

A practical approach to teaching the notion “PREDICTIONS AND EXPECTATIONS”

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1. Why teaching Communicative and Cognitive grammar?

We, as newly convinced advocates of communicative and cognitive grammar (C+C grammar), think it was about time that our school modernizes and catches up on new approaches on how to teach grammar effectively. Many of us, as we know, still stick to the traditional grammar approach, which in fact is one out of many commonly used ways to teach grammar, true! It is also less time consuming and students still seem to pass their exams, also true! However, we should question ourselves if these facts make the traditional grammar approach a better one than others and if the main focus should be put on time saving and the fact that it makes our life as teachers easier? Well, that would be the same as if we only ate burgers from McDonald's from now on, because it is time saving, cheap and it disburdens our lives as parents. So there's an obvious answer – hopefully. The easier way is not always the right way to go. We should be more concerned with what is best for the students, or better said, how students learn grammar effectively.

Some of you again might argue that even if it is more effective for students to learn grammar when being taught the C+C approach, it is unpromising that there will be enough time to cover everything that is in the curriculum. So let me get this clear. You are concerned with not covering every chapter in your book within one school year. So you obviously try to comply with the curriculum, right? I can tell you beforehand that you're not. Because what you might have missed is that the Austrian school curriculum also includes instructions on HOW to teach grammar. The exact wording is:

“Der Vermittlung von [...] Grammatik in vielfältig kontextualisierter und vernetzter Form ist größtes Gewicht beizumessen [...].”

“Der funktionale Aspekt der Grammatik hat Vorrang gegenüber dem formalen Aspekt.”

“Generell sind die situative Einführung und ein induktives Erschließen grammatischer Sachverhalte aus kommunikative Zusammenhängen und Textbeispielen anzustreben”

“Grammatische Teilsysteme dürfen sich keineswegs verselbstständigen und [...] zum eigentlichen Lernziel des Fremdsprachenunterrichts werden.” and

“Wo es sinnvoll ist, sind grammatische Strukturen besser ohne Regelformulierung [...] zu vermitteln.” (Newby 2014: 16)

This section in the curriculum really shouldn't be just considered as a guideline or some unimportant recommendations. It is clear that these instructions are focusing on how to teach grammar efficiently, namely the C+C grammar approach. Learning by heart as well as deductive and explicit grammar teaching, that are all part of the traditional grammar approach, are not mentioned at all. And let us tell you one thing – this is no coincidence. From a learners' perspective this method offers no advantages at all and this is reason enough for not including it in the curriculum and banning it from our classrooms. It is not beneficial for students to study grammar forms by heart, always keeping in mind that each chapter comes with numerous exceptions.

What does it actually mean to teach grammar the C+C way? First of all, the main aim is NOT that pupils can recreate grammar rules with all its exceptions, but they should be able to apply grammar in real life. In order to achieve this, pupils must get the chance to built concepts in their minds about the different grammatical notions. Having linked those notions to their existing knowledge, they will be able to perform grammar correctly and unconsciously.

A well-known problem is that many pupils are pretty good at filling in grammar exercises, but as soon as they have to produce any kind of writing or speaking, they are making numerous mistakes. So, hands-on! Here is what you can do to solve this problem: If students acquire knowledge the inductive way, an aspect that is in the core of communicative and learner-centered approaches, it is very likely that this won't happen anymore. Meaningful inductive tasks are engaging and students have to use their brain actively. Therefore, please get rid of your fill-in exercises and make sure your students have to discover something on their own. Once they use their brains actively, the new information will be linked to the knowledge, which has already been stowed in the student's brains. Thanks to this very active mental process, your students will later remember easily what they've learned in your lessons and they will be able to APPLY grammar correctly in their writing and speaking. By doing so grammar is not learned on its own, but imbedded into meaningful contexts.

Another main aspect of the inductive way of acquiring knowledge is that the students should be able to find out and develop the rules by themselves. This is not the case with most traditional grammar tasks that can be found in common textbooks, which is

one of the reasons for the problem mentioned above. Letting them discover the rules will lead to high mental activity, which will then lead to better understanding. Please keep in mind that there's a reason why inductive processing and the advice to not provide the students with ready-made rules are explicitly mentioned in the Austrian school curriculum!

What might be other changes for you when getting rid of the traditional way of teaching grammar? Another very important task for you as a teacher is to set up an authentic, real-life situation, which will engage your students and will encourage them to communicate! Furthermore, the C+C approach is "meaning driven and goal directed" (Newby 2014: 29) which means that activities should be meaningful and defined. It has been proven, that the motivation of the students to learn comes from their desire to communicate in meaningful ways about meaningful topics. (But this is unfortunately very often not the case in classrooms.) Therefore, your exercises must consist of authentic language and must serve a purpose. This means it should be language your pupils would actually use in real life situations as well. A negative example would be transforming "active sentences" into "passive sentences" – honestly, when did you ever have to do this in real life? – never, so why teaching it? Wouldn't it be better to think of situations in real life where passive constructions occur naturally? For example when talking about manufacturing processes the passive is used in a completely natural way and therefore makes sense. Don't you think so?

If the topics chosen are also related to the students' lives or of great interest to them it would be perfect. This is the so-called "personalization aspect of language." (Newby 2014: 40) Your pupils will use their own ideas and opinions in the exercises, which will again lead to high mental activity, which is of crucial importance when learning. Communicating about themselves or about topics they really care about will not only motivate them and make them commit to the exercise, but also make them remember the content and structures easily and for a longer time.

Furthermore, it's a very learner-centered approach: you as a teacher are not the most important person, but it's your students who are in the center of attention. You can take on different roles to support their learning by being the students' mentor or guide, but you should not provide the main input. It's also important for the pupils to learn from each other. Social learning among peers might be underestimated.

According to Newby (2014:39) peers may on certain occasions be better in teaching than teachers. Please think back to these words when preparing your next lesson.

We, as future teachers of English and admirer of the communicative and cognitive grammar, think that this approach makes the students speak English from the beginner level on. The main goal of teaching a language at school should be making the students able to communicate. They shouldn't be afraid of using the language or of making mistake because as for a successful conversation it's not important that everybody speaks perfect English. You thought so? You're not right! It's not about correcting students, it's about giving them a stage to communicate in the target language. When constantly using the target language, students will gain confidence, they'll be more fluent and they'll learn more quickly.

Whenever there's something innovative, something new and something different, there are always critical voices that add their two cents. Some critics say that grammar learning is 'pushed aside' and students find it difficult to be aware of how language works. However, this is not true, because grammar learning doesn't necessarily mean to learn grammar rules by heart. C+C grammar simply means learning grammar in a different, more successful way.

So, whenever you meet any of those critics, keep in mind what you've just read and please try it out. Before using an exercise in school, think back to our essay and rethink it carefully! You could also go to <https://www.epep.at> and download the Quick Check Grammar Chart designed by Dr. Pölzleitner in order to check if the exercise you're going to use really makes sense and fulfills the criteria that will lead to successful teaching and learning! Although preparing C+C activities, that observe these qualities for class might be more work, but it's also way more fun! When doing so, we are convinced that you'll see that you and your students will have more success in teaching and learning grammar the C+C way! Good luck and now enjoy looking through the exercises we've thought of to give you a better idea of what is meant by this great approach to learning grammar.

2. Practical Part: Teaching materials for three lessons

As an introduction to the first lesson in which the students will work on the exercise with the fortune telling cards and “Cassandra the fortune teller”, the pupils should be made curious about the topic. In order to make them question what will happen the day the teacher introduces this new notion, a mystic atmosphere could be created in the classroom, by making it as dark as possible, by decorating a table with a dark-red tablecloth and by putting some tarot-cards and a big crystal ball on the table. The pupils will wonder what they are expected to do in this lesson, since it should seem rather strange to them.

The brief conversation at the beginning of the lesson between the teacher and the pupils can be seen as the first awareness-raising exercise. By asking them what they think that **will** happen today, they use the new notion for the first time. The teacher should pay great attention that the students use phrases in which they make their predictions and express their expectations using the will-future without even being aware of it at the beginning. It is very likely that they will guess what the lesson will be about. Then, the notion should be introduced briefly by telling how it is formed and what it is used for to make the pupils aware of what they’ve just done unconsciously.

Activity 1.1: FORTUNE TELLING WITH CARDS

Help your partner and predict what his/her future will bring! Each pair will get a suit of cards and the explanations of the cards. Each card of the set has a different meaning. (Heart, Club, Diamond, Spade)

- draw one card and lay it out on the table in front of you
- have a look at what this card means on the explanation sheet
- think of what this card could mean for your classmate
- explain him/her what he/she will expect in the future
- the card might not only make sense for your classmate only, but also for his/her family or his/her friends. Think about this as well and explain it with at least two sentences.

(modified for classroom use – idea taken from source:

<http://www.cafeastrology.com/fortunetellingcards.html>)

- ♥ **Ace of Hearts** Love and happiness; a love letter.
- ♥ **King of Hearts** Helpful advice; a caring fellow student may help you out next week.
- ♥ **Queen of Hearts** A teacher will give you good advice for the next test.
- ♥ **Jack of Hearts** A warm-hearted person who might become a good friend.
- ♥ **10 of Hearts** Good luck; success; good fortune.
- ♥ **9 of Hearts** The card of wishes; a wish/dream fulfills.
- ♥ **8 of Hearts** Unexpected gift or visit; an invitation to a party.
- ♥ **7 of Hearts** Someone is interested in you.
- ♥ **6 of Hearts** A sudden wave of good luck.
- ♥ **5 of Hearts** You or a person you know well may win some money.
- ♥ **4 of Hearts** Travel, great week to plan the summer holidays.
- ♥ **3 of Hearts** You're having a good time.
- ♥ **2 of Hearts** strength and support coming from a friend.

- ♣ **Ace of Clubs** Prosperity, unexpected money/gain; but don't spend it all at once!
- ♣ **King of Clubs** A generous gift may be waiting for you.
- ♣ **Queen of Clubs** A dark-haired woman will give you good advice.
- ♣ **Jack of Clubs** A good-hearted; funny admirer.
- ♣ **10 of Clubs** Good luck with money.
- ♣ **9 of Clubs** Success in sports.
- ♣ **8 of Clubs** Work and study hard, it will be worth it.
- ♣ **7 of Clubs** Success in school thanks to good studying.
- ♣ **6 of Clubs** Financial aid or success.
- ♣ **5 of Clubs** New friendships.
- ♣ **4 of Clubs** Beware of lies.
- ♣ **3 of Clubs** Love and happiness; successful friendships.
- ♣ **2 of Clubs** Watch out for gossip; talking bad about others is not fair.

- ♦ **Ace of Diamonds** Change; a message and good news.
- ♦ **King of Diamonds** Fair-haired or graying man may give good advice.
- ♦ **Queen of Diamonds** A person is gossiping.
- ♦ **Jack of Diamonds** A person who brings news about your friends, generally positive.
- ♦ **10 of Diamonds** A change in financial status, often for the better.
- ♦ **9 of Diamonds** A step forward in sports.
- ♦ **8 of Diamonds** New chances, new love.
- ♦ **7 of Diamonds** An argument with a friend, but generally expected to be resolved happily.
- ♦ **6 of Diamonds** Good time to start new projects.
- ♦ **5 of Diamonds** Happiness; success; A change for the better.
- ♦ **4 of Diamonds** A new domestic animal.
- ♦ **3 of Diamonds** Be tactful with others in order to avoid disputes.
- ♦ **2 of Diamonds** A puppy will come into your life.

- ♠ **Ace of Spades** A new beginning
- ♠ **King of Spades** You will become more ambitious.
- ♠ **Queen of Spades** New family members; new friends
- ♠ **Jack of Spades** A lucky day is coming up.
- ♠ **10 of Spades** Keep your eyes open, a shooting star will fulfill your dreams
- ♠ **9 of Spades** Somebody you really like will come and visit you.
- ♠ **8 of Spades** Think pink!
- ♠ **7 of Spades** Advice that is best taken.
- ♠ **6 of Spades** Small changes and improvements.
- ♠ **5 of Spades** Don't let you get down by a negative or depressed person.
- ♠ **4 of Spades** Small worries that can be resolved.
- ♠ **3 of Spades** You'll find a new lucky charm.
- ♠ **2 of Spades** Romantic interest

Activity 1.2: CASSANDRA, THE FORTUNE TELLER

After having seen the fortune telling cards you are even more curious what future will bring. To find out what path you will walk on in the future, you've decided to also see Cassandra, a gipsy, who can give you advice for your future by consulting her crystal ball without even looking at you.

LOVE		WORLD
	POLITICS	
		MARRIAGE
HEALTH		
SCHOOL		CAREER
	FAMILY	
		FRIENDS
	EVERYDAY LIFE	

Think about what the cards have told you about your future and now write down what Cassandra has just seen in her crystal ball, using some of the categories from the box above. You can also add own categories.

e.g. Cassandra: *“Your friends **will** always be there for you, also in difficult situations. Your studying **will** pay off; the next grade **will** be a good one. You **will** soon win some money in the lottery.”*

Activity 1.3: HOW WELL DO WE KNOW EACH OTHER?

Now it's your turn to predict someone's future without the help of fortune-telling cards or Cassandra, the gipsy. Write down your predictions about what one of your classmates will do in the next week. The words in the box will help you to come up with different ideas. Then check next week what actually happened and what not.

e.g. *I think that the biology test next Thursday won't be easy, but I am confident that Thomas will do very well on it.*

I (don't) think I (don't) expect I bet I am sure	I hope I'm confident	I'm afraid I'm worried
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Box: (Newby 1992:70)

Activity 2.1: GLOBAL WARMING

In order to get students to conceptualize this notion they need to work in pairs on the following exercise. They will be handed a set of small cards with claims on what will be happening in the future with reference to our environment (global warming). They are supposed to take turns and form sentences using the future notion of predictions and expectations using the following pattern:

Start your sentence with: *“In the future/in 50 years....will...”*

Example: *more people live in cities* → *In the future more people will be living in the cities.* There will be also some claims that seem to be very unlikely to happen (Elephants will be drinking coffee.). Therefore, they need to categorize them according to whether they think it is possible or not at all. Then each student should come up with another 5 sentences of what they think will happen in the future combined with a drawing. They can for example draw flying elephants, held as pets, drinking coffee etc. As an explanation of the drawing they will write down the 5 sentences. “In 100 years elephants will be flying and drinking coffee.” “In the future it will be raining every day” etc.









elephants drink coffee	glaciers melt; sea level rises
shortage of drinking water	polar caps melt
more hurricanes, floods and droughts	more people live in cities
polar bears eat pizza	some animals are extinct
Increase of the average surface temperature	mild winters
flying cars	precipitation increases
people live healthier	...

May happen	Might not happen
In the future precipitation will increase.	In the future there will be flying cars.
In the future there will be a shortage of drinking water.	In 50 years polar bears will be eating pizza.

Activity 2.2: WHAT WILL YOUR FRIENDS BE DOING FOR A LIVING?

The game can either be played in pairs or with the whole class. The students will be given each a set of about 15 cards with different job names, as shown below. One student needs to pick out one of the cards (without saying it out loud), whereas the other one(s) need to find out which one he chose/ what he will be doing for a living in

the future, using “yes-or-no” questions They are not allowed to ask for the job itself (“Will you be a teacher?”) but need to ask for activities: “Will you be helping people”, “Will you be making appointments”, “Will you be using handcuffs” etc..

 doctor	 nurse	 vet
 teacher	 painter	 cook
 secretary	 police officer	...

Activity 2.3: YOUR FUTURE CAREER

Write down what you really think that two of your friends and you will do after having finished school. Think back to the professions mentioned in the exercise we have just done, but feel free to think of another profession or occupations they may hold in future! Think of what he/she will have to do once he/she will work in this profession.

Activity 3.1: WHAT WILL HAPPEN NEXT?

In this activity the students will have to make predictions of what will happen next in a video clip. As suggested, we chose a short clip of an episode of Mr. Bean. (source: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Am-fr9xeKlg>) Before actually showing the video to the students, we would tell them that they have to watch the clip carefully as they will have to predict what will happen when we stop the video. On the board we would write down the question “What will happen next?” as an implicit reminder to use the will future. Moreover, after having paused the video, we would again pose the question and give an example: “What do you think will happen? Will he ask someone for help?”. This should tempt the students to use the same grammatical form when making a prediction.

If they cannot come up with their own predictions you can always give them some options to choose from. 1 Possible stops for making predictions in this video could be:

00:20 → Mr. Bean doesn't have small change – what will he do?

02:07 → Mr. Bean doesn't feel comfortable in the fragrance section – what will happen?

03:00 → Mr. Bean opens a tooth brush? What will he do with it?

05:07 → What will he be doing with the pay?

06:38 → The customer next to Mr. Bean takes his member's card – what will Mr. Bean do?

(adapted for classroom-use from source: <http://edition.tefl.net/ideas/grammar/will-for-predictions/>)

Activity 3.2: GOOD MORNING EVERYBODY, IT'LL BE CLOUDY TODAY!

The local TV program, “ORF Steiermark“, is looking for a weather presenter for their new English kids channel. As this is a unique opportunity for you to increase your pocket money, you're asked to send in a promo-tape!

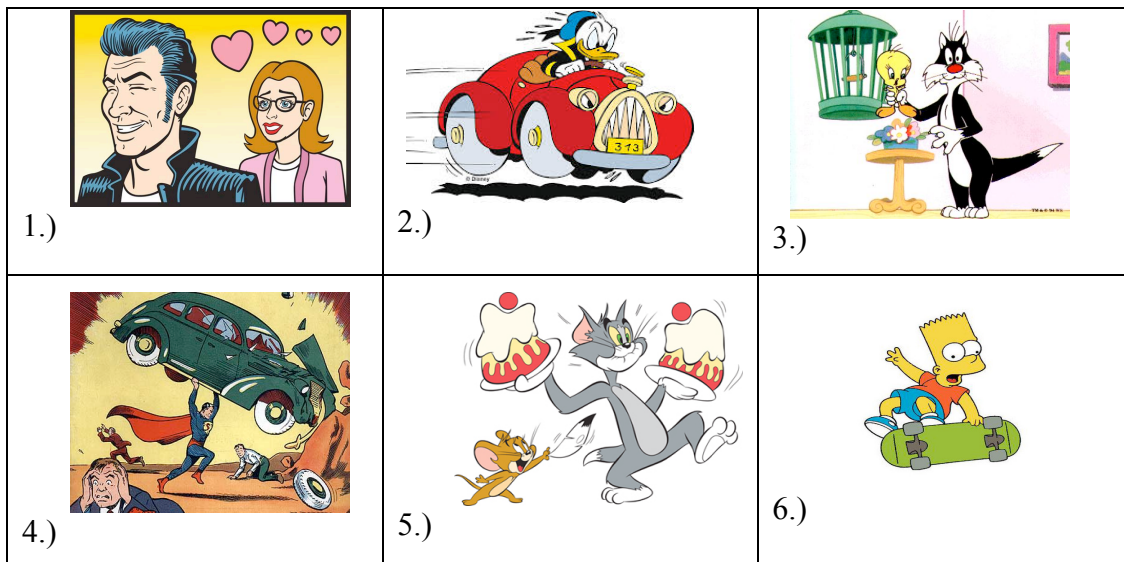
Tips for recording you own 2-minute-weather forecast:

- Look at the weather forecast for your hometown and prepare some keywords!
- Look up how professionals work by watching a youtube video
- Dress up nicely!
- Don't forget to use a proper background!
- You can either use your laptop, or ask somebody to film you with his/her phone or camera!
- When you're done with your video, upload the file on our moodle page!

Testing Activity

Choose 3 of the comic pictures below and write three brief stories. Describe

- 1.) what you see in these pictures and
- 2.) what you think will happen next (what will the characters do? What/who will they see? etc.).



3. Theoretical Analysis of the teaching activities

Activity 1.1: The Students should understand and practice the usage of the “will“-future. This exercise supports the hypothesis building process. It is effective, because students have to use their brain actively. They have to look up what the card means first, then they have to predict the future of their colleague using the “will“-future. As there are no sample sentences given, they can come up with their own examples producing natural language. The task is also personalized since they are talking about their friends and in addition it is interactive because the students have to work in pairs or in small groups and will therefore also learn from each other.

Activity Type: formative exercise; oral partner exercise (can also be done in small groups),

Activity 1.2: In this exercise the students should come up with ideas of what Cassandra has just seen about their future in her crystal globe. After having done an oral exercise to get introduced to the new notion, this formative exercise will enable them to practice the new notion multiple times in written form. This will support their conceptualization. This is definitely a very personalized exercise as it allows students to express their own ideas about their own future and the future of one of their classmates. They can come up with anything they want and will probably be committed to the exercise since it might be fun for them to think about all the good things that could happen in their lives.

Activity 1.3:

In exercise 1.3 the hypothesis process is supposed to be continued. Therefore we chose another formative exercise. They will talk about the upcoming week and by correcting their predictions in one-week time, they will see clearly what using the will-future to make predictions is about, therefore in this exercise authenticity is guaranteed. It is very likely that they want to get their predictions right, therefore they will be committed to the exercise in order to get the feeling of success. This exercise does not require social interaction in the first part, however, when comparing the predictions with the 'real' happenings of the week, social interaction will take place.

Activity type: formative exercise, individual, written exercise.

Activity 2.1: The first exercise itself does not require much mental engagement of the students as they are more or less using the same pattern for each sentence and the vocabulary is already given. However, as it should support the hypothesis building process and not the proceduralization, we thought it was not one of the most important requirements anyway. Despite this, they are mentally engaged when thinking about whether it is a true fact or not, even if it is not a hard task. The entertaining part of the exercise and the curiosity of whether they have put the sentences in the right column should commit the students. Also the peer/social learning factor is given, which is supporting the learning procedures. In pairs they are discussing the facts and talk about what could be true and what is a lie. The last part of the exercise is very personalized, as they can bring in their own ideas and expectations of what the world will look like in the future. All exercises make use of authentic language, as global warming and future prediction about the environment and what the future will look like in general are commonly used topics in real life that require the will future.

Activity 2.2: This proceduralization-task illustrates a good example on how to teach grammar as it is a peer/social activity, which involves the students actively in groups or pairs and allows/encourages them to discuss their posed questions or what questions could be asked next. Furthermore, it is an personalized exercise as it concerns themselves and they may express their own ideas/questions. The personal engagement allows them to remember the notion more easily. Due to their curiosity and also success when having guessed something right, it commits them. Moreover,

as they are constructing their own phrases, they are also mentally engaged, which allows them to process grammar in a faster way.

Activity 2.3: Proceduralisation. Within this exercise, which can also be done as homework, depth of mental processing is guaranteed, as the pupils have to think actively which profession would fit to themselves and to his/her friends. Personalization is given as well, since they talk about themselves and therefore it can also be considered as authentic and the connection to the real-life context is provided. In this exercise not much social interaction is required.

Activity 3.1: The students are mentally engaged when doing this activity, as they need to come up with their own ideas of what will happen, which results also in using natural language. Moreover, it should be a fun exercise, which commits them, as they want to guess it right and are curious whose answer was right. They may guess as many times as they want and discuss or correct their classmates guesses when doubting them, which leads to a social/interactive learning atmosphere that affects learning processes positively. Given all these circumstances, the students will be more likely to remember this grammar notion as it is a personalized, authentic, mentally engaging and interactive task that commits them.

Activity 3.2: This is a very special proceduralization task where students really have to apply their knowledge of the future and practise using it. Students love roleplays, so we think this is an engaging exercise because they are the center of attention. They can be creative and they can produce natural language, which makes it more likely for them to remember this grammar notion. The task is definitely mentally engaging as the students have to collect ideas and can come up with their own weather forecasts. This topic is also a real life topic because sooner or later everyone will get in contact with weather forecasts as they're part of the news everyday.

Activity type: oral, individual task

Testing activity: Performance. This activity is testing the students knowledge whether they can correctly apply the future notion of experiences and predictions. To test whether they can distinguish between they forms they not only have to describe what will happen next but also what they see in the pictures. So basically, they are

applying the present tense and the will future and therefore should be able to identify these 2 notions. It is mentally engaging as they are not only describing what they see in these pictures but also need to think of what might happen next, which can be numerous things. There is no right or wrong in terms of content. As a result, this exercise is also personalized and authentic language is produced. Also the commitment factor is given, as it should be a fun testing activity and they can choose 3 out of 6 examples. We thought that it would be easier for the students if they knew the comics and like the characters, so we chose several different ones.

4. Short Conclusion

After finishing this paper, we have to say that we are a little bit proud of our work. During the last few weeks, we've learned so much about selecting and designing activities for classroom use to teach grammar in a meaningful and especially communicative way. It can be challenging sometimes to come up with C+C tasks, but it's definitely worth it, because it's already fun preparing them. We discovered that there are so many differences between the traditional exercises and the ones we learned about in this class. Most of the schoolbook-exercises are not only boring, they're also useless.

We think, that if teachers used a C+C approach in class more often, students would be much more confident when speaking English. When we think back at our school time, we did a lot of fill-in tasks and grammar learning by heart. And now, a few years later we don't remember any of the rules we learned, for instance for the future tense. C+C grammar allows the students to take an active role within the language classroom, which makes them also more successful when it comes to real-life conversation with native speakers. The role of the English teacher within this concept is varied, but it's not that the teacher is the only one who gives input.

To sum up, we have to say, that we're really looking forward to getting some feedback on our exercises in order to further improve our invaluable knowledge of C+C grammar and to be able to use them in class, once we have finished our studies.

5. Bibliography

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