WHAT REALLY WORKS
IN THE ENGLISH CLASSROOM

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WHAT REALLY WORKS IN THE ENGLISH CLASSROOM

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Foreword

Everything in life is changing, especially with the ongoing AI revolution. Its incorporation into society is clearly visible as AI integrated with emerging tools is being utilized in education and learning to make it more flexible and more interactive, creating a world of interconnectivity that nurtures globalization on a higher scale. One of the consequences of this process is that the concepts of language education and learning are being changed.

Considering these developments, the need now is for language professionals to have a growth-oriented mindset and tap into these opportunities by revolutionizing the way language is taught to the students. The modern world and its students require a closer integration of resourcefulness, flexibility, and both new age and old school teaching techniques. We are clearly deep into the post-method era in which no single teaching technique or strategy can be effective with all students anymore. Students' needs change and evolve continuously which is why an eclectic approach, whereby an instructor picks and modifies various strategies to suit the needs of learners, is required now.

This puts into perspective the usefulenss of this volume that combines case studies uniquely exhibiting the use of integrated disciplines, drawing its stems from language, literature, culture, and modern learning technologies to language pedagogy. It includes original texts from a broad variety of methodologies, ranging from traditional practices of translation and dictation - reimagined anew by fresh pedagogical perspectives - to new approaches, including peer learning, AI-driven language modeling, and drama in foreign language teaching.

The book thus covers several pedagogical directions, such as the Action-oriented Approach, Communicative Language Teaching, and Project-based Learning. This variety can allow teachers to create lessons that are active, interactive, and student-centered, which then provides the chance for developing deeper linguistic competence and increased cultural awareness. Even traditional tools like translation exercises and structured dictation that are fully integrated into innovative and engaging lesson plans can capture the students' attention and lead them toward meaningful, long-lasting language acquisition.

In this respect, this book equips language teachers with the tools and perspectives needed to adapt to a changing educational environment. From using AI-integrated tools to using literature to open the doors for students to talk about *Frankenstein*, the book brings transformational power into the learning and teaching spaces of educators.

Furthermore, it acknowledges the dynamic nature of language and the rapid pace at which culture and society determine shifting patterns of communication and learning.

The chapters of this book should be able to nurture language professionals' ability to harmoniously balance the traditional and new, allowing development of dynamic, engaging learning environments that provide linguistic and cultural fluency in support of individuals needing to operate naturally in an interdependent world. It does this by being mindful of the students' diverse learning preferences, cognitive processes, and strategies in an ongoing adjustment to language in its ever-changing process due to globalization, technology, and changes within society.

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February, 2025

Literature as a Linguistic Tool: The Case of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*

Cristina Benicchi, PhD

Teaching Language With Literature: A Theoretical Framework

Paraphrasing John Locke's words, it could be asserted that reading provides the raw materials for knowledge, but it is through reflection and thought that we truly internalize and make that knowledge our own. John Locke's observation elegantly captures the transformative power of reading, underscoring how it is not the mere accumulation of knowledge that fosters intellectual growth, but the act of reflecting, questioning, and interpreting the material that solidifies learning. In the realm of language education, this statement becomes particularly relevant, as literature does more than provide lexical and grammatical knowledge; it stimulates the critical faculties that enable learners to truly internalize language. Through thoughtful engagement, students begin to move beyond the superficial understanding of words, phrases, and sentences, arriving instead at a more profound mastery of both language and the ideas it conveys.

Ronald Carter and John McRae (1996, p. xx) state that "using literature as a linguistic resource involves starting from the fact that literature is language in use and can therefore be exploited for language-learning purposes", therefore integrating literature into language teaching fosters language growth. In line with this, Lazar (1993) provides a list of key reasons for using literature in language learning, including its ability to enhance cultural understanding, expand vocabulary, and promote critical thinking, but above all, it significantly boosts students' motivation by allowing them to engage with the language in a more meaningful and enjoyable way.

Literature, as an art form, serves not only as a repository of linguistic structures but as a powerful vehicle for interpreting reality. It creates a space where the ordinary can be examined through the lens of the extraordinary, provoking both wonder and inquiry in equal measure. *As Roland Barthes (1977) argues, a text is not a closed entity with a fixed meaning but rather a space of interaction between the reader and language. Applying this perspective to language teaching highlights how literature serves not only as a source of linguistic input but also as a dynamic field where students engage in decoding, reconstructing, and negotiating meaning. This process fosters a deeper and more authentic linguistic competence, as learners actively participate in making sense of the text rather than simply absorbing predefined meanings.* By immersing themselves in literary texts, learners encounter a spectrum of human emotions, social contexts, and philosophical dilemmas that mirror the complexities of real life. The act of reading, therefore, becomes an exploration of the world and the self, allowing students to engage with universal themes of identity, morality, and belonging. In this sense, literature is not only an academic tool but a bridge that connects individual experience with broader human concerns, fostering empathy and insight.

In the context of English language teaching, the integration of literary texts offers unparalleled opportunities for students to refine their linguistic competence. Novels like Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* exemplify the richness of language as a means of communication, one that goes beyond basic transactional exchanges. Literary texts bring students face to face with a variety of linguistic registers, syntactic complexities, and stylistic nuances that challenge and enhance their language acquisition. At the same time, these texts introduce learners to narratives imbued with deep ethical questions and existential struggles, which, in turn, promote critical thinking and interpretive skills. The integration of literature into English language teaching has garnered increasing recognition as a pivotal approach to enhancing linguistic competence among learners. This paper embarks on an exploration of the multifaceted pedagogical value of incorporating literary texts, with a specific focus on Mary Shelley's Frankenstein. The central thesis posits that literary works serve as potent vehicles for authentic linguistic input, stimulating students' cognitive and emotional engagement and fostering a profound understanding of vocabulary, grammar, and idiomatic expressions that extends beyond traditional language instruction.

In an era defined by rapid technological advancements and globalization, the demand for effective language teaching methodologies has reached new heights. The theoretical framework underpinning this paper draws upon the principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Task-Based Learning (TBL). Both methodologies underscore the importance of meaningful interaction and contextualized learning as foundational elements of effective language acquisition. As Savignon (2002) elucidates, CLT shifts the focus from the mere mastery of grammatical forms to the application of language in real-life communicative contexts. This paradigm shift becomes particularly relevant when considering the use of literature as a conduit for language learning, as it immerses students in authentic, relatable contexts for applying their linguistic skills.

One of the most compelling attributes of literary texts is their capacity to provide authentic linguistic input characterized by complex syntactic structures and a rich vocabulary. Such exposure is essential for fostering advanced reading comprehension and overall language proficiency. As Nation (2001) asserts, repeated exposure to vocabulary in diverse contexts significantly enhances retention and application. In *Frankenstein,* for instance, Shelley's masterful use of descriptive language and intricate sentence constructions invites students to engage deeply with the text, enhancing their linguistic skills while igniting their imaginations. The novel's vivid imagery and emotional depth create an immersive reading experience, prompting students to explore the intricate relationship between language and meaning.

Moreover, literature inherently connects to the socio-cultural contexts from which it emerges. The thematic concerns of *Frankenstein* – identity, alienation, and the ethical implications of scientific progress – resonate with contemporary issues, fostering students' ability to draw parallels between literary narratives and their own lives. As Eagleton (2008) eloquently states, literature serves not only as a reflection of societal norms and values but also as a critique of them, compelling readers to question and reinterpret their beliefs and assumptions. Engaging with such complex themes enables students to cultivate critical thinking and interpretive skills, which are essential for advanced language learners. Kramsch (1993) further reinforces this notion by arguing that literature acts as a cultural artifact that embodies the values and beliefs of its time, thereby enriching learners' cultural awareness and facilitating a more profound connection to the language being studied.

The engagement with literary texts through CLT and TBL methodologies fosters a rich linguistic environment in which learners are encouraged to interact with language authentically and meaningfully. Task-based learning emerges as a pivotal pedagogical approach, wherein students become active participants in their learning journey rather than passive recipients of information. When analyzing *Frankenstein*, for instance, students can engage in collaborative activities that promote discussion and analysis of the text's linguistic features, facilitating deeper comprehension and application of language. This aligns with Vygotsky's (1978) social constructivist theory, which posits that learning occurs in social contexts and through interaction with others, emphasizing the significance of collaboration in language learning.

Beyond cognitive engagement, literature fosters emotional connections, inviting students to empathize with characters and grapple with moral dilemmas. As Rosenblatt (1978, p. 9) articulates, the reader's response to a literary text is a "transaction" – "the essential idea of the dynamic interfusion of both reader and text [...] each reading involves a particular person at a particular time and place, underlines the importance of such factors in the transaction as gender, ethnic and socioeconomic background, and cultural environment" – that shapes the meaning derived from it. This interplay between text and reader allows for a deeper, more nuanced understanding of language, as students are encouraged to articulate their thoughts and feelings regarding the narratives they encounter. In *Frankenstein*, the profound isolation of the Creature prompts reflections on themes of acceptance, identity, and humanity, issues that resonate on both personal and societal levels.

The practical section of this paper introduces a carefully designed teaching activity centered on a selected excerpt from Frankenstein, illustrating how literature effectively enhances linguistic skills. This activity is structured to promote vocabulary enrichment and a nuanced understanding of linguistic and stylistic elements within the text. Through close reading, students engage with Shelley's eloquent prose, analyzing its descriptive richness and intricate sentence structures. Such activities not only foster vocabulary acquisition but also encourage stylistic analysis, reinforcing the importance of literary texts in the language classroom.

The selected excerpt serves as a catalyst for developing students' inferencing skills, enabling them to decipher nuanced meanings and appreciate the moral complexities of the narrative. Engaging with the text in this manner enhances vocabulary while nurturing a sophisticated understanding of language use in context. Structured tasks connect linguistic features to real-life communicative functions, including vocabulary mapping exercises to explore contextual meanings, guided discussions analyzing stylistic choices, and creative writing prompts that encourage students to apply newly acquired vocabulary in meaningful contexts. By employing these interactive strategies, the activity effectively demonstrates how literature enriches vocabulary and cultivates a deeper understanding of language, thereby reinforcing the theoretical claims regarding the vital role of literature in the English language classroom.

Moreover, the utilization of literature in language teaching aligns with the principles of differentiated instruction, catering to diverse learning styles and preferences. Some students may thrive in visual learning environments, where the imagery presented in literary texts can enhance their understanding and retention of vocabulary. Others may find that engaging with the emotional and thematic aspects of a narrative fosters a more profound connection to the language itself, thus enhancing their motivation to learn. Differentiated instruction, as articulated by Tomlinson (2001), involves tailoring educational experiences to meet individual student needs, thus maximizing their potential for success. By integrating literature, educators can offer varied pathways for students to engage with language, ultimately promoting a more inclusive and effective learning environment.

In addition to vocabulary enrichment, literary texts can also facilitate the development of pragmatic competence, an essential aspect of language proficiency that involves understanding how language is used in social contexts. Through exposure to dialogues, character interactions, and the subtleties of communication in literary works, students can cultivate an awareness of language use that extends beyond grammatical correctness. Pragmatic competence is crucial for effective communication, as it encompasses the ability to interpret nuances, understand implicature, and navigate cultural references. By engaging with texts like *Frankenstein*, students not only learn linguistic structures but also gain insights into the social and cultural dimensions of language use.

Furthermore, literature provides a rich source for fostering intertextual connections, allowing students to see relationships between different texts and their underlying themes. This intertextuality enhances their comprehension skills as they learn to draw parallels, contrasts, and references across various works. Engaging with *Frankenstein* in conjunction with other literary texts, such as *Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley or *The Picture of Dorian Gray* by Oscar Wilde, can deepen students' understanding of themes such as morality, the quest for identity, and the implications of scientific advancement. By analyzing these interconnections, students become more adept at critical analysis, developing the ability to synthesize information and articulate their thoughts in a coherent manner.

In conclusion, the integration of literature, particularly through the lens of works like *Frankenstein*, offers a wealth of opportunities for enhancing linguistic competence, critical thinking, and emotional engagement among learners. This paper underscores the significance of literary texts as authentic resources for language acquisition, enabling students to navigate the complexities of language while grappling with profound thematic content. By employing task-based approaches within the framework of CLT, educators can create dynamic and engaging learning environments that empower students to become not only proficient language users but also thoughtful, empathetic individuals. As we advance in the ever-evolving landscape of language education, it is imperative to continue exploring and advocating for the integration of literature as a cornerstone of effective English language teaching.

Sample Activity

In alignment with the pedagogical framework discussed earlier, the following section provides an example of a classroom activity that demonstrates how literary texts, such as *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley, can be effectively used to enhance both linguistic proficiency and critical thinking skills. This activity, titled "*Frankenstein* and the Gothic Novel," illustrates the practical implementation of the principles outlined in the article. It emphasizes how students can engage with literature not only as a cultural artifact but also as a dynamic tool for language acquisition. The focus here is on a lesson structured around key literary themes, as well as the development of essential reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills.

Lesson Structure and Implementation

The activity, structured over two lessons, begins by introducing students to an excerpt from *Frankenstein*, specifically the passage where the Creature comes to life. This carefully selected text provides rich material for linguistic exploration and thematic analysis. The lesson plan follows a clear and structured format, divided into five distinct stages: warm-up, global comprehension, analysis, synthesis, and reflection. This sequence ensures a gradual deepening of both literary understanding and linguistic engagement, encouraging students to approach the text from multiple perspectives while acquiring new vocabulary, grammatical structures, and interpretative skills. This approach aligns with Giovanni Freddi's (1994) model of communicative competence, emphasizing the integration of language with authentic contexts to enhance both linguistic competence and textual competence. Paolo Balboni's (1994, 2002) principle of progression is reflected in the lesson's phased design, moving from comprehension to production, while Massimo Vedovelli's (2002) theory of "understandable input" underlines the scaffolding that helps learners acquire new linguistic forms. Additionally, the lesson aligns with the CEFR's action-oriented approach – well described by Mezzadri (2004) in his analysis of the CEFR in service of the class – encouraging meaningful communication and active language use. The reflection phase focuses on intercultural and interpretative competencies, linking the text's themes to broader cultural questions. Finally, the integration of literature as both content and medium echoes Gianfranco Porcelli's (1994) view on the role of texts in fostering linguistic and cognitive development.

Below are the detailed activities designed for different phases of a literature lesson based on the provided extract from *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley. These activities are structured around the four key phases – Warm up, Globality, Analysis, Synthesis, and Reflection – and are aimed at facilitating both literary appreciation and language acquisition in an integrated, meaningful way.

Excerpt from *Frankenstein*:

> It was on a dreary night of November that I beheld the accomplishment of my toils. With an anxiety that almost amounted to agony, I collected the instruments of life around me, that I might infuse a spark of being into the lifeless thing that lay at my feet. It was already one in the morning; the rain pattered dismally against the panes, and my candle was nearly burnt out, when, by the glimmer of the half-extinguished light, I saw the dull yellow eye of the creature open; it breathed hard, and a convulsive motion agitated its limbs.
>
> How can I describe my emotions at this catastrophe, or how delineate the wretch whom with such infinite pains and care I had endeavoured to form? His limbs were in proportion, and I had selected his features as beautiful. Beautiful! Great God! His yellow skin scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath;

his hair was of a lustrous black, and flowing; his teeth of a pearly whiteness; but these luxuriances only formed a more horrid contrast with his watery eyes, that seemed almost of the same colour as the dun-white sockets in which they were set, his shrivelled complexion and straight black lips.

The different accidents of life are not so changeable as the feelings of human nature. I had worked hard for nearly two years, for the sole purpose of infusing life into an inanimate body. For this I had deprived myself of rest and health. I had desired it with an ardour that far exceeded moderation; but now that I had finished, the beauty of the dream vanished, and breathless horror and disgust filled my heart. Unable to endure the aspect of the being I had created, I rushed out of the room and continued a long time traversing my bedchamber, unable to compose my mind to sleep. At length lassitude succeeded to the tumult I had before endured, and I threw myself on the bed in my clothes, endeavouring to seek a few moments of forgetfulness. But it was in vain; I slept, indeed, but I was disturbed by the wildest dreams. I thought I saw Elizabeth, in the bloom of health, walking in the streets of Ingolstadt. Delighted and surprised, I embraced her, but as I imprinted the first kiss on her lips, they became livid with the hue of death; her features appeared to change, and I thought that I held the corpse of my dead mother in my arms; a shroud enveloped her form, and I saw the grave-worms crawling in the folds of the flannel. I started from my sleep with horror; a cold dew covered my forehead, my teeth chattered, and every limb became convulsed; when, by the dim and yellow light of the moon, as it forced its way

> through the window shutters, I beheld the wretch—the miserable monster whom I had created. He held up the curtain of the bed; and his eyes, if eyes they may be called, were fixed on me. His jaws opened, and he muttered some inarticulate sounds, while a grin wrinkled his cheeks. He might have spoken, but I did not hear; one hand was stretched out, seemingly to detain me, but I escaped and rushed downstairs. I took refuge in the courtyard belonging to the house which I inhabited, where I remained during the rest of the night, walking up and down in the greatest agitation, listening attentively, catching and fearing each sound as if it were to announce the approach of the demoniacal corpse to which I had so miserably given life. (2004, pp. 55-57)

Warm-Up

The warm-up phase, often referred to as the motivational stage, is a critical element in any well-structured lesson, particularly when dealing with complex literary texts such as *Frankenstein*. This phase plays a pivotal role in capturing students' attention, engaging their prior knowledge, and setting the thematic and linguistic tone for the lesson. The effectiveness of this initial stage lies in its ability to bridge the gap between the students' existing knowledge and the new material they are about to encounter, creating a more meaningful and relatable learning experience.

By introducing activities that activate cognitive engagement, such as brainstorming or guided discussions, the warm-up phase does more than just prepare students for reading—it also fosters curiosity and builds anticipation for what they are about to explore. This approach is particularly valuable in literature lessons, where abstract themes, unfamiliar historical contexts, and complex linguistic structures can sometimes seem distant or intimidating.

In this specific case, using a spider gram centered on the word “monsters” not only taps into students’ existing mental schemata but also allows them to explore and articulate vocabulary related to key emotional and thematic aspects of the text, such as fear, sorrow, and ugliness. By doing so, the teacher creates an inviting space where students feel confident to share ideas and connect their personal experiences or knowledge with the literary themes of *Frankenstein*. This engagement lays a solid foundation for the subsequent analysis of the novel’s content and language.

Moreover, the use of open-ended questions, like “Do you think scientists should try to create human life?” and “Is this theme still relevant today?”, extends the students’ engagement from passive reception to active critical thinking. These questions encourage students to draw parallels between the novel’s themes and current societal issues, making the text more relevant to their own lives and the world around them. The ethical implications raised by these questions resonate with real-world discussions on bioengineering, cloning, and artificial intelligence, stimulating debate and discussion. In doing so, the warm-up phase not only serves to introduce vocabulary but also fosters higher-order thinking skills, such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation, key components of a well-rounded linguistic and cognitive development.

The motivational phase proves to be exceptionally effective in several ways. First, it activates background knowledge and introduces essential vocabulary in an accessible manner. Second, it shifts the learning dynamic from teacher-centered to student-centered, promoting a more interactive and communicative approach to language learning. Finally, it helps create a connection between the text and contemporary societal issues, making literature not just an academic subject, but a means of interpreting and understanding the world.

By initiating a discussion about the ethical and scientific dilemmas posed by *Frankenstein*, students are drawn into the narrative world with a sense of purpose and relevance. This readiness primes them for the upcoming linguistic challenges and ensures that they approach the reading and analysis of the text not just as passive learners, but as active participants in an ongoing dialogue. In this way, the warm-up phase does not merely serve as an introduction; it becomes an indispensable tool for fostering a deeper, more engaged learning experience.

Global Comprehension

Following the warm-up, students move into the global comprehension phase, where they engage in a first reading of the excerpt. The aim here is to develop a general understanding of the text, focusing on key plot points, characters, and setting, without delving into detailed analysis. This initial reading, designed to be relatively quick, allows students to build fluency in handling authentic English texts and prepares them for more in-depth exploration in subsequent phases.

At this stage, the teacher might pre-teach important vocabulary or provide a list of key terms that are critical for understanding the text, such as “animate,” “catastrophe,” or “agony.” By offering this linguistic scaffold, the teacher ensures that students can focus on the overall meaning of the text without being hindered by unfamiliar vocabulary. The global comprehension phase is particularly effective because it trains students to approach reading holistically, making them more confident in grasping the general meaning of a text before diving into its complexities.

Globality

Objective: To guide students through a first reading of the text, focusing on global comprehension.

Activity:

Students will be given the extract and asked to engage in a “silent reading” for overall understanding. After this initial read-through, they will discuss in pairs or small groups the “general atmosphere” of the scene and share their initial reactions. To prompt discussion, the teacher will pose guiding questions:

- “What is the mood or atmosphere of the passage?”
- “What are the main emotions Victor feels in this scene?”

The teacher will emphasize “reading for gist”, encouraging students to identify the “main idea” of the passage (Victor’s horror and regret after bringing the creature to life) without getting bogged down in difficult vocabulary or specific details.

Rationale:

This activity is crucial because it helps students grasp the general meaning of the text, focusing on the overall mood and narrative flow rather than details. It also encourages students to engage with the emotions and setting before diving into more analytical tasks. The collaborative discussion further enhances their ability to understand the narrative globally.

Analysis (Understanding and Appreciating)

The analysis phase is split into two parts: understanding and appreciating. After the initial reading, students revisit the text for a more detailed examination, focusing on both the language and the content.

During the understanding stage, students work in pairs or small groups to complete worksheets that guide them through the identification of key elements in the text, such as the setting, characters, and narrative voice. For example, students might explore how the isolated laboratory setting contributes to the mood of the passage, or how Shelley uses descriptive language to evoke horror. This phase provides an opportunity for students to collaboratively engage with the text, fostering communication and negotiation of meaning in English.

The second part of the analysis, appreciating, encourages students to look beyond the surface meaning and delve into the stylistic and thematic choices made by the author. In this section, the teacher guides students to identify literary devices such as metaphors, imagery, and symbolism. For instance, they might discuss the significance of the monster's "watery eyes" and how it evokes both horror and pity, or analyze the broader implications of Victor *Frankenstein*'s ambition. This dual focus on comprehension and appreciation helps students develop a deeper *understanding* of literary techniques while simultaneously enhancing their linguistic competence by exposing them to a wide range of descriptive and evaluative vocabulary.

Analysis – Phase A (Understanding the Language)

Objective: To deepen comprehension by focusing on specific language and content.

Activity:

After the initial reading, students will return to the text for a "closer reading". This time, the focus will be on understanding specific vocabulary, structures, and descriptions. The teacher will provide students with a "worksheet" containing two key tasks:

- Task 1: Match vocabulary from the text (e.g., "toils", "agony", "lifeless", "convulsive", "horror", "grin") to definitions. This will help students unlock the meaning of challenging words in context.

- Task 2: Students will fill out a "character analysis grid" focusing on:

- Victor's physical and emotional state

- The creature's appearance and first actions

- The symbolic meaning of light and dark imagery in the scene (e.g., "half-extinguished light," "yellow eye," "moon").

Students will work in pairs to complete these tasks, encouraging collaborative learning and language practice.

Rationale:

This phase focuses on improving "vocabulary acquisition" and comprehension of descriptive language. By analyzing the language used to describe Victor and the creature, students will build a deeper understanding of character development and thematic symbolism. It also sharpens their reading skills by encouraging them to focus on specific language features.

Analysis – Phase B (Appreciating the Literary Style)

Objective: To appreciate the literary techniques and style employed by Mary Shelley.

Activity:

In this activity, students will work as a class to identify key "literary techniques" used in the extract. The teacher will guide the students through a "close reading" that highlights:

- Imagery and description: Analyze the contrast between beauty and horror (e.g., "pearly whiteness" of the teeth vs. "shrivelled complexion").

- Mood and atmosphere: Identify words and phrases that evoke fear, suspense, and disgust (e.g., "breathless horror", "cold dew covered my forehead").

- Narrative structure: Discuss the use of first-person narrative and how it intensifies the emotional depth of Victor's account.

After this discussion, students will be asked to re-read the passage and annotate it, identifying moments where the tone shifts and how Shelley's word choices affect the reader's perception of the creature and Victor.

Rationale:

This activity is particularly effective in teaching stylistic appreciation while improving students' analytical skills. It helps students recognize the use of language devices such as imagery and tone, while also prompting them to think critically about how these choices influence the reader's understanding of the text. This phase also expands students' literary vocabulary, which is crucial for advanced language acquisition.

Synthesis

The synthesis phase challenges students to connect the literary themes of *Frankenstein* to contemporary issues and broader societal concerns. This is where the lesson becomes particularly effective in facilitating both linguistic and cognitive development. Students are asked to consider questions like, "How does the theme of scientific ambition in *Frankenstein* relate to modern debates about genetic engineering or artificial intelligence?" This phase encourages students to use the target language to express complex ideas and to synthesize their thoughts both orally and in writing. By prompting students to relate the text to real-world issues, the lesson transcends mere language practice and becomes a tool for critical thinking and ethical discussion.

This phase is particularly beneficial for language acquisition because it requires students to formulate their own arguments and opinions using the new vocabulary and structures they have learned. The teacher supports this process by offering sentence starters and model responses to help students structure their ideas more clearly and confidently.

Synthesis (In Other Words)

Objective: To encourage students to synthesize their understanding of the text and themes, and to reflect on their interpretation.

Activity:

Students will complete two synthesis tasks:

- Task 1: Written Reflection: Students will write a "short paragraph" reflecting on Victor's emotional state and the consequences of his actions. The prompt will be: "How does Victor's reaction to the creature reflect the novel's themes of ambition, regret, and the pursuit of knowledge?"

- Task 2: Comparative Discussion: In small groups, students will compare Victor's feelings after creating the creature with modern ethical dilemmas in science (e.g., cloning, AI, genetic engineering). They will be asked to discuss and then present their thoughts to the class on the question: "Is there a modern equivalent to Victor's ethical dilemma? How do today's scientists grapple with similar issues?"

Rationale:

This phase encourages critical thinking and requires students to draw connections between the text and broader ethical and societal issues. The written reflection serves to consolidate their understanding of the text while fostering language production in a more controlled, reflective format. The group discussion prompts spoken interaction and further language practice, ensuring students engage in meaningful communication.

Reflection

In the final reflection phase, students are asked to apply what they have learned in both written and oral tasks. This phase is designed to consolidate linguistic and thematic knowledge, allowing students to demonstrate their understanding of both the content and the language used in the lesson. For example, students may be tasked with answering interpretive questions such as, "How does Victor Frankenstein's relationship with the creature evolve throughout the story?" or "What moral dilemmas are posed by the creation of life in the novel?"

Reflection (Interpreting the Text)

Objective: To guide students in interpreting the deeper themes of the novel and reflecting on its relevance to contemporary issues.

Activity:

To conclude the lesson, students will participate in an open class discussion guided by the following interpretive questions, written on the board:

1. What does Victor's reaction to the creature suggest about human nature and our fear of the unknown?

2. How does Shelley use the Gothic elements of fear and horror in this passage?

3. How does this passage reflect the theme of responsibility in scientific discovery?

The teacher will encourage students to express their opinions and connect their interpretations to broader societal questions. This discussion will also serve as a bridge to the next lesson, where students will study the Gothic Novel as a literary genre.

Rationale:

Reflection encourages students to think beyond the text and apply its themes to contemporary issues. It promotes critical discourse and allows students to articulate their interpretations, reinforcing language skills in a more authentic, communicative manner. This phase fosters the development of higher-order thinking skills such as analysis, evaluation, and synthesis.

The Second Lesson: Contextualizing "Frankenstein" and the Gothic Novel

The second lesson focuses on placing *Frankenstein* within the broader context of the Gothic novel. After reviewing the previous lesson's homework, the teacher introduces students to the characteristics of the Gothic genre through a multimedia presentation, highlighting features such as eerie settings, the supernatural, and the theme of isolation. This contextualization allows students to understand *Frankenstein* not only as an isolated work but also as part of a larger literary tradition.

In this lesson, students are encouraged to make connections between the novel and other Gothic texts. For example, they might compare Shelley's depiction of monstrosity and isolation with similar themes in works like *Dracula* or *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. This comparative exercise fosters critical thinking and allows students to see literature as a conversation across time and genres. Moreover, this phase enables them to use the newly acquired vocabulary in a broader literary context, further reinforcing their linguistic development.

Conclusion

The structured approach of the lesson, particularly the emphasis on gradual, scaffolded learning, proves highly effective for students. The warm-up activity and global comprehension phase set a strong foundation for deeper analysis, while the analysis and synthesis phases encourage higher-order thinking and allow students to actively apply their language skills. By consistently integrating reading, speaking, and writing tasks throughout the lesson, students not only engage with the text on a literary level but also develop their linguistic proficiency in a meaningful and context-rich environment.

The lesson's success lies in its ability to make the study of literature functional for language acquisition. Through collaborative activities, peer discussions, and individual reflection, students are given ample opportunities to use English authentically, promoting fluency and confidence in their language use. Moreover, by linking literary themes to contemporary societal issues, the lesson transcends traditional language learning and fosters critical engagement with both the text and the world around them. This holistic approach ensures that students emerge from the lesson not only with a deeper understanding of Frankenstein but also with enhanced language skills that they can apply across various contexts.

While all phases of this lesson are valuable, the Analysis – Phase B (Appreciating the Literary Style) stands out as the most effective for combining language acquisition with literary appreciation. Through close reading and stylistic analysis, students not only deepen their understanding of the text but also learn to recognize and use advanced descriptive language, enhancing both their reading comprehension and their writing skills. This phase, alongside the reflective tasks, ensures that students are not simply reading literature, but are engaging with it in a way that enhances their overall linguistic competence.

This dynamic learning process resonates with Mauro Spicci and Timothy Alan Shaw's (2018) notion of "wonderstanding," which emphasizes literature's extraordinary ability to elicit profound questions and ignite the wonder of discovery. This transformative approach to knowledge, which fosters a critical and flexible mindset, is instrumental in shaping an enriched understanding of both language and literature. This term elegantly captures literature's extraordinary power to evoke a profound sense of inquiry and astonishment within individuals. Through this lens, "wondering" transcends mere curiosity, transforming into an active engagement that sparks new questions and ignites the joy of discovery. Such wonder evolves into a deep comprehension rooted in genuine, self-generated inquiries rather than prescribed ones.

This distinctive form of knowledge, arising from the enchantment of recognizing the literary text as a tool for exploration and insight, surpasses traditional notions of understanding. It embodies a dynamic learning process that continually provokes further inquiries through an ongoing dialogue with reality and personal experiences. This adaptable, critical knowledge framework remains resilient against extreme positions, firmly anchored in the belief that understanding is best cultivated through language. In this context, literature becomes a vital source of authentic and inspiring material for language learning, offering rich opportunities for both cognitive engagement and communicative proficiency. By fostering a deep connection to the text, literature not only enriches linguistic skills but also cultivates a broader appreciation for the complexities of human experience and understanding. By embracing this philosophy, the lesson not only cultivates linguistic skills but also deepens students' appreciation for the complexities of human experience, underscoring the vital role of literature as a source of authentic and inspiring material for language learning.

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Using Dictation in the English Classroom

Elsbeth Hird

Introduction

Dictation is as old as the hills in terms of language teaching. First described as a feature of Grammar Translation in the sixteenth century, it has appeared in various methods and approaches and fallen both into and out of fashion over time (Stansfield, 1985). The Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics defines dictation as a "technique used in language teaching and language testing in which a passage is read aloud to students, with pauses during which they must try to write down what they hear as accurately as possible" (1992, p.108). This definition brings back my own memories of transcribing obscure sentences in high school French classes. It was only as a novice EFL teacher that I properly appreciated the integration of speaking, listening, writing, and reading in learning a language. I can reflect now on the untapped possibilities that might have enlivened my language learning at the time.

Alternative Dictation Delivery

In their brilliant book, Paul Davis and Mario Rinvolucri (2002, p.1) turn the traditional dictation concept on its head by asking us to consider aspects of the text selection, its delivery, and possible follow-up activities to a dictation. In terms of who reads the dictation aloud, it could be the teacher, but it might equally be the student(s). The speed of delivery might be at a slower or more natural pace. There is also the question of who creates or selects the text, how much the listeners write down (the whole text or key items only; what they hear or a response to this?), and who corrects it. A further consideration is the manner in which the text is dictated: is it to be whispered or shouted? And what, if anything, happens after this stage? Completing the dictation does not need to be an end but a springboard for further skills or a focus on language.

Classroom Management and Opportunities to Practise Skills and Language

Davis and Rinvolucri also discuss several advantages in both language, skills, and classroom management of dictation:

1. The students are active during dictation
2. They are active after the dictation activity.
3. Dictation is a vehicle for oral communication.
4. It fosters unconscious thinking.
5. Dictation copes with mixed-ability groups.

6. It can be done with both small and large groups.
7. It calms the group by providing a sense of purpose and a desire to get something down.
8. Is technically useful as learners are required to decode sounds to help with spelling, word boundaries and punctuation.
9. It gives access to interesting text.
10. It is safe for non-native speakers as the dictation itself can be fully prepared beforehand.

I would like to extend this list and propose two further benefits:

Firstly, in addition to 1) and 2) above, the students are active in preparing for the dictation, and this can help ensure engagement in what they are about to hear. For example, what is it that the teacher would like to share with them? What do the students already know about the topic or would like to find out? Do they have any questions they want to ask? Their ideas can be recorded on the whiteboard or screen as a reference during and after the dictation. Of course, the content of the dictation is unlikely to tell the students everything they wish to know, but this can help activate schemata and motivate students to find out more. The second is that dictations are a non-threatening and time-saving way for novice teachers to explore using or adapting authentic material or to exploit coursebook texts further. As an early CELTA graduate, trying out a new (for me) type of dictation without creating a text completely from scratch was a lifesaver.

Practice in Developing Strategies

Dictation supports the deployment of a variety of strategies for students to develop their proficiency. O'Malley and Chamot (1987) categorize three basic types of learning strategies to develop language learning. These are metacognitive, cognitive, and social/ affective strategies. Metacognitive strategies help students organize and monitor how they are doing. For example, students direct their attention to learning and selecting (or rejecting) aspects of language or information according to their perceived usefulness. In dictation, this could be taking notes, becoming comfortable with the speed of delivery, and focusing on the main points.

Cognitive strategies refer to how learners develop their language, remember information, and construct meaning. In a dictation activity, this means students may use features of prosody such as intonation and pausing and creating meaning from the words they hear. Notetaking may also be a cognitive strategy to focus on information and apply spelling and grammar rules to produce text. Social/affective strategies are those in which students interact with each other to share information, ask the teacher or speaker for repetition or check they have the correct information, and request more information or examples.

Gordon (2008) makes the point that motivating students to write can be challenging. In her study, several characteristics of good writers were identified, two of which seem particularly important to dictation activities. The first is that good writers learning another language develop strategies to cope with uncertainty about how language is used. The other is that they are aware of the importance of meaning and form. Dictations provide focused practice on dealing with these in a supportive environment.

Types of Dictation

Dictation activities have been classified in various ways. Sawyer and Silver (1972) distinguish four types: the phonemic item (focusing on the sound of a word), the phonemic text, the orthographic item (focusing on spelling), and the orthographic text. Teachers in the EFL classroom will value the importance for students in recognising sounds and producing spelling across individual words, phrases, and whole texts. However, activity books more commonly refer to dictation activities according to what the student(s) actively do during the exercise. Thus, a more familiar list is probably:

1. A full dictation in which students write the complete text they hear.
2. A partial dictation in which students fill in the blanks or write keywords and later reformulate the text. A dictogloss is an example of this.
3. A wild dictation in which students write the answers to a list of heard prompts.
4. A running dictation in which students work in a runner-writer pair. The runner reads and memorises a fragment of text to run and dictate to the writer.
5. A shouting dictation. In this version, each student has part of a text. Their partner stands a distance away

and must dictate their portions. This is particularly useful for quieter students or younger learners but, for obvious reasons, is best done outside or away from other classrooms!

6. A picture dictation. Students draw something, e.g. a room in a house, based on a description the speaker gives.

A Framework for Creating Engaging Dictations

Morris (1983, p.126) states that appropriate texts for dictation are those which have interesting subject matter and are short in length. Oller (1979, p. 273) recommends that the dictation comprise cohesive text rather than isolated sentences. My own experience is certainly that students are much more likely to be attentive if they sense something they are about to find out something new, and the text comprises only a few sentences so that they can more easily retain some of the content to jot down their ideas and pool these with the group. Dictating cohesive text allows me to refer to it as ‘a story’, i.e., with a beginning, a middle, and an end. This, I feel, is useful to further engage students and encourage them to retell that story in their own reproductions. A further advantage is that the teacher can include relevant discourse markers to focus on language items in any post-dictation study.

The following four suggestions provide the language teacher with a variety of dictation activities. Activities one and two were created, and the subject matter was designed to appeal to students in my own language classes. Activities three and four are ideas to adapt the coursebook. All are sufficiently short to maximise the opportunities for learner engagement both in the informational and language content of dictated texts for students at CEFR B1+ and B2 levels. However, the length and language content can easily be adapted to meet the needs of students at lower or higher levels. Although the instructions and format suggest a particular way of running each, they could be modified for other types of dictation.

Activity 1: A Dictogloss

Wajnryb (1990) outlines four procedures for the dictogloss, which are: the preparation; the dictation itself in which learners first just listen to the text, then during the second (and possibly third listening) take notes rather than transcribe the complete text; the reconstruction stage in which students collaborate to produce a version of the text; and analysis and correction. In this last stage, the learners may see the original text to compare with their own version.

The dictogloss activity encourages learners to be active at all stages, including the preparation when they learn about the topic of the text and can discuss what they know or would like to find out. It also allows for what Davis and Rinvolucri call *interesting text.* The teacher is not confined to topics or text based on the coursebook (if one is used) but can introduce content that is more relevant to the local environment and target language culture that may well be absent in a standard Eurocentric student coursebook.

The following text was created to help learners in New Zealand find out more about the local environment as part of their cultural studies programme. The stages follow Wajnryb's procedures with two additions: during the first reading, when learners listen to allow the text to 'wash over them' (1990, p.7), they are asked to raise their hand each time they hear items of lexis from the vocabulary stage to help with noticing key informational (rather than linguistic) content. When I first began working with students, I was surprised by how often students would avoid using the key lexis despite an explicit focus on meaning and form at the preparation stage. This instruction is an attempt to tap students' cognitive strategy to contextualise the new items and relate these to a physical action to make them memorable. The other addition is that after the correction stage, learners can be asked to do further research on the topic outside the classroom for the next lesson. If they have questions about the topic that were not answered either at the discussion or dictation activity stages, their research could focus on finding out this information.

The Kakapo

Discussion Questions

1. What are some New Zealand animals that are different from animals in your country? (The kiwi, tuatara, tui, albatross, yellow-eyed penguin, and skink).

2. What do you know about them? Say where they live, what they eat and if they are endangered by other animals.

Vocabulary to Pre-teach

flightless (adj)

nocturnal (adj)

a predator (n)

vulnerable (adj)

3) show a picture of the kakapo and ask students what they would like to find out.

The Text

1. The kakapo is the world's rarest and strangest parrot. **2.** It is the only flightless and nocturnal parrot. It's also the heaviest in the world, weighing up to 3.5 kilograms. **3.** The birds live in New Zealand, a place inhabited only by birds and reptiles for millions of years. **4.** However, predators such as rats and cats have made the parrot very vulnerable. **5.** Now, there are approximately only 247 adult kakapo left.

Additional Comment on the Dictogloss.

- The students' group texts can be displayed for peer feedback and correction. Primary attention is given to meaning: Is the message clear? Is the information accurate? With teacher guidance, students can be directed to consider accuracy to diagnose and correct errors. Prompting students to notice if there is a mistake (*Is the grammar correct? / Can you see one mistake in this sentence? Do we need a capital letter here? / How do we spell X*?) can be a valuable way for the group to learn language from each other and give peer feedback in a supportive way.

- At the last stage, the students' versions can be compared to the original text. This is also an opportunity to discuss meaning and choices in form.

Activity 2: A Pair Work Dictation

In this variation, learners work together independently of the teacher for the dictation stage. Each learner is required to transcribe every word to complete the missing sections of text. The format allows the students to complete the missing parts of the text to create the whole.

After the initial discussion of the topic, students are grouped into As and Bs and given a partial text to preview. They read their text, ask any questions they need to about vocabulary and pronunciation (individual sounds, stress connected speech and intonation) and rehearse reading aloud, practising phrasing. It is important that the teacher model this and show students how to chunk the text into meaningful units using slashes.

When both groups are ready, they regroup into AB pairs to dictate the missing portions and create the complete text.

The Origins of Chocolate

<u>Sample discussion questions</u>

1. How often do you eat chocolate?
2. Do you ever buy chocolate as a gift for someone?
3. What type of chocolate do you prefer (dark / milk / with a fondant filling)
4. What do you know about where chocolate comes from?

Group A

S1. Chocolate is enjoyed by almost everyone all over the world but what do you know about its history?

S2. ____

S3. Cacao was considered a gift from the gods.

S4. ____

S5. Chocolate was brought to Spain and became very popular with the European elite.

S6. ____

Group B

S1. ____

S2. Made from the beans of the cacao tree, chocolate can be traced back to the Mayans in South America around 4,000 years ago.

S3. ____

S4. It was used as currency, medicine and to make an alcoholic beverage.

S5. ____

S6. The solid block that we recognise as chocolate today developed in the 19th century.

<u>Additional Comments on the Pairwork Dictation</u>

- For lower-level students in a mixed ability class, the skeleton text can be easily adapted through the addition of phrases in either the A or B ‘blank’ sentences.

- Social/affective strategies are particularly encouraged in this activity. Co-dependence necessitates learners deploying communication strategies to support each other's understanding, so functional exponents such as *Can you say that again, please?* and *How do you spell that?* are useful to pre-teach.
- This text was created to provide post-dictation input on the passive structure, either as a way of getting students to notice language before explicit focus on its meaning/ use and form or as further practice.

Activity 3: Adaptation of Coursebook Lead-in Discussions

Typically, the introduction to a coursebook topic includes one or more discussion questions to prepare learners for the informational content in a listening or reading text. However, dictating the questions (with coursebooks closed) allows students to actively receive and produce the questions(s) while providing an opportunity for them to subconsciously formulate their own response during the dictation phase. Giving learners some thinking time has been shown to measurably improve the quality and quantity of output (Ellis, 1987; Foster, 1996).

Additional Comment on Dictating Discussion Questions

- Students can be asked to write their own discussion question(s) on a given topic prior to class and dictate each one to their partner or group.

Activity 4: Prediction - single-word items to foster engagement and prediction as part of a pre-listening or reading skills activity.

Although this dictation activity does not conform to Oller's stipulation that texts be pieces of coherent discourse, it does fall within Sawyer & Silver's phonemic and orthographic item dictations.

In addition to the lead-in to a coursebook listening or reading text, several key items of lexis are dictated to the listeners to pique their interest in the topic and to begin to make predictions about the likely informational content. In this way, students may feel more engaged with what they are about to read or listen to.

Additional Comment on Dictating Single-Word Items

- The items chosen may be words already known to the learners but could equally include some new items that the class has to research using their pooled knowledge of sound and spelling relationships, dictionary skills and awareness of meaning in context.

Conclusion

These activities are intended to show a little of the scope of dictation within skills and language practice in the classroom. Texts can be one word or several sentences, be an end in themselves or the lead-in to a whole topic or scheme of work, and provide focused listening, reading, writing, and speaking. Students are active in re-creating text, regardless of their level or the level of their peers, and are encouraged to actively share their pooled information and language knowledge, practicing communication strategies they may not otherwise deploy. As a diagnostic tool, they reveal what students know and can do, as well as help them notice gaps in their knowledge. Useful conversations can arise when students are curious about how their own text and the original one differ. The teacher's creativity and students' reactions as they practice the skills and find out about language and the context in which they are studying will help you consider and explore further possibilities for doing dictations.

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Using Translation in the ELT Classroom

Belma Kartal

Introduction

For a long time, the use of learners' first language (L1), both as part of retranslation techniques and as a wider academic topic, was either actively discouraged or simply overlooked. ELT practitioners interested in this topic will find an exhaustive historical overview of *'the outlawing of translation'* in Cook's (2010) *Translation in Language Teaching*. However, in most recent editions of several publications of influential ELT authorities, L1 is, if not encouraged, at least considered. Jeremy Harmer, for example, in the 5th edition of his widely popular *The Practice of English Language Teaching,* devotes a short section to arguments for and against the use of L1 (Harmer, 2015, pp. 49-51). Similarly, the amended 2018 *Cambridge Language Assessment CELTA* syllabus makes a reference to teachers' ability to *'use their own English language skills and L1 where* *appropriate to enhance the effectiveness of their teaching'* [1]. The rationale is based on the argument that *'it was felt important to make explicit that use of L1 is not to be prohibited and that discussion of its use may be helpful to candidates'* (see 2018 Modifications to the CELTA syllabus and Assessment Guidelines, p. 5).

L1 can be used in different ways, for example in task set up, or language clarification. This article will focus only on the use of translation at different stages in the lesson. The activities outlined below are, in their essence, text reconstruction exercises that encourage learners to notice the gap in their knowledge of the language.

The Case for Translation

Cook categorises his arguments for translation in language teaching into three broad areas: evidence-based, educational, and pedagogical (Cook, 2010, pp. 85-155). In terms of evidence-based arguments, he does not present extensive research findings in favour of translation but rather highlights 'to the lack of evidence of harm' (Cook, 2010, p. 99). Given this lack of evidence, he calls for the rehabilitation of translation in language teaching, which he believes would stimulate new linguistic research. Cook's educational-based arguments concern curriculum and syllabus decision-makers (Cook, 2010, pp. 104-124).

From a practitioner's perspective, perhaps the pedagogical-based arguments are particularly interesting.

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[1] The same provision is included in subsequent editions of CELTA Syllabus and assessment Guidelines, the latest version is from 2021, see p. 11

Essentially, Cook argues that translation can be used by teachers who speak and do not speak their students' language in a wide spectrum of activities, from form-focused to communicative and from beginner to advanced levels. He does, however, caution against 'imposing (any teaching) approach upon people who are deeply opposed to it' (2010, pp. 125-153). For beginners, Cook advocates for the use of the L1 not only in translation activities but also in teaching, e.g., when clarifying language and responding to students' queries, which may help the teacher better gauge students' understanding.

A wide range of activities in Deller and Rinvolucri's *Using the Mother Tongue* imply the same position – this practical book includes ideas on how to use the L1 in classroom management and language clarification, as well as in exercises that help improve accuracy and fluency. Similarly, Thornbury (2010) and Nation (2003) see no reason for the prohibition of L1 use either. In addition to the previously outlined arguments and activities, they both regard translation as a time-saving technique in language clarification.

This paper focuses on the use of translation in awareness raising activities in practise activities and supplementary instruction, rather than in initial language clarification.

Retranslation Activities: Focus on Form and Meaning

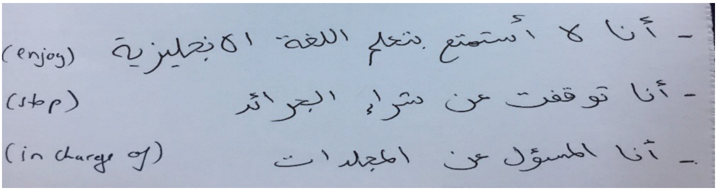
The activities in this section primarily focus on helping learners notice differences in form and meaning between their L1 and English. The target language is selected on the basis of learners' needs and typically addresses areas that are particularly challenging for the speakers of that L1. For example, the first activity focuses on non-finite forms, i.e., gerunds, and infinitives, which do not exist in Arabic (Swan & Smith, 2001 p. 204) as in activity 1. Similarly, Activity 2 addresses the hypothetical past that does not exist in South Slavic languages (see Riđanović on the subjunctive in Bosnian/Croatian /Serbian in Riđanović, p. 292).

Activity 1: Focus on accuracy - providing feedback

This activity was conducted as part of delayed feedback after a freer practice activity. The A2 student made the following errors: *I don't enjoy to learning English. // I stopped to buy newspapers (many years ago). // I'm in charge for to filing.* Instead of corrections, I displayed his errors as correct sentences in English and asked the student to translate them into his L1, in this case, Arabic:

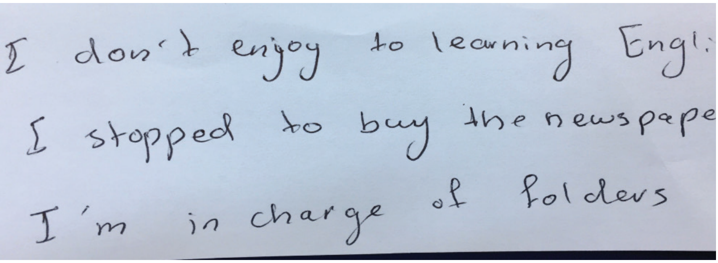
> I don't enjoy learning English. // I stopped buying newspapers. // I'm in charge of filing.

The student translated them into Arabic, as in the image below. The prompts on the left were added to make it easier to refer to the sentences again in the next lesson.



- أنا لا أستمتع بتعلم اللغة الانجليزية (enjoy)
- أنا توقفت عن شراء الجرائد (stop)
- أنا المسؤول عن المجلدات (in charge of)

At the beginning of the next lesson, as part of revision, the student translated the three sentences back into English. This is what he wrote:



I don't enjoy to learning Engl

I stopped to buy the newspape

I'm in charge of folders

The mistakes in the first two sentences were the exact verb pattern errors he had made in the previous lesson. He avoided the gerund form in the third sentence.

The student was then given some time to circle the errors and review the relevant rules on verbs followed by gerund or infinitive.

Activity 2: Establishing which aspect of target language may still be difficult[2]

This activity was conducted with Ukrainian B1+ students, focusing on the uses of present perfect tenses – the perfect aspect is typically problematic for Slavic speakers (de Wit, in Altshuler, 2018). Students were asked to translate these sentences into English:

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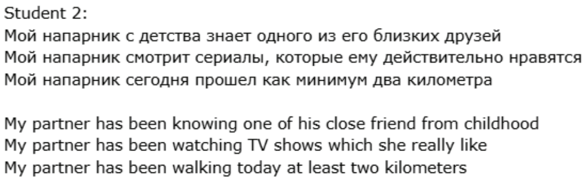
[2] Credit to Alisa Rashkovych, a fellow CELTA tutor to was willing to experiment with translation in her classes.

> My partner has known one of her closest friends since childhood.
>
> My partner has been watching a TV series that she really likes.
>
> My partner has walked at least two kilometres today.

Students produced the following translation into L1 and re-translation into English:

Student 1:
Моя подруга/партнерка знає одного зі своїх близьких друзів з дитинства.
Моя подруга/партнерка дивиться серіал який їй дуже подобається.
Моя подруга/партнерка пройшла сьогодні принаймні/не менше ніж два кілометри.

My partner has know one of her closest friends since childhood.
My partner has been watching series which she likes a lot.
My partner has passed today at least 2 km.



Student 2:
Мой напарник с детства знает одного из его близких друзей
Мой напарник смотрит сериалы, которые ему действительно нравятся
Мой напарник сегодня прошел как минимум два километра

My partner has been knowing one of his close friend from childhood
My partner has been watching TV shows which she really like
My partner has been walking today at least two kilometers

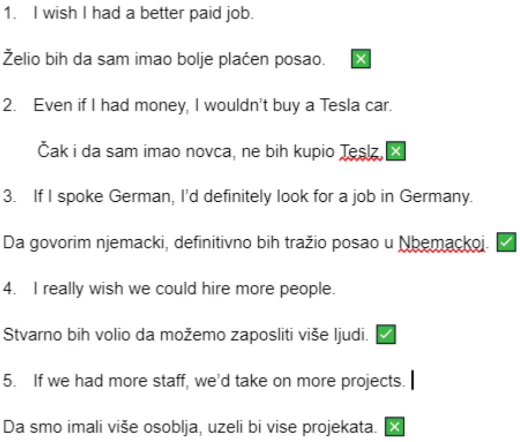
Re-translation established that while students did not have problems choosing the correct tense, which is not always easy for Slavic speakers, they did struggle with the form. As is often the case after these activities, there was no need for additional clarification of the language – students simply needed to notice the errors, recall or be prompted to recall the rules and self-correct.

Activity 3: Focus on accuracy and meaning - what if the translation is wrong?

This exercise was done at the end of the week with a B2 class as part of the bi-weekly revision test. The hypothetical past was taught in the previous week.

1. I wish I had a better paid job.
2. Even if I had money, I wouldn't buy a Tesla car.
3. If I spoke German, I'd definitely look for a job in Germany.
4. I really wish we could hire more people.
5. If we had more staff, we'd take on more projects.

Even though the explicit clarification of the grammar was relatively recent, students struggled with the translation, and most produced either just one or two correct sentences, as in the sample below:



1. I wish I had a better paid job.

Želio bih da sam imao bolje plaćen posao. ☒

2. Even if I had money, I wouldn't buy a Tesla car.

Čak i da sam imao novca, ne bih kupio Teslz. ☒

3. If I spoke German, I'd definitely look for a job in Germany.

Da govorim njemacki, definitivno bih tražio posao u Nbemackoj. ☑

4. I really wish we could hire more people.

Stvarno bih volio da možemo zaposliti više ljudi. ☑

5. If we had more staff, we'd take on more projects.

Da smo imali više osoblja, uzeli bi vise projekata. ☒

Quite a few errors indicated that students may not have fully grasped that the sentences refer to the present time despite the verbs being in the past form. Considering the frequency of error and the intrinsic connection between the meaning and the form of this target language, proceeding with the translation would not have made sense. Further clarification of the hypothetical past was clearly necessary. The teacher needed to identify if these were merely translation errors or if the target language was perhaps misunderstood. Translation, in this case, helped the teacher assess to what extent the new item was understood, serving as an alternative method of concept checking using past forms to convey hypothetical present meaning.

After additional clarification and translation were done in open class with the teacher, students produced correct translations[3]:

1. Volio / voljela bih da imam bolje plaćen posao.
2. Čak i da imam novca, ne bih kupio / kupila Teslu.
3. Da govorim njemački, definitivno bih tražio / tražila posao u Njemačkoj.
4. Stvarno bih volio / voljela da možemo zaposliti više ljudi.
5. Da imamo više osoblja, uzeli bi više projekata.

Retranslation was quite successful, as in the sample below

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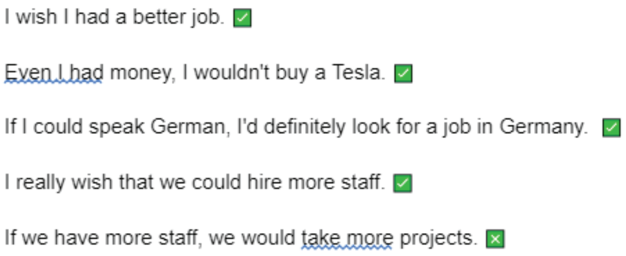
[3] Since this was done in open class, with the teacher, verb conjugations in Bosnian include both genders.



I wish I had a better job. ☑

Even I had money, I wouldn't buy a Tesla. ☑

If I could speak German, I'd definitely look for a job in Germany. ☑

I really wish that we could hire more staff. ☑

If we have more staff, we would take more projects. ☒

Afterward, students were given an opportunity to compare with the original sentences in English and consider their errors.

These retranslation activities, inspired by exercises described in *Uncovering Grammar* (Thornbury, 2005, p. 71) and *Using the Mother Tongue* (Deller & Rinvolucri, 2006, p. 33), involve students translating either a text or series of sentences from English into L1, and then – ideally after some time, for example in the next lesson – back into English from their own translation. They are most effective for grammar items that have already been explicitly taught and are expected to be mastered at students' current level, otherwise they are at risk of fossilisation. It is not necessary for the teacher to speak the students' L1 nor is it required for all students to share the same mother tongue.

Variations of these activities include simple dictation or a dictogloss activity, where the teacher dictates the text in English, and students write it down either in English or L1 (or reconstruct it from memory in case of a dictogloss activity), then translate it back into English before comparing with the original. Both activities can be done as individual, pair, or group work, and the retranslation can be done with one's own or peers' texts. One thing to note is not to rush the final stage, that is the contrastive analysis. See more about this in the concluding section.

More Ideas: Translation and Retranslation Used to Check Understanding and Expanding the Range

Activity 4 – Translation in the presentation stage

We have previously looked at activities suitable for practice or feedback stages. Translation can also be used in the presentation stage, as in the activity below, in which, instead of asking concept questions to check understanding of the meaning, the teacher asks students to choose the best translation. The teacher might ask students, “Koji pridjev na engleskom opisuje osobu koja je praktična, razmišlja logički” or prepare a multiple-choice worksheet like the one below[4]:

Choose the best translation.

‘a sensible person’

a. osjetljiva osoba, neko ko se lako uvrijedi

b. osjetljiva osoba, neko čije se raspoloženje lako mijenja pod uticajem okoline

c. praktična osoba, neko ko razmišlja logički

‘eventually’

d. na kraju

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[4] See a similar activity in Deller & Rinvolucri (2006). p.34

e. slučajno

f. eventualno

Such an activity would also work well as a consolidating, controlled practice.

Activity 5 – Retranslation for systems expansion

Retranslation is not limited to accuracy activities. With higher level learners it can be used to expand the range of grammar or lexis.

For example, activity 4 below works well with B2 level learners who tend to use ‘easy’ past forms, and avoid the usage of the forms such as ‘used to’ and ‘would’. The same text was used in both the language presentation and practice stages. The teacher prepared the translation - this activity depends on the teacher and students sharing the L1.

For the presentation stage, students were given the text in English and asked to underline all past tenses – the text with underlined verb forms looked like this.

> My mother was always frightened of us catching germs. Every day she used to give us a good dose of cod liver oil. My brother Jimmy would refuse, but she used to hold his nose until it went down. Afterwards we all got a piece of apple, and then we went to school.
>
> Kathleen Cassidy British Tea Lady
>
> (taken from New English File, Advanced Student’s Book. OUP. P. 21)

The meaning was presented through a guided discovery activity:

> Which of these past forms highlight that the past action was done repeatedly[5]:
>
> a) past simple forms such as 'was', 'got', 'went'
>
> b) forms with 'used to + base verb' and 'would + base verb' such as 'used to give,' 'would refuse', 'used to hold.'

They were then asked to underline the sections of the sentences in the translated paragraph – teacher's guidance was required as these were not word-for-word translations (e.g., *'imala je običaj da .... da'* = *'used to give'*). The meaning was consolidated through a series of concept-checking questions, e.g., which words in Bosnian indicate that we are talking about something that was done more than once, repeatedly (e.g., 'običaj,' 'obično').

Moja majka **se** stalno **plašila** da ćemo pokupiti neke bakterije. **Imala je običaj da** nam svaki dan **da** jaču dozu ribljeg ulja. Moj brat Jimmy **bi obično to odbijao**, a ona ga **je znala držati** za nos dok ne proguta. Kasnije smo svi **dobijali** po komad jabuke i onda **odlazili** u školu.

Kathleen Cassidy, kuharica iz Velike Britanije

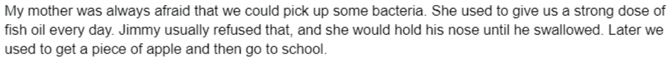
(my own translation)

---

[5] This was followed by more work on meaning and form, e.g. that the difference between the two forms is negligible, that when using narrative tenses it is nice for stylistic reasons to use more than one form. And that 'would' in this meaning cannot be used with stative verbs.

In the next lesson, as part of the revision, students were shown the translation and asked to translate the paragraph back into English, using ‘used to + base verb’ and ‘would + base verb’ when possible).

This was one of the responses:



My mother was always afraid that we could pick up some bacteria. She used to give us a strong dose of fish oil every day. Jimmy usually refused that, and she would hold his nose until he swallowed. Later we used to get a piece of apple and then go to school.

In feedback, after comparing with the original text, the teacher reassured students that (with the exception of ‘go to school’) this translation was rather good even if did not match the original. Exact translation, i.e accuracy, is not something to aim for at any cost in activities like this. The aim is to push students to make a conscious effort to use more advanced or more varied language.

Using Translation to Aid Fluency

Cook suggests a communicative activity in which students are asked to bring in short texts from their own language and translate them for the class (Cook, 2009, p. 152). Although this works well, it can be time-consuming in class. For B1 and above, an adaptation of this includes asking students to choose an article on a topical issue from their country, read it in their own language, and then summarise it orally for the whole class or a group. The task can have different communicative focuses. For example, choose a text on a topic that you think not many people from outside your country know about but should. It works well with multilingual classes not only in terms of novelty but also to help establish a stronger rapport between the learners.

No re-translation is necessary for activities like this, but a reflective task that would call for some translating / re-translating can be added. Students can be asked to identify one (or more) items (a word, a sentence) that has been difficult to express in English and asked to consider if the problem lay in perhaps not knowing the word/grammar or it being too different in English. This works well if there is more than one speaker of one language in class, as they can be grouped together to share their observations and provide more insightful peer feedback. This kind of talking about language is sometimes frowned upon, but it may appeal to a certain type of learner. Cook advocates such usages of L1 and translation 'to deepen, through discussion of translation problems, explicit knowledge of the two languages and the relation between them.' (Cook, 2010, p. 132)

Conclusion: The Importance of Contrastive Analysis in Noticing Activities

It is very important to allocate sufficient time for contrastive analysis[6], allowing students to compare their retranslation with the original and to encourage self-assessment. This is where the noticing, or raising of awareness of the knowledge gap, takes place. It is worth asking students to circle errors, perhaps allow them time to refer to the lesson in which the language was initially clarified. If the

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[6] See more on contrastive language analysis in Thornbury's entry on contrastive analysis. Thornbury, S. (2013, January 27). *C is for Contrastive analysis. An A-Z of ELT.* https://scottthornbury.wordpress.com/2013/01/27/c-is-for-contrastive-analysis/

learners' response to these activities is positive, they may be incorporated in lessons more frequently.

As with any other technique, these activities may not appeal to all types of learners. However, they are particularly beneficial for analytical students or those focused on improving accuracy, who often find these exercises highly engaging. Additionally, the translation stage can help the teacher assess the extent to which an item or a concept has been understood or mastered. Finally, retranslation works best when used judiciously as a technique, not a method.

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Peer Teaching in the ELT Classroom

Marijana Klemenchich

Introduction

The peer teaching model is used in English language teaching, and students take on the role of both teachers and learners in the EFL classroom. This approach involves students teaching their peers, thus providing a collaborative and interactive learning experience for the students. It promotes a dynamic and effective learning environment, and it enables students to learn from one another. Peer teaching is an instructional strategy in which students are responsible for teaching their peers, thereby facilitating learning in a collaborative, non-hierarchical environment. Peer teaching allows students to act as both teachers and learners, reinforcing their knowledge and enhancing their understanding of the material through the process of teaching others (Topping, 2005, p. 631). Falchikov defines peer teaching as a method where students teach their peers, leading to an enhanced understanding of the content by reinforcing concepts through teaching. Peer teaching is viewed as both a means of enhancing academic learning and a tool for social development (Falchikov, 2001).

When using this model of teaching, the students need to act as teachers, meaning that that they have to be familiar with the material that they need to teach in a classroom. They should be well prepared and they must have a solid knowledge of the material taught. As Stigmar states, when learners shift from being students as recipients to being productive teachers, itis likely they need to understand the material at a deeper level to be effective teachers (Stigmar, 2016, p.125). According to Bennett & Gadlin (2012), facilitating peer learning can be a mutually beneficial concept that involves sharing knowledge, ideas, and experiences between participants.

The concept of peer teaching as an educational strategy began to be studied and developed in the 20th century. The peer teaching as an educational strategy was initially used in classrooms in the 1960s and 1970s and it became very popular at that time. In this period, educators began to recognize the benefits of peer teaching for both the “teacher” and the “learner” and the development of educational theories that emphasized collaborative learning, social interaction, and active learning has been noted.

Peer teaching is a powerful educational technique where students teach each other under the guidance of a teacher-mentor or facilitator. Students feel less intimidated by the teacher, because they are working with their peers and they are all in the same position, so they provide support to each other. Students can share their knowledge without fear of intimidation or ridicule from their peers. Students feel a sense of accomplishment knowing that they are sharing their gained knowledge with their peers which can raise their self-confidence and motivation to improve learning content (Bruno et al., 2016).

I have been using peer teaching in the course Seminar and Teaching Practice in EFL for four years now and I found it very beneficial for the students. The peer teaching is done is small group around maximum ten students. The teacher becomes a facilitator and a teacher-mentor, working with this small group of students, interacting with the students and helping them plan, prepare and conduct their lessons. The teacher mentors the students, guides and supports the peer teachers throughout the whole process of peer teaching.

The course Seminar and Teaching practice in EFL is taken by the fourth year ELT students, which means that they already have most of the theoretical knowledge related to English Language Teaching learnt in the ELT subjects in the previous three years. This allows the process of peer teaching to be conducted much more easily. The students take turns in teaching and each student is given the opportunity to teach twice in the semester for 40 minutes (per each peer teaching).

Prior to the peer teaching session, the students are taught basic concepts such as giving clear instructions, using warm-up activities, teaching the four skills (reading, speaking, writing, and listening), teaching vocabulary and grammar, how to do assessments, how important feedback is, etc. I have used peer teaching for four years so far, and each year, I added something new until I found the model that best suits me and the students. Using peer teaching as a strategy in the last four years has enabled me to see great transformations taking place in the students regarding confidence, building teaching skills and mutual collaboration, and developing problem-solving skills.

In the process of peer teaching, I have detected nine stages. As mentioned before, the first stage is the stage where important theory is learned, revised and explained in detail and in practice. The second stage is the preparation stage, where topics should be selected and the skills that students will teach determined. In this stage of mentoring the students in the peer teaching process, I make sure that each student is given the opportunity to teach twice in the semester and that different skills or concepts will be taught by each student. For example, in the first peer teaching, I make sure that all the students do a warm-up activity, and in the second part that they teach either grammar, vocabulary, reading, writing, or speaking that interrelates with the third stage of assigning roles, which means deciding who will be the teacher and who will be the learners for each session.

The fourth stage is gathering resources, which means providing materials, textbooks, or online resources for both teachers and learners. In this stage, the students are provided with all the necessary materials, but they prepare extra materials for their classes as well. In the fifth stage, which is the training stage, guidance on effective teaching strategies, communication skills and managing the learning process is given. In addition, the students are advised to actively engage in the learning process, ask questions and seek clarification from their peers, when they are in the role of peer-students.

The sixth stage is planning how the teaching will be conducted, and at this stage, lesson plans are developed and made. Peer teachers plan their lessons, including the objectives of the lesson and the methods that will be used in the teaching process. The peer teachers establish clear objectives and aims. At this stage, the learning goals are set, and the peer teachers outline what the learners should understand or be able to do by the end of the lesson that they will teach. In order for the peer-teaching strategy to work effectively and improve students' self-confidence, the teacher must establish goals, objectives, procedures, rules in the classroom, expectations, and roles and responsibilities of students and teacher (Cohen & Sampson, 2001, pp. 22-23).

The peer teaching process can be stressful for the students when they are placed in a position to teach their peers, becoming even overwhelming at times. Peer teaching takes students out of their comfort zone and gives them a higher sense of responsibility, so the teacher/mentor must prepare them well and ensure that they feel comfortable in their new roles. The teacher/mentor has to make sure that all students have an equal engagement, that they have understood what their teaching task is, that they have set clear aims and objectives and that they are clear with the content and context.

Doyle (2008) explains the rationale for peer-teaching by saying that although our students have watched teachers for thousands of hours, they have little familiarity with the planning and delivery processes of teaching. If teaching others is to be a meaningful learning experience, we must do an effective job of teaching our students how to teach. … When we ask our students to teach, we place them in a learning situation that requires that the one doing the teaching thoroughly understands the knowledge or skill set being taught. Having students teach one another promotes deep learning…Students will gain an increased appreciation of the effort and skills required for effective teaching (Doyle, 2008, p. 107).

The actual teaching is the seventh stage of peer teaching. Peer teachers teach by giving lectures, having discussions, or using multimedia in the classroom. Interaction and active participation, as well as engagement and collaboration among learners, are encouraged. Each student has the opportunity to teach for 40 minutes and to deliver a lecture on a previously agreed topic in accordance with the lesson plan that they have prepared previously. All the students have the lesson plan and are familiar with the content of the peer teaching.

The next stage is peer feedback, and at this stage the peer learners provide constructive feedback to the peer teacher. The feedback refers to the clarity and effectiveness of the lesson. Feedback is provided by the teacher/mentor as well to both the peer teacher and learners, emphasizing strengths and areas for future improvement.

Assessment is the ninth stage of the peer teaching where the effectiveness of peer teaching is assessed and evaluated. The assessment is done both by the peer learners and the teacher/mentor. The peer teacher also completes a self- assessment, which is a valuable step in the teaching process and the peer teachers find this very helpful.

The last stage is the continuous support stage, which provides continuous support, help, and guidance to the peer teachers, and it is an ongoing process throughout the whole semester. Ongoing support and mentorship are provided to help peer teachers improve their teaching skills over time.

Throughout the peer teaching process, collaboration and active participation are reinforced, and a supportive learning environment is promoted. Since the students have the opportunity to peer teach twice in the semester, they learn all the stages the first time, and the second time, it is easier for them to teach and to implement all the stages, as well as to implement all the suggestions given in the constructive feedback stage. Regarding the benefits of peer teaching, I have not conducted formal research, but I have discussed the following three questions with the students in class about the peer teaching process and experience.

To the first question: What has peer-teaching taught you?, the students responded that it has helped them develop their leadership skills, presentation skills, and time management skills and has boosted their self-confidence. Most of them emphasized the fact that the peer teaching experience has helped them build their self confidence in teaching.

To the second question: How do you feel about this peer teaching experience?, the students responded that it was positive, fun, rewarding, helpful and beneficial.

To the third question: How has the peer teaching affected your relationship with your peers?, the students have explained that they have developed closer relationships with peers, trust, and respect for one another.

Benefits

There are many benefits from integrating peer teaching into the EFL classroom. A major benefit of peer teaching is that it allows learners of English to practice their language skills in an authentic context, thus helping peer teachers and learners to develop fluency and confidence in speaking English. This approach enables the students to put into practice all the theories that they have learned throughout the years of study and to implement their knowledge in the classroom. Peer teaching offers a chance for learners to actively engage with their classmates, thus improving their listening and communication skills.

Another advantage of peer teaching is that it encourages learner agency. James Anderson defines learner agency as an individual's ability to affect their environment, particularly in the face of obstacles. According to Anderson, it involves three key elements: "the environment to act, the will to act, and the power to act" (Anderson, 2021, p.4).

Peer teaching allows students to take responsibility for teaching others, promoting active participation in learning. The students are motivated to research, to use methods that they have learned about, and to put into practice the theory learned. This approach promotes collaborative learning and allows the students to practice teaching skills in a supportive environment where constructive feedback is given. The constructive feedback is given by the teacher and the peers as well, and it enables the students to become better teachers. This approach also enables the students to understand the material at a deeper level.

Peer teaching has been used for many years in education. It is prevalent in diverse schools where students from different academic levels work together to share their prior knowledge and help each other through difficult assignments, class work, and projects. It has also proven beneficial for students who struggle to learn content such as concepts, ideas, terms, and problem-solving in the classroom (Topping, 2005). The students have a higher tendency to help and assist each other in the process of peer teaching. Topping (2005) views peer teaching as an instructional approach that builds self-confidence and provides a pathway to reconnecting with our students by bringing rigor, expectations, and relationships into the classroom, resulting in student growth.

Cooperative learning is also a great benefit in the peer-teaching instructional approach and it influences positively on the peer teachers' self-confidence. The peer teachers, through the peer teaching process, develop their leadership skills; they also develop their autonomy and responsibility and have great motivation to learn and to teach in a professional manner. Students demonstrate an openness with their classmates and exchange ideas that result in an increased level of understanding of content and respect for other students' opinions and individuality (De Lisi, 2002). Peer teaching helps develop students' self-confidence and emerging leadership skills (Lockie & Van Lanen, 2008).

Conclusion

Peer teaching, as an instructional strategy, is a social event that involves activity between the teacher, the facilitator, and students working with each other to complete a task that requires behavioral activity along with learning content. “The only true education comes through the stimulation of the child’s powers by the demands of the social situations in which he finds himself” (Dewey, 2017, p. 34). In the peer teaching process, the students have hands-on experience in teaching and this practical approach enables them to become better teachers and the peer teaching shifts the focus from the teacher to the student.

Implementing a peer-teaching instructional approach in the classroom is a strategy that has a positive effect on a student’s motivation and self-confidence. A peer-teaching instructional approach allowed students to develop relationships with their peers and collaborate with students of different backgrounds. Students felt a sense of accomplishment by sharing their gained knowledge with their peers and raised their self-confidence and motivation to improve learning content (Bruno et al., 2016).

The peer-learning experience was not a memorization of written and verbal statements of facts, it was a connection with others and actual life situations (Bobbitt, 2017). The process has helped the students become more self-confident in teaching and to develop their teaching skills. Even though formal research has not been done, and I consider this a limitation, the peer teaching was definitely a very positive experience for the peer teachers - fourth-year English Language Teaching Department students.

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Engaging Learners through the KWL Chart in the English Language Classroom

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Introduction

What do we currently **know** about communicative English language teaching? Much has been written about this, from best practices to the theories that underpin them. But if one was asked to describe a classroom in which such teaching occurs, most of the answers would be a variation of: there is *a lot of* speaking in it.

In truth, however, although the ultimate goal of communicative language teaching (CLT) is to increase the students' ability to communicate in the target language and therefore consolidate their *communicative competence* (Richards, 2006), a truly communicative classroom transcends the fluency first tenet for which CLT is known and is characterised by the following:

- It promotes cognitive, affective, and social *engagement*.
- It activates and makes use of the students' *prior knowledge*.

- It fosters *inquiry* and develops *interthinking* skills (described by Littleton and Mercer (2013) as individuals using language to construct knowledge through conversation).
- It optimises conditions for *language retention*.

In summary, present-day CLT nurtures a whole-person approach to the students' development, activating aspects of their identity – their linguistic abilities, their emotional intelligence, and their interpersonal competencies – in order to co-create an environment that is conducive to learning.

If this is the case, though, what do we **want** to know further about CLT?

Teachers are practical creatures and, more often than not, methodologically orientated. In short, they want to know how to achieve the goals of CLT in their own teaching, which, in the majority of the classrooms worldwide, is CLT adjacent at best, or, more commonly, still steeped in view of learning that is focused on teacher-centered, top-down dissemination of knowledge. Teachers are also learners of their own craft, so in order to capitalize on their own previous knowledge, we will discuss the use of graphic organisers as an instruction tool.

Graphic organisers are not Indigenous to the language classroom, although CLT favors visually-rich materials. They are an import from STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) subjects, where they are used to visually represent connections between concepts, ideas, and information in order to facilitate understanding.

It is for this reason that they have been of critical use in language learning contexts from as early as the pre-communicative period in the history of English Language Teaching (ELT).

Language learners are required to process large amounts of information in a new language (Zhao, 2016) and CLT, although hailed as more practical and focused on real-life interaction, has been criticized for taking a 'whole-system' approach to language teaching, wherein the "linguist, over-excited by their analysis of a piece of language [...], sets out to teach everything that has been observed (often including the metalanguage used to describe the phenomena), without stopping to ask how much of the teaching is a) new to the students or b) relevant to their needs" (Swan, 1995, p.5). Thus, graphic organisers can be used to streamline and better organize this overflow of information: mind maps, spidergrams and Venn diagrams can help learners make sense of what they are learning and visualize connections between what they already know and what they are currently learning.

If the aim is to optimize *language retention*, as stated above, then "graphic organisers provide a means to externalize a learner's mental models or knowledge structures" (Novak & Cañas, 2008, p. 7), which can increase the likelihood of long-term retention. Similarly, graphic organizers foster *cognitive engagement*. Dye notes that "when students use graphic organisers, they engage in metacognitive processes by thinking about how to categorise, summarise, and synthesise information" (2000, p.74).

So far, we have argued that graphic organisers promote engagement and foster retention. But what of the rest of the characteristic we have previously associated with CLT? Do they also foster affective and social engagement? Do they make use of the student's prior knowledge? Can they be used to develop interthinking skills?

One of them can: the KWL chart. Introduced by Ogle as a tool to set "the stage for learning new information by creating curiosity and personal goals" (1986, p. 565), KWL stands for **K**now – **W**ant to Know – **L**earned and it serves, as the name indicates, as both a pre-learning tool, focused on activating prior knowledge, and as a post-learning tool, helping students co-create and reflect on the newly acquired knowledge.

The table below [T1] showcases how each part of the KWL chart addresses the characteristics of the CLT classroom as we have identified them.

Table 1: KWL – a theoretical overview

What I **K**now	What I **W**ant to Know	What I **L**earned
Students make use of their *existing / prior knowledge.* Helps students connect familiar information to new concepts. Facilitates *peer learning* and *social engagement.* Fosters *affective engagement* as existing knowledge is seen as being valued. Helps the students and the teacher notice gaps in the knowledge.	Helps students set *learning goals*. *Personalizes* the learning experience. Increases motivation and anticipation in what is to be learned next (*cognitive and affective engagement*). Fosters *inquiry* and develops a need for knowledge.	Helps students summarise the new knowledge. Encourages *reflection* and evaluation of learning. Develops *inter-thinking* skills and co-construction of knowledge. Creates conditions for *long-term retention.*

Understanding the KWL chart

What have we **learned** so far about KWL?

To further understand the theoretical underpinning of the KWL chart and its use in the CLT classroom, we are going to investigate the key concepts mentioned above in relation to each part of the chart: prior knowledge, cognitive, affective, and social engagement, inquiry, interthinking skills, personalization, learning goals, reflection, and long-term retention.

What I Know

Existing knowledge, also known as prior or background knowledge, is the focus of the schema (plural: schemata) theory. As cognitively gifted beings, we interpret the world using categorical rules or scripts – in short, our knowledge of the world is neatly categorized into schemata, which relate to specific topics. For example, if a friend says to you *I went to the cinema last night*, this activates your 'going to the cinema' schema. This means you are immediately able to make lots of assumptions about your friend's visit to the cinema without being told about them, e.g. the fact that your friend sat down to watch the film or that the film was viewed in a darkened room. Therefore, as Carrell and Eisterhold argue, "one's prior knowledge, or schema, plays a crucial role in interpreting and understanding new information" (1983, p. 556).

This ability to make assumptions based on previous knowledge of the world is activated in the *What I Know* part of the KWL chart and its purpose is to help students connect given information with new, received information. The most basic practice in CLT is pair work or collaboration, so this stage is often carried out in pairs or small groups: this expands the pool of information and creates opportunities for peer teaching, i.e., students learning from one another and their diverse cultural, social, and personal experiences. The multitude of events (or scripts or schemata) that shape one's identity can now be seen as valued by a community of peers. On a very practical note, it also serves as a diagnostic tool to raise awareness for both teachers and students of the gaps in knowledge, from a linguistic point of view *and* from the point of view of the content of learning.

The positive impact of this renewed awareness is that students are more motivated to address these gaps and engage with the content designed to help them achieve their learning goals.

What I Want to Know

Much has been written about *taking ownership of one's learning.* What the teacher endevours to teach may not be what the students eventually learn or *need* to learn. In response to Swan's criticism of CLT (1985), present-day practices value the real-life communicative purpose of the tasks set. Although, in most cases, it is still the teacher who makes an (informed) selection of tasks, the KWL chart has the advantage of allowing students to *personalize* their learning experience within the confines of a given topic, thus being more likely to engage in self-regulation (Zimmerman, 2002). The success of a learning experience is now evaluated against student-generated criteria: this may increase motivation to engage cognitively and affectively with the material or even search outside of the classroom for missing information. *Inquiry* is a skill that thrives on the need for specific knowledge.

What I Learned

Knowledge is all around us, instantly accessible to the modern student. And yet, parsing through so much of it is a daunting task without taking into consideration the critical thinking abilities required to identify *accurate* information.

Cognitive overload is a term often used in CLT: in order to avoid it, the amount of information presented has to be, as we have already seen, “a) new to the students or b) relevant to their needs” (Swan, 1995, p. 5). The KWL chart empowers students to make decisions about what they want to learn, i.e. what their needs are (see 2.1.) and what is relevant to them (see 2.2.). It also encourages them to synthesize that information and evaluate the progress that they have made. This need not be an individual endeavour. Littleton and Mercer focus specifically on the collaborative nature of thinking – or *interthinking* (2013), arguing that individuals use language and conversation to co-create knowledge.

In the *What I Learned* part of the KWL chart, students can be encouraged to engage in what Littleton and Mercer call *exploratory talk*, wherein they can “engage critically but constructively with each other’s ideas” (2013, p. 23). As we have also seen in 2.1., the KWL chart offers opportunities for the students to engage in meaningful discussions and tap into the collective knowledge and experience of their community of peers, thus enhancing their own individual cognitive abilities.

How is this achieved? Through *reflection.* From the very beginning, Ogle, the creator of the KWL chart, noted that the final step "encourages students to reflect on their learning, leading to deeper understanding and *retention*" (1986, p. 566).

Retention is not just a by-product of the processes students go through as they complete the chart (e.g. activating schemata, peer teaching, stimulating cognitive, affective and social engagement, setting goals, reflection, inter-thinking). It is also facilitated by the fact that at the end of the task, they have a written record of their progress, one that they can revisit, redo and further enrich throughout the course of study.

To summarise, the KWL chart, although deceptively simple in format, showcases increased flexibility in promoting learning conditions and processes characteristic not only to the communicative language classroom, but to second language acquisition as well. It is a versatile tool, which can be used with a variety of language proficiency levels and, as we will see below, with a range of lesson foci.

KWL in English Language Teaching

As we have already learned, the KWL chart is a type of graphic organizer used to activate prior knowledge, engage students with the process of their own learning, and assess learning against student-generated criteria. It was designed by Donna Ogle in 1986 to help students who found reading and understanding texts challenging. Though it was introduced as a comprehension strategy for *users* of the language, its benefits made it popular with other subjects as well, and nowadays, it is used not only in the foreign language classroom but also in the content and language integrated classroom (CLIL), as a monitoring tool for the students' achievement of content.

The KWL chart is versatile in its application: it can be used to organize an individual lesson or a full course of study (week by week, unit by unit, or even provide the underlying structure for an entire syllabus). In this section, we will be looking at its more traditional uses (i.e., to facilitate the development of receptive skills) and how it can be used in collaboration with other approaches, like the flipped classroom, to develop language systems (e.g., lexis or grammar).

Developing Receptive Skills

One key issue related to the teaching of receptive skills in ELT has been the debate around the difference between testing and developing receptive skills, with the main argument being that the framework proposed by most coursebooks focuses more on testing than teaching. The comprehension approach, i.e., the approach that informs the teaching of receptive skills in mainstream CLT (that is to say, in coursebooks, materials, and teacher training programs), measures how competently students perform based on their ability to provide correct answers to the set tasks. The focus, therefore, is on the *what* (the product, i.e.*, what are the correct answers?) rather than the how (the process, i.e., how did the students reach these answers?*).

To counteract this claim, current best practices for both reading and listening promote *evidence-based feedback* (i.e. what are the correct answers and why they are correct) and *more authentic task design* in order to align the real-life purposes of reading and listening to classroom-based ones. Therefore, the KWL chart can act as a framework for teaching receptive skills that meet both of the above-mentioned criteria. In [T2], we present the orthodox sequence of stages for teaching reading and listening, as seen in “almost any coursebook written for the global market” (Watkins, 2017, p. 7).

The KWL chart can complement and enrich this framework by augmenting opportunities for a more personalized learning experience, with an emphasis on helping students provide evidence for the accuracy of their learning in a more real-life context.

Table 2: A Framework for Teaching Receptive Skills

Cycle	Stage	Procedure
Pre	Lead-in	Teacher generates interest in the topic by activating prior knowledge.
	Pre-teach	Teacher pre-teaches blocking lexis, which is vital for attempting the upcoming tasks.
While	Task 1	Teacher sets an easier comprehension task. Students read/listen and complete the task. Students pair-check their answers. Teacher confirms answers in open-class feedback.
	Task 2	Teacher sets a more challenging comprehension task. Students read/listen and complete the task. Students pair-check their answers. Teacher confirms answers in open-class feedback.
Post	Follow-up	The teacher sets a productive task (more often, spoken rather than written), such as a discussion or a role-play, which follows on from the text.

The example that we are going to present next was designed for an exam preparation class. The aim of the lesson was not just to foster receptive skills development, but also to raise the students' awareness of the skills a successful exam taker must consolidate, a dual language / content focus for which the KWL chart is eminently suited. In [T3], we included a procedural overview of the lesson that closely follows the receptive skills framework above.

Table 3: A KWL Reading Lesson (Task 2, Adapted From Watkins, 2017:64)

Cycle	Stage	Procedure
Pre	Know	In pairs, students discuss what time management tips they already know in the context of taking an IELTS exam. The teacher hands out an A3 paper divided into 3 columns. In groups of 4, students share what they know and write the tips they had in common in the first column of their handout.
	Want	In their groups, students write what else they would like to know about how to manage time on an IELTS exam on post-it notes. The teacher monitors and offers support with the accuracy of their questions. Students stick their notes on the second column of their handout.

Cycle	Stage	Procedure
While	Task 1	The teacher tells students they will read an article about time management tips for the IELTS exam. Students are given 1 minute to skim the text and see if any of their initial tips were mentioned. Students pair-check their answers. Teacher elicits answers and evidence in open-class feedback by referring to the students' written record.
	Task 2	Teacher tells students to read the text again and annotate it using the symbols below, according to their reaction: Δ = I need/want more explanation ! = This is surprising Students are given 4 minutes to complete the task. Students pair-check their answers. Teacher provides open-class feedback and further clarification.

Cycle	Stage	Procedure
Post	Learned	The teacher draws the students' attention to the post-it notes they wrote earlier. In pairs, students check to see which questions were answered and which still remained unanswered. Teacher monitors and collects unanswered notes. The teacher facilitates open-class discussions to find answers and/or provide further resources. Students are given some time to agree and write down three things they've learned about time management in the last column of their handout. Handouts are displayed around the classroom for further reference.

This lesson can be adapted to a listening focus and to a variety of learning contexts (General English, Business English, English for Specific Purposes, English for Academic Purposes etc.) and topics. It allows for minimal preparation time from the point of view of the teacher, which makes it very practical, and it has high surrender value in terms of both language (question formation) and content (time management skills). Apart from ticking the previously stated characteristics of the KWL chart in CLT (activating previous knowledge, increasing engagement, developing inquiry and interthinking skills, and promoting retention), it also creates a visual reminder of the knowledge acquired that can be used in future lessons. Finally, this lesson can be taught face-to-face *and* online, with students potentially making use of collaborative writing platforms like Google Docs, Google Slides, Padlet, etc., to create their KWL charts.

Developing Language Systems

As previously mentioned, the KWL chart can be used in combination with other CLT-adjacent approaches, such as the *flipped classroom*. A definition of the flipped classroom includes the key concepts we have looked at so far: it shifts the focus from passive content delivery to *engaging* the students in *inquiry*-based activities by relegating content learning outside of the classroom through video and written resources, thus freeing up classroom time for *collaborative* activities such as discussions, case studies, and problem-solving exercises (Abeysekera & Dawson, 2015).

In [T4], we look at the most common framework for teaching language systems (i.e. a text-based presentation) side by side with a flipped classroom edit of it to highlight the similarities and differences.

Table 4: Text-based presentation versus The Flipped Classroom version

Text-based presentation			**Flipped classroom version**		
Stage	**Aim**	**Type**	**Stage**	**Aim**	**Type**
Lead-in	Generate interest	In-class	**Lead-in**	Generate interest	In-class (*or omitted*)
Receptive skills tasks	Expose students to target language (TL)	In-class	**Receptive skills tasks**	Expose students to target language (TL)	In-class (*or omitted*)
Clarification	Clarify meaning, form, and pronunciation of TL	In-class	**Clarification**	Clarify the meaning, form, and pronunciation of TL	Self-study resources provided
			Feedback	Provide further clarification	In-class
Controlled practice	Focus on the accuracy of TL	In-class	**Controlled practice**	Focus on the accuracy of TL; Further clarification	In-class
Freer practice	Focus on the accuracy and fluency of TL	In-class	**Freer practice**	Focus on the accuracy and fluency of TL	In-class

As you can see from the model above, the clarification stage has been purposefully divided into two separate stages in the flipped classroom approach according to the type of thinking skills involved. The clarification stage proper (which includes teaching students the relevant aspects of meaning, form, and pronunciation) makes use of lower-order thinking skills, according to Bloom's Taxonomy, e.g., understanding and remembering (previous knowledge). This can be achieved outside of the class through guided self-study tasks designed and/or suggested by the teacher. The feedback (and controlled practice) stage, conducted during class time, makes use of higher-order thinking skills (e.g., applying, analysing, evaluating), thus maximizing opportunities for deeper learning experiences (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001).

How does the KWL fit into all of this? The chart can provide more structure to the self-study component of the flipped classroom and a framework for students to develop their autonomy by setting clear goals for the research they are to conduct.

In [T5], we propose a framework for systems lessons (i.e., where the main aim of the lesson is either grammar or lexis) that combines the flipped classroom approach, the KWL chart, and the receptive skills procedure seen in [T2].

Table 5: Developing Language Systems by Using the Flipped Classroom Approach and the KWL Chart.

Stage	**Procedure**	**Type**
Lead-in	The teacher generates interest in the topic by activating prior knowledge.	In-class
Receptive skills tasks	The teacher sets comprehension tasks. Students read/listen and complete the task. Students pair-check their answers. The teacher confirms answers in open-class feedback.	In-class
Follow-up	Teacher sets a productive task to allow students to react to the information from the text in a collaborative manner.	In-class
Clarification	The teacher highlights the target language (TL) in the text. In pairs, students discuss the following and complete the first two columns of a KWL chart: what they already know about the TL; what they want to know about the TL. As homework, students consult the resources provided by the teacher in order to answer the questions in the **Want to Know** column.	In-class & self-study

Feedback	Teacher gives students a quiz to check understanding of what they learned about the TL. Students complete the quiz in pairs to facilitate peer teaching. The teacher provides further clarification as needed.	In-class
Controlled practice	Students practise the TL in a controlled manner.	In-class
Freer practice	Students practise the TL in a freer manner.	In-class
Reflection	Students reflect on what they've learned and complete the final column of the KWL chart.	In-class

In the flipped classroom approach, the teacher adopts the role of a facilitator and feedback provider. They are a guide to knowledge rather than the exclusive source of it. The classroom embodies the fluency first tenet of CLT, with a focus on effective real-life communication and learning skills, rather than the 'whole-system' approach that Swan berated (1985, p.5). The perusal of the system is now in the students' hands: they set their learning goals and reflect on their progress based on criteria they set for themselves, using the KWL *approach.*

Conclusions

We started off by presenting the KWL chart as a type of graphic organizer, a tool to categorise information. We then moved on to showcasing it as part of a framework for organizing lessons for both skills and systems. We have now **learned** that it can become an *approach* and a *mindset* that enables students to make use of their previous knowledge, engage with the content of the lesson in a cognitive, affective, and social manner, develop inter-thinking skills, and enhance long-term language (and content) retention. In the era of principled eclecticism in language teaching, the KWL chart is, therefore, an invaluable addition to the modern teacher's toolbox that will allow them to engage, inspire and empower their students to become better language users.

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Assessment for Learning: Implementing Effective Feedback in the English Classroom

Karim Rezagah

Introduction

Assessment and learning should be regarded as integral and interconnected components within the foreign language classroom and not as separate parts. Classroom assessment and assessment-related activities devote a third to one-half of the teachers' time in foreign language classrooms (Vogt, 2018). Assessment, encompassing a more comprehensive concept than testing (Vogt, 2018), is defined as "[…] obtaining evidence to inform inferences about a person's language-related knowledge, skills or abilities" (Green, 2014, p. 5).

Explaining this definition, Green (2014) elaborates that task performance, which involves language use, gives *evidence* and *inferences* and refers to our interpretation of the meaning of that performance. Our beliefs about the language's nature and role in the assessment takers' lives (or "assesses" as Green refers to them) impact this interpretation. We make inferences about the assessment takers to decide how the instruction has been, which areas need to be focused on further, or in other words, where the learners are, where they need to be, and how to get there.

Assessment is crucial in effective teaching because, regardless of how we plan our instruction, we cannot predict exactly what students will learn. Thus, we use assessment for learning because it entails gathering the most accurate evidence of what students have learned. We use that information to determine the next steps in instruction (Wiliam, 2017). Consequently, we would be able to decide what to do next.

Throughout this chapter, the assessment for learning (AfL) concept and its importance in the practices of education will be discussed. The discussion will be supported by evidence from the related research. More specifically, effective feedback will be in focus, because of its role and significance in AfL and the support it provides for both students and teachers in achieving their instructional objectives. Therefore, the chapter will accentuate how the implementation of feedback in AfL impacts the performances of teachers and students.

Furthermore, in this chapter, a practical classroom-based task will be presented as an example to demonstrate the implementation of AfL in practice. This example focuses on applying feedback in a written skill activity. I will describe the stages that are helpful in the implementation of the feedback and how its implementation will move learning forward. Through this practical application, I aim to show how teachers can create a more interactive and reflective learning environment that benefits both teaching and student achievement. The following part is devoted to AfL theoretical foundations and presenting and comparing assessments for and of learning.

Assessment for Learning (AfL)

Theoretical Foundations of Assessment for Learning

Assessment for learning does not have its own distinct theory of learning or language acquisition. Instead, it is based on three key learning theories: behaviorist, constructivist, and sociocultural. When the focus is on testing and using the results to re-teach what students have not mastered, it aligns with behaviorist theory. Aligning with the constructivist theory, AfL pays special attention to helping learners understand what they are learning. In other words, in AfL, learners play an active (rather than a passive) role in the teaching-learning process. Finally, due to the nature of AfL, students' interactions in the classroom are encouraged, which gives the students more accountability toward their learning, and this is in accordance with the sociocultural theory (Boyd et al., 2019).

Assessment for and of Learning

According to Popham (2017), the term *assessment for learning* is often mistakenly credited to Richard Stiggins or Paul Black and Dylan Wiliam, though all three deny originating the phrase. Upon investigating, Dylan Wiliam traced its earliest use to a paper by Mary James (1992) presented at the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development conference in New Orleans. Ruth Sutton then used it as the title of her 1995 book. The first explicit distinction between *assessment for learning* and *assessment of learning* appeared in a 1997 book by Gipps and Stobart, further popularized by the Assessment Reform Group's guide for policymakers in 1999 (Broadfoot et al., 1999, as cited in Popham, 2017).

Considering that in this chapter, practical aspects are prioritized over the theoretical aspects, and similar to other scholars (namely, Birenbaum et al, 2015; Boyd et al., 2019; Popham, 2017; and Shermis & Di Vesta, 2011), I will use AfL interchangeably with formative assessment and AoL (assessment of learning) with summative assessment. Even though this chapter focuses on formative assessment, it needs to be emphasized that I do not try, by any means, to convince the reader that formative assessment should replace summative assessment completely. The reality is that they complement each other, and if done meaningfully, they would impact the teaching-learning process dramatically. However, given its characteristics, the learning opportunities it offers, and the support it provides to both teachers and students in the teaching-learning process, prioritizing formative assessment as the primary approach in classroom practices is preferable.

Formative assessment is defined as a planned process in which teachers use the evidence gathered from assessments to modify their teaching methods, or students use it to adjust their learning strategies (Laveault & Allal, 2016;

Poham, 2017). It is important to highlight certain terms in this definition. The first one is the fact that formative assessment is a process rather than a test. Cambridge Online dictionary defines process as “a series of actions that you take in order to achieve a result” (https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/process), and that is precisely what AfL does.

Furthermore, it is planned. Therefore, formative assessment is not simply a test or an impromptu activity; rather, it is a thoughtfully designed process where teachers and students utilize the outcomes of assessments to enhance their practices and learning strategies and make the required adjustments: teachers can adjust their teaching approach, and students can adjust their learning strategies. Thus, as Popham (2017) put it nicely, formative assessment can be effectively viewed as an instructional approach. It utilizes evidence gathered through assessments to refine teaching methods and enhance student learning outcomes. Formative assessment is usually discussed in conjunction with summative assessment. Besides, considering them together gives a clearer picture of their differences.

According to Vogt (2018), “Assessment of Learning is closely associated with summative assessment” (Vogt, 2018, p. 253). Its objective is to summarize what the learners have learned at the end of the instructional period. Summative assessment occurs when the evidence collected by educators is test-based and used to inform decisions about instructional activities that are already completed. Final examinations administered by a teacher to their students at the end of an instructional period are an evident example of summative assessment. Such an exam aims to help teachers assign an appropriate grade to students based on their performance. The decision which will be made by this exam does not intend to enhance the instruction primarily, rather it will be used for instance to check a student's eligibility for moving to the next instructional level (Popham, 2017).

Vogt (2018) also maintains that "Assessment for Learning is closely associated with formative assessment." (Vogt, 2018, p. 253). In formative assessment, on the other hand, the focal point is enhancing the teachers' teaching approach and the learner's learning strategies. The mindset in formative assessment is promoting the teaching-learning process (Popham, 2017), therefore it happens **during** an instructional period. One of the main features of formative assessment is being insightful to both teachers and learners by providing the strengths and weaknesses of the teachers' and learners' performance.

This assessment is characterized by its informal and continuous nature (Vogt, 2018). AfL, typically embedded in classroom activities, involves ongoing feedback mechanisms that help both teachers and students understand progress and make adjustments throughout the learning process. This type of assessment is not limited to specific tests or evaluations but is integrated into classroom activities to enhance learning. The adjustment that the teachers make influences their current students and not necessarily their upcoming groups of learners. The main idea is that the present students will benefit the most from it.

It is worth noting that the terms formative assessment (assessment for learning) and summative assessment (assessment of learning) are more meaningful when used to describe the purpose of the assessment rather than the assessments themselves (Wiliam, 2017). This implies that when we talk about them, we are clarifying for what **purposes** we are using the assessment, not referring to the assessment itself. More specifically, it is the way we use the assessment that includes it in either one of the labels. However, if a test is built for collecting information about what the students have learned during a specific instructional period, it best suits summative assessment rather than formative assessment (Popham, 2017).

Summative assessment, unlike formative, is often linked to unintended and harmful effects on both learning and motivation. Research suggests that grades, the common practice in summative assessments, can negatively impact performance, self-confidence, and motivation, especially among low-achieving students. Since grades are a deeply ingrained part of society, efforts should be made to reduce their negative impact, and formative assessment can be an effective strategy to achieve this aim (Andrade & Heritage, 2018).

On the other hand, grades do not qualify as formative feedback. Formative feedback occurs during the learning process, helping students improve, while grades are a summative evaluation of what has already been learned. Unlike feedback, grades do not provide the information students need to bridge the gap between their current knowledge and their goals (Sadler, 1989, as cited in

Andrade & Heritage, 2018). While grades conclude the learning process, feedback encourages continued progress (Andrade & Heritage, 2018).

The Role of Effective Feedback in AfL

It has been collectively agreed that the impact of AfL in the teaching-learning process is positive and that AfL could move learning forward (Boyd et al, 2019). Earlier, Leahy and Wiliam (2012) asserted that AfL is capable of enhancing the results of instruction for students and promoting their learning. For that to happen, AfL should be implemented appropriately. Effective feedback is one of the strategies that can assist teachers in modifying their teaching approaches and help students in moving their learning forward.

It was in the late 1990s and the beginning of the 2000s, that the related research progressed significantly and emphasized the impactful role of feedback in AfL (Gan & Leong, 2019). As cited in Ruiz-Primo (2013), Hattie (1999), after analyzing 180,000 studies involving over 100 variables, ranked feedback as one of the top five most effective strategies for enhancing student learning. The author identified it as a key factor in the success of many other learning improvement methods.

Effective feedback benefits students and teachers. It (a) gives the students an awareness of how they have performed or their current situation, and (b) gives the teachers an estimation of how to help their learners progress toward obtaining the instructional goals (Shermis & Di

Vesta, 2011). Such feedback aims to help both teachers and learners recognize the logic behind the committed mistakes, the reasons for achievement, the possible ways for reducing the mistakes or removing them, and the ways to increase achievement. According to research, even low-achieving students are able to benefit from the advantages of feedback (Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Shermis & Di Vesta, 2011; Sternberg, 2006). Following this, a classroom-based activity is introduced, which aims to demonstrate an overall picture of the stages of feedback implementation.

Classroom-Based Task: Effective Feedback in Action

Whether you are a teacher in training or an experienced educator, choosing to implement formative assessment in your classes will lead you to view instruction in a fundamentally different way than the traditional approach. Formative assessment has the power to truly transform your teaching practices (Popham, 2017). A pivotal aspect of formative assessment is that feedback should be integrated into the overall instructional framework (Gan & Leong, 2019). Hattie and Timperely (2007) conceptualize feedback as “information provided by an agent (e.g., teacher, peer, book, parent, self, experience) regarding aspects of one’s performance or understanding” (p. 81).

Providing effective feedback is a complex skill. Research shows that feedback is most effective when it is specific, timely, and constructive, and it should involve active communication between teachers and students. Classrooms constantly supply teachers with information about what students are learning, understanding, and engaging with. Skilled teachers recognize this information flow and adjust their teaching accordingly to meet students' needs. Likewise, when learners process and act on the feedback they receive, they develop a more reflective approach to learning, which boosts their motivation and resilience and leads to deeper understanding (Boyd et al., 2019).

Following, I will outline seven essential elements of effective feedback, suggested by Boyd et al. (2019), that teachers can integrate into their practice, along with examples from language classrooms to demonstrate their application. According to the authors, effective feedback

- is specific and clear
- is well timed
- is clearly linked to the learning intention
- focuses on the task rather than the learner
- gives prompts at the right levels on how to move learning forward
- offers strategies rather than solutions
- challenges, requires action and is achievable

In this part, I will propose an AfL activity in which feedback is put into practice.

Activity: Writing improvement through feedback

Objective: This activity aims to guide students in improving their writing skills through targeted, actionable feedback.

Instructions:

(A). First Draft Submission: Students prepare a draft of their paragraph or essay.

(B). Peer Review: Before teacher feedback, students exchange essays and provide peer feedback using a checklist provided by the teacher beforehand, including all the required elements for an acceptable piece of writing in line with lesson objectives and teacher and curriculum expectations. The checklist might include text clarity, spelling, paragraph structure, grammar, coherence, etc. However, the focus of a specific lesson is limited to one or two areas. Table 1 below presents several areas, along with guiding questions designed to help students focus on key aspects when reviewing their peers' work.

Table 1: Peer feedback areas in an AfL peer review activity

Area	**Questions**
Introduction	Is the main idea of the text stated clearly in the introduction? Are the main arguments of the text stated clearly in the introduction?
Paragraph structure	Does each paragraph focus on one main idea? Is there a clear topic sentence at the beginning of each paragraph?
Conclusion	Are the main points summarized in the conclusion? Is the main idea stated in a new way?

Clarity of ideas	Is the main idea followed throughout the text? Are the ideas well-organized and reasonably connected?
Supporting evidence	Are there sufficient examples or evidence to support the arguments? Are they relevant and appropriately used?
Vocabulary	Is the vocabulary range used in the text acceptable to the students' level? Are any words used unclearly or improperly?
Sentence variety	Is a variety of sentences (simple, compound, complex) used in the text? Is the length of the sentences appropriate? Are there any confusing or unclear sentences?
Grammar	Is the text correct grammatically? Are various grammatical structures used in the text?
Punctuation	Is punctuation used to make the text clearer and easier to understand? Are correct punctuation marks used in their appropriate places?

Spelling	Is the spelling of each word correct throughout the text?
Overall clarity	Is the text easy to understand? Are all the paragraphs connected to the main idea or the topic?
Strengths	Which part did you like the most? Why?
Areas for improvement	How do you think the writer can make the text stronger?

Note 1: It is neither possible nor recommended to focus on all the components mentioned above in one lesson. Teachers are recommended to focus on one or two areas each time depending on the importance of the mistakes, their frequency, the learning objective, practicality, etc.

Note 2: By getting engaged in such an activity, both feedback givers and receivers will learn from each other.

Note 3: This activity fits both pair-work as well as group-work. Remember that the focus is on one and two areas only. For example, you might ask them to focus on spelling or grammar (only to find and underline the mistakes, **without correcting them**, to give the writer an opportunity to think and reflect on the committed mistake).

(C). Teacher Feedback: Although the previous stage was peer feedback, the teachers can decide to get involved after a few minutes, considering the seven elements of feedback, discussed below:

1. Specific and clear feedback: Teachers are recommended to make their feedback focused on particular aspects of the essay (e.g. clarity of argument, use of evidence) rather than giving vague comments like “good job” or “try harder”.

2. Well-timed feedback: It is the teacher’s decision to address the feedback, particularly when the teacher is engaged immediately after giving time for peer feedback. In this case, the teacher can decide to provide immediate feedback (as soon as they face the mistake) or delayed feedback (if, for instance, the mistake is minor in the teacher’s opinion. In this case, the teacher can delay the feedback for later to see how frequently that mistake appears in other’s writing). Feedback that is given promptly after the draft submission allows students to make improvements while the task is still fresh in their minds. Delayed feedback, on the other hand, prevents interrupting the activity flow.

3. Feedback linked to learning intentions: Feedback refers directly to the learning objectives discussed by the teacher at the start of the task, helping students see how their improvements contribute to achieving these goals. For example, if grammar has been taught in a specific lesson, the task purpose is grammar. In that case, it is recommended to focus on grammatical mistakes or ambiguities and not vocabulary variation, for example.

4. Feedback focuses on the task, not the learner: Feedback targets specific aspects of the work. It is recommended to avoid personal judgments, such as you have done a great job or your skill has improved. Such learner-centered feedback, instead of task-centered feedback, does not offer any opportunities for thinking and reflection. In fact, they don't move learning forward as effective feedback aims. Instead, we can say: I can see that your ideas are reflected clearly in the text, or you have used certain words or structures to express yourself.

5. Feedback provides prompts for next steps: Rather than simply pointing out mistakes only, the feedback includes prompts like, how could you add more evidence to support this claim? What are other words that you could use to express your ideas and guide the student toward improvement? Students should not conceive feedback as punishment. This happens when teachers focus only on students' performance by commenting on students' mistakes and forgetting about the "what's next" part of the feedback.

In such circumstances, students who have no mistakes would receive no feedback. Consequently, students who receive feedback might consider it as more work to do, or simply as punishment. Let's not forget that the ultimate goal of feedback is to move learning forward. To overcome this misunderstanding, teachers should view feedback as a tool for guiding future actions (Wiliam, 2017).

6. Feedback Offers Strategies, Not Solutions: Feedback provides suggestions for how students can improve their writing but leaves room for them to apply these strategies themselves. For example, "You have presented some great ideas such as X and Y! Try to strengthen your conclusion by summarizing your main points clearly". Or "Think about how you can do this in your own words and let me know if you'd like to discuss it further". Here, the teacher makes it clear to the students what they need to do to summarize the main points without expressing what words or structures to use or without suggesting a sample sentence or pattern. The strategy is clear, but it is the student who should reflect on it and decide how to implement it.

7. Achievable Feedback: The feedback provides manageable challenges that encourage progress without overwhelming the student, helping them stay in the learning zone. For example, "Your main idea is expressed clearly! For your next step, try expanding just one example in your essay to add more detail. Once you have done that, we can work on improving your transitions".

(D). Time for Revision: Teachers need to ensure that students are given sufficient class time to address the feedback and revise their essays. They are encouraged to reflect on how their revisions align with the lesson objective(s). Do not forget to give students time to work on the feedback you provided, as time plays a crucial role in enhancing their learning (Wiliam, 2017). This is the critical moment to reap the results of your efforts. Therefore, revision or reflection time should never be overlooked.

Challenges and Solutions in Implementing AfL

Formative assessment is recognized as a valuable approach for enhancing student learning, but it is not exempt from presenting challenges for both teachers and students. These challenges stem from the need to rethink their roles and adapt to new classroom dynamics. Like any educational innovation, formative assessment must be understood within the complex and evolving interactions of various systems (Gan & Leong, 2019).

A well-designed formative assessment requires considerable effort and careful thought from teachers, as well as the gathering of assessment evidence from students. While formative assessment can be challenging for educators and may discourage its use, it plays a crucial role in enhancing student learning. If teachers neglect to implement it, students may miss out on important instructional opportunities. Thus, educators should use formative assessment strategically—not excessively—to foster students' mastery of essential curriculum objectives.

Formative assessment tends to be most effective when teachers utilize it to support their students' mastery of important curriculum objectives. By integrating formative assessment into their teaching strategies, educators can enhance learning outcomes, ensure that students achieve key academic goals (Popham, 2017), and overcome common challenges or minimize their impact. Two of the common challenges are discussed below, and suggestions are provided for overcoming them.

One challenge that teachers might face in implementing AfL is time constraints. To overcome this issue or to reduce its impact, teachers need to make AfL an ingredient of their teaching procedure or lesson plan. This means that when they are planning their lessons and steps to follow, AfL could be incorporated into their lesson plan. It needs to be emphasized that AfL is or should be indeed integrated into teaching rather than being considered a separate or independent stage from teaching. Furthermore, making strategic use of AfL means that teachers need to be selective in what areas they want to focus on, from more important to less important ones.

Another challenge is large classes. In such contexts, besides the above-mentioned suggestions, relying on group work could be practical. For AfL implementation, and particularly for applying feedback as it was in focus in this chapter, teachers' instructions matter. It might take a while for students to get accustomed to it, particularly if such activities are new to them, but it is worth it. When students learn how to implement it, they will find it useful because it engages them actively in the learning process, and they will learn from each other and hopefully grow together. Besides, teachers will receive feedback about their teaching and what needs to be modified, if any. An important point in this regard that needs to be considered is that feedback is a two-way process, occurring both from teachers to students and from students to teachers.

Conclusion

This chapter aimed to demonstrate how teachers can enhance the effectiveness and engagement of their instruction by incorporating Assessment for Learning (AfL) strategies into their practice. In this chapter, the AfL concept was explored, and its significance was discussed based on research findings. Among the principles underpinning AfL, the chapter focused on feedback and strategies for implementing it effectively to move learning forward. The chapter tried to reveal the efficacy of AfL and provide feedback on enhancing and supporting the teaching-learning process. It was also discussed that feedback should prompt thoughtful reflection (Wiliam, 2017). For feedback to be effective, it should guide students toward what to do next, rather than emphasizing only the mistakes or generally stating how well or poorly they performed on the task.

To make it more practical, the chapter was not limited to theoretical discussions. Instead, informed by theories and research findings, practical suggestions were presented in a way that supported teachers in practice. The example proposed in this chapter demonstrated how teachers can employ and integrate AfL in their teaching practices and implement feedback, which is one of the most prominent principles of AfL.

As research showed and was discussed in the chapter, AfL, or formative assessment, is one of the highly effective processes that teachers can implement in their classroom practices. The chapter emphasized that AfL is a process that is preplanned and well thought out and intends to move learning forward. Despite all the benefits and advantages, however, AfL is not without its challenges. Two of the most common challenges, i.e., time constraints and large classes, were discussed and some suggestions were made to overcome them.

Finally, teachers who implement formative assessment are likely to enhance student learning, regardless of the specific methods they use. The key lies in the teacher's ability to gather assessment evidence from students, which enables both the teacher and the students to make informed decisions about how to modify their approaches. As long as this evidence-driven focus is maintained, formative assessment proves to be effective in fostering learning (Popham, 2017).

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Combining Drama Activities and AI tools in the EFL Classroom

Marija Stevkovska

Introduction

The omnipresence of Artificial Intelligence has given rise to the increased usage of AI tools in educational technology. Language educators are cautiously approaching the AI hype in view of its effectiveness on language learning alongside more conventional teaching techniques. Drama activities have long been used in the EFL classroom because of their dynamic, engaging and interactive nature. Techniques such as role-plays, frozen or still image, and improvisations increase task authenticity and ultimately foster real-language use. Additionally, they help students learn or practice vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation in a creative and stimulating manner. This chapter aims to explore the integration of AI tools and drama activities in the EFL classroom by focusing on how their combination can facilitate lesson planning and the language learning process. The benefits of drama and AI tools are discussed from both teachers' and students' perspectives.

The chapter also discusses various AI-powered tools that can support teachers during the lesson planning phase. Examples of practical applications of such tools are provided to showcase how teachers can benefit from them and combine them with drama-based activities. In this way, the chapter presents a framework for effective use of AI tools while planning drama-based EFL classes.

Drama Activities

Communication does not depend on words only. It is commonly believed that body language and facial expressions are equally important in human interaction. According to Mehrabian's 7-38-55 Communication Model, merely 7% of spoken communication relies on the words we utter. A significant 38% is through our tone of voice, while the remaining 55% of human interaction takes place through body language (Mehrabian, 1972). Transferring this to second language acquisition means adoption of teaching techniques that promote a combination of movement and speech. The multimodal nature of drama performance promotes kinesthetic learning. Teaching English through drama has long been used as a structured approach to develop students' English language skills. It is a learner-centred approach as it can only operate through active cooperation with the other students (Fleming, 2006). The most common drama activities are role-plays, improvisations, still images/frozen image building, mimes, simulations, and scriptwriting. According to Maley and Duff (2005) there are numerous advantages of utilizing drama activities in language classes, as listed below:

- spontaneity, which leads to integration of language skills in a natural way
- integration of both verbal and non-verbal types of communication
- activation of cognitive and affective domains
- language contextualization with an emphasis on meaning rather than form
- focus on whole-person learning and multi-sensory learning, thus catering to learner differences.
- development of students' self-esteem and their confidence
- fostering and sustaining motivation for learning
- transfer of responsibility for learning from teacher to learners
- stimulation of creative thinking and imagination
- a positive effect on classroom dynamics
- an enjoyable experience
- low-resource

It is important for teachers to make their students aware of the fact that although drama activities are fun and resemble a game, these activities have clear language aims. This should ultimately help students take active participation and understand what is expected of them. (British Council, 2008/2009, p. 2). From a teacher's point of view, implementing drama activities in the classroom is practical and cost-effective. Therefore, such activities should be used as often as possible. With the advent of AI tools, preparation of lesson materials has never been easier. The combination of low resources and instant preparation of classroom handouts renders drama activities a perfect tool for EFL teachers.

The Usage of AI Tools for Preparing Lesson Materials

Modern education is following recent trends in information technology that aim to increase teaching and learning effectiveness. Latest advancements in artificial intelligence include rapid development of AI-powered tools that can be used in the EFL classroom. Current research is focused on the debate on the benefits and drawbacks of AI tools in education (Bocianu, 2024; González Tigrero, 2024; Milinković & Vuleta, 2024). The plethora of advantages include personalized and adaptive learning, and automated tasks (Tuliakova & Bereshchuk; 2024, Kristina et al., 2023; Baker, 2021). On the other hand, AI implementation into education needs to be carefully examined due to issues such as bias, overreliance on technology, privacy, and ethical considerations (Bobro, 2024; Eliott, 2023).

In this chapter, AI tools are discussed from a teacher's perspective, i.e. how they can be used to prepare lesson materials for drama activities in the language classroom. The greatest advantage for educators is that AI tools are time-saving and affordable. The most widely used AI tool, both by teachers and students, is ChatGPT, which was released on November 30, 2022 (OpenAI, 2024). When using drama activities, ChatGPT can provide teachers with ideas for suitable drama activities to match students' levels and lesson objectives. Furthermore, it can be a valuable tool for developing role-play scenarios, improvisation prompts, dialogue scripts, character profiles, drama warm-up activities, storytelling exercises, or designing rubrics for assessment of students' performances during drama activities. Nevertheless, teachers ought to be cautious about the use of AI tools. Prior to using AI-generated content with their EFL learners, educators need to review and, if necessary, modify the activities to avoid any bias or false information. AI tools should be considered as technical support for busy teachers. Yet, they cannot and should not replace teachers and the contextual nuances and subtlety of the human relations with their students.

A Practical Example of Combining AI Tools and Drama Techniques

Frozen Image Technique

'Frozen Image' is a particular drama technique discussed in this chapter. Several students are provided with role-play cards, and they stand in a certain position to capture a moment in time, creating a 'frozen image' or a 'still picture' of a scenario, as shown in image 1 below.

Image 1: Frozen image where students are frozen

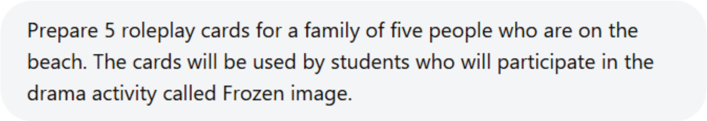
They later interact with the rest of the class who ‘unfreeze’ them by tapping them on their shoulder or snapping with their fingers, and ask questions related to a certain topic, a lexical set, or a target grammar unit.

Image 2: Frozen image where students are unfrozen

The activity encourages students to explore body language and contextual vocabulary, which contribute to a deeper understanding of verbal communication in general. It also promotes collaboration, as the participants must work with the other students as a team to create their frozen images. This technique could be implemented very effectively with EFL learners who lack the confidence to communicate in L2. The greatest benefit of this and any other drama activity is that they help students to communicate in English, particularly low proficiency learners (Aldavero, 2008). Therefore, the ‘Frozen Image’ technique is particularly suitable for lower-level students.

The Use of AI Tools

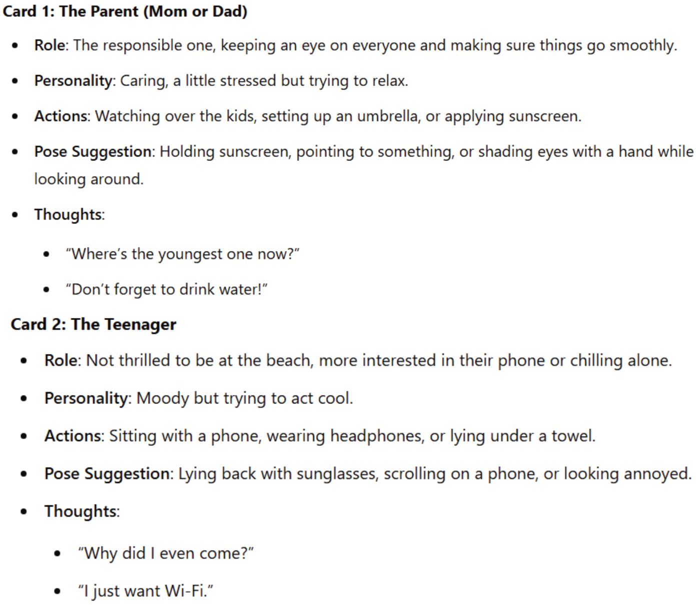
The teacher needs to prepare role-play cards and give them to the students who are participants in the ‘Frozen Image’. AI tools such as ChatGPT or twee.com can be used to prepare such cards. In this case, ChatGPT was used to generate text to be included in the role-play cards. Image 3 shows the prompts that were given to ChatGPT:



Prepare 5 roleplay cards for a family of five people who are on the beach. The cards will be used by students who will participate in the drama activity called Frozen image.

Image 3: Prompts for ChatGPT

The AI tool provided the following role-play cards, as shown in Image 4:

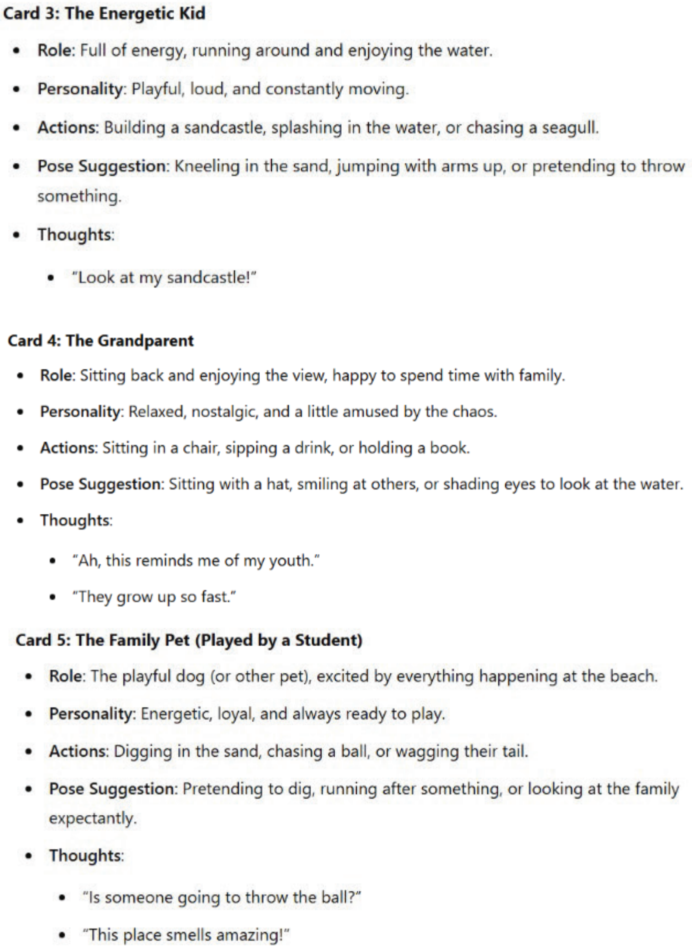


Card 1: The Parent (Mom or Dad)

- **Role**: The responsible one, keeping an eye on everyone and making sure things go smoothly.
- **Personality**: Caring, a little stressed but trying to relax.
- **Actions**: Watching over the kids, setting up an umbrella, or applying sunscreen.
- **Pose Suggestion**: Holding sunscreen, pointing to something, or shading eyes with a hand while looking around.
- **Thoughts**:
  - “Where’s the youngest one now?”
  - “Don’t forget to drink water!”

Card 2: The Teenager

- **Role**: Not thrilled to be at the beach, more interested in their phone or chilling alone.
- **Personality**: Moody but trying to act cool.
- **Actions**: Sitting with a phone, wearing headphones, or lying under a towel.
- **Pose Suggestion**: Lying back with sunglasses, scrolling on a phone, or looking annoyed.
- **Thoughts**:
  - “Why did I even come?”
  - “I just want Wi-Fi.”



Card 3: The Energetic Kid

- **Role**: Full of energy, running around and enjoying the water.
- **Personality**: Playful, loud, and constantly moving.
- **Actions**: Building a sandcastle, splashing in the water, or chasing a seagull.
- **Pose Suggestion**: Kneeling in the sand, jumping with arms up, or pretending to throw something.
- **Thoughts**:
  - "Look at my sandcastle!"

Card 4: The Grandparent

- **Role**: Sitting back and enjoying the view, happy to spend time with family.
- **Personality**: Relaxed, nostalgic, and a little amused by the chaos.
- **Actions**: Sitting in a chair, sipping a drink, or holding a book.
- **Pose Suggestion**: Sitting with a hat, smiling at others, or shading eyes to look at the water.
- **Thoughts**:
  - "Ah, this reminds me of my youth."
  - "They grow up so fast."

Card 5: The Family Pet (Played by a Student)

- **Role**: The playful dog (or other pet), excited by everything happening at the beach.
- **Personality**: Energetic, loyal, and always ready to play.
- **Actions**: Digging in the sand, chasing a ball, or wagging their tail.
- **Pose Suggestion**: Pretending to dig, running after something, or looking at the family expectantly.
- **Thoughts**:
  - "Is someone going to throw the ball?"
  - "This place smells amazing!"

Image 4: Roleplay Cards for a Family Drama Activity: Frozen Image

As Image 4 demonstrates, the language might be too complicated for lower-level students. Therefore, the teacher may simplify the language, or ask the AI tool to do that for him/her, prior to giving the role-play cards to the students.

This activity could be used for practicing present or past tenses (What are you doing right now? / Why are you on your phone? / What did you do before you came to the beach?), conditionals (If you were at home now, what would you be doing?), personality adjectives (Please, describe your mother. / What is it you don't like about your sister?) or clothes vocabulary (What are you wearing? / What is your brother wearing?).

Students' Feedback

The personal experience of the author proves that students enjoy participating in drama activities, including those who are shy or with lower English proficiency. They find it interesting to escape the usual seating arrangement and teacher-student interaction. The activity also provides students with many opportunities for movement around the classroom. Finally, they are motivated to participate because activities such as "Frozen Image' allow them to connect language to the real world.

Conclusion

Drama activities are a valuable resource in the English classroom as they change the classroom dynamics, engage all students, and increase learners' motivation. Nowadays, educators have advanced digital tools they can combine with various drama techniques. These include AI-powered tools that are free and easy to use. AI tools such as ChatGPT or twee.com may be utilized in the process of lesson preparation, particularly for designing lesson materials. Through the practical example shown above, it was demonstrated how EFL teachers can combine the drama activity ‘Frozen Image’ with the AI tool ChatGPT. The tool was used to produce role-play cards for the students, thus saving teachers’ time and providing them with practical ideas on possible scenarios for the ‘Frozen Image’ activity.

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