CHAPTER 7: Word, structure, function and discourse

The lexical syllabus - a resume

The impetus for the lexical syllabus came from the research which lay behind the *Collins COBUILD English Language Dictionary.* We believed that the patterns and meanings associated with the commonest words of English would afford a basis for syllabus specification which would provide learners with good coverage - and would provide that coverage economically. Once we moved towards the concept of the learner's corpus (our collection of texts and recordings), we saw the syllabus specification as helping us to describe that corpus and to identify items within the corpus which should be highlighted for the learner. The lexical syllabus would derive from research into a large corpus of natural language, and would use that research to highlight significant items within a smaller learner's corpus. We believed that this approach to syllabus specification and design would give us better coverage than the more traditional syllabus based on an inventory of grammatical patterns and/or functional realisations.

We also believed that taking lexis as a starting point would give us new insights into the structure of the language and the way it might usefully be viewed by learners. It led us to reject some categories, such as reported speech and the three conditionals, which figure prominently in most pedagogic grammars. It also led us to focuis on some features of language, such as the complex noun phrase and items which structure discourse, more systematically and thoroughly than structurally or functionally based syllabuses. The fact that we were concerned with exploiting the learner's corpus enabled us to help the learner look at language in use, and at language within a clear context of meaning and intention. This freed us from the constraints which force most approaches to language teaching into a sentence level description of grammar.

Finally, the lexical syllabus, by taking the word as its point of departure, would afford learners an easy way of referencing the language they had experienced. The word indexes and reference sections provided with each Level would enable learners to re-examine their language experience systematically when they wished to do so. This is not an easy thing to do if one is dependent on grammatical metalanguage. Learners are much more likely to recognise the need to check up on the use of **who** or **which** than to feel the need to check up on adjectival relative clauses, and **who** and **which** are much easier to index and to retrieve.

As I outlined in Chapter 2, when we started writing *CCEC* we were critical of traditional approaches to syllabus design, and some of our criticisms sharpened as we developed the lexical syllabus. Most approaches to syllabus specification give an inordinate prominence to the verb phrase, and largely neglect the noun

phrase for example. They set up categories like reported speech which are uneconomical and potentially confusing. In a few cases, such as **some** and **any**, they may perpetuate false beliefs and assumptions about the language.

We wanted, however, to take full account of approaches which had served the teaching profession, and many would say had served it well, for many years. We were anxious to compare our findings and our coverage of language against a consensus derived from coursebooks which were widely used and presumably, therefore, accepted by teachers and students as providing a useful description of the language. We would then need to identify omissions and departures highlighted by the COBUILD research or by what we were prepared to defend as a more pedagogically satisfying description of the language. The consensus syllabus was provided by our analysis of the TEFL Side Corpus which provided an inventory of the linguistic structures and speech functions commonly covered at the elementary and intermediate levels. We were able to check the coverage offered in our lexical syllabus against this consensus syllabus and to look critically at ways in which we had departed from the consensus. This chapter goes on to describe how the lexical approach is different in its treatment of some grammatical features.

The verb phrase - tense, aspect, mood and voice

Most formal grammars describe the verb phrase in English under four headings:

Tense   Present or past.
Aspect Simple or progressive/continuous and/or perfective.
Mood   - as realised by the models **can/could, may/might, must, will/would** and (according to some descriptions) **going to, have/had to, need to, ought to**.
Voice   active or passive.

Strictly speaking there are only two tenses in English, present and past. Together with the other components these generate all the verb forms in English, from the simplest:

1 We test the machines every week.

to the most complex:

2 It will have been going to be being tested every day for a fortnight soon.

This last example, at first sight an almost impossible occurrence, is attested by Halliday (1976) as being recorded from conversation.

Pedagogical grammars handle the verb phrase quite differently. The label 'tense' in a pedagogic grammar normally covers the formal grammarian's tense and aspect together with the modal **will**. The 'tenses' in a pedagogic grammar include:

Present simple   We test the machines regularly.

Present continuous   We are testing the machine.

Future	We'll test the machine tomorrow.
Future continuous	We'll be testing the machine soon.
Past Simple	We tested the machine.
Past simple Past continuous	We were testing the machine.
Present perfect	We've tested the machine.
Present perfect continuous	We've been testing the machine
Past perfect	We had already tested the machine..
etc.	

Voice is combined with these forms to produce, for example, the past perfect passive:

> 3 The machines had already been tested.

Or the past continuous passive:

> 4 The machine was being tested.

The models are usually taught lexically alongside concepts like ability:

> 5 I *can* speak a little Spanish.

possibility:

> 6 You can learn Spanish at evening school.

and function like asking and giving permission:

> 7 Can I go early please?
>   Yes. You can go as soon as you've finished.

In addition to this, certain verb forms are taught within a particular structural context, such as the second conditional with the past tense and **would** marking a hypothesis:

> 8 You *would* soon learn Spanish if you *went* to evening classes.

and the third conditional with would have and the past perfect:

> 9 You *would have* learned Spanish if you *had gone* to evening school.

Our own treatment of the verb phrase came somewhere between the formal grammar approach, and that of the pedagogical grammar. In many ways it followed the traditional pedagogic description, but there were significant differences. We did not, as most pedagogic grammars do, identify a 'future tense' with the modal **will**. Instead we identified 'ways of referring to the future'. We treated all models lexically. Although we took conditional sentences as our starting point for the description of **would** we were careful to remove the dependence on if at an early stage. Although we used the terms 'present continuous' and 'past continuous' we did not teach these forms as such. Instead we encouraged learners to build them from their component parts, the verb be and the present participle ending in -**ing**, which was treated as an adjective. The past participle, too, was treated as an adjective, and from this we derived the passive voice. Finally our exploitation of the learner's corpus meant that we did not have to rely on sentence level citations to illustrate the use of verb forms, or indeed of any other forms.

Tense

Our treatment of the past and present tenses was similar to that found in most pedagogic grammars, but learners were exposed to both tenses right from the beginning. Specific exercises draw attention to the two tenses throughout Level 1. They are contrasted in Unit 4 of Level 1:

<u>58</u> **Becky's homes**

The authors' teenage daughter, Becky, wrote this.

> We live in a four-bedroom semi-detached house in a town called
> Hemel Hempstead, about twenty miles from London. It was built
> in about 1960.
> When we lived in Birmingham, from 1979 to 1981, we lived in an
> old house in a district called Harborne. It was a large
> semi-detached house built in the 1 890s with five bedrooms and
> nice big rooms downstairs. It had a big garden at the back but no
> front garden. It was a really nice house, much nicer than our house
> in Hemel Hempstead.   **BW**

Unit 5 draws attention to the commonest past tense forms in English:

A psychiatrist, receiving a new patient saw that she was carrying a duck under her arm. Saying nothing about the duck he asked her to sit down. 'Well,' he said, 'can I help you?' 'Oh, it's not me who needs help, doctor,' she replied, 'it's my husband here. He thinks…	Cartoon picture omitted

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Past and present forms
 Match the verbs.

asked	said	is	has
went	was	see	hear
saw	heard	go	ask
thought	had	say	think

Units 9 and 11 give practice in the use of the past tense in narrative. By the end of Level 1 students have had ample exposure to both tenses and their basic
uses.

The negative and interrogative forms also occur right from the beginning of Level 1. In line with our lexical approach they are brought together in an analysis exercise on the words **do** and **did** in Unit 9:

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do

What is the difference between sets 1 and 2?
Set 1
Ask your teacher if you don't understand.
How do you know?
It doesn't matter.
What does Chris say?
I didn't get up until 8.30, so I was late.
Did Chris give good directions?

Set 2
I usually do the cooking and cleaning in the morning.
My husband does the gardening at weekends.
He did the meals when I was ill.
What are you doing?
All right. You do it first, then it's my turn.

_____

These examples are a mixture of sets 1 and 2. Sometimes both types appear in the same sentence. Which is which?
a *What does your brother do?*
b *Did you do your homework?*
c *No, I didn't, because I had a lot of other things to*
  do.
d *Who's going to do the dishes?*
e *Which bus? A 62 or 63 will do just as well.*
f *Is this yours? No, it's nothing to do with me.*
g *Have you done your homework?*
h *It doesn't matter.*

Look at the Grammar Book. Which categories do the last eight examples go into?

This exercise asks learners to distinguish between two extremely common uses of the word **do**. It is used as an auxiliary in Set 1 and in Set 2 it is a delexical verb - a verb which does not carry meaning itself but takes its meaning from the noun which follows it. More examples of **do** as an auxiliary are given in the grammar reference section at the back of Level 1:

_____

do, did (132)

1 used to form questions
How many things did he remember? (42)
Where did you live? (57)
Why did you move? (57)
Did you have a look at the shops?
Where did you go yesterday?
Do you know your teacher's name? (2)
Do you live in a house or a flat? (52)

Do you want milk and sugar?
Do you work in the evenings?
How many children does he have?
When does she go to bed? (212)

Your friend, John has just introduced you to another friend of his, Peter. Use these frames to make questions you might ask Peter.

Where…………come from?   *When …………meet john?*
What work……..?   *Where…………?*
………live?

Make questions from this table.

When *What time*	*do* *does* *did*	*you* *Myf*	*start work?* *finish work?* *get up?* *go to bed?* *have lunch?* *get home in the evening?*

2 used to make a verb negative

I don't go to work as such. (118)
I don't always have lunch actually. (113)
A: Do you know where Green Park is? B: No, I'm sorry, I don't.
I didn't do anything interesting.
I do not know yet whether I shall be staying with Vijay Bhatia. (193)
Do not insert money.

Say which of these things you do and which you don't do.

Speak English/Italian/Spanish/German/French/ Chinese/ Japanese Play football/tennis/cricket/golf/chess Ride a bicycle Drive a car Fly a plane

The use of the past tense for hypothesis occurs in Unit 6:

10 If you were counting how would you say these numbers?
11…depending whether it was English or American.

and is reinforced in association with **would** and with **if**:

if (209)

1   in conditions

1.1 when the speaker thinks something is likely to happen.
What happens if the person isn't there?
It will help if you know where the hole or button is on your phone. (205)

1.2 for something imagined, not real (see would 2)

Which examples would be useful if you went to Britain?
If you were counting, how would you say these numbers? (79)

2 for something imagined, not real ('would')

Imagine that   to see the
 person

What do you think the weather would be like if you were:

In London? In Rome? In Madrid? In Moscow? In Cairo?

If you were asked to make a film:

what book or play would you choose?
who would the stars be?
what parts would they play?

Suppose an English friend asked you what to do and what places to visit in your country. What would you tell them?

_____

If you wanted to save money, which of these things would you do?
Eat less?
Drink less?
Spend less on going out?
Sell your car?
Spend less on clothes?

208 What would you do if….?

Cartoon picture omitted here

Discuss briefly what you would do if you were in one of these situations.

-if you heard the fire alarm in the building you are in now
-if the electricity went off in your home, and you thought it might be a power cut
-if you were by the sea and you heard someone shouting for help

Together with your partner, plan what you would say. If you were with a friend, what would you tell them to do?

Act out the situation in front of the class. Don't say which of these three situations it is. Can the others guess what has happened?

This is further developed in Level 2:

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90 Language study

Would
a Look at the verbs in colour. What tense are they in? Do they refer tp past time?

JV: Are we ready: Yes, erm, now what would each of you cook if someone dropped in unexpectedly and stayed for a meal in the evening?
JV: What would you cook, David?
DF: Whatever vegetables happened to be there.
 JV: Supposing they arrived after the restaurants had shut.
JV: But, er, and if you'd made it at home…

Why are they in past tense?

b Look at these sentences. What does would mean? Why is it would, not will?

We asked Jenny, Bridget, David and Danny what they would cook for an unexpected guest.

JV: What would you do, Danny?
DL: Would I have to cook them something, because I'd prefer to take them out for a meal.
JV: It says here 'What would you do if each of you cook?'
DL: Erm…
JV: So, to summarise, Bridget would cook sausage and beans, Danny would cook an omelette, David would cook something exotic that he'd rustled up from bits in the fridge, and I would cook a cheese flan.

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and Level 3:

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Past forms and past participles

a Say when the underlined words refer to past time.

1 If I <u>saw</u> a man-eater I would be terrified.
2 The man-eater nearly <u>killed</u> the caretaker.
3 Assuming a man-eater <u>attacked</u> you and your family, what would you do?
4 The man-eater <u>was sent</u> to Tsavo by mistake.
5 Suppose one of your friends <u>was attacked</u> by a leopard, what would you do?

A future tense is not identified but attention is drawn to ways of referring to the future:

THE OPEN UNIVERSITY

Dr. Markham L. Tickoo
Chairman,
Seminar Planning Committee,
REGIONAL Planning Committee,
30 Orange Grove Road,
Singapore 1025

Dear Dr. Tickoo,

SEAMBO Language Seminar 1985
I am writing with regard to my traveling arrangements for the above seminar. I shall be travelling by Jordanian Airways and should arrive in Singapore at 13.50n on 18th April. The return booking is for 05.30 on 4th May.

I have not yet got confirmation of the arrangements for the Amman-Singapore section of the journey so I shall have to confirm these timings as soon as I receive further information.

I look forward to seeing you next month.

Yours sincerely,

J. F. Morritt
Professor of Teacher education

c.c. Dr. J. D. Willis, English Language officer,
British Council, Singapore.

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Look at this extract from John Swales's letter.

I do not know yet whether I shall be staying with Vijay Bhatia. I'll let you know as soon as I have heard from him.

Do the highlighted words refer to the past, the present or the future?

In Professor Merritt's letter there are four ways of referring to the future. Can you find them?

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Talking about the future
Find the verbs in this transcript.
Find all the verbs which refer to the future. How many different ways of referring to the future are there?
DF: Will your paths cross? What about this coming week and weekend? Will you be going to the, er, Nisa this weekend?
BG: Probably, yes.
DF: Er, I might be as well, so that's a possibility. Erm…are you going the th—Are you going out this weekend to anything? Have you got any plans?
BG: Erm, I'm staying in London. I'm going to a concert on Saturday night.
DF: Where? Where's that?
BG: At Wembley.
DF: Uhuh. What are you going to see?
BG: Tina Turner.
DF: Uhuh. Great!
BG: Erm, ..Then I'm going out to lunch on Sunday.
DF: Where are you going out t lunch?
BG: Parson's Green.

DF: Ah. I'm going out to lunch in Putney, which is close-ish. After that?
BG: Erm…I don't know. I haven't really got anything else planned.
DF: So what about shopping?
BG: Oh, I'll probably-I'll have to go shopping at some stage, probably on Saturday.

Say whether these sentences are about the present or the future.
a Are you going to play tennis?
b For the time being I'm happy.
c I'll just see what happens.
d I am writing with regard to my travel arrangements.
e Are you planning to stay with a friend?
f If you come home tomorrow I won't be here.
g Which examples would be useful if you went to Britain?
h Take a good look and tell me if you see anything different.

These uses are highlighted separately under the modals and under have:
> **6.2 for something that will have happened at some time in the future**
> He'll be home
> Tell me
> (*We can also use the present tense.*
> He'll be home when he finishes work.
> Tell me when you finish.)

and brought together in the sections given above.

The decision no to treat **will** as the future tense was a deliberate one which was taken for a number of reasons. First, there seemed to be no good reason for treating **will** as being different from any of the other modals. It can be treated lexically, and we could see no reason why it should not be treated in this way. Secondly, treating will as the future tense implies that this use is in some way neutral in terms of modality. But this does not seem to be the case. The closest it comes to a neutral form is when it is used to express certainty or prediction:

> 12 If it's midday in London Chicago will be 7 a.m.
> 13 In some areas you will find green cardphones.

But the fact that **will** is not normally found in clauses with **if** and **when**:

> 14 *If it will rain we'll get wet.
> 15 *When you will finish you can go home.

shows that it is not neutral. It cannot be used in these clauses with its casual meaning of certainty or prediction, because the words **if** and **when** are selected in order to avoid the notions of certainty and prediction. **Will** is not acceptable in such clauses precisely because it carries a modal meaning. It is, of course, acceptable after **if** or **when** when it is used to express volition and to realise a request or offer:

> 16 If you will agree to the price we can sign the contract.

Treating will as the future tense actually draws learners into the kind of error exemplified in 14 and 15 above. Probably the closest thing we have in English to a future tense is the present simple, which many formal grammars treat not as present but as 'not-past', descr ibing English as a system which has a marked tenese form for the past and realises other time references, present and future, through this unmarked form unless some modal meaning is carried in addition. This accounts for uses like:

> 17 Give it to the first person you see.
> 18 I can't come next week. I'm on holiday.

Progressive aspect
A description which conflates tense and aspect means that the concepts of progressive and perfective aspect are not taught as such. In the case of progressive aspect, this omission means that the description is highly uneconomical. For example many coursebooks identify a use which is labelled the 'interrupted past'. This is realised by a pattern with the verb in one clause in the past simple tense and the verb in the other clause, usually a temporal clause, in the past continuous:

> The postman called while I was cooking breakfast.

But the notion of 'interruptedness' is a feature of progressive aspect, not simply of the past continuous tense'. The sentences:

> The postman usually calls while I'm cooking breakfast.

and:

> I'll probably be cooking breakfast when the postman calls.

are equally possible.

Progressive aspect in English is marked by the suffix -ing. Although our syllabus was basically lexical, we covered the uses of ring in all three levels. A consciousness raising activity comes towards the end of Level 1:

Grammar words

.-ing

1 describing something :
There were two girls eating fish and chips. Write down one or two interesting things about eacb person.

2 after **am, is, be** etc.
One girl was carrying a white bag. The S student will be asking you questions about things that you usually do during the day.

3 after **see, look at hear, listen to** etc.
Listen to them talking about when they go to bed.

4 before **am, is** etc.
Dialling 999 is free.

5 after **stop, start, remember, like** etc.
I remember going to London many years ago. She likes watching television.

6 after **when, before, instead of** etc.
Remember that when dialling a number from within the same area, you do not need the prefix.
Before attempting to break down the door, the man tried ...

Write down five of these things.

> something you like doing
> something you stopped doing a long time ago
> something you can see someone doing
> what you were doing at this time yesterday
> what you will be doing this time tomorrow something you remember doing as a child
> someone who is sitting at the front of the class

What categories do these sentences belong to?

a   *Put in the money before making your call.*
b   *Listen to David and Bridget discussing the same problem.*
c   *The conversation ceased and she heard gasping sounds.*
d   *Using a cardphone is not difficult.*
e   *You can telephone your family back home without using money.*
f   *The special cards are available from Post Offices*
g   *and shops displaying the green 'Cardphone' sign.*
h   *I really like running. Swimming is nice too.*
i   *You have quite a long working day, don't you?*

The grammar section in Level 1 offers this summary:

-ing (213)

1 describing something
I've got a man wearing a hat.
There was a man carrying a brown bag.
You hear a ringing tone. (206)
A purring sound.

2 after 'am','is','be' etc.
At one o'clock I'm normally eating my lunch. (143)
They were walking past the newsagents.

3 after 'see','hear' etc.
If you heard someone shouting for help. (208)
He saw a woman Iying on the floor. (210)

4 before 'am','is' etc.
Learning English is easy, difficult.
Watching TV is. . .

5 after 'stop', 'start', 'remember', 'like' etc.
He stopped talking and began to eat.

6 after 'vvhen', 'before', 'instead of' etc.
Instead of putting your money in first, you dial the number... (206)
Can you use the cardphone without using coins?

Certainly categories 1, 2 and 3, and possibly all six categories carry the notion of progressive aspect. Levels 2 and 3 draw particular attention to the use of progressive aspect in setting a scene in narrative, a scene which is soon to be 'interrupted' by a chain of events. Of course one of the main uses of the **-ing** form is category 2, which goes with the verb **be** to form what pedagogic grammars call the continuous tenses. By highlighting the use and meaning of **-ing** and also of the verb **be**:

3 '. .. be' + ring
I shall be staying with Vijay Bhatia. (193)

2 used to make the present perfect w~th ring
I've been doing it since I was sixteen. (98)
I've been working here in Top Shop for 3 months. (98)

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8   Grammar revision

am, is, are, was, were

Look at these uses of the verb to be.

1 Who or what	3 Where	5 With -ed, -en.
It's a very pleasant school.	*It's near Birmingham, isn't it'*	*He's married.*
I was an insurance broker.	*That was in Warrington.*	*Where were you born and brought up?*
2 Describing	4 With -ing	
He's about fifteen months.	*He's getting to the more interesting stage isn't he?*	
She's quite small.	*At the moment I'm looking for jobs.*	

Which category do these examples belong to ?

a John is trying to get a new job.   *e It's two miles from Uxbridge.*
b It's a new town I think.   *f His son is called Joe.*
c Now it's in Cheshire.   *g Joe is just starting to get mischievous.*
d Hillingdon is a suburb of London.   *h Catherine left Dublin when she was seven.*

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we can enable students to produce for themselves the verb forms which carry progressive aspect. The fact that the present participle -ing is treated as an adjectival form gives learners a powerful indication of its use. The sentence:

A man was *carrying a brown bag*.

is descriptive in exactly the same way as:

There was a man *carrying a brown bag*.

or:

> I saw a man *carrying a brown bag*.

To bring out this feature of English, it is important not to treat the present continuous as a "tense', but rather to make a broader generalisation by treating the ring form as adjectival, with the collocation with **be** as one of its common uses. As we shall see below there are other important reasons for treating the present participle with **-ing** as adjectival.

Perfective aspect

The treatment of the present and past perfect tenses is very similar to that found in most pedagogic grammars, with two important exceptions. One of the consequences of working from research data and working with authentic text was that we identified the use of the present perfect tense with reference to the future:

> I'll let you know as soon as I've heard from him.
> Let me know as soon as you have fixed your travel plans.
> Answer the questions after you have read the passage.

The second difference is methodological. The examples which illustrate the use of perfective aspect are taken from the learner's corpus:

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had

a In each example below there are two or more things that happened. Which thing took place first?

1   *One evening the wife, white as a sheet, called me over to her flat saying that it had been burgled.*
2   *Her husband had dropped in briefly while she was out (before she got back), to look for his driving licence.*

Now what aboue these sentences from other units?

3   *The assistant sold more ice-cream in the interval than anyone had ever done before. (55)*
4   *And I won the next year but not as much as I'd won the first year.*
5   *. . . they arrived after the restaurants had shut. (86)*
6   *The pilot then discovered the cockpit door had locked itself and he'd mislaid the key. (104)*
7   *One morning he found that someone had parked in front of his garage door. (150)*

b In what ways are had or 'd used in the story below?

SB: Well, my girlfriend's very frightened of flying, and she had a bad experience. IDescribes how plane engine caught fire.] And they had to take the plane back to Heathrow.
CM: Does that mean that nobody else had noticed?
SB: I think maybe the pilots had noticed, but certainly nobody else on board had noticed, [ ] so they drugged her up with [ ] valium for the next flight, by when she'd missed her connection in New York to Texas and so she had to go on . . .

Cartoon picture omitted

This helps the learners to build up a picture of the use of perfective aspect in real contexts of use, and also encourages them to look critically at the texts to which they are exposed.

The modals

As we have seen from looking at **will** and **would** all the modals were treated lexically in *CCEC*.

can, could (93, 138)

1 ability/possibility
What things could you describe as sort of reddish?
(37)
What other questions could I have asked?
Can you explain the answers? (46)
How much can you remember? (48)
She ran away as fast as she could. (198)
Ten twelve. That could be the time. (78)
Oriental definitely. It could be Thailand. (171)

Make sentences from this frame.

I can …………….. but I can't ………………

Here are some ideas to help you.
speak English / Italian / Spanish / French / Japanese
play football / chess / cricket / basketball
swim / ski / sail a boat / canoe

What can you see?
I couldn't hear what he was saying.

Look at the picture on page 58. Make three sentences starting:
I can see …

1.1 'could' for suggestions
You could look in the newspaper.

Make suggestions in answer to these questions.
1 I want to go out for a good meal. Where could I go?
2 I've lost my book. Where could it be?
3 The telephone's ringing. Who could it be?
4 It's my birthday. What could we do?

2 permission
You can go out now, but come back in ten minutes.
Could I do it tomorrow instead of today?

3 offer / request
Can you give me your address? (11)
Can you spell your name for me? (11)
Can I speak to Dr Brown please? (89)
Can I take a message? (89)
Can you tell me the time, please? (94)
Can you tell me how long it takes?
Could you give me your phone number please? (11)
Could you look after the children for me? (97)

Make six sentences from this table (two offers and four requests).

Can *Could*	*I* *you*	*help you* *tell me the time* *help me* *go home early* *give me a lift* *carry that for you*	*(please)*

4 can/could be
That could be John . . . but I thought he was at work. (92)
It could be China or Thailand. (171)
Bring lots of jumpers as it can be quite cold. (176)

Imagine you are woken up by a loud noise at night. What could it be?
. . . the cat? . . . a burglar? . . . someone coming home late?
. . . someone in the kitchen? . . . someone falling out of bed?
. . . the neighbours? . . . the traffic?
Imagine you are telling someone about it the next day. Say:
It could have been . . .

Say which of these things can be:
dangerous / interesting / fun / funny / exciting / boring

driving fast	TV programmes	parties
visiting relatives	travelling by plane	ski-ing

This is very much in line with other approaches, which also tend to treat modality lexically. The lexical research did, however, add certain insights. For example about 15% of the occurrences of **can** and **could** are followed by the word be. This is so common that we took special account of it in category 4.

The passive voice

I have already argued that the passive is best treated by regarding the past participle as adjectival. It is introduced in Unit 2:

> DF: Yes, my brother's married.
> BG: And what's his wife called?

and is recycled throughout Level 1:

> **5 + -ed / -en**
> Your father's called John? and your mother's called
>   Pat? (19)
> It was built in 1890. (55)
> It was built for William Randolph Hearst. (55)

This street is called Montague Street Precinct. (67)
. . .teenage girls who are interested in fashion.. . (95)
Are you tired?
Wally is awakened by the phone ringing. (91)
. . .so that I can make sure that you are properly looked after. (193)
Listen for the words that are stressed. (103)

There is a series of activities throughout the course recycling this concept and encouraging learners to analyse the use of verb forms and of other words:

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111 Grammar words

by

1 who/what did it
Do you think this would be said by a teacher?

2 how
She begins by asking what time they start.
Idomy shopping by car.
I come to work by bus.

3 when
I've got to finish this by tomorrow.
It opens at eight, so I'm there by eight.

4 where
There's a phone box by the school.
It's over there by the post office.

Find examples for each category.

a She starts by asking what time they begin work
b She usually gets back home by 9 a.m.
c handicrafts made by people in the Third World
d Come and sit here by me.
e Guess what your partner's number is by asking 'Is
  it under 50. . .'.
f I think I left it by the telephone.
g I have to finish this by tomorrow.

Compare the examples in each category with the examples in the Grammar Book.

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by (111)

1 who / what did it

Wally is awakened by the phone ringing. (91)
Handicrafts made by people in the Third World. (104)
Is that a magazine published by Macmillan? (146)

This work is brought together and reviewed half way through Level 3:

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125 Grammar revision

Past participles and words ending in -ing
Look at sentences 1-6 and find seven **past participles**.
How many of them are in passive verbs? What about the one(s) left over?

Look at sentences S-12 and find ten -ing forms. How many of them are adjectives? What about the others?

2   . . . the sunrise is sometimes filmed separately and then thrown on a studio screen. (118)
3   Do you think they (crocodiles) should be kept in special places . . . (97)
4   . . . storms. . . I don't really like being caught in the middle of them. (121) :
5   It (the airbag) cannot totally prevent somebody being thrown forward . . . (83)
6   A man-eating leopard was trapped at Siaya Location... for killing a young girl... (113)
7   What might have happened if the Webbers had run screaming out of the banda . . . ? (110)
8   The following morning, the crew returned without the sunrise. (118)
9   I don't like getting wet. (121)
10   I remember once being really cold in Japan . . . (121)
11   . . . we went to bed thinking what an exotic place ... how exciting (109)
12   . . it started looking in at the window, at my baby son. (109) . . . such a frightening time. (109)

All the examples given here and all the sentences in the rearranging exercise are part of the learner's corpus. Most of them occur in texts which come shortly before this particular activity. The result of this is that learners have a context for these sentences. They are involved both in consciousness raising and in developing a greater familiarity with and sensitivity to particular features of their corpus. The great difficulty with the passive and the present perfect is not what they mean but when they are used. Only by drawing attention to occurrences in text can learners begin to build up a picture of these forms in use.

A final summary of the passive is given in the Grammar Book at the end of Level 3:

> **be** (am, is, are, was, were, be, been)
> 5 for the passive, followed by a past participle ending in red
> or -en. EG *They were chosen from about 31,000 entries.*
> *(45b) **The world population of them has been** drastically*
> **reduced**. *(97) Stories about **people being eaten** by crocodiles*

by 16
1 (l50a, 163a) *issued **by the Home Office**/might be asked
questions **by the programme presenter***

A note on methodology

One point which has emerged strongly in the discussion of the verb phrase above is the importance of retrieving examples of language in use from the learner's own language experience. We have several times made the point that language use involves choice and that learners must learn to exercise that choice. At the beginning of a lesson a teacher may choose to announce:

> Last lesson we looked at the present perfect tense.

Or:

> Okay, we've had a look at the present perfect tense.

Why does a teacher on a specific occasion choose one rather than the other? Learners need to acquire the ability to select the appropriate form to encode the desired meaning. They cannot learn to do this by working with decontextualised examples at the level of the sentence. They must have as many opportunities as possible to see and hear these forms in use.

A second important feature is a refusal to resort to a contrastive methodology. There is little real gain in contrasting, say, the present simple and the present continuous tenses. Even if this strategy is successful, all it does is contrast uses in which the choice between the two seems to be clear cut. The present continuous and the present simple, for example, are often contrasted to show that the simple tense is used for an action which happens frequently, the continuous for an action which is happening at the time of speaking. The presentation may be made with a picture with the legend:

> John is going to school. He usually goes to school on his bike.

But this ignores some important features of English. First, it ignores the convention in English that the simple tense is normally used to caption pictures.

> Johnny goes to school.

would be a more likely caption. Secondly, it ignores the fact that the present continuous with adverbs of frequency is not uncommon. We have a recording in which native speakers repeatedly produce sentences like:

> Oh, I'm usually leaving for work at around that ~me.

One of the dangers with contrastive teaching of this kind is that teachers spend a good deal of time making a straightforward contrast between two forms which holds true for most of the occurrences of those forms, but which does not create any learning difficulty. It is a time consuming process which achieves very little. Adult learners are very quickly aware of the 'rule', although they will take some time to incorporate it in their language use, no matter how long is spent drilling and contrasting at this particular stage. A more insidious danger is that once these contrasts have been made, they become institutionalised. What I mean by this is that materials writers often

redraw the language to make very specific contrasts between certain forms. Once they have done this, they allow learners to see only those forms which exhibit this contrast. They begin by doing for the learners what is easy, and then leave them to make for themselves the subtler more difficult inferences about language use. They compound this by concealing from the learner any text which runs counter to the 'rule' they have set up. Simplistic choices are dictated, subtler choices are avoided. This is a process which protects learners from language in the classroom, by preventing them from coming to terms with language choice. Choice operates in conformity to a simple set of rules, not as a response to the need to encode precise meanings.

The noun phrase.

One of the texts we selected for Level 3 threw up this sentence:

> So, during the winter months, a van equipped with a loudspeaker and tape bearing the agonised squawks of a captured seagull held upside down slowly toured the reservoirs for two hours after dusk.

According to some grammars this is a simple sentence - the only finite verb it contains is **toured**. By any reasonable criteria, however, it is an extremely complex sentence. Given a context and appropriate introductory activities, the sentence did not cause too many comprehension problems and it was not difficult to devise an exercise to draw attention to the structure of the complex noun phrase:

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81 Language Study

Understanding a complex sentence
Practise reading these sentences quickly. After each one, say what the new information is about.

A van …………………………toured the reservoir.
A van equipped with a loudspeaker and tape ……… …………………. toured the reservoir.
A van equipped with a loudspeaker and tape bearing the agonised squawks of a ………… seagull
………………………. toured the reservoir.
A van equipped with a loudspeaker and tape bearing the agonised squawks of a captured seagull held upside down slowly toured the reservoir.

Look at paragraph 5 of the newspaper article; how many additional phrases are there? Now work out how to read the whole paragraph out loud.

81: Listen to it being read on tape.

But how could learners begin to produce sentences of this type? The example given may be an extreme example, but a look at any written text will show that complex phrases of this kind are a common feature of the language. The first sentence of the article from which this sentence is taken reads:

Tape-recorded squawks of a seagull in distress have enabled water authorities in
 Strathclyde to cleanse two reservoirs at Milngavie, near Glasgow, by frightening
 away an estimated 5,000 seagulls which were polluting the water.

The main clause in this sentence, in italics, consists of 28 words. But most coursebooks offer learners virtually no help with the kind of complex phrases involved in a clause of this kind.

One feature of the first example given above is the use of participles - **equipped, bearing, agonised, held**. The recognition that participles play such an important part in the construction of noun phrases was a vindication of our decision to treat participles as adjectival. This participial use of the -ing form is, in fact, much commoner than its use in the continuous tenses. Similarly, the adjectival use of the past participle is much commoner than its use in the traditional passive.

Another common feature of complex phrases is the use of prepositions, particularly **with** and **of.** But again we rarely find a principled treatment of these uses of prepositions in traditional coursebooks based on an inventory of structures or functions. This is hardly surprising since, almost by definition, such approaches are concerned with clause and sentence structure and pay relatively little attention to phrase structure. A lexically based syllabus, however, cannot fail to recognise the importance of prepositional phrases in building more complex phrases. The prepositions **of, to, in, for, on, with, at, by, from, about** and **up** all feature among the fifty commonest words of English. Any approach which recognises the importance of lexis, therefore, is bound to analyse carefully the uses of these words and to make sure that they are highlighted for the learner. Both **with** and **of** are comprehensively covered in Level 1:

of (17, 139)
1 used in expressions of quantity, size etc.
I've got   those. (25)
          your brothers. (26)
Where's that   (107)
     the yellow shapes are squares. (35)
He talked to   other people. (107)
I did   work last weekend.
Bring jumpers. (176)

1.2 containing / consisting of something
Here are two
Let's find a place to have

1.3 'part of', some of' etc.
       the morning. (84)
Tell   the class. (106)
Tell each other your   the story. (115)
      Saint Laurence Road. (125)

2 belonging to
Do you know the names of the students in your class? (2)
David tried to remember the names of Brigid's family. (19)
The number of a house. (77)
What's the name of the college? (109)

3 'sort of' etc.
3.1 spoken only – used to show the speaker doesn't want to sound very exact; or used instead of a pause or hesitation
The watch is sort of next to the glass of water. (42)
We sort of get on well. (53)
3.2
That sort of roof? (171)
Three types of telephone. (206)

4 dates, times, ages
My father is the first of May. (81)

with (99, 204)
1 together with
I've come to Liverpool to stay with my parents (98)
Discuss with your partner (78)
I worked with her a long time ago.

2 used to describe things or people
It was very very big, in very good condition with a thick lining. (104)
How many expressions can you hear with 'think' or 'thought'? (92)
A shirt with no buttons. (38)

3 how
Something you're not going to actually work with.
your friends need a watch to time you with.

and again in Level 2:

d ????
What's the missing word?
He is married a 15 month old son called Joe.
What words do your questions begin ?
. . . is a suburb of London   a population of. . .
It is a large hotel   64 rooms, each   bathroom and shower.

It has something to do   the rhythms of the language.
Do you have anything in common   any other students?
. . . wait a moment and I'll be you.

In which sentences does the missing word mean 'and has'?

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160 **Preposition spot**

of
1 with quantity (to answer the question 'How many?' or 'How much?')
There's an awful lot of bad writers around. (121)

etc (rest of example omitted)

Yet another feature of English which is often incorporated in the complex noun phrase is the use of one noun to modify another. There are two examples above - winter months and water authorities. It is impossible to treat these noun + noun combinations systematically, let alone exhaustively, because the relationships which can exist between the two or more nouns are almost infinite. Nevertheless it is important to draw the attention of learners to this feature of English:

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50 **Grammar**
Noun plus noun
In English we often put two nouns together to express quite complex meanings:
1 *Have a one minute conversation.*
 (a conversation lasting one minute)
2 *I have had a Saturday job. . .* (24)
 (a job on Saturdays)
3 *What were your childhood fears*? (34)
(fears when you were a child)
4 *. . . a back page summary of this news report.* (38)
(summary of a report containing news on the back page of a newspaper)

5 *I was behind a big food shelf when the door was locked behind me.* (38) (a shelf to keep food on)
6 *. . . his original ambition was to be an engine driver like his father.* (16) (a man who drives engines)

Try to explain what these phrases mean:

a *I left school at the end of the summer term.* (24)
b *. . . on the factory floor and in school playgrounds.* (14)
c *. . . a great interest in country life.* (16)
d *You are at a small dinner party.* (59)
e *. . . John Helms clung to the safety fence.* (36)
f *Grimble's home toast delivery servi*ce. (48)
g *. . . started a folk-dancing evening, in the village hall.* (17)
h *They must have left the car engine on.* (72) :
i *. . . to prevent serious injury.* (83) :
j *. . . the position of Trainee Assistant Manager.* (24)
k *A learner driver. . .*
l *He had been put in the front passenger seat . . .*(72)
m *Listen to the rain drop falling.* (124)
n *This one is a news article.*

Once elements of this kind have been treated, Level 3 begins to look in detail at the complex phrases involving the elements, and to give examples of the way they can be structured:

155 **Grammar**
Noun phrases Who's it about?
 a Newspapers pack a lot of information into a short space.
One way of doing this is byexpanding the noun phrase
when introducing the person the story is about:

Mr. William Casey, the former CIA head . . .(150)
A 16 week old kitten named Mor. . .(l50)

A common pattern is:
 NAME   AGE   PLACE   JOB
John Brown, a forty-five year old London policeman.

Sometimes the name comes at the end:

Forty-five year old London policeman, John Brown. . .

 Write descriptions like this for some of your family and
friends.

b Sometimes the description can be even more extended:

Handsome smiling forty-five year old former London policeman, John Brown . . .

Can you write some like this?

c The same thing often happens when the newspaper refers to the source of a story. Make some examples from this table:

DESCRIPTION	PLACE/ NATION	EMPLOYER	STATUS
senior	British	government	spokesman
official	French	hospital	official
	London	prison	representative
	Paris	school	
		trade union	

165 Grammar

Fronting information

In Unit 15 we saw how newspaper articles pack a lot of information into descriptions of people:

Handsome smiling forty-five year-old London policeman... (155)

They do the same with events. Opening sentences particularly highlight a lot of information to set the scene for what follows:

Police investigating the mysterious disappearance in Dorset of Mrs. Etty, a local farmer's wife . . . (161)

Opposition party spokesmen, who have been calling for government action to bring piped water into the centre of the town . . . (161)

Rearrange the following phrases to make opening sentences which you have seen before:

1 *on how to reduce the risk – A free booklet – of falling victim – of advice to women – to violent crime - ... has been issued by the Home Office.* (150)

2 *yesterday – by Madrid underground workers – A strike – demanding a pay rise - ... cut the number of morning rush-hour trains by half ...* (158)

3 *and crew members – on board a Dutch plane – last night – All 91 passengers – were released unharmed – hijacked to Rome ... after brief but intense negotiations*

4 *at Great Ormund Street Hospital, - Up to 20 children a month – London, - through lack of equipment – are refused treatment – and a shortage of nursing staff - ... says Professor Lewis Spitz, a pediatric surgeon.*

189 Language Study

Sentence building

a We have seen how news reports pack a lot of information into a single sentence. See how this sentence is put together:

A young man was senously injured.
  (What young man?)
A young man, identified as Jack, was seriously injured.
(Who identified him?)
A young man, identified in an official statement as Jack, was seriously injured.
(How was he injured?)
A young man, identified in an oflicial statement as Jack, was senously injured when he tell down the hill.
(What hill?)
A young man, identified in an official statement as Jack, was seriously injured when he fell down the hill where the well was located

b Now look at this sentence:

The Ministry stated repeatedlythat there was no danger.
(No danger to whom?)

The Ministry stated that there was no danger to the public.

How is sentence b related to the first sentence?
Now see how the two sentences fit together.
In spite of repeated statements by the Ministry that there is no danger to the public, a young man, identified in an official statement as Jack, was seriosly injured when he fell down the hill where the well is located

Again most of these exercises are consciousness-raising activities. The complexity and unpredictability of these phrases are such that we can offer no prescriptions. All we can do is outline the elements, and encourage learners to examine their experience of the language. It is, however, most important that we do this. It is difficult to see how anyone could become a competent speaker or writer of English without recourse to the kind of complex phrase structure which is too often overlooked in course design.

Discourse structure

In the past it has been very difficult for syllabus designers to offer learners systematic insights into the structure of discourse. The work of Hoey (1983) building on Winter (1977) suggested that a lexical approach might offer the most promising starting point. I have shown above the importance of words like thing, fact and idea in structuring discourse. In Level 3 we took a lexical starting point to look at a number of common discourse patterns.

In Level 3 we used advertisements to illustrate a common discourse structure incorporating situation - problem - solution - evaluation:

Leather Jackets

Leather jackets have become increasingly popular and fashionable over the last few years, but in the long winter months they just don't keep the cold out. Here's the solution. These beautiful XXXXXXXXXXXX jackets from Somerset combine the suppleness and style of real leather with the unbeatable XXXXXXXXXXXXX of genuine 100% British sheepskin . . .

Time folds flat

Our buyers stay in hotels all over the world so they are very aware of the need for a good alarm clock a that doesn't take up space in the suitcase. XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
Just 3" square with all the latest functions, the soft black leather look case folds flat for travel. An inexpensive and very personal gift Personalisation: Up to 3 initials.
Fold Away Alarm £6.95
JS3633C*

Designer Shirt Wallet

There are times when you need to carry a wallet but you're not XXXXXXXXX This slim leather wallet (4" x 2 ½") will hold credit cards and notes, and slips discreetly into your shirt pocket.
From the house of Piem Cardin, this is the most elegant shirt wallet currently available at such a low price.
Plerre Cardin Shirt Wallet £6.95 CZ847

The Unbreakable Flask

The problem with flasks is that they tend to break easily, but now we've found one that should serve you for a lifetime. An elegant and contemporary design in solid stainless steel, it will retain the temperature of hot or cold liquid for hours. XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX XXXXXXXXXXXXXX while the threaded stopper prevents
Unbreakable Flask 1 litre capacity
£24.95 JS4046C

Keyminder

Not only does the Keyminder bleep when you whistle, enabling you to easily locate your keys, but XXXXXXXXXX incorporates an LCD clock and XXXX XXXXXXXXXX to illuminate your lock. A great gift.
Keyminder £4.95 JS4708C

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79 Language study

SITUATION—PROBLEM—SOLUTION—EVALUATION
Notice the structure of these adverts. Read the notes in the table carefully, then suggest what words or phrases from the texts could go into the empty spaces. Then continue building up the table with notes from the other adverts

Situation General topic	*Leather jackets popular and fashionable*	*Men often carry a wallet*	*car keys*		
The **problem** is that …	*In winter, don't keep cold out (too thin)*	*when not wearing a jacket (too bulky for shirt pocket)*	*(people lose them) (difficult to use in dark)*		
The **solution** is to …	*Line jacket with sheepskin*	*slim leather wallet 4 x 2½, fits in shirt pocket*	*bleeper device when you whistle, light*		
Evaluation	*warmth and comfort combined with style*	_____	_____		

This structure is further exemplified in a short anecdote:

STICK AT NOTHING

My three-year-old brother, who had been playing outside all morning, came into the kitchen begging for a snack. I gave him a slice of bread and peanut butter. Holding the bread carefully in both hands, he started to leave, but when he reached the closed kitchen door, a puzzled expression came over his face. He was too small to open the door without using both hands to turn the door knob. After a moment's consideration, he found a solution. He plastered the sticky side of his bread to the wall, used both hands to turn the knob, peeled his bread off the wall and went out happily to play.   J. WHITE

SITUATION small hungry child is given bread and peanut butter
PROBLEM . . .
SOLUTION . . .
EVALUATION . . .

Before seeing this text learners were asked to speculate about it:

82 Peanut butter

(Photographs of jar of peanut butter and slice of bread stuck to wall next to a door omitted

Why do you think the boy did this? This was the solution - can you work out what the problem was? Clue: The boy involved was three years old.
~ Tell the class what you think. ~

This idea was then further developed:

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85 Grammar
The problem is that … the solution is to . . .
We use **that** to introduce a situation or problem. We use **to** to introduce the action you would take in finding a solution:

*My brother's problem was **that** he couldn't open the door without using both hands, and he was carrying a slice of bread and peanut butter at the time. His solution was **to** plaster the sticky side of the bread to the wall while he opened the door.*

*What bothered the old man was **that** he had borrowed his mother's car without asking, so he begged the police not to tell her.*

*If you see smoke the obvious thing is **to** telephone the fire brigade.*

Which of these phrases do you think would introduce **problems** and which would introduce **solutions**? Are there any that might do either?

The best thing is . . .
I What worries me is . . .
It was too big . . .
One possibility might be …
The answer could be …
The trouble is …
The only thing is …
One difficulty is …
One way out would be …
The worrying thing is …
The disadvantage might be …

---

85 Grammar

Problems and solutions

Look at this example:
Lots of jobs around the house would be simple enough to do yourself, if only you had the tools the professionals use.

    trouble is
The problem is I don't have the right tools.
    thing is

    answer
The solution is to buy some good tools
    best thing

Make sentences using words like TROUBLE, PROBLEM, ANSWER, SOLUTION and THING based on the following sentences:

a. Let this electronic dictionary check your spelling.
b. This revolutionary new mobile baby alarm enables you to listen in to your little ones wherever you are in the house - or even the garden.
c. Cleaning brass, copper and silver is a dirty task, but these new Magic Gloves provide their own polish and keep hands clean.

Exercises of this kind both highlight patterns in text and also show how lexical items signal elements in these patterns:

Problem -	What *worries* me is . . .	Solution -	The best thing is . . .
	It was *too* big . . .		One possibility might be . . .
	The *trouble* is . . .		The answer could be . . .
	One *diffculty* is . ..		One way out would be . . .
	The *worrying* thing is . . .		
	The *disadvantage* is . . .		

All of these items are strongly predictive. A statement of a problem strongly predicts an attempt to identify a solution. The exercises not only serve to highlight these functions in discourse, but also provide a structural environment for the predictive items:

What worries me is
The trouble is   *that* . . .
One difficulty is

The best thing is
The answer could be   *to* . . .
One way out would be

Other discourse patterns were treated in a similar way:

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123 Language Study

HYPOTHESIS—EVIDENCE—CONCLUSION
Discuss a-c below, rereading the relevant sections from earlier units if you can't remember the facts, so that you can answer the questions. Then write a short paragraph about each one, like the paragraph in a.

See Unit 11 (sections 109 - 116).
What did Mr Woodley think about the leopard? What did he finally decide? Why?
Mr Woodley thought the leopard could have been either a stock-killer or a man-eater.
Because of the way it behaved he concluded that it must have been a man-eater.

What did Richard Webber and his wife think about the leopard when it was outside their hut looking in the windows?
They thought (that) . . .

What did they finally decide? :
They decided that . . .

What was their reason? :
.. . because. ...

See Unit 10 (section 100). :
The Yetties lost their flight case on their way to Nepal. What did the Yetties think could have happened to it? Write a list of possibilities. (For example *it could have been left in London*.)

What had actually happened?

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162 Language Study
Classifying
Bob Jobbins talks about diferent kinds of news broadcast. He begins by pointing to the difference:

Different radio programmes require different styles of writing and broadcasting ...

Then goes on to describe types and examples:

… some programmes, for example on a pop music channel, like short snappy reports. Others on more serious channels want more details and perhaps some analysis.

Can you expand these opening sentences in the same way? There are some notes in 1 to help you. Write notes, then full sentences.

1 Not all jobs require the same kind of qualifications.

Some – e.g. teaching – academic qualifications – eg a degree.
Others – eg newspaper reporter – personal qualities – eg stamina, the ability to assimilate information quickly and accurately

2 Different sports appeal to different people …

3 Different countries seem to enjoy different kinds of food …

4 Different means of transport offer different advantages …

Read one of your completed paragraphs out to the class. Find out who has thought of a similar way to continue. Listen to their report and continue in the same way.

A lexical approach to discourse structure affords us a way of identifying those language items which the writer uses to give shape to the discourse, and which the reader uses to make predictions and to develop his mental map in line with the writer's intentions. Nowadays a feature of most EFL courses is 'the skills lesson', in which learners are given opportunities to practise the skills which go to make up successful communication. I have no doubt about the value of the skills lesson as one item of the EFL menu. But I am sure that such skills as prediction, skimming, scanning and so on are much more readily accessible to the learner if we can highlight those language items which enable us to predict and which, because they mark the macro-structure of text, provide important clues as we skim or scan a given text.

Coverage of functions

There is little danger of a task-based syllabus failing to provide good coverage of the main language functions. The content of Level 1 lists among other things the 'Social Language' covered. This incorporates most of the functions covered in courses which take language functions as a basic element in syllabus planning. Units 6 to 10 in Level 1 list the following:

Unit 6
SOCIAL LANGUAGE
Asking where people are.
Telephoning: getting put through.
Agreeing and disagreeing.
Asking people to wait.

Unit 7
Informal inviting, accepting, refusing and giving reasons.
Shopping for clothes:
asking for other things, making queries

Unit 8
Asking about what people do
Making and responding to more formal invitations.
Classroom questions, instructions and queries

Unit 9
Asking for and giving directions.
Making suggestions, offers, requests.
Asking about someone else's education.

Unit 10
Comparing experiences to find out something or someone in common

Many of these functions are highlighted when the models are dealt with:

138 Grammar Words

can, could
(For meanings 1 and 2, **could** is the past tense of **can**.
For meaning 3 **could** is a more formally polite form than **can**.)

1 ability/possibility
Can you follow these directions?
It must be John. It can't be anyone else.
I was so tired I couldn't stay awake.
What can you see from your classroom window?

1.1 **could** for suggestions
A: *What shall we do?* B: *We could go to the cinema.*
What about 1989? Could it be a telephone number?

2 permission
You can write three words to help you remember.
I asked if I could go home early.

3 offer/request
Can you open the window a bit please?
Could you open the window a bit please?
Can I help you?

Say if these sentences are expressing meanings 1, 2 or 3.

a Close your books and see how much you can remember.
b You can go out now, but come back in ten minutes time.
c Do you think you could help?
d I can understand English but I can't speak very well.
e I can't come tomorrow. I've got a meeting.
f Can you spell that for me please? :
g Can I carry that for you?
h The tape was so fast that we couldn't understand. :
i That could be John.
j Can you hear me?

Compare the examples in each category with those in the Grammar Book.

The expression **can be** is very common.
'Housework can be very hard work' means
'Housework is sometimes very hard work'.

> What can you say about learning English?
>
> *Learning English can be. . .*
> interesting, easy, difficult, very difficult, hard work, : very hard work, exciting, boring, horrible, en1oyable, fun, good fun

More important is the way native speaker recordings illustrate important language functions:

b Reaching agreement

MS: Well when I see . . . er . . . a windmill I always think of Holland, so I would say Holland, for that.
PK: Mhm. Yes I think I agree with you.

Have they reached agreement that it is a picture of Holland?
Look what they go on to say. At which point do they actually reach agreement?

PK: Mhm. Yes I think I agree with you. It's flat as well isn't it?
MS: Yes.
PK: So it must be Holland.
MS: The -
PK: And the third one along the top?

171a How do they reach agreement on the other countries?

This shows that a function like 'reaching agreement' can be socially and linguistically complex, and is not simply a matter of saying 'Yes, I agree with you':

PK: It's - Yes, yes. We ve got North Africa, so
MS: Right. Okay, let's say North Africa.
PK: I think that's North Africa.
MS: Right.
PK: I don't think it's anywhere else that's on the list, so
MS: No.
PK: North Africa. Mhm. Right, now this one on the left
down here. That looks a bit like the Grand Canyon to
me.

The important thing here is that it shows that the realisation of a particular language function is very often a cooperative venture. It is certainly the case that such realisations are often, indeed usually, much more complex than functionally based syllabuses normally acknowledge. Learners are not likely to acquire the ability to negotiate language functions by acquiring linguistic realisations such as:

>   Yes, that's right.

Or:

>   Yes, I agree with you.

Much more important is experience of the way such functions actually are negotiated and agreed in authentic discourse.

Summary

When we checked against the TEFL Side Corpus the language coverage we had achieved in CCEC, we found that we had either covered all the items traditionally covered or, as in the case of reported speech, had made a deliberate decision to omit them. We found that even with items like the verb phrase, which are covered with great thoroughness in traditional approaches, we had achieved comparable coverage. Given lexis as our starting point, there were differences in our treatment, particularly the decision to treat participles as adjectival and to derive progressive aspect and passive voice from this description. The lexical approach also led us to treat will, like other models, as a lexical item, and therefore to deny the notion of a future tense.

We also found that our lexical approach had highlighted many important aspects of language which are largely ignored in many other courses. I have already mentioned the treatment of participles as adjectives. These were combined with prepositional phrases and noun modifiers, all of which assume great importance in structuring complex phrases in English. Similarly, we were able to identify and highlight for learners lexical items which are important in structuring discourse and which make up the hidden agenda in many skills lessons. Finally, we were able to offer good coverage of most language functions. This was a feature of our methodology and our reliance on authentic or spontaneous material. This led us to look at the negotiation of language functions, rather than simply to list idealised realisations of target functions.

Central to all of this is the notion of the learner's corpus. What we need to do is provide learners with a corpus which contains the language potential that they need, and then to enable and encourage them to look at that corpus in detail. In this way we move from an itemised syllabus to a dynamic description of language which learners can make their own.