

Creating an Implicit Grammar Lesson

Objective of the task: Students will recognize the “comparative of inequality” structure and use it in tasks after focusing on the form by means of contextualized examples.

Review vocabulary. They will recognize the “pluscuamperfecto” form and use it in the final task.

Material: Course Packet (the “pluscuamperfecto” is not part of the textbook), Powerpoint, worksheet, blackboard.

Pre-task priming

- Step 1. **Brainstorming:** students will have to talk in pairs about two images. They will have to deduce the meaning of “doble” (stunt actor/actress) in this context and talk about it.
- Step 2. **Watching and listening to a video** (real advertisement): Context: the add presents “Diego Alione” an unofficial stunt actor for Sylvester Stallone. The add plays with the idea that in spite of Alione being Stallone’s *doble*, he is different in his way to approach life (he is a pacifist). Hence, the punch line that I chose as a topic of the class: “El doble nos gusta más” (We like the “doble” better).
- Step 2. **Talking about the video.** Students talk about their opinions and their interpretation of the dissimilarities between Alione and Stallone’s characters.
- “Little c” Culture note: The add introduces an interesting cultural aspect. I will briefly explain (1 minute) that dubbing (*doblaje*) is very common in Spain due to historical reasons. Also, the advertisement uses the same voice to dub Alione than the voice that is used to dub Stallone’s characters. A Spanish audience would be aware of this fact adding another layer of meaning to the video.

Form focus: gradual.

- Step 1. “Alione vs. Stallone”. Students will be presented with some examples. The main structure will be highlighted in different colors, to help them focus on form.
- Step 2. Students will be given some pictures of other actors and actresses and a sentence with blanks. The blanks correspond to the structure used to make comparisons of inequality. The answers will be given by the class as a whole.
- Step 3. In pairs. Students will be given a picture and then they will have to write a sentence using the same structure.
- Step 4. An alternative (less common) way of making this kind of comparisons is presented. Students will link the sentences to pictures.

Task (work in groups of three: randomly organized): Create an advertisement for a product.

- Step 1. Chose a product. Students are given three options of three “special” products that are presented in the images.
- Step 2. Students have to give their product a name.
- Step 3. Students have to create an advertisement and compare it to other products in the market.
- Step 4. Reporting back. Students will present their publicity campaign to the class.

Task repetition and/or evaluation. Step 4. Students will vote for the name they like best for the product that was selected (all the groups selected the same product). The instructor will collect

the cards where the groups wrote their advertisements and will give feedback for each of them. The cards will be scanned into a single document and posted in classesv2 so everyone has access to each group's task outcome and feedback.

Table format based on Willis, D. and J. Willis. 2007. *Doing Task-based Teaching*. OUP.

Reflection: I think this particular topic was very well-suited for an implicit grammar lesson. The structure is similar to the one used in English, so it should not have been cognitively difficult for students to deduct the main structure and its different uses. Also, at this level (SPAN 130), students have been previously exposed to this form, so it is not entirely unfamiliar to them. As in previous lessons (although that is not always the case), I chose to title the powerpoint with a more implicit headline (“El doble nos gusta más”), rather than a more explicit one (“Comparativos de desigualdad”). The chosen title also presented part of the target structure and was taken from the video used in the priming task, thus merging grammar and culture. While I do not always use an implicit approach, I have noticed that for certain structures it is much more efficient to have students deduct the rules on their own. Hence, the way grammar was introduced was not too different from other classes my students have been exposed to. Students reacted positively to activities and, as it was a fairly simple structure, they seemed to grasp it without problems. In order to focus on form I highlighted the main structure (más...que/menos...que) in red and the grammatical forms that could be found in the structure (verbs, adverbs, nouns and adjectives) in blue. I also asked them to explain the differences between the sentences in the first step of the “Form focus” section to each other. After completing the form focus section, a couple of students asked “Is it correct to say...?” The sentences they had created were indeed correct and the questions made evident that they were testing the hypotheses that they were forming regarding this type of comparison. At one point some irregular adjectives came up, which divert from the rule and I hesitated as to how to combine the implicit grammar with an irregularity (in these cases it might be best to use an explicit approach or make an aside, although I am not completely sure). The task and report of the task were a success (which is not always the case!). Everyone chose the same product (the baby mop was just too eye-catching) and they came up with great names; often making puns (from blending two nouns *bebe* + *bayeta* (baby + mop): *bebebayeta* or *aspiradora* + *adorable* (vacuum cleaner + adorable): *aspiradorable*). Students made no mistakes when using the targeted structure in their tasks so, since this was an open activity, it seems that they understood the structure and were able to use it without problems. The reporting of the task was very positive and students succeeded in creating a publicity campaign that was both professional and creative. Therefore, I think that for this particular case, an implicit grammar lesson was just right.