

Contents

Editorial	<i>page 2</i>
Interview with Frances Pinter, the new CEO	<i>page 3</i>
50 years of IH	
Fifty Years of IH in Broad Brush Strokes by Brita Haycraft	<i>page 4</i>
John Haycraft: Founding Father of ELT Extracts from a talk he gave in the 1980s.	<i>page 5</i>
Getting Turned On and Tuned In by Lin Coleman	<i>page 6</i>
Some personal recollections of ELT Teacher Training in the Sixties	
My Shaftesbury Avenue Days by Alan Wakeman	<i>page 8</i>
The early days of IH London	
50th Celebrations Events List	<i>page 9</i>
Language Issues	
The ‘Music of English’ by Charles Lowe	<i>page 10</i>
A new model of communicative rhythm and intonation.	
How British Education Failed To Teach Us About Our Own Language	<i>page 17</i>
by Rodney Blakeston	
How Language Education Failed To Teach Students How to Use Language	<i>page 18</i>
by Nick Hamilton	
Catalan for Beginners: A Learner’s Account by Scott Thornbury	<i>page 19</i>
A Continuing Experiment – Teacher Talking Time and Parent Talking Time	<i>page 23</i>
by Roger Hunt	
Examinations	
What IELTS Students Want by Sue O’Connell	<i>page 26</i>
Exploring students’ concerns in exam preparation courses.	
Taking the Pain Out Of English Exams by Adam Schreck	<i>page 28</i>
Looking at the IH Budapest Euro exam	
Management Issues	
The Diploma In Educational Management by Jan Makdabas	<i>page 29</i>
What is it and why do it?	
Young Learners	
Why ‘Chunking’ Is Important in Younger Learners’ Classes by Diana England	<i>page 31</i>
Theatre Club: English Through Drama by Dominic Streames	<i>page 35</i>
A source of great drama ideas for Younger Learners	
Classroom Ideas	
Creating the Message From the Medium by Andrew Wright	<i>page 37</i>
Using the classroom as a teaching resource.	
Business English	
Business English Update by Dominique Vouillemin	<i>page 40</i>
IHWO News	
What’s going on in the IHWO	<i>page 42</i>
School Profiles (Hanoi, Krakow, Pisa)	<i>page 43</i>
The IHWO Transfer System – A Guide for Teachers by Alex Monk	<i>page 43</i>
Book Reviews	
Business English Frameworks	<i>page 46</i>
English Vocabulary In Use – Advanced	
International Express Elementary	
Landmark Advanced	
natural English	
Zap! and Zabadoo!	

ISSN: 1368-3292



Editors: Rachel Clark
Susanna Dammann
Subscriptions Manager: Emma Bailey
Editorial Board: Nigel Beanland
Steve Brent
Pippa Bumstead
Michael Carrier
Roger Hunt
Jeremy Page
Scott Thorbury

e-mail: ihjournal@ihlondon.co.uk Tel: +44 (0) 20 7518 6955

Emma Bailey
The Subscriptions Manager
IH Journal of Education and Development
International House
106 Piccadilly
London W1J 7NL
U.K.

Susanna
Co-editor



Rachel
Co-editor



Nigel
Advertising
editor



Emma
Subscriptions
editor



Editorial

What's new?

You may possibly have noticed that the Journal has a new look for a new half century: a colourful cover and more illustrations inside – now you know what your editorial team looks like!

Nigel Beanland is in charge of the book section – so get in touch with him if you'd like to do a review for us: Nigel.Beanland@ihlondon.co.uk. As always we have had help and support from many different people; we owe thanks in particular to Joe Grundman whose work on proof reading has saved us many boring hours looking for errant commas.

As we write, the IH Journal website is under construction (www.ihjournal.com), where you will be able to find back numbers and a whole portfolio of exciting new ideas by Charles Lowe, of which the article on page 10 is a taster. We hope to expand the website as we go. This is just the beginning.

Past, present and future.

In this issue, we celebrate the past 50 years with memories from Brita and John Haycraft, Lin Coleman and Alan Wakeman. We offer some thoughts for the future from our new CEO, Frances Pinter, and Young Learners, the subject of Diana England's article, **are** the future. This is a bumper issue, as you can see, and sadly there is no room here to mention everybody whose work makes this a worthy contribution to the 50th anniversary celebrations. It is good to have Rodney Blakeston, Nick Hamilton, Roger Hunt, Charles Lowe, Sue O'Connell, Scott Thornbury and Andrew Wright among many others, taking us, as always, to the cutting edge of ELT thinking.

The IH Journal is your Journal – it is as good as your contributions and ideas make it. So please get in touch and let us know about what you like and even more importantly you DON'T like about this issue; send us your ideas, your articles and suggestions. We're waiting ... at ihj@ihlondon.co.uk. If you have difficulty getting to see the Journal, take out a personal subscription. Email Emma Emma.Bailey@ihlondon.co.uk. A

reminder also of the lesson plan competition mentioned in issue 13 and the prize is now £200, so get writing.

Hellos and Goodbyes.

We would like to welcome Frances Pinter, who joined us recently as CEO of the Trust (see interview on page 3).

Many of you will have heard that Jeremy Page is leaving IH London for a post as Deputy Director (EFL), Sussex Language Institute at the University of Sussex, after 19 years with IH. The good news is that he has agreed to stay on the editorial board, so a constant source of inspirational ideas and support will remain with us. In his place, we welcome David Carr who will start in the post of DOS IH London immediately.

We are aware that other people are moving around the organisation and we'd like to include a regular section on 'IH people on the move' - so keep us posted about what's going on and who's going where and we'll make sure that we share your news with our readers.

In the current global situation our work may seem unimportant, even irrelevant; but it is even more vital today to keep at the forefront of our minds John Haycraft's vision of a profession which would contribute to the breaking down of international and intercultural barriers. Our work, in the classroom and in the training room, is essentially about improving communication; and it is communication that will make a difference to the outcome of the events of this year. Some of our students are the statespeople of tomorrow (some are the statespeople of today!) and if we can help them in however small a way, to develop a greater tolerance and understanding of other cultures, we shall perhaps make some difference to the world of the future. How to do this in the most effective way is, in one way or another, the central concern of every article in this issue. Rachel Clark and Susanna Dammann.



Frances Pinter

Near the end of last year, Frances Pinter took over the job of CEO of the International House Trust. We were able to put a few of the most important questions to her so that we can all have the chance to get to know her better. Here is what she said:



Where have you come from professionally speaking?

I began my professional life as an academic at Oxford, working as a criminologist, even though my PhD was in International Relations. At the same time I established a publishing company called Pinter Publishers, which grew to a medium sized academic press specialising in the Social Sciences. In the eighties I bought Leicester University Press which specialised in Humanities and founded Belhaven Press, an imprint that concentrated on Environmental Studies. Then in the nineties I was drawn into all the political changes in Central and Eastern Europe, sold my publishing company, and went to work for the Soros Foundation, where I established the Centre for Publishing Development. From there I helped grow the newly emerging independent private publishing sector in 30 countries. The thread through all of this, I guess, is education and communication.

What attracted you to IH and this job in particular?

I've always been attracted to being at the cutting edge. IH established itself by having something unique to offer. When Bill

McAlister, a trustee, asked if I'd be interested in being a trustee I wasn't sure what I'd have to offer, but I was curious. Interestingly, I subsequently found out that a number of people from publishing have migrated into the language education field, and now I can see why. When the CEO position became vacant I was hooked on the cause.

Do you have any vision/mission statement? Where do you see IH in the next 50 years?

Fifty years is a long time. I'd feel on safer ground commenting on the next five years. I'd like to see the Trust's role more clearly articulated and communicated. At a recent senior managers' retreat we worked on the mission statement and concluded that what we all cared about was 'meeting customers' language needs worldwide'. The Trust's role is to ensure, to the extent that it can, that conditions are created for the IH London school to thrive and for the International House World Organisation to flourish. But these are empty words unless followed by concrete goals. In the first instance the Trust has to make sure its investment strategy helps the viability of the London school, which is the only school it owns. Secondly, the Trust needs to be clearer about its role within IHWO, a group of independent businesses, affiliated in spirit and standards, but requiring a different sort of input from the Trust. A less paternalistic and more collaborative approach is being pursued now by the Trust within IHWO. IH as a whole has to reconcile quality with financial viability. This is not easy, but as the Trust is not able to print money (or put another way, has no endowment from which it can become a grant giving body) its role is to facilitate all of IH in 'meeting customers' language needs worldwide'. In that way it can stay true to the original Haycraft mission of contributing to global understanding through the knowledge of languages.



Fifty Years of IH in Broad Brush Strokes

Brita Haycraft

Brita is the co-founder of IH and is on the Board of Trustees of the school.

John and I arrived in Cordoba so that he could write and both of us could live on giving English classes. Neither of us was thinking of founding a school. But three weeks later sixty Cordobese people had passed through two patios and knocked on our door. Doctors, lawyers, clerks, waiters, olive salesmen, lace merchants, señoritas, students. We had become a school.



a classroom in Cordoba ... with a brazier under the table

At once John laid the foundations: low fees ensuring small earners weren't excluded; persuading students to join classes according to level not friendship; small classes, since our rooms were small. The cold rising through the brick floor had everybody cluster round the table, with a brazier underneath, - perhaps the origin of our friendly circular classroom seating. Contradicting the reputation of the Spanish, our Andalusian students arrived punctually, regularly and wrote wonderful homework. On Sundays we'd meet for excursions. We decided to stay.

Expansion had already taken possession of John's mind. In a year we had started Spanish Easter courses for Foreigners and people from England, France, Holland descended for a packed three-week programme, also sampling Montilla wine and flamenco dancing with our delighted Cordobese students.

Once in better premises, we started a library, a little bar was fitted out, classes of German and French began and speakers from



... a little bar was fitted out

England also stopped by to give talks. We organised 'International Weeks' and had ambassadors come down and be fêted by the Town Hall. We became not just a school but a 'Casa Internacional'.

John wrote in the mornings, stimulated by the new enterprise. I was just as gripped by our projects though sometimes wished for longer spaces in between. Six years later, now with two babies, we had to settle and so returned to London.

IH London might easily not have happened

IH London might easily not have happened. After publication of his successful book *Babel In Spain*, John hoped his writing would take off and we both had journalism in mind but that was precarious with minimal savings. Suddenly the chance of a flat in Covent Garden came by, we grabbed it and the school process began again.

How different from Cordoba! By Christmas only six students had found their way to our third floor premises in tatty Endell Street. We tried to cheer up the grim metal stairway and John also taught ILEA classes in West London to make ends meet. But when they closed for the summer, all John's students followed him to Endell Street and never went back to the ILEA school.

Things looked up when the BBC commissioned John to write a course for English By Radio. Just then he was asked to go to Finland to polish President Kekkonen's English before his state visit to Britain. In his palace quarters in the dark snowy North, when not tutoring the President, John wrote his BBC course.

Back in London, I manned the school, dropping our toddlers in a Greenwich day nursery. I spotted the ideal premises in Shaftesbury Avenue but was rejected, until a note in the Daily Express gossip column about John teaching Kekkonen made the agents smile. It was very cheap except that the lease had to be renewed every six months, pending reforms for Piccadilly Circus. We stayed 18 years. The eight-room flat was grotty but perfectly located at a stone's throw from the famous Eros. Students filled the school. We needed teachers fast.

This is when John thought of a course to train teachers. A tiny ad in the magazine *The New Statesman* brought our first twelve trainees for two weeks in June 1962. There was a bold new component. Each afternoon, after their theory session, the trainees had to teach real classes watched by fellow trainees and their tutor. It worked, possibly because of the group discussion afterwards. And it was the 60s. At the end, we kept on the best ones as teachers. The course was to multiply.

Against tradition, teacher trainers didn't stop teaching foreign students and so stayed in touch with classroom complexities, always upgrading the training course. The beauty of short courses was that you could see the result within months, rather than years. Swapping ideas and observing classes became the

norm and I remember the excitement at the teachers' meetings. Being a new school with new teachers made new ideas possible. This was only 1963-4 -5. We never looked back and some of our intrepid trainees have become today's most popular EFL authors.

The teacher-training programme launched, John set off to newly liberated Algeria; bound to need English language training we thought. Some of our newly hatched teachers soon found themselves out there, including Ben Warren and Doug Case. Beirut followed. When a Libya contract was cancelled due to the Gaddafi coup, the teachers happily flew to Khartoum which also craved English. They were valiant and dedicated and brought valuable teaching ideas back to IH London.

From Rome, Ausonio Zappa would bring summer students regularly to London and in 1966 he asked us to run a teachers' course there. In Rome's unforgettably soft September we met a promising pick of trainees, Roger Gower, Sheila Sullivan, Edward Woods, Cathy Wallace, and other EFL experts-to-be. John was keen to start an IH Rome and a year later a building was found. John just said 'OK Let's go out and start it'. It was goodbye to *Transinterpreter*, my little translation agency, and I had to suspend my Longman pronunciation book, but I couldn't resist Rome. Our children were taken from their primary school and off we drove. Four months later we were back home, as the school expanded into our lodgings.

Three years later it was off to Paris, which we knew well. The Parisians loved the lively and beautiful International House; but John's wish to create a whole 'village anglais', pub and all, hit local resistance.

By then International House had some thirty affiliates and 40 Shaftesbury Avenue was a powerhouse of teaching and training, supplying teachers, materials and services to many UK schools too. We offered classroom videos, the English Teaching Theatre, a bookshop, a teachers' monthly magazine, Salvatore's restaurant, a students' welfare bureau, an au pair agency, and the Teachers' Centre. We never advertised until 1980. What we lacked was some large rooms.

In 1976 John happened to notice that 106 Piccadilly was to let (very cheaply) and after nine months' wooing, he got us this splendid, totally unschool-like Georgian piece of elegance with

some magnificent rooms where we still are.

The teaching engine purred

Doubting teachers all succumbed. The teaching engine purred. Charles (Tim) Lowe created the DTEFLA distance course in the ex-quarters of one footman. In the garret of the other footman, the business school was shaped by Joe Wiersma. And the EFL world, I think, was pleased to have a brilliant centre where teaching-ideas could shine. Abroad, the affiliated schools were no longer fledglings: you could now train in Colin McMillan's IH Lisbon or IH Rome or in Ben Warren's IH Barcelona or in IH Cairo, also founded by IH London offspring.

In 1975 John persuaded the Bell School to run their first teachers' course, as one of our teacher trainers was moving to Cambridge. In 1978 John told me the RSA wanted to model their new teachers' course on ours and he'd agreed. I wonder if it ever crossed their minds what a gift that was. John felt education was there to be shared. We seconded teacher trainers to the Institute of Education from 1985 to 1990, at our expense. Slowly the CertTEFLA spread, even to the lofty universities.

In the late 80s John told everyone he was re-launching the Modern Language Department. No sooner said than done. Teacher trainer Elaine Walker produced the business plan overnight and Marisol Gower and Ana Palley gave the first TT course for Italian, Spanish, French and German teachers a month later. Japanese followed. It prospered.

IH know-how was to bring in schools in Hungary, Poland, the Ukraine and beyond. The dedication continues in more than 120 affiliated schools worldwide.

Together, the EFL opportunity and the IH inspiration have crafted an exhilarating and valued international profession. Let me express my awe and gratitude for a fantastic first fifty years.

An article solely on the Cordoba years will appear in a forthcoming IH Festschrift. Richer IH stories are found in John Haycraft's book, Adventures of a Language Traveller, from the bookshop at 106 Piccadilly, e-mail: piccadilly@bebc.co.uk



John Haycraft: Founding Father of ELT



John Haycraft on the way to Spain

John's philosophy lives on chiefly in the schools founded in the IH mould. A profoundly practical man, he seems to have been less concerned to talk about what he was doing, than to do it. The editors of the IH Journal are tremendously privileged to have been given access, thanks to Brita, to the manuscript of a talk John gave in the 1980's. In it, he articulates many of the ideas and tells some of the stories Brita outlines above but he also puts into words the idealism which drove him to create the extraordinary movement which IH became.

Here are some edited extracts from the talk, which he called:

BUILDING UP A WORLD ORGANISATION FOR THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH

Haycraft on basic principles:

This apprenticeship ...[in Cordoba] ... taught us a number of things which have been an essential foundation to the building up of our world organisation for the teaching of English....[First] teaching English to foreigners required skills which were quite different from those involved in teaching [students of] one's own nationality. [Secondly] teaching English ... was one of the few opportunities of sinking a mineshaft into a foreign community [to gain an understanding] which a tourist or businessman could never have. Finally teaching English could flourish whatever the political regime. In our classes [in Franco's Spain] we had to be tactful, never discussing politics or religion. In one group you could have a hotel porter whose father had been killed fighting for the Republicans, a marquis's daughter whose father had been an officer in Franco's army, an officer in the Guardia Civil and a business man who detested the regime. English classes were a way of bringing them together. In a regime like Franco's, our school was also a little island, an international community where, through learning English, people absorbed other values, other points of view. Politics could never be explicit but new horizons were opened.

Haycraft on Teacher Training

[Our teacher training courses] became the cornerstone of our development as a world organisation because they were also a means of teacher selection. ...we could judge not only a

potential teacher's ability, but also their imagination, flexibility, attitude to others and efficiency. ... Another vital result of observed teaching practice was that teachers accustomed themselves to being observed right from the start and accepted [the experience] as positive. Instead, therefore, of the classroom being regarded as a closed preserve ... free discussion, excitement at new ideas and consultation about problems was generated. ... It was and is a joy to have stumbled by chance on a profession where you can devote yourself to the pioneering of educational activities, which, so long as quality was maintained, were also viable economically.

Haycraft on Education

... Education here [in Britain] is still an undervalued profession. Language schools rank even lower – perhaps often with reason. There is often a temptation to escape into more 'respectable' spheres such as administration, language teaching as an academic study, teaching literature before language or the pure realms of cultural exchange. The hard-headed, in contrast, may find it more satisfying to regard the whole thing simply as a business. Yet none of these aspects can exist in isolation and all are interlinked by quality language teaching.

... Like the short-sighted, we all find it difficult to put the world into focus. Perhaps the most inaccessible psychological peak is the challenge to escape from national self-centredness, the need to identify with those we teach... One of the joys of teaching English, after all is the pleasure of communicating internationally, not as a sahib or a jet-setter, but as a teacher.

ih

Getting Turned On and Tuned In

Some personal recollections of ELT Teacher Training in the Sixties.

Lin Coleman

Lin worked as a teacher and trainer and DoS at IH London for many years. She is now working in counselling.



Reception at Shaftesbury Avenue

I was on the top of a number 24 bus, travelling reluctantly across London to work, when I first read of International House. In *The Times* there was an article by someone called John Haycraft. He made the teaching of English as a Foreign Language - something new to me - sound such fun! So different from what

I was going to do that February morning in 1965: teach French to disaffected eleven to thirteen year-olds. The same afternoon I stopped off in Shaftesbury Avenue and asked at IH Reception for a job. Ann Samson called John down to give me an impromptu interview. The outcome was disappointing. There was no job without doing a teacher-training course first. Before I had time to think, he had me signed up for a two-week course (cost: 10 guineas) the following August AND he had enlisted me to help in the social programme office on Wednesday evenings. The payment for this was a free omelette for supper in Salvatore's restaurant on the top floor. I have to admit now to a sneaking feeling that John had conned me into taking a course with no guarantee of anything at the end of it.

August came and the course began: John gave the introduction and the first grammar analysis. After the break we went straight into a foreign language lesson. We repeated our Malay greetings, introductions and vocabulary with total

concentration. Our teacher, Yunus, was a brilliant teacher, considering he couldn't speak English. We were all aghast when he asked us in beautifully modulated RP: 'So how did you feel during that lesson?' It may be hard now to understand the full impact of that experience. Even to a foreign languages graduate it was mind-blowing.

On my course John did the 'Grammar' input, Martin Joseph and Brita did the 'third hour' Pronunciation, and Roger Gannon covered techniques and skills. The key components of that two-week training course set the standard and the nomenclature for the Certificate course of today: experiential input sessions (a radical departure then from lectures), a foreign language lesson, daily teaching practice with real foreign students, immediate feedback, and observation of classes. Some practices have fortunately been dropped. At the end of TP in 1965 the tutor would suddenly give one of us an idiom to teach without any preparation. 'OK, Lin, teach them *to go on strike*.' The students were mainly Italian waiters who came in for free lessons before their evening shift. They were elementary level. Why couldn't they understand my simple story of the factory workers who downed tools because of the removal of their *tea-break*? I stuck to my example digging an ever-deeper hole for myself. (The term 'culturally specific' did not exist then!). The feedback, given very politely - first from the students in those days - was something never forgotten.

It was summer, the school was very busy and I was offered a job. It was impressive to be working in a school where each classroom had a giant tape recorder in front of the blackboard. A year and a half later, in early 1967, John asked me to be Teacher Training Director of Studies. This seemed a daunting task. But 'Nonsense, darling! I'll be in the office next door. I'll help you. Of course you can do it'. Promotion did come very quickly in those days of rapid expansion but once again he seemed to be directing my life without much input from me. Yet knowing that John believed in us enabled us all to fulfill tasks we might never have attempted otherwise.

He was a constant inspiration - AND interruption

He was a constant inspiration - AND interruption. I'd be writing out the timetable for the next course or interviewing a prospective trainee when he would burst in with an idea, or to read something out of a magazine and ask what I thought. It was a very productive time. John provided the creative energy and I tried to put ideas into practice and make everything run smoothly.

At first we ran one course at a time. After some discussion - would people be able to pay for more than two weeks? - we extended the regular 2-week courses to 3-weeks. As these seemed successful, by September 1967 they had become 4-week courses - the forerunner of the current Certificate

courses. Georgie Raman, another teacher disenchanted after her probationary year of teaching, attended one of the first of these. She became Director of Teacher Training and Director of IH London in the late seventies. VSO then asked us to run a one-week course for their volunteers before they left for their assignments: quite a challenge. What are the essentials, and what can one leave out? For two or three summers we put on four or five of these concurrently with our advertised courses, which required more teacher trainers. Apart from a few supportive chats and sharing of input notes I don't recall any official training-up programme at all.

As International House expanded abroad the opportunity started for teacher trainers to go abroad to run short courses. We felt very privileged, and important! In those days only high-powered business-men had their foreign trips paid for. There was a down-side of course. Carrying two large suitcases of EFL textbooks to Rome in addition to my own luggage was definitely NOT a perk.

In the spring of 1970, after much talk with the RSA, Jennifer Coutts led the first eight-week pilot course for the RSA - later UCLES - Diploma. She left the school that Easter to work for British Airways, to set up their language laboratories. She ended up running their corporate image department and being nominated for the Veuve-Cliquot Business woman of the Year Award, confirmation of our belief that John Haycraft had an instinctive talent for spotting people who would go far.

So then it was my turn to run the 8-week pilot courses. In a two-week break I mugged up on the few available books: *Teaching English in Difficult Circumstances* is the only title that sticks in my mind now. (So few of us had ever taught outside Britain that we only had this information in theory). After the initial nervousness had evaporated I found those two courses the most relaxed of all because we had the luxury of time. In contrast to today, there really wasn't enough research, information or literature to merit eight weeks' intensive study, so we had ample opportunity to go into what we would now think of as the basics in some depth, and to have a lot of invaluable teaching practice.

It was such an exciting time to be in EFL Teacher Training. The pleasure lay in seeing people's new-found enthusiasm for a little-known subject, a world of new possibilities opening up for people of all ages. Our beloved Joan Holby and Hugh Stewart both taught for 25 years AFTER they'd retired from their previous professions in their late fifties!

EFL teaching was not a real profession

The challenge was in pioneering new courses, but as we were in the forefront of the field there wasn't any stressful market competition. Although IH always set very high standards of resources, care and efficiency, EFL teaching was not

considered a real profession then; consequently we did not feel so pressurised. We take it for granted nowadays that English, in its various forms, is the accepted international means of communication. Looking back, I realise what an innocent I was, completely unaware of how vital, varied and professional our EFL Teacher Training world would become.

And now, despite frequent discussions, the daily time table of a CELTA course is much the same as it was when John and Brita first started in London. Exactly thirty-eight years after I walked into IH we still see the legacy of that two-week summer course of 1965 being taught all over the world.



My Shaftesbury Avenue Days

Alan Wakeman

Alan ran IH Language labs from 1964-1972 and has published more than a dozen books including 'English Fast'.

I began working for International House at 40 Shaftesbury Avenue in June 1964 with the intention of teaching till the autumn and then returning to the continent where I'd been living for the previous three years. However, an event at my first teachers' meeting changed everything. Early IH teachers' meetings were well attended because a free lunch was provided in Salvatore's restaurant on the fourth floor, a typical



Martin Joseph warily pushing buttons

John Haycraft wheeze! At this particular meeting, John introduced a Director of Studies called Martin Joseph who he'd asked to demonstrate the tape-recorders he'd just had installed in every classroom. Martin was a sweet gentle man and a jazz musician (which may explain why John assumed he'd know about tape recorders) but when he began warily pushing buttons the tape got tangled and he panicked. (Early reel to reel tape recorders required a finger strategically placed on the spinning full reel as you pressed the stop button.) I was the new boy, straight off an early teacher-training course but I'd been using tape recorders all my life so I took a breath and put my hand up. "If you like," I said, almost apologetically, "I can give a quick demo of how to use that machine safely". "Would you?!" Martin said gratefully. So I did.

After the meeting, I felt John's hand on my shoulder. "Come and have a drink with me!" he said and whisked me off to a pub in Wardour Street where he asked me to take charge of the language laboratory he'd just ordered.

Within a month, I was working 16 hours a day 7 days a week writing and producing language lab materials for the entire

school. Within a year, we had expanded into the pigeon-infested upper floors of the building, installed two more language labs and my fellow teachers had begun avoiding me on the stairs because they knew I'd buttonhole them for lunch-hour recording sessions of dialogues and exercises I'd written the previous night and programmed for use that day. Within a couple of years, I found myself lecturing on language laboratory techniques for the National Audio-Visual Aids Centre in London, for the British Council in places such as Tripoli and Tokyo, and installing language labs in new International Houses in Rome, Algiers and Osaka, which John seemed to be opening almost monthly at the time. During the eight hectic years I worked for John full-time, I trained hundreds of teachers to use the language lab as an effective practice tool and it saddens me that such skills no longer seem to be valued.

a hairdressing salon became the reception area

Before working for John I'd spent three years on the continent on a kind of impecunious *Grand Tour* but before this I'd been an architect for eight years and when John discovered this he began exploiting my architectural skills as well – first, by putting me in charge of improving the whole Shaftesbury Avenue building and then, by asking me to draw up plans for converting neighbouring buildings in Rupert Street into extra classrooms and the derelict building at 33 Shaftesbury Avenue, opposite our main entrance, into a self-contained intermediate school. (It had been a hairdressing salon with a dozen shampoo basins in what became the reception area and my recollection is that John gave me a fortnight to complete the work. It's now the *Montaigne School of English* and, as far as I know, still uses my original layout.)

Birth of the IH Symbol

Another design job John gave me stemmed from the fact that for the first few years the first floor at 40 Shaftesbury Avenue was occupied by a slightly dodgy film company. This meant he'd had to put reception up on the second floor. Fearing potential students might lose heart before they got there, John asked me to design a display cabinet for the mezzanine landing

to boost their morale on their way up. We bought a world map to put in it with little flags indicating IHs of the time. I made them from tiny round self-adhesive labels and on each put the initials 'ih' in white Letraset (lower case, gill sans), just like the modern logo.

first thoughts are usually best

The cabinet had sliding glass doors to facilitate the addition of new flags – a futile attempt to keep pace with John's insatiable appetite for expansion! – and encouraging signs pointing up to the second floor. John was so pleased with the design that he asked me to do new stationery for the school as well and I amused myself playing with variations on the theme: for the Osaka school, for example, I designed a bright red pennant which I hoped would appeal to the Japanese love of flags. But first thoughts are usually best and in the end I settled for the original emblem from the mezzanine display cabinet which everyone now knows. How amazing and gratifying that it has

remained essentially unchanged for over thirty years!

English Fast & Early Retirement

My three years ELT experience in France, six months at a private school in Kent and the language laboratory materials I'd invented for IH, led to my embarking on the writing of a ground-breaking, comprehensive classroom course which I called *English Fast* (Hart Davis Educational 1967-1972). This took me five years to complete and as I continued teaching throughout its composition I was able to test its entire contents in real classroom situations – which may be why it sold half a million copies and enabled me to virtually retire in 1972 and turn my attention to the delightful (though unprofitable) arts of poetry, plays, children's stories and environmental articles.

Looking back on my eight years with John, my main feeling is one of immense gratitude because, though working for him was always a challenging ordeal, I've never before, or since, felt as fully stretched as I did during those turbulent Shaftesbury Avenue days.



IH Special Jubilee Year Programme

Saturday Workshops at IH London

17th April	Angi Malderez
7 June	Philida Schellekens and members of IATEFL ESOL SIG

Wednesday Evening Events

7 May	George Pickering
4 June	Adrian Holliday

(for further details on contents, prices and the autumn programme see website – www.ihlondon.com/pdc)

Exhibition Celebrating the History of International House - Spring

A pictorial story of the last 50 years will be displayed in the exhibition area of 106 Piccadilly, the IH London premises. It will be open to all IH visitors during IH London opening hours.

Musical Evenings – Summer and Autumn

A series of musical evenings with musicians from around the world with special invitations to the press to join in our multicultural celebrations

Anniversary Conference – Autumn

A look at what the next 50 years hold for the teaching of languages

Literary Evenings - Autumn

Some of London's best loved authors will be lecturing and reading from their works at IH London

The 50th Anniversary Reception – 9 October

Invited guests will gather at 106 Piccadilly for a gala evening to celebrate the 50th

On the occasion of our 50th, the following publications will be produced.

A Bibliography of IH Teachers' Publications – Spring
IH: the first 50 years – Spring
IH and the Community – Spring
Special Jubilee editions of the IH Journal – Spring/Autumn
Commemorative Jubilee Magazine – Winter

These are the events on which we have information as we go to press; there are many more happening round the IH World Organisation of which you can find details on the website: www.ihworld.com



The 'Music of English' - a New Model of Communicative Intonation and Rhythm

Charles (Tim) Lowe has been in the ELT business for 28 years, as a teacher, trainer, academic, and school principal. He set up and ran the first UCLES Distance Diploma from 1981 to 1986. He is currently teaching and teacher training, while also developing his career as a homeopath.

Introduction

In 1981, as I was writing materials on English stress and intonation for the first UCLES Distance Diploma, I knew there were flaws in the explanations then accepted by applied linguists. Many of the ideas in this article were first outlined in those materials, and have been developing ever since.

From the 60s to the 80s, English language stress and intonation were described in a concoction of different ways by different commentators, and there was little symmetry or coherence to the models. Intonation was variously seen as having both a 'grammatical' function (as in the 'fall' for the Wh-Q), and an 'attitudinal' function (as in the wider voice range to indicate higher emotional intent). The intonation was seen as being 'carried' on the 'nucleus' of each 'tone unit', and four different tones were identified: fall, rise, fall-rise, rise-fall, each with variations depending on the context. Stress was described in relation to both words and sentences. Word-stress (called 'prominence') usually applied to single words and it was held that there were some general guidelines about where that stress would fall depending on the way the word was structured. English sentence stress was seen as 'stress-timed' (as opposed to the other European languages which were 'syllable-timed'), so that there was essentially one main stress on each main clause in a sentence. Contrastive stress indicated when a particular word, marked for specific opposition in a dyadic discourse, was stressed. Rhythm was created when primary and secondary stress in sentences were added together, and English was seen as having 'isochronous' rhythm – the same time between stresses. In the early 80s, David Brazil radically enhanced the way we look at intonation by realising it had, above all, a discourse function, and he invented the term 'discourse intonation'. His theories have at their base the idea of referring and proclaiming (i.e. pre-known and not-pre-known) information.

Since that time, teachers have grappled, more or less successfully, with this unwieldy mixture of incompatible models, somehow cobbling together a picture of sorts for their students. Mindful of this problem, Jennifer Jenkins has critically evaluated the work done on intonation and rhythm over recent years, as part of her work on English as an International Language, and she has made several useful suggestions. But she has not yet put forward a new model as such. The inescapable truth for teachers has been that it is not a system that teachers feel confident to teach, or that students go away having learnt. Those few learners that do 'get' English

intonation, do so by some invisible osmotic process, often because they have an open ear and intuitive senses.

I want to propose something new and different – a coherent and integrated view of intonation and rhythm, which I call 'the music of English'¹. The 'music of English' is different because it is predicated on a novel precept – the 'communicative chunk'. Because it is based on this communicative chunk, or 'unit of meaning' (a group of words that has communicative meaning within the discourse), it is not based around sentences, and it contradicts discourse intonation theory.

Background to the model

In simple terms, every language has its own 'music'. Let us look at a few. In each example below, there are three tone units, and the meaningful intonation falls on the nucleus of each one. The rest of the tone unit prior to the nucleus is usually at the mid-pitch. The vertical line denotes pitch-range.

Italian goes something like this:
low-flat, low-flat, low-flat



German is something like this:
low-rise, low-rise, low-fall



Swiss German is something like this:
high-rise, high-rise, high-fall



French is something like this:
high-flat, high-flat, high-flat



Inevitably, these characterisations are simplifications, but they do serve to show the distinctive difference between languages. To best get a sense of the music of another language, listen to two people speaking it when you know little or nothing of the words – you will only hear a stream of mellifluous sound. If I learn French, I have to learn the music of French. And so with Italian, Brazilian Portuguese, and so on.

But how is it possible to for our students learn English music when it *appears* to be complicated? Teachers often say: 'I have been teaching English intonation for years, to no avail – my students don't, or won't, assimilate it. As for stress, they pick up what they can, I mark stress on sentences when I drill new structures, and on tricky words when I put them on the board .

Aware of this feeling among teachers, I have developed a

model of English 'music' which works. It is a little simplified, but it is accurate in terms of unmarked native-speaker norms. It is very effective at enhancing students' communicability, helping them with both speaking and listening. And the simplification makes it easy to teach, and even easier to learn – 75% of my students take it on board with alacrity, and most are able to use it in their speech soon afterwards.

First, let me define my terms. 'Phonology' is the overall sound system of the language. It is divided into 'sounds' (phonemes) and 'music'. 'Music', in turn, is divided into 'rhythm' (not 'stress') and 'intonation'. 'Stress' is the individual accent on a syllable (also called 'prominence'), and although it can be described as primary stress and secondary stress, I am not going to make this distinction. For reasons that will become clear later, primary and secondary stress will have the same weight. A 'communicative chunk' is the basic unit of verbal communication, a unit of meaning, and can be one word or seven words, depending on the speaker's intended message.

So we have two strands, intonation and rhythm. As we shall see, they are interdependent, and they work together in the way they are expressed in each communicative chunk. Communication is only made possible when the speaker and listener issue and interpret the unfolding sequence of communicative chunks, and when these chunks reveal the full message. The medium of communication is the verbal information (the words) and the supra-segmental information (the rhythm and intonation) which the interlocutors are giving and receiving.

Let us explore these ideas one by one.

Communicative chunks – units, intonation, and rhythm

Have a look at this piece of discourse, taken from 'What the Victorians Did for Us', BBC Television. 2001. Presenter: Adam Hart-Davis.

AHD: *This | is a tempest prognosticator. | And it was
 first shown | by its inventor | Dr George
 Marryweather | at the Great Exhibition | of 1851. |
 Now this is not the original, | this one's been lovingly
 rebuilt | by Phil Collins | here at "Barometer World"
 | in Devon. | Phil, you had to follow | his original
 design, I gather.*

PC: *That's right | We're fortunate | that there's a
 surviving line drawing | from the Great Exhibition
 Catalogue. | And so we've gone into meticulous
 detail | in copying it | in every way. | It's one
 of the most absurd methods | of forecasting and
 foretelling the weather, | and it's based on leeches. |*

AHD: *So. | Explain to me how it works. |*

PC: *If it's going to be stormy weather | one would
 expect the leeches to try to get out. | And to do that
 | they go through this little brass tube | and push
 that little bit of white bone there. | And that releases
 the trip, | which is attached to this wire here, | and
 that's attached to the chain, | which runs up here
 to the little hammer | and rings the bell. |*

AHD: *Ah I see. | So it's all gravity. | Leech-assisted
 gravity. |*

NB The stress markers denote equal weight on primary and secondary stress. There are 5 turns, which I will nominally call Turns 1 – 5, and these are referred to later in the text.

I have divided the discourse into **communicative chunks**, and I have marked the boundary of each chunk with a vertical line. Let us now look at the characteristics of these chunks and see how they represent, in an authentic way, the totality of the discourse, and the interaction between the two speakers.

First of all, **a communicative chunk is a 'unit of meaning in the discourse'**. In other words, it is the basic unit of communication. Each unit could be one word, it could be three words, it could be eight words. For example, from the text, we have: 'This', 'and so we've gone into meticulous detail', 'in every way', etc.

*will always | find a job. | And it is so vital | to
the economy | that its future | is always |
guaranteed.*

The decision on what constitutes a 'unit' is a decision made by the speaker. This in turn depends on how the speaker senses the listener needs to hear the message. The speaker may decide, for instance, to slow his speech to very small groups of words per unit, because his audience is unfamiliar with the topic, or because they are foreign. For example, with a pre-intermediate class:

*OK everybody. | Please watch | carefully | as
I draw | this picture | on the board |*

Or maybe she (in this case my daughter) feels she can quicken her speech and run lots of words into one unit, knowing her listener is an old friend who is familiar with the background to everything she is saying. For example:

*Hey you really don't wanna know what Hayley did last
week | It was cool.*

For more normal everyday speaking, and especially for our learners, intermediate level upwards, average word-group size will be between two and seven words. It depends only on the speaker as to how he or she groups their chunks. What the speaker intends the listener to understand is the most important thing. We are not concerned, as much applied linguistic analysis is, with an observer understanding of the text, only with the real-time dynamics between two interlocutors.

Here is an example² of how a piece of text can be spoken in different word-groupings by different people. The first is in long chunks. The second is in short chunks.

1. *There is one area of business | where the best will
always find a job. | And it is so vital to the economy
| that its future is always guaranteed*
2. *There is one area of business | where the best |*

The communicative chunk, then, is the basic unit of communication. Not sentences, not lexical phrases, not words, but the 'unit of meaning' of the idea that the speaker wants to convey. The communicative chunk is signalled with intonation and pause, sometimes dramatically (with wide voice range), and sometimes subtly (with narrow voice range), but always, in the listener's ears, *clearly!* The gradual accumulation of chunks builds into complete 'ideas', and thence into discourse. Sometimes, there is only one chunk in a full idea ('That's right' 'Oh I see'). More usually there are several chunks in a full idea ('Now this is not the original | this one's been lovingly rebuilt | by Phil Collins | here at Barometer World | in Devon').

We have said that the chunk is signalled by two things, **intonation** and **pause**, though the pause is sometimes imperceptible. In slow deliberate speech, these are clear (watch BBC World or News 24, and you will see that most news readers have good intonational clarity). In normal clear dialogue, chunks are very obvious (listen to Any Questions, BBC World Service). The pause is not signalled by a breath, as Mark Powell says in the textbook *In Company*, or we would be breathing every couple of seconds.

I have said that chunks are signalled by intonation and pause. So now let us look specifically at the role of **intonation**. In written language, the signal for 'I have not yet finished this idea' is usually a comma, and the signal for 'I have finished this idea' is a full-stop. In spoken language, in my model, the key intonation is the tone on the nucleus, just as in the original models, which saw the unit of speech as being the tone-unit. Each communicative chunk is a tone unit, and so each chunk has a nucleus i.e. the stressed syllable which carries the intended function of that chunk. In my model, there are basically **two possible intended functions of a chunk – either 'I have not yet finished this idea' or 'I have finished this idea'**.

In unmarked (i.e. contextually neutral) discourse, when we haven't yet finished the idea – I call this the **'not-finish chunk'** – we use **a high fall-rise**.

And when we have finished the idea – the **'finish chunk'** – we use **a high fall**. (though not always³)

This general observation is, I think, about 80% true. The other 20% represent contextually-sensitive variations, especially in 'marked' contexts. Indeed, in the marked context, the 'not-finish' chunk *can sometimes* be either a fall, or a rise, and the

contexts for these are complex. For more exploration, see footnote 3 of the web edition of this article.

So, most of the time, in speaking, the fall and fall-rise intonation indicate the 'finish chunk' and the 'not-finish chunk' of a spoken sequence. And the full-stop and comma indicates the final and not final part a written sentence. Note that spoken chunking does not follow punctuation⁴, as we shall see below, though there are sometimes overlaps.

To collect your own data, record people speaking. You will usually hear quite distinct communicative chunks in their discourse, building up to make up whole ideas. When doing your personal 'research', you may find it difficult at first to distinguish one unit from the next, so I try these suggestions: (i) to distinguish chunks, don't listen for breaths but for the nucleuses and the pauses (ii) in speech between familiars with fast speech-flow, pauses may be short or non-existent, and intonation-voice-range may be less wide, but the tones will still be distinguishable. And try recording people talking on radio where speech is often slower. 'Any Questions' (BBC World Service) is an excellent source of data.

I have provided some more examples of natural speech intonation in Appendix 2 (both Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 are only available on the website).

What about the role of *rhythm*? I define 'rhythm' as the accumulation of communicative stress, and I define 'stress' as the individual accent on syllables. In traditional models, the only important stress was the stress on the nucleus of the sentence, often called 'nuclear stress' (by linguists) and 'main stress' (by teachers), and it 'carried' the intonation of the utterance. In my model, **there is more than one stress in the tone unit, or chunk, because all secondary stresses have the same importance as primary stresses** in focussing the listener. The speaker focuses the listener by using stress on all the **information syllables** in words and phrases, and the accumulation of these stresses is called the rhythm. It seems to me that, in 'unmarked' discourse, this **rhythmic focussing is systematic**. The old adage that the main stress is only on the important word is not really true, because **in every chunk, and therefore in every idea, there may be several important words**.

So what is the system at work? It revolves around none other than the lexical basis of language. In other words, **the rhythm on phrases is lexically organised, whether on words, collocations, phrases, or fixed expressions**. In this lexically-based rhythm system, I do not distinguish between primary and secondary stress, and the 'rules of phrase-rhythm', such as they are, reveal some surprising yet satisfying regularities which reach well beyond traditional word-stress rules.

The full system, such as it has so far revealed itself, is available on the web edition of this article. And there is also a task in which you are invited to identify the rules before looking at the answers⁵.

The 'lexical chunk' is of course a unit of *linguistic* meaning, and is not the same as the 'communicative chunk', which is a unit of *communicative* meaning. This was pointed out by Nick Hamilton in his article in Issue 8 of this Journal, where he used the term 'phonological chunk'. It is an important difference to draw, especially since the lexical view of language influences our thinking so deeply nowadays that the confusion could be problematic. Just to clarify the difference, in the above text, the communicative chunks are indicated by the vertical lines. But a lexical division would go like this:

'there is| one area of business,| where| the best| will always find a job| and| it is| so . . . that| vital to the economy| its future| is always guaranteed'.

As you can see, there is no direct correlation between lexical chunks and communicative chunks.

To recap then, my communicative chunk is part of an intended message. The way it is signalled is by a combination of pause, intonation and rhythm, what are called the supra-segmentals of the language. What we deal with next is the details of these systems.

The intonation component explored

A good deal of confusion has reigned in the field of supra-segmentals for decades. Part of this problem is due to the simple fact that people find it difficult to name what they are hearing. And part of it is due to the fact that the system has proved a very difficult nut to crack. Early attempts, such as the grammatical model and the attitudinal model, were valiant but partial, and only David Brazil seemed to recognise that the system must have a communicative foundation. Halliday knew it too, 10 years earlier, but he didn't put it together into a system that we could use in teaching.

But after years of informal research, I am sure that, not only the early models, but also Brazil, got it wrong!

The **grammatical model** was deficient because it explained almost nothing. First, the nucleus usually came near the end of the tone unit, on the 'important word', and a tone unit was usually seen as the same as a sentence. Second, in an affirmative sentence, the tone on the nucleus was a fall; in a yes-no question, the tone was a rise; in a wh-question the tone was a fall; and so on. All of this, while partly true, was not explanatory.

The **attitudinal model** was deficient because it also explained very little. The main suggestion was that extra voice range allowed the speaker to express more emotion. Certain

emotions were also accorded specific tones, such as a fall-rise for indecisiveness, or a rise-fall for gossipy surprise.

e.g. (i) *'Well . . .'* (ii) *'Oh, so that's what she said'*.

The **discourse model** was altogether more sophisticated, but was still deficient. In any two-person discourse, the stress and intonation depended on what was known and what was new. The tones which were identified were: a fall-rise for 'referring' information, and a fall for 'proclaiming' information. And there were variations of these depending on subtleties. An example:

A: *We've decided to go Australia for Christmas.* (fall: proclaiming new information)

B: *Oh really. We haven't been to Australia.* (fall-rise: referring to known information)

The problem is that Brazil's discourse model simply does not stand up to scrutiny. To explain this, I will refer you to the extract from the BBC television programme 'What the Victorians Did for Us', quoted above on Page 11.

In this discourse, the tones on all the chunks are either fall-rise, or fall. In Brazil's model, all these fall-rises should be referring to information assumed by the speaker to be already known by the listener. And similarly, all the falls should be proclaiming new information. I will admit that in Adam Hart-Davis's Turn 1, it could be claimed that the referring tones refer to the object in the room which both AHD and Phil Collins can see. But remember that the speaker is speaking to the television audience, who know nothing in advance, so this claim is hard, in fact, to substantiate. In Turn 2, Brazil's discourse model cannot be correct, as you can see if you now refer back to it.

Here, *'we're fortunate'* is clearly not 'referring', nor is *'a surviving line drawing'*, nor *'we've gone into meticulous detail'*. Indeed, the only viable model that fits this data is very simple. It is that of the 'not-finish chunk' and the 'finish chunk'. And if we look back at Turn 1, that of AHD, and apply the model to it, we see that it works just as well. I think it is fairly clear that **Brazil's model is complex to apply, difficult to learn, and wrong**. I would like to suggest that my model is easy to apply, easy to learn (believe me, I have been teaching it for many years) for teachers and students, and right.

The rhythm component explored

English rhythm is not what we once thought it was. We used to say that there was stress on words, and stress on sentences, and that together these made the rhythm. We had a vague idea that English was not stress-timed, as were

European languages, and that there was a lot of time-shortening of some syllables, making them 'weak'. I think that a lot of what was thought to be true in the past was wrong. I think that English rhythm is carried on words and on lexical phrases in a way that can be easily described and categorised. But it is not carried on sentences as such! **Rhythm becomes manifested in discourse because it is manifested in communicative chunks**. Communicative chunks are made up of words and lexical chunks. And words and lexical chunks have rhythm-rules which can be systematically described.

Though some rules have been posited in the past for English wordstress, a broad system for word and phrase rhythm has not, to my knowledge, been identified before. In my model, I have identified some of the 'rules of thumb'⁶, and although the list is not exhaustive – there are only 20+ 'rules' – it is a sound start, and I welcome all additions from interested readers. The most important principle is that the rules are simple to remember, and at least 80% true. They refer, it is important to emphasise, to the unmarked⁷ context.

In the *marked* context, word and phrase rhythm 'rules' are affected by a number of things (stress marked here by underlines) (i) whether the item is non-contrastive or contrastive (e.g. *'White wine?'* *'No, red wine please'*) (ii) what part of speech it is (e.g. *'I'll be here this afternoon and we'll have afternoon tea'*) (iii) what its syntax role is (e.g. *'Is it Japanese?'* *'Yes. It's Japanese tea.'*). But these are issues for another article

What I have done below is to present a mini-task for you to explore a few of the phrase-rhythm rules in the unmarked context. This will give you an impression of what is going on. For the full list of rules, I have devised a task, which you might like to try for yourself. This task will be found in Appendix 1, in the full version of this article, which is placed on the IH Journal Website (www.ihjournal.com).

A mini-task

Place the stress on these words and phrases. Remember, secondary stress counts. What's the 'rule of thumb' for each group? Can you find more examples? Can you find exceptions? Answers below.

Sample 1: regional, politician, intention, resumption, option, optional

Sample 2: possible, agreeable, electricity, modify, geology, democracy, biography, philosophy, endoscopy, antithesis, analysis, emphasis, formulate, privatise, laxative

Sample 3: multi-storey, paranormal, anti-clockwise, hard headed, well-paid, rear-engined, real-life, north-south, high-speed

Sample 4: a very hot day, an absolutely brilliant suggestion, an extremely boring film, a multi-storey carpark

Sample 5: what have you come up with, he turned me down, can you turn that up please, can I come in here, we

have run out

Answers to mini-task

- Sample 1: stress on syllable before 'tion[al] /sion/cian (example: institutional).
- Sample 2: all of these are '2-syllable endings', i.e. stress on syllable before the two-syllables at the end. The endings are: able, ible, ity, ify, logy, cracy, graphy, pathy, y/e/asis, scopy, VCate*, VCise*, VCive* (*V=vowel, C=consonant) (example: indemnify, paleontology, reciprocate)
- Sample 3: compound adjectives 1: stress on both parts (example: ready-made)
- Sample 4: adverb modifier + adjective + noun: stress on adverb and adjective and noun (example: a very attractive offer, the most reliable friend, absolutely terrible weather)
- Sample 5: phrasal verbs: stress on both parts (example: look after yourself, how are you getting on?)

How to teach the Music of English

How to approach the Music of English in the classroom

Nowadays, we use 'rules' with a different frame of mind than in the past – as clarifications and reference points, not as launch pads. I always, at some point early in the proceedings with a new class, draw the students' attention to the key tones, fall-rise and fall, put them on the board, and have the students practice these simply as a humming exercise. I refer to my own speech as a teacher, slowing it down chunk by chunk, and repeating each to show how natural it is. I always mark phrase stress on **all** boardwork. Then, with intermediate-plus classes, I will go into more detail, starting with Mark Powell's book (see footnote 6), and then asking them to do a phrase-rhythm task similar to the one on the website attached to this article. I play a section of the BBC Morning newsreader as authentic evidence and back-up (any good BBC World or BBC News 24 presenter will do). Once the students have got the basics, I use reading-aloud newspaper articles (e.g. Metro), which the students first practise dividing into chunks, one sentence at a time, each one discussed step by step, until everybody 'gets' it. Then, a regular read-aloud slot will keep the students' awareness alive. During speaking activities, I constantly refer the students back to the day we did the 'rules', and do a lot of student-centered reformulation of their output.

Boardwork

- Always use different colours for stress and intonation from the normal colour of your text, and chunk what you put on the board where useful.

e.g. He couldn't find his ticket, | because he had left it at home).

- Always mark phrase rhythm, using boxes on all the lexis you put on the board, and always put words in full lexical context (e.g not just 'return on investment' but 'to get a return on your investment'; not just 'deal with' but 'to deal with a person / matter / problem'; not just 'charged' but 'they have been charged too much money by the bank'. This is especially true for collocations and fixed expressions, but teachers also seem to forget grammar markers like the article 'a', the infinitive 'to', and the bracketed '(adj)', all of which are essential when the student goes back to their notes.
- Always mark intonation *and* rhythm on functional language.
- Always take your time with boardwork. It gives a nice breathing space for the students, and good records are essential for their later reference. And remember that most textbooks don't have a system of intonation and rhythm, so you have to make up for this with your own boardwork.

Chunking helps comprehension, not just speaking

A key principle underlying why communicative chunking is so crucial, and a point not yet made, is that it seems to help dramatically with comprehension as well as speaking. Once learners get the hang of the system, they become more receptive as you then apply it to authentic video material. Before long, they are understanding much more effectively how to 'hear' the stream of speech, and they find they can understand much more than they thought they could.

Sound scripting

I give full credit to Mark Powell for this idea (see *Presenting in English*, page 44). I truly believe that if radio and TV reporters followed this simple technique, we would not get the awful reading-aloud mangling of the language we sometimes get when they are reading from their autocues. Basically, by scripting on the computer (i) what they are going to say, divided line by line into communicative chunks (ii) the **bolding** of the rhythm syllables (iii) the CAPITALISING of the nuclear syllables. . . . students can prepare exactly how they want to read a text. Great for getting students used to giving any sort of speech or monologue or presentation with perfect intonation at lower levels (don't forget to tape them). Very useful for confidence building at higher levels.

Functional lexis

Any functional phrases should be both practised (i.e. drilled) with good rhythm and intonation, and be backed up with good boardwork. For example:

I'm a bit busy at the moment. Can I call you back?
Excuse me, do you have the time please?

Conclusion

Even in its simple format, when I apply this model to the speech around me, it does seem to be applicable to most spoken interactions. But, as I mentioned above, there is more to this model than I have outlined here, especially in accounting for the variations.

What is more gratifying is that it is teachable. It is simple, and it is 80% usable and true for most of the language interactions students engage in. For students, just by the mere adding of that fall-rise tone (which is the one they find most difficult, as it hardly exists at all in other languages) to their speech, they can sound 50% more English. Students gain massively in confidence once they 'get' this system, and their comprehension goes up significantly too.

As for where we go from here, I have a number of related lines of enquiry to pursue. There clearly *is* a grammatical dimension to intonation, in the form of the 'high fall' for statements and wh-Qs, and the 'high fall-rise' for yes/no-Qs. But I believe this 'grammatical' regularity may fit somehow into the model I have outlined. I believe there may be a meta-level of intonation connected to the notion of 'need-cooperation' vs 'not-need-cooperation' (remember Grice's 'cooperative principle'), which links all the models, and, interestingly enough, which may link all languages. Perhaps we are not so far from finding it.

Bibliography

- Emmerson P (1999) *Business Builder* Macmillan
Hamilton N (2000) 'Learning, Lexis and Business English' *IH Journal*, April 2000
Jenkins J (2000) *Phonology in the Teaching of English as an International Language* OUP
Powell M (1996) *Presenting in English* LTP/Heinle
Powell M (2002) *In Company* Macmillan

¹ I want to note two authors for being the first in ELT materials to demonstrate some aspects of this system. They are Mark Powell ('*Presenting In English*' LTP 1996 p36) and Paul Emmerson ('*Business Builder*' Macmillan 1999 Unit 7.3).

² Taken from '*Presenting in English*' p36 (Mark Powell, LTP 1996)

³ For an elaboration of this complexity, see footnote 3 in the website edition of this article. The key point is that the normal tone for the 'not-finish chunk' is a fall-rise, not a rise as so many textbooks want to tell us. If it were, we would sound German, as the actors on EFL tapes often do.

⁴ For instance, the written text 'the clever, creative, fraudulent artist was finally found out' would be spoken as 'I the clever creative fraudulent artist I was etc, etc'. Here, there are no pauses in the first chunk, and no intonation until the nucleus 'artist'.

⁵ As a taster, try the Mini Task at the end of this article.

⁶ I started with the few rules presented in '*Presenting in English*' Mark Powell, LTP 1996 p32-36, and developed the system from there.

⁷ 'The word 'unmarked' is used by linguists to mean 'contextually uncomplicated and neutral'.

This article is one of a series to be published on the IH Journal website under the following epigraph:

**'Before enlightenment, carry water, chop wood.
After enlightenment, carry water, chop wood'
Gautama Siddhartha (the Buddha), c500BC**

Philosophy

1 Do language teachers and applied linguists understand each other?

2 Eclecticism or integration – a brief history of language teaching: 1853 – 2003

Methodology

3 Noticing – a re-appraisal of its implications for methodology.

4 'Authentic participation' – integrating task-based and language-focus methodologies

5. 'Good teaching' – a reappraisal

Syllabus

6 Lexical approaches now: where do syntax and grammar come in a lexical view of language?

7 A 'Standard International English' – where next?

Language

9. The 'music of English' – a new model of communicative rhythm and intonation

10. The present perfect – chimera or pussy cat?



How British Education Failed To Teach Us About Our Own Language or Is 'to die' A Transitory Verb?

Rodney Blakeston

Rodney has been a teacher and CELTA and DELTA teacher trainer for over twenty years.

Most people starting a teacher training course such as the CELTA know next to nothing about the grammar of their own language. No eyebrows are raised. This is simply what we expect. It is in fact rather shocking.

victims of Trendy Teaching

All over the world children are taught (well or badly, for better or worse) about the grammar of their own language; except in this country of course! This means that we have people with degrees or MAs, even with PhDs in literature who might hesitate to identify the present perfect. (One trainee asked me: Is the verb 'to die' a *transitory* verb? ...well, pretty much, I said.) These graduates (I have to include my son) are quite simply victims of progressive education, or Trendy Teaching.

Originating in the late sixties, developing through the seventies, eighties and nineties, the idea prevailed that grammar was irrelevant, possibly even *a constraint on the creativity of the child*. Where did this nonsense come from? Ultimately perhaps from the barricades of Paris, 1968. "L'imagination au pouvoir" was one of the cries of the *soixante-huitard*, after all. But of course the French were too traditional and sensible to *implement* such nonsense. It was the literal-minded (and inherently more radical) Anglo-Saxons who were daft enough to actually *do so*.

Think of it! There must have been meetings, perhaps even in Whitehall, at which educationalists, drunk with radicalism, cried Let's actually *stop teaching our kids grammar!*

My history of education may be rough and ready. But I do know that people who were in state education through those decades haven't a clue about grammar. In the four weeks of the course we have to teach them the basic categories, the basic taxonomy of language. There was a time when this ignorance could be dealt with 'in camera', so to speak. But not any more. For now (and rightly) courses such as CELTA are open to non-native English speaker candidates, from Germany, say; or from Poland; and our national shame is compounded by the disbelief on the faces of these trainees when they discover that their British peers *don't know what the present perfect is!* I find it mortifying to explain why but I must. Otherwise there is embarrassment on both sides. The British candidate because he doesn't know and the Pole who is embarrassed on behalf of native speaker fellow trainee.

We do a good job on the CELTA course redressing the neglect of state education. When our trainees go off to teach our trainees they have a rough-tuned knowledge of the bits and pieces of language: the tenses (already I can hear a linguistics professor sniggering at *that* simplification), the "three" conditionals (another snigger), articles, modals etc., such that, in their first job they can't screw up too badly (as they stand before students who know more grammar than they do). DOSes do what they can with the new recruits on site and yes after a year or so the teacher has a respectable, practical overview of the grammar of his own language.

exotic tales of sexier language descriptions

But... just as they start building up a working knowledge of English grammar siren-like voices lure them astray with exotic tales of much sexier language descriptions. Just as they are getting to grips with those tricky old structures along come writers with dire warnings about the inadequacy, *indeed the risible naivete* of anything such as the "three conditionals", the impossibility of a canonical grammar. And our new teacher, still unsure of his tenses, may welcome such a message! But it doesn't really help him in the classroom. It just makes him readier to say to the students: "Er, there aren't really rules here...you just have to sort of *feel* whether it sounds right.." or whatever.

Are these anti-canonical prophets right? Of course they are! As long as they are talking *descriptive* linguistics, they are. Yes, of course we should know as much as possible about a variety of descriptions of language and these should inform us educationally. But in pedagogic linguistics, in the classroom, we have to make what would appear to descriptive linguists *gross generalisations*; yea, even that there are 'three conditionals'.

How is it that we have become so loftily disdainful of modest pedagogical grammars? Well, it may be because it is so much more sophisticated to deal with these more exotic taxonomies of descriptive linguistics. But I think it may be simpler than that. We may simply have forgotten what it is like to be a language learner. Some of these experts who disdain the three conditionals *may never have learned a language*.

But can this be? Don't we all speak foreign languages in the

language teaching business? Yes indeed, and so we should, having lived abroad, surrounded by the language, suffused with it, comprehensible input left right and centre, in buses, on the TV, in bed with our local lover! No *wonder* we know languages! Why? Because we have, in these fantastically propitious circumstances merely *acquired* them. Quite a different matter. But when did we last *learn* one?

As I argued in a recent IH Journal article (Issue 12), our scant respect for grammar may come from the fact that we have never, in our own country, after a gruelling day at work, plodded upstairs to a language school with flickering neon lights and

Beefeater posters blu-tacked to the walls and doggedly, over the years, *learned* a language; not merely acquired it but learned it. If we had we would be much more respectful about prescriptive, simplified and canonical grammar. Indeed we would be crying out for simple rules. So my final question once again must be to the anti- canonical brigade: pray, what language are you at present learning, here in the UK, as an elementary student, in the classroom, with a teacher?

This article originally appeared in the Guardian Weekly, Jan 2003 and will appear in the IH 50th Anniversary Festschrift later this year.



How Language Education Failed to Teach Students How to Use Language or Is Lexis a Transitory Concept?

Nick Hamilton

Nick Hamilton has worked as a teacher and teacher trainer at International House London for 12 years.

If you ask people what learning a language is about, the most common answer will be that it is a combination of learning its grammar and vocabulary. For a lot of people this is stating the obvious; they can't see any other way of looking at it. It is also a view which, it has to be said, has a certain appeal; after all, we all need some kind of framework with which to work. And it's striking how many teachers assess students' level of language only on the degree of its grammatical accuracy. Most coursebooks for English Language Teaching still follow a clear grammatical syllabus, and consequently encourage lessons based on the study and practice of grammatical structures to provide this framework for the language. It would seem to make perfect sense.

However, when we observe students learning a language, this view of what is involved raises a number of questions. How is it possible for students to learn the main grammatical structures and yet still remain at an Elementary or Pre-Intermediate level? We've probably all met the student who can recite the uses of the Present Perfect yet is sitting in a low level class. How is it that you can learn 101 irregular verbs but still be unable to communicate? More generally, why is it that we say some people are 'gifted' at languages and others aren't? Yet when we look at places where different language cultures overlap, this distinction doesn't seem to exist.

One way to start answering these questions is to look at two very different ways of 'knowing' a language: knowing **about** it, and knowing **how to use** it. Knowing about a language is the understanding of how it works and the ability to explain this. Many native speakers of English would be unable to do this.

On the other hand, knowing how to use a language is what every proficient speaker of English can do, whether or not they are able to explain how it works. One of the problems of putting too much emphasis on the teaching of grammatical structures is that it can easily lead to the first type of knowledge at the expense of the second. And unless we're careful, students can end up learning very little language that is new.

we're not as creative as we think

So what is it that the proficient speaker of a second language knows if it's not grammar? As the humorous writer Miles Kington once pointed out, if you teach a low level speaker of English the reply '*Don't mind if I do!*' to the question '*Would you like a drink?*' they'll be treated as a bit of a linguist even if that's the only expression they know. Another way to look at this framework that underpins language is that it consists of combinations of words that function as single items of language. These combinations of words, or lexis, are of different kinds: short phrases, collocations, and fixed expressions, which can be complete utterances or semi-fixed, allowing for them to be completed in different ways. They all have in common the fact that they combine words in a way that is highly predictable; it seems that we're not as creative with our use of language as we might like to think. It is this lexis that gives us our knowledge of how to use a language. Broadly speaking, collocations express the topic of what it is we're talking about (family, work, travel), whereas the phrases and expressions express the function of what we're trying to say

(describing, discussing, predicting, etc), providing the frame of an utterance. And, unlike grammatical structures, this lexis doesn't require so much mental processing by the student. In other words, a student can say something meaningful with new lexis in a way that they can't do when struggling to learn a new grammatical structure.

So the framework here is lexical rather than grammatical. However, this isn't to say that it ignores grammar; it just takes a different view of it. One difference is that it focuses more on the grammatical patterns that go together with lexical items rather than the sentence level grammatical structures, i.e. it is a more phrasal view of grammar. Another difference is that it looks at the process of grammaticisation, or how grammar 'manages' language in text as a whole. Ironically, this takes us back to a traditional description of grammar as syntax and morphology. The conclusion I come to about grammatical structures, is that they don't actually exist; or rather, they exist only as lexical expressions. For me, the framework of a language is its lexis; and I'm struck by the fact when teaching, that students can notice the grammar within a lexical expression, but they cannot get to that lexical expression from a grammatical rule.

The implications for teaching are several. Firstly, lessons are built around topics rather than grammatical structures; and this will include interesting texts and tasks to put the focus firmly on

a meaningful use of language. Secondly, the language focus in the lesson will take lexis as its starting point, allowing the grammar to emerge naturally from it. Thirdly, there will be an emphasis on reformulation of student language rather than simply correcting the grammatical errors that arise as students try to express themselves. These grammatical errors will in any case disappear in their own time as we encourage students to notice the gap between input and output. The result should be that students learn a lot more language, and become both more fluent and more accurate. Most importantly, they are able to use the language, and not just talk about it.

coursebooks are full of lexis

And, contrary to an often-voiced objection, there's no reason why a lexical approach should be any more difficult for a teacher whose first language is not English. Once we look at language lexically, we see that the coursebooks are full of lexis; they just don't focus on it necessarily. A lexical approach is no more legislating for language use than a grammatical syllabus is; and we all know that native speakers don't observe a lot of the rules of so-called grammatical structures. Taking lexis as your framework just makes the language so much easier to learn.

This article originally appeared in the Guardian Weekly, Feb 2003



Catalan for beginners: A learner's account.

Scott Thornbury

Scott works at IH Barcelona. His latest book is How To Teach Vocabulary (Longman).

In a previous issue of this journal I described my experiences as a beginner student of Maori (Thornbury, 1998). A glutton for punishment, I've returned to the classroom again, this time to learn Catalan. Here are some edited extracts from the diary I kept and posted at intervals on the Dogme ELT website ([www.groups.yahoo.com/ group/dogme](http://www.groups.yahoo.com/group/dogme)).

The class takes place in a community centre in Barcelona twice a week: the first lesson was last week, and the experience was uncannily reminiscent of the film *Italian for Beginners* – i.e. dogme 95 meets dogme ELT¹. The classes are subsidised by the local government; there are about a dozen of us, crammed into a small room with a whiteboard on an easel. The teacher (Mari, 21, Catalan) introduced herself (in Spanish) by telling us, candidly, that she'd never taught before, had no training, and her only related experience was as a school camp monitor – but she was going to give it a go. My expectations – already at low, having walked in to find her pre-occupied with a cassette recorder – sank further.

But then Mari told us that – since there was no “book” – she was prepared to adjust the content of the lessons to our own needs and interests (or words to that effect). We then embarked on the usual personal information stuff, where she showed she had some basic intuitions about the usefulness of repetition and pairs practice. We students, perhaps taking advantage of her youth, ingenuousness and relative lack of a clear plan, interrupted constantly to bombard her with questions (in Spanish), often about what seemed to me to be fairly minor points of pronunciation and grammar. She managed fairly well at fielding these, although even she admitted – disarmingly - that she was making things up from time to time. But we did have to wade through a sheaf of photocopies, which seemed to have been cobbled together at the last minute.

By the second half the group was clearly starting to bond, and there was a lot of laughter and a growing feeling of warmth towards her, as she was clearly prepared to bend to our own wishes (e.g. no writing, lots of speaking, please). And, very

candidly again, she asked us at the end of the lesson, how it had been for us – or words to that effect – a question that, in my experience, very few “real” teachers would ever dare to put. Mari’s lack of training and preconceptions, combined with her candour, actually seemed to work in her favour. It made us feel that we could take more of the running in terms of the direction, pace and content of the lesson. All we asked of her was that she should provide accurate models, some (albeit dodgy) linguistic information, and lots of constructive feedback, especially on pron. When I left, my head was buzzing with lots of (admittedly fairly disconnected) fragments of Catalan.

Day Two began less promisingly, with two new students to integrate, and a ton of photocopies, uncollated, and even more questions flying at her, especially from the South Americans. A fractured, but self-initiated and highly engaging, account, by one of the students, of what he had done in the weekend was cut short by Mari as she tried to steer the lesson on to the handouts. At the break she was looking quite depressed, and someone suggested that we could perhaps do more dialogues. In the second half we listened to some short taped dialogues, and then practised them ourselves in pairs, and in front of the group. Morale picked up hugely, and there was a lot more laughter and the sense, again, that we were “learning” something useful (although nothing that had been pre-selected for us from a grammar syllabus).

The experience so far seems to demonstrate convincingly the point that learning is jointly constructed (she’s helping us, we’re helping her, we’re helping each other) but that the materials – far from supporting the learning process – simply inhibit it. As Breen (1985) put it: “The language I learn in the classroom is a communal product derived through a jointly constructed process” (p.149). Both the fact that she has few preconceptions about teaching, and that our output is not being artificially constrained by a grammar syllabus (albeit some of the input is), seem to be especially conducive to an “emergent” learning experience.

Day Three (last night) – the first absentees, always a bad sign – and yet more photocopies. But Mari is wonderfully adaptable: I suggested – at one point, when we were doing “the time”, that we practise by doing a clock dictation, which – once explained to her - she immediately did, and with flare.

One of the most interesting things about the class is the chance to “observe” a teacher in her pre-lapsarian state, i.e. with no training whatsoever, operating on some kind of default DOS system, and without a book. The last lesson but one started with everyone doing “show and tell” with family photos. I had spent about three totally absorbing hours at the weekend preparing elaborate descriptions of just two photos. Others seemed to have done likewise. We huddled around while each

took turns to show pics of bar-mitzvahs, weddings, family picnics, Mexican interiors, Argentine exteriors... We plied each other with questions, commented - brokenly - about family resemblances, and joked about the aging process. But, after about 20 or 30 minutes of this, we were cut short by the teacher who must have felt that this was all getting a bit out of hand. Her DOS setting seemed to have clicked on to TEACH THEM mode. Out came the photocopies - the rules for marking accents on vowels. There was nothing to do but grit one’s teeth and play along.

In the breaks, though, Mari joins us in the corridor while the smokers smoke, and we generally attempt to talk in Catalan. This is proving to be the most worthwhile part of the lesson: we struggle to make small-talk, while she supplies the words and reformulates where necessary, and there is no blackboard available for distracting “teaching” interventions. (I suggested, facetiously, to a classmate that we’d be better off doing the grammar in the breaks and using the classroom for the chat).

Last night threatened to be more of the same - we were doing plurals and prepositions, and in the break I took the bull by the horns and explained how to set up a “Picasso dictation” (dictate the layout of a room, for example, and students draw, then compare). She took to this with a relish and we spent a hilarious 40 minutes creating this elaborate interior, which she then had the wit to make us ask and answer questions about. This generated a lot of very rich and useful language as well as a lot of teasing, banter and laughter as we tried to outdo each other by asking increasingly devious questions. We are to describe a room of our own for homework - again, Mari’s idea - which suggests that her intuitions are sound and that given a nudge in the right direction, she could be a great teacher.

We’ve just had lesson five. The group has settled to a steady eight or so regulars, and we get on well. The South Americans are less panicky now, and the class is less often derailed by nit-picky questions of the sort “is there a W in Catalan?” etc. For the 4th lesson we had been set the task of writing a short piece about ourselves, including daily routine. It was amazing how seriously the bulk of the class had approached the task, some producing a good page of text, which we each took turns to read aloud. (It was amazing how hot-and-bothered I got, reading my stuff out loud - as if it had been dragged from the depths of my being - all that stuff about getting up and having breakfast and going to work!). Unhappily, though, the teacher didn’t pick up on any of the content of any of these wonderful texts - apart from a “Bravo” or two. But there was material there for several lessons, if not a whole course.

Typically, I managed to elbow my way in and fire a few questions off to individuals, hoping that Mari would get the idea. But, no, out came the photocopies and we settled into the

routine of mindlessly repeating decontextualised verb paradigms etc. (I have become that sort of student that teachers loathe and fear: I either take the initiative continuously, or, if doing something I don't like, I sulk).

But after last lesson (on Thursday) I was on a real high. Mari had had the inspiration to invite to the class one of her friends from university, to be at the receiving end of our questions for the last half hour of the lesson. It was perfect timing in terms of the course, because, five lessons in, we are able, jointly, to produce just enough conversational (and pragmatic) stuff to sustain a reasonably coherent conversation. It was quite amazing what happened, as suddenly the language took root and we really felt that we were – for the first time – *speaking* Catalan. It was helped by the fact that the friend, Marina, who has herself never taught, displayed innate teaching skills, such as the capacity to grade her language without descending into baby talk. It is also the nature of conversation that - like chess - the possible moves multiply exponentially at each turn, especially where there are so many interlocutors. (It makes you wonder why teachers worry so much that conversation will dry up). So even with the minimal means we had available, we were able to trick ourselves into believing we were practically native speakers! (And there were no sodding materials!)

During the break Mari told us that she had heard of another centre where they taught Catalan for roughly the same price, but that the teachers were “professionals”, implying that we might like to try it. The unanimous response was - professionals, yuk! We'd much prefer you, Mari. Professionals conjured up images of teachers who were likely to be even more transmissive, and certainly a lot less accommodating, than her. “Seco” was the word someone used - “dry”. Whatever Mari is, she's not dry. I'm happy to put up with an hour of the rules of accentuation, and irregular plural forms, for the sake of the show and tell, the chat in the break, the Picasso dictation, and the guest she brought in - that is to say, the “dogme moments”.

The Catalan class looks like it might be on its last legs - there were only three of us on Thursday, although the rain may have had something to do with it. The sense of the class having fallen below the critical mass of self-sustainability is palpable - also a sense of betrayal by those who remain towards those who have left. Classes are funny things - little emergent communities, but incredibly fragile. Once someone drops out there's no way of retrieving them - they disappear into the city like a migratory bird lost in a storm. It's not like a family, or a workplace environment, where, when people leave (to get married, to move to another job) there's a bit of a party, some kind of leave-taking, and the chance at least of continued contacts. When people drop out of a class they do just that - drop out. Leaving the others to carry the can, burdened by the knowledge that the survival of the class depends on your fronting up, come hell or high water.

On Thursday she brought her boyfriend

Of course, fewer students means more speaking opportunities - but less “biodiversity” - it's always the same people speaking about roughly the same things in roughly the same (halting) way. But you come out of the class reeling - and the other night I actually had a dream in broken Catalan (a bit like the Woody Allen story of the man condemned to be forever pursued by an incarnation of the irregular Spanish verb “tener”). Mari, bless her, carries on regardless, and actually gets better (I mean, more fluency-focused) lesson by lesson. On Thursday she brought her boyfriend with her, and for the first hour he acted as occasional consultant as we each toiled through a description of our daily routine (something you only ever do in a language class, but no less fascinating for all that). In the second half we (three) were given the chance to ply young Andreu with questions - and this was real deep-end stuff as we pushed ourselves to the edge of our shared competence (occasionally falling off). A more experienced teacher would have followed this up with, say, some kind of writing activity (e.g. “In a group, write Andreu's story for one of the students who's not here”) in order to “capture” all this emergent language, and then work it up a notch. Instead we listened to a Serrat song - which was topically relevant since it was about two 15-year-olds falling in love - but my attempt to turn the class back on to Mari and Andreu and the story of their relationship was cut short by the end of class.

we reeled out pursued by irregular verbs

And we reeled out into the rain, pursued by irregular verbs...

The Catalan class is alive and well - there were six of us on Thursday, and we're already talking about signing up for Level 2 in the New Year. Ironically, I was forced to miss the Tuesday class, being bedridden with flu, and - egocentrically - had assumed that my absence would be the final nail in the coffin.

While in bed, though, I thought I'd take advantage of the time I had on my hands to try out a technique that I am always telling other people is a great language learning technique and that I have had students do in class, but which I'd never done myself (hem hem), and that is: take a text in the L2, translate it into your language, then, without reference to the original, translate it back into the L2 again. I found a couple of stories in a Catalan newspaper, worked them into a fairly literal translation in English (which meant checking the odd word in the dictionary), and then, at least three times and at successively longer intervals, translated them back into Catalan, taking careful note of the differences each time, and checking doubts in a grammar. The sense of satisfaction as you move closer

and closer to the target text is motivating, and I was really learning things - about vocabulary, agreement, tense relationships, pronoun rules, and even cohesion and style.

So when Thursday came round, and being still a bit sniffly, I did wonder if I shouldn't just drop the class altogether, and spend the time, more usefully, translating texts back and forth.

But I went. And was immediately caught up in the warm, familial dynamic that had been nurtured from day one, and which just a short time ago, looked like it was about to flicker and go out. It was all "Where have you been? we've missed you, what's *your* excuse?" etc. Truism No. 1: While working on your own may score high in terms of the "density" of learning, it has to be weighed against the longer-term motivational potential of working as a group.

And, of course, you speak. And Mari is getting better and better at exploiting the interactive, fluency-focused potential of her activities, being unconstrained as she is by a narrow-band syllabus, and letting us say just about anything we can get away with. Occasionally there's a grammar detour, but most of this last lesson at least was us just "doing speaking activities" (not quite the same thing as "talking" but a fairly good pedagogical substitute).

The disappointing discovery was the (startlingly unoriginal) fact (Truism No 2) that all my new-found grammatical confidence, culled from the translation exercises, did not transfer one jot into the classroom, where I was as tongue-tied as ever. Not a single pronoun fell neatly into its slot, nor did I manage a single cohesive marker, and everything I said was unmarked for time or aspect. So, there you go... It's what I always bang on about to trainee teachers - the lag between knowing and using etc .. but it's somehow a lot more acute when it's happening to *you*.

At the same time I'm always being amazed at what my fellow students are capable of producing, and the resultant feeling of, well if they can do it, way can't I? (Another underestimated factor about working in groups - the affordances (van Lier, 2000) offered by peer output). And I'm also in awe of the effort that some of them make to stay astride the bucking bronco of the language as they force out their meanings. One, who is an English-speaker, has never let slip a word of English when speaking to me - both in or out of the classroom. He's doggedly monolingual and I can see why for him this is such a good learning strategy, painful as it sometimes is for both himself and his interlocutors. I myself simply don't have his stamina, though. Or his ego-permeability. But then, he's only 22.

Because she'd done a quick board-based presentation of the imperfect, Mari threw the last ten minutes open to letting us ask *her* questions about her past - such as it is (she confessed the other day that she'd never been in a plane). Now, how many even experienced teachers would deliberately "expose" themselves to a "just ask me questions" task? Either they would be terrified of the anarchic language that this might

unleash, or they would feel guilty that they were monopolising attention.

she's riding a wave of fluency

Two other things to note: first of all, our attempts to stick to the grammatical agenda and ask questions in the imperfect - sort of equivalent to the past continuous - quickly floundered, but - because she's basically riding a wave of fluency, and doesn't really care about the grammar a great deal - she didn't seem to mind nor notice and simply re-formulated any questions that were wrong into whatever form of the past was more appropriate. But what also amazed me was that out of this chat emerged the fact that, the day Mari had rung up about the job, she was asked if she could start then-and-there: hence the somewhat scatty start to the course. She hadn't even had time to be shown a syllabus. (We also learned that she had taken the job on as part of her "practicas" for her university course, and was therefore not being paid).

Which - when you think of the training (and its associated costs, both financial and psychological) that most teachers go through, and then all that it entails to de- and re-skill them at successive stages of their development in order that they gain the confidence to be able to just sit down and say "Ok, ask me some questions about my past"- well, it makes you think...

Nearing the end of the course, and Mari is scratching around for ideas for ways of keeping us busy. She started today's lesson by suggesting we do some sort of role-play, but the whole thing sounded so unstructured and face-threatening that I seized the nettle and attempted to explain the game "Alibis". Co-constructing an alibi, and then being separately quizzed about it, seemed an appropriate way to follow up on the work we'd been doing on past tenses. Just describing the game (in Catalan) first to Mari and then to my classmates was a major achievement. But playing it was sensational. We took turns, in pairs, to go out and invent stories, while the others predicted and practised the kinds of questions that might be useful. The effort of both being interrogated and interrogating - trying to avoid discrepancies in the story, on the one hand, and trying to weasel them out, on the other - was intensely engaging as well as being hugely funny. After each "round", Mari read out a list of errors she'd noted while we attempted to self-correct them. This lasted the full two hours, and I came out - not only with my head swimming with Catalan - but convinced that simply by playing "Alibis" (and getting error feedback) I would be able to learn Catalan. Well, a lot of Catalan: the trick is to find similarly productive activity types for other notional areas (such as futurity, frequency, comparison etc).

The course ended last week and we all went off to a neighbouring bar where we were able to sustain two-hours of conversation in rudimentary Catalan, assisted by Mari and several beers. (In the movie, *Italian for Beginners*, they all go off to Venice: more picturesque but the principle is the same). There were six of us by the end – something like half of the original class, which is not bad. Of course, it would be extremely interesting to know why the others dropped out. Was it the lack of structure, including the lack of a coursebook? Were they less infected by the social dynamic than I was? Or did life simply take over – maybe providing other, if not better, affordances for learning Catalan in the real world? Well, we'll never know.

training might “corrupt” her

And what will become of Mari? Will she improve as a teacher, developing and fine-tuning her innate classroom management abilities to encourage free-wheeling talk? Or will she take the high road – becoming more “teacherly”, more obsessed with accuracy, more prone to ridiculing pronunciation mistakes (something that was irritating me increasingly towards the end), and generally more “bookish”? With some misgivings, I gave her a brochure for our Spanish teacher training courses, since I do feel she has a talent that could be nurtured. But, at the same time, I am worried that training might “corrupt” her,

especially once she is introduced to the insidious world of coursebooks, with their rigid grammar syllabuses, inconsequential situations, and utterly colourless characters. In our class, the characters were us: Cecilia, Georgina, Alejandra, Michael, Jordan and me.

And by now *highly* coloured, we kissed and hugged, gave Mari her present, and dispersed into the night.

References:

- Breen, M. (1985). *The social context for language learning: A neglected situation?* In *Studies in Second Language Acquisition* 7: 135-58.
- Thornbury, S. (1998). *A language learner's diary. The IH Journal*, 5, 5-7
- Thornbury, S. (2000). *A Dogma for EFL. IATEFL Issues*, 153, 2.
- van Lier, L. (2000). *From input to affordance: social-interactive learning from an ecological perspective.* In Lantolf, J. (Ed.) *Sociocultural theory and second language learning.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

¹ For an explanation, see Thornbury 2000, accessible at www.teaching-unplugged.com



A Continuing Experiment: Teacher Talking Time and Parent Talking Time (TTT & PTT)

Roger Hunt

Roger Hunt currently works at International House Barcelona as Educational Consultant for language teaching and teacher training. He was formerly Director of Studies for Teacher Training at International House London and has been involved in language teaching, teacher training and educational management for over twenty years.

Introduction

Teacher Talking Time (TTT) was considered a bad thing when I first trained to be a teacher more than twenty years ago. I had a ‘problem’ with my TTT in as much as there was too much of it according to my tutors. However, we all learned our first language partly by listening to it and making sense, eventually, of what we heard. Most of what we heard was our parents speaking to us ie: Parent Talking Time (PTT). Clearly there are many other factors involved in first language acquisition, and many more in second language learning by adults, than just making sense of what we hear, but, that which we hear and make sense of remains a singularly powerful learning and teaching factor; perhaps a very underrated teaching tool.

TTT may be divided into two main types: asking questions and saying things ie: making statements. The following is an

account of helping teachers in training aware of their TTT as a teaching tool; a contributing factor in their learners’ understanding and learning of a second language.

Teachers and question types

Background

In 1994 a candidate on what is now the Cambridge DELTA course, and on which I was course tutor, conducted an experiment in which he recorded himself teaching and analysed his TTT according to criteria defined by Michael Long (1983) and further developed by David Nunan (1987). These criteria related to question types, which were: ‘Display’ questions, in which the teacher asks students to ‘display’ their knowledge of language eg: asking: ‘What colour is my shirt?’ in order to ascertain whether or not the student knows the appropriate

vocabulary item, and 'Reference' questions to which the teacher does not know the answer eg: 'What did you do at the weekend?'. The Diploma candidate added two other criteria to his analysis which were :

1. Purpose

In other words why was the question asked in the first place?

2. Linguistic Demand

In other words how much did the student have to say in order to answer the question? eg: a 'Yes/No' question requires very little in terms of language production from the student, whereas a question such as 'What did you do this weekend?' might demand much more (although I have worked with some students who are adept at giving a minimalist answer to this question eg: 'I sleep!').

The 'Purpose' analysis was intended to see to what extent the use of questioning was procedural ie: pertaining to the management of the class and lesson, and to what extent it was 'communicative' ie: using questioning to discover something not already known by the questioner. The 'Linguistic Demand' analysis was intended to see to what extent the students were invited to take long, as opposed to short, turns. In other words, how much they were invited to contribute linguistically during the lesson; how much time they were given to practise speaking English. (This following Nunan's suggestion (1987) that longer turn taking contributes to greater proficiency in second language usage.)

The results of this analysis were: the students were predominantly asked display questions, (which seemed to have little or no purpose), and the majority of the questions required little more than a nod or shake of the head by way of answer.

Following this analysis the candidate, for reasons of his own, resolved to eliminate all display questions and all questions which required a short turn response from his teaching.

A continuing experiment

As well as asking many teachers in training to record and evaluate their TTT as described above I have asked them to further their analysis by introducing other criteria for inclusion. These include: 'Waiting Time' ie: the length of time the teacher waits for a response having asked a question; 'Authenticity' ie: a question may be 'procedural' in as much as it is an aspect of classroom management eg: giving instructions/checking understanding/etc. or it may be genuine piece of communication eg: 'What did you think of the new Harry Potter film?' This differentiation may seem very similar to that between 'display' and 'reference' questions. However, the distinction I intend here is that between classroom management (procedural) issues and those which the students may understand as 'real' (or 'Reference') questions. For example 'Could you open your books at page 17?' is unlikely to be seen by anyone as anything other than a procedural question.

Waiting time

Typically the teacher asks a question, waits for a second or two, feels undermined by the lack of an answer, then asks another

question or gives the answer him/herself. I asked the participants on an INSET training programme to ask a question then wait, however long it took for an answer from the students. One teacher I observed asked the question: 'What is the difference in meaning between 'walk' and 'run'. Seventeen seconds later a student offered an answer. Meanwhile the teacher sat silently. The other students in the room did not agree with the answer ('running is quicker than walking') and eventually decided that when walking one foot is always on the ground, whereas when running both feet are off the ground at times - a series of leaps.

the 'right to silence'

The interesting thing was that the teacher waited. He knew the answer to his question, but he knew that thinking time was involved and that rehearsal time was involved as well: thinking time to come up with an answer; rehearsal time to work out how to give the answer in a foreign language. Wisely perhaps, he waited: it is easy to answer questions such as 'How are you?', or 'Do you smoke?', but many questions which require longer turn-taking also require thinking and rehearsal time. This waiting time became an integral part of the *continuing experiment*. It also gave rise to the issue of the 'right to silence', in which students are not required to say anything until they want to do so, which is commented on later in this article.

Authenticity: Initiation Response Feedback (IRF)

IRF is a well known phenomenon: the teacher asks a seemingly genuine question eg: 'What did you do last night?', the student responds eg: 'I went to the cinema.' then the teacher comments on their language display eg: 'Good!' (meaning: Good, you got the grammar etc right), the student then says: 'No'. What is going on here in the student's mind is not a comment on his/her language display but a genuine piece of communication, obviously the intended meaning was: 'No, it wasn't a good film'.

A variant on this might be:

T: What did you do last night?
S: I've been to cinema.
T: Is that right?
S: Yes.

Again the teacher's response has been to question the correctness of the student's grammar, but this is not what the student has understood: the student is still communicating at the level of one human being to another. Clearly teachers need to help students say what they want to say correctly (phonologically, grammatically, lexically etc) but the above IRF sequences beg the issue of when it might be most appropriate to comment on language display and when it might be better to remain a human being engaging in conversation (and storing up the language display issue for later lessons?).

As part of the *continuing experiment* I have asked candidates on teacher training programmes to note incidences of IRF, and to comment to themselves on the appropriacy, or not, of comment on language display to students at different points within a lesson.

The right to silence

The issue of waiting time, particularly, leads to the issue of whether or not a student may be ready to contribute in class, and to the issue of whether or not a teacher should require a student to contribute. Clearly some students contribute even before invited (or welcome!?) to do so, others are more reticent. Krashen (1981) suggested that contributions by students are only indications of what language they have acquired, rather than indications of what language they are acquiring. The issue in the *continuing experiment* was to what extent might a teacher ask/require a student to contribute and to what extent did contributions by students indicate their ability with the foreign language. After all, many people are very quiet in their own languages though they have an expert mastery of it. The *continuing experiment*, therefore, asked participants not to nominate individuals, but wait until any individual appeared to want to contribute. (An aside: I once watched a horrific lesson in which the teacher continually asked a particular student to contribute when she was not ready to do so: she found the pronunciation of the language point impossible. Rather than helping her, the teacher relied on showing her that all the other students, of different language backgrounds, could do it and, therefore, so could she. The student finished the lesson in tears.)

Making statements

In the seventeenth century Nicholas Clennard gathered together a 'motley group' of learners and 'caused their ears to be assailed by Latin and nothing but Latin'. He claimed that 'after a month, each of them babbled it fluently after their fashion'. He described his methodology in these terms: 'whilst I stood by and made the thing more apparent by gesticulation' (Howatt 1984). An example of highly refined teacher talk (TTT)? Perhaps based on the obvious parallel of parent talk (PTT)? Some centuries later Sauveur published his account of learning through physical response (TPR - see also Asher, Krashen and Terrell). The human voice had an acknowledged role in second language learning many years before the present. In fact documentation on 'Natural Approaches', in which the prime source of 'input' is the teacher's voice abounds. The human voice was 'out' when I was a teacher in training. Hopefully it can come 'in' again. The secret is merely to be aware of what you are saying: the words you use, the way you pronounce connected speech, and the extent to which you help your learners become aware of these factors.

A short story for you:

1. What do the following mean: *splink*; *fuitzkerlick*; *blanetch*; *splean*; *bloimp*; *tront*; *plimp*?

No doubt you have no idea at all (as I have just made these words up), but in the following story, which could be a bit of teacher talk, I am sure all will be clear.

splinking along the highway

2. The story

Dick and Dora were *splinking* along the highway in their brand new *fuitzkerlick* when a twenty ton *blanetch* coming in the opposite direction went out of *splean* and skidded into their lane. The *blanetch* *boimped* into their *fiztzerlick* with a sickening crunch. Fortunately Dick and Dora were not *tronted*, only *plimped*.

The meaning of the 'new' words in this story have not been made clear by 'gesticulations', as in Clennard's methodology, but I am sure that they have been made clear. Obviously there is nothing new in using context to help students understand meaning. But the point of the *continuing experiment* was to make teachers in training aware of how they could use their TTT in creating a PTT type environment: how they might use their speech to help with understanding and, to an extent, create an environment of 'comprehensible input'.

In this continuing experiment I ask teachers in training to record themselves teaching, analyse what they say according to the criteria above, and to consider ways in which, by talking, they can make language comprehensible to their students. Just making language comprehensible is not enough to enable students to use it. But, learners will never be able to use that which is incomprehensible to them.

Acknowledgements:

I am grateful to Steve in Budapest, Mike (wherever he is) and Suzie in Barcelona, as well as many others for their indulgence in the continuing experiment over the years.

Bibliography

Howatt APR, *The History of English Language Teaching*, 1984, OUP
Krashen S, *Second Language Acquisition and Second Language Learning*, 1981, Pergamon.



What IELTS Students Want: Exploring Students' Concerns in Exam Preparation Courses

Sue O'Connell

Sue began her career (eons ago) with IH, first in Santarem, Portugal and later in Athens. After returning to the UK she worked in FE for many years, teaching on the usual mix of General English and EAP programmes and also running regular TEFL courses. It was the lack of an appealing coursebook for a Proficiency evening class that prompted her to try her hand at authorship and eventually to the publication of Focus on Proficiency. Several books later, as juggling teaching and writing finally lost its attraction, she became a full-time author, while endeavouring to keep a foot in the 'real world' as occasional teacher and teacher trainer as well as CELTA assessor and IELTS examiner

IELTS is the new kid on the block among EFL exams, certainly compared with FCE or CPE, both of which date back to the first half of the last century, amazingly enough. All the same, it's rapidly becoming a force to be reckoned with. When I became interested in the exam four years ago, candidate numbers were around 75,000. The figure for 2002 is close to 350,000, well beyond FCE levels. Remarkable growth by any standards!

As a result, more and more teachers around the world are having to turn their attention to the requirements of the exam and the needs of IELTS students.

And there does seem to be a consensus that IELTS students are "different" in some way. Teachers tend to use adjectives like *serious*, *motivated*, and *focused*. They're students who want to know why they're doing things, and how it will help them get the score they need; they're impatient with "fun" activities, or anything, in fact, without an IELTS label.

a wood and trees issue

They can also become preoccupied with the minutiae of the exam: "What happens if I write 139 words in Task 1 of the Writing paper?", for example. There's a wood and trees issue here which is a danger with any exam, of course. But with so much often hanging on an IELTS band score – a Masters' degree, a career in medicine - anxiety about exam details can represent a particular problem.

In order to explore IELTS students' attitudes and concerns in more detail, I decided to carry out a small-scale survey. The questionnaire I prepared was given to four groups of students (representing about twelve nationalities) in three institutions in Bristol. The results of the exercise were interesting in a number of ways, not least for the thoroughness with which the students completed the questionnaires. It seems that IELTS students have plenty to say about their studies, and they want to be heard!

Survey results 1: What are the main challenges of IELTS?

Section 1 was a simple ranking exercise asking which paper they considered most challenging. The overall result was fairly predictable, perhaps, with Writing coming top of the nightmare list, followed closely by Reading.

Number the papers

1 – 4 in order of difficulty. 1 = easiest; 4 = hardest

	Overall		Experienced	
LISTENING	1	18%	1	19%
READING	3	28%	4	32%
WRITING	4	31%	3	28%
SPEAKING	2	22%	2	21%

But when I separated out the results for students who had already taken the exam, I found an interesting variation: Reading and Writing had swapped positions in the ranking of these "experienced" students. Why should that be? We can only speculate, but perhaps they had received excellent writing training and felt well equipped for whatever the exam could throw up, while reading texts and tasks were still a more unpredictable and therefore daunting element.

Had these been my own students, the obvious next step would have been to have a class discussion on the issues raised. And this is where a questionnaire can be such a useful tool. It can form the basis of an ongoing dialogue about the exam and the course, allowing a general airing of preconceptions and apprehensions and a useful exchange of views.

The following section looked at each module in detail, asking students to specify one or two aspects of each paper (from a choice of four or five) that worried them most. The results showed broad areas of agreement between experienced and inexperienced students but also some startling differences in ranking. They also yielded a number of potentially valuable discussion points. These are some of the findings:

LISTENING

Overall	Inexp	Exp
1 Answering qs <i>at the same time</i> as you listen	27%	73%
2 Tricky questions (eg involving spelling)	50%	27%

The main concern for both groups was the listening process itself, no doubt reflecting anxiety about the once-only playing of the tape. It's notable, however, that nearly three times as many experienced students identified this as a problem. One reason for this may be that listening practice in the classroom had been on the "soft" side, with the teacher giving extra support by replaying the tape, for example. On the other hand, it may simply underline the stress of exam conditions. At any rate, it seems a topic worth exploring.

READING

Overall	Inexp	Exp
1= Timing	50%	54%
1= Dealing with unfamiliar vocabulary	55%	45%

WRITING

Overall	Inexp	Exp
1 Timing	50%	72%
2 Having enough vocabulary	38%	36%

Anxiety about vocabulary

The same two concerns, time constraints and vocabulary, figure prominently in the results for both the Reading and Writing papers. Anxiety about vocabulary in reading texts was significantly higher amongst inexperienced students – another area worth investigating, perhaps. *Tackling long texts* ranked unexpectedly low overall for these students. With Writing, almost 50% more experienced students identified *Timing* as a problem, suggesting the need for more emphasis on timed practice in class.

SPEAKING

Overall	Inexp	Exp
1 Not making too many grammar mistakes	44%	45%
2 Having clear pronunciation	27%	54%

Interestingly, there was much greater concern about grammar in relation to Speaking than Writing. It was surprising, too, not only that pronunciation ranked so high (above *Having enough vocabulary* and *Being able to speak on a topic for a minute*, for example) but also that it was twice as much a concern for experienced students. Again a useful topic for discussion, and one which raises the question of whether pronunciation, touching as it does on questions of expectations and confidence, might warrant a higher profile on courses.

Among the questions students raised in this section were the posers:

What is the best (typical) answer? means what answer they want to get?

If I don't understand the question, what can we do?

Survey results 2: How can your teacher help you most?

In the final section of the questionnaire, students were asked to choose six teaching strategies from a list of 16. What I had predicted here was an emphasis on exam-focus as opposed to skills-focus, but in fact the overall Top 8 below shows a fairly healthy balance between the two.

How can your teacher help you most?

Top 8 Overall	Inexp	Exp
1 By giving you lots of IELTS-level exam practice	1	6=
2= By showing you model answers for writing tasks	3=	1=
2= By working on sentence and paragraph structure	3=	1=
4 By building up your reading and listening skills	3=	6=
5= By giving you exercises to develop your vocabulary	2	15
5= By suggesting a clear approach for each exam Q	6	6=
5 By giving you lots of helpful exam tips	9=	1=
8 By helping you to plan your written work	8	4=

The results show some common ground between experienced and inexperienced students in the area of developing reading, writing and listening skills, but also some significant differences. In the most striking of these, vocabulary is very high on the priority list for inexperienced students but second to last for experienced students.

Equally interesting in many ways are the items students didn't choose ...

- By writing detailed comments on written work (9)*
 - By giving you lots of speaking practice in class (10)*
 - By explaining all about the IELTS Test (15)*
 - By suggesting extra reading and listening practice (16)*
- ... and these throw up some interesting anomalies:

They want every kind of help with writing but are not particularly interested in detailed written comments on their work

They want the teacher's help in developing their listening and reading skills but not to do extra practice outside class.

They're interested in pronunciation but not in speaking practice in class

hours marking may be a waste of time

This points again to the value of a questionnaire as the basis for a valuable and on-going dialogue. After all, if anomalies like this aren't aired, and discussed:

All those hours we spend marking may be largely a waste of time.

Students may not realize just how much they can do to help themselves. And that might make the crucial difference between achieving that elusive score or not!

Students may not see the point of speaking (or other) activities in class. And if they don't see the point, they can't get maximum benefit from them.

The important thing about a survey like this, and its real value in my view, is that results are specific to one group. With other students in other contexts, there would no doubt be completely different conclusions (and implications). As regards this particular group of students, however, the survey provides a clear message:

Writing is high on the nightmare list for experienced and inexperienced candidates alike. Motivation for any work on writing skills is very strong.

Reading is seen as more of a challenge as they progress.

Grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation are significant concerns, possibly exaggeratedly so.

Incidentally, the questionnaire also threw up one rather unexpected insight. How many students failed to follow instructions in one way or another? One third!

Sue hopes to look at some of the implications of these findings for classroom practice in a future article for the Journal.



Taking the Pain out of English Exams: IH Budapest's Euro Exam

Adam Schreck

After three years as a teacher and exam item writer at IH Budapest, Adam is currently Educational Director of the school's Euro Exam Centre. He also has experience teaching in Cairo and Prague.

In the summer heat and humidity, the pungent odours of stale beer, fried sausages, cigarette smoke and patchouli oil hang indefinitely in the air. At an hour when the ravers are just waking up and the rockers are already passed out, many are searching for the most happening stand at Central Europe's answer to Glastonbury — Budapest, Hungary's Sziget festival. To an outside observer, the situation doesn't seem quite right—the place attracting the most interest is a tiki-torch-lit tent offering passers-by a lowly cup of tea, a few English magazines and, strangest of all, a chance to try out tasks of Hungary's newest language test, the IH Euro Exam.

To better understand this phenomenon, one first needs to consider the history of language testing in Hungary. While internationally recognised tests like Cambridge and TOEFL have long been available to students intent on studying abroad, the vast majority of people leaving high school, entering university or advancing in their careers, faced the daunting prospect of the state-administered English exam. For years this dry exam, focussing on candidates' knowledge of antiquated grammar and obscure lexis, came to be dreaded for its dullness and infamous for its irrelevance to learners' actual needs. For teachers, especially native speakers, it posed unique challenges, such as trying to explain to students why choice 'C' seemed to be the *best* right answer, even though two of the other multiple choices were *also* correct. Worst of all, it was the only state-accredited exam available.

This all changed in 1998. For the first time, Hungarian law allowed other organisations to challenge the long-standing state monopoly on language testing, providing that any new

exams conformed to the stringent accreditation guidelines and level system. Work soon began at IH on laying the groundwork for the Euro Exam.

While the original team had a clear idea of what the three levels would be (approximately strong pre-intermediate, strong upper intermediate and advanced/proficient), it was decided a more comprehensive framework would be needed. The *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* seemed the perfect choice.

The *Framework* "views users and learners of a language primarily as members of society who have tasks...to accomplish" and sees language activities as forming "part of a wider social context". This view of language learning corresponds to current approaches in language teaching such as Task-Based Learning and the Communicative Approach. Not only do these reflect the philosophy of International House, they also clearly set the Euro Exam apart from other state-accredited exams in Hungary...which brings us back to the festival-goers and their tests over tea.

"Wow, cool!", "You mean this is really a state exam?", and "Can I take it right now?" are not the sort of comments you'd expect to hear about a language exam, least of all from dust-covered Hungarian teenagers. Then again, it is this excitement about learning that any teacher would love to experience in their own classroom. It also represents one of the primary goals of the Euro Exam—achieving beneficial backwash (i.e. the notion that tests positively influence teaching and test preparation).

Like that in many countries in Central and Eastern Europe, English teaching in many state schools in Hungary can best be described as “traditional”. Rote memorisation and grammar translation are widely practised, with little emphasis on actual communication. This has traditionally been reinforced by state exams. The Euro Exam designers wanted to break this mould. They designed an exam based on authentic texts and topics relevant to exam candidates, with a primary focus on communication. Thus, it was hoped that the way test preparation and, by extension, language teaching are carried out by many in Hungary could also be improved.

Interest from teachers has been huge. More than 110 secondary school teachers from across Hungary have successfully completed the Euro Exam Teacher Training Course. According to trainer Erika Osvath, “It’s wonderful to see [participants’] eyes light up, because they realise they can teach students in a fun way, while training them for the exam. Preparing for an exam doesn’t have to be a dull experience.” As one course participant put it when asked why she was drawn to the Euro Exam, “I would like to ensure [my students understand] that choosing a completely different kind of exam will not hinder them in speaking a language properly but will help them speak it naturally. Anything that helps me put students at ease with learning English is most welcome.” In addition, in-house teachers at IH Budapest have also participated in a one-week training course, receiving valuable skills which can be applied to exam preparation courses in other contexts as well.

The teacher training section is just one part of the Euro Exam project. At the top of the rickety stairs marked “dangerous—do not use” at the back of IH Budapest, the Exam Centre doesn’t look like much at first glance.

They speak of passwords, task formats, pre-test data, the next fag break

The cramped office is no larger than an average classroom and

is scattered with signs imploring visitors to watch their heads; the ceiling is less than six and a half feet at its *highest* point. Nine former teachers cum material writers, managers and trainers along with three support personnel and a part-time statistician type away, attempting to remain focused amidst the constantly ringing phones. They speak of passwords (security is an important concern), task formats, pre-test data, oral examiner standardisation and the next fag break. Yet this austere environment and small but committed team have produced some incredible results.

Following state accreditation in October 2001, the first Euro Exams were administered in December of the same year in the two systems of the suite: the Euro (general English) and the EuroPro (professional and business English). Since this first round of exams, the exam has been held three more times in March, June and December 2002. More than two thousand candidates have been examined with an average pass rate around 60%.

From the outset the Exam Centre sought to form partnerships with language schools throughout the country, thereby allowing students throughout Hungary the chance to take the Euro Exam. The Centre now boasts fourteen affiliate language schools and colleges across the country. In addition, an in-house publishing department has produced sample sets for all levels in both systems, a handbook for teachers, quarterly newsletters and a pilot coursebook and teacher’s book for the popular upper-intermediate level exam; teaching materials are currently being written for the advanced level exam.

On its one-year anniversary of operation, the Euro Exam received the prestigious *European Language Label* for an “innovative and outstanding” project by the European Commission and the Hungarian Ministry of Education. It is well poised for continued success in Hungary, with the possibility of expansion into other parts of Europe as well.

If you would like more information on the Euro Exam project, feel free to contact me by e-mail adam@ih.hu. Or, of course, we could always meet for a cup of tea at next year’s Sziget festival...



The Diploma in Educational Management: What Is It and Why Do It?

Jan Madakbas

Jan Madakbas is currently a teacher/teacher trainer at International House London. He is also a marker for the Diploma in Educational Management. Before that he was Director of Studies in BKC International House in Moscow.

I did the IH Diploma in Educational Management because I was already a Director of Studies and I needed a course that would actually teach me something useful for my job. I liked the fact that I could transfer my training to a commercial environment if

I ever chose to leave teaching. I also needed to satisfy a vague feeling that it was somehow useful to have links with other educational managers. I wanted to know what other people were up to in their schools.

That was almost 5 years ago. I still remember the course contents very well, the comments made by tutors on my hand-in tasks and even whether they were in pen or pencil. That's how strong an effect the course had on me. It was really tough meeting deadlines. In fact I remember not being able to meet all of them and having to ask for extensions. I learnt a vast amount and became so busy trying to put my learning into practice and trying to improve the school where I was working that writing the assignments was a drag. Actually doing the stuff was far more exciting. (If only it could be assessed on actual implementation!) To this day I am grateful for the continual support and encouragement from the tutors back in London and from markers wherever they were.

writing was a drag

So what is the Diploma in Educational Management?

It's a twelve month course in everything (well almost everything) you need to be an effective manager in education. The course includes 8 modules covering a useful variety of topic areas. For each module except the helpful orientation module there is a hand in task which must be completed by a certain deadline and be sent to "headquarters" where veteran EFL warrior - course director Maureen McGarvey and her team of markers assess and return it with constructive comments.

The topics are as follows:

Orientation Module	Assessing your current situation
Module 1	Organisational Structure and Culture
Module 2	Management Styles and Motivation
Module 3	Curriculum Development
Module 4	Managing Change
Module 5	Quality
Module 6	Marketing
Module 7	Finance
Module 8	Human Resource Management

In addition to these there is also a Report Back Task where participants are required to choose one aspect of the topics covered on the course and report on its impact on their working practices. This is a kind of mini dissertation/ research project submitted at the end of the course.

Clearly there is quite a lot to do in 12 months. To help with this burden participants are asked to negotiate their own deadlines and submit their schedule at the beginning of the course so that they have as much say as possible in managing their own time. This kind of thoughtfulness makes the course friendly despite its demanding nature.

What's in it for participants and schools?

The Diploma in Educational Management is unique in being the only wholly distance management qualification in ELT. There is no need to take time out from work with all the disturbance and the loss of income that this entails. This fact means that you are

able to apply the ideas and suggestions you are exposed to, immediately. From the point of view of the educational institution you work for and your career these are two great advantages of the course.

Another major advantage for the institutions is the trickle down effect of the course. Any training that staff receive spreads. In my school this manifested itself in terms of ADOS training courses, management seminars for administrative staff and a general waking up to the idea of some kind of systematic approach to running an organisation. Everybody in the company learnt from it; not just those who had taken the course.

If you are an educational manager in a location where you don't have much contact with colleagues and have nobody to bounce ideas off, then this course provides just such an opportunity. The course managers and markers do provide much needed "nurture" in the form of comments on assignments and encouragement. If you have a problem simply put it in an e-mail and someone at the other end will take the time to reply to you with refreshing friendliness and good ideas. There is also a discussion group managed through MSN which allows participants to air views to and react to each others' situations.

Apart from looking good on your CV and being a transferable qualification, the Diploma in Educational Management gives participants 40 credits towards the Aston University MSc in TESOL. This (should you wish to continue studying) is an extremely useful bonus as it cuts a considerable chunk out of the work and time needed to complete it.

What participants and directors think

When I told Maureen McGarvey about this article, she kindly volunteered to ask recent graduates and their directors for their comments on the course. Here are some of the things they said:

"The IH Diploma in Educational Management is a course with considerable potential. The bottom line of such a course - from the point of view of the school-owners - is whether participants become better managers. Speaking as a school principal, I would imagine that the first step towards becoming a better manager was to familiarise oneself with the theory of school management. The IH programme encourages participants to become acquainted with a wide range of literature and to respond to essay questions. It would be useful to have a further programme with an entirely practical approach, which involved the superiors/ colleagues of the course participants and a number of tasks very much along the lines of the RSA DELTA".
Robin Hull Director IH Zurich

"As an 'experienced' manager (DOS - Head of Education - Director), I found the course invaluable in providing a theoretical underpinning for my own views and procedures and in prompting reflection on established practice. A real plus is the

way you can tailor the practical assignments to the demands of your working context, so that the course - while requiring good time-management - is compatible with, and indeed feeds into a full-time job. It provided the learning challenge I needed at this stage in my career, tutors were very supportive and I thoroughly enjoyed it".

Kate Pickering Head of Education IH Madrid, Spain

"Today's educational leader is increasingly the 'everyperson' who needs a skill for each occasion, and the emphasis for good leadership today, is on having the skills and abilities to handle the many different circumstances that emerge during the

working day. Reflecting on my working situation throughout this course, and writing assignments based on it, was the key to equipping me with some of these skills".

Andrew Nye DOS IH Lisbon

If you are interested in finding out more about the Diploma in Educational Management qualification call International House London and speak to Maureen McGarvey on +44 (0) 20 7518 6900 or e-mail her at ed.man@ihlondon.co.uk. Also visit the International House London website- www.ihlondon.com



Why 'Chunking' is Important in Young Learners' Classes

Diana England

Diana is the Director of Studies of IH Torres Vedras, Portugal, where approximately 70% of the students are under the age of 16. She was one of the writers of the IH Younger Learners Extension Course and is currently a Course Tutor on the Distance DELTA. She has also trained teachers and taught in Lisbon, Cairo, Krakow, Timisoara and Valencia.

When 'The Lexical Approach' first became a buzzword, much of the emphasis focused on adult students and Business English. Yet this exciting way of looking at language is also highly applicable to Young Learner teaching. It's interesting to look at the approaches used in some Young Learners coursebooks, even those published only a decade ago, and which are still widely used today. The topics are geared towards children, but the language and some of the teaching techniques are often watered-down versions of what has typically appeared in adult coursebooks. How meaningful to their own lives is it for primary children to learn, for example, the present simple or continuous? Given their age, how often do they use equivalent structures for describing daily routines or actions currently in progress in their own language?

This problem is compounded since these children are likely to meet these same structures in a similar format again and again when they become secondary school students. And all this at the expense of providing language which has a more immediate surrender value and can help communicate their needs and feelings. Presenting children with just a few of the structures found early on at secondary level, as Lynne Cameron observes, "merely stretches out what has been done before over a longer period of time."¹ Instead, she argues for the value of providing primary children with a "broad discourse and lexical syllabus" that goes beyond traditional grammatical and single-word vocabulary programmes.

In this article, we shall see why it's important for teachers of Young Learners to be aware of the value of learning lexical chunks and we shall investigate some ways in which this approach can be easily implemented in our classrooms, without radically changing our teaching styles or syllabuses.

But first, a reminder. What exactly are 'lexical chunks'? Michael Lewis², Michael McCarthy³ and Scott Thornbury⁴ group them slightly differently, but these are the categories I find most helpful:

(A) **Collocations** ('seriously ill' or 'do your homework');

(B) **Phrasal verbs** have degrees of 'transparency' of meaning, such as 'pick up' which can be idiomatic ('I picked up few words of Polish when I was in Krakow') or literal ('Could you pick up that piece of paper for me?');

(C) **Discourse markers** or **Sentence frames/builders** which often appear at the start of an utterance, indicate a change in the direction of the discussion and allow for other elements to be 'slotted' in ('Come to think of it', 'As far as ... is concerned ...', 'What gets me is ...', 'It's quite incredible that ...') and **Tags** which consist not only of the traditional auxiliary verb plus pronoun, such as 'did(n't) you?' and occur at the end of an utterance and aim at showing attitude or involving the listener ('do you know what I mean?' or 'frankly');

(D) **Binomials** and **trinomials** are two and three-part units formed of adjectives, nouns, prepositions, adverbs that occur in a fixed order, often with an idiomatic meaning ('a black and white film', 'morning, noon and night', 'to and fro');

(E) **Compounds** are two independent words that combine together to form a new word with a small to significant difference of meaning from that of the two original words ('hard-working', 'to babysit', 'a coffee jar');

(F) **Social formulae** are stand alone phrases which, like other types of chunks, can allow for a degree of flexibility of form

(‘How’s everything?’ could be substituted with ‘How’s tricks?’ ‘I’ll get back to you’ could be altered to ‘He’ll get back to you tomorrow’):

(G) **Idioms, catchphrases** and **sayings**: some of these are purely idiomatic and fixed utterances which operate as ‘stand alone’ clauses, allowing for no changes (‘you can’t teach an old dog new tricks’); some are semi-idiomatic, allowing for limited changes (‘She/they/I (really/almost) let the cat out of the bag’).

So, as we have seen from the examples above, a lexical chunk is a **multi-word unit** (also known as a ‘**lexeme**’). In order to voice our thoughts and ideas in real time, we don’t have time to trawl our minds and put together the language we need on a piece-by-piece basis. Instead, we seem to rely on ‘chunks’ of language that come ‘ready-made’.

John Sinclair refers to this instant accessibility as the ‘idiom’ principle, which is accompanied in our mental lexicons by a second one: the ‘open-choice’ principle⁵. This is an extension of Noam Chomsky’s ‘mentalism’ – the belief that sentences can be produced creatively on the basis of an understanding of underlying rules – and refers to our analytical ability to ‘pick and choose’ our words when necessary and when time allows. Interestingly, some Alzheimer’s sufferers lose this skill and are unwittingly forced to rely on prefabricated chunks to help them communicate verbally. As a result, they can sound superficial and robotic.

Why is lexical chunking important when teaching young learners?

Scott Thornbury provides a useful description of what is currently believed to happen as children acquire their first language. When children are around one year old, they start using **single words** (as opposed to chunks) eg: *ball, daddy, stop*. At around eighteen months, they move from a one-word to two-word stage ie **mini-sentences**. Compare these two conversations, the first between a fifteen-month-old boy and his mother and the second between the same boy at twenty three months:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1 Timmy: <i>Car.</i> | 2. Timmy: <i>Car go.</i> |
| Mother: <i>Nice car!</i> | Mother: <i>It’s going very fast</i> |
| Timmy: <i>Go.</i> | |
| Mother: <i>Where’s it going?</i> | |

From two years onwards, a parallel process takes place. Children start producing **longer utterances**, albeit relatively ungrammaticalised eg: ‘*letter fall out Mummy book*’. At the same time, the child starts to come out with **prefabricated chunks** eg: ‘*gimme*’, ‘*See you later*’. These are used appropriately without any understanding of their internal structure eg:

(Child is putting coat on the wrong way)
Mother: *That’s upside down.*
Child: *No, I want to upside down.*⁶

However, they may overuse such chunks, as the little girl in the second exchange has done:

(Mother calls downstairs)
Mother: *Can you come downstairs and help me, please?*
Boy: *But I’m doing my homework!*

(Later, when Mother asks the boy’s three-year-old sister to help her)

Girl: *But I’m doing my homework!*

The sister has taken a leaf out of her older brother’s book, observing the underlying meaning of what he said (ie a successful avoidance technique) without analyzing the surface meaning.

Alternatively, their responses may be appropriate ‘reflex’ responses but inappropriate to the precise circumstances or audience, as this example illustrates:

Mother: *What do you want for supper?*
Me (aged about 4): *I don’t care!* (meaning: ‘I don’t mind’)

rote-learned chunks of language will make up a significant part of early learning

The above examples corroborate evidence from L1 acquisition studies that **children learn phrases formulaically** which they later break down into individual words that can be combined with other words, giving new (and personally creative) ways of speaking. Applying these findings to the Young Learners’ language learning classroom suggests that rote-learned chunks of language will make up a significant part of early learning.

How can we make use of ‘lexical chunking’ in the classroom?

(A) Starting and ending the lesson

You may use a password or **magic word** as a classroom routine to encourage students to enter and leave the classroom in an orderly fashion and to reinforce words that they have met in the lesson. But a magic ‘word’ can extend beyond a single word to two words (eg ‘black shoes’) or a phrase, exemplified by this recent exchange between my students and myself. The phrase the children used in order to come into the classroom was taken from a story we had listened to and watched from Big Red Bus 1:

Diana: *What’s the magic word, Catarina?*
Catarina: *‘Mm, you look very nice!’*
Diana: *Thank you! Come in!*

Taking the register can become a key language exposure stage of the lesson. Compare this first, more conventional, exchange with the second:

1. Teacher: *João?*
João: *Present!*
2. Teacher: *Hello, João! How are you today?*
João: *Fine, thanks.*

This can be further developed:

3. Teacher: *Hello, João!*
João: *Hello, Diana. How are you today?*
Teacher: *I'm great, thanks.*

You can see here the teacher recognizes the need to go beyond activating and making automatic the stock response of 'Fine, thanks' to include the children regularly using, as well as simply hearing the question 'How are you?'. This in turn can give rise to exposure to various other appropriate answers ('not too bad', 'I'm OK' and so on).

The end of the lesson is another opportunity for genuine communication and interaction using English. The teacher can drill common **social formulae** like 'Have a nice weekend!' 'You too!' or 'See you on Thursday!', and expect this to be used at the end of every lesson as the students pack up their bags. It's important that children don't just associate English as something practised inside the classroom alone, but learn to develop confidence in using it elsewhere too. Why not involve other members of the school staff, so that the children can say to the receptionist: 'Bye Mafalda! Have a nice weekend!'?

(B) 'Incidental' language used by teachers and learners

It is useful to monitor yourself or ask an observer to record the language you use with your students. Here are some examples of language I use in my children's classes:

'That's a good boy / girl!'. 'That's NOT a good boy / girl!'. 'What do scissors do?' 'Cut, cut, cut.' 'Slowly and carefully.' 'What does glue do?' 'Glue, glue, glue.' 'Just a little.'

children enjoy parroting

I have found that children enjoy parroting my praise and warnings whilst performing tasks. Because the words are readily understandable and accompanied by actions, they are very memorable. When I have produced the scissors and glue in a later lesson, the children have spontaneously come out with 'Slowly and carefully' and 'Just a little' as they start to cut or glue, the action being a mnemonic for language production.

Providing comprehensible language which learners can later use for themselves also applies to **typical classrooms instructions**. When my four-year-olds noisily berate each

other, chanting 'Close your books! Close your books!' as a means of exerting peer pressure, this is bizarrely one of the more rewarding aspects of my job as a Young Learners teacher, an example of '**language uptake**'. Typical commands which are lexical chunks include:

*Stand up! / Sit down! / Cross your legs!
Open your books! / Close your books!
Look at me! / Stop that please!
Hurry up!
Two minutes left! I'm waiting for silence!*

We can also use classroom instructions to set the stage for **breaking down chunks**. For example, 'Give out the books' can be substituted with 'Give out the scissors / crayons / glue', so children can sense the integral meaning of the first part of the chunk. Children love helping the teacher and this is another opportunity for genuine language use, getting students to ask 'Can I give out the books, please?', which can be substituted with 'Can I give out the crayons / glue, please?' as necessary.

(C) Language in Young Learner coursebooks

Increasing numbers of Young Learner coursebooks now recognise the value of highlighting 'lexical chunking' and choose conventional phrases as units to be taught which are expected to be learnt as formulae. *Zap A (formerly Cool! Starter)*⁷ has put several of the most frequently used classroom instructions for a very young learners class to a catchy and easily memorable song:

*'Hands Up! Hands down! Hands Up! Hands down!
Look at me everyone,
Sing a song
Hands Up! Hands down*

*Stand up! Sit down! Stand up! Sit down!
Look at me everyone,
Sing a song
Stand up! Sit down!*

However, learning the song doesn't necessarily mean children will immediately associate the lyrics with real language and real situations. I said 'stand up' the lesson after we'd 'done' this song without standing up myself and the students did nothing. But the first lesson I had this year, I said 'stand up' and they burst into song. This appears to show that the language was in a process of being internalized and hadn't in fact been forgotten.

Another course I have found particularly useful in helping very young learners to communicate is *Playway to English 1*⁸. In an early unit the children watch a video of the characters making a paper flower. They hear and practise the following language:

'The red pencil, please', 'The scissors, please', 'The glue, please'

For the children these three, four word phrases appear as one-word chunks. It is this type of language which can be very

empowering for children in future lessons.

(D) Using authentic language - 'fronting' for future grammar work

Real Books (ie books written for a native speaker children) can provide a very effective means of exposing Young Learners to lexical chunks, and can also develop an unconscious awareness of underlying grammatical structures. 'Dear Zoo' by Rod Campbell is one such example.¹⁰ This tells the story of a child who writes to a zoo asking to be sent a pet, but each one they send is 'too big / fierce / naughty etc'. After each problem the child says: 'So I sent it back', until the zoo finally sends a puppy, which is perfect. The teacher can read the story with the children, drilling key phrases from the story, such as 'It was too big', 'So I sent it back'. In our school, our Young Learners (aged between nine and twelve) have written and designed their own books entitled 'Dear Supermarket' and 'Dear On-line Furniture Store', in connection with coursebook topics. Other language that the children are exposed to and use, without the need for any analysis of underlying structure includes adjectives, past simple and too+adjective. The children produce their own book, complete with magazine photos and paper flaps to cover the pictures, which they take home and read out loud to their parents.

We looked earlier at how teachers can exploit the beginning of lessons as a means of exposing students to lexical chunks. We can also use these moments of genuine interaction to set the stage for developing grammatical awareness, without going into any structural analysis with the children. Here's how a teacher can start off the first lesson of the spring term:

1. Teacher: *Did you have a good Christmas?*
Elicit: *Yes, thanks.*
Teacher: *What did you get?*
Elicit: (various presents)
2. Sts draw pictures of some of the presents they received. They are encouraged to ask: 'What's ... in English?' for any words they don't know, and these are written on the board.
3. Hand out large slips of paper with individual words 'dotted' from the above two questions for students to join the dots.
4. Elicit the first word and stick it on the board. Continue to elicit the next words, until the complete dialogue is on the board. Drill and practice.
5. Elicit the questions from the children for the teacher to answer using 'I got'.
6. Practise the dialogue in open-class pairs.
7. Children practise in closed pairs, using their sheets to help them.

This same language can be recycled in future lesson with 'Did you have a good weekend?'

Paying attention to grammatical features of a language is not something that happens automatically in communicating and some artificial means of pushing that attention is needed. This

type of activity aims to gradually move children from communicating their meanings from the purely gestured and lexical to the grammatical.

(E) Moving from Lexis to Grammar - 'Grammaring Up'

Rob Batstone⁹, Michael Lewis and Scott Thornbury have all talked about the value of 'noticing' activities as a means of making learners' brains more susceptible to taking on board new language. Here are a couple of ideas for moving from the purely lexical to the grammatical with the aid of 'chunks':

1. Variation on a 'running dictation'. The teacher can insert slashes where lexical chunks begin and end in a short text. The children are encouraged to read and remember the words between the slashes rather than single words.
2. The teacher can select a short text that is to be used as a model for writing. The children reformulate the text which has been cut up into meaningful chunks. In reordering, students can be encouraged to notice the value of words such as 'but', 'and', 'or' and other words that help link clauses.

These are just a few of the ways we can exploit genuine communication with and among Young Learners and promote Lynne Cameron's idea of a 'broad discourse and lexical syllabus'.

They take advantage of the fact that **Young Learners' cognitive, processing skills are not developed or are still in a process of development**. For teachers, 'chunking' is a useful way of helping Young Learners acquire relatively large amounts of language without the need to analyse it and help them communicate their needs and feelings in the foreign language, such as 'I don't know' or 'See you Diana!'

In the Beginner and Very Young Learner classroom, it is direct (as well as indirect) teaching of **formulaic phrases** that **provides the trigger for discourse development and communication**. Teaching the numbers one to five, the primary colours or parts of the body won't of themselves help students communicate. However, phrases such as 'Can you help me?', 'Is this right?' or 'I got ten right' will. Some Young Learners' coursebooks have tended to progress from a 'lock-step', analytical standpoint, for example moving from teaching numbers to 'How old are you?' to the verb *to be*, neglecting or unconsciously relegating the communicative value of more idiomatic language. I'm certainly not suggesting we should abandon the more 'traditional' syllabus items, but by including those phrases which have an immediate surrender value as key components of a course syllabus, children have more language tools with which to join in and interact with the teacher, which in turn means they get more exposure to input for language learning and more practice.

Exposure to lexical chunks can be the **springboard for learning and using grammar**. A lot of important grammatical information is tied into words, and learning words can take

students a long way into learning 'grammar'. Consider a lesson which focuses on the contents of a child's schoolbag:

*One green pencil
Two blue pens
Three green rubbers
Four yellow books etc*

Hidden in these 'chunks' lie rules of word order and non-plurality of adjectives. Obviously, a teacher will not highlight these rules to children of primary school age, but building up an unconscious 'internal grammar' can be useful in later stages/years when getting students to discover what's different/similar with their L1 or what the rule in English is. So the teacher can help the child to move from the instinctive 'idiom principle' to the 'open, analytical principle', which in turn will help the child in creating his own substitutions, based on an understanding of underlying rules.

Finally, learning language in chunks as well as single words can help Young Learners obtain more native-speaker-like **pronunciation**. They often experience less difficulty in linking words together if they regularly use expressions which contain

examples of catenation or other linking sounds, such as are present in 'Have a nice weekend!' or 'Can you open the window, please?'

Bibliography

- 1 Cameron, L. 2001 *Teaching Languages to Young Learners*. Cambridge University Press
- 2 Lewis, M. 1997 *Implementing the Lexical Approach*, Language Teaching Publications
- 3 McCarthy, M. 1990 *Vocabulary*, Oxford University Press
- 4 Thornbury, S. 2002 *How to Teach Vocabulary*, Longman
- 5 Sinclair, J. 1990 *Collins Cobuild English Grammar*, Harper Collins quoted in Cameron, L. *Teaching Languages to Young Learners*
- 6 Thornbury, S. 2001 *Uncovering Grammar*, Macmillan Heinemann
- 7 Oxford University Press
- 8 Gerngross, G and Puchta, H. 2001 *Playway to English 1* Cambridge University Press
- 9 Batstone, R. 1994 *Grammar*, Oxford University Press
- 10 Campbell, R. 1982 *Dear Zoo*, Puffin Books



Theatre Club: English Through Theatre

Dominic Streames

Dominic has been teaching for ten years in Spain and Japan where he taught on the Jet Programme for three years. Currently he is a teacher at IH San Sebastian (Lacunza) where he is Theatre Club Co-ordinator and Co-ordinator for social activities.

What is a Theatre Club?

The basic idea of a Theatre Club is simple. It is held once a week for 1 - 2 hours. In that time students have the chance to act out specially written short fifteen to twenty-minute plays. After about three to four months, the play is then performed in front of their parents and invited students.

Using drama in EFL is not new. There are quite a few excellent resource books available dealing with this area, books which show how drama techniques such as mime, improvisation etc can be incorporated into the classroom. However, although Theatre Club does involve "drama", the emphasis is deliberately on "Theatre" rather than "Drama".

The idea came to me a few years ago when I was asked to run a free extracurricular activity for young learners. Wonderful, I thought, a chance to do theatre! The problem was that although I had had a lot of experience of being on a stage, I had none of directing or organising other would-be actors.

I looked at them with less than obvious panic

The first day of the new "Theatre Club" came along and there I was in the classroom facing fourteen smiling faces, all of them looking at me in obvious excitement and expectation, and I looked at them with less than obvious panic. "What exactly do I do now?" The first idea that came to mind was improvisation. Now, I wasn't exactly sure what "improvisation" was or how you did it, but I was sure that this is what you did in "Drama". So I got everyone to be trees. This worked very well, for oh, at least about the first five minutes. This is what I remembered doing in my drama club at school when I was their age, and funnily enough, it was just as boring. In fact the children told me so in no uncertain terms. And so I asked them what did they want to do? "A play! We want to do a play, act it out, do theatre!" So that week I went away and wrote a very short play, about witches, princes and princesses. And in that inauspicious way the first play was born. Of course the play wasn't very good; there was practically no plot and lasted about six minutes from beginning to end. But the surprising thing was that the children loved it. Probably, the fact that it was in a foreign language helped disguise the fact that it was pretty silly. But it didn't matter, we had a whale of a time and the excitement and obvious pride with which they finally performed "The witches of Castelldefels" in front of their parents, convinced me that this was definitely something worth pursuing.

Since then I have written and performed dozens of plays, and the majority of the Theatre Club students come back year after year. The reason for the success of Theatre Club is that it is based on such a very simple idea. Children love to play-act, to dress up, kill the witch, arrest the baddies and save the day. And they want to do it in front of an audience. This is the essence of Theatre Club. It is simply another opportunity for them to do all this. But this time, to make it a little different, they will be play-acting in English, using the English they have been learning in the classroom.

Although the emphasis of Theatre Club is on having fun rather than learning English, Theatre Club does have an immensely positive effect on a student's English. The scripts are deliberately not linguistically challenging; they are written at a level of English with which the student will be familiar, and therefore comfortable. (To modify Krashen, one could call it "Input minus 1")

What is the IH Theatre Club Starter Pack?

The International House Theatre Club *Starter Pack* is an exciting and highly motivating educational resource, designed to get students involved in an extra curricular activity which is not only great fun and very rewarding but also gets them to use their English to the full. It includes a Teachers' handbook packed with useful tips and ten specially written plays ideal for young learners, all of which have been performed in front of an audience. And sound effects so you can have truly real ghostly moans and creaking doors.

The Theatre Club plays available on the IH CDROM have a variety of parts to suit all levels and ages. Some parts may involve half a dozen lines, suitable for a young beginner, whilst other parts might be quite large to suit an intermediate student. Although the members of the Theatre Club may be students of different ages and levels, all of them are involved in the same play. As producer, you can individually tailor students' parts to their level if need be though in reality very little fine-tuning is ever necessary.

Involvement in Theatre Club undoubtedly helps improve fluency, but the real benefit is the huge boost in confidence it

gives students in their oral abilities. In Theatre Club, the English is full on. Lower level students, who in the classroom are only (necessarily) expected to produce short utterances, can be made to take part in quite extended dialogues. Although they only have a few lines to say, they have to listen, follow the script and know exactly when to say those lines. And the amazing thing is that they can do this!

the real fun is to put on a good show

I have been teaching English as a Foreign Language for ten years and although there are many aspects of the job I love, running a Theatre Club has been by far the most rewarding experience of all. Running the weekly Theatre Club sessions is in itself extremely enjoyable, but it is the putting on of the final performance which really makes it worth it. Were you to just put the children on the stage and let them act out the play, the result would be enjoyable and well appreciated by the parents. But that wouldn't be real theatre would it? The real fun is to try to put on a good show. With a little bit of scenery made from painted cardboard boxes, a few well chosen props and the odd sound effect, the final performance can become night that the parents and children won't forget for a long time.

Once you become involved in a Theatre Club group, the urge to turn the final performance into something special is irresistible. It is this aspect above all else which I believe is the key to the success of Theatre Club. We are not just practising English, we are not just going over a script in class. What we are doing from day one is preparing for a thoroughly entertaining show, a night that the students will be utterly proud of. That's show business!

[Dominic first introduced his Theatre Club project to IH at the IH Young Learners' Conference at Valladolid in November 2002. The Theatre Club pack is available from IHWO on CDROM]



Creating The Message from The Medium Using the Classroom as a Teaching Resource

Andrew Wright

Andrew Wright is an author, illustrator, teacher trainer and storyteller in schools. As an author he has written *Creating Stories with Children for Oxford University Press*, *Games for Language Learning for Cambridge University Press* and *1000+ Pictures for Teachers to Copy for Longman*. Andrew also runs an *LCCI Business English CertTEB* course with Mark Powell. For more information about Andrew and his work please contact him directly. Andrew's email address is: andrew.wright@ili.hu

An Underlying Principle

If an activity is interesting and involves the use of language then it is potentially material for teaching and learning language.

Most teachers are highly aware that many of their students learn through visual, kinaesthetic and aural experiences. The focus on media in this article aims to contribute to the corpus of ideas of what can be done to satisfy this need. I am going to take some of the media commonly available to all teachers but which are not often, perhaps, seen as potential media but merely as part of the overall learning context.

The Classroom

1 You can use the **room as an historical document** (fluency, past tenses, speculative language).

The older the room is the more signs you will find of human habitation! Particularly look at scratches, worn areas, and graffiti. *How was it caused? What might have happened? The school was built fifty years ago. The first students must now be about sixty years old. Do you know any of them? What are they doing?*

2 Or you can see the **room as a landscape** (fluency, present tenses).

The tables, the aisles, the sink, the tap, the central heating pipes, etc. can be seen as representing, hills: valleys, lakes, waterfalls, volcanoes, etc.

This classroom is the country. What's this? It's a road. What are these? They are hills. What's this? It's a lake.

The tap is a waterfall. The sink is a lake.

Go to your favourite place. Close your eyes. What can you see/hear/smell/feel? Go for walk. What can you see and hear to your right and to your left?

This is our town. Here is the centre of the town. Where is the school/hospital/swimming bath/cinema, etc.?

Where do you live? Go there.

Go to an important place for you. Talk to your neighbours. Tell them what you are doing there.

The room can become a stage and the furniture becomes props for dramatic enactments of dialogues or stories.

3 You can use the **room as a games board** (language point focus practice)

The tables can be linked together to make the pathway of a games board. On each table there can be pictures and/or texts (which the students have made) which send the students back or forwards or stay in one place. For example:

You break a leg. Miss two turns.

You ride on a bus. Go forward five places.

You ride on a big bird. Go forward ten places.

A monster comes. You run! Go back ten places.

4 The **room can become a metaphor** (Describing people)

Write down the names of two people you know well and who are important to you. Find things in the classroom which are metaphors for each person. For example: *door, window, light, floor, cupboard, wall, heating pipes*, etc.

Say why the objects are metaphors for each person. For example: *My Mother is an open door. She welcomes everybody.*

5 You can **design your ideal classroom** (should/shouldn't, would/wouldn't)

Do you like this room? What is good and what is bad about it?

The chairs are too hard. The walls are ugly.

What do you want in your perfect classroom? Things you can see, hear, touch, smell, taste. Let's write the ideas on the board. Beds. Comfortable armchairs. Music. A free coke bar. Computer games.

Draw and annotate your perfect classroom.

It's not a chair. It's a horse

The Furniture

Let imagination run riot: **It's not a chair. It's a horse** (Fluency)

This is not a chair. It's a horse. Here are its legs. This is its body and this is its neck. This is its head (waving one hand above the top of the chair)

This is not a cupboard. This is a cave.

This is not a table. It's a mountain.

(I learned this idea from Alan Duff)

The Walls

The walls of the classroom represent a huge, much under-used medium. They can become a stimulus for creative language use in all four skills.

draw directly on the wall

1. You can put up very large sheets of paper or just get permission to draw directly on the surface (it can easily be whitewashed for the following year). The students can be employed to illustrate all the words they are learning onto the wall so that it becomes a **gigantic picture dictionary**. Or they can create a **gigantic landscape** through which heroes and villains can travel, either practising prepositions and different verbs of action or creating stories and dramas.

Instead of trying to produce such a huge mural immediately you can build it up over the year.

2 The **four walls and time** (ways of expressing time)

The front wall and the front half of the side walls is the future...the back wall and the back half of the two side walls is the past. The present is at the junction between past and future. Put a picture of the class half way down a side wall to show where you are now.

Now you can show, with pictures, what you are doing at the present (present continuous) and what you have been doing and expect to be doing but may not be actually doing at the present moment (present simple). Show how the present perfect comes from the past and touches the present.

If you like the idea and want to refine it then you can add a long strip of paper from the back to the front of the class and begin your academic year by marking the first day at the beginning of a side wall, at the back of the class. You can then make a calendar on the paper strip showing the months and the days and this will act as a reference point for all tense forms or other

ways of communicating time eg time markers, for example, 'I am going to my uncle's house on Saturday.'

The students can see and feel the past is behind them and the future ahead of them.

The Floor Tiles (Sentence construction or story telling)

These are usually square. They offer you a grid which can be used as a **'games' board** as with the tables.

Alternatively a word or longer text can be placed on each tile and then the students can move along the lines of tiles, reading and responding to the texts. For example, they can collect them to make a sentence or to make a story.

Or a student proposes to move from tile to tile (word to word) making connections which other students must accept before s/he can proceed.

Through The Windows

1 **True/false sentences** (Descriptive language)

The students write five sentences about what they can see through the window. The sentences should be a mixture: true and false. The students exchange their work and decide which sentences are true and which are false.

Note: If you can't see anything through the window then ask the students to close their eyes and listen to all the sounds they can hear and identify. Discuss afterwards what was heard and in what sequence.

2 **Imaginary Hiding** (Prepositions)

In pairs, the students take it in turns to imagine that they are mice and hiding somewhere in the scene through the window. The other student asks: *Are you under the car? Are you behind the big tree? Are you in the roof of the red house?*

3 **Work with Memory** (Descriptive language)

Students work in pairs; one stands with his/her back to the window. The other asks what he/she can remember. *"There is a house." "What colour is it?" "It's red." "Is it red or yellow?"* To help the students to do this successfully, demonstrate the idea with the whole class.

4 Play **I spy with my little eye** (Spelling)

In groups the students can play the traditional game of, *I spy with my little eye*. One student sees something he or she can name and then refers to it by the word's initial letter. *"I spy with my little eye something beginning with T!"* The other students guess, *"Tree!"*

5 Talk about **what is happening and what happens** (Present continuous and simple)

Unless you are very unlucky life will be visibly and perhaps audibly going on outside your classroom window. This living life beautifully contextualises various tense forms but, most importantly, the present simple and continuous.

Tell me as many things which are happening, as you can in three minutes.

The teachers park their cars in the car park every day.

Mr Solberg drives a Mercedes.

The students' bus stops in the street.

The gardener is cutting the grass.

The wind is blowing.

6 Speculate about **what might be going to happen** (He might be going to.../probably is going to...)

Where's he going, do you think?

He might be going to work.

He's probably going to work.

7 Use **the five senses** (Descriptions plus present continuous in poetic form)

You are outside. Where are you? What are you doing? What can you see/hear/smell/feel? What are you thinking about? What are you feeling?

Let's put the sentences together. Let's make a poem.

It's winter.

The sky is grey.

The sun is pale yellow.

The wind is cold.

I have a headache

And a cough.

My mother is shouting,

You've got a cold!

'Put your coat on!

'Put your hat on!

'Put your scarf on!

Outside The Classroom

You can use **the doors** (Questions, possessives, predictions)

Five students go out of the door and close it. Knocking...who's that? The students take it in turns to put one hand round the door. The class try to identify whose hands they are...*Whose is that hand? Is it Peter's?...I think it might be Peter's.*

Make creative use of **the staircase** (Syntax...or other vocabulary in sequence eg numbers)

Write words on the vertical part of the step so that they are seen by people walking upstairs. It could be numbers: *How many stairs are there?*

Or you could put sentences or words on each vertical surface of the steps to practice sentence construction...e.g. wise sayings.

Go out to **the playground** and **play Hopscotch**

The basis of the game is that a series of squares are drawn on the ground, usually with numbers written in each one. The students hop from one square to another.

Here is an adapted version of 'hopscotch' to help the students practice their use of the sentence pattern, "I like cats/milk/swimming."

Draw a T shape of squares. Ask three students to each draw an animal in the top three squares. Ask another student to draw a heart in the middle square. Instead of drawing the animals in chalk on the ground the students can draw on card and put the card on the ground.

Now the students take it in turns to hop on the squares, saying the appropriate words. You could do it first. This is the procedure:

Throw an object which represents you onto the first square, for example, a toy, a pencil case, etc.

Hop onto the first square and say "I" as you do so.

Hop onto the second square and say "like" as you do so (Alternatively, jump with both feet either side of the heart square and say "don't" as you do so and then hop onto the 'heart' square saying 'like').

Finally hop onto one of the last squares and say what it is that you like or don't like.

Groups of four students now find their own patch of playground where they can draw. They draw a similar pattern and three different animals (or other objects). They should then play with their hopscotch pattern for a few minutes.

Other sentence patterns can be practiced in a similar way, usually by adding more squares.

A rationale

we want them to experience language

We can expect our students to do very mechanical and meaningless activities for part of the time. But if we want to keep their motivation and full involvement and if we want them to *experience* language used for real purposes then we must offer engaging activities in which language has a vital role. The media and materials around us can contribute to that fundamental endeavour.

Note: Part two of this article will appear in the issue 16 of the IHJ. The copyright for both articles remains with Andrew Wright but he is, of course, only too happy if individual teachers use his ideas in the classroom!

Business English Update

Dominique Vouillemin

Dominique worked at the IH London Executive Centre for some time before leaving to work as a DOS in other London schools. She returned to the IH fold in 2002 and spent an interesting time in China acting as consultant for a new school.

What's hot? This was the question as I returned to Business English teaching after a gap and needed to become familiar with current favourites in no time at all. Colleagues at International House Executive Centre rallied generously to offer experience and evidence of best practice and the results were surprisingly consistent. They were further corroborated by student feedback questionnaires and the experience of participants at a recent session for International House's Teacher Centre programme.

Questions were asked of my colleagues (to whom warmest thanks) as to what they use in the short intensive (2 week) Executive and One to One courses run at the Centre, how their own teaching style may have changed and developed and what they perceive to be current methodology in this field.

The clear favourite was *Market Leader* in particular the **case studies** found in each chapter of both the Intermediate and Upper Intermediate coursebooks (Longman). The opportunity that case studies offer students to practise naturally occurring Business English in a realistic work-related context was praised and cited by almost all teachers asked.

Hot on the heels of *Market Leader* was Mark Powell's *In Company* (Macmillan). A feature of this is its high quality listenings exploited through a variety of tasks via apparently effortless lexical chunking and categorising. Perhaps it is a mark of the coming of age and acceptability of the lexical approach in that it is no longer flagged up and trumpeted as of yore – we and above all our learners know it makes sense.

Also by Mark Powell and often quoted as almost indispensable to the numerous short-term one to one clients we welcome in London, who come to prepare a major presentation, is the admirable *Presenting in English* (LTP). This excellent book, perfect for self study also offers the positive backwash of improving clients' presentation skills in their own language – not that we would dream of suggesting such a thing. It is readable and practical and comes with a cassette.

Paul Emmerson's confident grasp and understanding of the needs of the Business English learner and his or her teacher was reflected in the widespread mention of his *Business Builder* series (Macmillan Heinemann), his *Business Grammar Builder* (Macmillan) and his latest – my favourite – *Business English Frameworks* (see reviews section). In his frameworks the author is able to combine light input covering key terms and phrases pertaining to his topic and variously formatted questions that elicit personalised input for teacher correction

and reformulation. By using these, the teacher is able to exploit current business media and the relative experience of the learner to the full. His topics list, feedback form and news item frameworks should be required shelf material in every Business English staff and resources room. His *Business Grammar Builder* follows a more traditional format and is very popular with students and teachers requiring remedial targeted structural practice for learners. His texts and topics are fresh and up to date and bring grammar to life while providing springboards for personalisation and reformulation.

a maverick and genius team

It will come as no surprise that for tried and tested specialist English written with sound lexical underpinning, the LTP publications *Financial English* and *Management and Marketing* both by Ian Mackenzie are high scorers. LTP - now LTP Heinle - has been serving the closely observed Business English client for many years and Business English teachers have come to trust and to value the no-nonsense adult-to-adult nature of its published corpus. This is a maverick and genius team that provides our market with innovative material which is instantly recognisable as sensible and effective and above all written by people who have been, or who trial with people who are in the classroom warranting the shibboleth of credibility.

Last though probably first (my questions focussed on published materials in particular) comes the use of the extraordinary range of authentic materials which are at the disposal of the modern Business English teacher. This is truly overwhelming and it is interesting to note that daily news and use of the Internet were the only classroom materials mentioned on student feedback questionnaires. International House Executive Centre records multiple copies of the **BBC1 Business Breakfast News** and builds intensive and extensive news listening into the morning programme. **Radio 4 's Today** programme has a short **Business News** bulletin just before 7am. Business programmes can be taped off air for educational purposes – providing the school has the correct licence - and worksheets can be developed to accompany and extend these. Ricky Gervais' wonderful character Dave Brent delighted students and Teacher Centre audience alike with the worst ever motivational presentation in the recent BBC 2 series **The Office**. CLA licence permitting www.cla.co.uk articles may be taken from the business press – *The Economist* (also great for recruitment ads); *The Financial Times*; the business section of *The Week* and that godsend to London teachers, the *Metro* newspaper – free so multiple copies of one issue circumvent

copyright restriction – to name but a few. We are used by now to surfing the **Internet** for articles on our clients' companies, for details from the client's company or personal website and for updates on less readily available news stories from their own countries. A new area here is the webQuest which is the current buzzword at ELT conferences and represents a pragmatic and it is hoped engaging and affective channel of interaction and learning between student, teacher and **ICT**.

Lexical and task based approaches are quoted by teachers as those that they most commonly espouse. These are certainly the areas described as recent developments on current CELTA and DELTA courses and so are reflected in current teaching practice. The task based approach also mirrors the business world in that so much working time is indeed spent on tasks or projects such as finite meetings, negotiations, preparing presentations and contracts; so the frame of reference rests easily with the Business English learner; perhaps more so than

with his or her General English counterparts who do not recognise this rhythm so readily.

what fun it is to teach Business English

The Business English client is perhaps the most demanding and the least tolerant of jarring inauthentic materials and ill-informed or poorly prepared teachers. The teachers interviewed for the above research are right there at the board-pen face every day. If they say these materials work – you can be sure of it. If you need to set up a school somewhere remote – these are the materials to take; and shush – don't tell anyone what fun it is to teach Business English – or they'll ALL want to do it.

This article originally appeared in The Guardian Weekly early this year.





What's Going On In the IHWO

Michael Carrier Director, IHWO

IHWO

This year marks the 50th anniversary of International House, and we are all celebrating 50 years of excellence in language teaching and training. There will be many events worldwide but especially on Thursday October 9th 2003, which has been nominated 'IH Day' and will be the focus of events, receptions and parties worldwide.

Membership

The network continues to grow. We have approved a new school in Bangkok and expect IH Hanoi to open in Ho Chi Minh City by May 2003. Negotiations are under way for schools in China, Saudi Arabia, France, Kazakhstan and Canada.

Recruitment

The IHWO Recruitment Service goes from strength to strength under the expert guidance of Lucy Horsefield and is now preparing for the peak season of recruitment for 2003. Our electronic list of qualified teachers has now reached 5000 and we look forward to helping more teachers secure IH jobs this year.

Conferences

The Directors' Conference in 2003 will be held at Hotel Hesperia in Cordoba, Spain, from Saturday May 3, 2003 to Weds May 7 2003, with the IH Study Abroad schools' Agent Workshop held the following weekend in IH Sevilla. In both venues the local city is actively involved, with receptions planned in the Alcazar in

Cordoba and the Real Alcazar in Sevilla.

The IH YL Conference will be hosted by IH Campobasso, Italy, from November 27-30.

The second IH ICT Conference will be hosted by IH Istanbul from October 23-26.

The IH DOS Conference for 2004 will be held in London Jan 7-10, preceded by a repeat of the Visitors' Training Workshop Jan 5-6, and followed by the IH DOS Certificate Course from Jan 12-16.

The first of a new IH TT Conference will be held in London in March 2004 (date to be confirmed).

Enrolment details of all these conferences will be sent to schools before the summer but please note the dates in your diary.

Materials

New educational resources are now available and will be sent to schools shortly.

The FCE Skills seminar pack (by Rod Fricker, IH Opole) and the IH Theatre Club pack (by Dominic Streames, IH San Sebastian see article on page 35) are original materials now available on CDROM.

The Recruitment Services Handbook, detailing processes and procedures to streamline recruitment, is now available.

A new teacher development course in Language Awareness (by Alex Tilbury, IH Katowice) will be available on CDROM by May 2003.

To get extra copies of these and other materials please download the Order Form from the website and send it to us.

IHWO Office notes

The major event of January was the annual IHWO DOS Conference; this took place as usual at 106 Piccadilly and was distinguished by excellent sessions given by DOSes from all over the world; if you weren't there you can read some of them in this issue. The opportunity to meet, exchange ideas and learn from other DOSes, doing essentially the same job but in such enormously varied circumstances, is an invaluable part of the IHWO year; it reminds us what we are all about and offers tangible proof of the support network provided by the presence of other DOSes on the net or at the end of a phone line. The chance to take a step back from the daily rush of paperwork, teacher support, timetabling and student needs, can energise and inspire one for the demands of the next year. That's what we hope anyway!

There was a strong demand for more input on management issues at the next DOSconference; we hope to act on this and on any other ideas you may have, in good time for the next one (see dates in Michael Carrier's report)

Within the schools, things are hotting up for the next round of Cambridge exams, the end of the school year in some parts of the world, the winter break in others, and some teachers are considering their next move. Have a look at Alex's notes if you're thinking of moving and are not quite sure what to do next.

Susanna Dammann



THE IHWO TRANSFER SYSTEM – A Guide for Teachers

One of the advantages of working for IH is that you are eligible to apply for transfer to any of the affiliated schools within the network. This is an excellent opportunity for those who wish to move on geographically but wish to maintain the continuity that the IHWO system provides in terms of training and development.

The way in which the system works is outlined below.

At the beginning of April your DOS conducts a performance development interview (PDI) with you in order to find out what your plans are for the next academic year. Following this, the DOS then writes a report, which you both sign.

IHWO Recruitment Services (RS) posts vacancies at the end of April.

We will then ask you to choose three schools that you would like to apply to in order of preference. Please remember that

you must ensure that your experience and qualifications match your chosen school's requirements.

The PDI is then forwarded to your choice of transfer. School Directors then decide how they would like to proceed with your application. You'll then receive notification from Recruitment Services or from the schools directly.

This process is then repeated for your second and third choices. Should you accept a transfer post, RS will then let you know what your next move should be regarding contracts/visas/ flights etc.

Any further questions please contact alex.monk@ihlondon.co.uk or lucy.horsefield@ihlondon.co.uk

Alex Monk



Profiles of schools

Here is our latest tour around the IH Affiliates. We're sure you'll enjoy reading about these places. As always, we would love to hear from those of you who haven't told us about your school yet

IH Hanoi (Apollo Education and Training)

We are the biggest foreign education organization in Vietnam with two schools in Hanoi and one in Hochiminh City. To serve 2000 students monthly, our facilities include more than 30 well-equipped classrooms and our team consists of more than 100 staff members with around 40 native-speaking teachers. Our organization has achieved many accolades including the distinction of being the first 100% foreign owned education and training organization granted by the Vietnamese Government. Our branches in Hanoi and Hochiminh City were officially opened by HRH Prince Andrew and HRH Princess Ann respectively.

Active in Vietnam since 1994, we have worked with local and

international clients to develop high quality cost-effective solutions to their training needs. Our "on the ground expertise" and facilities put us in a unique position to service the needs of companies, government organizations, NGO's and individuals. Besides English language courses, Apollo offers courses in Business and management skills, and professional courses leading to marketing and financial qualifications. Our English language courses cover a wide range of courses from General English, Business English, English for Young Learners, English for Kindergarten to Exam Preparation courses and English for Specific Purposes. Apollo is a place where teachers can benefit from experiencing TEFL in various contexts.

Our vision is to help students reach the highest of their ability by giving personal care in their study program as well as in our social activities. We have small events every month for young learners and adults separately along with annual events such as school performances in the summer and Christmas Games Night in December for students at all age ranges. In 2002 summer, "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs" filled Youth Theatre, one of the biggest theatres in Hanoi, for two nights. The success came from the hard work of our young learners but was greatly enhanced by the efforts of our teachers with their creativity. Among those are Gayle who wrote the script, Maggie who directed the kids with the help of Sonia and Olivia, David who mixed music, Glenn who created lights and decoration and many other teachers who encouraged the students and supported the project as a whole. The social activities bring the whole school together and we always welcome teachers' ideas and involvement.

Apollo has a big team of administration staff who do support work to students and teachers. Our Customer Service Centres

IH Kraków

International House Kraków has an interesting history which is in some ways symbolic of the recent history of the country. Initially a English Language Catholic Catechism school (private language schools being illegal in the Polish People's Republic), the school endured a fraught early existence and several times escaped closure by the authorities until in 1984 it officially opened its doors as a private language school, affiliating to International House in 1990. The school currently occupies two buildings situated across the street from each other, less than five minutes' walk from the centre of town. The teaching staff numbers 30, (of whom half are native speakers), and students number over 1200. Approximately half of our students are Younger Learners (16 years of age and under), and we also have contracts with local and international companies to teach English for Business, an area which is growing rapidly.

IH Kraków has for over ten years been established as an RSA/UCLES teacher training centre, running RSA Certificate and Diploma courses full- and part-time annually. This year we will be running eight full-time Certificate courses and one full-time Diploma course, making IH Kraków the most active training centre in Poland. With just two full-time trainers at the centre this is a heavy load and we face a constant battle to balance the needs of the teaching staff with the growing demands of the training courses. As a result, in recent years the school has become a centre for training up trainers and our graduates can be found in many of the other centres in the region.

Kraków is a fantastic place: one of the great historical, cultural and architectural centres of Europe providing entertainment ranging from cinema, theatre, opera and classical music to sport, bars and

open 7 days a week for approximately 12 hours per day to consult students on their concerns and enquiries. The Human Resource and Administration is the biggest department as they include cleaners and guards who take care of the buildings and make sure staff and students are well served. The Academic Department which includes teachers has a friendly administration team of Academic Manager, Corporate Manager, Public-course Co-ordinator, Material Officer, Material Assistant, Corporate-course Support Officer and Public-course Support Officer. Accounting Department is quite small but they work efficiently, you are assured that your salary is paid on time. Last but not least is the Marketing Department who work creatively to promote Apollo's name and get more students coming in the buildings.

Being a big team, we are proud that we are a strong team, striving towards quality and results in education.

Phan Hoang Hoa, Public Relations Manager



restaurants. Indeed, it is a hard place to leave – as many of our teachers can attest. It is quite common for teachers to stay four, five years or longer and this is one feature which, perhaps, differentiates the school from many others in the region.

Kraków is the third-largest city in Poland and is the cultural capital and the home of Polish history and tradition. Having avoided destruction during the second World War the Old Town remains as it has been for centuries and is a unique and unspoiled monument to sacred and secular architecture. Indeed, in 1978 UNESCO listed the entire **Old Town**, together with the nearby salt mines at **Wieliczka**, as two of the world's most valuable objects of cultural heritage.

Thanks to grants from UNESCO and more recently thanks to the boom of investment in Poland, a large number of buildings have been restored. The city centre is, however, not a museum but a thriving cultural and commercial centre. The whole of the Old Town is a pedestrian-only zone and during the warm months (April to November) cafes put chairs and tables out on the Market Square, the **Rynek Główny**, which is the largest of its kind in the world and forms the heart of the city.

It is a spectacular place to while away the summer afternoons watching the street performances which take place there. In the winter months heavy snowfalls give the Old Town a fairytale look and the cafes and bars move back to the traditional and famous Kraków cellars.

Peter Moran, DOS IH Krakow



Leaning to Learning ... a life in the day of IH Pisa ...

Right let's get going with this article because the deadline is tomorrow evening, Friday 14 good grief it's San Valentine's so I've got to get a present for the Admin Director, my wife **Paola** that is, she's buried in the accountancy again, her hardest job

is getting companies to cough up, as I tell the Ts sometimes when they ask me "Have you discussed this with Paola yet?" And I say 'well I haven't seen her today, she is only my wife you know, but she really keeps the wheels turning' ...



I'll carry on with this later as I'm off to the Research Centre for the lesson with Daniele he's a sort of manager with *dot it* the people who give you website addresses in Italy. Always learn lots from him about Internet and stuff and lots of political manoeuvrings, typical of Italy. Must remember to do some PET practice with him. Said he was interested. **Don** is just down the corridor doing his course with the web miners. Web miners? You might well ask. But you'll have to ask Don

and he's into quantum physics and time travel and stuff so he's in his element there. He says they're working on a new breed of search engines. Then after Daniele it's a dash across town to do a course with Vodafone execs, business stuff.

Back in the school now. **Verity's** subbing in the Nursery class this afternoon. Give her a hand with the planning. First time she's done kids this young. 4 to 5. Verity's got some interesting students. One of them off to Antarctica digging holes to find penguin carcasses so he said. And Simone is down south having a look at the Stromboli volcanic eruption.

One of our secretaries, **Andreina** the gourmet cook who brings us in cakes every now and then, tells me one of the PCs in the study centre's broken down again. Integrated Internet in the courses this year. Internet round the clock. Most ss like it. Andreina says "undeliverable message" has come up again on her PC. Pazienza. Got a mock FCE session now with **Philippa's** lot then got a placement test then mocks with **Eamon's** 6s. **Giulia**, our other secretary, says the girl's interested in private lessons. Pity, could do with filling our courses better this year. Giulia says she likes working at IH because she can improve her English talking with the teachers ...

Just read feedback questionnaires from our intensive courses,

just finished. One student says to the question *Would you recommend a friend to come to IH Pisa?* "Yes, I would cut a good figure". Nice comment. State school teacher just dropped in asking about Trinity exams. We offer them as well. We do a lot of work with state school teachers. Got a teachers' club where we hold monthly seminars. Good contacts. One of Philippa's student's writing a book on the architecture of public conveniences. Didn't know there were any in Italy. She says one of her groups is composed of a urologist, a show jumping builder, an ex-marine and an economics student. Variety is the spice ...

Must remember to mark the 1st level intensives' exam for tomorrow. We organise our own exams for all the levels 1 to 7. **Lynne**, our teacher trainer, has got her monthly teacher development workshop next week. European portfolio & using video on the agenda. We have weekly teachers' meetings as well. Including input sessions. Eamon's just back from his primary school course - says he prefers chianti & good literature to young minds but the state school teacher working with him says he's really a big softie, a natural. Don's just given Andreina & Giulia a home made valentine's card. They're fighting over it. Got to help Verity clear up after the Nursery. **Annie** does what we call our tea & biscuits course in the morning with the signore & **Fiona** is doing other courses at the research area where she's got domain name inputters.

OK so better wind up here because I've got a "consultancy" in 2 minutes. Service we offer free to ss who miss lessons. So there's no lack of interesting students, demanding mind you, researchers, uni students, MDs, shop assistants we say we've got a student for every bit of the anatomy! but if you fancy a challenge, think that EFL is creative, think that Ts can learn from their ss, that sounds a bit glib, but that's right, it is creative, then, oh and you can cope with the simple inspirations that Tuscany offers, the wine, the olives, the myriad of pastas, the light & clear colours, this is ending up like a tourist brochure, the beauty, then drop me a mail on chris.powell@ihpisa.it second thoughts use the IH recruitment service and I've probably forgotten a few things but I think that's just about it.

Chris Powell, DOS IH Pisa



Book Reviews

Business English Frameworks

Paul Emmerson
(Cambridge University Press)

All who work with Paul Emmerson know him to be a wise, thoughtful and kind colleague who achieves excellent classroom results. It is therefore not without well-founded bias that his latest contribution to the Business English teaching corpus is reviewed below.

Topics covered by the frameworks are those most often requested by Business/Executive English clients – including management, finance, and trade. Frameworks are single photocopiable sheets dedicated to a key business area and designed for completion by learners and subsequent class or one to one discussion. The resultant classroom presentations, meetings and exchanges are personalised, enriched through teacher input and relevant because chosen by the learners via an initial “ need to discuss “ list. Properly administered, they provide the teacher with a rich body of learner output to monitor and correct and suggestions are given as to how this feedback might be varied and reformulated.

This is by no means the first volume of frameworks devised for use with Business English clients. The approach is attested and popular in both Business and General English. *Business English Frameworks* is, however, the most distinctive, for its range covering some quite technical and specialist topics, and for its depth, offering as it does comprehensive notes and guidance for the teacher.

Within a standard template requiring teacher input at the preparation stage followed by a second stage requiring the making of notes, each framework is unique employing different formats and diagrams to elicit and stimulate individual experience and interest. The frameworks and conveniently interleaved accompanying teacher’s notes offer practical and comprehensible input, clarifying business terms and concepts both for the non-specialist class participant and Business English teacher.

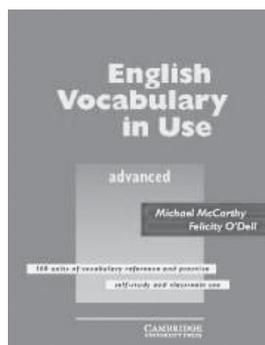
The author has many years’ experience in the Business English classroom and deploys his skills of elicitation and anticipation of clients’ needs and attention spans. His teacher’s notes are generous and thorough, while the introduction to the book reads like a charter for best practice in the Business English classroom. Among many essential recommendations, teachers are urged to monitor unobtrusively, to vary modes of feedback, to select carefully the type of client who would most benefit from this approach and to employ jigsaw and mixed skills approaches (particularly relevant to groups with differing needs).

This material has been trialled extensively and these ideas and formats are effective. This is a generous book, a highly experienced teacher and trainer is giving away his best ideas. He knows whereof he writes - with humour and gravitas. I recommend it without reservation while fearing for DOSs’ resources budgets – this one will “ walk “ from your shelves. (Dominique Vouillemin)

English Vocabulary in Use – Advanced.

Michael McCarthy and Felicity O’Dell
(Cambridge University Press, 2002)

I was asked to try out this book with my Advanced General English group last month and write a review as to how it went down with the group. So I duly tried to do just that. Flicking through the extensive three-page contents list at the beginning, there were so many topics listed that it seemed that it was going to be easy to incorporate some of the material into lessons on whatever themes I happened to chose to look at with the group. However, the reality proved to be different. Either the themes I wanted were not in the book, or the language it presented just wasn’t suitable enough for the activities I was doing.



English Vocabulary in Use - Advanced is presented in the same way as the other levels: 100 topical units covered over two pages, the first page being a presentation of new vocabulary and the second being a series of exercises testing the student’s understanding of the new language. The vocabulary is presented through short texts with highlighted words to match to definitions, example sentences with added on brief explanations of meaning or use, tables providing a definition along with some collocations, or sometimes just quite simply a word together with its definition. The rather drab presentation of a page of text is occasionally ‘enhanced’ by printing part of the page in pink or adding a small picture. Whilst there are some useful learner training units on how to learn vocabulary (including some excellent follow-up activities for students involving using the Internet or going out in the real world), how best to utilize a dictionary, and some good units on functional vocabulary and appropriacy of language, in general I was disappointed by the content. The book had some interesting topics, but often slipped in some words or expressions that I never use, never mind would teach my students. Scant regard was given to pronunciation, with only the occasional use of the phonemic script or indication of word stress. Some of the exercises tested words that had not been introduced, or even had a whole series of new words and students were instructed to use their dictionaries.

It seemed only fair though, to let my students have their say, and so I selected a few units for them to do at home, on topics related to what we had done in class. Along with these, they completed a questionnaire about their reactions to the material. They liked it. They all said that they had found the language presented interesting, and the exercises useful, and that they would like to use this kind of material at home, although not in class. Some of the explanations they found insufficient or confusing, but this was soon cleared up in class the next day. Some of them felt that an opportunity to write their own examples would have been useful, as opposed to just gap-fills, but again that was easily provided in class time. It seemed to raise the issue for me that whilst clearly my students had enjoyed and benefited from the material, there was a further need for opportunities to experiment with it before they could go about the business of acquiring it, rather than just understanding it. I also felt it was my responsibility to point out which of the words I considered most useful for them to remember, and those which I never really used myself.

Clearly, I am not a big fan of the book for class use. My students agreed with me, but found it useful for self-study. I can imagine, though I did not try it out, that it could be useful for helping students with writing, as a resource book to use when they were writing at home and in need of some language input to spice up whatever topic they were writing about. That way, they would have the opportunity to select what they wanted to use, and experiment with it freely, with the necessary feedback coming from the teacher’s corrections. (Julian Hiles).

International Express Elementary

Liz Taylor
(OUP, 2002)

International Express Elementary, intended for adult learners, is a course in English as a language of international communication in work, travel and social situations. An impressive package, it includes a Student’s Book, a Pocket Book, a Teacher’s Resource Book (notes and photocopiable material), a Workbook, a Class Cassette (for the Student’s Book) and a Student’s Cassette (for the Workbook).

This course is designed to use students’ limited time effectively and efficiently. Considering how rapidly it accelerates from the present simple through modals

to the past simple passive in twelve units, I’d have to agree. For this reason, I believe the course would be most effective for learners familiar with basic grammar and vocabulary, who need to consolidate and expand their practical language competence. Well-organised units cover such themes as getting to know people, lifestyles, travel, communication (phone, e-mail, fax), winning and keeping customers,

and global differences, and include many functions, a few of which are making and changing arrangements, social exchanges, invitations, and suggestions. All these are solidly supported by the necessary structure and lexis.

The layout and graphics (illustrations, photographs and coloured boxes) are clear, attractive, and in good taste. There is none of the "Let's play!" presentation of many GE coursebooks. Rather, the appearance contributes to the overall impression of organisation and usability appropriate for a course aimed at the business and practical user.

A nice feature is the slim Pocket Book (at the back of the Student's Book), which can be carried around for reference and review. It contains clear summaries of key grammar, many examples of language usage, and even sets out the format and language of typical formal and informal letters.

Although, as a whole, it is not suitable as a coursebook for general English classes, parts of it would be very useful — in particular, 'Telling the Time', 'Places in a Town' (lexis, prepositions of location, an excellent illustration), 'Asking for Travel Information', 'Travel and Holiday File' (lexis, past simple), 'Hotel File' (lexis, language, another excellent illustration), 'Food File', 'Ordering in a Restaurant' and 'Workfile/Word Partners' (common collocations). Also valuable as GE class activities are 'Introductions, Greetings and Goodbyes Quiz', 'Mass and Count Nouns', 'British and American English', 'Films, Music and TV', and 'Public Signs Cards' from the Resource Book.

(Leslie Anne Hendra)

Landmark Advanced

Simon Haines
(OUP, 2002)

Advanced level students, although a notoriously diverse cohort, quite often have one thing in common. Namely, they have clocked up hundreds of hours working with published ELT materials and particularly course books. Indeed, they may have experience that rivals that of their teachers. They therefore tend to be at best demanding of their course book and at worst openly hostile to publications they feel are inferior. They have both high expectations and the English to let you know when said expectations are not being met.

Happily, *Landmark Advanced*, a largely comprehensive course completing the three-level *Landmark* series, went down very well with the class I trialled it with. The course offers the standard components, including teacher's book and workbook with or without key. In addition, there is a student's cassette providing extensive further listening practice and a CAE study pack, a freestanding element which is thematically linked to the main course book. The latter offers an imaginative solution to the problem of coping with classes where not all students are sitting the exam. The teacher's book is thorough and provides ample language and cultural support for both native and non-native teachers. While it does provide suggestions on how to adapt the material to different contexts, the extra photocopiable material at the back of the book is somewhat tired and skimpy. Similarly, its lack of Internet support and a video component does make *Landmark Advanced* appear slightly incomplete when set aside other more extensive packages.

The course book itself has many admirable features and has clearly been very well thought out. Perhaps most importantly, it is likeable. Divided into twenty topic-based units, which in turn are divided into three potentially freestanding sections, it provides up to one hundred and twenty hours of material. It is clear that the book has been informed by Simon Haines' extensive experience of teaching Advanced level students. It has the aim of exploiting the vast store of knowledge of the world and language — both their own and English — which Advanced level students bring to the classroom. In terms of layout and visuals, very occasionally it can look cluttered as various boxes jostle with a range of fonts. However, I thought the visuals (ranging from standard course book fare to film stills, cartoons, line drawings and paintings) gave the book a texture others lack. In particular, the use of a key image from each unit in black and white to mark the start of each unit served to harmonise the three sections by providing a visual thread.

Each unit is based around either an abstract idea, such as 'creativity' or 'danger' or an everyday phrase such as 'all the rage' or 'infernal machines.' The range of topics is impressive. What is more, this book consistently surprises, intrigues and therefore motivates by embracing themes we do not often see in course books. Unit thirteen's treatment of conflict was striking in its engagement with such controversial issues as gun control, hot housing and air rage. Simon Haines seems willing to push the boundaries beyond the bland. It is also highly topical, for instance tackling the reality TV craze in unit eighteen.

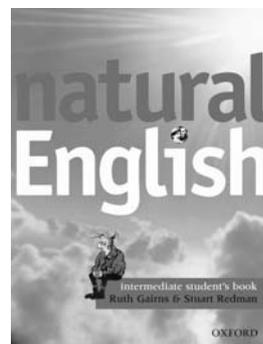
The book has a guided discovery approach to grammar along with extensive lexical development. The listening texts are unscripted and the tape scripts contain examples of speaker slips that reflect this. A key feature is *exploring natural speech*, which encourages students to identify phonetic, grammatical or lexical features of spoken language. But what I liked above all about this book was its differentiated approach. By this, I mean its commitment to ensuring all members of a class are able to flourish on their own terms. The guided discovery approach promotes pooling of knowledge. Language toolboxes provide prompts for the less fluent. The *close up* lexical boxes ask students to interrogate tricky lexical and grammatical items from the texts, thereby encouraging them to begin to mesh the new items in with their existing knowledge. The numerous speaking activities have preparation time and scaffolding for the less fluent or confident as well as extension activities for the more fluent. Finally, the components of each unit are kept purposefully snappy to avoid what is termed 'topic fatigue.'

Landmark Advanced, through a focus on diversity and engagement in terms of both materials and tasks, will undoubtedly succeed in offering the myriad of idiosyncratic Advanced students something rewarding.
(Will Hutton)

natural English. Intermediate

Ruth Gairns and Stuart Redman.
(OUP, 2002)

It is very apparent from this book that the authors specialise in vocabulary development and syllabus/materials design. The emphasis is on language that students need to express themselves naturally and colloquially, and this embraces fixed expressions, semi-fixed expressions, collocations, phrases and so on. Grammar is emphatically not employed as the basis for sequencing language items in the book, but is introduced as required for each task and topic. Modals, for example, are covered, as are comparatives, superlatives, the simple past, the present perfect, and conditional structures, but tense shift in reported speech is omitted, as there are other ways in which speakers may report information. Decisions on which grammar items to include and which to omit were based on the authors' extensive research into the ability and needs of students at this level and on the naturalness of the language.



This approach has many strengths in that it successfully meets the communication needs of students by consolidating and reinforcing their active language, but it does not challenge them to activate and experiment with their passive language. The level of the book is lower than that of other intermediate coursebooks. Some of our teachers have found that the comprehension questions following readings are simplistic, the sections on grammar are brief to the point of being cue-like, the vocabulary is good but somewhat limited, and many of the listening passages are illustrative but too easy and lacking in richness of language that can be built on. There is a feeling that while the authors have an excellent idea that has been realised in many ways, there's a need for more 'meat and potatoes' in terms of structure and lexis.

Each unit presents a clear flow of activities, which the authors call 'planning and rehearsal time', and these build towards the unit's extended speaking task. Students are also provided with natural phrases and responses useful for the task ('guidelines for structuring

discourse'), and there is ample opportunity for 'confidence-building practice'. These three elements, the authors believe, improve conversation strategies, so that by the time students reach the extended speaking task, they are well prepared to handle it.

A considerable range of topics is covered: universal (disabilities, pocket money for children, relationships), practical (education, work, travel, application forms, telephoning), cultural (jokes, humour), and novel. My students particularly enjoyed the reading passages 'Eat in the darkest restaurant in Paris', 'How much pocket money should you give?', 'The whole thing was a nightmare', 'Bar etiquette' and 'The most expensive hotel suite in the world'. Several passages fall into two sections, which is very suitable for jigsaw reading. In addition to the Listening Booklet containing tapescripts and exercises on pronunciation of individual sounds, intonation, and word stress, there is a useful Language Reference section at the end of the Student's Book.

The layout is excellent. It is varied and lively without being cluttered, and each element of a unit is clearly marked out. The graphics are exceptionally attractive. The authors have used interesting illustrations, photos and authentic cartoons ('Agrippine'), coloured boxes and lettering, and various font sizes and styles, all of which contribute to the clear layout and attractive appearance of the book.

With a couple of reservations, I find this a very welcome addition to the Intermediate corpus and look forward to further additions to the *natural English* series.
(Leslie Anne Hendra)

Zap! and Zabadoo!

Vanessa Reilly, Paul A. Davies, Carolyn Graham, Jackie Holderness and Wendy Superfine
(OUP, 2002)

Zap! A and *B* and *Zabadoo! 1, 2, 3*, and *Plus* are a six-level course of English coursebooks for primary learners aged between approximately 6 and 12 years old. The coursebooks are accompanied by teachers' books, cassettes, flashcards and posters, plus a cloth puppet of Marvo the magician for *Zap!* The writers are well-established names in the area of Young Learner materials and the experience they bring as teachers and coursebook writers is evident in all aspects of the course.

As someone who teaches these ages both on-site and in our school, what would encourage me to use this course? At this point, I have to admit a certain bias. Last year I used *Zap! A* (distributed in Portugal as *Cool! Starter*). I found it principled, easy to prepare from, fun for the children and effective – the proof of the pudding being that my students have retained an impressive amount of the language covered in this book, which they regularly use in their lessons with me this year.

The course has a multi-layer syllabus. Alongside the traditional structures and vocabulary items often seen in primary courses, it aims to provide children with the basic skills for communicating in English. In addition, it promotes the development of various skills relevant to the age and stage of education of the children. *Zap!* helps to develop children's motor skills (for example through regular use of TPR and hand-to-eye coordination), personal and social skills (such as participating in group games and co-operating in pairs). *Zabadoo!* continues children's cognitive development through activities like training their memory and encouraging them to concentrate for longer periods, and social objectives that include appreciating reading and listening for pleasure and taking an interest in different cultures. The units in each book progress in a similar fashion, which provides a reassuring routine for young children. While many of the activities, such

as the songs, and language presentation stages, are inevitably open-class and teacher-fronted, others like the paper and pencil and craft activities, allow the teacher to work with individuals or small groups.

For teachers who work from possibly seven or eight other coursebooks or other materials during their teaching week, the *Teachers Books* are a welcome breath of fresh air. The introductions provide a succinct but informative rationale of the course design, although the authors could have usefully included the age ranges for *Zabadoo! 1, 2* and *3* in the course outlines. The lesson notes are well laid-out and easy to plan from or refer to during a lesson.

Each level includes photocopiable progress checks, tests and other masters of materials the children will make in their lessons. As the course progresses, children are encouraged to become more aware of their own progress and evaluate their learning through fun self-evaluation activities.

The topics are interesting and motivating to the children and relevant to their particular stage of development. *Zap! B* includes the themes of animals and clothes, while at the other end of the course, *Zabadoo! Plus* looks at space and the weather. All have units connected with festivals and celebrations, such as Christmas and Easter, Hallowe'en and Pancake Day. It is a shame that *Zabadoo! Plus* does not include reference to festivals from non-western cultures, given the writers' desire to encourage learners to be less ethnocentric. There are different types of characters; *Zap!* features two children, plus Marvo the magician who is involved in all presentation of new language. If he is anything like his predecessor, Mumbo, in *Cool! Starter*, he is a valuable medium through which children can communicate in English. The characters change in *Zabadoo!* with the introduction of other children and their genie friend Zabadoo, who is responsible for teaching instructions and everyday language. He is accompanied by other comic-strip characters who assume the role of Marvo in the presentation and practice of key structural items.

There is a progressive development of reading and writing skills; starting in *Zap! B* with recognition and optional writing of words, *Zabadoo! 2* where children follow simple comic-strip stories and write simple phrases and sentences to *Zabadoo! Plus* where children learn to read extensively for specific information and write short creative texts.

The activities reflect the ages, interests and cognitive abilities of primary learners, with chants written by Caroline Graham (who wrote *Jazz Chants for Children* and *Grammar Chants*), songs, different sets of stories, physical activities, craft activities such as colouring, making posters, games and puzzles.

The size of the coursebooks makes them relatively easy for young children to handle on tables where they are seated close to other children. The paper is thick and therefore hard-wearing. The page numbers are easy for children to read. The drawings and characters appeal to the various ages of children. The *chants* and *songs* are extremely catchy, with children remembering many of the songs many months later. (Incidentally, they make ideal material for end of year shows in front of family and friends!) The colourful *posters* and *flashcards* are easy to use and store and include all the vocabulary in each of the levels.

Zap! and *Zabadoo!* get the thumbs up from me as pedagogically sound, reasonably priced, user-friendly and innovative courses which help bring out the best in child and teacher alike.
(Diana England)

