

Graduate School of TESOL
Fall 2022

Introduction to Teaching English to Young Learners

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Section 1

Syllabus & Schedule

Section 1: Syllabus

Introduction to Teaching English to Young Learners

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The purpose of this course is for educators to become more aware of the empirical and theoretical aspects of language acquisition and learning in young learners. We will begin by looking at first language acquisition which we will then compare to second language acquisition in children. After examining the empirical evidence and theoretical explanation of language acquisition and learning the course will focus on the implications for teachers.

We will be using a course packet available at [참글](#)

Grading and assessments:

30% Attendance and active participation
20% Homework on readings
25% Project/Presentation 1
25% Project/Presentation 2

Attendance & Participation (30%)

Attendance is **mandatory**. Participants who arrive to class **10 minutes or more** after the start of class will be **considered late**. Participants who are **late 3 times** will receive **1 absence**. Any participant who **misses ¼ or more** of all class meetings **WILL receive an F** in the course. **More important than attendance is participation**. I expect participants to be active in class discussions and to complete all oral and written assignments **BY THE DUE DATE**. If assignments are handed in late without prior permission from the instructor, **10% for each late day will be deducted from the grade**. Finally, participants in this course will have several opportunities to apply the skills learned in lectures, discussions and workshops by engaging in various “in-class” activities and projects.

Homework on readings (20%)

It is essential to be prepared for each class by completing the required readings. This will provide you with the background knowledge on the topic and allow you to participate actively in the class discussion. In order to ensure that you have read the required readings for class, you will be expected to do a short homework assignment for the reading. This homework assignment involves answering the guiding reading questions (see below). These homework assignments are to be submitted at the beginning of class. **Late submissions will NOT be accepted.**

Activity Route Map and Rationale 1 (25%)

Each participant will be asked to create an appropriate learning activity for their target learner. In the first Activity Route Map and Rationale project, participants will design and describe an activity for listening or speaking.

Activity Route Map and Rationale 2 (25%)

Each participant will be asked to create an appropriate learning activity for their target learner. In the second Activity Route Map and Rationale project, participants will design and describe an activity for reading or writing.

HUFS grading scale:

A+ = 96-100%

AO = 90-94%

B+=85-89%

BO = 80-84%

C+ = 75-79%

CO = 70-74%

F = 69% or less

Weekly Plan

This weekly plan is a *tentative* plan. It will act as a flexible guideline for the classes throughout the semester and may not be followed exactly due to holidays or participant needs. The lecturer will decide what to cover according to the participants' needs, their understanding of the contents, time remaining and overall progress.

Week/Date	Topic /Focus	Assignments/Reading
Week 1	Introduction of students, lecturer and course	
Week 2	Sample Lesson: Life Map Processing	Reading 1: Theories of Child Development
Week 3	Key Terms & Concepts	
Week 4	Sample Lesson: Listening Processing	Reading 2: Language Learning Processes in Childhood: First and Second Languages
Week 5	Sample Lesson: Speaking Processing	Reading 3: Child Centered Learning
Week 6	Introduce Mid-Term Project Activity Route Map & Rationale	Reading 4: Teaching Listening and Speaking
Week 7	Conferencing on Route Maps	
Week 8	Grellet: Reading on Reading	Route Map 1 Due
Week 9	Reading, Writing & Young Learners	Reading 5: Teaching Reading and Writing
Week 10	Theories and Issues	
Week 11	Sample Lesson: Reading Processing	Reading 6: The Place of Grammar Instruction in the Second/Foreign Language Curriculum
Week 12	Sample Lesson: Writing Processing	
Week 13	Introduce Final Project Activity Route Map & Rationale	
Week 14	Flex Week: Review	
Week 15	Conferencing	
Week 16	Course Evaluation and Survey	Route Map 2 Due

Section 2

Readings

Theories of Child Development

(Please answer in **full sentences** and **in your own words**)

1. Use the following chart as a guide and summarize Piaget's theories of Child Development.

Pre Operational Stage		
Ages	Deficiencies / Examples	Achievements / Examples
Criticism or problems:		
Concrete Operational Stage		
Ages	Deficiencies / Examples	Achievements / Examples
Criticism or problems:		
Formal Operational Stage		
Ages	Deficiencies / Examples	Achievements / Examples
Criticism or problems:		

2. Defining the concept of scaffolding in the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and summarizing the techniques used for creating effective interaction between a learner and a teacher. Please provide a language learning example to illustrate your point.

3. What is informational processing and how does a child's ability to attenuate to language input change over time?

4. Identify and provide examples of different kinds of memory strategies that we can use with children to help them internalize and remember new language?

1

Theories of Child Development

This chapter will

- consider three influential theories of cognitive development, i.e. those associated with Piaget, Vygotsky, and information processing, and some issues related to emotional development
- discuss the characteristics of different age groups
- consider links between cognitive development and second language learning/teaching

1.1 Introduction

This first background chapter is concerned with child development theories. As a language teacher working with children, you will find that basic understanding of the cognitive, social and emotional development of different age groups will be helpful in teaching, and in planning, implementing and interpreting research. Second language learning in schools or in less formal environments should not be seen as an isolated process but instead as closely intertwined with cognitive development, learning about the world and developing as a person.

Child development theories are interested in exploring the following questions. How do children mature as they get older? How do they think and learn differently from adults? To what extent is it nature that is responsible for these developments and what is the role of the nurturing environment?

Some theories are based on the premise that there are stages in development and that each stage is qualitatively different, while others maintain that development is more continuous. In terms of exploring the main forces behind development, some theories are more cognitive in orientation, while others are more social. The three main theories explored here are: (1) Piaget's stage-like theory of child development; (2) Vygotsky's socially mediated development; and (3) a more general approach, i.e. the

information processing approach to child development. Some basic insights related to children's emotional development will also be reviewed.

1.2 Piaget's theory of child development

Jean Piaget (1896–1980) was a famous Swiss child psychologist who offered a systematic approach to the study of children's thinking and development from birth to adulthood. His name is associated with the 'stage theory' which has been extremely influential in educational circles throughout the twentieth century and remains relevant and popular today.

Piaget's theory grew out of careful observations of his own children and his interest in identifying aspects of child development that might be universal. This explains his interest in identifying stages in development. Piaget defined intelligence as a basic life function that helps organisms to adapt to their environment. During this process of gradual adaptation, children attempt to achieve a kind of balance or 'equilibrium' between themselves and their environment. Piaget observed that his own children were constantly exploring their environment and learning came naturally to them. They were curious explorers who were constructing knowledge through their own actions.

Concept 1.1 Piaget's organisation, adaptation, assimilation and accommodation

When interacting with the environment, children create mental structures or schemes (Piaget and Inhelder 1956). These schemes are being created all the time and they are also combined to make ever more complex schemes. This is the process of *organisation*. At the same time, children need to compare and adjust their developing schemes to match what they encounter in their environment. This process of adjusting is referred to as *adaptation*. Adaptation actually consists of two sub-processes: *assimilation* and *accommodation*. The first process refers to interpreting new knowledge in terms of old models/ schemes they already possess, and the second process refers to modifying these existing structures to fit the new knowledge. These processes work together to further cognitive growth.

How do these concepts actually translate into practice? Imagine a young child who already knows that creatures that live in water are fish, they have gills and their skin is covered by scales. This mental structure seems to fit well with what this child experiences in his environment (equilibrium) as he cares for his pet goldfish. One day however, the child will come across a book about whales, and realise that not all creatures that live in water are fish. Whales breathe air and they don't have gills or scales. At this point

the child will have to reorganise the original mental structure for 'creatures that live in water' by adjusting it to accommodate the new information. With more and more experience of interacting with the environment over the years, the child can achieve more integrated and more differentiated levels of equilibrium. This will lead to a more and more sophisticated way of organising information.

1.2.1 Piaget's stages of development

Piaget argues that all children follow the same stages of development in the exact same order, hence he refers to these as 'invariant stages of development'. Within each stage the quality of thinking is relatively consistent across different tasks. A child's performance on one Piagetian task for a given stage will predict the performance on a range of other tasks for that same level. The stages of development are given in table 2.

Table 2 Piagetian stages of development

Stage 1 0–2 years: sensori-motor stage

Repetitive motor habits (e.g. kicking)

Goal-oriented behaviour (e.g. reaching out to grab)

Active curiosity (e.g. trying to put a block inside another one)

Imitation (e.g. actions of adult, accompanying a jointly recited nursery rhyme)

Object permanence (e.g. looking for an object where it was last seen)

Stage 2 2–7 years: pre-operational stage

Animism (attributing lifelike qualities to inanimate things, such as teddy bears)

Egocentrism (seeing the world from one's own point of view without appreciating others')

Centration (attending to one aspect of a task only)

At age 7: intellectual revolution (Wood 1998: 23)

Stage 3 7–11: concrete operational stage

Operational thought (ability to think in a logical fashion)

Using analogy competently (If A is smaller than B and C is smaller than B, then ...)

Full emergence of symbolic thought (e.g. an ability to make one thing stand for another, i.e. a map for a town)

Reversibility and conservation (e.g. mentally undo/change back an action)

Appreciating causality (reasoning from particular to particular)

Development of hierarchical classification (e.g. putting furniture and chair together rather than chair and breakfast)

Table 2 (Continued)

De-centration (ability to deal with more than one aspect of a task)

A gradual loss of/decline in egocentricity

Relational logic (mentally order a set of stimuli along a dimension)

Stage 4 11–12 and beyond: formal operational stage

Formal operational thought (ability to carry out mental actions on ideas and propositions without the need to rely on concrete objects)

Hypothetico-deductive reasoning (ability to reason by progressing from general ideas to specific ones by generating possibilities and hypotheses)

Thinking like a scientist (hypotheses are systematically tested in experiments, if-then statements)

Rational, systematic and abstract thinking

Our interest with preschool and primary school aged children leads us to focus first of all on the pre-operational stage. According to Piaget, the beginning of this stage is marked around the age of 2 and lasts until around the age of 7. During this stage children begin to use language and imagery as meaning-making systems and make huge progress in their intellectual development; but interestingly, Piaget describes this stage by largely focussing on deficiencies rather than achievements. When children in the pre-operational and operational stages were given the same tests and tasks, typically children under 7 were unable to do them, whereas those over 7 years of age were able to do them. In fact these two stages are best understood as divided by an ‘intellectual revolution’ (Wood 1998: 23) that, it is claimed, happens at around the age of 7.

Pre-operational children (2–7 years of age) do not yet follow the rules of ‘formal logic’. Piaget characterised these children as ‘ego-centric’, i.e. unable to imagine any other perspectives but their own. One of the most well-known empirical studies conducted by Piaget and his associates to illustrate this point was the ‘Three mountain experiment’. In this experiment a doll was placed facing a model of a mountain which had some snow on its top. The next mountain beyond the snowy one had a church on its top and beyond that the third mountain had a house. The children were asked to stand facing the third mountain, the one which had the house, i.e. directly opposite to where the doll was. Then they were asked what the *doll* could see. Children under the age of 7 tended to describe their own view rather than the doll’s view, and they consistently responded that the doll could see the mountain with the house.

Another example to illustrate young children’s failure to appreciate formal logic is their lack of ability to ‘conserve’, i.e. their inability to realise that the characteristics of an object will remain the same even if their outward appearance changes. For example, in experiments when water or sand is poured from a long narrow glass into a short wide glass, most pre-operational

children say that the amount of the water or sand changed, as perceptually the level is higher in the first container, which is the taller and narrower one.

Similar findings were gathered in a range of different tasks (e.g. classification tasks, hierarchy tasks, see table 2) which all showed that young children can focus only on one aspect of the task at a time and they ignore all other aspects.

Quote 1.1 On pre-operational thought

Lacking operational thought means that... flexible, reversible reasoning which allows them to conserve, classify, seriate, coordinate perspectives and overcome misleading impressions' is not available yet.

(Meadows 1993: 24)

Overall, Piaget's assessment of young children under 7 is rather negative, as he describes them in terms of what they lack. The tasks that Piaget and his team used were all tasks that aimed to test formal logic. While it is true that young children are less able to do well on formal experimental tasks, children between the ages of 2 and 7 make important progress in their development. For example, they enjoy and participate effectively in repetitive games where the same scenario is acted out over and over again. 'Make believe' play, which over time becomes more complex, develops into socio-dramatic play (e.g. 'let's pretend we are mum and dad and we live with our 40 children in a double-decker bus'). Frequent engagement in different kinds of play situations contributes to cognitive, social and emotional development where children learn about feelings and points of view of others in meaningful and naturally occurring contexts. During play activities they participate in different culturally and contextually appropriate linguistic routines.

If you teach very young children, you may want to be reminded of their difficulties in coping with formal logic in de-contextualised situations. They cannot understand complicated instructions and they cannot work with tasks that require coordinating perspectives, evaluating options or reasoning in a formal manner. They enjoy spontaneous language play (Nicholas and Lightbown 2008) and simple, repetitive tasks, games and stories. Games and drama activities can stimulate these children's creative imagination and willingness to take on playful roles.

Following the so-called intellectual revolution at around the age of 7 (Wood 1998: 23), the beginning of the third stage marks the start of the most fundamental cognitive change, according to Piaget: the development of 'concrete operations'. While administering the experimental tasks to children, Piaget and his colleagues noticed that the majority of children who were older than 7 typically completed their tasks successfully. Children older than 7 years of age appreciate that pouring water from one container to

another does not change the quantity of the water, because even though one glass is taller, the other is wider and these two characteristics compensate for each other. These children also appreciate that there may be more than one angle/perspective to a question or a task. They become competent at organising and sorting objects into hierarchical structures and they recognise that the same set of objects can be looked at and categorised in more than one way. Children's seriation also improves, which means that putting numbers of objects physically or mentally in a list according to their height or weight, progressing from smallest to biggest, is no longer a problem. They can work out puzzles of simple analogy such as 'if A is bigger than B and B is bigger than C, then A is also bigger than C' (Chapman and Lindenberg 1988). Another area of development is spatial awareness. Understanding of distance, maps and directions improves. For example, at the age of 10 children can give clear, well-organised directions (Gauvain and Rogoff 1989).

A clear implication of these achievements in middle childhood for language teachers is that it becomes possible to use a greater variety of tasks and activities. For example, children can compare pictures and maps and sort different words into different categories. They can also use analogy to work out linguistic puzzles. A growing ability to appreciate other points of view allows teachers to include pair and group work, because children become more attentive while listening to one another and working collaboratively on tasks.

These are major strides in development but the concrete operational child still suffers from some limitations, according to Piaget. While children between the ages of 7 and 12 can use the rules of formal logic (as measured by the experimental tasks), they can only do so if the questions and problems are applied to concrete examples and objects in real life. Children overcome this limitation during the next stage of development, i.e. when they enter the formal operational stage. During this stage, children develop 'propositional thought' which enables them to become competent at discussing and evaluating problems without referring to the real world. Children at the formal operational development stage enjoy generating creative ideas and hypothetical propositions, i.e. they become interested in the 'what if' type of problems.

Example study 1.1 Shaffer (1973): Differences between concrete operational and formal operational thought

A study by Shaffer (1973) compared concrete operational and formal operational children's responses to the same task. The task invited the children to imagine how humans might benefit from a third eye and they were asked to draw some innovative solutions. Most younger children (9-year-olds in the concrete operational stage) drew a third eye in the middle of the forehead, between the two eyes

and did not think of extra functions for it. Older children (13-year-olds, in the formal operational stage) were more creative, suggesting interesting new functions for the third eye, such as hiding it behind the hair at the back of your head, so that you can see things behind your back. Formal operational children were much more adept at generating more abstract and hypothetical solutions than were the younger children.

According to Piaget, the formal operational stage is the ultimate achievement of the human mind, which is characterised by hypothetico-deductive reasoning. Access to this type of reasoning enables adolescents to take an abstract/hypothetical problem and carefully consider all possible factors that might affect the outcome. By considering all options in an orderly manner, the adolescent mind can propose hypotheses regarding what is most likely to happen, based on eliminating less likely scenarios one by one. One well-known experiment to illustrate formal operational thinking is the 'pendulum problem' (see Miller 1989). In this experiment the researchers asked children what factors they thought might affect the way the pendulum oscillated. By considering the strings of the pendulum of different lengths and the objects of different weights at the end of the strings, formal operators, i.e. children who had reached the formal operational development stage, discovered that it was only the length of the string that mattered. Younger children typically failed to test all options and came to a premature conclusion. Adolescents can take a systematic approach to this type of problem by holding all factors constant while testing just one factor at a time. Armed with an ability to think in abstract terms about hypothetical matters, adolescents are increasingly able to make decisions about complex problems by weighing up different alternatives. They also become adept at imagining creative alternative realities as opposed to what is given. This makes them question rules and procedures and ultimately adult authority.

If you are a teacher working with adolescents, the implications are that you can use more sophisticated tasks such as debates, role plays and various activities that involve evaluating different opinions. These learners can also appreciate linguistic challenges such as translation, or text analysis. Learners at this age are able to evaluate their own and their peers' progress in learning and they may be able to negotiate learning content with teachers.

1.2.2 Criticism of Piaget

Piaget's original stage theory has been scrutinised and criticised by many. In particular, two of his stages were criticised most: the pre-operational and the formal operational stages. It is widely accepted now that his claims about pre-operational children were too harsh and that he underestimated young children's mental capacities, whereas with regard to the formal operational stage, he somewhat overestimated young adolescents. (e.g. Donaldson 1978).

Since Piaget's original experiments, research on pre-operational thought has revealed that cultural practices influence the development of operational thinking significantly. Children from different cultures develop operational thought at different ages. In addition, in order to do well on the Piagetian tasks, children must take part in everyday activities which promote this kind of thinking and raise these kinds of problems of logic (e.g. Light and Perrett-Clermont 1989). Formal schooling itself facilitates the development of operational thought. Children's specific experiences and their unique motivations can also affect the emergence of operational thought (Ceci and Roazzi 1994).

So, what was so problematic with the Piagetian experiments for pre-operational children? Donaldson (1978) proposed that the language of the experiments was unnatural and difficult to understand. Some of the questions used in the experimental tasks were ambiguous and confusing. For example, in one of the task which tested children's ability to identify categories of beads, the experimenter typically asked: 'Are there more brown beads or more wooden beads?' Donaldson argues that questions like this sound strange, unnatural and they are never heard in normal everyday conversations. Children, therefore, may have been confused about the interpretation of the questions rather than the task demand *per se*. When McGarrigle and Donaldson (1974) replicated one of the inclusion tasks with changes to the actual wording of the original questions, the results showed that the majority of the children were able to give the correct answer.

The context of the experiments was also problematic. For example, when the experimenter indicates the change by introducing a new container or rearranges the sticks in the conversion tasks, it is quite logical for the child to think that there is some link between the action (changing the display) and the experimenter's next question. A question asked without any change for a second time in everyday situations often carries the implication that the first answer was wrong or inadequate. It may have been this breakdown in mutual understanding between the experimenter adult and the child that contributed to these failures, rather than young children's complete lack of logic. This issue, namely, the potential lack of understanding between the child and an adult outsider/experimenter, can be problematic in all types of laboratory research contexts where the tasks are different from real-life experiences and events.

Overall, we can conclude that pre-operational children may be able to think in logical ways but only if the tasks are made meaningful and the instructions are clear and unambiguous. Donaldson also points out that 'egocentrism' associated with the pre-operational stage is not just a young child-specific phenomenon. It is more a 'mode of thinking'. When we are familiar with the context, fully understand the task and have sufficient experience, we are more likely to demonstrate 'non-egocentric' ways of thinking, as opposed to situations where the task is not clear and the context is confusing.

Quote 1.2 On 'ego-centrism'

What is being claimed here is that we are all ego-centric through the whole of our lives in some situations and very well able to decentre in others. Piaget would not disagree with the claim that ego-centrism is never wholly overcome. The dispute with him is only about the extent – and the developmental significance – of ego-centrism in early childhood. I want to argue that the difference between child and adult in this respect is less than he supposes.

(Donaldson 1978: 25)

Differences between pre-operational and operational children are thus not quite as significant as was suggested by Piaget and his colleagues. The supposed abrupt change around the age of 7 seems more likely to be a gradual, continuous change, in that older children can achieve higher levels of within-stage consistency with fewer 'decalages' (slips, mistakes in the performance).

Quote 1.3 On the differences between pre-operational and operational children

It seems likely that, as far as the school years are concerned, the difference between younger and older children will turn out to be that the former can do what the latter can; but only sometimes, only under favourable conditions, only with help, only without distractions, only up to a point, without so much efficiency, without so much self-control, without so much awareness of the implications and without so much certainty.

(Meadows 1996: 29–30)

Piaget's assessment of the formal operational stage has also been criticised. It has been shown that even adults can be 'tricked into' giving the wrong answer in an operational problem-solving task, if the phrasing of the questions is misleading (e.g. Winer, Craig and Weinbaum 1992). In addition, as Wood (1998) and Donaldson (1978) both emphasise, adults do not always think according to the rules of formal logic. Indeed, this type of thinking is not generally necessary and practical in everyday life. Sometimes everyday rules may coincide with formal logic but other times they do not. Finally, one more point is significant. Piaget suggested that adolescents would reach the pinnacle of human development by about 12 years of age, yet there is plenty of evidence suggesting that development is nowhere near complete by this age. In fact Wood argues that many crucial improvements take place beyond 12 years of age.

Quote 1.4 On developments beyond the formal operational stage

Even though Piaget's claims, as they stand, seem overconfident regarding adolescent thought, there is plenty of evidence coming from other research to suggest that important developments take place around puberty (age 11–13). One line of evidence strongly suggests that literacy and especially the extended use of both reading and writing both trigger and facilitate important changes. Both reading and writing involve ways of communicating that transform the nature of children's knowledge of language and lead to more analytical ways of thinking.

(Wood 1998: 200)

Despite these criticisms, Piaget's legacy still lives on, albeit in significantly altered forms, i.e. with less rigidly described stages. Neo-Piagetian theorists (e.g. Karmiloff-Smith 1992; Halford 1992; Case 1991) still continue to argue that there are discrete stages of development in childhood.

1.3 Vygotsky's theory of development

Lev Vygotsky (1896–1934) was a Russian psychologist, a contemporary of Piaget. Just like Piaget, he has also been enormously influential in the field of education. As opposed to Piaget, his theory emphasises continuity in development rather than discontinuity or 'stages'. It focusses more broadly on the crucial role of social environment, and particularly on the role of expert helpers and the quality of their assistance to novice learners.

Quote 1.5 On the difference between Piaget's and Vygotsky's approaches to child development

Rather than being predominantly based on direct encounters with the physical world, for Vygotsky the construction of knowledge and understanding is an inherently social activity. Thus the child's interactions with other people, notably those who are more advanced and capable members of the society in which the child is growing up, mediate the child's encounters with the world-to-be-learned-about.

(Mercer and Littleton 2007: 13)

Vygotsky's interest is in the social processes of learning between people and how these processes contribute to and complement the individual's internal development. Any social encounter is situated in the local context but also in a particular historical and cultural setting. To describe how children learn from parents and teachers, Vygotsky proposed the 'law of cultural development' as an explanation. The adult and the child interact and together they construct new knowledge (*intermental* stage) and

only following this stage is it possible for the child to internalise the new knowledge for individual reflection and understanding (*intramental* stage).

Quote 1.6 On Vygotsky's intermental and intramental processes

...processes of interaction between the child and others at the so-called intermental level, become the basis for processes that subsequently go on within the child – discussion, interaction and argument become internalised as the basis for intramental reflection and logical reasoning.

(Mercer and Littleton 2007: 14)

In order to clarify the relationship between intermental and intramental processes, Vygotsky proposed the concept of the *zone of proximal development* (ZPD). The ZPD is a metaphorical space between the child's level of current ability to solve a particular problem and the potential ability, which can be achieved with the careful assistance of someone else, usually a more knowledgeable expert, i.e. a parent or a teacher.

Concept 1.2 The zone of proximal development (ZPD)

[The ZPD] is the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers. Intramental activity is accelerated by intermental (social) activity.

(definition in Vygotsky 1978: 86)

The ZPD captures Vygotsky's belief that learning and intellectual development are embedded in contextual factors and effective dialogue between the expert and the novice can accelerate individual learning processes. The ZPD also points to the fact that two learners who appear to be at the same level of development based on their individual achievements (e.g. as measured by test scores), can in fact be quite different in terms of how readily they may be able to respond to assistance within their ZPDs.

One implication of the Vygotskian approach for language teachers is that it is important to pay attention to individual differences and consider alternative ways and levels of assisting learners. It may be possible to start by offering only a small amount of assistance in case the learner is able to take some responsibility for solving the particular linguistic problem.

The concept of the ZPD has had immense influence on educational practices. It has also been the basis on which Wood, Bruner and Ross (1976)

developed the concept of ‘scaffolding’. Scaffolding is a special type of assistance that experts provide to novices while jointly engaged in a problem-solving task. The expert not only guides and supports the novice with information but may in fact intervene to simplify the task and to encourage the novice to persevere with the task. Effective interaction between expert and novice in the ZPD is crucial. Recognition of the importance of the quality of talk in classrooms has led to numerous approaches and techniques designed to enhance talk in interaction, such as ‘guided participation’ (Rogoff 1990) and ‘teacher-led instructional conversation’ (Tharp and Gallimore 1988). These techniques all imply that both the expert and the novice are active participants in the learning process:

- Learning is seen as a shared responsibility between tutor and student.
- Learners make unsolicited comments rather than just answer questions from tutors.
- Tutors provide a bridge between learners’ existing knowledge and the new task.
- Tutors provide a focus and a structure to support the learners’ problem solving (e.g. by offering reminders, simplifying the problem, removing distractions, highlighting crucial points and fading out when not needed any more).
- Tutors ensure that learners participate actively in the process of solving the task.
- Tutors build on learners’ responses.
- Tutors encourage learners to use language effectively by paraphrasing learner utterances and introducing more formal phrases.

In order to highlight the importance of effective communication within the ZPD, Mercer (2000) introduced the concept of the *intermental development zone* (IDZ).

Concept 1.3 Intermental development zone (IDZ)

For a teacher to teach and a learner to learn, they must use talk and joint activity to create a shared communicative space, and intermental development zone (IDZ), on the contextual foundations of their common knowledge and aims. In this intermental zone, which is reconstituted constantly as the dialogue continues, the teacher and learner negotiate their way through the activity in which they are involved. If the quality of the zone is successfully maintained, the teacher can enable the learner to become able to operate just beyond their established capabilities and to consolidate this experience as new ability and understanding. If the dialogue fails to keep minds mutually attuned, the IDZ collapses and the scaffolded learning grinds to a halt.

(definition in Mercer 2000: 141)

From the language teachers' point of view important implications arise regarding effective teacher talk in children's second language classrooms. Teachers may want to explore their own target language use by recording their classes and examining features of effective communication – for example, how teacher talk may be adjusted to the needs of different learners, how paraphrasing or modifying instructions and explanations may help make input comprehensible to all learners in the class.

Vygotsky particularly highlighted the central role of 'language' and identified two main functions for language use. On the one hand, we use language as a communicative tool. In this way, we can jointly share and develop knowledge. On the other hand, language is also a psychological tool which helps us organise, plan and review thoughts and actions. In second language classrooms both these functions are relevant. In addition to using language to communicate with one another, learners can also use language to reflect on their learning. For example, when learners are given tasks and they collaboratively negotiate linguistic structures and forms, e.g. correct use of tenses, or phrases, or in the process of debating, negotiating and trying out different linguistic alternatives, they use language to reflect on their own knowledge and on others' contributions.

Swain's study (2000) illustrates how two students can benefit from the process of jointly negotiating a task in their L2. The learners in this study were recreating a piece of text after listening to it together. In order to recreate it to be as close to the original as possible, the learners have to work together and negotiate linguistic solutions together, focussing on those in particular that they are not sure about.

Quote 1.7 On why joint problem solving generates new linguistic knowledge

Our data showed that these actions generated linguistic knowledge that was new for the learner, or consolidated their existing knowledge. In line with van Lier, one might hypothesise that learners seek solutions to their linguistic difficulties when the social activity they are engaged in offers them an incentive to do so, and the means to do so. The important point however in this context is that it was the act of attempting to produce language which focussed the learner's attention on what he or she did not know, or knew imperfectly.

(Swain 2000: 100)

In the process of working together learners are using language (L1 or L2) as a psychological tool and they offer assistance to one another within their respective ZPD. Ohta (2001) argues that even learners who are at the same level of L2 development are able to assist one another in helpful ways.

Quote 1.8 On peer assistance

By working together learners collaboratively build utterances that are a bit beyond their reach and that of the interlocutor. Assistance is responsive to the partner's need for support. Learners wait patiently for the interlocutors to finish their utterances and step in to help at an appropriate time rather than interrupting. The assistance provided is overwhelmingly helpful.

(Ohta 2001: 125)

It is important to note that not all talk between learners during task-based interactions is necessarily helpful or leads to learning. Sometimes learners may mislead one another or come to solutions that are incorrect linguistically. Moreover, not all learners can communicate in pairs or groups effectively and it may be important for teachers to prepare their learners by providing explicit training in how to use effective strategies for talking and working together.

The following study is an example where 9–10-year-old children were exposed to a set of training materials that helped them become better communicators, and this in turn led to further individual benefits.

Example study 1.2 Mercer, Wegerif and Dawes (1999): 'Thinking Together' materials

'Thinking Together' is a set of materials that the researchers specially designed to enhance children's abilities to talk together effectively in groups. The research project was carried out in year 5 classrooms with 9–10-year-old children in primary schools in Milton Keynes, UK. Altogether 124 children participated. 'Thinking together' was aimed at training children how to use exploratory talk effectively, i.e. exploring each other's ideas, challenging assumptions, and debating solutions while working towards solving puzzles collaboratively. The researchers compared two sets of children: those who were in target classes where 'Thinking Together' was taught and those children who were of the same age but did not use the materials. Before and after the intervention, The 'Raven Progressive Matrices' (Raven *et al.* 1995) were used to measure children's general non-verbal reasoning. Non-verbal reasoning tasks are visual puzzles with geometrical shapes where children need to be able to notice patterns and complete missing items. During the intervention the children worked with these puzzles and received training in effective ways of working with them in groups. After the intervention, the researchers compared the quality of the children's talk, using video-recordings of groups where children participated in group tasks. The study showed that the 'Thinking Together' materials were changing the way children were using language in groups. Those in the target groups discussed issues for longer and in greater depth and they provided reasons and justifications more frequently than children who were following the ordinary syllabus. The researchers also noticed that children who increased their exploratory talk improved their

joint problem solving. Finally, as a result of the treatment, the target children became significantly better at solving these problems individually, which suggests that the collaborative activity accelerated their individual learning.

This project report underlines the importance of fostering effective group and pair talk in L2 classrooms and the importance of helping children to develop ground-rules and useful strategies. One of the most important implications from the Vygotskian approach to learning is that classroom talk involving both teachers and learners deserves a great deal of attention. In fact, classroom talk is where learning happens.

Quote 1.9 On the centrality of talk in learning

...it is in the talk through which tasks are defined, negotiated, and evaluated, and by means of which the students' participation is monitored, and assisted, and students and teachers engage in the dialogic co-construction of meaning, which is the essence of education.

(Wells and Chang-Wells 1992: 33)

1.4 The information processing (IP) approach

The 'information processing approach' is a more recent development in the study of cognition and, unlike the theories of Piaget and Vygotsky, it is not associated with a single name or a researcher. The IP approach to researching cognition is associated with the computer as an analogy to illustrate how the human mind works. Here we are interested in the mind in its development. Following the computer analogy, the human mind is studied both in terms of its hardware, consisting of the nervous system and the brain, sensory receptors and neural connections, and its software, comprising various mental programmes such as rules and strategies for remembering, organising and evaluating incoming information.

Quote 1.10 On the development of hardware and software systems in childhood

As children's brains and nervous systems mature (hardware improvements) and as they adopt new strategies for attending to information, interpreting it, remembering what they have experienced, and monitoring their mental activities (software improvements), they are able to perform increasingly complex cognitive feats with greater speed and accuracy.

(Shaffer and Kipp 2010: 299)

One of the most important aspects of hardware development is brain growth. At birth, the brain weighs only about 30 per cent of its adult weight. By the age of 2 the weight of the brain is about 70 per cent and by year 6 it is 90 per cent of its adult weight (Thatcher *et al.* 1996). While brain development is continuous and extends beyond childhood, researchers have identified spurts of brain growth based on brain weight and skull size and in electrical activity of the cortex (Epstein 1980; Thatcher 1994). Specific growth spurts seem to occur at the age of 1.5–2 years, 7.5–9 years, then between the ages of 12 and 15, and finally another spurt around 18–20. The first spurt coincides with major increases in L1 development and the second spurt happens around Piaget's pre-operational/operation shift. The next growth spurt may signal significant developments in abstract thinking and literacy development, while the last one can be associated with the development of the mature adult capacity for reflective thought (Fischer and Rose 1995; Kitchener *et al.* 1993).

In order to appreciate the different components and processes of the computer-mind, it is a good starting point to consider the mind as a multi-store model (Atkinson and Shiffrin 1968). According to this model, when input reaches the mind and the individual chooses to attend to it, it gets stored and processed, first of all, in the short-term memory store. This memory store is of limited capacity. Originally it was thought that the human working memory was capable of storing only seven pieces of unrelated information, such as seven random numbers (Miller 1956). This, of course, is not quite true, as the basic capacity can be increased dramatically according to what strategies the individual applies, such as categorising the seemingly random numbers in a meaningful way. According to Baddeley (1994), the capacity of the short-term memory store can be stretched to as many as 20 items in this way.

If the incoming new information is important, the individual needs to transfer it from the short-term memory store into the long-term store, which has infinite capacity. According to the 'levels of processing model' (Baddeley 1992), when information enters the mind, it can be stored in different ways. Information interpreted meaningfully or deeply will be linked to other information and will be retained more permanently in the long-term memory store. When a particular link is strengthened, it becomes automatised. Automatic processes demand little or no attentional resources and they can free up spare capacity for new tasks. Automatised processes in language learning helps speakers retrieve huge chunks of language from their long-term memory store without having to consciously think about the separate constituent parts. This allows speakers to develop fluency in a second language.

1.4.1 Attention

Before any information can be stored or processed, individuals must notice it and attend to it. Children's attention improves over time. Sustained

attention improves with age, which means that children get better at keeping their attention on the core features of the task. Cognitive inhibition, i.e. cutting out distractions while working at a particular task, also improves with age. Gains in cognitive inhibition are particularly marked from early to middle childhood but further improvements occur in adolescence (e.g. Riderinkhof and van der Molen 1997). Planning makes attention more effective and goal-directed.

Example study 1.3 Vurpillot (1968): Children's attentional strategies

In this study the researcher explored the attentional strategies of children between the ages of 3 and 9 years. The children were invited to look at two drawings of houses. Each house had six windows but there were some small differences between the two houses. Some windows were drawn with curtains, some without, some were open and some were closed. The children were invited to look at the two drawings to decide whether the houses were the same or not. Considering the task, the most appropriate strategy is to look at each window one by one in the first house and compare all windows to their corresponding pair in the second house. The researchers recorded the children's eye movements to gain insights into the ways which they directed their attention. The findings showed that all children aged 5 or younger only examined a few windows and quickly concluded that there were no differences, that the houses were exactly the same. Children from age 6 onwards were more likely to examine pairs of windows and those children older than 6 started to use the systematic strategy of comparing windows one by one, i.e. effectively and exhaustively.

Attentional strategies improve particularly sharply in middle childhood (Strutt, Anderson and Well 1975). Older children are more adaptive, adjusting their attention to the changing requirements of the situation. The ability to focus attention on the basis of previous experience of similar tasks continues to improve into adulthood as studying at tertiary level puts new challenges on attention allocation (Brown, Smiley and Lawton 1978).

From the language teacher's point of view, it is important to remember that young children under 5 or 6 years of age may not enjoy tasks such as 'Spot the differences' or other types of problem-solving puzzles, because they are not able to direct their attention in ways that may be required by such tasks. It is better to plan activities that involve routine patterns of active participation.

1.4.2 Processing capacity and memory store

The total processing capacity of the hardware system increases with age, according to Kail's studies (1993, 1997). He gave individuals between the

ages of 7 and 22 a variety of cognitive tasks and found that the average processing time decreased with age for all tasks. A steady decline across the ages eventually trailed off at 12 years of age. This pattern was repeated for motor tasks such as tapping, clapping, and many other tasks. The patterns were very similar. These findings are particularly robust because the same patterns of declining processing speed can also be found among different nationalities and cultures.

Research into measuring memory stores shows that age differences are highly reliable, as children can store more information as they get older. Among the forerunners of modern memory research were Brunswick, Goldscheider and Pilek (1932), who found that a linear and steep rise in memory store development occurred between the ages of 6 and 11 years of age. This was followed by a plateau in performance during pre- and early adolescence. The basic memory span of a 2-year-old is just two items, the span of a 5-year-old is four items, the span of a 7-year-old is five items and the span of a 9-year-old is six items, as compared to the adult's span which is seven items.

Case (1985) found that as cognitive processes (e.g. multiplying 12 by 8) are executed more efficiently with age, they require less operating space. In turn, this means that there is more resource available in short-term memory to manipulate information. In children (between the ages of 3 and 16) the amount of resource available to store information about how to perform a task (storage space) is a function of their chronological age. (Case 1972; Scardamalia 1977). However, the resource necessary to process instructions and store task information (operating space) develops very slowly in younger children (aged 3–8) and more rapidly from 8 onwards.

1.4.3 Expertise

In addition to a gradual increase in capacity with age, domain-specific knowledge, i.e. expertise in a particular area, can enhance our ability to store, remember and retrieve information. A widely cited study by Chi (1978) compared recall results of chess positions of adult novices and expert children. Both adults and children were asked to remember a range of chess positions for recall. The experiment demonstrated that the chess-expert children had significantly better memory spans for chess positions than did chess-novice adults, despite the fact that adults showed larger memory spans for digits in an earlier task. This finding supports the argument that domain-specific expertise is an essential element of recall success. Experts have a more organised memory. Wood (1998: 35) argues that both experts and novices share the same channel capacity, but an expert manages to encode the six to seven items as a meaningful configuration rather than as seven isolated pieces. Another study by Schneider and Bjorklund (1992) confirmed the importance of domain-specific expertise. They investigated novice and

expert soccer specialists' ability to recall lists and found that experts remembered far more items on the soccer list than did non-experts. Having large amounts of knowledge and experience in a particular area can aid memory functions although domain knowledge might not be the only factor, because these children are often highly motivated too.

Quote 1.11 On the importance of expertise

Several studies demonstrated that rich domain-knowledge enabled a child expert to perform much like an adult expert and better than an adult novice – thus showing a disappearance and sometimes reversal of usual developmental trends. Experts and novices not only differed with regard to quantity of knowledge but also regarding the quality of knowledge, that is, the way their knowledge was represented in the mind.

(Schneider 2006: 247)

Increasing levels of processing and growing expertise both have implications for language teachers. Children's gradual ability to cope with increasingly complex tasks which require storing and retrieving larger amounts of information (e.g. memory games and reading tasks) allows teachers to select more and more challenging tasks with older learners. Teachers can explore their learners' interests and expertise so that L2 learning may focus on these areas.

1.4.4 Mental representations

How does incoming information get represented in children's minds? In terms of the representations in the mind for concepts, facts and ideas, the number of representations and the strength of associations are increasing throughout the developmental process. Simon (1974) pointed out that older children seem to include more information per chunk than younger children. In terms of the nature of links among items, children progress from a more *perceptually* organised representation base to a more *conceptually* organised representation base. Young children form groups of similar objects on the basis of perceptual similarity. Older children however are most likely to invoke super-ordinate relations to explain similarity, moving to a more advanced, abstract, conceptually based approach. For example, in a word sorting exercise, younger children would put together *banana* and *monkey*, whereas older children would put *banana* with *apples* in the super-ordinate category of *fruit*. These developmental trends have implications for teaching L2 vocabulary.

Quote 1.12 On the development of hierarchical word relationships

The words for basic level concepts are the most commonly used words, they are learnt by children before words higher or lower in the hierarchy, they are the shortest words, and they are the words used in neutral contexts e.g. *We have always kept dogs* is more likely to be used than *We have always kept spaniels*. Conceptually, the basic level is the highest level at which objects have similar shapes, are used in similar ways and at which a single mental image can be used for the whole category (Lakoff 1987). So we can create a single image of a chair but not of furniture, and we interact physically with all chairs in the same way (by sitting on them), but interact differently with different examples of furniture. At a basic level, a child's experience with the physical world links directly into the development of concepts and vocabulary, serving as an 'entry point' for learning.

(Cameron 2001: 79–80)

Younger children's knowledge is not represented in the same way as older children's and adults' knowledge. They have fewer features or dimensions with which to represent concepts. Older children tend to have more numerous, more varied and more abstract dimensions. Category boundaries of young children's concepts are restricted and less well-defined. Children do not lack hierarchical structures entirely, but rather, their hierarchy is perhaps less reliable and contains incomplete information. Even preschool children's categorical representations are hierarchical (Keil 1981) but less complete and systematic. Overall, the development is the constant reorganisation of existing knowledge so that the more salient and more abstract attributes are stored at higher levels of hierarchy.

The following study illustrates the importance of the development of hierarchical relationships between concepts.

Example study 1.4 Verhallen and Schoonen (1993): Lexical knowledge of bilingual children

This study explored Dutch-speaking (monolingual) and Turkish-speaking (bilingual) children's lexical knowledge in the Netherlands. The participants were 80 children between the ages of 9 and 11. The researchers used a definition task where children had to express all the meanings of words that they knew. This allowed the researchers to analyse more in-depth how meaning structures were represented in children's minds. In definitions it is possible to refer to vertical relations between concepts which are hierarchical (such as the relationships between *dogs*, *animals* and *mammals*), or horizontal relations (such as the relationships between *dogs*, *they sniff*, *they are used for protection*, or *they have four legs*). The results showed the older children used more hierarchical categories whereas younger

children used more horizontal categories and subjective descriptions. The study also showed that bilingual (Turkish-Dutch) children lagged behind monolingual children in their ability to produce effective definitions.

1.4.5 Memory strategies

Memory strategies can be divided into two categories: those related to short-term, and those related to long-term memory.

Concept 1.4 Short-term memory strategies: rehearsal, organisation and elaboration

These strategies are used to store information effectively so as to help recall. *Rehearsal* means repeating the information in some way orally or in writing. *Organisation* means to manipulate the information so that it is more meaningful, for example, by putting similar words together. *Elaboration* means extending the meaning of the items in some way, such as by using metaphors or analogies, to impose personal meaning on random information.

(adapted from Berk 2000)

Concept 1.5 Long-term memory strategies: recognition, recall and reconstruction

Once the information has been stored effectively, it will be available for retrieval. *Recognition* is noticing whether an image or concept is the same as or different from a given stimulus. Recognition is a fairly automatic process by the preschool years and it does not require a deliberate search of the long term memory store. *Recall* stands for generating a mental image of something that is no longer present. The better an item was stored, the easier it is to search for it. *Reconstruction* is a complex process of recalling information but it also requires interpretation.

(adapted from Berk 2000)

Children's memory strategies become more effective with age, helping them to remember/store information as well as retrieve information from storage when necessary. Strategies are acquired as a result of deliberate learning and training efforts but children need a significant amount of time and practice to perfect them.

The first memory strategy to develop is rehearsal or repetition for memorisation, followed by organisation and elaboration. It appears that younger children, between 3 and 4 years of age do not rehearse at all. Children aged 7–10 can rehearse but only with help, while 12-year-olds can rehearse

without help. According to Flavell (1992), rehearsal and organisation strategies develop quickly between 5 and 10 years of age.

Even when young children are encouraged to rehearse, their rehearsal efforts have little effect on their memory performance until about the age of 6 (Baker-Ward, Ornstein and Holden 1984). Some young children can be trained to rehearse, but when given the opportunity to do so without prompting, most children abandon the strategy (Bjorklund *et al.* 1997). Schneider and Bjorklund (2003) argue that young children may be taught to rehearse and this improves their performance, but this is a short-lived advantage and even with sustained training they cannot do as well as older children who rehearse spontaneously.

Quote 1.13 On rehearsal strategies

Even after being taught how to rehearse and having experienced evidence of its success, children will not usually rehearse spontaneously when they are asked to memorise other material. The use of rehearsal as an aid to memorisation might appear to be a simple, self-evident and obvious way to aid learning. But children learn how to do it gradually, throughout the early years of school.

(Wood 1998: 76)

The way children rehearse makes a difference, too. Simply repeating words is less effective than trying to organise them in some way: 8-year-olds repeat single words to try and remember them, whereas older children connect words within a list and repeat the list instead of individual items. This approach improves recall (Kunzinger 1985; Orstein, Naus and Liberty 1975).

Quote 1.14 On organisational strategies

Children younger than 10 years do show evidence of organising material which has to be remembered but often they do so in only a partially effective way – for example, organising a list of items is achieved best if all the items can be grouped into a small number of categories, but young children may use a large number of categories, and have several ‘categories’ which only include a single item.

(Smith, Cowie and Blades 1998: 377)

By the time children are 9–10 years of age, they can often consider the nature of the list before deciding on how to memorise it (McGilly and Siegler 1990). Unless items are highly familiar and strongly associated, children under the age of 8 do not group them at all (Best and Ornstein 1986; Bjorklund and Jacobs 1985). Until they are 9–10 years of age, children are no better

at recalling items that can be semantically organised than those that are difficult to organise because they are unrelated (Hasselhorn 1992).

Quote 1.15 On emerging organisational strategies

It has been suggested that whereas older children and adults enter a memory task with a deliberate strategy to organize material for recall, the organization seen in the protocols of younger children may not represent an intentional strategy per se. Rather, the categorical relations in a list may be discovered only at output, while a child is in the process of retrieving individual items (Bjorklund 1980, Bjorklund & Hock, in press)[=1981: AP]

(Bjorklund and Zeman 1982: 800)

Ornstein *et al.* (1985) propose that children gradually transfer a strategic approach to settings in which the interim connections may be less salient.

Long after learning rehearsal and organisational strategies, elaboration is developed. Elaboration rarely appears before the age of 11. Children's working memories must expand before they are able to use this strategy (Schneider and Pressley 1997). With age, they are able to create more and more meaningful and memorable relationships between items that need to be remembered.

Children's ability to remember and retrieve experiences also develops steadily in childhood. General representations of events, called 'scripts', help children interpret familiar experiences (Berk 2000: 295). Young children develop 'scripted memory' of events by gradually absorbing what happens at significant events such as birthday parties, in the playground or at restaurants. Then they organise and interpret these experiences so as to make predictions about similar events in the future. Novel experiences are embedded into familiar ones slowly and gradually. Autobiographical memory is built up gradually, too. Parents play an important role as they help children construct increasingly complex personal narratives by frequently talking through important events in the child's life.

Older children and adults represent a large volume of information relying on their 'fuzzy trace memory' (Brainerd and Reyna 1990). This means creating a vague *gist* that concentrates essential content without the non-essential details rather than trying to remember everything word by word.

Concept 1.6 Fuzzy trace theory and gist

A theory that proposes two types of encoding, one that automatically reconstructs information into a fuzzy version called *gist*, which is especially useful for

Concept 1.6 (Continued)

reasoning and a second, verbatim version that is adapted for answering questions about specifics.

Gist is a fuzzy representation of information that preserves essential content without details, is less likely to be forgotten than a verbatim version, and requires less mental effort to use.

(Berk 2000: 293)

Young children are biased towards storing and retrieving verbatim traces. For example, 4-year-olds are better at answering verbatim whereas children at the age of 7 are better at gist (Brainerd and Gordon 1994). Fuzzy traces help retention a great deal and in most everyday life contexts fuzzy gist is sufficient. Fuzzy traces are also less likely to be forgotten than verbatim memories.

By the age of 6–7 children can recall the important features of a story, and they can combine information into a coherent story and reorder the sequence of events to make it more logical (Mandler 1984). Over time, school-aged children become more adept at drawing inferences about actors and actions, adding information to the story to help the listener to make sense of it, increasing the coherence of the story and its memorableness (Thompson and Myers 1985). Identifying and summarising main ideas is not produced spontaneously until high school years (Bjorklund and Douglas 1997).

How do strategies develop? Strategy development is a gradual process and at the initial stages children exhibit some deficiencies. There are some stages in development that seem to occur in many areas of development with many different tasks (e.g. attention, memory).

Concept 1.7 Strategy deficiencies

Production deficiency: at this first stage a child cannot use a strategy even though it would be helpful, e.g. not using rehearsal strategies when asked to remember some words.

Control deficiency: at this stage the child can sometimes use the relevant strategy but not always; usage is not yet consistent.

Utilisation deficiency: at this stage the child applies the rehearsal strategy consistently, but despite this his or her performance on the task does not seem improve.

Siegler's model of strategy choice (1995, 1996) maintains that children generate a variety of different strategies while they are working on any one task. Siegler presented children with different problems over an extended period of time and recorded their strategy use. Large numbers of different problems (i.e. reading, spelling, time-telling, word decoding, memory for word lists and basic maths) were used and children's strategy choices were recorded in different circumstances. Siegler concluded that children's strategy development follows an 'overlapping waves pattern', which means that multiple strategies are present at any one time, with some becoming less frequent, others more frequent, and still others rising and falling over time.

Quote 1.16 On overlapping waves of strategy use

Within this overlapping wave conception, some ways of thinking are prevalent early on and then decrease in frequency, others rise from infrequent to frequent use, and then fall to infrequent use again, others grow from infrequent to frequent use and remain frequent, still others are only used occasionally even at their peak. The advantage of this conception is that it allows depiction of the diversity of children's thinking over time and the introduction of new ways of thinking into children's cognitive repertoires.

(Siegler 1995: 267)

There are many implications that arise here for teachers. For example, fuzzy trace theory suggests that young children cannot cope with traditional listening exercises such as comprehension questions and it is best to develop tasks that allow them to listen and join in with a story, a rhyme or song as they feel ready to do so. The cyclical development of strategy use implies that teachers should consider helping children discover new strategies and encourage the use of different strategies related to the same task.

1.4.6 Knowledge about thinking and the mind

Concept 1.8 Metamemory and metacognition

These terms describe what children understand about their own memory and mind. *Metamemory* refers to our knowledge and understanding about memory functions while *metacognition* refers to our knowledge and understanding about thinking, how the mind functions. *Metacognitive strategies* are those that allow us to plan, monitor and evaluate our learning and thinking.

Preschoolers often confuse remembering, knowing and guessing, and their understanding of their own mind is incomplete and limited. Very young

children believe that the mind is static and passive. So 5-year-olds still think it is possible to think of nothing, whereas 8-year-olds understand that it is not, because the mind is always active (Flavell 2000). Children younger than 6 have problems recalling what they were thinking just a minute before, whereas school-aged children make big gains in their understanding of their own memory functions and capacities. They begin to view the mind as an active constructor capable of selecting and transforming information. They are also more conscious of strategies for processing information and understand more about task variables that influence performance.

Knowledge about memory increases between the ages of 4 and 12. Children younger than 8 do not have a well-developed sense of self and an ability to self-evaluate (Harter 1998). The ability to evaluate one's performance particularly increases after the age of 11 or 12 but self-esteem generally decreases until mid-teens and this may have an effect on self-reporting (Muñoz 2007). There is a strong relationship between children's growing memory capacities, i.e. how much they can remember, and their metamemory capacities, i.e. how much they know about their own memory functions. This relationship appears especially strong in children 10 years of age or older. For example, Schneider (2004) reported that there are important correlations between metamemory, memory behaviour and memory performance. Children who can reflect on and explain why a memory strategy works show better recall (Justice *et al.* 1997).

It is clear from a teacher's point of view that these learners are ready to be engaged in self- and peer-evaluation and may be able to take some responsibility for their learning through planning, monitoring and evaluating learning processes.

1.5 Emotional development

Language learning is not just a cognitive activity concerned with remembering words and using effective strategies to recall, retain or reconstruct information. It is also important to acknowledge that children's language learning is embedded in their emotional development. Learning a new language may involve negotiating new identities and it is bound up with who we are, who we would like to become, how we feel about ourselves and how we form social relationships.

Quote 1.17 On the importance of identity in child L2 learning

Language is the most salient way we have of establishing and advertising our social identities (Lippi-Green, 1997). Young language learners, particularly second language learners, are developing new identities in the community and at

school... Looking at children's progress in language learning through the window of identity has provided powerful messages that language learning is more than the development of language knowledge (see e.g. Toohey 2000; Miller 2003).

(McKay 2006: 30–1)

1.5.1 Emotions and sense of self

In the preschool years, young children are not yet able to control their emotions and their self-concepts are very basic. When asked to say who they are, they describe their physical appearance, their possessions and perhaps their everyday behaviours (Harter 1996; Watson 1990). Their self-esteem is very high and they are described as 'learning optimists', as they rate their own abilities high. They typically underestimate task difficulty and have clear expectations of success. They cannot yet differentiate between causes of success and failure. In the primary years children rapidly gain control of their emotions. Their self-concept becomes more complex and sophisticated. When they describe themselves, they will mention both positive and negative personality traits. They become competent at comparisons and frequently compare themselves to their peers. Through these comparisons they create a more realistic picture of the self and thus their self-esteem adjusts to more realistic levels. In adolescence, the control of emotions develops further but older children have much lower self-esteem and lower levels of motivation (e.g. Victori and Tragant 2003). Self-concepts become more sophisticated. In addition to physical characteristics and personal traits, older children emphasise interpersonal relationships when they are asked to describe themselves.

1.5.2 Friendships

Preschoolers consider everybody who is available to play as a friend. Children who play together at this age often play parallel games without much mutual engagement. Yet, friendship is very important to young children even at this early age and some research (e.g. Field 1984) indicates that even kindergarten children as young as 3–4 years of age go through a period of grief response when their friends leave.

In the primary school years children begin to develop more complex friendships. Friends like each other and respond to each others' needs. Trust becomes an important aspect of friendships. Children become more selective about friends and typically end up with just a few good friends. Sex segregation in friendship groups becomes very common and typically boys' friendship groups are different from girls' groups. Berndt (1982) suggests that boys' groups are competitive and grow out of team games that are increasingly more complex in their rule structure. Boys practise leadership

and other social roles through participating in these games, whereas girls emphasise intimacy and exclusivity in friendship.

Bigelow and La Gaipa (1980) asked children to write essays about their idea and understanding of 'friendships'. The researchers noted that three different stages of development emerged with regard to the changing nature of friendships during the primary school years. When talking about friendships, children between the ages of 7 and 8 tended to focus on common activities or emphasised living nearby, whereas children between the ages of 9 and 10 began to mention shared values. Finally, by 11–12 years of age children mentioned the importance of understanding, self-disclosure and shared interests among friends. A similar study (Selman and Jaquette 1977) that used interviews to gain insights into children's conceptions of friendship, found that mutuality and reciprocity as important features of friendships emerged during the primary school years gradually. Children between the ages of 4 and 9 often said that a friend is someone who helps you but they did not talk about reciprocating. Between the ages of 9 and 15 an awareness of mutuality develops slowly and from 12 onwards children become more aware that relationships change and they accept that their friends need other relationships.

Quote 1.18 On features of children's friendships

A considerable body of research over the last 20 years has been summarised by Newcomb and Bagwell (1995) and Hartup (1996). Newcomb and Bagwell conclude that relations between friends, compared with non-friends, exhibit four particular features: reciprocity and intimacy; more intense social activity; more frequent conflict resolution; and more effective task performance.

(Smith, Cowie and Blades 1998: 121)

The following study illustrates how important friendship groups may be in terms of children's success and wellbeing at school.

Example study 1.5 Azmitia and Montgomery (1993): Benefits of working with friends

This study was carried out with 11-year-old children in California, USA. The researchers compared 18 pairs of close friends (who had each nominated each other as friends) and 18 pairs of acquaintances (who had not nominated each other as friends but who did not dislike each other either). All children had same-sex partners. The researchers gave all the children some scientific reasoning tasks to work on and video-recorded their performances. Interestingly, the results showed that friends did much better than non-friends. In particular, the problem-solving accuracy of friends was better than that of non-friends. The researchers

noted that friends appeared more able and willing to evaluate and critique each other's reasoning and whenever they disagreed they managed to resolve the conflict successfully.

By adolescence, friendship represents greater depths of intimacy, loyalty and mutual understanding. Friends may help to relieve loneliness, sadness and fear. Forgiveness is part of friendship and only major upsets will lead to ending friendships. Adolescent friends tend to be very similar to one another, with the same educational aspirations, same family background and similar taste in music, clothes and hobbies (Berndt and Keefe 1995).

Overall the implications for language teachers are clear. It is important to consider friendship groups for group and pair work as well as classroom research, as children tend to respond better to tasks in a secure, friendly environment.

1.6 Conclusion

What can children's language teachers' learn from these theories? Combined with teachers' own experiences, these ideas, propositions, research findings and debates can spark new interests, encourage investigations and help explain successes and failures in everyday teaching. The best way to view these three approaches is to focus on how they complement our understanding about children. Table 3 attempts to summarise some implications that language teachers may consider, but it is important that we all draw our own conclusions and insights.

Table 3 Implications for language teachers

Some implications for teachers	
Piaget	<p>Taking developmental stages into account when planning tasks, and teaching materials for different age groups</p> <p>Anchoring young children's tasks in the here-and-now and planning simple, one-dimensional tasks</p> <p>Encouraging hands-on tasks for young children</p> <p>Taking care with planning the language of task instructions and explanations</p> <p>Creating opportunities for creative explorations</p>
Vygotsky	<p>Importance of the tutor/teacher in guiding children's thinking</p> <p>Encouraging collaborative learning to create opportunities for peer scaffolding</p>

Table 3 (Continued)

Some implications for teachers	
	Expecting wide variations across cultures but also across individuals as they interpret the same task
	Taking into account where the current level of the learners is so that they can learn effectively within their ZPD
	Paying attention to the process of learning rather than just the product/ outcomes
	Thinking about effective language use, both the teacher's and learners' in classrooms
Information processing	Teaching and practising strategies, not just one but different ones
	Encouraging different approaches and offering alternatives
	Encouraging students to monitor their behaviour and learning processes
	Building on an increasingly more powerful memory store capacity between the ages of 6 and 12
	Taking into account what children are knowledgeable about when planning teaching content
	Encouraging self-assessment, especially with children of 10 or over
Emotional development	Building positive self-esteem and a positive L2 self-image
	Encouraging pair and group work among friends

Language Learning Processes in Childhood: First and Second Languages

(Please answer in **full sentences** and **in your own words**)

1. What are some cross cultural differences in first language learning that are noted in the text? In your opinion, how might these differences influence second language teaching and learning?

2. During the primary school years, what kind of first language development is still ongoing? How is grammar learner as a pattern or as a function? What does this mean for us as second language teachers?

3. What does current research say about the critical period hypothesis? In terms of second language learning who are the strongest learners: Children, adolescents or adults? Why?

2

Language Learning Processes in Childhood: First and Second Languages

This chapter will

- outline some important aspects of L1 development in childhood
- consider the ‘age factor’ in L1 and L2 acquisition
- review the debate around the Critical Period Hypothesis (CP)
- discuss evidence from both naturalistic second language and formal foreign language contexts

2.1 Introduction

How are first and second languages learnt? Some theories stress universal/biological foundations and processes, others focus on cognitive aspects, such as memory functions and strategies, and yet others focus on social and cultural influences. Table 4 summarises some popular approaches.

Language acquisition research is a heavily contested area and no one theory is universally accepted. Each approach offers a different point of view and a different emphasis to explain language acquisition phenomena. Together they contribute to our ever-increasing understanding of language learning.

2.2 First language acquisition in childhood

Exploring L1 development is crucial to second language teachers. In order to make your teaching effective, you will need to familiarise yourself with the linguistic background of your pupils. How far have the children progressed in the acquisition of their L1? How much do they already know about the formal properties of their L1? What grammatical terminology are they familiar with? What vocabulary might still be unfamiliar in L1? Can they read fluently in their L1? How much writing do they do in L1? Questions like these will influence second language teachers’ day-to-day decisions about how to

Table 4 Some language learning theories/approaches

Behaviourism (e.g. Skinner 1957)	Stimulus and response connections build habits Complex behaviour is shaped by breaking it into parts and drilling each element, adding new elements gradually Children are born as ‘clean slates’ and the role of the environment is significant in shaping them
Universal Grammar/nativist approach (e.g. Chomsky 1987)	Humans are biologically pre-programmed to learn Language has an innate blueprint Universal Grammar contains a set of specifications for permissible structures in any language Children do not violate UG rules
Cognitive approaches (Anderson 1985)	The human mind is a computer Learning is information processing Learning involves storing and retrieving information Learning leads to automatism and developing declarative and procedural knowledge
Input and interactions (e.g. Larsen- Freeman and Long 1991)	Both comprehensible input and interaction are necessary for language learning Meaning negotiation drives language learning forward Focus on form and feedback are also essential Learners need opportunities for input, interaction and output
Socio-cultural perspectives (e.g. Lantolf 2006)	Language learning is socially mediated Dynamic relationship between individuals and environment Interactional routines are culturally determined Linguistic and cultural knowledge are inseparable

approach aspects of L2 teaching. Children’s L1 knowledge and competence also has consequences for researchers (see Chapter 6).

2.2.1 **Preschool years**

Babies begin their journey of becoming communicators (Berk 2000: 368) as they learn to use eye-contact, smile and begin to gaze in different directions. At around 3 months vocalisation and turn-taking begins and by the end of the first year most children realise that they can communicate effectively by using two basic forms of preverbal gestures: ‘protodeclaratives’ (i.e. making

declarative utterances such as ‘there’ meaning ‘My car is there’) and ‘pro-
toimperatives’ (i.e. asking for things such as ‘koko’ by stretching out to reach
toward some chocolate, meaning ‘Give me that chocolate’).

The last quarter of the first year is an important turning point in
development.

Quote 2.1 On the development of joint attentional behaviours

At nine months of age human infants begin engaging in a number of so-called joint attentional behaviours that seem to indicate an emerging understanding of other persons as intentional agents like the self, whose relations to outside entities may be followed, directed or shared.

(Tomasello 1999: 61)

The second year is characterised by more and more turn-taking and gestures. Typically 2-year-olds recognise about 200 words but would actively use fewer. Initially, they can produce only a small number of sounds: words with repeated syllables such as ‘mama, dada, bye-bye’. Simplified language input from parents with words such as ‘tummy, choo-choo’ reinforces this phenomenon. Around the middle of their second year, toddlers begin to use sound patterns and rhythm in creative ways. This is linked to early encounters with nursery rhymes and songs in the company of their parents, siblings or even the media. Many toddlers with busy parents spend a great deal of time watching TV or educational DVDs and learn new language in this way.

With regard to vocabulary acquisition, children first learn so-called minimal words (two sounds) then add an end consonant, change the length of the vowel and finally produce the word. Word learning is fast during the pre-school years and children’s pronunciation improves steadily. Phonological development is largely complete by the time children go to school but aspects of intonation and stress patterns will be acquired much later. Babies say their first words at around the age of 12 months, although there is a large variation across individuals. By the time children go to school they know many thousands of words. It has been assessed that children pick up an average of 5–8 new words a day (Berk 2000). The earliest words they learn refer to important people, objects, familiar actions and their outcomes (e.g. ‘mummy gone’). Between the ages of 18 and 24 months a spurt of vocabulary learning takes place. Nelson (1996) points to the centrality of naming and referring that is first achieved in non-linguistic ways (pointing and gesturing). Parents keep naming things and much of this early language learning is related to common vocabulary that will serve as a basis for further communication.

Quote 2.2 On the importance of naming things

Events are non-linear and dynamic – action, actor and object are only three aspects of the complex situation in which many objects are visible at once and many actions take place at the same time. The practice of drawing attention to a specific object and naming it places it in a privileged class of named things that can be talked about in any situation.

(Nelson 1996: 338)

Nelson suggests that this kind of naming and referring is later extended to abstract categories such as places, events and time. These abstract concepts are embedded in local cultures and they are learnt gradually over the years.

One strategy for word learning is ‘fast mapping’ which means acquiring words after hearing them used in familiar contexts. Both under-extension and over-extension are common strategies in early word acquisition. For example, ‘bear’ may be used to refer only to a teddy (under-extension) or ‘chicken’ might be used to refer to a duck (over-extension). Around the age of 2 coining words is common. Children use novel ways of expressing themselves by building on analogies, such as a child aged 3–4 years calling a Dalmatian ‘a dog with chicken pox’. Another strategy for word learning described by Clark (1990) is the ‘lexical contrast’ strategy. When learning a new word, children contrast it with other words they already know. This works well for early vocabulary because many basic words refer to separate entities that are non-overlapping (such as ‘big’ and ‘small’). A further strategy is ‘syntactic bootstrapping’ (Gleitman 1990) which implies deducing word meanings from how the words are used in syntax. For example, in the sentence ‘the cat caught the mouse’ and the ‘the cat and the mouse are singing’ the child can work out that the first verb requires an object whereas the second one does not. The first sentence implies that the cat is doing something to the mouse whereas in the second sentence they are doing something together. Learning new vocabulary is a cyclical process. Children hear a word in a relevant context but they may not immediately understand it. It may take encountering the word many times before they begin to use it themselves.

A variety of different factors influence word learning, such as children’s cognitive foundations (their memory capacity, their ability to recall), the rate of their neurological maturation, personal styles, the quantity and quality of adult–child communication, individual differences and even cultural differences are important. Interestingly, birth order makes quite a big difference. First-born children are used to a more referential style of labelling objects while later-born children learn a more expressive style of language as they listen to their parents and older siblings regulating others’ behaviour (Oshima-Takane, Goodz and Derevensky 1996). Overheard conversations between

adults and older siblings may be a useful source for development. For example, it would not be unusual for a 3-year-old to say to an older sibling 'Stop making a fuss about everything', as he would copy what parents often say to older children. The younger sibling can pick up phrases like that, whereas a first-born would not have had this opportunity. On the other hand, other research cited by Foster-Cohen (1999) suggests that second-born children may be slower at language development in general because their older siblings can work out what they mean and take care of their needs without the younger ones needing to communicate their needs clearly and explicitly.

There are also interesting cultural differences in the way parents talk to their children and thus in the way children learn new words.

Quote 2.3 On cross-cultural differences

English-speaking mothers tend to use more nouns than verbs and this is reflected in the infant's tendency to learn nouns before verbs. By contrast, Korean- and Mandarin-speaking mothers tend to use more verbs, and their infants' early words are as likely to be verbs as nouns (Gopnik and Choi 1995, Tardiff 1996). English-speaking mothers tend to focus on objects and activities, giving their babies directions and asking them questions, whereas Japanese mothers focus on the child's feelings and emotions (Fernald and Morikawa 1993, Toda, Fogel and Kawai 1990), differences that are reflected in their infants' early word learning.

(Thornton 2008: 192)

In terms of grammar, the first sentences tend to appear at around 1.5 years of age. Initially toddler talk is described as telegraphic speech (no articles, prepositions or auxiliary verbs are used). Telegraphic speech is remarkably similar across many languages, although, for example, in highly inflected languages such as Turkish or Russian, important grammatical markers are acquired early. Telegraphic speech is often ambiguous because of its fragmented nature and this is why children need to use gestures and intonation to make their early utterances clearer and more effective.

At first, two-word utterances are used and then a third word is added. UG researchers believe that an elaborate grammar is already present in the background and this is why children do not violate certain rules of grammar. Others, such as, for example, Tomasello (1995) argue that two-word utterances are copies of adult language. By the age of 2–3 children begin to add grammatical markers such as plurals. Acquisition of less complex morphemes is followed by more complex ones (e.g. Johnston and Slobin 1979). The acquisition of grammatical morphemes is vital as these will help to give more precise meaning to utterances. In English, grammatical morphemes seem to be acquired in more or less a consistent order. Brown (1973) reported that the three children in a study learnt 14 grammatical morphemes in English in

exactly the same order. Children over-extend grammatical rules as well: for example, the irregular past tense in English is often produced by using the regular marker (e.g. *go *goed*). [The asterisk as usual indicates an incorrect form.] Initially children might use *went*, the correct form, because this is what they hear others use, but at a later stage when they learn to apply the '-ed' marker for regular past tense, they over-extend this rule to irregular verbs: '*go-goed*'. This is a very good example of a developmental error which shows active analysis and an attempt to apply rules. Negatives and questions also take a cyclical developmental path. Toddlers' first questions are declaratives with rising intonation such as 'where mummy go?' At the next stage they learn to use the copula 'where mummy is going?' and finally they correct the word order to 'where is mummy going?' The negative construction is similar. Development occurs in a step-like fashion. Three steps are common, such as 'No I go', 'I no go', 'I don't go'. By the age of 3 more negatives and questions are used. Sentences get longer as children learn to use coordination ('and'). Later, subordinate connectives are added such as 'if' and 'when'.

Research shows (e.g. Snow 1986) that speech addressed to young children (18–36 months) is both simpler and more grammatical than ordinary adult speech that is characterised by ill-formedness, hesitation and ungrammaticalities. As parents talk to their children, they constantly try to teach them about language. Children have a salient acoustic basis for separating out declaratives, imperatives and questions early on and because parents' utterances are restricted to the 'here and now' contexts, it is easy to follow the gist of the intended meaning. Parents are experts at fine-tuning their utterances to the needs of their children. Conversations are generally unequal, i.e. dominated by the adult interlocutor, although effective interlocutors follow the child's lead and let them guide the line of conversation. Parents expand on the child's utterances by reformulating telegraphic utterances, turning them into correct utterances. This may also be a source of syntactic development for children. Parent talk is an important source of continuous language development and the quality of the talk is particularly important in preparing children to become effective communicators.

Quote 2.4 On the importance of parent talk

Children whose parents were more prone to instruct made less than average progress whereas those whose parents were more concerned to ensure mutual understanding and, above all, to extend the children's topics through related questions, comments and explanations, were likely to make faster than average progress. These parents, it is suggested, as well as providing clear evidence from which the child can construct his control of the language, also increase his motivation to communicate and to acquire the means to do so more effectively.

(Wells 1986: 137)

Engaging children in dialogue, such as joint picture-book reading, enhances their language skills, but in addition to the linguistic benefits it also helps children learn about people's mental states, motives, emotions and different cause and effect relationships.

Young children's communication in the preschool years is very much related to their everyday experiences and they are not yet able to communicate in a de-contextualised manner. De-contextualised communication requires an acute awareness of the listener's needs. When a young child is talking on the phone and expects the listener to see his new pyjamas, it is clear that this child cannot appreciate yet that the person on the other end of the line cannot see the pyjamas and will need a description. According to Lloyd, Baker and Dunn (1984), younger children show inadequacies both as speakers and as listeners. As speakers they have difficulty in constructing unambiguous messages and as listeners they can't judge the adequacy of simple messages. Robinson and Robinson (1983) demonstrated that young children automatically blamed the listener for unsuccessful communication, regardless of the message quality. The authors showed that the shift from listener-blaming to speaker-blaming was a phenomenon which was related to coming to understand the importance of the message in referential communication. Most 3-year-olds give ambiguous descriptions of objects and places, and the ability to send a clear message (describe objects unambiguously) develops with age (Deutsch and Pechmann 1982). As they get older, children become better at communicating with unfamiliar people and people who are out of sight. They give fuller explanations to people they are not familiar with than to people who they know (Sonnenschein 1986).

The development of metalinguistic awareness is slow in young children. The ability to think about language as a system is emerging gradually. For example, most 4-year-olds are aware that word labels are arbitrary but some may confuse a long word with a long object: for example, they might say a long word is 'snake' because of the shape and length of the actual animal. Metalinguistic awareness, just like metacognitive awareness (see Chapter 1), develops fast during the years of primary school as a combined result of factors such as physical maturation and school-induced strategies and thinking skills.

2.2.2 Primary school years

According to Berk (2000), between the start of the elementary school and adolescence, vocabulary increases four-fold, to about 40,000 words. Children's ability to understand and give definitions improves with age and synonyms appear, and 10–11 year olds can add new words to their vocabulary by simply being given a definition. Individual variation is still important and children who read regularly will accelerate their learning of words. School-aged children begin to appreciate multiple meanings of words, subtle

mental metaphors, humour and puns, and they begin to develop a capacity for abstract reasoning. Understanding non-literal meaning and irony is a fairly late development, emerging after the age of 10.

Until the late 1960s it was assumed that a 5-year-old had already completed his acquisition of the syntactic features of the L1 and any further development was devoted to the expansion of the lexicon. However, given Piaget's findings about fundamental cognitive changes after the age of 5, it seemed reasonable to hypothesise that the child's linguistic competence must also reflect these changes. Equally, Carol Chomsky's (1969) work made it clear that there were very important developments taking place between the ages of 5 and 10. She drew a distinction between 'basic tools of language' (e.g. pronominalisation) which she maintained were acquired by age 5, and 'specialised syntactic tools' for complex constructions gradually mastered between 5 and 10 years of age. Children during the middle school years acquire a range of complex structures, for example the full passive construction in English, by gradually extending the passive forms to different nouns, first animate, then inanimate. They also begin to form understanding of the pronoun reference systems and the conditional structures. Syntactic development is slow and continues into young adulthood.

One aspect of grammatical development is related to understanding that two or more functions can be represented by the same linguistic form. One study that showed this is focussed on the use of determiners in French-speaking children. Karmiloff-Smith (1986) proposed that children acquire just one function at a time and the development is stage-like. In French *le* and *les* have several related but different meanings: 4-year-old children can understand that 'le chien' makes reference to a single dog, and 'les chiens' to more than one dog. However, 'les' can also mean all the dogs, referring not just to 'plurality' but also to 'totality' (to all the dogs in a picture, for example). The ability to use 'les' to refer to 'plurality' and 'totality' simultaneously only emerges in French children at around the age of 8. It is not that children do not understand the concept of totality because they can express this meaning in a different way, but it is simply that they do not yet appreciate the multiple, simultaneous functions of the same linguistic form.

In addition to lexical and grammatical development, children during the school years become more explicit, more precise and more listener-friendly when constructing messages. At home, children are typically supported by sympathetic listeners who are familiar with their lives. Most of the early talk is about the immediate environment, about directly perceivable and observable aspects of everyday life. In fact, children often do not need to understand the precise meaning of a word because they can work it out from the context. It is this primary reliance on context and contextual cues which makes communication in a familiar setting a stress-free enterprise for the young child. School represents the first unfamiliar context for many children, where a totally different type of communication is required. At school,

in conversations with teachers and peers over tasks, at least some of the time, the precise meaning of words can matter a great deal.

Quote 2.5 On switching to using talk in an intellectual way

When we as adult questioners, use language in ordinary conversational ways, we expect that children will do likewise. We would be quite annoyed if they did not. But when we set someone an intellectual problem (and even a very simple construct-mode problem may be genuinely 'intellectual') we switch, often without noticing it, into using language in an intellectual way – that is, with the expectation that the precise wording is to be definitive. We intend that language shall be given primacy over other clues as to the nature of the task. However, the trouble is that young children do not necessarily know this.

(Donaldson 1992: 119)

During the primary school years children experience and practise language in different contexts. They listen to the teacher talking at school, they talk together with their peers during groupwork and they chat in the corridor and in the playground. Those children who have siblings spend a considerable time talking and playing together. Some children will be learning and using two languages simultaneously during these years. For example, at home they may be using their L1 while at school they may be learning some or all subjects in another language (L2). Chapter 3 reviews many similar examples.

It is important to have a great deal of practice in participating in different types of school talk. Mercer (1995) distinguishes three types of peer talk in school activities. The first type is *disputational* talk which is characterised by disagreements, short turns offering suggestions, assertions and counter-assertions. The participants are in competition with each other and each seems to have a strong desire to win the point. The second type of talk is *cumulative* talk, where the speakers build positively on what the previous speaker says. This sort of talk is characterised by repetition, agreements, confirmations, elaborations. The third type of talk is *exploratory* talk, where the partners are engaged in critically constructing the discourse. This is a very important type of talk to experience. In this talk, children offer suggestions to each other for joint consideration and the suggestions are carefully examined, challenged and justified. In the process, alternatives are offered and reasons are requested. Talking with a partner is an opportunity to put half-formed ideas into words. Having to say what you mean, thinking aloud, is a way of making your thoughts clear to yourself and having to say things to a partner is a way of developing a shared understanding of ideas. Learning to analyse and clarify one's own thoughts and learning to express oneself clearly and explicitly are very important for different school tasks, and children make great progress in this respect during middle childhood.

According to Rodino and Snow (1997), this explicit way of talking is similar to the reflective and distanced stance that is required when working on writing tasks.

Successful participation in referential communication requires the development of an ability to appreciate different points of view. As children mature in their roles as communicators they begin to act more deliberately rather than spontaneously. They learn that message quality affects the success of communication, that as a listener you have to respond to both adequate and inadequate messages to help the speaker. The tendency to give more information after listener feedback also increases with age (Patterson and Kister 1981). Just as in other areas of strategy development (Siegler 1981), children go through certain stages to achieve ever-more effective strategies in handling referential tasks. Whitehurst and Sonnenschein (1981) explain that in a typical referential communication task a speaker can give three types of description. The first one is a 'contrastive description' when the speaker provides the minimum necessary information, not more and not less. This is the most effective strategy in describing. The second type is 'redundant description', when the speaker says more than necessary. Finally, the third type is 'incomplete description' when the speaker provides less than necessary information for the listener to act upon. Preschoolers are uninformative: they frequently give incomplete information in description tasks. Then, as they mature they become redundant, and finally contrastive speakers. Lloyd's study (1991) showed that 10-year-olds and adults behaved very similarly on a task that required communicating route directions to each other. However, 7-year-olds produced fewer adequate messages than the older children and adults.

De-contextualised communication and exploratory talk both place demands on children that are similar to the demands of literacy. The introduction to, and an increasing reliance on, literacy in primary school helps children make further developments in their L1. In the earlier years of primary school, children's writing does not much differ from their speaking. However, by the time they are 9–10 years old (Perera 1986) their writing differs from their speech in that it is largely free of mazes, i.e. circular arguments and repetitive descriptions, and colloquial constructions such as tag statements or vague clause completers. There is, however, great variation among children. Writing helps to develop many aspects of children's language such as relative clauses, parenthetical constructions, clause length, and subject and noun phrase complexity. All of these continue to improve into adulthood. The middle childhood is also the period of rapidly developing metalinguistic thought. Children are able to reflect on their thoughts and language use, bringing implicit knowledge to consciousness and examining it by using language. This leads to understanding new relationships and new theoretical propositions. They are also able to analyse unknown words and make inferences.

2.2.3 Post-primary school years

L1 development continues after the primary school years into adolescence and adulthood.

Quote 2.6 On developing one's L1 across the lifespan

... in terms of Piagetian cognitive maturation, adolescents have attained abstract thinking and have well-established metacognitive skills, developments that both enable and are fostered by advances in linguistic knowledge. This does not mean that later language development culminates in a clear end state. Rather, the process continues across the lifespan ...

(Berman 2007: 348)

During the post-primary years, many further, subtle structural refinements take place in addition to the massive acquisition of more marked lexis. The most important changes that occur in this period are strongly related to the acquiring of new, more sophisticated forms of literacy.

Vocabulary increases by thousands of words each year (Anglin 1993). Late elementary/early high school students will learn 3,000 to 5,400 words per year. This advanced vocabulary store contains more marked forms which are greater in length, less frequent and semantically more specialised or more formal. Adolescents are able to use more affixing, compounding, synonymy and polysemy. They also develop an increasing sensitivity to different registers. They are able to alternate between colloquial, everyday expressions and words which are more formal, more distanced and academic in style. These words in English tend to be of Latin origin, e.g. *alternate* instead of *switch*. In writing, their lexical diversity and the mean length of sentences will increase. Adolescents appreciate jokes, riddles, similes, idioms, metaphors, proverbs, and they understand figurative language and irony. Different types of linguistic humour ranging from obvious to subtle become available.

Complex grammatical structures are used more often, such as, in English, the past perfect tense. The use of infinitives, gerunds and participles will also increase together with non-finite subordination, as in 'Being close friends, they decided to attend the event together'. Tighter connectivity appears in discourse. Passives and modals are used a great deal. Complex noun phrases and sophisticated sentence connectors appear.

According to Berman (2007), multifunctional structures take on ever more sophisticated forms, such as those demonstrated in the following example. One of the earliest inflections acquired in English is the *-ing* ending that is initially used in young children's speech to describe present and past progressive events, such as the 'the children are swimming/were swimming'. Then, at the next stage, the non-finite form appears, such as 'watch someone

swimming'. Much later again, the nominalised form is acquired, such as 'swimming is healthy'. Next, non-finite subordination appears, such as 'swimming fast to save his life, he swallowed a lot of water'. Finally, a relative construction with the *-ing* form appears: 'an issue requiring attention'. This illustrates well the route of development of a single structure from preschool to mature, proficient speakers/writers.

Quote 2.7 On the route of development

Clearly no single factor can explain the complex and protracted route from preschool interactive language use to command of formal book language. Growth in command of linguistic forms and structures is an obvious prerequisite but its pattern is not simply cumulative. Rather, forms previously used in restricted contexts and for limited functions are extended to new metaphorical and communicative contexts, while initially restricted discursive functions are expressed by means of an expanding repertoire of linguistic forms.

(Berman 2007: 359)

Wood reminds us that spoken fluency, for example in telling effective narratives, is not an automatic skill but something that adolescents acquire parallel to learning sophisticated literacy skills. To tell a story coherently requires orchestrating a range of different skills:

Quote 2.8 On adolescent spoken fluency

The child that is fortunate enough to achieve fluent levels of literacy has at her disposal a whole new range of words, linguistic structures and skills in planning which enable her to create interesting, informative, dramatic and *coherent* narrative. Such a child may draw upon and exploit two powerful bodies of expertise. On the one hand, she has her voice, perhaps the most versatile of musical instruments, rich in prosodic melody and embedded in bodily movements that help to orchestrate her interactions with her listeners. On the other hand, she has command over a range of literacy devices and structures that can be exploited in speech to make what she says dramatic, flexible, variable, versatile, and should she so wish, fast and efficient.

(Wood 1998: 211)

Adolescents are continuously exposed to new social experiences. Their extensive participation in peer culture and their more independent lifestyle will offer new opportunities to develop their L1, combined with the effects of promoting more formal styles of language in classrooms. Those preparing to apply for places at college or university will experience yet new, more academic ways of using their L1 in interviews, tests, essays and reports.

2.3 Second language acquisition in childhood

Children are believed to be more successful second language learners than adults. Parents all over the world put their children in language schools at an early age, convinced that the earlier they start learning, the better. But what is the actual research evidence behind this widespread belief about young children? Are young children superior language learners as compared to older learners? What are children's advantages over adults, if any?

When it comes to pinpointing the exact effects of age on the processes of second language acquisition, research to date has produced rather complex results. Although age is inevitably important, it is clear now that other factors may also play equally important parts in the process of learning a new language. For example, factors such as supportive contexts, opportunities to practise, motivation and the quality of formal instruction all make a difference, and age simply cannot be separated and examined in isolation.

Quote 2.9 On the age factor

... while everybody agrees that the learner's age does influence the SLA process, scholars have not been able to establish the exact pattern or nature of age-related change, let alone identify the specific causes and mediators of the process.

(Dörnyei 2009: 233)

2.3.1 Critical Period Hypothesis

The Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH) is a term taken from biology and it refers to restrictions on the development of some skill or behaviour. When timing is critical, a particular development can only take place within defined periods of time. For example, new-born ducklings will bond with the mother duck only if they have a chance to see her and follow her within a few critical hours after their birth. The question is whether acquiring languages to native-like levels can happen within a similarly defined critical period.

Concept 2.1 The Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH)

In its most succinct and theory-neutral formulation, the CPH states that there is a limited developmental period during which it is possible to acquire a language, be it L1 or L2, to normal, native-like levels.

(Birdsong 1999: 1)

CPH in L1

There is more or less unequivocal agreement about the existence of a weak form of a CPH for first language acquisition. If a child is deprived of their first language from birth, they will certainly suffer serious negative consequences. Studies of children who were for some reason abandoned or grew up in isolation (e.g. Curtiss 1977) and deaf children who did not learn sign language early in life, show that trying to learn L1 after puberty is a difficult achievement which leads to rather poor outcomes that cannot be described as comparable to 'native-like' competence. Mayberry, Lock and Kazmi's (2002) work with deaf children also illustrates that there definitely is a critical period for L1 acquisition.

Quote 2.10 On CPH in L1

Our results show that the ability to learn languages arises from a synergy between early brain development and language experience and this is seriously compromised when language is not experienced during early life ...

(Mayberry, Lock and Kazmi 2002: 38)

These authors conclude that missing out on the opportunity of learning one's first language in early life has irreversible consequences. Others argue that depriving a child of language in the early stages of life also affects their cognitive development and it may be the case that the combined psychological and cognitive effects cause these problems rather than a critical period for language *per se*. (Peterson and Siegal 1995; Lundy 1999).

CPH in L2

Is there a similar critical period for second language learning? This question is much harder to answer. A great deal of research has been completed both to support and to refute the CPH. Birdsong states that the CPH occupies an 'unmistakeable centrality' in SLA research (Birdsong 1999: 1) and it continues to engage researchers today. Originally, the Critical Period Hypothesis in L2 was based on neurological arguments based on Penfield and Roberts (1959). They proposed that L2 acquisition was most efficient before the age of 9, at which point the brain becomes stiff and rigid and loses its capacity for natural acquisition. Progressive lateralisation of cerebral functions and ongoing myelination in the Broca area will eventually cause such stiffness. (Penfield and Roberts 1959; Lenneberg 1967). Lenneberg (1967) proposed that the critical period is associated with a 'heightened plasticity' in the brain which is lost, at least partially, once the brain becomes lateralised and stiff.

Age ranges for child/adult SLA

If there is a critical period for SLA, how can it be tested? At what ages should children be tested? At what age can we separate child SLA from balanced bilingual acquisition that starts at birth? Not unexpectedly, different age ranges have been proposed by different researchers. According to Schwartz (2003), in early bilingual acquisition the two systems of grammar develop at the same time whereas in early L2 acquisition one system of grammar is already formed at the time the child encounters another language. Dimroth (2008a) proposes that most important aspects of morphosyntax and phonology are not yet all in place before the age of 4, and therefore child L2 acquisition starts at 4 years of age. Other researchers, such as Nicholas and Lightbown (2008) claim that early child SLA starts earlier, at about 2 years of age, arguing that L1 grammar is already well established by then, and children who begin an L2 at age 2 already rely on their L1 as a resource, as evidenced by code-switching. Another relevant question is about how long the critical period might last. Some argue it is complete by the age of 7, while others think it lasts until the age of 15, with each period being critical for the acquisition of different aspects of the second language; 7 years of age is also often referred to, following Piaget's famous cut-off point.

According to Singleton (2003), the CPH in L2 acquisition has been interpreted in different ways and there seem to be three commonly held views. First, after a certain maturational point learners are not able to attain native-like levels of proficiency; second, after a certain maturational point successful learning requires more effort than before; and finally, after a certain maturational point the processes of L2 acquisition are qualitatively different from before.

These suggestions imply that comparisons between the L2 acquisition processes of adults and children of different ages are important. First of all, some evidence points to the finding that at least in some respects, grammatical development is very similar across children of different backgrounds. Dulay and Burt (1974) claim that children pass through some 'universal' developmental stages at least with regard to the development of morphology. They compared the developmental paths of children learning English from two different L1 backgrounds, Spanish and Chinese. They used a 'bilingual syntax measure' instrument (BSM) which consisted of picture stimuli to elicit responses from the children. There were no correct answers but the questions were constructed in such a way that it was almost unavoidable to use certain structures. They administered the BSM to 55 Chinese- and 60 Spanish-speaking children, all aged 6–8 years. The speech samples elicited in this way were then analysed to investigate 11 morphemes (such as pronoun case, articles, the copula, *-ing* for progressive tenses, plural forms, past regular and irregular and possessive and 3rd person singular forms). The results showed that the acquisition of these for Spanish and Chinese children were virtually

the same. The authors acknowledge that their claims cannot be extended to other areas of English grammar; however, they also suggest that the grammars of Spanish and Chinese are so widely different that these children must have universal mechanisms to guide them to be able to perform in such a uniform manner. What about adults? Or is this only specific to children? In fact, the area of morphosyntax is so robust that even adults show a similar path of acquisition. Bailey, Madden and Krashen (1978) replicated the procedures used by Dulay and Burt (1974), with 73 adult subjects who were between the ages of 17 and 55. The results showed that despite the differences among adult learners in the amount of instruction, exposure to English and use of mother tongue, there is a high degree of agreement with regard to the difficulty of grammatical morphemes. Adults also use common, universal strategies for language learning. In addition, the relative accuracy of the different forms in adults is similar to the relative accuracy observed in children. Many other studies also attest to the fact that the developmental order is very similar in all learners (Cancino, Rosansky and Schumann 1978; Clahsen 1984).

Some universal processes are shared across L1 and L2 acquisition for young children (especially in the area of morphosyntax), although more recent research that compared L1 and L2 development found that even at a very young age, children's first and second language acquisition processes are not actually identical. There is plenty of evidence for L1 transfer into L2, just as in the case of adult learners. For example, Haznedar (1997) studied the L2 acquisition of English by a Turkish boy (Erdem) who was just 4 years old when he started at a nursery in an English-speaking context. Data collection began after a month in the new environment and it showed that Erdem's utterances were influenced by transferring Turkish structures into English. Similarly, Whong-Barr and Schwartz (2002), who studied Korean- and Japanese-speaking children (between the ages of 4 and 10) learning English as an L2, showed that L1 transfer was an important feature of their L2 interlanguage, not just at the beginning of the acquisition process but throughout the period of study, which lasted several years.

Some recent longitudinal research with untutored children (Dimroth 2008b) also shows differences in the way children of different ages process a second language: in particular, important differences were discovered with regard to the order of acquisition of different aspects of grammar. In Dimroth's study, two Russian beginners of L2 German (aged 8 and 14) were compared with one another but also with adults with regard to the acquisition of negation and finiteness in German sentence grammar. The study showed that the adolescent learner was more similar to the adults than the younger learner. The child learner was faster and she acquired the grammatical features in a different order. Dimroth (2008b) suggests that younger children assimilate input patterns in a different way, i.e. without analysis, whereas older learners analyse the input more carefully.

Current neurological experiments point to important differences in the way older and younger learners process second languages. For example, Weber-Fox and Neville (1996, 1999) explored the different brain patterns of younger and older second language learners. They found that older learners processed L2 in different ways from younger learners, although it may be that the different proficiency levels of the groups influenced the results. Similarly, a study by Kim *et al.* (1997) looked at the differences in the location of two languages in the brain in bilingual learners, using functional magnetic resonance imaging (MRI). Both very young beginners and older beginners were given a sentence generation task and their brain activity was monitored while they were engaged in the task. The results indicated that the older beginners had two distinct areas of activity in the Broca area whereas in the case of the early bilinguals there was no separation between languages. This seems to point to the fact that there is neurological difference between how younger and older children process language.

2.3.2 Rate of development: older learners' advantage?

Krashen, Long and Scarcella (1979) suggested that in order to tease out young learners' advantages over adults' in second language learning we should explore both the rate of language learning and the ultimate attainment that learners achieve. With regard to the rate of language development in an L2, research evidence seems to be clear, and clearly in favour of older learners. Studies that focus on measuring learners' rates of development typically compare learners of different ages.

One of the most famous and most often cited examples in a naturalistic setting that compared the rate of development across different age groups was a series of studies in the Netherlands. It was conducted by Snow and Hofnagel H6hle (1978a, 1978b/1982).

The first study (1978a) was conducted with 69 English-speaking subjects of all ages (from very young children to adults) who were all classified as new arrivals to the target country (The Netherlands). At the time of testing, some subjects had been in the country for one year, while others only for three months. The first group of subjects who had been there for a whole year were tested only once, at the end of their first year while the second group was tested three times within the year, at four-month intervals. This grouping allowed the researchers to compare subjects with different lengths of residence (albeit all quite short). A variety of different tests were used which tapped into subjects' pronunciation, auditory discrimination ability, morphology, vocabulary, sentence repetition and translation. The findings were clear-cut in that adults and adolescent beginners showed a clear advantage over the younger beginners in all areas of competence, although this advantage began to disappear by the end of the year. The instruments overall favoured the older learners because they tapped into more abstract and

explicit knowledge. There was only one test related to phonological and phonetic skills that did not show significant differences between younger and older learners.

In the follow-up study (Snow and Hofnagel-Höhle 1978b/1982), exactly the same way as in the first study, 51 beginners (within six months of arrival) were tested three times and 30 'advanced' speakers with at least 18 months in Holland were tested only once. This time the researchers included a greater variety of tests such as pronunciation, auditory discrimination, morphology, sentence repetition, translation, sentence judgment, vocabulary, story comprehension and storytelling. On the first testing occasion significant age differences were noticed among the beginners, and in all cases the adolescent and adult subjects outperformed the younger ones, except for the imitation condition of the pronunciation test. The advantage of the older learner over the younger seems to be especially high for aspects of the second language that are dependent on rule acquisition, i.e. in syntax, morphology and metalinguistic ability. Differences in pronunciation, auditory discrimination, story comprehension, and spontaneous fluency tests diminished earlier than in morphology and sentence translation tests.

In another study, Snow and Höfnagel-Höhle (1977) combined a laboratory test with a more naturalistic component. In the laboratory test, the participants were asked to imitate Dutch words which were judged by native speakers for accent. In the naturalistic study participants in their first year in the Netherlands were tested every four to five months using both an imitation task and a spontaneous production task. These were again recorded and evaluated by native-speaker judges. The researchers found an initial advantage for older subjects but younger learners were catching up and became better at pronouncing some words than the older learners after 10 to 11 months of residence. After 18 months of residence, some adults showed lower scores than the children.

Many other studies indicate that, overall, older learners progress faster and do better on measurement tests. In The French immersion programmes older learners have a clear advantage over younger ones except for pronunciation and oral fluency (Cummins 1983; Harley 1986; Swain 1981). Turnbull *et al.* (1998) clearly show that those who started earlier (i.e. at a younger age) outperformed those who started at a later age on a range of spoken tests.

Pronunciation and oral performance, especially face-to-face communication and listening, seem to be the areas in which young learners do relatively better, but even here their advantage is not completely undisputed. Olson and Samuels (1973) investigated the German pronunciation of three different age groups of English speakers: 20 elementary school pupils (aged 9.5–10.5), 20 junior high students (14–15 years of age) and 20 college students (18–26 years of age). The participants' pronunciation was tested using a German phoneme pronunciation drill task, which took about 15–25 minutes to complete. All subjects' performances were recorded and the results clearly

showed that the two older groups, i.e. the junior high school students and the college students, performed significantly better than the younger ones.

In an attempt to confirm adults' initial advantages, Aoyama *et al.* (2008) compared phonetic measures in Japanese adults and children learning English in Canada during the first two years of immersion in an L2-speaking environment. The point of this study was to tease out whether adults did have any advantage over children and if yes, was this short-lived or sustained. The children's mean ages were around 10 years while the adults' mean age was 40. Altogether, 16 adults and 16 children were included. All adults learnt English in Japan starting between 11 and 13 years of age but none of the children knew English when they arrived in Canada. In the study, 26 English words (frequently occurring familiar words) were elicited three times. The tests were administered three times over a 1.6-year period. The results showed that adults' intelligibility scores were higher but children improved between time 1 and time 2, and thus in the end no significant differences were shown. All scores, however, remained significantly lower than the native English speakers' scores. While the children's production improved more rapidly than the adults', it is still the case that after 1.6 years of exposure, all children still had a noticeable foreign accent.

In sum, it seems to be the case that in natural contexts older learners have an initial advantage over younger learners but younger learners tend to catch up in the long run. What happens in formal contexts where children are learning second languages as school subjects? Will older learners progress faster? If yes, how can we protect and justify early foreign language learning?

In the 1960s when French was introduced in primary schools in England and Wales, the Burstall report (Burstall *et al.* 1974) which evaluated the project found some interesting benefits gained by younger learners. They compared children who started French early at the age of 8 (experimental group) and those who started later at 11 years of age (control group). Comparisons between the two groups were made twice, once at the age of 13 and a second time at 16. The first time around the findings showed that the experimental pupils outperformed the control pupils on speaking and listening but the scores on reading and writing in the control group were just as high, or higher, than the experimental group. Three years later, when the same children were tested again, the only test the experimental group scored higher on was the listening test. The rest of the tests did not show a difference. This was taken as evidence for the overall superiority of the older learner and the funding for the programme to start a foreign language early was cut. The conclusion of the report was that early foreign language learning in formal contexts was not a worthwhile activity because initial advantages would disappear by the time the children study the language more seriously in secondary school.

A much larger study, The Barcelona Age Factor project (BAF 1995–2002), compared different age groups of English language learners in Spain. Data

were collected from over 2,000 participants after approximately 200, 400 and 700 hours of instruction in English. To compare the results of those who began learning English at the age of 8 and those at the age of 11, a large range of different measures were used including measures of speaking, listening, writing, reading and comprehension tests in L1 (which was Spanish for some and Catalan for others). Several measures were meaning-focussed, such as an oral interview and a role play. The results showed that late starters, i.e. those who started English at 11 rather than 8, always obtained higher scores than the early starters. After 200 hours (time 1 testing) the difference between the two groups was marginally significant on many tests. This initially small difference reaches significance after 400 hours (time 2 testing) in favour of the older learners. After 700 hours (time 3 test) significant results on all tests in favour of the older learners were obtained. Muñoz (2006) concludes that there exists an age-related difference in the rate of foreign language learning in a school setting in that older learners indeed showed the most rapid initial progression. A distinction emerges between two types of tests used: more cognitively demanding tasks, with tapping into the morphosyntactic component, and the less cognitively demanding task, tapping into speech perception and production and fluency tasks. A strong increase in the development of morphosyntactic ability can be detected at around the age of 12. The progression seems much faster between ages 11 and 13 than between ages 14 and 16.

Quote 2.11 On the advantage of older learners in foreign language settings

In sum, differences in cognitive development play an important role in explaining why older learners in a formal foreign language situation are faster and more efficient than younger learners, especially in tests in which the morpho-syntactic component is important. The older learners' superior cognitive development also allows them to take greater advantage of explicit teaching processes in the classroom. In contrast, young learners seem to favour and to be favoured by implicit learning. Implicit learning improves with practice but occurs slowly and requires massive amounts of exposure.

(Muñoz 2006: 32)

Muñoz's findings fit well with the 'older the better' conclusion. Older learners and adults are indeed very different from younger children. What is the underlying reason? Felix (1985) proposes that the co-existence of a UG (Universal Grammar) and a domain-specific cognitive function becomes untenable in adults and the competition between these two systems results in the dominance of the cognitive function, leaving no room for the innate acquisition system. This is known as the 'Competition Hypothesis'. Bley-Vroman

(1989) proposed the 'Fundamental Difference Hypothesis' which also denies adults' access to UG. In agreement with Bley-Vroman, DeKeyser (2000) comments that between the ages of 6/7 and 16/17, we all lose the tool for implicit induction to human language.

Although there are indications in the BAP data that by time 3 testing the youngest learners seem to be catching up on some measures, in foreign language contexts children simply do not receive enough contact hours for this catching up to be completed. Interestingly, Singleton and Ryan (2004) calculate that comparing the amount of exposure in naturalistic and formal language learning contexts, it would take approximately 18 years for foreign language learners to catch up with older beginners, if at all. This is well beyond the length of time we can follow participants in a research project. In fact this would stretch well beyond the period of schooling in most people's lifetime.

While the Barcelona study offers convincing results because of the size and the length of the project, it is important to add that the actual quality of materials and teaching were not really evaluated. What if good quality teaching can make all the difference? A small project in Croatia (Mihaljević Djigunović and Vilke 2000), which ran for eight years, reported important benefits for younger children. In this project 1,000 first graders (age 6–7) learning one foreign language (English or French or German or Italian) were investigated and compared to a group that started later, at the age of 10. The experimental language programmes were focussed on the intensity of exposure and offered natural content-based conditions. The tests that were used included oral interviews, classroom observations, storytelling and proficiency tests. Young learners were developing fast at the phonological level (Kovačević 1993), mastered prototypical language elements faster than other parts of the language, and interestingly, a number of learning and communication strategies also emerged. In the final evaluation the researchers found that the experimental project students were significantly better at pronunciation, orthography and vocabulary than the older beginners. The researchers concluded that the project learners outperformed the other groups on tests of implicit knowledge. The most important variable to explain the younger learners' success was the quality of input/teaching, but also the tests themselves were more naturalistic.

2.3.3 Ultimate attainment: younger learners' advantage?

Older learners progress faster initially, due to their superior strategies, cognitive capacities and strong motivation – but younger learners often overtake them in the long run. This implies that younger learners are likely to have an advantage when it comes to ultimate attainment.

Studies that explore ultimate attainment of learners who started an L2 at different ages often use native speakers both as control subjects and as judges

of non-native performance. If those learners who started younger compare more favourably with native speakers, then it could be argued that an early start contributes to higher, native-like levels of ultimate attainment. Ultimate attainment research to date has produced very complex results. Most of these studies have been conducted with immigrants and a large proportion of them have focussed on pronunciation and on grammar. This is partly because these are aspects of language competence that can be tested easily and quickly in experimental circumstances. Pronunciation and accent have also been particularly popular because a native-like accent is believed to be more difficult to attain than other aspects of competence for older learners.

Pronunciation/accents

The superior ultimate attainment of younger children was confirmed in a study conducted by Oyama (1976, 1978). In the first study (1976), 60 male immigrants participated whose age on entering the USA ranged between 6 and 20. The first variable in this study was the age of onset (AO) of second language acquisition of these subjects. The subjects' length of residence ranged from 5 to 18 years and this was the second variable under investigation. The participants' pronunciation was tested using two 45-second extracts from a reading task and a free speaking task. A group of native speakers (NS) also performed the same tasks. All performances were recorded and the NS' and non-native speakers' (NNS) recordings were randomly mixed up on a tape. Then NS judges were asked to rate the 'nativeness' of the extracts. The judges rated the performances on a five-point scale from 'heavy accent' to 'no accent at all'. An extremely strong effect for age of arrival was found but almost no effect for the number of years spent in the USA. The youngest arrivals within the NNS group performed within the range of the NS controls whereas those above the age of 12 did not. In a second study (1978), listening comprehension scores were compared, based on the performances of the same subjects. Twelve short English sentences were recorded by native speakers and the participants had to repeat these. Subjects of 11 years and under were native-like whereas older subjects were not. Those arriving after age 16 performed markedly worse than natives, suggesting that there may be a second cut-off point. These results suggest that pronunciation in the long term is probably affected by age of arrival but not by length of residence. The cut-off point for pronunciation seems to be around the age of 12.

In their studies, Flege, Monroe and McKay (1995) and Flege, Yeni-Komshian and Liu (1999) also showed that the degree of authentic accent and age of arrival correlated. The authors studied Italian immigrants in Canada who had lived there for at least 15 years at the time of testing. In 1995, 240 Italian immigrants were tested. They were asked to read out five short English sentences and their performances were mixed up randomly with the performances of 24 native speakers. These tapes were presented to native speaker judges. The ratings increased systematically with the decline

in age of arrival, indicating a clear effect of age of onset in ultimate pronunciation attainment. The 1999 study used the same design but with Korean speakers: 240 immigrants and 24 native speakers were asked to participate. Once again, ratings for authentic accents tended to decline with increasing age of arrival. The authors claim that once learners firmly established the categories of their L1 sounds, L2 sounds can only be perceived according to these original categories and this leads to a foreign accent. L2 speakers will have particular difficulty with those sounds that are similar to their L1 sounds but not quite the same.

While young children's native-like accent and authentic pronunciation cannot be denied, there is at the same time a great deal of evidence in the literature that older learners, even adults, can master accent and pronunciation to native-like or near-native levels with dedication, motivation and formal training.

An interesting series of studies was conducted in the Netherlands by Bongaerts and his colleagues (Bongaerts 1999). These studies focussed on successful adult learners who started English at high school at 12 years of age, typically studying it for just two hours a week, taught by non-native speaker (NNS) teachers. After high school they continued specialising in English at university, which meant a large amount of input from about 18 years of age. This included formal training in pronunciation and phonology. When they graduated, they typically spent a year abroad in Britain in a fully English-speaking environment. In the first study the participants were asked to read aloud a text, ten sentences and 25 words, alongside some native speakers. The unexpected results showed that many advanced NNS were rated higher than the native speakers (NS) themselves, some of whom had heavy regional accents. In the second study the same groups of subjects participated but the judges and the NS were better matched in terms of regional accents. The advanced NNS received very high scores from the judges, (means ranged between 4.18 and 4.93 as opposed to NS scores which ranged between 4.67 and 4.94.) and five out of 11 individuals from the advanced group were judged to have native speaker-level pronunciation. These NNS participants reported in a questionnaire that they were highly motivated: it was important for them to have good pronunciation in English and they consciously worked on improving it. Following criticisms that the participants' L1 (Dutch) is very close to English, in the third study a new second language was investigated. The same research procedures were repeated but this time French learners rather than English learners were asked to participate. Similar results were obtained in that three out of the nine participants were judged to be at NS level. Bongaerts claims that the cause of these learners' success is threefold, following Klein (1995). Firstly, it is of vital importance to them that they should sound native; secondly, they have continued access to massive amounts of authentic input; and thirdly, they had focussed training in phonetics, targeting the differences between their L1 and L2 systems. Similar

studies where advanced level adult L2 learners were mistaken by NS judges for native speakers continue to be reported in more recent research, such as Urpunen (2004) with Finnish women in Canada and Nikolov (2000) with learners of Hungarian.

Some researchers (e.g. Bley-Vroman 1989 or Selinker 1972) maintain that successful adult L2 learners are rare, exceptional, and even peripheral among the total adult L2 population. The perceived low levels of success in adulthood could be explained by the fact that many L2 learners abandon their L2 learning well before they come anywhere near their ultimate attainment. This often happens for practical reasons, i.e. they simply do not need very high levels of L2 in their jobs, for example. These learners are not motivated to achieve their full potential. So, in terms of ultimate attainment it does make sense to focus on those language-learning individuals who make every effort and whose target language context affords favourable circumstances, as they are the only ones who exemplify 'true' ultimate attainment levels.

Grammar

In addition to pronunciation, the grammatical competence of second language subjects has also been investigated. Patkowski (1980–90) conducted a study using quantitative analysis of English grammatical competence. He studied 67 highly educated immigrants from various L1 backgrounds who had lived in the USA for at least five years. Fifteen native-born Americans (with similar backgrounds) were used as controls for the comparisons. A multiple choice test of syntactic competence revealed age effects, but not quite as sharp as expected: those entering before the age of 15 did better. They were showing evidence of being more systematically proficient. With regard to the effect on their performance, the amount of informal exposure was significant but the amount of formal instruction was not.

Perhaps the most well-known study in this area pointing to the ultimate advantage of young learners is the one conducted by Johnson and Newport (1989). These authors were also looking for a correlation between age and test results in different areas of English grammatical competence. They tested 46 native Chinese and Korean speakers. All subjects had resided in the USA for at least five years but they all arrived at different ages. The researchers used grammaticality judgment tests. These tests require subjects to make judgments about the grammatical correctness of English sentences. The participants were given 276 taped English sentences and they had to decide whether they were grammatically correct or not. About half of the sentences functioned as 'distractors' (which means they were incorrect). The sentences exemplified basic surface contrasts in English such as regular verb morphology and particle placement. Younger learners achieved better scores. Those who arrived before the age of 7 performed within the range set by native speaker controls. Performance levels declined between 8 and 15 years at age

of arrival, and among those who arrived at around age 17 performance was claimed to be random. This accordingly suggests that in addition to the first sensitive period between 0–7 years of age (particularly ripe for acquisition) there is a second maturational sensitivity between the ages of 7 and 17, during which time the ability to acquire L2 is gradually diminishing. After age 17, age of arrival ceases to have any effect at all. In contrast, however, when Birdsong and Molis (1998) replicated this study they found a strong age effect but with no cut-off point at all. Rather, the ‘earlier the better across the lifespan’ seemed to be the pattern emerging for the whole group. This means that performance of those arriving after the age of 17 was not random but continued to decline steadily.

More recent studies that employ longitudinal designs do not seem to confirm young learners’ advantages when it comes to acquiring grammar. Jia and Fuse (2007) report that none of the ten Mandarin-speaking immigrant children that they followed mastered past tense *-ed* at an 80 per cent accuracy level after being immersed in the English environment for five years. In addition to the regular past tense, other morphemes were measured, such as the irregular past tense, 3rd person singular, progressive aspect *-ing*, the copula *be*, and the auxiliary *do*. All these were measured in both obligatory and spontaneous contexts. Overall, the researchers found that the children’s language environment was a stronger predictor of individual differences than their age of arrival. Younger learners were not better at acquiring grammar simply because of their age.

Quote 2.12 On failure to master past tense *-ed*

By the end of the 5th year of immersion, only one structure (progressive aspect *-ing*) was mastered by all participants and one structure (regular past tense *-ed*) was mastered by none of the participants. Performance on other structures fell in between. In other words, all participants still spoke English with various degrees of morphological errors, after having lived in an English-speaking country for 5 years.

(Jia and Fuse 2007: 1293–4)

While previous studies only measured attainment at one point of time, this study was longitudinal and it measured grammar performance over time using 13 testing times altogether.

In contrast, adult learners have been shown to acquire grammar successfully. For example, White and Genesee (1996) investigated the acquisition of English by French native speakers in Montreal, Canada. These participants started English after the age of 12. They were asked to make questions involving ‘wh-extraction’ and to judge the grammaticality of 60 examples of

various ‘wh-movement’ structures, for example, ‘What did the newspaper report the minister had said?’ These grammatical features are difficult to acquire in English. 16 out of 45 participants, however, appeared to be native-like on various measures. White and Genesee argued that these results meant that some successful learners were able to achieve native-like levels despite starting the English language after puberty. Birdsong (1992) also studied the acquisition of French by 20 native English speakers who had been exposed to French after puberty, between the ages of 11 and 28 years. All participants had been residing in France for at least three years by the time the study was conducted. Birdsong found that six out of the 20 participants came within the native speaker range, thus suggesting that native or native-like performances in adult learners are not only possible but given the right circumstances, actually quite likely.

Based on the emerging evidence that the learners’ environments matter more than their age alone, Bialystok and Hakuta (1999) question the existence of the critical period and they suggest that the evidence from ultimate attainment studies does not offer clear conclusions at all.

Quote 2.13 Casting doubt over the ‘critical period’

Are young learners generally more successful than older ones when ultimate proficiency in a second language is assessed? Yes. Do younger and older learners approach the learning problem differently? Presumably. Are there neurological differences in the brains of younger and older learners? Probably. None of these statements, however, compels the conclusion that there is a critical period for second language acquisition.

(Bialystok and Hakuta 1999: 161)

Bialystok and Hakuta (1999) argue that in addition to age, cognitive factors are also crucially important in second language learning. In particular, literacy allows certain types of instruction that younger learners have no access to. Cognitive capacities such as memory and recall, both of which are crucial in language learning, deteriorate gradually across the lifespan, suggesting the same process for language abilities.

In order to find empirical evidence for the gradual deterioration theory, they conducted a study which was based on census data collected in 1990 in New York State. The data set included information about participants’ home language background, length of residence in the USA, their age in 1990, their years of formal education and their self-reported English proficiency. The subjects had to rate their own performance in English by ticking one of the following options: (1) speak it not at all well, (2) not well, (3) well, (4) very well, (5) speak only English. The participants’ length of residence was set at

ten years in view of the criticism levelled at some of the earlier studies that some of the subjects who spent only five years in their target environment may not have achieved their ultimate attainment. In a truly large-scale study, overall, nearly 25,000 speakers of Chinese and 39,000 speakers of Spanish were included. The results did not show any cut-off point around puberty or the ages of 7, 12 or 15. In fact there appeared to be 'nothing special about the age range before puberty'. The decline in proficiency remained constant across the ages and it was similar for both Spanish and Chinese speakers. Bialystok and Hakuta also found that schooling was found to be positively related to proficiency. This is consistent with the suggestion that cognitive processes play an important role.

In an attempt to explain younger learners' overall success, the authors argue that younger learners typically enjoy special social support such as the advantages of a nurturing environment, unlimited access to easy, simplified input, good educational opportunities and cooperative peers. All these factors happen to help facilitate successful language acquisition at a young age.

Indeed, the importance of social experiences has been confirmed by more recent research, such as that by Jia and Aaronson (2003). In this longitudinal study, which lasted three years, the authors closely followed the progress of ten Chinese-speaking immigrant children in the USA. The children's ages ranged between 5 and 16. One group ranged between 5 and 9 years of age (the younger group) and the other group ranged between 12 and 16 years of age (the older group). The authors describe an interesting age-related preference for language use over time. While the younger children switched mainly to English and cultivated close relationships with English-speaking friends in a predominantly English-rich environment, the older group preferred to maintain their L1 by interacting with L1 Chinese-speaking friends and thus limiting their access to English-speaking environments. The data in this study are not based on just grammar tests but rather a range of sources such as interviews with children and parents, surveys about languages spoken at home and at school, in the neighbourhood, reading practices in the family and access to Chinese and English mass media.

Quote 2.14 On variability of acquisition rates among children

Taken together, L2 acquisition during the first 3 years of L2 immersion by these 10 children and adolescents of different ages was shaped by the dynamic interactions of multiple factors involved in language acquisition. Cognitive, social and cultural variables interacted with each other and shaped the immigrant children's and adolescents' language preferences and hence language environments. The environmental differences in turn, at least partially, contributed to differential

Quote 2.14 (Continued)

language proficiency changes among immigrants, thus leading to the dominant language switch among younger arrivals and maintenance among older arrivals.

(Jia and Aaronson 2003: 156)

It seems that the longer and more systematically we study them, all L2 speakers will exhibit some unique linguistic features when compared to native speakers, whether they started learning the second language at a young age or later in life.

Quote 2.15 On post-pubertal and early beginners

It is true, as Hyltenstam and Abrahamsson (2000: 155) claim, that there is no case on record of a post-pubertal L2 beginner who has been demonstrated to behave in every last linguistic detail like a native speaker. However, it is also true, as Hyltenstam and Abrahamson recognise, that the more closely we study very early L2 beginners the more we realise that at the level of detail, they too differ from monoglot native speakers.

(Singleton 2003: 9–10)

2.4 Conclusion

There is no clear evidence for the existence of the critical period for L2 acquisition, but instead, social, environmental and individual factors help to explain many young children's success. Overall, there is a general decline in L2 learners' ability to acquire second languages across the whole of the life span. The decline is not sharp but continuous and linear. Marinova-Todd (2003) suggests that it is not age *per se* but the availability and access to good L2 input and instruction that will produce best outcomes for children of all ages. The main focus for language educators, therefore, should shift from providing early instruction to more quality-oriented instruction. Factors that contribute to success are complex, including an early start in an optimal environment, consistent, rich exposure, opportunities to practise, high motivation and some explicit instruction.

There are many methodological difficulties in the studies that attempted to look for evidence of the advantages of either younger or older learners. For example, a wide range of different participants are tested together, including younger and older children and adults in the same study. This makes selecting appropriate instruments to measure their abilities very difficult and

generally young children's needs suffer. Most of these studies are also limited in that they use one-off testing measures rather than more longitudinal measures such as tracking participants' progress and performance over time. For example, it is relatively easy to read out a short text and concentrate on correct pronunciation. It is much harder to perform consistently well across different tasks, for a longer period of time. More studies are therefore needed to track learners longitudinally, drawing on a range of different data sources, and illustrating the complexities that lead to unique achievements in different contexts.

Child-centered learning

In a successful child-centered approach, each child is a motivated active learner eagerly exploring the world of English, and successfully building a mental model of how the bits of English she encounters fit together. What factors create the necessary conditions for this to occur?

ACTIVE LEARNING

In a child-centered lesson the children are active learners exploring the world of English.

A mother tries to help

One day a mother was in a computer store and came across some useful educational software. She bought it, took it home to her daughter, and installed it, telling her daughter how useful and interesting it would be. She read the instructions and then showed her daughter what to do. Her daughter quite enjoyed the software for a while. It was interesting to learn new things, and her mother helped her a lot. Then her mother had to leave to go to work. The daughter took out the software from the computer and replaced it with one of her favorite computer games.

How much did the daughter learn? In the short-term, she may have gained some knowledge from her mother, but she probably did not retain it very deeply. How actively will she be able to use this knowledge to make guesses about new things she encounters in the future? Probably not very actively. How motivated was she to continue learning when her mother was not there? Not very motivated at all. How would this story need to be different in order for the daughter to want to continue sitting down using that software excitedly for hours, getting steadily better, solving each level and moving forward? Let us look at what happened to the child next door...

A child experiences for herself

The child who lives next door had a different experience. One day she was browsing around her favorite computer store when she came across some software that fascinated her. It was educational, but it was packaged in an exciting way and had a lot of games. It looked so much fun. Then her parents called her away, saying it was time to go home. She was reluctant to leave, but she knew she had to go.

As she left with her parents, she was wondering how to tell them about the software. She really wanted it, but she expected her parents to say it was too expensive, or that she should not spend so much time with her computer. After a while, she summoned up the courage to tell her parents, and as she expected, their first reaction was negative. But she persevered, saying how if she saved up her pocket money for another month she would have enough money to buy the software for herself. Her parents were not sure it was a good idea, but felt they had to agree. So the next month she went to the store and bought the software. Now it was hers! She excitedly took it home, unpacked it and installed it on the computer. She did not even bother to look at the instructions properly, she just wanted to play it.

It was more difficult than she expected. She made a lot of mistakes at first, but she gradually got the hang of it, and moved through the levels, getting better and better, noticing each new complication as it arose, and finding a way through. After completing all the levels, she sat back satisfied. Then she remembered some other software that she did not use because it seemed very difficult. She was in the mood for a challenge, so she installed it on the computer, and yes, it was too difficult.

Then she noticed that some elements of this other software were similar to elements of the software she had just bought, so she started to experiment, using techniques she had discovered while playing with the previous software and experiences from other software she had used in the past. And it worked! It was difficult at first, but she gradually got better moving steadily through the levels.

■ Child-centered learning

The second story is an example of successful child-centered learning. Notice the following stages:

Noticing

She noticed the software in the store and she noticed the problems she needed to solve while using the software.

Wanting

She wanted to get the software and she wanted to solve the problems she encountered while using it.

Challenging/taking a risk

Wanting is not enough. There are many things we want but do not do anything about. Challenging/taking a risk requires a positive attitude and often courage as well. She summoned up the courage to ask her parents and she also tried positively to solve each problem she encountered while using it.

Playing/experimenting

She played with the software, making mistakes and learning from those mistakes. She also played around with each new problem she encountered, trying things out until she succeeded.

Succeeding

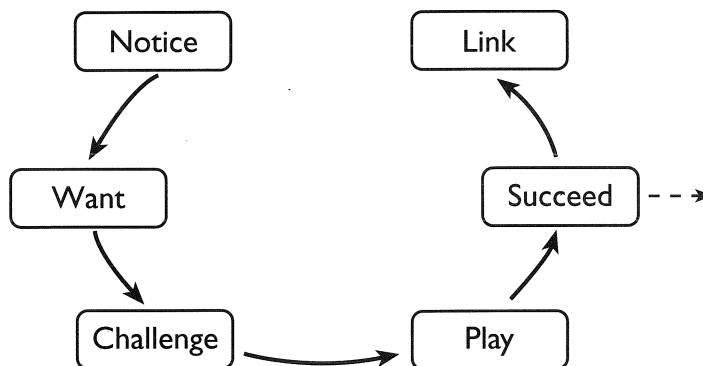
She succeeded in solving each problem, succeeded in moving from level to level, and finally succeeded in getting through to the end.

Linking

She noticed patterns and principles in the software, linked them with other patterns and principles she had discovered in the past, and used these ideas to make guesses when experimenting with more difficult software.

■ **The Questioning Cycle**

We can put these stages into a cycle like this:



Each time she completes this cycle successfully, she is likely to keep moving forward and learning.

■ **In the English lesson**

All children are active learners, but they choose which direction to move in. If we want them to choose to be active learners of English, it is important for us to consider each of the above stages whenever we introduce new language targets:

Noticing

The children notice new words or patterns while they are playing. We do not “teach” these words or patterns, we include them in activities and let the children notice them. For example, we might mix some new flash cards with ones they already know while they are playing a flash card game. They will suddenly come across a new card and think, *Huh? What’s that?*

Wanting

If the children are enjoying the activity they will want to find out what these new words and patterns mean, just like the child encountering problems while playing the computer game. The extent to which they genuinely want to find out depends on how much they are enjoying the activity.

Challenging/taking a risk

If the words or patterns are just beyond what the children already know, and if they have techniques for trying to discover their meaning, the children are more likely to try. One simple technique is for them to learn questions they can ask us such as, *What is it? What's she doing? or, What's this in English?*

The children use patterns and principles they have learned in previous activities to make guesses about the new words or patterns. For example, if they see a new picture or flash card during an activity, they can turn it over and read a word or sentence on the other side. If they have learned phonics, and the word or sentence has reasonably regular spelling, they can use phonic principles to try and read it (see Chapter 6, page 88).

Playing/experimenting

The children can do a lot of activities where they play around with the new language target, trying things out, making mistakes, encountering many examples of the new pattern, and using it to express their own genuine feelings.

Succeeding

If the new language target is at an achievable level, the children will be successful in understanding and using individual words and sentences.

Linking

If our language syllabus fits together well, and if the children do activities where the new language target is mixed with targets already learned, the children are more likely to link it into the mental model they are building up as they try to make sense of the world of English. This process is often referred to as **internalization**. Language targets that are deeply internalized are those which a child can successfully link into her mental model of English, and use actively to make predictions about future language items she encounters.

■ What can go wrong?

Every stage of the Questioning Cycle plays an important role in encouraging a child to be an active learner of English. If we neglect any stage, we may weaken the children's interest or ability to learn English actively.

We do not give the children space to notice

If we introduce new words or patterns without giving the children opportunities

to notice them first, the children are likely to feel they are basically following our direction – not their own. Many of them may not even be doing that. They may still be thinking about whatever their mind was working on before we introduced the new language target.

They do what we want them to do

Even if they notice the new words or patterns but feel they are just doing what we want them to do, they will still feel they are following our direction, not theirs. Their own minds may still feel like moving in other directions that feel more personal and meaningful. At the very least, even if they feel they are learning what we want them to learn, they should feel that they want to learn it, too.

They do not try for themselves

They may have become dependent on us, and they may not know the questions with which they can express their curiosity. The new words or patterns may be too difficult, or may not connect with what they already know. They may not be having enough fun, or we may not have built up their motivation enough over a period of time.

They do not experiment enough

If we do not give the children enough time and space to play around with new words or patterns by practicing and making mistakes, turning the language upside down, and looking at it from all angles, it will be very difficult for the children to retain these words or patterns at a deep level, produce it spontaneously, or use it flexibly.

They are unsuccessful

If the children do not succeed often enough, they may be less likely to risk trying when they encounter new words and patterns in future. They may lose confidence, and turn their minds in other directions where they are more likely to encounter success. In other words, they may come to see themselves as failures in English, and turn their attention to other subjects or out-of-school activities where they feel successful. Children are interested in what they feel they are good at.

They do not make links

One reason children fail to link new target patterns into the mental model of English they are building up is that our activities focus too narrowly on the target. For example, they might practice, *I like... I like... I like...*, without mixing the target pattern with other patterns. Another reason is that we get the children to memorize isolated dialogs or songs that contain language that is difficult for the children to internalize. A third common reason is that we do not challenge the children to think enough. If the children fail to link new words and patterns with the ones they have already learned, it will be difficult for them to use the language to make guesses about new words and patterns they encounter. In other words, they will not be able to use their new knowledge actively.

■ So what is an active learner?

An active learner is not afraid to experiment and wants to keep moving forward. Her mental model of the English she has learned so far fits together well, and she feels she has built this through meaningful experience. She has encountered problems but she has solved them after thinking about them, so now she can face new problems with confidence. She has noticed connections between the language targets she has encountered in our lessons, and has seen or sensed underlying principles which she uses to anticipate what may come next. She makes guesses when she encounters new words or patterns.

She is not dependent on us – we have given her many chances to challenge things for herself. She is not dependent on the textbook – she does many activities with the textbook closed. She is not dependent on more able students – we have given her chances to work alone and in pairs or groups with other children of the same level, though balancing this with opportunities to interact with us, or with children who know more than she does.

She also trusts us. She knows that the new language targets in our lessons will be achievable and make sense to her. She knows that if she risks trying to solve the puzzles and tasks we put in her path, she will succeed. She also genuinely feels that she wants to solve these puzzles and do the activities. She does not feel she is simply doing them because we want her to.

■ Self-perception

An active learner perceives herself as being successful and is not restricted by the negative or constrictive opinions of those around her. A passive learner of English may perceive herself as being bad at English, lazy, badly behaved, a slow learner, or perceive herself in numerous other negative ways. Her perception that she is bad at English may simply be because she has failed a lot when she has risked learning actively in the past, but the other self-perceptions may be because of labels given to her by others.

We should be very careful not to categorize the children or let others categorize them. If the children come to believe these categorizations, it can severely restrict their ability to learn actively, and if we come to believe them, it may have a negative effect on how we view the children's potential. An active learner believes that anything is achievable, and we need to create a learning environment where negative self-perceptions do not obstruct this.

All of us, and this includes teachers as well as children, are held back so much by our perceptions of ourselves. To reach our full potential, we need to escape from the past, escape from categories we or others put us into, and believe anything is possible.

THINKING AND LEARNING

It is often said that children should be physically active. In a child-centered lesson, the crucial point is whether or not they are mentally active.

■ Are the children thinking?

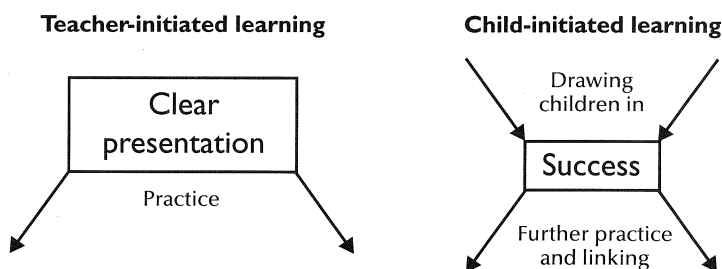
A lesson cannot legitimately be called child-centered unless the children are mentally active and being challenged to think. A lesson may appear child-centered when, in fact, very little mental exploration is taking place.

The children may be having a lot of fun and doing a lot of activities with limited interference from the teacher, but the language targets they are practicing may have been originally “taught” by the teacher. They may also be doing activities that are not challenging enough, and do not involve enough interaction with the teacher or with children who know more than they do.

The lesson may contain a lot of unthinking rituals. The children may be chanting together without thinking, singing their favorite songs that do not contain new words or patterns, or copying from the board. The children may come to be good at giving the teacher the impression they are learning a lot, or finding strategies that please the teacher, whereas, in fact, they may be going through the motions of learning without really thinking very deeply.

■ Initiating the learning process

Compare the following two diagrams:



Teacher-initiated learning

The teacher starts by explaining what the children are going to learn, or by teaching the new language target using techniques such as “repeat after me,” modelling a new pattern possibly with accompanying actions, bringing a model pair to the front of the class and demonstrating an activity in as much detail as possible, or translating the new target language from the children’s native language. After this, the children may practice and have a lot of fun.

Child-initiated learning

We draw the children into an activity, getting them more and more interested and involved. During the activity, they come across new words and patterns. They are confused at first and think, *Huh? What does that mean?* or, *Huh? How do I say that?* But they are feeling positive and are immersed in the activity so they are interested in learning. After they are successful, they feel that what they have learned belongs to them. This is largely because each child felt that the initial desire to learn came from inside her. She felt that she initiated the learning process.

■ Clarity

Many sincere teachers use a teacher-initiated approach and many sincere teachers use a child-initiated approach, but the approaches are so different from each other and are based on opposing views of how children learn most effectively.

Why is it that the sincere teacher who uses a teacher-initiated approach explains or demonstrates? What is it she believes that the second teacher does not agree with? One important difference is that the first teacher believes a good teacher should be as clear as possible, and believes that if she explains or demonstrates very clearly, the children will understand more clearly and so learn more. This view of how children learn best is based on a very common misperception among teachers. In fact, if we introduce new language targets very clearly, the children are not likely to learn very deeply since we are doing most of the thinking for them.

Instead of being clear, we should create deliberate confusion within a positive atmosphere. This can happen when the children encounter new language targets both in activities where the children are playing by themselves and in those where we are more involved. They encounter puzzles or hints that make them pause and think, *Huh? What's that?* Of course, we do this with a playful smile or a mischievous grin.

In a child-initiated lesson, there is a time to be clear, but it is not at the beginning. It is at the end. The children go home thinking, *At first I was confused. I didn't understand, but I thought about it, and now I understand.* It is not the teacher who is clear. The children find clarity in their own minds after thinking things through. If the pattern is difficult, they may not find perfect clarity after one lesson, but they should feel they have succeeded to a certain extent, enough to feel they want to try to be even more successful next time. The children go home with a sense of personal accomplishment and are more likely to tell their parents excitedly about what they have learned, and more likely to approach the next lesson with positivity and confidence.

■ Learning through thinking

I have suggested that we should cause "confusion." What this really means is that we stimulate the children to mentally reach out towards the new words and

patterns they come across. Each bit of confusion is like a fun puzzle that the children need to solve. The combination of puzzle solving and fun creates a very powerful learning environment. When she faces a new puzzle, a child forms a theory to try and solve it. There are a number of possible outcomes:

The child's theory works

She may make a guess about a new word or pattern and the guess is correct. In this case, there may be some initial confusion when she first encounters the new word or pattern, but there is no need for her to adjust or question the patterns and principles in her mental model of English. She will extend her model to incorporate the new words or patterns.

The child has no theory

She may come across a new pattern that she does not have an appropriate theory for, so it is difficult to make guesses. This may mean the pattern is too difficult, in which case we should avoid it, but sometimes the pattern is achievable with our help. For example, she may encounter the sentences, *It's a cat*, and, *It's an elephant*, but not understand why *a* is in one sentence and *an* is in the other.

We can get the children to draw two big animals on separate pieces of paper or on the board. We, or the children, draw a big *a* in one picture and a big *an* in the other. One of the children has a pile of animal flash cards which she holds up one by one. When the other children see the cards they either run to touch the appropriate picture, jump on it, slam it with their hands or flyswatters, or just touch it gently. When they do so, they say the appropriate sentence, such as, *It's a lion*.

We can use a puppet or toy animal to tell them if they are right or wrong. The puppet shakes its head saying, *Uh-oh*, if they are wrong, and nods its head saying, *Yes!* if they are right. Gradually they notice the pattern. We just do the activity for a few minutes, mixed in with other activities, and then come back to it again.

The child's theory is wrong

She may encounter a word or pattern, make a guess about it using a theory she has developed, but find that something is wrong with her theory. In this way, cognitive conflict may cause her to reflect on and rethink her theory (see Chapter 11, page 175). The theory may just need modifying, or it might be quite a superficial theory that does not link with many other parts of her mental model of English, in which case it is easy to modify.

For example, she may have a theory that *a* is always pronounced as in *apple*, and when she comes across the word *panda* she pronounces the last *a* as in *apple*. The puppet shakes its head saying, *Uh-oh*, or other children pronounce the word correctly because it is familiar. She is confused, and wonders about her theory. She then notices words like *Africa* or *umbrella* and realizes that her theory just needs to be modified a bit.

On the other hand, a theory that does not work well could be quite deeply embedded in her model of how English works, and some of her other theories may depend on it, in which case she may need to make quite fundamental changes to her way of looking at English. If we have a well-thought-out language syllabus there should not be too many occasions when she needs to make such fundamental changes.

■ Learning and memory

The more deeply children think while they are learning, the more they will commit to memory and later be able to recall what they have learned. But there are other factors involved in improving the children's retention of words and patterns. Here are some of the key factors:

Organization

If children learn the principles and patterns behind knowledge, rather than just the knowledge itself, they will retain the knowledge more deeply and will be more likely to recall it and use it flexibly in novel situations.

Ownership

If children feel they are constructing their own personal model of how English fits together, they will remember more of what they learn.

Repetition

Children need a lot of practice, repeating new words and patterns in ways that feel meaningful to them (see Chapter 3, page 37).

Association

Children are more likely to remember words and patterns they associate with a fun game, an interesting picture, a mime or action, a song, or an absurd situation.

Emotional involvement

Children will remember words and patterns more readily if they are emotionally immersed in a lesson.

Action

If children learn words or patterns while doing an action, they are more likely to remember the pattern. We just need to make sure they also have space to think and reflect. It is probably best to start a course with quieter activities, and once we are sure the class is really thinking and focused on learning, we can make the lessons more physically active.

Beginning and end

Children best remember things from the beginning or end of a period of learning. This means it is effective to practice new target words or patterns for a while, then go away and come back to them a number of times later in the lesson.

Rest

Short periods of rest during lessons aid memory. Nonstop drilling and practice is less effective.

Warm-up

Children remember more after warming up. This means it helps to have some kind of review warm-up activity at the beginning of a lesson. It is best if the review logically leads into the new target language.

Recycling

Words and patterns need to be recycled, both for homework shortly after a lesson, and in future lessons.

Peripheral language

Children remember many things they do not even appear to be focusing on. They may fail to remember the target pattern we want them to learn, but remember other words or patterns they encountered in the lesson (see Chapter 4, page 55).

All these aids to memory can be exploited more in a child-centered lesson than in a teacher-centered lesson. An effective child-centered lesson focuses on each child's personal mental organization of what she has learned, on the importance of ownership, on meaningful practice, and on all the other factors mentioned above.

■ Space to think

Just doing is not enough. Children need to think and do. This means not just running around, jumping up and down, and moving frantically from one activity to another. It means having space to think and space to reflect. The child who puts up her hand fastest, or the child who touches the correct flash card first, may not be the child who has been learning the most. Her quick actions may mean she is not thinking enough. Another child may be standing back more, considering the situation, and weighing up options.

If children play games too frantically without thinking enough, we may need to use quieter activities to settle them down, or change the rules of a game to encourage them to think more. For example, if we are playing a game where the children race to touch a picture, and some children touch many pictures as quickly as possible until they get the right one, we can take points away for touching the wrong picture. This makes them pause before touching and think a bit more.

This is particularly important when we introduce new language targets. We want the children to think, pause and wonder. At this point, we may need to encourage them to think. We can pretend we are puzzled by the same problem, saying, Yes, *what is it?* or give some hint that leads the children through a thought process that will enable them to get to the right answer.

PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT

In a child-centered lesson, children are real, individual people, involved with their whole selves, not just their intellect.

■ Classroom feelings

If children see English as something that “has to” be learned or “should be” learned, and when a lesson is over they leave the classroom to do the things they really “want to” do, such as run and play with their friends or go home and play with their computer games, it is unlikely that many of them will deeply internalize much of the English they encounter in the classroom.

In the classroom, they will have classroom feelings, and with their friends, or with their computers, the children will have more meaningful feelings. Much of what the children learn in the classroom is likely to remain in that world. They may be able to use it in tests, but it will probably not have much impact on their daily lives outside the classroom, and it is unlikely that they will be able to use the English they learn in this way to express meaningful feelings and meaningful opinions.

The children will probably be able to use the skills they acquire by playing on their computers or with their friends, and be able to transfer these skills to a wide variety of other situations. But, except for subjects or particular lessons the children take a special interest in, and this includes English for some children, school knowledge will easily become just knowledge that is not easily transferred to situations away from school, and quickly forgotten if they do not have lessons for a while.

If we want children to connect English with feelings that have a significant meaning for them, and be able to use English communicatively in their daily lives, we need to attack the artificial world of the classroom.

■ Emotional involvement

Games are at the core of a child’s world outside the classroom, so we should play a lot of games in the classroom. If only the children could have the same feelings in our lessons that they have when they sit down in front of their favorite computer games. If only they could completely immerse themselves emotionally, playing and learning, and getting better and better. This is all possible. It does not mean every activity needs to be exciting. The important point is whether the children are focused, positive, and engaged in learning with both sides of their brains (see Chapter 11, page 178). They can do this in quiet activities where they are sitting down with a pencil and paper as well as in lively activities.

The children should also have many opportunities to ask genuine questions and communicate with us in a way that does not feel like a classroom exercise. They need to learn a range of questions to express their curiosity, and we need to use English naturally rather than “teach.” If a child looks at a picture and asks, *What’s she doing?*, we answer naturally, depending on the child’s English level, *She’s playing volleyball*, *I think she’s playing volleyball*, or, *Let’s see. It’s difficult to know. I think she’s playing volleyball*. We do not follow up by saying, *Repeat after me! She’s playing volleyball*.

If a child cannot pronounce a sound, we do not focus on getting her mouth into exactly the right shape and get her to make the correct sound. We put the sound into a fun activity, make a joke out of it, and get the children to learn the sound with a mime or action that will help them remember it. For example, if a child cannot pronounce the sound ‘ou’ as in *cloud*, we bump into something or hit ourselves with a card that has *ou* written on it, and say *ou!* as if we have been hurt. If the child smiles, there is a good chance she will now be able to remember and produce the sound. So as to make sure, we can get her and other children to bump into things and say, *ou!*

■ Ownership

Having a feeling of ownership of what has been learned is an essential ingredient in a child-centered lesson. In the approach taken in this book, we plan the core language sequence of our courses. However, whether or not we plan the syllabus is not the key factor in determining if the children develop a sense of personal ownership of what they have learned. The key point is whether we pay full attention to each of the stages of the Questioning Cycle.

If the children notice new words and patterns while playing a game, are curious about them, make mistakes at first, but finally succeed in understanding and using them, and if they are able to connect this new knowledge with the other English words and patterns they have learned, there is a good chance they will feel they “own” their new knowledge. They will feel they have learned what they genuinely wanted to know. They will also feel they struggled, made mistakes, but finally succeeded. These are key factors in developing a feeling of ownership.

In fact, most of the new words and patterns they come across just happened to be put there by us, but we do not “teach” them. We let the children notice and learn them for themselves. This does not mean every new word and pattern is planned by us. The children will try to say things in English that we have not planned, or be interested in words and patterns that they come across by themselves. This is great, and should always be encouraged, as long as what they want to know is achievable for them, and is not going to confuse their mental models of English.

As the children's English gets better, and their mental models of English become more robust, we do not need to be so careful. We can encourage them to make more choices about what they want to learn. For example, they can choose which graded readers to read, keep a diary and choose what to write about, choose projects to work on, and assess our lessons and suggest how they can be changed.

■ Personalizing language

To personalize language means to use it to refer to subjects that feel personal. For example, when practicing the pattern *like/likes*, the children do not say or write, *John likes bananas*, if they have no idea who John is. Instead, they say or write sentences such as, *I like baseball*, *My sister likes ice cream very much*, and, *My dog likes me very much!*

Personalizing patterns is not something the children do as a final stage after first learning the pattern in a less personally meaningful way. There is no need for artificial sentences at all. From the beginning, the children should be constantly using the pattern to say and write things that mean something to them.

This does not mean they should always personalize sentences. There are many other ways of making sentences feel meaningful to a child, such as when they look at attractive pictures and say or write sentences about them, or when they look out the window and say or write about what they see. Meaningful sentences can develop into short talks or written paragraphs. In time, after the children get used to writing paragraphs they can move on to keeping diaries or journals in English.

A short talk or written paragraph

I have a pet dog called Woof.

I like him very much!

And he likes me very much!

He also likes sleeping and going to the park.

He likes my sister's cat, but he usually doesn't like cats.

Diaries and journals

Once the children get used to writing paragraphs, and have learned enough patterns, they can keep diaries or journals where they write about anything they feel like. We can encourage them to keep the journal in their bedrooms and write something before they go to sleep. The important thing is to encourage the children to express their thoughts in English. They can show us their diaries or journals sometimes, but we should not correct them strictly. We can just notice the patterns they are having trouble with and give the children more practice of these patterns in our lessons or for homework.

■ Motivation

Whether or not a child is motivated to learn English will depend to a large extent on whether she sees learning as a personal adventure or not, and this is largely dependent on whether we pay attention to each stage of the Questioning Cycle when we introduce new language targets, and whether we establish a warm and encouraging relationship with her. There are other important factors as well:

Home and friends

The attitude of family and friends can have a big effect on a child's motivation. If her parents encourage her to learn and her friends think it is "cool" to learn, she is more likely to be positive about learning.

Transferability

It helps if she can see how to transfer what she learns into other situations. For example, if she learns a new grammatical structure, we can make sure she has chances to use this structure in practical situations, to express genuine thoughts and feelings, to write messages to e-mail friends, to use it in projects, and come across it in stories. Using a pattern in multiple contexts also develops her ability to use the concepts in more abstract and sophisticated ways. She is more likely to seek out and recognize opportunities to use the pattern.

Self-perception

As has already been pointed out (see page 14), if we want a child to be motivated to learn actively, it is important that she perceives herself as being successful.

Absence of extrinsic rewards

Intrinsic motivation is fostered by the sense of accomplishment gained from struggling with something that is a bit difficult at first, yet succeeding. It may be undermined by extrinsic rewards (see Chapter 8, page 115). Rewards tend to encourage children to learn in order to get the rewards, not to achieve internal goals, so rewards may have an adverse effect on motivation.

Evaluation and threats

If children expect to be evaluated, feel threatened, or feel they are being watched and checked up on, it is likely that they will study for the sake of the evaluation, to avoid the threatened punishment, or to satisfy the adult watching them, and will lose some inner motivation to learn for its own sake. They may feel they are no longer learning from choice.

No matter what teaching method we use, there will always be some children who are highly motivated to learn English. But, if we want as many of the children as possible to have a high level of motivation, it is essential that we use child-centered methods, and encourage children to be as personally involved in the learning of English as possible.

A PAUSE TO REFLECT

■ What is child-centered learning?

Using a child-centered approach does not simply mean getting the children to do activities or projects by themselves or in groups, or getting them as physically active as possible. There are many situations where the children are doing all this, but which are really quite teacher-centered because the teacher explained or demonstrated before the children started practicing. Child-centered learning is more mental than physical. The initial desire to learn something starts inside each child. We may choose a language target, but before the children learn it, we need to ensure that the children also feel it is important and genuinely want to learn it.

Every time we “teach,” we send a message to the children that they do not need to learn for themselves. Every time we focus on immediate facts and knowledge, and ignore the process of learning, we send a message to the children that they cannot be natural human beings in our lessons. Children, by nature, are active learners. They are full of life and curiosity, and learning is at the very core of their existence. As we “teach,” we gradually dampen this curiosity down, and may turn a naturally active learner into a passive learner.

Fortunately, the children will continue to be human, and will simply turn their curiosity in other directions. With a bit of luck and some perseverance on our part, if we stop “teaching,” focus on attracting the children back toward English, and on giving them the power and confidence to learn for themselves, they can become self-motivated active learners of English again. So much depends on us and our use of child-centered methods.

Some questions to reflect on or discuss:

- 1 How can we draw children towards new language targets so that they notice and want to learn them before they understand them?
- 2 How can we ensure that as many of the children as possible will be successful?
- 3 What types of activities give children chances to link new words and patterns with ones they already know?
- 4 How can we encourage children to have a positive perception of themselves as learners?
- 5 What factors do you think are most important in getting children to remember words and patterns they encounter?

Teaching Listening and Speaking

(Please answer in **full sentences** and **in your own words**)

1. What are some of the sources of difficulty for children when listening to English based texts?

2. In listening what is bottom-up and top-down processing? How can we support you children in developing these skills in a language classroom?

3. What are some common speaking activities that we can use with younger children? What are some common speaking activities that we can use with older children?

5

TEACHING LISTENING AND SPEAKING

Introduction

It was suggested in the previous chapter that the teacher was a key player in the overall success of TEYL programmes and one of the reasons why this is the case is because teachers are the major sources of language input for children. Just as in mother tongue learning, English should start with an emphasis on listening and then speaking. These are the two main skills to teach first because children often cannot read and write at all yet, or not with much confidence. Young beginners need to start with plenty of listening practice, and opportunities to listen to rich input will naturally lead to speaking tasks. In this way, listening and speaking are truly integrated in the primary English classroom.

Teaching listening

Children in an English as a foreign language class will listen to a great variety of texts but above all to their teacher: talking, singing, chanting, dramatizing dialogues, giving instructions, and telling stories. Although in the early stages the teacher will remain their main source of listening input, children might also listen to video and audio tapes especially if these come with the coursebook the teacher is using. Teachers can be supported with good quality tapes to accompany their teaching if they are not yet confident about their own language proficiency.

Listening—aspects of difficulty

Listening is an active skill and there are many factors that contribute to its difficulty. It is important in the early stages to avoid these sources of difficulty and introduce them only gradually. One source of difficulty is the type and length of the text the children listen to. Another factor is the familiarity of the person who they are listening to. It is easier to listen to the teacher than to recordings because teachers can adjust the speed of their speech and

modify their language. The teacher can also repeat messages and use gestures and facial expressions to help children to work out the meaning. What also makes a difference is the response the children need to make before, while, or after they listen.

There are two basic sub-skills that competent and mature listeners use all the time. One set of sub-skills is referred to as 'bottom-up' skills. These help learners build up the language from constituent parts. Relying on their knowledge of the linguistic system, listeners use bottom-up skills to segment the speech they hear and make sense of it. Knowing the language system helps learners to work out, for example, what the unstressed grammar words are in a particular sentence even without hearing or listening out for every word. Speakers of all ages find this processing difficult but children will have particular difficulties. Depending on their age and the type of teaching they have been exposed to, they may not know much about the abstract rule system of English and therefore they may lack the ability to manipulate the system from bottom up. Parallel with 'bottom-up' processing, successful listeners also do simultaneous 'top-down' processing. They rely on their schematic knowledge, i.e. their mental frameworks for various topics and their world knowledge to fill in gaps in their understanding, make guesses and interpretations as they follow the listening text. In comparison with adults, children have less developed schematic knowledge about many topics; they know less about the world in general and therefore guess and infer meaning with more difficulty. The younger the children, the more this applies.

Support with listening

In order to support children with both bottom-up and top-down work, teachers may want to focus on giving them listening tasks that are meaning driven and help them to develop these strategies slowly. In order to support top-down processing, teachers can make sure that listening is carefully embedded in the here-and-now context of familiar games and routines such as stories and action rhymes so that children do not need to infer the context or topic for themselves. Gestures and visuals will help, too. With regard to bottom-up processing, it is important that children are given tasks that do not require them to manipulate linguistic features that they do not know yet and are not interested in, such as translating, analysing constituent parts of phrases and sentences, and substituting patterns. Instead, children should start with easier 'listen and do' activities. Many coursebook activities ask children to 'listen and read', meaning that they can follow the text on the page as they listen, which helps with bottom-up processing. This, of course, is only helpful if they can read.

Teacher talk in the primary English lesson

In young learners' classrooms, especially at the beginning stages of learning a language, teachers often talk a lot in the target language because they provide the language input. This helps children to get used to the intonation patterns and the sounds of the language. Teachers talk and comment on what is going on as they point to pictures in the book or on the classroom wall, or as they mime something (see Figure 5.1).

As children listen, they are engaged in working out what is going on and for some of the time they may choose to remain silent and just absorb the

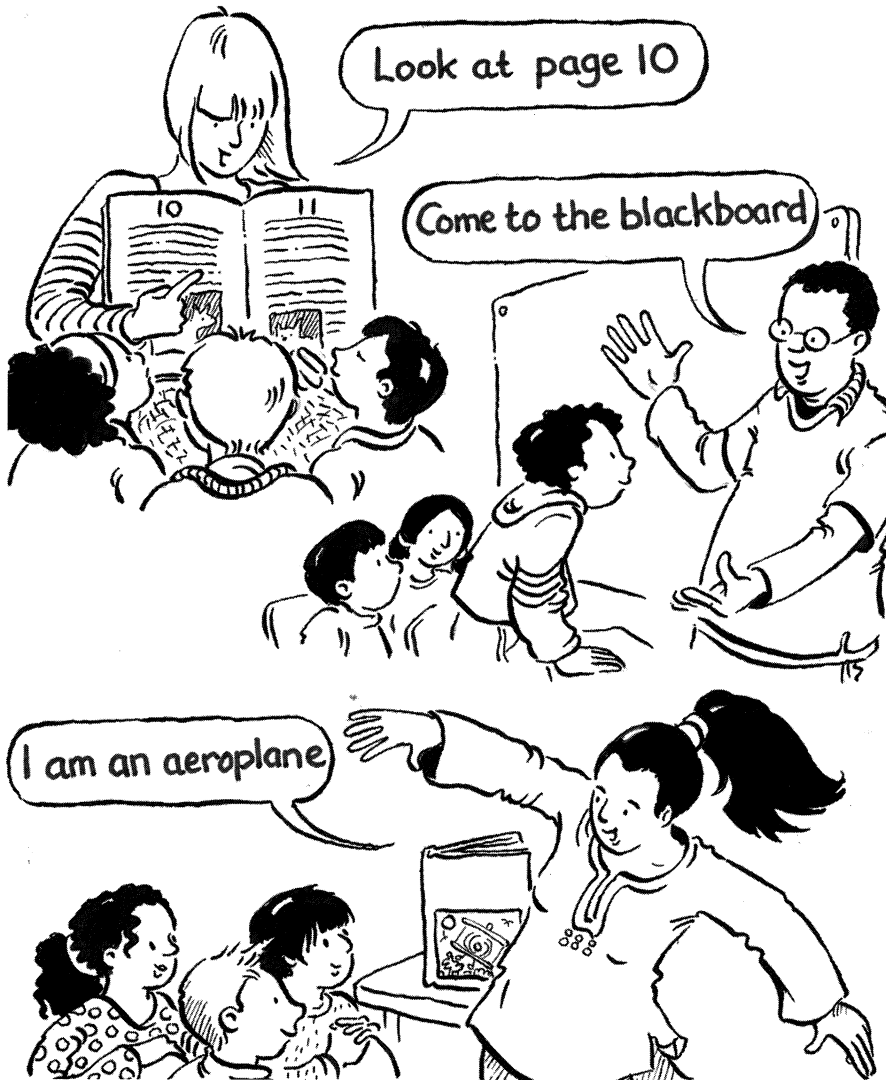


Figure 5.1: Examples of teacher talk

language. This is similar to the first couple of years in learning the mother tongue. Of course, they do not necessarily understand every word the teacher says but most children will be able to work out the meaning from the context, the gestures, and the visual aids. When teachers use English (the target language) to give instructions, tell a story, or introduce a song or a rhyme, children who have just started learning may comment in their mother tongue on what they think is happening because they cannot yet contribute in the second language. The teacher may want to accept children's comments in their first language and also encourage them by confirming their guesses and contributions, and incorporating their utterances into the target language. There is also an important social, affective function of teacher talk. Teachers will use a lot of praise and encouragement and will model social conventions such as saying hello at the beginning of the lesson.

Interactional modifications of language

During interactions of any kind between adults or children in any language, there are inevitably communication breakdowns. This simply means that the partners do not always understand what the other has just said. When a breakdown or misunderstanding is judged by the speakers as unimportant, they might simply ignore it and just carry on talking. However, if the breakdown is serious, the conversational partners will decide to repair and rephrase what has been said by modifying their original language use. This is often referred to as 'language modification'. Modifying language to avoid and solve misunderstandings can include using repetitions, comprehension checks ('Do you understand what I am trying to say?'), clarification requests ('What did you say?'), and confirmation checks ('Did you say you got five?'). Michael Long, a linguist in America, and many of his colleagues conducted research studies in the 1980s with adult EFL learners to explore interactional modifications, and found that the processes of negotiating meaning (modifying language and asking for modifications from a partner) facilitated second language acquisition.

Almost all empirical research in this area has however been conducted with adults. One study that stands out because it was conducted with children and in an EFL setting has interesting supportive evidence. This study was carried out in Spain with ten-year-old children. In 2001 Marcos Penate Cabrera and Plácido Bazo Martínez investigated the effects of two types of story input in their English classes. One story was told to the children using simplified sentence structures and vocabulary, but without repetitions, comprehension checks, and supporting gestures (interactional modifications). The other story was told using the original story text with interactional modifications. The children's understanding was measured afterwards using a

comprehension test. The results showed that the groups of children who heard the story with interactive modifications understood and recalled the story significantly better. The children were also asked in an interview for their opinion about which type of storytelling was easier to understand. All the children considered that listening with interactive modifications was easier. In addition to the linguistic features, the authors of this study also stressed the importance of using gestures as 'tools' to assist input.

To illustrate how teachers can modify their language and make messages more accessible to children, Table 5.1 gives an example of a teacher's modifications to the story of the 'Fat Cat' (see page 52).

Once upon a time there was an old, old woman. How old is she? Is she 50, 60, or 70? What do you think? Yes, I think she is 70 or 80 years old. Very old. Look at the picture. What is this? What did she have? She had a what? Yes, she had a cat. Yes, cat. Is this is a thin cat or a fat cat? Yes, a fat cat. A fat cat (gesture). A black cat. Do you like the cat? Hm, one day, the old lady made some soup for lunch. Look, here is the pot. There is soup in the pot. Hmm, lovely soup. The old lady said to the cat, 'Cat, watch the soup in the pot. I must go to my sister.' The cat said, 'Don't worry. I will watch the soup.' So the old woman went to her sister. What do you think the cat did when the old woman left (repeat question in first language)? Let's see. Oh, look, the cat is eating. The cat ate the soup. And what else? And ate the pot, too. Oh, no. Look how big he is now. I think he is very hungry, hungry (gesture). He ate the soup and the pot too.

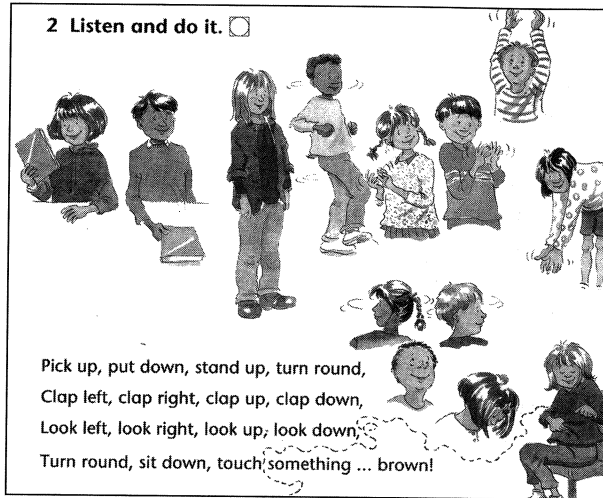
Table 5:1 Extract from a story modification (from The Fat Cat by J. Kent, Puffin 1974)

We can see how the teacher elicits information from the children, builds on what they already know, comments on the story, and keeps children engaged by asking them to predict what will happen next. She also makes use of the illustrations which help learners follow the storyline. She repeats language for emphasis and uses examples to highlight concepts, and she modifies language by offering alternatives and synonyms. Such input can be a very rich source of language learning and also serves as meaningful practice in listening.

Listening activities for younger learners

Where do we start with younger learners? In order to give children plenty of listening practice and help them tune into English, many young learners' coursebooks and resource books initially recommend mainly activities

which require nonverbal responses from children. One such task is to listen to rhymes or action stories or songs and enjoy them by miming the actions rather than immediately producing the language. The nonverbal contributions help make sense of the content. The important principle is that children have the opportunity to absorb the language before they have to say anything. Such responses to listening are associated with Total Physical Response (TPR), an approach to language learning originally developed in the 1960s in America. TPR links learning to physical actions and ensures that learners will hear a lot of natural English in meaningful contexts without having to respond verbally. The example in Extract 1 is taken from *Buzz 1*.



Extract 1 (Revell, Seligson, and Wright 1995)

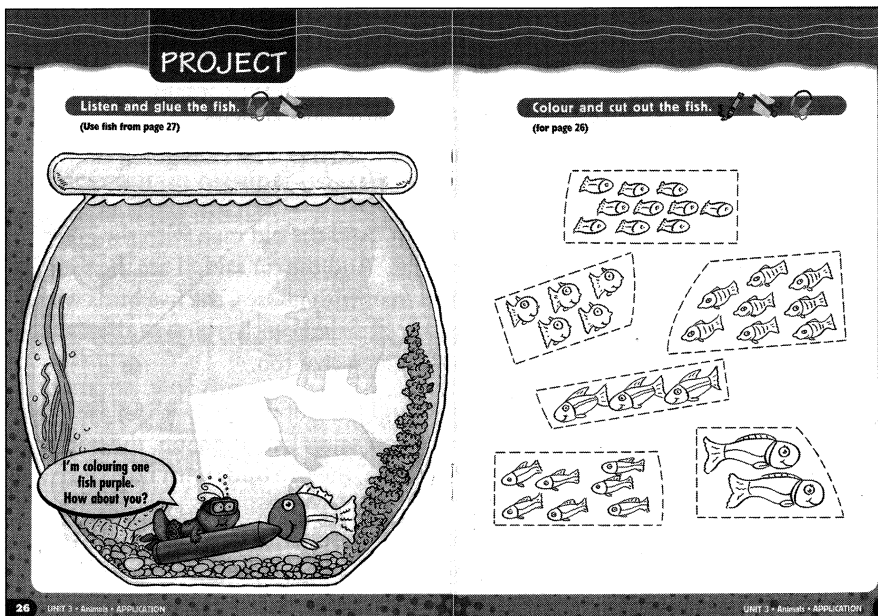
The instructions in the Teacher's book are as follows:

- The teacher does the actions as the cassette is played;
- Pupils join in as they become confident;
- Pupils point to pictures in the book as they hear the instructions;
- Pupils do the actions and join in with the words if they want.

The new language is introduced with support from the teachers' gestures and the illustrations in the book. These help children grasp the meaning. There are two different nonverbal responses recommended here. First, children join in with the actions, then point to the pictures. Even at the stage of language production, it is emphasized in the teacher's book that this should be optional. Eventually most children probably want to join in and say the rhyme. Most coursebooks contain rhymes, songs, and action stories which can be used in this way. There are also resource books in which teachers can find additional materials, and some confident and creative teachers may feel inspired to write their own. (See more about this in Chapter 9.)

A great deal of listening practice in the early years can grow out of TPR. For example, there are the so-called 'listen and respond' games such as 'listen and clap your hands', or 'Simon says'. In these activities children have to listen and understand messages, decide whether they are right or wrong, and act accordingly. Other activities such as 'Listen and draw the picture' or 'Listen and colour in the clown's clothes' include drawing or colouring. Yet other exercises include simple ticking or circling or require some writing, such as true and false. Many of these are focused 'listen and do' exercises with an end product such as a picture, a colourful clown, or an animal mask to take home to show parents. Because of the focused nature of these tasks, it is easy for the teacher to monitor what children have understood from the listening text. These activities not only give excellent listening practice but also offer opportunities for incorporating into the English class multiple intelligences through sticking, colouring, and making simple objects. (See more about this in Chapter 1.)

The typical 'listen and do' activity in Extract 2, for the younger age group, is taken from *New English Parade Starter B*. It is a simple 'listen and colour' activity where children colour their fish and then glue them into the fish bowl.



Extract 2 (Herrera and Zanatta 2001a)

Listening to stories is the most authentic and popular activity for all children, and primary English teachers can use storytelling as additional listening practice. Children will learn new language as well as having

An old woman lived with her cat in her house. She made soup for lunch and she said, 'Cat, watch the soup in the pot. I must go to my sister.' The cat said to her, 'OK. Don't worry. I will watch the soup in the pot.' But when the old woman went out, the cat ate all the soup. And the pot, too. When the old lady came back, she asked the cat, 'What happened to the soup and the pot?' 'Oh,' said the cat, 'I ate the soup and the pot too. And now I am going to eat you.' And he ate the old woman too.

The cat went for a walk. And he met a fat boy with a red hat. And the fat boy asked him, 'What did you eat my little cat? You are so fat.' And the cat said, 'I ate the soup, the pot, and the old woman too. And now I am going to eat you.' So he ate the fat boy with the red hat too.

The cat went for a walk. And he met a thin man with glasses. And the thin man asked him, 'What did you eat my little cat? You are so fat.' And the cat said, 'I ate the soup, the pot, the old woman, and the fat boy with a red hat too. And now I am going to eat you.' So he ate the thin man with glasses too.

The cat went for a walk and met five birds with nice shirts. And the five birds asked him, 'What did you eat my little cat? You are so fat.' And the cat said, 'I ate the soup, the pot, the old woman, the fat boy with a red hat, and the thin man with glasses too. And now I am going to eat you.' So he ate the five birds with nice shirts too.

The cat went for a walk and met seven dancing girls with brown shoes. And the seven dancing girls asked him, 'What did you eat my little cat? You are so fat.' And the cat said, 'I ate the soup, the pot, the old woman, the fat boy with a red hat, the thin man with glasses, and the five birds with nice shirts too. And now I am going to eat you.' So he ate the seven dancing girls with brown shoes too.

The cat went for a walk and met a little lady with a pink umbrella. And the little lady with a pink umbrella asked him, 'What did you eat my little cat? You are so fat.' And the cat said, 'I ate the soup, the pot, the old woman, the fat boy with a red hat, the thin man with glasses, the five birds with nice shirts, and the seven dancing girls with brown shoes too. And now I am going to eat you.' So he ate the little lady with the pink umbrella too.

The cat went for a walk and met an old man with a green coat. And the old man with the green coat asked him, 'What did you eat my little cat? You are so fat.' And the cat said, 'I ate the soup, the pot, the old woman, the fat boy with a red hat, the thin man with glasses, the five birds with nice shirts, the seven dancing girls with brown shoes, and the little lady with a pink umbrella too. And now I am going to eat you.' So he ate old man with the green coat too.

The cat went for a walk and met a woodcutter with an axe. And the woodcutter with an axe asked him, 'What did you eat my little cat? You are so fat.' And the cat said: 'I ate the soup, the pot, the old woman, the fat boy with a red hat, the thin man with glasses, the five birds with nice shirts, the seven dancing girls with brown shoes, the little lady with a pink umbrella, and the old man with a green coat too. And now I am going to eat you.' But the woodcutter said, 'No, you can't eat me, my little fat cat.' And he took his axe, cut the cat open, and saved everybody. He told the cat not to be greedy any more.

And out jumped the old man with a green coat, the little lady with a pink umbrella, the seven dancing girls with brown shoes, the five birds with nice shirts, the thin man with glasses, the fat boy with the red hat, and the old woman with her soup in the pot.

So the woman took her soup and went home. This is the end of the story.

enjoyable listening practice. Language is picked up easily because stories contain repetition which makes linguistic input more noticeable. Songs, rhymes, and stories often use repetition to make the input salient in this way. In the following story there are many types of repetitive patterns which make new language stand out. The example in Extract 3 is a Danish folk tale which has variations in many other cultures.

This is a 'cumulative repetitive' story. There is a pattern to what happens to nearly everybody who meets the fat cat. The dialogue between the cat and the other characters also follows a clear pattern. Each character is introduced with a similar phrase i.e. noun + with + adjective + noun: 'a girl with brown shoes'. Every time a new character is introduced, the cat repeats the same phrase adding another animal or person. This is like a chain memory practice for vocabulary. These patterns will be picked up by the children without much effort because they are so salient in the input. Predictability will enhance understanding. Visuals, i.e. the pictures in the book, gestures, and interactive modifications will also help. Children will find they want to join in with parts of the story. Chanting together means that individual contributions are voluntary and safe. Those children who are not ready can just listen. In addition to the listening practice, the recurring linguistic patterns in the dialogue between the cat and the other characters can be developed as a model for follow-up speaking practice. Initially controlled dialogues and drill-like repetition can lead to freer dramatization or role-plays. Listening to stories, rhymes, and songs can also lead to learning the words and phrases by heart and this can be very useful because songs and rhymes contain reasonably fast connected speech in English, with shortened sounds and the use of 'schwa' [ə], such as in 'cutter' [kʌtə].

Listening activities for older learners


The majority of the activities in the previous section can be used with older learners as well especially at the beginning stages. For example, 'Simon says' works with older learners as well. Perhaps the instructions themselves might become more challenging. Older learners also enjoy storytelling but the teacher will have to make careful judgements about the type of story that is suitable. It is possible to look for longer stories or stories from other cultures. With older learners, it is a good idea to introduce tapes rather than just the teacher's input because children will have to get used to faster speech, unfamiliar speakers, and different accents. It is possible to increase difficulty by varying text length and activity types. Activities used with younger learners can be adapted for older ones by increasing the level of difficulty. For example, within the category of 'listen and do' it is possible to introduce activities which require quite a lot of processing, such as 'listen and identify


one person', where the learners have to listen to a passage and work out which person is being described. The more people there are to choose from, the more difficult the task is. Task difficulty therefore is largely dependent on the kind of output required. Younger learners may be asked to join in with a story while older learners can rewrite the story ending and act it out.

As children grow older, they get better at both bottom-up and top-down processing. They learn more both about the linguistic system and about the world around them, which makes predictions and guessing more reliable. They can also alternate between these two skills depending on the task at hand. In Extract 4, taken from *New English Parade 6*, children listen to a recording of a professor talking about the future. They read and understand the four sentences from the book to focus their attention. The task is to decide which of these sentences they hear in the listening text.

5. Listen to the radio programme.

Everyone is talking about the future. Tick the things that the professor on the radio programme says will happen in the future.





1. There will be many new inventions to make life easier.
2. There will be no more cars.
3. There will be robots in homes.
4. There will be plant farms in the sea.
5. Rubbish will disappear.
6. People will live in houses on the sea.

Extract 4 (Herrera and Zanatta 2001b)

Extract 5, taken from *Tip Top 4*, illustrates how older learners can begin to use their predicting skills to make certain assumptions about the content of the listening before they hear it. First of all, children can look at the photos of the four readers and guess what they may be collecting. Then they listen and find out whether their predictions were right. When they listen the third time, they focus on other parts of the text. They listen for specific detail about the reasons why different children wanted to collect different things.

This example illustrates that older learners can use their predicting skills to their advantage. The text is a rich source for practice, through getting the learners to focus on different aspects of the text each time. It is also important to add that texts like this illustrate well that it is not necessary to understand every single word. As long as the learners can complete the task, the listening has been useful and successful. Teachers can explicitly focus on helping children to be aware of useful listening skills. (See more about this in Chapter 8.)

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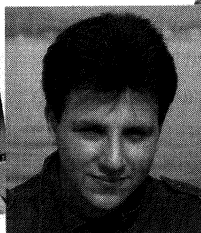
THINK AND LISTEN.

Mark telephoned some readers of *Young Ideas* to find out about what they collected.

- 1 Before you listen, look at these photos of four of the people he phoned.
Each person collects something from the list in Exercise 1. Guess what each person collects.



Susannah



Pedro



Paula



Chris

- 2 Now listen and check your answers. Were your guesses correct?
- 3 Now listen again and find out the reasons that each person likes their 'collecting' hobby. Join the name to the reason.
- a She likes to write letters in English and read the replies.
b She likes to wear casual clothes that are not expensive.
c He likes to wear something interesting on his clothes.
d He likes beautiful and interesting pictures.
He hasn't got a lot of money.

Paula

Chris

Pedro

Susannah

Extract 5 (Rixon 1993)

Teaching speaking

Fluent speakers

Learning to speak fluently and accurately is one of the greatest challenges for all language learners. This is because to be able to speak fluently, we have to speak and think at the same time. As we speak, we have to monitor our output and correct any mistakes, as well as planning for what we are going to say next. To be able to speak fluently in a foreign language requires a lot of practice. Speaking practice starts with practising and drilling set phrases and repeating models. A great deal of time in language classrooms is often spent on these repetitive exercises. Speaking practice, however, can also mean communicating with others in situations where spontaneous contributions are required. Fluent speakers will also have to learn a range of other things such as what is appropriate to say in certain situations, how to manage conversations, and how to interrupt and offer their own contributions. It is a difficult and lengthy process to master all these sub-skills.

What is realistic for young learners?

Children are not necessarily competent communicators even in their mother tongue with regard to some of the above sub-skills. For example, they may be unable to appreciate what other speakers already know (more on this in Chapter 2) or may not know the rules of what is appropriate in which situation or how to be polite when interrupting. It is important for teachers to familiarize themselves with what their children can do in their first language. At the beginning stages with children it is a good idea to focus on simple but purposeful and meaningful pattern drilling and personalized dialogue building in order to prepare them to be able to talk about themselves and their world and to begin to interact with their friends in class and other speakers of the language.

Speaking activities with younger groups

At the beginning in TEYL classrooms teachers and children construct utterances together. This means that teachers build on and incorporate learners' utterances from their utterances in their first or second language. Children do not have to be able to produce complete sentences or questions to initiate an utterance. After children have been exposed to English through listening, they soon want and are able to participate in interactions with the teacher and each other. Many children will want to start copying simple phrases, join in with rhymes and songs, answer simple questions, introduce themselves, and memorize short dialogues. The first building blocks that allow children to move from listening to speaking and to begin to participate in interactions with others are so-called 'unanalysed chunks'. This means that children can remember phrases from previously heard input and use them without conscious analysis. Chunks will often be learnt from the teacher's input or from other texts such as songs, rhymes, chants, stories, and dialogues. For example, if the teacher says, 'See you tomorrow' at the end of every lesson, some learners will pick this up and learn it as an unanalysed chunk. They may understand that it is like saying goodbye because the teacher always says it at the end of the lesson but they will not be able to articulate, for example, that the phrase consists of three words, or what each word means in isolation.

All speakers of English use chunks. Some chunks are fixed while others can be complemented. Fully fixed chunks such as 'see you later' 'what a surprise', or 'what do you think' are complete and ready to use. Partially fixed chunks, such as the chunk 'have you got', are those which require additional elements. Chunks help speakers to produce language faster because they do not have to think of the individual words. Children use more chunks than

adults do because they do not share adults' tendency to analyse language into constituent parts. Chunks will be picked up effortlessly by the children but teachers can also explicitly choose to teach set phrases as chunks as in the following example:

A <What do you like>?

B <I like> pizza.

A <What do you like>?

C <I like> chicken.


This mini-dialogue, for example, contains a fixed chunk <What do you like> that teachers can present and practise as a whole. The other chunk is a partially fixed one <I like>, which the children can begin to complete by substituting the original dialogue with items that are personally relevant. These dialogues are quite limited and drill-like at the beginning so it is essential that such practice is fun and as meaningful and purposeful as possible. Here is an example of how to make drilling fun. Guessing games, though fun, are usually drill-like. For example, one child comes to the front of the classroom and mimes an animal. The rest of the class ask questions, 'Are you a monkey? Are you a giraffe?' All their questions follow the same pattern. However, the purpose of the activity is meaningful to them. It is a guessing game and whoever guesses the right answer gets to come out and mime another animal.

Many other language games which are enjoyed in foreign language classrooms require such repetitive contributions. For example, 'I spy', 'What's the time, Mr Wolf?', 'I went to the market and got some apples, bananas, and pears ...'. These activities give children a sense of security and confidence which in turn might increase their motivation levels. In these activities children often copy an original text and use it as a model to create their own. Extract 6 is taken from *Zabadoo 3*.

6

Listen. Talk about yourself and your friend.

I like football and swimming. I also like drawing and volleyball. I don't like skiing or tennis. Hoot likes computer games and music. He also likes cycling and basketball. He doesn't like skating or dancing.



Extract 6 (Davies 2002)

In this exercise the children are encouraged to listen to or read a 'model' which they then personalize by creating their own description of what they and their friends like doing. They are supported by this model as to how much to say, how to construct the sentences, and what kind of activities to mention. It is meaningful in that the children have a choice of what to substitute in the model patterns. This type of exercise can lead to simple surveys where each member of the class is asked the same question and the results are displayed. For example, following on from the previous activity, the children could ask each other what they like and don't like doing and thus find out what is the most popular activity in their class. In large classes this can be carried out in groups. The advantage is that this practice is personalized and gives everybody a chance to talk. Table 5.2 shows the results of a survey.

Swimming	Tennis	Basketball	Singing	Dancing	Acting	Riding	Other
Jasleen	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Bethany	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sylvia	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
Mark	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Tom	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Louise	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Others							

Table 5:2 A survey of pastimes

Speaking activities with older learners

Many of the simple dialogues or drills can of course be used with older learners. Dialogues can also lead to interviews or role-play which may require some spontaneous, creative language use. Children will also have to learn how to manage more complex tasks. In order to use such tasks in classrooms, teachers may have to prepare learners. First of all, it is important to teach children phrases which allow them to check what they did not hear or cannot make sense of (for example, 'Sorry, I did not understand. What did you say?'). Teachers can equip learners with useful classroom language such as 'It is your turn', 'Give me the dice', 'Which one is mine?', 'What have you got?' to manage interactive games and tasks. Such language can be displayed on posters. Some of the tasks might require that the learners pay attention to what their partner is saying, ask for and give clarification, repair a com-

munication breakdown, or express themselves explicitly, with extra care. This is all part of 'learning to learn' (see Chapter 8).

Need for meaning negotiation

During games and interactive tasks learners often have to negotiate meaning, i.e. make sure that they understand each other. Research shows that children's ability to negotiate meaning when they do not understand something grows gradually with age and older learners can successfully repair conversations. Younger children, however, cannot reliably take responsibility for clarifying things in conversations. Rod Ellis and Rick Heimbach in 1997 investigated younger children's ability to negotiate meaning in situations when they did not understand new words. Ten kindergarten children were asked to participate in a small-scale study in an ESL programme in an American school in Japan. The children were five or six years old. In a pre-test the researchers established what vocabulary the children did not know and these words were selected for the purposes of the study. An experienced ESL teacher practised a listening task with individuals and groups using the new words. The children had to pretend to be zookeepers, listen to some instructions, and place a bug or a bird in the correct cage on the board. The teacher was a helper who would answer any questions the zookeepers had. The teacher did the task with individual children, making it clear that if they did not understand any of the instructions they could ask for help. Ellis and Heimbach found that there was a great deal of difference in individual children's preparedness or ability to negotiate. Overall the results showed that instead of negotiating the meaning of new words, the children used guesswork when faced with uncertainty.

Older children in Australia in Rhonda Oliver's study in 1998 were found to negotiate meaning more successfully. Two tasks were selected from commercially used materials. In the first task the children described simple black outline objects for their partners to draw. In the second task, which was of jigsaw format, each participant had an outline of a kitchen with cut-out items to be placed in it. The children in the study were between the ages of eight and 13. 128 non-native speaker and 64 native speaker children participated. Oliver found that all the children in her study negotiated meaning. However, when comparing their use of these strategies with that of adults, Oliver found that they used meaning negotiation strategies in a different proportion. They focused on constructing their own meaning rather than facilitating their partners' meaning. As a result, they used more clarification checks, confirmation checks, and repetition but not comprehension checks. So, while the children were mainly concerned with their own understanding, the adults tended to be concerned about the needs of their listeners, too.

Oliver suggested that her findings might be influenced by children's developmental level. The implication of these two studies for teachers is that tasks that require meaning negotiation may have to be introduced slowly and carefully, making sure that children are ready and capable of dealing with the demands of the tasks.

The demands of more complex tasks

Information gap tasks, where participants A and B have different information, often require that children say things creatively on the spot and describe details of visuals to each other with some precision. They might have to initiate questions and volunteer information as well as responding to their partners' questions appropriately. They also require that children learn to pay attention to what their partner is saying, check understanding, clarify meaning, and monitor the progression of the task carefully. For example, in Extract 7 on page 62, taken from *Story Magic 3*, one learner has to explain a route to his or her partner. The speaker needs to give clear directions. The listener needs to ask if anything is not clear and then the speaker will have to repeat or paraphrase their message. In this example, A and B speakers share a map so they can use their hands to guide each other on the map. This activity also requires an understanding of maps and thus a certain level of abstraction.

Information gap tasks, discussion tasks, and other complex speaking tasks can hide various difficulties. It is important for teachers to explore these difficulties with their children and provide plenty of practice of new task types. In my own research (Pinter 2001) I found that even children at the age of ten needed a great deal of practice to be able to deal with the difficulties of two classic information gap tasks: 'Spot the differences' and 'Follow the route on the map'.

Table 5.2 summarizes the most common difficulties and provides simple examples.

It is important for teachers to exercise their best judgement when selecting tasks for older and more experienced learners because tasks need to be motivating but not too difficult. Creating a positive learning environment can certainly help. Children will speak up and contribute to the lesson if they feel happy and secure. It is also crucial that children understand that they can speak up even when they are not sure about their contributions or have only a fragmented answer or idea to offer. This principle has important implications for careful error correction and plenty of encouragement. Children also need purposeful activities which create a communicative need and fuel their motivation to listen and speak. It is often a good idea to talk to children in their first language about the importance of practice in speaking. Teachers may want to encourage practising at home with parents and

Demands	Definition	Example
1 Linguistic	Aspects of difficulty such as what type of language is required by a particular task and to what extent the learners can select the linguistic forms they wish to use.	In a picture description task the learner is free to use 'I can see', 'I have got', 'In my picture there is', etc. without any restriction. Can the learners choose? Should the teacher model the language?
2 Referential	The need to establish unambiguously what the other person knows or has got.	When learners reconstruct a picture from two incomplete versions, they need to establish first what parts they share. They need safe reference points to refer back to as they build the picture together. Can they establish these safe points? Have they got the English to do this?
3 Cognitive	Demands related to attention, memory, and reasoning limitations. Logical or mathematical operations needed.	The game called 'Complete a list of clock faces or numbers' (by discovering the rule) or playing 'noughts and crosses' in teams both require adhering to some rules of logic. Can the children play these games in their first language?
4 Metacognitive	Demands which refer to the need in a task or a game to monitor own performance closely while carrying out the task.	Decide to change tactics midway in a noughts and crosses game depending on which squares the other team takes. Can they play this in their first language?
5 Interactional	Demands which refer to aspects of turn taking i.e. whether it is obligatory or not in a particular task, conversational management skills, or meaning negotiation.	The need to double-check confusing instructions on a map task by using meaning negotiation moves such as clarification requests.

Table 5.3: Demands in interactive tasks

siblings. Teachers may also want to advise parents about how to help their children, for example, parents can listen to songs, rhymes, and chants, practise dialogues, and encourage any discussion about English.

3 The Giant's Causeway

1 Listen and follow the route on the map.

2 Ask your friend.

Start at Table Mountain. Walk north.
Turn right. Walk to Snake River.
Turn left. Walk north. Where are you?

I'm at Monster Castle.

Extract 7 (House and Scott 2003b)

Summary

Listening and speaking are the two most important skills in most TEYL programmes. The development of listening can be the basis of initial speaking practice. There should be many opportunities in the class to combine listening and speaking through meaningful activities. Both younger and older learners need plenty of practice with listening and speaking activities and need confidence building to be able to speak up. It is important for

teachers to plan both their listening and speaking activities according to their learners' age, interests, and abilities.

Recommended reading

Background theory

Anderson, A. and T. Lynch. 1988. *Listening*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bygate, M. 1987. *Speaking*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

These two books are in the Oxford Language Teaching: a Scheme for Education series. They are comprehensive and very accessible books incorporating the theory of teaching listening and speaking with useful tasks and examples and how to implement them in class. Both these books are an ideal choice for professional development purposes.

Garvie, E. 1990. *Story as a Vehicle*. Clevedon, Avon: Multilingual Matters.

This is a guide for primary teachers offering creative ideas about how to exploit stories for language learning.

Wray, A. 2000. 'Formulaic sequences in second language teaching: principle and practice' *Applied Linguistics* 21/4: 463–490.

This article covers the underlying research and theory of formulaic phrases in speech. It discusses issues of identification and analysis and the significance of formulaic language analysis for practice.

Practical teacher resources

Ellis, G. and J. Brewster. 2002. *Tell it Again: The New Storytelling Handbook for Primary Teachers*. London: Longman.

This is an excellent resource for teachers and teacher trainers with some theory and plenty of practical ideas on storytelling. The book is a collection of twelve popular stories used and told all over the world and suggestions to exploit them for learning English as a foreign language.

Martin, C. and C. Cheater. 1998. *Let's Join in! Rhymes, Poems and Songs: Young Pathfinder 6*. London: CILT.

This is a practical handbook by CILT aimed at primary foreign language teachers. Even though the activities are for teaching languages other than English, it is still a very useful resource for teachers of English because the discussion and the explanation of the activities are in English. This volume contains some good ideas to introduce songs, rhymes, and poems.

Paran, A. and E. Watts. 2003. *Storytelling in ELT*. Whitstable: Kent: IATEFL.

This is a collection of stories used by teachers working with EFL learners all over the world. The book contains the texts of the stories and some recommended teaching tips that worked successfully in classrooms. The book has a substantial section on stories and techniques for young learners.

Satchwell, P. 1997. *Keep Talking: Teaching in the Target Language Young Pathfinder 4*. London: CILT.

This is another CILT publication for primary foreign language teachers. This volume discusses the advantages of using the target language in the classroom and gives practical tips to put theory into practice.

Wright, A. 1997. *Creating Stories with Children*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

This is a practical handbook for teachers interested in exploring stories and engaging children in the process of creating their own stories. It contains actual classroom materials with ready-to-use photocopiable sheets.

Tasks

If you would like to look at some practical tasks to explore your own practice related to the content of this chapter, you can try Tasks 2: Observing teachers' language use and 6: Getting children to reflect on their learning (1) (Appendix pages 157 and 159).

Teaching Reading and Writing

(Please answer in **full sentences** and **in your own words**)

1. Describe the process that children in their first language undergo that introduces them to literacy and make them ready to learn to read?

2. “Children can only benefit from phonics training if the meaning of the words makes sense to them.” What does this mean statement in terms of how we should approach the teaching of reading and writing with second language learners?

3. What are some reading activities that are appropriate for younger children? What are some activities that are appropriate for older children?

4. What are some writing activities that are appropriate for younger children? What are some activities that are appropriate for older children?

6

TEACHING READING AND WRITING

Introduction

Are there any good reasons why reading and writing can be introduced usefully in the TEYL curriculum despite the main emphasis in most programmes on the oral skills of speaking and listening? In order to appreciate the demands of learning to read and write in other languages, this chapter will compare first and second language and suggest ways in which English as a foreign language reading and writing can be introduced and gradually built up with children.

Why teach reading and writing in EYL classes?

Unfortunately there is no formula to follow or no single most effective technique to use when it comes to teaching native speaker children to read English. Needless to say, if there is no formula for teaching reading to children whose first language is English, then there is certainly no formula for teaching reading in English as a second or foreign language because second language contexts can be varied and complex. Whether reading and writing are introduced at all, and if yes, when and how, will depend on many factors such as the age of the children, the level of their exposure to English as a second language, their first language background, and their ability to read in their first language.

In bilingual contexts learning reading and writing in two or more languages often happens at the same time. This means that certain reading skills such as learning to guess the meaning from the context or using illustrations to help with the process of decoding can be transferred between languages. In foreign language contexts, the general consensus is that children should learn to read in their mother tongue first and when they are reasonably competent they can learn to read in a foreign language. It would be controversial to introduce reading and writing in a second language to children who are not yet literate in their first language. However, once literacy in one language is established, children often expect to learn to read

in the new language too. In fact, the most convincing reason for teaching reading and writing in English is that many children show both interest and enthusiasm in doing so when they start English. Reading and writing can help to reinforce what they are learning orally. Being able to read or write something meaningful in the second language, such as a party invitation, short message, or shopping list, can give children a real sense of achievement. In addition, exposure to the written record of what is being learnt can be important for those whose learning is more visual and who like to see the words and phrases written down. As children get used to reading and writing in class, these two skills can also open up new opportunities for record keeping. They will also help link children's school learning with their use of English outside class through written homework or reading and writing using the Internet.

Early literacy in English as a first language

In order to make some principled decisions about EFL reading and writing for young learners' programmes, it is useful to explore how children learn to read in English as a first language. The process for EFL learners will be different but this is still a useful starting point because without some familiarity with the process in the first language, the second language process of reading and writing cannot be understood.

Reading and writing during pre-school years

During their pre-school years, English-speaking children learn about literacy in their culture from a range of different experiences. Quite early on, often as early as at the age of three, they begin to recognize written words and signs in their environment such as 'TESCO' or 'PIZZA' or traffic signs. Children who are regularly read to by their parents will notice that story books contain letters and words, in addition to pictures, and that adults actually look at the print to tell the story. Most children also have the chance to observe their parents reading books or newspapers, working on computers, or engaged in other relevant reading and writing activities at home, such as filling in forms and writing lists and cards. All these experiences will prepare children for their own reading and writing. They will begin to see reasons and purposes for reading, such as enjoyment or simply finding out about something, for example, reading the television guide to find out what time a cartoon is on. Children learn very early to write their name and other significant words such as 'mummy' or 'daddy' or a friend's or sibling's name. They will begin to understand that messages, stories, or anything we say can be represented on a page using symbols. By the time children go to school in England at the age of four to five years, they already have a fairly good understanding of many

literacy practices and activities and are well on their way to beginning to decode the system of symbols for reading and writing. Building on these initial experiences, the role of the primary school is to carry on with teaching ever more sophisticated literacy skills to children.

Reading and writing at school

Native speaker children possess a great resource to build on when they begin to tackle reading formally at school. This resource is their oral competence in their first language, in particular a large bank of words and phrases. Oral language proficiency is directly related to the ability to learn to read because the solid language knowledge helps children to make intelligent guesses when attempting to read, by simply drawing on what would make sense. This is a great advantage in 'top-down' processing. For example, let us imagine that an English native speaker child is reading the beginning of a story and can work out that the first word is 'Once'. Then without having to read the next word, he can make a reasonable guess that the next phrase is 'upon a time'. This happens because the child knows this phrase is frequently used at the beginning of stories. This knowledge will make it unnecessary to decode the words on the page as if they were in isolation. If there is a meaningful context, the child can make good predictions about what would be a likely phrase or word.

For English-speaking children, the process of learning to read and write takes rather a long time because in English the letter and sound correspondence is not at all direct and consistent. Esther Geva and Min Wang, researchers interested in cross-linguistic perspectives of learning to read, refer in their 2001 survey article to languages such as English as 'deep' orthographies. In English, sounding out the word does not always help with working out how it is written. For example, think of words such as 'enough' and 'thought' or 'height' and 'weight'. The written similarities between these pairs of words do not lead to similar pronunciation. Many other languages that use the Roman alphabet, such as Spanish or German, for example, are called more 'shallow' orthographies because there is more consistency between what a word sounds like and how it is written. In such languages the process of learning to read and write takes less time and appears to be less complicated.

In order to teach aspects of the English system that are regular, English primary schools teach letter–sound correspondence patterns (phonics) to all children. Songs and rhymes are great for teaching phonics because they contain rhyming words such as 'One two three four five, once I caught a fish alive' where 'five' and 'alive' both rhyme and follow the same written pattern. With this approach learners are encouraged to recognize analogies below word level to help them to work out how to read and write words. They are

taught to notice that each word has an onset (first consonant or consonants) and a rime (the rest of the word) and it is useful to group words that have a different onset but the same rime because they are pronounced the same way. For example, consider : 'c(at), b(at), m(at), s(at), p(at), h(at), fl(at)'. The initial consonant is salient but the rime of all of these is the same. Recognizing patterns like this will be useful in reading. Traditional nursery rhymes are full of such rhyming pairs, so children find it quite easy to get a feel for rhymes. For example, consider 'the cow jumped over the m(oon)' and 'the dish ran away with the sp(oon)'. Or 'Humpty Dumpty sat on a w(all)' and 'Humpty Dumpty had a great f(all)'. Or 'Jack and J(ill) went up the h(ill)'. Many native English children know these rhymes by heart so it is easy for them to notice the patterns in a meaningful context.

With regard to those words that are irregular, another strategy is used in teaching reading in schools. Often called the whole word method, it encourages the rote learning of some 'sight vocabulary' that children can immediately recognize when reading. This method helps children to see and remember words as visual images. The idea is that these words will be recognized immediately and no further decoding is needed. Knowing a large pool of such vocabulary can help with the initially slow reading speed. Recognizing lots of words is helpful because children can concentrate on processing longer, unfamiliar words.

Teaching reading in EYL classes

In most contexts children do not have a strong background in oral English when they start reading or writing. Their oral proficiency is typically low and they are not necessarily familiar with a wide range of songs, rhymes, and stories in English which carry everyday phrases and words useful for guessing words or for phonics work. Children can only benefit from phonics training if the meaning of the words makes sense to them. It is not good practice to get children to sound out words that they are not familiar with.

However, non-native children also bring some advantages to the process of learning to read and write in English. The greatest of these is their experience with reading in their first language. They usually come to English already able to read and write in their mother tongue and bringing with them some potentially useful strategies. Although the actual first language influences the process of learning to read in English, the point of similarity is that the children have some understanding about what reading is. With regard to the strategies they bring, how they learnt to read in their mother tongue can influence their reading in the second language. They are likely to use strategies that worked in their first language reading, such as spelling, trying to sound things out, comparing sounds and letters. Of course, it is important

to remember that the degree to which they have mastered one reading system can vary greatly.

Their first language makes a difference too. There are languages that use morphography or logography, where each symbol represents an idea (such as Chinese, and one writing system of Japanese); or syllabic signs (for example, Korean, where each word is made from alphabet letters which combine into syllables; these in turn combine into a compact character block) and those that use phonography (English, Spanish, or Russian). Naturally, children whose first language uses phonography, and in particular, the Roman alphabet, will find beginning to read and write in English easier than those whose language uses other types of symbols. For example, Russian children learn to read and write using the Cyrillic alphabet, and though this alphabet is closer to English than say Korean or Chinese, it can still present some difficulties. So it will be important to discover the differences and overlaps between the Cyrillic and the Roman alphabets: for example, the children will have to learn that the letter symbol 'P' in English is pronounced as [p] rather than [r] as it would be in their first language. In addition, there are languages that read from right to left and/or bottom to top, and these children will have to start with learning to adapt to a different orientation when using English books.

Reading activities with younger children

As was suggested in the previous chapter on speaking and listening, reading and writing in the primary foreign language classroom do not need to mean fully developed skills from the very beginning. Rather it is advisable to start with working on sub-skills such as learning to decode familiar written language, match spoken and written forms, or complete short texts with personally relevant information. At the beginning of the programme and with younger learners, the teacher might introduce written words to let the children experience printed materials. For example, one could label objects such as tables, chairs, blackboard, window, door, pictures, plants, books, shelves, by making word cards, laminating them, and hanging them up round the classroom. This would make the children curious about reading and writing and could illustrate to them that words that they are familiar with orally can be represented in writing. There are, of course, many other types of writing that can be displayed in any classroom. For example, the teacher can make posters containing commonly used phrases such as 'sit down', 'come here', 'it is your turn', or a calendar with the names of the days and months, or a class birthday chart, or an English noticeboard (see Figure 6.1). All of these visual aids would attract children's attention and help them make the links between spoken and written forms. Teachers can also introduce letter cards or magnetic letters to encourage playing with letters and letter combinations to make words.

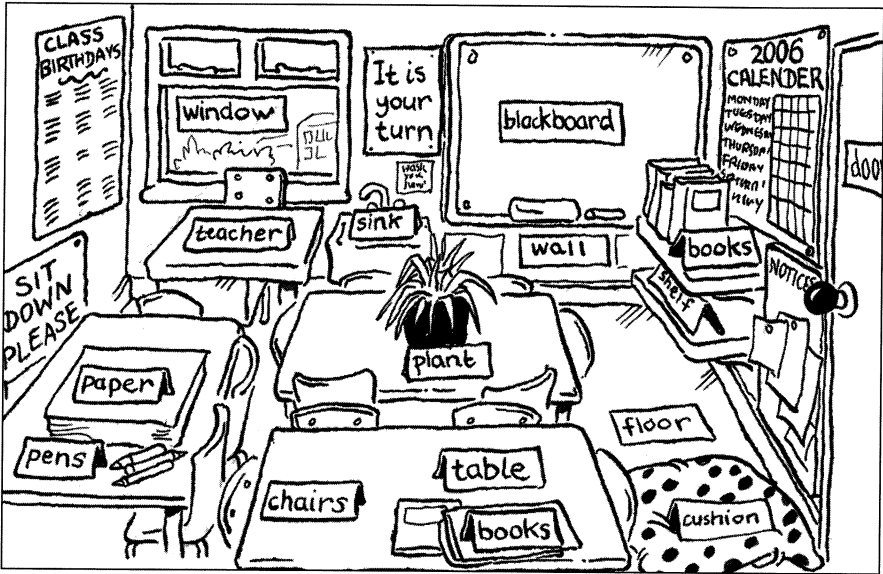


Figure 6.1: A classroom full of written language display

4B King Cat's corner

1 Match the parts to make an animal. Find the word.

a horse a cow a bird a dog a bear a cat

Extract 8 (Hicks and Littlejohn 2002b)

Another early activity is to begin to connect spoken words and written words more deliberately by using word cards. Extract 8 was taken from *Primary Colours 1*. This exercise gets the children to practise matching the pictures with the written labels.

In order to practise word level reading, many different games and activities can be used. One well known memory card game is often played by matching pictures and words. Children play in teams picking up two cards each at any one time to see if they match. Similarly games such as 'word snap' or 'dominoes' can be played in small groups or pairs. Teachers can make their own word cards and picture cards and play simple matching or categorizing games or spot the missing card. Many children's coursebooks have their own packs of cards complete with a set of instructions for the teacher. Cards can be used during storytelling as well as other activities for vocabulary teaching. A lot of work with word-cards will contribute to build up children's sight vocabulary of commonly used words in English.

In order to reinforce patterns that are regular in English, it is advisable to include some phonics when teaching children to read and write in a second language. Activities can include categorizing words according to what sounds they begin with and creating sound banks. The difficulty here is that second language learners' knowledge of words to create useful patterns is rather limited at the beginning. With phonics exercises it is important to keep a balance between usefulness and pattern building. If the meanings are unknown, long lists of words exemplifying the same pattern are not useful to children. Familiar songs and rhymes can be exploited in this way to focus children's attention on patterns.

Most beginners' coursebooks also teach the English alphabet, usually in the form of a song. Knowing the names of the letters will not help the children to read but it will enable them to spell words in English. They can practise spelling their own or their friends' names, or play games such as Hangman or simple puzzles such as guessing which letter has been removed from a sentence, or matching letters or dot-to-dot exercises to find words hidden in 'letter boxes'. It is a good idea to display the alphabet in the classroom and practise singing it again and again.

Introducing reading beyond word level should happen gradually. Following on from the practice with word cards, it is of course possible to play with sentences and phrases. The teacher can chop up sentences and get the children to put them back in the correct order. Similarly, familiar songs, rhymes, and poems can also be chopped up and reconstructed. Depending on how familiar the language in these exercises is to the children, the activity can be of varying difficulty. Common sense shows it is best to have plenty of encouraging practice with familiar language first. At a later stage, the teacher can introduce gap-fill activities which combine reading and some writing.

Another supportive way to progress from word reading is to let children follow texts, dialogues, songs, or rhymes in the coursebook while listening to them on the tape. Teachers can get the children to read short texts and dialogues which have been extensively practised orally. This is the case in Extract 9, taken from *Superworld 2*. Children ask each other about their own streets using cut-out buildings and then do a reading activity which is simply matching four sentences of street descriptions with four pictures. The reading is at sentence level. It follows extensive oral practice and is supported by matching visuals.

In the case of younger children it is important to progress slowly with reading in a foreign language. It is a holistic process which involves learning many skills such as predicting, noticing patterns, and guessing. It is a good idea to make this process multisensory by including crafting, colouring, body movements, and sounds. (For more about multisensory teaching see Chapter 1.)

7

Read and find out

Which street is it?

There's a cinema opposite the school.
 There's a pet shop next to the cinema.
 There's a toy shop opposite the pet shop.
 There's a supermarket next to the toy shop.

The image contains two street scenes, labeled A and B, separated by a dashed horizontal line. Scene A (top) shows a cinema with 'SCREEN ONE' and 'SCREEN TWO' signs, a pet shop with a dog and a bone, and a toy shop with a bird. Scene B (bottom) shows a cinema, a pet shop, a book shop, a school, a toy shop, and a supermarket. The buildings are stylized and colorful.

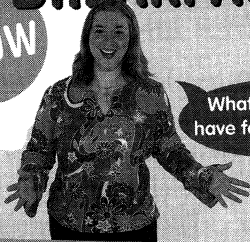
Extract 9 (Read and Soberon 2000)

Reading activities with older children

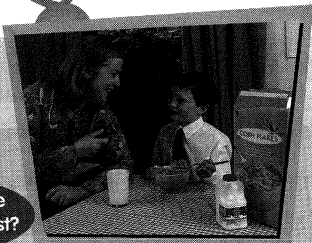
The same principle applies here as in previous chapters. Many older children, especially beginners, will enjoy word level and sentence level practice with reading. However, soon they will want to progress further. Reading for meaning entails exercises which encourage children to skim and scan texts in order to understand the meaning. In Extract 10, children have to read the passages and correct sentences underneath. They read for meaning, using their understanding of the passages to work out which statements are true or false.

1 Read.


THE BREAKFAST SHOW



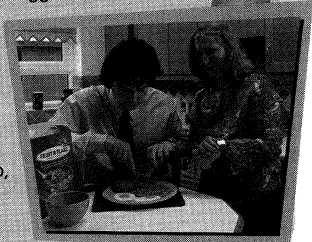
What do people have for breakfast?



This is Matt. He's ten. He always has cereal and a glass of milk for breakfast. He sometimes has a banana – but not today. He never has eggs. He doesn't like eggs.



This is Matt's sister, Liz. She's fourteen. She always has orange juice, toast, and yoghurt for breakfast. She sometimes has an apple but she never has cereal.



This is Matt's teacher, Mr Harper. He loves breakfast! He always has cereal, beans, tomatoes, and two eggs. Sometimes he has toast too! He never has bananas or yoghurt. He doesn't like yoghurt. Hurry up, Mr Harper. It's time for school!

Extract 10 (Maidment and Roberts 2001)

Older children can be taught that there are many cues that they can use while reading. Semantic cues include those that help them guess the meaning, for example, from illustrations. They will also help as learners look at the structure of sentences and ask questions such as 'Is this a question or a statement?' or 'Is this sentence in the past or in the present?' Phonological cues such as 'how are words like this usually pronounced?' are also useful strategies that can help readers. Older learners often enjoy dictionary work.

They may be introduced to different types of dictionaries such as English–English dictionaries, combined picture and word dictionaries, bilingual dictionaries, or electronic dictionaries. Whatever dictionaries teachers have in the classroom, it is a good idea to begin to use them regularly so that children can develop good dictionary habits such as checking important words and taking notes of synonyms or first language equivalents. In pairs or small groups, children can learn to set each other tasks with dictionaries, such as putting words in alphabetical order or looking up difficult words and letting the other team guess what they mean by choosing the definition that they think is correct.

Teaching writing in EYL classes

What do native speaker children write?

Writing is a complex skill progressing from the level of copying familiar words and phrases to developing an awareness of text structures, genres, the processes of drafting and editing, and writing for an audience. Reading and writing are usually taught in parallel because children who begin to read enjoy writing too. English native speaker children begin with what we call ‘emergent writing’. This starts with pretend writing and then gradually they begin to write words and short texts but without knowing exactly how to spell. They incorporate their early phonics knowledge from reading. Emergent writing is often combined with drawings. The example in Figure 6.2 was written by a five-year-old over a period of several months. The progress from pretend writing to simple story writing is very obvious here.

During the first years of formal schooling native speaker children learn tracing and connecting letters to make words. They learn to use basic punctuation marks and start composing passages such as simple story endings and messages, invitations, or cards, slowly progressing towards creative, independent writing and drafting.

Writing activities with younger children in EYL classes

Depending on their specific language background and the type of writing system in their first language, EFL children may need more or less practice with the mechanical basics of writing. It is useful for these children to start with tracing and copying. In order to make these early mechanical activities fun, teachers can vary the activities, for example, introducing creative copying in which children select which words to copy from a list and add one on their own. Other examples may include copying only those words which

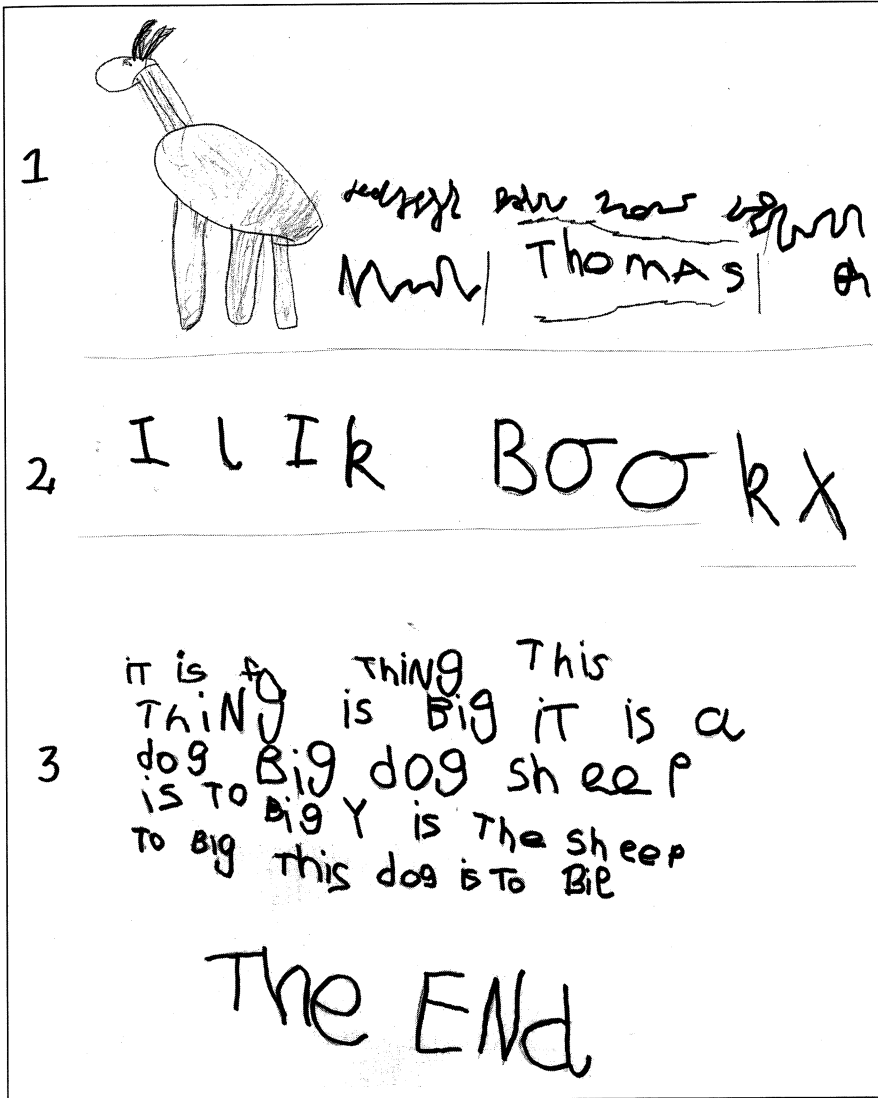


Figure 6.2: Example of a native speaker 5-year-old's writing

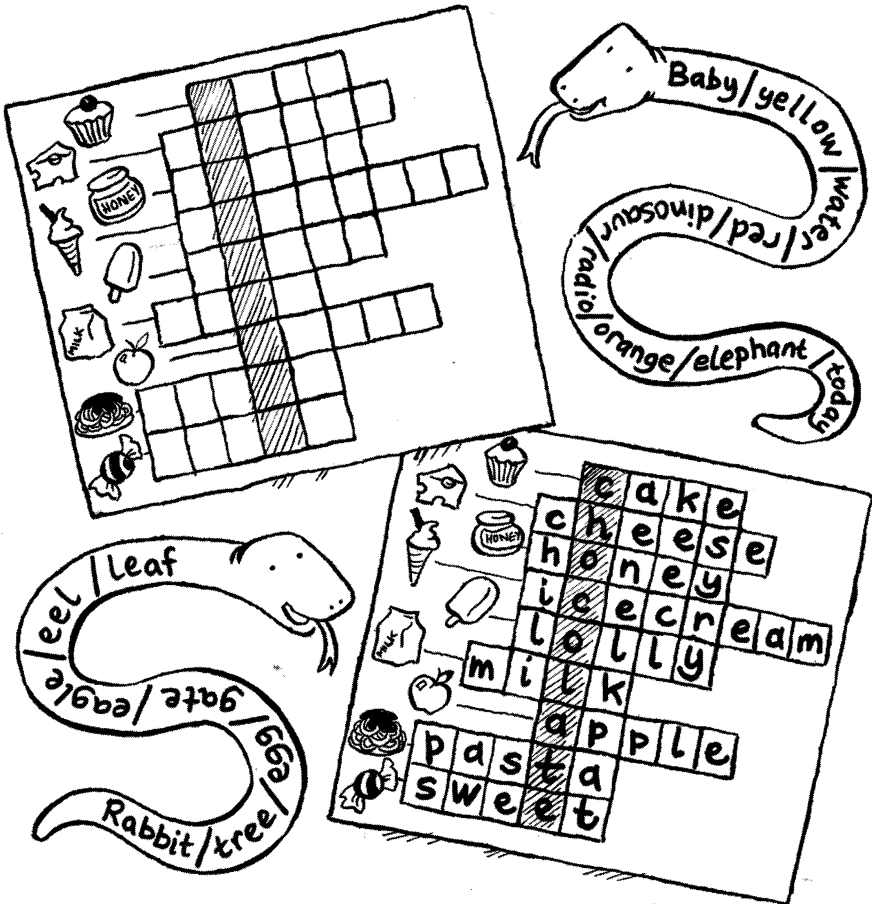
mean some kind of food, or copying only those words which contain the letter T, or copying only those names of animals that appeared in the story. Copying is also done as a follow up to an oral activity. For example, the teacher might get the children to brainstorm lists of words or phrases to write on the blackboard. Later, the teacher can ask the class to copy these words into their exercise books.

Moving on from copying, many games and activities popular in the primary classroom involve word level writing. For example, games such as creating

'word snakes' for each other, working out words where the letters have been mixed up or written backwards, creating and solving simple (four- to five-word) puzzles. These are also excellent activities for children to design for each other. They can create their own crossword puzzles which can be given to classmates to solve.

Another popular type of writing practice is finger writing. This involves writing on a different surface as well as moving and getting up from a chair. This means that it follows the multisensory approach. Using fingers, children can write in the air, on each other's backs or in the sand outside, and they can just copy or write creatively.

In most contexts children use a coursebook as well as an activity book. The activity book contains written grammatical and vocabulary exercises at word or sentence level. These can be gap-fill exercises or matching pictures with words or sentences. They all contribute to practising writing using familiar



language. Many teachers use guided writing of some kind. This means, just as in guided speaking tasks, that there is a framework or some kind of a model to complete with children's own ideas and relevant details. These are often in the form of cards, invitations, letters, stories, or posters. These genres are important because they can be used to introduce the idea of writing for an audience. Children can begin to see that we write differently depending on who we are writing for. Guided writing activities can be motivating because they allow children to write longer pieces of text by substituting their personally relevant messages into a given frame. These products can also be displayed or taken home. In Extracts 11a and 11b (overleaf), taken from *Jet Primary Resources*, it is very clear that completing such text skeletons can be done at very basic levels, too.

Writing activities with older children in EYL classes

Older learners also need practice with word and sentence level writing and spelling but they may also be ready for freer writing. This can start with filling in captions in speech bubbles in a group cartoon story, or writing instructions, scripts, shopping lists, recipes, puzzles, or simple diaries. The introduction of various written genres will further enhance children's appreciation of different audiences. Older learners may begin to see clear reasons for writing such as to fill in forms, write their own stories, or produce their own class newspaper.

It is good to use word processing because it is possible to have a good quality end product and the correction in editing and redrafting processes is easier and less time-consuming. Computers, of course, are also useful in encouraging written communication with real people such as when a group of children in one country writes to a group of children in another country. Teachers can set up email accounts for everybody in the class and encourage communication within the group both during and after classes. The Internet is a great source of information that children can use with a teacher's guidance. For example, they can search for useful tourist information or timetable details. Creating English websites is a great way of getting older children to practise and enjoy writing. Many good resource books are available to teachers for further ideas.

Children will also use writing for record keeping. Writing lists of new words, dialogues, or short paragraphs in the exercise book is a way of keeping a record of what has been learnt. Teachers can encourage children to evaluate their learning on a regular basis in a personal diary or journal. Initially this is probably best done in the first language but gradually, after mastering some useful phrases (such as 'I enjoyed', 'learnt a lot from', 'did not like', or 'next I would like to learn'), children can begin to reflect on their learning in the second language. (See more about this in Chapter 8.)

Follow-up

- 1 Pupils can prepare a letter to Santa Claus (see fig 1 below).

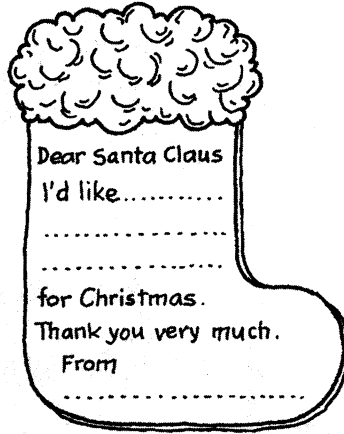


Fig 1

Name Class

❄️	❄️	❄️	❄️	❄️	❄️	❄️	❄️	❄️	❄️	❄️	❄️
❄️	Dear	❄️									❄️
❄️	Thank you for the	❄️									❄️
❄️ you gave me for Christmas.	❄️									❄️
❄️ (It's very	❄️									❄️
❄️	nice/I like it very much/It's just what I wanted).	❄️									❄️
❄️	I am	❄️									❄️
❄️	(playing	❄️									❄️
❄️	with it/wearing it/looking at it) now.	❄️									❄️
❄️	I got some other lovely presents too.	❄️									❄️
❄️	My favourite was	❄️									❄️
❄️	which I got from	❄️									❄️
❄️	It's	❄️									❄️
❄️	and	❄️									❄️
❄️	I hope you had a	❄️									❄️
❄️ (good Christmas/happy	❄️									❄️
❄️	holiday/great festive season).	❄️									❄️
❄️	Love from	❄️									❄️
❄️	❄️									❄️
❄️		❄️									❄️
❄️		❄️									❄️

Once children can read and write, in many contexts teachers give homework which often involves doing exercises from the workbook. It is worth exploring other fun options for homework such as making puzzles for each other or letting children choose something from a range of tasks. Where teachers are convinced of the positive role of homework in learning, it is important to allocate time to check or discuss this work. Parents who are aware how best to support their children can help a great deal with homework.

Research shows that learners who work together in pairs on tasks that ask them to write texts such as stories or letters do much better together than they could have done on their own. This is because during the process of writing it is important to focus on both the message and the grammatical correctness of the writing. Children can usefully help and scaffold each other during this process. The work of Merrill Swain and her colleagues in Canada (for example, Swain 2000, Swain and Lapkin 1998) clearly shows that interactive writing tasks can also be fertile ground for learning. Working on a piece of writing together with a friend is also beneficial in terms of sustaining interest and motivation.

Summary

Reading and writing can be useful skills in the TEYL classroom provided that the children are ready and interested in beginning the process of familiarizing themselves with the English writing system. Knowing about reading and writing in English as a first language can be a useful starting point for teachers to make informed decisions about when and how they feel reading and writing should be tackled in their classrooms.

Recommended reading

Background theory

Campbell, R. 2002. *Reading in the Early Years: Handbook*. (2nd edition). Buckingham: Open University Press.

This is an introduction to how native speaker children learn to read in English. It covers many useful topics such as emergent writing, the role of story books and reading schemes, shared reading, whole word approach, and phonics.

Tribble, C. 1996. *Writing*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Wallace, C. 1992. *Reading*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

These two books complete the Oxford Language Teaching: A Scheme for Teacher Education series mentioned in the previous chapter, in terms of covering the language skills. They integrate theory and practice with tasks and materials extracts.

Practical teacher resources

Lewis, G. 2004. *The Internet and Young Learners: Resource Books for Teachers*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

This resource book is directly aimed at primary English teachers who are interested in exploring the opportunities offered by the Internet in their classes. A range of age groups from eight to 13 is catered for. The tasks are simple to follow and the book contains some useful websites for teachers to explore.

Dudney, G. 2000. *The Internet and the Language Classroom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

This is a detailed introduction for teachers to the Internet. It offers some theory and a collection of activities to use with students. Some of them could be easily adapted for primary classrooms. This book also offers advice on the practicalities of creating web pages for classroom use.

Painter, L. 2003. *Homework: Resource Books for Teachers*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Although this book is not directly targeted at primary schoolchildren, many of the ideas and the underlying principles can be made relevant for primary English classes. This book encourages teachers to re-examine their homework tasks from a new angle and suggests ways in which homework can be made motivating and encourage learners to continue learning outside the classroom. The author also suggests ways in which homework can be taken full advantage of in the classroom.

Reilly, J. and V. Reilly. 2005. *Writing with Children: Resource Books for Teachers*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

This is a comprehensible collection of ideas about how to introduce and develop writing in primary English classrooms. There are activities which cover the mechanical basics such as tracing and copying and there are also word-, sentence-, and text-level writing exercises. The book emphasizes the idea that writing can be fun and offers opportunities to practise a wide range of writing skills.

Skarbek, C. 1998. *First Steps to Reading and Writing: Young Pathfinder 5*. London: CILT.

This is another volume in the CILT series, other volumes of which have

been recommended in previous chapters. This volume discusses ways in which early reading and writing can be successful and motivating in primary foreign language classrooms. The activities are designed for languages other than English but can be equally well exploited in ELT.

Tasks

If you would like to look at some practical tasks to explore your own practice related to the content of this chapter, you can try Task 7: Observing children working together (writing) (Appendix page 159).

Ellis, R. (2002). **The Place of Grammar Instruction in the Second/Foreign Language Curriculum.** In E. Hinkel & S. Fotos *New Perspectives on Grammar Teaching in Second Language Classrooms* (pages 14-34). Routledge: London.

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Directions: Answer the following questions on a separate piece of paper. I will collect them next week.

1. What are the four reasons that the author gives for learners' failure to achieve a high level of grammatical competence?
 2. Summarize the six aspects of SLA research that support grammar instruction?
 3. Where and when should grammar be taught in the EFL/ESL curriculum? Why?
 4. The author describes the kind of activities that need to be present in a unit to support grammar acquisition; what are these activities?
-

The place of grammar instruction in the second/foreign language curriculum has been strongly debated in the past 30 years. In teaching methods reliant on a structural syllabus (e.g., grammar translation, audiolingualism, Total Physical Response, situational language teaching), grammar held pride of place. However, with the advent of communicative language teaching (see, e.g., Allwright, 1979) and "natural" methods (e.g., Krashen & Terrell, 1983), this place has been challenged and in some cases, a "zero position" has been advocated (e.g., Krashen, 1982) on the grounds that teaching grammar does not correlate with acquiring grammar. More recently, various arguments have been advanced for incorporating a "focus on form"¹ into the language curriculum (e.g., Doughty & Williams, 1998), motivated by research findings that suggest that "natural" language learning does not lead to high levels of grammatical and sociolinguistic competence (e.g., Swain, 1985). The purpose of this chapter is to consider a number of reasons why grammar should be included in a second language (L2) curriculum. The chapter also addresses how a grammar component might be incorporated into a communicative curriculum. Finally, it outlines an approach to the teaching of grammar that is compatible with the curricular framework being proposed.

THE CASE FOR TEACHING GRAMMAR

A case for teaching grammar can be mounted from different perspectives: (1) acquisition theory, (2) the learner, and (3) language pedagogy. Taken together,

¹Long (1988) distinguishes between a "focus on forms" and a "focus on form." The former refers to traditional approaches to grammar teaching based on a structure-of-the-day approach. The latter refers to drawing learners' attention to linguistic forms (and the meanings they realize) in the context of activities in which the learner's primary focus of attention is on meaning.

arguments based on these perspectives provide a compelling argument in favor of teaching grammar.

Acquisition Theory

It is now widely acknowledged that L2 learners, particularly adults, fail to achieve high levels of grammatical competence even if they have ample opportunity to learn the language naturally. Hammerly (1991) indicates that many naturalistic learners, even after years of exposure to the L2, often fail to proceed beyond the second level on the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) scale of language proficiency. Kowal and Swain (1997) and Swain (1985) point out that learners in Canadian immersion programs (i.e., programs in which the target language serves as the medium of instruction for teaching subject content) achieve high levels of discourse and strategic competence but frequently fail to acquire even basic grammatical distinctions, such as *passé composé* and *imparfait* in French. There are many possible reasons for learners' failure to achieve high levels of grammatical competence, including the following:

1. Age: Once learners have passed a "critical period" (about 15 years of age in the case of grammar) the acquisition of full grammatical competence is no longer possible.
2. Communicative sufficiency: Learners may be able to satisfy their communicative needs without acquiring target language norms.
3. Limited opportunities for pushed output: Research (e.g., Allen, Swain, Harley, & Cummins, 1990) has demonstrated that the linguistic environment to which learners are exposed in the classroom may indeed be limited in quite significant ways.
4. Lack of negative feedback: It has been suggested that some grammatical structures cannot be acquired from positive input, which is all that is typically available to learners learning an L2 "naturally" (see White, 1987).

If (1) is the reason, not much can be done to alleviate the problem pedagogically, as teachers are clearly powerless to alter the age of their learners. However, there is growing doubt concerning the validity of the critical period hypothesis where grammar is concerned; it is becoming clear that there are large numbers of learners who, given sufficient time and motivation, are successful in acquiring target language norms even if they start learning the L2 after the age of 15. If (2) and (3) are the reasons, two possible solutions suggest themselves. One is improving the quality of the interactional opportunities learners experience, for example, by ensuring that learners' communicative needs are enhanced by requiring them to produce "pushed output." One way of achieving this is by devising a curriculum of communicative tasks that are linguistically demanding (e.g., call for learners to activate their rule-based as opposed to lexical competence - see Skehan, 1998). The other solution is to focus learners' attention on grammatical form (and, of course, the meanings they realize) through some kind of grammar teaching. Point (4) also indicates the need for grammar teaching, as this serves as one of the more obvious ways in which learners can obtain the negative feedback needed to acquire "difficult" structures.

Given that the possible reasons for learners' failing to achieve target language norms vary in the kind of solution they point to, it is obviously important to establish

whether the “teach grammar” solution is, in fact, effective. Earlier (see Fotos & Ellis, 1991), I summarized the main findings of what is now a substantial body of empirical research that has investigated the effects of form-focused instruction on interlanguage development. This summary, I would claim, remains valid today. It states:

1. Formal instruction helps to promote more rapid L2 acquisition and also contributes to higher levels of ultimate achievement (Long, 1988).
2. There are psycholinguistic constraints which govern whether attempts to teach learners specific grammatical rules result in their acquisition. Formal instruction may succeed if the learners have reached a stage in the developmental sequence that enables them to process the target structure (Pienemann, 1984). Conversely, it will not succeed if learners have not reached the requisite developmental stage.²
3. Production practice is not sufficient to overcome these constraints. There is now clear evidence to suggest that having learners produce sentences that model the target structure is not sufficient to guarantee its acquisition as implicit knowledge. Studies by Schumann (1978), R. Ellis (1984), and Kadia (1988), among others, suggest that formal instruction directed at developmental or difficult grammatical structures has little effect on performance in spontaneous language use. (The term developmental refers here to structures that are acquired in stages and involve the learner passing through a series of transitional phases before mastering the target structure. Examples of developmental structures are negatives and interrogatives.)
4. It is possible, however, that formal instruction directed at relatively simple grammatical rules (such as plural or copula be) will be successful in developing implicit knowledge, as such forms do not require the mastery of complex processing operations (Pica, 1983; Pienemann, 1984).
5. Formal instruction is effective in developing explicit knowledge of grammatical features. There is substantial evidence to suggest that formal instruction is successful if the learning outcomes are measured by means of an instrument that allows for controlled, planned, language use (e.g., an imitation test, a sentence-joining task, or a grammaticality judgment task). It is in this kind of language use that learners are able to draw on their explicit knowledge. Studies by Kadia (1988); Lightbown, Spada, and Wallace (1980); Schumann (1978); and Zobl (1985) all support such a conclusion.
6. Formal instruction may work best in promoting acquisition when it is linked with opportunities for natural communication (Spada, 1986).

In short, although there are constraints that govern both when and what type of grammar teaching is likely to work, there is clear evidence that, providing these constraints are taken into account, teaching grammar can have a beneficial effect on learners’ interlanguage development. This conclusion is now widely accepted by Second Language Acquisition (SLA) researchers (see Doughty and Williams, 1998).

² A recent article by Spada and Lightbown (1999) does cast some doubt on the claim that developmental sequences are inviolable. This study found that learners who were at an early stage in the acquisition of question forms were able to learn question forms at an advanced stage as a result of formal instruction, suggesting they were not constrained by the kind of psycholinguistic constraints on acquisition proposed by Pienemann. Spada and Lightbown suggest that the effectiveness of instruction may depend less on the learners’ stage of development than on the type of instruction.

The Learner's Perspective

An equally strong reason for including grammar in the L2 curriculum is that many learners expect it. Adult learners typically view “grammar” as the central component of language and, irrespective of the type of instruction they experience, are likely to make strenuous efforts to understand the grammatical features they notice. In an analysis of the diaries written by ab initio learners of German in an intensive foreign language course at a university in London (Ellis, R., unpublished manuscript), I was struck by the depth of the learners’ concern to make sense of the grammar of German. Their diaries are full of references to grammar—of their struggle to understand particular rules and their sense of achievement when a rule finally “clicked.” It should be noted, too, that “grammar” for these learners consisted of explicit rules that they could understand; it was not the kind of implicit grammar that comprises interlanguage.

Of course, not all learners will orientate so strongly to studying grammar. Some, younger learners for example, may be more inclined to view language functionally - as a tool for communicating - and may be less able to benefit from grammar instruction. Nevertheless, it is my contention that many successful learners are not only prepared to focus on form but actively seek to do so (see Reiss, 1985). For such learners, a “communicative” syllabus that eschews a focus on grammar may be missing the mark.

A Pedagogical Perspective

One of the arguments that was advanced against the kind of notional/functional syllabus that appeared in the late 1970s and early 1980s was that “notions” and “functions” do not provide a basis for the systematic coverage of the language to be taught (see Brumfit, 1981). Examples of notions are possibility and past time, whereas examples of functions are requests and apologies. The problem with such constructs is that they are not generative in the way grammar is. A similar criticism can be leveled at the current fashion for task-based or thematically based syllabuses. There can be no guarantee that the teaching activities that are based on such syllabuses provide a full and systematic coverage of the grammar of the L2. To some extent, tasks can be devised so that they require learners to use specific grammatical features, but, at least where production tasks are concerned, there are limits on the extent to which these features are essential in performing the tasks (see the comments later in this chapter) as learners are adept at avoiding the use of structures that they find difficult. Arguably, the only way to ensure a systematic coverage of the grammar of the L2, then, is by means of a structural syllabus. Such a syllabus provides teachers and learners with a clear sense of progression—something that I think is missing from both notional and task-based syllabuses. However, this does not mean the abandonment of meaning-based syllabuses and a straight return to the structural syllabus. Rather, I see a need for both. This involves a curriculum that incorporates both types of syllabus. We will now turn to the question of how grammar can be incorporated into a language curriculum.

THE PLACE OF GRAMMAR IN THE CURRICULUM

Deciding the place of grammar in the language curriculum involves seeking answers to the following questions:

1. At what stage of learners' general L2 development should grammar be taught?
2. With what intensity should grammar be taught?
3. Can the teaching of grammar be integrated into meaning-focused instruction?

The first question concerns the general timing of the grammar instruction. The second deals with whether grammar instruction should be intense or spread over a period of time. The third concerns the crucial matter of the relationship between the grammar and the communicative components of a syllabus.

The Timing of Grammar Instruction

An assumption of traditional approaches to grammar is that it should be taught from the very beginning stages of a language course. This assumption derives from behaviorist learning theory, according to which learning consists of habit formation. Learners must be taught correct habits from the start to avoid the unnecessary labor of having to unlearn wrong habits in order to learn the correct ones later. As Brooks (1960) put it, "Error, like sin, is to be avoided at all cost." Such a view is not supported by current theories of L2 acquisition. Interlanguage development is seen as a process of hypothesis-testing and errors as a means of carrying this out (Corder, 1967). Learners follow their own built-in syllabus. Thus, it is now widely accepted that errors are both a natural and inevitable consequence of the processes of acquisition. In other words, there is no longer a theoretical basis for teaching grammar to prevent errors.

There are, in fact, some fairly obvious reasons for not teaching grammar to beginners. First, as the immersion studies have shown (see Johnson & Swain, 1997), learners do not need grammar instruction to acquire considerable grammatical competence. Learners with plentiful opportunities to interact in the L2 are likely to acquire basic word order rules and salient inflections without assistance. For example, L2 learners who have never received instruction are able to acquire the rules for ordering elements in the English noun phrase; they do not put the adjective after the noun, even when this is the ordering in their L1 (Hughes, 1979). They are also able to acquire the English auxiliary system and, over time, use this in a target-like manner in interrogatives and negatives. Probably, they will also acquire at least some complex structures such as simple relative clauses in which the relative pronoun functions as subject (as in "Mary married the man who lived next door"). Of course, not all learners will acquire these grammatical features; some learners, like Schumann's Alberto (Schumann, 1978), will fossilize early. But many learners will go quite a long way without any attempt to teach them grammar. In other words, up to a point, the acquisition of a grammar takes place naturally and inevitably, providing learners experience appropriate opportunities for hearing and using the L2.

A second, more powerful reason for not teaching grammar to beginners is that the early stage of L2 acquisition (like the early stage of L1 acquisition) is naturally agrammatical. Language learners begin by learning items—words or formulaic chunks. They communicate by concatenating these, stringing them together into

sequences that convey meaning contextually, as shown in these examples from Ellis (1984):

- Me no (= I don't have any crayons)
- Me milkman (= I want to be the milkman)
- Dinner time you out (= It is dinner time so you have to go out)
- Me no school (= I am not coming to school on Monday)

Such utterances are ubiquitous in the spontaneous, communicative speech of beginner L2 learners, both child and adult. It is only later that learners begin to grammaticalize their speech. According to N. Ellis (1996), they do this by extracting rules from the items they have learned—bootstrapping their way to grammar. It would seem, then, that the early stages of language acquisition are lexical rather than grammatical (see also Klein & Perdue, 1992; Lewis, 1993).

If grammar teaching is to accord with how learners learn, then, it should not be directed at beginners. Rather, it should await the time when learners have developed a sufficiently varied lexis to provide a basis for the process of rule extraction. In crude terms, this is likely to be at the intermediate-plus stages of development. There is a case, therefore, for reversing the traditional sequence of instruction, focusing initially on the development of vocabulary and the activation of the strategies for using lexis in context to make meaning and only later seeking to draw learners' attention to the rule-governed nature of language.

The Intensity of Grammar Instruction

Independent of when grammar should be taught is the question of how intense the instruction should be once it starts. Is it better, for example, to spend substantial periods of time focusing on a relatively few (albeit problematic) grammatical structures, or is it better to deal less intensively with a broad range of structures?

There are now a number of studies that demonstrate that when problematic grammatical structures are taught intensively learners acquire them. Harley (1989), for example, describes an instructional treatment for dealing with the distinction between *passé composé* and *imparfait* that lasted eight weeks! Thankfully, this resulted in marked gains in the accuracy of these verb forms that were sustained over time. One wonders, however, how feasible such intense treatments are in the context of the complete language curriculum. If such lengthy periods of time are devoted to a single grammatical structure there will be little time left to focus on the numerous other grammatical problems the learners experience.

Underlying this question of the intensity of the instruction is another question. What is the goal of grammar instruction? Is it to lead learners to full control of the targeted structures? Or is it to make them aware of the structures and, perhaps, of the gap between their own interlanguage rule and the target language rule? Grammar instruction, again influenced by behaviorist learning theory, has assumed that the goal of grammar instruction is complete accuracy. It is this assumption that appears to motivate the call for intense doses of instruction of the kind Harley provided. However, a more cognitive view of L2 learning suggests that acquisition begins with awareness, and that once this has been triggered learners will achieve full control

through their own resources in due time. Such a view supports a less intense, broader-based grammar curriculum.

The Relationship Between Code-Focused and Message-Focused Instruction

Traditional language teaching was code-focused, although there were probably always some opportunities for message-focused activity, even in the most audiolingual of courses. With the advent of communicative language teaching, however, more importance, quite rightly, has been given to message-focused language activity, not just because this is seen as needed to develop communicative skills in an L2, but also because it caters to the natural acquisition of grammar and other aspects of the code (see, e.g., Prabhu, 1987). Perhaps the key issue facing designers of language curricula is how to relate the code-focused and the message-focused components. There are two basic options.

The first is the integrated option. Integration can be achieved in two ways:

1. Communicative tasks that have been designed to focus attention on specific properties of the code. I have referred to these elsewhere as “focused communicative tasks.” Such an approach represents a proactive approach toward integration; it takes place at the level of the curriculum content.
2. Teachers’ feedback on learners’ attempts to perform communicative tasks. Such feedback can focus on specific errors that learners make. This approach is reactive in nature; it takes place, not at the level of content, but methodologically. The feedback can be instant (i.e., can occur as an immediate response to a learner error) or it can be delayed (i.e., take place after the communicative task has been completed).³

There are enormous problems in designing focused communicative tasks (see Loschky & Bley-Vroman, 1993) that preclude using them as a means of achieving curricular integration. As I have already noted, learners are adept at sidestepping the grammatical focus while performing a communicative task, unless of course they are told what the focus is; in which case, it can be argued that the task ceases to be communicative and becomes a situational grammar exercise. Integration is more likely to be achieved reactively rather than proactively, although there are some obvious problems here, not least concerning the nature of the feedback; should it be explicit, which potentially endangers the communicative nature of the task, or implicit, when it might not be noticed? Currently, however, strong arguments have been advanced for what Long (1991) has called “a focus on form” (i.e., reactive feedback while learners’ primary attention is on message). The claim is that drawing learners’ attention to form in the context of ongoing communicative endeavor is compatible with the type of input processing that is needed for interlanguage development.

The second approach for relating the two elements of a language curriculum is the parallel option. Here no attempt is made to integrate a focus on code and message;

³ Little is currently known about the relative efficacy of immediate and delayed negative feedback on learners’ acquisition of grammatical features. Most studies of negative feedback have focused on the type of feedback (e.g., whether it is implicit or explicit) rather than the timing. This is clearly an area that needs to be investigated.

instead, these are entirely separate components. In such a syllabus, the main component would consist of communicative tasks, designed to engage learners in the receptive and productive processes involved in using language to convey messages. A second, smaller component would consist of a list of grammatical structures to be systematically taught. There would be no attempt to create any links between the two components. The time allocated to the two components would vary according to the learners' general level of proficiency. Thus, at the elementary level there would be only communicative tasks (receptive rather than productive in the first instance). At the intermediate stage, once learners had established a lexical basis for the acquisition of grammar, the focus on code (which could include pronunciation and discourse as well as grammar) would kick in, growing progressively larger as time passed, until it occupied close to half of the total time available with advanced learners. This proportional curriculum model (Yalden, 1983) is shown in Fig. 2.1.

Elementary	Intermediate	Advanced
Communication tasks	→	→
	Code-focused tasks	→

FIG. 2.1 *The relationship between the communicative and code components of a syllabus.*

This proposal flies in the face of what is generally considered to be good practice in language pedagogy—namely, that the curriculum should be carefully constructed to ensure an integration of skills, with tasks carefully sequenced to ensure a systematic and graded progression. However, such syllabuses, although superficially sensible, ignore the essential fact that skill integration is not something that is achieved externally by the curriculum designer (or teacher) but must be achieved internally by the learners themselves, in accordance with their built-in syllabuses and their particular learning goals. Curriculum designers have hung themselves quite needlessly on the gallows of the integrated syllabus.

There are strong arguments to support the view that the goal of the code-oriented component of the syllabus should be awareness rather than performance; that is, the syllabus should be directed at developing learners' conscious understanding of how particular code features work, not at ensuring that learners are able to perform them accurately and fluently. In more technical terms, this entails a syllabus directed at explicit rather than implicit knowledge of the L2. As I have argued elsewhere (see Ellis, R., 1991a, 1993, 1997), it is unrealistic to try to intervene directly in interlanguage development by teaching implicit knowledge, as this constitutes a highly complex process, involving intake and gradual restructuring, which we still understand quite poorly and which is not amenable to one-shot (or even to several-shot) pedagogic ministrations. In contrast, explicit knowledge can be taught relatively easily in the same way that history dates or mathematical formulae can be taught.⁴ Of course, explicit knowledge constitutes a lesser goal than implicit knowledge, as

⁴ This assumes that many L2 learners are capable of learning a wide range of explicit rules. Such an assumption is controversial, however. Krashen (1982) claims that learners are only capable of learning simple rules (e.g., third-person -s). However, there is research evidence to suggest that Krashen seriously underestimates learners' capacity for explicit knowledge (see, e.g., Green & Hecht, 1992).

effective communication activity requires the latter type of knowledge. This limitation, however, is less severe if it can be shown that explicit knowledge plays an important facilitating role in helping learners acquire implicit knowledge by encouraging “noticing” and “noticing the gap” (Schmidt & Frota, 1986). If learners know about a grammatical feature they are more likely to heed it when they come across it in the input and also to attend to how it differs from the current interlanguage rule that underlies their own performance in the L2. In other words, the goal of a grammar syllabus becomes not that of teaching learners to use grammar but of helping them to understand how grammar works. In this respect, but not others, this position is closer to that of the cognitive code method than to behaviorism.

A crucial issue is the content of the code-oriented component of the syllabus. Clearly, this will have to go beyond grammar, to include pronunciation (perhaps) and discourse features. Here, however, I will consider only the question of grammar content. Clearly, this content should be derived from our understanding of the learning problems that learners experience; that is, the content should be remedial in nature, focusing on areas of grammar where learners are known to make errors. There are, in fact, many such areas that are common to all learners. The so-called developmental errors reflect learning problems that are universal. Examples are as follows:

- omission of plural *-s*
- omission of third person *-s*
- overuse of the article *the* (and corresponding under-use of *a*)
- the double comparative (e.g., “more faster”)
- resumptive pronouns in relative clauses (e.g., “The man who my sister had married *him* ...”)
- process verbs (e.g., “The size was increased greatly.”)

Our knowledge of such problem areas of grammar provides a solid base for the development of a general grammar syllabus, applicable to all language learners. Of course, syllabuses designed for specific groups of learners will need to take account of the fact that there are also some errors directly traceable to first language influence. Probably, though, the transfer errors are less numerous than the developmental errors (see Ellis, R., 1994).⁵

Curriculum designers also need to consider how this grammatical content can be graded. There is a growing and somewhat confused literature dealing with this issue. Although there is general agreement that grading should proceed in accordance with difficulty, there is much less agreement regarding what this actually involves. This results, in part, from the failure to recognize that what is difficult with regard to implicit knowledge may not be difficult in terms of explicit knowledge. For example, teaching learners to understand the rule for third-person *-s* (explicit knowledge) is relatively easy, but teaching them to use this feature accurately and fluently (implicit

⁵ Many errors, of course, are the result of both developmental and transfer processes. Thus, whereas all L2 learners seem to have problems distinguishing the use of the and a learners whose L1 does not include an article system (e.g., Japanese or Korean learners) are likely to experience the problems for longer, often failing to completely overcome them, even though they achieve a very advanced level of overall proficiency.

knowledge) is problematic. Thus, third-person *-s* can be thought of as an easy explicit feature but a difficult implicit feature. The question that needs to be addressed, then, is what criteria influence the level of difficulty learners are likely to experience in acquiring grammatical features as explicit knowledge? Table 2.1 suggests some of the criteria. At this juncture, it is not possible to apply these criteria in a systematic fashion, although it might be argued that these are the very criteria that have been traditionally applied in the development of structural syllabuses. Thus, designers of grammatical structures can call on this tradition with some confidence.

TABLE 2.1

Criteria for determining the difficulty of grammatical structures as explicit knowledge approach for teaching grammar

Criteria	Definition	Example
1. Formal complexity	The extent to which the structure involves just a single or many elements.	Plural <i>-s</i> is formally simple; relative clauses involve many elements.
2. Functional complexity	The extent to which the meanings realized by a structure are transparent	Plural <i>-s</i> is transparent; articles are opaque
3. Reliability	The extent to which the rule has exceptions.	Third-person <i>-s</i> is very reliable; the rule for periphrastic genitives is much less reliable.
4. Scope	The extent to which the rule has a broad or narrow coverage.	The Present Simple Tense has broad scope; the Future Perfect Tense has narrow scope.
5. Metalanguage	The extent to which the rule can be provided simply with minimum metalanguage.	Plural <i>-s</i> is simple; reflexive pronouns are more difficult; subject verb inversion is even more difficult.
6. L1/L2 contrast	A feature that corresponds to an L1 feature is easier than a feature that does not.	For French learners of English, the position of adverbs in sentences is difficult.

Finally, it should be noted that the two principal curricula options—integrated and parallel—are not, in fact, mutually exclusive. It would be perfectly possible to complement a parallel syllabus that includes a nonintegrated grammar component with Long’s “focus on form” through reactive feedback to errors that learners make when performing tasks from the communicative component of the syllabus. There are considerable strengths in such a proposal as a focus on form. It may be one way in which teachers can encourage learners to make use of their explicit knowledge to “notice” features in the input. This raises the intriguing possibility of forging a link between the focus on form and the teaching of explicit knowledge (i.e., by teachers directing feedback on features that have recently been explicitly taught). It is doubtful, however, if such a link can ever be anything other than opportunistic. In general, the focus of teachers’ feedback in the communicative strand of the curriculum will not

match the focus in the grammar component. Nor do I see this as something for which to strive for the reasons I have already given.

AN APPROACH FOR TEACHING GRAMMAR

The approach for teaching grammar that will now be outlined is premised on the assumption that the focus of the instruction should be awareness rather than performance. There are, in fact, two senses of awareness. First, learners can be made aware of the formal properties of the language as they experience these in input; that is, they can be made to consciously “notice” them. Second, learners can be made aware in the sense of forming some kind of explicit representation of a target form (i.e., developing explicit knowledge). Figure 2.2 shows these two senses of awareness. The particular approach to teaching grammar that I will now describe involves attempts to induce both kinds of awareness.

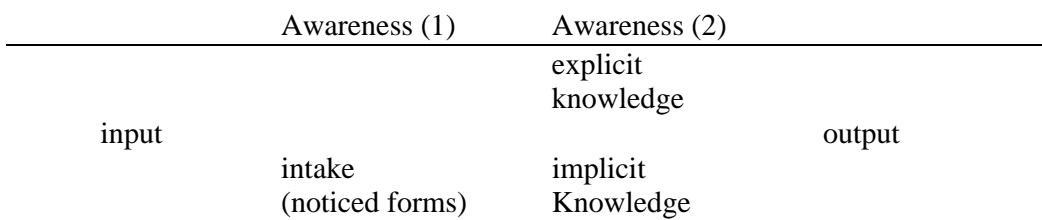


FIG. 2.2 *Two types of awareness in L2 acquisition.*

The materials (Ellis & Gaies, 1998) consist of a series of units, each directed at a single grammatical problem. The approach is remedial, with the error targeted in a unit indicated in an “error box.” By asking “Do my students make this error?” the teacher is able to determine whether to teach the unit.

A unit consists of five kinds of activities:

1. Listening to comprehend: Here students listen to a continuous text that has been contrived to contain several examples of the target structure. On this occasion, however, they are required to focus on the message-content of the text.
2. Listening to notice: In this activity the students listen to the text a second time (and if necessary a third or fourth time) to identify the target structure. To assist the process of noticing the structure, they are asked to complete a gapped version of the text. It should be noted, however, that this fill-in-the-gap activity differs from traditional grammar exercises in that students do not have to rely on their competence to complete the text; they can obtain the missing words by listening carefully.
3. “Listening to Notice” is intended to raise the first type of awareness in the students. Oral rather than written texts have been chosen to induce real-time input processing.
4. Understanding the grammar point: This activity is directed at helping learners develop explicit knowledge of the grammar point (i.e., awareness). They are helped to analyze the “data” provided by the text, which they have now completed, and to “discover” the rule. A discovery approach to teaching explicit knowledge is favored on the grounds that it is more motivating and that it also serves a learner-training function. By completing such tasks,

learners can develop the skills needed to analyze language data for themselves and so build their own explicit grammars of English. However, there is a grammar reference section (at the back of the book) to which students can refer to check the accuracy of the explicit rule they have formed.

5. **Checking:** The students are given a further text (this time, written) containing errors. They are asked to identify the errors and correct them. This kind of grammaticality judgment task is chosen because it lends itself to the use of explicit knowledge (see Ellis, R., 1991b). It also fosters the skill of monitoring, which, as Krashen (1982) has pointed out, draws on explicit knowledge.
6. **Trying it:** Finally, there is an opportunity for students to try out their understanding of the target structure in a short production activity. The emphasis here is not so much on practicing the structure as on proceduralizing students' declarative knowledge, a step DeKeyser (1998) considers to be necessarily intermediate between the teaching of explicit knowledge and its full automatization as implicit knowledge.⁶

These materials are not designed to develop implicit knowledge. Indeed, this can hardly be achieved in a single hour, the typical length of time needed to complete a unit. They are directed at developing students' awareness of grammar. As such, the materials do not constitute a complete curriculum but rather the kind of grammar component I have described in the previous section. They will need to be complemented with task-based materials of a communicative nature.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has sought to make a case for teaching grammar. However, the case is a circumscribed one, and it is perhaps useful to conclude by saying what is not being proposed as well as what is.

It is NOT being proposed that:

- We revert back completely to a structural syllabus.
- We teach beginners grammar.
- We attempt to teach learners to use grammatical features accurately and fluently through intensive practice exercises.
- We teach grammar communicatively (e.g., by embedding a grammar focus into communicative tasks).

It is being proposed that:

- We include a grammar component in the language curriculum, to be used alongside a communicative task-based component.

⁶ DeKeyser's claim that explicit knowledge can be converted into implicit knowledge by means of automatizing practice can be challenged for the reasons explained earlier in this chapter. However, his idea of "proceduralizing declarative knowledge" seems a useful one. Thus, the materials stop at this stage and make no attempt to supply the kind and amount of practice that DeKeyser acknowledges is needed for automatization.

- We teach grammar only to learners who have already developed a substantial lexical base and are able to engage in message-focused tasks, albeit with language that is grammatically inaccurate.
- We teach grammar separately, making no attempt to integrate it with the task-based component (except, perhaps, methodologically through feedback).
- We focus on areas of grammar known to cause problems to learners.
- We aim to teach grammar as awareness, focusing on helping learners develop explicit knowledge.

These proposals are theoretically based and, as such, provide a solid foundation for the teaching of grammar. However, it needs to be acknowledged that there is more than one theory of L2 acquisition and that somewhat different proposals based on alternative theories are possible (see DeKeyser, 1998, for example). This is likely to ensure that the place of grammar in the curriculum and the nature of grammar teaching will be hotly debated in the years ahead.

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Guiding Questions: *(for Grellet reading)*

*Here are some ways to think about this reading about reading.
Answer the questions on your own and then compare with a partner.*

- 1) What are two examples of things we read in our lives?

- 2) What are two reasons that the writer says we read?

- 3) What are four ways the writer says we read?

- 4) What is the process that the writer says the reader is always going through?

- 5) What are some productive ways that you can show comprehension of reading?

- 6) a) What do you think of the formula: (Who) + What + Why = How

b) What do you think the writer meant by it?

Part One – That Formula (Who)+What+Why = How

(Adapted from Developing Reading Skills by Francoise Grellet, 1994)

What do we read?

- novels, newspapers, diaries, letters, emails, accounts, pamphlets, recipes, instructions, comic strips, statistics, telephone directories, dictionaries

Why do we read?

- reading pleasure
- reading for information

How do we read?

- skimming: quickly running your eyes over a text to get the main idea
- scanning: quickly going through a text to find a particular piece of information
- extensive reading: reading longer texts, usually for pleasure
- intensive reading: reading shorter texts, usually to extract specific information

How is reading used in relation to the other skills?

In real life we rarely read without talking or writing about what we've read. It is therefore important to link the other skills to your reading activities.

- reading and writing: summarizing, note taking
- reading and listening: comparing an article and a news bulletin, matching opinions to text
- reading and speaking: discussions, debates, appreciation

Who are you as a reader?

Reading is a constant process of guessing and what one brings to the text is often more important than what one finds in it. This is why from the beginning students should be taught the use of what they already know to understand unknown elements, whether these are ideas or simply words.

Reading is an active skill. It constantly involves guessing, predicting, checking and asking oneself questions. It is then possible to incorporate time in your plan to ask students to anticipate the content or develop their powers of inference as they read the text. Similarly, one should introduce exercises for which there is no single straightforward answer. This allows the student to exercise their powers of judgment and analysis for a great amount of consideration of the text.

Grellet's Seven Assumptions for Designing Reading Exercises

- 1) **Provide students with whole texts** (a paragraph or longer). Students should be encouraged to use the whole text to arrive at meaning.
- 2) **Start with global understanding and move towards detailed understanding.** Students should understand the gist first, then details. This builds confidence, develops awareness of how texts are organized, encourages students to predict, anticipate, infer, deduce, and teaches students to use what they know understand unknown.
- 3) **Use authentic texts whenever possible.** Authentic texts provide a natural system of references, repetitions, redundancies and discourse indicators – all of which are often altered or removed when texts are rewritten or simplified. Rewritten texts deprive students of new rhetorical structures and useful vocabulary. Authentic texts enable students to use non-linguistic clues, e.g. pictures, etc. To simplify a reading task, **adjust the difficulty of the activity, not the text.**
- 4) Integrate reading with the other three skills.
- 5) **Reinforce reading as an active skill.** Involve students in pre-reading tasks, predicting, guessing, anticipation content from title and illustrations, predicting content of the next paragraph, etc. Provide activities that lead to discussion and reflection on the texts vs. straightforward answers. Provide authentic and meaningful communicative follow-up activities appropriate to the text.
- 6) **Provide an assortment of flexible and varied activities that are suited to the texts and the reasons for reading them.** One text may lend itself to understanding the author's point of view, intention and tone through open questions or multiple-choice questions. Another may lend itself to tracing a route on a map or matching pictures and paragraphs.
- 7) Clearly define the aim for each activity, and make a clear distinction between teaching and testing.

from Grellet, Françoise. 1981. "Reading and Reading Comprehension" in *Developing Reading Skills*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Section 3

Sample
Lesson Plans
Activity Route Maps
&
Rationales

Name _____	Title or explanation Life Map: What's made a difference in your life?	Time 50 minutes
----------------------	---	---------------------------

Level/Age
Low intermediate to intermediate/ Young adult to adult

Language focus
Target language: Lexis used to describe important/influential/memorable evens such as graduation, get married, be born, etc... needed to answer Qs in a gapped dialog:
A: What was your most interesting experience? / What was your most influential experience? / What was you scariest experience?
B: My most _____ experience was _____.
A: What happened?
B: _____
Specific language skill focus: Speaking
Culture: N/A

Student learning objective and assessment activity
By the end of the lesson, SWBAT demonstrate the ability to use key vocabulary in the dialog (A: What was the most _____ experience? B: My most _____ experience was _____ . A: What happened? B: _____) by doing a life map interview activity.

Ongoing assessment
elicit key vocabulary after learner have a group discussion, provide key expression in context and clarify meaning, let learners brainstorm events in their own lives and share with partner before doing the final interview activity

Students' background knowledge and abilities in relation to the topic of the lesson
Learners will know some of the vocabulary needed for the lesson such as get married, girlfriend/boyfriend and will have a lot of motivation to find out unknown words to help them describe their lives

Challenges and solutions
Challenges: Unusual events in individual learners lives cannot be anticipated by the teacher so some necessary vocabulary will be missing
Solutions: Allow learners to share ideas with each other, allow learners access to electronic dictionaries or smart phones, monitor and supply necessary lexis and terms

Steps	Stages	Time	Procedure	Interaction	Activity purpose
1		2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Greet Ss and write the following Qs on the WB: What's made a difference in your life? What's the most important event in your life? Let Ss discuss in small groups. T can model/share an important experience such has: Coming to Korea has made me more independent. Elicit experiences and wrote them on the WB –Use two columns on for key words and another for non-key words <p>Slide 1: No slide is necessary; unless T decides to have a title page showing on screen</p>	T-Ss	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Establish rapport, friendly atmosphere. Get Ss used to English and my voice / pronunciation. Activate Schema and intro topic
2		10-12	<p>BRAINSTORM/ACTIVATE SCHEMA/BUILD VOCABULARY</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Put the following words on the PPT: graduation, to move, be born, attend, learned to, date/go out with, contest/competition, break up Give one handout with the words used in context to each group. Have Ss discuss the meaning of the words in their L1 Ask some CCQs such as: What high school did you graduate from? Have you ever moved? Where do you move from and to? In what month were you born? What school are you attending now? Ss will do a vocabulary matching activity. Model task for Ss by doing the first one. Have Ss check answers with partner Check answers altogether. Hand out several WB markers and ask Ss to match the vocabulary on the WB. <p>Slides 2≈10:</p>	<p>T-Ss</p> <p>T-Ss</p> <p>S</p> <p>S-S</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Brainstorm vocabulary related to important life events Assess Ss background knowledge, find out what Ss know, get an idea of Ss level. Validate Ss participation and build confidence in the topic by writing all solicited words on the WB Model task Create a safe and comfortable learning environment thru peer learning and collaboration <p>Check understanding by using a kinesthetic activity</p>
3		5	<p>Life Map – Task 1</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Tell Ss that they are going to make a list of important life events: Good, bad, interesting, funny, etc... T models by writing some important events on the WB: Born August 15, new bike, lost parents at state fair, changed schools, broke leg... Ask Ss to write as many events as they can remember in 5 minutes. Tell Ss that if they need help with English to ask their partners. Put help language on the WB: How do I say ___ in English? Check Ss understanding by asking CCQs: Are you speaking or writing? Do you write many things or one thing? What are you making? Monitor Ss and help Ss find appropriate English words and phrases <p>Have Ss share their lists with their partner or in small groups. Tell Ss if they remember something important to add it to their list.</p>	<p>T-Ss</p> <p>S</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Model task Provide Ss with support by leaving elicited vocab on WB, and help language so Ss can ask e/o in English Peer sharing to make the task safe and to promote peer learning

				S-S	
4		5	<p>Life Map – Task 2</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ask Ss to count the number of events on their list. Ask random Ss: How many events do you have? 2. Ask Ss to put the events in their list in order: first, second, next, and then... Model task by putting your sample list on the WB in order. (see PPT) 3. Monitor as Ss do tasks 	T-Ss S	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. T models tasks for Ss and visual represents what the Ss need to do so Ss can do task successfully 2. Silent period is provided with opportunity of repetitive writing tasks of key events to build comfort and safety of language elements before speaking
5		10	<p>Life Map – Task 3</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Show Ss a picture or sample of a Life Map (Ps. 20 &21) to let them know what they will make 2. Model next task on the WB. Draw a winding line from one side of the WB to the other. Explain to Ss that this line represents the road of their life. 3. Then draw dots along the line. One dot for each event on their list. Remind Ss to try to space the dots out evenly. 4. Next ask Ss to label each dot on their Life Map based on the events they have put in order on their list. Model task on the WB with the line and dots you have drawn. 5. Pass out colored pencils and/or crayons and ask Ss to add simple illustrations of the events they have labeled on their Life Map. Model task for Ss and show sample Life Map on PPT. <p>Monitor Ss to make sure they are on task.</p>	T-Ss S	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. T models tasks for Ss and visual represents what the Ss need to do so Ss can do task successfully 2. Ss are allowed to personalize Life Map thru the drawing of pictures
6		15	<p>Sharing Life Map</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. After Ss have finished making their life map have Ss get into groups of three. 2. Put the following Qs on the PPT: A: What was your most interesting experience? / What was your most influential experience? / What was you scariest experience? B: My most _____ experience was _____. A: What happened? B: _____ 3. Ss take turns showing their life maps and explaining the events to their partners 	S-S	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. T models tasks for Ss and visual represents what the Ss need to do so Ss can do task successfully 2. Ss are allowed to personalize Life Map thru the drawing of pictures

Mini-Lesson



Discuss in Groups

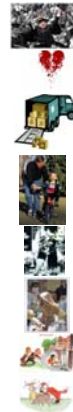
- **What are some important events in your life?**
- **What experiences have made a difference in your life?**

Discuss these words. What do they mean?

- graduate
- graduation
- to move
- be born
- attend
- learn to
- date
- go out with
- contest
- competition
- break up
- break up with

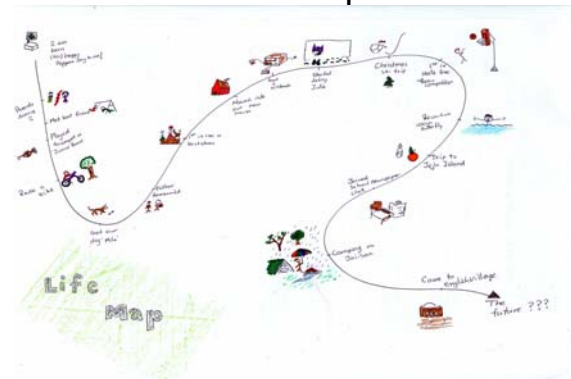
Use sentences on page 76 to help you.
Can you think of other words that would be helpful
when describing past experiences?

- move
- learn to
- date
- attend
- graduate
- contest
- break up
- be born



- ◆ I won the ____ . I got a prize.
- ◆ I will ____ middle school next year.
- ◆ I ____ from high school. Now I'm going to university.
- ◆ I ____ ride a bike from my father.
- ◆ I was ____ in August in the year of the monkey.
- ◆ I ____ with my boyfriend last week.
- ◆ There's a girl I want to ____, but she keeps saying no.
- ◆ My family and I ____ to a new apartment last month.

Life Map



Step 1: Brainstorming

Think about some of the different experiences in your life.
Put them in one of the five columns.

Important/ influential	Interesting/ exciting	sad/ disappointing	scary/ stressful	embarrassing/ funny
being born	going to Egypt	father died	falling into hornets nest	teaching with my zipper down
night climb of Soraksan	summer in NYC	Miguel shot	arrested in Egypt	naked guy in subway singing Bonkja
coming to Korea				

Share list with partner.
Add ideas.

A: What was one of your ... experiences?
B: My ... experience was ...
What was one of your ... experiences?
A: My ... experience was ...
<continue taking turns>

Kinds of experiences:

- fun
- exciting
- interesting
- embarrassing
- scary
- funny
- sad
- interesting

Step Two

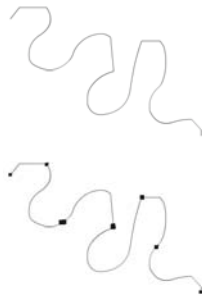
- Count the number of your events (at least 6 no more than 12)
- Make a column of numbers
- Put events in order: **First, second, next, and then...**

1. being born
2. move & change schools
3. falling into hornet nest
4. traveling to Egypt
5. getting arrested for climbing pyramid
6. summer in NYC
7. father died
8. teaching with zipper down
9. night climb of Soraksan

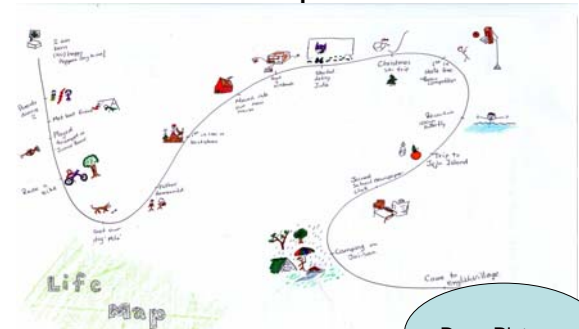
- being born...
- traveling to Egypt...
- father died...
- falling into a hornet nest...
- night climb of Soraksan...
- teaching with zipper down..

Step Three

- On page 65 draw a single, wavy line
- Make dots on the wavy line for each event in your life.
- Then write the name of the event next to each dot (1-4 words)



Step 4



Draw Pictures

Get to know your classmates:

A: What was one of your _____ experiences?
B: An important _____ experience was _____.
A: What happened?
B: _____.
What was one of your _____ experiences?
A: A _____ experience was _____.
B: What happened?
A: _____.

A:important....
B:camping at the beach.
B: I met my current boy/girl friend....scary...
A: getting stuck on top of a rollercoaster.
A:

You Try! Share with a Partner

A: What was one of your _____ experiences?
B: An/A _____ experience was _____.
A: What happened?
B: _____.
<continue taking turns>

- important
- interesting/exciting
- embarrassing/funny
- scary
- fun
- sad

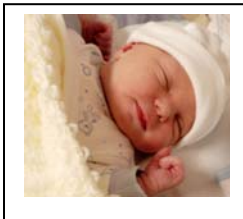
Vocabulary in Context

Directions: Look at the sentences below and use them to help your understanding of the key words and expressions. Discuss what you think the words mean in groups. You may use Korean.



He **graduated** from Harvard University in 2009.

Her **graduation** was really special. President Obama gave the commencement address.



We are going **to move** next week.



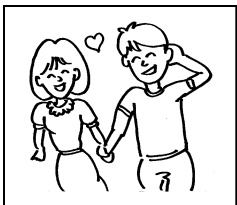
Her baby **was born** last month. He's so cute!



Do you remember **learning to** ride a bike?



My daughter **attends** Washington Elementary School. She's in third grade.



Did you hear the news? Gina and Tim are **going out with** each other!

Really! I thought Gina was **dating** Tim's brother, Tom.

She was. But she **broke up with** Tom to date Tim.



Did he win a prize at the speech **contest**?

He entered the **competition**, but he didn't get a prize.

- move



- ◆ I won the ____ . I got a prize.

- learn to



- ◆ I will ____ middle school next year.

- date



- ◆ I ____ from high school. Now I'm going to university.

- attend



- ◆ I ____ ride a bike from my father.

- graduate



- ◆ I was ____ in August in the year of the monkey.

- contest



- ◆ I ____ with my boyfriend last week.

- break up



- ◆ There's a girl I want to _____ , but she keeps saying no.

- be born



- ◆ My family and I ____ to a new apartment last month.

Brainstorming

Directions: Think about some of the different experiences in your life. Put them in one of the five columns.

Important / Influential	Interesting / Exciting	Sad / Disappointing	Scary / Stressful	Embarrassing / Funny

Draw Your Life Map

LISTENING SAMPLE LESSON - PARK LESSON

Name _____

Date _____

1. What are you teaching?

Key words: **pigeon, paper bag, entrance, statue, hoop**

Language point needed for Ss to demonstrate SLO: Present Continuous

Language skills: Listening

Culture: N/A

2. What are your student learning objectives for the lesson?

--

3. When/how in the lesson will I check students' progress toward the above student learning objective?

When Ss point to and circle the appropriate park-related items while listening to the text; when they identify where misinformation is given about the original story by raising their hands; when Ss describe the park picture to their partners using the new vocabulary and present continuous, and then when they are able to describe a different park picture and their own park picture using the key vocabulary and present continuous.

Preliminary considerations:

a. What do your students already know in relation to today's lesson?

Ss already know some park-related vocabulary, basic sentence formation, and the present continuous tense.

b. What aspects of the lesson do you anticipate your students might find challenging/difficult?

Understanding the Qs that I ask and want them to ask each other and pronunciation of some new vocabulary words such as "pigeon" and "statue".








c. How will you avoid and/or address these problem areas in your lesson?

Write Qs on the board.

Have choral repetition of words.

Time	framework <u>P D P</u>	Procedure/Steps	Interaction (S-T, T-S)	Activity Purpose
5		1. Introduce the topic "park". T shows Ss a picture of a park and writes the word "park" on the board. T asks Ss, "What can you do in a park?" Ss share in pairs. T. elicits from group.	T-Ss T-Ss S-S Ss-T	1. To activate schema and students' prior knowledge in order to prepare them for the new information
5		2. Show picture of a park and elicit park objects they know using the language: T. "What's this?" Ss: "A bench." T writes the words on the board.	T-Ss Ss-T	2. To elicit Ss' prior knowledge Ss are treated as knowers Ss learn from one another
3		3. For park objects that Ss do not know, T elicits from other Ss or gives new vocabulary words: pigeon, paper bag, entrance, statue, hoop	T-Ss Ss-T	3. To ensure that Ss have the necessary vocabulary to succeed at the listening task.
3		4. Listening Task #1: Ss circle all the items they hear as T reads the text. Ss check with partner using the language S1: "What did you circle?" S2: "I circled <u>statue, bag, and pigeon</u> . How about you?"	S S-S	4. Ss are given an easy listening activity; it's safe and manageable; uses of VAT
5		5. Listening Task #2: Ss listen to false text read by T. Ss raise their hands and say "Stop." when they hear false information. T. elicits correct information.	Ss-T	5. Ss are given a more specific task. Ss check answers to make safe environment. Use of VAKT
3		6. Listening & Reading Task #3: Cloze sheet: T puts up a poster of words that go in the blanks. Ss work in pairs to fill in the blanks. Ss listen and check in pairs afterwards.	S-S	6. Integrating reading and listening skills. On-going assessment of key vocab.
5		7. Ss review the form of the present continuous and then describe the park story to a partner using the new vocabulary. S: "Two women are sitting on a bench; one man is holding a paper bag, etc."	T-S S-S	7. Ss build on language they already learned in previous lessons; SLO can be observed.
8		8. Listening & Speaking Task #4: Ss listen to original text and look at new picture. T asks Ss to check the differences. Ss compare differences. Ss ask each other: "What did you circle that was different?" "I circled ____; what about you?" T elicits.	S-S	8. Ss use vocab. & grammar in new context. Supports post activity
13 <hr/> 50 min.		9. Working in pairs, students draw a picture of their favorite park and describe it to their partners.	S-S	9. Adds a creative element and personalization; Ss use and expand on what was learned.

PowerPoint

<p>Listening Lesson – “THE PARK”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Beginner Level Ss → Elementary to Middle School</i> • <i>What do Ss already know?</i> • Ss already know some park-related vocabulary, basic sentence formation and present continuous tense. 	<p>A park</p> 	<p>A: What can you do in a park? B: I can <u>walk</u> in a park.</p>
<p>A: What can you do in a park? B: I can _____ in a park. What can you do in a park? A: I can _____ in a park. What can...?</p>	<p>What do you see?</p> 	<p>A pigeon</p> 
<p>Pigeons in a park</p> 	<p>Which one is a pigeon?</p> <p>1</p>  <p>2</p> 	<p>Statue of Liberty</p> 

1



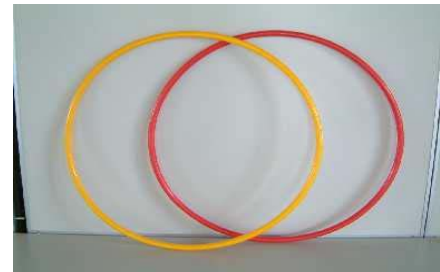
2



A hoop and a stick



Hoops or Sticks?



A hoop or a stick?



A paper bag



Yes or No?



Yes or No?



1



2



Entrance



An entrance?



Circle what you hear



A: What did you circle?

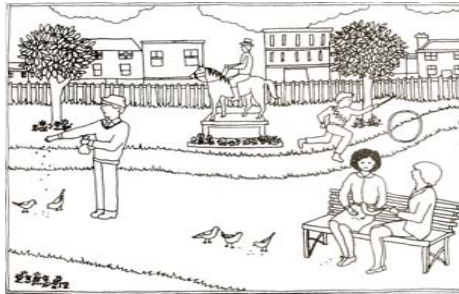
B: I circled _____. What about you?

A: I circled.....



B:

Listen for What's Wrong



Word List

- Hoop
- Horse
- Two
- Park
- Sitting
- Pigeon
- Man
- Looking
- Nearby
- Paper
- Pigeons
- Bird
- Eating
- Playing

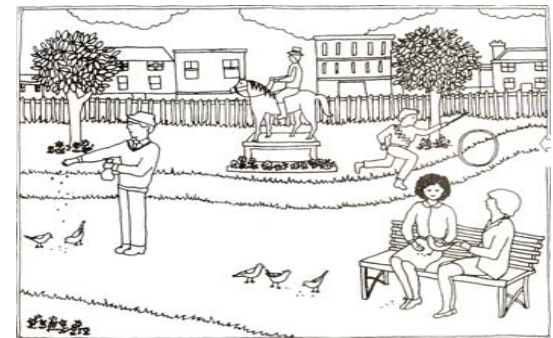
Answers

- Park
- Sitting
- Pigeon
- Looking
- Nearby
- Paper
- Pigeons
- Bird
- Eating
- Playing
- Hoop
- Man
- Horse
- Two

Review

I
 You
 He
 She
 It
 We
 They

Describe What You See





A: What did you circle?

B: I circled _____. What about you?

A: I circled.....



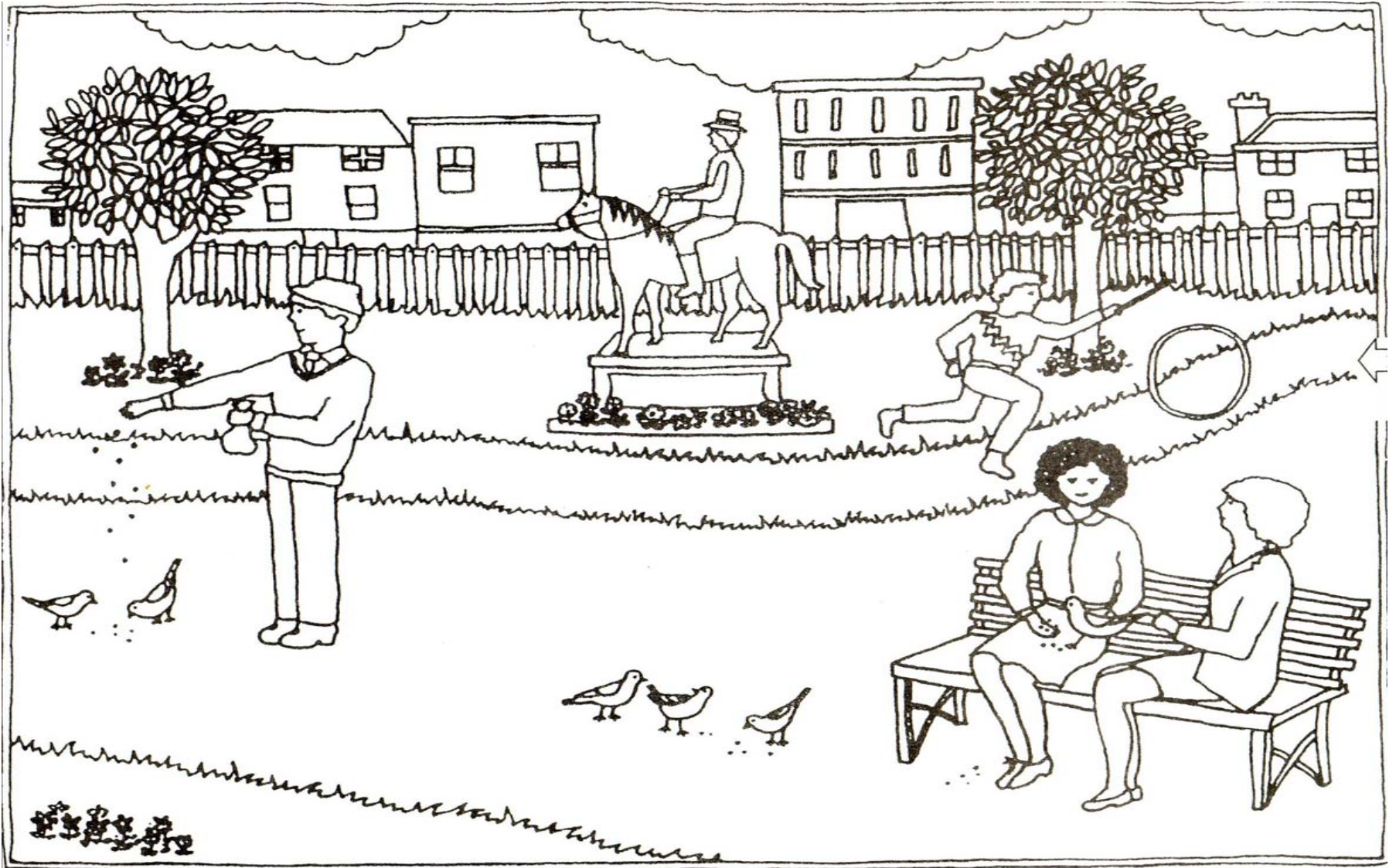
B:

Draw Your Favorite Park

- Do you have a favorite park?
- I do:



Tell Your partner about your park



Park Sample Lesson – False Reading

You can see the picture of a **zoo** in this town. You can see that it's in a town because there are some houses behind the park. Two women are **standing** on a bench; one of them has black hair, and she's giving some food to the **dog**-the other woman is just **yelling** at it.

Three more pigeons are on the ground **far away**. Then there's a man with a **plastic** bag in one hand; I think he's got **dog** food in it because he's throwing food to the **ducks** and they're **drinking** it. On the path there's a boy **dancing** with a **girl** and running towards the entrance of the park. Behind the path you can see the statue of a **horse** sitting on **a man** with a tall hat and there are some flowers growing around.

There are **three** trees in the picture, one on either side of the statue.

Park Sample Lesson – Cloze Activity

You can see the picture of a _____ in this town. You can see that it's in a town because there are some houses behind the park. Two women are _____ on a bench; one of them has black hair, and she's giving some food to the _____-the other woman is just _____ at it. Three more pigeons are on the ground _____. Then there's a man with a _____ bag in one hand; I think he's got _____ food in it because he's throwing food to the _____ and they're _____ it. On the path there's a boy _____ with a _____ and running towards the entrance of the park. Behind the path you can see the statue of a _____ with a tall hat sitting on a _____ and there are some flowers growing around. There are _____ trees in the picture, one on either side of the statue.



Sample Park Lesson – Listening Text

You can see the picture of a **park** in this town. You can see that it's in a town because there are some houses behind the park. Two women are **sitting** on a bench; one of them has black hair, and she's giving some food to the **pigeon**-the other woman is just **looking** at it. Three more pigeons are on the ground **nearby**. Then there's a man with a **paper** bag in one hand; I think he's got **bird** food in it because he's throwing food to the **pigeons** and they're **eating** it. On the path there's a boy **playing** with a **hoop** and running towards the entrance of the park. Behind the path you can see the statue of a **man** with a tall hat sitting on a **horse** and there are some flowers growing around. There are **two** trees in the picture, one on either side of the statue.

Draw your favorite park.

Name _____	Title or explanation Comparative Adjectives with “Yes/No” Questions	Time 45 minutes
----------------------	---	---------------------------

Level/Age Low Intermediate/Upper elementary through high school

<p>Language focus</p> <p><u>Target language</u>: Comparative statements and questions (“X is ____er than Y” / “Is X ____er than Y?”)</p> <p><u>Specific language skill focus</u>: speaking & grammar (some reading)</p> <p><u>Culture</u>: N/A (unless words like fat and ugly comes up, then T may want to discuss the appropriateness of those terms)</p>
--

<p>Student learning objective and assessment activity</p> <p>By the end of the lesson, SWBAT make statements about and ask basic questions using comparatives (i.e. “x is taller than y” and “is x taller than y?”) by conducting a class survey about famous people.</p>
--

<p>Ongoing assessment</p> <p>Ss understanding of meaning will be assessed through the puzzle activity, form will be introduced as a pattern that Ss will first manipulate in a controlled manner, as Ss gain confidence more authentic tasks such as personalized substitution drill will allow Ss to internalize and use the TL.</p>
--

<p>Students’ background knowledge and abilities in relation to the topic of the lesson</p> <p>Most students will be familiar with adjectives used to describe people, such as big, small, tall short, etc...</p>

<p>Challenges and solutions</p> <p><u>Challenges</u>: Using adjectives to compare two things may be completely new language for some Ss.</p> <p><u>Solutions</u>: I will provide lower level Ss with opportunities for peer learning; for example new learners will have a chance to model their language use after the more experienced students.</p>

Glossary for Common Abbreviations Used in the Lesson Plans

T = teacher
S = student
Ss = students
TL = target language
N/A = not applicable
i.e. = that is
w/ = with
w/o = without


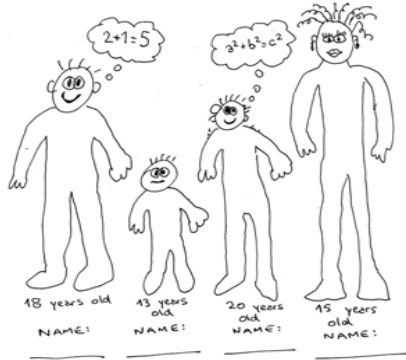
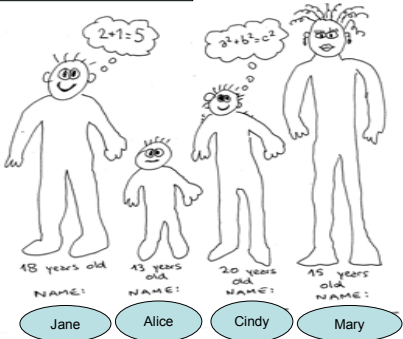
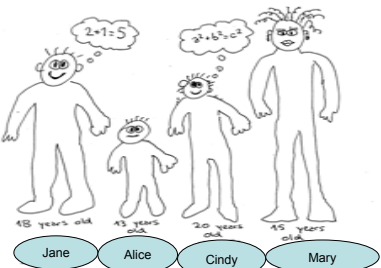
Q&A = question and answer
PPT = PowerPoint
WB = white board
SL = sample lesson
NB = take special note of
e/o = each other
b/c = because

SWBAT = students will be able to
VAKT = visual, auditory, kinesthetic, tactile
CCQ = comprehension/concept check questions
FMU = form, meaning, use
SLO = student learning objective
e.g. = for example
FOWTAK = find out what they already know

Steps	Stages	Time	Procedure	Interaction	Activity purpose
1		1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Hang pictures of famous Korean music, film, TV and sports stars on walls around classroom Greet Ss, introduce my name, smile, make eye contact, ask a few questions: Who is that? Do you like him/her? What is she/he famous for? Who's your favorite singer? Introduce topic: Today we are going to talk about people? Do you like to talk about people? Do like? Do you like Ivy? 	T-Ss	(1) Activate schema (2) Establish rapport, friendly atmosphere (3) Get Ss used to English and my voice / pronunciation (4) Intro of topic
2		6	<p style="text-align: center;">REVIEW / BRAINSTORM</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> pics of tall, old pretty – elicit vocab from Ss, write list on whiteboard (If Ss give non-adj. write on WB in different column); Ss in pairs create longer list if not on their list, add good, beautiful, intelligent, bad... 	T-Ss S-S (T-Ss)	(1) Model task (2) Check Ss background knowledge, find out what Ss know, get an idea of Ss level (3) Validate Ss participation and build confidence in the topic
3		10	<p style="text-align: center;">PUZZLE GAME</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Logic puzzle on PPT and handouts. Small groups / pairs to discover names of the people in the picture based on clues: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Cindy is taller than Alice. Jane is taller than Cindy. Mary is older than Alice. Jane is happier than Alice. Cindy is more intelligent than Jane. Mary is prettier than Cindy. Cindy is older than Jane.; feedback: elicit names (include a kinesthetic component such as placing names on WB) elicit/give Ss structure: A is ____ than B model use of the support language erase / take away clues – drill: Ss make 3 sentences Ss pass monkey and share their sentences 	T-S S-S T-Ss	(1) Ss first exposure to target language (2) Discovery method – Ss see the meaning of target language in a context, work out the rules from the examples (3) Student motivation / interest – Ss are initially focused on a meaningful task, NOT the language (4) VAKT is used to help Ss with various learning modalities (5) Silent period provided to give Ss time to get comfortable with new form
4		6	<p style="text-align: center;">Next Chunk – Q Form</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce/Elicit the questions form (assuming that some Ss are already familiar with this form): Is A ____ than B? Use picture to drill: Have Ss make three Qs and ask them to each other – Ss then ask Qs to T Picture as prompt and WB as support when pairs practice Q and A 	T-Ss S-S S-T	(1) Listening before speaking (2) T values Ss as experts (3) Encourage Ss to participate in meaning making by providing learn-centered task (4) Provides another chance to practice TL (5) Silent period provided to give Ss time to get comfortable with new form
5		5	<p style="text-align: center;">CHECKING FORM</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> T models chart on WB...check rules by asking Ss CCQs Ss complete chart on handout T monitors, checks answers <p style="text-align: center;">Optional:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Have Ss write answers on WB 	Ss T-Ss	(1) Ss are given a chance to clarify the written form (2) VTK - that is - Visual/Tactile/Kinesthetic learners accommodated.
6		7	<p style="text-align: center;">LESS CONTROLLED PRACTICE</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Show pictures/ elicit names of famous Korean pop singers/movie/sports stars and write on WB 	T-Ss, S-S	(1) Ss are given a chance to practice in a less controlled exercise (2) Increase Ss interest by using relevant material.

			<p>2. model activity: T / T-Ss / Ss-T / Ss-Ss A: Is A _____ than B? B: Yes, A is _____ than B // No, A isn't _____ than B.</p> <p>3. Ss practice asking and answering using pictures prompt or WB to scaffold task. TL support is provide as a gapped dialog. T can remove TL support to check if Ss have internalized</p>		
7		10	<p style="text-align: center;">SURVEY</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Remove TL support 2. Handout survey sheet 3. Ss write 3 to 5 Qs about famous Koreans 4. T models task with Ss 5. Ss mingle with classmates and ask Qs and record As (T can have Ss form two lines, if it seems Ss aren't mingling. Have the two lines face each other and have lines move in opposite directions to change partners) 6. If time T models how Ss can report findings: Gina thinks BoA is more beautiful than Ivy. 	T-Ss S-S S-S T-Ss	(1) Students are able to be active in their own learning (2) The activity provides an authentic purpose in using the TL: to find out about the opinions of other classmates.

PPT and Materials

<p style="text-align: center;">Sample Lesson 1</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Let's Talk about People</p> 		<p style="text-align: center;">A is _____ than B.</p> 
<p>A: Is <u>A</u> _____ than <u>B</u> ?</p> <p>B: Yes, <u>A</u> is _____ than <u>B</u>. No, <u>B</u> is _____ than <u>A</u>. // No, <u>A</u> isn't _____ than <u>B</u>.</p> 	<p>Is <u>Bi</u> better than <u>SG</u> Wanna Be?</p> <p>No, <u>Bi</u> isn't better than <u>SG</u> Wanna Be.</p> <p>A: Is <u>A</u> _____ than <u>B</u> ?</p> <p>B: Yes, <u>A</u> is _____ than <u>B</u>. No, <u>B</u> is _____ than <u>A</u>. No, <u>A</u> isn't _____ than <u>B</u>.</p>	

Additional Materials:

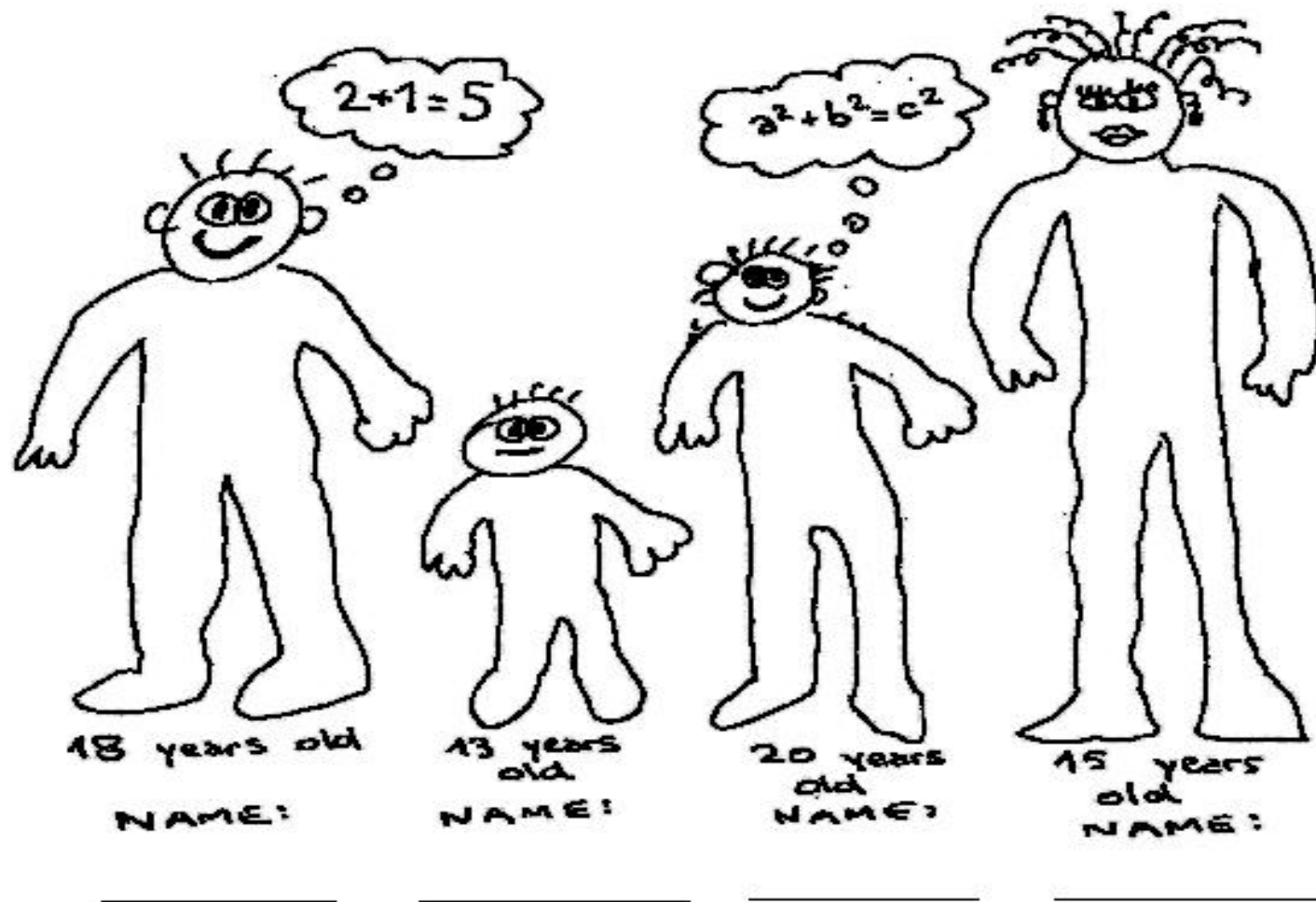
- Laminated pictures of famous Koreans such as singers, actors and sports stars
- Pictures of angel, devil, Einstein and a baby

Mary

Jane

Cindy

Alice



Who is who?

Cindy is taller than Alice.

Jane is taller than Cindy.

Mary is older than Alice.

Jane is happier than Alice.

Cindy is more intelligent than Jane.

Mary is prettier than Cindy.

Cindy is older than Jane.

Where do these go?

Tall, happy, intelligent, pretty, old, interesting, beautiful, cute, big, young

+er	- y + ier	more

Special: Good – better; bad – worse.

Survey

Write questions about famous people, ask your classmates and write their answers.

Question	Name & Answer	Names & Answer	Name & Answer	Names & Answer

Lesson Plan Template

Name 강재승	Holidays in the Fall Doosan Middle School 2 pp. 189-192 (2006)	Time 50 minutes
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Level/Age
High Beginner (reluctant readers) / Second year MS students (포천시)

Language focus

Target language: ghost, throw, trick or treat, trouble, celebrate, harvest, pray, temple, growth, traditional

Specific language skill focus: reading

Culture: **N/A** - Although this lesson is about holidays, it is not the kind of culture language Ts should be concerned with. We should be concerned with how culture affects language use; that is, the invisible aspect of culture such as beliefs, values and expectations. "Holidays," in this lesson, is the content, topic or theme; that is, culture is an interesting topic through which Ss can learn other aspects of English such as vocabulary and grammar, but the topic "Holiday" doesn't affect how English is used.

Student learning objective and assessment activity

By the end of the lesson, SWBAT...

Optional Post Activity SLO <If time permits> SWBAT talk about a Korean holiday by telling a classmate/explaining to the teacher important information about that holiday

Ongoing assessment

T will elicit, teach and check keywords in the pre. and Ss will do a follow-up vocab activity, General understanding will be assessed though a matching activity, more detailed understanding and their predictions will be checked by identify which countries have each holiday

Students' background knowledge and abilities in relation to the topic of the lesson

Some students might have some background knowledge about Halloween and words like ghost, pumpkin, etc.. Ss should know simple actions words like come, go, throw, get, take, wear, etc... Also Ss should be familiar with the name of countries such as Japan, Spain, etc...

Challenges and solutions

Challenges: Ss are reluctant readers, so they have probably experienced past failure when reading and are not motivated to read texts in English

Solutions: Adapt the tasks; not the text; try to give Ss easier reading activities to boost confidence; add competition to increase interest and motivation

Note on Materials

See lecture notes online for the PPT materials for this lesson and how I adapted this lesson for high intermediate and advanced learners at 대화 Middle School in 일산.

Steps	Stages	Time	Procedure	Interaction	Activity purpose
1		3	Ss look at the pictures on PPT and T elicits Halloween vocabulary from Ss. T shows additional pictures of other holidays and elicits the word "holiday" by asking Ss "What are these?"	S-T/T-S T-S/S-T	Ss schema is activated. Interest is generated. Pictures are helpful for visual and low level learners (use direct method). Ss are set up for successful reading by being introduced to the topic (holidays).
2		6	T pre-teaches vocabulary using pictures on PPT T goes over the FMU of the necessary vocabulary to understand the reading by providing the new words in context. T asks Ss simple CCQs to check their understanding of the new words (ex: Where do we usually pray? Is a ghost scary or funny? etc) Optional Follow-up Activity: For lower level Ss or groups of Ss who do not participate actively in the T-lead vocab presentation, T provides a handout and Ss do a matching or gap fill to clearly show they know and understand the keywords.	T-Ss/Ss-T S Ss-Ss Ss-t	Vocabulary is pre-taught to set Ss up for successful reading. Pictures are helpful for visual and low level learners (use direct method). Ss guess the meaning through context so that Ss are active in the learning process. To make sure Ss understand the meaning of the new words before reading.
3		2	T shows the pictures from the textbook and asks Ss "Which countries have these holidays?" Ss tell their predictions to each other. T elicits and writes on the WB .	T-Ss Ss-Ss Ss-T	To generate Ss interest. Prediction is used as a reading strategy.
4		4	T gives Ss handouts that have only the text of each holiday with the title and picture missing for pages 182-184. T shows Ss the three titles and three pictures from the textbook on PPT. (T gives directions about task before handing out the pictures, title, scissors and glue) Ss pick out an appropriate title and picture for each story. Ss glue title and picture next to the appropriate text. Ss check their answers with their partners and then with the whole class.	T-Ss S S-S Ss-T	Ss are given with a reason to read. Ss are given a general and easy reading task. Pictures are helpful for visual and low level learners. Ss have a chance to build on their reading techniques (skimming). Ss are provided with a safe environment to check their answers

Steps	Stages	Time	Procedure	Interaction	Activity purpose
5		5	<p>T shows the Qs on the PPT and tells Ss that they will read the text again and to find the answers for the questions.</p> <p>Ss read the text and answer the Qs.</p> <p>Ss check their answer with their partner.</p> <p>T asks Ss the answers to the Qs and shows them on the PPT.</p> <p>Ss and T look at Ss predictions made in the pre-stage and confirm their guesses</p>	<p>T-Ss</p> <p>S</p> <p>Ss-Ss</p> <p>T-Ss/Ss-T</p>	<p>Ss are given a reason to read with a task that is more specific.</p> <p>Ss are given another chance to interact with the text.</p> <p>Ss are provided with an activity that requires additional reading and prepares then for more difficult assessment Qs.</p> <p>Ss are provided with a safe environment to check their answers.</p> <p>Ss are provided with a visual of the answers (helps visual and low level learners).</p>
6		15	<p>T gives Ss a handout with detailed comprehension Qs.</p> <p>T tells Ss that they will play a game (Typhoon game) and the game is based on these Qs.</p> <p>Ss have a chance to answer the Qs together in groups (7-8min) by reading the text again and finding the answers.</p> <p>Ss play the Typhoon game.</p> <p>(*Note: To ensure that all Ss participate in the game, T will make a rule that each S in each team can only answer ONE time, but they can help each other in their teams.)</p>	<p>T-Ss</p> <p>S</p> <p>Ss-Ss</p> <p>T-Ss/Ss-T</p>	<p>Ss are provided with a reason to read with a more specific and difficult task.</p> <p>Ss can learn from each other (collaborative learning).</p> <p>Ss show their comprehension of the text.</p> <p>Games are fun and can provide motivation for Ss.</p> <p>T can assess Ss achievement of the SLO.</p>
7		10	<p>T asks Ss what their favorite Korean holiday/festival are.</p> <p>T elicits important information and details about each holiday on the WB as support language</p> <p>Option 1: Lower level Ss could make a poster to help in their explanation of key information about the holiday. They discuss in small groups what to put in the poster and why it is important for that holiday</p> <p>Option 2: Higher level Ss work in small groups and create an outline that they can use to explain the important information about their holiday</p>	<p>T-Ss/Ss-T</p> <p>Ss-Ss</p>	<p>Ss have a chance to personalize what they learned</p> <p>Ss apply topic (holidays) to their own local context</p> <p>Other skills are integrated (speaking).</p>

Which title and which picture?

The Tomato War Festival in Spain

Shichi-go-san Day

Ghosts on Halloween



Leave Page BLANK

Holidays in the Fall

Title?

If you are interested in ghost stories, you may want to hear about Halloween. On Halloween, which is October 31, American children dress up as ghosts and monsters. In the early evening, they go from house door to door to collect candy.

When you open the door, the children shout, "Trick or treat!" Then you put a treat into each child's bag. Later, the children go to Halloween parties or get together to tell scary stories.

Some people believe that ghosts and monsters come out on Halloween. So children dress up as ghosts or monsters to deceive the real ghosts and monsters.

Picture?

Title?

What will happen if you throw tomatoes at others? Of course, you will be in trouble. In Spain, however, you can throw tomatoes at others during the Tomato War Festival, La Tomatina. Why? Well, just for the fun! It is part of a week-long festival with music, fireworks and food.

The Spanish people have celebrated this Tomato War Festival since 1944. It began when people celebrated a good harvest of tomatoes. They were so pleased that they began to throw tomatoes at one another. Today, a large number of people from all over the world come to the festival to enjoy this friendly war.

Picture?

Title?

Shichi-go-san Day, which is November 15, is a big holiday in Japan. Parents pray for the healthy growth of their young children. Shichi-go-san means seven, five, and three. Boys go to Jinja with their parents when they are three and five. Girls visit Jinja when they become three and seven. Children used to wear traditional Japanese clothes on this day, but these days, some of them wear western dresses and suits.

Picture?

Directions: Read the story “**Holidays in the Fall**” and answer the following questions with your group members.

- 0) **When** is Halloween?

- 0) **What** do children say to get candy on Halloween?

- 0) **What** do children dress up as on Halloween?

- 0) **When** did the Tomato War Festival start?

- 0) **Who** celebrates the Tomato War Festival?

- 0) **What** do people do on the Tomato War Festival?

- 0) **When** is Shichi-go-san Day?

- 0) **Where** do children go on Shichi-go-san Day?

- 0) **When (age)** do girls go to Jinja for Shichi-go-san Day?

Lesson Plan 1 – Click Clack Moo: Cows That Type

Name: _____

Date: _____

Teaching time: 45 min

Action points – (These are the suggested techniques/ideas to try in your next practice teaching. See trainer’s observation notes from your last practice teaching session and copy the action points here)

1.

2.

3. **What are you teaching?**

- **Language points** – reading, writing, speaking (“I’d like a/some/an _____”)
- **Language skills** – Asking for something, writing a letter.
- **Cultural Aspects** – Writing a letter (salutation, closing,) request.

2. What are your Student Learning Objectives for the lesson? (These should be specific and describe *observable student behaviors*, which you will be able to see in class.)

By the end of the lesson, SWBAT:

Demonstrate their ability to use the conventions of letter writing to ask for something by writing a letter from a pet to the pet’s owner asking for something that pet would need.

3. When/How in the lesson will I check students’ progress toward the above Learning Objectives? What behaviors/activities will show me whether they have mastered the material?

- a) When students identify what the animals want in the listening activity (Click, Clack, Moo: Cows that Type)
- b) When they are able to identify what other animals want in the reading activity (letters from animals).
- c) When they explain to their friends what their pets want.
- d) When they write a letter from a real or imaginary pet explaining what they want from their master.

Preliminary considerations:

a. What do your students already know in relation to today’s lesson?

Students know what letters are. They have probably seen some.

b. What aspects of the lesson do you anticipate your students might find challenging/difficult?

- i. *The text is quite long so they may have a hard time following the story.*
- ii. *They will not be able to notice the form of the letter from just listening to the story.*
- iii. *They may find it difficult to think of what a particular animal might need.*

c. How will you avoid and/or address these problem areas in your lesson?

- i. *I will show them the pictures in the book and give them two chances to listen so they can understand the story. For very low level Ss, I will chunk the story into two parts and only read the first half on the first day. I may need to read it several times.*
- ii. *I will provide an example of a written letter for them to look at before they write their own.*
- iii. *I will have them brainstorm what the animal would need in the pre-writing stage. I will let them talk to their partner about what their pet would need.*

Steps	Stages	Time (min): Guess here	Procedure/Steps --these need to be written in the perspective of what the students do	Focus S-S, T-S, etc.	Activity Purpose
1	L:Pre	3	Teacher asks Ss if they know the story of the “Three Little Pigs.” Ask if they know any other stories where animals act like people. Elicit a few (I.e. “Goldilocks and the Three Bears,” Aesop’s Fables,	T-Ss	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activate Ss’ background knowledge. Prepare them to read the story. Assess their
2	L:Pre	5	<p>T pre-teaches key vocabulary:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. T has Ss repeat after her to teach pronunciation and stress of new vocabulary (<i>problem, type, electric blanket, neutral, exchange, type writer, diving board.</i>) 2. then has them check with each other about what each word means 3. T checks comprehension by using gestures, anecdotes and drawings to elicit the new words from the Ss, then asks some CCQs about each word (i.e. in this drawing, who is <i>neutral</i>? Does a <i>neutral</i> person fight?) 	T-Ss S-S T-Ss	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ss learn new vocabulary to prepare them to understand the listening story. • T validates and assesses Ss’ prior by monitoring their discussion (Ss may use some L1 here) • T keeps Ss engaged in the lesson and assesses their knowledge of key vocabulary by eliciting and CCQs
3	L:During	7	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. T puts a question on the WB and asks students to listen to the story and think about the question. When the story is over, she will ask Ss: 2. “Where did the story take place?” 3. (Support may be by providing choices: “A school, a farm or a zoo?”) 	T-Ss	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ss are given a general reason to listen for their first time. • Visual support is given by showing the illustrations. • Peer checking is encouraged so Ss feel more confident in their

			<p>4. T reads the story aloud while Ss listen and look at the illustrations.</p> <p>5. Have the Ss check their answers to the question with a partner then share with the class.</p>	S-S	<p>answers and will help each other.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ss see a letter writing in context. 																
4	L:During	7	<p>T puts a chart on the board:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="470 410 921 565"> <thead> <tr> <th>Animal</th> <th>Wants</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>T tells Ss they will listen and tell her what animals they hear in the story and what each animal wants.</p> <p>T reads the story again (as many times as is required to complete the chart.)</p>	Animal	Wants							T-Ss	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ss listen again to learn more details about the story. • Ss see a possible use for writing letters (audience and aim.) • T provides a graphic organizer to help Ss answer the questions. <p>Answers:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="1514 638 1965 792"> <thead> <tr> <th>Animal</th> <th>Wants</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td><i>Cows</i></td> <td><i>Electric blankets</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>Hens</i></td> <td><i>Electric blankets</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>Ducks</i></td> <td><i>A diving board</i></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Animal	Wants	<i>Cows</i>	<i>Electric blankets</i>	<i>Hens</i>	<i>Electric blankets</i>	<i>Ducks</i>	<i>A diving board</i>
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5	W: E L: Post	5	<p>Reading a New Letter</p> <p>T has Ss look at the handouts and read the letter from the cows.</p> <p>Who is the letter from?</p> <p>Who is the letter to?</p> <p>What do the cows want?</p> <p>T gives the same questions to the students about letter B (from the dog.) Ss check with a partner and report to the whole class.</p> <p>Noticing the Letter Structure and Grammar</p> <p>T asks focusing questions:</p> <p>What is the first word? What comes at the end?</p> <p>What words are underlined?</p>	T-Ss	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This activity moves beyond the listening text by using another skill, reading. • The previous listening activity has acted as a ‘pre’ stage by activating schema about letter writing. • This reading activity is a chance for the Ss to see a written letter, preparing them for the writing activity later. 																
6	W:E L: Post	5	<p>Form/Meaning Check</p> <p>Ss match the animal with what it would want. Check with a partner, then with the class.</p> <p>Ss unscramble the letter and check with a partner, then with the class.</p>	S S-S	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • T checks that the Ss know the “I’d like” grammar form and meaning. 																

7	W: I L: Post	10	<p>Practice the Grammar Form T draws a picture or writes words on the WB: A: What would you like? B: I'd like _____ pencil, eraser, money (and elicits <i>a, an</i> or <i>some</i> to go before the words) T models the pronunciation and has Ss repeat using "I'd like _____." T elicits things that the Ss want and let them practice as partners.</p>	T-Ss S-S	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice first in a controlled way to practice pronunciation and intonation. • Ss practice on their own to personalize and make it automatic. • T provides TL and SL to support practice.
8	W:I L: Post	10	<p>Prewriting T puts graphic organizer on WB and fills it in with the Ss. T Elicits many possible things to model brainstorming. T then models writing a letter from his dog asking for something using the "I'd like" expression. T elicits some animals and has Ss fill in a graphic organizer for their own pet.</p>	T-Ss S	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prewriting allows Ss to organize their ideas and be successful in the writing stage.
9	W: F L: Post	10	<p>Writing T has Ss choose just one item for their pet and write a letter using the template.</p>	S	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ss can use the letter genre to write with a purpose. •

Name and student number

Write your full name in English/Korean and include your HUFS ID number

Title

What your activity is about / It's content or theme

Context

Level and age of your students

Time

How long you think your activity will take

Objective

Clearly state in terms of learning outcomes – “By the end of the activity, students will be able to . . .”

Materials

In addition to any necessary attachments, provide explicit explanations with examples

Lead-in

Create interest, activate background knowledge, and/or focus on lexis

Set up and run the activity

Organize students and give detailed instructions for each step – state what both you and the students will do

Then, make sure that your instructions were understood and monitor/guide/facilitate etc. as students do the activity

Close the activity and post-activity

First, allow the activity to close properly/check when the students are ready to move on. Then, deal with ideas, comments, and questions about the topic and language items (i.e. get feedback). At the end, do a simple communicative task that gets students to participate actively and expands on your topic or acts as a springboard for practicing another skill

Provide Materials needed for the activity**Rationale**

Write one page rationale explaining why you are doing what you are doing. Please make reference to the theories, method and techniques we have been studying.

NAME: James 1007

Title or Explanation
Who is Who

Level/Age
High Beginner – Low Intermediate / Upper Elementary 5th 6th grade

Time
12 minutes

Objective
By the end of the activity, students will be able to make statements using the comparative form, e.g. "Mary is more beautiful than Jane."

Materials

- ♦ PPT & Handout with four people drawn on it, but no names
- ♦ Worksheet with seven sentences describing the people from the handout to create the clues for the puzzle
- ♦ Name cards
- ♦ PPT slide with answers to the puzzle and sentence pattern for learners to use
- ♦ Monkey or other stuffed animal

Before (Lead-in)

1. Leave the adjectives (describing words) from the brainstorming activity on the WB
2. Use the image on the PPT to ask the Ss some questions: "How many people do you see?" (4) "Do you know their names?" (No) "How many name cards do you see on the WB?" (4) "Can you guess what we are going to do next?"

During (Set up and run the activity)

3. If students answer the question above correctly, repeat what they have said. If not, provide the following directions: "Look at the handout. [hold up the correct piece of paper] How many sentences do you see?" (7) "So what I want you to do first is READ all the sentences...Second...[hold up the handout with the picture of the 4 people]... I want you to THINK...[point to you head]...Third I want you to write [mime writing on the paper with the 4 people]. So, what do I want you to do first? (Read) What do I want you to do second [point to head]? (think) What do I want you to do third [mime writing]? (write). Excellent. You have three minutes. Begin.
4. Monitor learner progress. If Ss are struggling to figure out who is who, point to the sentence number 5 and say, "This is my favorite sentence."
5. Have learners check their answers in pairs
6. Have volunteers put the name cards under the picture of the person on the screen or WB

After (Close the activity and post-activity)

7. Put answers and the sentence pattern [A is _____ than B.] on the PPT. Complement the Ss for guessing correctly and ask Ss to look at sentence #1. Read sentence #1 and point to the sentence pattern on the PPT. Ask questions about the pattern [A is _____ than B.] For example: Who is A? Is Mary A or B? Do the same for one or two more sentences until learners are comfortable with the pattern
8. Ask students to write 3 sentences using the pattern. Have them write about the 4 people that they just learned the names of. Have them use the describing words (adjectives) that are on the WB. CCQ the task: How many sentences are you going to write? Who are you going to write about? What pattern/words are you going to use?
9. Monitor learners as they are writing and help learners who may struggle with formulating their own sentences.
10. Have Ss share sentences with the person next to them.
11. Hold a stuffed animal in your hand and ask: "What is this?" (monkey) Tell the Ss that they will play a game. The person with the monkey needs to read/say one of their sentences and then pass the monkey to a classmate. Ask the Ss if they are ready to begin. Wait and then ask: "Who has the monkey? (Ss laugh and point to T) Ask what do I do if I have the monkey? (Ss should say read/say a sentence, if not prompt them to retell the directions) Share a sentence for example: "Mary is more beautiful than Jane." After sharing my sentence ask: "What do I do next? (throw the monkey) Pass the monkey to a student and let them share their sentences. Let 3-5 students share sentences and then ask for the monkey back.

Materials can be found with the Comparatives Lesson Plan. This is the route map for step 3 in the lesson plan.

Rationale

The purpose of this activity is primarily to introduce the learners to the target language. In this lesson, students will be learning comparative adjectives using the structure: A is _____ than B; for example, Mary is taller than Jane. I want learners to encounter the language naturally and in a fun and interesting way. Following Paul's Inquiry Learning or Active Learning Cycle, I introduce learners using a picture puzzle; that is, I give learners a picture with 4 people, I let them know the names of the four people they are to identify and I give them seven sentences using comparative adjectives describing the picture using the names of the characters.

The puzzle corresponds to the Noticing and Wanting stages of Paul's Inquiry Learning or Active Learning Cycle because the children are noticing the new pattern through a fun, meaning-based activity. I am not teaching the pattern directly because I want the learners to figure it out inductively. Moreover, this is a meaning not a form focused task. Understanding comes mostly through the underlying vocabulary that learners have already demonstrated that they know through the brainstorming and elicitation task that was given prior to the puzzle. This students to almost completely understand the new input and thus the input is comprehensible but beyond their productive capacity. With a solution well within their reach students will want to figure out who is who, thus encountering the new form and demonstrating their comprehension of it.

To assure that the task isn't too difficult, I have provided learners with a key sentence: "Cindy is more intelligent than Jane," which allows students to identify two of the four characters quickly. If learners have not stumbled across this sentence within the first 1-2 minutes, I walk around and point to this sentence and say: "This is my favorite sentence." This gives learners a clue without directly helping the learner. This kind of help promote confidence because I have done anything directly, Learners have to read, understand and then identify the individuals, so success is all theirs, I only point them to the best sentences to puzzle over first.

After giving learners 3 minutes to puzzle over the sentences, I have the learners check with the people next to them and compare answers. Usually learners spend time discussing the picture rather than the sentences. They spend time identifying who is happy, who is intelligent etc so that the sentences they have read can be matched with the right individual. Again, this helps with learner confidence because the sentences are clear it is the teacher's drawing which isn't. After learners have had a chance to compare answers, I ask for a volunteer to place the name card under the picture of the character on the screen. I then have that student choose the next classmate to come up, and I do this to all four people in the picture have been identified. The purpose of this activity is to integrate and accommodate various learning styles with this activity.

Ss work originally alone which is good for the intrapersonal and studious type learner. I have them share answers so that is good for the interpersonal or communicative learners. The puzzle activity is good for analytic type learners. There is a visual element to the task which is appreciated by visual learner and the card placement and monkey toss is appropriate for kinesthetic and tactile learners.

In the follow-up activity, I move from focusing on meaning to focusing on form and use. I provided Ss with a significant silent period in which they could demonstrate that they were comfortable with the meaning of the target form, so now it's time to let learners practice the target form in a controlled manner. I draw learner attention to significant features of the linguist input by showing them the formula for the target structure on the PPT. I read several example sentences take from the puzzle task and I ask learners about the word order of the sentence. Since my learners are all Korean L1 learners of English, word order these sentences are a major difference that needs to be clarified. I ask very simple questions about he sentences structure. I ask Ss to identify who is A and who is B in each sentence. Once I am satisfied that learners understand the word order I ask Ss to write three sentences using the target structure. I have write sentences about the 4 people they have just figured out and I point out they can use any of the describing words on the WB to help them write their sentences.

Again this follows Paul's Inquiry Learning or Active Learning Cycle. This moves us through the Challenge/Risk taking stage and the Play/Experiment stage. Learners demonstrate that they have noticed and can use the target pattern productively in a controlled and scaffolded context.

Finally, I let learners share their sentence through a stuffed-animal toss game. This technique allows me to continually balancing the learners academic and emotionally needs. Writing sentences is not particularly fun for young learners, but tossing a stuffed-animal and sharing something is. Reading simple sentences is not particular fun for young learners, but solving a puzzle is. Sharing answers with the teacher is not particularly fun, but choosing who will place the name card under the person on the screen is.

NAME: Scott 123456789

Title or Explanation Pet hamster

Level/Age Pre-intermediate / Middle School students – 8th grade

Time 8-12 minutes

Objective

By the end of the activity, students will be able to use the past continuous to explain what happened to a hamster

Materials

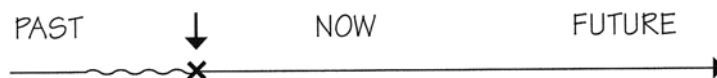
- Flashcards – a hamster eating some cat food, a cat seeing the hamster eating its food, the cat chasing the hamster, a boy seeing the cat chasing the hamster, the hamster climbing the curtain with the cat watching, the boy grabbing the hamster from the curtain
- Handout slips with two halves of sentences – I was walking in the country/when I saw a snake, I was working in the garden/when I saw a lot of bees, I was drinking a cup of tea/when I swallowed a fly, I was having a shower/when I noticed a big spider

Before (Lead-in)

- Establish the context:** Ask one student to leave the class. Tell her that she will get a surprise when she gets back. Tell the rest of the class to imagine they are a (big) family. They have lost their pet hamster (use the flashcard in case this is a new word) and are looking for it everywhere. Get them to begin miming looking for the hamster. Then ask the student to come back in.
- Introduce target language:** Ask the student (who left the class), "What were they doing when you came in?" Get him/her to guess. As he/she guesses, recast his/her language – e.g. [S] "They looked for something." [T] "Yes...they were looking for something. What were they looking for? Can you guess?"

During (Set up and run the activity)

- Check comprehension:** Elicit the following sentence from the students, "We're looking for a hamster when X came in," and write it on the WB. Underline, "We were looking for a hamster." Ask the class, "Did this take a long time?" Then underline, "X came in." Ask the same question, "Did this take a long time?" Write "long" above "We were looking for a hamster" and "short" above "X came in." You can illustrate how these verb tenses are used by drawing a timeline on the board:



Ask the class what the "We were looking" (the wiggly line) and what represents "X came in" (the arrow).

- Language focus:** Draw a substitution table on the board (you may need to remind your learners that the singular "you" form is the same as the plural).

I				
He	was			
She		looking for the hamster	when	X came in
You				
We	were			
They				

- Check comprehension:** Show the class the first flashcard and ask them what the hamster was doing. Ask them what they think happened next. Show the second flashcard and ask them to make a sentence using "...-ing...when..." Repeat with the other flashcards.
- Practice the language:** Hand out the slips of paper – each one has one half of a sentence (*see "Materials" above). Tell the class that they have to stand up and try to find the person with the other half of their sentence. If you think you're learners will have trouble with the words, scaffold by drawing on the WB.

After (Close the activity and post-activity)

7. Close and extend the activity: When the learners have found their partner, ask them to sit together and prepare a mime of their sentence. Give them a few minutes to prepare. Put the learners in small groups (4-6 Ss) and then tell the pairs to perform their mimes for the group. The rest of the group should guess what happened and make a sentence using "was/were...-ing...when..."

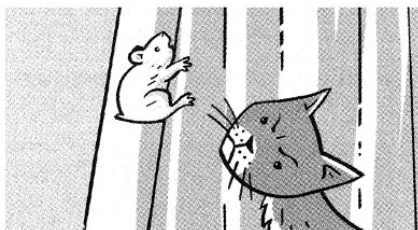
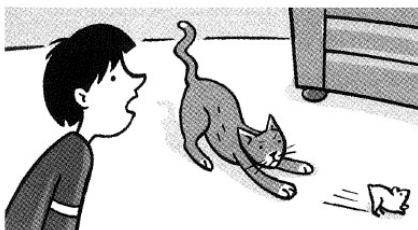
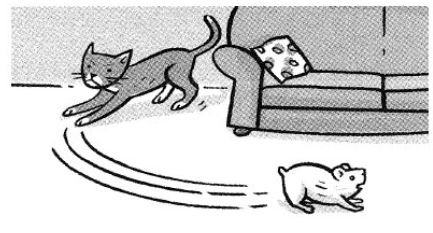
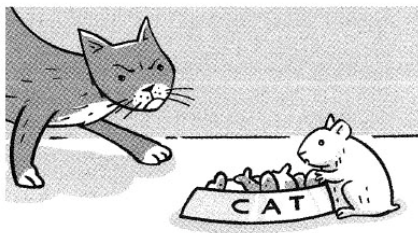
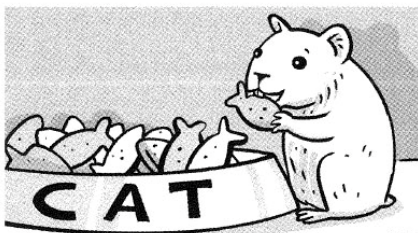
8. Get learner feedback: Bring the class together and have each pair tell their completed sentence. Review the difference between the past continuous and past simple tenses by asking questions about the timeline and substitution table (i.e. ask questions about how each are formed).

PPT Slide / Topic Intro

What is this?



Flash Cards



Sentence Strips

I was walking in the country

when I saw a snake

I was working in the garden

when I saw a lot of bees

I was drinking a cup of tea

when I swallowed a fly

I was having a shower

when I noticed a big spider

NAME: Judy Kim 987223456

Title or Explanation Extraordinary coincidences!

Level/Age Low-intermediate / Upper Elementary School students, 5th-6th grade

Time 25 minutes

Objective

By the end of the activity, students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of the short news article "Extraordinary Coincidences" by describing how the twins were similar using "both" and "neither."

By the end of the activity SWBAT use "both" and "neither" to describe how they and their partners are similar.

Materials

White Board (WB) or Black Board (BB)

Magazine picture or flashcards of identical twins – two young boys

Reading text about the identical twins

Poster copy or handout of the following chart:

Before (Lead-in)

1. **Keywords & Prediction:** Show picture of the twins to the class. Ask what the learners notice. Use the picture to teach twins and identical. Write on the WB: *identical twin, separated, adopted, coincidence*. Elicit, teach and check the meanings of the keywords. Ask learners what they think the article will be about.

During (Set up and run the activity)

2. **Skimming:** Hand out the reading text. Ask, "What is the story about?" To find the answer, tell the learners to look very quickly through the text (30 seconds), and then cover it up. Ask them to turn to a partner and tell them what they think the story is about. Collect suggestions from the whole class. Now ask the learners to read only the first and last sentences of the text. Have them cover the text again and ask what happened to the twins.

3. **Scanning:** Ask the learners short questions about specific facts. Do not go through the text in order. Instead, jump around a bit. For example...

Were the twins adopted by the same family?

When were the twins separated?

How old were the twins when they met for the first time?

Where were the twins born?

4. **Read for detail:** Give out the chart (from the "Materials" section) or put up the chart and get learners to copy it. Ask them to fill it in with information from the text. To help them find the information, you can ask them first to glance through and circle the word both each time it appears. This word acts as a signal showing when new information is coming. Get learners to check in pairs, and then go through the answers.

5. **Guess the words from context:** Learners read parts of the text again that containing words that they are not likely to know – e.g.

*Identical twins often have **astonishing** stories.*

*There were some **amazing** coincidences.*

*They both **divorced** their wives and married again.*

*Forty years later the brothers **were reunited**.*

Ask them to guess the new words; that is, can they think of a word or words they know to replace them? Put them in pairs to discuss, and then write on the WB: separated from, met again, very surprising, incredible. Ask learners which words these could replace.

6. **Language focus and summary:** Ask learners to look back through the text and find the words both and neither. Write the table below on the WB for learners to fill in with the phrases from the text.

Neither	Both
_____ the boys	_____ the boys
_____ them	_____ them
_____ family	_____ families

Have learners turn the text over. Ask the learners to look at the table they filled in and have them use the TL to write sentences that summarize the extraordinary coincidences.

After (Close the activity and post-activity)

7. **Close the activity:** Bring the class back together and ask different students to compare the sentences that they wrote. Have several students share sentences with the whole class.

8. **Get learner feedback:** Discuss their reactions to the story – e.g. Do they know any twins? Do surprising things happen to them? How do you think the twin in the story felt when they learned about all their coincidences? Has anyone ever had a coincidence?

9. **Communicative post-activity:** Put learners in pairs. Tell them they have a limit of five minutes. They have to write down as many sentences about themselves as possible beginning with “Both of us...” (e.g. “Both of us have four brothers”) and “Neither of us...” (e.g. “Neither of us likes fish”). Encourage them to strive for an equal number of “both” sentences and “neither” sentences. And the sentences must be true! Can they find any coincidences? At the end, get the pairs to report back to the class.

PPT Picture

What do we call two people who look the same?



Extraordinary coincidences!

Identical twins often have astonishing stories. One pair of identical twin boys, born in Ohio, USA, were separated at birth and adopted by different families. Neither of the boys knew about his twin, but there were some amazing coincidences. To begin with, neither family knew the other, but both families called the boys James. At school the boys liked the same subjects and both of them were good at drawing and woodwork. The boys did various jobs but at one point both of the boys wanted to be policemen. Both of them married women called Linda and both of them had sons, one called James Alan and one called James Allan. They were married for several years but in the end both brothers divorced their wives and married again. Here another extraordinary coincidence happened: both new wives were called Betty. The final coincidence in this astonishing story: both men owned dogs—and both dogs were called Toy. For many years, the brothers lived different lives, neither of them knowing about the other, until forty years after the separation the brothers were reunited.

Scanning Questions

Were the twins adopted by the same family?

When were the twins separated?

How old were the twins when they met for the first time?

Where were the twins born?

Guessing Words from Context

*Identical twins often have **astonishing** stories.*

*There were some **amazing** coincidences.*

*They both **divorced** their wives and married again.*

*Forty years later the brothers **were reunited**.*

Graphic Organizer

	Twin 1	Twin 2
name		
jobs		
good at		
first wife's name		
second wife's name		
son's name		
dog's name		

Language Focus & Summary Support

Neither	Both
_____ the boys	_____ the boys
_____ them	_____ them
_____ family	_____ families

NAME: James **Title or Explanation:** Name Scramble

Level/Age: First graders

Time: 10-12 minutes

Objective

By the end of the activity SWBAT recognize, say and sequence the letters in their own and their classmates' names

Materials

Printed letter cards
Student Name cards
Alphabet song and video
White Board or Felt Board

Before (Lead-in)

- 1) Play the ABC Song and sing the song together with students
- 2) Pass out several letters to each students as we listen and sing the ABC Song Ss will raise their letters when they hear/say it.
- 3) Review letters that Ss are having a hard time with such as E/F, M/W, U/V, S/Z

During (Set up and run the activity)

- 1) Pass out a name card to each Ss with their name written on it in capital letters
- 2) Pass out ABC cards
- 3) Explain and model task with your name (e.g.: J-A-M-E-S) first find the letters in your name, then put them in order and then say each letter "J-A-M-E-S is James."
- 4) Ask CCQs: "what do you do first?" etc...
- 5) Tell Ss to begin
- 6) Monitor
- 7) After Ss have unscrambled their names have them do the same thing for one or two of their classmates

After (Close the activity and post-activity)

- 1) Ask one S to hold up his/her name card
- 2) Ask Ss which letters are in this S's name
- 3) Have Ss find the right letter - the first one to find it brings it up and puts it on the WB/FB
- 4) Do this with two or three other Ss
- 5) Conclude lesson by holding up difficult letters and let Ss identify them M/W etc..

