

TEACHING ENGLISH GRAMMAR AND GRAMMAR TOPIC EXPLORATION

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Abstract: This paper explores the teaching and learning of English grammar with a focus on comparative and superlative adjectives among eighth-grade students in a Russian-medium school in Uzbekistan. The target learners, aged 13–14 and at an English proficiency level of IELTS 3.0–4.0, are developing their understanding of grammar through both explicit and inductive approaches. The study draws on *A Glossary of English Grammar* by Geoffrey Leech (2006) and *Schaum’s Outline of English Grammar* by Eugene Ehrlich and Daniel Murphy (1991) to compare how each text presents the topic. While Leech provides a detailed linguistic explanation of the grammatical structures and comparative clauses, Ehrlich and Murphy offer step-by-step rules and practical exercises that are more accessible for classroom use. Based on this analysis, the lesson design combines form-focused and meaning-focused instruction (FFI and MFI) to help students learn both the structure and communicative use of comparatives and superlatives. A communicative activity titled “Who’s the Best?” was developed to encourage students to apply grammar in real contexts, comparing people, places, and objects through guided practice. This activity promotes active participation, reinforces grammatical accuracy, and supports both visual and interactive learners. The approach demonstrates that grammar teaching can be both structured and communicative, providing learners with meaningful opportunities to use English for comparison in authentic ways.

Keywords: English grammar teaching, comparatives and superlatives, communicative grammar, inductive learning, explicit instruction, Uzbekistan, secondary education, grammar materials, *Schaum’s Outline*, Geoffrey Leech

1.Description of Target Learners: My target learners are a group of 15 eighth-grade students studying at a Russian school in Uzbekistan. They are between the ages of 13 and 14 and have an English proficiency level approximately IELTS 3.0 to 4.0. The class is an English language course designed to develop their reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills, with a particular focus on grammar and language structures. Since English is taught as a foreign language in their school, they have varying degrees of the language outside the classroom, with limited opportunities for practice. These students have been studying English grammar for several years, primarily through explicit instruction in a deductive manner. Their previous instruction has relied heavily on rule-based learning, where grammar concepts are explained first, followed by practice exercises. While some students appreciate this structured approach, many students prefer lessons that incorporate visuals and interactive activities, as this helps them understand grammatical concepts more easily. Given their background, an effective approach for this class would be a combination of explicit explanations and inductive learning, with authentic examples to show grammar in real-world usage.

2. Selected Grammar Topic and Selected Books: My selected grammar topic is: Focus on **comparatives** and **superlatives** (for example, -er and -est endings, more and most, irregular comparatives and superlatives)

Selected Books and Page Ranges:

1. “A Glossary of English Grammar” by Geoffrey Leech

- Pages 20-21 cover comparative and superlative adjectives, including their formation, irregular forms, and usage in comparative clause.

2. “Schaum’s Outline of English Grammar” by Eugene Ehrlich & Daniel Murphy

- Chapter 5, Page 99 provides detailed explanations and examples of comparatives and superlatives.

3. Grammar Topic Exploration: The two books, A Glossary of English Grammar by Geoffrey Leech and Schaum’s Outline of English Grammar by Eugene Ehrlich & Daniel Murphy, both explain how comparatives and superlatives work in English. They describe how we add -er and -est to short adjectives (e.g., tall → taller → tallest) and use more and most with longer adjectives (e.g., beautiful → more beautiful → most beautiful). Both books also mention irregular forms like good → better → best and bad → worse → worst.

However, the books differ in their approach. Leech’s Glossary focuses more on the technical side, explaining how comparatives and superlatives fit into sentence structures and grammar rules. It also discusses comparative phrases and clauses. On the other hand, Schaum’s Outline is easier to follow because it explains the rules in a clear, step-by-step way and includes practice exercises.

Some important terms from both books include absolute, comparative adjectives, superlative adjectives, irregular forms, degree of comparison, comparative phrase, and comparative clause. These words help describe the topic clearly.

As a teacher, Schaum’s Outline is the better book to use because it explains things simply and provides exercises that help students practice. While Leech’s Glossary is useful for deeper understanding, Schaum’s Outline is more practical for teaching.

4a. Description: For my target learners, who are eighth-grade students in a Russian school in Uzbekistan with an IELTS level of 3.0–4.0, I would focus on teaching the formation and usage of comparative and superlative adjectives in a structured but accessible way. According to their level, they can handle regular comparatives and superlatives (e.g., taller/tallest, bigger/biggest, more interesting/most interesting) and some common irregular forms (e.g., good → better → best, bad → worse → worst). However, I would not introduce highly advanced comparative structures, such as double comparatives (the more, the better) or comparative clauses (the book is more interesting than I expected), as these might be too complex for one lesson. To ensure a balanced approach, I would integrate form-focused instruction by explicitly teaching the spelling rules and structures, such as when to use -er/-est versus more/most. I would also highlight common mistakes, such as using more easier instead of easier. This part of the lesson

would involve guided exercises where students practice forming comparatives and superlatives using familiar adjectives. For meaning-focused instruction, I would incorporate real-life contexts, such as comparing cities, sports, or personal experiences (e.g., “Tashkent is bigger than Bukhara” or “Football is more exciting than chess”). Engaging activities like classroom surveys, where students compare their favourite fruit or schoolmate, would help reinforce meaning. This ensures that students not only recognize the grammatical forms but also understand how to use them in natural communication. By focusing on this level, I can provide a meaningful and manageable lesson that helps students apply comparatives and superlatives in both writing (FFI) and speaking (MFI).

4b. Graphic Representation: Comparatives and Superlatives Chart

This chart explains how to form comparatives and superlatives of adjectives. Comparatives are used to compare two things, while superlatives are used to compare three or more.

Base Form	Comparative (-er / more)	Superlative (-est / most)	Examples
One-syllable adjectives	Add -er	Add -est	old → older → oldest, thin → thinner → thinnest
One-syllable ending in -e	Add -r	Add -st	large → larger → largest
One-syllable ending in vowel + consonant	Double the consonant + -er	Double the consonant + -est	big → bigger → biggest
Two-syllable adjectives ending in -y	Change -y to -i + -er	Change -y to -i + -est	happy → happier → happiest
Two or more syllables	Use more / less	Use most / least	important → more important → most important
Irregular adjectives	Change completely	Change completely	good → better → best, bad → worse → worst, little → less → least

Comparative and Superlative in Sentences

The present mayor seems **more popular** than the last one was.

Many people spend **more money** on dog food than they give to the church.

Mount Everest is **the highest** mountain in the world.



His mother is one of **the kindest** women I know.

Comparative and Superlative Structures

Comparative:

- [adjective] + -er + than → This book is thicker than that one.
- more/less + [adjective] + than → She is more patient than her brother.

Superlative:

- the + [adjective] + -est → He is the fastest runner in the school.
- the most/least + [adjective] → This is the most expensive dress in the store.

4c. Communicative Activity Outline

Who’s the Best?

Focus: Comparatives and Superlatives

Objective: Students will practice forming and using comparative and superlative adjectives in a collaborative and meaningful way.

Pre-Activity (5 minutes)

Introduction:

- Briefly review the rules for forming comparatives (-er, more) and superlatives (-est, most).
- Provide a few examples from the book chart Ehrlich, E. H., & Murphy, D. J. (1991).

1. (Chapter 5, p. 99):

Adjective	Comparative	Superlative
sweet	_____	_____
intelligent	_____	_____
beautiful	_____	_____
tall	_____	_____
good	_____	_____

- “Jane is the more intelligent of the two sisters.”
- “She is the best student I know.”

2. Warm-Up:

- Write three adjectives on the board (beautiful, tall, good).
- Ask students to give their comparative and superlative forms orally.
Example: “Beautiful → more beautiful → most beautiful.”

While-Activity (15 minutes)

1. Group Task:

- Divide students into groups of 3-4.
- Give each group a task to compare real-life items or people using comparatives and superlatives.

Tasks:

- Compare 3 fruits (e.g., apples, bananas, oranges).
Example: “Bananas are sweeter than apples, but oranges are the sweetest.”
- Compare 3 countries or cities they know.
Example: “London is more exciting than Tashkent, but New York is the most exciting city.”
- Compare 3 classmates (traits like height, kindness, etc.).
Example: “Ali is taller than Sara, but Timur is the tallest in our class.”

2. Rules:

- Each group writes 3-5 sentences using the correct forms of comparatives and superlatives.

Post-Activity (10 minutes)

1. Presentation:

- Groups share their sentences with the class.
- The class listens and identifies any errors in adjective forms.

2. Feedback:

- Highlight accurate usage and correct any mistakes as a class.
- Encourage students to try irregular forms (good → better → best) in their responses.

Adaptation Details

This activity is adapted from Ehrlich, E. H., & Murphy, D. J. (1991). *Schaum’s outline of English grammar*. McGraw-Hill Professional. (Chapter 5, p. 99), which introduces the forms of adjectives and their usage. Specifically, the examples and rules (e.g., sweet, sweeter, sweetest; good, better, best) served as the foundation for designing this tasks.

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