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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Using the Grammar Auction Technique to Teach Mixed Conditionals to B2-Level Learners

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Abstract. Grammar plays a fundamental role in developing learners' communicative competence, as it enables them to express ideas accurately and establish meaningful relationships between events, actions, and situations. However, learning complex grammatical structures can be challenging when lessons mainly focus on rules and written exercises. This article discusses the use of the Grammar Auction Technique to teach mixed conditionals to B2-level learners. It presents the content of the lesson, the target learners, the lesson aims, and a practical teaching procedure based on communicative language teaching. The proposed lesson combines grammar awareness, teamwork, decision-making, and personal expression. The main purpose is to show how an interactive classroom activity can create opportunities for learners to understand and practice mixed conditionals in meaningful contexts.

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Introduction

Grammar plays an important role in foreign language learning because it helps learners organize their thoughts, express their intentions, and communicate their ideas accurately. However, learning grammatical structures can be challenging, especially when students need to connect different time references within a single sentence. Mixed conditionals are an example of this difficulty because they combine imaginary situations in the past with their consequences in the present, or present circumstances with imagined results in the past. Although B2-level learners may already be familiar with second and third conditionals, they can still struggle to choose the correct verb forms and understand the relationship between a condition and its result.

For grammar learning to be effective, students need more than explanations of rules and written exercises. They also need opportunities to apply their knowledge through meaningful and interactive activities. When learners work together, discuss their answers, and explain their decisions, they can develop a better understanding of grammatical structures while becoming more confident in using English. Therefore, incorporating communicative techniques into grammar lessons can make learning more engaging and help students improve both grammatical accuracy and communication skills.

One technique that can support this process is the grammar auction. It is an interactive classroom activity in which students work in teams, examine different sentences, discuss whether they are grammatically correct, and bid imaginary money on the sentences they believe are correct. Instead of depending entirely on the teacher to identify mistakes, students actively analyze sentence structures, justify their choices, and learn from their classmates' explanations. This technique combines grammar practice with teamwork, problem-solving, and friendly competition. Manolong R.D, Ordaneza, and Garces (2024), in their study *Sentence Auction: An Interactive Game to Increase Language Learners' Grammar Skills*, explored the use of sentence auctions in grammar learning and reported improvements in students' test performance. Their findings suggest that interactive grammar games can be a useful way to engage learners in language practice.

Similarly, Zakirova (2026), in her article *Interactive Grammar Teaching as a Means of Promoting Learner Engagement and Autonomy*, emphasizes the importance of interactive activities in grammar instruction. The author discusses how collaborative tasks, problem-solving, and grammar auction activities can encourage learners to analyze grammatical structures, evaluate sentence accuracy, and learn through interaction. Such activities also promote learner engagement, critical thinking, and independence. These ideas support the use of the grammar auction technique to teach mixed conditionals, as it allows students to apply grammatical rules while communicating and making decisions collaboratively.

This article explores how the grammar auction technique can be used to teach mixed conditionals to B2-level learners. It focuses on what to teach, who to teach, and how to teach the topic through three stages: a pre-communicative exercise, a communicative grammar auction, and a post-communicative reflection activity. These stages aim to help students recognize grammatical patterns, evaluate sentence accuracy, and use mixed conditionals to express their own ideas in meaningful situations.

What to Teach?

The main focus of this lesson is mixed conditionals, which are used to describe imaginary situations and their possible results at different times. They help speakers explain how a past event can affect the present or how a present situation could have changed something in the past. These structures are useful when talking about past decisions, missed opportunities, personal experiences, and situations that could have been different. Before introducing mixed conditionals, the teacher should briefly revise second and third conditionals to help students understand how these structures are formed. According to Mann and Taylore-Knowles (2008), *Destination B2: Grammar & Vocabulary* covers conditional structures, including mixed conditionals, in Unit 9. The lesson focuses on two main patterns:

- **Past condition with a present result:** If + past perfect, would + base form of the verb. This structure describes an unreal situation in the past and its consequence in the present.
- For example: *If I had studied harder, I would have had better opportunities now.*
- **Present condition with a past result:** If + past simple, would have + past participle. This structure describes an unreal present situation and its possible result in the past.
- For example: *If she were more organized, she would have finished the project yesterday.*

The teacher explains these patterns using clear examples and highlights the relationship between the time of the condition and the time of the result. Students are also reminded that *would* is followed by the base form of a verb, whereas *would have* is followed by a past participle. The practical aim of the lesson is that, by the end of the lesson, students will be able to identify and form the two main types of mixed conditionals, correct common grammatical mistakes, and use these structures to express hypothetical situations in speaking and writing. During the lesson, students will also develop their critical thinking and communication skills by analyzing sentences, comparing answers, explaining their choices, and discussing possible solutions with their classmates. These activities support the developmental aim of the lesson. In terms of the educational aim, students will learn to cooperate with others, respect different opinions, take responsibility for group decisions, and accept mistakes as a natural part of learning.

To achieve these aims, the lesson follows three stages. First, students identify and correct mixed conditional sentences in the pre-communicative exercise. Next, they participate in the communicative activity where they discuss sentence accuracy and make decisions as a team. Finally, in the post-communicative activity students create their own sentences about hypothetical situations and share their ideas with classmates. This sequence helps students move from understanding grammatical rules to using mixed conditionals more confidently in meaningful communication.

Who to Teach?

This lesson is designed for B2-level English learners who have already studied second and third conditionals and have a basic understanding of conditional sentence structures. At this level, students are generally able to express their opinions, discuss familiar topics, and understand more complex grammatical forms. However, they may still experience difficulties when using mixed conditionals because these structures require them to connect different time references and choose the appropriate verb forms.

The lesson is suitable for teenage or adult learners studying English at secondary schools, universities, or language centers. Students can work individually, in pairs, and in small groups, depending on the activity and their learning needs. Some learners may understand the grammatical rules but find it difficult to apply them in communication, while others may need additional practice in distinguishing between past conditions and present results.

The grammar auction technique is particularly suitable for these learners because it encourages active participation, critical thinking, and cooperation. By discussing sentences and explaining their choices, students can learn from one another and develop a clearer understanding of mixed conditionals. The competitive element can also increase their motivation and make grammar practice more enjoyable. Therefore, this lesson provides B2-level learners with opportunities to strengthen their grammatical accuracy, improve their communication skills, and become more confident in using English.

How to Teach?

The lesson follows a communicative approach that combines grammar practice with interaction and collaboration. Instead of learning the rules only through explanation, students have opportunities to recognize, analyze, and use mixed conditionals in different contexts. The lesson is organized into three stages: pre-communicative, communicative, and post-communicative practice.

Pre-communicative exercise: Spot the Mixed Conditional

The lesson begins with a short revision of second and third conditionals, followed by a brief explanation of the two main mixed conditional structures. The teacher then gives students several sentences and asks them to identify which ones are correct and correct any grammatical mistakes. Students first work individually and then compare their answers in pairs. This activity helps them recognize the target structures and prepares them for the main task.

Communicative exercise: The Grammar Auction — Bid for the Correct Sentence

In this activity, students are divided into small groups, and each group receives a limited amount of imaginary money. The teacher presents a set of mixed conditional sentences, some of which are grammatically correct while others contain mistakes. Groups discuss the sentences and decide which ones they want to buy by placing their bids. After the auction, the teacher reveals the correct answers, and students explain their choices. The group with the highest score wins. This activity encourages learners to think

critically, negotiate with classmates, and apply grammatical rules in an enjoyable and competitive environment.

Post-communicative exercise: If Things Had Been Different — Reflect and Create

In the final activity, students use mixed conditionals more independently. The teacher gives them prompts related to past decisions, missed opportunities, personal habits, or imaginary situations. Students create their own sentences and share them with a partner or the whole class. For example, a student might say, *If I had started learning English earlier, I would feel more confident now.* Their classmates can ask follow-up questions to encourage further discussion. This activity helps learners connect grammar with their own experiences and use mixed conditionals more naturally in communication.

At the end of the lesson, the teacher briefly reviews the main structures, provides feedback on common mistakes, and encourages students to reflect on what they have learned. In this way, the three activities guide learners from recognizing grammatical patterns to using mixed conditionals more confidently and independently.

Conclusion

The grammar auction technique offers an engaging way to teach mixed conditionals to B2-level learners. By combining grammatical analysis, teamwork, and friendly competition, it creates opportunities for students to understand not only how mixed conditionals are formed but also when and why they are used.

The three-stage lesson provides a gradual learning process. The pre-communicative activity helps students recognize the structures and correct common errors. The grammar auction encourages them to analyze sentences, justify their choices, and cooperate with their classmates. Finally, the post-communicative activity allows them to apply the target grammar to personal ideas and hypothetical situations.

Overall, the grammar auction can make grammar lessons more interactive and purposeful. When supported by clear instructions, appropriate examples, and constructive feedback, it can help learners improve grammatical accuracy, develop communication skills, and become more confident in using mixed conditionals in everyday English.

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