

Visual Materials for the Language Teacher

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Longman

5 Grammar

Affirmative and negative forms can be most easily compared if the same verb is used in both cases.

Broad functions of visual materials used for the teaching of grammar

- 1 To clarify the meaning of a grammatical point for the pupils and to draw their attention to the precise form of the language involved.
 - 2 For the diagrammatic analysis of text.
 - 3 In the making of general statements about grammar.
 - 4 To assist the pupils in their practice of the use of grammatical points.
- These four points form the sub-sections of this chapter.

1 Clarification

Examples which clarify the meaning of the text and draw the pupils' attention to the precise form of the language.

Contrast

Very often the easiest way of directing the pupils' understanding of the use of different tenses and the change of form necessary to show those differences is to *contrast* them. It is usually better to contrast various periods from the same on-going event than to contrast two quite different events.

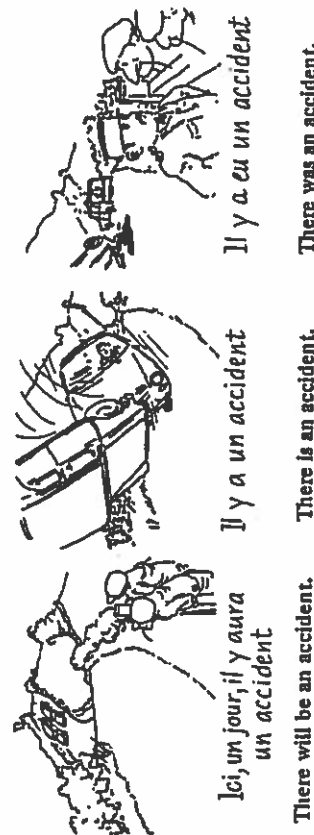
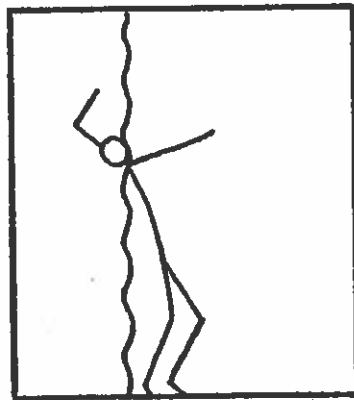
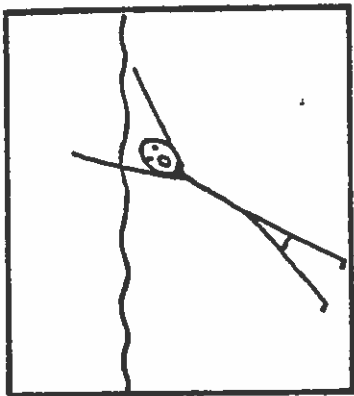


Fig. 37



John can swim.

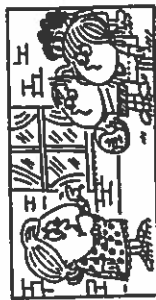


Mary can't swim.

Fig. 38

A number of examples

It may not always be possible to draw attention to the form of a grammatical feature through *contrast*. An alternative or even an additional help is to give a number of examples of it.



If you break this window, you will have to pay for it!



If he falls, he will hurt himself.

Fig. 39

2 Analysis

The diagrammatic analysis of text

To draw the attention of the students to certain features of a text the teacher or the materials producer can use colour, e.g. coloured letters, heavy type, underlining and boxing. An important technique when comparing and contrasting language texts is to position the key points to invite comparison.

You saw it.

Did you see it?

rather than

You saw it. Did you see it?

The overhead projector is a most useful instrument for the analysis of texts by students or teacher. (See Media)

3 General statements

Example 1

(Acknowledgement is made to ELT Documents, The British Council (73/2))
 'It's possible to work out your own scheme to cover all the tenses, e.g.

	PAST	PRESENT	FUTURE
CONTINUOUS			
SIMPLE			
PERFECT SIMPLE			
PERFECT CONTINUOUS			

Fig. 40

1 Listening comprehension

Notes:

- 1 The above tells nothing like the whole story - e.g.
 - i Future Continuous form used with a one-moment concept ('We'll be leaving at 6.0' - not a period, but an action regarded as an activity) isn't catered for;
 - ii Present/Past-Continuous special use with *ALWAYS* stressing recurrence;
 - iii Past-Simple used to register past habit.
- 2 However, by juxtaposing two of these very simple diagrams, one can illustrate differences in tense concepts, or similarities; e.g.
 - i Contrast the two lines for Past Simple + Present Perfect to reinforce the idea of *DEFINITE/INDEFINITE* past time;
 - ii Superimpose the lines for Past-Simple and Past-Continuous and you can represent the interruption of the second by the first;
 - iii Compare the diagrams for the three Perfect-Continuous tenses and you get quite a satisfying parallel concept.'

(Worth noting incidentally that even the direction of the line is debatable - is future left-to-right or vice versa?)

Doug Case who wrote the article, 'Visual Reminders for Structures' from which this extract is taken qualifies the implications inherent in the diagram above. Such diagrams are of interest and many others are shown in his article. However, there is a danger in their use which is indicated by the qualifications in the article. It is easy for the student to conclude that, just as the various tense forms can be used in the way shown, so each time reference can only be described by those tense forms. This would, of course, be untrue.

Example 2 A grammar correction box

Bright and McGregor (see Further reading 6) suggest that the individual correction of pupils is easy provided that the explanations and exercises are put on cards and indexed instead of being written on the blackboard or in a pupil's book. It is suggested that the explanation and examples be put on one side of the card and the exercises on the other.

There is a lot to be said for making these cards attractive to the student in the grammatical examples. Humour or information or experiments might provide this type of interest.

This suggested use of visual materials adds to administrative convenience.

4 Practice

The grammatical table, both the drawn version (Fig. 16) and the push and pull model (Fig. 56) and the grammatical roll (Fig. 17), all give concentrated practice in the use of certain sentence patterns. At the same time the visual draws the attention of the student to the features of the pattern he is using.

Further reading 16