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MA TEFL/TESL
Module 1

Language Teaching Methodology
Classroom Research & Research Methods
Oct 2008 – Jan 2009

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Teaching grammar with authentic material: Advantages and disadvantages of a deductive and a consciousness-raising approach

Word count: 4,277

excluding footnotes, long quotes, transcripts, lesson materials and references

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1 Introduction

Although grammar teaching approaches go back as far as the sixteenth century, only the last few decades have seen ground-breaking developments resulting in a wide variety of approaches and entailing heated debates about their appropriacy (Brown, 2001). Traditional deductive approaches have ceded ground to the learner-centred Communicative Approach, which, according to Richards and Rodgers (2001), has become widely accepted, as

> "... practitioners from different educational traditions can identify with [communicative grammar], and consequently interpret it in different ways." (Richards and Rodgers, 2001, p.157)

While the benefits of the deductive approach should not be entirely disregarded, the Communicative Approach – though not a "panacea" for all language teaching issues (Long, 2001) –, offers considerably more ways of adapting lessons to the necessities of the classroom and making language learning (and teaching) a pleasurable experience.

Meanwhile a rapidly increasing range of media occasions a growing demand for the use of authentic materials. Notwithstanding the challenges of authentic language, its independent exploration may raise learners' genuine interest and increase their motivation (Nunan, 1999).

In my study of two lessons described in section 4 I have used a deductive and a consciousness-raising approach to teach the form and functions of a grammatical structure through an authentic text. My goals were to motivate learners by acquainting them to authentic language and culture genuinely interesting to them and to determine the merits and drawbacks of the approaches involved.

2 Approaches to teaching grammar

The vast range of approaches and methods – from Grammar Translation and Audiolingualism over Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) to "input hypothesis" (Krashen, 1997, cited in Cook, 2008, p.1 [online]) and the "organic approach" (Nunan, 1999 and 2001) – provides a variegated choice of models for grammar teaching. However, this range seems to be surprisingly restricted in

itself. On the one hand, as the debate between Swan (1985a,b) and Widdowson (1985) demonstrates, many grammar teaching approaches more or less claim exclusivity; on the other hand, Woodward (1996) describes how teachers themselves either tend to cling to long-cherished beliefs or to completely replace them by new ones – hence, "using a true blend of several paradigms may be impossible" (Woodward, 1996, p.8).

2.2 Deductive approaches

Traditional deductive approaches are teacher-centred and use a "building-block" system to present individual grammatical structures independent of context (Nunan, 2001, and Long, 2001). Characteristically, scripted materials are used, and rules are often explained in L1 and practised through pattern drill, rote dialogues, rule-reciting or translation.

The deductive approach addresses cognitive skills, which develop towards abstract thinking around the age of eleven (de Andres, 2003). Its benefits are thus limited to older or more advanced learners familiar with language structure, learners with prior experience of prescriptive grammar or learners of "logical/mathematical" or "spatial" intelligence (Gardner, cited in Richards and Rodgers, 2001, p.116).

A considerable disadvantage of deductive approaches is their disregard of learners' need for meaningful content. While Brown (2001) allows that occasionally a deductive approach may be warranted, Goleman (1995) notes "that the Western civilisation has overemphasised the importance of the rational functions of the mind to the detriment of the non-rational functions: intuition, emotions, feelings" (Goleman, 1995, cited in de Andres, 2003, p.1 [online]).

2.2 Consciousness-raising approaches

The idea of learners' active exploration of language structures has been characterized by the underlying principle of learner autonomy and independence.

For Nunan (2001), this means that learners discover rules from given data and decide for themselves how to apply them. Although he concedes that some

grammatical structures should be taught in a linear way, most structures require a complex process of acquisition and should best be learned in context.

Ellis (2001, p.2 [online]) describes the term "consciousness-raising" in connection with rules as follows:

> ... We don't actually directly try to influence the construction of the complex network ..., because really learners can only do it themselves. We cannot implant rules into that network.
>
> Learners extract from the available information around them the regularities that go into their knowledge system. If that is the case, all that we can do is make them aware of some of these patterns and bits and pieces of language and how they work under the assumption that if you have an awareness of them, then ultimately your pattern detector might function a bit more efficiently.

My study investigates how two fundamentally different approaches may be used largely independently of the teacher's beliefs but with the main focus on learners' needs and abilities as well as on the specific features of the material used.

3 Authentic materials in the classroom

As Swan (1985b, p.85) points out, "authentic material ... gives students a taste of 'real' language in use, and provides them with valid linguistic data for their unconscious acquisition processes to work on."

Nunan (1999, p.79) defines spoken and written authentic texts as

> ...[having] been produced in the course of genuine communication, not specially written for purposes of language teaching. They provide learners with opportunities to experience language as it is used beyond the classroom. Of course there is a great deal of language generated within the classroom itself that is authentic, and this can very often be used for pedagogical purposes.

According to Nunan (1999, p.80) the term "authentic text" covers language samples

> drawn from a wide variety of contexts, including TV and radio broadcasts, conversations, discussions and meetings of all kinds, talks, and announcements [as well as] magazines, stories, printed material and instructions, hotel brochures and airport notices, bank instructions, and a wide range of written messages.

As "text" might be misunderstood as meaning "written language" only, I will substitute it by "material".

Despite learners' increasing needs to deal with authentic materials, scripted materials are still prescribed or preferred in most classrooms, as many teachers criticize the complexity of authentic language as too demanding for most learners.

However, an often disregarded aspect of introducing authentic materials is the pleasure and motivation it might bring to the learners. Working with "the real thing", a genuine piece of the culture underlying the language, might even motivate reluctant learners into overcoming their shyness, aversion or fears with regard to language-learning. As Scrivener (1996, p.85) puts it, "*authentic* is for communication, fluency, real-life, pleasure."

For my study I used a film with real-life discourse, produced for a general audience, a) to supplement cultural information in the textbook, b) to motivate learners into occupying themselves with grammar and c) to give them a pleasurable experience with the English language.

4 A lesson study

4.1 Planning factors

4.1.1 Target group

My target group was a mixed-gender class of twenty-six eighth-graders (ages 13-14) at a rural German *Realschule*[1]. All students were native speakers of German with over three years' textbook instruction in English as first foreign language, about four lessons per week. None had watched a film in L2 before.

I had been teaching the students for three months and found the majority of them to be outgoing, interested in L2 and willing to use it, but they rarely applied any grammar rules and easily relapsed into using L1. Three boys were very fluent, while four of the girls were extremely reluctant or shy and difficult to assess. Most of the students actively contributed in class but were easily distracted and seldom did the regularly assigned homework.

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[1] *Realschule – state school offering a medium level of education in a three-level system; grades 5-10, ages 10-16; school attendance compulsory until age 16*

4.1.2 Material

The (prescribed) textbook unit preceding my study dealt with American sports. As nearly every student was actively involved in a discussion about "boys´" and "girls´" sports, I decided to show them S. Daldry's film *Billy Elliot* (UK, 2000), in which a boy from an English coal-mining town becomes, against all odds, a ballet dancer. Despite the foreseeable challenges detailed below, I expected students' to identify with the main character and become interested in the language and vividly illustrated local culture.

As all speech is Northern English and Scottish dialect with numerous slang expressions, unfamiliar and spoken comparatively fast, I prepared the students with a summary, activated subtitles in L2, and also warned them there would be interruptions for language work. The backdrop to the boy's dancing career is the 1984 coal-miners' strike; both topics being wholly unfamiliar, the students received some preliminary information. An opportunity to explore these topics further was reserved for a project after watching the film.

As watching time alone was 100 minutes, I had to plan several lessons, only two of which would become the object of my study; this and potential technical or organizational flaws required particularly careful planning and flexibility, and I prepared extra tasks to fill in left-over time. The unit is discussed further in section 4.2.

4.1.3 Language structure

During the textbook unit about sports, L1 interference occurred whenever students wanted to express future events. Since the formal L1 future form is usually replaced by the present tense, the students, although familiar with *'will'* + *infinitive*, used the simple present in L2 without communicating the meaning of future. I equally noticed L1 interference with offers or intention, never explicitly introduced by the textbook and also expressed by the present tense in L1. Moreover, students who did use *'will'* never contracted it.

With numerous references to future actions or events as well as offers and intentions, many of them in the contracted form, the film lent itself for treating *'will'* + *infinitive*. To re-introduce the structure and draw attention to its different

functions, I decided on using a deductive approach for teaching the form and its contractions and a consciousness-raising approach for the students' discovery of different uses of it.

4.2 Two lesson plans

Although the study focusses on grammar teaching, the complexity of presenting a film in L2 suggested more goals; therefore the structure with which these particular lessons dealt constituted only a small part of the whole teaching unit.

I divided the teaching unit into six lessons:

- Lesson 1 (45 minutes), before watching the film:

  o Based on film stills: Boxing and ballet – gender-specific sports? (cf. App. 2, BE 1-2)

  o Unfamiliar pronunciation and dialect in the film

  o (Homework assignment) Summary with guideline questions; the coal-miners' strike; list of slang expressions (L2 > L1) (cf. App. 1 & 2, BE 3-5)

- Lesson 2 **(= 'Lesson A', cf. section 4.2.1)**

- Lesson 3 (90 minutes):

  o Cultural issues (standard of living, celebrations, etc.)

  o Active use of the structure introduced in Lesson 2; predicting actions and events in the film

  o Lesson 4 **(= 'Lesson B', cf. section 4.2.2)**

- Lessons 5 and 6 (45 minutes each), after watching the film:

  o Research project about film-related issues

  o Internet research; writing information texts; designing posters

  o Film facts review (cf. App. 2, BE 9-10)

4.2.1 Lesson A: Prescriptive grammar

The lesson plans present the lessons' overall purpose, students' benefit in general and in detail, materials, procedures (including timing) and evaluation (Brown, 2001, pp.149-162).

1 Goal

1. Students will review their knowledge of *'will'* + *infinitive*

2. Students will have fun watching an interesting film in English

2 Objectives

Terminal objectives:

1. Students will review the construction of the future tense

2. Students will distinguish between L1 and L2 use of future forms

3. Students will listen to authentic language and have some insight into a different culture

Enabling objectives:

1. Students will be able to construct the future tense

2. Students will be able to actively use both standard and contracted forms

3. Students will be able to recognize the forms of the future tense and the contracted negative form in unknown spoken texts

4. Students will be partly able to understand authentic spoken language

3 Materials and equipment

Television set and DVD player, remote controls

Billy Elliot DVD

DVD scenes timetable (cf. App. 1)

Worksheet BE 4 (cf. App. 1)

Classroom sets of worksheets BE 6 and BE 7 (cf. App. 1)

4 Procedures

a) Pre-watching activity

Warming up / homework check:

- Ss draw a mind map on the board with keywords from worksheet BE 4 (coal-miners' strike), running to the board freely in a competition to write the most different words.

7

(5 minutes)

b) Watching the film

❖ Ss watch scenes 1-3 of the film; T stops the film before the dialogue given in worksheet BE 6 (scene 3: Billy talks to Mrs W.).

(10 minutes)

c) Presentation of form

- T writes 'The sun <u>comes</u> out' on the board (in L1 also used to express the future).

- T writes 'The sun <u>will come</u> out <u>tomorrow</u>'; points out future meaning (adverb); writes *'will + infinitive'*.

- T writes 'The sun <u>does not come</u> out'.

- Ss guess negative future form; T writes 'The sun <u>will not come</u> out tomorrow'.

- T writes 'The sun <u>won't come</u> out tomorrow'; elicits *'short form'*.

(5-10 min)

d) Construction of form

❖ Ss' handout: Worksheet BE 6 (cf. App. 1)

- Ss fill in the table in the worksheet.

- Ss present results orally; T corrects if necessary.

(5-10 min)

e) Watching the film

- T asks Ss to listen for the form used in the text.

❖ Ss watch the rest of scene 3 and fill in the gap (BE 6, 2.1).

> (Transcript from scene 3)
>
> Mrs W. *(ballet instructor, to piano player)*: "Right, Mr Braithwaite. 'The Sun Will Come Out Tomorrow'. Fat chance."

(5 min)

❖ Break after scene 3.

f) Active use of the form

- Ss work in pairs to discuss and state why Billy will / will not come to the ballet class again, using *'will'* in writing, both positive and negative (worksheet BE 6).

    Example answers:

    "Yes, he will. He will come to the ballet class again because it's better than boxing. / No, he won't. He won't / will not come again because his dad won't / will not allow it."

(5-10 minutes)

g) Whole-class discussion

- Weaker Ss briefly present their written views; T corrects if necessary.

- Stronger Ss discuss briefly.

(5-10 min)

h) Watching the film / Recognizing structure in unknown text

❖ Ss watch scenes 4-7.

- T stops before and after texts given in the worksheet (Billy visits his friend / Mrs W. reads the letter); Ss fill in gaps (worksheet BE 6).

> (Transcript from scene 6)
>
> Billy *(to friend)*: "Won't we get in trouble?"
>
> (Transcript from scene 7)
>
> Billy's mother *(in letter to Billy)*: "But please know that I was always there with you through everything, and I always will be."

(25 min)

❖ Break after scene 7.

- Ss compare results; T corrects if necessary.

(5 min)

i) (With time left:) Post-watching activitiy

- Whole-class discussion: What does Billy's mom mean by, "Always be yourself"?

j) Homework assignment

❖ Ss' handout: Worksheet BE 7 (transcript of film dialogue, part of scene 8: The story of Swan Lake); Ss read BE 7 for information.

4.2.2 Lesson B: Discovering functions

1 Goal

1. Students will discover and communicate different functions of *'will'* + *infinitive*

2. Students will have fun watching an interesting English film

2 Objectives

Terminal objectives:

1. Students will reinforce their knowledge of the future use of *'will'* + *infinitive*

2. Students will find out about the positive contracted form of *'will'* + *infinitive*

3. Students will find out about other functions of *'will'* + *infinitive*

4. Students will become aware of the difference between L1 and L2 use of the other functions of *'will'* + *infinitive*

5. Students will listen to authentic language and have more insights into a different culture

Enabling objectives:

1. Students will use *'will'* + *infinitve* freely to predict actions and event

2. Students will distinguish between the following functions of *'will'* + *infinitive*: future, offer, intention, determination

3. Students will become aware of the frequent use of contractions of *'will'*

4. Students will actively use different functions of *'will'* + *infinitive* in real-life situations

5. Students will be partly able to understand authentic spoken language

3 Materials and equipment

Television set and DVD player, remote controls

Billy Elliot DVD

DVD scenes timetable (cf. App. 1)

Classroom set of worksheet BE 8 (cf. App. 1)

4 Procedures

a) Pre-watching activity

Warming up / homework check:

- Some Ss present written homework: Will Billy get in [to the Royal Ballet School]? Future use of *'will'* + *infinitive.*
- Whole-class discussion (briefly).

(5-10 minutes)

b) Watching the film

❖ Ss watch scene 16.

❖ Break after scene 16.

❖ Ss' handout after scene 16: Worksheet: BE 8 (cf. App. 2)

(15 minutes)

c) Discovering functions

- Ss work in pairs to find *'will'* forms in extracts from scene 16 (BE 8).
- T asks if all sentences express future events; Ss discover different functions (future; probability; offer).

> (Transcripts from scene 16)
>
> Billy: "I'll miss you, Miss."
> Mrs W.: "No, you won't."
> Billy: "I will. Honest."
>
> Billy's brother: "You'll miss the bus."
> Billy: "I'll take it *[the suitcase]*."
> Billy's father: "Come on, I'll take that."
>
> Billy's brother: "I'll miss you!"

- Fast Ss discover (individually or in pairs) more functions of *'will'* forms in extracts from scene 13 (BE 8) (future; offer; intention; determination).

> (Transcripts from scene 13)
>
> Mrs W. *(to Billy's father)*: "I'll give you the money for the fare."
> Billy's father: "I'll handle this myself."
>
> Billy's brother (to his father): "We'll find him some money.
> We'll find it for him."

 (10-15 minutes)

- Ss present results orally (L1 allowed for Ss' explanations).

 (5-10 minutes)

d) *Active use of functions*

- Ss invent a similar situation in groups of 3-4 (including at least one stronger S), write up a minidialogue about everyday school-life.
- Presentation by role-play.

(20-25 minutes)

e) *(With time left:) Whole-class discussion*

- Ss discuss: Will Billy become a star? (future use of *'will'* + *infinitive*)

f) *Watching the film*

❖ Ss watch scenes 17-18 (end).

(10 minutes)

g) *Homework assignment*

Ss think about a film-related topic suitable for a project.

(5 minutes for T's explanation)

4.3 Classroom report

The classroom report establishes the main goals of the lessons, what was actually learned and what procedures were used, and it deals with problems and effectiveness, discussing possible changes (Richards and Lockhart, 1996, p.10).

4.3.1 Lesson report A

1 Goals and objectives

Although the main lesson goal was reviewing the future tense, a few students treated the form as new; however, this aspect was covered by the presentation procedure. The students learned to express the future, both in formal and informal language, by a form other than the simple present. All students actively used the forms to express ideas in standardized sentences; some used them more freely. Most students recognized standard and contracted forms in authentic speech.

The students' unexpected concentration and absolute silence during the watching phases and their comments after the lesson proved that the topic interested them and that it was indeed a pleasurable experience.

2 Teaching procedures

Although this lesson was designed along the lines of a deductive approach, I compromised with regard to some details. Apart from the authentic material itself and the student-made mind map, the listening tasks and the class discussion did not belong to the range of procedures suggested for deductive approaches. I saw the mind map as lexical preparation which did not concern the structure, and the listening tasks offered themselves through the material. The brief discussion was a natural extension of the standardized-sentences task and an opportunity to comment on the film.

However, the grammatical form was presented on the board, practiced as a pattern drill by filling in a table, and produced and reinforced by making standardized sentences. All errors were teacher-corrected (except during the discussion phase).

With no time left, the optional discussion at the end of the lesson was omitted.

3 Problems

Although the students had learned the terms *'tense'*, *'present'*, *'future'* and *'infinitive'* earlier, these were unfamiliar. Hinting to the nearly identical L1 terms failed for the same reason; to solve the problem quickly, I explained in L1.

With such a large group, sitting around one small television set was unsatisfactory, especially because I relied on the L2 subtitles to support weaker students, but the school's new, state-of-the-art beamers are reserved to "special events".

Seated in haphazardous order, some students refused to pair up with their neighbours during the production procedure. To avoid commotion or a lengthy discussion, I let them work individually.

After the lesson some students complained that the subtitles disappeared too quickly. I explained in L1 (as I had done before the film) that they were not expected to understand everything and suggested concentrating more on voices, mimics, and gestures.

4 Effectiveness

Although the students filled in the patterns in the table successfully, I could not ascertain their ability to repeat this in other contexts or to actually use the form in discourse without relapsing into the simple present. The (mostly correct) production of standardized sentences, including the negative contraction, seemed to prove that the students had mastered the form but again did not warrant its use in free speech, as pointed out by Nunan (1999, p.43). During the brief discussion only the orally stronger students spoke, as expected, using the forms appropriately and (mostly) correctly.

The following listening task seemed too easy for most students – using their knowledge from the tasks before, they had already filled in the gaps before the scenes started; so its effectiveness has to be questioned.

5 Possible changes

- In another group, under similar circumstances, I would merge the presentation on the board and the table in the worksheet into one task. Introducing it to this extent seemed redundant for a review.

- I would also forgo the ineffective listening task.

- I would allocate more time to the discussion part, trying to include weaker students, perhaps by asking standardized questions.

- The optional post-watching discussion would become a set lesson part – group work with subsequent whole-class discussion – as the topic might incite even weaker students to talk.

- Given more time, I would not interrupt the film for listening tasks but replay certain parts after a scene, for better understanding and enjoyment of the film.

4.3.2 Lesson report B

1 Goals and objectives

The students reinforced their use of *'will' + and infinitive* by talking freely about future events, using the form correctly most of the time.

They became aware of different functions of the structure, although not by independent discovery. A few students found out the "offer" use of the form – others then pointed out the difference to L1 –, but no further functions were discovered, although L1 was allowed for clarification. On explanation, first in L2, then in L1, it emerged that all students lacked confidence because "there was no rule" to follow, and because the concept of different uses confused many.

Surprisingly, the students successfully used the structure in real-life role-play – presumably on intuition. They adapted the functions to every-day school life with wit and imagination and, unawares, added others:

> (Transcripts from Ss' role-play)
>
> (Promise / Future)
> Boy *(to girl, during break)*: "Oh, my Wiebke, I'll love you forever!"
> Wiebke *(drily)*: "Forever? No, you won't, next week you will love Carina."
> Boy *(with utter conviction)*: "I will. Honest."
> *(The Ss took the last line from the film transcript.*
> *Unfortunately, most Ss missed the point of it in this context.)*
>
> (Offer / intention)
> 1st girl *(to 2nd girl, on the bus)*: "F***ing hell, I have forgotten my homework."
> 2nd girl: "I'll give you my homework, if you like."
> 1st girl: "OK, thanks, give me your exercise-book, I'll copy it."
> *(The Ss took the swear word from the list of slang expressions received before the film.)*

(Offer / prohibition / order)
1st boy *(to teacher, outside the classroom)*: "Hello, Ms S. How are you, Ms S.? I'll carry your bag for you."
2nd boy *(at the door)*: Good morning, Ms S. I'll open the door for you."
3rd boy *(inside the classroom)*: "And I'll clean the board for you, OK?"
4th boy *(as Ms S.)*: "No, you won't. You will write a class-test."

Interestingly, positive contraction was used only with the 1st person, despite the 2nd- and 3rd-person examples in the film transcripts.

Although a few were reluctant to play, most students obviously enjoyed this very much. They asked to see the film again or to work similarly with another film.

2 Teaching procedures

The design of this lesson along the lines of a more consciousness-raising approach involved using motivating, authentic material; free discussion of a topic of genuine interest, uncorrected by the teacher; students' independent exploration of functions with discussion in pairs; and active, small-group use of the structure in role-play of real-life situations.

Allowing the students to use L1 did not fit into the range of consciousness-raising procedures, but foreseeing that explaining the different uses of the structure might exceed the students' abilities in L2, I decided to let them use L1.

3 Problems

As described in 'Goals', the concept of different uses overtaxed the students, who before my arrival had been taught grammar only in a strictly deductive way and depended on clear structures and rules. Nevertheless, acquisition of the functions did occur, if intuitively, as the subsequent role-play showed.

A problem concerning group work was that in some groups only the stronger students actively worked – the weaker ones did not contribute.

Time management was an issue arising from the optional discussion before the last film scene; with most of the students involved and talking in L2, I was reluctant to interrupt it, which meant either postponing the last scene to another day or forgoing the precious 20-minute break. Fortunately the students voted for the latter option, unanimously.

4 Effectiveness

Even if the discovery task did not evolve as planned and only few students comprehended the concept of functions, most of them developed, through the film scenes and the role-play, a feeling for the use of the structure in different situations, as described by Ellis (2001). With communication in mind, the tasks had the desired effect: the students communicated different *'will'* functions fluently.

Although the students did discover the positive contracted form, as was shown in the role-play, it was not wholly adopted and will need reviewing.

The class discussions required the students to use the structure as future again, which most did fluently and accurately. However, it is unclear to what extent this was due to the activities in Lesson A and B alone.

5 Possible changes

- Instead of discovering functions in the film dialogues, students would simply use the transcripts as basis for their role-plays. Afterwards they should discuss whether a dialogue referred to the future or not; clarification of other uses (if any) would depend on student input.

- I would not insist on equal distribution of stronger and weaker students in groups.

- I would allocate more time to the second discussion by shortening the discovery task (as described) and assigning the homework in writing.

- The students would be told that their seating order must be suitable for pairwork.

5 Merits and drawbacks

One big disadvantage in using a film for teaching, apart from language complexity, is its length, which raises numerous organizatorial issues. (In this case it was only feasible thanks to my colleagues who kindly cooperated by swapping periods.) Moreover, unlike a written text, a film cannot be "skimmed" or repeatedly "scanned". Thus the greatest challenges in planning the lessons were a) finding suitable extracts on which the two approaches would be based

and b) timing – i.e., adapting the lessons to the film in such a way as to avoid unnecessary interruptions or replays.

Since one authentic text was to be used for both lessons, implementing a deductive approach was only possible as a sequence of procedures embedded in one lesson. On the one hand, presenting the form and drilling it proved to be suitable for reviewing a familiar form: students overwhelmed by the language complexity seemed to be relieved at the sight of "orderly" grammar within their range of knowledge, and looking out for familiar forms motivated them to continue. On the other hand, a more intensive treatment might have dampened the students' general enthusiasm.

Exploiting the film for a consciousness-raising approach was certainly easier. Discussion, listening to spoken language and exploring authentic language for function offered themselves through the material, meeting the students' interest in the story and in the cultural background. Using the functions from the film in real-life situations involved the students' daily experiences. This approach was also better suited to prepare post-watching exploration by a project. However, for students reluctant to work independently and wanting guidance group work would be important, provided that weaker group members are not demoralized or lulled into inactivity by the performance of stronger ones.

6 Conclusion

Of course, watching an entire film cannot be part of the everyday lesson plan and should certainly remain a "special" in the classroom. Nevertheless, a film with a story suited to learners' interests offers a wonderful opportunity to motivate learners' for L2, while providing a vast source of procedures for different approaches.

While no generalization can be made on the grounds of this study, I was nevertheless able to observe how the use of authentic material, despite its challenges, motivated these young learners and how they acquired language in passing that they might otherwise have considered "boring grammar".

The combination of two approaches allowed a differentiated treatment of the structure: the deductive approach, despite its limitations within the use of the authentic material, proved to be a suitable instrument for reviewing the

known form of a structure, whereas the consciousness-raising approach made the students aware of different functions of it and was generally better suited to exploit the possibilities of the material.

This result may serve to support recent findings: a single approach cannot take into account all variables of language learning. Richards and Rodgers (2001) argue how necessary it is "to learn how to use different approaches and methods and understand when they might be useful" (Richards and Rodgers, 2001, p.250), and Nunan (2001, p. 198) convincingly points out that

> In seeking to explore alternative ways of achieving our pedagogical goals, it is important not to overstate the case for one viewpoint rather than another, or to discount factors such as cognitive style, learning strategy preferences, prior learning experiences, and the cultural contexts in which the language is being taught and learnt. However, while there are some grammatical structures that may be acquired in a linear way, it seems clear from a rapidly growing body of research that the majority of structures are acquired in complex, non-linear ways.

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Appendix

Appendix 1: Lesson materials (used for lessons A and B)*

Worksheets mentioned in sections 4.2.1 and 4.2.2

*All materials have been resized to document format.

BILLY ELLIOT

DVD Scenes

Scene	Title	Time
1	Main Titles	0.00.00
2	A Disgrace to the Gloves	0.06.04
3	The Ballet Class	0.08.06
4	To Be a Dancer	0.13.57
5	Dad Finds Out	0.22.04
6	Mrs Wilkinson's Offer	0.32.09
7	Private Lessons	0.36.44
8	A Ghost Story	0.46.10
9	Tony's Arrest	0.52.07
10	The Chance to Dance	0.55.51
11	Christmas	1.01.25
12	A Dance of Defiance	1.04.47
13	Dad's Decision	1.08.39
14	The Audition	1.17.16
15	The Interview	1.23.02
16	The Letter	1.27.02
17	Billy's Big Night	1.37.44
18	End Titles	1.40.30
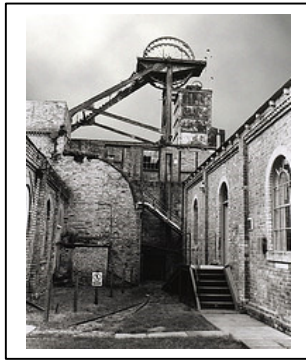
BILLY ELLIOT (BE 4)
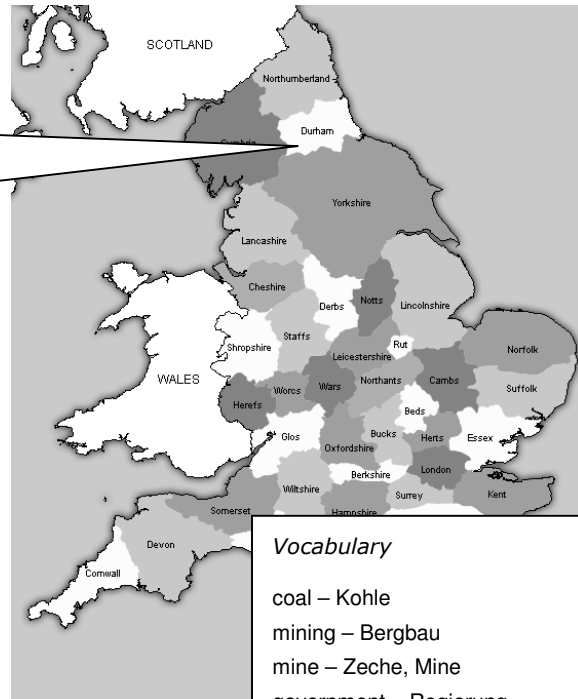
in Durham County

Many of the coal <u>mines</u> in England got money from the <u>government</u>. In the 1980s, the government wanted to stop paying for the mines so that many mines in Durham County would be closed and people would lose their jobs.

In 1984, the <u>leaders</u> of the <u>miners</u>' <u>trade union</u> called the miners to go on <u>strike</u> so that the mines would not be closed. <u>Strikers</u> did not work but they did not get any money either. It was very hard for their families. That's why some of the miners became <u>strikebreakers</u>. They went on working and getting money.

The strikers were very angry with the strikebreakers and called them "<u>scabs</u>". They formed a "<u>picket line</u>" and tried to stop the "scabs" from going to work. The strikebreakers were taken to work by special buses with <u>wire netting</u> on the windows for <u>protection</u>. The police were there to stop the strikers from hurting the strikebreakers. There were many <u>bloody</u> fights between strikers and police officers.

Vocabulary

coal – Kohle
mining – Bergbau
mine – Zeche, Mine
government – Regierung
leader – Anführer
miner – Bergarbeiter
trade union – Gewerkschaft
strike – Streik
striker – Streikender
strikebreaker - Streikbrecher
scab – *Schimpfwort:* Streikbrecher
picket line – Streikbrecherposten
wire netting – Drahtgitter
protection – Schutz
bloody – blutig
Prime Minister – Premierminister
enemy – Feind
within – von innen, im Inneren
not even – nicht einmal
to cave in – einbrechen, nachgeben

Margaret 'Maggie' Thatcher, the British <u>Prime Minister</u>, called the miners' trade unions "the <u>enemy within</u>". Because too many miners did <u>not even</u> have enough food anymore, the unions <u>caved in</u> and the strike was lost in 1985. Many mines were closed after that and many people lost their jobs.

III

'WILL' FUTURE

BILLY ELLIOT
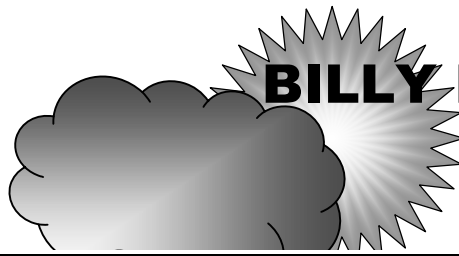
BE
6

sun / come out / tomorrow

1 Fill in the table.

Statement	The sun _____ _____ tomorrow.	*'will'* + *infinitive*
Negative statement	The sun _____ <u>not</u> _____ tomorrow.	_____ + *'not'* + _____
Neg. statement (short form)	The sun _____ _____ tomorrow.	_____ + _____
Question	_____ the sun _____ tomorrow?	_____ + _____
Negative question	_____ the sun <u>not</u> _____ tomorrow?	_____ + *'not'* + _____
Neg. question (short form)	_____ the sun _____ tomorrow?	_____ + _____
Short answer	Yes, it _____.	_____
Neg. short answer	No, it _____ <u>not</u>.	_____ + *'not'*
Neg. short answer (short f.)	No, it _____.	_____

2 Watch the film scenes.
2.1 Fill in the form that you hear.

Scene 3:   **Mrs Wilkinson** *(to Mr Braithwaite):*

"Right, Mr Braithwaite. *The Sun _____ Tomorrow.*"

After scene 3:
2.2 Work in pairs. Do you think Billy will come to the ballet class again? Why? / Why not?

(a) Yes, he _____.

He _____ to the ballet class again because _____

_____.

(b) No, he _____.

He _____ to the ballet class again because _____

_____.

2.3 Fill in the forms that you hear.

Scene 6:   **Billy** *(to Michael):*

"_____ we _____ in trouble?"

Scene 7:   **Billy's mom** *(to Billy):*

"But please know that I was always there with through everything

and I always _____."

BE 7

Swan Lake

*is a famous ballet music
written by Russian composer
Pyotr I. Tchaikovsky (1840-93)*

In the film *Billy Elliot*, Mrs Wilkinson tells Billy the story of *Swan Lake*.

Billy: So is there a story, then, Miss?

Mrs W.:   Of course. It's about a woman who's captured by an evil magician.

Billy: Sounds crap.

Mrs W.:   And this woman, this beautiful woman, is forced to be a swan,
             except for a few hours every night, when she becomes alive.
             When she becomes real again.
             And then one night she meets this young prince and he falls in love with her.
             And she realizes this is the one thing that will allow her
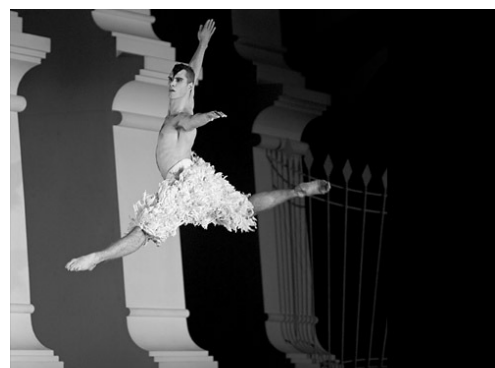   to become a real woman once more.

Billy: So then what happens?

Mrs W.:   He promises to marry her and goes off with
             someone else, of course.

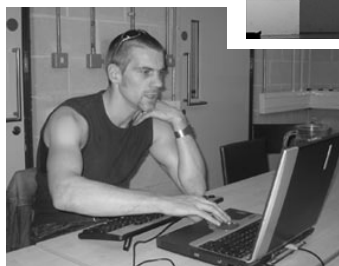*Billy:*   So she has to be swan for good?

Mrs W.:   She dies.

Billy: 'Cause the prince didn't love her?

Adam Cooper *as the adult Billy
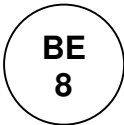Elliot in the final scene (Swan
Lake) of the film...*

...privately...

...and at a live interview chat

V

"I'll Miss You, Miss"   **BILLY ELLIOT** (BE 8)

Scene 16:   ***Use of 'will'***

Billy says goodbye to Mrs Wilkinson

Billy:	I'll miss you, Miss.	*future*
Mrs W.:	No, you won't.	_____
Billy:	I will. Honest.	_____

Billy leaves home

Tony:	You'll miss the bus.	_____
Billy:	I'll take it *[the suitcase]*.	_____
Billy's dad:	Come on, I'll take that.	_____

Billy says goodbye to Michael

Billy's dad:	You'll miss your bus, Billy.	_____

On the bus

Tony *(mute)*:	I'll miss you, Billy.	_____
Tony:	I'll miss you!	_____

Scene 13:   ***Use of 'will'***

Billy's dad comes to see Mrs Wilkinson

Mrs W.:	I'll give you the money for the fare.	_____
Billy's dad:	I'll handle this myself.	_____

Billy's dad becomes a 'scab' to get the money for Billy

Tony:	We'll find him some money.	
	We'll find it for him.	_____

VI

Appendix 2: For readers' interest

Materials used for other lessons of the teaching unit, mentioned in section 4.2*

*All materials have been resized to document format.

Boxing and the *Ballet*

BE 1

1 Which of these sports do you think is more for boys, which is more for girls? Why do you think so?

2 What are the boy's feelings? What is he thinking?

3 What would other people, for example...
the other boys / his coach / his big brother and father
...say to him in this situation?

4 Write a short story for the two pictures (3-4 sentences).

VIII

BE 2

Famous male dancers and celebrated female boxers

Rudolf Nureyev was probably the the most famous ballet dancer of the 20th century. He was born in Russia in 1938, lived in Austria and died inFrance in 1993.

Do you know these world-famous boxers and dancers?

Adam Cooper *1971, Britain
Elena Reid *1981, USA
Fred Astaire 1899-1987, USA
Gene Kelly 1912-1996, USA
Regina Halmich *1976, Germany
Susanna Kentikian *1987, Armenia/Germany
Wayne Sleep *1948, Britain

A

_____

B

_____

C

_____

D

_____

E

_____

F

_____

G

_____

IX

BILLY ELLIOT

It is 1984. Eleven-year-old Billy Elliot lives in a coal mining area in Durham County in North East England. His mother is dead, his father Jackie and big brother Tony work as miners. In his free time, Billy has to look after his senile grandmother.

The coal miners are on strike because the mines are going to be closed down. Billy's dad and Tony are on strike, too. They fight against the police who protect the strikebreakers, miners who go to work because they cannot live without the money.

Billy's dad wants him to go boxing but Billy is not very good at it. Then the ballet school room is used as a soup kitchen for the strikers, and Mrs Wilkinson, the dancing instructor, has to teach the ballet lessons at the boxing hall. Billy watches the girls dance and joins them.

At first he dances secretly, but then his father finds out...

Watch the film looking at these things:

1. How do people in Durham County live?
    - Look at the houses in Billy's area.
    - Look at Billy's house.
    - What is the cost of boxing or ballet lessons?

2. The strike
    - Why are the miners striking?
    - How do the strikers react to the strikebreakers?
    - Look at the fight between the strikers and the police.
    - Why are the mines going to be closed down?

3. Christmas
    - What is Christmas like for the Elliot family?
    - How do the miners celebrate Christmas?

Cast:

Billy Elliot – Jamie Bell

Billy as adult – Adam Cooper

Jackie Elliot – Gary Lewis

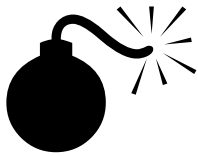*Tony Elliot –* Jamie Draven

Mrs Wilkinson – Julie Walters

Debbie Wilkinson – Nicola Blackwell

Michael Caffrey – Stuart Wells

Directed by

Stephen Daldry

Notes:

BE 5

Slang expressions in BILLY ELLIOT

Billy lives in a coal mining area. It is a rough, hard-working world where people use a lot of slang and swear words (= bad language).

The slang expressions used in the film are listed here so you can understand what people are saying, but ☀ DON'T USE THESE WORDS in writing or when you are talking to people that you don't know very well!

dickhead - Schwachkopf
twat – Arschloch
poof – Schwuchtel, Tunte
sissy – Weichei
wanker – Wichser
shit, shite – Scheiße
you look wicked – du siehst geil aus
the frigging thing – das verdammte Ding
the bloody thing – das verfluchte Ding
the fucking thing – das Scheißding
we are fucked – wir sind am Arsch

fucking hell – verdammte Scheiße
for fuck's sake – verdammte Scheiße nochmal
What the fuck ...? – Was zum Scheiß ...?
to fuck up one's life – sich sein Leben versauen
to piss – pissen
Piss off! – Verpiss dich!
to piss about with s.o. – mit jm. herumhängen
he got pissed – er hat sich volllaufen lassen
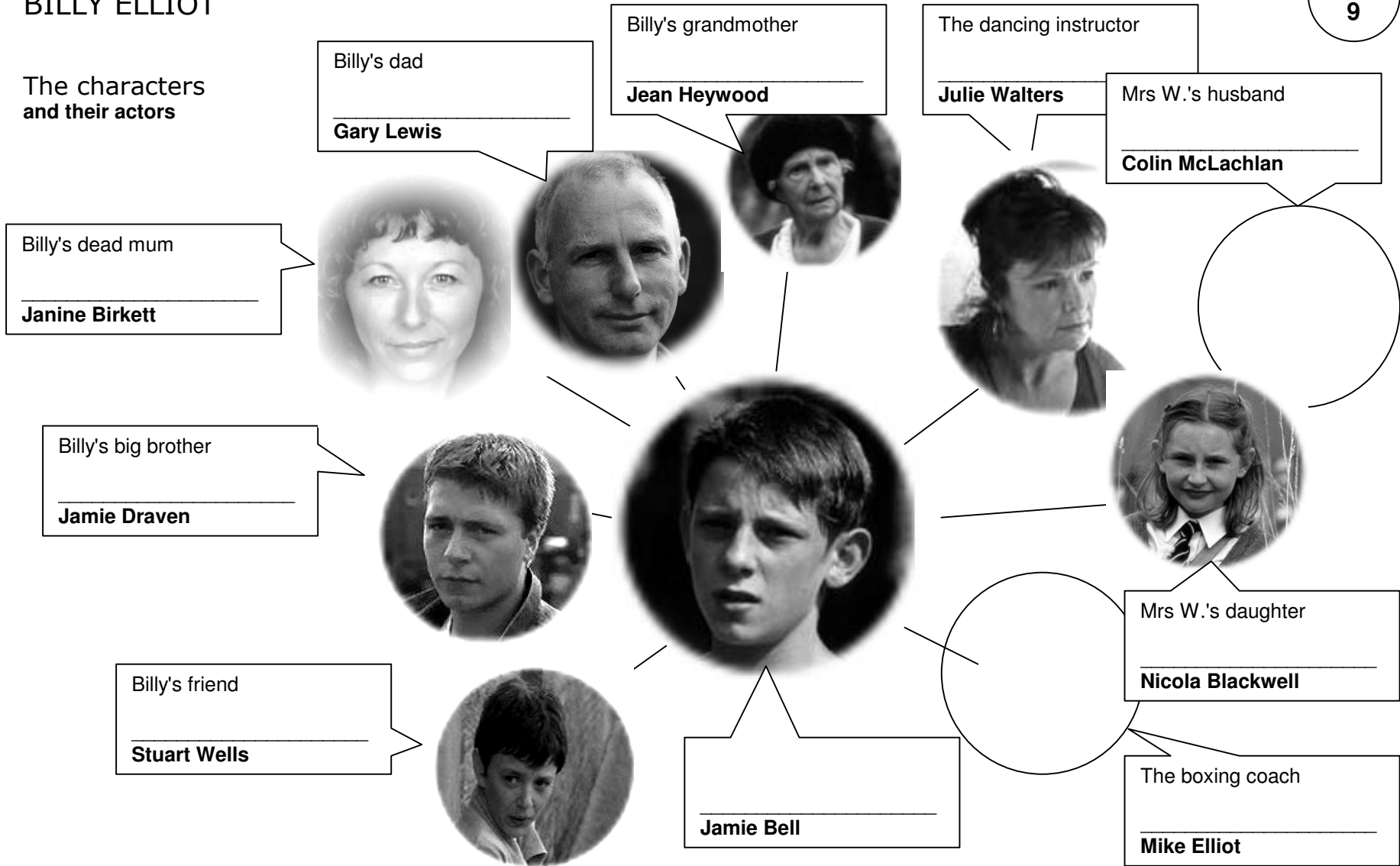he was pissed – er war besoffen
I'm busting my ass for ...! – Ich reiß mir den Arsch auf für ...!

BE 9

BILLY ELLIOT

The characters
and their actors

Billy's dad

_____

Gary Lewis

Billy's grandmother

_____

Jean Heywood

The dancing instructor

_____

Julie Walters

Mrs W.'s husband

_____

Colin McLachlan

Billy's dead mum

_____

Janine Birkett

Billy's big brother

_____

Jamie Draven

Billy's friend

_____

Stuart Wells

Mrs W.'s daughter

_____

Nicola Blackwell

_____

Jamie Bell

The boxing coach

_____

Mike Elliot

XII

Billy Elliot – 20 questions

Answer the questions in <u>complete</u> sentences and write them in your exercise-book.

1. Where does Billy live?
2. What is Billy's "job"?
3. What's his brother's name?
4. What do his dad and his brother do?
5. Why do they have only little money?
6. How much does a boxing lesson cost?
7. Who is Mrs Wilkinson?
8. Why do the children call her "Miss"?
9. Where are the ballet lessons?
10. How does Billy learn to spin? *(turn around very fast in a dance)*
11. What is Mrs Wilkinson's idea of Billy's future?
12. Who is Michael?
13. What does Michael sometimes do?
14. Why doesn't Michael want Billy to go to London?
15. What do Billy and his family wear on Christmas?
16. How do the miners celebrate Christmas?
17. Why does Billy's dad become a "scab"?
18. How does George get the money for Billy's audition? *(Vortanzen)*
19. What does the woman at the Royal Ballet School ask him before he leaves?
20. Why are the miners not happy when Billy's dad tells them that Billy has passed the test?