

Communicative Grammar

“An Introduction to Cognitive Communicative Grammar”
by David Newby



Teach him to think for himself? Oh, my god, teach him rather to think like other people!

‘Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?’
‘That depends a good deal on where you want to get to,’ said the Cat
‘I don’t much care where -’ said Alice.
‘Then it doesn’t matter which way you go,’ said the Cat.
‘- so long as I get *somewhere*,’ Alice added as an explanation.
‘Oh, you’re sure to do that,’ said the Cat, ‘if you only walk long enough.’



David Newby

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An Introduction to Cognitive Communicative Grammar for teachers

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1: What is Pedagogical Grammar?

1.1 Why do pupils learn grammar?

'The overall aim of learning grammar is to be able to express your own ideas in real situations in language that is as correct, meaningful and appropriate as possible. It is the teacher's task to facilitate this grammatical skill with maximum efficiency.'

1.2 Tasks of pedagogical grammar

The focus of this course will be pedagogical grammar (PG), which can be defined as follows:

Pedagogical grammar refers to measures taken by teachers, learners, materials designers, grammarians etc. to facilitate the development of grammatical competence and the skill of using grammar.

The main tasks of pedagogical grammar are the following:

- a) **Formulating grammar rules** to describe grammar based on a suitable theoretical model in ways that are transparent for learners;
→ pedagogical reference grammar, school textbook, lessons etc.
- b) **Selecting & grading** areas of grammar to be presented to the learners and establishing criteria for the sequencing of grammar
→ curriculum, school textbook etc.
- c) **Learning aims and processes:** consider aims of individual exercises or of sequences of teaching in terms of learning processes; how can learning processes be activated and supported?
- d) **Formulating grammatical objectives:** grammatical functions, notions, patterns forms...
- e) **Selecting efficient methodology** to facilitate learning: presentation forms, exercises, activities etc.
→ school textbook, teaching materials etc.
- f) **Testing grammar:** selecting areas of grammar and exercise types which fulfil criteria of testing theory (validity, reliability etc.)
→ Schularbeiten, Matura etc.

1.3 Competences of PS 2 – EPOSTL

It follows from the above definition of PG that a variety of competences listed in the *European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages (EPOSTL)* will be developed in this course. The most important are the following:

EPOSTL	SELF ASSESSMENT
Category	Descriptors
Learning aims & needs	<p style="text-align: right;"><i>Context: Aims and Needs (p16)</i></p> <p>2. I can take account of overall, long-term aims based on needs and expectations. 4. I can take into account the cognitive needs of learners (problem solving, drive for communication, acquiring knowledge etc.). 5. I can take into account the affective needs of learners (sense of achievement, enjoyment etc.).</p>
Grammatical objectives	<p style="text-align: right;"><i>Lesson Planning: Identification of Learning Objectives (p34)</i></p> <p>5. I can decide whether to formulate objectives in terms of skills, topics, situations, linguistic systems (functions, notions, forms etc.).</p>
Grammar rules	<p style="text-align: right;"><i>Methodology: Grammar (p27)</i></p> <p>3. I can deal with questions learners may ask about grammar and, if necessary, refer to appropriate grammar reference books. 4. I can use grammatical metalanguage if and when appropriate to the learners' needs.</p>
Learning processes & Methodology	<p style="text-align: right;"><i>Methodology: Grammar (p27)</i></p> <p>1. I can introduce a grammatical item and help learners to practise it through meaningful contexts and appropriate texts.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Methodology: Grammar (p27)</i></p> <p>2. I can introduce, and help students to deal with, new or unknown items of grammar in a variety of ways (teacher presentation, awareness-raising, discovery etc.).</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Methodology: Grammar (p27)</i></p> <p>5. I can evaluate and select grammatical exercises and activities, which support learning and encourage oral and written communication.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Lesson Planning: Lesson Content (p35)</i></p> <p>5. I can plan activities which link grammar and vocabulary with communication.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Independent Learning: Virtual learning Environments (p49)</i></p> <p>2. I can use various ICT resources (email, Web sites, computer programmes etc.)</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Methodology: Speaking/Spoken Interaction (p22)</i></p> <p>12. I can evaluate and select a range of oral activities to develop accuracy (grammar, word choice etc.).</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Methodology: Writing/Written Interaction (p24)</i></p> <p>12. I can evaluate and select writing activities to consolidate learning (grammar, vocabulary, spelling etc.).</p>
Testing grammar	<p style="text-align: right;"><i>Assessment: Designing Assessment Tools (p52)</i></p> <p>1. I can evaluate and select valid assessment procedures (tests, portfolios, self-assessment etc.) appropriate to learning aims and objectives.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Assessment: Self- and Peer Assessment (p54)</i></p> <p>1. I can help learners to set personal targets and assess their own performance.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Assessment: Error analysis (p57)</i></p> <p>3. I can deal with errors that occur in class in a way which supports learning processes and communication. 4. I can deal with errors that occur in spoken and written language in ways which support learning processes and do not undermine confidence and communication.</p>



1.4 The Austrian school curriculum

AHS-Lehrplan, Unterstufe. Didaktische Grundsätze:

1. Als übergeordnetes Lernziel in allen Fertigkeitsbereichen ist stets die Fähigkeit zur erfolgreichen Kommunikation – die nicht mit fehlerfreier Kommunikation zu verwechseln ist – anzustreben. Somit sind die jeweiligen kommunikativen Anliegen beim Üben von Teilfertigkeiten in den Vordergrund zu stellen.
2. Der Vermittlung von Wortschatz und Grammatik in vielfältig kontextualisierter und vernetzter Form ist größtes Gewicht beizumessen, zB ist Vokabular, wo immer möglich, in Kollokationen, Redewendungen und Phrasen mit impliziter Grammatik einzubetten.
3. Der funktionale Aspekt der Grammatik hat Vorrang gegenüber dem formalen Aspekt.
4. Generell sind die situative Einführung und ein induktives Erschließen grammatischer Sachverhalte *aus kommunikativen Zusammenhängen und Textbeispielen* anzustreben.
5. Grammatische Teilsysteme dürfen sich keineswegs verselbstständigen und wegen ihrer leichteren Überprüfbarkeit indirekt zum eigentlichen Lernziel des Fremdsprachenunterrichts werden.
6. Wo es sinnvoll ist, sind grammatische Strukturen besser ohne Regelformulierung als lexikalische Einheiten zu vermitteln.

1.5. Approaches to Pedagogical Grammar

As Chalker points out, there tends to be a tacit assumption among many students, teachers and pedagogical grammarians that there exists what she calls a single, 'God's truth' view of grammar: 'traditional' ways of categorizing and describing grammar based on formal, rather than semantic, categories (1994: 42). However there are different ways of approaching grammar, based on the theories that may underlie them. We shall be discussing four approaches to grammar:

- Traditional grammar
- Communicative grammar
- Acquisition-based grammar
- Cognitive grammar

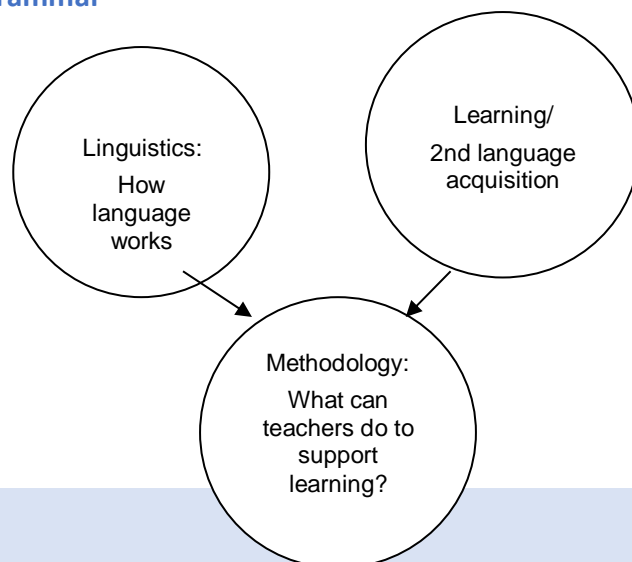
These are summarized in the table on the next page.

Figure 1: Summary of approaches to grammar (based on Newby, 2002)

Label	Some key concepts	View of language	View of learner	View of teacher
Traditional grammar	grammatical structures; deductive learning of rules; accuracy controlled practice; 'PPP'	system of forms which express meanings	student as a knower of language	teacher informs and controls
Communicative grammar	communicative competence; context; fluency; notions & functions; skills; interaction; inductive learning	language as a means of social interaction; communicative events; system of meaning options	student as a user of language	teacher manages contexts for communication
Acquisition-based grammar	naturalistic acquisition; comprehensible input; intake	language as a set of innate mental processes; universal grammar	student as an acquirer of language (as in L1)	teacher provides comprehensible input
Cognitive grammar	learner-centred, cognitive processes, styles and strategies; learning stages awareness-raising; constructivism	language as concept formation within more general knowledge structures, information processing	student as a responsible learner of language	teacher facilitates awareness and supports learning

1.6 Three areas of theory

Figure 2: Areas of theory necessary in pedagogical grammar



2: What is Grammar?

2.1 Definitions of grammar

Grammar can be defined in various ways, as these examples show:

Definition 1. Lock, *Functional English Grammar* (1996: 4)

‘Grammar includes two aspects: (1) the arrangement of words and (2) the internal structure of words.’

Definition 2. Batstone, *Grammar* (1994: 4)

‘At its heart, then, grammar consists of two fundamental ingredients - syntax and morphology - and together they help us to identify grammatical forms which serve to enhance and sharpen the expression of meaning.’

Definition 3. Ur, *Grammar Practice Activities*, (1988: 4)

‘Grammar may be roughly defined as the way a language manipulates and combines words (or bits of words) in order to form longer sentences.’

Definition 4: Ur, *A Course in Language Teaching*, (1996: 87)

‘One possible definition might be: Grammar is a set of rules that define how words (or parts of words) are combined or changed to form acceptable units of meaning within language.’

Definition 5. Leech, Deuchar, Hoogenraad, *English grammar for today*. (1982: 3)

‘We shall use grammar in reference to the mechanisms according to which language works when it is used to communicate with other people. We cannot see this mechanism concretely because it is represented rather abstractly in the human mind. One way of describing this mechanism is a set of rules which allows us to put words together in certain ways, but which do not allow others.’

Definition 6. Batstone, *Grammar* (1994:5)

‘When we talk of grammar as process, we are thinking of the myriad of ways in which it is deployed from moment to moment in communication. Some understanding of grammar as process will be invaluable if we are to help learners to employ grammar effectively in their own grammar use.’

TASK



What do you consider good or bad about these definitions? Try to write your own definition.

2.2 Cognitive+Communicative Grammar (C+C Grammar)

In this course we shall be considering grammar from a ‘**Cognitive+Communicative**’ (C+C) perspective (Newby 2002). The C+C axis refers to two separate but complementary aspects of theoretical analysis: **language description** and **language learning**.

Language description – theory of what grammar is

A C+C approach to language seeks to analyse and describe grammar, on the one hand in terms of the **mental processes** that underlie the use of language (**Cognitive**), and on the other, as an act of communication, as a **dynamic process** in which a speaker’s perceptions of the world are encoded into messages (**Communicative**). By adopting a communicative view, we can approach language from a **discourse-linked, context-based** direction; by adopting a cognitive view, we can approach it from a **psychological, mind-based** direction. It follows from this that any definition of grammar must reflect what the *Common European Framework of Reference* (2001: 9) calls an **action-oriented** conception of language.

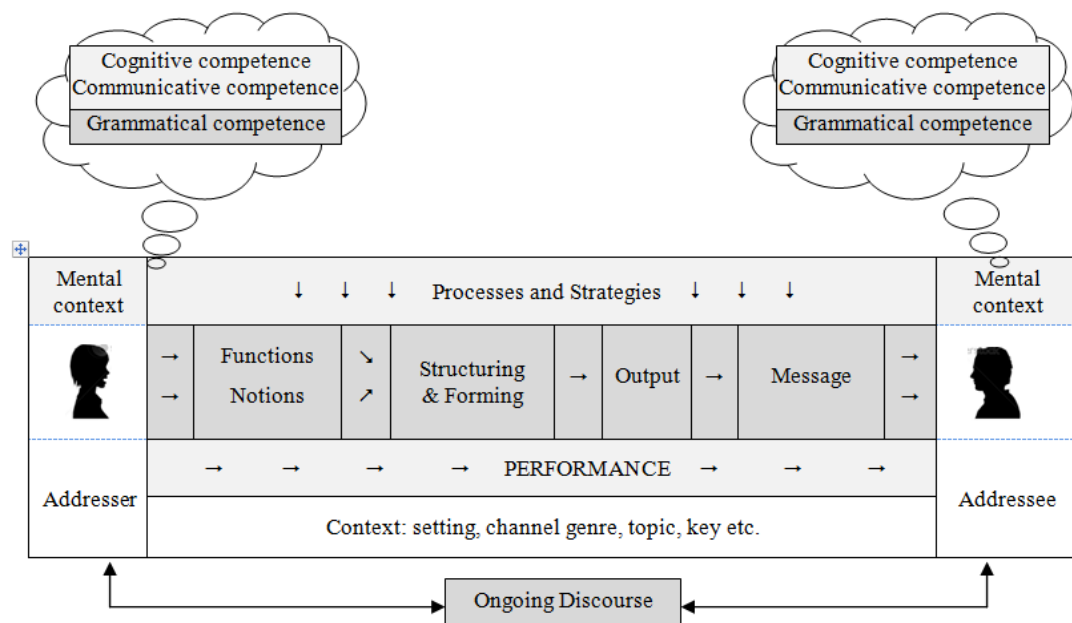
Language Learning – theory of how grammar is learnt

A C+C approach to learning will analyse how new grammatical concepts are **processed** and **stored** in long-term memory (**Cognitive**) and the role played in learning by **language use** (**Communicative**).

2.3 Grammar as a Communicative Event

A C+C view requires us to see grammar as a **process** rather than a **product**. This process can be modelled as follows:

Figure 3: Communication Model – Communicative Event



One advantage of representing language in this way is that it stresses that language must be seen both in terms of **knowledge** and of **use**; the communication model depicts not only **competence** but also **performance**.

Both the Communicative Approach to language teaching and Cognitive Linguistics are very much concerned with seeing language as a means of expressing **meaning into form**. This applies to all kinds of meaning including grammar. Richards and Rodgers list four principles of a Communicative view (2001: 161):

1. Language is a system for the expression of meaning.
2. The primary function of language is for interaction and communication.
3. The structure of language reflects its functional and communicative uses.
4. The primary units of language are not merely its grammatical and structural features, but categories of functional and communicative meaning as exemplified in discourse.

It follows from this that grammar can be seen as a way of **encoding meanings into form**. **Grammatical meaning** will be at the core of our discussions of pedagogical grammar.

2.4 C+C Definition of Grammar

Based on a C+C view, grammar can be defined as follows:

Grammar is:

1. the knowledge of a system of **concepts** (i.e. **notions**) stored in the mind of speakers of a given speech community through which they express *how* they perceive lexical items
→ **semantic competence**
2. the knowledge of the shared system for **forming** the words and morphemes which realize these concepts and for **patterning** them in ways which show their relation to each other
→ **formal competence**
3. the **process** by which speakers apply this knowledge in actual situations to **encode** their perceptions into grammatical form
→ **performance**

3: Grammar - rules and objectives

3.1 Grammar rules

A grammar rule can be defined in *psycholinguistic* terms as a **generalization** or **regularity** stored in the minds of speakers. A rule in a *pedagogical reference grammar* or school textbook can be defined as **metalanguage** used to describe such regularities.

Pedagogical grammar rules must be:

- **valid** or **true** – cannot be de-verified by examples
- **transparent** – understandable by learners
- **systematic** – for example, in the use of terminology
- **economic** – not contain unnecessary information

Remember that grammar rules found in grammar books or textbooks do not come from God but are formulated by *human beings*. We shall find when we analyze rules that grammarians very often make statements that can be *de-verified* and prove *unreliable*.

Grammar rules that are found in most pedagogical grammars and school textbooks fall into the following categories:

- Rules of **meaning** – explaining what grammar means (tenses, articles etc.)
- Rules of **patterning** – for example, how to form a question
- Rules of **forming** – for example, regular and irregular past tense, comparatives (*_er, more*)
- Rules of **relations/agreement** between concepts– such as the third person 's'

It should be added that these **categories are not mutually exclusive**: knowledge of rules of meaning always requires knowledge of rules of form when an utterance is encoded. As far as English is concerned – though not all languages – major problems for learners seem to lie within the first category, ‘rules of meaning’. It will be this area that will be given most attention in this course.

3.2 Ways of setting grammatical objectives

It follows from these four categories that objectives can be specified in various ways as shown in figure 4.

Figure 4: Categories of grammatical objectives

Category of objective	Specific objective	Examples
grammatical function	describing/modification	pretty, with a nice face
general world concepts	expressing location	next to, opposite, over there
grammatical notions (meanings)	arranged activity	I'm playing tennis tonight.
	expressing intention	I'm going to use my new racket.
	making a prediction	I'll probably be back by six.
process	passive	We were beaten 3-0.
	indirect speech	He said he was ill.
communicative function	likes - dislikes	I like swimming
pattern (syntax)	question form	What did he say ?
form (morphology)	irregular past tense	was, had, went, saw, gave
	plural forms	boys, men, ladies, kisses

3.3 Notional Grammar

It emerges from the *meaning* → *form* orientation of the Communication Model (figure 3) that grammatical notions take a central place in grammatical description. As they represent the core of the system of communication, we need rules and terminology (metalanguage) to describe grammatical notions *systematically*. This is the task that **Notional Grammar** (Newby 1981, 1989a, 1991etc.) sets itself.

Notional grammar can be defined as a theoretical framework for analysing and explaining in a *systematic* and *coherent* fashion the **Conceptualization system** underlying grammatical meaning and the **process of grammaticalisation** that speakers employ when encoding utterances. Its dual aims are to provide a specification of grammatical meaning which fulfils the theoretical criteria of linguistic analysis and to package its findings in pedagogically accessible form.

A **(grammatical) notion** (NG) can be defined as a single grammatical concept which is encoded into a form. Together with **lexical notions** speakers' perceptions of the world around them can be encoded into form.

In traditional grammar it is forms of grammar which are usually listed in the contents pages of reference grammars and school textbooks – the '*going to*' future, the present progressive, indefinite articles etc. It is in **formal** terms that teaching objectives are often expressed. In a Notional approach, **teaching objectives** will

be defined in terms of **notions**. To do this we need a fixed and **systematic** set of **terminology** to differentiate between different notions. Examples of Notions can be found in figures 5 and 6. Just as grammatical forms are given labels – present perfect, indefinite article etc. – it is equally important to give Notions labels. You will notice in the figures below that the terms in square brackets indicate a **Notional label**.

Figure 5: Future Notions – examples

Notion	Form
[arranged activity]	- I'm playing tennis tonight.
[expressing intention]	- I'm going to use my new racket.
[interpreting signs]	- It's going to be a tough match.
[making a prediction]	- I'll probably be back by six.
[spontaneous decisions]	- I think I'll change my racket.

Figure 6: Present perfect notions

Notion	Form
[Experience]	- I've never been to England.
[Changes/completion]	- You've had a haircut!
[Duration - state]	- I've been here since yesterday.
[Duration – activity]	- They've been playing tennis for an hour.
[Recentness – state]	- I've been on holiday.
[Recentness – event]	- I've just seen a car accident.
[Recentness – activity]	- I've been watching television.

One big advantage of a Communicative/Notional approach is that it makes it possible for learners to express their grammatical competence in terms of the kind of 'I can' descriptors to be found in the **Common European Framework of Reference**:

- ✓ *I can express an intention using 'going to'.*
- ✓ *I can make predictions about the future using 'will' etc.*
- ✓ *I can talk about my experiences using the present perfect.*

The view that notions should be given prominence in pedagogical grammar derives from the following four hypotheses (Newby, 2003: 275):

1. Notions represent the **primary semantico-grammatical unit** of encoding and decoding. Human beings express and comprehend notions.
2. Notions are **psycholinguistically real**. They represent concepts stored in the 'mental grammaticon' and utilised in the process of grammaticalisation.
3. A notion is an **autonomous semantic concept**. Different notions, even if encoded into the same form, express psychologically separate and distinct grammatical concepts.
4. There is a **systematic relationship** between notion and form. A notion is always encoded into the same form.

The implications of these hypotheses are considerable. On the one hand, 1 and 2 will lead us to give paramount focus to notions both in grammatical description and in pedagogy. This will apply to both the **setting of objectives** and the **formulation of rules**. It follows from 2 and 3 that notions are both identifiable and describable. Explaining grammatical notions will therefore represent the central task of a pedagogical

grammarians. With hypothesis 4, I am stating my belief in the **absolute systematicity** underlying the meaning-form relationship. The implication of this is that grammarians should arrive at **exceptionless rules** which explain the systematic relationship between notion and form. Whilst these hypotheses might at first sight seem somewhat abstract, they are an essential starting point for a coherent pedagogical model. They have been used as guiding principles in my own pedagogical reference grammars (Newby, 1989 etc.). Three pedagogical implications of NG are:

1. **Teaching objectives** should be defined as grammatical **Notions** not as forms.
2. **Rules** must explain **single Notions** of a form (there is no single rule to explain, e.g. the present simple).
3. Notional objectives will also provide a springboard to **communicative methodology**.

NG is part of what can be referred to as '**Speaker grammar**', which differs from '**Sentence Grammar**'. The difference between these approaches can be found in figure 8.

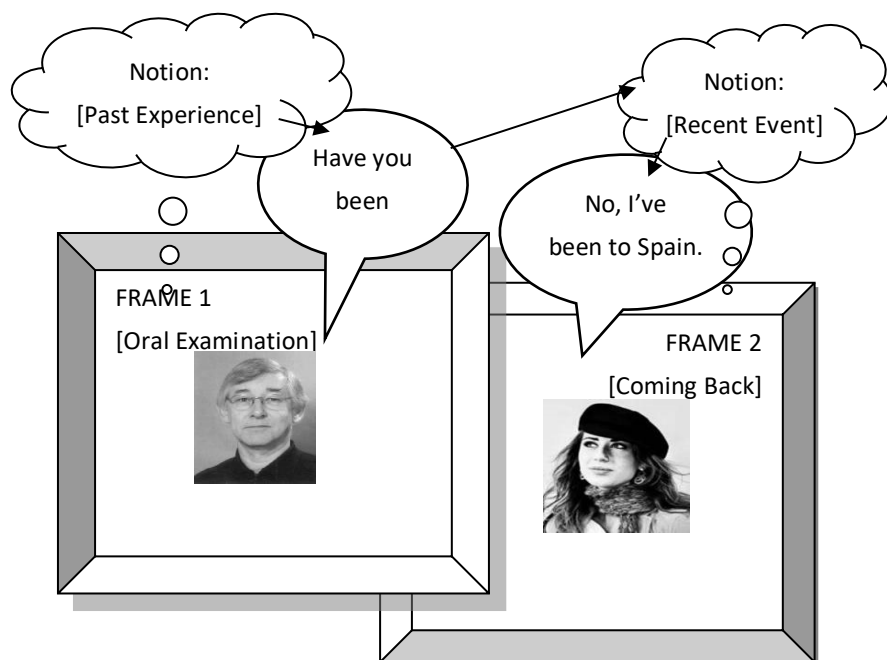
Figure 7: Sentence-grammar vs. speaker-grammar

	Sentence-grammar	Speaker-grammar
<i>RATIONALE</i>	grammar as a product	~ grammar as a process
<i>AIMS OF</i>	what grammar is	~ how grammar works
<i>ANALYSIS</i>	how to form sentences	~ how to encode utterances
OBJECT OF ANALYSIS	relations between language and language	~ relations between speakers and language
	external product	~ internal mental processes
	context unimportant	~ context important
MODE OF ANALYSIS	observing/analysing sentences	~ modelling communication
	'post-mortem' analysis	~ 'dynamic use' analysis
	linguistic	~ psycho-, sociolinguistic
MEANING	observation fallacy	~ psycholinguistic validity
	what grammar <i>can</i> mean	~ what grammar <i>does</i> mean

In addition to the **communicative perspective** emerging from the Communicative Event view of language (figure 3) a process view of grammar will lead us to examine certain categories of what might be described as the speakers' **cognitive competence**; that is to say, schematic structures that help language users to encode and decode language. Language use always takes place not only in a physical, external context but also in a **mental context** of language users. One category of cognitive competence relevant to pedagogical grammar will be considered – that of grammatical frames.

Grammatical frames

Figure 8: Present perfect misunderstanding – grammatical and cognitive categories



A grammatical frame can be described as is a frequently occurring scenario in which specific notions tend to be encoded. The misunderstanding quoted above (figure 5) arises not from our different knowledge of language but from our conflicting **frames**. Within the student's mental context is what can be termed the [Coming back] frame. As a result, there are experiences in her mind that she expects might be talked about. Within this frame it often occurs that speakers refer to 'recentness', and thus encode the Notion of [Recent event] – *I've been to Spain* - or as a [Recent activity] – *I've been feeding the ducks*.

Notional grammar will enable us not only to identify meaning-based objectives and specify meaning-based rules; it will also show how grammatical meaning is embedded in other types of semantic and pragmatic meaning. This can, in turn, be utilised in a pedagogical reference grammar. The extract in figure 9 is based on *Grammar for Communication*, page 89.

3.4 Selection and grading

A Notional approach provides a systematic way of specifying grammar. An example of a Notional analysis of the present progressive is shown in figure 10. Such a list has the following advantages:

- It states **explicitly, systematically and transparently** what grammar means.
- It provides the teacher with an **overview** of all **notions**.
- It helps teachers to be clear about what exactly **they are teaching** pupils.
- It helps teachers to **grade and select** the Notions they wish to teach.

Figure 9: Pedagogical grammar entry: Recent activities

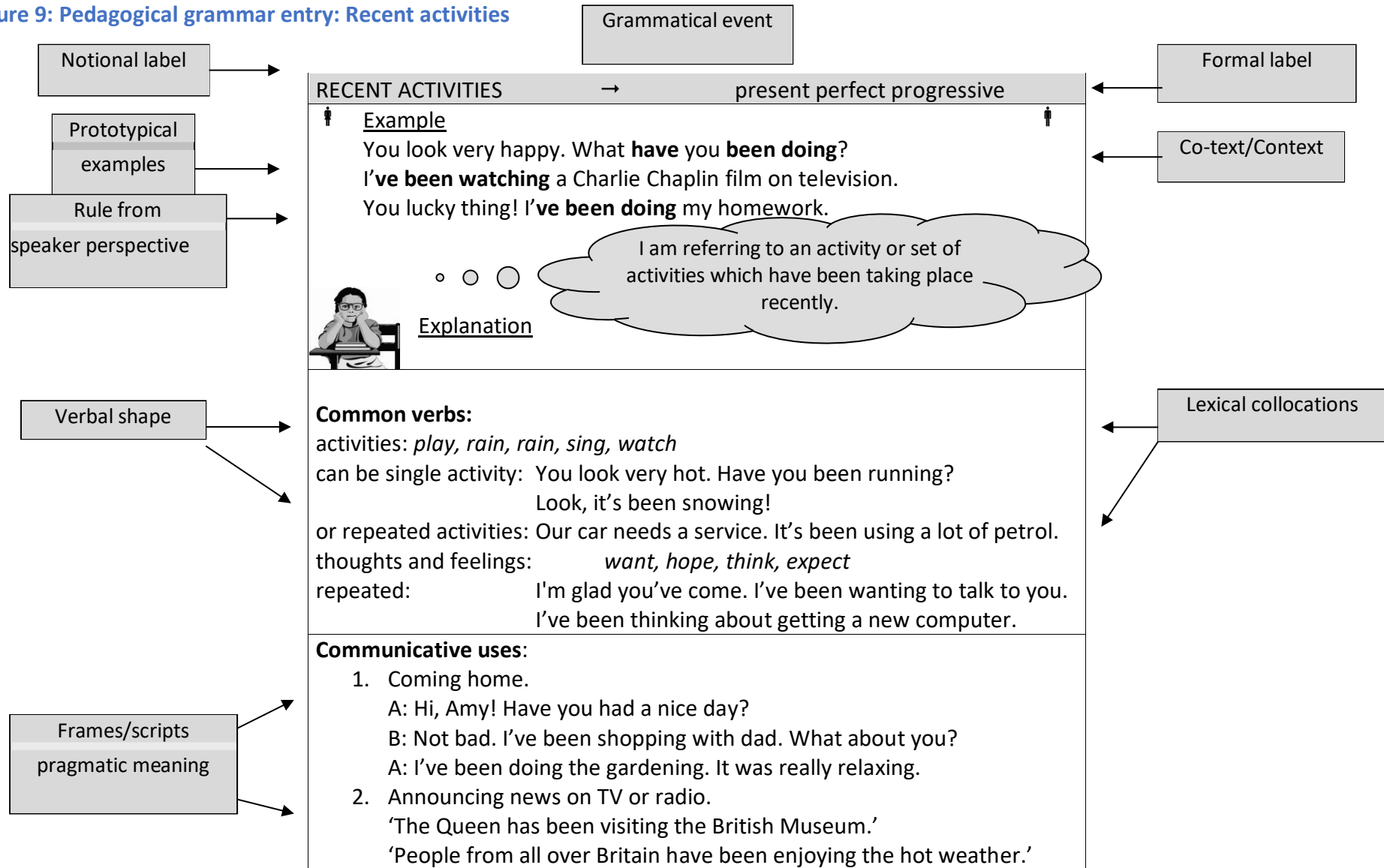


Figure 10: The notions of the present progressive

Notional tag	Examples	Time relevance	Shape of action	Diagram of salient meaning*
1. [Present activity]	Don't interrupt. I'm talking. You're being stupid. I'm having a shower.	now	single activity	Now ~
2. [Current activity]	I'm reading 'War and Peace' at the moment. We're intending to buy a new car at some point. I'm having a lot of headaches at the moment. I'm going jogging every day while I'm on holiday. You're always breaking things!	surrounding now	iterated activity iterated state iterated event	Now ~ ~ ~ ~ - - - -
3. [Changing activity]	Your English is improving. You're playing better every day. More and more people are owning their own houses. I'm gradually realising that grammar can be fun.	changing now	iterated activity iterated state iterated event	Now ~ ~ ~ ~ - - - -
4. [Inception/ termination]	She's going to a new school now. (inception) He's no longer living in Sheffield. (termination) I'm liking it much better now. (inception) She's loving her new job. (inception) (Diagram only shows 'inception')	started/stopped now	iterated activity iterated state iterated event	Now ~ ~ - -
5. [Arranged activity]	We're playing Glasgow Rangers next week. She's getting her new car on Friday. I'm spending my holidays in America.	arranged now	single activity iterated activity single event	Now

(Newby 2003: 337)*

Key: ~ indicates a single activity; ~ ~ an iterated (repeated) activity; - indicates a single state; - - an iterated (repeated) state; events are not depicted in the diagram; arrows shows salient perceptions of a speaker's thoughts;

4: Learning grammar

In the Methodology – Grammar section, one **EPOSTL descriptor** states the following:

- ✓ I can evaluate and select grammatical exercises and activities, which *support learning and encourage oral and written communication*. (p27)

In order to make this assessment we need to focus on various aspects of grammar:

- a. What do we mean by learning?
- b. To what extent do exercises really help learners?
- c. Do grammar exercises lead to actual communicative ability?

The following sections will focus on these three important questions.

4.1 What has to be learnt?

Learning grammar involves not only a **knowledge** of the grammatical **code** but also the ability to **use** grammar. In addition, the grammar that is being learnt must always be seen in terms of a more general **skill development**. We shall discuss three categories:

- a. **Grammatical Knowledge** – an *awareness and understanding* of grammatical rules, seen in the ability to do, for example, fill-in-the-gap exercises
- b. **Grammatical Competence** – the *potential to use* grammar, seen in open-ended grammar exercises, like the ‘*Guess the Question*’ game we played in class.
- c. **Grammatical Performance** – the *skill of using* grammar in real time and in realistic contexts.

One criticism of traditional grammar is that there is a tendency to focus on grammatical knowledge but to give insufficient attention to the other two categories mentioned above.

4.2 Aspects of learning theory

Issues

Discussions, and different theories of grammar learning and teaching, tend to result from how the following questions are answered:

1. To what extent do grammar exercises and activities actually help?
2. What is the role of the teacher in learning?
3. What role does the explicit knowledge of grammar rules play?
4. What kind of language activities and tasks support learning?
5. What role can the learners themselves play in facilitating their own language learning?
6. What role can the learners’ peers play in the language learning process?

Types of knowledge

In characterising the nature of knowledge a distinction is commonly made by psychologists between two types, which relate both to language and to more general types of behaviour. These are **declarative** and **procedural** knowledge, which Anderson (1990: 219) defines as follows: ‘Declarative knowledge refers to *knowledge about* facts and things; procedural knowledge refers to knowledge about *how to perform* various cognitive activities.’ The former is popularly labelled ‘knowing that ...’; the latter, ‘knowing how ...’. Traditional grammar exercises tend to focus on developing, or

testing, declarative knowledge. Communicative methodology attempts to develop both types. Procedural knowledge is important if learners are to use grammar in real contexts.

Explicit and implicit knowledge

Explicit knowledge will be defined as ‘meta-knowledge’; that is to say, knowledge that is expressed through metalanguage, such as a grammar rule or explanation, or through the use of other forms of representation, such as a time chart to help the understanding of tenses. Such explicit meta-knowledge is expressed in the rules of reference grammar books or may be expressed by teachers or learners. **Implicit knowledge** will be defined as sub- or unconscious knowledge. This type is intuitive and not verbalised.

Means of acquiring knowledge – deductive vs. inductive

Deductive processing means that learners first process metalanguage – e.g. a grammatical rule found in a school textbook – before they process language – the new grammatical item and the language in which it is embedded. In deduction-based methodology learners are first presented with a grammatical rule and then given exercises to apply their knowledge of this rule. They thus ‘deduce’ what grammatical item to use. The type of reference-cum-practice grammar book which has grammatical explanations on the left-hand side of the page and exercises on the right relies heavily on the process of deduction being employed.

Inductive processes on the other hand are employed when learners are provided with grammar **exemplars**, be it in a text, dialogue or single sentences, on the basis of which they set up hypotheses as to the nature of rules which underlie the grammar occurring in the exemplars. Acquiring and applying knowledge by deductive means is at the core of many traditional grammar practices; communicative and learner-centred approaches tend to favour induction.

4.3 Cognitive approaches to learning – general hypotheses

Since the 1980s applied linguistics has been strongly influenced by the premise that there are strong similarities between first and second-language acquisition. According to this view, foreign language teaching should replicate as far as possible the conditions under which L1 proceeds so that language will be acquired in a ‘naturalistic’ way. As a result of this view, it was claimed by linguists such as Krashen (1982) that grammar should not be given a conscious focus.

This view of acquisition is challenged, however, by those who take a **Cognitive** approach to learning theory. Cognitive accounts of language learning have gained in importance in recent years. Cognitive theories of learning derive from *cognitive psychology* rather than linguistics. Whilst there is no unified view of what cognitive learning actually entails, certain *general principles* can be identified which underlie most cognitive approaches. Some of these are shown below, together with the main *pedagogical implications*:

Hypotheses and pedagogical implications of a Cognitive view of learning

1. Language learning is **concept learning**; learning is **meaning driven** and **goal directed**.
→ We must define teaching objectives largely in terms of Notions; task-based activities should be used.
2. Language is embedded in a **network of schematic constructs** and **contexts** which facilitate both communication and language learning.
→ **Grammar activities should be embedded in contexts and learners should bring in their own ideas and knowledge**

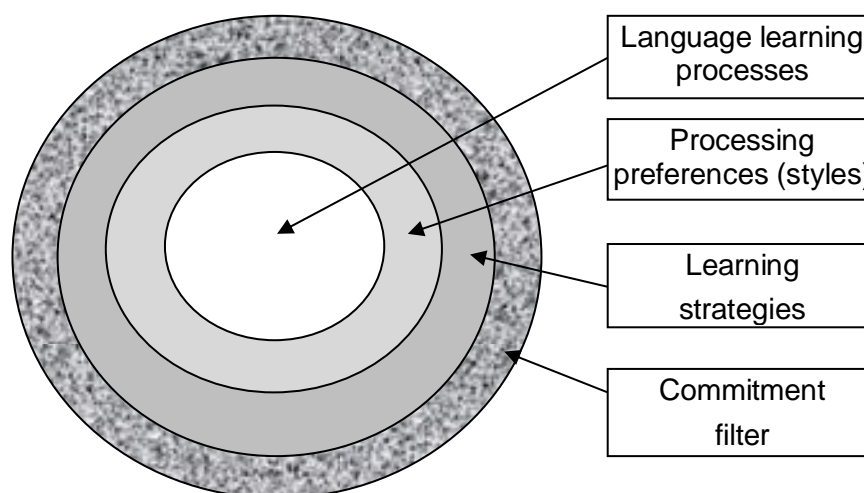
3. Knowledge of language emerges from **language use** (Croft and Cruse, 2004: 1).
→ grammar exercises should focus on competence and performance rather than just knowledge.
4. Learning is an **active and dynamic process** in which individuals make use of a variety of information and strategic modes of processing (O'Malley and Chamot 1990: 217).
→ Teachers must ensure that learners are as mentally active as possible.
5. Learning a language entails a **stagewise progression** from initial awareness and active manipulation of information and learning processes to full automaticity in language use. (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990: 217)
→ When giving learners activities, teachers must take into account learning stages. (see 5.5)

4.4 Processes, styles, strategies, commitment

Four aspects of human cognition are relevant to learning grammar; these are shown in figure 11.

At the heart of cognitive learning theory are the **learning processes** by means of which human beings perceive, categorise, store and remember information. These processes can be subdivided into **processes, styles** and **strategies** – the cognitive triad – plus a more general category of what will be termed the **commitment filter**.

Figure 11: Four cognition-related categories of learning (Newby, in preparation)



These terms will be defined as follows:

Language learning processes	Innate processes by means of which the human mind perceives, categorises, conceptualises and remembers new information.
Processing preferences (styles)	Individual ways of perceiving, conceptualising and memorising new information.
Learning strategies	Strategies and measures employed by learners in order to optimise or accelerate learning. These are mainly intentional and conscious.
Commitment filter	Elements of the learners' mindset, both affective and cognitive , which influences the degree to which they engage with language learning and pedagogical activities.

Language learning processes

Of these categories it is that of learning processes which is the most important and which will form the focus of our discussions. Having some idea of what happens in the minds of learners when they acquire new information will help considerably when analysing and designing grammar exercises and activities. The kinds of processes we are concerned with are what is sometimes called **cognitive operations**. These include:

- **engaging** with new information – i.e. releasing and activating mental resources
- **attending to** an item of grammar
- **focusing** on what is salient or noticeable about new grammar
- **making a generalisation** (i.e.) a rule about new grammar
- **analogy** – comparing the new grammar with other L1 or L2 grammar
- **testing out** a rule by using grammar
- **activating schematic** knowledge to make sense of new grammar

It is one of the premises of C+C Grammar that the more actively cognitive processes are used, the more efficient learning will be. It is therefore one of the tasks of the teacher to provide activities which cause students to activate mental processes as strongly as possible.

Learning preferences (learning styles)

Learners learn grammar in different ways, depending on their individual processing preferences. For example, acquiring a new grammar rule may proceed along various paths. Some methodological options available are seen in figure 12.

Figure 12: Different methodological options to help students conceptualise new grammar

<i>Method</i>	<i>Procedure</i>	<i>means of learning</i>	<i>rules are ...</i>	<i>learning process</i>	<i>knowledge type</i>
Explanation	Teacher gives students a rule	learning by understanding	explicit	deductive	declarative
Exemplification	Teacher gives examples of use	learning by acquiring	implicit	inductive	declarative
Exploration	Pupils analyse the data given to them by the teacher	learning by reflecting	explicit	inductive	declarative
Utilisation	Pupils are given a language task to perform	learning by using	implicit	inductive	procedural

It should be added that these methodological options are not mutually exclusive. ‘Explanation’ will almost always be accompanied by ‘exemplification’. It could be said that traditional grammar teaching tends to rely too heavily on the ‘explanation’ option. A Communicative approach will tend to stress ‘utilisation’; a Cognitive approach ‘exploration’.

Learning strategies

I shall make a distinction between innate learning processes, including metacognitive processing (Learning-CogOps), and conscious **learning strategies**, which will be defined as intentional pedagogical measures - behaviour patterns, routines and actions - adopted by learners to foster learning. (It should be noted that this definition does not necessarily correspond to that given by other researchers (compare, for example, Wenden & Rubin, 1987, Oxford, 1990 and O’Malley &

Chamot, 1990). Learning strategies may be defined in broad terms – for example, practising grammar at home using a self-study reference book; or specific – for example, peer monitoring during a classroom activities. This category is important as it will lead us to consider what types of activities are actually *helpful to learners*.

Commitment filter

The final cognitive category in the focus of C+C learning theory is **commitment**, which is defined as elements of the learners' mindset, both **affective** and **cognitive**, which influence the degree to which they **engage** with language learning and pedagogical activities. It can be seen as an attitudinal aspect of the learner's mental state vis-à-vis learning grammar in general (long-term) or a specific learning task (immediate) and will influence to what extent and how efficiently cognitive processes are employed.

4.5 Learning stages

One of the premises of a Cognitive approach, identified by O'Malley and Chamot (1990: 217), is the following:

'Learning a language entails a **stagewise progression** from initial awareness and active manipulation of information and learning processes to full automaticity in language use.'

Seeing learning in terms of stages is not new and can be found in various learning and teaching models. However, there is a considerable difference in how these stages are described. Figure 13 shows two different views of language learning/acquisition stages.

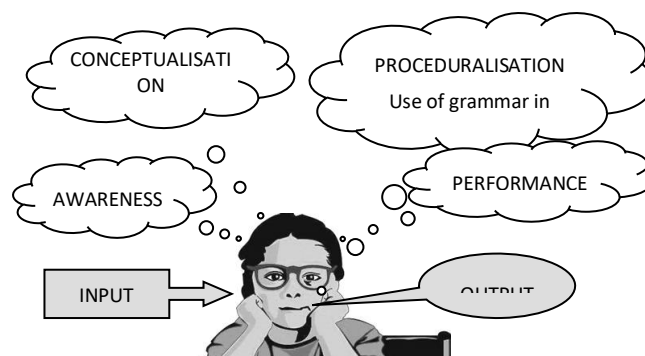
Figure 13: Learning stages in different approaches

Approach	Learning stages
Traditional teaching	Presentation → Practice → Production
Naturalistic acquisition	Input → Intake → Output

Cognitive learning stages

Figures 14 (a. and b.) show the **Cognitive view of learning stages which will form the basis of discussions in this course**. It is loosely based on a stage-model of language processing used by cognitive psychologists (for example Anderson, 1990).

Figures 14a. and b.: A cognitive model of learning stages



Explanation of cognitive learning stages:

Input – materials provided by the teacher/textbook + pupils’ existing knowledge und schemata		
Learning stages	Awareness	pupils notice and focus on new grammar
	Conceptualisation	pupils ‘understand’ a grammar rule; usually conscious knowledge
	Proceduralisation	pupils are able to use grammar in ‘scaffolded’ exercises without a strong conscious focus on rules
	Performance	pupils are able to use grammar in open contexts ; focus on the overall message
Output – what pupils say or write		

In some ways a Cognitive specification of learning stages can be compared to the teaching stages found in traditional grammar pedagogy: presentation – practice – production (PPP). However, whereas traditional grammar takes a **teacher’s perspective**, a cognitive view will see stages from the **learner’s perspective** and will focus on the tasks that need to be accomplished in the human mind at each stage in order for grammar to be internalised. It will be noted that this model sees grammar both in terms of **competence** and of **performance**. Here we can also see a link to the Communicative approach, which stresses the importance of seeing language in terms of both knowledge and skills. In the following, the individual stages of the model will be explained and differences between a Cognitive and a traditional view of learning will be discussed.

Input

A cognitive view of input is much broader than that normally taken in discussions of second language learning. This different perspective derives from two sources: first, from seeing language in terms of **process** rather than **product**; second, from seeing input not only in terms of **teacher input** but also **learner input**.

A narrow traditional view of input will see it in terms of **items of new language** embedded in a text or dialogue – i.e. the language product – which is presented to the learner. Whilst this represents the core of input, a Cognitive view also needs to take into account a range of linguistic and **cognitive resources**, which are brought to bear on language input by learners. This in turn enables us to take a **constructivist** view of input. The pedagogical implications of this are that, at the following awareness stage, grammar activities will be designed which incorporate the learner’s existing knowledge, both linguistic and schematic. This will provide for a more **active** initial stage of learning than is normally found in traditional grammar pedagogy.

Awareness

Awareness is the stage in which an item of grammar **enters the learners’ consciousness** and in which they release **mental energy** to process it (see Van Lier, 1996: 6). In the context of learning, awareness takes on a specific meaning, which does not correspond to its undifferentiated use in general English. Here it indicates what Eysenck (1984: 49ff.) refers to as **focal attention** and takes on a very **active** sense, which is well characterised in an early definition given by William James (1890: 403): ‘Focalisation, concentration, of consciousness are of its essence. It implies withdrawal from some things in order to deal effectively with others.’ The notion of ‘dealing effectively’ is particularly appropriate since it points to this more active sense of awareness.

Conceptualisation

Conceptualisation refers to the process of making **generalisations** about grammar on the part of the learner. In other words, we are concerned with the **internalisation of rules**. This stage requires

learners to process language input in two ways: on the one hand, they must **comprehend an overall message**; on the other, they must **build a hypothesis** about the nature of a grammatical concept or pattern which has been registered during the awareness stage - a new notion, a new form, a new discourse structure etc. These dual tasks of comprehension and processing are closely linked: the overall meaning of a message will help learners to form hypotheses about the rules which underlie a new piece of grammar. In addition, learners will make use of contextual information and their own schematic constructs, all of which will lead to their making a generalisation about an underlying rule and incorporating this new rule into their personal 'grammaticon'. In short, it can be said that pedagogy concerns the management of the evidence-hypothesis-rule process.

It will be noted that 'hypothesis building' suggests that, as in first-language acquisition, the learner is left to him/herself to work out grammar rules, but this is not necessarily the case. It is the task of pedagogy – teachers, materials, grammar books – to support the hypothesis process. In traditional grammar, rules are handed to the learner in pre-fabricated form so that the learner is the passive receiver of rules. Other approaches will provide discovery activities which help learners to discover rules themselves. (Different Conceptualisation options were shown in figure 12.) It is an important task of grammar pedagogy to strike a balance between providing support for learners and encouraging them to make use of their own mental resources.

Proceduralisation

Whereas Conceptualisation is concerned with the acquisition of new knowledge, Proceduralisation relates to the **skill** aspect of language use in both oral and written production. Proceduralisation is the stage which links **competence** to **performance**; if grammatical knowledge is largely **declarative** at the beginning of this stage, it is where **procedural knowledge** gradually takes over. As far as pedagogy is concerned, this stage needs to be supported by oral and written activities, exercises and tasks which consolidate concept formation and guide the learner towards the Performance stage. It is an essential design feature of a Proceduralisation activity that learners must produce utterances which **encode their own ideas**. Thus, they do not only have to know grammar, they have to **use** it under 'controlled' conditions.

Closely linked to Proceduralisation is the diminishing **role of attention** in information processing. In the initial stages of learning - Awareness and Conceptualisation - the aim of pedagogical mediation is to 'freeze the action' of language in order to focus the learners' attention on new language and enable them to take on board new concepts; the aim of the Proceduralisation stage is to set the action going again and gradually to reduce the amount of attention required to process grammatical items.

The Proceduralisation of knowledge leads to a more **efficient use** of the **storage capacity of memory**. Once a grammatical concept becomes proceduralised, this has the function of reducing the load on memory since declarative knowledge does not need to be retrieved from memory when language is being processed. Proceduralised language knowledge becomes part of long-term memory and this then frees up the working memory to deal with other language-related processing tasks.

Performance

In this final stage, activities will incorporate all the processing demands that performance entails in a real-time context. Learners will be able to perform tasks which are not scaffolded or pedagogically structured. In other words, learners are given a task and left to themselves to accomplish it.

Output

Output is not a learning stage but the language used by the learner. It may provide evidence of internal mental processes. Output can be monitored by students themselves, by their peers or by teachers. Monitoring is an important means of providing feedback to the learner.

Pedagogical uses of learning stages

A stage model has the following applications for the teacher:

1. We can **locate** a specific exercise or activity **within a particular learning stage**. When we give pupils a grammar activity to do, we should be clear about which learning stage or stages this activity supports. Many grammar exercises found in school textbooks and reference grammars only support the Conceptualisation stage. If this is the case, we may need to look for or design additional grammar activities which move learners through the Proceduralisation and Performance stages. Paying attention to learning stages will help to make grammar teaching more coherent and learning more effective.
2. **Coherence**: by means of learning stages we can analyse all the exercises in a school textbook that deal with an area of grammar – for example, indirect speech – and find out if there are exercises that lead the learner from initial awareness through Conceptualisation and Proceduralisation to the stage of Performance. In fact, we shall find that this is usually not the case: many textbooks and reference grammars provide few exercises which go beyond the Conceptualisation stage.
3. Cognitive **learning tasks** of a particular learning stage: we can be clear about the contribution an exercise or activity should make to learning and what learners should be able to do when they reach a certain stage. Examples of cognitive tasks are given in figure 13 below.

Figure 13: Cognitive learning tasks of specific learning stages

Learning stage	Examples of cognitive learning tasks
Awareness	Learners must focus on the new grammar and recognise a pattern or shape.
Conceptualisation	Learners must understand a rule/generalisation, confirm this rule, test this rule out and store the new concept in memory.
Proceduralisation	Learners must consolidate the new generalisation, locate the rule within their personal experiences and schemata, use the grammar to generate their own utterances, store the new concept in long-term memory, automatise the rule.
Performance	Learners must use all grammar to create meaning and generate their own utterances, map their ideas onto language by selecting notions and forms from their grammaticon.

It should be noted that many exercises do not fall within one learning stage but support two: e.g. Awareness + Conceptualisation; Proceduralisation + Performance.

5: Grammar Pedagogy – a C+C approach

Teachers often give grammar exercises to their students without much consideration of why a particular exercise might be appropriate to the learning stage a learner might be at or whether it actually helps the learner to learn grammar. In this section we shall consider how insights from Cognitive+Communicative learning theory can guide the design of pedagogy.

In order to illustrate various theoretical points I shall show two grammar exercises. Reference will be made to them in the following discussions.

Example a) from M. Swan and C. Walters, *How English Works*, p. 151)

Present perfect and past: revision. Put in the correct forms.

Dear Eileen,

Hope things are okay with you. The doctor (*come*) yesterday. He (*not like*) my cough. I (*lie*) in bed looking at the ceiling since Tuesday, and I can tell you, I'm fed up with it. I (*never be*) ill like this before – don't know what's happening to me. And the weather's was terrible. It (*rain*) all day, and I can't even have a cup of tea to cheer myself up, because the milkman (*not come*) this morning. Don't know why – I'm sure I (*pay*) his bill.

Example b) from *Grammar for Communication, Exercises and Creative Activities*, p.65

Present perfect: [experience] → {present perfect} & [past events] → past tense. Use the notes below to write dialogues. (Make up the last few dialogues yourself.)

1. Example:

- | | | |
|------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| A: (hold snake?) | <i>Have you ever held a snake?</i> | |
| B: (yes – two) | <i>Yes, I have. I've held two.</i> | |
| A: (where?) | <i>Where did you hold them?</i> | |
| B: (pet shop – garden) | <i>The first time was in a pet shop and the second was when I found one in my garden.</i> | |
| 2. A: (helicopter?) | 3. A: (read a Harry Potter book?) | 4. A: (sleep in open air?) |
| B: (no) | B: (yes, one) | B: (3x) |
| A: (aeroplane?) | A: (like?) | 5. A: (stay up all night?) |
| B: (yes) | B: (fantastic) | B: (2x) |
| A: (where?) | A: (see Harry Potter film?) | 6. A: (find any money in street?) |
| B: (Australia) | B: (yes) | 7. |
| A: (what do?) | A: (like?) | 8. A: (pop concert?) |
| B: (uncle) | B: (boring) | A: (bitten by a dog?) |

5.1 What makes a 'good' grammar activity?

Factors that support learning

Various researchers in the fields of cognitive psychology and neuroscience have identified factors that accelerate or optimise language learning. The following list is summarised from a variety of sources.

1. **Attention:** Learners must attend to input and attention must be maximised in activities.
2. **Meaning-driven processing:** Learners' memories will be enhanced if their own interpretations of language meaning is at the heart of activities.
3. **Associations:** Learners should be encouraged to associate new items with their existing knowledge.
4. **Depth of processing:** Learners should be given tasks which require them to process language at different and deeper levels.
5. **Repetition:** Learners need multiple contacts with new language.
6. **Multi-modal processing:** Learners should process language through a variety of senses and processing modes, including affective.
7. **Social learning:** Learners must be given opportunities to learn from each other.
8. **Cognitive needs:** Learners will commit themselves to activities more strongly and process information more deeply if cognitive needs are fulfilled (to solve problems, discover satisfy their curiosity, make sense of new information etc.).
9. **Affective needs:** Learners will commit themselves to activities more strongly if affective needs are fulfilled (reduction of negative stress, fun, 'self-actualisation' etc.).

These factors will be discussed in the next section in connection with activity analysis and design.

Principles and criteria for assessing grammar activities

The C+C model provides various parameters for analysing and assessing the effectiveness of grammar activities. We shall consider two categories: **Pedagogical Principles**, based on Cognitive views of **learning**, and **Communicative Criteria**, based on theories of **language use**. These categories have the following analytical tasks:

Pedagogical Principles – to what extent does a grammar activity support learning by *activating and optimising learning processes* and thus contribute to the overall aims of learning grammar?

Communicative Criteria – to what extent does a grammar activity support the development of both grammatical and communicative performance by *simulating conditions of language use*?

Pedagogical Principles will determine whether an activity can be **validated** – i.e. plays a useful role in learning; Communicative Criteria will determine whether an activity can be **authenticated** – i.e. corresponds to communicative use. **Validation** and **authentication** can be seen from the learners' perspective: if learners *validate* an exercise, they (subconsciously) accept that what they are doing makes a good contribution to their learning; if learners *authenticate* an activity, they recognise that the way they are using language corresponds to some extent to how they are likely to use it in real life.

In the design of activities, validity is an essential feature since activities must always be assessed in terms of the contribution they make to learning. As far as authenticity is concerned, this must be matched to the learning stage of a particular activity. This will be discussed in a later section.

5.2 Pedagogical Principles

It is the aim of grammar pedagogy to **support learning processes**. Consideration of the following aspects of pedagogical grammar will help us to analyse and to design grammar materials.

1. Depth of processing

The extent to which a new item of grammar becomes stored in the memory of the learner is partly dependent on *how mentally active* the learner is when doing grammar tasks. Depth of processing will be determined by the nature of the grammar task given to students.

Traditional methodology tends to provide activities which are '*cognitively shallow*'. For example, at the Awareness-Conceptualisation stage, the mental activity of the learners may be restricted to understanding what they have been told by teachers, textbooks etc. Activities such as fill-in-the-gap tend not to require learners to *strongly activate* their mental energy. As a result, they may hear or see the language input, but do not process it adequately - what might be called the 'in-one-ear-and-out-of-the-other' phenomenon.

Discovery activities on the one hand lead to far deeper processing. A cognitive view stresses the *maximising* of mental resources, and tasks are designed with this in mind.

2. Schematisation/construction

Learners must be given the opportunity to apply their existing knowledge structures to a learning task. At the Awareness-Conceptualisation stages of learning, this may include their knowledge of both their first and foreign languages. At the Proceduralisation stage, this will particularly apply to the schematic constructs they bring to bear on exercises. This principle is linked to 'personalisation' (see Communicative Criteria).

3. Commitment filter

Pupils must be encouraged to 'commit themselves' to learning grammar. This may include *affective* aspects such as enjoyment or fun but also what is sometimes termed 'resultative motivation': i.e. pupils experience feelings of success (Erfolgslebnisse) when doing grammar exercises and activities. The cognitive filter also refers to *cognitive needs* such as curiosity, problem solving, drive for communication, acquiring knowledge etc. Exercises should produce an 'AHA!' effect rather than an 'OJE!' effect.

4. Peer/social learning

All learning is influenced by the learners' social environment. The contribution to learning made by interaction between learners and their peers is an important factor. On some occasions, peers may be better at teaching than teachers! Group work activities can include *peer monitoring* as part of their design.

5. Summative vs. formative exercises (testing vs. teaching/supporting learning)

These are two terms commonly used in testing theory but are equally appropriate to grammar exercises. A **summative** exercise has the main aim of **testing** whether an item of grammar has been learnt, whereas a **formative** activity has the specific aim of **supporting the learning process**. A shorthand way of distinguishing between them is **testing** vs. **learning** activities. Many exercises found in school textbooks do not help the learner to learn but merely *test declarative*

knowledge – whether a rule has been learnt. Summative/testing exercises very often take the form of contrastive exercises (present perfect or past tense etc.). We should remember that contrastive exercises might cause confusion in the minds of the learners and may therefore not support learning processes.

6. Do you know vs. can you use

In a previous section, a distinction was made between **declarative** and **procedural** knowledge. Many grammar exercises only focus on the former. However, students need exercises which require them to use grammar if they are to go beyond the Conceptualisation stage..

5.3 Communicative grammar activities

A Communicative approach to learning and teaching attempts to replicate the real-life conditions of language use and to apply them in the design of pedagogy. Communicative activities are essentially meaning-driven and goal orientated. grammar incorporates two general aspects:

- a) **language** – the contextual, notional view of grammar discussed in a previous section
- b) **methodology** – the design of grammar exercises and activities.

Whether grammar activities can be described as ‘Communicative’ can be decided according to certain criteria. There is *no simple binary distinction* between ‘Communicative’ and ‘Non-Communicative’ activities. It could be stated that the more of the Communicative Criteria which a grammar activity fulfils, the farther along the continuous cline towards ‘100% Communicative’ it might be located. However, learning stages must also be taken into account. For example, a discovery activity such as the *Passive Bricks* activity we tried out in class, does not fulfil any of the Communicative Criteria and therefore has zero authenticity, but in this case this does not matter since the aim is to raise awareness and support the Conceptualisation of grammar, not to use it. On the other hand, activities at the Performance stage are likely to fulfil most of the Communicative Criteria.

Communicative criteria for assessing grammar exercises

1. **Authentic language.**

The examples used as input and in exercises correspond to the kind of *authentic language learners have experienced*, or are likely to experience in real life.

2. **Contextualisation.**

Language used in an explanation or exercise is *embedded in a clear context*, or the exercise *facilitates contextualisation* (imagining a context) by the student.

3. **Personalisation.**

When we produce language we are representing information, ideas, knowledge etc. from *our own personal perspective*. Grammar activities need to take into account this ‘personalisation’ aspect of language and give pupils the opportunity to *apply their own schematic constructs*, and *express their own ideas*, from their own perspective in order to produce utterances.

4. **Complex encoding**

Whenever human beings produce language, they are processing two general areas of cognition. On the one hand, they *represent the world* around them – what they see, think, remember, experience etc.; on the other hand, they *map their perceptions of the world onto language*. If pupils are to get to the Performance stage of the Cognitive Stage model, they must be given the opportunity as soon as possible to *rehearse* this complex encoding. Grammar exercises which merely require students to fill in gaps or to change one sentence into another require grammar processing but no complex encoding.

5. Authenticity of process.

To produce language, learners apply *processes that human beings use when encoding utterances*. Fill-in-the-gap with words given in brackets or transforming direct into indirect speech are totally lacking in process authenticity, whereas paraphrasing an utterance is an authentic process. Producing utterances as a reaction to what has just been said or to a context cue also has process authenticity.

6. Interaction.

Learners use the grammar item to interact with other learners in ways which require a response – for example, in an oral group work activity.

7. Task-based.

In addition to producing correct utterances, students fulfil a *purposeful cognitive task* which will have some kind of outcome or end product. Task-based activities are always message-based (see 4 above).

8. Integrated skills (e.g. spoken fluency, writing texts).

The aim of an activity is not only to practice grammar but to provide practice in spoken or written skill development. As far as speaking is concerned, this might entail a role play; with writing, it might entail writing an email or a report. A caveat needs to be added here: virtually all grammar exercises and activities require the learners to speak or write – a multiple choice format is an exception. However doing, say, a grammar exercise orally in pairs does not mean that speaking skills in general are being developed. Activities will only fulfil this criterion if learners produce discourse which goes substantially beyond the language required by the grammatical exercise itself (for examples, 'Writing Tasks' in *Grammar for Communication – Exercises and Creative Activities*).

Two Examples

An example of a grammar activity which fulfils several of these criteria is the following, the aim of which is to practise the generation of meaningful 'wh' questions. In this activity students have to write questions which may lead to the answers given.

1. A: *Why are going to bed already?*

B: Because I feel tired.

2. A. _____ ?

B: A hamburger, please.

3. A. _____ ?

B: Let's go to France. I've never been there.

4. A. _____ ?

B: English and Spanish.

5. A. _____ ?

B: For five years. She really loves it there.

6. A. _____ ?

B: Fantastic! we had seats in the front row!

With the exception of criterion 7 (task-based) this activity appears to satisfy all the Communicative Criteria.

The following exercise – a type found in many grammar books – seems to fulfil none of the communicative criteria.

1. Where _____ (Mary - buy) her new dress?
2. When _____ (you - go) to bed last night?
3. What _____ (you - want) for breakfast.

It is often possible to make exercises such as the one above more Communicative simply by leaving out the words in brackets. If this is done, then more complex encoding is required.

Traditional vs. Communicative Grammar

Following our discussions, it is possible to summarise the most significant differences between Traditional and Communicative grammar.

Traditional	Communicative
Formal teaching objectives	Meaning-based objectives
Learning by understanding	Learning by using etc.
Exercises which test knowledge	Exercises which support learning
Grammar is an end in itself	Grammar is a means to an end

6: Evaluating grammar activities

Categories to be used in analysis

The following categories can be used to analyse and evaluate grammar activities.

1. Grammatical objective(s)	Notion, form etc. (see 3.2) (note that the exact objective, e.g. a notion, may not be stated in the activity; however, you, as the teacher, must identify the objective)
2. Activity type	Oral, written; individual, group; fill-in-the-gap, completion, problem-solving task etc.
3. Procedure: what learners do	Fill in gaps; discuss answers in pairs; listen and underline words etc. (Even if the book you are analysing does not state this clearly, you must state how you would use this activity in class)
4. Learning aim	What exactly are pupils supposed to learn by doing this exercise?- e.g. test their knowledge, understand how to use, practise using etc.
5. Cognitive learning stage(s)	Conceptualisation, Proceduralisation etc. (see 4.5)
6. Pedagogical Principles	Why is this activity effective or not effective? (see 5.2) - Choose those which are particularly relevant to your analysis.
7. Communicative Criteria	Clear context etc. (see 5.3) - choose those which are particularly relevant to your analysis
8. Coherence (with other activities in the unit or book which have the same grammatical objective)	How does this particular activity relate to other grammar activities in a textbook unit or in a whole textbook? Are all learning stages covered?

Whenever you analyse an exercise, you must **ALWAYS** identify

- the **grammatical objective** and
- the **learning aim** of the exercise.

If you do not do this, you as the teacher will not know why you have given pupils a particular exercise.

Written grammar exercises – checklist of item types

The following list will help you to identify the activity type (see 2 above).

1) ORDERING

- a) write sentence from jumbled words in sentences
- b) write sentences using words in different boxes

2) MULTIPLE CHOICE

- a) choose correct answer from distractors

3) INTERPRETATION

- a) explain meaning of similar sentences which have different interpretations

4) COMPLETION (GAP FILLING)

- a) fill in gaps in sentences
- b) fill in gaps in dialogues
- c) as a) and b) + cue word in brackets
- d) as a) and b) + bank of words above exercise

5) MATCHING

- a) match two halves of sentences
- b) write sentences based on substitution tables

6) TRANSFORMATION

- a) change one sentence into another (e.g. direct → indirect speech)

7) REFORMULATION

- a) paraphrase a sentence using a different construction

8) EXPANSION

- a) expand cue words into sentences
- b) expand cue words into dialogues

9) COMPOSITION (Open-ended, imagination required)

- a) complete partial sentences
- b) answer questions using a sentence containing a particular grammatical item
- c) add second line to dialogue using a particular grammatical item
- d) interpret or explain information in a chart or picture

First impressions: grid for analysing grammar activities demonstrated in class

Name of activity	Grammar objective	Procedure	Principles	++	--

7: A few examples:

The Passive

THE PASSIVE – A C+C approach

1. Grammatical objective(s)	-	Process – using the passive; form – passive construction
2. Activity type	-	Group, problem-solving activity
3. Learning aim	-	to understand how a passive is formed (explicit) and how it is used (implicit)
4. Cognitive learning stage(s)	-	Awareness → Conceptualisation
5. Pedagogical Principles	-	
6. Communicative Criteria	-	
7. Coherence	-	

Text of cards for passive bricks

TOPIC	PROCESS	ADDITIONAL INFO.
Most cameras	are made	in Japan.
Zebras	are eaten	by lions.
Kilts	are worn	in Scotland.
English	is spoken	in Australia.
Llamas	are ridden	in South America.
Cricket	is played	in summer.
Stamps	are sold	in post offices.
E-mails	are sent	through the Internet.
Paper	is made	from trees.
Comics	are read	by most children.

Materials: Each group is given three sets of cards – topic, process and additional information, which have been copied onto different coloured paper. The cards are shuffled and then arranged in three columns with the text facing upwards.

Task 1 – Engagement phase: Matching exercise – students have to form ten meaningful sentences by rearranging cards. Each sentence must contain three bricks, one from each category.

Task 2 – Focusing phase: Students look at the sentences they have formed and identify any grammar which is new to them.

Task 3 – Reflection phase: The teacher asks if the students know or can guess what the sentences mean and if there is any similar structure or function in their own language.

Task 4 – Consciousness phase: Students are asked to write down in groups the rules for forming the passive.

Traditional and C+C approach to the passive – a comparison

Traditional grammar - change the active into the passive

PRESENTATION → PRACTICE ← TESTING

Principles

- based on transformation
- teacher-centred
- rules: deductive
- declarative knowledge

Disadvantages

- pedagogically - complex
- devoid of meaning
- 'cul-de-sac' methodology - no link to performance
- leads to 'alienation'

Advantages

- easy method for teacher to teach and test
- structured for weak and lazy students
- appealing for students who prefer maths to FL

Cognitive/Communicative – awareness-raising approach

INPUT → AWARENESS → CONCEPTUALISATION

- Principle replicates language processes
- activates cognitive processes
- dual aims of input: comprehension + processing
- awareness-raising, discovery
- learning by doing
- world knowledge incorporated
- L¹ knowledge incorporated
- student-centred
- student is mentally active
- social learning
- rules: inductive + use-based
- declarative & procedural knowledge

Advantages

- pedagogically simple
- link to use/performance

Disadvantages

- open-ended, unpredictable
- more commitment required by learner and teacher

CHANGE IT BACK: ACTIVE OR PASSIVE?*

Try to change the following sentences into the passive. Then read them and decide how they sound. If you think they sound better in the active form, change them back again. Write down your final choice.

1. My sister had a baby last week.
A baby was had by my sister last week. (??????) ACTIVE!!
2. The dog jumped over the fence.
3. A flash of lightning knocked him into the river.
4. My sister knocked my front teeth out with a baseball bat.
5. My mum married my dad in 1965.
6. A bishop married my mum and dad.
7. They painted their house during the holidays.
8. Rembrandt painted this picture.
9. Four girls kissed me at the party.
10. She kissed her boyfriend in front of the headmaster.
11. I used mum's computer last night and broke it!
12. Pupils use computers at our school but they often break them.

Reporting Words and Ideas: Process Approach

1. WHAT IS REPORTING?

- a) reporting takes place in the reporter's context - here and now. This provides the speaker's orientation
- b) we report the meanings of impressions that we remember, not the actual words
- c) we think back to the time of the meeting/conversation/thought
- d) whether anything was said does not actually influence the choice of tenses (see examples)
- e) the difference between 'now and then', 'here and there' leads to our choices of tense, time/place adverbs, pronouns etc.

2. EXAMPLES:

- a) *I didn't buy the toy car. It was broken.*
- b) *I didn't buy the toy car. The salesman told me it was broken.*

- a) *When I saw John, he was going to church.*
- b) *When I saw John, he said he was going to church.*

- a) *I could see you were ill and it was obvious that you wouldn't go to school yesterday.*
- b) *I thought you were ill and assumed you wouldn't go to school yesterday.*
- c) *Your mum said you were ill and that you wouldn't go to school yesterday.*

3. LEARNING OBJECTIVES:








- a) tense forms - not new for the learners
- b) use of tenses - not new for the learners
- c) mental processes when reporting - new for the learners

4. DOES 'BACKSHIFTING' ALWAYS TAKE PLACE.

- a) **Reporting:** the speaker does not identify with or doubts the information.
He said he was ill. He claimed he had never been to England!
- b) **Announcing:** the speaker not only reports but announces this information; he/she identifies with it. Quite common in the future.
*The doctor told my wife she is going to have a baby!
My wife said she has known for weeks.*

Reported speech discovery activity

This activity is done orally by students working in pairs. The texts and activities required are on the two cards below, A1) and A2). Each pair requires one set of cards. The cards should be copied or glued back to back so that the students cannot see both texts at the same time.

A1)	REPORTING WHAT SOMEONE SAID
<p>a) What do they do in the dialogues?</p> <p>Maria has just met an English tourist. Write the numbers in the boxes next to the dialogue.</p> <p>① Asking for information ② Giving information ③ Making a suggestion</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Tourist: Can you go skiing near here? <input type="radio"/> Maria: Yes, sure you can. <input type="radio"/> Can you ski well or are you a beginner? <input type="radio"/> Tourist: Oh, I'm quite good. I go every weekend. <input type="radio"/> Maria: Well, in that case you can go to the Dachstein. <input type="radio"/> Tourist: I don't know where it is. <input type="radio"/> Maria: Well, I'll take you there.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">      </p>	
A2)	<p>b) Fill in the gaps to complete the report.</p> <p>This morning I met an English tourist who me if he <u>could</u> go skiing near here. I him if he <u>could</u> ski well or if he <u>was</u> a beginner. He me that he <u>was</u> quite good because he <u>went</u> skiing every weekend..... I that he <u>could</u> go to the Dachstein. He he <u>didn't</u> know where it <u>was</u> so I <u>took</u> him there.</p> <p>c) Discover the rule</p> <p>The underlined verbs are in the past tense. Can you guess why? Would the same tense be used in your own language?</p> <p>d) Report writing</p> <p>Imagine that you had a similar conversation with an English-speaking tourist. Write a short report about what happened and what was said.</p>

Procedure:

- a) Students work in pairs and first identify the functions of the utterances in the dialogue. Feedback may be given by the teacher at this stage. Students then fill in the gaps in the report.
- b) Students work in pairs and carry out the discovery task. The teacher may need to ask additional prompting questions.
- c) students work on their own and write an imaginary report about a similar incident. This will be a 'learning by using' activity and moves in the direction of the following learning stages (Proceduralisation, performance).

STEP 3

Reporting what someone said * *Berichten, was jemand gesagt hat*

• • 3.1 What do they do in these dialogues?

Write the numbers in the boxes. Then complete the report.

- 1 Asking for information : asked
- 2 Giving information : said, told
- 3 Making a suggestion : suggested

Dialogue

- Tourist: Can you go skiing near here?
- Mary: Yes, certainly. Can you ski well or are you a beginner?
- Tourist: Oh, I'm quite good. I go every weekend.
- Mary: Well, in that case you can go to the Dachstein.
- Tourist: I don't know it.
- Mary: Well I'll take you there.

Report

This morning I met an English tourist who ...
 me if he could go skiing near here. I ... him
 if he could ski well or if he was a beginner.
 He ... me that he was quite good because
 he went skiing every weekend. I ... that he
could go to the Dachstein. He ... he didn't
 know it. So I took him there.

• • • 3.2 Discover the rule.

The underlined verbs are in the past tense.
 Can you guess why?



WUFF'S
GRAMMAR
SPOT

Über ein Gespräch berichten

I asked him if he	<u>could</u> ski well.	
	<u>was</u> a beginner.	<i>Fragen</i>
He said	(that) he <u>was</u> a good skier	
told me	<u>went</u> skiing every weekend.	<i>Antworten</i>
	<u>didn't</u> know it.	

12 REPORTING WORDS AND IDEAS

137. REPORTING FACTS/ACTIVITIES (126). Complete the dialogue about Graham the liar.

- A: Graham told me his father was an airline pilot.
 B: What! His father is a plumber!
 A: And that his mother ... a clothes shop in Oxford St.
 B: She doesn't own it! She cleans it!
 A: He said his brother ... the English basketball team.
 B: Well, he must use a ladder. He's only half as tall as me!
 A: He told me ... an old castle.
 B: You're joking! He lives in the flat next door to me.
 A: He said that every year ... the Bahamas on holiday.
 B: He's never been out of England in his life.
 A: He said ... table tennis.
 B: What! I win every time!

Try to continue the dialogue. Use your imagination!

208 REPORTING FACTS (126) ⇨

Lizzie is the editor of the school magazine. Last week she interviewed the new headmaster. Use the notes to report her questions and his answers.

- married? – wife from Edinburgh, maths teacher.
Lizzie asked him if he was married and he said that his wife came from Edinburgh and that she was a maths teacher.
- children? – no
- pets? – dog, hamster
- hobbies? – tennis, walking
- favourite colour? – green
- speak any languages? – French
- musical instrument? – piano, not very well
- holidays? – Cornwall, every year
- like new school? – very much

212 REPORTING CHANGES/RESULTS (129)

Last week my parents went away and left my sister in charge of the house. When they got back, everything was in a terrible mess. My sister blamed it on everyone else but herself! Can you guess what she told my parents? Write sentences using the verbs in the box.

eat – break – drink – kill – steal – leave – invite – tear – (not) do

- There was no food left. She blamed it on her friends.
She said that her friends had eaten all the food.
- There was no milk. She blamed it on me.
- Mum's necklace was missing. She blamed it on my aunt.
- She blamed the broken vase on the dog.
- The goldfish was dead. She blamed it on the cat.
- The curtains were torn. She blamed it on our two hamsters.
- The washing up hadn't been done. She blamed it on my brothers.
- There was an old man sleeping in the sofa. She blamed it on me.

216 REPORTING: ALL TENSES (124–129, AHA p128)

Choose a suitable reporting verb from the box and add the reasons. Use your imagination!

said – told – claimed – warned – promised – thought –
 knew – could see – expected

- The headmaster didn't punish me because *I promised I wouldn't do it again.*
- Mum phoned the police because
- Nancy's boyfriend left her because
- I didn't buy the radio because
- Our teacher gave us all some sweets because
- Jim didn't come to school yesterday because
- The police arrested my brother because
- I felt really happy yesterday because
- We didn't go to the lake yesterday because
- Sharon didn't do her homework yesterday because

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