively low cost.

5) Greater interaction. Random access to Web pages breaks the linear flow of instruction. By sending E-mail and joining newsgroups, EFL students can communicate with people they have never met. They can also interact with their own classmates. Furthermore, some Internet activities give students positive and negative feedback by automatically correcting their on-line exercises.

6) Individualization. Shy or inhibited students can be greatly beneficial by individualized, student-centred collaborative learning. High fliers can also realize their full potential without preventing their peers from working at their own pace.

7) Independence from a single source of information. Although students can still use their books, they are given the chance to escape from canned knowledge and discover thousands of information sources. As a result, their education fulfills the need for interdisciplinary learning in a multicultural world.

8) Global Understanding. A foreign language is studied in a cultural context. In a world where the use of the Internet becomes more and more widespread, an English Language teacher’s duty is to facilitate students’ access to the web and make them feel citizens of a global classroom, practicing communication on a global level.
a. Teacher’s role in CALL

The existences of computers have changed the role of the teacher and the learner. The teacher’s role is as facilitator of learning, guide, correspondent, and motivator. However, according to Noni in January (2007), computer does not mean to replace the teachers’ role in the classroom. Teachers are still need to lead the students and arrange assignment and activities that done by learners. Therefore, it is hoped that a teacher is able to relate ‘CALL’ activities with the learning program in order that his or her students use their learning potential optimally.

According to Jones in January (2001) defines the role of teachers in CALL is not different in general terms from that of any teacher supporting students’ progress towards autonomy. What is different is that she or he cannot be an effective CALL teacher without knowledge of the range of learning opportunities that CALL offers. The acquisition of this knowledge should include specific training in what I would term “CALL Pedagogy”, that is, the exploitation of those opportunities for the benefit of the learners. Responding to the four constraints discussed above, for example, this teacher will require two kinds of pedagogical preparation.

It is necessary that English teachers should be equipped with the necessary knowledge, various ways of learning and training to design learning materials that are useful and appropriate to the students and integrate them into English classes. According to Astika (2009) state that one type of learning with the use of technology which is gaining popularity is online learning. This type of learning is now seen in many educational institutions and it is integrated into English courses or as a supplementary educational aid to the regular English courses or even offered as a complete online program. Although the use of technology by language teachers are not yet widespread due to different reasons, it can be expected in the future that the use of technology in language classes will be increasing and will become a normal part of language teaching. Dudeney & Hockly in Astika (2009) describe that there are many reasons for using technology in language classrooms.

1) Internet access – either in private homes or at internet cafes – is becoming increasingly available to learners.
2) Younger learners are growing up with technology, and it is a natural and integrated part of their lives. For these learners the use of technology is a way to bring the outside world into the classroom.
3) English, as an international language, is being used in technologically mediated contexts.
4) Technology, especially the internet, presents us with new opportunities for authentic tasks and materials, as well as access to a wealth of ready-made ELT materials.
5) The internet offers excellent opportunities for collaboration and communication between learners.
6) Learners increasingly expect language schools to integrate technology into teaching.
7) Technology offers new ways for practicing language and assessing performance. Technology is becoming increasingly mobile. It can be used not only in the classroom, lecture hall, computer room; it can be used at home, on the way to school and in internet cafes.
b. Hot Potatoes

The Hot potatoes suite is a set of authoring tools, created by the Research and Development team at The University of Victoria Humanities Computing and Media Centre. This software is a free download software. They enable you to create interactive Web Based exercised of six basic types. The exercise use JavaScript for interactivity, and will work in Netscape Navigator and Internet Explorer Versions tools, JMatch and JMix, can also produce drag and drop exercises. (Half-Baked Software).

Hot Potatoes is an authoring packages program (software) which includes five applications enabling us to create interactive multiple choice, short answer, jumbled sentences, cross word, matching and gap fill exercise. Hot Potatoes is a must-have tool for teachers or trainers who want to create a web based interactive exercises for students. Teachers use the Hot Potatoes programs to create educational materials, especially exercises and tests. All these materials can be produced in the form of web pages.

All we need to do in using this software is entering data of texts, questions, answers, and so on, and the programs will create and show the Web Pages on the screen. There are three main steps in creating exercises (Half-Baked Software):

1) Entering data (Questions, answers, and so on).
2) Configuring the output (Preparing the button captions, instructions, and other features of your web Pages).
3) Creating Web Pages (Compiling your exercises into HTML pages).

The purpose of the Hot Potatoes is to enable you to create interactive Web-based teaching exercises that can be delivered to any Internet-connected computer equipped with a browser. The exercises use HTML and JavaScript to implement their interactivity, but you do NOT need to know anything about these languages in order to use the programs. All you need to do is enter the data for your exercises (questions, answers, responses etc.), and press a button. The program will create the Web pages for you, and you can then upload them to your server.

Discussion

There are five basic types of exercises in hot potatoes. They are JQuiz program creates question-based quizzes, JMix program creates jumbled-sentence exercises, JCross program creates crossword puzzles, JMatch program creates matching or ordering exercises, and JCloze program creates gap-fill exercises.
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**a. JCloze**

JCloze program creates gap-fill exercises. Unlimited correct answers can be specified for each gap, and the student can ask for a hint and see a letter of the correct answer. A specific clue can also be included for each gap. Automatic scoring is also included. The program allows gapping of selected words, or the automatic gapping of every word in a text. Creating cloze exercise

1. Click on JCloze and a blank template will appear on the screen. Copy and paste the text for the exercise in the blank space. When the text has been pasted, click on the gap button at the bottom part of the screen. It will gap the word that you want to hide. The words that are underlined will be deleted.

2. Click on the button and the cloze exercise will appear on the screen as can be seen below. Then save the exercise with a new name, for example, *cloze Grammar*

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**b. JMatch**

JMatch program creates matching or ordering exercises. A list of fixed items appears on the left (these can be pictures or text), with jumbled items on the right. This can be used for matching vocabulary to pictures or translations, or for ordering sentences to form a sequence or a conversation. Creating a matching exercise
1) Click on *JMatch* and a blank template will appear on the screen. Type incomplete sentences in the left column from 1-5 and its answer in the right column. Then click

![JMatch screenshot]

2) Match the word in the right with the word in the left as seen below.

![JQuiz screenshot]

c. *JQuiz*

*JQuiz* creates short-answer quizzes, in which the student types in a word or a sentence in response to a question. The sentences are checked against any number of correct answers, and the feedback shows which parts of a student's answer are correct. The student can ask for a hint if necessary, and see the next correct letter in the answer.

Creating a multiple choice exercise

1) Click on *JQuiz* and a blank template will appear on the screen. Type the title of the exercise, for example, *Grammar Quiz*.

2) Type the first question in the space provided on top of the screen. Then type four options, A, B, C, and D in the left column.

3) Type the feedback for each option in the right column. The correct option should be indicated by putting a check mark next to the correct option. The feedback for the correct option can be ‘excellent’, or ‘correct’, or ‘very good’. The feedback for the wrong options can also vary such as, ‘no, sorry’, ‘no, try again’, or ‘no not right’.

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4) Continue typing the questions by clicking the up-arrow next to the Q button and type the options in the left column and the feedback in the right column.

5) When the last question has been entered, click on the button on the menu bar. Then the exercise will appear on the screen like the following:

d. JCross

JCross is one of the basic type’s exercises in hot potatoes. JCross program creates crossword puzzles that can be completed online. You can use a grid of virtually any size. As in JQuiz and JCloze, a hint button allows the student to request a free letter if help is needed. Creating a crossword exercise

1) Click on JCross and a blank template will appear on the screen. Type the title of the exercise, for example, *Past Form*

2) Type the word in the screen. It can be type across or down.
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3) Click to add the word clue to answer.
4) When the clue has been added, click on the button on the menu bar. Then the exercise will appear on the screen like the following.

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e. **JMIX**

JMIX program creates jumbled-sentence exercises. You can specify as many different correct answers as you want, based on the words and punctuation in the base sentence and a hint button prompts the student with the next correct word or segment of the sentence if needed. Creating jumbled-word exercise

1) Click on **JMIX** and a blank template will appear on the screen. Type the title of the exercise, for example, *Jumbled-sentence exercise*.

2) Type the sentence in “main sentence” box. You may give alternate sentence if there are other possible answers.
3) Click on the button on the menu bar. Then the exercise will appear on the screen like the following:

These exercises are interactive with facilities for feedback to the answers. More detail steps to create the different exercises can be learned from the tutorial that comes with the Hot Potatoes program.

Conclusion

The use of computer in language teaching is called as Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL). CALL is a good alternative that the teachers can choose as teaching methods because it is easier for the student understand the lesson if they are given many chances to recognize and practice the words through computer. One of the CALL Programs is Hot Potatoes Authoring Software. It can help the students practice many exercises without connect to the internet services. It also can check the students mark directly.
References


