

EXPLORING COMPARATIVE ADJECTIVES IN A UNIVERSITY EFL CONTEXT: GRAMMAR INSTRUCTION AND LEARNER PERFORMANCE IN UZBEKISTAN

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Annotation

This article profiles a group of Uzbek university students aged 18–23 studying English at the B1 level, with some approaching B2, in a general English and IELTS-focused classroom. The paper outlines the learners' grammar background, instructional preferences, and challenges—particularly with advanced structures. Emphasizing a dual approach that combines explicit and contextualized grammar instruction, the author analyzes how learners develop grammatical accuracy and fluency. The focus is on the teaching and learning of comparative adjectives, supported by two grammar resources: *Introducing English Grammar* by Young and *Mastering English* by Bache and Davidsen-Nielsen. The paper discusses how these resources aid comprehension and application of comparative structures for intermediate learners, offering pedagogical insights for grammar-focused instruction.

Keywords

comparative adjectives, English grammar instruction, Uzbek EFL students, B1 learners, IELTS preparation, explicit grammar teaching, comparative structures, regular and irregular forms

Аннотация

В статье представлен анализ группы узбекских студентов университета в возрасте от 18 до 23 лет, изучающих английский язык на уровне B1 (по CEFR), с элементами подготовки к экзамену IELTS. Рассматриваются грамматические знания студентов, их предпочтения в обучении и типичные трудности, особенно в освоении сложных грамматических конструкций. Особое внимание уделяется обучению сравнительным прилагательным с использованием комбинированного подхода: явное объяснение правил и

контекстное обучение. Рассматриваются два грамматических источника: *Introducing English Grammar* (Young) и *Mastering English* (Bache & Davidsen-Nielsen), с акцентом на их полезность в обучении студентов среднего уровня.

Ключевые слова

сравнительные прилагательные, обучение грамматике, студенты Узбекистана, уровень B1, подготовка к IELTS, явное преподавание, сравнительные конструкции, регулярные и нерегулярные формы

Annotatsiya

Ushbu maqolada O'zbekistonlik 18–23 yoshdagi universitet talabalari ishtirok etgan umumiy va IELTSga yo'naltirilgan ingliz tili darslari kontekstida grammatika o'qitilishi tahlil qilinadi. Talabalar B1 (ba'zilar B2) darajasida ingliz tilini o'rganmoqda. Maqolada ularning grammatik tayyorgarligi, o'qitish uslubiga bo'lgan afzalliklari va ayniqsa murakkab tuzilmalar bilan bog'liq muammolari yoritiladi. Asosiy e'tibor sifatdoshlarning solishtirma shakllarini o'rgatishga qaratilgan bo'lib, *Introducing English Grammar* (Young) va *Mastering English* (Bache & Davidsen-Nielsen) kitoblari asosida tushuntiruvlar beriladi. Ushbu yondashuv o'qituvchilarga grammatika asosida samarali ta'lim berish bo'yicha muhim tavsiyalarni taqdim etadi.

Kalit so'zlar

solishtirma sifatlar, ingliz tili grammatikasi, O'zbekistonlik talabalar, B1 daraja, IELTS tayyorgarligi, aniq grammatika o'rgatish, solishtirma tuzilmalar, oddiy va noodatiy shakllar

My group consists of twenty-three university students aged between 18 and 23 years who come from Uzbek families where Uzbek was spoken. The current English level of the participants, measured by the CEFR, is Intermediate (B1), although two or three students are believed to have already achieved B2. They have come through from an A1 starting point with me and their progress has been constantly monitored by regular testing. I give midterm and final examinations that are specially designed to test their listening, speaking, reading, and writing abilities, which are comprehensive in nature to see their proficiency levels.

I teach in a mixed classroom of general English with an emphasis on IELTS preparation. Not only will the dual approach work for improvement of their general ability, but it will also prepare students for particular abilities which will be needed in order for them to get better scores in the IELTS examination. They contribute to our group conversations and interactions because their behavioral backgrounds have grown from Uzbek lifestyle and speech peculiarities. Combined

with the professional assessment mechanisms, which I provided throughout the entire course, will give a decent background for continuing improving their mastery of English further.

Speaking about grammar training - my students receive or received education on grammatical rules to one extent or another - from occasional to planned teaching in schools. They often prefer the explicit method combined with implicit techniques. I first provide clear, straightforward explanations of the grammatical rules, followed by guided practice through structured exercises. My children like to do interactive exercises that teach these conventions in a friendly atmosphere. Additionally, I contextualize grammar within reading and listening activities whereby students, through induction, may learn the rules. The dual approach allows them to learn the grammatical structures better and then use them, both in speaking and writing activities. They especially value examples that relate language to real-life circumstances since it improves their understanding and memory.

My students have different levels of exposure to English. This is because they have received education which varies from sporadic instruction to some structured teaching. Most of them demonstrate a basic understanding of grammar concepts like tenses, subject-verb agreements, and simple sentence formation. However, they face problems with more advanced concepts like conditionals, passive voice, and reported speech.

Most students prefer the direct approach to grammar where rules are plainly laid out before them. This method can also be combined with indirect methods for better comprehension. For instance, after I explain a verb tense, I take them through some exercises to reinforce what was discussed. This helps not only with understanding the rules, but also applying them appropriately in speech.

Capability in Using Grammar

In terms of speaking, students are able to articulate basic ideas on conversational topics using simple constructs. Sometimes it can be very difficult for them to be fluent, and even more difficult to convey more complex ideas in an advanced structure. While writing essays, students can construct sound paragraphs based on their interests or personal experiences, but they often struggle with coherence and complexity in longer pieces of writing.

To help resolve this, I use grammar games that facilitate a comfortable setting for learning. Together with a context-bound grammar lesson in reading and listening, students are able to learn the grammatical rules on their own. By using practical examples, they are able to remember and comprehend the structures more easily, which in turns improves their speech and writing.

My goal is to provide them with a complete learning experience in terms of general English and IELTS preparation by equipping them with grammar skills as they learn the four language skills. The completion of their goals and objectives gives them self-assurance and motivates them to face much stronger language problems.

Grammar Topic Exploration

I will analyze comparative adjectives and their role in English on this assignment. The scope of this grammatical phenomenon is best explained in the two selected books: *Introducing English Grammar* by David J. Young and *Mastering English; An Advanced Grammar for Non-native and Native Speakers* by C. Bache and N. Davidsen-Nielsen.

Young has tackled comparative adjectives wonderfully on pages 57-58 of *Introducing English Grammar*. He illustrates how these adjectives are easier to understand using practical meanings rather than terms. For example, a simple adjective can have '-er' or 'more' placed before it to make it a comparative adjective. He focuses on the comparative adjectives' ability to modify nouns and explain differences amongst them. His examples help B1 learners understand how the comparison works within the framework of a sentence.

On the other hand, the treatment of comparative adjectives in *Mastering English* (pages 473-475) offers further insight. Bache and Davidsen-Nielsen explore grammatical processes for creating comparative adjectives with regular forms, such as "taller," and irregular forms like "better," Bache and Davidsen-Nielsen twist Davidsen-Nielsen's structural accounts of comparatives by incorporating semantics: how do comparatives do extra work in the description that communication is uplifted? The authors give examples and show the importance of these adjectives in a sentence to demonstrate how they are language into use.

Both materials are uniform in their recognition of the functional nature of comparative adjectives as modifiers or nouns and as nouns of comparison. Young puts forth a basic outline that can be followed by B1 students who have just started learning about English grammar. However, Bache and Davidsen-Nielsen offer further insight for those who want to understand the detailed workings of grammar.

"Comparative adjective," "base adjective," "regular and irregular forms," and "comparative structure" are important words related to this subject. Gaining an understanding of these words is essential to understanding how English comparative adjectives function.

To sum up, both of the chosen literature provide insightful information on comparative adjectives. While Bache and Davidsen-Nielsen offer a more in-depth

examination for individuals wishing to deepen their comprehension of comparative structures, Young's work offers an approachable introduction that is ideal for B1 students. When combined, these materials give educators the information and resources they need to teach and explain comparative adjectives in the classroom.

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