**Element of Focus (Third Person /s/)**

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**Considerations**

Prior to learning third-person /-s/, a child should have an awareness of singular and plural differences, subject-verb agreement, and plural /-s/. Developmentally, children acquire present progressive /-ing/, regular /-s/, possessive /-s/, regular past tense, irregular past tense, the copula be, and the articles a/an.

Acquisition of morphemes in English, as a second language, learners (ELL) varies in the order of acquisition for English as a first language. Developmentally, children learning English as a second language should have acquired plural /s/, present progressive /-ing/, copula be, auxiliary be, articles a/an/the, irregular past tense, regular past tense, regular past tense –ed. \*\*\*

**Methods**

**Instructional Teaching**

Ellis, Loewen, Elder, Erlam, Philp, and Reinders (2009) describe the value of implicit and explicit knowledge in second language learning (Esteki, 2014). The authors describe one teaching strategy by giving, “explicit instruction at the beginning of each session by explaining that the indefinite article can be used to make a generalization and that it is omitted with noncount nouns.” Students then work in structured activities to identify whether or not the sentences were grammatically correct (i.e., a good teacher will make students laugh).

Leonard, Camarata, Pawlowska, Brown, and Camarata (2008), found that reading a story aloud to the child, while simultaneously acting out the events in the story with the support of manipulative (i.e., using toys and props). Then, during play, the clinician will provide conversational recasts that includes third person singular /–s/ of the child’s utterances.

**Specific Session Lesson Plan Ideas**

Jin, Odabasi, and Kim (2014) provide the following lesson plans as suggestions for teaching simple present tense in third-person singular:

*Activating Schema*

Activate the student’s schema and review simple present tense using the subject pronoun “I”.

1. Teacher writes six simple, present sentences on the board with the picture card in the blank spaces to represent each verb.
2. Teacher places the verb cards beside corresponding sentences.
3. The teacher asks the students to come to the board and replace the flash card with an appropriate verb card.

*Ball Game*

This activity provides students with the opportunity to practice asking and answering “wh-questions” using the simple present tense.

1. Each student is provided a strip with a “wh-question” in simple present tense.
2. Students memorize the question in 30 seconds.
3. The students then make a circle around the teacher.
4. In this teacher-initiated activity, each student is provided with the opportunity to toss the ball to another student and answer his/her question.

*Reading Passage*

The purpose of a reading passage is to introduce sentences with verbs that take “s” in the third-person singular present tense form. The structure of a reading passage will allow students recognize the structure of third-person present tense form.

1. Students read the passage silently and independently.
2. The teacher writes six simple present sentences (taken from the passage), leaving a blank space where the verbs belong. The teacher has the verb cards beside the sentences.
3. The teacher asks comprehension questions and elicits answers from the students.
4. Teacher calls on students to come to the board and place the correct verb carb in the blank spaces.

*Comprehension Check: Fill-in-the-Blanks Sentences*

This activity tests the students’ understanding of the simple present verbs that take “s” in the third-person singular and verbs in base form in the first-person singular form.

1. Students work individually and complete 10 fill-in-the-blanks sentences.

*Domino Game*

This domino game helps students practice creating simple present tense using first-person singular and third person singular subject pronouns.

1. Students work in groups of four and receive one set of cards.
2. The teacher places subject pronoun “*I”* card on each group’s table to start the game.
3. Through turn taking, a student picks a card in the deck to form simple present tense. If the student doesn’t pick an appropriate card to match the pronoun “*I,”* he/she waits for his/her next turn.
4. When the student produces a complete sentence, he/she reads the sentence aloud and places matching picture flash card beside the sentence.

*Student Interview*

This activity provides students with the opportunity to use speech and converse with each other while practicing use of simple present forms with second person singular and third person singular forms. Also, students will practice asking “yes-no” questions in simple present.

1. The teacher distributes folded interview worksheets to the students.
2. Students walk around the class, ask each other the questions on the worksheet, and return to their seats once they obtain one classmates’ name to fit each question (i.e., Find a student who…)
3. Students unfold the worksheet and write sentences about their classmates’ routine(s).

*Extension Activity: Writing a Postcard*

This personalized writing activity provides students the opportunity to practice simple present tense with third-person singular verbs during a writing activity.

1. Students write a postcard to their parents describing one of their friend’s daily activities by using third person singular verbs.

**Materials**

*Activating Schema*

The materials required for the *Activating Schema* activity include a whiteboard, six laminated picture flash cards, six laminated verb cards, and teacher guidelines.

*Ball Game*

The materials required for the *Ball Game* activity include 16 “wh-questions” and a small ball.

*Reading Passage*

The materials required for the *Reading Passage* activity include a reading passage and six laminated verb cards with third-person singular “s.”

*Comprehension Check*

The materials required for the *Comprehension Check* activities include Fill-in-the-blanks sentences and a worksheet with 10 fill-in-the-blanks.

*Domino Game*

The materials required for the *Domino Game* activity include four sets of cards (each set containing three subject pronoun cards; “I,” “he,” “she,” 12 verb cards, 12 cards of additional helpful words and 12 picture cards).

*Student Interview*

The materials required for the *Student Interview* activity include a questionnaire with “Find a Student who…” questions, paper, and pen.

*Writing a Postcard*

The materials required for the extension activity, *Writing a Postcard,* includes post cards, pen, and any supplemental material found in their environment to support their comprehension of the concepts.

**Resources**

Leonard, L., Camarata, S. M., Pawlowska, M., Brown, B., Camarata, M. N. (2008). The

Acquisition of Tense and Agreement Morphemes by Children with Specific Language Impairment During Intervention: Phase 3. *Journal of Speech Language and Hearing Resourse* *(51)*1: 120-125.

Laurence B. Leonard. (2014). *Children with Specific Language Impairment* (2nd ed.). Cambridge, M.A.: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press.

Picón Jara, L. (2015). The acquisition of the 3rd person singular –s in English: Exploring

its use by L2 learners of English in written and oral register. *Universitat Autónoma de Barcelona.* Retrieved from https://ddd.uab.cat/pub/tfg/2015/137841/TFG\_laurapicon.pdf

**Websites**

*Teaching Present Tense in Third-Person Singular*

http://www.catesolnews.org/2014/12/teaching-simple-present-in-third-singular/

*How to Teach the Present Simple Tense*

http://busyteacher.org/3560-how-to-teach-the-present-simple.html

**Blogs**

*Guessing Games for Third-Person S*

https://www.englishclub.com/efl/tefl-articles/third-person-s/

*Sixteen Free ESL Third Person Singular Worksheets*

https://en.islcollective.com/resources/search\_result?Tags=third%20person%20singular&searchworksheet=GO&type=Printables

**References**

Esteki, B. (2014). Implicit and explicit knowledge in second language knowledge and

thinking. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies,* *(4)*7. 1520-1525. Retrieved from http://www.academypublication.com/issues/past/tpls/vol04/07/30.pdf

Jin, B., Odabasi, G., & Kim, J. (2014). Teaching simple present tense in third-person

singular. *CATESOL News*. Retrieved from http://www.catesolnews.org/2014/12/teaching-simple-present-in-third-singular/

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