

International Journal of Social Science and Education Research



ISSN Print: 2664-9845
ISSN Online: 2664-9853
Impact Factor: RJIF 8.00
IJSSER 2023; 5(2): 17-21
www.socialsciencejournals.net
Received: 02-05-2023
Accepted: 04-06-2023

Hou Wei
Department of Foreign
Languages, Yangtze
University, Jingzhou, Hubei,
China

The case design of a corpus-based English grammar lesson of high school-The passive voice in the present progressive tense as an example

Hou Wei

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33545/26649845.2023.v5.i2a.54>

Abstract

How to teach grammar has always been a matter of great concern. With the development of data-driven learning, corpus has been gradually applied to language teaching. In this paper, under the guidance of Chinese High School Curriculum Standards of English (2017 Edition), a corpus-based grammar lesson of passive voice is designed, aiming to help students learn, understand the form and meaning of grammar and ultimately apply what they have learned to use.

Keywords: Corpus, grammar teaching, three-dimensional grammar

Introduction

In the High School Curriculum Standards of English (2017 Edition), It has been stated that the content of the English curriculum consists of elements such as themes, discourse, language knowledge, cultural knowledge, language skills and learning strategies. Among them, language knowledge includes knowledge of grammar, which is an important foundation for developing language skills. It can be seen that grammatical knowledge is crucial to the development of students' English ability. However, grammar teaching has always been a controversial issue (Cheng, 2013) ^[2], and one of which is how to teach grammar. As for English grammar teaching in China, it is mostly dominated by teacher-centered, mechanical teaching of grammar rules, supplemented by a large number of grammar exercises. When designing a grammar lesson, teachers tend to consider such elements as the grammatical forms, structural features, and sentence patterns of grammar points, ignoring overall teaching activities in a lesson or a unit, and also failing to provide students with a holistic language learning context (Fan, 2020) ^[4]. Although students memorize certain grammar rules, they know almost nothing about context, register and appropriateness of use (Jia, 2014) ^[9], so much so that students may be able to do certain grammar exercises, but they are full of errors when speaking and writing English.

The development of science and technology provides more possibilities for English teaching and accelerates the evolution of English teaching and learning at the same time. Corpus is a product of modern science and technology, which is a specialized research database that integrates a large amount of linguistic information in real context (Leech, 1997) ^[12]. There are unique advantages to applying corpus to grammar teaching. First of all, corpus can not only provide teachers and students with rich and real language, but also it can enable students to better focus on grammatical points and enhance their grammatical awareness through its unique means of presenting and highlighting examples, thus improving the efficiency of grammar teaching (Su, 2021) ^[15]. In addition, it is conducive to carry out a series of learning activities by observing and analyzing the characteristics and patterns of language that can cultivate students' innovative thinking. The introduction of the corpus into language teaching helps students to cultivate the ability of independent learning and self-exploration (Zhao, 2014) ^[21].

It can be seen that corpus-based grammar teaching can make up for the defects of the current grammar teaching which is mechanical and lacks context, and open up a new path for English grammar teaching.

Corresponding Author:
Hou Wei
Department of
Foreign Languages, Yangtze
University, Jingzhou, Hubei,
China

Literature review

1 Developments of grammar teaching at home and abroad

In the development of foreign language teaching, there are different focuses of grammar teaching with the change of pedagogy over time. Hou (2013) [7] summarized the development of early grammar teaching. During early period, the focus of grammar teaching was mainly on two aspects. Before the 1970s, grammar teaching mainly focused on the form of grammar. In the 1970s, Hymes put forward the communicative function of language teaching, and he believed that the ultimate goal of language teaching was to communicate, thus, the focus of grammar teaching shifted from the form to the meaning of grammar.

After a shift from form to meaning in grammar teaching, Larsen-Freeman in the early 1990s proposed three dimensions of grammar--form, meaning, and use. At the beginning of the 21st century, Larsen-Freeman (2005) [11] coined the term “grammaring” to refer to the use of grammar not only in terms of grammatical accuracy, but also in terms of the ability to use it appropriately and expressively in a meaningful way. This concept reflects the dynamic nature of grammar. Meanwhile, Larsen-Freeman (2016) [10] proposed a Three-Dimensional Theory, arguing that grammar in foreign language teaching should encompass three dimensions, i.e., the form, meaning and use of grammar (see Figure 1).

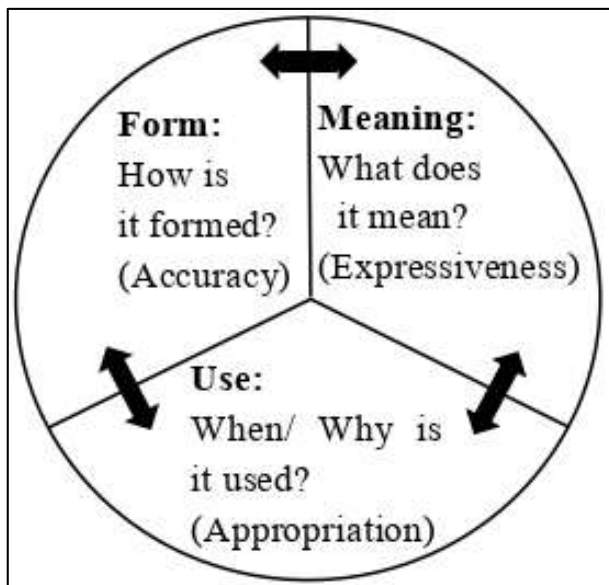


Fig 1: The Three Dimensions of the Larsen-Freeman Grammar (Larsen-Freeman & Celce-Murcia, 2016:4)

The development of grammar teaching in China is relatively late, but it has also gone through a stage from focusing on “form” to focusing on “use” to combining “form”, “meaning” and “use”. The High School Curriculum Standards of English makes it clear that grammatical knowledge is a unity of “form-meaning-use”, and that the purpose of learning grammar is to use grammatical knowledge to understand language and express meaning in context. It can be seen that in addition to focusing on the unity of form, meaning and use, the curriculum also advocates learning grammar in context. Fan (2020) [4] suggests that at present, domestic grammar teaching is making attempts to create thematic contexts. Deng (2017) [3] and Gao (2019) [5] also suggested that grammar teaching

should be led by thematic contexts. Grammar teaching at the discourse level can help students summarize the grammar rules on their own, thus improving their motivation for grammar learning and making grammar learning more efficiently. Therefore, teachers need to follow the concept of new curriculum, which is to have grammar lessons that are thematic, contextualized, holistic, language use-oriented and dynamic as “form-meaning-function” as a whole, aiming to cultivate the students’ ability to accurately use grammatical structures to understand language and express in context (Xu, Wu & Ding, 2021) [20].

2 The Use of Corpus in Grammar Teaching

Corpus refers to “written and spoken linguistic material processed and stored by computer for the study of language” (Sinclair, 1987) [14]. Since the 1980s, corpus-based research in linguistics and language education has been increasingly emphasized (Xiao & Xu, 2008) [19]. A kind of disciplinary co-evolution between teaching and corpus research is apparent (Leech, 1997) [12].

On the basis of theory, a series of empirical studies have been carried out by applying corpus to language teaching. Alison (2004) [1] conducted action research on corpus-based grammar and vocabulary teaching in two elementary school in the UK; Guan (2005) [6] also takes conditional sentences as an example and designs grammar exercises using the Michigan College Speaking Corpus to show the important role played by the corpus. Rapti (2013) [13] investigated the impact of corpus-based grammar learning on adolescents’ grammar learning; Vannest M. E & Lindquist H (2007) [16], Huang L. S (2011) [8] and Vyatkina (2016) [17] conducted studies in universities, all of which confirmed that the use of corpora in grammar teaching can enhance students’ motivation, self-learning, and learning effects.

The above empirical study reflects some of the advantages of corpus in grammar teaching--providing authentic and vivid corpus; providing comprehensive and reliable statistics on the distribution and frequency of grammatical phenomena; and highlighting new linguistic phenomena (Wu, 2010) [18]. Therefore, “form-meaning-use” can be perfectly reflected in corpus-assisted grammar teaching (Su, 2021) [15]. Besides, corpus can provide specific contexts to guide students to carry out a series of grammar learning activities, which indicates that the corpus-assisted grammar lesson is reasonable and feasible.

Teaching Content

This lesson is derived from the the grammar part of Unit 2 *WILDLIFE PROTECTION*, the second compulsory book of senior high school in China. The theme of this unit is man and nature, which centers on wildlife conservation. The grammatical content of this part is the passive voice of the present continuous tense. Students has learned passive voice in junior high school, but they only focused on the passive voice of the simple present, the simple past and modal verbs. The passive voice in the present progressive tense, in addition to expressing a passive relationship, also emphasizes the ongoing state of the action. Moreover, the passive voice of the present progressive tense contains two “be”, which can confuse students easily.

Leading by thematic context, six discourses were selected for this grammar lesson to build two small teaching corpus. Corpus 1 consists of two listening texts from Listening and Speaking part, a reading text from Reading and Thinking

part, and an exercise text, all of which are centered on the theme of the unit--wildlife conservation, and contain some passive structures of the present progressive tense. Corpus 2 is a selection of two texts from the workbook, one about wetland conservation and one about wildlife conservation, which contain more present progressive passive structures. Based on this, this lesson, with the help of the corpus, allows students to explore the form of the passive voice of present progressive tense, summarize the meaning of the passive voice of present progressive tense, and use passive voice of the present progressive in the thematic context of the unit.

Teaching Method

Step 1: Learning and Understand--Perceiving the Form of “be + being + done”.

The teacher imports the self-constructed teaching Corpus 1 into Antconc, inputs “being” in the search field, and sets Sort 1, Sort 2 and Sort 3 to 1L, C, 1R respectively. Six sentences are presented, one of which is not in the passive voice of the present progressive tense, and should be eliminated, leaving five sentences (see Figure 2).

File	Left Context	Hit	Right Context
1 wildlife protection.txt	every single day." That means there are elephants which are	being	killed right now! In his speech, Prince William also
2 wildlife protection.txt	face a serious attack from hunters. These large animals are	being	killed illegally for their body parts that are considered
3 wildlife protection.txt	are so many species dying? B: Well, some animals are	being	hunted and killed. And then there's pollution and
4 wildlife protection.txt	also reminded of the danger they are in. They are	being	hunted, illegally, for their valuable fur. My guide is
5 wildlife protection.txt	about the antelopes and what Zhaxi told me. Much is	being	done to protect wildlife, but if we really want

Fig 2: Concordance line of “being” in corpus 1

The teacher asks the students to look at the example sentence and observe the common features of the words in colors. Through observation, students can quickly summarize their common form as “be + being + done”.

The teacher presents the complete context of these sentences (see Figure 3) and asks the students to observe them. Based on it, teacher asks students try to translate them and summarize the meaning of the structure in terms of tense and mood.

Step 2: Learning and Understand--Summarizing the Meaning of “be + being + done”.

1. That means there are elephants which are being killed right now!
2. These large animals are being killed illegally for their body parts that are considered valuable.
3. Well, some animals are being hunted and killed.
4. They are being hunted, illegally, for their valuable fur.
5. Much is being done to protect wildlife, but if we really want to save the planet, we must change our way of life.

Fig 3: Examples in context

Through observation, students can find the time marker “right now”, guessing that the verb is in the present progressive tense, and each structure contains “be done”, guessing that the verb is in the passive voice. Therefore the form is the passive voice of the present continuous passive voice. After that teacher guides students to understand that the use of “passive voice” shows that wildlife are greatly influenced by human beings; the “present progressive tense” shows the seriousness of the survival of wild animals and plants and the urgency of adopting protective measures.

exercises, students are able to distinguish between the passive voice in the present progressive, the active voice in the present progressive and the passive voice in the simple present.

Step 4: Transfer and Innovation--Use in Context (USE)

Teacher creates a situation--“Environmental Advocate”--to inform neighbors about local measures of wildlife protection. The teacher imports the self-constructed Corpus 2 into Antconc, inputs “being” in the search field, and sets Sort 1, Sort 2, and Sort 3 to C, 1R, and 2R respectively. 16 results are shown as in Figure 4.

Step 3: Application and Practice--Consolidation Exercise
The teacher asks the students to choose the appropriate form of the verb to fill in the blanks to tests them. Through

	Left Context	Hit	Right Context
1	the air, water, and soil. The whole of nature is	being	affected by human beings. However, much has been done
2	have begun to change in recent years. Small birds are	being	caught with nets. Wild ducks are being sold at
3	even worse, the wetland is being destroyed. Some parts are	being	covered with new houses. You can see rubbish everywhere.
4	still being done to save endangered species. Many programmes are	being	designed to preserve the populations of endangered species. In
5	the main reasons is loss of habitat. Animal habitats are	being	destroyed as humans search for more natural resources to
6	for food in restaurants. And even worse, the wetland is	being	destroyed. Some parts are being covered with new houses.
7	human beings. However, much has been done and is still	being	done to save endangered species. Many programmes are being
8	is being threatened as a large number of species are	being	driven to extinction. Some scientists predict that half of
9	be extinct by, 2100. The question is why these species are	being	endangered. One of the main reasons is loss of
10	are being sold at food markets. Fish and snakes are	being	killed for food in restaurants. And even worse, the
11	new houses. You can see rubbish everywhere. The wetland is	being	polluted seriously every day. am very worried about it.
12	keeping livestock (家畜). In addition, massive amounts of waste are	being	produced by humans, which are polluting animal habitats. Harmful
13	ing animal habitats. Harmful chemicals created by human activities are	being	released into the air, water, and soil. The whole
14	Small birds are being caught with nets. Wild ducks are	being	sold at food markets. Fish and snakes are being
15	we do? The balance of nature on our planet is	being	threatened as a large number of species are being
16	more natural resources to consume(消费). More land is also	being	used for growing crops or keeping livestock (家畜). In

Fig 4: Concordance line of “being” in Corpus 2

Teacher asks students to accumulate these structures. The teacher presents sentences to the students and asks them to observe the passive structure of the present progressive tense in the context. The students were asked to classify these structures into two categories--destructive and protective. Based on these language scaffolds, students discuss in small groups, and make oral presentations to the class. After the presentations, students should evaluate themselves, ask other groups to evaluate them, and finally the teacher make comments on their behaviors.

Step 5: Expanding Resources

The teacher searches for “wildlife protection” in the COCA, and 93 results are retrieved. The teacher checks the specific contexts and sifts out three articles (see Appendix) on the protection of wildlife in India, the United States and Cambodia, which are distributed to the students, so that they can learn about the protection of wildlife in other countries through reading.

Conclusion

In this grammar lesson, a series of corpus-based grammar teaching activities are carried out with the guidance of thematic context-“Wildlife Conservation”. The use of corpus in grammar teaching can guide students to explore the form and meaning of grammar through a series of activities and use grammatical structures in the thematic contexts, so as to realize the combination of form, meaning and use. It is not only in line with the Three-Dimensional Theory of Lassen-Freeman but also fulfils the concept of China’s new curriculum. At the same time, the corpus-based lesson not only allows students to become the real masters of the classroom but also stimulates their interest in English learning and ultimately achieves the purpose of developing students’ core abilities.

References

1. Alison, Sealey, Paul, *et al.* What Do You Call the Dull Words? Primary School Children Using Corpus-based Approaches to Learn about Language. *English in Education*, 2004.
2. Chen XT. Some Thoughts on the Issues in English Grammar Teaching. *Curriculum, Teaching Material and Method*. 2013;33(04):62-70.
3. Deng FT. The Use of Situational Teaching Method in High School English Grammar Teaching. *English Teacher*. 2017;(6):18-21.
4. Fan WH. Exploration on Teaching of English Grammar from Perspective of Whole Unit. *Education and Management*. 2020(25):50-53
5. Gao YQ. Exploring Strategies for Optimizing English Grammar Teaching in High School. *Foreign Language Teaching in Primary and Secondary Schools (Middle School)*. 2019,42(12):30-36.
6. Guan WY. The Use of Corpus in Grammar Teaching. *Foreign Language Teaching*. 2005(02):21-27.
7. Hou SC. English Grammar Teaching in High School under the Perspective of Three Dimensional Grammar. *English Teacher*. 2013,13(05):8-17.
8. Huang LS. Language Learners as Language Researchers: The Acquisition of English Grammar Through A Corpus-aided Discovery Learning Approach Mediated by Intra-and Interpersonal Dialogues. *Language and Computers*. 2011, 73-80.
9. Jia F. From Sentence to Discourse-A Functional Perspective on Teaching English Grammar. *Education and Management*. 2014(36):142-144
10. Larsen-Freeman D, Celce-Murcia M. *The Grammar Book: Form, Meaning and Use for English Teachers*. Boston: National Geographic Learning; c2016.

11. Larsen-Freeman, D. *Teaching Language: From Grammar to Grammaticalizing*. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press; c2005.
12. Leech G. *Teaching and Language Corpora: A Convergence*. London and New York: Longman; c1997.
13. Rapti, N. 2013. Data-driven Grammar Teaching and Adolescent EFL learners in Greece. <http://www.helsinki.fi/varieng/journey/volumes/13/rapti/index.html>.
14. Sinclair J. *Looking up--An Account of the COBUILD Project in Lexical Computing*. Collins ELT, C1987.
15. Su YD. *Corpus-Assisted English Grammar Teaching in High Schools from the Perspective of Three-Dimensional Grammar Theory*. *Teaching Monthly-Middle School Edition (Foreign Language Teaching)*. 2021(04):13-18.
16. Vannest M. E, Lindquist H. *Learning English Grammar with A Corpus: Experimenting with Concordancing in A University Grammar Course*. 2007, 19(3):329-350.
17. Vyatkina N. *Data-driven Learning for Beginners: The Case of German Verb-preposition Collocations*. 2016, 28(pt.2):207-226.
18. Wu J. *Corpus and English Grammar Teaching*. *The Foreign Language Journal*. 2010(01):104-107.
19. Xiao ZH, Xu JJ. *Corpus and Language Education*. *China Foreign Language Education*. 2008(2):48-58,79.
20. Xu YJ, Wu WP, Ding L. *Exploring Grammar Teaching from the Perspective of English Learning Activities*. *Teaching Monthly-Middle School Edition (Foreign Language Teaching)*. 2021(4):44-49.
21. Zhao LP. *The Application of Corpus Method in English Teaching*. *Journal of Shanxi Normal University (Social Science Edition)*. 2014,41(S3):109-110.

Appendix

Source 1: Chicago Tribune **Date:**2019(19-07-29)

Title: India's tiger population rises to nearly 3,000 animals
 India's tiger population has grown to nearly 3,000, making the country one of the safest habitats for endangered animals. Prime Minister Narendra Modi released the tiger count for 2018 on Monday and said it's a "historic achievement" for India, whose big cat population had dwindled to 1,400 about 14-15 years ago. India estimates its tiger population every four years. Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar said the tiger population was 2,226 in the last count, in 2014. The tiger is India's national animal and is categorized as endangered under the Wildlife Protection Act. The human conflict with tigers has gradually increased since the 1970s, when India started a tiger conservation program that carved out sanctuaries in national parks and made it a crime to kill them. "With around 3,000 tigers, India has emerged as one of the biggest and safest habitats for them in the world.

Source 2: San Francisco Chronicle **Date:** 2012-04-27

Title: WILDLIFE

Fox, who co-wrote the book "Coyotes in Our Midst", said she believes the nationwide effort to exterminate coyotes has actually caused their population to increase by disturbing the hierarchy and, in turn, allowing more coyotes to reproduce. When the young coyotes is killed, all the

animals disperse and breed. The effort became a movement in 1998 when California banned the use of steel-jawed traps and poisonous collars. Over the next two years, the county formed the Marin Livestock and Wildlife Protection Program, which essentially used the money once paid to federal trappers to help farmers build fences and lambing sheds, and purchase guardian dogs. The program now has 26 farmers employing 37 guard dogs and 31 llamas to protect 7,630 animals on 14,176 acres, according to Stacy Carlsen, the Marin County agricultural commissioner. The number of sheep killed by coyotes in Marin has decreased steadily since the program began, Carlsen said.

Source: web **Date:**2012

Title: Beat On The Ground | New Security Beat
 Before Wildlife Alliance began the Community-Based Ecotourism (CBET) project in Chi Phat, most villagers made a living by slash-and-burn farming, illegal logging, and hunting endangered wildlife. Wildlife Alliance Founder and CEO Suwana Gauntlett described the ecological zone around the town as "a circle of death", in an audio interview with New Security Beat last year. Now, Chi Phat is a rapidly growing tourism destination offering hike and bike tours. In 2010 they brought in 1,228 tourists -- not huge by any means, but over twice the number from 2009. The town now boasts a micro-credit association, a school, and a health clinic that offers maternal and reproductive health services. The village is also visited by the Kouprey Express, an environmental education-mobile that provides children and teachers with lessons, trainings, and materials on habitat and wildlife protection, pollution prevention, sustainable livelihoods, water quality, waste and sanitation, energy use, climate change, and adaptation.