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„Grammar and Communication in EFL.

The presentation of Tense in Austrian Course books.“

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To my husband and our children,

with my deepest love

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Abbreviations

CLT = Communicative Language Teaching

CEFR = Common European Framework of Reference

EFL = English as a foreign language

GERS = Gemeinsamer Europäischer Referenzrahmen für Sprachen

L1 = first language

L2 = second language

INTRODUCTION

The following paper consists of two parts and gradually moves from theory to praxis. Part 1 discusses the role of grammar in communication and aspects thereof, and Part 2 investigates how grammar and context are brought together in textbooks.

The aim of my thesis has been to find out to what extent grammar sections in Austrian course books for EFL reflect the linguistic and pedagogic reasoning about language as a communicative tool on the one hand and the basic ideas of the Common European Framework of References on the other hand.

A further step, which is not included in this thesis, would be to go into the classrooms and see what teachers make of it. Teachers and learners must activate the course books for themselves and teachers must adapt their teaching methodology to suit the communicative needs of their students.

As an investigation of course books in general is too broad a topic, I have laid the focus on teaching grammar as one communicative skill among others, which I have further narrowed down to an analysis of presentation and practice activities of English tenses in four course book series of the Austrian “Schulbuchliste” (list of school books).

First of all, I have chosen the present topic because grammar teaching has always been of special interest to me. Second, during classroom observation and many years of tuition in English I have frequently noted that putting the theoretical knowledge about the English tense system to use seems to be a major obstacle for many pupils in secondary education.

Eli Hinkel supports my impression:

[I]ncorrectly used tenses occupy a prominent place among the factors that lead to low ratings of L2 writing. (Hinkel & Fotos 2002: 182)

In the course of my studies as a teacher and my research for this thesis I have come to the conclusion that some problems could be avoided by the appropriate design of

teaching material and the respective teaching methodologies. I think that learning grammar must become easier for students. They should be fluent in the structures they need when they put meaning into discourse. This can only be achieved if the language presented is set into plausible contexts and the associated tasks and activities are meaningful and have a genuine communicative purpose. My own experience, however, has repeatedly shown me, that this is often not the case. Therefore, I try to find out if the reasons for that are to be found in the design of Austrian course books for EFL. The investigation of the textbooks in Part 2 is closely linked to the theoretical discussions in Part 1.

Chapter 1 closely looks at the communicative potential of grammar, explains communicative competence and discusses why it is crucial that texts and activities bring the (structurally) possible and the (socially) appropriate together.

Chapter 3 considers some discussions of teaching grammar and then looks at specific aspects of teaching and practicing tenses. I list the main functions of the English tenses in grammar books and examine to what extent they are represented in textbooks. It is important to note here that grammarians describe tenses because they exist. This does not mean that all functions of a specific tense have to be covered in a student's book. It is, however, crucial, whether the selected functions are practised in communicative activities.

Chapter 4 explains how communicative competence is seen in the Austrian curriculum for EFL, which underlies the recommendations of the Common European Framework of Reference. Austrian course books for foreign languages are based on the CEFR, which was issued in 2001 by the Council of Europe. The main aims of the Council of Europe were to establish common reference levels in examinations and to react to increasing mobility in Europe. The CEFR is meant to support learner autonomy and to foster communication among Europeans. Communicative competence is one of the main concepts in the CEFR.

In order to activate course books according to their needs, students and teachers must collaborate closely. Therefore I outline their respective roles in a communicative environment. Certain classroom processes have a higher chance to develop a communicative competence in students than others. Chapter 2 explains which

characteristics these processes should have and which functions learners and teachers play within them.

Based on all these underlying arguments I perform a detailed course book analysis in Chapter 5. I look at general pedagogic and linguistic principles and see how they are linked with theoretical linguistic concepts of grammar as a communicative tool as outlined in Chapter 1 and with the CEFR. I then investigate the pedagogic approach of each series, the reliability of grammar rules, texts and contexts as well as exercises and activities in order to evaluate if they are based on the ideas of communicative language teaching and teaching tenses in particular as they are discussed in Chapters 2 and 3.

A grid in appendix 1 lists the results of this investigation for every course book series. The course books receive a score (= s) for each category that fosters genuine communication. It is important to note that I am not weighing the importance of the concepts, but there are only “1” or “0” scores. The table only contains short explanations; a detailed reasoning and analysis of the course books follows in Part 2.

My analysis is based on background reading in the vast field of applied linguistics with a focus on the basic concepts of communicative language teaching, and on grammar teaching in particular. The argumentation and the conclusions are the result of my education and development as a future teacher, i.e. the studies in the fields of linguistics and teaching methodology, as well as practical trainings in the classroom.

PART 1

1. Grammar and Communication

In order to support the reasoning of the textbook analysis and my conclusions on the role of grammar in teaching material thereafter, it is important that I first outline the communicative potential of grammar and look at its tight relationship with other communicative competences, and with context and lexis, as grammar is not independent of other linguistic and non-linguistic factors. Chapter 5 reveals in how far these relationships are reflected in course books. Texts and contexts will be investigated under this aspect.

In the past language teaching laid the main focus on the learners' ability to produce grammatically correct sentences, i.e. on what Chomsky defined as the ideal speaker's competence and often only one "correct" answer was possible. However, it is not only grammatical correctness that students need to know in order to be able to communicate effectively. Communicative competence, according to Dell Hymes (1972) should be the ultimate goal of language teaching, but it involves more than knowing which sentences are grammatically possible. In discourse our utterances also must be feasible, i.e. processable by our interlocutors. Long and complicated sentences might be perfectly possible, but awkward and difficult to follow. Furthermore, our language must be appropriate to the context, i.e. socially appropriate. We do not produce grammatical sentences without regard to the situation (Brumfit & Johnson 1979: 14). Communicative competence also involves knowledge about what is actually done. Native speakers can easily judge to which extent utterances that are grammatically possible, feasible and appropriate to the situation are actually performed, which is often most difficult to know in a foreign language. Non-native speakers might produce perfectly grammatical and appropriate language, which native speakers would never say or write. I am, however, not suggesting that language teachers should prevent learners from producing utterances no native speaker would ever say if they can make themselves understood. The focus must be on the learner's ability to convey meaning, which – on

the other hand – does not mean that attention to grammatical accuracy can be neglected (Canale & Swain 1980: 14).

According to Canale and Swain (1980) people need grammatical, strategic, sociolinguistic and discourse competence for successful communication. Certain strategies are needed to “initiate, terminate, maintain, repair and redirect communication” (Richards & Rodgers 2001: 160). Of course, pupils usually already possess knowledge of appropriateness and communication strategies in their mother tongues. They know, for example, how to start a conversation or how to address strangers. The fact that rules of appropriateness are rather universal can be exploited in foreign language teaching. Therefore a focus on rules of use is not prior-ranking at the early stages of second language learning. If cultural conventions differ significantly, however, students must be made aware of them. Canale and Swain (1980) prefer a focus on grammar and communication from the beginning. Grammar must be taught in meaningful communication, but lessons should not focus on aspects of grammar that are not related to the learners’ needs. (Canale and Swain 1980: 14f.)

Instead one might begin with a combination of emphasis on grammatical accuracy and on meaningful communication, *where such communication is generally organized according to the basic communication needs of the learner* and the communication functions and social contexts that require at least knowledge of idiosyncratic appropriateness conditions in the second language. (Canale & Swain 1980: 15)

Discourse competence allows people to understand the interconnectedness of individual messages in the entire discourse (Richards & Rogers 1980: 160). Texts fulfill certain functions within a certain context. Understanding them is an important part of being communicatively competent. Henry Widdowson (2007: 3f.) offers numerous examples in “*Discourse Analysis*” of how language in the form of texts works in the real world. Public notices, for example, are not displays of language, but something “to act upon” (ibid: 4); they can, however, achieve their purpose only in a certain context. A label “Keep away from children” cannot be understood (or would be misunderstood) out of context, but its purpose becomes perfectly clear when it is found on a label of a medicine.

In formal education most of the basic grammar and lexis is learned through the teaching material, especially at a lower level, hence course book texts and new grammar items must be embedded in certain contexts, so that the development of strategic, sociolinguistic and discourse competences is possible.

As my focus is on grammar in teaching material I will concentrate on the importance of grammatical competence in communication and explain why we need knowledge of structures in communication. Grammar, however, is not a self-sufficient entity in language. It is closely related with lexis and context. Therefore their interdependencies have to be taken into account.

What exactly is it that grammar can do that words alone cannot accomplish?
According to Widdowson:

Grammar is a device for indicating the most common and recurrent aspects of meaning which it would be tedious and inefficient to incorporate into separate lexical items. (Widdowson 1990: 87)

This means that grammar is a means of encoding frequent functions in language. Grammar does not make a language more difficult, but easier. Without grammar we would be obliged to learn endless lists of words by heart (e.g. different lexical items for various tenses). Grammar allows us “to be endlessly creative with a finite set of resources” (Batstone 1994: 24).

[G]rammar allows us to create imaginary worlds: to tell stories, ponder events both real and imaginary and dislocated in time and space, hypothesize about the future, or engage in debate. (ibid: 31)

In short, grammatical forms, such as tenses, are there because they fulfill certain communicative functions. When we say, for example, “I am going to Scotland”, the tense suffices to express our firm plans. Grammar here has communicative potential. A full understanding of the background details (whether we are going to Scotland for the holidays or for good), however, depends on the context and our interlocutors’ shared knowledge.

It follows that students need to learn grammatical functions as well as forms, but never out of context and independent of communicative needs. Otherwise they will not understand the full meaning of grammatical phenomena and they will not be able to use them appropriately. Chapter 5 shows if the contexts offered and the activities that follow trigger in students a genuine need to communicate.

But for language learners to learn only the intricacies of the device [i.e. grammar] without knowing how to put it to use is rather like learning about the delicate mechanisms of a clock without knowing how to tell the time. What is crucial for learners to know is how grammar functions in alliance with words and contexts for the achievement of meaning. (Widdowson 1990: 95)

Sometimes the situation does not ask for any grammar at all, as Widdowson's (1990: 82) example of discourse in an operating theatre shows: "Scalpel!" The context (here: the place where the speech act occurs) provides the necessary shared knowledge and the addressee knows that this one-word sentence is to be understood as a demand for an object. "The more context, the less grammar." (Thornbury 1999: 4).

Context is, however, an abstract notion. It refers to more than place, time and shared knowledge, i.e. what a speaker assumes to be known to his hearer. It also includes the social setting. Having grown up in a certain community, people know when to speak (and when to remain silent) and how to speak. They do not talk to their bosses in the same way that they speak to their friends, but they act upon certain social conventions, they possess sociolinguistic competence on which their choice of grammar can depend. They would ask a friend, "*Can you help me?*", but address their boss in a more formal manner, e.g. "*Could you help me...?*"

Grammar is not only connected with context, but also with lexis. Michael Lewis' (1993: 4) claim has been that we should teach "[I]nstitutionalized sentences and lexical phrases [...] without analysis, to a much greater extent than has hitherto been the practice." The examples *The professor is typing his own letters (these days)* and *John is growing old*. (Widdowson 1990: 88) prove that we should avoid drawing a sharp line between vocabulary and grammar. In the above cases, the duration, which the progressive aspects emphasize, is not the same in the two sentences because it is heavily influenced by the two different lexical items of the verb. "The lexis, in this

respect, acts upon the grammar. There is, then, a reciprocal relationship between grammar and lexis.” (ibid: 89)

As Lewis says “when students travel, they don’t carry grammar books, they carry dictionaries.” (ibid 1993: iii). If we were given minimal resources and had to choose between grammar and lexis, we would take the latter, as grammar does not even exist without vocabulary and lexis comes sooner in first language acquisition. However,

Even travellers’ phrase books have limited usefulness – good for a three-week holiday, but there comes a point where we need to learn some patterns or rules that enable us to generate new sentences. (Thornbury 1999: 15)

If we were teaching our students ready-made phrases only, they would not be able to be creative with language. Not all possible sentences have been produced before, but speakers must be able to exploit the possibilities of language, which includes grammar, according to their communicative needs.

[A] good deal of language knowledge takes the form of synthesized and memorized chunks. But equally a good deal of it does indeed take the form of analytical grammatical rules. (Widdowson 1992: 334)

Widdowson (1990: 95) therefore suggests the following for teaching: “to begin with lexical items and show how they need to be grammatically modified to be communicatively effective.” Therefore I also investigate the role of lexis in Austrian course books. Through idealization of language, however, grammar teaching has often pretended that grammar rules can be applied to any lexical items. Some idealization is, of course, justified and necessary in teaching. Grammar and student books must explain general patterns, which students can relate to actual examples in the same way that people can relate street maps to actual streets in a town (appendix 2). It is impossible to account for all actual occurrences of language in use. “Grammar can only denote degrees of generality. It cannot refer to individual cases.” (Widdowson 1990: 92) or in Batstone’s (1994: 14) words “Once we reach ground level, the grammarian ceases to exist.”

What does this mean for teaching material? As sometimes grammar is subordinate to lexis and sometimes it is the other way round, students must be made aware of the close relationship and must learn to exploit it, as suggested by Batstone (1994: 61) – “Learning grammar means learning to deploy language flexibly, combining elements from grammar and lexis in productive ways.” Therefore, tasks in course books must make sure that students have the chance to be creative with language. Consequently, grammatical forms should be learned flexibly as they are needed for fulfilling communicative tasks and in close relationship with lexis. The grammar rule for the present progressive, for example, says that the tense can be used for gradual processes of change (see 3.1.2. and 5.2.3.). To learn *It's getting dark* as a lexical phrase, however, which can then be adapted according to the communicative need of the speaker (e.g. *it's getting cold*), might be more effective for students than to study the above mentioned rule. The phrase can be retrieved quickly without too much effort. Therefore lexical collocations should be preferred over rules whenever they bring the greater benefit for the students.

Grammar is not a matter of absoluteness, of something that is either correct or wrong. Batstone (1994: 13) emphasizes that grammar is more a matter of degree, and hence some rules are clearer and more absolute than others. It is a fixed rule that the plural of *child* is *children*, whereas especially the use of tenses hardly allows for absolute rules at all. If students, for example, tell a story in past tense, course book instructions often tell them to mind sticking to past tense. In fact, however, narrative present is often used in narration in order to achieve a special effect. Similarly, course books (see Chapter 5) often pretend that there is an absolute difference between *will-* and *going-to* future. In reality, however, different shades of meaning can be marginal. In many cases it is the speaker's choice that decides which future tense is used.

Not only can speakers choose the grammar they use, they can also decide how to organise their sentences, they make a choice of register and formality according to their audience and the situation and they decide on how much they need to say according to the context and the shared knowledge which they can expect of their interlocutors.

When we communicate through language we do not simply pick grammatical items off the shelf, packaged with ready-made meanings.

We fashion and *choose* language to express ourselves, conveying a particular point of view. (Batstone 1994: 16)

Therefore, course book tasks and texts should be as varied as possible so that students learn to use the full range of language in various situations with differing degree of formality and with various text types. The CEFR has exploited this idea. (see Chapter 4).

2. Communicative Language Teaching

For centuries learning languages was equated with learning grammar and word lists separately, based on the teaching of the ancient languages Latin and Greek; in Michael Lewis' words: "language teaching [has been] greatly overemphasizing usage". (Lewis 1993: 13). It was common for teachers and students to produce meaningless, inappropriate sentences just to show the usage of the language, as opposed to language use – what people normally do, which intentions they have when they actually use language.

When experts found out that students could not use the target language effectively in real-life situations outside school, the approaches changed. Various techniques were tried out. One of them was the natural approach of the 1970s and 1980s. It reversed all the ideas of traditional language teaching, which was heavily criticized because it concentrated on what Chomsky had defined as the ideal speaker's competence, his ability to master structures, i.e. his linguistic competence only. Other factors of communicative competence, such as sociolinguistic competence or discourse strategies were ignored. There was considerable discontent with grammar teaching. Consequently, linguists started to find better ways to teach grammar.

The British linguist Wilkins, for example, described language in notions (such as time, location etc.) and communicative functions (such as requests, offers etc.). He published his "Notional Syllabuses" in 1976, on which the Council of Europe based a syllabus for first level learners, the "Threshold Level English". (Richards & Rodgers 2001: 154, 163). It was intended to describe which notions, functions, vocabulary and grammar learners needed for proficient communication. Wilkins' notional syllabuses were, however, soon criticized by other linguists.

But people do not communicate by expressing isolated notions or fulfilling isolated functions any more than they do so by uttering isolated sentence patterns. We do not progress very far in our pedagogy by simply replacing abstract isolates of a linguistic kind by those of a cognitive or behavioural kind. [...] we must accept the commitment to investigate the whole complex business of communication and the

practical consequences of adopting it as a teaching aim. (Widdowson 1978: ix)

From the 1980s onwards many different interpretations of communicative language teaching have derived. Some linguists claim that language can be learned through communication only. At its extreme end grammar teaching is completely condemned out of the classroom. Stephen Krashen, for example, bases his learning theory on the psychological principles of how children learn their first languages, which happens without any explicit focus on grammar rules, without any explanation and often without correction of errors that do not impede understanding. It was believed that if students were exposed to meaningful target language as much as possible, “attention to meaning would somehow trigger the natural cognitive development of the language system” (Cook 2003: 36), i.e. students would come to master accuracy automatically.

The “weaker” version of communicative language teaching, does not ban grammar teaching from the classroom, but demands that successful communication becomes the ultimate goal of language teaching. Therefore input and exercises must be meaningful, i.e. they must have a real communicative purpose.

The main goal of the communicative approach is to favour the individual’s development of communicative competence, a complex framework in which psychological, sociocultural, physical and linguistic elements come into play [...]. All the activities respond to the learner’s communicative needs and have to make sure that the interaction they lead to reflects genuine communication. (Bryam & Garcia in Knapp & Seidlhofer 2009: 500)

The communicative approach is process-oriented. Certain processes in language learning have been defined as promoting communicative competence. The main claim is that input (i.e. written or spoken texts, teacher language etc.) and exercises, i.e. any task the students are supposed to perform, must be meaningful. They must have a real communicative purpose.

[...] we can only really *teach* language if we present and practise it in relation to the uses to which, as a communicative tool, it may be put. It is on this belief that communicative language teaching is based. (Brumfit & Johnson 1979: 44)

Although CLT does not offer any instructions for teachers to take and implement in their classrooms, they can rely on some principles that it promotes.

It [Communicative Language Teaching] refers to a diverse set of principles that reflect a communicative view of language and language learning and that can be used to support a wide variety of classroom procedures. (Richards & Rodgers 2001: 172)

If teachers want to prepare their students for effective communication, they must consider how people actually communicate. First of all, people have a purpose when they speak or write, such as “giving information, expressing a point of view, shaping opinion, providing entertainment, and so on.” (Widdowson 2007: 6). They produce texts as a basis for discourse in order “to get a message across.” (ibid). The message transfer has often been neglected. If there is no information gap, however, no genuine message transfer takes place. In order to be understood by their receivers, people must be able to predict a certain shared knowledge. They usually do not say things that they can assume to be known. Consequently, exercises in course books should not, as it was often the case in the past, have students exchange information that is not new to them. There should be a genuine information gap, so that communication is meaningful.

Neither do people produce texts in order to display language, so it follows that when we teach a language we must not focus on the linguistic, but on the communicative perspective.

This does not mean that grammar teaching should be banned from the classrooms. A certain extent of mastery of structures is necessary for conveying meaning, as grammar carries communicative potential (see Chapter 1), but input should always be meaningful and tasks should fulfill a communicative need. We must concentrate on teaching students to be able to enter discourse, which also includes adapting their answers to the previous comments of their interlocutors and to move on discourse by turn-taking, negotiating meaning etc. Students need strategic and discourse competences to be able to participate in discourse successfully. Free practice activities or role-plays (not memorized dialogues), for example, help students

develop these strategic competences. Only in free practice can students learn the simultaneous use of various skills. In the past, and partly still today, skills were often practised individually. There were separate listening, reading, speaking or writing exercises. Genuine language use, however, presupposes that the students are able to listen to partners and understand them, to speak when they comment or to write when they take notes all at the same time. Thus, tasks must be designed in a way that students have the chance to practise the integration of skills as often as possible. This is best achieved in group work where student discussions are likely to occur and where the learners are encouraged to take risks when they experiment with the foreign language. Trial and error are important steps in the learning process.

Activities that promote discourse should therefore constitute the main part of classroom activity. If we expect students to scan out pragmatic information from interactions, we must “provide them with reason for scanning”, and if they are supposed to understand a speaker’s aim, we must “provide them with a speaker aim (a communicative intent).” (Brumfit & Johnson 1979: 200)

The fact that the same claim can be found again almost three decades later in Larsen-Freeman (2008) shows that there is still discontent with foreign language teaching. Freeman says that students must practise “to figure out the speaker’s or writer’s intentions” (Larsen-Freeman 2008: 125), which is part of being communicatively competent. Negotiating meaning must be an integral part of classroom interaction, as this is what people do when they communicate. Through communicative tasks students should use the target language in order to express their beliefs or feelings, thus the “target language is a vehicle for classroom communication, not just the object of study.” (ibid)

Understanding the semantics of the words is not enough, but unfortunately past language teaching concentrated on the meaning of individual words. Marianne Celce-Murcia supplies an example of how the same utterance can carry different pragmatic meaning. “*I am hungry*” uttered by a child coming home from school is a request for food, said by a beggar it is a request for money, and if a guest produces the above utterance on coming in, it may be an indirect compliment. (Hinkel & Fotos 2002: 119)

Within those classroom processes, which promote the students' communicative abilities, the teacher and the learners' roles have changed as compared to former language teaching.

CLT is learner-centred. Learners should take on responsibility for their own learning. They can "plan, initiate and organize their own work" (Hedge 2000: 36). In order to make lessons successful learners must be prepared to engage in problem-solving and communication tasks in the classroom by sharing their opinion and expressing their view. They should interact in groups with other learners, as "failed communication is a joint responsibility [...]. Successful communication is an accomplishment jointly achieved and acknowledged." (Richards & Rodgers 2001: 166). The learner's feedback to other students and to the teacher is extremely valuable for the further planning of activities. Therefore they should also let the teacher know about their needs and interests.

Learner autonomy is an important goal also of the CEFR (see Chapter 4). Students should constantly monitor their own learning progress and be aware of their strengths and weaknesses. The language portfolios, which are based on CEFR, contain extensive checklists for students to monitor their own progress. Learners are also asked to set themselves certain aims by defining in which areas they want to improve.

The teacher's main role is mainly that of an organizer and planner. They should facilitate communication by providing material and initiating situations that stimulate classroom communication based on the needs of their students. They can either take part in the activities themselves or act as monitors and see if the aims of the lesson have been achieved and learn for future lessons. Teachers are a resource for learners, give advice and provide feedback. Through observation the teacher should also collect experience for future classroom activities. Teachers should motivate their students to learn a foreign language as much as possible by arousing their interest in a foreign culture and language and by arranging lessons that are as varied as possible, but it is the learners who must bring a certain interest and motivation. Motivation, in my opinion, is one of the key factors for successful learning. I think, however, that almost all pupils, especially children, are eager to learn and that it is

sometimes the lessons, which are boring, or demotivating because assessment concentrates on formal aspects.¹

¹ The reasons for a lack of motivation might lie in our school system, where a geography lesson is followed by an English lesson and preceded by a Maths lesson. If students have the chance to engage in more project work which absorbs them for a longer period, to find interrelations between various school subjects and to relate what they learn to their own lives, their preparedness to engage in challenging work would be higher. A discussion of the Austrian school system is, however, goes far beyond the aim of this thesis.

3. Teaching Grammar

Chapter 1 has made clear that we need grammar in communication and in Chapter 2 we have seen that

A communicative approach, properly conceived, does not involve the rejection of grammar. On the contrary, it involves recognition of its central mediating role in the use and learning of language. (Widdowson 1990: 98)

However, we have also said that teachers will not find step-by-step instructions for effective grammar teaching. The different language teaching methods and approaches², some of which have never gained ground, have proposed numerous teaching techniques and teachers must verify these proposals for themselves and their pupils.

It is not always the latest linguistic model which provides the most satisfactory basis for the preparation of teaching materials. (Brumfit & Johnson 1979: 135)

Teachers must therefore be careful not to completely condemn any methodology that was existent before the communicative approach.

It is particularly important for language teachers to maintain a balanced point of view and to avoid setting the new types of grammar too sharply in opposition to the old. (Allen & Widdowson 1976: 47)

Unfortunately, however, teachers sometimes rely on traditional methods uncritically, merely because they are used to them. In former times, for example, it was common for language teachers to produce meaningless, inappropriate sentences, just to show the usage of the language, as opposed to language use, i.e. what people normally do, which intentions they have when they actually use language.

² A method usually prescribes its implementation, whereas an approach is constantly updated and leaves room for individual adaptations (Rodgers 2009: 348 f.).

[P]ast language teaching often failed to practise language to some purpose – somewhat akin to practising the use of an axe without any trees to cut down. (Brumfit & Johnson 1976: 200)

During classroom observation, I have noted that teaching grammar for its own sake is still widespread. The reasons why this is still done, although experts know that it does not make good language users, are various. Michael Swan (2002) tries to explain why traditional grammar teaching is still present in our classrooms. I strongly believe that he is right in at least two points. Grammar is often taught for its own sake because it is easily testable. Errors in fill-in exercises of grammatical forms can be calculated like errors in a mathematics test.

Another reason why teachers teach grammar is because it constitutes a recognizable content and thus makes language teaching more like other school subjects. (Ellis 1997: 74)

Most teachers have the experience of grammar-centred language learning and still teach the way they were taught themselves. Furthermore, learners expect their teachers to equip them with knowledge of the language, and there are outside (socio-political factors) that influence teaching heavily. Certain norms (what pupils must be able to do in a foreign language at which level) must be established for the school system to work. Tests are necessary to see whether students fulfill these norms.³ Several studies have shown that it is hard to progress above a certain level without formal instruction. Learners are more likely to notice certain phenomena in language if they have been taught about them before, otherwise they might go unnoticed (Thornbury 1999: 16). I think that this is one of the most important reasons why students' attention should be drawn to important grammatical features. Raising consciousness for certain structures through cognitive learning by discovery tasks results in consciously noticing language phenomena in real life, which raises the chance that learners will produce new structures themselves. Students must be

³ Whether the way pupils in Austria are tested and assessed makes sense, is, however, far out of the scope of this thesis.

encouraged to experiment with language. Especially the use of tenses can only be grasped through plenty of inductive exercises and many genuine samples of language in various situations. Teachers must raise students' attention so that they know that certain tenses are there because they fulfill specific functions, but they must also give their learners the possibility to develop a feeling for their appropriate use.

3.1. Teaching Tenses

It is neither possible, nor necessary to cover the full range of possible and appropriate uses of the English tenses in the classroom. It is the quality of classroom activities that is essential. If isolated uses are presented and practised in a communicative way, the basis for autonomous learning of further features will be laid.

For course book designers and teachers it is still important to know about the main uses of the English tenses in order to develop or select teaching material and activities in which the use of a certain tense is plausible.

However, I do not copy all the details of the various Reference grammars on each tense here, but only give an overview of the main functions of those tenses which occur in course books for the years one to four.

3.1.1. Present simple

Leech and Svartvik distinguish between state uses of verbs (referring to states that continue over a longer period of time, e.g. *become*, *leave* etc.) and event uses (single occurrences with a definite beginning and end, e.g. *contain*, *know* etc.). The "habit meaning" combines state meaning with event meaning [...] (Leech & Svartvik 2002: 66). The most common uses of the present simple, which we find in all Grammars are expressing habits (things that happen repeatedly – Swan 2005: 450) or facts/truths, i.e. general present including the present moment, as in "*He lives in the French Alps near the Swiss border*". (Collins Cobuild 2005: 247). Present simple is further used

for giving instructions. The historic present describes “events vividly as if they are really happening just now” (Leech & Svartvik 2002: 74), “especially in informal style” (Huddleston & Pullum 2005: 46). Speakers also choose present simple for commenting a “present event”, which has begun and ended at the very moment of speech” (in Leech & Svartvik 2002: 67) or reviewing, as well as describing feelings or thoughts. Present simple is further used as a “timetable future” for scheduled events or in constructions containing “if/when”.

3.1.2. Present progressive

The *Cambridge Grammar* explains that all verb phrases give information about time, and aspect, i.e. “the speaker’s perspective on time” (Carter & McCarthy 2005: 405). A similar definition can be found in Huddleston and Pullum:

[...] a grammatical form or construction qualifies as an aspect if its main use is to indicate how the speaker views the situation described in the clause with respect not to its location in time but to its temporal structure or properties. (Huddleston & Pullum 2005: 51)

Present progressive is often used for actions that take place only for a limited period of time, but not necessarily at the moment of speaking, or for actions that are in progress.

Leech and Svartvik have an extra section on verbs which do not form the progressive aspect, such as verbs of perceiving (*feel, hear, smell* etc.), verbs referring to a state of mind or feeling (e.g. *believe, want, hope* etc.) and verbs referring to a relationship or state of being (e.g. *belong to, contain, depend on* etc.). They mention, however, that some of these verbs can be used in the progressive aspect when they function as activity verbs, as in “*I am thinking about what you were saying*”. (Leech & Svartvik 2002: 75ff.)

Present progressive is also used for stressing gradual processes, as in *It’s getting dark* or for complaints, as in *He is always complaining*. Another common function is future meaning for events that have been arranged, as in *I am going to Scotland this year*.

3.1.3. Past simple

In “*A Communicative Grammar of English*”, the past tense is said to be used for an event that happened at a definite time in the past, and is therefore called “past-happening-related-to-past time”. (Leech & Svartvik 2002: 69)

Collins Cobuild English Grammar also states that an adjunct of time or a definite time adverbial clause is necessary when talking about the past, but it can occur in a previous sentence. (Sinclair 2005: 250)

The Cambridge Grammar offers examples where there is no time marker, but the reference to past time is conceived through “general or shared knowledge”, for example in “*Charles Dickens wrote “Great Expectations” in instalments.*” (Carter & McCarthy 2006: 609).

Michael Swan’s *Practical English Usage* proposes:

We use the simple past for many kinds of past events: short, quickly finished actions and happenings, longer situations, and repeated events. [...] The simple past is common in stories and descriptions of past events [...] and] is often used with words referring to finished times. (Swan 2005: 394)

Swan suggests that – “we use it if we do not have a special reason for using one of the other tenses”. (Swan 2005: 394), which is a vague explanation.

Huddleston’s and Pullum’s *Grammar* compares perfectivity and imperfectivity of present and past tense. *I promise to be back for lunch* is perfective, i.e. the time reference is isochronal with the utterance, whereas *She mows the lawn* is imperfective, as the activity does not coincide with the act of speaking. The past tense *She mowed the lawn* can be both, perfective and imperfective. (Huddleston & Pullum 2005: 44ff.)

3.1.4. Past progressive

For Swan the past progressive is used for actions happening around a past time, in order to say that something was in progress at a particular time in the past. The past

progressive and the past simple are often used together, the past progressive then referring

[...] to a longer background action or situation; the simple past refers to a shorter action or event that happened in the middle of the longer action, or that interrupted it. ” (Swan 2005: 395)

as in “As I was walking down the road, I saw Bill”. (ibid: 396)

Swan also mentions the use of the progressive for shorter temporary actions, as in “*It happened while I was living in Eastbourne last year.*” (Swan 2005: 396). Huddleston and Pullum concentrate on the aspect as the main difference between simple and continuous forms. They stress that by selecting the progressive or non progressive aspects speakers express how they view a situation: in its progress or temporariness or repetition rather than its totality (Huddleston & Pullum 2005: 5ff.) The fact that language users have a choice is emphasized. In this respect Grammars like Huddleston and Pullum differ from most course books (see Chapter 5), which often present rules as if there were only one correct possibility.

3.1.5. *will*-future

According to Leech & Svartvik and Swan *will*-future is the most common (the “most basic” in Huddleston & Pullum 2005: 56) option of expressing the future. It is a “neutral future of prediction” (Leech & Svartvik 2002: 78). Intention is often expressed by *will* constructions with personal pronouns, as in “*I’ll see you again on Tuesday.*” (Leech & Svartvik 2002: 78). This tense is often used to express “what we think, guess, or calculate will happen.” (Swan 2005: 187)

The Cambridge Grammar stresses the speaker’s choice. Which future tense he or she uses largely depends on how “certain the speaker wants to sound” (Carter & McCarthy 2006: 629). *Will*-future is often used when the evidence of a future event is less obvious than, for example, in *going-to* constructions.

Another difference between the two future tenses, which cannot be found in any course book, is the degree of formality. *Will* is more formal than *going to*, which often merges into *gonna* in spoken language. A guest in a restaurant might say to a friend

"I'm gonna have fried mushrooms", turn to the waiter and say *"I'll have ..."* (Carter & McCarthy 2006: 631).

Sometimes only *will*-future is used, especially in spontaneous decisions, as in *"There's a garage. We'll just stop and get some petrol."* (Carter & McCarthy 2006: 632). In such contexts usually no other future tense is acceptable.

Huddleston & Pullum have a different view on *will*-future. As the auxiliary *will* is usually used to express modality there is a close link between prediction and modality in many examples, e.g. *"That will be the plumber"* or *"He will like you."* (Huddleston & Pullum 2005: 56)

3.1.6. *going to*-future

According to Leech & Svartvik *going-to* is mainly used for future events "resulting from a present intention", as in *"Aren't you going to put a coat on? It's cold out."* or for events caused by a present event or state as in *"I think I'm going to faint"* (both examples from Leech & Svartvik 2002: 78). The near future is also an indicator for the use of *going-to* constructions.

The Cambridge Grammar compares *going-to* future to the present progressive with future meaning. *Going-to* is the more informal option, but both have a similar meaning, i.e. "future plans, decisions and arrangements" as in *"What are you going to drink?"* or *"What are you drinking?"* (Carter & McCarthy 2006: 629)

A difference between these two ways of expressing plans usually lies in the arrangements that have been made. *Going-to* might rather be selected when a decision has been made, but no plans have been accomplished, whereas the present progressive expresses that arrangements have started already. (Carter & McCarthy 2006: 630)

Swan also mentions that it is often a matter of choice which future tense is used. Sometimes several options are possible, as in *"What will you do next year?"*, *"What are you doing next year?"* or *"What are you going to do next year?"*, where the first is an open question, the second emphasizes fixed arrangements and the third focuses on intention. (Swan 2005: 193)

3.1.7. Present perfect simple

Present perfect refers to events in the past that are connected with the present or that are relevant to the moment of speaking (Carter & McCarthy 2006: 613ff.). It combines past and present. (Huddleston & Pullum 2005: 48). It can also be used for events that are uncompleted (and have been true for a long period of time, as in “*A church has stood on this site since the twelfth century.*” (Carter & McCarthy 2006: 617) or that happened in an uncompleted period of time, i.e. actions that lead up to the present, as in “*I have not seen him this morning.*” We can also use present perfect for repeated events up to now, as in “*I’ve written six letters since lunchtime.*” (Swan 2005: 440). Huddleston and Pullum also mention that we can express present result of past events as in “*You’ve put on some weight.*”, which, according to Leech & Svartvik is “the most common use of the present perfect” (Leech & Svartvik 2002: 70). The tense is sometimes used for hot news (this use is also mentioned in Swan’s *Practical English Usage*) as in “*The premier has resigned.*” (Huddleston & Pullum 2005: 49)

All Grammars mention that the present perfect is often used with time markers such as *just, yet, already, still, ever, never*, whereas the tense cannot be used with past tense markers such as *last week*, because they “divorce the situation from present time” (Huddleston & Pullum 2005: 49).

Future meaning in sentences containing “*when*” or “*before*” is commonly used. In my opinion this meaning need not necessarily be mentioned when students first encounter the present perfect.

3.1.8. Present perfect progressive

The focus of the Grammars for the use of the present simple is on events that are still going on, but have begun in the past. We talk “about people’s use of their time up to the present, as in “*Hi! What have you been doing with yourself?*” (Swan 2005: 445). Swan as well as Carter and McCarthy mention that present perfect progressive can also be used for actions that have (just) stopped or “whose effects are still continuing” as in “*Maybe they can see, I’ve been crying.*” (Carter & McCarthy 2006: 617).

According to the “Practical English Usage” the tense is also used for repeated actions or questions and statements that express how long something has been going on (Swan 2005: 446). Concerning the use of the progressive, Swan again refers to longer, and shorter situations. He contrasts “He hasn’t worked for years.” and “I haven’t been working very well recently.” (Swan 2005: 447). I am commenting on the terms “long” and “short” actions below.

In Huddleston and Pullum the difference between present perfect simple and present perfect progressive is not explained explicitly, but contained in the detailed analysis of the perfective and imperfective aspect, i.e. present perfect progressive would rather see an action in its progress and not in its totality. (Huddleston & Pullum 2005: 42ff.)

3.1.9. Past perfect simple

This tense is called “preterite perfect” in Huddleston & Pullum and its main use is to express an action that is “past relative to some other past time” (Huddleston & Pullum 2005: 50). It is also referred to as a “past in the past” tense. (Leech & Svartvik 2002: 71). Past perfect is used for a “time-frame leading up to a point in the past” (Carter & McCarthy 2006: 619). The use of the past perfect for “situations that were true but which have been or are to be changed”, as in “*I had planned to work until I was sixty but I can’t any more.*” (Carter & McCarthy 2006: 620) is mentioned as well.

Of course, all Grammars list the frequent use of the past perfect in reported speech and in if-constructions. I will not analyse these functions here as they are triggered by grammatical reasons (as in Latin “consecutio temporum”, where certain tenses must be used in constructions containing several verbs) and not by meaning.

Chapter 5 will show which of the main functions mentioned above are reflected in the course books I have analysed. Furthermore, I will reveal if texts and contexts are constructed in a way that the selected functions for each tense are used most naturally and if exercises on certain tenses are set into contexts that trigger their use.

The various rules for above mentioned tenses already suggest that tenses are not straightforward to teach. There are hardly any absolute rules, but the appropriate use of tenses can only be understood within a meaningful context. The more coherent the texts (written or spoken) teachers provide their students with, the better they will understand shades of meanings and relationships between the various possibilities of expressing time correlations in English.

Instructors as well as students must be careful to distinguish tense and time relationships. Present tense, for example, does not always refer to present time and past tense does not always mean that something happened in the past, as the examples below prove.

In those early chapters, he does keep himself very much in the background. (Collins 2005: 247)

He said he lived in Australia.

Teachers can easily design awareness exercises, such as the one I composed for understanding the time correlations and the tense sequence in reported speech.

He said that Kuala Lumpur was the capital of Malaysia.

He said, "Kuala Lumpur is the capital of Malaysia."

True/False

He said that Bonn had been the capital of West Germany

He said, "Bonn is the capital of West Germany."

True/False

They told us that they had been in France.

They are in France.

True/False

She said that Paul was her son.

Paul is her son.

True/False

(from my Portfolio for "Introduction to Language Teaching 2", June 2008)

Eli Hinkel suggests using authentic texts and analysing them in terms of their use of English tenses, so that students can explore their relationships. (Hinkel & Fotos 2002: 101). I agree with Hinkel that for investigation authentic texts (see also 3.3. on

the authenticity of texts) can often provide best examples of why an author uses one tense rather than another. As mentioned before, especially the use of tenses is a topic that cannot be taught by simply presenting rules to the students. A lot depends on the speaker's choice and therefore it is a chapter in the English grammar that is better taught bottom-up (i.e. investigated by the students) than top-down (presented by the teacher). If students infer the basic rules of use from samples of language, they are more likely to develop a feeling for how tenses are used in communication because they can relate a specific function to an example.

There are rules for the use of tenses, but they help only partly as we will see. Even the system of tense sequence in reported speech is not as strict as it may seem. It is perfectly possible to say *"He said that Berlin is the capital of Germany."*

Tenses have a lot to do with relationships of events. Unfortunately, however, they are mostly still taught more or less independently from each other. Often texts, which contain an unnaturally high number of one tense, are made up for teaching purposes only. Many exercises on tenses consist of isolated sentences (see Chapter 5 for more examples), where it is impossible to assign any pragmatic meaning to. Instead of overloading exercise sentences with signal words, such as time adjuncts, students could be asked to insert time adverbials themselves into a given text or to change the tense of a text and see how the meaning changes (Hinkel & Fotos 2002: 188 f.).

Why is understanding tenses in English so difficult? One might expect that, for example, speakers of German do not have huge problems. There are forms for expressing past time, past perfect time, present time and future time in German.

Rosemary Aitken suggests a simple comparison. There are words in any language for different kinds of furniture, but where are the boundaries, for example, between a stool and a chair, and where are they in other languages. They are almost certainly not the same. "Stuhl" (stool) is a word used in Germany only, as opposed to a more comfortable "Sessel" (chair), whereas only "Sessel" is used in Austria and the same word used in Germany would be an "armchair" in Austria. Here we have difference in meaning for the same word in the same language - it is just a dialectal variation.

The differences between concrete objects can easily be demonstrated, whereas the shades of meanings and relationships between time and tense, which often differ

considerably in the various languages, cannot be made visible. In a language on the Indian sub-continent, for example, tense depends on the distance from the present moment, and the same tense is used for periods within the same distance into the past and into the future, distinguished usually by a time marker (Aitken 1992: 6). We can observe the phenomenon of distance in English as well, where the difference between a present and a past tense form can relate not only to a time but also to a social distance. "*I was wondering if it might be possible....*" is a polite form of asking somebody who is socially distant. (Batstone 1994: 17)

Different meanings can be expressed by one form and similar meanings can be expressed by different forms. "*I am working*" and "*I am working this evening*" (Aitken 1992: 6) express different time spans and are distinguished by a time marker only.

The progressive aspect troubles speakers of German considerably as there is no such formal difference of aspects in their mother tongue, although aspect exists in German. However, the concept of two different aspects, which a verb form can have, it seems to me, has not gained recognition in all Grammars and even less in the course books of English. I know the term "aspect" rather from learning and studying the Russian language. It is certainly not a concept or a term that can be found in any English student books in secondary education in Austria. I guess that the concept seems too difficult to designers of teaching material, especially for German speaking pupils, as there is no difference in form between a perfective and an imperfective aspect in German. Most speakers are probably not aware of the fact that there are aspects in their mother tongue as well. Only when ambiguity arises (due to lack of context), do we realize that German *Er kocht* can express two completely different pragmatic meanings in English, namely *He cooks* or *He is cooking*.

Consequently, teaching students that there are two aspects for every tense and work on the concept of perfectivity and imperfectivity, might help students understand the basic differences between simple and progressive tenses. It has to be noted, however, that imperfectivity is not restricted to progressive verb forms. *She still lived with her parents* is imperfective, the speaker does not look at the event in its totality. (Huddleston & Pullum 2005: 43). It would be interesting to investigate if there is an emphasis and a naming of aspects in course books for speakers of languages which

have different forms for the two aspects, e.g. for Russian pupils. Unfortunately, this goes beyond the topic of this thesis.

Swan's grammar explains that past progressive is used for longer, past simple for shorter events (see 3.1.4.). These terms can, however, easily mislead students. They consequently concentrate on finding out whether an action is short or long instead of developing a feeling for the difference in meaning of the progressive and simple aspects. In the example "*It happened while I was living in Eastbourne last year.*" (Swan 2005: 396, see 3.1.4.), we do not know whether the person lived in Eastbourne for the whole twelve months of the past year or for 2 months only. In any case, it is difficult to say whether we are talking about a short period. Compared to a life time, two months, or even twelve months may be said to be short. I think that "short" and "long" are no grammatical terms, as so much depends on the speaker's choice. I could decide to say *He was cleaning his nose* in order to emphasize that he made a dramatic event out of it, and on the contrary I could say, *They watched TV all afternoon* if I do not want to comment on their watching TV, but if I want to express that they did nothing else. Certainly, the "nose-cleaning" action was shorter than the TV - watching event, but I assigned the aspects contrary to Swan's definition.

Furthermore, the relationship between "Imperfekt" and "Perfekt" in German differs completely from that of past and present perfect in English (spoken language in Austria is different again).

In some languages there are verb forms that are constructed like the English present perfect (compare English *I have worked*, French *j'ai travaillé*, German *ich habe gearbeitet* [...]). Note that the English present perfect is used rather differently from most of these. (Swan 2005: 438)

Students whose L1 is German or French are tempted to compare them as they are similar in form, the past consisting of one full verb and the present perfect of an auxiliary and a past participle. This is a typical "false friend", which is often even enforced by confusing teaching and sequencing. In Chapter 5 we will see that the present perfect is mostly contrasted with the past tense, again often in fill-in exercises where students have to choose one or the other tense in isolated sentences. It might sometimes be helpful to look at minimal pairs or contrasting examples of related topics, but I think that especially for the use of tenses it can be misleading and

confusing. Students are usually geared to time markers like “*since, for, yet, ever*” as opposed to “*in 1980, yesterday, last night*” or “*next year vs. tonight*” etc. which only helps them with their fill-in exercises, but leaves them helpless when there is no such word. Collins Grammar (see 3.1.3), for example, sees no need to constantly use adverbs of frequency with the present simple. Of course, the use of adverbs may be pedagogically motivated in order to help students understand the basic meanings intrinsic to a tense, but students should also see examples where there is no adjunct.

Usually the verb tense is sufficient to indicate that you are referring to the present. You normally use an adjunct of time for emphasis, or to refer to something which is unrelated to the present moment. (Sinclair 2005: 246)

In written tests teachers often use isolated sentences but as compensation tend to have a time adjunct in almost every sentence. So students learn that teachers “want” the present simple if they have “*always*” in his sentence or present perfect when the sentence contains “*since*”, “*for*” or “*just*”.

In the course books also many exercises on the distinction between the *will*- and the *going-to* future can be found. They all pretend that there is a clear difference and students must be able to choose the one or the other only from the context of a single sentence.

I think these contrasting exercises even scare pupils. Whenever they have to produce language freely, they know that they have to be careful not to mix past and present perfect or *will*- and *going to*-future. Had they learned the relationship in meaningful situations and context they would be able to decide for themselves more easily without having to think about signals or rules.

Aitken offers a checklist of aspects to bear in mind when teaching tenses. I will not copy all the suggestions here but pick out the most important ones: Teachers must ask themselves how they can build upon previous knowledge of their students and how they can “demonstrate and contextualize (rather than explain)” (Aitken 1992: 7) the meaning of a tense in the simplest possible way. Furthermore, it is important that teachers familiarize themselves with all the uses of the English tenses, for which they might need to refer to a good grammar book. As mentioned above, the forms also

need to be looked at. When presenting examples the teachers should use as many different verbs as possible as there is interdependence between use/form and lexis and contexts (see Chapter 1). We would hardly say that one doesn't eat, but "*he doesn't drink*" is perfectly possible (Aitken 1992: 7-9) because the lexical item "*drink*" also means being an alcoholic in an extended sense, whereas the word "*eat*" lacks a similar figurative meaning.

As a preparation teachers can ask themselves which questions are most likely to provoke an answer in the desired tense. This will help them to think of contexts and realistic situations where native speakers would use a certain tense. "*Do you swim?*", for example, would normally not provoke the answer "*I swim*". (Aitken 1992: 8)

The next step is to sequence the functions and forms of the tenses, as it is not possible to teach them all at once. Teachers should start with the most frequent uses, which will probably entail teaching the irregular verbs before the regular ones. (Aitken 1992: 8). I will look at various opinions on regularity and irregularity, but as there is no definite answer which verbs should be taught earlier, the decision lies either with the teachers or presumably results from the texts or textbooks they use.

When I talk of sequencing, I am not suggesting that all other tenses, functions or forms should be invisible to the students before they actually learn them consciously. Chapter 5 will reveal that many textbooks still obscure the natural use of tenses from the pupils, which, in my opinion, adds to the problem that students cannot use tenses appropriately and accurately, once they have covered them all.

Although rules alone cannot make language learners successful language users, it is important that students have some formal instruction (see Chapter 2). I will therefore mention some options teachers have and touch on some open questions regarding the presentation and sequencing of rules.

3.2. Presenting and sequencing grammar rules

The first question teachers have to ask themselves before presenting a grammar rule is whether the rule is learnable at all. Not for all language features teaching a rule, even if it is a simple one, like adding the third person –s in present simple, ensures that students apply the rule once they know it.

If the teacher has decided that an item is teachable and learnable, the main questions for teachers and course book writers are if they should or should not present rules, in what way and in what sequence. Again there is no consensus among researchers; in fact the results are in opposition with each other. On the one hand experts find that “simple rules can be induced by learners on their own and teachers should focus on those that are difficult.” (Scheffler 2009: 7). On the other hand the widespread opinion is that we should move from simple to difficult. But what is simple and what is difficult? As mentioned before we must not confuse a simple presentation of a rule with an easy concept to understand and remember. “[W]hat is difficult to explain and what is difficult to internalize – the two may not be the same.” (Larsen-Freeman 1991: 220). Difficulty is furthermore an individual concept (Scheffler 2009: 7). Scheffler carried out an investigation with Polish students. One group had to rank various grammatical phenomena in order of their difficulty, another group rated the usefulness of instruction of the same structures. Scheffler draws the conclusion that the level of difficulty is directly proportional to students’ desire for instruction. Whether this is due to the fact that his subjects were young adult students in a language college is difficult to judge, but it seems true for me that learners expect their teachers to explain difficult concepts to them and to offer help by categorizing and rule-formation.

Many experts have argued that some of the most difficult grammatical structures for students to internalize are those that differ in many respects from their mother tongue. These can be phonetic, syntactic or morphological structures that are not possible or not existent in the first language. Research could not confirm this. In my opinion grammar that expresses nuances in meaning, which are not existent in the learners’ first language, is even more difficult. Tenses and aspects (which was the most difficult item in Scheffler’s questionnaire) have different shades in various

languages and are difficult to understand, especially if the structure exists in the student's mother tongue, but has a different meaning (see also 3.1.).

If it were possible to define unambiguously, which items in English are easiest and which are most difficult to learn, we could build up a teaching sequence on that. Many attempts have been made to rank the complexity of grammatical structures. One assumption, for example, is that irregular forms are more difficult than regular ones (Larsen-Freeman 1991: 221). It seems logical that it is easier to add *-ed* to a huge number of words in order to form the past tense, whereas irregular verbs must be studied one by one. On the other hand students quickly internalize highly frequent verbs, such as "*go-went*", whereas they might have to think about the past tense of *pursue*.

Rod Ellis (1997: 67) suggests that teaching should concentrate on features which are not acquired easily, e.g. the morphology of a language. Furthermore, teachers should attract learners' conscious attention so that acquisition can take place. He says that even frequent grammar items such as articles tend to be difficult to learn if they are non-salient and if no conscious attention is paid to them, whereas salient, highly frequent features, are learned more easily, such as *-ing* forms. According to Ellis teachers should also explicitly teach redundant features, such as a plural *-s* which is redundant in the context (ibid: 68).

Even if we know what is difficult and what is simple we still have to decide which we should teach first. Should we teach the simple at all or will it come by itself? I personally would suggest to teachers not to spend too much time trying to classify grammatical structures by their difficulty, but invest their energy into finding meaningful activities for the students. Whatever structures they need for communicative activities in the classroom should be taught. Once teachers or course book writers have decided that they want to present a rule for a specific grammatical phenomenon, they must ask themselves what the rule should look like.

Michael Swan offers a checklist of good rules. Rules must be short, simple, clear and true. There is, however, "some trade-off between the truthfulness of a rule and the pedagogic worth of a rule." (Thornbury 1999: 32). If teachers presented rules that are absolutely true, their explanations would be too complex and students would not profit from them. Therefore rules must be formulated in a way that they are relevant

for the learners' needs. On the other hand, the jeopardy of clear and simple rules is that they are simplified too radically for the sake of easier understanding. Therefore rules should rather show the limits of a given form (e.g. when explaining the use of the *will-future*, students must be told that this is not the only way to express future time in English) than present the whole truth.

Rules can only be grasped by students if they are accompanied by plenty of examples. A good strategy to see if students have really understood a concept, is to have them think of examples or even exercises themselves. This could be done in groups or pairs. Afterwards the pupils can exchange their exercises.

Ellis suggests that rules that cover high frequency occurrences, examples of which students often encounter, should be taught early, especially if their reliability is high, i.e. if the rule applies to about 90 percent. An example would be the formation of the past tense, where the reliability that the base form adds the suffix *-ed* is high and the occurrence is frequent. Nevertheless exceptions have to be taught as well. Celce-Murcia (1993: 300f.) proposes the garden-path condition. The teacher explains a rule and later asks the class to apply the rule to an exception. It has been found that students remembered the exceptions better when they had been on the wrong path before.

I think that it really makes sense to teach highly frequent rules first as students can manage a considerable amount of language within a very short time. Why should we wait until students have realized that the English past tense is formed with an *-ed* suffix in many cases and that there are exceptions? Students might waste time finding out which words take a suffix and which are changed in their stem only to find out that there is no real rule that explains which words are regular and which are not (apart from the fact that the irregular verbs are those that are most frequent in use and have therefore been resistant to change).

In the textbooks I have examined the irregular past tense forms, for example, are not given to the students all at once, but it is suggested that they learn them when they occur in a text. It is, however, important that the course book contains a full list where students can check at any time.

Most experts on this topic agree that the lower the level and the younger the students, the fewer rules should be presented. In the environment I am concentrating on (grammar school) children start to learn English at the age of ten, so it will not be wise to teach the most complex features first. As there is hardly any foreign language teaching in primary school, pupils need some lexis first before they can apply any grammar rules. After some time the teachers need to idealize language to some extent so that the pupils can refer to a system when they need to. For items students have already met, but have not paid attention to, inductive discovery might be the best teaching method. Students have a chance to find out the rule for themselves if they have heard or seen some examples. When teachers decide to teach new grammatical structures that they find useful for communication they have to evaluate if the new structure allows for inductive or deductive exploration. No matter if the teacher presents the rule or if the students induce the rule themselves from samples of language, the examples which illustrate them have to be plausible and appropriate to the situation because knowledge of the possible is not enough, as Chapter 2 explains. Appropriacy of the possible can only be understood if grammar is embedded in context.

3.3. Texts and contexts in teaching material

Of course, course books for English as a foreign language offer contexts for the language in focus. Frequently, however, these are pictures which exist side-by-side with the language the students are supposed to internalize. What textbook designers often forget is, that

[I]n normal circumstances speakers use language only to complement the context, to provide information that is not already there. (Widdowson 1998: 707)

It is simply unrealistic to have a picture of somebody performing an action accompanied by the respective utterance in present progressive. I have, however, found several examples of that in the course books. Why should we say, "*I am walking to the door*" if everybody can see what we are doing unless we imply a

different meaning that is not in the semantics of the words but in the pragmatics of the context (Widdowson 1998: 707). "Speakers do not normally provide such a running (or walking) commentary on their actions." (ibid)

The challenge for course book designers is to find a balance between realistic language use and language that students can make pragmatic meaning of. A lot of language is not actually performed because it is in the context, so students might not learn enough from a realistic situation of a family at breakfast (Widdowson 1998: 780f.).

You cannot infer the semantic meaning from the pragmatic use because so much of the meaning that the people make of what they say is not in the language at all but in the context. (Widdowson 1998: 709)

Students must, however, improve their knowledge of pragmatic meaning. The actual use of language of a community sharing the same knowledge of context is often of no use for our course books. Consequently, the texts in teaching material must be specially designed so that students can learn from them.

There are no fixed rules which texts teachers should or should not use in the classroom, but there are some requirements that they should consider. In any case, texts must be realistic, i.e. realistic for the learners. It must be easily possible for them to think of a situation in which they would find such samples of language. Language should be authentic not in the sense that it must be intended for native speakers, but authentic for the students. They must be able to relate the language to their own contexts. These can be newspaper articles, emails, diary entries, literature and many other text types, which appeal to the students because of their contents and/or language. The more variation there is, the better. As mentioned before students should be confronted with different styles and degrees of formality and they should not be bored. In my opinion it is most important that teachers keep the students' attention. Therefore teachers can use any text that might surprise and interest the learners.

Varying texts and text types will also increase the chance that students find words and grammar items in various contexts. According to the context the same lexical or grammatical structures, even one and the same utterance can have very different

meanings. It is important therefore for students and teachers to change the question “What does this word mean?” to “What does this word mean **here**?” (Lewis 1993: 14). If we do not provide our learners with context, they will never be able to see the different possible meanings and shades of words and grammar.

It has been criticized that grammarians “make regular use of nonsense” as in “*I have not seen your father’s pen, but I have read the book of your uncle’s gardener.*” (Widdowson 1990: 79). We must not, however, equate “expressions *in* English as if they were normal uses *of* English” (ibid:80). If we changed the lexis of some texts, we would arrive at perfectly normal sentences, e.g. “*I have not seen your client’s proposal, but I have read the report of your company’s accountant*”. (ibid: 79)

In Chapter 5 we will see that many course books have put their dialogues and other texts into situations that are likely to occur, but that still too much attention is paid to the structural links, the cohesion within a text, whereas coherence, i.e. the contextual or pragmatic linking, is neglected (Lewis 1993:15). Attention is paid, for example, to grammatical linking words, such as “*this, that*” or pronouns, but texts can be coherent without being cohesive, as the example from Batstone (1994:27) shows:

Jane: Hi Harry. How’s life?

Harry: Well, it’s been better. I’m not going to Rio.

There is no cohesive device that links Harry’s second sentence to the rest of the conversation, but for the two speakers the text is still coherent due to their background knowledge (Widdowson 2007: 45ff. and Batstone 1994: 27), a phenomenon that has – it seems to me – been neglected in course books, although coherence is especially important for understanding the appropriate use of tenses, which often depend on relationships of events.

Samples of coherent texts could be found in literature, but teachers often refrain from including literature in their lessons because they think the language is too elaborate and the texts are too long. But who says that you have to read Jane Austen from the first to the last page? First, it does not have to be classics all the time, as there is enough young adult literature on the market that offers immense possibilities for classroom discussions. Second, teachers can think of numerous pre-reading

tasks that prepare the students for the topic and the lexis. Sometimes excerpts will serve the purpose, such as reading various chapters of novels on the same topic and compare them. Literature is often a good basis for classroom discussions; on the other hand “literature [...] is in many ways the least natural of text types”. (Lewis 1993: 16).

I will not go into detail on reading literature here as I am concentrating on course book design.⁴

In any case I think that teachers should not elaborate too much on examining the difficulty of a text (which can hardly be measured anyway), but spend time on finding meaningful tasks. Even “difficult” texts can be used for exercises for students at a very beginning stage of language learning if they are accompanied by activities that the students can accomplish. If the tasks are on a very low level, you can even perform them if you do not speak the language at all because you can profit from previous knowledge, e.g. from other languages ([appendix 3](#)). Even if you do not know one single word in Portuguese you will be able to find out the basic information about the hotel in the given advertisement.

One pedagogical proposal would be that we might choose those kinds of tasks for the classroom which are authentic to how people best undertake learning and, simultaneously, engage the learner in authentic communication. (Breen 1985: 66)

Of course, composing communicative tasks demands creativity, but teachers and course book designers must think in terms of what pupils profit most of. They should try to find samples of language that are examples of plausible language use.

There have also been claims that we should simulate real-life contexts in the classroom and have the students perform authentic tasks (such as a discussion of an estate agent and a customer, see Breen 1985: 66) so as to create a situation that promotes native-speaker like behaviour. This is neither possible, nor necessary, according to Breen even inauthentic. We should use the social situation in the classroom and make use of the differing background knowledge and opinions of

⁴ In my Portfolio “Hooked by the book.” (July 2009) I look at various options of using literature in the classroom.

students. This alone is enough for communicative purposes. If the teacher stimulates communication, there will be discussions among the pupils as there obviously are opinion and information gaps. Classroom practice activities have to be designed in a way that students have a genuine need to communicate.

I imply that the classroom is in itself a particular culture and, therefore, remain unsure of the need for, or the nature of “appropriate simulation”.
(Breen 1985: 70)

On the other hand Michael Lewis observes that “in one sense the classroom is not the real world, and in another sense it is.” (Lewis 1993: 16). The classroom is the real world for the learner and has its conventions, but the consequences of failing to communicate are different from those in the real world (Lewis 1993: 16f). I would not completely object to simulating real-life situations at times. Plausible situations which students may be confronted with when they visit the country where the target language is spoken, could be practised in role plays or games. Children usually enjoy playing games and acting out. The more variation of tasks there is, the better it is anyway.⁵

But which tasks do promote students’ development into successful language users? The next sub-chapter touches upon some basic features which exercises should have to qualify as communicative activities.⁶

3.4. Grammar practice activities

Classroom activities must have a real communicative need to fulfill if they are to be realistic. In order to examine whether exercises have a real purpose I briefly have to return to the concept of communication. Why do people speak to each other? Usually they want to share information or their opinion with others. Therefore a meaningful

⁵ An investigation of the structure of each text book series in Chapter 5 will reveal if there is variation.

⁶ More comments on the design of exercises can be found in analysis of the various course books.

activity (no matter if an oral or a written one) must be based on an opinion or information gap.

We can only be said to be conveying a piece of information to someone if they do not already know it. (Brumfit & Johnson 1979: 200)

Johnson (2009) also mentions that we risk boring our students if we only repeat things that are already known to them. In genuine conversation we ask for information that we do not already possess and what we say or answer is a reaction to what other people have said before. We receive feedback from our interlocutors when they comment on our utterances or make clear if they have not understood our intentions. Therefore genuine information or opinion exchange including giving and receiving feedback must be a preferred activity in the classroom. Teachers and course book designers should offer situations where students are likely to have different views or knowledge. Information gaps can also be made up if we provide some students with information that the others do not have.

Sometimes teachers might want to drill specific structures so that students internalize the forms. I agree with Richards and Rodgers (2001) that drills should not be predominant. "Drilling may occur, but peripherally." (ibid: 156). Teachers should be aware that drilling structures is no guarantee that students can master them thereafter. In my opinion, grammar games are a suitable alternative to drills. Repetition of structures can be promoted, but students have fun while learning (which increases memorability), and they also see a purpose as games usually have some kind of solution. Language games do not really fulfill a communicative purpose, but they can increase students' motivation to talk about something that is obvious to their partners and they can be a very effective relief. Games can easily create a context, a purpose and an information gap and usually have a goal. Feedback is automatically included in games when various students try to achieve an aim. Many games do not need any preparation or material. The effort is minimal, but the effect can be considerable. I furthermore strongly believe that students remember language better if they can sometimes connect certain structures with fun activities. The same holds true for problem-solving tasks which usually demand a strong involvement from the learners, but which hardly can be found in Austrian course books.

In most cases, however, course books must allow students to choose what they want to say and how they want to express themselves. (Brumfit & Johnson 1979: 201). Therefore course books must make sure that students learn that different forms can serve different functions and that functions can often be expressed by various grammatical structures. When students have to practise only fixed dialogues (see 5.1. for examples) or always concentrate on specific structures in their exercises we misinterpret the nature of grammar, “we are presenting them with the product of someone else’s choices” (Batstone 1994: 66). Grammar should, however, be a matter of choice which depends on such factors as context, shared knowledge, the speaker’s personal preference and many other factors. For role-plays students should therefore be offered topics only so that they can choose how they want to express themselves.

Unfortunately, transformation exercises are still common in course books for EFL. Thus, course book designers pretend that the meaning of the original structure is equivalent to the meaning of the transformed structure, which is usually not the case. Transforming affirmative statements into negations or present tense sentences into past tense, for example, is a wide-spread exercise. Rather than changing the structure of isolated sentences, the tasks should, however, trigger the structure in focus. By asking questions for which the answer is likely to be negative or in the past teachers can concentrate on certain grammatical phenomena. In general, however, realistic communication – in which, of course – structures (such as tenses, active-passive, affirmative and negated sentences) are mixed, should be in the foreground and the main part of exercises should be embedded in plausible contexts and have realistic purposes, such as getting somebody to do something, providing information or entertainment, or solving problems. Students should preferably work together in small groups, where they perform tasks that are personalized and authentic for them.

Petrovitz (1997) argues that for some structures there has been an overemphasis on accuracy even if communication is not hindered by inaccuracy (e.g. the inversion of subject and verb in questions). It is more important, in my opinion, that students develop a feeling of what they express when they use certain structures. For use of the English tenses awareness, feeling and context are especially important. Learning rules and drilling forms will hardly help the students understand the meaning of the various tenses, but unfortunately these exercises are still more common than

communicative ones, especially in the workbooks that accompany the textbooks for EFL in Austria.

In lower level classrooms, where lexis and the mastery of grammar are constrained, a strong focus can be laid on the perceptive skill of grammar. Students should be able to understand the meaning of linguistic structures before they produce them. Therefore, awareness raising and inductive grammar exercises, where students detect the meaning of certain structures should be prioritized over deductive learning, where the teacher presents the rules. (see also Chapter 3.2.).

PART 2

4. Communicative competence in the CEFR

The newer course books in Austria are based on the GERS (Gemeinsamer Europäischer Referenzrahmen für Sprachen), which is the German version of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) issued by the Council of Europe in the European Year of Languages in 2001. It has been acknowledged that Europe possesses a rich cultural heritage, including many languages. This resource must be converted “from a barrier to communication into a source of mutual enrichment and understanding (CEFR 2001: 2). As a consequence of increasing European mobility and a rising number of people who need foreign languages, a claim for standardized language teaching and testing has arisen. Standards for students to measure themselves against and for examiners have been defined. For that purpose language learning has been broken down into five skills – listening, reading (UNDERSTANDING), spoken interaction and spoken production (SPEAKING), and writing. For these skills various ascending levels have been specified- A1/A2 (Breakthrough Levels), B1/B2 (Threshold Levels) to C1/C2 (Proficiency Levels). Descriptors for each skill and each level tell the student and the teacher what learners should be able to do with the language at the given stage. A grid, which lists the qualitative aspects of spoken language use by learners, describes proficiency levels in terms of range, accuracy, fluency, interaction and coherence separately. There is no connection between the ability to express the intended meaning and the use of grammar. Grammatical accuracy is measured only in terms of the capability to master simple or more complex structures and the ability to self-correct. Unfortunately, errors that cause misunderstanding are explicitly mentioned only for B2 level, for all other levels the obscure terms “error” or “basic mistake” are mentioned.

Grammatical competence is defined in the following way in the CEFR:

Grammatical competence is the ability to understand and express meaning by producing and recognising well-formed phrases and sentences [...]. (CEFR 2001: 112f.)

Apart from linguistic competence, the CEFR also mentions sociolinguistic and pragmatic competence as communicative language competences and elaborates on the description of situations in which learners will need to be proficient outside the classroom. These situations are categorized into certain domains, such as the personal, the occupational or the educational domain. Teachers are supposed to select activities under the consideration that students will have to perform certain tasks, and will encounter certain people from different cultures in the “real” world outside the classroom. Students should make use of the descriptors in order to evaluate and plan their own progress in learning. Life-long learning and learner autonomy are important aims of the CEFR. Here is an example of a descriptor in the self-assessment grid for spoken interaction on level A1:

I can interact in a simple way provided the other person is prepared to repeat or rephrase things at a slower rate of speech and help me formulate what I’m trying to say. I can ask and answer simple questions in areas of immediate need or on familiar topics. (CEFR 2001: 26)

The basic ideas of the CEFR can be found in the Austrian syllabus for English as a foreign language, such as fostering learner autonomy, accounting for different learning strategies among learners, or respecting different cultures. Communicative competence in listening, reading, spoken interaction, spoken production and writing should be the ultimate goal. The syllabus stresses that successful communication does not, however, equal to error-free communication and grammatical accuracy should be only part of the assessment criteria. Other factors, such as the appropriate register, coherence, range, co-operation strategies etc. must be practised and assessed as well.

Unfortunately, both the CEFR, and the Austrian syllabus concentrate on situations that learners will be confronted with outside the classroom. They ignore the potential of communicative activities which the classroom community itself offers. There are about twenty-five different characters, usually from some different cultures that bring various knowledge and opinions with them.

Furthermore, the CEFR and the syllabus make too sharp a distinction between the various skills. In genuine discourse, however, people need to be able to use all skills simultaneously. In a conversation we need to understand and produce language almost simultaneously, i.e. to interact with our interlocutors. Therefore course books should rather aim at an integration of skills than at exercises where students practise one skill at a time.

Some of the basic ideas of the CEFR, which the Austrian syllabus has taken over - namely that the learner has to be in the centre of attention and that structural competence in a foreign language is not enough for successful communication - are also principles of CLT. However, neither the syllabus, nor the CEFR, offers instructions to the teacher with which they can turn their learners into successful users.

[N]o syllabus, however conceived and designed, can *produce* a communicative competence. A syllabus is simply an inert specification. Only when it is actualized through classroom activity can it have an effect on learning. (Widdowson 1990: 39)

5. Course book analysis

The following analysis aims at finding out to what extent Austrian teaching material for EFL reflects the basic idea that language is a tool for communication as outlined in Part 1.

The analysis concentrates on five main areas.

First I look at the underlying approach of the teaching material. Most course books are accompanied by a teacher's handbook that comments on the pedagogic and linguistic considerations on which the series is based. I want to find out if the approach mentioned in the guidance section is really manifested in the material. For teachers who do not know about the developments in applied linguistics and language pedagogy it is hardly possible to evaluate the validity of these principles as Henry Widdowson observes.

[...] the teacher [...] is given no guidance in the evaluation of the validity of the principles on which the materials have been designed even when these principles are clear to the course book writers themselves. (Widdowson 1990: 37f.)

I also examine the structure and pattern of each course book. In my opinion a course book should constantly arouse students' attention, hence there should be a variation of texts and activities rather than fixed patterns (see also 3.3.).

With a focus on teaching tenses, I investigate how students come into contact with new grammatical structures. Are they offered the rule first, and what do these rules look like? (see also 3.2.). Are there any inductive exercises? I concentrate on the rule of use for the English tenses. Rules of form always accompany the explanation, but I do not mention these here for reasons of space. Moreover, I am interested in the validity of the rules of use.

Furthermore, I examine texts and contexts in terms of their plausibility (see also 3.3.). As Lewis (1993: 183) observes there should be different texts for different purposes and exercises should make a small part of course books, whereas activities that serve a non-linguistic purpose should dominate. Therefore, I investigate

exercises and activities in terms of their communicative value (see also 3.4.). I closely look at the proportion of form- and meaning based tasks. I have mentioned that language should be used as a vehicle for classroom communication. Communication has been described to have three basic characteristics: there is usually an information or opinion gap, users have a choice of language and they receive feedback. Hence, I examine if activities include these components. As it is not always possible to create situations that trigger true communicative needs, language games and problem-solving tasks are good alternatives in the classroom. They are usually built upon an information gap and students have to reach a goal that is not a linguistic one. Therefore I scan course books for grammar games as well.

The following course book series, all of which are currently used in Austrian grammar schools, have been examined:

The New You & Me
Red Line
English to go
Friends

5.1. The New You & Me

5.1.1. Pedagogic approach

Although the teacher's book claims that in the course book series language is taught for communicative purposes, the detailed analysis cannot confirm this. In fact, no clear line or underlying approach can be identified in *The New You & Me* course book series. The main aim of the material seems to be that every unit must include activities on all four skills separately at all costs. Unfortunately, many listening, speaking, reading and writing sections lack a communicative purpose as described in Chapter 3.4.

Compared to the other course books which I have examined, *The New You & Me* beginner's course book contains a high number of orthographic exercises (both in the text- and the workbooks). It is obvious that correct spelling is prioritized over listening and understanding, which should account for the larger part in beginner's lessons.

It has been mentioned before that course books should be as varied as possible so that students get into contact with a wide range of language in use and so that their attention and curiosity is constantly aroused (see Chapter 3). In the *New You & Me* there is, however, little variation. Most units follow more or less the same pattern. They open with a picture dictionary or a song, sometimes followed by some grammar rhymes. The next part is usually a listening comprehension, where students must tick *true* or *false* or fill in blanks. Some units open with a text, on which students answer questions or write a summary. Most sections contain dialogues on CD, which pupils have to learn and act out after listening. In the higher level course books pupils are supposed to make up dialogues which are similar to the sample dialogue.

The pattern is the same in the lower and the higher level course books, although we should expect free-practice activities to increase with the level of proficiency. The only difference is that the reading texts are longer in *The New You & Me* 3 and 4, but most comprehension questions can still be answered by copying sentences from the text without understanding them. The first sentence of a story, for example, is "Andy was on the number nine bus [...]" and the first question is "What bus was Andy on?" (*The New You & Me*, Textbook 2 2005: 96f.) This kind of exercise repeats regularly throughout the course book series. Only once are students supposed to respond to

questions on a story, where the answers cannot be copied from the text ([appendix 4](#)). Unfortunately, this does not repeat.

The “climax” of almost every unit is the production of short texts based on sample texts. No context, no purpose or assumed audience is suggested. The texts are simply named “text 1” and “text 2” and the instruction always says “*Study and change*” in the lower level course books. According to the teacher’s book they are meant to lead students to imaginative writing. However, pupils usually have to change only some words or names. It is clear that free text writing is not possible at the very beginning stage, but a task where students have hardly any choice and which has no communicative purpose at all, is certainly not realistic. In the course books 3 and 4 students are not offered complete sample texts but topics, words and phrases and have to compose their own texts. Still often half-made sentences are proposed. Students still hardly get a chance to choose the structures and to experiment with language ([appendix 5](#)), although choice of language is one of the characteristics of genuine communication (see Chapters 1 and 3.4.).

Free writing activities include, for example, shortening a summary, writing picture stories, inventing stories from words, or writing dialogues, for which merely the situation and some expressions are given, occur. A realistic context or purpose, such as passing on information, is lacking in all these activities.

The first few chapters in the beginner’s book concentrate mainly on vocabulary. Students usually have to write words or numbers under pictures. In later sections students move from writing single words, such as *like* vs. *likes*, *don’t* vs. *doesn’t* to writing phrases. They often find jumbled sentences which they have to put into correct order, formulate questions or complete dialogues. Although the focus is on learning new vocabulary at the beginning stage, students do not learn any lexical chunks without analysis. Some frequently used questions, for example, could have been introduced. In Austria students start to learn English at the time when they have just changed schools and hardly know their classmates. Providing them with structures and words that they might need when they want to find out more about each other, such as *Have you got any brothers and sisters?* or *Where were you born?* etc. without analysing past tense or passive could have been useful. In fact, in this course book every phrase serves the purpose of introducing grammatical

structures and is analysed at the end of each chapter. This is true even for the songs, which can be found in every unit. Only structures that have been taught explicitly occur in them.

5.1.2. Grammar rules

In Chapter 3.2. I looked at some characteristics that grammar rules should have and I have concluded that rules must be relevant for the students and reliable in a sense that they can be generally applied. Many rules on tenses in *The New You & Me* are, however, unreliable. Most of them are simplified and the use of adverbs of time with certain tenses is overemphasized. In reality adjuncts of time do not have to occur explicitly in order to justify the use of a certain tense (see 3.1.). In many rules we find several vague explanations and terms which can easily mislead students.

The rule for the present progressive, for example, is reduced to one isolated function. It says that the tense expresses what somebody is doing or what is happening at the moment. The use of the present progressive for temporariness or progressive change is missing, although it might not be necessary for beginners to include the latter function at that stage. Although I do not think that all functions have to occur in textbooks at all costs, I do not believe that the most common functions can be neglected. The use for events that happen in a limited period of time, should, be mentioned, as temporariness is certainly one of the most common ones of present progressive. Moreover, the German words *jetzt gerade* (*now*) reinforce pupils' belief that the tense can only be used for actions that are going on at the moment of speaking. If they rely on the rule, students cannot understand the use of present progressive in examples like *She's working hard these days*. Hence, the rule is unreliable.

Another common function of the present progressive – future meaning is explained in year three. According to the rule we can use present progressive for the future if an event is planned. This is a vague explanation which is not reliable, as it does not cover the difference between present progressive and *going-to*. In the first course book students are told that *going-to* is used for planned future events (see below).

The rule for *will*-future is also extremely simplified. It says that we use the tense for predictions and expectations about the future. The use of *will* for spontaneous decisions is not mentioned. There is more emphasis on signal words, such as *probably, I hope, I think* etc. than on exemplifying the main functions.

Similar to other course book series the emphasis for the use of the past tense is on adverbs of definite time, such as *yesterday, last week*, etc. The rule says that we most often use past tense when we talk about something in the past. This is, of course, a simplification, which does not even help students. Even if it is true that past tense is more often used than other tenses that refer to past time, the explanation that we use the tense “most often” does not explain the meaning intrinsic to the tense. It does not, for example, cover the distinction between past and present perfect tense, which is also used for events that have happened or started before present time.

The rule for the present perfect simple tells students that they often use the tense to express that an event has recently taken place if we do not mention a definite time. This explanation is too unspecific. The term “recently” could also refer to last week. One of the main characteristics of present perfect, i.e. expressing that an event has an effect on the present, is not covered at all.

The rule for the present simple is more exhaustive. It mentions the main functions, and leaves out those that are not relevant to a beginner’s needs. The rule says that we can express habit, fact, thoughts and feelings by using the present simple. If we look at one of the Grammars, Collins Cobuild lists also commentaries, the present moment, reviews or commenting as functions of the present simple. The rule is still not false, it does simply not say that there is more to the present simple. It is however, relevant to the students’ needs and it is simple and clear, yet not fully reliable. Examples follow right below the rule. They cover all functions which are mentioned in it. The question is whether all functions have to be listed if they are not relevant to the learners’ needs. They will not need to comment on a sports event or to review a film or book at that stage. The use of the present simple for instructions could have been added, as it is an easily understandable and teachable meaning with plenty of possibilities to experiment with. Examples for all functions mentioned in the rule follow immediately.

Several rules contain vague terms. The past progressive, for example, is said to be used for longer events in the past. If another shorter event happened during that time, the shorter event is put into past simple. I have commented on the terms “long” and “short” before (see 3.1.). I do not think that they are reliable enough to appear in a grammar rule. Explaining the use of the past progressive for background actions with a focus on the situation would have been better.

Another imprecise term can be found in the rule on past perfect. It says that the tense is used in stories to relate events that had happened considerably earlier than the main event. This is certainly not true. If I say *When I had finished my breakfast, I rushed to the school bus*, the first event finished just before the second started. It did not take place considerably earlier.

When *will* and *going to* future are contrasted, the explanations are vague as well. According to the course book *will*-future is used for predictions or spontaneous decisions whereas *going to* is used for events that are planned or decided.

5.1.3. Texts and contexts

Context is important for learning the appropriate use of the possible. I have outlined the main characteristics that course book texts should have in order to be pedagogically useful and I have concluded that they must be authentic for the students, i.e. they should be designed in a way that students can learn from them (see 3.3.). They should still be realistic and depict plausible situations. Many texts in the course book series *The New You & Me*, especially in years one and two, however, are unnatural and difficult to relate to the students' own contexts, as the examples will show. It is obvious that they have been made up for teaching purposes with the aim to cover as many formal distinctions, such as various verb forms or negated forms. For this reason some functions are overused, whereas others are neglected. For some tenses, isolated uses are looked at from all formal aspects. In the higher level course books some texts are more natural and provide interesting information.

The most frequent use for present simple in the textbook is habit (especially daily routine and hobbies), likes and dislikes and descriptions. As the past tense is introduced only late in course book one, i.e. during the end of the students' first year

of English, all stories are in present simple, which is unnatural, as we usually tell stories in the past tense. That the present simple can be used for narration is not even mentioned in the rules. The tense is more naturally used in some plays in the first course book.

In my opinion, the first texts which have been designed for presenting present simple are highly unnatural. I also think that the texts are rather childish even for ten to eleven year-old children. There are two texts and a song about Arnold, the crocodile, and Pippa, the parrot who both eat too much. They have been designed only to introduce new words for animals and food and for seeing the present tense verb forms including negation. Until unit 6 third person singular is avoided completely. Only imperatives and forms of *to be* occur. Third person -s is, however, dominant to an unnatural extent in many texts from unit 8 onwards. A longer group of texts is about daily routine. There are pictures and a listening comprehension about a girl's day, which also introduce telling the time in English. It is obvious that the texts have been designed for studying the contrast of the present simple verb forms. I think that the strategy of avoiding the third person singular verb form for months, and overemphasizing the contrast as soon as it first appears, is ineffective. A more realistic use of the two distinct verb forms from the beginning would probably lead to a more natural acquisition.

The texts that follow are mainly about likes, dislikes and routine behaviour, where the latter is most often combined with adverbs of frequency, such as *always* or *sometimes* or a specified time, as in *I get up at seven. I have breakfast at a quarter past seven*. Utterances like *It's always raining* (Sinclair 2005: 249) or *Sometimes he read so much that he became confused* (ibid: 253) might later easily confuse students who have learned to use these adverbs of frequency with the present simple. I think it is therefore dangerous to provide too many samples of tenses combined with adjuncts of time, as they are not reliable examples of how the tense is used in genuine communication.

In the course book for year three present tense is used in more natural contexts. We find information about Shakespeare's Pyramus and Thisbe and an excerpt of the play. Students are asked to tell their opinion about cheating in tests. In some extra units there is information on celebrations, famous people or inventions. Present

simple for instructions can be found in a section about mobile phones (how to write text messages).

In the course books two and three most texts are in past tense. Finally, present tense reoccurs for habits (e.g. talking about pocket money; Halloween, mascots, sports etc.). Present simple for facts does, however, only appear in year three, e.g. in a chapter about Florida or a funny chapter about invented newspaper articles. The use for facts is prominent in year four. Students find information about Australia, extreme sports, Indian people in the USA or about Ireland. The texts are natural and interesting and also provide a lot of cultural knowledge.

The present progressive with future meaning first occurs naturally in postcards. Students tell their friends at home what they have done on their London trip, what they doing in the evening or the next day. All events are, of course, arranged, so the tense is appropriate in this context.

Past tense forms are introduced towards the end of year one. First students hear the tense in a grammar rhythm and have to match infinitives with past tense forms. Regular and irregular verbs are mixed, which is certainly more realistic than the first past tense texts in Friends (see 5.4.3.).

The second text is a song, where students also have to fill in the missing past tense forms. Two “study and change” texts are about a dream. Students have to produce a similar text. Next students read about a young girl who got a tennis racket for her birthday although she does not like tennis but prefers reading. Of course, the use of past tense for stories is exemplified, but students will hardly be able to relate the situation in the story to their own context. At the beginning of the second course book a more plausible context is offered. Students talk about their holidays.

From then on most stories are in past tense. Unfortunately, most of them do not relate events that students may have experienced themselves. ([appendix 6](#)). More plausible text types, where we would find past tense, such as newspaper articles or information about historic events cannot be found.

For *will*-future no plausible contexts can be found, either. The unit where the tense first occurs is on feelings. A person tells that he is a worrier. He worries that he will be late for school, that he will get bad marks etc. The next text is about a young girl who

has a bad day and thinks about what she will change in her life when she is grown. It will be hard for pupils to relate these contexts to realistic situations where the tense is naturally used.

Present perfect is introduced in a highly unrealistic picture story ([appendix 7](#)). Of course, the use of the tense here serves as a sample for the present perfect in its use to stress events that have an influence on the present, but again it will be difficult for students to relate the examples to real life situations. This use of the present perfect is not even mentioned in the rule.

Like many other tenses in the course book series, past progressive is first encountered in a story. It is about a toucan who did not have a name and who fell when he was going down the steps. Again, I would have chosen a more plausible context, where the tense is used naturally.

Students first encounter present perfect progressive in a text about a family and what they have been doing in their holidays so far. In contrast to the other tenses, no sample text concentrates on the present perfect progressive exclusively. In fact, a listening comprehension contains the new structure among all others that students have learned so far ([appendix 8](#)).

Past perfect easily fits into a story in the function that the rule has told the students, namely for events that were earlier than past. The tense is also introduced as a preparation for the rules of the reported speech in the next unit.

As most other course books the present simple and the present progressive are the first two tenses that students learn in *The New You & Me*. I am not convinced that this is the most relevant sequence. It might have been more relevant for students to be able to talk about past events first. We frequently talk about our week-ends, our holiday or only about the day before. Most genuine stories are in past tense, while the textbooks still has stories in the present simple until the fifth last unit, when students finally learn past tense.

5.1.4. Exercises and activities

I have outlined that the main part of classroom activities should be triggered by communicative needs, which means that there ought to be an information or opinion gap, students should receive feedback and should be allowed to choose their language. Activities should bring the possible and the appropriate together. Furthermore, they should foster students' discourse, strategic and sociolinguistic competences (see Chapter 1 for more detail).

In the *New You & Me*, however, the exercises only develop from a focus on correct spelling to a focus on the accuracy of grammatical forms. Students accomplish most exercises individually, so discourse competence is not practised. Sometimes they talk to their partners in controlled speaking exercises, but group work is rare. There is one in course book three. Students have to play a crime story based on a text and find out who the murderer is. In the same book we find another group work where students have to reach an agreement (appendix 9). Unfortunately, activities which are accomplished in groups and which have a non-linguistic goal do not occur very often in the series. I have not found any project work, where language is used as a vehicle for classroom activities.

There are some role plays in course book three. Descriptions of various roles are given and students have to choose one each on which they base the discussion. They usually have to reach an agreement, e.g. on what to do at the weekend. Another role play is on cheating in tests at school. Students can discuss their opinion on cheating in groups and act out in class thereafter. This is a natural situation which is of immediate interest for the students, so their motivation is probably high.

Although the teacher's book promises many riddles and language, only a few can actually be found, such as Bingo (on the vocabulary of the word field "food") in course book one. In the "London Eye Game" pupils answer questions in clockwise direction going up in the capsules of the London Eye, e.g. *Name four countries, Which London tourist attraction would you like to visit?* Workbook three contains two games: whispered messages and a category game. The teacher calls out a letter and the students have to write down a town or city, an animal etc. starting with that letter.

Throughout the whole course book language as a matter of choice is not respected. For answers on frequent questions no alternatives are offered. Answers are merely learned by heart. For questions like *Do you want... ?* students find the answers *yes, I do* or *no, I don't*. Unfortunately, no options are given, such as *Yes, I'd love one* or *Not really, Maybe later* etc., so that pupils could choose. The respective exercise book does not offer any alternatives either.

Although the teacher's book promises that language is practised in natural contexts, many exercises lack a plausible context and purpose. Furthermore, students always practice only one skill at the time.

The major part of exercises in *The New You & Me* is form based. Tasks for practicing present simple are a good example of a typical row of exercises on a new grammatical form.

From the first introduction of the present simple students are expected to use the verb forms including negation and question correctly. The course book contains a short story on CD, which is about a crocodile. Students then form sentences about the crocodile with a focus on using the third person singular present simple verb form. In another form based exercise students have to formulate sentences about a girl's day based on a text. Then they tell about their own day. The instruction does not suggest a purpose. It does not even say whether they should talk to their partners or write a text. At the end of the unit there is a "Study and change" text about an unnamed English school girl and students are asked to write about their own or a friend's day. Again no purpose for completing this task exists.

The workbook has three fill-in exercises in a row, where students have to fill the gaps in isolated sentences using *like/likes* and *don't/doesn't* correctly.

There is not a single communicative activity in the units where students practice present tense. The focus is clearly on verb forms in exercises without any communicative purpose and without any context.

As far as tenses are concerned, all workbooks almost exclusively contain fill-in exercises. Students have to concentrate on the correct forms of the verbs. Some exercises are personalized, e.g. students fill in a grid about their likes or dislikes concerning food, but no communicative purpose can be detected. Pupils merely write

down the sentences afterwards. No speaking, free writing, pair or group work activities are suggested. Even in the higher level workbooks we mainly find form based exercises, such as filling in words into blanks based on the texts in the course book, bringing sentences into correct order, matching sentence halves or writing correct sentences under pictures. The only difference between the lower and the higher level workbooks are the writing tasks. In the workbook for *The New You & Me* 3 writing picture stories is dominant. Unfortunately, no other writing tasks occur. Another function of the workbook is an overview of new words. Workbooks one and two have included tips on learning to learn. No communicative tasks can be found in any of the workbooks.

When past tense is introduced, students first have to fill in past tense form in a grammar rhythm, which they hear on CD before they encountered the tense in context. The second activity is similar. Pupils hear a song and have to fill in the blanks, which are past tense forms only. All exercises in the workbook concentrate on filling in correct past tense forms.

The same pattern holds true for *will*-future. The course book contains only one exercise based on a text. Students are supposed to write down sentences about themselves, starting *When I am older, I will/ I won't ...* The workbook has only one form based exercise. Students have to insert words from a box into a text in the future tense. No activities that trigger a natural use of this tense can be found.

For present perfect simple there are also only form based exercises. Correct forms have to be filled into blanks. Again no activities that promote the use of present perfect can be detected, not even any grammar games.

Present Perfect Progressive forms first have to be completed in a grammar rhyme. Short drills like this are justified, especially as the form consists of three parts, but unfortunately no communicative activities follow. In all speaking exercises pupils are forced to use the new tense. In the workbook, for example, pupils see pictures and must ask each other questions following the example given, e.g. *You look hot. Have you been jogging? – No, I've been playing squash.* No other activities follow.

Past progressive is also practised with the help of a picture, which shows what students were doing before the teacher came in. Pupils have to write down

grammatically correct sentences using past progressive. In the workbook there are two fill-in exercises only.

As little as free speaking is fostered in the course book series, as little is free writing cultivated. I do not believe that the “Study and change” texts really lead students to producing their own texts. I rather think that students become lazy. Their creativity is not stimulated if they merely have to change some words in order to adapt ready-made pieces of writing to their own contexts.

5.1.5. Summary

In my opinion the authors of *The New You & Me* series have not created real communicative purposes with information or opinion gaps or feedback from a partner. The exercises and the texts have been designed for learning individual words and structures only. The real use of language, i.e. a means for message transmission is completely lost. An unnaturally high number of activities is based on pictures. Pictures are misused for accuracy exercises as well as for stimuli for writing tasks. No communicative purpose exists when pupils transform information of pictures into written or spoken language.

Most rules are simplified and emphasize the use of adverbs of time. Some frequent functions of the English tenses are not explained. The text types hardly vary and the language is unrealistic. Tenses are often presented in implausible contexts, which students can hardly relate to real life situations. Tenses are usually introduced in texts, a simplified rule and form based exercises follow. No inductive activities can be found.

Pair work or free role-plays are rare, and if students are supposed to talk to each other, they always do so in controlled exercises. Group work or project work is not fostered at all, consequently communication strategies cannot be learned.

Throughout the course book series language is hardly used for real purposes in natural contexts, hence the communicative value of the course book is little. In this respect the series does not conform to the requirements of the CEFR and the Austrian syllabus for EFL, which demand that communicative competence be the ultimate goal in language teaching. However, separate exercises on all skills as listed

in the CEFR and the syllabus can be easily detected. The role which grammatical accuracy plays in the CEFR (see Chapter 4), i.e. that students can produce well-formed phrases, is the main aim of the course book series.

5.2. Red Line

5.2.1. Pedagogic approach

The authors of the series *Red Line* have made the compulsory parts slim so that all students can manage them and offered many options and additional material for individual training and learning. Listening and speaking are prioritized so that students learn to express themselves as soon as possible. Many communicative exercises assist them. Revision sections have been incorporated at the end of every unit and at other times in the course book, so that language that has been learned already is repeated as often as possible.

Differing young characters from various cultural backgrounds have been chosen to arouse students' attention.

Based on the CEFR students find tips on learning strategies as well as self-check sections. Learner autonomy is fostered in many respects as the analysis will show.

Lexis plays an important role in the course book series. There are extra sections which are called "wordwise", where new words are not learned individually, but in groups. We even find suggestions on word formation. There is a clear focus of the course book not only on genuine communication, but also on communication strategies. Pupils practise to make themselves understood even if they do not know the appropriate word by paraphrasing. They learn to listen out for the most important information and not to concentrate on individual words.

Several projects prepare students for situations in which they are likely to need English outside school, such as scanning texts for information, using the internet when preparing a speech or passing on information, which also fosters learner autonomy.

It is important to highlight that the compulsory "language parts" in the course book differ from all other sections. They focus on new structures and their formal appearance. In all other segments language is not displayed, but used as a vehicle for classroom communication.

The course books contain seven units, each of which is divided into five parts. The check-in section introduces the learners to the subject, often with the help of photos

([appendix 10](#)). Students are supposed to talk about the pictures and make guesses on what they are about. In this case students do not duplicate information as in many exercises in *The New You & Me*, but they are supposed to express their opinion on the picture. Listening comprehensions further introduce the topic and answer some of the questions that might have come to pupils' minds when talking about the photos.

The language part consists of short texts and exercises with a focus on grammatical structures, and is followed by a text or story section, which also contains activities on the texts. They concentrate, however, on contents not on forms.

Red Line 3 has an additional section, called "Talkwise", where students practise speaking in every day situations.

The next part is called "Wordwise" and focuses on vocabulary. Words are grouped according to their meaning (e.g. words that have to do with "school", opposites etc.). Students are also encouraged to guess or paraphrase words they do not know. Furthermore, we find some suggestions for word-formation, such as adding *-er* to verbs in order to form nouns ([appendix 11](#)). Students learn how they can exploit the possibilities of grammar.

The last section – "check out" - contains some mixed exercises (on contents as well as on forms) and a short section, which is based on the CEFR (see Chapter 4 for more detail). It tells students what they can do after having completed the unit and suggests some activities. Here is an example:

NOW YOU CAN

Talk about your school. → Stelle deine Schule in fünf Sätzen vor.

Say your name. → Stelle dich und einen Partner/eine Partnerin vor.

(Red Line 2008: 25)

Some revision sections in *Red Line 1* and *2* focus on form rather than on meaning (mainly fill-in and transformation exercises, see [appendix 12](#)), whereas the test practice parts in *Red Line 3* contain activities based on texts. The exercises comprise reading and a listening comprehension, vocabulary, passing on information and

writing. These sections are intended for students to check their understanding and knowledge of the forms of English which are listed and explained on the Grammar reference pages at the end of the book.

Red Line 3 has five useful extra sections within each unit that focus on the four skills. The first (appendices 13 & 14) is on presenting a topic. Pupils are offered a lot of suggestions on how to collect ideas and information, how to prepare and present the information. Some useful phrases, such as *We're going to tell you...*, *As Karin said...* and phrases for asking and answering questions on the topic are provided. *Red Line 1* already has a section on project work with a focus on group skills and presenting skills.

The fact that a lot of classroom time is dedicated to project work, is evidence that language as a vehicle for classroom communication is more important than language for its own sake. In projects students learn to use all skills simultaneously, which represents a more natural language use than the practicing of individual skills (see Chapters 2 and 4). Moreover, it has become extremely important to be able to present topics. At universities as well as in the professional life good presentations are more crucial than ever before.

Workshop 2 (appendix 15) is equally important. It is about how to use dictionaries, especially on how to find the most suitable translation in a German-English or an English-German dictionary, and how to read phonetic transcriptions. In terms of learner autonomy it is inevitable that students are able to use dictionaries. Furthermore, this is evidence that lexis plays an important role throughout the course book series.

[...] since the ability and willingness to consult a dictionary is crucial to "independence training" (Brumfit & Johnson 1979: 178)

In Skills workshop 3 students are prepared for listening comprehensions. They are advised not to try to understand every single word, but should concentrate on the gist when listening for the first time and on more details when they hear the text a second time. Some ideas on how to practise listening outside school, e.g. when hearing tourists speak English or when listening to English songs etc. are offered.

Reading comprehension is the focus of the fourth workshop. As mentioned in the introduction to the workshop, students will often have to look for facts in magazine articles, leaflets or internet pages and it is important that they are able to retrieve information quickly. Pupils are advised to look at the title and the pictures first and to scan the text quickly for the material they are looking for. Already *Red Line 1* devotes a section to practising reading for gist.

The fifth skills workshop in *Red Line 3* is about different kinds of personal writing, like diary entries, text messages, emails, letters or poems and rhymes. Students obtain feedback from a partner and give each other tips on how to improve their writing. I would also have included some tips on what to check when revising a piece of writing.

All five workshops are valuable sections for improving communication skills because understanding and producing written and spoken texts is an important basis for discourse.

A separate section after the last unit is named “Passing on information” (appendix 16) and contains activities that focus on the receptive skills. The aim is to prove to the students that they can understand texts and pass on information without understanding every single word. German is used to explain the activities. In *Red Line 1* students are even encouraged to use German when talking about the contents of a text. It is important to note that no word-by-word translation is suggested. On the contrary, it is emphasized that students need not understand every word and that there are often several possibilities of expressing the same. In *Red Line 2* and *3* students are asked to translate between English and German for people whose English or German is insufficient. Again no word-by-word translation is suggested, but students are encouraged to provide the necessary information in their own words, i.e. to pass on information.

In the story chapters (appendices 17 and 18) pre-, while- and post-reading activities are suggested. The ideas are, however, addressed to the pupils, not to the teacher. It is the student who should become active. The texts are far longer than the texts in the units.

Two examples of relating English to other school subjects (which is an authentic context for pupils) in project work can be found at the end of *Red Line 3*. The first one is on English and Biology and the nutrients in our food. Students are asked to make a poster about breakfast and present it to the other people in their class. The second example is on English and Geography ([appendix 19](#)) and on how to read a weather map and finishes with a suggestion for a presentation as well. These sections are of immediate interest for the students and consequently offer room for classroom interaction.

Three more projects (working with adverts, working with films and using the internet – [appendix 20](#)), where there is no focus on grammatical forms, but on lexical chunks and on the structuring of information are part of *Red Line 3*.

Longer story sections for recreational reading on well known and exciting topics (The Mystery of Loch Ness, Robin Hood, Harry Potter, King Arthur and The Canterville Ghost) can be found *Red Line 2* and *3*. I think that it is important that students are offered some texts for recreational reading as well.

Based on the CEFR the workbooks contain learning biographies, where students can tick for each skill what they can do well or what they find difficult.

5.2.2. Grammar rules

In contrast to the other course books, grammar rules do not appear in the section where new structures are introduced to the students, but at the end of the course book only. It is difficult to say if that is a disadvantage, as the immediate reference and examples from the new texts are lost. It is, however, more problematic that the grammar rules in *Red Line* are not reliable. They are often misleading, too simplified and consequently incomplete, or even false.

Too often do the rules stress that certain tenses must be used with specific lexical items (see also 3.2.). The rule on the present simple in *Red Line 1*, for example, explains that the tense is used for facts, for actions that occur frequently or regularly and for actions performed one after the other. *Red Line 2* adds a rule, which is misleading, even false. It says that with words like “*always*”, “*sometimes*” etc. present simple MUST be used. I have discussed my opinion on the emphasis of signal words

repeatedly. It is certainly not acceptable to tell students that they must use a specific grammatical tense with certain lexical items. Unfortunately, similar rules occur for all other tenses as well. We can think of numerous examples (*“He was always late when he was young”*, *“It’s always raining”* etc.), where one of the “signal words” is used with other tenses.

Other misleading terms which appear repeatedly in grammar rules (see also 5.1.2.) can be found, in the rule on the past progressive. According to *Red Line* the tense is used for actions stretching over a longer period of time and for actions that were still going on when another, short event happened. The terms “longer” and “shorter” actions unfortunately appear in many grammar rules, although they are highly ineffective (see also 3.4.).

Translations into German can also easily mislead pupils. The present perfect is translated as “Perfekt” into German. Students might be tempted to compare the uses in the two languages (see Chapter 3.1.). Two main uses are mentioned: for events that have just been completed and for actions that took place in the past, but whose results can still be seen or felt. *“Just”* and *“already”* are mentioned as signal words and their position between the auxiliary and the past participle is explained. To illustrate the position of the object and the time adjunct in present perfect sentences, unfortunately, an English sentence in the present perfect is translated literally into German. Even if the translation is suitable in this case, it might further add to the danger that students compare the tenses in the two languages, which are similar in form, but not identical in meaning.

I have already listened to the CD. – Ich habe die CD schon angehört.
(Red Line, Course book 2 2008: 144)

Some rules are extremely simplified and leave out relevant functions. The rule for the present progressive, for example, stresses that there are two different forms of the present tense, which do not exist in German. It is used for actions occurring at the moment of speaking or for actions not yet finished. It is suggested adding the words *“gerade, im Augenblick, im Moment oder jetzt”* (i.e. all different expressions for “now” in German). Some time adjuncts that can be a signal for the present progressive are listed – *now, right now, just, still*. An information on lexical limitations, i.e. that the

tense is usually not used with words such as *know*, *believe* etc. is missing. Present progressive with future meaning is explained in *Red Line 3*. According to the rule, the tense is used for arranged future events, and can be combined with words which signal the future, such as *tomorrow*, *tonight*, *next weekend*. It is not mentioned that the tense is often used for temporary events that do not necessarily take place at the moment of speaking, a frequent function of the tense, which is, however, often missing in grammar rules of course books.

Going-to future is also introduced in second year. The rule says that *going-to* is used for describing what one intends to do, or when one has a certain plan. This rule is also extremely simplified. Depending on the speaker's choice of the nuance of fixed versus planned, *going-to* or present progressive can be used.

The use of the present perfect is revised in the Grammar section and compared to the use of the past tense. One function of the present perfect is detached, namely the use of the present perfect for events that have had an influence on the present and compared to past events which are over and completed.

I do not think it is a good idea to compare only one function of a certain tense to one function of another tense. If it is effective at all to compare the past and the present perfect (which I do not believe it is, as my experience has shown me repeatedly that students become confused and tend to mix up the tenses even more), it would be necessary to compare several uses. It might even be a better idea to contrast present and present perfect, as the relationship to the present is stronger than that to the past.

The same danger arises when the *will* and the *going-to* future are compared (see also 3.1.). First the use of the *will*-future is explained. It is said to be used for something that will happen at a point of time in the future (*the next day, week or year*) or for prediction, often used in combination with *I think*, or *probably*. I think the first part of the rule is too simplified. Any future tense construction in English pins an event into the future, so the information does not help to see the concept of this tense.

The comparison of *will* and *going to* is contradictory. It says that it depends on what a person wants to express which tense must be used. The use of the modal

“must” is certainly not appropriate here. *Will-future* is said to be used for guesses or for talking about things that cannot be influenced, as in *The weather will be nice in Scotland*, whereas *going to* is used for plans and intentions. Again detached functions of the two future tenses are compared.

The past perfect simple is the last tense that is explained in *Red Line 3*. According to the grammar rule the tense is used for actions that happened before an event in the past tense. The function of the past perfect for changing circumstances is not mentioned. This function can, however, easily be acquired from examples. No communication problems will arise if students do not know about it from the beginning.

5.2.3. Texts and contexts

The course books *Red Line 1* and *2* are set into a context of four young people who attend a school in Greenwich. Their activities, thoughts, conversations and pieces of writing provide the background context for most of the texts in the two course books.

The texts in this course book series are more realistic than in *The New You & Me* (see 5.1.3.). Moreover, the functions of the tenses are presented in contexts where they are most likely to occur. In the language sections certain structures (tenses, for example) often occur unnaturally often, especially in the lower level course books (see for example a text in which the *going-to* future is introduced ([appendix 21](#))). The higher level course book texts and the story sections in all course books show a more natural use of grammatical structures; tenses are mixed in realistic frequency, which proves that it is possible to design texts for teaching purposes which are still realistic.

Many different kinds of texts can be found, e.g. songs and poems, information about different places, emails, stories, phone calls, advertisements etc, so that students have the possibility to see language in various contexts and text genres. Furthermore, their motivation is higher if the pattern and the structure are varied.

Present simple is the first tense that students are confronted with in *Red Line 1*. As in all other course books many texts contain the use of present simple as an example for its use for routine and habits.

A different function of the present simple, factual truth, is illustrated in a section about Greenwich and its sights in *Red Line 1*. Here the texts are far more natural and the aim of this unit is not a linguistic, but a communicative one. Within this context the present simple is an example of the tense as it is used for conveying factual information. Furthermore some cultural knowledge about Greenwich is provided. *Red Line 2* and *3* also contain a lot of information about the most famous sights of London (appendix 22) and about interesting places to visit around the U.K., where present simple for states and facts is used in a plausible context.

At the end of course book one, in a “Calendar” section pupils find information on various traditional days – Valentine’s Day, Red Nose Day, Guy Fawkes Day and Christmas, another context of the present simple’s use to express habits and facts. All the activities are communicative ones based on an information gap and are done in pairs or groups. Students are invited to find out more about one of these days or talk about their habits on these days.

Red Line 2 suggests a project work on animals. Groups are asked to collect material on an animal they find interesting (i.e. information on where it lives, what it eats etc.) and present a poster to the class. The context, of course, triggers the use of the present simple for factual truths, but the focus is on contents and presentation skills (appendices 23 and 24).

Some topics for discussion (what young people do with their pocket money, which music, sports they like, what they eat, places to visit etc.) introduced by pictures or listening comprehension trigger the natural use of present simple. First pupils have to work on information they receive from the text and then they are asked to express their own thoughts or talk about their personal preferences and habits.

In a project work on poems another meaning of the present simple is naturally used, although it is not mentioned in the rule. Present simple here is an example of talking about thoughts and feelings.

In the story sections of *Red Line 2* and *3* we find two longer coherent plays: *Robin Hood* and *The Canterville Ghost*. The two plays are in narrative present, so that students can imagine the plays to happen on a stage before their eyes.

The first context for the meaning of the present progressive of actions going on at the moment of speaking is shopping. A mini-context of a phone calls suggests that one person tells the other person what he is doing, an example of the present progressive for describing what is going on to a person who is not present, which is more realistic than duplicating information in pictures, which is still a common exercise, for example in *The New You & Me*.

Another context for the present tense is built around the topic “weather”. The present progressive is used to describe the weather outside and is contrasted with pupils’ favourite season, consequently a contrast between present simple and present progressive, illustrations of the one tense being used for habitual events and the other one being used for actions going on at the time of speaking. Some exercises contrasting the two verb forms follow with a strong focus on signal words.

In *Red Line 2* and *3* we do not find any topics or texts that trigger the use of the present progressive only. Fortunately, a natural use of the tense can be found in the course book series. The tense is incorporated in many texts where it is appropriate, for example in stories in direct speech or in letters and emails for temporary actions. Present progressive for complaints also occurs in *Red Line 2* in “*It’s always raining.*” (Red Line 2 2008: 114). There is, however, no explicit reference in the Grammar section to this use of the present progressive.

A more extensive use of the present progressive with future meaning can be found in *Red Line 3*. In an email a young girl tells about her fixed plans for the next day. She is going to Wimbledon to watch a match. Everything has been arranged, so the use of the present progressive is appropriate. For means of demonstration the tense is overused in the text and the following exercises. The use of the tense for arranged future meaning has occurred before, e.g. in a story in *Red Line 2* “*But tell me first, what we’re having for dinner*”, or in the Robin Hood play: “*When is the Sheriff coming to Sherwood Forest?*”, but no explicit explanation has been given so far.

Past Tense is introduced only in *Red Line 2*, where the pupils are back at school and talk about their holidays, an example of using the tense for past events. Irregular forms precede the regular forms. Based on the context, forms like *was*, *went*, *spent* cannot be avoided. A mixture of regular and irregular forms is certainly more natural than texts that contain regular verb forms only, as in *Friends*. (see 5.4.3.)

In the following stories past tense is mixed with other tenses in direct speech. A little context of a story competition and a sample text by one of the main characters of the course book is meant to illustrate the use of the tense and gradually lead students to writing their own stories in the past tense. Many other stories in past tense follow and further illustrate the use of the tense for past time.

A newspaper article about Stonehenge in *Red Line 3* is a realistic sample of a text where past tense occurs in its function of describing past (historic, in this case) events. Our knowledge of the world provides the context. There is no need to mention a definite past time adjunct. It is not even known when Stonehenge was built, but everybody knows that it was long ago. In *Red Line 3* we also find a newspaper article about a pickpocket on the London underground, where past simple and past progressive for background events occur naturally.

In a section about pop music in *Red Line 3* we find several entries in an encyclopedia about stars like ABBA, Elvis Presley, or U2. Past tense is used for past events (where and when the pop stars were born, what they did when they were young). The past is contrasted with present or present perfect for relating what they have done in the past years and what they are doing now. Here the contrast between the various tenses is set into a plausible context, so the texts do not sound artificial, but still students can learn from them.

The story sections in *Red Line 2* and *3* contain texts that are far longer than the ones within the units. We find a cartoon on the Wizard of Oz, stories about the mystery of Loch Ness, Harry Potter and King Arthur. The texts are far more coherent than the shorter texts and tenses are mixed naturally. Furthermore, students come to realize that the context is more important than time adjuncts that signal the “correct” use of a tense. The shift from present to past tense in the introduction to the story of Loch Ness is triggered by a single use of a definite time marker.

My family and I live in the most beautiful place in Scotland. [...] We McArthurs haven't always lived here. We lived in a big city of Glasgow until last year. (Red Line 2: 2008: 114)

From the context it becomes clear that the narrator is going to tell about past events and no further use of adverbs of time are necessary.

The Harry Potter story is a good example of an implicit time marker. Through the coherence of the text, the use of the past tense for the second verb is obligatory without having to use a time adjunct.

Harry Potter's parents are dead. They were wizards, so Harry is a wizard, too. (Red Line 3 2008: 108)

Of course, the texts are intended to improve pupils' reading skills, but there is no focus on language forms and no tasks associated with them. They have been added for recreational reading, which is important, as students sometimes just want to enjoy a piece of writing without having to fulfill tasks based on the texts all the time.

Past tense can also be found in emails and letters in both *Red Line 2* and 3, which young people write to each other. In these texts we find a realistic mix of tenses, as the nature of letters or emails is to tell other people what has happened, what they are occupied with at the moment or what they plan to do (appendix 25).

As mentioned before, the texts in the language sections are different from the stories. When the *going-to* future is first introduced in *Red Line 2* the text is even hard to read because half of the sentences contain a *going-to* verb form (appendix 21). Even *going to go* occurs several times within this unit as in *Lisa and her dad are going to go to the match, too*. (Red Line 2 Course book 2008: 63). It is not mentioned that merely *going* is often preferred over the clumsy form *going to go*. Furthermore, the use of the present progressive should have been preferred here, as the tickets for a match Arsenal against Manchester United in a week's time must be at hand already. Within the text the forms are even contradictory and might easily confuse students. The text first says that one of the girls is still saving for a new shirt, and later the girl says "*I am going to save my pocket money...*" Another text in the story section is about a present for an upcoming birthday. *Going-to* constructions are used more naturally and as an example of intentions of doing something. Furthermore, *going-to* is used in texts and stories where appropriate, as in the legend of King Arthur. "*There's going to be a big tournament*" (Red Line, Course book 3 2008: 113)

Will-future is first introduced in *Red Line 2*. A letter by one of the pupils to a friend offers several uses of the *will*-future. It occurs for prediction as in *You won't like*

Scotland, and with personal pronouns. *Will*-future occurs in a *when*-sentence constructions, in *He says, he'll take me to see the city when he's better*. We also find *will* with a modal touch in *[H]e won't stay in bed tomorrow*. The sample *I will send you a photo of...* exemplifies the use of *will*-future tense for spontaneous decisions (all examples are taken from Red Line 2 2008: 78). Another text is about a person who works on an oil platform, where many things can happen. In this context the construction *if* + present simple and *will*-future is frequently used. The context here justifies the use of *if*-sentence constructions. They are, however, slightly overused.

Red Line 3 revises the use of the *will*-future, albeit in rather restricted functions, for making predictions and in *if*-clauses. A diary entry is meant to serve as a sample, but *will*-future is used in almost every sentence, so the text sounds unnatural.

Will-future, of course, occurs naturally in any other text or story where it is appropriate for hopes, predictions (e.g. in the legend of King Arthur: *[...] she will become your wife. She will give you a son.*" (Red Line 3 2008: 111) and in poems and songs.

In a short picture story in *Red Line 2* pupils first meet the present perfect simple in its function for actions that have just been completed or that have an effect on present situations. The text that follows is connected with the picture story, but the main use of the present perfect here is for actions that have occurred repeatedly up to now, as in *[...] we've acted before*". (Red Line, Course book two 2008: 54). The next text is also linked with the previous two, and the present perfect is used for expressing result as in *"What have you done to your hair?"* (Red Line, Course book two 2008: 56). All three texts try to introduce the most common functions of the present perfect. For demonstration purposes the tense is overused in all of them. The same holds true for a revision text in *Red Line 3*, where young people tell about their jobs and how long they have been in the job and what they have learned so far.

I think the problem with tenses like the present perfect or *going-to* future is that they usually do not occur many times in a coherent text, as opposed to present simple or past tense, so they are more difficult to show in natural contexts. Consequently, they are overused in texts that have been made up for demonstration purposes. Fortunately, the course book series contains many coherent texts where

present perfect is used in more natural contexts, as in *Some people say they've heard strange noises from the Loch at night.* (Red Line, Course book two 2008: 117).

Past tense progressive occurs in *Red Line 2* in its main functions for describing background situations as in “[...] *it was raining when we arrived*”. (Red Line, Course book two 2008: 92) or for some past event or actions going on around a specific time in the past, e.g. one person tells the other person why she did not pick up the phone at a certain time the day before. These functions are revised in *Red Line 3*. A picture shows several people near a post office, which was robbed at a certain point of time.

Both, the past progressive and the past perfect are consequently used in a Sherlock Holmes story (Red Line, Course book 3 2008: 37ff) in their most typical functions. We also find two examples of gradual processes of change, one in present progressive – *It's getting dark out here. Let me in.* and one in past progressive – *“It was getting nearer.”* (both in Red Line, Course book 3 2008: 38). There are no explanatory notes on this use of the progressive aspect and I think that it is even not necessary to elaborate on this function, which is not a very frequent one. In this specific case, I personally think that the use can be acquired through enough input in the course of time. Hardly any communicative problems will arise if pupils do not know and use the function of process development from the beginning.

5.2.4. Exercises and activities

A typical pattern of exercises in *Red Line* can be observed for all new tenses. The activities gradually move from form focused to freer activities.

The texts as well as the exercises in the “language sections” concentrate mainly on form, whereas the story sections and projects, which form the larger part of the course book, contain many realistic activities with a real communicative purpose. All the language sections, however, have at least one listening comprehension, where students have to understand the meaning of spoken language. They also contain a personalized activity, named “Your turn” ([appendix 26](#)), in which students talk or write about the topic that has been covered in written or spoken texts and in which they can apply new structures to their own contexts. The activities are set in a way that a

certain new structure is very likely to occur, as in *What are you going to do...* (after school, tomorrow, etc.) (see Red Line 2, Course book 2008: 41)

The initial activities for the present simple, for example, concentrate on adjuncts of time, like *sometimes*, *always* etc. and on their position in the sentence. No real communicative tasks can be found at first. Students have to formulate correct sentences on information given in pictures. There is, however, a personalized activity, where pupils are asked to write or speak about what they do after school. The next section on present simple introduces the third person –s and consequently the two possible verb forms are contrasted. The first exercises are based on a short text, which is unnatural because it simply contrasts verbs with and without a third person –s. Fill-in and sentence formation exercises with a strong focus on the difference of the two verb forms follow. All the exercises in the workbook on present simple for routines are similar. Students have to fill in correct verb forms. Given the theory that the third person –s is hardly teachable, this does not make much sense.

A widely used exercise (contrasting sentences in present simple and present progressive overusing adjuncts of time) can be found in *Red Line 1* ([appendix 26](#)). The disadvantages of exercises like this have been discussed before.

The initial practicing stages for past tense are similar. Most of the exercises in the course book and in the workbook concentrate on the correct forms of the past tense, including questions and negations. Many fill-in exercises (most of the time filling in verbs in past tense, which are given in the infinitive) are part of the language section. The only difference from traditional course books lies in the fact that sometimes not only isolated sentences, but short texts are used for form based exercises, and that usually the isolated sentences contain names and activities that are connected with these persons (based on earlier texts etc.). Based on a sample postcard, where present simple and past simple are contrasted in a highly unnatural way, students are supposed to write their own postcard about their holidays to one of the young people in the course book. I do not see the communicative purpose of addressing somebody who cannot give any feedback. It would have been the better option if students had had to write to each other, so that they could have answered to each other.

The first activity for *going-to* future in *Red Line 2* is also form based. Pictures of people who are about to start an activity are meant to signal the appropriate use of

going-to constructions. One of the pictures, for instance, shows a young man with a book and some money in his hands ready to pay. One would rather say *He is buying a book* instead of *He is going to buy a book*. I do not think that intentions can really be shown in pictures as they are in our minds.

The procedure for practising the present perfect tense is similar to the tenses which students learned before. The tense is introduced in a text, followed by a number of form based exercises, such as making sentences from mixed lexical items, saying what has not been done based on a picture etc. We also find a gap filling exercise contrasting present perfect and past tense. Students have to insert either past or present perfect tense in nine isolated sentences, all of which contain a signal word.

In a fill-in text about William the Conqueror past or past perfect tense has to be inserted. Coherent texts, of course, provide a better chance for the students to decide which tense is more appropriate than isolated sentences do.

The *will*-future exercises concentrate mainly on the correct structure of if-sentences and is contrasted with *going-to* in a gap filling dialogue ([appendix 27](#)), which at least provides a context, so that it is easier to decide whether *will* or *going-to* is the better option.

Past and past perfect are contrasted in a text about the London Eye. Based on the six pictures how buildings developed into something else students are asked to make up sentences. Fortunately, not too much time is dedicated to formal distinctions.

The check-in sections encourage students to speak about a topic that will be covered. Students can speak freely and choose their language. Other speaking activities are based on stories. Students, for example, have to say their opinion about a story ([appendix 18](#)).

Most of the course book is dedicated to using language for non linguistic purposes. For one of the projects students are asked to collect pictures and information of their home town, similar to that about Greenwich: on transport or sights. Pupils are encouraged to create a map or invent a quiz. Students can work freely and can make use of the new structures (in this case mainly present simple) and vocabulary in a meaningful way. Even if there are many students from the same town, there will be

an information gap, because the groups will probably not bring the same pictures and information. Through such projects students come to use language for a real purpose.

A free writing activity is suggested after a story about a bike theft. Pupils are asked to write a different ending to the story. The use of the past tense in its function for story telling is triggered by the task. In the next unit students are supposed to write a complete story of their own. Writing stories, of course, serves the purpose of entertainment for the readers and offers room for class discussion because many different stories can be compared afterwards. A competition is one of the contexts of this unit, so the teacher could also decide to make a competition within the class and suggest naming the best story afterwards.

The workbooks 1 and 2 mainly consist of gap filling activities on new structures or new lexis. Workbook 3 has more free speaking and writing activities associated with the skills workshops in the course book, such as writing a poem ([appendix 28](#)). Students talk to a partner on how people in a picture might feel, or tell a story about these people, they are asked to arrange something for the weekend, or to write an ending to a story. Speaking or writing activities are usually based on texts or pictures.

Role-plays do not often occur, but most of them are free speaking activities, not just learning by heart a given dialogue (as in *The New You & Me* – see 5.1.). In a picture, for instance, students can see a woman and a teenager whose ball has just crashed into the lady's window. Based on this picture students have to act out a role-play.

Two listening comprehensions on Greenwich focus on understanding what the speakers talk about. In pairs students are asked to play roles at a tourist information centre with the help of the language in the text. The pupils can choose what they want to ask and answer, but no real information gap exists as all students have the same information. For such an activity folders of different towns could have been given to groups of students and another group could have asked which places are worth visiting.

Some language games and puzzles can be found in the course and the exercise book. They mainly concentrate on vocabulary (e.g. doing crosswords or playing

battleship with adjectives). Some activities have been composed for fun only, as a money quiz, where students can find out how good they are with money when they answer the questions and follow the track. For practising the form of the present progressive, for example, there is a short language game – in groups – which is based on an information gap. One person mimes an action and the others have to guess. In another game on the *will*-future, which is performed in groups, students write their wishes on cards, mix them and talk about what they will do if a certain wish comes. Here students are forced to repeat a certain pattern, but not in a drill which has no purpose at all (see Chapter 3.4.).

Past progressive is practised in a speaking exercise immediately after its introduction. Based on a picture where a post office and several people can be seen, students are supposed to say what people were doing at the time when the post office was robbed. The form based activity is, however, disguised as a game. The students are asked to look at the picture for two minutes, then close their books, take notes of what they have remembered and tell their partners.

We can also find some problem solving tasks. Students have to assemble a menu with their favourite food ([appendix 29](#)) or prepare a questionnaire about food. They are encouraged to make a poster about Britain, or bring notes that have been mixed up into order.

Discovering grammar, which is important especially for understanding the use of tenses (see Chapter 3), has not found its way into the course book. Only when past tense is introduced in *Red Line 2*, students have to categorize sentences into past and present ([appendix 26](#)). It is, however, not past or present time they are asked to detect, but past and present tense in a grammatical sense. *We play football every week* does, of course, express habit, which probably took place in the past, and will take place in the future.

5.2.5. Summary

The designers of *Red Line* have combined many ideas of the CEFR with those of CLT. Pragmatic meaning is in the foreground. Learner autonomy and learning to learn are dominant factors in the book.

Students are assisted in learning how to remember new words, how to understand a piece of writing or spoken language without concentrating on understanding every single word, on how to present a project and also on how to check and revise grammar. The whole course book can be said to concentrate on the learner. The idea of checklists is taken from the CEFR, but they are far more generally formulated than in the CEFR. In the workbook students are asked to evaluate their skills and to sign a contract declaring what they want to improve. The book offers a few suggestions on how students can improve their English outside school. Although for some speaking and writing activities no real purpose is given, many of the activities in the textbook have a non-linguistic goal, such as the presentation of a project, or the creation of a poster. In some exercises two pupils are given different information, e.g. two different pictures or texts, so that they have a real gap to close.

One of the drawbacks of *Red Line* is the formulation of grammar rules on tenses. They are often simplified to an extent that they are no longer reliable. The use of adjuncts of time for certain tenses is overemphasized. Students are even told that they must use a certain tense with specific adverbs of time. Unfortunately, some important functions of tenses (e.g. *going-to* future for events that are likely to happen) are left out. Grammar is always presented in written or spoken texts and the rules are provided in the course book.

Although many form based exercises can be found, they are restricted to the language sections and the test practice pages and the workbook. Therefore, I would rate the course book series *Red Line* among the most communicative ones. An important factor of communication is that we can choose our language. *Red Line* often offers several possibilities of expressing more or less the same with different shades of meaning in sections called “useful phrases”. Unlike, for example, in *The New You & Me*, several alternative answers are proposed for the question *Would you like to...?* or *Let’s...!* ([appendix 30](#)).

Furthermore, students often have the chance to apply the language to their own contexts and to express their opinion in free speaking activities, which makes the language authentic for the learners (see 3.3.) and which helps them develop communicative competence (see Chapter 2).

The most obvious difference between *Red Line* and other course books is the focus on communicative strategies. Paraphrasing unknown words, passing on information without translating, taking notes and working with dictionaries are promoted in the skills workshops and projects of *Red Line* (see also 5.2.1.). All these strategies are important communicative skills, which students need to be able to negotiate meaning in discourse.

5.3. English to go

5.3.1. Pedagogic approach

The course book series English to go has incorporated ideas of the CEFR as well as of the lexical approach represented by Michael Lewis. Expressions, such as *She's getting better at English* are learned as lexical phrases without a grammatical analysis in a section which teaches idioms containing the verb *get*. The teacher's book emphasizes that fixed lexical phrases should not be analysed, but learned as such.

Most of the new vocabulary is not presented as single words. Lexical items are usually grouped into collocations and arranged either by topic or by function within a sentence (appendix 31). The teacher's book takes up Lewis' suggestion (cf. *English to go*, Teacher's book 1, 2005: 6) that students should keep lexical notebooks rather than the common vocabulary books, where they can note down phrases they find most important, and where they can compose mappings or drawings which help them remember.

The teacher's book also explains that what we teach our students is not always what native speakers perform (see Chapter 1 on the importance of what is actually done as one aspect of communicative competence). "*What are your hobbies?*", for example, is a possible (and also feasible and appropriate) question, it is, however, hardly ever performed by native speakers. Instead, they would rather ask "*What do you do for fun/in your free time/when you're not at work?*" (cf. *English to go Teacher's book 1*, 2005: 8).

The course book introduces many expressions and some abbreviations which are typical for young English native speakers, like *wow*, *cool*, *CU* or *4U* etc. and which have also become common use, especially among the young generation in Austria. In contrast to all other course books, which I have examined, there is a difference of register in the various text types. Chatroom language, for example, differs significantly from the language in emails.

Typical ideas from the CEFR are the progress checklists, a language biography in *English to go 2* (a section about languages where student have to produce a poster of languages in the class), learning tips and portfolio writing. Writing pieces for the

portfolio are, not meant to be assessed, which conforms to the idea of a portfolio in the CEFR. The last unit in *English to go 2* is dedicated to portfolio writing. Pupils receive several tips on how to prepare a portfolio and on where to obtain feedback. Throughout the course books students receive a lot of support in improving their writing. Every writing task is accompanied by a “writing workshop”, where pupils find suggestions what to do before and after their writing and where they can receive feedback (appendix 32).

The authors also claim a focus on culture of English speaking countries and on interdisciplinary topics (cf. *English to go*, Teacher’s book 1, 2005: 3, see also 5.2.1.). They have created a separate icon (a globe) for “English across the curriculum”. Unfortunately, however, hardly any topics that link English to other subjects can be found in the course books, although English connected with other school subjects would create an authentic context for students. There are six sections altogether in four course books that are marked with a globe: one is a world map which shows English speaking countries (*English to go 1*), one is an information section about Canada in *English to go 2* and there is a map of Europe in the same course book. *English to go 3* does not have a single interdisciplinary part and *English to go 4* has three: one on preparing presentations, a very short one on plants and one on mathematical calculations.

There is a strong focus on the four skills, of which listening is predominant throughout all four course books. We find larger parts of listening comprehension, the so-called “The Treehouse Kids” radio programme, a radio programme made by children for children. Pupils are encouraged to concentrate on listening for gist and on understanding the meaning from context.

Many units are introduced by songs, which do not avoid unknown structures; others start with pictures, or online chats between two young people.

All units contain listening exercises, “Language to go” sections where the focus is on new lexis and “Grammar to go” segments, where new structures are explained. The last part of each unit is dedicated to writing workshops or project work. Students are encouraged to apply English to their own contexts. All writing workshops provide help through pre-writing tasks, such as grids or questions, as well as suggestions on how to obtain feedback from a partner and on how to revise the text. For their

projects students are also supported by the course book. Charts, photos, a sequence of tasks and other tips help students to prepare a presentation in groups.

Higher level and lower level course books are similar in structure. The proportion of reading, speaking, listening and writing exercises does not change. The texts increase in length from part one to part four of the course book series. Already in the second year we find a long science fiction story that is divided into two parts. The story is in past tense, but all other tenses occur naturally in direct speech. The aim is to provide a basis for group discussions.

Although diary entries and chatroom conversations occur frequently, the structure is not boring, as all texts are embedded in the context of the two young people who are accompanied throughout the whole school year.

5.3.2. Grammar rules

The sequence of teaching the English tenses in *English to go* is different from the other course book series and their functions are less confined. Although some frequent characteristics of the English tenses are not explained in the rules, they occur in the texts. The emphasis is clearly on the use, not on the rules of the English tenses. Problematic simplifications and misleading German translations do, however, occur in this series as well. Some explanations of tenses are clearer and more elaborate than in other course books (see for example the rule on *will*-future). Moreover, students are not misdirected into using a certain tense with specific adverbs of time, which is the case in all the other course books I have examined.

Present simple, for example, is translated into German as “Gegenwart”, a term which implies that it is used for events that take place at the moment. The rule is similar to the others and says that present simple is used for facts and regular activities. Many functions, some of which are relevant already at a beginner’s stage, are not explained, such as expressing thoughts or feelings. As mentioned before, not all special functions, such as commenting or reviewing films or books, have to be explained. It is more important that the selected functions are practised in communicative activities (see also 5.3.4.).

According to the rule Present continuous is used for events that happen at the moment of speaking (now), which is “gerade” or “zurzeit” in German (an expression that is not used among young people any more). It is emphasized that the tense does not, however, exist in German. The frequent use of the tense for temporary actions that do not necessarily occur at the time of speaking is not mentioned. Again there is no hint that progressive is not used with all words.

In *English to go 2* the phrase *is/am/are getting* + adjective/comparative is explained for a changing event, one of the functions of the tense. The phrases are learned as lexical units, not as a grammatical function. In this case it is probably the better option and serves the needs of the students. They can quickly retrieve the idiomatic expression and adapt it to their needs by completing the phrase with a few words, such as *It's getting dark*, *It's getting more difficult* etc.

The Past tense simple rule consists of only one sentence and explains that the tense is used for telling something that has happened already. The rule is clearly too simplified and unreliable. Past events could be expressed by present perfect, past perfect and their respective progressive forms as well. The larger part of the section is dedicated to the forms of the past tense. The difference between regular and irregular verb forms is explained at length.

The future with present continuous is introduced earlier (in *English to go 1*) than in most other course books. It is contrasted with *will*-future, the use of which is reduced to promises and spontaneous decision, although more functions are explained in the section of the *will*-future (see below), whereas present continuous is used to express that something has been arranged, e.g. *I'm visiting my grandmother this summer*.

Going-to future occurs for the first time in *English to go 2*. It is used to express plans and intentions. The use for actions that are likely to happen is not mentioned. There is also no hint that *going-to* is sometimes preferred over *will* in informal speech.

The present perfect rule says that the tense is used for events that are over, but still have an effect on the present. Some examples are given, such as *A lion has escaped from the zoo*, *I can't go inline skating*, *I have broken my leg*.; Furthermore, we use present perfect to narrate what we have done when the point of time is not

important, as in *I have often seen a leprechaun*. Another relevant function – for events that are still going on – is not mentioned.

The use of the *will*-future is explained in more detail than in *The New You & Me* and in *Red Line*. The rule says that the tense is used to express future time in promises (e.g. *I'll never do that again*) and predictions (e.g. *You'll like it*) and for decisions about the future that are made at the moment of speaking (e.g. *I'll call you back*). Several examples are given for statements, questions, negations and short answers. A tip warns pupils not to mix up *will* for the German word *werden* and *want to* for *wollen*, which is a typical “false friend”, as the verb form of the German word “wollen” (= want to) for the first and third person singular in German is “*will*”. In my opinion it is a good idea to draw students’ attention to typical mistakes that occur because of an interference with their mother tongue.

The past continuous rule explains that something was going on (a background action) when something new happened, which is certainly the most relevant function for the tense. For the description of the background action past continuous is used, for the new action past simple. It is falsely mentioned that *while*-sentences trigger the use of the past continuous, whereas *when*-constructions prefer past simple. Two misleading examples are offered: *While I was talking to my friends, my mobile rang*. and *I was talking to my friends when my mobile rang*. According to this rule the sentence *When I was talking to my friends, my mobile rang* would be incorrect. As anticipated the notion of aspect does not occur.

Past perfect occurs in *English to go 4* only. The grammar rule explains that the tense is used in narration, when we describe an event that had been over in the past already. This is a simple explanation, which is relevant for the learner and has a high reliability.

5.3.3. Texts and contexts

The course book series offers a wide variation of text types and situations. Texts range from cartoons to poems, stories, articles, songs and factual information to diary entries, emails and online chats. The last two text types are set into the context of young people chatting on the net or writing mails to each other. In *English to go 1* one

teenager is from Great Britain and the other one from the USA. They start chatting with each other. Students consequently meet variants of British and American English, e.g. *favourite* vs. *favorite*. In *English to go 2* students from England, the USA, Ireland, Poland and Australia meet in a chatroom and pupils learn about different ways of living in the respective countries.

The chatroom serves several purposes. First, new structures occur naturally in context. Second, students learn some important differences between British and American English and are exposed to informal written language, which differs considerably from written texts that provide factual information. Informal expressions like *lots of*, *tons of*, *yeah*, *me neither*, *guess what* occur in the young people's language.

The topics and the texts, especially the chatroom conversations, have been well selected and all suit the learners' needs and interests. They range from talking about pets, food, fashion to facing the problem of bullying or cheating at school.

All course books contain a lot of poems and songs. I have made the experience that especially young pupils easily learn poems and song lyrics by heart and consequently remember new structures and new lexis.

As far as grammar is concerned, *English to go* distinguishes itself from other course books. There is no avoidance of structures or grammatical forms that are not explained until later. As I mentioned in Chapter 3 I believe that grammatical features should not be avoided even if they seem still too complex to teach them explicitly at a certain level.

From the perspective of investigating the teaching of tenses in English course books, it is extremely interesting to note that already the second song in the first unit in the beginner's course book contains present simple, including third person forms, as well as present progressive, past and future tense. Instructions for exercises do not avoid tenses that have not been explained yet, either, for example *What do you think Jen and Sheraf are talking about?* (*English to go 1* 2004: 11). Present simple occurs in texts before there is an explicit explanation, for example, in a diary entry. In a letter present perfect occurs naturally – *Has your child lost something?* (*English to go 1* 2004: 15). Other grammatical forms that occur much later in other course books,

like “any”, passives, genitives, possessives etc. come up naturally in the texts whenever they are needed to convey a specific meaning.

The beginner’s course book follows the topics that students will typically be confronted with in their first year at gymnasium. They get to know each other and learn about the others’ hobbies and interests. In the end they talk about their plans for the summer holidays.

Throughout the whole series the online chats serve as plausible contexts for the introduction of different structures. At times the two young people talk about their habits, about past events, their plans or what they are occupied with at the moment. Compared to *Red Line* the new structures are, however, not overused to an extent that the texts sound unnatural ([appendix 33](#)).

The first topic that exemplifies the use of the present simple for habits is on the four seasons and activities that people do in summer, winter etc. A short diary entry shows the use of the present simple for habitual activities. As in many other course books there is a longer section on likes and dislikes of school subjects and food, which triggers the use of the present simple. In a chat between young students from different countries various ways of living, preferences and habits of young people are compared. The language is rather informal, which is typical for online chats, especially between teenagers. “*Just like us...*” (English to go Course book two 2005: 55). The whole section is about lifestyles of young people in different countries.

Present simple for factual information occurs in a unit about field trips. Several pictures are described and serve as inputs for places to go. The focus is, however, not on the tense, but on the topic. Students also talk and write about a trip using past tense. In a letter, in which a teacher informs parents about an upcoming school trip, mainly future tense occurs, whereas information about interesting places to go triggers the use of the present tense.

A topic that meets the needs of pupils is “learning”. In short texts, on which the learners can base their own texts, students describe how they learn best. The next units are on healthy and unhealthy eating habits, on pets, and chores at home and trigger the use of the present simple. The topics are introduced again by an online

chat. In the second course book we find another interesting topic, namely how and what young people read.

There are two extra units, which are certainly relevant for the pupils. In a section about Halloween it is explained how a pumpkin is made into a lantern followed by a ghost story. The second background unit is about Christmas. As the traditions differ significantly between Great Britain and the USA the online chat compares the various habits and makes room for discussions in the classroom. The use of the present simple in these contexts serves as a natural example of the tense used for habits or tradition.

Some short instructions for making decorations are offered, a use of the present simple that is not explained in the rule, but comes up naturally in this context.

For the introduction of the present progressive the chatroom serves as a natural context again. The two young people chat about what they are doing at the moment. The tense is not overused, but exemplifies that it describes actions going on at the moment of speaking, which another person cannot see. Present progressive also occurs in emails, which is an equally plausible context for using this tense because the other person is not present. The next topic is about champions and stars and what they have to do. In a text about an Austrian champion in gymnastics, present simple and present progressive are contrasted. Normally the girl practises two or three hours a day, but before the competition she is training six hours per day. Present progressive is used as an example of events which take place for a limited period of time, and present simple as an example of routine behavior.

In the second course book we also find examples of the present progressive for a gradual process of change in two emails. "*School is getting better*" or "*It's getting cold here.*" The expressions are learned as lexical phrases. The whole section is on the verb *get* and its idiomatic uses. Many other idioms can be found in all four course book of this series, which confirms what the teacher's book says about learning lexical items as chunks whenever it is appropriate. In the case of *it's getting* it is certainly the better investment (see also 5.3.1.).

When past tense is introduced, it is not used exclusively in a text, as in many other course books. The two young people chat about the previous day – a school play and

a birthday party. Questions and answers in the past occur naturally, but present tense is used as well, e.g. *Sleepy is a funny dwarf*. We also find a short newspaper article about the school play. In the second course book past tense is taken up to talk about the holidays.

Will-future also first occurs in the chatroom. One pupil was caught chatting. *Will*-future samples serve as examples for promises (*I'll never do that again*), spontaneous decisions (*I'll call her back*) and prediction (*You'll like it*). The course book authors have managed to exemplify the main uses of the future tense in a short text, which does still not sound artificial. Later we read a diary entry by the boy who was caught chatting, where the *will*-future is slightly overused. In these chatroom conversations several tenses occur, however, naturally side-by-side with the new tense ([appendix 34](#)).

In a section about plans for the holidays *will*-future for predictions is contrasted with present continuous for fixed plans. The main texts are the chatroom and a diary entry again. The whole unit about summer: sun safety, water safety or cycling. The focus is on contents, not on the future tense.

Going to- future is introduced in a listening comprehension. The authors of *English to go 2* tell the pupils what they are going to learn in their second year of English, which shows how the tense is used for the near future. The unit is, however, not dedicated to *going-to* structures; the focus is on the pupils' plans for improving their English. *I plan to*, *I want to*, *I'm going to* are used side by side, so that the children can choose from various structures.

The present perfect is first introduced in the chatroom again. The young people talk about Nessie, and other mystical creatures and ask each other if anybody has ever seen them, a common example of the present perfect in its use for actions in an uncompleted period of time. A song takes up this use of the present perfect and is meant to internalize the form. In *English to go 3* we find a revision of the present perfect for expressing how pupils have changed over the summer. The topic is, however, the new school year and various tenses are used in a natural mix: past for what happened in the summer, *going-to* future for what they are going to do at school etc. Later the present perfect occurs with the adverbs (*not*) *yet* and *already* when the young people chat about tests they have already had. The focus is clearly on the

meaning and position of the adverbs. In another topic (cheating in tests) questions, such as *Have you ever cheated?*, exemplify the use of the tense with certain adverbs again, but students are supposed to express their opinion on cheating or helping other pupils in tests, for which they will need different tenses. Thereafter present perfect is mainly used naturally in combination with other tenses in various contexts.

The past progressive first appears in a diary entry in *English to go 2*. The focus is on *while* sentence constructions, but an instance of a *think* as an activity verb can also be detected. *I was thinking about... the whole time*. The use reflects the rule which also concentrates on *when* and *while* constructions (see also 5.3.2.).

After all main functions of the tenses have been introduced they are used in combination with each other in various functions and plausible contexts, which are of immediate interest for students. *English to go 3* contains a section about pre-teens and about first love, as well as a unit about books, such as Harry Potter, where students learn how to write book reports, using mainly present simple.

An underlying topic of the course book three is “professions”. Various job descriptions occur in different units. People tell what they have to do in their jobs, which skills and interests they need to bring. *English to go 4* has sections on racism and drugs and factual information about Ireland and Australia.

All functions of the English tenses are revised in the higher level course books and summarized at the end of the book in a grammar overview section. Many occurrences in the texts are, however, not explained. Several functions, which we find in Grammar Reference books (see Chapter 3) can be found in natural speech or in texts without being made explicit, such as present or past progressive for changing situations present simple for reports.

5.3.4. Exercises and activities

English to go contains various exercises, in which the focus is on pragmatic meaning rather than on form. Even when the main attention is paid to grammatical forms, the activities are often set into funny mini-contexts, which certainly increases students' motivation. We find free role plays or sketches, which are not based on ready-made samples. The whole course book series is structured around topics. The climax is

usually a project in groups or individual writing. Students are guided through these projects or writing tasks and encouraged to obtain feedback from their classmates (appendix 35). Many personalized tasks have to be accomplished in groups or teams and students can usually choose structures. For speaking exercises only suggestions are offered, no ready-made sentences, so that students can choose how they want to express themselves.

In a section on the four seasons we can find the first focus on present simple. The same tasks (students have to describe what they do in the different seasons) are practised in several skills. First pupils hear a dialogue where two persons talk about the sports they do in the different seasons. Then they talk to their partners about what they do in spring, summer etc. After that they read a diary entry on the same topic and finally they compose a text, where they can choose to write about what they or their families do, what happens in school or in nature in the four seasons (appendix 35).

Although the topic for each activity is slightly varied, I think that working on the same task, differing only in the skill, might be boring and consequently demotivating for the children. On the other hand, we could argue that practising the same structure in speaking, reading, listening, writing can help internalize it. Anyway, this pattern is not repeated. On the contrary, we find a huge variation of activities. Some of them are form based (filling structures into gaps), and controlled (e.g. matching sentence halves) but many of them are less controlled, foster the students' creativity and give them the chance to choose what they want to say. Free speak activities based on topics, pictures or texts occur regularly. A lot of projects encourage students to use English for non-linguistic purposes, such as making a poster about the problem of bullying at schools or making a brochure about a town. Each unit concludes either with a project or with a writing workshop.

One of the writing workshops is based on six short sample texts, in which pupils in England report about how they learn best. The language sounds natural, as there is no explicit focus on certain forms. Modal verbs, affirmative and negated present simple forms, as well as forms of *to be* are used in a context which is interesting for the students. The topic might help pupils find out how their peers learn best. Before the writing task pupils are advised to talk to their partners about learning and to take

notes. Then they produce their texts and ask for their partners' feedback. Based on the feedback they revise their texts. This task is an example of a communicative activity. There is an information gap, a purpose (find out how your partner learns best) and feedback. Students can freely choose the language from all the forms they have learned (e.g. *I can't learn when; I don't want to study, I learn best, my sister helps me, English is fun...*). The sample texts are there to help them structure their texts and to provide some new lexis, but they differ from the "study and change" texts in *The New You & Me* significantly. Students do not merely change single words to make the texts become true for them, but they can choose from a larger pool of lexical items and grammatical structures when they produce their own personalized pieces of writing.

Some role plays of certain situations (e.g. buying tickets, asking for information or ordering in a restaurant) give students the chance to practise English in real life situations. We also find speaking activities which foster fluency by limiting students' talking time to a few minutes ([appendix 36](#)). I think that it is sometimes important to encourage students to speak more quickly than they would usually do and to say as much as they can in a very short time, so that they lose their fear of talking. In *English to go 4* the speaking activities are often based on opinion gaps and students can talk freely. They are given the topic only, such as "drugs" and "alcohol".

Whereas the course books for all four years clearly focus on communication, the workbooks contain mainly exercises on forms and even more on lexis, as well as checklists and learning tips. Some writing activities or reading comprehension exercises can, however, be found in the higher level workbooks.

As in all other course books, present progressive is often used for describing pictures. Listening exercises occur in every unit and prepare students for the speaking activities. For practising the present progressive, for example, two funny pictures are shown and students are asked to invent what is going on. The pictures show untypical situations, so that students are likely to invent various stories ([appendix 37](#)).

A short game (playing charades) also triggers the use of the present progressive. In the writing workshop, which focuses on present progressive, students have to produce a text about something that is happening. They can choose between

different topics: getting ready for a birthday party, describing something for someone who cannot see, describing a picture, describing what is happening on TV. First they are advised to brainstorm on the following questions: *who, what, when, where*. After that they describe something without telling what the situation is. Then they listen to a partner and try to guess what the situation is about. Finally they rewrite their texts to make them better.

Form-focused exercises are not predominant in the course book. Nevertheless, the first exercise on past simple is a text where students have to fill in the missing past tense forms. In contrast to other course books students do not get isolated sentences but the coherent text is based on one of the chatroom talks before.

After having read a newspaper article students are supposed to answer questions on it. An interview about the school play on CD is meant to prepare students for the next activity. They have to interview a partner about their last holiday, weekend etc.

In another form- focused exercise students have to fill in the correct negated past tense forms. The next activity is free speaking. Students have to tell their partners about something funny they did in the past. Afterwards they should tell another partner about their first partner's story.

A writing workshop proposes different topics, which trigger the use of the past tense. Students can write a newspaper report, a radio script, a diary entry, a story, or about something else which they can choose. Several suggestions on giving feedback are offered: *what do you like, is the information correct, is the past simple correct?* Based on this feedback students can rewrite their drafts.

Sometimes students have to answer questions on stories. Whereas in *The New You & Me* students can usually copy paragraphs from the text, in *English to go* they have to say their opinion on a story, i.e. what they liked or what surprised them.

One Treehouse Kid listening comprehension is on pets and chores. After that students are asked to choose a topic for a speaking activity, each of which triggers the use of a different tense. They can talk about the previous day – using past tense mainly, a(n) (imaginary) pet (using present simple), about what is happening right now or describe a picture (practicing present progressive). A similar exercise can be found in the second course book. Students can choose between three different

pictures and either describe what they can see, or what is happening or what happened. As always in *English to go*, the pictures do not show typical situations, but they are either funny or strange, so that pupils have fun when they practice. Furthermore, many different stories are likely to be produced by different pupils.

Students can usually always choose between different topics for speaking as well as in writing tasks, which certainly increases their motivation to fulfill the tasks.

The use of the *will*-future is meant to be discovered by students. They are asked to underline the parts where Jen and Joe talk about the future in the chatroom ([appendix 34](#)). Will-future is used in various functions, but not overused.

In a very short activity students have to match sentence halves. The six sentences show various functions of the *will*-future, such as spontaneous decisions, promises or predictions ([appendix 38](#)).

A less controlled exercise, which is certainly fun for the students, is based on three pictures, which show unusual situations again. In one picture, for example, there is a man in a rubber boat with a laptop and a mobile phone in his hand. The boat is moving towards a waterfall. Students are asked to say what will happen next. Of course, pupils are supposed to use *will*-future, but they can choose what they want to say.

When students are supposed to practise *going-to* structures, the focus first is on the correct form only in a short speaking exercise. After that students can talk about what they want to do in the near future to improve their English. They are encouraged to use various ways of expressing their intentions for the school year, such as *I plan to*, *I want to*, *I am going to*. In groups they make a poster about the goals and finally they write a letter to their teacher, a friend, a classmate, to themselves or to the authors of *English to go*. A few tips tell students how to start and finish such a letter.

Present perfect is first practised in a fill-in exercise. After that students can talk to a partner and ask each other if they have ever *seen a lion*, *been to England*, *gone camping* etc. ...). Then they write sentences about themselves using present perfect. The workbook focuses on the third form of the verb. Pupils have to complete a table and finish a crossword by filling in the past participle form. Still form based, but funny is the next activity, where students are asked to make funny sentences with present

perfect by combining various sentence parts in an unusual way, e.g. *Have you ever eaten cat food?* This is another example how pupils can easily be motivated to practise a structure in a drill.

In another fun activity there is no focus on present perfect any more. Students create their own mythical creature. They invent a funny name, describe its appearance, what it does, where it lives and so on ([appendix 39](#)). This exercise triggers, of course, present simple, but the focus is on talking about strange things people claim to have seen, another example how texts and activities in *English to go* are linked rather by topics than by structures.

Past continuous is also first practised in a form based fill-in exercise. The focus in the section where past continuous first occurs, is, however, on telling stories. In a writing workshop students have to write a story of their lives. They are advised to use past progressive for background actions. Then they have to read to their partners, stop after each scene and ask their classmate what will happen next. We can see again that the units are not dedicated to a certain new structure, but to a topic.

The past perfect first appears in a listening comprehension. Thereafter students perform a controlled speaking activity using structures like *I had never ... until I was ... years old* or *Last week I had just done my homework when my parents got home*. The writing workshop suggests producing a diary entry by someone who lived long ago, his or her daily life, work etc. Students then read their texts to the group, pause to answer questions, and use the questions they cannot answer for the revision. They are not obliged to use past perfect, but they can if they need to.

English to go is the only course book in which I have found inductive grammar exercises. Most of them are, however, not very sophisticated. It seems that the course book designers felt an obligation to have grammar and language discovery exercises, but the basic idea of inductive meaning has been lost. Often students merely have to underline a new structure. Sometimes they have to explain what the forms mean. The rule is usually stated next to the exercise so that students can easily copy what they read. Most discovery exercises are based on isolated sentences. The example in [appendix 40](#) is typical for the inductive grammar exercises in this course book series. I am not convinced that students will profit much from this kind of activity. Furthermore, the question is on grammatical tense,

not on time relationships. I would have included an awareness question on both, the tense and the meaning which is expressed by the tense.

In order to exemplify what I would call an inductive grammar exercise I have copied one of my favourites from Tricia Hedge ([appendix 41](#)) on the various ways of expressing future time. Here the focus is on the meaning of the various forms although they are grammatically not all future tenses.

5.3.5. Summary

English to go does not completely restrict the pupils in their choice of language. Usually they can express their own ideas, tell their own stories. The different units are dedicated to certain topics and consequently students practise several structures and tenses. Form based exercises are rare in the course books, but dominant in the workbooks.

There is definitely a strong focus on lexis in this course book series. Words are grouped into topics, several idiomatic expressions occur and even young people's colloquial expressions are not left out. The chatroom conversations provide an insight into informal language and different cultures, and they are plausible contexts for any topic and structure, which leads to a natural mix of tenses throughout the course book. Several diary entries serve the same purpose, but the language is more formal than in the chatroom.

Tenses are not avoided even at the beginner's level. They occur in songs and instructions long before they are explicitly explained or practised. The topics that the young people chat about are based on learners' interest at the respective age. In several cases students can choose the text type or the topic which they want to speak or write about, which certainly increases their motivation. All four skills are given equal attention. We find listening exercises in all units and fluent speaking is fostered. Several shorter and longer texts serve as a basis for classroom discussion and the focus is on understanding the gist, not every detail. Improving students' writing skills is fostered in the writing workshops, which alternate with project work, in which the focus is on an integration of skills.

Although some form based exercises are necessary, the course book authors have often skillfully disguised them as language games or brought in humorous elements (e.g. funny pictures).

Concerning the discovery exercises, I think none of them is effective.

A strong alliance to the CEFR is obvious in the course as well as in the workbooks. Self-check lists are part of every unit.

Concerning the rules of the English tenses the course book does not differ from the others in some respects. Many rules are simplified and frequent functions are not mentioned, not even in the grammar overview section (appendix 42). The overview is the same in the beginner's and in the higher level course books. No more functions are mentioned for the respective tenses. In the texts, however, many shades of the English tenses, which are not listed in the grammar overview, occur. Thus, students can discover the various possibilities of using tenses for themselves. There are, fortunately, no exercises which contrast the use of one or two isolated functions of tenses, such as past and present perfect or *will-* and *going-to* future, which is common in other teaching material. Furthermore, there is no overstated use of adverbs of time.

In my opinion the focus on language for communication in the course book series *English to go* dominates the attention that is paid to grammatical forms. Thus, in my opinion, the series qualifies as communicative language teaching material.

5.4. FRIENDS

5.4.1. Pedagogic approach

According to the teacher's book, the focus of the course book series *Friends* is on teaching children with multiple intelligences and on respecting different learner types. It contains activities for visual or auditory types, as well as for kinaesthetic characters, so that every pupil benefits. The series is based on the CEFR. There is a strong emphasis on learner autonomy (e.g. by keeping a portfolio where pieces produced in the foreign language are collected), on different learning styles and on the four skills. Furthermore, the series respects multiculturalism, which I find extremely important. In Austria many children come from different cultural backgrounds. The course book introduces children from various nationalities and appreciates their culture. In the section on food *Friends 1*, for example, suggests having a food party with different dishes from various countries.

The contexts (coming to a different country, going to clubs, celebrating birthdays, watching television, going shopping etc.) ask for certain words and certain structures, but the course book does not seek to tick off language functions (such as introducing, asking for permission, etc.) one after the other. Unfortunately, however, as much as the texts in the course book are embedded in a context, no real purpose or imagined audience can be perceived in many speaking and writing activities. Similar to other course books, which I have examined, the "climax" of a unit is often a personalized writing activity, which only says "*Now write about yourself....*", and suggests putting the finished product into a portfolio, an idea that has been taken over from the CEFR. I do not want to argue that producing a portfolio is not a good idea. It is certainly motivating for many students to have a collection of writings and other pieces that are connected with the English language, which they can show to their parents or friends. Collecting pieces of writing is, however, no communicative purpose. The focus in this case is clearly on the end product, not on the process and purpose of writing.

The layout of the course book series is appealing and varied. The children in the pictures are about the same age as the Austrian pupils who use the course books. Although all units in *Friends 1* start with a picture dictionary, the activities do not follow a strict pattern. We can find different text types: emails, dialogues, timetables and stories. There are also extra sections at the end of the course books, which are about topics of immediate interest for young people (festivals, traditional celebrations in various countries, Christmas, Easter or Halloween. *Friends 4* contains an additional list of reading tips.

In *Friends 1*, some frequently used questions and answers, which children will probably ask each other when they meet for the first time, are introduced, such as *Where are you from?*, *Do you speak English?*, *Do you like Wales?* or *We don't speak German*. There is no analysis of questions with *do* or negations with *don't*, they are just learned as lexical chunks.

5.4.2. Grammar rules

Grammar rules often come in several parts. Only the functions that students have encountered in the texts are explained. Any further functions or forms come in a second or third part. For easier orientation they are numbered, e.g. Present Simple (2).

Although the four course books I have examined differ considerably in many respects, the rules on the English tenses are equally problematic in all of them. In *Friends* some rules are also simplified to an extent that they become unreliable. There is too much focus on adverbs of time and other words that often occur in combination with particular tenses. Moreover, we also find confusing comparisons between tenses, as well as misleading German translations.

The rule on present simple says that the tense is used for habits, facts and regular activities. Present tense used for descriptions and thoughts does, however, occur frequently, especially in *Friends 2*. This function is not mentioned in the rule, but its use is exemplified in texts.

Adverbs of frequency are used exaggeratedly often in the texts for beginners. The disadvantages of using adverbs of time too often with a tense have been explained

before. However, we also find a counter-example. One text contains an adverb which is frequently associated with present simple in a past tense narration. *The magician always laughed at him.* (Friends 1, Course book 2: 95)

Similarly, there is a focus on lexical items, such as “*I think*”, “*I hope*” or “*maybe*” for the use of *will*-future. However, all these words can be used with other tenses as well. If we look at lexical items that are associated with the present perfect, such as *yet*, *already* and *just* and take an example from the Cambridge Grammar - *You just said you weren't hungry* (Carter & McCarthy 2006: 98), we easily understand that connecting signal words with tenses can lead students into the wrong direction.

Contrasting tenses is common in this series as well. Present simple, for example, is contrasted with the use of present progressive. Only two functions of present simple, namely regular activities and habit are mentioned, and the use of the present progressive is reduced to actions taking place at the moment of speaking. When past and present perfect tense are compared, the focus for the past is on the details, such as a particular point of time. When we use present perfect, the rule says, it is not important or not known when the action took place. Furthermore, present perfect expresses that a situation started in the past and is still going on, whereas actions in the past tense are finished. Signal words for both tenses are mentioned. Problems that arise from such comparisons and emphasis on signal words have been discussed before ([appendix 43](#)).

Going-to is contrasted with the use of *will*. *Will*-future sentences are always introduced by *I think*, *I hope* and *maybe*. Unfortunately, the distinction and similarities between these two ways of expressing a future reference are not clear. It is never mentioned that both future tenses can be used for intentions, but *going-to* is more subjective. Sometimes there is hardly any difference in meaning, as in *Hurry up or we're going to be late!* or *Hurry up or we'll be late!* (Carter & McCarthy 2006: 630). Most course books, including *Friends*, pretend that only the one or the other future tense is appropriate.

A misleading German translation can be found in the rule of the present progressive, for example. The tense is called “*jetzt-gerade-Zeit*”, which is, of course, a simplification. The rule is reduced to one function of the tense. It may not be necessary to mention all possible uses of the present progressive in the first rule, but

the most frequent uses – for actions that take place only for a limited period of time or for actions that are in progress - not necessarily at the moment of speaking- should be covered.

The past tense rule explains that the tense is used for something that happened (at some time) in the past. Unfortunately, the German word “*irgendwann*” (*some time*) is confusing. It carries the connotation of an unspecific time, which is exactly the opposite of what the Grammars tell us. The examples do not show the typical use of past tense (appendix 44). *Friends 2* repeats the use of the past tense by referring to it as a “yesterday-tense”, which means that it is typically used for events in the past.

Sometimes, however, German explanations can help students. The rule for the present perfect progressive says that the tense is used for activities that started in the past and that are still going on or have just finished, in German we would say “*schon seit*”, which is true in most cases. Only if an event has just finished and its effects are still presents, as in “*“Maybe they can see, I’ve been crying.* (Carter & McCarthy 2006: 617, see 3.1.8.) the German translation would be inappropriate.

As indicated, many rules are extremely simplified and consequently unreliable. The rule on *will*-future, for example, says that the tense is used for talking about the future, making predictions and expressing expectations. In my opinion the rule is too general and not reliable at all. We can speak about the future in many different ways.

The present perfect simple tense is presented in *Friends 2*. According to the rule the tense is used for events in the past which are tied to or have an effect on the present. This rule is not completely reliable. Present perfect can also be used for events that are uncompleted or happened in an uncompleted period of time, as in *I have not eaten anything today*.

In other course books the same functions which are explained in lower level course books are simply repeated in higher level course books in the so-called revision sections. *Friends* often adds explicit explanations of tenses in later course books. In *Friends 4*, for example, the present simple for timetables and programmes is introduced and explained. The rule says that present simple can be used even if the time reference is in the future. Some functions are not mentioned, such as narration (although stories in the present simple occur frequently in the book),

instruction, expressing feelings and thoughts, but they can also be learned through experience.

A revision of the present perfect simple in *Friends 3* adds that we can express that an event has taken place and how long a certain situation has lasted by using the present perfect tense.

Only in *Friends 4* present progressive with future meaning is mentioned. The rule says that present progressive can be used for personal arrangements or fixed plans in the near future. This, however, contradicts the explanations of *going-to* future in *Friends 2*. According to the course book, *going-to* is used for intentions and future actions that have been arranged already, as well as for talking about future events when signs point to it.

Past progressive first occurs in *Friends 3*. The rule states that the tense is used for events that were not finished at a particular time in the past. Furthermore, the past progressive shows that two or more actions were going on simultaneously (often in *while* constructions) or that an event was still in progress when another event started. The latter would be expressed by past simple. The extra tip tells the students that some verbs do not normally take the progressive form, such as *be, have, know, like* etc., a hint that I have not found in the other course books. Unfortunately, no counter-examples are provided that show that sometimes above mentioned verbs can take an imperfective aspect, as in idiomatic expressions such as *having breakfast*.

Past Perfect Tense occurs in *Friends 4* only. The rule tells students that we usually tell stories in past tense and we need past perfect tense for referring to events before that time. An extra tip says that sentences with *before* or *after* normally contain two time frames, past and past perfect. This rule is simple and relevant for the learners' need at that stage. It is not necessary to explain that the tense can also be used for changing circumstances. This function can easily be acquired through enough input in the course of time.

5.4.3. Texts and contexts

The course book writers have solved the problem of producing texts, especially dialogues with no purpose, by setting the whole course book into a context: in *Friends 1* children from various countries come to live in another country for one year, in *Friends 2* an English pupil comes to an Austrian class and the other students in her class try to speak English with her. In *Friends 3* and *4* the leitmotif is an English youth magazine, for which the stories and texts are written by young people. The authors have exploited the context in several ways. It brings in many cultural aspects of the different countries, i.e. Austria, Wales and the USA in *Friends 1* or Canada, Ireland, India, Australia and South Africa in *Friends 3*. In the beginner's book Austrian twins accompany the students of the course book when they learn English, as they are improving their knowledge of the language at the same time and note down - in an easily understandable way- words and structures they find important. A lot of the written texts are emails between the children which serve a real communicative need for the course book characters. The same holds true for the dialogues, which – in *Friends 1*- are conversations between the guest parents and the children or among children at school. They have a real need to understand and talk in the foreign language. As children are new at the Austrian, respectively the Welsh school, it is plausible that they introduce each other, talk about preferences, their families or habits. The age of the protagonists in the course books and the background of going to school build up the emotional context for Austrian pupils at the gymnasium. The whole context of the first few units triggers the use of the present simple. Unfortunately, the contrast of the first and the third person perspective (consequently a contrast between the two verb forms) is exaggerated to the same extent as in *The New You & Me*. Moreover, third person forms of full verbs have been completely avoided until then, but they occur unnaturally often as soon as students have seen the rule.

The present simple is not completely displaced by other tenses which the students are supposed to learn in their first year. In *Friends 1* there is one more unit on television, another one on asking one's way and some extra units that have texts in the present simple, as well as a longer email where present and past tense are mixed. In the higher level course books of *Friends* there are only a few texts that

contain one tense form predominantly: when there is a revision of the form and use of a certain verb form. In all other texts tenses are used and mixed naturally without any emphasis on time adverbials. The meaning of the present simple for facts occurs only once in *Friends 1*. There is a very short paragraph, which is about a traditional day (Pancake Day) in Wales. In higher course books, there are numerous information sections on various English speaking countries. Facts are a predominant function of the present simple in *Friends 3* and *4*.

Friends 3 is set into the context of producing an international youth magazine. We find invitations to produce articles for the next issue of the magazine. The topics of the magazine are interesting for young people and the articles by the children from all over the world provide real information without any focus on grammatical forms. There are, for examples, suggestions by an Australian teenager on how to take photos under water.

The first text that focuses on Present progressive in *Friends 1* describes the following situation: it is snowing in Austria, which is extremely exciting for the girl from Hollywood. The contrast between *it's snowing* and *it doesn't snow in Hollywood* is, of course, easily understandable, so this little context makes the most of the contrast between these two verb forms. The progressive form is, however, overused unnaturally. In about fifty utterances there are fifteen progressive verb forms, all referring to the moment of speaking. The next text shows a similar percentage.

Past tense is introduced towards the end of the course book one. I have mentioned before (see 5.1.3.) that narrating about past events and reading stories is rather relevant for students and they should be given the means to do so much earlier, at least on a receptive basis. First only regular past tense forms occur, which proves that the text has been made up for showing a selected verb form. It seems rather unnatural to me to find a text with no irregular past tense forms. If students have the chance to meet irregular verb forms repeatedly on a receptive basis, before they have to produce texts in the past tense themselves, they will have remembered some forms without any effort.

The next text, an email, is a good example of how various tenses can occur in a short piece of writing ([appendix 45](#)). Past tense (for events that happened the day

before the email) and present tense (when the author talks about the present moment), as well as future time ("*Tomorrow I want...*") are mixed.

The last tense form introduced in *Friends 1* is the *will*-future within the context of weather forecasts. In this section various tenses are opposed. Students talk about the weather in the future and in the past and about their favourite weather for doing certain things. *Friends 2* also contains several texts (e.g. postcards) where various tenses are used naturally. The children write to each other where they are, what they did a few days ago etc.

In *Friends 3* the following contexts for the use of *will*-future have been chosen: horoscopes and telling the future by reading palms. Although *will*-future is naturally used in these contexts, the extra tip in the grammar section says that the future is often used after *I think*, *I hope*, *probably*, *maybe*, which the texts preceding the grammar section does not confirm.

The context for the *going-to* future provided in *Friends 1* is a project work at school about ice-cream, and about what pupils are going to do for the project. The whole unit is on ice-cream. The focus on meaning clearly dominates over the focus on the new form. More attention to the form is paid in the Activity book. In a later section, the use of *will* and present tense in if-sentences is introduced, but I will not investigate the grammar rules and exercises on if clauses here, as I want to concentrate on the relationship between tense and time references.

When present perfect is introduced, the new form first occurs in a listening comprehension. The focus is on actions that have had an effect on the present: about a pupil who has played a trick on his classmates. The first forms that student hear are questions starting with *have you...?*. This kind of questions is certainly frequently performed, therefore it is perfectly justified to present it early. The next two texts contain an unnatural number of sentences containing *just* + present perfect. Here the focus is certainly on form, especially on the position of *just* between the two parts of the verb.

The past progressive tense occurs relatively naturally in a text in which an Irish boy describes a "murder game". The tense is slightly overused (e.g. instead of *we were standing in the hall* (*Friends 3*: 49) we would prefer to say "*we were in the hall*").

The text does not, however, sound highly artificial. It is a natural use of the past progressive to ask all the suspects what they were doing at a particular time. The game can easily be played in class as well.

Past perfect first occurs in diary entries. In most cases the sentences start with *after*, so the tense expresses a time before past time.

In *Friends 4*, there is no focus on specific tenses. The emphasis is on topics that are relevant and interesting for students at the age of fourteen, such as writing a letter of application or a résumé, filling in a job questionnaire or preparing for an interview. One unit is about making movies and Harry Potter. We also find a section on multiculturalism, which is an important topic in our society. Furthermore, pupils' interest in literature is stimulated by an extract of Tom Sawyer followed by several book recommendations, something I have not found in other course books. I am of the opinion that reading is still very important for pupils, therefore it has to be fostered in school as often as possible.

5.4.4. Exercises and activities

In the course book series there is a strong emphasis on the receptive skills, especially on listening. Pronunciation, intonation and spelling exercises occur, especially in *Friends 1*, but they are not predominant. Usually students encounter new grammatical forms in texts and the first few exercises are listening or reading comprehension. Only later do students have to produce the forms themselves.

The role-plays differ from the dialogues which students have to act out in *The New You & Me* in that respect that the dialogues are not meant to be learned by heart. Students cannot even be tempted to do so, as the stories on which they are supposed to base their role-plays are too long to be reproduced word by word. So they are obliged to speak freely.

All pair work is based on information gaps, especially in the lower level course books (e.g. one student looks at a picture in the course book, the partner at a differing picture in the Activity book), or on opinion gaps in the higher level course books, i.e. two pupils exchange their opinion on a certain topic. Unfortunately, almost

all pair exercises are all controlled speaking or writing activities where the pupils are expected to use certain structures.

Several short games for which students have a different set of information can be found in the series.

The context in *Friends 3* (producing a youth magazine) can be exploited as a series of activities with a real writing purpose throughout the whole school year. The students can write articles on the topics suggested in the book. The English teacher may collect all the pieces of work of the pupils and decide together with the class which articles should go into a magazine. Students would be motivated to do their best and to rework their writing and they would have an aim for the whole year. Unfortunately, many writing activities lack a communicative purpose. The instruction for most writing activities is simply “*write about....*”

Whereas there is a clear distinction between form and meaning based sections in *Red Line*, the exercises in *Friends* are mixed. They usually move from receptive to controlled and to free activities, but frequently form based exercises can be found at later points as well. The higher level course books, however, have a significantly lower percentage of form based activities. Sometimes they are assigned a purpose by an artificial creation of an information gap (see below).

A typical sequence of exercises can be found when past progressive is introduced. The first few activities concentrate on the reception of the new tense. There are two listening comprehensions and a song, which focus on the comprehension of the contents, not on the form of the tense. Only in the last exercise of the unit do the students have to produce the tense themselves. They work in pairs. One partner uses a picture in the course book, the other partner a slightly different picture in the activity book. The exercise clearly concentrates on the new form, but we have an information gap and immediate feedback is provided. We do not, however, have a real communicative purpose and choice of language. Students are expected to formulate sentences in the past progressive.

Many activities are, however, form based without any information gap or other communicative purpose. For present simple, for example, many tasks are fill-in exercises only with a strong focus on the formal distinction of the two present tense

verb forms, in the course book as well as in the activity book. Students first write about their favourite school subjects and about their habits and then they write about a friend's habits. There is a strong focus on form, but students can choose the contents of the sentences themselves. The present tense is always combined with adverbs of frequency. There are no speaking activities in *Friends 1* that trigger the use of the present simple.

For the present progressive an overused means of forcing students to use this tense has been chosen. A picture shows what is going on and students are to describe what they see. As the picture can be seen by everybody in the class, the exercise has no communicative value (Brumfit & Johnson 1979: 118 f). No communicative act is performed, as there is no purpose other than the display of language. An alternative would be to have one partner describe a picture and the other one to draw what he understands.

One of the next activities is based on pictures as well, but here an information gap between the two partners has been created. They pupils are given different pictures and have to find out the differences by describing to each other what the people are doing.

Present perfect progressive is introduced differently. The tense does not occur in a text first, but in a short activity. In pairs students have to find out who has been doing which activity for how long (e.g. doing their favourite sport). Afterwards they take notes on who has been doing what the longest in the whole class. The information that the students collect are probably not known to them beforehand, so this might be an interesting activity for the learners.

The course book series also contains several free speaking activities. The instructions are formulated in a way that triggers the use of a certain tense, but students can choose what they say and how they say it. For example, after a listening comprehension on a trip to Manhattan, students have the chance to practise past tense in a free speaking activity. They are to tell each other about a trip of their own. In a later unit there is also a free writing activity. A short text about how the parents of a girl met, triggers the task of writing about how one's own parents met.

A similar procedure can be found when the distinction between present perfect and past tense is emphasized. A speaking activity is based on the text where pupils helped other people. Pupils are asked to tell five of their classmates if they have ever helped their neighbours and how they did it. This activity is less controlled than the preceding ones, the next exercise, however, focuses on form again. Students must write 2-3 sentences in the present perfect tense using *for* or *since*.

A revision section on present perfect and past tense is preceded by a text where both tenses occur naturally followed by a few drills on the question *Have you ever...?* and present perfect in *for/since* constructions. Sometimes drills can help students internalize forms and they are not to be condemned as long as they are not the predominant form of practice. I am not sure that a drill is meaningful here, however. The form of the two tenses is not new to the students and the use will not become any clearer if they are drilled on distinguishing sentences that contain *ever* from those that contain a specific point of time in the past.

In some activities practicing structures is hidden in games or fun activities. Reported speech, for example, is practised in a section about jokes. One pupil uses the course book, the other partner has the activity book. They can grasp the complete joke only if they read the text together using reported speech. Afterwards they are asked to put the joke into direct speech and say which text they like better

In *Friends 4*, for example, students are asked to make up or tell a story, the others have to guess if it is true.

5.4.5. Summary

Friends has incorporated many concepts of communicative language teaching. A focus on learner autonomy and producing portfolios are taken from the CEFR. There are sections and activities when there is too much focus on form, and texts where certain verb forms are exaggerated, but on the other hand students are assigned a good deal of talking time. The more language they have, the freer the speaking (and writing) activities become, which can be seen when we compare *Friends 1* and *2* to *Friends 3* and *4*, where the students know more structures and consequently the

focus on form diminishes and the focus on communication increases. We also find many language games and information gap activities.

What I especially appreciate are the texts where several tenses occur side by side. They are most realistic and give students the chance to see the relationships and differences in meaning and not only the meaning of one specific tense at a time. The emails and other texts in *Friends* are even more natural, as they do not seem to focus on particular forms at all. Tenses as well as other grammatical structures are mixed in a realistic way.

In my opinion the topics in *Friends* are well chosen and offer a lot of room for discussions without any focus on forms. Especially the course books three and four focus more on communication than on form. One unit, for example, in *Friends 3*, is about young people who have become famous and about their problems. As far as tenses are concerned, the texts and activities comprise all the tenses students have learned. They are asked to say what they think the young band will do in the future, how their lives have changed, what they had to do to become successful etc. There are also tips for the pupils on how to conduct interviews and the suggestion to act out such an interview as a role play.

The activity books do not really deserve their name. Most tasks are fill-in exercises where the focus is on form or on vocabulary. In most cases there are no coherent texts, but isolated sentences starting with *I, he, Ann, Andreas...* A far overstated focus is on the third person –s in the beginner's book. Some riddles, short language games, puzzles and crosswords can be found within form focused exercises. There is at least the aim of solving it. The book, however, lacks speaking activities. It is meant for individual practice only.

In most activities students have to find the correct formulations for actions that can be seen in pictures. I have copied an example of a typical exercise on tenses, as it is a "classic" ([appendix 46](#)). There is a similar exercise on the difference between present simple and present progressive, each sentence containing time markers, such as *always, normally, sometimes* contrasted with *now, at the moment, look!*

Only some free personalized writing exercises, such as short essays on hobbies, family or favourite school subjects, telling about a week end trip or about plans for the

future can be found, but most of them do not have a real communicative purpose. The instruction usually only says “write a short text about....” It does not say to whom, for what reason etc.

6. CONCLUSION

It has become clear that teaching languages demands more of the teachers than in former times. Teachers must inform themselves about linguistic and pedagogic developments so that they can take the best decision for their students, depending on the purpose, the individuals, their level, the context and many other circumstances that have been mentioned. It would be irresponsible of teachers to approach each group of students or each grammar item in the same way. As language is a living experience, the jobs of teachers cannot be static. Even if they have been using the same textbook for years, teachers should not repeat the same lessons again and again. They have to keep their eyes open for spoken or written texts, games, songs and communicative activities that they could use in their classrooms.

Language learning has, however, become more demanding for students as well. They are supposed to take responsibility for their own learning and they might sometimes be required to do more time consuming tasks than just fill in sheets. Learner autonomy is an important goal of the CEFR and the Austrian syllabus, but only *Red Line* and *English to go* have managed to put the learner in the foreground.

It is not primarily the language which is being learned, but a person who is learning. (Lewis 1993: 2)

In some respects, unfortunately, all course books which I have examined do not conform to the insights on how language should be taught for communicative purposes. Many texts are still unrealistic because they contain an unnaturally high number of certain structures. Some course book designers have tried to solve the problem of creating texts that are out of context. In *Friends*, for example, the whole course book is set in a context. Especially for the understanding of a realistic use of the English tenses, plausible contexts are inevitable.

A great deal of exercises (especially in the workbooks) still focus on grammatical forms (isolated sentences used for fill-in exercises, often with the base forms in a box or in brackets), and too much attention is paid to forms that do not convey any meaning, like the third person –s. Especially in *The New You & Me* not enough

classroom time is dedicated to communicative exercises where all the forms are used in realistic contexts. The typical pattern that I have found in *The New You & Me* and partly in other course books as well is similar to that of older course books. Pupils are introduced to new structures in a text, they then fulfill various exercises, which often focus on receptive skills first (listening comprehension, reading comprehension) and then they have to produce the new forms in a form-focused exercise. The “highlight” only comes at the end of each section. It is usually some freer speaking or writing activity, which unfortunately often has no real purpose. Most of the activities address students’ experience or opinion, but they are formulated in a way that certain structures have to be used. If some instructions were reformulated in a way that students could imagine a readership for their writing, if students could see a non-linguistic goal and choose the language, the exercises would become more meaningful. *Red Line* is the only course book that offers many alternatives to the students how they can express more or less the same meaning in different ways.

Free speaking activities or project work where an integration of the skills and communication strategies can be practised, are fostered in *Red Line* and *English to go*, and to a lesser extent in *Friends*. In *The New You and Me* all skills are practised separately and no genuine communication takes place.

As far as tenses are concerned many rules are simplified to an extent that they become unreliable. The use of adjuncts of time with certain tenses is overemphasized in all course books and consequently learners tend to rely more on the lexical items of isolated sentences than on their meaning. Many confusing comparisons of various tenses, unfortunately, occur in all course books.

Some textbooks, like *Red Line* or *English to go*, however, have put grammar for communication into the foreground in many activities, especially in project work. *Friends* has no project work and language as a vehicle for communication is not as strong as in *Red Line* or *English to go*. Most activities, however, are based on information or opinion gaps, so that at least pupils exchange information that is new to them.

Attention to lexical collocations has entered only some text books, for example *English to go*. In *Friends* some frequent questions are introduced quite early as lexical chunks without a detailed analysis of the underlying structures.

As I am an adherent of grammar games, for the reasons mentioned in this thesis, I was disappointed that hardly any games are suggested in the course books. I was also extremely disappointed not to have found any real grammar discovery activities. Inductive learning does not seem to have found its way into our teaching material.

Fortunately, teachers are not forced to base their lessons completely on the course books, but they can adapt the material or bring in their own texts and exercises. Textbooks will never cover all interests of students and can never be completely up-to-date. I do not want to say that teachers should not use the books from the "Schulbuchliste" at all, but they must be critical and should not blindly rely on them.

The problem is that as long as many teachers continue practising the methodology that they have been using for decades, language teaching will not change. They must constantly be trained on language teaching and learning. Michael Lewis, who has promoted a lexical approach, is perfectly right when he says that

[...] content and procedure, syllabus and method, need to be in harmony. (Lewis 1993: 2).

More or less the same holds true for course books, although the chances that through good course book design, teachers might change their methodology, are higher, as they are nearer to the teachers than the syllabus.

On a large scale, the communicative approach seems to be accepted by many applied linguists and syllabus designers. It has, however, only been half-heartedly implemented.

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8. APPENDIX

Appendix 1

Course book analysis chart

	The New You & Me	s	Red Line	s	English to Go	s	Friends	s
lexical chunks	words are learned individually, not in collocations, all grammatical structures are analysed, and not learned as lexical chunks	0	strong focus on lexis, words grouped by topics, many expressions learned as lexical chunks	1	strong emphasis on lexis, students learn collocations, rather than single words, many structures learned as lexical chunks already at the beginner's stage	1	frequently asked questions with "do" learned as lexical chunks without analysis of "do" questions	1
focus on communication and pragmatic meaning	focus on grammatical forms and orthography predominant	0	esp. in the later sections, focus on form separated from focus on meaning, language mainly used as a vehicle for classroom communication	1	many activities concentrate on pragmatic meaning as language is structured around topics	1	communicative need and meaning, not forms are in the foreground	1
integration of skills	all four skills practised separately in every unit, accurate production expected from the beginning	0	integration of skills practised in projects, sometimes skills practised separately	1	listening predominant in all four course books, but integration of skills practised in projects	1	listening predominant, skills mostly practised separately	0
reliable and efficient grammar rules	rules are often simplified, unspecific and unreliable, many explanations or terms are vague, overemphasis on adverbs of time	0	overemphasis of adverbs of time, rules even contradictory or false, misleading terms	0	overemphasis of adjuncts of time result in false rules	0	overemphasis of adverbs of time, some important functions only mentioned in course book 3 or 4, many rules too simplified	0
meaningful language in plausible contexts	in lower level course books unrealistic texts which students can hardly authenticate for themselves, overuse of new structures, forms often contrasted in the texts, overuse of adverbs of time, in higher level books texts are more realistic	0	texts in the language sections overuse new structures, others are realistic and provide plausible contexts, many texts are there for reading not for studying language	1	texts sound natural as there is no avoidance or overload of single structures	1	texts are realistic and based on communicative purposes, e.g. writing and answering emails, unfortunately grammatical structures sometimes used unnaturally often in the lower level course books	1
variation of text types	little variation, stories, sketches and songs predominant in lower level course books, some factual information in higher level books	0	many different text types: stories, dialogues, poems, articles, songs, advertisements, phone calls,...	1	many different kinds of texts: poems, articles, emails etc.	1	many different kinds of texts: songs, stories, phone calls, dialogues, emails, timetables	1
variation of deductive and inductive learning	no inductive grammar exercises: new grammatical items occur in texts, the rule follows, no awareness activities	0	no inductive grammar exercises: new grammar occurs in texts, the rules are presented in separate sections	0	mostly pseudo-inductive	0	neither deductive, nor inductive: new grammatical items occur in texts, the rule follows, no awareness activities proposed	0
realistic, contextualized exercises with a communicative purpose	no purposes given for speaking or writing activities, instructions only say "talk about" or "write about", work book is form based and individual work only	0	form based exercises restricted to the language sections, in all other sections, esp. in project work, non linguistic goals and realistic contexts dominate	1	realistic exercises through project work, most activities based on an information or opinion gap	1	partly realistic with a purpose and information gap and expected feedback, sometimes purpose or info gap is missing in Friends 1 and 2	1

Course book analysis chart (continued)

	The New You & Me	s	Red Line	s	English to Go	s	Friends	s
free practice (role-plays, group discussions etc.) that foster fluency and the development of communication strategies	beginners mainly learn by heart, no group work, pair work mainly for controlled speaking activities and acting out, freer role plays only in higher level books	0	many free speaking activities where only the topic is given, a lot of pair-, group and project work, in role plays, and the "real talk" activities students can talk freely, no focus on form, communication strategies are also fostered	1	free role plays and speaking exercises where only suggestions are offered, team work in projects, all speaking activities in pairs, feedback in pairs	1	free speaking, not learning by heart, not too much group work, pair work in many units, but very few in the Activity book, all pair work is controlled speaking exercises, some freer speaking and writing activities (writing lacks purpose in Friends 1 and 2)	0
grammar games	very few	0	some quizzes and games which often disguise form based exercises	1	none	0	some games and quizzes	1
information/opinion gap	exercises are mainly individual, consequently no real message transmission	0	not for all activities, in the language games information gaps have been created	1	most activities are based on an information or opinion gap	1	all pair work based on an information gap	1
language/grammar as choice	only very few options are offered	0	it is emphasized that meaning can often be expressed in various ways, many alternatives offered, students can use them freely in communicative exercises	1	e.g. writing workshop: exercises are formulated in a way that students can choose the language	1	most speaking activities in pairs are controlled exercises with no choice of language, more in later units	0
personalized exercises	the first exercises are always based on the texts, but all units contain personalized speaking and writing activities	1	almost in all units students can apply language to their own context	1	free communication exercises are usually personalized	1	most writing and speaking activities are personalized	1
focus on language use	focus on form predominant	0	focus on form not dominant, many projects and personalized exercises focus on language use in context	1	no avoidance of structures from the beginning	1	focus partly on meaning, partly on form, sometimes tenses mixed in texts to underline their meaning	1
fosters learner autonomy	pupils act upon instructions only	0	extremely strong focus, all activities learner centred, many projects for which students find several tips but work autonomously, through workshops students learn to improve their communication skills and strategies, to concentrate on the gist, to use dictionaries etc.	1	in projects learners need to take responsibility, learner autonomy is fostered	1	learner autonomy is not fostered, students act upon instructions	0
SUM		1		13		12		9

Appendix 2

“That’s another thing we’ve learned from your Nation”, said Mein Herr, “map making. But we’ve carried it much further than you. What do you consider the largest map that would be really useful?”

“About six inches to the mile.”

“Only six inches!” cried Mein Herr. “We very soon got to six yards to the mile. Then we tried a hundred yards to the mile. And then came the grandest idea of all! We actually made a map of the country, on the scale of a mile to a mile!”

“Have you used it much?” I enquired.

“It has never been spread out, yet”, said Mein Herr: “the farmers objected: they said it would cover the whole country, and shut out the sunlight! So we now use the country itself, as its own map, and I assure you it does nearly as well.”

(Lewis Carroll: Sylvie and Bruno Concluded)

(Batstone 1994: 23)

Appendix 3

3.1.3 Lesen: Sprachbewusstsein und sprachenübergreifendes Lernen

Sprechen Sie Portugiesisch? – Vielleicht.
Verstehen Sie eine portugiesische Hotelbroschüre? – Ganz sicher!
Hier ist der Beweis!:

HOTEL DE GUIMARÃES ****

Situado no centro de Guimarães, cidade Património Mundial da Humanidade, o Hotel de Guimarães é um excelente e moderno hotel de 4 estrelas, onde a qualidade dos serviços prestados e a satisfação dos hóspedes são o nosso objectivo primordial. O nosso hotel tem as seguintes facilidades ao seu dispor:

116 quartos, incluindo: Suites King, Suites Juniores, Quartos Executivos

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| • Piso de não-fumadores | • Sala de reuniões |
| • Quartos para deficientes motores | • Net center gratuito |
| • Restaurante | • Internet sem fios |
| • Bar | • Câmbios |
| • Serviço de quarto | • Parque e garagem privativos |
| • Health club | • Babysitting (sob pedido) |
| • Lavandaria | |

Quelle: www.hotel-guimaraes.com (Dezember 2006)

Versuchen Sie, folgende Fragen zu beantworten:

- Wo liegt das Hotel?
- Wie viele Zimmer hat es?
- Kann man im Hotel essen?
- Gibt es einen eigenen Parkplatz oder eine Garage?

Wie kommt es, dass Sie die Fragen beantworten können, ohne Portugiesisch gelernt zu haben? Mögliche Antworten dazu und weitere Beispiele aus anderen Sprachen finden Sie auf Ihrer CD unter dem Stichwort „Sprachbewusstsein“.

Appendix 4

"Maybe we can find them," Mona's father said and they started to look around.

Where did they look for them?

After about ten minutes they saw them again. The man and the woman were there, but the boy was not with them any more. Mona was excited. "Where's the boy?" she asked. "I've no idea," her father answered, "they're going to gate 12, but they have not got the boy with them. Let's find a policeman and tell him."

*This is what Mona's father told the policeman:
"Excuse me, . . ."*

The policeman looked at the man and the girl and then he said, "Look, there is nothing I can do. The only thing we know is that your daughter saw a man, a woman and a pale child."

How did Mona and her father feel?

Mona said, "I know that something is wrong. Let's go and see the airport manager." The manager's secretary told them that her boss was very busy and couldn't see them, but Mona ran round her desk and knocked at his door. "Come in," a voice said.

Describe the manager and his office.

The manager sat back in his chair and closed his eyes. It was very quiet in the office. Then he said, "I believe what you have told me."

Why do you think he believed the girl?

Then he picked up the phone. "You said gate 12, didn't you?" he asked. "Yes," Mona said, "the flight to New York." The manager spoke to the captain of the plane. He told him to hold the plane back for a few minutes. "Two of our men want to have a look at a suitcase, but don't tell the passengers."

*This is what the captain told the passengers:
"Ladies and gentlemen, . . ."*

The New You & Me, Textbook, Enriched Course 3, 2006: 33

Appendix 5

Text writing

Topics

- a) **Write a story called "The tickets".**
*First imagine what happened.
(Who? Where? When?)
Then write down what happened.
Start like this:
One day . . .
Think of a good ending.*
- b) **Poison at The Grange (a summary)**
A summary should be short, but all the important information should be in it.

Words and Phrases

- a) Mr and Mrs Clark – house in the country – letter – two cinema tickets – no idea – next evening – town – good film – back home – thief – note on table
- b) One day Fiona . . .
The problem was that . . .
Colin went . . .
There were . . .
They talked about . . .
At eight o'clock . . .

The New You & Me, Textbook, Enriched Course 3, 2006: 34

Appendix 6

A story

Read the story. Then listen to it.

Then put the sentences below into the correct order.

The coin

Tom was not a coward. He was good at sports and he was not afraid of ghosts or spiders. But he was afraid of dogs. On his way to school there were a lot of houses with gardens. In one garden there was always a big brown dog. When Tom came to the garden, he crossed the street and walked on the other side. But sometimes the dog was out in the street.

There was a small shop on this side of the street too. Tom was afraid and went into it. The shopkeeper was an old man with white hair. "What can I do for you?" he said. "I don't . . . I'm . . . The dog . . . I'm afraid of the dog," Tom said. The old man looked at Tom. Then he went into a room at the back

of the shop. When he came back, he had a coin in his hand. It looked old and there was a tiger on it. "Put this in your pocket," the old man said to Tom, "it will help you." "Thank you very much," Tom said and went out into the street.

There he saw the big brown dog again. The dog looked at Tom and Tom looked at the dog. Then Tom put his hand in his pocket. The coin was there. Tom could feel it with his fingers. He looked at the dog and then he went on. For the first time he was not afraid of the dog. Tom felt very good.

The next day the brown dog was out in the street again. Tom stopped and said hello to him. Then he went on.

Appendix 7

The driver of the year



Appendix 8

- 1 The Holt family from Seattle are going to Florida for their two weeks' summer vacation. Their plane leaves Seattle at 8.15 am. They have to change planes in Atlanta, from where they fly on to Miami. The total time for the two flights and the stopover is eight hours. Work out at what time they arrive in Miami.



- 2 The Holts have been staying in Miami for three days. The two children, Sue and Barry, phone their grandfather in Portland (Oregon). Listen to the phone call and mark the sentences true or false.

- Sue and Barry have been having a great time.
While Barry went snorkelling, Sue was playing volleyball.
Lots of people in Miami speak Spanish.
The children loved Disney World.
They have been to several beaches.
In the evenings they have been going shopping in malls.
They're not allowed to go anywhere on their own.
Their grandfather will call them again on Saturday.

T	F

Appendix 9

Simulation

You are on a fishing trip off the coast of Florida. It is very hot. Suddenly the engine on your boat doesn't work any more and there's water in the boat. You know there is an island not far away. You've got a small rubber boat so that you can row there. You know that there is no water and there are no trees on the island.

You cannot take more than ten things with you from the list below. Which ten things are you going to take to the island? Decide what you want to take with you and underline these things.

Then get together in groups of four. Discuss what each of you wants to take with you and why. You should agree on one list and write it down.

Finally, find out from your teacher how many points you get for your list.

a map of Florida
a compass
a bottle of salt tablets
a book: "Fish in the Atlantic Ocean"
a pair of sunglasses
5 litres of water
a little mirror
a gun

a raincoat
a knife
two boxes of chocolates
three packets of biscuits
a rope
a Walkman and some cassettes
two paper cups
a blanket



The New You & Me, Textbook, Enriched Course 3, 2006: 69

Appendix 10

Unit 5 You are what you eat!

Takeaways in Greenwich

Emma is going to have dinner at Sam's house tonight. Sam's dad is working late, and his grandma is going to the doctor because she is not feeling well. The family has to order a takeaway meal. There are so many choices. What are they going to order?

INDIAN FOOD

lamb curry
vegetable curry
Indian bread
mango cream
rice, tea

ITALIAN FOOD

minestrone soup
spaghetti bolognese
four seasons pizza
ice-cream
mineral water

CHINESE FOOD

spicy milk soup
sweet and sour pork
cold noodles with sauce
fried chicken
green tea

BRITISH FOOD

tomato soup
fish and chips
sausages and potatoes
apple cake
lemonade

Takeaway food

Look at the different kinds of food. Then answer the questions.

1. What's your favourite main course?
2. Which of the desserts do you think is the best?
3. Which do you think is the best drink?
4. Where would you order dinner?

WB 44.1-2

Red Line 2 Course book 2008: 62

Appendix 11

1 Words with -er

VOCABULARY SKILLS

A B C

Du kannst neue Wörter bilden, indem du
-er am Ende eines Verbs anhängst.

Beispiel: to speak + -er → speaker
Emma speaks a lot. Sam is a good speaker.

What does Rob tell his family after his first week at Thomas Tallis?

Make new words with -er and finish the sentences.

1. Lisa **plays** football. She's the best in the girls' Football Club.
2. Emma **dances** a lot in her free time. I think she wants to be a one day.
3. In Art class Sam **paints** a picture of me, but he's an awful .
4. Terry's dad sometimes **drives** him to school. He's a taxi .
5. Sam sometimes **eats** his lunch in ten minutes! He's a fast .
6. Emma **works** a lot in Computer Club. She's a great .

Red Line 2 Course book 2008: 22

Appendix 12

2 Present perfect or simple past?

Finish the dialogue. Grandad has had an interesting life!

- Lisa: Have you **ever ridden** a camel? (ever ride)
Grandad: Yes, I have. I rode one when I was about twelve years old.
Lisa: a wild lion? (ever see)
Grandad: Yes, I have. I one when I was in Africa. (see)
Lisa: on safari? (ever be)
Grandad: Yes, I have. I on one with your grandma in 1952. (be)
We in a group of ten people. (be)
Lisa: a lot of money? (ever win)
Grandad: Well, no, I haven't. But Grandma some money in a competition once.
Lisa: a bungee jump? (ever do)
Grandad: Yes, I have. I one when I was fifty. But I'm too old for that now.

→ G 32

Red Line 2 Course book 2008: 74

Skills workshop 1 A sports presentation

You are going to present a sport. Your presentation should be about ten minutes long.

Step 1: Plan your presentation

Work in a group of three or four.
Which sport would you like to talk about?
Listen to each person, and decide together.
Here are some ideas:

football • rugby • volleyball • hockey • tennis •
skateboarding • badminton • table tennis •
swimming • athletics • judo • softball • ...



Step 2: Collect ideas and information

1. Collect information under these headings:

equipment • people • history • rules •
clothes • events • clubs

Share the work! Who is going to look for what information? You can look in the library, in magazines, on the Internet, or ask friends and family.

2. Find or draw pictures and charts.
3. Compare information and pictures.



a softball ball



a softball bat

Step 3: Sort/prepare your information

1. Put your information into a good order.

Example:

1. introduction
2. equipment
3. history
4. ...

2. Write notes on cards for your part of the talk.

3. Number the cards and pictures so you can find them when you give the talk.

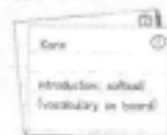
4. Do you want to use an overhead projector or a computer? Use the board for vocabulary or quick pictures, too.

PRESENTATION SKILLS



Don't read complete sentences in a presentation. It sounds boring. Write short notes on cards so that you can remember what you want to say.

You write:



You say:

Good morning, everyone. We are going to tell you about softball. Have you ever heard of it? We've written some special softball words on the board for you.



Appendix 14

Step 4: Practise your presentation

- *Try out your presentation with the pictures, charts and other things you need. Use some of the phrases in the box.*
- *Don't forget: The presentation should be about ten minutes long.*

USEFUL PHRASES

For your talk

We're going to tell you ...
We'd like to tell you about ...
Have you ever heard of ...?
... started in ...
First I'd like to talk about ...
Next ...
On the board you can see ...
The transparency/poster shows ...
As you probably know, ...
As Karin said, ...
Now, are there any questions?
Thank you for listening.

Asking questions

Could you tell me how many .../where ...?
Can you explain why .../what ...?
You didn't say anything about ...
Do you know why .../who .../where ...?

Answering questions

There is an easy answer to that, ...
I'm not sure, but I think ...
We didn't find any information about that.
It's a bit difficult to explain, but I'll try.
I'm sorry, but I don't know.
Sorry, I can't tell you that.

Step 5: Present your sport

- *Check that your cards and pictures are in the right order.*
- *Write your main headings on the board or a poster before the talk.*
- *Speak clearly and don't speak too fast.*
- *Look interested when you present!*
- *Ask: Are there any questions?*
- *Try to answer the questions in English. Don't worry if you don't know the answer.*



Step 6: How was your presentation?

Now talk to the other pupils in your class about your presentation.

- *What was new/interesting?*
- *Could they understand everything?*
- *How can you make your next presentation better?*

USEFUL PHRASES

That was interesting.
I didn't understand everything.
That was very clear.
I thought ... was very good.
You should stay cool and speak more slowly.

Appendix 15

1 Dictionary work

VOCABULARY SKILLS

A B C

Collect or draw pictures of ten healthy things and ten unhealthy things. You can cut pictures out of magazines and newspapers. Now make two lists in English of your things.

Healthy things	Unhealthy things
salad	crisps
apples	chocolate
jogging	eating too much
...	...

Do you know all the words in English? If you do not know a word in English you can use a dictionary. Look up the German word to find the English translation.



Red Line 2 Course book 2008: 72

Appendix 16

Unit 5 Food

COMMUNICATION SKILLS



Hier ein paar Tricks, wie du unbekannten Wörter erschließen kannst:

- Schau dir den Zusammenhang an. Oft kann er dir wichtige Hinweise geben.
- Kennst du vielleicht schon ein Wort aus derselben Wortfamilie? (z. B. to mix – mixed)
- Manchmal gibt es im Deutschen dasselbe Wort oder ein ähnliches (z. B. soup – Suppe).

Du bist mit deiner Familie in England unterwegs. Alle haben Hunger und ihr geht ins Star Café. Deine Eltern und deine Schwester Iris möchten, dass du ihnen bei der Auswahl hilfst, weil du am besten Englisch sprichst. Hilf ihnen, ihr Essen auszusuchen. (Siehe Speisekarte auf S. 105)

Iris: Ich möchte eine Vor- und Hauptspeise ohne Fleisch. Was könnte ich hier essen?

Du: ...

Vater: Ich möchte eine Suppe als Vorspeise, aber keine Gemüsesuppe. Welche Suppe kannst du mir empfehlen?

Du: ...

Vater: Als Hauptgang hätte ich gern Nudeln. Und dann würde ich gern etwas mit Früchten zum Nachtisch essen. Was könnte ich bestellen?

Du: ...

Mutter: Was ist denn der *super salad*? Kannst du mir das bitte erklären?

Du: ...

Du selbst möchtest ein Fleischgericht. Was gibt es für dich?

Red Line 2 Course book 2008: 104

© Sport can be dangerous!

1 Before you read: Sport

Do you think jogging can be dangerous? When? Why?



A It was six o'clock on Tuesday evening, and Mr and Mrs Jackson were in the living room. Terry came in. "Hey, Dad, we aren't going to have dinner until quarter to seven. Let's go jogging," said Terry.
 "Oh, Terry, I'm so tired," said Mr Jackson. "I had a very busy day at work. And now it's dark. I don't like jogging when it's dark. It can be dangerous."
 "Oh Dad, don't be silly," said Terry. "It isn't dangerous. There are two of us. Don't forget, the doctor said you need to exercise more."
 "Yes, Terry is right," said Mrs Jackson. "He said you need to do something like jogging or swimming. It's cold now, so I think jogging is a better idea than swimming."
 "OK, OK, you two," said Mr Jackson. "Let's go jogging. But tell me first what we're having for dinner. I'm getting hungry."
 "It's fish and a salad for you," said Mrs Jackson. "Should I buy some chips?" asked Mr Jackson.
 "No, you shouldn't," said Mrs Jackson. "We don't need any tonight."

B The paths in the park were dark because there were a lot of big, old trees next to them. "Terry, it's so cold and dark, and I don't see any other people jogging," said Mr Jackson. "Let's go and look in the department store next to the park. It's nice and warm."
 "Dad!" said Terry. "Come on, let's run!"

Terry and his father didn't see a young man in front of them.

He had a CD player with headphones and he ran into Mr Jackson.

"Oh I'm sorry," said the young man.

"You know, it's so dark here under the trees," "It's OK," said Mr Jackson. Terry and Mr Jackson started jogging again. After a minute, Mr Jackson said, "Terry, stop. My wallet isn't in my right back pocket. I think that young man has got it." They ran after him. "Hey, you, give me my wallet," Mr Jackson shouted at the young man.

"What?" shouted the young man, taking off his headphones. "What wallet?" "It's in your pocket!" shouted Mr Jackson. The young man was scared.

"OK," he said. "No problem." He took the wallet from his pocket and threw it to Mr Jackson. Then he ran away.

"That was cool, Dad," said Terry.

"It wasn't cool," said Mr Jackson. "I was really scared. Let's go home right now."



Appendix 18

- 55 **C** Back at home, Terry and his father went into the kitchen. "Hi there. How was your run through the park?" asked Mrs Jackson. "Mum, a man stole Dad's wallet!" said Terry. "But then Dad ran after him, and he got the wallet back."
- 60 "His wallet?" said Mrs Jackson. "What do you mean? It's here, on the kitchen table." Terry and his dad looked at the table. There was a wallet on it. Then Mr Jackson pulled the wallet out of his back pocket. "This isn't my wallet," said Mr Jackson. "Oh no! Whose wallet is it? What should I do now?"
- 65 "Take a look inside," said Terry. "The man's name must be in there somewhere. We can look up his telephone number and call him right away."



2 About the story

*Did you think the title was good? Did you laugh at the end?
Did the ending surprise you?*

3 What happened first?

Look at the sentences and put them in the right order.

Example: 1. e) "Let's go jogging," said Terry.

- Mr Jackson and Terry ran after the young man.
- "This isn't my wallet," said Mr Jackson.
- The young man took off his headphones with one hand.
- "Terry, it's so cold and dark, and I don't see any other people jogging," said Mr Jackson.
- "Let's go jogging," said Terry.
- "It's here on the kitchen table," said Mrs Jackson.
- "Oh, Terry, I'm so tired," said Mr Jackson.
- He took the wallet from his pocket and threw it to Mr Jackson.
- A young man ran into Mr Jackson.

→ WB 50, 1

4 Mr Jackson's telephone call

What does Mr Jackson say to the young man when he phones him? What does the young man say? What are they going to do? Write a short dialogue and act it out.

Mr Jackson: Hello! This is ... Is that ... ?

Young man: Yes, it is.

Mr Jackson: We just met in the park. I'm very sorry, but ...

USEFUL PHRASES

- A: Hello.
B: Hello. This is ...
Can I speak to ...
A: Yes, just a minute.
B: Thank you.
C: Hello. This is ...

Appendix 19

A project English and Geography

Step 1: A wet country?

a) Look at these annual average rainfall totals and find the places in your atlas.

Fort William:	1900 mm	Manchester:	800 mm	Falmouth:	1100 mm
Glasgow:	1200 mm	Norwich:	600 mm	Newcastle:	670 mm

b) Find a relief map of the UK in your atlas (it shows the highland and lowland areas). Which of the places are in highland and which are in lowland areas? Which areas are wetter?

Step 2: A weather map

Northern Scotland
Southern Scotland
Northern Ireland
Wales
North-east England
North-west England
South-east England
South-west England
The Midlands



sunny intervals
 showers
 light rain
 heavy rain
 cloud / cloudy
 sun / sunny

a) Look at the weather map. Match the letters on the map with the regions on the left.

b) Use the map to tell your partner about today's weather in three of the regions.

Start like this: The weather in ... today is ... There is / are ... in ...

Step 3: A presentation: The climate in the UK and Austria

a) Work in small groups. Each group finds out about one of the regions in Step 2. Collect information (from your atlas or the Internet) about the annual rainfall total and temperature in the region.

b) Compare the region with your part of Austria.

Which is wetter / hotter? Present your results to the class.

Sankt Pölten



Average annual rainfall:
659 mm



Average temperature:
9.2°C

annual average rainfall total [ˌænjuəl ˌævərɪdʒ ˈreɪnfɔːl təʊtəl] – durchschnittliche Niederschlagsmenge pro Jahr
atlas [ˈætləs] – Atlas, relief [rɪˈliːf] – Relief, highland [ˈhaɪlənd] – Hochland, lowland [ˈləʊlənd] – Flachland, interval [ˈɪntəvl] – Abschnitt, shower [ˈʃaʊə] – Regenschauer, light rain [laɪt ˈreɪn] – Nieselregen, heavy rain [ˈhevi ˈreɪn] – starker Regen, climate [ˈklaɪmət] – Klima, temperature [ˈtemprətʃə] – Temperatur, degree Celsius [ˈdiɡriː ˈseɪsɪs] – Grad Celsius

Appendix 20

A workshop Using the Internet

1 Finding information

Internet search engines are great if you need information or facts for an English project. (Did you know that 80% of the pages on the World Wide Web are in English?) You can also use pictures from the Internet in projects. The skills box will help you to use the Internet better.

PROJECT SKILLS

- Start a text file before you go into the Internet.
- Read the tasks on the right. Write down the keywords you need.
- Go to an Internet search engine. Give yourself 20 minutes to find useful information.
- Write the answers in your text file. You can also copy and paste text and save pictures from the Internet, but be careful! Only use the facts and pictures you need, and don't forget to quote your sources.
- Save your text file, then print and read it. Check if there are any mistakes in it. (You can also show the text to a partner.)



Tasks

- Find three British football clubs which start with the letter 'B'.
- Find the two biggest Scottish football clubs.
- Find a picture from the Highland Games. Write down the name of the sport in the picture.
- What is the 'Man versus Horse Marathon'?
- What is Gaelic football?

Red Line 3, Course book 2008: 107

Appendix 21

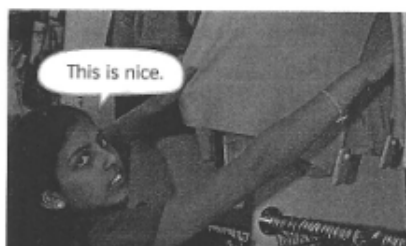
⑨ You're not going to buy that!

Emma, that's not an Arsenal shirt!



Saturday is pocket money day. Then on Tuesday Emma and Lisa go shopping. Lisa would *love* a new Arsenal shirt, but she is not going to buy one today – they are too expensive. Arsenal is going to play against Manchester United in the FA Cup in London next week. Is Arsenal going to win? Lisa thinks so. And the best part is – Lisa and her dad are going to go to the match, too. And she is going to cheer a lot for her team! What is she going to wear? Her old Arsenal shirt and scarf. She is still saving for a new shirt.

This is nice.



Now the girls are in a big clothes shop in Greenwich. Emma is going to buy a lovely blue top, or a green one? No, a pink one. But Lisa is not going to buy a top. She is still talking about going to the football match. Her dad is going to buy football tickets for her birthday. Football, football, football. Is Lisa going to talk about football all day, thinks Emma. "Lisa, can I borrow two pounds to buy this top?" "Oh, Emma. Another new top? I'm going to save my pocket money. Why don't you?"

→ WB 26,1

Red Line 2 Course book 2008: 63

Unit 2 Look at London!

Big Ben is a famous clock tower in London, but Big Ben is really the name of the huge bell. It weighs 13,200 kilos. People cannot go up into the tower, but everybody can hear the bells!





Everyone likes to go on this huge wheel. The London Eye is 135 metres high so you get a really good view of London. Millions of visitors go on it every year. You can even have your birthday party in one of the capsules with a special chocolate cake!



The Tower of London is over a thousand years old. Once, it was a prison, but today you can go there and see the Crown Jewels. If you have any questions, then ask one of the guards. They are called Beefeaters.



The London Dungeon is not just another museum in the city – it is a museum of horror! Are you brave enough to go on a tour? Then take the Tube to London Bridge – and good luck!



Let's go to Hyde Park! There you can go skateboarding, horse riding and jogging. Every summer there is a big free pop concert with lots of bands. It's really cool!

A project Animals

GROUP SKILLS



- Jede/r in der Gruppe soll beim Projekt eine Aufgabe übernehmen (Informationen sammeln, Informationen auswählen, Plakat schreiben, Bilder finden oder malen). Entscheidet, wer was macht. Alle tragen ihre Ergebnisse vor.
- Schaut euch die Tierbilder an und erstellt eine Liste von Tieren, die ihr interessant findet. Dann entscheidet euch gemeinsam für ein Tier. Findet ihr genug Informationen zu dem Tier?
- Wo findet ihr weitere Informationen, Bilder und andere Dinge zu eurem Thema? Sucht in Büchern, in Zeitschriften, in eurer Bibliothek oder im Internet. Entscheidet, wer wo suchen soll.

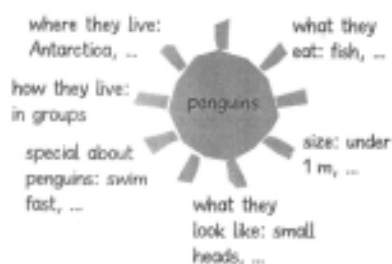


Step 1: Prepare your project

1. Make groups of four to five pupils.
2. Look at the penguin poster. You are going to make and present your own animal poster.
3. Choose an animal with the people in your group. You can choose one of the animals in the pictures, or you can choose your own animal.

Step 2: Collect ideas for your project

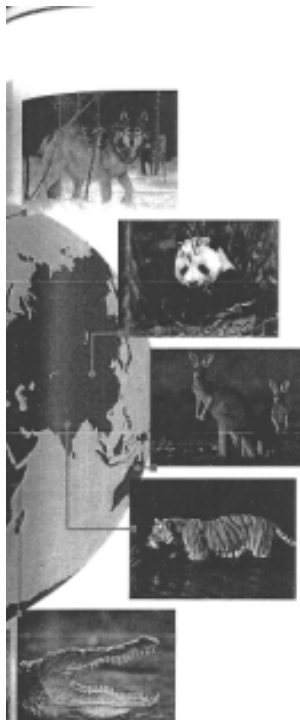
1. Now collect useful words and phrases for your animal.
2. Make a mapping in your group.



Step 3: Make your poster

1. Look at your mapping. Now choose the information that you are going to use for your poster. Which questions are you going to ask and answer? Have you got all the information you need?
2. Your poster can have photos or pictures, texts and lists. You can use a computer or you can write on paper. Make sure the writing is big and clear.
3. If you need a lot of new words, you can make a vocabulary box. Then the other pupils can understand your poster, too.
4. Now check your poster. Are you happy with it? Can you make it better?

Appendix 24



Project: PENGUINS

Where do they live?

- Antarctica
- Australia
- South America
- New Zealand
- South Africa

live beside the sea
like cold water + ice
live in colonies

mother penguins
lay 1-2 eggs
eat fish and small
animals from the sea

birds, but cannot fly
(bones are heavy and
wings are thin)
can swim fast
(some can swim 25 km
per hour)
are very slow on land

17 or 18 different
kinds of penguins
biggest: Emperor
penguin
smallest: Little Blue
penguin

What do they look like?

- black and white (some are black, white and yellow; baby penguins are brown)
- small heads
- small, thin wings
- long beaks
- Emperor penguins: can be 1.2m tall and weigh 35 kilos



PRESENTATION SKILLS

- Für eure Präsentation könnt ihr euch Notizen machen. Lest aber nicht vom Blatt ab, sondern versucht auch, eure Zuhörer/innen anzuschauen.
- Sprecht langsam, deutlich und laut genug, so dass man euch auch ganz hinten im Klassenzimmer gut verstehen kann.

Step 4: Present your poster

1. Everybody in your group should present one part of your poster to the class.
2. Practise what you are going to say. Don't just read the text. Talk about your poster. You can use other pictures, sounds and information, too. The useful phrases can help you.
3. Check that the other pupils have understood you. Have they got questions?

USEFUL PHRASES

Our presentation is about ...
 First, Anna is going to talk about ... then
 Peter is going to show you ... After that ...
 Here is a picture of / Here you can see ...
 This list tells you / This text is about /
 On this CD you can hear ...
 The words in the vocabulary box can help
 you. ... means / is ... in German.
 Is everything clear? / Have you got any questions?

Bild: meadow/Wildlife/Flora/Red Line 2/1067

Appendix 25

An e-mail from Scotland

Hi Terry,

I'm using my uncle's computer to send this. It's funny, but although I'm Scottish, I'm missing Greenwich. There aren't any shops in the village where Uncle Bruce lives, so I can't just go out and buy some chips or a comic. There's a post office where you can buy boring things like cornflakes and flour and, of course, stamps. Uncle Bruce drives to the supermarket in Aberdeen once a week. Last Saturday I went with him and put a lot of yoghurt and frozen chips in the shopping trolley! The kids here have already gone back to school. Uncle Bruce was away yesterday, so he sent me to the school in the next village. It's a really small school. I cycled, because the bus doesn't stop here and of course there's no Tube. I had to tell the class about London and then I felt really homesick. When I started riding my bike home after school, the chain came off. I tried to get it back on, but it was difficult, so I started to walk home slowly. Two girls were behind me on their bikes, and they stopped. They didn't say, "We'll help you." They said, "Don't give up. Remember King Robert and the spider." I'm not sure what they meant, but they were quite nice and I wanted to make a good impression, so I tried again, and I got the chain back on. I'm going to ask Uncle Bruce about the spider.

See you soon,
Rob

Red Line 2 Course book 2008: 82

Appendix 26

3 Present or past?

Are the sentences in the present or in the past?

1. Where is he from?
2. I rode my bike to school this morning.
3. We were at home yesterday.
4. This year Terry and Sam are in tutor group 8CS.
5. She had a great birthday in July.
6. They went to Scotland last year.
7. We play football every week.
8. I read three books last month.

GRAMMAR

to go	→	went
to have	→	had
to get	→	got
to ride	→	rode
to do	→	did
to read [ri:d]	→	read [red]

5 A postcard from Emma

In August Lisa got a postcard from Emma. Put the missing verbs in the past tense.

Example: 1. The weather is nice today but yesterday it was so cold.

Dear Lisa,

The weather is nice today but yesterday it 1 so cold. We usually go to the beach but yesterday we 2 to a big department store. You can get great things there, so I 3 you a fantastic present. I also got a book; I read here every day. Last week I 4 a funny book about a boy from Scotland. Guess what? I ride my bike here all the time! Last week I 5 to the next town with my dad. I am never tired after a bike ride but after our long bike ride I 6 very tired! At home we never have ice-cream but we 7 a big ice-cream after that bike ride! The campsite is great, too — there are a lot of other families here now. Last week there 8 no other families here. That was boring! See you at school in September.

Emma



Lisa Taylor
28 Pond Road
Greenwich
London SE10 9LW

Red Line 2 Course book 2008: 13

Appendix 27

2 Will or going to?

Make sentences with **will** or **going to**.

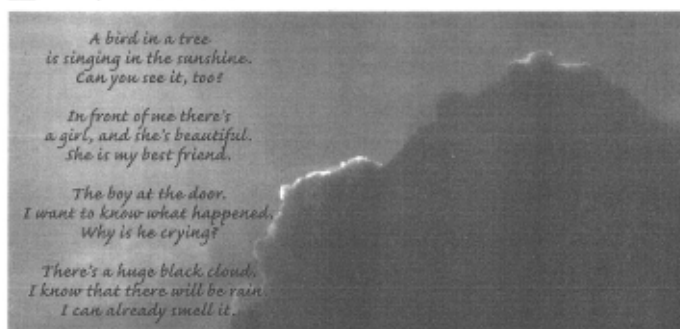
- Alan: There's a computer problem at one of the oil platforms, Bruce. I (fly) out there after lunch. I think the weather (be) a bit better then.
- Uncle Bruce: Right. I (come) with you if you like.
- Alan: No, it's OK. I (take) a lot of equipment with me. I (put) it on the other seat. There probably (not be) a seat for another person in the helicopter.
- Uncle Bruce: All right. Leslie and I have got a lot of plans for today, anyway. I (make) a new weather map for today. Leslie (send) a weather report to all the oil platforms. He (check) our computer equipment, too.

→ G 40

Red Line 2 Course book 2008: 87

Appendix 28

1 A new poem (→ p. 54/ex. 3)



a) Read the poem. There are four parts of the poem. What are they about? Write one sentence for each part.

- The first part is about a bird which is
- The second part
-
-

b) Look at the photo. Which part of the poem does it show? Find photos for the other parts of the poem and show them to the class.

c) Find a title for the poem: _____

2 WRITING SKILLS: My own poem (→ p. 55/ex. 5)

a) You can also write poems with names or words. Each line can have one or more words. Look at these two poems:

Blue
Eyes
Nice



Sun
Now
On
White



b) Write your own poem. You can use your dictionary if it is hard to find the right words. Try to complete these first. Then write your own poem. Don't forget to find a picture!

People
Are dancing to
Rap songs
T ...
Y ...

Laugh
In the sun
F ...
E ...

Red Line 3, Course book 2008: 36

Appendix 29

4 Your turn: A menu

a) Make a menu with your favourite food and drinks on it.
You can draw pictures or use photos from magazines.

b) Present your menu to the class.

Example: My favourite food is Turkish. On my menu there is a starter. It's ...

An apple a day keeps the doctor away.



Red Line 2 Course book 2008: 63

Appendix 30

6 Real talk: Invitations and plans

Act out short dialogues with your partner.

USEFUL PHRASES

Would you like to ☐ ?
Let's ☐.

Yes, I would.
Oh yes, that's a good idea!
Oh, thanks for the invitation.
Sorry, I haven't got time then.
Sorry, I'd like to but I can't.

come to my party on ... ?
go to the cinema on ... ?
play ... at the weekend?
go shopping on ... ? ... ?

→ WB 47, 4

Red Line 1, Course book 2008: 75

Appendix 31

Language to go

Good morning!/Hello!	Would you like to try it/them on?
May I help you?	Would you like to look at it/them?
I'd like to ...	How much is it?
I want to buy ...	It's 12.99.
Could you show me ...?	How much are they?
Could I look at ...?	They are 35,-.
	Here is your change.
This one or that one?	I think I'll take it/them.
These or those?	It's not what I am looking for.
Here you are.	That's cheap/(too) expensive.
	Thank you very much.
	You're welcome.

English to go, Course book one 2004: 92

Writing workshop

The seasons

Unit 08

10

Write a text about the seasons.

You can write about:

- what your family does.
- what you do.
- what happens in school.
- what happens in nature.

a. Before you write

Brainstorm useful phrases like in 9 b. Remember the third person -s!

	Family	Me	School	Nature
Spring				
Summer				
Autumn				
Winter				

b. Writing

Now write your text about the seasons.

c. Feedback

Work with a partner.

First, listen to your partner read his/her text. Then tell your partner:

- what your favourite part of the text is.
- what your favourite word in the text is.

Now read your partner's text silently. Are the verb endings correct? Is the text well-structured? Tell your partner what you think.

d. Revising

Can you make your text better? Can you add more ideas?

Can you correct your mistakes?

Tip

You can use the language for feedback in unit 7, too!

English to go 1 | Unit 08 | **49**

Appendix 33

10

Work in a team.

Create a shopping scene and act it out. Use the LTG box for help.

Who?	What?	Where?

Language to go

Good morning!/Hello!

May I help you?

I'd like to ...

I want to buy ...

Could you show me ...?

Could I look at ...?

This one or that one?

These or those?

Here you are.

Would you like to try it/them on?

Would you like to look at it/them?

How much is it?

It's 12.99.

How much are they?

They are 35,-.

Here is your change.

I think I'll take it/them.

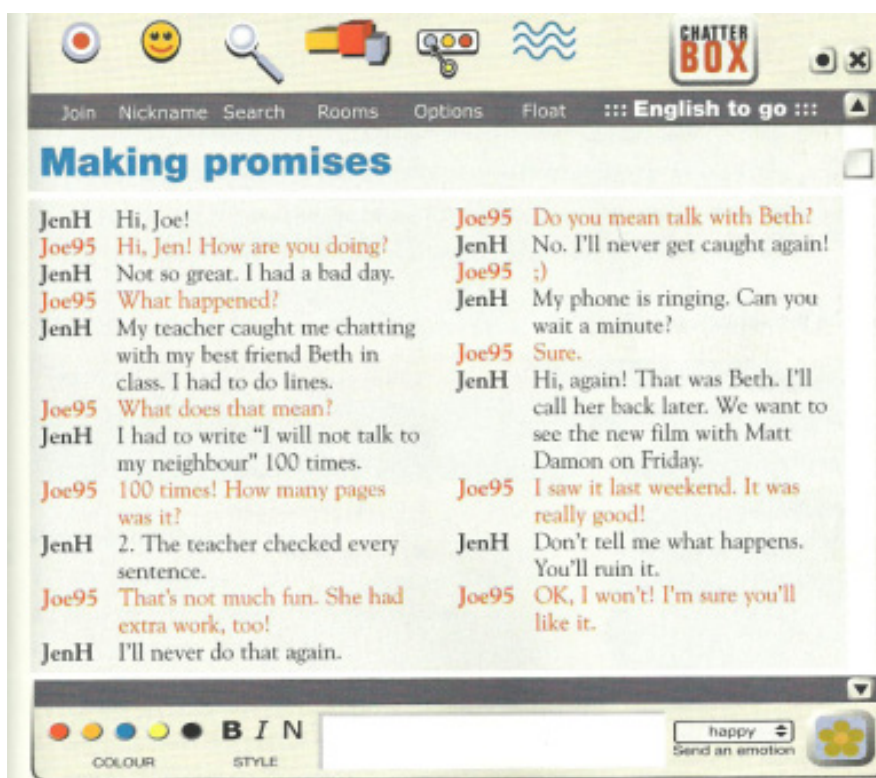
It's not what I am looking for.

That's cheap/(too) expensive.

Thank you very much.

You're welcome.

Appendix 34



English to go, Course book one 2004: 101

Writing workshop

The seasons

Unit 08

10 Write a text about the seasons.
You can write about:

- what your family does.
- what you do.
- what happens in school.
- what happens in nature.

a. Before you write
Brainstorm useful phrases like in 9 b. Remember the third person -s!

	Family	Me	School	Nature
Spring				
Summer				
Autumn				
Winter				

b. Writing
Now write your text about the seasons.

c. Feedback
Work with a partner.

First, listen to your partner read his/her text. Then tell your partner:

- what your favourite part of the text is.
- what your favourite word in the text is.

Now read your partner's text silently. Are the verb endings correct?
Is the text well-structured? Tell your partner what you think.

d. Revising
Can you make your text better? Can you add more ideas?
Can you correct your mistakes?

Tip
You can use the language for feedback in unit 7, too!

Appendix 36

2 Do a freespeak for two minutes.
You can talk about:

- the interview with J.K. Rowling.
- the Harry Potter books or films.
- your favourite book, film, or TV show.

English to go Course book 3 2005: 54

Appendix 37

9 Listen to the freespeak. Which picture is it about?
Choose a picture and do a freespeak.



English to go, Course book one 2004: 78

Appendix 38

3 Match the sentences.

- 1 Can you go to the cinema on Friday?
- 2 Do you think he will help me?
- 3 I can't find my school bag.
- 4 I have to go.
- 5 Please don't tell anyone.
- 6 The phone is ringing!

- a I'll answer it!
- b I don't know. I'll ask my mum.
- c OK, I'll call you later.
- d I'll help you look for it.
- e I'm sure he will.
- f OK, I won't.

English to go, Course book one 2004: 102

Appendix 39

6 Create your own mythical creature.



Invent a name.

Make sure it sounds funny: *a stinkbull.*

Describe it.

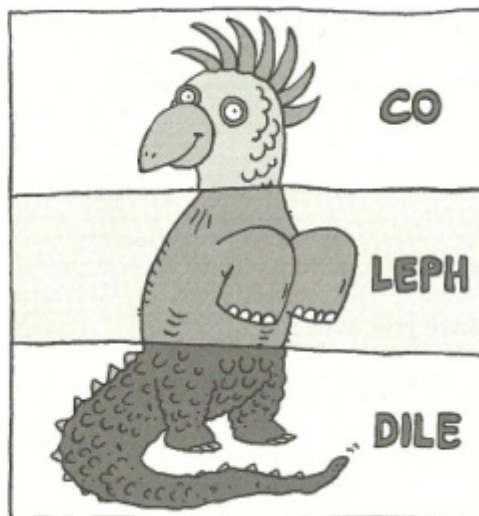
Use colours, adjectives, and parts of the body: *It has big green eyes and yellow ears.*

What does it do?

You need verbs: *It jumps on trees and makes funny noises.*

Where does it live?

Describe places or countries: *It lives in Wales under a stone in the wood.*



English to go. Workbook 2 2005: 60

Appendix 40

2 Listen and echo. Is it the past, the present, or the future? Tick the correct column.



- 1 Beth is eleven years old.
- 2 She went to Camp Wannabe.
- 3 She lives in Cambridge.
- 4 She will send Kim an e-mail.
- 5 She is Jen's best friend.
- 6 She is going to call her.
- 7 She had fun in school yesterday.
- 8 She is going to do her homework.
- 9 She doesn't like maths.
- 10 She worked with Lucy.

Past?	Present?	Future?
	✓	

English to go, Course book 2, 2005: 28

Appendix 41

Test your grammar

T.32 Read and listen to the joke. Underline the verb forms that refer to the future. What is the difference between them?

A Penguin Joke!

One day a man and his wife were walking down the street when they came across a penguin.

"Oh!" exclaimed the man. "What a surprise! What shall we do with it?"

"I know," said his wife. "We'll ask a policeman."

So they found a policeman and explained what had happened.

"Mmm," said the policeman. "I think the best thing is to take it to the zoo."

"What a good idea!" said the woman. "We'll go there straight away."

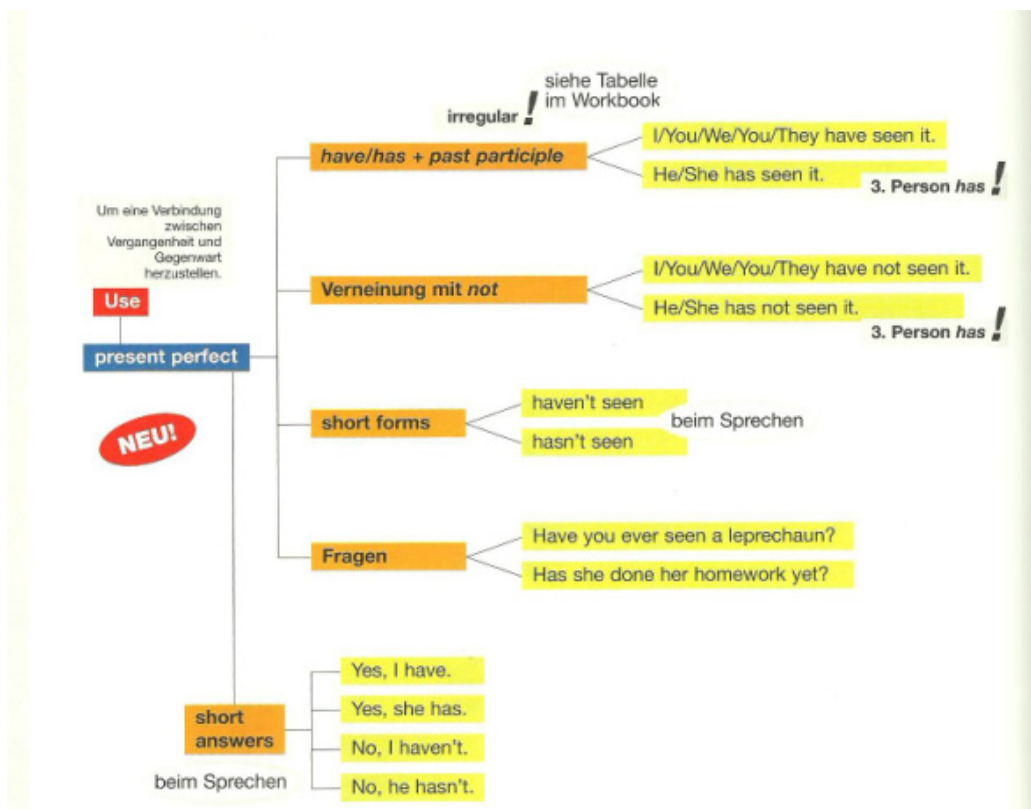


The next morning the policeman was walking down the same street when he saw the couple again with the penguin. "I thought I told you to take that penguin to the zoo," the policeman said.

"Well, we did," said the man. "We took it to the zoo and we all had a really good time. So this afternoon we're taking it to the cinema, and this evening we're going to have a meal in a fish restaurant."

(Hedge 2000: 161)

Appendix 42



English to go. Course book two 2005: 148

Appendix 43



Review: Present perfect tense (simple)

Die *present perfect tense* kennen wir ja schon aus der 2. Klasse. Gebildet wird diese Zeit mit **have/has** und **der 3. Form des Zeitworts (past participle)**. Man verwendet sie

- wenn Ereignisse in der Vergangenheit **mit der Gegenwart zusammenhängen und dort Auswirkungen haben**;
- wenn man ausdrücken will, **dass** (aber nicht wann) etwas geschehen ist;
- wenn man sagen will, **wie lange** (bzw. seit wann) **ein Zustand schon andauert**.

11 Gramm

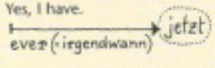
He has helped me to dig snow. The road is clear now.
 This has been the worst snowstorm ever.
 They have lived in Vancouver for sixty years.

Have you ever walked in snowshoes?
 She hasn't yet built the igloo.

Present perfect or past simple?

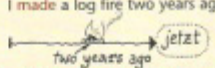
Wenn wir in der **present perfect tense** über etwas Vergangenes sprechen, dann ist es **unwichtig (oder nicht bekannt), wann** (genau) es geschehen ist. Das Geschehen selbst ist wichtig und ist oft auch **für die Gegenwart von Bedeutung**. Gibt man aber zu dem Ereignis **weitere Details** an (oder fragt danach), wie z. B. den **Zeitpunkt**, dann verwendet man **past tense**.

Have you ever made a log fire?
 Yes, I have.



ever (=irgendwann)

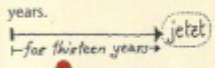
When did you make a log fire?
 I made a log fire two years ago.



two years ago

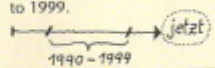
Wenn man ausdrücken will, dass ein **Zustand in der Vergangenheit begonnen hat und jetzt noch andauert**, braucht man die **present perfect tense**. Wenn es aber um etwas geht, das **zu einem bestimmten Zeitpunkt** oder in einem bestimmten, **abgeschlossenen Zeitraum** in der Vergangenheit stattgefunden hat, dann verwenden wir **past tense**.

Susan has lived in Vancouver for thirteen years.



for thirteen years

Her aunt lived in Vancouver from 1990 to 1999.



1990 - 1999

extra tip

Typische Signalwörter für die **present perfect tense**: *ever, never, always, for three (four, ten ...) years, since, yet, just, all my life*.
 Typische Signalwörter für die **past tense**: *yesterday, in 2003, last year (week, Monday ...), ... ago*.

For or since?

For bezieht sich immer auf einen **Zeitraum** (z. B. vier Jahre – Frage: wie lange?), **since** immer auf einen **Zeitpunkt** (z. B. September 2004 – Frage: wann?).

I have attended this school **for** four years.
 We have attended our school **since** September.

Appendix 44



Past simple

9 Grammar

Die **past simple** verwende ich vor allem, um darüber zu sprechen, was (irgendwann) einmal war. Bei **regelmäßigen Zeitwörtern** bilde ich die "past tense" durch das Anhängen von **-ed**. Wenn das Zeitwort mit **-e** endet, hänge ich nur mehr **-d** an.

The horses helped the boy.	help - helped
He stayed in the magic land.	stay - stayed
The boy played with the horses.	play - played
The magician lived in a castle	live - lived
The boy baked cakes.	bake - baked
The boy liked the horses.	like - liked

Wenn das Verb mit einem **Mitlaut nach kurz gesprochenem Selbstlaut** endet, **verdopple** ich den **Mitlaut**, bevor ich **-ed** anhänge.

He travelled to the magic land.	travel - travelled
---------------------------------	--------------------

FRIENDS Course book one 2003: 99

Appendix 45

To: Peter, Susan, Amir, Sean, Indira, Mogo
From: Kathi

2 The Oxford Sun

Hello friends,

It's me, Katharina, 'Kathi' – I hope you all remember me from our international course in Oxford in England. After our course together I had a great holiday in Greece, but now I am back home in Vienna.

I loved the magazine we created together in Oxford! Our teacher Michael Rodriguez had so many great ideas for it. I think it was wonderful when he asked us for stories about our friends, families and hometowns and created the magazine with us. I loved Peter's stories about his sister. Remember: she always spent at least two hours in the bathroom every morning! Amir's cartoons and puzzles were brilliant! Susan, I loved your songs and your funny diary!

This morning I had a great idea. Now we have friends all over the world. I thought that we could make an international magazine – in English, of course – and send it to everyone. You can all send me your stories, photographs, cartoons and so on and Michael can help us with our English. He is home again in Colorado now, but he is going to travel around the world to different schools. He told me that we could send him the things we write and he will help us. Then I can send you all copies of the magazine. What do you all think?

Love, Kathi

FRIENDS Course Book Plus 3 2005:5

Appendix 46



Can you fill in the correct form of the verb?

1 Which tense?

- 1) It is Sunday at 3 p.m. We _____ our mountain bikes now. (to ride)
- 2) Uncle Chris usually _____ tennis on Monday. (to play)
- 3) I _____ my homework now. I can't play with you. (to do)
- 4) The cat _____ after the mouse now. (to run)
- 5) We never _____ to bed before 8.30 p.m. (to go)
- 6) Helen usually _____ lunch at home after school. (to eat)
- 7) They _____ milk now. (to drink)
- 8) Please be quiet. Becky _____. (to sleep)
- 9) They always _____ fun at parties. (to have)
- 10) We sometimes _____ songs in the evening. (to sing)



DEUTSCHE ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Die vorliegende Arbeit besteht aus einem theoretischen und einem praktischen Teil. Teil 1 erklärt die Rolle von Grammatik in der täglichen Kommunikation und beleuchtet ihren engen Zusammenhang mit Lexis und Kontext. Laut Hymes (1972) besteht die kommunikative Fremdsprachenkompetenz eines Lernenden nicht alleine aus seinem Wortschatz und seinen Kenntnissen der möglichen formalen Aspekte einer Sprache, sondern unter anderem auch aus seinem Wissen darüber, welche sprachlichen Mittel je nach sozialem Umfeld passend sind, und wie die Sprache tatsächlich verwendet wird.

Basierend darauf, dass Sprache vorrangig der Kommunikation dient und dass Grammatik somit kommunikatives Potential hat, ist Grammatik im Kommunikativen Fremdsprachenunterricht nicht komplett aus dem Unterricht zu verbannen. Grammatikregeln müssen jedoch so formuliert sein, dass sie effizient und verlässlich für die Schüler sind und von zahlreichen Beispielen begleitet werden. Übungen und Aktivitäten sollen in der Art gestaltet sein, dass die Verwendung der Fremdsprache in der Klasse der echten Kommunikation dient. Das bedeutet, dass beispielsweise Lernende in Partnerarbeit Informationen austauschen, die nicht beiden bekannt sind. Schüler sollen auch die Wahl haben, welche Redemittel sie einsetzen und die Möglichkeit erhalten, von ihrem Gesprächspartner Rückmeldung zu bekommen. Sprachspiele beinhalten häufig diese Eigenschaften und können im Unterricht sehr effektiv sein.

Texte sollen plausibel sein, d.h. dass es möglich sein muss, sich eine Situation vorzustellen, in welcher man die angebotene Sprachauswahl in natürlichem Kontext vorfinden würde. Ferner sollen die angebotenen Texte authentisch für die Schüler sein. Diese sollen einen Zusammenhang zu ihrem eigenen Leben herstellen können und dadurch motiviert sein, sich mit einem bestimmten Thema oder einer Aufgabe in der Fremdsprache auseinanderzusetzen. Die Förderung von Lernerautonomie – der Bereitschaft des Schülers eigenständig an der Verbesserung seiner Fremdsprachenkenntnisse zu arbeiten – ist ein wichtiger Bestandteil des modernen Fremdsprachenunterrichts.

Die Wichtigkeit des selbständigen Lernens wird auch im GERS (engl. CEFR), auf welchem der österreichische Lehrplan und die Lehrbücher aufgebaut sind, betont. Hierfür wurden für eine große Auswahl an Situation, Lebensbereichen und Aufgaben, mit welchen Schüler außerhalb der Schule konfrontiert werden könnten, sogenannte Deskriptoren zusammengestellt. Anhand dieser sollen Lernende selbst einschätzen, ob sie eine bestimmte Situation in der Fremdsprache meistern könnten. Das Potential an möglichen Diskussionspunkten innerhalb der Klasse wird im GERS nicht hervorgehoben.

Der Fokus dieser Diplomarbeit liegt auf dem Unterrichten der englischen Zeiten, die Schülern häufig Probleme bereiten. Selbst Grammatiken definieren die Regeln zum Gebrauch der Zeiten sehr unterschiedlich, wobei manche Vergleiche und Regeln sogar kontraproduktiv sein können.

Die detaillierte Untersuchung in Teil 2 von vier Englisch-Lehrbuchserien aus der österreichischen Schulbuchliste, geht auf dieselben Aspekte ein, welche im Teil 1 von theoretischer Seite untersucht worden sind: auf welchen pädagogischen Grundlagen ein Lehrbuch basiert, welche Grammatikregeln Schülern angeboten werden, wie plausibel die Texte und Kontexte sind, und ob die Aufgabenstellungen und Aktivitäten im Unterricht dem Ansatz, dass erfolgreiche Kommunikation das oberste Ziel ist, gerecht werden. Dabei ist zu betonen, dass ein Lehrbuch, das zahlreiche Möglichkeiten für die Kommunikation bietet, noch keinen kommunikativen Unterricht garantiert. Lehrer und Schüler müssen das Unterrichtsmaterial aktivieren, daher kann das Material nur so gut sein, wie der Lehrer es zulässt. Eine Untersuchung, wie Lehrbücher im Unterricht zur Anwendung kommen, ist allerdings nicht Teil der vorliegenden Arbeit.

In vielen Lehrbüchern stellen Texte und Übungen allerdings die formalen Aspekte des Englischen in den Vordergrund. Bestimmte Formen kommen überdurchschnittlich oft vor, und die Sprachauswahl wird daher unnatürlich. In *The New You & Me* ist der Fokus auf die formalen Aspekte, d.h. richtige Formen und Orthographie, welche ohne Kontexte eingeübt werden, gelegt.

Die Grammatikregeln sind in allen vier Lehrwerken nicht hilfreich für die Schüler. Regeln werden meist so vereinfacht, dass sich Schüler nicht mehr auf sie verlassen können. Sprachspiele kommen nur teilweise in *Red Line* und *Friends* vor, *The New You and Me* und *English to go* bieten keine Spiele an.

In *Red Line* und *English to go* steht Sprache als Kommunikationsmittel im Vordergrund. Es werden zahlreiche Projektarbeiten angeboten, bei welchen Schüler ein echtes Bedürfnis haben, auf Englisch Informationen auszutauschen und zu diskutieren, um zu einem gemeinsamen Ergebnis zu gelangen. *Friends* bietet keine Projekte an, allerdings sind die Aktivitäten meist so gestaltet, dass echter Informationsaustausch stattfindet.

Zusammenfassend konnte ich feststellen, dass die Forderung, Sprache als Kommunikationsmittel im Unterricht in den Vordergrund zu stellen, im österreichischen Lehrplan und in den Englischbüchern für die Schule bereits Eingang gefunden hat, allerdings teilweise erst halbherzig umgesetzt worden ist.

CURRICULUM VITAE

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Education

1976-1980	Primary school, Vienna
1980-1988	Gymnasium, Vienna
1988-1990	Übersetzer- und Dolmetscherausbildung Englisch, Russisch AHStG, Vienna University
1988-2001	Lehramt Anglistik und Amerikanistik (Stzw) AHStG, Lehramt Russisch (Stzw) AHStG, Vienna University
1992-1996	Erweiterungsstudium Lehramt Italienisch (Stzw) AHStG
2008-present	Lehramtsstudium UniStG, UF Englisch, UF Russisch, Vienna University

Professional life

1996-present	Product analyst Vaccines/Global Industrial Supply Chain, Baxter AG, Vienna
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Teaching experience

1993-1994	Foreign language assistant at Hazlehead Academy, Aberdeen, Scotland
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Other qualifications

June 1994	Cambridge Certificate of Proficiency in English (Grade A)
December 2003	APICS (Certified Production and Inventory Manager)
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Languages	German (mother tongue), English (C2), Russian (C2), French (B1), Italian (A2)