The Warsaw Articles

1999 - 2001

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Contents

Author's Note

All the articles here are in their submitted rather than their published form. Some, when published, were heavily cut for reasons of space or toned down for reasons of libel, it was claimed, or to avoid the sensibilities of nice TEFL people. There's a bit too much niceness in English language teaching: we need more sound and fury.

<div align="center">**One**</div>

<div align="center"># Classroom research: learners and the syllabus</div>

Learners experience a syllabus but they do not know what it is. A syllabus is created by someone in authority or perhaps is not created at all. If there is one, the teacher delivers the syllabus lesson after lesson and the learners work through it, perhaps missing items when they are absent. Yalden (1987:87) states that "the learner must have some idea of the content (of the syllabus)" yet the learner's only idea of the syllabus might be the coursebook. However, there may be a mismatch between the syllabus demands and the learners' needs, so if the teacher diverges from the course-book the learners do not have a record of the complete syllabus.

Background to the project group

In 1998 I ran a small-scale research project with one class of 10 upper-intermediate level students. I knew five of the learners in the class as they were continuing into the second semester and I chose this class because they had worked well together in the previous semester. The students ranged from university students (male and female) in their early twenties, to middle-aged female professionals and non-professionals.
The lessons were held at Warsaw University of Technology English Language Centre (ELC). The class met twice a week for one and a half hours (two lesson hours) on Tuesday and Wednesday mornings. The book was (old) *Headway lIpper-intermediate.*

Project aims

The aims of the project were several:
- to make the students more aware of the syllabus
- to build a retrospective product syllabus with the students as a record of work done
- to encourage reflection on classroom activities and the rationale behind them
- to encourage feedback on classroom activities on a lesson to lesson basis
- to provide a document on which negotiation of the course could be based
- and for myself to compare the actual realised syllabus with the level syllabus.

The existing syllabus

The British Council English Teaching Centre (ETC) in Warsaw, where I also work, produces a level syllabus for each semester's work. It was at the time fundamentally a product syllabus, as defined by Nunan (1988: 12), derived from the contents page of the coursebook. The syllabus for this level at the ETC was based on headway upper Intermediate and was entitled Syllabus for D2 (Units 7- 12, see Annex I). It listed the work to be covered in eight sections: structures, vocabulary, pronunciation, functions, speaking, writing, listening and reading.

I took this syllabus as the set syllabus for the level and the one against which the actual realised syllabus would be compared. I also used it as the basis for designing the syllabus sheet to be given to the learners.

The design of the syllabus sheet

To fulfil the aims of the project it was important that the students and myself had a common document. This was the (empty) syllabus sheet which would be completed by the class and would form the basis for discussion, reflection and negotiation.
The document extended to two sides of A4 because it was going to be hand written (see Annex 2 for the completed syllabus). The topic areas were grammar, vocabulary, speaking skills, reading skills, listening skills, writing skills, functions and topics. I added sections for homework, tests and other considerations. I did not include a column on pronunciation as I felt that this should come under speaking skills.

Implementing the project

The sheet was given out during the first lesson and the rationale behind it was explained. I explained it as a way of keeping a record of work done, seeing exactly what we had done, so that we could discuss what we had done. The learners agreed to try it out.

We made the first entries that lesson and thereafter tried to complete the sheet in the last minutes of the lesson.

Completing the form

When I managed to get the timing right we had five or more minutes for the syllabus sheet. I asked the learners to take out their sheets and then I elicited what we had done in the lesson, discussed exactly what it was, eg reading for gist and not detail, and then each learner wrote it down in the correct column. Sometimes I asked questions like 'Have we done any grammar today?' to elicit the grammar that might have been hidden in a task. Often an activity provided an entry in different columns but we sometimes did not write in every aspect of a task as we felt it was going into too much detail.

Feedback on the project

At the end of the semester I devised a feedback sheet which I asked the students to complete anonymously before the final test. Eight students completed the sheet. Of these eight, six were,'generally positive about the project and two were very negative. The numbers 1-8 below represent the eight learners who completed the feedback sheet.

The sheet asked ten questions:

1   Was this project useful to you personally? Why? Why not?

1. Yes, it was. The project summarised our lessons during the course.
2. Yes, I know what I've done this semester.
3. Yes. I can remember what I was doing during the course.
4. Yes. I think I *(sic)* was very useful. I have learned names of different activities (e.g. listening for gist etc).
5. Yes because it helps with summarising what was done during the course.
6. It was useful, because of the possibility to revise the problems of English we talking about.
7. This project was not very useful for me personally. I think this project might be more useful more for the teacher.
8. Sorry, but no - for me it was a waste of time. 1 never look on it, if you don't ask. Now I don't know I where I have this paper...'

2 Did you understand the course better because of this project?

1. I don't think so but it's my fault.
2.Yes.
3. No rather not.
4. I don't think so.
5. Yes.
6. I think "yes" because it gives me a logical view on language grammar and different tasks: learning English. "'
7 .No I don't think so.
8.No, l don't.

3   Do you know what you have done during the course better because of the project?

1.Yes I do.
2. Yes.
3. I hope I will be able to prepare myself better to the test.
4. Yes, it's definitely the truth.
5. Yes.
6. Yes.
7. No I don't think so.
8. No, I don't.

4 Did you complete the document completely? Why? Why not?

1. No, I didn't -I'm too lazy.
2. No, I didn't because of the non-equal amount of different "activities".
3. Yes, I tried to do it.
4. I did my best. I think it's complete.
5. I did it completely. We have done it together in the group so it was easy.

6. Yes, because it helps me in my work on English.
7. Yes, I did. I thought it would be useful.
8. No. I wasn't interested in it.

5 Was it useful to complete the document at the end of each lesson? Why? Why not?

1. Yes, it was. I know better what I have done during the lesson.
2. Yes, look at point I.
3. Yes, because I then remember what we've done.
4. Yes, we could remember what we have done.
5. Yes, because the subjects of the lesson were known.
6. Yes, because it is easy way to remember what I must learn.
7. It is useful to complete at the end, because it is possible to summarise, what we have learn.
8. No. For me, much more useful and interesting is talking with the teacher.

6 Did you look at the document outside the class? Why? Why not?

1. No, I didn't - 1 haven't much free time
2. Yes, I did - to check my homework.
3. Yes, for example before the test.
4. Yes, I was looking at it when I was repeating the material.
5. Yes.
6. Sometimes "yes" to prepare for lessons.
7. I looked at the document outside the class to complete it when I was absent.
8. Never.

7 Did you show the document to others?

1. No, I didn't.
2. No.
3. Sometimes.
4. Yes. My friends from the course asked me sometimes.
5. No.
6. Yes, for completing it when I was absent.
7. Yes, I did.
8. Yes, if they wanted to check what we have done on last lesson. But for me it was better to call someone and ask.

8 Would you like to complete the document in your next course?

1. Yes, why not?
2. Yes.
3. Rather yes.
4. Yes, I think it would be useful.
5. Yes.
6. Of course.
7. Yes if it is necessary.

8. No. Please!

9 Is there anything about the document that you

Don't understand?

1.-4. -
5. No.
6. No.
7. I don't understand, what it is for.
8. I understand that you need it for some statistic work or something.

Don't like?

1. -
2. Section size should be adjusted to the amount of its activity during the semester (ie larger 'grammar', 'reading skills', 'vocabulary', smaller 'tests')
3. -
4. It isn't enough space to put everything we've done.
5. No
6. No
7. -
8. It was boring to write (to fill this piece of paper).

Think could be improved?

1. 'Homework' is not necessary. 'Other' is full of possibilities.
2-4 -
5. No.
6. No.
7. -
8. !!!

10 Do you have any other comments to make?

1. Thank you
2. No.
3. No, thank you.
4. It was a good idea (sorry for my handwriting!).
5. –
6. –
7. -
8. The course was good -the group was good prepared (the same, high level of many person) but I think it was bad that I was in other school in 1st semester: I need this time, I have to learn from first part of book again. And lesson with Ms Komorowska was very good. Thank you Robert! *(sic)*

Commentary on the feedback

The comments were generally favourable. Some constructive comments were made on the design of the sheet. The negative comments were very strong though and these two learners did not seem to understand what the sheet was for. Responses from student no.8 were especially negative except to the final question when she took the opportunity to comment on the course as a whole. Her comment on the lesson with a substitute teacher halfway through the course when I was absent due to illness jarred somewhat.

Evaluation of the project: achievement of the aims

- **to make the learners more aware of the syllabus**

Six of the learners said that they knew what they had done in the course better because of the syllabus sheet.

- **to build a product syllabus with the learners as a record of work done**

This was easily achieved and at the end of the course most of the learners had a completed document of what we had covered in the course.

- **to encourage reflection on classroom activities and the rationale behind them**

Completing the document provided time for reflection on the lesson's activities. This of course could have been achieved without the document but its existence provided a formal basis for the brief discussion -though one learner did regard this discussion as a waste of time.

- **to encourage feedback on classroom activities on a lesson to lesson basis**

The learners had the opportunity to give feedback at the end of the lesson on the benefits of different activities and I explicitly asked them for this after some lessons. Of course there was a mixture of responses. There were some requests for more activities of the same type or more work on a particular grammar point

- **to provide a document on which negotiation of the course could be based**

There was no explicit negotiation of the course content based on the syllabus apart from the requests mentioned in the section above. I did notice that there had been a lot of listening for detail and pointed this out to the learners. The next listening was for gist.

- **and for myself to compare the actual realised syllabus with the level syllabus**

The realised syllabus is different from the ETC syllabus document and this can be explained by a number of reasons:

- the ETC document was meant for a sixty-four hour course rather than the 56 hour course at the ELC .some aspects of the syllabus did not need to be covered by this particular group
- when discussing what had happened in the lesson some items did not seem important enough to write down
- items which appear only once on the imposed syllabus appear several times in the retrospective syllabus because this reflects the actual number of times these areas were dealt with and this gives a better idea of the content of the course.

Conclusions

The project was generally well-received and might perhaps have been completely accepted had more time been given to the rationale behind the project and if in fact, more uses had been found for the actual document.

The document served really as a record of work done and as such provided a reason to discuss the content of the lesson. An alternative would have been to complete the form at longer intervals, e.g. weekly or fortnightly to encourage a longer period of retrospection.

Other possible uses could have included using the retrospective syllabus as the basis of a more formal evaluation of activities and more actual negotiation of activities to meet student needs for the remainder of the course.
With an adult class the retrospective syllabus might form a useful document for both learners and the teacher.

References

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Annex 1 Syllabus for D2 (©The English Teaching Centre, The British Council, Poland)

Structures	Vocabulary	Pronunciation	Functions
Future forms (will, going to, present continuous, future continuous, future perfect)	Words that are nouns and verbs	Shifting stress in words that are nouns and verbs	Describing people (physical characteristics and personalities)
Relative clauses	Synonyms and collocations	Emphatic 'do'	Expressing negative qualities
Participles	Compound adjectives	/uzedto/	Describing objects
Modifiers	Describing people	Dipthongs	Describing places .
Modal verbs of deduction	Shape/material/colour	Sentence stress	Expressing present and past habit
Present simple and continuous, will, would, used to for expressing habit	Multi-word verbs	Connected speech	Expressing yourself, tactfully
Should have done/wish/ third conditionals	Money	Stress in compound adjectives	
Articles	Driving	Stress and intonation when criticising tactfully	
	Idiomatic expressions	Stress in multi-word verbs and nouns	
	Commonly confused words		
	Formal v Neutral style		
	Reporting verbs		
	Dictionary definitions		
	Singular/Plural nouns		

Speaking	Writing	Listening	Reading
Discussion	Letter to the press	Listening for specific information	Predicting
Roleplay	Pamphlet writing	Note taking	Recognising topic sentences
Giving short	Complex clauses	Intensive listening	Literary appreciation
Presentations	Essay writing	Summarising and predicting	Inferring
Expressing	Report writing		Summarising
Opinions	Discourse markers		Skimming
	Form filling		scanning

Annex 2 Completed Retrospective Syllabus

Grammar	Speaking Skills	Reading Skills	Functions	Topics	Homework
Modal Verbs	Who am I?	Reading for detail	Describing a picture	At work	Modal dialogue
Future forms – analysis	Tone units, stress and pauses	Predicting	Time expressions	At a hotel	Writing
Modals – degrees of Certainty	Selective stress – emphasis on modals	Scanning		City/countryside	wb p41 ex 1 future
Tenses after conjunctions	Pron. of verbs and nouns	Guessing vocab		Global problems	wb p42 ex3 future forms
Articles, there is/are	Discussing environment and global problems	For detail		3rd world childhood	wb p44 ex 7
Prepositions of place	Describing people	For gist		Holiday experiences	sts book p65 nos 6 - 7
Relative clauses	Family relationships	Inferring from content, style, structures and vocab		Describing people	syllabus
Participles as adjectives	Detective game – fluency	For general idea		Relationships	compound adjectives
Phrasal verbs	Expressing emotion	Styles of text		Crime	Essay
Modals of deduction	Money	Gist		Vices and virtues	p45 ex 1 -2
Past and Present	Paradoxes	Structure – topic sentences		Money	Relative clauses p49 ex 3
Reported Speech		Connectives		Marriage and divorce	Preps of place
Adverbs of frequency		For detail		Animals and pets	Reading 2nd text
Habits – used to/ would		to check predictions		Prison	Life
				Time management	Confusing words
					Wb p58 ex 6 p verbs
					Questions on Scrooge texts p64 no 2 and completing sentences
					Adverbs of frequency
					Ex5 p61,p62 nos 6 +8
					p68/9 ex 6
					Ex 4 p67 wish
					Hemingway text

Vocabulary	Listening skills	Writing Sills	Test	Other
Living in city/country	Listening for detail	Joining contrasting ideas although etc	23rd short test	Who am I?
Nouns as verbs etc	Listening for gist	Describing a scene:	- grammar, vocab correcting mistakes	Getting to know each other
Describing people	Listening for detail	- text cohesion, there is there are, it is, they are articles	Test for Robert	Dictionary work
Character and looks	- song	Comp – h/w		Exam skills – 3rd world cloze
Weather/seasons/ Temperature	listening for gist and detail	2 texts describing town h/w		Correcting mistakes
Get	Song – correcting mistakes			Revision
Describing people	Listening for comprehension			Dictionary work
Describing towns				
Modifying adjectives				
Crime				
Multi-word verbs				
Idioms				
Vocab – vices and virtues				
Money				
Violent crimes				

Other grammar (no room on form): should have done, I wish, articles, used to, -ing, conditionals, articles, past simple/continuous

Two

Photocopiable Materials - Design and Use.

Photocopiable materials are becoming ever more popular and widespread. It is easy to glance at a sheet, decide that it is what you need, copy it and use it, yet, as with all materials, there may be flaws.

One such sheet which I observed being used (from Forsyth and Lavender (1995)) had two problems with it. Firstly, the title of the sheet was wrong - the sheet was (and is) entitled 'Futures 2 future perfect and future perfect continuous' while the correct title should be 'Futures 2 future perfect and future continuous'. This may seem a minor point but if you are going to use such labels there should be no possibly confusing errors like this.

At a deeper level though the material contains potential pitfalls. The first section of the sheet described a situation and asked the students to complete sentence stems with an a/ or b/ continuation.

A. Denise is 25 years old. She is studying for a research degree in agriculture. She is due to complete her course next year. She has just been to her elder brother's 35th birthday party and this has made her think about the next ten years of her life. Choose which sentence ending, a or b, is correct.

1 In ten years I hope I'll   a/ be passing my final university exams.
                              b/ have passed my final university exams.

© Will Forsyth, Sue Lavender 1995

The teacher can check the exercise in **two** ways, by asking for an a/ or b/ response which is quick, **or** as the teacher I observed, by asking individual learners to read out the complete sentences. This is where problems arise. The learners I observed read out the sentences like this:

'In ten years time I hope I'll (pause while finally deciding whether to read a/ or b/) have passed my final exams.'

This is an unnatural way to read this sentence as it has been divided in the middle of a tone unit.

I rewrote the exercise like this:

1/ In ten years time   a/ I hope I'll be passing my final exams.
                         b/ I hope I'll have passed my final exams.

The teacher closely monitors the learners doing the exercise and then **before** asking for oral feedback the teacher (re) sensitizes the learners to tone units in a section B.

> **B. Now look at how we say these sentences. Listen to your teacher.**
>
> eg In ten years time / I hope I'll have / got married.
> or In ten years time / I hope I'll have got married.
>
> **Listen to your teacher. Where do they pause? Which words are stressed?**
>
> In ten years time I hope I'll be having a good time.

The learners listen and mark the pauses and the stresses and then **practice** the sentences in **A** before the class check the exercise. Linking and weak forms can also be practised. **Then** the teacher asks for oral feedback.

The learners go on to personalize the activity by writing out sentences of their own from the stem 'In ten years time...' and then **practising** saying them either alone or with a partner **before** saying the sentences to the class.

By considering tone units, correct stress and intonation an extra dimension is added to the grammar practice and if you want to have oral feedback then the **design** of the materials **must** consider pronunciation.

References

Forsyth, W. and S. Lavender (1995) <u>Grammar activities 2 Upper Intermediate</u> (Heinemann)

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Three

Coursebook Absurdities

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Introduction

Coursebooks are important. For much of teaching and many teachers, coursebooks **are** the syllabus. Learners like having a coursebook, and like to progress **through** it.

They have changed for the better over the last twenty years and have been an agent of change (Hutchinson and Hutchinson, 1994). Instead of just texts and questions, coursebooks have lead-ins, pre-reading and listening tasks, vocabulary development, skill development, games and communication tasks as well as grammar exercises.

Unfortunately the main innovation phase of recent coursebook design seems to have passed and coursebooks generally fit within two categories - those with multi-page thematic units (eg the 'Headway' series) and those with two page units (eg the 'New Cambridge English Course' series, the 'Reward' series). Publishers seem reluctant to deviate from these industry standards. I imagine publishers trying to achieve the same success as the 'Headway' series through imitation rather than innovation.

While these books may be better than those of the seventies and early eighties, there are glaring absurdities in their design and structure. These are not merely superficial problems but deeper faults in the fundamental concept of coursebook design.

The main faults of these books are an **extended discrete syllabus** and a **thematic structure.** These are at the core of coursebook absurdities and weaknesses.

The extended discrete syllabus

All coursebooks have divided up the language system into discrete 'chunks' which are dealt with separately in a bottom-up approach. Thus lessons on the Present Simple lead on to lessons on the Present Continuous (in themselves simplistic labels which cause many problems). The route to mastery leads through these chunks of language which are dealt with either in **a long unit** or in **a series** of shorter lessons.

In the New Cambridge English Course Book 1 there are a whole series of lessons devoted to the present perfect (lessons 19C, 19D, and elements of 20A, 20B). If teachers, as I suspect they do, just run through this series of lessons students will spend a block of 4 class hours on aspects of this language item. No wonder students groan at realising that their teacher is about to embark on another lesson of the present perfect.

In Reward Intermediate there is a series of lessons (Units 23, 24 and 25) dealing with reported speech (accompanied by skills and vocabulary work). Again this leads to a block of lessons (say, 6 class hours) on **one** grammar area of the language which the students have met **before** and one where they have probably already grasped the simplistic 'rules'.

This pattern of organising the language to be learnt may or may not be acceptable at the lowest levels but unfortunately it is basically replicated at higher levels - in fact extended throughout a learner's potential course of study. Once the main points of the grammar syllabus have been covered then the syllabus is repeated. Thus at an intermediate level there are more units on the Present Perfect, narrative tenses, future forms etc. While forms **may** be contrasted with others at an intermediate level and above, the fact remains that solid chunks of time and classroom energy are spent on isolated aspects of the tense system but worse than that, these aspects are dealt with **once** in the coursebook, or a best twice.

New Headway Intermediate, the latest addition to the Headway stable retains typical features of the series. There are large units which are theme-based and tied to a major grammatical point or linked grammatical points. Each unit has a major reading text and a main listening text for skills work usually on the same theme.

This structure of organising grammar leads to such problems as described above: future forms are contrasted in unit 5, conditionals (0, 1st and 2nd) met in unit 8 and reported speech in unit 12. The Present Perfect, (Simple and Continuous, contrasted with each other and with the Simple Past), merits two units - 7 and 10 - which, if the coursebook suffices for two semesters, as it generally does here in Poland, means that this problem area is dealt with in two large blocks **only** in the **second** semester.

The thematic structure

Topics are also met only once in a book. Thus if a coursebook is used over two semesters, the students will typically meet the topic of travel, say, **once** in the year in a solid block of time. In Headway Upper-intermediate travel and 'narrative tenses' are met in unit 5, a unit designed for approximately '10 hours' (Teacher's Book p. i). In New Headway Intermediate, unit 7 is entitled 'The world of work'. Thus there is a long series of lessons in which the reading is 'The modern servant', the speaking - an information exchange about three modern servants, a roleplay - choosing a career, a discussion on retirement, the listening - a retired man talks about his life and the writing is a letter of application.

In Focus on Advanced English CAE by Sue O'Connell there is the ultimate absurdity in theme-based coursebook design - a whole unit on fire (unit 10). How long can students, even if motivated by the prospect of an impending exam, keep up enthusiasm for lesson after lesson on fire?

In Sue O'Connells's Focus on Proficiency there are only ten units - that is ten topics for a whole year of study!

Workbooks

Themes and grammar are mirrored in the accompanying workbooks of most courses which generally provide parallel practice on unit topics. Thus homework, which is what most workbooks are used for, repeats the work already done in class at length. While many students do need extra work at home, to follow up work immediately and not in the future as **revision** is a serious weakness.

Dealing with absurdity

As a teacher I find that dealing with the above problems is a constant struggle of previewing topics, finding supplementary listening and reading texts, devising different tasks, reviewing topics and breaking up longer units with lessons on different topics and different grammar and vocabulary areas. No wonder there has been an explosion of supplementary materials on the market - coursebooks are inadequate.

Solutions

My general solutions to these design problems are simple and fourfold.

Firstly, coursebooks should be an embarrassment of riches - not just one main reading text and one main listening text on a topic. Each lesson (seen as one or two class hours) should have a long reading and short listening or visa versa. A teacher should not have to scramble to find the elements for a series of lessons from the materials in one long unit.

Secondly, this embarrassment should be spread **throughout** the book - students should be able to return to the same topic, again and again, to develop and **revise** their linguistic knowledge. Themes can be met firstly in a reading text and later in a listening text (perhaps from a different perspective) - not all lumped together in one monolithic unit.

Thirdly, grammar, above elementary level should be dealt with holistically - stressing the system, rather than the components. If grammar is touched upon rather than exhaustively rammed down students' throats it can be revised throughout the course, even from lesson to lesson. I suspect that learners have the ability and indeed have the **need** to be able to deal with the past and present and with future forms **within a single lesson.**

Finally, the teacher's book should offer the teacher **choices.** For any given listening or reading text, the teacher's book should suggest **a variety** of ways of exploiting and following-up the materials rather than step 1,2 and 3 that the teacher has to follow or abandon. With a variety of ways made explicit the teacher would be able to choose that way which is more appropriate for their students and at a **later** stage even return to the **same** material and exploit it in another way.

It may even be possible to make these choices explicit in the students' book - offer the students a range of tasks from which they have to choose. This would either involve negotiation of class tasks - based on teacher perception of students' needs and their own perception - or individual learners selecting tasks which suit them personally. Thus a class could do the same task or individuals or groups could be working on different tasks simultaneously. This would have further benefits of being more learner-centred and of training the students to take responsibility for their own learning.

Conclusion

With a little imagination and innovation (clearly supported by the teacher's book) coursebook design could be made to work **for** the teacher rather than something a thinking teacher has to struggle with to produce coherent, relevant lessons.

Grammar is a system and constant revision and revisiting in small doses is essential. Ignoring the future until unit 7 (of 12, Headway Upper-Intermediate.) or whatever, is not a sensible option.To meet a topic **once** in a coursebook is clearly absurd and has to be changed. Any topic is multi-dimensional and can be approached at different times **throughout** the book. Yet current coursebooks propagate these ideas which teachers have to accept and implement, **or** adapt, **or** reject and replace.

Coursebooks should be structured to encourage extensive rather than intensive contact with the grammar and vocabulary of the language and should be so rich that whole topics can be abandoned, if the students are not interested, with minimal impact on the syllabus that the coursebooks represent.

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Four

Using L1: what kind of sin?

I am constantly struck by the apologetic tone of those who admit to using L1 in the classroom. There are few advocates of L1. To admit that you use L1 often seems to be a confession of a sin: you can be absolved for doing it. Or, it is viewed as a weakness. L1 can be avoided – use gestures, games, special activities, **even** at lower levels.

Let me confess. My students use Polish. I use Polish. I've tried to stop them. I've given up trying to stop them. Mea culpa?

The use or non-use of L1 goes to the heart of English teaching. It touches on both methodological and power issues. Graddol (1997), in the The Future of English, divides English speakers into three groups: the 'inner', 'outer' and 'expanding'. He says though that 'one of the drawbacks of this terminology is the way that it locates the 'native speakers' and native-speaking countries at the centre of the global use of English and, by implication, the source of models of correctness, the best teachers and English language goods and services consumed by those in the periphery.'

These countries have had and continue to have a stranglehold on methodology, materials and ideology. In Poland, British publishers dominate the market, the Communicative Approach is the trendiest and British authors regularly tour and lecture at conferences.

The Communicative Approach arose in the UK, developed with small, mixed language classes of adults with the legacy of methods such as the Berlitz Method where LI was forbidden. In the periphery the classes are generally larger, of children and adults and of monolingual backgrounds. In Poland although I teach small groups these are mainly (but not always) native Poles. In the state sector the classes are larger. These are significant differences.

It is becoming common to re-label the teaching methodology known as 'communicative' as 'eclectic'. Eclectic teachers should apply whatever techniques to a class they think necessary. Yet it still seems that publishers, writers and methodologists to a great extent consider that despite the eclectic nature of learning learners are all the same. The global course book shows this. The lack of tolerance towards L1 use confirms this.

Although the currents in ELT are moving towards true eclecticism the inner countries still hold the keys to the magic kingdom, the answers to our problems: the writers and publishers produce the materials and many of us use them more or less in the manner prescribed.

Let's return to my confession that I use L1 in the classroom despite my best efforts to teach English through English. I want to turn the confession on its head and suggest that, to admit to **not** using or allowing the use of L1 in the classroom is a sin: a sin of omission.

The L1 should be welcomed into the classroom, especially in adult classes, with open arms. How are you? Take a seat at the high table.

It is invaluable in an English class. In teaching English we are not creating a separate language store of English. We are adding to the existing knowledge of **language**. Swan (1997) states that 'A second language learner is likely then, to short-cut the process of observing a new word's various references and collocations, by mapping the word directly onto the mother tongue' (p165)

Personally speaking I would hate to learn a language with a teacher who didn't speak my own language, especially at a lower level. And once I'd found such a teacher it'd be perverse for us to pretend that she didn't speak English.

The L1 taboo is a historical legacy. Not using L1 is right and proper in some circumstances and techniques will have to be deployed to make up for the inability of the teacher and learners to use L1: the proper use of and training in the use of bilingual dictionaries for example. Even in these situations though learners will continue to use L1for example to mentally translate. But in monolingual situations let us seize the opportunity to use the invaluable resource of L1. Learners are going to use their L1 so let's not allow ideology to handicap us. Let's harness L1.

In most Council teaching situations there is likely to be one dominant L1 (although there may be other minority languages). The use of this language by the teacher allows students to compare and contrast English with the language they know best, to use translation as a means to study form and meaning, to understand jokes, to check comprehension, to understand complicated instructions, to check exercises with their partners and to learn vocabulary with direct equivalents.

Furthermore encouraging the positive use of L1 empowers the learner – they should use their L1 knowledge effectively and know when to use L1 and when they do not need to. At lower levels especially, a learner cannot express themselves emotionally in L2. Allowing L1 reduces the processing load of constantly working in L2. Also with a teacher who isn't an L1 native speaker allowing the use of L1 gives both privacy and power to the learner: in L1 they have control.

Using L1 in the classroom shows my students I've learnt at least some of their language and shows respect. It also shows that I am a learner and can make mistakes.

In a two-year contract a teacher should be able to learn some of the host county's language. I also clearly mark activities where **only** English is allowed. If we are truly eclectic than let's be open and honest about it and use L1 positively when circumstances allow us to.

Five

The Death of the Native

The twentieth century has been kind to native speakers of English like myself, who wish to teach. The dominant paradigms have been underpinned by the primacy of the native speaker since the direct methods of the turn of the century.

However the status quo is now under attack from many quarters: Guy Cook (native speaker Professor at Reading University) has been lecturing on the subject and questioning the fashions of the century. Philip Prowse (native speaker coursebook writer) recently gave a talk at the IATEFL conference in Katowice dismissing native speakers. His conclusion was that every school should have a one as a language resource. Most teachers in the world have learned English as a foreign language and it is perverse that native speakers have such a dominance in prestige.

As we all know, native speakers no longer own English – not even British ones. The language has a life of its own. There are many varieties – Indian and South African English not the least of them. But there are also emerging varieties, emerging that is, onto the regional or even world stage. Also, English as a foreign language is growing in confidence. Swedish English is well known in the Baltic region as distinctive in its own right – no articles and a Swedish accent.

There is a danger, remote as it may seem, that native speakers and the institutions that rely on them will be marginalised. A native speaker is tied to a particular culture and the image of that civilisation. The Council is strongly associated with Britain, British culture and, at least here in Poland, native speaker teachers. This is fine at the moment as the Council has a high reputation, Britain is regarded positively and the Americans have yet the make major inroads into the market.

A preference for native speakers over non-native speakers could be a sign of the immaturity of the market. In Poland in the early nineties, unqualified native speakers were much in demand, but now schools demand qualifications. Some schools still split the teaching between non-natives doing 'grammar' and natives doing 'conversation'. One of the reasons learners come to the Council in Warsaw is that all the teachers are native speakers.

But what can native speakers offer? I asked my colleagues what they thought their 'added value' was and they suggested cultural knowledge, authentic material 'on tap', a 'deep' vocabulary resource, 'perfect' pronunciation and accent and 'natural' speech, stress and intonation patterns.

All these are very specific to a particular variety of language and culture. For native speakers, knowledge of a culture is part of their very existence but how much in-depth knowledge is necessary for a learner? And how up-to-date is that cultural knowledge when the teacher has been living abroad for years? A 'perfect' accent can be incomprehensible to some. How 'natural' should a teacher's pronunciation be? And who is defining natural?

Non-native teachers have two great advantages – they know the learner's first language and they have learnt English. They know what it is like to learn it and they

have been successful. So, let us step back and consider the issue from another angle. Why are learners learning English? If they are learning British English to go to Britain or because they identify in some way with that language and culture that is fair enough. British English native speakers, institutions and exam boards can be the gatekeepers – teaching, testing and evaluating – for these learners.

But for English as an international language, which is increasingly spoken mainly between non-native speakers, can native speakers set themselves up as gatekeepers? Are they qualified?

English is out of our control. Different varieties are maturing. As an international language it is owned by no-one. Native speakers are questioning their 'control' of teaching and learning. Learners might not want the baggage of a particular variety of English controlled from a country far away, and non-native teachers have great advantages over native speakers. How can native speakers position themselves for changes in the market? What can they offer when it is no longer enough to be merely a well-qualified native speaker teacher of (British) English?

One solution is for native speaker teachers to teach English and British Studies by explicitly tying language learning to the culture, although this could limit rather than expand their appeal. Another approach would be to build an awareness and tolerance of other varieties of English into their teaching.
However, the most promising way forward is for native speaker teachers to offer their strengths in intercultural relations. Native speaker teachers often have extensive experience of living in other cultures and dealing with people of different nationalities in a variety of situations. It is this intercultural knowledge that should make them highly prized as teachers, especially of English as an international language of communication.

Native speakers teachers have knowledge, if they are sensitive enough to learn, of how to operate in and between different cultures. This knowledge and experience of being expatriate rather than an exclusively culture-bound 'native speaker' could and should be a key element in the service they offer their learners: not British English or British culture or British accents. These are the foundations of their teaching but it is their experience of the world which should be the cornerstone.

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Thoughts on the to-infinitive

I read with interest Janet Olearska's (1999) article 'To split or not to split'. The controversy over the split infinitive amuses me greatly, as it is a clear case of analysis dictating conclusions. Language **is**, and the way it is analysed determines the rules and advice given about appropriacy and correctness.

The to-infinitive has always puzzled me. Why could we not split it? The answer is simple. We can only **not** split it if we regard it as a **single** unit. If we think of it as two words which co-occur to realise specific meanings then the problem of splitting it simply vanishes into thin air. This article will argue that the to-infinitive is merely a construct of analysis and does not exist as defined.

A preposition and a marker

A distinction has been made in grammar between the word 'to' as a preposition and as a marker for the infinitive. Why? To me 'to' always has an idea of movement – whether in time or space. Consider sentences (1) and (2).

> (1) I'm going.

> (2) I'm going to....

Sentence (1) is functionally equivalent to 'I'm leaving.' and refers to present time. Adding 'to' immediately pushes the focus forwards to some future time, from the first verb to the second. Consider (3).

> (3) I want to do it.

This sentences focuses on the present state of wanting and moves forward to the future state of doing. The 'to' projects meaning from the first verb onto the second in same way as the 'to' preposition shows movement in space.

Time

Swan (1996) claims that the to-infinitives generally do not show time.

> 'Infinitives are forms like (to) write, (to) stand. Unlike verb tenses (eg
>
> writes, stood), infinitves do not usually show the actual time of actions or
>
> events.'
>
> (Swan, 1996, p259)

However I would argue that as movement is always shown, so is time. The most famous example of the to-infinitive is (4)

> (4) To be or not to be, that is the question

If you read this soliloquy you will see that Hamlet is not speaking of 'being' or of a timeless state but of the future choice open to him – to take action or not, perhaps to

die. The whole speech is a meditation of the future in the play – movement from the now of his situation to the future of Act Three.

Labels, damned labels

The to-infinitive is a label placed on a piece of language by grammarians. It is distinguished from present simple because there is no third person 's'. Why is this distinction necessary? Why not have an all-embracing form which when used after 'to' has no third person 's'?

Why is a distinction made between the present perfect form and the perfect infinitive? Why not have a present perfect form which after 'to' has no third person 's'? Why is the form 'might have been' distinguished as 'modal + perfect infinitive without to' merely because there is no third person form (ie it is not the same as the present perfect)?

Where does this 'to' belong?

The pattern 'modal + prefect infinitive without to' is interesting because when 'ought' is used in this way it does need a 'to'. The modal verb 'ought' determines whether there is a 'to' or not, not the infinitive itself. The other modals 'must', 'might' etc do not need a 'to'. They determine the following grammar, not the infinitive. Sentences should be parsed thus:

> (4) {He} {must} {have been} {drunk}

> (5) {She} {ought to} {have noticed} {the car}

> (6) {I} {want to} {do} {it}

Ellipsis and Phonetics

The parsing of sentence (6) above fits in with the conventions of ellipsis (7) where 'do it' can be ellipted.

> (7) I want to.

If the to-infinitive were one indivisible unit it wouldn't be possible to do this.

Phonetically the 'want' and 'to' blend together in connected speech and one 't' is elided. In extreme cases 'want to' is realised as 'wanna' and 'going to' as 'gonna'. Again the 'to' seems to 'belong' to the first verb.

To or ing?

Often forms followed by 'to' or 'ing' are contrasted in coursebooks. The main thing for learners to remember is that 'to' always shows movement from the first verb to the second (8).

> (8) I must remember to post the letter.

The remembering happens first and prompts the second verb. The distinction is clear between this sentence (8) and (9).

> (9) I remember posting the letter.

Some verbs though have little or no distinction between the two forms and this is due to the nature of the verb itself. Compare (10) and (11).

(10)   I like to walk in the rain.

(11)   I like walking in the rain.

The verb 'like' has an idea of a state not a momentary whim but rather more prolonged. 'Love', 'prefer' and 'hate' are similar. There is no difference between (10) and (11) and those people who say there is should consider American usage. If 'like to' is good enough for Americans it should be good enough for our learners.

Splitting

Consider the placement of the adverb 'quickly' in these sentences.

(12)   I tried quickly to open the door.

(13)   I quickly tried to open the door

(14)   I tried to open the door quickly.

(15)   I tried to quickly open the door.

Of (12) and (13), (13) is most satisfactory as it conforms to standard word order. Of (14) and (15), (15) conveys the idea of the attempted action most effectively.

Conclusions

- 'to' always has an idea of movement

- there is no particular advantage to distinguishing between 'to' as a prepostion and 'to' as an infinitive marker

- 'to' shows movement and can thus show time

- the labelling of forms in pedagogical grammars could be much simplified and improved

- phonetics should be considered when analysing language

- the 'to-infinitive' is a construct of a particular analysis of the language – it can be analysed in other ways.

I may be overstating the case but it seems to me that there are strong reasons for grouping the 'to' with the first verb and considering that 'to' always has an idea of movement. If this is so and the 'to-infinitive' is not one indivisible unit then. 'splitting' it is not a problem.

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Seven

Try this – it works.

I have lost count, both before I joined the Council and while I have been here, of the number of times I have heard something on the lines of **'Try this – it works.'** But what does this actually mean? Does it mean that the learners learn a great deal of language from this activity? Or that their skills improve? Or that it's fun? Or that it takes up 45 minutes of time? Or that the learners are active? Or that it keeps them busy? Or perhaps (more hopefully) all of these?

On reflection **'Try this – it works.'** is often heard in connection with **'It takes a whole/half a lesson.'** Is this significant?

At one level teaching is concerned with **'activities'**. Teachers set up activities, set them off, monitor and give feedback. Course books are full of 'activities' and supplementary materials books even more so – jammed, cover to cover with activities to keep learners **'active'**. How important is it that learners are active? That lessons are fun? That the teacher has lots of cut up pieces of paper?

I've just been to a staff meeting where it was suggested that we run a summer course of FCE and CAE skills. 'Skills' is another area where we seem obsessed.
I think it was Yule who classified task into two types: 'skill-getting' and 'skill-using'. Reflect for a moment on a course book of your choice and consider how many of the activities are 'skill-getting' and how many 'skill-using.' I would venture to suggest that most activities are 'skill-using. On the face of it this seems fair enough – once taught they need to be practised but how much? In exam course books especially, the worst of which are exam practice in drag, the majority of tasks, activities etc are 'skill-using'. Gist reading, scan reading, listening for gist, listening for detail etc etc, again and again. A 1989 study by Robb and Susser suggests that classes explicitly trained in reading skills do less well than those who just read!

How many listening tasks in **any** course book are actually devoted to learning to listen – that is pronunciation - and how much is **testing** their current listening ability?
Let's look at the language content of a course in the same way as Yule looks at skills. We have **'language learning'** and **'language using'**. Again reflect on a course book or series of lessons you have done recently – how much time was spent on which? **Language learning** is explicitly focussing on language – **'noticing'** new words and constructions, expanding lexical sets, looking at word formation, recording language as it is found, guessing words form context (skill-using). **Language –using** brings us back to all those activities and tasks above – games and quizzes, talking about pictures, completing sentence transformations, doing cloze texts, reading for gist and scanning, multiple choice tests and texts, find someone who etc etc again and again.
Now I'm not saying that 'skill-using' and 'language-using' are wrong and a waste of time, far from it. Learners often only have the classroom in which to practice and it is a relatively stress free place in which to do so. No, what I am suggesting is a need for a balance between 'skill-using' and 'language-using' on the one hand and 'skill-getting' and 'language-getting' on the other. And by balance I am not suggesting a 50:50 split.

I think we spend too much time on activities which are only practising language which the learners already (or should already) know and not enough time on 'language-learning'. I think we spend too long practising what the learners have already met rather than teaching new language.

An anecdote. At an IATEFL Conference in Łodz a speaker spoke of a Rumanian or Hungarian teacher he had observed. He showed us samples of the learners' written work and asked us to say what level it was. We plumped for CAE. It was, he revealed, the result of one year of learning English in a state school with English 6 or 8 hours a week. The teacher was very charismatic he told us but not only that, she had told him that she covered the whole of English grammar in one year.

The pressure is on to keep the customer satisfied. To amuse him or her. To entertain. To be the star. To keep them busy. There is enormous pressure if one of your colleagues is a popular/fun teacher who always plays games and does quizzes and puzzles. Imagine sharing a class with them – and you want to do something worthy but perhaps dull – like word formation and dictionary work. A balance is, of course, needed.

Each of us should, I suggest, take a step back occasionally and reflect on how we spend the time in the classroom. Do you spend a lot of time on practise activities? Do you in fact hide behind pieces of paper (laminated or otherwise) and keep your learners busy rather than explicitly teach them something? Is learning language something incidental in your classroom or something central? Do you learners need to, yet again, do an exam task? Or could you spend the time learning some vocabulary? Do you need all these resource books? Do you need so many OHT's or photocopies? When was the last time you thought about language first rather than the activity first? When was the last time you extended your own knowledge of English or of the language of your learners?

Scott Thornbury, in IATEFL Issues, has recently made an appeal for fewer resources in the language classroom, based on the principles of the Danish Dogme 95 film-making collective. This is teaching without excessive technology – without photocopies, without OHT's, without a mountain of materials, that is learning based on the learners and the teacher and the interaction of these two and the real world.
I think it is very easy to be seduced by the enormous number of fun and exciting language activities which are available. I know, I have been. Yet I wonder if this is enough? Next time you hear or say **'Try this – it works.'**, reflect for a moment on what it actually means.

Eight

The Language We Teach

Britishness is in crisis if you believe what you read in the newspapers. The English are starting to search for an identity now that devolution has muddied the waters. Who are the British? And what is British English anyway? The way things are going it could turn out that the Scots will firstly be Scots, the Welsh, Welsh, the English, English and the only British people will be those who choose to identify with their British nationality. Where would this leave the idea of Britishness and even the British Council?

These are bigger questions than I want to address here but these issues affect the case of British English. This variety of English, for we must call it a variety in a world of more Englishes than there are Heinz varieties, is the preferred term for UK based publishers. It is, in fact, a brand. But British English covers **so** many island-based individual varieties that a useful definition of what it actually **is**, is practically impossible. British English is a generalisation, which, when we consider pronunciation (the Cinderella of ELT), is too broad. The term British English conceals the fact that there is, in any meaningful sense, no such thing as British English. I speak **a** British English, one of many, but more than that, my English has many different facets.

British English seems to have been proposed as a branded competitor to American English (because in the global market, size matters) rather than as an accurate label for the English we offer. The distinction between British and American English is in itself a blind alley (but maybe necessary for publishers). Comparing British and American English is like comparing sizes of supermarket without considering the products which they sell. The similarities between these two Englishes outweigh the differences and, if the new Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English is to be believed, the differences between the two varieties are much smaller than those between different genres or registers. Academic written English is far more divergent in vocabulary and grammar to conversational English than the constructs of American and British English are. In short, the differences **between genres within a variety of English** are more significant than those between separate varieties.

What is called British English in ELT is, in fact, Standard Coursebook English (British rather than American). It is tarted-up RP or Standard English with softer edges and concessions to other Englishes. Many of us have commented on the strangeness of the language offered in coursebooks on occasion. This is when the language in question differs from our own English or the English which we are aware of. And it is so 'nice' – no toughness or taboos for our learners. Let's be nice, neutral and unemotional. It is, however, a necessary attempt to deal with the **quantity** of English and maybe a valiant one at that, but is it good enough?

There is so much English in the world that it would be difficult to know where to start if you were given a blank slate and no guidance. There is safety in the established Standard Coursebook and it has served its purpose. People have learnt English through it, just as there were successful language learners before the Communicative

Approach. Learners do need a model of English to learn, perhaps to aspire to own, an English which will enable them to communicate in a form of English. Standard Coursebook English has been meeting this need. Yet there are moves afoot to develop a Common Core English which will do more than just nod to the new International English, which is developing outside of the control of native speakers.

However, this doesn't deal with the latest findings outlined above: the differences between genres are the most important. The entire approach to the language we teach should be re-evaluated in the light of the research of the last twenty years. Standard Coursebook is an amorphous mass of English misleadingly presented as a unified whole.

There is a clear distinction between written and spoken English. This needs to be dealt with explicitly in materials and by teachers. **Within** this distinction different genres need to be taught in a modular way. For General English there could be a selection of core written and spoken genres while add-on genres would enable ESP learner's specific needs to be met.

As a further refinement, and to answer the critics who say we 'should' be teaching an international standard of English, there should be both a receptive and productive syllabus. Such things as question tags would appear in 'spoken conversation' in the receptive syllabus but would not appear in 'spoken conversation' in the productive syllabus. Learners would have to be able to understand such things but not need to produce them. They could work on producing them if their motivation moved them to do so of course.

About a year ago I read an article in ELTJ about 'tails' - a recently noticed feature of 'real spoken English' - and used the sample materials with a group of business learners. They understood the idea quickly enough but were completely uninterested in producing tails. Imitating specific patterns of spoken English was definitely not what they wanted or even needed. The receptive/productive syllabus would cope with this.

The above approach to language content would mean that we could teach the genres of English (found in Britain, say), add-on different genres and even compare them between varieties while providing a core of English which would enable learners to operate in an international setting. This English, or rather these English genres, would be the learners' key to the door of the wider English language family that is English today. We need to recognise that English is a complex animal but then use these complexities to our advantage.

The question for the British Council and British ELT is: 'Is British English the right brand for this 'English'?' The answer must be yes. The British English brand is so widely recognised and respected world-wide, one of the most powerful brands in the world in fact, that we must continue to use it, despite what might happen politically in Britain itself. But in this changing and developing world we must ensure that the product sold under the British English brand reflects the quality of the brand itself. British English must reflect the reality of the Englishes found on our isles and give us the flexibility to meet learners' needs world-wide.

A year of BIELT

I've been a member of the British Institute for English Language Teaching for a year now and I feel it's been a worthwhile investment of time and money. I've seen it develop from a single ambitious homepage on the web to an organisation that can really make a difference to the ordinary teacher (like myself). It is still developing and while it is not perfect as an organisation, especially for teachers in the British Council Network, it is worth looking at membership.

The aims of BIELT are 'to raise the profile of the ELT profession, to be a voice for the ELT profession and to encourage the personal and professional career development of ELT practitioners.' In short it's a lobbying group for the ELT industry and a support group for practising teachers. British Council teachers may feel that they do not need such a group, being in the relatively advantaged position of working for the British Council but that would be a mistaken, even selfish, view.

Firstly, what 'goodies' do you get? Well, there are the issues of the BIELT magazine, The Information, and membership of IATEFL (which includes Issues magazine, Conference Proceedings and a SIG Newsletter). So membership of two organisations and lots of magazines.

Secondly, how much is it going to cost you? Membership, with the Council paying half, only costs £30. IATEFL membership normally costs thirty notes itself. Two for the price of one: a bargain.

Some things are not so great about overseas membership – like the fact that you pay more and get less. What use is a library in the UK? Or hotel bookings? And as we're already practising teachers we don't need entry details like which Cert to do. But not everyone is in our position and other needs have to be served.

BIELT is trying to do worthwhile things like 'establish a framework of British professional qualifications and work towards a set of international equivalences'. This will help all teachers, however indirectly and in areas such as these, advantaged British Council teachers should unselfishly support their professional association.

As the only teacher at the Teaching Centre here in Warsaw who has joined, I got to go the first Conference at Oxford Brookes University. Over 150 ELT professionals gathered on a cold rainy April day but enthusiasm shone through. The Council had sent people from Poland and Hungary and I met old friends and made new contacts. The day started and ended with plenary sessions by Chris Brumfit and Peter Skehan who both talked about where BIELT had come from, what it is and where it is going. In between there were workshops on a number of areas including teacher training and professional development.

I especially liked the fact that Gabriela Matei from the University of Timisoara, Romania had been asked to present. This showed that BIELT is not going to be a bastion of Britishness but will be an inclusive rather than an exclusive organisation.

The barriers to entry are the need for British qualifications rather than British nationality.

Personally speaking I enjoyed the conference enormously and the chance to meet fellow professionals – not only from teaching but also from management and academia.

The best thing about BIELT though (apart from the magazines and the weekend in Oxford) is the massive resource for Continuing Professional Development that is available on the web site for members. It is 'essential that you maintain high levels of professional competence by continually upgrading your skills and knowledge'.

CPD is a central plank of the philosophy behind BIELT's work to professionalise ELT. There are a large number of documents to help teachers climb the career ladder. There are suggested career ladders for you to look at and career ladders for you to create. There are documents to help you plan your career, help you enact that plan and to help you in your day to day life. You can record your progress (and failures) on a Record Card and in a Portfolio. You will be able 'to develop your expertise in recognising and planning your learning needs'. This will enable you to structure your career development in a coherent way and enable you to show something for the work you do. This resource has been prepared by Fiona Balloch and the quality, range and depth of the materials is a tribute to her.

Membership of BIELT in itself will show that you are serious about teaching and enable you to present a stronger case for Council resources but you will be in an even better position with a CPD portfolio you can show to your line manager. You will be able to show that you have thought about your learning needs in a principled way and be able to argue for time and funds to develop yourself to both **your** advantage and for the benefit of the Teaching Centre. The CPD material will help you plan and present proposals to your line manager in a much more effective and professional way.

BIELT membership shows you are committed to yourself, to your professional and personal development, shows commitment to ELT, will help you enjoy your job more, will increase your network, will empower you in relation to your employer and will make you more attractive to future employers.

I think all Council teachers should consider joining BIELT as a sign of commitment to professionalism and should undertake CPD. And I think that the British Council itself should encourage membership and show its commitment by specifying BIELT membership as 'desirable' on teacher, senior teacher and manger job descriptions and eventually listing them as essential.

To end, this is one of my favourite quotes from the CPD material:

"If you think education is expensive, just try ignorance."

Ten

Context, co-text, core meaning and distance.

Introduction

Grammar is all pervasive in language teaching methodology and language teaching materials although some authors have tried to redress the balance in favour of vocabulary (for example Willis, 1990 and Lewis 1993) or even to nullify the distinction completely. Yet grammar remains central to English language teaching, despite the communicative revolution of twenty years ago and the proponents of the Lexical Approach.

A teacher has to come to terms with grammar in materials and reference books. Hefting up a copy of Swan's Practical English Usage one is impressed by its size and weight, looking inside it, by its comprehensiveness. The very existence of this book raises some questions: 'Am I supposed to know all this?' 'How much are my learners supposed to know?' and even, heretically, 'Is this volume useful at all? 'Is it in fact the 'teacher's bible'?'

In Graver's (1986) Advanced English Practice, first published in 1963 there is an interesting passage

> Student's at an advanced level should, in any case, be encouraged to develop a healthy scepticism of 'rules' until they have had an opportunity to measure them against the facts of English as they find it. They should be encouraged to keep a record of examples they find.....Provided the teacher provides the necessary framework for investigation students can be asked to examine modern written English of various registers and styles, with a view to finding out, say, when and where the passive is used......Given the necessary help, students can discover and build up their own grammar of English, in however limited a way. (p13)

I would argue that this applies no less to teachers and learners at any level. This article attempts to challenge the orthodox descriptions of English, to raise questions in the minds of teachers and encourage them to undertake an exploration of English and to 'discover and build up their own grammar of English'. The key premise of my own personal search is that grammar is simpler than books such as Swan's suggest.

Key Concepts

Context: the general situation of the language eg an informal discussion between friends.

Co-text: the words in a sentence or utterance that surround the item being focussed on eg **What a lovely** day **it is today**. (co-text in bold).

Core-meaning: the proposition that verbs have a core meaning that underlies **all** uses.

Distance: there is distance between **'here'** and **'there'** and between **'now'** and **'then'**. **'Then'** can be used to talk about the future.

Some explorations.

Lewis (1986) described what is known as the Present Simple as 'the base form' and as an 'unmarked form' used when there are no temporal questions to be answered. Thus sentence (1) is complete. Time is not an issue.

(1) 'I am 34.'.

I would agree and suggest that the essential meaning of the present simple is a 'a close fact' and we understand it as close in the example above because there is no context or co-text to suggest that it is not 'close'. It is present by default and the label 'present simple' is extremely misleading because the form can be used for non-present time. Adding co-text (2) changes the situation and we understand the sentences as referring to the future **because of the co-text.**

(2) When I am 44.........

The essential core meaning of the base form is preserved. Clauses with 'when' followed by the base form can be paraphrased as 'when this becomes true or a fact...'
If we examine another verb – read- we see that (3) is a possible sentence. It is a general statement but how specific can we make it by adding co-text. Can we make it really 'present'?

(3) I read.
(4) I read every day.
(5) I read a lot.
(6) * I read now.

(3) cannot be made explicitly 'present'. It is only 'present' to the extent that we accept it as a true of the speaker when spoken. The 'present continuous' could be used to refer to 'now' (7).

(7) I am reading.

The present continuous works in the same way as the simple present: it is present by default. Adding co-text changes the time reference but the verb form remains the same (8) and (9) (though convention suggests that we don't use 'watch TV in the sense of (9)).

(8) I'm watching TV.
(9) I'm playing tennis on Saturday with John.

The co-text or lack of it expresses the time reference: the verb form itself does not. The 'Present Perfect' works in exactly the same way. (10) and (11).

(10) I have read the book, you can have it.
(11) When I have read the book, you can have it.
(11) refers to the future because of 'when'.

To get closer to the core meaning of verb forms you have to contrast sentences. (12) and (13).

(12) When I have read the book, you can have it.
(13) When I read the book you can have it.

In these two sentences I would suggest that the meaning is very similar. Maule (1991) suggests another pair of sentences where the difference in meaning is clearer. (14) and (15).

(14) When I visit Barcelona I'll see her.
(15) When I have visited Barcelona I'll see her.

Maule argues that the 'present perfect' shows that there is a greater time distance between the two actions. Lewis (1986) argues that the fundamental meaning is one of looking back. I think it is simply 'completion' (or 'incompletion').

Does the idea of 'present by default' extend to 'past by default'? (16) and (17)

(16) I live here.
(17) I lived there.

Example (17) seems incomplete. It begs the question 'when?' We accept it as 'past' because there is nothing to tell us that it is not past but we need a more explicit time reference to place it in time: either co-text or context. This is because the 'present simple' form and the 'simple past form' are part of a wider system that underlies English grammar and language. This is the system of **distance**. Things are '**close**' or '**distant**.' Figure 1 shows this system working around the most important, central element of each person's universe '**me**' while Figure 2 shows distance related to distant time: **me then**.
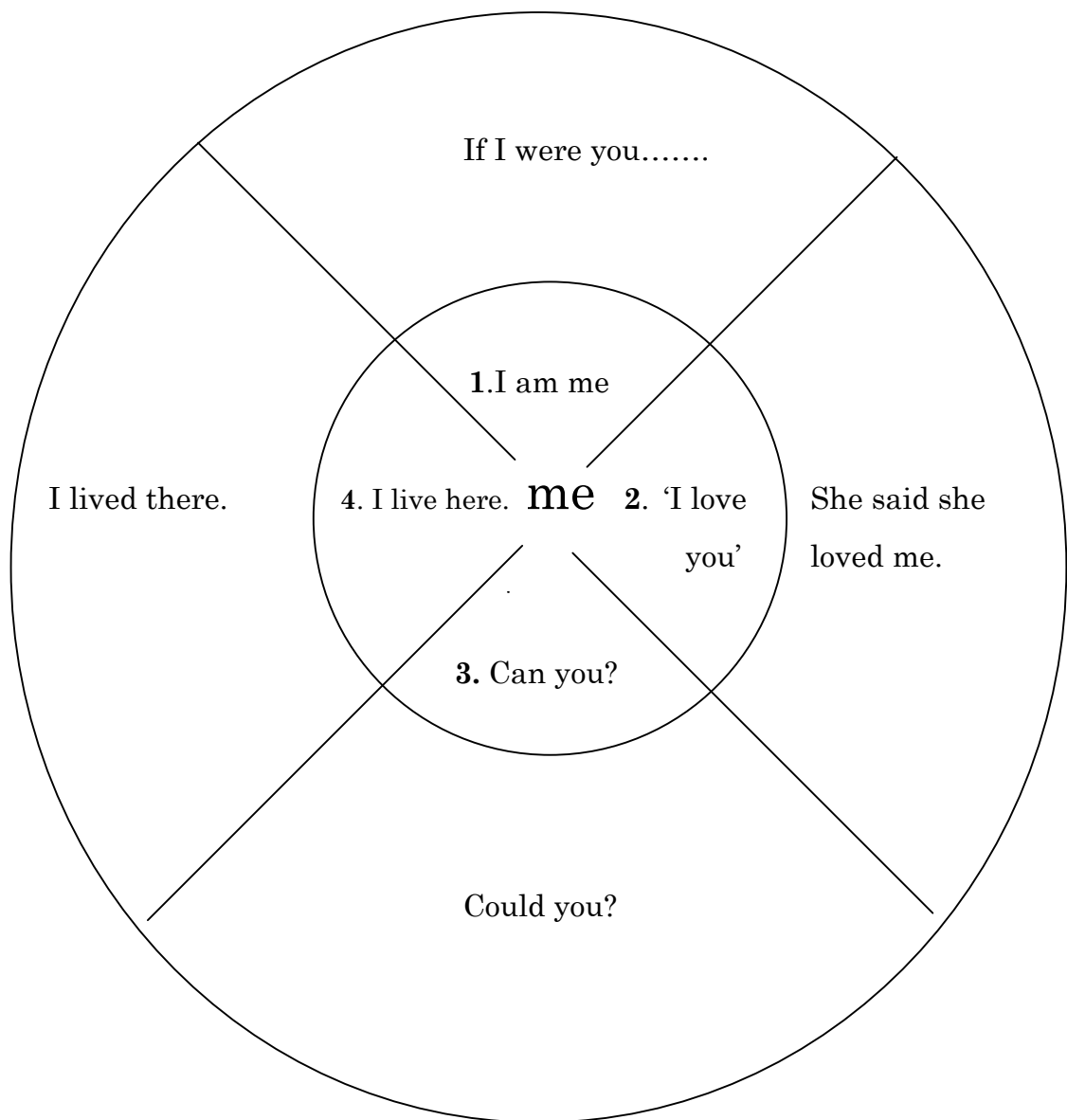
Figure 1. Close and Distant.

Discussion.

In **Figure I** we can see the same mechanism working for all four distances. Distance 1 is reality, distance 2: reported speech, distance 3: formality and distance 4: time. Each movement from the inner 'close' circle to the outer 'distant' one involves what is conventionally described in reported speech as 'a step back into the past'. However, as the diagram makes clear, the step is not concerned with time in the majority of cases but distance from **me**. This is the key to understanding much of English grammar and is completely regular. Reported speech, though actually rare in spoken English, follows this mechanism but with the added sophistication that we can choose

to report something as close or distant depending on how we see it: as still true ('close') or not ('distant').
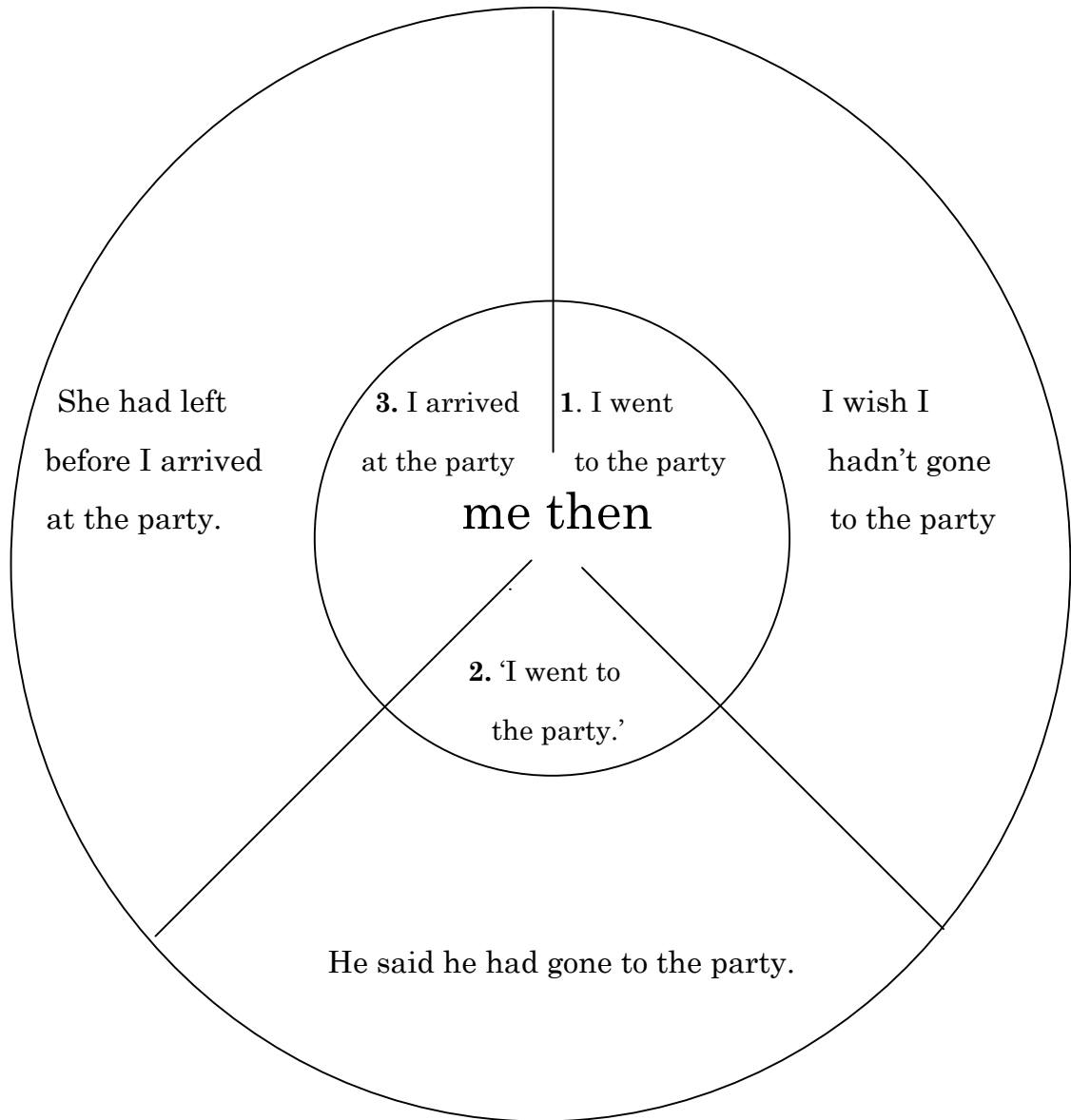

Figure 2. Distant and More Distant.

Figure 2 shows the distance idea connected with distance in time itself. The inner circle is 'distant in time', the outer one 'more distant'. Here there are only three distances. Formality is a concern of closeness, not distant in time so is not found in this figure. The same mechanism as in Figure 1 is at work here only this time, in conventional terms, the distance is between past simple ('distant') and past perfect ('more distant'). Distance 1 is reality, distance 2: reported speech and distance 3:

time. Again complete regularity. Notice again that only **one** aspect of distance is concerned with time.

This fits in completely with the idea of core meaning discussed earlier. The verb forms are not time based in themselves but can be used, with context and co-text toe refer to time.

Conclusions

The above discussion has attempted to throw some light on the core meaning of verbs and the importance of the concept of distance to understanding English grammar. Some conclusions can be drawn.

Verbs have a core meaning which is not connected to time.
Co-text and context supply the time reference.
There are different kind of distances which underlie the use of certain verb forms.
Verb form labels eg 'present simple' seem to be misleading.

The reader is invited, in the spirit of the Graver passage, to explore English using the framework outlined above: context, co-text, core meaning and distance.

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Eleven

Rituals and Myths

Rituals are very important – they support and structure our day, year and life. In some cultures making tea and coffee are complex ceremonies which reflect the society in which they are found. In the classroom too, teachers develop standard behaviours which become part of their teaching style. These styles though should not become completely fixed as they may be inappropriate when put to use in a new or unusual situation. Myths in teaching exist for more people and are shared and influence both value systems, beliefs and **expected** behaviour.

This August I flew off to Tashkent to join Martin Seviour and Council team out there to run a short course for doctors. They are doing lots of interesting things out in Uzbekistan – adapting coursebooks and video courses, writing whole new coursebooks specifically for the local situation and running carefully targeted ESP courses. Teaching in a new country with doctors as students was a novel and welcome experience which enabled me to reflect on my classroom rituals.

In Warsaw I find myself starting every lesson with a variant of 'Well here we are: another lovely day in Warsaw,' (no matter what the weather may be doing outside). In Tashkent, every day **was** a lovely day so this little verbal routine lost its meaning and my whole comfortable rhythm was lost. I also tend to ask my Polish students how they have spent their time since the last lesson or ask them to ask each other and then report back to the class. Because in Tashkent we saw each other every day, this again seemed to lose its meaning: they always went home, cooked, ate, did their homework and slept. I spent less time on pleasantries in the lessons and we did more work.

The doctors – very keen, excellent students, who used their intellects when learning – were unused to working in pairs and I like my students to check their answers together before we check as a class. It took some time but, with my group, by the end of the course the women doctors were working together.

The question is: will I return to my comfortable routines when I start teaching in Warsaw again?

TEFL seems to be particularly susceptible to myths. Take reading aloud for example. At some distant time in the late sixties or early seventies some bright spark methodologist suddenly announced that reading aloud should not be done in the classroom as native speakers didn't read aloud. An inauthentic task - Heaven forbid. Everyone nodded in agreement and said 'Don't read aloud in the classroom.', and for over twenty years the prevailing 'wisdom' was that one did not read aloud in the classroom. I started teaching and was told that reading aloud was 'verboten'. I thought for a minute – native speakers **do** read aloud: horoscopes, newspaper articles, poems etc etc. TEFL, as preached in the UK and on Cert. course for this period, was in the grip of a silly delusion. This made me very wary of conventional 'wisdom'.

Sticking to reading, I would like to consider reading skills. The main reading skills are prediction (fair enough), scanning and skimming. Exams like FCE and CAE test these last two ways of reading at great length and coursebooks practise these skills at even greater length. Scanning though is, or should be, restricted to certain text types eg timetables or menus. I don't scan novels or poems as a rule – unless I am re-reading and looking for a particular passage (to read aloud to my girlfriend for example). Check what kind of text types demand scanning in exams – is this form of reading appropriate?

Skimming on the other hand is supposed to offer up the general gist of, say, an article. I do not use skimming as a strategy for reading newspaper articles or novels for that matter. When approaching an article, I use the headline and pictures (if there are any) to decide if I will be interested and then I start (or don't). I read the first paragraph. Strange that. It's also strange that the first paragraph has usually been specifically written to tell me the content of the article and to encourage me to read for more information: the key points will be there. I don't skim though for the general idea: absolutely not.

I do, however, skim – I admit it. But only under specific circumstances. I skim through a text when I'm bored with it and I'm looking for something to capture my interest. When I skim that is a sign that the author has failed.

So, I **do** scan (specific texts) and I **do** skim – as a repair strategy. These two ways of reading are very limited in (my) real life but are taught and tested at great length. There is also one great difference between my skimming and scanning and a learner doing the same. I can stop at any stage of the text and I am 99.9% sure that I will understand the text and any individual word in the text. This is completely different from all but the most advanced learner. I can deploy these two strategies because I can understand absolutely everything in the text. Learners though are asked to employ them **because** they don't understand everything.

I would not employ these strategies on a very specialised text that I wanted to understand: I would read with great care and attention. Most texts are specialised for our learners. Do we encourage our learners to do the same?

In my opinion the most important reading 'skill' is a very large vocabulary: teach your students more words and phrases and practise skimming and scanning less.

A teacher should be able to reflect both on their own classroom behaviour and on the dominant best practice which may in fact be nothing more than a myth and a mistaken belief. Then maybe change their teaching.

(Thanks to Emma Tuhill who first got me thinking about skimming and scanning.)

Twelve

Progressive aspects: life's journeys

Stand not upon the order of your going
But go at once
Lady Macbeth

Introduction

Progressive or continuous forms often cause problems for learners of English: problems of form and meaning. In Poland, learners often overuse the forms and this article seeks to present a simple metaphorical analogy for all these forms so that learners can grasp the meaning and use of the form without learning a whole list of situations when the forms are used (or not). After looking at the current interpretations of the forms, the article moves on to examine some language before the metaphor is presented. (For the sake of simplicity this article is not going to consider forms such as *present perfect progressive* or any passive forms.)

The State Of Play

The Present Continuous or Progressive form is viewed in ELT misleadingly as a 'tense' and one described as 'present'. The form is really not a tense but an aspect and is not intrinsically 'present' (see Buckmaster 2000). We can use both 'present' and 'past progressive' forms for present/future: consider these two constructed examples:

> (1) I was going to meet John at 6 but I can't make it.
> (2) I'm playing tennis with Julia on Saturday.

These mislabellings in themselves cause learners problems. If something is called 'present' then the learner will think of it as 'present' or go through mental gymnastics to avoid thinking so. Although these issues are widely known they are not being addressed by the profession and this article is not going to discuss them. However, the global term used for these forms will be *'progressive aspect'*. (When referring to a specific form, I will indiscriminately use either *'progressive'* or *'continuous'* to reflect the confusion present in materials and coursebooks.)

Different authors have different views on the progressive aspect. Thornbury (1997) quotes three:

> Forms containing *(be) + -ing* express the speaker's view of the event as having *limited duration*. (Lewis 1986)
> Progressive *be* is so called because its basic meaning is that it presents the situation as being in progress, (Huddleston 1998)
> The basic meaning of the progressive is…its depiction of an activitiy or event as incomplete, changing , temporary, etc (Richards 1985)

In his discussion Thornbury agrees with Huddlestone on the basic meaning as *'being in progress'*. (p207)

David Maule (1991) agrees with Lewis 'When we uses the *continuous* it means we see the event as having *limited duration.*' (p85)

Yule (1998) states that: 'With the progressive, a situation is viewed from the inside as potentially ongoing at that point ('in progress'), relative to some other situation.' (p65)

One problem for learners though is the complicated metalangauge used to describe the progressive forms: limited duration, incomplete, changing, temporary, depiction, as potentially ongoing etc. Look in the back of any coursebook and the language of grammar explanations generally exceeds the 'level' of the book itself. However, coursebook grammars often offer a seriously simplified and flawed grammar explanation in contrast to the considered opinions of the authors above.

Generally, the *'present continuous'* is taught first but in a piecemeal fashion – future uses are ignored though this is a **major** use. The teacher often uses misleading contexts to elicit the form (ie the teacher insists that the form is essentially *present* and the learners can clearly see the teacher's actions) and learners practise the form in unconvincing situations far from reality:

Eg   (4) T: What am I doing?
             S: You opening the door.

In contrast with this, in real life the question 'What are you doing?' is used as a request for information (because I don't know or can't see) so that I can evaluate the importance of your activity, or 'What **are** you doing?' as a censure – you are doing something wrong.

Later the *'past progressive'* is introduced and **then** future uses of the *'present progressive'* is introduced and even later other progressive forms. This article argues that the basic meaning is the same and that the *'past progressive'* is a distant form of the *'present progressive'*. Teachers should ask themselves whether dividing the uses of the present continuous into present uses and future uses is sound?

Explorations in language: some observations on 'go'

It is useful not to start with *progressive aspects* themselves but to take a different starting point: in this case 'go'.

Go is a very common verb in English.

       (5) We   go to the cinema/go fishing/go shopping/go for a walk/go mad/go out for dinner/go out with someone etc

This idea of *going* somewhere is very important in English.

Other languages may focus on other aspects of the event/sequence of events (Lakoff and Johnson 1980), English chooses 'go'. We can't say:

(6) * Let's be at the cinema to see Gladiator.

Life's journey

The Ancient Greeks conceived of themselves as standing still in life with the future rushing **towards** them from **behind** them and becoming 'the past' that 'lay before their eyes' (Kluckhohn 1960). The dominant metaphor for English, however, is of us moving through life **towards the future** or the future moving towards us from in front of us. The past is behind us. Thus life, in English, is a journey from birth to death. This can be seen in phrases such as 'go our separate ways', 'at a crossroads', 'no turning back', 'going nowhere fast', ' look how far we've come', 'it's been a long, bumpy road' and so on. (see Lakoff and Johnson's seminal work Metaphors We Live By (1980)). We may live in the perpetual present but we are moving through time from the past to the future. This is why many grammarians have proposed the time-based analysis of the verb system eg *simple past*, *simple present* and *simple future*, which despite its obvious inadequacies and lack of intellectual rigour, is the dominant grammatical analysis in ELT.

The 'Life is a journey' metaphors can be taken a step further: **Life is a whole series of journeys**. Journeys are characterised by beginnings and endings and travelling in-between. Let's go back to the cinema example:

(7) I'm going to the cinema this evening.

This entails a decision to go. From that point on, from that moment of decision, I am on a journey which will involve travelling to the cinema, buying tickets, going to the auditorium, taking my seat, watching the film, and then leaving the cinema at the end of the film. Then my 'journey' is at an end. Sentence (7) tells you that I am on this journey: between the decision to start the journey and the end of the journey itself though the actual physical movement to the cinema may be several hours away.

In English this whole journey is all expressed using the verb **go** in the *progressive aspect*. The 'going' form is properly considered a *progressive aspect* of **go** rather than a semi-modal: it looks like any other example of eg the *present continuous* but collocates with **to** and another verb – which is the future action. It's frequency is explained by the frequency of **go** itself in expressing this concept 'Life is a series of journeys'.

Let's consider two more (constructed) examples from an imaginary party. In (8) someone stands up at the end of the evening and says:

(8) Right, I'm going. Goodbye.

In (9) someone signals the end of their stay is near:

(9) I'm going to leave soon.

They are at different stages in their journey. In both cases the decision to leave has been taken. In (8) the leaving is closer – the door looms, is opened, the leaving takes place, the person is on another journey: home? In (9) the same (leaving) journey is signalled but the speaker is at an earlier stage so 'to leave soon' is necessary to make the meaning clear.

Other Journeys

Life is a whole series of journeys that are not just limited to **go**. As 'going' is a *progressive aspect* (and merely that) it is suggested that other progressive forms share its core meaning.

> (10) I'm reading a book.

This example also has a journey idea, I started reading the book and I am on the journey to the end of the book. The *progressive aspect* catches me in 'motion' on the journey.

If we look at the first two examples again:

> (1) I was going to meet John at 6 but I can't make it.
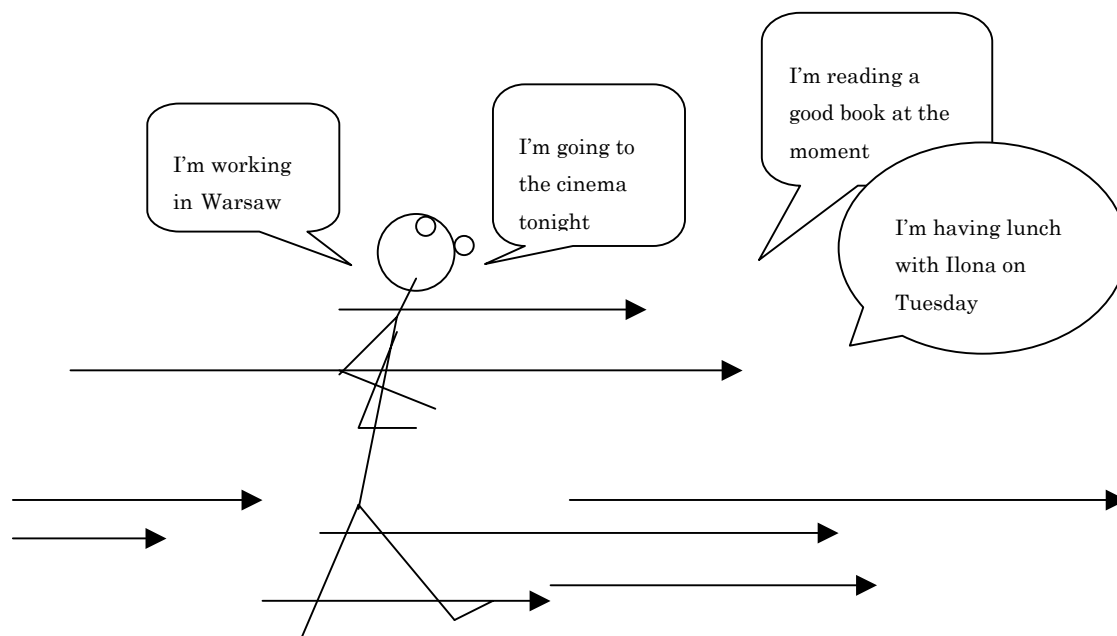> (2) I'm playing tennis with Julia on Saturday.

In (1) I was on a journey but now I have abandoned it. In (2) I am still on the journey from the initial (shared) decision to play tennis to the actual match itself on Saturday.

Old journeys

Past progressive forms are used for old journeys which are now distant from the **me** of here and now. Convention though suggests that, in English, we are more interested in the fact of the journey having happened than the journey itself **unless** something interesting or significant happened on the way so the *simple past* will be more common than the *past continuous*. This causes problems for learners who **overuse** the *past progressive*. Only when something interesting happened on the journey is the event contrasted (in the *simple past*) with the journey (in the *past progressive*) otherwise the *journey as a finished event* is enough to communicate the meaning.
In the present/future the fact of being on journeys is itself most interesting, in the past the fact that the journey happened is, initially, most interesting, though the speaker may expand on the details of the journey if the interlocutor wishes.

A visualisation

Teacher task

Consider these examples of progressive forms. Which of them could be usefully presented as *journeys*? Which are ridiculous as *journeys*? Would you teach them?

I'm trying.
I'm coming!
Spring is coming.
He's writing a new novel.
You're drinking my beer!
Your English is improving.
We're looking forward to it.
You're standing on my foot!
I'm learning to drive.
They're getting married in the summer.
What's the time? My watch isn't working.
I was walking home from work when I met an old school friend.
They were still having lunch when I phoned.
We were just talking about the director when he came in.
(examples taken from Ćwiczenia z Gramatyki Angieskiej 1999)
I'm living in Oxford.
He was leaving when I was coming in. (both Lewis, 1986)

It's not working.
You're not trying.
Where are they hiding?
Is she going with us?
Who are they waving at?
Who are you waiting for?
They're moving in a few days.
I'm opening the door.
They're coming tomorrow.

Teaching

The analogy of being on a journey expressed by progressive aspects gives the learner an understanding of the concept underlying the forms without the difficult metalanguage, without having to remember uses and without complicated and misleading rules.

Using this metaphor the 'rule' is that if the speaker decides that being on a 'journey' is important – they use a progressive aspect, close or distant.
Of course some cases can seem strained when considered as a 'journey' but the basic analogy is sound. Journeys have beginnings and endings – so do the actions or states conventionally expressed in progressive forms.

Conclusion

In English and its philosophy, life is a series of journeys and these are expressed by *progressive forms*. A person is on several journeys at any one time and, of course, on life's journey towards death. New journeys start, journeys end and such is life.

'I have a long journey to take and must bid the company farewell.'

Walter Raleigh Last Words

In English we choose to express this idea by looking at the journey **in progress**. Of course a journey has a beginning and an end and is limited in duration but these are common to all journeys even the one of life itself. It is being on the journey that is important in English and which should be made clear to learners.

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<p align="center">**Thirteen**</p>

Quality Assurance Schemes

Introduction

The overthrow of Communism found ELT in Eastern Europe and Central Asia in a parlous state. In Poland alone the Ministry of education estimated there was a shortfall of 10,000 English school teachers. The last ten years has seen phenomenal growth in the quantity of English language teaching and, together with this, a growing concern for quality. At the start of the nineties almost anyone could make money teaching English and demand was such that standards was not an issue. In Warsaw there are still cowboy outfits who employ unqualified and inexperienced teachers in poor premises but recently there has been a shake up in the market. Major schools have been losing contracts and a Bell affiliate has lost its accreditation. Profit margins are being squeezed as competition grows in the lower end of the market and schools are finding it increasingly difficult to recruit qualified native speaker teachers. In this climate, with increasingly discerning clients, quality assurance schemes, with regular inspections of member schools to ensure standards, are ever more crucial and can give competitive advantage. But are these schemes just for the elite, for a small sector of the urban population, or do they have a wider role in promoting standards in English language education? And are these schemes just western models imposed on these countries without considering the peculiar circumstances of the individual countries?

The Big Picture

In the post-Soviet world there is an incredible range in ELT from places like Tajikistan, where no-one cares about English, to Poland, Romania and Hungary, where English has been the dominant foreign language for the last decade.

In Uzbekistan, while the President is keen on English learning and supportive there is no private sector to speak of and the standards in the state sector are low. Martin Seviour, ELT Advisor in Tashkent, says that without a private sector standards of ELT provision are going to remain low. Martin adds that while the President is enthusiastic about English he does not see a role for private language schools and is more interested in joint degrees with prestigious universities than in Cambridge ELT exams.

In Latvia, a country the size of Ireland, a 1999 funding application to ELTeCs for a meeting to start the ball rolling on a quality assurance scheme was turned down as not being regional enough. The Baltics – that is Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania – not being a large enough region apparently.

However, in the most developed countries of the region – Poland and Hungary – quality assurance schemes have been in operation for some time. In Hungary, the Chamber of Language Schools, now the Association of Language Schools, was founded in 1991. In Poland, PASE – the Polish Association of Schools of English - was established in Gdansk in 1993. More recently, the Romanian Association for

Quality Language Services – QUEST – was created in 1996 and the Bulgarian Association for Quality Language Services – OPTIMA had its first meeting in April 2000. This shows the regional-wide drive towards quality and improved standards.

What's in it for them?

Being a member of such associations brings several benefits to members. The school is 'approved' in some way and can display the association's logo and letterhead. PASE advertises the recognised schools (and itself) in the national and local press. QUEST schools report being chosen by corporate clients because of the inspection scheme. Being the subject of an inspection scheme in which standards have to be maintained or improved means that the school is in a cycle of continuous development with an eye on the next inspection and maintaining the accreditation.

Networking - The International Dimension

All the associations desire to become part of the wider European network of EQUALS - *'a pan European association of language training providers aiming to promote and guarantee quality'* and have been inspired by that organisation. The Hungarian Association of Language Schools, QUEST and PASE are all associate members. Meetings of the individual organisations have shown a remarkable degree of international co-operation. A recent workshop in Bucharest involved participants from 16 countries and support from the Romanian Ministry of Education, QUEST, the British Council, the Goethe Institute, the Institute Francais, the Council of Europe, EAQUALS and Bell Budapest.

The Local Dimension

Critics say that western models are being imported into inappropriate situations. However, all the accreditation schemes have been adapted to the local situation. In Bulgaria, for instance, the OPTIMA scheme includes both the private sector and university based language centres. In contrast to this, in Poland, PASE has refused to accredit the University Centres for English Teaching (UCET) as they are nominally in the state sector. Paul Hilder, of the British Council in Bucharest, agrees that there was an early 1990s rush to promote *'the good things we in the West had to offer, without valuing local ways of doing things, but in general a much more sensitive approach is adopted these days.'*

The recent OPTIMA meeting to draw up the inspection criteria, rating scheme and inspection procedures drew on the experience of PASE. Ludmila Kotarksa from ELS-Bell Gdansk led the seminar but as Galya Mateva, OPTIMA Chair, put it *'we haven't had to invent the wheel but we have had to introduce changes and choose the model of vehicle which makes us feel comfortable when riding.'*

QUEST also acknowledges the inspiration provided by the EAQUALS inspection schemes, but *'adapted them to the Romanian reality while making sure the newly designed documents reflected the concern for and commitment to quality and good practice'.*

Inspections

All the schemes involve inspections of premises, teaching and teacher's qualifications typically every two years. John Whitehead, Deputy Director of the British Council in Poland, says of UCET inspections, *'The UCET inspection scheme has to be flexible to some extent because these institutions are tied to university buildings. Some things are out of the control of the UCET Directors. A centre should not necessarily fail because, say, the toilets leave something to be desired. What matters is an acknowledgement of issues like this and the acceptance by the UCET management of the need for a strategy to talk to the university authorities to invest and make improvements. The Code of Practice document with clear standards provides an effective way to do this.'*

The wider picture – Exams

Western ELT examinations like the UCLES main suite of First Certificate (FCE) and Advanced (CAE) and Proficiency (CPE) exams, have expanded greatly in the 1990's. Martin Seviour is hoping to introduce such exams into Uzbekistan, to encourage the adoption of externally validated standards throughout the education system. The Polish Ministry of Education adopted FCE and CAE as qualifications for their teachers in 1993. Primary and secondary school English teachers had to take firstly FCE and then CAE (or TOEFL) within a limited time in order to keep their jobs. The whole Polish education system is undergoing reform and this is being helped by organisations like the British Council but is being driven by the Poles themselves.

The wider picture - Teacher training

The British Council has also been and still is involved in promoting teacher education and training as part of a world-wide goal of improving the standards of English language teaching. The Support for Polish Reform in Teacher Education (SPRITE) project aims to develop *'a comprehensive and sustainable quality teacher education system'* for teachers of English in the state primary, secondary and tertiary sectors. This means providing access to British expertise but also training Polish trainers who would adapt the methodologies to the realities of Polish classrooms.

Ann Stewart in Latvia estimates that the British Council's work has reached about 2000 teachers and this has involved working with local partners such as the Latvian Association of Teachers of English (LATE). There is a very active programme of workshops and seminars thoughout the year and, in summer, LATE organises a very popular intensive course for primary and secondary teachers.

The future

The British Council has been intimately involved in the development of ELT and the creation of several of the quality assurance schemes in the region. In 1990 the Council supported the Polish Ministry of Education's programme to make up for the huge shortage of English teachers. They aided the establishment of a country-wide network of 54 state Foreign Language Teacher Training Colleges (NKJO's) and other university-based programmes. In the late 1990's the Council's involvement gradually decreased as the colleges became sustainable and complete ownership moved to the Polish partners.

QUEST grew out of the British Council Romania 'Language Centres' project, which saw five centres set up around the country and staffed by Romanians. At the end of the project in 1996 QUEST was born to maintain the good links between the schools (and two others) and ensure standards remained high. The Council supported QUEST initially but over time this has diminished so that now the organisation is self-sufficient. Paul Hilder notes *that 'the QUEST school in Bucharest is now in friendly co-operation with the new British Council Teaching Centre here.'*

Similarly the UCET network was originally a British Council 'Studia' project in conjunction with Polish Universities. When the project was coming to an end in 1998/9 the centres formed a new network and drew up a code of practice with the help of Cherry Gough from the British Council. It drew on the experience of the British Council Code of Practice but adapted it rather than imitated it.

For the schools who are members of quality assurance schemes, the benefits seem clear. The codes of practices adopted provide quality targets to be reached or exceeded and help with the reputation of the school – both by being part of a network and by having inspections. The success of the QUEST school - Prosper-ase Language Centre - in Bucharest in attracting corporate clients clearly shows this. QUEST, though, in particular seems to be doing more. Thanks to their strong connections with the Ministry of Education, QUEST is actively involved in improving teacher training across all sectors of English language teaching in Romania. Their experience, while informed by western models, is specifically Romanian in character and tied to their success in providing quality teaching. This is the wider impact of the drive for quality – a ripple effect through the whole private sector market and education system.

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Fourteen

The New Coursebook

What is it? Where is it? And will it ever arrive?

The coursebook. It all comes back and down to the coursebook. How good is it? How bad? Do the learners like it? Is it in colour? Does it look nice?

The coursebook is central to modern English language teaching today and will remain so. For most teachers on a heavy teaching schedule with a syllabus to deliver and exams for their learners to pass, coursebooks are the ugly reality of teaching today. For many they **are** the syllabus and have to be 'covered'.

Coursebooks have, in some ways, developed enormously over the last 30 years but they have become trapped in a formula.

Death by a thousand cuts

When I open the book and see the third lesson in a row with reported speech, I know I'm in trouble. When I see a unit ostensibly on '0' conditionals but with examples of 1st conditionals mixed in, I know I am for it. When I again open the book and see a large picture and more instructions than language for the learners to learn on the page, I know I'm dead. I don't have the time or the energy to supplement, adapt or replace **every** lesson.

Coursebooks are all the same

Some are slightly better, some are significantly worse. None are anywhere near perfect. They cover the same language points – again and again. They deal with the same topics – again and again. They concentrate on verbs – again and again. They have the same example sentences, the same contrasts, the same little diagrams – again and again.

Where has all the language gone?

Modern coursebooks have very little language in them. They have pictures in them, instructions, white space, skills work and they look attractive. But where is the language? Root around in a library and dig out a copy of Streamline English and compare the amount of language input for the learners with any modern coursebook. Learners have to learn language through exposure to language but if it is not there in the book then where is it?

It's easier to add skills than to add language

For most teachers (non-native speakers of English) it would be easier for them to devise approaches to the language of coursebooks than add the language itself. Many teachers are not sure enough of their command of English (for whatever reason) to

add language to the coursebook let alone have the physical resources (eg other books) where such language may be obtained.

The language in coursebooks is the language of coursebooks

The language being pedalled by coursebooks is properly called Standard Coursebook English – it's a variety on its own and despite the advances in corpora research has stayed remarkably the same for many years. It's not British English but rather one of the British Englishes – one created especially for learners of English. As such it is a valid concept but is it the best we can offer in this day and age?

The paradox of adapting

Which other profession adapts the basic texts they work with? Do doctors? Do lawyers? Of course not. However, some adaptation is inevitable with global coursebooks because I suspect that everyone, including the writers and publishers, expect the coursebooks to be adapted. Yet a **minority** of teachers will feel confident enough to adapt the coursebooks while the majority, I suspect, will lack the confidence, training or resources to do so effectively. If the 'best' teachers feel the need to adapt coursebooks how are the learners being served when their teachers do **not** adapt the coursebooks? Either coursebooks are good enough to be used without being adapted by **every** teacher, or they should not be used by **any** teacher.
A colleague of mine declares: 'a good teacher doesn't rely on the coursebook.' This is completely the wrong attitude. Any teacher **should** be able to rely on the coursebook.

The element of chance: do you feel lucky?

I have a file of articles I have culled from many newspapers and magazines which I use in my teaching. Lots of teachers do. But what if I hadn't read the newspaper that day or bought that magazine? How lucky are you?

The success and failure of the global coursebook

The global coursebook has been a massive success. But also a massive failure. One product cannot suit all and the very existence of different supplementary resource books shows the inadequacies of the product. If coursebooks were good enough we wouldn't have to supplement them. The global coursebook has been a triumph of design (white space) over content (language) and marketing (a glossy western product) over needs (relevant materials).

The faults of coursebook design

Long thematic units are dull and certain topics are taboo of course – but they would have to be with a global product, wouldn't they? And too few units are boring. The grammar descriptions haven't changed in 40 years despite huge advances in our knowledge of language. The same grammar is repeated again and again on a yearly basis but only once or twice in big blocks during the year. Language should be recycled on a lesson by lesson basis. And where are all the collocations and fixed phrases?

Skills: the exam course nightmare.

Take a critical look at an FCE coursebook. What do you see? I see practice tests in drag. A book of exam practice with exam training. Now there might be nothing wrong with this except…..the exam is supposed to be a **language** test at an upper intermediate level. Yet FCE is a test of how well you can take FCE – why would a whole year of exam practice be needed otherwise? There are specific skills which need to be taught so that the learner can do the tasks. And when the learner moves on to CAE the whole process is repeated with the **same** skills.

The times they are a changing

The death knell of the global coursebook has sounded. English is *changing*. *Teaching* is changing. The demographics are against both native speaker teachers, and core country publishers and methodologists. The periphery countries are loosening the bounds that have tied them to Britain and Australia and the USA and the good times are over. How is a publisher to survive in such a changing market and will it be as exciting as it has been?

The New Coursebook. What is it?

The New Coursebook is a package that would be offered by publishers as an 'open source', for regional or local textbook writers, to create materials based on local socio-political and educational realities. It is a joint venture between the publisher, supplying the 'toolkit', and local experts. The publishers would supply a package from their huge resources – a legacy or dowry of their previous titles - and their corpora. They would recruit a team of teachers of writers from the region or country and provide them with these materials, assign them an editorial team and manage the whole project.

The publishers would be able to recycle massive amounts of previously published materials, which their coursebook writers would release for a nominal fee. This material would be moulded into new products, produced locally at lower costs and suited specifically for that market. One global package (the open source tool kit) would result in several regional products which would, of course, feed and inform the others. Editors would have great fun managing these projects, mainly using the internet but also visiting the project teams.

The excesses of global coursebooks would be avoided. Local writers would decide on the topics. Pictures of women won't have to be torn out because the women are not wearing veils. The methodology would not necessarily be that of British methodologists but a fusion of the most appropriate methods of different educational traditions. Learners used to teacher-led learning wouldn't have to work in pairs. Publishers should look at it like the case of Java, which was given free to the world of computing. Give the resources of major publishing houses as an open source took kit to experts in other regions and countries and see coursebooks blossom.
A key part of this idea is the regional diversity that would result but there are some things I'd like to see specifically in the New Coursebook which reflect my critique in the first part of the article.

There should be shorter units – topics can be revisited later in the book – not done to death in one big block. There should be lots of language, real language use. Lots of exercises. Lots of texts, lots of listenings. One reading and listening per unit is not enough. There should be a wide variety of text types – not just teaching learners to read newspaper articles. Language should be explicitly recycled – more than once. Alternative grammar explanations should be given – dare to be different – even offer the learners a **choice** of explanation. Writing tasks should be realistic – how many learners are going to need to write a newspaper article in 250 words?

Give the teachers language – let **them** worry about how to approach it.

The new coursebook. Will it ever arrive?

It will be a brave publisher who risks the New Coursebook, brave schools who adopt it and brave teachers who teach it but the global coursebook is a dinosaur that has almost had its day. Publishers need to start planning now for when this 'cash cow' of a beast drops dead.

Forthcoming: In 'The Information' BIELT magazine

The Dual Syllabus

Introduction

English language teaching is perhaps (again) at a crossroads. Some of the old post-'communicative revolution' certainties are gone. The influence of the core countries (the UK, USA etc) is weakening in the face of large English-language demographic changes. Language teaching methods and strictures from the core countries are being challenged as irrelevant in certain language learning contexts. The 'supremacy' of the native speaker is being attacked. The idea of a standard English – as **the** one to learn – is being exposed as the myth it always was. Multiple standards are being proposed: international English, regional Englishes, my English not yours. More people may soon speak English as a 'learned' language rather than as a native one.

Who will have the power in this changed world? Who will teach and what will they teach?

Challenges

In the face of these changes, ELT as it is today, in the first years of the 21st century, will have to develop to incorporate some of these new realities. Global coursebooks look an obvious casualty. Publishers will have to persuade Governments, ministries, institutions, teachers and learners that the English represented in their products is a valid English. Native speakers will have to offer something more than an English of a minority speech community. The English in materials will have to meet the needs of diverse learners who want English for a variety of reasons and teaching methods will have to suit the different learning styles of learners in different educational contexts. Teaching may have to fit in with new technology as new ways to reach learners are developed. One size fits all might well soon be seen as a post-Berlin Wall aberration.

There are many books and articles on how to teach, fewer on what we should teach: this article is a small attempt to redress the balance.

The Dual Syllabus

The dual syllabus is an attempt to meet some of these challenges and prompt some of the necessary changes in both teaching and testing.

It consists of a Receptive Syllabus and a Productive Syllabus. Both syllabuses consist of two main Englishes: written and spoken. Within these are a number of registers which are explicitly dealt with as being separate rather than lumped together as General English. In a way the dual syllabus ESPs General English.

One Variety: the entrée

The dual syllabus approach recognises that a standard cannot and should not be imposed on a learner and that the learner has the main responsibility for their English. The dual syllabus allows the learner to exercise this responsibility.
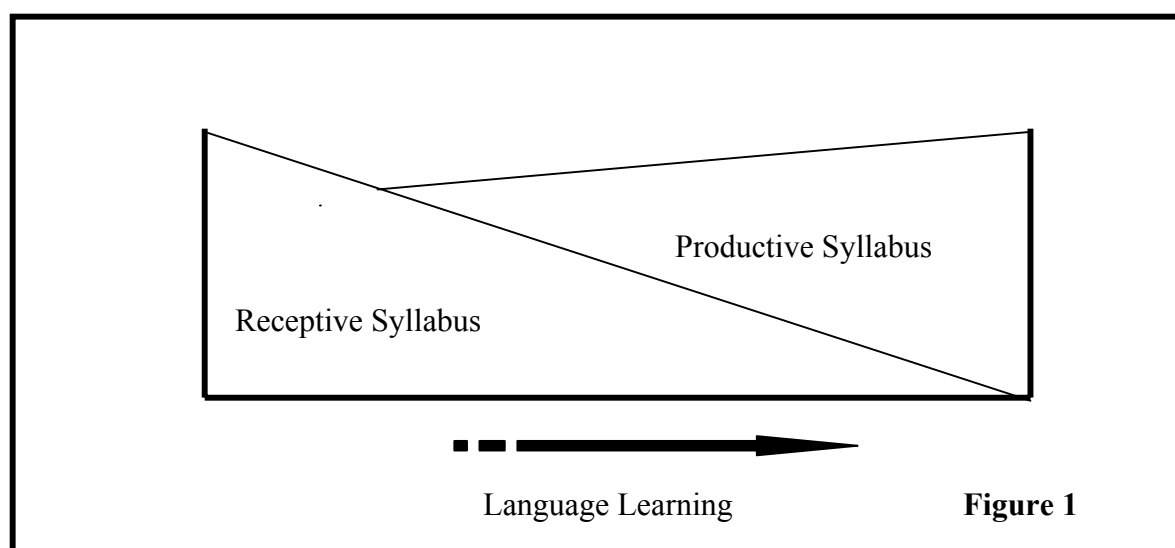
Yet it is still proposed under the dual syllabus approach that a variety of English is chosen as the basis for the registers presented in the Receptive Syllabus. It is argued that proficiency in a register in one variety allows someone to operate in a similar register in another variety. For example proficiency in a UK academic register will mean the ability to comprehend a US academic register more than an ability in General English would. The learner would have to adapt their productive register to fit in with a US academic register of course but the two registers are probably closer to each other than general English is to either of the registers.

It is this entrée approach and subsequent adaptation on the part of the learner, which is at the heart of the dual syllabus proposal.

Recent coursebooks claim to be multi-syllabus: grammatical, lexical, functional and skills for example but the explicit distinctions between registers is generally lacking.

A way of measuring language proficiency would be to determine how many registers a person is proficient in. The more registers you can operate in, theoretically the better. Yet for some learners, the ability to operate well in only one register might be sufficient. The dual syllabus can provide the English needed for both of these extreme cases.

On a learning timescale the relative 'weight' of the syllabuses is illustrated in **Figure 1**.

Productive Syllabus

Receptive Syllabus

Language Learning   **Figure 1**

As can be seen, the Receptive Syllabus becomes progressively less important while the Productive Syllabus becomes more important. The next two sections will examine in more detail the content and implications of the two syllabuses.

The Receptive Syllabus

The receptive syllabus is a top-down syllabus based on, for example, British English. It is offered as a core syllabus to **one** variety of English but is broader based than current General English syllabuses. It would include a variety of registers that a learner might conceivably meet in their immediate context without trying to predict their future linguistic needs to any exact degree. It would exclude, for adults, conversational registers peculiar say to teenagers in the UK. For teenagers a similar register might be included in order to understand TV programmes, which might use such language. As far as possible the Receptive Syllabus would reflect the predictable needs of the individual learner and groups of learners rather than a global imagined user of the product.

The basis of the Receptive Syllabus is that if you want to 'operate' in **these** registers in you **chosen** variety then this is the language you need to **understand**. The Receptive Syllabus would cover and re-cover the 600 most common words in spoken English and the 3000 most common words in written English but through specific registers. Similarly grammar would be revised in different registers. The Receptive Syllabus might look like this: see **Figure 2**.
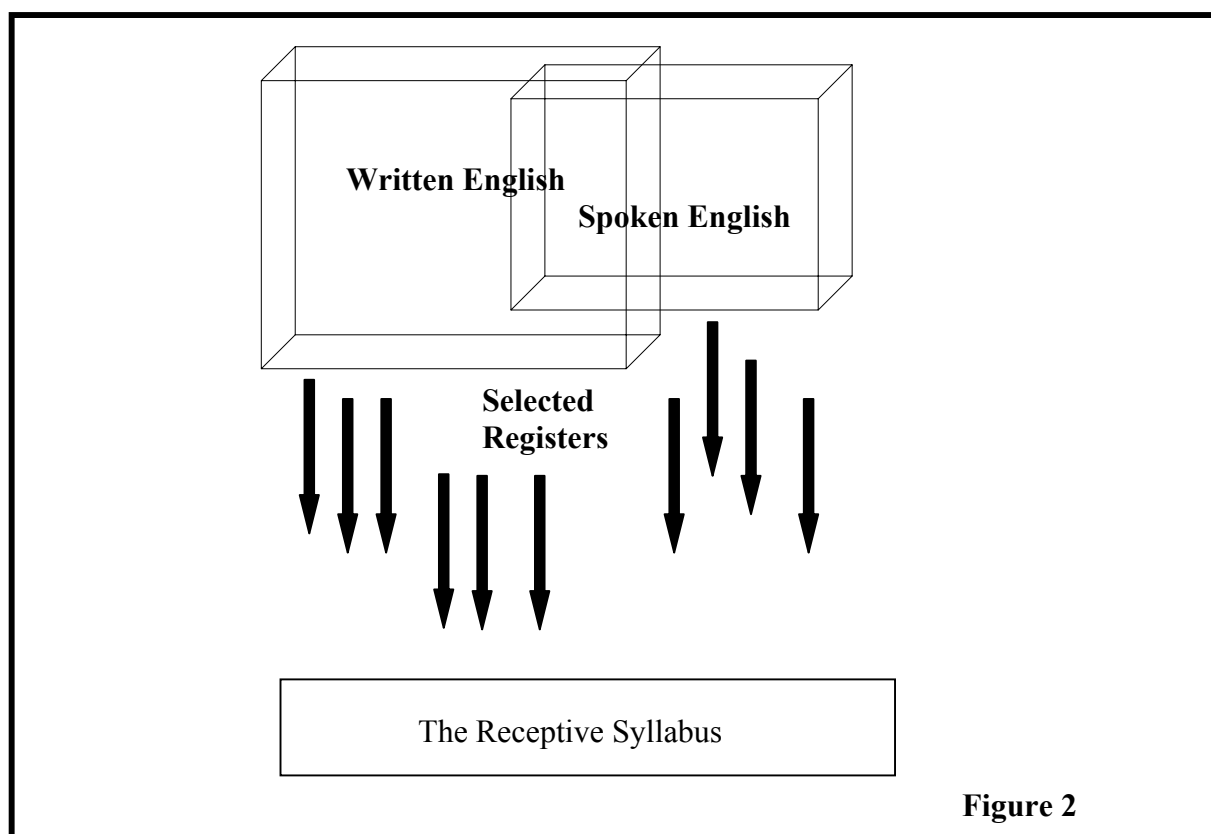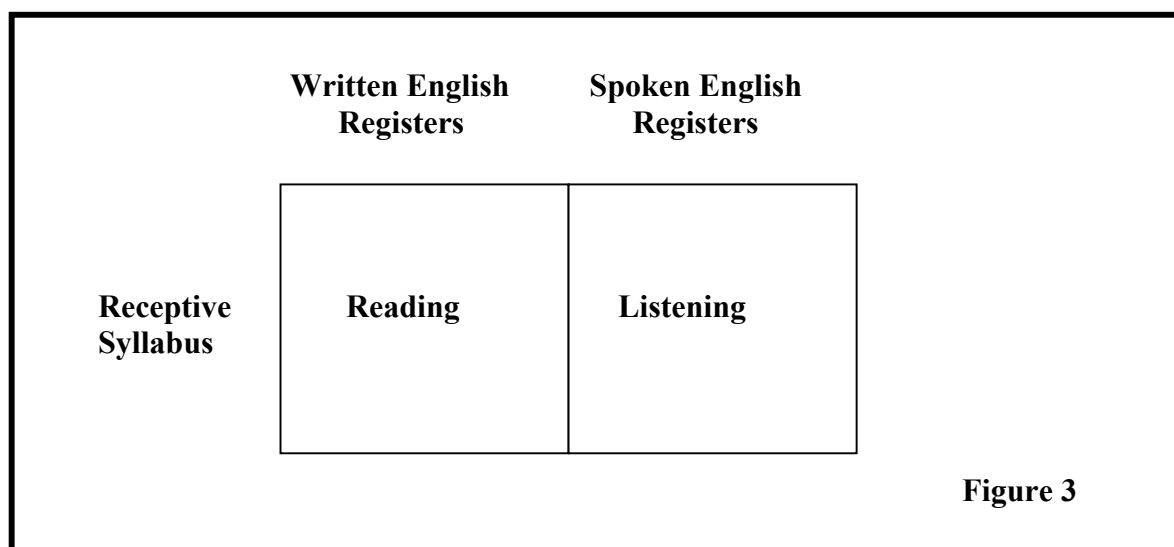

Figure 2

It is important to consider the Receptive Syllabus as distinct from the Productive one. Imagine an Uzbek sports fan reading the US sports news in the International Herald Tribune in Tashkent and talking about the news with their friends in their native language. Register transfer is an important element of language use but we cannot assume that it will be into English. Coursebooks attempt register transfer by asking

learners to talk about newspaper articles but in English. Also the articles are usually on 'worthy' topics – the environment etc - rather than something with passion like the sports news. Coursebooks also consider the learners' production to be a mirror of their reading (or to a lesser extent their listening), but the Productive Syllabus does **not** necessarily mirror the Receptive one and this which will be discussed in the section on the Receptive Syllabus.

Another way of looking at the Receptive Syllabus is in terms of skills: see **Figure 3.**

	Written English Registers	**Spoken English Registers**	
Receptive Syllabus	Reading	Listening	

Figure 3

Learner Choice

It is perfectly conceivable that a learner may choose only spoken registers and have no wish to read or write in English. In such a course the material would consist of listenings, the core vocabulary of 600 words and perhaps a picture dictionary.
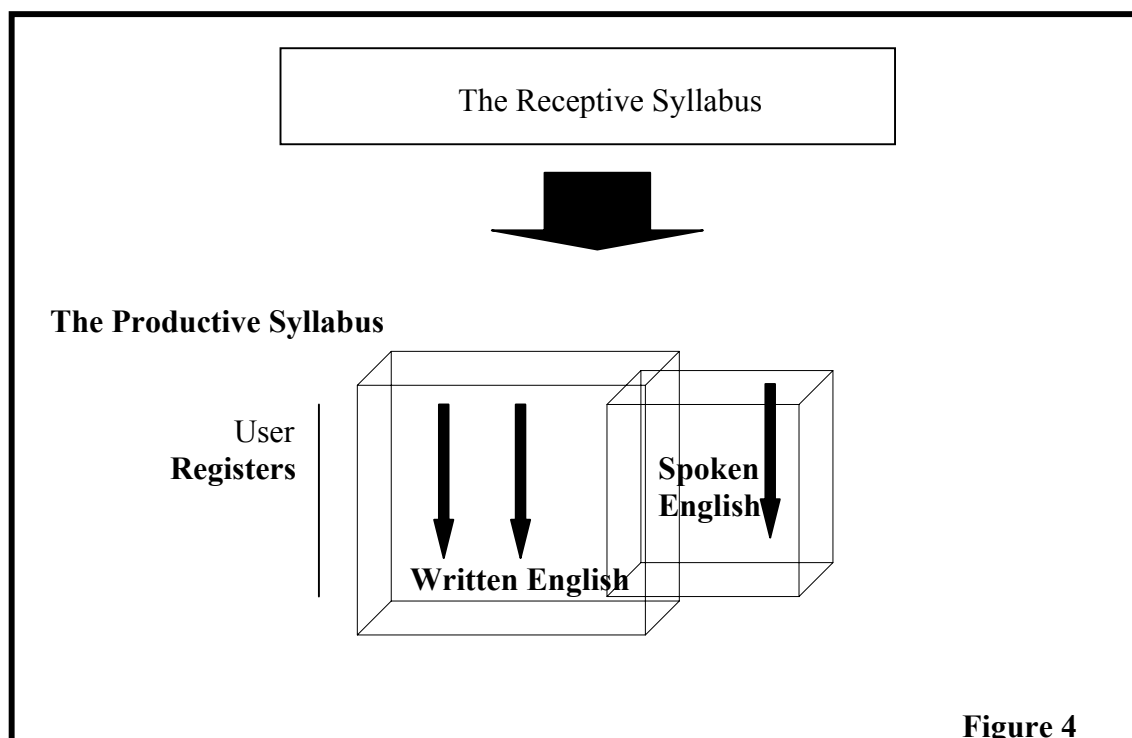
The Content

The Receptive Syllabus would contain all that is needed to understand the chosen registers of the chosen variety. If it were to be compared with a traditional syllabus, there would be a great deal in common – if compared with a modern syllabus that takes into account the latest researches on language: lexical chunks and word/phrase frequency etc.

The Productive Syllabus

In contrast to the top-down imposed Receptive Syllabus where the teacher/course designer is saying this is what you need to understand these registers, the Productive Syllabus is a negotiated syllabus. This recognises that learner/user English – English as an international language of communication - is not a native speaker standard, but a temporary construct between two or more speakers and follows negotiated norms or is mediated between the user and the text (and this last is dealt with by the Receptive Syllabus). These users may be a native-English user with an English-user or more

likely between English-users of different native language backgrounds. Here the norms of, say, American English, are irrelevant.

The Productive Syllabus can be represented as in **Figure 4.**

Figure 4

The Productive Syllabus will differ in respects from the content of the Receptive Syllabus. Whole registers might be missing from the Receptive Syllabus. For most people – even native speakers - a lot of 'read' registers are not 'written' registers. More people read newspapers than write them. Similarly more people watch the TV news than present it. This may seem obvious when stated but a lot of coursebooks and examinations seem to ignore this. Learners and candidates are asked to write film reviews, 100 word reports, newspaper articles, brochures etc in an attempt for General English learners to produce something (anything?).

Certainly in my teaching situation in Poland my general English learners need a spoken register and perhaps to write a letter of application and a report. They will never, I will hazard, have to write a film review.

The Productive Syllabus should be proposed by the learner to account for what they wish to produce. The onus should be on them to articulate what they want. There would no longer be endless formal letter writing if the learner did not envisage the need for them.

The learner should be encouraged to be autonomous and to negotiate with the teacher – with power on their side – to ask for what they need. At a certain level a General English course becomes an aberration. Once learners can understand most general texts and speech then it is time for ESP. Each learner is an individual and has different actual and foreseeable needs.

Content

The content of the syllabus is negotiated between the learner and the teacher. Whole registers may be missing and also some features of language, which appeared in the Receptive Syllabus, may be deemed unnecessary. For example the learner and teacher might consider that question tags, which are a feature of spoken English in Britain, are not essential for production. It is perfectly possible to communicate in English without question tags. Similarly the Present Perfect Continuous appears so little in speech that time spent on trying to produce it might be consider wasted, though a receptive understanding would be useful. Indeed, heretically, could a learner survive without any Perfect tenses?

The idea of the Productive Syllabus is not that these language forms would automatically be excluded, just because they are, say, difficult, but that the learner makes a choice in what their English should be like. Learners do this at present by what they chose to learn and use. The Dual Syllabus recognises this and explicitly addresses this fact.

The Dual Syllabus does not assume that the user wants to do what native speakers do with English or even if they do, does not assume they want to do it in a way native speakers would.

Conventions and correctness

One of my learners recently wrote the phrase '**never-ending youth'** to which I suggested the (native speaker) alternative '**eternal youth'**. Her phrase was entirely comprehensible – it just was not how a native speaker like myself might express it. It was not 'wrong' but 'different' and entirely acceptable. Under the Dual Syllabus, her productive register could include such a phrasing. As her teacher I might suggest an alternative 'native speaker phrase' but the final decision should be hers as to whether she adopts the phrase 'eternal youth' or continues with her original phrasing.

This is the power of the Dual Syllabus approach. If we had been using the Dual Syllabus, in the Receptive Syllabus she might not have been exposed to 'eternal youth' or had not noticed it. While working on her Productive Syllabus the opportunity would have arisen to suggest it as an alternative. The decision, though, would remain hers on how close she wanted to model her English to the standard (or my) norms.

In writing such an article as this I have to conform to certain conventions and norms in order for the article to be published and thus become involved in the academic discourse that this journal is part of. I have not studied the style of academic discourse and this journal in detail but I hope that my academic style is sufficiently close to the

journal's norms for it to be accepted. I will adjust the style, if necessary, so it is close enough.

My learners similarly have to make such decisions: if they want to become part of a native speaker discourse they have to model their language sufficiently close for it to be acceptable. But that is only part of the story – in user-to-user discourse (that is **not** native-to-native speakers of the same English) the language is a construct with temporary norms which are negotiated between the participants. Then native speaker norms are not important. When I am in discourse with such users I similarly have to accept the adjustment of my norms and to enter into a negotiation of meaning and acceptability.

These ideas have major implications for teaching and testing.

Implications for Teaching

At 'lower levels' the Receptive Syllabus is essentially a teacher-led construct which learners have to learn in order to be able to understand communication in English. This is what we suggest as a minimum for any worthwhile standard of competency. At an early stage though the learner should be able to express their Productive needs based on their knowledge from the Receptive Syllabus (see **Figure 1** again).

Together the teacher and learner construct the Productive Syllabus. The teacher has two main roles in this.

- As provider of input in the learner's chosen registers: from whatever variety they chose. Eg a learner might be learning from a British Standard Receptive Syllabus but might express an interest in US baseball news. The teacher should provide further Receptive input from whatever variety or register requested, and provide opportunities to talk about such news. Input could come from the Internet, as photocopies of authentic materials or from specially written materials.

- To provide the learner with feedback on their production – not on the basis of 'this is wrong and this is right' but in terms of 'this is understandable – communicative – and this is not.' Alternatives can be offered so that the output is more understandable. Here the teacher and learner are working on emergent language (an approach advocated by the Dogme Group) to make it more comprehensible but without a forced focus on the norms and conventions of one variety of English. Thus an American teacher would have to accept forms that might be British or whatever, even 'International' while a British teacher should accept Americanisms etc. Unless, of course, it is the avowed aim and choice of the learner to speak as an American (etc).

This implies a greater awareness on the part of the teacher of different Englishes. There should also be a change in attitudes towards 'correctness'. It should not be 'what I say and how I say it is correct' but 'you could say that but it would be more understandable to say this and I myself (as a native speaker/proficient user of English [delete as appropriate]) would say it in this third way.'. It would be the learner's choice whether to continue with their possibly unintelligible phrasing, to improve it or to adopt a native speaker phrasing.

Is an 'Advanced' class possible?

As at an 'advanced' level learners will be working on their own chosen registers this brings into question whether an effective advanced class can be run, one that is which pays attention to the individual concerns and needs of the learner. Also what materials would such a class use?

Under the dual Syllabus approach perhaps other models of tuition would have to be followed. One-to-one teaching, tutorials and the setting of assignments might be more effective even with a reduction in the face-to-face contact with the teacher. After all, in other educational situations, the model of primary school class instruction is not maintained into University.

Language learning should not be the same from elementary to advanced. At the moment, coursebook series recycle a limited number of topics (and associated vocabulary) and a closed set of verb grammar. This language is recycled throughout the series: again and again. Advanced coursebooks should not really still be focussing on the Present Perfect surely.

In any group of learners there are some who are not interested in a topic, say, the environment, or even willing to pretend to be. The Productive Syllabus avoids this by asking the learners to specify what they want to learn.

Implications for Testing

The implications for testing are mainly that there would be different tests for Receptive and Productive Syllabuses or carefully designed tests to test both. It would not be assumed that learners might want to produce what they can understand.

The Receptive syllabus could be tested in traditional ways. The Productive Syllabus is slightly different. If we assume that learners might not have the need or desire to produce certain registers, eg the film review, then it follows that we should test them in the registers of **their** choice and to grade their proficiency against a communicative rubric rather than a native speaker one. That is, unless, of course, you want to test a learner in their ability to produce American English etc.

Instead of having a General English exam which purports to test reading, writing, speaking and listening, exams based on the Dual Syllabus would be register based and provide specific information on the learner's ability in particular registers on a scale similar to the IELTS 0 – 9 global scale. A learner could request a test on their ability to write reports in English to a particular audience. It would be graded on its understandability, lack of ambiguity etc. The Certificate(s) would provide precise information on their ability to do this.

An example of a business exam to test both the Receptive and Productive Syllabuses would be: 'Using a computer and the given raw data on CDROM, write a 1000 word report on the data for a specified audience, in three hours. Then prepare (1 hour) and give a 15 minute presentation on the report.'

One examination, that I know of, does attempt register transfer: the Cambridge Advanced Examination. In this task though the test is focussed on transfer of specific lexical items rather than the ability to achieve a register transfer itself. Also in the writing, one task asks the candidates to use different texts, in order to produce a third.

Conclusions

The Dual Syllabus answers some of the challenges that English teaching faces in this new century. It also throws out some challenges to the profession: to teachers, to material writers and to examination boards.

In a way the most important aspect of the Dual Syllabus is the state of mind it demands of both learners and teachers. Learners have to articulate their needs and takes responsibility for their English while teachers have to change their attitude towards the concept of correct and acceptable English. Together they have to work on the learners emergent registers to fine tune them **as afar as the learner wants**. The learner's English will never be a native English so the norms of native varieties are not paramount. What is need is a comprehensible English register which is appropriate enough for the context of the user.

It is the fact that the Dual Syllabus approach must be made explicit to the learners and involve them in choices to determine their own level of English in their chosen registers which is the key. The learners would have take control of their own learning and work **with** the teacher to achieve this rather than be a passive vessel waiting for an agglomerated English to be poured in. With true learner autonomy comes responsibility. Only in this way will the English they learn become theirs in any meaningful way.

To summarise I would like to complete **Figure 3** as **Figure 5,** which shows the Receptive and Productive Syllabuses together.
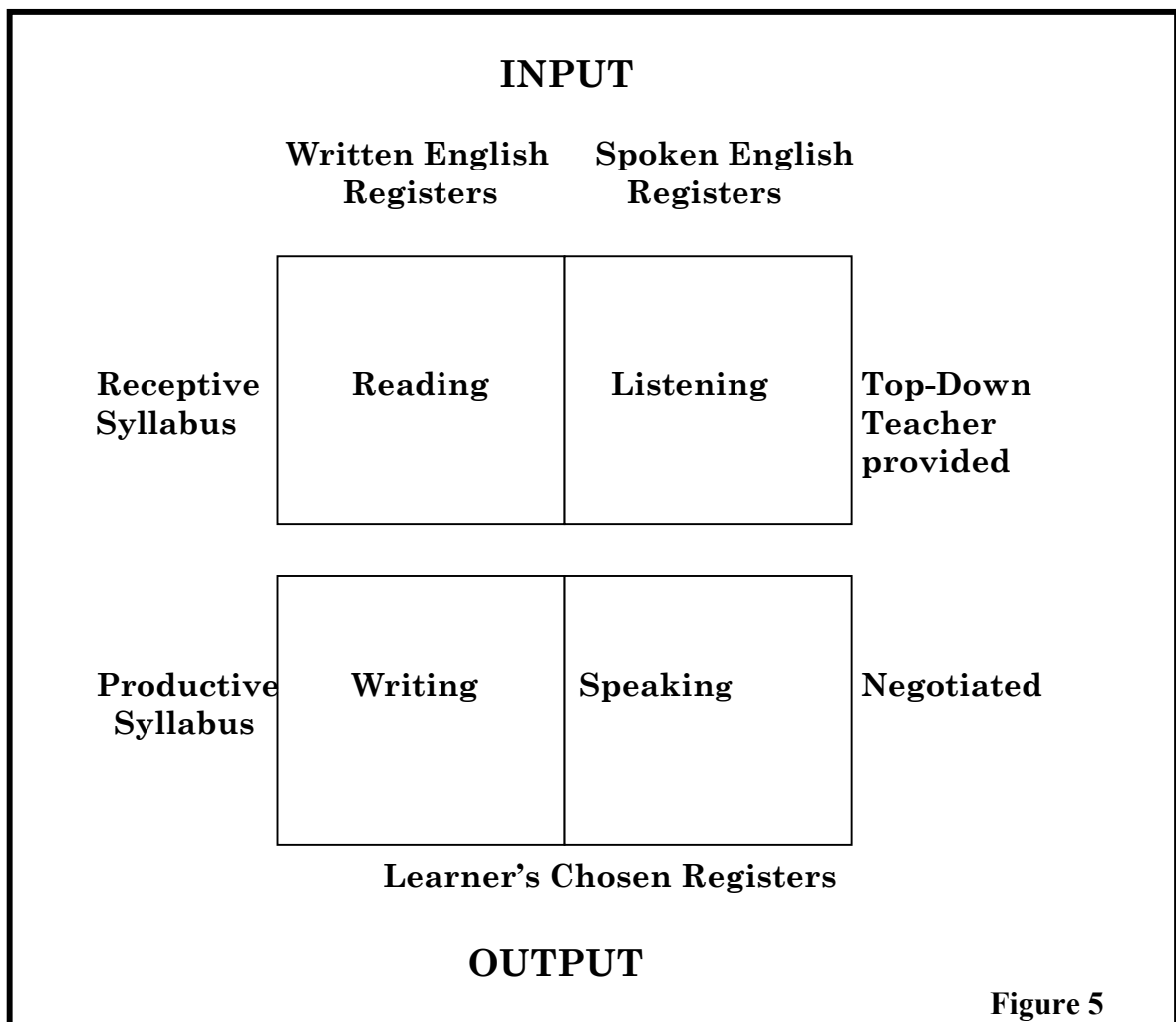
INPUT

	Written English Registers	**Spoken English Registers**	
Receptive Syllabus	Reading	Listening	**Top-Down Teacher provided**
Productive Syllabus	Writing	Speaking	**Negotiated**

Learner's Chosen Registers

OUTPUT

Figure 5

Note: The Dogme Discussion Group is a group of teachers and trainers discussing teaching approaches advocated by Scott Thornbury and can be found at dogme@yahoogroups.com

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