TESL REPORTER

BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY — HAWAII
Volume 22, Number 4 • Laie, Hawaii • October 1989

TESL Reporter

BYUH Box 1830
Laie, Hawaii 96762-1294

ISSN 0886-0661

A quarterly publication of the Language, Literature, and Communications Division of Brigham Young University—Hawaii

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What Gets Wetter When It Dries? Some Comments on Transitivity in English Verbs

Edward M. Anthony, University of Pittsburgh

Students of English as a second language sometimes find difficulty in understanding and using those verb and sentence features which we characteristically label 'transitive' and 'intransitive.' The explanation below may help the teachers of such students by providing an approach-level explanation which can be used as a basis for developing and presenting these matters in the classroom.

A Generative Grammar Explanation

Generative grammarians often cite as evidence of the existence of both surface structure and underlying structure the following pair of sentences:

1. *He is easy to please.*
2. *He is eager to please.*

The two sentences, it is said, show the same surface structure but must reflect different underlying structures, one evidence of which is that the two sentences paraphrase differently. *He* is the semantic **object** of *please* in the first sentence but the semantic **subject** of *please* in the second, i.e.:

1. *It is easy to please HIM.*
but 2. *HE is eager to please somebody.*

An Alternate Explanation

While the bilevel metaphor is often a useful explanatory device, another valid explanation of the structure of these two sentences is possible. It is the aim of this essay to explore that explanation by focusing upon the transitive/intransitive distinction, a dichotomous terminological tradition which tends to force us into a two-part classification of English verbs.

According to a dictionary many of us use (Webster's Ninth New Collegiate), transitive is defined as "characterized by having or containing a direct object, and can be applied to types of verbs as well." That dictionary uses, for example, vi after verbs like *go* and vt after verbs like *hit*. In this paper, my stipulative initial definitions of the two terms echo these:

1. **Transitive verb**: One which language data show to be capable of functioning as the main verb in a transitive sentence.
2. **Intransitive verb**: One which language data show to be capable of functioning as the main verb in a intransitive sentence.

In the present analysis, transitive and intransitive functions in verbs inhere in the verbs themselves, and are as much a part of them as their "verbness".

But when one attempts to classify verbs as potentially either transitive or intransitive, another category elbows itself into view. "What gets wetter when it dries?" asks my title, citing an ancient riddle. The answer, of course, is a towel. The riddle is whimsical, but illustrates a serious grammatical point. The difficulty of the riddle (if it is difficult) derives from the nature of the verb *dry*. What allows the

riddle to exist at all is that dry is versatile enough to have a potential for either— in the riddle, both— transitive or intransitive function. The three definitions below thus replace my initial two:

1. **Transitive-only verb**: a verb which the language data show to be capable of appearing as the main verb in only a transitive sentence, e.g.: *enjoy, get, reach.*

2. **Intransitive-only verb**: a verb which the language data show to be capable of appearing as the main verb in only an intransitive sentence, e.g.: *are, come, die, go, happen, wait.*

3. **Transitive/intransitive verb**: a verb which the language data show to be capable of functioning as the main verb in transitive OR intransitive sentences, e.g.: *ask, awaken, believe, call, change, know, learn, pass, PLEASE*, and, of course *DRY.*

One can thus suggest that transitivity in an English verb is a built-in component of its meaning. This places discussions of the putative differences between pairs like *lie/lay* and *sit/set* in the lexical realm.

At this point let's return to:

1. *He is easy to please.*
   (It is easy to please him)
2. *He is eager to please.*
   (He is eager to please somebody)

We can now construct a hypothesis which explains the two sentences, but which does not need a surface/underlying structure premise: Only a verb belonging to the (transitive/intransitive) lexical category can appear in both sentences. The two sentences do not, from this perspective, reflect two different underlying sentences but derive directly from the differing transitivity feature of the verb.

The examples belonging to this latter category are: *ask, awaken, believe, call, change, know, learn, pass, please, dry.*
The sentences they result in are...

He is easy to ask.
He is eager to ask.

He is easy to awaken.
He is eager to awaken.

He is easy to believe.
He is eager to believe.

He is easy to call.
He is eager to call.

He is easy to change.
He is eager to change.

He is easy to know.
He is eager to know.

He is easy to learn. (?)
He is eager to learn.

He is easy to pass.
He is eager to pass.

He is easy to PLEASE.
He is eager to PLEASE.

He is easy to dry. (?)
He is eager to dry (?)

A Pair of Cautionary Comments

Each of these is an acceptable sentence, but two cautionary addenda must be put forth. First, some of these represent situations which might only rarely occur—that is, they exhibit lexical incompatibility. *He is eager to learn* is possible, but *He is easy to learn* is less likely, since one does not often encounter situations where it is necessary to "learn" people; we resort to the intransitiviy option and "learn *about* people." If,

however, one substitutes *they*, which can refer to people or things, there is no problem: They (the boys) are eager to learn; They (the lessons) are easy to learn.

Again, *He is easy to dry* and *He is eager to dry* might puzzle some. But one can without much difficulty set up a situation in which a baby is troublesome to bathe, but is *easy to dry*, and a boy who, late for an appointment, rushes from the ocean *eager to dry*. In fact, another situation could be set up about a spouse who refuses to wash dishes but, in compensation, is *eager to dry*. The contrast between the latter two is interesting because a hypothetical object of the tardy boy is to dry *himself*, whereas the presumed object of the spouse is to dry *dishes*. These examples, however, involve supplied semantic, or paraphrase objects, and not grammatical ones, and are slightly apart from the main issue here.

The second comment: Some dialects, idiolects, and styles might categorize particular verbs differently. For example, I have included *enjoy* as a verb that is only to be found in transitive sentences, yet the exhortation "Enjoy!" is sometimes heard. This merely transfers one item to a different category—perhaps limited to a particular dialect, idiolect, or style. It does not, however, disturb the categories themselves. *He is easy to enjoy* is unlikely to be challenged; *He is eager to enjoy* would be acceptable only to those whose speech allows that verb to appear in intransitive sentences.

Similarly, one who, in a non-standard way, uses the verb *learn* to mean "teach" might well accept *He is easy to learn* (*larn*?) as well as *He is eager to learn.*

The rest is easy to complete, and I am eager to do so. Transitive-only verbs are restricted to use with *easy*: *He is easy to enjoy, to get, to reach.* Intransitive-only verbs cannot be so used: * *He is easy to come, die, wait* do not occur. But these intransitive-only verbs are quite possible in *He is eager to come, die, wait*, though *eager to die* or *to wait* quite possibly reflect rather unusual circumstances!

About the Author

Edward M. Anthony, a past-president of TESOL, is professor emeritus in the Department of General Linguistics at the University of Pittsburgh.

Teaching Math in the ESP Classroom

David Wardell,
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Have you yet found yourself teaching an English for Specific Purposes course that requires you to address math skills? If not, count yourself temporarily fortunate. I say "temporarily" because the chance that you will someday need to do training in the arcane world of numbers and formulas is growing ever greater as our profession moves away from traditional English training syllabi and becomes more and more responsive to the special concerns of the students we serve.

Passing standardized tests, such as GMAT, GRE, SAT and TOEIC, provides the rationale for many students to enroll in EFL courses here in Japan. Unhappily for language teachers, who principally hold degrees in the humanities and for whom algebra-and-beyond were not the most favored academic pursuits, these examinations include math components. Therefore, EFL instructors here sometimes find themselves responsible for teaching concepts which they themselves may not have fully mastered.

Do not despair. Let me share with you an approach to teaching math that we have used to good effect within the MBA Preparation Course at the University of Pittsburgh ELI. Although the aim of this course is to cultivate advanced study skills--principally analysis of real texts, academic writing, formal argumentation, and presentation techniques--a GMAT preparation component occurs throughout the second term. And that means teaching math.

The math section of our course consists of twelve one-hour lessons delivered at one-week intervals. Our textbook is *The Official Guide for GMAT Review* (1989-90 Edition) prepared by the Educational Testing Service in Princeton, New Jersey. Within this guide is a wide assortment of the four major types of math problems on the GMAT: (1) arithmetic, (2) algebra, (3) geometry, and (4) word problems. This text serves as a bank from which math training materials can be developed.

Materials Preparation

1. Catalogue problem types. Each week a set of problem sheets is prepared which exemplify only one of the problem groups noted above. Limiting the problem type in this way focuses student attention on the similar equations and formulas that are reiteratively employed for solutions. In order to know which problems in the *The Official Guide for GMAT Review* are characteristic of each group, the instructor must first analyze all problems appearing in the text, classifying them into the category (or categories) they best represent. In other words, the guide does not have all the arithmetic problems together in one section and all the algebra problems in another. Nor are all the ratio and proportion problems (one type of arithmetic problem) grouped apart from other types of arithmetic problems such as percents, powers and roots, and decimals. Therefore, it is the instructor's task to examine all entries in the guide and then

sort these by type so that similar kinds of problems can be introduced together.

2. Prepare problem sheets. After the cataloging is accomplished, problem sheets can be organized. Each "problem sheet" contains a single problem at the top and the explanation of that problem on the bottom. [See illustration.] Approximately twelve to fifteen problem sheets are necessary for each hour of instruction. Instructors should be sensitive to the fact that some problems are rather easy and others are quite hard. Therefore, it is important to try to assemble a representative cross-section which includes all levels of difficulty.

Instructional Methodology

1. Distribute the first problem sheet to each student. These papers are placed face down on the desk; no one may begin until the instructor says, "GO."

2. When given the signal to begin, all students turn their sheets over and fold the page so that the explanation section at the bottom is hidden from view. They then start working as quickly as possible to solve the problem.

3. When a student thinks he has the correct answer, he raises his hand. The instructor walks over to see if this answer is, indeed, correct or not.

a. If the answer is correct, the instructor says, "One minute." The rest of the class continue working for this additional amount of time. The instructor watches the clock and says, "Stop" when the minute has passed.

b. However, if the answer is incorrect, that student is "out," and the others continue working until someone else thinks he has the solution. Once more, when this happens, the instructor checks to be sure the response is correct and the others are given one more minute to arrive at an answer.

4. After the one-minute time limit has passed, the instructor says "Stop," and everyone must cease working. Following this, each student must orally state his answer; the person who first had the correct answer recites last. Hearing the answers that students have chosen gives the instructor an idea which members of the class are having difficulty; it also forces students to take risks. Each student MUST have an answer even if it has been reached by guessing.

5. The person who first answered correctly then explains how the problem should be solved. At this stage, Japanese is permissible. After all, our purpose here is to promote math competence--an intellectual activity that will almost certainly always be performed using the linguistic traditions of the first language; we should not allow our urge for classroom purity to interfere with this immediate pedagogical goal. Furthermore, others may ask questions--in Japanese. Allow as much time as the students need to share fully this information with one another before going on to the next problem sheet. The teacher need not become engaged in the technical operations of the formulas and equations; however, it is the instructor's duty to resolve difficulties that require linguistic explanations.

6. Only occasionally does a problem prove to be so difficult that no one in the class can reach a correct answer or provide a satisfactory explanation how it should be solved. In these cases, the printed explanation at the bottom of the worksheet can be called upon for assistance.

7. When everyone has been satisfied with the proper way to solve the first problem, pass out a new problem sheet and repeat the steps noted above.

Advantages of this Procedure

I have found that the game-like atmosphere which this procedure generates stimulates enjoyment while exercising the math skills needed to pass standardized examinations. As one of those EFL instructors who becomes muddled by tasks as elementary as keeping a checkbook straight, I welcome the way in which this technique enables my MBA prep students to develop their math skills without exposing my utter incompetence.

About the Author

David Wardell, instructor for the University of Pittsburgh (Japan) MBA Preparation Course, has taught in Thailand, China, and Iran as well as at several universities in Portland, Oregon.

ILLUSTRATION

PROBLEM

The regular hourly wage for an employee of a certain factor is $5.60. If the employee worked 8 hours overtime and earned 1 1/2 times this regularly hourly wage for overtime, how much overtime money was earned?

(A) $67.20

(B) $55.40

(C) $50.00

(D) $44.80

(E) $12.00

EXPLANATION

The employee would have earned 8 x $5.60 = $44.80 at the regular rate. For overtime he receives an additional amount equal to half the regular rate, or $22.40. The total overtime earnings are therefore $44.80 + $22.40 = $67.20, so the best answer is A.

Using Bumper Stickers to Teach American Values: An Ethnographic Approach

Terry N. Williams, Florida State University

Ethnography, the holistic study of a natural community, is becoming more and more popular as a technique in ESL research. However, its usefulness as an ESL teaching tool is often being overlooked. Since one begins by collecting data and inductively building a theory, ethnography is particularly suited for use by ESL students in studying American culture.

This paper focuses on a student document analysis, a micro-ethnography of American drivers, investigating the cultural values found in slogans on bumper stickers. Bumper stickers are cultural artifacts, and as such, they may yield information about the culture which produced them. Moreover, bumper stickers tell something about the value system of the individuals who choose to display them. Each of the slogans presented was seen on a vehicle. That indicates that some person felt that the bumper sticker expressed something which was important enough to him or her to attach it to his or her car. Below is a description of how students may carry out a study investigating these values.

A Class Exercise

A few days prior to the planned classroom exercise, the teacher asks students to note down all the bumper stickers they see and to write each one on a separate 3 by 5 inch index card.

Before the designated activity day, the teacher collects the cards from the students. This enables the teacher to proofread for any spelling or grammatical mistakes the students may have made while copying the slogans or to eliminate any vulgar slogans he or she may believe inappropriate for classroom discussion. Of course, vulgarity may also be an aspect of American culture, and the teacher may choose to include *all* slogans the students present.

On the day of the exercise, the teacher asks the students to move into small groups. He or she then gives each group a number of cards. The students work together examining the slogans and grouping them into different categories. Lastly, each group shares its classification with the class, giving examples of slogans included in each category.

Examples

This technique was demonstrated at a recent ESL conference. The procedure was described to the participants (ESL professionals), who were asked to gather in small groups. Each group was given a number of cards containing slogans from bumper stickers. Following are some of the categories, with an example from each, which each group decided on.

Politics

George Bush for President

Religion

Jesus is my Rock and my name is on the Roll.

Advertisements

Ford Trucks. 20 years in the lead

Social

ERA Yes

Laws

Buckle up. In Florida it's the law.

Place or Personal Values

My child is an outstanding citizen at Belle Vue Middle School.

Sports

FAMU Baseball

Humor

This is not an abandoned car.

Group Affiliation

Don't Mess with Texas.

Opinion

Electricians do it 'til it Hz!

Music

Z103

Americana

So many pedestrians, so little time.

Community Pride

Panama City Beach

Environmental

Save the Manatee

Pride and Loyalty

I Love Delta Delta Delta

Public Awareness

School's Open. Drive Carefully.

Of course, these are not the only possible categories. Some overlap. Different groups classified similar slogans differently. For example, one group believed *I Love Allah* indicated group affiliation while another group said *Jesus Loves You* expressed one's religion.

A linguistically and culturally heterogeneous group of ESL students at the Florida State University Center for Intensive English Studies categorized slogans similarly. Their categories include politics, clubs, advice, advertisements, sports, personal feelings for places or things, family, humor, and criticism.

Follow-up Activities

After categorizing bumper sticker slogans, students may participate in a variety of follow-up activities. Some of these take place immediately following the exercise in the classroom; others have to be researched in the community. Some possibilities are listed below:

Students may discuss whether or not a certain value would be expressed publicly in their home cultures.

They may look at the range of opinion Americans have regarding one particular issue, for example, gun control.

Students may ask American drivers why they have chosen to place a certain sticker on their car.

They may go to places where groups of people holding relatively homogeneous values gather, e.g. a church. They may then compare the bumper stickers seen in one location (a Southern Baptist church) to those seen elsewhere (a Unitarian church).

By participating in these activities, students may gain a deeper insight into the beliefs, values, and customs of the American people.

About the Author

Terry N. Williams is a doctoral candidate in TESL at Florida State University, where he teaches ESL in the Center for Intensive English Studies. He is a former Fulbright Junior Lecturer to Turkey.

Beyond Words: An Advanced Reading Course

BEYOND WORDS: AN ADVANCED READING COURSE. Mark O. James and Norman W. Evans. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall Regents, 1989. pp. 343 + iv, Paper: $13.25. Teacher's Manual.

Beyond Words was written to bridge the gap between typical ESL reading levels and college-level expectations. From their years of teaching experience, both James and Evans noticed that relatively few ESL reading texts effectively prepared advanced students for college course loads and expectations. Other than ESP texts created specifically for a particular field of study, relatively few textbooks meet this need.

Drawing upon recent research findings in the area of interactive reading and schema theory, the text uses thematic chapters representing the broad spectrum of science and the humanities as a vehicle for instruction in the organizational patterns found in expository writing. Reading skills closely related to these organizational patterns are also integrated into each chapter.

Though the use of thematic chapters in a reading textbook is not new, what is new in this book is that each chapter contains four to six substantial readings, allowing students to build on previous knowledge before moving on to a new topic and chapter. In addition, each reading passage is accompanied by a rich variety of both pre- and post-reading exercises and tasks which encourage readers to interact with the text in a variety of ways.

Social and Functional Uses of the Present Progressive

Denise E. Murray, San Jose State University

The last decade in ESL/EFL teaching has seen a movement away from grammar-based to notion/function-based syllabus design and communicative methodology. The focus of instruction has been appropriateness of use. However, for learners to become proficient users they need to acquire both the grammatical (including syntax, phonology and semantics) system of English and the functional system (i.e., how the linguistic resources are used in particular contexts). This requires that teachers and textbooks present language not as isolated lists of either grammatical rules or funcitons, but as an integrated system. To do this, we need a better understanding of the relationship between form and function. As there is no one-to-one correspondence between structure and use, so too there is no one-to-one correspondence between one function and surface representation. The relationship is far more complex. As a start in this direction, I examined the use of the present progressive in real world situations to determine what functions it fulfills in actual use.

Traditional Descriptions

Traditionally, present progressive has been considered easy to teach since it is easy to demonstrate and is regular in form. Before examining its actual use, I examined how the present progressive functions in textbooks and grammar books.

Textbook Descriptions

In grammar-based courses, the present progressive is usually presented by asking students what various people are doing at that time. Thus, we have drills such as...

Teacher: What am I doing? (while pacing up and down the room)
Student: You're walking.
Teacher: What is Juan doing? (pointing to a student who is reading a book)
Student: He's reading.

Similar drills revolve around describing pictures in texts or from magazines. From such practice, students are led to believe that the present progressive is used to describe an action going on at the moment of description and that the action is probably visible to both speaker and hearer.

Grammar Book Descriptions

According to Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech and Svartvik (1985, p. 198),

> The meaning of the progressive can be separated into three components, not all of which need to be present in a given instance:
> 1. the happening has DURATION
> 2. the happening has LIMITED duration
> 3. the happening is NOT NECESSARILY COMPLETE.

According to Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1983, p. 63), the present progressive is used for (i) event/action in progress, (ii) temporary activity, (iii) repetition or iteration in a series of similar ongoing activities, (iv) future, and (v) emotional comment on present habit (usually co-occurring with 'always' or 'forever').

The Data

Over a period of six months, I collected every use of the present progressive I consciously heard. The data come from casual conversations, meetings, and service encounters. All aspects of the context in which the example occurred were recorded. I then categorized the data according to function.

Functions of the Present Progressive

The following list of functions is not necessarily exhaustive, but represents the range of functions for which the present progressive is used in actual speech. It demonstrates that this aspect carries affective meaning, and almost always negative affect; it does not simply describe an ongoing action. The examples below come from real data, but have been presented without the false starts, pauses etc. that actually occurred. In each example, the present progressive form is underlined.

Accusing (with request)

The present progressive's use for accusing can take the form "What are you doing?" As has been well documented in research on classroom language (e.g., Cazden, John, and Hymes, 1972), the speaker is not asking an information question, but is accusing the person of some wrongdoing, and often also requesting the person cease the wrongdoing. In the second example below, the speaker is accusing B of wrongdoing, but also demanding an explanation.

1. Teacher: Johnny, what <u>are you doing</u>?
   Johnny: Nothing.
   Teacher: You were talking. You should have been listening.

2. A: <u>What're you looking at</u> me like that for?
   B: There's something different about you, but I don't know what it is. Is that a new dress?
   A: No.
   B: Oh. I know. It's your hair. You've had it cut.
   A: No.
   B: I give up.
   A: I've lost 10 pounds.

Apologizing

In example 3, the teacher is expressing intention, but is also apologizing that she will not be able to accompany the students back since she is going a different way.

3. Teacher: <u>I'm going</u> this way. Do you all know how to get back?

Complaining

Complaining was the major use of the present progressive in the data. However, most examples include an additional function. In example 4, there are only complaints, made at a homeowners meeting that was discussing the traffic problems in the neighborhood. Example 5, on the other hand, is a complaint and a

request to do something about it, similar to example 1 above, while example 6 demonstrates one conventional way of complaining about pain.

4. A: They're constantly speeding on Macintosh
   B: They're just doing a survey. They're doing a survey for signs.
   A: It means directing all the traffic through one street.
   B: That's already happening in Apple Creek.

5. Mother: Why are you standing there dripping water on the carpet?
   Child: Sorry. I'll go get changed.

6. A: How're you feeling?
   B: Not too good. My tooth's bothering me.
   A: Why don't you go to the dentist?
   B: I hate going to the dentist.
   A: Me too. But, if your tooth's troubling you . . .

Explaining

In example 7, the father is accusing someone of making a mess and complaining about it, but his wife also interprets it as a request for an explanation and so she responds using the present progressive to explain.

7. Father: What's this mess? (said in the yard as he's about to mow lawn)
   Mother: Oh, the kids're building a tree house.

Expressing Surprise

Example 8, while it takes the form of the accusations discussed earlier was used in a telephone conversation between A and B. B had just received a phone call from A., in which she said she was at a resort several hundred miles away. B did not know A was going there and, in fact, was expecting A and her husband for dinner the next week. Thus, B expresses surprise. She is neither complaining nor accusing since the purpose of A's phone call was to say they wouldn't be coming for dinner.

8. A: It's Susan. I'm calling from Ventura.
   B: What are you doing up there? Having fun away from the kids, I guess?
   A: Yes. It's really great down here. I thought I'd better let you know that we wouldn't be able to see you this week.

Expressing Intention

Often the present progressive is used only for expressing intention and does not carry any additional affective meaning such as in the apology in example 3. This use of the present progressive is discussed in textbooks and grammar books as a means of expressing future.

9. A: We're going to Guido's tonight. I hear it's a really great restaurant.

Giving Excuse

In example 10, the secretary uses the present progressive to indicate why she doesn't know when John will be back.

10. A: Can I speak to John?
    B: He's not in right now.
    A: Oh. This is Bill. When'll he be back?
    B: I'm not sure. He's having lunch with a client. Can I take a message?

Pre-sequences

A major use of the present progressive in these data was as a pre-sequence. Pre-sequences are used as introductions to a speech act. Two types of pre-sequences occur: introducing a request and introducing an offer.

a) Introducing a Request

In example 11, A asks the question as a pre-sequence to making a request that the listener take something to Encina Hall for him. In example 12, the conventional use of "Are you doing anything?" is used as a pre-sequence to requesting help. In example 13, the pre-sequence takes the form of giving information.

11. A: Are you going over to Encina Hall again?
    B: No. I just went over to get the checks. It was a once in a lifetime thing.
    A: Oh. I just asked because...

12. A: Are you doing anything?
    B: Nothing important. Why?
    A: Do you think you could help me...

13. A: I'm looking for the cane picnic baskets that were advertised. Can you tell me where they are?
    B: Yes. They're in housewares on the second floor.
    B: Oh. I've got a lot of work to do.
    A: Why don't you come camping with us?
    B: To tell you the truth, I really hate camping.

b) Introducing an Offer

As well as functioning as a pre-sequence to a request, the present progressive can also be used as a pre-sequence to an offer as in example 14.

14. A: What're you doing this weekend?

Making an Offer

Example 15 differs from introducing an offer since no actual offer was made. "I'm going up to the store now" acts as an offer by itself. This is probably possible only because this was a conversation between husband and wife and so could rely on implicit meanings. In this particular case, the husband and wife have previous conversations on which to draw, conversations in which whoever went to the store asked whether the other person needed anything. Thus, in this case, "I'm going to the store now" was sufficient for the husband to reply by asking her to buy some wine.

15. A: I'm going up to the store now.
    B: Can you get some wine? We're almost out.

Specific to Genre

Some uses are specific to the particular genre, including telephoning, writing postcards, and making letter tapes.

(i) Telephone:

Establishing Purpose

One special use of the present progressive is on the telephone, where it functions as a pre-sequence to a request or as the request itself. It can function as the request itself because it has become semi-conventionalized. Thus, it is better treated separately from the pre-sequences described above.

16. A: I'm calling about your advertisement for a cook.

17. A: Berry Manufacturing Company.
B: I'm enquiring about the job as assembler.
A: We're setting up interviews for that. I could have you come in today about 6:30 or tomorrow around 10:30.
B: 6:30 would be fine.
A: All right. May I have your name please?

Notice also here the use of "We're setting up interviews", which as Quirk et al. state, must be treated separately from expressing intention (example 9) since it describes an event for which preparations are already underway. In other words, the company does not intend to set up interviews; they are already in the process of doing so.

(ii) Postcard: Giving Information

Writing postcards is one conventionalized use of the present progressive that simply describes an ongoing activity or an intended one.

18. We're at the Grand Canyon. We're staying at the lodge. It's really marvelous. It's a bit cold, though. Have done lots of hiking. Tomorrow we're taking a hike down the canyon. Next stop Zion.

(iii) Letter Tape: Setting the Scene

In speaking onto tape as a letter, speakers often describe the setting for the listener as in example 19.

19. A: I'm sitting in the yard, watching the birds...

Set Phrases

In addition to the above functions, are set phrases that act as phatic communication. These include:

How're you feeling?
How're you/things going?
What're you doing?

Conclusion

From this partial analysis of the functions of the present progressvie, we can see that there is no one-to-one correspondence between form and funcion. Further, we can see that traditional descriptions of this aspect fail to account for the range of functions it performs in actual use. In both our teaching and our textbooks, we need to cover the range of uses so that students do not assume that present progressive merely describes an action going on at present or expresses future. Further, this analysis shows that we need to work with authentic material or material based on authentic use. The examples given here could be used as dialogues in teaching the particular functions and the present progressive. Further, we need to expand this analysis and we also need to determine the function of other syntactic forms.

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Publications of Interest

The inaugural issue of the *Journal of Asian Pacific Communication*, to be published by Multilingual Matters Ltd. (Clevedon, England/Philadelphia), is to appear in early 1990. Research on language issues and communication problems in the Asian Pacific region currently appears in a wide diversity of journals. In addition, any linguistic and communication problems faced by Southeast Asian immigrants elsewhere in the world are also located in disparate contexts. This journal provides the first forum for such widespread concerns to be published in the English language. The second and third volumes are to be guest edited by Florian Coulmas and Braj Kachru. Further information about subscriptions, contents, and guidelines for the above special issues may be obtained from the General Editors of the JAPC: Howard Giles, Communication Studies, University of California—Santa Barbara, CA 93106, USA, and Herbert Pierson, English Language Teaching Unit, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Shatin, N.T., Hong Kong.

The monthly *Bulletin of Overseas Teaching Opportunities* provides complete information on teaching positions at English language schools in all parts of the world. It would be of interest to teachers with ESL/EFL training who are interested in spending some time teaching English overseas. Since it is directed primarily toward new teachers, little or no teaching experience is required for many of the openings. Subscriptions for twelve issues of the monthly *Bulletin* are $39 a year. To enter a subscription, contact Overseas Academic Opportunities, 949 East 29th Street, Brooklyn, New York 11210. Telephone (718) 706-4898. Telex 221500.

The *Athelstan Newsletter* is a quarterly publication dealing with various aspects of computer assisted language learning and teaching. It contains a wealth of information on new CALL software and hardware in the form of news reports and reviews. Contact: Athelstan Publications, P. O. Box 8025, La Jolla CA 92038-8025.

The International Teaching Assistant: An Annotated Critical Bibliography, compiled by Sarah Briggs, Sunny Hyon, Patricia Aldridge, and John Swales, contains a bibliography of 137 items arranged in three sections: papers, reports, and presentations, dissertations, and manuals, textbooks, and videos. All have informative abstracts and all but dissertations have evaluative commentaries. This ring-bound, soft-cover bibliography can be obtained for $10.00 plus $2.50 for shipping and handling from English Language Institute Test Publications, The University of Michigan, 3004 North University Building, Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1057. Telephone (303) 747-0456. Fax (313) 763-0369.

Making Lemonade

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there is an odd number of students, make two answers for one original. Students mill around, saying the sentence on their piece of paper. At the same time, they listen for the correct expansion/transformation/substitution. Their task is to find their matching partner, and the first pair to do so wins—or is handed other slips in order to continue.

Variation: Students write their own sentences and transformations. They keep their cues, hand in the responses, which the teacher then mixes up and distributes. The activity then proceeds as outlined above, with each student speaking the cue and listening for the appropriate response.

Scrambled Stimuli

This is another activity involving pairwork where one student has the cues, the other the responses. In this case, however, the cues and responses are listed on a sheet of paper. While A reads the cue, B scans the page for the correct response and gives it. Each pair is racing against the other pairs to see who can finish first. The teacher checks to make sure the answers are correct.

Example:

A:	B:
I spend a lot of ...	*candy*
I buy a few ...	*money*
I eat a lot of ...	*magazines*

Variation: Instead of reading from the list, students doing part B respond with true statements about themselves.

Variation: Each pair has five cues and five responses. All students stand. The first pair to finish matching them all and sit down is the winner.

Example:

a. Tom ate the apple.
b. Sue ate the apple.
c. Tom and Sue ate the apple.
d. You and I ate the apple.
e. I ate the apple.

1. She ate it.
2. They ate it.
3. He ate it.
4. You ate it.
5. We ate it.

Variation: Each student gets the same sheet for matching (as above, but expanded). Students work individually. The first to complete the matching correctly wins.

Diving for Responses

The teacher prepares slips as in "Is this a pen?"—several for cues and several for responses. However, she retains the cues while spreading the responses on the table or among several tables. (For large classes, the teacher would prepare one set of cues and responses so that each group of five students would have a set.) When the teacher (or appointed student) reads a cue, the students must find and remove the response from among those laid out on the table(s). The student who finds the most responses is the winner.

Drop a Response

The teacher writes responses to cues on slips of paper. She than distributes the slips equally among the students and then

reads a cue. Any student with an appropriate response drops that slip of paper on the desk. The winner is the first student to get rid of all the slips held.

Variation: Students write the responses as dictation.

Personalized Drills

Students write a true statement on a slip of paper. The slips are mixed and redistributed. Students question each other to find the writer of the slip. (ex.: *Did you use to live in California?*)

Circle Drills

The teacher starts by saying a sentence in the target structure. The first student reports the teacher's statement and adds hers. (*She likes to ski. I like to dance.*) The next student repeats all previous information and adds her own. No note-taking is allowed; it spoils the challenge.

Benefits

These activities put an element of competition and fun into what might otherwise be a boring and mechanical lesson. They thus give the students an immediate goal, something that is very important in motivating students in the rather ethereal world of EFL.

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Author note: Thanks to Dale Griffee, Marc Helgesen, and David Wardell for comments on the activities described in this article.

About the Author

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Making Lemonade: Turning Drills into Games

Steve Brown,
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"If life hands you lemons,
make lemonade."
--Auntie Mame

Despite the advances made toward communicative language teaching in the last ten years, many teachers still have to deal with textbooks that provide for language learning practice at the mechanical level only:

What does a teacher do?
A teacher teaches.
What does a researcher do?
A researcher researches.

Of course, there is something to be said in favor of beginning a language lesson with a mechanical drill/controlled practice, followed by less controlled practice, and free practice. (Paulston and Bruder, 1976, Harmer, 1983, Byrne, 1986). Students need a chance to become familiar with utterances in a new language before they get creative. These mechanical drills are often dry and boring, but they do not need to be. This article presents activities that put fun into mechanical drills.

Is this a pen?

Write several original sentences, or copy sentences from the textbook (ex.: I used to live in California.) on slips of paper. Write the appropriate expansions/ transformations/substitutions (ex.: *I don't live in California any longer.*) on others. Give one slip of paper to each student. If

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