Applied Linguistics and Materials Development

Edited by Brian Tomlinson
Applied Linguistics and Materials Development
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Introduction:

Applied linguistics and materials development

Brian Tomlinson

What is the relationship between applied linguistics and materials development?

Theory and practice

For many years applied linguists have been lamenting the gap between applied linguistics theory and language teaching practice while at the same time predicting that it is about to be reduced. For example, Allwright and Bailey (1991, p. xv) admitted that many researchers ‘have given research a bad name’ by failing to demonstrate that they are concerned with ‘what works in the classroom’. They say, however, that there ‘are signs that a reconciliation between teachers and researchers is already taking place’ and they hope to ‘show that language classroom research can be directly relevant to teachers’. Tomlinson (1998, p. 343) stresses the need to bring together researchers, teachers, writers and publishers and says that, ‘Only by pooling resources will we ever be able to answer some of the questions we need to ask if we are to really increase the effectiveness of the materials which we produce’. Nunan (2005, p. 234) agrees with Carr and Kemmis (1985, p. 8) that a great deal of research ‘has little to do with [teachers’] everyday, practical concerns’ but sees promise in action research as a means of ‘bridging this gap between research and practice’. Ellis (2010, p. 34) refers to the many second language acquisition (SLA) researchers who have warned that SLA findings are not ‘sufficiently robust to warrant applications to language pedagogy’ but argues that, ‘Teachers . . . cannot wait until researchers have solved all their problems and ask only that they base their proposals on the best information available’. Tomlinson (2011) repeats his 1998
plea for researchers, teachers, writers and publishers to collaborate on projects applying research findings to practice and again offers MATSDA (the Materials Development Association) as an agent to facilitate such collaboration. MATSDA Conferences (and especially the 2012 MATSDA/University of Limerick Conference on ‘Applied Linguistics and Materials Development’) are one way being tried to bring research and practice closer together. But here I am again in 2012 worrying about the gap between what research tells us would probably facilitate L2 language acquisition and what is actually done in materials development to help learners achieve acquisition. This book is an attempt to find out what the gaps between theory and practice are in relation to materials development and to make suggestions as to how to reduce the gaps so as to help learners to learn in more efficient and effective ways.

If there are big gaps between applied linguistics theory and materials development practice it is useful to ask why. Some possible reasons are that applied linguistics theories:

- are often written about in language which is not easily accessible to practitioners;
- sometimes seem difficult to apply to materials development;
- do not seem to take into account such realities of classroom practice as large classes, unmotivated learners, lack of adequate time, lack of resources and the need for examination preparation;
- are unappealing to materials developers as their application would require innovations which might prove unacceptable to the users of their materials.

For a fuller discussion of possible reasons for disconnections between theory and practice see Chapter 2 of this book.

Principles of applied linguistics and procedures of materials development

It is very revealing to try to find out how materials developers actually go about designing materials. Do they consciously apply theory to their practice or are they driven by their instincts and the apparent results of previous practice?

Tomlinson (2012) reveals how reports of what materials writers actually do shows that they typically ‘rely heavily on retrieval from repertoire, cloning successful publications and spontaneous “inspiration”’ (p. 11). For example, in Hidalgo et al. (1995) materials writers in South-East Asia describe how they write materials. Some of them talk about applying theoretical principles to the development of their materials but ‘many report replicating previous materials, adapting activity types which . . . worked for them before and relying upon creative inspiration’ (p. 11). The writers in Prowse (1998, 2011) report similar pragmatic approaches to materials development and say that ideas come to them as they are writing or doing something else and that they rely both on inspiration and their willingness to write many drafts until they get the materials right. Obviously they are being driven by subconscious principles based on their
knowledge of theory plus their experience of practice but none of them report developing principled criteria or frameworks before or while writing. This was true also in Johnson’s (2003) experiment in which he invited eight expert materials writers and eight novice writers to ‘design an activity involving the function of describing people’ (p. 4). He asked each writer to think aloud as they wrote their materials and then he analysed their ‘concurrent verbalisations’. He found that the experts, for example, designed in opportunistic ways, instantiated as they wrote, and used repertoire a lot.

There are some publications, however, which either report writers applying principles to practice or suggest ways of doing so. Tomlinson (2011) proposes principles for materials development which derive from SLA research and from his experience of classroom practice, and a number of other writers outline principled approaches to developing L2 materials in Tomlinson (2011). For example, Jolly and Bolitho (2011) advocate a principled, practical and dynamic framework for materials development and Bell and Gower (2011) articulate principles which they try to apply when writing materials. They also stress the need, however, to make compromises to meet the needs of teachers and learners and to match the objectives and constraints of the publishers. McGrath (2002) provides a review of the literature on principled advice for materials developers, Tomlinson ((ed.) 2003) and Harwood (2010a) contain many chapters either advocating or reporting the application of theory to practice in materials development, Harwood (2010b) reviews the literature on task design and concludes that language materials cannot only be shaped by research but need to suit the contexts in which they are used and Tomlinson and Masuhara (2010) contains research reports of the effects of applying theory to practice in materials innovation.

A book which focuses on the application of principles to practice is Tomlinson ((ed.) 2008). This provides principle-driven evaluations of ELT materials in use in different parts of the world and it also contains an introductory chapter on ‘Language acquisition and language-learning materials’, which proposes ways of applying commonly agreed theories of language acquisition to materials development. It also lists such principles as:

- the language experience needs to be contextualized and comprehensible;
- the language and discourse features available for potential acquisition need to be salient, meaningful and frequently encountered;
- the learner needs to achieve deep and multidimensional processing of the language (Tomlinson, 2008, p. 4).

A principle-driven chapter which has been applied to a number of materials development projects is Tomlinson (2003). This chapter proposes a principled text-driven framework which was developed on a project in Namibia for which 30 teachers came together and wrote the first draft of the coursebook *On Target* (1995) in 6 days. The framework was driven by such principles as:

- the learners’ need for a rich and meaningful exposure to language in use;
- the value of encouraging personal responses to experience of language in use;
the importance of providing opportunities for genuine communication;
\[ \text{the value of helping learners to make and apply discoveries about how the language is used.} \]

Since the publication of this chapter the approach it advocates has been used on materials development projects in China, Ethiopia, Singapore and Turkey.

An area of applied linguistics which has made efforts to achieve a match between theory and practice in materials development is corpus linguistics. For example, O’Keefe et al. (2007) is concerned with how corpora can be used to inform and generate classroom activities and McCarten and McCarthy (2010) investigates ways in which coursebooks make use of corpora as well as describing an approach to ‘bridging the gap between corpus and coursebook’ (p. 11). Gilmore (2009) and Farr et al. (2010) suggest ways of using corpora as language resources and Willis (2011) exemplifies ways in which teachers and students can develop their own corpora.

The aims of applied linguistics and materials development

The main aim of this book is to investigate the match between applied linguistics theory and materials development practice. Cook (2008) has investigated what a language teacher can expect to gain from SLA theory and Tomlinson (2007, 2008, 2010, 2011), Ellis (2010, 2011) and Harwood (2010a, b) have discussed the application of SLA research and theory to materials development for language learning. However I do not know of any publication which has explicitly tackled the topic of the application of applied linguistics research and theory to the development of materials for language learning. That is what this book sets out to do. It focuses on major areas of applied linguistics and for each one it reports the current theories of the area and investigates their application to materials development. In doing so it attempts to not only find out what is and what is not being applied but it aims also to give practitioners information about research findings and theories with the potential for useful application. It also makes suggestions for ways of applying them, not in order to be prescriptive but in order to stimulate thought, experiment and innovation.

In Chapter 9 of this book, Ben Fenton-Smith refers to Murray and Crichton’s (2010) survey of 39 Australian universities to determine what is actually meant by the term ‘applied linguistics’. He considers two of their conclusions to be particularly pertinent to his chapter: (i) discourse analysis is one of the seven core courses that appears in the majority of programmes; and (ii) language teaching ‘is arguably the context of application with the best developed career pathway and this has implications for enrolment numbers’ (p. 15.12). Fenton-Smith makes the point that ‘it is surprising how many books on discourse analysis pay little attention to its connection to language teaching’ and argues that those responsible for discourse analysis courses should ask ‘In what profession will my students be most likely to apply the principles of discourse analysis?’ His answer is ‘language teaching’. It is arguably true that this is the case for most of the modules on any applied linguistics course and yet there still seems to
be a disconnection between applied linguistics theory and language teaching practice. In the 
1980s we sent nearly 30 teacher trainers from the PKG Project in Indonesia (Tomlinson, 1990) 
to do postgraduate courses at a number of institutions in the United Kingdom. They came back 
saying that their courses were interesting but they could not see the connection between the 
modules they studied and their jobs in Indonesia as teacher trainers and materials developers. 
I hear similar complaints today about applied linguistics courses all over the world (with some 
exceptions, such as the MA in Materials Development at the International Graduate School in 
Seoul). It is to help both academics and practitioners to achieve greater connection between 
applied linguistics and language teaching that this book has been written. It is not saying that all 
theories should be applied to practice but it is saying that all theories should be communicated 
in ways which make them accessible to practitioners and that practitioners at all levels should 
keep in touch with relevant research fi ndings and consider ways of applying potentially useful 
findings to their local context. I hope that this book will make not only a small contribution to 
helping practitioners to do this but will also help researchers to be more aware of the realities 
of practice and that it might inspire other publications which attempt to provide a direct link 
between theory and practice.

An appeal to the reader

Please read this book critically and constructively. It aims not just to inform and stimulate but to 
influence developments too. If you are a materials developer or a teacher please think of ways of 
applying to your practice those points whose value you are persuaded of by writers in this book. If 
you then modify your practice please research the effects of your modifications and write up your 
research as a potential chapter for a follow-up volume to this book. If you are an academic please 
consider modifications to your theories of language and language learning. Then apply one of your 
modified theories to an aspect of materials development, research the effects of this adaptation 
and write up your research as a potential chapter for a follow-up publication.

In 2016 I plan to put together a follow-up publication to this book which reports the effects of 
innovative approaches to materials development. I look forward to receiving your abstracts and 
draft chapters at brianjohntomlinson@gmail.com.

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INTRODUCTION


PART ONE

Learning and teaching languages
Introduction

Second language acquisition (SLA) is the process by which people acquire and/or learn any language in addition to their first language. It is also the name of the academic discipline which studies that process. Some SLA researchers use the term ‘acquisition’ to refer to the informal, subconscious process of gaining a language from exposure and use while reserving the term ‘learning’ to refer to the deliberate, conscious study of a language in order to be able to use it. There is considerable controversy in the field as to which of these processes is the most likely to help a learner to develop the ability to use a language effectively but most researchers seem to agree that learning is insufficient and needs to be at least supplemented by acquisition. The literature in which this issue is discussed is referred to in various sections below and its relevance to materials development is highlighted at a time when many researchers are becoming increasingly critical of the continuing predominance of learning activities in commercial coursebooks (e.g. Tomlinson et al., 2001; Masuhara et al., 2008). Some researchers also differentiate between ‘acquisition’ and ‘development’. For example, Tomlinson (2007a, p. 2) says that ‘acquisition’ ‘is the initial stage of gaining basic communicative competence in a language’ and ‘development’ is ‘the subsequent stage of gaining the ability to use the language successfully in a wide range of media and genres for a wide variety of purposes’.

In this chapter I will be reporting the research findings from SLA literature and considering their application to materials development. I will also be highlighting what we do not as yet know about language acquisition and questioning the effectiveness of many of the stereotypical coursebook procedures for which there is no theoretical or research based validation (Lightbown, 1990).
What we know about the process of SLA

Research and theory

It is generally agreed that SLA is facilitated by:

A rich and meaningful exposure to language in use

Krashen (1981, 1994) claimed that exposure to comprehensible input was both necessary and sufficient for SLA. Not many applied linguistics would agree that such exposure is sufficient but I think nearly all would accept that it is necessary (Ellis, 2008; Ortega, 2010). Ideally the input which the learners are exposed to should be rich in the sense that it contains a lot of implicit information about how the language is actually used to achieve communicative effect and that it provides natural recycling of language features (Nation, 2011). It should also be meaningful in the sense that it is relevant to the learner and the learner is able to understand enough of it to gain meaning from it.

Powerful evidence in support of the value of exposure to language in use is provided by the many studies of extensive reading projects which have demonstrated that voluntary, free reading of extended texts chosen by the learner facilitates both the acquisition of language and the development of language skills (Elley, 1991; Krashen, 2004; Maley, 2008).

Affective and cognitive engagement

It has been found that affective engagement is vital for SLA. Learners who are stimulated to laugh, smile, feel joy, feel excited and feel empathetic are much more likely to acquire communicative competence than learners who are restricted to bland, safe, neutral materials which do not stimulate any emotional response. Positive emotions seem most likely to stimulate deep processing (Craik & Lockhart, 1972) and therefore to facilitate language acquisition. But negative emotions such as anger, disagreement and sorrow are much more facilitative than no emotional responses at all. Self-confidence and self-esteem are also important aspects of affective engagement, as is feeling positive about the learning environment. Arnold (1999) reports research findings which support the points above about affective engagement, as do Schumann (1997), Pavlenko (2005) and Braten (2006).

It is also very important that learners are cognitively engaged by the texts and tasks they are given to use. They need to use such high level mental skills as inferencing, connecting, predicting and evaluating while processing language. If they do, they are much more likely to achieve deep processing and to eventually acquire language and develop language skills than if they are restricted to using such low level decoding and encoding skills as learning dictionary definitions, recognizing and repeating sounds, listening to and repeating utterances, learning spellings and reading aloud short phrases. For reports of research supporting this view see Anderson (1993), Green (1993), Byrnes (2000) and Robinson (2002).

Put very simply, in order for learners to acquire a second language they need to think and feel in the process of acquiring it.
Making use of those mental resources typically used in communication in the L1

In the L1 we make full use of the resources of our brain when we use language. For example, when listening or reading we make use of our inner voice to silently echo the utterances we hear or see and to comment to ourselves about them, we make use of visual imaging to represent the meaning of what is said or written and we make use of motor imaging to recreate movements which are described. Also prior to speaking or writing we use visual imaging and inner speech to develop a mental representation of our intended message and inner speech to prepare what we are going to say or write. Yet when learning an L2 learners rarely make use of these mental resources at all. This is mainly because they are not encouraged to do so by their teachers and materials and because their reluctance to tolerate ambiguity, their ‘need’ to know the meaning of everything and the interrogative nature of their activities pushes them into linguistic micro-processing which takes up all the brain’s processing capacity. For reports of research demonstrating the value of multidimensional mental representation see Archer (2003), de Guerro (2005), Tomlinson and Avila (2007a) and Tomlinson (2011b). And for suggestions for activities designed to encourage making full use of the resources of the brain see Tomlinson and Avila (2007b).

Noticing how the L2 is used

Schmidt (2001) asserts that nothing in the input can become intake without noticing it. By this he means that it is essential for the learner to pay attention to the salient features of the language they encounter in order to eventually acquire them. While some applied linguists (especially those researching the effects of extensive reading) might disagree with such a strong assertion, most applied linguists would accept that noticing linguistic features in the input is an important facilitator of language acquisition. The more the learner pays willing attention (either deliberately and consciously or incidentally and subconsciously) to a feature of the language the more the learner’s brain is likely to notice that feature as salient in subsequent input and the reader the learner will be for acquisition. Pienneman (1985) claims that psychological readiness is an important facilitator of acquisition and that this can be influenced by materials and teachers. One way of doing this is to draw the learner’s attention to language features in use either through direction or through making the understanding of that feature important for task completion. This does not lead to instant acquisition of the feature but it does contribute to and can accelerate its eventual acquisition. A very effective way of helping learners to achieve psychological readiness is to use experiential discovery approaches in which the learners first of all respond personally to the content of an engaging written or spoken text and then go back to make discoveries about the form and function of a particular feature of that text (Tomlinson, 1994, 2003b, 2007b; Bolitho et al., 2003; Bolitho & Tomlinson, 2005). Another way is to make use of a form-focused approach (Long, 1991; Ellis, 2002; Williams, 2005; Fotos & Nassaji, 2007) in which learners first focus on the meaning of a text and later focus on the form and function of a specific linguistic feature (through instruction and or consciousness raising).
Being given opportunities for contextualized and purposeful communication in the L2

Evidence that comprehensible input is important but insufficient as a facilitator of acquisition was provided, for example, by data from the French immersion programmes in Canada in which students who spoke English as their L1 were taught their school subjects in their L2, French. They developed native-like skills and acquired a lot of language but after many years still used a non-native like grammar when they spoke (Swain, 1991).

It has been found that output (i.e. producing language for communication) is also an important facilitator of acquisition. It can provide learners with contextual feedback, it helps to automatize language, it constitutes auto-input and it can elicit further comprehensible input too (Swain, 1995, 1998; Ellis, 2008; Ortega, 2010). It seems that pushed output (communicating something which is not easy to express) can be particularly beneficial as it stretches the learner’s capabilities by making them make full use of their acquired language and of their strategic competence, as well as providing opportunities for new but comprehensible input from their interlocutors who are helping them to negotiate meaning. This would suggest that setting learners achievable communicative challenges is likely to be more useful than providing easy practice.

Being encouraged to interact

Long (1996) posited an interaction hypothesis in which he claimed that oral interaction in the L2 creates propitious conditions for its acquisition as it helps to make input more comprehensible, it provides meaningful feedback and it pushes learners to modify their output. This is especially so when there is a breakdown in communication as learners must then negotiate meaning and are pushed to find ways of doing so (Varonis & Gass, 1985; Swain, 1995, 1998; Swain et al., 2002; Pica, 2005). Such communication is contextualized and purposeful, it is relevant and salient, it is generally comprehensible and it promotes meta-talk about the L2. Barker (2010, 2011) studied Japanese university students engaged in unstructured learner interaction outside the classroom and found it increased their motivation and improved their ability to communicate.

Being allowed to focus on meaning

The learner’s natural syllabus is meaning-focussed and it is generally agreed upon by SLA researchers that learners are more likely to acquire forms if their primary focus is on meaning rather than form (Prabhu, 1987; Long, 1996; Ellis, 2008, 2011). However it does seem that more attention to form is needed as the learner progresses to advanced levels. Sato (1988) referred to this as a process of gradual syntactification in which users of an L2 move gradually from exclusive focus on meaning as beginners to a greater focus on form as advanced users of the language. One way of helping learners to acquire language from a focus on meaning is to use an experiential approach (Kolb, 1984; Tomlinson, 2003b) in which the learners first experience an engaging text holistically, respond to it personally and then return to the text to focus discretely on a salient feature of language use. This procedure was advocated by Long (1996) as a ‘form-focused’ approach to replace the typical ‘forms-focused approach’ in which the teacher or textbook focuses the learners’ conscious attention on a predetermined, discrete form (e.g. the present perfect).
is also made use of in language awareness approaches in which the learners first experience a form in use and are then helped to make their own discoveries about it (Tomlinson, 1994; Bolitho & Tomlinson, 2003; Bolitho et al., 2003) and in consciousness raising approaches in which the learners are guided towards finding out how a form is used (Ellis, 2002).

There are many other generally accepted facilitators of language acquisition and development. These include:

- being relaxed – a condition which can be promoted by giving learners the time, silence and encouragement to use their inner voices (Tomlinson & Avila, 2007a, b) and by textbooks using a personal voice and chatting to their learners in the informal, affable way that good teachers do (Beck et al., 1995; Tomlinson, 2011a);
- being motivated to participate and to learn (Dörnyei, 2001, 2005; Ushioda, 2003);
- being helped to develop an emerging interlanguage which gradually moves closer to the target language – a phenomenon first drawn attention to by Selinker (1972) and generally agreed to be a significant feature of SLA by researchers today (Cook, 2008; Ellis, 2008; Gass & Selinker, 2008; Ortega, 2009, 2010);
- developing hypotheses about how the language is used for communication – a creative process involving the individual development of mental hypotheses which are weakened or strengthened, confirmed or modified as a result of exposure to the language in use (Gass & Selinker, 2008);
- being catered for as an individual who might learn faster or slower than others, who has preferences for certain learning styles and who will not use language with consistent accuracy and effect (Arnold, 1999; Dörnyei 2005; Ellis, 2008);
- making full use of non-linguistic means of communicating (McCafferty (2004), McCafferty & Stam (2008) and Chapter 3 by Lutzker in this volume);
- being ready to acquire a focused feature – a readiness (researched by Pienemann (1985)) which can be powerfully influenced by materials which create a need to ‘know’ a language feature in order to complete a motivating task and by materials which help learners to notice a particular feature being used.

See Tomlinson (2008, 2010, 2011a) for discussion of such other facilitators of language acquisition as allowing for the inevitable delayed effect of instruction, impact, self-confidence, relevance, self-investment, positive attitudes and a silent period at the beginning of instruction.

**Match between SLA theory and ELT materials**

To try to gauge the match between theory and practice I analysed a number of recently published global coursebooks.

What I found is that there is a very weak match between theory and practice – a conclusion reached also by Tomlinson et al. (2001) and by Masuhara et al. (2008). Obviously I cannot claim that my random sample of those global coursebooks available to me is representative of all current
global coursebooks but from my worldwide experience of observing the use of global coursebooks (and local imitations) I would claim that it is at least indicative.

I found that none of the coursebooks focus on meaning, that they are all forms-focussed and that the majority of their activities are language item practice activities. Some of the coursebooks provide some opportunities for noticing and most make some attempt at personalization. None of them, however, offer choice of content, route or activities.

In Table 2.1 is a summary of what I found by evaluating the equivalent unit in six intermediate level coursebooks in relation to ten generally accepted theories of SLA. In giving scores out of 5 (with 5 indicating a perfect match) I tried to be as objective as possible. A different evaluator might have given different scores but I cannot imagine anybody giving high scores for any of the categories.

### TABLE 2.1 The match between SLA theory and current coursebook activities

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<td>4 Utilization of the resources of the brain</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Noticing</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Opportunities for use</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Opportunities for interaction</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Making use of non-linguistic communication</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Catering for the individual</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Focus on meaning</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


It is particularly noticeable that:
- very little use is made of literature (except in *global*);
- the texts (both written and spoken) are very short and simple;
most activities involve practice rather than use;

- the topics and activities are bland and safe, and are unlikely to stimulate any affective responses;

- the learners are rarely asked to think for themselves (except in Just Right);

- the learners are rarely asked to be creative;

- all the books and all the units in them are very similar in their approach and in their frequent use of such conventional practice exercises as True/False, matching words to sentences/pictures/meanings, filling in blanks, completing sentences, role play and working in pairs to compare ideas;

- all the units have review sections at the end but there is little evidence of actual recycling of language in use;

- the learners are rarely asked to speak or write at any length;

- the learners are rarely asked to interact for a communicative purpose or at any length;

- the units are predominantly forms-focussed.

This, of course, does not mean that the six books evaluated are not useful. It just means that there is a very weak match between the materials and SLA theory.

I do know of some coursebooks at this level which try to apply SLA theory to materials development. For example, Use Your English (Tomlinson & Masuhara, 1994) is a text-driven coursebook which makes use of potentially engaging texts to drive personal response tasks, localization tasks, thinking tasks, visual imaging tasks, inner speech tasks and creative writing tasks. On Target (1995) includes lengthy authentic texts (including many stories and poems), controversial topics and tasks which stimulate affective and cognitive engagement, tasks stimulating genuine interaction and tasks requiring extensive (and often creative) writing for a purpose. Search 10 (Fenner & Nordal-Pedersen, 1999) includes illustrations which are both engaging and functional, many extensive texts (including songs, poems and stories), tasks requiring criticality and creativity, tasks stimulating personal responses, tasks offering choice, different versions of a text for learners to choose from, extensive projects and a very pronounced focus on meaning. English for Life 1 (Tomlinson, Hill & Masuhara, 2000) includes controversial authentic texts, personal response tasks, thinking tasks, discovery activities, creative writing and speaking tasks and a definite focus on meaning. Life Accents 3A (Davis et al., 2003) includes provocative topics, think questions, personal response tasks and extensive writing tasks for an audience and a purpose. Searching 9 (Fenner & Nordal-Pedersen, 2009) includes provocative and extensive authentic texts (many of them from literature), discovery activities, a choice of activities, thinking tasks and creative tasks. All of these books are meaning-focussed. Significantly none of them are global coursebooks and none have been developed by major UK or USA publishers.

The big question is, ‘Why is there typically such a weak match between SLA theory and global coursebooks?’ I would say that the main reasons are that:

- very often SLA researchers end the reports of their research by saying that the evidence is inconclusive or that more research needs to be done (but see Ellis, 2010);
often research and theory is written about in language which is only accessible to academics;

- coursebook publishers are catering mainly for teachers who do not have access to research findings;

- coursebook publishers understandably publish what they know they can sell;

- publishers are reluctant to risk innovations that threaten the face validity (and therefore the sales) of their coursebooks;

- publishers understandably clone coursebooks which have been big sellers;

- some of the findings of SLA research seem difficult to apply to materials development (e.g. making use of visual imaging and inner speech – but see Tomlinson & Avila (2007b));

- SLA research is often seen as ‘a resource to inform teaching practice’ (Pica, 2005, p. 263) rather than as a determiner of the content and format of coursebooks;

- in many countries there is a massive mismatch between typical examination tasks and SLA principles; and the backwash from the examinations to the classrooms means that teachers are unlikely to want to use principled materials which do not explicitly prepare their learners for their examinations (Le, 2012);

- not all research findings are equally applicable to all materials developers, contexts or teachers (Richards, 2006).

What we would like to know about SLA

Theory

There are still many unanswered questions in SLA research. For example, I would like to know the answers to the following questions:

Is SLA primarily implicit or explicit?

Pica (2005) and Ellis (2008) provide useful reviews of the literature which has contributed to the often heated debate as to whether we acquire an L2 best through an implicit mental process or from paying explicit and conscious attention to the language we are learning. Some researchers (especially Krashen, 1981) argue that it is implicit acquisition which enables the learner to communicate spontaneously in an L2 and that explicit learning is only of value in monitoring output in order to achieve repair and in planned discourse when the learner has the time to make use of explicitly learned rules. Other researchers (e.g. Bialystok, 1990; Norris & Ortega, 2001) claim that explicit knowledge can be converted into implicit knowledge through practice (i.e. that formal
teaching and conscious practice can lead to communicative competence). Most researchers though (e.g. Ellis, 1993; Doughty & Williams, 1998) claim that explicit knowledge and conscious practice can only facilitate the acquisition of implicit knowledge (i.e. they can help learners acquire more language from their exposure to it).

Is there a natural sequence in language acquisition?

In the 1970s a number of studies revealed very similar orders of acquisition of grammatical features by different types of learners in different contexts (see Krashen (1977) for a review of these studies). But the sequences were not exactly the same and there were individual differences as well as differences between learners with different L1s. What was particularly interesting in relation to materials development was the finding that the sequence of instruction did not necessarily determine the sequence of acquisition.

One plausible explanation for similarities in sequences of acquisition is offered by MacWhinney (1987; 2005). His competition model claims that what learners can pay attention to at any one time is limited and that they filter out features of language when they listen to a second language. Learners gradually get better at processing sentences and mental resources are freed up to focus on more complex features of the input. I would argue that this inclination to learn the simplest structures first is reinforced by the learner’s initial prioritizing of meaning over form. What is essential for communication is learned before what is perceived as redundant.

Are the factors which determine the effectiveness of language acquisition variable?

Much has been written on the variability of L2 use and there seems to be little doubt that learners of an L2 vary in accuracy and effectiveness from one interaction to another. A learner, for example, might be accurate but restricted in expression when talking to a teacher and less accurate but more expressive when talking to a friend. See Ellis (2008), for example, for detailed discussion of this phenomenon. There is even less doubt that English as an L2 varies according to the region, language group and social class that the interactants belong too (Mckay, 2005; Kirkpatrick, 2010) and that L2 users modify their language by accommodating towards their interactants’ variety of English (Kirkpatrick, 2007). However I am not aware of much literature on the questions of whether different ethnic, cultural and language groups acquire an L2 in different ways and whether individual learners acquire language in different ways according to their context of learning. Certainly learners are taught differently in different learning contexts but does the mental process of acquisition vary accordingly or is it constant regardless of the nature of instruction?

Does text enhancement facilitate language acquisition?

Sharwood Smith (1993) asked why L2 learners typically ignore the vast mass of evidence about target norms which is available to them in their input and he proposed text enhancement (e.g. colour coding, boldfacing, audio repetition) as a means of drawing their attention to salient features of their input. Since then there have been many studies of the effects of text enhancement (TE)
and Han et al. (2008) review 21 such studies. They conclude that the empirical findings have so far been inconclusive and report that some studies revealed that TE led to both noticing and acquisition, some that TE led to noticing but not acquisition and some that TE was not effective at all. They did however report, for example, that Leeman et al. (1995, p. 248) discovered that ‘some learners prioritize meaning over form despite the emphatic instructions they received’ and that Lee (2007) found that only when input has been understood can learners attend to form. I would agree that learners tend to prioritize meaning over form and I personally find it difficult to achieve global comprehension of a text if elements of it have been enhanced. I would also agree with Allwright (1984) that learners have their own agenda which might be resistant to instructional guidance. What seems to facilitate acquisition is the learners willingly paying intensive attention to salient features of their input.

Other questions which I would very much like to know the answers to include:

- Is a bimodal approach in which both the left and right hemispheres of the brain are active more effective than a unimodal approach? See Danesi (2003) and Talebinezhad and Mahmoodzadeh (2011) for a review of the literature and for evidence of the superiority of bimodal approaches.
- Do controlled practice activities facilitate acquisition?
- Does presentation/practice/production (PPP) facilitate acquisition?
- Does postponing reading until learners have gained a large enough vocabulary to be able to macro-process text facilitate language acquisition?
- Does memorization facilitate language acquisition?
- Do repetition drills facilitate language acquisition?

For overviews of current positions on SLA see Ellis (2008) and Ortega (2010).

**Match between SLA theory and ELT materials**

Interestingly there seems to be a much closer match between published materials and those theories which are in dispute than between published materials and those theories which have been substantiated by evidence. It would seem that many coursebook procedures have become accepted as dogma to be followed, even though there is little research or even anecdotal evidence to support them. For example, many coursebooks make use of text enhancement and all the coursebooks I analysed provide many opportunities for controlled and guided practice. Most of them also make use of a PPP approach and of such theoretically unsubstantiated procedures as memorization and meaningless repetition. All of them provide far more opportunities for explicit learning than they do for implicit learning. What we really need is publisher and university cooperation on a longitudinal research project designed to discover just what the effects on language acquisition are of the stereotypical coursebook procedures mentioned above.
Suggestions for applying SLA theory to ELT materials development

There are a number of principled pedagogic approaches which do apply SLA theory to their practice and for which materials have been developed. For example, task-based materials (e.g. Van den Branden, 2006) provide the learners with a purpose and an outcome (e.g. assembling a model; completing a design; developing an itinerary) which can only be achieved through interaction in the L2. This is equally true of problem-based approaches (Mishan, 2010) in which learners communicate with each other in order to solve a problem. Both approaches apply SLA theory to practice by providing the learners with opportunities for purposeful, pushed output, by stimulating interaction and often by helping them to notice features of their own and/or other people’s use of the language. Here is an example of task-based materials which I developed for university students in Malaysia. The materials take the form of a script for the teacher to make use of.

1. Get into pairs please.
2. Decide who is A and who is B.
3. Take a piece of paper each.
4. Make ten tiny balls out of one of your pieces of paper.
5. Listen to my instructions. The first time just listen and visualize what you are going to do. The second time carry out the instructions.
6. On your other piece of paper draw four similar circles. Two circles should be next to each other above the other two circles. Each circle should touch the circle next to it and the circle above or below it. Write A in your top left hand circle, B in your top right hand circle, C in your bottom left hand circle and D in your bottom right hand circle.

Ask me questions if you are not sure of something or if you cannot remember what I said.

7. Compare your circles with those of another pair nearby.
8. Listen to my next instructions. The first time just listen and visualize what you are going to do. The second time carry out the instructions.
9. Put your balls in the circles so that:
   - you have twice as many balls in A as in C;
   - you have twice as many balls in A as in B;
   - you have twice as many balls in B and C as you have in D;
   - you have one ball in between A, B, C and D.
10. Compare your answer with that of another pair nearby.
11. Move two balls so that you have an equal number of balls in each circle.
12. Join together with another pair.
13 Make up another task involving balls and circles.
14 Write instructions for your task.
15 Compare your instructions with the instructions for this task.
16 Revise the instructions for your task.
17 Swap instructions with another group.
18 Carry out the instructions given to you. If you have any problems you can ask questions to the group who gave you the task.

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) approaches (Snow, 2005) also apply SLA theory to practice. CLIL materials help learners to acquire an L2 by teaching them a subject, topic or skill they are interested in through the medium of the L2 (e.g. Coyle et al., 2010; Tomlinson et al., forthcoming). CLIL materials apply SLA theory to practice by providing a rich and meaningful exposure to the language in use, by stimulating affective and cognitive engagement (if the content is something which the learners are enthusiastic about) and by providing a need and purpose for learners to interact with each other, as well as to produce lengthy spoken and written texts (e.g. in presentations and projects). Some of these materials also include activities helping learners to notice how the language is used. Here is an example of CLIL materials which I adapted from materials which I originally used with a group of engineering students at a university in Japan.

1
- Think of an idea to conserve water. Visualize your idea in action and talk to yourself about its potential applications.
- Tell a partner of your idea.
- Form a group and share your ideas for conserving water.

2
- Read the passage on Water conservation from Wikipedia. As you read it decide which you think is the best idea for conserving water at home, for commercial conservation of water and for agricultural conservation of water. Don’t worry about any ideas which you don’t completely understand.

3
- In your group share your decisions about the best ideas.
- In your group help each other to understand any ideas which were not completely clear. You can also ask your teacher to help you.

4
- Use the web references in the Wikipedia passage to help you to read more about water conservation.
- Tell the other members of your group anything interesting which you have found out from your reading.
5

• In your group write a one-page leaflet advising people in Malaysia how to conserve water. Make the advice clear, useful and memorable.
• Put your group name on your leaflet and then stick your leaflet on the wall.
• Walk around and look at the other group’s leaflets. Use the evaluation sheet from your teacher to evaluate each leaflet.

6

• In your group invent a device for conserving water.

7

• Write a letter to an international company in Malaysia telling them about your invention and asking them for an opportunity to demonstrate your invention.

8

• Prepare a 10-minute group presentation on your invention to give to the company you wrote to. Aim to make it clear and persuasive.
• Practise answering questions on your presentation.
• Give your presentation to the Product Design Manager of the company you wrote to (your teacher will be acting as the Product Design Manager).

9

• Reflect on your presentation.
• Decide how you would make your presentation even more effective if you had to give the presentation to another company.

The approach which possibly has the greatest potential for the application of SLA theory to materials development is the text-driven approach (Tomlinson, 2003). Text-driven materials are determined by potentially engaging written and/or spoken texts rather than by language teaching points. The learners’ interactions with the texts drive personal response activities, thinking activities, communication activities, creative writing activities and language awareness activities, as well as often inviting supplementation with other locally appropriate texts. Such materials apply theory to practice by:

• exposing the learners to rich and meaningful use of the language;
• engaging the learners affectively and cognitively;
• stimulating the learners to utilize the resources of their brains;
• providing opportunities for purposeful and meaningful communication;
• helping the learners to notice features of language use.

The approach has been used to develop coursebooks in China, Ethiopia, Japan, Namibia, Norway, Singapore and Turkey but I do not know of any global coursebook which follows this approach.
Tomlinson (2003) and Tomlinson and Masuhara (2004) outline a flexible text-driven framework which is designed to help teachers to develop principled and effective materials very quickly. Table 2.2 outlines the recommended stages.

For examples, of text-driven materials developed from the framework outlined above see Tomlinson (2003) and Tomlinson and Masuhara (2004).

**TABLE 2.2 Recommended stages for a text-driven approach**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stages</th>
<th>Learner Activities</th>
<th>Principles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Readiness activities</td>
<td>Thinking about something personal which will help them to connect with the content of the core text.</td>
<td>1 Personal connection. 2 Visual imaging. 3 Use of inner speech.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Initial response activities</td>
<td>Linking the images and thoughts from the readiness activities to the text when first experiencing it.</td>
<td>1 Personal connection. 2 Visual imaging. 3 Use of inner speech. 4 Affective and cognitive engagement. 5 Use of high level skills. 6 Focus on meaning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Intake response activities</td>
<td>Developing and then articulating personal responses to the text.</td>
<td>1 Personal connection. 2 Visual imaging. 3 Affective and cognitive engagement. 4 Use of inner speech. 5 Interaction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Development activity 1</td>
<td>Developing the text by continuing it, relocating it, changing the writer’s views, personalizing it, responding to it, etc.</td>
<td>1 Personal connection. 2 Visual imaging. 3 Use of inner speech. 4 Affective and cognitive engagement. 5 Use of high level skills. 6 Focus on meaning. 7 Interaction. 8 Purposeful communication.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Input response activity</td>
<td>Focusing on a specific linguistic, pragmatic, discourse, genre or cultural feature of the text and in order to make discoveries about its use.</td>
<td>1 Personal connection. 2 Visual imaging. 3 Use of inner speech. 4 Affective and cognitive engagement. 5 Use of high level skills. 6 Interaction. 7 Noticing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Development activity 2</td>
<td>Revising the first draft from 4 above making use of their discoveries in 5 above.</td>
<td>As for 4.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conclusion

As I hope I have demonstrated above L2 materials developers can make use of SLA research to help them to develop principled materials which can facilitate the acquisition of an L2 in the classroom. Materials developers are making use of SLA research in this way on projects and in locally published textbooks. The commercial publishers of global coursebooks face many difficulties if they try to do the same (e.g. conflict with user expectations; teacher resistance to innovation; conflict with the demands of examinations, etc.). Nevertheless I believe that they could make more attempt to apply generally accepted principles of SLA to their material development. Of course, they would be helped to do this if global and local examiners made more attempt to apply SLA theory to their examination tasks (see Tomlinson (2005) and Chapter 19 by Bailey and Masuhara in this volume). I used the water conservation activities outlined above as part of an end of year examination for a large class of engineering students at Kobe University in Japan. The students enjoyed them, learned from them and demonstrated their ability to read, to transfer information, to write formal letters, to think creatively and to express themselves orally. Global examinations and textbooks could achieve this too.

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Beyond semantics: Moving language in foreign language learning

Peter Lutzker

Part one

What we know

Considering the range of research published every year in areas potentially related to foreign language learning, it is clearly a rather daunting if not impossible task to discover those findings which could be most directly relevant for foreign language teachers. At the same time, it is evident that in a wide range of fields there has been research which could significantly influence the teaching of foreign languages. In this chapter it will be argued that a paradigmatic example of such research is provided by a core body of findings in the study of linguistic-kinesic behaviour. Together with related research from the fields of gesture studies, neurology and psychology, these findings will be considered with respect to their significance for teacher education and materials development.

Traditional approaches to foreign language learning continue to be almost exclusively based on a view of language as consisting primarily of vocabulary and grammar, although in a broad range of fields from linguistics to psychology this perspective has long since been replaced by far more encompassing views of language and communication in which the entire physical/gestural embodiment of language is viewed as intrinsic to all perception and expression (Kendon, 2004; McNeill, 2005). For psychologists, the overriding significance of non-semantic dimensions of language with respect to the perception and expression of emotions has become a well-established position. Daniel Goleman writes,

People’s emotions are rarely put into words; far more often they are expressed through other cues. The key to intuiting another’s feelings is in the ability to read nonverbal channels, tone of voice, gesture, facial expression and the like... One rule of thumb used in communications research is that 90% or more of an emotional message is nonverbal. (1995, pp. 110–11)
Within the larger framework of communicational processes, the actual meanings of words constitute only one aspect; by far the largest amount of ‘information’ which is communicated occurs as unconscious physical movements made while speaking and listening (Birdwhistell, 1970, p. 3). These positional shifts and gestures of the entire body, demonstrating both cultural and individual variations, are tied to gesture, body language, facial expression and vocal qualities, as well as to micro-kinesic movements co-occurring with the single speech sounds (Condon, 1975). With respect to the perception of meaning, these factors, generally unconsciously expressed and perceived, are considered to be far more decisive than the words themselves. Goleman explains,

Indeed, when a person’s words disagree with what is conveyed via his tone of voice, gesture, or other nonverbal channels, the emotional truth is in how he says something rather than in what he says. And such messages – anxiety in someone’s tone of voice, irritation in the quickness of a gesture – are almost always taken in unconsciously, without paying specific attention to the nature of the message, but simply tacitly receiving it and responding. (1995, p. 111, italics in original)

The significance of non-semantic levels of meaning has also become clear in the context of neurological research examining the interaction of the hemispheres of the brain in understanding and creating language. Although in the vast majority of humans the left hemisphere of the brain is decisive for both the articulation and comprehension of language, the significance of the right hemisphere in conveying and perceiving emotional dimensions of speech has become increasingly clear, in part through assessing the effects of strokes which damage parts of the right (minor) hemisphere (Ross, 2010).

Damage to the right hemisphere of the brain will not generally prevent correct and fluent speech, but utterances may sound emotionless. Similarly, although the capability of understanding the meanings of words will remain intact, the ability to perceive tone, gestural and facial expression may be lost (Ross, 2010). There also appear to be corresponding functions of the right hemisphere involved in processing meaning in reading (Taylor & Regard, 2003). Strikingly enough, even when the left hemisphere ‘language centers’ of their brains have remained fully intact, patients who have suffered right hemisphere lesions often evidence more profound difficulties in their communication with others than those patients who through left hemisphere lesions are deprived of the ability to understand the meanings of words, but are still fully attuned to all other levels of communication (Sacks, 1990, pp. 80–4). In fact, Oliver Sacks poses the question of whether an utter reliance on tone, modulation and gesture due to a left hemisphere lesion does not lead in some respects to a deeper and richer understanding of language than is normally the case with both hemispheres functioning. He writes of those patients:

Something has gone, has been devastated, it is true – but something has come, in its stead, has been immensely enhanced, so that – at least with emotionally-laden utterance – the meaning may be fully grasped even when every word is missed. [. . .] In this, then, lies their power of understanding – understanding without words, what is authentic or inauthentic. (ibid., pp. 81–2)
By far the largest amount of non-semantic information is conveyed through movements. Since the human body is capable of making thousands of positional shifts each second, scientists base their observations of human movements to speech on the careful analysis of slow-motion films which enable researchers to perceive otherwise undetectable movements made while speaking and listening (Birdwhistell, 1970; McNeill, 2005). Through the painstaking study of such films, researchers have ascertained that while two people are talking to each other there is an exchange of 2,500–5,000 and up to 10,000 ‘bits of information’ per second (Birdwhistell, 1970, p. 3). The organization of movements which is revealed through such micro-kinesic studies can best be demonstrated by citing an excerpt from the classic work of one of the pioneers in this field, William S. Condon. In a filmed analysis of two men speaking one of the men says the word ‘keeping’. The moment in which the ‘k’ in ‘keeping’ was articulated was captured in 14 frames of 0.0208 seconds each, making a total of 0.29 seconds.

The body of the speaker moves in five patterns of change which are isomorphic with the five linguistic features into which keeping is analysable. To illustrate [. . .] across the 3-frame, 0.0625 second duration of /kkk/ the head moves right at normal speed and at the same time moves forward and inclines left slightly, while the right elbow flexes very slightly, while the right wrist flexes slightly, while the right fingers continue an extension which had begun earlier but end precisely as the segment ends, constituting criteria for its terminal boundary, while the mouth opens slightly. (Condon, 1988, p. 59)

After first establishing individual units of micro-kinesic movements, it was then possible for researchers to perceive entire and overlapping organizations of movements consisting of the synchronous movements of the entire body to speech (ibid., p. 69). Among the highly significant results brought to light by this research, the ones that must be considered particularly decisive in terms of language perception refer to the unconscious movements of the entire body made while listening. The analysis of films showed that not only is there a continual and exact coordination of a speaker’s movements with his or her own speech (self-synchrony), but that the listener with a time lapse of 50 milliseconds also entrains in precise synchrony to the articulatory structure of the speaker’s speech sounds demonstrating an interactional synchrony (ibid., p. 76). This synchrony of movement encompasses the entire human being. Condon writes, ‘Metaphorically it is as if the listener’s whole body were dancing in precise and fluid accompaniment to speech.’ (Ibid.) Accordingly, the responses generated by and to speech are not reducible to the movements of single organs, but are based on a hierarchical principle in which sub-organizations are unified parts of wider circumscribing organizations.

A further discovery relevant in this context was that newborn infants also showed similar patterns of entrainment to speech which could be distinguished from their reactions to all non-speech sounds (Kato, 1983, p. 628). Through repetitions of shared movement to the sounds and speech structures of a language, specific linguistic-kinesic patterns of behaviour are formed. This linguistic-kinesic entrainment to speech in newborns points to the presence of an innate capability of perceiving language-specific speech sounds and intonation, coupled with an integrated sensory-motor capacity of accompanying speech sounds with language-specific movements. Parallel to micro-kinesic behaviour tied to speech sounds, the infant is also perceiving the visible
kinesic and gestural language of her environment. Within 4 months she will show some of the
kinemorphs typical of her particular culture. Within the first 2 years of life, she will have largely
absorbed the kinesic behaviour of her respective language and culture and will already be able to
understand and express key aspects of that ‘silent language’ including, for example, gender-specific

It is the co-occurring processes of entraining to the speech sounds of a specific language and
incorporating its visible kinesic behaviour which can be viewed as providing a basis for the child’s
acquisition of language (Lutzker, 1996, pp. 163–6). It is thus important to realize that when a child
begins to talk, we are not witnessing the beginnings of language acquisition, but a relatively
advanced stage in a complex ongoing process. Both the nature and timing of these developments
in language acquisition must be considered as relevant for foreign language learning as well.

**What we think we know – but need to reconsider**

Language considered from a perspective in which non-semantic levels of communication are
viewed as highly significant calls for new approaches to teaching foreign languages. In recent
years an increasingly broad range of research devoted to specifically examining the significance
of gesture in second language classrooms has shown that the gestural dimensions of language
constitute a crucial element in shaping language learning (McCafferty, 2004; Stam & McCafferty,
2008; Quinlisk, 2008; Sime, 2008; Tabensky, 2008). In light of these findings, it becomes
imperative to reconsider some of the standard paradigms of foreign language teaching. Traditional
views of foreign language learning are still implicitly based on an understanding of language as
consisting primarily of vocabulary and grammar. Accordingly, a focus on learning these aspects
of the target language through a carefully devised progression of steps becomes the logical
methodological consequence. A glance at any coursebook will confirm that this approach still
underlies most foreign language learning materials at all levels. Yet, when we consider that in
light of the above mentioned research, grammar and vocabulary play a relatively small role in
actual communication, an almost exclusive emphasis on these areas raises numerous questions,
not the least regarding its efficiency. Instead of working with those already highly developed
capabilities in the mother tongue of understanding and expressing language holistically, the
methodological priority is generally placed on isolating new material and learning it in a reduced
and simplified context. The focus is on a cognitively based approach in which, for instance,
kinetic and affective dimensions of communication are largely ignored. Thus, students are being
taught a foreign language in a manner that bears almost no relation to the way they have learned
and use their first language.

From a neurological perspective, the focus is placed on developing specific new language
structures and connections in the left hemisphere, instead of working with the more flexible
right hemisphere which has already become attuned to perceiving tonal, non-semantic levels of
meaning. While naturally there are variations between languages with respect to the meaning
and interpretation of such non-semantic forms of expression, there also appears to be a set of
remarkably consistent markers in these areas. In particular, the research of Paul Ekman into the
universals of interpreting facial expressions reaching across the divides of every culture which
has been studied, points to a level of human emotional expression and recognition which can be

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considered universal and hence potentially significant when effectively utilized in learning a new
language (Ekman, 2003). Parallel to this, exploring those types of aspects of kinesic and gestural
expression which can be considered language-specific and/or culture-specific also opens up new
possibilities in foreign language learning.

Although much of the above mentioned research appears to be largely unknown in the field of
foreign language teaching, imaginative teachers have continually designed different approaches
to foreign language learning in which the non-verbal, affective dimensions of communication
play vital and varied roles. This can be seen in methods ranging from James Asher’s Total
Physical Response with its emphasis on learning a foreign language in conjunction with specific
physical commands and responses (Asher, 2003), to Georgi Lozanov’s Suggestopediy in which
physical and mental relaxation techniques play a central role in the entire learning process
(Lozanov, 1978).

Moreover, the incorporation of the above-mentioned dimensions of language can also be seen
as a crucial element in a broad range of drama-based approaches including those with a focus on
dramatic activities and processes in the classroom such as those designed by Alan Maley, Alan
Duff and Mario Rinvolucri (Maley & Duff, 2005; Rinvolucri, 1985; Maley, 2000) as well as the more
performance-oriented approaches developed by Gary Carkin, Manfred Schewe, Ruth Huber and
others (Schewe, 1993; Huber, 2003; Carkin, 2007).

In most traditional courses in schools and in adult education, these perspectives on language
and foreign language learning have generally not been taken into account. A crucial reason for
this may well lie in a lack of awareness of these findings in the fields of teacher education and
materials development.

What we need to find out: Teacher education and
the art of teaching

From the perspective advanced here, the nature and quality of both the teachers’ and learners’
embodiment of a foreign language must be viewed as a vital dimension of language teaching
and learning. Through a richer, fuller and thus more perceptible communication of non-semantic
levels of language, a teacher will enable her pupils to attain a higher degree of understanding
and expression. These enhanced possibilities of understanding open up a new range of content
and materials for language lessons. When unfamiliar words and structures are no longer viewed,
in themselves, as a decisive hindrance to understanding, there is clearly a far greater chance of
finding and using materials in the foreign language which interest and move pupils. Such materials
will be readily found in authentic literature.

This perspective also calls for very different approaches to what pupils are actually asked to
do in their lessons. For example, the use of drama and drama techniques in language learning
must be seen as far more than an occasional artistic ‘addition’ to the rest of the curriculum. Such
work, incorporating crucial dimensions of the experience of language into the learning process,
offers unique opportunities to directly encounter and learn a foreign language as a whole. The
growing interest in drama as a central element in the foreign language curriculum reflects the
often remarkable results of such processes, which have also been increasingly documented
(Carkin, 2007).
In considering the underlying premise discussed here with respect to the entire gestalt of language and the importance of non-verbal levels of communication, this approach to foreign language teaching calls for a substantially different understanding of teacher education. It implies that teachers should be offered possibilities to develop a new range of capabilities not previously considered to be part of their training. Foreign language teaching and learning viewed in this manner will inevitably become a far more physically, affectively and cognitively engaging process requiring in its embodiment of language, skills far closer to the artistry demanded in the performing arts and particularly in the field of drama than those skills required in scholarly pursuits.

Considering foreign language teaching as an art implies adopting a requisite framework of knowledge and expression. The musician’s sensitivity to nuances of tone, the actor’s to voice and gesture, the painter’s to colour and line, all represent forms of knowledge and skill which do not lend themselves easily to rational, scientific discourse. Nor do they represent that type of knowledge which most educational research and theory has propagated as essential in teacher education, or, for that matter, for pupils in their schooling. At the same time they are all, incontrovertibly, examples of highly precise and expressive ways of knowing and acting. This is a view of teaching which has been extensively developed in the works of a number of educators (Dewey, 1980; Eisner, 1985; Sarason, 1999; Greene, 2001). In his book Teaching as a Performing Art, Sarason elucidates the relevance of his concept of a teacher as a performing artist:

A performing artist is one who uses him or herself to convey an emotion, or situation, or imagery intended to be meaningful and stimulating to an audience. The ‘message’ whatever the medium, is for the purpose of evoking in others the response ‘I understand and believe what I am seeing and believing. You have not left me cold, you have engaged me.’ [. . .] In the case of the teacher, engagement is a sustained one; it is not a one-night stand. (1999, p. 6)

Drawing on Dewey’s writings he argues that Dewey’s concepts of teaching and learning were implicitly based on the idea of ‘the teacher as performer, someone who took on or manifested characteristics considered necessary to affect her audience in specified ways’ (ibid., p. 43). At the same time he points out that Dewey never concretely addressed this perspective in the context of designing teacher education programmes (ibid., p. 44). Sarason elaborates on what he sees as the central issue facing teacher education:

. . . the teacher as performing artist is faced with a terribly complex and difficult task that all those in the conventional performing arts confront: how do you put yourself into a role and then enact it in ways that instruct and move an audience, fulfilling the expectation of the audience that they have in some way learned something about themselves and their world? They have been moved, they seek more such experiences. Teachers are not born, so to speak, with such attributes. It requires a kind of training which no preparatory program I know has taken seriously, if at all . . . (ibid., p. 54)

In the autobiographical reflections of the German author Alfred Döblin (1878–1957) there is a passage which can help to illuminate what Sarason envisions here. Shortly before his death, Döblin ‘invited’ all his former high school teachers to an imaginary conference in which he told
them what he had thought of them as a pupil and what he thought of them half a century later. In no uncertain terms, he reminded them of events that had occurred in his youth and described how they still remained with him. Among the many unhappy memories of his school years, there is one notable exception:

Herr Professor Konrad, I see you and I’m glad to see you again. We had German in the upper grades with you. We read some Goethe, but mostly Schiller. You know, the long philosophical poems. It’s odd, Schiller seems to have written these poems for the purpose of having them studied in school. I’ve never heard of anyone reading them afterwards. [. . .] You read the poems to us, Herr Professor, standing before the lectern, one arm resting back on it. Your clothes were too big for you. You were quite tall, dynamic and thin. You always held your head a bit bent back. You spoke of Truth, Virtue, Beauty. When you spoke these words they were true and not just words. It was moving to watch you. When you read a poem, believe me, Professor Konrad, I remembered it; it became a part of me. When I think about Schiller and the Idealism around 1800, I think about you Professor Konrad, and then Schiller is true. Schiller can be glad, Herr Professor. He was fortunate to have had you. When you see him above, don’t be afraid; talk to him, tell him what you’ve just heard. (Döblin, 1978, p. 76, my translation)

The comprehensive dimensions of the expression and perception of language as a *gestalt* are evident in this passage. Schiller’s words came to life, unforgettably embodied in Professor Konrad’s voice, body, posture, gestures, movements and clothes. Its intensive remembrance more than 50 years later (‘When you read a poem, believe me, Professor Konrad, I remembered it; it became a part of me’) eloquently portrays both artistry in teaching and the lifelong significance of these lessons for his pupil.

Although it is obvious that Professor Konrad does not use a ‘method’ which can be imitated or learned, this passage raises the question of whether teachers should not be given opportunities and support in their training to develop their own possibilities of artistic expression. The literary critic George Steiner has argued that working towards performance in this context is the most primary form of literary interpretation:

> Interpretative response under pressure of enactment I shall, using a dated word, call *answerability*. The authentic experience of understanding, when we are spoken to by another human being or by a poem, is one of responding responsibility. We are answerable to the text, to the work of art, to the musical offering, in a very specific sense, at once moral, spiritual and psychological. (G. Steiner, 1989, p. 8, italics in original)

He maintains that it is only through the medium of speech that the richness of literature is most fully revealed and perceived:

> The meanings of poetry and the music of those meanings, which we call metrics, are also of the human body. The echoes of sensibility which they elicit are visceral and tactile. There is major prose no less focused on articulation. The diverse musicalities, the pitch and cadence in Gibbon, in Dickens, in Ruskin, are most resonant to active comprehension when read aloud.
The erosion of such reading from most adult practices has muted primary traditions in both poetry and prose. (Ibid., p. 9)

Through training focused on enhancing the performance of literature, processes are instigated which have far-ranging implications not only for the way literature is directly experienced but also for how it can later be taught. Learning from professionals how to more fully embody and convey a story, poem or scene can be viewed as an essential step in realizing and expressing its meaning. A training in such interpretative processes can be viewed as particularly significant for teachers of foreign languages, as those kinesic and affective dimensions of language intrinsic to the embodiment of all forms of literature can be seen as crucial in terms of awakening and maintaining pupils’ interest in the material. From this perspective, the kind of knowledge and skills that language teachers learn in the course of their education must be broadened to encompass forms of knowledge which at present play no role in traditional university teacher education programmes.

Over the last two decades an approach has been developed in foreign language teacher education for Steiner Schools in which those artistic qualities which Professor Konrad so memorably embodied are considered as essential realms of exploration and learning within a teacher’s studies. This has most clearly been the case in a series of in-service courses in drama, storytelling, directing, theatre clowning and the performance of literature which have specifically been developed for Steiner School language teachers over more than 15 years at the English Week and which have also gradually achieved a broader acceptance in contexts as diverse as the Pilgrims training courses in Canterbury, England and ICELT conferences in Malaysia. In my book The Art of Foreign Language Teaching: Improvisation and Drama in Teacher Development and Language Learning, I documented and evaluated the effects of courses in theatre clowning and improvisation taught over many years by Vivian Gladwell. (Lutzker, 2007, pp. 88–220) The findings demonstrated that both in the context of personal development and transformation, as well as with respect to helping teachers develop vital skills for the classroom, these courses had wide-ranging and positive long term effects (ibid., pp. 136–49). Those qualities which were most often mentioned as having been developed through these courses included an increased openness to others, more flexibility and fluidity, an enhanced sense of presence and the ability to perceive more fully and respond more intuitively (ibid.). Other artistic courses such as drama, storytelling or literature in performance have clearly helped teachers to develop their abilities to convey works of literature in more authentic and expressive ways (ibid., pp. 80–7).

What we now need to find out is whether the types of approaches which have been developed in the training of foreign language teachers in Steiner Schools would be equally appropriate for teachers working outside of Steiner education. Since within the entire Steiner School curriculum the arts play a significant role, one can often assume some prior basis of artistic experience, or at least an interest in such areas. Moreover, Steiner School language teachers generally enjoy a high degree of curricular freedom and are usually not required to use course books; thus they are free to directly incorporate much of what they learned in such courses into their language lessons. Would the immediate and long term effects of such artistic courses be comparable for other teachers working in very different contexts? More generally, in what respects is it possible within more traditional frameworks of both teacher education and foreign language teaching to explore the implications of a perspective of language in which non-semantic elements are considered crucial?
Part two

Materials development for teacher education

In the context of this chapter and book, we need to consider what this understanding of language means for materials development, for teacher education and in the classroom. In order for teachers to be able to more fully embody and express a foreign language and enable their pupils to do the same, the requisite materials for teachers and pupils will be required. In the following sections I will first explore different possibilities of materials development for teacher education and then consider what this would mean with respect to classroom materials.

There are naturally clear limits to what printed materials can offer teachers in both a pre-service and in-service framework when the actual focus is on the heightened experience and expression of language. At the same time, there is undoubtedly a need for materials which can serve as a theoretical basis for teacher trainers and teachers, as well as provide the necessary basis for a practical course of instruction. In considering what was documented in the first part of this chapter, it is apparent that a teacher’s language training must go well beyond traditional phonetics courses; a far broader range of courses specifically relating to crucial elements such as presence, voice and gesture must be offered. In pursuing the implications of Sarason’s understanding of teaching as a performing art, the analogy to the type of training and materials required in the study of the performing arts and particularly the dramatic arts can prove to be relevant and instructive.

An important step in this respect was Alan Maley’s *The Language Teacher’s Voice* (2000), which is a brief theoretical and practical guide to becoming aware of developmental possibilities in this area. We need comparable works in an array of related disciplines, ideally within a larger and coherent context in which these elements build on and complement each other. In the context of an actor’s learning to authentically and expressively convey language and meaning, there already exists a broad range of materials designed for the development of the actor’s imagination, gestures, voice, etc., many of which have been successfully used for generations. These range from the classic acting methods of C. Stanislavski and M. Chekov to works addressing specific aspects such as voice training (Stanislavski, 1936; Chekov, 2002; Rodenburg, 1992; Berry, 1973). However, these books were primarily designed for later work on the stage, not in a classroom and they also generally assume years of training in the field. What would thus be needed is a careful distillation of this broad range of materials focusing on those aspects of imagination, voice, movement, gestural expression, etc. which best match the particular needs of a language teacher working in a classroom.

A further, highly relevant area would be the development of a teacher’s improvisational skills. The ability to act and react appropriately within the inherently unpredictable process of an unfolding lesson is the skill which has been consistently emphasized as being ultimately decisive in any given classroom situation (Eisner, 1985, pp. 175–7). In helping teachers to develop their improvisational capabilities, there is also a wide range of materials to draw upon. The seminal works of Keith Johnstone are an obvious choice (1981, 1999). Another rich source is the tradition of theatre clowning connected to the work of Jacques Lecoq (2002).
Another crucial aspect of materials development would be to give the teacher a repertoire to be able to initiate different forms of dramatic activities in the classroom. As before, an essential aspect of developing this repertoire and the skills required for its implementation would be in the actual practice of it as part of a teacher’s training; these are not capabilities that can be acquired only through reading about them. Within the framework of such practical studies, a coursebook setting out and elucidating a range of different possibilities would be invaluable. A particular emphasis in such a coursebook would be on incorporating those approaches such as Readers Theatre and Chamber Theatre which were expressly designed for adapting and transforming prose fiction, poetry and non-fiction texts into a dramatic mode. The methods that have been developed in numerous theatre schools utilizing such techniques to adapt all types of texts for both solo and group presentations have previously played little or no role in foreign language teacher education.

There already exists a wealth of scattered material both in foreign language teaching and in the realm of drama; as part of a language teacher’s training they would need to be offered in a more focused and unified manner. The books of Wallace Bacon and Robert Breen written in the context of their pioneering work in the Northwestern University Department of Interpretation could be considered as general models for such work (Bacon, 1972; Breen, 1978). Breen’s book offers a superb introduction to the possibilities of adapting literature to be performed as chamber theatre. It establishes both a theoretical and practical basis for the work and also includes examples of how texts can be adapted. Bacon’s far more extensive work is an actual coursebook for drama students on how to learn to interpret literature through performance. While establishing a broader, theoretical background in relevant areas, it mostly consists of a wide range of different literary and non-fictional texts accompanied by practical suggestions regarding their preparation for individual or group performances. Once again, these are works largely designed for acting students as part of their general training; they would need to be adapted for the specific needs of language teachers. At the same time they serve as inspiring and successful examples of how a coursebook can be an invaluable guide in the framework of an artistic training in the interpretation of literature through performance.

In the end, this form of language teacher training would in crucial respects far more resemble the kind of artistic training which aspiring actors (or musicians) receive at schools of the arts, than the classical philological education offered by universities. This is a vision of foreign language teacher education that Johannes Kiersch advanced more than two decades ago (Kiersch, 1992). There are also significant parallels here to the work of Ruth Huber in Portugal and Manfred Schewe in Ireland in incorporating drama activities and performances into university level language teacher education (Schewe, 1993; Huber, 2003), as well as to the broader motor-and-verbal approach to teacher education that Harald Rugg proposed more than 50 years ago (1960).

**Materials development for the classroom**

Along with the above-mentioned need for a teacher’s handbook, a corresponding coursebook for pupils consisting of an extensive collection of texts specifically chosen for this kind of work in foreign language lessons would be invaluable. In his book *Openings*, Brian Tomlinson put together a reader that could function as a model for this kind of collection (1994). In this book he took excerpts from a broad range of authentic literature to serve as initial impulses for an array of suggested creative tasks, both oral and written. I am proposing something similar here, but with
a focus on providing material for different forms of dramatization. It should include poetry and
different types of fictional and non-fictional texts that lend themselves to this kind of work. A
wide-ranging handbook from a mainstream publisher incorporating and synthesizing such material
into a coherent framework with suggested activities would provide a crucial basis for the approach
developed in this chapter.

At the same time, I believe these materials should be clearly targeted to specific age groups. A
choice of texts and activities designed for adults will be substantially different than one designed
for teenagers, independent of their respective language abilities. From my own experience of
more than 25 years of high school language teaching, I believe it would also be essential to
further differentiate between grades; a collection of texts appropriate for a ninth grader will be
significantly different than those for a twelfth grader. A broad range of language-levels in each
volume would be desirable in order to be able to reach learners at different stages. What would
connect the different texts within each volume would thus not primarily be a defined range
of language difficulties, but rather the attempt to address an age-specific range of emotional
and intellectual interests with the intention of thus offering realistic possibilities of affective
engagement with the foreign language.

Coursebooks of this kind could provide a much-needed basis for the kind of engagement and
enjoyment that is often sorely missed in many foreign language classrooms. In considering the
linguistic-kinesic research that was discussed in the first part of this chapter, they would also
provide an encompassing and effective basis for foreign language learning through the physical,
affective and cognitive involvement of the learner – in and through – moving language.

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Classroom research of language classes

Brian Tomlinson

Introduction

Second language acquisition (SLA) and classroom research have often been treated as separate disciplines, each with experts and a literature of its own. SLA has tended to focus on the procedures, processes and effects of attempts to learn an L2 (quite often in laboratory conditions) whereas classroom research has tended to pay most attention to what actually happens in the classroom during language learning classes. Understandably the emphasis in much classroom research has been on recording and measuring the observable rather than on attempting to discover what might be happening in the minds of teachers and learners. Topics which have featured prominently in the literature include:

- interaction between teachers and learners;
- interaction between learners and other learners;
- classroom management;
- attentiveness of learners;
- learner ability to carry out instructions;
- indicators of learner motivation;
- indicators of learner engagement;
- the effect of instruction on uptake (i.e. the ability to produce the target language at the time of instruction);
- the effect of correction on repair (i.e. the ability to correct inaccurate or ineffective utterances).
Topics which do not seem to have featured very much in the literature on classroom observation include the effects of observed learner and teacher behaviours on long-term acquisition and the long-term effect of traditional classroom activities, such as listen and repeat, dialogue recitation, true/false and filling in the blanks. Exceptions to this generalization, however, are Ohta (2001), who investigates language acquisition processes in the classroom, Nunan (2005), who states that the main aim of his chapter is to reveal what classroom research has to tell us about the relationship between what goes on in the classroom and SLA and McCafferty and Stam (2008), who focus on classroom research on the role of gesture in SLA. Nunan (2005, p. 226) is particularly interested in finding answers to the question, ‘What modes of classroom organisation, task types and input facilitate second language development?’ – a question of great interest to materials developers.

What classroom research has revealed

From the massive literature on classroom research I have selected the issues below as those being most relevant to materials development. For more comprehensive surveys of classroom research see Nunan (2005), Gieve and Miller (2006) and Allwright and Hanks (2009).

Evaluations of classroom pedagogy

Some efforts have been made to systematically evaluate the effectiveness of classroom language teaching practices in promoting SLA, with the results indicating that many traditional language-teaching techniques are inefficient and ineffective (e.g. Lightbown, 1990). Nunan (2005) reports that in the 1960s there were many methods of comparisons studies which were unable to demonstrate the superiority of one method over another and suggests that one explanation for this emerges from Swaffer, Arens and Morgan (1982), who compared the use of audiolingualism with cognitive code learning and revealed that there are a range of classroom procedures which teachers use regardless of the method they are following. This could explain why ‘some teachers seem to succeed however out-of-date or out-of-fashion there methods are’ (Allwright & Bailey, 1991, p. xv). Many researchers, including myself, also believe that it is the rapport that teachers establish with their students which determines their effectiveness rather than just their pedagogic procedures. I do not know of any research which proves this, though I did conduct a five country survey of what makes a good language teacher (Tomlinson, 2008) and found that regardless of their social and educational culture teachers thought that such personal attributes as patience, empathy and a sense of humour were more important than the teachers’ knowledge of the target language or the methods that they use. Teachers’ methodologies continue to be researched though and Muller et al. (2012), for example, report on the effects of a number of teachers’ innovative pedagogic approaches in Asia.

One of the many still unresolved pedagogical issues relates to the effectiveness of explicit teaching: can explicit teaching of language items facilitate the acquisition of communicative competence? Research on this issue has produced quite different results. Some research has, however, indicated that helping learners to discover things for themselves is a more effective approach.
facilitator of acquisition and development than explicitly teaching them what to do. For example, Al-Busaidi and Tindle (2010) report a project at Sultan Qaboos University in Muscat in which in-house materials for developing writing skills replaced commercial coursebooks. The new materials follow a text-driven, process approach in which the students write responses to potentially engaging texts. Then they go back to the stimulus text and are helped to make discoveries for themselves about the use of specific language features. They write a second draft of their text making use of their discoveries and the second draft goes to the teacher for suggestions for modification before a third and final draft is written. The materials were evaluated pre-, during and post-use through the use of surveys and examination scripts and were found to be more effective in achieving student engagement and in helping learners to develop writing skills than the previous approach, which had focused on the explicit teaching of writing skills.

Use of materials

Given that textbooks seem to be used in most classrooms (Tomlinson, 2010) there is surprisingly little treatment in the literature of how coursebooks should be used and of how they are actually used in the classroom. However, Dat (2003) reports a study and expresses his views on localizing coursebooks in Vietnam, Lin and Brown (1994) provide guidelines for the production and use of in-house self-access materials and Tomlinson (2003) proposes classroom procedures to help teachers to humanize their coursebooks.

Richards and Mahoney (1996) report on the resourceful use of textbooks by teachers in Hong Kong and Katz (1996) found that the actual use of materials in classrooms varied according to each teacher’s pedagogical needs and goals. Gray (2010) reports how teachers in Barcelona modify aspects of cultural content in English Language Teaching (ELT) reading materials which they are uncomfortable with and Lee and Bathmaker (2007) find that teachers of vocational students in Singapore secondary schools adapt their coursebooks in order to meet local institutional and classroom requirements. Le (2011) also discovered this phenomenon in Vietnam, where he found that teachers were focusing on those parts of a new coursebook which were of obvious value in preparing students for their end-of-year examinations. In contrast Zacharias (2005), showed how teachers in Indonesian tertiary institutions are reverential towards international coursebooks and use them as scripts to be followed, and Gray (2010, p. 7) reports how novice teachers in Barcelona ‘do not have the confidence to challenge the authority of the coursebook’.

There have been a number of studies of how teacher attitudes towards their coursebooks influence their use of them in the classroom. Pelly and Allison (2000) surveyed 58 Singaporean primary school teachers and found that 79 per cent reported that their teaching was determined mainly by test preparation; four teachers who were interviewed said they taught only those parts of the textbook which were likely to come up in the examinations. Tsui (2003) showed how less-experienced teachers rely heavily on their textbook while more-experienced teachers can be more selective and make use of a variety of material resources. Gray’s (2010) report of his interviews with teachers in Barcelona revealed that some teachers omitted materials which they felt perpetuated cultural stereotypes whereas others used them because they could generate
lively discussions. Another recent example of looking at teachers’ beliefs through classroom interaction is Li and Walsh (2011) in which they report their research on comparisons between what two teachers in China say they believe and do and how they actually interact with their students in the classroom.

McGrath (2002) suggests procedures to find out more about what teachers actually do with their materials and Masuhara (2011) suggests a record of use as a means of discovering data on teachers’ classroom use of materials. Tomlinson (2010) surveyed teachers at conferences and workshops in Harrogate, Hue and Melaka and found that most teachers used a coursebook because their institutions required them to but that many of them found the books to be ‘insufficiently relevant, suitable and stimulating for their learners’ (p. 8). It would help materials developers if we knew even more about what teachers actually do with the materials they are given to use as well as what they would like their materials to help them do.

**Evaluations of materials use in the classroom**

There is a growing literature on the evaluation of the use of innovative published materials for specific purposes and of innovative in-house materials in the classroom. For example, McCullagh (2010) evaluated a new textbook which she had written for the teaching of communication skills for the medical practitioner. Its distinguishing features were that it made use of authentic audiovisual scenarios and that it targeted the learning of communication skills. It was evaluated both with undergraduate students studying medical courses and with postgraduate students either working or intending to work as doctors in English-speaking areas (including the United Kingdom). The postgraduates appreciated and gained more from the authentic scenarios and the communication skills activities than the undergraduates, who were focused on their examinations and on learning the lexical items they would need to pass them. This is an interesting reminder that both pedagogy and materials cannot be researched or evaluated in isolation from their context of use and that effectiveness is variable rather than absolute.

Another evaluation of innovative materials in use is reported in Ghosn (2010). She compared the ‘English vocabulary, grammar and reading comprehension outcomes after five years of formal instruction in four’ primary schools in Lebanon, ‘two using literature-based reading anthologies and two using international English-as-a-second language’ coursebooks (p. 21). All the children in the experiment were beginners of English but after 5 years those in the classes which took part in the literature-based programmes significantly outscored those using the communicative coursebooks, in reading comprehension and in vocabulary development. Other recent studies investigating the classroom use of innovative materials include Fenton-Smith (2010), who found that getting university undergraduates in Japan to select from a variety of creative activities after extensive reading of a book was found to be both enjoyable and useful by the students, Park (2010), who found that process drama materials used in a secondary school in South Korea had beneficial effects on teacher-student interaction, motivation and communicative competence, and Jones and Schmitt (2010), who found that language awareness tasks based on a needs driven spoken corpus were effective in helping students at the University of Nottingham to acquire vocabulary and phrases they needed for discipline-specific seminars. Other reports on classroom materials evaluations can be found in Harwood (2010) and Tomlinson and Masuhara (2010).


Classroom discourse

Studies of teacher talk have found, for example, that, in order to make themselves comprehensible to L2 learners, teachers typically ‘speak slower, use simpler syntactic structures, exaggerated pronunciation, clearer articulation, more repetitions and more basic vocabulary’ than when speaking to native speakers (Tsui, 2001, p. 121). Many studies have investigated the effects of such modifications but no clear indication of a positive effect has been found (Chaudron, 1988) and attention has turned to discovering the effects of learner negotiation of meaning (Varonis & Gass, 1985). At the same time there have been many investigations of how the teacher manages interaction and learning (Allwright & Bailey, 1991) and of turn taking in the classroom (Allwright, 1980). However there has been very little empirical investigation of the effect of different types of classroom interaction on language acquisition (Ellis, 1988). Instead there has been considerable attention given to recording and generalizing on what actually happens in classroom discourse. There is a recently launched journal called Classroom Discourse (Edited by Steve Walsh at Newcastle University and published by Routledge) and there have been a number of recent books published on the topic (e.g. Walsh, 2006, 2011; Hellerman, 2008). Seedhouse (2010, p. 11) makes a very obvious but important point when he says that ‘all learner utterances are potentially subject to evaluation’. This must influence what students say in class and how they say it, as must the point he makes that there is always a relationship between pedagogy and the organization of discourse in the classroom (i.e. learners in the classroom tend to interact in the way they think their teacher intends them to). This is probably also true of observed lessons, in which learners tend to behave and interact in ways they think they are intended to. Barker (2010) compared learner–learner interactions when a teacher was present to such interactions without a teacher present and found the latter contained more turns, longer turns and more interruptions (i.e. were closer to native speaker interactions). Perhaps the most typically reported feature of classroom interaction is the three-part sequence referred to as IRF (teacher initiation, learner response and teacher follow-up or feedback) (Sinclair and Coulthard, 1975). As Seedhouse (2010, p. 12) says, ‘This pattern has been identified in numerous research studies as ubiquitous throughout the world’. It is, of course, an interaction determined by pedagogy rather than communicative need and I wonder how valuable it is as a preparation for communication in which learners have to initiate as well as respond (see Kumaravadivelu (1999) for a critique of the scope and method of classroom discourse analysis). The same question can be asked of the teachers’ tendency to ask display questions which they already know the answers to rather than referential questions which they do not know the answers to. See Park (2010, 2012) for critiques of this tendency and reports on a process drama project in South Korea in which teachers were influenced by their roles in drama activities to ask referential, open-ended questions rather than display questions. See Brock (1986) for a report of a classroom research project in which ‘treatment-group teachers asked significantly more referential questions than did the control-group teachers. Student responses in the treatment-group classes were significantly longer and more syntactically complex and contained greater numbers of connectives’ (p. 47).

What teacher observation tells us

Long-term classroom observation projects can be very informative about what teachers believe and do, as being observed as the norm can overcome the problem of observed lessons being
Lawson (2011), for example, reports an 8-year project in which it was discovered that teachers could change their lesson planning and assessment procedures as a result of constructive feedback but many of them found it difficult to change their questioning techniques and their tendency to be teacher centred. Although this project was undertaken in the Leicester area those with experience of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom observation overseas are likely to agree that:

In a culture where long-established practices are seen as the most appropriate way of teaching (not least by students and their parents themselves), then effecting change can be very difficult. This is compounded in situations where success in public examinations is the main measurable outcome of the teaching establishment. The pressure to ‘get through the curriculum’ and to achieve good grades creates a pressure on teachers to maintain control of teaching sessions in direct ways. (Lawson, 2011, pp. 333–4)

Even though teachers can be resistant to some suggestions for change they seem to welcome classroom observation providing there is subsequently an opportunity for an exchange of opinions. This is what Lasagabaster and Juan Sierra (2011) found in their study of 185 teachers’ attitudes towards classroom observation in Spain. This warns us that simply recording what happens in the classroom can be misleading. We need to know why a teacher did something and what they intended to achieve by doing it not just what they did. This is where peer observation schemes can be very useful in which peers observe each other and then discuss what they have observed (Richards & Lockhart, 1992). Reflection and discussion seem to be the key to both a rich description of classroom activity and to the process of teacher development. They are central to most of the observation tasks suggested in Wajnryb (1992).

**Action research**

Burns (2005) surveys the literature on action research and reports a number of research projects which focus on classroom research by teachers, including a project in which teachers involved in the Australian Adult Migrant English Programme researched and modified their roles as teachers in a learner-centred approach (Burns, 1999) and a project helping and researching secondary school teachers in Hong Kong in their efforts to develop greater professional competence and status (Tinker Sachs, 2000). Dat (2002) and Tomlinson and Dat (2004) also report a project which researched the change it was trying to achieve. It started as a response to a problem and grew into a full scale classroom research project. The problem was the apparent reticence to speak of students in English classes in Vietnam and the response was for Dat to develop a project which involved surveying the views of 300 intermediate level EFL learners and of 15 of their teachers at the National University of Vietnam in Ho Chi Minh City. The surveys revealed that, although the teachers thought the problem was because of fear of losing face and of accepting the traditional passive role of the learner, the real problem was that the students wanted to speak but were often prevented from doing so by their teachers demanding instant answers, nominating respondents, answering their own questions and not encouraging learner–learner interaction. Dat devised a treatment involving giving thinking time to the students, encouraging volunteer respondents and encouraging students to stretch their learning styles by participating in learner–learner interaction.
This was administered by ten teachers, with six of them persisting and increasing student contributions in the classroom. Such mismatches between learner and teacher perceptions are often reported in the literature (e.g. Barkhuizen, 1998), as is the need and readiness for learners to be given thinking time, to be left alone to interact with each other (e.g. Barker, 2005) and to stretch their learning styles (e.g. Kubanyiova, 2002; Tomlinson & Avila, 2007).

An alternative to action research has been proposed by Allwright (1993, p. 125), who considers ‘exploratory teaching’ to be more useful to the teacher than action research. He characterizes ‘exploratory teaching’ as the teacher using normal pedagogic activities (rather than research procedures) to explore something that puzzles them. For Allwright (Allwright & Hanks, 2009) this is less time-consuming and onerous than action research and more realistic in that it aims at deepening understanding rather than finding a solution to a problem. It would be very useful if teachers’ books accompanying coursebooks included suggestions for teachers to make use of the coursebook activities to engage in ‘exploratory teaching’.

Responses to innovation

In my experience teachers are often resistant to change and often continue to teach in their usual way unless they are invited to influence the change, they derive some benefit from the change or they receive positive long-term encouragement to change. On the other hand, learners are much less resistant to change, especially if the benefits of the change are explained to them and if they become aware of gains they are making because of the change (e.g. greater enjoyment, greater engagement, greater confidence). Many researchers have opposed the imposition around the world of classroom methodologies from the ‘west’ (e.g. Pennycook, 2001; Holliday, 2005) and of materials from the ‘west’ (e.g. Padwad, 2002; Gray, 2010). My own experience is that communicative methods and materials are rarely imposed but are frequently resisted (even in the ‘west’). Teachers understandably want continuity (Liu, 1998; Urmston, 2001). Teachers also need time to understand and become comfortable with change. This is a phenomenon summed up by a teacher in Vietnam quoted in Dat (2002, p. 272): ‘Some strategies don’t work because I am simply not familiar with employing them. These will have to take time to develop into my own techniques.’ Another understandable phenomenon, that of delay to allow discussion and deliberation, is summed up by an Indonesian teacher in Coleman’s (2011) report on an innovative project in which selected elite schools were instructed to achieve an ‘international standard’ of instruction and to use English as the medium of instruction for maths and science from Year 4 of primary school onwards: ‘We’ve been having internal discussions within the school about what being an SBI means – whether it concerns the learning process, the way we evaluate the [pupils, and whether all competencies should be developed . . . ’ (p. 97). Yet another understandable phenomenon, that of resistance to change because of lack of consultation, is discussed by Ruanni and Tupas (2010), who argue that teachers should be consulted prior to any innovation.

Many classroom researchers have stated that examinations also need to change before what happens in the classroom can change; for example, LoCastro (1996) when reporting on attempted curriculum change in Japanese high schools and Be (2002) when reporting on textbook innovation in Indonesia. I once managed to achieve such a change in Vanuatu when we changed the end of primary school leaving examination to a communicative examination and then stimulated teachers in weekend workshops to write booklets of communication activities which mirrored those likely
to be set in the examination (Tomlinson, 1981). What happened in the classroom changed almost overnight and did so for the better.

It has been reported many times that students respond negatively to sudden changes in what happens in the classroom. For example, Dat (2002) reports negative responses to teachers breaking all expectations by acting as co-communicators and Karavas-Doukas (1998, p. 49) reports how a number of EFL innovation projects failed because they attempted to ‘introduce practices within school cultures that promote a different type of social order in the classroom’. However I would certainly agree with Holliday (1994, p. 23) that such phenomena of ‘temporary culture’ as classroom patterns and expectations are changeable, especially if they are explained, are introduced on trial and quickly become perceived as enjoyable and useful. Dat (2002, p. 256), for example, reports that in his experiments in Vietnam students confounded the prophecies of their teachers (‘You don’t know them, they just won’t speak’) by expressing themselves in English during experimental communicative activities. Kubanyiova (2002, p. 179) reports that students at a university in Thailand participated enthusiastically in drama activities despite warnings from their teachers that they would be too shy. In a number of classes in Japan and in Oman I successfully introduced changes in the classroom by telling the students what I intended to do and why, and by telling them we would try the new approach three times and then decide together whether to continue.

What I have found is that ‘there is a universal predisposition to learn a foreign language in enjoyable and experiential ways’ despite the universal tendency to teach a foreign language in analytical ways (Tomlinson, 2005, p. 141). I have also found that most teachers and learners are willing to experiment with change providing that the change is non-threatening and potentially beneficial.

My observations

In the last 45 years I have observed over 2,000 lessons at all levels all over the world. I have seen some outstandingly different lessons, some very eccentric lessons and some models of good practice but at all levels in countries as culturally different as Indonesia, Japan, Malawi, Singapore, Spain, United Kingdom, Vanuatu and Zambia I have seen the same lesson over and over again. It is a lesson in which:

- the teacher tries to be in control throughout the lesson;
- the teacher decides on the content of the lesson;
- the teacher determines what the learners do;
- the teacher determines much of what the learners say and how they say it;
- the teacher instructs and interrogates the learners but spends very little time interacting with them;
- learners do not seem to learn what the teacher teaches, they seem to learn what they want and need to learn;
- the lesson is dictated by a teaching point;
most of the time the teacher and the students are looking at a textbook;

- the learners spend very little time reading or writing extensively;
- the learners spend very little time thinking;
- the learners spend time practising a language point in a mechanical way;
- the learners spend much of the lesson doing nothing;
- many of the learners seem reluctant to use the target language;
- many of the learners seem to be bored;
- teachers tend to prevent thinking time by demanding immediate answers to their questions and by setting demanding time limits for tasks;
- teachers tend to focus on forms rather than on meaning;
- teachers tend to correct student mistakes regardless of their gravity, frequency, salience and context.

It seems that it is the norm everywhere for educational institutions to be conservative and to make use of the teacher-controller to maintain order, conformity and the status quo. The administrators and often the parents require the teacher to be in control and to follow the inventory of teaching points in the syllabus, the examinations often impose on the teacher items and/or skills which must be taught, the teacher feels more secure when in control and the learners are used to being controlled. These observations are from my own personal experience but the point about institutions wanting to maintain the status quo is also made by LoCastro (1996) and by Cooke (2011); the points about teacher-centredness and convergence of thought and behaviour are also made by Mitchell and Lee (2003).

**Conclusion**

What emerges from classroom research is a rather depressing picture of the teacher preventing language acquisition. I think this is because classroom research tends to focus on what can be counted, measured or recorded. What it often missed is the positive rapport between students and the energetic and enthusiastic teacher who cares for and is respected by her students. She might make many of the ‘mistakes’ noted as typical above but the positive atmosphere she creates might inspire and motivate her students to invest the time, energy and attitude required for language acquisition. I have seen such lessons countless times. I saw one recently in Spain in which the teacher dominated the lesson, made nearly all the initiations, gave no thinking time, focused on forms and corrected the students nearly every time they made an error. Yet the teacher was entertaining, the teacher knew the students and related to them as individuals, the students obviously respected him, they participated eagerly and they achieved creativity and humour in their contributions. I would very much like to find out what the accumulative effect of such lessons is on language acquisition.
What we do not know about the classroom

Because classroom research tends to focus on the easily observable and language acquisition is not easily observable there are many things about the effects of classroom behaviour we do not really know. I would particularly like to know more about:

- the effect of the teacher starting every lesson with a 5 minute ‘reading’ of a story, poem, joke, news item, etc. (something I have been doing with apparently beneficial effects for many years);
- the effect of the teacher allowing learners not to speak when they do not want to;
- the effect of the teacher building into lessons periods of reflective silence;
- the comparative effect of giving instructions in the L1 compared to giving instructions in the L2;
- the comparative effect of using short, contrived texts compared to using extended, authentic texts;
- the comparative effect of using the coursebook as a script compared to using it as a resource;
- the comparative effect of easy, guided activities compared to challenging, open-ended activities;
- the comparative effect of the teacher using a presentation, practice, production (PPP) approach compared to an experiential approach;
- the comparative effect of teaching a language item compared to helping learners to make discoveries about it for themselves.

All of the above enquiries could be turned into very informative research projects. They would be very demanding projects as they would need to be longitudinal and the researchers would face great problems in controlling the variables. However attempting such projects might develop a new kind of classroom research which goes beyond recording the observable and strives to find out what the actual long-term consequences are of what teachers and learners do in the classroom.

What is the match between what coursebooks ask their users to do and what is reported to typically happen in the classroom?

I would like to answer the above question by asking supplementary questions about whether coursebooks mirror the typical procedures of the classroom and whether coursebooks try to
compensate for the discovered shortcomings of typical classroom procedures. First though, I should say that we can hardly expect commercial publishers to risk money to try to change what teachers do in the classroom. Their interest lies in providing teachers with what they want (Tomlinson, 2012). They have a problem in doing this though, as what teachers want who teach small classes of highly motivated students in well-resourced schools in the United Kingdom or United States of America is bound to be different from what teachers want who teach large classes of unmotivated students in poorly resourced schools in countries where very little English is spoken.

**Do coursebooks mirror typical classroom procedures?**

I analysed Unit Five in each of six current Intermediate level coursebooks and scored each book out of 5 for its degree of match with each of six negative findings from classroom research. Table 4.1 shows what I found, with a close match (i.e. a high score) indicating very little application of what we have learned from classroom research:

**TABLE 4.1 Match between negative findings of classroom research and current global coursebooks**

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<td>2 Lessons are forms focused</td>
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<td>3 Lessons focus on activities likely to be experienced in examinations</td>
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<td>4 The learners are told what to do and how to do it</td>
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<td>5 The learners are not encouraged to think for themselves</td>
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<td>6 The learners spend very little time in genuine communication</td>
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It seems that coursebooks are perpetuating some of the ‘negative’ norms reported in classroom research. Particularly noticeable is the way many of the coursebooks not only tell the learners what to do but also tell them what language to use when doing it. For example, *Just Right* tells the learners to ‘Write a short paragraph about your partner’s answers using *since* and *for*’ (p. 53) and even when being told to discuss which of the homes illustrated they would like to live in they are given two examples to help them, both of which make use of ‘because’ (p. 49). In *English in Mind* the learners are asked to talk about a picture but are told to use expressions like ‘I think that this is the best because . . . / What do you think about this picture here?’ (p. 37). In *Intermediate Outcomes* the learners are told to, ‘Describe the job in as much detail as you can, using language from these pages’ (p. 37). In all the books very little genuine communication is fostered in which the learners speak or write to achieve an intended effect with the content and the language determined by themselves. Nearly all the production activities are guided practice activities and most of the other activities are stock examination type activities, such as sentence completion, filling in the blanks, true/false and reordering of sentences. However, most of the books do to some extent try to personalize the activities, to encourage learners to think for themselves and to guide learners into making discoveries about language use for themselves. It would be interesting to find out how teachers actually use these more innovative activities.

A look at some coursebooks published for local markets reveals just how closely many of these books also tend to mirror what is reported to typically happen in the target classrooms rather than to help teachers rethink what they do. For example, the learners only respond and are always told what to do and how to do it in *Success with English* (2002), a book for primary schools in China which does however make use of songs, games and acting. Another primary course for China, *Disney English* (2009), while having very appealing visuals, also completely controls what the learners do and say and *English Empowers 2 Express* (Poh-Knight & Keppler, 2011), a coursebook for Singapore secondary schools, encourages the learners to think for themselves while often telling them what to do and think. One exception to this trend is *Searching 10* (Fenner & Nordal-Pedersen, 2010), a coursebook for learning English in Norwegian secondary schools, which makes imaginative use of literature and of aesthetic visuals to stimulate learners to think and respond critically and creatively and to do things for themselves (e.g. ‘Decide for yourself what questions you want to ask’ (p. 185)). Two other exceptions to total control in local coursebooks can be found in Singapore where *English for Life* (Tomlinson, Hill & Masuhara, 2000) encourages personal, critical and creative responses and *Life Accents 3A* (Davis, Tup & Aziz, 2003) has an ‘Expressing your opinion’ section after every text.

Some coursebooks on Ministry of Education projects also encourage learners to think about and say things for themselves. For example, in Namibia *On Target* (1995), a coursebook for secondary schools, uses stories, poems, newspaper articles and pictures to stimulate critical and creative responses from the learners and they are invited to select from a menu of genuinely communicative spoken and written tasks. This is true also in Ethiopia for *Improve Your English* (2004), a language improvement book for teachers. If such books are used as intended then what happens in their target classrooms should change for the better. But then that was the intention of an innovative communicative coursebook in Vietnam and (Le, 2011) reports how many teachers used it mainly in the ways they had used their previous coursebooks.
What can coursebook writers learn from classroom research?

These days coursebook writers tend to be directed by publishers. They are recruited to write a coursebook which the publisher has decided would fill a gap in the market and to a large extent decisions about content, pedagogic approach and activity types are made by the publisher on the grounds that they know what teachers want. However classroom research has shown that teachers often do things differently in the classroom from what publishers believe they do and Masuhara (2011), for example, has suggested ways of finding out what teachers really want and need. Howard (2010) has shown that teachers do things differently when not being observed and suggests that the typical language lesson described by classroom researchers might not be so typical after all. It seems that the teachers in her (admittedly small) study differed from their observed lessons, from the coursebook and from each other when not being observed.

I once conducted research in 12 countries for a major British publisher on what teachers and students wanted from a coursebook. Both students and teachers said what they wanted most was interesting texts and the teachers said that if the main text in a unit is interesting they can ignore the boring activities and develop their own. Yet the publisher actually reduced the length and number of texts in their coursebooks and gave greater emphasis to grammar.

Until we have more conclusive evidence about which classroom behaviours have positive influences on the acquisition of communicative competence and on what teachers really do and want to do in their classrooms I would suggest that coursebook writers should try to match their books more closely to what we do know about what learners and teachers need and want in the classroom by:

- giving learners opportunities to initiate interaction rather than nearly always having to respond;
- giving learners opportunities to think before responding;
- giving learners opportunities to plan before presenting;
- providing more narrative texts to enjoy;
- providing more creative activities;
- providing more critical thinking activities;
- stimulating the learners to take part in genuine communication for a reason, with a purpose and with intended outcomes;
- helping teachers to use the book flexibly in ways which match their personality and beliefs.

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Language learning for young learners

Irma-Kaarina Ghosn

Introduction

The practice of teaching English to young learners (TEYL) is rapidly spreading around the world, with schools introducing English into the curriculum increasingly early, often in the first 2 years of schooling. Brain mapping studies show that vigorous growth in the regions of brain connecting linguistic and association cortices of the two brain hemispheres begins at age 6 and continues to about age 15 (Thompson et al., 2000), implying that this is the optimal age for second language learning. This finding supports earlier suggestions by Patkowski (1980) and Johnson and Newport (1989) about sensitive and critical periods for second language learning. For young learners to experience success, however, instructional materials must take into account children’s developmental characteristics.

Part one

What we know about young learners and language learning

Young language learners in the classroom

Young second language learners share developmental characteristics with their first language (L1) peers. Regardless of their mother tongue, normal children’s cognitive development follows a fairly predictable sequence, with neurological maturation placing constraints on children’s thinking and reasoning ability (Kuhn, 2006). While children’s ability for abstract reasoning may not be fully developed before the age of 10 or 11 (Piaget, 1970), many primary school children occasionally demonstrate abstract thinking (Metz, 1995), and certain frequent experiences and training may help children acquire some abilities earlier than 10 or 11 (Kuhn, 2006).
Despite the developmental similarities between first and second language learners, young second language learners differ from their native English-speaking peers in some key aspects regarding language. First, young English speakers are immersed in the language from birth and, upon entering school at age 5 or 6, have considerable knowledge about the English language and how it works. They would have acquired a sizeable vocabulary, possibly up to 15,000 words (Pinker, 1994) and would have learned some basic grammar rules by age 3 or 4, evidenced by overregularization (Maratsos, 2000). Similarly, they would have acquired a grasp of pragmatics, reflected in their ability to adjust their speech to different situations (Sonnenschein, 1986). The author’s granddaughter, Kiira, presents examples of this. At age 2.5 she noted that her ‘feets were smaller than [her] daddy’s’; at age 3.3 she said her doll and teddy bear ‘sleeped and sleeped and sleeped’; and at 2.5 she adopted a stern adult tone in warning her younger neighbour: ‘No touch Mommy coffee!’

Another key difference is the learning context. While young L1 learners are immersed in the language within the context of social interaction, second language learners learning the language as a subject are typically exposed to the target language only for short lesson periods, possibly only 1 or 2 hours a week. Such brief exposure does not ‘produce advanced second language speakers, no matter how young they were when they began’ (Lightbown & Spada, 2006, p. 74).

Developmental nature of language learning

Child language learning is a developmental process with the emergence of linguistic features following a fairly predictable pattern. For example, young L1 learners’ initial language is devoid of any inflections, which emerge only gradually, albeit with considerable individual differences in the rate of acquisition. Young L1 learners make fairly predictable errors of syntax, and, because of their developmental nature, corrective feedback rarely produces the desired results. Parents, intuitively perhaps, typically do not correct these grammatical errors, focusing on the meaning instead (Pinker, 1994). The author’s exchange with 2.5-year-old Kiira during a bedtime story illustrates children’s insistence on adhering to their developmental syntax:

Kiira: [Grandma], I want the other one booki [book], please.
IG: You want the other book? Which other book?
Kiira: Yes, I want the other one booki. That one (pointing).

[Author gives Kiira the book and reads it.]

Kiira: [Grandma], I want another one booki.
IG: I’m sorry, what did you say?
Kiira: Please, read another one booki.
IG: You want me to read another book?
Kiira: Yes, I want you read another one booki, please.

Similar developmental patterns are observed in young English Language Learners (ELLs). Regardless of their mother tongue, young ELLs’ language emerges in a sequence similar to
that of their L1 peers in that telegraphic and formulaic phrases precede the productive use of language. Their morpheme acquisition also follows a rather predictable order, but different from that of L1 learners. While no single explanation for this order has been identified salience, linguistic complexity, semantic transparency, similarity to first language form, and frequency in the input may all play a role (Goldschneider & DeKeyser, 2001).

Just like their L1 peers, young ELLs are creative in using second language syntax and make intralingual errors common to all young ELLs, regardless of their mother tongue (Richards, 1971), overextending rule application and producing sentences such as *I wented to the park*. Just as in L1, these errors appear to be of developmental nature and not responsive to corrective feedback. In an effort to correct language learner errors teachers often use recasting, that is, repeating the form correctly, which does not appear to be any more effective than overt correction (Lyster & Ranta, 1997). However, Tomlinson (2007) reports interesting evidence about meaning-focused, purposeful recasting that can be beneficial, attributing the value of such recasts, among other things, to teachers focusing frequently on one particular feature and making the recasts salient by emphasis. Recasting, if done conversationally, as validation of the learner output, allows the discourse to flow, whereas overt corrective feedback tends to disrupt the flow of discourse (Ghosn, 2002).

Efforts to teach syntax to young ELLs are likely to be successful only if the learners are ready to ‘assimilate the new rule into their mental grammars’ (Ellis, 1994, p. 22). In other words, if they are developmentally ready to acquire the target structure. Although children may initially respond to teacher correction and use the correct form on command, the influence is not lasting and children revert to the same error (White, 1991) until the correct forms emerge with morphological and syntactic maturation.

Young children seem to learn second language grammar by utilizing their procedural memory (Ullman, 2001a), while older learners rely on declarative memory (Ullman, 2001b). Procedural memory helps us remember how to do things, such as swimming or riding a bike, and we learn these things gradually through rehearsal. Similarly, young children apparently learn grammar by repeatedly hearing and using the target structures in context, not by explicit instruction in rules. When children’s language emerges, both first and second language learners begin to use formulaic chunks of language as a single word, such as *this-is-a* and *once-upon-a-time*. In compositions collected from Lebanese ELLs ages 9 to 11.5, the author found several different spellings for once upon a time, including *wansaponatime*, *onesaponotime*, and *wanseponatime*, which reflect an understanding of the expression as a single word. This is aligned with the parallel processing, or connectionist, theory; language is partly learned in chunks rather than single words, and sentences and phrases are not always formed word by word (N. Ellis, 2003), with learning resulting from a gradual strengthening of associations within a network of different pieces of information (Ormrod, 2009). When children are repeatedly exposed to a given linguistic feature in context, associations are formed between the linguistic element and what it represents and gradually also with other features that occur with them (Elman et al., 1996). Thus an ever expanding network of associations, or connections, is formed. In terms of second language acquisition (SLA), frequency of input is the ‘key determinant in acquisition’ (N. Ellis, 2002, p. 144), and the learner must have acquired ‘the appropriately weighted range of associations for each element of the language input’ (ibid.).
Learning and memory

Because of developments in brain-imaging technology, we now have a fairly broad understanding of the learning brain. For example, a number of studies with both animals and humans have shown the importance of stimulation on dendritic growth in the brain; the more stimulation, the more dendritic growth, and the more dendritic growth, the more connections and more cognitive growth. Exposure to stimulating, enriched environment, however, is not sufficient; learners should also be involved in creating the environment (Sprenger, 1999).

Studies on memory show that meaningful material is learned faster and remembered better than information that is less meaningful (Anderson, 1995; Mayer, 1996). Novel, emotionally relevant, or personally significant information draws attention and thus gets moved from the sensory register to the working memory better than information less so (Barkley, 1996). To facilitate long-term memory storage, learners must engage in rehearsal, but rehearsal and repetition result in storage only if the information is associated with existing knowledge or is somehow elaborated.

In contrast, rote-learned information may be difficult to retrieve. Because retrieval of information is facilitated in a context similar to the one in which it was learned (Blaxton, 1989; Gatbonton & Segalowitz, 2005), students may be able to successfully complete vocabulary or grammar drills in class and pass a test, but not be able retrieve the material in a real life situation.

Learners must also process information in several ways in order for it to be stored into and retrieved from semantic memory. According to Sprenger, ‘semantic memory must be stimulated by associations, comparison, and similarities’ (1999, p. 51), and she suggests some strategies for learners to build their semantic memories. Many of these strategies are applicable in a language class, including joint construction of graphic organizers, peer teaching, summarizing and paraphrasing, role-playing, mnemonic devices and student-generated questions (ibid., pp. 65–8).

Motivation, interest and emotions

According to the affective filter hypothesis (Krashen, 1982), SLA is facilitated or hindered depending, among other factors, on learner motivation. Motivation, in turn, determines how much time and effort learners are willing to spend on learning tasks. Because children learning English as a foreign language may not be intrinsically motivated, they must find the content of lessons interesting and relevant if they are to engage in learning. Motivation and interest have a profound influence on academic achievement (Jalongo, 2007), with Artelt (2005) arguing interest is the most important form of intrinsic motivation. Interest comprises both situational interest and individual interest (Jalongo, 2007), the former being based on novelty, curiosity and the saliency of the information and believed to have a strong effect on learner engagement. Instructional texts that are easy to comprehend, present novel, unusual or surprising content, feature characters or topics learners can identify with, or involve high levels of activity have the potential to evoke situational interest (Hidi & Harackiewicz, 2000). Thus, language learning materials ought to have these characteristics.

Neuroscience research shows that learning is not only a cognitive but also an affective process, with Gilbert (2002) and LeDoux (1993) considering emotions to be critical for learning. As Gilbert (2002) puts it: ‘We have to play to the emotional brain; then and only then, will we open up the intellectual brain’ (p. 2). Emotional states affect learning with the lesson content or learning context generating emotions (surprise, excitement, etc.), which, in turn, generate thoughts, opinions or
questions. Subsequent responses (e.g. anticipation, curiosity or excitement) influence student motivation to engage. While the affective process can be significantly influenced by teacher behaviours, appropriate lesson materials can also generate emotions.

**What we think we know about TEYL and materials**

Since the early 1970s, children's SLA has been the focus of extensive research, and many educators now believe naturalistic immersion in the target language to be the ideal language learning situation for children. Yet classroom foreign language learning is far from immersion, and Cameron (2001) theorizes that children’s foreign language learning occurs through ‘the building of vocabulary and supporting the development of discourse abilities’ (p. 242) and suggests discourse as the appropriate starting point.

Cameron’s theory resonates with the work of Bruner (1983) and Vygotsky (1978), who emphasized the importance of social interaction in learning. Indeed, Vygotsky viewed language and social interaction to be critical for learning. In the process of social interaction, the adult (or a more capable peer) can provide support that Bruner (1983) referred to as scaffolding. In second language classrooms, ‘comprehended’ (Krashen, 1982, p. 33) input, comprehensible output (Swain, 1985), and negotiations of meaning, form (Lyster & Ranta, 1997) and content (Rulon & McCreary, 1986) can create social interaction and provide scaffolding for language learning.

**YL materials**

Much has been written on evaluating language teaching textbooks (e.g. McDonough & Shaw, 1993; Tomlinson, 1998) with a number of criteria being proposed. It is generally agreed that materials should reflect topics that are interesting and relevant to the learners. Richard-Amato (1988) calls for materials that present meaningful and logical discourse, integrate the four language skills, and gradually increase in difficulty, while Watt and Foscolos (1998) emphasize the importance of volume and repetition of language input and output. They propose that activities should cater to learners at different levels of proficiency, thus providing more opportunities for success. Materials should also be culturally appropriate and meaningful (Nelson, 1995), as well as humanizing, taking into account learners’ ‘experience of life, their interests and enthusiasms, their views, attitudes and feelings’ (Tomlinson, 2003, p. 162). Primary school materials must also take into account the holistic development of young learners who are still developing, not only linguistically but also cognitively and psychosocially.

Arnold and Rixon (2008, pp. 45–6), who surveyed 76 teachers in 28 countries, found that the two most valued textbook features were the potential for fun and enjoyment and emphasis on listening and speaking (81.5% each), with interaction and topic-based content taking second place (75% each).

High quality picture storybooks present an appropriate instructional medium in the YL classroom in that they appeal to children’s curiosity, often containing rich but repetitious language, and generating meaningful negotiated discourse (Ghosn, 2002). Research on the use of picture books has been carried out since the late 1970s with very promising results. Elley (1997, 2000) and Elley et al. (1996) report on extensive book flood studies, in which literally...
hundreds of children in several countries have participated and which show picture books’
positive influence on all language skills. Longitudinal studies in Croatia (Djigunovic & Vilke,
2000), Hungary (Lugossy, 2006), Lebanon (Ghosn, 2010) and Poland (Sadowska-Martyka, 2006)
support the findings of Elley and his colleagues. Several smaller studies have also yielded
positive results in India (Aranha, 1985), the United Kingdom (Eade, 1997), Lebanon (Ghosn,
2007) and elsewhere.

Developmental psychology tells us that young children are active and curious explorers of their
environment. Children as young as 4 and 5 are not only interested in things such as toys and
games but also in dinosaurs, robots and space exploration. When young learners come into the
language classroom, they do not shed their curiosity at the door. Yet, many materials developers
appear to underestimate young children as learners, restricting coursebook content to simple
language and simple topics.

What we need to find out

Young learner materials must be examined to determine whether they conform to what we know
and think we know about young learner characteristics, children’s language learning, memory and
motivation. More specifically the following questions about materials need to be answered.

1. Are materials developmentally appropriate for the target age group?
2. Do materials and activities conform to what is believed about SLA and learning?
3. How interesting and relevant are materials likely to be for the target audience?
4. How is learner success and confidence achieved?

Part two

The current match with published materials

Four internationally marketed YL coursebooks were examined: Tops (Hanlon & Kimball, 2008),
Backpack (Herrera & Pinkley, 2009), New Parade (Herrera & Zanata, 2000) and Pockets (Herrera
& Hojel, 2009). The first three are primary level courses, while Pockets targets ages 3 to 5.
Levels one to three of each course were analysed for scope and sequence, and three units were
examined in detail, one from the beginning, one from the middle and one from the end of each
book. Teachers’ books were examined for suggested approaches and strategies.

Developmental appropriateness

Tops, Backpack and New Parade present developmentally appropriate, tested and proven activities,
assuming that learners at level one are at least 6 years old. Pockets, however, raises some
concerns. Although the course presents an array of songs, chants, videos, hands-on projects
and stickers, which young children undoubtedly will enjoy, the academic, book-based approach is surprising bearing in mind the target ages of 3 to 5. One would expect preschool children to learn through immersion in stories, songs, play and other activities rather than from a coursebook. For example, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) (2009) Position Statement on developmentally appropriate practice emphasizes the importance of play, dramatic play in particular, on young children's learning.

While the authors state *Pockets* adopts a natural approach, the lessons imply a traditional structured approach. Vocabulary is presented and practiced in isolation and production of complete sentences is expected in the very first lesson of level one. Some activities in *Pockets* are likely to be too challenging for average 3- and 4-year-olds. For example, in level one children are expected to play a board game in pairs, something not typically associated with 3-year-olds, who are just moving from parallel play to associative play, with some instances of cooperation observed (Santrock, 2007). In levels two and three, children aged 4 and 5 are expected to count items up to 20 and 100 respectively. Student books provide tasks of counting a variety of sets, with pictures in the larger sets very small (in order to fit on the page). For example, in the set of 60, children are to count 1.5 cm tall and 2 mm wide neckties set within a space of $3.2 \times 6.2$ cm, making one-to-one correspondence recognition potentially difficult. Although many young children are able to rote count numbers, counting actual items or pictures can prove challenging. Even some 6-year-olds have difficulty with one-to-one correspondence (Copley, 2000). On a positive note, *Pockets* incorporates a values curriculum, with children learning to be neat, polite, friendly, sharing and caring, etc.

**Match with SLA and learning**

*Linguistic features*

The four examined courses share one troubling characteristic common to most young learner courses, namely the adherence to present tense verbs for over 2 years. *Backpack, Tops* and *New Parade* present the first few past tense verbs only midway through level three (*was, were, went*). In the last unit of *Pockets 3*, children are expected to recognize regular past tense verbs, although they are not presented in the student book. The absence of the past tense is problematic for two reasons. First, discourse limited to the present tense often results in a stilted, unnatural language, as the following abbreviated example from *Backpack 3* illustrates: ‘One day Snake is talking to two birds . . . The birds carry Snake high in the air . . . Snake opens his mouth to bite Eagle. He falls through the air down to the ground. He lands on a cactus. Ouch!’ (Herrera & Pinkley, 2009, pp. 45–6).

Second, past tense is necessary for narrative discourse, the primary mode of children's communication (Meek, 1988). Without past tense verbs, children are denied access to language that would allow them to construct their own narratives in the new language and share their experiences in the new language. Some verbs are also more common in the past than the present tense. For example, a brief search of the British National Corpus (www.natcorp.ox.ac.uk) produced 195,554 instances of *said* but only 67,218 instances of *say*, implying that the former is much more common in actual use. There is no reason to assume that children must first learn the meaning of *say* before understanding *said*, which they easily pick up from story narratives.
Discourse and skills
The discourse generated around the activities in communicatively oriented Backpack and New Parade is likely to be interactive, albeit in the present tense. Tops and Pockets follow a more traditional approach with practice of chunks of language in structured dialogues and pointing to and describing pictures using specific grammatical structures. An example from a unit in Tops 2 illustrates this approach. The target structures around the unit on weather are How was the weather? Was it . . . ? Students listen, look at pictures, point, respond in writing, and read and match. The unit features only brief instances where students actually communicate meaningfully with their peers.

Backpack, Tops and New Parade integrate the skills, while Pockets understandably focuses mainly on listening and speaking. Backpack provides specific phonics and spelling instruction, introduces grammar embedded in songs and dialogues and is accompanied by a content reader thematically related to each unit. Tops provides specific contextualized grammar points, a good number of writing tasks and a special reading feature after every two units.

Volume and repetition
Within the examined units, there seems to be sufficient volume for rehearsal, but the scope and sequence charts do not indicate how much recycling there is of vocabulary and structures across units. If items appear only in a single unit, there may not be sufficient repetition for them to be processed to the long-term memory for later retrieval. In terms of grammar, there appears to be sufficient opportunity within given units for repetition of structures, but, again, less so across units. There is, however, recycling across levels. How meaningful the rehearsal activities are is not clear. The way grammar is practiced in Backpack, New Parade and Pockets matches with Ullman’s (2001a) studies about grammar learning and use of procedural memory, while Tops approach implies more reliance on declarative memory.

Potential relevance for learners
Although the content clearly features topics with which children can identify, not much of the content sampled can be defined as novel, curious or surprising, text characteristics related to situational interest. However, children will undoubtedly enjoy the stickers, cutouts, songs, chants and craft projects. The projects in particular are likely to be motivating and engaging, offering potential for the fun and enjoyment teachers in Arnold and Rixon’s (2008) survey are calling for. Surprisingly, despite research evidence in favour of stories as a medium for language learning, they are conspicuously absent from these four courses. Although some reading selections are labelled as ‘stories, with the exception of two selections in Backpack, they are simply dialogues or narratives without any real storyline.

In global coursebooks, including those examined here, the activities and their settings are usually modelled after the American or British cultural context, including schools, classrooms and communities. While the Anglo setting would be a good source of culture learning, the adopted approach fails to capitalize on this.
Potential for learner success

The earlier mentioned NAEYC Position Statement on developmentally appropriate practice calls for teachers to ‘make plans and adjustments to promote each child’s individual development and learning as fully as possible’ (2009, p. 9). An effort to differentiate instruction is evident only in New Parade, where the teacher’s book offers mixed-ability suggestions. The underlying assumption in the other courses appears to be that all learners will move at an equal pace through the material. Although the courses all progress appropriately in terms of gradually increasing levels of difficulty, the slower learning children might not be able to catch up, thus gradually finding the lessons increasingly more difficult and, consequently, less motivating.

When children enter school, they face a major challenge; they must win the approval of teachers by acquiring specific skills and competencies. If pressured to perform at a higher level of perfection than what they are capable of, children will be frustrated. In his classic Childhood and Society Erik Erikson (1950) explains how children’s willingness to try new things and their ability to handle failure may be adversely affected if they are unable to meet the expectations placed on them and they may develop a sense of inferiority. This in turn can hinder learning by raising the affective filter and lowering motivation. The NAEYC Position Statement cautions that ‘In the high-pressure classroom, children are less likely to develop a love of learning and a sense of their own competence and ability to make choices, and they miss much of the joy of and expansive learning of childhood’ (p. 5).

Suggestions for materials development application

As the practice of teaching English spreads to ever younger populations (one recent coursebook is aimed at 2-year-olds!), it is important for materials developers to keep in mind what is known about children’s cognitive, psychosocial and motor development, as well as their linguistic development. Young children learn best through play and active exploration and experimentation and acquire language within the context of meaningful human interaction rather than through formal book-based lessons. Thus young learner materials should not be modelled after traditional, older learner materials, such as a coursebook. Big illustrated storybooks, accompanied by picture cards, posters, realia, songs and chants are much more appropriate for young children, especially those between the ages of 3 and 6.

Children are naturally drawn to stories, and research has proven storybooks to produce better results than traditional coursebook lessons. Discourse around stories is typically natural and highly interactive, even when the story is set in an unfamiliar context and introduces new concepts (Ghosn, 2002). The language of stories is highly contextualized, facilitating language learning, and stories present the important past tense verbs that children need for their own narrative discourse. Illustrated stories can be used as a starting point to develop motivating thematic units that integrate all four skills while also fostering children’s cognitive development.
An example of materials development application

Materials

Big, oversized easel books offer a perfect medium for story-based instruction in YL classrooms. Only one book is needed for each lesson unit, as children will make their own additional books. Additional materials needed include picture cards featuring key scenes and characters from the story, vocabulary cards, sentence cards on strips of cardboard, character cards and posters of songs and chants. Big books can be printed on write-on/wipe-off paper and can include pages for graphic organizers, vocabulary study and story mapping, among other possibilities. An example of this format is Hampton-Brown’s (2004) beginning level book in English at Your Command! series geared for English language learners in mainstream classes. For the youngest learners (ages 3–5), stories should be accompanied by songs, chants, dramatic play and art, as well as relevant hands-on projects, such as cooking, planting seeds and simple science experiments.

Sample activities

- Teacher places the story on an easel and reads the story using a dialogic approach, stopping to point to the illustrations and engaging the children: ‘See, here is the sleepy cat. Can you see the cat?’ With the second reading, children are invited to come and point to the pictures. With subsequent readings, children will begin to join in the repetitious refrains. Choral reading then follows.

- Children sequence pictures and retell the story using pictures.

- Children dramatize the story. The actors do not need to speak first; the class can read the story chorally while the actors mime the story.

- Simple character puppets can be made from socks or paper bags for children to engage in dramatic play.

- Teacher elicits from children a summary of the story and writes down children’s contributions on a large sheet of paper. Children read the summary chorally a number of times and suggest any changes or revisions. If children can write, they copy the class story on sheets of paper, leaving space for illustrations. Alternatively, the teacher can print the story on blank sheets and make enough copies for the class. The illustrated pages are stapled into books, ideally with cardboard covers. Children take their story home.

- Children ‘write’ their own story, using the dictated summary as a guide but changing some elements. If children cannot yet write, they can develop a class story by dictating to the teacher. If the original story is very short or learners sufficiently proficient, they can adapt the original story. The following is an excerpt from a rather creative story generated by a 6-year-old learner after work on Goldilocks and the Three Bears:

  ‘Onesapona time there were three gorillas. They were Baby Gorilla, Mother Gorilla and Father Gorilla . . . Goldilocks tasted Father Gorilla’s pizza. But it was too hot. She tasted Mother Gorilla’s pizza. It was too cold. She tasted baby Gorilla’s pizza and ate it’. (Ghosn, in press)
● Picture and vocabulary cards are used for a variety of vocabulary games.

● With children who are developing literacy, sentence strips are used to match text with pictures or with text in the big book. They can also be used for jumbled sentences. For very beginners, a single sentence can be cut into three or four pieces for sequencing, with the capitalization and punctuation providing useful clues.

● Selected pages are covered with a transparency: children use erasable markers to circle letters, words, sounds and punctuation marks on the page. Small sticky notes can be used to cover letters to have children guess the hidden letter/s or to cover a word while revealing only the first letter.

● Children rewrite their own stories with teacher-determined changes, depending on the lesson objectives: for example, singular to plural; past tense to present or future; emphasis on negative; dialogue to indirect speech; add adjectives before nouns, etc.

There will be plenty of opportunity for meaningful rehearsal, and the basic materials can be stretched with only the teacher’s imagination as the limit. Stories can be selected around themes reflecting universal values, such as sharing, cooperation and friendship, or themes related to growing plants, transportation, food or changes. For example, a unit can be built around a big book containing a fictional story, a related song or poem, a non-fiction selection, a template of a story map and a graphic organizer for guided writing.

**Conclusion**

As the practice of TEYL gains popularity, the question of appropriate materials must be addressed. The typical coursebook is not necessarily developmentally appropriate for the youngest learners, who will be better served by adopting a storybook-based approach. Good stories present rich and natural language, often with amusing repetitious refrains that children easily pick up. Good children’s stories also feature universal themes and topics of immediate relevance to children. Dramatizing stories is highly engaging and will help children process the language to their long-term memory. Moving away from the rigidity of a coursebook will also enable teachers to better differentiate learning and ensure everyone can succeed. Educators also need to keep in mind David Elkind’s (1988) cautionary note in *Miseducation: Preschoolers at Risk* about the false concept of young children’s competence: ‘we miseducate young children when we assume that their learning abilities are comparable to those of older children and that they can be taught with materials and with the same instructional procedures appropriate to school-age children’ (p. 59).

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The authors of the chapters in Part One seem to be agreed that there is a mismatch between what the current applied linguistics literature recommends and what is typically done in the classroom by teachers and students. This mismatch seems to be most apparent when the recommendations are compared to what coursebooks typically ask their users to do in the classroom. This seems to apply especially to global coursebooks but to some extent to local imitations of them too. Brian Tomlinson, in his chapters on second language acquisition and on classroom research, Chapters 2 and 4 respectively, finds that what applied linguists say facilitates language acquisition seems to be given very little consideration when coursebooks are developed. Peter Lutzker, in his chapter on physical movement in language acquisition and use (Chapter 3) cannot find any application of the literature in this area of applied linguistics to coursebook development. Irma-Kaarina Ghosn, in her chapter on language learning for young learners (Chapter 5), is critical of the way very young children are made to study a coursebook rather than being encouraged to enjoy taking part in activities. She finds very little correspondence between the coursebooks in her study and SLA theory, developmental theory and discourse theory. All three authors seem to be recommending similar types of materials in order to help learners acquire language in principled and potentially effective ways. Brian Tomlinson recommends rich exposure to language in use plus opportunities to communicate purposefully. Peter Lutzker favours teacher handbooks with engaging texts and suggestions for using them to stimulate creative drama activities. Irma-Kaarina Ghosn proposes replacing the rigidity of the coursebook with a storybook approach in which dramatization is used to engage the learners and help them to process language to their long-term memory. All three authors favour an experiential approach in which learners discover things for themselves as a result of engaged exposure. Tomlinson also advocates an analytical phase in which learners do focus on language after first of all experiencing it in use.

The only correspondence between theory and practice seems to be found in supplementary materials and in local materials development projects. Such a disconnection between theory and practice cannot be found in, for example, engineering and medicine. So why is it found in materials development for language learning? In addition to the possible reasons put forward
already in Part One, could it be that the consumers of engineering and medicine accept their lack of expertise and they trust the experts, whereas the users of learning materials think they know how a language should be learned. It seems obvious to most learners of a language and to many of their parents and some of their teachers and examiners too that in order to learn a language you need to be taught grammatical and lexical items and to practise them until you get them right. But that is not what the research shows. There is evidence that many coursebook developers are aware of the gap between the research and their published practice but that they are made to compromise by publishers who ‘know’ what they can and cannot sell. For example, Gray (2010, p. 115) researched the regulation of content in global coursebooks and says that Littlejohn (1992) was right in concluding that ‘ELT writers were essentially agents writing to an agenda set for them by the publishers’. Bell and Gower (2011) report on the compromises they were persuaded to make when developing a major series of global coursebooks and Hegelson (personal communication) says he recently had his name taken off a second edition of a coursebook in which the content had become sanitized and every question had to have a correct answer. I have also experienced such publisher insistence myself and I once withdrew (with my co-author) a proposal for a book of discourse discovery activities because the publisher insisted that every question had to have a correct answer so that teachers could use the activities as tests. For very practical reasons of reliability and face validity school examinations tend to test language learning using objective measures of ability. Parents, teachers and students target examination success and therefore publishers produce coursebooks which will help them to achieve it. This means that many of the activities replicate examination tasks which have correct answers. These activities will restrict how students learn and use language and will result in an inevitable mismatch between theory and practice (Tomlinson, 2005). Not until school examinations start to reward the learners’ ability to respond personally to extensive spoken and written texts, to communicate purposefully in order to achieve intended effects, to make and articulate discoveries about language use and to interact appropriately and effectively will the gap between theory and practice be reduced.

Another possibility, of course, is that the theorists are wrong and the practitioners are right. We will never know until the theories are actually applied and the effects of the applications are investigated.

Bibliography

PART TWO

Aspects of language use
It is safe to say that we know a great deal more about the nature of spoken language than we did 30 years ago. One of the major reasons for this is technology: more sophisticated recording equipment has allowed the compilation of large computerized databases of spoken language (corpora) which can then be analysed efficiently and systematically using dedicated software. Large spoken corpora such as CANCODE (Cambridge and Nottingham Corpus of Discourse English) or the spoken component of the BNC (British National Corpus), which have been carefully balanced to include a wide range of speakers and spoken genres, allow us to gain, at least to some extent, a representative picture of how a particular variety of the language is used, in this case British English. This revolution in the quality of data available to the spoken language researcher has been reflected in the publication of the Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English (Biber et al., 1999) and the Cambridge Grammar of English (Carter & McCarthy, 2006), both of which contain substantial sections on conversational grammar. While acknowledging this revolution in the quality of data, it is as well to strike a cautionary note at the outset: no corpus, no matter how carefully compiled, can be truly representative, and even the largest corpora only represent a fraction of the language output of a community (Gavioli & Aston, 2001). Nevertheless, spoken language research based on corpus data has produced a wealth of new insights.

What can we say with confidence about spoken language? First of all, we now have a very clear idea of what the most frequent words of spoken English are, and the differences between a spoken word frequency list and a written word frequency list. While the high frequency words in both lists are predominantly grammatical, even at this level we can see differences, with the pronouns ‘I’ and ‘you’ more frequent in spoken English. As O’Keeffe et al. (2007, p. 159) note, this difference in frequency reflects the interactive nature of conversation. They also point out that the high frequency of ‘well’, ‘just’ and ‘right’, when their contexts of use are examined,
underlines the importance of words which have ‘pragmatic functions in the organisation and management of conversation and in the speaker-listener relationship, particularly in terms of maintaining good relations’ (O’Keeffe et al., 2007, p. 159). Further evidence for this line of argument comes when we consider that the high frequency of words such as ‘know’, ‘see’ and ‘mean’ can in part be attributed to their appearance in lexical chunks such as ‘you know’, ‘you see’ and ‘I mean’. Frequency information is not limited to words used in speech: Shin and Nation (2008, p. 339), for example, researched the frequency of collocations in speech and concluded both that collocations are more frequent in speech than in writing and that ‘a large number of these would qualify for inclusion in the most frequent 2,000 words of English, if no distinction was made between single words and collocation’. They also note that interjections and amplifiers are the most frequent collocations, once again showing the influence of interactive concerns on the nature of spoken language. It will come as no surprise, then, that in analysing lexical chunks in CANCODE, O’Keeffe et al. (2007, p. 71) conclude that many of the most frequent chunks fall into the pragmatic categories of ‘discourse marking, the preservation of face and the expression of politeness, acts of hedging and purposeful vagueness . . .’.

Turning now from lexis to grammar, the general tenor of findings has been to suggest that there are grammatical features that are systematic and pervasive in speech across a wide range of speakers that have received inadequate attention in grammars (McCarthy & Carter, 1995; McCarthy, 1998; Biber et al., 1999). I would argue that there are two aspects to these findings: recent spoken language research has provided much fuller descriptions of features which had received little attention before and/or has provided new insights into features which were quite well-established in existing grammars. It will be helpful to take two examples. First, to show how corpus research has provided fuller descriptions of certain structures, we can look at the syntactic feature of tails (also known as right dislocation) illustrated in the example below (from the Bolton corpus, Timmis, 2010a):

They all want throwing out, the government.

This violates the canonical rules of (written) syntax as the subject is repeated after the classical s + v+ x clause, and for this reason has often, as the term right dislocation suggests, been regarded as deviant, or as a structure to carry out repair or afterthought. However, its striking co-occurrence with evaluation in informal conversation (McCarthy & Carter, 1997), and its occasional use in informal writing, suggest that there is something more to it than this. Additionally, its occurrence in the example below, suggests it cannot simply be a repair or afterthought structure as the ‘tail’ component does not clarify the initial subject at all.

‘She’s a good player, she is.’ (Bolton Corpus, Timmis, 2010a)

The use of this structure seems to be widespread (McCarthy & Carter, 1995), historically well-established (Durham, 2007; Timmis, 2010a) and common in languages other than English (Lambrecht, 2001). In view of this evidence, the case for dismissing the structure as deviant seems to be very weak, and it seems to deserve a place in descriptive grammars.
Let us take a second example to show how corpus research has added a new dimension to an existing, well-established description. In contrast to tails, the discourse marker ‘though’ is well-established in traditional grammars. It is often presented as a conjunction used in either initial or medial position as in the invented (though true) examples below:

1. Though Brian comes from Blackpool, he supports Liverpool.
2. Ivor supports Bolton, though he lives in Leeds.

Spoken language research, however, presents a strikingly different picture of the use of ‘though’ in conversation. Conrad (1999, 2004) makes two interesting points about the use of ‘though’ in conversation:

1. It is often used clause-finally as a linking adverbial, for example,
   
   I enjoy the job. I don’t know if I’ll be doing it in 10 years time though (Teachers Telling Tales corpus, Timmis, 2010b):

2. It can be used interactively between speakers, for example,

   
   S1: It's not nice
   S2: It's funny though
   (Example from the BNC)

Timmis (2011) takes this line of argument a stage further and shows that in his data, the clause final and interactive use is by far the most common in conversation. He also points to its frequent co-occurrence with evaluation. In these two cases – tails and the spoken use of ‘though’ – we can at least say with reasonable confidence that previous descriptions of the features did not do them justice, and that we now have a fuller picture of their use, particularly with reference to pragmatic aspects. These are two examples among many (see Biber et al., 1999 and Carter & McCarthy, 2006 for further examples).

There are things we can claim to know, then, about the frequency and function of words, collocations and chunks and about the frequency, form and function of certain grammatical features which are either peculiar to spoken language or appear to operate differently in spoken language. However, we need also to account for these findings by asking why spoken language differs from written language in some important respects. What do we think we know about this relationship between the goals and conditions of conversation and the nature of spoken language? Progress has been made on this question by adopting a functional approach which relates the explanation of features to the conditions and determinants of conversation.

Drawing on Biber et al. (1999) and Ruehlemann (2007), we can consider four main determinants of the nature of spoken language and look at examples of how each determinant can shape spoken language use:

- Real time processing
- Interactive concerns
Interpersonal concerns

One grammatical feature which has been attributed to the pressure of real time processing constraints is the use of ‘there’s’ with a plural noun phrase complement (Biber et al., 1999; Cheshire, 1999; Ruehlemann, 2007). Ruehlemann (2007) notes that the use of ‘there’s’ with singular and plural NP complements simplifies online processing by obviating the need for a singular/plural decision. For example, there’s no dragons these days (Bolton Corpus). It is also easier to manage phonologically than ‘there are’. Cheshire (1999) adds another dimension to the argument by showing that ‘there’s’ is often used turn-initially so that there is even more processing pressure through the need to compete for a turn. Other examples of spoken grammar which have been at least partially explained in terms of real time processing constraints are ellipsis and contractions (Biber et al., 1999), and the preference for direct mode in conversational speech reporting (McCarthy, 1998; Ruehlemann, 2007), for example, ‘He said, “What are you doing?”’, rather than ‘he asked what I was doing’.

For an example of the role of interactive concerns in shaping spoken language we can return to our earlier discussion of the interactive use of ‘though’:

S1: It’s not nice
S2: It’s funny though

S2 can be seen as using S1’s utterance as an ellipted subordinate clause, that is, S2’s utterance is understood as:

It’s funny though [it’s not nice]

Here we see evidence for Biber et al’s (1999, p. 1045) argument that ‘conversation is co-constructed by two or more interlocutors, dynamically adapting their expression to the ongoing exchange’. In similar vein, Tao and McCarthy (2001) have noted that ‘which’ can be used clause-initially and interactively, for example,

S1: The inspection is in November
S2: which is why we need to start the paperwork now.

The role of interpersonal concerns appears to be paramount in conversation (e.g. Aijmer, 2005; Ruehlemann, 2007). One role of features such as ellipsis and tails appears to be to index informality (McCarthy & Carter, 1995), for example,

‘Nice olives, these.’ (at a dinner party among friends, Teachers Telling Tales corpus, Timmis, 2010b)

In other words, such features appear to have an affective function. It would be quite possible to say, ‘These olives are nice’, but the speaker makes a choice (normally subconsciously) to use structures which contribute to establishing an informal relationship. What we have here is a grammar of affect or a grammar of choice (McCarthy & Carter, 1995, 1997).
Lexis too reflects interpersonal concerns. McCarthy (2003), for example, has drawn attention to the importance of good listenership in conversation and its role in spoken lexis. A word such as ‘absolutely’, for example, turns out to be more frequent as a ‘response token’ than as an intensifier (O’Keeffe et al., 2007), for example,

S1: We need to improve our marketing
S2: Absolutely

Biber et al. (1999) also point to the influence of interpersonal concerns on spoken lexis, noting that the most common predicative adjectives in conversation are evaluative.

Situational ellipsis is the feature which perhaps most obviously shows the influence of shared context on spoken language. If an item can easily be recovered from the shared context, then there is no need to specify it. ‘See you tomorrow’, for example, could be seen as an institutionalized form of ellipsis. There is no need to specify the subject as it is obvious. Indeed, the full form ‘I’ll see you tomorrow’ is marked and can have a quite different pragmatic force. The prevalence of pronouns and pro-forms in conversation also shows the imprint of shared context on conversation (Biber et al., 1999). Situational ellipsis also turns out to be a good example of how features can be explained in terms of one or more of the four determinants of conversation we have discussed. As ellipsis allows the omission of elements which would be required in writing, it helps the speaker to deal with processing constraints; it also indexes informality.

Spoken language research has shed interesting descriptive light on a number of grammatical and lexical features which are typical of speech. There is though, a great deal we still need to know. In terms of applied linguistics, and language teaching in particular, there is also a formidable challenge in responding to what we already know, or think we know. We need, I would argue, to ask three interrelated questions:

1. Can we identify a core affective grammar of spoken English?
2. Is such a grammar relevant to the needs of learners who may well be using English predominantly with other non-native speakers?
3. Can we design materials which teach relevant spoken grammar in socioculturally appropriate ways?

The third question is deferred until Part two of the chapter, but we deal now with the first two.

We can approach the question of a core affective grammar from three different perspectives: sociolinguistics; historical linguistics and first language acquisition. From a sociolinguistic perspective, we need to know how socially widespread a feature is. If a particular feature is strongly identified with, for example, a particular social class, or age group or community of practice, we will be less inclined to include it in our core. Crucially, we need to include non-native expert users of English in our notion of ‘socially widespread’. While much earlier spoken language research was conducted with exclusively native speaker corpora, corpora of non-native spoken English are growing both in size and number and should help us in addressing the sociolinguistic aspect of a core affective grammar. Let us take a specific example to illustrate this notion of ‘socially widespread’: the quotative use of ‘like’ as in, ‘I was like “what’s going on?”’ Adolphs and Carter...
(2003) argue that this feature is used predominantly by people under the age of 30 in British English. If that remains the case, it would probably sound strange coming, for example, from the 65 year old Estonian woman I once taught. Ellipsis, on the other hand, while it seems to be more common in certain genres than others, does not seem to have social boundaries (McCarthy & Carter, 1995).

It may seem incongruous to speak of an historical perspective when corpus-based spoken language research is so young, but I would argue that it will become increasingly important if we compile generically and demographically aligned spoken corpora for the purposes of tracking language change (which occurs relatively rapidly in spoken language). To return to our example of quotative ‘like’, we can observe that this is a relative newcomer, having arrived in British English in the early 1990s. It remains to be seen whether it will remain common in the language and, if it does, whether it will become more socially widespread. Even with existing historical corpora, there are interesting findings. Timmis (2010a) has shown that tails were frequently used in a particular community in the 1930s and that their use is strikingly similar to current descriptions.

To my knowledge, no systematic work has been done on the order in which features of spoken language are acquired in the first language, although some work has been done on when children begin to take interactive control of a conversation (Caines et al., 2011). To take an anecdotal example of acquisition and interactive control, I remember my son’s first (I think) question tag, ‘That car shouldn’t be there . . . [pause to compute polarity, modality and pronoun reference] . . . should it?’ The function here may well be affective in including the listener, but it also seems to have a certain pragmatic force in demanding an answer. Both pragmatic functions may well be useful to the learner of English. It seems reasonable to suppose that the first acquired spoken grammar features would be either the most important (at least in the child’s communicative context) and/or the most manageable to process. Such information would not dictate what we include in a core affective grammar, but it might inform what we include.

The sociocultural aspect of the applied linguistic challenge in relation to spoken language research has been most succinctly expressed by Prodromou (1996, p. 88), ‘. . . What does the grammar of informal, spoken English mean for the non-native speaker of English, and what is the pedagogic relevance of this particular variety of English in the context of English as an international language?’ There is an interesting paradox here: just as it is becoming possible to describe more accurately what native speaker language is like, commentators are increasingly questioning the relevance of native speaker norms for learners of English. If the majority of communication in English takes place between non-native speakers, and that preponderance is highly likely to rise, why encumber learners with the ‘luxury’ items of native speaker spoken language? And if the primary function of these features is the construction and negotiation of relationships and identity, does teaching these features involve imposing a false identity on the learners?

To begin to answer these questions we need, I would argue, three kinds of research. First, as noted above, we need more corpus research on the spoken language used by non-native expert users of English to see how they cope with the affective aspect of conversation. This will allow us to establish whether common features of native speaker spoken language are used in the same way by expert non-native users, whether expert non-native users have found other ways of achieving what native speakers achieve affectively, or whether there is an ‘affective gap’. Secondly, we need to evaluate what spoken language sounds like without these native speaker spoken features. This is a very challenging kind of research as it necessarily involves subjective interpretation, but with
ready access to multimodal corpora (with transcript, audio and video), seemingly quixotic tasks such as measuring affect may become more feasible. The third kind of research we need is into the attitudes of teachers and learners to these questions. Timmis (2002), for example, conducted such a survey with 400 adult students from 15 different countries and 250 teachers, divided almost equally into native and non-native speakers, in 50 different countries. This research showed that a majority of students expressed a wish to learn native speaker spoken grammar, but were markedly more equivocal when shown actual examples of native speaker speech. The majority of teachers felt that learners should be exposed to such language, but expressed misgivings about these features becoming part of their productive repertoire. This study, however, was a snapshot in time and, while the numbers and geographical spread may look impressive at first sight, the sample is minuscule given the (increasing) size of the English language learning population. Local studies addressing these questions would be welcome.

To summarize what we know, what we think we know and what we need to know about spoken language, I would like to present a brief case study of a feature we have mentioned a number of times, the syntactic feature of tails as in, ‘She has her own horse, has Nancy’. We think we know that the structure may function to disambiguate an underspecified subject, but that more often it seems to add, to borrow Carter’s (2004) phrase, an ‘affective contour’ to what we are saying, particularly when we are making evaluative comments in informal conversation. We need to know whether the structure is used in the same way and for the same purposes in different speech communities. We also need to know whether non-native expert users have found different ways to add an affective contour to evaluative comments, and whether learners and teachers want or feel the need for this structure. If in pursuing this knowledge, we do establish a case for teaching the structure, we need to know how to teach it; but that is the business of Part two of the chapter.

Finally, Tannen (1984, p. 6) points out that ‘Conversation . . . is an awesome area of investigation because it is so vast and elusive’. Although she was writing in 1984, that remains the case. It is what makes the area so fascinating and why it leaves so much scope for new research and new researchers.

**Part two**

In 1995, Michael McCarthy and Ronald Carter published a seminal article on the implications of spoken language research for ELT in *English Language Teaching Journal*. The article, entitled ‘Spoken language: what is it and how can we teach it?’ brought the debate about the applicability of spoken corpus findings to the attention of ELT practitioners. In the first part of this chapter, we addressed the first part of their question. We now turn to the second part ‘how can we teach it?’, or more precisely, ‘What kind of materials do we need to teach spoken language?’

Our first port of call in seeking an answer to this question is an extensive materials survey carried out by Cullen and Kuo (2007). Cullen and Kuo (2007) were interested in how far findings from spoken corpus research had filtered through to ELT coursebooks. They included in their survey 24 general EFL coursebooks published in the United Kingdom since 2000 (though some coursebooks were from the same suite of coursebooks, for example, different levels of *Headway*).
Their interest was specifically in the coverage and treatment of spoken grammar features. They considered three kinds of features:

1. Category A features, which they define as productive grammatical structures which ‘involve a degree of grammatical encoding in their production and a degree of grammatical decoding in their interpretation’ (p. 365). As an example, they give question tags, but we could also include in this category our example of tails from part one.

2. Category B features, which they define as ‘fixed lexicogrammatical units’, and which can be equated with our examples of collocations and chunks in part one, for example, you know; I see; I mean

3. Category C features, which they define as a departure from a prescriptive rule, for example, using ‘less’ rather than ‘fewer’.

Cullen and Kuo (p. 361) conclude 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 [i.e. category B], and common syntactic structures [i.e. category A] peculiar to conversation are either ignored or confined to advanced levels as interesting extras’. They also commented on the methodology used to present features of spoken grammar, and noted that many coursebooks followed a similar procedure which typically involved the following stages:

- Exposure to the feature through a semi-scripted listening text;
- Global comprehension task on the listening text;
- Focus on the target feature (through repeated listening or use of the transcript);
- Brief explanation of the feature and questions;
- Short controlled practice activity.

Cullen and Kuo (2007) also point out that this procedure has much in common with the i-i-i (illustration – induction – interaction) paradigm for teaching spoken grammar proposed by McCarthy and Carter (1995) and elaborated to some extent by Timmis (2005). We should note, however, that neither McCarthy and Carter (1995) nor Timmis (2005) included controlled practice in their proposals. The overall picture presented by Cullen and Kuo (2007) suggests that spoken language research has filtered through to coursebooks, but in restricted ways, and with wide variation between coursebooks in how systematically spoken language is treated. In a word, we could say coursebooks have dipped their toes in the water.

I would like to add to this picture by focusing closely on two coursebooks: Innovations (Dellar & Walkley, 2005) and Touchstone (McCarthy et al., 2006). I have chosen these two books for three reasons:

1. Both books advertise a particular focus on natural spoken language. Indeed, Innovations was singled out by Cullen and Kuo (2007) as a coursebook which dealt with spoken language more extensively than the average (Touchstone was not included in the survey).
2 In both cases, one of the co-authors has been quite explicit about their approach to teaching spoken language (Dellar, 2004 for Innovations; McCarthy, 2004 for Touchstone).


We will consider each book in relation to three aspects of spoken language materials: text; language selection; methodology.

**Text**

**Innovations**

The first thing to say about Innovations is that a conversation is prominent in the unit and can be said to drive the unit (Dellar, personal communication). The conversations contextualize the target grammatical feature, whether this is a particularly spoken feature or not. Dellar (2004, p. 1) is unequivocal that such conversations should be scripted, arguing that corpora cannot show us typical conversations or even typical responses to given questions: ‘. . . if we want to present our students with models of the kinds of conversations they themselves might actually want to have, we are forced to fall back on our (actually ample) experience of such conversations in order to script them. However, I would argue that it is precisely because we have got such broad experience of such conversations that we do tend to know how they work and sound and look.’

**Touchstone**

Conversation is also central to each unit in Touchstone, although the conversational texts contextualize the target spoken language features rather than other grammatical features dealt with in the unit. Unlike Innovations, Touchstone conversations are based on corpus information on natural usage and on the kinds of conversation one finds in the corpus: ‘Textbook writers observe usage in corpora and adapt corpus texts and conversations so that they will not be intimidating or confusing for learners. In this way, teachers and learners can work with familiar types of materials, knowing that they are based on reliable and authentic sources’ (McCarthy, 2004, p. 6).

**Comment**

My own view is that there are two overriding criteria for spoken language texts: they should be plausible as natural interaction and motivating. The route to plausibility may differ: those with a scriptwriter’s ear for dialogue may be able to arrive at plausibility through intuition. The risk with this approach, however, is that the students’ exposure to language may be circumscribed by the materials writer’s idiolect and ability to project other identities in dialogue. There is no reason why intuition cannot be supported by reference to corpora and plausibility achieved by adaptation or
recontextualization of corpus conversations, that is, using naturally occurring data, but changing the speakers and/or the context and/or combing data from different corpus conversations. The motivation criterion presents a challenge: as McCarthy (1998) has noted, many of the most interesting features of spoken language are present in the most mundane conversations. There would seem to be possibilities, however, in areas such as soap operas and reality TV, where the context of the conversation provides motivation, and in recordings of teachers’ own conversations (Timmis, 2010b), which might exploit learners’ curiosity about their teachers. There may also be possibilities, as we shall see, in the creative recontextualization of corpus conversations.

Language selection

Innovations

The main vehicle for the focus on spoken language are the ‘Real English’ slots, although it is fair to say that all the grammar, whether particularly spoken or not, is treated with an emphasis on its applicability in speech. Below is an indicative sample of spoken language features covered in Innovations:

- Lexical chunks
  
  for example, what about you? I can imagine; that sounds good; have a quiet night in; give you a ring;
  
  How about . . .; shall we say . . .; do you mind if . . .

- Non-canonical grammar
  
  for example, me and my brother; there’s + plural NP

- Cultural conventions
  
  for example, terms of address; conventions for times/dates/ distance; conventional euphemism (e.g. passed away)

- Colloquial vocabulary
  
  for example, guy

- Grammar miscellany
  
  for example, a bit older

Two things are striking about this indicative sample. First, the focus on lexicogrammatical units identified by Cullen and Kuo (2007) is evident. Secondly, it is difficult to infer any overall rationale for the selection from this sample.
Touchstone

There are two vehicles for a focus on spoken language in Touchstone. Every unit has a section on conversational strategies where the function of a particular spoken language feature is discussed. There are also 'In conversation' boxes where information is given about the spoken use of a feature, that is, the feature itself may not be restricted to spoken language, but it may have a particular application in speech. To exemplify this, we can return to our example of 'though' in Part one: as a conversation strategy, it is often used to soften disagreement; when used in speech it is often clause-final, whereas in writing it is often in initial or medial position. Below is an indicative sample of features covered in Touchstone:

- Spoken use of ‘mainsteam’ lexis
  for example, really/sure/definitely as responses

- Lexical chunks
  for example, at least; I’d better go; you know what I mean; whatever you’re having; it seems like . . .; if you ask me; the thing is; did you hear about . . .

- Syntax
  for example, the use of always + present continuous to express irritation; the clause-final use of ‘though’

We can note that there is some similarity with Innovations in terms of the focus on lexical chunks, although in Touchstone there is also a focus on the spoken use of individual words and on syntactic features. However, McCarthy (2004) speaks of ‘a carefully crafted syllabus’ and is explicit that the selection of items is informed by corpus frequency lists and by a focus on features hitherto ignored which are ‘at the heart of real communication’, for example, the use of past continuous to introduce reported speech.

Comment

The choice here seems to be between a fixed intuition-informed spoken language syllabus and a fixed corpus-informed syllabus. However, there is, I believe, a third possibility, which is to enable teachers to be ‘systematic opportunists’ by acquainting them with spoken language research findings and equipping them with the methodological tools to exploit opportunities to focus on spoken language which are presented, for example, by the listening texts used in class or by conversations which take place in class. Coursebooks such as Innovations or Touchstone would have an important role to play in developing this systematic opportunism by providing examples of features to focus on and/or particular activities which may be used in teaching spoken language.
Methodology

Innovations
The ‘Real English’ slots in Innovations usually carry brief information about the function/use of a feature, but do not involve practice of the feature.

Touchstone
Touchstone follows a situational PPP approach. Typically, the spoken language feature is contextualized in an opening dialogue and attention drawn to the target feature. This is followed by controlled and freer practice. Indeed, McCarthy (2004, p. 15) is explicit that the methodology is quite conventional in this respect: ‘Teachers and learners should expect that, in most ways, corpus-informed materials will look like traditionally prepared materials. The presentation of new language and activity types will be familiar. Certainly, teachers do not need any additional knowledge to use them.’

Comment
My own position, set out in Timmis (2005), was that productive practice was unnecessary, and perhaps unhelpful. The exclusive focus on noticing (McCarthy & Carter, 1995; Timmis, 2005) has, however, been questioned by Kuo (2006) and Mumford (2009), on the grounds that certain features are important for learners’ fluency, and should, therefore, be practised so that they can become a part of the learners’ productive repertoire. Jones (2007), on the other hand, argues for productive practice on the grounds that it can actually contribute to noticing. I find Jones’ (2007) argument more convincing as there is no guarantee that productive practice will embed a feature in a learner’s repertoire; there is, however, a chance that it will enhance noticing. I have, then, modified my rather austere 2005 position to allow for some experimentation with the feature.

Sample materials
I present below some sample materials focusing on spoken language. The materials are based on Circus, an episode in the clay animation series Creature Comforts developed by Nick Park. It is as well to be aware that this series features talking animals, although, to my knowledge, there are no corpora of animal spoken English. The materials are intended to illustrate some possible ways to explore spoken English in class and are followed by a rationale in terms of text, language selection and methodology. I would use these materials with an upper-intermediate class simply because the listening work is quite challenging, but that does not at all mean that I think work on spoken language should be restricted to this level.
The Joys of the Circus

Task 1
Discuss these questions with a partner:

- Do you like circuses? Why? Why not?
- How many circus animals can you name in English?
- How many circus performers can you name in English? For example, acrobat

Task 2
As you listen to the animals talk about their experience of performing, make a note of which animal or animals refer to:

- The relaxing effect of performing;
- Embarrassments suffered while performing;
- Communication with the audience;
- Their own impact on the audience.

Task 3
1. Put the words below into an appropriate order.
   about performing excites me is that that the thing of any tension it’s a release

a) Listen to what the elephant says and compare your sentence.

b) Write down the sentence the monkeys say with the same structure. [The thing is . . . ]

Task 4
Work on one of the tasks below.
Group 1: Watch the scene again and write down all the phrases which include ‘like’.
Group 2: Watch the scene again and write down all the phrases which include ‘kind’.

Now discuss these questions with another group:
1. Do you think ‘like’ and ‘kind’ are a necessary part of the phrases they are in?
2. If they are not necessary, why are they there?

Task 5
Watch the lion and the cow talking about their embarrassing experiences and listen for words and phrases which mean:

1. There was an exciting atmosphere;
2. Strange;
3. I thought I was going to die.

Task 6
Create a story from your own experience which ends with one of the following phrases:

1. There was a real buzz;
2. It was weird;
3. I thought I was a goner.

Complete the sentence below in any way you like.

1. The thing I like about Creature Comforts is. . . .
2. What I like about Creature Comforts is. . . .
Text

An important reason for the choice of the text is the motivation criterion: the film, featuring animals talking about their experiences in the circus is very amusing and popular. It is not so obvious at first sight how the film meets the plausibility criterion. The dialogue is, however, taken from naturally occurring data: interviews with ordinary people whose words are then transposed to the mouths of the animals in the film. The interviews are presumably framed to produce answers relevant to the topic of the film, but they are unscripted and unrehearsed. The film represents, then, an extreme (and extremely good) example of the creative recontextualization of naturally occurring data. Its very humour lies in the comic gap between the plausibility of the language and the implausibility of the creatures producing the language.

Language selection

My choice of language to focus on was guided by both intuition and an explicit knowledge of corpus findings. My intuition will undoubtedly have been influenced by my teaching experience and my corpus research. It has also been influenced, I am sure, by my experience of learning spoken French and searching for conversational formulae and strategies to develop my conversational fluency. Overall, at an intuitive level, I have a feeling that coursebooks tend to look either at written language or at socially marked colloquial language and/or slang, ignoring (with the exception of Innovations and Touchstone) relatively socially unmarked and frequent colloquial language. Into this category I would put ‘buzz’ and ‘weird’ (Task 5). We could also include in this category an example from Innovations, the use of ‘go’ as in ‘how did your weekend go?’ There are also structures which intuition tells me are underutilized by learners, for example, ‘The thing I . . . . is . . . . ’ (Task 3). My intuition will certainly be fallible, but it may be a reasonable starting point for an exploration of the spoken language in the text.

My explicit knowledge of spoken research findings tells me that ‘like’ is common and multifunctional and that ‘kind of’ is an example of vague language, which is pervasive in everyday language (Task 4). I am also aware that the use of ‘like’ to introduce reported speech is socially marked (Adolphs & Carter, 2003), though it may be becoming less so, and that the use of vague language is, at least in part, to do with projection of identity, perhaps an affable, relaxed identity (O’Keeffe et al., 2007). For this reason, I include discussion of appropriate use of these features (Task 4), but not productive practice.

Methodology

The most obvious feature of the methodology is that it follows the principle of focusing on global comprehension and enjoyment (Tasks 1 and 2) before a close focus on language. I would like to draw attention to four other aspects of the methodology:

1 Task 3 involves a comparison between the learner’s expectations and the reality of spoken language, which, I would argue, is a useful route to noticing.
2 Task 4 involves discussion of the function and appropriacy of certain kinds of spoken language.

3 There is a ‘light touch’ productive focus in Task 6.

4 All the tasks provide challenging intensive listening practice.

It is in respect to point 4 that I think there is a need for a shift in methodological mindset, and perhaps to differ from McCarthy (2004) in this respect. Specifically, I feel there is a need to acknowledge that the same task can have different outcomes for different learners. Learner A may only value the intensive listening practice; learner B may only value the spoken language; learner C may value both (and there is always a learner D!).

In conclusion, it can be seen that applied linguistic findings in the area of spoken language research are beginning to be applied in materials, though somewhat slowly and unsystematically. This is quite reasonable: findings have to go through a pedagogic filtering process and there are formidable challenges:

1 Can we identify features of maximum use to learners which they can use in sociolinguistically appropriate ways?

2 Can we identify (or construct) motivating texts which incorporate features of spoken language and are plausible as natural interaction?

3 Can we develop tasks which facilitate the discovery and exploration of spoken language?

In the sample materials, I have tried to outline an approach which might help in exploring the answers to these questions, because ultimately, I believe, answers will come from the interaction of theory and practice.

**Bibliography**


7

Vocabulary

Alan Maley

Part one

What do we know about vocabulary?

The short answer is 'quite a lot'. We certainly know that there is plenty of it – there are far more words than there are rules of syntax. We also know that words behave differently from each other in some rule-governed way, even if we shall probably never apprehend, still less learn, all these collocational rules.

Even in the ‘traditional’ teaching of English it was customary to teach about words and how they behave. However, it was really only with the work of West, Palmer and Hornby in the 1930s that serious attention was paid to word frequency – in the General Service List of English Words (West, 1953) and the pioneering Advanced Learners’ Dictionary (Hornby et al., 1952). The ‘great leap forward’ however, only really came when computerized treatment of large corpora became possible. Sinclair’s work with the COBUILD corpus and the dictionary which was its offspring (Sinclair, 1987) mark a turning point in our knowledge and understanding of vocabulary From this point on, it became possible to base our statements about language on large samples of running words drawn from naturally occurring text. In doing so, it became clear that the borderland between syntax and lexis is more blurred than previously thought, so we have seen the emergence of lexico-grammar. Meantime, the COBUILD corpus was followed by ever larger and more specialized corpora, and more sophisticated and refined techniques for analysing the data they provided.

Some key aspects of vocabulary

In this section I shall try to summarize what we know about vocabulary under its major aspects.
Frequency

As noted above, it was frequency which was the focus of the early practical research into vocabulary as a key component of reading. The General Service List (West, 1953) developed by West and Thorndike, formed the basis for controlling vocabulary in graded readers and teaching materials for many years. ELT publishers still have their preferred frequency lists which authors have to comply with more or less strictly – but now the lists are based on the much more copious and accurate information derived from computer corpora. All the new generation learner’s dictionaries and thesauruses incorporate information about the frequency of vocabulary, both in the spoken and the written language. The interesting paradox about frequency is, of course, that the more frequent a word is, the greater its range. That is, the more different meanings it is likely to have. So the fact of being frequent does not necessarily make a word any easier to learn. Rare and unusual-looking words may prove easier to retain because of their salience – but because of their restricted range they are also less useful.

Core/nuclear vocabulary

Related to frequency is the notion of ‘core’ vocabulary. It was soon realized that frequency alone was not sufficient to determine usefulness (Carter, 1987; Stubbs, 1986) Carter offers a number of tests for ‘coreness’:

- syntactic substitution: some words can substitute for others, while others are dispensable. Many dictionaries use this to derive their ‘defining vocabularies’, for example.
- antonymity: the more core a word is, the easier it is to find an antonym for it.
- collocability: the more core an item, the more other words it will collocate with.
- extension: core items are more likely to be extended into compounds, idioms, phrasal verbs, etc.
- superordinateness: hyponyms are core. flower is more core than chrysanthemum.
- culture-free: words without specific cultural connotations will be core.
- associationism: core items would be in the centre of scales of informal-formal, strong-weak, positive-negative (Osgood, 1962). For example, in the scale – emaciated, skinny, lean, slender, slim, thin, weedy, it is thin which emerges as the core word.
- neutral field of discourse: core words do not belong in any special register of language use.
- neutral tenor of discourse: core words will be neutral as to emotive tone. For example, complain would be core, whereas whine would not.

Specialist/non-specialist vocabulary

This is again an extension of the work on frequency. Nation (2008) divides vocabulary into high frequency words, academic words (Coxhead, 2000), technical words (Mukundan & Ng, 2011) and low frequency words. Further information is available from:

- www.vuw.ac.nz/lals/staff/paul.nation/nation.aspx
Clearly, such a division is of some help in determining which vocabulary should be the priority for explicit teaching (see Part two of this chapter).

**Lexical sets**

One way of grouping items of vocabulary is under semantic relationships. For example, words for describing a *house*: *roof*, *windows*, *door*, *dining room*, *bedroom*, *bathroom*, etc. It is not unusual to find examples of these in dictionaries, usually in special boxes, often with an illustration. Hyponomy is a related concept, where there is one superordinate term, like *vehicle*, and a number of subordinate terms related to it, like *car*, *bike*, *bus*, *taxi*, etc. The basis for lexical sets is not so much linguistic as psychological: we put together things that our mind sees as belonging together. These networks of associated items form part of the mental schemata we operate with. They are a convenient way of systematically filing away lexical information for rapid retrieval.

**Varieties**

It is now widely accepted that language has a tendency to develop varied forms. These varieties emerge in response to geographical, historical, social and occupational conditions.

There are now many quite distinct geographical varieties of English, and these have been widely described and debated (McArthur, 2003; Kirkpatrick, 2007, 2010; Jenkins, 2003; McKay, 2002). Such varieties have developed phonological, lexical and, to a lesser extent, syntactical individuality. It is the lexis which concerns us here. Increasingly, dictionaries are being produced to describe and record the distinctive lexis and usage of particular varieties. This started long ago with *Hobson Jobson*, the dictionary of Indian words in English, and has continued with the Macquarie and Times-Chambers dictionaries for Australian-New Zealand and Singaporean-Malaysian English respectively.

Historical diversity is chiefly evidenced in written texts, where there are possible misinterpretations of words which have changed their meanings since they were first coined.

Social diversity manifests itself particularly through class, age and gender. Within the British variety of English there is a continuing obsession with ‘speaking proper’, speaking ‘BBC’ or the ‘Queen’s’ English, so as not to betray one’s lowly class origins. This is famously caricatured in Shaw’s *Pygmalion*. The *U* / *non-U* fad was another manifestation of this ailment (Mitford, 1956; Ross, 1954). Class accents and vocabulary are still deeply embedded in the heart of British English. The gap between the English used by the older and younger generations is also noteworthy, with the ubiquitous use of ‘like’ as its marker. The emergence of Estuary English is also perhaps as much a generational as a geographical new development. And, despite the rise of feminism, there still persist some vocabulary items which are decidedly ‘female’ or ‘male’. The issue is far from clear-cut however. For divergent views see Cameron (2007) and Tannen (1990).

The specific technical vocabulary associated with particular occupations has already been referred to above. Occupational varieties develop partly because there is a need for specific terminology. But they also develop to give a sense of identity to those inside the occupational group, and to keep the outsiders at bay. One reason why the public did not understand what was happening to them in the recent financial crash was the arcane terminology coined by the financial services providers to ‘keep it in the family’ – *leveraging*, *derivatives*, *hedge funds* and the rest.
Fascinating though the study of variety is, it is easy to get sidetracked by it. It is unrealistic to expect students to ‘learn’ the vocabulary of many varieties. They need a solid basis in one variety (whichever has been chosen as the model), and to be made aware that they will meet very different varieties when they leave the classroom and engage in authentic encounters.

Collocation and friends

One of the major contributions of language corpora has been an enhanced understanding of the nature of collocation – and the related phenomena of colligation, lexical chunks and idiomacity in general.

Essentially, collocation means the likelihood of words occurring together. For example, we say, wide awake but sound asleep. Why is this? It is because over time and many repetitions in the mouths of many people, these words have come to like each other’s company, rather in the way that certain atoms in chemistry have a preference for bonding with certain others.

Colligation refers to the same phenomenon as applied to grammatical words. For example, the noun case can co-occur with a limited number of grammatical words: a case of, a case in, a case which, a case over which, in which case, just in case, etc.

Learning colligational and collocational patterns is an essential part of learning vocabulary. When such combinations become fossilized, or fixed, they are sometimes referred to as chunks or holophrastic elements, or prefabs. For example, as a matter of fact is one such chunk. It cannot be altered without drawing attention to itself. We cannot normally say, as a matter of fiction, or as an item of fact. Such chunks are stored as units and must be learned as such. They can then be deployed componentially to construct texts. They are not grammatically constructed but lexically stored. Nattinger and de Carrico (1992) offer a system for categorizing these phrasal chunks, from fixed items such as proverbs and idioms, to syntactic structural templates which can be filled in a variety of ways. Hoey’s (2005) work on lexical priming suggests that we learn a language by gradually building up a sensitivity to these phrasal patterns rather than by learning grammatical rules. Whatever the case, it is indisputable that phrasal lexis is supremely important. It has been estimated that between 30–50 per cent of any text is made up of these prefabs or formulaic chunks. To anticipate Part two of this chapter, one implication for teaching is that vocabulary items should not be taught in isolation but always with a co-text (Prodromou, 2008).

Word formation

One important element of lexical knowledge concerns the inner structure of words. An essential part of knowing a word is to know the grammatical particles which can be attached to it: -s, -ed, -ing, -ly, -able, etc.

Prefixes also contribute in a major way to expanding word meanings. The most common are: in-/ im-/il-/ir-, re-, un-, dis-, en-/em-, non-, over-, mis-. Similarly, suffixes greatly expand the possibilities for generating new words: -less, -ful, -ious, -tion, -ivity, -ness, etc.

One feature of vocabulary which attracts less attention nowadays, is word derivation; in particular, knowledge of Greek and Latin roots. For example, the root voc occurs in: vocal, evocative, vocation, invoke, revoke, vociferous, advocate, vocabulary, etc. Knowledge of roots can help to substantially expand vocabulary.
A related feature of English in particular is the propensity to import loan-words from other languages. These are so common that they form a whole category of English vocabulary. John Agard's humorous poem, *The Great Dictionary Disaster* (Agard, 2008) imagines a day when all the loan words in English return to their homes, leaving the dictionary almost empty.

**Language change and new words**

Just as variety is a norm in language development, so is language change (Aitchison, 1981, 1997). New words are constantly entering the language. *20th Century Words* (Ayto, 2009) documents the arrival of 5,000 new words in the course of the twentieth century. And every year sees something like 900 new words entering the language – many of which exit almost as quickly as they enter. Many new words are created as new technologies or trends develop: computers, motor cars, film and media, fashion, space exploration, finance, environment, medicine, youth-culture, etc.

What is perhaps more interesting to the student of language are the typical processes used to create new words. These typically are:

- by borrowing from another language. For example, *angst*;
- by blending two words into one. For example, *brunch*;
- by making new compounds. For example, *laptop*;
- by using prefixes or suffixes. For example, *unputdownable*;
- by giving an old word a new meaning. For example, *mouse*;
- by adopting proper nouns. For example, *kleenex*;
- by abbreviation. For example, *mike*;
- by changing a word from one part of speech to another (e.g. a noun to a verb). For example, *They spammed me*;
- by occupying vacant spaces in the sound system. For example, *spum* (not a real word – yet);
- by occupying vacant spaces in the morphological system. For example, *googleable*;
- by using acronyms. For example, *AIDS*.

Not only are new words coming into the language but the old ones are constantly changing their meanings and use in many subtle ways. We could think of words as pebbles on a shore. As the sea rolls them up and down the beach, they knock against each other and slowly change their shape. So with words, which knock against each other constantly and slowly expose new layers of meaning. There are many fascinating books which document the historical development of word meanings (Williams, 1976; Ayto, 2005). Few users of the language however are aware that the words they use so ‘naturally’ may have meant something quite different once – neither do they usually have time or the inclination to find out!

**Synonymy and related issues**

Synonymy and antonymy are slippery concepts. Even words which, at first sight, appear to be perfect synonyms, prove on closer examination not to be so perfect after all. Take the case of *big*/
In many contexts they can indeed be used interchangeably. For example, *a big/large flat*, *a big/large salary*. But in many other cases there is no interchangeability. We can speak of *a big argument* but not *a large argument*. And once we move into compounds and idiomatic uses, there is no overlap at all. We can speak of *seeing the big picture* (but not *the large picture*). Likewise, something can be *large-scale* but not *big-scale*. The same issue arises with antonyms. There are plenty of near-perfect pairs, such as *heavy-light*, *open-shut* (or is it *closed*?), but in many cases, like *deliberate* (adj.), there is no real antonym.

It is therefore preferable to talk of degrees of equivalence. And in order to find ‘the right word’ we often make quite complex contextual choices. Many roughly equivalent words can be arranged along scales of intensity. For example, *little/small*, *tiny*, *minute*, *miniscule*, *microscopic*, *infinitesimal*. . . . Other groupings of roughly equivalent words are discriminated more by the contexts in which they can occur and their connotations, such as *awful*, *bad*, *ghastly*, *shitty*, *rotten*, *lousy*, *sub-standard*, *unacceptable*, *terrible*, *execrable*, etc. The group *strange*, *odd*, *eerie*, *weird*, *bizarre*, *eccentric* clearly cannot be deployed as neat equivalents. Some words will collocate with all of them; *behaviour*, for example. Others do not, such as *food*, *sound*, *sport*, etc. All of which takes us back to the centrality of collocational constraints (see above) (Lea, 2008).

Journalists, advertisers and politicians often attempt to bias our judgements by their use of ‘loaded’ language. There is a large literature in critical linguistics which examines this in detail (Fairclough, 2001; Fowler, 1991). The whole issue of synonymy and fine shades of meaning intersects with translation, of course. There is now a resurgence of interest in translation studies which, as we will see in Part two, has relevance for the way we teach vocabulary (Bellos, 2011; Cook, 2010; Duff, 1989; Grellet, 1991; Kramsch, 2009). We can even regard different versions of the ‘same’ text in a single language as a form of intra-linguistic translation. See Maley and Duff’s *Variations on a Theme* (1978) for an example of a kind of intralingual translation.

**New insights from corpora research**

Increasingly complex and detailed information about the way words behave is emerging from the research into language corpora (Carter & McCarthy, 1988; Hoey, 1991, 2003, 2005). For example:

- there are clear differences between written and spoken language, including vocabulary and the way it is used. (Brazil, 1995; Carter & McCarthy, 2006)
- many words in the spoken language function to create and maintain social relations. They have a pragmatic, discoursal function rather than a semantic one. (Prodromou, 2008)
- Examples would be the way *just* and *like* are deployed.
- it appears that many words have preferred positions within sentences. They like to be at the beginning, middle or end of the sentence. (Hoey, 2003) Some words also tend to occur at the beginning or end of whole texts even.
- in the spoken language there is a tendency for words to be repeated in close proximity.
- similarly, relexicalization occurs frequently. That is, a conversational partner will utter a word similar in meaning as a reaction: *A. Wonderful. B. Yes, great.*
Deborah Tannen has done some interesting work analysing repetition and relexicalization in conversations which shows how conversation has an almost-poetic structure (Tannen, 2007).

much more detailed information is emerging about the connotation of words. The difference between, for example, two apparent synonyms like result (positive) and consequence (negative) turns out to be a matter of positive or negative connotation. Other pairs yield similar results: obviously/clearly, report (v)/inform, percolate/leak, etc.

Fascinating though this research is, it will only slowly percolate (!) through to pedagogical materials. It is nonetheless important for teachers to be aware of the amazingly complex and subtle ways the lexical system works, and in particular how it intersects and interacts with grammar. As an illustration of this complexity, here is a rough representation of the word ‘rain’ in my own mental lexicon:

A map of my personal ‘knowledge’ of the word RAIN in my mental lexicon.
Part two

What do we know about the teaching of vocabulary?

The short answer is ‘not as much as we should like’. That is not to say that we know nothing. We know that learners with a bigger vocabulary do better on standard proficiency tests, so vocabulary is a very good indicator of success in other areas of the language. But there are complex issues involved which make definitive pronouncements problematic. Here are some of these issues:

- How many words are there in English? Who knows? It depends partly on how we define ‘word’. Are grow, growing, grew, growth different words or all part of the same one? Dictionaries usually present ‘headwords’ as main entries and deal with derived words within the definition of the headword. Estimates vary quite widely, so the question is almost meaningless.

- How many words does an educated Native Speaker ‘know’? Again estimates vary. Aitchison (1987) puts the number between 50,000–200,000. Others, like Schmitt (2010) put it at 16,000–20,000 word families. Again, it may not be helpful to think about this too much. Given the incremental nature of word acquisition, even Native Speakers never completely acquire the lexis of their own language: it is continually evolving (Hoey, 2005).

- More importantly, how many words does a second language (L2) learner need in order to read unsimplified material? Most estimates suggest about 8,000 words. And for a reasonable level of understanding and use, about 2,000–3,500 is the commonly accepted number.

- How many times must an L2 learner meet a word in context before it starts to become part of their vocabulary? Estimates again differ: some suggest 8–10 times but there is an emerging consensus that new words need to be encountered at least 15–20 times (Waring, 2006).

- What do we mean by ‘knowing’ or ‘learning’ a word? Does it mean that we simply recognize it when we meet it? That we can pronounce it and spell it? That we can use it in grammatically acceptable ways? That we understand its core meaning? That we know the compounds it enters into with other words. That we are familiar with its most frequent collocations? That we can interpret what it means in a particular context? That we can use it without paying conscious attention to it? As Nation reminds us (Nation, 2008) acquiring word knowledge is incremental, multidimensional and interrelated. In other words, learning a word does not happen in one go. Rather, we gradually add to the web of meanings and uses of a word as we progressively meet it in more and more contexts. We learn different aspects of a word, not just a core meaning. And we learn words in relation to each other, not separately. So we can make a distinction between breadth and depth in vocabulary knowledge. Breadth refers to the number of words we ‘know’ in the sense of perhaps knowing the core meaning only. Depth refers to the knowledge of the many ways a given word acts and reacts.

- Last but not least, we need to be aware that there are two main aspects to vocabulary. These are summarized below:
Static meanings are the ones we learn on language courses and that we find codified in dictionaries. We can learn a great deal about words and how to use them in this way. However, once words are let loose in conversation or on the page, they start to take on a dynamic life of their own. For example, in a dictionary we may find a number of semantic equivalents for *work*: employment, toil, hard graft, labour, job, etc. But in a text we may find equivalents which are particular to their instantial use in that text. For example: put in a few hours, turn up, go in, get through a pile of stuff, etc. There is no way that we can teach these equivalents. The best we can do is give students the opportunity to recognize and interpret them through repeated encounters with texts. We shall also find that learners develop highly personal, idiosyncratic and sometimes quite intense feelings about the words they encounter (Kramsch, 2009). Words have pleasant and unpleasant associations, often connected with deep-seated, emotive feelings: we like (or dislike) the way they sound in the mouth, the way they look on the page, the way they mean something special to us.

For more detailed treatments of these and other aspects of learning vocabulary, there are excellent accounts in McCarthy (1990), Carter (1998), Schmitt and McCarthy (1997), Schmitt (2000, 2008, 2010), Meara (2009) and Nation (2011). The overview in Schmitt (2010, pp. 3–43) is particularly helpful. There also are those who advocate making lexis the central feature of language courses (Willis, 1990; Lewis, 1993). This has not so far been widely adopted but it has influenced the way lexis is dealt with in many language coursebooks.

### Implications for teaching vocabulary

A number of suggestive directions flow from the above observations:

- We cannot possibly teach all the words our students will encounter or need to use. There are simply not enough hours in a normal timetable to do this. Even supposing we were only teaching vocabulary and nothing else, it would be unrealistic to expect students to ‘learn’ more than about 10 words per lesson. Assuming a year of 35 weeks, they would, at most, have learned 1,750 words in a year. This does not allow for forgetting, of course, nor
for the fact that recycling the words is necessary to ensure students meet them enough
times to internalize them. So the fact is that most students do not learn anything like this
number of words in a year in class. It is therefore all the more important to concentrate
teaching time only on high-frequency words (see above, Part one), since these are the
ones with highest payback.

- Nation (2008) reminds us that at least 25 per cent of teaching time in class should be
devoted to explicit formal instruction. The most productive way of doing this will be to
concentrate on the structural properties of words (morphology, affixation, roots, etc.) and
collocation.

- In order to ensure students meet words sufficiently frequently in context, we shall also
need to arrange activities in class where this happens naturally, for example, in word
games, performance, creative writing and extensive reading.

- Given that the class hours will never be enough to guarantee learning sufficient
vocabulary, we shall also need to help students help themselves outside class, through
orientation to resources such as dictionaries, the use of cards, notebooks and personal
journals and study techniques such as regular revision, mnemonics, etc. And, of course,
the provision of massive amounts of extensive reading.

- We shall also need to encourage students to develop and cherish their personal
relationship with words, through activities such as drawing (Tomlinson, 2011) and creative
writing.

In what follows, I shall suggest some ways of meeting these needs.

**Procedures for teaching vocabulary**

Based on the above discussion, I shall organize this section under two main headings: In-class
activities, and Out-of-class activities.

**In-class activities**

These would be of three main kinds:

1. Explicit instruction based on word structure and use. These are just some of the possible
techniques which might be used.

   - Word formation. Provide some words in one part of speech and ask students to provide
     the forms for other parts of speech. For example:
     - *hate* (noun) (verb?) (adjective?) (adverb?)
     - *hated* (noun)
     - (noun?) *persuasion* (verb) (adjective?) (adverb?)

   - Prefixes /suffices. Match prefixes with words to which they are commonly attached. For
     example:
- anti-terrestrial
- ab-septic
- de-developed
- extra-normal
- under-form

- **Roots:** Offer a number of common roots. Students find as many words as possible incorporating these roots. For example: -log-: logic, analogue, logistics, etc. graph: graphic, graph, seismograph, telegraph, graphite, graffiti, paragraph, etc. seq: sequence, consequence, sequel, consecutive, etc.

- **New words:** Take a list of common new words and discuss how they are formed. For example: cutting-edge, alcopop, spam, Xerox, prequel, etc.

- **Work with matrices for collocation** (Rudzka et al., 1981; Maley, 2009). For example:

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>wind</th>
<th>desire</th>
<th>drug</th>
<th>influence</th>
<th>empire</th>
<th>army</th>
<th>leader</th>
<th>weapon</th>
<th>smell</th>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Students have to decide which of the adjectives can co-occur with each of the four synonyms

- Offer students a list of phrases which come at the bottom of a page in a novel or reader. They have to predict how the sentence will continue on the next page, thus building up their anticipation of the most likely collocation. For example:
  - Connie looked out of . . . (the window)
  - You know how nervous he is of travel. Frightened of trains, frightened of . . . (planes)

- **Work with concordance lines.** On the basis of the examples, they then write a brief definition of the meanings of the word. For example, investigating the distinction between *suitable / fit.*

  . . . it’s just not **suitable** for what we need.
  Will it be **suitable**, do you think?

I thought it was highly **suitable**, in fact.
  Is it **suitable** for bad roads though?

Willy will make a very **suitable** husband.
  Will 2 p.m. be a **suitable** time?
He’s not fit for the job.  
He should be fit in time for the match.  
It’s a tight fit. I’m afraid.  
Is it fit for purpose, though? That’s what . . .  
I’ll try to fit you in tomorrow.  
She nearly had a fit when I told her.

2 Activities which involve students in actively using the words. There are, of course, many published materials which offer these kinds of activities. The examples given here are simply indicative of what might be done, but in no sense comprehensive.

- Language games are a good example of this. Crystal (1998) and Watcyn-Jones (1993) include many examples. Here the focus is still on the words but on their meanings and use rather than their formal properties (as in 1 above).

- Certain kinds of dictation (Davis & Rinvolucri, 1988) ensure repeated close attention to the vocabulary. For example, when the teacher reads the text at normal speed, and students have to reconstruct the text from memory and through group discussion.

- Retelling stories using a set of key words from the text as prompts again ensures an active reuse of vocabulary.

- Activities involving translation engage students with words in terms of their comparative ‘fit’ (Duff, 1989; Grellet, 1991). Translation has been neglected for too long (Bellos, 2011; Cook, 2010). The struggle to find the ‘right’ word or expression, taking account of appropriacy and register, requires activating the learners’ existing lexical resources and a search for alternative items.

- Using dictionaries to generate class activities. There are many tasks and activities which can be based on dictionaries (Wright, 1998; Maingay & Tribble, 1993). This is also an excellent way of training students in using reference resources out of class later.

- Using drawing as a way of getting a ‘feel’ for meanings (Tomlinson, 2011).

3 Activities where vocabulary is used repeatedly as an incidental part of the process. Here are just four types of activities which require vocabulary to be used over and over, usually without students realizing that this is what they are doing.

- Extensive reading in class. Although extensive reading is more naturally done outside class, there is every reason to allow some time for it in class too, partly to ensure that it gets done, and partly to offer advice, encouragement and guidance where necessary (Maley, 2008; Waring, 2000). In reading material at the right level, students can afford to forget about the meanings of individual words and allow themselves to be carried along by the story. Nonetheless, they will be meeting vocabulary items many times in subtly different contexts, and subconsciously, reinforcing and extending their word knowledge through lexical priming (Hoey, 2005).
Teacher reading aloud to the class. One highly effective technique for exposing students to vocabulary in context and developing affective associations is for teachers to read aloud regularly from poems, stories or novels. This heightened exposure to the language virtually guarantees high levels of attention and retention, especially if the texts are distributed for the students to read afterwards.

Performance. There are many ways of using texts for performance. Readers’ Theatre (Cazden, 1993), where groups of students decide on how to perform an expository text, is just one of them. One highly productive form of performance is to use a short poem. Students in groups decide how to orchestrate it for maximum effect in performance (Maley, 1991). This inevitably involves intense discussion of vocabulary and incidental repetition in rehearsal. For more ambitious forms of performance, students can give fully produced theatrical performances of sketches (Case & Wilson, 1995; Wilson, 2009) or plays (Lutzker, 2007).

Creative writing, in the form of writing short poems, mini sagas or stories involves a deep engagement with the words as they are weighed before being finally chosen. In this sense, creative writing is similar to translation in its attention to the ‘right’ words. Creative writing is also the best way I know for students to take control of the language, appropriate it, foster an intuitive apprehension and develop a personal relationship with the lexicon. Such activities are well within the capacities of learners, even at fairly low levels of proficiency, and there now exist plentiful examples of ideas (Maley & Mukundan, 2011a, b; Spiro, 2004, 2006).

Out-of-class activities

As already noted, there is no way that students will acquire sufficient vocabulary in class, given the limited number of hours of class time. In some way, therefore, they will need to work on the language outside class. This is the only way they have any chance of meeting enough new vocabulary, of consolidating what they have already met and of extending it. Here I will focus on three main strategies for helping students to take control of their own vocabulary learning.

1 Extensive Reading. Not everyone would go as far as Krashen (2004, p. 37), who claims that, ‘Reading is the only way . . . we become good readers, develop a good writing style, an adequate vocabulary, advanced grammatical competence . . . ’ Many argue that more is needed than simple exposure. The work of Craik and Lockhart (1972), also suggests that the greater the ‘depth’ of the learning activity, the greater the pay-off. So if we wish to develop vocabulary, we need conscious as well as unconscious learning activities. However, there is plenty of research evidence, quoted in Krashen above, to support the view that reading of abundant material at the right level of challenge does develop acquisition of vocabulary, along with other aspects of language, without undue pedagogical intervention. (For a more detailed discussion, see Chapter 11 in this book.) At the very least, extensive reading helps to consolidate vocabulary already learned and to extend the meanings of words as they are encountered in multiple contexts. There are now plenty of compelling reading materials available in the graded reader series of

www.ztccom
most major ELT publishers. For advice on how to set up and run an Extensive Reading programme, see Waring (2000, 2006). One of the great advantages of reading is its flexibility: it can be done almost anywhere, at any time, for as long or short a time as desired. And it can be argued that, if a learner engages totally with a book – in a state of ‘flow’ – this more than satisfies the requirement of ‘depth of processing’.

2 Creative Writing. Provided students have been exposed to creative writing activities in class, they should be encouraged to continue with this kind of writing out of class too. At the very least, the keeping of a personal journal, in which they can also include poems, short stories and forms such as haibun (a combination of prose with short poems), should be encouraged. Some teachers may prefer to formalize the activity a little by setting creative writing tasks to be done as homework. If at all possible, the students’ writing should be published in some way, that is, shared with other students. When students get hooked on creative writing, they will go to enormous lengths to craft their work and research the words they need. For activities which students can use on their own, see Maley and Mukundan (2011a, b) and Spiro (2004, 2006).

3 Learner Training. There are a number of ways students can be guided and supported to develop self-study habits. The following are some of the more effective:

- Orientation on the use of reference tools. Time in class should be spent introducing some of the more useful reference tools: dictionaries, thesauruses, encyclopaedias, etc. All the latest generation of such resources contain highly useful information but this needs to be explained, and practice given. Many dictionaries are accompanied by free workbooks which can get students started (Maley, 2009; Wright, 1998).

- Some orientation on useful websites and how to use them most effectively is desirable. Very often students are more savvy about such tools than their teachers. Even so, there is now so much material out there, that no one person will know about everything, so sharing is helpful – perhaps by keeping a class log of useful websites. Also, although students may know how to access websites, they may not always realize how best to get the most out of them. This is where the teacher can help.

- Study and revision strategies. Guidance should be given on goal-setting, establishing study routines, record-keeping, regular revision of words and on sources of advice (Maley, 2009). There is some evidence that using mnemonic systems, such as Keywords, is also useful, especially in the early stages of learning when it is important to build a largish, basic working vocabulary quickly (Meara, 1980) (see www.k8accesscenter.org/training_resources/Mnemonics.asp).

- Notebooks and word cards. Although some experts recommend the traditional L1-L2 listing of vocabulary (Ur, 2012), others argue strongly against it (Hoey, 2005). Wherever possible, students should progressively add information about the words they record, reflecting in this way the incremental process by which words are acquired. Each entry should include not simply the ‘meaning’ in a translation equivalent but also grammatical and collocational information, along with instances of the word in context. Using word cards which are regularly revised is also recommended. In one version, the word is written on one side of the card, on the other is the core meaning and other useful
information (collocates, grammar, compounds, etc.) The student keeps about 20 cards at a time in a pack, looks at each one in turn and tries to recall the information relative to the word. When a card has been used, it is returned to the bottom of the pack.

- General advice on noticing language is also useful. Students individually might make collections of street signs, advertisements, headlines, book titles, etc. which have interesting uses of vocabulary. This helps students develop the habit of noticing language and develop the personal relationship with words, mentioned above.

**Conclusion**

A number of important points need to be made in conclusion:

1. Vocabulary is extremely important in learning a foreign language. In the words of David Wilkins, ‘Without grammar very little can be conveyed. Without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed.’ (Wilkins, 1972, p. 111).

2. There is a lot of it, and it is structured in very complex ways. We never stop acquiring vocabulary, and no one ever completely acquires the vocabulary even of their own first language.

3. Because there is so much of it, time for learning it in class will never be enough, so much vocabulary learning will have to be done out-of-class.

4. There is a strong case for explicit vocabulary teaching in class, with a focus on the systemic (and therefore generative) features of the lexicon and on the acquisition of lexical chunks and typical collocations. Emphasis should be placed on vocabulary in context, not as isolated items.

5. There is an equally strong case for more personal, individual activities which can be done outside class. Extensive Reading will be one of the most important of these.

6. Vocabulary teaching needs to focus on the most frequent and useful items, since these have the highest payback.

7. Like learning anything, vocabulary is best learned when students can be actively engaged in it, with deep processing.

8. There is no one right way to learn vocabulary. It is the teacher’s job to offer a range of strategies and techniques from which learners can choose to develop their own uniquely personal relationship with vocabulary.

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Pragmatics

Andrew D. Cohen and Noriko Ishihara

Part one

This entry looks at (a) what we know, (b) what we think we know and (c) what we need to find out with respect to materials development in L2 pragmatics (‘L2’ referring both to second and foreign language in this chapter, and ‘SL’ referring just to second-language contexts). What is problematic about attempting to make these distinctions with regard to pragmatics is that we do not have the level of ‘proof’ that exists in other areas of language study. Nonetheless, the meta-analyses conducted to date have suggested that explicit teaching about how language functions in discourse may generally be more beneficial than leaving learners to figure pragmatic behaviour out for themselves (see Kasper, 2001; Rose, 2005; Jeon & Kaya, 2006).

What we know

There is general consensus that pragmatic ability deals with how meaning is conveyed and interpreted in communication, both in reception and production:

- As listeners, we need to interpret what is said, as well as what is not said, and what may be communicated non-verbally. These verbal and non-verbal cues transmit to us just how polite or impolite, direct or indirect, formal or informal the communication is, what the intended tone is (e.g. to be kind, loving, attentive, or devious, provocative or hostile) and what the intended outcome is (e.g. to arrange, persuade, justify, inform or excuse). The input could be through language (e.g. through words, phrases or extended discourse), through gestures or through silence.

- As readers, we need to comprehend written messages, identifying the rhetorical structure of the message and interpreting sometimes subtle indications of tone or attitude in the communication (e.g. a concerned and supportive tone in a boss’ email message as opposed to a detached and disapproving one).
As speakers, we need to know how to say what we want to say with the proper level of politeness, directness, formality and – when relevant – clarity or ambiguity (e.g. in the role of doctor, conveying bad news to a patient; in the role of politician, making campaign promises; or in the role of patron, complaining to a hotel manager about poor service). We also need to know what not to say at all and what to communicate non-verbally.

As writers, we need to know how to write our message intelligibly, again paying attention to the level of politeness, directness and formality, as well as considering issues of rhetorical structure (e.g. in the role of job applicant, conveying self-confidence but not conceit and directness without being overbearing; in the role of supervisor at work, making a request that employees work overtime sound reasonable).

Our pragmatic performance as learners of the given L2 depends on various factors, such as: (a) our level of general proficiency in that L2 and possibly in other (especially related) languages, (b) our age, gender, occupation, social status and experience in the relevant L2-speaking communities of practice (e.g. talk on a factory floor) and (c) our previous experiences in that L2-speaking community and our multilingual/multicultural experiences in general.

The interpretation of pragmatic meaning can sometimes be challenging since speakers (and writers) are not necessarily explicit about what they mean, and consequently listeners (and readers) – especially L2 learners – may not always get the intended meanings. So, collaboration by the interlocutors is necessary to assure that genuine communication takes place. Thus, pragmatics deals with meaning that the speaker needs to co-construct and negotiate along with the hearer within the given sociocultural context (Thomas, 1995; LoCastro, 2003, 2012; Ishihara & Cohen, 2010).

**Speech acts as a fruitful area for materials development**

An engaging area of pragmatics for materials developers is that of speech acts, namely, the specific social functions that people carry out in speaking and writing, such as apologizing, complaining, making requests, refusing things/invitations, complimenting or thanking. Speech acts have a basic or **locutionary** meaning as conceived by the speaker (‘The kitchen is a mess’ = the kitchen is not in order), an **illocutionary** or intended meaning (e.g. ‘The kitchen needs to be cleaned up’), and a **perlocutionary** effect on the hearer (i.e. the hearer perceives the request of him/her and replies with ‘OK, I’ll do the dishes in a few minutes’). While speech acts may be accomplished by a single word like ‘thanks’, they may involve complex and indirect speech over a series of conversational turns. Speech acts often follow regular and predictable patterns for members of the given speech community. In the case of ‘greetings’, for instance, when greeted in English by a colleague at a conference with, ‘How are you doing?’ the expected response would be, ‘Fine. How are you?’ rather than a litany of woes.

While there is value in including the full range of pragmatic behaviour in a pragmatics curriculum (including, for example, turn-taking in the full discourse context; see Kasper, 2006), speech acts continue to be of keen interest to researchers because they are a fruitful area of pragmatics in their own right and because of their application to L2 instruction. While real speech act sequences,
such as in apologies, may actually involve interwoven discourse – with numerous starts and stops and discontinuous elements, the more basic elements of these speech acts can be presented to learners in ways that can enhance their communication in the L2, in sometimes high-stakes interactions.

**Speech acts across languages**

Core strategies for performing speech acts may be similar across languages, such as those for an apology: *expressing an apology, acknowledging responsibility, offering repair, giving an explanation or excuse*, and *promising non-recurrence*. Nonetheless, knowing whether they are applied in the given language context, and if so, determining when and how to perform the given speech act can be challenging. The following is an example of one such situation:

You completely forget a crucial meeting at the office with your boss to go over the final draft of an important document. Two hours later you realize what you have done, and you call him to apologize.

An Israeli Hebrew speaker may select *expressing an apology* and *giving an explanation* as the strategies from the speech acts set of apologizing. For example:

*Ani mitsta-er bekeshar lap'gisha, aval hai ti tarx lakaxat et haben sheli larofe, ve...*

‘Sorry about not making the meeting but I had to take my kid to the doctor and...’

Israelis may tend to avoid the strategy of *repair*, because in their speech community, the boss often determines the next step. For the speaker to suggest what comes next would be equivalent to committing a second infraction aside from missing the meeting (Cohen & Olshtain, 1981). While in Japan the employee would most likely be expected to offer an expression of apology repeatedly and profusely, it would be inappropriate to give a detailed explanation unless the boss calls for it (Kumagai, 1993; Kondo, 1997; Nonaka, 2000). For example, a Japanese worker might say:

*Ee, ano, sakihodo kesekishite shimaimashita mitinguno kendesuga, makotoni moushiwake arimasen deshita. Mattaku watakushino fuchuuide hontouni moushiwake arimasen.*

‘Uhm... about the missed meeting earlier today, I am really sorry. It was entirely due to my carelessness. I really have no excuse’.

Within other speech communities, the apology might play itself out with an overlapping but different set of strategies specific to the given context. It may be imperative for the apologizer to offer repair so as to appear dutifully apologetic. In the US context, for example, the speaker may say something like, ‘Oh, no! I guess I really had my head screwed on backward! Please let me make it up to you. I can rush those papers to you within the hour, or how about meeting on it first thing tomorrow?’
Textbook analysis for pragmatic components

In current commercially marketed materials, curriculum writers' intuitions rather than empirically based information about L2 pragmatics tend to be the primary source for instructional materials. So, while the writer’s intent may be to provide idealized examples of common pragmatic routines, the actual dialogues may sound awkward or stilted, and are inauthentic in that they do not represent spontaneous pragmatic language as used in natural conversation.

One example of research regarding textbook treatment of speech acts is Usó-Juan (2008), who analysed five popular English as a Foreign Language (EFL) textbooks used in the discipline of Tourism in Spain for how they covered the speech act of requesting and especially how they dealt with ways to modify requests. On the whole, the aim of what was presented was to teach learners to make polite requests not only by selecting a conventionally indirect request strategy capable of expressing a high degree of politeness by itself but also by including modifying devices that helped to minimize the imposition involved in a request. She found little or no information about the situational and contextual variables in which the requests were embedded. This lack of pragmatic information in the description of the activities confirmed the researcher’s contention that textbooks serve as a poor model to foster the pragmatic competence learners need to achieve successful communication.

Another study was of three levels in an EFL textbook series intended for Vietnamese high schoolers in grades 10–12 (Nguyen, 2011). Unlike the study in Spain which focused just on textbook coverage of requests, this study looked at all 27 speech acts that were included in the textbooks, and found that their distribution across the books did not seem to reflect any systematic plan. For example, ‘conversational openers’ were practiced at all three levels, while ‘closing of conversations’, ‘responding to bad news’ and ‘persuading’ were not. Also, ‘apologizing’ and ‘advising’ were not recycled at the higher levels. In addition, the researcher questioned why a highly formulaic speech act such as ‘responding to thanks’ was introduced much later than some other speech acts whose realizations might involve a higher degree of linguistic complexity and pragmatic sophistication, for example, ‘advising’, ‘suggesting’, ‘complaining’, ‘disagreeing’, ‘declining an invitation/suggestion’, ‘requesting’ and ‘responding to requests’.

As in the Spanish EFL study, the Vietnamese EFL study found inadequate treatment of the context in which the speech acts were presented. In fact, the majority were taught out-of-context, without steps to draw students’ attention to this variable and its effects on the speech produced. Unfortunately, metapragmatic information about when, where and to whom it would be appropriate to perform the speech act, along with discussion about the expressions that would be appropriate in the given cultural context, was only found to accompany ‘agreement’ and ‘disagreement’. In addition, the teacher’s manuals apparently did not provide guidance on how to present these speech acts more communicatively.

Using resources informed by research in adapting textbooks

Textbooks tend not to avail themselves of the pragmatics information provided by research findings. Learners could benefit, for example, from information about the following:

1. the appropriate situations in which to use certain forms;
2 the semantic formulas (i.e. speech-act-specific strategies) that have been found to be associated with those speech acts (e.g. for apologies, ‘acknowledgement of responsibility’ and ‘offer or repair’);

3 the common vocabulary (e.g. for intensifying or softening an utterance) and grammatical forms associated with given speech acts (e.g. whether to use an indicative or conditional verb form in requesting, say, a glass of water, where in certain contexts Spaniards may favour the indicative while Uruguayans at the same sociocultural level may favour the conditional; see Márquez Reiter & Placencia, 2004);

4 the effect of gender on language use.

The point is that teachers of L2 pragmatics should not rely necessarily on the commercially marketed student textbooks alone. A study by Kondo (2008) with Japanese EFL students demonstrated that instead of teaching formulaic phrases straight from a textbook by rote, it was more effective if teachers complemented the textbook coverage of the speech act, in this case ‘refusals’, with small-group role play and discussion. Furthermore, she noted that it was beneficial to provide learners with research-based materials of a crosscultural nature which pertained to the given speech act – that is, how the speech act was performed across languages and particular speech communities, including discussion of ways that particular learners might diverge from the norm. Given that research results about pragmatics may appear in journals which may be less accessible to curriculum developers, websites have been constructed which offer findings from empirical research and abstracts of existing research. One such website (www.carla.umn.edu/speechacts/index.html; accessed 27 December 2011) can be found at the Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition’s website at the University of Minnesota.

Teachers could also have their students go out into the community and collect their own data on a given speech act – both how speakers of their L1 perform the speech act and, if possible, how it is done in the L2. Assigning students this kind of task lets them serve as data gatherers, while at the same time enhancing their pragmatic awareness.

What we think we know

There are also areas in pragmatics where there is not a clear consensus. There is, for example, a misconception among some curriculum writers, teachers and language learners alike that learners will somehow ‘pick up’ the ability to interpret others’ messages as intended and produce language in a way that communicates their intentions accurately and appropriately. However, if no formal instruction is provided, learners have been found to take years to acquire native-like pragmatic ability, even in a setting where learners are exposed to the L2 on a daily basis. For example, in a crosssectional study Olshtain and Blum-Kulka (1985) found that it took up to 10 years of residence in Israel for ratings of politeness strategies by Hebrew L2 learners to approximate those of native speakers. Speech acts are difficult to learn for many reasons, such as: their contextual complexity, regional and individual variations, grammatical and lexical complexity and subtleties of tone and nonverbal behaviour.
The following are examples of how research-based information on pragmatics could possibly be integrated into the curriculum, and how culturally specific aspects of speech act realizations can be taught systematically.

- Explicitly stating the primary goal and approach to speech acts – The goal is to instil in learners a heightened awareness of the pragmatic use of language that will enable them to take initiative in developing their own pragmatic ability over time. Learners are to understand that speech acts are really at the intersection of language and culture – that it is not sufficient to know the language forms, but rather it is also crucial to know when and how to use them.

- Focusing on relevant linguistic features and providing immediate feedback – Along with explicit attention to the general pragmatic norms and related cultural information in the learning of speech acts (often referred to as sociopragmatics), learners also need to be attend to the linguistic forms that will enable them to realize speech acts in a culturally appropriate way in the given situation (referred to as pragmalinguistics; see Thomas, 1995).

- Guiding learners’ observations and facilitating their attention to L2 pragmatic norms and L2 forms – The research literature is somewhat inconclusive as to the relative benefits of inductive, guided discovery as a means for retaining this explicit information as opposed to a deductive approach, where the pragmatic norms are simply provided. A study by Rose and Ng (2001) on compliments, for instance, found that although both inductive and deductive instruction had a positive impact on pragmalinguistic proficiency, only deductive instruction appeared to contribute to the development of sociopragmatic proficiency. In a later study by Takimoto (2008), learners who had to discover the underlying rules for downgrading requests were better able to process information about the target features and store it in working memory than those who simply received explicit information about making requests, without having to link the sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic features in the information to various meanings conveyed by means of downgrading requests.

- Explaining cultural reasoning for L2 pragmatic norms – Just because learners encounter L2 pragmatic norms that differ from those that they are familiar with does not necessarily mean that there will be a problem in learning them. However, when learners’ L1 norms or personal values directly conflict with certain L2 norms, they may have difficulty deciding whether (and/or to what extent) to emulate or conform to the L2 norms or to resist them altogether (Di Vito, 1993; Ishihara & Tarone, 2009). Being well-informed as to why members of the target-language community behave as they do can help learners make informed decisions as to whether they wish to conform to the given speech behaviour. Learners can make use of strategies which take advantage of their ‘special’ status as non-native speakers (Aston, 1993). These strategies include:
  - alerting the interlocutor to their unfamiliarity with L2 norms;
  - providing metapragmatic comments (i.e. comments about their language use) as a reinforcement of the real intent;
  - looking for relatively appropriate L2 expressions that reflect how they would communicate (e.g. perform the given speech act) in the given situation in their L1.
What we need to find out

L2 textbook writers, teachers and learners can benefit from knowing more about the norms for pragmatic performance in given contexts, taking into account the culture involved, the relative age and gender of the speaker and hearer(s), their social class and occupations and their social status and roles in the interaction (Thomas, 1995; Ishihara & Cohen, 2010). So, aside from sorting out the norms for turn-taking, back-channelling (i.e. feedback as a listener in the conversation) and other discourse issues, materials writers would want information on the norms for realizing speech acts, especially in areas where there are gaps in our current knowledge. Here are four examples of areas where we could extend our knowledge base:

- pragmatics data on languages and speech communities that have not tended to receive the attention of pragmatics researchers, such as the languages of sub-Saharan Africa (Bobda, 2008);
- more comparison of second-language (SL) and foreign-language pragmatics, and especially with a focus on the development of SL vs FL pragmatics longitudinally (Schauer, 2008);
- dialect differences in the performance of pragmatics (Barron, 2008);
- norms for pragmatic behaviour among non-native speakers of, say, English, Spanish or Chinese as an International Language, who need to interact for, say, business purposes, and especially how such interlocutors achieve communication through, for example, negotiation.

Since even speakers vary among themselves as to how they perform pragmatic routines in a given discourse situation, language behaviour would not normally be deemed absolutely ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ in a given case. Rather, the norms of the given speech community tend to make certain pragmatic behaviours more or less preferred or appropriate in a given context.

Part two

The current match with published materials

As we discussed in Part one, existing research has shown that L2 pragmatics has rarely been represented adequately in the materials commercially available today. It is disappointing that not only earlier studies (e.g. Bardovi-Harlig et al., 1991; Boxer & Pickering, 1995) but also more recent ones (e.g. Vellenga, 2004; McGroarty & Taguchi, 2005; Shimizu et al., 2007, 2008; Usó-Juan, 2008; Nguyen, 2011) have found that a neglect of L2 pragmatics continues. These studies show that the materials have typically included relatively few explicit discussions about register, politeness, formality and appropriateness. Even when textbooks contain contextualized input, they may well fail to direct the learners’ attention to how the language and the context interact to convey messages directly and indirectly. In addition, textbooks do not usually provide sufficient interactive exercises for practicing the introduced forms and discussing sociocultural norms of the target language.
Given that pragmatic or sociolinguistic competence has long been recognized as an essential constituent of communicative competence (e.g. Canale, 1983; Bachman & Palmer, 1996), one may wonder why commercial materials are not consistent with our current knowledge base. One plausible reason would be that materials are largely based on curriculum writers’ intuitions. Materials are also written for a grammar-focused syllabus or driven by content (e.g. academic or situational themes) without much consideration for how language is actually used in a given social context. The problem is that intuition – even that of expert speakers – has been found to be unreliable (e.g. Kasper, 1997; Judd, 1999; Golato, 2003). Consequently, researchers in L2 pragmatics have argued for utilizing research-informed insights or naturally occurring conversation as a basis for materials development.

Some recent efforts in this area include that of Barraja-Rohan (2011), where simplified conversation analysis (CA) transcription was adopted to teach various CA concepts to ESL learners from lower to intermediate levels over 12 weeks with successful results in enhancing learners’ interactional competence. Likewise, Huth and Taleghani-Nikazm (2006) propose an instructional approach which has students predict, interpret and produce sequences in the L2 using conversation-analysis-based data. Félix-Brasdefer (2006) offers materials and instruction for teaching the negotiation of refusal sequences in Spanish based on unscripted role play data (also see chapters in Houck & Tatsuki, 2011). It is anticipated that more work along these lines is underway. As this trend shows, curriculum development is an area where research-based findings can be directly applied to pedagogy. The following section discusses some suggestions consistent with this effort.

**Suggestions for materials development applications**

As described above, a prominent approach to L2 pragmatics instruction and materials development calls first for curriculum writers to examine how language is used socially in context and then to encourage language learners to gain similar insights through their own observation and analysis of actual language data. This approach is in sharp contrast to the conventional approach, whereby curriculum writers design dialogues on the basis of what intuitively sounds appropriate or natural, and then students are asked to mimic the way language is represented in the textbook. Because our knowledge of language use may be largely outside the realm of consciousness even for expert language users, it is valuable for curriculum writers to draw on empirical sources in order to gain or refresh their explicit knowledge about how language is used for pragmatic purposes.

Just to name a few examples of how research might be useful in this effort, a study by Liddicoat and Crozet (2001) using naturally occurring data revealed how interaction about the previous weekend tended to unfold differently in Australian English and in French. As an example of similarities and differences between natural data and the language of textbooks, Jiang (2006) compared suggestions in a spoken and written academic language corpus with the way that they appeared in textbooks. In addition to going to journal articles to find out about L2 pragmatics as reported in these two studies, teachers may wish to utilize books such as those by Bardovi-Harlig and Mahan-Taylor (2003), Ishihara and Cohen (2010), Martinez-Flor and Usó-Juan (2010), Tatsuki and Houck (2010) and Houck and Tatsuki (2011). Likewise, teachers could access websites such as the one at CARLA (described above). These resources contain information about the realization of various speech acts, conversation management, turn-taking and organization of discourse, as well as for suggested instructional activities.
However, if there is no existing research on the pragmatic or discursive feature one intends to teach, even a small-scale data-driven investigation is recommended. This investigation could entail having teachers (sometimes along with students) collect language data and analyse them collaboratively in the spirit of a teacher-as-researcher approach (Roberts et al., 2001). Some teachers seem to believe that the learner-as-researcher approach only lends itself to second language contexts, in which students are exposed to the target language outside of the classroom. However, in foreign language settings teachers can get students to collect media-based data (e.g. from films, dramas or news programmes) or provide data for students to analyse in order to guide them to self-discover the range of norms of the target community.

After the curriculum writers become (re)informed about how the target features are used, the actual instruction can be designed inline with Schmidt’s notions of noticing and understanding (1993). In noticing learners simply register a surface language structure, while at the understanding phase, they come to understand the principles behind how the language form interacts with the context. Some instructional frameworks have been proposed which draw on this cognitive approach. For example, Martínez-Flor and Usó-Juan (2006) introduced the 6R approach in which learners research and reflect on the target pragmatic feature, receive language-focused explicit instruction, reason and understand the impact of sociocultural factors, rehearse what they know in production and finally revise their own production. The following are features that appear to be common to existing instructional frameworks (e.g. Kondo, 2008; Ishihara & Cohen, 2010; Tatsuki & Houck, 2010; Houck & Tatsuki, 2011):

- raising the awareness of the learners as to the linguistic form and sociocultural norms of the target culture;
- providing language-focused (i.e. pragmalinguistic) practice;
- engaging learners in producing interactional output;
- providing meta-pragmatic opportunities for learners to reflect on their own language use and the possible consequences of their language use in the target community.

It is also important for curriculum writers to bear in mind that native-like pragmatic language use is not always the learners’ goal. It may not, in fact, be a realistic goal for instruction in the first place. While learners can certainly benefit from having receptive competence in L2 pragmatics at an advanced level (e.g. a well-developed ability to interpret other speakers’ meaning as intended in context and to assess the potential consequences of language use), their productive competence is a matter involving the negotiation of multicultural identities (Ishihara & Tarone, 2009). Materials consistent with this approach provide learners with language choices as to L2 pragmatics and empower learners’ multicultural competence, rather than being based on a position aimed at the assimilation of the learners into the target culture.

**Examples of materials development application**

While as mentioned above, most of the commercial materials appear to under-represent pragmatic use of the target language, we will turn in this section to a few notable exceptions that have come available relatively recently. The first example is some materials for teaching telephone
conversation closings designed by Wong (2011). Based on past research and instructional plans (e.g. Schegloff & Sacks, 1973; Bardovi-Harlig et al., 1991; Griswold, 2003), three components of the sequential structure of conversational closings are first introduced: terminal exchanges, preclosing signals and preclosing sequences, as well as their definitions, sequence types and examples, including the one below:

Marge: Uh, tell your little girlfriend or other little girlfriend hello an’ everything like that. (preclosing sequence of solicitude)
Sam: I will, dear. (preclosing sequence)
March: OK. (preclosing signal)
Sam: Thank you. (preclosing signal)
March: Bye bye. (terminal exchange)
Sam: B’bye. (terminal exchange) (Wong, 2011, p. 141)

Through worksheets with transcripts of multiple naturally occurring conversations, students are guided to:

1. raise their awareness of these sequences and signals through discussion;
2. identify the preclosing moves by analysing written examples and doing consolidation exercises;
3. practice preclosings through writing and role play and
4. reconstruct closings by reordering scrambled closing components.

The second example comes from the curricular materials by Riddiford and Newton (2010) designed for effective business/workplace communication for intermediate and advanced ESL learners. In their first unit on small talk, learners are first prompted to analyse the context of a naturally occurring dialogue in terms of the status difference and the level of familiarity between the interlocutors. Then learners are asked to role play the same situation and to write it down. After listening to the audio (available online, see below for examples), learners are to compare their own language with the sample. The discussion questions ask, for example, what the topic of the small talk is, how suitable it is, how much detail is given, how long the small talk lasts, what purpose the small talk serves, where it comes in the conversation, what we can infer about the relationship of the speakers and who starts and finishes the small talk (p. 11). In this unit, learners can study an audio sample and transcripts of ten naturally occurring dialogues representing small talk and are guided to analyse them in terms of the status difference, the level of familiarity and the topic of the small talk.

While some language educators may believe that pragmatics can only be addressed at an intermediate or advanced level of proficiency, the third example below by Ishihara demonstrates how pragmatics can be incorporated into the first phase of the existing curriculum. This adaptation has been designed to supplement somewhat stilted greeting exchanges between friends often found in beginning-level EFL textbooks such as the one below:

Kumi: How are you?
Paul: Fine, thank you. And you?
Kumi: I’m fine too. Thank you. (Takahashi et al., 2006)
Instead of teaching this dialogue between two early teenagers as it is, teachers can prepare two formal and informal examples of greeting exchanges. The language of the first formal exchange could be identical to the textbook dialogue above. The second informal interaction could be written based on the naturally occurring data in Kakiuchi (2005) or Riddiford and Newton (2010). For example, the latter source can include one or both of the following greeting exchanges in their above-mentioned unit on small talk:

Joan and Elizabeth pass in the corridor.

Elizabeth: Hi Joan!
Joan: Hi, how are you?
Elizabeth: Oh, busy busy busy!
Joan: Mm, terrible isn’t it.

Two male colleagues of equal status, Matt and Bob, in the lift.

Matt: Hi, how's things? [sic]
Bob: Hi, good good . . . haven’t seen you for ages. How are you?
Matt: Fine. Busy though, as always . . . must meet my performance objectives, eh. [laughs]
Bob: [laughs] Yeah, me too. Ah well, see you later.
Matt: Yeah, bye. (Riddiford & Newton, 2010, p. 14)

Both of the dialogues can be given to learners without any indication as to who the interactants are. Placing the original and the additional dialogue(s) side by side, learners discuss who the speakers are likely to be and what the relationships might be in the respective dialogues. Learners also explain why they think so, which prompts them to direct their attention to particular language forms. Then they can consider the relative levels of formality in each situation and visually represent them on a continuum (see Ishihara & Cohen, 2010, pp. 163–5). Learners can also compare and contrast more examples of naturally occurring greeting exchanges (e.g. in Kakiuchi, 2005), collect and analyse further samples and conduct some interactional practice.

While textbooks are often authorized and treated as unproblematic, especially in foreign language contexts (Pulverness, 2003; Ishihara, 2011), many of them still fall short in terms of appropriate language use in context. However, as discussed earlier, recent publications in L2 pragmatics have begun to provide samples of instructional materials and lesson plans (e.g. Bardovi-Harlig & Mahan-Taylor, 2003; Ishihara & Cohen, 2010; Martinez-Flor & Usó-Juan, 2010, Tatsuki & Houck, 2010; Houck & Tatsuki, 2011). More extensive curricular materials include Riddiford and Newton (2006) for teaching a range of business or workplace interactions in ESL contexts, Sykes and Cohen (2006) for teaching communicative acts in Spanish and Ishihara and Maeda (2010) for teaching speech acts in Japanese. Although pragmatics is often neglected or only marginally treated in existing L2 curricula, further materials development along these lines will support teachers in preparing learners to understand and use language effectively in context and to express their own voice as they wish in the target community.
Bibliography


The application of discourse analysis to materials design for language teaching

Ben Fenton-Smith

What we know

Why speak of ‘discourse’ analysis, not ‘language’ analysis? And why ‘communicative’ language teaching (CLT), not ‘language teaching’? In both cases, terms have changed because our understanding of ‘text’ has changed. Pre-1980s, textbooks contained decontextualized language items – polished models of formal properties. However, as knowledge of what constitutes ‘text’ expanded, so too did the realization that the study of formal properties alone was not enough. The term ‘discourse’ was invoked to refer to text in a wider sense – as language with meaning in context. This altered focus, towards texts with communicative purposes in the social world, underlies both contemporary discourse analysis and CLT. The influence of discourse analysis on materials design is evident in many ways (to the extent that most CLT tasks are effectively discourse analysis activities).

To begin with, texts of various shapes and sizes have become objects of study. When focussed on formal properties, sentences or clauses are reasonable base units of analysis, since grammar is conveniently and tightly packed there. However, from a discourse perspective, texts of all shapes and sizes have recognizable identities and purposes. Even a single, muffled grunt from a sleeping person could constitute a complete, fully comprehensible, and culturally familiar text – for example, when interpreted as someone expressing unease over a bad dream. Equally, PhD dissertations and Russian novels are recognizable discourse units.

We also know that texts do not come into being vacuum-sealed, quarantined from the multitude of texts around them. As Halliday (1994, p. xxii) has cautioned, ‘The natural tendency is to think of text as a thing – a product’, but ‘the problem for text analysis is that it is much harder to represent a process than it is to represent a product’. A misleading description of discourse is that it is constituted by texts that form ‘coherent, meaningful wholes’. Text fragments are discourse too,
as long as we recognize their potential as parts of wider communication processes. This has impacted on CLT, as materials writers seek to expose students to the inherent ‘messiness’ of real discourse through ‘authentic’ (i.e. naturally occurring) materials.

Spoken discourse is particularly free-flowing and (probably for this reason) was neglected in language teaching, at least in comparison to its written counterpart, until developments in discourse analysis elevated its status. Burns et al. (1996) point out that in the past many teaching materials, such as contrived versions of spoken texts, were ‘based on traditional grammars of written English’ (p. 44). Talk suffered from the perception that it was ungrammatical, as Chomsky observed in drawing a distinction between ‘competence’ (knowledge of language structure) and ‘performance’ (actual use):

In actual fact, it [performance] obviously could not directly reflect competence. A record of natural speech will show numerous false starts, deviations from rules, changes of plan in mid-course, and so on. (1965, p. 4)

Discourse analysis has shown that there are key linguistic features that characterize the differences between spoken and written discourse and that language learners should be aware of them. Paltridge (2006), following Halliday, lists these as:

- grammatical intricacy (speech tends to have a more complex architecture of clauses);
- lexical density (written discourse tends to have a higher ratio of content words to grammatical words);
- nominalization (the repackaging of actions/events as nouns rather than verbs is a feature of written discourse);
- explicitness (indirectness and inference are common in spoken discourse);
- contextualization (spoken and written genres vary in the extent to which a shared context is required to make sense of the text);
- spontaneity (spoken discourse has less opportunity for conscious planning).

The difference between the written and the spoken is not absolute – multiple genres crossover (e.g. an academic lecture may be more pre-planned and lexically dense than an online chat).

Discourse knowledge can improve the quality of language teachers’ practice (McCarthy, 1991; Riggenbach, 1999; Olshtain & Celce-Murcia, 2001). As McCarthy (1991) notes, discourse-savvy teachers understand the features of natural discourse and are therefore able to make better judgements about all aspects of their work: what materials to use, what to do in the classroom and what the end products of the teaching process should be.

What we think we know

In some ways, however, discourse knowledge has further complicated the language teaching field. Three areas of continuing contention are grammar, authenticity and critical pedagogy.
Grammar

Attempts to place CLT within a theory of ‘communicative competence’ (Canale & Swain, 1980; Canale, 1983) have troubled over a suitable approach to lexicogrammar. As Canale (1983) concedes: ‘it is still not clear that any current theory of grammar can be selected over others to characterize this competence nor in what ways a theory of grammar is directly relevant for second language pedagogy’ (p. 7).

Widdowson (2007a) revisited the place of grammar in CLT and concluded that it has, in a sense, got lost in the enthusiastic rush to focus on all things ‘communicative’. Or to put it another way, the embrace of the ‘communicative’ has been done superficially, not along the lines of the discourse model that was originally intended. Although Halliday’s (1973) functional grammar was cited as a foundation stone for CLT in the 1970’s (e.g. by Brumfit & Johnson, 1979), it still struggles for recognition:

As a general approach to language teaching, CLT had an immediate appeal, and enthusiasm for it tended to reduce it to a simplified and superficial version. It was the most obviously novel feature of CLT that was seized upon: the idea that language was essentially a communicative activity and should be taught as such. In other words, the external pragmatic functions of language were given primacy . . . and there was a widespread belief in some quarters that this precluded a consideration of grammar. An exclusive concern with external functions, this denial of grammar in some CLT practices, of course, makes Halliday completely irrelevant. (Widdowson 2007a, p. 217)

In a sense CLT has become decoupled from discourse analysis because the essential link between the internal encodings of the language and the contexts in which these resources can be appropriately realized has been neglected. Widdowson views the ‘central issue of CLT’ as being ‘how learners can be made aware of how this relationship works’ (p. 218).

The discourse analysis world provides mixed messages on the significance of grammar in text analysis. For example, within the Hallidayan tradition, a statement such as Martin’s (2009) would be uncontroversial: ‘discussing the relation of lexis, grammar and discourse structure to genre is inescapable – since the lower level resources have to be brought to consciousness and taught’ (p. 16). But Jan Blommaert states that a lot of analysis suffers from too much grammar – a ‘linguistic bias’ which ‘restricts the space of analysis to textually organised and (explicitly) linguistically encoded discourse’ (2005, p. 35). Functional grammar is still more the preserve of discourse analysts than language teachers, possibly for the reason Derewianka (2001, p. 262) suggests: it ‘can be seen as too complex and inaccessible in its raw state for teachers to utilise’. CLT would be richer and stronger if this changed and language teachers were expected to command a thorough knowledge of the functional structures of language.

Authenticity

Although there are varying definitions of the word ‘authentic’ in language teaching, the most common is captured by Morrow (1977): ‘a stretch of real language, produced by a real speaker
or writer for a real audience and designed to convey a real message of some sort’. The discourse approach gels with the use of authentic materials because it makes naturally occurring language the focus of learners’ attention. As Burns et al. (1996) state:

- contrived materials rarely reflect the structure of natural spoken discourse;
- contrived materials are usually based on materials writers’ unreliable intuitions about what natural discourse is;
- contrived materials are often based on traditional grammars of written English;
- contrived materials are often designed around target structures or functions to suit syllabi.

Gilmore (2007) adds that authentic materials are often preferred in the belief they are more motivating for learners, although he notes there is little empirical evidence to support this.

Several points have been raised by Widdowson (1994, 1998, 2007a) in opposition to the preference for authentic materials. First, privileging the authentic can privilege native speakers, since exemplars will inevitably be native speaker productions, such as newspaper reports and advertisements. As a result, ‘communicative competence’ (which the authentic materials presumably embody) becomes equated with native speaker norms. Second, non-native speaker teachers, who for many reasons are better suited to instructing fellow non-natives, will be sidelined, lacking the capability to handle nuanced, idiomatic discourse. However these are not so much arguments against authenticity as against exclusivity – that is, what counts as ‘authentic’ has been restricted to the discourse of the ‘core English-speaking countries’ (Phillipson, 1992, p. 17). This does not preclude the production of authentic materials showcasing English in all its real-world (including non-native) manifestations.

Another of Widdowson’s arguments is that discourse is authentic only in the context within which it originates: that is, for students, language-made-for-learning is real for their context. While this may be so, Gilmore (2007) is right to insist that we need to limit the definition of authenticity to some ‘objectifiable criteria since, once we start including subjective notions such as learner authentication, any discourse can be called authentic and the term becomes meaningless’ (p. 98).

The last of Widdowson’s objections is a common sense (but sometimes overlooked) reminder that a piece of language is not necessarily the most appropriate for learners just because it has been performed. The primary guiding principle for materials design should always be the learning purpose. Thus, believing that learners benefit from exposure to real language does not preclude the use of contrived material, and indeed most discourse analysis books contain made-up examples too.

**Critical discourse teaching**

By adding ‘critical’ to discourse analysis, the focus shifts from language to society. Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is not so much interested in describing what makes one discourse different from
THE APPLICATION OF DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

another as with how and why discourses come to be different. Blommaert (2005, pp. 25–6) summarizes CDA's main tenets:

- discourse is not benign – it is an ideological, non-transparent ‘instrument of power’;
- CDA can denaturalize discourse practices through the analysis of power relationships;
- CDA targets topics where the intersection of language and social structure have the most impact: for example, politics, racism, gender, economics and media.

But what is CDA's place in a language learning programme – if any? Fairclough (2010) believes language teaching ought to include the development of students’ critical discourse skills. He agrees that awareness-raising is important (e.g. understanding the nature of high status genres), since ‘learning standard English does give some learners life chances they would not otherwise have’ (p. 536). However he argues that it is dangerous to stop there, because doing so

- promotes the erroneous assumption that language education alone can neutralize the effects of social class; and
- portrays a situation of inequality (marginalized non-standard varieties of English vs English which is appropriate for situations carrying social clout) as one of diversity, and thereby legitimizes it.

Most language programmes are based on a ‘tradition which sees a sociolinguistic order as a given and common-sense reality’ but the ‘question of why it is there scarcely arises’ (Fairclough, 2010, p. 537).

A problem for language teachers is that the choice of materials for CDA-style instruction can lead to accusations of ideological advocacy. One teacher’s denaturalization of oppressive worldviews is another’s activist indoctrination. An example is Guest’s (2005) denunciation of Peaty’s (2004, 2005) call for global issues education in Japanese EFL:

Peaty’s advocacy . . . manifests all the worst of the missionary mentality. Here we have a scenario in which the masses (students) have been duped by an unfair, devious power (government and its minions in the monolithic mass-media) that is fundamentally ‘wrong’. However, the teacher – the enlightened one – knows the truth. He therefore feels it is his bounden duty – he is, after all, an educator – to impart these truths to his captive audience in order to lift the veil of deceit from their eyes and ‘save’ them. (p. 12)

CDA does have a place in language learning. While outright advocacy is odious, excessively anodyne materials can be equally dull. Additionally, any act of materials design constitutes an ideological statement, since all materials represent a worldview of some kind. Letting students in on that secret is a good thing. The function of discourse in constructing and perpetuating social structures is beyond argument and therefore has a place in language programmes. But the teacher’s role is to provide the tools for analysis – not prescribe the analysis itself.
What we need to find out

Because discourse perpetually evolves (as modes of delivery and communicative purposes change), research on new discourse forms is continually required. This entails estimations of the most common/significant contexts students will face through their lives and materials that equip learners with the tools (lexicogrammatical, sociolinguistic, generic, etc.) needed to operate in them. ELT in the ASEAN region, for example, might heed Kirkpatrick's (2010a, p. 221) prediction that learning objectives will eventually shift from ‘standard forms and native-like proficiency’ to using ‘English successfully in lingua franca or multilingual contexts’. This would impact on materials design:

Adopting a multilingual model also has implications for the cultural content of the curriculum. Rather than a course in American or British culture, the ELT curriculum can provide a course in regional cultures. So, in the ASEAN context, learners can study the cultures of ASEAN through English, including the study of pragmatic norms. (2010a, p. 221)

One way we obtain information on language-in-use is by referring to large corpora, such as the British National Corpus and the Corpus of Contemporary American English. The mapping of discourses will be enhanced as corpora relevant to more discourse communities build around the world, along with the technology for using them. For example, the creation of Kirkpatrick’s ASEAN curriculum will be facilitated by the Asian Corpus of English, under construction (Kirkpatrick, 2010b). But although corpora have the potential to alter language policy and provide resources for materials designers, the extent to which teachers currently utilize them is questionable. In her review of the literature on this topic, Breyer concludes that ‘the continuing enthusiastic academic endeavour within this field is not reflected in current language teaching practices’ (2009, p. 154). We need to know more about what corpora can tell us and how to use them.

It is dangerous to conceptualize the future of materials design as a dialogue only between academics (discourse analysts) and teachers (including materials designers), as this excludes the student voice. There is an assumption (e.g. Riggenbach, 1999; Wennerstrom, 2003) that students are more motivated by a discourse analytic approach to learning, especially when asked to inductively investigate texts in such roles as ethnographers, researchers and grammarians. But it is possible to conflate one’s teaching philosophies with students’ learning preferences. They are not the same, and where they conflict, the latter can (and often should) be overridden, albeit with conscious intent and defensible reason. Gilmore makes the point in his review of the authentic materials debate that ‘Only a small number of researchers have bothered to ask the learners THEMSELVES what they think about these issues’ (2007, p. 106). As an example of how learners’ views can confound the political correctness of academics, Timmis (2002) found that learners across 14 countries expressed a preference for models of native speaker discourse over non-native, even if they anticipated communicating with non-native speakers in the future. The psychology of learner aspirations is an area we need to understand better.

We also need to remain open-minded that the meaning of the term ‘discourse’ itself is continually metamorphosing, and that this too has repercussions for materials design. An expanded conception of discourse could now include, for example, multimodal forms of expression. Thus Fairclough (2010, p. 530) argues that education programmes need to incorporate ‘a critical awareness of
discourse which includes other forms of semiosis as well as language: visual images in particular are an increasingly important feature of contemporary discourse.

**The current match with published materials**

Most commercial textbooks and resource books display the influence of discourse studies. A representative example is *New Headway* (Soars & Soars, 2005). It is divided into 12 units, each 8–10 pages long, with broadly relevant, inoffensive themes (e.g. ‘No place like home’, ‘Forever friends’). On the surface these themes approximate contexts-for-use, but in fact are literary devices. As rationales for otherwise disjointed narratives, they link an array of mini-contexts and text types that have no other necessary connection. Each contrived situation or text is elaborated by a variety of language activities. For example, Unit 5, ‘An eye to the future’, fits all of the following into 10 pages:

- a pilot’s monologue about an impending flight (students fill in missing words);
- a press article on youth attitudes (students discuss issues, identify key ideas);
- casual conversations about holidays, social meetings, the weather, upcoming study (students focus on grammatical forms);
- phone conversations between old university friends planning a reunion (students listen for key information);
- a letter and an email in which friends exchange news (students consider the texts’ social functions and linguistic differences, and compose an email in accord with prescribed purposes and stages).

Although it is unlikely the texts are authentic, the materials are discourse-oriented in several ways. They enact real world contexts (albeit UK-centric ones); they contain broadly familiar genres; they include different modes of communication (e.g. email, telephone, face-to-face); they address differences in spoken and written discourse; they link form to function in grammar activities; and they flag sociolinguistic concerns (e.g. degrees of formality).

A different question is whether books that are explicitly devoted to discourse analysis – and that purport to be published for students, not just researchers – ought to show how the subject can be applied in language teaching. Murray and Crichton (2010) surveyed 39 Australian universities to determine what is actually meant by the term ‘applied linguistics’. Two of their conclusions are pertinent here: (i) discourse analysis is one of the seven core courses that appears in the majority of programmes; and (ii) language teaching ‘is arguably the context of application with the best developed career pathway and this has implications for enrolment numbers’ (p. 15.12) (i.e. student language teachers underpin the viability of applied linguistics programmes). Yet it is surprising how many books on discourse analysis pay little attention to its connection to language teaching. There is, arguably, an onus on those who convene discourse analysis courses to ask ‘In what profession will my students most likely apply the principles of discourse analysis?’ The answer: language teaching.
There are several books that combine a theoretical orientation to discourse with concrete directions as to how language teachers can apply discourse knowledge in their work: Burns et al. (1996), Carter et al. (1997), Cook (1989), Nunan (1993), McCarthy (1991), McCarthy and Carter (1994), Riggenbach (1999) and Wennerstrom (2003). One drawback is that most of these works pre-date new forms of technology-driven communication. Other books on discourse analysis that are very accessible and more contemporary, but which are not focused on applications to language teaching include Johnstone (2008), Martin and Rose (2003), Paltridge (2006) and Widdowson (2007b).

**Suggestions for materials development applications**

There are several ways in which discourse analysis can be conceptualized and practiced in materials design, depending on the materials writer’s objective(s). The most basic is the traditional form/function matching exercise, familiar in commercial textbooks. An example, from *New Headway* (Soars & Soars, 2005) Unit 3 (‘What a story!’), is the following:

- *Showing interest and surprise.* Students listen to (and fill in the gaps of) a dialogue in which interlocutors express interest/surprise about personal news. They then learn how ‘echo’ and ‘reply’ questions have been used to fulfil the communicative functions and consider the role of intonation and stress in realizing the question forms. Finally, they complete further dialogues applying the question types.

A second type focuses on micro skills while still maintaining a broader discourse perspective. For example:

- *Vocabulary.* Discourse fields are partly defined by the recurrence of lexical items, so learning is facilitated by specialized frequency word lists. For example, Wang et al., (2008) provide a medical academic word list to aid students of medical English.

- *Pronunciation.* In a discourse-driven syllabus, the question is not necessarily whether a learner’s pronunciation approximates native-speaker norms. Rather, it is ‘Does pronunciation impede communication in this context?’ Materials are developed that raise awareness of this fact or target trouble spots.

A third approach is to focus on whole genres, typically of an academic or professional nature:

- *Academic.* Some genres are well documented, such as the traditional five-paragraph essay (introduction/body/conclusion paragraphs, thesis statements, topic sentences, etc.) – but more work is needed on varieties of discipline-specific texts.

- *Professional.* English for specific/professional purposes is a growth area, with an increasing number of genres of professional writing being documented. It is more difficult to obtain or develop models of spoken interactions.
A different approach is not to use discourse analysis to develop learners’ language proficiency per se, but to develop learners’ knowledge of language structures so they can execute discourse analysis themselves. The ‘systemic-functional’ tradition (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004; Martin & Rose, 2003) is noted for this, as in the following examples:

- **Clause structure.** Butt et al. (2000) present an introductory, step-by-step guide for learning how to define clause boundaries and clause types, along with texts to work on. The same process can be adapted to any group of learners using different texts that are closer to their interests/experiences.

- **Transitivity.** This term refers to ‘experiential meaning’: how grammar is used to represent what is going in the world (as opposed to, for example, ‘interpersonal meaning’, whereby grammar is used to modulate relationships between interlocutors). Learners require an accessible introduction to three main concepts – processes, participants and circumstances. They can then attempt analysis on sample texts (which are preferably not too complex in the first instance, as in Droga & Humphrey (2002)).

A related exercise is to raise learners’ awareness of the principles of pragmatics through text analysis tasks, as in these examples:

- **Politeness.** Students are given a reason for needing to contact a teacher/lecturer (e.g. to enquire about assignment specifications). They then evaluate a collection of sample emails, which vary in tone, formality, structure, etc. and decide which is the most appropriate. Finally, students compose their own example.

- **Presupposition.** Learners analyse a TV drama scene, identifying presuppositions on multiple levels: background knowledge (e.g. references to places, famous people), interpersonal relations (assumed knowledge about characters), implicit cultural knowledge (e.g. social behaviours or attitudes – such as dating conventions), hidden ideology (worldviews which are taken for granted, or expressed as common sense).

Next, within the critical discourse/critical pedagogy tradition, the objective of the materials designer could be to develop the learner’s capacity to critique society itself. The goal is to understand that language structures reflect and perpetuate sociocultural structures, as illustrated in the following activity:

- **Identity.** Learners examine how individuals/groups are identified (particularly, named and tracked) in separate accounts of the same event (e.g. a major speech by a US president, covered in western/non-western news reports), and consider what the data says about the worldviews of the sources.

Finally, it is worth remembering that the most readily available source of authentic (but non-native), contextually appropriate, student-centred discourse is students’ own work. It is common practice in second language writing classes for students to critique their drafts and those of classmates.
This is not easy for spoken discourse, which by its nature is ephemeral, and therefore difficult to objectify unless recorded. The following is an example of students analysing their own spoken discourse:

- **Self-transcription.** A team of teachers (Stillwell et al., 2010) had pairs of students give improvised poster presentations to each other which were recorded and then transcribed by the students themselves. Both the students and the teacher studied the transcriptions to identify language problems and suggest improvements. The process was repeated a week later so that all students had two transcriptions, both marked up with their own and the teacher’s ideas for alternative wordings. As a final step, students analysed the data using simplified criteria for fluency, accuracy and complexity in the hope that this would spur development through ‘noticing’ (Lynch, 2001).

### An example of materials development application

In conclusion, the following is an example of materials developed for a large-scale EAP project. This was conducted at Griffith University, the ninth largest university in Australia with a student population of 43,000, of whom approximately 20 per cent come from overseas. The university executive commissioned the creation of four ‘English language enhancement courses’ (ELECs) to boost the oral and written English language skills of international students and to maximize their chances of succeeding in their academic studies. The courses were aligned with the university’s major academic groupings:

- English Language and Communication for Business and Commerce
- English Language and Communication for Health
- English Language and Communication for Science, Environment, Engineering and Technology
- English Language and Communication for Arts and Social Sciences

Each course would run for one 13-week semester (4 contact hours: a 2-hour lecture and a 2-hour tutorial).

Materials had to be prioritized in accordance with how closely they matched the discourse encountered in students’ regular discipline courses. Key language patterns underlying the texts – invisible to most students – would be the focus of study, with the purpose of improving students’ outcomes in all courses through improved capacity to handle discipline-specific language. An example of the materials that resulted from this design process is a lesson on the language of academic journal articles for students of health sciences.

As preparation for class, students read a model, authentic text (cited by Polit & Beck, 2010, as a good example of the discourse of nursing research):

In class, as an orientation to the context and purpose of the text, students activated existing schemata about the text type, discussing why the genre was significant (at personal, academic and professional levels), and considering what overall forms/shapes/stages the text type has. (Students from fields such as social work and human services, where narrative research was common, were less familiar with the conventions of quantitative research. This proved the biggest materials design challenge of the project – providing discourse samples that were relevant to a diverse audience.)

**TASK 1**
Discuss the following questions with a partner.

1. Prior to coming to Griffith University, how much journal reading experience did you have? Have you had to read many journal articles in your courses so far? How easy/difficult is reading journal articles for you?
2. Who reads and who writes the research contained in academic journals? Only academics?
3. What are the purposes of these texts?
4. Many research articles in academic journals have a predictable structure. What do you think it is? (Hint: the letters IMRaD might help you.)

**Answer:** *Introduction, Method, Results and Discussion. But how fixed is the order? And how variable is the content of these parts?*

Students then worked through a number of exercises that guided text analysis at multiple levels, ranging from specific focus on key lexical and grammatical features, to the rhetorical functions of, and relations between, sentences, to the organization of paragraphs/main sections. Tasks 2–5 demonstrate how this was done for the model text’s literature review section.

**TASK 2**
What is the overall structure of the literature review in Howell et al. (2007)? Look at Section 2 of the article and complete the pyramid diagram by adding subsection titles. Then decide: Has the literature review been organized according to the *methodology* of previous studies, the *chronology* of previous studies or the *conceptual* focus of previous studies?

**Answers:** a. *psychosocial factors*; b. *biological factors*; c. *trait anger*; d. *anger expression patterns*; e. *trait anxiety*; f. *gender*; g. *height and weight*

*It has been organized according to the conceptual focus of previous studies.*
TASK 3
Read the first paragraph of the literature review:

[1] Trait anger (Johnson, 1989, 1990; Siegel, 1984), patterns of anger expression (Johnson, 1989; Muller, Grunbaum & Labarthe, 2001; Seigel, 1984), and trait anxiety (Ewert & Kolodner, 1994; Johnson, 1989; Meinginger et al., 2004) are psychological factors that have been associated with high blood pressure in adolescents. [2] Biological factors such as sex, height and weight have also been significantly associated with high blood pressure (Johnson, 1984, 1989; Meinginger et al., 2004; Muller et al., 2001). [3] Although the contribution of these factors to the development of hypertension has been investigated in adults and adolescents (Ewart & Kolodner, 1994; Harburg, Gkeuberman, Russell & Cooper, 1991; Meinginger et al., 2004), much less research has been done with children (Hauber et al., 1998). [4] It is the intent of this study to investigate relationships among psychosocial factors, biological factors, and blood pressure in children.

a Which sentence identifies a gap in the previous research?
Answer: Sentence 3. It points out that hypertension in children has rarely been studied.

b Which sentence uses the identification of a knowledge gap to justify the study?
Answer: Sentence 4. It shows how this study will fill the knowledge gap that was identified in the previous sentence.

TASK 4
Look at the first sentences of subsections 2.1.1, 2.1.2 and 2.1.3. What purpose do these sentences serve in the text?
Answer: They provide clear definitions of each of the research concepts. They are like the topic sentences we used in writing essays, which signal the main ideas of paragraphs.

TASK 5
Let us look at patterns of subject + verb in the literature review. Below are two tables containing parts of sentences from that section. In some cases, verbs are missing, in other cases, subjects are missing. Look in the text to complete the missing boxes then write a short answer to the question below Table 9.2.

**TABLE 9.1 Patterns of subject and verb, part 1.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grammatical Subject</th>
<th>Verb</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1.1</td>
<td>Anger a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.1</td>
<td>Repeated episodes of anger arousal b.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.3</td>
<td>c. has been shown to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.3</td>
<td>Responding to stress- or anxiety-provoking experiences with anger d. has been associated with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.3</td>
<td>e.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Answers: a. is thought to; b. may lead to; c. Anxiety; d. has been shown to; e. The presence of anxiety

**TABLE 9.2** Patterns of subject and verb, part 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grammatical Subject</th>
<th>Verb</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1.1 Researchers</td>
<td>f.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.2 Siegel (1984)</td>
<td>g.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.2 h</td>
<td>found</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.2 Hauber et al. (1998)</td>
<td>i.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.2 j</td>
<td>found that</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.3 Jonas, Franks and Ingram (1997)</td>
<td>k.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.3 l</td>
<td>found</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.1 Hauber et al. (1998)</td>
<td>m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.1 n</td>
<td>found</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Answers: f. have noted; g. found that; h. Johnson (1984, 1989); i. found; j. Muller et al. (2001); k. suggested that; l. Heker, Whalen, Jamner and Delfino (2002); m. identified; n. Starner and Peters (2004)

Do you notice any patterns in the language? How do the two tables differ?

Answer: There are two main kinds of subjects: concepts and people. In Table 9.1, all the subjects are concepts, such as ‘anger’ and ‘anxiety’, whereas in Table 9.2 they are all people – mostly the names of researchers (followed by the publication year of their research). Passive verb forms tend to be used when the subject is a concept, while active is more common when the subject is a researcher. This may be because the ‘doer’ of the research has been left out to make a concept the subject. Certain verbs are also repeated many times (e.g. ‘shown’ and ‘found’). Past tense is a standard form, because the text is a ‘review’ of literature.

The main objective of the activities was to expose students to a range of discourse features relevant to their university studies. Task 1 focused on context, purpose, forms and functions of the overall text, while Task 2 focused on the overall structure and function of one stage of the text. Tasks 3 and 4 focused on rhetorical construction at the paragraph and sentence level, while Task 5 focused on patterns in grammar and lexis. The focus was receptive discourse skills: understanding and deconstructing texts. Learners were not yet of a sufficiently high proficiency level to reproduce the text type (i.e. write a journal article) but later in the course they did write simplified research essays and were encouraged to replicate the forms they encountered here (e.g. lexicogrammatical patterns for summarizing the research of others).
In summary, the materials touch on key features of the discourse approach to language learning:

- context – understanding how the text links to context but also to users, producers and the learner him/herself;
- purpose – understanding the functional motivations of the overall text and of its specific parts;
- staging – understanding how the text typically unfolds and the extent to which the stages are variable;
- lexis and grammar – understanding patterns in wording that typically occur within the text type;
- authenticity – understanding what real texts are like in contexts likely to be encountered.

Bibliography


Intercultural competence

Michael Byram and Hitomi Masuhara

Introduction

The phrase ‘intercultural competence’ appears to have an assured status in academic and professional circles, if the production of handbooks is a reliable indicator. In English, there is a handbook with ‘intercultural competence’ as its title (Deardorff, 2009) and there is a handbook of intercultural communication (Kotthoff & Spencer-Oatey, 2007) and another of language and intercultural communication (Jackson, 2012). In the germanophone world there is a ‘Handbuch’, which deals with both intercultural competence and communication (Straub et al., 2007). At the same time there are plenty of textbooks for the masters level courses which have developed in recent years (e.g. Neuliep, 2003; Chen & Starosta, 2005; Holliday et al., 2010).

Presumably this interest in the academic world is related to developments in other worlds. Many academics begin their articles and books by remarking on changes in society, referring above all to ‘globalization’. For example, in the German handbook, we find:

Intercultural competence is today considered to be a key qualification in a globalized and/or glocalized world in which border crossings and cultural exchange have become unavoidable. (Straub et al., 2007, p. 1 – our translation)

The phrase ‘intercultural competence’ itself is often described rather than defined because of the complexity of what it refers to. In their overview in the first chapter of The SAGE Handbook of Intercultural Competence, Spitzberg and Changnon (2009) do not define it but talk of the many ways in which intercultural competence is ‘conceptualized’. Nonetheless a starting point is provided by Guilherme’s definition (2000, p. 297): ‘intercultural competence is the ability to interact effectively with people from cultures that we recognise as being different from our own’.

What is interesting for language teachers is that such conceptualizations and definitions pay little or no attention to the role of language or to language learning, when language teachers might incline to believe that language is fundamental to intercultural competence. This is explicable by the fact that there are two ‘traditions’ of activity in this field: one which focuses upon what is often
called ‘cross-cultural training’ and one which is associated with foreign language teaching and has a number of labels, including ‘civilisation’ in French, ‘Landeskunde’ in German and ‘background studies/area studies’ in English. The first started from a professional need to prepare people for living and working in another country, and can be traced to the 1950s; the second has largely been seen as an accompaniment to the development of knowledge and skills in a foreign language, and has existed in various forms throughout the modern period of language teaching, which began in the 1880s. There is a body of knowledge and research in both traditions, which are only recently beginning to take note of each other, to their mutual benefit.

**Cross-cultural training**

We use the phrase ‘cross-cultural training’ to denote the broad field of interest in international trading and, in more recent times, the global economy and globalization. Although the phrase ‘intercultural training’ is also used (cf. Müller-Jacquier, in press, pp. 358–61) it might help here to keep the ‘cross-cultural’ and ‘intercultural’ separate. Interest in cross-cultural training began after the Second World War, when the United States of America was the only major economy left intact, and began to offer assistance to rebuild Europe and other countries with the Marshall Plan (Hart, 1996).

There were difficulties of communication which could not be attributed only to language, and in a new development, the Foreign Service Institute turned to people who were not specialists in language pedagogy but anthropologists and specialists in non-verbal communication. A second source of influence came from psychology and social psychology, introducing concepts such as ‘culture shock’. The most influential work in this case was research by Hofstede (1994), who carried out a large-scale survey across many countries, and claimed to identify a number of dimensions of psychological and culture-specific characteristics which could be used to describe each country and its inhabitants. This has been much criticized for its weak scientific basis, for its reductionist and stereotyping tendency (e.g. McSweeney, 2002; Gerhart & Fan, 2005), and yet has maintained its dominance until the present day. The publication of a new book with the significant title *Beyond Hofstede* (Nakata, 2009) is a recognition, not of the problems in Hofstede’s work – there is no reference to the criticisms of its scientific weaknesses – but rather of a need to go beyond his simplifications in a more complex world.

Surveys of this field in addition to the handbooks already mentioned include:
Fowler and Blohm (2004); Mendenhall et al. (2004); Müller-Jacquier (in press).

**Intercultural education and foreign language teaching**

Turning to the second tradition, the history of the development of the ‘cultural dimension’ in foreign language teaching is complex but has been analysed in a comprehensive way by Risager (2007). Risager shows how the shift from the position where ‘background knowledge/area studies’ was an accompaniment to language teaching, to the acknowledgement that some other kind of competence is needed and cannot be separated from linguistic competence, was a complex
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process lasting many decades. By the 1990s it was widely recognized by theorists that language and culture are ‘inextricably linked’ (p. 138) but some took a structuralist approach, trying to describe intercultural competence in abstract, universal terms, and others a post-structuralist approach. The latter is represented by the work of Kramsch with her emphasis on ‘symbolic competence’ in interculturality: ‘the ability not only to approximate or appropriate for oneself someone else’s language, but to shape the very context in which the language is learned and used’ (Kramsch and Whiteside, 2008, p. 664). From this perspective, those participating in multilingual/multicultural exchanges need knowledge of the historical value of keywords, awareness of the symbolic power being used through language choice, the ability to evaluate the effects of choices being made and to take their listeners’ perspective, all of which Kramsch describes as ‘savviness, i.e. a combination of knowledge, experience and judgement’ which cannot be directly taught but may be the result of general education (Kramsch, 2009, p. 118).

On the other hand, those who have followed a structuralist approach have done so in order to develop pedagogical models and have looked to the skills and knowledge of the ethnographer. In the anglophone world, the concept of ‘language learners as ethnographers’ was developed for advanced and beginner learners (e.g. Snow & Byram, 1998; Roberts et al., 2001; Corbett, 2003), and in the francophone literature it was above all the work of Zarate (1986) which showed practical methods of using ethnographic skills of data analysis in the classroom.

Just as anthropologists and ethnographers have had to face the criticism that they were part of a colonial movement, and English language teaching has met with criticisms of being part of imperialism or neo-imperialism, those engaged with intercultural competence in language teaching are also challenged by accusations of essentialism and orientalism that is, that descriptions of ‘other cultures’ are simplified and imply that there is an underlying common core of values, beliefs and behaviours in a given country and that such accounts are written from a ‘western’ perspective which implicitly denigrates ‘non-western’ countries and cultures. It is argued by such critics that it is crucial to develop an awareness of the ways in which relationships among people of different countries may be patronizing and there should be a questioning attitude towards intercultural communication and its practice (Holliday, 2011).

This is an important critique and in particular raises questions for those who teach languages and cultures in the context of general education. For we must not forget that the vast majority of teaching which might develop intercultural competence is that which takes place in schools and universities, and foreign language teachers in schools and universities are educators within national education systems. In some cases they are civil servants with an explicit allegiance to the state. Insofar as state-funded education functions as a means of creating a sense of national identity – part of what Billig (1995) describes as the processes of ‘banal nationalism’ – the foreign language teacher is someone who may experience the apparent paradox of, on the one hand, being expected to reinforce national identity and, on the other hand, trying to make learners aware of, interested in and perhaps ready to identify with the world beyond the nation state, two perspectives often seen as incompatible. However, the interpretation of intercultural competence as the ability to centre, to ‘see ourselves as others see us’, to ‘make the strange familiar and the familiar strange’, to reflect critically on what we take for granted, offers the foreign-language teacher a way out of the paradox since they can at the same time focus on ‘the other’ and on ‘us’, and the relationships between the two. In some education systems, statements about the purposes of foreign language teaching explicitly include the idea that it will strengthen learners’
understanding of and pride in their own society. It must be noted however that this is a recent development which for some teachers and learners – and materials developers – may seem to contradict their purposes of looking only outward to the language and culture of ‘the other’.

Although there are different views of this aspect of foreign language teaching – some countries being more open to self-criticism and others seeing language learning as an opportunity to present themselves to the world – what is important in all of this is the fact that adding the notion of intercultural competence to the aims of foreign language teaching introduces complex matters of values in education which materials producers have to take into consideration.

Empirical research on this dimension of foreign language teaching has been surveyed at different times (Paige et al., 2000; Byram & Feng, 2004; Humphrey, 2007; O’Regan & MacDonald, 2007) and there are many publications which deal with a mixture of empirical research and discussions about the purposes and values of teaching intercultural competence. It always becomes clear in this work that neither the teaching of intercultural competence nor research about it can be ‘value-free’. Much of the research is action research, seeking ways of realizing in the classroom the values and purposes that teacher–researchers attribute to intercultural competence teaching. Little research is within a positivist tradition of seeking to establish causal relationships between ways of teaching and learning. More often research focuses upon understanding teachers’ and/or learners’ experience of intercultural competence pedagogy.

Teaching as education and training

The existence of the two traditions has led to two sets of research and in a sense to two knowledge bases. In the first, which we have called cross-cultural training, concepts such as ‘individualism versus collectivism’ (Hofstede, 1994) or ‘reverse culture shock’ (Ward et al., 2001) – developed from empirical psychological or communications science research – have provided the basis for raising practitioners’ awareness of difference and helping them to adopt suitable behaviours with the purpose of coming to a satisfactory negotiated outcome of their ‘business’ whatever its nature. This can be criticized as superficial, as simplification, as dealing with surface behaviours or competences which are observable and, if need be, assessable.

In the tradition of what we have called ‘intercultural education’, the certainties arising from empirical research are fewer because of the dearth of any substantial research tradition – perhaps as a consequence of lack of funding. On the other hand, the questions raised about the values involved in this kind of education and what ought to happen in classrooms are widely discussed. This means that foreign language teachers who look only at the intercultural education tradition find plenty of guidance about what ought to happen but little about what can be predicted to happen on the basis of empirical research.

It is clear that the two traditions should not be seen as dichotomous. On the one hand the findings of empirical research in the first tradition, and the teaching/training methods developed from them, could well be of assistance in producing materials and methods for foreign language teaching. On the other hand the concerns about the ‘superficialities’ of training have the potential to give depth and to overcome the separation. This has been articulated by Fleming:

The position represented by the concept of ‘education’ and ‘training’ is more usefully seen in a dialectical relationship rather than in oppositional or hierarchical terms ( . . .) the terms
'education' and 'training', 'surface' and 'depth' need to be seen in relation to each other to reflect the complex blend of understanding, experience, reflection, involvement and action that is involved in becoming intercultural. (Fleming, 2009, pp. 8–9)

One way of realizing this in practice is to ensure that learners engage with 'critical cultural awareness'. This is one element of intercultural competence, and is defined as 'an ability to evaluate, critically and on the basis of explicit criteria, perspectives, practices and products in one's own and other cultures and countries’ (Byram, 1997, p. 53).

Critical cultural awareness as an aim of language teaching requires both teachers and learners to consider the values present in other cultural behaviour but also to reflect on their own as it might be made more evident by juxtaposition with 'the other'. It requires, in the reference to 'explicit criteria', a raising to awareness of the underlying assumptions we have about what is 'right' or 'wrong' and where these assumptions have come from, how we acquired them in the first place. There are substantial issues here for both teacher trainers who must enable teachers to take up a conscious position on their own attitudes to values-laden teaching, and for materials writers who need to have a clear position about how they address the values questions implicit in their presentation of otherness.

Teaching ‘knowledge about’

The one area which we have so far not addressed, perhaps to the surprise of readers, is the question of what ‘knowledge’ should be taught, in foreign language classrooms, ‘about’ countries and societies associated with the target language. For this is indeed the strongest element of the traditional ‘background studies/ area studies’ perspective.

It might be expected that the approach which is taken in cross-cultural training would give more attention to skills and behaviours – and perhaps to attitudes – than to the acquisition of knowledge. Some models do indeed contain no reference to knowledge but others do (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009). Sometimes however what appears in Spitzberg and Changnon’s list of the ‘knowledge’ required for intercultural competence refers to self-awareness or knowledge of processes, rather than the knowledge ‘about’ which has been stressed in background/area studies.

Those concerned however with materials development would justifiably ask for guidance as to the knowledge which might be part of an approach to the country and society of the target language, irrespective of, or perhaps connected with, the development of other competences – skills, attitudes, behaviours. Practical guidance of this kind is surprisingly limited but does exist either in the form of discussion of principles of selection (Byram et al., 1994, pp. 47–54) or in the specifications of curriculum documents. For example, the specification for foreign languages in the English national curriculum includes the contents listed in Table 10.1 for children in the fourth year of primary school where the objectives are described as intercultural understanding (IU).

However, there is no rationale given for this particular selection of topics, as is often the case in curriculum documents. This leaves a gap which materials writers may have to fill themselves, explaining their selection and its rationale. On the other hand, theoretical models mentioned above do provide a means of identifying specific competences of all kinds and in one widely quoted case (Byram, 1997) the model attempts to define competences in terms of teaching objectives,
including a list of specific topics which should be included. The model defines and gives lists of objectives for five dimension of intercultural competence: skills of interpreting and relating and of discovering or interacting; attitudes of relativizing self and valuing other; critical cultural awareness; and knowledge. Our argument is that all five elements should be reflected in the objectives teachers use in planning their teaching – and materials developers use in producing materials.

Here we focus on the knowledge element which has two aspects: knowledge of self (and own society/social group) and of the other (and their society/social group). These are then specified as follows:

Objectives (knowledge about/of):

- historical and contemporary relationships between one’s own and one’s interlocutor’s countries;
- the means of achieving contact with interlocutors from another country (at a distance or in proximity), of travel to and from and the institutions which facilitate contact or help resolve problems;

### TABLE 10.1 The specification for foreign languages in the English national curriculum

| Year 4 |
|--------|--------------------------------------------------|
| IU 3.3 | Identify social conventions at home and in other cultures |
|        | • Learn about polite forms of address |
|        | • Know how to greet native speakers |
|        | • Recognize some typical names |
| IU 4.1 | Learn about festivals and celebrations in different cultures |
|        | • Learn how children of different cultures celebrate special days |
|        | • Identify similarities and differences |
|        | • Learn simple phrases to celebrate festivals, drawing on the experience of fellow pupils where possible |
| IU 4.2 | Know about some aspects of everyday life and compare them to their own |
|        | • Compare pastimes of children of different cultures and countries |
|        | • Exchange information with a partner school, for example, sports, hobbies |
| IU 4.3 | Compare traditional stories |
|        | • Compare characteristics of simple stories between cultures |
|        | • Look at the writing system of the language |
| IU 4.4 | Learn about ways of travelling to the country/countries |
|        | • Revise the location of country/countries where the language is spoken |
|        | • Identify a route from own locality to specified destination, drawing on the direct experience of pupils where available |
INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE

- the types of cause and process of misunderstanding between interlocutors of different cultural origins;
- the national memory of one’s own country and how its events are related to and seen from the perspective of one’s interlocutor’s country;
- the national memory of one’s interlocutor’s country and the perspective on it from one’s own;
- the national definitions of geographical space in one’s own country and how these are perceived from the perspective of other countries;
- the national definitions of geographical space in one’s interlocutor’s country and the perspective on them from one’s own;
- the processes and institutions of socialization in one’s own and one’s interlocutor’s country;
- social distinctions and their principal markers, in one’s own country and one’s interlocutor’s;
- institutions, and perceptions of them, which impinge on daily life within one’s own and one’s interlocutor’s country and which conduct and influence relationships between them;
- the processes of social interaction in one’s interlocutor’s country.

Assessment

A second area which we have not yet addressed is that of assessment, an issue which has become ever more dominant in education in general – steered largely by international surveys by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) of national education systems and their outputs – and cannot be ignored in this aspect of foreign language teaching either.

There is no doubt that separate and compound competences can be measured; with the help of psychologists and sociolinguists such assessment has been established. Fantini (2009) provides a very useful overview. Assessment using psychological tests may however be costly and has so far not been introduced into general education systems.

Those who develop materials for teaching may nonetheless be able to draw upon existing work to offer opportunities for assessment and self-assessment in and beyond the classroom. The use of portfolios is a specific approach which offers to meet the demands of the complexity of intercultural competence, and some of the issues arising from the values implicit in intercultural education. However, some teachers may wish to avoid assessment of, for example, attitudes or the ability to de-centre and critique one’s own society and one’s place within it, since such assessment raises ethical issues involving with the ‘right’ or ‘authority’ of teachers to make this kind of personal judgement. The pedagogy of intercultural competence cannot avoid questions of values, and this is the crucial issue in whatever materials developers do too.
The current match with published materials for intercultural language education

The literature on intercultural competence seems to focus on the following objectives:

1. Knowledge (i.e. external information-based) of self and others
2. Awareness (i.e. internal perception-based) of self and others
3. Attitudes towards the relativized self and others
4. Skills of exploring, interpreting, relating and interacting.

Targeting these intercultural competences could help materials developers and teachers to treat language and culture as inseparable. As Risager (2007) notes in her review of the development of the intercultural component in language teaching, having clear objectives for developing intercultural competence seems to be a way forward from the earlier days in which culture was an additional component to language teaching.

What is not clear, however, is how these intercultural objectives may be implemented as materials for intercultural language education. For example, do we need to develop a syllabus? If so what should it look like? What kinds of teaching methodology would suit such intercultural objectives as ‘Knowledge of self and others’? Should we include the knowledge of cultural tendencies and patterns reflected in the language use of self and others? For English we could benefit from recent developments in corpus linguistics of spoken language (O’Keefe et al., 2007; Carter et al., 2011), English as a lingua franca (Jenkins et al., 2011) and World Englishes (Kirkpatrick, 2010).

Likewise, in relation to the objectives of raising awareness, reflecting attitudes and developing skills, what kinds of methods or approaches may be suitable for multi-cultural and multi-linguistic learners in a globalized and/or ‘glocalized’ world? Cross-cultural trainings in the past may have helped psychological and strategic preparation for specified target cultures but intercultural language education needs to cater for diverse and dynamic cultures not only at national levels but at individual, community, society and transnational levels as well. As for language teaching methodology, there have been a lot of criticisms against direct transplanting of ‘western’ teaching methods or approaches to different social contexts (Holliday, 1994; Kramsch & Sullivan, 1996; Holliday, 2005). For example, the insensitive adaptation of Communicative Language Teaching and its various developments (e.g. Task-Based Language Teaching, Content-Based Language Learning) has been criticized in many parts of the world (Canagarajah, 1999; Hu, 2002; Pham, 2007). We will need to give sensitive consideration to the optimal methods and approaches for intercultural language education.

We should also not lose sight of the very fact that learners have their own needs, wants and objectives. Judging from the popularity of global language coursebooks worldwide, the majority of learners still seem to want and need language acquisition and development, while welcoming implicit intercultural awareness materials too. In evaluating the match between current materials and what we think we know about intercultural competence we will look at the materials which emphasize intercultural elements first and then move on to materials with a primary emphasis on language learning.

Our analysis and evaluations are meant to provide a rough sketch of how theory and practice match in materials for intercultural education. For more detailed discussion on the principles and procedures of analysis and evaluation of materials see Tomlinson (2003a), Tomlinson and Masuhara
(2004a) and Littlejohn (2011). Tomlinson (2008), though its focus is the match between language learning theories and materials (and not intercultural language education), provides a collection of evaluation reports of materials used from different parts of the world.

**Materials with more emphasis on intercultural education**

We have presented in Table 10.2 evaluation criteria that seem to be in line with the objectives and recommendations from the relevant literature (e.g. Byram, 1997; Guilherme, 2000; Kramsch,

**TABLE 10.2** Criteria for evaluating materials with more emphasis on intercultural education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent are the materials likely to help the learners to:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Knowledge</strong> K1 discover the diversity of cultures (theirs and others) at different levels (e.g. individual, community, nation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K2 understand the historical backgrounds of diverse cultures (theirs and others)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K3 understand the social backgrounds of diverse cultures (theirs and others)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Awareness</strong> Aw1 become aware of assumptions, values and attitudes of the self and others beneath utterances and behaviours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aw2 reappraise what they take for granted in the light of how others from different cultures may see them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Attitudes</strong> At1 treat cultures including their own in a relative or decentralised way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At2 be open when interpreting what they see and read without being judgemental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At3 be empathetic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At4 be wary of stereotyping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At5 retain their identities and acknowledge those of others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Skills</strong> S1 interact effectively with people from different social groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S2 learn about the cultures of various social groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S3 interpret perceived differences within historical and social contexts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S4 assess situations sensitively</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S5 identify options for preventing or solving cultural conflicts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S6 acquire appropriate language from exposure to language in use in various cultures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S7 acquire effective language use from purposeful opportunities to use it in various cultural contexts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2009). The criteria are pre-use evaluation criteria for predicting the likely effects of the materials. With some modification, they could be used as whilst or post-use criteria, which would give us more information based on empirical evidence.

Mason (2010b) reports his attempt to assess the effects of various materials on developing intercultural competence in the British Contemporary Identity course in a Tunisian university. The objectives of his materials are to nurture intercultural competence, inquisitiveness, open-mindedness and diplomatic skills. The topics selected for his course include national memory, immigration, race relations, integration and faith. His materials are delivered by DVD, by powerpoint lectures and through various reading texts. The language learning element of his course is implicit. The approaches employed involve discussions, debates and materials development projects.

When we apply our criteria one by one, Mason’s materials seem likely to help the learners to deepen their knowledge, raise awareness and provide opportunities to reflect upon their own attitudes to British people and their cultures. As for skills, being in an EFL situation does not seem to provide rich opportunities for direct cultural interactions. Activities such as simulations, role play, interviews and projects may provide more experiential ways of achieving intercultural language learning. The fact that it is an academic course on British Civilization in a Tunisian University context, however, may limit application of such approaches.

Corbett (2010) offers materials with a comprehensive collection of activities designed to help learners to reflect on their own language and culture as well as that of others. The book is topic-based, including childhood, food, sport, icons, politics and body language. It encourages establishing online intercultural exchanges in the first chapter. It takes ethnographic approaches in which learners learn to observe and discover cultural and linguistic practices through various tasks (e.g. interviews). It also makes use of insights from semiotics, represented by activities focusing on how non-verbal communication through, for example, signs and gestures affects our overall interactions. Many of the activities provide opportunities for the learners to compare their own cultures with those of others. Corbett (2010) seems to satisfy the criteria in relation to awareness, attitudes and skills. Whether the ethnographic approaches are welcome in other contexts would require whilst and post-use evaluation.

Pulverness (2003) describes a number of country or region-specific joint publishing enterprises in Central and Eastern Europe in which the British Council and local publishers helped teachers in developing textbooks that combine English language teaching and intercultural awareness. Pulverness (2003) also describes how teachers adapt global coursebooks which have the tendency of ‘the marginalization, at times the complete exclusion, of culturally specific content’ (ibid., p. 246).

Rico Troncoso (2010) also emphasizes the value of the language teacher adapting language teaching materials to enable intercultural language education. He describes principled procedures based on the Text-Driven Approach proposed by Tomlinson (2003b) in which ‘texts’ from, for example, DVDs, literature, magazines, cartoons, CDs, etc., provide exposure to language in use with affective and cognitive engagement and the potential for awareness activities at later stages.

InterCultural Communication Training in Teacher Education (ICC in TE) (Lázár et al., 2007) presents a guidebook and CD Rom which aim to assist teacher educators and language teachers in shifting the focus from linguistic competence to intercultural communicative competence. The guidebook and CD Rom are designed to be self-standing as well as to complement a separate textbook called Mirrors and Windows (Huber-Kriegler et al., 2003). The CD Rom includes songs, films and extracts from literature plus activities.
It is interesting to note that Pulverness (2003), Rico Troncoso (2010) and ICC in TE (Lázár et al., 2007) all encourage teachers to develop principled materials for intercultural language education.

**Materials with more emphasis on language learning**

We would now like to evaluate two global coursebooks, published in 2010 and 2011, to see how intercultural perspectives may be incorporated in language learning materials. The selection was made based on the books’ claims to cater for multi-cultural users of English as a lingua franca. We have taken samples from pre-Intermediate (Common European Framework A2–B1) and Intermediate (CEF B1–B2) levels and evaluated them using the criteria in Table 10.3.

As seen in the criteria, our main aim is to predict the likelihood of learning effects in terms of cultural language education. See Sercu (2000), Gray (2010) and Littlejohn (2011) for a detailed analysis of intercultural elements in language materials. Sercu (2000), for example, applies an analytic framework to the content of German coursebooks used in Belgian Schools in order to find their capacity to develop intercultural communicative competence. Her framework consists of 33 items such as location, characters, point of views of the authors, text-types and task-types. She uses it to conduct a content analysis of ‘weight’/emphasis by quantifying aspects such as repetition, use of space, number of lines and cases of artwork. Gray (2010) and Littlejohn (2011) provide analysis of English language teaching materials. Gray (2010) considers coursebooks as a commodity, implicitly mediating culture, consumerism and promotion. He analyses four coursebooks published between 1979 and 2003 in terms of language systems and skills but

| TABLE 10.3 Criteria for evaluating materials with more emphasis on language learning |
|----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Awareness | To what extent do the materials help the learners to: |
| Aw1 | become aware of assumptions, values and attitudes of the self and of others beneath utterances and behaviours |
| Attitudes | treat cultures including their own in a relative or decentralized way |
| At2 | be empathetic |
| At3 | be wary of stereotyping |
| At4 | retain their identity and acknowledge that of others |
| Skills | interact effectively with people from different cultures |
| S2 | identify options for preventing or solving cultural conflicts |
| S3 | acquire appropriate language from exposure to language in use in various cultures |
| S4 | acquire effective language use from purposeful opportunities to use it in various cultural contexts |
his questions are designed to penetrate into the underlying cultural assumptions and potential subliminal influence on the users: for example, Which varieties of English are represented?; How are they presented?; Is there a model of pronunciation?; What topics are addressed?; Who are the characters? (real/fictional/sex, age, ethnicity, job, etc.); What types of activities are used to practice speaking (e.g. role play)?

**Global pre-intermediate by Clanfield with Jeffries (2010)**

*Global Pre-Intermediate* claims to help the users ‘to learn English as it is used in our globalized world, to learn through English using information-rich topics and texts, and to learn about English as an international language’ (blurb on the back cover). Topics include the individual and society, eating and drinking and work and leisure. It includes texts by David Crystal on various aspects of English. In ‘Same language but different’ (Global, p. 15), Crystal describes how English varies according to classes, regions, generations and social communities. Various kinds of semiotic texts are included (e.g. 30 video clips, 10 novel extracts, websites) as well as 27 different varieties of accents worldwide in the section called ‘global voices’. The methodology seems to involve a lot of pair work, using the four skills sometimes in an integrated way (e.g. reading a text in order to have a discussion).

When we apply our evaluation criteria, *Global Pre-Intermediate* seems to gain credit for its efforts to present various cultures and varieties of English in a decentralized manner. Note, however, that the practice of pronunciation and the expressions used for social interactions seem to treat so-called native speaker norms as a model. Meeting the diverse demands from different markets may be causing the book to include study skills, functions and employability training as well as providing sections for regular language learning (pronunciation, lexis, grammar, expressions) and development of the four skills. The treatment of each section seems brief and possibly superficial, perhaps, due to the ambitious coverage and also to the fact that it is for a pre-intermediate language level. For example, on p. 54, the Speaking activity asks the learners to read a quote by Rich Hall, an American comedian and writer, ‘When you go to work if your name is on the building, you’re rich. If your name is on your desk, you’re middle class. If your name is on your shirt, you’re poor’. The next activity asks them to discuss in pairs three questions: ‘What does this quote say about jobs in America?’; ‘Is this true in your country?’; ‘Look at the jobs in the box. Which ones would/wouldn’t you like? Decide on the top three and the bottom three’. These activities could be done in groups and then in the whole class to discover convergence and divergence across different cultures about what may be regarded as social and financial success. Such activities may provide opportunities for raising awareness of their implicit assumptions, values and attitudes of self and others (our criterion Aw1). An activity, for example, asking the learners to adapt Hall’s quote so it represents their cultures might help the learners to ‘acquire effective language use from purposeful opportunities to use it in various cultural contexts (criterion S4)’. The book, however, moves onto matching vocabulary items with definitions and then to pair discussion on experience of attending a job interview, on a minimum wage in their countries, etc. After that comes Reading and Speaking about the ‘Profile of an Indian call centre worker’ (p. 55) before a Grammar section in which the learners are asked to look at the various meanings of ‘have’ and its contracted forms. *Global* does present some texts and artwork representing
multi-cultural issues and varieties of English and it provides some opportunities for intercultural discussions.

**English unlimited intermediate by Rea et al. (2011)**

*English Unlimited* claims to be ‘a goals-based course for adults, which prepares learners to use English independently for global communication’ (blurb on the back cover). Many of the goals are those specified in the Common European Framework of Reference, such as ‘describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes’. Other claims include, ‘Real life every step of the way’, ‘Building global relationships’, ‘authentic audio throughout builds learners’ ‘ability to understand the natural English of international speakers’, ‘Across Cultures sections develop learners’ intercultural competence as a “fifth skill”, leading to more sensitive and more effective communication’ (backcover). Topics include media, communication, giving advice, problem-solving, truths and lies, learning from mistakes and considering alternatives. Each unit consists of initial skills and language sections plus various extra sections that give learners ‘extra language and skills work, all aiming to help’ them ‘become a better and more culturally aware communicator in English’ (p. 5).

*English Unlimited* seems to give space and prominence to intercultural language education. Every other unit (7 out of 14 units) features a section called ‘Across Cultures’, focusing on topics such as ‘saying no’, ‘dealing with conflict’ and ‘attitudes to family’. One of the Across Culture sections features an audio of an Argentinian describing his experience of working in Egypt. He talks about a cultural incident in which different preferences towards social distance and ways of showing needed some mediation at the beginning of his stay. The learners then reflect on various phases of their lives involving inner conflicts and eventual reconciliation caused by changes of environment (e.g. moving abroad, changing jobs, learning a language) before looking at their own cultures in terms of eating habits, greetings, personal space, showing emotion and relationships. They then consider which aspects of their cultures they would expect visitors to ‘understand quite quickly’, ‘take longer to get used to’ and ‘only understand when you know the culture very well’. The approaches used in the Across Cultures sections seem to involve:

1. listening to audio accounts by people of different cultural and linguistic backgrounds who describe their experience of discovering their own assumptions, values and attitudes;
2. paying attention to language use (e.g. various ways of hinting ‘no’ on p. 43);
3. reflecting on their own assumptions, values and attitudes;
4. discussing the similarities and differences of classmates.

The cultures of self and others are treated in a decentralized (Criterion At1) and empathetic (Criterion At2) manner. The audio texts are anecdotes of how an individual perceived and interpreted cultural encounters. As it is not clear how recent or representative these accounts are we feel that there might be a slight danger of stereotyping at the level of ‘national cultures’ (Criterion At3). The approaches seem to encourage reflection and discussion (Criterion S1) but the discussions may be limited by what the participants are conscious of and willing to talk about. The skills of language and social accommodation and negotiation (Criteria S3 and S4) may benefit
from experiential approaches to using the materials in which the learners are asked to interact, negotiate and reflect.

Suggestions for materials development for intercultural language education

It is noteworthy that both developers and users of materials are exploring how the objectives of knowledge, awareness, attitude and skills of language and cultures can be effectively realized in materials. To cater to ever-changing global needs and wants, we agree with Pulverness (2003) and Gray (2010) in emphasizing the strengths of materials development through the collaboration of teachers, publishers and experts for specific target contexts. There are case reports of how this could happen (Pulverness, 2003; Lázár et al., 2007; Mason, 2010b; Rico Troncoso, 2010; Amrani, 2011). There does seem though to be an urgent need for interdisciplinary exploration of the optimal syllabus, methodology and materials for intercultural language education. Tomlinson and Masuhara (2004b) discuss principles and procedures for intercultural language education and propose and exemplify five activity types. Regarding the criticisms against cultural imperialism, we agree with Pham (2007) and Tomlinson and Bao (2004) in arguing for the vital importance of sensitively applying valid methodological principles when adapting methods and approaches for different contexts. In this chapter we have proposed evaluation criteria and exemplified how they could be used as a yardstick in evaluating materials in a systematic way. These criteria could be further developed to guide materials selection, adaptation and development. Finally, it seems pertinent that Corbett (2010) pays attention to online communication as an additional platform for intercultural language education. Cultures and languages are not static and the materials should cater to the dynamic and varying nature of intercultural language education.

Bibliography


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Comments on Part Two

Brian Tomlinson

The authors in this section report some positive applications of what we know about language use in materials developed to help learners to acquire an L2. For example, Ivor Timmis reviews two coursebooks which claim to focus on natural spoken language in Chapter 6 and in Chapter 8 Cohen and Ishihara refer to a number of coursebooks which do apply findings from research into pragmatic use of language. However what inevitably seems to have been applied is that which is teachable and testable. Maybe this is our main problem in trying to apply research findings to materials development. What we know is that language use varies from context to context, from user to user, from time to time, that there are no simple rules of language use which can always be applied. What we also know is that language teachers need definite rules and items to teach and test and the results of research into language use rarely satisfies this need.

Very few accounts have been published by publishers themselves reporting the process of developing a coursebook. Those that do say very little about principled decisions being made to make sure that the texts and tasks in their coursebooks reflect what we know about how the target language is typically used. Donovan (1998) provides a very detailed account of the piloting of major global coursebooks. In the samples of questionnaires which he provides the focus is on level of difficulty and the practicalities of using the books in the classroom. There are questions about the suitability of the grammar items and phonological items in the books but no questions about the value of the texts and activities in preparing learners for the reality of language use. Aziz (2003) describes the whole process of publication of a coursebook and focuses on feedback during the development of the materials. In a case study she refers to, the questions concentrate on important issues such as the match between the materials and the syllabus, the appropriacy of the topic content and the usability of the materials in the classroom. But there are no questions about the extent to which the texts and activities reflect what we know about the reality of language use and no questions about the potential of the book as a preparation for communication in the real world. This is true too of Amrani (2011), who reports on the process of evaluating materials prior to publication. The emphasis is very much on whether or not the materials ‘work’ in the classroom. She provides examples of review sheets in which the questions are about the level of difficulty, the clarity of instructions, the suitability of the content.
and the relevance and enjoyment potential of the exercises. These are all important criteria but it would be useful if the publishers also asked teachers and researchers about the potential value of the materials in helping learners to develop communicative competence for the world the learners will need to use it in. If they did, they might get the sort of feedback provided by Gray (2010, pp. 136–7), who evaluated four global coursebooks and found that the ‘untidiness’ of spoken English was missing, that the English represented was unrealistically ‘invariant’, that ‘a single model of English – that contained in the coursebook’ was taught and that the ‘linguistic content is regulated by the publishers, made deliverable for teachers in manageable portions and finally made testable by examination’ – hardly an ideal preparation for communication in the real world where language varies according to the context of its use and appropriacy and effectiveness are just as important as accuracy and fluency.

**Bibliography**


PART THREE

Language skills
Part one

What is reading?

Reading involves the most incredibly complex, interrelated set of brain processes humans ever have to engage in. When we read a text we are decoding visual squiggles on paper, making connections between these and sounds, understanding the literal meanings of the words, then interpreting the writer’s intentions, situating the text in a linguistic and social context, relating what we read to what we have read earlier in the text, and to our previous world knowledge, visualizing and engaging in inner dialogue with ourselves, asking questions – and all more or less simultaneously (Dehaene, 2009; Masuhara, 2007; Paivio, 2007; Tomlinson, 2011). As Maryanne Wolf says ‘... the ideal acquisition of reading is based on the development of an amazing panoply of phonological, semantic, syntactic, morphological, pragmatic, conceptual, social, affective, articulatory and motor systems, and the ability of these systems to become integrated and synchronised into increasingly fluent comprehension’ (Wolf, 2008, p. 223).

And in order to accomplish this feat, young novice readers need to reshape their brain structures, by reallocating functions from specialized regions such as vision and movement, and using them until they become automatic. It is only when they become automatic that readers can free up the mental space which gives them time to process messages for their deeper meanings and to comprehend and interpret what they read, not simply decode it.

What is more remarkable is that children learn to do this in their L1 in about 2,000 hours, whereas it took humanity about 6,000 years to develop these skills. As Wolf (2008, p. 3) reminds us, ‘We were never born to read’. Therefore, we have to learn how to do it. As teachers, we do not need to fully comprehend the complexity of the brain functions but we do need to appreciate the complexity of the task. And to put ourselves back in the shoes of the novice reader.

Fortunately for us, if students have acquired efficient reading in their L1, they can do so in the L2 as well. However, they can only do this if they also reshape their mental processes to those
of the new language. Different writing systems develop different brain structures, and the more
different one writing system is from another, the more adaptation will be required. And different
sound–print correspondences have also to be learnt.

From the L2 perspective, reading has been viewed in different ways at different times. In the
audio–lingual and structural–situational paradigms, it was largely seen as a vehicle for teaching
aspects of grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation – text as pre-text. Under the influence of Smith
(1996, 2004) and Goodman (1996) reading came to be regarded as a ‘psycho-linguistic guessing
game’. The focus was on the reader’s active processes while engaging with the text, rather than
the text itself: a top-down approach where readers deployed previous knowledge (schemata)
to predict meaning, then read to confirm or disconfirm their hypotheses. This focus led to an
emphasis on the reading strategies deployed by proficient readers as they process text in a ‘rapid,
purposeful, comprehending, flexible and gradually developing way’ (Grabe, 1991, pp. 375–406).
More recently, lower-level skills such as automatic word-recognition, sound-word correspondences,
etc. have been to some extent reinstated in interactive approaches (Grabe, 1991, 2010). These
involve interaction between lower-level (bottom-up) skills and higher level cognitive skills such
as using schemata, forming a gestalt of the ‘aboutness’ of the whole text, etc. Interaction also
takes place between the reader and the text, as the reader uses previous knowledge and text to
construct ongoing meaning.

Reading ability relates also to what kind of texts we read, and the manner and purposes for
which we read them. Broadly speaking, we can divide texts into Expository (non-literary) and
Imaginative (literary).

Non-literary texts tend to deal with factual objects, ideas and opinions which are ‘out there’ in
the real world. They tend to present information which is relatively predictable and unambiguous.
Literary texts require us to make an effort to represent the imaginative world we enter as we read
the text. This requires imagination. Furthermore, such texts are largely unpredictable and open to
multiple interpretations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 11.1 Types of reading texts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-literary texts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referential (out there)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Predictable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unambiguous</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, that is not all. We also have the option to read texts differently. Kramsch (1993), citing
Rosenblatt (1994), makes a distinction between Efferent and Aesthetic reading. When we read
efferently our main purpose is to extract information for use. When we read aesthetically we
are responding to what we read in a way that involves us in feelings and emotions about what
we read. This kind of reading makes us feel, think and reflect. Table 11.2 sets out the main
differences.
A further distinction is often made between Intensive and Extensive reading. Intensive reading takes place when the teacher takes learners through a text by painstakingly deconstructing it, explaining vocabulary, drawing attention to points of grammar or style, and sometimes analyzing how it is constructed, or they have to answer detailed questions on the text. The texts chosen are often well above the learners’ current level and are therefore perceived as difficult and demotivating. This practice is common in many educational systems even today. In fact, many reading ‘experts’ would not regard Intensive reading as reading at all, since the very essence of ‘natural’ reading is that it is fluent and does not engage in exegetical, analytical processes: it just flows.

However, there is clearly a place for intensive reading, particularly for L2 students studying academic subjects in English. Reading research papers, or instruction manuals or management reports clearly requires a form of more deliberate efferent reading.

What is more, intensive reading can also be a private and rewarding activity if the reader has a clear, personal purpose for reading intensively and is left to get on with it. The main criticism of intensive reading is that it uses text as pre-text for grammatical or other language study.

Extensive Reading (ER) is a very different process. The main characteristics of effective ER have been set out by Richard Day (Day, 2002). This has been supplemented by Prowse (2002). While these lists do not command universal acceptance, they are nonetheless useful as a benchmark and a basis for discussion. Table 11.3 is a digest of the two lists of factors or principles for successful ER.

The model is very much like that for L1 reading propounded by Atwell (2007). It has been variously described as Free Voluntary Reading (FEVER), Uninterrupted Silent Reading (USR), Sustained Silent Reading (SSR), Drop Everything and Read (DEAR) or Positive Outcomes While Enjoying Reading (POWER) (Kyung, 2004, Jolly, 1984).

The criteria for ER chime well with Pennac’s (2006) list of The Rights of the Reader, in Table 11.4. Clearly, reading as ER is viewing the whole process as naturalistic, relaxed and enjoyable rather than some kind of pedagogical ordeal to be undergone.

---

**TABLE 11.2 Types of Reading**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Efferent reading</th>
<th>Aesthetic reading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extraction</td>
<td>Contribution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product</td>
<td>Process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Answers</td>
<td>More questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detachment</td>
<td>Involvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective</td>
<td>Subjective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis</td>
<td>Response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear</td>
<td>Recursive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efficiency</td>
<td>Reflection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information</td>
<td>Imaginative prediction</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### TABLE 11.3 Successful extensive reading

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Students read a lot and read often.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>There is a wide variety of text types and topics to choose from.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>The texts are not just interesting: they are engaging/compelling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Students choose what to read.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Reading purposes focus on: pleasure, information and general understanding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Reading is its own reward.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>There are no tests, no exercises, no questions and no dictionaries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Materials are within the language competence of the students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Reading is individual, and silent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Speed is faster, not deliberate and slow.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>The teacher explains the goals and procedures clearly, then monitors and guides the students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>The teacher is a role model . . . a reader, who participates along with the students.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE 11.4 The rights of the reader

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>The right not to read</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>The right to skip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>The right not to finish a book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>The right to read it again</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>The right to read anything</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>The right to mistake a book for real life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>The right to read anywhere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>The right to dip in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>The right to read out loud</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>The right to be quiet</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How do we learn to read?

Most authorities on reading agree that we learn to read by reading (Atwell, 2007; Krashen, 2004). In the L1, what is crucial is that children are introduced early to books by a loving adult. Those children become readers whose parents or carers read aloud to them at bedtime, and who make sure that there are plenty of books in the home environment. Those who do not enjoy this warm, unpressured and unthreatening introduction to reading will have a difficult time catching up when they go to school. In fact, there is some evidence (Pennac, 2006) that school actually undoes much of the good work already done at home, by making reading a tedious and stress-laden chore, rather than a delightful, enriching experience.

In the L2, the place of the loving parent should ideally be taken by a caring teacher who makes sure that the conditions for reading are in place. Based on a survey she conducted with her grade school students in the United States, Nancie Atwell set out ten factors which would help students become ‘skilled, passionate, habitual, critical readers’ (Atwell, 2007, p. 12) (see Table 11.5). Although most of what Atwell describes relates to L1 learners, it clearly also applies to reading in the L2 (Krashen, 2004). There is significant overlap between her list and the factors needed for Extensive Reading, and to Pennac’s Rights of the Reader. And there seems to be broad agreement (Krashen, 2004) that it is not methods that matter but rather getting the learner to love books and reading.

You might well ask how this can be done in the L2 in the absence of enough vocabulary and syntactic control. Indeed, research seems to show that L2 learners need to be familiar with about 95–8 per cent of the words in a text before they can read it fluently (Hirsh & Nation, 1992, p. 2; Laufer, 1992; Nation & Meara, 2002). However, we need to beware of a blanket acceptance of such percentages. They may often mask the importance of prior knowledge, topic familiarity,

**TABLE 11.5 Factors which help students become good readers**

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Booktalks and mini-lessons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>A big, diverse classroom library with regular new additions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Quiet, daily, in-class time to read</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Individuals’ free choice of books, authors and genres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Recommendations of books from friends and the teacher and a special bookshelf for kids’ favourites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Comfort during in-class reading time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Students’ letters to the teacher and friends about their reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Individuals’ conversations with the teacher about their reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Individuals’ lists of books they want to read someday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Homework reading of at least half an hour every night</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

reader motivation and aspirations, redundancy, recycling, tolerance of ambiguity and experience of reading in the L1 – all of which may override the simple calculation of numbers of unfamiliar words. Nation makes a strong case for at least some formal teaching of vocabulary and grammar as well as opportunities for more informal use. (Nation, 2008) However, with the advent of a new generation of really interesting graded readers at very elementary levels (as few as 250 headwords in the case of CUP’s Starter level, for example), learners can begin to engage with L2 reading almost from the start.

**What are the benefits of fluent, efficient reading in the L2?**

There is a good deal of evidence to show that the benefits for L2 learners are much the same as those for L1 learners (Day & Bamford, 1998; Krashen, 2004). In the L1 these include affective, cognitive and linguistic benefits.

Affective benefits include increased self-esteem and confidence, leading to motivation to go on reading more, as well as the pleasure of getting lost in a book: ‘... a kind of parallel universe in which anything might happen and frequently did ...’ (Quindler quoted in Wolf (2008, p. 209)). Krashen (2004) cites the importance of ‘home run’ books as critical points in the development of readers. (A ‘home run’ book is defined as the first complete book in the L2 the student reads unaided, through sheer enjoyment.)

Cognitive benefits include knowing more about the world. When we read widely, we necessarily come across more information which we integrate with what we know already. Put simply, those who read more, tend to know more and to remember it for longer. Children who come from backgrounds which do not encourage reading tend also to do less well in their subsequent education. A reflective style of reading is also a kind of tool for thinking – a way of ordering the otherwise confusing turmoil of facts, ideas and opinions with which we are daily assailed.

Linguistic benefits have been well-documented (Krashen, 2004; Waring, 2006; Day et al., 2011). Besides becoming better, more proficient readers, the whole spectrum of linguistic skills is affected positively.

‘In-school free reading studies and “out of school” self-reported free voluntary reading studies show that more reading results in better reading comprehension, writing style, vocabulary, spelling, and grammatical development ...’ (Krashen, 2004, p. 17). Day claims that even pronunciation improves as a result of ER. One of the most marked improvements is in the area of writing. The link between more/better reading and better writing is now well-established, if not yet well-understood (Kroll, 2003; Maley, 2008).

**Some unresolved issues**

**How important is it to control the level of language difficulty? Should we be aiming at using authentic or simplified texts?**

Opinion is divided on this issue. There are those who present convincing evidence that in order to process a text fluently, readers need to be familiar with 95–8 per cent of the words (Laufer, 1992;
Nation, 2002, 2008). If the text has more unfamiliar words than this, readers will be unable to work out their meanings from context alone and this will slow them down and lead to the ‘vicious circle’ of failure, where failure to read the text leads to discouragement and de-motivation and further failure.

Many writers on ER (see, for example, Day et al., 2011) advocate offering learners texts at i-1 (adapting Krashen’s i+1 terminology). In other words, learners should only read texts which are slightly below their current language level of difficulty.

Others ask how, if all the vocabulary is already familiar, the text can contribute to further learning? Of course, no two learners will ever have precisely the same vocabulary, so even if texts are theoretically below their current level, there will always be some items which are unfamiliar to some readers. The encounter with items in many varied contexts also serves to reinforce them, making future recognition more automatic, and to extend their meanings. However, it is also perhaps invidious to lump all learners together in terms of their motivation to read more challenging material. There will always be those who will wish to attempt more difficult texts, who will want to try original rather than adapted material, who will strive for engagement with ‘authentic’ texts. The role of the teacher will be to provide encouragement to push the limits and to counsel those whose ambition is not matched by their competence – always remembering Browning, ‘Ah, but a man’s (sic) reach should exceed his grasp – or what’s a heaven for?’

**Does strategy training have any value?**

Much has been made of the value of training students in reading strategies, such as skimming, scanning, deducing meaning from context, identifying the main points, topic sentences, etc. (Cohen & Macaro, 2007; Grabe, 2010). In recent years, the idea of strategy training has come under fire however. Walter and Swan (2009) and Schellekens (2011) argue that it is not reading strategies that students need: they already know how to read. What they need is more work on the language itself to bring them to a stage where they have near automaticity. Walter (2007) goes farther and claims that comprehension is not a linguistic skill at all but a generalized, amodal, cognitive skill already available to learners in their own language. So it is not even a matter of ‘transfer’ of skills but rather ‘access’, which is blocked when the language is not available. The implication is that, in the early stages especially, more time needs to be spent on learning the language system, including phonology, before reading is undertaken (Walter, 2008). This can be aided by more experience of listening to texts spoken or read aloud (Masuhara, 2007). The issue of fast access to phonological storage in working memory suggests that perhaps reading aloud needs to be appropriately rehabilitated. It is likely that, if strategy training has any value, this will be at higher levels of language proficiency, when students are no longer processing the text at word and sentence level.

**Do we need activities to accompany reading?**

Many published reading materials are accompanied by sometimes copious and distracting activities, questions and exercises. Is this because they are valuable in helping learners to read better or is it because educational authorities, publishers – and indeed teachers themselves – are uncomfortable with the idea that reading by itself is sufficient to promote reading comprehension?
After all, every 5 minutes spent on activities is 5 minutes lost for reading time. As Rosenblatt (1980) remarks, ‘Doing justice to the aesthetic mode of language behaviour does not require discovery of a new array of teaching techniques’. There is little or no evidence to suggest that activities and questions make any difference to the quality of the reading experience or to the learning that derives from it. What evidence there is suggests that it is relatively unstructured and open-ended activities, such as keeping a reading journal, or giving short book talks to other students, or broad-ranging discussion questions, which yield the best results (Bamford & Day, 2004). Good results may also be had from creative post-reading activities (Fenton-Smith, 2010).

**Should reading be tested?**

There are again strongly held views on both sides. What seems to worry teachers and administrators most is whether students can be trusted to have read what they claim to have read and understood, and an uneasy feeling that unless students have been tested, they cannot be shown to have been taught.

A major argument against testing is that tests inevitably require students to read efferently, as if they were reading for facts rather than for overall understanding and enjoyment. As Pennac puts it, ‘. . . books were not written so that my son/daughter/young people could write essays about them, but so that they could read them if they really wanted to’ (Pennac, 2006, p. 138). What is more, the experiences of reading are ‘. . . so subtle, so fantastic, so quicksilver and simultaneous, that we can’t account for them, measure them, test them, or teach them’ (Atwell, 2007, p. 64). In other words, tests only test what can be tested. And the essence of reading cannot be reached by tests.

In all likelihood, the best we can do is to check, in some rough and ready way, on whether the texts have been read and to what extent they have been understood and enjoyed. There are valuable ways of doing this described in Bamford and Day (2004).

**Some unanswered questions**

**Will reading as we know it die out?**

It is common to read claims, usually in the press, that ‘reading is dead’. The digital natives are said to regard books as un-cool and boring. While it is true that the younger generation appears not to read as much as predecessor generations, there is some counter-evidence against these claims. Apart from the much-vaunted ‘Harry Potter effect’, particularly interesting are the surveys carried out by Scholastic (2008) into ‘Kids and Family Reading’, and the National Literacy Trust survey (2008) into children’s and young people’s reading habits. These have shown that a majority of kids between 5–17 like reading books for fun, that one in four of them reads every day, that they regard books and the Internet as complementary and that 62 per cent still prefer to read books on paper rather than online. So the issue is far from clear-cut (Richards, 2000).
Is the digital revolution changing the way our brains/minds work?

This is a more profound issue. The fact that accessing information online seems to require us to scan in a non-linear, instantaneous way, spotting keywords, scavenging for bits of information – all of this encourages a superficial kind of processing.

If so, will the wiring of our brains be changed again, as is claimed by writers like Carr (2010)? Or will we be able to ‘code switch’ between ‘The analytical, inferential, perspective-taking, reading brain with its capacity for human consciousness, and the nimble, multifunctional, multi-modal, information-integrative capacities of a digital mind-set . . .’ (Wolf, 2008, p. 228). A big question, the outcome of which will impact on L2 reading too.

Part two

The current match with published materials

In this section we will look at the treatment of reading in coursebooks for teenagers and adults, in reading skills books and in graded reader series. Materials for Young Learners are dealt with in Chapters 5 and 12.

In Part one, we saw how ‘In the audio-lingual and structural-situational paradigms, [reading] was largely seen as a vehicle for teaching aspects of grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation – text as pretext’. To what extent is this still true today? How far are current teaching materials still grounded in a PPP (Presentation – Practice – Production) model where reading texts exist in order to contextualize target grammatical structures, or language functions and are exploited intensively?

To answer these questions we will look at lessons taken from coursebooks published over the last 10 years. The lessons are chosen to exemplify the most common approach in each book.

Coursebooks for teenagers

*English in Mind* (Puchta & Stranks, 2010) is not untypical of elementary (CEF A2/B1) level courses where differing approaches are adopted for language-focused and skills-focused lessons. In Student’s Book 2 Unit 11 (pp. 82–7) the language aims of which are given as ‘Defining relative clauses, used to, Vocabulary: medicine’, we find a reading text on ‘Medicine in the past’. It contains a number of examples of the target structures, followed by True/False/No information comprehension questions and then a personalization activity where students imagine what it was like to be ill 200 years ago. Two pages of grammar and vocabulary exercises follow. At the end of the unit there is a ‘Culture in the Mind’ double-page spread where a reading text in the same topic area is exploited intensively with comprehension questions and vocabulary work, but not for grammar teaching purposes. It is followed by another reading text which acts as a model for a writing exercise.
Energy (Elsworth & Rose, 2005) Book 4 Unit 7 ‘Making Choices’ (pp. 74–83) employs a similar approach starting with a specially written text with examples of the target structure (the gerund) embedded into it, followed by multiple choice questions and a grammar box and exercise. It continues with a dialogue presenting the third conditional and at the end of the unit there is a Skills section with a longish reading passage about Rosa Parks (containing three examples of the third conditional). Key lexis is pre-taught, there is a Quick Read followed by a Detailed Read with open comprehension questions. The lesson also contains an unrelated Listening section aimed at raising awareness of prediction before listening.

Gateway (Spencer, 2012) claims to focus more on the requirements of school-leaving examinations and has a more complex unit structure. Here we shall only describe sections dealing with Reading. In Book B2 Unit 5 ‘Money talks’ (pp. 58–69), with grammar aims relating to modal verbs, after an initial page of vocabulary work in the topic area, there is a longish specially written pair of texts about students and money containing examples of the target structures. These are followed by open comprehension questions which also ask the learner to say where s/he found the information. A Study Skills box directs students to a back of the book short section on Skimming and Scanning. After two pages of Grammar and Vocabulary exercises we come to the second main Reading text in the unit under the heading ‘Cross-curricular – Literature’ which is a lengthy extract from Q & A by Vikas Swarup (the book on which the film Slumdog Millionaire was based). It is followed by open-ended questions.

The conclusion to be drawn is that, with the occasional exception, reading texts in the books examined are specially written pre-texts for grammar exploitation rather than for the development of reading skills. Two possible reasons for this are the language level at which the books are written and the conservative methodological expectations of teachers at secondary school when choosing their books. It is significant that the only lesson/unit of the three reported on which included authentic texts and a nod towards skimming/scanning was at B2 level. It is also worth noting that in terms of exposure to longer texts the recent increase in emphasis on cross-curricular content for school-based learners has meant that coursebooks for this age group have become more ‘text rich’, see, for example, New Inspiration (Garton-Sprenger & Prowse, 2012) where the workbook contains CLIL sections and a complete extensive reading story.

Coursebooks for adults

Global (Clanfield et al., 2011) Upper-Intermediate has 12-page units which contain a number of reading texts used for different purposes. Unit 6 ‘Power & Money’ (pp. 66–7) has three grammar foci: the passive voice, causative have/get and quite. The first substantial text is a specially written one, ‘The Masters of the Universe?’ which is exploited to teach adverb phrases such as ‘Obviously’, but the phrases themselves are not ‘seeded’ into the text. After True/False comprehension questions and vocabulary work there are questions asking for a personal response to the text, for example, ‘Do bankers hold too much power in today’s society?’ In contrast, the next text ‘Ten facts about lotteries’ does have examples of the target structure quite seeded in and students are explicitly directed to find them before doing grammar exercises. The third main reading text ‘Economics for Everyone’ is an extract from a book and the exploitation focuses on the content, on how the
author develops his argument and how he expresses himself. In other words the focus is on rhetoric not surface language. The final reading text serves as a model for a Writing skills section dealing with report writing.

*English Unlimited* (Tilbury & Hendra, 2011) has shorter units and fewer reading texts. It describes itself as a ‘goals-based’ course, and Unit 6 of Upper-Intermediate (pp. 46–53) is entitled ‘Virtual Worlds’ with a grammar focus on conditional clauses – present and future. It opens with a real newspaper article about online role-playing games with pre-reading activities, ‘correct these sentences’ comprehension questions, discussion questions and vocabulary work. There is no overt work on grammar or reading strategies. Later in the unit there are web posting texts as models for writing a web posting with production-oriented activities which focus on phrases for structuring an argument.

*Speak Out* (Eales & Oakes, 2011) has longer units again and Unit 4 of Upper-Intermediate (pp. 43–54) is titled ‘Stories’. It opens with two very short stories which students are invited to complete, and then read the actual endings at the back of the book. The language focus of the unit is on narrative tenses, expressing wishes and regrets and expressing likes and dislikes. The first of the two stories is exploited by asking students to underlining narrative tenses and there is a box of grammar rules. This is acknowledged as an adapted authentic text, but the use of it is largely grammatical. On the next page a Writing section offers a specially written story with questions asking the student to look at the structure of the story. Subsequently an article about Sir David Attenborough is used to teach phrasal verbs, and a short authentic text on why people lie about their reading leads into listening work on likes and dislikes. The unit ends with ‘Tess of the D’Urbervilles’ but, alas, this is a BBC DVD extract and not a reading text.

The coursebooks for adults looked at here are all upper-intermediate and mainly feature authentic or adapted reading texts. The freedom from the institutional constraints of secondary school political correctness certainly encourages more freedom of personal response to the text. However, the majority of the texts looked at in this sample were utilized for language practice (structural and lexical) or as models for writing, rather than reading skills development. It was noteworthy that two of the titles sampled laid a much heavier emphasis on oral/aural communication skills than on reading and contained fewer reading texts than the coursebooks for teenagers.

**Reading skills books**

In Part one we noted that a top-down approach to reading had ‘led to an emphasis on the reading strategies deployed by proficient readers’ and that ‘more recently, lower-level skills . . . have been to some extent reinstated in interactive approaches’. To what extent is this apparent in textbooks specifically designed to teach reading skills?

*Reading Explorer* (Douglas et al., 2012) aims to develop both reading and vocabulary through the use of texts from National Geographic magazine. Unit 8 of Book 5 (CEF C1–C2) (pp.137–54) opens with pre-reading discussion, skimming and prediction tasks before a three-page, 150-line (approximately 1,500 word) text on ant and bee behaviour and its relevance to humans. It is followed by a page of multiple-choice questions which focus on the rhetorical structure of the
text and a page with two major exercises, one on classification involving assigning statements to spaces in a Venn diagram and one stimulating critical thinking. This structure of exploitation and text is typical of the other text in this unit and other texts in the book.

*Just Reading and Writing* (Harmer, 2004), dealing as it does with two skills, takes a more language-focused approach and has shorter, six-page units. In Unit 5 (pp. 36–41) of the Intermediate level three specially written texts about three famous women are followed by comprehension activities where students supply information under headings which mirror the structure of the text and examine ‘language chunks’ from the text. A second text follows, this time about the wives of Henry VIII, with a vocabulary exercise and a table to complete with information from the text. As the book’s title implies both texts provide a model for a writing exercise which follows. It is worth noting that most of the other texts in the book are from authentic sources.

*Reading Skills* (Rogers, 2011) is for university students at CEF B2–C1 level and is designed as preparation for academic reading. Unit 5 (pp. 44–58) has ‘Crime’ as a topic and opens with pre-reading topic focus tasks and a prediction activity from key words. One of the unit aims is ‘Identifying relationships between ideas and theories’ and pre- and post-reading questions on the unit’s first long text on ‘Biological and genetic explanations of crime’ address this. It is followed by a second long text on ‘Sociological theories of crime’, where after reading and answering comprehension questions, students do activities comparing the texts and the importance of the ideas in them. Four pages of exercises follow: two are language-focused (modals and hedging, and alternative and counterarguments) and the other two focus, respectively, on ‘Critical thinking: cause and connection’ and discussing and presenting the ideas in texts.

There was little evidence in the books sampled of bottom-up activities, but this is almost certainly because their level (from intermediate to advanced) meant that automaticity in reading was assumed. Two of the books surveyed concentrated heavily on the explicit teaching and practice of top-down reading strategies, one in more popular contexts and one with a specific EAP aim.

**Graded reader series**

The coursebooks for teenagers and for adults surveyed above were concerned with intensive reading. In the context of extensive reading in Part one it was noted that ‘There is little or no evidence to suggest that activities and questions make any difference to the quality of the reading experience or to the learning that derives from it’. All the more surprising, then, to discover that many major graded reader publishers have recently developed series of books where the running text is disrupted by a plethora of comprehension and language-focused exercises and activities (e.g. Black Cat, Cambridge Discovery Readers, OUP Dominoes, Penguin Active Readers). Traditionally, readers have had glossaries and short comprehension questions at the back of the book (e.g. Macmillan Readers, OUP Bookworms, Penguin Readers), or no activities or questions at all (Cambridge English Readers). This recent development turns extensive reading into language-focused intensive reading and undermines all the benefits described in Part one. The teacher can, of course, recommend that students only read the text and ignore the accompanying activities.
Suggestions for materials development applications

If it is accepted that the benefits of extensive reading are derived from the act of reading itself, then there is little to suggest in materials terms other than to continue the production of graded readers which offer an enjoyable and successful reading experience. There are already teachers’ handbooks (e.g. Bamford & Day, 2004) and articles which provide reader-response activities for those students and teachers who wish to use extensive reading as a springboard into creative classroom language use.

The dearth of books dealing with reading skills for the general language learner (The ‘2011 BEBC Critical Guide to ELT Materials’ only lists 16, going back to Byrne, 1986) would indicate that their teachers would prefer reading dealt with in the confines of a coursebook. Teachers working with beginners with a different mother tongue script or indeed with illiterate beginners could benefit from more materials like Viney (2009), which is intended for adult students who need to master the Roman alphabet. Materials developed for the CLIL classroom, with some honourable exceptions (e.g. Holden, 2008), provide considerable reading challenges for learners and content challenges for non subject-specialist teachers. It would be valuable for more attention to be turned to reading skills development in CLIL materials.

For reading skills development within an EAP context, the model provided by Rogers (2011) is an excellent one. Text selection at this level, however, remains thorny – too general and interest is lost, too specific and the teacher may not have the subject competence to deal with it. Certainly an ESP approach to reading skills development, rather than the traditional combination of study skills and language work (see McDonough, 2010) would be valuable.

As for coursebooks, our samples above for both teenagers and adults showed a very conservative treatment of reading, largely as a vehicle for language work. One reason for this is the space constraints within which a coursebook writer works, weaving the threads of a multi-syllabus, promoting study skills and learner independence, as well as developing the four skills. A suggestion would be to accept that reading in language-focused lessons (whether the aims are expressed in functional or grammatical terms) will be largely a vehicle, and deal with reading per se elsewhere. Elsewhere, but not separately. An integrated skills approach offers the opportunity for real reading skills development and genuine response to content. By ‘integrated skills’ is meant a lesson where the four skills support each other: speaking leads into reading, which fosters discussion, supported by listening leading to a written product. Such an approach does not mean the elimination of language work (this is about language learning!) but it is focused on understanding the text and the words which structure it. Comprehension questions also have a place, but they must take the learner away from detail, and concentrate on meaning and a response to it. Dependent on level, the text can be un-simplified, adapted or specially written, but the key thing is that it be written to be read for itself, not used to exemplify a language point.
An example of materials development application


Integrated Skills
Telling a folk tale

1 OPENER
Every country has folk tales – stories which children often hear from their parents. For example, the Swiss story of William Tell, his son and the apple is told in many countries. What folk tales are there in your country?

READING

2 Read and complete the text with phrases a–i.

The Professor and the Wise Ferryman – an Indian folk tale

There was once an old ferryman who lived in a hut by the River Ganges in India. For as long as anyone could remember his family had rowed people across the river. His father had been a ferryman __1__.

Like all the people from his village the ferryman was poor. The money he made from the ferry was hardly enough to feed his family. He had taken over the job when he was a young boy __2__. Although life was hard, he never grumbled and was pleased to help his passengers.

The ferryman had learnt a lot about life by listening to his passengers. He had heard about life in the city, __3__. It seemed to him that city people spent all their lives rushing about with no time to think. The ferryman rowed slowly and was in no hurry. He had time to talk __4__. People said that he was wise and often asked his advice.

One day a well-dressed professor from the city with a shiny briefcase climbed into his boat. He was wearing a smart suit __5__. Slowly the ferryman began to row his passenger across the river. After a while the professor spoke.

‘Have you studied any history?’ he asked.

‘No, sir,’ said the ferryman.

‘What!’ said the professor in surprise. ‘You haven’t studied history? Aren’t you proud of your country? Why don’t you know any history?’

‘Well, sir,’ the ferryman replied, ‘I’ve never been to school. I’ve been rowing people across the river all my life, __6__.’

‘There’s no excuse for not learning,’ said the professor. ‘And I suppose you haven’t studied geography either.’

‘No, sir,’ the ferryman replied.

‘Geography tells us about the world,’ the professor said almost angrily. ‘Don’t you know anything about the world – __7__?’
'I haven’t been to school, sir,’ the ferryman replied. ‘I don’t know anything about these things.’

After a few minutes the professor asked if the ferryman had studied science, __8__. ‘You’ve studied neither geography nor history, and you haven’t heard about science!’ he shouted in amazement. ‘Scientists are the most important people in the world today. Look at me. I’m a professor of science. Do you see my briefcase? It’s full of important books and papers. If you don’t know about science, you don’t know about the world. You have learnt nothing! And if you don’t know anything, you might as well be dead.’

The ferryman looked sad. No one had ever spoken to him like this before. He felt terrible. There was so much knowledge hidden in books __9__.

a which he had never learnt
b and so had his grandfather before him
c and well-polished shoes
d so I haven’t learnt any history
e but couldn’t understand why people chose to live there
f the countries, mountains and rivers
g and think about things
h and had been doing it ever since
i and got the same answer

Now listen and check. Which words in the phrases helped you to complete the text?

3 Find the words in italics in the text which mean:
   1 important university teacher _n_
   2 hurrying, moving very quickly _v_
   3 great surprise _n_
   4 almost not _adv_
   5 with a bright surface _adj_
   6 complained _v_

4 Linking words: neither . . . nor . . .
Find an example of neither . . . nor . . . in The Professor and the Wise Ferryman. Rewrite these sentences using neither . . . nor . . .

   1 The ferryman didn’t have a suit or a briefcase.
   2 The ferryman hadn’t been to school or university.
   3 The ferryman hadn’t studied history or science.
   4 The ferryman and the professor didn’t know what was going to happen next.

5 Answer the questions.
   1 What do we know about the ferryman and the professor?
2 What reasons did the professor give for learning history, geography and science? Do you agree?
3 Do you think the ferryman really knew nothing about history, geography and science? Why/Why not?
4 What do you think will happen next?

6 LISTENING
Listen to the end of the story and see if you were right. Answer the questions.
1 What happened to the ferryman and the professor?
2 Does the story have a message? What can we learn from it?

7 SPEAKING
Discuss these questions.
1 Is what you learn in school more important than what you learn out of school? Why/Why not?
2 Which school subjects are the most and least important to you?
3 Some people are said to know a lot, some are said to be wise. What do you need to know to be wise? What does ‘wise’ mean?

8 GUIDED WRITING
Write one of the folk tales from your country, using narrative past tenses with time phrases and adverbs to show the sequence of events.

Time phrases and adverbs
There was once . . . One day . . . In the end . . . after . . . as soon as . . . before . . . finally . . . later . . . then . . . until . . . when . . . while

Now tell other students your tale and say what it means – what its message is.

[Note: This text and some of the questions are adapted from Fisher (1996). The lesson is taken from a unit in Garton-Sprenger and Prowse (2012).]

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12

The teaching of reading in English for young learners: Some considerations and next steps

Annie Hughes

Part one

What we know

How young learners learn a foreign language

Teaching English as a foreign language to young learners is not at all the same as teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) to adults or adolescents. For one thing, younger learners are, on a daily basis, coping with the processes of learning about all sorts of things and they probably have no idea why they are learning them. They learn this stuff because it is just part and parcel of being 4 or 6 or 8 with not usually a very clear idea of what is going on in their education, except that they like different parts of it, like playing with their friends at playtime, listening to the story the teacher reads them or singing songs.

Older learners, however, usually have a very clear understanding of why they are learning EFL. They are aware that, now or in their future, they will be able to use it for travelling, business, online interaction with the rest of the world, checking the Premier League football and match reviews, reading books on all manner of specialist subjects such as engineering and generally for tasks linked to many other aspects of twenty-first-century life where English is useful.

A second reason why young learners are different is because they are still developing cognitively, linguistically, psychologically and socially. Those teachers involved in teaching English to young learners (TEYL) have to cater for these developmental needs, alongside teaching them English.

When teaching anything to young learners, be it mathematics, science, history, language, art and craft or music we need to scaffold their learning (Bruner, 1983). In other words, we must help...
them to think through what they are doing, why they are doing it and how they might do it, in any activity or task, in order that they can understand what they are doing and then do something similar for themselves at a later date. As Vygotsky said 'What a child can do with assistance today she will be able to do by herself tomorrow' (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 87). This highlights how we must also be modellers of thinking and learning for young learners, often talking through what we are thinking or doing ourselves aloud to illustrate how we structure this thinking and learning. As I have stated elsewhere,

As educators, we believe that we are initially building the foundations of understanding in each subject in a very practical, hands-on way so that young children can interact with the 'actual', 'physical', and 'here and now' of these subjects and may not even be aware that they are learning about maths, history, science or music. They are learning about these subjects in concrete and practical ways that we believe link with their cognitive development at these ages. Ideally we are supporting this by scaffolding their learning, creating a meaningful, dynamic and functional learning environment, with the teacher as mentor and modeller of the thinking that is being introduced to the learners, and creating development in learners and their understanding of these subjects through zones of proximal development. (Hughes, 2011a, p. 327)

We must also tell our learners why we want them to take part in any activity, be it task, role-play, game or song, because ‘children need cognitive clarity about what they are learning’ (Cunningham & Cunningham, 2002, p. 88). In this way, we will not only be slowly helping to scaffold their own thinking and learning but will also, at the same time, be clear and honest with them about why they are taking part in such activities and tasks. As Williams explains:

General guidelines for teachers that derive from the research evidence . . . include the suggestions that teachers help students by explaining fully what it is they are teaching – what to do, why, how, and when. . . . (Williams, 2002, p. 256)

The reasons for carrying out different activities and tasks should not be a secret for any learners, but especially young learners. This clarification really helps younger learners understand the reasons, both ours and theirs, for taking part in activities in the language class, too. If we give them ‘helpful tips’ or ‘strategies for learning’ in each activity or task we will also be raising their awareness of both learning and using learner strategies in the classroom.

This awareness in our young learners can then give them more understanding of the reasons for carrying out a whole range of different activities and, in the long run, create opportunities for maximum success and achievement for them.

However, we must remember that often children are unaware of their own growth in linguistic skills. This is echoed in Donaldson’s observations:

The child acquires these skills before he becomes aware of them. The child’s awareness of what he talks about – the things out there to which the language refers – normally takes precedence over his awareness of what he talks with – the words that he uses. And he becomes aware of what he talks with – the actual words – before he is at all aware of the rules which determine their sequencing – the rules which control his own production of them. (Indeed, a thoughtful adult has a very limited awareness of such processes in his own mind). (Donaldson, 1978, pp. 87–8)
This suggests that we could, and should, slowly introduce young learners to enough simple metalanguage in order for them to be able to talk about the new language simply, just as we would use simple mathematical metalanguage to help children talk about what they are doing in mathematics, such as add, the same as, take away and so on.

Scaffolding all of this learning and learning to learn, though, needs to be as constant as possible so that there is always support and guidance for each and every child as he/she develops and learns. We must remember we are teachers of young learners, in the first place, and then teachers of English to young learners, secondly. We must be constantly aware of the importance of scaffolding and developing children in our classes all the time so that, long-term, they will be prepared, able, willing and excited about doing these things for themselves, and especially, in this case, using English for themselves.

Linked to this, and as we introduce new target language to young learners, we should also ensure that meaningful interaction is at the core of the activities we ask them to carry out in the language class because we know that young learners develop and grow, and develop linguistically, through meaningful and purposeful interaction (Vygotsky, 1978; Hughes, 2010).

Additionally, we must also ensure that both new and recycled English is introduced to and used by them in context, and is both meaningful and purposeful, so that it is understandable and makes sense to the learners (ibid.). We should also try to introduce the sort of target language learners might be able to use in many different contexts and on which they can build further target language. This would be similar to the way they are introduced to, use and build on their mother tongue.

However, a third, and rather crucial difference between young and older learners of English, is that younger learners may not be able to read and write in their mother tongue and, thus, not able to read or write in English. Even if they can read in their mother tongue, they may not be able to read and write very well or be just beginning to learn how to do this.

It is incredibly difficult for teachers who are language teachers but not trained to teach reading and writing in either mother tongue or EYL, to teach learners how to read and write in the target language. They need to know how they can support young language learners who are not yet able to read and write.

In this chapter, we will grapple with some ideas which might help young language learners learn to read and write in the target language and try to become aware of what teachers need to know in order to teach reading and writing in EFL.

I use ‘grapple’ here for many reasons but mainly because we are still so unsure about how best to go about the teaching of reading and writing with young language learners, particularly because there has been so little research carried out in this area of TEYL from which we can take clear pedagogical leads. As Rixon rightly comments:

Reading as a skill very often is not addressed in any depth, either in national syllabuses or in EYL teaching materials on which most of the onus of teacher support and development is placed in many parts of the world . . . This lack of attention to how reading skills might best be launched with [young learners] contrasts greatly with the often furious debate about the most effective procedures for handling them with native speaking children. (Rixon, 2007, p. 6)

We will seem to have more questions than answers here. Should we use a mother tongue approach to the teaching of reading and writing for our young English learners? This might be be
rather harsh, given the learners would not have had around 5 or 6 years of oral English language and vocabulary input, as native speakers often have had as they start to learn to read and write. Do we assume that if they can read and write in their mother tongue they will be able to read and write in the target language automatically? Do we treat our young learners as having reading and writing difficulties if they cannot transfer their reading and writing skills directly to the target language? Do we ignore the script the young learners are using in their mother tongue? Do we need to consider the direction in which the mother tongue language is written?

In addition to these types of questions, we also need to know about the approach taken in the learners’ mother tongue culture towards literacy in general. Is it a text- or oral-based culture? Is there much writing around for the learners to interact with? What sort of writing is there, if any?

Linking back to the cognitive, linguistic, social and psychological development that is occurring in all young learners, we must remember to (i) take account of these differences when we are delivering English courses to young learners, (ii) ensure the teaching addresses their needs and (iii) consider carefully the sort of language that should be used and taught in any delivered programme for them. The language being taught in the target language should always reflect the needs and interests of the learners, in terms of the topics and complexity of the social situation in which it is being contextualized.

Add this to the constraints, put on the TEYL professional, in terms of classroom facilities, materials and resources, plus the level of training they may or may not have had, and you can see that the starting point for TEYL is never usually an easy or well-supported one!

However, many, many children are managing to learn English in a huge variety of settings and situations and at an earlier and earlier age (Hughes, 2011a) so we must start addressing the target language reading and writing needs of the young learners plus the professional needs of their teachers.

**What we think we know**

Increasingly within a TEYL syllabus, we will want young learners not only to listen to and use English verbally but also, at some stage, to read and write in the target language too. As outlined above, this is not as simple as we might think. Learning to read and write in the target language is not necessarily the same as learning to read or write in the mother tongue.

The daily reality in many TEYL classes is that the teachers who teach English are not likely to have had any training in the teaching of reading and writing to young language learners in any language, but especially the target language. These teachers might assume that learners will be able to transfer any reading and writing skills from mother tongue to the target language, when this may be far from the truth. Additionally, these teachers may also assume that the best course of action in TEYL is to start teaching the alphabet as soon as possible, starting with ‘a’, which is illustrated by many course books that are being used globally in TEYL, when, yet again, this might be far from the most suitable approach.

So, by way of review, there are a whole host of issues linked with teaching children to read and write in a foreign language. In particular, these include:

- whether the learners can read and write in their mother tongue at all at the time when they begin English;
THE TEACHING OF READING FOR YOUNG LEARNERS

- whether the learners’ teachers are trained or have an awareness of how to teach reading and writing in the target language as a foreign language;
- whether the teachers think English text should be seen early on in the course or not;
- whether the learners’ culture is text-based or oral-based;
- whether the mother tongue’s written script is similar to English for these learners;
- whether the mother tongue’s written script is slightly different from English;
- whether the mother tongue’s written script is very different from English;
- whether the home culture views reading and writing as significant or not;
- whether the English resource materials used in the English language class support the learning and development of reading and writing in this target language;
- whether the syllabus allows sufficient time for the teaching of reading and writing in the target language.

As you can see from this non-exhaustive list, the overall questions about how to teach young learners to read and write in the target language are not easy-to-answer questions.

*How should we teach reading and writing in TEYL?*

It seems that for some years TEYL teachers may not have really given much thought to how they teach reading and writing in EFL. Many teachers concentrate on teaching the learners a large amount of vocabulary along with sight reading of these words, phrases and sentences. Perhaps teachers assume that if the learners are old enough to have started reading and writing in their mother tongue, the skills and expertise needed for reading and writing in the target language will simply be transferred to the new language, or perhaps they have not really thought about this issue much at all.

There are some teachers who start teaching the target language to young language learners by introducing the alphabet, in strict alphabetical order and often using capital letters. This is often what happens because this is how these teachers believe they were taught as children, or taught English. There are very few teachers involved in TEYL who were taught English as young learners themselves. Instead, they were usually taught English, or other target languages, when they were in their adolescence and when they could cognitively cope with the learning of a foreign script and its uses.

Some teachers concentrate on teaching words and spellings in English without being aware that it may help learners more if they first built up the learners’ knowledge of a great deal of oral and repetitive English input before doing this (Ponterotto, 2001).

Sometimes there are handwriting activities that accompany the language lessons or the teaching of the alphabet, with many courses also having *handwriting books* as well as activity books for the learners. In these handwriting books, young learners practise writing English letter shapes, sometimes as in capital letters, not necessarily in any particular order or sometimes, unfortunately, in alphabetical order.
What we believe is that there have to be some clearer guidelines for teachers involved in the teaching of reading in English to young learners (TREYL). It is certainly not the fault of the untrained or unaware teachers that they may be using a less-than-supportive approach with their young learners. Realistically, TREYL is not an issue that has been at the forefront of the teaching of English to younger and younger learners – though it is now becoming more and more obvious that it should be.

**But what do we know – or at least believe – about TREYL?**

If we think for a moment about mother tongue teaching of reading, we are thinking about children who have an active vocabulary of around 3,000 words and a passive vocabulary of around 10,000 at around the age of 5, when the teaching of reading and writing often begins (Aitchison, 2003). However, it is likely that young foreign language learners acquire around only 1,000 words per year during their language learning (Cameron, 2001). It would seem, then, that there is a huge gap in the active and passive vocabulary banks which young language learners can call on when they are being taught to read and write in English.

This is of huge importance in TREYL because we know there is a link between the size of the lexicon and understanding of grammar. As Cameron highlighted, ‘Much important grammatical information is tied into words, and learning words can take students a long way in grammar’ (ibid., p. 72). And as Aitchison echoes, ‘ . . . word learning is interleaved with other dimensions of language learning, . . . continues long after other aspects of acquisition are complete’ (Aitchison, 2003, p. 11). She further states that 20,000 words, usually acquired by the native speaker at around 13 years of age

. . . seems to be a critical mass for being able to speak English fluently. Foreign learners who had reached this total could talk efficiently about any subject. . . and those with less than this number often struggled both to understand and to talk fluently. (ibid., p. 35)

So there seem to be many implications for our teaching here. Do we try to build up young learners’ ‘critical mass’ vocabulary in order to help them become, in the long run, fluent speakers? Do we try to emulate the target of native speaker acquisition of around 3,000 active and 10,000 passive vocabulary items as near to the age of 5 as we possibly can? Do either of these options seem at all possible in TEYL?

Sadly, these both seem to be pretty much impossible, as there is not enough time in the EYL classroom to help learners acquire such a huge amount of active and passive vocabulary (Rixon, 2004). On the other hand, Cameron, believes that if our young learners are taught around 2,000 words, derived from the most frequently used vocabulary in written texts, this should give them a working lexicon in English (Cameron, 2001). We may, however, have some concerns about the size of this lexicon or, indeed, using a lexicon for TREYL derived from the most frequently used words in texts, rather the most frequently used – and perhaps the most useful – words in oral English, but at least what is suggested is something to start with and seems more attainable than the size of the active and passive vocabulary size described by Aitchison.

Rixon additionally raises the problem that many young learners are trying to learn to read in English when they might be trying to learn to read in their mother tongue – and are perhaps trying
to use the same strategies for both, perhaps not very successfully, depending on their mother
tongue’s text and written form (Rixon, 2010). She also feels that young language learners ‘. . . may
have to make a conceptual leap when moving to an alphabetical system such as English’ because
the ‘. . . multitudinous relationship between symbols and sounds that English permits could make
it difficult to acquire easily’ (ibid., p. 6). Here is yet another aspect of English that could give our
young learners a few headaches!

On top of these issues, it is not just knowing a word that will be important for our young
learners but if they know about the word, in every sense. They will need receptive, productive,
phonological, decoding, orthographic, grammatical, pragmatic, style, register, collocation and
metalinguistic knowledge of the words they come in to contact with too (Cameron, 2001). These
different aspects of word knowledge are adapted from Cameron (ibid.) in Table 12.1.

**TABLE 12.1** Knowing about a word (Based on Cameron, 2001, p. 77)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of knowledge</th>
<th>What is involved</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Receptive knowledge: Aural/decoding</td>
<td>To understand it when it is spoken/written</td>
<td>not confusing protractor with compasses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memory</td>
<td>To recall it when needed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conceptual knowledge</td>
<td>To use it with the correct meaning</td>
<td>not confusing protractor with compasses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of the spoken form: Phonological knowledge</td>
<td>To hear the word and to pronounce it acceptably, on its own, and in phrases and sentences</td>
<td>to hear and produce the endings of the verb forms, such as the /n/ sound at the end of undertaken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammatical knowledge</td>
<td>To use it in a grammatically accurate way; to know grammatical connections with other words</td>
<td>she sang very well not * she sang very good; to know that is and be are parts of the same verb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collocational knowledge</td>
<td>To know which other words can be used with it</td>
<td>a beautiful view not * a good-looking view</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orthographic knowledge</td>
<td>To spell it correctly</td>
<td>protractor not * protracter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pragmatic knowledge, knowledge of style and register</td>
<td>To use it in the right situation</td>
<td>would you like a drink? is more appropriate in a formal or semi-formal situation than what can I get you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connotational knowledge</td>
<td>To know its positive and negative associations, to know its associations with related words</td>
<td>to know that slim has positive connotations, when used about a person, whereas skinny is negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metalinguistic knowledge</td>
<td>To know explicitly about the word, e.g. its grammatical properties</td>
<td>to know that protractor is a noun; to know that pro is a prefix</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Once again, we may have hit yet another stumbling block in our journey towards TREYL – if there is no English around in the child’s community how can they build up either a passive or active working knowledge of the words of a written text? We know that for native English children there is a huge amount of acquisition of passive knowledge of written text going on from when they are toddlers, because of the amount of text that is around them, but this may certainly not be the case for learners of EFL. It seems to be crucially important for the native speaker child to be exposed to a large amount of the target language well in advance of when they are going to be taught to read and write in it. Our young foreign language learners, however, just do not normally have this amount of target language word exposure and so the task of learning to read and write in English is made much harder for them.

In addition we also need to consider the lack of training, or awareness of such issues, in the teachers who are teaching English, and thus reading and writing, to children learning EFL. Indeed, in a survey carried out by Rixon among those teaching English as foreign language to young learners, she established that some of the teachers had actually had negative experiences when learning English as a target language themselves (Rixon, 2004). Many of these teachers had actually done little reading in English, other than of set texts or handouts at university. Many said they had used a ‘look and say’ approach to reading in English as learners, with only a very small number who claimed to have focused on consonant clusters rather than syllable-initial consonants, which we know is particularly relevant to the teaching of reading in English (ibid.).

What is confirmed by Rixon’s survey is that TEYL teachers seem to have little in the way of training or awareness of the teaching of reading and writing in TEYL and many are understandably confused about different aspects of and issues relating to TREYL.

An English literacy environment

It would seem then, at least to start with, young foreign language learners of English need to be learning within a created English literacy environment surrounding them, given that this will go some way to replicating the huge number of texts that surround the native speaker child, and with which the language learners could interact both passively and actively, if properly scaffolded to do so.

This English literacy environment in the young learner classroom should include the following in English – signs, labelled pictures, realia, food packets, posters about a variety of different topics, labelled storage and boxes, labelled resources, books, newspapers and magazines as well as the writing found on things, such as toys, games and computer screens. Ideally, everything in the English classroom should be labelled. This will encourage our learners to interact with the language as they gain in skills and confidence in the target language. For example, we could give information to our learners through posters in the classroom which change on a very regular basis, for example, information about activities that week. Teachers could then encourage learners to use a variety of interactive English games and quizzes in class, in as many ways as possible. We must also remember that these posters, games and labels do not have to just be in English text, but could also, initially and for very young learners, have symbols printed along with the text so that comprehension of the language is easier to interpret.
Stories, rhymes, chants and poems should be used as often as possible to extend the young learners' knowledge and use of English in a wide variety of ways. We know that lots of exposure to rhymes and chants, as well as carefully chosen stories, can help the young learner enormously when it comes to learning to read and to understanding the sounds they will find in English.

While being fully aware that in the TEYL class the exposure to the target language would not be for anything like the amount of time that the native speaker child has before they start to read and write in English, the suggestions above will go a long way towards helping young English learners to:

- feel comfortable around the language;
- be curious about the language, for example, what the posters may be saying, how the game is played;
- enjoy the language, for example, join in with the story of The Enormous Turnip during the repetitions;
- become aware of different forms of the language and different varieties of text;
- have time to see a lot of the target language and perhaps note the differences and similarities with their mother tongue language;
- start to see patterns in the language;
- start to link the oral and written forms of English.

Using the English literacy environment as a starting point, and as part of the overall strategy for teaching English reading and writing, will mean that long-term English language learners will be able to use all the textual clues around them to develop their abilities in English reading and writing. Eventually, in TEYL, what we are aiming for is that our language learners will be able to interact with English texts, and will be reading and writing using many cues and clues (Hughes, 2011b).

However, we must also remind ourselves that for some children text in English is nothing like the text they might be seeing in their mother tongue. As Rixon explains,

Children coming from contexts in which their L1 uses a very different writing system, particularly a logographic system (such as Chinese) or a syllabic system (e.g. Sinhala) may need to make quite a conceptual leap when moving to an alphabetical system such as English. Children whose languages are written alphabetically like English but which do not use the Roman alphabet (e.g. Greek, Russian, Arabic) will also have adjustments to make. Less obviously, children whose languages share an alphabet with English (e.g. Spanish, Italian, German) may find the different sound values to seemingly familiar letters frustrating. (Rixon, 2007, pp. 6–7)

We need teachers involved in TEYL to be aware that teaching reading and writing in English needs lots of learner support, exposure to the language and sounds of English and a structured approach. This is not an easy task. However, if learners are exposed to a wide variety of examples of English
in the language classroom, and if there is a rich English literacy environment, it should encourage a more meaningful approach to the acquisition of the skills needed to read and write in the target language.

**What we need to find out**

There is very little in the way of research being carried out in TREYL as yet and little in the way of support and instruction for those involved in TEYL. There are some research findings from English as a second language (ESL) situations, but ESL is not the same as EFL. The few EFL studies on reading and writing that have been carried out seem to have been mostly carried out on adolescents or higher education students, so are not very helpful when considering the needs of younger language learners. We need to carry out a lot of research into this area in order to then guide TEYL practitioners, material designers and teacher trainers. In its very broadest sense we need to look at the following four areas:

- How best to teach reading in EYL;
- How best to teach writing in EYL;
- What materials are needed to teach reading and writing in EYL;
- How best to train teachers to teach reading and writing in EYL.

Four Areas of Investigation in order to establish guidelines for TREYL are shown in Diagram 12.1.
Part two

The current match with published materials

There are currently a lot of matches with published materials which will help young language learners engage in literacy-building activities but not a great deal that directly addresses TREYL. However, the range of materials that are currently available which will help to create an English literacy environment and support the teaching of reading and writing to young English language learners, includes:

**Picture dictionaries**

These are ideal for supporting young learners acquisition of contextualized vocabulary and many, such as those created by Usborne publishing, not only focus on the language but on the linking of this language with the child’s world, too, are fascinating and enjoyable for young learners to look at and use.

Good examples include: First 1000 Words in English, Everyday Words, Improve Your English, which are directly related to language, but also titles such as Look inside the Airport beautifully introduce and illustrate language about life around the child.

**English classroom wall friezes**

These can include friezes about anything, the weather, numbers, animals or places and are useful to have in the classroom for both teachers to point to and learners to refer to. Ladybird currently make lots of lovely friezes. Additionally, by using sparklebox teachers could create their own friezes for the classroom (www.sparklebox.co.uk/cll/alphabet/posters.html).

**English games and card games with text**

There are lots of different games and card games which will support literacy. Again, from Usborne, such games as Picture Word Lotto and Happy Families Card Game are great for the language classroom. I mention Usborne here because of their attention to detail and support for beginning readers and writers. Their illustrations, for example, directly support the language being used.

Usborne also, create the most lovely sets of card games, particularly snap, with which you could develop some excellent language work in the classroom. These boxed cards include titles like football snap, fairy tales snap, pirate snap and lots of others which can be found at www.usborne.com/catalogue/catalogue.aspx?cat=1&series=38
Stories within course books

Many TEYL courses and course books have the use of story as the central theme of their delivery. Some course books do this better than others, but there is evidence of some excellent stories for young language learners within course books which visually support the comprehension of the story and new language well. There are too many course books globally to list individuals here. Sadly not all stories in course books support the learners’ literacy as well as others. All course books need to be evaluated carefully if literacy support is what teachers are looking for.

Stories and story books

There are a whole host of oral stories, not only fairy and traditional stories, and written stories that are ideal to use in the young learner language class. For a teachers reference to such stories I would initially recommend Puffin Books, Ladybird and Usborne. As a starting point in collecting published stories for learners classroom I would also recommend these publishers as they have a wide range of attractive, accessible and supportive books for the learners.

Graded readers

Graded readers for TEYL offer a controlled and carefully chosen written resource for young learners who are starting to read in English. They include written text and illustrations which support early reading and writing in English, while the accompanying recordings give the readers even greater support in the sound, rhythm and pronunciation of the language they are reading.

Readers which are specially created for the young English language learner market usually follow a well thought-out structure using a set list of headwords per level of reader and a clear indication of any new words in the text being introduced in the reader. The illustrations link to the language in order to allow children to fully comprehend what the reader is about.

Two particularly well-created readers series are:

1. The Penguin Young Reader Series (Penguin ELT), which has readers for the 5-year-old English language learner to the 10-year-old learner. This series links to the young learners’ age, ability and linguistic levels as well as their interests.

   It also caters for different levels of input of English language, that is, if the learner is 10 and a beginner of English, they will have a particular size of book that does not look like a ‘baby book’ but will address these learners’ particular needs. Likewise, if the learner is 8 with a lot of English input already, they will have a different size of reader, too. These sizes of readers are linked to the need for different age groups of language learners to feel each book is suitable for them.

2. The Popcorn Series (Scholastic) of readers are based on popular films for children (hence popcorn as the title!), and they use stills from these films to accompany the story in the reader. These are films that learners will have watched in their mother tongue and so are likely to know the story before they read it in the target language. Readers in this series include such children’s favourites as Shrek, Madagascar and Mr Bean.
Suggestions for materials development

There needs to be much more in the way of materials to support the direct teaching of reading and writing in EYL, both as materials for teachers and materials for learners.

Materials for teachers

First, we will discuss briefly here, the phonics versus whole-word debate in the teaching of reading, that is being carried out in first language at the moment, and shall rely on Rixon’s clarity as she notes:

It is this mix of transparent versus variously tricky written forms in the English language that contributes to the debates amongst L1 reading experts concerning the effectiveness of phonics-based learning verses whole-word learning. In other words, English is a language in which it is not easy or straightforward to gain mastery in processing and understanding the written words, even for native speaker beginners. To this, we need to add the fundamental disadvantage at which Young Learners find themselves. Native speaker children have a large orally-learned data bank of language upon which to draw when trying to match not-very-transparent symbols with meaningful language, but Young [language] Learners do not have this. (Rixon, 2007, pp. 7–8).

As has been suggested above, it might be that to focus on the amount of vocabulary first in English would be a good starting point for young language learners (Calderon, 2009) though much present evidence for this is based on ESL situations rather than EFL learning situations.

Center (2009) suggests that there are two types of skills needed in order to learn to read, which are word-level skills comprising ‘phonological/phonemic awareness, phonics, and fluency’ and ‘meaning-levels skills’ of vocabulary and comprehension (ibid., p. 6).

Martin, Lovat and Purnell illustrate that the process of reading is overarched by the need, on the part of learner, to link many skills, in four clear areas, when trying to make meaning when reading, as illustrated in Diagram 12.2 on Making Meaning. The reader approaches reading using each of these four skills at the same time, in order to make sense of the words they are reading (2004, pp. 17).
We can clearly see which aspects of these four skills areas would be hard for the young foreign language learner trying to learn to read and write in English.

The teacher of EFL reading and writing needs clear guidelines, training and support to carry out this work, plus examples of activities which will aid them in the classroom, and with which to initially learn how to teach reading and writing in EYL, or at least help develop their skills in this area.

**An example of materials development application**

**Material for Young Language learner use**

What would be ideal for TEYL professionals, is a carefully blended mixture of teachers’ resources – perhaps a ‘Teaching English Reading and Writing Teacher’s Kit’ – that will support and possibly induct the teachers, help them structure the approach to the teaching of reading and writing in English they could use with their learners and include a range of resources such as:

- A teacher’s support book – with step-by-step ideas about how to teach reading and writing to different age groups of learners, plus clear guidelines about how young learners learn to read and write and suggestions for applying them.

- Classroom materials which specifically support the teaching of reading and writing in EFL. These materials would include posters, friezes, words and parts of words (e.g. suffixes); picture dictionaries, picture dictionary posters for the classroom walls, story books, graded readers, word/sentence-level games and puzzles, and activities that help and encourage the learners to interact with and use the target language script and sound system.

By using such kits, the teachers could have a blended and highly flexible, child/class-centered, focused and enjoyable way of addressing the teaching of reading and writing in their language classes, which would emulate the use of real language in real situations and with a meaningful and purposeful focus on reading and writing.

It is very important that a blended approach to the teaching of reading is used, as it seems clear that neither the phonic nor look and say approaches are, on their own, the complete answer. Instead, making sure that both approaches are used will help address the needs of individual learners who may favour one over the other. By using aspects of both these approaches we can support different learner types and children’s multiple intelligences and can avoid interfering with what is being taught in mother tongue reading and writing – something that TREYL needs to be sensitive about.

As only part of such a multifaceted kit, one aspect of the blended approach, suggested above, could include something being used in English-speaking countries at the moment (i.e. stories about letters) which could be adapted to suit the TEYL needs of both the teacher and learners. When I saw this in action with children who did not have a huge native vocabulary to draw on, even though they were in an English environment, I immediately thought that an adapted version of it would be ideal for young English language learners. A similar approach to learning letter identification worked very well for me when I was a beginner learner of Japanese and I am convinced that
This approach, with story the central part of remembering the symbols, would be ideal for young language learners too.

The resource I am thinking about here is linked closely to the use of stories about letters and uses lots of alliteration, encourages learners to remember a story linked to each letter, and thus remember the letter. In my Japanese learning experience, the story was certainly easier to remember than the letter!

I believe that an EYL adapted version of an idea similar to that found in the widely used *Letterland* (published in the United Kingdom by Collins) for the native speaker market, would be a really useful resource in TREYL. In *Letterland* each letter has a story attached to it, which highlights its sound and spelling use. The adaptations I would suggest would be to use stories about each sound and letter that are globally acceptable, include some vocabulary that the learners may know before coming to the English classes and vocabulary which is taught early in English lessons. The adaptations would also include not only stories about the letters of the alphabet (in meaningful groupings rather than in alphabetical order) but also stories linked to common digraphs and blends, plus stories that illustrate the oddities in English such as the *magic e* and so on.

Such a kit would need specialist knowledge to produce it in order to cater for different reading and writing needs in different countries, but, if it could be created, I think it would be a really dynamic and valuable resource for EYL teachers and learners.

**Bibliography**


**TEYL Graded Readers**

The Penguin Young Readers Series (www.penguinreaders.com).

Usborne ELT series (www.usborne.com).

Listening in another language – research and materials

Rimma Ableeva and Jeff Stranks

Part one

The research

Introduction

This chapter is concerned with the scholarly literature and the materials related to what is often termed ‘a Cinderella skill’ (e.g. Nunan, 1997; Vandergrift, 1997) – L2 listening comprehension. Despite the fact that listening comprehension (LC) is generally recognized as a crucial component of foreign language proficiency, it has been frequently reported as an under-researched area in L2 studies (e.g. Ur, 1984; Rubin, 1994; Alderson & Bachman, 2003; Vandergrift, 2007) and an overlooked part of L2 instruction over the years (e.g. Feyten, 1991; Omaggio-Hadley, 2000). Given the lack of research in this area, it appears that ‘we still do not fully understand what the important sub-skills of listening are; nor are we sure what information educators need to teach listening better’ (Buck, 2003, p. 97). Thus, the purpose of this chapter is first to provide an overview of L2 academic literature associated with the complex problem of LC: more precisely, to analyse current views on text comprehension and to scrutinize the text comprehension models outlined in L2 listening and reading research. The first part then examines some recent exploratory work that has been done in response to various concerns expressed by L2 listening research over the last decade. The second part of the chapter looks at the extent to which L2 listening research is reflected (or not) in materials designed for LC.
What do we currently know about listening comprehension?

Over the last several decades comprehension research has yielded a number of models that have attempted to explain the processes involved in reading and listening comprehension. The first model of text comprehension was bottom-up, developed in the 1940s and 1950s (Flowerdew and Miller, 2005). The bottom-up model primarily considers linguistic dimensions in text processing. From the perspective of the bottom-up model, for example, the LC process involves the ability to recognize phonemes, which are then ‘combined into words, which, in turn, together make up phrases, clauses, and sentences’ (ibid., p. 24).

In a similar vein, Buck (2003) describes the bottom-up model as one involving the L2 learners' language knowledge (i.e. words, syntax, grammar) during text processing and outlines four stages of bottom-up oral input processing. During the first stage, listeners decode phonemes; in the course of the second stage, they recognize words; during the third stage, the syntactic level and analysis of the semantic content occur and listeners ‘arrive at a literal understanding of the basic linguistic meaning’ (p. 2); and in the fourth stage, listeners interpret the literal meaning embedded in the input depending on the communicative situation that helps them to understand the speaker’s message. Buck claims, however, that the oral input processing does not always follow the preset order of stages presented above and entails the interaction of bottom-up and top-down processing, rooted in the individuals’ knowledge of the world. It should be noted, however, that contrary to reading, when listening to oral texts, listeners deal with a number of features unique to spoken discourse only, that is, sound modification, prosodic characteristics (e.g. stress, intonation), hesitations, the involuntary breaks, ellipses, redundancy, the grammatical reconstruction of utterances, repetitions and corrections, etc.

With regard to top-down models, text comprehension research points out that the decoding of verbal messages depends more on reader’s and listeners’ prior knowledge of the world or schemata than on acoustic signals (Bernhardt, 1991; Carell, Devine & Eskey, 1991; Swaffar et al., 1991; Kern, 2000, Buck, 2003; Flowerdew & Miller, 2005). As soon as the individuals’ previous cognitive experience (e.g. going to a grocery store, being in an airport or checking in to a hotel) is ‘stored as a schema in memory, it aids individuals in negotiating future events, in allowing them to predict what is likely to happen’ (Flowerdew & Miller, 2005, p. 26).

L2 research on top-down processing has also shown that successful text comprehension depends on L2 listeners’/readers’ familiarity with the topic of the text and whether or not they share the same previous knowledge with the person producing a spoken or written message (Bernhardt, 1991; Kern, 2000). Clearly, the lack of the background schema usually hinders text comprehension (Swaffar et al., 1991). In this respect, L2 researchers have expressed concern about the extent to which L2 learners can share background knowledge with the producers of spoken and written texts because of the mismatches generated by cultural differences (Carell et al., 1991).

Thus, L2 studies point out that listening and reading comprehension are complex multidimensional processes in which many factors come into play. While reading or listening to texts, learners employ their prior contextual knowledge (top-down process) as well as their L2 knowledge (bottom-up process). For this reason, L2 researchers highlight the necessity of synthesizing both text processing models and call for looking at text comprehension through the lens of an interactive model (e.g. Bernhardt, 1991; Swaffar et al., 1991; Vandergrift, 1998; Rost,
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2002; Buck, 2003; Flowerdew & Miller, 2005). In this fashion, Rost (2002, p. 96) explains how these two processes operate in listeners:

Speech perception and word recognition are the ‘bottom-up’ processes in listening: they provide the ‘data’ for comprehension. If the listener does not recognize enough of these bottom-up cues in order to process the speech in real time, he or she will rely more exclusively on ‘top-down’ processes semantic expectations and generalizations. (Bold in the original)

Rost (2002) also provides a definition of text comprehension which integrates both of the text processing models and which nicely summarizes the present discussion on this complex process:

Comprehension is the process of relating language to concepts in one’s memory and to references in the real world. Comprehension is the sense of understanding what the language used refers to in one’s experience or in the outside world. ‘Complete comprehension’ then refers to the listener having a clear concept in memory for every referent used by the speaker. (Rost, 2002, p. 59)

Despite the proven value of text processing models in explaining how comprehension processes operate in listeners/readers, the recent findings in L2 cognitive comprehension research suggest that these models do not capture all of the components that accompany discourse processing because they do not fully account for social and cultural factors. In this regard, Flowerdew and Miller propose a cognitive text processing model that includes not only the three comprehension processes (bottom-up/top-down/interactive) but also eight additional dimensions – individualized, cross-cultural, social, contextualized, affective, strategic, intertextual, critical – that ‘may affect the way messages are perceived and processed’ (2005, p. 28). The authors specify that the three core processes of their LC model should unquestionably be taken into consideration by L2 instructors and listening materials developers, but the application of the eight dimensions is optional and may vary depending on the goal of each particular listening activity.

Our discussion now turns to several interrelated concerns expressed in recent L2 listening research, that is: (1) lack of diagnostic tests to better inform instructional practices (e.g. Buck, 2003; Alderson, 2005); (2) predominance of quantitative product-oriented approaches to assessing LC (e.g. Vandergrift, 2007) and (3) the need to incorporate more qualitative process-oriented approaches in listening research and instruction, which are able to produce more sensitive diagnostics of learner ability and development (ibid.). The next section summarizes recent attempts of L2 research to address these concerns.

L2 listening comprehension: Under-researched areas

Recent L2 literature articulates the need for the creation of L2 diagnostic tests allowing language educators to identify the source of learning difficulties (e.g. Spolsky, 1992; Buck, 2003; Alderson & Huhta, 2005; Huhta, 2008). For example, Alderson (2005) is cautious about the fact that the L2 field has been too preoccupied with the standardization and the creation of high-stakes language testing
to the neglect of diagnostic tests. He complains that this has given rise to ‘a considerable confusion and indeed ignorance about what diagnostic testing might be’ (p. 26). Alderson emphasizes that L2 instructional and assessment research certainly has to start diagnostic explorations, asserting that:

If tests are informed by an adequate theory of language use, language development and language learning, and if learners can receive feedback on their performance and their ability immediately, then the possibility for the incorporation of assessment into language learning becomes apparent, indeed urgent. (p. 12)

In his book, Alderson (2005) reports on DIALANG, a free of charge online language diagnostic test (see also: www.dialang.org Readers unfamiliar with DIALANG can start to find out more at the Website of the DIALANG system: www.lancs.ac.uk/researchenterprise/dialang/about.htm. The test is developed within the scope of a European Union-funded 1996 project and is available in 14 European languages, that is, Danish, Dutch, English, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Icelandic, Irish, Italian, Norwegian, Portuguese, Spanish and Swedish. The major goal of the test is to assess Reading, Listening and Writing abilities as well as Vocabulary and Grammar through multiple-choice, gap-filling (cloze), short-answer questions, drop-down menus and text-entry formats. The DIALANG includes five stages: 1. Selection of language and skills/aspects; 2. Optional placement exercise; 3. Self-assessment; 4. Test; 5. Feedback and advice.

The DIALANG listening test aims to measure three subskills: 1. Identifying Main Idea/Distinguishing from supporting detail; 2. Inferencing (including lexical inferencing); 3. Listening intensively for a specific detail. The selected recordings are typically 30–60 seconds in length and are verbalized by the speakers who use a standard variety of the targeted languages. The texts contain general topics in order to avoid special vocabulary and are based on monologues or dialogues covering various discourse types (e.g. advertisements, news reports, formal/informal conversations, etc.). Test users are usually asked to read questions before listening, then to listen to the recording only once and to choose one of the 3–5 options.

Alderson (2005) quantitatively reports on the results obtained from the pilot DIALANG English listening test. In order to gain more insights into L2 listening development, the test-takers' performance is analysed with respect to the following variables: listening ability by mother tongue, by sex, by age, by educational level, by length of time learning English, by frequency of use, etc. It was revealed that test-takers' listening ability is positively influenced by the length of time of learning English; the frequency with which they use English; by their level of education; and by their mother tongue. It is not sensitive, however, to test-users’ age and sex. In addition, Alderson reports that the learners’ self-assessment of their listening ability matched the results of the DIALANG listening test.

Alderson (2005, p. 153) concludes that ‘more research is needed into how the different language skills and aspects develop. This is particularly true for listening, which is a relatively unresearched area’. He points out that the three listening subskills selected for DIALANG ‘do not appear to correspond to developments in listening ability, and so future research would do well to explore what variables better predict the development of such an ability’ (ibid.). As an orientation point, Alderson suggests investigating the relationship between listening ability and the ability to discriminate L2 sounds, the ability to understand L2 stress and intonation or the ability to deal with native and non-native accents.
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Another concern expressed in L2 listening research is related to the predominance of the product-oriented trend as compared to process-oriented approaches to listening studies and instruction (e.g. Field, 2000, 2008; Buck, 2003, Flowerdew & Miller, 2005; Vandergrift, 2007). Vandergrift (2007) states that L2 research and teaching need to shift from the product (correct/incorrect answer) to the process of listening. He warns that ‘answers may verify comprehension but they reveal nothing about how students arrived at comprehension or, more importantly, how comprehension failed’ (ibid., p. 196). In this regard, Goh (2002) and Vandergrift (2007) highlight the importance of research exploring the actual processes of listening through the lens of various pedagogical approaches with the intention to inform instructional practices.

Furthermore, Vandergrift (2007) suggests that future L2 listening research should apply more qualitative methods in order to gain a better insight into comprehension processes, not accessible through quantitative methods. He highlights the usefulness of such qualitative methods as interviews, questionnaires, think-aloud protocols and stimulated recalls, enabling researchers to find out ‘what students are attending to and why’ when listening to aural texts (ibid., p. 206). Vandergrift (ibid.) summarizes the need for investigation of the listening process through qualitative approaches as follows:

[. . .] listening processes are complex and they interact with different knowledge sources, human characteristics and other contextual factors in complex ways. These processes and their interactions need to be explored using in-depth qualitative methods to better understand how L2 listeners attain successful comprehension.

To address the aforementioned concerns, Ableeva (2010, see also Ableeva & Lantolf (2011)), investigated the development of L2 listening ability among L2 French learners. In her study, situated within the sociocultural theory framework, Ableeva implemented a qualitative approach – Dynamic Assessment (DA) – in order to assess and promote learners listening ability. DA is a pedagogical approach based on Vygotsky’s concept of the Zone of Proximal Development, which integrates mediation and assessment into a unified activity. DA prescribes expert-learner mediated interactions during the assessment procedure. These interactions allow DA to diagnose the concrete source of learner difficulties and at the same time to help the learner overcome these difficulties.

The study was carried out over a 2-month period and involved seven intermediate university L2 learners of French. They were asked to listen to and recall in English (the learners’ L1) a series of increasingly complex authentic French video texts. Comprehension was determined by counting the total number of idea units recalled as compared to the total number contained in the original text. Following the independent recall, the students interacted with the researcher, who helped them whenever they encountered problems recalling specific portions of the text. This help, in accordance with DA principles, was at first implicit but, depending on learner responsiveness, became increasingly explicit. The aim was to push the learners, to the extent possible, to resolve the problems on their own. In this way, DA was able to bring to the surface those abilities that were in the process of developing and at the same time to identify concretely those areas where learners had problems, that is, phonology, lexicon, grammar and cultural knowledge.

Through mediated interactions, it was revealed that the learners experienced problems not only with lexicon and cultural references embedded in the texts but also with grammar and phonology.
In fact, grammatical and phonological problems turned out to be more salient than what previous quantitative research on aural comprehension has argued (e.g. Mecartty, 2000; Stæhr, 2009). Ableeva’s study confirmed that DA is one of the qualitative diagnostic tools that allows for a better access to the listening processes and for revealing ‘how listeners arrive at the right answer or why comprehension breaks’ (Vandergrift, 2007, p. 192), since it employs dialogic interactions and qualitative interpretations of test results.

**Conclusion**

The examination of academic publications demonstrates that various L2 theoretical frameworks – cognitive and sociocultural – understand text comprehension as a process that consists in making meaning from the text. Additionally, L2 research views listening and reading comprehension as complex processes in which bottom-up and/or top-down processing are involved. Yet contemporary developments in this area acknowledge that both of these processes occur concurrently and actively interact with one another. Therefore, current L2 research regards text comprehension as an interactive process entailing the learners’ knowledge of the linguistic code and the learners’ knowledge of the world based on schema structures. Recently the L2 research has begun, however, to incorporate voices arguing in favour of the inclusion of sociocultural dimensions in order to understand better the comprehension process.

Another vital matter arising from the discussion above is that current L2 research has begun to articulate the need for the creation of diagnostic tests anchored in a developmental theory as well as for the application of more qualitative approaches to investigate the listening process. A number of L2 scholars emphasize that diagnostic tests and qualitative methods, allowing for gaining a deeper insights into comprehension processes, can significantly increase our understanding of language development and thus improve language teaching/learning practices, in particular listening instructional practices. It is hoped that the answers to these research concerns will not only inform the field of second language acquisition but also will guide L2 educators in creating new instructional listening materials, informed by empirically grounded acquisitional research.

**Part two**

**The materials**

**Introduction**

Given the mass of material available across the world, it is almost inevitable that you fall into generalizations based on your own experience: and it is our experience that published materials simply do not take listening seriously enough, and fail to take a sufficiently broad view of the real problems that learners of English as L2 face when they listen, either in classrooms or outside. Listening materials tend not to reflect what applied linguistics has suggested about listening processes, for example, the use of schemata alongside bottom-up processing to arrive
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at comprehension; but that is not necessarily a criticism of the materials, since in our view a lot of research has over-concentrated on discovering the processes used by L1 listeners rather than investigating those used by L2 listeners.

The opening to this chapter makes it clear that research into top-down processing views of listening comprehension has become preeminent, and the absence of any emphasis on bottom-up processing is overall reflected in the listening materials and tasks which we see nowadays and have seen for quite some time. The opening refers to the fact that researchers call for a twin-pronged approach which draws upon both top-down and bottom-up models. However, looking at much published material for listening in English, it is hard to see much evidence of either model being actively developed, while the synthesis is at best implicit.

**What materials currently do**

As a reasonable representative of listening material in coursebooks, here is a sequence of moments (numbered sequentially here) which an excellent, popular and successful course for teenagers (Garton-Sprenger & Prowse, 2005, pp. 32–41) offers in the course of a ten-page unit at A2 level in the CEFR¹, moments in which listening to recorded language takes place:

1. Learners listen to a text at the same time as they read it. (This might allow learners to attend to aspects of phonology compared to orthography, although there is no task to point to this.)

2. Learners listen to the past tense forms of verbs and write them in columns. They then listen again and check. (This might help learners recognize these particular past tense forms in continuous speech, but this does not appear to be the aim, which is, rather, pronunciation.)

3. Learners listen to a dialogue at the same time as they read it. (see 1 above)

4. Learners listen to individuals words and count syllables and mark stress. (Pronunciation practice, not overtly linked to listening.)

5. Learners listen to a brief narrative and match time periods to activities. (The main purpose appears to be to provide information for learners subsequently, in pairs, to practise asking and answering questions in the simple past tense.)

6. Learners listen to a dialogue at the same time as they read it. (see 1 above)

7. Learners listen to an anecdote describing an accident and read statements to decide if they are true or false according to the anecdote. (This is strongly related to the grammatical aim of the unit, that is, contrasting the past simple with the past progressive.)

8. Learners listen to and repeat a tongue twister. (see 4 above.)

9. Learners listen to a reading text being read aloud, to check whether they performed a previous task (inserting time reference words) correctly. (Listening, with a focus on identification of particular lexical items.)
Learners listen to the recounting of the life of a famous person and complete a table of information, exclusively with dates and numbers. (Listening for specific, predetermined information.)

Learners listen to a dialogue at the same time as they read it. (see 1 above)

So it can be seen that over the course of a unit, encompassing ten pages of material, learners are given a significant amount of things to listen to and (arguably) a good range of genres and text types: monologues, conversations, narratives, etc. Even discounting the activities which are focused on phonology rather than listening per se (arguably 3 activities) there are eight recordings as opportunities for extended listening. The content of many of the recordings is potentially very interesting and stimulating for learners, too. This would be true of most published course materials these days.

That said, if we were to ask a question such as: ‘To what extent, and in what ways, does the listening material offered reflect the findings of research into listening?’, it might not be straightforward to answer. If, for example, we look to top-down processing and the use of schemata to construct meaning, then none of the tasks actually requires or focuses on this (e.g. by giving students the general topic before listening and brainstorming possible words that might occur, or by giving them the situation and asking them to think, in L1 or L2, of the kinds of exchange that might take place). Learners might of course use elements of top-down processing, but that is not the same thing.

We might take another example of a common approach and task type for listening comprehension, this time from an adult course (Tilbury et al., 2010, p. 91) at B1 level. Learners first read advertisements, with photos, for accommodation to rent, and then listen to a couple discussing them. The tasks for learners are as follows:

1 Listen to Donna and José outside the estate agent’s.
   1. Who likes the idea of moving? Who doesn’t like the idea?
   2. Which places [on the previous page] do they talk about?

2 Listen again.
   1. Why does José think they cannot move? (two reasons)
   2. What solution does Donna suggest?

(Note that immediately after these tasks, the material picks up on instances of would in the text and develops grammar exercises based on them.)

Arguably the previous information that learners read gives them a kind of schemata, or at least some previous knowledge, which allows initial entry into the text they listen to. The tasks themselves, though, appear to relate more to notions of listening sub-skills such as listening for gist (task 1.1) and listening for specific information (tasks 1.2, 2.1, 2.2), as is overwhelmingly the case in printed materials for listening. The real purpose of many listening materials, then, appears quite clearly to be one or more of the following: topic extensions; exemplification of grammar; exemplification of functional or lexical items of language; lead-in to a learner speaking activity. All of these are worthy and defensible aims, but they are not aims which are tied intrinsically to improving learners’ ability to process spoken language.
Product or process?

We have mentioned earlier the distinction between product-oriented and process-oriented approaches to listening, and the tasks above (and we would suggest in most other materials) show an almost exclusive focus on product – that is, the obtaining of information and the answering of various kinds of questions. One might note in passing that such product-oriented tasks tend to remain very similar across levels – what varies from lower to higher ability levels is the length and syntactic/lexical difficulty of the texts, and sometimes the speed of delivery, but tasks remain very similar, indeed on occasions almost identical. An example would be tasks from two levels of Redston and Cunningham (2005, 2007) – the tasks are paraphrased here:

1. Elementary level (A1/A2) p. 17: a) Look at the photos b) Put the photos in order c) Listen again and choose correct words in sentences about the text.
2. Upper Intermediate level (B2) p. 59: a) Look at the pictures b) Listen and put the pictures in order c) Listen again and answer questions.

(NB This is not a criticism of this course material in particular. Indeed, it has a highly positive feature which stands out in materials for listening – see below.) While the third task varies somewhat (T/F at Elementary level, open-ended questions at Upper Intermediate) there are nonetheless decided similarities between the two activity sets.

So the disparate needs of learners for example, between beginner and intermediate are frequently not addressed – for example, we do not see listeners at elementary levels encouraged to read and listen, or to just visualize, or to hear familiar words in extended speech and recognize them, etc. Task and text difficulty may vary across level, but task and text type do not vary much.

There appears to be an underlying belief that practice makes perfect – give learners enough listening comprehension tasks, encouraging them to ‘use their L1 listening skills’ along the way, and their listening will improve. This product-based view of developing learners’ ability to listen and understand in L2, ignores, by and large, process-based views and the need to consider not just whether learners were successful or not in a given task, but why they were successful, and perhaps more importantly, why they were sometimes unsuccessful. (see the quote from Vandergrift (2007) earlier in this chapter). This is without even touching on the notion that learners might well succeed in tasks but nonetheless feel (or indeed, know) that part or much of the text they listened to was partially or totally incomprehensible to them – that is, they succeeded in the task proposed by the material, but not in their own ‘inner task’ (for want of a better term).

A notable exception to the claim here that materials do not try to overtly develop learners’ ability to listen is Redston and Cunningham (2005, 2007), a course which offers learners a section in every unit and at every level entitled ‘Help with Listening’. The contents range from discoursal features, for example, recognizing redundancy in speech, or the functions of lexical items such as ‘Actually’ or ‘By the way’, to phonological features (this is one of very few examples of a formal acknowledgement in materials that phonology is equally as important receptively as productively). These activities are sometimes, but not always, connected to listening texts and activities within the course, that is, they act as a direct follow-up to listening which has just been undertaken.

At this point, discussion has focused mainly on while-listening tasks, but now we are suggesting that post-listening tends to be neglected or to be something not associated with listening. Cauldwell
states that one problem with the teaching of listening is that ‘we use listening activities to serve other language-learning goals’, and raises the question of whether more attention needs to be paid to learners’ perceptual problems – in other words, to matters of bottom-up processing. A case might be made that listening skills or strategies, which learners may well have in their L1, can only really be effective in L2 once some degree of mastery of bottom-up processing has been achieved, because it is only then that attention becomes available. Walter and Swan (2008, p. 70), discussing reading in L2, suggest that learners start to understand L2 texts when

\[\ldots\] they have reached the point where they can access their already-existing comprehension ability on the basis of L2 input. Earlier difficulty with L2 comprehension is best understood as resulting from overload: readers are fully occupied with decoding at the word and sentence level, and have little spare working memory capacity for higher-level processing.

The same would be true for listeners, but even more so, since listening involves perception whereas reading does not. Learners themselves testify to this difficulty when asked: a learner called Wei, in Goh (1997), reports:

I listened to an English programmes \ldots though the speed was not very fast, I didn’t understand well. I often heard some words sounded familiar but I couldn’t know the meanings quickly. I must think for a while and when I knew it, the programme already past a lot. (Goh, 1997, p. 364)

This is a learner difficulty which is enormously common but which materials for listening rarely if ever cater for\(^2\), though there are occasionally tasks which lean in this direction. For example, in Oxenden et al. (1997, p. 60), there is a listening task where learners listen to a dialogue in a restaurant and complete phrases (e.g. ‘I’ll _______ ______.’) The objective here seems to be to focus on useful lexical phrases (e.g. ‘I’ll get this’ = ‘I’ll pay for this’) and the Teacher’s Book does not hint at any other objective, but in order to do this exercise, learners have to pick out the phrases within the flow of speech and thus are working on a perceptual level, concentrating on identifying the utterances 100 per cent correctly. This is along the lines of what Cauldwell feels to be important as perceptual work, though by no means identical to his ideas. One of us has attempted to take this further and formalize it – for example, by requiring learners, after listening to a text, to listen to part of it again and complete missing chunks of language which feature elements of assimilation or elision – but editors rejected it on methodological grounds. But in this area, we might look back at activities which require learners to read and listen simultaneously (e.g. in Garton-Sprenger & Prowse, earlier in this section) and see that they perhaps have a very useful function, since if the texts are well-recorded in the sense that they retain features of natural speech such as assimilation, elision, weak sounds, etc., then learners are getting practice in perception, in hearing words that they can see and that they more or less know, in various phonological contexts.

**Other under-treated areas**

Two more areas of listening deserve mention in terms of materials. One is the ‘inner voice’, which Tomlinson (2001) feels can be encouraged by giving learners, especially at more elementary levels, time to listen and think without requiring them to respond. This might be interpreted as a call
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for materials and activities where learners simply listen without any task to divert their attention from the listening itself. Such tasks are, in our experience, non-existent in published materials. The closest you might come to this would be perhaps the ‘listen and make notes’ exercise, for example, in Oxenden et al. (1997, p. 85) where learners listen to someone describing the place where they live and ‘note down two positive points and two negative points’, although this would not, one imagines, be what Tomlinson has in mind. Completely task-less listening might well be a methodological leap too far for most editors and publishing houses (and perhaps materials writers, too), although it is done now on some extensive reading courses by using recordings of the books.

A further aspect of listening is that which involves, at least on occasions, visualizing what is being listened to. Many authors, notably Arnold et al. (2007) emphasize the value of encouraging learners to listen (or indeed, read) and to concentrate solely upon creating mental images, visualizations, of what they hear. Such activities are, again, not easy to find. One example is in Puchta and Stranks (2004, p. 73) where learners listen and imagine/visualize a scene and some actions, with pauses for learners to respond to questions such as ‘Take your time and look around. What can you see?’ The focus of the activity, however, is not actually listening per se, but rather a build-up towards a writing task (the learners write their own version of the ‘story’ they have listened to). And, regrettably, it is the only instance of such listening and visualization in the course.

Conclusion

So, it is our contention that listening materials serve learners rather poorly. While most materials give learners a wide range of listening opportunities, and often with stimulating content, there is an over-emphasis on product-oriented tasks to the detriment of processing. Most listening materials do not reflect many of the findings of research into listening comprehension, but this is not necessarily a bad thing since the research is rather skewed and could do with being directed more strongly into discovering what the problems are that L2 learners at different ability levels actually face when listening, so that materials could then be directed, at least partially, towards dealing with those difficulties.

Notes


2 It also raises doubts about well-intentioned teacher urgings such as ‘Don’t worry about the words you don’t know’, as if all L2 words were either totally known or totally unknown, and as if the ‘known’ ones can always be processed as quickly as necessary for the learner to keep pace with the text.

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Materials for writing – was this the case of the Runaway Bandwagon?

Jayakaran Mukundan and Vahid Nimechisalem

Part one

Introduction

Most teachers in Asia in the 1960s believed that writing could not be taught and learners who wrote well did so probably because they inherited good genes (Campbell, 1998). Some other teachers believed that the large amount of time they spent editing students’ essays was teaching. Materials produced for writing were more for testing rather than teaching purposes and they usually took the format of models of good writing. Examinations in those years, especially those like the Ordinary Level and the Advanced Level School Leaving Examinations had writing sections which required full length essays and publishers produced Examination Preparation books with models essays for students to imitate. In most parts of Asia where writing was not taught the book with model essays was the essential learning tool. Most students memorized essays but the more sensible ones adapted them by studying patterns of good essays, usually ways in which the content was generated and organized. Writing instruction hardly featured even in the First Language (L1), except in literature classrooms where learners were taught to write essays such as the compare–contrast essay type and to link writing to reading by extensively covering the works of critics before shaping their essays.

In the late 1960s there was a Revolution in the Teaching of Writing (Hairston, 1982). In the early years, many believed that the Process Approach, which revolutionized the teaching of writing from Product to Process, would eventually lead to a further shrinking of material space devoted for writing; the opposite took place – specialized writing books began to be produced. As a very learner-centred approach, which encouraged learning of writing through discovery, the Process Approach involved learners in idea-generation activities through pre-writing tasks. Process-oriented
activities engaged students in the cognitive processes that they would need in writing. The move from focus on form to focus on writer to focus on content and then to meaning moved like pendulum swings across writing curriculums. Then there was war from the Expressive School which spread the message of anarchy. *Writing without Teachers* was Peter Elbow’s (1973) solution to writing problems in classrooms. Elbow contended that teachers should move away from students to let them write. He advocated learner-centredness, encouraged creativity, spontaneity and integrity (Reid, 1993).

The Cognitive School made an attempt to restore the teacher and some order in classrooms. Unlike Expressivists, Cognitivists believed that absolute freedom should not be given to students. They argued that teachers could intervene to provide help for learners by aiding them to generate or rearrange their ideas. The involvement of applied linguists in the field of writing soon made writing go from macro to micro, from top-down to bottom-up with a focus on syntax T-Unit analysis, cohesion and coherence. Publishers were overjoyed – this was their opportunity to churn out writing workbooks which resembled grammar workbooks! Researchers who worked on the reading–writing collaboration then suggested ways in which content and audience awareness must lead the way, especially in tertiary-level writing. There was a need for academic readers (writing books which had a selection of readings for pre-writing) during this time. Then as computer technology became advanced, writing instruction soon embraced new technologies to help writers write with ease. The intention was to use computers in writing (e.g. Writer’s Workbench). This was the beginning of huge investments in software for writing laboratories.

Teachers hopped onto the bandwagon of the day, adopting wholeheartedly whatever new trails and trends emerged from conferences. The bandwagon has slowed down a bit with teachers now more knowledgeable about the practicality of new approaches, making sure these new approaches can be implemented in their own unique writing environments. The tragedy in the past was that teachers totally embraced writing approaches like the Process Approach without even considering the factors that weighed against them – large mixed ability classes of between 40–50 students and limited writing time in curriculums (sometimes only 90 minutes a week).

**The early years and the influence of methodologies on writing task development: The case of the Audio-Lingual Method (ALM)**

In Asia, there were two distinct contexts for the teaching of writing; one where the public school system adopted methodologies with a very restricted writing component; another where schools allowed learners (usually in the private school system) to adopt curriculums that prepared students for international entrance or placement examinations like Tests of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or International English Language Testing System (IELTS), and where materials for the latter usually came in the form of test preparation books (see Chapter 19).

The Structural Syllabus, which was influenced by the ALM, was adopted by many countries like Malaysia in the late 1960s and 1970s. As the emphasis of the ALM was to get learners to be orally proficient, the focus on writing was minimal. In fact writing was treated like a support
skill and copying of dialogues practiced through repetitive drills for the major part of the week was considered a consolidation of oral work. Transformation drills were very common, and usually restricted the students to rewriting a number of statements in negative or interrogative forms.

The ALM and the Structural Syllabus enabled teachers to have more realistic expectations of their teaching goals. The syllabus helped teachers in the writing component by providing guidelines. The tasks which were recommended were those that supported the ALM and the Structural syllabus. Some of these task types were Controlled Writing, Free Writing and Guided Writing. In textbooks all this quite easily fitted in. Dialogues which were presented for oral practice were then utilized as writing tasks; dialogues were stripped of punctuation marks and became controlled writing tasks – students had to put the missing punctuation marks back. The same texts were used to frame free writing or guided writing tasks. Dictation which required memorization was also a common writing task. Then tasks became a lot more demanding on students. The dicto-comp (a less restricted form of dictation) was one of those tasks, in which teachers read texts at natural speed and learners wrote them down based on their understanding rather than memorization.

Another trend that emerged, especially in SL situations like those in Malaysia, was the Prose Models Approach, where teachers encouraged students to learn from model essays and replicate new ones from the same model.

A new concept in materials development for writing in the Communicative Approach to Language Teaching (CALT) – the role of stimuli and cues

The advent of the CALT in the 1970s (Savignon & Berns, 1984) brought about a sense of utilitarianism and consumerism to teaching a language and this was largely connected to reality and authenticity. People needed to communicate and this meant they had to be led to a large extent by cues or stimuli. The cues for CALT came largely in the form of authentic material and the inspiration of this came from everyday life. People need to take trains and they need to read train schedules, kids need to watch TV and they have to refer to the TV guide and when people need to buy or sell they have the classified advertisement in newspapers to refer to. Authenticity from the perspective of materials brought a greater sense of reality in communication.

CALT and its contribution to expanding writing genres

CALT was largely responsible for breaking the traditional moulds of writing. The influence of public examinations which had led to the emphasis on essay writing took away fun in writing classrooms. The advent of the Communicative Approach and then task-based learning led teachers away from the routine deliverance of the essay topic and the timed writing that resulted. Soon fun was infused
in classrooms and learners began writing in a number of new genres, mainly those connected to media and advertising. In many classrooms, learners moved away from constantly working on five-paragraph essays to redesigning cereal boxes and writing advertisements for their new products. The use of authentic materials and media writing (which linked writing in classrooms to writing for the market), brought about an awareness of the importance of creativity and deeper understanding of audience demands.

**Post-revolution schools of thought: Anarchy and order**

The Revolution in the Teaching of Writing brought new schools of thought. The two main schools; the Expressive School and the Cognitive School took different directions, different beliefs, but learners benefitted from both.

Peter Elbow (of *Writing without Teachers* (1973) fame) and the Expressive School were against teacher domination and authoritative teaching in class because they believed that the presence of teachers was the main problem with non-writers. They asked for the teacher to step aside so that writing could begin. Freewriting started as a way in which learners wrote without prompts from the teacher. This the Expressive School believed would instil in writers a sense of originality, creativity and integrity. Learners, they believed, would also find their own voice in writing. People (like Ann Raimes, 1983) soon developed other terms for freewriting, such as journals, and it was catching attention due mainly to the fact that teachers were focused on getting students to write first to develop fluency rather than accuracy.

The main point about Freewriting from the materials development perspective is that there was nothing to gain from developing materials for people who believed in anarchy: no teacher, hence no teacher-driven material. The only materials learners brought to class for this sort of writing were their notebooks. All other aspects, from prompt to direction were within the learner.

The Cognitive School of Thought was quite the opposite from the Expressive School, proposing strategies for teachers to teach learner writers. Prewriting preparation became the focus of writing instruction. Invention and arrangement became key words that defined their work. With the Cognitive School came new strategies for initiating writing like cubing, clustering and mind maps. They were idea-generators or idea-organizers. This school believed heuristics had a major role in the invention processes of writing. Even strategies used by journalists to organize their thoughts and writing (journalistic questions) were adopted by this school as ‘thinking tools’ for learner writers.

The Cognitive School was a welcome change to publishers who feared that the removal of teachers from the main plot of teaching also removed them – there were no materials to produce with total writer empowerment. But with the influences of the Cognitive School came opportunity. Mind Maps and other techniques like cubing and clustering could feature in Writing Workbooks, especially for beginner writers who would need some scaffolding techniques to help them build cubes and clusters and mind maps of probable content.
The shifting focus from that of focus on form to focus on writer and then to content and meaning and the effects of these movements on material development

The Process Approach made a lot of writing teachers happy but at the same time left many others, especially those in universities, devastated. The latter feared that absolute focus on the writer was misguided in university writing environments especially since the goal of instruction would be to quickly initiate learners into their social discourse communities. This meant that student doctors, for example, had to be immersed into the language that doctors at work use (Bartholomae, 1986). For this immersion into social discourse communities writing had to depend on reading, something very commonsensical since most people write academic papers using background sources which come mainly from written texts.

It was particularly during the 1980s that academic readers were developed for writing classes. What some publishers did was to compile critical reading texts (so as learners, in the initial stages, did not need to frantically search for the right texts needed) and develop pre-writing tasks which prepared learners to write confidently and critically on issues. Of course with the increased speed of the internet, these readers soon lost a lot of interest among writing teachers and learner-writers.

The computer and writing instruction

Some people may still argue that people who totally depend on the computer keyboard may soon have very poor handwriting skills. This may be true but the computer seems to have brought a lot more positives than negatives into writing instruction. For one, we know now that the Spell and Grammar Check in word-processing software will go to a large extent in minimizing the ill effects of writer anxiety, especially those who fear making grammar or spelling errors. The computer alerts them to their errors and offers writers opportunity to correct them. These will eventually lead beginner writers to minimize the risk of blocking, where the writer stalls and becomes disoriented, a phenomenon that can be caused by anxiety. Also learners become optimal monitor users as they are aware that errors are not a major concern and this leads them out of the entrapment of accuracy.

Computers can give immediate feedback to learners. Programmes are available that can analyse the style and structure of learners’ scripts. A good example is Writer’s Workbench, a product of BELL Laboratories modified by Kiefer and Smith to fit ESL student writers’ needs (Reid, 1986). The programme is capable of analysing various features of written text including the content, grammar, vocabulary and punctuation (Writer’s Workbench, 2002) and has proved helpful in providing learners with feedback on sentence variety, use of verbs and readability (Day, 1988). All this can save the teacher’s time. Teachers may also find computers and the internet very useful sources of supplementary materials for their learners. Research findings in the area of Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) have shown that computers can improve writing
quality, minimize the teacher’s role and make peer response more focused (Sullivan & Pratt, 1996),
increase the frequency of revisions (Li & Cumming, 2001) and increase the frequency of peer and
teacher feedback (Braine, 1997).

The negative aspects of writing instruction using computers is that while background sources
from the internet are in abundance and can be systematically retrieved, there is a cause for
concern for issues related to plagiarism. There are websites that offer plagiarism detection
services (like Turnitin) but the digital archives created by these services to evaluate students’
integrity may be of questionable integrity (Purdy, 2009). Additionally, writers have become so
efficient in click and drag and cut and paste routines that critical thought and creativity might
suffer.

What goes around comes around, positively!

It is amazing how writing leads to reading and can come back as even more writing. A significant
change to writing instruction came about with the introduction of portfolio writing and portfolio
evaluation. It signalled a further move towards an even more profound humanistic approach to
the learner writer and writing. It also stressed the point that writing is to read. Portfolio writing
developed craftsmanship in writers but most of all developed the sense of authorship which came
from publication. Some teachers who are firm believers of this approach select good pieces of
writing out of learners’ portfolios and publish them in volumes which are usually put onto the
shelves of the school library at the end of term. The most positive aspects of this are increased
motivation and self-esteem. What start out as writing tasks become reading products which other
students make reference to and which can inspire other learners in future writing. The writing–
publishing nature of portfolios makes the reading–writing collaboration the key to understanding
the roles of writers.

The shifting trends in writing instruction that
came from research

Many of the current ideas for developing tasks for writing have been influenced by the research
which gained in momentum in the 1970s. With the increasing number of immigrants in America
came the need for serious research on composing behaviour and the nature of errors in
writing.

It was the intensity of research into syntax and the focus on the T-Unit (developed by Hunt, 1977)
that led researchers to believe that remediation can come from sentence-combining tasks. This
they believed would lead learners to be aware of and use clause subordination through over-learning
leading to automaticity. Writers of writing workbooks celebrated as they could offer various types
of sentence-combining tasks very easily – from two sentence combinations to twenty! – if they
wanted to, thus occupying precious space in writing workbooks and a reason to sell.

Likewise, the work of Odell (1977) on intellectual processes soon brought about an interest in
techniques for teaching processes that make writing ‘intellectually mature’. He showed writing
quality could improve when students were made aware of six processes. This provided workbook
writers and publishers an opportunity to expand the range of writing exercises. For instance, Odell showed how more mature writers tend to shift the ‘focus’ (indicated by the grammatical subject in a sentence) more often than basic writers do. Therefore, one possible way to help students write more maturely would be to encourage them to shift the focus in their writing more frequently.

**Materials for testing writing**

Traditionally, writing was evaluated discretely through multiple-choice tests that were particularly popular during the dominance of ALM. Discrete point tests are objective and easy to score and despite criticism are still in use (Crusan, 2002). Multiple-choice test items that evaluate test takers’ writing ability through indirect structure or written expression items are common in language proficiency tests like the Paper-based TOEFL. Indirect writing tests have long been criticized in writing assessment for their lack of validity (Huot, 1990; Cope et al., 2011). This has resulted in an interest in integrative writing tests that are able to measure learners’ actual use of their global writing ability and are more valid (McNamara, 1996). The drawback of the integrative method is its subjective scoring that reduces its reliability. The problem, however, can be reduced with the help of materials that provide raters with a set of evaluative criteria or scoring guides that help them avoid impressionistic and subjective judgments (Weigle, 2002). Numerous examples of such rating scales are available including the ESL Composition Profile ( Jacobs et al., 1981) that has been used by teachers and researchers for decades. Progress in computer technology has paved the way for automated essay scoring, offering an economical method for giving the learner extended feedback (Attali & Burstein, 2006) and reportedly can score as reliably as human raters (Attali & Powers, 2008). The problem, however, which still remains is ‘the absence both of a good standard to calibrate human marks and of a clear set of rules for selecting master texts’ (Valenti et al., 2003, p. 327).

Besides their subjective nature, writing tests have also been criticized for being summative (Cope et al., 2011). That is, learners are only given a score indicating their writing proficiency level rather than being told what their writing skill lacks and how they can improve it. To account for this, more recently, alternative methods (like portfolios) have been introduced to the ESL writing classroom. Portfolio assessment encourages continuous evaluation of student writers’ performance, allots a longer time and permits access to sources like dictionary and peer feedback to revise drafts before submitting the final work (Hamp-Lyons & Condon, 2000; Lee, 2006). The strength of this method is its formative feature that allows the teacher to diagnose learners’ particular areas of difficulty (Alderson, 2004).

Apart from the paradigm shifts regarding the type (from discrete to integrative) and purpose (from summative to formative), writing assessment has also experienced a change in the way test takers are instructed to produce the written work. As is the case in the more traditional ‘prompt-based’ writing tests, prompts or tasks stimulate a certain written response around a given topic. They include one or two sentences to set the scene and present the topic. Examples include the Tests of Written English (TWE) in Paper-based TOEFL or the Written Task 2 in IELTS Written Module. More recently, as an alternative to such tests, ‘source-based’ writing tests integrate writing with other skills like reading and listening by getting the test takers to read and/or listen to some texts on a related topic and then write in response to these source texts (Weigle, 2004). The
main intention is to provide test takers with the necessary background knowledge around which they can invent ideas. The writing section in the New Generation or Internet-based (IBT) TOEFL can be regarded as an example of source-based writing tests.

Writing teachers must be writers!

While learners have been the focus of researchers, there is an emerging trend that change and improvement in SL and FL writing situations must start with teachers. One of the 12 features outlined in Maxine Hairston’s (1982) summary of the Revolution in the Teaching of Writing is that writing teachers must be writers. This must only be logical as a teacher who does not know the constraints and limitations of writing cannot teach or facilitate effectively.

While there has been a lot of effort in the United States to continually involve writing teachers in professional development, training of teachers in SL and FL situations has been lacking. One programme which was started by Alan Maley, Jayakaran Mukundan and Tan Bee Tin is the Creative Writing Workshops run at least once a year somewhere in Asia. This group started in 2003 in Bangkok and has met regularly in Asia ever since. Every time the group meets facilitators scaffold techniques to start off poets and story writers. Then the writers write and with peers work on revisions. One day of the writing meet is dedicated to a trip that introduces the concept of travel writing where writing from close observation is encouraged. The most rewarding aspect of these workshops is that teacher-writers get to publish their work. To date there have been 10 volumes of creative writing published plus two books where the writing ideas have been documented.

One very interesting change in teachers who have come to these workshops is a new belief among them that if things worked for them then they will likewise work for their students. These teachers have effectively implemented creative writing programmes in their writing curriculums for their students.

Part two

Materials for writing – what is happening in practice?

The influence of some ELT methodologies on writing tasks

As reported in Part one, two of the English Language ELT methodologies that have played significant roles in the development of materials for teaching ESL writing are the ALM and the CALT. In the 1960s, the ALM was the dominant approach to teaching English as a second language. Since speech was given priority, teachers regarded writing only as a way to help learners speak better. The language theory on which the ALM was established was Structuralism, according to which language is a system that can be learned by mastering its rules. Writing materials, therefore, sought to reinforce the language structures that the students had just learned. Additionally, the ALM was based on the psychological principles of Behaviourism. Behaviourists perceived errors as bad habits which could become fossilized if they were not corrected immediately, so in speech,
MATERIALS FOR WRITING

repetition led to conditioning and correct use, in writing, memorization of texts and dictation reinforced the language taught.

The ALM gave birth to materials that promoted controlled writing tasks. Some common examples of tasks used in the ALM included:

1. transforming sentences (e.g. changing active to passive voice);
2. making sentences from a list of words;
3. putting sentences in the correct order to organize a paragraph;
4. substituting words (e.g. changing ‘we’ to ‘he’ in ‘We have a dog’); and
5. completing sentences (e.g. completing ‘He has a dog, but she . . . ’ in their own words).

As it can be observed, ALM activities typically had strictly controlled items that focused on accurate formal language usage. These types of tasks are language – or forms-focused rather than meaning-focused and emphasize accuracy over fluency (Nation, 2009). Activities of this type can still be found in teaching materials. For example, in *World Class (Level 1)* Harris and Mower (1994, p. 69) provide a paragraph with all the verbs in brackets. The student is supposed to fill in the blank spaces with the simple past form of the verbs to complete the paragraph.

In the 1980s, the CALT emerged with an emphasis on learning the language in meaningful contexts. This led to the use of authentic materials like newspapers and excerpts of texts from real life contexts, which could elicit more purposeful and original written works from the learner. Information gap and negotiation for meaning activities emerged which encouraged meaningful communication in the language classroom. In a negotiation for meaning activity, for example, the learners may be given three newspaper ads on renting an apartment. They work in pairs or small groups to decide which unit they would prefer to rent. Next, they write a letter to the owner to make an appointment to view the unit. Before completing the task, they may ask a partner to check their writing and make comments on it.

A wealth of materials are available today that manipulate real life materials, like newspaper headlines (Adrian-Vallance & Phillips, 1999, p. 21), book or movie reviews (Soars & Soars, 1998, p. 36), letters (Nolasco, 1994, p. 38). To offer an example, Purpura and Pinkley (2000) present an advertisement about a community centre which offers different courses on a variety of skills. The learners decide which course they want to study and then write a letter of inquiry to the community centre. Finally, they give and receive feedback to and from a partner considering the following four questions:

- Does the letter include all the parts of a formal letter of inquiry?
- Is it clear what the writer is asking for?
- Are the ideas ordered in a logical way?
- Is the language accurate?

Adapted from Purpura and Pinkley (2000, p. 10).

A comparison between this and ALM activities indicates while CALT materials focus primarily on the appropriacy and clarity of the content, ALM materials prioritize structural accuracy. A
The final characteristic of CALT writing activities is that they commonly use authentic materials (like newspaper or magazine articles). These materials can place the learners in real situations that they may experience in their future interactions in English. Because they are purposefully selected based on the learners’ needs, authentic materials can motivate the student. They can stimulate learners’ interest by manipulating real life and natural examples of the target language.

The influence of different schools of thought on writing instruction

Materials for teaching writing were also influenced by the proponents of the Expressive School. The Expressivists believed that students must be given the freedom to express themselves in writing. Their contention was that too much attention to the linguistic accuracy hinders learners’ fluency. Therefore, techniques were developed that advocated freewriting. Learners were taught to write their ideas fluently while minimally monitoring the language they used. It was believed revising a written piece, while writing, could interrupt the writer’s flow of thoughts. One of the most dominant Expressivists, Elbow (1973) introduced techniques for freewriting, including looping. Looping involves writing freely for a short time, reading and selecting the ‘center of gravity sentence’ (i.e. the most important idea) then using it as the topic of other pieces, which are also written freely by the learner. For example:

The first loop
This week has been one of those weeks when nothing goes right. I had an exam on Monday, but because we had a party the day before, I couldn’t study at all, so I failed the exam. I felt awful. On Tuesday, I lost my calculator in my math class. On Wednesday, I had an argument with my best friend, and the next day I had my mobile phone stolen. On my way to school on Friday, I fell off my bike and broke my arm. I will have to stay in the hospital for a week or so until my arm gets better. I’m so glad that at least I won’t be going to school next week.

The second loop
On Wednesday, I had an argument with my best friend. He wanted to borrow my mobile phone to play the game in it during the history class. I didn’t think it was a good idea and didn’t give him the phone, but he insisted and insisted. When I refused, he kicked me, but when I wanted to get back at him for it, the teacher saw me and sent me to the school office. My friend told her nothing, and I just had to leave the class. I felt miserable.

In this example, the underlined section in the first loop is the centre of gravity, which comprises the topic of the second loop. The centre of gravity in the second loop has also been underlined and can be the topic of the next loop, and in this way learners can continue choosing the centre of gravity sentences and keep looping. Of course, this technique does not always result in neat and cohesive paragraphs as in the example above. Redundancies, inaccuracies and disorganized ideas are to be tolerated and do not have to be monitored or corrected by the teacher. Indeed, the teacher has to be more ‘responsive’ than ‘authoritative’ (Murray, 1985).

Another school of thought was cognitivism. Cognitivists believed that learners’ writing performance improves when they are taught certain pre-writing, writing and post-writing strategies. For example, students do exercises that prepare them for writing which activate their background knowledge or the language resources they require while writing. Cubing, clustering and journalistic questions are some of the techniques used.
Cubing
As a pre-writing technique, cubing involves visualizing a three-dimensional block. On each side of the block, there is a question about the topic to which the student should provide an answer, for example:

Write about computers by answering the following questions.

1. How would you describe them?
2. How would you compare them?
3. How would you associate them?
4. How would you analyse them?
5. How would you apply them?
6. How would you argue for or against them?

Adapted from Reid (1993).

Such questions help students generate and organize ideas more quickly and successfully than when the teacher only asks them to write a paper about computers.

Clustering
Clustering means brainstorming and sketching a cluster diagram of ideas before writing about them. To offer an example, before directing the students to write on the advantages and disadvantages of formal and informal education, the teacher can direct them to complete the following activity:

Imagine that you have discussed the question at the centre of the diagram below. Read the notes that a student has made and complete the ideas with opposite answers.

In addition to providing support for the learners to invent and organize ideas, an activity like the preceding example can provide key words that they need to write about the topic.
Journalistic questions
Journalistic questions help learners invent ideas. They include questions that journalists often use as they seek to elicit information from their target subjects. As an example of journalistic questions, Nolasco (1993) gets the students to answer the following questions to write about agriculture in their country:

1. Is food grown on large farms or small farms?
2. How much work is done by hand?
3. Are animals or machines used to plow the fields?
4. Is farm work done by men or women?
5. Is the soil rich or poor?
6. Which crops or fruits are exported?
7. What food is imported?

Adapted from Nolasco (1993, p. 43).

Evidently, these questions will provide useful background and language knowledge for the learner to start writing about the topic. Learners will find completing such a task more practical than when they are faced with a prompt directing them to write about agriculture in their country. As the examples for cubing, clustering and journalistic questions illustrate, cognitivists believe in the major role of heuristics (learning through discovery and problem-solving methods) in students' writing.

The influence of product-, process- and genre-based approaches in ESL writing materials
Other noticeable trends in ESL writing have been the focus on form (product-based approach 1966–), focus on writer (process-based approach 1976–) and focus on reader or content (genre-based approach 1986–) (Raimes, 1996).

The product approach
Elementary level students usually went through materials with controlled writing activities (like putting words in the correct order to make sentences). Dictation was another familiar activity for these learners. In the case of upper level learners, timed compositions were very common. The learners were given a topic, wrote about it for a limited period and turned the composition in. The teacher read, marked and returned each paper the next session. As a result, except for books that consisted of some controlled writing activities, and books that provided the learner with sample essays, there were no materials developed for teaching writing. Learners at times would have no other choice but to memorize sample essays in order to prepare for their composition tests.
Dictation was another common type of writing activity in the product-oriented approach to the teaching of writing. A passage with an appropriate length and difficulty level would be read out slowly to students, who listened carefully and wrote it down. In addition to giving students practice in listening, dictation could teach the mechanics of writing (spelling, punctuation, capitalization) and reinforce vocabulary and grammar already learned. Another type of dictation that came somewhere between completely controlled and free composition was the Dicto-comp. In this technique, the teacher read out a passage at normal speed to the students, who wrote what they remembered in their own words, trying to keep to the original words as closely as they could. Dicto-comp exercises could serve different teaching goals, focusing on specific syntactic and/or rhetorical patterns (Kleinmann & Selekman, 2008).

The process approach
The advent of the process approach (Matsuda, 2003) shifted the focus to writers and what happened while they were writing. The approach promoted less controlled writing activities that gave the learners some sort of freedom to express themselves.

Textbooks that follow this approach often emphasize techniques like journal keeping. When students keep learning journals or logs, they are encouraged to write about their learning experiences in and/or out of class. This can help learners gain fluency by writing about topics that they like. Journals, or learning logs, are valuable tools as they give the students a chance to reflect on their own learning and enable the teacher to keep record of their learning progress.

The materials following a process-oriented approach also stress revising and editing. When they revise, students holistically check what they have written for its cohesion, coherence, etc. As they edit, their focus shifts to sentence level accuracy, adequate use of vocabulary and mechanics. Such techniques encourage learners to delay their focus on form until they have drafted and redrafted their ideas. This allows them to direct their attention more to the content during the writing process. That, in turn, helps them develop fluency.

The process approach also encourages pair and group work. As a result, peer review and teacher conferencing could also typically be observed in materials that follow this approach. Peer review helps learners develop audience awareness and be more sensitive to the reader (Rosenblatt, 1988). It is supported by social learning theory and empirical evidence concerning its effect on learners’ writing ability (Freedman, 1992; Berg, 1999; Nelson & Carson, 2006). It is important that the learners know what to do and are provided with checklists that show the specific dimensions of the writing skill that should be considered during the peer review (Campbell, 1998). Teacher conferencing is another technique that is empirically known to be beneficial in helping learners develop their writing skills (Ferris, 2002; Hansen & Liu, 2005; Mukundan & Nimehchisalem, 2011). It is ‘a face-to-face conversation between the teacher and the student, usually outside the boundaries of the classroom’ (Reid, 1993, p. 220). Conferencing is a valuable technique in that it gives a chance for unconfident and shy learners to discuss their writing problems individually with their teacher. It is also an opportunity for the teacher to diagnose learners’ particular areas of difficulty, give feedback, provide support and help them improve their writing skill.

The use of portfolios is also common in materials that teach writing following the process approach. It aims at encouraging the learners to collect their written pieces purposefully. Keeping
a record of their own writing helps the learners understand their specific problems, solutions and progress in learning writing. Thus, portfolios can be manipulated both as learning and as assessment tools. According to Richards and Schmidt (2002, pp. 406–7) some of the main characteristics of portfolios include:

1 The learner is involved in deciding what to include in the portfolio.
2 The learner may revise the material in the portfolio after feedback from the teacher or others.
3 The learner is required to assess or reflect on the work in the portfolio, thus becoming aware of personal development.

As an example, the authors encourage their degree TESL students to keep a portfolio of their own writing, as a semester project. The learners are given topics to write about. They plan, draft, get peer feedback as well as tutor conferencing, and edit their written work. The learners also turn in a self-evaluation essay that describes the processes their writing went through, the problems they faced while doing their assignment and the way they solved these problems. At the end of each semester, the top ten stories are ‘published’ and put in the library where they are available for those interested in reading them.

**The genre-based approach**
The genre-based approach (Hyland, 2003) advocates scaffolding the students’ learning by providing models that illustrate the unique characteristics of different types of texts. The learners analyse these texts to familiarize themselves with their features. Genre-based materials seek to teach the learners how, for instance, an argumentative essay differs from a descriptive report.

For example, in *On Target 2*, Purpura and Pinkley (2000, pp. 92–4) teach descriptive paragraphs as follows:

1 Students read a description of a famous museum.
2 They figure out the meaning of some vocabulary items used in the passage.
3 They further analyse the way in which the description of the museum is organized.
4 A short paragraph explicitly presents the organization of main ideas and specific details in a descriptive paragraph.
5 Students read a sample paragraph describing a room and answer 4 questions on its organization, controlling idea, specific details and the purpose of its concluding sentence.
6 They brainstorm a list of places that have been important in their life.
7 They also brainstorm the specific details that will help them create a vivid picture of the place and decide on the sequence of their presentation.
8 They start writing a topic sentence presenting the controlling idea.
9 They write the whole paragraph.
They exchange paragraphs with a partner and provide feedback on the main features of a descriptive paragraph (controlling idea, details, organization and clarity of ideas).

As this example shows, the typical genre-based lesson consists of setting a context, providing a text as a model, analysing the model, getting students to construct a similar text and then make links between it and related texts (Atkinson, 2003).

**Present and future trends**

Today a variety of materials are available for teaching ESL writing in commercial or Ministry of Education coursebooks. There are also textbooks that are published with the intention of preparing the learner for a particular proficiency or university entrance test. These books are used for coaching learners to score high in tests like the International English Language Testing System (IELTS), Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). Other, genre-based, materials are also available for teaching writing in universities. Their objective is empowering the students to write in their related discourse communities, to write, for example, a successful report or a journal article.

The different purposes, for which each type of the above-mentioned materials has been designed, commonly result in very different outcomes. Mukundan and Nimechisalem (2011) compared the writing activities in two textbooks. The first textbook was *English Form 4* published by the Ministry of Education Malaysia (2003), and the second was a commercial textbook, called *Top Notch 3* by Saslow and Ascher (2006). While the two books had been published for intermediate level learners, the results of the qualitative analysis showed that they adhered to different loads and types of writing activities. It was found that *English Form 4* attempted too much and was expected to overload the target learners. *Top Notch* activities, on the other hand, seemed more practical and suitable for the level of the learners. This may be the case because *English Form 4* represents a textbook published in an exam-oriented society like Malaysia, where the student learns to score high in tests like the Malaysian University English Test (MUET).

There are also materials that seek to move away from traditional task-types. The available multimedia and educational software have provided an invaluable tool for learners to publish their own materials. For example, instructing students to develop film scripts for their own short video clips on a topic like ‘jealousy’ or ‘my family’ will motivate them to do a number of pre-writing, writing and post-writing activities in a purposeful and natural way. Some of the products of such writing activities are available in Youtube (e.g. www.youtube.com/watch?v=oo8LbydmoOc&feature=related). Such activities show how educational technology can serve as a valuable tool for language learners in improving their writing skills.

**Conclusion**

There are a number of points that need to be be taken seriously. First is the matter of context. It is not wise to stick to one particular approach regardless of the teaching situation. When it comes to
serious decisions like the choice of a suitable approach in the light of a certain teaching situation, it is important not to overgeneralize the findings of research conducted in developed countries to other learning–teaching contexts (Mukundan, 2011).

The second important point is raising English language teachers’ awareness of the various approaches to teaching ESL writing. Teachers should be warned about the dangers of using the wrong materials for a particular group of learners, thus disregarding their specific needs. For example, teaching basic student writers to be observant of their lexicogrammatical mistakes before teaching them useful invention techniques (like cubing, outlining or clustering) is like teaching people to run before they have learned to walk. A related matter is that insisting on a specific technique, which the learner finds hard to put into practice, can lead to equally undesirable consequences. Campbell (1998) tells us about the way her school teachers persisted in encouraging their students always to outline their ideas before writing compositions even though students like her found the technique more confusing than helpful. This accentuates the significance of teachers’ focus on their learners’ personal needs and learning preferences.

A final issue is the subject matter of culture. Before making decisions on the best approach or materials for teaching ESL writing, it is worth considering whether the learners are culturally prepared to appreciate them:

Concepts such as total independence, total freedom, assertiveness, and self-initiated directions towards goals are alien in cultures like those in developing countries in Asia, where the young are taught to be obedient and show respect for teachers. These learners are brought up trusting the teacher and the book in the classroom as these are integral parts of their culture. (Mukundan, 2011, p. 187)

The target learners’ cultural background can, therefore, have considerable implications for educational policy makers. This is particularly true of Malaysia where recently native English speaking teachers have been recruited to train and assist Malaysian school English teachers. It is definitely the native teachers that need the local teachers’ guidance in dealing with the Malaysian students. Using new teaching approaches, especially in the case of older learners who are used to the conventional teaching methods, may not lead to promising outcomes.

A particular approach, technique or material that perfectly matches the needs of students in a certain context may mismatch other students’ needs in a different learning–teaching context due to variations in the learners’ age, culture, interest, etc. Therefore, it is best to approach the materials developed for teaching ESL writing cautiously and only after gaining a clear picture of the needs and interests of the target students.

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Teaching speaking in a second language

Anne Burns and David A. Hill

Part one

Introduction

Recently, teaching speaking has assumed new importance, as educational policymakers internationally have placed greater focus on spoken language skills. Several factors motivate this development. The growth of English as a global language has highlighted the importance of learners emerging from formal learning with the ability to interact effectively with other English users, the majority of whom are not native speakers (NS). English is seen to further international opportunities in politics, education, business, finance and intercultural connections. Many learners look to further studies overseas where English is the medium of instruction, where they will need to communicate orally, as well as through academic writing.

In many countries too, policymakers are advocating that subject areas be taught through English and not the national language. Technology and large-scale international travel have massively accelerated global international contact. Thus, many learners need English for employment purposes, as a lingua franca with international clients, colleagues or travellers. In such circumstances, the ELT field is now challenged as never before to ensure teachers have good professional knowledge of the skills involved in spoken communication, and of current ideas about teaching speaking effectively.

What we know about speaking

Quite a lot is now known about the nature of speaking. In broad terms, this knowledge can be described as process-oriented and product-oriented.
Speaking as process

A cognitive process
Speaking is a complex mental process combining various cognitive skills, virtually simultaneously, and drawing on working memory of words and concepts, while self-monitoring. When preparing speaking activities, teachers need to be aware of three important cognitive processes (Levelt, 1989):

1 Conceptualization: speakers need the capacity to select content and ideas for oral production, drawing on sensory imaging and inner speech (Tomlinson, 2000). Content may involve initiating a topic, or selecting ideas for continuing a topic with other speakers. Speakers need awareness of what kind of spoken interaction they are engaged in (e.g. story, description, request) to select language culturally and socially relevant to the context. In short, learners need sufficient content and background knowledge to be able to say things.

2 Formulation: speakers need to be able to express content. They must know lexicogrammatical structures and be able to string them together cohesively, selecting from their mental lexicon and from their knowledge of grammar. They also need knowledge of how spoken genres unfold in logical sequences. Learners must have enough linguistic knowledge to express intended meaning.

3 Articulation: speakers also need to be able to articulate their selected ideas and expressions. Articulation is a physical process involving appropriate use of mouth, teeth and tongue, but it is closely linked to memory, and to conceptualization and formulation. Competent speakers have learned to automatize pronunciation; so they are adept at stressing various sounds to draw attention to meaning. Learners usually have to work hard to produce certain sounds consciously, and to learn how stress and meaning combine in English.

An affective process
Cognitive processing demands can create nervousness or embarrassment for learners. It is important that teachers become aware of the pressures of speaking and develop strategies to minimize anxiety.

Teachers often worry about learners’ reluctance to speak. Reluctance is typically interpreted as lack of motivation but there are several emotional or psychological factors which may cause learner resistance, including the following:

1 Spontaneous speaking involves little time to prepare, which increases both processing and production pressures. It follows that learners may need silent thinking time for some activities before being required to produce responses.

2 Any speaking situation can produce feelings of tension, apprehension, nervousness and anxiety. For learners, without advanced command of the language, speaking in class becomes stressful, bound up with self-esteem, inhibition and risk-taking (Brown, 1993).
3 Personality traits can affect willingness to speak (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991). Some individuals are shy, or more anxious than others. Learners who are anxiety-prone tend to resist speaking, especially in whole-class situations.

4 Language anxiety (Horwitz et al., 1986) can arise from personal or social pressure. Under personal pressure learners may evaluate themselves too negatively, so that they produce only a restricted version of their real capabilities. Social pressure comes from being overconscious of how others may evaluate performance, and fear of mockery or loss of face.

5 There may be gender differences in willingness to speak. According to Zhang (2001), male learners can experience greater anxiety when they have to speak English both in and out of class.

It is useful for teachers to identify whether their planned activities have psychological implications that could cause students to be reluctant to speak, rather than dismissing learner reluctance as ‘lack of motivation’.

**Speaking as product**

*Pronunciation*

A foundational aspect of speaking a language is being able to produce the sound patterns instrumental in contributing to meaning and intelligibility. Paralinguistic features (eye movement, gesture and facial expression) are also implicated in speaking and often parallel sound patterns (Burns & Seidlhofer, 2010). In a stress-timed language like English, it is important for teachers to focus on pronunciation instruction at both segmental and suprasegmental levels, especially for beginners.

Segmental features are sound elements at the micro or phonological level – single vowel and consonant sounds or their combinations (e.g. c-a-t as in cat; pl as in please). Learners may struggle with differences between pairs of sounds (bit/beat), which can impede meaning. They need opportunities to practise problem sounds, which may come from interference from their other language(s) (e.g. b for w; l for r), and notice how these sounds are used by competent speakers.

Suprasegmental elements highlight ‘what knowledge speakers [think they] share about the world, [and] about each other’s experiences, attitudes and emotions’ (Brazil et al., 1980, p. 15). Among these are tone units (chunking information into ‘sense groups’), which package information and signal how listeners should process and interpret messages (Burns & Seidlhofer, 2010). Spoken chunks utilize pitch movement (the way speakers voices go up and down to convey the message). In addition, prominence is given to certain syllables to highlight what is important in the content. Speakers’ voices rise or fall; for example, interrogative forms are typically accompanied by a rising tone to indicate that the speaker is asking a question, while a falling tone can reflect the end of a speaker’s turn and signal an opportunity for others to speak.

Typically, much classroom instruction has focused on producing sounds at segmental level. However, there is growing evidence (e.g. Brazil, 1997; McCarthy, 1998) that suprasegmental patterns (intonation) are more important in conveying meaning. More recently, Jenkins (2000) proposed, controversially, that pronunciation teaching should move away from NS models and focus more on what non-native speakers (NNS) of English as a lingua franca (ELF) need for
comprehensibility. Drawing on analysis of learner English, she suggests a syllabus based on a ‘pronunciation core’ of sounds problematic for learners. Whatever approach is taken, effective speaking classes should provide activities to help learners work on sound, stress and intonation patterns as these relate to their needs and aspirations outside the classroom.

**Language system**

Significant recent advances in technology have made it possible for linguists to collect large quantities of both formal and informal spoken language. Spoken discourse analysis has resulted in substantial insights into the nature of spoken language and its grammatical features. One major insight is that past tendencies to base the teaching of speaking on written language models is no longer productive. As McCarthy and Carter (1997, p. 338) note:

> Whatever else may be the result of imaginative methodologies for eliciting spoken language in the L2 classroom, there can be little hope for natural spoken output on the part of language learners if the input is stubbornly rooted in models that owe their origin and shape to the written language.

Spoken language is highly dynamic, interactive and processed in real time. Written language, in contrast, can be planned and redrafted without a physical recipient being present. Consequently, spoken grammatical features differ notably from written forms. Consider this exchange between two acquaintances at a teacher education conference:

1. A: hi Ian good to see you
2. B: oh hi Kumiko . . . ages since I saw you last, must have been at that conference and we 3 did a presentation together and . . . so we had a kind of panel thingy on the stage that . . .
3. A: yeah, that was really good, that conference . . . and with Kyomi, Toshio . . . and . . . er . . .
4. B: yeah, and Masako . . . yeah that was real fun . . . always remember that, was great
5. working with you . . .
6. A: me too . . . you going to be here the whole time
7. B: yeah, leaving on Saturday . . . how about you
8. A: no staying on with colleagues over there
9. B: okay, let’s catch up at coffee break
10. A: great

(author’s data)

Here, we see several grammatical and lexical features typical of speech. First, the speakers take turns, building on each other’s utterances to maintain the conversational flow. They achieve continuity by adding information, using conjunctions (and, so) and completing and extending (and Masako) each other’s turns. Feedback in the form of backchannels (yeah, mmm, great) confirm
that speakers-listeners are on track and in tune with the meaning. Certain kinds of turns produce
certain kinds of responses (e.g. greeting – greeting lines 1–2; question – answer, lines 7–8); such
turns are known as adjacency pairs. Because they possess past and current contextual knowledge,
the speakers can refer to shared information (‘that conference’, ‘colleagues over there’) without
having to spell out phenomena explicitly.

The shared context and need for fluent interaction lead speakers to use features like ellipsis,
where elements of grammatical structure are omitted (e.g. ‘ages since I saw you last’, ‘leaving on
Saturday’). Another feature of spoken grammar is where emphasis is given to certain significant
information – ‘yeah, that was really good, that conference’. The expression ‘that conference’ is
an example of a tail, but its counterpart, a head, is also common in speech – for example, ‘that
conference it was really good, that was’. Speakers may not have time to recall exact lexis, so lack
of precision is common, as in ‘panel thingy’. Also, vague language is often employed to avoid
sounding pedantic or appearing overly convinced or committed to one’s propositions, so ‘stuff’,
‘thing’, ‘whatsit’, and so on pervade speech, especially in highly interactive casual conversation.
Other distinctive features of speech are summarized in Table 15.1.

Since many learners, especially more advanced learners, aspire to negotiate quite complex
exchanges outside class, it is important to draw their attention to features of natural speech and
give them practise for different contexts. A persistent problem with many coursebook materials
is that the dialogues presented rarely include such features and thus learners are deprived of
opportunities to practise listening to and producing more naturalistic spoken interaction.

**Genres of speaking**

Considerable work has emerged on genres of speaking (e.g. Burns & de Silva Joyce, 1996;
Carter & McCarthy, 1998; Thornbury & Slade, 2006). Spoken genres are stretches of text which
are purposeful, orient towards achieving social goals and show relatively predictable sequences.
Speakers from similar cultural backgrounds can recognize and respond to an unfolding spoken text, because they assume certain stages of a genre will be present.

Humans are socially oriented individuals and many daily interactions involve ‘story-telling’ genres to exchange personal experiences, feelings and perceptions. Thornbury and Slade (2006, p. 152) identify four major storytelling genres: narrative (facing/resolving problematic experiences), anecdote (experiencing remarkable events), exemplum (highlighting moral points), recount (experiencing sequences of events). Each has a predictable ‘macro-structure’, making it recognizable as that particular genre. For example, the macrostructure of recount is (Abstract)^Orientation^Record of Events^(Reorientation); parenthesis indicates an optional structural element and ^ shows sequence. The speaker may initiate the recount with a signalling comment or Abstract (guess what happened to me last week), before providing an Orientation (who, what, when, where, why) to the circumstances. Next comes the Record of Events, consecutively, at which point the recount may stop or be rounded off by an evaluative Reorientation (gee, that was amazing), leading to continuation of the interaction. In casual talk, speakers typically reciprocate by following one storytelling with another to build up social relationships.

To increase skills and knowledge, learners need to develop abilities in both the processes and products of speaking, while simultaneously improving fluency and accuracy and becoming aware of cross-cultural issues, such as how particular settings and relationships affect linguistic choices that facilitate communication.

**What we think we know about teaching speaking**

One major question is how speaking processes, skills and products can most effectively be transposed into pedagogical practice. Three major language learning theories can be said to have motivated speaking instruction: behaviourist, cognitivist and sociocultural. The audiolingual approach, for example, assumed a learning sequence from the so-called passive skill of listening to the productive skill of speaking. Learners were discouraged from using written forms until spoken skills were mastered. Teaching speaking at this time relied on behaviourist notions of ‘habit formation’ – good language ‘habits’ were gained by practising the same structures repeatedly (Cook, 2008). An extension of the audiolingual approach which was (and still is) widely advocated is the presentation, practice, production (PPP) sequence. Learners are first introduced to situations and language models, for example, by listening to a recording or to the teacher reading a short dialogue (Presentation). The Practice stage involves controlled exercises focusing on and imitating the target structure, through drills, substitution activities, repetitions or matching exercises. Finally, learners perform model structures in a freer way through practising the dialogue together or doing a role play.

Various criticisms have been levelled against PPP, including its fixed sequence of learning, teacher-centredness and linearity, controlled introduction of language structures, and limited focus on communication (e.g. Willis, 1996; Harmer, 1998). Second language acquisition (SLA) research from a cognitivist (mental processing) perspective, contested behaviourist notions of learning, drawing attention to the synthetic and multidirectional nature of learning where learners utilize several mental systems simultaneously, depending on readiness to learn. Thornbury (2006, p. 38) suggests that a cognitivist model of learning proceeds from awareness-raising to proceduralization.
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to autonomy. Awareness-raising emphasizes gaining knowledge of language system patterns, either by focusing explicitly on rules or by deducing the rule through examining its use in speaking. The aim is for learners to acquire greater automaticity, which will then lead to greater independence in language performance.

A model drawing on cognitivist theory is Harmer’s Engage, Study, Activate (1998). The Engage phase involves arousing learners’ interests, curiosity and emotions towards the topic to attract attention and motivate them. Study draws attention to language construction, be it pronunciation, language structure or longer spoken texts patterns. Finally, Activate focuses on learners using the language communicatively, drawing on whatever knowledge and skills they have. Cognitively motivated learning is also inherent in task-based approaches, where the ultimate aim is learners’ independent communicative performance of skills needed to complete a task successfully. Tasks envisaged are those found outside classrooms, such as ordering meals, determining alternative courses of action or socializing with friends.

Sociocultural learning models embed learning in social and cultural interaction. Learning is seen as constructed through social mediation, that is novice learners are ‘apprenticed’ or ‘scaffolded’ (Wood et al., 1976) into learning by more knowledgeable others. Learning assistance from others is a social apprenticeship (Wells, 1992, p. 291) that progresses gradually from fully supported to collaboratively constructed to individually performed. The zone of proximal development (ZPD) (Vygotsky, 1978) or the ‘cognitive gap’ between what a learner can do alone and what they can do with support from expert others (Gibbons, 2006, p. 26) is a central concept. The teacher’s role becomes one of actively creating, through finely tuned pedagogical discourses, shared understanding of spoken language that will support learners’ successful performance. As Gibbons (p. 68) says, ‘the notion of the ZPD reminds us that learning needs to be geared to ESL [learners’] potential learning, not simply their actual level of development (of English)’.

Socioculturally motivated models include genre, discourse and text-based approaches (e.g. Feez, 1998; McCarthy, 1998; de Silva Joyce & Burns, 1999). They differ from task-based models in that they view products of speaking as starting rather than finishing points. Moreover, textual products of speaking are seen as embedded in social and cultural contexts and the functional purposes of spoken interaction within those contexts. One example of a sociocultural approach comes from McCarthy and Carter (1995) who suggest a sequence of language awareness activities (e.g. promoting awareness of how spoken interaction works in different contexts), consciousness-raising activities (e.g. analysing the use of discourse feature and grammatical structure from text samples) and learner observation activities (e.g. formulating and comprehending rules for language use). Another sequence (Silva Joyce & Burns, 1999) involves preparation activities (focusing attention on social contexts of use and previous experiences of using different spoken genres), discourse activities (identifying, modelling and practising stages and features of spoken genres, turn-taking, listener and speaker roles and discourse features/strategies), language activities (focusing attention on spoken grammar and vocabulary) and interaction activities (moving towards independent production of sustained interactions) (see Burns, 2006 for specific examples of activities).

Currently, these various learning models underpin most teaching approaches (see Goh & Burns, 2012). Despite differences in orientation, there does seem to be some consensus on what key phases constitute effective speaking instruction (Thornbury, 2006): awareness where learners must come into contact with new knowledge; appropriation, where new knowledge becomes
incorporated into existing knowledge; and autonomy where skills become automated and learners move towards greater independence.

**What we need to find out about teaching speaking**

Although substantial developments have occurred in our knowledge of where to derive models for speaking and speaking instruction, much remains for further investigation. We highlight two key areas here.

**Which grammar?**

Analysis of large corpora of spoken text (e.g. Biber et al., 1999; O’Keeffe et al., 2007) has contributed extensively to insights into how naturalistic spoken language is realized grammatically. What is very clear is that spoken language is not simply an oral version of written language, even though it is equally clear that they overlap in complex and highly interrelated ways. Since written grammar has traditionally dominated materials for speaking instruction, the ELT profession is now faced with a profound dilemma. Clearly, it would be doing learners of English a disservice to continue to expose them to language forms that will not advance naturalistic speaking development. McCarthy and Carter (2001) note that one difficulty in developing grammars of speaking is determining the core units. Unlike in writing where the sentence is the basic unit, speaking is more problematic, as turns often consist of phrases or incomplete clauses. Given that speaking involves joint interaction, deciding on a core unit becomes even more challenging. Another difficulty is that spoken language is highly contextualized and speaker-sensitive, leading to considerable tentativeness, indirectness and inconsistency in features such as tense choice. Speakers also vary in where they position grammatical elements in a clause, as in the examples of heads and tails shown earlier. Various apparent irregularities also occur, such as frequent use of double negatives (‘it wasn’t that good I don’t think’) or non-standard forms (‘where’s you all going then’). Clearly, given such challenges, it could be some time before spoken language is codified for language teaching purposes to anywhere near the same extent as written language.

**Which speaker norms?**

Given that English is now recognized as a global language, another important question relates to which speaker targets and norms should provide the basis for instruction. The NS as the target is increasingly under criticism, with calls being made for perspectives that recognize global variety and diversity. In relation to NS norms, various questions can be raised. Does NS mean American or British – what about Australian, Canadian or South African? Moreover, for each of these varieties, which NS dialect or pronunciation should be privileged? Are NSs ‘incorrect’ if their phonological, grammatical and lexical variations do not conform to a particular standard? Can competent speakers in non-English-speaking regions be models for speaking instruction. These questions are highly contentious and likely to be the subject of much future research and debate in relation to teaching speaking (e.g. Seidlhofer, 2011).
Part two

Teaching speaking: Current textbook practice

Introduction

In order to examine what is going on in relation to the teaching of speaking in contemporary textbooks, we are taking three international coursebooks which span the first decade of the twenty-first century: Inside Out (Macmillan, 2000), face2face (CUP, 2006) and Outcomes (Heinle, 2010). We will look at the intermediate level books of each course in order to see how far the issues raised in Part one are reflected in current practice.

The main areas of focus are:

- how far do speaking activities reflect the changing nature of English as a global language, and the fact that most interactions in English in the world today are not between NS?
- how much concern is shown for the cognitive and affective elements which impinge upon speaking?
- how is the learning of pronunciation at segmental and suprasegmental levels catered for?
- how much attention is paid to the true nature of spoken English, as opposed to basing practice on written models?
- does a behaviourist, cognitivist or sociocultural theory of language learning dominate?

Brave new words: Our theory and methodology

The first place to look to see what the authors intend to do in their coursebook is in the introduction to the Teacher’s Book, where they lay out their wares.

Inside out teacher’s book

The authors seem to be very aware of the nature of spoken English, stating on the first page that ‘in most situations you move back and forth fairly freely between (speaking and listening). . . . People interrupt each other, or even talk at the same time. Words blur together. Some people have novel accents. As a result, students fi nd much of what happens in a natural conversation difficult to deal with’ (p. 3). Later, under the heading of Personalized speaking tasks, they say that ‘the main purpose is to develop fl uency. . . . Most of them encourage students to talk about things that matter to them, rather than playing roles or exchanging invented information. Personalized, authentic tasks challenge and engage students and this encourages linguistic “risk taking”’ (p. 4). They also include something which they call Anecdotes, explaining that ‘There are also extended speaking tasks, where students tackle a longer piece of discourse. We’ve
called these “anecdotes.” They are based on personal issues, for instance, memories, stories, people you know. . . . Anecdotes give students a chance to get to grips with how discourse is organized’ (p. 4). Under the heading Varied listening work, they tell us that ’The listenings include . . . . authentic recordings. . . . There is a variety of English accents – British, American, Irish, Australian, etc – and some examples of non-native speakers’ (p. 4). The authors would appear to have understood the nature of natural speech, and to want to offer activities which will help learners to work towards it. Key elements emphasized are the nature of authentic speech, the personalization of talk, the importance of risk-taking and the need to practice longer pieces of discourse. However, elsewhere, they discuss the need for planning for these ‘anecdotes’, stating (with no citation) that ‘Research, by Peter Skehan among others, has shown that learners who plan for tasks attempt more ambitious language, hesitate less and make fewer basic errors’ (p. 4). This seems to sit at odds with the idea of spontaneity and risk-taking. Planning time is precisely what one does not have in interactive speech. There seems to be some attention to the importance of global English, with the varieties of native speaker accents included in the Student’s Book, and also some NNS, which is a positive step. There is no mention of pronunciation in this introduction.

**face2face teacher’s book**

In their general overview, the authors tell us that ‘there are numerous opportunities for communicative, personalized speaking practice . . . (with) . . . lessons in each unit (that) focus on the functional and situational language students need for day-to-day life’ (p. 4) Later, under the Speaking heading, they tell us that there are ‘numerous speaking opportunities. Many of these focus on accuracy, while the fluency activities help students to gain confidence, take risks and try out what they have learned. For fluency activities to be truly “fluent,” however, students often need time to formulate their ideas before they speak, and this preparation is incorporated . . . ’ (p. 5). Under the heading of Pronunciation, they also assure us that ‘Pronunciation is integrated throughout. . . . (with) . . . drills (which) focus on sentence stress, weak forms, intonation and other phonological features’ (p. 5). As with Inside Out, the authors of face2face seem to favour the preparation-before-risk taking approach to speaking, which does not match with real world experiences. There seems to be some overt recognition of the importance of pronunciation up front, focusing on a range of important features. Like the Inside Out authors, they also mention the importance of ‘personalization’ in speaking.

**Outcomes teacher’s book**

Under a heading called Developing conversations, we are told that ‘The sections teach typical questions, responses and patterns common to conversation. An explanation clarifies the focus while exercises give controlled practice’ (p. 4). This is followed by Conversation practice where ‘A task lets students practice social and practical conversations based on their own experience or through role-play’ (p. 4). And under Speaking we are told that, ‘These sections give students the chance to exchange ideas. The final speaking task in each unit is a variety of longer tasks that draw the language and/or themes of the unit together’ (p. 4). Under the heading Vocabulary, the
authors say that, ‘Vocabulary is carefully chosen to enable students to talk about the topic in the context of English as a lingua franca’ (p. 4). Later they say that, ‘We all know from experience and research that people learn a new language when they are struggling to express something and the “correct” or better word is given. This is also why we have lots of speaking activities. They are not just opportunities for students to practice what they know, they are chances for them to try and say something new; stretch themselves and make mistakes . . . ’ (p. 6). They stress under their Key Goals heading that they are following overall goals laid out in the Common European Framework (CEF), citing paragraphs 1.1 and 1.2: ‘to deal with the business of everyday life in another country, and to help foreigners staying in their own country to do so; to exchange information and ideas with young people and adults who speak a different language and to communicate their thoughts and feelings to them’ (p. 5).

As with the other two courses, the Outcomes authors seem to want to follow the PPP behaviourist model mentioned in Part one, ensuring students have plenty of controlled practice (or preparation) before attempting to speak ‘productively’. What is different about the things they say is the mention of ELF and the reference to the CEF goals. (The authors quote from page 3 of the Council of Europe’s Common European Framework of Reference, saying that language learning and teaching goals should be: 1.1. to deal with the business of everyday life in another country, and help foreigners staying in their own country to do so; 1.2. to exchange information and ideas with young people and adults who speak a different language and to communicate their thoughts and feelings to them; 1.3. to achieve a wider and deeper understanding of the way of life and forms of thought of other peoples and of their cultural heritage.) Both of these move the book closer to the world of English as a global language, although the methodology is apparently still rooted in the behaviourist approach. There is no mention of specific pronunciation activities, or an approach to pronunciation in general.

**What actually goes on in the student’s book?**

**How far do speaking activities reflect the changing nature of English as a global language, and the fact that most interactions in English in the world today are not between two NS?**

**Inside out**
There is a cast of international people to talk about (e.g. Unit 1 Mick Jagger, Claudia Schiffer, Yoko Ono, Arantxa Sanchez Vicario, Bob Marley, Ronaldo). Some dialogues include different NS of English, and occasionally a NNS. In general it is very white-British/American.

**face2face**
There seems to be little attempt at any global focus. There are a few non-white, non-British/American type characters, but their impact is minimal and their purpose is not for exploration of communication between different speakers of English. Little that happens in the book seems to take place outside Britain and most of the interaction is between white NS.
Outcomes
There are rather more non-white-British/American characters evident in photos, and situations are set elsewhere to a greater extent in this book. However, conversations do not really reflect any global contexts.

How much concern is shown for the cognitive and affective elements which impinge upon speaking?

Inside out
There is one overt mention of how to deal with a topic where negative affective issues might be encountered. Unit 3 is called Dating and the TB has a note saying: ‘if dating is too sensitive a theme in your students’ culture to allow them to discuss it comfortably, most of the exercises can be changed to talk about how to meet and make friends rather than life partners’. In general, the authors seem to imagine that the progressive build-up to speaking activities will be sufficient to allay any anxiety, nervousness, shyness, etc. Also, many of the topics for discussion are ‘western’, and students from many societies around the world might not be used to discussing them, however there is no other advice as for the Dating unit when these occur. From the cognitive point of view, everything is very heavily guided by the authors, with various types of grammar, lexical and skills activities. There is little opportunity for students to select what they want to say or talk about.

face2face
There is nothing overt here to help students, either cognitively or affectively, unless one counts the inexorable build-up of reading, writing, listening and vocabulary exercises through each unit. Is this really cognitive scaffolding?

Outcomes
The cognitive side is catered for as far as it is in the other two courses, but there is no real overt help with the affective issues that might affect students. We will exemplify the points raised here with reference to the first activity in Unit 09 of Outcomes, as it is typical of all three courses, although the order of activities and number of exercises of different types naturally varies from course to course.

The Unit Overview in the Teacher’s Book states: The main aims of this unit are to enable students to talk about where people live and to describe flats, houses and areas. The main grammar area is comparative forms and comparing the past with now. Students also learn how to add emphasis and ask about rules.

The SB starts off with Vocabulary, asking students to use a list of 12 words (e.g. ‘a courtyard’, ‘a garage’, ‘a swimming pool’, ‘a patio’ . . .) to describe a cutaway drawing of a block of flats with three different sets of people living in it – an arguing couple with a child and messy flat, old man with armchairs and open fire, a young woman watering flowers on a roof patio with a trendy artistic flat. Our feeling is that some students may be reluctant to talk about where and how they live, because they are embarrassed by their home situations, both the property itself, and the

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district they live in, and maybe a picture which includes a variety of lifestyles like this one does can help to reduce potential tension.

Students are then asked to use certain adjectives encountered in phrases (e.g. ‘cramped’, ‘conveniently located’, ‘affordable’, ‘spacious’) about places they have lived or currently live in. There are no suggestions in the Teacher’s Book about helping students to talk about these things, for example, suggesting they keep to neutral features, such as ‘conveniently located’. Using words like ‘newly built’, ‘run down’, ‘affordable’ automatically put them into potentially difficult affective areas.

**How is the learning of pronunciation at segmental and suprasegmental levels catered for?**

**Inside out**

There is a little work on individual sounds (e.g. minimal pairs), word stress in sentences, stress timing, short vowel sounds, pure vowel sounds, /s/ + /z/, /θ/ + /ð/, vowel sounds. Some of these exercises involve knowing phonetic symbols. It is all segmental.

**face2face**

Topics such as strong and weak forms are dealt with from time to time, the difference between British and American accents is also dealt with once. However, sentence stress is dealt with in every unit at least once in the target constructions, and the syllable stress in all new words is indicated. It is unusual to see such systematicity in these areas. Also in many of the dialogue recording scripts in the back of the Student’s Book, word and sentence stress is indicated (with dots over the words), weak forms are written phonetically and interword connectivity is shown. This is a welcome and unusual feature. But does simply drawing learners’ attention to such features actually facilitate acquisition of the features?

**Outcomes**

There is regular, if limited, pronunciation work on topics such as: sentence stress and intonation, connected speech, vowel sounds, consonant sounds, emphatic auxiliaries, diphthongs, abbreviations, question tags. The stress and intonation theme shows up several times for different kinds of utterances. It is hardly systematic, though it does have a mixture of segmental and suprasegmental work.

**How much attention is paid to the true nature of spoken English, as opposed to basing practice on written models?**

**Inside out**

The model dialogues still read like written English. There are no overlaps, false starts, repeats, etc., although there is usually a lot of colloquial and informal English and some ellipsis, for example:
Rose: What do you think of Jake?
Meg: He’s all right.
Rose: You don’t like him, do you?
Meg: Well, he wasn’t exactly friendly.
Rose: Oh, he’s just a bit shy, that’s all.
Meg: Shy? You must be joking. Five minutes after meeting me he asked me to buy him a drink! That’s not what I call shy!
Rose: OK, that was a bit cheeky, but he’s broke.
Meg: Huh. I’m not particularly well-off myself and I’m trying to save up for my holiday.
Rose: All right, all right. I’ll pay you back. He’s not bad-looking, though, is he?
Meg: No, I suppose not – but he knows it. I think he’s really big-headed.
Rose: You’re just jealous.
Meg: No, I’m not. I don’t want him. He’s mean, big-headed and stupid.
Rose: What do you mean stupid? You’re not exactly Miss Einstein yourself.
Meg: Shut up!
Rose: No, you shut up!
Meg: Mum! (TB, p. 34)

*face2face*

The model dialogues are all very similar to those in *Inside Out* – nice and clear, separated speech, some colloquialisms and ellipsis.

*Outcomes*

There is a continual insistence on recent colloquial English in this book. The authors go out of their way to introduce it in sections called *Native Speaker English* (e.g. ‘I’m really into jazz’; ‘How come?’; ‘You don’t want to get ripped off’). Also in 9 out of the 16 units, there is a speaking activity as the first thing, where the students really have to fend for themselves, take risks and use what language they have at their disposal. Elsewhere, the sequence is similar to *Inside Out* and *face2face*, where a series of activities on vocabulary, listening and pronunciation (e.g. in unit 9) leads into a *Developing Conversations* section with examples of the comparative, and then a *Conversation Practice* section to use the language of the earlier parts of the unit. The model dialogues follow the pattern of the other two courses.

*Does a behaviourist, cognitivist or sociocultural theory of language learning dominate?*

*Inside out*

The typical process for getting to a speaking activity is: read a text about the topic, do an activity which examines the language used in the text (reading/written exercise); listen to a conversation about the topic, do an activity which uses the language (reading/written exercise); or talk to your partner about the same topic related to you. What is striking is that although there is plenty of
build-up for the person who is leading the conversation, there is no specific help for the ‘partner’ – how are they supposed to interact? Just be a passive listener?

**face2face**
The process for moving to a speaking activity is very similar to that in *Inside Out*. However, there are activities like this one from *At the doctor’s*:

a) Work in pairs. Write the first half of a conversation between a doctor and a patient.
   Write about the patient’s symptoms only.
   Hello, Mrs Jones. What seems to be the problem?
   Well, I haven’t been feeling very well recently. I’ve got . . .

b) Swap papers with another pair. Write the rest of their conversation. Suggest treatment for the patient’s symptoms.

c) Practise the conversation in pairs until you can remember it.

d) Work in groups of four. Take turns to role-play the conversation for the students who wrote the beginning. Do you agree with the other pair’s suggestion for treatment? (p. 75).

It is likely that the pairs will use their coursebook to find suitable symptoms and remedies to write down. They will then read their conversation until they learn it by rote. They will then ‘perform’ it for the other pair. This has nothing to do with spontaneous natural speaking, and seems unlikely to lead to it. Elsewhere, students are heavily guided to role-play situations like this.

**Outcomes**
Because of the initial speaking activities in many units, this coursebook offers students an opportunity to sink or swim, which is lacking in the behaviourist model-based process of the other two. They end up being less materials- and teacher-led and get an opportunity to stand on their own two feet, being involved in an activity which invites them to use the language resources they have, which is what often happens in real-life interactions.

**Conclusions**
What is disappointing is that coursebooks have not really moved on very much in the past decade, despite a teaching and learning situation which has changed radically. All three courses are still largely stuck in the behaviourist PPP way of working, and insist on students going through a lot of vocabulary-learning, reading, writing and grammar exercises before they are let loose on the speaking activities. One thing that is noticeable is the scant attention paid to pronunciation in all three courses. Another thing is the lack of support for the ‘partner’ in all of the speaking activities. The preparation makes it seem more as if one student is preparing a lecture and the other one is just going to listen. The opportunities for true dialogue, where both initiation and response are
introduced, are negligible. This denies the very nature of true negotiated interaction, and is hardly likely to help students with genuine communication.

The other thing that is quite surprising is the lack of a global approach to the dialogues and interactions; those that occur are perfunctory, and often consist of locations to talk about rather than genuine interactions between two human beings from different language cultures. Where is the Polish plumber talking to the Irish home-owner, the Afghan refugee talking to the French builder who might employ him? There seems to be no reflection of the real language world.

Publishers and authors need to bite the bullet of what is really going on in the world of English, in order to present realistic models of interaction and provide activities which help students cope with both sides of the real dialogues they are going to face when they come to use their English. With students in a monolingual class, such an approach would require the following sequence of events:

- Initially, and at regular intervals throughout the course, the presentation and analysis of authentic sequences of informal spoken interaction in the mother tongue, in order for students to become familiar with how people construct meaning in dialogues (turn-taking, false starts, overriding, interruption, repetition, hesitation, pauses).

- The discussion of familiar topics in the mother tongue in groups of three or four, which are recorded and analysed, so students realize exactly what they do when they speak in their mother tongue.

- The presentation of short authentic dialogues in the target language, with transcripts to follow, for example:

  The speakers are talking about people’s touchiness.

  M errr (.) it’s not (.) it’s not what you do (.) it’s the way you say it (.) there’ s nothing you can really do (.) do to D – apart from perhaps (.) trying to think what you can do to D – (.) err
  F1 his clothes
  F2 oh yeah (.) definitely
  M yeah but that’s just (.) that’s just joking weren’t it (.) you mean how you can nastily f*** someone up (.) make somebody not speak to you for the rest of the night
  F1 yeah yeah
  M oh ermmm
  F2 especially B –
  M with B – it’s anything (.) B – (.) I mean if you get (.) if you want to get (.) if you want to get him to not speak to you for the rest of the night and risk getting smacked in the mouth you can say
  F1 why (.) is he (.) is he a bit hard (Cockcroft, 1999, p. 98)
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- The transcript is then discussed and analysed at a metalinguistic level, and students find out key things to help them speak: it’s OK to pause, hesitate, repeat, interrupt, etc.
- They are then presented with the vocabulary, and structures needed to talk about the same topic as the dialogue they have been analysing. This is practiced in controlled and freer ways, looking at individual word pronunciation and phrase intonation.
- Finally they are put into pairs or small groups with tasks to carry out using the new language. Their production is recorded for later analysis.

Coursebooks referred to


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Comments on Part Three

Brian Tomlinson

The chapters in this part seem to report slightly more congruence between theory and practice than those in the previous parts – possibly because many of the skills development researchers and the authors of books on teaching skills are also practitioners themselves. It does seem that some of the published materials for the teaching of reading, writing, listening and speaking have taken into account what has been found out about what those skills involve, how they are best used and how they are acquired. However there still seems an understandable reluctance to publish anything which would require teachers and students to do things which are too different from the classroom norm and/or too different from the activities typically used to examine these skills. In Chapter 11 Alan Maley and Philip Prowse say that some materials now encourage more personal response to reading texts and that many more texts are now from authentic sources. However they report that most of the reading that learners are asked to do is intensive, that many coursebooks treat the reading section as an opportunity for more language practice and that ‘many major graded reader publishers have recently developed series of books where the running text is disrupted by a plethora of comprehension and language-focused exercises and activities’. Rimma Ableeva and Jeff Stranks also complain in Chapter 13 about the tendency to concentrate on language-focused activities in listening tasks. While welcoming the fact that most coursebook listening texts are now potentially engaging for the learners, they are critical of the tendency to focus on the product of reading (by, for example, setting questions on a text) rather than helping learners with the process of listening. In Chapter 12 Annie Hughes says that there have been many applications of what we know about how young learners acquire language but that we need a literacy environment in which the learners are surrounded by the language. She also says that the learners would benefit from more games, rhymes, chants, etc. in which vocabulary is repeated in enjoyable ways so that they can build up the vocabulary they need to be able to read in the L2. In Chapter 14 Jayakaran Mukundan and Vahid Nimechisalem say that some writing materials now are more personalized but that many materials still seem to be more concerned with providing language practice than with helping the learners to develop writing skills. In Chapter 15 Anne Burns and David A. Hill welcome the fact that some materials encourage learners to become involved...
in activities which invite them to use the language resources they already have but complain that many materials still do not provide opportunities for genuine interaction.

I would certainly endorse the one complaint common to all the chapters in this part. Coursebooks try to do too much by getting students to develop a skill while at the same time learning something new about the language. I do not think that you can read extensively if you are paying conscious attention to language which is highlighted in the text, or listen extensively if you have been told to listen out for the use of the simple past, or write fluently if you have been told to use the new vocabulary in the unit, or speak fluently and meaningfully if you have been told to practise the structures in the dialogue you have just rehearsed. In such cases the learner and the teacher will focus on the language point because it is easier to do so, because it seems more salient and because it is more likely to be tested. If the teacher is totally reliant on a coursebook which follows this dual target approach her students might learn some language for a short time but they are unlikely to develop the targeted skills. This is what has happened in the many reported cases of students doing very well in advanced examinations testing knowledge of language while at the same time remaining almost at a beginner level in terms of skills development. For example, Kim and Krashen (1997, p. 26) report on five South Korean women who are classed as advanced learners but have very little confidence in their ability to read in their L2 (despite being ‘dedicated readers in their primary language’). Nothing much has changed since Eskey (1970) complained about a beginners’ model which emphasizes language instruction rather than reading instruction and since Clarke (1980) complained that the non-interactive reading approach which this developed persists into intermediate and advanced levels of learning. What they said about language instruction interfering with skills development is still true today, not only for reading but for the other skills as well.

One big mistake made in most coursebook series’ is to start skills development before beginners have had chance to acquire enough vocabulary to enable them to read, write, listen and speak without excessive micro-processing of language. At the moment beginners are focusing on language items when they start to read, write, listen and speak in the L2 and this becomes a habit which persists at higher levels. I can understand why publishers produce beginners’ books which feature skills development (it is what the users expect) but I do wish a publisher would have the courage to publish a beginners’ coursebook which focuses on vocabulary development through Total Physical Response activities, dramatic readings with visuals and sound effects and vocabulary games (Tomlinson, 1999, 2000). Another big mistake made in many coursebooks is to start each unit discretely with a specific focus on a particular structure, function, lexical group or skill and then to practise it holistically later on. In my experience a far more beneficial approach is for the learners to start by doing something which requires them to try to use the skill being targeted and then to be helped to reflect on their use of the skill and to explore ways (sometimes with the teacher) of using it more effectively. One very effective way I have found of doing this is to use a Scenario Plus activity – my development of di Pietro’s (1987) approach. I give half the class a character to play in a situation and the other half a different character in the same situation. The students know what their character is trying to achieve but not what the other character is going to do or say (e.g. a teenage girl trying to get her boyfriend to take her out of the stadium at a football match because she feels ill). The students prepare their character’s strategies in groups and then one representative from each group acts out the scenario and tries to achieve the goals they have been given. The group can call back their representative at any time to give advice or even make a
substitution. After the scenario has been completed all the students take part with the teacher in a post-mortem discussion which evaluates the strategies and the language used in the scenario. The students then read or listen to a text in which a similar scenario is acted out by proficient users of the language before making discoveries for themselves about strategy and language use and then taking part in a similar but different scenario.

Perhaps the biggest problem with materials for L2 skills development is that they require learners to read, write, listen and speak in ways which are dramatically different from their use of these skills in the L1. No wonder the skills they have already acquired do not seem to transfer to their use of the L2.

**Bibliography**


PART FOUR

Curriculum development
Language policy and planning

What we know

Some writers on language policy distinguish between language policy and language planning, the former being narrowly defined as a statement of intent, the latter as the process of implementation. Others prefer to amalgamate the two elements in an overarching term, language policy and planning (LPP). For the purposes of this chapter we will refer to LPP which describes the process of formulating a language policy, drawing up a plan, and implementing and evaluating it.

LPP is a deliberate attempt by an agent or agents, typically though not exclusively at governmental level (a macrolevel), to influence an individual’s or a group’s future language behaviours (a microlevel). These behaviours if operating at the levels of discourse, lexico-grammar and phonology are commonly referred to as corpus planning; if the intention is to change the roles and functions of languages (often in competition with one another) so that certain languages will be used more extensively in one domain rather than another, this is known as status planning. (These categories and others are more fully discussed in Baldauf, 2005). LPP is often top-down and coercive when those affected are obliged to implement the policy and there are sanctions if they decline to do so.

LPP is problem-solving in that those designing and implementing a policy perceive a problem that needs a solution. If the perceived problem is not shared by those at whom the policy is targeted, they may resist policy implementation either by not implementing the policy or by adjusting it to their own needs and wants. Orafi and Borg (2009) show how teachers in Libya at
the micro-LPP level of the classroom react against a curriculum innovation (a part of macro-LPP implementation) in which the policy does not match their own attitudes and beliefs.

LPP is a political process. There are few instances where underlying changes in language behaviour are not driven by ideological and/or political concerns even though the outcomes may be language-based. Hence the fact that resistance can occur since underlying a language policy may be decisions that will affect a group’s identity, their beliefs, their economic well being or their political influence and power.

There is often a lack of ‘fit’ between policy and its implementation (Kennedy, 1999). We have all experienced (not only in the field of LPP) a macropolicy that once pushed down to lower microplanning levels, is either not implemented, is partially implemented or implemented in unintended ways. Sometimes this lack of successful implementation is deliberate (where for example, those working at lower levels in the system disagree with the policy), but it may also be that the macropolicy makers ignore or are not aware of the conditions operating at microlevels that may prevent implementation (Hoa & Tuan, 2007). One solution is the notion of subsidiarity (Melé, 2005), pushing decisions down to a level where they are best made, a form of decentralization. Centralized systems find decentralization difficult to accept, and subsidiarity in any case will only work where participants charged with implementation at their level are given the resources (human, financial and physical), and have the skills and expertise to implement policy successfully.

LPP affects all sociopolitical domains – government, law, media, arts, science, business and of particular relevance for this article, the domain of education. Within the educational field, one of the major choices to be made is which languages will be used within educational institutions at which level (primary, secondary and tertiary) and whether those languages will be taught as curriculum subjects or whether they will be used as a medium of instruction. Once these decisions have been made, other curriculum and syllabus decisions follow, such as deciding the amount of time to be spent on language instruction, which theoretical approaches are to be adopted in teaching and learning, the design of syllabi and materials including methods, and numbers, qualifications and training of teachers; (see Kennedy (2001) for a discussion of these elements with reference to English for Academic Purposes). This type of LPP is referred to as language-in-education planning.

**What we think we know**

Kaplan and Baldauf (2003) divide language-in-education planning into a number of interrelated policy areas. Access policy refers to those plans dealing with the choice of languages on the curriculum and when in the educational system they should be studied; personnel policy deals with the recruitment and training of educators such as inspectors, head teachers and teachers; curriculum policy decides on the organization and content of the curriculum including assessment; materials and methods policy is concerned with what pedagogic resources are available and how the materials are going to be taught; resourcing policy allocates funding; community policy engages local communities; and evaluation policy considers how the effectiveness and efficiency of the policies above can be measured or judged.

Liddicoat (2004) though agreeing to these divisions thinks we would gain by looking at language teaching methods as influencing or being influenced by four sub-components of language-in-education-policy – policies relating to methods themselves, to materials, to curriculum
and to assessment. He is arguing for a more integrated systemic approach to language-in-education policy with regard to methods in particular. The list provided by Kaplan and Baldauf (2003) should perhaps be represented by a system of interrelated circles indicating that none of the elements are discrete in practice but are influenced by and influence each other.

LPP is often the result of perception of a demand and a need for English regarded as important for a country’s economic development (Euromonitor, 2010), although such correlations between English competence and development are questionable (Kennedy, 2010). LPP, when motivated by such socioeconomic concerns and translated into language-in-education planning, can result in politically driven, overambitious macropolices creating high expectations unlikely to be realized because of the low investment in educational implementation at the more microlevels.

Hamid (2010) claims such policies lack the infrastructure and resources to develop effective implementation and the result is an appeal to development aid finance with ELT aid projects as an outcome. Referring to a history of such ELT aid projects in Bangladesh, including the English-in-Action Project (EIA, 2011), Hamid acknowledges the short-term benefits of such ELT aid projects but doubts their long-term impacts. He suggests that the resources needed to fund such ELT projects would be better spent developing local capacity and expertise, especially in teacher training, so that by creating a national capacity longer term systemic educational objectives could be met.

An analysis of the secondary-level English textbooks in Pakistan (Aftab, 2012) reveals they may not be able to promote the declared language-in-education policy of the Pakistan government. She considers the centrality of the textbook in language-in-education policy implementation and in an evaluation emphasizing the systemic nature of the process makes a number of recommendations which include: matching learners’ needs and wants with their future job requirements; greater involvement of school administrators, teachers and students in planning; a flexible curriculum so that syllabi can be adapted to local contexts with appropriate textbooks selected; and the training of local materials writers who will be able to match macrolevel LPP with microlevel educational needs.

Extending these issues, Baldauf, Kaplan and Kamwangamalu (2011, p. 432) discuss the problems of Primary School English and suggest that the following questions need to be asked of ELT projects in this area. (Although they deal with Primary School English such questions can be asked of any language project at whatever level).

Is the amount of time dedicated to language learning adequate?
Are indigenous teachers trained to deliver successful instructional programs?
Are available educational materials sufficient and appropriate?
Are available educational methodology models appropriate?
Are system resources adequate to the task?
Is the educational system sufficiently committed to providing Primary School English in terms of resources, space and a prospect for continuity?
Are children in Primary School prepared to undertake early language instruction?
Is there any evidence that the availability of such instruction actually meets community and/or national objectives in terms of utility for participants?
What is the impact of such instruction on other languages in the language ecology? Are other perspectives needed?

Enever and Moon (2009), also in the context of LPP implementation for Primary Level English, raise similar questions and expand some of the categories mentioned by Baldauf, Kaplan, and Kamwangamalu above. They question the belief that the earlier the start in learning English the better the results (as we have seen there are many other variables involved in the introduction of Primary Level English). Monitoring and evaluation of these additional variables is essential. Hastily planned and implemented programmes may be ineffective, and they recommend a phased implementation preferably with knowledge and insight gained from pilot projects. Both macro top-down and micro bottom-up processes which gain institutional support and involve schools, parents and communities are important. There should be communication between primary and secondary institutions so that there can be a continuity of approach. Enever and Moon add that for successful implementation of such programmes continuing resources are required with ongoing teacher training and development, that teachers need time and space to develop and that their English language competence is a crucial factor in success. Materials need to be age-related and culturally appropriate.

Malaysia provides an example of educational macro- and micropolicy in action and a mismatch between them. The Malaysian government was concerned that Malay graduates were losing their competitive edge in recruitment to international companies based in Malaysia because of a comparative lack of English language competence. The macropolicy response to this problem was to move from a fully Malay-medium educational system to one in which Science and Mathematics would be taught through English rather than Malay. The project ran for 6 years but was halted and Science and Mathematics reverted to being taught in Malay (Hashim, 2009), with the new coursebooks combining English, Science and Mathematics needing to be replaced. One of the reasons for failure occurred at the microlevel of the schools because a sufficient number of English-competent Science and Mathematics teachers were not available. Those training programmes that were initiated were not able to train enough content teachers to a sufficient level of English to teach English-medium Science and Mathematics.

**What we need to find out**

One proposal to create language policies with a greater chance of successful implementation is suggested by Swanson and Bargwhal (2009). They propose a set of seven tools which can be used to create ‘adaptive’ policies that are not fixed and immutable but are designed to be flexible and responsive to changing local contexts. They write as development rather than language specialists but their model is one that has resonance for the sorts of issues we have considered above, and an outline of their approach follows.

They believe that it is important to lay a foundation for the adaptive policy prior to its design and implementation. This would include, for example, understanding the context and the issues involved, identifying the key factors that might affect successful future operation of the policy and selecting suitable indicators of performance to evaluate policy success.
During policy design and implementation phases, consideration should be given to predicting scenarios and ensuring that the policy can be adjusted. In other words, some attempt should be made to anticipate possible conditions once implementation takes place. Policy design and implementation adjustment is facilitated if networking can be encouraged among the various stakeholders and if decentralization can occur, so that decisions are pushed down to the level at which they are best made (see subsidiarity above). As mentioned earlier, such decentralization is difficult to achieve especially within macro LPP programmes since it will only work if those responsible at the lower microlevels have the expertise, knowledge and resources to implement policy. Without those three essential elements, decentralization will fail and in such cases centralization is probably a more efficient, if less effective, alternative. Finally systems need to be set up that provide continuous reviews of implementation so that improvements can be made as the policy is implemented.

The assumption is that if this adaptive approach is taken it will provide flexibility and variation depending on local conditions and a policy process will be implemented that can react to a range of conditions, will ensure a broader participation among the stakeholders and will create conditions whereby policies can be adapted to changing conditions over time.

The adaptive approach although stressing the need for flexibility of processes, still takes a top-down approach to planning. Another approach, derived from the writing of Elmore (1979), and claiming to overcome the problem of microimplementation of policy (not only of LPP but public policy in general) is the notion of ‘backward-mapping’ (Robinson, 2006; Birkland, 2011).

The most common approach to LPP as we have seen moves from top to bottom of a system, from macro to micro, for example, from a national Ministry to State provincial educational structures to district School Boards and finally to schools, teachers and students. The problem with this forward-mapping approach is that policy is determined at higher levels and the local context and conditions are neglected in the formulation of policy. The result is a lack of ‘fit’ and a ‘split’ between policy and its implementation. The result of the ‘split’ is failed implementation with demotivated teachers, disappointed students and aggrieved parents.

A backward-mapping process, as the term suggests, reverses the forward-mapping approach, and moves from micro to macro with investigation of the local context and its realities as a first stage. (In this respect it is similar to the adaptive approach above but crucially the backward-mapping process is essentially a bottom-up rather than a top-down procedure). Subsequent data collection moves ‘backward’ from schools, teachers, students and parents to Districts, States and finally Ministries. At each stage there is an attempt to draw up a local policy that can be realistically implemented at the relevant level which will eventually feed back into the final macro policy. The result of starting at the microend of the system will be an appraisal of the differences between actual and desired practice (Dyer, 1999). It will be clear what is needed at each level moving upwards or ‘backwards’ through the system and what any particular level is capable of delivering. Decisions can then be taken whether a policy that ‘fits’ the local conditions should be generated on the basis of actual practice or whether additional resources can or should be allocated in order to ensure successful implementation of desired practice.

Backward-mapping is also useful to evaluate policy implementation. It can for example according to Dyer (2003) identify critical decision points and political influence, reveal personal beliefs and attitudes of individuals or groups, and provide reasons for acceptance or rejection of policies by, for example, teachers and students. In summary then, a backward-mapping approach tries to work from the final microagents who implement the policy (e.g. teachers and students) to the
initial designers of the macropolicy (national politicians and government administrators), quite the reverse of the more usual forward-mapping.

It is important to distinguish at this point between three types of microplanning. The type described here in the backward-mapping approach although occurring at lower levels in the system is intended to feed back into the final macropolicy, the microprocesses informing decisions made at higher levels. The second type of microplanning implements the macropolicy and as we have seen can cause problems of non-acceptance or avoidance strategies on the part of the agents (typically at this level teachers and students). The third type is a micropolicy created by local groups at lower levels independent of any national policy. Practitioner research and exploratory practice (Allwright, 2005) would fall into this category where a group of teachers might get together in a school to investigate their own learning situation to see whether it could be improved in any way. This is a valuable activity, but because it acts independently of the overall system, it has benefits to those implementing it at the local level but rarely reaches further up the system so that systemic reform is difficult to achieve. It is important therefore when we talk of micropolicy to distinguish between these three types as each may be appropriate and relevant for different circumstances and conditions, and we need more investigation of the advantages and disadvantages of each approach.

Accounts of LPP and language-in-education planning have been criticized for remaining at a descriptive level and not investigating sufficiently those agents involved in the planning, their beliefs and attitudes, their actions and the reasons for them. It is particularly difficult to approach administrators and politicians higher up the planning system as they are generally wary of making public statements about their actions which are potentially politically sensitive.

We can however more successfully investigate agency at lower levels and particularly the motivations and actions of agents such as teachers and students. There is of course a long tradition of classroom investigations of materials and methodologies and of teacher beliefs and attitudes, but such investigations have not been seen as an integral part of language-in-education planning nor causally linked to LPP decisions. The microagents have themselves not always been critically aware of such linkages, nor have those responsible for language-in-education planning at higher levels taken account of lower level agency. If we can investigate the motivation of agents at various levels in the language-in-education process, this should help us move from a merely descriptive level to an explanatory one so that we can make better decisions at all levels in the language-in-education process. A few examples below may make this question of agency clearer.

O’Laioire et al. (2011) investigate the implementation of the 2003 Official Language Act in Ireland, looking particularly at those administrators responsible for implementation at the level of local organizations. They use the term ‘subalterns’ to refer to those local agents operating outside the normal power structures, social actors such as parents, teachers and local administrators, who, rather than being passive implementers or policy resisters, actually shape LPP implementation. They use ethnographic approaches (observations, interviews and written communications) with local agents (in this case administrators) to show how they grapple with the problems of implementation in their own context and within their own constraints, and the processes of negotiation and compromise that take place to satisfy both the demands of those outside and above the local system and of those within it. What appears at the macrolevel to be successful implementation, in that certain objectives have apparently been achieved (the familiar ‘box-ticking’ approach), is revealed when researched in this way at more microlevels of implementation, as individualistic interpretations on the part of active and powerful local agents.
IMPLEMENTING LANGUAGE POLICY

Two further examples illustrate this notion of subaltern agency, this time at the level of the classroom. Creese and Blackledge (2010) show how using all languages available in multilingual classrooms (what the authors refer to as ‘heteroglossia’) and not just English which might be the official language-in-education policy, may be a positive teacher strategy leading to more effective classrooms and facilitating a richer learning environment. They call this approach where different languages are not compartmentalized but used in a complementary fashion ‘translanguaging’, and their ethnographic approaches collecting data of teacher–pupil interactions reveal how agents or subalterns implement their own local language policy in the classroom.

Martin (2005) characterizes teachers’ local language practices which are a response to national language-in-education policies as ‘safe’ practices. They produce a satisfactory outcome for the teacher in the face of inappropriate macropolicies which disregard the local context, in this case that of some rural schools in Malaysia where the local language is neither English nor Malay but a third local language, Kalabit, a language not accounted for in the national policy but which teachers use in the classroom in order to achieve more successful communication. Martin's article shows clearly the tensions between national language policy and the classroom practices of the local agents, the teachers and the pupils, and the creative ‘translanguaging’ use of the different languages available. Martin cautions, however, that although such practices are ‘safe’, they may not be ‘sound’, and that we need to investigate such strategies to see not only whether they do increase the quality of talk needed for language and cognitive development but also whether such local realities can filter into the system, for example, into teacher training programmes, an example of the backward-mapping approach mentioned above.

LPP and language-in-education policy now belong within an ‘emergent’ stage of social development (Kennedy, 2010) characterized by more critical approaches to policy, an awareness of the complexity of LPP processes, and by increased interest in agency and in particular the role of agents at the more microlevels of policy implementation. There is a rich agenda for us to pursue.

The implementation of LPP through materials development and use

International published materials and LPP

As international materials are usually targeted at the largest possible global market it would be unreasonable to expect a close match between these materials and the LPP decisions of a particular country. However, it might be interesting for commercial publishers of global coursebooks, to analyse planning documents from their major markets to discover common policies and then to design flexible materials which are capable of implementing these policies. What we have done in Table 16.1 is to decide on a number of policies which seem to be currently common to the policies of many countries and to discover the degree of match between these policies and the texts and activities in current commercial coursebooks. In order to do this, we have analysed Unit Six in each of six current Intermediate level coursebooks and scored each book out of 5 for its degree of match with each of six common national policies:
TABLE 16.1 The match between LPP and global coursebooks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy</th>
<th>EU</th>
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<th>IO</th>
<th>JR</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Helping to develop creative thinking</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>2 Helping to develop critical thinking</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Helping to develop communicative competence</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Catering for students in both rural and urban areas</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Providing a window on the world</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Contributing to educational development</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
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</table>


The scores are obviously subjective and could be very different if given by different evaluators. What this evaluation does reveal though is that many current global coursebooks do match the requirements of policy planners to use learning English to develop critical thinking ability and some do contribute to educational development. Where there is a big mismatch though is in the type of students that the internationally published global coursebooks target. Nearly all the topics, texts, photographs and illustrations are likely to be much more familiar to students from middle-class families in urban areas than to students from working class families in rural areas. This is understandable as the main market for these books consists of middle-class urban learners in private schools. It is important though that administrators responsible for choosing coursebooks for institutions in such countries as Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia and China (where the majority of students live in rural areas) are aware that their content might not help to promote the national policies of catering for all students equally. Gray (2010) is particularly concerned about this mismatch between the contents of global coursebooks and the experience and needs of many of their users. He views ‘the ELT global coursebook as a deeply problematic artefact’ (p. 191) and is highly critical of the way most global coursebooks promote a world which is urban, materialistic, commercialized and economically aspirational.

**National published materials and LPP**

One obvious effect of LPP has been the surge in the publishing of English coursebooks from primary to tertiary levels in countries such as China, Japan and South Korea, which have recently placed...
greater emphasis on the importance of their citizens being able to communicate internationally in English. In all three countries, both local and international publishers have rushed to meet the new demand with different approaches and differing effects. Smiley and Masui (2008) conclude that native speaker teachers in Japan tend to use coursebooks written by native speakers, whereas Japanese teachers of English tend to use coursebooks written by Japanese authors. While both types of coursebooks are aiming to match the curriculum, the native speaker written books, according to Smiley and Masui’s evaluation, tend to be internationally centred, to focus on learner engagement and interaction and to downplay grammar, whereas the non-native speaker written books tend to transmit traditional values, to focus on grammatical structures and to use traditional activities such as translation and memorization. This is an interesting example of what we have found to be a universal phenomenon – writers tend to implement LPP in ways driven more by their own experience and beliefs than by the imperatives of the policies they are implementing. This was found to be the case too by Jiangqiong and Tin (2010), who found that a coursebook written in China for teaching English for communication shared some pedagogic approaches with an American coursebook with similar objectives but the Chinese coursebook was much more teacher-centred and teacher-directed (e.g. the ‘length of information given in the teacher’s book ‘is almost double the length of the respective unit in the student’s book’ (p. 284)).

It must seem to many governments that local publishers are more likely to implement LPP effectively than international publishers as they can impose language planning decisions on them. For example, in Singapore the publishers are obliged to publish three different versions of their coursebooks for each year of secondary school, a challenging version for Express courses, one with more scaffolding, graphic organizers and some simplification for Normal (Academic) courses and a much easier version for Normal (Technical) courses. In order to have their books approved they must also stick strictly to the Syllabus and the language planning policies which it represents. For example, *English for Life 1* (Tomlinson et al., 2000) says on its backcover that it ‘is based on the MOE’s English Language Syllabus 2001 and incorporates the initiatives of National Education, Thinking Skills and Information Technology’ (all new content areas specified as government policy). *Life Accents 3A* (Davies et al., 2003) also matches this syllabus very closely and specifies thinking and IT activities for every unit. And *Access 2* (Singh, 2011) says on its backcover that it ‘is specially developed in line with the English Language Syllabus 2010’. In China coursebooks will not be approved for use unless they match very closely with the current curriculum, a document developed to ensure that the country’s English language policies are implemented. *Success with English for Primary Schools* (Tomlinson et al., 2002), for example, contains only those topics, those structures and those lexical items prescribed by the syllabus. It would appear these are examples of LPP being successfully implemented through materials but it has been our experience that detailed prescription of teaching points can restrict the materials developers and result in materials which match the syllabus but do not necessarily engage the learners. It has also been our experience in a number of countries that the officials in Ministries of Education tasked with monitoring new textbooks are often more knowledgeable about and sympathetic towards the previous syllabuses than the new one and they often inhibit innovation. This is true too of teachers in the classroom, who often continue to teach the materials for the new syllabus in the same way as they taught the materials for the old ones, and who often focus on those sections of the materials which explicitly prepare students for the examinations. This is what Le (2011) found when he investigated the actual use in classrooms of a new textbook for Vietnam which had been developed to facilitate the
development of communicative competence and to implement the ‘master plan of the national 2001–2010 socio-economic strategies’ (p. 18), with a particular emphasis on strengthening ‘pride in Vietnamese people and in new socialist ideals’ (p. 18). He found, for example, that the book was too difficult for learners in rural areas, that many of the activities were insufficiently communicative and that teachers focused on those activities which would help their students to prepare for ‘multiple-choice test items’ (p. 285). Le concluded that the ‘policy ambitions for the textbook’ were unrealistic and that there was a ‘need to align the underlying political, educational and cultural forces towards on-site textbook users’ needs, interests and circumstances’ (p. xi).

**National materials development projects and LPP**

It is in the materials developed on national projects that you would expect the greatest match with national LPP. Most of these projects are initiated and overseen by a Ministry of Education which has been tasked with implementing national planning decisions. However, in our experience the unit responsible for materials development is sometimes physically and mentally separated from the unit responsible for curriculum development and mismatches between policy and implementation can occur. In our experience, the most productive approach to implementing policy through materials development involves a combination of the forward-mapping and backward-mapping approaches described above. In Namibia, for example, *On Target* (1995) was written to implement a new syllabus which had been developed to implement new policies. The policies included an emphasis on communication skills, on thinking skills, on language across the curriculum and on connecting Namibia to the rest of the world, and this was reflected in a content and skills based syllabus which replaced the previous forms-focused syllabus. This forward-mapping approach was then followed up by a backward-mapping approach in which the needs and wants of students and teachers were researched through nationwide questionnaires before 30 teachers from all over the country came together in Windhoek to develop a framework with advisors which was then used to write the first draft of the materials in 5 days. During that period senior representatives from the publisher and from the Ministry of Education were present at the workshop to advise and sanction but not to impose from the top (Tomlinson, 1995). This mixed approach was also taken on the PKG Project in Indonesia (Tomlinson, 1990). The Ministry of Education and Culture made a decision to retrain lower secondary school teachers of English to facilitate communicative competence. Then 137 teachers from all the then 28 provinces decided on pedagogical approaches at national workshops and then went back to their provinces to train key teachers and to help them develop materials for use in their provinces. Similar mixed approach projects are reported at a national level by Popovici and Bolitho (2003), Bolitho (2008) and Whitehead (2011) and at an institutional level by Lyons (2003), Al-Busaidi and Tindle (2010) and St Louis (2010). Interestingly though a recent book on the implementation of LPP (Coleman, 2011) makes very little mention of materials development in its discussions of the implementations of policy and planning in 15 countries. It does, however, highlight the important point made by Tupas (2009) that language planning is a form of social planning which should follow social needs analysis and support social objectives. It also reinforces the point made by Kaplan and Baldauf (2007) that applied linguists should try to influence language planning more by making themselves more familiar with local constraints, attitudes and norms
and by reporting their research and findings in more intelligible ways. In our view this applies especially to the process of materials development in which language planners, applied linguists, administrators, teachers, students and materials developers need ideally to cooperate in a sharing of knowledge, needs and resources.

**Conclusion**

There seems to be less of a match than would be expected between LPP and the materials used to implement it. Possible reasons for this are that:

- policy decisions are often made by politicians and/or civil servants with no experience of the realities of teaching and learning;
- materials designed to implement radical new policies are unlikely to be acceptable to teachers and parents and so compromises are made by the materials developers;
- policies might change but examinations tend to remain the same (and examinations tend to determine what published materials do);
- policies sometimes conflict with accepted pedagogic practice and compromises are made both by materials developers and teachers in the classroom;
- new policies are sometimes insufficiently understood or accepted by the personnel in Ministries of Education who are responsible for approving the materials used in state institutions.

In order for there to be an effective match between language planning policies and the materials used to implement them, it is important that language learning experts are involved in the drafting of the policies so that they are compatible not only with political, social and educational ideals but with language acquisition theory and language learning practice too. Then there needs to be efforts made to help officials, principals, teachers, parents, teacher trainers, curriculum developers, materials writers and students to understand both the new policies and their intended effect on classroom practice. If this happens, there is a better chance of materials not only transmitting national policy effectively but of facilitating language acquisition and educational development too.

**Bibliography**


IMPLEMENTING LANGUAGE POLICY

Studies of pedagogy

Freda Mishan

Introduction

In an overview of language pedagogy, a unifying thread can be seen straddling the twentieth century linking early educational philosophies such as experiential learning (Dewey), discovery learning (Bruner) and in particular Constructivist philosophy (Vygotsky), to the language pedagogy of the 1970s onwards. Constructivist principles, such as ‘learning evolves through interaction with input and with others’ and meaning is constructed collaboratively, can, for instance, be seen to underpin the Communicative approach to language teaching (CLT) which came to the fore in the 1970s. Also inherent in these philosophies was a shift of focus from the teacher to the learner, from teaching to learning, from teacher as ‘sage’ to teacher as learning facilitator. The recognition of the crucial role that learners play in their own learning is reflected in the evolution of language pedagogy over the latter half of the last century. Thus we see the movement from the controlled and controlling language learning methods of the 1950s and 1960s, such as the audio-lingual method, the direct method and grammar translation, to the Communicative Approach in the 1970s and thence to approaches and pedagogies which explicitly foster autonomy, such as task-based learning in the 1980s (Willis & Willis, 2007), learner autonomy in the 1980s and 1990s (Benson, 2001), and latterly, Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) (Coyle et al., 2010) and Problem-based Learning (PBL) (Barrett et al., 2005).

This chapter gives an overview of currently influential language pedagogies, outlining their basis in second language acquisition (SLA) theory and assessing their transfer to teaching materials, with particular reference to ELT coursebooks. The rationale for the focus on coursebooks is that, as practitioners and researchers are fully aware, ‘course books still continue to be the single most important resource in the language classroom throughout the world’ (Arkian, 2008, p. 2). 79 per cent of teachers use a coursebook for more than 50 per cent of their teaching, according to a poll conducted by Arkian. A British Council poll in 2008 revealed comparable results, with 67 per cent of teachers claiming to use the coursebook for part (48%) or all their teaching (19%).
The communicative approach to language teaching

The SLA basis for communicative language teaching is generally seen as Hymes’ notion of communicative competence (1971). This focused on socio-functional aspects of language and was a revolutionary ‘about-turn’ in language pedagogy, which until then had tended to teach language ‘usage’ rather than ‘use’. The original communicative tenets included notional (semanticogrammatical) and functional categories but communicative coursebooks, particularly of the early years, tended to emphasize the latter (see McDonough & Shaw, 2003, p. 22). The theoretical strength of the approach was its roots in what we know about language acquisition; above all, that acquisition is promoted by opportunities to interact meaningfully and purposefully in the target language; quite simply, from the ‘need’ to communicate. In the course of interacting, ‘negotiation for meaning’ takes place; that is, the modifying and recasting of unclear utterances (see, for example, Long’s Interaction Hypothesis, 1996). Successful negotiation for meaning also ensures, of course, that participants receive comprehensible input (Krashen, 1981) and produce comprehensible output (Swain, 1985), both of which are crucial to SLA.

In transferring the theory of ‘meaningful interaction’ to practice, however, CLT was in trouble from the outset. A core communicative technique devised to stimulate this was the ‘information gap’ activity which set up an artificial ‘need’ to communicate – usually, to fill the gaps in texts or dialogues. While the information gap concept is ‘a powerful one . . . (if used intelligently)’ (Swan, 1990, p. 94), too often it was undermined by a failure to instil genuine affective engagement or incentive, that is, as Swan points out (ibid.), by the information being transacted lacking relevance or interest to the students. A typical activity of this type was to give/follow directions on a map:

**Listening**

You are going to hear six people asking for directions. Listen to all the conversations and match them with the plans. Listen again and find the starting points on the maps. Follow their routes.

**Exercise**

In pairs, ask each other for directions using the maps.

From: *Streamline English Directions* (Viney, 1985, p. 16).

It is testament to the persistence of CLT techniques, however, that information gap activities remain embedded in the coursebook repertoire. It is regularly rolled out in Oxford University Press’s *Headway* series for example, even at advanced level, with the core principles, relevance and incentive, still often unaddressed.

Work with a partner. Ask and answer questions to complete the biodata of novelist Iris Murdoch.

Student A: Look at this page
Student B: Look at the copy from your teacher

From: *Headway Advanced Student’s Book* (Soars & Soars, 2003b, p. 18).
Over the years, the interpretation of ‘communicative’ has evolved, most significantly with the reaction against the original ‘functionally-oriented’ communicative coursebooks, in the form of so-called post-communicative coursebooks which reverted to a familiar grammatical syllabus, spearheaded by the tremendously successful Headway series. Typical of the breed are English in Mind, which unashamedly proclaims a ‘strong focus on grammar and vocabulary’ (Puchta & Stranks, 2010, back cover) and New English File Upper Intermediate Student’s Book, ‘the perfect balance of grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation and skills to help your students use English really effectively’ (Oxenden & Latham-Koenig, 2008, back cover). Nevertheless, it is understandable that publishers are reluctant to relinquish claims to ‘communicativeness’ in a world where communication is paramount, giving us the classic communicative hybrid: ‘based on the communicative approach it combines the best in current methodology . . . ’ (face2face Intermediate Student’s Book, Redston & Cunningham 2006, back cover).

With the return to the ‘grammar canon’ as Thornbury calls it (2009), and the four skills breakdown, not only the content, but the layout of the original communicative coursebooks, with their more extensive reading passages (often over two pages in books such as Streamline English: Directions, Viney, 1985), changed radically. Coinciding with the rise of Microsoft’s Windows and the growth of the Web, the post-communicative crop of coursebooks have taken on the look and feel of the web page, with windowed chunks of text attracting the eye hither and thither across each 2-page spread. Publishers are clearly cognizant of their main market, the so-called Millennials (people who came of age at the Millennium) for whom ‘computers aren’t technology’ (Oblinger, 2003) as they have grown up in a digitally-enabled world. Millennials use information in bite-sized packages (think of tweets) and as Oblinger notes, ‘have zero tolerance of delays’ (ibid.). Hence we have activities, text and language presented in today’s coursebooks in the form of quickly digestible ‘McNuggets’ (Thornbury, 2009). (Thornbury’s original reference was to ‘grammar McNuggets’ but I have taken the liberty of applying this to other elements as well).

This abridging of content has serious implications for language learning, of course, for two reasons. The first is that brevity precludes engagement and contradicts what we know about the value of extensive reading for language acquisition and development (Tomlinson, 2001; Krashen, 2007). The second is the potential, in over-short activities, for the classic tension between content and accuracy:

‘Write four sentences about things you like and four sentences about things you don’t like [. . .]

I really love watching soap operas
I can’t stand going to the dentist.

Find one student in the class who agrees with each of your sentences. Ask follow-up questions if possible.

I really love watching soap operas.
Yes me too.

Which ones do you like?

(face2face Intermediate Student’s Book, Redston & Cunningham, 2006, p. 7)
Students are asked to think and talk about things they like and dislike, a topic which should engage them, while at the same time paying attention to grammatical form.

The observation that ‘communicative design criteria permeate both general course books and materials covering specific language skills as well as methodology in the classroom’ (McDonough & Shaw, 2003, p. 15), remains largely the case almost a decade on. The longevity of the communicative approach in the language teaching field can be attributed to many factors, not least to its versatility and chameleon-like quality of absorbing elements of passing trends. Conversely, communicative reverberations can be detected in many of the other pedagogies discussed below, starting with task-based learning.

**Task-based language learning**

At the core of Task-based Language Learning (TBL) as a teaching methodology is the task. A task is conventionally defined along the lines of a goal-oriented activity requiring meaningful and purposeful interaction in the TL in order for the outcome to be achieved (see Ellis, 2003, pp. 4–5 and Van den Branden, 2006, p. 4 for summaries of definitions from the literature). The focus on task completion means that TBL relies, as Ellis points out, on ‘sleight of hand’ (2003, p. 8): learners strive to achieve the goal using the TL, ‘incidentally’, using language which becomes primed for acquisition.

The seminal work on TBL in the language learning context is Prabhu’s *Second Language Pedagogy* (1987). It is significant that this was not principally a theoretical work but one reporting the piloting of an approach offering meaning-focused language activities, developed in response to the perceived failure of traditional approaches based on systematized language inputs and controlled practice. The Bangalore Project reported in the book was probably one of the ‘purest’ applications of TBL – and there is a certain irony that once adopted into mainstream language pedagogy, it was rationalized to an extent into a traditional format.

The first methodological exponent of TBL was Willis’s *A Framework for Task Based Learning* (1996), which gave teachers a workable structure and practical ideas for using TBL in their classrooms. The framework Willis proposed consisted of a three stage task cycle, pre-task, carrying out the task and post-task language feedback via a form of language consciousness-raising, C-R (see below).

The clarity of TBL’s pedagogical framework belies the complexity of its SLA rationale. Van den Branden asserts that its emergence was a top-down process from SLA, in that ‘the term was coined and the concept developed by SLA researchers and language educators largely in reaction to [. . .] teacher-dominated, form-oriented classroom practice’ (2006, p. 1). The methodology does not eschew attention to form but by focusing on meaningful use of language, establishes ‘form-meaning mappings’ as learners ‘manipulate and thus pay at least some (conscious or unconscious) attention to form’ (ibid., p. 9). Ellis concurs that TBL draws on established SLA constructs, principally teachability (e.g. Pienemann, 1985) and noticing (e.g. Schmidt, 1990) and while the first to admit that these theories are not without their challengers, he is adamant as to the pedagogical integrity of the concept (Ellis, 2010, p. 42).

From the early 2000s, as TBL became integrated into the repertoire of language teaching methodologies (Bygate et al., 2001; Ellis, 2003; Nunan, 2004 and Van den Branden, 2006), a ‘weak’ version of ‘task’ emerged in which it constituted the ‘free language production’ activity supporting other teaching procedures, typically supplanting the ‘practice’ element of the PPP
(present – practice – produce) model, and as Ellis admits, ‘it is probably true to say that this is how tasks figure in the majority of course books’ (2010, p. 39). Tasks of this type can indeed be seen in a broad cross-section of coursebooks. Examples include some of the ‘speaking activities’ in *Headway Advanced*, such as a maze card game in which the aim is to become an ‘A list’ celebrity (Soars & Soars, 2003b, p. 44), the ‘Improvisation’ sections in *English in Mind 2* (Puchta & Stranks, 2010), where students prepare and act out role plays, and the ‘Free Talk’ activities in *Touchstone* (e.g. *Touchstone Full Contact*, McCarthy et al., 2008) which include problem-solving and decision-making activities.

It would seem puzzling that in the main, this popular and strongly SLA-based methodology has been eschewed by coursebooks. The only two of which the author is aware of are *Cutting Edge* (Cunningham & Moor, 1998) and *Widgets* (Benevides & Valvona, 2008). *Widgets* subscribes to the ‘strong’ version of TBL, as stated in its pedagogical rationale (this can be seen online at: www.widgets-inc.com/teacher/tblt.php). It is effectively an extended ‘role play’, putting the students into the position of employees in an international company. The tasks engaged in are authentic teamwork business-type tasks ranging from simple ‘getting to know you’ activities, to problem-solving and creative tasks (such as producing an ‘infomercial’ for the company). True to TBL principles, the language focus stage generally comes after task completion, as described in the course overview; ‘[teachers] monitor how students are trying to use their language to interact, giving them language solutions if they ask for them, and noting any relevant examples of language used (poorly or well!), which can then be discussed with the class after the task has been completed.’ (www.widgets-inc.com/teacher/course.php).

The attempt by *Cutting Edge*, on the other hand, to combine a task-based learning approach and a traditional grammar and skills syllabus undermined the most essential principle of TBL: unwilling to relinquish the tried and tested coursebook formula, it presents the language focus as the precursor to the task, rather than as an outcome of it. This makes its tasks, albeit extended and detailed, ultimately just more of the ‘weak’ versions described above.

There may be more than the insidious ‘washback’ effect (Mishan, 2010a; Tomlinson, 2003b) at work in the case of *Cutting Edge*, however, something that might explain why coursebooks have in the main steered clear of TBL. It may be that the coursebook is not in fact a suitable mode of delivery for this approach. For TBL is not essentially a text-based pedagogy, it is one that involves and requires genuine interactivity.

**Problem-based learning**

In PBL we see Constructivist philosophy in action. In PBL, learners are conceived as active constructors of knowledge within meaningful contexts and in the course of peer interactions. The cycle of confronting and dealing with a problem, and learning from the experience is arguably the most natural impetus for learning from caveman on. Problem-solving was one of the group of ‘discovery learning’ approaches to emerge in the 1980s, and in the context of language learning, it was subsumed into TBL as one of a set of task types (Willis, 1996). Meanwhile, from the 1970s onwards, what became known as PBL was revolutionizing approaches to teaching in increasing numbers of disciplines in third-level education (Barrett & Moore, 2010). Defined by its originator as ‘the learning that results from the process of working towards the understanding of the resolution of a problem’ (Barrows, 1986), PBL is student-led, enquiry-fuelled and self-reflective (Davison,
2010). It involves students working in groups grappling with a real-world ‘fuzzy’ problem (i.e. having no fixed solutions). The pattern of group work, the importance attributed to the interaction process and the engagement with the problem have obvious resonances with TBL (as pointed out in Mathews-Aydinli, 2007, Mishan, 2010b). PBL’s emphasis on reflecting on the learning process is paralleled in TBL by the final, language focus stage. However, the approaches diverge in that PBL systematizes its teamwork more than TBL, since it is primarily an approach used in higher education, where team interdependence is part of the participants’ professional training. Compared to TBL, PBL goes ‘that extra mile’ towards autonomy, being more learner-directed and shifting the teacher firmly into the role of facilitator. These distinguishing features have attracted practitioners to adopt PBL in preference to TBL in some adult language learning contexts, including ESL/ABE (Adult basic education) in the USA (Mathews-Aydinli, 2007), third-level Spanish in University College Dublin, Ireland (Rankin, unpublished), third-level French at the University of Manchester (Franc et al., 2007) and third-level EFL at the University of Limerick in Ireland (Mishan, 2010a). As for learning materials, PBL has generated a number of handbooks (Barrett et al., 2005; Barrett & Moore 2010) and much research, but its core materials are the problems or targets central to the approach: ‘Designing high-quality problems is a key success factor for problem-based learning [. . .] curricula [. . .] as the problem is the starting point and driving force for learning’ (Barrett & Moore 2010, p. 18). The core materials for PBL are discipline-specific and sometimes commercially available problems. These exist in areas such as medicine and management but very few, to my knowledge, in languages.

**Consciousness-raising**

One of the main theoretical bases for CLT was that language acquisition is an unconscious process, a result of sufficient, comprehensible input (Krashen, 1981). In research into SLA, this was challenged, most notably in Schmidt’s work on the role of consciousness in language learning, crystallized in his Noticing Hypothesis (Schmidt, 1990). This stated that acquisition depends on learners paying conscious attention to exemplars of linguist form: ‘noticing is the necessary and sufficient condition for converting input to intake’ (Schmidt, 1990, abstract). This theoretical position paralleled a dissatisfaction in language pedagogy as the deficiencies of the Communicative Approach became apparent and practitioners reclaimed grammar after a decade in the Communicative wilderness. Indeed, as early as 1981, Bolitho and Tomlinson’s *Discover English* had fostered language discovery and language awareness, an approach that Carter (2003) sees as a reaction to both earlier over-prescriptive grammar translation methods and non-grammar-oriented Communicative methods of language teaching. Language awareness, or what has become known as ‘consciousness-raising’ (C-R) is a cognitive approach to language learning in which learners are provided with language data in some form and encouraged to develop, inductively or deductively, an ‘understanding’ of how a linguistic feature works (Ellis, 2003, pp. 163–4). In the inductive method, learners interact with the language data to discover/construct the grammar rule for themselves. In the deductive method, explicit explanations of grammatical structure are provided (Sugiharto, 2006, p. 144). In both cases, learners are encouraged to engage meaningfully with the linguistic feature, making C-R ‘tasks’ in the true TBL sense, but where an understanding of the language point is the task ‘goal’. Most importantly in C-R, the language practice arises through discussion about the language feature and not ‘practice’ of the feature.
Many of the grammar activities that resurfaced in coursebooks from the 1990s onwards do give a nod towards this approach. *Headway Intermediate* (Soars & Soars, 2003a) and *Upper Intermediate* (Soars & Soars, 2005) use short inductive C-R activities, significantly called ‘test your grammar’, as ‘introductions’ to the grammar covered in each unit. In an example from *Headway Intermediate Student’s Book* (Soars & Soars, 2003a, p. 30), students are presented with the following:

**Look at the sentences.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>can</th>
<th>should</th>
<th>go</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>must</td>
<td>have to</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Write the negatives.
2. Write the questions.
3. Write the third person singular.
4. Which verb is different?

*Headway’s* ‘Grammar Spots’ and ‘Language Focus’ sections later on in each unit use the same approach of encouraging awareness-raising about the language forms. As intrinsically part of pedagogies using corpora for learning, C-R activities are built into corpus-informed coursebooks such as *Touchstone*, in their ‘figure it out’ sections, and to a lesser extent, *Innovations*, in some of the ‘Using grammar’ sections. However, as pointed out in two overviews of coursebooks (Tomlinson et al., 2001; Masuhara et al., 2008), too often, attempts at C-R – or ‘awareness’/‘discovery’ approaches – are extremely controlled. They either immediately provide the ‘correct answers’, as in *Cutting Edge* (Cunningham and Moor, 1998) where the discovery ‘language focus activity’ comes on the same page as the highlighted ‘Analysis’ section giving the grammar rules, or they are run directly into ‘practice’ activities. In fact, an investigation into the use of consciousness-raising tasks in nine contemporary coursebooks revealed that C-R tasks are usually juxtaposed with practising tasks (Nitta & Gardner, 2005, p. 10). Both these failings are exemplified in this extract from *Natural English*:

Grammar present simple and continuous (1)

1. What’s the difference in meaning between a and b?
   1. a My washing machine’s leaking.
   2. b My washing machine leaks.

2. a I’m having problems with the computer.
   2. b I have problems with computers.

2. Underline the correct verb form in each sentence.
   1. Every time I pick up /’m picking up the phone, it makes a funny noise.
   2. They building /’re building a petrol station next to the hotel; the noise is terrible.

   go to language reference p.155

This suggests that practitioners are reluctant to fully relinquish the PPP model despite the theoretical arguments on the effectiveness of C-R rather than practice activities (ibid.). Since C-R primarily functions to develop explicit understanding of language use without the expectation that this become instantly producible as part of implicit knowledge, using C-R in conjunction with a PPP approach could be seen as undermining its theoretical rational and its effectiveness. Resources which provide data ideal for C-R tasks, however, are language corpora, to which we now turn.

**Corpus linguistics: Pedagogy and materials**

Corpus linguistics has given us both materials and pedagogies. The findings of corpus linguistics in the form of corpus-informed materials are now routinely included in dictionaries, grammars, resource books and coursebooks. The corpus-informed materials used cover the gamut from multi-word ‘lexical chunks’, as in the Innovations series (written by Dellar et al., series published between 2004 and 2008) and Inside Out Intermediate (Kay & Jones, 2000) or ‘high-frequency phrases’ (Natural English, Gairns & Redman) to the wholly corpus-informed series Touchstone (McCarthy, McCarten & Sandiford, 2005–8). As for corpus-based pedagogies, the issue of how, and with what measure of success they have transferred to coursebooks is discussed below.

**Data-driven learning**

The two pedagogies associated with corpus linguistics, DDL and the lexical approach, are both rooted in an experiential learning tradition and both orient towards inductive learning. Johns, the originator of DDL, saw the learner as a ‘language detective’; ‘Every student a Sherlock Holmes!’ (Johns, 1997, p. 101). A prerequisite for DDL is a data-rich environment, and therein lies its unsuitability for a coursebook format:

> What distinguishes the data-driven learning approach is the attempt to cut out the middleman [. . .] and give direct access to the data so that the learner can take part in building up his or her own profiles of meanings and uses. (Johns, 1991, p. 30)

DDL is thus a genuine ‘discovery learning’ approach, so much so that it can be ‘divergent learning’ in that ‘different paths through the data [will disclose] slightly different things’ (McEnery & Wilson, 1997, p. 6). Thus discoveries can vary between students, and between student and teacher – there are no ‘right’ answers (to be given in the Teacher’s book), making it arguably unsuitable for novice teachers (implying, of course, that the coursebook format is). DDL nonetheless engendered its own form of learning materials based on concordances generated for specific search words, expressions or grammatical forms. DDL materials tend to be extracts from concordances with shortened and/or simplified lines, presented either as lists of examples or varieties of gap-fill exercises. Because the material devised depends on the needs, interests and abilities of learners, most DDL materials per se exist either online or among teachers’ files. The material below is a C-R activity, raising awareness of the semantic prosody of two near-synonyms.
SET A

There weren't many _______ villages in Kent
   She's _______, right, and really skinny
She showed me the _______ room
It's only a _______ piece of carpet
Well, I just wanted a _______ box
Oh! But the hole's too
Now that number is _______ and decreasing it seems to me
They are very _______ sums, about 10 thousand

SET B

You silly _______ thing
She's a _______ angel
I forgot those _______ green men
You gonna eat that _______ bit of cake?
She's just a _______ bit older than David
D'you want the same as Mum or a _______ bit of each
They're out in that _______ cupboard
They're moving into this beautiful _______ cottage
   ONE word is missing from all the gaps in SET A and one from SET B.

What are the two words?
How did you guess?
What are the different ways in which the two words are used?

There are also some excellent teacher resource books to support teachers in using existing corpora for DDL activities, building their own corpora and creating corpus-informed materials; these include O’Keeffe, McCarthy and Carter’s (2007) From Corpus to Classroom and Sinclair’s (2004) How to Use Corpora in Language Teaching.

The lexical approach

The lexical approach draws on the psycholinguistic concept of the mental lexicon as a ‘store’ of ready-made lexical units which speakers ‘combine’ to produce meaningful text. The approach famously proposed that ‘language consists of grammaticalized lexis, not lexicalized grammar’ (Lewis, 1993, p. 89). In foregrounding lexis, the approach did not reject the importance of syntax, but emphasized the importance of grasping the ‘fuzzy’ relationship between the two:

The whole vocabulary/grammar dichotomy needs to be replaced by a spectrum of patterns which exhibit different degrees of restriction and generalizability. Words are used in patterns which learners need to notice; structures are subject to constraints which are frequently ignored
in traditional EFL teaching; and the new descriptions mean we need to revise our views of both vocabulary and grammar – words and structures (Lewis, 2000, p. 142).

The appeal of the lexical approach was not merely that it was a reaction to an over-prioritization of grammar teaching. It was also a recognition of the persistent sidelining of lexical teaching, where lexis is ‘randomised’ in that it emanates from the texts being used to teach the grammar, rather than having its own raison d’etre.

In terms of pedagogy, in a lexical approach, learners are encouraged to perceive language as ‘chunks’ on the spectrum from collocation (e.g. powerful collocates with engine, strong with coffee, but not the reverse) to full idiomaticity (e.g. hit the roof, up in arms). The inductive learning model is schematized as ‘observe, hypothesise, experiment’ (OHE) (Lewis, 2000, p. 177–8) and has a clear basis in SLA theory. The ‘observe’ stage corresponding with the ‘noticing’ activity emphasized by Schmidt (e.g. 1990) and ‘hypothesise and experiment’ with the developing of the learner’s interlanguage (Selinker, 1972).

However, the pedagogy is seen by many as impractical; Pulverness notes ‘a view of language where lexis is fundamental and grammatical structure is a secondary organizing principle may have great explanatory force, but it does not translate easily into pedagogic process’ (Pulverness, 2007), and this, indeed, proved the weak spot of the (only) coursebooks based on the lexical approach, the Innovations series (Dellar et al., 2004–8). Interestingly, the most obvious stumbling block viz. the fundamental dichotomy between the approach’s prioritization of lexis and the centrality of grammar implicit in the content of the majority of coursebooks (see, for example Thornbury, 2009; Tomlinson et al., 2001; and Masuhara et al., 2008), was to a large extent cleverly avoided. At the level of content, the organizing principle for the Innovations units is thematic and lexical, but overtly flagged ‘Using grammar’ exercises are included in most units. One suspects they were so-named in order to fulfil the expectations of users, for these are most often window-dressed ‘lexicalised grammar’ (e.g. an exercise on the colligation ‘to have something done’) or collocations activities.

### Using grammar: Adverbs that modify adjectives

Match the adverbs from the article with the adjectives they collocate with.

| 1. internationally | □ | a. British |
| 2. blissfully | □ | b. disgraceful |
| 3. clinically | □ | c. qualified |
| 4. badly | □ | d. famous |
| 5. absolutely | □ | e. happy |
| 6. uniquely | □ | f. depressed |

From Innovations Advanced Dellar and Walkley., 2008, p. 46.
The main compromise was at the level of pedagogy, for there are few vestiges in *Innovations* of the encouragement of ‘talking about language’, the observe – hypothesize – experiment cycle envisaged by Lewis and other corpus-based approaches such as DDL. On the contrary, as Masuhara et al., note (2008, p. 308), both the teacher’s and student’s books ‘are very prescriptive and explicit’.

It can be argued nevertheless that a ‘weak’ version of the approach is preferable to nothing at all and that the form it takes in *Innovations* at least broadens teachers’ thinking: ‘the way to assuage teachers’ and learners’ fears of a lexical approach is to avoid an iconoclastic call to abandon all grammar activities. We should instead simply call for the teaching of lexis to come higher up the agenda’ (Harwood, 2002, p. 148).

**Humanistic approaches**

Humanistic approaches may be characterized as those taking a holistic view of the learner and the learning process and implicating ‘whole-brain’ activities. The influence of Gardner’s concept (1993) of ‘multiple intelligences’ – musical, spatial, kinaesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal – can be seen to run through many of them and hence they tend to involve learners in physical activity, often in response to teacher prompts. Neuro-linguistic programming (NLP) goes further, maintaining that people learn through all their senses and sustaining the importance of ‘mind-body unity’: ‘we experience the world through our five senses and represent it in our minds through neurological processes [. . .] we use language – in thought as well as speech – to represent the world’ (Revell & Norman 1997, p. 14). NLP activities thus involve sensitization to the world, through storytelling, relaxation techniques, etc. Another such holistic approach is the ‘multi-dimensional approach’ put forward by Tomlinson (ed.) 2003a which encourages learners to use mental imagery and inner speech while affectively engaging with the processing of language input and producing output. Affect is also at the core of Suggestopedia (developed by Lozanov, 1978), in which a state of learning ‘readiness’ is attained through relaxation.

Resource materials for teachers to practise some of these approaches are available in practical handbooks, such as *In Your Hands* (Revell & Norman, 1997) for NLP, *Humanising Your Course Book* (Rinvolucri, 2002) which incorporates a number of humanistic principles, *Multiple Intelligences in EFL* (Puchta & Rinvolucri, 2007) and *Imagine that!* (Puchta et al., 2007), which exploits mental imagery. The humanistic language teaching ‘webzine’ at www.hltmag.co.uk is also an excellent source of research, articles, publications and training opportunities in such teaching methodologies.

The holistic ethos of humanistic approaches is, on the whole, anathema to the modern coursebook culture of ‘instant linguistic gratification’, a relentless drive for oral production. Confining themselves to bite-sized information chunks as characterized earlier, today’s coursebooks do not offer opportunities for extensive reading that would allow for the implementing of a multidimensional approach (and which research by Krashen and others (Krashen, 2009) has shown to promote language acquisition). Where there are opportunities for humanistic approaches to be deployed, for example, with material such as songs, which are regularly used in coursebooks and which appeal to musical intelligences and engage affect, these are steadfastly denied. In most treatments of songs, coursebooks discard the affective element, the melody, and ignore the symbiotic lyrics-melody relationship, to focus uniquely on the lyrics. This representative
instruction in *face2face Intermediate Student’s Book* (Redston & Cunningham, 2006, p. 83) ‘Look at the song ‘I’m not in Love’ on p. 101’ (my italics), jars for this very reason. Similarly, in the treatment of the song, ‘Don’t Worry, Be Happy’ in *English in Mind* (Puchta & Stranks, 2010), learners are asked to study some of the words from the lyrics pre-listening; ‘before listening make sure you understand the words in the box’ (my italics) (Puchta & Stranks, 2010, p. 49). This is a double affective whammy whereby the student anxiety is first raised, and then the opportunity for lowering it, by hearing and enjoying the song, is prevented as they are merely asked to listen to it and check a word-match exercise. In a promising example in *New English File Upper Intermediate*, some short pieces of music are played – however, the affective potential of the music is once again undermined by enforced verbalization; ‘How does the music make you feel? Would you like to carry on listening?’ (Oxenden & Latham-Koenig, 2008, p. 68). Some suggestions for a humanistic approach which uses the emotive power of music and song for language learning, found in Mishan (2005), include the following:

- As a piece of music is played, learner visualize/draw a picture or series of pictures/cartoon, create a poem, prose piece, dialogue, etc. and share and discuss their pieces when they are ready to do so;
- Learners work in groups to storyboard a song for a pop music video;
- Learners listen to a piece of music/song and work in groups to storyboard an advertisement for which the music/song could be the background.


**Conclusion**

‘There may be a closed circle at work here, wherein textbooks merely grow from and imitate other textbooks and do not admit the winds of change from research, methodological experimentation, or classroom feedback.’ This is not a comment on the current ELT publishing climate but one made over two decades ago (Sheldon, 1988, p. 239). The overview in this chapter has illustrated that there remains a mismatch between pedagogical approaches incorporating the findings of applied linguistics research, and the teaching materials which (should) apply them. Published coursebooks have by and large remained numbingly uniform, paying, as Tomlinson notes (2012), only superficial lip service to these shifts.

In briefly examining the reasons for this, it can be seen that coursebook users are in some ways as much to blame as the publishers. The ‘washback effect’ (Mishan, 2010a, Tomlinson, 2003b) noted by Sheldon above, where successful coursebooks spawn replicants moulded on the same frameworks, is linked to the issue of face validity; learners and teachers have come to expect coursebooks ‘built around [. . .] conventional design principles’ (Harwood, 2002, p. 147) and they may well question the validity of those that are not. Or even worse, has a ‘monster’ been created which has in a sense ‘devoured its maker’, so that coursebooks now define practice? ‘What the majority of teachers teach and how they teach [. . .] are now determined by textbooks’ (Akbari, 2008, p. 647). If this is the case, it is all the more incumbent upon publishers to ensure that ELT coursebooks incorporate valid pedagogies. Yet in practice, despite the continued increase in
coursebook production, procedures for piloting drafts have been severely reduced in the interests of speed of output. ELT coursebook editor Amrani (2011) describes the drastic shortening of coursebook development cycles, and how piloting is being replaced by reviewing (pp. 268–9). Consequently, the sort of longitudinal research into coursebook impact on language learning which should be the business of the publisher, is being left to individual practitioners and researchers. Perhaps the core of the problem is really one of dissemination: ELT publications do incorporate up to date pedagogies and the findings of SLA research; but these are found in the multitude of resource books put out by the publishers rather than the coursebooks that are the default teaching materials of the majority of teachers. Could it be that, ultimately, coursebooks may not be the best mode of delivery of reliably SLA-based learning materials? After all, the rationale for the use of coursebooks always tends to be, as Brian Tomlinson points out (2012), on practical rather than pedagogical grounds.

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Appendix

What’s the Problem? A hybrid problem-based learning activity

Summary of the activity

Working in groups, learners are given a PROMPT (see (1) below), which explains that they are newly immigrated to a foreign country and they do not yet speak the language. This is followed up with a LETTER (see (2, 3) below) in a language they are not familiar with*. The letter looks official and some lines are written in red. They have to work out what the problem is, then how to deal with it.

*An English version of the letter is given below. It would be translated into a language none of the learners know.

Learning outcomes

Linguistic: the language of hypothesizing, suggesting.
Sociocultural: consciousness-raising: how it feels to be a newcomer in a country and where you don’t speak the language.

Activity

1. Ask learners to work in groups of 3 or 4.
2. Ask each group member to assign themselves the letter A, B, C or D.
3. Invite all As to a short private briefing (out of earshot of their groups). Ask them to act as Secret Observer in their groups during the activity, noting the type of language used as the group discusses the problem.
4. Distribute the PROMPT (see Material (1) below) to each group and give them one minute to read it.
5. Distribute the LETTER (see Material (3) below) to each group.
6. Put up the following prompts:
   - What’s the problem?
   - How to deal with the problem?

During group activity, observe and comment only if invited by groups to do so. You may give some guidance/hints if required. Note language use for Debriefing stage 2 below.

Allow between 10–15 minutes for group discussion.

Debriefing (1) The solution?
What was the problem? What did the groups identify as the problem? How did they identify the problem? (What clues were there etc.)
How to deal with the problem? What solutions to the problem did the groups come up with? Compare/contrast.

Debriefing (2) Consciousness-Raising
Ask ‘secret observers’ to reveal the language use they had noted during their activities, teacher may add his/her own observations.
Use consciousness-raising (C-R) techniques to raise learners’ awareness of what language they had used during the activity and the function/s that the language served.

Debriefing (3) Sociocultural Awareness-Raising
Ask learners to think about and discuss how they felt in the position of newcomer with no language skills, having to deal with an urgent problem with the authorities. Personal examples of being in this situation may be prompted here.

*Materials*

**(1)** Prompt

You have just immigrated to xxxx. You have been here 2 months. You are living in a rented apartment. You cannot yet speak the language. Today, this letter came through your door . . .

**(2)** Letter: English

*BSP*

The occupier
Apartment 3a, Dublin Road
Hospital

*BSP*

Telephone: 045–32019457
Email: energy@BSPaccounts.com
2nd February 2011
Third and final advice.
Account no. 21048943
Amount due: €376.21

*NOTICE OF ELECTRICITY DISCONNECTION*

Settlement of this account is now 28 days’ overdue. **Unless we receive full payment immediately we will have no alternative than to disconnect the supply of electricity to the above property as of 9th February 2011.**

Signed:
Managing Director
BSP
Modes of delivery

Freda Mishan

Introduction: The mode continuum

Once upon a time there was the language teacher interacting directly with the learners. During the early years of the EFL boom, from the 1970s, the printed coursebook, mediated by the teacher, became the default mode of delivery for language learning materials. The print medium was gradually supplemented by audio and audio-visual materials which altered the dynamic between student, materials and teacher. The growth of technology and its use for language learning further complicated this relationship. This chapter looks at modes of delivery of language learning materials, on the continuum from the ‘stand-alone teacher’ through ‘blended learning’ (a combination of face-to-face and computer-mediated instruction), to self-access materials. It analyses their fit with what we know about second language acquisition and language development, and examines the idea that ever-closer interconnection with technology has led our learners, the ‘digital generation’, to evolve unique ways of learning.

Teacher talk

In L1 learning, the parent or caregiver is generally the largest source of language input. Historically this was the case in second language teaching. But as English Language Teaching (ELT) became big business and methodologies for language teaching developed, dominated by the communicative approach, ‘teacher talk’ came to be frowned upon, with trainee teachers encouraged to reduce Teacher Talking Time (TTT). More recently, this attitude has been criticized as a simplistic focus on quantity over quality which neglects the multiple functions that teacher talk fulfils (Walsh, 2002). The burgeoning area of research into classroom discourse (Walsh, 2006; Farr, 2011) recognizes the vital role that teacher talk plays in managing what happens in the language classroom. Decentralized modes of learning and peer interaction form the basic pedagogic configurations of most current approaches. But this should not be at the cost, Walsh argues, of essential language
learning supports the teacher provides, such as encouraging repair strategies, error correction and generally managing classroom interaction: ‘teachers should and indeed do play a more central role than that advocated under both Communicative Language Teaching and Task Based Language Learning’ (2006, p. 3). The TTT ‘edict’ is also somewhat at odds with the contemporary concern with exposing learners to authentic spoken language, coming in particular out of the field of corpus linguistics, which exposed the overuse of written language paradigms in language teaching materials (McCarthy, 1995). So, it is argued by some practitioners, what better authentic spoken language than teacher talk? ‘Constructively used, it has enormous potential’, asserts Timmis (2010, p. 70). Using teacher-generated material has the added benefit of forging the class’s relationship with their teacher, while increasing student motivation and participation, as Davies (2002) found in an experiment using ‘teacher-generated biography’ as classroom material.

‘Storytelling’ in general is probably the most ancient technique for L2 learning. In the last decade or so, there has been growing interest in storytelling for L2 learning, supported by arguments such as Cook’s: ‘If language teaching were to really engage with a wide and representative sample of language use, it would include a far greater proportion of nonsense, fiction, and ritual and many more instances of language use for aggression, intimacy and creative thought’ (2000, p. 193) (see also Chapter 5 by Irmka-Kaarina Ghosn). Teacher resource book titles reflecting such a storytelling approach include Wright’s Storytelling with Children (2009) and Wajnryb’s Stories (2003). Yet contemporary calls for a return, or at least a reassessment of the teacher’s place at the centre of learning, can be juxtaposed against the pull of technology against it. This is the quandary addressed in the rest of this chapter.

**Blended learning**

The use of social media and Web 2.0 technologies is ever more prevalent today in most Western educational environments. This suggests that we are approaching ‘normalisation’ of technology in education, that is, its ‘natural’ integration into pedagogic practice. Blended learning (combining face to face teaching with use of technology) is thus becoming the norm in many contexts, a factor of what Chapelle calls the ‘vertical spread’ of computer assisted language learning (CALL) throughout language materials and curricula (2008, p.1). In this section, some blended learning activities are examined in terms of their application of valid SLA principles and the pedagogy/ies in which these are embedded.

A useful starting point for this is the set of conditions for SLA relevant to multimedia CALL identified by Chapelle:

1. The linguistic characteristics of target language input need to be made salient.
2. Learners should receive help in comprehending semantic and syntactic aspects of linguistic input.
3. Learners need to have opportunities to produce target language output.
4. Learners need to notice errors in their own output.
5. Learners need to correct their linguistic output.
6 Learners need to engage in target language interaction whose structure can be modified for negotiation of meaning.

7 Learners should engage in L2 tasks designed to maximize opportunities for good interaction.


Onto this, as was hinted above, we need to overlay other criteria which reflect new ways and styles of learning among our students, evolving out of the integration of technology into their lives. This is not to say that the fundamental principles of language acquisition, such as the need for input and interaction, have changed, but that our students’ ways of achieving these may have.

The age profile of the majority of EFL and ESOL students is probably around 18–33, that is, they are ‘Millennials’ (those who came of age around the Millennium). For most of these, in the West at least, technology is ‘normalised’ to the extent that it is a natural part of their environment. Within such an environment, the potential for instant communication has created a generation dependent on this. Continual interconnectedness is essential to the social lives of the Millennials (Oblinger, 2003; McNamara, 2011), with social networking sites such as Facebook the embodiment of this ongoing networking and community-building. More significantly, Millennials orient towards particular ways of learning. One is what Frand calls ‘Nintendo’ style learning, a ‘constant, persistent trial and error’ approach to problem-solving (Frand, 2000, p. 17), in preference to acting only after careful consideration. This way of learning implies the value attributed to ‘doing’ over ‘knowing’, in a society where ‘the ability to deal with complex and often ambiguous information’ can be more important than an accumulation of knowledge (ibid., p. 17). Such characteristics – an inherent inclination towards functioning as a group, and towards ‘learning by doing’ – have clear resonances with current pedagogic practices and the philosophies on which they draw. Notions of ‘shared cognition’ and of thinking and learning as ‘situated social practices’ (Hampel, 2010, p. 137) came out of early twentieth-century sociocultural theory and constructivist thought. The Web 2.0 tools that enable all this shared participation and community knowledge-building thus effectively make possible a sort of ‘philosophy in action’; ‘the emphasis on community and social networks in Web 2.0 has a strong connection to theories of social constructivism’ (Sturm et al., 2009, p. 371). This is the same philosophy underpinning the pedagogy that has come to be most closely associated with CALL – Task-based learning: ‘TBL and CALL share a series of theoretical antecedents, including [. . .] constructivist and social constructivist thought’ (Thomas & Reinders, 2010, p. 5).

In 2001, Chapelle speaks of ‘the unique nature of technology-mediated tasks learners can engage in for language acquisition’ (2001, p. 2). Mishan puts task firmly at the centre of CALL, and asserts that task as conceived in language pedagogy, has in many ways found its ‘raison d’etre’ in the electronic medium: ‘Despite being conceived before the digital age, the characterisation of task as free-standing, goal-focused and learner-driven in nature, is perfectly in tune with the work modes have come to be associated with using the internet’ (Mishan, 2010, p. 150). Then, with the publication of Thomas and Reinders’ volume Task-Based Language Learning and Teaching with Technology (2010) came a coherent pedagogical framework for the use of technology for language learning. The authors consider the suitability of Task-Based Language Teaching for use with the new media as self-evident: ‘TBLT is based on promoting real-world authentic tasks in the target language at a time when 1.5 billion people in the world have access to global forms of
technology-mediated communication, from laptop computers to mobile phones, from [ . . . ] GPS to social networking sites’ (Thomas & Reinders, 2010, p. 3). The task authenticity that the authors refer to here is a major factor in giving technology-mediated tasks SLA credibility.

Task based learning (TBL) is described in some detail in Chapter 17; in brief, it is a methodology in which learners communicate in the target language to complete a task, and in which the detailed discussion of language use follows the activity as part of a post-task debriefing. Its validity lies in its basis in many of the things we know about language acquisition. One is that acquisition is promoted through purposeful and meaningful interaction in the TL, which in TBL is a factor of the task–goal. While carrying out language tasks, there are occasions when learners will need to ‘negotiate for meaning’, that is, recast their utterances to clarify their intent. This focuses attention on these utterances, the phenomenon known as ‘noticing’ (Schmidt, 1990) which is widely agreed to be essential for converting input to intake, that is, for language acquisition. The fact that noticing is easiest in written texts, was highlighted in early claims for the usefulness of computer mediated communication tasks (Warschauer, 1997). This became particularly significant as Web 2.0 tools came on board, for noticing features of that ephemeral mode, conversation, in ‘written-spoken’ varieties such as blogs, the language on social networking sites, email and online text chat.

The three sections that follow illustrate learning tasks using three different technologies – with the rider, of course, that many more can be found in the literature on CALL: for example, in Thomas and Reinders (2010); Thomas (2009); the online journals ReCALL and Language Learning and Technology Journal. I have restricted technologies to ones easily accessible and useable on standard desktop PCs running Windows XP or similar, or, in the third section, to mobile phones.

**Webquests**

Perhaps the technology-mediated task that most closely resembles classic TBL in structure and pedagogy, is the webquest. Webquests are technology-mediated research projects in which most or all of the information is sourced online and on which learners work individually or in groups. The concept is obvious enough as it emulates general web-searching, but it has been given methodological support on the Webquest.org site (http://webquest.org/index.php) which provides a template within which teachers can design their own webquests. Echoes of the TBL framework can clearly be seen in Table 18.1.

**TABLE 18.1 Webquest template from webquest.org**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Introduction</th>
<th>Sets the stage for the task</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Task</td>
<td>States the task goal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process</td>
<td>Gives the steps that students will have to follow to achieve this goal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>States how the achievement of the goal will be evaluated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>Suggests the anticipated learning outcomes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

www.ztccprep.com
Webquest.org is also a repository of webquests designed by other teachers of all disciplines including English and other languages, so teachers can source ones relevant for their learners by means of the key word search tool. In the webquest ‘Simply the best’ (designed by the author and available online at http://questgarden.com/137/48/1/120104043405/), the goal is for learners, working in groups, to set up an online platform for their favourite sports star, with the goal of convincing their classmates that their star is ‘the best’. The process consists of sourcing information, images, videos, etc. for the site, and the culmination of the project, a class vote for ‘the best’ star, serves as the evaluation stage. The ‘conclusion’ constitutes awareness-raising activities for both language forms and learning strategies.

Working on tasks like this offers many of the opportunities for language acquisition discussed above. Collaborative information-gathering tasks involve peer discussion and negotiation, and there are also the sort of ‘group knowledge construction’ activities which coincide with Constructivist learning principles. Webquests usually involve periods of individual web research work, and where the webquest involves creation of a new resource, the teacher’s role as facilitator comes into play, in guiding students to recognize any errors in, and correct, their language output. Incentive – and hopefully concomitant motivation – can be built into webquests by the teacher-designer, in the form of some sort of competition (as in ‘Simply the best’), award of credits or purely the satisfaction of authoring something for their peers/the public domain. Webquests are classic TBL tasks in that they are intrinsically authentic at the level of both skills and content; they require learners to search authentic sources and to use and hone transferable technical and critical skills such as searching and selecting useable information from the web. They also pass the true test of task authenticity, they are non-level dependent and can be adjusted to suit all levels of language proficiency.

Online text chat

Online Text Chat in which users type conversations in real time, has both practical and pedagogical attractions for teachers. First of all, it is easy to set up and use, involving an online link to and/or registration with an online chat room. Gabbly.com, for instance, links users straight into a live chat room. A site such as Sharedtalk (www.sharedtalk.com), on the other hand, is more regulated and requires users to register before choosing and chatting in a choice of language chat rooms. Online Text Chat involves the peculiar hybrid variety characterized as ‘written conversation’, while involving dynamic real time interactions between chatters. This mode of communication, so close to conversation but mediated by the keyboard, fulfils many of the criteria for language acquisition discussed above. Studies have revealed enhanced noticing in student chatters (e.g. Lai & Zhao (2006); Shekary & Tahririan (2006)). Shekary and Tahririan showed that this acted as a contributor to subsequent L2 learning especially if followed up as output and/or by focused work on the printed transcript of the chat (2006, p. 570). Lai and Zhao’s research revealed students negotiating for meaning, and noticing this negotiation, thanks to the text-based nature of the interaction, and they conclude that ‘text-based online chat has some advantages over face-to-face conversation in facilitating noticing’ (Lai & Zhao, 2006, p. 116). Online Text Chat is, above all, collaborative and social. Chatters ‘scaffold’ each other’s outputs, constructing meaning together. The energy and excitement this creates makes the task itself rewarding and deeply engaging,
with obvious implications for motivation. Part of the frisson of using chat is, as with the use of other social media, that users become part of a real online community (ibid., p. 558, see also Mishan, 2007).

**mLearning**

The technology with which most students are most familiar is undoubtedly the mobile or cell phone. Eminently portable, with ever more sophisticated applications (or ‘apps’) and in possession of practically every student (according to the mobile marketing group mobiThinking, 77 per cent of the world’s population have a mobile phone), it is not surprising that there is increasing interest in the use of the mobile phone for language learning.

The features of mLearning (also known as MALL, mobile assisted language learning) which most appeal to educators, have been summarized as ‘portability, social interactivity, context sensitivity, connectivity, individuality, and immediacy’ (Lan et al., 2007). This makes for one element of its appeal, ‘its ability to deliver learning resources to those who may otherwise be unable to attend traditional learning environments such as classrooms and provide a practical and personal way to learn’ (GSMA, 2010, p. 6). Secondly, mLearning has an advantage over CALL in that mobile phones can be useable in places where networked computers may not be. This makes for its popularity in parts of the world slower to be networked, such as Africa, which in 2010, had the highest mobile phone growth rate in the world (Crystal, 2011), and Bangladesh, where mobile telecommunication is the country’s fastest growing industry (statistics as of 2009, BBC World Service Trust).

Many of today’s mobile phones have many of the features and devices that PCs and laptops do, including internet connectivity, sound and video recorders, MP3 players, and digital cameras. As well as the obvious potential for synchronous communication and thus speaking and listening practice, learning material – vocabulary, grammar or reading texts – can be delivered to any mobile phone with online capability. The self-contained nature of the mobile will increasingly make it people’s primary, perhaps sole computing device (Godwin-Jones, 2011, p. 8), and thus a prime ‘learning hub’ as Wong and Looi (2010) term it.

In terms of pedagogy, practitioners soon realized the mobile’s potential for implementing constructivist precepts such as collaborative learning, co-construction of knowledge and community-building, framed within what Wong and Looi call ‘design-oriented activities; essentially out-of-class, often authentic and/or social mobile learning activities’ (Wong & Looi, 2010, p. 422).

Useful paradigms for mLearning tasks representing international practice and which range from content-based to design-oriented activities include:

- Using SMS to send regular vocabulary and other course-related messages to beginner-level Italian students in Australia (Kennedy & Levy, 2008).
- Using mobile phones to access the Internet to practice EFL listening in Korea (Nah et al., 2008).
- Using mobile smart phones (running MS Windows) for vocabulary development activities among primary school students in Singapore, in which students illustrate idioms using photos or videos with added captions (Wong et al., 2010).
MODES OF DELIVERY

Producing mobile phone video diaries, writing brief descriptions of them in the form of a blog (Gromik, 2009) (undergraduate Advanced English course students in Japan).

Using the recording devices on mobile phones to teach so-called soft business skills (i.e. interpersonal skills for selling, negotiating, persuasion, etc.) to Business English students in India, by recording mock interviews (Viswanathan, 2009).

Delivering mobile English lessons to subscribers nationwide: Bangladesh's first mobile educational language service, BBC Janala ('window'), was launched in 2009.

The distinguishing features of mLearning over other technologies are its mobility and portability. However, much of the experimentation to date with mLearning is not unique to the affordances of mobile computing, as Wong et al. (2010) freely admit with regard to their reported studies. Likewise, in their 2008 overview, Kukulska-Hulme and Shield note that published mobile learning studies rarely report using the phone for the purpose for which it was originally designed, that is, oral interaction and conclude: 'Mobility and portability too often seem not to be fully exploited in the design of MALL activities, even though it is precisely these affordances that justify using mobile devices at all' (Kukulska-Hulme & Shield, 2008, p. 280). Although the deficiencies in today's MALL techniques, like CALL before it, are doubtless a factor of its newness and will be redressed in time, this does beg the question as to whether mobile learning (currently) offers any 'added value' for language learning.

When used to ‘deliver’ content-based listening or written materials, mLearning can be seen to be grounded in the same classic input learning theories (Krashen, 1981) as other media. SMS messaging focused on specific language features as described in some of the studies above, could be claimed to stimulate noticing (Schmidt, 1990). With tasks involving peer interaction (e.g. posting comments on a wiki or bulletin board), interaction theories (Long, 1996) come into play. Moreover, as with many other Web 2.0 technologies, such tasks fulfil constructivist principles regarding the social context of learning, collaborative knowledge-building and problem-solving.

Turning to affective factors, given the importance of social networking and group identity to today’s students, one might assume they would welcome extending this into their language learning using their prime networking tool. Yet as Stockwell (2008) reveals in his investigation into learner preparedness for mobile learning, there can be quite strong psychological barriers to this. First of all, students identify their mobile phones with recreation and socializing, not education, raising the problem of face validity if used for this purpose. More seriously, to many young people, their mobile phone is their virtual social lifeline, and for those using iPhones, ‘the responsive touchscreen interface seems to create a more personal, even intimate connection, becoming part of one’s personal identity’ (Godwin-Jones, 2011, p. 8), thus creating an ‘emotional bond’ (ibid.). Exploiting for pedagogical purposes a device with which students have a veritable relationship might be seen as intrusive and cause resentment.

Alternatively, students may be happy to extend this relationship to embrace their language learning. Using their mobile phones is part of students’ lifestyle and is thus authentic in a way that using other technologies may not be. Their use for learning blurs the line between the classroom and ‘real life’, what Wong et al. (2010) call ‘seamless learning’, that is, ‘continuity of the learning experience across different environments (formal and informal contexts; individual and social learning)’ (Wong et al., 2010, p. 16). Precisely because of the authenticity of the medium to
students, however, it is essential for it not to be abused by inauthentic tasks: Lee, for example, notes how a group of youngsters in one study considered participating in a mobile forum on local citizenship a ‘waste’ of phone credit – because they were all members of a group who could easily meet face-to-face to discuss the issue (Lee, 2006, p. 15).

To conclude, with appropriate design and implementation, ‘MALL has the potential to assist learners at the exact point of need and in ways that are congruent with learners’ increasingly mobile, always-connected lifestyles’ (Shield & Kukulska-Hulme, 2008, p. 249). As Godwin-Jones warns, this is not a trend that language educators can afford to ignore (2011, p. 8) – for to do so would be neglecting what could become the ultimate tool for learner autonomy in the future.

**Self-access CALL materials**

At the far end of the delivery mode continuum come self-access CALL materials. The self-access materials discussed here, in ascending order of the autonomy required of the learner, are coursebook companion websites, general language learning websites and courseware.

Some of the earliest of the ‘modern’ language teaching materials were in fact self-access materials – that is, those used in the audiolingual labs of the 1960s. Although the language learning theory on which these drew, behaviourism has been largely discredited as a pedagogy, the interactional paradigm, of the lone learner interacting with technology, remains the same today. In the self-access programmes of the 1970s onwards, the much-lauded ‘interactiveness’ that became the buzzword as soon as the technology permitted, cashed in on the pedagogy of the Communicative Approach to language teaching; an arguably devious ambiguity that identified technical capability with human communication. The extent of ‘interaction’ was mouse-click activities such as gap-filling, clicking multiple-choice options and hyperlinks, and ‘dragging and dropping’ words or text – basically the same ‘drill and practice’ activities used in behaviourism.

Many of the original language learning websites that sprang up from the 1990s onwards, consisted of materials that were effectively coursebook exercise lookalikes migrated to online environments; ‘The learner is faced with a technologically advanced, consumer-friendly version of his textbook from the sixties, with Web pages created by designers who know more about Web design than about new methodological approaches in language learning’ (Vogel, 2001, p. 139). This was in part indicative of what Gruba terms ‘a poor understanding of task design principles for the new environment’ (2004, p. 72). From this somewhat dismal beginning, then, it is interesting to investigate how language learning sites have developed since.

The largest ELT publishing houses offer separate companion sites for teachers and students for all their biggest sellers. Oxford University Press’s sites therefore include the *Headway*, *English File* and *Business Result* series, Cambridge University Press’s include *Touchstone*, *Interchange* and *Ventures*, while Macmillan and Pearson Longman have sites for *Inside Out* and *Cutting Edge*, respectively.

The teachers’ sites primarily offer tips for teaching as well as some supplementary materials, all of which involve teacher mediation. What is of interest for the purposes of this section are the students’ sites, which are intended for self access and where the materials correspond to and supplement the coursebook units. They offer ‘interactive’ grammar, vocabulary and listening
activities, as well as games. As the companion sites are an extension of their coursebooks, the materials on each mirror their style, focus and quality.

As for ‘independent’ language learning websites, today there are literally thousands available, of hugely varying quality; substantial lists are available on portals such as ‘ICT4LT’ (www.ict4lt.org), the ‘I love languages’ site (www.ilovelanguages.com) or Dave’s ESL café (www.eslcafe.com). Two of the best sites are the British Council ‘learn English’ site (http://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/en/) and the BBC’s World Service site, ‘learning English’ (www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish). These offer multimedia for listening and viewing as well as reading materials, interactive games, grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation exercises and quizzes, examination pages (e.g. IELTS) and social media (facebook, twitter and blogs).

The texts on the BBC and British Council sites are provided in both written and audio format. They are up to date and lively, and range between authentic texts, simplified texts and texts created specifically for learners. They include materials such as simplified news items (‘Words in the News’ on the BBC site), purpose-designed podcasts and opportunities for student contribution via blogs, message boards, etc.

A trawl through both the coursebook companion sites and these two general language learning sites quickly reveals one common trait. What the cutting-edge technology, multimedia functionality and diverse activities vying for space on the page all fail to hide, is that the underlying pedagogical repertoire used in the ‘interactive’ activities remain basically unchanged. Beneath the colourful graphics and technical interactivity lurk the default permutations of multiple-choice, gap-fill, matching, error-spotting, text manipulation and comprehension check.

The pedagogical principle of gap-fill, for example, is fulfilled by drag-and-drop and fill-the-blank activities and these are used variably for grammar, vocabulary and comprehension checking. A Flash game in *English for Life* Intermediate,¹ in which the learner moves an anteater up and down in order to ‘eat’ the ant carrying the correct word to complete a gapped sentence, illustrates just one of the many permutations of gap-fill, with the anteater game used in *English for Life* to practise grammar and vocabulary. Gap-fill is also used for listening practice activities where students write in a gapped transcript on the printout of the passage (*English for Life*, all levels).

Discounting the somewhat spurious ‘interactivity’ of the anteater game, neither of the above activities is any more genuinely interactive than working on coursebook exercises. The listening material is offered in basically the same way as it is in the printed coursebook, the only difference being that in this ‘self-access’ version, the learner controls the audio him/herself and has access to the complete transcript.

Almost as ubiquitous as the gap-fill in these sites is the principle of text manipulation, usually done at sentence level or less frequently at discourse level, which is worked into a variety of exercises and games. In *English File Advanced*, for instance, learners unscramble sentences by clicking words in the correct order to make sentences using the verb to have.² The same format is used in *Headway Advanced* for adjective order³ and in *American English File’s The Space Game*, which practises such language as reporting verbs,⁴ except that in the games, users ‘race against the clock’. Text reconstruction is hardly an innovative use of interactive media for language learning. It was the basis of one of the original (and hugely successful) software packages, *Fun with Texts* (designed by Graham Davies for Camsoft), dating from 1985. English File’s Textbuilder,
which requires learners to read then reconstruct a short text from memory, having removed 25, 50 or 100 per cent of the words, is a latter-day version of this.

Multiple-choice is deployed in various guises for grammar, vocabulary and functional language practice, and, of course, comprehension checking. Much is effectively print-based material, as in the following example, the only ostensibly ‘interactive’ exercise featured in the promising-sounding ‘funky phrasals’ section of the BBC site:

Which of the phrasal verbs complete these sentences?
I used to love that TV show when I was a child, it really . . .

- takes me back.
- grows up.
- brings me up.
- stands up for itself.
- gets on well.

In a surprising proportion of materials on these sites, interactivity is eschewed entirely, with materials consisting of lists of ‘print-ready’ pdf worksheets for printing off, as offered by Inside Out in its ‘e-lessons’ and Cutting Edge’s grammar worksheets. On Pearson Longman’s adult level ‘Online Activity Archive’, 11 of the 13 activities are pdfs.

What the above examples illustrate is that in much of the material, the potential for exercise design offered by the media – and today, that means Web 2.0 technologies – is vastly underexploited. This is the same comment that was made about the early ELT websites of two decades ago (by Vogel (2001) and Gruba (2004)). Their design remains rooted in Web 1.0 frameworks of static content and one-way information transfer and they still remain basically electronic forms of traditional exercise templates.

Multiple-choice, gap-fill and drag-and-drop activities all work on the same language learning principle, requiring the student to recognize the correct word or phrase to complete a sentence. As Tomlinson points out (2011, p. 414–15), such exercises are limited to testing and helping to develop knowledge of language systems. With the exception of text manipulation activities with longer texts (such as English File’s Textbuilder), which can help develop knowledge of discourse features, these exercises will tend to develop accuracy of form at sentence level only. Concomitantly, they appeal to a narrow range of learning style, mainly to analytic and visual learners. Neither do they offer development of the full range of language skills – there are no opportunities to practise interactional skills, for instance, as this obviously requires an interlocutor.

A fundamental problem with many of the activities on these sites as materials for independent study is that they provide answers and scores but not feedback. Thus, what students can learn from working with such material depends largely on their willingness and ability to stop and examine their errors, or to consult a teacher or peer. This hints at the importance of overlaying the human interface onto technology-based work. In one study typifying this, the largest learning gain from doing multiple-choice comprehension questions online was shown to be as a result of student pairs working collaboratively, that is, it had to do with the pedagogy rather than the technology (Murphy, 2007). Another concern with regard to the benefit from coursebook companion websites
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is face validity. Designed as optional self-access materials, learners may not feel the sites have much added learning value as compared to their teacher-mediated class work with the same coursebook.

The redeeming features of these sites are the materials which best exploit the media, engage the user and involve a ‘challenge’: the games. The inclusion of games indicates that site designers are in tune with the expectations, mindset and learning styles of their (largely) ‘Millennial’ users. The games on offer include interactive crosswords, videogames, social media games, word searches and word-building, some, of course, familiar in ‘hard copy’ in the classroom.

Other useful features of some of the sites are ones which look outward to the world of the web. New English File’s ‘Weblinks’ section, for instance, links to authentic sites on topics related to each unit; English Express’s ‘English out there’ section recommends authentic sites for students to familiarize themselves with English and American culture, as well as some sites for making ‘e-pals’ (electronic penpals). Both the BBC and British Council sites offer various tools for adding comments, tweeting, blogging and sharing on Facebook. Applications like this which encourage genuine communication between users do provide more opportunities for developing pragmatic or procedural knowledge of the language.

Ultimately, coursebook companion sites do what they are designed to do, that is, provide easily accessible out-of-class supplementary material for the independent student whose prime learning forum is the classroom. In contrast, the BBC and British Council sites are online compendia of up-to-date news, articles, learning activities and networking tools which have a lot to offer, particularly to distance learners who do not have recourse to a conventional classroom set-up. As ‘flagship’ British sites for language learning, they tend to be somewhat Anglo-centric in content and perspective, but they do give students a window into the English-speaking world where they can pursue topics of interest, link up with other learners and work at their own pace. This last feature emerges as a significant advantage of using language learning courseware, to which we now turn.

Language learning courseware

Language learning websites are designed to offer students self-access, supplementary materials. Language learning courseware, on the other hand, is designed as stand-alone material for independent study and as such is a de facto ‘coursebook’ in electronic form. Language courseware today is delivered either via CD ROM or online, and can include a host of multimedia features ranging from audio and audio-visual material to automatic speech recognition (ASR) capabilities. Some is designed for networked use in educational settings, such as that produced and/or distributed by companies such as DynEd, Wida and Clarity Language Systems. Other courseware is designed for the independent learner, such as the popular Rosetta Stone, which uses a ‘direct method’ in which learners match spoken TL vocabulary and expressions to pictures.

Some of the better courseware, such as Clarity’s Tense Buster, builds in solid pedagogical principles such as awareness raising and hypothesis testing while resisting the lure of cutting edge technology. Other programs do adopt high-end technology; Auralog’s Talk to Me series,
for example, uses ASR which enables learners to interact with the program for conversational and pronunciation practice, and individual feedback. Technology which enables multimedia glosses (graphic, textual and audio-visual) for reading and listening passages is today routinely used in courseware (in Movie Talk, published by EuroTalk, for instance) and can be created within most authorware (such as Clarity’s Exercise Generator). Such technologies have been claimed to assist learning by boosting fluency (e.g. ASR), with multimedia glosses being shown to benefit ‘comprehensible input’ while catering to a range of learning styles (e.g. ‘visualizers’ as well as ‘verbalizers’ (Mohsen & Balakumar, 2011, p. 143)).

There are also affective advantages that are a corollary of working in self-access mode which impact on language learning; using technology has been found to lower anxiety (this is indicated by Mohsen and Balakumar (2011), reviewing 18 articles on the use of CALL), partially, as Tsai found (2011), because students can work at their own pace in a stress-free environment. On the whole, the skills sets practised using courseware remain limited by the media, most notably, those essential for language learning; human interaction to engage in negotiating meaning and hone interactional skills.

In practice, however, courseware is often deployed in class settings, so students can interact with their peers and the teacher while working, these interactions ‘supplementing’ the courseware as it were. Indeed, students appear to prefer this ‘supported’ environment when using computer-based self-access materials, for reasons encapsulated in these subjects’ complaints in research into student attitudes to this mode of study; ‘It’s so boring to learn English this way. Nobody discusses with you’; ‘There is no teacher to help me when I have a question’ (Lu, 2010, p. 350). This compliments findings from a similar study, which revealed that while students appreciated the value of working with courseware, they rated it highest for writing, spelling and grammar practice and ultimately showed a marked preference for classroom-based teaching (Ayres, 2002). Ayres’ subjects considered that CALL should form an aspect of their studies only, leading him to conclude: ‘One of the clearest indications given from the study is that, like any learning tool, CALL work needs to be linked tightly within the course curriculum’ (Ayers, 2002, p. 248). In sum, the key to effective use of CALL seems to be integration as part of the curriculum, and use in class and teacher-mediated settings. It is also essential to factor in the pedagogical and cultural context when introducing self-access materials. A case study in this is Singapore, where there have been huge investments in educational technology, but where this has not been accompanied by the fundamental changes in pedagogy required for learners to profit from self-access facilities (Vallance et al., 2009).

**Conclusion**

One thing to have emerged in this chapter is that where materials fall short, this is not a factor of using technology per se, but more often due to a failure to imaginatively exploit it. Perhaps unsurprisingly, blended learning contexts combining the triumvirate of teacher, learner and technology emerge as the most successful in terms of language learning.

Gratifying though this may be for us as teachers, we must also recognize that in the ‘Millennial’, the Web has bred a far more confident, capable and multi-skilled learner than in a pre-digital age. It
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is important that we acknowledge and tap into these capabilities and that they drive considerations about modes of delivery. As Warschauer and Ware put it:

Youth use ICT interactively and purposefully, in ways that are increasingly hypertextual, connected, and communicative. Educators [. . .] need to [. . .] explore creative ways to tap into this rich, existing set of uses [. . .] educators must look for ways to acknowledge and even appropriate for themselves the creative and complex literacy practices that youth bring into schools. (2008, p. 21)

In order for our learning materials to fulfil students’ expectations and have face validity with them, we need to think creatively and to deliver the materials in multifaceted ways.

Notes

5 www.bbc.co.uk/apps/fil/worldservice/learningenglish/quizengine?quiz=105_phrasal1,pagerType=pa
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Language testing washback: The role of materials

Kathleen M. Bailey and Hitomi Masuhara

This chapter discusses the concept of washback in language assessment and how it may be related to materials designed to help learners prepare for tests and materials designed to facilitate language acquisition. The main focus is on the washback generated by large-scale, high-stakes, standardized tests and the published materials available to students worldwide.

Part one
What we know

Language assessment is both an academic discipline and a career track in applied linguistics. It encompasses conventional testing instruments and procedures, as well as alternative assessment procedures, including self-assessment and portfolios.

There have been many changes in language assessment over the years. (For reviews of early language testing history, see Clark, 1983 and Spolsky, 1993) These include a broadened understanding in terms of what should be measured. The focus has shifted from testing primarily linguistic competence to attempts to assess communicative competence and pragmatic abilities. In terms of scoring, an earlier emphasis on objective scoring has grown into a combination of objective and subjective scoring, through the development of scoring rubrics and accepted procedures for determining inter- and intra-rater reliability. More recently, varied uses of technology have allowed computer-adaptive test delivery (Alderson, 2000; Dooey, 2008; Chapelle, 2009) and automated scoring (Burstain & Chodorow, 2002; Shermis & Burstein, 2003).

Traditionally language tests have been evaluated in terms of four criteria: reliability, validity, practicality and washback. We will briefly examine each one in turn as a way of contextualizing the importance of washback.
First, reliability is a matter of consistency. We want to know that language tests and rating systems are working uniformly well across test administrations. For example, if raters are evaluating learners’ essays, it would be very unfair if some raters were strict and others were lenient – or if raters started out being lenient but became more strict as they graded more papers, or started out strict and became more forgiving as they got tired.

The second criterion – probably the one that matters the most to us as teachers – is validity. There are many different subtypes of validity (Cumming & Berwick, 1996), but essentially this issue is the question of whether a test actually measures what it is supposed to measure. This concern is partly a matter of how we define the construct(s) to be assessed, but it also involves the scoring criteria. For instance, if we are conducting oral proficiency interviews to assess students’ speaking skills, then the scoring criteria should be based on the components that make up the construct of speaking. If they are based solely on grammatical accuracy demonstrated during an oral proficiency interview, then we will not have gained much information about the students’ broader speaking abilities, such as fluency and pronunciation.

Third, practicality is the issue of how much work is involved and how many resources are consumed in developing, administering and scoring a test (Oller, 1979). The resources can include time, money, equipment, materials and human effort. Bachman and Palmer (1996) define practicality in terms of the available resources relative to the resources required.

Finally, there is washback, which has also been called ‘instructional value’ (Oller, 1979, p. 4). Washback has to do with the effect of a test on teaching and learning. It can be either negative or positive depending on our view of the desirable outcomes of language learning. If we feel, for instance, that a broad command of receptive academic English vocabulary is particularly important for university-bound students, then we would most likely approve of a test that emphasized the recognition and interpretation of vocabulary items in reading and listening passages. To the extent that such a test encouraged students to learn (and teachers to present and review) academic vocabulary, we would feel that that test had the potential for positive washback. If, however, we feel that a main goal of language teaching and learning is for students to be able to communicate orally in real time then we might see a high-stakes test that emphasized only academic vocabulary as exerting negative washback.

This contrast is well explained by Weigle and Jensen (1997), who note that ‘testing procedures can have both negative and positive effects on program and curriculum design and implementation’ (p. 205). They go on to say, ‘Test tasks should require the same authentic, interactive language use promoted in the classroom so that there is a match between what is taught and what is tested’ (ibid.). When assessment procedures are aligned with instructional goals and activities, positive washback results, because ‘there is no difference between teaching the curriculum and teaching to the test’ (ibid.).

One difficulty related to washback arises because students often have two competing goals. Their long-term goal may be to improve their language proficiency, whether for work, immigration, education or social purposes. Their short-term goal, however, may be to pass a particular high-stakes test with satisfactory marks. These competing goals can lead to questionable behavioural choices. For example, in an intensive English programme I directed in the early 1990s, the teachers would sometimes get frustrated because the week prior to the administration of the old paper-and-pencil TOEFL, students would frequently skip class in order to stay home and study high-level grammar rules and archaic vocabulary items, on the expectation that these elements of English would be tested.
Ideally, assessment tools and procedures exert a positive influence on teaching and learning, a point we will return to below when we discuss materials and washback. In recent years there has been quite a bit of research on washback. (For a reference list of books and articles about washback please visit www.tirfonline/resources/references and scroll down to washback.)

**What we think we know**

Alderson and Wall (1993) note that for washback to be detected, the influence of a test on teachers and learners must involve them in activities ‘they would not necessarily do otherwise because of the test’ (p. 117). Messick (1996) echoes this view. He said that washback refers to the extent to which the introduction and the use of a test influences language teachers and learners to do things they would not otherwise do, and that these actions would either promote or inhibit language learning (p. 241). Berry (1994) defined washback as ‘the effect a test has on classroom practice’ (p. 31). This view was broadened when she said that washback involves ‘how assessment instruments affect educational practices and beliefs’ (p. 41). An even wider definition comes from Peirce (1992), who said that washback is ‘the impact of a test on classroom pedagogy, curriculum development, and educational policy’ (p. 687). A related concept is the *systemic validity* of a test: the integration of a new test into the educational system, followed by subsequent evidence that the use of the new test can improve learning (Shohamy, 1993, p. 4).

The influence of high-stakes language tests on materials development is most clearly and directly seen in the publication of test preparation materials. These products are used both by individual learners studying independently and by students enrolled in test preparation courses. Such materials are typically produced for widely used ‘high stakes’ standardized tests – those that can have a major impact on students’ lives because of the influence the scores exert in important decisions, such as college admissions and job placement or advancement. The combination of the wide use and importance of such high-stakes tests practically guarantees that there will be a broad market for test preparation materials.

Arguably the three major international tests of English as a second or foreign language are the TOEFL (the Test of English as a Foreign Language), the TOEIC (the Test of English for International Communication) and IELTS (the International English Language Testing System). Students who wish to take these tests can access a dizzying array of test preparation materials. For example, the IELTS – a product of the University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations group – is supported by publications from Barron’s, Cambridge University Press, Kaplan, McGraw Hill and Oxford University Press, among others.

Several commercial publishers produce TOEFL preparation materials, including Barrons, Cambridge University Press, Delta Publishing Company, Kaplan, Longman and McGraw-Hill. Educational Testing Service – the parent organization of TOEFL Programme – also produces materials to help students prepare for this test. Access to such resources can be found online at www.ets.org/toefl/ibt/prepare/. Some of these materials cover the test in general, while others focus on specific skills or knowledge sets. (See, for example, Stafford-Ylmaz & Zwier’s (2005) TOEFL vocabulary preparation book.)

TOEIC preparation materials are also produced by a range of publishers, including Barron’s, Cambridge University Press, Compass Publishing, Encomium, International Thomson, Longman,
Washback has also been studied with regard to important local examinations, and one manifestation of such washback has been in materials development. For instance, Cheng (2002) noted that when the major secondary school exam was changed in Hong Kong, the quick development of new test preparation materials was one demonstrable result of the changed test. Using a model which discussed the participants, processes and products of washback (Bailey, 1996), Cheng (2002) identified publishers as participants, materials development as a process and new teaching materials as a product (p. 107).

Cheng's (2005) investigation dealt with the washback exerted by the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE), an exam taken by secondary school students, when a new version of that test was implemented. As Cheng (2005) explains, ‘The goal of this exam change was to improve the current English language teaching and learning standards in Hong Kong secondary schools’ (p. 4). The new exam reflected curriculum revisions, including students performing ‘simulated “real-life” tasks’ (ibid.), rather than doing multiple-choice items. An oral component was also more heavily weighted in the new test, in order to encourage the teaching and practicing of speaking and listening in schools. Thus, for those who believed Hong Kong students’ oral skills were lacking, these developments would be seen as instances of positive washback.

In the case of washback from the HKCEE, Cheng (2005) notes that textbook publishers offered workshops for teachers whose students would face the new exam. These workshops ‘received the largest teacher participation’ (p. 121), compared to those offered by tertiary institutions and the Hong Kong Examination Authority:

Textbook publishers provided their understanding of the proposed changes and showed how they had integrated the changes into practical language activities in their textbooks. They demonstrated, in some detail, to the teachers how these language teaching and learning activities and tasks could be carried out in the classroom, including suggestions about how much time should be devoted to particular activities. (ibid.)

Indeed, Cheng (2005) points out that one strategy textbook publishers use to sell books ‘is to provide full support to the teachers’ (p. 122). Published HKCEE test preparation materials generated for the new exam typically included student books and workbooks, cassettes, a teacher’s manual, additional materials and practice tests (ibid.). To the extent that these materials and the supporting workshops helped teachers develop their knowledge, skills and confidence, these results would also be examples of positive washback.

To the best of my knowledge, there are relatively few published studies specifically about washback and test preparation materials and/or courses. One such study was conducted in the United States, where Alderson and Hamp-Lyons (1996) investigated TOEFL preparation courses. They compared the same two teachers teaching TOEFL preparation classes and other classes. Among their findings were the following noteworthy points:

1. Test-taking is much more common in TOEFL classes.
2. Teachers talk more and students have less time to talk in TOEFL classes.
There is less turn-taking and turns are somewhat longer in TOEFL classes.

Much less time is spent on pair work [in TOEFL classes].

The TOEFL is referred to much more in TOEFL classes.

Metalanguage is used much more in TOEFL classes.

TOEFL classes are somewhat more routinized.

There is much more laughter in non-TOEFL classes (pp. 288–9).

The image that emerges from reading this list is that of rather serious, teacher-fronted lessons.

In New Zealand, Hayes and Read (2004) investigated IELTS preparation classes at two schools, which they called School A and School B. In School A, the IELTS preparation class was taught by ‘Teacher A’, who had had 30 years of teaching experience and 2 years of experience teaching the IELTS prep course, and was also an IELTS examiner. The course lasted for 4 weeks and consisted of 22 hours of instruction. It emphasized the structure of IELTS and test-taking strategies. At School B, ‘Teacher B’ had had 7 years teaching experience, 3 years teaching IELTS preparation and was not an IELTS examiner. The course lasted 4 weeks and consisted of 28 hours of instruction. It emphasized test familiarization and language development. Hayes and Read (2004) found that on average students laughed once a day in the IELTS preparation class at School A. In contrast, at School B students laughed an average of 11 times per day in the IELTS preparation class. These authors noted that students laughed most often in group or pair activities, which were more common at School B. Thus two different teachers covering approximately the same overall course goals emphasized different issues, with Teacher B encouraging language development and using pair and group work to do so.

To summarize what we know about language testing washback and materials, there is clearly a market for test preparation materials. Numerous commercial publishers have produced books, CDs, DVDs, flashcards, computer software and sample tests for that market, and many test preparation courses are offered by universities, intensive English programmes, and ‘cram schools’, such as the juku system in Japan. Thus it is not an exaggeration to say that there is an entire industry based on test preparation, and that the industry operates around the globe.

What we need to find out

The topic of washback is a fairly recent focus in language assessment research. It started in the 1990s with publications, for example, by Khaniya (1990), Alderson and Wall (1993), Shohamy (1993, 1992), Andrews (1994) and Prodromou (1995). Most of these early studies investigated the impact of language tests on teachers and teaching. Some dealt with the impact on students, via questionnaires and/or classroom observation, but relatively few actually documented student learning gains that can be directly attributed to the positive washback of a test. As Green (2006) has pointed out, ‘The washback effects of tests on teaching has attracted considerable attention over recent years, but the critical question of how this translates into washback on learning remains
under-explored’ (p. 113). Such an impact could be supported through the use of appropriate test preparation materials.

The New Zealand study (Hayes & Read, 2004) discussed above did in fact document student gains in the two IELTS preparation classes. The gains in band scores made by students after 4 weeks of instruction are reported in Tables 19.1 and 19.2.

**TABLE 19.1** Pre-test and Post-test data from School A (Hayes & Read, 2004)

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<thead>
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<th>Pre-test score</th>
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**TABLE 19.2** Pre-test and Post-test data from School B (Hayes & Read, 2004)

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</table>
Table 19.1 shows that of the nine students in the IELTS preparation course at School A, three students’ IELTS scores did not change (students 2, 6 and 9). The IELTS score of student 3 dropped by half a band, but the scores of four test takers (students 1, 4, 7 and 8) increased by half a band, and the score of student 5 actually increased by an entire band.

In the IELTS preparation course at School B, the scores of three students (6, 7 and 8) remained the same in the pre-test and the post-test. The score of student 2 dropped by half a band, and the scores of students 4 and 5 both increased by half a band. Surprisingly, the scores of students 1 and 4 both increased by a full band and a half. It was in Teacher B’s course that language development was emphasized.

The research design used by Hayes and Read in this instance is a one-group pre-test post-test design, which was used twice (once at School A and once at School B), so we cannot make strong causal claims. More investigations are needed in test preparation courses, including studies focusing on test preparation materials, to determine what effect, if any, they may have on students’ language development.

One potentially important washback process that may arise in test preparation courses is for the language learners to understand the scoring criteria that will be used to evaluate their performance, particularly on any direct tests of speaking or writing. For instance, if students and teachers know that the test-takers are expected to write a three-paragraph essay and that part of their scores depends on having an effective topic sentence for each paragraph, then it is likely that they will practice these tasks. This kind of focus can lead to positive washback, if we believe that the ability to write a three-paragraph essay with clear topic sentences is a good outcome.

However, some teachers and researchers have voiced concerns that scoring criteria which are too clearly defined and too limited may result in the narrowing of the curriculum. (Raimes, 1990.) If the composition test described above is an important component of a high-stakes test, then it is possible that teachers and students facing that exam will focus only on writing three-paragraph essays with clear topic sentences, to the exclusion of creative writing, or learning to write chemistry lab reports or producing effective business letters. Thus, we can see that it is important for test developers to carefully select tasks and articulate scoring criteria with input from the various stakeholders, including teachers, programme administrators, curriculum designers, the employers of adult learners and students themselves. Furthermore, for test preparation materials to exert a positive influence on learning and teaching, they must faithfully present the constructs measured by the test and the tasks students will face in taking that test.

In summary then we can articulate several desirable criteria for test preparation materials. A tentative list would include the following:

1. Test preparation materials should, of course, represent the most recent version of the test they are designed to support. If a test has been replaced or substantially updated, the support materials must change.

2. Such materials should address all the constructs measured by the exam, whether in a single publication or in combination. If a test includes listening comprehension, reading comprehension and vocabulary, but the test preparation materials focus only on vocabulary and reading comprehension, the students who use those materials may suffer.

3. Alternatively, for students who score low on particular sections of high-stakes examinations, or who are weak in certain skill areas, focused development may be helpful.
In this situation, targeted test preparation materials, such as *400 Must-Have Words for the TOEFL* (Stafford-Ylmaz & Zwier, 2005) may be helpful.

**4** Test preparation materials should go beyond test-taking strategies and actually promote language development. While it is apparently the case that learning test-taking strategies can help students improve their scores, the long-term goal must still be to increase their target language proficiency.

**5** Since test preparation materials can be used by both individuals and by groups of students in courses, they should promote opportunities for interaction. Likewise, the stimulus materials should be authentic or quasi-authentic. In fact, Bachman and Palmer (1996) have added authenticity and interactiveness to the criteria by which tests should be evaluated.

**6** Test preparation materials should promote good teaching. To take just one example, if the output hypothesis (Swain, 1995) is correct, students’ efforts to produce language actually promote language learning. Therefore, we may conclude that test preparation courses that are dominated by teacher talk (as seen in the study by Alderson & Hamp-Lyons, 1996) may detract from students’ efforts to improve their proficiency. So, for instance, when the new HKCEE was implemented, Cheng (2005) was able to document changes in teachers’ classroom behaviour that were directly influenced by the addition of ‘simulated real-life tasks’ (p. 4) and an oral component to the test (e.g. the teachers’ use of English in class increased).

**7** Test preparation materials should explain the scoring criteria associated with the exam and how to interpret the scores on the test. If students do not know how to read their test scores, they will not be able to use that information to improve their performance or their language proficiency.

Let us return briefly to the traditional criteria by which tests are evaluated, focusing on validity and reliability. Test preparation materials are, by definition, based on the test for which they were defined, so they can be no better than the test itself. It follows that if the test itself is a poor representation of the construct being measured the test preparation materials – no matter how closely they parallel the content and test methods used in the exam – will not generate positive washback.

Likewise, if the test or the testing procedures are unreliable, the meaningfulness of the students’ scores will be jeopardized and the feedback to learners and teachers provided by those scores will be less than fully helpful. However, many major test publishers work very hard to ensure the reliability of their published tests and their scoring procedures, so reliability is not as much a concern with regard to washback as is validity.

Nevertheless, the way in which scores are reported to test takers and their teachers is potentially related to positive washback. If students receive only an overall score they are not given much information about how to improve their language proficiency. If that score is accompanied by a prose description of what it means, students may gain a better idea about where to focus their language learning efforts. If the testing organization provides detailed profiles based on the learners’ performances, those students will be even better informed as to their strengths and weaknesses.
Part two

The washback effects on global coursebooks

The next question we would like to ask is what kinds of washback effects examinations may have on global coursebooks, not just the high stakes global examinations which are becoming more communicative but local examinations which, with some notable exceptions, still make use of such easy to design, easy to mark activities as true/false, sentence completion, gap filling and matching. Global coursebooks seem to be the flagship of ELT publishing (Gray, 2010) and are widely used all over the world (Tomlinson, 2008). It could be, therefore, that they are transmitting the washback effects of examinations to classrooms on a global scale. Degrees and kinds of washback effects through coursebooks, however, may depend on contextual factors such as the importance placed on both the exams and coursebooks by administrators and also the attitudes, needs and wants of teachers and learners (see Spratt (2005) for a review of studies on intervening factors and the roles teachers play).

We have looked at two intermediate level student books for General English for young adults/adults published in 2010–11 by major ELT publishers. Intermediate level is roughly the equivalent of The Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) level B1 which is described as:

Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans. (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 24)

We would welcome detailed content analysis of global coursebooks in terms of examination washback as our search brought up none (see Gray, 2010 for his content analysis of four coursebooks and Littlejohn, 2011 for discussion of principles and procedures for analysis of ELT coursebooks). For this chapter we will take snapshots of how typical testing methods copied originally from high-stakes examinations may have left their marks on coursebook activities.

Outcomes – Dellar and Walkley (2010)

According to the blurb and backcover, Outcomes claims to provide ‘Real English for the real world’. It emphasizes how it helps ‘students to succeed in social, professional and academic settings’ (blurb). It also claims that ‘CEFR goals are the focus of communication activities where students learn and practice the language they need to have conversations in English’.

A unit of Outcomes generally consists of five sections: Grammar, Vocabulary, Reading, Listening and Developing conversation. Writing tasks are given after every four units involving, for example, an email, story, and making requests.
Regarding the methodology, what strikes us is the repeated use of traditional testing techniques across different sections:

- Sentence completion
- Gap filling (NB different from sentence completion in a sense that there are longer co-texts than a sentence)
- Choice (similar to multiple-choice but only two options are given)
- True/false
- Correcting mistakes
- Translation and comparison between L1 and L2
- Matching (e.g. new vocabulary with definitions)
- Comprehension questions

Let us sample Unit 9 to see how these activities are used. The unit starts with a Vocabulary Section in which the learners are asked to match 12 words in a box with items in an illustration of a large English detached house. The next activity asks learners to identify which items of the illustration of a house they may have back home and which items they would rather not have. Then, in the next vocabulary activity, it introduces ten sentences describing different kinds of houses/flats with key words in bold. It then asks which words would describe the learners’ homes. A Language Patterns Section follows in which learners are asked to translate a sentence into their language and retranslate the L1 version back to English to compare the original English sentence with the converted English sentence. The next section is Listening in which they listen to an audio of Gavin and Lynn talking about their friends’ new flat. After listening to the audio, four comprehension questions follow. The Listening Section continues with eight sentence completion activities, then listening to the audio again to check if they got their answers right. The Listening section ends with a discussion activity with the following questions:

- Do you like the sound of Nick and Carol’s new place?
- How many times have you moved in your life? Why?
- Have you ever done any work on your place? What?
- Have you ever shared a room? How was it?

The Pronunciation Section explains how auxiliaries (do, does or did) are used to add emphasis. It asks the learners to look at eight sentences and guess where the stress might come before listening to the CD to check their answers and to practice saying the sentences with correct stress. A Developing Conversation Section asks learners to correct the mistakes in six sentences that include expressions of comparison. Then it asks learners to tell how big their rooms back home are to their partner. The Conversation Practice Section asks the learners to have a similar conversation to the one they heard in the Listening Section, with model expressions provided. This unit goes on to another Vocabulary Section before Reading sections. There are a few prediction
questions before learners are asked to read a text on difficulties in finding accommodation in Europe. The majority of activities are more or less similar to those already reported, for example, True/false, sentence completion. We have looked at other units and the authors’ approaches seem to be consistent with this sampled unit.

What seems to emerge from our review of *Outcomes* in terms of washback effects includes:

- Traditional testing techniques such as gap filling and matching are used as teaching techniques in order to draw attention to linguistic items (e.g. lexis, grammar and expressions) and to check the comprehension of listening and reading texts.
- The majority of activities are language focused and we did not see persuasive evidence to support the claims of ‘real English for the real world’.
- There does not seem to be a match between what *Outcomes* provides with what CEFR suggests in terms of language learning, teaching and assessment.
- Spratt (2005) discusses intervening factors of washback effects but we might like to add materials developers’ beliefs as one of the factors that has been overlooked.

**English Unlimited – Rea et al. (2011)**

*English Unlimited* claims to be a ‘goals-base course for adults, which prepares learners to use English independently for global communication’ (blurb). By goals it means ‘CEF goals at the core’ and ‘every unit contributes to achieving purposeful, real life objectives’ (backcover). By the use of the word ‘independently’ *English Unlimited* emphasizes the importance of learner autonomy and provides an e-portfolio DVD-Rom that ‘enables learners to build a portfolio of their own work, creating a real “can do” record of their progress’ (backcover). It also highlights their efforts in treating ‘intercultural competence as the “fifth skill”, leading to more sensitive and more effective communication’ (backcover). These claims seem to be in line with what the Council of Europe and their supporting experts are advocating. The map of *English Unlimited* shows that each unit consists of Goals, Language (i.e. vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation), Skills (i.e. listening, reading, speaking) and Explore. ‘Look again’ components, review sections, feature in all the units.

Let us look at a sample unit (Unit 7 ‘Personal qualities’) to see what kinds of footprints exams may have left. The goal of 7.1 is to ‘describe qualities you need for different activities’ (Rea et al., 2011, p. 54). The first activity is ‘Reading’ a newspaper article, ‘The 5-minute interview: Carlos Acosta’ the internationally renowned Cuban ballet dancer. The purpose of reading is specific and meaning-focused: to get an impression of what kind of person he is. The Post-reading activity is purposeful re-reading of the same text to seek four facts about the dancers’ life and two of his opinions. The next activity involves leaners closing the book and sharing recall with classmates. All the activities seem to reflect some aspects of what we may do in real life though we would have our own purpose for reading that determines how we read and what we would do after reading. The purpose of reading is given and some requirements such as spotting four facts and two opinions may give out a misleading signal that intensive reading is necessary. A Writing and Speaking Activity follows in which learners are asked to complete...
the sentences in the article as if they are the ones who have been interviewed. An effective and communicative use of the sentence completion technique. The next phase involves the learners forming pairs, reading out their sentences to each other and asking questions. After that, the learners are asked to report to the whole class the most surprising thing that they found about their partners.

The Vocabulary Section that follows asks learners to read the opinions of six individuals from different countries on what brings success. Phrases expressing qualities such as ‘have initiative’ and ‘have an open mind’ are highlighted in the six opinions. The next activity involves individually matching these qualities to occasions or occupations that may require them. Then they are asked to get together to find the similarity and differences in each other’s choices. Again matching is used in a meaning-focused way. Furthermore, this Vocabulary Section prepares the learners for the next Listening Section.

The Listening Section asks the learners to listen to a Ghanaian dancer about how she feels to be a dancer. The first activity asks for sequencing a jumbled list of topics in the order she refers to them. The sequencing is also a testing technique but it seems to be used for meaning-focused gist listening. The next activity involves listening to the CD again to match what the dancer points out as the qualities required to be a dancer. The last activity is for the pair or group to discuss if they agree with the statements taken from the CD, such as ‘Success is about being in the right place at the right time’ (p. 55).

The Vocabulary Section comes back next, focusing on what the dancer said about the necessary qualities in a job. The first activity asks the learners to read the sentences in a table and make a list of jobs that may require the kinds of qualities that the dancers talked about (e.g. someone who never gives up; the kind of person that can take rejection well). The second activity is an individual one that involves writing three or four sentences about his or her job and the qualities required for it. The example given is ‘Nursing is the kind of job that requires a lot of patience’ (ibid.).

What was done in the Vocabulary Section works as a preparation for the Speaking Section in which the learners are asked to tell each other about their jobs. The task is to find someone who is suitable for each job. After this pair or group work a plenary discussion takes place with learners reporting who they recommended for which jobs and why.

Unit 7 moves onto Unit 7.2 with different goals: describing personality and making comparison. The basic approaches are the same as the previous 7.1. Some traditional testing techniques such as true/false, matching, gap filling are used but they seemed to be used in a meaning-focused way and the activities flow coherently from one activity to another. There is a lot of revisiting the texts in reading and listening, increasing the amount of exposure to language in use. Gradual interpretation seems to be encouraged. There seems to be a general sequence of experiencing texts in reading or listening first, then the language being explored in Language Section next and lastly come Speaking or Writing. Each stage seems to prepare learners for the next step. The various activities seem connected to specified goals. The Look again Section is a review, which is slightly more traditional in its approach. The conventional gap-filing, matching and choice are used to check the mastery of vocabulary, pronunciation and lexical chunks. There are a few meaning-focused activities that require the use of the language learned. At the end of each unit there is a self-assessment table of ‘can do’ statements based on the specified goals.
What we have observed in our review of *English Unlimited* in terms of washback effects includes:

- Traditional testing techniques such as true/false and sentence completion are used in conjunction with pair or group discussion. Interestingly, the traditional testing techniques are used in a meaning-focused way as part of a series of coherent activities that gradually help the learners to interpret the texts. The use of these techniques in the review section seems more conventional, focusing more on language practice.

- Language sections are used to provide focused learning opportunities but also to prepare learners to re-interpret authentic/semi-authentic texts and also to be ready for oral and written communication as the target tasks.

- There seems to be a close match between what *English Unlimited* provides with what CEFR suggests in terms of language learning, teaching, and assessment.

We wondered what makes the differences between *Outcomes* and *English Unlimited*. Both make use of traditional testing techniques such as gap filling, true/false, etc. Yet, the former appears like an exercise book for practicing vocabulary, expressions and grammar whereas the latter gives an impression of a coherent book for communication with some focus on language. In the map, both list goals roughly based on CEFR. On a closer inspection of the maps of the two books, however, there are marked differences in the specifications. In the goal section, *English Unlimited* specifies communication goals. In addition, there is a target activity in the goals column. Target activities seem to be real life tasks such as ‘Describe a book or a TV show (Unit 1)’, ‘Talk about people who have influenced you (Unit 7)’ and ‘Choose a story for a news programme (Unit 14)’. The Language section is also somewhat different from a typical list of grammar or vocabulary items. For example, in Unit 7 of *English Unlimited* the Vocabulary section involves ‘Personal qualities’, ‘matching people to jobs and activities’ and ‘describing someone’s influence’. These language points cohere and connect well with the goal specifications and target activity.

In Unit 9 of *Outcomes*, for example, the first column in the map seems to state the aims/goals ‘(In this unit you learn how to) describe flats, houses and areas; add emphasis; make comparison; ask about rules’. These items may be loosely connected as a topic but ‘add emphasis’ seems to us to be a technique in communication, ‘make comparison’ seems to be more of a function or grammar item than a CEFR communication goal. The next column in the map is Grammar: ‘Comparing the past with now’. The column for Vocabulary follows: ‘Describing where you live’, ‘Describing changes’, ‘Describing areas’. These descriptions in the Vocabulary section read more like the entry in the CEFR list. It seems to us that *Outcomes* seems somewhat torn between different objectives: CEFR communication goals on the one hand, traditional grammar-based goals (with an emphasis on learning the lexical chunks and expressions) on the other.

We have checked two other global coursebooks published between 2011–12 to see if the following two characteristics of *Outcomes* are shared:

- Typical examination tasks are used for language practice;

- There is a conflict between the two objectives of nurturing communication skills and teaching grammar and vocabulary.
What we discovered is that the books share similar characteristics with *Outcomes*. The conflict between the objectives of nurturing communication skills and language knowledge is not new. Coursebook production has become costly and it involves various considerations (see Singapore Wala, 2003; Amrani, 2011 for publishers’ views). The global demands for communication skills of English as a lingua franca seem to be getting stronger but if the market still demands a grammar/vocabulary syllabus and traditional methods of teaching and testing then global coursebooks have to cater for such needs and wants in order to make ends meet. In this sense, *English Unlimited* is different in that it tries to realize what the Common European Framework of References advocates in learning, teaching and assessment in a coherent and focused way. What is remarkable about CEFR is that the syllabus, methods and assessment are designed to match each other. Methods and assessment specifications in CEFR are written as general suggestions and recommendations for methodologists, examiners and materials developers to put into practice.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion we would argue that the concepts of validity, reliability and positive washback can be applied when evaluating syllabuses, methods and materials. To facilitate such evaluations we have articulated the following criteria:

Examination and materials should

1. represent up-to-date understanding of language, language learning, language teaching and language assessment.
2. promote language acquisition and development.
3. help learners acquire and develop the knowledge, awareness and skills required for language acquisition and development.
4. promote good teaching and help teachers develop professionally.
5. match (in that what learners do in examinations should be what they typically do in the classroom).

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There is much in the chapters in this part to give cause for optimism. Chris Kennedy and Brian Tomlinson in Chapter 16 give examples of principled language policy and planning resulting in innovation in materials development. Freda Mishan in Chapters 17 and 18 gives many examples of principled and effective materials development, both in the application of current pedagogies such as the task-based and problem-solving approaches and in the principled development of web and mobile phone based materials. Kathy Bailey and Hitomi Masuhara in Chapter 19 give examples of positive washback from examination change on materials development and classroom practice, as well as of a global coursebook resisting negative washback effects from examinations. Unfortunately what all these authors also report is what almost all the authors in this book have lamented. Most commercial materials are still forms-based and are still dominated by such activity types as true/false, sentence completion, gap filling and matching. Many reasons have been offered for the persistence of approaches in coursebooks which are theoretically unsupported and I would just like to add that it is much easier to design discrete item activities, to use them for classroom tests and to mark them than it is to design holistic activities and to make use of them for classroom tests. Discrete item activities might have been introduced into the classroom by coursebooks making sure that their users are well-prepared for conventional language examinations but they have persisted because they are popular with teachers. They are especially popular with teachers who lack the confidence to teach and test communicatively. Many such teachers are required by their institutions to test their students regularly (in some countries, every week) and they make use of discrete item tasks in their coursebooks to do so. Many such teachers also have to prepare their students for school and national examinations which are still dominated by conventional discrete item test types. High-stakes examinations have moved in more communicative directions but it would be a brave publisher who risked losing customers by following them too far. What would persuade them to change though is if more local examinations became more communicative and this eventually had a positive washback effect on classroom practice.
I would like to end this book on a positive note. Since I started putting the book together I have noticed encouraging announcements for major conferences in the United Kingdom focusing on the application of applied linguistics theory to classroom practice from BAAL (the British Association of Applied Linguists), from BALEAP (the British Association of Lecturers of English for Academic Purposes) and from MATSDA (the Materials Development Association). I have also seen announcements for conferences in Sweden and in Singapore focusing on applying theories of intercultural competence to classroom practice and an announcement from BAAL of funding for research evaluating the application of applied linguistics theory to practice. In addition, I have received proposals for PhDs from all over the world which plan to develop and evaluate principled classroom materials and I have been asked to review numerous articles reporting research on the application of theory to practice. Things are changing and there is hope for the classroom, especially now that books on applied linguistics are being written in much more reader-friendly ways and both applied linguistics journals (e.g. *Applied Linguistics*) and professional journals (e.g. *ELT Journal*) are publishing more articles linking theory to practice and practice to theory.

What I would like to see are two types of research focused on. I would like to see more research focusing on practical ways of applying attested theory to the development of coursebooks in ways which help them to retain face validity and I would like to see really innovative research experimenting with novel ways of applying theory to materials development.

Some practical ways of applying theory to materials development without risking the loss of face validity could be:

- to focus on engaging exposure plus personal response, personal expression and interactivity at the beginning of a coursebook unit and then to provide a menu of more conventional activities at the end of the unit;
- to provide the usual discrete item activities but make sure that each one involves choices related to personal preferences and that each activity is a preparation for the next one and for an eventual activity which involves extensive reading or listening, personal response and interactive communication of views;
● to make the conventional activities a little more demanding and get learners to justify their answers, sometimes in pairs, sometimes in groups and sometimes in writing.

Some really innovative materials applying theory to practice could include:

● a beginners book which focuses only on the development of vocabulary through stories, games, mimes, illustrations and TPR activities and which does not require the learners to read or listen intensively or to produce continuous text;

● a coursebook in which each unit aims to stimulate through extensive reading, listening and viewing the production and ‘publication’ of a different type of spoken or written text (e.g. poem, story, short play, advertisement, poster, short film, stand up comedy performance);

● a coursebook in which samples of authentic speech and writing are provided in context for the learners to make discoveries from in order to develop their language awareness, pragmatic awareness, genre awareness and intercultural awareness.

As I said earlier I plan to develop a follow up to this book in 2016 which will consist of reports of research evaluating attempts to apply attested applied linguistics theory to materials development. If you have anything to offer please contact me at brianjohntomlinson@gmail.com.
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