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TEACHING TOGETHER, LEARNING TOGETHER

English Language Teaching Ideas (ELTI)

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English Language Teaching Ideas

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Table of Contents

PREFACE

The new peer-reviewed English language teaching publication ***'English Language Teaching Ideas' (ELTI)*** is an annual online periodical of practical articles. It was launched by Slovenská komora angličtinárov/the Slovak Chamber of English Teachers (SKA) in cooperation with the Department of Language Pedagogy and Intercultural Studies of Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra (Slovakia).

The current publication provides contributions of English teachers from Slovakia, Central Europe and around the world who share their expertise, practical tips and insights in teaching English that they have used with their students in their classrooms. The idea behind the publication is that both teaching and learning are collaborative processes. The teaching can also be enriched by sharing our experiences, our insights, our wisdom, and our challenges.

The purpose of the publication is to record and compile practical ideas which have worked well and bring them to colleagues who would like to try out some new ideas in their English language classes. It consists of two parts. The first one titled *Theoretical section* provides previously unpublished articles from English teachers and teacher trainers, which reflect current theory and practice in English language teaching, and which present practical ideas and recommendations that readers could apply in their classes. In addition, the second part named *Practical teaching activities* offers short classroom activities, which introduce original practices or techniques the authors have used successfully in their English language classes.

INSTEAD OF INTRODUCTION…

ALWAYS LOOK ON THE BRIGHT SIDE – BEING A NONNATIVE

MEDGYES Péter

Abstract: *In my book 'The non-native teacher' (1994), I argued that nonnative-speaking teachers of English were unable to emulate native speakers in terms of their English-language competence. I also claimed, however, that nonnatives were in possession of certain attributes that could well offset their linguistic handicap. To prove my point I put forward two sets of hypotheses. Although partly based on empirical evidence, 'The non-native teacher' received mixed responses at the time of its publication and afterwards. In addition to briefly presenting the gist of the book and its aftermath, this lecture gives a brief overview of developments that have since taken place both concerning the native/nonnative dilemma and English language teaching in general. With a new paradigm looming large, I propose that a fundamental rethink of steps to be taken in language policy and practice is required. My ideas are specified in a 9-point action plan for deliberation.*

Key words: *native speakers of English, non-native speakers of English, language proficiency, English as a lingua franca*

Introduction

More than twenty years ago, I had a paper published in the ELT Journal (Medgyes, 1992), followed by a full-length book (Medgyes, 1994). As I was working on the two pieces, I had the gut feeling that I was going to open a can of worms. However, not in my wildest dream did I imagine that there were going to be so many worms in that can.
In those two studies I investigated the differences between native- and nonnative speaking teachers of English, for whom I used the acronyms NESTs and non-NESTs.
'Differences? But aren't we all equal?' – I hear you ask. Of course there're far more similarities than differences between the two groups. Some of those similarities are fairly visible too. Both NESTs and non-NESTs have two ears, two eyes and two noses. Sorry, one nose… We were born thirty, fifty, a hundred years ago, many of us are married with children and, sadly, all of us will die some day. In addition, we share the same ideas, problems and dreams. We often have similar teaching qualifications, length of experience and technical repertoire, too.
'Why highlight the differences then?' – you may ask. Because there *are* differences. And quite a few of them, too. For good or ill, we fall into two distinct groups: NESTs and non-NESTs.

The aims of my lecture then are to:

- compare NESTs and non-NESTs,
- pinpoint the differences,
- focus on non-NESTs,
- touch upon our disadvantages compared to NESTs, but,
- dwell much longer on the advantages we enjoy over NESTs.

However, my primary goal for the next hour is to give your self-confidence a boost. I want you, dear non-NESTs, to take pride in being what you are: nonnative speaking teachers of English. In order to clarify what I mean, I advance two sets of hypotheses. Let's take a look at *Set 1* first.

Set 1

The first assumption underlines that *NESTs and non-NESTs differ in terms of their language proficiency*, with the implication that NESTs are more proficient users of English than non-NESTs. This is pretty obvious since they are native speakers of English, which we are not.

Their superior command applies to all four skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing.

Let me justify this statement with reference to my own English-language competence. To save time, I'll identify only two of my weak spots, namely listening skills and speaking skills.

Listening. I don't understand the jokes of English-speaking stand-up comedians, for example. I've tried several times – in vain. Why? Because comedians say the punchline fast and under their breath. By the time I figure out the joke, the comedian is ten sentences ahead of me. I wish he'd slow down and repeat the punchline. Like this:

'Have you heard the latest Hungarian joke?'
'Careful, I come from Hungary.'
'That's all right. I shall tell it slowly then.'

Recently, I watched the American series running under the title 'House of Cards'. Standard American English – yet I couldn't understand a word of it. So after the first part I decided to watch it with English subtitles, because I wanted to enjoy the film.

Speaking. With due modesty, I claim to be a fairly fluent speaker of English. Even though I speak English with a Hunglish accent, I'm more fluent than most nonnatives. However, not half as fluent as any native speaker of English.

When my son was born, my friends often said: 'you're an English teacher, your wife likewise. How lucky your son is! He'll learn English from the cradle!' Nonsense! We kept talking to him in Hungarian. Why? Mainly because we don't know babyspeak in English: 'Nyuszi-muki! Kicsi boldogságom, angyalbögyörőm!' Both my parents were Hungarian and I was 27 years old when I first visited an English-speaking country.

For me, speaking English is like wearing an uncomfortable costume. Too tight, a 100 percent polyester. It's all sham and artificial. If scratched beneath the surface, my utterances are hollow, unsuitable for carrying personal messages. Well-practised holophrases tied together on a string. It's not only that I'm less fluent than native speakers, but I'm less accurate, less appropriate and less colourful, too. Worse still, I'm unable to express my emotions. I can't give vent to my anger in English, for example.

Let me illustrate what I mean with an anecdote. A few years ago I went to a shop in London to buy a shirt. The shop-assistant asked: 'What size?' 'I don't know exactly,' I stammered. 'Men of your age should know what size they are,' he said, and turned his back on me. Gobsmacked, my subtle English-language competence evaporated without a trace. In Hungarian I would've known what to say: 'A kurva anyád, te rohadt köcsög!' Or something similar. (I hope none of you can understand Hungarian – you can guess the meaning though.)

Let's face it, in English I'm a boring person. (Maybe in Hungarian too, but that's another matter.) But this applies to you too, dear friends. Nonnative speakers are dumb and we non-NESTs are the worst off! No offence meant.

In order to prove that this is more than the whimper of a pathetic non-NEST, I collected questionnaire and interview data from several hundred teachers (325, to be precise), a mixed bag of NESTs and non-NESTs. And, lo and behold, the overwhelming majority shared my

queries and qualms! This being the case, non-NESTs had better accept with resignation that our English language competence is not on a par with any of our native peers.

Therefore, if native speakers tell you that your E is as good as theirs, don't believe a word of what they're saying. They're either lying, or acting politically correctly, or comparing you to an uneducated native speaker. Such as an English football hooligan.
What I've said so far is not very uplifting, is it? Instead of succumbing to despair, however, remember that every cloud has a silver lining.
Time to examine the second assumption I put forward: *NESTs and non-NESTs differ in terms of their teaching behaviour*. On the basis of the collated data, I specified these differences in a tabular form. Here it is. You can't see it? Not to worry! Take this pair of binoculars. These data prove that, indeed, NESTs and non-NESTs teach differently.
However, the first two hypotheses led me to a third one: *The discrepancy in language proficiency accounts for most of the differences found in their teaching behaviour.* After all, if NESTs and non-NESTs use the language differently, they *teach* it differently too. I considered this cause-and-effect relationship so evident that I didn't even bother to seek empirical evidence to confirm it.
Fourthly, I claimed that *NESTs and non-NESTs can be equally good teachers – but each on their own terms*.
Before I let you know about my respondents' answer, let me take a straw poll. Here's a tricky quiz. Suppose you were the principal of a commercial language school here in Spain. If there were a vacancy for a teaching post, who would you prefer to employ?

a. Only a NEST.
b. Preferably a NEST.
c. Makes no difference.
d. Can't tell.

Well, the respondents in my survey were rather divided on this issue. While nearly half of them agreed, the other half expressed their preference for either NESTs or non-NESTs. In roughly equal proportions.
At this point I couldn't not help asking myself: How come that non-NESTs can be as good as NESTs despite their linguistic handicap? What gives us, non-NESTs, a competitive edge? Surely, this is only possible if we have certain attributes that NESTs are lacking. OK, but what exactly are these attributes?

Set 2

In order to be able to answer these questions (and cheer you up), I put forward a second set of hypotheses, which displays the bright side of being a non-NEST. This time, however, I dispensed with empirical research. Instead, I relied upon my personal experience and intuition, and picked the brains of a few fellow teachers. Now let me briefly elaborate on each of my assumptions.
My first claim is that *non-NESTs can provide a better learner model than NESTs*. We didn't *acquire* the English language – like our NEST colleagues.
We *learnt* it at school – just like our students. Shedding tears of pain in the process. In a sense, NESTs are *inimitable* models – we are *imitable* (if there's such an adjective, which there isn't.)
For non-NESTs, native speaker proficiency is a mirage. What we can set as a realistic goal is a high level of *nonnative speaker* proficiency.

At this point you may ask: 'But is there a correlation between linguistic performance and teaching performance?' My tentative answer is yes, but I'm also aware that success is a complex issue. There's more to it than mere language proficiency. Teaching qualifications, experience, personal traits, motivation, love of children, and so on. What I'm suggesting is that a good command of English is a necessary, but not a sufficient, condition for successful teaching. If language proficiency were the only attribute that mattered, NESTs would be better teachers by definition – which they are not!

Now here is my second assumption: *Non-NESTs can teach language learning strategies more effectively than NESTs.*

We non-NESTs were language learners. And still are. Successful language learners, into the bargain. If we weren't, we wouldn't have become language teachers, would we? We're conscious of which learning strategies have worked for us and which ones haven't. We know every nook and cranny of the road that leads to proficiency in English. NESTs have never gone down that road. Certainly not with respect to learning English. Given this, I claim that we are better at making our students' learning process effective, fast and easy. Relatively easy, that is.

My third argument is that *non-NESTs can supply more information about the English language than NESTs.*

As I've pointed out, we know less English than our native peers. On the other hand, we know more *about* English than they do. A lot more. We've amassed huge amounts of information about the English language during our own learning process. For instance, we're aware how difficult it is for a foreigner to use the word *enough*:

My car is *big enough*.

Enough always comes after an adjective.

There are more than *enough cars* on the roads of Budapest.

Enough always comes before a noun.

My Volkswagen isn't a *big enough car* for our family.

If there's an adjective-noun combination, *enough* comes after the adjective but before the noun.

There are more than *enough big cars* on the roads of Budapest.

Oops! *Enough* preceding an adjective-noun compound? What now?

This should be *explanation enough* why the mayor of Budapest considers introducing a toll in the city centre.

Enough after a noun?! I've had *enough*! I give up…

Or here's a typical Hunglish mistake:

Grenville:	Did you know that Brad Pitt was 50 last year?
Peter:	Wow! She looks much younger.
Grenville:	She?! But Brad Pitt is a man!

In explanation, in Hungarian there's only one personal pronoun to cover all three genders. Therefore, we constantly confuse *he*, *she* and *it*

Grenville isn't aware of this – I am. (Don't get me wrong, please. Hungarians may be genderless but not sexless…)

This brings me on to my fourth point: *Non-NESTs can anticipate and prevent difficulties more effectively than NESTs.*

NESTs can better tell what is *right* or *wrong* in English – non-NESTs can better perceive what is *easy* or *difficult*. We're equipped with special antennae, a kind of sixth sense. We can predict

what's likely to go wrong even before our students open their mouths. NESTs can't. This is an asset, but a risk too. 'Wrong! Wrong again! And again!' Non-NESTs tend to overcorrect and penalise mistakes. Please don't!
Fifthly, I argue that *non-NESTs show more empathy to the needs and problems of students than NESTs.*

This is not to say that non-NESTs were born to be more empathetic than NESTs. In the language classroom, however, we can automatically slip into our students' shoes. Why? Because we come from the same linguistic, social, cultural and educational background as our students. We have a pretty clear picture of what they feel, talk, think and dream about. We can often understand each other with the wink of an eye. NESTs can't, simply because they come from a different culture.

And finally, I assume that *non-NESTs can benefit from the students' native language.*

For a long time, the monolingual principle was never challenged. The native language was all but expelled from the language classroom. However, it has made a comeback in recent years. This being the case, we have an enormous advantage over NESTs, provided that the group we are teaching is monolingual.
Let me now summarise the overall message of the six assumptions I've put forward. What it all boils down to is that our linguistic deficit is a blessing in disguise. It's precisely this deficit that helps us develop capacities that NESTs cannot even hope to possess. A strange paradox, isn't it? In the final analysis, NESTs and non-NESTs may turn out to be equally good teachers, because their respective strengths and weaknesses balance each other out. Since each group can offer competences of which the other group is in short supply, the ideal school is one in which there is a good mix of NESTs and non-NESTs, who work in close collaboration with one another. I'll come back to this point at the end of my talk.

Critique

At the beginning of my lecture I referred to the can of worms. And indeed, after my first publications on the NEST/non-NEST issue, I was fiercely attacked from various quarters.
Linguists rejected the division of natives and non-natives. 'Can anyone define who is a native or a non-native', they asked. And their answer was a resounding no. A vehement opponent of the native/non-native speaker separation, Paikeday (1985) went so far as to lend his book the title, 'The native speaker is dead!'
Although I readily admit that the native/non-native dichotomy does not stand up to close scrutiny, the majority of us still fall into either this or that category. Who would query, for instance, that I am a non-native speaker of English whereas Grenville is a native speaker? Mind you, there're lots of other things in the universe which defy clear-cut definitions. The philosopher Popper (1968) said, for example, that if physicists in the 19th century had been bogged down in the definitional problems of the phenomenon *light*, the electric bulb might never have been invented. As if to close the polemic, the famous linguist Halliday (quoted in Paikeday, 1985) quipped that the native speaker is a useful term, precisely because it cannot be closely defined.
Up rose the stalwarts of the P. C. movement, too. They objected to the prefix *non* in the term *non-native*, stressing that it had a pejorative ring to it. 'No human being is inferior to another. We're all equal,' they queried. But who said we aren't equal? Different doesn't imply *better or*

worse – different simply means *different*, with no value judgment attached to it. All different – all equal.
Another band of critics consisted of teacher educators and their ilk. They complained that, while I scourged non-NESTs for their linguistic shortcomings, I gave short shrift to other attributes, such as teaching qualifications, length of experience, individual traits, level of motivation, love of students and many more. Let me make it clear: I set high store by these other attributes. I paid them little tribute merely for research purposes: the validity of a statement can be proven only if all variables are kept constant except for one variable, which in this case was language proficiency. All I claimed was that *all other things being equal*, the better a non-NEST speaks English, the better teacher he or she is likely to be.
However, my vociferous opponents were non-NEST advocacy groups. They fumed that the separation of the two groups fuelled discriminatory practices against non-NESTs. And they were right, too! It's a sorry fact that teaching applications from even highly qualified and experienced non-NESTs often get turned down in favour of NESTs with no comparable credentials. However, I doubt that this is an overriding concern in most parts of the world. The percentage of non-NESTs in search of a teaching job in English-speaking countries is relatively low, isn't it? Non-NESTs typically work in EFL environments at home and not in ESL contexts abroad. Anyway, forcibly removing the label 'non-NEST' is no more than window-dressing.

Like it or not, NESTs and non-NESTs are different species of animals.

On the credit side

For the entire backlash, I trust that my efforts paid off, because they launched an avalanche of research on this conundrum. Replicating my studies, many researchers confirmed or fine-tuned the conclusions I'd arrived at. Others, following different research agendas, provided new perspectives and generated novel ideas. In addition to scores of research papers published in professional journals, at least seven full-length books on this topic were published in the past 20 years. Be that as it may, the study of the NEST/non-NEST issue has come into its own.
Furthermore, non-NESTs, who had seldom made their voices heard in the past, were prompted to contribute to this line of research – and they did ever so eagerly. This was a niche which offered us plenty of opportunity for gaining recognition in the academic world. Braine is right in noting that this development is 'an indication of the empowerment of [non-native] researchers who are no longer hesitant to acknowledge themselves as [non-native speakers], and venture into uncharted territory' (Braine, 2010, p. 29).
Finally, and most importantly, I like to think that my studies, but especially this follow-up lecture I delivered in many parts of the world, succeeded in boosting non-NESTs' self-confidence. The message that it's not a shame to be a non-NEST seems to have gone down well. Non-NESTs would often come up to me after my lecture, saying that from now on they would take pride in who they were. And I received loads of emails, too, adorned with smileys.
Speaking of shame, here's another straw poll I'd like to take. You're still the principal of that commercial language school and you've finally decided to employ a non-NEST. She's a near-native speaker of English. Before she went to teach her first class, what would you tell her to do?

a. Pretend to be a native speaker of English.
b. Reveal your non-native identity.
c. Do as you please.

When NESTs reigned supreme

Let's now take a look at what the ELT operation was like before the non-NESTs' self-awakening process began. From time immemorial, native speakers were regarded as models of the proper use of English that every learner was expected to imitate. Needless to say, nonnative *teachers* were the worst off; after all for us an excellent command of English was – and still is – a good predictor of professional success. Since there's no way we can emulate NESTs in terms of language proficiency, many of us have developed a more or less serious form of inferiority complex. This nasty feeling is well expressed in the title of a paper, 'Children of a lesser English' (Mahboob et al., 2004), which is a paraphrase of the American movie, 'Children of a lesser God'.
In his hotly debated book, Phillipson (1992) introduced the Centre/Periphery dichotomy. To the *Centre* belong powerful English-speaking countries in the West, while the *Periphery* mostly consists of underdeveloped countries, where English is a second or foreign language. Another construct, similar to Phillipson's, is the BANA/TESEP distinction created by Holliday (1994). While *BANA* typically comprises private sector adult institutions in *B*ritain, *A*ustralasia and *N*orth *A*merica, *TESEP* includes state education at *te*rtiary, *se*condary and *p*rimary levels anywhere else in the world.
Both authors pointed out that since ELT was an extremely profitable business, organisations and individuals in the Centre/BANA had high stakes in maintaining its operation. NESTs and their accomplices considered themselves not only the sole repository of the English language but also the gatekeepers of 'proper' ELT methodology, even though their ideas had no roots in, and were often inimical to, the educational traditions of the Periphery/TESEP. We were inundated with flashy course materials, 'wandering troubadours' (to use Alan Maley's term), jet-in/jet-out teacher trainers and backpack teachers. They all arrived from the 'hub', to act the smart alec. Regretfully, for a long time we accepted NEST superiority unconditionally, giving preference to import products over home-grown goods.

Paradise lost

How about today? Has anything changed since the first publications on the NEST/non-NEST issue were published in the early 1990s? My answer is a definite yes.
To begin with, today nonnative speakers of English far outnumber native speakers: according to rough estimates, only one out of four speakers of English is a native speaker. This being the case, the question of ownership inevitably arises: Can a minority group, that is native speakers of English, retain their hegemony and continue to arbitrate what is right and what is wrong in language usage?
Widdowson's answer is unequivocal: Native speakers should no longer be considered the true custodians of the English language, which they can 'lease out to others, while still retaining the freehold. Other people actually own it' (1994, p. 385). By the way, as early as 1977, Povey reported on an illuminating example of disobedience: 'An African student, after he was criticised by the native-speaking teacher for using a non-standard form, burst out like this: „It's our language now and we can do what we like with it!" (1977, p. 28).'
According to this line of reasoning, any nonnative speaker who engages in genuine communication in English with a native or nonnative partner is entitled to use it creatively. We have every right to mould the English language until it becomes an adequate tool of self-expression. Hundreds of studies support Widdowson's doctrine against what Phillipson (1992) called the 'native speaker fallacy' – none states the opposite.
Graddol is even harsher in his judgment when he says: '[N]ative speakers

may increasingly be identified as part of the problem rather than the source of a solution. They may be seen as bringing with them cultural baggage in which learners wanting to use English primarily as an international language are not interested' (2006, p. 114). To cut a long story short, it seems that native speakers are rapidly losing the pride of place they once occupied.

English as a lingua franca

There are two areas which have generated a great deal of interest in recent years. One of them is *English as a lingua franca* (ELF) (Jenkins, 2000; Seidlhofer, 2011; Sowden, 2012). Scores of studies have attempted at disentangling the complexities of ELF, both as a social phenomenon and a language variant. However, while acknowledging the socio-educational value of such efforts, I have certain reservations about their legitimacy. Until I've seen 'The Grammar of ELF', I can't give it full credit and, therefore, I'd ill-advise learners of English and their teachers to throw away the 'good old grammar book'. There's no better way, for the time being, than turn to the native speaker norm 'as a benchmark against which to monitor output' (Kirkpatrick, 2007, p. 191).

Young learners

The other area gaining momentum has to do with the recognition that learners of English are getting younger. In more and more countries, English is introduced as early as the lower primary school and even the kindergarten. It looks as if English is catching up with the three R's (reading, writing and arithmetic) as a basic skill, and thus becoming a second, rather than a foreign, language in the school curriculum.

Obviously, the job of teaching the young poses new challenges, which the ELT profession cannot yet meet. This concerns both teacher supply and methodological expertise. Today we need a lot more teachers who are intimately familiar with the local educational environment than ever before. And let me reiterate that NESTs are less capable of coming up to these expectations than their nonnative peers.

Suffice it to say, the traditional EFL model is in decline (Graddol, 2006), and NESTs, the last bulwarks of native speaker supremacy (Braine, 1999), are losing ground at an ever faster speed. Please note that, according to current estimates, out of 12 million non-NESTs 97 percent of the ELT profession consists of non-NESTs. Hurray!

Conclusion

What is to be done then? With a new paradigm looming large, I believe that a fundamental rethink of steps to be taken in language policy and practice is required. Teacher trainers, in particular, bear an increased responsibility for preparing prospective teachers how to adapt to the rapid transformation of education.

It is with these caveats in mind that I propose a nine-point action plan. Whereas some of these points have been touched upon in this talk, others are waiting to be put on the agenda of ELT experts and decision-makers.

1. An *adequate teacher supply* to satisfy the exponential growth of demand for English should be ensured.
2. Work on establishing norms of *English as a lingua franca* use should be intensified.
3. More heed should be paid to the special needs of *young learners*.

4. The scope for *content and language integrated learning* in schools should be broadened.
5. *Information and communication technology* should be factored into the curriculum of teacher education.
6. The integration of *classroom and out-of-school* learning opportunities should be reinforced.
7. *Language improvement courses* for non-NESTs should constitute a fundamental component of teacher education curricula.
8. NEST job applicants prepared to *stay for an extended period of time* in the foreign country should be prioritised.
9. Enhanced opportunities for *NEST/non-NEST cooperation* should be created.

I'm pleased to say that the self-awakening process of non-NESTs is well underway. Native speakers are no longer in a position of unchallenged authority. They're no longer regarded as custodians of the 'proper' use of English and the gatekeepers of 'proper' ELT methodology. Today, NESTs and non-NESTs own this language in equal measure. Both can use it creatively and teach English at their discretion.

Puppet: Beautiful words, Peter. You've nearly made me cry. However, you haven't answered the crucial question: Who's worth more, the NEST or the non-NEST?
Peter: Come on, this is an absurd question!
Puppet: OK, let me put it this way. Who is the ideal NEST and who is the ideal non-NEST?
Peter: Well, the ideal teacher is one who is well-qualified and experienced.
Puppet: Don't waffle, Peter. These are the similarities. What are the distinguishing features?
Peter: OK then. The ideal NEST is a professional who speaks the local language and is familiar with the local culture.
Puppet: And the ideal non-NEST?
Peter: The ideal non-NEST is one whose command of English is at near-native level. Let's not delude ourselves: a high level of language proficiency remains a make-or-break requirement.
Puppet: You said that the good NEST should be familiar with the local culture. How about the good non-NEST?
Peter: She should be well-versed in the culture, or rather cultures (in the plural), of English-speaking countries.
Puppet: Britain, USA, Australia…
Peter: And the whole world. Don't forget that English has become the universal lingua franca. The ideal teacher is multilingual and multicultural. In this sense, too, the ideal NEST and non-NEST stand quite close to each other, even though they arrive from different directions.
Puppet: Do we need both species then?
Peter: By all means! NESTs and non-NESTs serve equally useful purposes, but each in their own ways. Let's not blur those differences.
Puppet: Time for the punchline.
Peter: OK. In an ideal school, there should be a good mix of NESTs and non-NESTs, who complement each other in their strengths and weaknesses. Each group should contribute with competences of which the other group is in short supply.
Puppet: Sitting in opposite trenches?

Peter: Oh no! NESTs and non-NESTs must collaborate. As closely as possible. At the end of the day, we are all friends.

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I Theoretical section

SIX HIDDEN CONVERSATION KILLERS

BLAKE John

Abstract: *Six strategies are proposed to help learners maintain conversations. The strategies were uncovered through textual analysis of student-trainee conversations as part of a teacher training course. Practical classroom activities are suggested to help learners practise each of the strategies.*

Key words: *conversation analysis, sociocultural competence*

1 Introduction

Lack of vocabulary, poor pronunciation and limited grammar can severely affect communication and bring conversations to a sudden end. These aspects are often made explicit in course objectives and are directly addressed in text books. Learners with sufficient mastery of vocabulary, pronunciation and grammar, however, still face significant difficulties in keeping conversations going. This article identifies six hidden conversation killers, details strategies to enable learners to overcome them and suggests practical classroom activities.

2 Method

Action research was undertaken with heterogeneous groups of pre-intermediate language learners. Drawing on a principled communicative approach (Dörnyei, 2013), learners worked in pairs to prepare questions to use when initiating conversations. The learners were primed by their teacher to hold a 2-minute conversation with a stranger. Learners were paired with trainees who were enrolled in an introductory course in teaching English as a foreign language. The pairs worked together for approximately 10 minutes. At the start, the learner initiated a conversation. The trainee teachers remit was to help the learner improve their conversation skill and so the remaining time was spent helping improve the conversation. Each trainee held conversations with at least four learners. The conversations with the trainee teachers were audio recorded. Conversations that tapered out or instantly ground to a halt were identified and transcribed by the trainees. Conversations may be viewed as an extended sequence of paired exchanges (called adjacency pairs by Schegloff, 2007). Each exchange consists of turns or speech acts in which each interlocutor contributes in turn. Common examples are greeting-greeting, question-answer and answer-response. Trainees annotated the transcripts of conversations to show the speech acts.

3 Results

Analysis of these transcriptions uncovered six hidden conversation killers. Two potential killers were present in each of the three main acts: question, answer and response. Questions are interrogative sentences. Three commonly used question types are open (Wh- questions), closed (Yes/No questions), and choice (either/or questions). Problems with questions stemmed from the choice of topic and sequencing of the questions. Answers are generally but not always declarative sentences. Answers to questions may be single words, phrases, clauses or sentences. The main problem with the answers was the lack of detail, making it hard for the interlocutor to select an appropriate way to follow up. Responses are the utterances that follow an answer. Responses may be verbal (e.g. interjections, repetitions or comments) or non-verbal (e.g. facial expressions and gestures). Although non-verbal responses are important,

only verbal responses were analysed. Problems with responses were related to backchannelling and asymmetry in exchanges of information.

4 Conversation killers

In this section, the six conversation killers identified in the transcripts are exemplified in a series of dialogues between two interlocutors (addresser and addressee). The effect is described and explained, strategies to develop sociocultural competence (Canale & Swain, 1980; Celce-Murcia, 2007) are discussed, and example classroom activities are suggested.

4.1 Conversation killer 1: Personal questions

Dialogue 1 follows a question-answer format which is similar to many getting-to-know-you activities in standard ELT textbooks.

Dialogue 1
A. How old are you?
B. 27.
A. Are you married?
B. Err. No.
A. Do you have a girlfriend?
B. Why?

Questions are far more frequent in conversation than in written English and deserve classroom attention. In fact, corpus results show an average of one question for every 40 words (Biber *et al*., 1999, p.211). However, these particular questions could be considered rather personal for a conversation between complete strangers. Some people are sensitive about declaring their age, hence the expression "over 21" is used by people who are over 21 but do not wish is disclose their exact age. Other people may have issues with their marital or dating status, causing dead air or an uncomfortable atmosphere. Cultural sensitivity needs to be raised. Starting conversations with non-personal questions is a safe option.

Learners are likely to benefit from being provided with a list of socioculturally appropriate topics and starter questions, and a list of contentious topics and questions that may cause offense. For example, questions about salary, age, weight and sexuality may be accepted in the learner's culture but could cause offense in anglophone countries. Topic headings and cue words could be given so learners create their own questions (Nation, 1980).

4.2 Conversation killer 2: Unrelated questions

In Dialogue 2, the questions are appropriately non-personal, but the jump in topic between questions creates the impression that the answers are irrelevant and breaks Grice's maxim of relation (Grice, 1975), which states that utterances should be relevant and pertinent.

Dialogue 2
A. What kind of music do you like?
B. I like classical music.
A. Can you drive?
B. Err. …Yes.
A. Is this your first time to come here?
B. No.

This question-answer pattern is typical in police interrogations and, as Holmes and Brown, (1976) noted, learner English. Simply by asking follow-up questions that are related to the preceding answer, a more positive impression will be created, since the information given in answers will be used rather than ignored.
Strategies to ask related follow-up questions could be focused on, such as being more specific (e.g. What kind of ...?), changing the time frame (e.g. Did you … as a teenager?), or adding a condition (e.g. If you …?). Substitution drills for creating related questions can be used.

4.3 Conversation killer 3: One-word answers

In Dialogue 3, the questions are appropriate and related.

Dialogue 3
A. What kind of music do you like?
B. Classical.
A. What kind of classical music do you like?
B. Concertos.
A. Do you have a favorite composer?
B. No.

The use of one-word answers, however, creates the impression of someone reluctant to continue a conversation. This may negatively affect the addresser's willingness to communicate. Learners should be encouraged to expand one-word answers.
Strategies to do this could include drills using full sentences for answers to open questions (e.g. I like classical.) and short answer forms for closed questions (e.g. No, I don't.).

4.4 Conversation killer 4: Lack of elaboration

Dialogue 4 is an improvement, since short answers replace the one-word answers. However, in terms of information units, there is no extra content despite the increase in number of words.

Dialogue 4
A. What kind of music do you like?
B. I like classical.
A. What kind of classical music do you like?
B. I like concertos.
A. Do you have a favorite composer?
B. No, I don't.

Learners should be encouraged to provide some extra information in their answers. This provides more opportunities for the addresser to select the next topic to develop. Topics are usually drawn from either the information given or world knowledge (Harris & Sipay, 1990) of the topic under discussion. Should the topic need to be changed, expressions, such as 'Oh, by the way,…' can be used to signal the change of topic.
Flow charts and cued dialogues (Littlewood, 1981, p.14) can be used to show how conversations develop based on new information. Drills can be used in which learners answer questions and incorporate extra information.

One activity could be to see how many extra units of information learners can include in answers to open questions. For example in answer to "What kind of music do you like?", "I like classical music, especially Mozart. I particularly like his early Violin concertos" contains 3 units of information [underlined for emphasis] giving the addresser three options to follow up on.

4.5 Conversation killer 5: Lack of attentiveness

Dialogue 5 improves on Dialogue 4 since extra information units are now provided in the answers to the first two questions. The conversation, however, only consists of question-answer adjacency pairs (rather like a police interrogation).

Dialogue 5
A. What kind of music do you like?
B. I listen to classical music most of the time.
A. What kind of classical music do you like?
B. I like concertos, violin concertos.
A. Do you have a favorite composer?
B. No, I don't.

The addresser did not acknowledge or comment on the answers. Responses can be non-verbal, for example, by nodding or smiling, but commonly a verbal response is used. Verbal responses could simply be a sound (e.g. oh, ah, no!). The short interjection of "oh" is a form of backchanneling that shows the addressee received and values the message sent (Tottie, 1991). A quick way of addressing this is to show learners how to use common interjections, such as 'oh' with different intonation patterns so that they can use the same word to show a variety of emotions. More advanced learners could use rejoinders like "So do I" and "neither do I" as a way of responding to answers to closed questions.

Repetition of the key part of the answer can be used to show attentiveness, (e.g. I listen to classical music. Oh, Classical.). This can be practiced by learners repeating the key part of statements read aloud from a prepared list.

Should the addresser have a relevant comment, this is the opportune time to make it. Holmes and Brown (1976) advocate practising adding comments to avoid conversations that consist entirely of question-answer exchanges. They describe a communication strategy represented by the formula: Q → SA + EI in which Q is question, SA is short answer and EI is extra information.

One way to encourage learners to use the three types of responses is to practise using all three responses to simple statements. Any statement can be used, but starting with statements that learners are likely to hear spoken is recommended. After the initial statements, learners respond using the prompts: sound, copy and comment. Table 1 provides examples of responses to three statements.

Table 1: Three initial statements and suggested responses

Statement	**Responses**		
	Sound	**Copy**	**Comment**
I can speak Chinese	Oh, wow	Chinese	It must be so difficult.
I can speak a little English	Oh	A little English	I can speak a little, too.
It's cold today.	Umm	It`s cold.	It will be cold all winter.

These can be used initially, but statements and comments relevant to learners would be more appropriate.

4.6 Conversation killer 6: Lack of contribution

Dialogue 6 incorporates backchanneling, but still contains a hidden conversation killer, namely the lack of contribution of information. The asymmetry in contribution of information may create a negative impression.

Dialogue 6
A. What kind of music do you like?
B. I like classical.
A. Oh. What kind of classical music do you like?
B. I like concertos, violin concertos.
A. So do I. Do you have a favorite composer?
B. No, I don't.

In interviews and interrogations one interlocutor asks while the other answers, but in conversations both interlocutors expect to ask and be asked questions. The maxim of "give before you get" can be used to encourage learners asking questions to share something about themselves first. (e.g. Hi, I'm John. What's your name?). In class, teachers can set parameters for discussions to encourage all interlocutors to ask questions (e.g. answer two questions then ask a question).

5 Summary

In short, to overcome the hidden conversation killers, learners need to avoid asking personal or unrelated questions, they should elaborate their answers and they should be encouraged to use sound, repetition and comment responses, and reciprocate by asking their own questions. Dialogue 7 is the result of applying all six strategies.

Dialogue 7
A. I like jazz. What kind of music do you like?
B. I listen to classical music most of the time.
A. Oh. Classical. What kind of classical music do you like?
B. I like concertos, especially violin concertos.
A. So do I. Do you have a favourite composer?
B. No, I don't. How about you?

The six hidden conversations killers and associated strategies to overcome them are listed below:

Killer 1: Personal questions	Strategy 1: Ask non-personal questions
Killer 2: Unrelated questions	Strategy 2: Ask related follow-up questions
Killer 3: One-word answers	Strategy 3: Use multi-word answers.
Killer 4: Lack of elaboration	Strategy 4: Give some extra details.
Killer 5: Lack of attentiveness	Strategy 5: Use sounds to show attentiveness

Killer 6: Lack of contribution Strategy 6: Insert comments in responses

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TEACHING ESP AT RUSSIAN UNIVERSITIES: CHALENGES OF METHODOLOGY

BURENINA Natalia

Abstract: *The article gives an overview of typical problems that ESP teachers face at universities in Russia. In spite of the fact that foreign languages teaching have been progressing significantly for recent decades the situation with teaching ESP has remained almost unchained at many provincial universities. The author outlines some measures that should be taken to improve the situation.*

Key words: *Teaching, English for Specific Purposes, a foreign language, methodology, teacher training*.

1 Main Characteristics of New Approaches to Foreign Language Teaching

Within a number of past decades we have observed how significantly foreign language teaching and investigation have been progressing. However, the most interesting discoveries are not those describing “the new and revolutionary” method. The significance of the latest findings of language methodology implies a new approach to teaching languages that is based on the following three main things.

1. Emphasis on the Individual Learner. In the past, within a teachers’ community the most frequently asked question was “Which is the best teaching methodology?” Now teachers ask “How can my students learn a foreign language most effectively?” The focus now has shifted from the teacher to the learner, and with this has come the realization that each learner is an individual, with distinct needs, learning styles, mental schemata and attitudes. And what makes the matters more complicated is that not only different learners have different overall learning styles, but an individual learner uses different approaches to learning at different stages in the learning process. Evidently, the teacher is to be aware of these multiple individual cognitive and personality factors, he/she should be able to diagnose them and apply them effectively. It means that he/she must have more than a passing knowledge of recent investigations in Psychology.

2. Eclecticism. Taking into account that each learner possesses distinct cognitive and personality traits, it follows that applying one teaching methodology for all students will hardly be the most appropriate. Therefore, the recent tendency has been toward eclecticism, selecting materials and techniques from various sources. This obviously puts a much larger responsibility on the teacher, for now he/she should be familiar with a much wider range of materials, exercises, and activities than before. It is no longer simply a matter of picking up the textbook and teaching it. Thus, a future teacher needs a much broader training in Pedagogy.

3. Communication in a Social Context. One of the weakest points of the Audio-lingual method that was so popular in the past is that students "parroted" phrases, with no idea of what they were saying. In more formal terminology they demonstrated "linguistic competence" (Chomsky, 1965) but not "communicative competence" (Hymes, 1974). Now we recognize that it is not enough to acquire knowledge of linguistic structure. One must also possess the appropriate schemata regarding the culture of the language being learned in order to understand the communication and be able to respond using the vocabulary and structure that correspond to a specific social situation. Thus the importance of sociology in language teaching is growing. (Champeau de Lopez, 1994).

2 Challenges of Teaching ESP

No doubt, teacher training faculties and institutes react on these changes and build up their Methodology courses on the components that give future teachers good understanding of the Learner-in-Focus Approach, equip them with the newest techniques based on information communication technology, include a sufficient bulk of Psychological and Pedagogical issues. Generally, students of these teacher training programs are trained to be teachers of General English at primary and secondary schools, the best ones start their professional career at the institutions of the tertiary level.

Those who are involved in teacher training programs build their own approaches on the best examples of their former university teachers. They recollect the best practices of being taught and apply them to their own experience rather successfully. Being ambitious and innovative they make good progress in teaching because they teach students who are highly motivated (at least, most of them), otherwise why should they have entered the foreign languages department? The subject they teach (a foreign language) is major in many aspects (a good amount of hours in the curriculum, language levelled students groups, close attention and every support of the faculty administration, well-equipped laboratories etc.).

Graduates from foreign languages departments who start their professional career as teachers of English for Specific Purposes or better to say English for Professional Purposes find themselves in quite a different situation.

Within their first steps they try to apply the methodology they were taught when being language students to their work in class with students majoring in various fields but English, the latter being an instrument for achieving professional goals.

As it has been mentioned before, classes of language students are generally formed according to their language level. Thus, a particular class has approximately the same level of English and the teacher can offer the same program for all the students of the group. In case of non-language students the situation is quite different in most cases. A class consists of students whose competence in English differs dramatically: there can be students with the levels A2 or B1 even B2 or C1 and there can be those who has never learnt English and was put in this particular group only due to an administrative aspect. A young English teacher finds this situation quite unexpected and the first question becomes: who should be the target audience - Level B2 or Level A1? What methodology support (books supply generally) should be used?

A kind of advice in this respect may be to take into account the majority of students. And generally this is the way most teachers follow. They offer their students a program of the middle level, say for instance Level B1. But it is absolutely evident that students with zero knowledge of English are not able to follow this program. At the same time students who came in the class with level B1 will find this program boring and giving no progress for them.

A general way out that most teachers find in this situation is: they find extra material for "advanced'' students and allow them to study it by themselves arranging several "dates" within a semester to check the acquisition of the material. The poorest (in the sense of English competence, of course) students are recommended to take extra classes for extra money.

So the problem is that teachers of ESP/EPP are not ready to meet a rather great diversity of their students and develop the most successful methodology in this respect.

The second unexpected aspect (for young teachers) in teaching ESP is a dramatically small amount of time scheduled for learning English in the curricula of non-language students (comparing with language students' curriculum). Young ESP teachers feel embarrassed about what aspect to teach. When being students they were taught reading, speaking, listening, writing, they were taught grammar and vocabulary. But in ESP curricula they have 6-8 times

less class-hours. They find it absolutely impossible to teach all aspects. That's why they almost completely exclude listening and writing at their lessons and focus their attention generally on grammar and vocabulary, and reading. Speaking is traditionally taught as a performance in the format of well-known "topics".
Thus, the second problem is that young ESP teachers can not define the priority of skills to teach and follow the previous out-of-date approach that includes grammar exercises, reading and translating, and topics.
Lack of class hours and great diversity of the target audience force ESP teachers to implement ICT elements in their teaching but it should be noted that there are rather a large number of teachers who do not have sufficient experience in organizing students' independent study based on distant learning.
So, the third challenge comprises ICT competence of ESP teachers.
In spite of the fact that reading remains the main activity taught some ESP teachers lack contemporary technique in teaching reading and testing reading. They lack methodology that leads their students from listening to speaking and from reading to speaking. Their methodology of teaching reading is based on "translate the text", "put questions to the text", "ask your group mates to answer your questions". Developing speaking skills includes "speak on the topic", "make a dialogue" and "dramatize the situation" in the better case.
Thus, the fourth challenge is that ESP teachers should be given training courses of teaching and testing various communicative skills based on the best practices in this field.

Conclusion

To sum up the situation with teaching ESP at Russian universities we can make the following conclusions.

1. Young teachers who have graduated from foreign languages departments quite recently have a good command of using computer and internet technology in teaching a foreign language. They lack knowledge and competence of managing the time and language diversity of their students.

2. Experienced teachers, in their turn, lack knowledge and competence of applying ICT to teaching a foreign language, as well of contemporary methods of teaching and testing English.

3. Both of the groups need to acquire knowledge and techniques to develop student's autonomy in learning a foreign language.

The necessity to give ESP teachers courses of basic methodology in teaching ESP is obvious and urgent. A lot of Russian universities and Institutes have been developing academic mobility, double degrees programs, and research projects with their foreign counterparts. ESP teachers become responsible for the level of English of non-language students that cannot be defined as sufficient in many cases. Teachers cannot change the curriculum; they cannot avoid the language level diversity of the target audience. They have to up-date their methodology. One of the ways of this up-grading is implementation of CLIL in ESP teaching. The latter issue is being discussed very actively in academic publications (Kováčiková, 2012). Since the competition among universities is growing, more and more of them start running their educational programs in foreign languages. Studying experience of those European universities that have achieved effective results in implementing CLIL will help develop a program of student language competences improvement that will match cultural environment and specificity of a particular university.

That is why re-training courses should be developed and offered to in-service teachers of ESP. Another way out is developing Master programs for ESP teachers that can be offered to graduates with Bachelor degree in Linguistics.

This new, increased responsibility for language learning does not fall entirely to the teacher. The student must also assume more responsibility for the learning process. Now, the student is not simply a passive receptacle into which the teacher pours knowledge. He/she must participate actively in the learning process. It is the learner who must assimilate the language and make the latter part of him/her, teachers can only "facilitate" this process (Champeau de Lopez, 1994).

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MULTIMODALITY IN THE LANGUAGE CLASSROOM: EXPLORING DIFFERENT SEMIOTIC MODES IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING

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Abstract: *Following a more traditional teaching mode, which mainly depends on teachers' instruction, sometimes might cause students getting bored. That is why nowadays 'multimodality is important in supplementing the traditional classroom teaching mode' (Fangpeng 2013:25). Moreover since 'learning is closely related to experiencing life and in life we employ all of our senses not only vision' (Anastopoulou, 2004:29) we should therefore build a multimodal teaching mode which at the same time would arouse students' English learning interests. Today EFL books having been using multimodal texts which communicate messages using more than one semiotic mode. Meaning is derived from individual elements in the text, such as words, pictures, sounds and usually interactive online activities and the meanings of these elements interact to form a whole. The principal communicative components of the text are typeface, layout, images and aspects of images such as colour. These involve verbal language together with other semiotic modes, such as visuals, material and sound. Moreover great emphasis is now placed not only on the visual appeal in education but on the role of computers too. As a result English language textbooks had to change format including stimulating and rich in imagery computer activities paying attention to the important role of different semiotic modes in language learning. As Kress and Van Leeuwen say, 'today we seem to move towards a decrease of control over language and towards an increase in codification and control over the visual' (Kress and Van Leeuwen 1996:28).*

Key words: *foreign language learning, multimodality, motivation, textbooks, technology*

1 Different semiotic modes

From the time we are born, we try to communicate with others using various modes of communication. We use different modes such as linguistic, visual, auditory, gestural, and spatial in order to create meanings and manage to communicate our messages to other people. Multimodality is actually the theory which 'explores how communication is structured through modes and describes how different modes work together to convey meaning in different contexts' (Stein, 2004 cited in Martens et al., 2012, p.286).

Following the multimodal theory, teachers try to teach pupils to communicate by 'talking, writing, drawing, playing music, using gestures, and so forth, in particular spatial and cultural contexts to share meanings with others' (Martens et al., 2012, p.286). Teachers nowadays try to overcome the traditional single teaching method by changing their teaching methods according to their different teaching aims. They create a combination of instruction and interaction, taking the best advantage of diverse means with the use of multimodal modes in order to improve students' learning interest helping them gain great self-confidence. In this way 'the ultimate goal of improving their English level can be achieved' (Fangpeng 2013, p.25).

Going through a textbook, it is obvious that 'all texts have acquired colour illustrations and sophisticated layout and typography' (Lillis and McKinney, 2003, p.107). Also by looking at the text, we can see that it is inevitably constructed across multiple modes of communication. There is a combination of visual and verbal communication and both the author and the graphic designer place the various kinds of images as well as the writing not at random, but for

various semantic purposes. They collaborate to realize complementary intersemiotic meanings when they co-occur on the page. They work together to produce a coherent multimodal text. There are times when images are really important since they are conveying new information which is the core of the curriculum content and they are representing meanings that are not available in the written text.

1.1 The visual mode

The multimodal text consists of a profusion of highly coloured images which accompany the whole text writing. Those 'images are treated not simply as illustration; rather they are integral to the way in which meanings are made' (Snyder, 2001, p.266). They are used in conjunction with a text or a song for specific learning outcomes and require an active response from the learner in a spoken or written form. All 'visual depictions of people, places and things are combined into a meaningful whole' (Snyder, 2001, p.267). Words, images and sounds interact to carry meaning of the multimodal text in a less complex way. Each image conveys information and meaning. We could say that images are considered illustrative supports to writing.

But it is not only the images being used. Let us keep in mind that 'adding colour to documents can increase the readers' attention span by more than eighty per cent'. (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996, p.229). Usually the chapter headings have a distinct colour and all section headings and activities follow in colour throughout the book, reminding us that 'colour-coordination rather than the repetition of a single colour can be used to promote textual cohesion' (Lillis and McKinney, 2003, p.130). Having in mind and knowing that 'children enjoy the highly saturated and unmodulated colours' (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996, p.165) we can easily say that children show more interest when using multimodal texts in their learning which seem to be more friendly and easy to use. We could say that colour therefore provides an attractant to the eye, a cohesive link between the elements, which serve to link page-to-page to facilitate the reader and even more sometimes colour can un-complicate situations.

Bearing in mind that young readers require simple, engaging text comparing familiar concepts with new ones, and prefer enticing and often highly-colored productions, the two pages could have several blocks of information and the page elements could be differentiated by size, positioning boxes and panels. If the illustrations are full-colour artwork they could give emphasis on the exercises, by being sometimes bordered in dark colour. Analysing the role of the image vis-à-vis language we could say that it performs a full communicative role in which it either reproduces language meanings, or complements them.

It is obvious that writers choose to follow a specific strategy where the written words are accompanied by images, making the whole process more challenging for the children. Sometimes some images are not repeating aspects of the written text but are in fact, conveying new information which could be the core of the curriculum content such as the introduction to a new grammatical structure. The layout of the exercise should have a neat, tidy and 'fresh' appearance with clear, precise visuals associated with the grammatical structure. Images and written language should be working in harmony on the page. It is obvious that the visual communication is important in adding to the verbal message and that information can't easily be conveyed through words alone.

1.2 The verbal mode

A text produced for the early years of EFL schooling should richly be illustrated. Of course images could vary in their function between illustration, decoration and information. If the textbook is geared towards primary age children, 'the sentence structure is much simpler, with

many sentences containing just one or two clauses. This is related to the fact that the conceptual information conveyed is simpler and 'mainly because the information about the structure of objects is now provided in the visual image' (Kress et al., 1998, p.111).
Even the fonts usually give the impression of a soft, friendly and easy to read, visual experience. Let's not forget that young readers require simple, engaging text comparing familiar concepts with new ones. As Kress and Van Leeuwen say, 'most texts now involve a complex interplay of written text, images and other graphic or sound elements, designed as coherent entities by means of layout' (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996, p.17). Of course the meaning of the images being used is always related to, and in a sense, dependent on, verbal text. In those images, 'someone can see not only the aesthetic and expressive but also the communicative dimensions'. (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996, p.20)

1.3 The audio-visual mode

Communication through computer technology has increased the intermingling of text, audio, video and images in meaning making. So the use of CD-ROMS adds a new dimension of richness to the session representation, providing a visual record of the activities. The children are also given the chance to get engaged with interactive activities on CD-ROM, giving them the chance to immediately immerse in multimodality – sounds, images, video clips. They are immersed in an enticing and highly-coloured production with simple navigation. So using the CD-ROM they can sing along (KARAOKE) and they can listen to the pronunciation of words they show using their mouse. Technology nowadays is so useful in education even through it should not be designed around the technology since as Murray states 'the technology should be chosen because it fits the curriculum and fits the way students learn' (Murray, 2001, p.42).

2 Layout

The page spread is also very important. Usually a double-page spread is used where communicative images, though over-simple to grownups, help young students associate the grammatical structure with the images. Pages are organized into columns. The title usually indicates clearly the primary entry-point for reading. The rest of the columns are usually devoted to further practice and reinforcement of the learning activity and contain exercises, each clearly differentiated. If the book is for younger learners then the headline usually follows a childlike typeface, and being placed in front of a striking background, reinforces the story, reminding us of the title and supporting the grammatical structure which is going to be taught.
The left hand page usually contains the verbal text accompanied by large and salient images, the combination of which gives us the new grammatical structure. The right hand page seems to be the side to which the reader must pay particular attention, reinforcing the 'message' of what is to be learned and what is to be applied. Usually the right hand page is the page with the practicing activities, written or aural.
The upper part of the page is usually occupied by the new vocabulary given in the new text. Simple pictures play the lead role in different activities being used in order to learn and practice the unknown new words. Children using the images get some idea of what to expect and ease themselves more confidently into the reading. Also before listening to the new unit, students could guess what they think the actual story is and explain or discuss it with the teacher. In this way we can help develop students' understanding of the story and grammatical structures. The visuals therefore provide ample opportunities for students to converse with the teacher and peers.

Usually structures 'being presented as centre means that it is presented as the nucleus of the information to which all the other elements are in some subservient' (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996, p.196).

3 Design and Materiality

The design of a textbook is important and thus the task of the graphic designer is seen as architectural since he/she is responsible for 'the shaping of available resources into a framework which can act as the blueprint for the production of the object or entity of event' (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2001, p.50). It is thus the designer's responsibility, in cooperation with the writer, to decide on 'what modes to use for what segments of the curricular content; how to arrange the content' (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2001, p.51) and choose among the available resources for design, helping pupils to sufficiently practice language. Design which 'involves a knowledge of the relationship between words and pictures' (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2001, p.18) is the particular way the writer and designer work on combining semiotic modes to create a layout which will cleverly challenge the children with both the written words and the images spread around it.

Focusing on the materiality of texts means focusing on the physical characteristics of texts, the materials used in text construction for example the kind of paper being used. 'A written text similarly involves more than language. It is written on something, on some material' (Lillis and McKinney, 2003, p.97). So 'the paper used, for instance, conveys the almost ineffable but very important meanings of gloss' (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2001, p.122). 'The way it is bound and the quality of the paper allow it to be leafed through', (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2001, p.122) making it more child-friendly.

'The different material resources used help to demand a different response from the reader towards the text' (Ormerod and Ivanic, 2002, p.122). Certainly young readers would enjoy leafing through the pages of a textbook when its format is of glossy and coloured pages which are more likely to produce a positive, enthusiastic response towards the text.

4 Multimodal Learning: the contribution of technology

A digitally enhanced world is lately been introduced in learning. Teachers are creating an environment which helps pupils to interact with the technology which is provided and with digital, resources available. Technology allows teachers to incorporate real-world interactions creating digital effects of how instances of the symbolic world are affected and 'a range of real world and symbolic modalities that are important for learners' meaning construction' (Anastopoulou, 2004, p.7) The introduction of digital technologies and the use of internet into the language classroom, enables students to reach beyond the traditional teaching. They are now having access to foreign languages and cultures using tools which are 'becoming increasingly more powerful, often combining different modes of communication in one single environment'. (Hauck and Youngs, 2008, p.87).

Computers can be used as any other learning resources. They can be used for a variety of reasons, as a word processor, a spreadsheet, a database, desktop publishing and graphics, to interact with multimedia software, to browse the internet. 'Images, animation, colour, and visual design interact with language in Web-based communication' (Kern, 2006, p.183) but a teacher should study very carefully the way all those changes affect the way pupils learn and use languages taking into consideration the advantages and problems of learning with multimedia technologies.

Multimodal interactions with technology can benefit learners in their efforts to understand language. Through a digitally enhanced world environment, learners have access to real world and symbolic modalities that help them understand in a much easier and motivating way the subject to be learnt. This multimodal digitally enhanced world used in learning 'would be a real world in which the learner can see digital effects; a conceptual environment where symbolic entities have direct referents to the real world' (Anastopoulou, 2004, p.5).

The Internet allows the teacher to introduce multimedia dimensions that go beyond print textuality changing the traditional discourse structures and allowing pupils to participate in multicultural learning communities. Multimodal online teaching sources allow for richer and more effective collaborative learning and provide an authentic environment for communication. However we must study very carefully before using any new teaching material, making sure that they are suitable for the pupils we are teaching and for the teaching purpose we are using them taking into consideration that 'the multimodal nature of synthetic world environments may overload learners'(Wigham, C.R. and Chanier, T., 2015, p.262).

Using technology allows learners to move from the book to the computer where they are given the opportunity for greater interactivity and novel ways to think about a learning activity. Technology provides different ways to represent concepts through different media formats like animations, narratives, text and graphics. Learners are given the opportunity to be engaged collaboratively in online learning environments constructing in this way meaningful knowledge. Interactive digital video clips can support learners through interactivity and cognitive scaffolding. Teachers of course have to study very carefully before using any kind of online teaching material 'by placing the focus not only on technology but also on pedagogical considerations' (Anstopoulou, 2004, p.14) and making sure in this way that they facilitate learning.

We have to realise that there are important differences between reading print and reading on screen. These differences make learning quite more interesting for learners who are in this way motivated in language learning. 'Reading on screen involves various aspects of online processing that includes responding to animated icons, hypertext, sound effects, and the continuous pathways between and within screens for internet and intranet' (Walsh, 2010, p.214). Different types of online multimodal texts such as digital picture books can very efficiently be used for language practice. Digital picture books use multiple modes, 'including the linguistic (written text), visual (illustrations), spatial (evident in the design, layout, and composition), and gestural (found in the positions and movement in the illustrations)' (Martens et al., 2012, p.287).

Conclusion

Multimodality brings all different semiotic modes for students helping them to understand the meaning of words and know more customs of foreign cultures being studied. In this way students are motivated in their English class and really attain the goal of improving the intercultural communication competence. A good teacher is asked to handle the different teaching methods harmoniously, strengthening 'the construction of meaning to make the content vivid and easier to be understood otherwise it would bring contradiction, even make the students confused' (Fangpeng, 2013, p.26). A teacher nowadays is asked to make judicious use of the many multimedia resources available studying carefully to what extent does the visual image reinforce or conflict with the words and must 'become more critically aware of the ways in which a wide range of semiotic resources contribute to the construction of meanings' (Iedema, 2001, p.129).

Multimodality adds more to the traditional teaching mode bringing image, video and audio for students helping them to understand the meaning of words and knowing customs of foreign cultures feeling as being personally on the scene. Multimodality helps students gain interest in English class improving their intercultural communication competence. In the last few years by using computers in their teaching, teachers manage to increase the intermingling of text, audio, video, images and other features which contribute to the meaning of the text.

Using this collection of different (semiotic) modes can change the way pupils perceive information increasing their interest in learning, ending up in a more efficient teaching, as Liu and Qu state 'the multimodality of textbooks, especially that of language textbooks, is regarded as having close relationship with the effectiveness and efficiency of teaching and learning' (Liu and Qu, 2015, p.136).

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GUIDED DISCOVERY APPLIED AS SOCRATIC QUESTIONING AND ITS POTENTIATING ROLE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS AMONG STUDENTS OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

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Abstract: *The ever expanding mixture of cultural dimensions of the world we live in makes it shrink. The global village, as often referred to, is growing rapidly. As the inhabitants of the melting pot, we co-exist, interact and, thus, are both directly and indirectly influenced and shaped by its cultural diversity, complexity and multi-facetedness as such. The very concept of globalisation often touches upon the very core of our existential selves, setting Homo sapiens representatives in the ever intensified meaning pursuit mode, also reflected in the educational arena in the swelling ranks of higher education graduates across the globe. The developmental stimulation of intellectual inquisitiveness and critical thinking skills as such among our students is, thus, of paramount importance if we are to prepare them for the existential intricacies and the complexities of the world they inhabit. What tools are, then, needed for its successful implementation? Guided discovery as a form of Socratic questioning with its multi-layered explorative potential can doubtlessly prove a competing contestant in the domain of intercultural studies, deepened awareness of which is indispensable for anyone taking the reins of existential becoming in the age of such intense cross-cultural interaction.*

Keywords: *critical thinking, Socratic questioning, guided discovery, intercultural, communication*

1 Theoretical contextualization

1.1 Introductory reflections on the increasing importance of critical thinking skills in higher education

According to the data release by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics[1], we are faced with an unprecedented growth in higher education enrolment and student mobility across the globe. This, however, does not seem to be corresponding with the ever increasing number of students graduating, as Richard Paul in his *State of Critical Thinking Today* (2004) put it, *without the intellectual skills necessary for reasoning through complex issues*, directly resulting, as he further argues, from the fact that

Students…toady are achieving little connection and depth either within or across subjects. Atomized lists dominate textbooks, atomized teaching dominates instruction and atomized recall dominates learning. What is learned are superficial fragments, typically soon forgotten. What is missing is the coherence, connection, and depth of understanding that accompanies systematic critical thinking[2].

Although dated as it now is, Paul's statement has only gained in relevance since it is evident that more and more graduates with solid theoretical foundations struggle manoeuvring through the multitude of competing cultural, political and socio-economic realities of everyday existence in the global village of the present age. What, then, can be done to facilitate the aforementioned mediation and what role do educators play in such cognitive potentiation?

[1] http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Pages/tertiary-education.aspx accessed on January, 21st 2016
[2] http://www.criticalthinking.org/pages/the-state-of-critical-thinking-today/523 accessed on January, 9th 2016

Reuven Feurstein, when pondering the nature of teaching endeavour, pointedly concluded: *The teacher must be not just a dispenser of information but someone who helps…learn to use each encounter with stimuli in order to benefit from it* (qtd in Topping, Crowell & Kobayashi, 2013:402). As obvious as it may seem, it is still the dissemination of abstract theoretical knowledge that is prioritized over more inductive empirical reasoning, with the latter perceived as seemingly less reproductively structured and, thus, more demanding, being more reluctantly incorporated into the teaching-learning process by both learners and teachers alike. What, then, is its balancing counterpart recognising the importance of students' independence of thought and critical reasoning along with their meta-data processing potential and how can it be successfully implemented?

1.2 Guided discovery in the form of Socratic questioning as a potentiating tool in critical thinking development

Jim Scrivener in his *Learning Teaching* (1994) pointedly notices:
An alternative [to dry explanation] *giving…would be to create activities that allow learners to generate their own discoveries and explanations…. Teacher questions will 'nudge' the learners toward key points. In this way…*[they] *take a more active role in their own progress….This kind of guidance is sometimes referred to as 'Socratic questioning', i.e. leading people to discover things that they didn't know they knew via a process of structured questions* (Scrivener, 1994: 268-269).
As for the notional origination of the abovementioned approximation of Socratic dialoguing, it, obviously, bears direct relation to the now proverbialised conclusion arrived at by the Artisan of Thought who capacitatingly admitted: *I cannot teach anybody anything, I can only make them think* (qtd in Taylor, 2001:17). As potentiation-oriented educators in the age of cultural heterogenization of the world, teachers should make Socratic stance their pedagogical creed to work by, passing the view formulating torch to their learners, who as fellow human beings, should feel equally responsible for the qualitative direction of their educational endeavour on the journey of their existential becoming. For this to be realizable, however, not only does the spark of students' cognitive inquisitiveness need to be ignited first through the contextualizing analytical exposition of the subject matter relevance-elicitation, but its burning flame has to be kept alive by the empowering activation of students' interpretative potential. In this way, as Richard Paul in *The Thinker's Guide to the Art of Socratic Questioning* (2007) points out
Fruitful Socratic discussion infects students with…curiosity about the meaning and truth of what they think, hear and read and gives students the clear message that they are expected…to take everyone else's beliefs seriously… To learn how to participate in it, one has to learn how to listen carefully to what others say, look for reasons and evidence, recognize and reflect upon assumptions, discover implications and consequences, seek examples, analogies and objections, discover, in short, what is really known and distinguish it from what is merely believed (qtd in Paul & Elder, 2007: 361-362).
It is evident that a skilful employment of Socratic stance in educational setting, widely known as guided discovery, does present an enormously empowering potential, allowing for more than mere knowledge acquisition; it does provide stimulating environment for its mental digestion, conceptual boundary testing or clarification of its referential relevance applicability. It can also serve as a powerful confidence booster, as given an opportunity to see the 'tangible' results of their productively fruitful cognitive labour, students are more likely to welcome analytical challenges and prioritize them over reproductively-oriented tasks.
To conclude on the Scrivenerian note: *it isn't enough to throw a task at the learners, let them do it and then move on. Guided discovery requires imagination and flexibility, your job here is not*

simply to pass over a body of information, but rather to create the conditions in which that information can be learned (Scrivener, 1994: 268). Its practical application is the subject matter of the considerations to follow.

2 Practical application

Linguistic similarities are often considered the winning contestants for the crown of cross-cultural communicative coherence and discursive understanding formatives among global villagers. Although by no means should they be underestimated, it can, undoubtedly, be claimed that they also shed some illuminating light on the indispensability of other, equally, if not more contextually significant, conceptual components of a cross-cultural communicative exchange. Their full appreciation requires, however, more than bare awareness of the existence of intercultural differences since, as significant as it doubtlessly is, it is the very understanding of the variable causatives that promotes and sustains cross-cultural dialogue, diversity and inclusion being of such immense importance nowadays. How, then, can the aforementioned understanding be developed? Instead of the factual presentation to the student auditorium, a teacher may apply the following, Guided, in its Socratic orientation discovery procedure described in its broadest terms:

1. Empirically-oriented subject matter contextualization / Cultural differences among the citizens of the planet/-elicit the notion of the above-mentioned differences as known from first-hand experience by: problem identification, its context specification and the consequential outcome
2. Taking 1. Into consideration, ask learners to ponder the causative nature of the encountered difficulties as introduction to the pre-devised text on the notional contextualization of cultural differences among the citizens of the planet
3. Upon the distribution of the appended text, clearly identify the notions to be discussed, i.e. *intercultural differences, high vs low-context cultures, monochronically vs polychronically-time-oriented cultures,* culturally embedded *weak vs strong uncertainty avoidance, high vs law power distance* or *collectivism vs individualism* in culture formation and its manifestation
4. Having familiarized themselves with the provided textual contextualization, students:

   - identify the terms with the accompanying textual contextualization;
   - are, then, asked to express the meaning of the notional textualization in their own words;
   - come up with examples of empirical representation of the discussed notions as encountered or heard of in real life situations;
   - identify and discuss their potential causative factors;
   - hypothesize/de-hypothesize, bearing in mind previously mentioned causatives, potential coping strategies when faced with such culturally conditioned behavioural patterns.

Conclusion

Although just a grain of food for thought, the aforementioned applicatory considerations, comprising guided concept questioning, context validation, with the empirically-embedded exemplification, followed by the analytical discussion aimed at the subject matter notion

unification and context-defined hypothesis, illustrate that, although cognitively challenging as it doubtlessly is, critical questioning is instrumental if students are to graduate as well-rounded, thinking individuals capable of skilful navigation amidst cognitive variables of the immersing global reality.

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Appendix

Textual extract written for the seminar on the notional contextualization of cultural differences among the citizens of the planet

As citizens of the world, global villagers inhabiting the increasingly expanding melting pot of the shrinking world they live in have never been in greater need of the awareness of the normatives of intercultural communicative encounter. As Eva Reid in her *Intercultural Aspects in Teaching English at Primary Schools* (2014) notices

The norms of certain behavior are set entirely within the particular culture and help the individuals to interpret experience in that culture. Individuals cannot use the same norms of

behavior outside their own culture expecting they would function the same. Individuals need to be aware of the existence of other cultures and of the fact that other individuals would perceive them in turn as the ones from the outside…. Culture either includes or excludes. (2014:26).

This, in turn, translates into what Adrian Holliday in his *Intercultural Communication: An Advanced Resource Book for Students* (2010) refers to when he states

…before we can communicate with people who are different to ourselves, we need to understand something about how they present themselves as being or belonging to certain groups. Thus, *a good* cross-cultural and, as such*, interpersonal* as I would add the Scollons would argue, *communicator…needs to be aware of the issues surrounding the concept of identity…., we should try to understand people before we can communicate with them* (2010:21/23).

it cannot go unnoticed that the awareness of the well-established hypothetical facts relating to the undeniable existence of cultural differences among global villagers may serve as a smoothening remedy for the initial uneasiness frequently accompanying cross-cultural encounters, sensitising its participants to their culturally attributable uniqueness to promote mutual understanding and respect. It should, then, be taken into consideration that individuals from *high-context* cultures, such as Asian, South European, African or Latin American ones, may appear to rely on the implicit contextual message transfer, while their *low-context* western counterparts might appreciate a more explicit communicative style. When it comes to the perception of the notion of time, it is of immense importance in cross-culturally interpersonal dialogue since, as Hall notices *…time is one of the fundamental bases on which all cultures rest and around it all activities revolve* (2002:179). As such, it is symbolic of individual values and priorities reflected in one's present, past, future or mixed-time orientedness, possibly denoting more conservative traditional, liberal or progressive stance in life. What is more, if viewed as *monochronic or polychronic,* the concept can be a metaphorical representation of individual behavioural pattern manifestation indicative of one's inclinations towards more focused, structured and self-disciplined independence of being or multi-tasking, creative chaos and unrestrained flexibility respectively. German, Swiss or Austrian cultures, to name just a few, are considered most monochronic in their relation to time, whereas Latin Americans, Arabs or Africans seem to be on the polychronic end of the spectrum. This dimension can also be representative of the expectational *power distance* as members of *high power distance* cultures such as e.g. African, Asian or Latin American ones may also be, in their greater independent readiness to accept rigidity and follow the centralised power instructions, more likely to adopt monochronic time perception behavioural associations while those from predominately western *low power distance* contexts might struggle with the notion of constraining authority as such. This, in turn, may be translatable into culturally normative degree of *uncertainty avoidance* with which individuals face the unknown. Those whose cultures can be characterised by *strong uncertainty avoidance* as it might appear to be the case of China, France or Germany, may prefer structured task and existential organization of life itself as the preventative measure against the unpredictable, which could also be connected to the monochronic time perception and/or high power distance in their everyday lives and encounters with others. Those with *weak uncertainty avoidance*, on the other hand, would probably be described as more cognitively, discursively and existentially autonomous and, thus, more tolerant of the unfamiliar what is often said of the British, Africans or the Japanese for various, if not opposing reasons though. Logically speaking, polychronic time relatedness

and low power distance might follow. This dimensional pair has the potential of being interrelated and realized through that of *individualism* for those employing *low uncertainty avoidance* and *collectivism* among others with *high uncertainty avoidance* respectively as the means of dealing with the unexpected to a shared end of cross-cultural understanding, effective communication and sustainable development. The notions of *individualism* and *collectivism* have been so popularized that they are self-explanatory as such, referring to the degree of individual interpersonal integration, with its higher intensity attributable to apparent collectivists of Arab, African or Asian origin and lower among those more individually oriented in the west. Moreover, collectivistic cultures also appear to have a higher *long-term orientation* in prioritization than those of the more individualistic nature what might be explainable in terms of the aforementioned *uncertainty avoidance*, *power distance* or, indeed, time perception as such. They might also be perceived as more *diffusive* by nature in their collective orientedness when compared with their *specific*ally-natured individualists, valuing privacy, productive disconnectedness and relative communicative straightforwardness. This, in turn, can be, though loosely as it might be, associated with the notions of *achievement* vs *ascription status.* Achievement-oriented cultures, such as North American, German or Finnish ones, tend to measure success through the prism of its individual attainability in terms of the agent's personal growth and professional development. Status ascription-orientedness, on the other hand, apparently prevalent in China, might be exhibited in the success perception as attributable to the group and the length of one's given social standing as such. Another dimension of cultural differences and differentiation processes as such refers to the scope and level of *masculinity* and *femininity* governing social constructs of the citizens of the planet. Those with the dominant *masculine index* may, as it could be expected, present the tendency towards more conservative division of socially ascribed roles and identities as in Arab or Latin American countries while those with an observably higher *feminine index*, e.g. of the Nordic origin, seem to be less gender prescriptive in their social role distribution. The abovementioned cross-cultural variation of socially constructed gender index could be considered as reflective of other potentially culturally definable normatives of *universalism* and *particularism* since universalists might be taken as generalists, determined on their traditionally-rooted conservatism while those of a more particularistic orientation may be inclined to be more change embracing and willing to adapt. These are just a few of potentially endless cross-cultural and, indeed, interpersonal differential conceptual dimensions that might come to the surface in any discursive interaction, shaping its effectiveness in their difference accommodation, similarity estimation and the message transfer itself. As such, they can be perceived as indicative of individual value systems and their prioritization modes, both directly and indirectly reflected in the preferred degree of one's culturally acceptable communicative relatedness and style varying among those from more *affective* cultural contexts, frequently characterized by the heightened intensity of verbally and non-verbally expressiveness which the Spanish or Italians, the *contact culture* representatives, might be known for in contrast to those of more *neutral* contextual origin, with the observably higher subtlety of communicative expression and greater need of personal space in more *non-contact cultures* of Northern Europe and the Far East. The appreciation of the potentiality of such cultural differences and the awareness of the resulting ways of their contextual verbalization and non-verbal channelling can, undoubtedly, be considered indispensable for overcoming linguistic barriers limiting effective communication in any cross-cultural, potentially transactional, discursive interaction.

TEACHING WRITING: FROM THE CORE TO THE COMPLEXITY

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Abstract: *Although writing is a multifaceted task, teaching writing is a demanding task basically for two reasons: Grammar and Syntax. This article provides a method of teaching writing that was found to be effective in improving students' academic writing composition skill. The article explains the concepts of 'guided-discovery' and 'guided-construction' upon which a method of teaching writing is grounded and developed. Providing a brief commentary on what the core could mean primarily, the article presents an exposition of understanding and identifying the core and building upon the core that can demonstrate the way a teacher can make use of the concepts in teaching for improving the writing skills of their students. The method is an adaptation of grammar translation method that has been improvised to suit to a student-centered classroom environment. An intervention of teaching writing through this method was tried out with positive outcomes in formal classroom research setup, and in view of the content's quality that relates more to the classroom practices and also in consideration of its usefulness to the practicing teachers the process and the findings are presented in a narrative form along with the results in tabular form.*

Key words: *Guided Discovery, Guided Construction, Core of a text, Theme of a Text.*

Introduction

Writing is a multifaceted task that relates to the use and coordination of many cognitive processes. Owing to its complexities, many students find writing challenging and many teachers struggle to find methods to effectively teach the skill (Gillespie & Graham 2011). However, with regard to language use in writing the two basic factors that can affect the quality of one's writing are grammar and syntax. Unlike speaking that can be gained by constant exposure to a language, writing needs investments of special efforts for both learning and mastering, since it requires the basic knowledge of grammar and syntax of a language. The core of a text, which is something similar to the theme of a text, can be identified in a sentence, in a paragraph, in an essay or an article and also in a big text like a novel or a content book. To be specific the theme of a text refers to be the essence of a larger text, and the core refers to the root of a sentence as well as the theme of a larger text. In a different way, one can understand that the theme is based on the core.

Drawing upon the strategies of teaching writing mentioned in the works published by the National Writing Project and few other sources, and the results of an experiment carried out clinically with a group of 9 students preparing for IELTS academic module test and a group of 8 other students preparing for TOEFL iBT test, the article describes a writing instruction method that is built on the concepts of identifying the core and building upon the core. Identifying the core helps in improving grammar and building upon the core helps in improving a sentence, a paragraph, a story or any other bigger text. When the instructional model was tried out with adult English learners at a university the results were positive and when the same strategy was employed in training the students for TOEFL and IELTS tests the outcomes were a considerable improvement in their writing as well as reading scores, in comparison with their previous test scores. Grounded in the concepts of 'guided discovery' for identifying the core, and 'guided construction' for building upon the core, the article explains the pedagogy that an English language teacher can adopt for improving the writing quality of their students.

Backdrop

In the view of Killgallon & Don (2000), learning sentence composition can be eased through imitation. They advocate that teachers collect model sentences from classic texts and show their students the way they can compose similar sentences. They argue that the practice of imitation gradually leads to the acquisition of quality writing composition in the way that one can imitate and master the skills in the events like playing a sport, making a cake, and driving a car. Matulis (2007), mentions, "Sentence fluency is an essential writing skill, but it's very difficult to teach in a way that transfers into student writing." Matulis maintains that every two weeks they would focus on a particular sentence structure and in their analysis of a model sentence, taken from Killgallon's "Worktext" booklets, they would first find the base sentence and would proceed to tack the chunks in line with the model sentence.

Gillespie & Graham (2011) present a list of strategies for teaching writing that according to them are built on scientific studies and so are evidence-based practices for teaching writing. The list includes:

- teaching strategies for planning, revising, and editing;
- having students write summaries of texts;
- permitting students to write collaboratively with peers;
- setting goals for student writing;
- allowing students to use a word processor;
- teaching sentence combining skills;
- using the process writing approach;
- having students participate in inquiry activities for writing;
- involving students in prewriting activities;
- providing models of good writing.

They suggest that since no single strategy has proven to be effective for all students, teachers should consider a combination of suitable strategies from the list and customize the combination of strategies to each student. In fact, they argue that these evidence-based strategies, either individually or in combination, can supplement the teachers' current practices and curricula and so are not a complete substitution.

Webster (2007) recommends that the teachers teach their students the way of reading a book that helps in enhancing their writing. She prefers the phrase 'teaching-writers' to 'teaching writing'. The strategy highlighted by Webster adopts the technique of empowering the students to observe the techniques employed by authors of texts in order to ensure that their texts more interesting. For example, when students are empowered and guided to observe the techniques like alliteration, ellipses, pauses, word stretches and the choice of words their imagination gets sparkled toward the writing techniques. An initiation of a discussion on the techniques further flares the student's interest in writing techniques and they become encouraged to take up a writing task and the author's techniques that they recently observed.

Hillebrand (2007) talks about the practice of imitating periodic sentences that can improve students' knowledge of the structure of a sentence, can support the students' understanding of punctuation and can promote their style awareness like the word order, varied sentence lengths and parallel structure. In her words, "a periodic sentence is one in which the reader must wait for the other shoe to drop; the structure of the sentence creates a sense of suspense. The subject of the sentence may be introduced toward its beginning, but the rest of the core sentence -which completes its meaning -is held in abeyance until near the end."

We can also note that in view of Chomsky (1972, P.88-89), since a language user is innately equipped with a framework for constructing grammars and he/she is genetically programmed to construct grammars of a particular kind, their creativity in producing an "indefinite number of expressions which are new to" his "experience" (Ibid, p. 100) reflects their ability in mastering the grammar and syntax of the language.
When the authors of this provided the question 'What are the elements required for good writing?' to teachers participated at some international conferences the participant teachers came up with a list of things that include knowledge of the language, grammar, vocabulary, ideas, information about the target readers, creativity and genre. That means a competent writing instruction should be able to address all these elements, which is really a complex and challenging task.

What is the core?
The core of a sentence is the base of a sentence upon which various chunks of phrases can be tacked. It's the root of a sentence that supports different modifiers of the sentence. It's the skeleton that can be fleshed up with any additional information adjuncts. The core is the simplest unit of a sentence that can be increased to any level of complexity of the sentence. Every sentence is built up on a core that signifies the tense of the sentence. Getting habituated to identify the core, while reading a text, is an essential strategy for improving one's reading fluency as well as writing fluency. Identifying the core helps in improving one's grammar knowledge and building upon the core helps in improving one's syntactical knowledge. For improving the academic writing skills of students, teachers can think about teaching the way to identify the core of a sentence. For instance, let us have a look at the following sentence:

> "Though digital literacy can be broadly defined, in this contribution **we will focus** particularly on the skills and practices of reading and writing, and how those are transformed in the digital environment" (Warschauer, Zheng and Park 2013).

In the above sentence, the bold faced sentence "we will focus" is the core of the sentence. Teachers are required to bring the attention of their students to this phrase while reading it. When students understand that the entire sentence would be meaningless without this core, their reading strategy starts changing. Once they start looking at a sentence from its core their comprehension levels of a text could dramatically increase. The complexity of any difficult sentence can be easily worked out and their analysis of a sentence aims at understanding the sentence and comprehending the text completely.

Guided-Discovery: How to Employ It in Teaching Writing
According to the Teaching English of the British Council, BBC, "guided-discovery, also known as an inductive approach, is a technique where a teacher provides examples of a language item and helps the learners find the rules themselves." Teachers are required to guide their students towards identifying the core while analyzing a sentence. Teachers can start guiding them with the examples of the simplest sentences and carry them to analyze complex sentences. Let us look at the following sentence, which was provided in one of the GMAT exams in its verbal section.
"While larger banks can afford to maintain their own data-processing operations, many smaller regional and community banks are finding that the cost associated with upgrading data-processing equipment and with the development and maintenance of new products and technical staff is prohibitive."

Many students even at advanced level of English find it either difficult to find the core in complex sentences or they may need some time to identify it, unless he or she is trained to identify it. In spite of their speaking fluency, many students fail to analyze and identify the core of a complex sentence until their attention is brought to this aspect of sentence analysis. To start with the teaching process of identifying the core, the teachers can consider the sentences as simple as the following.

The white cat killed the black rat.

In the analysis of the above sentence teachers bring the attention of the students to the boldfaced part of the sentence. And isolate that part of the sentence and write it separately on the board. Now the students can see only that part.

Cat killed. (It is a complete sentence.)
Killed. (It can also be a complete sentence in a context.)

Then guide students to elicit the other parts of the sentence with the following questions.

What did the cat kill? Cat killed *rat*.

What kind of cat is it? White cat. *White* cat killed rat.

Which white cat is it?
The white cat (that we saw yesterday). *The* white cat killed rat.
No. We don't know anything about the cat. *A* white cat killed rat.

What kind of rat is it? Black rat. The white cat killed *black* rat.
(Or) A white cat killed *black* rat.

Which black rat is it?
The black rat (that we saw before.) The white cat killed *the* black rat.
(Or) A white cat killed *the* black rat.
No. We don't know anything about the rat. The white cat killed *a* black rat
(Or) A white cat killed *a* black rat.

After working with some simple sentences teachers can switch over to working with little complex sentences. And once students understand the concept, teachers can get their students exercise with the sentences as complex as the following one.

"From a little after two o'clock until almost sundown of the long still hot weary dead September afternoon **they sat** in what Miss Coldfield still called the office because her father had called it that--a dim hot airless room with the blinds all closed and fastened for forty-three summers because when she was a girl someone had believed that light and moving air carried heat and that dark was always cooler, and which (as the sun shone fuller and fuller on that side of the house) became latticed with yellow slashes full of dust motes which Qunetin thought of as being flecks of the dead old dried paint itself blown inward from the scaling blinds as wind might have blown them" (Faulkner 1990, p.1).

In the analysis of the above sentence a teacher can point to the bold faced and underlined part of the sentence "they sat" as the primary core of the whole sentence and for easier comprehension of the entire sentence teachers can point to the core parts in the other subordinate or adjunct clauses that are connected by the conjunctions like that, which, because, and, etc., as they are boldfaced, underlined and presented below.

> "From a little after two o'clock until almost sundown of the long still hot weary dead September afternoon **they sat** in what **Miss Coldfield** still **called** the office because **her father had called** it that--a dim hot airless room with the blinds all closed and fastened for forty-three summers because when she was a girl **someone had believed** that light and moving air carried heat and that dark was always cooler, and **which** (as the sun shone fuller and fuller on that side of the house) **became latticed** with yellow slashes full of dust motes which Qunetin thought of as being **flecks** of the dead old dried paint itself **blown** inward from the scaling blinds as wind might have blown them" (Faulkner 1990, p.1).

When teachers can organize a discussion on all the underlined parts, the discussion can lead to brainstorming and elicitation of grammar in the sentence. Teachers can play their role as facilitators of the discussion and take the opportunity to explain the role of conjunctions and adjuncts without using grammatical terminology. For example, in leading a discussion on the sentence given above, to begin with, teachers can focus on the primary core part 'they sat' and start a discussion with the following questions and the strategy for eliciting grammar.

Who sat? *They* sat.
Where did they sit? They sat *in the office*.
What time was it? *After two O'clock in the afternoon* they sat in the office.
How long did they sit?
From a little after two o'clock until almost sundown they sat in the office.
What kind of afternoon was it?
From a little after two o'clock until almost sundown *of the long still hot weary hot dead September afternoon* they sat in the office.
How do they know that it's an office?
From a little after two o'clock until almost sundown they sat *in what Miss Coldfield still called* the office.
Why did Miss Coldfield still called it an office?
From a little after two o'clock until almost sundown they sat in what Miss Coldfield still called the office *because her father had called it that* –

Guided-Discovery: In Parsing the Garden Path Sentences

Although teachers and students can work with regular sentences for parsing, it's the block style appearance and the rhythm that creates special interest in working with garden path sentences. Moreover, the omission of functional words also creates some curiosity in learners to understand in what way they are grammatically correct sentences. That's why after working with common sentences we recommend the teachers to work with garden path sentences in guiding the students towards identifying the core. Working with puzzling sentences that look awkward but grammatically perfect can be a way to strengthen the knowledge of sentence structures and to enhance learners' ability in identifying the core. For example, a teacher can provide the sentences similar to the following ones for analysis.

1. ***The Horse*** *Raced Past The Barn* ***Fell*** – Beaver 1970

2. ***The complex houses*** *married and single* ***soldiers*** *and their families (Wikipedia, n.d).*

3. *The rat the cat the dog chased killed ate the malt* -- Chomsky & Miller 1963

4. ***Anyone*** *who feels that if so-many more students whom we haven't actually admitted are sitting in on the course than ones we have that the room had to be changed, then probably auditors will have to be excluded,* ***is likely to agree*** *that the curriculum needs revision* – Chomsky & Miller 1963

5. *Buffalo buffalo Buffalo buffalo buffalo buffalo Buffalo buffalo* – Rappaport 2006
A buffalo that can buffalo a Buffalo buffalo **can** aslo buffalo other Buffalo **buffalo.**

6. ***This*** *exceeding trifling* ***witling,*** *considering ranting criticizing concerning adopting fitting wording being exhibiting transcending learning,* ***was displaying,*** *notwithstanding ridiculing, surpassing boasting swelling reasoning, respecting correcting erring writing, and touching detecting deceiving* ***arguing*** *during debating.* – Brown (1851)

Once the students brainstorm and analyze these garden path sentences, teachers can present the same sentences that are modified by removing the ambiguity so that they look like normal unambiguous sentences and lead a discussion for clarification.

Guided-Construction: Building upon a Story
The concept of guided construction can be employed in teaching writing to advanced student in constructing sentences in a story based on the core parts of the story. The process of teaching can follow the steps given below that are shown using a story as an example. First, a teacher can show a simpler version of a story as small as the following one. Allow students to have enough time for reading.

There was a blind girl. She had a boyfriend. She used to say that she'd marry him if she could see him. One day someone donated her a pair of eyes.
She finally saw her boyfriend.
He told her, "You can see me now, can we get married?"
She replied. I have my eyesight now, but you're still blind. I'm sorry."
He said, "Take care of yourself, and my eyes."

When teachers are sure that they have given their students enough time for reading they can hide the story and show the students the same story with only the core parts and questions related to the deleted adjuncts of the story. The text then does look like the one given below.

There was a girl (**What kind of girl was she?**). She had a friend (**What kind of friend was he?**). She used to say that (**What is *that*?**). One day someone donated her (**what did someone donate?**)
She finally saw (**What did she see?**). He told her (**What did he tell?**) She replied (**What did she reply?**)
He said (**what did he say?**).

Now teachers can ask the students to construct the story again. The students will be able to discuss and reconstruct the story and will be able to understand the way they are connecting sentences. Then teachers can show the bigger version of the story that may look as the following one.

There was a blind girl who was filled with animosity and despised the world. She didn't have many friends, just a boyfriend who loved her deeply, like no one else. She always used to say that she'd marry him if she could see him. Suddenly, one day someone donated her a pair of eyes.

And that's when she finally saw her boyfriend. She was astonished to see that her boyfriend was blind. He told her that she could she see him and asked if she could marry him? She replied that if we would marry him, she couldn't do anything and they would never be happy because she could see now and he was still blind. And she said that it wouldn't work out and she was sorry to say that.

With a tear in his eye and a smile on his face, he meekly said that he just wanted her to always be happy, and told her to take care of herself, and his eyes.
(Source of the story: Romantic Love Messages
http://www.romanticlovemessages.com/cat/stories1.htm)

Again allow students enough time to read the story and when the teachers are sure that their students have had enough time to read, hide the story text and present them the text with the core parts along with the questions embedded in the text that can prompt the missing parts and can ask them to reconstruct the story. This part of the text for the story given above can look like the one given below.

There was a blind girl (**Who is this blind girl? How do you describe her?**). (**How many friends did she have?)**, just a boyfriend (**who is this boy? How do you describe him?**). She always used to say that she'd marry him if she could see him. Suddenly, one day someone donated her a pair of eyes. And that's when she finally saw her boyfriend. (**What was her reaction?**). He told her that she could she see him and asked (**What did the boy ask?**) She replied that (**What did she say?)**. And she said that it wouldn't work out and she was sorry to say that.

With a tear in his eye and a smile on his face, he meekly said that he just wanted her to always be happy, and told her (**What did the boy tell her?**)

When the students finish the task teachers can lead a discussion on the questions and they can provide the students with the feedback on their use of the conjunctions and other adjuncts of information.

Classroom Research

The authors' scholarship of teaching prompted to experiment with the strategy to improve their students' writing scores in IELTS and TOEFL. When the students who scored well in their speaking, listening and reading found it disappointing when it comes to their writing scores, the authors took up the task of teaching writing to the students who scored low in writing. The students who scored low in writing section of the tests and wanted to improve their writing scores were selected for the proposed course. We understood that in spite of their fluency in speaking, listening and reading they find it difficult to produce sentences grammatically

accurate. And because of the grammatical inaccuracies they are scoring low. We planned to train them for 3 months on sentence analysis and sentence composition. We planned to make the classes more interactive, collaborative and teacher directive. The method on its face looks like a traditional grammar translation method, but we adapted the method and made it completely student centred by introducing pair works, group works and collaborative completion of the tasks that are followed by teachers' individual and whole class feedbacks. After the training with the method that we described above the results were promising and the students feed back was clearly positive. The students who scored between 4.5 and 5.5 in IELTS writing section could improve their scores from 6.5 to 7.5. Moreover, the reading scores of 4 students improved from 7.5 to 8 and the reading scores of 3 other students improved from 7 to 8. And the students who took TOEFL iBT test and scored between 12- 15 in writing before the training could improve their writing scores from 16-24. The reading scores of these students also improved from the range of 21-25 to the range of 24-28.

Table: 1

	IELTS Band in Writing Section Before Training	IELTS Band in Writing Section After Training	Percentage of Improvement	Standard Deviation
Student 1	5.5 (61.1%)	7 (77.7%)	16.6%	27.8
Student 2	4.5 (50%)	7 (77.7%)	27.7%	27.7
Student 3	5 (55.5%)	7.5 (83.3%)	27.8%	22.2
Student 4	5 (55.5%)	6.5 (72.2%)	16.7%	22.2
Student 5	6 (66.6%)	7.5 (83.3%)	16.7%	22.2
Student 6	6.5 (72.2%)	8 (88.8%)	16.6%	16.7
Student 7	4.5 (50%)	6.5 (72.2%)	22.2%	16.7
Student 8	5.5 (61.1)	7.5 (83.3%)	22.2%	16.606
Student 9	5 (55.5%)	7 (77.7%)	22.2%	16.6

Mean: 20.96667 Standard Deviation (SD): 4.36068 Variance (SD): 19.01556
Maximum Standard Deviation: 25.327 Minimum Standard Deviation: 16.6

Table: 2

	TOEFL iBT score in Writing section before training	TOEFL iBT score in Writing section after training	Percentage of Improvement	Standard Deviation
Student 1	14 (46.6%)	23 (76.6%)	30%	30
Student 2	13 (43.3%)	21 (70%)	26.7%	30
Student 3	18 (60%)	25 (83.3%)	23.3%	30
Student 4	18 (60%)	27 (90%)	30%	26.7
Student 5	17 (56.6%)	25 (83.3%)	26.7%	26.7
Student 6	12 (40%)	16 (53.3%)	13.3%	23.3
Student 7	19 (63.3%)	26 (86.6%)	23.3%	23.3
Student 8	15 (50%)	24 (80%)	30%	13.3

Mean: 25.4125 Standard Deviation: 5.26888 Variance: 27.76109
Maximum Standard Deviation: 30.681 Minimum Standard Deviation: 20.144

Closing Statement

On its face, the writing instruction method looks like traditional grammar translation method. But the improvised way of dealing with the traditional method makes it completely student centred and more interactive and can lead to active learning that can improve students' creativity and their ability to think critically. The teaching of writing can be simplified by getting the students analyze sentences from their core. When students are habituated to identify the core in sentences, comprehension of complex texts could be easier. The basic essentials of writing, grammar and syntax can be taught well by adopting the guided discovery and guided construction methods. Once teaching writing through this method is started, teachers can find that they are addressing many other elements of writing that are desirable in a good writer as well. For example, through collaborative approaches teachers can improve their students' critical and analytical skills, creativity, vocabulary and ability to select proper genre. Apart from developing writing skills, students can improve their reading skills as well through the proposed writing intervention. However, in view of varying learning styles of learners it is difficult to recommend any specific method as the best one universally, because no single method could be the most ideal method for all learners. There is always a scope for a better method and the teachers should keep trying something that suits better to their students and one can consider this method as one of the best methods that can bring about a great improvement in their students' writing skills.

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DEVELOPING SPEAKING IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

KOHUTOVÁ Veronika

Abstract: *The article presents an overview of speaking activities used in teaching-learning process. It is divided into 6 parts. The first part presents the ultimate objective of learning a foreign language – communicative competence. It also explains what communicative competence is and what steps learners have to take to become communicatively competent. The second part focuses on speaking as one of the four skills to be developed in students. The importance of dependence of productive skills on receptive skills is emphasized. The part provides readers with the basic division of speaking activities and describes a successful speaking activity by naming its characteristic features. The third part of our article deals with educational goals. The necessity of setting partial, proper and achievable goals is notably pointed out. Afterwards, we familiarize readers with controlled, guided and free speaking activities and present various examples with regard to lesson objectives. The very last part of our article offers teachers of English language specific examples of activities to practice both systems and speaking skill.*

Key words: *communicative competence, speaking skill, goals, accuracy and fluency oriented speaking activities*

Introduction

Teaching speaking might be difficult for some teachers. They find themselves asking the same question and that is: Why my students cannot speak when they have the grammar and vocabulary needed to do so? In order to answer the above mentioned question we must have a deeper look at speaking as one of the four skills to be developed in students.

Skills are divided into receptive and productive. The division has been made on the basis of what students mainly do in a particular activity. When they receive the language, their receptive skills such as reading and listening are developed. On the other hand, while producing the language, productive skills such as speaking and writing are improved.

If students are to speak, teachers have to show them a way of doing so. The goal of studying a foreign language, in our case, English, is to understand and be understood by other people. The ultimate goal is to fully gain communicative competence. However, it requires a long-term process. One cannot learn to speak from one day to another or from one week to another or even from one month to another. Both teachers and learners must realize that the ability to speak English can be acquired only through a plenty of practice, a variety of speaking tasks, sufficient learner talking time, determination, perseverance and hard work. That is why teachers should not be disappointed by the disability of their students to speak. Teachers must set partial and achievable goals, so that students are given a chance to succeed. Only then both sides can be satisfied and motivated. Gradually, step by step, teacher with his/her students reach the ultimate goal – communicative competence.

Nowadays students are quite irritable and impatient. They long for quick results. If they do not come, students become nervous, demotivated and they quickly give up. The shift in their attitude depends on teachers who should demonstrate their pedagogical mastery by supporting and encouraging students. Moreover, students´ motivation goes hand in hand with success which is based on realistic and achievable goals.

1 Communicative competence

Various resources offer a definition of communicative competence. We have chosen the one by Brown (2000, p. 246) who defines communicative competence as follows *"an aspect of our competence that enables us to convey and interpret messages and to negotiate meanings interpersonally within specific contexts"*.
One must realize that in order to achieve the ultimate goal of a foreign language, communicative competence, and all its subcategories must be gradually worked on. Among the four components there are linguistic competence, discourse competence, pragmatic competence and strategic competence. What each of the competences means and what both teachers and learners should work on to develop them properly is described very briefly.
Hedge (2000, p. 46) defines linguistic competence as *"knowledge of the language, its form and meaning."* However, to know the language is not sufficient enough. Learners should be able to use their knowledge about the form and meaning and produce coherent speech, in other words, speech understandable for other people. Only when speakers´ ideas are arranged according to logic and make sense, only then their discourse competence has been fully developed. Pragmatic competence, also known as sociolinguistic competence is the ability to know where and when to use English and what language to use when talking to different people in different social situations. Strategic competence as the last component of communicative competence can be defined as the ability to use both verbal and non-verbal means of communication. Harmer (1991, p. 16) thinks that this component of communicative competence *"is not knowledge about anything but rather knowledge of how to evaluate what is said to us and of how to plan and execute what we want to say back. It is the knowledge of what to do with the language competence that we have, and it is this dynamic processing mechanism which puts all the other knowledge we have to real use."*
What particularly should students learn in order to develop the above mentioned competences? When taking linguistic competence into consideration as first, we want our learners to achieve accuracy in the grammatical and pronunciation forms, we want them to build a range of vocabulary, achieve accuracy in syntax and word formation and last but not least, we want them to use rhythm, intonation and stress accurately to convey meaning. If pragmatic competence is to be developed in students, they should be taught the relationships between grammatical forms and their functions, how to use stress and intonation to express attitudes and emotions or they should be explained the scales of formality. Discourse competence is based on the ability to use cohesive devices. Thanks to cohesive devices text produced by a learner is unified. To be more specific, teachers should teach their students pronouns, transitional words, linkers or synonyms because they are used to bridge particular words, sentences, ideas and texts. Students cannot be afraid to make mistakes by no means. On the contrary, they should be encouraged to take risks in using spoken language because one learns best through enough practice and his/her own mistakes. Moreover, teachers should emphasize the fact that even though their students cannot think of a particular word or expression to be used in a situation, there is always a way how to lie their way out. Teachers should ask them to explain the word or provide a synonymous term and use non-verbal means of communication which are a great help, too. When learners are able to do so, they have developed strategic competence.
To sum up, this part of our article, in order to become a proficient communicator, one must master all four sub-categories of communicative competence.

2 Speaking as a skill

Two groups of skills have been already mentioned. Speaking belongs to the group of productive skills because students primarily produce the target language. All four skills, reading, listening,

speaking and writing are equally important. Any of the skills cannot be underestimated, they are all interconnected and none can be developed fully without other skills. For example, a dialogue between two people involves both speaking and listening as its participants are in roles of speakers and listeners. Another example which proves the dependence of one skill on the other one can be ability or inability to reply to an email from a friend, an acquaintance or an employer. Students cannot write back if they cannot read what is written in it? There are many examples which prove that productive skills depend on receptive skills. Jeremy Harmer (1991, p. 52) emphasizes that *"one skill cannot be performed without another"* and strongly refuses the idea of teaching language skills separately. That is why teachers should focus on all skills equally. The following lines are dedicated to speaking only as it is the objective of this article.

While in the past, English teachers put emphasis on teaching grammar and vocabulary, nowadays, the objective is a balance between systems and skills. It is necessary to realize that *"there can be no speaking if you do not have the vocabulary to speak with, there is no point learning words unless you can do something useful with them"* (Scrivener, 1998, p. 21).

Speaking has been a priority for many language learners. They want to master this skill for various reasons. Some students need to develop speaking to be successful in their school leaving exam known as "Maturita" in Slovakia, or their entrance exams to universities. Adult learners need to be decent speakers in order to get a job or be promoted, other people want to speak not to get lost abroad when travelling for business or going on holiday and seniors for instance learn a foreign language to keep in touch with their families which have moved to different countries and whose children cannot speak their parents´ mother tongue.

There is no doubt that speaking activities are used in every language classroom. However, the teacher never says to his/her students that they are going to learn how to speak today. Speaking takes places while systems such as grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation or functions are practiced. In these cases the speaking activities used are called or known as accuracy-oriented. If a particular task focuses on speaking itself, on the other hand, we talk about fluency –oriented speaking activity. Not every speaking activity is a good activity, though. The quality of the speaking tasks is questionable. One must realize that if a speaking activity is to be successful and speaking skill really practiced and improved, it must meet the qualities of a well-set speaking activity. Let us briefly describe the features of a successful speaking activity. Every single speaking activity an English teacher wants to apply should be relevant to students, personalized, appropriate with regard to learners´ level and interests. Moreover, it should be meaningful. It means that if students do not see the point and think they will not use what is going to be practiced in their future, they will not be motivated and so rather passive. Another essential fact to be mentioned is that every speaking activity must be well planned in advance. Teachers should not underestimate the objectives, procedure, timing or grouping because if they do, failure will be the result and not so much wanted success. The importance of motivation as it plays a huge role in a teaching-learning process.

We distinguish between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation comes from learners themselves and proves to be a better drive in comparison with the extrinsic motivation. It is said that learners whose intrinsic motivation surpasses the extrinsic one learn faster and achieve better results. They are eager to learn something new, something enriching, and something they will certainly need. By contrast, learners driven by extrinsic motivation study because they have to for various reasons. They work with the language because of their parents, school grades or a chance to get a better-paid job or possible promotion. But what if students are not motivated enough or at all? Motivating unmotivated students can be very challenging, difficult or even tiring. According to our experience, there are three groups of students. Group one includes students who need very little input to be motivated. The second group is comprised

of learners who do not like the subject but study because their parents want them to do so. The third group of learners is the worst one. Whatever a teacher does, these students will not show any interest, and they will not concentrate and so will not remember anything. Every time the teacher asks them to do something in a lesson, they are lost. These students tend to ignore teachers and show no respect. In majority of cases, English or a foreign language is not the only subject they have problems with. Moreover, problematic behaviour can be noticed, too. Students like these can really spoil the lesson. As a result, those learners who are willing to participate and learn do not have enough time to improve their language as a teacher tries to give naughty students a good talking. In addition to that the teacher is nervous because the objectives have not been fully reached and the atmosphere students work in is not truly friendly but rather tense. If teachers have such individuals in their class, then contact a school psychologist. By contacting a school psychologist teachers may help the problematic individual to solve his/her hidden problems. Furthermore, they create a chance to have better or smooth-running English lessons.

To conclude this part of our article, when a speaking activity meets all criteria of a successful speaking activity, students are given a real chance to develop speaking skill with all its subskills.

3 Setting goals

Setting goals represents an essential part and a must of a lesson planning process. When teachers set wrong objectives they cannot expect success on the side of students. English teachers should subordinate materials, methods, specific activities, grouping and all that is required to take into consideration when preparing for a lesson to goals or objectives. They have to ask themselves these particular questions: What do I want my students to learn this lesson? What do I want them to be able to do at the end of the lesson? What do I want them to practice, to reach, to remember? Only then, after answering these questions, teachers can decide what materials, teaching, methods, aids and activities they will use and how they will group students. The objectives set by teachers should be in correspondence with syllabus. One thing to be remembered in connection with educational goals is that a lesson without goals set in advance is damned to failure. All teachers should keep that in mind.

4 Types of speaking activities

Speaking activities are divided into two groups: accuracy-oriented and fluency-oriented speaking activities.

Accuracy-oriented speaking activities can be either controlled or guided. As for fluency-oriented speaking activities they are either guided or free. If an objective of an activity is systems, then we are talking about an accuracy-oriented speaking task. Accuracy-oriented speaking tasks are controlled by a teacher. The extent of his/her guidance is very high and the language produced by learners is rather limited. Students are asked to use only structures a teacher wants them to practice.

Among some examples of controlled speaking tasks there are: chorused or individual imitations, pronunciation drills, question and answer dialogues, memorizing situational dialogues, tongue-twisters rhymes and songs (Gondová, 2010, p. 73 and Scrivener, 1998, p. 120-125). In guided speaking activities the language learners produce is freer in comparison with the controlled ones. The guidance of the teacher is still present, but is limited. Some examples include: information gap activities, questionnaires, find someone who, drawing a picture according to someone's description, comparing pictures or retelling the text (ibid., p. 120-125). The language produced by learners is unpredictable in free speaking activities because they use language freely without any limitations whatsoever. The teacher does not intervene in a sense of absent

guidance. To mention some examples teachers of English might use in their lessons: discussions, debates, speeches and presentations (when only topic or a statement is given), role plays without rehearsal, group planning tasks, problem solving tasks and projects.

Speaking activities can be used in any phase of a lesson. They can occur as vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation practice activities. In the following tasks, vocabulary is practiced by means of speaking: matching pictures to words, filling in crosswords, using prefixes and suffixes to build new words from given words or provide explanations, forming own sentences with new words, creating a dialogue with new phrases, explaining words to other students, telling a short story using new words and others. There is a huge amount of activities to choose from. However, teachers should make a decision with regard to learners' level. If teachers find some of these activities: substitution drills, yes/no questions, specific questions for a variety of tenses, grammar quiz done orally, students saying comparative sentences on the basis of pictures, split sentences – students are given a half of a sentence and should find the second half by reading it out to classmates, miming an action – to practice present continuous tense, creating stories using a variety of tenses, information gap, find someone who, games sentence auction or noughts and crosses in students books, workbooks or some complementary teaching materials, the main objective is grammar. Because the practice is carried out by speaking, speaking is practiced, too. It may be said that speaking is also an objective – partial objective or sub-objective. Speaking as a sub-objective is probably most obvious in the activities where learners practice pronunciation. Among such activities there are: repetition drills, reading out loud, shadow reading- reading along with a CD, songs, counting syllables, syllables snap – students turn cards with words and count syllables- as soon as any of the words have the same number of syllables the first student who calls snap and slaps the cards takes all face up cards and earns points- if he/she takes 3 cards then earns 3 points, other possible games are minimal pairs, sounds same or different – it is a variation of minimal pairs – it can be done in a snap way, stress pelmanism, silently mouthing, and many others (ibid., p. 120-125).

We would like to present classification of fluency-oriented speaking activities as well. Fluency-oriented activities are also known as skill-oriented because their objective is to practice skills. Learners use all the language they have at their disposal. On the contrary, in accuracy-oriented speaking activities learners are told which vocabulary or grammar to use and are even given a sample to follow. Moreover, in activities focused on fluency the teacher cannot predict learners' outcomes while in accuracy activities she/he knows what kind of language to expect (Gondová, 2011, p. 56). As it has been stated before fluency activities can be either guided or free. Straková (2005, p. 51) explains that *"speaking activities are frequently based on some kind of input whether read or heard and can be used at various stages of the lesson in connection with the development of other language skills. They are used as a lead- in activity or as a follow-up activity"*. Gondová (2010, pp. 14-15) and Pokrivčáková (2012, pp. 85, 105) state that lead-in activities are activities used right before reading, listening or writing. They stimulate students, motivate them, activate their background knowledge and engage them with the topic. To give an illustration of such activities we have chosen these: using pictures or the title of the text to predict what the text is going to be about, expressing opinions on the topic, students say what they would like to learn from the text – they dictate questions and the teacher writes them on the board. Follow-up activities are similarly used to stimulate students to produce language, but after reading, listening or writing. These examples may be recognized: retelling the story, after-listening/reading discussion, problem-solving, group planning, role play, finishing the story or creating alternative endings.

The need of diversity of speaking tasks used in lessons has been already pointed out. We would like to emphasize the fact that more speaking tasks you use in your lessons, the better prepared

your students will be for different real life situations. Various tasks require various languages on part of learners. In other words, a variety of speaking tasks equals a variety of language produced by students.
To conclude, it is a teacher's role to ensure a wide range of activities. A variety of tasks not only make learners produce a variety of language, but they also keep students motivated. That is why a good teacher should not forget about the variety, balance between controlled, guided and free activities and most importantly the needs of the learners.

5 Useful and tried activities

We not only wanted to make a summary of speaking activities, we also want to provide readers with specific detailed activities which can be used straight away in their lessons. We have chosen those activities that we used several times and that were great success each time. The following lines are dedicated to the description of the "Hot Seat", "Running Dictation" and "Sentence Auction".
We found the "Hot Seat" activity on the internet two years ago. We would love to give credit to its author; unfortunately, he/she was not mentioned. This activity is recommended for A2 and higher level students. The main objective is to practice vocabulary. The practice is carried out by speaking, so speaking skill is developed as well. The Hot Seat activity belongs to guided speaking activities as learners are limited by the words teacher wants them to practice. In addition to that, the language produced by learners is predictable to a certain extent so it cannot be a free activity. It is somewhere in between controlled and free speaking activities. Students can play in two teams. Each team appoints one player to sit into a hot seat which is placed in front of the board. These two students face their classmates and are turned with their backs to the board. Teacher choses, for example, 10 words which constitute basic vocabulary of a particular topic. He/she writes one word at the board and students´ task is to explain the word to their team player who is sitting in the hot seat. Students can either use definitions they were asked to remember or can use their own words to explain the given term. First person in the hot seat guessing the word correctly scores a point for his/her team. Students can change, in other words more people can guess the words, however, only one person from a team at a time. For example, after guessing three words, students sitting in the hot seat exchange with another player from their team. The activity has proven to be an immense motivation for students to take part in teaching-learning process. On one hand, vocabulary is practiced in an interesting catchy way and on the other hand students are highly motivated especially those who like to compete. If students like competitions of any kind, then this is a right activity for you and your class. Some may claim that only good and talkative students will give definitions, but that is not absolutely true. Our observation has shown that even weaker students get involved because they realize that definitions they give are understandable, it means good enough for their classmates. Many of our students use literally translated collocations to explain words. It is surprising, but they do work. It is a great activity to develop strategic competence. This activity also broadens opinions about your own students. Many surprised us by the effort put into the activity. Students we thought were rather shy, actually were not.
Another wonderful activity is so called "Running Dictation". The activity was presented in Pokrivčáková (2012). It provides space for practicing grammar, vocabulary, spelling, reading, speaking, listening and writing skills. What is more, it livens up the atmosphere. This activity is suitable for visual, audial and kinaesthetic learners. Teacher chooses a text on the basis of what he/she plans his/her students to practice or creates one. Afterwards, the text is cut into several pieces which are distributed around the classroom. Pupils work in pairs. One pupil from the pair is a writer and the second one is a runner. Runners´ task is to run to the sentences, read them,

remember them, run back to their partners-writers and dictate them these sentences. If a runner forgets a word or a whole sentence, he/she must run back, read the sentence again, try to remember it and run back to the writer. Shouting across the room and moving pieces of paper is strictly prohibited. If someone breaks the rules, the pair is disqualified. The first pair with all sentences written without mistakes wins this game or competition. If your students get very noisy, our recommendation is to tell them to tiptoe. This particular tip has worked out for us several times. Pupils might love the activity even more, especially the younger ones. As for the group of speaking activities it belongs to, Running Dictation is classified as controlled because the language produced by pupils is strictly limited and the rate of teacher's control is very high.

Last activity out of our favourites is "Sentence Auction" which likewise "Hot Seat" is a guided speaking activity. It is applicable for both pupils and students. Learners work in two, three or four teams depending on their number. Each team chooses a name. A teacher displays a set of sentences at the interactive board. The alternative is that the teacher brings printed sentences and distributes them among the teams. Learners´ task is to decide which sentences are grammatically right and which are not. As they are at auction, they are supposed to buy sentences, however, only correct ones. Teams are given some money to play with, for example £2, 000. Every time they want to buy a sentence, they have to place a bid. The teacher decides how much they have to pay for one sentence. When another team wants to buy the same sentence, it has to place a higher bid. None of the teams can bid all the money. The teacher draws a table at the board where he/she keeps a record of money bidden. The teacher is in a role of auctioneer. He/she may use the following sentences: Let me welcome you at today's auction., I hope that everybody buys something they like., We offer 10 interesting and useful sentences., Let us get it started., The first sentence is - Is anyone interested?, Does anyone want to buy the sentence?, The lowest bid is.., Who will place a higher bid?, going once, going twice, going for the third time, sold to team.., and many other formulations. When the auction is over, the teacher goes through the list of sentences with learners again. They discuss the mistakes and learners try to correct them. If a team bought a correct sentence, the sum of money paid for it will be doubled. If the team bought a wrong sentence, but convinced it was correct, the money will be subtracted. Team with the highest sum of money wins. Teacher can reward the winning team. The "Sentence Auction" is a guided speaking activity. Learners try to explain which grammatical item is used in what situation. They may use definitions provided by the teacher, but also use their own words for explanations. The objective is grammar and speaking.

If teachers want to motivate, activate and get to know their students, they should use a large variety of activities because every student is different. It means that every single one has different needs and interests. A variety of tasks will help the teachers know their students and so make teaching-learning process easier and more successful.

Conclusion

The mastery of speaking skill is a long-term process requiring a number of rules to be kept. Teachers must provide pupils and students with as much learner talking time as possible. Speaking activities used in lessons should be well-planned and should have all features of a successful activity. Teachers should keep their students motivated because without motivation there can be no activity and without activity there can be no success. Integration of various speaking activities into a teaching-learning process plays a crucial role in developing speaking. The sooner the teachers and learners realize and accept the concept, the faster success comes.

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BRAIN GYM EXERCISES IN ENGLISH LESSONS

KOVÁČIKOVÁ Elena

Abstract: *This chapter deals with practical implementation of particular body movement exercises into English lessons mainly suitable for learners with specific needs in inclusive classrooms however, beneficial for everyone including teachers. Kinesiology introduces brain gym exercises primarily founded for activating brain functions after brain injuries. In case these short and simple exercises are introduced in English inclusive classrooms they might activate learning through movement. They are instructed in English, demonstrated by a teacher following TPR method which activates learning through body movements and thus the whole class with an added value of possible specific impact on focusing attention, improvement of language skills and systems.*

Key words: *brain gym exercises, TPR, kinesiology, inclusive classrooms*

1 Terminology and literature review

Learning and attention disorders are primarily based on neurological problems, however as Pokrivčáková claims (2009, p. 30) the students diagnosed with the above mentioned problems are able to achieve the same or at least comparable results with intact learners under the condition that they are instructed following different approach. Many learners with learning and attention disorders can be extraordinary creative in the field of art and sport activities. However, it is more than a concern to find out that these learners feel uncomfortable in the schooling environment comparing with the other learners. This psychological premise could be overcome by a sensitive teacher who is able to perceive learner´s positive sides as well as drawbacks. The art of teaching stems from building up on the favourable skills and finding the compensations of the negative ones. English lessons are compulsory two years after initiating the school attendance therefore there is the hope for using some compensation techniques already built up within the lessons instructed in the mother tongue. According to Hurajová (2012, p.96) the Slovak school have currently been trying to set up and adjust the education of learners with specific needs including teaching them English. Pokrivčáková (2009, p.31) summarizes the results of attention and learning disorders in English lessons as follows:

- delayed production of speech,
- problems with pronunciation of some sounds,
- slower development of vocabulary,
- problems identifying rhyming words,
- frequent exchange of letters when reading or writing,
- problems when learning numbers, colours, shapes,
- extreme restlessness and impatience, lower ability to focus and concentrate on a task.

There are different approaches applicable in English classes. Best practice for English teachers seems to be by using methods, techniques and strategies applicable for all the learners taking into consideration their learning styles, preferences and difficulties as well. Motivation always leads and therefore teacher´s attitude towards learners is extremely important. Encouragement, praise, support, patience and understanding are basic presumptions for

positive attitude and relationships between teachers and learners. Even if these basic conditions are fulfilled there are some general rules which might be followed in order to make learning and teaching process approachable for English teachers and learners.

1.1 General Guidance

Apart from the recommendation of psychologists or special educators, the cooperation with parents and classroom management of a classroom organized in a simple and disruptive design, clear and comprehensible teacher´s instruction, a step-by-step approach and use of modern and updated technologies, the multi-sensory approach might also be hand-on practices when teaching English to students with specific needs. A multi-sensory approach involves the use of visual, auditory, and kinaesthetic ways simultaneously to enhance memory and learning of written language. According to IDA (n.d.) links are constantly made between the visual, auditory and tactile language in learning to read and spell. All levels of language are addressed, often in parallel, including sounds (phonemes), symbols (graphemes), meaningful word parts (morphemes), word and phrase meanings (semantics, sentences - syntax), longer passages - discourse and the social uses of language pragmatics). Thus, all language systems are covered. Kordos and Smith (2012), Pokrivčáková (2009) and DysTEFL (2011) summarize practical key principles of teaching approach to learners with specific needs as follows:

- Provide opportunities for learners to practice and review a concept frequently within the repetitive principle;
- Language should be taught in a logical progression and help students categorize concepts;
- Language concepts should be organized from simple to complex within structured, sequential principles;
- Teachers should build on what learners already know and make connections between the known and the new information (so-called cumulative principle);
- the phonemes or speech sounds of the foreign language should be taught systematically and explicitly;
- Sounds of the letters in English and the letters the sounds represent within alphabetic/phonetic principle should be taught directly;
- Several language skills can be presented simultaneously when a new language system is presented;
- Visual aids, such as pictures, posters should be used whenever possible;
- Structured overview should be provided to learners such as study guides, summary sheets, and graphic representation of covered content;
- Colour coding for gender, verb/noun agreement, and other matching principles;
- Provides sufficient time during tests to accommodate learners with slow processing skills.

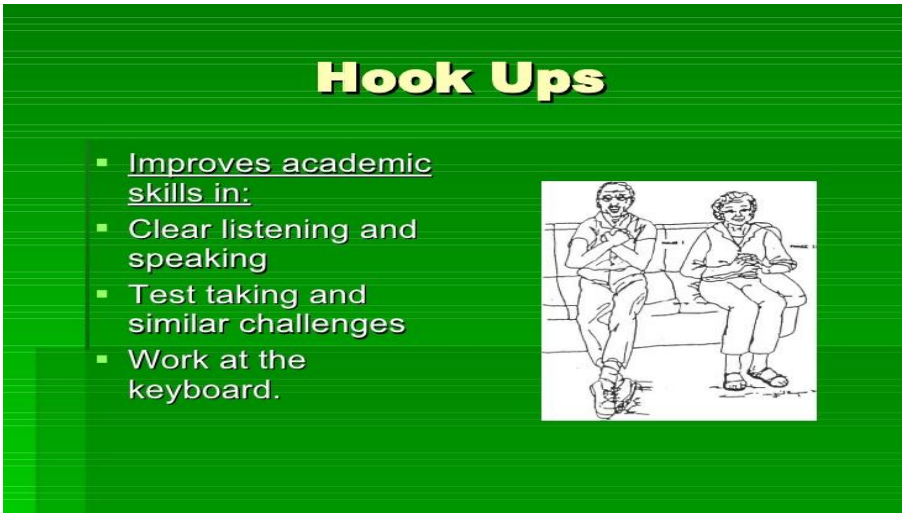
The special methodological procedures help language acquisition and language skills development. In order to enhance mental balance and focus attention of students the recommended exercises cover the simple relaxation exercises. Pokrivčáková (2009, p. 38) suggests “teachers to practice short relaxation exercises, mostly with body movements in order to release tension”. Brain gym exercises seem to be effective movement activities which can provide not only enhancing the balance and attention but also the space for refreshing and entertaining TPR activities which can be instructed in English and thus they also build up the listening skill and comprehension competence in the foreign language.

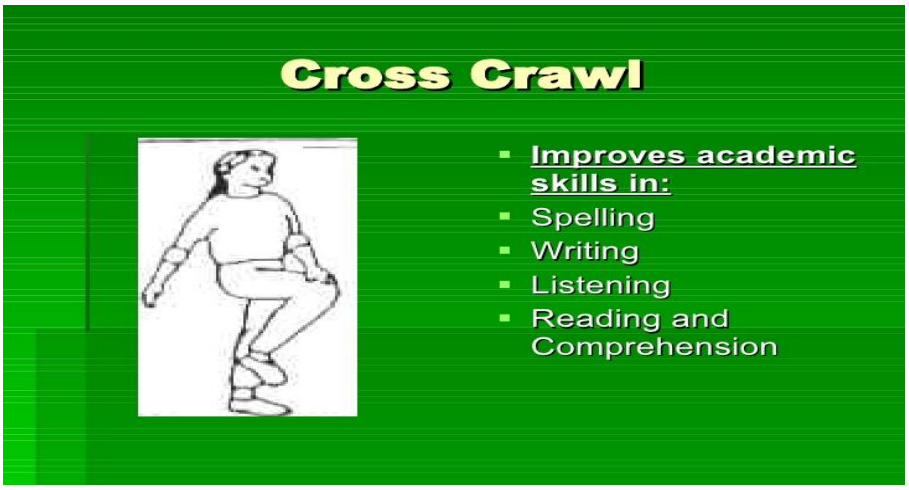
2 Brain Gym Exercises

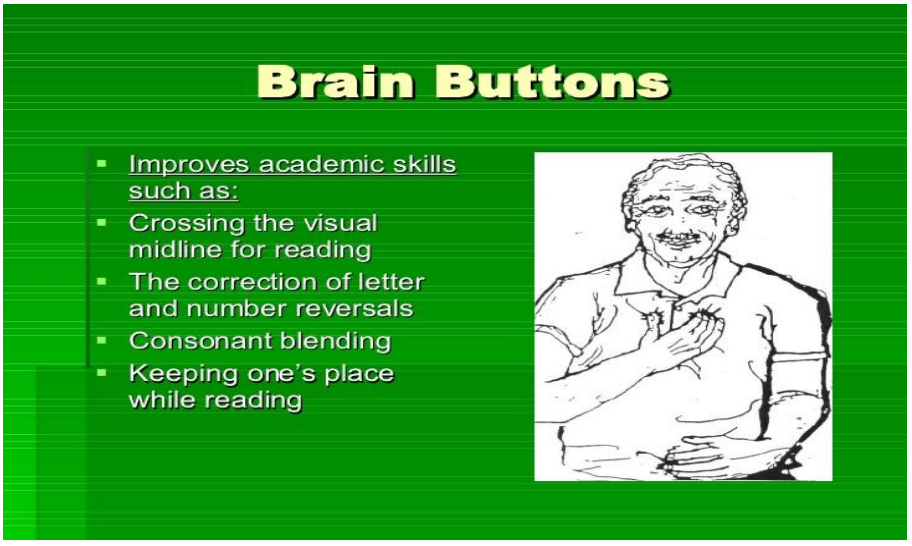
The idea of Educational Kinesiology believes the principle that "moving with intention leads to optimal learning" (Brain Gym®International). The series of the brain gym exercises were developed in the 90´s by Dr. Paul Dennison primarily for recovery from brain injuries. Currently they are known under an umbrella term of Educational Kinesiology connecting movement and learning. Simple movements should help brain function better by interconnecting both hemispheres and thus enabling concentration and focus of attention on given tasks (Alexander, 2011). Later on, the series of these exercises were used in some British and American schools because as she claims "Brain Gym is not just for children with learning difficulties, it can even those who think they have perfectly normal brain function."(ibid). These simple and short exercises like Belly breathing, Brain buttons, Cross Crawls, Earth Buttons, The Grounder, Lazy Eights, Neck Rolls, The Thinking Cap (Alexander, 2011) take each only a few minutes at most, therefore doing them during English lessons might be not only refreshing but also vivid, entertaining, and useful. The first recommendation is to drink water during the day as the water brings oxygen all over the body and that is essential for the development of the nerve network during learning. Therefore, teachers are advised not only allow their learners bring water bottles into the classroom but also remind them drinking water more often during the day.

Alexander (2011) claims that simple *belly breathing* and exhaling through mouth in short little puffs as if you are keeping a feather in the air, increases your energy levels. It can also help improve both reading and speaking activities. *Brain Buttons*, with resting one hand over the navel with the thumb and fingers of the other hand rubbing the hollow areas under the collar bones help redirecting messages from parts of the body to the brain, thus improving reading, writing, speaking and the ability to follow directions. *Cross-crawls* are marching in place touching the opposite knees alternatively. She claims that this exercise is helpful for improving productive skills and the memory. It also coordinates the whole brain. *Earth buttons* stimulate the brain and relieve mental fatigue. *The Grounder* is about standing with the legs apart, pointing the left foot straight ahead and pointing the right foot towards the right. It is then followed by bending the right knee with keeping the knee straight while the body faces squarely to the front while exhaling. Doing this movement over three or more complete breaths and then following with the opposite direction should increase comprehension, short-term memory, self-expression and organisational skills. *Lazy Eights* are performed by extending one arm straight out in front of the body with the thumb pointing toward the ceiling. In the air, the shape of a large figure 8 is slowly traced by focusing the eyes on the thumb and keeping the head upright. The number 8 should be traced by beginning at eye level. Finally, it is followed by the both hands clasped together. This should integrate both visual fields, improves balance and coordination as well as better vision. *Neck rolls* is about breathing deeply, relaxing the shoulders and dropping the head forward. While having eyes closed, the head is rolled from side to side. At any point of tension, the head relaxes while making small circles with the nose, breathing fully. This simple exercise helps all kinds of verbalising or thinking. *The Thinking Cap* places hands at the top of each ear, gently unrolling the curved parts of the edges at the same time. This exercise helps tune out distracting noises, increases listening ability, short-term memory and abstract thinking skills (exercises described in more details are available at www.braingym.org.uk). Alexander (ibid.) also offers the set of exercises depending on the performing learning task or activity.

Examples:







(Webster, 2005)

3 Conclusion

The use of the above mentioned exercises individually or in the set might be either as a warm-up activity or as a refreshing moment in the classroom, however, with the focus on its selection according to the following activity. As for illustration, if there is a reading task with the comprehension, exercises like *Brain Buttons* or *the Grounder* might be practised. These exercises can be understood as TPR activities which are practised by a teacher altogether with the learners, listening to English instructions given by the teacher. Thus, the learners also develop their listening skill in a foreign language. Moreover, the instructions introduce new vocabulary in terms of body parts or movements, and last but not least, they might be entertaining and refreshing for the whole class. Besides its added value of "switching on the brain" these simple activities can be a motivational element of making the learners active and successful.

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RESEARCH OF ENGLISH ARTICLE ERRORS IN WRITINGS BY CHINESE ESL LEARNERS

LEI Qingli

Abstract: *The English article system is an important part in any English sentence. Many teachers are aware that their English as second language (ESL) learners make a number of predictable and seemingly intractable errors. Misuse of English articles pervades ESL learners' output, irrespective of their proficiency level. This study discusses several reasons for common errors with English articles that Chinese ESL learners make. From both qualitative and quantitative methods, we find the factors that influence English article usage errors of Chinese ESL learners and provide suggestions for Chinese ESL teachers.*

Key words: *English, articles, grammar, writing, ESL, EFL, learners*

1. Introduction

The English article system is an important part in any English sentence. Many teachers are aware that their English as second language (ESL) learners make a number of predictable and seemingly intractable errors. Misuse of English articles pervades ESL learners' output, irrespective of their proficiency level.

The root of this problem might logically be assumed to be that some countries do not have articles in their language. It is a universally acknowledged truth that Mandarin Chinese is a language with no functional equivalent to the English article system. Therefore, using English articles accurately is difficult for Chinese ESL learners. Robertson (2000) claimed that some Chinese learners usually trend towards omitting the article where native English speakers would use one. For Chinese learners, although the English articles are discussed multiple times in some beginning classes, some seemingly simple morphemes like *a* and *an* can hardly be mastered even by intermediate English learners.

Traditional grammarians state that articles should be placed before nouns or noun phrases to express a specific or general meaning. The concepts of definiteness and indefiniteness are the most important things to decide what the grammatical status of an article is supposed to be. As the *Oxford Concise Dictionary of Linguistics* interprets it, an article is "a determiner whose basic role is to mark noun phrases as either definite or indefinite" (2000, p.25). It is obvious that there is no exclusive explanation for the concept of articles, and different books have various definitions.

Definiteness and indefiniteness are distinguished in Chinese by means of word order or the use of determiners, such as *zhèi* "this", *nèi* "that", and the numeral *yī* "one" (Robertson, 2000). Li and Thompson (1981) also made the same point that "Mandarin Chinese does not have words that correspond to the English words *the* and *a*" (p.131-132).

In addition, English articles are known as "treatable" errors, an idea put forward by Ferris (1999). Since article usage occurs in a rule-governed way, learners can therefore be taught by grammar books or by a set of rules to eliminate these errors. Bitchener, Young, and Cameron (2005) also reached the conclusion that the combined feedback of direct oral feedback and direct written feedback promoted improvement in the more "treatable," rule-governed features like the definite article than in the less "treatable" features. For this reason, using an

empirical study to make clear the errors of ESL learners is very useful for helping teachers give feedback to their students.

2. Literature Review

As mentioned above, English articles are the very simplest and most common, but yet complex, morphemes in English.
Krámský (1972) stated, "The term 'article' is a translation of the Latin term articulus which again is a rendering of the Greek word *arthron* known as a grammatical term since the 4th century B.C. For the Stoics it was one of the five 'parts of speech' and was defined as an element of a sentence with case endings which distinguish gender and number of nouns" (p.18).

2.1 Related Theories of Article System

It is an automatic phenomenon and an indeed essential part of the learning procedure that all foreign language learners will make errors. Some researchers focused upon analyzing article errors, but it is difficult to get a suitable methodology and criteria for analysis. According to Quirk (1972), the range of use for the three articles (a/an, the, Ø) is as shown in Figure 2-1.

Specific Reference: Indefinite form	**Generic reference**: Indefinite, zero, or definite article
Specific Reference: Definite form	

Figure 2-1 Quirk's (1972) categorization of article usage

However, even the elegant diagrammatical explanations cannot determine the use of articles by both form and context. Quirk (1972) indicated that "article usage with common nouns in an intensive relation. Unlike many other languages, English requires the definite or indefinite article with the count noun complement in an intensive relation" (p.147).

2.2 Criteria for Error Analysis of English Article Usage

Bickerton attempted to put forward a system categorizing the articles according to semantic function. Bickerton (1981) declared in his work on Creole languages that these languages constantly divide noun phrases according to the concepts of specific or non-specific. English, however, provides no such defined formation of specific or non-specific items. For example, a word can support any one of the three articles. In addition, English is also governed by the additional criteria of supposed-known-to- listener and supposed-unknown-to-listeners, or presupposed and non-presupposed. Presupposed can be understood as "information presumed shared by speaker and listener" (Bickerton, 1981, p.248). Therefore, Bickerton (1981) proposed the following semantic space for English articles in Figure 2-2.

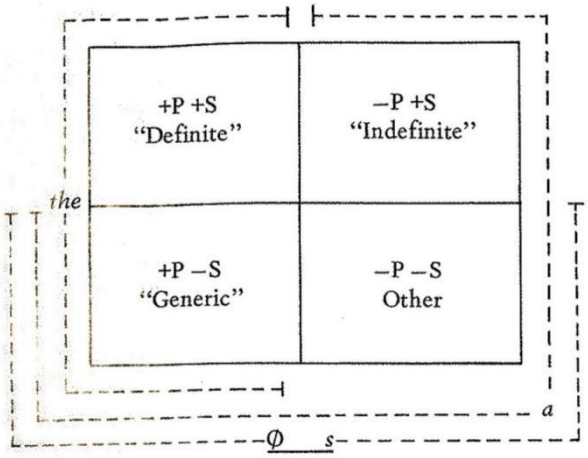

Figure 2.2 Bickerton's (1981) semantic space for English articles system (+/- P: presupposed/ non-presupposed; +/- S: specific/ non-specific)

Huebner (1979) presented a semantic wheel of four noun phrase types in terms of two binary features for English which were taken from a personal communication with Bickerton. Then Parrish (1987) borrowed Huebner's (1979) system, which interpreted article use in all contexts. This system relied on two different characteristics: "(1) the semantic function of each noun phrase used and which article is used with that NP function and (2) the way in which this article +NP function changes over time" (Parrish, 1987, p.364).
According to Huebner (1979) and Parrish (1987), Table 2-1 shows the different semantic categories for the information of particular article usage. The article-intent task adopted these criteria.

Table 2-1 Environments and Examples for the Semantic Categories [+/- SR, +/- HK]
(SR= specific reference, HK=hearer knowledge)

Category	Article	Huebner's (1979) definitions
Type 1 [-SR,+HK]	the, a/an, ø	Generics
Type 2 [+SR,+HK]	the	Unique, conventionally assumed unique reference, previously mentioned, physically present referents.
Type 3 [+SR,-HK]	a/an, ø	First mentioned NPs, or NPs following existential 'have/has' or 'there is/ there are'.
Type 4 [-SR,-HK]	a/an, ø	Equative NPs or NPs in negation, question, or irrealis mode.

2.3 Error Taxonomies

Taxonomy is the branch of science that deals with classification. Dulay, Burt, and Krashen (1982) held that descriptive taxonomies of errors, which are concerned mainly with observable surface features of errors, are prerequisites for subsequent diagnoses. They put forward two types of descriptive taxonomy: the linguistic category taxonomy and the surface structure taxonomy.
The surface structure taxonomy "highlights the ways surface structures are altered" (Dulay, Burt, and Krashen, 1982, p. 150). Dulay, Burt, and Krashen suggested that there are four major

ways in which learners "modify" target forms, in other words, four ways in which their interlanguage forms and their target language forms diverge "in specific and systematic ways" (Dulay, Burt, and Krashen, 1982, p. 150). Table 2-2 is an illustration of the taxonomy of the categories with examples.

Table 2-2: Surface Structure Taxonomy of Errors (Dulay, Burt, and Krashen, 1982, p. 150-162).

Category	Description	Example
Omissions	The absence of an item that must appear in a well-formed utterance (p.154).	She sleeping.
Additions	The presence of an item that must not appear in well-formed utterances (p.156).	We didn't went there.
Misinformation	The use of the wrong form of the morpheme or structure (p.158).	The dog ated the chicken.
Misordering	The incorrect placement of a morpheme or group of morphemes in an utterance (p.162).	What Daddy is doing?

2.4 Previous Research on the English Article System

There are is great quantity of studies researching the English article system, including its function, acquisition, and pedagogy, etc. Some scholars, particularly from cross-linguistic research, focused on analyzing the acquisition of the article system by learners of English from various language backgrounds. Some researchers conducted empirical studies by collecting interlanguage data from ESL learners of different ages and different proficiency level in different context. For example, Parrish (1987) and Mizuno (1999) undertook longitudinal studies to analyze Japanese learners of English as a second language to understand how to develop inherent interlanguage.

Mizuno (1999) mentioned that some countries do not have an article system in their language, and Japan is one of them. His research collected data from 2000 Japanese students who learned English as their foreign language. Mizuno separated these students into five groups according their proficiency in English and divided them into different three levels. This study analyzed five different experiments on native Japanese-speaking learners regarding acquisition of the English articles. In addition, he discovered that there are five cognitive constraints to Japanese adult learners when they learning English. These constraints are the inability to distinguish between using zero and nil, the lack of knowledge on when not to use English articles, not enough knowledge of the attributes of discrete and continuous nouns, not enough chance to use English to communicate every day, and subconsciousness on using English articles and deictic factors.

Parrish (1987) also undertook a longitudinal study by a single Japanese learner to analyze noun phrases through the above orientations of Huebner's (1979) reorganization of Bickerton's (1981) "semantic space" criteria. Consistent with previous studies, she found that it was difficult to assess usage of the definite article. Parrish concluded by noting that the subject of the articles was systematic rather than random, "this systematicity is found to be governed by the semantic functions of NPs, lexical categories and attempts to keep linguistically related forms consistent with one another" (p. 381).

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Questions

Based on the theoretical studies and empirical findings by former researchers, I analyze some different aspects of the English articles. In my research, I focus attention on some errors about usage of articles by Chinese ESL learners who learned English at English Language Institute (ELI) in Central Michigan University. Through Chinese ESL learners' essays, I use qualitative and quantitative methods to analyze some questions about the misuse of English articles. These questions are:

1. What kinds of errors do Chinese ESL students usually make when using articles?
2. Why did some Chinese ESL learners make these article mistakes?
3. Which article usage is most difficult for Chinese ESL learners?

3.2 Subjects

This research was designed to illustrate article acquisition by international students in the English Language Institute (ELI) at Central Michigan University (CMU). The ELI provides quality English instruction for degree-seeking undergraduate and graduate international students as well as non-degree-seeking international students who just wish to study English. Once students have finished all levels of the ELI classes, they can begin their academic classes. I collected papers from nine ELI Chinese ESL learners who studied in ELI 198. The ELI 198 class is American Language for International Students: Writing Component. This course is available to all international students at CMU, and it can develop nonfiction writing or composition writing for non-native English speakers.

3.3 Data Collection Procedure

3.3.1 Retrieval Software

The concordance software adopted in this study is AntConc 3.4.3w (Windows) 2014. AntConc is an adaptable and useful tool, since it can help researchers run detailed corpus linguistic research on large text files. It offers many tools: Concordance, file view clusters/N-Grams, collocates, word lists, and keyword lists. Using the Concordance tool, we were able to scan how words and phrases are commonly used in articles. With these tools we can conduct a lot of retrieval research.

3.3.2 Data Elicitation

3.3.2.1 Frequencies of the English Articles in ELI 198 Students' Papers

The first step of the research is creating my corpus (named ELI 198 corpus) from the first page of the ELI 198 students' papers. Next, I saved the type (as txt) for these paragraphs. In order to answer the research questions, I searched the overall frequencies of *a*, *an*, and *the* in the ELI 198 corpus.

Table 3-1 Frequencies of *a*, *an*, and *the* in the ELI 198 corpus.

Word Types	Word Tokens	The	A	An	Total Articles
878	3256	120	74	7	201

3.3.2.2 Error Tagging

In this research, error tagging is actually the core of the data analysis because the errors with articles have many different types. In order to distinguish all types of these errors, this research used error tagging for each article.

Taking the taxonomy of Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982), I redefined the taxonomy for the convenience of this research. In my research, article errors can be put into three categories: omission (EO), confusion (EC) and redundancy (ER). A set of tags was made to indicate the locations and types of article errors in the ELI 198 corpus. Table 3-2 shows the error tagset.

Table 3-2 Error Tagset

Tag	Meaning
EO1	Omission of *a*
EO2	Omission of *an*
EO3	Omission of *the*
EC1	Confusion: *a* is erroneously used instead of *an*
EC2	Confusion: *an* is erroneously used instead of *a*
EC3	Confusion: *a/an* is erroneously used instead of *the*
EC4	Confusion: *the* is erroneously used instead of *a* or *an*
ER1	Redundancy of *a*
ER2	Redundancy of *an*
ER3	Redundancy of *the*
OE	Other errors. Using articles in place of other words. For example, *the* is erroneously used instead of *one* or *their*, etc.

4. Findings and Discussion

From the ELI 198 corpus, the analysis found a total of 36 article errors out of 201 articles in 3256 word tokens from the nine Chinese ESL students' writing. Table 4-1 shows the overall accuracy of the article system, which proves that the English article system is problematic for Chinese ESL learners.

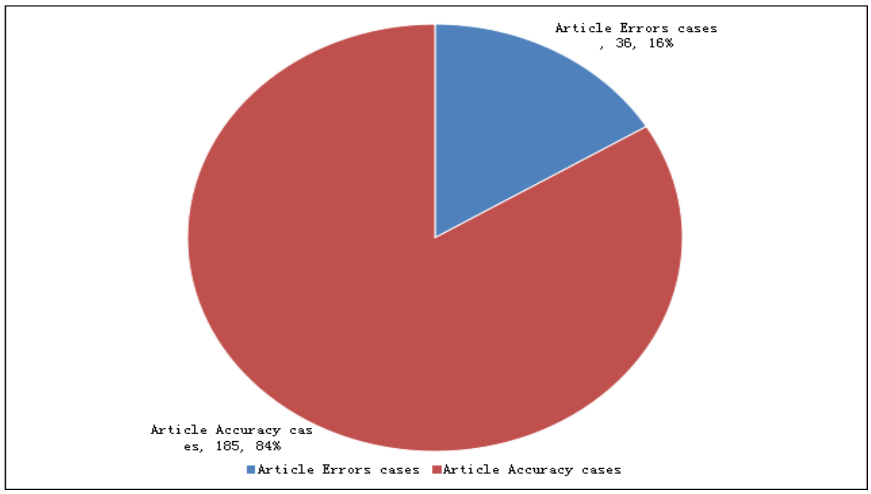

Figure 4-1: Overall Accuracy of the Article System

Table 4-1: Summary of Article Errors

Omission (EO)	Confusion (EC)	Redundancy (ER)	Other Errors	Total
16	7	9	4	36

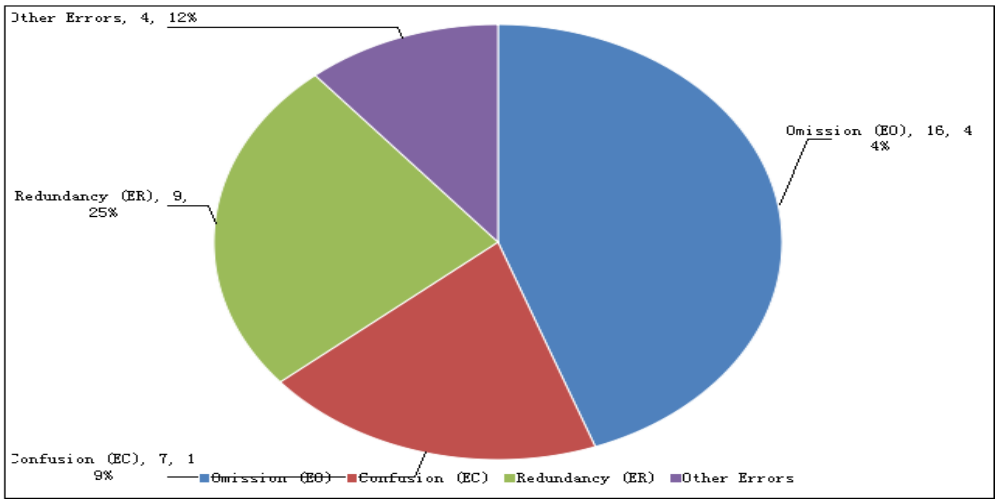

Figure 4-2: Percentages of Article Errors

From Table 4-2, we see that the majority of article errors made by the participants in this research were omission, while confusion had the smallest amount.

Figure 4-2: Summary of Errors in Subgroups

Omission			Confusion				Redundancy			Other words
EO1	EO2	EO3	EC1	EC2	EC3	EC4	ER1	ER2	ER3	4
10	2	4	2	0	1	4	2	0	7	

4.1 Error Sources

4.1.1 Article Omission

The most common type of article errors made in this research was OE1 (omission of the indefinite article *a*), which had 10 out of 16 errors. The second most common type was EO3 (omission of the definite article *the*), which had 4 out of 16. In total, omission of articles accounts for 45% of all errors. Article omission in this research is the failure to use any article in an instance where the use of an article is required, as illustrated in the following three examples:

a. *Before I came here, I could not recognize the difference between *(√an) American Accent and *(√an) English Accent...*
在我来这里之前, 我无法识别英音和美音的差别...

b. *You can imagine that in another dimension…there is a person, with the same name, *(√the) same relatives and *(√the) same life as you.*
你可以想象另一个维度有一个人和你有着一样的名字,一样的亲戚一样的生活。
c. *When a kid is one year old, families will put *(√a) pen, *(√a) book, money, *(√a) toy car and so on in front of the kid.*
当一个小孩一岁时家人会把钢笔书钱和玩具车等摆在他面前。

In Chinese the equivalents of these three sentences all need no referential determiners. When the learners wrote some sentences, they used Chinese thinking, which led to their article omission errors.

Chinese never uses articles before these nouns. For example, in Sentence C, because Chinese doesn't have different words with "singular pen" or "plural pen", the only way to make a word plural is adding a "*mén*" (们) word after the noun. If the number is not important, and when it makes sense either way, people will omit "*mén.*" As I mentioned above, people will use "*zhèxiē*" (这些,these) or "*nàxiē*" (那些 those) before nouns to imply a large quantity. Since without including an article in this sentence, the meaning of this sentence will not change, Chinese ESL learners usually forget to add it.

4.1.2 Article Redundancy

Another common type of errors made in this research corpus was ER3 (redundancy of *the*), with a total of seven out of nine. Ekiert (2004) had the same finding, that "*the* may be overgeneralized. Both Huebner and Master call this phenomenon 'the-flooding'... Except loosely as a dramatic rise in usage" (p. 4). As mentioned previously, the definite article *the* dominates in the categorizes of [+SR, +HK], [-SR,+HK] , and [+SR, -HK]. Here are some examples:

a. *Because the exam is full of *the (ø) reading and writing on *the paper which is only included few points on listening...*(the exam which he is talking about is "*Gāo Kǎo*", an entrance examination)
b. *I knew that they were much than *the (ø) normal parents due to raising three children, which was uncommon in China.*
c. *He was smiling and showing joy reading while he reading *the (ø) books.*

English language only have one article, which is *the*, to modify definite specific references. Thomas (1989) pointed out that children who are first language learners use the definite article in referential indefinite contexts, and adult second language learners also overgeneralized the definite article. Some Chinese ESL learners had noticed that many nouns were preceded by the definite article '*the*' but did not know much about its rule restrictions. For Sentence D, since Chinese ESL students are conscious of "*Gāo Kǎo*" as a specific Chinese exam, they especially wanted to emphasize the two important parts of reading and writing. They only acquired these rules in naturalistic settings, as Pica (2006) emphasized that it is difficult to perceive and yet not critical to message comprehension for them when they were in a naturalistic input environment. Therefore, it is necessary to provide Chinese ESL students more formal lessons about rules for article usage.

4.1.3 Article Confusion

Article confusion had the third-most number of occurrences of the four types, with a total only seven. EC4 ('*the*' is erroneously used instead of '*a*' or '*an*') was found to be the dominant subgroup. The following are some examples in Chinese ESL writing:

a. *Once we found *the (√a) loved book, no matter how much money was cost...*

b. *Words, they interweave with each other so that constitute *the (√a) sentence.*
c. *Writing my own thoughts, feelings on papers has become *a (√the) best way for me to explain and express myself.*
d. *In China, we supposed to get *a A+ grade on every subject because of the big exam named Gao Kao.*

In Sentences G and H with EC4, "loved book" and "this sentence" are all being mentioned for the first time and are not referring to specific objects. This error is due to overgeneralization. Overgeneralization also plays a part in EC1 ('*a*' is erroneously used instead of *'an'*) errors as well, as in Sentence J. The phonology of the letter "A" is a vowel, and the meaning of this "A" is not an indefinite article instead of a noun. Some Chinese ESL students are conscious of a vowel sound at the beginning of a word.

4.2 Article Accuracy with Different Referents

In order to determine which article usage is most difficult for Chinese ESL learners, I made a table about article accuracy with Different Referents (Table 4-3).

	Case Total	Error Total	Accuracy
A-involved cases	74	15	79.72%
An-involved cases	7	2	71.43%
The-involved cases	120	15	87.5%
Total	201	32	84.07%

Table 4-3: Article Accuracy with Different Referents

From Table 4-3, I conclude that the Chinese ESL learners' order of difficulty with English articles is: an>a>the. Therefore, the definite article '*the'* is easiest to use for Chinese ESL students. The indefinite article '*an', which* had an accuracy of only 71.43% is difficult to master for them.

5. Conclusion

Based on a self-made corpus of ELI 198 class, this research used an empirical study of errors with the English article system in Chinese ESL learners' writing to answer each discussion question about this topic. There are three main kinds of English article errors that Chinese ESL learners usually make: omission, confusion, and redundancy. The reasons for these article errors are not only due to article rule restrictions, but also due to how their first language (L1, Chinese) transfers to the target language (English). Overgeneralization caused some of the omissions and confusions.

The statistics of article accuracy showed that the indefinite articles *'an*' and '*a*' are difficult for Chinese ESL learners. The order of their accuracy was *the>a>an*. The most important influencing factor is that Chinese does not have an equivalent to articles. Moreover, the learners did not have enough input regarding the rules of article usage in formal classes. If some ESL teachers could teach a set of rules about the English article system in their classes, their students will be able to make better progress.

6. Limitations of the Research

In spite of the great efforts invested in corpus building, due to this research using error tagging, it would be a very time-consuming job to analyze the complete corpus, so that this

research only collected 3 256 words in running texts to make a miniature corpus. Moreover, all of the nine writing samples came from only one ELI 198 class in CMU. The small number of cases and the lack of variability in learning setting may not adequately justify the subjects as representatives of all Chinese ESL learners. Also, due to limits on the time and resources available, the researcher was only able to make inferences about the sources of article errors and only analyzed three different categories for Chinese ESL students' article errors without mentioning or collecting zero article errors.

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DEVELOPING INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCES OF PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS AT ENGLISH LANGUAGE LESSONS

REID Eva

Abstract: *Culture is an inevitable part of foreign language teaching and it should be included right from the beginning. Culture is a very wide notion and it can be understood in many different contexts. For the purpose of foreign language learning a model including necessary aspects was created. Apart of discussing the aspects of culture in English language teaching, three model activities are provided developing intercultural communicative competences of primary school pupils.*

Key words: *English language teaching, culture, intercultural communicative competences*

1 Cultural aspects in foreign language education

Acquiring intercultural communicative competences (ICC) should be one of the primary aims of foreign language teaching. Foreign language teachers need to be concerned not only with linguistic competences, but also with socio-linguistic, pragmatic, non-verbal competences and socio-cultural knowledge in order to teach the foreign language well and appropriately. The afore-mentioned competences have a greater impact on interaction in intercultural environments than linguistic competences. Misunderstandings can occur easily, because learners tend to use their own cultural conventions in foreign language communication (CEFR, 2001). Socio-linguistic, pragmatic, non-verbal competences and socio-cultural knowledge are inevitable parts of intercultural communicative competences. Acquiring ICC allows learners to use foreign language appropriately in communication with foreigners (Reid, 2014).
Cultural aspects need to be included right from the beginning of foreign language education and should be included in teaching all linguistic structures and acquiring all communication skills. Intercultural communicative competences are often considered as an extra fifth skill, but it would be fair to say this is a myth (Byram, 1998, Kramsch, 1993). For example an appropriate use of a word "please" needs to be used correctly in speaking, writing and understood well in reading and listening. That is why intercultural communicative competences have to be developed equally in all communicative skills: writing, speaking, listening and reading. To help teachers to find their bearings with understanding what intercultural communicative competences to include, I have created a model, consisting of socio-linguistic, pragmatic, non-verbal and socio-cultural components (Reid, 2014).

Socio-linguistic competences include:

- greetings, addressing, introducing;
- use of exclamations (e.g. *Oh dear!, My God!);*
- positive politeness, negative politeness, impoliteness;
- admiration, showing interest, apologizing, expressing regret, dislike, anger;
- appropriate use of: *please / thank you;*
- register (formal, neutral, informal, familiar, intimate);
- dialect, accent (social, regional).

Pragmatic competences include:

- advising, persuading, urging;
- suggestions, asking for help, offers, requests, warnings, invitations, encouragement;
- socialising (attracting attention, toasting, greetings);
- interaction patterns (turn taking);
- phrases, idioms, irony, intonation.

Non-verbal competences include:

- body language (gestures, facial expressions, posture, eye contact, body contact, proxemics);
- prosodic qualities (loudness, pitch of voice);
- extra linguistic speech sounds (for silence, approval, disapproval, disgust, onomatopoeia).

Socio-cultural knowledge includes:

- everyday living (food, drink, meal times, table manners, leisure activities);
- living conditions (housing, living standards);
- values, beliefs (religion, humour);
- people, country (national identity, history, politics, institutions);
- social conventions (dress code, presents, punctuality);
- ritual behaviour (festivals, celebrations, traditions, weddings, funerals).

2 Activities developing intercultural communicative competences of primary school learners

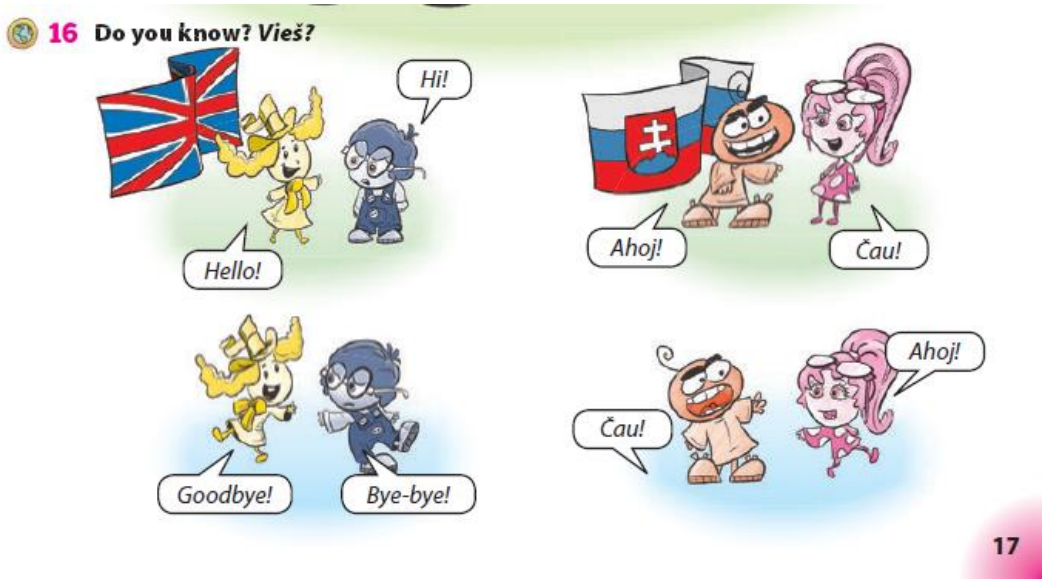
The three following activities are given here to show how intercultural communicative competences can be developed at English language lessons at a primary school level. The first activity practices socio-linguistic competences – greetings. The second activity practices non-verbal competences, such as extra linguistic speech sounds – onomatopoeia for silence, disapproval, disgust and likeness for food. The third activity practices pragmatic competences – idioms and non-verbal competences – body language.

2.1 Greetings – Hello / Hi, Good bye / Bye

Level: A1 – primary, beginners
Time required: 20 minutes
Goals: To practice greetings appropriately (socio-linguistic competences), to compare Slovak and English greetings upon arrival and departure and to practice greetings together with already learnt phrases. Greetings are important to use correctly. Slovak learners make a common mistake (based on Slovak cultural habits using "Ahoj/Čau") and use "Hello/Hi" for both – coming and going.
Background: pupils have already learnt basic phrases (What's your name?, My name is…, How are you?, I'm fine, thank you. And you?, I'm fine too, thanks. How old are you? I'm…).
Materials: self - prepared cards with phrases (Hello/Hi, Good bye/Bye, What's your name?, My name is…And what's your name?, How are you?, I'm fine, thank you. And you?, I'm fine too, thanks. How old are you? I'm…And how old are you?)
Preparation: photocopy and laminate enough pieces for each group to make dialogues
Procedures:

1. Organize pupils in three groups. Each group will get one dialogue – each sentence is on a separate piece of paper. Pupils' task is to make dialogues.

2. Pupils perform dialogues in their groups and then in front of the class.
3. Teacher elicits possible problems – using Hello/Hi for arrival and Good bye/Bye for departure. Teacher explains the difference between Slovak (Ahoj/Čau can be used synonymously for both arrival and departures) and English (where Hello and Good bye should not be mixed up)
4. Teacher can sum it up by putting on the board – British flag with Hello/Hi for arrival and Good bye?/Bye for departure and Slovak flag with Ahoj/Čau for both arrival and departure



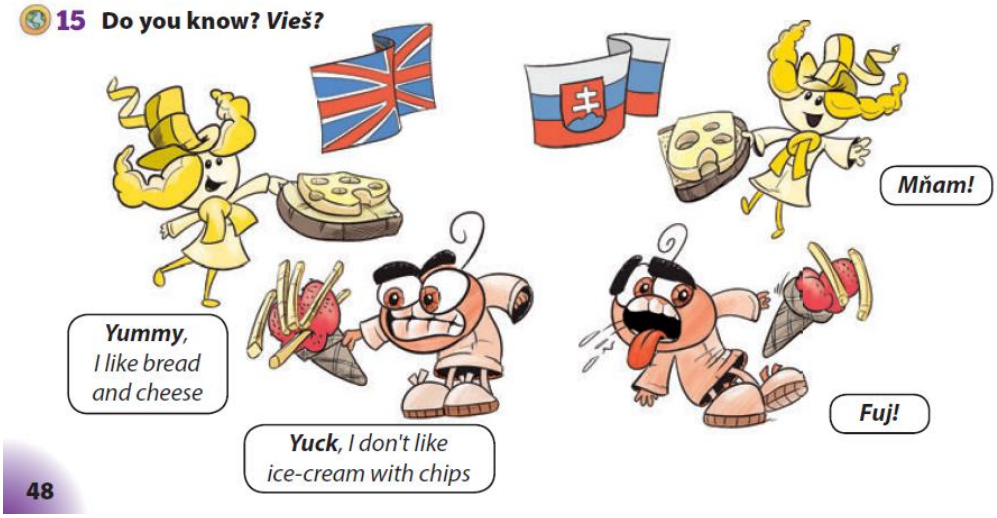
Picture 1: Greetings (Reid et al, 2015)

2.2 Onomatopoeia: Oi – hej, Shush – Pssst, Yummy - Mňam, Yuck – Fuj

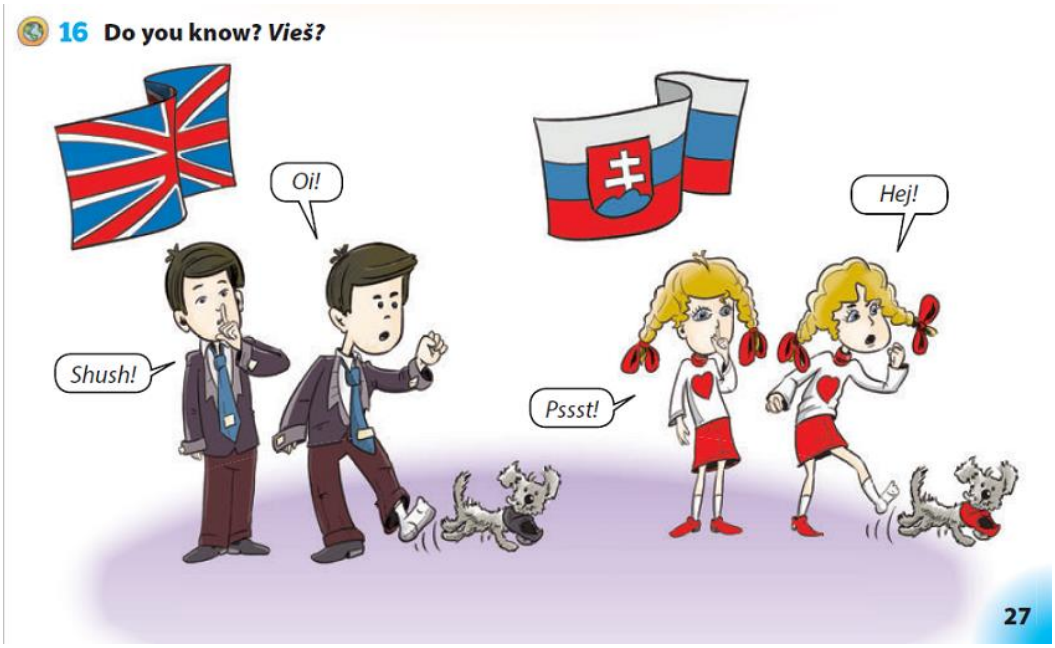
Level: A1 – primary, beginners
Time required: 20 minutes
Goals: To practice extra-linguistic speech sounds (non-verbal competences) for silence, disapproval, likeness for food and disgust and to compare Slovak and English extra-linguistic speech sounds. This is important to learn appropriately, as we tend to use extra-linguistic speech sounds subconsciously based on our cultural background, which is inappropriate in a foreign language.
Background: pupils know some basic food names (bread, milk, eggs, pizza, pasta, butter, jam, etc.), verbs (talking, running, jumping, etc.). These words can be used together with extra-linguistic speech sounds (oi, shush, yummy, yuck).
Materials: self - prepared cards with onomatopoeia words: "Oi", "Shush", "Yummy", "Yuck", "Hej", "Pssst", "Mňam", „Fuj"
Preparation: photocopy and laminate enough pieces for each group
Procedures:

1. Organize pupils into small groups. Each group is given the four English and four Slovak onomatopoeia words.
2. Pupils try to match the English and Slovak onomatopoeia words.

3. Teacher checks if pupils got the matches correct. She/he explains that extra-linguistic speech sounds are not the same across cultures and languages and that if they used the Slovak ones, they would not be understood.
4. Pupils are encouraged to make gestures for each meaning and guess in groups what that gesture might mean.
5. In the whole class, the teacher shows a gesture and pupils guess. A pupil who guesses first, takes a turn and shows a gesture for the class to guess.
6. For better illustration, pictures showing individual expressions are presented to pupils.



Picture 2: Extra-linguistic speech sounds 1 (Reid et al, 2015)



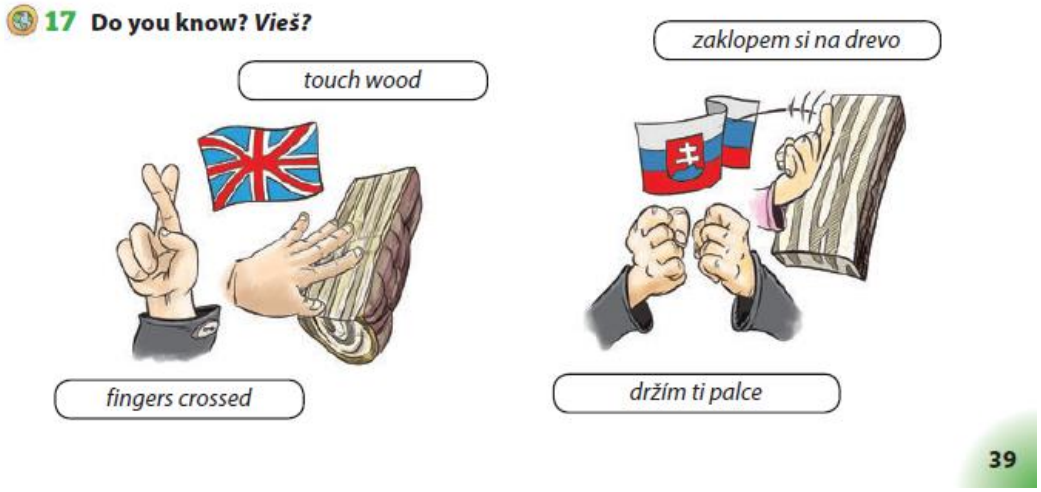
Picture 3: Extra-linguistic speech sounds 2 (Reid et al, 2015)

2.3 Idioms and gestures

Level: A1 – primary, beginners

Time required: 20 minutes
Goals: To practice pragmatic competences – idioms and non-verbal competences – gestures for wishing good luck (Fingers crossed) and for avoiding bad luck (Touch wood). To compare Slovak and English idioms and gestures. Learners use idioms and gestures subconsciously based on their cultural background, which is inappropriate in a foreign language.
Materials: self - prepared cards with Slovak idioms (držím ti palce, zaklopem si na drevo) and English idioms (fingers crossed, touch wood).
Preparation: photocopy and laminate enough pieces for each group
Procedures:

1. Teacher shows pupils' gestures with her/his hand – she/he holds a thumb in her/his fist and asks pupils the meaning of that gesture and name the idiom in Slovak. She/he shows another gesture – knocks on wood – and asks pupils the meaning and name of the idiom in Slovak.
2. Teacher explains pupils that gestures and idioms are not the same across cultures and languages and that if they used the Slovak ones in communication with foreigners, that they would not be understood.
3. Teacher organizes pupils in pairs and gives pieces of paper with idioms to each pair. Pupils try to match the idioms according to their meaning.
4. Teacher checks the answers and shows pupils the gestures to go with the English idioms.
5. Pupils practice gestures together with the idioms. Pupils can play a game – a pupil shows a gesture and other pupils name the idiom.



Picture 4: Idioms / body language (Reid et al, 2015)

Conclusion
The above provided information on contents of intercultural communicative competences can help teachers to understand the principles and importance of teaching cultural aspects in their English language lessons. The three activities suggest what can be done with young learners at the A1 proficiency level. It is often believed that young learners/beginners do not need to develop ICC. This belief is wrong and that is why these activities are provided to show how simply and interestingly ICC can be developed with primary school learners of English.

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PROJECTS, QUESTS AND SOCIAL NETWORKS – NEW TOOLS FOR TEACHERS OF ENGLISH

SINKOVA Oksana

Abstract: *There are a lot of modern teaching technologies connected with class activities. Rapid development of modern society necessitate permanent search for pedagogical innovations for intensifying the process of education. The use of modern teaching methods - quests, projects, resources of social networks - may not only develop communicative language skills and motivate students, but also help to overcome language barriers and in some cases even help students to cope with test anxiety.*

Key words: *pedagogical innovations, project method, quest method, resources of social networks, comprehensible input, test anxiety, communicative barriers, language barriers.*

1 Search for pedagogical innovations

Rapid development of modern society necessitate permanent search for pedagogical innovations for intensifying the process of education. The external reality of modern society doesn't allow us to work in the old way; we have to learn new concepts, new systems, new opportunities of the informational and media environment, upgrade even the proven didactic principles. New techniques - such as, for example, special projects, quests, and social networking - may help motivate students and help them to overcome communication barriers.

1.1. Project work

Development of some language skills sometimes depends not only on the content of education but on the teaching technologies. There are a lot of modern pedagogical technologies connected with class activities. One of them - a method of projects - has been widely used.

Project activities significantly broaden and deepen students skills, during the project they learn to interact with each other, they are able to use language more freely, they learn how to work with information in English and, moreover, the output helps them to internalize some linguistic skills.

We live in the age of YouTube, Instagram and social networks so we try to talk to our students in the same language, causing their interest and motivating them for active communication. For example, we introduce a large number of projects connected with photo and video.

Project — creating a video - can be used for students of completely different departments and of different language levels. We ask our beginners, for example, when they study such topics as "My City", "My Home", "My Family," not just to write an essay on this subject, or tell us a short story, but to create a short video on the topic or photo project with annotation in English.

Our students of International Relations Department study the socio-political news and we ask them, for example, to produce "TV-news" video on the most important problems playing not only the roles of "newscasters" but also of "leading analytics" and other "invited guests".

We ask our students of Managment Department to do a similar project — create a video of a newscast - but only business news, when they study the topic "Business Media".

Project method is also very useful when you divide students into several groups within a language group, since it allows giving those materials one level above that can be understood despite them not understanding all the structures and lexical units, if we select comprehensible input (Krashen, 1985). It is hard to do it in the groups of mixed ability but we can divide such groups during projects.

While studying foreign culture it is important to try to use communicative language abilities to simulate the classroom situation as of different culture and different mentality and involve students in active dialogue but not one-sided studying of texts about social phenomena and lifestyles of other cultures.

Therefore, role-playing games in English is also one of the most important types of project activity. For example, for our students of Management Department (Business English classes) we finalized the topic Marketing and Advertising by the project "Tender for Provision of *Creative Advertising* Strategy and Related Television *Commercial".*

All conditions were close to real affairs - a teacher acting as a manufacturer of certain goods sends students the invitation to the tender. Students were divided into 4 teams - advertising agencies. They had to apply for participation in the tender according to the rules.

After that "advertising agencies" presented their videos and detailed explanations of promotional strategies, using special terms and lexical units. Obviously, it is not enough just to read texts "about advertising strategies," it is desirable to try to create these advertising strategies even at a training level.

1.2 Social Networks

The value of social networking for learning is not fully appreciated, as some methodologists are sceptical about the possibility of using such networks as pedagogical means of education, as they are traditionally considered leisure time and entertainment means. However, social networks can be used for a wide variety of tasks: some social networks can help to effectively organize the team work of a language group, a long-term project activity, interest groups, including education and research, etc. There are such advantages as familiar environment for students, the opportunity to work together, including on-line consultations, the opportunity to use forums, walls, chats.

In our university we have a Language Club. We organize students' concerts and theatrical performances in foreign languages, festivals of foreign languages and culture, linguistic quests. And we have created a group of the Club in the social network VKontakte — a very popular network among our students. VKontakte allows users to create groups, chats, public pages, share images, audio and video files, message each other publicly or privately

This social network is used by many students of the university so in the group of Language Club there are about 300 students of our university. The group contains all announcements of upcoming events of university language activities, additional language materials and links, announcements of interesting events related to languages and cultures (foreign theatrical performances, exhibitions, etc). We have regular contests of essays in foreign languages, translation contests (including poetry translations), original quizzes, tests, quests.

The creative nature of various competitions, games and contests of such kind contributes to a better memorization and assimilation of various grammatical phenomena, expansion of vocabulary, development of monologue and dialogue and opportunities for individual work of students.

When managing the content of the group, we try to choose different materials for students of different levels also taking into consideration the "one level above" approach.

We also use the social network to be in touch with our students. We have group conversations (private but formal group chats) with our groups. In such chats I can send them additional materials, home tasks, links to books and movies in English mentioned in the class, consultations on the tasks, as well as explanations of some grammatical material.
In this case it is not the subject of the ethical dilemma (as we know, in some countries the administration of the university does not approve when professor and student are "friends" on a social network, etc.), because we don't use this network for personal purposes and our students and university executives are well aware that it is an official profile of the teacher for distant work with students.
In other cases work with students on social networks can sometimes raise a number of ethical issues.

1.3 Quest

We use the practice of common linguistic quests (interesting types of tasks in English, done step by step by the team of students searching for the prize).
In this case we achieve two main goals of language teaching - communicational and informational exchange. Quests in a foreign language develop critical thinking and the ability to manage change, compare, analyze, classify, and ability to abstract thinking.
We also use our social network group for interactive language quests. For example, three weeks before the New Year, we announced the language quest in English - “Getting in the Holiday Spirit”. Students who wanted to take part in it had to choose the team captain, the name of the team, etc. As a result we had 8 teams (about 10 people in each). The teams created private chats where we send them the first task – they had a week for a quiz in English - questions on the customs and traditions of the New Year and Christmas celebrations in English-speaking countries as well as the New Year symbols of pop-culture, including movies and music. They also had to create video greetings in English. All this videos were posted in Language Club group in VKontakte and had a warm welcome.
After that our students had to answer questions on some challenging topics and create a greeting card in the style of the Victorian era - related to the events of the era or characters - real or fictional. All the cards were also shown in the group of the Club.
Then students had to write a short guide to the New Year celebration, recommending dress-code, dishes and other (sometimes quite funny) things.
We had only on-line consultations on the quest, but students had their team meetings. Then we announced a meeting of the participants in the University for naming the winners and awarding prizes. We think that such events are not only entertaining and motivating, but also help students to overcome the communicational language barriers.
Very often the cause of the language barrier is rooted in the unpleasant memories of the previous (usually school) experience of learning a foreign language. Overall, the fear of school children - is the fear to fail with their studies. Unfortunately, this fear is usually inadequate to the real situation and the child *exaggerated* out of proportion to the danger of the dreaded object or *situation* (Jersild & Holmes, 1935, p.305). And as they grow, the fear associated with the competition is increasing. "The school fear" of speaking in the presence of people who speak better than you (even if it is not so) transforms into the fear of being primitive (from the linguistic point of view) - "the institute fear". This psychological problem results in embarrassment and students think that they can't speak English, they have bad pronunciation or they make a lot of mistakes, they look funny. The result is that they prefer silence or use the simplest language. Students tending towards perfectionism can experience the same difficulties as they are afraid they will not express their thoughts well enough. Such, at first

glance, entertaining activities (quests, theatrical performances, etc.) help students to overcome these fears and speak English.

Another serious problem connected with communicative and emotional barriers is a test anxiety syndrome. Test anxiety affects the physiological, psychological and behavioural responses to situations of testing or evaluation, leads to the deterioration of the test results and academic achievements in general, and at our English classes it influences not only the results of written tests or examinations, but also all situations connected with test and evaluation (for example, oral answers to questions, rendering). Some "anxious" foreign language students interviewed by Price said their source of anxiety "was having to speak the target language in front of their peers" (Price, 1991, p. 313). And some students stated it as another source of stress "was the frustration of not being able to communicate effectively" (Price, 1991, p. 105).

Test anxiety is a serious problem caused by nervousness, anxiety, and even fear, it influences normal learning lowering the language level of the student. This problem is common among students all over the world (Zeidner, 1998).

We believe that the inclusion of students with test anxiety in a large number of language activities contributes to the improvement of the situation. Moreover, quests and team projects may help as in such cases these students do not speak to someone, but the speak together with someone and that will allow them to gradually reduce the symptoms of test anxiety.

Conclusions

The use of modern teaching methods — quests, projects, resources of social networks — may not only develop communicative language skills and motivate students, but also help to overcome language barriers and in some cases even help students to cope with test anxiety.

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TEACHING EFL THROUGH POPULAR ENGLISH SONGS

SORÁDOVÁ Daniela

Abstract: *Songs and generally music have served as a tool for teaching English for many years. Although songs and rhymes are used mostly by teaching very young and young learners, it is also effective to use songs by teenagers or adult learners. The important thing is to choose the right song which is popular, known by learners and may serve as an educative tool.*

Key words: *songs, popular songs, teaching English, teenage learners, adult learners*

1 Why to use songs at the lesson?

There is a natural connection between a man and music. We do not realize it, but we all like it. It can calm us down, or arouse us to a certain performance, or just make us feel better. We have all been coming across songs throughout our lives. Mothers sing lullabies to their babies, children in the kindergarten learn about the world around them through the songs, next, there are teenagers with the headphones in their ears, or we listen to music in cafés, restaurants, or just while driving our cars. We like to listen to music, hum it or sing it, because it makes us feel relaxed.

Many researches have confirmed this positive effect of music on people and what is more, it has the same positive effect on language learners and the climate in the classroom. Music is not only a natural part of our lives, but it can be naturally integrated into the lessons. Songs are mostly used by very young and young learners, because they are considered to be one of the most-enjoyable activities, often combined with TPR activities. Using music at the lesson is beneficial, because songs may develop vocabulary, improve comprehension and listening skills, extend attention span, accelerate memorization and enhance abstract thinking. (Hill-Clarke & Robinson, 2003). Moreover, neurologists found out that musical and language processing are situated in the same brain area and there appears to be a parallel between processing musical and linguistic syntax (Maess etl. al, 2001). Consequently, music plays an important role in developing language and literacy (Woodall and Zeimbrovski ,n.d., in Paquette and Rieg, 2008).

To be more specific, there are linguistic, cognitive and affective reasons for using songs at the lesson. From the linguistic point of view, songs present language phrases coming from everyday situations. As for a cognitive reason, songs help students develop automaticity in using a language. And last but not least, by effective reason we understand feelings that are created while listening to songs (Schoepp, 2001). Positive feelings occurring while listening to songs play an important role by learning, because the songs store in learners´ short and long memory and help remember quite long chunks of language (Griffe, 1990). In the same way, Steven Krashen (1982), who developed affective filter, explains that the affective filter must be weak by a learner in order to learn without any feelings of anxiety. In other words, "affective filter is an imaginary wall that is placed between a learner and a language input. If the filter is on, the learner is blocking out input. The filter turns on when anxiety is high and self-esteem or motivation are low" (Bogglesworldeslcom, 2015). And as we already mentioned above, songs create calm and relaxed atmosphere in the classroom, what accordingly, makes affective filter low.

2 What and how to teach teenage and adult learners by using songs?

Underwood (1989) states, that listening is a complex communicative process. He later explains that during listening a learner should be able to understand the message and the context of the verbal message (in our case a song) and the speaker´s/singer´s emotions, opinions or meaning. Generally, each verbal message has its methodological purpose using different types of listening strategies (Pokrivčáková, 2012). Songs created for very young and young learners already have the goal. It has already been included in the pupils´ books and prescribed when and how to use it. The songs may be used to teach or practise (Orlova, 2003):

a) listening comprehension,
b) vocabulary,
c) grammar structures,
d) pronunciation, rhythm, stress and intonation,
e) memorization,
f) culture.

We describe the above mentioned purposes into more details:

a) Listening comprehension: As English songs come from different parts of the world such as America, Great Britain, Australia, Jamaica, or even non-English speaking countries, learners can come across many different accents, which is helpful for practising listening comprehension. Many times it is difficult to guess the lyrics from the song, because of the singer´s accent or pace. Therefore, it is completely fine to play the song more times (or at least certain parts) and let the learners focus on the song properly.
b) Vocabulary: We all know that it is sometimes very difficult to remember the meaning of the new vocabulary. As songs are usually rich in in new vocabulary for non-native listeners, many new authentic words may be taught and learnt this way.
c) Grammar structures: There can be a lot of grammatical structures found in the song. We may encounter all the present, past and future tenses, modal verbs, and what is more, they are used in the contracted form, what helps students realize that the contracted forms are used on a daily basis.
d) Pronunciation, rhythm, stress and intonation: As words pronounced in the songs are usually contracted, learners can practise the right pronunciation, realize the use of the stress placement, intonation and the rhythm in simple or longer words or even phrases. Moreover, it is natural that people start to sing the song to themselves, what is actually a non-intentional way of practising pronunciation.
e) Memorization: We enjoy listening to a song, and we may come across the song in a radio, you tube, music channels etc., what makes remembering the new vocabulary easier.
f) Culture: Songs reveal not only the emotions of a singer, but there are songs that describe the attitudes or express the opinion about the current situations. We may also learn about the background of the author. For example, American singers often mention the name of their country in their songs, how proud they are of their country, etc., which is a sign of patriotism. Furthermore, the songs together with music videos are helpful to get a better picture of the nation and the country.

It does not matter if we teach young learners, teenage or adult learners, the above mentioned methodological purposes will serve for all the levels. The only thing we need to do is to choose the right song. Not only songs for very young and young learners are easy to remember, repetitive and with catchy rhythm, but any songs, because those are the main features of the song to become popular.

However, that childish content of the song is not attractive for teenagers anymore and there are not many songs included in textbooks for teenage or adult learners. Therefore, we may pick up a song which is currently popular on USA or UK charts, everybody is able to recognize it and hum it, or, on the other hand, we may search for a classic song that has been popular for decades.

For example, currently, for the year 2015, there are popular songs such as Lean on by Major Lazer, Hello by Adele, Here by Alessia Cara, etc., or as we have mentioned above, we can choose a classic and we may go ahead with any song by Queen, for instance, because even the people who cannot pair the song with an author, they will definitely recognize rhythm or even a part of lyrics.

However, if we are not sure what songs are popular by our students, we may ask them in advance in a form of a warm-up discussion, make some notes and then pick the song for the next activity. We choose a song, find something useful in it, such as contracted forms, idioms, or collocations and use it as an example for upcoming topic in the textbook, or just practise listening comprehension and vocabulary as a warm-up or chill-out activity. As popular songs do not carry methodological goal, we have to find it in the song.

Although these songs are not intentionally made for teaching, their biggest advantage is, that they are thoroughly authentic. They provide us slangs, idioms and non-literal everyday English. What is more, it helps learners understand that they cannot translate English into Slovak word by word, but they need to be creative by translating.

On the other hand, we have to be careful while choosing the song, because many popular songs and their music videos are often inappropriate because of vulgar lyrics or expressing a negative message.

Although popular songs are not divided according to their level of English, or methodological goal and it can take some time to choose a right song for the lesson, the fact, that songs and generally music make learners feel relaxed and interested, is worth the effort.

Conclusion

Tunes are present everywhere around us and form a natural part of our lives. Therefore, they need to be included in the lessons even by teenage and adult learners. The positive nature of the songs is very important in today´s classrooms in order to alleviate anxiety and make learning more enjoyable and effective. As we could see above, the songs can be used to teach vocabulary and grammar, make students realize the stress placement and intonation of the whole phrases and see cultural differences. Moreover, the authenticity and currency of the popular songs is also very attractive. The only negative thing of using popular songs for educational purposes is, that the teachers need to find the methodological goal and adapt the song to serve their purpose.

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LEGAL TRANSLATION: TEACHING/LEARNING STRATEGIES

TARASOVA Tatiana

Abstract: *The article deals with legal translation problems encountered by most teachers and students due to mistakenly chosen approach. The law students are encouraged to use monolingual law dictionaries to interpret legal concepts instead of looking up the translation of words in bi-lingual dictionaries. The source legal texts for translation come from law text books – meta-law and develop student-translators' reading/speaking skills as well as broaden their legal knowledge. The major focus on the cognitive aspects of translation and the detailed interpretation of the authors' code – meta-language bring about the desired results and effect. The interpretation of the legal source concepts and further conceptualisation allow student-translators to take deeper insight into their own legal system.*

Key words: *Legal translation for academic purposes, functional approach, communicative aspects, cognitive aspects, interpretation, legal concepts, meta-language, meta-law, speech act, legal background knowledge*

1 Legal translation for academic purposes

Traditional theoretical approach to translation is associated with such issues linguistic translation, comparison of linguistic units from phonemes to syntactic structures, when languages are compared for the sake of equivalent finding and solving the problem of untranslatability. (Catford, 1965) However, what we are after in practical terms is the formation of the regular skills of student-translators to obtain and convey legal information/knowledge about law between the two legal systems using their knowledge of both languages (SL and TL) and legal systems (SS and TS). At first sight, the task may seem insuperable because student-translators are only in the second year of their law school. However, shifting the focus to functional approach in the language learning and translation teaching we shall concentrate on communicative and cognitive aspects of translation and discuss it as a speech act or rather two speech acts. Although the term translation is still used in our context the role of interpretation will be emphasized. Search for meaning equivalence will be replaced by juxtaposition of legal concepts underlying different legal systems through the examination of their use in the source system and the source legal language.

The methods of the research include the analysis of legal discourse the topic of which is confined to the students' curricular and individual research interests. The legal discourse analysis proceeds from general principles to a particular usage whereas case law and common law culture have evolved from the particular to the general. The cognitive perspective resolves the tension between these obviously conflicting practices.

The ultimate objective of the present paper is to equip the teachers and learners of foreign languages with the reliable functional model of translation for academic purposes in various areas of law; to provide the comprehensive LATP definition embracing interpretative, instrumental, communicative, cognitive, cultural, meta-linguistic, meta-legal aspects of this mental and then lingual activity.

The aims of teaching/learning the legal translation skills should be attainable. That is why when the first-year law students start doing the English language course they are taught to understand the language of English common law in their interactive lectures on the History of

the UK/US Law and Government, in the detective and crime stories they read and discuss, in a collection of texts raising the hottest legal and moral issues for all times.
The course of legal translation for academic purposes (LTAP) is taught to the second-year law students who have upgraded their English during the first year and worked out useful learning strategies related to obtaining the relevant legal information, using British and American electronic and printed law dictionaries, other reference sources. The present article incorporates those theoretical ideas and practical methods which have proved working, reliable and effective in the teaching/learning practice.

1.1 LTAP definition

Legal translation for academic purposes is part and parcel of legal English studies which inevitably combine the acquisition of language through law and law through language. The enhanced knowledge of both facilitates the students' interest and motivation for deeper insight into a different legal system for the sake of its comparison with their own. In this way students-translators can achieve a higher degree of objectivity in examining both systems. It follows that LTAP can be also viewed as an integral part of comparative legal studies which provide more reliable knowledge/information about other legal systems. In this sense it is also a means of showing better academic results in other legal disciplines. Ultimately, LTAP is a tool of obtaining verifiable legal knowledge, understanding the evolution of legal thinking and reasoning, receiving and producing messages about different legal systems in at least two languages.

1.2 Communicative and cognitive aspects

Any process of translation begins with the translator's comprehension – reading of or listening to the original legal text – source text (ST) which is rooted in a different legal system (SS Source System). The process of understanding will be more effective when no legal concept is left undefined, culturally or contextually explained. Then a new written or oral legal text (target text – TT) will be communicated in the student-translator's native legal language and transplanted into the translator's national legal system (Target System – TS). So the division of the legal translation process into two speech acts seems natural and consistent with the learning/teaching strategies.
One of the main prerequisite conditions of effective teaching strategies is the student-translator's competence in the source language (B2). The source text borrowed from an Anglo-American law text books should be of a manageable size – about 15-20 pages – which usually makes a chapter of a text book. The topic of the source text should be well known to the student-translator in the native legal language; it should also meet the student-translator's academic needs. The student-translator can be also highly motivated by personal research interests in conducting comparative legal studies.

2 The speech acts

Any translation as follows from the above descriptions is made of two speech acts. The first focuses on acquiring the legal language of and knowledge about the Source System and involves the interpretation of common-law concepts (Source Concepts – SC), the determination of their functions and role within that system (SS). The new legal concepts (Target Concepts – TC) are perceived as the SS underlying elements and are the units of legal knowledge. Their definitions are looked up, thoroughly analyzed and discussed. Other legal information concerning relevant regulations and laws, statutes, cases, courts, judges, legal entities and individuals, etc. is found to fill in the gaps of the student-translator's legal background

knowledge and to clarify certain cognitive and cultural concepts contained in the source text. With all the relevant information being added, most existing ties with common-law culture and tradition being established, the source text takes the form of a 3D message that represents a small but vivid segment of the common law system.

2.1 Meta-language

Roman Jakobson fairly calls the first speech act the "intralingual translation" or "rewording". (Jakobson, 1966) The definition of interpretation borrowed from the "legal Bible" may also fit our purposes particularly in the following part: "interpretation, *n.* (14c) 1. The process of determining what something, esp. the law or a legal document, means; the ascertainment of meaning to be given to words or other manifestations of intention. 2. The understanding one has about the meaning of something." (Black's Law Dictionary, 2009) At the same time this kind of research procedure makes it possible for the student-translator to correctly receive the author's message using the same code – the meta-language. Roman Jakobson has described it as follows: "A faculty of speaking a given language implies a faculty of talking about this language. Such a "metalinguistic" operation permits the revision and redefinition of the vocabulary used." (Jakobson, 1966)

When the student-translator unmistakably receives the author's complete message there follows the juxtaposition of the SS concepts and the TS concepts with similarities and differences between them being identified and discussed. Psycholinguistic studies and experiments have demonstrated that students find differences more eagerly and easily than similarities. Therefore search for similarities probably should receive more time and attention in class discussions and comparative homework. One should also bear in mind that student-translator's responsibility here is to remain unbiased and faithful and be governed by the legal rather than political interpretation.

2.2 Meta-law

The other speech act which Roman Jakobson calls "interlingual translation – translation proper" (Jakobson, 1966) occurs when the student-translator becomes the author – writer/speaker this time, who produces a target text (TT) to readers/listeners in the native legal language in terms/concepts of the national legal system. Unfortunately, many translation theories ignore the final addressee who is legally competent enough to evaluate the translation product. It is the student translator's group mates who can judge whether or not the legal message is properly delivered with all legal facts and ideas being fully represented. Thus, the student translator begins as the addressee receiving legal speech and information/knowledge in the SL (Source Language) and then becomes the author producing legal speech and information/knowledge in the TL (Target Language).

Here the question of meta-law is bound to arise because by the law texts chosen by teachers or students for translation are not law in the strict sense of the term. By meta-law here we mean legal discourse created for teaching purposes by law professors and found in law text books rather than monographs, research articles, legal news articles and the like. The language and the topic of the text books completely meet the didactic communicative and cognitive purposes. Moreover, the legal text books are available for all law areas, they contain the latest updated content.

3 Cognitive function

We proceed from the premise that "all cognitive experience and its classification is conveyable in any existing language" (Jakobson, 1966). Whereas traditional translation is about the

transfer of meanings and search for equivalents interpretation is more about understanding and making sense of discourse. The importance of interpretation in common law and its language is taken for granted. No legal translation can be done without interpretation. The detailed conceptual analysis, interpretation, conceptualization are indispensable processes of understanding legal discourse.

In this connection the cognitive learning strategies should be accounted for in planning and conducting legal translation lessons. One of the most important cognitive strategies is that of memorizing which appears the most difficult for most students. This can be trained through conceptualization i.e. finding narrow or broad contexts for the new concept in the same or other law areas. Relating already known legal concepts and new ones within the same area of law may be a useful team activity, or a contest activity. The distinction should be drawn between different meanings of polysemantic concepts. A new concept should be associated with a case or controversy in which the concept is used. The desirable effect is achieved because links should be established between the abstract legal concepts and real case decided or pending. Legal new is an important source for discussing the current legal events on the one hand and for examining legal media discourse, on the other. The switch of the discourse serves better understanding by providing illustrative materials and fresh ideas. Another important cognitive strategy which comes out as a new type of activity in translation lessons is that of summarizing larger portions of legal texts and making power point presentations connected with the chosen area of research interests. Cognitive skills of using electronic resources is about searching relevant information, sending and receiving messages in English, e.g. the use of electronic legal dictionaries and reference resources

Conclusion

Theoretical disputes about the distinction between language and speech are not relevant for LTAP teaching/learning purposes. Communicative and cognitive aspects prevail and conceptual analysis allows juxtaposing legal concepts used in two different legal systems (SS and TS). The turn to interpretation found in monolingual dictionaries instead of use of bi-lingual dictionaries develops communicative skill and cognitive competence with focus being made on message/idea rather than words.

Legal translation for academic purposes (LTAP) always includes two speech acts, where the student-translator is in turns the recipient of the original legal text generated within the source common law system (SS) and the author of a new legal text communicated in the translator's native legal language in terms/concepts of the target legal system (TS). The course is challenging for law students as it stimulates mental activity and develops public speaking skills as the translation proper if proceeded by fascinating discoveries and interpretation of legal and cultural concepts not found in the student-translator's national law. LTAP classes are never formal.

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TYPOLOGY OF WRITTEN OBJECTIVE EXERCISES

WALKOVÁ Milada

Abstract: *The paper gives a comprehensive overview of basic written objective language exercises, namely matching, classifying, binary and multiple choice questions, rearranging, completing, and rewriting. They can be used to introduce, practise, review and test vocabulary, grammar, listening or reading comprehension, and marginally also spelling, cohesion, and pragmatics. These exercises, mostly the so-called selected response items, allow for indirect and objective assessment. Each type of exercise is illustrated and its subtypes and peculiarities are discussed.*

Key words: *language exercises, language testing, selected response items, indirect assessment*

1 Introduction

In teaching practice, language teachers may want to develop their own classroom materials to address the specific needs of their students. Part of materials development is developing exercises that introduce, practice, revise or test target language structures. Some types of exercises are very common, while others are used more sparingly; some exercises are relatively easy for students, while others are rather demanding. This paper attempts to give a comprehensive overview of basic types of simple written objective exercises. The types of exercises described here focus on vocabulary, grammar, listening or reading comprehension, and marginally also spelling, cohesion and pragmatics. Teachers can use the paper as a repository of types of exercises they can develop to help students acquire particular linguistic knowledge.

Since "there is no important difference between writing a test item and writing a learning task or exercise" (Alderson, Clapham, & Wall, 1995, p. 41), I will start with a broad division of testing. I will not deal with issues such as validity, reliability, or scoring of tests, etc.; I will only focus on questions directly related to typology of exercises used in assessment. Plakans (2010) informs us that language assessment is placed on a continuum of direct and indirect methods, which assess different abilities and use different techniques. She describes them as follows. Direct assessment is based on CONSTRUCTED RESPONSE TASKS, in which the learner creatively produces spoken or written language. This sample performance is a demonstration of his/her ability to use the language. While direct methods are more authentic and therefore better reflect the actual use of language and motivate students, they are very difficult to score and students may fail to complete the task in the way expected by the teacher (such as by simplifying the task inappropriately or by not demonstrating the required creativity). In contrast, indirect methods measure comprehension and recognition rather than production. They typically exploit SELECTED RESPONSE ITEMS, in which the learner selects an answer from two or more possibilities. For these reasons, indirect methods are less reliable in measuring to what extent a student can use or produce language, yet they are easier to score and more objective. The scoring of direct and indirect assessment, then, is subjective and objective, respectively. As Heaton (1988) explains, objective scoring means that "a testee will score the same mark no matter which examiner marks the test" and the items can be evaluated by computer (p. 25). Indeed, although constructing exercises relying on indirect methods is more time-consuming than preparing tasks using direct methods, evaluation and grading is much faster with the former type of tasks (Heaton, 1988, p.26).

The present paper explores exercises on the indirect end of the continuum. However, as already pointed out, they may be used not only for testing, but also for practice. Since the learner typically chooses from a limited range of options, they can be well used in e-learning, where the answers are automatically evaluated by suitable available software.

2 Types of exercises

This section discusses individual types of exercises and their subtypes, namely matching (Section 2.1), classifying (Section 2.2), binary and multiple choice questions (Section 2.3), rearranging (Section 2.4), completing (Section 2.5), and rewriting (Section 2.6).

2.1 Matching

Matching is a simple exercise suitable as a warm-up. It is typically used for practicing or testing vocabulary, but a variation is also suitable for building communication skills. Matching contains shuffled pairs of items, one of which is a STEM and another is an OPTION. The exercise involves matching stems with options based on a relationship between them. Depending on this relationship, there are several subtypes of matching exercises.

In the simplest subtype, students match words or phrases with pictures. While this type of matching is evidently well-suited for young learners, it can be equally well used with adults in English for Specific Purposes (ESP). An example involves matching names and pictures of geometrical shapes or of Personal Protective Equipment, e.g. *goggles* – [picture of goggles], *hard hat* – [picture of a hard hat]. The advantages are that the exercise does not require any linguistic knowledge beyond the target vocabulary and that it facilitates a better understanding and memorizing of the target vocabulary via visual memory. An obvious disadvantage is that the task is suitable only for a restricted range of vocabulary, typically concrete nouns.

Another subtype involves matching words with their definitions or descriptions, e.g. (1). (The examples in this paper are exercises constructed by the author based on the material present in primary sources listed in References.) This subtype often requires, beside the knowledge of the target vocabulary, the syntactic and lexical knowledge for the learner to understand the definitions. The respective definitions or descriptions can be taken from a dictionary or a textbook and simplified, if necessary.

(1)

corporate rate	hire for one week
regulations	extra cost
seven-day rental	official rules
additional charge	insurance cover for other road users
third-party liability	special price for businesses

The task becomes more demanding when it involves words of only one word class (such as only adjectives), and possibly of the same semantic field (for instance adjectives describing character, e.g. *honest, arrogant, lively, responsible*, *mature*). Another way to increase the difficulty of matching is to include one or more extra choices for which there is no stem and which should not be used.

The third subtype involves matching words with another set of words on the basis of synonymy (2) or antonymy (3). As such, this exercise is suitable for enlarging students' vocabulary. Of course, the stems should not contain words of similar meaning, as the exercise will then involve a group of synonyms rather than a mere pair.

(2)

throw away	connect
take apart	discard
pump out	drain

	blow up	inflate
	plug in	dismantle

(3)	old-fashioned	safe
	rebellious	modern
	typical	boring
	exciting	obedient
	hazardous	unusual

To increase visual attractiveness of matching, it can be presented in the form of a WORD CLOUD, see Figure 1.

Figure 1. Example of a word cloud. Created by wordle.net.

A more demanding variation of the latter two subtypes includes the target words in a reading text instead of a simple list. In such a case, students are given a list of definitions/synonyms/antonyms for which they search relevant words in the text. With longer texts, the number of paragraph, or a range of lines, in which it occurs is given for each target word. This variation of matching is suitable as a post-reading activity.
Another subtype practices collocations, which are divided into two parts and the task of the students is to find the respective collocations, e.g. (4). The exercise is more challenging when it rests on collocations of the same syntactic structure, e.g. verb + noun, as in (4).

(4)	do	a PIN
	make	the Internet
	enter	a lecture
	give	homework
	access	a mistake

The last subtype involves matching utterances, typically questions and answers, in order to form mini-dialogs, e.g. (5). Focusing on pragmatics rather than on vocabulary, it practices routine replies.

(5)	Hello, I'm Jane.	Yes, please.
	How are you?	Likewise.
	May I help you?	Fine, thanks.
	Thank you.	Nice to meet you.
	It was nice meeting you.	You're welcome.

A matching exercise ideally contains five to ten pairs. These should be presented vertically rather than horizontally, i.e. in two columns, with one column listing stems and the other listing

choices. Stems and choices should be short and clear. Types of choices should not be mixed (such as collapsing synonymous and antonymous pairs into a single exercise).
As matching assesses recognition rather than recall, it is a relatively simple exercise. It is also easy to assess for the teacher. Since its focus is mainly on vocabulary, it can be used as a pre- or post- activity related to listening or reading. For instance, it can contain selected words form a listening script to make sure that students understand the key words of the listening activity.

2.2 Classifying

Classifying is another simple exercise targeting vocabulary. Specifically, it focuses on word associations, especially relations of hyponymy and hyperonymy. In contrast to matching, however, classifying involves groups of words rather than pairs. This exercise is composed of words which form conceptual classes.
There are three subtypes of classifying. The first one involves a list of words (presented horizontally or in a word cloud). Students classify the words from the list into two or more groups whose headings are given, e.g. (6). In other words, students classify hyponyms to their respective hyperonyms. If relevant, students can also brainstorm additional members of the class not given in the list. This exercise is useful especially when content knowledge is also required, such as in ESP.

(6) aluminium, copper, glass, iron, lead, plastic, rubber, steel, timber, zinc

METALLIC MATERIALS	NON-METALLIC MATERIALS
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	
_____	

In another subtype, students are given several sets of words related to a particular subject. The task is to identify the subject, e.g. (7). As this exercise calls for creativity, students can be divided into teams and hold a competition.

(7) a. laundry service, mini-bar, porter, room service, reception
b. porthole, itinerary, crew, cabin, deck
c. gate, departure, seatbelt, overhead locker, checked baggage
d. overhead projector, microphone, plenary, presentation, keynote speaker

A visually attractive presentation of classifying is a MIND MAP, which may even combine the latter two subtypes, see Figure 2.

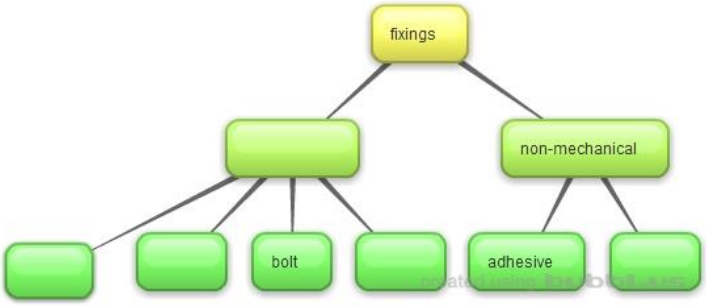

Figure 2. Example of a mind map. Created by bubbl.us.

The last subtype is ODD ONE OUT. Similarly as in the previous subtype, students are given several sets of words each related to a particular subject. In this subtype, however, each set contains an extra word that does not belong in the group. The task of the students is to find the extra word and explain why it does not belong with the other words. This exercise is also suitable for pointing out false friends, e.g. (8).

(8) a. primary school, basic school, secondary school, high school, gymnasium, university
b. audit, check, control, inspection, monitoring, review
c. contemporary, current, present, actual, state-of-the-art

2.3 Binary and multiple choice questions

This paper treats binary questions and multiple choice questions together for their similarity as well as for the sake of simplicity. The main difference is that binary questions contain only two options, whereas multiple choice questions contain more than two (typically three to five) options. Both binary questions and multiple choice questions are objective and easy to score. Both can be used for practicing grammar, vocabulary, and listening or reading comprehension.

BINARY QUESTIONS contain a question or a statement and only two options. As there is fifty per cent chance that students will merely guess the correct answer, this type of exercise is rather easy, making it suitable practice for less advanced learners. For the same reason, it is less appropriate for testing.

The first subtype focuses on recognition of correct and incorrect grammar structures. Students are given a set of sentences some of which are grammatically correct and others incorrect, e.g. (9). Their task is to identify whether each sentence is correct or not, and perhaps also correct the incorrect ones.

(9) a. Our machinery is old.
b. The news are that there's a new boss.
c. The office will give you informations about the city.
d. The packs were torn.
e. How much computers do we have?

A subtype suitable for listening or reading comprehension is TRUE OR FALSE, in which students mark each of a set of statements as true or false based on what they heard or read. Alternatively, YES-NO QUESTIONS are presented instead of statements and the students answer *yes* or *no* to each question. As there is a great chance that students will merely guess the answer, teachers should always require them to support their answers with arguments.

The last subtype focuses on vocabulary (10) or grammar (11). The target words or structures are presented in suitable sentences along with an alternative word that does not fit the sentence, e.g. (10). Alternatively, all the choices may be part of a longer text (11).

(10) a. The new pump completely/dramatically reduces vibration.
b. Timber from deciduous trees is called hardwood/softwood.
c. Helium was contained/suspended inside the balloon.

(11) A spreadsheet is an interactive computer application program for organize/organizing and analyse/analysing data in tabular form. Although spreadsheets were first developed for accounting or bookkeeping tasks, they use/are used extensively in any context where tabular lists are built, sorted and shared. The program operates on data representing/represented as cells of an array, organized in rows and columns. Each cell

of the array is a model–view–controller element that can contain/be contained either numeric or text data, or the results of formulas that automatically calculate and display a value based/basing on the contents of other cells.
(Text taken from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spreadsheet and adjusted. It is also used in examples (17) and (18).)

A MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTION consists of a stem (i.e. the part that needs to be completed) and several options (choices), with one (or occasionally more than one, see below) being the correct option and the others being the wrong answers called DISTRACTORS (Heaton, 1988, p. 28). Students' errors and structures in their first language are a recommended source of plausible distractors (Heaton, 1988, p. 32; Madsen, 1983, p. 20). The stem can be a question, an incomplete statement that needs to be completed, or a complete statement, whose part needs to be singled out as incorrect or matched with a synonym (Heaton, 1988, p. 30). The probability that students will merely guess the answer is lower than with binary questions. The difficulty of multiple choice questions can be varied depending on the subtype.
The first subtype contains only one correct answer and several distractors, e.g. (12). Therefore, a binary question can be expanded into a multiple choice question by adding extra distractors.

(12) The overall _____ of the plane is 73 meters.
a. long
b. length
c. lengthen

A reverse version is a set of choices with one incorrect answer and several correct answers. Students choose a single answer which they believe to be incorrect. For listening or reading comprehension, it can be expanded from a true or false subtype by additional true choices (the instructions are then worded in the sense *All of the following is true except*). This subtype of multiple choice question can also be constructed to test grammar (13): Students are presented with a set of sentences with several parts highlighted in each. One of the highlighted parts is grammatically incorrect or incomplete. This part has to be identified, and perhaps even corrected, by students.

(13) Penicillin has been discovered by Alexander Fleming at St Mary's Hospital in 1928.

According to Heaton (1988, p. 40), such error-recognition exercises have been criticized for exposing learners to imperfect language instead of focusing on accurate forms and production, but he argues that they develop skills which are required in the post-writing stage of editing and proof-reading. Error-recognition exercises can also be constructed more open, without giving learners a set of choices. However, while such a variation reduces the possibility of guessing, it is much more demanding and may confuse students.
The most demanding subtype of multiple choice questions is one that contains at least two correct choices for each stem. This greatly reduces the possibility of guessing. Each option, then, should be scored individually. This subtype is suitable for listening or reading comprehension and for grammar – identification of correct and incorrect structures, e.g. (14), similar to (9).

(14) The new method was used…
a. …to analyse the sample.
b. …to analysis of the sample.
c. …to analysing the sample.
d. …for analyse the sample.

e. …for the analysis of the sample.
f. …for analysing the sample.

Constructing good multiple choice questions is rather demanding. Anderson et al. (1995, pp. 47–51) and Heaton (1988, pp. 27–32) point out to some caveats in constructing multiple choice questions. First, neither the correct answer nor the wrong one(s) should be immediately obvious. In other words, all options should be equal in length, difficulty level, and style. The distractors should not be conspicuous by being logically implausible (in comprehension), structurally not fitting into the stem (unless this is tested by the item), e.g. *Someone who designs houses is *an designer/builder/architect/plumber*, or being ungrammatical per se, e.g. *The overall long/length/*longth of the plane is 73 meters* – instead, the question should be constructed in such a way that it is the combination with the stem that is incorrect, cf. (12). Similarly, with listening or reading comprehension, multiple choice questions should not be answerable merely by common sense without reference to the text or recording. Second, a good multiple choice question should not test two things at the same time, such as word order and sequence of tenses, e.g. *I knew where had the boys gone/the boys have gone/have the boys gone/the boys had gone*, or a question testing comprehension that contains ungrammatical options. Third, stems should be short, clear and concise. If the same word or phrase should occur in each option, it is usually a better idea to make it part of the stem, e.g. *I enjoy looking to/about/at/on the children playing in the park* instead of *I enjoy looking to/ looking about/ looking at/ looking on the children playing in the park*, see also (15). Exceptions are cases in which this strategy would make distractors unequal, e.g. *I enjoy looking to/*-/at/on the children playing in the park*. In such cases, therefore, it is preferable to repeat the word or phrase in each option, e.g. *Someone who designs houses is a designer/a builder/an architect/a plumber.* Fourth, it is advisable to double check (ideally by another person) that the exercise does not allow unintended correct answers.

2.4 Rearranging

Rearranging is a simple fun exercise that can be constructed to target spelling and vocabulary, word order and sentence structure, as well as cohesion and paragraph structure. It is composed of scrambled letters, words, or sentences that need to be put in the correct order.

In the simplest subtype, students are presented with words whose letters have been scrambled, e.g. (15). This subtype can be used to practice spelling and vocabulary. It can also be used as a game in class.

(15) a. ROBASINA (noun)
b. RULEDAB (adjective)
c. LITABISTY (noun)

Another subtype practices syntax. Each sentence is split into several chunks (composed of individual words or of phrases) which need to be ordered correctly, e.g. (16). Teacher should stress to students that the words should not be altered in any way and no words can be dropped or added.

(16) a. of/ has/ out/ run/ coolant/ the system
b. of/ provide/ details/ please/ the bolts/ further
c. attached/ drawing/ find/ please/ a/ revised/

Nevertheless, the exercise can be made more demanding by including an extra word for each sentence. The learners, then, also have to identify which word does not belong in the sentence. In the final stage of the exercise, all the extra words can be used to form another sentence.
In the last subtype, learners order scrambled sentences or larger chunks of a single text. It practices paragraph or text structure and cohesion. Heaton (1988, p. 129) recommends that learners should be provided with one or two initial sentences, as starting with the wrong sentence will inevitably result in the whole exercise being wrong. In general, rearranging should not contain too many items and it should allow only one correct answer.

2.5 Completing

Completion items "measure production rather than recognition" (Heaton, 1988, pp. 42–43), so it is placed further from the indirect extreme of the continuum discussed in Section 1 than the other types of exercises described above. As such, completing exercises can often be answered in more than one way and they are consequently more difficult to evaluate, especially by computer. Various subtypes of completing can be used to target spelling, vocabulary, grammar, pragmatics, listening comprehension or global command of language.
A well-known subtype of completing is the CLOZE TEST, e.g. (17). It is formed by a text from which each *n*-th word, such each fifth or each seventh word, is regularly left out regardless of the function of the words. Students have to complete the text with suitable words without any additional hints. When every second word is deleted from a text, the type of exercise is known as the C-TEST, e.g. (18). Due to the high proportion of missing words, initial part of each word is given as a hint, its length depending on the overall length of the deleted word. The number of missing letters may also be indicated. The problem with both cloze test and C-test is that the deleted text may correspond to different ratios of grammar words and content words, influencing how easy it is to retrieve them, how many correct answers are possible, and even what is actually tested, as these tests measure language proficiency in general rather than individual aspects of language (cf. Alderson et al., 1995, pp. 55 – 56).

(17) A spreadsheet is an interactive _____ application program for organizing and _____ data in tabular form. Although _____ were first developed for accounting _____ bookkeeping tasks, they are used _____ in any context where tabular _____ are built, sorted and shared. _____ program operates on data represented _____ cells of an array, organized _____ rows and columns. Each cell _____ the array is a model–view–controller _____ that can contain either numeric _____ text data, or the results _____ formulas that automatically calculate and _____ a value based on the _____ of other cells.

(18) A spreadsheet is an interactive computer application program for organizing and analysing data in tabular form. Although sp……. were f…. developed f.. accounting o. bookkeeping tas.., they a.. used ext…….. in a.. context w…. tabular li... are b…., sorted a.. shared. T.. program op…… on d… represented a. cells o. an ar…, organized i. rows a.. columns.

Such problems can be avoided or at least reduced by constructing GAP-FILLING ITEMS instead, e.g. (19). This exercise can target vocabulary, grammar, pragmatics, or listening comprehension. In gap-filling, words are not deleted on the basis of their numerical position in a running text but are purposefully chosen by the teacher. For this reason, they are typically key content and function words, phrases, or even whole sentences. The instructions should make clear whether a gap is to be filled with a single word or more words. The gaps are typically part of sentences or a text, including a dialog, e.g. (20). According to Heaton (1988, p. 44), it is preferable to use a

continuous text rather than individual unrelated sentences because text reduces ambiguity and students learn to rely on context more.

(19) Our hotel offers many facilities. You don't have to carry your luggage to the room, as we have _____ service. We also offer a 24-hour _____ service, as well as _____ and dry cleaning service. You can lock your money and jewellery in a _____ -_____ box. In the en suite bathroom you will find towels, toiletries and _____ .

(20) A: EM Cargo. Caroline Smith speaking.
B: Hello, _____ Peter Right from Ponac Stores.
A: Hello, Mr Right. _____?
B: Yes, I'd like to speak to Sylvia Black.
A: I'm afraid she's not here at the moment.
B: _____?
A: Oh, I don't know, she's gone to an urgent meeting.

As gap-filling typically allows more than one correct answer for each gap, it is possible to disambiguate the exercise in several ways. First, the initial letters or parts of the missing words may be provided and/or the length of the target words or word class may be indicated. This variation allows focus on spelling, vocabulary, and suffixes. Second, the basic form of the missing word may be given and learners have to supply its correct form, possibly along with necessary grammar words, e.g. (21). This variation is suitable for practicing word formation, the use of tenses, comparison of adjectives, etc.

(21) A: In 2002, a terrible accident _____ (happen) in Pennsylvania. Nine miners _____ (break) through a wall of an old mine and _____ (get) trapped. They _____ (not/have) much air.
B: _____ (the rescue team/help) them?
A: Yes. The miners _____ (not/think) they had a chance but they were all rescued.

Third, the teacher may provide an alphabetical list of words or phrases which need to be used and matched with suitable context (the so-called BANKED GAP-FILLING, see Alderson et al., 1995, p. 54), e.g. (22).

(22) about, alternatively, another, could, couldn't, don't, not

a. We _____ install a security system in front of all the doors.
b. _____ option would be to install a secret camera.
c. Or, _____, we could hire a security guard.
d. What _____ getting some alarms for our trucks?
e. Why _____ we try a recording device?
f. _____ we get a tracking device?
g. Why _____ install this?

Care still needs to be taken so that there is only one correct answer for each gap. If constructed in such a way, the exercise can well be evaluated automatically. Extra words may be added to increase difficulty. If using phrases, it should be made clear that phrases as a whole fit into the gaps. Alderson et al. (1995, p. 55) recommend avoiding items which are acceptable without the deleted word, e.g. *It so happened that the man* ____ *I was following turned out be extremely fit*, as they are confusing to students.

A difficult to construct but much more attractive to students is a CROSSWORD PUZZLE. It is actually also a subtype of completing, in which the number of letters for each word is indicated, and possibly some letters are also already given.

2.6 Rewriting

Rewriting is the most direct of the exercises discussed in this paper. As it is based on recall rather than recognition, it may have more than one correct answer and it is therefore more difficult to evaluate. It can be used to practice writing and grammar, especially word order and sentence structure.

In this exercise given sentences have to be re-written in the way indicated. This indication may involve a word that needs to be used in a new sentence, or a word that has to be used in order to join two sentences into a single complex sentence (23). Another subtype is reminiscent of completing in that it involves completing a sentence whose beginning is given, the resulting sentence being a transformation of another given sentence (24). In other words, rewriting involves formal variations of expressing the same meaning.

(23) a. It was raining. So we took an umbrella. (because)
b. I have not finished my studies yet but I have a lot of work experience. (although)
c. If you don't start studying, you will not pass the exam. (unless)

(24) a. What time does the train leave? = Do you know _____?
b. Is this the right bus? = Do you have any idea _____?
c. Where is Baker Street? = Could you _____?

Conclusion

This paper has attempted to provide a comprehensive overview of basic types of language exercises which indirectly assess language competence and which can be evaluated objectively and automatically. These exercises range from those based on mere recognition, such as matching or marking sentences as correct or incorrect, to those which require more active knowledge, such as cloze test or rewriting.

This increasing demandingness and complexity of exercises can be exploited to consolidate language knowledge: The same vocabulary or grammar structures can be presented repeatedly through various types of exercises. For instance, vocabulary can be first introduced in classifying type of exercise, then practiced in matching and binary questions, and finally tested in multiple choice questions. Another example is grammatical structures first recognized as correct or incorrect in binary questions, then practiced in rearranging and completing, and finally actively used in rewriting. This paper hopes to give an impetus to teachers of English to construct a variety of exercises around particular language items.

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II Practical section

ACTIVITIES LEVEL A1 - A2

WHAT'S IN A PRESENT?

DJOKIC Anica

Level: A1 (Young learners)

Time required: 5 minutes (or more)

Goals: to practice asking the question "Is it a...?"; to review the vocabulary of toys, school supplies, and other things that could be given as a present.

Background: This activity is connected to the topic of "birthdays", but can also be used when talking about Christmas, New Year, or such.

Materials: previously made "shape flashcards"

Preparation:

1. Prepare some "shape flashcards", similar to silhouettes, choosing objects that could be given as a present to kids: a ball, bike, book, game... They need to have a distinctive shape. Stick them to cardboard, and cut around the shape. Now reinforce the other side with wrapping paper.

Procedures:

1. Show the Ss the wrapping paper side of the flashcard and ask them to guess what could be in the present by looking at its shape.
2. Students try to guess, asking the question "Is it a...?"

(Follow-up): The children can draw a present they would like to get.

(Variation): A possible variation of this activity would be an activity with "drawing" in the air with your fingers.

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TONGUE TWISTERS

DJOKIC Anica

Level: all levels, reading required

Time required: from 1 minute to how long you prefer

Goals: to practice rhythm, intonation, and target language

Background: Tongue twisters can be used as warmers, coolers, or fillers

Materials: basically, no materials required; tongue twisters could be written on board, or slips of paper

Preparation:

1. Prepare a set of tongue twisters, preferably topic-based, e.g. Halloween, or Christmas

Procedures:

1. Demonstrate how fast a tongue twister can be said.
2. Let your students practice saying it.
3. Organise a competition: who can say it fastest, who can say it without mistakes

Follow-up: Perhaps your students can create their own tongue-twisters.

Variation: These are some possible examples: Halloween&Christmas

- If big black bats could blow bubbles, how big of bubbles would big black bats blow?
- If two witches would watch two watches, which witch would watch which watch?
- Three Swiss witches watch three Swatch watches. Which Swiss witch watches which Swatch watch?
- I wish to wish the wish you wish to wish, but if you wish to wish the witch wishes, I won't wish the wish you wish to wish.
- http://supersimplelearning.com/halloween/
- http://bogglesworldesl.com/halloween_worksheets.htm
- Santa's sleigh slides sideways on slushy snow.
- Running reindeer romp 'round red wreaths.
- Eleven elves licked eleven little liquorice lollipops.
- Bobby brings big bright bells.
- Santa sings shining star songs.

- http://bogglesworldesl.com/christmas_worksheets.htm
- http://supersimplelearning.com/christmas/

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HOT SEAT

KOHUTOVÁ Veronika

Level: A2 and higher

Time required: depends on how many words a teacher wants his/her students to practice, we usually use about twenty words and the activity takes about 20 minutes maximum

Goals: to revise vocabulary, to improve speaking skill

Background: I taught in a language school for two years. Among many courses I had, there was one focused on developing reading and speaking skills. Students worked with articles from the British national daily newspaper called The Guardian. Before we read the article, we went through a list of new words which appeared in the text. Students matched them with appropriate definitions either with the help of their dictionaries or my help. They were asked to do this matching activity at home from time to time, too. After several articles, when there were enough words to be practiced and reinforced I used the Hot Seat activity. The activity was a great success, my students loved it and when I asked them: "what activity would you like to do today?" their answer was the Hot Seat. They really enjoyed competing. I did not use it in only course focused primarily on speaking, but also in those which were aimed at the development of general English. When I started working for a state secondary school where the majority of students were boys, I wanted to create a positive attitude towards English language so I tried several interesting, catchy and funny activities among which there was the Hot Seat. To apply the activity students must have A2 grammar and vocabulary at least at their disposal. Of course, teachers have to choose vocabulary that is in correspondence with their learners´ level of English. The Hot Seat will certainly motivate your students as it raises interest in the activity. However, teachers must clearly state what the objective of the activity is. Some students may misleadingly think that the point of the activity is to avoid learning and have solely fun. When you set clear rules, your students will surely stick to them if they are sophisticated enough.

Materials: blackboard and chalk or interactive whiteboard to write words on

Preparation:

1. Chose target words for revision
2. Put two chairs in front of the board the way they face students

Procedures:

1. Tell students that the objective of today´s lesson is to revise vocabulary covered so far.
2. Students are divided into two teams so forces are spread more or less equally.
3. Students agree on a name of their teams.
4. Each team appoints one person who sits into the hot seat.
5. Emphasize that only English is allowed and if you hear your students speaking their mother tongue subtract one or two points depending on how strict you want to be and how much your students tend to turn to their mother language.

6. Write one word or expression at the board.
7. Students try to explain the given term to the classmate/teammate that is in the hot seat in front of the board.
8. To explain, they can use synonyms, antonyms, fixed expressions specific situations etc., however, using the word base is not allowed. If someone reveals the word by mistake or whispers it, teacher may subtract a point.
9. Person who guesses the word or term as first scores a point for his/her team.
10. Team with the highest number of points wins this competition.
11. Teacher may reward winners somehow depending on the age of learners.

Follow-up: students create a crossword for a classmate, students can use crossword makers available on the internet, when they have created their crosswords they exchange them (teachers can use this follow up if they have enough time and computers with the internet)

Variation: As for variations, the person sitting in the hot seat and guessing words can exchange after for example 3 or 4 words with another student from his/her team. It is up to teacher how many students will sit in the hot seat and guess words during the activity.

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MODEL EXERCISES USING CLIL METHOD

ŠIMKOVÁ Zuzana

Level: A2 (Elementary)

Time required: 45 minutes

Goals:
1. To practice the vocabulary related to everyday situations which students can encounter on holidays
2. To practice speaking and communicative skills

Background: The exercises and activities have been used to teach or revise vocabulary connected with holidays, travelling and things that can happen when someone is on holiday.

Materials: blackboard, chalk, printed worksheets

Preparation:
1. Photocopy the worksheets and pass them to the students.
2. Review pre-taught vocabulary and grammar structures/phrases connected with holidays and travelling

Procedures:
1. Teacher starts the topic with a brainstorming activity and asks questions about students' country and the country they have visited.
2. Teacher divides the class into the groups of three or four and asks students to read the article in the first exercise to get the main idea about Simon from Montenegro.
3. Teacher asks the key questions about Simon from Montenegro to make sure that students understand the article.
4. Then he asks students to read the article for the second time and do the exercise below the article. Students have to choose the correct answer based on reading. Students do the follow-up exercise in groups and the first finished group gets the point.
5. In the second exercise, vocabulary exercise, students have to match the word with its definition. The vocabulary is still related to the topic holidays and students still work in groups. Teacher can print the second exercise and cut it into pieces and pass it to the students. The first group finished, gets the point.
6. In the third exercise students read the dialogue between a patient and a doctor. They have to fill the gaps with the missing words. Below the dialogue there are the pictures that can help students.
7. After completing the dialogue in exercise 3 students create their own dialogues and then they act them out. They work in pairs and in the end the best dialogue gets the point.
8. In the fourth A exercise students have to compare two pictures. They have to describe the basic differences between the life in a city and a village. Then they have to name advantages and disadvantages of the village/city they come from. Students can discuss

the topic in groups and the group that names the most positives and negatives, gets the point.

9. In the last exercise, students have to make up the dialogue. Teacher asks students to work in pairs. Student A is a Slovak student and he meets a student B, a Spanish student, at the train station. Spanish student would like to know how to get to the national bank. Student A has to give him/her proper directions to get there.
10. At the end of the lesson, students count the points they gained in the individual exercises and the teacher announces the winner group.

Follow-up activities: Teacher can use some follow-up activities. He/she can ask students to play the scene about their holiday experience (shark chasing, buying an ice cream on the beach, adventurous boat trip etc.). If the students have not visited any country and they haven´t got any experience, they can use their imagination and create their own holiday story.
Another game the teacher can also play is the bingo game to revise vocabulary or he/she can use the game called guess what country I am thinking about. Teacher chooses a student who has to think about some country he likes and other students have to ask Yes/No questions to find out the country.

Variation: If the teacher does not have access to a photocopier, he/she can display the current exercises with computer and overhead projector. He/she can also use the follow-up activities instead of the printed worksheets. Teacher also can vary pair or group and individual work according to his/her own consideration.

Appendices: Worksheets

Reading

1. **Read about Simon from Montenegro and then choose the correct answer for the following statements.**

Hello everybody,
My name is Simon and I live in Podgorica, the capital of Montenegro. It isn't a big town but it's the biggest town in Montenegro. It has a very favourable geographic position. The climate is mediterranean so the weather and temperature is very pleasant in summer. It isn´t surrounded by seaside, but there are many rivers and lakes. The best place for rest and relaxation is forest called Gorica. It is one of the most popular tourist destinations. You can go sightseeing, because we have plenty of monuments and things that worth seeing. The small cottages and countryside houses are an important part of our city. There are not any skyscrapers and therefore you can see the beauty of nature.
I think that my country is the most beautiful in world. If you don't believe in me come and see my country. So, I invite all you my friends from all over the world to visit my beautiful country. I'm highly convinced that you'll love it if you come and see it.

1. Simon is:
   a. a boy who lives in Gorica
   b. a boy who stays in Podgorica for holidays
   c. a boy who lives in Podgorica
   d. a boy who lives in a small town
2. Montenegro is:
   a. a large city in Podgorica

b. a town in the east of Croatia
c. bigger city than Gorica
d. is a country and its capital is Podgorica

3. Temperature in the summer is
a. very unpleasant
b. it is not very warm there
c. it is hot there
d. it is rainy and cloudy

4. Nature is amazing and:
a. there aren´t many lakes
b. there are forests for a rest
c. Gorica is a lake near Podgorica
d. nobody likes the nature there

5. His town is
a. a popular for its factories and companies
b. a famous and well-known agricultural city
c. full of cottages and countryside houses
d. not popular because there is nothing to see

6. He thinks that:
a. Podgorica is worth visiting
b. Podgorica isn´t worth visiting
c. there are much more beautiful countries
d. it isn´t an attractive place for tourists

Vocabulary

2. Match the words with their definitions.

Example: 1. garage - a. a place where you park your car

1. **Platform**	a. a person who controls the bus or train tickets.
2. **Guide**	b. not to catch the bus
3. **railway station**	c. One who travels or has travelled to some places.
4. **traffic lights**	d. to pass (time) in a particular manner, place
5. **underground**	e. The time a journey takes from start to end.
6. **miss the bus**	f. a person who guides, especially one hired to guide travellers and tourists.
7. **Traveller**	g. a place where trains regularly stop to load or unload passengers
8. **ticket inspector**	h. The place in a train station to get on your train.
9. **Arrive**	i. a subway system very common in England
10. **Spend**	j. a set of signal lights used to direct or control traffic at intersections.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

3. Read the dialogue between a doctor and a patient. With the help of the pictures fill in the correct words and letter defining the patient´s health problems.

Doctor- Good morning.

Patient- Good morning, doctor.

Doctor- What´s the matter with you?

Patient- I have a _____ and_____.

Doctor- How long have you had these symptoms?

Patient- For three days now.

Doctor- Where does it hurt exactly?

Patient- Further down than my kidneys, on the right side.

Doctor- Let's see your back. You don't have any _____and your back is neither_____ nor red.

Patient- Yes, my back seems ok on the outside, but on the inside it's very bad.

Doctor- I will give you an appointment to have an _____taken.

Patient- Well, thank you doctor.

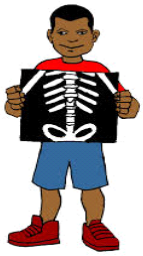
Doctor- You are welcome.

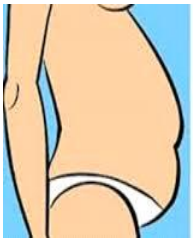
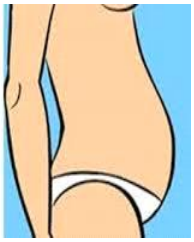
Patient- When will the appointment for X-ray be?

Doctor- The day after tomorrow, at 8.30 am, you must go with an empty_____.

Patient- Thank you very much. Goodbye.

Doctor- Goodbye.

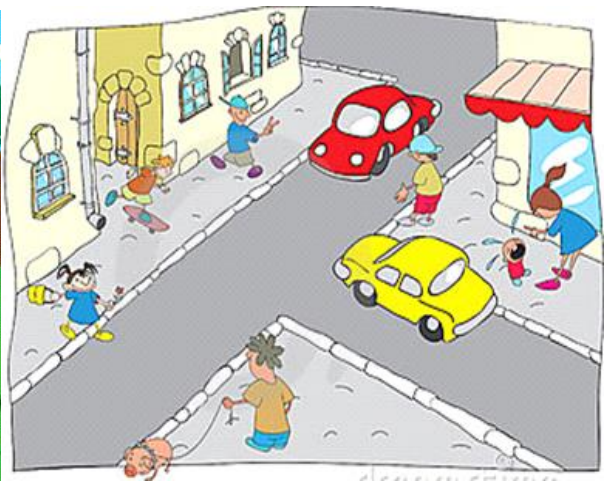
 a.  b.  c.  d.  e.

  f.

backache stomach swollen X-ray headache bruise

Speaking

4. **A. Compare these two pictures. Describe the basic differences between the life in a city and a village.**

B. You are a Slovak student and you meet a Spanish student at the train station. He asks you how to get to the national bank. Give him/her proper directions to get there.

<u>You tell him:</u>
to take the bus and buy the ticket
to walk several metres
to turn left next to the supermarket

<u>He will ask you:</u>
how far the bank is
the number of bus he has to take
the place where he can buy bus ticket

Sources of pictures:
Bruise
https://www.google.sk/search?q=bruise&rlz=1C1FDUM_enSK518SK518&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiZmNzyt5fKAhUDfHIKHVtRADQQ_AUIBygB&biw=2051&bih=965&dpr=0.67#tbs=itp:clipart&tbm=isch&q=bruise&imgrc=wgiIi832yDxOSM%3A
Swollen
https://www.google.sk/search?q=backache&rlz=1C1FDUM_enSK518SK518&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjmqoPWuJfKAhXFfiwKHfrJDP0Q_AUIBygB&biw=2051&bih=965&dpr=0.67#q=backache&tbm=isch&tbs=itp:clipart&imgrc=zouj3NIOte0LtM%3A
Backache
https://www.google.sk/search?q=backache&rlz=1C1FDUM_enSK518SK518&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjmqoPWuJfKAhXFfiwKHfrJDP0Q_AUIBygB&biw=2051&bih=965&dpr=0.67#tbs=itp:clipart&tbm=isch&q=backache&imgrc=ncFcQzlZ3iwn9M%3A
Headache
https://www.google.sk/search?q=backache&rlz=1C1FDUM_enSK518SK518&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjmqoPWuJfKAhXFfiwKHfrJDP0Q_AUIBygB&biw=2051&bih=965&dpr=0.67#tbs=itp:clipart&tbm=isch&q=headache&imgrc=rtpAgKY3OBdxeM%3A
X-ray
https://www.google.sk/search?q=backache&rlz=1C1FDUM_enSK518SK518&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjmqoPWuJfKAhXFfiwKHfrJDP0Q_AUIBygB&biw=2051&bih=965&dpr=0.67#tbs=itp:clipart&tbm=isch&q=x+ray&imgrc=ENJLGg5rXY8JLM%3A
Stomach
https://www.google.sk/search?q=backache&rlz=1C1FDUM_enSK518SK518&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjmqoPWuJfKAhXFfiwKHfrJDP0Q_AUIBygB&biw=2051&bih=965&dpr=0.67#tbs=itp:clipart&tbm=isch&q=stomach+full+empty&imgrc=WpqsXVabLNyNgM%3A
Village
http://gallerily.com/drawing+of+children+playing+in+the+park?image=328254720
City
http://www.dreamstime.com/photos-images/cartoon-summer-city.html#details19525870

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A SPEAKING ROBOT

ŠTEFANKOVÁ Martina

Level: A1 (Beginner)

Time required: 15 minutes

Goals: To improve phonemic awareness of dyslexics (learn to segment word into syllables), to reinforce memory

Background: This activity can be used in the phase of the introduction of new vocabulary.

Materials: magnetic board, magnets, flashcards with coloured pictures and cards with new words written with using a spaced font and bold and with pastel colour background

Preparation:

1. Photocopy pictures of new vocabulary
2. Write new words using a spaced font and bold on papers with pastel colour background
3. Put the pictures on the magnetic board
4. Put new words under these pictures

Procedures:

1. Tell students to observe new pictures
2. Ask students to say the names of pictures in English, if they know
3. Present all pictures pronouncing aloud their names and put new words under these pictures
4. Ask students together to read these words with you as a robot, clapping hands and segmenting words into syllables.
5. Ask dyslexic students to read these words with you as a robot, clapping hands and segmenting words into syllables.
6. Change order of pictures with words and ask all students to read one more time these words without you as a robot, clapping hands and segmenting words into syllables.
7. Read whole words without segmentation, showing pictures. Ask students repeat after you.

(Follow-up): It is possible to realize this technique in reading counting rhyme, out- counting rhyme or short poem.

(Variation): The teacher can write new words with using a spaced font and bold on the blackboard. He/She does not need flashcards.

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AN INITIAL LETTER

ŠTEFANKOVÁ Martina

Level: A1 (Beginner)

Time required: 15 minutes

Goals: To improve phonemic awareness of dyslexics (distinguish an initial letter in words), to reinforce memory and analogy thinking

Background: This activity can be used in the phase of fixation or revision of new vocabulary.

Materials: coloured pictures of food and drink, plastalina

Preparation:

1. Prepare and photocopy a list of pictures of food and drink
2. Give the list of pictures to every pupil in the class
3. Give a piece of plastalina to every pupil in the class

Procedures:

1. Tell students to observe pictures, name them silently, compare words and circle those beginning with the same letter
2. Ask students to make this initial letter from plastalina
3. Check your students.

(Variation): The teacher can to realize this activity with flashcards with different coloured letters from the alphabet. Students choose those correct.

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DRAW BY HEART

ŠTEFANKOVÁ Martina

Level: A1 (Beginner)

Time required: 10 minutes

Goals: To improve short- term memory and to reinforce fine motor-skills

Background: This activity can be used in the phase of the motivation during English lesson.

Materials: The coloured list of food and drink, white sheets of paper, crayons

Preparation:

1. Photocopy the list of food and drink (6-8 items)
2. Give one photocopy and one white sheet of paper to every pupil in the class

Procedures:

1. Tell students to observe pictures during 3 minutes
2. Ask students to turn the list and draw pictures at the white sheet of paper respecting the same order and using the same colours
3. When finished, ask students to turn the list and to compare it with their drawings
4. Question students where they did a mistake

(Follow-up): It is possible to realize this technique teaching different topics (e.g. means of the transport, clothes...)

(Variation): The teacher can use real food and drink; put them on the desk, after 3 minutes observation put them to the bag and ask a student to order them according to the teacher´s order. When finished, other students check the order and comment it.

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GUESS WHAT IT IS

ŠTEFANKOVÁ Martina

Level: A1 (Beginner)

Time required: 10 minutes

Goals: To create new associations, to improve memory, to motivate

Background: This activity can be used in the phase of the motivation.

Materials: apple, pepper, rice, cucumber, sugar, scarf

Preparation:

1. Put the food into the box (for the students can´t see the food)
2. Put the scarf around the eyes of the student

Procedures:

1. Tell students to pay attention
2. Ask one student- volunteer to go to the blackboard
3. Put the scarf around the eyes of the student
4. Pass your student an apple and ask him to touch, smell and taste it
5. Ask student to identify what kind of food it is
6. When guessed, pass him/ her the next food
7. In the final phase put him/her off the scarf and ask the student to name the food in the box

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ACTIVITIES LEVEL B1 – B2

EXCUSES

DATKO Jural

Level: B1 (Intermediate)

Time required: 20 minutes

Goals: To practise sentences with a future meaning; to practise using *when*, *as soon as*, *until*, *after*, *while*, *before* in sentences

Background: This activity has been used in my teaching practice at a secondary school.

Materials: printed pictures (1, 2, 3, 4)

Preparation:

1. Print and cut out the pictures from the appendices section.
2. Revise the use of *when*, *as soon as*, *until*, *after*, *while*, *before*.

Procedures:

1. Tell students to form four groups (ideally of 4 – 5 people).
2. Distribute pictures (each group receives one of the four pictures). Make sure that students don't look at them before the task is explained.
3. Explain the task: Each picture contains a question and group members have to come up with as many answers (excuses) as possible. Their excuses must contain *when*, *as soon as*, *until*, *after*, *while*, or *before* (e.g. Q: When are you going to tidy your room? A (E): I won't do it *until* you give me 10 euro; or I'll do it *while* I'm watching this movie.).
4. Tell students to look at the pictures and give them some time to think of suitable answers. They should write them down.
5. Check the answers (excuses) with the whole class.

Follow-up: Students can vote for the funniest or the most/least believable excuse.

Appendices: The pictures were retrieved from the Internet and modified using MS Paint.

a.) Pic. 1 – original available at: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-2997256/I-cleaned-son-s-room-Pringles-tube-URINE-worst-items-discovered-teenager-s-bedroom-revealed-Mumsnet.html>

b.) Pic. 2 – original available at: <http://www.coolneeds.com/son-surprise-father-with-new-home/>

c.) Pic. 3 – original available at: <http://lvcounseling.com/admin/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/mother_daughter_conflict_021205_1807_0024_lsls.jpg>

d.) Pic. 4 – original available at: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3224954/School-sent-13-year-old-girl-home-leopard-print-hair-cut.html>

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PEER REVIEW AS A UNIVERSAL ASSESSMENT TECHNIQUE

KOROVINA Irina

Peer review is students' evaluation of each other's work, papers, projects, etc. Students can evaluate both oral and written assignments. They can either grade papers or give feedback in various forms (comments, rubrics, recommendations, etc.). Peer review assignments are rather diverse.

ACTIVITY 1

Level: B1- B2 (Intermediate / Upper-Intermediate)

Time required: 1 hour

Goals: to practice the up-to-date communicative approach in teaching foreign languages

Background: The peer review technique is used within the course *Modern Techniques of Teaching Foreign Languages,* which is taught to the students of the major *Teaching Foreign Languages*. The students' background knowledge has to include the ways of implementing the communicative approach while mastering English grammar and vocabulary. The students have to know what assignments they can use within the communicative approach, and what order of the tasks is more effective (this material is covered by the teacher in the lectures preceding the peer review activity).

Materials: obligatory: blackboard, chalk, handouts
optional: computer, projector, presentations (if necessary)

Preparation:

3. Tell 2 students to prepare mini-classes of English (or any other foreign language) (20 min each). One class is supposed to be devoted to a new grammar topic, whereas the second one is to be aimed at mastering a number of new vocabulary items (e.g. under the common topic: *Food, Hobbies, New Technologies,* etc.). The choice of topics is up to the students. The students are given a choice of the educational levels, at which their classes are supposed to be given: primary school, secondary school, high school, the university level.
4. Explain to these two students that they have to implement all their knowledge of the communicative approach techniques while preparing the mini-classes. They are to decide on the topic of the class and choose the educational level. After that they have to make up tasks and place them in the most effective order (from the simplest one up to the most difficult one). They prepare the plans of the classes at home. The students prepare handouts for the classes.

The example of the plan template:

Stages	*Minutes*	*Material*	*Teacher's Actions*	*Students' Actions*
Warm-up				
…				

Procedures:

4. Role play: In class the two students fulfill the role of "teachers". They conduct their classes, during which their groupmates fulfill the role of "students". (40 min)
5. After the role play all the students do the peer review task: they are to assess their peers' classes, according to the following criteria:

- if the class matches the chosen educational level;
- if the order of the tasks is logical and effective;
- if the tasks are varied;
- if the communicative approach is used;
- if all "the students" were involved into the in-class activities.

The peer review activity is organized in the form of discussion. The teacher controls the discussion, by asking leading questions and summarizing the key points.

(Follow-up): Taking into account the peers' comments (the outcome of the peer review activity), the students who fulfilled the role of "teachers" have a chance to improve their plans of classes.

(Variation): In case of a lack of time, the teacher can give the peer review assignment as a home task (in the written form). The example of the home task assignment:

Criteria	Class 1	Class 2
1. if the class matches the chosen educational level		
2. if the order of the tasks is logical and effective		
3. if the tasks are varied		
4. if the communicative approach is used		
5. if all "the students" were involved into the in-class activities		

ACTIVITY 2

Level: B1 Upper-Intermediate

Time required: 45 minutes

Goals: to develop writing skills in English (or any other foreign language)

Background: The peer review technique is used within the course *Basic Academic Writing Skills,* which is taught to the students of the majors *Teaching Foreign Languages, Linguistics, Translation,* etc. The students' background knowledge has to include the paragraph structure and the text structure. The students have to know how to write effective sentences in the foreign language, how to support ideas with arguments, and how to make citations in a text.

Materials: students' papers (essays), handouts

Preparation:

- At home the students write an essay on one of the following topics: *Can generation gap be bridged? / Euthanasia: for and against*. Before writing the essay the students have to read several texts devoted to the problem in the topic. The students are to include several citations from the texts into the essays.
- The students are to bring the essays in class.

Procedures:

1. In class the students swap the essays and do the peer review task: they are to assess the peer's essay according to the following rubrics:

- grammar (absolutely clear / clear enough / vague / unclear)
- vocabulary (absolutely clear / clear enough / vague / unclear)
- sentence structure (length, word order, etc.)
- paragraph structure (size, logic, the main idea / arguments, etc.)
- text structure (paragraphs, logic, introduction, conclusion, etc.)
- style (appropriate / inappropriate)

They give the result of the assessment either in the written form or in the form of discussion.

2. Taking into account the peers' comments (the outcome of the peer review activity), the students have to improve their essays (home task).

Peer review can be used in an endless number of assignments, which allows the teacher to apply this method within almost any course. In each particular course the form of peer review turns out to be unique, which can be considered one of the advantages of this method.

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CINDERELLA STOR*IES*

PUSCHENREITEROVÁ Jana

Level: B1 (Intermediate) and above

Time required: 45 minutes

Goals: To develop speaking, to develop reading for gist

Background: I used this activity while teaching English at a secondary vocational school since it is a great speaking-oriented activity and I also used it within extra-curricular activities.

Materials: photocopies of the text "Cinderella Story" (Appendix 1); a word cloud created from the text "Cinderella Story"; a computer, a projector and a projection screen; speakers

Preparation:

1. Photocopy and cut up the text "Cinderella Story" (each paragraph should be on a separate piece of paper).
2. Use the webpage www.wordle.net to create a word cloud from the text, download the word cloud as a .png file (or use Appendix 2); and print enough copies for each student.

Procedures:

1. *Do not tell the students the topic of the lesson – they are going to find it out*. Distribute the copies of the word cloud. Open the word cloud and show it on the projection screen; ask the students to identify the topic of the lesson encapsulated in the word cloud, and then discuss the meanings of the unknown words from the word cloud (students can write the meanings to their copies of the word cloud). (5minutes)
2. Explain to the students that they are going to read the original Cinderella fairy tale to, then, watch the modern version of this fairy tale for comparative purposes.
3. Tell the students the instructions at first and then distribute cut-off pieces of paper with the text "The Cinderella Story". The task is to arrange the story into correct order (in pairs) and read it carefully (individually). Check this task with the whole class asking individual students to read the pieces of the fairy tale one by one, in the correct order. (15 minutes)
4. Play the following video entitled "*A Cinderella Story (2004) Official Trailer"* about the "modern Cinderella" twice: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fkymvwd02xQ> and ask students to watch it carefully (5 minutes)
5. Students are working in pairs and answering questions from the handout (see Appendix 3) (10 minutes) - while doing this activity, the teacher is monitoring the class and helping students.
6. Discuss the differences between the original and modern version of the Cinderella story in a whole class discussion. (10 minutes)

Follow-up: Students use their smartphones and computers to create a short, funny, either modern or original, creative version of the Cinderella story as a homework project.

Appendix 1 - The Cinderella Story
(Text retrieved from < http://shortstoriesshort.com/story/cinderella-beautiful-girl/>)

Cinderella –Beautiful Girl

Once upon a time, there was a beautiful girl named Cinderella. She lived with her wicked stepmother and two stepsisters.

They treated Cinderella very badly. One day, they were invited for a grand ball in the king's palace.

But Cinderella's stepmother would not let her go. Cinderella was made to sew new party gowns for her stepmother and stepsisters, and curl their hair. They then went to the ball, leaving Cinderella alone at home.

Cinderella felt very sad and began to cry. Suddenly, a fairy godmother appeared and said, "Don't cry, Cinderella! I will send you to the ball!"

But Cinderella was sad. She said, "I don't have a gown to wear for the ball!" The fairy godmother waved her magic wand and changed Cinderella's old clothes into a beautiful new gown!

The fairy godmother then touched Cinderella's feet with the magic wand. And immediately she had beautiful glass slippers! "How will I go to the grand ball?" asked Cinderella.

The fairy godmother found six mice playing near a pumpkin, in the kitchen. She touched them with her magic wand and the mice became four shiny black horses and two coachmen and the pumpkin turned into a golden coach.

Cinderella was overjoyed and set off for the ball in the coach drawn by the six black horses. Before leaving, the fairy godmother said, "Cinderella, this magic will only last until midnight! You must reach home by then!"

When Cinderella entered the palace, everybody was struck by her beauty. Nobody, not even Cinderella's stepmother or stepsisters, knew who she really was in her pretty clothes and shoes.

The handsome prince also saw her and fell in love with Cinderella. He went to her and asked, "Do you want to dance?" And Cinderella said, "Yes!" The prince danced with her all night and nobody recognized the beautiful dancer.

Cinderella was so happy dancing with the prince that she almost forgot what the fairy godmother had said. At the last moment, Cinderella remembered her fairy godmother's words

and she rushed to go home. “Oh! I must go!” she cried and ran out of the palace. One of her glass slippers came off but Cinderella did not turn back for it.

She reached home just as the clock struck twelve. Her coach turned back into a pumpkin, the horses into mice and her fine ball gown into rags.

Her stepmother and stepsisters reached home shortly after that. They were talking about the beautiful lady who had been dancing with the prince.

The prince had fallen in love with Cinderella and wanted to find out who the beautiful girl was, but he did not even know her name.

He found the glass slipper that had come off Cinderella’s foot as she ran home. The prince said, “I will find her. The lady whose foot fits this slipper will be the one I marry!”

The next day, the prince and his servants took the glass slipper and went to all the houses in the kingdom. They wanted to find the lady whose feet would fit in the slipper.

All the women in the kingdom tried the slipper but it would not fit any of them. Cinderella’s stepsisters also tried on the little glass slipper.

They tried to squeeze their feet and push hard into the slipper, but the servant was afraid the slipper would break.

Cinderella’s stepmother would not let her try the slipper on, but the prince saw her and said, “Let her also try on the slipper!”

The slipper fit her perfectly. The prince recognized her from the ball. He married Cinderella and together they lived happily ever after.

Appendix 2 - A word cloud based on “**The Cinderella Story**” **text** (created with the help of www.wordle.net)

Appendix 3 - A handout for students

Instructions: Work in pairs. Fill in the table and answer the following questions in order to compare the two versions of the Cinderella story (the original one and its modern equivalent)

	"Original story" (text)	**"Modern story" (movie)**
1 Who were the members of the Cinderella's family?		
2 What were the responsibilities of Cinderella at home?		
3 What was the reason Cinderella could not go for the ball?		
4 Who was Cinderella's Fairy Godmother and what did she do for her?		
5 Was there any contact with Prince Charming before the ball? If yes, what kind of contact?		
6 Why did Cinderella have to leave the ball so early?		
7 What did Cinderella loose at the ball and who found it?		
8 How did Prince Charming try to find his secret love?		
9 How did the story end? (If you do not know the ending, try to present your opinion :)		

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HOW DOES THE SINGER FEEL?

SORÁDOVÁ Daniela

Level: B1/B2

Time required: 10-15 minutes (depending on the length of the song)

Goals: To practise listening comprehension and vocabulary describing people´s emotions.

Background: Listening activity focusing on vocabulary describing people´s emotions. The activity should be motivational, making students feel relaxed.

Materials: PC, internet access (optional), any gadget playing music

Preparation:

1. Find the suitable song describing the feelings of the singer.
2. Find the right lyrics of the song on the internet and check if the lyrics are the same as in the played song (on different web pages, the lyrics may vary).
3. Delete those words that are describing singer´s emotions, or indicating their emotions. Delete at least every sixth word, so that students are able to fill in the missing gaps.
4. Do not make the activity too difficult.
5. Copy the prepared material for each student or for a pair of students.

Procedures:

1. Tell students to listen to the song (you may play the music video as well). You may give a background information about the singer to inspire learners.
2. Ask learners if they liked the song. Try to find out if the students were able to understand the main message of the song.
3. Distribute the lyrics.
4. Read the lyrics together and let the students guess what might be filled in the missing gaps.
5. Listen to the song again and ask students to fill in the missing lyrics.
6. If necessary, play the song again.
7. Check the answers together.
8. If there is a part that no one could guess, play the part of the song again, and ask students what the heard. It may be even the part of the word, or just a sound they heard. Help them to guess the word.

Follow-up:

- Ask the students to describe the words they filled in. Firstly, they should try in English. Later, translate, if necessary.
- Ask students if they ever felt like the singer presented in the song.
  - Have you ever found yourself in the similar situation?
  - How did you feel?
  - What did you do?

- This listening activity may be used as the motivational part for writing a story about the learner´s experience; practising past tenses.
  - Write about the situation as the singer was describing in the song.
    - Have you ever found yourself in the similar situation?
    - How did you feel?
    - What did you do?

Variation:

- If there is no PC in the classroom, play the song using CD/MP3/MP4 player or the phone connected to loudspeaker.
- If there is no printer, use the overhead projector (OHP).
- If there is no PC or OHP, write only the phrases with missing lyrics on the white/black board. In this case, it is a harder activity, because learners cannot skim the whole lyrics, but the need to listen to the beginning of the phrase in order to fill in lyrics in the right place.

For example:
Alicia Cara- Here

Full text:
I´m sorry if seen uninterested,
Or I´m not listening or I´m indifferent.
Truly, I ain´t got no business here.
But since my friends are here
I just came to kick it, but really
I would rather be at home all by myself not in this room
with people who don´t care about my well-being.
I don´t dance, don´t ask, I don´t need a boyfriend. So you can go back, please enjoy your party. ...

Written on the board:
I´m sorry if seen ……..,
Or I´m not listening or I´m …… .
I would rather be at home …… not in this room

with people who don´t care about my …… .

TIP: To find current popular songs, go to:

- http://www.billboard.com/charts/hot-100
- http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio1/chart/singles

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DREAM JOBS: A COMMUNICATION CAROUSEL

TOLAND Sean H.

Level: B1 (Pre-intermediate +)

Class Time required: 60 - 90 minutes

Preparation time: 20 minutes

Goals:

- Expand knowledge of career/employment vocabulary
- Enhance the learners' awareness of authentic language
- Improve reading, writing, and communicative skills
- Generate excitement and promote cooperation

Background: The development of new types of information and communications technologies (ICTs) and the forces of globalization have had a profound impact on the field of English language education (Ince, 2014; Liyanage, Walker, & Singh, 2014). Nowadays, the ability to speak in public and utilize ICTs to research information are seen to be increasing important skills in preparing English-language learners (ELLs) for future careers in the global economy. In classrooms all over the world, English as a Foreign Language (EFL) educators are constantly searching for innovative lesson ideas that will not only inspire learners, but also improve their communicative and technological competencies. The lesson plan that follows interweaves these three elements into an enjoyable and practical activity that teachers can use across a wide range of instructional contexts.

Many business English textbooks (i.e., *Market leader - pre-intermediate*) have career units that highlight résumés or curriculum vitaes (CVs), cover letters and vocabulary associated with job interviews. Although a typical textbook employment unit can be a valuable resource for ELLs, it is often filled with lackluster cookie-cutter exercises that do not require students to think outside the proverbial box. This activity will supplement a ready-made career lesson by providing learners with the opportunity to research and discuss a variety of dream occupations with their classmates. In addition, it will ignite the students' creative fires when they design their own unique characters and talk about them during a role-play activity. Dundar (2013) argued that role-play is a "worthwhile learning experience" for foreign language learners because it offers them a forum to interact with their peers and fosters their communicative abilities and understanding (p. 1425). On a similar note, Shrum & Glisan (2000) contended that role-playing activities inject authentic language situations into a classroom and can lead to a deeper cultural awareness.

The role-play activity highlighted in this paper requires learners to take on the dual roles of job applicant and interviewer. The interviewee creates a CV for a character working in a 'dream' occupation and discusses this information during a speed interview session. The interviewer, who adopts the persona of a marketing department manager, listens carefully and asks the applicant a variety of questions. After the interviews, the marketing manager meets with the other members of the hiring committee to discuss the candidates and select a suitable individual to appear in a new advertising campaign. This speed interview role-play not only

generates excitement in an EFL classroom, it also introduces new vocabulary and gives the students a chance to practice their writing skills. However, the most important element in this activity is that it provides learners with an opportunity to utilize authentic language in a realistic context.

Materials: mobile devices; whiteboard/blackboard; scotch tape; CV template handout; dream job images; speed interview handout; and stopwatch/timer.

Preparation:

1. Before class, the instructor will compile a list of dream jobs. A search on the Google search engine conducted on September 6, 2015 generated 108,000,000 results with the following words: 'list + dream jobs'. The teacher must visit a few sites (i.e., The Telegraph, 2015) and write down fifteen to thirty 'dream' jobs. Here is an example list:

    1) NPO (non-profit organization) worker; 2) Winemaker; 3) Novelist (author); 4) Music producer; 5) Actor; 6) Wildlife photographer; 7) Fashion designer; 8) Singer / musician; 9) Chocolatier; 10) Professional baseball player / professional athlete; 11) Formula One race car driver; 12) Wedding planner; 13) Movie director; 14) Sports announcer; 15) Astronaut; 16) Artist; 17) Pilot; 18) Reporter; 19) Fitness trainer; 20) Secret agent (spy); 21) Ice cream taster (food scientist); 22) Video game tester; 23) Scientist; 24) Magician; 25) Princess; 26) Scuba diving instructor; 27) Travel blogger (travel writer); 28) Animator; 29) DJ; 30) Flight attendant

2. Go to a photo sharing website (i.e., *Foter*; *Google images*) and print out pictures of ten or more 'dream' occupations from your list (Appendix A). Print each image on an A4 paper.
3. Print out the lesson handouts (Appendix B – Appendix C).
4. Reconfigure the desks in the classroom into a long line. The interviewees will sit on one side and the managers on the other. This logistical manoeuvre creates space so that students can visit other groups at the beginning of the activity and easily change partners during the speed interview session.

Procedures:

1. Divide the class into small teams of three to four students. Provide each group with two images.
2. The teams work together to identify the occupations. Afterwards, the learners use their personal mobile devices to research information about each job (i.e., education required; salary; duties; etc.). The students discuss their findings and write down three things they learned about each job. Encourage the learners to make notes in point form with their own words. Inform the students that they are not allowed to copy any sentences from websites.
3. The teams rotate around the classroom visiting other groups. Each team will make a brief report about the 'dream' jobs they researched.
4. Bring the groups together. The students tape the pictures to the board and write down the name of the occupation above each image. The groups must also brainstorm other dream jobs and write them on the board.
5. The students go to the board and circle a job they find interesting. The activity works best if a number of different occupations are selected.
6. Provide each of the learners with a CV template (Appendix B).

7. Give the learners five minutes to think about an ORIGINAL character. They create a CV for their character on the template. The students must also find an image of the dream job they selected on their smartphone/tablet. They will need the image during the speed interview session.
8. Provide the leaners with a set amount of time to complete their CVs.
9. The students report back to their original team to brainstorm possible interview questions. Each group must create two interview questions and write them on the board.
10. The instructor provides corrective feedback and eliminates any duplicate or superfluous questions.
11. The students are provided with the 'Speed Interview Handout' (Appendix C).
12. The learners must select five questions of their choosing from the board and write them in the box (Part A) on the handout.
13. Explain to the class how the speed interview activity works. The class is divided into two groups: interviewees and hiring committee managers.
    - The interviewees will have 3 minutes to introduce themselves, highlight their skills and answer questions from the managers. They will also use their mobile device to show the manager an image of their job (i.e., animator) at the begining of the interview.
    - The manager will shake hands with the job applicant, listen, and ask not only the prepared interview questions (Part A), but also follow-up questions.
    - At exactly 3 minutes, the instructor will signal it's time to change (i.e., flick the lights; ring a bell). The interviewees must stand up and go to the next manager. The hiring committee members remained seated and will make brief notes on the handout (Part B) after each interview.
    - (Note: It is important for the instructor to model the two roles with a student volunteer before the activity commences. Emphasize the fact that this is a communicative role-play activity NOT a reading exercise.)
14. After five interviews, the managers will get together for a five-minute meeting to discuss the best candidates for the job. Each manager will select one person to get the position (Part C).
15. The interviewers and job candidates change roles. The speed interview process is repeated.
16. When all of the interviews are completed, the learners get in a small group. They must make a report about the person they would like to hire and the reasons behind their decision (Part C).

Follow-up:

1. More advanced leaners can write a cover letter with their CV.

Variation:

1. This activity can be modified for different English proficiency levels. For example, lower level groups might need more time to create their CV.

2. The teacher can write all of the different 'dream jobs' on the board at the start of the class. Lower level learners can match their picture to one of the job titles on the board. This will also make it easier for students to research various occupations on their mobile devices.

3. The time for the speed interview session can be extended. For example, the students can partake in eight interviews instead of five.
4. The students can also research a famous person (i.e., professional soccer player; musician) who has a 'dream job'. They can create a CV and imagine they are the celebrity during the speed interview activity.
5. The category 'dream jobs' can be substituted with 'dirty and dangerous occupations' or 'unusual jobs' (i.e., Toland, 2014).
6. The learners can also create their own CVs and use it during the speed interview activity.

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SINGING WITH THE BEATLES

VÍT Marek and ZITKOVÁ Helena

Level: B1-B2 (Intermediate – Upper-Intermediate)

Time required: 45 minutes

Goals: The students will be able to sing the song Norwegian Wood by the Beatles with correct pronunciation and remember the lyrics. They will understand the meaning of the song and they will be able to summarize the story of the song using their own words.

Background: There is great potential in using music, songs in particular, in English language lessons. We are persuaded that songs may work as an effective tool when teaching English to develop all the aspects of Communicative Language Competence (CLC), i.e. Linguistic, Sociolinguistic and Pragmatic according to CEFR (2001). This lesson focuses mainly on phonological, lexical, semantic and functional aspects of CLC. The activities cover all four skills (listening, reading, speaking and writing) as well as two language components (pronunciation and vocabulary). Apart from that, it is important for the learners to remember the lyrics by heart, because we believe that a song serves as a study material that will stay in their heads long after the end of the class. Thanks to this, they will practice pronunciation features, vocabulary, grammar patterns, chunks of language etc. The song can also function as a reference point for future classes (e.g. when teaching new grammar, pronunciation features etc.)

Materials:

sets of cut-up illustrations (appendix A)
lyric sheets with illustrations (appendix B)
electronic or printed form of the lyrics, ppt or doc with deleted parts (appendix C)
audio recording (CD or YouTube) or performed by the teacher
a roll of toilet paper
sticky notes
dictionaries (printed or electronic – smartphones etc.)

Preparation:

1. Photocopy and cut up illustrations (appendix A) – one set per pair or group
2. Photocopy the lyric sheet (appendix B) – one copy per student
3. Optional: learn how to play and sing the song

Procedures:

PRE-LISTENING PART (5 minutes)

1. Ask the students to have a look at and discuss the illustrations and in pairs/groups try to arrange the pictures to make a story.
2. Ask one of each pair/group to share the story with the others.

LISTENING PART (3-5 minutes)

3. Ask the students to listen to the song and re-arrange the pictures accordingly.
4. Play (or perform) the song.
5. Check the story by asking one of the students to tell it. (Allow discussion if necessary.)

TEACHING THE SONG - part A (10 minutes)

6. Distribute the lyric sheets (appendix B)
7. Read the lyrics out loud, line by line, explain important pronunciation features (such as linking, strong/weak syllables, word stress, problematic sounds etc.) and ask the students to repeat. After each line has been repeated acceptably, sing it (with the students).
8. Sing the whole song.

LOOKING FOR THE MEANING - part A (4-5 minutes)

9. Tell the students to read the lyrics and underline unknown words or phrases. Ask them to discuss the underlined words in pairs/groups and look up their meaning in the dictionary if necessary.

TEACHING THE SONG - part B (5 minutes)

10. Use the first page of the deleted version of the lyric sheet (appendix C) and sing the song with the students.
11. Use the second page of the deleted version of the lyric sheet (appendix C) and sing the song with the students.

LOOKING FOR THE MEANING - part B (13 minutes)

12. Divide the students into groups where there are only boys or only girls in each group.
13. Ask the students to discuss what the song is about from their own perspective. (Suggest questions such as: Why did she invite him home? How did he feel? How did she feel? Why did he sleep in the bath? What happened in the morning? etc.)
14. Have one representative of each group briefly (in three sentences) summarize what they agreed on.
15. Tell the students that in the morning, the girl left the boy a short note on the fridge and the boy left the girl a note written on toilet paper in the bathroom. Ask them to think about what might have been in the notes and have the girls write a message on the sticky note and boys on the toilet paper.
16. Ask them to display the notes on the class notice board or wall.

TEACHING THE SONG - part C (2 minutes)

17. Sing the song one last time, this time only using the illustrations.

Follow-up:

I. ROLEPLAY (15 minutes)

1. Brainstorming conversation topics - ask the students to come up with topics the boy and the girl might have talked about when they “talked until two”.
2. Have the students work in pairs, pretend to be that couple from the song and talk about some of the topics the class came up with.

II. WRITING AN EMAIL / A LETTER TO A FRIEND

1. Tell the students to think about the story from the boy's or the girl's perspective and write a letter or an e-mail to a good friend of theirs about what happened and how they felt about it (about 100 words if done in class, up to 200 words if done as homework)
2. Display their work in class and let the students read each other's letters.
3. (If you want students to give peer feedback, you together with your students should create a set of criteria prior to the activity.)

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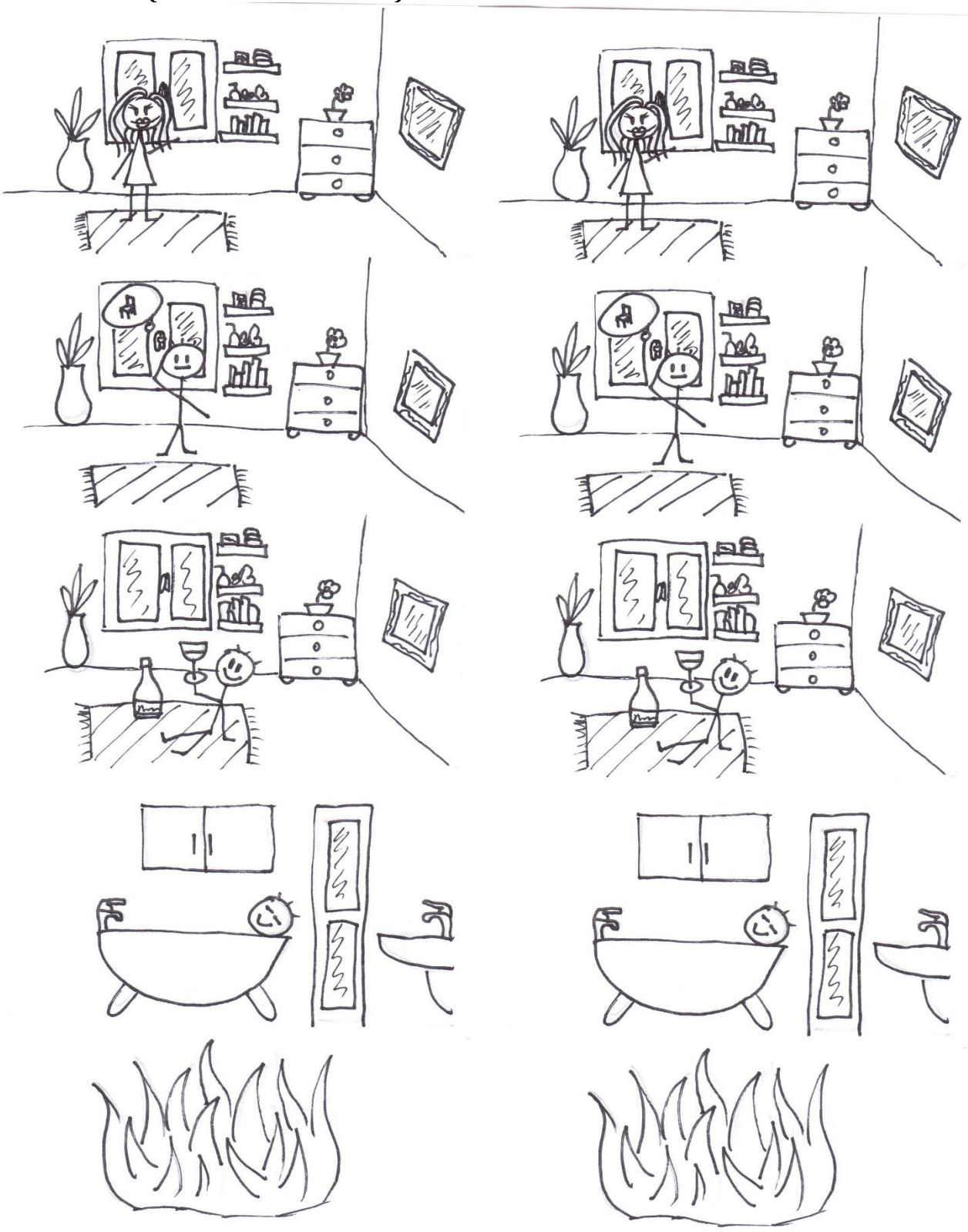
APPENDIX A (2 sets of illustrations)



APPENDIX B (lyric sheet with illustrations)

The Beatles – Norwegian Wood

I once had a girl, or should I say, she once had me
She showed me her room, isn't it good Norwegian wood?

She asked me to stay and she told me to sit anywhere
So I looked around and I noticed there wasn't a chair

I sat on the rug, biding my time, drinking her wine
We talked until two and then she said, "It's time for bed."

She told me she worked in the morning and started to laugh
I told her I didn't and crawled off to sleep in the bath

And when I awoke I was alone, this bird had flown
So I lit a fire, isn't it good Norwegian wood?

APPENDIX C (lyrics with deleted parts)

I once had a girl, or should I say ……
She showed me her room, isn't it good, ……..

She asked me to stay and she told me ……..
So I looked around and I noticed ……..

I sat on the rug, biding my time, ……..
We talked until two and then she said, ……..

She told me she worked in the morning ……..
I told her I didn't and crawled off ……..

And when I awoke I was alone, ……..
So I lit a fire, isn't it good, ……..

I once had a girl, ……..
She showed me her room, ……..

She asked me to stay ……..
So I looked around ……..

I sat on the rug, ……..
We talked until two ……..

She told me ……..
I told her I didn't ……..

And when I awoke ……..
So I lit a fire, ……..

ACTIVITIES LEVEL C1

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES IN ESP: INTEGRATED SKILLS PRACTICE IN CLASS AND ONLINE

AMOCHKINA Elena

Level: C1 (Advanced)
The minimum level required for the activity is Intermediate (B1-B2), while there is no upper limit. The higher the level of the students, the more complicated topic can be taken up and the more profound the discussion will be. However, it is preferable that the group is homogeneous in terms of level; this would make the productive and perceptive practice most efficient for all the students. It is also essential that whatever the level of linguistic competence, the students should be instructed to focus on both the content and the language.

Time required: The time can vary depending on the length of the class, the number of students, the complexity of the topic, etc. Generally, one full class can be advisable for a face-to-face debate. A benefit of moving online is that the time for preparation and practice in this case is virtually unlimited (it is limited only by the personal wish and the workload of the participants). On the one hand, doing this activity online by filming each round of the debate and discussing the arguments of the teams in comments to the video clip saves a lot of time in class, on the other - it requires more time and effort from the students outside classroom.

Goals: The main goal of the activity is integrated skills development. In particular it aims to shift the focus of the students' attention from learning language as an ultimate goal to using language for effective communication. The activity also aims to develop rhetoric skills and the ability to speak convincingly on professional topics. It also provides great motivation for the students to listen actively, i.e. to try to grasp the idea of the interlocutor and instantly react to it. On the other hand, while speaking, the students learn to focus on the audience, which requires them to look for feedback, to make sure that their ideas are well comprehended and the speech in general produces the desired impact. To sum it up, the final goal of using the debates technique in teaching English for Specific Purposes is to boost communication on the topics of professional interest.

Materials: A face-to-face debate in class does not require any special materials. However it might be useful to arrange the space so that the two competing teams can face each other and the jury sit separately and have a good view of all the speakers.
As for the online debate, all the participants, including the teacher and the jurors must have internet access and at least one camera or smartphone or tablet with a camera for each of the competing teams. The students are supposed to be able to meet outside classroom for joint discussion and filming.

Background: Although the activity can easily be adapted to a wide variety of teaching contexts, the description in this article will rely on the practice of conducting parliamentary debates in groups of second year university students that study law and have 6 hours of English per week as part of their curriculum. These classes include general, academic and legal English and are meant to introduce law students to the language of professional communication. There are normally about 10-15 students in a group with approximately the same level of English.

Preparation: While no special preparation is needed, the students may be given the topic in advance, so that they can think it over, formulate their arguments, review or look up the relevant vocabulary and divide into teams.

Procedure:

1. Preliminary stage - introduction of the activity

Before the debate actually begins, it might be very helpful to discuss the cultural context with the students. Ask the students whether any of them have participated in or watched parliamentary debates in their native language and whether they know what it is. If some of the students are familiar with the game, they can tell the others about their experience. If not, the teacher can explain that it is a popular academic event in English-speaking countries, which, despite its name, has nothing to do with the debates in Parliament. It can be described as a team game with usually two students on each side (referred to as "Government" and "Opposition") debating a currently important issue. They are limited in time and must convince the judge (or "Speaker") that their position is right. There are usually three rounds (several minutes each), in which the teams take turns to introduce their position, suggest their arguments and rebut. The team that appears to be more convincing wins the game. The game has become so popular in the UK and the US that there are national associations of parliamentary debates that organize the events and elaborate detailed rules. These rules vary from place to place, examples can be found at the websites of National Parliamentary Debate Association (http://www.parlidebate.org; American Style) or World Universities Debating Championship (http://www.wudc.info/the-championships/rules-1; British style). However, for our purposes it is best to adopt simplified rules that can easily be altered to suit each particular group in what concerns the number of speakers, the time allocated for preparation and speeches and the method of adjudicating. These rules should be agreed upon with the students before the debate begins. Some tentative rules and procedure are suggested below.

2. Face-to-face debate

Choose and formulate a topic that all the students are likely to be interested in and competent to discuss. It can arise from the recent discussions in class, prepared by the teacher in advance or suggested by the students. If it is an ESP class, the topic should be related to the corresponding subject area, for example, a group of law students that were studying British parliamentary system at that moment took up the following topic: "The House of Lords should be abolished as an anachronism"; another law school group, where several students were interested in intellectual property law, debated on the topic "Downloading illegally distributed copyrighted materials from the internet should be punished". The topic for the debate must be formulated as a proposition, which will be supported by the Government team and opposed by the Opposition team. It should be engaging and have no obvious answer, so that both sides have equal chances to win.

Once the topic is chosen, let the students divide into the Government, the Opposition and the Jury and give them 15 minutes to distribute the roles and discuss the strategy. After that the debate begins. The teams take turns in three rounds of the debate and each speaker has 3 minutes. The first speaker from the Government presents their case and supports it with the bulk of their arguments, leaving several arguments for the second speaker. Then the first speaker from the Opposition introduces their position in the same way. The second speakers should concentrate on the rebuttal and may introduce some new arguments to develop and support their own position. The third speakers rebut and then finish by summarizing the position of their respective teams; no new arguments can be introduced at this point. The jury can ask each team a question after each round, but this part should not be too long. The teams

also have a chance to ask each other questions during the rebuttal. After the debate has finished the impartial Jury must decide which team wins. The criteria include the persuasive impact and the quality of the language. Give the Jury two minutes to come to a unified decision and discuss the reasons. Then ask the Jury to announce their decision and to analyze what they liked and disliked about the speeches. Discuss how the performance of each speaker could be improved and what linguistic and extra-linguistic means could be used to make the speech more convincing. If the students liked the experience and see what they could improve, suggest an online debate.

3. Online debate
Choose a more complicated topic, divide the group into two teams (the teams can be bigger) and, if it is possible, ask another group to act as an impartial jury. Ask the students to start one new page in Facebook or another social network that they use. The rules remain basically the same, but this time the students will have one week for each round of the debate and will film short videos with themselves speaking. Each week they must upload a 3- minute video with their Introductory statement (week 1), Rebuttal (week 2) and Summary (week 3). They are also supposed to watch the video of their competitors, so that they can respond to it. The Jury watch both videos, leave comments and ask questions in the comments box to each video clip during the week; members of the corresponding team must respond to those questions by posting full and profound answers in the comments to the video. The teacher and the teams can also post questions. The purpose is to provoke vigorous written discussion in the comments to the videos during the week. The teacher should closely monitor the debate and discussions in the comments, analyze the mistakes and suggest improvements. Alternatively, a brief analysis of the progress and the mistakes could be done in class at the end of each week. At the end of the final week the Jury must 'vote'. The 'voting' can take the following form: each member of the Jury posts a comment where they explain who, in their opinion, should win and why. Count the votes, announce the winner and organize an awarding ceremony! After that ask the students to analyze their experience once again and share their impressions.

Variation: It must be noted specially that this article suggests only a tentative procedure of the activity, because the rules here are very flexible and can be altered each time to fit a particular situation.

Outcome: Participating in a debate the students learn a number of useful communicative skills: they learn to speak as a team and support each other, to focus on the audience rather than on their own prepared materials, to listen to the opponent and respond quickly and adequately, to sound logical and convincing, to think about the content and the language at the same time - all of which are very important for professional communication. It allows to demonstrate the students how to use phonetic, lexical, syntactic and rhetoric means of the language to produce impact; to teach them choose the appropriate style, use allusions and comparisons, present statistics, include famous quotations, appeal to the emotions of the audience - in other words, to teach how to communicate effectively.

Advantages of going online: From the teacher's perspective, online debates offer a considerable number of advantages as compared with an in-class activity. Firstly, it provides speaking practice outside classroom, which is especially valuable in the non-English-speaking environment. Class time for speaking is limited, so every student can get only a very little portion of it, while preparation for an online video-debate outside classroom can extend this

time considerably. Secondly, an online activity provides the students with much more time and resources to prepare - they have a whole week to research and practice before they come up with a recorded speech. This only logically leads to better composition, more accuracy and the eagerness to use new and more suitable vocabulary. The possibility to watch the video clip again and analyze one's own speech enables self-assessment, while the kind of alternative assessment used in this activity, by the jury made up of peer-students, brings it closer to real-life situations, when the communicative skills in a foreign language must be used to achieve an extra-linguistic goal. It also provides an impetus for interaction and competition. Finally, the online environment makes possible continuous feedback from the teacher and from the other participants of the activity and allows to integrate all the four skills (speaking, listening, reading and writing) in one activity, as well as to integrate language with content.

Conclusion: "Parliamentary debates" is a team game which has gained popularity around the world. It is also an activity that is widely used in university teaching. Debating hot issues of the day in teams of one's peers provides invaluable practice of professional, communicative and rhetoric skills. The present article describes how this team game can be turned into an effective language learning activity and then adapted to the online environment. A special focus is made on Legal English and integrated skills teaching.

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USING +/- SIGNS TO AVOID SENTENCE FRAGMENTS AND RUN-ON SENTENCES

CHAN Hoi Yuen (Jason)

Level: C1 (Advanced)

Time required: 45 minutes

Goals: To help ESL students develop a self-monitoring system to be able to identify fragments and run-on sentences

Background: Sentence fragments and run-on sentences are still noticeable in many ESL students' written texts even among advanced ESL students. Using +/- signs is developed to enable students to self-identify these errors. With that technique, ESL students could feel confident analysing whether their writing may contain fragments, run-on sentences or not. This technique has been used many times. My ESL students find it very helpful, and they have developed the ability to identify if they have a run-on sentence or a fragment in their written texts.

Materials: Blackboard/Whiteboard & Chalk/Marker/Power point

Preparation:

1. Prepare a power point if needed.
2. A worksheet on identifying fragments and run-ons
3. Review what a complete sentence is

Procedures:

1. Review the definition of a complete sentence which contains a subject and a main verb.
2. Explain what a run-on sentence and a fragment are. The definition of a run-on sentence is when two main clauses occur without appropriate punctuation or conjunctions. A sentence fragment is an error because the sentence cannot stand by itself; it is a dependent clause. It may have a subject and a verb, but it needs a main clause to complete the thought.
3. Show a run-on sentence on the board or on a power point whichever way is convenient for the teacher.
4. Explain how to use +/- signs. "+" sign is put under a conjunction or a semi-colon, "–" sign under a verb. Every correct sentence should contain either one "–" sign (a main verb) or two "–" signs (two main verbs) with one "+" sign (a conjunction or a semi-colon).
   A run-on sentence contains two "–" signs (two verbs) without a "+" sign (a conjunction or a semi-colon)

E.g. Smart phones *are* good for sending email, they can also *be used* as cameras.
- **-**

This sentence contains two main clauses, which means two verbs are found in this sentence. Then, the teacher will put a negative sign under each verb. According to the definition of a complete sentence, a sentence can only have one main verb. However, this sentence contains two main verbs without any conjunction, which makes it a run-on sentence. In other words, if this example is correct, students should see one "+" sign and two "–" signs there.

A correct sentence contains a "+" sign (a conjunction or a semi-colon) and two "–" signs (two verbs)

E.g. Smart phones *are* good for sending email, and they can also *be used* as cameras.

- **+** **-**

Or a correct sentence contains one "–" sign (a main verb):

E.g. Smart phones are good for sending email.

After the signs are used for each sentence, teachers will explain how to identify whether it is a correct sentence or not. A complete sentence always has only one "–" sign (main verb) left in the sentence after a "+" sign (a conjunction or a semi-colon) and a "–" sign (a verb) are crossed out. When there is a "+" sign (a conjunction or a semi-colon), always look for a "–" sign (a verb) to even it out so that there is only one "–" sign (main verb) left in the sentence.

E.g. Smart phones *are* good for sending email, *a/nd* they can also *b/e use/d* as cameras.

- **+** **-**

In this sentence, after the conjunction "and" and the verb "be used" are crossed out, the only verb, which is the main verb, remaining is "are".

Let's look at a fragment example: *Bec/ause* I *ha/ve* a demanding job.

In this example, after the conjunction "Because" and the verb "have" are evened out, there is no main verb in the sentence. In other words, there is no "–" sign left in the sentence.

Follow-up: Teachers may assign sentences-editing homework for their students to identify conjunctions/semi-colons and verbs by labelling "+" and "–" signs underneath each respectively. Then, ask students to determine whether it is a run-on or a fragment sentence. After the identification, students need to correct the sentences.

Conclusion: In order to help students avoid making run-on sentences or fragments, teachers may use this technique to help students identify whether they have written correct sentences or not by labelling "+" and "–" signs if necessary. If the students cannot label any sign at all, that means a main verb is missing. On the contrary, if they can label "+" and "–" signs but cannot even them out, that means either a conjunction or a semi-colon or a verb is missing. By

visualizing the signs which represent a conjunction, a semi-colon, or a verb, students will be able to clearly identify whether their sentence is a run-on, a fragment, or a correct sentence.

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PHRASAL VERBS IN CONTEXT

HORVÁTHOVÁ Božena

Level: e.g. C1 (Advanced)

Time required: e.g. 45 minutes

Goals: To learn and to practice the use of phrasal words in context through a jigsaw strategy.

Background: The jigsaw strategy is a very efficient way to learn the material as the jigsaw process encourages listening, engagement, and empathy by giving each member of the group an essential part to play in the activity.

Materials: hand-outs with gap fill exercises (version A and version B), dictionaries or computer, tablets, smart phones with Internet connection

Preparation:

1. Photocopy and cut up the gap-fill quiz with tasks which should be completed (text named *My uncle Fester*).
   original available at: http://esl.about.com/od/advancedlistenin1/a/Phrasal-Verb-Gap-Fill-Listening.htm
2. Prepare the listening text (mp3 file of the text *My uncle Fester*). You can either play it directly from the Internet or download it as an mp3 file.
   original available at: http://esl.about.com/library/media/audio/fester.mp3

Procedures:

1. Tell students that the following activity is aimed at testing their knowledge of some of the most common phrasal verbs.
2. Review the phrasal verbs the students should already know according to their level.
3. Explain that the students will focus on a jigsaw activity.
4. Explain the term *jigsaw activity* - compare it with a jigsaw puzzle, where each student`s part is essential for the completion and full understanding of the final product (the text).
5. Divide the students into two groups (A and B).
6. Distribute the photocopies with the gap-fill quiz to the students (the version A to the students A, the version B to the students B).
7. Tell the students A to match the listed phrasal verbs with their meanings, which are also listed in the hand-out.
8. Tell the students B to think of phrasal verbs which corresponds to the meanings of the listed expressions.
9. Students complete the task individually and are allowed to work with dictionaries, tablets or smartphones with Internet connection.
10. Arrange the students into pairs (A+B).
11. Ask them to compare their solutions and to complete the text together.
12. Elicit the students` answers.

13. Ask the students to listen to the text *My uncle Fester* twice, and to check whether they filled in the blanks with the correct phrasal verbs. Before listening tell the students that some phrasal verbs are used more than once.
14. After listening check whether the students completed the blanks correctly.

(Follow-up): Tell the students to work in pairs and create their own story using the following phrasal verbs.

come into, get on with, pass on, cut down, give up, be up to, drop in on, look after, put through, hold on, get over, set off, come up with, make out, look for, tell off, take on, turn up, take up

(Variation): A variation to the activity might be presenting the students with the text and tasks using a data projector if the teacher does not have access to a photocopier?

Appendix 1 - Version A

The following is a gap-fill quiz testing your knowledge of some of the most common phrasal verbs. This exercise was created to help an advanced class.

1. Match the following phrasal verbs with their meanings:

come into, get on with, pass on, cut down, give up, be up to, drop in on, look after, put through, hold on, get over, set off, come up with, make out, look for, tell off, take on, turn up, take up

to leave, have a good relationship with, to pretend, reduce, stop, take care of, pass on the telephone, recover from, visit, to be doing, to have an idea, to see in the distance, die, to search for, inherit, to criticize, to employ, to arrive, to begin a new activity, to wait on the telephone

2. The blanks in the selection contain the listed phrasal verbs. Listen twice, and then try to fill in the blanks. Some phrasal verbs are used more than once:

<u>Uncle Fester</u>

Last year, Jack Peterson …… that he …… a small fortune after His uncle Fester …… . His uncle had been a heavy smoker for many years and hadn't been able to …… on his smoking. Jack …… his uncle Fester, and often …….. on him to see what …….. One summer, uncle Fester promised …….. on his cigarette smoking after having taken 3 months …….. an extremely bad cough. Jack …….. him those 3 months and, a number of times, he …….. uncle Fester. Then he …… a brilliant idea to make uncle Fester …….. his nasty habit. He had the local cancer society telephone uncle Fester. When they called, he told them to …….. and then …….. . They proceeded to …….. that they …….. a volunteer to …….. to help …….. the patients. Well, that frightened uncle Fester and he immediately swore to …….. smoking. In fact, uncle Fester …….. jogging in order to help him feel better. He even began to …….. other smokers (although he couldn't quite give smoking up himself). One day, as he

…….. on his morning run, he …….. a stand in the distance. A new society …….. that day …….. people willing to …….. young puppies. Uncle Fester immediately …….. a cute Dalmatian, and …….. …….. this new responsibility. Now, three years later Jack …….. the "small fortune" which reminded him every day of his wonderful, if not wise, uncle Fester.

Appendix 2 - Version B

The following is a gap-fill quiz testing your knowledge of some of the most common phrasal verbs. This exercise was created to help an advanced class.

1. Try to think of a phrasal verb which corresponds to the meaning of the following expressions:

to leave, have a good relationship with, to pretend, reduce, stop, take care of, pass on the telephone, recover from, visit, to be doing, to have an idea, to see in the distance, die, to search for, inherit, to criticize, to employ, to arrive, to begin a new activity, to wait on the telephone

2. The blanks in the selection contain the listed phrasal verbs. Listen twice, and then try to fill in the blanks. Some phrasal verbs are used more than once:

Uncle Fester

Last year, Jack Peterson …….. that he …….. a small fortune after His uncle Fester …….. . His uncle had been a heavy smoker for many years and hadn't been able to …….. on his smoking. Jack …….. his uncle Fester, and often …….. on him to see what …….. One summer, uncle Fester promised …….. on his cigarette smoking after having taken 3 months …….. an extremely bad cough. Jack …….. him those 3 months and, a number of times, he …….. uncle Fester. Then he …….. a brilliant idea to make uncle Fester …….. his nasty habit. He had the local cancer society telephone uncle Fester. When they called, he told them to …….. and then …….. . They proceeded to …….. that they …….. a volunteer to …….. to help …….. the patients. Well, that frightened uncle Fester and he immediately swore to …….. smoking. In fact, uncle Fester …….. jogging in order to help him feel better. He even began to …….. other smokers (although he couldn't quite give smoking up himself). One day, as he …….. on his morning run, he …….. a stand in the distance. A new society …….. that day …….. people willing to …….. young puppies. Uncle Fester immediately …….. a cute Dalmatian, and …….. …….. this new responsibility. Now, three years later Jack …….. the "small fortune" which reminded him every day of his wonderful, if not wise, uncle Fester.

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CONTRACTED FORMS

SORÁDOVÁ Daniela

Level: C1 (Advanced)

Time required: 10 minutes

Goals: To recognize contracted forms of the past tense of modal verbs and pronounce them.

Background: As the contracted forms of the past tense of modal verbs (should have done, must have done...) are difficult to recognize in speech and learners often do not realize when they are used in practise, this activity may serve as an authentic example.

Materials: PC, internet access (optional), any gadget playing music

Preparation:

1. Find the song where contracted forms are used
2. Find the right lyrics of the song on the internet and check if the lyrics are the same as in the played song (on different web pages, the lyrics may vary)
3. Make copies for the students

Procedures:

1. Tell students to listen to the song (you may play the music video as well). You may give background information about the singer to inspire learners.
2. Ask learners if they liked the song. Try to find out if the students were able to understand the main message of the song.
3. Distribute the lyrics.
4. Read the lyrics together and check if they understood the main idea of the song.
5. Let them look at the contracted form and ask them to explain the meaning.
6. Give additional or test questions:
    - Does the singer speak about present/past/future?
    - How do we form the past tense of modal verbs?
7. Play the part where contracted form occurs again.
8. Ask pupils to pronounce the given form.
9. Present other examples of contracted forms of the past tense of modal verbs.

Follow-up:

- Ask students to write their own examples, using the contracted form. Let them read the examples aloud to practise the pronunciation.
- Other tenses and contracted forms in the song may be analysed.

Adele: Hello
Suggestion for a song:

- There is an example of the past tense of a modal verb.
- There are other examples of tense to be analysed.

- There are other examples of contracted forms.

Hello, it's me.
I was wondering if after all these years
you'd like to meet.
To go over everything.
They say that time's supposed to heal ya
But I ain't done much healing.

Hello, can you hear me?
I'm in California dreaming about who we
used to be.
When we were younger and free,
I've forgotten how it felt before the world
fell at our feet.

There's such a difference between us
and a million miles.

Hello from the other side
I must've called a thousand times
to tell you I'm sorry
for everything that I've done,
but when I call you never
seem to be home. ...

Variation:

- For better students the contracted forms may be deleted from the lyrics and filled in later by them.

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PARAPHRASING: AN INTERACTIVE SCAFFOLDING ACTIVITY

WILCOXON Elizabeth

Level: C1 (Advanced - first-year university composition or academic writing)

Time required: 20-30 minutes

Goals: At the end of this lesson, students will be able to: define the term *paraphrase*, compare and contrast paraphrasing with summarizing, and paraphrase a written text successfully. The eventual goal is that second language writers will be able to successfully paraphrase with complex input, such as information from a research article. Another expected outcome is that by instructing students step-by-step how to effectively paraphrase, they can avoid unintended plagiarism in their academic writing.

Background: Scaffolding, which takes its name from the supporting structure used during building construction, has been used by educators in all grade levels and subjects to facilitate student learning. Because of its flexibility, scaffolding methods can be used effectively in the college composition classroom in order to support novice writers' understanding and mastery of complex topics and tasks related to the writing process. These supportive techniques can facilitate an inductive, student-centred approach to instruction of topics central to composition and writing curricula.

For many second language writers, incorporating sources effectively into academic writing can pose challenges. This activity involves a sample activity instructors can use and/or modify for the curriculum and student ability in their own classrooms when teaching complex writing concepts incorporating sources into writing by including summaries or paraphrases. This activity draws on prior knowledge of a topic in order to develop the writing and critical thinking skills needed to paraphrase material from academic sources. Students will be able to practice a complex skill beginning with relatively simple input. However, this activity can be easily modified to include excerpts from actual sources if a higher level input is needed.

Materials: This activity is quick to prepare and requires the following: students will need paper and a pen or pencil.

Preparation: Instructors will prepare slips of paper with universally neutral and understandable real-life tasks such as: changing a tire, washing a load of clothes, packing for a trip, parking a car.

Procedures:

1. Divide students into equal groups of about three to four students.
2. Assign each group a topic by allowing them to draw a slip of paper with the real-life task.

3. Instruct each group to write one paragraph describing how to do the assigned task. Remind them that at this moment in time, grammar, spelling, and mechanics are not the focus. Their main goal is to get their ideas down on paper.
4. After the groups have finished writing their paragraph, rotate the paragraphs to other groups so that each group has a new paragraph.
5. Before allowing students to begin paraphrasing, discuss briefly that the task is to restate the idea in their own words, and not to add new ideas.
6. Monitor each group to see how they progress through the task.
7. Use a document camera to show the paragraphs to the class or call on a member from each group to read their paragraphs. Read each set of paragraphs to the class and ask questions such as:
    a. Is the new paragraph in their own words?
    b. Did they capture all the ideas from the first group's paragraph?
    c. Was any idea added that the original paragraph didn't have?
    d. Was any idea left out that appeared in the original paragraph?
8. Allow ample time for discussion and questions regarding paraphrasing. For extra practice, students may switch paragraphs again, or receive an excerpt from higher level source, such as a news article or academic journal. Another option is to do a peer review in class to polish and refine the paragraph.

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