Teaching and Learning the English Language

A Problem-Solving Approach

RICHARD BADGER

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Teaching and Learning the English Language

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Teaching English to speakers of other languages or TESOL is a wonderfully varied activity. This is partly because there are many different kinds and aspects of English that people want to learn. Some people want to sound like Hollywood actors, others want to be able to read scientific articles in English, some people want just enough language to be able to survive in parts of the world where they can use English to communicate, and some just want to get through their next exam.

In this chapter, I want to talk about part of my teaching biography and how I think about these stages of my life in order to explain why I have organized this book in the way I have.

Some teaching history

Malaysia

My first job after completing a postgraduate certificate in English language teaching was teaching in a secondary school in Malaysia, preparing pupils for the Sijil Rendah Pelajaran or Lower Secondary Certificate, which they took at the end of their third year of secondary or high school. The exam focussed largely on reading, writing and grammar, and a lot of my teaching centred on these. However, I had just been taught about communicative language teaching, and, when I plucked up enough courage, I wanted to try out ideas that were new to me and to my students, like pair work, information gaps, listening to songs and using authentic material. This was a government school, and I had a textbook that most of my lessons were based on, and each week I had to complete a record indicating what I had been teaching that week. This sounds quite constraining, but I also had a head teacher who was expanding the English part of the library and an Inspector of Schools who was very keen that I should spend time helping my pupils to speak better rather than just get them through their examination.

There were about thirty students in each of my four classes, and each period lasted forty minutes. The classes were streamed. The top class included pupils whose English was very good and two whose own language was English. In my bottom class, I had pupils who found English very difficult. For some of them, English was their third spoken language and second writing system, but, for all of them, doing well on the national exam was very important and would have a major impact on their lives. So, a lot of work had to be done on preparing students for the examination. In a lot of classes, I presented examples of a grammatical structure, maybe the difference between the past simple and the present

perfect or countable versus uncountable nouns, followed by related spoken and written exercises. Sometimes, we did some kind of communicative activity. So, one pupil would be a shopkeeper and the other would be a customer, and they would use sentences like 'How much flour do you want?' or 'I want three durians'. Generally, however, the end of the class would be either some kind of writing activity or a reading comprehension exercise, and, especially when I started this job, I often got the timing wrong, and so I would have to have some filler exercise, hangman or some anagram activity.

Algeria

My next job was in a language school in Algeria. The students all paid fees and came because they wanted to learn English. They were almost all Algerians, but some were French, and there were also one or two speakers of other languages who were working in Algeria. The students were over sixteen. Some of the students were preparing for one of the Cambridge examinations, such as First Certificate or Proficiency. These examinations cover speaking and listening, as well as reading and writing, and require students to produce language where the grammar is accurate and the vocabulary appropriate.

One big change was that all the other teachers taught English. In the Malaysian staff room, we had talked about sports days and the next assembly; now we discussed textbooks, swapped worksheets and wondered how to make our classes livelier. I was getting lots of ideas about things to do in class from my colleagues, and, as I had a bit more experience, I had the confidence to try out different ways of organizing the class.

We had a choice of textbooks with audio and video material, and while all exam preparation classes used the same materials, this was the choice of the teachers rather than the School or the Ministry of Education. We kept a record of what work we did in case someone fell sick and another teacher had to take over the class, and once a term the director of studies came and watched a class.

There were between seven and fifteen students in a class. Students took a test when they first came to the school and were placed in an appropriate group, and they generally moved up a class each term. They were eager to speak. When I had worked in a Malaysian secondary school, I had to structure speaking activities and make sure the pupils had the language they needed. Here, students would try out things and invent language or ask me for help in mid-utterance. They were very comfortable working in groups. However, they had much less time than my Malaysian pupils. They came to the school once a week for a two-hour period and had little exposure to English outside the classroom. In Malaysia, pupils could watch TV and films in English. In Algeria, their only sources of English were the few English language libraries and radio programmes such as Voice of America. I spent much less time in class on reading comprehension or writing. These could be done as homework. The class was for oral communication and maybe a little work on grammar and vocabulary.

The UK

After Algeria, I got a job in a further education college in the UK. In the summer, we did work that was fairly similar to what I had done in Algeria but with groups of multilingual learners who were often still at school and saw the course as part of their holiday. For the rest of the year, I was working with students, mainly from Africa and Asia, who were preparing to study for degrees in the UK. The students were

fee-paying, but some were sponsored by their governments. They were very motivated. They came to us for a year and then took examinations in their specialist subjects, such as law, business, media studies and an English examination that we wrote. This focussed on reading and writing but included an element of listening.

I worked mainly with the students who wanted to study law. They came with fairly high levels of English and were generally very articulate. They and I attended one law lecture a week given by a local university, and we spent the rest of the week working on whatever topic had been covered in the lecture. We did not use a textbook but made extensive use of audio recordings of the lecture and the readings that the lecturer suggested. These included sources which were not part of general English, so we had to deal with legislation and law reports in which judges explained why they had reached a particular decision.

Classes had between fifteen and twenty students. We had four one-hour classes a week, one each on listening and reading and two on writing. Initially, I used some published materials on listening to lectures in the listening section, but I soon began to focus on recordings of the lectures and, in particular, on the PowerPoint slides that the lecturer used. After a while, we started doing this session in the computer lab where the students could listen to the lecture and see the PowerPoint slides at the same time, and my role was one of monitoring how they were getting on and fielding questions about what the lecturer had said or what message had been intended.

This mirrored to a large extent what was happening in the reading class. Students would be allocated a reading text with some questions before the class and would discuss what they had read and what they had made of it in their groups. In some cases, this could be set up as a formal debate. Again, my role was monitoring the students to make sure everyone was playing a role and stopping the more outgoing students from dominating discussions. Writing classes were also mainly organized in groups with students working on producing essays on topics such as the ways in which laws are passed in England and Wales or giving their opinions on whether a description of a particular set of events would amount to a crime or be the basis on which one person could take another person to court.

A framework for TESOL

This description of my own teaching history is intended to illustrate some of the variety of TESOL. This variety is what makes many people want to teach English, but this variety can sometimes seem close to chaos, especially for those who are relatively new to the profession. The rest of this chapter describes a framework for looking at the different ways in which people teach English to speakers of other languages. This should enable us to see the parallels between different situations and hopefully enable us to learn from our own and other people's experiences so that we can become better teachers of English. The three key questions that need to be asked about any TESOL class or programme are:

1. What is the aim of the class or programme? This is a question about language.
2. How is the language being learnt? This is a question about learners and learning.
3. How is the language being taught? This is a question about teachers and teaching.

These questions are best answered in this order. We need to know what the class is hoping to achieve before we can consider how students might learn whatever they are supposed to be learning, and we need to know both what the learners are learning and how they are learning it before we can think about how teachers can contribute to this process. These three questions explain the title of this book: language, learning and teaching, and also provide the titles of Chapters 2, 3 and 4. However, I will illustrate how the questions can be used to understand different contexts by applying them to the three teaching contexts I have just described.

Language

In Malaysia, the language aims were largely to help the pupils develop their reading and writing skills. The passages that the pupils read in class and in the exam fell into two groups. The most common were rather like entries in a junior encyclopaedia, covering topics such as 'The Pampas', 'Palm Oil' and 'The Planets', but students also had to read formal dialogues between children and, occasionally, adults about everyday topics such as what they had done at the weekend. The language in these dialogues did not reflect colloquial speech but was presumably intended to compensate for the lack of focus on speaking and listening, which were not ignored but given less importance than reading or writing. The kinds of things the pupils had to write included letters applying for jobs, something which might plausibly be seen as the kind of writing the pupils would do after they had finished school, as well as summaries of texts similar to the factual reading passages, which seemed to be more to do with providing a way of assessing the pupils' language than helping them to use language beyond the classroom. Grammar was important, and we covered topics such as conditionals, the past tense, the perfect aspect and countable nouns. Some time was spent on vocabulary, but this almost always related to a particular reading passage.

When I was working in Malaysia, I was part of a programme that the Malaysian government had introduced to improve the level of English in the country as a whole. Schools across Malaysia received teachers mainly from the UK, so one of the less obvious aspects of the aims of the class was to do with pupils learning to use a traditional kind of British English rather than a Malaysian variety. This was generally reflected in examinations, so there were quite often items testing the distinctions between 'who' and 'whom', but there were some lexical items used that would be unfamiliar to most people from Britain, such as go-down for warehouse and bungalow to mean a detached house. The differences between British and Malaysian English are more striking in spoken language, and here, after a period of adjustment, I learnt to accept questions formed by the addition of the tag 'or not' rather than starting with a modal verb, such as 'You got a pen or not' instead of 'Have you got a pen'?

The aims here might loosely be described as communication but with a heavy emphasis on the written rather than the spoken language. In terms of language varieties, there was a preference for British English, but there was some flexibility about local and other native speaker varieties such as American or Australian. The aims were decided by the Ministry of Education and applied across the country. This was an attempt to ensure that all Malaysians had access to roughly similar education resources, but it also meant that the match between the learners and what they were expected to achieve was not always very close.

In Algeria, spoken language was much more important, and most of my classes focussed on helping students to develop their abilities to listen and speak in English. Grammar was less important compared to Malaysia, and vocabulary was given a greater role. Writing and reading also received less attention. The variety of English again tended to British English, but some of the teachers spoke North American varieties, and a lot of the voices on our listening materials spoke with American accents. There were also some examples in the teaching materials of non-native speakers of English from countries such as Holland and Sweden.

As with Malaysia, the aim here was to be able to communicate in English but with more emphasis on the spoken language. There was a less clear preference for British English, with other native speaker varieties of English being treated fairly equally. The learners had more input to the process of deciding what should be taught than in Malaysia. The focus on Cambridge examinations meant that decisions taken by the Cambridge syndicates were very influential, but the availability of a range of exams meant it was possible to match learner needs to what we expected them to achieve reasonably closely.

With my law course in the UK, the language aims were much more specific. The intention was to help the students to be able to use English to study law. A lot of work was done on legal and academic vocabulary, but reading and writing legal texts received the most attention. The students were learning how to read law reports and legal textbooks, rather than how to read generally in English or how to write the problem answers that law examiners require rather than an essay. This meant that there was a change in focus from looking at language at the level of the sentence to looking at language as texts. The ways in which texts were structured and the purpose that they were meant to achieve were central to the programme.

Again, we can see that the aim was broadly to do with communication, but as in the secondary school, the emphasis was on written language. However, because the level of the learners was much higher, there was a shift towards texts or genres rather than sentence-level features. The aims were more communicative than in Malaysia, largely because the fact that the learners were going to be using English to study law in the following year made it much easier to decide what their communicative needs were. The students were studying Common law, a legal system used in several Anglophone countries such as the United States and in some British Commonwealth countries such as Nigeria and Singapore, but the students were mainly reading and listening to speakers of British English. However, the variety of language was less to do with the origins of the speakers than the fact that the language was to do with law. The learners' needs were the key factor in curriculum design, but all the students in the law groups were aiming for the same thing, so the only way of ensuring that learners' needs matched their targets was to only accept students with sufficiently high levels of English.

Learning

The ways in which learning takes place are a harder to follow than what is being learnt, because learning is partly a psychological process, and we only have limited access to what happens in our learners' heads.

The pupils in the Malaysian secondary school had quite varied levels of motivation. All of them wanted to do well on the SRP examination, or had parents who wanted them to do well, but for some of

the pupils in the lower classes, English was extremely difficult, and they coped with my classes by speaking as little as possible and doing enough not to attract attention. In the higher streams, they knew that English was important if they wanted to go on to university, and they worked very hard, reading books in English as well as completing all the homework I gave them.

In one sense, learning is the acquisition of knowledge, and the pupils acquired knowledge in a range of ways. One kind of knowledge they acquired was grammatical. When I used terms like plural and singular or past and present tense, this may have helped them to notice the difference between 'cat' and 'cats' or 'cook' and 'cooked'. Similarly, when I said a minimal pair such as 'light' and 'right' or 'ship' and 'sheep', it may have helped them to notice the difference between the phonemes /l/ and /r/ and /ɪ/ and /i:/. This may have also been happening with knowledge and skills they already had. So they may have seen a connection between the Malay word 'dua' meaning two and the English word 'dual' or between the way that they look at the last page of a comic to find out how their favourite character got on and the strategy of looking through a passage article quickly to find out where a particular piece of information required by a comprehension question can be found.

Learning is also about using knowledge and skills. So, the oral drills and rather tedious written exercises that we did in class may have helped them to get their tongues around some English sounds or to be able to produce the right tense when they needed it. Often they were using language with some kind of support. So when they were answering the questions on a reading text, they would have had support in terms of some discussion about the topic or perhaps looking up words in a dictionary or, if they chose to write something down before saying it, it would have made it easier for them to put their attention on how the words should be pronounced rather than their choice of vocabulary. This also happened outside the classroom. The homework I gave generally included some kind of support, and some parents or siblings would lend a hand. Supported use outside the classroom also happened less formally. The father of one of the pupils ran a small shop, and even though his English had weaknesses, the pupil could speak fluently in English.

The students in the Algerian Language School had paid to attend classes and were highly motivated. However, for most of them, the classes were just one part of a busy life, and they found it hard to concentrate if they had to write a long piece of writing or tackle an extended reading passage. They acquired some knowledge about grammar, vocabulary and discourse, such as how to end a conversation in English, and many of the activities they did in class had similarities with the supported language use that I talked about for the Malaysian students. The two main differences between the Algerian and Malaysian students were that the Algerians were older and better able to think about their learning. However, they also spent less time on English and lacked the institutional and social support that you get from being in a school where you are with the same people for a large part of the day, and these people are engaged in similar activities. Finding time to do homework was difficult for the Algerian students, partly because of other pressures on their lives but also because it was difficult for them to engage in meaningful communication in spoken English outside the classroom, which was their main focus.

The students I worked with in the UK were possibly the most focussed. Like the Malaysian students they had an exam to prepare for, and this was coming at the end of the year rather than some years away. Also, most of them had chosen to study law in English, while the Malaysian pupils were taking

English as a compulsory course. The parents of most of the students in the UK were paying for the course and presumably putting pressure on their offspring to make sure the investment was not wasted.

They were getting a lot of information about legal and academic vocabulary and discourse, some of which was explicit, but a lot of which was being picked up through their reading and their interactions with their fellow students. They were also learning skills. In the law lectures they attended, the way the lecturer talked about a case or piece of legislation would help them to see how lawyers reasoned, and the sessions on planning and writing law essays or problem-solving questions helped them to develop the abilities to do these things. Perhaps the most important skill they were developing was how to learn a particular variety of English. At the beginning of the course, many of them expected to be told all the vocabulary they would need to make sense of an article, but by the end they had a clearer idea of how they could solve the linguistic problems that texts created on their own.

Teaching

Teaching in the Malaysian secondary school was my first job after a year studying TESOL and my first formal exposure to the ideas of communicative language teaching. Communicative language teaching is a very broad term, and the version that the course had encouraged me to adopt was one which saw the three stages of presentation, practice and production (PPP) as the normal way of organizing a class. While the aim was to end with a production stage in which there was a communicative activity, the use of drills and very controlled pair work was common. At the time, this seemed to be the most important thing that the course had taught me about pedagogy, but the teaching practice on the course and the response of my tutors also taught me the importance of reflecting on classes after trying to work out how to teach them better.

The three stages became my standard way of organizing classes. My lessons were often planned around a grammatical item, teaching the learners to write a particular kind of text, but there were also lessons where my aim was more to do with covering a part of the course book rather than what I was hoping my learners would learn. The fairly conservative style of teaching that I adopted was at least partly because of my concern about managing a group of thirty teenagers and a sense that the class would go more smoothly if I kept control of what happened and did not allow the learners too much freedom. I made use of techniques such as giving the learners a writing exercise if I felt they were making too much noise. It took me six months and the incentive of a visit by the school inspector for me to try out pair work. I used an information gap exercise and was surprised at both how smoothly it went and how keen the learners were to complete it.

The other things I brought to the classes were skills in using language and knowledge about language acquired from the course I had just completed. In the Malaysian class, this related mainly to vocabulary and grammar, including some terminology like active/passive and indefinite articles. I was also drawing on my knowledge of phonology when I created minimal pairs. There was even an element of discourse knowledge which informed how I taught the pupils to write a letter. I have a fairly good command of English, and the fact that I was using English in class was an important part of the lesson as was the fact that the pupils knew that they would have to use English rather than Malay if they wanted to say something to me. But even though my knowledge of Malay was limited, I did use it on occasions

and sometimes found out what the Malay equivalent of a word I thought would be difficult to explain in English before I went to class.

By the time I was working in Algeria, I was more relaxed about how the classes were organized, though PPP was still the most common pattern of organization. Some classes consisted of simulations or relatively free discussions. This was partly because of my growing self-confidence but also because of the wider range of teaching materials I could draw on. There were two other important factors. First, discussions about teaching and learning were the main topic of conversation in the staff room, and it was quite common for teachers to use each other's lesson plans or make suggestions about which textbook dealt best with a particular problem. Second, I was conscious that my students were paying for the classes, and while many of them wanted to improve their English so that they could study abroad or improve their employment prospects, the majority saw learning English as a kind of hobby. I felt the need to vary the activities so that they did not become bored, and sometimes I probably thought too much about having an enjoyable class and not enough about whether the students were learning.

Also my knowledge about discourse had increased, so I now knew about things like turn-taking, fillers and problem solution patterns. Some of these terms I used with my students, but they were mainly part of the range of ideas which influenced what I taught or how I analysed where students needed help.

In the UK, PPP became just one way of organizing the class, and much of my teaching involved blocks that covered two or more periods. My aims were less to do with grammar and more to do with what I was learning to call tasks. How could students read a bit of this law report, listen to part of the weekly lecture and then produce an essay? The language aims were more likely to emerge from the problems that my students were having than from my own ideas about what language they needed. I was also giving up more time to helping learners to learn on their own, so I would get them to compare two versions of an essay or look at the way authors showed what they thought of other people's ideas without saying 'I think this is rubbish'.

This notion of helping learners to learn related to another thing that I was bringing to the classes which might seem negative: my ignorance. When I attended the weekly lectures, the topics were often things about which I had limited knowledge, such as the role of magistrates in the English legal system or the moral issues related to abortion. When I came out of the lectures, I needed to teach myself enough about these topics so that I could manage the next week's classes effectively. But I soon learnt that I could not become an expert on all these different topics. What I could do was help the students work out how they could learn about these topics, and the students were old enough to realize that, while I might be able to give them an explanation about the structure of the third conditional or why the plural of criterion is criteria, the most useful thing I could do when they asked what phrases like 'sufficient consideration' or 'reasonable doubt' meant was to point them to a person or a document that would help them understand.

I brought a different kind of ignorance to technology. The college where I worked installed a computer laboratory for language learning the year after I started work there. The range of programmes we had were fairly limited, multiple-choice gap fills, cloze tests and some simple simulations, but several programmes allowed teachers to author their own activities. After some experimentation, we discovered that the students' favourite programme was a complete cloze called 'Storyboard', and their favourite activity was listening to a song on the language laboratory tape recorders and typing in the lyrics.

Conclusion

Most experienced teachers look on their careers as representing professional development, and I am no exception. I can see how I began with a fairly rigid view of how lessons can be organized, where I was implementing a particular kind of teaching method, to a more flexible approach. This was partly because I was learning about different ways of teaching and had a deeper understanding of language and learning, but it was also to do with my own confidence.

However, this partial autobiography also illustrates the importance of context in language teaching and the enormous variation that results from this. The language aims, the kinds of learners, the resources available and the differences between the institutions in which I was teaching all had an impact on the way in which I taught, and my experience is, inevitably, limited. I have not taught in Australia, New Zealand or North or South America. People with experience of working in these contexts will bring different insights to the teaching process, but I hope the framework of language, learning and teaching that I have used to make sense of my own experience will be useful to teachers who are faced with different hurdles and opportunities for developing their learners' language abilities. The next chapter looks at this first aspect of language teaching – what we mean by language.

Part I

Language, Learning and Teaching

Chapter 2

Language

Introduction

We produce and process language so efficiently that we hardly notice it. However, in order to teach English to speakers of other languages, we need an understanding of the idea of language in general and of English in particular. This chapter attempts to provide this understanding by answering the following questions:

1. What is language?
2. How are languages organized?
3. What is special about English?

What is language?

The section on language in general is divided into how we think about language, that is, theories of language, and how language is organized.

Theories of language

Our ideas of language and our theories of language are important when we address many of the issues that language teachers face, such as

They know the grammar rule, but they can't seem to use it

I've said this a hundred times, but they don't listen.

Should I always use authentic texts in my reading class?

A common-sense view is that language is a physical object. The words on the page you are reading at the moment seem to be objects in the same way that a pen or a table are physical objects. If I give some students copies of a list of articles and books I want them to read in a handout, it feels as if I am giving them information. This physical view of language fits in with Saussure's (1974) conceptualization of signs, or words, as consisting of a signifier and signified. So the word 'page' consists of the signifier, the four letters p-a-g-e or, for spoken language, the acoustic image (Joseph, 2004, p. 59) of these letters and the signified, for example page of a book (Harris, 1996, p. 6).

However, from the viewpoint of language learners, problems arise. How do learners recognize letters in written language? The recognition of the letter 'O' seems similar to the recognition of a table as a flat surface with some legs. How do readers know that a particular set of marks is the letter 'O'? They look for the circles or ovals. But identifying the letter 'O' requires more than this. The 'O' in 'LION' is often the same as the 'O' in '100' but is not the same symbol (Smith, 1994). The two instances of 'O' are physically identical but linguistically different. More strikingly, the letter 'A' can be written in various ways which have little physically in common: 'a', 'A', 'ɑ'. Readers who are not familiar with the Roman alphabet might think 'ɑ' was a kind of 'O' rather than a kind of 'A'. To recognize an 'A', you need to know the range of things that count as an 'A'. When learners encounter what seems to be a new language, it is not just that they do not know what the letters or phonemes of that language are. They do not know what parts of what they are seeing or hearing need their attention.

Letters are physical objects, but whether they are language does not depend just on what kind of physical objects they are. For something to be language, we need a physical object, but we also need users of that language who can make sense of it. Language is an interaction between users and a physical object.

What is on the page in front of you are not letters, words and paragraphs but marks on paper. You need to bring information about the writing system of English and your knowledge of how people write about topics such as language to make these marks on paper into language. The letters, words and texts are the result of the interaction between the information in your head and the physical object.

Language users draw on their knowledge of what they wish to communicate and their knowledge of the language they want to use to produce a range of physical objects such as ink on paper, pixels on a screen or sound waves moving through the air. Language users who wish to make sense of these physical objects draw on their knowledge of language and their knowledge of the world to create a new instance of language. Without the language users, the physical object is not language. A lion is a lion whether or not someone is around, but the word 'lion' is only a word when someone uses it in speech or writing. Language is both physical and psychological.

However, language is more than knowledge in the brain. People produce the sounds or marks on paper in the hope that this will somehow enable communication. The knowledge that makes this possible must be shared, and so language is social as well as physical and psychological. While two people create something new every time, they listen to what the other has said or written, they can only communicate because they have 'a common set of signs' (Harris, 1996, p. 6). Language is 'a socially shared, psychologically real system of signs' (Matsuda & Friedrich, 2011, p. 59).

At the start of this section, I identified three issues that relate to the nature of language. The first was where learners know a grammatical rule, that is, they understand at least a part of the psychological element of language but are not able to produce language using the rule. What they lack is the social element. Their knowledge is useless until it results in the production of something other people can recognize as language. What they need is probably not more knowledge but more practice. See also Chapter 9: Grammar.

Similarly, when teachers complain that their learners do not listen, they sometimes forget that what the learners are creating is a more or less complete version of the teacher's message when they listen.

The extent to which learners' version of the teacher's message coincides with what the teacher intended to convey will depend partly on the knowledge that the learners have. For many beginners, the sound that comes out of their teacher's mouth is just noise. See Chapter 15: Listening.

The final issue was to do with the use of authentic texts in reading classes. What is authentic for one group of language users is not authentic for a different group. I am trying to learn Chinese and can say some words in Chinese but can read almost no characters. If my Chinese teacher gave me an article taken from a Chinese newspaper, it would not be authentic for me because I do not have enough knowledge of Chinese to reconstruct the text in a way that would correspond to what the author wrote. See Chapter 13: Reading.

Activity 2.1. What is a language?

Which of these samples are language? How do you know?

ʃ╥ ╟╝╥╓╓╢

Hij gaf me een boek

'oH vam Hol

他给了我一本书

彼は私に本を与えました。

How are languages organized?

It is not possible to teach all of a language at once. Teachers need to find a way of breaking it down into component parts that can be used as the basis of a course or a lesson. This section describes some ways in which language can be divided up, and two of these structure most of the rest of this book.

The first approach attempts to describe the ability to communicate, the second is based on the stages one needs to go through in the process by which one gets from the physical trace of language, or expression, to meaning or vice versa. Finally, we examine a very common way of dividing up language into the skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening.

Communicative competence

Linguists working within the transformational generative tradition associated with Chomsky make 'a fundamental distinction between the competence (the speaker-hearer's knowledge of his language) and performance (the actual use of language in concrete situations)' (Chomsky, 1969, p. 4).

The language users' core knowledge for these linguists are the grammar and the phonology/phonetics because these parts of language seem to have rules, and these rules can be used to understand how language is produced. This view led to the idea that linguistic competence meant knowing the grammar and phonology of the language being studied. This was an influential view, and many language courses have focussed on these elements and particularly on grammar.

However, several linguists offer wider views of what learners need to know. The three most important models are those presented by Hymes, Canale and Swain, and Bachman.

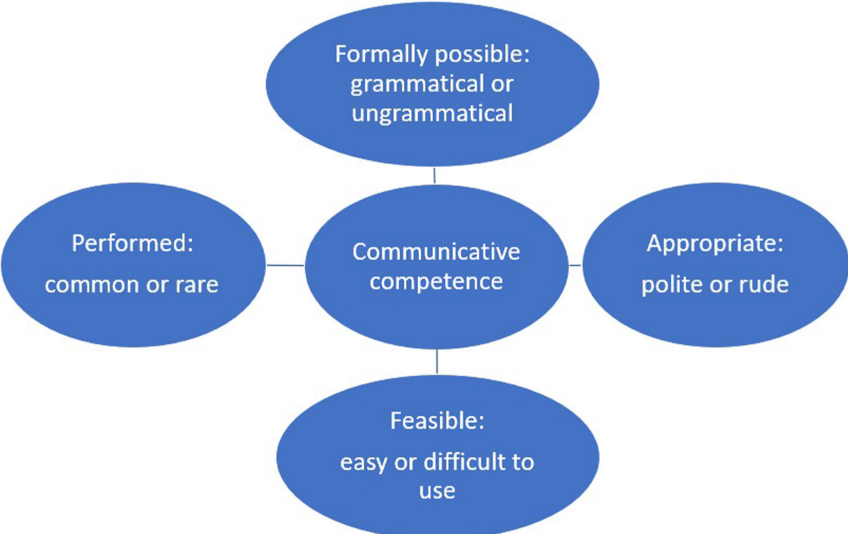

Figure 2.1 Hymes's model of communicative competence.

Hymes identified four aspects of communicative competence. See Figure 2.1. This is a useful way of describing what underlies an act of communication and highlights what learners need to know. The ideas of easy/difficult or common/rare provide useful guides for organizing a course book, and ideas of politeness are important for language learners. However, it is difficult to see how this translates into what might be taught in the classroom beyond a grammatical syllabus.

A second attempt was made by Canale and Swain (1980, pp. 29–31 et passim). They identified three elements:

1 *Grammatical competence:* knowledge of lexical items and of rules of morphology, syntax, sentence grammar, semantics and phonology.
2 *Sociolinguistic competence:*
   a. socio-cultural rules of use (what makes language appropriate for a particular context)
   b. rules of discourse (how language is organized above the sentence).
3 *Strategic competence:* strategies used to deal with breakdowns in communication.

This model has been influential in two main ways. The first is to do with teaching the socio-cultural rules of use or the functions (Wilkins, 1976). Many course books for elementary learners start with a unit which covers the function of introduction, and this allows the course book writers to include different grammatical patterns in the same unit. If we were being strictly grammatical, 'How are you'? is grammatically different from 'Hello' even though they are both ways of greeting people. The functional view of language is still influential, and you may well have functional units or parts of units in the course books you use, but, despite Wilkins's efforts, it is hard to use this as the sole basis for an English syllabus. Swan (1985a and 1985b) has argued that this is because grammar is more useful

for learners who want to create new language than functions, because functions are less systematic and less generative than grammatical knowledge. Functions are still important in language learning, and there is some further discussion of them in the section on speech act theory in Chapter 12: Pragmatics.

The other contribution of Canale and Swain's notion of communicative competence is communication or compensatory strategies. Many textbooks now include elements on what learners should do if they do not understand something or what they should do if they do not know the exact word for what they want to say. Approaches involving strategies are still being used in language learning and teaching, and we will cover some aspects of these in the chapters on skill-based teaching.

Bachman (1990, p. 87 et seq.) replaces the term communicative competence with the phrase communicative language ability. This is made up of language competence which is then realized through strategic competence (Bachman & Palmer, 1996, p. 63), and this in turn is divided into organizational competence and pragmatic competence. See Figure 2.2.

Organizational competence covers the formal structures of language and comprises grammatical competence, equivalent to Hymes's linguistic competence and Canale and Swain's grammatical competence, and textual competence, paralleling Canale and Swain's rules of discourse.

Pragmatic competence covers the ways in which language is used to express meaning. The first part of this, illocutionary competence (Bachman, 1990, p. 90) or functional knowledge (Bachman & Palmer, 1996, p. 69), covers how an utterance such as 'it's very hot' may be a description of the temperature (ideational meaning), a request to turn on the air conditioning (the manipulative meaning), an illustration of the contraction 'it's' (heuristic) or engaging listeners in a story at a journey across a desert (imaginative). The other element in pragmatic competence involves sociolinguistic knowledge, which covers awareness of how languages vary geographically (dialect) or by differences between the discourse domain (e.g. the registers of science and law), naturalness and cultural references. See Figure 2.2.

These areas of language competence are then used to produce language when language users draw on their strategic competence. This process has three elements: assessment (working out what is needed), planning (working out how to do what is needed) and execution (doing what is needed).

These versions of communicative competence have been important in the way that they have made it clear what learners need to know in order to use language effectively. You will also hear echoes of these ideas in the chapter on pragmatics (e.g. politeness) and discourse (e.g. register). However, the models are difficult to apply directly to the classroom. How, for example, would you teach a series of lessons on frequency or sociolinguistic competence? The development of the models also illustrates some problems with the division between competence and performance. The models can be seen as re-conceptualizing the notions of knowledge, related to competence, and skill, related to performance, as complementary ways of viewing language. Every instance of language use represents both knowledge and skill.

In the next section, we examine the notion of knowledge using the idea of language levels, and the final section of the chapter looks at the four skills.

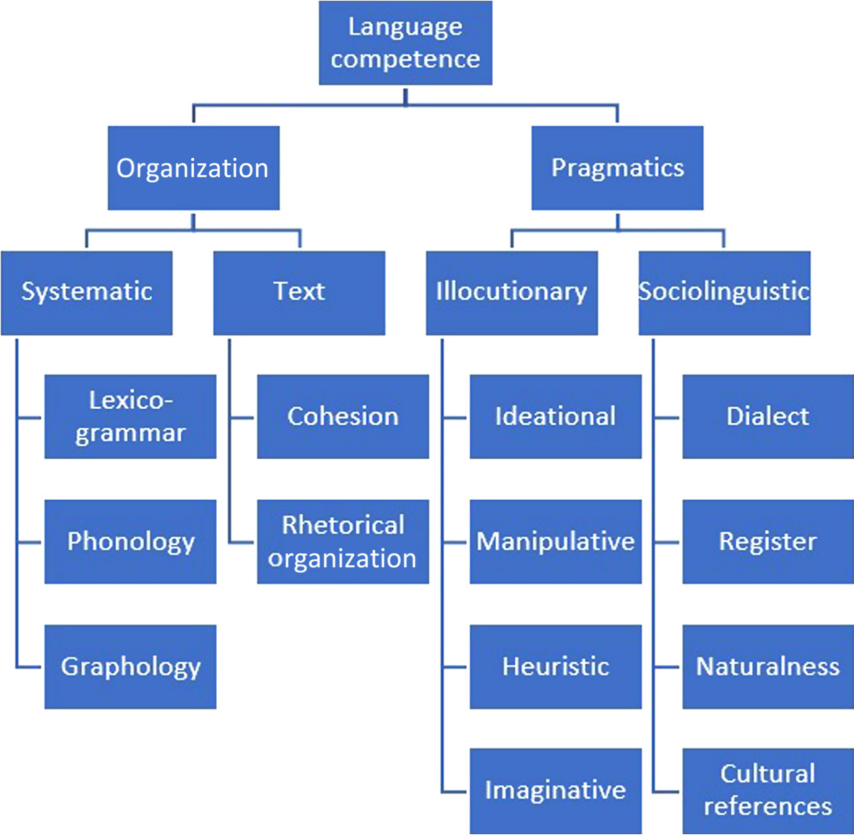

Figure 2.2 Bachman's language competence.

Language levels

When babies start to communicate, they use a sound like 'ma' or a gesture to mean something, such as mother, and the meaning relates directly to the expression. There is a direct link between the meaning and the expression, and when adults hear the sound, they go straight from the expression to the meaning.

However, adult languages have three levels (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p. 24), and this enables users of English to combine three phonemes /k/, /æ/ and /t/ to produce 'tack', 'cat' and 'act' and to know that they cannot say */ktæ/ (the asterisk indicates that something is not possible in a particular language). For written language, the situation is similar. The three letters 'c', 'a' and 't' can be combined to produce a range of words. Instead of having a range of sounds each of which expresses one meaning, the two levels mean that the twenty-six letters we use in English can express half a million or so words. See Figure 2.3.

This feature of language is variously called duality of expression (Hockett, 1960, pp. 91–92) or 'stratification of the content plane' (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p. 25). Halliday and Matthiessen see the development of this division as a very important part of human evolution. This division of language 'turned *homo* . . . into *homo sapiens*' (2004, p. 25).

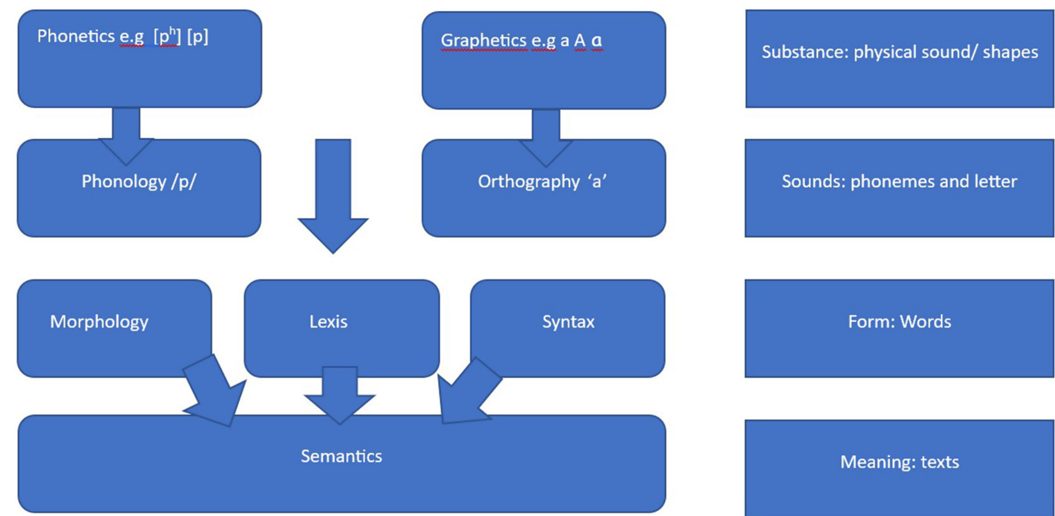

Figure 2.3 Language levels.

When we understand a spoken message, we take the physical object, the phonetic substance or expression, and make it into phonemes. Phonetic description covers things like the position of the tongue when you make a sound and is not related to a particular language. Phonemic description is about the sounds in a particular language and how they relate to each other. One example of this is tone, which is phonemic in Chinese but not in English. For example, the Putonghua or Chinese word for ‘Mother’ is written ‘mā’ in pinyin Romanization with the line above ‘ā’ indicating first tone, and horse is written ‘mǎ’, with the ‘ǎ’ indicating third tone. Speakers of Putonghua will hear these as two different words. Most native speakers of English will hear one sound repeated twice because in English tone is not phonemic. More importantly, they will continue to fail to distinguish between mother and horse in Chinese until they learn, first, that tones are important in distinguishing meaning and, second, to differentiate the tones.

Phonetics and phonology are distinct aspects of the study of language, but for language teaching purposes, they are closely related and are often treated under the heading of pronunciation. This includes both speaking with an acceptable accent and understanding the way other people speak. This is covered in Chapter 7: Pronunciation.

Understanding a written message means going from the physical substance of marks on paper to letters. This parallels the process with spoken language, so we recognize the range of items such as ‘g’ and ‘ɢ’ as being instances of the same letter. This is covered in Chapter 8: Spelling.

The description of the next level, meaning and form, has led to two debates. The first is signalled by the two labels of lexis and grammar or lexico-grammar. Lexis means vocabulary and grammar is how we order those words. The division between grammar and vocabulary is used widely in language teaching. The alternative view, often associated with Halliday (1961), is that meaning is a continuum with general meanings expressed through grammar and more specific meanings expressed through vocabulary. The difference between ‘learner’ and ‘learners’ is a fairly delicate distinction and so is grammatical. The difference between ‘learner’ and ‘teacher’ is greater and so this is vocabulary or lexis. We can see the continuum view in arguments about whether the difference between ‘put on’ (e.g. put

on your clothes) and 'put off' (e.g. put off a meeting) is a lexical or grammatical difference and in the way that some language teaching materials focus on topics like collocation and formulaic language. However, at the moment, grammatical descriptions are not able to cover vocabulary, and so I treat grammar and vocabulary in separate chapters. This is also in line with the division in many linguistic theories, for example Chomsky (2000), and the fact that we have two main kinds of reference books for language, dictionaries and grammars.

Activity 2.2. Grammar and vocabulary or lexico-grammar

Would you treat the difference between these pairs of items as part of grammar, part of vocabulary or something else?
Go, went.
Go, come.
Throw at someone/throw to someone.
Take up/take off.
Happy, happier.
Happy, unhappy.
Happy, not happy.
As happy as Larry/As happy as you.

The other debate at the level of form relates to what kind of units we are using. In everyday use, we link meaning most closely with words and, for many linguists, the largest meaningful unit of language is the sentence. However, 'it is people who make meanings, not words or structures' (Prodromou, 2008, p. xvi), and people use units larger than the word or sentence to communicate. Halliday sees the most important unit of meaning as not the word or the sentence but the spoken or written text. When we talk about communication, it is easier to talk about texts rather than words or grammar. So, a conversation is a text. A letter applying for a job is a text.

Patterns in language operate over units larger than the sentence. (See Chapter 11: Discourse). Starting a conversation follows conventions about how groups of sentences are used. In Hausa, a language spoken in West Africa, it is common to ask someone if they are tired when you meet, and many conversations in South China start with one person asking another if they have eaten. For people who use many varieties of English, a comment about the weather is a useful way of starting a conversation. The illocutionary force or function of a comment about tiredness, food or the weather varies between cultures (Bachman, 1990; Bachman & Palmer, 1996).

Similarly, written texts are structured. Many academic texts have introductions, and textbooks typically have pages of context and indexes. If you are going to use a language effectively, it is not enough to be able to form grammatical sentences. You also need to know about these kinds of text structures. Language learners need to be able to produce and understand texts, so we need to think of grammar and vocabulary as a means to this end.

At the moment, it is difficult to identify a particular way of teaching texts in the same way as we can talk about ways of teaching grammar or vocabulary. One of the most widely used ways of describing

texts is genre analysis, where groups of texts are treated as forming one category or genre if they serve the same function or purpose. See Chapter 11: Discourse, and the section on genre in Chapter 14. A very closely related, and possibly identical, concept is that of the communicative task. The term 'task' is used with a variety of meanings in TESOL, and most of these meanings are primarily to do with what happens in the classroom.

> a task is taken to be an activity in which meaning is primary, there is some sort of relationship to the real world, task completion has some priority, and the assessment of task performance is in terms of task outcome. (Skehan, 1996, p. 38)

However, the kind of task I am talking about here is a communicative or target task. Long says 'Tasks are the things people will tell you they do if you ask them and they are not applied linguists' (Long, 1985, p. 89). If you want to decide what to teach, you first need to identify learners' needs 'in terms of *target tasks,* the real world things people *do* [using language] in everyday life' (Long & Norris, 2000, p. 599) (italics in original), such as buying a train ticket or applying for a job. Thinking about language use in terms of tasks is very useful as a way of making sure that we remember that language is a means of communication. However, as with genres, our descriptions of language in terms of tasks are limited. The notion of the communicative task is closely linked to the idea of task-based teaching. While this approach to teaching is more influenced by the notion of tasks in the classroom than of communicative tasks, Long's ideas have had an impact. See Chapter 4: Teaching. See table 2.1.

Language skills

We can also divide language up in terms of whether (a) we are working with spoken and written language and (b) we are working with productive or receptive skills. Reading is a receptive skill used with written texts, speaking is an active skill used with spoken texts. A range of terms are used instead of receptive and productive. So some people use the terms active and passive. The term 'passive' is not a good one because it suggests that reading and writing do not require the language user to do anything, but reading and listening are quite demanding. 'Receptive' suggests more activity than 'passive', and perhaps a word like 'interpretive' is closer to what happens when someone reads or writes.

While the skills based approach has the virtue of simplicity, it can lead to teaching where speaking is treated as unconnected with listening. However, the skill-based approach is very useful in language teaching as long as the division between skills is seen as a convenience for teaching rather than a claim that the skills are independent. For these reasons, I have used skills and levels to structure much of this book. See Table 2.2.

Table 2.1 Levels of language and organization of the book

Expression and substance		**Form and meaning**			
Chapter 7 Pronunciation	Chapter 8 Spelling	Chapter 9 Grammar	Chapter 10 Vocabulary	Chapter 11 Discourse	Chapter 12 Pragmatics

Table 2.2 Language skills and organization of the book

Chapter 13	Chapter 14	Chapter 15	Chapter 16
Reading	Writing	Listening	Speaking

Activity 2.3. Organizing a language textbook

Choose an English language textbook you know well. How does it divide up the language? To what extent does it make use of functions, levels (pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, tasks) or skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking)?

What is special about English?

Language as interaction and the divisions of language by levels and by skills apply to all linguistic communication, and as language teachers, this leads very soon to discussion of particular languages. Teachers of Chinese, Arabic, Spanish or English are likely to have classes that focus on grammar/vocabulary or reading and writing. However, the concept of what a language is sometimes a little fuzzy. This fuzziness is reflected in the term translanguaging (Conteh, 2018), and we will discuss this fuzziness before coming back to English.

Translanguaging

Language users 'are not confined to using languages separately unless there are work-related or institutional reasons to do so. In most home and social communication, they move fluidly across languages, styles, registers and genres – that is, they translanguage – as they attempt to make meaning' (Simpson, 2020, p. 42).

Languages are created by the institutional context in which they are used. With the fall of the Roman Empire, different geographical areas of the empire started using combinations of Latin and other languages. They were translanguaging. For some, the language varieties they were using were institutionalized into languages such as French, Italian or Romanian. The saying associated with Max Weinreich that a language is a dialect with an army and a navy expresses this idea. Translanguaging has a role to play in the learning of institutional languages, so this topic appears in the next chapter, Chapter 3: Learning.

English as an international language

English has a lot of institutional support, but, unlike many other languages, it is a language that is used internationally, and the majority of speakers of English do not speak it as a first language. As Widdowson puts it, 'English is different: it appears practically everywhere because it seems assumed to have "a global relevance that other languages do not have"' (2000, p. 193). If you are teaching a

language to speakers of other languages, you need to decide which variety you should be teaching, and the fact that English is spoken so widely makes this more complicated than for many languages.

The reasons for English being so widespread are mainly to do with the fact that the English-speaking United Kingdom was succeeded as one of the dominant powers in the world by another Anglophone country, the United States. This has resulted in there being different native speaker varieties of English associated particularly with what is often called 'the inner circle' of English (Kachru, 1983), that is Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, South Africa, the UK and the United States but usually excludes other native speakers of English from, say, the West Indies. The multiplicity of native speaker varieties means that many teachers of English have to decide which varieties they wish to focus on or how to deal with the varieties that are included in their teaching material.

However, the number of native speakers is not what makes English different. Estimates of the number of people who speak English as a first language vary between about 330 million (Lewis, 2009) and 400 million (Gnutzman, 2000, p. 357), while Mandarin Chinese or Putonghua has about 1.2 billion speakers.

The main reason for the different status of English is to do with L2 speakers, but estimates here vary even more than they do for first language speakers. Graddol (2006, p. 62) quotes a figure of 510 million speakers of English as a first or second language, which suggests under two hundred million speakers of English as a second or foreign language. Crystal (2010, p. 370) puts the figure at 1.2 billion, and Graddol suggests that by 2020 there will be two billion learners (2006, p. 14) which could generate the same number of speakers (Graddol, 2006, p. 96) of English. 'English has become not only an international lingua franca, but the first world language in human history' (Gnutzman, 2000, p. 357).

L2 speakers of English are often grouped into two categories: those who speak English as a second language (ESL), the outer circle (Kachru, 1983), and those who speak English as a foreign language (EFL), the expanding circle (Kachru, 1983). People who learn English in a country where English has no official status, such as Japan or China, are said to speak English as a foreign language. People who learn English in a country where English has some official status, such as Nigeria or Singapore, are said to speak ESL.

However, this classification is too simplistic for teaching purposes because ESL learners do not form one coherent group. In the United States, migrants learning English have very different needs than, say, someone learning English in India. This has led to a proliferation of acronyms. In the UK people talk about English as an additional language (EAL) for non-native speakers of English at school and English to speakers of other languages (ESOL) at college. In the United States, teachers talk of English language learners (ELLs). Learners who plan to settle in a country where English is a native language may wish to learn the standard language in that country, but they will also need to learn more local varieties. Someone who settles in Leeds will need to be able to cope with Yorkshire English.

Outer circle countries like Nigeria often have a standard English which is distinct from native speaker varieties, and in many situations two Nigerians might communicate in English even though they both have other languages in common. These varieties are primarily used for communication within a country or region and often have distinctive features of vocabulary and grammar. In West African English, people may say 'two breads' rather than 'two loaves of bread' or read works of literature which include sentences such as 'I was a palm-wine drinkard since I was a boy of ten years of age' (Tutuola, 1961, p.

4). If you are learning English in Nigeria or Ghana, West African English, and the cultures associated with that variety, are likely to be more useful than, say, a native speaker variety such as Australian English.

The situation with learners of English as a foreign language is more complex because of the range of reasons for which such learners may need to use English. If they are going to use English primarily with L1 speakers of English, then a variety of English as a native language (ENL) will probably be appropriate. So, a Mexican who is learning English to do business with people from the United States should probably learn a variety of American English. Similarly, a speaker from Côte d'Ivoire who wants to trade with Ghanaians might wish to learn a Ghanaian or West African kind of English. However, many learners will wish to use English to communicate with others from the expanding circle. The situation where two non-native speakers of English use English to communicate with each other is very common. 'About 80% of verbal exchanges in which English is used a second or foreign language do not involve native speakers of English' (Gnutzman, 2000, p. 357). In these circumstances, English is being used as a *lingua franca* and, for many people, this is the variety of English that they need to learn.

> A lingua franca is a contact language used among people who do not shared a first language, and is commonly understood to mean a second (or subsequent) language of its speakers. (Jenkins, 2007: 1)

There is disagreement about whether English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) includes interactions with L1 speakers of English. Prodromou says that ELF is 'the use of English as an international context as a lingua franca between people with a different L1 but excluding L1 speakers of English' (2008, p. xviii), and he uses the term English as an International Language (EIL) to cover interactions between both L1 and L2 speakers of English. In contrast, Jenkins (2007) argues that ELF includes interactions which include L1 speakers of English because so many interactions involve both L1 and L2 speakers of English, 20 per cent according to Gnutzman (2000, p. 357).

Some people have tried to come up with descriptions of the phonology, lexis and grammar of ELF. For example, Jenkins suggests that the difference between unvoiced and voiced versions of 'th', as in 'three' and 'that' respectively, is not part of the ELF 'core'. There are also claims that ELF uses fewer idioms than ENL or ESL varieties. However, Jenkins argues that these features should not be used as models for teaching but are simply examples of the ways that ELF interactions happen. What is important is that ELF should not rely on ENL norms (Jenkins, 2007, p. 25) because 'relying on native speaker norms (or near-native speaker norms) does not necessarily guarantee that the communication will be successful' (Gnutzman, 2000, p. 358). Different users will have different varieties of English.

> For instance, if a Chilean, an Indian, and an American attended a business meeting in Hong Kong, each participant might use a variety of English that they were most fluent in – for example, Chilean English, Indian English, and American English respectively. (Matsuda & Friedrich, 2011, p. 333)

A better approach is to focus not on the knowledge of the different language levels of those who speak ELF but on the way they use English in an ELF interaction. 'What is distinctive about ELF lies in the

communicative strategies that its speakers use rather than in the conformity to any changed set of language norms' (Seidlhofer, 2005, p. 38).

Probably the most important strategy is that of accommodation. Users of language need to adjust the way they produce and understand language to try to ensure that they communicate effectively. Here is an example of two speakers in an ELF interaction. They are talking about some pictures that Jean's friend has sent to her, and which both Jean and Karen are looking at.

JEAN: They have pictures of them you know in Kathmandu, in Tibet, like
KAREN: (laughing)
ANNA: They sent pictures on the internet.
JEAN: It's nice but it's a bit
ANNA: . . . too much eh? [speaking at the same time]
JEAN: . . . cheesy [speaking at the same time]
KAREN: Yeah
ANNA: Yeah
KAREN: Yeah a bit too much I think (laughing)
JEAN: So blue flower, we say fleur bleue [blue flower in French]
ANNA: Why? To say that it's cheesy?
JEAN: Fleur, yeah, fleur bleue means you know when you have these pictures with little angels of . . ..
KAREN: Ahh. Yeah
ANNA: Yeah
JEAN: Fleur bleue
KAREN: Kitsch- kitschig [the German for kitschy a word that English has borrowed from German].
JEAN: Kitschig yeah (laughter).
Source: Adapted from Cogo & Dewey (2006, p. 67).

Here, Karen accommodates the way that Jean uses the term 'fleur blue' to explain 'cheesy' in a way that is closer to Jean's L1, and in return, Jean accepts and repeats Karen's use of the German word 'kitshig'.

The focus on interactional needs is the key element here. As teachers, we need to be helping learners develop the skills they need to communicate in the way they need, and this will depend not only on the varieties of English that the parties to the communication can use but also the relative status of those involved. When you are being interviewed for a job, you will probably use language in a way that is acceptable to the person who is interviewing you. Choices of whether to teach one or more kinds of ENL, a second language variety, the set of communication strategies associated with ELF (Seidlhofer & Widdowson, 2009, pp. 37–38) or some combination of these will depend on what learners need and where we are not able to say what they will need, the varieties that we think will be most useful to them. A closely related idea is an approach that trains learners to be 'diplomats', able to view different cultures from a perspective of informed understanding (Corbett, 2003, p. 3).

Activity 2.4. Varieties of English

Consider a group of English language learners you have worked with. What were their reasons for learning English? If you speak a first language other than English, this could relate to your own reasons for learning English. How would these reasons relate to the variety or varieties of English that they were taught?

Summary

This chapter has examined ideas about language in general and English in particular. I have argued that language is complex. Language is simultaneously physical, psychological and sociological, and language teachers need to think about all three elements in their teaching. Again, language is both knowledge (phonology, orthography, lexico-grammar and communicative tasks) and skill (reading, writing, speaking and listening). I have also discussed the ways in which English is different from most languages because it is widely used as a lingua franca and argued that this has implications for what kinds of English students of English need to learn.

Further reading

My favourite book on language is Crystal (2019). The description of the elements of language is a feature in many current textbooks, but its rationale is not widely discussed. This chapter was influenced by Halliday's work (e.g. Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). The literature on ELF is growing. A good starting point is Jenkins's (2007) or Seidlhofer's (2011) and MacKenzie's (2014) looks at the implications for teaching. Graddol's (2006) is well-informed and thought-provoking. At the time of writing, it was available for free download.

Chapter 3

Learning

Introduction

This chapter addresses my second question about TESOL courses:

How is the language being learnt?

This is a question about learners and learning. Theories of learning try to explain how learners in general learn and so are meant to apply to all learners. A good theory should do two things. It should help make sense of what has happened in your class. For example, if your learners are able to get a written exercise on the third person singular 's' in the present tense completely right but then miss out the 's' when they are having a conversation, a good theory will explain this. A good theory will predict what will happen when you go into the class. Whenever you plan a lesson, you are making predictions about how the class will go and how your actions will lead to your learners' learning. If you present grammar rules to your learners, your theory of learning predicts that knowing the rules of grammar leads to language development.

All teachers have a theory of learning, but not all teachers are aware of their own theories. This chapter aims to make you more aware of your own theories of learning and to help you develop your theories in the light of the ideas that other people have developed. Our knowledge of second language development is incomplete. Many theories often provide only partial explanations of how language learning happens (Hummel, 2014). So, it is important that teachers and researchers develop theories that fit their own experience of language learning and teaching, and this will not always mean that they have to adopt an existing theory wholesale. The chapter addresses three questions:

1. How do people learn second languages?
2. What motivates people to learn second languages?
3. What strategies do people use to help with their second language learning?

Activity 3.1. Learning a language

If you have taken courses in learning a second language, say which of these featured in your courses:

a. Grammatical rules.

b. Extensive reading or listening.

c. Drills and repetition.

d. Role play.

e. Correction.

How might these things help the development of language?

How do people learn second languages?

The number of theories of learning is extensive, and the list of references at the end of the book includes several book-length studies of theories of second language learning, but here we will focus on three core theories. One reason for the number of theories is that different theories concentrate on different parts of the learning process. The first theories covered in this chapter focus on what is special about learning a language, the second theory relates to psychological aspects of learning and the last theory relates to socio-cultural aspects of learning.

Language-oriented theories

This section looks at two language-oriented theories of language learning. Both theories emphasize implicit language learning.

The Monitor Model

The Monitor Model was created by Krashen (1989, 1981, 1987) by applying the ideas of Chomsky (1969) about first language development to second language development. Almost everyone learns to use their first language successfully. Krashen compared this with what he saw as the relative failure of second language learning and suggested that the best way to help second language learners is to make second language learning as similar as possible to first language development.

The difference between the relatively informal way in which people acquire their first language and the highly structured approach to language learning in many schools led Krashen to identify two kinds of language development.

> 'Acquisition' is a subconscious process identical in all important ways to the process children utilize in acquiring their first language while 'learning' is a conscious process that results in 'knowing about language'. (Krashen, 1989, p. 1)

Krashen sees conscious and sub- or unconscious development as separate. A learnt grammar rule can never be a part of what you have acquired. You can use what you have learnt to monitor the language

you produce as a result of acquisition, but you must be focussed on accuracy (Krashen, 1989, p. 2). The lack of connection between what is learnt and what is acquired has led to his theory being called the Monitor Model. Because the use of the Monitor is so limited, acquisition is the most important part of language development, and Krashen makes three claims about how acquisition happens.

The first of these is that acquisition requires largely comprehensible input. Unless learners understand what they hear or read, they cannot learn. If learners hear something that they do not understand, then it is not language for them, and the question of language development does not even arise. The 'largely' is also important. If learners can understand what they hear or read completely, then their language will stay at that level. If learners can only roughly understand it, then they may be able to use what they have heard to develop above their current level. Krashen says that for language development, you need i+1, where 'i' is comprehensible input and '+1' indicates something that is a little bit above that.

Learners can use messages they understand for language development. Krashen borrows an idea from Chomsky about first language development, the language acquisition device or universal grammar. This theory argues that humans are genetically endowed with a set of principles and parameters which are triggered by exposure to language samples and help them construct the grammar of the target language, for example, you might learn from one utterance whether adjectives come before or after nouns in a particular language.

Secondly, Universal grammar explains why second language learners seem to develop their knowledge of the grammar and, in particular the morphology, in similar ways regardless of their first language (Krashen, 1989, p. 1). See Figure 3.1.

Other commentators have views on what the natural order is (VanPatten, Smith, et al., 2020, p. 22) and have made suggestions about more specific sequences such as those about the development of questions (Lightbown & Spada, 1999, p. 79). We discuss this kind of sequence below. See Table 3.1.

The third point Krashen makes is about language development and affective factors. If someone is very nervous, then they are not going to get better at language. Krashen uses the term 'affective filter' to describe this.

> [L]ow motivation, low self-esteem and anxiety . . . can work together to 'raise' an affective filter and form a 'mental block' that prevents comprehensible input from being used for acquisition. (De Bot et al., 2005, p. 36)

This idea would be a rationale for letting learners who are uncomfortable speaking to remain silent. One rather unusual piece of research which supports the notion of the affective filter idea was carried out by Guiora et al. (1972, p. 426). They investigated whether drinking alcohol would improve the pronunciation of second language speakers of Thai. They found that 'ingestion of small amounts of alcohol, under

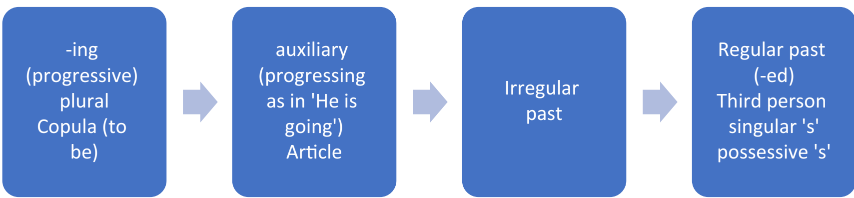

Figure 3.1 Natural order (adapted from Krashen, 1987, p. 13).

Table 3.1 Question attempts

A	Can you say what the girl does? It is a mouse, isn't it?
B	Did they visit to Indonesia? Do you have the picture of the girl?
C	Singapore? You know?
E	We have different pictures? The book on a shelf?
F	What is he doing? How can you know?

Table 3.2 The monitor model

Hypothesis	Gloss
Acquisition/learning	Unconscious language acquisition is separate from conscious language learning.
Monitor	What is learned can only be used to monitor language production.
Natural order	We acquire the elements of language in a predictable order.
Input hypothesis	If learners can roughly understand what they read or hear, this will lead to language development.
Affective filter	Learners who are anxious or nervous will not be able to process any input.

certain circumstances, does lead to increased ability to authentically pronounce a second language' but that too much alcohol led to worse pronunciation. Table 3.2 is an attempt to summarize Krashen's views.

Connectionism

Connectionism and other usage-based approaches see language primarily as a matter of patterns in a complex network. Language users combine smaller units such as morphemes and words to form larger units, such as sentences, based on what the words and morphemes are associated with. So even though sentences might seem to be formed by the creation of grammatical rules, this is just an appearance. 'The only relation in connectionist models is strength of association between nodes' (Ellis & Schmidt, 1997, p. 153). When we produce language, we can use rules to describe what we produce, but usage-based theories think that language users are not necessarily using rules.

When learners are exposed to examples of language, they will identify regularities in what they hear or see, and these regularities will be mimicked in the brain. As learners hear or see the same pattern again, that will strengthen the links between nodes. An individual's creative linguistic competence emerges from the combination of two things: the memories of all of the utterances encountered in communicative situations and the induction of regularities in those utterances based on frequency (Ellis, 2006, p. 78). If an English speaker produces the sound /wʌn/, listeners are primed to hear 'one' rather than the first syllable of 'wonderful' because 'one' is more common than 'wonderful' (Ellis, 2006, p. 78).

Both the Monitor Model and usage-based approaches provide arguments for providing learners with lots of exposure, and Krashen's notion of comprehensible input is a useful guide to what exposure may lead to learning.

Psychologically oriented or cognitive theories

Cognitive models are labelled in various ways. Here I focus on language learning as information processing (Saville-Troike & Barto, 2017) more or less equivalent to what is sometimes known as skill development (Johnson, 1996, 2017; Johnson, 2002) and the adaptive control of thought (Anderson, 2015). Language learning here is the same as other kinds of learning. The essential idea here is that learning consists of two elements: acquiring explicit or declarative knowledge and then using that declarative knowledge to create procedural knowledge.

This theory differs from Krashen's views in two important ways. The first is that this view includes explicit learning and sees explicit learning as leading to or at least supporting unconscious or automatic language use. However, information processing theory does not exclude implicit learning (DeKeyser, 2006, p. 103) as learning may happen without declarative knowledge (Ullman, 2020). Indeed Doughty and Long (2003, p. 292) state 'the default processing mode in SLA, as in other types of complex learning is implicit', and it is possible for learners to learn procedural knowledge without first learning declarative knowledge (Ullman, 2020). This possibility of explicit learning means that learning a language is different from using a language. So, while Krashen would see the communicative, albeit, receptive, use of language as leading to language development and completely separate from explicit learning, for information processing theory, explicit learning and language use are different but linked processes.

Second, information processing views see practice as leading to language development. Chase, one of the originators of the theory, is reported to have summarized the theory as 'No pain, no gain' (Anderson, 2010, p. 242) or more positively, 'practice makes perfect'.

How do learners acquire declarative knowledge about language?

Learners develop knowledge about language by noticing a difference between what they hear or read and their own knowledge of language (Schmidt, 1990, p. 132). For example, if learners see the spelling 'address' and realize that they normally spell that word 'adress', that could lead to them acquiring knowledge about the spelling of 'address'. Noticing is subjective and individual (Schmidt, 1990, p. 130), but the importance of noticing fits in with many teaching activities. Textbooks draw learners' attention to particular features of English, and teachers go out of their way to identify what learners should be noticing. Noticing can also result from the negotiation of meaning that happens in a communicative activity. Here are some data from (Mackey et al., 2000, p. 486).

A: There are [flurs]?
B: Floors?
A: [fluwərs] uh flowers.

Student A seemed to have noticed the initial pronunciation was not the same as the normal pronunciation, and the researchers checked this by asking A to recall what had happened.

Recall: I was thinking that my pronounce, pronunciation is very horrible.

How do learners use their declarative knowledge to create procedural knowledge?

Noticing is not enough, so errors that teachers have often corrected are repeated even where the learners have noticed what was wrong. Their knowledge needs to be turned into action, or, using the technical term must be proceduralized. The first stage of the proceduralization requires that learners have some conscious control over what they are doing. So, they would be able to spell 'address' correctly but would need to use their declarative knowledge to do this. As they develop procedural knowledge through practice about the spelling of 'address', they do not rely so much on the declarative knowledge (Ullman, 2020). This stage is the controlled stage. Because learners need to control their actions, it means that they have fewer cognitive resources to do other things. If they are concentrating on spelling correctly, they may have worse handwriting or make more grammar mistakes.

The notion of learners having limited cognitive resources provides a rationale for repeating activities (Foster & Skehan, 1999). The second time learners carry out a task such as planning a holiday, assuming they are still interested in the topic, they should speak more fluently or more accurately.

Gradually, learners become more expert at what they are doing, and the action becomes more automatic so that it requires less effort to produce. Once the spelling of 'address' is automatic, learners can use the resources that had been taken up by their need to think about, or control, the spelling of 'address' for other learning or communicative events (Anderson, 2010, p. 243). This explains why learners may be able to produce a new grammatical structure when they are practising it in the classroom but revert back to less sophisticated or inaccurate forms in more communicative activities where the increased time pressure and, possibly, the desire to say something original means they have fewer resources to produce the structure accurately. Table 3.3 is an attempt to summarize the skill-based view of language learning and some of the different terminology for related theories that you may come across.

Not all practice leads to improvement, and most of us have the experience of our progress in developing expertise in a sport or language stalling. What is effective, according to Ericsson et al. (1993), is deliberate practice. Learners must:

1. want to improve their language not just use it
2. receive feedback on their performance

Table 3.3 Learning language as a skill

Information processing (Saville-Troike & Barto, 2017)	Language learning as a skill (DeKeyser, 2007)	Adaptive control of thought – Rational (ACT-R) (Anderson, 2015)
Perception	Declarative knowledge	The cognitive stage
Controlled processing	Procedural knowledge: controlled	The associative stage
Automatic processing	Procedural knowledge: automatic	The autonomous stage

3. monitor how their performance matches the correct performance
4. focus on eliminating the imperfections in their performance. (Ericsson, 2013, pp. 263–264)

Socio-cultural views: Vygotsky

The socio-cultural theory of language development is associated with Vygotsky (1978, 1986). Like skill-based approaches, this view sees learning language as the same as learning other things, but it differs from the theories discussed above in two important ways. First, learning is seen as initially social and only being internalized later on.

> Any function in the child's cultural development appears on the stage twice, on two planes, first on the social plane and then on the psychological. (Vygotsky, 1966, p. 44)

Second, learning is brought about, or mediated, through people, often teachers, and artefacts around learners. Learners can do more with support from other people or artefacts around them than they can do on their own. However, learners move from other-regulation, where they are guided by more expert users of English and the artefacts they used to learn English, to self-regulation or autonomy, where the teacher and other languages are no longer needed when they are using English.

Vygotsky says that learners have a zone of proximal development (ZPD), the difference between what they can do independently and what they can do with support or scaffolding, and this is where learning happens. This notion sounds like Krashen's i+1, but whereas Krashen's idea is primarily to do with how universal grammar helps with acquisition, the ZPD is about how the interaction between learners and their environment supports or does not support language development. I+1 is fixed for each learner at a particular time, while the ZPD will vary if the context changes. For Vygotsky, good teachers can increase what their learners can learn. What both Krashen and Vygotsky agree on is that in a particular classroom, learners have the capacity to learn or acquire some aspects of language and not others.

The support that learners receive can come from other learners or anyone else with higher levels of language ability in their context but will often come from teachers and the fact that socio-cultural theory theorizes the role of the teacher distinguishes it from the theories discussed above, but this also means that a key element in learning is teachers identifying what lies within a learner's ZPD and providing the right level of support to the learner at the right stage. See Nishida and Yashima (2010, p. 484).

Artefacts support language development. This can include any object, and in language classrooms, this now often includes the use of digital technologies. However, for Vygotsky, the most important artefact is language, and this covers the use of the first language as well as the second. This connects to the concept of translanguaging discussed in Chapter 2. Saville-Troike collected data from a kindergarten where a four-year-old native speaker of Chinese was often able to communicate successfully with monolingual speakers of English.

Gege: Zhege shi shenme guanzi a? [That is what kind of hose]
Teacher: That's a fire hose (Saville-Troike, 2006: p. 18)

Table 3.4 Translanguaging

Par exemple For instance, *for instance* ça va for exemple, example en anglais, if if gouvernement français if the French government avait considéré, non, non avait pris en compte l'histoire , in account had taken history in account n'aurait pas été aussi surpris, it wouldn't have been so surprised, when, pendant la Seconde Guerre mondiale during the Second War World, les Allemands ont envahi the Germans evaded France from l'Ardenne the Ardenne.

Gege demonstrates the level of confidence which did lead to him getting enough appropriate support to become a fluent speaker of English, but at this stage he was reliant on the presence of a hose in his immediate context and a supportive interlocutor. A more self-directed example is given in Table 3.4. A speaker of French is producing a piece of writing in English. Normal text indicates what the learner said aloud. Underlined segments indicate text actually written down; italics indicate re-readings and repetitions of that text.

Socio-cultural theory is not prescriptive about what are or are not effective ways of mediating the development of a second language but, in ways that parallel most models of language learning, the desired result is an autonomous user of English.

Activity 3.2. How do we learn?

1. Table 3.1 includes attempts at producing a question in English produced by learners of English. Can you identify the order in which they were produced?
2. If you are able to sequence the question attempts, what would you see as underlying the sequence?
3. Look at a piece of learner writing that you have marked recently. What strategies have you used to encourage the learner to notice something in the original piece of writing?

What motivates people to learn second languages?

Motivation is a concept that most teachers use to explain the success or failure of their learners, but it is difficult to be precise about what it means.

> While intuitively we may know what we mean by the term 'motivation', there seems little consensus on its conceptual range of reference. (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, p. 3)

The term motivation comes originally from the Latin 'movere' to move, and the metaphor of learners being moved, or not moved, to learn English is a powerful way of talking about why some learners are more successful than others. But the idea of motivation can usefully be supplemented by two other ideas. First, learners' ideas of their identities, for example, how good they think they are at learning or what they want to do in the future will have an impact on their language learning (Darvin & Norton, 2015; Ushioda, 2011).

The other idea is investment (Darvin & Norton, 2015; Peirce, 1995). Learners are not just motivated by something outside them but play an active role in their language learning. Learners who invest in

their own language learning build up cultural capital (Bourdieu et al., 1991), and this implies some level of consistency over time. This part of the chapter uses the more common term, motivation, but with an understanding that draws on the ideas of identity and investment.

Successful language learners need to have a positive attitude to both the language and the process of learning. This section first examines why people choose to learn English rather than another language and then moves on to the ways in which the learning process may impact learners' motivation.

Motivation to be good at English

One of earliest ideas about why people were motivated to learn a particular second language came out of Canada (Gardner, 1985). Parts of Canada are English speaking and parts are French speaking, and generally people in the English-speaking areas are taught French and vice versa, but the levels of attainment vary widely. Gardner and Lambert (1972) suggested that this might be because of differences in the way that learners related to the target language community. The more successful learners often had an integrative orientation and wanted to be 'valued members of the language community' (Gardner & Lambert, 1959, p. 271). This contrasted with an instrumental orientation, where the focus was on the employment or other benefits that might come from speaking the target language, and which led to lower levels of motivation. The notion of an integrative orientation has been adopted by many researchers but has also been criticized. This is partly because most learners do not live in countries like Canada with large populations of English speakers and partly because English has a different status in the world from many other languages, and even among learners who have achieved high levels of English, few learners aspire to be British or American. See the comments on English as a *lingua franca* in Chapter 2.

Many English learners are not trying to integrate into British or American society, and it is often hard to distinguish instrumental and integrative orientation. Indeed, Dörnyei's (2009) research in Hungary led him to see learners being motivated by having an ideal self which differs in some way from their current ideas of themselves. This is a flexible notion and can cover both a French-speaking Canadian who might aspire to using English like a native speaker of English but equally could be a Hungarian who aims to be an expert speaker of English as an international language. This latter identity applies in many parts of the world too. One Indonesian learner said:

> I'm interested in learning English, because people said that maybe a few years in the future, English is going to be used in Indonesia, so I was afraid I wouldn't be able to, so I was really interested. (Lamb, 2004, p. 2013)

The ideal self for many Indonesians may 'not be English speakers, therefore, nor even westerners in general, but rather other urban middleclass Indonesians who have already acquired this global identity' (Lamb, 2004, p. 15). Some Chinese learners see learning English as part of being a good citizen of China, combining 'harmonizing the family' and 'putting the country in order' (Gao et al., 2007, p. 141). Learners in an English-speaking community may have a different identity. One learner who had moved to Canada said, 'I am a unique individual with a unique combination of skills and talents. I value the fact that I can speak three languages, even if I might never get true native-like ability in all of them' (Cervatiuc, 2009, p. 260).

The notion of the ideal self is a useful way of understanding learners' motivation, but it is less useful for younger learners who may not have a clear idea of their future. Indeed, Butler (2015, p. 180) found that young learners were more influenced by their parents.

> Anyway my Mom tells me that I must learn English well; otherwise, I will be like her who knows only a few very simple English words.

Dörnyei conceptualizes this as the 'ought-to self', a kind of complement to the ideal self (2011, p. 82). The boundary between the 'ought-to' and ideal self is not always clear. So some of Gao et al.'s comments about putting the country in order might be seen as more to do with what they think they ought to do than what they want to do. However, to the extent that these identities are different, the 'ought self' is probably less effective as a long-term motivator as it is less integrated into learners' views of themselves. Hadfield and Dörnyei (2013) suggest that teachers explicitly present possible future selves that the learners might adopt and a set of strategies to help learners see themselves as speakers of English or getting learners to agree with statements about how they see themselves at some point in the future. Similar techniques are described in Magid and Chan (2012).

Activity 3.3. Developing an ideal self

Hadfield and Dörnyei (2013, p. 19) suggest that learners can be helped to develop ideal selves that motivate them to learn English by comparing their ideal selves with other learners and looking at the ideal self of other people. This is one of their examples.

> I see myself in future with a higher degree in English. After graduating, I apply for a job with an international company. The job is very interesting and has a good salary so there are a lot of applications. However, I am well-prepared and confident so I have no trouble speaking English at the interview. I see myself at the interview, answering all their questions confidently and fluently. After the interview, I feel I have done well, though I am nervous about the outcome. The next days, the phone rings, The Managers tells me I have been selected for the job. My first job will be in London and later I will be posted to Geneva. I really enjoy my careers with this company., working in different countries with international colleagues and communicating in English in my work and daily life. I do well in my job and soon get promotion.

Hadfield and Dörnyei suggest learners then write about their own ideal selves. Would this kind of example be relevant to learners that you know? Would making their ideal selves explicit lead to greater motivation?

Motivation to be a good learner

The second part of motivation is a positive attitude to what happens in the classroom, something which is the third strand of Dörnyei's model of motivation. One of the best-known ways of thinking about this is Deci and Ryan's self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2017). They distinguish intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Where students enjoy an activity in the class, they are

intrinsically motivated, but when they are doing it for some reward, such as getting a gold star, this is extrinsic motivation. This distinction in attitudes to learning activities has some similarities to integrative and instrumental orientations to English, and, like an instrumental orientation, extrinsic motivation is regarded as less effective in the long term.

> Extrinsic motivation has traditionally been seen as something that can undermine intrinsic motivate. (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, p. 24)

Learners who are rewarded for doing well in their English examination by being given sweets may interpret this as an implicit message that preparing for the examination is such an unpleasant activity that the only reason why they would want to do the preparation would be to get the sweets. This can lead to learners putting less effort into English in the long term. However, whether learners react this way will depend on how they relate the extrinsic reward and the activity. For example, learners who wish to study at an Anglophone university will need to do well on a test such as TOEFL or IELTS and this could be seen as extrinsic to their English language study, but if the test is seen as closely related to their English ability and their future studies, the extrinsic motivation may not have a negative impact on their intrinsic motivation.

Deci and Ryan argue that intrinsic motivation comes from three basic human needs: competence, autonomy and connectedness (2000, p. 57), and these concepts can be related to particular classroom practices. Teachers often use praise as a way of helping their class to feel they are competent language learners. The learners' interpretation of the praise (Henderlong & Lepper, 2002) is key here. Learners may interpret praise for an activity that they regard as easy as an indication that the teacher sees them as not very good at language, and this can have a negative impact on the learners' view of their competence.

Bandura (2001) suggests that learners' motivation is closely linked to learners' view of what they are able to do, what he describes as self-efficacy. Teachers who want to enhance learners' self-efficacy and competence will choose appropriate activities for their learners. This may be providing them with strategies they need to succeed. See the section below on learner strategies. A second approach that is likely to improve learners' self-efficacy in English is using text about topics familiar to learners. Kao and Oxford (2014) found that using hip-hop music helped one language learner, and texts in English about local cultures can lead to higher levels of motivation (Ajibade & Ndububa, 2008).

Activity 3.4. Learner context and material choice

Ajibade and Ndububa (2008, p. 46) used the following text with secondary school students in Nigeria.

> A boy called Dayo who was an orphan lived with his old uncle in a remote village in Ondo State. He liked the idea of living in the village but then he wanted to live a better life as he felt there were more prospects in the city. So, he requested to live with his uncle in Lagos. On his uncle's invitation, he was highly excited and imagined so many nice things about Lagos. On getting there, the reverse was the case as he never enjoyed the peace and quietness he enjoyed in the village. Around his

> neighborhood were blaring sounds coming from speakers. His neighbors were not helping matters as their radio sets were always on. He longed for his peaceful home no matter how poor it was.

Compare this text with those in an English language textbook with which you are familiar. How far does the choice of texts mean that learners are more or less likely to understand the text and so feel they are competent learners of English? Could you find or create other texts or activities that would more closely relate learners' backgrounds or interests?

Teachers also have a range of ways of helping learners to feel more autonomous, from fairly simple things like letting them choose where they sit in a class to ideas like allowing them to play a role in deciding what they are taught (Breen, 1987). Project work can offer opportunities for learner autonomy.

> When the 9th-grade students in our study were invited to individually select books for a final literature project, Davey appeared lost (explaining: 'Ms. V., you know I don't read!') until his teacher realized that she had the answer at her fingertips. Although Davey struggled to connect with novels, rock music sprinkled most of his conversations and seemed to fill his head as he drummed nonstop on desktops. When his teacher allowed him (within strict parameters) to use music lyrics as his self-selected literature, classroom observations found Davey buried under, and engrossed in, stacks of lyrics. (Faircloth & Miller, 2011, p. 265)

Autonomy has also been used to explain why praising learners for their ability (e.g. 'You are good at languages') is less effective and may even have a negative impact than praising them for their effort (e.g. 'You have done a lot of work on this') because ability is something they cannot control, while they can generally work harder (Henderlong & Lepper, 2002). Teachers will need to judge what makes their learners feel autonomous.

Connectedness often relates to the relationship between the teacher and learners. While many teachers are uncomfortable with the use of languages other than English, this can have a positive effect on relations with learners. For example, when one teacher started learning Portuguese from her learners, this improved the teacher–pupil relationships and responsiveness (Kirsch, 2020, p. 5). However, some learners prefer teachers who only use English in the classroom (Sa Nguyen, 2013, p. 84).

But the connection can be with almost anyone, and the connections can be digital. Prichard found that getting students to write posts on social media increased motivation (2013, p. 752). The strategies discussed about the choice of classroom activities to encourage feelings of competence and autonomy can also lead to stronger connections between teachers and learners.

Maintaining or increasing motivation needs to be handled in both a top-down and bottom-up way. Teachers need to do what they can to use the general findings on motivation with activities based on ideas such as the ideal self and intrinsic motivation but also responding to what motivates particular individuals in the classroom.

Activity 3.5. Motivation

1. Consider a group of learners whom you have worked with recently. To what extent is their motivation to do with their ideal or ought-to selves? Is it more useful to think in terms of intrinsic or extrinsic motivation?
2. Lamb (2017, pp. 330–1) identifies four main findings from research into motivation.
    1. Teachers can motivate.
    2. The personal is paramount.
    3. Methods matter, but so does context.
    4. Learner control.

To what extent does your experience of the language classroom fit in with these four findings?

What strategies do people use to help with their second language learning?

Most teachers have the experience that some learners in the classes seem to be better at learning languages than others. This experience has led to research into good language learners (Naiman, 1996) and the idea that good learners are doing something different from other learners. For example, a learner reported in Huang (2016) said:

> We had so many words to memorize . . . I usually worked with my friends in arranging schedules, testing one another, and memorizing difficult words. Working with friends helped reduce my anxiety.

Another learner said that she 'tried to encourage myself and calm myself down before I stood on the stage' (Huang, 2016, p. 6). These different actions are described as learning strategies and defined as 'deliberate goal-directed attempts to manage and control efforts to learn the L2' (Oxford, 2010, p. 12). Good language learners seem to make more use of learning strategies.

The conceptual framework and positioning of strategies is confused. Macaro says it is not clear if 'it is the range and frequency of strategy use, the nature of strategies, or the combinations of strategies that is the key to successful language' (Macaro, 2006, p. 321). The terminology is complex. Learning strategies are different from learning skills in that they are conscious and so more controllable. They are also, at least partially, different from communicative strategies in that learning strategies are aimed at supporting learning while communicative strategies are aimed at enabling communication, but the two notions overlap because in many cases being able to maintain communication will lead to learning. Some commentators use learner strategies as a general term to cover strategies used by learners.

The element of consciousness in strategies means that they are often associated with the information processing model of learning and conceptualized as cognitive; however, some socio-cultural theorists

see them as an element of learner self-regulation within a broadly Vygotskyan framework and conceptualize them as behaviour. Oxford says learning strategies:

1. Are purposeful mental actions that the learners creatively implement to meet learning-related needs.
2. Aid the learning developing self-regulation, completing L2 task and moving towards L2 proficiency.
3. Are complete, dynamic and fluidly employed in specific socio-cultural context.
4. Are used consciously or at least partially consciously.
5. Can be discussed in terms of functions, such as 'meta-strategic', cognitive, emotional/affective, motivational and social.
6. Can be taught (Oxford & Amerstorfer, 2018, p. 5).

Several attempts have been made to classify strategies. A particularly good list of strategies was produced by Oxford (2010, p. 16), and this could be used as a syllabus, but my own preference is for working on strategies that are needed to carry out a task in English. Teaching learners who struggled with reading about the strategies of skimming, scanning and making global and lexical inferences led to students reading more quickly and understanding texts better (Gu, 2018, p. 151). In some classes, learners can teach each other strategies. Kondo and Yang (2004) helped English learners in a Japanese university cope with anxiety by sharing the strategies that they found effective. We return to the topic of strategies in the chapters on reading and listening.

Summary

This chapter has examined a range of theories of second language development, covering Krashen's Monitor Model and connectionism but focussing on information processing models and socio-cultural theory. The chapter also looked at two contributions that learners make to the learning process: motivation and learning strategies.

Activity 3.6. Discussion

Take a unit from a textbook that you know well, and answer the following questions.

1. To what extent does the material present comprehensible input? What could a teacher do to make the material more comprehensible?
2. What does the material do to help learners notice new features in the input?
3. What opportunities do the materials offer for practice? Could this provide an opportunity for deliberate practice?
4. What scaffolding does the material provide to the learners? What opportunities are there for scaffolding from the teacher or other learners?
5. What evidence can you see in the material that it has been designed to increase learner motivation?

Further reading

Several authors have produced books on second language development. Lightbown and Spada (2013, 2021) and Hummel (2014) provide accessible introductions. The best-known author is Rod Ellis whose Understanding Second Language Acquisition(2015) is a good starting point for a more academic account. Saville-Troike and Barto (2017) are clearly written, and Mitchell and Myles (2013) and Van Patten, Keating and Wulff (2020) are worth looking at. Krashen has made much of his earlier work available through his website, and even though you may disagree with some of his arguments, his ideas are worth exploring. Connectionism and other usage-based theories are becoming better known. Nick Ellis is the main figure in second language learning. Tomasello (2003) writes very clearly about first language development.

This chapter focussed on two learner variables – motivation and use of learning strategies. A useful introduction to learner variables in general is Dörnyei (2005). Dörnyei and Ushioda's (2021) is a clear academic introduction to motivation. Norton and Kramsch (2013) discussed how identity and investment can be used to explain why learners do or do not want to learn a language. Cohen and Macaro (2007) and Oxford and Amerstorfer's (2018) are useful surveys of the work on learner strategies, and Grenfell and Harris (2017) cover the topic from the point of view of language learning in general.

Chapter 4

Teaching

Introduction

This chapter and Chapter 5 ‘Programme and Lesson Planning’ address my third question about TESOL courses:

> How is the language being taught?

This is a question about teachers and teaching. This chapter focusses on how to organize a lesson to provide learners with opportunities for language development, and the next chapter covers the factors related to planning a course. This question assumes that someone has already decided on the language learning focus to be taught. Sometimes Ministries of Education, school principals or textbooks writers make that decision, but hopefully all teachers have some influence over how their classes are taught. If you are able to decide what to teach your learners, the first stage will be to carry out a needs analysis, discussed in Chapter 5.

Once the language learning focus is decided, the next stage is to work out how best to teach this. The standard way of addressing how language should be taught has been in terms of method. So if someone asked you how you teach, you might say I use the communicative method or task-based learning. However, the idea of 'method' is problematic. One reason for this is the proliferation of methods. A look at books on teaching languages (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011; Richards & Rodgers, 2014) will produce a list of methods such as Community Language Learning, the Silent Way, Suggestopedia, Total Physical Response, the Natural Method, Content and language integrated learning (CLIL) and Dogme (Meddings & Thornbury, 2009), as well as commercial approaches such as the Michel Thomas approach (Block, 2003), the Pimsleur method (Pimsleur, 1980) and Crazy English.

The number of methods is a problem because it is difficult to distinguish the methods. Task-based teaching is sometimes seen as a variant of the communicative methods and sometimes as a separate method entirely. Brumfit (1991, p. 135) wondered how 'it was possible for Krashen and Terrell (1983) to market ‘The Natural Method’ as some kind of coherent packages without constantly examining the extent to which it overlapped with others traditions in its recommendations'. It is also difficult to find differences in classrooms which are supposed to be examples of different methods (Swaffar et al., 1982).

Teachers have also resisted the introduction of new methods because they seem culturally inappropriate. For example, some teachers argue that particular features of communicative language teaching

are not relevant in contexts where classes are traditionally teacher-centred (Ji & Pham, 2020; Kessler et al., 2021; Klapper, 2003; Lewis & McCook, 2002; Takanashi, 2004).

More generally, the idea of a method implemented by teachers and delivered to learners is fundamentally mistaken. A method is not like a drug that a doctor gives to a patient, where the teacher is simply a cog in the education machine (Canagarajah, 2016, p. 20). The process is much more context-dependent than the medical metaphor suggests. Learners' experience of the same method and even of the same class vary enormously, and we lack evidence that different methods are more or less successful (Larsen-Freeman, 1991, p. 126 et seq.). Long went further:

> It is clear that 'method' is an unverifiable and irrelevant construct when attempting to improve classroom FL instruction. Worse, it may actually, do harm by distracting teachers from genuinely important issues. (Long, 1991, p. 40)

Kumaravadivelu (2006) has argued that we must move beyond method to the notion of post-method, where teachers make decisions about what teaching methods are appropriate for the needs of their learners within a particular teaching and learning context. 'Situated methodologies rather than a particular method are what lead to successful learning' (Ur, 2013, p. 468). Harmer (2015, p. 70) argues for a similar approach when he talks about 'principled eclecticism'. Teachers might use a dogme approach because their learners have a low level of motivation and find learning through use more effective than learning through instruction. Teachers might choose an audiolingual method for teaching pronunciation because the learners find that repetition is a way of improving how they speak. Rather than thinking of teachers selecting what is currently thought to be the 'best' method, methods are a set of resources from which teachers construct their own methods of teaching in ways that fit with the needs of their particular learners and ways of learning. Teachers are generally the best people to make decisions about methodologies. The rest of this chapter will cover the range of ways that teachers might answer three key questions:

1. What is the aim of the lesson?
2. What materials are being used in the lesson?
3. What is the sequence of activities in the lesson?

The discussion covers five methods to illustrate the variety of methodologies that teachers currently use. See Table 4.1.

Aims

Language teaching methods aim to prepare learners to use the language for communication. This is in the title of Communicative Language Teaching, and even grammar translation does have the long-term objective of enabling learners to read works of literature in English. Similarly, most, but not all, methods recognize that learners need to develop grammatical and lexical abilities and particular language skills, but the staging of these different aspects of a method varies.

Table 4.1 Language teaching methodologies

Method	Explanation
Grammar translation	Helping learners read literature in the target language. Speaking and listening in target language (TL) are not part of its aims. Instruction involves translation into and from the TL and the construction of grammatically accurate sentences using metalinguistic rules. Classes are largely not conducted in the TL.
Audiolingual	Developing learners who can use language like native speakers in all four skills, but initially the focus is on listening and speaking. Instruction involves the imitation of sentences and sentence patterns constructed to exemplify grammatical structures. The use of other languages and grammatical explanations is rare. Classes are conducted in TL.
Weak CLT	Developing learners who can communicate in TL. This often begins with listening and speaking, but all four skills are valued. Instruction involves pronunciation, grammar and functional teaching or the practice of one or more skills. Teaching units end with a communicative task.
Strong CLT/ TBT	Developing learners who can communicate in TL. A task-based syllabus is based on communicative tasks that learners need to do outside the language classroom. Classes may consist of learners trying to carry out communicative tasks. Where there is instruction, this is based on the problems learners have with the tasks rather than a pre-designed grammatical syllabus.
CLIL/English-medium instruction/ content-based teaching	Developing learners who can study a specific subject in TL and enhance their general TL abilities. The teacher would normally be a subject expert who can use TL. Instruction relates to problems that arise from the subject instruction, but in many contexts, a language-focussed class, often organized on a weak CLT basis, runs parallel to the subject class. The use of other languages is not unusual.

I learnt French using the grammar translation approach and spent most of my first year learning grammar rules and vocabulary lists. I did not get to the communicative objective, in my case reading a novel called *Candide*, until my third year. When I studied Malay in an audiolingual method, I was able to go into a restaurant and order a simple meal within the first week of my course in a way that I was not able to do until my third year of French. However, my reading skills remained undeveloped. This, however, was not to do with the audiolingual method but to the shortness of the course. If you had looked at the grammar translation class at different periods of time, the aims of the class would have been very different, and this applies to several methods. The next chapter will address this change in focus associated with some methods, but this chapter focusses on planning a lesson. Having sympathy for a particular method does not mean that the aims of all your classes have to be similar.

Communication versus preparing to communicate

As my experience learning French suggests, it is not always possible to achieve the communicative aim within one lesson, and so you will often have to decide whether your aim in the individual lesson or part of a lesson is to get your learners to communicate or if you are preparing them to communicate at some later stage.

Starting by teaching the learners and then getting them to use what we have taught them may seem natural, but this is not always true for at least three reasons. First, when someone is learning an additional

language, they already have knowledge of one or more other languages. A group of burglars who are learning ESL (Swan, 1985b, p. 86) would interpret their look-out saying, ‘The policeman is crossing the road’ as a warning based on their knowledge of pragmatics in their first language, even if they have not taken a course on speech acts in English (see Chapter 12: Pragmatics). Second, most language syllabuses are cyclical. A topic like the past tense will be taught several times, and this means that many learners will come to a lesson with some knowledge of what the aim of the current lesson is. Third, second languages are often taught to groups of learners, and different learners in the group will have different levels of knowledge. These three reasons mean that a teacher can sometimes start a lesson by trying to communicate, rather than preparing to communicate.

This is not an argument against preparing to communicate. Non-communicative activities are justified 'in the process of becoming a competent user of another language' (Gilmore, 2004, p. 371). In the same way, those who want to become tennis players spend some of their time not on the tennis court but developing the skills they need to help them become better players. Practice leads to tennis players improving and language learners developing, but if you start with preparing rather than communicating, you will need to predict what the learners need.

Classes focussing on learning to communicate enable teachers and materials writers to design activities before the class begins. A focus on communication means that the language taught relates to the problems the learners have rather than those that are predicted, but it does mean that what needs to be taught is less predictable, and this can present problems for teachers.

Preparing to communicate

Lessons whose aims are to prepare learners to communicate will typically focus on language elements (pronunciation, spelling, grammar, vocabulary, pragmatics, discourse) or skills (reading, writing, speaking, listening), and we can find this in the grammar translation, audiolingual and weak CLT methods.

Grammar translation lessons might be structured around a grammar point such as comparative adjectives. The lesson would cover grammar and relevant vocabulary, and the learners would only be expected to develop the skills of reading and writing, so pronunciation would not be covered. A distinctive element of the grammar translation approach would be that the learners would be expected to learn to translate from English into another language and back again.

Audiolingual lessons would embed the use of comparative adjectives within some kind of communicative context such as buying a pet. When the shop assistant suggests a tiger, the customer says:

> Haven’t you got something a bit quieter? (Granger & Hicks, 1978, p. 43)

The lesson would probably also cover the pronunciation of comparatives. While audiolingual approaches typically start with spoken language, reading and writing might be covered later in the class or in a later class. Other languages would be discouraged, and learners would be expected to use only the target language (TL).

Within a weak CLT approach, teachers have a choice about whether to start with communicating or preparing to communicate but often have a focus on an element in context. For example, *English in*

Mind (Puchta & Stranks, 2010, p. 54 et seq.) uses the context of people who speak several languages for a unit on comparative adjectives. The unit starts with reading and listening texts which include examples of comparative adjectives before the explicit grammatical information in Table 4.2.

Activity 4.1. Communicating and preparing to communicate

If you were teaching a unit which included comparative adjectives to an elementary class, would you want to include the information in Table 4.2 before or after you gave the class a reading text which included examples of comparative adjectives.

Table 4.2 Comparative adjectives

Adjective		*Comparative form*	
short adjectives (one syllable)	long short big	longer shorter bigger	than
adjectives ending in -y	easy happy	easier happier	
longer adjectives (two or more syllables)	difficult important	more difficult more important	
irregular adjectives	bad good far	worse better further	

Approaches which start with communication express aims in terms of tasks. For a task-based approach, the aim would be something like booking a hotel room. Within CLIL, however, the task relates to the content of the subject that is being taught. So, students might be studying how to separate substances through crystallization in a Chemistry class. The language used would depend on what was needed to achieve the aim of the Chemistry lesson. See Activity 4.2.

Activity 4.2. Supporting a CLIL lesson

An example of a CLIL task

- Students mix water and copper sulphate in a petri dish, then heat the liquid with a Bunsen burner as an experiment in crystallization.
- Students have a mixture of water and food colour in a test tube which they heat with a Bunsen burner to do distillation.
- Students do a paper chromatography where they draw coloured dots on a filter paper, place it in a beaker of water so that the end of the paper touches the water and starts absorbing it (Nikula, 2015, p. 18).

In this lesson, the teacher used the following language

> and what we're going to do is separate so now I've just added some colour in that water just water but for some reason you want that water back you have the colour and this is how we can do it we kind of clean the water.

If you were preparing students for this kind of class, would your aim be more to do with communicating or preparing to communicate? What language features would you focus on?

What materials are being used in the lesson?

Once the focus of language learning is decided, teachers need to consider what materials they will use. This has two main elements:

1. What kinds of texts or recordings do they use, a question mainly about authentic versus constructed texts, and
2. The kind of language that the teachers and learners use. This section focusses mainly on the use of other languages in English language teaching.

Authentic and constructed texts

Authentic texts 'have been produced by and/ or for expert users of the language for use outside of the classroom' (Kumaravadivelu, 2003a) or are examples of 'real language from a real speaker/writer for a real audience with a real message' (Gilmore, 2007, p. 97). Authentically produced texts are a feature of all forms of CLT and TBT. An extract from a newspaper or magazine would be authentically produced, whereas something which a teacher or course book writer produced to help their students develop their language skills would not be authentic. In the later stages of the grammar translation method, learners would be expected to read authentic works of literature in English by authors such as Austen and Steinbeck. This aim here would be to understand English-speaking cultures, but a more recent argument for authentic texts is that contrived simplification of language is misleading. 'Only by accepting the discipline of using authentic language are we likely to come anywhere near presenting the learner with a sample of language which is typical of real English' (Willis, 1990, p. 127). This line of argument was a reaction to the teaching materials that were associated with the audiolingual approach. The Granger and Hicks (1978, p. 43) quotations above came from the following dialogue:

Assistant: I've got some cats
Mr Mole: Oh. Er . . . I don't think my mother would like one of those.
Assistant: Oh, doesn't she like tigers?
Mr Mole: Haven't you got something a bit quieter?
Assistant: Yes sir. I've got just the thing for you. A tortoise.

This extract includes several features of authentic speech, hesitation markers, short forms and verbless sentences, which might help learners understand more about spoken English. Despite this, it does not seem to be the kind of thing that would be heard in a pet shop. The writers' intention was to produce something entertaining that exemplifies the use of comparative adjectives.

Roberts and Cooke (2009, pp. 626–7) identify important and possibly misleading differences between constructed and authentic versions of what happens when a doctor asks a patient what is wrong. This is the constructed text:

D: Hello. Come and sit down. What seems to be the matter?
M: Well, I haven't felt very well for a few days. I've got a bit of a temperature, and I feel just terrible. I've got stomach-ache as well.

This is an authentically produced text:

D: Oh dear what's been happening
K: Ur well I don't know I was urn going away for Easter and um I had a pain in my back (.) in the lung and I had it bad once and um I thought 'uh uh' you know I'll brush it off so I had a very, very dry cough last week when I went to work and er I couldn't go in on the Wednesday and then Thursday and Friday I was coughing and coughing but nothing (.) hurt me but last night I never slept at all and I was going to go up to G hospital, hospital. One minute its hard and one minute its soft and then when I cough (.) it nearly kills me so.

The real patient takes much longer to explain her symptoms and uses colloquial language to present herself as worthy of treatment ('I'll brush it off' and 'it nearly kills me'). The constructed text sounds quite natural, but the two texts show that even natural-sounding constructed texts are likely to present a distorted view of how communication happens, and this may disadvantage learners when they have to communicate outside the classroom.

Roberts and Cooke are working with ESOL students in the UK who may well need to be able to understand language such as 'brush it off', and the lack of authenticity in the constructed text might well be problematic. However, the needs of those learning English in other contexts might not be met by Roberts and Cooke's authentic text. This raises the issues of the role of learners in deciding what is authentic (Badger & MacDonald, 2010). Language users create texts from the ink on the paper, the pixels on the screen or the acoustic signal because they have a purpose for which they wish to use it (see Chapter 2), so the authenticity of a text for the learners relates both to whether they have the appropriate skills and knowledge to make sense of the text, and whether the text relates to the communicative tasks with which these users want to engage.

When teachers are choosing texts, they need to choose ones that are authentic for their learners. For example, if a teacher were working with a group of molecular biologists to improve their abilities to produce a systematic review of research into the molecular biology of cancers, the article from which this is taken might well be an appropriate choice of text:

> Improvements in our understanding of molecular alterations at multiple levels (genetic, epigenetic, protein expression) and their functional significance have the potential to impact lung cancer diagnosis, prognostication and treatment. (Cooper et al., 2013, p. 479)

However, it is unlikely that this kind of text would be authentic for many other groups of learners, and even with a group of molecular biologists whose aim was to improve their listening skills, the text might not be authentic. This is not because the physical text is different, but because learners are interacting with the text in different ways.

A related notion here is dogme (Nhat Quang & Bui Phu, 2020; Thornbury, 2001) ‘a pedagogy of bare essentials'. In this approach, teachers do not make use of any materials specifically related to language teaching and learning but use whatever resources are available in the classroom so that communication emerges from the interests of teachers and learners rather than what is in the course book or the syllabus. The dogme approach emphasizes the communicative task of conversation in language development and sees language learning as coming out of conversation rather than learning grammar and vocabulary. This may not be a complete solution to how to teach, but a dogme lesson can help reengage learners who have been put off by course book-oriented lessons.

While authentic texts are generally better materials for language teaching, constructed texts also have their uses. The choice depends not on what is authentically produced but on what best supports language development. CLIL materials are usually authentic in the sense that they are ‘real language from a real speaker/writer for a real audience with a real message’ (Gilmore, 2007, p. 97), though they have probably been created for teaching purposes.

Activity 4.3. Authenticity

Look at the following texts. For what kind of learners, if any, would these texts be authentic, and what would be an effective way of using them in the classroom?

A (Simpson et al., 1999)

S1: Alright Sue now it’s like uh I dropped like Chem one- twenty- five.
S2: This year? This term?
S1: This_yes this se-semester right now I [S2: okay] late- dropped because like (xx) I missed a couple of classes my G- S- I instructed me to, [S2: mhm] and secondly it’s like uh I told you I was transferring to engineering.
S2: Ri-oh but you dropped chem okay.

B (Terry & Wilson, 2004)

O: Platinum card service. Rebecca speaking. How may I help you?
C: I’ve got a few problems with my credit card account.
O: OK. What is your credit card number?
C: Let’s see. Huh. It’s here somewhere. Ah. Here it is.
O: Can I just take the card number please.
C: Yes it’s six double nine two.
O: Six double nine two.

C. (Lynch, 1996)

Mrs West: I wonder why your country has been involved in almost every war on the continent.

Klaus: The reason for this is its geographic position, I think. Germany is in the middle of Europe and has more bordering states than any other country. Before the last war Germany had ten neighbours. The more neighbours a country has the greater is the danger of war. You British are luckier than we are.

D (My own data)

I: OK. Uhm uhm, have you been to the movies or to the theatre yet?
L: Yeah. I have been to a movie once.
I: What did you watch?
L: Starbucks
I: Starbucks? Stardust.
L: Stardust. Sorry!
I: Did you like it?
L: Yes, of course. A romantic movie.
I: What was it about?
L: Aah. Just a kind of fantasy. It's about a fantasy.

The students' other languages, translanguaging and English

Different methods have taken very different attitudes to the use of the students' other languages. In grammar translation, translation from one language into English and back again is an aim of the class, and often a language other than English will be the dominant language in the classroom, at least partly because the aim is to help them develop reading and writing skills in English.

The audiolingual approach is strongly against the use of other languages because it reduces the amount of time when the TL is being used. This can have advantages. When I was learning Malay, the teacher did not translate anything, and we did not write things down until we could repeat the day's dialogue from memory. This was difficult but did mean that when I tried to use Malay outside the classroom, I could do this fairly automatically.

Many teachers working with broadly CLT and task-based approaches to teaching feel they should avoid other languages. However, my experience of classes where the learners share a language other than English is that the other language is used regularly, and one of the unfortunate side effects of the exclusion of other languages is that we have relatively little knowledge of when other languages are used and when this use helps or hinders the development of English.

Within CLIL and content-based learning approaches, other languages are used. Some classroom-based research also suggests that other languages can be a resource in helping the development of the second language.

> Something I have noticed, and which I consider an advantage, is that when they have mastered their mother tongue and they learn the foreign language the mother tongue is used as a support. They compare the languages and bring different ideas face to face, which leads them to reflect on their own language. (Méndez García & Pavón Vázquez, 2012, p. 588)

Research into the use of other languages in English language teaching drawing on the concept of translanguaging (Conteh, 2018) is becoming more common. Use of other languages can lead to better relations between learners and teachers and increases learner participation (King & Martha Bigelow, 2020; Kleyn & Garcia, 2019). However, Kirsch (2020) reminds us that the core issue is whether it leads to TL development.

Activity 4.4. Translanguaging

Below is a sample of a group of English language learners talking about a Bulgarian salad called shopska.

1. Do the participants communicate successfully?
2. How would you feel if this happening in your classroom? Would it lead to TL language development?

S4 We we make one special salad which is called er shopska.
S2 Out of what?
S4 It 's er er made out of tomatoes erm cucumbers erm onion cheese.
S2 Aha we have that.
S1 No it 's good it must be good.
S4 Yes it 's very good and er, you, you eat salad and or then or you, you also have some like erm come se pronunciare accettato?
S2 Com affectato?
S4 Accettato.
S2 Affetata?
S4 That 's Italian. Doesn't matter.
S2 No ah feta feta?
S4 No.
S1 Feta cheese you mean?
S4 No no this like er, salamis, different types of salamis.
S1 Oh I know, I know.
S1 Okay (adapted from VOICE, 2020).

Being forced not to use one's own language can be beneficial for a short course but is hard to maintain. Also, using the learners' first language is problematic in a multilingual class where one learner's own language is meaningless to speakers of other languages. Scrivener says:

> As an ideal, I would like a classroom where learners were free to use their own tongue whenever they wanted, but in fact mostly chose to use English. (2011, p. 297)

This is a useful guide. The overarching aim is how the use of the learners' other languages can help the development of English, but this is difficult to evaluate.

Activity 4.5. Using other language in the ELT classroom

1. If you teach learners who share a language other than English, how often do you use that language in your classes?
2. You will find a questionnaire on the use of other languages in the classroom in the companion website.

What is the sequence in the lesson?

Broadly, the sequence of activities in a lesson depends on whether the teachers aim to teach something and then get the learners to use whatever they have been taught, or if the teachers adopt a problem-solving approach in which the learners try to do something and then are helped to do this better. The first option results in a lesson sequence that is normally called presentation, practice and production (PPP), typically associated with syllabuses focussing on grammar and vocabulary. The main alternative is a task-based sequence (Faez & Tavakoli, 2019; Willis & Willis, 2007) closely associated with syllabuses where the focus is on tasks and which I label as the problem-solving sequence.

Presentation, practice and production

In a PPP lesson, the teacher presents the new language at the start of the lesson. This might be a grammatical structure, some vocabulary, spelling rules or something to do with pronunciation. See Figure 4.1. It is normally something connected with the elements of language rather than language skills. However, it is possible to use a PPP sequence when the aim is to teach learners how to carry out a communicative task (Nunan, 2004).

Presentations vary a lot. See the chapters on language elements. The aim of the presentation is to increase the amount of knowledge that learners have in line with the information processing models of learning covered in Chapter Three Learning. The presentation provides learners with declarative knowledge

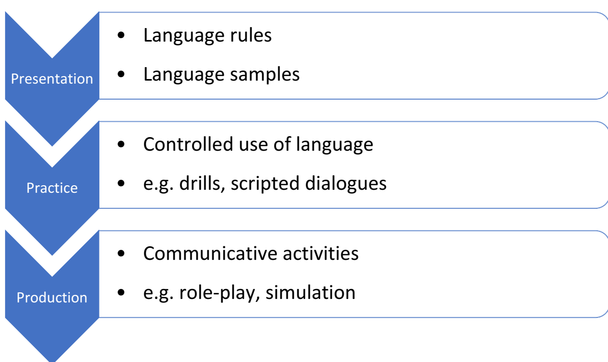

Figure 4.1 Presentation, practice and production.

(e.g. language rules) or examples of procedural knowledge (e.g. language samples). The teacher might combine both kinds of knowledge by presenting some language samples and seek to help the learners to develop some implicit awareness of the rules or patterns underlying the language samples. Anderson (2020) sees the presentation stage as consisting of two elements, presenting language samples and analysing those samples, often a feature of audiolingual or weak communicative approaches. PPP also often involve teachers working on the affective side of learning by trying to engage the learners' interest in what the lesson is about. Harmer (2015, p. 67) suggests the first stage of a typical lesson should be aimed at engaging the learners before the teacher starts the presentation.

Practice, the second stage, involves the learners starting to use their new knowledge in line with the proceduralization of knowledge of information processing models of learning. This involves controlled use of the language and often includes activities such as drills and dialogues. Some people regard this stage as focussing on accuracy (Hedge, 2000).

The production stage is where learners use the language freely. This might be a role-play of some kind of real-world task. This stage corresponds to the autonomous stages in information processing or the ACT-R (Anderson, 2015, p. 242) model of learning.

The PPP sequence has been much criticized (Allwright, 2005; Jones & Carter, 2014; Willis & Willis, 2007) because time constraints mean that the most communicative element of the lesson, the production, is often missed out. It can also mean that the teacher is presenting materials that the learners already know. However, PPP is widely used at least partially because of institutional factors. When I worked in Malaysia, I had to record what grammar points identified in the syllabus were covered in my classes, and this would have made it difficult not to have some PPP lessons. However, teachers can use PPP more flexibly than a simple description of the sequence may suggest. So Byrne (1986) suggested seeing the sequence as a circle. This would have the advantage of the language points that were taught emerging from the production activities attempted previously rather than just from the syllabus.

A problem-solving sequence

A problem-solving sequence has three main stages: pre-task, task cycle and language focus. A more detailed version of this is given in Figure 4.2.

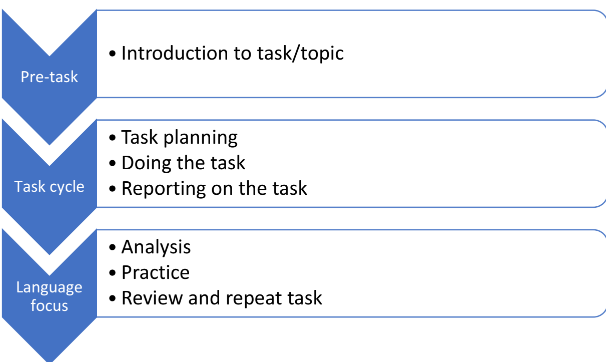

Figure 4.2 A problem-based sequence.

The pre-task stage gives the learners information about the TL item. In TBT, a communicative task, or in a CLIL or content-based lesson, the language item would be the topic that is to be covered. This stage should help engage the learners and provide some background information about the task or topic. This may also activate topic-related words and phrases (Faez & Tavakoli, 2019, p. 17; Willis, 1996, p. 41).

The task stage is the learners carrying out the task using whatever linguistic resources they have. Normally, the task would be carried out in groups within the class. This is intended to be a relatively stress-free environment and so should encourage learners to use language fluently. In some classes, some of the groups would then report back to the whole class on the task they have done. This is intended to encourage recycling of language, and the fact that this is more public should encourage a focus on accuracy.

In the language focus section, the learners work on the elements of language that they need to carry out the task more effectively. This may involve learners comparing how different groups carried out the task or comparing their own performance with that of more expert language users. Where the outcome of the task is, for example, some writing, learners might read an expert version of the writing. They may also go on to practise elements of language, for example, grammar, that come out of an analysis of the differences between how they carried out the task and how experts would have done it.

The teacher must devise activities very quickly or have a portfolio of materials that can be given to learners. Some teachers organize their classes so that the language focus happens in a later lesson when they have had time to prepare appropriate activities. In some lessons or lesson sequences, the language focus will be followed by the learners, possibly in new groups, doing the task again.

A problem-solving sequence can be related to information processing views of language learning. At the language focus stage, learners are noticing the gap between what they can do and what experts do. The conditions for noticing are better than they would be in a PPP lesson because the noticing relates to differences between how the task was carried out by the learners and experts. The problem-solving sequence allows several opportunities for practice. In the task phase, these are mainly to do with repeating the task under different conditions. Teachers need to decide when repetition is beneficial for learning and when it leads to demotivation.

This version of the problem-solving sequence is highly structured and reflects the fact that, for many teachers, this is a relatively new approach to teaching; however, problem-solving sequences exist in several forms. Many teachers do not have a separate language focus stage and address language issues at various stages throughout the lesson.

Deciding on a sequence

The PPP approach provides certainty about language learning aims. This is useful in many state systems of education where there is a national syllabus which is specified in terms of grammar and/or vocabulary, and a Ministry of Education is trying to ensure consistency about what happens in different schools. Consistency would mean that a student who has studied at one school would be able to transfer to another school because the same parts of the syllabus will have been covered. This has

advantages for teachers and course book writers because they have a fairly clear idea about what they will need to cover and can thus plan in advance.

In a problem-solving sequence, teachers do not know what language problems the learners will have until they carry out the task, and so need to be able to address a wide range of issues. General resources for language learners, such as learner dictionaries and grammar exercise books, will be needed.

PPP is based on an analytical view of language. Learners are regarded as learning a bit of grammar, some vocabulary which they integrate into the more holistic view of language represented by the notions of communicative tasks and genres. Sometimes, even though learners have been able to use the target linguistic element in the practice stages, they fail to use it in the production stage because they can communicate without the new language or because they do not understand how it relates to the communicative task. Knowing the present perfect is not just a matter of being able to use the right word endings and understanding the difference between the present perfect and, say, the past simple, but also knowing in what circumstances it is appropriate to use the present perfect, and a task-based approach and a problem-solving sequence seem better able to do this.

PPP also underplays the roles of learners in the language classroom and misrepresents how learning happens. Presentation is something that teachers do. A focus on learning would centre less on the teacher than on raising the awareness of learners. This point is highlighted in Thornbury's (2005b) recasting of PPP in learner-centred terms as awareness, appropriation and autonomy. In a problem-solving sequence, the language elements that are covered are those that have been problematic to the learners, and this is likely to help with learner motivation.

Summary

This chapter examined the concept of teaching methods and looked at how a grammar translation, weak CLT approach, a strong communicative/TBT approach and CLIL approaches lead to different kinds of lessons. The rest of the chapter looked, first, at the aim of a lesson, second, at the materials used, focussing on the use of authentic and constructed texts and the learners' L1, and finally on the choice between PPP and a problem-solving lesson sequence.

Activity 4.6. Discussion

You are teaching a group of doctors who have been working as doctors in non-Anglophonic contexts. They are now going to practise as doctors in an English-speaking environment. Write a plan for a sequence of lessons preparing them to find out their patients' reasons for coming to see them. You should consider your aims, your materials and the sequence of activities.

You may want to use the example of patient–doctor interviews above and two more examples in the companion website.

Further reading

The two best descriptions of the different methods used in language teaching are Richard and Rodgers (2014) and Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2011). Both cover the five methods discussed in this chapter. Willis and Willis (2007) and Faez and Tavakoli (2019) are good descriptions of task-based teaching. Erlam and Tolosa (2022) studied task-based learning in languages other than English with insights for task-based teaching in an EFL context. Ahmadian and Garcia (2018) is a useful summary of different research traditions into task-based teaching. Coonan et al. (2017) cover how CLIL is implemented in different contexts. Macaro (2018) covers the use of English-medium instruction in university education. Kumaravadivelu (2003b) is the classic text on post-method.

Chapter 5

Programme and Lesson Planning

Introduction

This chapter and Chapter 4 address my third question about TESOL courses:

> How is the language being taught?

This chapter focusses on planning. Planning is a central part of all teachers' lives, but the role of planning often changes as teachers become more experienced. As a student teacher, I stayed up late writing very detailed lesson plans. I rarely completed my plans and often found myself halfway through the class with only a fraction of my plan completed, but the lesson plans gave me confidence in the classroom. This experience was important in teaching me that plans are 'not legally binding . . . We can depart from them or stick to them as we, the students and the circumstances seem to need' (Woodward, 2001, p. 1).

When I was working full-time, I could not devote as much time to preparing my lessons, but I still needed the lesson plan to structure my teaching. I now work in teacher education, and my handouts and PowerPoint slides are my lesson plans, but if I had to walk into a class without any preparation, I could teach a reasonable class based on all the planning I have done in the past. The amount of planning teachers do is also related to the kind of work they do. When I worked in Malaysia, the course book and syllabus were not under my control, and so my planning focussed on the lesson and how to use the course book. In Algeria and the UK, I had much more freedom and was also involved in designing programmes and, in the UK, also in the assessment for the programmes.

However, even teachers who are given a course book and a fixed number of lessons in which the course book must be covered are still involved in course design and lesson planning. Teachers 'will inevitably have to make decisions about how long to spend on certain activities, which ones to skip or assign for homework if there is not enough time, which ones to modify so that they are relevant to that particular group of students' (Graves, 2000, p. 149). Course books are aimed at generic learners but have to be used to teach specific individuals and, given 'the understandable conservatism of commercial publishers' (Tomlinson, 2013, p. 73), need to be adapted to achieve their purpose. This chapter introduces the area by addressing the planning of courses and then examining lesson planning as they relate to some of the teaching methods discussed in Chapter 4: weak CLT, task-based teaching and the different forms of content-based teaching.

Programme design

Woodward (2001) identifies six aspects of course design:

1. Conceptualizing content
2. Assessing needs
3. Formulating goals and objective
4. Organizing the course
5. Developing materials
6. Designing an assessment plan

Conceptualizing content relates to an understanding of language and learning, covered in Chapters 2 and 3, and designing an assessment plan is covered in Chapter 6. The other four aspects are addressed in this chapter. Planning a course or a lesson should be done systematically but is not an objective process. Lesson and course design are questions of judgement rather than truth. Indeed, perfect plans are not desirable.

> If my course design is so refined, my objectives so detailed, my materials so elaborate that nothing is left to chance then I am creating a teacher- centred environment in which the learners are just pawns to be moved about the game board of curriculum. (Graves, 2000, p. 9)

The discussion of course design focusses on communicative language teaching (CLT), task-based learning (TBL) and content language integrated learning (CLIL). While the grammar translation method and audiolingualism still influence classroom teaching, they have only a peripheral impact on course design, perhaps mainly through the fact that many weak CLT approaches have, at least, a partially grammatical syllabus.

Assessing needs

The aim of this stage of course design is to find out what learners want to mean (Willis & Willis, 2007, p. 179). Taking account of the needs of the learners can be difficult, and many well-known course books, for example, *English File Beginners* (Latham-Koenig & Oxenden, 2013), are based on a generic description of needs such as the Common European Framework of Reference (Council of Europe, 2001). This framework identifies three levels: proficient, independent and basic, each of which is divided into two. Table 5.1 gives the CEFR levels and the approximate equivalents in two common English language examinations.

While this approach is problematic, indeed the CEFR framework has been described as ‘flawed’ because it is not empirically based (Fulcher, 2010, p. 116), general programmes and course books probably have to be designed in this way. However, this reinforces the need, discussed above, for teachers to adapt course books in line with their needs analysis. For courses in English with a clear notion of their learners, the needs analysis should provide information about:

Table 5.1 Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR)

	Descriptor	IELTS	TOEFL
C2	Mastery (proficiency)	8.5–9	111–120
C1	Effective operational proficiency(advanced)	7–8	101–110
B2	Vantage (upper intermediate)	5.5–6.5	91–100
B1	Threshold (intermediate)	4.5–5	61–90
A2	Way stage (elementary	3-4	31–60
A1	Break through (beginner)	1–2.5	0–30

Source: Council of Europe (2001).

a. what the learners can do, sometimes known as the present situation analysis,

b. the target language use, what the learners need or want to be able to do,

c. a means analysis, what resources are available to enable the learners to move from (a) to (b) (cf. Swan, 1985b, p. 86 supra).

You may notice a similarity between this and the overall structure of this book in terms of language, learning and teaching.

Data related to the learners' current ability and their aims may be available, but often teachers and programme designers will need to collect this information. For example, when Woodrow (2006) had to design a pre-sessional programme for learners who were going to study in English at an Australian university, she consulted the students who were already studying similar courses, as well as tutors, on the programmes that the learners were going to take. Woodrow considered the gap between the present situation and target analysis, so the course covered academic writing abilities. However, the analysis revealed that the learners could not develop all that was needed during the course, and so learners were helped to develop the skills to research the literacy demands of their academic course to allow them to keep on developing after the course was over.

In contrast, Potts and Park (2007) found that university students in Korea, who might have been expected to have similar needs to Woodrow's students, expressed their main needs as being able to take part in oral interaction, and this became the main focus of the course. With both courses, learners played an important part in negotiating what the aims of the course should be, and in many contexts this element of learner involvement can lead to more effective course design (Breen, 1987a, 1987b). Indeed, Woodward (2001, p. 22) suggests, for any course for adults, that teachers write a letter to the learners to find out what their aims are for the course as part of the planning process. For a CLIL approach and similar kinds of programmes, the needs analysis would be based on the content of the other subject.

Formulating goals and objectives

The terms goals and objectives are used with varying meanings, but, for present purposes, the goal of a programme is what should be achieved by the end of the programme and the objectives

Table 5.2 English File Beginners' grammar syllabus

Unit	Grammar term	Example
1	Present tense of 'be' including negative forms	I'm, you're, he's, she's, it's, we're, they're, I'm not, you aren't etc.
2	Singular and plural nouns, possessive adjectives, possessive ('s) adjectives	A cat, cats, an apple, apples My car, your name, his book, her table, its tail, our course, their drink Christina's book, the cat's tail A red car. The car is red.
3	Present simple including negative forms	I go, you go, she goes, he goes, it goes, we go, they go, I don't go, etc.
4	Adverbs of frequency, word order in questions using 'be' and lexical verbs, can/ can't permission and possibility	Always, sometimes, never Are we late? Do they speak French? How old is he? Where does he come from? You can't park here You can get a bus from my house
5	Past simple: be, have, go, get, regular verbs	Was, were, had, went, go Walked, changed, waited
6	There is/are/was/were Revision of object pronouns	Me, her, him, us, them
7	Like + verb + -ing Future: going to (plans) Future: be going to (predictions)	I like swimming I am going to buy some milk It is going to rain

Source: Latham-Koenig and Oxenden (2013: 3).

are more specific. This part of course design aims to produce a set of goals and objectives that learners on the course are intended to achieve. In weak forms of CLT, the goal is communication, but the objectives are generally formulated in terms of language elements and language skills. For example, the contents of *English File Beginners* (Latham-Koenig & Oxenden, 2013, pp. 2–3) have three strands: grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation (see table 5.2); and *Cutting Edge Elementary* (Moor et al., 2013) has grammar, vocabulary, skills, pronunciation, tasks and world culture. Many courses also have strands which relate to learning strategies such as effective use of electronic dictionaries. Ashcraft (2014, p. 36) suggests the following aims for a weak CLT lesson. At the end of the lesson, students will be able to

- Make statements about personal life experiences in their past using regular and irregular verbs in the simple past tense.
- Ask questions about the previous life experiences of others.
- Write five sentences about their past experience using regular and irregular verbs in the simple past tense.

Courses which are designed in this way need to ensure that learners are able to combine all the discrete items (Bourke, 2006, p. 281) through something like the task-based activity in *Cutting Edge*.

In task-based teaching, the goal is to engage in real-life communicative tasks, and the objectives would emerge from learners' difficulties, if any, in carrying out the tasks rather than being specified in advance. The same task might appear in the final or production stage of a PPP lesson in weak CLT and as the starting point of a task-based lesson. If some CLIL learners were studying volcanoes as part of a course in geography taught in English, the learners' geography goal might be explaining how earthquakes occur, and their language needs might include being able to write the explanation

sequence stage of a process explanation to explain how earthquakes occur at different types of plate boundaries', and the objectives would include using the following:

1. content-obligatory vocabulary – convection currents of magma, converge, diverge, compressional/tensional/lateral forces, oceanic/continental plates, subduct, friction, plate boundary, energy.
2. cause–effect language – verbs (active and passive): create, result in, cause, accumulate, release; causal connectives: therefore, as a result, when, as (Kong, 2015, p. 214).

Organizing the course

Organizing the course means taking the goals and objectives identified in the needs analysis and producing a syllabus by dividing the goals and objectives into teachable units and sequencing the units. For weak CLT programmes with multiple strand syllabuses, the structure is often based on topics which provide a framework for teaching the different strands. The choice of topic may also guides the sequence. The topic guides or even controls the new language items, be they structures, language functions or vocabulary. The topic also suggests relevant listening and speaking tasks, interactive activities (e.g. games, information gap), reading texts and a variety of writing tasks keyed to the topic (Bourke, 2006, p. 282). Some course books provide a framework through a story which runs through the book, and this has some advantages in terms of learner motivation and can lead to making the text more authentic for the learners (e.g. Coles & Lord, 1976).

Where the topic or narrative does not guide the order of the syllabus, course designers often draw on concepts like difficulty and complexity. For grammar, the natural order (Krashen, 1987, p. 13) shown in Figure 3.1 in Chapter 3 provides one view of what sequence a grammatical syllabus should follow. However, course books seem to have developed their own sequence. If you are working with a course book, it is worth looking at the page of contexts and trying to work out what principles underlie the course book writers' decisions. Perhaps the sequence in these books is based on Bourke's (2006) ideas about the topic leading to the grammar accompanied by a recognition that grammatical syllabuses are cyclical, with the same grammar point coming up in different contexts at different stages of the educational process and that a grammatical syllabus is best thought of as a checklist of what learners need rather than a sequence of how they are learnt.

The vocabulary strand in these materials is often topic-related, but where lexical factors are considered, the main criterion is often frequency. The most frequent 700 words in English account for about 70 per cent of all texts (Willis and Willis, 2007, p. 193). Once learners know 2,500 words, they will know 86 per cent of all texts. Beyond this, vocabulary becomes more specific and should be selected on the basis of what the learners need to do with the language rather than the overall frequency of vocabulary in the language; so, what someone who wants to study law needs would be lexically different from those who are more focussed on working as travel agents. The vocabulary syllabus should involve recycling, but this is harder to do than it is for grammar, and so even though it is desirable, recycling is not often systematic.

Task-based teaching follows a sequence which is not based on linguistic content but task complexity and difficulty. So, giving directions from A to B is cognitively easier than giving directions from A to B via

C (Robinson, 2001). A task-led course book such as *Cutting Edge Elementary* (Latham-Koenig et al., 2013) seems to rely, at least partly, on this criterion, so the first task of finding information is easier than the second task of talking about one's five favourite people, and both these are easier than the later task of choosing a holiday. However, while cognitive difficulty is a useful criterion, it will not differentiate all tasks, and teachers may need to use the parameters described in Chapter 11 to bring tasks to the appropriate level for their learners and, if they are involved in the design of a task-based syllabus, to recognize that the sequencing of tasks is not an exact science.

In many CLIL programmes, learners attend both an English class and a subject-specific content class taught through English (Dalton-Puffer, 2007), and the process of course design for the English class may follow any of the strategies discussed earlier, though it is common for such courses to adopt a problem-solving or task-based approach related to the difficulties that arise in the content class, and this may lead to a lack of a clear language focus (Baecher et al., 2014), This is also likely to be an approach where English is not taught as a separate subject, and the pressure of teaching to both language and content syllabus may require that extensive opportunities for out-of-class study are needed.

Activity 5.1. Organizing the course

1. 1 How would you sequence the following communicative tasks?

a. Buying a pint of milk.

b. Telling a friend about a film you liked.

c. Taking part in a conversation with two friends.

d. Listening to the news on television.

e. Ordering a book through a website.

2. If you have worked with advanced learners of English, can you identify a set of grammatical features that present difficulties? Are these difficulties to do with differences with the first language or some other factor? Would the notion of difficulty help you to decide the order of items in a grammatical syllabus for advanced learners?

Developing materials

Material development covers 'all the processes made use of by practitioners who produce and/or use materials for language learning, including materials evaluation, their adaptation, design, production, exploitation and research' (Tomlinson, 2012, pp. 143–144). Material development can be aimed at developing new skills or knowledge related to the information processing model of learning to declarative knowledge, at improving the ways learners use existing skills and knowledge, or to procedural knowledge, or a combination of both. The first of these will generally involve exposing the learners to spoken or written texts which will:

1. be comprehensible to the learners,
2. contain examples of the linguistic features, and
3. be of interest to the learners. (Tomlinson, 2008, p. 4)

Within weak versions of CLT, materials might relate to pronunciation, spelling, grammar, vocabulary, discourse or one of the four skills. For example, teaching the present continuous might involve part of the transcript from the 2016 televised presidential debates in which the compere, Lester Holt, asked Donald Trump how he would put more money into the pockets of American workers. Trump responded:

> Thank you, Lester. Our jobs **are fleeing** the country. They**'re going** to Mexico. They**'re going** to many other countries. So we**'re losing** our good jobs, so many of them. When you look at what**'s happening** in Mexico, a friend of mine who builds plants said it's the eighth wonder of the world. They**'re building** some of the biggest plants anywhere in the world, some of the most sophisticated, some of the best plants. With the United States, as he said, not so much. So Ford **is leaving** . You see that, their small car division leaving. Thousands of jobs leaving Michigan, leaving Ohio. They**'re all leaving** . And we can't allow it to happen anymore. (Blake, 2016 my emphasis)

This text contains eight instances of present progressive or continuous (in bold) as well as three elliptical uses of the same tense and might serve as an illustration of the use of this tense in discourse for learners at the appropriate level and with an interest in American economic policy. However, it is difficult to find texts in this way, and in many instances, the initial criterion is the theme or topic, and the other language elements and skills emerge from the text.

Where the aims of the materials relate to improving the ways learners use existing skills and knowledge, teachers and materials writers will need to design pedagogic tasks. Willis and Willis (2007) identify eight kinds of pedagogic tasks, which are useful in designing classroom activities or supplementing a course book. See Table 5.3.

Table 5.3 Categories of pedagogic tasks

Task category	Example
Listing	Towns or cities you have visited
Sorting	Your favourite city
Classifying	The best towns for art and the best towns for night life
Matching	Matching post cards to towns or cities
Comparing	New York compared with Los Angeles
Problem-solving	Choosing a town that will be good for a group of people to visit
Projects	Producing a tourist guide to a city
Story-telling	Writing about an incident that happened in a city you visited

Source: Willis and Willis (2007, pp. 64–111).

Activity 5.2. Designing materials

1. You are working with a group of upper-intermediate learners on ways of making requests. How might you use the text taken from an Australian television programme below? It is a conversation between Clarrie, a grandfather, and Helen, a neighbour, about a party that Clarrie's grandson is going to have (McCarthy & Carter, 1994, pp. 118–19).

Clarrie: So I said to him, forget your books for one night. Throw a party next weekend.
Helen: A party at number 30! What will Dorothy say about that?
Clarrie: Well, what she doesn't know won't hurt her. Of course, I'll be keeping my eye on things, and that brings me to my next problem. You see these young people. They don't want an old codger like me poking my nose in, so I'll make myself scarce. But I still need to be close to hand, you see. So I was wondering, would you be all right if I came over here on the night? What do you reckon?
Helen: Oh Clarrie, I . . .
Clarrie: Oh, I'd be no bother. It'd mean a heck of a lot to those young kids.
Helen: All right.
Clarrie: I knew you'd say yes. You're an angel, Helen.
Helen: Ha.

2. Here is an example of a task from Breen (1985, p. 67). What is the task objective? For what age and level of learners would this task be appropriate? Could you adapt the task to make it easier?

   The students – working within five or six groups – have been asked to read the teacher's comments on two pieces of handwritten homework multi-copied from the work of a previous year's group. Working in pairs initially, the students had to assess the usefulness and appropriateness of the teacher's feedback on the two original pieces of homework. Now working within their groups, the students are agreeing on their answers to two questions which are written up on the blackboard: 'What comments from the teacher would have been most helpful to the people who wrote the homework?' and 'What kind of homework would you recommend as the most useful and helpful?'

3. Design a listing task related to homework that elementary learners could do in groups.

Lesson planning

When you observe a good lesson, the process seems effortless. The teacher is relaxed, the learners are motivated, the teaching materials are ready when they are wanted, one activity leads smoothly into another, and the whole lesson is coherent. However, such classes only happen as a result of effective preparation and planning (Butt, 2008, p. 2). The four key components for a lesson plan are:

1. Purpose – what goals and objectives does the teacher want the learners to achieve by the end of the lesson?

2. Activities – what activities will the learners engage in to achieve those goals and objectives?
3. Resources – what resources will the teacher need to enable those activities?
4. Evaluation – what will be the evidence that the goals and objectives have been achieved?

Activity 5.3. Lesson planning skills

1. Which of the following items would you regard as appropriate lesson goals and objectives? Which would you see as too general? Which are not related to do with learning?

a. Learners will complete the listening comprehension exercise in the course book.
b. Learners will be able to communicate effectively in writing.
c. Learners will be able to write an informal email.
d. Learners will be able to identify new and old information in short spoken sentences.
e. Learners will describe a picture using the present continuous tense.

2. How would you sequence these activities within a lesson on houses for upper-intermediate learners? (Adapted from Rifkin, 2003, p. 176)

a. Learners read an article from a blog about differences in house designs between different regions of the United States.
b. Learners write an essay entitled ‘My perfect home’.
c. Learners are given a house plan from a sale brochure. In pairs, they each describe their plan to their partner, sight unseen, who then draws the plan.
d. Learners watch a five-minute extract from a sales video for a house.

3. Giving instructions

How would you organize the seating for the ‘describe and draw’ activity in 2c in this activity? Write out instructions in English for the activity that would be appropriate for upper-intermediate learners.

4. Lesson planning

If you use a course book in your teaching, identify the learning goals and objectives of a sample unit and then evaluate the activities in terms of how they contribute to these aims. How might you edit/supplement or reorganize the unit so that it would be more effective?

Table 5.4 is a lesson planning form for a four-activity lesson. The bottom of the lesson plan has space for comments, where the teacher can write comments on the lesson after it has been taught. Writing comments is an important part of teacher development, and I would encourage all teachers, no matter how experienced, to do this as a way of reflecting on their more and less successful lessons. See Chapter 17 Professional Development. Pang (2016a) suggests that for less experienced teachers, it is a

Table 5.4 A lesson pro-forma

Teacher				
Class				
Level				
Date				
Time				
Goals and objectives				
Materials				
Activity	**Description**	**Int**	**S/ E**	**Time**
1				
2				
3				
4				
Comments				

Int = pattern of interaction – plenary: teacher to whole class (W); group (G); pairs (P).
S/ E = language skill or element.

useful process to not only write down the lesson plan but also to explain why they chose organized the lesson in the way they did, and this can be a very effective way of developing their own planning skills.

How do teachers identify the purpose of a lesson?

The purpose or goal of the lesson, or for a group of lessons, may come from the course book, the syllabus, a needs analysis or may relate to a language issue that has arisen in a previous lesson. For example, in task-based teaching, teachers may use their diagnosis of how the learners carried out the task in one lesson to provide the language objective of the next lesson, though the goal of the sequence of lessons would remain being able to engage in the real-life communicative task.

The purpose of a lesson is often language-related, but, because of the need to enable learning beyond the language classroom, it may also be to do with, for example, learning strategies and motivational factors. Goals and objectives need to be reasonably specific. For a reading lesson, the aim of reading in English is too broad. This would need to be related to the text type and skill involved that learners need in order to be able to read more efficiently. Being able to scan an encyclopaedia entry for a specific piece of information would be more appropriate than being able to read for information. However, teachers should not feel they are bound to have measurable outcomes for all their lessons.

Sometimes, their objectives relate to issues like motivation or confidence, where it is more important that teachers and learners can sense some development rather than the teacher being able to put a tick against a particular language point. The aims of the lesson should not just record what the learners are expected to do in the class. So, taking part in a pair work activity or practising a reading skill would not be an appropriate objective or goal. The objective would relate to what the learners learn from the activity, such as being able to use a grammatical structure more fluently.

Many lessons have multiple objectives. These may be coordinated in some way, so a reading lesson may incorporate objectives related to particular sub-skills, vocabulary knowledge and information about a particular culture. It is also possible to have 'threads' (Woodward, 2001, p. 55), that is, a sequence that is not closely related to the rest of the lesson but forms a coherent strand over a set of lessons or course. This could be related to language elements such as pronunciation and vocabulary or to something more general, such as a discussion of what videos learners have watched. Threads can be useful as a way of incorporating learners' need even where teachers have restricted freedom. In Malaysia, in a course book-centred approach, I was able to incorporate threads on extensive reading in response to what the learners wanted.

Learners are not robots and so even in the best-planned lesson, they may not achieve all that the teacher hoped they would, so Anderson (2015a) suggests that teachers should talk about learning opportunities or affordances rather than aims, goals and objectives, at least partly as a reminder to teachers that what you teach is not always what learners learn. The view that lessons should not be judged on whether the goals and objectives are achieved has merit. Indeed, teachers who deviate from their lesson plan when the planned aims are proving problematic are demonstrating essential teaching skills and should be commended.

However, specifying aims and the related component of evaluation are an important part of how teachers can improve their understanding of what is and is not possible with one group of learners. This means it is important that aims are expressed in a form that makes it easy for teachers to decide if the aim has been achieved. For example, an aim might be expressed in the form 'by the end of the lesson, learners will be able to hear the difference between the phonemes / p/and /b/' or 'by the end of the lesson, learners will be able to produce an accurate list of references for an assignment'.

How do teachers choose and sequence activities?

Once teachers have decided the aims of the lesson, they need to select appropriate activities. This will relate to the different lesson sequences discussed in Chapter 4 and the elements or skills discussed later in the book. However, a choice of a problem-solving approach, or PPP, will not provide a complete answer as to how the lesson should be sequenced.

Two key stages in lesson planning are the start and the end of the class. Most teachers develop a routine about the start of the class, which might include writing what is going to be covered in the class on the board, a review of what happened in the previous lesson, or something less structured such as a discussion of what the learners have been doing since the previous class. Teachers also often have routine endings, a summary of what the teachers hope the learners have learnt in the lesson or setting homework for the next lesson, and some teachers like to end with a game, perhaps chosen by the learners. A game that can be extended or dropped is useful in case other activities in the lesson have not taken the time the teacher expected in the lesson plan. A game might be a thread activity, and teachers often have thread activities which they do at the start or end of lessons.

The other activities in the lesson also need to be sequenced. Ur (2012, p. 22) suggests that more difficult activities should be done earlier on when learners have the most energy, and this is also an argument within task-based teaching for doing the target task near the start of the lesson rather than,

as in PPP, towards the end. The energy level in the class is an important issue in lesson planning. Teachers in primary schools often talk of stirring activities, which encourage higher energy levels, and their counterparts, calming activities; and this distinction can be applied more widely. For example, teachers may follow a stirring activity where learners are expected to talk a lot, such as a discussion, with a calming activity such as a written exercise. Teachers will often change the order of activities in a lesson if they feel it is getting too noisy or that the learners are getting bored. The ways in which teachers and learners interact are also important. Group and pair work may lead to higher energy levels than when teachers address the whole class.

Task-based teaching makes considerable demands on teachers in terms of activities because a problem-solving sequence means that, until the learners have tried to carry out the communicative task, the teacher does not know what the language elements or skills need to be addressed. This kind of responsive teaching 'needs the support of rich repertoires of pedagogical content knowledge' (Pang, 2016, p. 446), which means not just knowing how to describe the problems learners have but also having ideas about how they can learn to overcome them. So, in task-based lessons, teachers need to identify possible problem areas and have appropriate activities and their associated materials available. In some task-based courses, the language aims of a second lesson emerge from a task that has been done in an earlier lesson, so that the teacher can plan appropriate activities. This might increase the planning time but would essentially be the same as the kind of lessons discussed above, though if learners have different problems, the teacher will need to arrange the class so that different learners or groups of learners can work separately. Whether the language focus happens in the same lesson as the task or later, teachers need to have a bank of resources available, which might be published materials or activities the teacher has designed.

Lesson plans will normally include how long particular activities are expected to last. This can be difficult to judge, and most teachers sometimes struggle with this. The point of these estimates is not to determine in advance what happens in a class; decisions about timing need to be based on the needs of the learners in the class, not what is in the lesson plan. However, after the class, teachers should note how accurate the estimate was so that future estimates will be closer.

What resources are needed to carry out the activities?

Once teachers have identified what activities learners and teachers are going to do, they need to consider what resources they need. This may include photocopies of materials or activities in the course book. However, the resources may also include the use of particular skills such as drawing on the board, giving instructions for a pair work activity, or using a particular app or piece of technology in the classroom. Some teachers make a point of using resources, such as bringing a guest into the class or recording what learners say, as a way of extending their repertoire of activities.

How do teachers know if they have achieved their aims?

A good lesson is 'one where there's plenty of language learning going on' (Woodward, 2001, p. 2), so teachers need to know what their learners know at the start of the class and monitor what learning happens during the class in a kind of ongoing and specific needs analysis. Task-based teaching

incorporates this into its overall structure with the initial attempt at the communicative task providing information about what learners already know and, if the learners carry out the task again after some language instruction, this will tell the teacher what the learners have learnt. Many activities provide evidence of what learners know after teaching and most teachers probably have a reasonable idea of what their learners know at the start of the lesson. This can be built into activity design. If a course book provides a list of vocabulary items for a reading passage, the teacher can start by finding out what learners know before explaining any of them and, similarly, might try to get learners to produce a particular grammatical structure before presenting it.

Summary

This chapter has built on the discussion of teaching methods in Chapter 4 by looking at programme and lesson design. Programme design covers needs analysis, formulation of goals/objectives, organizing the course and developing materials. Lesson planning includes identifying lesson aims, choosing and sequencing activities, ensuring the appropriate resources are available and evaluating whether the lesson aims have been achieved.

Activity 5.4. Discussion

Activity 4.6: Discussion in Chapter 4 asked you to devise a lesson for a group of doctors who have been working in non-Anglophone contexts and are now going to practise in an English-speaking environment. How would you carry out a target language use analysis to identify what their language needs are and a present situation analysis to identify what they are currently able to do?

Further reading

The most useful book on designing English language courses and lessons is Woodward (2001) but, if you are just planning a course, Graves (2000) is very good. Both these books contain useful information about material adaptation and design. Harwood (2010) and Tomlinson (2013) provide more detailed information about materials. If you are in a context where you have to use a textbook, several authors have published studies related to textbooks: Harwood (2013), Gray (2013) and Garton and Graves (2014). I find Willis and Willis (2007), Ur and Wright (1992) and Hadfield (2001) useful sources of ideas for activities, but most teachers have their favourite authors in this area. Wright (2005) is good on classroom management generally.

Chapter 6

Evaluation and Assessment

Introduction

Assessment, evaluation and the tests that are used to inform the assessment process are important in most educational systems and attract a wide range of views. Some teachers feel 'fear and loathing' towards tests (Haladyna et al., 1991, p. 4), struggling to reconcile their commitment to helping their learners become better users of language with the need for qualifications. Learners find many tests stressful, so it is important that teachers and others involved in the education process understand how assessment practices work. However, misconceptions are common, and the three of the most egregious are discussed here (Bachman & Palmer, 2010, pp. 6–11).

The first misconception is trusting too much in the information from assessments. Tests provide a partial indication of what learners can do, and all tests have weaknesses which can lead to injustice (McNamara et al., 2019). The second misconception is that test construction should be left to the experts. Understanding how tests are constructed enables teachers and other educational practitioners to evaluate the tests they use, prepare their learners for tests and construct their own tests to support their learners' language development (Bachman & Damboc, 2018). The third misconception is to over-value features of tests such as reliability, often backed up by statistics. Features such as reliability are important, but the central issue is whether a test leads to appropriate decisions. A test score:

> is the basis for a claim, nothing more, about the candidate's standing in relation to a domain of knowledge or skill or capacity to carry out particular sets of communicative tasks and hence his or her readiness for entry into particular communicative contexts. This point is sometimes obscured by the fact that the claim is expressed in the form of a number or a labelled category on a scale, which seems to give it a spurious kind of scientific objectivity. (McNamara, 2007, p. 280)

This chapter addresses four main issues:

1. The purposes of testing: What decisions will the test data inform?
2. The quality of the test: What are the characteristics of a good test?
3. Creating tests: How can teachers produce their own methods of assessment?
4. Preparing learners for tests: How can teachers prepare learners for language assessment?

Activity 6.1. Your experience of examinations

Think back to the last time you or your learners were taking a public examination and consider the following questions.

1. How was the information from the examination used? What decisions did it influence? Did the examination lead to good decisions?
2. What aspect of language use was the examination intended to measure? How well were these aspects reflected in the elements of the examinations?
3. What impact did the public examination have on your teaching, if your learners were taking the examination, or your learning, if you were taking the examination yourself?
4. How would you describe your overall evaluation of the examinations?

The purposes of assessment

Tests have traditionally been said to achieve five purposes:

1. Achievement: What aspects of language have the learners learnt?
2. Aptitude: What are learners' natural abilities?
3. Diagnosis: What are the gaps in learners' language abilities?
4. Placement: What language class should the learner be in?
5. Proficiency: What level are the learner's language abilities? (Fulcher, 2010, p. 21)

This list is an oversimplification, and the categories overlap, but it provides a framework for the necessary first stage of test evaluation. Unless you understand what a test is intended to achieve, you cannot judge whether it is successful.

Achievement tests are often constructed by teachers to evaluate their teaching (Bachman & Damboc, 2018). Informal achievement testing is a part of most lessons as teachers seek evidence that learners have understood what they have been taught. Achievement tests can also be used to evaluate the effectiveness of educational programmes or teachers. The results of achievement tests are normally specific to a particular context and are not meant to be generalizable. Achievement tests may have a pass mark based on how much of what has been covered in a programme has been learnt, but this is not a necessary feature.

Aptitude tests (Rogers et al., 2016) are intended to identify whether an individual has a general ability to learn languages. These are less common than they were, partly because people attribute success in language learning to other factors such as motivation (Green, 2014, p. 11) and partly because the spread of compulsory English language education makes the question of whether learners have the potential to be good or bad at English less important.

Diagnostic tests are often related to achievement tests in that they are intended to find out the gaps in what learners know or can do and so by implication what they do know or can do. Diagnostic tests are part of a larger category of **formative** tests, that is, tests which provide information to support language teaching, as opposed to **summative** uses of tests where the information provided a retrospective view of what has been learnt. Two important developments in formative assessment, Assessment for Learning (Black & Wiliam, 1998) and Dynamic Assessment (Poehner & Lantolf, 2005), are explored in more detail in the section on 'writing your own tests'.

Placement tests are used to decide in which class learners should be placed. Placement tests are available commercially but are often produced by language schools based on the content of the syllabuses they use for different levels. Generally, if a learner is placed in the wrong class, this can be remedied fairly easily, so these are low stake tests.

Proficiency tests provide information about whether the people being assessed have the necessary language ability for particular needs. They are typically created by large organizations such as Ministries of Education and commercial testing enterprises and are based on some kind of specification or construct of the language ability that is being assessed. Proficiency tests can have life-changing impacts as they relate to issues such as study through English (e.g. IELTS, TOEFL iBT) and citizenship (Hill & McNamara, 2015) and are contentious. See, for example, Uysal (2010) on IELTS; Hill and McNamara (2015) on the US citizenship test; and Shohamy on the 'No Child Left Behind' Programme in the United States (Lazaraton, 2010). However, such tests can serve as a relatively fair way of allocating limited resources (Fulcher, 2010, p. 8).

Because proficiency tests are used for selection, they can be norm referenced. If, for example, government translators need to take an exam before they are employed, it may be that fifty translators are needed in one year and a hundred in the next. To reflect this, the pass mark may change. This would make this **norm referenced** as opposed to a **criterion referenced** approach, where everyone who meets the relevant standards would pass the test. Driving tests are criterion referenced. We do not have a target number of how many people should be allowed to drive, but we do want people to reach a specific standard or criterion before they are allowed on the road. The importance of these kinds of tests and the claims that their results can be generalized make it paramount that educational professionals can evaluate the data produced by such tests and the decisions based on those data, which is the topic of the next section.

The qualities of the test: practicality, validity, reliability, consequences

The four most important qualities of a test are that it is practical, valid, reliable and has beneficial consequences or backwash (Green, 2014, p. 58). No test fully satisfies all four qualities. Teachers and other stakeholders need to consider the quality of the test when they use the resulting information. This section will discuss the first three issues and relate them to two hypothetical tests designed to reveal whether the candidates can (a) arrange an appointment at a doctor's surgery by telephone and (b) understand an academic lecture. The issue of consequences will be discussed in the section on preparing learners for test.

Practicality

Constructing and/or using a test or assessment takes resources. Teachers must balance the time taken to design and administer an achievement test against the activities that their learners could be doing if the test or assessment did not happen. At a larger scale, this decision becomes more complex, and security issues and modes of delivery (e.g. paper and pencil versus computer-based testing) become important. During the Chinese college entrance examination, the *Gaokao*, aircraft flight paths are changed to reduce noise (Fulcher, 2010, p. 7).

The practicalities of assessment related to booking an appointment are less dramatic. Ideally, the candidate would speak into a telephone to a medical receptionist. On a large scale, this would be difficult to arrange, and even for a small group of candidates, it is likely the receptionist would be replaced by someone simulating the behaviour of the receptionist. The target activity also involves candidates speaking aloud, and so individual candidates should not be able to hear each other. A written exam might be more practical, though online testing might also work.

Validity

Test developers must justify the intended uses of the test (Bachman & Palmer, 2010, p. 11 et passim). If candidates successfully pass a test on arranging a medical appointment, the test writers need to be able to show that the candidates can book an appointment outside the testing context, that is, the use of the test for this purpose is valid.

The validity of a test is its most important feature: 'a language test without validation research is like a police force without a court system: unfair and dangerous' (McNamara, 2007, p. 280). Validity is based on evidence that the test results are being used in the right way (Chapelle & Lee, 2021). If a test like IELTS is used as a way of deciding which student's class in a pre-sessional course, the evidence would not need to be as strong as if it is used to decide who can migrate to a new country. The amount of validation research will depend on the importance of the decision being made and should be extensive for high-stakes proficiency tests, but for all tests, the main way of carrying out validation research is demonstrating a link between how test results are used and the communicative abilities it is meant to measure (Boyd & Taylor, 2016, p. 39) See table 6.1.

Table 6.1 Kinds of validity evidence

Category	Gloss
Face	The test looks as if it measures what it is supposed to be measuring
Content	The test tasks reflect what the learner has been taught
Construct	The test covers a reasonable number of the skills and knowledge needed to carry out what the test is meant to measure
Concurrent	The scores on the test are similar to some other assessment
Consequences	The test leads to fair and just decisions

Source: Adapted from Chapelle and Lee (2021).

Appearance or face evidence relates to whether a test looks as if it is measuring what it is supposed to measure. Academic lectures typically last a little under an hour. Replicating this length is practically problematic, and most tests of lectures comprehension use extracts. TOEFL iBt requires candidates to listen to four to six extracts from lectures, each about three to five minutes long (Educational Testing Services, 2012). For many test takers, this appearance means they will take the test more seriously. However, lectures are typically supported by presentational software such as PowerPoint. This aspect of lectures is typically not addressed in tests, though TOEFL iBT does provide a photograph to accompany each lecture extract, providing information about the number of speakers.

Where a Ministry of Education creates a test each year, the test needs to relate to the syllabus that their teachers are following. Often, it is not possible to cover the whole of the syllabus each year, but over time, everything on the syllabus needs to be covered. This is sometimes described as content validity. If something in the syllabus is regularly not tested, teachers may stop teaching that point. Where a test is trying to provide information about whether candidates can do some real-world activity rather than whether a syllabus has been taught, the content validity evidence would be about whether the test relates to the real-world activity. If the test was meant to show if someone could arrange an appointment at a doctor's surgery by telephone, the test would need to cover all typical examples of making appointments.

A test may be a direct or authentic measure of real-world activity, but directness is usually partial, for example, listening to a lecture in an examination hall is different from listening in a lecture theatre, and the test is intended to indicate whether candidates can understand lectures in general. Indeed, the notion of a direct test is a misnomer (Messick, 1996, p. 244). Test construction almost always involves a description of the target activity, for example, the skills of listening and note-taking in listening to lectures or the grammar and vocabulary involved in making a doctor's appointment. This is described as a construct, and the validity evidence is whether the test covers all the elements in the construct. This is a two-stage argument. First, we need evidence that we have an appropriate construct. For local tests, the creation of a construct can be relatively straightforward. For a course test, it could be the contents of the course book and would cover as much of the syllabus (to avoid construct under-representation) and not cover things anything else (to avoid construct irrelevance). In the test about making a medical appointment, test writers might rely on their own knowledge of a typical interaction, perhaps starting with the receptionist asking what might be done to aid the caller and the caller asking for an appointment, eventually ending with the making of an appointment (see Roberts & Cooke, 2009 in Chapter 4). Second, we need to know that the test covers all elements in the construct and does not include elements that are not in the construct (Messick, 1996). For example, a test of listening to lectures should not require that candidates speak.

For the doctor appointment tests, the interlocutor speaking to the candidate would need thought. The candidate's teacher would be familiar with the candidate's accent, something the receptionist would not have met the candidate before, and so this would not limit the test's validity. However, if the teacher were the interlocutor this might reduce the candidate's anxiety and, if anxiety is not a part of the construct for the test, reduce construct-irrelevant factors.

If the test has more significance, more empirical data would be needed. The lecture comprehension test could draw on a corpus of lectures such as MICASE (Briggs et al., 2002) or BASE (Nesi, 2007), but the data from the corpora would need to be analysed in some way. The analysis might centre on the

language elements in lectures and identify typical lecture vocabulary and grammar, and this could be used to create a listening text that represented lectures in some way. So the construct might include the use of reporting verbs in:

> His equation says/claims/argues that there's a linear relationship between the reaction time and the log of the number of stimulus response alternatives.

The construct should cover what would count as comprehension of a lecture, for example, a summary of the content. TOEFL iBT has four lecture extracts because what is typical of lectures cannot be captured in an extract from a single lecture, and the use of authentically produced extracts shows that the features of continuous speech are an important part of the lecture construct (see Chapter 7).

An alternative approach to construct design would include a processing or skill-based view of lectures. In the UK, the construct for mother tongue reading in primary schools separates decoding and comprehension (see Chapter 13 Reading). The reading test evaluates decoding without comprehension by asking them to read aloud nonsense words such as *zam, blat, splot, plock, dring, crig* and *tweb* (Clark, 2016).

The discussion of construct validity often focusses on the relationship between the description of the target language and the test. This should be interpreted broadly (Messick, 1989). A narrow evaluation of the construct of the nonsense word reading test above would explore if the test results provided good information about whether candidates can decode. A broader evaluation would ask if the test results told us about the reading abilities of the candidates.

When a language school uses a placement test, the length of the test is important, and they may create a shorter version. In this case, they might want to compare the results of the shorter test with the longer test, and the evidence for concurrent validity would be that the scores are similar (Zahedi & Shamsaee, 2012). More generally, cloze tests or gap-filling activities have been used as tests of both reading and listening comprehension on the grounds that the results they produce are similar to those of tests more obviously linked to those skills (Oller, 1973).

One of the most difficult kinds of validity evidence relates to consequences. This is a bigger issue for large-scale tests where biases in tests such as IELTS potentially can have an impact on large numbers of people (McNamara et al., 2019). A test of general language ability which suggested that those under thirty outscored those over forty would need to be questioned unless the age of candidates was part of the construct.

Activity 6.2. Validity

The academic module of IELTS is often used to decide whether candidates should be admitted to degree-level courses in an Anglophone university. The writing paper comprises two tasks. For Task 1, candidates write a report of around 150 words based on a table or diagram, and for Task 2, they write a short essay or general report of around 250 words in response to an argument or a problem.

1. Produce your own construct of the writing ability needed for an undergraduate degree in English. You may like to look at research in writing in universities (Gardner & Nesi, 2013; Nesi & Gardner,

2012), but you can rely on your own knowledge of undergraduate writing. In other words, what information about writing abilities in English would be needed to decide if a candidate should be admitted to a degree programme taught in English?

2. Would the construct differ for a degree in English literature and engineering?
3. Should information about the difference between more and less successful writing be a part of the construct? If so, what would it be?
4. To what extent are the IELTS writing tasks an effective way of evaluating whether candidates have the appropriate writing abilities?
5. If you work with a different kind of test on a regular basis, what information would you need to decide if it is valid?

Reliability

Reliability is consistency of measurement. 'Does the test yield the same scores one day and the next if there has been no instruction intervening?' (Lado, 1961, p. 31). Reliability is a part of validity. A test cannot be valid if it is not reliable, but a test can be reliable without being valid because the test is measuring something else. Tests which are reliable indicators of whether students can study in English are not necessarily valid measures for citizenship, just as a set of bathroom scales could provide data about weight but not about someone's height. Some aspects of reliability are to do with statistical aspects of the internal integrity of tests. These are not covered in this chapter but are explained in the books listed under suggested reading. Green (2014, pp. 73–74) identifies seven strategies for building reliability into assessment. See Table 6.2.

If the medical appointment test were conducted as an oral examination and success meant arranging an appointment, the result would be fairly reliable. However, the interlocutor is a human and is likely to use different words and phrases with each candidate; this would introduce some variability and would mean the conditions were not the same for all candidates, so there would have to be guidelines about what the interlocutor said and the level of support they provided to the candidate.

For the lecture comprehension test, the first issue would be the equivalence of what the candidates heard. Every time the test was administered, the candidates should hear the same recordings under the same conditions. Diverting the flight path of passing planes might be part of this, as would making sure that candidates near the recording device were not advantaged over those at a greater distance. The same issue would arise with the questions used to evaluate the candidates' comprehension. If a lecture related to nuclear physics, this would advantage candidates with this kind of knowledge over historians. If candidates were asked to produce a summary or a piece of writing based on the lecture, clear criteria about what counts as a successful answer would be needed, with guidelines to deal with candidates who had understood the lectures but whose writing or grammatical skills meant they produced a weaker response than might be expected.

Table 6.2 Strategies to improve reliability

Clear tasks	If instructions are clear to everyone, the information will be more likely to reflect the intended language abilities.
More tasks	If you ask one question, someone might get it right by chance. The more questions you ask, the smaller the role of guesses.
Limit the scope	A test of grammar will be more reliable than a test of grammar, vocabulary, reading and writing.
Standardize conditions	Everyone should take the test under the same conditions. This is why flights are changed for the *Gaokao*.
Control scoring	Giving training to scorers and/or providing them with marking criteria and answer keys improves reliability.
More scorers	A mark that is agreed to by two markers will be more reliable than a mark from one marker.
Wide range of ability	Distinctions between high-level and low-level learners are more reliable than those between two intermediate learners.

Activity 6.3. Reliability

1. If you wanted your learners to write to demonstrate their writing abilities as part of an achievement test, how would you ensure the reliability of the marks that this task produced? Which of Green's strategies would be relevant to this task?
2. If you have an internally produced test that you use on a regular basis, how do you ensure that the results are reliable?

Creating tests: Writing your own tests and assessment tools

Teachers are involved in 'a continuous process of appraising their learners' (Rea-Dickins, 2006) as a part of their teaching, but sometimes the assessment needs to be formalized. This has three stages: identifying the aims, designing the assessment instruments and evaluating what the learners have done.

The aims of assessment

Teacher assessment is generally conceptualized as a way of finding out what the learners have achieved, that is, as a kind of summative assessment. However, increasingly, evidence about student achievement is used to improve future instruction (Black & Wiliam, 1998), that is, formative assessment, also known as Assessment for Learning. Fulcher (2010, p. 73) identifies three strategies that have come out of this strand of research:

1. Feedback should describe what the learners have accomplished.
2. Feedback should identify aspects of the learners' performance that can be improved.
3. Time should be provided to allow learners to reflect on the feedback.

This focus has been reinforced by the notion of Dynamic Assessment, which comes out of the Vygotskyan theories discussed in Chapter 3. Dynamic Assessment attempts to collect information about the learning trajectory of candidates. Two learners with the same levels of support who were able to use the past tense might not be equally ready to start working on the present perfect. In Vygotsky's terms, the present perfect might be within the zone of proximal development of one learner but not that of another (Poehner & Lantolf, 2005, p. 234). Both Assessment for Learning and Dynamic Assessment have implications for assessment techniques discussed below.

Teachers need to decide what aspects of language are assessed. This might relate to a particular course, for example, the contents of the first four units of a course book, or to a particular skill or sub-skill, for example, writing a film review. The more specific the aims, the easier the assessment design will be. An aim such as being able to make an appointment at a doctor's surgery is easier to assess than understanding lectures because the construct for the latter is more complicated and so it is harder to evaluate whether all construct-relevant facets have been included. Where a selection needs to be made from the construct, for example, if the course book has covered too much for it all to be tested, teachers will need a systematic process of selection, such as what is most important or what can be seen as representative of the whole construct, and future tests should cover anything that has not been tested previously.

Assessment instruments

To evaluate if a learner can make a medical appointment, the most plausible assessment instrument is a role-play. The candidate would need to be given a card indicating what must be done, for example, 'You have a fever and have been vomiting. You call Dr Watson's surgery to make an appointment with Dr Watson as soon as possible. You should write down the day and time of your interview'. The language on the card would need to be as simple as possible because reading comprehension is not relevant to the target task. The learners would need to know the criteria on which they are being assessed, for example, whether they simply write down the correct date and time of their interview or if they are being evaluated in terms of their pronunciation or aspects of their grammar.

To standardize the conditions of the assessment, learners need to be evaluated separately, and the face validity would be enhanced if they spoke on a telephone. If this is not possible, it would be possible for the teacher/evaluator and learner to sit with their backs to each other, but issues related to how easy it is to understand someone with their back to you would need to be addressed. If the learner and teacher/evaluator can see each other, the learner will be able to use non-verbal communication, and this would involve a construct-irrelevant factor and so weaken the validity of the assessment procedure.

Teachers can often be flexible about how their tests are run. McDonald et al. (2000) found that learners engaged more with lectures given by their teacher than with recordings of lectures and preferred topics related to familiar subjects rather than those related to what they were planning to study. A live lecture would also make it easier to integrate a lecture with reading texts and would mean that the teacher could prepare PowerPoint slides to accompany the lecture.

The next stage is to create the test item. For comprehension activities, this will probably be a short answer question or a summary. If the test is used with large numbers of candidates or used on multiple

occasions, it may be worth investing the time in creating multiple-choice questions. These can be done online through authoring software such as Hot Potatoes (Arneil et al., 2017, p. 124; Chapelle & Voss, 2016) or apps such as Socrative (MasteryConnect, 2016). Multiple-choice questions need to be carefully constructed. If, for example, we wanted to test whether the learners had understood the significance of the reporting verb in:

> Hick's equation says that there's a linear relationship between the reaction time and the log of the number of stimulus response alternatives.

We might give four alternatives to 'says':

> Hick's equation a. suggests b. suggested c. said d. says that there's a linear relationship between the reaction time and the log of the number of stimulus response alternatives.

This item would be open to several criticisms. First, the choices or distractors cover tense (suggests versus suggested), which is not relevant to our construct, as well the lexical choice, which is relevant. Instead, we might go for

> Hicks's equation a. suggests b. claims c. says d. states that there's a linear relationship between the reaction time and the log of the number of stimulus response alternatives.

'States' means more or less the same as 'says', and we would not know if choice (c) is better than (d). Multiple-choice questions need to have only one answer, or in testing terminology, only one key. More generally, the candidates can arrive at option (d) solely by decoding what has been said, and if the aim of the item is to test comprehension as well as decoding, the item would also fail for construct under-representation. It might be better to go for an option such as

> The lecturer believes that Hicks's equation is a. untrue b. partially untrue and. partially true c true d. neither true not untrue

This illustrates the complexity of writing effective multiple-choice items. Table 6.3 provides some advice on writing such items.

Asking candidates to write a summary is a more direct way of testing lecture comprehension but would require a specification of information to be included in the summary. For example, consider this extract from a sports science lecture:

> Now I've got the ball. I'm walking up towards the penalty spot. I haven't put it down yet. You have no information about my body language cues. But what can you get? Am I left footed am I right footed? If you've seen me play, ok. Am I going to kick with my left foot or am I likely to kick with my right foot? Ok. Have you seen me take a penalty before? Do I always go in the top right corner? You can get information about contextual cues: strengths, weaknesses, their preferences. This is prior knowledge about someone's experience. Your experience, your prior knowledge about that individual is key. These kinds of contextual clues shape your expectations and control the speed of your actions.

Table 6.3 Guidance on writing multiple-choice questions

1. Each multiple-choice item should have only one answer.
2. Only one feature at a time should be tested.
3. Each option should be grammatically correct.
4. All multiple-choice items should be at a level appropriate to the proficiency level of the testee.
5. The stem should contain all the information necessary to select the key, but should not contain unnecessary material.
6. The key to any item should not give a clue about the key to another item. This often happens in reading tests where multiple items are based on the same text.
7. Ensure that the key cannot be selected without reading the stem, or any other textual material upon which the item is based.
8. Avoid negatives such as ‘not’ and ‘except’ if at all possible, as such questions increase cognitive processing and make the item more difficult.
9. Randomize the location of the key. If you don’t, you will find that (on average) option (C) will tend to be the key more often than other options.
10. Avoid options that use ‘all of the above’ or ‘none of the above’.
11. Avoid using qualifiers such as ‘always’ or ‘never’, which are less likely to be in the key than qualifiers like ‘sometimes’ or ‘probably’ (Fulcher, 2010, pp. 172–173; Heaton, 1988, pp. 29–30).

Source: Fulcher (2010, pp. 172–173); Heaton (1988, pp. 29–30).

The central point of this extract is that your prior knowledge of a person influences how quickly you respond to their actions, but the extract also includes more specific information. A candidate who just wrote down something about left- or right-footed players might not be judged to have understood the lecture extract. If this extract were used in a test, the test writer would need to identify what points would need to be included and what weighting would be given to these before administering the test. A point about footedness might earn one point, but a point about how the prior knowledge of the person could influence the speed of the reaction might earn two points. On the companion website, materials that you might use to write a test item are included.

Activity 6.4. Multiple-choice question

All the items below are problematic in some way. Identify what the problems might be and try to rewrite them. The instructions ask candidates to choose the best answer.

1. You can work out a. what your opponent is going to do b. what is your opponent going to do c. what your opponent will do d. what will your opponent do.

2. If you want your message to be understood, you a. can b. must c. shall d. will eschew obfuscation.

3. Sihem a. did b. had c. made d. took a decision.

4. Very soon the Rabbit noticed Alice, as she went hunting about, and called out to her in an angry tone, ‘Why, Mary Ann, what ARE you doing out here? Run home this moment, and fetch me a pair of gloves and a fan! Quick, now!’ And Alice was so much frightened that she ran off at once in the direction it pointed to, without trying to explain the mistake it had made.

What mistake had the Rabbit not made?

a. It forgot its fan.

b. It thought Mary Anne was Alice.

c. It thought Mary Ann was not at home.

d. It thought Alice was Mary Ann.

Multiple-choice writing software and apps often allow for feedback to be given on answers, and this can be informed by the ideas of Dynamic Assessment (Poehner et al., 2015). The idea of Dynamic Assessment is to combine assessment with pedagogy (Anton & Garcia, 2021). For example, here is an alternative question to the test given in question four of Activity 6.4. What mistake had the Rabbit made?

a. It forgot its fan.

b. It thought Mary Anne had her gloves.

c. It thought Mary Ann was at home.

d. It thought Alice was Mary Ann.

The following feedback would be given:

1. If the first attempt is wrong: This is not the right answer. Read the passage again and have another go.
2. If the second attempt is wrong: Who did the Rabbit call out in the first sentence, and what name did he call her by?
3. That is the wrong answer. The right answer is d.

Providing this amount of feedback requires extra work from the test writer, but it would enable a teacher to discriminate between learners who need more or less support and so could structure follow-up lessons accordingly.

Preparing learners for tests: Backwash and language tests

Backwash or washback 'refers to the extent to which the introduction and use of a test influences language teachers and learners to do things that they would not otherwise not do that promote or inhibit language learning' (Messick, 1996, p. 241). While policy makers may give the impression that changing assessment procedures is an easy means of changing a whole education system, the relationship between testing and teaching is complicated by the number of people involved, particularly teachers and learners, and their variable understanding of what a particular test entails (Alderson & Wall, 1993). However, in particular classes and with particular learners preparing for particular examinations, it is possible to see the relationship between tests and teaching.

Many learners come to language classes to prepare for tests, and the results of these tests can have a major impact on the learners, but some teachers have misgivings about such preparation

(Haladyna et al., 1991, p. 4) because preparing learners for a test might seem to give them an unfair advantage over learners. In some multiple-choice tests, the longest answer is often the correct one, and candidates can be told to use this strategy when they cannot otherwise choose a correct answer. If wrong answers are not penalized, sensible candidates will guess the answers to questions they do not know. Similarly, some candidates are said to commit to memory possible essays which they produce if the title they predicted comes up. These strategies, in Haladyna et al.'s term, 'pollute' the data the test produces.

However, the issue here is to do with poor test design rather than unethical teaching. A well-designed multiple-choice test will not have the longest answer as the key, and deducting marks for wrong answers should discourage guessing. Essay-writing tasks should not be that predictable. More generally, if a syllabus claims to teach the four skills and the test only examines reading and writing, teachers should not be blamed for focussing on reading and writing (Wall & Alderson, 1995). The blame belongs to the test designers for construct under-representation. If a test is well-designed, the most effective teaching would be to prepare learners for the target language use as specified in the test construct.

Unfortunately, tests are not perfectly designed, and many activities that candidates are required to do in tests, for example, multiple-choice questions, fill-in-the-gaps, do not reflect the target language use about which the tests should be providing information. This difference between the test activities and the test construct leads Fulcher (2010, p. 288) to identify two strands to effective test preparation. The first of these is familiarization with the test format, 'to ensure that the learners do not spend time and effort having to work out what they should be doing during the test'. If a test includes multiple-choice items, the teacher should make candidates aware of this format and the scoring system. Where candidates' performances are measured against criteria, they should be aware of what these are and well-designed tests should make this information available. For example, the Cambridge First Certificate English test (First, 2016) provides information about the four scales for the writing test: content, communicative achievement, organization and language. This familiarity is an important part of test preparation and explains why it is useful to let candidates work through past papers, but once they are familiar with the test, repeating the process has limited or no benefit.

The other aspect of effective test preparation is helping the learners develop the necessary skills and knowledge they need for the target language use. The test construct provides a target for teachers and learners but does not explain how that construct should be acquired (Fulcher, 2010, p. 282). A test should help teachers decide what they are teaching but will not normally influence how they teach. How they teach should depend partly on the ideas related to Assessment for Learning and Dynamic Assessment discussed above, but largely on the general pedagogic principles covered in fourth and fifth sections.

Summary

This chapter has presented testing and assessment as ways of making decisions about learners. The chapter has looked at some of the different purposes these decisions relate to and examined how test designers can produce tests that are practical, valid and reliable and so lead to appropriate decisions. The last two sections of the chapter have provided advice on how teachers can create their own tests and how they can most effectively prepare their learners for high-stakes tests.

Activity 6.5. Discussion

What would you suggest that the teacher in this context do to design a test to identify which learners have the right skills?

I work in a language school in Vancouver. Many of our learners have part-time jobs in local restaurants, but not all of the learners have the necessary language skills to do this well. As we provide the learners with references, we would like to be sure that the learners will cope with the work in the restaurants. Equally, we do not want a test that will take up more than ten minutes per learner.

Suggested readings

The two books I have found most useful on testing are Fulcher (2010) and Green (2014), and these provide some information about statistics. Bachman, on his own and with Palmer, has written three books which provide a solid theoretical basis to assessment policy (Bachman, 1990; Bachman & Palmer, 1996, 2010) and the third of these is well worth reading. McNamara (McNamara, 2000; McNamara & Roever, 2006) provides an important reminder that assessment policies can have major social impacts. If you are writing your own tests, another Bachman and Damboc (2018) provide a lot of useful advice.

Part II

Teaching Language Levels

Chapter 7

Pronunciation

Introduction

The way people speak is the most obvious feature of their speech, and differences in pronunciation lead to evaluations of a speaker that go beyond their language abilities. At the same time, for many teachers, pronunciation is associated with specialist terminology which is only distantly connected with actual communications, and so pronunciation, if addressed at all, is dealt with unsystematically. This is exacerbated by the enormous variation in the phonetic resources used by different languages. Couper (2011, p. 634) quotes on teacher as saying:

> My excuse perhaps for not being more regular with certain areas of pronunciation is that different languages quite clearly have different issues; different people sometimes within those languages have different issues with pronunciation than others. And so to try to manage like a class is often a bit difficult.

This chapter attempts to address these concerns by exploring three questions:

1. What is pronunciation?
2. How do people learn pronunciation?
3. How can we best teach pronunciation?

The first question is about the aims teachers might adopt for a pronunciation class. The second question addresses how people learn or improve their pronunciations and the third question looks at teaching pronunciation.

What is pronunciation

The pronunciation of English is an extensive topic. This chapter is an introduction to the field with some suggested reading if you want to develop your knowledge of pronunciation in more detail. So this section provides:

1. an introduction to how teachers can identify what model of pronunciation or accept they might choose as a target for their learners.
2. a description of the most important aspects of English pronunciation.

The links between pronunciation and spelling are covered in Chapter 8.

What varieties should I teach?

Teachers planning to teach pronunciation need to decide what varieties of pronunciation that they should teach. The general aim is to be 'comfortably intelligible' (Kenworthy, 1987, p. 3) when speaking, that is, intelligible to the people they are talking to. Two main factors need to be considered when identifying the variety or varieties most appropriate for your learners: the reasons for which the learners need English and the resources that are available.

Traditionally, second language learners have been taught native speaker accents of English such as General American (GA) or received pronunciation (RP). These are prestige accents in the United States and the United Kingdom, respectively. GA is 'the accent of "Middle America in both a social and geographical sense"' (Pennington, 2013, p. 14), the accent used by middle class Americans who come from the geographical centre of the United States. RP is the only 'genuinely regionless accent within England' (Trudgill & Hannah, 2002, p. 15) but it is only used natively by 3-5 per cent of the population of England and the vowels of received pronunciation makes it 'more difficult for many foreigners to acquire than, say, a Scottish accent' (Trudgill & Hannah, 2002, p. 16). It remains, however, common in much teaching material.

While these accents are useful for learners interacting with other people who speak with these accents, many learners need to speak other varieties. Sometimes, they need to use the accent that is common in a particular area. Learners in India or Singapore probably need to learn an accent that is understandable to speakers of English in India or Singapore. Often learners need to communicate with other learners of English, and there has been quite a lot of work to produce a description of the pronunciation of English as a *lingua franca* (ELF) (Jenkins, 2000). See Chapter 2. The other aspect of what accent learners want to develop relates to how learners want to present themselves. Learners may want the people they are communicating with to realize they are not native speakers of English or that they speak ELF rather than another variety. This topic was discussed in the chapter on learning (Chapter 3) and will be discussed below.

The second issue in deciding what varieties of pronunciation teachers should teach is the resources available. The primary resource is the teacher and the variety or varieties that the teacher uses. It is very difficult to teach a variety with which the teacher is not comfortable, but in some contexts teachers are encouraged to use a particular variety even though it is not one they typically use. So, in a context where a GA accent is considered desirable, teachers who speak other varieties may be encouraged to adopt an American accent. This is not desirable either in terms of teacher motivation or teaching effectiveness.

Teachers may also have access to recordings of different accents. Many published materials focus on GA or RP. Online software such as Google Translate and electronic or online dictionaries often use one of these accents, but it is relatively easy to find examples of other native speaker varieties of English or different kinds of English as an international language online (e.g. Beuckens, 2016). If the purposes for which a particular group of learners need English are unclear, they should be exposed to a range of accents.

Describing sounds in English

Pronunciation is not at the same level of language as grammar and vocabulary because while morphemes, words and grammatical structures have meaning in a direct way, individual sounds do not have meanings. For example /e/ or /t/ does not mean anything on its own. Also, pronunciation requires fine motor control of the muscles in the vocal tract and, for most second language learners, this control is a completely automatic process for the first language.

Another feature of pronunciation that makes it special is that it draws on two different areas of linguistics: phonetics (describing how people produce sounds) and phonology (describing how people perceive sound). Phonetics is distinct from phonology, and this is reflected in how the two areas are investigated. Phonetics is a natural science. To find out whether people use their lips when they speak, in technical language whether they can produce bilabial sounds, we observe people when they speak. If you observe yourself in a mirror when you say the name of the capital of Spain, you will see that you use your lips. A representation of the phonetics of a sound is written in square brackets. So [pin] is a way of representing the word ‘pin’. Often this will appear with other marks or diacritics to represent particular features of the pronunciation so we might have [pʰɪn] to show that ‘p’ in ‘pin’ is pronounced with aspiration, that is, breath coming out of the mouth whereas in ‘spin’ [spɪn] ‘p’ is not aspirated and less air is emitted. For most teachers, being able to write phonetic transcripts is not of great importance.

Phonology is to do with the perception of sounds and with what people understand than what they do. Instead of looking at what people do, phonologists might ask a speaker of English whether they can hear a difference between ‘hit’ and ‘heat’. Most speakers of English would hear a difference, but this would not be apparent to speakers of many other languages. For Spanish speakers the ‘r’ sound in ‘pero’ (’but’ in English) is different from the ‘r’ sound in ‘perro’ (’dog’), but for speakers of many other languages, the two sounds and so the two words sound the same.

Phonology is particular to a language. All humans have the same phonetic resources, a tongue, teeth and so on, but these are used differently in different languages, and this is why it is often difficult

Table 7.1 The phonemes of received pronunciation English

Consonants				Vowels (monophthongs)		Vowels (diphthongs)	
p	pie	ʃ	shy	I	sit	ai	sigh
b	buy	ʒ	mea**s**ure	i:	seat	ei	say
t	tie	tʃ	choke	E	set	ɔɪ	soy
d	die	dʒ	joke	æ	sat	iə	sheer
k	s**k**y	M	my	ɑ:	start	eə	share
g	guy	N	nose	ʊ	soot	ʊə	sure
f	fly	ŋ	si**ng**	u:	suit	aʊ	shout
v	vie	W	why	ɒ	pot	əʊ	show
θ	thigh	R	rose	ɔː	port		
ð	that	L	lie	ʌ	but		
s	sigh	J	your	ə	wait**er**		
z	zoo	Z		ɜ:	bird		
h	how	H					

to learn to speak a new language in the way that expert speakers of the language do. A phonological or phonemic transcription of a word appears between back slashes; for example, /bɪn/ is a representation of phonemes of 'bin'. This kind of transcription is more widely used by teachers, and you will find these transcriptions in many dictionaries for learners of English. See Table 7.1.

Most of the symbols for the phonemes of English are also used in the Roman alphabet. Some other symbols are borrowed from other alphabets, and the pronunciation of some of these sounds is as follows; θ (theta); ð (eth); ʃ (esh); ʒ (zhe); ŋ (eng); j (yod); æ (ash); ʌ (upside-down v); and ə (shwa).

Activity 7.1. Describing the sounds of English

The items in this activity should encourage you to think about the individual sounds of English.

By the end of this section, you should be able to answer all the questions in this activity, but it will help you to make sense of the rest of the section if you answer the questions before looking at the companion webpage.

1. Here is a phonological transcription of the RP of the start of Alice in Wonderland (Carroll & Blum, 2008). What would this be in normal English? The back slashes indicate where there could be a pause if you read the text aloud. The text starts 'Alice was beginning to get very tired'.

/ˈælɪs wəz bɪˈgɪnɪŋ tə get ˈveri ˈtaɪəd əv ˈsɪtɪŋ baɪ hə ˈsɪstər ɒn ðə bæŋk/
/ənd əv ˈhævɪŋ ˈnʌθɪŋ tə du/
/wʌns ɔː twaɪs ʃi həd piːpt ˈɪntə ðə bʊk hə ˈsɪstə wəz ˈriːdɪŋ/
/bət ɪt həd nəʊ ˈpɪkʧəz ɔː ˌkɒnvəˈseɪʃənz ɪn ɪt/
/ənd wɒts ðə juːz əv ə bʊk,' θɔːt ˈælɪs wɪˈðaʊt ˈpɪkʧəz ɔː ˌkɒnvəˈseɪʃən/'

2. Put these sounds in a sequence depending on where you make the sound in your mouth. Start with the sound made furthest back in the mouth and end with the sound made with the lips: b(bee), d(do), g(go) , h(hi), ð (that), j(you).
3. Put your finger on your Adam's apple at the front of your throat and say the pairs of words below. For each pair, one sound is made with more vibration. Phoneticians describe the sounds made with more vibration as voiced and the other sounds as unvoiced. Write the words in the appropriate column:

(a) Sink zink	**(b) fast vast**	**(c) din tin**
(d) beat pete	**(e) choke joke**	**(f) core gore**

Unvoiced	Voiced

4. Look at yourself in a mirror while you say the following words and decide if you say them with your lips rounded or spread and try to sense whether you make them with our tongue near the front or the back of your mouth:

(a) bard bat	**(b) bet bought**	**(c) pit put**	**(d) sheep shoot**
		Lips spread	Lips rounded
Tongue at the front of the mouth			
Tongue and the back of the mouth			

Segmental phonology: Individual sounds

The production and perception of consonants and vowels are segmental phonology/phonetics. This section will describe how the consonants and vowels of English are produced in the variety sometimes known as RP. This is best seen as an illustration of a description of the phonetics of a language variety rather than an explanation of how to pronounce English. However, the consonants of English are fairly consistent between different accents. Even if you are more familiar with other accents of English, the description of consonants should be fairly accurate for those accents. Jenkins (2007) for example sees all the consonants of RP as necessary for easy comprehensibility except for the two dental sounds, usually represented in writing by ‘th’ (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010, p. 109).

Consonants

To describe the consonants of English, three dimensions are needed:

1. whether the vocal cords or folds vibrate or not (voicing);
2. where in the mouth the sounds are made (place of articulation); and
3. how the sounds are made (manner of articulation).

If you put your fingers on your Adam’s apple at the front of your throat when you make the sound [z] and then the sound [s], you should feel a vibration for the [z] but not the [s]. This vibration is voicing and the sounds [s] and [z] only differ by this. English has several pairs of consonants which are differentiated by voicing. Table 7.2 gives these pairings, and this also contains the answer to the third part of Activity 7.1.

The second dimension needed to describe consonants is place of articulation. See table 7.3. Phoneticians here need greater degree of precision in the terms they use than are common in everyday

Table 7.2 Voiced and unvoiced consonants

. Voiced	b	d	g	dʒ	v	ð	z	ʒ
Unvoiced	p	t	k	tʃ	f	θ	s	ʃ

Table 7.3 Place of articulation of the consonants of received pronunciation

Bilabial	With the lips	p, b, m, w
Labiodental	Lips and teeth	f, v
Dental	Tongue touching the teeth	θ, ð
Alveolar	Tongue on the ridge behind the teeth	t, d, s, z, n, l
Post-alveolar	Tongue on the hard part of the roof of the mouth behind the alveolar ridge	tʃ, dʒ, ʃ, ʒ, r
Post-palatal	Tongue on the boundary between the hard and soft part of the roof of the mouth	j
Velar	Tongue on the soft part of the roof of the mouth	k, g, ŋ
Glottal	In the throat	h

and so they use specialist terminology. These terms may seem abstruse, but they are needed for an accurate description of the geography of the mouth. The best way to become familiar with where the sounds are made is to say different sounds and feel how the parts of the mouth are being used to create the sounds. Those who are able to speak more than just English will be able to investigate the differences in the consonants in English and in other languages.

The third dimension needed to describe consonants is the manner of articulation. There are three main ways of producing consonants. A plosive is produced by blocking the air passage and then releasing it in a small explosion. When [p] or [b] is produced, the lips are closed and pressure is built up and then released. [t] and [d] are produced in a similar way, but the blockage is created by the tongue pressing against the alveolar ridge.

Nasal sounds are made by pushing the air through the nose rather than the mouth. When [m] is produced, the air moves through the nasal passages and unlike [p] the lips do not open.

The third main manner of articulation is fricative. This is where there is not a complete blockage and, as a result, the fricative sounds such as [s] or [z] can be extended in a way that the plosives such as [t] or [d] cannot. It is possible to combine the explosion of a stop with the continuity of the fricatives in two sounds [tʃ] and [dʒ], and this is reflected in the fact that both these sounds are written as combination of the stops [t] [d] and the fricatives [ʃ] [ʒ].

The final grouping of consonants in terms of manner of articulation is the approximants: [w], [l], [r] and [j]. These are sounds which are produced by bringing two parts of the mouth close together but not interfering with the air flow. These sounds are produced in a more fluid way than the other consonants. This can be illustrated with /l/. In the word 'lull', the first and second 'l' are pronounced very differently but still count as the same phoneme. This fluidity is reflected in the fact that some phoneticians describe approximants as semi-consonants and semi-vowels (Pennington, 2013, p. 47). Table 7.4 summarizes the description of the consonants of English.

Vowels

Received pronunciation has eleven simple vowels or **monophthongs** and eight glides or **diphthongs**, where creating the sounds involves moving from the place where one simple vowel is made to the place where a second simple phoneme is produced. The simple vowels can be described in terms of where in the mouth they are made. See figure 7.1. Vertically, vowels can be made at the top of the mouth, for

Table 7.4 The consonants of received pronunciation

Place → / Manner ↓	Bilabial	Labiodental	Dental	Alveolar	Post-alveolar	Post-palatal	Velar	Glottal
Plosive/Stop	p/b			t/d			k/g	
Nasal	m			n			ŋ	
Affricative					tʃ /dʒ			
Fricative		f/v	θ/ð	s/z	ʃ/ʒ			h
Approximant	w			l	r	j		

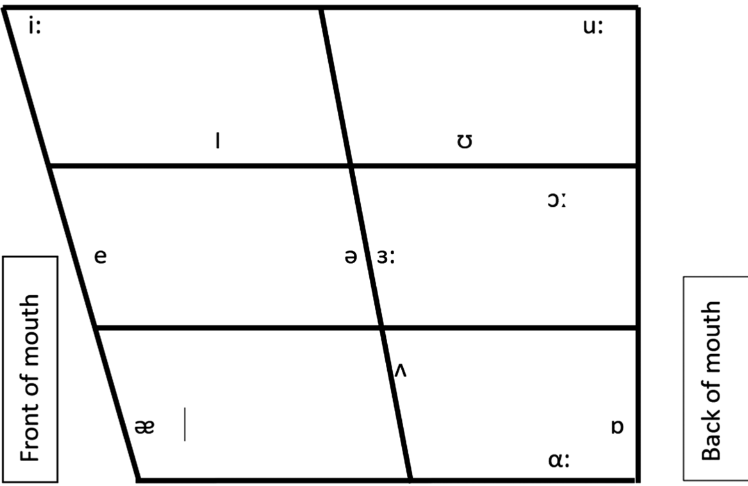

Figure 7.1 The simple vowels of received pronunciation (Roach, 2004, p. 242).

Table 7.5 A set of minimal pairs

/t/	/θ/
mats	maths
part	Path
tank	Thank
tin	Thin
taught	thought

example, [i:] in 'sheep'; the middle, for example, [e] in 'bet'; and the bottom, for example, [æ] in 'cat'. Horizontally, sounds are made at the front of the mouth, for example, [e] in 'bet'; centre, for example, [ɜ:] in 'bird'; or back, for example, [ɔ:] in 'port'. Typically, the front vowels are made with the lips spread and the back vowels are made with the lips rounded. See Table 7.5 for an indication of where in the mouth the tongue is typically placed. Most descriptions of the vowels of RP use the length of vowels symbolized by a colon (:) as an indication of length. So we have the following pairs:

Top & front	[ɪ] ship	[i:] sheet
Bottom & front/back	[æ] cat	[ɑ:] cart
Middle & centre	[ə] alone	[ɜ:] word
Top & back	[ʊ]look	[u:] Luke
Middle/bottom & back	[ɒ] cot	[ɔː] caught

The pairing of long and short vowels is not as neat as the voiced/unvoiced pairs for consonants, and it is important to note that the difference between these pairs is not just a difference in length. Indeed, Wang and Munro (2004) found that the quality of vowels was more salient than its length. So [ɒ] as in cot is produced at the bottom of the mouth unlike [ɔː] which is produced halfway up the mouth. It would be possible to produce a description of the vowels without introducing length. However, Jenkins (2002) found that vowel length was important for comprehensibility in ELF. One of the most striking features of RP is that /r/ cannot appear at the end of a syllable, so 'bar' is pronounced /ba:/. RP is non-rhotic, that is, without 'r'. Many varieties of English are rhotic, and Jenkins (2000) suggests that pronouncing the /r/ in words like 'bar' leads to more comprehensible speech. English also has compound vowels or diphthongs, and you will find information about these in the suggested reading at the end of the chapter.

Suprasegmental speech

Suprasegmental speech covers stretches of language longer than individual phonemes such the features of continuous speech, word stress, sentence stress and intonation.

Word stress

Where a word has more than one syllable, one syllable will be stressed more than the other. This is often indicated by /'/ in dictionaries. So 'student' would be represented as /'stju:dənt/ to indicate that the first syllable is stressed and 'decide' as /dɪs'aid/ to indicate the second syllable is stressed. Stress relates to how words are perceived. Phonetically, stress may mean that one syllable is louder, longer or lower pitched than its neighbouring syllable or any combination of these three features (Underhill, 2005, p. 52). Generally, unstressed syllables have a shwa /ə/, short /ɪ/, short /ʊ /or a syllabic consonant.

Even where a word has three syllables, there is usually only one stressed syllable. 'Decision' would have the stress on its second syllable and two other syllables would be unstressed. However, it is possible to have three levels of stress in a word, so 'pronunciation' is written phonologically as / prə,nʌnsɪ'eiʃən/, indicating that the main or primary stress is on '-a(tion)' and the secondary stress is on '-nunc'. Word stress is not easily predictable, but frequently words with affixes are stressed on the first syllable of the root words. So the prefix 'de-' means that 'decide' and 'decision' are stressed on their second syllable, and the prefix 'bene-' means 'beneficiary' is stressed on its third syllable. 'Threaten' and 'friendship' are stressed on their first syllable rather than on the suffixes '-en' and '-ship'. One complication is that some suffixes change the stress pattern of the root word so we have groups of words such as

Photograph	/'fəʊtəgrɑːf/
Photography	/fə'təgrəfɪ/
Photographic	/fəʊtə'græfɪk/

The importance of word stress in ensuring comprehensibility is the subject of debate. Two-syllable words which are normally stressed on the first syllable are difficult to understand when they are stressed on the second syllable, for example, /'stjuːdənt/ being pronounced as /stjʊ'dent/ (Field, 2005) but not when the change was in the other direction. More generally, Jenkins (2002) does not see words stress as part of the ELF common core. This may be a decision that needs to be taken in the light of the needs of a particular class.

Continuous speech: changing phonemes and rhythm

Producing a word in continuous speech often leads to modification of the pronunciation. For example, saying a word with a complicated syllable structure like 'twelfths' will be pronounced as /twelfs/ without /θ/. The **elision** of a consonants, typically at the end of the syllable, is common in all but the most deliberate speech. Next is more often pronounced /neks/ rather than /nekst/.

Sounds may also be changed through **assimilation**. An expression such as 'tin pot' will usually be pronounced as 'tim pot'. When speakers are pronouncing the /n/ in 'tin', they are preparing to produce the bilabial sound /p/ and so say /tim/. Vowels can also be elided, for example, 'suppose' is pronounced /spəʊz/. More often vowels are reduced to either /ɪ/ or /ə/. This is particularly true of **function** words. So 'she' /ʃiː/ is usually pronounced /ʃɪ/. These reductions help the regularity of English rhythm (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010, p. 164). In 'Who is to give the prizes?' there would be stresses on 'who', 'give' and 'prizes' and the other words would be reduced or unstressed /hʊz tə gɪv ðə ˈpraɪzəz/. The pattern in this sentence is very regular: a strong syllable followed by a weak. The rhythm is not always as regular. In 'the prizes are on the table', 'prizes' and 'table' are stressed but 'are', 'on' and 'the' would be unstressed, and this is reflected in the use of weak vowels on these words /ðə ˈpraɪzəz ər ən ðə ˈteɪbəl/.

This flexibility is sometimes described by saying that English is a stress-timed language unlike languages which have more regular rhythm, such as French and Chinese, which are said to be syllable timed (Roach, 1982).

Sentence or tonic stress and intonation

Stress also operates at sentence level. A sentence like 'We went to Madrid last summer' will be stressed differently depending on what is new.

1. Where did you go last summer? We went to MADRID last summer.
2. When did you go to Madrid? We went to Madrid last SUMMER.
3. Are you going to Madrid this summer? We went to Madrid LAST summer.

However, the unit for intonation is the tone unit rather than the sentence (Beaken, 2009; Brazil, 1997). ‘One day a big black crow found a large lump of meat’ might be spoken as three tone units: one DAY; a big black CROW; found a large lump of MEAT (Beaken, 2009, p. 351).

How do people learn pronunciation

Two main factors impact on how learners improve their pronunciation: our general understanding of how learning happens (Chapter 3) and what learners bring to the classroom.

Theories of learning and pronunciation

All the theories of learning covered in Chapter 3 can be applied to learning pronunciation. Within the cognitive group of theories, the development of declarative knowledge often comes from noticing. Most learners find differences in linguistic features like whether a sound is produced by contact between the teeth are less noticeable than difference between ‘mats’ /mæts/ and ‘maths’ /mæθs/.

/fin/ and /θin/. Phonology and perception come before phonetics and production. Learners may find phonetic descriptions of sounds or phonological transcriptions a useful scaffolding at some points in the learning process, but these are not good starting points.

A second important notion for pronunciation learning that comes from socio-cultural views is the notion of **accommodation** (Matsumoto, 2011) where the pronunciation of two people engaged in conversation will tend to become more similar. This is illustrated in the following extract:

A: Depression is often deTECted among teens with stable families, many friends, and appreciate (‘appropriate’) social behaviours. These teenagers hold their depression until sym . . . symptoms became extremely sever (‘severe’).
B: Many people have the asSUMption that extra weight caused by stripping . . . err . . . skipping breakfast.
A: True?
B: Yes, true. (Trofimovich, 2016, p. 415)

Speaker B here produced the correct stress pattern on ‘assumption’ after hearing this pattern in the way A said ‘detected’. Students produced correct stress patterns in three- and four-syllable words more than twice as often when they had been exposed to another student producing the correct stress pattern.

What learners bring to the pronunciation class

Second language learners bring their knowledge of their first language as well as a sense of how they might relate to English, and this will have a major impact on how they learn to pronounce English.

Learners hear English through what (Trubetzkoy, 1969) has been described as the ‘phonological sieve’ of their other languages, so a knowledge of the phonology of those languages helps support learners. The pronunciation of other languages can be described using the same framework that we used for English. In terms of segmental features, they will be able to recognize and produce the phonemes of their

first language so speakers of the languages have a nasal bilabial phoneme /m/ will need little instruction to learn to pronounce an English /m/. However, speakers of languages do not have the dental sounds /θ/ and /ð/ will find this pairing difficult to acquire. There are also problems where language may have the same phonemes but with phonetic differences. So, French makes a distinction between /p/ and /b/ which is similar to the distinction in English but, whereas in English an initial /p/ as in 'Paris' is aspirated, that is, produced with a puff of air, in French it is not. Languages also have different rules about syllable structure. So, while English allows the initial consonant cluster /sk/, Spanish and Malay do not and so the cognates of 'school' in those languages 'escuela' and 'sekolah' respectively, add an extra syllable so that the /s/ and /k/ are separated. Speakers of these languages may produce non-standard pronunciations of words such as 'sky'. Rhythm and intonation also differ. In Mandarin, tone is phonological, and a change in tone can change the word for mother into the word for horse. Speakers of Mandarin who are learning English will need to learn that in English tone operates at a suprasegmental level and in particular will need help using intonational patterns over units longer than the word. Teachers who regularly teach speakers of particular languages will benefit from an understanding of the ways those languages are pronounced.

Learners do not just bring their knowledge to the classroom, and various learner variables have been seen as related to effective learning. Age is a particular focus. The critical period hypothesis (FLEGE, 1987; Singleton, 2005) suggests that there is biological window for language learning. Learners who start learning a second language after puberty often struggle to attain native-like pronunciation (Moyer, 2013). However, the evidence is mixed, and a small number of learners who start learning English after puberty seem to be able to achieve a native-like pronunciation which suggests that this is not a purely biological phenomenon. Judgements about the success of the learning process are complex (Moyer, 2015).

An alternative approach to understanding the learning of pronunciation relates to motivation and identity. Many learners use 'their L1 accent as a means of expressing their own identity in English rather than identifying it with its L1 English users' (Jenkins, 2007, p. 125). Equally, learners in an Anglophone context may be motivated by the desire not to be different from their English-speaking friends and so seek out the opportunities to develop native accents of English.

> If you aren't really proficient with the language or you have a strong accent it's probably true that it's harder to make contacts. (Moyer, 2015, p. 6)

A final factor to bear in mind about pronunciation is learner anxiety. For some learners speaking in a foreign language can be very stressful, and it is important that learners do not develop a fear of speaking in English.

How can we teach pronunciation?

Pronunciation is a very personal matter, so it is important that teachers take account of learners' own view. Moyer (2015, p. 12) suggests that, where possible, learners should be involved in identifying how they will use language and use that as a way of deciding specific pronunciation goals as well as citing the types of pronunciation activities they most enjoy.

Teachers rarely devote whole lessons to pronunciation, and many teachers lack training in teaching pronunciation (Henderson et al., 2012); so, pronunciation is often taught in a reactive way, where the

teacher responds to a particular problem that comes up in a communicative activity in a way that parallels task-based learning (Chapter 3) or focus on form. It is also possible to include pronunciation points within more communicative activities (Trofimovich, 2016). This approach embeds pronunciation in a communicative context but often leads to a focus on segmental issues and so may need to be supplemented with a teacher-initiated programme

Where pronunciation teaching is initiated by the teacher, this often starts with an activity designed to make the learners aware of a feature of English pronunciation, a period of practice with varying degrees of freedom and a final 'discussion of the students' real life issues or concerns' (Pennington, 2013, p. 225).

Awareness of pronunciation

The language that is used to describe the pronunciation of a language is quite technical and is probably not directly usable in the classroom except with very meta-cognitively aware learners but should inform much pronunciation teaching. A more practical approach is to focus on awareness or noticing features. A common approach to awareness raising is based on the concept of the minimal pair. If learners' difficulty in understanding or producing the difference between 'mats' and 'maths' is causing communication problems, teachers would need to develop a set of four or five minimal pairs for /t/ and /θ/. A minimal pair is a pair of words which only differ by one phoneme, for example, /mæts and /mæθs/ or /pα:t/ and /pα:θ/.

The teacher would then say a word and either say the word again (e.g. mats and mats) or its minimal pair (e.g. mats and maths). The learners then indicate whether they had heard one word said twice by holding up one finger or two different words by holding up two fingers. The teacher would continue with the other minimal either saying the same word twice or two different words. Minimal pairs can be adapted to a range of activities including games like Bingo.

Activity 7.2. Minimal pairs

1. Find five minimal pairs for i. /r/ and /l/; ii. /e/ and /æ/; iii. /ɒ/ and /ɔː/.
2. Along the lines of the aspiration activity above (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010), what difference would be visible if someone silently mouthed the words 'mum' and 'numb'? Can you identify any other minimal pairs where their difference can be identified when the words are silently mouthed?

Speech recognition technology has great potential for helping learners to become aware of the similarities and differences between their own and their target pronunciation, but, at the time of writing, it is difficult to evaluate different technologies. Wang and Young (2015) found that automatic speech recognition software designed by the National Tsing Hua University helped both adult and young learners to improve their pronunciation over eight weeks. Whipple (2015) used Adobe Flash and software jointly created by the Dublin Institute of Technology to create a representation of a stress in

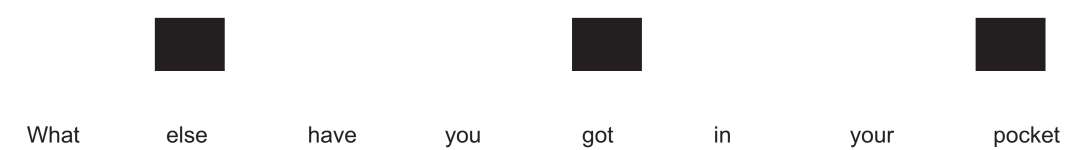

Figure 7.2 Syllable blocks.

a library of recorded utterances, but it may be useful to do something similar with less resources. See Figure 7.2.

Some teachers find that phonemic symbols such as the received pronunciation version in Table 7.1 can be used to make learners more aware of the different sounds of their target variety. This also provides learners with a useful tool when they are using their dictionaries. Underhill and Casey (2011) have produced an app which can be used by learners and teacher to become more familiar with phonemic symbols, and Underhill (2005) provides many examples of how to use phonemic script in the classroom. If phonemic symbols are not easy to use, features such as syllables and stress can be indicated by body language (Smotrova, 2017).

Practising pronunciation

Practising pronunciation can be embarrassing for learners. Their mistakes are very public, so it is important that teachers handle pronunciation practice sensitively. Choral work, where all the learners are speaking together, group work, where they have a smaller audience, or one-to-one interaction with the teacher minimize the learners' possible loss of face. Many learners now have access to ways of recording their own voices and find this a useful way of practising pronunciation (Ducate & Lomicka, 2009) whether their teachers get to hear the recordings or not.

The most common method of pronunciation practice is probably learners repeating what the teachers say (Murphy, 2011). This can be a useful activity if used sensitively and not overused. Other repetition activities can be beneficial. Getting students to repeat minimal pairs after the teacher can help them get used to making particular phonemes and can be embedded in sentences (that's the wrong path/part) to make them more realistic. English has many tongue twisters which can be used to practice different aspects of pronunciation. Tongue twisters such as 'She sells sea shells by the sea shore' incorporate many instances of the same sound in the form that many learners enjoy repeating

The following poem for children can be used to practice the /r/ /l/ contrast:

Row, row, row your boat
Swiftly down the stream
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily
Life is but a dream.

Learners could work on a poem like this in a group of four with each learner being given one line, which they then memorize (Pennington, 2013, p. 266). The learners then say their line to the group and try to

Table 7.6 Describe and draw: sheet one

Q: What is Luke's favourite colour?
A: Blue

	Rory	Luke	Harry	Billy	Your partner
colour	blue		brown		
sport	football		rugby		
food	ice cream		lollipops		

Table 7.7 Describe and draw: sheet two

Q: What is Rory's favourite colour?
A: Blue

	Rory	Luke	Harry	Billy	Your partner
colour		red		yellow	
sport		rounders		lacrosse	
food		chocolate		brownies	

work out what the best order would be for the whole poem. Many teachers have poems and tongue twisters that they use on a regular basis.

Reading aloud can also be used to help develop pronunciation, particularly intonation (Beaken, 2009). Before reading learners can identify the tone units and identify information that the reader would want to mark as known or unknown.

Controlled communicative activities can also incorporate particular pronunciation elements. Tables 7.6 and 7.7 are sample sheets for the /l/ and /r/, but these can be adapted for different aspects of pronunciation and level of student. The learners work in pairs and one person in each pair is given sheet one and the other is given sheet two. They then ask their partners questions to enable them to fill in the blanks on their chart. These sheets include the first question each learner should ask and also have a column so that they can ask each other about their own favourite colours etc. but this kind of activity can be organized differently.

Similar activities can be designed using describe and draw activities based on the pronunciation problems that particular classes face, for example, Underhill's (2005, pp. 202–3) 'humane dictation'. The students chose or write a text for the dictation. They read the text and identify any mistakes they think they might make with the dictation and estimate how many mistakes they will make. Underhill suggests that learner names and estimates of numbers of mistakes be written on the board. The text is removed from the learners and read aloud by the teacher, or, possibly, a student, phrase by phrase trying to maintain the conventions of connected speech but at a speed that ensures that learners are largely successful. The learners then check their version against the text and write the number of mistakes against their original prediction. This should lead to a discussion of why they over- or under-predicted. Then learners identify their 'best' mistake and try to explain why they made this mistake.

Summary

This chapter has looked at the teaching of pronunciation and tried to do three main things: introduce you to the description of pronunciation, discuss how people learn pronunciation and look at some of the strategies a teacher might adapt for the teaching of pronunciation. The chapter was intended to help you to:

- Know your learners' aims and current abilities.
- Help learners to become aware of specific pronunciation features.
- Practice these features individually and in group with a general movement from controlled to freer activities.
- Provide appropriate and sensitive feedback (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010, pp. 284–8).

This chapter has not looked at real-life communicative activities, but most of the activities included in Chapter 11: Discourse can either be used as they are or adapted to address particular aspects of communication (Trofimovich, 2016).

Activity 7.3. Discussion

What would you suggest that the teacher in this context do to help the student improve their pronunciation?

I teach in a private institution in Northeast India, helping students prepare for undergraduate study in Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States. A small group of students have a good command of English but speak with strong Indian accents. They are concerned that this will cause problems for them when they are in the UK. My own experience as an Indian in the UK leads me to think that the main problems related to this are not to do with lectures and seminars but informal interaction with British and International student and with those outside academic, for example, shop-keepers and language. I want to prepare these students to cope with these kinds of communication.

Further reading

The two books I have found most useful for the teaching of pronunciation are Celce-Murcia (2010) and Underhill (2005). Murphy (2020) is a useful and brief introduction to the topic. Pennington (2013) offers a good description of phonology and phonetics and their application to the classroom. Jenkins (2007) discusses the issues of identifying and pronunciation particular for ELF speakers, something which is also relevant for learners with different aims. For a description of English (primarily British English) for linguistic rather that pedagogic purpose, I would suggest you read Roach (2010).

Chapter 8

Spelling

Introduction

Spelling does not get very much attention when English is taught to second language speakers. Stirling (2005, p. 263) says, 'I have heard vocabulary, writing, and pronunciation all described at some time as the Cinderella of language teaching, but my nomination for the most neglected drudge of all Cinderellas goes to spelling'. However, a piece of writing that is misspelt often leads to negative judgements about the author, and most learners of English will need to learn to spell so the lack of attention is surprising. Perhaps this reflects an assumption that English spelling is illogical. 'Fish' could equally be spelt 'ghoti' where 'gh' stands for /f/ as in 'enough', 'o' stands for /ɪ/ as in the first syllable of 'women' and 'ti' stands for /ʃ/ as in 'nation' (Mayer, 1874). The process of learning is also unclear with long-standing debates over whether spelling is taught or caught (Peters, 1985), and many people have memories of being taught rules like 'i before e except after c', which combine memorability with uncertain functionality. This chapter seeks to provide a more solid basis for pedagogy by addressing three questions

1. What is spelling?
2. How do people learn to spell?
3. How can teachers help learners to spell better?

Activity 8.1. A spelling extract

This is from an essay a student has written on the advantages of e-books and paper books. If you were the student's teacher, how would you respond to the oddities in the student's spelling.

It is certain e-books do not give this kind of experiens. However, they also give a satisfying reading experiens. In conclushon, paper books and e-books may give different reading experiens. However, each experiens has its own good point. Thus, we cannot decide for sure which type of books is better, because it is to do with each person preferens and the type of reading experiens they want.

What is spelling?

Writing systems developed as ways of representing the spoken language, so understanding English spelling is largely to do with the relationship between spoken and written English. English has adopted

a phonographic writing system, that is, one where the symbols, the letters of the alphabet, represent sounds (Sampson, 2015, p. 24). Other writing systems, and in particular Chinese, are logographic, so the single symbol 人 represents the word 'ren' or 'man' in English. The closest to this in English is the number system where the symbol '1' stands for the word 'one' or /wun/. English is predominantly phonographic, but it has some logographic elements, or more precisely some morphological elements. Both phonographic and logographic elements are discussed below under the headings of consonants, vowels and morphemes.

The Roman alphabet that we use in English is used by several languages, and the link between spelling and pronunciation differs in these languages. To illustrate this, Table 8.1 contains equivalent sentences in Spanish, ('La ortografía es facil'), French ('L'orthographe est facile) and English ('Spelling is easy'). The transcriptions are written with different conventions because the phonemes of the three languages are different. So /r/ in French is not quite the same as /r/ in English. In Spanish, each letter stands for one phoneme, except for the two letter combination or digraph 'ph' which represents one sound /f/. French has several digraphs, and three letter combinations which represent one sound 'th', 'phe', 'est' and 'le' as does English with 'll', 'ng' and 'ea'. The close link between spelling and pronunciation in Spanish means it is described as having a shallow orthography while both English and French are said to have deep orthographies.

Consonants

The Roman alphabet used for English has twenty-two consonant letters (including 'y'), and the received pronunciation accent of English described in Chapter 7 has twenty-four consonant phonemes. This mismatch creates some problems. However, many English consonants typically represent their corresponding phoneme; for example, 'b' stands for the phoneme /b/. This applies to 'b', 'd', 'h', 'k', 'l', 'm', 'p', 'r', 'v', 'w', 'y', 'z' and, if 'of' pronounced /ov/ is excluded, 'f'. Where these can be doubled (e.g. 'bb' but not *'hh') they represent the same sound. 'J' does not represent the equivalent phoneme but is regularly pronounced as /dʒ/. There are also a number of consonant digraphs with regular pronunciations. See Table 8.2.

Some consonant individual letters and digraphs regularly represent more than one phoneme. See Table 8.3.

Table 8.1 Spanish, French and English sentences; orthography and phonology

Spanish	L	a	O	r	t	o	g	r	a	ph	i	a	e	s	f	a	c	i	l
	l	a	O	r	t	o	ɣ	r	a	f	i	a	e	z	f	a	θ	i	l
French	L'	o	r	th	o	g	r	a	phe	est	f	a	c	i	le				
	l	ɔ	ʁ	t	ɔ	g	ʁ	a	f	e	f	a	s	i	l				
English	S	p	e	ll	i	ng	i	s	ea	s	y								
	s	p	e	l	ɪ	ŋ	ɪ	z	i:	z	ɪ								

Table 8.2 Consonant digraphs

L	P	Example	L	P	Example	L	P	Example
ch	tʃ	chose	kn	n	know	qu	kw	queen
ci	ʃ	delicious	mb	m	climb	sc	s	science
ck	k	back	ng	ŋ	sing	sh	ʃ	show
dg	dʒ	fudge	ph	f	graph	ti	ʃ	deletion
gn	n	sign	ps	s	psychology			

L=letter; P=Phoneme.

Table 8.3 Consonants which regularly represent two or more sounds

L	P	Example	L	P	Example
c	k, s	can, certain	th	θ, ð	thin, then
g	g, dʒ	get, general	s	s, z, ʒ, ʃ	bus, rose, pleasure, sure
gh	f, g	rough, ghetto	w	w, h	when, who
n	n, ŋ	sin, sink	x	ks, gz, z	mix, exist, xylophone
t	t, tʃ	native, nature			

L=letter; P=Phoneme.
Source: Brooks (2015, p. 267 et seq.).

Table 8.3 probably overstates the complexity of this aspect of English spelling. 'N' is only pronounced /ŋ/ in front of 'k' and 'c' is pronounced /k/ when it is followed by 'a', 'o' 'u' or a consonant and as /s/ when it is followed by 'e', 'i' or 'y'. However, it underestimates the complexity of the digraphs 'ch' and 'gh' which sometimes are not pronounced at all, for example, 'yacht' and 'taught'. The system for spelling consonants is complex but is in many ways a reasonably close approximation of the pronunciation of English and much easier to understand than the vowel system.

Activity 8.2. Consonants

1. 'G' can be pronounced as /g/ or /dʒ/. Put the following words into groups according to how 'g' is pronounced and identify a rule accounting for this: gap, general, giant, glow, go, great, guess, guy, gypsy, magic.

   Try out your rule on any other words you can think of and try to account for the silent 'u' in 'guess'.

2. 'Ci' can represent two sounds as in 'city' and also be a digraph as in 'delicious'. What patterns can you identify in how 'ci' is pronounced? Here are some examples: artificial, city, civil, decide, delicious, precious, reception, social, special.

3. Several consonants represent the same sound whether they appear singly or are doubled. Can you identify a rule for when the single or double form is used when the one syllable words below are inflected?

> Big/bigger, fit/fitting, group/grouping, head/headed, hid/hidden, mean/meaning, moan/moaned, run/running, seat/seated, stop/stopped.
>
> What exceptions can you find to this rule?

Vowels

The Roman alphabet has six vowel letters (a, e, i, o, u and the ambivalent 'y') with which to represent twenty vowel phonemes. Received pronunciation also uses 'r' and 'w' as vowel supporters to indicate length but also sometimes with no apparent value. It is possible to identify sounds which are most often associated with vowel letters, so 'a' represents /æ/ and 'e' represents /e/ about half the time and 'o' is pronounced /ɒ/ and 'u' is pronounced /ʌ/ in about 40 per cent of cases, but the exceptions are numerous (Brooks, 2015, p. 346 et seq.).

As with consonants, English uses digraphs to compensate for the lack of vowel letters. These combinations may be contiguous, for example, 'ea' as in 'hear' or split as 'a.e' as in 'plate'. Table 8.4 provides information about vowel digraphs organized in terms of regularity.

Activity 8.3. Vowels

1. Table 8.4 shows that vowel digraphs have an uncertain relationship with phonology so longer letter combinations may be more useful. The vowel digraph 'a.e' represents /ei/ in only 68 per cent of instances because of words like 'garage', 'courage' and 'moustache'. Create a list of ten words with the rhyme 'ake' and calculate the percentage of times this is linked to /ei/.
2. When a suffix is added to a word which ends in 'e', the 'e' sometimes stays as in 'noticeable' and sometimes is deleted as in 'arrival'. Using the data at the end of the sentence, account for why this happens: advantageous, arousal, baking, changeable, manageable, moving, noticeable, noticing, staging, traceable.

Morphemes

Writing was historically developed as a representation of speech but needs to be easily processed as written text. So some of the patterns in English spelling are to do with making words easier to read and this means that the link to meaning, normally through the notion of morpheme, is more important that the connection with phonology. For example, the 'c' in 'medical' and 'medicine' are not pronounced the same but using the same letter helps readers see the connection between the morpheme 'medic' in both words orthographically. If English had a shallower orthography we would have something like 'medikal' and 'medsin' which would match the phonology more clearly but would obscure the similarity in meaning. A similar point applies to the regular past tense of verbs. The past tense of 'cook' is

Table 8.4 Vowel digraphs with their most frequently realized phoneme

L	P	Example	%	L	P	Example	%
ir	ɜː	sir	100	ar	ɑː	part	78
oi	ɔɪ	toy	100	ea	iː	beach	73
aw	ɔː	saw	100	ie	iː	brief	73
ee	iː	free	100	ie	iː	brief	73
oy	ɔɪ	boy	100	or	ɔː	or	72
e.e	iː	scene	99	ur	ɜː	turn	70
o.e	əʊ	rode	99	a.e	ei	place	68
i.e	ai	bike	97	er	ə	waiter	65
i.e	ai	like	97	ue	juː	Tuesday	59
u.e	juː	pure	89	oo	ʊ	book	51
ew	juː	few	84	ou	aʊ	shout	48
au	ɔː	caught	80	ow	aʊ	cow	45
ai	ei	faint	79	y	ai	try	*

L=Letter; P=Phoneme. %= the frequency with which the letter represents the phoneme. Frequency data are not available for 'y'.

Source: Brooks (2015, p. 346 et seq.).

Table 8.5 A text produced by an Arabic-speaking English language learner

On Saterday In the morning I go to sweming at 11 oclok I have lunch at 12:30 pm I read eamel at 4:00. In the evining I watch t.v at 10 oclock. On Sunday I go to park with my frend at 11:00. I play teanes at 11;30 I go to shoping at 3:00. At 8 oclok I go to senema. At the night I go to bed at 10 oclok.

pronounced /kʊkt/, the past tense of 'boil' is /bɔɪld/ and the past tense of 'roast' is /rəʊstɪd/, but all three morphemes are spelled '-ed'.

Spelling can also sometime help to highlight the differences between morphemes. If English were being redesigned, we would probably not use /ðeə / as a possessive pronoun, an adverb of place and a short form for 'they' plus 'are'. However given that we do have these homophones, the existence of the spellings, 'their', 'there' and 'they're' helps readers. Similar arguments would apply to 'to', 'too' and 'two'. Many functional words such as 'the' (/ðə/ or /ðɪ/), 'of' (/əv/), 'to' (/tə/) and 'and' (/ænd/ /ənd/ /ən/) are spelled in ways that are more helpful for reading than as an indication of how they are pronounced.

Activity 8.4. Morphemes

1. To make a regular noun plural, English adds an 's'. However, this is pronounced differently. Look at the following data and identify how 's' is pronounced in each case and explain why it is pronounced that way: bags, boxes, buses, cats, cups, dishes, dogs, pears, ships.
2. How would the words 'photograph', 'photography', and 'photographic' be spelt if English had a shallower orthography?

3. English has different spellings for the homophones pronounce /fɔː/ and /ai/ but not for /tɪl/ or /bɑːk/. Would the benefits for readers in having different spellings for the last two outweigh the disadvantages?

How do people learn to spell?

Most models of learning to spell come out of a cognitive framework. See Chapter 3. However, spelling requires two kinds of information, rules about the links between letters, and sounds, which helps writers to assemble words from their sound, and a lexical store, where writers produce whole words or morphemes as a unit (Brown & Ellis, 1994, p. 6). This parallels the distinction between consonants and vowels, on the one hand, and morphemes, on the other discussed in the section on what is spelling?

However, an alternative explanation of how people learn to spell is offered by connectionism or usage-based approaches (Treiman, 2018a, 2018b) (also covered in Chapter 3). This downplays the division between assembling words and recalling them as wholes (Brown & Loosemore, 1994; Heuven, 2005). This approach to human learning is based on computer models, and the essential learning mechanisms is the strength of links rather than notions of rules. The computer models produced in this way are able to simulate the ways in which first and second language learners develop the ability to spell. A connectionist model would see the main mechanisms as learners developing an understanding of spelling patterns rather than using rules.

Most spelling research has investigated first language learners and while this provides some insight, second language learners differ from first language learners and in particular their knowledge of writing in their first language. So Chinese learners who are familiar with a logographic writing system are less likely to use letter-sound links than say Korean speakers who use an alphabet (Nam, 2017; Wang et al., 2003). Similarly Arabic speakers who are familiar with a consonantal writing system which does not always represent vowels (Sampson, 2015, p. 73 et seq.) may suffer from 'vowel blindness' (Saigh & Schmitt, 2012) and so make more spelling errors with vowels than those from a writing system which is more similar to English. Korean learners whose writing system has clearer markers of syllables than English may find the fact that English uses some symbols as individual letters and as digraphs, for example, 'm', 'b' and 'mb' confusing (Nam, 2017). Learners who use the Roman alphabet will also be influenced by their first language. So speakers of Dutch which does not have the phonemes /θ/ or /ð/ or the digraph 'th' may write 'badroom' for 'bathroom' and 'clodes' for 'clothes' (Berkel, 2005, p. 113).

More generally, because learners of English can often read in in their first language and usually learn to speak and read English at the same time, they make less use of phonological knowledge. Zhao et al. (2016) found that bilingual users of English were better at spelling real words than monolingual users but were worse at spelling non-sense words. This may mean that bilingual users make less use of the spoken language in their spelling than do monolingual users.

How can teachers help learners to spell better?

What to teach

Some curricula include a list of words that learners are expected to be able to spell, and teachers then need to decide how to divide up the list. Where teachers are not provided with such a list, they may choose to draw on word lists online, for example, Nation's webpage (2017), the *Dolch* word lists (function words whose spelling does not indicate their pronunciation) or the many vocabulary course books (e.g. McCarthy et al., 1997). These are not organized around spelling issues but can be used as a starting point. Gerlach (2016) argues that beginners need to be able to spell the 300 most common words in English, many of which have idiosyncratic spellings and which would overlap with the *Dolch* word lists.

A more learner-centred approach is to use errors from learners' writing and words about whose spelling they have asked and analyse these to identify what should be the focus on your spelling instruction, bearing in mind that 'the task of spelling instruction is not to correct mistakes the child has already made, but to help the writer not to make that mistake the next time' (Torbe, 1978, p. 39). The focus needs to move from addressing mistakes to understanding learners' overall spelling system.

The learner who produced the text in Table 8.5 needs help with 'o'clock' (though the occurrence of 'o'clock' suggests some awareness of 'ck' as representing the phoneme /k/) but is also struggling with double letters, for example, swimming, tennis and shopping. 'Friend' and 'Saturday' are both frequent items and probably also need attention. This kind of analysis may reveal problems which are common to a class but is also likely to reveal that learners have different problems and require individual attention. One way of dealing with this is for teachers to build up a store of the kinds of activities described below on paper or online that can be used when a learner has a particular problem. Once teachers have decided what they need to teach, they need to consider how they will first increase learners' awareness of the relevant aspects of spelling and then practice those spellings.

Table 8.6 Worksheet for single and double letters

Write the correct '- ing' word next to the base verb?

What pattern do you notice about when to double the final letter?

Base verb	-ing form
Cook	
Hit	
Keep	
Read	
Stop	
Swin	

What is the '-ing' form of these base verbs: eat, heat, run, shop, sleep, sit?

Activity 8.5. Responding to spelling mistakes

Here is a sentence from an Arabic-speaking English learner:
On Sunday I go to park with my frend at 11:00 I play teanes at 11. (From EFCAMDAT)
Below I list some of the ways a teacher might chose to respond. What would you see as the advantages and disadvantages of these strategies?

1. This sentence contains two spelling mistakes. Can you correct them?
2. 'Frend' is misspelt. Check your dictionary to find the correct spelling.
3. What letters go in the gaps in (a) Fr_ _nd and (b) t_nn_is
4. On Sunday I go to park with my frend at 11:00 I play teanes at 11.

   friend tennis
5. On Sunday I go to park with my frend at 11:00 I play teanes at 11. Remember for 'friend', 'I' before 'e' except after 'c'.

Spelling awareness activities focus on identifying an aspect of spelling which seems relatively regular, for example, the pronunciation of 'g' and 'c' discussed earlier. Some teachers use flash cards to introduce new words. The impact of using flash cards on spelling can be enhanced by using cards which highlight the overall shape of the word. If a teacher were working on words with 'ake', the flash cards in Figure 8.1 might prove useful. Using a flash card without any letters can help learners to recognize the overall shape of the word.

With split digraphs, it would be possible to ask learners to focus on, say, 'ake' through a word puzzle based on brake, fake, lake, make, shake, snake and take. You can do this manually, or websites will create word squares for you. A useful related activity is a crossword. Where appropriate, learners can be encouraged to identify the regularities in English spelling. See Table 8.6. This can also be used to highlight groups of words where spelling reflects morphological rather than phonological aspects of the word such as medical, medicine, discussed above, or words like sign, signature, resign. Although patterns do exist in English spelling, many learners still struggle with particular words such as 'friend' in Activity 8.5. Torbe suggested that learners be encouraged to use the sequence of 'look, cover, remember, write check' (Table 8.7) as a way of working on these independently.

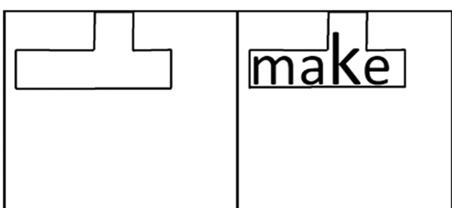

Figure 8.1 Flash cards for 'make'.

Table 8.7 Worksheet on 'how to help yourself to spell'

Look	• Look at the word; read it to yourself as few times. • What is the shape of the word? Draw the shape of the word with your finger. • What letters in the word are pronounced as expected? • What letters in the word are not pronounced as expected?
Cover	• Close your eyes and imagine the word in your head. • Try to say the letters in the word to yourself. • If you remember all the letters, say the word in your mind to remind yourself of what it looks like.
Remember	• If necessary, look again at the word and say it in a way that will remind you of how it is spelled. • Says with word in an exaggerated way. • Say the syllables or bits of the word separately. • If the word is very long, try treating is as a group of words and then putting them together.
Write	• Cover the word • Say the word in your head and then try to write it down.
Check	• If you're not sure about it, look at it again. • Cover it again and try to write it down. • Check back to see if you got it right. If you didn't, do it again. • Later in the day or the next day, write it again from memory.

Source: Torbe (1978, p. 46).

Table 8.8 Using a dictionary and a spellchecker to correct misspelling

Misspelling	Dictionary	Word processor suggestions
Saterday	×	✓
Sweming	✓	✓
/oclock	✓	✓
Eamel	×	✓
Evining	×	✓
Frend	×	✓
Teanes	×	×
Shoping	✓	✓
Senema	×	×

Spelling activities: production

All writing activities are spelling production activities, and a key question for teachers is the amount of support that they need to provide. One common piece of advice to learners is to use a dictionary, to look up words about whose spelling they are uncertain, or, where they are writing using a word processor, the spellchecker. If the learner who produced the text in Table 8.5 were able to identify the misspellings in their text, something which would be difficult for a poor speller, they would identify the nine items in Table 8.8. If the learner looked up the misspelt words in the Macmillan English Dictionary (Rundell, 2002), the help would be variable. In Table 8.8, I have treated a successful use of the dictionary as one where the target word is on the page that the learners would find looking for the words starting with first three letters of

their own spelling. I treat the spell checker as successful if it offers a correct spelling, whether or not other words are also offered. Looking for 'oclock' would take them straight to 'o'clock' and looking for 'shoping' would take them straight to 'shopping'. It is unlikely that the dictionary would help them find the correct spelling for 'eamel', 'frend', 'teanes' or 'senema'. The spellchecker in Word is generally more successful with correct suggestions coming up first with all the words except 'tennis' where the learner had 'teanes' and 'cinema' where the learner had 'senema'. Lin et al. (2017) found that the use of spell checkers not only improved the immediate quality of the learner's language but also improved the learners' spelling on future tasks.

Some learners find mnemonics useful to help them spell difficult words. For example, the spelling of 'rhythm' can be remembered by 'Rhythm Helps Your Two Hips Move' or learners may find 'I have a front and back door at my address' to remember the two 'ds'. Stirling (2011, p. 148) suggests a mnemonic to remember the good features of mnemonics which may be useful if you are trying to invent spelling mnemonics for your learners.

Summary

This chapter covered spelling in English. The first section described some generalizations about spelling in English, mainly related to the links between pronunciation and spelling, with consonants having a more regular connection than vowels, and also morphemes. The second section examined how spelling is learnt focussing on information processing models and connectionism before exploring how teachers might decide what they should be teaching in the spelling sections of their classes and some of the activities they might use in class.

Activity 8.6. Discussion

How might a teacher who has received this piece of work from a native speaker of Cantonese respond in order to help improve the learner's spelling?

My Family
My family is a large family, having six people live together in the hous. Each one has different way to help them relax. And also the way they thought is relaxing, having giv me too much angry. For example my youngest sister is luv chinese music, therefor whenever she at home do her homwork always has the music on. That bother me a lot. Becoz she and I liv in the room making me have to go with the arcument with her.

Further reading

The literature on teaching and learning spelling is very limited. Stirling's (2011) provides useful background and some useful teching suggestions. Torbe (1995) is aimed at monlingual speakers of English but is useful if you are working with primary age learners.

Chapter 9

Grammar

Introduction

In the UK, many secondary educational institutions are known as grammar schools because in the days when Latin was regarded as the most important language, the schools devoted a large part of their curriculum to the grammar of Latin. The centrality of grammar to second language education is a widespread belief. Even where English is taught for communication, the syllabus is often structured around grammar. This chapter examines how we can teach grammar, and in order to do this it addresses three questions:

1. What is grammar?
2. How do we learn grammar?
3. How can we best teach grammar?

The first question is an attempt to help you think about what your aim might be in a grammar class or in a section of a class on grammar. If you are working within a task-based, content and language integrated learning or content-based learning, you are unlikely to have a whole lesson on a grammar point, but you may use grammar to help your learners improve their English. Most other approaches to teaching English involve lessons whose main aim is teaching grammar. The second question addresses how people learn new grammar and get better at using the grammar they already know and the third question looks at approaches and techniques for teaching grammar.

Activity 9.1. A grammar extract

This is from a 'Find the difference' activity. Learners in pairs have similar pictures but with some differences, and they have to find the differences without looking at the other student's picture. A has a grammatical problem.
How would you describe this problem?
How important do you think the problem is?

A: Next?
B: Yeah, okay. Um, beside, beside the fisherman. There is a women, who is, who is sell something.
A: Yeah, she's selling-, let me see, um
B: Three, three yellow, eh, sock.

A: Three yellow socks? No, there, there are not socks of yellow here, I saw, I see two, two blue socks, maybe, I'm not sure.
B: okay, it's a difference.
Uh . . ., two yellow sock . . . hang on the part of the [unclear] beside the women.
A: Two?
B: Yes, two sock. My picture there's two.
A: There are three socks, my picture.

What is grammar?

The grammar of English is a very large topic. It is not possible to cover the whole of English grammar here and, even that were possible, it would not be particularly useful as what teachers need to know is the grammar that their learners need. So this section tries to:

1. Give you an introduction to some key grammatical concepts,
2. Provide you with the tools you need to evaluate descriptions of English grammar and
3. Develop your skills in identifying where your learners' grammar needs to improve.

Some key grammatical concepts

Grammar is a way of expressing meaning by choosing between different grammatical structures, and a good grammar will explain what different grammatical elements and structures mean as well as how they are formed.

When we talk about learners being good at grammar, this generally means that they are able to use the grammar well rather than being able to describe the grammar of a particular language and one does not imply the other. Many native speakers of English are able to produce grammatically accurate sentences without being able to describe the difference between, say, countable and uncountable nouns. Being able to use grammar is talking about grammar as a skill. Some writers use the term '**grammaring**' to indicate that this is the aspect of grammar they are talking about (Larsen-Freeman, 2003), and our aim is to help learners to produce grammatically accurate language rather than to able to describe grammar.

Grammaring is different from having a knowledge of the rules of grammar such as 'singular subject takes a singular verb, while a plural subject takes a plural verb'. Knowledge of grammar goes beyond rules to include the terminology or **metalanguage** that we use to describe language. This ranges from parts of speech such as noun, verb, adjective to terms such as aspect to describe different uses of verbs. The next section introduces some **metalanguage** which is useful for thinking about teaching grammar.

Activity 9.2. Grammatical metalanguage

Identify which of the following terms are (a) ones that you are familiar with and (b) which you would use with your learners.

1. Phrasal verbs.
2. Modal verbs.
3. Infinitive.
4. -ing form.
5. -en form.
6. Present tense.
7. Past tense.
8. Future tense.

Grammar is traditionally divided into **morphology** (how word parts contribute to grammar) and **syntax** (how words are arranged to make sentences). In English, the difference between singular and plural is signalled mainly by morphology, for example, chair and chairs, child and children. The distinction between declaratives and interrogatives is mainly signalled by syntax, for example, 'You are a teacher'. 'Are you a teacher?' 'Chen has got a nice house'. 'Has Chen got a nice house?' However, it is more complicated than this as illustrated by pairs such as sheep (singular) and sheep (plural), where there is no morphological signal of the difference between the singular and plural, and the relationship between 'You ate your lunch' and 'Did you eat your lunch?' which is to do with both word order and morphology (ate and eat).

Grammar is hierarchical. For most grammarians, sentences are the largest unit in grammar, and sentences are made up of one or more clauses; clauses are made up of one or more phrases and so on. See Figure 9.1.

Morphemes

Morphemes are the smallest meaningful units of the language. A morpheme may be a word (e.g. open, cat) or a part of a word, for example, '-ing' in 'opening' or 'cooking', '-s' in 'cats' or 'doors'. The central issue

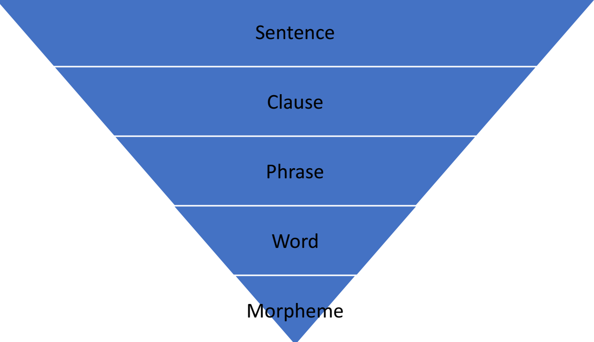

Figure 9.1 The grammar hierarchy.

here is meaning, so morphology ignores changes in spelling like the loss of an 'e' when '-ed' is added to 'live' to make 'lived' or the change of 'f' to 'v' when '-s' is added to 'knife' to make 'knives'. Grammatical morphemes are known as inflections. English also uses morphemes, labelled derivational, to make new words. See Chapter 10: Vocabulary.

English does not have many inflections compared to other languages, but one of the complications of learning English is that we use the same spelling for two different morphemes. So '-s' can represent the plural morpheme in 'books' or the morpheme signalling the singular third person of a present tense verb as in 'cooks' and '-ed' can represent the past tense as in 'He cooked' or the past participle in 'He has cooked'. English also presents problems for learners because the same morpheme is realized in a range of ways, for example, the plural morpheme as in 'books', 'Children', 'mice'.

Activity 9.3. Morphemes

What grammatical inflections, if any, can you identify for the following words?

1. Girl.
2. Arrive.
3. Dark.
4. Soon.
5. Of.

How does the grammatical morphology of English differ from other languages you know?

Word classes

To understand the syntax of English, you need to understand the differences between parts of speech. Table 9.1 identifies the eight main word classes.

Other descriptions of word classes are slightly different. Scrivener (2010, p. 14) treats pronouns as a separate class, Biber et al. (2021b, p. 56) treat interjections as sub-category of a more general category 'insert'. These kinds of differences are not very significant, but for teaching purposes consistency makes things easier for learners. Second, English differs from some other languages in that the same word can be used in more than one word class. Many words can be both a determiner (**This** book is good) and pronouns (**This** is my book). Biber et al. (1999, p. 60) show how 'round' can be used as six different word classes.

1. I think he serves a round of applause (noun).
2. I can round up Dave and Peter (verb).
3. Just give me an idea in round figures (adjective).
4. It takes a long time to them round (adverb).
5. That’s just round the corner (preposition).

Table 9.1 Word classes

Part of speech	Sub-category	Short definition	Examples
noun	common	denotes abstract or material objects	freedom, drink, table, tables
	pronoun	replaces a noun	it, his, mine, those, everything, which
	proper	denotes a person or place	Obama, Paris, Schipol Airport
verb	lexical	denotes action, process or state	run, ran, own, be
	auxiliary	supports a main verb and provided information about tense/aspect and clause type	be, do, have. may
	modal	supports a main verb and provides information about the certainty and necessity of the main	can, may, should
adjective		modifies a noun	red, tall, younger
adverb		modifies a verb, an adjective or clause	quickly, rather, very, actually
preposition		describes the relationship between two nouns or a verb and a noun	on, of
conjunction		links two words, phrases or clauses	and, when
interjection		an exclamation	wow, damn, gosh
determiner	modifies nouns		
	article	specifies whether the noun is definite or indefinite	the, a
	demonstrative	specifies if the noun is near or far from the speaker/ writer	this, those
	numeral	specifies the number of instances of a noun	five, seven, two hundred
	possessive	connection with other nouns	her, your, its, Shima's
	quantifier	specifies whether the number or amount of the noun	Some, many,

Activity 9.4. Word classes

1. Identify the part of speech of the words in bold in the following sentence. There are two nouns and two verbs so you should identify the sub-categories for these words.

Alice was beginning to get **very tired** of sitting **by** her sister on the bank, and of having nothing to do: once or twice she had peeped into the book **her** sister **was** reading, **but** it had no pictures or conversations in it, 'and what **is** the use of a book', thought Alice 'without **pictures** or conversation?'(Carroll & Rackham, 1907)

Word	Word class	Word	Word class
Alice		Very	
tired		Her	
was		But	
is		pictures	

2. If you speak a language other than English, try to identify examples of the word classes in Table 9.1 in those languages? How easy is it for a word to change word class in that language?

Table 9.2 Phrases in English

Phrase	Examples
Noun	**Alice**, she, the **rabbit-hole**, my poor little **feet**, **pictures** hung upon pegs, the **people** that walk with their heads downward
Verb	was going to **happen**, might **catch**, was no longer to be **seen**, would not **open**, was **coming**, must be **growing**
Adjective	very **remarkable**
Adverb	**suddenly**, very **slowly**
Preposition	**for** it, in another moment, **to** her great disappointment, **right** through the earth, **into** the loveliest garden you ever saw.

Heads of phrases in bold.
Source: Carroll & Rackham (1907).

Table 9.3 Different kinds of phrase

Clause element		
Subject		**Alice** opened the door **I** shall be late. 'Ahem!' said the **mouse** with an important air. **What** made you so awfully clever?'
Predicator		Alice **opened** the door I **shall be** late
Complement	subject	I shall be **late**
	object	What made you **so awfully clever**?'
Object	direct	Alice opened **the door.** She generally gave herself **very good advice**. I don't care **what happens.** What made **you** so awfully clever?'
	indirect	She generally gave **herself** very good advice
	prepositional	She got **to the door**
Adverbial		'Ahem!' said the Mouse **with an important air**. **In another moment** down went Alice after it. Alice had not a moment to think about stopping herself **before she found herself falling down a very deep well**.

Phrases

There are five main kinds of phrases in English. You can recognize the category of phrase from the head. The head of a noun clause is a noun, the head of a verb phrase is a verb and so on. See Table 9.2.

Clause elements

When phrases are put into clauses, they have to serve particular functions within the sentence. In English, the functions are: subject, predicator (often called verb or verb phrase), complement (subject or object), object (direct, indirect, prepositional) and adverbial. Examples of these are given in Table 9.3. The clause elements in sentences can be represented in different ways. I have given an example of one way representing a grammatical analysis, grammar tables in Tables 9.4, 9.5 and 9.6.

Table 9.4 An analysis of 'alice opened the door'

	Sentence			
Clause Element	Subject	Predicator	Direct Object	
Phrase	Noun Phrase	Verb Phrase	Noun Phrase	
Word Class	Noun	Verb	Determiner	Noun
Word	Alice	opened	the	door

Table 9.5 An analysis of 'I shall be late'

	Sentence			
Clause Element	Subject	Predicator		Complement
Phrase	Noun Phrase	Verb Phrase		Adjective Phrase
Part Of Speech	Pronoun	Modal Verb	Verb	Adjective
Word	I	Shall	be	late

Table 9.6 An analysis of 'she gave herself very good advice'

	Sentence					
Clause Element	Subject	Predicator	Indirect Object	Direct Object		
Phrase	Noun Phrase	Verb Phrase	Noun Phrase	Noun Phrase		
Word Class	Pronoun	Verb	Pronoun	Adverb	Adjective	Noun
Word	She	gave	herself	very	good	advice

Activity 9.5. Grammar tables

Try to produce grammar tables for the following sentences.

1. She got to the door.
2. What made you so awfully clever?'
3. I must be growing small.
4. Her foot slipped.
5. I don't care what happens.

Sentences

There are three kinds of sentence in English: declarative, interrogative and imperative. See Table 9.7. These roughly correspond to statements, questions and orders, but English allows some flexibility. So a declarative sentence like 'You must do your homework' is used to make something like an order. See Chapter 12: Pragmatics.

Table 9.7 Different kinds of sentence function

Sentence function	Examples
Declarative	She got to the door. That was a narrow escape.
Interrogative	What made you so awfully clever? Do bats eat cats?
Imperative	Drink me! Don't be angry about it.

Sentences can consist of more than one clause, and so they can also be categorized in terms of complexity. Simple sentences have one main clause. Compound sentences consist of two equal clauses linked by conjunctions like 'and' and 'but'. Complex sentences consist of one main clause and one subordinate clause. See Table 9.8.

Evaluating descriptions of English grammar

The ways in which grammars of language are produced has changed in the last forty years because it has become possible to use computer programmes to analyse large samples, usually called corpora, of naturally occurring data. This means that most reference grammars are based on examples of what language users actually do. They are **corpus based**. This is an important development because it means we can look at rules that have been widely accepted such as 'Do not split an infinitive' and find out whether this matches how most people use the language. Grammar based on how people actually use the grammar are often described as **descriptive** (Thornbury, 1999, p. 10) and seen as much better than prescriptive grammars (Willis, 2015) which often misrepresent the way language is used. However, teaching grammar is often prescriptive because teacher need to tell learners what they can and cannot do in English. What is important is that the grammar that is taught is a proper reflection of the way that the kind of English your learners need is used.

Swan (1994) identifies six criteria for evaluating rules. His criteria are:

1. Truth — Rules should be true.
2. Demarcation — Rules should identify the limits on the use of the relevant grammar.
3. Clarity — Rules should be clear.
4. Simplicity — Rules should be simple.
5. Conceptual parsimony — Rules should make use of terms and ideas what learners know.
6. Relevant — Rules should address the issue that concerns the learners.

These criteria provide a useful framework for evaluating rules, though there are many aspects of English grammar where truth is something that we aim for rather than something we achieve. However, the strength of these criteria is that they are learner focussed. So when Swan says that rules should be conceptually parsimonious, he is warning against using metalanguage that learners may not know. When you have spent time and effort in learning the metalanguage related to a particular grammatical

Table 9.8 Different kinds of sentence

Category	Example
Simple	She got to the door. What made you so awfully clever? Drink me!
Compound	She was now only ten inches high, and her face brightened up at the thought. She tried her best to climb up one of the legs of the table, but it was too slippery.
Complex	However, **this bottle was NOT marked 'poison'**, so Alice ventured to taste it. When she got to the door, **she found she had forgotten the little golden key**,

aspect, there is a temptation to assume that the language that has helped you to understand an element of grammar will help your learners to understand the same thing, but this is not necessarily the case. Similarly clarity, simplicity and relevance will vary depending on which learners the rule is for and means grammatical explanations may change as learners' language ability develops.

Swan also indicated the importance of knowing when to use one grammatical structure and when to use another by the criterion of demarcation. This goes back to the idea that grammar is a way of expressing meaning by making choices. Being able to use the definite article involves knowing how to the use the indefinite article and the meaning comes from the fact that language users decide which kind of article to use in a systematic way. Learners will need to know what they can and cannot do.

Activity 9.6. The present perfect

Look at these three descriptions of the present perfect from three well-known grammar books and evaluate how useful they are for you using Swan's criteria. These are extracts from these books and do not include rules for the formation of the present perfect. You will find longer explanations if you go to the actual books.

1. In general terms, the present perfect is used to refer to a situation that began sometime in the past and continues up to the present. For example, the sentence
'*But now she'**s gone** on holiday for a whole month*' describes a past action (leaving for a holiday) that creates a situation (or result) that extends to the present (Biber et al., 1999, p. 460).
2. The present perfect (simple and progressive) is used to refer to events taking place in a past time-frame that connects with the present: . . .
*So what**'s been happening since the last time we met?***
(from that moment till now)
In fact, alligators **have killed** only eight people in Florida **in the last half century.**
(in the fifty years up to the time of writing) (Carter & McCarthy, 2006, p. 613).
3. We use the present perfect to talk about events in the past – but it is a 'present' tense. How is that possible? The key idea with this tense is that it is about the past as it affects the present – i.e. there is always some link to now. All present perfect meanings connect the past to now in some way. This is a rather complex concept – and quite hard to convey to students.

I've been to four different countries in Africa (and the experience of visiting these countries is still live and important to me. It doesn't feel like a distant, dead event).
She's bought 20 copies of the book (and she still has them now).
He's eaten camel meat (and he is still a person who knows what that tastes like) (Scrivener, 2010, p. 163).

Demarcation

The extracts just aim to explain the meaning of the present perfect. They do not explain how the present perfect differs from, say, the past simple, what Swan describes as demarcation. How would you describe the difference between the present perfect and the past simple?

Identifying grammatical problems in learner language

A lot of grammar teaching is a reaction to problems that learners have in communicating. This is built into task-based learning and the problem-based sequence described in Chapter 4 but is a feature of most, if not all, classrooms, when teachers give learners feedback on the grammaticality of their language. There is some information about feedback on written language in Chapter 15 ‘Writing’, but here I want to look at how you might evaluate sentence-level grammar mistakes.

The first stage is to identify what your learner meant. So, for example, if the learner wrote 'Dream are not limit to rich peoples' I would guess that the learner meant

Dream**s** are not limit**ed** to rich **people** ~~peoples~~.

Of the three grammar problems here, the first two seem fairly straightforward: the use of a singular noun instead of a plural noun (dreams) and the use of the base form instead of the past participle or –ed form to make the passive. The third problem may be that the learner does not know the word 'people' is plural or it could be that somehow the 's' from dream was transferred to 'people' and this would of course mean that original analysis of 'dream' was wrong. My judgement would be that this a misplaced 's' because the learner elsewhere used 'people' correctly (see Activity 9.7), but I would emphasize that this is a judgement, and you might reach a different conclusion.

A key part of the information about learners is what languages they speak other than English because learners will quite often apply aspects of their other languages to English. If you are fortunate enough to know the other languages that your learners know, this will give a clearer understanding your learners' language. So Han (2000, p. 91) explained that the 'The letter has not received' produced by speakers of Mandarin was not a problem with the passive (i.e. 'has not been received') but due to two aspects of Chinese grammar. First, Chinese allows a subject pronoun to be omitted when it can be understood from the context, in this case 'I' as the subject of 'received'. Second, Chinese allows the main topic, 'the letter', to appear at the front the sentence even when it is an object. In written English the sentence the learner intended would have been 'I have not received the letter'. This analysis would suggest that the learner needs help with something other than the passive. If you do not know your learners' other

languages, you can also look up examples of errors associated in book such as *Learner English* (Swan & Smith, 2001) and learners can often explain what it is that they meant to convey.

Activity 9.7. Learner grammar problems in sentences

Here are ten sentences produced by the same learner over a two-week period. How would you describe the grammar problems (if any) that this student has? If you only had to consider this learner, what would you prioritize for teaching this learner grammar?

1. Dream are not limit to rich peoples.
2. Freedom of opinions lets all of people in a country say what they think.
3. People who has a high position in society are the educate people.
4. It will help us to be employ in the future
5. University education lead at successful life.
6. If he have freedom, he can say anything without being afraid of people.
7. If you gives the children the freedom to do anything they won't know wrong from right.
8. Freedom is the right that all people owns.
9. Governments around world provides education for their peoples
10. You can't feel of the pleasure of life without freedom.

How do we learn grammar?

Krashen and connectionists see grammar learning happening mainly as a result of learner's being exposed to intake without any particular focus on grammar. A lot of learners learn a lot of grammar without explicit instruction. However, many teachers and most textbook producers give considerable importance to explicit instruction in grammar. Research evidence does suggest that grammar instruction does help (Norris & Ortega, 2000), but it is important to note that, despite the amount of research, the evidence is mixed (Ellis, 2006, p. 86). My own view is that teaching grammar does help but that grammar explanations are often not understood by learners. What follows offers a way of understanding how that learning might happen but it is important to remember that learning cannot happen if the learners do not understand what they are being taught.

Both cognitive and socio-cultural view offer plausible explanations of how we learn grammar. The cognitive view sees this as a two-part process with declarative knowledge, coming from noticing or negotiating, supporting the development of procedural knowledge. The declarative knowledge may be a rule or awareness of a pattern. Learners can successfully acquire grammatical knowledge without explicit rules (Denhovska et al., 2016, p. 161) and can use complex grammatical patterns without being able to explain the rule (DeKeyser, 1995, p. 382). Teachers need to decide if giving learners access to

declarative knowledge through grammar explanations or examples will support their procedural knowledge.

Activity 9.8. Negotiating for meaning

Look at this extract from a communicative activity and consider how it might lead to learning for student 1. What has student one noticed about English grammar? What does Student one **not** notice about the difference between the language she uses and the language student two uses?

S1: This woman is walking on street and sees a nice dress in window of a shop.
S2: The dress is expensive.
S1: Quite expensive and so she stop looking at dress. It is very red.
S2: She stops looking? She walks away from the dress.
S1: No, no, she keep looking at dress. She like the dress so much. She stop looking at the dress for a long time.
S2: I can't understand. She stops looking. She is in a hurry? So she finishes looking and goes on.
S1: No. She stop so she can look.
S2: Ah. She stops to look at the dress.
S1. Exactly. She . . . how you say? She stop to look at dress.
S2: You are right.
S1: OK. She stop to look at dress for a long time. She want to buy the dress.

The socio-cultural view sees learning as happening as a result of the learners either understanding or producing the new grammar with help and that help being gradually withdrawn until the learners can use the grammar independently. Learners can only use grammar that is within their zone of proximal development so this means that the teacher will need to have a clear idea of what grammar is appropriate for a particular group of learners.

How can we teach grammar?

We do not have agreement about how to teach grammar (Borg, 1999, p. 20), but the target in teaching grammar is always to get your learners to use the language in a communicative task. Communicative tasks are covered in Chapter 11 'Discourse', but this chapter covers grammar explanations and grammar practice.

Chapter 4 'Teaching' distinguished between a PPP lesson, where the starting point might be a grammar point, and a problem-solving approach where the aim would be a task but a grammar point might emerge from this. While the problem-solving pattern of organization is very different from a PPP lesson, if the language focus that emerges from the learners' attempt to carry out the target task is to do with grammar, the teacher will face similar issues to the PPP teacher who has come up with a grammar point. Again the communicative use of the grammar point in the production stage of PPP or the second go at the communicative task in task-based approaches are very similar.

Whichever lesson structure is being used, teachers must choose between starting with a rule or with examples of the grammar. This choice has been described in a range of ways but the most common is deductive approaches (starting with rules) and inductive approaches (starting with examples or consciousness raising). Many teachers will use both rules and examples, so the decision about sequencing not what is included.

Deduction: teaching with rules

Generally, Swan's criteria for a good rule provide guidance for producing or evaluating rules and so you need to check your explanation is meaningful to your learners. A grammar rule will cover information about the **form** and the **meaning**. So in addition to the kind of information about meaning given in Activity 9.6, a rule about the present perfect will need to cover the way that we used 'have' as an auxiliary with the past participle to form the present perfect. One of the issues about describing the form is how much **metalanguage** you will use. The extent to which metalanguage is used depends on your learners. When you are explaining the meaning of a piece of grammar, **demarcation** is important. Your learners need to understand how choosing one grammatical structure rather than another will affect the meaning. So if you are introducing the passive, you will need to explain to learners why they might choose the passive rather than the active.

The meaning of a grammatical items can be conveyed in a range of ways. It is common to provide an explanation in English plus some **examples**. If your learners share a mother tongue this may include **using their mother tongue**. Thornbury (1999, pp. 38–40) suggests using translation to teach 'used to' to elementary learners who speak Spanish so that the learners understand the difference between English and Spanish grammar. The equivalent verb in Spanish, 'soler' can be used in both the past and the present whereas the English 'used to' is only used in the past. Meanings can also be conveyed **diagrammatically** or with pictures. Once you have decided how to explain the form and the meaning of the grammar structure you will need to think about whether you start with form or meaning. Activity 9.9 is intended to help you to think about the range of choices a teacher has when providing grammar rules.

Activity 9.9. Giving a rule

Here is an example of teachers' explanations of the passive for pre-intermediate learners.

1. What strategies have been used?

a. Metalanguage b. examples in English c. demarcation

2. In what order were the strategies used?

3. Would you have used a different or additional strategies? Would you have ordered the strategies differently?

In English, old information normally comes at the start of a sentence and new information at the end. So in the sentence 'He broke the window', 'he' is the old information and 'broke the window' is the new information. If I asked the question 'What has Tom done now?' then the answer would be 'he broke the window' because Tom was mentioned in the question. But if I asked the question 'What happened to the window?' the normal answer would be 'It was broken by Tom' because the window was mentioned in the question.

'He broke the window' is an active sentence because 'Tom' or 'he' broke the window.
'It was broken by Tom' is a passive sentence because something happened to 'it' or the window.
In English the passive is made with the verb 'be' plus the past participle. 'Was' plus 'broken'.

4. If possible, record one of your own explanations of a grammar rule or use a rule in a textbook that you are familiar with. What strategies have they used to explain their rule and how effective do you find them?

Induction: teaching with examples

Inductive approaches start with examples and are often sentences.

Invented sentences

Many teachers or textbook writers will invent the example sentences they use. This is partly because of convenience. It is easier to create a new sentence rather than to find an example from something you have heard or read. But there are also pedagogic reasons for this because it is important that the sentences that you use are comprehensible to your learners. This means that the new grammar element should be the most difficult part of the sentence. You do not want your learners to be distracted by the vocabulary of the sentence when you are trying to get them to notice the grammar. In Activity 9.8, the teacher's examples were:

He broke the window.
It was broken by Tom.

The use of the passive is the most complicated part of the sentence. If we took another pair:

She must have offended the mouse.
It must have been offended by Alice

The grammar point is equally well exemplified but the use of the word 'offend' may not be clear to the learners and, even if they understood 'offend', trying to understand how one might offend a mouse might distract them from the grammar.

It is also important that the meaning is conveyed by the grammar rather than vocabulary (VanPatten, 2002). This can be down by using **minimal pairs,** that is, two sentences which only differ in terms of one grammar item.

a. He has lived in Leeds for five years.
b. He lived in Leeds for five years.

Your learners will need to understand the sentences. Sometimes hearing or reading the sentence will be enough, but sometimes you will need to support the sentences with mime, *realia*, pictures or diagrams to explain the meanings. We might distinguish between Leeds sentences above by using a timeline.

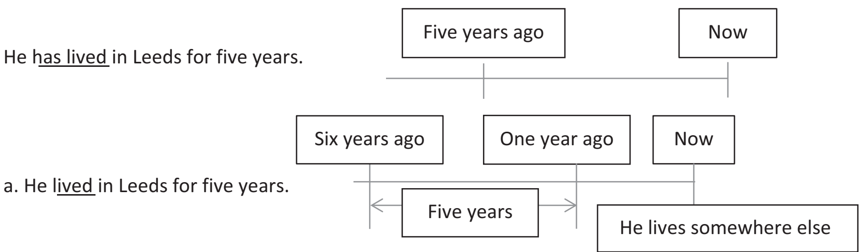

Figure 9.2 Present perfect vs Past simple.

Alternatively, a grammar point might be illustrated by a picture. See Figure 9.2. A teacher might ask learners to decide which sentence went with which picture.

The examples given in this section are written, but teachers will often provide examples orally. This has many advantages related to the development of the learners' ability to process oral English and perhaps helping them with their spoken English. However, it is important to remember that the purpose of the examples is for learners to develop new grammatical knowledge and that written language enables learners to process language at their own pace, rather than that of the speaker, and also to review the sentences easily. This may make noticing new grammar easier.

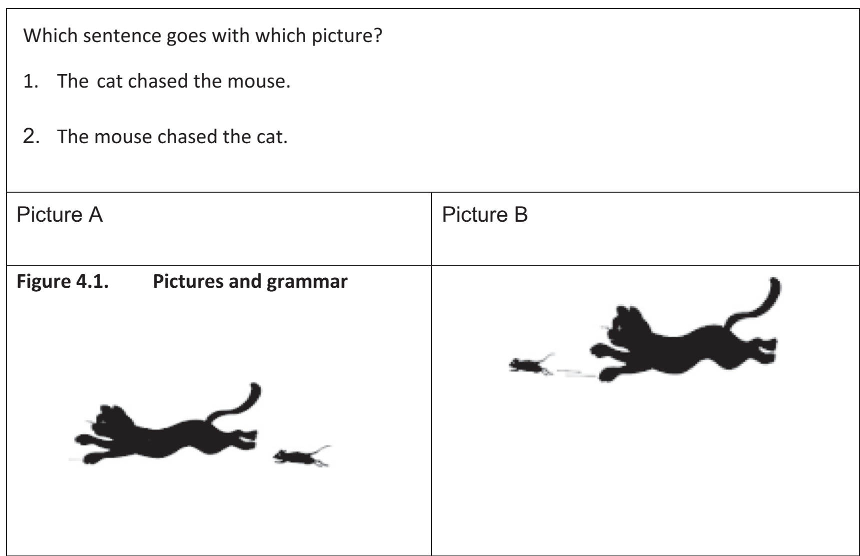

Figure 9.3 Pictures and grammar.

Concordances

Corpus linguistics (Perez-Paredes, 2021) can provide large numbers of examples of a grammatical point. This is sometimes called data-driven learning (e.g. Lin & Lee, 2015). If you want to use data-driven learning in your teaching, you need to access a corpus and use a piece of software called a concordance to do this. You can do this through a range of publicly available websites, or you can create your own corpus and generate example that way. The Brigham Young concordance is available at http://corpus.byu.edu/bnc/.

Activity 9.10. What can come after the word 'decide'?

Look at the following sentence and divide them into three groups according to the grammatical structure after 'decide'. What is the difference between the three structures?

a. 'Technically you should go back there, but I think you've already decided against that'.

b. Anne had now finally decided that she couldn't take it anymore.

c. Finally, he decided that The Housemartins were contributing nothing to his life.

d. Charles decided to be stubborn more than apologetic.

e. Peter Yeo decided to prod gently.

f. Robson again decided against summoning a replacement.

g. The Bush administration decided against a visible or military role.

h. The management one day decided to spread mirrors across the walls of the gym.

i. Then, he decided to study to become a librarian.

j. Wildski decided that Tokyo was the hat capital of the world.

Remember most learners are not familiar with this way of presenting data and will often be expecting a continuous text rather than a set of sentences or parts of sentences. Also concordance software requires that you start with a word or group of words and so you would have to think about how you could use this for the passive. One of the main advantages of data-driven learning is that it can become something that learners can use independently if you can help them learn how to use current materials (Lin & Lee, 2015). Using concordance data in class is also covered in Chapter 10 on Vocabulary.

Texts

A complete text may be needed to exemplify how a structure is used. Many textbooks provide examples of texts which can be used to illustrate a grammar point. Authentically produced texts are generally best for this because of the danger that a constructed text not represent language use accurately, but it is also important to remember that a text must be authentic for your learners (Badger & MacDonald, 2010). You may need to adapt your text so that your learners understand it and are likely to notice the particular grammar point you want to illustrate.

Once you have your text, you will need to check that the learners understand the text and then can ask them to look at how particular grammatical structures are used. The teacher would not provide a rule or metalinguistic explanation of the target structure because the aim is to help the learners develop their own understanding of the grammatical pattern and develop their ability to notice other grammatical patterns in their independent language use. It is quite difficult to find texts to illustrate particular points but many teachers develop a library of texts that they can use in their teaching and some patterns are repeated in many texts.

Generative situation

A more flexible alternative to using an existing test is what Thornbury describes as a 'generative situation' (1999, p. 61). A generative situation is one that is likely to result in the use of the target grammar activity. You might use the context of buying a pet to generate the use of comparative adjectives.

A learner is given a set of animal pictures and takes on the role of a pet shop owner.

Teacher: I am looking for a pet. What can you suggest?
Learner: I have got a tortoise?
Teacher: Have you got something faster?
Learner: What about a tiger?
Teacher: Have you got something tamer?

A generative situation can be used to introduce a new or half-known piece of grammar. It can be quite difficult to produce generative situations but textbooks often present grammar points through them and you can adapt these for your own purposes. A generative situation is part of the way to a communicative task and so is less predictable than other approaches but it is also more like communication.

Practice activities

Once the learners know the new grammatical grammar point, they need to proceduralize that information and that means practice. Practice activities can be more or less controlled. With more controlled activities, the language which learners produce is predetermined, and this should help them learn to use the new grammar more automatically. Some more controlled and less controlled activities are included in Activities 9.11 and 9.12, with some additional activities on the website.

Activity 9.11. Controlled activities

Look at these activities and consider the following issues:

1. The extent to which they would improve learners' grammatical abilities.
2. How motivating/demotivating they are.
3. The amount of preparation that a teacher would need.
4. How easy it would be to adapt this activity for another grammar point.

Activity one: A substitution drill

Student1: I went to the theatre last night.
Teacher: My aunt's house.
Student2: I went to my aunt's house last night.
Teacher: Visited.
Student 3: I visited my aunt's house last night.
Teacher: Yesterday.

Activity 9.12. Less controlled grammar practice activities

Look at the following activity and decide:

1. What grammar point each is likely to involve?
2. How controlled is the language?
3. How motivating it would be for your students?

Activity One: Find someone who

The teacher draws a grid on the blackboard and then elicits three musical instruments, three types of singing and three kinds of dance.

Play	Sing	Dance

Each student then decides on an instrument, a kind of song and a kind of dance. The students are then told to get up and to find someone who plays the same instrument, sings the same kind of song and dances the same kind of instrument as they do.

Corrective feedback

What do you think of errors?

Errors are conceptualized in different ways in different theories of learning. In behaviourist theory errors are bad habits, probably caused by the first language and evidence that something has not been learnt and so must be corrected immediately (Skinner, 1974). This view would mean that a teacher should correct all errors and then get learners to repeat the correct version. For Krashen, errors are an indication of the stage of acquisition that learners have reached and disappear as learners receive more comprehensible input (Krashen, 1989). This view would suggest that errors should be ignored

because over time they will disappear. Within a cognitive or skill learning approach, an error may be due to either:

(a) a lack of knowledge, in which case the best response would be to help learners develop that knowledge or

(b) a lack of automatization, in which case learners need a lot of practice (Anderson, 2010, 2015b; Johnson, 2002) (or sometimes both of these things).

In a cognitive approach, learners' recognizing or noticing their errors is an important element in learning. This relates to the idea of negotiation for meaning. See Activity 9.8.

Within a socio-cultural view, errors are an indication that learners need more scaffolding from people or artefacts (Lantolf, 2007; van Lier, 2000).

How do you respond to errors and mistakes

If learners make mistakes, the teacher has a range of options. One possibility is to ignore the mistake. Teachers may do this because they feel that this mistake will disappear over time, or because they feel that this is not an appropriate point to correct the mistake because, for example, it might interrupt the communication and/or have a negative impact on learners' motivation. Teachers often do respond to learner errors. See Activity 9.13.

Activity 9.13. Discussion

What would you suggest that the teacher in this context does to help the student improve their grammar?

Last summer I taught on a summer school course for teenagers. Most of the students came from a range of southern European countries, for example, Spain and Italy with some Thai, Chinese and Arabic students. The students were aged between 14 and 16 and had an elementary level of English. They had a range of grammatical weakness, but one which was common to almost all the students was problems to do with the use of the ways they talked about the future. Most of them overused the 'will' future. So they said things like 'I will go to York at the weekend' or 'I will have a conversation class after lunch'. They rarely used the 'going to' future and often referred to the future in incorrect ways, for example, 'I go back home in July'.

Summary

This chapter has looked at the teaching of grammar and tried to do three main things: describe the grammar of English, discuss how people learn grammar and look at some of the strategies a teacher might use for grammar teaching in terms of introducing new grammar and then practising that grammar. This chapter has not covered the final P of the PPP lesson production. This is covered in Chapter 11 on Discourse.

Suggested reading

There are several excellent grammar reference books available. Two comprehensive ones are Biber et al. (2021) and Carter and McCarthy (2006). There are also books which are aimed more specifically at teachers such as Parrott (2010) and Scrivener (2010). Crawford (2020) is a useful source of ideas and includes a chapter on corpus-based approaches to teaching grammar. Rylance and Kevech (2018) is also good, and Thornbury (1999) is useful. If you are interested in the use of corpus in the language classroom both Timmis (2015) and O'Keeffe et al. (2007) are good.

Chapter 10

Vocabulary

Introduction

While texts books and syllabus writers have traditionally focussed on grammar, learners carry around dictionaries rather than grammar books (Schmitt, 2010, p. 4). Researchers are now starting to recognize the importance of vocabulary (Nation, 2013). This chapter examines the teaching of vocabulary looking at three questions:

1. What is vocabulary?
2. How do people learn vocabulary?
3. How can we teach vocabulary?

Activity 10.1. Thinking about the vocabulary class

Think of a teaching situation in which vocabulary is being studied, which you know either from the point of view of a learner or a teacher, and try to address the following questions:

1. In what ways would you want your learners to be able to deal better with vocabulary? What makes you think this?
2. How many words are taught in a typical vocabulary lesson or part of a lesson?
3. How are the words chosen? Did the teacher choose the words? Were they related to a reading or listening text or did the learners choose the words?
4. What kind of knowledge about the words did the teacher cover? Meaning? Spelling? Pronunciation? Grammar? Something else?
5. How did the teacher present the vocabulary?
6. What did the learners do with the vocabulary?

What is vocabulary?

This looks at the unit for teaching vocabulary and the knowledge of vocabulary that learners need.

What is the unit for vocabulary?

The obvious unit for vocabulary is the word. Saying a learner knows a thousand words sounds like a precise way of discussing language knowledge. Few teachers say their learners know ten items of grammar or have mastered seventeen of the sub-skills in reading but many will talk about their learners' vocabulary size. However, there is some ambiguity about what exactly a word means.

Types and tokens

The first ambiguity is the difference between the meanings of 'word' in the following sentences.

1. How many words do you know?
2. Write two hundred words on your favourite hobby.

In the first sentence, 'words' means different types of words, in the second it means tokens of words. Consider this sentence: 'Reports of the number of words in English range from four hundred thousand words to over two million'.

This sentence has sixteen different word types and eighteen tokens of those words. The difference between type and token is important for teaching purposes. When we ask learners to write an essay of two hundred words, we are talking about **tokens** of words, and when we are talking about how many words we want to teach them we are talking about **types** of words.

Functional and content words

The aim of vocabulary teachers is to teach words, but some words are grammatical. Determiners such as 'a' and 'the' or prepositions such as 'of' and 'to' mainly serve a grammatical purpose. In 'The cost of living has increased', 'the' and 'of' seem signal grammatical relationships. These kinds of words are described as function words whereas 'cost', 'living' and increased' in the same sentence are described as content words. Generally, nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs are content words, but this is not always true. So 'has', a verb, is a content word in the sentence 'She has a large car' but is a function word in 'she has driven a long way'. Other words which can be both content and function words include 'is' and 'do'.

Function words have very general meanings and are part of the grammar of English and content words have more specific meanings and are part of the vocabulary of English. This is not always a clear cut distinction and does not matter where the grammar teacher is the vocabulary teachers. However, it will be a problem if items such as prepositions are not covered in either the grammar or the vocabulary class.

Activity 10.2. When does knowing one word mean you know another word?

Imagine that you have a learner who can understand the word or phrase in bold in the (a) sentences below. Do you think they would be able to understand the word in bold in the (b) and the (c) sentence where there is one?

1. a). Ioanna replaced the light **bulb** in the hall.
b). Achilleas has planted all the tulip **bulbs** in the back garden.
c). Before you start the engine, pump up the fuel line **bulb** on the outboard tank.

2. a). If you need to change some money into Euros, you should go to a **bank**.
b). Hillary and Bill have a lovely house on north **bank** of the river.
c). A fighter plane took station to starboard for a moment, the Red Star plain on its fuselage, then it **banked** away.

3. a). Indira was **admitted** to hospital after a bad fall.
b).Sanjay **admitted** his mistake.

4. a). I **like** watching old movies.
b). Yusuf will do whatever he **likes.**
c). There was not enough turkey for my **liking**.

5. a). We 'd also be **happy** to discuss future developments for your website.
b). Frank sat on the bench **happily** munching peanuts.

6. a). We **put him up** in a very comfortable hotel.
b). It is often easier to **put up** with difficult employees than to dismiss them.
c). If you are interested in economics, you shouldn't be **put off** by the maths.

7. a). Mei **glimpsed** a kingfisher on the edge of the lake.
b). Yuchen **caught a glimpse** of the thief's face as he ran around the corner.

Polysemes and homonyms

Quite a lot of words have more than one meaning. We can talk about a human foot, the foot of the stairs and someone being three foot tall. These uses of the words are related. The foot of the stairs is metaphorically linked to a human foot, and the foot as a measure of height or length is linked to average size of a human foot. These kinds of word are polysemes.

There is another category of words such as 'bark'. We can talk about a dog's bark and the bark of a tree. These meanings are not connected and so these are treated as two words which just happen to share the same spelling and pronunciation. Such pairs of words are called homonyms. This distinction is normally made on historical grounds. So polysemes are historically the same, while homonyms are historically different but have somehow come to look and sound the same. This is a useful starting point for vocabulary teachers, but teachers are more concerned with the knowledge of their learners. For learners who can work out the meaning of 'foot' in 'foot of the stairs' from knowing what a human foot is, foot is polysemous. For learners who cannot, this is two items. See Activity 10.2.

Activity 10.3. A vocabulary joke

Before we started teaching online I always used to start my classes by telling a joke and people always laughed. Since we have switched to online classes, people do not seem to find them funny. I asked one of my students why they did not laugh. They said my jokes weren't remotely funny.

How does this joke make use of two different meanings of 'remotely'?

Lemmas and word families

With polysemes, many learners will be able to use their knowledge of one use of a word to understand the same word being used in a different way. However, most learners will also be able to work out the meaning of words that are formed from a word they already know plus an affix, for example, they can work out 'tables' from 'table'. Vocabulary theory has got two ways of showing how knowing one word can help with another word: lemmas and word families. See Table 10.1.

Lemmas and word endings

The division between grammar and vocabulary also comes up when we look at affixes. When someone knows the word 'decide', they probably know the words 'decides', 'decided' and 'deciding' as well, because of their general knowledge of the grammar of English. For teaching purposes, it is more sensible to teach the word 'decide' and assume that learners will be able to work out the meaning of the other words without being taught to them directly.

Table 10.1 Lemmas and word families

Base form	Lemma	Word family
Arrive (Verb)	Arrive, arrives, arriving, arrived	Arrive, arrives, arriving, arrived, arrival.
Fool (noun)	Fool, fools	Fool(verb), fool(noun), fools, foolish, foolishly
Happy (adjective)	Happy, happier, happiest	Happy, happier, happiest, happily, happiness, unhappy, unhappiness, unhappily
Decide (verb)	Decide, decides, deciding, decided	Decide, decides, deciding, decided, decision, decisive, undecided
Take (verb)	Take, takes, taking, took, taken	Take, takes, taking, took, taken, intake, mistake, retake

Table 10.2 Phrasal verbs

come on	come along	take up	find out
get up	sit up	take on	give up
sit down	go ahead	get back	point out
get out	get in	get off	come off
come over	pick up	look up	run out
stand up	put on	set up	turn out
go off	make up	take off	go on
shut up	carry out	take over	

In technical language, the lemma 'decide' includes 'decides', 'decided' and 'deciding'. The idea of a lemma is limited to grammatical affixes or inflections. See Table 10.2. The lemma does not include affixes which change the grammatical category, sometimes called derivative affixes. So 'decision' is not part of the lemma, because 'decided' is a verb and 'decision' is a noun. More advanced learners with a knowledge of derivative affixes may be able to work out 'decision' from 'decide' so lemma may be too narrow a term for these learners. A broader concept is the term 'word family'.

What are word families?

A word family is the base word plus the derivations. Learners are assumed to be able to work out what 'decision' and 'undecided' mean if they know 'decide'. The difficulty here is knowing how good learners are at working out derived words. If learners know 'revolve' at what level will this mean that they also know 'revolution'? What about 'revolutionary' or 'anti-revolutionary'?

Bauer and Nation (1993) suggest the word family increases as the knowledge of affixes increases. So for beginners 'develop' and 'develops' would be as different as 'bad' and 'had', whereas advanced learners who know the word 'develop' would not only be able to work out the meaning of 'develops' and 'developing' but also 'redevelopment'. This is a plausible way of describing vocabulary knowledge and is extremely useful for teachers who are trying to decide which affixes to teach but this is a generalization so teachers need to be careful about checking how this approach applies to their learners.

Multi-word expressions

We write English with a gap between words, and this encourages us to think that it is quite easy to see where one word ends and another begins. However, for teaching purposes some groups of words seem to function as what are called lexical or vocabulary items. There are quite a lot of terms for this, so you will see people talking about idioms, phrases and chunks, but here I will use the term multi-word expressions.

If you are working with a textbook, you can examine how textbooks deal with multi-word expressions. If you design your own materials, the concept of multi-word expressions may be useful in working out what language you should be teaching in the vocabulary class. This is an area which attracts a lot of attention from corpus linguists because of the large number of multi-word expression that appear in natural language. So Pawley and Syder (1983) suggest that expert users of English are able to write and speak so fluently because they use a lot of multi-word units. See also Laufer and Waldman (2011).

Two particular categories of multi-word expression need special attention. The first is phrasal verbs. Phrasal verbs are verbs composed of a verb plus an adverb or preposition such as 'take off' and 'put down'. Some descriptions of phrasal verbs use the term particle instead of adverb and preposition to avoid having to make the distinction between adverbs and prepositions. Learners do have grammatical problems with phrasal verbs such as why the sentences in one are acceptable but the sentence in two is not.

1. He took off his hat/He took his hat off/He took it off.
2. *He took off it.

However, most issues are to do with the meaning of the phrasal verbs as in these two examples:

The fighter plane took off from an aircraft carrier.

She took off her crown.

You can find lists of phrasal verbs online, and there are also published lists. Table 10.2 gives the list of phrasal verbs that appear more than ten times in every million words (Biber et al., 2021, p. 410).

The second kind of multi-word expressions that need special attention are delexical (Carter & McCarthy, 2006, p. 899) or 'light verbs' (Nesselhauf, 2004). The main delexical verbs in English are 'have' (e.g. have a good look/dinner), 'make' (e.g. make sense/use), 'give' (e.g. give a thoughtful response/answer) and 'take' (take a chance/good care). English often expresses an idea that other languages do through a verb by using a verb with a noun, for example, 'have dinner' would normally be just 'dîner' in French or 'cenar' in Spanish. The verb is delexical or light because the meaning is expressed mainly through the noun. Where your learners speak languages that use delexical verbs less than English, you may need to think about teaching these items.

Having decided on the lexical units for teaching, we need to consider what knowledge learners need of each word or phrase.

What do learners need to know about a word

We can see that knowing a word can be quite complex when we look at the kinds of things that go wrong.

Activity 10.4. How much do learners know about words?

What aspect of word knowledge do the learners who produced these sentences lack? I have put my interpretation of what the learners meant in brackets after each sentence.

1. We stayed in a bread and breakfast hotel. [bed]
2. He had a long grin on his face. [broad grin]
3. My mother is the kindness person I have ever seen. [kindest]

4. She prepares our food in the chicken. [kitchen]
5. Social media are a feature of temporary society. [contemporary]
6. He is kind and considerable. [considerate]
7. The city is very grown. [developed]
8. They will travel by leg. [on foot]
9. You need to count his pulse. [take]
10. I gave up it at last. [gave it up]

We can get some idea of what advanced learners might be expected to know from looking at a dictionary entry. Here is the entry for the word 'lazy' from the *Macmillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners* (Rundell, 2002, p. 806).

Lazy /'leizi/ adj **

1. Not willing to work or do anything that involves effort: It was hot in the garden, but she was too lazy to move.♦He's a lazy slob who sits in front of the TV all day.
2. Spent relaxing and not involving any activity that needs effort: *a lazy afternoon in the sun*. 2a. a lazy movement or smile is slow and relaxed*: a lazy grin* – **lazily** *adv,* **laziness** *noun[U]*

The basic information here is what I would call the substance (spelling: lazy and pronunciation: /'leizi/) and the two-plus meanings (1, 2, 2a). This level of knowledge would enable learners to understand most instances of either the spoken or written form of the word, though even at this level teachers need to bear in mind some possible limitations. First, the meanings of most words are fuzzy, and even if learners can recognize what is meant by 'a lazy boy', they may not be able to understand what is meant by a 'lazy stereotype'. Second, learners who can spell a word many not recognize the same word in speech. Third, for most people, the number of words we understand, our receptive vocabulary, is bigger than the words we use in speech or writing. Learners who can understand receptively a word may not be able to use it productively.

Activity 10.5. Analysing a dictionary

Analyse an entry from a dictionary that you use in the way I analysed 'lazy' as a means of evaluating the dictionary.

Word knowledge is more than spelling/pronunciation and meaning. It includes grammatical or syntactic knowledge. So the dictionary entry includes the fact that lazy is an adjective and so can modify nouns as in 'lazy slob' or complement them as in 'she was too lazy to move' but not as a verb as in *'They lazy on the sunbeds'. The dictionary writers assume learners know the other forms of the lemma, 'lazier' and 'laziest', but they have included some morphological information with the use of the '-ly' suffix to make

the adverb 'lazily' and the '-ness' suffix to make the noun 'laziness' so that we can see learners are not expected to know the word family based on 'lazy'.

The dictionary gives information about collocation. In English, we say, 'a lazy grin' rather than *'an idle grin'. Collocation is an important part of their word knowledge. Learners need to learn that we say 'lazy stereotype' but not *'idle stereotype' or 'the machines lay idle' but not *'the machines lay lazy' (Lewis, 2000; Sinclair, 1991). The dictionary also covers frequency. The ** indicates that 'lazy' is a frequent word and can be used almost anywhere. A less frequent word like 'judicial' will mainly be more in restricted contexts. Table 10.3 describes what it means to know a word.

The range of knowledge that learners need for a word means teachers need to decide what kinds of vocabulary knowledge learners need. It is also useful it trying to understand why learners make mistakes with vocabulary as in Activity 10.4. So, for example, when a learner writes 'bread' rather than 'bed', this suggests that in their **mental lexicon** 'bed and 'bread' are stored close together, presumably because they sound similar. If learners talk of a 'long grin' instead of a 'broad grin', this may be because they store words with similar meanings together. This example also suggests that for expert users of English, there

Table 10.3 Word knowledge

Substance	Spoken	R	What does the word sound like?	/ˈleizi/
		P	How is the word pronounced?	
	Written	R	What does the word look like?	lazy
		P	How is the word written and spelled?	
Form	Morphology	R	What parts are recognizable in this word?	Lazy + ly ⟶ lazily (adverb) Lazy +ness ⟶ laziness
		P	What word parts are needed to express this meaning?	
	Syntax	R	In what patterns does the word occur?	A lazy day They are lazy
		P	In what patterns must we use this word?	
	Collocation	R	What words or types of words occur with this one?	Lazy grin Lazy stereotype
		P	What words or types of words must we use with this one?	
Meaning	Concept/ referents	R	What is included in the concept	Averse to labour, indisposed to action or effort; (Simpson & Weiner, 1989).
		P	What items can the concept refer to?	
	Associations	R	What other words does this make us think of?	Averse to labour, indisposed to action or effort (Simpson & Weiner, 1989).
		P	What other words could we use instead of this one?	
	Frequency/ Register	R	Where, when and how often would we expect to meet this word?	Lazy occurs between 1 and 10 times per million words in typical modern English usage (Simpson & Weiner, 1989).
		P	Where, when and how often can we use this word?	

is some kind of a link between the collocates 'broad' and 'grin'. 'Count his pulse' instead of 'take his pulse' is also to do with collocations. Expert users of English may either have a link between the delexical verb 'take' and 'pulse' or they may store 'take someone's pulse' as one lexical item. The learners who write 'count his pulse' may also be using the collocation that works in their mother tongue. Table 10.3 lists the knowledge of 'lazy'.

How many words do learners need?

The number of words learners need to learn is difficult to decide partly because of uncertainty about what we mean by knowing a word but also because the answer depends on the learners' purpose. English is estimated to have a million words (Payack, 2014). *Chambers English Dictionary* has about 250,000 definitions (Schwarz et al., 1988). These figures suggest that the task of learning vocabulary is one that will never be completed. This is true for all speakers of English. Native speakers of English are estimated to know 20,000 word families (Nation & Waring, 1997). Twenty thousand word families, though daunting, seems an achievable aim. Indeed Milton and Meara (1995) found that adult learners could learn over 2,500 words in their year abroad.

Nation suggests that teachers should focus on the most common words, plus the words that relate to the areas that are particularly relevant to the learners. The two thousand most frequent word families is probably a threshold for being able to use English with 3,000 to 3,500 word families needed to pass Cambridge First Certificate, an upper intermediate examination (Laufer & Shmueli, 1997, p. 90).

Lists of the most common words are available. One of the earliest, and still used, is the General Service word list (West, 1953) which has been revised with corpus data (Brezina & Gablasova, 2015). Lists of word frequencies are available online, and specialized lists of words for learners with specific aims such as the Academic word list exist (Coxhead, 2000).

How do people learn vocabulary?

The most useful framework for understanding how learners learn vocabulary is provided by cognitive models, so we really should consider:

1. How learners get knowledge of vocabulary: that is how learners develop declarative knowledge of vocabulary and
2. How learners learn to use that knowledge: that is how that knowledge is proceduralized. See Chapter 3: Learning.

Developing declarative knowledge of vocabulary

1. Noticing

Learners first need to notice that there is something new in what they are hearing or reading. For a new word, they need to connect a group of sounds or letters and a meaning. If they are learning new things

about a partly known word, this may relate to any of the areas of word knowledge discussed above. Noticing assumes some motivation. This may be provided by the teacher showing an interesting picture but will be stronger if the reason for noticing the word comes from the learners. For example, if learners come across an unknown word in a text or realize that there is something they want to say but they do not know how to say this in English, they are more likely to notice it than if the teacher or textbook tells them that this is an important word (Laufer & Hulstijn, 2001).

Noticing involves more than using the word communicatively because it involves decontextualization (Nation, 2001). This may be the teacher writing the word on the board or the learners thinking 'That is a new word'. But learners need 'to give attention to a language item as part of the language rather than as part of a message' (Nation, 2013, p. 64).

Learners also need to relate the information to what they already know, either additional information for a known word or, for a new word, links to other words that they know which are similar. If the learners only know a few words in English, the link may be to a word in their mother tongue or other languages they already know.

Proceduralizing word knowledge

Getting the words into learners' memories provides an important support for learning a word but does not mean they become part of the learner's lexicon. Learners need to proceduralize their knowledge through controlled and automatic use or in Nation's terms of retrieval and generative use. Retrieval means that learners find the word in their own memories, to express an idea or because they encounter word in something they have heard or read. Each time this happens the links between the word and other areas of knowledge in the mental lexicon are strengthened. Generative use covers the situation where 'previously met words are met or used in ways that differ from previous meetings with the word' (Nation, 2013, p. 68) so this will often involve the creation of new links.

Unfortunately, retrieval and generative use are not enough to guarantee that learners will retain the new vocabulary. The links in the mental lexicon are weak and repetition is necessary. 'Words stand a good chance of being remembered if they have met at least seven times over spaced intervals' (Thornbury, 2002, p. 24). The spacing of the repetitions is important. Rather than spending ten minutes in a block trying to remember a word it is better to spend two minutes on the first day, two minutes on the next day, then two minutes of day three, two minutes on day seven and two minutes a month later. This is plausible (Baddeley et al., 2009) because the delays give the neuro-chemicals in the brain time to reinforce connections or create new nodes. Spacing can be controlled by teachers but learners do the learning. When learners are involved in the task for which vocabulary is needed, they learnt more (Laufer & Hulstijn, 2001).

How can we teach vocabulary?

The previous two sections of this chapter covered deciding what to teach and how learners might be helped to learn that vocabulary most efficiently. This section now examines how best to teach vocabulary.

Activity 10.6. A vocabulary activity

This is from a role play activity in an intermediate class. Students were put in pairs with one student as a customer and the other as a shopkeeper. The customer had pictures of objects that they had to buy and an amount of money they could spend. The shopkeeper had a picture of their shop.

Students were given pictures of objects that the customer had to buy and the shopkeeper had to decide if they had the object and, if so, how much they would charge. You overhear the follow exchange. What would you do?

L: I want to buy a peeler.
K: What peeler mean? (adapted from Teng, 2010).

Vocabulary teaching makes many teachers think of a class with a teacher going through a list of vocabulary, often called explicit vocabulary teaching, but much vocabulary learning happens in classes, or out of class them, where the aim is not vocabulary teaching. This is incidental vocabulary learning. Teachers need to be able to teach vocabulary explicitly but they also need to be able to support learners to develop their vocabulary incidentally, either by using tools such as dictionaries or by exploiting what happens when their learners read or listen to texts in English.

Nation (2013, pp. 2–3) suggests the following sequence for teaching vocabulary

1. Comprehensible meaning-focussed input: a communicative activity where the focus is on meaning
2. Language or form focussed learning: learners focus on particular words or aspects of word knowledge
3. Meaning-focussed use: learners use the new vocabulary or new aspects of word knowledge in a controlled way
4. Fluency development: learners use the new vocabulary in a communicative task in ways that are close to expert users.

This relates fairly closely to his ideas about learning described in the previous section with stage two being to do with noticing and stage three to do with retrieval and the first and final stages being communicative tasks.

You should also notice some similarities with Presentation, Practice and Production (see Chapter 4 on Teaching) though with presentation being divided into a contextualized and decontextualized phase. Nation suggests that each of these strands should get equal amounts of attention and, while the evidence supporting this division is limited, this is a useful rule of thumb. For this chapter, I am assuming that you have already engaged learners in some comprehensible meaning-focussed input or, as I would put it, meaning-focussed intake and have some ideas about a final communicative task that is end of fluency development, and so here I will only cover stages 2 and 3.

Language-focussed learning

The language focus stage involves two elements, noticing and the provision of information. This probably makes it sound more complicated than it is in practice. If a learner asks, 'What does "zebra" mean'? the learner has noticed a gap in their mental lexicon related to the meaning of 'zebra' and, if the teacher says something like 'a kind of wild horse with black and white stripes', the teacher has provided information about the meaning to fill the gap.

Learners notice the gap so it is better if they identify what vocabulary they want to learn. Rather than the teacher or textbook writer identifying what words in a reading or listening passage need to be pre-taught, learners can read or listen to the text and identify what words they think they need to learn. This is a kind of incidental vocabulary learning but does seem to lead to fairly good retention (Sonbul & Schmitt, 2010).

There is another way of making sure that learners have noticed the relevant word is a communication breakdown. See Chapter 3. Here is an example from two learners doing a picture description task in which learner one describes a picture to learner two. Learner two does not have the picture and is trying to draw the picture (Gass et al., 1998, p. 237).

Learner 1	Woman has a [dok].
Learner 2	Duck?
Learner 1	[dok].
Learner 2	[dʌk] Oh I see.
Learner 1	A [dok].
Learner 2	What kind of dog?
Learners 1	I'm not sure. The usual one. . . . The dog wear some clothe.

Here learner two identifies that she does not understand what learner one has said and then learner one realizes that the problem is to do with pronunciation. When learner two says 'What kind of dog?' this seems to be enough for learner one to start pronouncing the word in a more standard way.

You could try limiting your vocabulary teaching to cases when there are communication breakdowns or learner questions, but most teachers are happy to draw their learners' attention to what they think should be learnt, often through questions but also through techniques such as pretending not to understand what learners mean. Once the gap in word knowledge has been identified, the question of how to fill that gap is raised. Sometimes there is little choice about how the information is provided. In the 'dog' example above, the gap related to pronunciation. Learner two could have said 'you need to voice that final consonant', but just saying the word 'dog' seems a better strategy.

The information should be related to the learners' current knowledge. This could be translation, and this is often more effective than the provision of synonyms in the L2 (Laufer & Shmueli, 1997). Translation and other forms of translanguaging need to be treated with care, and teachers decide how well translation works as a strategy (Nation 2001, p. 86).

Links to learners' existing knowledge can be achieved through actions, showing objects, sometimes called ***realia***, or using pictures or diagrams. Where possible, words can be defined in English or linked

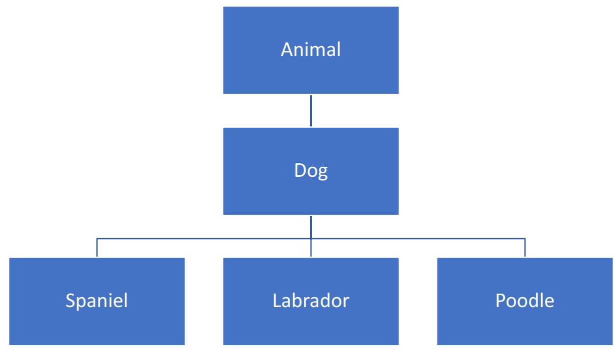

Figure 10.1 Superordinates and hyponyms.

to other English words through lexical relations such as synonyms, antonyms or opposites, superordinates and hyponyms. See Figure 10.1.

Animal is a superordinate of dog. Dog is a hyponym of animal and a superordinate of spaniel, poodle and labrador. Spaniel is a hyponym of dog.

Definitions can help learners understand the meaning of particular words or phrases. These definitions need to be short and simple (Laufer & Shmueli, 1997). Learners benefit from learning how to use paper or electronic dictionaries to find information about words.

Where you are trying to communicate information about other aspects of meaning such as grammar, collocation and register, examples are very helpful. Some teachers are able to provide multiple examples without preparation, but then dictionaries and corpora can be useful. Here are some sentences taken from the *British National Corpus* for the word 'grin', illustrating the adjectives used with 'grin'.

1. Amsterdam gave his aunt a lopsided grin.
2. Billy replied, with a mischievous grin.
3. Diana, Barry's wife of 35 years, doesn't mind him meeting all the great screen goddesses. 'I think she feels I'm safe', he says with that famous lopsided grin.
4. `Duty calls', he said with a wry grin.
5. He gave her a wide, toothy grin, and immediately realized it was exactly the wrong approach.
6. Her face broke into a mischievous grin that was pure Sally-Anne.
7. She gave a wry little grin, realizing she had no real plan of action.
8. Then his face broke into a sheepish grin.
9. Then his smile became a sheepish grin, and his shoulders hunched in a giggle.
10. When he saw me, he grinned a wide, toothy grin.

This is an example of rich instruction (Nation, 2013, p. 94 et seq.) which is only appropriate for words which are particularly important to a specific group of learners.

Activity 10.7. Concordance informed activities

Here is a set of rich instruction material that I devised about the difference between 'tall' and 'high' for upper intermediate students. It was fairly quick to produce, but you will need to decide how effective this is for your learners.

What kind of things can be described as 'tall'?

1. The noise brought in the new officer, a **tall** and muscular young lieutenant with a sad, world-weary face.
2. Under the eyes of a serious, **tall** Palestinian with a gun, they were singing.
3. We were sitting on rather low chairs, and he was very **tall**
4. They planted **tall** trees in the middle of the road.
5. Both are inner-city areas, with **tall** buildings.
6. I don't know what it was, but I felt almost ten feet **tall.**
7. Some girls are **tall** and some girls are short.
8. George and Simon are **tall** and walked with that kind of lithe confidence.

Write a list of things that can be described as tall here.

6(2) What kind of things can be described as 'high'?

1. They fired **high** over our heads.
2. **High** prices were paid for prize specimens
3. In general, Labour seemed to suffer from **high** tax levels
4. Often buildings are many storeys **high.**
5. A **high** income brings a middle class self-identification despite having a manual occupation.
6. Firstly, of course, because it only affects **high** earners, that is, those earning more than £75,000 a year.
7. They amazed us by leaping **high** out of the water and somersaulting two or three times before nosing beneath it again without missing a beat.
8. Dealers welcomed the rise in other countries' interest rates as it closes the gap with Sweden's own **high** rates.

Write a list of things that can be described as 'high' here.

6(3) Fill in the gaps with either high or tall.

1. And Arsenal were offering an unusually ____________________ salary for a football manager
2. For a while this may happen easily, not least in circumstances when interest rates are very ____________________.

3. He was able to sell the leaves for ___________________ prices.

4. Most of the women are ___________________ so they don't wear ___________________ heels.

5. The farm workers are ___________________ and proud in their bearing and though they have a slim build they are surprisingly strong and agile for their size.

Rehearsal

Several games provide useful ways to rehearse vocabulary. There are some examples in Table 10.4, and below but you will find a lot more in your reading and from your fellow teachers.

Lexical sets are a way of getting learners to rehearse words which they have already studied. The box is either written on the board or given as a handout, and the learners end up with the correct lexical sets with whatever support is useful. You can create your own lexical set puzzles online at https@puzzgrid.com.

Guessing the word

The class is divided up into two or more groups, and each group is either given or comes up with a list of some words that have been studied by the group over the last two weeks. The words are then written in lists on the board. One person from each team comes to the front of the class and faces the other learners. The rest of the learner's team then has to shout out clues to the word but they are not allowed to say the actual word. Within a given amount of time, learners have to guess as many words as possible.

Stories and songs

Primary age learners often like to hear the same story several times and so recycle vocabulary. Songs and poems (Coyle & Gracia, 2014) often involve repeated vocabulary. Serialized stories often include quite a lot of repeated vocabulary, and this can work well with older learners either as a group or individually.

Table 10.4 Lexical sets

four lexical sets			
cat	Chair	stroll	talk
walk	Goldfish	converse	sofa
speak	Settee	hamster	sidle
stool	Chat	march	rabbit
Arrange these words into four groups.			

Answer
Cat, goldfish, hamster, rabbit
Chair, settee, sofa, stool
March, sidle, stroll, walk
Chat, converse, speak, talk

Vocabulary records

Keeping a vocabulary record (McCrostie, 2007; Schmitt & Schmitt, 1995) supports vocabulary learning and rehearsal. These can be physical notebooks, a card index or an application on tablets or phones. Card indexes and apps have the advantage of allowing for word cards to be rearranged to help with learning. Notebooks encourage learners to revisit words and also to add information to entries as they learn more about words. Apps for learning vocabulary such as *Memrise* supplement what happens in class.

Summary

This chapter has looked at what might be the aim of a vocabulary class, how learners might develop their vocabulary and what a teacher can do to help learners do that. The chapter has covered:

- What is meant by a word?
- What does it means to know a word?
- How are words are learnt?
- How can words be taught?

Activity 10.8. Discussion

What would you suggest that the teacher in this context does to help the student improve?

I work with English language learners (ELLS) aged nine to eleven. These students have been in the United States for several years and can communicate well in most everyday situations. The local policy for ELLS is push-in. This means that they go to normal primary school classes, but they are supported by their ELL teacher, and in this case, that is me. The main teacher is not trained in dealing with ELLS, and I find that I spend most of my time answering whispered questions about the vocabulary that the main teacher is using. I have now been given two one-hour withdrawal classes, when I work with the ELLs on their own outside their normal classes, and I am not sure what I should do with them.

Further reading

There are several useful books on vocabulary learning and teaching. The most authoritative is Nation (2013). Other useful books are McCarthy et al. (2010), Schmitt's (2000) and Thornbury's (2002). If you are interested in the mental lexicon, Aitchison (2003) is a clear introduction.

An addition activity related to teaching strategies is included on the companion webpage.

Chapter 11

Discourse

Introduction

This chapter and the next one on pragmatics explore language in action. Discourse analysis focusses on how texts are used for communication, and pragmatics focusses on how context interacts with language. The two areas are important for language teaching because of the insights they provide into how communication happens and what we mean by communicative tasks. A complete set of communicative tasks does not exist, but the aim of this chapter is to give you tools to understand how we communicate through discourse.

This chapter addresses the following questions:

1. What is discourse?
2. How do people learn to use discourse?
3. How can we teach people to use discourse?

Activity 11.1. What kind of text is this?

Below is an advertisement for a house. What is odd about this advertisement? What other kinds of text is this similar to? Would this be useful to learners who had to write advertisements for houses? Why (not)?

Lonely Hearts for houses

I am a well preserved(honest), Victorian terrace house. Upstairs, I have two bedrooms and a lovely airy bathroom, perfect for long luxurious baths. Downstairs, a kitchen that is small but perfectly formed and just right for preparing food for yourself. The main reception room is great for entertaining or a quiet night in with the telly. Come and say hello. You won't be disappointed and, who knows, we could be a perfect match.

What is discourse?

Discourse analysis has generated a vast amount of research (e.g. Hyland & Paltridge, 2013), and this chapter is necessarily selective, but the selection attempts to represent our understanding of communicative tasks by looking at two frameworks: genre and register.

Genre analysis

Genre analysis is a way of classifying texts and so is a useful approach for any teacher who wants to identify what kinds of texts/tasks their learners need to use. Swales says 'a genre comprises a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes' (1990, p. 58). Nunan adds that 'Each genre has its own characteristic structure and grammatical form that reflects its social purpose' (2008, p. 209). While Martin comes from a different tradition of genre analysis, he similarly describes genre as 'a staged, goal-oriented purposeful activity in which speakers engage as members of our culture' (2009, p. 11). Texts that belong to the same genre will have the following:

1. A shared purpose (and sometimes a name). Business letters are not a genre because they can be used for a range of purposes (making an order, offering a job, etc). Letters of application are a genre.
2. A discourse community, that is a set of people who use that genre. The ways in which people use the genre may vary. For example, the genre of the recipe is used differently by cookbook writers and cooks (though the two categories of users may overlap).
3. A structure or organization. For example, recipes typically have a list of ingredients and then instructions about what to do with the ingredients.

Genres are groups of texts, and this might not seem quite the same as communicative tasks. However, the view of language discussed in Chapter 3 means that texts do not exist apart from their context, so a text is always a task (cf. Graddol, 1994).

Activity 11.2. Genre and function

Look at the following texts and decide which ones belong to the same genre.

authentic ADJECTIVE UK /ɔːˈθentɪk/ real, not false or copied *The letter is certainly authentic.* accurate or based in fact *an authentic insight into working-class boyhood* traditional or original, or very similar to this *authentic Italian food.*	Authentic learning In education, **authentic learning** is an instructional approach that allows students to explore, discuss, and meaningfully construct concepts and relationships in contexts that involve real-world problems and projects that are relevant to the learner.[1] It refers to a 'wide variety of educational and instructional techniques focussed on connecting what students are taught in school to real-world issues, problems, and applications'.
Coriander (*Coriandrum sativum*), also called cilantro or Chinese parsley, is a feathery annual plant of the parsley family (Apiaceae), parts of which are used as both an herb and a spice. Native to the Mediterranean and Middle East regions, the plant is widely cultivated in many places worldwide for its culinary uses.	cat NOUN COUNTABLE UK /kæt/ an animal with soft fur, a long thin tail, and whiskers, that people keep as a pet or for catching mice. A young cat is called a kitten. *They have three cats and a dog.*
The cat (*Felis catus*) is a domestic species of small carnivorous mammal. It is the only domesticated species in the family Felidae and is commonly referred to as the domestic cat or house cat to distinguish it from the wild members of the family.	coriander NOUN UNCOUNTABLE BRITISH UK /ˌkɒriˈændə(r)/ a plant whose leaves and seeds are used to give flavour to food. The American word is cilantro.

Genre and structure

The most striking feature of genre is often the text structure. See Swales's (1990) analysis of the introduction to research articles. One of the genres you may have identified in Activity 11.2 is the dictionary entry, a kind of text which aims to provide enough information to enable someone to use a word. The dictionary entries in Activity 11.2 were taken from a learners' dictionary (Rundell, 2002), so we could identify the discourse community as being dictionary writers, language learners and language teachers. The entries also have a fairly clear structure of the word, grammatical information, pronunciation key, meaning and example sentences. The regularity of the structure makes it easier for learners and others to use dictionaries.

Activity 11.3. The service encounter genre

Below is an example of a spoken genre which is often called a service encounter (Ventola, 1984, p. 282). Ventola identified the following moves: closing; goods handover; pay, service; and service bid. What order would you put these in to match the sequence of this service encounter?

S:	1	You 're right/rising tone/
C:	2	Can I have a small postal bag, please, jiffy bag?
		/3 secs—S gets the bag and hands it over/
S:	3	Twenty cents
		/C hands over the money and S receives it/
S:	4	Thank you very much
C:	5	Thank you

The jiffy bag dialogue has a simple sequence, from the shop assistant's acknowledgement of the customer to the concluding 'thank you'. Spoken monologues and written texts allow for more planning by the speaker or writer and so frequently have a more complex structure than genres produced in real time (Faez & Tavakoli, 2019, p. 30). These structures may be unique to the genre or may be used more widely. One of the most widely recognized pattern in English language teaching is the problem solution pattern, associated with Hoey (1983), and you will find examples of this structure in a range of genres. This four part structure is illustrated in Table 11.1.

Table 11.1 A minimal version of the problem solution pattern

Situation	My café sells coffee in plastic cups.
Problem	Plastic cups are not environmentally friendly
Response	We have started asking customers to bring their own cups.
Evaluation	This has reduced the amount of plastic waste.

Particular grammar and vocabulary are associated with this pattern. So words like 'but' and 'unfortunately' often signal that something is a problem and 'to avoid this' signals that something is a response or possible solution.

Activity 11.4. Problem solution patterns

Here is an example of a problem solution text. Identify the different elements in the text and any signalling vocabulary. Some sentences may need to be divided in two.

Go ahead and exercise

1. Regular exercise is known to confer a host of health benefits to the heart, lungs, muscles and bones, for instance, as well as warding off dementia.
2. But many people can be put off exercising outside because of air pollution, which has been linked with heart disease and lung cancer – especially as breathing harder means more dirty air passes through your lungs.
3. Taking breathing rates into account, James Woodcock at the University of Cambridge and his team combined data on the effects of exercise on life expectancy with pollution readings from cities all over the world.
4. They found that even in Delhi – the most air-polluted city in the world – people would need to cycle for over five hours a week before harm from the smog outweighs the health benefits of physical activity.
5. If more people switch to walking or cycling instead of driving for the sake of their health, this will also bring down the amount of air pollution, says Woodcock.
6. 'That's a big win-win'.

(adapted from https://www.newscientist.com/article/2087059-walking-and-cycling-are-still-good-for-you-despite-air-pollution/)

Genre analysis has often looked at the grammar associated with particular genres. For example, my own research into law reports (Badger, 2003) examined the different ways that the word 'prosecution' is used to refer to the act of prosecuting a defendant or the people who prosecute the defendant. Examining the concordance lines from a corpus of law reports enabled me to identify how the definite article signalled which meaning was meant.

The **prosecution** alleged that the men were responsible for the deaths.
There was insufficient evidence for **prosecution** under the new War Crimes Act.
The **prosecution** alleges that *en route* to Scotland, the goods were stolen.
He was stabbed in broad daylight, the **prosecution** alleges.
He would have to throw away the haddock or risk **prosecution**.
But she added that **prosecution** by a criminal court was not appropriate.

Register

When we talk about English, we often talk about accents and dialects. We can say someone has a Scottish accent or speaks a Nigerian dialect. This kind of variation is often described as geographical variation. Register is another way of looking at language variation, but this is in terms of topic so we can talk about the register of law or science. Register is how language varies according to the situation in which the language is being produced (Ghadessy, 1994).

Register analysis is useful for teachers who work with learners who are looking to use English in specialist contexts, for example, English for specific purposes or working with learners CLIL or EMI (Lo & Jeong, 2018; Tardy et al., 2022). Register analysis gives teachers a way of analysing language so that they can identify features that are important to their learners' use of language.

Halliday identified three aspects which influence what he calls the meta-functions of language. The first is how the language represents reality. If I see a girl kicking a ball, and want to tell someone about this I could encode this in language as 'The girl kicked the ball'. But I could also say 'the ball was kicked', 'The boot made contact with the ball' or even 'The ball moved'. Language requires us to make choices about how to describe the world. Halliday describes this as the Field and the way this is reflected in the language is the ideational meta-function.

Language is a form of communication, so our language also reflects all the people involved in the communication. So if I am telling someone about a girl kicking a ball, I could present this as statement, but I might also say 'Did you see the girl kick the ball?' or 'Look at that girl kicking the ball'. My choice of language here will reflect my relationship with the other people involved in the communication. The is the Tenor of the context and the resulting language choices are the interpersonal meta-function.

The third contextual aspect is how the language is being used. The main choice here is between speaking and writing but this may also relate to more specific decisions. If I decide to write about the girl kicking the ball on Twitter, the language will be different from how I would describe this in an oral conversation. This is a part of the Mode of the context and impacts on the textual meta-function. The three contextual features and some of the related language choices within each meta-function are given in Table 11.2.

Table 11.2 The relationship between context and language in register analysis

Context		Language	Features of language meta-functions
Field	The topic/subject matter (e.g. tennis, cooking, linguistics, medicine)	Ideational	Choice of vocabulary Transitivity
Tenor	Who is involved: the personal relationships, the roles and degree of power between the interactants (speakers/readers, writers)	Inter-personal	Level of formality declarative, interrogatives, imperatives
Mode	What part language is playing: e.g. the channel of communication – how the text is produced – written/spoken, face-to-face, email, phone etc.	Textual	Spoken and written language

Field/Ideational meaning

Field is concerned with the topic of subject matter, and this is partly reflected in language through the choice of vocabulary and transitivity, or the relations between the people and things in language. The vocabulary and transitivity are the ideational language for that field.

If you look at the two extracts in Table 11.3, you can see that the topic has led them to have some similarities. I have underlined the content word families that the extracts share. You may also notice that the two texts use the present tense, much but not all the time. Some of the words which are different in the two texts are in italics. The first extract is from the *Guardian*, a serious UK newspaper, and the other comes from a UK government webpage on childcare.

The differences between the two extracts are also shown by the noun phrases in the two extracts. See Table 11.4.

Table 11.3 Two texts on the pre-school education

Pre-school education boosts children's academic success, research finds
Children of all backgrounds who receive a pre-school education are almost twice as likely to go on to sit AS-levels, according to a study by Oxford *University*.
The research, funded by the government's department for education, also found that children who go to pre-school were significantly more likely to take four or more AS-levels, suggesting that far more preschoolers end up taking an *academic* route into *university* than those who do not have the same educational start.(The *Guardian* newspaper https://www.theguardian.com/education/2015/dec/11/
15 hours free childcare for 3 and 4-year-olds
All 3- to 4-year-olds in England can get 570 free *hours* per *year*. It's usually taken as 15 *hours* a *week* for 38 *weeks* of the *year*, but you can choose to take fewer *hours* over more *weeks*, for example.
The free early education and *childcare*:
must be with an approved *childcare* provider
stops when your child starts in reception class (or reaches compulsory school age, if later)
You may have to pay for extra costs like meals, nappies or trips.
You can get it from the term after your child's 3rd birthday.
From https://www.gov.uk/help-with-childcare-costs/free-childcare-and-education-for-2-to-4-year-olds

Table 11.4 The subject noun phrases in two extracts about pre-school education

Pre-school education boosts children's academic success, research finds	**15 hours free childcare for 3 and 4-year-olds**
	All 3- to 4-year-olds in England
Children of all backgrounds who receive a preschool education;	It
Children of all backgrounds who receive a preschool education	you
The research, funded by the government's department for education	The free early education and childcare:
children who go to preschool	your child
far more preschoolers	You
those who do not have the same educational start.	You

Activity 11.5. Field and ideational meaning

What similarities and differences do you see in the ideational features of these two extracts?

Vaping to quit smoking

There's some confusion and misleading information about vaping, which can make it difficult to work out what's true or not. Nicotine vaping is substantially less harmful than smoking. It's also one of the most effective tools for quitting smoking. Vaping is not recommended for non-smokers and young people because it is not completely harmless. Here you will find the facts on vaping, based on scientific evidence and research, plus advice on how to use vapes (sometimes called e-cigarettes or e-cigs) as a tool to quit smoking (https://www.nhs.uk/better-health/quit-smoking/vaping-to-quit-smoking/).

Young non-smokers told not to take up vaping by experts

Young non-smokers are being advised not to take up vaping. Researchers looked at the evidence and say while vaping is far safer than cigarettes, the long-term effects of vapes are still unknown. Vaping causes less exposure to harmful toxins than smoking, say the experts, who were tasked by the government with looking at the issue. In recent years there's been a rise in vaping, particularly in young people. A recent survey by Action on Smoking and Health (ASH) found vaping in people aged 11-18 had doubled from 4% in 2020 to 8.6% in 2022. However, smoking figures for the same age-group had gone down slightly from 6.7% in 2020 to 6.0% in 2022. Overall, there are believed to be around six million smokers in England, and nearly four million vapers (https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-63076876).

Mode/Textual meaning

Mode covers the differences between spoken and written language. Spoken and written language come in many different forms but, generally, when we speak, we are working in real time with few opportunities to plan or edit what we say. When we write, we can generally take our time. If we make a mistake, we can go back and change it before anyone else reads it. These changes in the way speech and writing are produced lead to changes in the language used in speech and writing. However, the division is not always clear. Some kinds of spoken language are planned (e.g. giving a speech) and some written forms are produced in real time (e.g. text messages).

Several writers have explored the differences between written and spoken language. Gilmore (2004, 2015) has carried out some interesting work on how similar spoken extracts in textbooks are to those not produced for educational purposes. Leech (2000) identifies six features that are characteristic of one common form of spoken discourse: conversation.

You can see some examples of these features in the spoken extract in Table 11.5 about two parents talking about childcare. The use of pronouns here is very different from 'Pre-school education boosts children's academic success, research finds' (Table 11.3). In Table 11.6, I have underlined the personal

Table 11.5 Features of spoken language

Shared context	More use of pronouns Ellipsis
General vocabulary	e.g. sort of, thing
Interactive	Co-construction of utterances
Affective content	Politeness markers, Use of names as vocatives
Restricted repetoire	Narrow range of vocabulary Simple grammar
Produced in real time	Dysfluences e.g hesitation markers, short forms Discourse markers e.g well, you know. Lexical bundles and idiom

Table 11.6 A spoken extract about childcare with pronouns underlined

Two parents talking about childcare	
A	Day care has just done just incredible stuff with him and he like comes home with something new every day you know and so I know I know they're working with him and he's well
B	That's great that's so good
A	. . . excited to get there in the morning and just doesn't even want to kiss me good-bye

Source: Open American National Corpus Spoken. https//anc/org.

pronouns. You can see that the number of personal pronouns contrasts with the extracts in Table 11.3 with 'Pre-school education boosts children's academic success' having no pronouns.

The spoken extract in Table 11.6 also contains other examples that are characteristic of spoken language:

General vocabulary: stuff; something.

Discourse markers: you know.

Dysfluencies: I know, I know; this, this; is, is; uhuh.

Simple grammar: sentences linked with 'and'.

Activity 11.6. Textual meaning: spoken or written

Look at the following examples of language and decide if they are more likely to appear in spoken or written discourse and think why this is so. Some sentences may have features typical of both spoken and written language. The companion webpage has more examples.

1. Browsing in the book shop, I discovered a book about Peter the Great.
2. However, defective our knowledge may be, we have ample evidence to show that great empires rose and fell in India, and that, as in religion, art, literature and social life, so in political organization, India produced her own system, distinctive in its strength and weakness.

3. New York's an incredible place we went through the Bowery . . . and so and so we had to keep the window lock through there but it's an incredible city it's mind boggling.
4. Ooh, that's a neat picture.
5. Right, well, what you're doing is drawing a line.

Tenor/Interpersonal meaning

Interpersonal meaning reflects how the language shows the relationship between the speaker or writer and other people and what they are saying or writing. The main way we do this is through the difference between declarative, interrogative and imperative sentences. The conversation extracts in Tables 11.7 and 11.8 illustrate how declarative, interrogative and imperative are used in spoken language. In Table 11.7, the speaker A uses declarative sentences and B produces the minimal response of 'yeah' because A is telling B something and B just has to show that they are listening. In Table 11.8, speaker A uses interrogatives and B produces longer answers because they are negotiating about where they should eat. Interrogatives and imperatives are much more common in spoken than written language.

The other important aspect of interpersonal meaning relates to how the speakers express their relationship with what they are saying through modality and related aspects of language.

Table 11.7 A conversation about a butcher

A	Yeah I think there was something on the news a while ago saying oh there was a butcher and he was told by the shopping centre that he was in
B	Yeah.
A	Because he obviously he had meat hung up in the window and stuff.
B	Yeah.
A	But I supposedly it was upsetting children and he was told to take it down.
B	Yeah.

Table 11.8 Two people in a car deciding where they want to eat

A	What do you fancy eating?
B	Oh I don't know.
A	Actually we'll have to see what's at this services.
B	Yeah.
A	I bet they're not that good are they?
B	There was a Burger King at the last one.
A	Well do you fancy a Whopper [A kind of hamburger]? .

Source: Biber et al. (2021, p. 24).

Gardner et al. (2019, pp. 558–661) illustrate learners writing academic essays about biology, law and philosophy, respectively.

> Bacteria are prokaryotes which possess simple chromosomes and no nuclear membrane. They are single-celled organisms and have simple structure.

The biology writer presents the description as a simple representation of reality and is implicitly claiming that this is an objective version of the world.

> Due to the lack of force used to actually attempt to acquire the 'phone' (the force used was entirely independent of this act), I think it unlikely that attempted robbery would be the charge.

The law writer used 'I think' and so presents this as a subjective view of reality and also uses the word 'unlikely' to emphasize the lack of certainty.

> Plato claims that order in the state will be maintained through the 'nurture and education' (Rice, 1998, p. 57) of the *Guardians* and the propaganda used by the *Guardians*.

The philosophy writer is doubly distanced from the text. The view expressed comes immediately from Rice and indirectly from Plato and again the writer indicates some uncertainty about Plato's view by using the verb 'claim' rather than say. The positioning of writers and speakers is common in academic writing but also appears on other registers. You should be able to find examples of this in the texts in Table 11.9.

How do people learn to use discourse?

All the theories of language learning that we examined in Chapter 3 would see the need for learners to be exposed to examples of different kinds of discourse as a necessary part of their language development. The cognitive view would, in addition, highlight the important support provided by learners developing declarative knowledge about discourse structure, along the lines of the description of discourse covered above. This declarative knowledge would then help learners develop their ability to use registers and genres appropriately. The development of the declarative knowledge can also be motivational.

> I feel like they started to get it, with prodding and with time, they finally started to understand. And . . . they – not all of them, but a lot of them – who chose to [analyze] a syllabus as the genre, and a lot of them, it kind of opened their eyes, and they kept coming back to me and telling me, 'Wow, I didn't realize that teachers didn't write everything!'. (Tardy et al., 2022, p. 7)

Table 11.9 The speaker or writer's relationship with what they report

It will rain	It may rain	Modal verbs
It is definitely going to rain	It is probably going to rain	Adverbials
It is going to rain	I think it is going to rain	Embedding

Liu et al. (2010) found that being taught explicitly about discourse patterns increased learners' self-confidence.

Socio-cultural views would also highlight the importance of learners participating in discourse as a way of moving from other- to self-regulation. Exposure to and participation in discourse and, in some cases, awareness raising are the main processes leading to the development of the ability to engage in discourse and communicative tasks. However, learners bring knowledge related to discourse in other languages learners to the English language classroom, and the rest of this section examines how this might impact the way they learn English discourse.

Research into differences in the ways different cultures organize texts is described as contrastive rhetoric (Conor, 1996) and can be traced back to Kaplan (1966). While most teachers of writing will have come across learners who produce texts which are organized in ways that do not conform to expectations (Li, 2014; Ye, 2014), but this may not be national or linguistic cultures. In the UK, many school leavers struggle with the rhetorical organization of the essays they are expected to write at university, reflecting a difference in culture between school and university and also physics and, say, history.

The notion of culture in contrastive rhetoric is built into genre analysis (Martin & Rose, 2008) and means that teachers should develop a good understanding of the discourse needs that the classroom instruction addresses and their learners existing discourse knowledge (Kubota & Lehner, 2004).

How can we teach people to use discourse

Teaching discourse fits in very well with task-based teaching or what I described as a problem-solving sequence in chapter four on teaching. Genre analysis has been very influential in the teaching of English for Academic purposes and has also made a big impact on literacy teaching in parts of Australia and this has led to suggestions about teaching in English language teaching (Chen & Su, 2012). Broadly speaking, these see the learning process as follow:

1. Guided analysis of the genre, related to the development of declarative knowledge,
2. Joint construction where learners and teachers or groups of learners produce examples of the genre, a kind of scaffolding or if you like, controlled production
3. Independent production where learners create their own examples of the genre. (Martin, 2009, p. 11)

Hyland's (2007) offers an expanded version of this. This section adapts these models and presents the teaching of discourse as having three elements:

1. exposure
2. awareness and
3. practice.

Exposure

The first stage in teaching discourse is identifying the kinds of discourse or discourse features to which the learners need to be exposed. Ideally, this would mean an empirically based needs analysis (Long,

2005), something which is explored in more detail in chapter five on programme design. There may be existing information which can be used from the research literature. Table 11.2 identifies the written genres used in schools in New South Wales. Nesi and Gardner (Gardner & Nesi, 2013; Nesi & Gardner, 2012) identify the following broad genres of writing at university.

1. Explanations and Exercises allow learners to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding;
2. Essays and Critiques provide opportunities for learners to cultivate their independent thinking and powers of critical evaluation;
3. Methodology Recounts, Literature Reviews, and Research Reports develop learners' research capabilities;
4. Case Studies, Design Specifications, Problem Questions, and Proposals help prepare learners for future professional practice;
5. Narrative Recounts and Empathy Writing enable learners to reflect on their own practice and communicate with a readership beyond their course. (Gardner et al., 2019, p. 649)

Learners arriving in new contexts such as those transitioning from primary to high school or from high school to university may not be aware of the range of genres that they will need to produce to succeed. Matters are complicated by differences in the way genres are labelled. What primary school learners call stories are often labelled narratives in other contexts. Ye (2014) found that what the learners thought of an argumentative essay was different to the actual texts they were expected to produce so it is useful to have a discussion with your learners about what they see as the features of the genres they are producing.

Sometimes teachers may provide their own genre analysis. I work with learners from non-Anglophone other countries who generally have at least intermediate levels of English but struggle to engage in everyday interactions. In student flats, people often talk about food but the conversations tend to be brief.

Query	What are you cooking?
Response	Fried rice
Comment	That looks nice.

My learners wrote a more extensive version of this conversation with the requirement that it ends with a question.

Query	What are you cooking?
Response	Fried rice
Expansion	1. It's recipe my Granny taught me how to make.
	2. I don't know many recipes, so I cook this a lot.
	3. I don't like the fried rice from the take way.
Comment	That looks nice.

Response	Thanks.
Follow-up	1. Are you cooking tonight?
	2. Do you like cooking?
	3. Do you want me to teach you the recipe?

This was helpful because they could see that the language they needed was language they already knew. What they needed to do was to activate the language they already knew and writing a script was a good way to do this.

This reflects the fact that other part of the needs analysis is what knowledge and skills learners bring to the classroom. In an Australian context, Martin sequenced the teaching of written genres in terms of their similarity to the genres learners knew. The issues related to cultures discussed in the section on Learning Discourse above are relevant here. The best approach is to explore what discourse resources the learners you are working with bring to the classroom, bearing in mind Ye's point that the labels attached to particular forms of discourse may not be consistent across languages.

Once the communicative tasks have been identified, teachers need exemplars of the resulting texts. For example, if service encounters were a target task, a teacher might decide to expose the learners to the dialogue in Activity 11.3 on the ground that this is an authentic text. Authenticity can be a problematic criterion for text selection. Table 11.10 provides an authentically produced service encounter dialogue. This has a more complex structure and this might not be appropriate for all learners. Gilmore (2015, p. 516) suggests that teachers and material writers should base their exemplar texts on authentically produced samples but adapt them so that they are appropriate for their learners and have what might be described as their receptive or interpretative authenticity. Learners need to be exposed to several examples so that they understand that tasks can be carried out in different ways. The service encounter

Table 11.10 A more complex service encounter

Customer 1	Excuse me.
Shop assistant	What can I do for you on this nice sunny day? [Moves from behind counter].
Customer 1	I'm looking for a plug strainer thing. Do you know . . .
Shop assistant	A sink strainer?
Customer 1	That sounds about right. Do you have that kind of thing?
Shop assistant	I think so. We have a couple here. [The assistant walks to a shelf near the front of the shop]
Customer 1	That looks good. [The shop assistant holds up two sink strainers] The smaller one.
Shop assistant	Great. Card or cash? [The shop assistant and customer walk to the counter].
Customer 1	Card.
Shop assistant	[The shop assistant touches the card machine on the counter]. At the end.
Customer 1	[The customer taps their card on the card machine]. Has that gone through?
Shop assistant	It has.
Customer 1	Thanks very much.

is a spoken genre so learners would need to be exposed to a spoken version, though good pedagogic reasons may exist for also exposing them to written versions of the text.

Awareness raising

Teachers can make learners aware of a discourse feature by presenting information about that feature. Pryde introduced his learners to terms such as turn-taking and the initiation, response and feedback sequence before exposing his learners to examples of the 'What did you do today?' genre. Liu et al. (2014) presented an existing text structure similar to the problem solution patterns discussed above and known as a story grammar (Rumelhart, 1975) in their class on writing stories.

A less teacher-centred approach would be for the learners to take on the role of language researchers. This is illustrated in the section on genre approaches to writing in Chapter 12, particularly Activity 15.1 and described there (Negretti et al., 2011). Getting learners to reconstruct a text and extract from a version in which the sentences have been jumbled up can make them aware of how the language is being used (Flowerdew, 2000) as can comparing a text such as that in Activity 11.1 with a more conventional advert for a house. Murray (2012) suggests that learners translating communicative events from their own language into English is a useful technique.

Practice

The practice section of the discourse informed classroom generally follows something indicated in both Martin and Hyland's notion of group construction followed by independent construction. This is an instance of a factor that makes a task more or less easy. For most people working with a group to produce language is easier than working individually. However, teachers may want to sequence the activities in the class differently. The notion of deliberate practice, discussed in chapter three is a useful guide to structuring this progress. In addition, guides to what factors influence task difficulty exist (Foster & Ohta, 2005; Foster & Skehan, 1999; Skehan, 1998, 2003, 2014; Willis & Willis, 2007). Generally, providing more support while the learners are working of the task makes things easier. Getting learners to choose one town to visit is easier than planning a series of trips. Reducing the amount of planning time makes this harder. Repetition, whether it is just doing the same thing twice or writing a script and then performing it also makes things easier.

Pryde's learners acted out their own versions of the 'What did you do today?' genre and some pairs then performed their dialogue for the whole class and my learners did the same for cooking dialogue. The learners also analysed some of the examples of the genre produced by other members of the

Table 11.11 The emperor's sons without a problem/solution structure

Once upon a time, emperor's wife had twins boys. They were the same age. People did not know who is the next emperor. One son was tall. The other son was smart. Some people supported the tall son and some people support the smart. The emperor wanted them to fought but they said no. After he died they both become emperor.

Table 11.12 The emperor's sons with a problem/solution structure

Situation	Usually the emperor's oldest son becomes emperor. Once upon a time, the emperor's wife had twin sons. They looked the same. No one knew which was the older son.
Problem	The emperor needed to decide who was going to be the next emperor.
Solution	He decided they should fight each other
Evaluation	The two sons refused to fight
Solution	They said they would both be emperor
Evaluation	When the old emperor died, they both became emperor and the country was happy.

class, as kind of reinforcement, which echoes Hyland's suggestion of comparison stage. Liu et al.'s learners worked individually but because the software allowed stories to be shared, all the learners could see the stories that were being written by other learners. Both Pryde and Liu et al, reported positive outcomes for the way in which they taught discourse. See Tables 11.11 and 11.12 for examples of how problem solution patterns helped a learner produce a better piece of writing.

Summary

This chapter has looked at discourse through the lens of genre and register analysis. Genre is a way of classifying texts by their purpose but takes into account the people who use the genres, or the discourse community, and the structure of text. Register describes how language reflects the context in which it is produced and analyses language in terms of the field or topic, the relationship between writers and speakers, their audiences and their subject matter and the ways in which the language is produced with a central focus on the difference between spoken and written language. The chapter has also considered how people learn to use discourse and presented a model for teaching discourse in terms of exposure to the discourse, awareness raising and practice using the discourse.

Activity 11.7. Discussion

Imagine you are teaching a group of learners from different language backgrounds who hope to study on a range of postgraduate degrees taught in English. The learners have an upper-intermediate levels of English. They will all need to read academic article in English. How would you make these learners aware of how such article are written? You may want to use the genre analysis of a research article (Swales, 1990). You should also consider whether some of the techniques of register analysis might help develop their awareness of these articles and help them to read them independently.

Further reading

Discourse analysis is a very wide topic, and it is hard to identify sources which cover all parts of the approach. Most books in this area are aimed at describing discourse analysis rather than teaching and learning. Biber and Conrad (2019) is a good example of this kind of study. Paltridge (2012) and Thornbury (2005a) are more pedagogically oriented works. Paltridge has also written about genre and writing (2014). The core text on the linguistics of problem solution is Hoey (1983), Skehan (1998, 2014, 2014) and Willis and Willis (2007) are good on designing pedagogic tasks. Faez and Tavakoli (2019) have some useful suggestions on designing a task-based curriculum and the practical impact of using tasks in your curriculum.

Chapter 12

Pragmatics

Introduction

When I was a teenager with some knowledge of French, I was taken by some friends to a restaurant in Marseilles. The waiter offered me a bread roll, I said 'Merci', the French for 'thank you' and waited for him to put a roll on my side plate. However, the waiter walked on past me without giving me any bread. When the waiter came around with a bottle of water, I again said 'Merci', and he walked past without filling my glass. When he came round again with a bottle of wine I had realized what I was doing wrong and this time I said 'S'il vous plait' ('Please' in French), and he filled my glass with wine. My problem was not that I had used the wrong pronunciation, grammar or vocabulary but that I did not know enough about the pragmatics of French. In English, if someone offered me a bread roll and I said 'thanks', this would generally be understood as meaning I wanted some bread. In many situations in French, 'Merci' is the equivalent of 'No thank you' in English. Being able to communicate effectively requires an understanding of how the meaning of language is influenced by the context in which it is being used. This is called pragmatics.

Pragmatics is the study of how context impacts on what language means. Pragmatics is an important field within linguistics, and you will find several books on the topic in the list of readings at the end of this chapter. This chapter attempts to answer three questions about pragmatics

1. What is pragmatics?
2. How do people learn pragmatics?
3. How can we teach pragmatics?

Activity 12.1. A pragmatics extract

This extract is from a telephone conversation. This is not from a classroom context. Why does the utterance 'I'm hot' seem odd here? If this happened in your classroom, what, if anything would you do about it?

R: Richner
P: Ah hello. Good morning. Mr Richner
A: Yes.

P: It's Peter Sykes speaking. You remember me, How are you?
R: Yes, I am fine. How are you?
P: I am hot.
R: (Laughs) You are hot. (adapted from Bührig & Thije, 2006, p. 271)

What is pragmatics?

This part of the chapter will describe three key parts of pragmatics: the co-operative principle, speech act and politeness theory and is meant to help you decide what you need to teach. This section is intended to help you to decide what aspects of pragmatics, if any, that your learners need to improve. This may be connected with the examinations your learners want to take, but it should also relate to their communicative needs. If you have to carry out your own needs analysis, you may find that discourse completion tests, something that is described in the teaching section of this chapter, may be helpful. Learners who need to use English as an international language may need a greater focus on pragmatics than in many traditional syllabuses (Canagarajah, 2014).

The co-operative principle

When we communicate, we have to work with the other people involved in the communication. Once when I set a particularly difficult exam for some students, one told me that 'You have killed us'. This was not an accusation of murder but a complaint about the exam, and I was able to interpret it appropriately. The process of interpretation is based on what Grice's (1999) called the co-operative principle. When we communicate, we assume that everyone involved is cooperating and interpret what people say based on that principle. The co-operative principle is made up of four kinds of maxims:

1. Quality: be truthful.

   When the student said, 'You have killed us', this was clearly not true and was a breach of Grice's quality maxim so I knew it did not mean what it appeared to mean. I then had to work out what they really meant. In this case, it was a way of saying the exam was too hard.

2. Quantity: do not say too much or too little.

   If I ask you what you think of a restaurant and you say that it is very cheap, I will understand you to mean that the food is not great.

3. Relation: talk about what is relevant.

   If I ask you 'Where is the roast beef?' and you say 'The dog looks happy' I will assume that you mean that the dog has eaten the roast beef (Attardo, 1993, p. 26).

4. Manner: express yourself clearly.

   If I asked you liked a particular music band, and you said, 'I would not want to say that I listen to them all the time', I would infer that you did not like them.

Grice's maxims seem to work in different languages but, when you are trying to identify possible areas for improvement, it is important to look at different approaches in different languages and cultural contexts. If you suggest something to colleagues in a meeting and they say 'we'll think about it', you might interpret that as an offer to consider a point in the future but, depending on the cultural context, it might be a polite way of saying 'No'. He (2012) says that in some Chinese cultures, the co-operative principle might result in a request to turn on an air conditioner being expressed as 'It's better in this room than outside the building', or even 'It's ok. Don't turn the air conditioner on'. These might not be understood as requests in other cultural contexts.

The maxims that come from Grice's co-operative principle are not instruction about how to speak but how to interpret what other people say or write. We will look at this in the sections on learning and teaching below. If you are familiar with the cultural context of your students, then you will be in a good position to judge the difference between the ways in which Grice's maxim apply in English and in other languages.

Activity 12.2. The co-operative principle

How would you interpret the differences between the two responses in italics in the following interaction? Can you relate each interaction to one of Grice's maxims? Would these interactions work in the same way in other language or contexts?

1. Two friends have just watched a film together.

What did you think of the film?

   a. *I loved it.*
   b. *The special effects were great.*

2. Two people are talking.

Do you want to go out on Saturday?

   a. *I am busy.*
   b. *I am washing my hair.*

3. Two parents are talking to each other while their children watch television.

I am going to the kitchen. Do you want anything?

   a. *Could you get me some ice cream?*
   b. *Could you get me some I-C-E C-R-E-A-M?*

4. Two strangers meet outside a shop.

It is a warm day.

a. *Yes it is warm.*

b. *Yes, it is absolutely boiling.*

Speech act theory

When we communicate, part of the meaning of what we say comes from the context in which we are using the language. Grundy (2008, p. 148) reports how a question in an email 'Can you tell me how to get to the airport from X?', which was intended as a request to be picked up, resulted in an extensive set of travel instructions. Speech act theory started with Austin's (1962) insight that, when people use language, they are not simply describing reality but also doing things, for example, naming ships and getting married. At the end of a wedding ceremony, when the registrar says 'It therefore gives me great pleasure to declare that you are now legally married', this means the couple are married (Leeds City Council, 2017). Saying the words is a way of making the marriage happen.

However, this is not limited to special uses of language. If a customer in a shop says, 'Can I have a bag?', this is probably not just a question but intended to carry out the function of a request. All language use involves doing things, that is, all language is functional. We cannot avoid carrying out speech acts whenever we use language. Austin describes this by saying that utterances have more than one level of meaning. The basic meaning, which Austin calls the locution, is the literal meaning. In 'Can I have a bag?' this is a question about possibility or capacity. The second level is the illocution, and this is what the speaker intended. This will normally be the function. Austin also identified a third kind of meaning, the perlocution, which is what happens as a result of the utterance. This is hard to predict and is less useful when we try to be specific of what we want our learners to learn.

Activity 12.3. Locution and illocution

Using grammar it is possible to identify whether the following sentences are declaratives, interrogatives or imperatives. In speech act theory, declaratives, interrogatives and imperatives are described as the locutions or locutionary force of the utterance. Speech act theory uses the term utterance rather than sentence because it is sometimes difficult to say what a sentence is in spoken language and sometimes functions or illocutions do not match sentences very well.

Utterance	Locution
1. Can you swim?	
2. You can't swim here.	
3. Swim across the pool.	
4. Could I have a cup of tea?	
5. I'd like a cup of tea.	
6. Please give me a cup of tea.	

Now look at the same utterances in a bigger context and try to work out what the purpose or function of the utterance is, and write your answer under the Illocution column.

Utterance	Illocution
1. A: I really enjoy going to the seaside. I like splashing in the waves and, if it's not too cold, I go into the water. What about you? **Can you swim?** B: Yes, I grew up by the sea.	
2. A: Only people who are gold members of the health club can use the pool. B: **Can you swim?** A: No I only have silver membership.	
3. The water is very deep here and the current is very strong so **you can't swim here**.	
4. I am really thirsty. **Could I have a cup of tea?**	
5. I am really thirsty. **I'd like a cup of tea.**	
6. I am really thirsty. **Please give me a cup of tea.**	

If a customer says, 'Can I have a bag please?' the use of 'can' does not make this a question about ability. It would normally be understood as a request. In some languages, a question formulated in this way would be less common. Expressing a request in English using 'can' or 'could' has become conventionalized as a request, but the assistant could answer 'No, you need to go to a stationery shop', which suggests that some interpretation is necessary. Speech act theory is a way of explaining how a question about ability is interpreted as a request.

Sometimes the locution and the illocution are clearly linked, and we can call this a direct speech act. Often the link is not clear, and then we have an indirect speech act. If you want someone to give you a cup of tea, the direct speech act is 'Give me a cup of tea', but in English the most common way is 'Could/can I have a cup of tea?' 'The literal meaning of 'Can I have a cup of tea?' is do I have the ability to have a cup of tea. We are able to make a request by asking about our ability to do what we want.

Most speech acts only work if certain conditions are fulfilled. For example, if you want to offer someone a cup of tea, you can only do that if the tea is available, you have the ability to provide the tea, and the other person wants the tea. These conditions have an influence on the different ways we can offer a cup of tea. So the fact that the tea needs to exist means that it is possible to make an offer by saying 'There is some tea in the pot'. See table 12.1.

Table 12.1 Felicity conditions for an offer

Conditions	**Way of making an offer**
1. The offeror has the ability to provide the tea.	Can I give you some tea?
2. The offeror wants to provide the tea.	I'd be happy to get you some tea.
3. The tea is desirable to offeree.	Do you want some tea?
4. The offeree was not going to do the action before the offer.	I'll get some tea if you want it
5. The tea exists.	There is some tea in the pot.

The speech acts make sense because they are linked to what Austin calls the felicity conditions for the specific act. The felicity conditions for an offer would include:

1. The person making the offer is able to carry out the action they are offering to do.
2. The person making the offer intends to carry out the action that they are offering to do.
3. The action offered is desirable to the person(R) to whom it is offered.
4. The person making the offer was not going to do before the offer was made.
5. It is possible for the offer to be carried out.

Activity 12.4. Felicity conditions for a request and utterances

In what ways could a teacher ask a student to open the window? How are ways of asking connected with the felicity conditions for a request listed below?

Felicity condition	Utterance
The window can open.	*Does that window open?*
The student is able to open the window.	
The teacher would like the window to be open.	
The temperature in the room is very hot.	

Activity 12.5. Task 4: Utterance to felicity conditions

All of the following utterances could be used by a speaker S to a listener L to ask for a cup of tea, which should enable you to identify the felicity conditions for a request.

Felicity condition	Utterance
	1. Can I have a cup of tea?
	2. A cup of tea would be really nice now.
	3. Is there any tea in the pot?
	4. Could you give me a cup of tea?

Many examples of speech acts suggest that we express speech acts in individual sentences, but speech acts are often carried out in longer stretches of text. Here is an example of a request (Thomas, 1985, p. 781)

A: You know those browny glasses?
B: Yeah.

A: The ones we got from the garage.
B: Mm.
A: Do you use them much?
B: Not really, no.
A: Can I have them then?

Austin does not discuss the issue of scale. Most speech act research has focussed on individual utterances, and this has meant little attention has been paid to the internal structure of speech acts, though this has been explored in work on patterns in text and genre, discussed in the chapter on discourse. More work has been done on the different kinds of speech acts. For example, Searle (1976, pp. 7–11) identifies five categories:

1. Commissives: the speaker is committed to doing something, for example, promise, guarantee and swear.
2. Declaratives: the speaker's words change the world, for example, baptize, declare war, name.
3. Directives: the speaker wants the listener to do/say something, for example, advise, invite, order, permit and request.
4. Expressives: the speaker's words describe a psychological state, for example, apologize, congratulate, greet and thank.
5. Representatives: the speaker represents an aspect of reality, for example, boast, complain, conclude and state.

While this framework is still referred to in studies of speech acts, it is too general to be of much help for language teaching. Tsui, for example, divided Searle's directives into elicitives (intended to elicit a response), requestives (requesting an optional non-verbal action) and directives (requiring an obligatory non-verbal action) (O'Keeffe et al., 2011, p. 97). A very different set of categories was produced by Van Ek and Trim when they tried to specify the functions needed by people who wanted 'to prepare themselves to communicate socially with people from other countries, exchanging information and opinions on everyday matters in a relatively straightforward way' (Ek & Trim, 1998, p. 1)

1. imparting and seeking factual information.
2. expressing and finding out attitudes.
3. getting things done (suasion).
4. socializing.
5. structuring discourse.
6. communication repair (Ek & Trim, 1998).

More recently, when Ren and Han (2016, p. 428) looked at how textbooks handled speech acts, they came up with a set of categories which is quite close to Searle's framework. Their list comprised:

Advice	Complaint	Greeting	Persuasion	Request
Agreement	Compliment	Invitation	Refusal	Thanking
Apology	Criticisms	Offer		

This is a useful set of terms when you are trying to specify what you learners need to do better but it is important to remember, first, that this list is not specific and secondly, that these functions can be achieved in a range of ways. negotiations and the interpretation intended by the speaker may not the same as the interpretation of the listener.

The insight that language is functional has had a great impact on language teaching and most textbooks and syllabuses make use of at least some functional labels, for example, greeting, making requests. See Chapter 2 but also see Swan's critique of functional approaches in Chapter 4.

Activity 12.6. A pragmatic joke

Harry: Ron you should be washing the dishes after supper.
Ron: I hate doing the washing up. Can we change the subject?
Harry. The dishes should be washed by you.

What does Ron mean when he says, 'Can we change the subject?' How does Harry interpret the question?

Politeness

When we want to be polite, we can draw on the relationship or level of solidarity we have with the person to whom we are talking. For example, in English, we might address someone as 'mate' or 'bro' to show that we are friends. Linguistics would say that this kind of politeness is to do with positive face (Brown & Levinson, 1987). English often does this through the ways we describe each other but it is possible to refer to our shared history by talking about this like how long we have known each other. If we were making a big request, we might spend some time reminding the hearer of favours we had done for them.

Another way of being polite is to do with recognizing the autonomy of the hearer. If we make a request, we will often include a work like 'please' and formulate the request as an interrogative. The 'please' shows that we recognize that the request is an infringement on the hearer's freedom and the interrogative gives them the option of saying no. We might also use words like 'sir' or 'madam' to show our respect. This kind of politeness is to do with negative face.

Pragmatics sees politeness is a way of mitigating a threat to the hearer's face when you are imposing in some way of the hearer. The level of threat will be related to three factors:

1. The social distance between the hearer and listener.

   If you are interacting with a stranger you will need to be more polite than if you are interacting with someone you know well.

2. The relative power of the hearer and listener.

   You will need to be more polite if you are talking to someone who has more power than you.

3. The ranking or extent of the imposition

   You need to be more polite to borrow £1,000 than if you borrow £1.

Speakers may choose to perform face threatening acts indirectly. This would be difficult in a shop, where a customer is speaking to a shop assistant because the context strongly implies that the customer will ask for something. But, if someone wants to invite a friend to a party, they might start with some kind of pre-sequence.

Anna: Hi Philip. How's it going?
Philip: Not bad. Listen, are you free on Saturday?
Anna: Sure. Why?
Philip: It's my birthday on Thursday, but most people are working that day, so I want to have a little get-together on Saturday (English Web 2013) (enTenTen13).

When Philip asks Anna if she is free on Saturday, this allows her to turn down the invitation before it is even made and do so without a threat to Philip's face.

Even more indirectly, the speaker can go off record as in

A: I'm dying for a drink (an off-record invitation to go for a drink).

B: Yes it's really hot, isn't it (an off-record rejection of the invitation, signalled by the absence of a reference to going for a drink) (Paltridge, 2012, p. 77).

Politeness theory offers a useful way of thinking about how relationships between speakers and listener impact on language use. It does not offer an account of the structure of complete communicative task and some kinds of communicative task, for example, conversation may not have any structure. However, for tasks which do have structure, we need to look at research into patterns in text. See the chapter on discourse.

Activity 12.7. Politeness

1. Some speakers of Japanese were asked how they would ask a friend to close the window because of the cold. This is what they would say in English to an English friend:

Could you close the window for me?/ Hey yo, close the window, would you?
This is what they would say to a Japanese friend in Japanese:
Isn't it a little chilly?/ It's cold, don't you think? (Paltridge, 2012, p. 75).
Can you account for the differences?

2. Greetings

Some English varieties use a question about health as a way of greeting. Here are ten instances of 'How are you?' from the British National Corpus. What is the typical response to the question?

1. ‘So how are you’, he said, ‘this morning?’ ‘Fine’, she said brightly.
2. How are you, Andy? ‘OK thanks, Younis’, replied an American voice.
3. And how are you, my boy?’ Fine, sir.
4. And how are you, my dear? ‘I’m quite well, thank you’, she said,
5. ‘Maggie! how are you? Are you OK? Where have you been? ‘I’m fine’.
6. Oh . . . em, Catherine, how are you? – Fine, Duncan
7. How are you?, I’m fine.
8. ‘Hi, Kate, how are you?’ Fine . . .
9. ‘And how are you?’ Fine.
10. ‘Hello, Mammele, how are you?’ ‘We’re all fine, Dad’.

Is 'how are you?' still a question about health?

Other languages have also adapted other questions as ways of greeting (e.g. have you eaten?, where are you going?). To what extent have these questions lost their primary meaning as questions and become simple greetings?

How do people learn pragmatics?

Pragmatics are often not taught explicitly in the language classroom and many learners will use the strategy I used in France of assuming that pragmatics works the same in the L1 and the L2. The assumption is often correct because many cultures share ways of expressing politeness. For example, Backhaus (2009) reports that in both Japanese and German-speaking contexts, nurses used complements as positive politeness strategies that are found in English-speaking environments after actions that threatened patients’ independence. However, this is not always the case. Siegel et al. (2019) asked Japanese learners how they would thank a professor for the help they have given you. One suggested response was:

> It was a precious time for me to be here today. Thanks you for giving me such a nice advice. It was really information and practical and I’ll ask for your advice after this.

One comment was that this was too long and seemed insincere. Lee (2011) suggests that in Chinese culture the impact of power differences is less than in many Anglophone cultures and this can result in some Chinese speakers having problems expressing themselves. This is also linked to language level in the L2. Takahashi and DuFon (1989) found that beginner learners of English with Japanese as their first language sometimes produced impolite requests. Japanese often encodes the relationship between speakers and hearers by the use of honorific verbs. This strategy is not possible in English,

and this meant that the learners requests were perceived as too direct. A similar finding has been reported of first language speakers of Greek when learning English (Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2011).

Even where pragmatics is not taught explicitly, learners who spend time in contexts where the second language is used do seem to develop their pragmatic abilities (Freed, 1995) but some features are not acquired even after lengthy stays (Dasli & Sangster, 2022). This suggests that some explicit teaching is needed.

Activity 12.8. Thinking about the pragmatics class

Before you read the section on teaching pragmatics, try to do this activity.

Think of a teaching situation in which pragmatics is being studied. This may be a situation which you know either from the point of view of a learner or a teacher. Address the following questions:

1. In what ways would you want the learners to be able to deal better with pragmatics? What makes you think this?
2. How much is typically covered in a pragmatic lesson or part of a lesson?
3. How are decisions made about what to teach in question 1?
4. What was the teaching sequence?
5. What teaching activities were used?
6. How effective was the lesson or part of lesson?

How can we teach pragmatics?

This section looks at how you might come up with your own examples of the feature you are focussing on (exposure), how you might encourage learner to notice the target features (engaging) and then move through experimentation to independent use. We do not discuss the order in which you might teach, and this will depend in your particular circumstances but I should note that in a task-based or problem-based approach you might well start with the independent use activity.

Exposure

You will need to expose your learners to examples of pragmatic uses of language that are relevant to their aims. Many parts of pragmatics have focussed on relatively short stretches of English, often on sentences or pairs of sentences. Course books might have a section on apologizing using expression such as 'I'm sorry' or making a request such as 'Can I book a table for four people for seven tomorrow?' However, good examples of the use of these features generally requires longer stretches of text. You may be lucky enough to have examples in the teaching materials you are working with.

Commercially produced English language teaching (ELT) textbooks often do not present pragmatically authentic models of language and discourse (Bardovi-Harlig et al., 2015, p. 499) so this may be an aspect of teaching where you will need to develop your own materials. Various approaches have been suggested for find your own examples. For example, if you wanted to work on apologies you might search for the item 'I'm sorry' in a corpus and then present one or more examples to your learners (Bardovi-Harlig et al., 2015). It is fine if you have to make some changes to the text to make sure you learners can understand it. You might also use extract from authentic materials such as films or TV series (Washburn, 2001). Table 12.2 includes an example from the BNC spoken corpus, where a beautician and a customer are trying to arrange to time when they can meet.

Engaging

Sometimes your learners will pick up on the pragmatic aspect of the language examples that they are exposed to, but you may also need to work on drawing their attention to the important features. With some groups of learners, this can be done by asking them to consider how the pragmatic features would be realized with a translation of text such as that in Table 12.2. Another useful technique is borrowing a technique from pragmatics research. This means presenting a written description of a context and asking learners to consider the impact of alternative responses. For example, you might ask the learners to consider what they think of the possible responses that an employee might give to their male employer if they arrived at work late.

1. I'm sorry, sir.
2. My fault. I should have got up earlier, John.
3. The bus was late, John.
4. I'm sorry. I'll buy you a coffee, sir (Cohen & Olshtain, 1981).

Table 12.2 A request and refusal

A	Are you away at the weekend? Or are you here at the weekend?
B	I'm here but can only do Saturday next week.
A	Have you not got anything?
B	Yeah not in the week.
A	Okay.
B	And I've only got three thirty on Saturday.
A	Yeah no.
B	It's the end of the day I suppose but can you do that? Or are you going to a be busy?
A	Sorry, no.

Source: Adapter from the BNC Spoken Corpus..

Table 12.3 Two versions of a task to practice requests

You missed a class and need to borrow a friend's notes. What would you say?
You are at the end of a history class and you are sitting next to Tom Yates. You missed last week's class and need to borrow his notes. He has been in the same programme as you for one year and you see him socially about once a month in a group. You will be taking classes together in the future. He is a good note taker and one of the best students in the class. You have borrowed his notes twice before the same class and the last time you borrowed them he was reluctant to give them up. In two week you both have the final exam for your class. What would you say? (Billmyer & Varghese, 2000, p. 548)

Table 12.4 A role play

Person A Where: on campus. Situation: you have lost your purse/wallet with your train ticket in it. You see your classmate and walk over to talk with him/her. Ask your classmate to lend you the money to pay for your train fare to go back home.
Person B Where: on campus. Situation: it is afternoon, after the last class has finished. You class mate approaches you to talk to you.

Source: Nicholas (2015).

If you are working in a context where your learners have access to interactions in English, you could also ask your learners to observe how pragmatics is realized in interactions and collect examples (Murray, 2010).

Experimentation

Discourse complete activities are very adaptable in terms of how much support you give. So you can move from presenting these as multiple-choice activities to where you just give a cue and to where they script their own text or produce the text without preparation. Table 12.3 illustrates how you might provide more or less information for one of these activities.

Independence

The target of pragmatic teaching is for the learners to use the language independently, and this is likely to mean a role play, as in Table 12.4.

Summary

This chapter has looked at three pragmatic features of language, the co-operative principle, speech act theory and politeness theory. The chapter has also looked at what factors influence the learning of pragmatics and made some suggestion about activities for teaching pragmatics.

Further reading

There are several useful books on pragmatics from a linguistic perspective but fewer on the learning and teaching or pragmatics. Huang (2014) provides a good introduction to pragmatics and covers many more topics than this chapter. Grundy (2013) and O'Keefe et al. (2011) come from a language teaching background and often make links to teaching and learning.

Part III

Teaching the Four Skills

Chapter 13

Reading

Introduction

Being able to read in your mother tongue is necessary to be able to play a full part as a citizen. Those who live in English-speaking environments or wish to study in Anglophone educational institutions likewise need to be able to read in English. Even in countries where English is not the main language, being able to read in English gives access to cultural and economic resources which are not so easily accessed through other languages. These incentives to learn to read in English are reinforced by examinations and educational systems more generally which treat reading as a central part of being able to use English, something which is perhaps reinforced by the pedagogic advantages of a relatively permanent written texts. All this means that most teachers of English are also teachers of reading and so are concerned with identifying ways that they can help their learners read English better. This chapter is intended to offer such teachers help by discussing the following three questions:

1. What is reading?
2. How do people learn to read?
3. How can we teach reading?

What is reading?

Perhaps because so much of reading is unobservable, many of the people who write about reading have offered definitions what the term means:

> Understanding a written text means extracting the required information from it as efficiently as possible. (Grellet, 1981, p. 3)

> [Reading means] to work out the meaning of a written text with the purpose of being able to take some kind of action as a result. (Wallace, 1992, p. 4)

> Reading is the ability to draw meaning from the printed page and interpret this information appropriately. (Grabe & Stoller, 2020, p. 5)

> Reading comprises a number of interactive processes between the reader and the text during which the reader uses his or her knowledge to build, to create, and to construct meaning. (Day, 2020, p. 2)

These definitions underplay the wonder of reading.

> Readings appears to be at least as magic as pulling rabbits from hats, conjuring pigeons from coat sleeves, or producing dimes from behind someone's ear. . . . readers are able to take arbitrarily determined shapes presented against some appropriate background and turn them into meaning. (Hudson, 2007, p. 7)

The rest of this section looks at psychological, linguistic and social understandings of what is involved in reading.

Activity 13.1. Reading and readers

Think back over the last month and consider what kinds of texts you have read.
Was your reading for pleasure or did it have a purpose to do with work or study?
If you can read in more than one language, do you read the texts in different languages in different ways?
Did your purpose influence how you read the text?

Psychological aspects of reading

Reading draws on two sources of information: visual information from the written text and non-visual information from what readers already know. The non-visual information is normally divided into lower level, largely linguistic, information (discussed in the next section on linguistic aspects of reading) and higher level information, information about the world. When readers see a text they retrieve the relevant linguistic knowledge and world knowledge from their long-term memory and bring this into their working memory (Baddeley et al., 2009) and the result is an interpretation of the text.

The lower level information is processed fast, a rate of 240 and 300 words per minute for fluent readers and the process is automatic, that is, it cannot be consciously controlled (Grabe & Stoller, 2020, p. 12). Identifying word meaning is an important product of the lower level information reading process and measures of the speed at which readers can identify words correlate very closely with their ability to read but, to the extent that the use of lower and higher level information can be distinguished, lower level information results in semantic propositions related to phrases or clauses rather than individual words.

The higher level information includes background information about the world. This information is often described as being organized into cognitive structures known as schemas or schemata. Grabe (2009, p. 79) describes them as 'variable and messy networks of knowledge that are called up, or activated by the active information in working memory' and some writers now avoid the term schema. However, reading cannot happen unless readers make extensive use of their knowledge of the world. If, for example, a text starts with the mention of a judge, readers may activate the network related to judges and court cases within their long-term memory and assume that lawyers, a defendant and possibly a jury will be involved. Readers use their schemata to resolve ambiguities in the text so they will know that a sentence is more likely to refer to the punishment the defendants receive rather than a unit of written language and, as readers read the text, the network of activated items will be refined (Nassaji,

2007). The lexical items related to the judge will be primed and, if a word such as sentence appears in the text, readers will be able to retrieve it faster than if the judge had not been predicted.

The content of particular networks will not be the same for all readers. Lawyers educated in England or Wales might distinguish between different levels of court, for example, a Magistrate's Court without a jury, a Crown Court with a jury and kinds of law, a civil case with a plaintiff and a criminal case with a prosecutor, where non-lawyers would not make such distinctions until they had read further into the text. Similarly, readers from different cultures will bring different kinds of background knowledge to a text and this may result in different understandings of what the text means.

The use of higher level information is less automatic and more under the control of readers than the use of lower information. Readers monitor their own reading processes, evaluate how well the reading process is going and make plans to deal with any problems that arise. For some readers, these processes are conscious. For example, earlier in this section you might have consciously noticed 'schemata', if you had not come across the term before, and decided that it was an irregular plural of schema or that it was not necessary for you to understand what you were reading and so could be ignored. However¸ the decision not to worry about the word may have been unconscious. Where this is a conscious process, it is usually described as a strategy and, where it is not conscious, it is a skill (Grabe, 2009, p. 221). This means that the same behaviour may be a strategy or a skill depending on whether it is conscious or not. It is possible to find many different lists of both skills and strategies, for example, Table 13.1. However Hudson notes that 'while the detailed lists of skills may be helpful in curriculum development and score and sequence charts associated with textbooks and series, the actual operationalization of simple unitary skills is problematic' (2007, p. 103). This does not mean that skills and strategies are not an important part of reading, but that readers use particular skills and strategies in response to problems created by particular texts and what the readers have to do with the texts. The identification of a particular skill or strategies depends on the text and task with which readers are dealing. Activity 13.2 relates to the strategies one learner used in reading a text.

Table 13.1 Grabe's behaviour of strategic readers

Before reading	Predict what the text will be about. Consider what you already know about the topic. Create questions that you want the text to answer.
While reading	**Monitoring** Monitor how well you understand the text. Use the text structure to help you understand the text. Make notes as you read the text. Answer the questions you created before reading or decide they cannot be answered. **Problems** If you do not understand something, decide if it is important or can be ignored. If you identify something you don't understand but you need to understand, take action such as asking someone for help or using a dictionary.
After reading	How well did you understand the text? What helped? What made it difficult? Will you change the way you read in future? How will you use what you learnt from the text? Do you need to read other texts on this topic?

Source: Grabe (2009, p. 241).

Activity 13.2. Strategies

Here is a text and below is a think-aloud protocol from a learner who read the text below starting 'Food contains' and ending 'amount of vitamins'. How would you describe the strategies they use? Could these form the basis of teaching?

Vitamins

Food contains only minute quantities of the substances called vitamins, but they are vital for good health. For example, if you eat a diet of meat, bread, sugar and fat, you may become ill with a disease called scurvy. This is caused by a deficiency in vitamin C, which is found in fruit and vegetables.

About fifty different vitamins have been identified, and a deficiency in many of these can lead to illness. Vitamin A is most important for good eyesight, but is also important for general good health. Liver contains a considerable amount of vitamin A, but vitamin A is also found in fish, meat, milk, butter, some fruits and vegetables.

Vitamin B in fact consists of twelve different chemicals, which are found in eggs, cheese, butter, wholemeal flour and vegetables. If a person has an inadequate amount of vitamin B in his diet, this may affect his whole body, particularly the skin, the nervous system, and the heart. Deficiency in vitamin B results in a disease called beri-beri.

Vitamin C prevents scurvy and helps to heal injuries. Some doctors believe that large quantities of vitamin C help people to avoid colds. Fruits and uncooked vegetables are rich in vitamin C, but when they are cooked, or left for a long time, they lose most of their vitamins.

Vitamin D is essential for the growth of bones and teeth and is found in fish, liver, oil and milk. Vitamin D is the only vitamin which the body can make for itself, but it can only do this if there is sufficient sunlight. A lack of both sunlight and vitamin D can result in a disease called rickets, which causes bones to soften and to be deformed.

Vitamins are only needed in very small quantities. A quantity sufficient for a whole life would weigh only a quarter of a kilogram. Vitamins can be manufactured and are sold as additions to our food, but a well-balanced diet will provide an adequate amount of vitamins.

Here is an excerpt from a transcript of what the student said while she was reading the text. This kind of transcript is called a **protocol** because it describes what the student does while she reads. What strategies or skills did the student use? Can you relate these to the strategies identified in Table 13.1.

I am going to read the passage . . . to get the main idea. I read just the first sentences of every paragraph. Vitamin A. Vitamin B. I am still reading the third paragraph. I read the passage and . . . I am in the 4th paragraph. OK. I finished this passage and I am going back to read it again sentence by sentence. Do I know what the text is about? Yes, it's about vitamins, types of vitamins. A, B, C, D. And what foods contain them.

I will read the sentence in the 1st paragraph. The 1st sentence . . . yes, . . . there is one word in the first sentence I couldn't have the meaning. What's that word? It's minute. Minute, second, hour, does not make sense. No. Minute. Minute. Minute. Oh /maɪnju:t/. Yes, may be. I . . . I know this. Yes, it's minute. The last paragraph. Oh . . . Oh . . . Very small quantities. OK. I read the sentence and I get the meaning. All other words are known for me. And I am going to the second sentence.

While the lower end information process results in semantic propositions, as readers read the text, these proposition are combined using higher order skills to form a coherent model of the text meaning that relates to the readers' purpose for reading the text (Kintsch & Rawson, 2005).

The psychological view of reading provides insights into reading. However, this approach does not consider differences in the ways that readers approach different texts or even the same text so it needs to be supplemented with insights about texts which the linguistic approach provides useful explanations and the insights about readers and their roles in society that the social view offers.

Linguistic views of reading

This section explores in more detail the lower level information that are a part of the psychological views of reading. However, it extends the notion of linguistic information beyond to orthography, phonology, lexis, grammar, phonology to include discourse. Less familiar words may be processed letter by letter, and sometimes using information about their phonology. For example, readers who first encounter a word such as 'gryphon' will use their knowledge of the fact that, in English, writing move from left to write and spaces indicate the beginning and end of words, and of the Roman alphabet, to reconstruct the word 'gryphon' (see Chapter 2), possibly making the identification of the word based on the fairly unusual combination of 'gry-'. They may then retrieve the typical pronunciation of the letters, for example, 'ph' as /f/ and 'y' as /i/, to produce something like /grifən/ (see Chapter 8 on spelling) and compare the resultant acoustic image with the words in their mental lexicon. If the reader knows that a gryphon is a mythical creature resembling a lion with the head and wings of an eagle, that understanding will cue a particular set of expectations related to the topic and genre of the text. If the reader does not know the word, they will either ignore it or work out its meaning somehow. In contrast a word like 'cat' will probably be processed as a semantic unit, without drawing on orthographic information, though, even with words like this, phonological information is probably involved (Walter, 2008).

With lower level information, the focus has been on identifying word meanings but as items 7 and 10 in Activity 13.3 may suggest, without syntax and morphology, reading is not possible. As Grabe notes 'the role of grammar in reading comprehension is not a common topic in books on reading' (2009, p. 199). If you do not know any English grammar, it is not possible to read any but the shortest English text but beyond that it is difficult to estimate how important grammar is. However, just as with spoken language, some grammatical patterns are characteristic of particular genres of written language. Readers of academic text need to be able to process nominalizations as in the grammatical subject of the sentence:

> Students' monitoring of their comprehension is often identified as a major reading strategy that improves main-idea comprehension. (Grabe & Stoller, 2013, p. 143)

Here the writers could have said used 'students monitor whether they have understood what they have read'. This kind of compression in written language means that the information which might have been spread over three sentences is expressed in one sentence and readers need to process the semantic proposition expressed by the nominalization before moving on to the next part of the sentence.

Klauda and Guthrie (2008) investigated reading comprehension of English texts in a secondary school where most of the pupils were native speakers of English and estimated that syntactic processing accounted for 5 per cent of the variation in reading comprehension scores, as against 10 per cent for vocabulary, 2 per cent for discourse and 50 per cent for background knowledge. Kremmel et al. (2015) investigated secondary school EFL learners. They did not have a measure of background knowledge but found that syntactic processing contributed significantly to overall comprehension, but not as much as lexical knowledge. However, what they term, phraseological knowledge, the ability to process multi-word units whose meaning is not simply a combination of their individual elements, had a greater impact than syntax. Klauda and Guthrie's (2008) study suggests that knowledge about discourse is not very important in reading. However, their finding is partially a result of the use of a standardized measure of reading comprehension. But, when we read a text, what would count as success will depend on what kind of text is being read. For example, someone reading a dictionary will generally be regarded as successful if they find the information they need about a particular word. Someone reading a novel may expect to end up with a broader awareness of human nature. Someone

Genre		Text books	Academic articles	Encyclopedias
Purpose		Established knowledge	Emerging knowledge	General knowledge
Discourse community	Readers	Students	Researchers, specialists, advanced students	General public
	Writers	Subject matter specialists	Researchers	Multiple authors: Researchers and subject matter specialists
Structure		Table of contents Introduction/preface Chapters with subdivisions [Glossary] Index	Abstract, introduction & issue, literature review, methods, findings/result, discussion references [Appendices]	Title Introduction Body (subsections) Key point References
Language		Objectively and formal language	Objective and formal style Focus on process of research	Objective and formal language

Figure 13.1 A genre programme for EAP reading.

reading a Twitter feed may be deciding what tweets they want to forward to their own followers or which tweets need a response. If reading is conceptualized as a communicative task, the central question is why somebody is reading this text and the main linguist framework for identifying communicative tasks is genre theory, discussed in Chapter 11: Discourse. The key element of genres are their communicative purposes. If you are trying to create a genre-based programme, it is useful to see this as having two dimensions: the kinds of texts and the genre analysis. See Figure 13.1. However, several commentators have produced lists of reading purposes, independent of the texts (e.g. the seven purposes identified by Grabe & Stoller, 2020, p. 8), which may be useful in course design.

Activity 13.3. Lower level knowledge in reading

When we read, we bring a lot of different kinds of knowledge to what we see on the page or the screen. This activity is intended to make you think about these kinds of knowledge. What makes these language samples easy/difficult to read? I have made a suggestion for the first example.

1. .gnidneherpmoc dna gnidoced htob sevlovni gnidaeR — Direction of reading
2. lexicalaccessorwordrecognitionsyntacticparsin gandsemantic propositionformationaretypical lyseenaslower levelprocessesthatoccurrelativ elyautomaticallyforthe fluent reader
3. 他送我一本书。
4. ρεαδινγ καν βε διφφικυλτ
5. Ανάγνωση μπορεί να είναι δύσκολη
6. Tā sòng wǒ yī běn shū
7. Be high level comprehend process that closely represents what we typical consider read comprehend
8. Hij gaf me een boek
9. ‘Twas brillig, and the slithy toves did gyre and gimble in the wabe.
10. A book give he i

Social views of reading

Reading is a social process. Somebody is producing language to express a message and someone is reconstructing that message from marks on paper or on screen. To read is to be involved in a slow, often very slow, interaction with the author or authors of a text that parallels what happens in listening. In same way that we are limited in the people to whom we can speak, the kinds of text to which people have access and the purposes for which they can use those texts will vary depending on their place in society. For example, in many countries the process of becoming a lawyer, involves learning to read legal texts and this is not easy. First-year law undergraduates in England read law reports very

differently from third year students (Badger, 2003) and this is not simply a question of learning new language but of understanding the role of law reports in the legal system. If you have not completed this training, these texts will be very hard for you to read.

More generally, an important part of most educational systems is learning what kinds of text written by what authors need to be read and in what ways they should be read. The social view of reading focusses not just on the reader and the text but on the social and communicative context in which it take place, what Heath describes as the literacy event (1982). For example, where learners are reading an academic paper, the literacy event would include they ways in which they have access to that paper, online or in print, on their smartphone or on a desktop computer, the context in which they read the paper and the associated acts such as writing an essay and receiving feedback on that essay. Being able to decode the text and relate the propositional meaning to the relevant background information is an important part of this but reading is more than this and so the aims of the reading class need to be more than decoding and comprehending.

How do people learn to read English?

Most of the models of learning discussed in Chapter 3, see some form of practice as a necessary part of learning to read. Within information processing models, practice should be preceded by some kind of input. This has often meant that learners need to have relevant linguistic information, usually particular vocabulary, or background information related to the topic of the text. More recently, the input has been widened to include strategic and meta-cognitive instruction (Hudson, 2007, p. 292).

For Krashen, the necessary element is that learners should be able to understand more or less what they are reading. This has parallels with socio-cultural views of learning where providing the appropriate support and then withdrawing it is how learning is seen to happen. Deciding what the support is appropriate requires an understanding of the resources that learners bring to the classroom.

Learners who are already able to read in the first language bring the important knowledge that written symbols carry meaning, but this will vary depending on the writing system used in their first language. Some of these differences and the impact these differences have on learners of English are described in Chapter 8 on spelling. However, one of the insights of the social view of learning is that learners who can read in their first language do not simply bring knowledge of the orthography of that language but also their experience of literacy practices in that language. So, the fact that young learners have been read to by their parents in their first language or in English is something that can be built on in the English reading class and indeed being read to may be the first stage in learning to read. Learners may bring other experiences to the language classroom. Gregory (2008, p. 20) describes working with a four-year-old boy called Tony who was learning to read his first language, Chinese and English at the same time. In the Chinese class, Tony copied out the text before reading it and wanted to do the same in English. His English teacher had seen copying out words as part of the process of learning to write rather than learning to read but was able to adapt her teaching style to take advantage of Tony's copying skills. Understanding the resources that learners bring to the class and managing these resources is an important part of effective teaching.

How can teachers teach reading?

The previous sections have described the reading process and how learners develop the reading abilities as ways of helping teachers identify the aim of their reading lesson. Within a task-based approach, the aim is likely to be a task which involves reading but is not limited to reading such as the description of reading an academic paper discussed in the social view of reading. Preparing learners for this reading task would be very demanding and it would need to be broken down into more specific aims, that is, identifying particular genres that learners will need to read or particular purposes that they need to achieve. In weak communicative approaches, the aim of the reading lesson is often to understand a particular text, which may be from the course book or one selected by the teacher. If it is the latter, Grabe and Stoller (2020, p. 139) suggest involving learners in the choice selection where possible but, even if this is not possible, using texts with are interesting, attractive and accessible. This may lead to the selection of authentically produced texts but Grabe and Stoller's point about accessibility is more important than their source. If learners cannot access a text, it will not be authentic for them.

The sequence of the reading lesson

Once teachers have identified their reading text, they need to structure the overall lesson. Reading classes typically consist of three stages:

1. pre-reading, which focusses on providing learners with the appropriate linguistic (often lexical) and world knowledge needed to understand text,
2. while reading stage, where the learners read the text and demonstrate their understanding of the text, often by answering comprehension questions,
3. post-reading stage, where learners respond to the text by, for example, discussing the topic of the text or using the information from the text in a piece of writing.

Activities in the reading lesson

The world knowledge that learners need to make sense of a text will depend on what the learners know and the particular text. One aspect of background knowledge that needs to be covered to ensure that readers engage in as authentic way as possible with the text is the reason why the learners are reading the text. This will enable the learners to understand the role their reading is playing in an act of communication and identify what kind of information they will be looking for when they read the text. Common pre-reading activities include a discussion about the topic or the use of visuals. Many of the tasks described in Chapter 16 Speaking can be adapted for this purpose.

The choice of words to pre-teach reflects a dilemma in the typical reading class between whether the aim is to help learners read a particular text or to read future texts. Teachers may use their own intuitions to identify what the key vocabulary items are for the text but should probably draw on frequency data to identify what vocabulary learners need for future texts, perhaps supplemented by words that the learners

Table 13.2 Word recognition exercise

Key phrase	Distractors			
1. On the way	In the way	By the way	On the top	On the side
2. First of all	Festival	For the tall	For an owl	For a fall
3. Consider	Conceal	Converse	Insider	Decider

Table 13.3 A generic strategy: SQ3R

Survey	Survey or skim the text to get an overall grasp of what it is about. Is it worth reading the text in more detail?
Question	Based on your general understanding, write questions about what you want to find out from the text. What do you want to know from the text?
Read	Read the text carefully and in detail. Did the text answer the questions you asked at the previous stage?.
Recall/recite	Now try to recall what you have learnt, reciting or listing it to yourself, whether by remember inside you head, saying it out loud or writing notes on a fresh piece of paper or computer file. What have your learnt from the text?
Review	Finally, review what you have done and what you should do next. What other texts do you need to read now? How can you use what you have learnt from the text?

Source: Adapted from Fairbairn and Winch (2011, p. 36 et seq.).

identify. Particularly for future-oriented items, learners need to be able to recognize lexical units very quickly and techniques such as the use of flashcards or apps such as *Memrise* can be useful. Table 13.2 is part of a word recognition exercise. Grabe and Stoller suggest using this kind of activity with twenty to twenty-five words or phrases on a regular basis to build up learners' sight vocabulary at some point in a reading lesson. Research (Walter, 2008) suggests that the speed at which readers can form an acoustic image of words is an important part of reading fluency and reinforces the need to include the pronunciation of words in reading lessons. Chapter 10 provides more examples of techniques for introducing and practising new vocabulary.

The pre-reading stage can also be used to develop learners' reading strategies. This can be in the form of a discussion with the learners about how they will approach the text or the teacher may want to introduce a new strategy. As discussed above, strategies are normally a response to a particular problem with a particular text and so pre-planning what strategies to teach can be difficult. However, one widely used generic strategy for reading academic texts is survey, question, read, recall (or recite) and review (SQ3R). This is illustrated in Table 13.3 but appears in several other sources. Teachers can present this to their learners but it is probably most effective to illustrate how it might be used with a think-aloud protocol, where the teacher reads a text aloud and adds comments on the application of the particular stages of the strategy at appropriate points.

Ness and Kenny (2016) illustrate modelling a strategy with a lower level class using a think-aloud protocol. They suggest that before the class, teachers need to identify where they are going to pause, what strategy they are going to exemplify and consider what they will actually say. During class they

read the text aloud and explain how what strategies they used while they were reading. This is illustrated in Table 13.4 using an extract from Alice in Wonderland (Carroll & Blum, 2008).

During the reading stage, the standard procedure is for learners to read silently and on their own. Some teachers ask their learners to read aloud. This is a useful technique for beginner learners as it can help teachers identify and monitor particular problems that learners have. However, reading aloud slows down the reading process and so can make comprehension difficult. Once teachers are confident that learners are reading reasonably well, they should encourage them to read silently. Where readers need help to read more quickly, some teachers find it useful for their learners to follow the text as the teacher reads it aloud or as a recording of the passage is played back.

A related activity is shadow reading (de Guerrero & Commander, 2013). The learners are paired with one member of the pair reading the text orally in chunks which allow both members of the pair to identify the propositional meaning, and the other repeating the text, first aloud, secondly in a low voice and then silently. Table 13.5 illustrates how the technique operates for two students reading and also shows that the word 'sibling', which the teacher assumed was not known to either of the pair, did not seem to cause any difficulty in understanding the text.

During the while reading activity, learners need to demonstrate their understanding of the text. This is often done by them answering questions on the text. It is important that these questions address what a reader outside the language classroom might be expected to understand. For example, if teachers want their learners to demonstrate a general understanding of the text, a useful question would be to give the text a title and asking learners to identify the referent for a pronoun is a way of checking that the learners are bringing together information from more than one sentence. An alternative to asking questions is for the learner to transfer the information into another format, such as labelling a diagram. This activity can be facilitated using technology such as using software to produce mind maps of texts (Liu et al., 2010). Figure 13.2 shows a mind map produced for the term 'Caucus Race' described in Table 13.5.

Where a class is reading more than one different text or reading separate parts of one text, teachers can ask learners who have read different texts to form groups and discuss the texts together. This can be more structured, in jigsaw reading activities where learners have the questions for the text they have not read or where the questions need learners to combine information from more than one text.

Table 13.4 Using a think-aloud protocol to model a strategy

Text	Possible script	Strategy
It was high time to go, for the pool was getting quite crowded with the birds and animals that had fallen into it: there were a Duck and a Dodo, a Lory and an Eaglet, and several other curious creatures.	I don't know what Dodo and Lory mean. Possible animals of birds. Eaglet looks a bit like Eagle. A baby eagle.	Using word parts to work out meaning
Alice led the way, and the whole party swam to the shore. They were indeed a queer-looking party that assembled on the bank – the birds with draggled feathers, the animals with their fur clinging close to them, and all dripping wet, cross and uncomfortable.	Draggled is new. The animals are wet so maybe draggled means wet or soaked.	Using context clues for unknown vocabulary

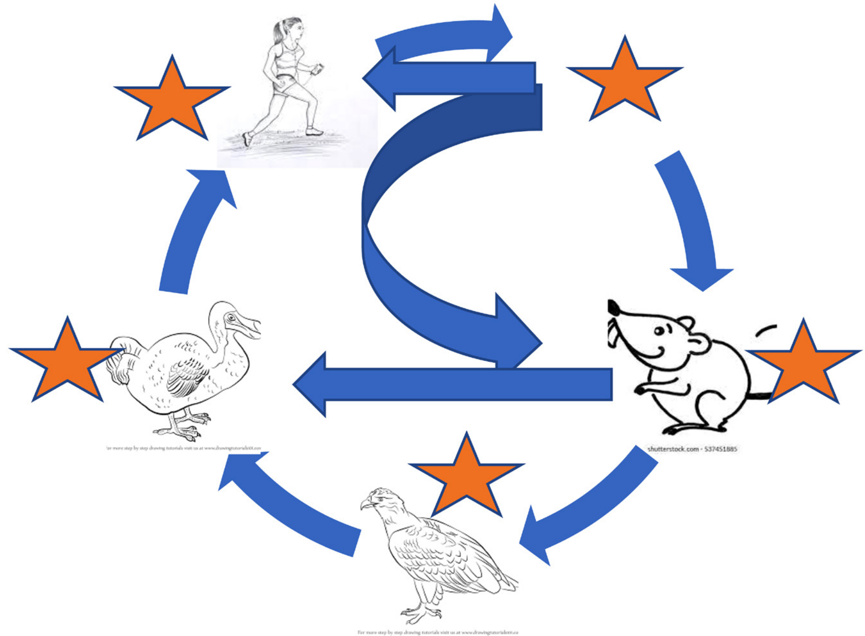

Figure 13.2 A Caucus race: all must have prizes (Carroll & Blum, 2008).

Table 13.5 Shadow reading

	Interaction	Text
S2	The Dodo gets angry easily.	'What I was going to say', said the Dodo in an offended tone, 'was, that the best thing to get us dry would be a Caucus-race'.
S1	Offended. 'Marah'. [Angry in Malay]	
S2	"Korkus". Oh [reads text] Caucus. Is that like kolcalus [Malay for calculus]?	
S1	[Looking further down the text] Well Alice asks. Maybe they will explain?	'What is a Caucus-race'? said Alice;
S2.	So just running?	'Why', said the Dodo, 'the best way to explain it is to do it'. (And, as you might like to try the thing yourself, some winter day, I will tell you how the Dodo managed it.) First it marked out a race-course, in a sort of circle, ('the exact shape doesn't matter' it said,) and then all the party were placed along the course, here and there. There was no 'One, two, three and away', but they began running when they liked, and left off when they liked, so that it was not easy to know when the race was over. However, when they had been running half an hour or so, and were quite dry again, the Dodo suddenly called out 'The race is over!' and they all crowded round it, panting and asking, 'But who has won'?
S1	It seems. This book is a little bit 'bodoh' [stupid in Malay].	

S1=reader; S2=shadower.
Source: Carroll and Blum (2008, p. 472).

Web quests

Where learners have access to the internet, teachers can create reading activities that require learners to visit a range of website and collection information to carry out a particular task. This kind of activity is known as a Web Quest. Dodge (2007), one the originators of the idea of web quests, says that 'a web quest is an inquiry-oriented lesson format in which most or all the information that learners work with comes from the web'. A web quest makes language and technological demands on learners. Where learners have good technological skills, these can be used to support them as they address the linguistic demands of the question. The web quest designer identifies a topic or issue that is of interest to the learners and then selects web sites which will help the learners to carry out a task related to the topic or issue. For example, teachers might design a web quest on the cost of flying from where the learners are to, say, London and the relevant web sites would be those of airlines or travel companies. In its simplest form, the learners are given:

- a description of the issue/problem they need to address and
- a list of web sites.

The learners then address the issue, question or problem using the websites. In more sophisticated versions, the web quest designer will use special software to design a web page which contains all the information and ensures that the learners do not get lost as they roam the web.

Here is an example of the teaching context that led one teacher to design a web quest.

> The six learners with whom I used the web quest formed an elementary level group who had been learning English for approximately four to six months. The group consisted of five Arabic speakers and one Portuguese speaker. They had recently been following a course book unit about food and restaurants, had practiced vocabulary about describing restaurants and used basic dialogues about how to order food in a restaurant. During the lessons, I noticed that learners were less than motivated and reluctant to communicate with one another. At one point during the unit, I asked the learners whether they had had much experience with eating in local restaurants. The response was a resounding 'no'. Their reasons for this included that food was 'bad' in Britain or that restaurants in the local area were too expensive. There was some comment that they were reluctant to use English in restaurants or would find it difficult to read the menus, perhaps because the language contained in the average menu from a restaurant is usually above elementary level English. It was at this point that I realized that the learners didn't feel that they would actually use most of the language being presented during the lessons and this, in turn had resulted in low enthusiasm for the lesson.

The Town X Web Quest in Figure 13.3 was the teacher's response to this situation, and she was aiming to do three things: improve learner motivation in the classroom, practise restaurant-related language and encourage her students to go to a restaurant in the town where they lived.

I do not seem to be able to add a figure. It is in my file of figures but I will email that separately to you.

The Town X restaurant web quest

Your friend is coming to visit you in Town X. You'd like to take your friend for a meal at a restaurant. She then listed four websites for restaurants in town X and asked her learners to complete this chart:

Name of restaurant	Address	Phone number	Kind of Food	Price

2. Now discuss the following questions.

a. Which restaurant would you like to take your friend to? ___________

b. Why? ____

Figure 13.3 The Town X website.

Post-reading activities

For some reading lessons, the demonstration of comprehension is not easy to distinguish from the post-reading activity but in principle, the post-reading activity should mirror what would happen when the text is read outside the language classroom.

Where the lesson has is a strategic or meta-cognitive aim, learners can usefully reflect on how well they were able to demonstrate their understanding of the text with a view to identifying knowledge, skills or strategies where they or other learners in their class might seek to improve. For example, one learner had to decide if the statement ‘Roy only copied paintings by two famous artists’ was true, after reading the following extract:

> This, of course, gives rise to much shaking of heads among art experts. After all, the whole point of art is to be creative and original. Even so, Roy was proud of his ability to reproduce Picassos, Van Goghs and so on so accurately they seemed like the real thing.

The learner justified her decision that the statement was false by saying:

> OK, in the text it says, 'Even so, Roy was proud of his ability to reproduce Picassos, Van Goghs and so on' So that's false, because 'so on' means something more and that means that he did not only copy paintings by two famous artists. (Kremmel et al., 2015, p. 12)

This would have demonstrated to the teacher that the learner had understood the phrase 'so on' and might also have served as input for other learners.

The approach to organizing readings lessons described above can be described as intensive reading and the main focus is on understanding a particular text, though the approach may develop particular reading skills/strategies or linguistic knowledge that can be used on other text. This kind of lesson is useful and common. Two other kinds of activities are useful in developing reading abilities but receive less attention than they should: reading fluency development and extensive reading.

Reading fluency

Reading fluency activities are intended to increase the speed at which people read and, while not explicitly linked to the notion of deliberate practice discussed in Chapter 3, are consistent with that idea. Teachers have used speed reading techniques to do this. For example, Yen (2012) used twenty texts written at the 1,000 word level (Nation, 2017). Each of the passages was 550 words long and was accompanied by ten comprehension questions. The learners who read the text increased their speed from about 120 words per minute to about 165 words per minute and also increased their reading speed beyond the course.

Taguchi et al. (2012) used a repeat reading approach with the same overall aim. This study looked at one learner. The texts were taken from two novels. The learner chose how much she read in each session but averaged about eight hundred words. For each session, she

1. Read a passage silently timing herself.
2. Read the same passage three more times while listening to the audio recording.
3. Read the same passage two more times silently while timing each reading with a stopwatch.
4. Wrote thoughts and comments about the repeat reading session in a diary.

Over six sessions, she increased from about 130 words per minute to just under 190.

Extensive reading

Extensive reading means that learners read books, often graded readers, that they find easy to understand and enjoy reading. The idea that extensive reading leads to improvements in reading is intuitively plausible, and it has been described as the 'magic carpet' to language development in general and reading abilities in particular but 'the "magic carpet" remains firmly nailed to the floor' (MaCalister, 2014, p. 389), despite the evidence suggesting its benefits (e.g. Nakanishi, 2015). One of the reasons for this is that the results of extensive reading are largely to do with reading efficiency and

a more positive attitude to English and reading, and these are not aspects that are highly valued by all examination systems and so extensive reading is seen as an unnecessary luxury. Extensive reading is also relatively expensive. It requires a library of readers and logistical support in terms of a place to keep the books, a mechanism for learners to borrow and return them and support for the learners as they read. When I worked in Malaysia, I was fortunate enough to have a head teacher who was sufficiently in favour of English language education to agree to the purchase of relevant readers but perhaps more importantly a library where the books could be kept. Where teachers are in a position to set up extensive reading schemes, the following are useful guidelines.

1. The reading material is easy.
2. A variety of reading material on a wide range of topics must be available.
3. Learners choose what they want to read.
4. Learners read as much as possible.
5. The purpose of reading is usually related to pleasure, information and general understanding.
6. Reading is its own reward.
7. Reading speed is usually faster rather than slower.
8. Reading is individual and silent.
9. Teachers orient and guide their students.
10. The teacher is a role model of a reader. (Day & Bamford, 2002, pp. 137–9)

The Extensive Reading Foundation (2011) runs a website on extensive reading and a downloadable guide.

Summary

This chapter has examined the process of reading from a psychological, linguistic and social perspective and briefly examined how people learn to read in order to inform the teaching of reading in the final section. This chapter provides information about structuring reading classes as well as suggestions related to reading fluency and extensive reading activities.

Activity 13.4. Discussion

What would you suggest that the teacher in this context does to help the student improve their reading?

I teach adults in a college in California in a low intermediate (B1+) class. The students are mainly migrants who have moved to California to find work. Although they enrol on a twelve-week course, their attendance is poor because job interviews migration formalities and family responsibilities take precedence over English language courses. However, they are very motivated, particularly wanting to learn spoken English and the written language associated with dealing with bureaucracies and potential

employers. If they attend all their classes I would see them for seven and a half hours a week and they would also have classes with a colleague for the same amount of time.

I have agreed with my colleague that my focus should be on reading, particularly job advertisements and application forms. However, I cannot be sure who will come to my classes from day to day and I need to find a way to organize my teaching and the work they do outside the class so that the classes are useful both to learners who comes to every class and those who are not so regular.

Further reading

My favourite book on reading are Hudson (2007) and Days (2020) but Grabe (2009) and Grabe and Stoller (2020) are good, and the latter has a chapter on research-informed reading teaching. Gregory (2008) is very good on social aspects of learning to read, particularly with younger learners and Snowling and Hulmes (2005) provide an authoritative account of reading in a first or second language, particularly from a psychological point of view.

Chapter 14

Writing

Introduction

This chapter examines the teaching of writing and the ideas which underlie how this happens. The chapter is divided into three main sections looking first at

1. What is writing?
2. How do people learn to write in a second language?
3. How can we teach writing?

Activity 14.1. Thinking about the writing class

Think of a lesson where you aim to improve a group of learners' writing abilities in English and try to address the following questions:

1. Why do the learners need to be able to write in English? This may be for an examination but may be for other reasons.
2. What are the aims of the writing class? How closely is this related to your answer to question one?
3. What kinds of activities happen in the writing class? Do writers spend most of their time writing or are they working on other aspects of language such as grammar?
4. What kinds of things does the teacher do, for example, talking about writing, giving learners feedback?
5. How well can the learners write in languages other than English? How might this knowledge help them when they are writing in English?
6. How good are the learners at the skills involved in writing such as planning?
7. How well does the writing element in the programme help the learners achieve the aims identified in question one?

What is writing?

Theories of writing provide teachers with a way of describing what it is that they want to achieve in the lessons.

Theories of writing

The term writing has been understood in a range of ways (Hyland, 2009, 2022; Ivanič, 2004b). These are often described as approaches, but I will use the term theory in this chapter.

The different ways we understand writing can be described in two dimensions. The first is whether the word 'writing' is treated dynamically as a verb (as in I am writing) or synoptically as a noun (writing is difficult), and the second dimension relates to whether the focus is on the individual creativity of the individual writer or the social view of writing as communication. The two dimensions give four theories. The boundaries between them are often fuzzy, and it often makes sense to draw on more than one theory (Badger & White, 2000).

The different theoretical positions have been described as being opposites (Badger, 2006; Hyland, 2003; Kammler, 1995; Tannen, 2002) or as a progressivist narrative reflecting our growing understanding of writing with the most recent model seen as being the best. However, the theories are best seen as complementary. They provide a diagnostic tool for the writing teacher. When you teach a group of learners, you need to think about what they need to learn and the theories of writing can help you do this. If they lack knowledge of the appropriate vocabulary, then the product view is most appropriate and, if they are not good at planning their work, then a process view is better. See Table 14.1.

Product theories

Product views see writing as mainly to do with knowledge and use of grammar, vocabulary, spelling, punctuation and cohesive devices. This often leads to pieces of writing whose main aim is to allow learners to demonstrate their knowledge of grammar.

> Focusing mostly on experiential writing, my grammar-writing prompts looked like this: *What has been the happiest moment in your life? What happened? Describe and explain.* This writing prompt appeared on the top of a page, followed by blank lines. It was presented with little additional instruction or discussion. Students were expected to provide a rich description using the present perfect, past perfect, and simple past tenses. (Racelis & Matsuda, 2013, p. 383)

Table 14.1 Theories of writing

	Synoptic	Dynamic
Individual	**Product** e.g. spelling, punctuation, grammar, vocabulary	**Process** e.g. generating ideas, planning, editing
Social	**Genre** e.g. purpose, audience, topic, text structure	**Literacy** e.g. investigating what people writing

This view of writing sees the writing class as an extension of what happens in grammar (Chapter 9) and vocabulary (Chapter 10) classes and most teachers will have a richer conceptualization of writing. However, sometimes learners have difficulty writing because of their lack of knowledge about grammar and vocabulary and you may have grammar and vocabulary as one of your aims in a writing class.

Process theories

Process views of writing emerged from mother tongue teaching, where knowledge of grammar and vocabulary was not an issue and these views focus on the skills people use in writing, which makes this a dynamic view of writing. They were originally used in with more advanced learners but this view of writing does have insights into how even beginners can be helped to improve their writing.

In an influential article, Flower and Hayes (1981) argued that 'the process of writing is best understood as a set of distinctive thinking processes which writers orchestrate or organize during the act of composing' (1981, p. 366). The Flower and Hayes model was a description of first language writing, but it has been successfully adapted to make sense of the L2 writing process (Leki et al., 2008; Silva, 1993). Table 14.2 summarizes five models of the writing process. While there are similarities in all the models, the terminology used to describe the writing process varies, and this can be problematic. Table 14.2 should help you to navigate the different process models when you read research in this area.

Translating or translanguaging are used in second language writing with mixed results. Gosden (1996) found that translation is used more by less skilled second language writers, and Woodall (2002) found that intermediate students used the first language between two and three times as much as advanced learners, depending on the writing task. However, Kobayashi and Rinnert (1992) found that second language writers using translation got better writing results than those who write directly in English. Similarly, in Sasaki's (2000) study, both skilled and less skilled second language writers benefitted from translation in writing but skilled writers improved their English expression with the help of the first language while less skilled writers translated ideas word by word from the first language into the second language.

Table 14.2 presents the idea of writing as a process as linear. In fact, the writing process is cyclical or recursive (Raimes, 1983; Silva, 1993; Zamel & Spack, 1998), and White and Arndt present their model diagrammatically as a cycle. See Figure 14.1. Writers move back and forth between the processes of planning, drafting and revision, and between the written and the emerging text to carry out the problem-solving task that composing entails (Manchón & de Larios, 2000). De Larios et al. (1999) describe this as 'backtracking', which they gloss as writers' actions 'to take stock of the ideas and constraints of the text produced so far in order to bring them to bear on current needs' (De Larios et al., 1999, p. 14). If you were hoping to prepare learners to write a letter of complaint, the focus would be on the process that might lead to the letter. The aim of the lesson might include what people complain about, producing a first draft or proofreading a letter.

The limit of the process view is that it sees all kinds of writing as broadly the same, so planning and revising would be seen as a part of many kinds of writing but may not be used in writing text messages and emails. Process approaches also underplay the role of specialist knowledge about kinds of writing.

Table 14.2 Process models of writing

Flower and Hayes (1981, p. 370)		Wang and Wen (2002, p. 232)		White and Arndt (1991, p. 11 et seq.)	Sasaki(2000, p. 290)	Roca De Larios et al. (2008, pp. 36–7)
The rhetorical problem		Task examination		Generating ideas	Generating ideas	Reading the prompt
						Task conceptualization
Generating		Idea generating				Planning
Planning	Organizing	Idea organizing		Focussing ideas	Planning	
	Goal setting			Structuring ideas	Retrieving	
Translation				Drafting	Verbalizing	Formulation
Reviewing	Evaluating	Text generating activities	Re-viewing	Evaluating	Evaluating	
	Revising		Process control-ling	Re-viewing	Re-reading	
Monitor					Translating; Other	Meta-comments

Figure 14.1 White and Arndt's model of the writing process.

So secondary school learners will need to learn about the conventions of writing in a range of disciplines, for example, writing a description of an experiment and this is where genre theory can help.

Genre theories

Genre models developed in two main contexts. The first was the mother tongue English language classes where learners were writing what should have been, for example, science reports as the stories they were familiar with from their English classes. The second context was where speakers of other languages were preparing to study in Anglophone universities and did not understand the conventions of English academic writing.

Genre models differ from process approaches in that their focus is on language knowledge and, from product approaches, in that the areas of knowledge they see as most important are about texts and their relationship with the social environment. The idea of genre is examined in more detail in Chapter 11: Discourse. A genre is a group of texts which share the same social purpose and so have similarities in terms of who reads and writes them, their topic and how they are structured. As few learners will need to produce all kinds of written genres, this has implications for syllabus design.

A typical genre class or series of classes would have an aim like writing a letter of complaint about, say, a delayed bus or producing an academic essay and the focus would be on how such pieces of writing are structured and the ways in which the grammar and vocabulary are used to achieve the overall aim.

The limit of genre views of writing is that they underplay the role of the writer and this means that they sometimes present genres that are more fixed than they really are and also are unwilling to consider how genres can contribute to injustice, two issues which have been addressed by literacy theories (Wingate, 2015).

Literacy theories

Literacy theories in English language teaching came out of classes with people who had moved to English-speaking contexts and were often socially disadvantaged such as English language learner

classes in North American and ESOL and EAL classes in the UK. They have been applied in higher education contexts. Writing here is seen as just one aspect of language use and the speaking, listening and reading that go on around writing as well the multimodal resources, such as the use of images, are seen as just as important to the production of writing as making marks on paper or typing on a keyboard. A literacy practice will often include writing but will rarely consist only of writing. Literacy theories see writing as a social practice within a historical context.

> All our writing is influenced by our life histories. Each word we write represents an encounter, possibly a struggle, between our multiple past experience and the demands of a new context. Writing is not some neutral activity which we just learn like a physical skill, but it implicates every fibre of the writer's multifaceted being. (Ivanič, 1998, p. 181)

The aim of the literacy writing class is not just to develop the learners' writing abilities but also to empower learners (Lillis, 1998; Wingate, 2015). The kinds of things that we write are changing (e.g. text messages, Facebook entries, online job applications), and the development of new and different kinds of writing have implications that go beyond what happens in the classroom, so empowering learners means helping them develop an awareness of why particular discourses and genres are the way they are.

Literacy approaches differ from process approaches because they see writing as social and from genre approaches in that they see writers as having more agency but also because they recognize that many texts are often not produced by individual authors. A typical literacy writing class would aim to help learners to produce letters of complaint about, say a delayed bus, but would also look at the way producing this involves spoken and written language and more generally explore the social role of public transport.

Activity 14.2. How do we learn to write

Look at the following kinds of writing or aspects of writing and consider how you learnt them. Were you given instruction, did you observe other people producing similar texts or was something else involved?

1. Forming letters/characters	2. Revising
3. Shopping lists	4. Emails
5. Formal letters	6. Academic assignments

Learning to write

Product and genre approaches to writing align mainly with psychologically oriented theories of learning (Chapter 3) with learners developing declarative knowledge from the teacher and their own analytical processes and using this when they write.

Process and literacy approaches are less clear about how they see learning happening but both assume that a lot of information will be picked up implicitly through engaging in writing and watching others carrying out the same activities. Literacy theorists believe that people 'learn implicitly by participating in socially situated literacy events which fulfil social goals which are relevant and meaningful to them' (Ivanič, 2004a, p. 235). This is consistent with implicit learning followed by practice within connectionist and psychologically oriented theories of learning but can be seen as learners developing by working within their zone of proximal development, supported by scaffolding from the teacher and other learners, within a socio-cultural paradigm.

Approaches to teaching writing

This section covers the four approaches to teaching writing associated with the views of writing discussed above and has a final section on feedback.

Product approach to teaching writing

In this approach, learning to write has four stages which closely parallel PPP (presentation, practice and production): familiarization, controlled writing, guided writing and free writing. The familiarization stage aims to make learners aware of certain features of a particular text. In the controlled and guided writing sections, the learners practise the skills with increasing freedom until they are ready for the free writing section, where learners may use writing within a communicative task.

A product lesson for a letter of complaint

1. Familiarization: learners look at examples of complaint letters and identify grammatical patterns and appropriate lexis.
2. Controlled writing: learners produce some simple sentences about their complaints from a substitution table.
3. Guided writing: learners produce a piece of writing based on a complaint suggested by the teacher or textbook writer.
4. Free writing: learners write a letter of complaint.

Process approach to teaching writing

Process writing classes involve learners engaging in the writing process. This is learning by doing rather than learning by instruction so the stages would depend on the teacher’s view of the stages of the writing process. See Figure 14.1. A lesson or series of lessons might have four stages: prewriting, composing/drafting, revising and editing (Tribble, 1996, p. 39).

A process lesson for a letter of complaint

1. Prewriting or generating ideas

   Learners think about a time when they complained about faulty goods or bad service and tell a partner.

2. Planning

   a. Focussing ideas: in groups, learners put the ideas from 'generating ideas' into a mind map.

   b. Organizing ideas: in group, learners organize the mind map into a plan.

3. Drafting

   a. First draft: in groups, the learners produce a draft letter of complaint without worrying about formal features of the letter, such as grammar and spelling.

   b. Second draft/Revising: learners exchange drafts and write comments on the content of each other's drafts. Sometimes, the teacher will also look at drafts. The learners then produce a second draft of their letter of complaint.

   c. Final draft/proofreading: in groups, the learners proofread their own draft and produce a third draft of the letters of complaint.

Activities common in a process writing class

Brainstorming

Process approaches see writing as an action of creativity, and the development ideas often happens through brainstorming. Rao (2007) suggested a three-stage approach. First the learners spend five minutes individually thinking about the title of their writing, for example, the merits and demerits of keeping pets. In pairs or larger groups, they combine their ideas without any evaluating but organizing the two sets of ideas in some way. The final stage is presenting their ideas to the class with one group producing a class brainstorm on the board. This is a very structured approach to brainstorming, but Rao found it had a positive effect on the quality of their writing. Brainstorming can be done with a combination of words and pictures, and this can be useful for younger learner. See Figure 14.2 for a brainstorm on 'Growing up', which led to a piece of writing.

Writing conferences

A conference here is a meeting between the teacher and one or more learners. Maliborksa and You (2016) describe a class using this technique. Learners produced a first draft based on an essay tile and had individual conference about that draft, produced a second daft and then had an individual conference about the second draft. Learners preferred individual to group conferences and wanted the conference to last more than the usual fifteen minutes. The first conference focussed on ideas and organization and the second on to grammar and vocabulary in the second conference. As with brainstorming, learners had to be taught bow best to use conferencing.

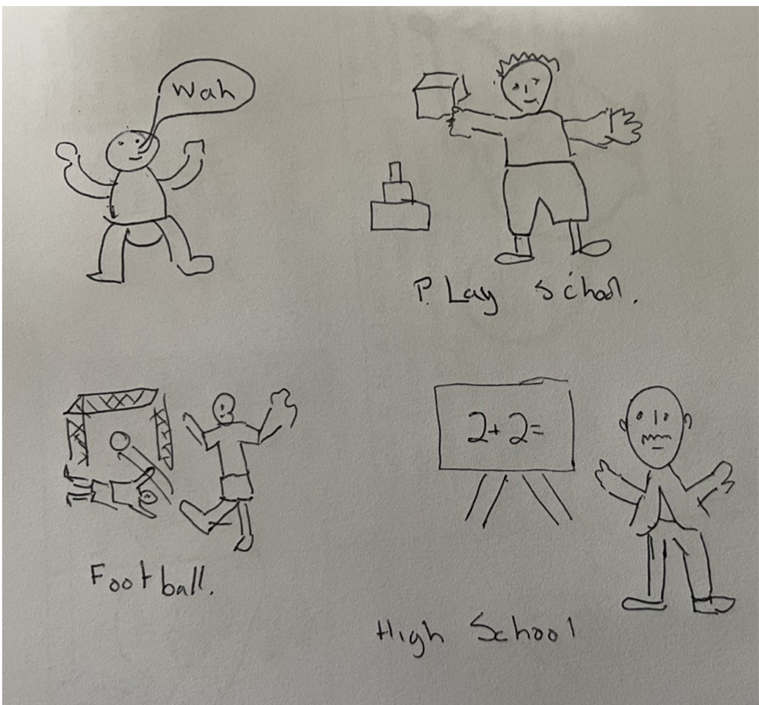

Figure 14.2 Growing up: a visual brainstorm.

Genre approach to teaching writing

Genre approach writing lessons can be taught in a range of ways, but the wheel model (Cope & Kalantzis, 1993) illustrated in Figure 14.3 has received a lot of attention. See also Figure 11.1 in Chapter 11. This essentially has three stages:

1. modelling the target genre, where learners are exposed to examples of the genre they have to produce;
2. the construction of a text by learners and teacher; and,
3. the independent construction of texts by learners.

The cycle can be repeated as and when needed. See also Dudley-Evans (1997, p. 154). This parallels product approaches very closely and fits in well with the cognitive model of learning with modelling helping learners to develop declarative knowledge, the construction teacher and learners being a kind of controlled proceduralization and the independent construction being automatic proceduralization.

A genre approach writing lesson for a letter of complaint

1. Contextualization: the learners and teacher talk about when it would be appropriate to write a letter of complaint.

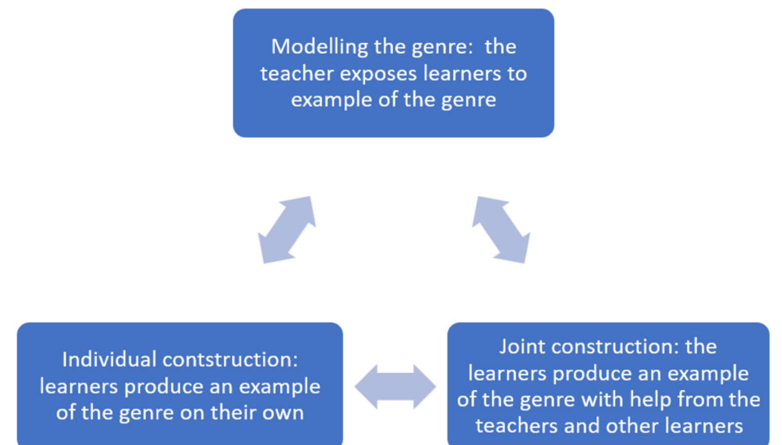

Figure 14.3 The wheel model of genre literacies pedagogy.

2. Language awareness: the learners look at two or three examples of letters of complaint, focussing on what aspects the teacher thinks they need help in, for example, the teacher may choose to focus on the layout or a particular aspect of grammar.
3. In groups, the learners write their own letter of complaint.

Activities common in genre approaches to teaching writing

Genre approaches are often text focussed as in the examples below, related to the overall structure of academic articles and formality in academic writing.

Text analysis: the structure of academic articles

Negretti et al. (2011) describe a course for native speakers of Swedish who were studying pedagogy at university. One of the tasks that the learners were asked to carry out was described thus:

> With your classmates, finish the analysis of the two ELT articles. Then, analyse and compare the two linguistics articles given to you. . . . pay close attention to the following aspects: intended audience; structure of the article; introduction; . . . rhetorical aspects throughout the paper; and style (ex. tenses, verbs used, hedges etc.).

This analysis of academic articles led to the learners developing declarative and procedural knowledge of the genre of academic articles but not for all the learners in the study. The genre knowledge might have become part of the writing of all the learners given time but other kinds of learning might also be needed.

Levels of formality: using 'I'

This is an example for people who want to study in English. Many learners have been told to avoid using 'I' in academic writing. However, in some fields the use of 'I' is acceptable (Hyland, 2002), and this

material is intended to help learners see what the practice is in TESOL and also develop their abilities to work out what happens in other academic disciplines. The aim here is to help learners develop the skills so that they can identify patterns of use.

Activity 14.3. Using 'I'

Read these text extract and work out why the writer is using the pronoun 'I'.

Extract A
In the preface of their work, Day and Bamford (1998) defined extensive reading as ‘an approach to the teaching and learning of second language reading in which learners read large quantities of books and other materials that are well within their linguistic competence’. As I have personally developed my own reading competence by reading a large number of English novels, I have always been confident about the beneficial effects of extensive reading.

Extract B
Permission from the students willing to participate was also necessary and this leads to the second ethical aspect I considered: the people affected by the research. Before asking for my students’ permission, I told them in Spanish what the study was about, what it was for, what improvements it was expected to bring about and what the participants were expected to do.

Extract C
In the following section, I will discuss the necessity of equipping students – with regards to the above-mentioned context – with some strategies that would help them be less dependent on teachers and more aware of their learning process.

Literacy approach to teaching writing

Literacy approaches focus on making classroom activities similar to what the learners need to do outside the classroom in line with the concept of authenticity discussed in Chapter 4: Teaching. Teachers need to design activities in the class that are close to literacy-based events outside the classroom which the learners would be likely to be involved in. Stewart (2010) chose the topic of migration for a class of learners who had come to live and work in the United States. Though the main target was to improve the learner’s writing, they also read and analysed a wide selection of texts related to the topic. This was an important element as it validated the learners’ own experience. One participant said:

> I have the similar experience with the authors [of the texts we read] and I could imitate the wrighting [*sic*] style for my composition.

This also led to the students seeing their writing as more than a classroom exercise.

> I hope our writing can help Americans understand that like them, we are human beings and we are here to work hard and to do good things for their country. (Stewart, 2010, p. 276)

A literacy or social practices writing lesson for a letter of complaint

1. Choosing the kind of writing
   a. The learners first discuss what they want to complain about and the purpose of the letter of complaint. This should come from the learners rather than from the teacher and reflect the learners' own lives.
2. Identifying resources
   a. The learners discuss what they already know about letters of complaint and what they need to know.
   b. Learners now discuss how they will get the information that they need, often from the teacher but also from other sources.
   c. The learners then do what they need to do to get the information they need. This might include reading timetables or photographs of the number of people on a bus.
3. Drafting the letter
   a. The learners in groups or individually draft a letter.
   b. In groups or with the help of the teacher, the learners produce a final version of the letter, often from more than one person.
4. Participating in communication
   a. The learners send their letters of complaint to the relevant authorities.

Activities-associated literacy approaches to teaching writing

Autobiographical writing

Autobiographical writing is important in literacy approaches as an acknowledgement of the role of learners' histories in their language learning. Park (2013) used autobiographical writing with a group of adult language learners in the United States. She asked her learners to produce a portfolio of autobiographical writing about the themes of (1) family and early schooling, (2) initial experience in the United States, (3) experience of learning English in the United States and (4) reflection on the writing project. She found a lot of variation in how learners responded to this but it helped learners develop aspects of language knowledge more often associated with produce and genre approaches:

> I had acquired a lot of useful techniques about writing. For example, I learned how to use subordinate clauses in paragraph, so that they wouldn't make your writing too monotonous. (Park, 2013, p. 342)

It also helped establish their own identity.

> I think the more important thing is that I write the real me. It made me think a lot, I see many changes happened to me. (Park, 2013, p. 343)

Finally, it served as a way of focussing their attention on what they wanted to achieve.

> I was able to organize my list to arrive to my final goal in the United States. So I know what is first and what I need to do to achieve those goal. (Park, 2013, p. 342)

Using a class blog

Blogs are used in many writing classes but particularly literacy approaches because they provide opportunities for learners to communicate in an authentic way and involve texts with multiple authors. Simpson (2013) describes the use of a blog as part of an intermediate class for people who had come to live in the UK. The opening post read:

> Hello everyone and welcome to our class blog. This is a place to practice your writing. we will use this throughout the year. first, click the comment icon. write the most important thing you learned last week. Say why this is important to you. second, look at this post. There are some mistakes. What are they? (Simpson, 2013, p. 198)

For homework, the teacher would set a question and the learners responded to that question, for example,

> [Teacher] Last week you had only 7 spellings to learn. Do you get everything correct? If not, why not? Did you spend enough time studying? Or is there another reason?
>
> [Learner] Yes, my all spellings are correct. No, I don't think so enough time spend in study because I have too much housework and my son keep busy to me. (Simpson, 2013, p. 189)

The teacher used the blog in class, and the learner from the interaction above wrote the following book review.

> [Learner]TYPE OF BOOK: Romance
>
> The setting of this book is in England and the Greek Island of
>
> Santorini (A Place in the Sun).
>
> This books main plot is How people fall in love, what is they expecting to there partner. Some men play with womens heart, they broken there heart and they can't bother. [Victoria and Ben]
>
> [Teacher] Very interesting Shahedah. Remember to put a space after a comma and full stop :) Also, can you say something about your opinion of this book? Did you like the characters? Did you like the story?
>
> [Learner] It's my common mistek, I'm always forgoten. Sorry. I like this book beacause it's gave me infomation about greek Island, riletionship, differant tipes people. I like victoria's and Kelly's characters. Intresting story. (Simpson, 2013, p. 192)

The blog encouraged learners to write. The learner who produced the book report said she liked the blog because it was public, the teacher and the students could comment on her work, and she could read other students' blog entries and use them as models for her own writing.

Feedback

As a teacher in Malaysia, I often spent my evenings with a stack of thirty or so exercise books and gradually worked my way through them with my red pen. One of my learners complained that it looked as if someone had been bleeding over his homework and my good intentions often discouraged my learners and had little impact on their writing. So this section discusses ways of providing feedback that will have more impact. The two most important issues are what to give feedback on and how to give that feedback and two less important issues are when to give feedback and who should be giving the feedback.

Activity 14.4. What do you give feedback on?

Imagine that you are a teacher of English working with learners aged between 16 and 18. The learners have been asked to write a short piece of writing answering the question 'How to live a healthy life?' This is what one of your learners has produced. What feedback would you give to this learner? You can write on the text or in the margins and you can include some comments at the bottom of the piece of writing if you want.

Healthy is the most important thing in the lives. Without healthy, people cannot do anything els. Money can almost buy everything, but not healthy. If healthy is very important for us, why some people keep doing bad things to damage their health? We all know smoking, drinking, taking drugs and other things that will hurt our body, but some people still keep doing those every day. People need to realized how important to maintain their health, so they won't regret in the future. Daily exercise, good eating habit and rest can help us to maintain our healthy. Therefore, we need to remember that it's never too late to change! If you are doing something that is hurting your body, stop it before too late!

What to give feedback on

Feedback on learners' writing generally has one of four often overlapping aims:

- evaluation (does the writing reach the required standard);
- criticism (what is bad about the writing);
- suggestion (how can the writing be improved); and
- praise (what is good about the writing). (Hyland & Hyland, 2001)

The first aim is addressed in Chapter 6 'Evaluation and Assessment', but the other aims are covered here. Teachers tend to give much more negative than positive feedback. Lee (2009, p. 17) found over 90 per cent of feedback was about weaknesses and, while Hyland and Hyland (2001) found more praise (44 per cent), many positive comments were followed by something negative.

> References very good. Two small problems. (1) Bibliography (at end of essay) – include initials of author. (2) Be careful about referencing inside the essay. Avoid said. (Hyland & Hyland, 2001, p. 192)

The focus on the negative is partly a reflection of the fact that improving learners' writing abilities implies identifying aspects for improvement as well as what is being done well. However, it is important to remember that feedback is not just about the writing but also about learners' overall motivation. See

Chapter 3: Teaching. Some students will feel the need for positive comments, like my Malaysian student but that other students may feel like this:

> I think I've already got enough confidence so I don't need any more good comments. The problem, um, I want development, so I want to know the weaknesses most. (Hyland, 1998, p. 280)

Teachers have a range of options when they are providing feedback on mistakes in student writing.

1. Identify all mistakes
2. Identify no mistakes
3. Identify some mistakes

Some education institutions have policies that say all errors should be identified (Lee, 2009), and this is often a popular policy with parents but is difficult to apply in practice. Teachers would need to be very brave to go for option two but some of research suggests that improvements will happen without correct. See Chapter 9 on 'Grammar'. Many teachers go for option three but then need to decide what criteria they adopt to make the selection.

Activity 14.5. Selective feedback

Look back at the sample writing in Activity 14.4 and identify the principles you used in deciding what to provide feedback on. To what extent did you use one of the following principles? Do you use these principles in your current practice?

a) Frequency, for example, the learner makes a lot of mistakes with 'healthy' (though the learners does get it right once).

b) Errors and not mistakes. Some teachers distinguish between errors, when the learner does not know the rule, and mistakes, where the learner knows the rule but forgets it. In English, we use the base form of the verb after to, for example, to go, to look. In the sample, the learner gets this right in 'to damage', 'to remember' and 'to maintain' but gets it wrong in 'to realized'. Some teachers think mistakes should be corrected as this is part of the process of automatization. In contrast, errors are an indication that learners need to be helped to notice a rule that is new for them. They would require that learners learn something new and so would require a different response from the teacher. Correction is probably not appropriate for errors.

c) Communication. Some errors make it difficult to understand what the learner means. I do not think there are any examples of this in the sample but you may disagree. This criterion can lead to debate because different people will disagree what makes it hard to understand what the learner means.

d) Importance. If a teacher is preparing learners for a particular examination or kind of writing, the teacher may feel that certain mistakes are more important. For example, I would see the use of exclamation marks in academic writing as likely to annoy a tutor and so would probably correct this. Teaching. Most teachers tend to focus on what they have just been working on. So if they have done a lot of work on organization, they are more likely to focus on problems with organization or praise examples of good organization.

How to give feedback

Feedback must be understood by the learners and teachers need to check their feedback is clear to their learners. In this example of a misunderstanding, the teacher wanted the learner Luo to add a conjunction between 'lessons' and 'play games'.

> Excerpt from Luo's first draft: They forget their homework, their lessons, only play games in the internet!
>
> Teacher's comment: Use transitions to rewrite this sentence.
>
> Excerpt from Luo's revision: **But** they forget their homework, their lessons, only play games in the internet! (Changes are highlighted in bold print.) (Yang et al., 2006, p. 190)

Spoken feedback in writing conferences can often help ensure mutual understanding but is not a guarantee (Maliborska & You, 2016, p. 11). There are also now technologies which allow for relatively easy recordings of spoken feedback where it is not possible for teachers to meet their learners face to face. There are also a range of ways of providing written feedback electronically including the blogs, wikis. Where I now work, student assignments are submitted electronically and tutors provide feedback electronically and many tutors find this more efficient than giving feedback on printed student scripts and this is becoming more common (Zheng et al., 2015).

Teachers also have to make decisions about how much information they give about particular errors. The first sentence of the learner text in Activity 14.3 reads

> Healthy is the most important thing in the lives.

Here the teacher's feedback could go from a complete rewrite, 'Health is the most important thing in our lives', to a question mark indicating that something needs to be changed. The balance here is difficult. Teachers will be trying to ensure that learners understand what the problem is but need to put in enough cognitive effort to make learning probable. If teachers provide too much help, learners can make a correction but no learning will happen. If teachers provide too little help, learners will not understand what is wrong and no learning will happen.

Many teachers use a coding system (Lee, 2009). See Table 14.3. This saves time and encourage learners to think about particular errors but it is important that learners are given training in any coding system and that the coding system is easily available to learners by, for example, a poster in class.

When to give feedback

Within a process approach, learners typically receive feedback when they have produced a first draft of their writing as well as on the completed texts. This means that learners can respond to the feedback

Table 14.3 A coding system for providing feedback

Spelling error	sp	Preposition	prep
word order error	wo	Wrong word	ww
verb form error	V	Missing word	/
tense error	T	Subject/verb concord	SV
article error	Art	Sentence structure	SS

they receive within a short time frame and this may help them to proceduralize their knowledge about language better than using the feedback on another piece of writing. The evidence for improvements between first and second drafts is strong (e.g. Yang et al., 2006). The evidence of improvement in later pieces of writing is less clear but positive (e.g. Hyland, 1998).

Who should give feedback?

Traditionally feedback has been provided by the tutor, but feedback can be provided by other learners in the class or by using online resources. Peer feedback has been tried in many contexts but most often with adults, and the results have largely been positive. If you are hoping to try this out with your learners, learners will generally need to be trained on how to give feedback and given a structure for their feedback. Learners prefer feedback from their teacher to feedback from peers (Yang et al., 2006) and made more improvement as a result of teacher than peer feedback, but the learners benefitted from peer feedback, particularly about the content rather than grammar and vocabulary. Peer feedback also encouraged learner autonomy.

Many learners have access to internet resources through laptops, tablets and smart phones but may need support to use these effectively. Saadat et al. (2016) give the example of a learner who is not sure whether to write 'in accordance with' or 'in accordance by'. This can be checked by using online dictionaries (see Chapter 10: Vocabulary) or concordances (see Chapter 9: Grammar) or in the archives of online discussion groups. In the same way many resources now exist which can help learners to check their grammar (Barrot, 2022; Koltovskaia, 2022), feedback of writing can be provided by artificial intelligence (Yao et al., 2021) and in the next few years, teacher will need to develop strategies to help learners make effective use of Large Language Modules such as Chat GPT (Kasai et al., 2023; Yang et al., 2023; Yang et al., 2022).

Summary

This chapter has looked the teaching of writing in terms of three main questions:

1. What is writing (to identify the aim of the writing lesson)
2. How do people learn to write (to understand what learners are doing when they learn to write)
3. How can we teach writing (to help teachers design writing lessons)

The chapter examined each of these questions in terms of four theories or approaches to writing: product, process, genre and literacy. The approaches are not alternatives but, as a group, give us a reasonably complete way of thinking about teaching writing lessons. The sections on each theory identified differences in the aims, views of learning and organization of lessons. The section on teaching also looked at what feedback teachers might provide on and the ranges of ways in which feedback can be given.

Activity 14.6. Discussion

What would you suggest that the teacher in this context does to help the student improve their writing?

At my university I teach the subject English Language I teach first-year students doing their degrees in English language teaching, translation and research. In fact, in the writing class students analyse model academic paragraphs from the writing textbooks, *considering* the writer-reader relationship, the purpose for writing and the specific lexico-grammatical elements. The students write drafts at home and I give them written feedback on their drafts using the correction symbols. i.e. I highlight students' mistakes without providing the right answer so that students use English dictionaries, the Internet and other learning resources to spot and self-correct the mistake.

However, when checking students' second drafts, I have noticed that my students fail to correct some of the most serious lexico-grammatical mistakes. In fact, although spelling, verb tense and punctuation mistakes made in the first drafts are usually corrected in the second drafts, other mistakes are either not corrected or incorrectly changed.

Further reading

Harmer (2004) focusses on process and genre approaches to writing but provides a clear introduction. Mott-Smith et al. (2020) is a straightforward introduction to ideas about teaching writing and has a good section on responding to learner writing. If you are interested in the use of technology in writing, Deane and Guasch's (2015) is a collection of chapters about different uses of technology, with a useful section on collaborative writing. Hyland (2022) is a more academic approach and covers research and theories about writing. On specific theories and approaches, Paltridge (2001) covers the application of genre to language learning generally and Ivanič (1998), Lillis (1998) and Kern (2000) explore the contribution of ideas about literacy to teaching and learning writing. Wingate (2015) also works within a literacy framework and focusses on how it relates to issues of inclusion in higher education. As the section on feedback may suggest, I would expect a lot of developments related to the use of technology in writing in the next few years.

Chapter 15

Listening

Listening can lay claim to being the skill to which least attention is paid. Listening is often undervalued because, like reading, it is a receptive skill and, like speaking, is often not part of the assessment procedures by which learner development and teacher effectiveness are measured. However, listening is very important in the learning process and is central to oral communication. The receptive nature of listening means that it is not always obvious how listening happens or how people learn to listen, and listening lessons often consist mainly of practice rather than teaching. This chapter attempts to respond to these issues by addressing three questions:

1. What is listening?
2. How do people learn to listen?
3. How can we teach people to listen?

Activity 15.1. Listening in other languages

If you have learnt to listen in a more than one language, reflect on what the experience of learning was like? What aspects of listening did you find most challenging and what was easier?

If you do not have experience of learning to listen in other languages, listen to someone speaking a language you do not know. Can you make any sense of what you hear? What strategies do you use?

Are there any similarities between the problems you have in listening to other languages that parallel the problems your learners have in listening to English?

What is listening?

Listening is a physiological, psycholinguistic and social activity. This section mainly describes the psycholinguistic listening process but remember two things. First, the conventions of written text make

it easier to describe the listening process as a linear process drawing on different kinds of knowledge, from what is often called bottom information all the way up to top information to make sense of the input. In actual fact, the listening is non-linear. Second, for expert users of English, many of the processes described happen extremely fast and without any conscious effort, and so most expert users are not aware of them.

> Beginning-level L2 listeners, . . . have limited language knowledge; therefore, little of what they hear can be automatically processed. They need to consciously focus on details of what they hear, and given the limitations of working memory and the speed of speech, comprehension suffers.
> (Vandergrift, 2004, pp. 5–6)

Learners perceive speakers of English as speaking very fast because the learners' listening processes are struggling to keep up rather than because English speakers talk particularly quickly.

When I discussed reading in Chapter 13, I used Grabe's division between different kinds of knowledge (Grabe & Stoller, 2020, p. 12): bottom and top knowledge, and this also works for listening. Field offers a two-stage models which more or less covers the same areas.

> Decoding: translation of the speech signal into speech sounds, words and clauses, and finally into a literal meaning
>
> Meaning building: adding to the bare meaning provided by decoding and relating it to what has been said before.

What follows is based on Field's stages, but I am dividing decoding into three parts: constructing phonemes and syllables; words and clauses or parsing. However, decoding is preceded by physiological stages. The physiological stages cover how we get the sound waves that are produced by speakers, the substance of listening, into our heads. This stage normally only goes wrong if there is a physical problem with the signal or a physiological problem with some part of the ear. So a listener may fail to understand something because the speaker's voice is too soft or because the listener's ear is too full of wax. If there are no physiological problems, we end up with what Field describes as the input or speech stream (2008, p. 126). Field says:

> What reaches our ears is not a string of words or phrases or even a sequence of phonemes. It is a group of acoustic features. . . . We must not think of the words or phonemes of connected speech as transmitted from speaker to listener. It is the listener who has to turn the signal into units of language.
> (2008, p. 127)

Once the input reaches the section of the brain called the phonological loop, it is ready to be decoded.

Decoding

Constructing phonemes and syllables

The perception or decoding stage starts when listeners use their knowledge of the phonology of the language, often described as bottom knowledge, to interpret the substance, the phonetic data,

as phonemes. Unfortunately, phonemes are not pronounced in the same way. The different ways of saying one phoneme are described as allophones. So if you produce the letter ‘p’ in ‘pit’ with your hand in front of your mouth, you will find that you produce a puff of air while the ‘p’ in ‘spit’ does not produce a puff. However, listeners hear these physically distinct phenomena as the same sound in English. The sound [p] with or without aspiration can count as the phoneme /p/. See Chapter 7: Pronunciation.

Once listeners have constructed the phonemes, they group them into syllables, though in some cases they may by-pass phonemes and go straight to syllables. Syllable construction is difficult in English. For example, Japanese has about 70 different syllables, and English is said to have up to 3,000 (MacWhinney, 2008, p. 345).

Words

Once listeners have constructed syllables, they need to convert these into words. The influence of written language has led to two misconceptions about spoken language. The first is that it is easy to identify words. Identifying words in written text is generally easy. 'Not happy' is two words because of the space between 'not' and happy' and the 'unhappy' is one because there are no spaces. Spoken language does not work like this, and anyone who listens to a language that they do not know will notice how difficult it is to decide when one word ends and another begins.

A second issue is that the regularity of written language encourages the view that the same word is normally said in the same way. Unfortunately in spoken language, this is not true. See Table 15.1. The listener has to recognize all these different strings of phonemes as the same word.

Deciding where one word ends and another begins, what Rost (2016, p. 29) describes as segmentation (is /fɔːrkændəlz/ 'four candles’ or 'fork handles'?), and whether two strings of phonemes are the realizations of the same word what Rost describes as variation (2011, p. 30) (Table 15.1), are key to listeners constructing words from what they hear.

Segmentation

The main cue for deciding where a word begins in English is stress. Like many languages, English syllables are either stressed or unstressed. In a word like 'cooker', 'cook' is stressed and '-er' is unstressed. Unstressed syllables usually contain the vowels /ə/ or /ɪ/. About 90 per cent of content or lexical words typically begin with a stressed syllable (Field, 2008, p. 30; Rost, 2011, p. 36). Immediately below is the first part of a nursery rhyme 'Mary had a little lamb', written without spaces to reflect the lack of gaps in spoken language but with the syllables marked for stress by the use of capital letters:

MAryHADaLITTleLAMBItsFLEECEwasWHITEasSNOW

Table 15.1 Different pronunciations of 'restaurant'

/ˈrɛstərɑnt/
/ˈrɛstərɑn/
/ˈrɛstrɑn/
/ˈrɛstrn̩/

The stress here is a fairly reliable way of finding the start of the content words. However, nursery rhymes have survived because they are relatively easy to understand, and so it might be expected that they would have a regular link between syllables and words. But even here, this not true. ‘Had’, which would normally be treated as a function rather than a content word, is stressed here. If this were not a nursery rhyme perhaps, it would be said more like 'MAry’d a LITTle LAMB’. It is also clear that stress is less effective in helping listeners decide where the end of a content word appears. Is the word 'had' or 'hada'? Is it 'fleece' or 'fleecewas'? If the same rule is applied to the first sentence of the previous paragraph, identifying the words gets a bit more complicated.

TheSTRESSisaFAIRlyreLIableWAYofFINDingtheSTARToftheCONtentWORDS.

So listeners must be using other strategies. The most likely are, first, a knowledge of functional words such as 'a', 'its', 'was' and 'as' in 'Mary had a little lamb' and 'the', 'is', 'a' again, and 'of' in the other sentence. There are many fewer functional words than lexical words and they are also much more common so it is reasonable to assume users of a language learn these words early on. In addition, they are not usually stressed so when users listen to English they can use these words to identify the boundaries of the lexical or content words. A combination of the assumption that content or lexical words start with a stressed syllable and knowledge of the function words of English would identify all the words in 'Mary had a little lamb'. Chapter 7: Vocabulary discussed function and lexical/content words.

For the second sentence (‘The stress here is a fairly reliable way . . .’) language users would also need to rely on a knowledge of prefixes and suffixes (Chapter 10: Vocabulary), or, more technically, bound morphemes, such as ‘-ly’, ‘re-’ and ‘-ing’. Again, these are a relatively small group of items and appear fairly frequently so it is plausible that language users learn to construct these morphemes (Chapter 9: Grammar) fairly early on and use this knowledge to identify word boundaries.

The extent to which learners know about stress, functions words and suffixes/affixes in English will vary enormously. This is partly because of their knowledge about English but also the ways in which other language they use cue the identification of words. For example, Russian indicates the ends of some words by the use of an unvoiced consonant (Nathan, 2008, p. 56), and French typically has the stress on the last syllable (Nathan, 2008, p. 57) so the extent to which this is an issue in a particular class will depend on who the learners are and what they know.

Variation

The various possible pronunciations of 'restaurant' in Table 15.1 one above illustrates several of the problems in identifying a word. Often when learners are first exposed to a word, they hear the full or citation form. For 'actually' this will be /æktjʊəlɪ/ but, as the differences between this way of saying the word and the most causal /æʃlɪ/ shows, citation forms are not always what listeners will hear. The two most important changes are elision, where a sound is left out (as in the omission of /ʊə/ in the most casual form of 'actually'), and assimilation, where a sound changes because of the sounds around it, as in the change from /tj/ to / tʃ/. See Chapter 7 ‘Pronunciation’ for more information on elision and assimilation.

Parsing

The parsing stage is where listeners identify clauses. Listeners need first to segment the words they have identified into clauses. For example, here is a sentence from the start of a lecture on psychology. The syllables in capitals are stressed.

> We're basically DONE with HIStory, we're DONE with METHods and we're going ON to biopsychology. (Briggs et al., 2002)

The process of parsing draws on a range of different kinds of knowledge but two of the most important here are intonation and grammar. In the sample above, we have three intonation units:

> We're basically DONE with HIStory,
>
> we're DONE with METHods
>
> and we're going ON to biopsyCHOLogy.

Intonation units normally end with a rising or falling tone at the end of the sentence. Here 'history' and 'methods' would typically be said with a rising tone so listeners would expect there to be something more to come in the sentence. In contrast, 'biopsychology' would normally be said with a falling tone, and this indicates the end of the sentence (Brazil, 1985; Dalton & Seidlhofer, 1994).

At the same time, listeners will be using their grammatical information. So 'we're' can be followed by an optional adverb and then either an adjective, an -ing participle, for example, eating or an -en participle, for example, eaten. This knowledge will activate the groups of words labelled as adverbs, adjectives and participles in the listeners' heads. This will make it easier for them to process the words 'basically', 'done' and 'going' when the speaker says them.

Problems identifying word and syllables

Decoding is complex and can go wrong, particularly where people speak two languages. For example, the phonetic substance, roughly transcribed as [ʒʌtʌdɒ], may be heard by an English speaker as 'Shut a door' or as a French speakers as 'Je t'adore' (I adore you). This is a slightly facetious example but it illustrates the need to remember that what a learner hears is not necessarily the same as what the teacher hears.

Meaning building and genre

The next section looks at how listeners progress from the words and sentences to the meaning of the message. Listeners usually assume that what another person is saying, it is true and then try to imagine what it could be true of (Rost, 2016, p. 58). They draw on a range of different kinds of information when they build meaning. There have been various attempts to describe this. Here I use the framework of genre. See Chapter 11: Discourse. So what follows is divided into three sections: the purpose for listening, the structure of what you are listening to and the people involved in the listening event, the discourse community.

We are not yet as a stage where a course designer can look at a list of all possible listening situations in the way that we can for grammar. Where you have a group of learners with specific needs, it may be possible to identify the set of listening genres that they will need to get engaged in but, for more general learners, deciding what should be taught is difficult.

Purpose

The most important feature of a genre is purpose. The purpose of students attending lectures is to understand the main ideas that the lecturer is expressing and to make notes that they can use later in their studies. The purposes will be different for other genres, for example, when listeners are in a conversation, they probably just want a general idea of what is being said but when someone is asking for the time at which a train leaves, they want the precise time. A related approach looks at the purposes for which people listen. Wilson (2008, p. 10) sees this as to do with whether listeners want to get a general idea of what is being said or more specific information. For example, when you listen to a weather forecast, you will probably focus on what the weather is like in your area, and if you are planning a barbecue, possible what the weather is like at a particular time. When you listen to the new you may want to get a general idea about what is happening or have a focus on a particular story. The purpose may also relate to what you are going to do with the information. If you listen to a lecture, you may want to be able to use the knowledge you get for writing an assignment. If you watch a film, you will be less concerned about how much you remember of the film later on and more about how it makes you feel as you watch it. With social interactions, you may want to make an arrangement for an event at some point in the future but you may just want to maintain social relations rather than get any new information.

Discourse structure

Listening events can be either one or two-way. Watching a video online or listening to a podcast or the news on the radio would be one way and a conversation, either face to face or online would be two-way. Both one-way and two-way can be audio only (e.g. a phone conversation or listening to the radio) or with visual information (e.g. a face to face conversation or watching a video). For many kinds of listening, it is also possible to identify stages within the listening event. For example, in an academic lecture, there will be an introduction and associated texts such as handouts or PowerPoint slides accompanying the lecture. Similarly, a service encounter will normally have some kind of greeting and the beginning.

A related aspect of structure is how the listening events relate to the world. In both listening and reading, this is sometimes described as schema. See Chapter 13: Reading. The essential idea here is that once the concept of say psychology is foregrounded in the listeners' head, then a range of associated concepts and vocabulary will also be activated. So, if a lecturer mentions 'History' and 'Methods', these words would be relatively easily understood by anyone for whom this was part of an activated schema in which a psychology had branches such as the history of psychology or methods used to investigate psychology.

Discourse community

One aspect of genres is the roles of those involved. Bell (1984, p. 160) identifies four possible roles of a listener:

Addressees – the person who is being spoken to and who has the same right to speak and the speakers e.g. a conversation between friends.

Auditors – listeners who are being spoken to but can only speak occasionally e.g. an academic lecture.

Overhearers – Listeners whom the speaker knows are present but are not being spoken to e.g. members of the public at a criminal trial.

Eavesdroppers – Listeners whom the speaker does not know are present but are not being spoken and have no right to speak e.g. people listening to a conversation between strangers on a bus.

These roles are important in listening because they indicate who can speak and when. This is related to the one-way two-way distinction I made in the section on discourse structure.

Using all sources of information

Listeners do not draw on one source of information and then another. Listening is messier than this. Students attending the psychology lecture above have quite a lot of knowledge about what they are going to hear before a word is spoken. For example, they know the topic, that is it part of series of lectures and, if they have studied the course outline, know that this lecture is about biopsychology.

Top-down and bottom-up

The description of the listening process in the section of decoding and meaning building followed a sequence described as bottom up. Knowledge about phonology is usually regarded a bottom information and knowledge about genres is top information. This approach is often contrasted with a top-down approach, where listeners start with say, contextual knowledge. However, most if not all, listening involves listeners in making sense of the acoustic signal by using all kinds of knowledge. Without top-down information, listening would be very difficult and without bottom-up information it would be impossible. As Staehr says

> If listeners have not recognized a certain number of words in the input though bottom-level processing, they will not be able to draw on top-level cues, access the relevant contextual information, and construct an adequate meaning representation of the text. (Stæhr, 2009, p. 581)

In the psychology lecture, the top-level information is not enough. The listeners need to be able to identify the phonemes, syllables and words that the lecturer is producing if they are going to achieve their purpose in attending the lecture.

A course which just taught learners bottom knowledge and how to use it would be extremely boring and probably not very effective. A course which focussed on the top end might be interesting but would not necessarily help learners to improve their listening. The real benefit of answering the question of how people listen and identifying the knowledge that is used in listening is as a diagnostic tool. Course designers and teachers need to decide what areas of knowledge are presenting problems to their learners, and this should form the aim of the listening lesson. Once the aims of the units of teaching

have been identified, then teachers need to consider the topic of the next section, 'How do people learn to listen?'

Activity 15.2. The listening process

Try reading these sentences with no pauses aloud to a friend and see what they write down.

- **a.** Necks day
- **b.** Wipe bird
- **c.** Tem men
- **d.** Bag cold
- **e.** Streak credibility.

How do people learn to listen?

Chapter 3 identified three approaches to learning a language: mentalism, cognitivism and socio-cultural and these approaches also apply to learning to listen.

Mentalism

Krashen's (1989, 1981) ideas of language development have made two key contributions to our ideas about how people learn to listen. First, affective factors are central. Learners who fail to understand a word when they listen cannot generally listen again, and this can lead to stress. Teachers need to consider giving learners more control. See the Teaching section of this chapter.

Second, learners only learn from comprehensible input. Giving learners authentically produced texts that they cannot understand will not improve their listening. Whether a text is comprehensible depends on an interaction between the text and the listeners so the most important aspect here is making sure that the texts are of an appropriate level for the particular group of learners. This is often difficult to do, but the interaction hypothesis suggests one way of doing this. Long (1983, 1985) argued that when people are engaged in face to face interactions, they often negotiate their way around possible incomprehension, and this negotiation can make the input comprehensible. This provides a rationale for the use of two-way interaction in the listening classroom, but it is less easy to apply this notion to one-way listening. However, some attempts to do this will be discussed in the teaching section.

Cognitivism

Cognitivism sees explicit teaching as important. The teaching of cultural and lexical knowledge is often part of listening classes, and this relates to cognitivism. Recent critiques of listening classes have focussed on the lack of declarative knowledge and have portrayed listening classes as being

about practising listening rather than about learning to listen (Field, 1998; White, 2006). One important response to this is the idea that learners need to be taught strategies for learning (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford & Amerstorfer, 2018). Strategies are typically divided up into three groups:

Cognitive	e.g. inferring the meaning of what you hear by building on the words you know
Socio -affective	e.g. making sense of what you heard by asking the speaker to repeat themselves (the social element) or by trying not to worry about what you do not understand (the affective side)
Meta-cognitive	e.g. doing activities which are not directly about listening but which will help you when you listen, e.g. deciding to concentrate on the start of what is said.

Goh makes a distinction between strategies such as cognitive strategies, the general terms we have just discussion, sub-strategies, such as inference, and tactics (a specific way of carrying out a strategy) such as using contextual clues. If a learner decided to use a meta-cognitive strategy to listen to a television documentary, the learners would then select a particular sub-strategy, such as pre-listening and a particular tactic of previewing the content, by reading a description of the documentary in a TV listening magazine of webpage.

There is some debate about how well this kind of a list reflects what learners actually do. Rees-Miller (1993) argued that the strategies that are used will vary widely between different learners. Lynch, for example, describes the term socio-affective as 'ragbag' (2009, p. 81). While there is now some support for the teaching strategies (e.g. Tudor, 2001; Vandergrift & Goh, 2012; Vandergrift & Tafaghodtari, 2010), many learners will already use a range of strategies, and teachers need to remember that the strategies they think are most useful will not necessarily be the most useful for their learners.

Learners can use their declarative knowledge less as they move from controlled use of skills to automatic or autonomous use of skills as a result of practice. You learn to listen, in other words, by listening. However, this is more than an argument for lots of practice. The change from controlled to automatic listening frees up mental power. When listeners have to think about controlling their actions, this requires a lot of cognitive effort but as the actions become more automatic, they need less and so they are able to do other things. Many learners will start noticing new things about the listening process, and this will start a new learning event. The idea of deliberate practice (see Chapter 4) suggests that learners need to be motivated and focussed when they do their practice if they are to benefit.

Socio-cultural

Socio-cultural theory sees learning as a process of interaction to develop 'effective ways of dealing with the world' (van Lier, 2000, pp. 246–7). A successful interaction is learning. Teachers need to provide opportunities for interactions and support them by providing scaffolding either from other learners or from themselves, or provide artefacts that the learners can use to engage successfully. The two insights that socio-cultural theory applies here are firstly what happens in the classroom needs to reflect the

learners' target listening contexts and that second, learners need to control over how they listen. This last point relates very closely to the cognitive arguments for teaching strategies.

Activity 15.3. Learning and teaching listening

1. How similar is the listening that happens in English classrooms that you are familiar with similar to the kinds of listening that happens outside the classroom?
2. What aspect of your learners' listening would you like most to improve?

How can we teach people to listen?

Styles in teaching listening have changed in the last fifty or sixty years. Goh (2008) sees this as changes in what people listened to (moving from the teacher reading out written texts, to recordings of 'authentic' listening interactions) and the activities learners carried out (from minimal pairs discrimination activities to prediction exercises based on background knowledge to a meta-cognitive activities involved strategies and reflection).

The comprehension approach

The rationale behind the comprehension approach is that learners get better at listening with practice. Typically learners are exposed to texts which have been produced for non-language learning purposes of texts. However, most language learners will not have the same decoding and meaning making knowledge of the target audience so the learners will need support. Underwood (1989, p. 28 et seq.) describes a three part lesson, a pre-listening stage 'where the context is established' (1989, p. 28), a listening stage which covers 'what students are asked to do during the time that they are listening to the text' (1989, p. 45) and post listening, which covers 'all the work related to a particular listening test . . . done after the listening is completed' (1989, p. 74).

The comprehension approach is often more complicated than this. So the teacher might start with pre-teaching of vocabulary and background information. Immediately after, or perhaps during a break in the listening, learners will be asked to answer general or gist comprehension questions. Typically, teachers will then play the recording again and ask the learners to do some more detailed comprehension questions. After the listening activities are complete, learners do an extension activity, for example, a writing or speaking activity on the same topic.

The comprehension approach offers teachers a useful template for listening classes, and some learners do benefit from this. Teachers who are new to teaching may find it a good way of organizing a listening class. However, the comprehension approach has two broad weaknesses: first, the activities used for listening are different from listening outside the classroom and, second, it gives very little attention to teaching. This means there are two complementary ways in which language teachers can

improve on the comprehension approach. They can create lessons which are closer to listening outside the classroom, what I label the authentic listening approach, informed by broadly socio-cultural views of learning, and they can create opportunities in their lessons for learning and teaching, the teaching listening approach, informed broadly by cognitive theories of learning. There is nothing to stop a teacher drawing on both these strands.

Authentic listening

Goh sees the move to authentic texts as one of the features of newer ways of teaching listening. However, the authenticity she is talking about is largely product authenticity. Unfortunately, the fact that a text was not produced for language teaching purposes is no guarantee that learners will be able to process it in an authentic way. Product authenticity does not mean there will be process authenticity. Effective teaching requires a broader view of authenticity.

Outside the classroom, listeners listen to things which have some relevance to them. Where possible, learners should help choose teaching materials. In some cases, the learners' needs and wants will be clear enough for teachers to identify listening texts for their learners. Those who teach learners whose needs are not so clear, such as young learners, may need to make informed guesses about what listening texts are relevant to their learners. Once the listening materials has been selected, activities for listening should start with the purpose for listening. If I listen to a weather forecast on the radio, I will normally only want to know what the weather is where I live, and so will focus only on that information. I may want to know if it will rain because, if it does, I will need to have my party indoors. In the classroom, a focus on one geographic location is more authentic than writing a general summary of the weather. The measure of success in listener is not whether the listeners have understood everything in the text but whether they have achieved their purpose.

Second, the patterns of participation in listening classrooms are often very different from listening outside the classroom. Listening to a recording of a conversation is very different from participating in a conversation and often more difficult. What teachers say to their students may provide a more authentic listening experience for their learners than listening to a CD because of the possibility for participation. Even if the recording has other merits which mean it should be used, there are various techniques that have been developed for increasing learners' participation.

One learner might be given control of the playback device and could stop the recording when somebody or an agreed number of learners raised their hands because something is hard to understand (Lynch, 1996, p. 99). Then the learners decide what to do next. They may find from the discussion in the group that one member of the group has understood the recording and so they can go on. Alternatively, they may want to hear the problematic part of the recording again, look up something in a dictionary or ask the teacher. Another technique suggested by Lynch is indirect negotiation, where the recording includes a listener who has some problems in understanding the speaker or speakers so that learners can hear the negotiation for meaning at second hand.

All the techniques we have discussed in the authentic listening section of this chapter have been about how what happens in the class can be made part of the process of leading learners to listen more effectively beyond the classroom. However, it is important to remember that many learners have

opportunities to listen to English outside the classroom, whether in face to face interactions or through recordings of songs and films. Where learners have access to the internet, this can be a very rich source of listening activities and teachers working in such contexts need to provide the support that their learners need to help them to make use of this resource. More independent learners can be directed to websites where they can listen to English language programmes that they select, allowing them a greater degree of control than would be possible in the classroom.

Teaching listening

Teachers and commentators have come up with a range of ways of supplementing the comprehension approach so that there is more opportunity for learning and these are often structured around the notion of strategies.

It is tempting to see lists of listening strategies as kind of syllabus, but there is danger that this will lead to a decontextualized approach. Learners need to learn to choose a particular strategy to address a particular problem that they are facing, and this will depend on their own level of knowledge and skill as well as the task that they are hoping to accomplish. A strategic approach starts with a diagnosis by the teacher of the learners' listening problems. The second part then focusses on how learners can develop the skills and strategies that the diagnosis reveals.

Diagnosing learners' problems with listening

A common way of diagnosing learners' problems is for the learners to carry out a task and either the teacher or the learners identify ways in which the learners could do better. Goh and Taib (2006) suggest a three-stage lesson for younger learners.

1. Listen.

Learners listen to a conventional listening text.

2. Answer and reflect.

They answer the questions as normal and then think about.

a. What they were listening to.

b. What helped them to understand.

c. What made it harder for them to understand.

d. What did they do to try to understand.

This is meant to get individual learners to think about how they listen. This can be done individually or in groups.

3. Report and discuss.

The learners report to the whole class on the factors that influenced listening and the strategies that they used to understanding the text.

Sometimes the diagnosis stage will involve the teacher in carrying out an activity which is specifically designed to identify problems. One example of this approach to diagnosis is called the dictogloss. This is Wilson's 'dictogloss' version of the task (2003). The teacher chooses a short text at a level that can be largely understood but presents some challenges for the learners.

1. Listening – in this phase learners do three things:
1.1 listen, without note-taking, to a short passage spoken at a natural speed.
1.2 self-assess their listening comprehension.
1.3 listen two more times taking notes.

2. Reconstructing – in this phase, learners form small groups and try to reconstruct the text.

3. Discovering – in this phase learners:
3.1 compare their text with the original and attempt to classify the sources of mistakes.
3.2 assess the relative importance of their mistakes.
3.3 listen again without reading the text and assess their performance.

The process of diagnosis will provide the teachers and, sometimes the learners, with information about where the listening process is not working as well as it should, and this diagnosis forms the basis of the next stage of the listening class.

Using the diagnosis

The process of diagnosis may reveal that some learners are using strategies that other learners are not using. Often the most effective way for learners to develop a new strategy is working with other learners who are already using the new strategy. Where no one in the groups of learners has been able to address a problem, the teacher needs to provide a framework for identifying the problems that arise. Field (2008, p. 298) offers an approach which identifies four kinds of strategy:

1. Avoidance strategies mean the listeners decide that some information is not needed to achieve their purpose. For example, when you are listening to a recording of a flight announcement in an airport, deciding you will only listen to announcements related to your airline or your destination.
2. Achievement strategies mean that listeners use available information to make sense of what was said to achieve their purpose. If you are flying to Copenhagen on Eagle Airlines flight 724, but you only hear Cope and Eagle, you can probably guess that this announcement is about your flight.
3. Repair strategies involve seeking help from the speaker or other sources of information. If you are not sure which gate a flight announcement said you should go to, you can ask an official or check on an information screen.
4. The term 'pro-active strategies' means listeners decide to adopt a different approach in future so that the problem can be avoided. If listeners find numbers hard to decode, they may decide to

repeat the number of their flight aloud, or ask someone else to do that before they have to listen to the flight announcements.

This kind of framework can form a useful basis for a discussion about what strategies learners should adopt and if there is sufficient common ground, this can be used as the basis for some whole class or group teaching. If a group feels that they are not sufficiently prepared, they can practise particular strategies such as rehearsing words that might be expected to come up in a particular recording.

The diagnosis process can also lead to teaching which is not related to strategies. For example, learners who cannot distinguish between 'disguises' and 'the skies' (Field, 2008, p. 292) probably need help with their minimal pair perception of /ð/ as in 'the' and /d/ as in disguise. See the section on minimal pairs in Chapter 7: Pronunciation.

Summary

This chapter has presented a view of how listening happens as having two interacting stages, decoding and meaning building. Decoding depends on the quality of the acoustic signal and listeners' knowledge of the linguistic signal. Speakers of languages other than English may fail to recognize what is said in English for a range of reasons, varying from a lack of knowledge of English phonology to a lack of background information about what is being discussed. I drew on a range of theories of learning to make sense of how people learn to listening. Mentalism highlights the importance of affect and comprehensible input in learning. Cognitivism emphasized the need for learners to expand their knowledge and skills and then practice these until they can be used automatically. Socio-cultural approaches have emphasized the importance of learners' interactions through listening in a supportive environment.

The final section examined some of the ways in which listening has been taught. One common pattern in the language classroom approach is the comprehension approach with a pre-listening stage, often focussing on vocabulary and reminding learners of relevant background knowledge, a while listening activity, focussed on comprehension question and a follow-up activity related to a skill other than listening. I also examined some ways in which the comprehension approach might be supplemented.

Activity 15.4. Discussion

What would you suggest that the teacher in this context does to help the student improve?

Dmitry works for a a UK-owned Investment Fund in Eastern European. He uses English on a daily basis in a variety of settings. He frequently travels on business trips to conduct negotiations with potential British or American investors and regularly takes part in business meetings with his native speaker business partners. Dmitry's general level of L2 proficiency is high. He speaks fluently and demonstrates a good command of grammatical and lexical knowledge, including specialized business vocabulary. However, his biggest challenge is related to listening skills, particular understanding native-speakers' connected speech.

Dimitry studies English in one-to-one classes run in his company. He is supposed to have three one-hour lesson a week but because of travel he often missed at least one of these lessons. His teacher is an expert use of English who speaks the same mother tongue as Dmitry. She does not have a background in finance. Lessons are normally based around the use of financial programmes recorded from the radio or TV. Typically, in the pre-listening stage, the teacher will have discussion with Dmitry about the topic and teach some key vocabulary. The while listening stage involves Dmitry listening to the recording and orally summarizing the content of the recording. Sometimes, he needs to hear the recording twice. After the recording. Dmitry will construct a written summary of the recording with the help of the teacher.

Further reading

My favourite book of listening is Field (2008) but Lynch (2009) is very good. Wilson (2008) and Nemtchinova's (2020) provides useful introductions to the teaching of listening. Goh and Vandegrift's (2022) is clear explanation of the meta-cognitive approach to teaching listening. Rost's (2016) provides a useful way into the increasing amount of researching into listening.

Chapter 16

Speaking

Introduction

Speaking is central to how language is conceived. If someone says that they can speak a language, this usually means that they can do more than just speak. However, both the fact that many people find speaking much more stressful than using the other skills and the problems that the temporary nature of oral language present for language learning explain why speaking is the last skill to be covered in this book. The chapter addresses three questions:

1. What is speaking?
2. How do people learn to speak?
3. How can we teach speaking?

What is speaking?

A speaking class or part of a class focussing on speaking should relate to a real-life communicative task with a spoken element. So, an understanding of what is involved in speaking English will help teachers to analyse their learners' performance and identify appropriate aims for pre-communicative teaching. This section is intended to help teachers do this by examining psychological, linguistic knowledge and social aspects of speaking.

Activity 16.1. Your experience of speaking

What kinds of speaking have you done in the last month?
What languages have you used?
Who have you been speaking with?
What topics have you been talking about?
What differences do you notice in speaking depending on:

a. What language you use?
b. The people whom you speak to?
c. What topic you are speaking about?

Does this enable you to say what kinds of speaking are harder and what are easier?

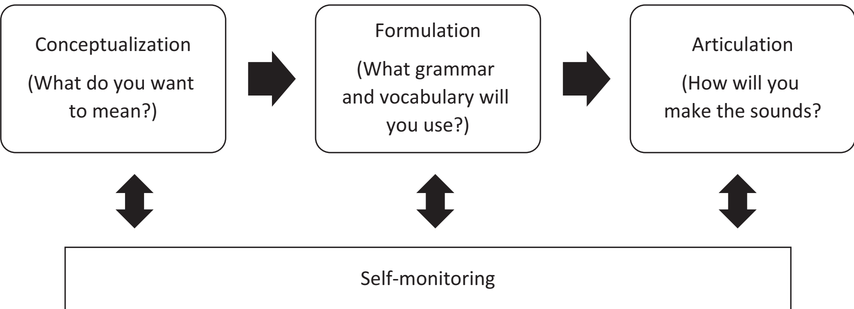

Figure 16.1 A model of speech production.

The psychology of speaking

Producing spoken language involves three stages: conceptualization (what the speaker wants to mean), formulation (expressing that meaning in the vocabulary and grammar) and articulation (producing the appropriate sounds). Speakers listening to themselves, so self-monitoring is a fourth element. See Figure 16.1 (de Bot, 1992, p. 3). For example, if a speaker wanted to explain that tomorrow is Black Friday, a day on which many shops have special offers and many people go shopping, the conceptualization would be the connection between the knowledge the speaker has about 'tomorrow' and the knowledge of 'Black Friday'. Whether this information is known or not known to other people in the conversation will help the speaker decide what to include, for example, whether the speaker can use the term 'Black Friday' by itself or with an explanation. This information is then passed onto the formulator to be put into English .

Often, formulation starts with the retrieval of the verb, in this case 'be' and the grammatical patterns that this implies, for example, subject/predicator// subject complement/optional adverbials. The words chosen might be 'Tomorrow is Black Friday', 'Black Friday is tomorrow', and 'It is Black Friday tomorrow', depending on the audience. The speaker then chooses the phonemes. The articulator uses the tongue, lips and vocal cords to produce the phonetics. This needs to happen extremely quickly to produce 'the rapid, smooth, accurate, lucid, and efficient translation of communicative intention into language under the temporal constraints of on-line processing' (Lennon, 2000, p. 26).

The linguistics of spoken English

To produce the sentence 'Tomorrow is Black Friday' requires a knowledge of the discourse, grammar, vocabulary, phonology and phonetics of English, as well as sufficient background knowledge. Speakers typically have less preparation time than writers and, generally, a live audience. The lack of planning time means that 'speakers do not usually speak in sentences (Luoma, 2004, p. 12), and so the term utterance is used about speech. But the amount of time allowed for production is the key element. The following sentence was spoken but has many of the features of written language:

> Burgess was a writer with his earliest roots and inspirations deep in popular culture, a lonely child who read out silent movie speech cards to illiterate neighbour kids in the cinema, a warily intelligent adult who addressed popular forms as an observer, a creator and one of the UK's earliest authors to embrace the possibilities of television. (Kennedy, 2017)

In contrast, the extract below was part of an online written interaction:

A: gotta go

B: ttyl[talk to you later]

A: ok (Carter & McCarthy, 2015, p. 12)

The difference here relates to the genre of the speech event. However, generally speech is unplanned, produced very rapidly and less grammatically complex than written language. The lack of planning also has an influence on the vocabulary used at the formulation stage. So speakers use vague words such as 'thingy' instead of someone's name or 'stuff' for a more specific noun and 'fillers' such as 'er' and 'you know' which give speakers time to plan what they will say next. This also leads to grammatical patterns that are not common in written language such as headers 'Black Friday, it's tomorrow' and tails structure: 'It's tomorrow, Black Friday' (Carter & McCarthy, 2006, p. 10). The speed of processing also leads to some divergences from what in normal is written language, for example, 'There's lots of things left to do' (Cullen & Kuo, 2007). See also Figure 16.2.

The fact that the audience is present for much speech also has an impact on the grammar and vocabulary that is used (Ruivivar, 2021). Some aspects of this were discussed in Chapter 11: Discourse, particularly the section on mode, and below in the section on social aspects of speaking, but this is also reflected in other ways, such as ellipsis.

A: It's lovely.

B: Good winter wine that.

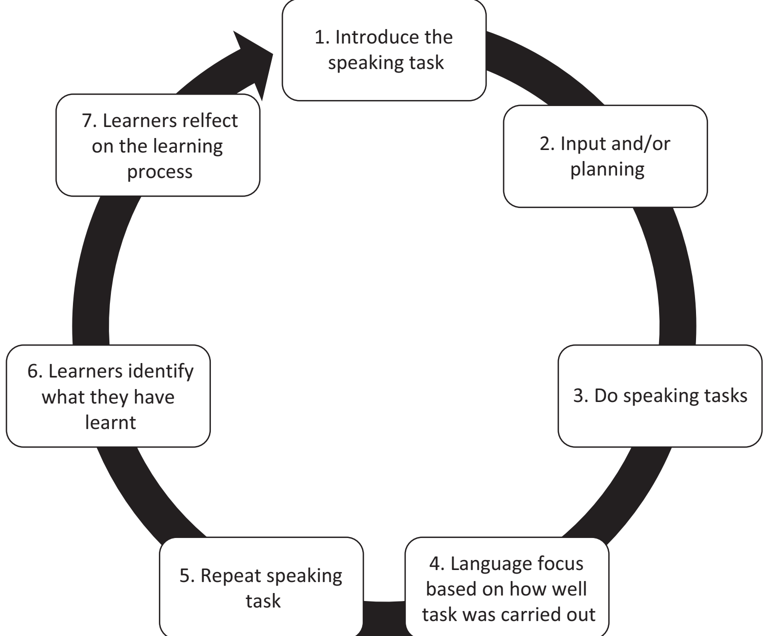

Figure 16.2 The teaching speaking cycle (Goh & Burns, 2012, p. 153).

A: A terrific one.

B: Put hairs on your chest, that one. (Carter & McCarthy, 1995, p. 147)

The non-elliptical form of the final utterance would start with 'It will', but the speaker also added the tail 'that one' to prevent misunderstanding. If learners have been exposed largely to written genres, this may be problematic, but the limited research into English as a *lingua franca* (ELF) (Seidlhofer, 2004, p. 222) suggests that these features also occur in ELF (Björkman, 2008, pp. 38–9).

Social aspects of speaking

Speaking often involves two or more speakers and so speakers need to avoid two people speaking at once. See Table 16.1. The two participants avoid overlaps, except in two places, first, right at the start where S1 says 'Okay' and second in S7. Speakers avoid overlaps by using grammatical boundaries as places where speakers may change and back channels to indicate that they do not wish to speak, for example, 'right' in S5 and 'Mhm' in utterance 8. They also use interactional communication strategies (Goh & Burns, 2012, p. 66) in the clarification request in S3 and the confirmation request in S9.

How do people learn to speak?

The theories of learning in Chapter 3 apply to learning to speak. The Monitor Model and connectionism focus on exposure. The information processing and Vygotskyan theories require more because they distinguish between to speak and speaking. The information processing model means that declarative knowledge of discourse, grammar, lexis and pronunciation may help learners, but they also need to practice their procedural knowledge so it becomes more automatic. But remember that learners bring, for example, knowledge of speech in their first language. See Activity 11.6 in Chapter 11 'Discourse'. Everyone who can speak a language will be able to use the processes outlined in Figure 16.1, but the speed at which they are able to process language will vary depending on their level of English.

The qualities of the speech that learners produce can provide some indication of the state of their declarative and procedural knowledge. Where learners cannot correct themselves, the issue is likely

Table 16.1 An example of a spoken interaction between a tutor and student

1. S1 Okay what are you working on today?
2. S2: Um, I'm in uh English um one-twenty-five, [S1: Okay] and I have um essay that I wrote and maybe you could, maybe, look at it, maybe revise it.
3. S1: Okay what was the assignment?
4. S2: Um, this one is autobiography.
5. S1: Right.
6. S2: And this one here is a synthesis essay which is based on a, essay that we read, about Columbus.
7. S1: Okay. [S2: So] Christopher Columbus?
8. S2: Mhm.
9. S1: And um these are both due for the end of this term? Is that it?
10. S2: Right right.

Source: Adapted from MICASE (Simpson et al., 1999).

to be declarative knowledge, and they may need language input; but if they are pausing for extended periods of time yet producing accurate and appropriate language, they probably need more practice.

Speaking is an affective issue because of the risk of a loss of face (see also Chapter 11: Discourse) as the learners' speech may be being evaluated by their teachers and fellow students. Some students prefer 'to stealthily read a brick-think vocabulary book hidden under the textbook of handouts in front of them' (Peng, 2014, p. 3). This is described as a lack of 'willingness to communicate'. Willingness to communicate relates to the size of audience, firstly, with talking to public groups as most stressful and talking to a single person the least, and, secondly, their relationship with the speakers, with strangers as most stressful and friends as least stressful (Macintyre, 2007). The idea has been expanded to cover individual and situational factors: cognitive (e.g. knowledge of the topic), linguistic (ability to speak English) and affective (level of anxiety) (Peng, 2014). Situational factors are also important. Teacher attitudes to correctness are key. So one student said of a teacher:

> C is a very kind person. When I speak in his class I feel comfortable and not stressed. I think what makes him different from other professors is that he is not much concerned about your pronunciation. (Zarrinabadi, 2014, p. 293)

Teaching procedures, such as allowing more time to answer questions, are important as this allows learners more planning time (Zarrinabadi, 2014, p. 293). Often, the attitudes of classmates and learners' self-rated language ability are related.

> I was kind of afraid of losing face when speaking English in from of class. [. . .] Because I often make mistakes in prepositions and grammar in my expressions, in high school my classmates often laughed at me. I am kind of scared. (Peng, 2014, p. 104)

Sometimes the culture of the classroom can reduce willingness to communicate. Creating a classroom culture which encourages willingness to communicate is an important part of enabling learners to improve their speaking.

Activity 16.2. Ease and difficulty in speaking

Can you put the following group of activities in order of difficulty from the easiest to the most difficult? What factors influence your judgement?

Group one

- **a)** A learner talks about their hometown to another learner.
- **b)** A learner records a talk about their hometown on their phone.
- **c)** A learner talks about their hometown to the whole of their class.
- **d)** A learner talks about their hometown to a group of strangers.

Group two

- **a)** A learner talks about their hometown to another learner.

b) A learner talks about their favourite music to another learner.

c) A learner talks about the history of their country to another learner.

d) A learner tells a joke to another learner.

How can we teach speaking?

Once teachers have decided their aim and considered how learners will achieve this aim, they need to identify an overall framework for the class and decide what activities would be appropriate.

Sequences in the speaking class

Teachers of speaking broadly have a choice between presentation, practice and production (PPP) (Figure 4.2) and a problem-solving sequences (Figure 4.3). However, variations on both sequences exist for the teaching of speaking. See AAA in Chapter 4. Goh and Burns (2012, p. 153) have extended the problem-solving sequence to include meta-cognitive or reflection activities. Figure 16.2 illustrates this model with distinctive elements at stages one and six. In stage one, learners think about how they might learn to speak. Learners might decide to develop their speaking by planning what they are going to say and anticipating what their interlocutor will say. The point of this stage is to help learners to think about their learning or in other develop their meta-cognitive awareness.

Stage six is also an addition to the problem-solving approach and complements stage one with the learners reflecting back on what they have learnt from the earlier stages of the cycle. Metacognition here is important but may not be included in all speaking lessons.

Activities in the speaking class

This section draws on the sequences outlined above to consider how teachers can design activities under the following headings:

speaking tasks
language focus (awareness)
language focus (appropriation) and
reflection.

Speaking tasks

The central element in a speaking class is the learners engaging in a communicative task similar to spoken communication outside the classroom, such as the service encounters discussed in Chapter 11. The choice of task may depend on the needs of the learners, the syllabus or the teaching materials. Once the task has been identified, teachers will need to consider how best to set up the task in the class so that learners can carry out the task reasonably successfully, bearing in mind what the learners

Table 16.2 Task preparation

In this session, practice your interview protocol on others in the class. Make a recording of your interviews. One of you asks the questions. The other observes and makes notes about any difficulties. You may need to elaborate on the actual question items you have prepared. If your respondent does not understand the question, rephrase it and think how you can clarify it for the final version. The aim is to practice your protocol and get feedback from others in the class about how easy or difficult it is to understand the interview items. Help your peers by giving them good feedback and by explaining how you understood the question items. When you have finished, listen again to your recording. How did you ask the questions and how could you improve on them? Revise any questions you need to.

Source: Basturkmen (2002, p. 29).

already know (Swan, 1985b, p. 86). See Chapter 4. Where learners do not have the necessary language knowledge and skills to engage meaningfully with the task, the teachers will need to provide some form of language support before learners do the task. This might be providing relevant vocabulary but could be much more extensive. A discussion about appropriate levels of punishment for different crimes might be preceded by the listing of crimes in order of seriousness (e.g. stealing a book compared with exceeding the speed limit in a car).

Learners can also be given time for planning, something which will allow them to draw fully on what they know. A similar idea is built into the Willis and Willis suggestion that learners first carry out the task in pairs or groups before doing the task to the whole class. A more extended version of this kind of task preparation to help learners develop the skills necessary to carry out research interviews is described in Table 16.2.

Identifying the focus of the language input

Most approaches to language teaching allow teachers to identify the focus on the language input in advance, and this allows time for preparation and burns. Where a task-based teaching approach is used with large classes, teachers may have to pre-select language input (Goh & Burns, 2012, pp. 226–227). However, within most task-based teaching approaches, the language input section will depend on what the teacher's monitoring suggests they need help with.

In some contexts, learners can analyse their own language production. Lynch (2001, 2007) made audio recordings of pairs of learners carrying out a role play in which they asked a tutor for an extension for their assignment. Each pair transcribed what they had said and reformulated it out of class. The teacher also reformulated the transcript and discussed the differences between the learners' and teacher's transcript was discussed with the pair of learners. The learners found this activity motivating and noticed many of the grammatical oddities. Although this kind of activity may be better for higher-level language learners, this is an effective way of identifying the language focus.

Language input (awareness)

Once the language focus is clear, teachers will need to decide if learners lack knowledge (i.e. declarative knowledge/ learner awareness) or need to use their knowledge better (i.e. related to the automatization of procedural knowledge and appropriation). Learners can be helped to become aware of aspects of language by exposure to language samples. For example, if learners are learning to tell stories in

English, the teacher might tell a story and ask learners to focus on, for example, the start and end of the story, an aspect of grammar or pronunciation. This might also be provided by more expert learners in the class. The same function might be achieved by using an audio or video recording, which learners themselves might be able to find online. Transcripts of spoken English are useful for this because their relative permanence allows more time for noticing activities.

Where the learners' performance sounds like written language, teachers may decide that learners need to be more aware of the features of spoken English, for example, by teaching about features of spoken English, such as the use of heads. An alternative approach would be to expose the learners to an extract of authentically produced spoken language of their target variety. Such transcripts may be included in the course book or available through online corpora such as MICASE (Simpson et al., 1999). Timmis (2005) suggests a four-stage approach:

1. Cultural access: relating the context of the transcript to the learners' culture.
2. Global understanding: ensuring that the learners have a general understanding of the text so that they appreciate the link between linguistic patterns and overall meaning.
3. Noticing tasks: designed to help learners see the differences between their expectations of spoken English (activity 1 in Table 16.3) and spoken varieties of other languages they may speak (activity 2).

Table 16.3 Working with the grammar of spoken English: noticing tasks

Noticing activity 1

Before you let the learners see the dialogue, produce your own informal version of it and if possible make a recording of it. If your learners are used to this kind of exercise, you may be able to get them to make their recordings of their own informal dialogues.

When you have done this, let your learners see the dialogue with these instructions

Look at the dialogue below and ***re-write any sentences that you think sound too formal.*** e.g. 'Hello' might be replaced with 'Hi' and 'It has been a long time since we saw each other' with 'Long time no see'.

Friend A: Hello. It has been a long time since we saw each other. How have you been?

Friend B: Hello. I have been very well, thank you. I have been very busy with work and other things. How have you been,

Friend A: Yes, It is the same for me. My work has been very busy. However, I should not complain about that. Hey, have you seen the new film that a lot of people have been talking about? Do you know which film I mean?

Friend B: Oh, do you mean the Elvis film. I went to watch it at the weekend. It was a very good film and the songs are extremely good.

Friend A: I am feeling very jealous of you. I am very keen to watch it. I heard that it is a film that everyone has to see. What did you think of the actor who plays Elvis?

Friend B: The actor who played Elvis was Austin Butler. He is a great actor and he is very good at singing. It was a very good film and I think you should go and see it.

Top of Form

2 Now listen/watch and check which words are missed out on the recorded dialogue.

Noticing activity 2

1 Look at the dialogue [see dialogue in sample noticing task 1] and translate it into your language.
2 Now translate it back into English without looking at the original.
3 Now look at the original and find any differences between your dialogue and the original.

4. Language discussion tasks: aimed to investigate the learners' understanding of the relations between levels of formality, personal relationship and the language used.

The learners are not required to produce the features of spoken English represented in the transcript, but whether it would be appropriate for learners to do this might be a part of the language discussion task, and the language input might impact an appropriation activity.

Language input (appropriation)

Within an information processing view of learning, appropriation activities relate to the automatization of procedural knowledge and so follow on from language awareness activities. However, within socio-cultural models of learning, appropriation happens as a result of providing learners with the support they need to carry out an activity and then gradually reducing the support so that learners can carry out the activity independently. The view means awareness activities would not be seen as essential and learning might happen during the different stages of an appropriation activity. When designing or selecting appropriation activities, teachers need to consider what their purpose is. This section focussed on three categories of activities: drills, communicative activities and repetition.

Drills, a technique most associated with the audiolingual approach, can be used to help learners with their fluency and accuracy. Drills are not widely discussed in current research literature because they can be 'awfully boring' (Saito, 2008, p. 58). However, many learners see memorization as an important element in language learning. Saito (2008) found his Japanese learners rated drills positively. Here is a comment from a Chinese learner:

> One day, I approached the most fluent speaker who always showed impatience in talking with me because of my hesitating English. I offered to discuss with him about such topics as intellectual copyright and laid-off workers. He was shocked by my incessant speaking with sensible arguments while he was at a loss to find appropriate English words to express himself. . . . But he never knew that I had just memorised some episodes from China Daily and poured them out to him. (Yu, 2014, p. 665)

Ding (2007, p. 278) argues that memorization allows learners to acquire a knowledge of 'the formulaicity of language, a feature linguists may overlook', something which has been put forward as an explanation for the production of fluent speech (Pawley & Syder, 1983). Some learners find that memorization helps with developing knowledge of grammar.

> One thing that I felt especially beneficial from learning texts by heart is that I could choose the right answer in the multiple-choice section without second thought. (Yu, 2014, p. 663)

Drilling may be a useful noticing technique 'since it draws attention to materials that learners might not otherwise have registered' (Thornbury, 2005b, p. 64). Learners may be able to analyse memorized chunks. However, the most obvious role for drills is in proceduralizing existing knowledge, and in particular the process of articulation and, where the learners make grammatical or lexical choices, formulation. Memorized chunks can act as 'islands of reliability' (Thornbury, 2005b, p. 64), which enable

learners to produce something which is grammatically accurate and, because they allow more time for conceptualizing or formulating, improve fluency.

Drills can vary both in terms of organization and in terms of the linguistic demands on learners. The simplest form of a drill is where the teacher says an utterance and the whole class repeats this. Teachers may not hear what individual learners say, so choral repetition reduces the potential for loss of face. This can be done with a recorded dialogue, and solitary teachers can model a dialogue, for example, by for example holding out the left or right hand to indicate who is speaking.

A dialogue of two utterances, such as a question and an answer, means that the individual stage can be followed by pair work or by dividing the class into two. Drills can also be organized as whole-class interactions. If the language input was focussed on 'would like to' plus a verb, learners could be asked to identify a musical instrument they would like to play, a country they would like to visit, and a singer they would like to meet, from a limited selection listed on the whiteboard. They then circulate around the class trying to find someone who has made the same choices by asking the questions 'What instrument would you like to play' and so on.

The linguistic demands on the learners can also vary. Drills are typically based on repeating spoken language, and this restricts the length of the utterance. It is possible to extend this by introducing the utterance in sections:

Where
Where can you get
Where can you get the best
Where can you get the best fish and chips?

Another approach to this is to write the whole dialogue on the board and gradually rub it off as the learners repeat it. A related version of this activity is where each learner in a group is given a written version of one of the utterances in a dialogue, which they memorize, returning the printed version to the teacher when they are confident of it. The group then reconstructs the original dialogue. Written cues are important, but the advantage of a purely auditory cue for a drill is that learners are not distracted by features of the written language, such as spelling.

Drills can also be graded in terms of how much choice the learners need to make. So, simple repetition is the easiest. Learners may go on to substitute a word or a phrase. So, if learners are able to say 'Where can you get the best fish and chips?' the teacher might use the cue 'pasta' and the learners would be expected to say 'where can you get the best pasta?' These kinds of drills aim to improve articulation. It is also possible to include some grammatical or lexical choices. So, a follow-up from the utterance 'They are from France. They're French' might be followed by the cue 'Korea' with the expected response of 'They are from Korea. They are Korean'. This includes an element of formulation. This can be taken a stage further with an element of personalization, for example, 'What is your favourite food?' 'X' followed by 'Where can you get the best? X?' 'In Y'.

Table 16.4 describes a goal-driven pair drill. This can be for a live or recorded dialogue with a transcript. Before doing the drill, the learners would complete a comprehension activity based on the dialogue, and Saito suggests that the learners either perform the dialogue for the class or make a recording as a final part of the drill.

Table 16.4 A goal-driven pair drill

	Gilbert	Becky
1 Look at the dialogue and read it out loud.		
2 See the first line in the dialogue, then look up and say it out loud. Continue line by line.		
3 See the first line, then look up, look at your partner and talk with emotion. Continue line by line.		
4 Now don't look at the dialogue. Look at your partner and talk with emotion (It doesn't have to be exactly the same as the dialogue). Keep practising until you feel comfortable.		
5 Talk with emotion, looking at your partner and using gestures.		
6 Change roles and repeat Rounds 1 to 5.		

Source: Saito (2008, p. 60).

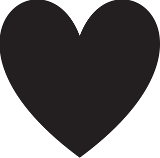
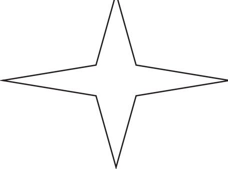

Figure 16.3 A simple image for describe and draw.

Whatever role drills play in a class, appropriation activities are likely to include more communicative activities such as information gap activities, where two partners have different information. One version of this is describe and draw, where one member of the pair has a drawing which they describe to their partner, who tries to draw the image without looking at the original. A simple version of this is illustrated in Figure 16.3. It is also possible to create similar activities where the two partners have similar but slightly different pictures or the same pictures in a different sequence and identify differences between them, without looking at each other's pictures. Many learners enjoy these activities, but the artificiality of the information gap can reduce motivation.

As a useful resource for devising discussion-based appropriation activities is the categories of tasks identified by Wills and Willis (2007) as shown in Table 16.5.

Repetition is an important part of appropriation. It is one of the rationales for the use of drills, and many communicative activities require that learners repeat language. Here, we are concerned with repetition of a task. Table 11.6 in Chapter 11 looks at some task conditions that teachers can change when they ask learners to repeat a task again.

One variation that applies to spoken tasks is the use of a different modality. Learners may be asked to produce a written version of a spoken task. Research also indicates that participating in text-based computer-mediated chat (CMC) helps learners develop oral skills (Razagifard, 2013), possibly because of the greater planning time and the reduced risk of loss of face. CMC can also allow learners to practise some aspects of their spoken English outside the classroom.

A more direct form of repetition is also possible. Lynch and Maclean (2000, pp. 236–9) were preparing a group of learners who were hoping to attend a medical conference. The group was divided into pairs, and

Table 16.5 Task as appropriation activities

Task type	Example of a cat-related task
Listing	Make a list of why people like/don't like cats.
Sorting	Classify things that cats like doing into nice things and not such nice things.
Matching	Match photos of cats with descriptions of them.
Comparing	Cats or dogs: which make the best pets.
Problem solving	Ways to stop your neighbour's cat from coming into your garden.

each pair read an academic article and produced a poster based on their article. One person in each pair stood by their poster, and the other people in the class moved around the class and spent three minutes asking about the posters. The extracts below come from the first and fourth visit to the poster.

> Q-TWIST is a new method of calculation. And we calculated the . . . quality adjusted . . . outcome. . . . It is a method to find out how, how much of the time the patients live without tumour and without toxicity . . . how much of this is really good for them. . . . So it was a calculation on a . . . meta-analysis of breast cancer studies . . . all applying the same. (Lynch & Maclean, 2000, p. 236)

> And we take this time . . . and some others (yeah) to do the Q-TWIST calculation . . . (yeah) and what we get is the result that . . . the time without symptoms is not different for patients . . . who (yes) received tamoxifen (yeah) or tamoxifen plus chemotherapy. (yes) So in regards to this aspect (yes) there is no difference between the two groups. (Lynch & Maclean, 2000, p. 239)

The language development is less to do with being able to use appropriate vocabulary and grammar than in producing a more coherent explanation of what the academic paper meant.

Reflection

Reflection is an important part of the learning process. Zhang and Head (2010) made use of reflection when working on a three-year programme with a group of university learners who, during the first year, were reluctant speakers. At the start of the second-year course, they asked their learners to discuss the following questions in groups:

1. Why did they want to speak good English?
2. How could they learn to speak good English?
3. What classroom activities could help them improve their speaking skills?

The responses to this were used to design classroom activities within the framework of topics determined by the course book. The learners also completed a self-evaluation form at the start of the second year and again at the end of the course. The first three questions of this form were:

1. I give myself the following grades for progress on this course. (Score 1–10)

   Speaking Listening Using learning strategies as much as possible.

2. I speak English in class: as much as possible/a lot/often/a little.
3. I speak my own language in class: only when necessary/often/a lot/too much.

The figures on question two changed from 49 per cent, a little, at the start of the second year to 53 per cent, as much as possible, by the end. The respective figures for question three changed from 37 per cent, often, to 44 per cent, only when necessary. This approach is most obviously relevant to older learners, but Goh and Taib (2006) have used a similar approach for listening with young learners.

Summary

This chapter has explored psychological, linguistic and social perspectives on speaking. It has used an information-processing approach, supplemented with Vygostkyan ideas, to explore how people learn to speak English and the kinds of knowledge and skills that speakers of other languages bring to the learning process. The final section has looked at sequences in the listening class, primarily the AAA (Awareness, Appropriation and autonomy) model and the problem-solving model, before looking at using speaking tasks in the classroom and how different kinds of language input activities, either related to awareness or appropriation, and reflection can contribute to the speaking lesson.

Activity 16.3. Discussion

What advice would you give to the teacher who wrote the following?

I teach the top form in a boys High School in an urban setting in Southeast Asia. Most of my learners will be going on to study business and business-related subject at university after school. There are about twenty-five students in each class and I see them for six hour lessons a week. Most of them have access to the internet outside school and play games such as Minecraft and Clash Royale with English speaking players from around the world. Their spoken English is fluent but their language is often very informal and grammatically inaccurate and this may be problematic for the more formal genres they will need at university and I think for their future careers. The university entrance exam does not include any speaking and so this receives little attention in the course book. However, I would like to give one hour a week to helping them learn to make formal presentation as I know this will be part of their assessment at university.

Further reading

The two useful books on speaking are Goh and Burns (2012) and the more classroom-oriented Thornbury (2005b). Belistein et al. (2020) focusses on conversation and has lots of ideas for teaching. Goh and Burns provide a clear description of the psychological processes involved in speaking and Kormos (2006) has more detail on this. The best source on the grammar of spoken English is Carter

and McCarthy (2006) but Biber et al. (2021b) also include information on this issue. The concept of willingness to communicate is largely addressed in articles, but Peng (2014) is well written and shows how the concept helps make sense of a particular context. Thornbury's (2005b) explanation of AAA is clear, and he provides numerous examples of relevant activities. Willis and Willis (2007) remain the best description of a problem-solving sequence with lots of examples. Goh and Burn are good on reflcxion, but this is still an area of language teaching that is being explored.

Part IV

Conclusion

Chapter 17

Professional Development

Introduction

This aim of this book is to help English language teachers to support their learners to become better users of English. This concluding chapter takes a step back from language learners to focus on how teachers can improve. Helping teachers to improve is often going to also help learners but may be more directly linked to the quality of life of teachers (Hanks, 2017, p. 117). When I realized I did not have to spend my evenings marking every mistake in my learners' homework, the main impact was that I had more free time rather than any direct benefit to my learners. Similarly, when I had to move all my teaching online because of the pandemic, this was a form of professional development but one that was externally imposed. While I hope my students saw some benefits from the change, the motivation for the change did not come from the learners. More generally

> The need for teacher to keep updated is not a reflection of being or educated inadequately, but a reflection of a profession that is continually reinventing itself and expanding its knowledge base. (Farrell, 2015, p. 8)

This chapter addresses the issue of professional development by first considering:

1. What is teacher development?
2. How can teachers organize their own professional development?

What is teacher development?

A starting point for professional development is to examine the description of the knowledge and skills teachers have. Shulman (1987, p. 6) identified six aspects of teacher knowledge or understanding. See Table 17.1. A slightly simpler framework is offered under the head of personal practical knowledge (Golombek, 1998). This divides teacher knowledge into four categories:

1. Knowledge of self;
2. Knowledge of subject matter;
3. Knowledge of instruction;
4. Knowledge of contexts.

Table 17.1 Schulman's (1987) areas of teacher understanding

1. General pedagogical knowledge	What are the general principles and strategies of classroom management and organization?
2. Curriculum knowledge	What I aspects of English need to be taught? What resources do I have to teach these things
3. Pedagogical content knowledge	How do I teach English?
4. Learners	Who are my learners? What do they want to achieve?
5. Educational contexts	How do the learners in my class interact? How does my educational institution operate? How does my educational institution fit into larger structures?
6. Educational ends	Why is English important in the education system? What are the purposes for learning English?

The two frameworks are more similar than they appear. Golombek or Shulman's framework can provide a useful starting point for the teachers to consider their own teaching. First, they both include contextual features. Teacher development is not just about improving teaching but also developing how the institution within which the teacher works and the overall education system contributes to wider society and, because of the international role of English, the development of global citizens. Teachers need to see themselves as moral agents rather than technicians (Kubanyiova & Crookes, 2016). In Stevick's (1996, p. 249) terms, teachers' primary focus is on teaching people rather than language and this includes thinking about the kinds of learners that emerge from our classrooms and the lives they have beyond their education.

Activity 17.1. Your teacher education

Consider a programme of teacher education that you have taken and consider the extent to which that programme helped you to increase your:

1. Knowledge of self;
2. Knowledge of subject matter;
3. Knowledge of instruction;
4. Knowledge of contexts (Golombek, 1998).

If you were in charge of organizing a future version of the programme, would you arrange it differently?

These characterizations of teacher knowledge and skills can be taken as a kind of syllabus for teacher development, and a formal programme of teacher development might use one of these frameworks to structure the programme content. These descriptions of teachers' knowledge and skills can form a useful basis for teacher education programmes. However, for practising teachers, they are best seen as checklists for what those teachers might consider when contemplating their own development. The starting point for most teacher development is where teachers identify a problem that they would like

to solve (Farrell, 2007, p. 3) or a puzzle that they would like to understand better (Hanks, 2017, p. 20). Often, learners contribute to identifying an area for development. Freire argued for learners to take more control of their own learning, and his conceptualization of teachers as a resource suggests that they should have a voice in teacher development (Freire & Ramos, 1996). So this leads us to an exploration of how teachers can decide the direction of their own teacher development.

How can teachers organize their own professional development?

Most teachers develop their knowledge and skills through a process of reflection. One well-established model of reflection is outlined in Figure 17.1 (Kolb, 2015, p. 53), and I will use that model to structure the rest of this chapter. The first two stages of the reflective cycle – concrete experience, that is, teachers doing something; and observation and reflection, that is, teachers thinking about how what they have done does not meet their expectations – are what leads to teachers noticing the problem or issue they wish to address. This then leads teachers to think about what they can do differently and then trying this out.

All teachers are involved in concrete experience whenever they engage in teaching activities, in or out of the class, and the stage of observation and reflection may not seem very challenging. Farell (2015, p. 13) says 'much of what happens in the language classroom remains unknown to the teacher'. For most teachers, teaching their classes is so complicated that many aspects have become routine

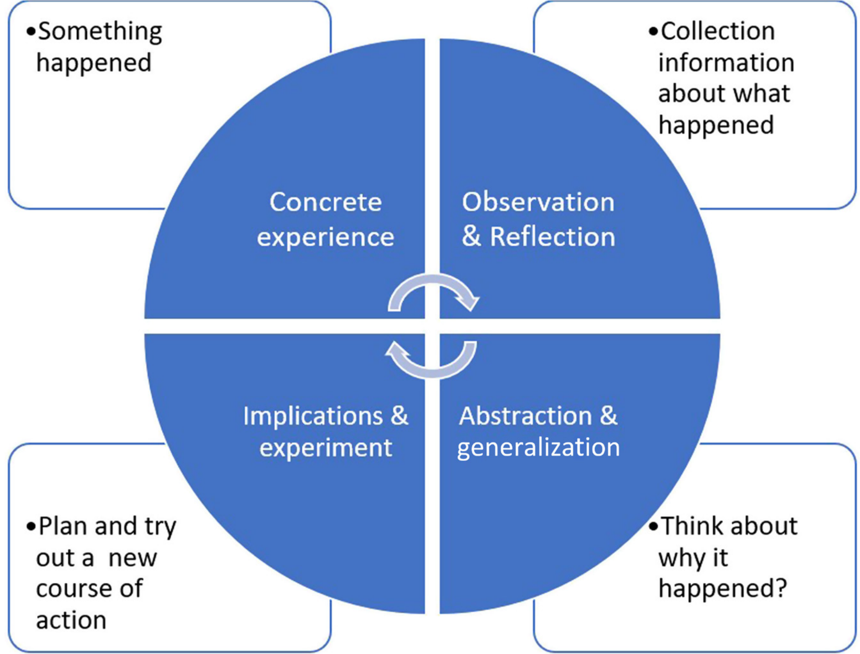

Figure 17.1 The experiential learning model.

activities that teachers do almost automatically. I did not realize that marking every mistake on my learners' homework was not leading to a clear benefit for several months, and it did not occur to me that there might be some other way of doing this. It was not until the event I noted above, when a learner said I had been 'bleeding' over their work that I was able to pull back from my routine and consider what alternatives I had.

Reflecting on what you have done is not something that happens all the time, but a range of techniques exist that encourage reflection. Writing a report on the lessons is a good way of initiating the process of reflection, and I have found this to be a very useful process in my own development. These reports can have more or less structure; so they can be a general report of how the lesson went, but you could also use the framework suggested by Richard and Farrell (2005):

The lesson opening
The main activities
The lesson closing
The amount of time spent on teacher-led and group activities
The amount of time spent on different language skills.

This is quite a detailed framework, and it may be more practical just to focus on one of the elements, for example, the lesson's closing.

It may also be useful to produce reports on a regular basis so that you can track whether issues are emerging on a regular basis or if factors from outside the classroom are having an impact on what happens in class. One advantage of such regular record keeping is that it can move away from a negative view of the lesson, where the focus is on what could go better rather than what is working well.

An alternative to keeping journals about your lessons is to use video or audio equipment to make recordings (Seedhouse, 2021). Technically, this has become much easier but can be ethically difficult because not everyone may be happy to be recorded, and also because the act of being recorded may lead to learners and teachers behaving in atypical ways.

In some educational institutions, teachers observe each other and this can be very beneficial if carried out in a supportive way. This can be done on a formal basis where teachers discuss each other's classes and offer comments, and some institutions make this a part of normal procedures. Mutual observations are more likely to lead to reflection than one person observing another because the latter can become more like an inspection. The aim is for the observer to be a critical friend (Farrell, 2007, p. 148), and most teachers respond better to advice from a friend than someone who is in a position of power over them, where the observed teacher may feel defensive. In some institutions, expert teachers sometimes do classes which are observed by several colleagues, and this can be effective where teachers can make the links between the expert classes and their own. Where teachers are working together with similar classes, discussions in the staff room and opportunities to exchange materials or ideas about how to use materials are good ways of encouraging reflection and professional development. Chung and Fisher talk of the importance of dialogue (Chung & Fisher, 2022), but they note that even where teachers are engaged in a conversation with others, this does not guarantee that they will change the way they teach.

The next stage in the reflective cycle is the formation of abstract concepts and generalizations, that is, the development of a personal theory about what has happened. For me, this was a move from thinking about marking as something that was an intrinsic part of a teacher's role, to the idea that marking might be demotivating my learners. At the time when this happened to me, I had limited access to published research and I initially thought back to my own teacher education when it was suggested that using a green pen might make correction less threatening to learners. Many teachers will be able to discuss their ideas with colleagues and will have links to teacher organizations and published reports.

Social media now also provide opportunities for teachers to expand their ideas about teaching and learning. Holmes found that following other language teachers on *Twitter* gave teachers access to information which supported the development of ways of addressing issues (Holmes et al., 2013). Xue et al. (2021) found that a *WeChat* group helped expand teachers' repertoires of teaching strategies. While social media offer a relatively low-cost opportunity for teacher development for those with internet access, their use is not unproblematic. Nelimarkka et al. (2021) studied a well-established teacher group with over 20,000 members on *Facebook* whose focus was on the use of technology in education rather than teaching language. They highlighted the importance of understanding why some teachers were more engaged than others, the difficult of newcomers joining the group, and argued that smaller, more focussed groups are more effective for professional development. 'Just setting up an online community may not lead to the best professional development gains' (2021, p. 10). Social media do have a contribution to make to professional development, but the group need to be properly managed.

The fourth part of the reflection cycle is testing implications of the concepts in new situations. My attempt to improve my marking practice meant that for two weeks, I switched to a green pen but kept on trying to mark all the mistakes. At the end of two weeks, a student in one class approached me at the end of a lesson and told me that the class had bought me a present and gave me a red pen. At this point, I realized that my initial theory had been wrong, and I was back at stage three of the reflection cycle. My theory that the red pen was demotivating was wrong; rather, my marking was giving my learners more information than they were able to or wanted to process. I then consulted a colleague, and he suggested correcting only the grammar points that had been most recently taught. When I tried this approach out, a second attempt at stage four, this was more successful.

My experience marking with a red pen led to a relatively clear outcomes, but sometimes the cycle results in a more general development. A teacher working in Canada (Shi, 2002, pp. 141–2) was working with a learner from India who found it difficult to distinguish /s/ and /ʃ/. To help the learner, the teacher suggested that the learner adopt the English name 'Sam' as a way of building in more practice of the problematic /s/ sound and, incidentally, addressing the fact that his Indian name was difficult for the teacher and his fellow learners to pronounce. That evening, she reflected on this decision and in particular the fact that mispronunciations of her own Chinese name had made her unhappy. The next day, she asked the Indian learner to teach the class how to say his name properly, and this went well. This had a beneficial effect on the class, and the learner did learn to distinguish /s/ and /ʃ/. For the teacher, reflection showed that the event was not about pronunciation but the links between language and identity and the importance of learners being addressed by the name with which they identify. This ties in with the exploratory practice view of professional development (Allwright & Bailey, 1991; Hanks, 2017) where the focus is on understanding more than problem solving.

Summary

This chapter has briefly examined professional development, looking first at what might be the focus of teacher development, second at how reflection might lead to professional development and third at some ways in which teacher development can happen.

Activity 17.2. Discussion

This activity relates to your previous teacher education, as I feel that professional development should be based on your own experience of the language learning classroom. But here is a framework which should enable you to think about your previous professional development and structure what happens in the future.

1. Identify an aspect of your teaching knowledge and skills that developed outside of formal teacher education.
2. What was the trigger for this? What made you notice the gap in your professional knowledge or practice?
3. What resources did you draw on to address the gap?
4. What impact did the resources have on your understanding or practice in the classroom?
5. How might you develop your ability to notice gaps in your professional knowledge or practice?

Further reading

Farrell (2015) is a good introduction to reflection and professional development, and Johnson and Golombek's (2004) includes many insightful stories from the classroom. If you are interested in exploratory practice Hanks (2017) is a good introduction, and Hanks has also produced a collection about exploratory practice in a range of contexts with Dikilitaş (Dikilitaş & Hanks, 2018). Kubanyiova (2012) is an interesting exploration of how teacher development happens.

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