Further Reading and Online Tasks

CHAPTER 2 Learning theories and methods

Task 2.3 Explore teaching method approaches online (p. 18)

Compare the clips below of two teaching methods in action and notice how these examples do, or do not, demonstrate the characteristics of different methods outlined in Arguments 1a and 1b in Section 2.1 (on p. 12).

Communicative method (Argument 1a):
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5bW15RpON9M&feature=related

Audiolingual method (Argument 1b):
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AJ1tr8kKkGU&feature=related

Task 2.5 Exploring a TPR lesson (p. 23)

View the Total Physical Response lesson in the clip below.
Notice what the teacher is doing and saying.
Notice what the students are doing and saying.
Do you think this is a useful way to teach language?
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ikZY6XpB214&feature=related

Task 2.8 Exploring Dogme online resources (p. 28)

The dogme approach has generated hot debate amongst teachers. Some believe a rejection of published resources is unrealistic and impractical; others have identified with the approach fully and share their lesson plans, teaching ideas, class-created activities and materials. Explore these resources yourself by following the link:
http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/articles/dogme-a-teachers-view
Ask at least five teachers who you know what they think of the ideas you find on the Dogme website. See if you can find any similarities or connections between the teachers who are positive about these ideas, and any similarities or connections between those who are negative.

**FURTHER READING (p. 29)**

The readings below invite us to ask questions about methods, and think about whether it is really possible to say one is better than another.


Larsen-Freeman suggests ways in which we can define when a method is or is not successful.

**Further reading task 1**

As you read, identify what you consider to be Larsen-Freeman’s answer to the question: what makes a method successful? Do you agree with her?

Before being persuaded that one method is absolutely best we should remember methods are decontextualised. They describe a certain ideal, based on certain beliefs. They deal with what, how and why. They say little or nothing about who/whom, when, and where. Each method put into practice will be shaped at least by the teacher, the students, the conditions of instruction, and the broader socio-cultural context. A particular method cannot, therefore, be a prescription for everyone. […] What makes a method successful for some teachers is their investment in it. This is one reason why
the research based on methodological comparisons has often been so inconclusive. It sought to reduce teaching to the faithful following of pedagogic prescriptions – but teaching is much more than this. (Larsen-Freeman 2000: 181–2)

Further reading task 2
What do you think Larsen-Freeman means by ‘methods are decontextualised’?
Can you explain what Larsen-Freeman might mean by her last comment that teaching is much more than ‘pedagogic prescriptions’? What do you think this ‘much more’ really is, in your experience?

Task 2.11 Bell, D. (2007), ‘Do teachers think that methods are dead?’, *ELT Journal* 61:2, 135-43

Further reading task 3
Before reading the extracts below from Bell, think about your own answer to the question: ‘Do teachers think methods are dead?’
Then compare your answer to extracts A and B below, and note whether your predictions were the same as or different to Bell’s findings.

Extract A
This paper examines the claim that whereas the notion of method no longer plays a significant role in the thinking of applied linguists, it still plays a vital role in the thinking of teachers. In order to assess this claim, four sources of data on teachers’ beliefs were examined – two direct sources of data: 1) interviews with questions directly addressing teachers’ opinions on the concept of method and 2) discussion board postings on the topic of
post-method, and two indirect sources: 3) language learning/teaching autobiographies and 4) teaching journals. The evidence from the data suggests that teacher interest in methods is determined by how far methods provide options in dealing with particular teaching contexts. Rather than playing a vital role in teacher thinking, teacher attitude towards methods is highly pragmatic. (Bell 2007: 135)

Bell’s research arrived at the following specific conclusions:

**Extract B**

Few teachers define methods in the narrow pejorative sense used by post-methodologists. Most teachers think of methods in terms of techniques which realise a set of principles or goals and they are open to any method that offers practical solutions to problems in their particular teaching context. Given this degree of openness, it is not surprising that when asked to describe their own methodology, teachers overwhelmingly use the term ‘eclectic’. Teachers’ eclecticism appears to be based on an awareness of the existence of different methods and a willingness to draw from each of them. Eclecticism is most often connected to notions of teacher autonomy and context sensitivity. A knowledge of methods is equated with a set of options, which empowers teachers to respond meaningfully to particular classroom contexts. In this way, knowledge of methods is seen as crucial to teacher growth. (Bell 2007: 141)
Further reading task 4
How is Bell’s view of methods similar, or different, to Larsen-Freeman’s in further reading task 1?
Is Bell more, or less, positive about the value of methods for the teacher?

CHAPTER 3 The place of the learner in methods

Task 3.1 Learning from the Hole in the Wall Project: Learners as research resource (p. 42)
View this 2011 online talk from one of the founder researchers of the Hole in the Wall Project, Sugata Mitra: www.ted.com/speakers/sugata_mitra.html

- What does the Calcutta case study example tell us about creating a good learning environment?
- What does it tell us about what a teacher can and cannot do to make a difference?

Note down your ideas and then compare them with the implications listed in Table 3.4. These are some implications for the teacher in keeping alive the learning excitement which is often more evident outside the classroom than inside it.

Table 3.4 Research into the good language learner: implications for the teacher

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do</th>
<th>Don’t</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provide the stimulus and opportunity for learning</td>
<td>Underestimate the capacity of a learner to develop new skills and strategies, if given the chance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allow learners the opportunity to ask the questions they choose, and provide the resources to find the answers</td>
<td>Assume or stereotype what you think a learner is capable of: ‘he or she won’t be able to achieve that because …’ could</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accept that learning can take place informally, through play and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

© the chapters their several authors, 2013
Published by Edinburgh University Press
ISBN 978 0 7486 4619 7 (paperback)
experimentation, and provide opportunities for this. Accept that what is learnt cannot be planned or predicted

well be wrong

Task 3.6 Web task: exploring learner profiles (p. 48)

Explore profiles of learners in UK schools written by their teachers.


- What information do the profiles give us about the learner variables that influence the child’s experience in class – for example, their personality, learning background, home background, age?
- How do the teachers take account of the needs of the children?

Task 3.9 Exploring world Englishes (p. 54)

This website gives you an overview of corpora worldwide of English and Englishes, including English from East Africa, New Zealand, India, the Philippines, Singapore and Europe. Each corpus draws on a million or more words of written data:

[http://www.corpora4learning.net/resources/corpora.html](http://www.corpora4learning.net/resources/corpora.html)

- Explore the ways in which English varies in different settings, cultures and countries.
- How might you use this resource in the classroom?

FURTHER READING (p. 55)

Task 3.10 Understanding the learner

Hirano’s article reports the case study of Junior, an adult learner of English in Brazil, who viewed himself as having difficulty learning English. This learner was typical of others she had met who were successful in other aspects of their career, but not in their learning of English. In spite of this, Junior had persisted with his studies in English in Brazil ‘because he wished to be more independent when he traveled abroad’ (Hirano 2009: 161).

Hirano explains her belief that ‘no matter how difficult it may appear to be for some people to learn a foreign language, everyone is capable of doing so’ (Williams and Burden 1997: 77, quoted in Hirano 2009: 159). In her view, the learner’s difficulties are not ‘intrinsic to the learner’ but rather ‘socially, culturally and historically constructed’ (Ibid. p. 159).

**Further reading task 1: you as reader and critic**

Do you agree with Hirano that ‘everyone is capable’ of learning a language, and that all difficulties are ‘socially, culturally and historically constructed’? Have you ever found an aspect of learning particularly challenging? What do you think were the causes of this difficulty? Which of the causes do you think were internal and within your own control as a learner? Which of the causes do you think were external and outside your own control as a learner?

Hirano’s study reports a one-year investigation into Junior’s learning in one-to-one tutorials with the researcher/teacher. She recorded and transcribed two lessons, and
noticed that teacher and student were increasingly sharing comments about the research itself. She also recorded ‘short impromptu interviews’ and two planned interviews, one at the beginning and one at the end of the year. In addition, Junior kept a diary in his own language to record thoughts and perceptions. From these ways of keeping records, Hirano discovered that Junior had tried and failed four times to learn English, over a period of two and a half years. His view was that ‘the teachers in these courses were not truly interested in his learning, which had a demotivating effect on him’ (Ibid. p. 163).

Hirano suggests that he was acquiring an identity as a ‘poor learner’. When he found something difficult, he would give up easily, using the excuse that he was a poor learner, and when he was successful, he would dismiss his achievement, explaining that the task was easy. Recognising that identity was the real issue, she began to focus on building Junior’s confidence in himself as a good language learner. His journals began to show this changing identity: ‘I feel much more confident when I try to speak in English’ (Ibid. p. 169).

Hirano ends with the following suggestion to extend this particular case study to a broader context:

This case study […] enables the teacher to view learning difficulty and learner identity not as intrinsic to the student, but as constructed through the experiences the student has had, especially, but not exclusively, learning English.

Working with students who show very little, if any, progress can be extremely challenging and frustrating for a teacher, who often reaches a point of not knowing what to do to help them. I find that by including the learner identity factor in the equation, particularly the development of a sense of competence,
one is better equipped to step out of a vicious circle and look at learning
difficulty with new, promising eyes. (Hirano 2009: 171)

Further reading task 2: you as reader and critic
Do you agree with Hirano that it is possible to change a learner’s view of him or
herself?
How would you help to build the confidence of a student who believed him or herself
to be a poor learner? What strategies would you use?

Task 3.11 The teacher and learner stories
Barkhuizen, G. (2008), ‘A narrative approach to exploring context in language
teaching’, English Language Teaching Journal, 62: 231–9
Barkhuizen interviewed Afrikaans-speaking teachers from South Africa who had
immigrated to New Zealand, to find out about their experiences of using English in a
new culture and country. In the interviews, Barkhuizen found that, instead of
straightforward answers, the teachers were narrating stories about their lives and
experiences. What these narratives all had in common were the following ingredients
of stories:

• Characters – in and out of classrooms; learners and teachers; in home and new
countries
• Reference to different times: before and after immigration; before, during or
after different political events
• Places: the physical settings of the stories were also important to make sense
of their experiences
Further reading task 3: you as reader and storyteller

If you were to tell your own story as a teacher or learner of English, who would be the main characters? When would your story take place (this could be at more than one point in time)? Where would the physical locations of your story be?

Barkhuizen suggests that ‘a narrative approach to exploring one’s teaching context leads to a good understanding of that context’ (Barkhuizen 2008: 232). In recognising this, he identifies a growing interest in using narrative to gather information about teachers and learners. Claims made for the value of narrative include the following:

Narrative inquiry is contextualised inquiry. Calls for a context approach to language teaching highlight the necessity of ‘placing context at the heart of the profession’ (Bax 2003: 278) which involves teachers exploring the numerous aspects of their particular local contexts.

He lists the particular aspects as follows:

- The needs and wants of the students
- The teaching resources and facilities available
- The school and community culture
- Existing syllabuses and language-in-education policies
- The wider sociopolitical context (Ibid. p. 233)

Further reading task 4: you as teacher and storyteller

Write brief notes for each of the aspects above, about a language teaching situation you are familiar with. It could be a description of yourself learning a language.
When you read your notes, do you consider you have covered the most important aspects of your ‘particular local context’? Is there something missing?

Note down any further aspects you think could be added to this list.

The reason these stories are important, according to the author, is that teachers teach best and learners learn best in situations that are compatible with their backgrounds, beliefs, and expectations (Ibid. p. 233)

He arrives at the idea of three interlocking levels of story:

![Figure 3.4 Interlocking stories](image)

Figure 3.4 Interlocking stories
The inner circle is the individual teacher story, capturing experiences, responses, emotions, personal theories, and developed ‘in teachers’ immediate contexts’ (Ibid. p. 236). The second level is the wider community around the teacher, such as school language policy in the teaching context; required methods and materials; student needs and expectations. The third sociopolitical level includes national educational policy, such as national exams and curriculum. What is interesting about these three levels is that they also represent three different degrees of control the teacher has over his or her own situation.

You as reader and storyteller
Draw the three concentric circles to represent yourself as a teacher or learner, as in Figure 3.5.

Note in the inner circle the aspects of your teaching or learning which you feel able to change or control.

Note in the middle circle the aspects of your teaching or learning which you are less able to control, but may be able to influence or adapt in some way.

Note in the outer circle the aspects of your teaching or learning over which you have no control.

Now compare your three layers of control with Barkhuizen’s three levels of story above.

Do you find these layers correspond to the three levels of story, or are there differences?

CHAPTER 4 Grammar in Methods

Task 4.8 Exploring natural grammar online (p. 77)

Natural Grammar (Thornbury 2004) is a grammar practice book that brings together corpus linguistics with Halliday’s (1994) insight that lexis and grammar are not separate but that words are the most delicate grammar – words are associated with certain grammar patterns. It presents the 100 most common words in English (based on the British National Corpus) along with the grammar patterns that the words are found in, and associated meanings.

Go to the Oxford University Press website for the book [link] and acquaint yourself with the key features of the book. Spread across the site are a number of samples of the book itself as well as other resources. For this task I have identified
three sample pages that cover a range of word types (modal, preposition, noun) and consider the range of information presented to the student to ‘know’ a word:

- Can
- Away
- Home

- What level of student do you think the book would be useful for?
- Do you think this kind of grammar practice book would be useful for your students?
- Is this lexicogrammar perspective on ‘small’ frequent grammar words a useful one in your context?
- How would you describe the approach? Does it embody a more formal rule-based approach or a more meaning-focused approach – or both? Is it inductive or deductive in its pedagogy?

Compare your ideas and responses with some of the reader reviews on Amazon:

‘The approach is refreshing […] For example, the various uses of words like just are explained simply and clearly. One disappointment is that this natural approach would seem to be best for beginners, but the book is designed for intermediate and advanced students.’

‘… it is designed to make students and teachers think about new ways to analyse grammatical structure according to a functional approach. This is achieved by focusing on the actual patterns of use of normal speech, in which grammar emerges from the lexis of words, rather than being broken into little pieces that are defined by terminology.’
You can also compare your ideas with Scott Thornbury’s own comment (2011) on his blog:

… you may disagree with the way that I decided to organise this material- e.g. that it is too rule-based and deductive – but I hope you don’t disagree with the motivation: to make unattended language salient.

- Do you agree with these opinions?
- Is such ‘unattended language’ important to study explicitly?
- Could you think of ways to use the information and tasks with learners in your context? How could you adapt it for classroom use?

Compare your response to the last question with the suggestion, found on the publisher’s website, to use the book in class as a follow-up to a text comprehension task. It suggests that you work through a regular reading exercise for your class focusing on meaning (comprehension, discussion, etc), then move to a focus on vocabulary and grammar. At this point it suggests a final focus on a key word from the book:

At this point learners should be ready to focus on the high frequency words in the text. For example:

- count all the examples of ‘have’ (or one of its derivatives) and categorise them
- check with Natural Grammar: do your categories match?
- are there any categories not represented in the text?
- go on to do exercises on ‘have’ in Natural Grammar.
- prepare a gap-fill of the text, by deleting all examples of ‘have’. Learners have to put them back in. (Natural Grammar Website: Teaching ideas)
Note: it is unlikely that the final point means you should replace the word *have* with a gap and a line for students to fill in (they would simply write the word *have*!). The kind of gap-fill that Thornbury is suggesting here is one in which you delete the word, but do not replace it with a gap. Students then have to read the text carefully and think where the word could/should go.

Thornbury, S. (2011), ‘S is for Small Words’:

http://scottthornbury.wordpress.com/2011/01/02/s-is-for-small-words/ (last accessed 21 October 2012)

Natural Grammar website:

http://elt.oup.com/teachers/naturalgrammar/?cc=global&selLanguage=en (last accessed 21 September 2012)

Natural Grammar website: ‘Teaching ideas’:


FURTHER READING (p. 77)


In this article, Hughes and McCarthy contrast rule-based sentence grammar with discourse grammar which ‘foregrounds the kinds of choices that speakers and writers deal with in production – that is how can one best formulate a message to make it clear, coherent, relevant, appropriately organised’ (Hughes and McCarthy: 271).

These choices from the language system are not motivated simply to follow abstract
rules, but are meaning-based choices that users of language make when constructing a
text, taking account of the context and the meanings unfolding across the text. They
illustrate this with three examples that contrast sentence-level grammar with
discourse-level grammar: pronouns, the past perfect and some features of the
grammar of spoken discourse.

In the first example they point out that, whilst we may usually teach subject
pronouns (I, you, he, etc.) as a set of grammatical choices, and demonstratives (this,
that) as another set, when we look at how such forms are used in texts we can see a
discourse-based paradigm of choices of it, this and that. They show that these three
forms represent a meaningful paradigm choice to the writer when they come to
referring to entities in the text or in the context. Based on previous research, they
define the use of these forms as follows:

(a) it signalled reference to continued, ongoing topics, (b) this
signalled the raising of a new or significant topical focus, and (c)
that had a variety of distancing or marginalising functions (e.g., the
attribution of an idea to another person, emotional distance, the
rejection of ideas or positions, the downgrading or defocusing of a
topic, referral across different topics) (Ibid. p. 266)

They give the following two examples to illustrate these choices:

1. If you buy a newly built home, you may have trouble getting a mortgage
unless it has a warranty such as the buildmark Warranty from the National
Housebuilding Council (NHBC). This covers most defects for the first two
years and major defects for ten years. It offers valuable insurance cover if the
builder goes bust while the house is being built or if major structural faults develop (Ibid. p. 266).

2. Slob out around the pool, sneak in a couple of ice cold beers … and then do it all again! And if that doesn’t sound like a holiday that’s hotter than a sauna, then lend us your sauna (Ibid. p. 267).

In sentence 1, the pronoun it would have been possible in both cases; but the use of This in sentence 2 signals the start of a new topic, and it in the following clause continues the same idea. In example 2 the choice of this is possible, but the use of that signals a distancing from the first clause – it looks back at it and comments on it, and this positions the author alongside the reader.

**Further reading task 1**

Re-read this section, and consider my use of the pronouns it and this:

a. ‘They illustrate this…’ (first paragraph)

b. ‘it looks back at it and comments on it and this positions the author …’ (last paragraph)

Are they functioning in the way that Hughes and McCarthy describe?

As we have seen, speakers and writers also make grammatical choices from the tense system and these depend on contextual features as well as signal their orientation to ideas and information in the text. Hughes and McCarthy illustrate this with an example of the past perfect which shows how it is not just used to sequence two
events in past time or in specific forms such as reported speech, but is often used to give a reason or justification for the main events of the narrative:

Got on better with Glynbob I think and John Bish let me and Trudie sleep in his bed last time we went up to Brunel or the one time when we stayed in Old Windsor with them cos erm *Ben had given us his room cos he’d gone away for the weekend* and erm it was me and Trudie just in Ben's room and John Doughty had a double bed so he, John Bish had a double bed so he offered us his double bed between us and then slept in Ben's room *cos Ben and PQ had gone away for the weekend* but they tried to get, *they'd gone away and tried to get back* like to catch me and Trudie before we left (Ibid. p. 270)

The sequences in the italicised clauses are not the main events, but what the speaker sees as essential background information. Such discourse choices operate beyond the level of the sentence and are probabilistic choices that speakers make appropriate to the context and the staging and coherence of their message.

Finally, Hughes and McCarthy look at the difference between grammar in spoken and written discourse. The basic unit of spoken discourse is not the sentence but the utterance – so we look both below and beyond sentence-level descriptions. They point out that in face-to-face talk there is an absence of some of the core grammar forms found in writing – e.g. well-formed sentences with main and subordinate clauses – we find instead single words or phrases, the use of ellipsis (the dropping of subject pronouns, auxiliary verbs, etc.), and these should be judged as ‘successful’ in terms of the meaning conveyed in the ongoing text, and taking account of the shared context – rather than in terms of a ‘well-formed’ sentence.
Speakers have more freedom in word order in spoken utterances: we construct the clause in real time and use word order choices to signal our information focus. Hughes and McCarthy identify a number of such patterns: ‘Heads’, which front information (That film, shall we see it today) and ‘Tails’ (can leave you feeling weak it can, flu), which they argue are evaluative in function and foreground interpersonal meanings. They argue that such descriptions are central to the teaching of spoken discourse, and not just exceptions:

The real problem is that the terminology itself is locked in a written, sentence-based view of language. Spoken language cannot have a left or right in the way that words on a page do; instead it has a before and an after. … When grammar moves from sentence to discourse, metaphors derived from written text lose their usefulness, and new terminology is called for. The fact that language is produced in time rather than space and for a face-to-face listener rather than for a reader usually displaced in time and space becomes the most important criterion in explaining grammatical choices. Hence discourse drives grammar, not the reverse. (Ibid. p. 274)

This becomes important when we look to assess students on their spoken accuracy, fluency and complexity of speech production – if we use sentence-based, written grammar descriptions of language in the assessment of students’ speech, then we will not really be assessing their skills in communication. Instead, we will be assessing their ability to produce verbally the approach to written grammar we have taught them.
Below are some of the benefits and drawbacks of sentence- and discourse-based approaches to grammar teaching that Hughes and McCarthy (Ibid. p. 280) summarise in Table 4.1.

### Table 4.1 Strengths and Weaknesses of Discoursal and Nondiscoursal Approaches to Grammar Teaching

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approach</th>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
<th>Grammar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discourse-based</td>
<td>• Acknowledge language as choice</td>
<td>• Is messy</td>
<td>• Ellipsis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Links to notions of appropriacy</td>
<td>• Lacks an agreed metalanguage</td>
<td>• Topic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Expands previously limited grammar explanations</td>
<td>• Promotes inner-circle view of English</td>
<td>• prominent fronting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Tense–function correlations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentence-based</td>
<td>• Depicts written sentences as ‘manageable’</td>
<td>• Presents language as series of atomistic units</td>
<td>• Unmarked word order</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Agreed metalanguage</td>
<td>• Doesn’t help the learner in stringing the discourse together</td>
<td>• Structure of tenses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Clear contrasts between forms</td>
<td>• Fixes paradigms that may not match use</td>
<td>• Subject–verb agreement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

English language pedagogy should foster a practice-driven view of grammar teaching, with the teacher being empowered to take an active part in and an informed view of what features to present and how best to present them. We would certainly not wish to suggest that the traditional and discourse-based approaches are mutually exclusive. (Ibid. p. 284)
Further reading task 2

- Do you feel this perspective on grammar can lead to a more ‘informed view’ of the language for teachers and the kinds of explanations we give our students?
- Are the reasons for your answer laid out in Hughes and McCarthy’s ‘pros and cons’ table above? What other considerations come to mind?
- Look at the materials you use in your own teaching context. Can you identify a discourse approach to grammar in them?
- With what kinds of learners and teaching situations do you think this approach would work best? Why?


As we have seen in section 4.1, grammar is a meaning-making resource that allows us to express meaning beyond what we can point to in the immediate context or name with simple lexis. It allows us to express complex notions such as time and definiteness, as well as attitudinal meanings such as approval, politeness and social intimacy. This article draws on Widdowson’s (1988) point that we should see grammar as a ‘liberating force’ rather than as a constraint or ‘set of restrictions on what is allowed and disallowed in language use’ (Cullen 2008: 221).

Central to the notion of grammar as a liberating force is the view of grammar as a communicative resource on which speakers draw to express their intended meanings at both levels – the notional and the attitudinal. As such the use of a particular grammatical structure is a matter of speaker choice … grammar is thus at the service of the
language user, and the teaching of grammar – especially if we wish to
present grammar to our learners as something which is liberating and
empowering – should aim to reflect this. (Ibid. pp. 222–3)

He argues that the implication of such a view is that students need to be able to
engage with pedagogic tasks that develop meaning-form mappings, and that push
students to produce language that stretches them to notice the gap in their present
knowledge.

To enable this, he proposes a process approach to grammar pedagogy that
encompasses three design features (Table 4.2).

Table 4.2 An approach to grammar pedagogy: three design features (Cullen
2008)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Learner choice</th>
<th>Lexis to grammar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>‘… learners are not compelled to use a particular grammatical structure which has been pre-selected for them … but rather they choose from their stock of grammatical knowledge to express the meanings they wish to convey (Ibid. p. 223)’</td>
<td>‘… learners are in effect asked to map grammar on to lexis, involving a process known variously as grammaticization (Batstone 1994) or ‘grammaring’ (Thornbury 2001)’ (Ibid. p. 224) This process is distinct from what students do in a PPP lesson (section 4.2) where ‘they begin with a preselected grammatical structure, and then have to slot lexis into it’ (Ibid. p. 224)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Comparing texts with more proficient users and noticing the gap

Learners need to notice the gaps in their own use of grammar. The focus on form is one that is ‘reactive’ to the particular communicative needs which they uncover in the process of a task and comparing how others may choose to do the same task.

Focusing on written output, he pulls together four kinds of process-oriented tasks that can encompass these features (Table 4.3).

Table 4.3 Four kinds of process-oriented tasks (Cullen 2008)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Grammaticization tasks</td>
<td>Students ‘add in’ the grammar to expand information presented in a reduced form: e.g. notes or newspaper headlines. For example, students are presented with newspaper headlines and write down a brief summary of the story in one or two sentences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Synthesis tasks</td>
<td>The teacher breaks down a short text with complex clauses into short, simple clauses. Students then reconstruct the longer, more ‘natural’ texts using information-structuring devices such as subordinate clauses and linking devices. They are asked to continue the text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Dictogloss</td>
<td>The teacher reads a dictation of a short text at a relatively normal speed a couple of times. Students take notes of the main ideas of the text. They turn their notes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
into a text – as close as possible to the original. Students compare their texts with each other, and finally with the original.

| 4. Picture composition | The classic task of reconstructing a picture story. The story is reconstructed from the pictures and key lexis provided. This is read out in groups, interpretations discussed and texts edited. The teacher makes a composite story based on the students’ work, and students can compare it to their original text. |

Cullen argues that these tasks draw on a task-based methodology which embodies the three design principles for a process approach to teaching grammar:

The activities also follow a process approach to teaching grammar, in which grammatical items are not elected and presented in advance for learners to use, but rather grammar is treated as ‘a resource which language users exploit as they navigate their way through discourse’ (Batstone 1994: 224). Gaps in their knowledge are noticed later through the process of matching and comparing so that work can begin on trying to fill them … Finally, although I have argued in this paper that a process-oriented approach to teaching grammar is more consistent with the notion of grammar as a liberating force than a product-oriented approach, I am not claiming that such an approach is inherently superior, and preferable at all times and for all levels of student. (Cullen 2008: 228)
Further reading task 3

Do you think the view of grammar as a ‘set of restrictions’ that Cullen outlines is common among teachers and students in your context?

What level of student is such an approach most appropriate for?

What issues can you see arising with these tasks?

Do/would/could you use such an approach or set of tasks in your classes?

Would you consider dictation a ‘liberating’ task for your students?

Further reading task 4

Bruton replied to this article in *ELT Journal*. See if you can find this journal online.

Do you agree with his critique?

Bruton, A. (2009), ‘Grammar is not only a liberating force, it is a communicative resource’, *ELT Journal* 63:4, 383–6

CHAPTER 5 Vocabulary in Methods

Task 5.3 Explore the corpus (p. 85)

Choose two or three vocabulary items you or your learners find interesting or challenging, and explore natural occurrences of the word from the Compleat Lexical Tutor link: [http://www.lextutor.ca/concordancers/](http://www.lextutor.ca/concordancers/)

Draw up your own definitions of the word, and any features you notice of how and where it is used in the sentence, according to the corpus.

Were there any surprises or differences from your expectations? From coursebook presentations of the word?
Task 5.4 Learner and teacher research activities online (p. 96)

Below are a series of search activities which teachers and learners might engage in together online, to discover words. Try these out for yourself and notice what you learn about words, and how you might include these activities into language teaching.

1. Teachers and learners might look at how a word is really used in everyday English by referring to a corpus website. They could compare this corpus information about the word with the information presented in the coursebook.

The link below gives you the opportunity to check corpus data for any word or phrase you would like to research for the classroom:

http://www.lexxtutor.ca/concordancers/

2. Teachers and learners could look at everyday language and ‘notice’ unusual, interesting or new examples of ‘word-building’. What new words are being coined and why? How are word-building blocks being used to make these new words? The website below gives you multiple examples of new words being coined in English:


3. Teachers might invite learners to recognise ‘morphemes’ or the building blocks of words for themselves by: building word ‘stars’ and word families, sharing knowledge with their peers, or using sources of information such as dictionary or corpus websites. This link leads you to the Online Oxford Collocation Dictionary, which is a free and fully online resource: http://oxforddictionary.so8848.com/

Word-building activities could include:
• experimenting and making ‘families’ of their own, and researching which experimental words are and are not used in English

• inventing new words of their own using word-building blocks – for example, to describe a new product or invention, or give a name to a real-life object or activity not yet officially named

• classifying words in a family according to their meaning (abstract or concrete; animal, human or object); their word function (verb, noun, adjective, adverb); their connotation (positive or negative)

4. Teachers might invite learners to share and compare the different words used in their own cultures and contexts, to describe categories such as family members, colours or household items. These ideas can be compared with corpora such as

http://www.corpora4learning.net/resources/corpora.html

This link gives you an overview of corpora worldwide of English and Englishes, including English from East Africa, New Zealand, India, the Philippines, Singapore and Europe. Each corpus draws on a million or more words of written data.

5. Teachers and learners might share collocations which do or do not occur in natural language, and look at those which are exchanged by other learners and teachers online, such as

Task 5.6 Research new words and collocations online (p. 98)

Act as a linguistic researcher for one week, and notice any ‘newly created’ words you might overhear – perhaps on the radio, in social settings or community settings such as on the bus. Note these down and think about how the word is structured and how it might have emerged. Then see if your ‘new words’ are listed in this corpus (Learn English Today, last accessed 17 January 2012): 

Now do the same for interesting or unusual collocations. Note down examples you have noticed.

Then search for your examples and further examples in these collocation resources:
Oxford Online Dictionary of Collocations  
http://oxforddictionary.so8848.com/  

Task 5.9 Exploring vocabulary resources and the lexical approach (p. 105)

Paul Nation at the University of Wellington, New Zealand has developed a series of resources for teaching vocabulary, and a battery of short tests for assessing the number of words learners have.

http://www.victoria.ac.nz/lals/resources/vocrefs  
http://www.victoria.ac.nz/lals/resources/vocrefs/vocab-tasks

Explore these resources and note down:

- How would you share these resources with learners in a language teaching context you are familiar with?
• What would the teacher need to do to set this up and prepare learners to best use the resources?
• What would the learners need to do to benefit most from the resources?

FURTHER READING (p. 106)

Questions about vocabulary


Blachowicz et al. ask and attempt to answer eight key questions about vocabulary acquisition. Whilst they are referring specifically to the school curriculum, and not exclusively to second-language vocabulary acquisition, their findings are relatable to the English language teacher. We will look at four of their questions here.

• What do we know about vocabulary knowledge?
• What do we know about vocabulary instruction?
• Which words should be taught?
• What specific strategies or approaches can help English language learners?

Further reading task 1: researching vocabulary

Before progressing further with the authors’ answers to these questions, note down your own brief responses to each, based on your own knowledge and experience, and any further ideas that have emerged as a result of reading this chapter. Then compare your notes to those below from the article.

What do we know about vocabulary knowledge?
The authors emphasise the importance of vocabulary learning as an indicator of success in all other aspects of learning in school, and particularly success in reading. They claim, ‘Vocabulary knowledge is a critical factor in the school success of English language learners’ (Blachowicz et al. 2006: 526).

**What do we know about vocabulary instruction?**

The view of the authors is that the best vocabulary instruction is ‘comprehensive’ and ‘integrated’ into other learning and into all subjects across the school day. They identify three characteristics of effective instruction:

- It focuses on awareness of words, or ‘noticing’ activities such as those described in this chapter
- It includes ‘multiple types of information about each new word as well as opportunities for repeated exposure, use and practice’
- It includes the development of ‘word-learning strategies’, which allow the learner to develop their learning independently of the teacher

**Which words should be taught?**

The authors suggest several different approaches to choosing words. These include selecting:

- words which are not currently in the learners’ repertoire
- words which they will meet frequently
- words which are important for their reading
- words which are ‘generative’ – that is, ‘this word or word parts can be used to learn other words’ (Ibid. p. 530)

**What specific strategies or approaches can help English language learners?**

The following strategies were identified by Blachowicz et al. as helpful in learning a second-language vocabulary:
• drawing on cognates between English and the learners’ first language. Garcia (1996) found this strategy effective with Spanish learners, who were able to use Spanish cognates to help them work out the meaning of English words.

• word-consciousness activities that include ‘seeing, hearing, spelling’ and analysing were also found to be useful by Carlo et al. (2005). Analysis included, for example, looking at the links between words such as synonyms, antonyms and multiple meanings of words.

The authors also add strategies generic to all learners:

• Drawing students’ attention to morphemes and how they combine to make meaning

• How definitions work for various parts of speech

• Developing word awareness

• Investigating the role of context in word learning

• Acquiring both depth and breadth of word knowledge (Blachowicz et al. 2006: 535)

Their conclusions are that ‘comprehensiveness of instruction coupled with the use of the native language are powerful tools for increasing second language vocabulary’ (Ibid. p. 533).

Further reading task 2: teaching vocabulary

Review this chapter and identify ways in which you might be able to fulfil the criteria for good instruction suggested above by Blachowicz. Which areas are you confident about? Which areas do you need to develop further, and what reading, understanding or actions would help you to do this?
Task 5.11 Vocabulary instruction


Nagy picks up the challenge offered by Blachowicz et al., and is in agreement that a ‘comprehensive’ approach to vocabulary learning is the one that is needed. His rationale for a long-term and comprehensive approach is based on his responses to four hypotheses about vocabulary teaching. The knowledge hypothesis suggests that knowing words is not in itself as important as knowing the concepts and ideas they are referring to. His example is of a reader who is a keen baseball player, and will understand a text about baseball much better than a text about, for example, fly fishing because of this conceptual understanding. A second hypothesis is that words are best learnt when they can be accessed quickly and easily, through familiarity or immediacy. A topic central to a learner’s interests is likely to be one he or she encounters more frequently, and can thus remember and access more easily. The instrumentalist hypothesis, that ‘knowing more words makes someone a better reader’, suggests that this becomes a virtuous circle, from conceptual understanding to vocabulary knowledge to textual understanding.

These observations reinforce our understanding that vocabulary is absorbed best when it entails content-rich topics and texts that engage the readers’ interests, and in which the reader might be or become ‘expert’.
Further reading task 3: researching vocabulary

How do these observations about the connection between conceptual familiarity and vocabulary knowledge match with your own experiences?

Further reading task 4: teaching vocabulary

How might you select vocabulary practice activities, as a result of this connection?

Guided reading and web browsing (p. 106)


Nation’s book defines clear principles for teaching and learning vocabulary, based on large-scale and long-term research into vocabulary acquisition. He notes that teachers ‘need to see the learning of any particular word as being a cumulative process where knowledge is built up over a series of varied meetings with the word’ (Nation 2009: 97). These ‘meetings’ will include both deliberate learning, the kind of ‘noticing’ activities described in this chapter, and also fluency development, where known vocabulary is practised and experienced. Nation describes fluency development as taking place when ‘learners bring a lot of knowledge and experience to the task so that the burden of the task is rather light and the chances of success are high’ (Ibid. p. 93).


Explore in more detail McCarten’s analysis of the links between the corpus and vocabulary teaching, discussed in Section 5. 1 above:
The lexical approach takes the view that all aspects of language can be taught through the unit of the word, as this is the central building block of messages. Explore this view in more detail on the websites below:

http://www.cal.org/resources/digest/0102lexical.html
http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/activities/lexical-approach-classroom-activities
http://iteslj.org/Articles/Kavaliauskiene-LA.html

CHAPTER 6 The written word in methods: reading and writing

Task 6.4 Evaluating online resources (p. 121)


The authors explore the ‘developments in software and online resources’ which might help students in their writing. Below are some of their suggested resources. Explore these for yourself and then think about: how would you set up and encourage use of these resources in the classroom? How would you monitor their usefulness?

- Online concordancers as a pedagogical tool in writing classes
- Track change facility, which marks changes in colour and highlights marginal comments
- Electronic thesaurus (Shift+F7 in Word)
• Search engines (such as Google) for checking, for example, the frequency of collocations. The authors give the example of a Japanese student translating ‘heavy illness’ directly from the mother tongue; checking this in Google and finding the frequency of this collocation is very low compared to ‘serious illness’.

• Search engines such as Check My Words: http://mws.ust.hk/cmw/index.php

• Specialised websites such as Google Scholar

• Online translators such as Bing Translator: http://www.bing.com/translator/

Plagiarism analysis website Turnitin, which measures the amount of synergy between student text and other published texts available online: http://turnitin.com/static/index.html

Task 6.7 Analysing spoken language online (p. 130)

Explore for yourself examples of fluent, connected spoken English and analyse features you notice of spoken competences. Below are links to children talking, socialising, telling stories, speculating. The final clip is of a twelve-year old girl giving a short speech to the United Nations. In Chapter 7 we will consider how authentic talk of this kind can be used as part of a listening activity.

Using language to socialise

Children discuss a book: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DIQeGjtI7d8

Children join in with circle time and talk to their teacher:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Ujrry3fB0c
Using language to speculate

When I grow up - children talk about growing up:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PPwbxEQmoyc

Goodbye Moon – children talk about dreams and illusions:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sMk4WMyDxIo

Using language to tell stories

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZlqQtyXAa6s&feature=related

The girl who silenced the world

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TQmz6Rhpu0

Task 6.8 Explore phonetic symbols online (p. 132)

Explore the symbols used to denote sounds in the English language. These symbols are used throughout this chapter.

Do you think these symbols would be useful to introduce to learners?

What would be the advantages of doing so?

What would be the disadvantages?

FURTHER READING (p. 141)

Task 6.11 Feedback and writing development

Ferris studied student responses to feedback from three teachers, between a first and second draft of writing, and then again at the end of a writing course.

**Further reading task 1: teacher reflections**

Ferris’s main research questions were:

- Does error feedback from instructors help L2 writers to improve their accuracy in the short term (from one draft of a paper to the next) and in the long term (from the beginning to the end of a writing course)?
- What strategies do teachers use to give error feedback, and what is the effect of differing strategies on student writing?

Think about how would you answer these questions, from your own experience either as a learner or as a teacher of writing. Note down your answers.

When you have finished, compare your responses to Ferris’s conclusions below:

We found a strong relationship between teachers’ error markings and successful student revisions on subsequent drafts of their essays. Students appeared to address the vast majority of their teachers’ error markings. (Ibid. p. 92)

The study found that students made more corrections and changes when the teacher used direct marking strategies which involved ‘mere transcribing or copying of the teacher’s suggestion into the next draft of their papers’ (Ibid. p. 93). However, changes were made by the students even with the less explicit forms of correction. ‘Indication and location of error, regardless of whether a code was attached or even accurate, provided adequate information for them to revise’ (Ibid. p. 94). This finding ran counter to the intuition of the students and teachers themselves, who in interview prior to the analysis, felt explicit and coded feedback would be necessary for their learners, and ‘error location alone would not provide enough information for them’.
Further reading task 2: research task

Ferris’s findings were with a small sample of highly motivated students learning English in Sacramento, California in order to live and work there. How far do you think her study and findings might be relatable to a learning situation in which you are familiar? Do you think you might arrive at a similar, or a different finding? Can you suggest why?


Jenkins tells us that a lingua franca:

emphasizes the role of English in communication between speakers from different L1s, i.e. the primary reason for learning English today; it suggests the idea of community as opposed to alienness; it emphasizes that people have something in common rather than their differences; it implies that ‘mixing’ languages is acceptable – and thus that there is nothing inherently wrong in retaining certain characteristics of the L1, such as accent. (Jenkins 2000: 11)

Thus Jenkins suggests that, as teachers and learners, we do not need to aspire towards a ‘received’ or standard notion of accent and pronunciation, but rather to be comprehensible. In addition, the English which is learnt and used can be disconnected from the culture and specificity of ‘Englishness’.

The following features were found to be ‘communicatively effective’ even though they do not match the patterns of standard English.

When an ELF speaker

- drops the third person -s ending on the present tense: *he go*
• confuses the relative pronouns *who* and *which*: *that man which showed me the way*

• omits definite and indefinite articles where they are obligatory in (English as a native language) ENL, or inserts them where they do not occur in ENL

• mixes different forms of tag questions, e.g. *you’ve met him before, don’t you?*

• inserts pronouns which are not needed grammatically

• replaces infinitive constructions with that-clauses: e.g. *I want that*

• adds information which is not needed: e.g. *black colour; how long time*

(Jenkins 2009: 146)

Jenkins found varied and polarised attitudes to ELF spoken language amongst experienced teachers on an MA programme at London University:

‘Isn’t this a lowering of standards, a watering down to suit non-native speakers?’ (NNS)

‘If all students learn from a teacher who has her own L1, then the English people learn will gradually deteriorate’ (NS)

‘All English will fragment so that nobody understands each other’ (NNS) v. ‘We’ll all become the same’ (NS)

‘I think we need to set some standard’ (NNS)

(Jenkins 2007: 124–8)

**Further reading task 3: teacher evaluation of ELF**

Below are arguments for and against the teaching of English as a lingua franca, shared by experienced teachers of English.

Which arguments do you agree with? Which ones do you disagree with?

Can you explain your reasons?
Formulate your own set of arguments in response to the question: should English as a lingua franca be recognised, taught, or practised explicitly in the language lesson?

Arguments against English as a lingua franca expressed by London MA teachers:

- ELF represents a lowering of standards
- EFL pronunciation (as contrasted with GP) will lead to uniformity or fragmentation
- Students do not want to learn ELF
- Native-like English is more intelligible, and NS are the best judges of the intelligibility of NNSs

Arguments for ELF:

- There is no such thing as perfect English
- ELF will be a relief to learners and teachers
- An ELF accent is part of an L2 speaker’s identity (Jenkins 2007: 128)

Further reading task 4: research enquiry

Conduct a small research enquiry yourself into the attitude of teachers towards ELF. Ask them to think about the language characteristics in the list above.

Would they regard these features as acceptable or not? Would they correct them or not?

How do your findings compare with those of Jenkins?

CHAPTER 7 Methods and principles for integrating the four skills:

reading, writing, speaking and listening

Task 7.2 Exploring text organisers for integrated skills practice (p. 148)
Explore the book and find further examples of text organisers: ‘onion’, Venn diagram, spidergram, grids, pyramid, cycle, opinions classified along a spectrum. Principle 3 on page 147 guides you to these in earlier chapters of the book.

Why do you think these text organisers were chosen? In what ways do they help to make the information or activity clearer?

Listen to one of the talks in the links below. You met these talks earlier in this book in other contexts.

A ten-minute lecture on the history of the English language, with visuals: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rexKqvPVuA

The Hole in the Wall Project: www.ted.com/speakers/sugata_mitra.html (Chapter 2)

The girl who silenced the world: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TQmz6Rbpnu0

Experiment with different visual ways of representing the information in the text. Try at least two different methods of text organisation, as represented in Figures 7.1 to 7.3.

Which text organisation suits your listening best? Why?

In what ways does it help to make meaning clear? In what ways does it hinder?

Can you suggest other helpful ways of note-taking, recording or classifying the information you hear?

Task 7.5 Evaluating online reading resources (p. 155)

The Extensive Reading Foundation was created in response to the recognition that second-language reading is best developed when it is pursued outside the classroom and motivated by delight in the reading process. In response to this, the Extensive
Reading Foundation has developed a rich resource for learners to explore beyond the classroom and direct their own reading choices.

Explore the resource in this link, and notice the opportunities it provides learners to choose what they read: [http://www.erfoundation.org/erf/](http://www.erfoundation.org/erf/)

Notice:

- the different kinds of reading they can engage in: ‘genres’ or text types such as romance, detective, adventure, mystery
- the different languages levels and how these are explained so they are clear to learners

**Evaluating the reading website**

- What is your experience of directed reading controlled by the teacher, and in what ways is this website offering different opportunities for the learner?
- What is your own view of this? Could it work with learners that you are familiar with? Would it work for you, reading in a second language?

**Task 7.10 English as a shouted language (p. 165)**


Would they like to learn this way? Why – or why not?

What does this tell you about which kind of learners might like this method and which would reject it?
FURTHER READING (p. 166)

Task 7.11 Case study of spoken English – Hong Kong


Cheng and Tsui looked at the conversational behaviour between Hong Kong Chinese (HKC) speakers and native speakers of English (NSE). They asked themselves when, how, and how often these two groups of speakers disagree with one another. They hypothesised that:

- Hong Kong Chinese speakers would disagree with their NSE peers less often than the reverse, thus aiming to avoid conversational conflict
- Hong Kong Chinese speakers would use fewer direct forms of disagreement than their NSE counterparts
- Hong Kong Chinese speakers would try and mitigate and soften their forms of disagreement more frequently than their NSE peers

The researchers collected thirteen hours of conversation between these two groups of speakers. The proportion of exchanges which did, and did not, attempt to ‘soften’ disagreement were counted; and the data was also analysed using a conversation analysis approach.

Further reading task 1: you as researcher

Which of the three hypotheses above do you think were upheld?

Can you explain why?

Now compare your prediction with the findings of the researchers summarised below.
Contrary to the stereotypical accounts of Chinese culture, Hong Kong Chinese are not at all shy to disagree with their NSE interlocutors. Neither are HKC less likely, if not more likely, to disagree in order to present their different, or alternative, views. However, when they disagree, they are more inclined to address the face-want (‘saving face’ so no-one feels uncomfortable or exposed) of both themselves and the addressees by using redressive (softening) language and mitigating devices. Qualitative analysis of sequences of disagreements in a conversational excerpt has shown the varying efforts HKC and NSE speakers make to align themselves with the interlocutor to manage interpersonal relationships and negotiate common ground. (Cheng and Tsui 2009: 2365)

Further reading task 2
How would you use the findings of this study for teaching the skills of agreeing and disagreeing?

Task 7.12 Spoken grammar


Cullen and Kuo express a concern that ‘there is a missing link between corpus research findings and current pedagogical practice’ and test this concern by analysing 24 ELT coursebooks in the UK. They start by defining their understanding of spoken grammar:
Following Biber et al. (1999) and Leech (2000), we take the view that speech and writing draw on the same underlying grammatical system (rather than on two separate systems) but that the system is adapted in various dynamic and often ingenious ways to meet the particular circumstances in which each medium is used.

One feature which they explain as being typical of spoken – as opposed to written – grammar is that it is ‘highly interactive, requiring cooperation and contextual sensitivity from all participants, who take turns to speak and listen, to negotiate meanings, and to respond immediately to one another's contributions’ (Brown 1989).

Cullen and Kuo go on to define specific examples of ‘spoken grammar’ (Table 7.1).

**Table 7.1 Features of spoken grammar (Cullen and Kuo 2007)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>EXAMPLES</th>
<th>ANALYSIS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A: Phrases dropped into speech which undergo grammatical changes</td>
<td>Tag questions: <em>You are coming, aren’t you? It is true, isn’t it?</em></td>
<td>Tag questions change depending on what they attach to in the conversation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Noun phrases expanding the pronoun: <em>This little shop – it's lovely.</em></td>
<td>These are noun phrases which give more information about the pronoun (<em>it, I</em>). They come either in front of the pronoun as prefaces, or after as tags, and are a typical conversational strategy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I reckon they're lovely, I really do, <em>whippets.</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B: Phrases which are dropped into conversations ‘intact’</td>
<td><em>I kind of knew it was a bad decision.</em></td>
<td>These might be used to fill gaps in the conversation and give the speaker time to</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| and without change | They grow cabbages and *that sort of thing*.  
It was a traditional wedding, big white dress and *all that stuff*.  
He’s *a bit* of bore.  
She’s *a bit* of a mystery. | Vagueness tags allow the speaker to suggest a broad category without needing to be precise.  
Modifiers such as these mitigate the impact of a comment. |
|---|---|---|
| C: Grammatical features we use in spoken discourse which appear to violate grammatical ‘rules’ | Placing ‘me’ in subject position – *My best friend and me are in the same band*.  
Dropping the second conditional in the ‘if’ clause – *if I was you*.  
Using *fewer* and *less* interchangeably:  
*There were less people than we expected*. | Grammatical features in this category all have a more formal and ‘correct’ variation, but this variation may be dispreferred in speaking.  
‘… although, traditionally, *fewer* is the comparative form used with plural count nouns and *less* with singular noncount nouns, increasingly, in informal spoken English, less is used with plural count nouns’ (Carter and McCarthy p. 103). |
Other examples of spoken grammar described by Cullen and Kuo are:

- Use of the past progressive: *He was telling me things aren't going too well.*

- Ellipsis, where the speaker omits elements of information which are evident or available in the situation. For example, you meet a colleague shopping in the middle of the working day: Speaker A: *Day off?* Speaker B: *No, sick leave.*

**Further reading task 3: teacher as materials evaluator**

Make some predictions for yourself.

What percentage of language presented in a typical coursebook do you think would focus on the features of spoken grammar defined above by Cullen and Kuo?

Which of the features listed above do you think are most likely to be represented in the coursebook? Which do you think are least likely?

Choose an English language coursebook available or regularly used in your own learning/teaching context. Test your predictions by exploring the textbook and making a note of examples of spoken grammar.

Were you right in your prediction of the percentage of spoken grammar presented?

Were you right in your prediction of the features most and least likely to occur?

When you have made your own analysis, read the conclusions reached by Cullen and Kuo and compare your results.

Cullen and Kuo conclude, on the basis of the survey, that coverage of features of spoken grammar is at best patchy. Where it is dealt with at all, there tends to be an emphasis on lexicogrammatical features, and common syntactic structures peculiar to conversation are either ignored or confined to advanced levels as interesting extras. There are good reasons for this. Many examples taken from the corpora need to be
seriously edited before they can be used in classroom materials. Farr et al. (2010) explore the transitions teachers need to make to adapt corpus data into workable language materials.

Further reading task 4: teaching reading

How far are Cullen and Kuo’s views above true of the coursebook you surveyed?

How would you change, adapt, or supplement the coursebook to meet your own learners’ spoken grammar needs?

CHAPTER 8 Multiple literacies: professional, academic and web literacies in methods

Task 8.3 Web-based task: English-language villages (p. 174)

ABC villages are total-immersion English language villages where children simulate the activities and competences of the outside world through the medium of English. Explore the ABC villages by starting with the link below, to the English village in Taiwan. In the link the children are simulating a TV news broadcast:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hrbra3-siik

What skills and competences are they practising and demonstrating?

How might these skills transfer into the world of work?

What preparations and guidance might have been put in place to make this ‘TV broadcast’ possible?
Task 8.7 Academic phrasebank and corpus of academic writing (p. 179)

The University of Manchester has developed a phrasebank that reflects the typical phrases used in academic writing at different stages of the discourse, such as in the opening sections and conclusions: [http://www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk/](http://www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk/)

The phrases are also classified for different kinds of writing, such as critical reviews and reflective writing.

Explore the website and notice:

- how specific phrases help to mark stages in a piece of academic writing
- how specific phrases indicate the kind of writing that is being prepared: for example, critical, reflective, analytical or descriptive

The corpus of British Academic Writing, mentioned in Chapter 6, offers 3,000 examples of undergraduate academic writing assessed at merit or distinction standard in three UK universities across arts, sciences, humanities and social sciences.

Explore the website within one subject discipline that interests you, and notice the kinds of phrases and structures typical of successful essays:

[http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/al/research/collect/bawe/](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/al/research/collect/bawe/)

Task 8.10 Artificial intelligence writing tutors (p. 185)

Review, compare and contrast three online artificial intelligence writing programmes.

Determine what you like about them and any concerns you may have.

‘My Access’ School by Vantage Learning:


‘Writing Planet’ by Measurement Planet: [http://www.writingplanet.net](http://www.writingplanet.net)

‘WriteToLearn’ by Pearson: [http://www.writetolearn.net](http://www.writetolearn.net)
Finding the right tool for the right job

Complete Table 8.6a, ranking in order of appropriateness and effectiveness these tools in teaching the four intralingual skills, giving reasons for your ranking.

Table 8.6a Evaluating web tools for learning and teaching

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tool</th>
<th>Appropriate for</th>
<th>Most effective for</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blogs</td>
<td>1.</td>
<td>E.g. where would you rank ‘summary writing’ and ‘descriptive reflection’?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.</td>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.</td>
<td>2.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.</td>
<td>3.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>1.</td>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 ...</td>
<td>2 ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YouTube</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Podcasting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

There exists an additional number of tools of peripheral but growing importance in this area. It would be beneficial to repeat the ranking exercise above; this time, in Table 8.6b, you will be given the name of the tool and a starting reference to begin your search and evaluation.
Table 8.6b Evaluating web tools for learning and teaching

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tool</th>
<th>Appropriate for</th>
<th>Most effective for</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wikis</td>
<td>1.</td>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.</td>
<td>2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.</td>
<td>3.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.</td>
<td>4.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Life</td>
<td>1.</td>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 …</td>
<td>2 …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skype</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital games-based learning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital Storytelling</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Elwood, 2010)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Also see: voicethread.com</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apps</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Task 9 Web-browsing

Teaching and web tools in the language learning process

http://iteslj.org/Techniques/Cullen-CALL.html

http://iteslj.org/Techniques/Fisher-PowerPoint.html


http://iteslj.org/Articles/Ybarra-Technology.html

http://webheadsinaction.org/

Case Studies of Technology Integration


**FURTHER READING (p. 187)**


Prensky offers a model addressing the major differences between students today and their teachers. Establishing his concept on the influence that technology has on our culture, he describes two resultant groups: digital natives and digital immigrants. Although his analogy provides an interesting catalyst for understanding the gap between the technology-immersed generation and the rest of society, it remains a provocative generalisation.

It is amazing to me how in all the hoopla and debate these days about the decline of education in the US we ignore the most fundamental of its causes. Our students have changed radically. Today’s students are no longer the people our educational system was designed to teach. A really big discontinuity has taken place. One might even call it a ‘singularity’ – an event which changes things so fundamentally that there is absolutely no going back. This so-called ‘singularity’ is the arrival and rapid dissemination of digital technology in the last decades of the 20th century […] On the one hand, they [educators] can choose to ignore their eyes, ears and intuition, pretend the Digital Native/Digital
Immigrant issue does not exist, and continue to use their suddenly much-less-effective traditional methods until they retire and the Digital Natives take over. Or they can chose instead to accept the fact that they have become Immigrants into a new Digital world, and to look to their own creativity, their Digital Native students, their sympathetic administrators and other sources to help them communicate their still valuable knowledge and wisdom in that world’s new language. The route they ultimately choose – and the education of their Digital Native students – depends very much on us.

In your personal opinion, does Prensky’s stance on digital natives and immigrants remain true and correct over a decade after its publication?

**Discussion task**

Do you believe in Prensky’s digital generation divide? If so, what does this reveal about you as a teacher? What do you feel are the main characteristics of digital natives and digital immigrants? Draw on the extract above and your own ideas to complete the chart below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics of a digital native</th>
<th>Characteristics of a digital immigrant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>.....</td>
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<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
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<td>..</td>
<td>..</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Are there any overlaps?

If none, then consider Vance Stevens’ website: http://webheads.info

This ‘Online Community of Practice of Teachers and Educators’ has been involved in many virtual activities since 1998 and continues to pioneer, assess and communicate about the use of technologies in education. Stevens’ community of digital pioneers contains members from various generations.


The researchers describe a number of the more recent technologies which offer various methods for practising and extending the four intralingual skills as well as collaborative writing and online interactions ‘through authentic communication, collaboration, networking and scaffolding’. They emphasise the self-access and autonomous aspects of these tools, which may be effective in addressing the individual needs of adult language learners.

Collaborative writing tools are valuable for promoting writing fluency and strategies and for helping students develop a more confident identity as English writers. In general, the tools may be less useful for promoting writing accuracy or basic writing mechanics, but that will depend in part on how they are used. In contexts where a focus on mechanics and accuracy is the principal goal, teachers or advisors can set up special activities using these tools to accomplish that goal (e.g., using wikis to find and correct mechanical errors in previously
written texts) or supplement the tools with other resources, including the language structure tools described later in this paper. Students can then engage in these activities autonomously.

Multiuser virtual environments allow interaction among people in digitally simulated contexts. One of the most popular and best-known sites, Second Life, brings together tens of thousands of users daily who design avatars, build communities and interact with the environment.

Chatbots present an outline for online interaction with a software-powered avatar in situations where live human interaction is not available or not preferred. They are an ideal tool for autonomous learning in that they require no teacher or partner. Learners can use chatbots to independently practice language structures and can also view or print the transcripts of chat sessions for further reflection and analysis.

How far do you agree with the claims made by the researchers that wikis, Second Life and chatbots promote autonomous learning?

How useful do you think these tools are in instructed settings? How far do you think they are useful for developing language learning beyond instructed settings?

A Case Study with English-To-Go.com

English-To-Go.com was one of the early pioneers of English language training via the Internet and an innovator in the use of technology to challenge traditional ESL publishing models. Started in 1997, it used the Internet to deliver up-to-date lessons to
teachers from around the world that they could print off and take into their classrooms. Due to the print and teach nature of these materials, teachers did not need to have constant Internet access and were able to bridge the digital divide. English-To-Go materials reached every country in the world, and were printed off near their point of need for use in prisons, refugee camps, community colleges, schools and home schools. Where English-To-Go used the Internet as a disruptive technology a decade ago, the mobile phone has stepped in to provide an alternative means of delivering mass-adoption programmes at little or no cost to the user, enabling students without access to books or basic infrastructure to learn.

Questions:

- Do you agree with the quotation: ‘There is no third world in ICT’?
- What do you think will be the impact on traditional publishers of anytime anywhere English language training delivered through mobile devices and how will business models change?

CHAPTER 9 Cultural competences in methods

Task 9.4 Bengali English Online: language and culture (p. 197)

Explore [www.bbcjanala.com](http://www.bbcjanala.com), the BBC’s course for students in Bangladesh. It is the first ELT web-based course designed expressly for the language and culture of those living in Bangladesh.

What topics, issues and questions are dealt with?

How do these topics, issues and questions introduce and develop specific aspects of language?

How would you evaluate the success of this project in developing an interface between the teaching of English and the culture familiar and meaningful to its learners?
Task 9.7 Would you like a drink? Social and pragmatic mistakes (p. 203)

The link below is to clips from the comedy series Fawlty Towers which show some ways in which misunderstandings might arise between the managers of a hotel and their guests: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5hWWTa7npmE

Can you identify what has gone wrong in each situation?

How would you advise the hotel managers to repair each situation?

How could you use this clip as part of a language lesson?

Task 9.10 Exploring online chat (p. 207)

Explore the online English club: www.englishclub.com/esl-chat

- What are the benefits of using an online chat resource such as this for learners?
- Are there any problems or concerns you might have as teacher, and how would you draw up ground rules for resolving these?
- How could you use an online club such as this in the classroom?

What would you need to do as teacher? What would the learners do to consolidate their learning?

FURTHER READING (p. 207)

Task 9.11 Teaching case study 20: a Congolese classroom


Whitehead describes classroom principles for the teaching of English to the Congolese during occupation by the British Army. The context was clearly highly
sensitive and potentially inflammatory, and the teaching aimed to take account of this. The following guiding principles were applied:

- Humanist methods: minimising negative feedback; including use of right- and left-brain activity such as poetry and art as texts; increasing tasks encouraging personal and emotional responses
- Acceptability of mother tongue in class: ‘to stimulate multilingual hybridity, learners should be encouraged to view positively the facets of their existing indigenous language identity and not to see English as “better”, “more powerful” or a threat’
- An equal mix of authentic mother tongue and L2 texts, both oral and written
- Afrocentrism: ‘Afrocentric materials would supplement, not replace, the other materials’

(Whitehead 2011: 345–6)

**Further reading task 1: you as cultural analyst**

Think about a classroom you know well. What do you think were the ‘core principles’ that determined teaching choices and decisions in that classroom? How were these similar or different from the list above?

Whitehead goes on to describe the methods and approaches adopted in a seven-week course, to match these core classroom principles. Table 9.1 the choices made for the content of each week (Whitehead 2011: 248):
Table 9.1 Whitehead’s syllabus for the Congolese classroom (Whitehead 2011: 248)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week one</th>
<th>Materials designed to facilitate the development of identity, aid motivation: using visualisation and imaging of an ideal future self ‘Best Possible Self’ extensive writing project (Sheldon and Lyubomirsky 2006)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week two</td>
<td>Explore pathways to their ideal future self and look at the role of English in achieving that goal: make a critical assessment of the negative and positive factors in their life at present – e.g. visualisation activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week three</td>
<td>Focus on learners’ mother tongues and English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week four</td>
<td>A comparative analysis of the representation of Africa and Africans in UK newspapers and magazines, and in Congolese newspapers and magazines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week five</td>
<td>Introduction to language mixing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weeks six and seven</td>
<td>Creating written and visual representations of groups of people relevant to themselves</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Further reading task 2: you as teacher

Do you think the activities listed above match the core principles for the classroom described above? Why, or why not?
Look at the core principles for the classroom you listed above for a classroom you are familiar with. How did actual teaching decisions, content and material match these?

Task 9.12 Teaching case study 21: a classroom in Cameroon


Kuchah describes the dilemma he had as a young trainer of language teachers, training adults who were older than himself in a culture in which ‘age is an important determining factor of power relationships, where the young are seen as immature, naïve and ignorant while the elderly are seen as mature, reasonable and wise’ (Kuchah 2008: 205).

In addition, he describes the multiple layers of cultures coming together in the language classroom: ‘With over 250 tribes, cultures and local languages, what may be seen as culturally appropriate in one part of the country will be inappropriate in another part,’ (Kuchah 2008: 205). He gives an example of the ‘opposing realities’ of working across cultures: ‘I had learned never to stretch out my hand to an older person unless he offered to shake hands with me first. In the far north province, I had to cope with even children offering to shake hands with me’ (Ibid. p. 205).

These dilemmas caused him to critique the western-based pedagogy with which he had been trained. He explains that he could list the theories and methods from his training days, ‘but these had nothing to do with a genuine awareness of their implications for the classroom,’ (Ibid. p. 2004). In addition, the prescribed textbooks
were not available, and the syllabus focused on methodology, rather than on the need for language development that was more urgent for his learners.

**Further reading task 3**

Below is Kuchah’s response to these dilemmas.

What is your own evaluation of these responses?

In what ways do they reflect sensitivity to his cultural and pedagogic situation?

What do you feel Kuchah as a young teacher has learnt from dealing with the mismatch between his training experience and classroom reality?

My response was to develop community-based content that both reflected their realities and provided the language support they needed.

--- in relying on resources that were available to them like folktales, local history and news, and making use of locally produced instructional materials, I was able to involve my trainees in developing as professionals in a way that was denied to me by my elitist and theoretical training. My immediate circumstances forced me as it were to reject the status quo and to look to local resources, drawing on these in a discourse of involvement with my trainees, a discourse that was symmetrical rather than assymetrical and engaged rather than detached.

The trainer and the trainees had the same amount of power and status, rather than the trainer having a higher status or power than his students.

Teachers with a positive vision of their profession are plunged into the realities and limitations of the educational system, stimulating creativity that can eventually build confidence in the teacher and positive attitudes in learners. In my case, the early experiences in my
first school built my self-confidence and imbued me with a vision of teaching not as a challenge but as an achievement. (Kuchah 2008: 209–10)

Further reading task 4: reflecting on critical incidents

The teacher in this story describes a critical incident in which he was forced to rethink his beliefs and ideas, and made changes as a result.

Think about a critical incident of your own, a time when your own beliefs or ideals as a learner or as a teacher were ‘plunged into the realities’, as Kuchah described.

Where were you? What happened? What surprised you?

What did you learn from this?

Did you change anything as a result?