

# Teaching Grammar to Elementary Level Saudi EFL Learners: Blending Theory and Practice

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## Abstract

Grammar as a system of language has been a central component of most EFL teaching programmes. Modern day approaches to teaching grammar are premised on its potential in developing the discourse competence of the students in social, academic and professional contexts. The present study was designed to involve a theoretical review of the teaching of grammar in EFL contexts as well as an observation of a real-time classroom teaching to see how theoretical underpinnings were realized in actual practice. The observer's report and the teacher's post lesson reflections revealed that a contextualized focus on form, meaning, and use was crucial in helping students to comprehend the target grammar for its meaning making potential. The findings are expected to be useful to EFL practitioners as well as researchers interested in exploring further areas of grammar instruction from a practical perspective.

**Keywords:** EFL, Lesson Planning, teacher effectiveness, EFL grammar, teaching observation

## 1. Introduction

Grammar may be defined as “a description of the structure of a language and the way in which linguistic units such as words and phrases are combined to produce sentences in the language” (Richards, Platt and Platt, 1999 p.167). The definition entails that grammar as a system of language unfolds both the meaning and functions which the sentences encode in themselves. This potential of grammar has probably made it the most frequently occurring teaching component of most English language course designs, especially for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. Even the standardized tests of English language proficiency such as the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) and Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) discreetly measure grammatical range and accuracy of the test takers' language use. Since the students are tested in producing accurate linguistic structures for both spoken and written discourse, grammar assumes further significance as it aids in the creation of syntactically accurate models of student discourse (Celce-Murcia, 1991).

Traditionally, teaching of grammar has been a highly favoured content with the teachers which they believe provides a distinct and itemized measurement of the students' performance. However, students, especially those who are taught traditional grammar, find it challenging to relate the study of grammar with real-life language use. This pedagogical paradox has thereby reshaped the role of grammar in EFL pedagogy, and the present day EFL course designs propose to align the teaching of grammar with the contemporaneous pedagogical content. Modern day practice blends both prescriptive and descriptive approaches to teaching grammar to prepare students develop accuracy and fluency of language use in meaningful contexts. Therefore, a study which aims to find out how theoretical perspectives on grammar are actually realized in an actual classroom context could be a viable research initiative.

## 2. Literature Review

Grammar as part of the system of language occupies central position due to its role of a mediator between the phonology, morphology and semantics. Greenbaum (1996) refers to the multidimensional applications of the study of grammar. First, the knowledge of grammatical structures is a requisite for proper punctuation. Secondly, the knowledge of first language (L1) grammar facilitates the understanding of second language (L2) grammar. Moreover, expertise in grammatical analysis is a key to the understanding and appropriate interpretation of both literary and non-literary texts. Most importantly, knowledge of grammar is essential for learning not only how to compose texts but also for revising and editing the initial draft.

Traditionally, grammar has been a decontextualized pedagogic component in most EFL course books and syllabus design (Ellis, 2006). Form focused instruction mainly dwelled on structural explanations of grammar which, sometimes, included a little mention of the meaning. Grammatical structures provide an array of linguistic choices to the students but fail to enable the use of the choices in the creation of context specific discourse. Similarly, grammar was discrete from vocabulary as far as the development of the lexical range for text comprehension and text construction is concerned. Biber, Conrad and Leech, (2010, p. 4) opine that the knowledge of “word behaviour (lexis)” interact with the knowledge of “grammatical patterns” to create “lexico-grammatical patterns”. These lexico-grammatical resources are the key in the development of discourse component which is, in fact, the basic premise behind teaching EFL or English for Academic Purposes (EAP).

However, following Krashen’s (1982) natural approach which was premised on the notion of meaningful communication changed the course of teaching grammar. Scholars such as Ellis (2002) propounded that the study of grammar should be integrated into the meaningful communicative activities whereby the learners were exposed to authentic language in use. This would help them understand the language in real life use, and would learn grammar as a byproduct. Perspectives such as these led to the emergence of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) where the focus was on fluency and meaningfulness instead of accuracy (Richards and Rodgers, 2014). CLT further led to the introduction of pedagogic approaches such as the Task Based Learning (TBL), Content Based Instruction (CBI), Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) etc. which all aim to integrate grammar and lexis to provide students with an opportunity to engage in meaningful tasks so that language learning in a variety of contexts is optimized.

In the context of Piaget’s theory of cognitive development (1970), elementary level EFL learners can be assumed in a learning phase where direct exposure and interaction with the world help them create meaning. Grammatical content can be, therefore, exploited to help them construct meaning for themselves. One of the most basic and frequently occurring grammatical concept is that of the present simple which owing to its variety of usage carries huge importance for the elementary level students.

**2.1 The Present Simple Tense**

According to Kroeger (2005 p.167): “Tense specifies the situation’s ‘location’ in time”, and the present tense indicates present time mostly (Huddleston &. Pullum, 2005). Scrivener (2010 p.103) points out that we use the present tense to refer to things or situations which are “generally true and unlimited in time i.e., without a beginning or an ending”. But the present tense can also be used to express the past and the future time. However, in view of the level of the class, the study limited the present simple to the daily routines only and that too with the base form of the verb.

**Form**

One of the foremost realizations of the present simple is through the verb “be” which can be affirmative, negative, and questions statements.

- Noun/pronoun + be + noun phrase/adjective  
He /she / it is .....  
They /we / you are.....
- Noun/pronoun + be + not + noun phrase/adjective  
He /she / it isn’t / is not .....  
They /we /you aren’t / are not.....
- Be + Noun/pronoun + noun phrase/adjective  
Is he/ she / it .....?  
Are they / you / we .....?

**Affirmative sentences in present simple have the following forms:**

- Noun/pronoun + Verb (base /-s form) + Noun phrase/Complement

I / You / We / They	work	in a bank.
He / She / It	works	

- The –s ending and spelling rules as mentioned by Scrivener (2010, p. 101) are:

- We use –es when the base form ends in /dz/, /s/, /z/, /ʃ/, /tʃ/, or /z/. For example, discusses, rises, washes, catches
- We use –ies (to replace the y) when the base form ends in a consonant followed by y. For example, fly →flies, carry → carries

**Present simple: negative sentences**

- Noun / pronoun + don't / do not / doesn't / does not + Verb (base form) + Noun phrase/Complement

I / You / We / They	don't / do not	work	in a bank.
He / She / It	doesn't / does not		

- There is no –s form in the negative sentences.

**Present simple: questions**

**Yes / No questions**

- Do / does + noun / pronoun + verb (base form) + noun phrase / complement

Do	I / You / We / They	work	in a bank?
Does	He / She / It		

- There is no –s form on the base form.

**Wh – questions**

- Wh (question word) + do / does + noun / pronoun + base form

Wh – question word	do	I / you / we / they	work?
	does	he / she / it	

- There is no –s form on the base form
- Present simple negative questions are also frequently used such as: Why don't you work? etc.

**Present simple: Imperatives**

Imperatives are formed with the base form of the verb with subject 'you' remaining implicit (not written as subject of the sentence). The negative imperative is made with 'don't'.

For example: Bring me some apples. Don't cry.

**Present Simple: Adverbs of frequency**

Although adverbs of frequency can be used with present progressive, present perfect, past simple and past perfect, they are typically used with the present simple (Srivener, 2010). Some of them are never, hardly ever, rarely, occasionally, sometimes, often, usually, and always.

- We typically put adverbs of frequency between subject and verb  
e.g. He usually sleeps late.
- We put adverbs of frequency after 'be'.  
E.g. He is always on time.
- Some not all come before the subject e.g. *sometimes*, and not *never*  
E.g. Sometimes, I visit my grandparents on Fridays.

**2.2 Meaning and Use**

The present simple offers a range of meaning and use in varying contexts. The form "be" is sometimes the main verb such as in "he is intelligent" or it can be an auxiliary verb in the passive form of the present simple where the

main verb is the past participle as in “*this necklace is made of gold*”. Adverbs and expressions of frequency are used to mark habits, routines and repeated actions; for example, *I always get the eight o’ clock train*. According to Srivener (2010), the adverbs *always, usually, often, sometimes, rarely, never* and adverbials such as *twice a week, every day* are normally introduced at the elementary level. The adverbs *occasionally* and *hardly ever* can be introduced at the intermediate level, while the adverbs *constantly, regularly, almost, never, normally, routinely, seldom, sporadically* etc are usually taught at the higher levels of instruction.

Adverbs of frequency tell us how often something is done. They can be placed on a continuum of frequency from 0% (it never happens) to 100% (it happens all the time)

<b>0%</b>	<b>Hardly</b>	<b>Rarely</b>	<b>Occasionally</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>Usually</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>never</b>	<b>ever</b>							<b>always</b>

In addition, the present simple is also used to refer to permanent situations, truths and things believed to be true: things that happen all the time. Things that seem permanently true and do not have any obvious beginning or end such as in “*My sister lives next door*”. States, senses, and feelings that are generally true, using verbs such as *believe, know, live, have, feel, like, taste* etc. are also expressed in present simple as for example in “*This tea tastes funny*”. The present simple is also employed for the activities planned for future (*The match starts at 3 o’clock*) or to refer to future after *when* or *if* when *will* cannot be used as in “*Just buzz me when the client arrives*”. Similarly, newspaper headlines, live commentary especially of live events, and jokes and anecdotes are mostly expressed in present simple. The imperative sentences for orders, commands, requests, warnings, advice and suggestions use present simple as in “*Beware of the pickpockets*”. The use of present simple is also evident in the zero conditional where both the conditional and the result clauses are in present simple, and the first conditional where the only the conditional clause is stated in present simple.

### 2.3 Learner Problems

As Scrivener (2010) puts it, “the present simple is not as simple as its name”, the learners face several problems while understanding and practicing this tense for academic or other communicative purposes. The learners confuse the notion of the present simple with ‘*now*’ i.e. continuity and use ‘*ing*’ form in place of the present simple form; for example, “*I living in Istanbul*”. The learners sometimes over-generalize the use of the auxiliary ‘*am*’ and we come across such sentences as “*I am go there*”. Similarly, they make inaccurate use of ‘*do*’ and ‘*does*’ and sometimes, they even use it with ‘*is, am, and are*’. For instance: “*When does he is wake up?*” The beginner level learners can also produce such sentences in the present simple affirmative: “*She does walk to school.*” Scrivner (2010) points out that “it is, in fact, possible if the speaker wants to emphasize the truth of what he is saying, especially to disagree with a previous speaker: A: *Omer doesn’t live in London.* B: *He does live there!* NB the auxiliary verb (*do/does*) is stressed.”

One of the most recurring problems in the use of the present simple is the subject-verb agreement i.e. the –s form of the verb. It is difficult for some learners to internalize the notion of the singular and the plural and take care when using the verb form for the third person singular. Sometimes, it is difficult for the elementary or even for the intermediate level learners to identify the singular subject in such sentences as this: “*The quality of the mangoes that you talk about is not good.*” Here, it is likely that the learners take ‘*mangoes*’ for the subject and use base form of the verb. The collective nouns like *police, jury* etc. can also cause problems. They struggle to understand whether it is “*the police is .....*” or “*the police are .....*” The active and the passive voice forms are also difficult for the students to practice. It is really difficult for the beginner and the elementary level learners to understand the concept of the transitive and the intransitive verb and, therefore commit errors when asked to transform an active sentence into a passive voice because they associate the present tense only with the base or the –s form of the verb. The past participle in the passive causes them problems. The learners especially, the beginners and the elementary level may also find it difficult to grasp the notion of time and adverbs of frequency for routines and may place the time phrase or the adverb in the wrong place. For example: “*He always is late*”. They also make a double negative with ‘*never*’: “*They don’t never help us.*” The learners mispronounce the –s ending: The distinction between /s/ and /z/ is not typically a problem for speakers of many mother tongues (maybe because it is usually harder to say the endings with the wrong phoneme -- and it doesn’t make a big difference to communication even if you get it wrong. However, the /iz/ ending does cause some trouble. Students may use it to pronounce many –s endings e.g. *cooks* /kukiz/, *walks* /w<sup>o</sup>:kiz). However, the teacher can help them by pointing out that words like *cooks* and *walks* are one syllable but they are using two. The learners may have problems with the use of ‘*before*’ and ‘*after*’. E.g. “*I brush my teeth after I leave for the college.*”

## 2.4 Suggestions for Teaching

Awareness raising and production tasks can be designed to address learners' problems with the present tense.

### Awareness Raising

Before students are taught form and use of the present simple, it is better to provide them with the clear notion of what present simple means. For example, a time-bar can be used to make the students understand the past, the present, and the future. Similarly, the time bar can be used to help learners learn adverbs of frequency. This should be done for all the uses of the present simple also. The teacher should create a meaningful context with the help of pictures, flashcards, audio or video recording or even from the realia. The context will help the learners grasp the real meaning of the present simple and its various uses. The teacher should provide examples from the authentic materials and relate them with the actual language use so that the learners could understand the notional properties of the present simple.

### Production Tasks

Once the learners grasp the basic concept of the present tense, the teacher can tailor tasks that suit to the language needs and the learning preferences of the learners. The learners, especially the beginners and the elementary often confuse the present simple with the present progressive. This can be resolved with the help of a time-bar as well as pictures which distinguish reporting of the present observations, routines, facts, etc. from something that is in continuity. The learners' problem with the 'be' form and the present simple auxiliaries *do* and *does* can be removed by different activities such as the drill practice. The teacher should give them the correct model and make them drill the model. Then, he can give them a worksheet with the auxiliaries missing. The students will fill in the missing words. The intermediate and the advance level learners will understand this use after they are introduced to the active and passive voice constructions and the transitive and the intransitive verbs.

The -s form issue is perhaps the most frequent and it occurs while making the subject agree with the verb. The lesson plan (Appendix) proposed in this study will start with the base form so that the learners get a clear idea and sufficient practice before they are introduced to the -s form. However, the learners should be taught the countable and the uncountable nouns as well as the personal pronouns before the -s form. Once they are pretty familiar with the singular and the plural nouns and the pronouns, they can be taught the -s form. Even then, the problem is not over. The -s form has different inflections on the verb and it is likely that the beginner or the elementary level learners generalize the simple addition of the 's' as 'work' – 'works'. So, it is the task of the teacher to sequence his priorities. Sequencing of the tasks will help the learner focus on one task and do comprehensive practice. For instance, if the teacher wants his learners to understand the inflection 'ies' on the verb 'vary', he should provide an activity with the same inflection. At a later stage, he can blend different inflections as a learning-check strategy. Similarly, the active and the passive voice problem is a higher-level problem, especially for the learners on English for Specific Purposes (ESP). And it seems wise not to teach voice at the beginner and the elementary level in view of the complexity that the transitive and the intransitive verbs bring. However, the problem can be solved if the learners practice how to create focus in the text. Similarly, a clear notion of the subject and the object, the past participle as the only intransitive verb used in the passive voice, the prepositional phrase, and the adverbial can ease the difficulty.

The time-bar referred to earlier can be very effective in making the learners understand how different adverbs of frequency are used. But, as suggested by Scrivener (2010), it is advisable to first grade and sequence the adverbs of frequency according to the level of the learners and then teach them. Exercises on the use of time and daily routines can be particularly a good background for the teaching of adverbs of frequency. The low-level students can be taught contractions like *he's*, *I'm*, *they're*, *isn't*, *don't*, and *doesn't* in the initial stages of a course. The lesson plan in the present study includes practice in the use of *don't*. The teacher will provide the model and the students will drill it first after the teacher, and then with one another. After this, the teacher can introduce the verbs with an *s*, *es*, *ies* inflections and distinguish the /s/ sound from the /z/ and especially the /iz/ sound first by providing a model either personal or recorded and then, engage the learners in extensive practice on the stress pattern of the words.

## 3. Aims and Objectives of the Study

This study attempts to ascertain the extent to which an elementary level grammar lesson on teaching the present simple tense is designed out of theoretical and practical considerations. The study also proposes to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching in achieving the stated learning outcomes.

#### 4. Significance of the Study

The foci of most research on grammar in EFL setting has been either on theoretical perspectives or methodological issues. There is scarcity of research which investigates the teaching of grammar in real time setting. This study aims to fill this gap by blending theory and practice in an elementary level EFL class. More specifically, the authors design a grammar lesson to help learners understand and practice the present simple tense as it is used for expressing daily routines. Following Ahmad (2020a), this study will use a preset lesson observation criteria to ascertain the extent to which the lesson on grammar was effective and in alignment with the observation benchmarks. It is anticipated that the results of the study based on the observer's comments and the teacher's post-lesson reflections will not only benefit the EFL teachers but also provide some useful insights for further research on the topic.

#### 5. Method

The lesson was designed for elementary level Saudi EFL students at the University of Jeddah. These elementary level learners had studied some basic vocabulary both nouns and adjectives, personal pronouns, *be* form of the verb, pronunciation of numbers, nouns, adjectives, and '*be*' form contractions, and most recently routines. It was assumed that the students had been exposed to sufficient language to start the present simple tense. In the future lesson, they were expected to do '*time*' and it would be helpful for them to build on the practice they had with the routines and the present simple form. It was also assumed that the learners had already listened to and read some form of the present simple at least in this course. They were familiar with some commonly used verbs, adjectives, nouns, and pronouns. So, they had the background knowledge to learn the present simple.

Malderez's as cited in Ahmad (2020b) mentions four dimensions of teacher observations: for professional development, for training, for evaluation, and for research. The present study designed a teaching observation for research purposes only to identify the strengths and weaknesses of a grammar lesson for the elementary level EL students. The class observation criteria were an adaptation of the evaluation criteria previously used by Ahmad (2020b), and as recommended by the British Council (2012) the lesson observation was administered in three stages: Pre-observation discussion; the lesson; and the post lesson reflections

The lesson observation was conducted at the English Language Institute (ELI), University of Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. The researchers assumed the roles of the observer (first author) and the observed (second author). Both the researchers have been teaching EFL for more than 20 years and possess relevant postgraduate qualifications and language teaching certifications. Both also have extensive experience of teacher training and teaching observation. With this professional background, it was expected that both would be able to design a contextually relevant lesson, observe and report the lesson objectively.

The researchers decided to work on matters relating to the learner profile, learning problems with grammar, and the lesson observation criteria before actually designing the lesson. The lesson plan, the classroom tasks, activities, and materials were designed by the second author and were shared with the first author a day before the lesson. The observation was planned to focus holistically on two areas i.e. lesson planning and lesson delivery. As referred to earlier, the lesson plan, the classroom tasks and activities, and the teaching materials were shared with the observer a day before the lesson so that he could have a clear idea of what was expected to happen in the class. The lesson had one main aim and one secondary:

##### Lesson Aim

- To help the learners understand and practice the present simple tense using the base form of the verb for daily routines.

##### Lesson sub-aim/s

- To expose the learners to the negative and the question statements and, a few common verb-noun collocations for daily routines.

By the end of the lesson, the learners will have learned how to form and use the present simple tense with the base form of the verb and '*you, they, we, I*' as subjects. Besides, they will have practiced the negative and the question statements with the same base form. They will have also practiced verb-noun collocation again with the same base form of the verbs '*read, clean, play, make, have*' etc.

The learners will focus on the form and use of *you, they, we, and I* with the base form of the verbs '*have, make, clean, play*' etc for daily routines. They will practice '*do not*' to form negative sentences and invert the auxiliary '*do*' to form questions. The learners will also use these verbs to practice some common verb-noun collocations.

After the lesson was conducted and observed, the observer and the teacher decided to have a post-lesson meeting after one day. But the teacher was asked to write post-lesson reflections that would be discussed in the meeting. The observer shared his findings of the lesson, while the teacher his reflections. Both the observer comments and teacher reflections were further analyzed to identify areas of improvement in the upcoming lessons and have been reported in the results section of this paper.

## 6. Results

The lesson observation was mutually agreed upon by the teacher and the observer during the planning stage and included appraisal of the lesson plan, and teaching effectiveness.

### 6.1 Observer Comments

The teacher provided a brief overview of this course, and the group of learners, explaining their levels, who taught this course, teaching materials and hours of study. He identified appropriate main aims within a context, and referred to supporting lexical word in the sub-aims. The overall lesson procedure appeared to move from presentation through analysis of form to controlled practice and so was reasonably logical. The stage aims were detailed, student-centered and generally appropriate. Stage timings were clearly stated and some of these were reasonable. It was a good decision to include an extra activity as a backup if needed.

However, in the first stage, it was not really clear how the teacher could establish the context of daily routines through just one picture. In addition, there seemed to be an overlap there while dealing with lexis. He identified two stages as controlled practice when in fact there was no practice, only focus on form and these two stages were rather repetitive, and the jumbled sentence stage was not free practice, but controlled practice of form. It would also be useful to round off the lesson with some activity to provide some freer personalized practice or production. Finally, he needed to check that the interaction patterns matched the procedures. The second stage showed student to student interaction but the procedure appeared to be all teacher-led. Moreover, the total amount of time devoted to analysis of form – 27 minutes – was far too long and made the overall plan unbalanced.

The teacher went some way to engage with the learners, making an effort to use their names. This would help to build rapport. He adjusted his role when learners were engaged in tasks – stepping back more and encouraging learners to work things out for themselves. It was a good strategy to bring the learners to the board in feedback. This helped to engage them. Generally, the teacher listened to the learners and responded to them appropriately. However, the teacher should consider taking the learners' needs into greater consideration in order to engage them purposefully. Learners at this level needed far more opportunities to see language in context, to consider meaning for themselves and to practise the target language in meaningful contexts with more opportunities for simple communication in pair and group work. This was evident in the jumbled sentence stage when the learners mostly chose to work together even though the teacher said it was to be done alone. This would help reduce levels of L1, usage of which was high in this lesson.

Teacher language was generally accurate and, at times, grading was appropriate to the level. There were opportunities for the learners to discover form and the use of a timeline could possibly have helped the learners think about meaning. He also checked that the learners knew the time reference for present simple. But there were frequent examples when teacher grading was above the level of the learners using structures that they had not heard of before (You can look at the pictures, you can talk to each other, you can tell each other and you can write here whatever you think can be written here). He also did not really exploit the timeline – using this to show the repeated nature of a routine would have been more useful than just putting years on it. In addition, the mechanical transformation of form – from positive to negative, for example, with no change of time/pronoun, etc. – meant that context and therefore meaning might be lost.

Similarly, information about word order was inaccurate. The form on the w/b was given as “pronouns+verb+noun+routines” and variations of the same for negative and questions. This was neither clear nor really accurate. The learners needed to be made aware of terms such as “subject” and the items he described as “routines” were adverbial phrases of time. The concept of a routine was also not clearly highlighted – showing the same action “watch tv” with every morning, every afternoon and every evening did not provide a clear enough context to guide learners at this level. The teacher should also consider better ways to check understanding through concept check questions rather than just asking “Understand?” which checked nothing. As mentioned earlier, it was a good move to bring the learners to the board periodically which helped to create some variety. Teacher monitoring was generally supportive, but not intrusive. It was good to see him allowing for some peer-checking and involving learners a little more in feedback.

The teacher should have tried to establish a clear context for the language he was presenting, and then used a technique to either elicit this language from the learners (create a situation through visuals, mimes, etc.) and find out what they know – or give them some kind of text where they can discover the target lexis for themselves. He spoon-fed nearly all of the language that was introduced instead of using one of the techniques above. The students also needed better opportunities for practice and/or production, if possible personalized, allowing for learner-to-learner interaction.

The lesson was implemented as planned, and the teacher generally managed the class space and materials appropriately. His instructions were generally well-staged and fairly clear. He also used the board to help with these. The learners were introduced to present simple for daily routines and seemed to grasp some aspects of it, so the lesson aims were partially achieved. The teacher should consider building more flexibility into the plan. Since the tasks involving analyzing form all took some time – and were repetitive – it would have made sense to cut a couple of these short, just allowing the learners to focus on a couple of sentences to notice patterns and then move onto the practice activity, which was more engaging for the learners. There was also a need to consider how user-friendly your handouts were. The first lexis handout was on three pages, where combining all the pictures on to one would have been easier for the learners to use. The presence of too many teacher-led stages just giving the target language and repetition of tasks in analyzing form meant the learners were not as fully focused as they might have been.

### 6.2 Post Lesson Reflections

The lesson did not start as well as had been planned. Perhaps, the teacher was a little cautious of the fact that his learners were doing the present tense for the first time. It was teacher's part of the lesson plan to relate the picture to the previous lesson which he could not do in detail. Then, after the learners had labelled the pictures, he could have focused on the present tense for routines but it went more on the verb-noun collocation pattern. He realized this and, therefore, did not introduce the topic at this point probably because he wanted the learners to have a little more contextual exposure of the present tense routines. Similarly, he could have used the time bar for the present tense as per the lesson plan but it was introduced a little late. In task 1, he did not use the learning check as he had stated in the plan. Then, he decided to use the term 'Noun Phrase' (NP) after the verb but keeping in mind the low level of the learners, he changed it to noun. Similarly, the negative form '*don't*' could not be practiced extensively as the teacher had to respect the time factor. The free practice was to be done in groups but he changed it to individual tasks so as to check the understanding of the students.

However, except for the first five or seven minutes into the lesson, the teacher was able to compose himself, and then most of the lesson went according to the plan and was completed on time. The topic was new for the learners and it was quite challenging to give them the notion, form, and use of the present tense, the verb, and the pronouns *you, they, we, and I*. However, the learners' feedback was satisfactory and they could do the tasks successfully. The materials and the activities were appropriate to the level of the learners and aimed at providing not only the concept and practice on the target item but also the reinforcement. The pictures were relevant to the topic and the learners were able to link it with the previous lesson on "routines". The use of the whiteboard was clearly legible and meaningful, and was helpful for the learners to understand both the form and the use of the present simple tense for routines. The teacher-student interaction, on the whole, was suitable to satisfactory learning except for one or two instances when one group finished the task a little early and indulged in talking to each other. The lesson stages went according to the plan and the teacher could recapitulate the main points of the lesson and finish on time.

## 7. Discussion

By the end of the lesson, the learners were expected to have learned how to form and use the present simple tense with the base form of the verb and '*you, they, we, I*' as subjects. Besides, they would have practiced the negative and the question statements with the same base form. They would have also practiced verb-noun collocation again with the same base form of the verbs '*read, clean, play, make, and have*' etc.

It was decided to do the present simple tense with the target group who were elementary level learners. The lesson plan was, in fact, the outcome of several considerations. First, the teacher was teaching this group of learners for the past few weeks, and, therefore, he had to link his lesson plan with the context that had developed to date and further develop on this context to maintain the logical progression of the teaching activity. Secondly, by the time the lesson plan began, the teacher had a fair understanding of the learners' needs and could predict what should come next. As the learners had done some basic vocabulary on *nouns, verbs, adjectives, and pronouns*, singular and plurals, some practice of pronouncing contractions like *he's, I'm, they're* etc., *be* form of the verb, and most



recently the lexis for the routines in the present simple, it was assumed thought that it was an appropriate time to introduce the present simple tense to the learners at this point of the course.

However, keeping in mind the level and the needs of the learners, teaching options had to be prioritized as the present simple typically involved a variety of form and function. As a starting point, it was decided to teach the form and the function of the present simple as it was used for daily routines. Since the students had the vocabulary for the present tense routines, familiarity with the pronouns, and an idea of the singular and the plural, the lesson focus was narrowed down to include only on the routines, the base form of the verb, and the plural personal pronouns (*you, they, we, I*). This selective focusing of the teaching content excluded the plural subjects because of the assumed difficulty that could be caused for the learners and the third person singular –s form which would require comprehensive practice of the phonology involved in it.

Despite the availability of the coursebook, teacher created materials were used in the class to collect a better understanding of the overall teaching effectiveness. To this end, efforts were made to create a meaningful context with the help of the pictures whereby the learners could link the new learning with the previous one/s. The teacher employed the inductive approach to teaching form so that he could allow students autonomy and let them discover the rules by themselves. Since the learners were elementary level, the form-focused content was restricted to ten verbs which were then recycled for the negative and the question statements so that there was reasonable reinforcement for the learning process. The students were set to work in pairs and groups to further practice the target items. There was consistent availability of the teacher during the lesson to monitor student performance and provide support whenever needed. In addition, a few supplementary activities were held in store to use if the lesson finished a little early or the students needed more practice or the worksheets that had been created for the lesson proved challenging or too easy for the learners.

## 8. Conclusion

The present simple tense has more functions than any other tense, aspect, or mood. This variety of use speaks about its effectiveness in the language learning process. Therefore, teaching should be learner-centred and suitably graded to conform to the needs and the learning preferences of the learners. Teaching grammar is often considered a boring task, especially by the learners. So, if grammar is made interesting and motivating for the learners, optimum learning outcomes can be achieved. Therefore, the learners should be made equal partners in the teaching-learning process and be allowed to explore for themselves the form, meaning and the use.

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**Appendix: Lesson Procedure**

Time	Stage/Stage Aim(s)	Procedure	Interaction	Materials
7 min	<b>Lead-in:</b> - to activate the schemata of the students for the target lesson by exploiting the learning done in the previous lesson/s. - to introduce the topic.	1. Greet the learners. 2. Show them picture handout of a daily routine. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ask students a few questions about the picture. E.g., what do you see? What does the picture say? Etc.</li> <li>Link the students' responses with the previous lesson on routines</li> <li>Give students picture handouts and ask them to label them by writing either nouns or verbs.</li> <li>Write the topic on the white board</li> <li>Introduce the topic</li> </ul>	T ↔ SS	Picture hand-out  White board
10 min	<b>Context set-up:</b> - to develop a clear and meaningful context which could help learners understand a base form verb, the subject pronouns 'you, they, we, & I', and the present simple tense for daily routines.	1. Use the same pictures again, the white board, and the body language to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>help the learners understand the verb as an action word.</li> <li>make a time bar on the board to enable the learners understand the notion of the present.</li> <li>involve the learners in identifying the present</li> <li>engage the learners as 'you, they, we, &amp; I' to further understand the verbs and the pronouns</li> <li>give them an exercise to circle only the base form of the verb</li> <li>give feedback to the learners on the activity.</li> </ul>	T ↔ SS  SS ↔ SS  T ↔ SS	Picture hand-outs  White board  Hand-out
15 min	<b>Controlled Practice</b>  - to give present simple form for routines.	<b>Task 1</b> 1. Give learners ten sentences with present simple base form 2. Ask learners to identify the position of pronouns, verbs,	T ↔ SS  S ↔ S (pw)  T ↔ SS	Hand-outs  White board

	<p><b>- to practice the form with base verbs and ‘you, they, we, I’ pronouns.</b></p>	<p>and routines and try to elicit the rule.</p> <p>3. Then use the board to write the form</p> <p>You/They/We/I + VERB + NP (write routines instead of the NP so that the learners could understand).</p> <p>4. Use the learning-check to see the understanding (may use 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular)</p> <p>5. Give feedback</p>	<p>cards</p>	
12 min	<p><b>Controlled Practice</b></p> <p>- <b>To introduce the negative form of the present simple with the auxiliary ‘do’</b></p> <p>- <b>To help the learners invert the auxiliary ‘do’ to make yes/no questions.</b></p> <p>- <b>To prepare students for the free practice.</b></p>	<p><b>Task 2</b></p> <p>1. Give learners negative sentences with present simple base form</p> <p>2. Ask learners to identify the position of pronouns, do not, verbs, and routines and then elicit the rule.</p> <p>3. Use the board to write the negative form</p> <p>You/They/We/I + DO NOT/DON’T + VERB + NP ( write routines instead of the NP so that the learners could understand)</p> <p>4. Practice pronunciation of ‘don’t’ sentences</p> <p>5. Give learners yes/no questions with present simple base form</p> <p>6. Ask learners to identify the position of do, pronouns, verbs, nouns, and routines and then elicit the rule.</p> <p>7. Use the board to write the YES/NO question form</p> <p>DO + You/They/We/I + VERB + NP ( write routines instead of the NP so that the learners could understand)</p> <p>8. Practice questions</p>	<p>T ↔ SS</p> <p>S ↔ S (pw)</p> <p>T ↔ SS</p>	<p>Hand-outs</p> <p>White board</p>
10 min	<p><b>Free Practice</b></p> <p>- <b>To allow students do a task independently in groups</b></p>	<p><b>Task 3</b></p> <p>1. Give a worksheet with jumbled words and ask the group to form simple, negative, and question statements.</p>	<p>T ↔ SS</p> <p>SS ↔ SS (GW)</p> <p>T ↔ SS</p>	<p>Hand-outs</p> <p>White board</p>

2. Let the learners do the correction
3. Intervene only when needed

06 min **Round-up**

- |   |   |                                      |
|---|---|--------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>To recapitulate the present simple for routines</b></li> <li>- <b>To check whether the lesson objectives have been met</b></li> </ul> | <p><b>Back-up plan:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The learners will fill in the columns to make verb-noun collocations</li> </ol> | <p>T ↔ SS<br/>SS ↔ SS<br/>T ↔ SS</p> |
|---|---|--------------------------------------|

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