Teaching English
5. Grammar and vocabulary

Nancy Grimm – Michael Meyer – Laurenz Volkmann
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Discuss:

Have a look at the cartoon. Recapitulate how grammar and vocabulary were taught in your own school days. Discuss the place the teaching of grammar and vocabulary should have in the foreign language classroom and how it should be taught.
1.1 Today’s consensus

Communicative competence as paramount goal of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

CLT does not regard the role of grammar as obsolete

Teaching grammar and vocabulary must be integrated into the model of communicative competence

“Communication cannot take place in the absence of structure, or grammar, a set of shared assumptions about how language works, along with a willingness of participants to cooperate in the negotiation of meaning.”

Savignon 2002: 7, emphasis added
1.1 Today’s consensus

‘Don’t be so sensible!’
(a false friend)

semantic mistake

rules of politeness
1.2 Speech production and Interlanguage

I went to the movie theater yesterday.'

Levelt 1994: 91

1. Communication and competence
1.2 Speech production and Interlanguage

- FL learners will only produce language structures if the processing procedures are available in the **formulator**
- “The learner **does not learn** the TL [target language] structures in the sequence in which they are presented by a teacher, but rather in the sequence in which the human language processor **can handle them.**”
  
  Keßler & Pless 2011: 86, emphasis added

- **Teachability Hypothesis**: there are constraints to what can be taught
- **Processability hierarchy**: a developmental path with predictable stages of acquisition
1.2 Speech production and Interlanguage

1. no stage can be skipped
2. one stage needs to be mastered to enter the next
3. with each stage, the morphological / syntactical structures become more complex
4. developmental path cannot be altered / sped up by instruction
5. developmental state of individual learners needs to be diagnosed
   ➢ useful diagnostic tool: Rapid Profile
### 1.2 Speech production and Interlanguage

#### The third-person -s: Why do learners omit it?
- the third-person -s acquired at stage 5
- complex process: **number** (singular) + **person** (3rd) + **tense** (present) + **aspect** (non-continuous)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Processing procedure</th>
<th>Universal L2 process</th>
<th>English Morphology</th>
<th>English Syntax</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Interphrasal information exchange</td>
<td>- Interphrasal morphemes (e.g., subject-verb agreement): He gets up at six o’clock.</td>
<td>- Passive construction: The ball was kicked by Peter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentence procedure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Wh-auxiliary-2nd: Why did he sell the car?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Wh-copula inversion: Where has he gone?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.2 Speech production and Interlanguage

**Interlanguage (IL):**

“As new elements of L2 are acquired, language is tested and assessed. L2 items are also constructed through analogy with items and rules already known. This may be carried out subconsciously, along with the processing of feedback and how this may or may not change the IL as the learner moves along the continuum.”

Cherrington 2000: 307

- **Language transfer:** interference from the L1
  - overuse of the present perfect instead of simple past
- **Transfer of training:** items of the L2 language training procedures
  - if third-person -s is trained exclusively by using the pronoun ‘he’ → students might produce ‘he’ for both ‘she’ and ‘it’
- **Strategies of L2 learning:** approaches by the learner to the material to be learned
  - reducing TL to simpler norms
- **Strategies of L2 communication**
  - approaches by learner to communicate with native speakers of the TL
- **Overgeneralization of TL linguistic material**
  - rules and semantic features

Selinker 1972: 215-20
1.2 Speech production and Interlanguage

Learner errors
- a natural part of SLA
- an indicator of the developmental stage
- Learners will benefit from instruction and material that exposes them to “structures from ‘the next stage’”

Developmental error
- Error because PH-stage not yet reached
  - correction will be ineffective for specific learner
  - but: beneficial for others who have already entered this PH-stage
- Salient examples:
  - omission of plural -s / third person -s
  - overuse of the article ‘the’ (underuse of ‘a’)

Variational mistake
- Mistake although PH-stage already entered
  - must receive corrective feedback
  - to help him/her along the developmental path and prepare him/her for the next stage
  - to avoid the fossilization of a simplified IL version

Pienemann 1998: 250
2.1 Choices and approaches

**Deductive approach**
- a grammar rule is presented by the teacher
- practiced by the learners
- and often tested at the end of the grammar teaching sequence

**Inductive approach**
- rich input is provided in which a grammatical structure is repeated several times
- students discover the rule on their own from the examples provided
2.1 Choices and approaches

The trouble with grammar teaching

- ≠Language acquisition
- Form over meaning
- ≠English in actual use
- Inauthentic material
- Textbook progression
- Structures in isolation

based on Lenzing 2008: 21
2.1 Choices and approaches

Grammar matters!

2. Teaching and learning grammar
2.2.1 Focus on form

**Noticing** a grammatical features

- **Noticing**: registering a particular linguistic form in communication/instructional material

- **Comparing – noticing the gap**: comparing the linguistic feature noticed with own mental grammar, registering to what extent there is a ‘gap’ between the input and own IL

- **Integrating**: integrating a representation of the new linguistic feature into own IL

Keßler & Pless 2011: 152, adapted
### 2.2.1 Focus on form

**Input Enhancement techniques – implicit**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Implicit</th>
<th>Feedback (Teacher)</th>
<th>Material</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Recasts:** | S: “I want read.”  
T: “Oh, you want to read?” | **Visual textual enhancement via typographical alterations:** italicizing, boldface type, color coding, etc. |
| **Clarification requests:** | S: “What the woman do?”  
T: “I don’t understand. What do you mean?” | **Input flooding:**  
T (wants to introduce the use of the preposition “on” and provides many examples of its use): “My books are on the table. You are sitting on your chairs. The answers are on the blackboard. There is a stain on my shirt.” |
| **Oral equivalent of textual enhancement through stress, intonation, gestures:** | S: “I have seen her yesterday.”  
T: “You saw her yesterday?” | **Task-essential language:** requires a learner to use a target structure in order to complete a given activity |

Based on Keßler & Plesser 2011: 153, adapted
2.2.1 Focus on form

Input Enhancement techniques – explicit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feedback (Teacher)</th>
<th>Material</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Explicit</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| ▶ **Mental linguistic feedback:**  
  S: “Where he is study?”  
  T: “Well, watch out for your grammar. You need to use the -ing form after auxiliary verbs to indicate the present progressive. And you need to reverse the place of auxiliary and subject – Where is he studying?”  
| ▶ **Negative evidence through overt error correction:**  
  S: “Last weekend I go shopping and do homework.”  
  T: “No, that’s not exactly how we would say that. Remember that you are talking about the past. The correct sentence is – Last weekend I went shopping and did my homework.”  
| ▶ **Processing instruction:**  
  T provides a sample sentence with a grammatical structure; the learners have to understand the underlying grammatical structure in order to capture the meaning of the sentence.  

based on Keßler & Pless 2011: 153, adapted
2.2.1 Focus on form

Reactive and proactive FonF

1. **Reactive FonF**: a grammatical structure comes into focus only if the need arises

2. **Proactive FonF**: teachers prepare instructional materials that facilitate the elicitation of a grammatical structure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Input Enhancement activity</th>
<th>T provides enriched material: S listen to a dialog between two individuals talking about their last holiday.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Production activity</td>
<td>Pair work: Tasks S to talk to each other about their last holiday.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main task</td>
<td>Picture description task: S are given a picture sequence which shows an individual carrying out different activities. The title says that these pictures refer to a past event. S are asked to describe the pictures.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Keßler & Plesser 2011: 150, adapted
2.2.2 Task-based Language Teaching

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-task</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Aim:</strong> To introduce the topic of celebrations and to give S exposure to language related to them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Activation:</strong> T shows S pictures of a celebration (e.g., a family celebrating Christmas or someone's birthday). T tells S how the celebration went. T uses the pictures to provide as many details as possible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pre-activity:</strong> T distributes a card with the following questions and has S answer them. When was your last family celebration? Which are some of the special occasions you celebrate with family or friends? What is your favorite celebration with friends or family? What was the last celebration you had with your family or friends? How was it? What details make a celebration a success? Do you remember an especially happy celebration with friends or family? What happened?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 2.2.2 Task-based Language Teaching

#### Task cycle

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Planning</th>
<th>Report</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| ▶ T tells S (in groups of four) that they will plan a celebration including all aspects around it like invitation cards or a newspaper article to report all the facts about the celebration.  
▶ The groups discuss possibilities for a celebration and brainstorm vocabulary (e.g., kinds of celebrations, objects used for certain celebrations).  
▶ T provides grading schemes so that S know how they will be assessed.  
▶ T monitors and answers questions. | ▶ S (in groups) plan their celebration (e.g., Christmas, Halloween, birthday, 4th of July). T provides a task card which explains the process and requirements.  
▶ S prepare to report.  
▶ T checks how roles and assignments are distributed within the group (all S should be involved).  
▶ T provides language feedback. | ▶ The classroom is divided. Each group is assigned a place in the classroom to decorate the environment for their celebration.  
▶ S present, classmates listen and participate in the celebration. They can ask questions after the presentation.  
▶ T gives feedback on the content and comments on it briefly.  
▶ S vote and choose the best presentation. |

Rodriguez-Bonces & Rodríguez-Bonces 2010: 172-74, adapted
## 2.2.2 Task-based Language Teaching

### Post-task: language focus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analysis</th>
<th>Practice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>▶ T writes selected sentences uttered by S on the board.</td>
<td>▶ Option A (in the classroom): each S asks two questions about one of the celebrations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▶ T highlights language structures that need to be addressed.</td>
<td>▶ Option B (at home): T assigns homework to practice new words or structures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▶ S review phrases in context and take notes of the language they need.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Evaluation

- ▶ S complete a task evaluation form
- ▶ T completes grading schemes

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Rodríguez-Bonces & Rodríguez-Bonces 2010: 172-74, adapted
2.2.3 Acquisition-based Method

Five phases

- **Demonstration**: grammatical structure presented in typical communicative context (rich, holistic, and lively input)
  - grammatical structure is repeated up to 15 times

- **Understanding / Reacting**: students show their understanding of the structure by reacting to, for example, questions by the teacher with language structures they have already acquired

- **Reproduction**: students use the grammatical structure for the first time in a guided teacher-student dialog

- **Clarification**: teacher engages students in a classroom discussion; students should discover the grammatical rule
  - explanation of the rule follows

- **Production**: students apply the structure in meaningful ways in team or partner practice (e.g., information gap tasks)

2.2.3 Acquisition-based Method

Demonstration

T: You all know quite a lot of English now. One day you’ll speak it so well that you’ll be able to go to Britain for a holiday. If you go to Britain you’ll need a passport or identity card, of course. If you don’t have these documents they won’t let you into the country (T shows S his/her own passport). Now let’s think about how you’ll get there. How could you travel?

S: Fly or by train and ferry.

T: (shows S a travel brochure and air connections on a transparency) You can fly from Stuttgart to Heathrow. That takes just over an hour. Can you find Heathrow on the map? Or from Frankfurt to Manchester. It will be faster if you fly. But if you fly you won’t see very much, will you? You’ll see much more if you go by train and ferry.

T: (shows S a timetable with ferry connections) Let’s see which way you can go. If you go this way, through Belgium, you’ll get to Ostend (S mark travel routes and connections on a map). If you get on a ferry in Ostend you’ll arrive at Ramsgate. Who can show us the Ostend-Ramsgate route on the map? That’s a long way. If you go from Ostend you’ll be on the ferry for about four and a half hours. So let’s find a different route (to be continued with more alternative routes). Now, let’s say you’ve arrived in Britain and you haven’t been seasick. Let’s think about what you’re going to do. If you go to London you’ll see lots of famous sights. But then you won’t see much of the rest of the country if you stay there all the time, will you? What would you like to see in Britain? (S comment)
Understanding and reacting

T: (prepares copies of traffic signs, prohibition signs, notices) When you arrive in Britain you’ll probably see some of these notices. Let’s see if you can understand them all. Listen. Which notice am I talking about? 1. They won’t let you into the country if you haven’t got one.

S: Passports.

T: That’s right. Can you go on? Which notice is this? (to be continued with more false statements by T and corrections by S)

Reproduction

T: (challenges students with false statements about British customs and conventions and writes statements with highlighted words on the blackboard) Let’s imagine you’re going to Britain on holiday. Let’s see if you know everything you’ll need to know. Tell me if this is right: You won’t need a passport if you go to Britain.

S: That’s wrong. You will need a passport if you go to Britain (to be continued with more false statements by T and corrections by S).

Ziegesar & Ziegesar 2007: 292-98, adapted
2.2.3 Acquisition-based Method

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clarification and focusing</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tasks students for regularities. S should recognize and explain the underlying grammatical structure of Conditional I (simple present in conditional subordinate clause, will-future in main clause).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Production</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T provides student pairs with tandem sheets with tips for going to Britain that differ on each of the two sheets. S1 has to ask S2 for tips and vice versa (information gap exercise).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discuss possible advantages and disadvantages of these three approaches to grammar teaching. Consider, for example, (1) the relation between meaning and form, (2) the explicitness/implicitness of the approach, (3) the time and material needed.
3.1 Psycholinguistic basics

Mental lexicon – a network

- spelling & pronunciation
- word class
- derivations
- meaning(s)
- synonyms, antonyms
- collocations, connotations
- register

3. Teaching and learning vocabulary
3.1 Psycholinguistic basics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To know a word</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Spoken        | Receptive: what does the word sound like?  
|               | Productive: how is the word pronounced?   |
| Written       | Receptive: what does the word look like?  
|               | Productive: how is the word written and spelled? |
| Position      | |
| Grammatical patterns | Receptive: in what patterns does the word occur? 
|                 | Productive: in what patterns must we use the word? |
| Collocations  | Receptive: what words or types of words can be expected before or after the word?  
|               | Productive: what words or types of words must we use with this word? |
| Function      | |
| Frequency     | Receptive: how common is the word?  
|               | Productive: how often should the word be used? |
| Appropriateness | Receptive: where would we expect to meet this word?  
|               | Productive: where can this word be used? |
| Meaning       | |
| Concept       | Receptive: what does the word mean?  
|               | Productive: what word should be used to express this meaning? |
| Associations  | Receptive: what other words does this word make us think of?  
|               | Productive: what other words could we use instead of this one? |

Nation 1990: 31, adapted
3.1 Psycholinguistic basics

Organization of the mental lexicon

Subset Hypothesis: L1 – L2

Combination
- collocations
- Idioms
- figures of speech

+ Clang associations
- ‘bed’ / ‘bad’
- ‘merry’ / ‘Mary’

Selection
- synonyms, antonyms
- hyp(er)onyms
- word class

A burning desire
keen
passionate
unfulfilled

Syntagmatic
Paradigmatic
With your knowledge about word retrieval, the organization of the mental lexicon, and the relation between the L1 and L2 lexicons, explain what went wrong in the following utterances:
1. ‘He hit me so hardly that it gave me a black eye.’
2. ‘I love to color eggs for Christmas.’
3. ‘The accident I witnessed yesterday was terrible.’
### 3.1 Psycholinguistic basics

**Which words to know and how many?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Native speakers</th>
<th>FL learners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20,000 word families</td>
<td>5,000 word families (several years of study)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Passive: 75,000 words</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Active: 30,000 words</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Average school year</th>
<th>Per lesson</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>400 to 700 words</td>
<td>Maximum of 10 to 20 new words</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Core vocabulary          | 2,000 to 3,000 high-frequency words |
|                         | New General Service List: [www.newgeneralservicelist.org](http://www.newgeneralservicelist.org) |
|                         | More specialized needs: 5,000 word families |

| For academic studies in English | Academic Word List: [www.victoria.ac.nz/lals/resources/academicwordlist](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/lals/resources/academicwordlist) |

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3. Teaching and learning vocabulary
3.1 Psycholinguistic basics

Options of lexical selection

- Highest frequency words in large general word-counts / for thematic areas
- Key words and phrases
  - in thematic areas required for the achievement of communicative tasks relevant to learner needs
  - which embody cultural difference and/or significant values and beliefs shared by the social group(s) whose language is being learned
- Words contained in (authentic) spoken and written texts
- Organic vocabulary development in response to learner demand when engaged in communicative tasks

Council of Europe 2001: 150-51
Have a look at the vocabulary file in a current textbook and assess according to which principle(s) lexical selection has been made. Discuss your findings.
3.2 Structuring vocabulary lessons – systematic approach for beginners

**Presentation**
- multichannel
- meaningful context
- pronunciation before spelling

**Practicing**
- exercises & activities to facilitate integration into the mental lexicon
- link new words to vocabulary previously learned
- pronunciation, spelling, learning techniques

**Application**
- in meaningful communication
- focus on syntagmatic connections (e.g., syntax, collocations)

**Assessment**
- should mirror the ways in which lexical items were introduced by the teacher (see presentation phase)
- go beyond testing knowledge of decontextualized items

Based on Doyé 1985, Neveling 2010: 333-34
3.2 Structuring vocabulary lessons – explanation techniques

Quetz 2007: 277, adapted
3.2 Structuring vocabulary lessons – presentation phase

- T: Now our next word is ‘to smell.’ Now watch me and look at me. Now I’m smelling. (T schnüffelt) Hmmm. The smell is OK in here. It’s not too bad. ... Now – when you smell, what do you smell with? (S schnüffeln)
- S1: Er – with my nose.
- T: That’s right. Yeah, you smell with your nose. And sometimes things also smell. And they can smell good, or they can smell ...
- S: (mehrere murmeln) ... bad.
- T: Right. ... My socks, for example, smell terrible.
- S2: (leise) Müllabfuhr ...

Quetz 2007: 281
Practice presentation. How would you introduce and explain the following words/word fields:

1. to shout (verb)
2. tall (adjective)
3. handy (adjective)
4. vegetables (word field)
5. hobbies (word field)
6. hurricane (noun)
7. global warming (noun)
3.3 Teaching activities

Teachers ➞ students

- repeated encounters
- communicative situations
- vocabulary rehearsal
- learning strategies
- constant attention
3.4 Learning strategies

Successful vocabulary learners

- Know how to organize their own learning
- Take risks / are not afraid of making mistakes
- Are good guessers
- Pay attention to meaning
- Pay attention to form

Based on Thornbury 2002: 144-45
3.4 Learning strategies – learning techniques

- Using pictures to memorize the meaning of words
- Picturing words in one’s mind
- Connecting words to personal experiences
- Connecting new words to synonyms, antonyms
- Grouping words together in grids, mind maps, etc. that show their semantic relations
- Paraphrasing the meaning of words
- Guessing from context
- Listening to words
- Acting out words
- Making up a story using new words
- Putting English labels on physical objects
- Engaging actively with English-language media (literature, songs, movies)
- Using learning software, online word games, and tests


Acknowledgments


The cartoons at the beginning of each ppt were designed by Frollein Motte, 2014. If not otherwise indicated, the copyright of the figures lies with the authors. The complete titles of the sources can be found in the references to the units unless given below. All of the websites were checked on 10 September 2014.

- **Slide 6**: Psycholinguistic model of speech production, Levelt, Willem J. M. 1994: 91
- **Slide 8**: Processability hierarchy for English as L2 from advanced (6) to beginners (1), based on Pienemann in Keßler & Plesser 2011: 86-87
- **Slides 16/17**: Input enhancement techniques, based on Keßler & Plesser 2011: 153
- **Slide 18**: Proactive FonF focusing on past -ed, based on Keßler & Plesser 2011: 150
- **Slides 19-21**: Example of TBLT, based on Rodríguez-Bonces & Rodríguez-Bonces 2010: 172-74
- **Slides 23-25**: Example of ABM, based on Ziegésar & Ziegésar 2007: 292-98
- **Slide 28**: Lexical competence, based on Nation 1990: 31
- **Slide 35**: Explanation techniques, based on Quetz 2007: 277