**Sample Essay**

According to researchers Walker (1967) and Novakov (2009) present perfect tense for ESL learners is one of the most troublesome tense in the English verb system (Mullen 1997). Celce-Murica and Larsen-Freeman (1999) states that “present perfect tense is used retrospectively to refer to a time prior to now” (p.115). Novakov (2009, p. 281) further explains the complexity of this finite verb tense by stating that “its specific temporal structure (situation starting in the past, continuing to the point of speech and after it)” makes it difficult for ESL learners to comprehend. Hence there is a greater need to develop a clearer understanding of the semantic features of verbs and types of present perfect tense in English. This can be achieved by applying the three interacting dimensions of grammar. Larsen-Freeman’s (2003) and Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1999) suggest that the framework of three dimensions consist of: Form or structure (how meaning is formed); Meaning or semantics (what is the meaning) and Use or Pragmatics (when or why is this used) (Mullen 1997, p34).

Novakov (2009) states that present perfect tense is divided into four basic types which are related to some semantic features of verbs. Kung (2013) describes present perfect tense as having multiple functions to express meaning. Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1999, p.116) further divided present perfect as the following:

a. “A situation that began at a prior point in time and continuous into the present

b. An action occurring or not occurring at an unspecified prior time that has current relevance

c. A very recently completed action (often with just)

d. An action that occurred over a prior time period and that is completed at the moment of speaking

e. With verbs in subordinate clauses of time or condition”
Mullen (1997) highlights that most textbooks lack clarity in the rules concerning present perfect tense. Thus, language teachers are challenged to use creative and innovative methods to teach grammar (Widodo 2006, p.139). Gass, Behney & Plonsky (2013) suggest that ESL instruction has three sources of input: teacher, materials and other learners. Many methodologies have been introduced to ESL classrooms and textbooks, however, the most commonly used method employed is the communicative approach (Mullen 1997).

Communicative Language Teaching is defined as the “theoretical perspective of the communicative approaches by making communicative competence the goal of language teaching” (Larsen-Freeman 2000, p.121). Galloway (as citied in Krashen 2008, pp181-182) further clarifies that Communicative Language Teaching allows teachers to create scenarios of real life situations that the students might encounter. The research by Swain (1984) suggested that some type of focus on grammatical forms was necessary if learners were to develop high levels of accuracy in L2 language, thus communicative language teaching by itself was found inadequate ((Nassaji & Fotos 2004)

The Task Based Instruction uses communicative tasks but is interpreted to have primary focus on meaning (Nassaji & Fotos 2004). Nunan (1989 as citied in Nassaji & Fotos 2004) defined communicative tasks as “a piece of classroom work which involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language. Larson-Freeman (2000, p. 144) explains that this approach aims to provide learners with a natural context for language, through the use of communicative activities (Nassaji & Fotos 2004). Even though structure based and comprehension task introduces grammar structure implicitly in communicative contexts, consciousness-raising tasks require learners to communicate with each other, about target grammar structures thus the grammar forms are the task content (Fotos & Ellis as citied in Nassaji & Fotos 2004)
References


