

# **A Training Course for TEFL**

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## Introduction

This book is for teachers of English as a second or foreign language teaching anywhere in the world, under any circumstances.

However, the book was written in response to a demand from teachers of EFL (particularly from non-native speakers) for an up-to-date and clear-cut statement on the principles and practice of TESL/TEFL. The majority of teachers of EFL in the world are not in fact native speakers. And, while their level of English is adequate to teach their classes, it may not be good enough to cope with standard books on the subject.

In any case such teachers all too often find these books academic and seemingly irrelevant. Then again, there are so many books on ESL/EFL at present, all presenting different points of view, that there is a need for a guide to the reading matter available. Otherwise there is a danger that teachers will extract sufficient practical ideas and suggestions to become adequate 'technicians', but never really grasp the principles that underlie modern practice. Among other things, this would prevent them from becoming innovators themselves or contributors to the technology, which would be a pity, because such teachers are in the best position to see how well new techniques and materials work in practice. The gap between the 'expert' and the practitioner would become wider.

In this book, then, we have attempted to set out the basic principles, simply and clearly; to provide a guide to key passages in the literature; and to offer a framework which links together the ideas contained in those passages. However, since many of these ideas are controversial, we have attempted, wherever possible, to encourage readers to arrive at their own conclusions by setting exercises, problems and questions for discussion.

It will also be seen that, while we have been primarily concerned with setting out the theoretical background, we have not neglected the practical side. Most of the theoretical points are illustrated with practical examples or suggestions. And some sections of the book are designed to provide a series of 'recipes' for successful teaching activities.

We believe the book is versatile enough to suit a wide range of needs. Here are some possible ways in which it could be used:

- 1 As a basic textbook for the non-native speaking teacher undergoing in-service (or initial) training outside Britain;
- 2 As a starting-point for the teacher trainer faced with the prospect of designing a course;
- 3 As an introduction to the theoretical principles of ESL/EFL for the native speaker undergoing initial training;
- 4 As a source-book of practical suggestions for any teacher of ESL/EFL in any part of the world.

The chapters in the book are intended to follow a logical progression of ideas and may be read through in normal sequence. However, there is nothing to prevent teachers or teacher trainers from using sections of the book in any order which suits them. In this case, technical terms introduced earlier in the book can be found in the GLOSSARY at the end or the INDEX will provide reference to the passages where they first occur.

Note that throughout this book teachers are referred to as 'he', 'his', and 'him'. We do this to avoid the clumsy repetition of 'his or her' etc. and also because, from a linguistic point of view, 'he' is the neutral or 'unmarked' term. In other words, it refers to teachers in general, both male and female.

#### *Footnote*

The book is based on the experience of the authors in training non-native speakers for the *Royal Society of Arts Certificate for Overseas Teachers of English (COTE)*. Since this qualification is attracting increasing attention and centres for courses leading to the Certificate are being established in different parts of the world, we have included references to COTE exam questions. In our experience, the COTE scheme is an extremely promising development and we would recommend that overseas teacher training centres consider it as a possible means of establishing a worldwide standard in EFL teaching for non-native speakers.

#### *Acknowledgments*

The authors would like to thank all the people who helped in the development of this book. In particular, we are grateful to the RSA COTE course in Nicosia 1979-1981. Thanks are also due to Noel Brookes for his ideas on songs and reading games; to Ian Forth for ideas on making visuals move; and to Pat Charalambides for suggestions on early writing and copying activities.

# 1 First principles

## A look at some common techniques

In this chapter we are going to be looking at a number of basic techniques used effectively in EFL classrooms all over the world. Teachers should know how to use these techniques, but it is also important that they should know something about their background: how they developed historically and what theoretical principles they are based on.

Each of the following fragments (A – D) of English classes in progress illustrates a different technique commonly used in the EFL classroom. After each fragment, there are a number of questions, exercises and discussion points.

### FRAGMENT A

*(Students have just read a text about Mrs Black and can see a picture in the book.)*

**Teacher:** Right! Now, Mrs Black is in the supermarket. She's shopping. She's got a trolley. What's in it? Lots of things.

**Listen!**

*She's got some butter. She hasn't got any sugar.*

*She's got some butter. She hasn't got any sugar.*

*Some butter... any sugar. Some butter... any sugar.*

*Some... any. Some... any.*

How do we use these words? Listen again!

*She's got some bread. She hasn't got any tea.*

*She's got some butter. She hasn't got any sugar.*

Let's see if you can do it. Marios! *Butter.*

**Marios:** She's got some butter.

**Teacher:** Good!

Theresa! *Tea.*

**Theresa:** She hasn't got some tea.

**Teacher:** Um... Is that right?

- Anna: No!  
 She hasn't got any tea.  
 Teacher: Good, Anna. Again, Theresa!  
 Theresa: She hasn't got any tea.  
 Teacher: Good! Now, when do we use *some* and when do we use *any*?  
 Well, let's look at it like this.  
 (He writes sentences on the blackboard.)

	not / n't
She's got <u>some</u> bread.	She hasn't got <u>any</u> tea.
She's got <u>some</u> butter.	She hasn't got <u>any</u> sugar.

- Do you understand this?  
 Students: Yes!  
 Teacher: Good! Well, let's try it with another word. Look at the picture.  
 What's in the trolley?  
 Antonis, *coffee*.  
 Antonis: She hasn't got any coffee.  
 Teacher: Good!  
 Sofia, *ice-cream*.  
 Sofia: She's got some ice-cream.  
 Teacher: Very good, Sofia!  
 Do you all understand now? I think you do.  
 Let's try something else. Ask me a question, Anna. *Coffee*.  
 Anna: Has she got any coffee?  
 Teacher: Good! Did she say *some* or *any*? Ask it again, Anna.  
 Anna: Has she got any coffee?  
 Students: Any.  
 Teacher: Right! So we can now write up this...

	not / n't	?
She's got <u>some</u> bread.	She hasn't got <u>any</u> tea.	Has she got <u>any</u> coffee?
She's got <u>some</u> butter.	She hasn't got <u>any</u> sugar.	Has she got <u>any</u> flour?

In this fragment, the main technique used by the teacher was giving the students a *grammatical rule*: the rule about how to use *some* and *any* in English.

### Points for discussion

- 1 How did the teacher actually give the students the rule? (Mark in pencil the part of the fragment where he started giving the rule.)
- 2 What did the teacher do before he gave the rule? Would it have been better to give the complete rule right at the beginning of the fragment? Give reasons for your answer.



- 3 In your own words, as briefly as possible, describe the rule for the use of *some* and *any* in English.
- 4 Now give a simple and clear rule which might help your students to do one of the following:

Use *in*, *on* and *at* correctly as prepositions of *place*.  
 Form the comparatives of adjectives.  
 Find the correct word order in sentences.  
 Use the past continuous tense (*was/were -ing*) correctly.  
 Form question-tags (*wasn't he? ... , did he?*) correctly.

Now that you have done this exercise, would you say that giving clear, simple rules of grammar is always easy?

### Exercise

Consult the *University Grammar of English* (see Bibliography) Sections 7.35, 7.46 & 7.47 and make a list of exceptions to the rule about *some* and *any* you gave in answer to question 3 above. To what level of student would you give these exceptions, basic, intermediate or advanced?

### FRAGMENT B

(Again the students have read a text and have a picture to look at.)

Teacher: Right, everybody! Listen and repeat!

*She's got some bread.*

Students: She's got some bread.

Teacher: Again. *She's got some bread.*

Students: She's got some bread.

Teacher: Good! Marios?

Marios: She's got some bread.

Teacher: Good! Anna?

(Students repeat the pattern individually round the class.)

Teacher: Everybody! *She's got some bread.*

Students: She's got some bread.

Teacher: *Butter...*

Students: She's got some butter.

Teacher: Good! *Flour.*

Students: She's got some flour.

Teacher: Very good!

Now listen and repeat! *She hasn't got any tea.*

Students: She hasn't got any tea.

Teacher: Right! Theresa?

Theresa: She hasn't got any tea.

Teacher: Good! Antonis?

Antonis: She hasn't got any tea.

Teacher: Good! Now, Anna. *Sugar.*

Anna: She hasn't got any sugar.

Teacher: Very good!

Now listen, everybody. Listen and repeat!

*She's got some bread, but she hasn't got any tea.*

Students: She's got some bread, but she hasn't got any tea.

Teacher: Very good! Now, *butter... sugar.*

Students: She's got some butter, but she hasn't got any sugar.

Teacher: Good!

(He continues in this way using different words – *butter, coffee*, etc. until everybody seems to be producing the pattern correctly.)

### Activities

- 1 This technique really has two stages to it. Mark the place in the text where the teacher switches from the first stage to the second – i.e. where the activity changes slightly. (This happens more than once in the fragment.)
- 2 What exactly does this technique consist of? Describe the stages as they occur.
- 3 Comparing this technique to the one used in fragment A, could we say that each would be suited to a different type of student? If so, what type of student and why?
- 4 What are the advantages and disadvantages of using this technique with a large class (i.e. more than 30 students)?
- 5 Could the teacher have used a tape-recorder effectively to teach this lesson, using this technique? Describe ways in which a tape-recorder might help.

### FRAGMENT C

*(The students have in front of them a large picture of Mrs Black in the supermarket. They are familiar with this character.)*

Teacher: *(points)* Now, who's this?

Marios: Mrs Black.

Teacher: Yes. Where is she?

Theresa: In the supermarket.

Teacher: Good. What's she doing?

Anna: She's shopping.

Teacher: Yes, she's shopping. Look at her trolley. What's in it? *(points)*

Antonis: Bread.

Teacher: Yes. And ... *(points)*

Sofia: Butter.

Teacher: That's right. *She's got some butter.* Repeat, everybody!

Students: She's got some butter.

*(The teacher now does some choral and individual repetition of this model sentence.)*

Teacher: Good! What about *bread*?

- Marios: She's got some bread.  
 Teacher: Fine! *Soup?*  
 Anna: She's got some soup.  
 Teacher: Very good! What about sugar?  
 Theresa: No.  
 Teacher: No. *She hasn't got any sugar.* Repeat, everybody!  
 Students: She hasn't got any sugar.  
*(More choral and individual repetition. The teacher then begins drilling by pointing at the picture or giving word cues.)*  
 Teacher: *(points)*  
 Sofia: She's got some bread.  
 Teacher: Good. Coffee?  
 Antonis: She hasn't got any coffee. *(Etc., etc.)*  
*(In the next stage, the teacher makes Anna empty her bag on to his desk. All students look at the objects on the desk.)*  
 Teacher: Anna's got some books.  
 Students: Yes.  
 Teacher: What about sandwiches?  
 Theresa: No, she hasn't got any sandwiches.  
 Teacher: That's right. Tell me more, somebody.  
 Antonis: She's got some pencils.  
 Teacher: Very good, Antonis. Anything else?  
 Sofia: She hasn't got any elephants.  
*(Laughter)*

### Activities

- 1 The technique used here shows some similarities to that in fragment B. What are they?
- 2 In what respect(s) does this fragment differ from the two previous fragments?
- 3 In all three fragments so far, the teacher is aiming to get the students to produce correct examples of the pattern, but in fragment C he uses several slightly different methods to get the students to speak. What are these?
- 4 At the end of the fragment the teacher switches from practice on the picture to practice on a real situation in the classroom (when Anna empties her bag on the desk). What are the advantages of doing this? And what are the advantages of just changing to a different situation? (E.g. A different picture?)
- 5 At the end of the fragment Sofia says, 'She hasn't got any elephants.' Naturally the other students laugh. And yet her statement is both true and grammatically correct. The teacher should now say 'Good!' What does this tell us about this kind of classroom practice?

## FRAGMENT D

*(The teacher shows the students a picture.)*

Teacher: Tell me about this picture.

Marios: It's a shop.

Teacher: Good!

Theresa: She is a woman.

Teacher: There's a woman, yes.

Anna: Coffee... There's coffee.

Teacher: Yes?

Antonis: There's butter.

Teacher: Yes, we can see coffee, butter, bread, sugar.  
Can we see books in the picture?

Students: No.

Teacher: No, it isn't a bookshop. It's a grocer's shop.  
Repeat, everybody! *Grocer's*.

Students: Grocer's.

*(writes the word on the board)*

Teacher: In a grocer's shop we can buy *(shows them money)*... coffee, butter  
and things like that. What else can we buy?

Marios: Tea?

Teacher: Yes.

Anna: Bread.

Teacher: Yes.

*(Students go on giving examples using known vocabulary. When they run out of ideas, teacher shows flashcards of new items and teaches students the new words.)*

Teacher: Right! Now, listen everybody. We are in a grocer's shop. This  
*(indicates teacher's desk)* is a grocer's shop. Marios here is the  
shopkeeper. *(laughter – teacher installs Marios behind the desk)* Now,  
Marios. These are the things you've got in your shop *(Hands him a list)* OK? What have you got? Tell me one thing.

Marios: I've got coffee.

Teacher: Fine. Now, all the rest of you are buying things. Here are your  
shopping lists. *(Hands out cards to each student)* Right! Who wants to  
begin? Anna?

*(She comes up to the desk.)*

Anna: Hullo. I want tea.

Marios: No. No, I haven't got tea. Sorry.

Anna: Oh. Um ... Have you got butter?

Marios: Yes. How many you want?

Anna: Two. Yes. Thank you.

Teacher: Good. Sit down now, both of you.  
Now let's listen to the tape.

This lady is buying some things in the grocer's.

## TAPE

Lady: Oh, good morning.

- Grocer: Good morning. What can I do for you?  
 Lady: Um... Have you got any coffee?  
 Grocer: Yes, certainly. Here you are.  
 Lady: Thank you. Um... What about butter?  
 Grocer: Yes. We've got some butter. In the fridge over there.  
 Lady: Good. Now, have you got any bread?  
 Grocer: No, I'm sorry. We haven't got any bread today.  
 Come tomorrow morning.

*(Teacher plays the dialogue several times, checking for comprehension. Then he practises have got and some/any with choral repetition and drilling from the picture.)*

Teacher: Right! Now let's try buying things again. Have you got your shopping lists?

- Marios: Good morning.  
 Antonis: Good morning. Have you got any sugar?  
 Marios: Certainly. Here you are.

*(Practice continues. Students take turns to be the shopkeeper and the teacher sorts out any problems which arise. Sometimes it is necessary to do some repetition and a little drilling.)*

---

### Activities

- 1 Mark the place in the fragment where the new language (*some/any*) was introduced for the first time.
  - 2 What was happening before this? What was the purpose of these activities?
  - 3 Suppose the tape-recording had been played near the beginning of the fragment. How do you think the lesson would have progressed? Describe the stages of practice that would have taken place.
  - 4 What similarities does this fragment share with the previous one? What are the main differences?
  - 5 Can you see any advantages in using this technique for introducing new language to your students?
- 

These four fragments, A – D, are all examples of ways in which a teacher might introduce some new piece of language to the students. The term for this is *presentation*; and we talk about *presenting* a new language *item*. In this case, the new item was *some/any*. *Has/have got* was evidently an item already taught and familiar to the students – a *known item*.

We will now give a name to each of these techniques:

*Technique A:* Presentation by examples and grammatical explanation, plus drilling.

*Technique B:* Presentation of an oral model, plus drilling.

*Technique C:* Presentation of an oral model contextualized in a situation, plus drilling.

*Technique D:* Presentation through role-play, plus drilling.

In each fragment the teacher went on from presentation into practice – a practice activity we are all familiar with, the drill. We will be looking at *presentation* and *drilling* in more detail later on in this chapter.

---

### Points for discussion

- 1 From your own experience in the classroom, which technique would you regard as most effective? (You will first have to agree on what you mean by 'effective'.)
  - 2 Which of these techniques do you regularly use with your own classes? (Probably more than one.)
  - 3 Are there any practical factors (e.g. large classes) which prevent you from using one or more of these techniques? Are there any practical reasons why you find one or more of these techniques particularly useful with your classes?
  - 4 Putting yourself in the place of the student, which technique would you personally find most interesting? Satisfying? Effective? Explain why.
  - 5 In fragment D, the new language was introduced in a tape-recording, not by the teacher himself, as in other fragments. Can you think of any advantages in introducing new language this way? Or disadvantages?
  - 6 What other techniques do you sometimes use for presenting new items to your students? Explain exactly the procedure you follow.
  - 7 In all these fragments, the model sentences containing the new items were presented as *sound* (either the teacher's voice or a tape-recording). Is there any reason why we should not present these in writing?
- 

## Language items

On page 10 we introduced the term *language item*. An item is a 'bit' of language we can teach our students. For example, the item being taught in fragments A–D was *some/any*.

What kinds of item are there? There are three obvious kinds: *structural* items; *lexical* items; and *phonological* items.

Structural items like *some/any*, *has/have got*, *there is/are*, are grammatical points about the language. We nearly always introduce these in the form of examples or model sentences. Textbook writers

and teachers often call these *patterns*; and we hear terms like *pattern practice* or *pattern drilling*. Although a verb tense like the simple present tense is an important structural item, we would certainly not attempt to teach every form and usage of this tense in the same lesson; nor would they be likely to occur in the same unit of a textbook. So major items such as these are broken down into smaller items. For example we might teach first the *I*, *we*, and *they* statement forms:

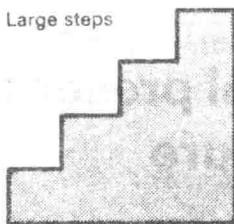
*I live, we go, they like, etc.*

Then the *he*, *she* statement forms. Then possibly the *you* question form:

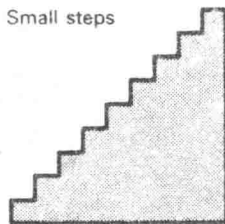
*Do you like...? etc*

This process of breaking down larger steps into smaller steps is called *structural grading*. The idea of large and small steps can be illustrated like this:

Large steps



Small steps



*Lexical item* is simply another phrase for a new bit of vocabulary. If a word like *factory* comes up in the textbook for the first time, this is a new lexical item. Sometimes it is difficult to decide whether an item is structural or lexical. It is not just a question of whether the new item consists of more than one word. The preposition of place *in*, for example, is usually regarded as a structural item. On the other hand, the verb *look for* is clearly a lexical item.

*Phonological items* are new features of the sound system of the language. For example, the contrast between the vowel sounds in *sit* and *seat* is a phonological item. An intonation pattern, the way the voice rises and falls when we say a particular utterance, is another example. And so is the stress pattern of a word or utterance.

The teaching of lexical and phonological items will be considered in detail in later chapters. Here we are more concerned with structural items.

---

### Points for discussion

Look at the textbook you use for beginners.

- 1 Is it structurally graded? If not, how is it organized?
- 2 If it is structurally graded, make a list of the structural items contained in the first five units (or 'lessons'). How many different

items are there in every unit? Which is/are the most important item(s) in each unit? In your experience, is there much new material in any of the first five units? (i.e. The steps are too large.)

- 3 How long would you spend teaching each important item? And how much time do you normally have to spend on a unit?
  - 4 Does the same item come up again later in the book in any form, or is it assumed that once it has been taught it is known?
  - 5 Could these items be taught in a different order from that which occurs in the book? Suggest a new order and discuss problems which this might cause.
  - 6 When starting a new unit, do you follow exactly the order of the material in that unit of your book? Or do you follow a special order of your own? Give examples of the order you might follow, with reasons for this.
- 

## Situational presentation of a structure

When presenting a new structural item (or structure) we should be primarily trying to achieve two things:

- 1 to enable the students to recognize the new structure well enough to be able to produce it themselves (establish the *form*);
- 2 to make absolutely clear the usage of the patterns, so that when the students produce them, prompted by the teacher, they know what they are saying (establish the *meaning*).

The next stage, of course, which usually proceeds straight after the presentation, is for the students to produce the patterns themselves (drilling). But here we are concerned with this first stage of presenting the structure, in the form of an example or examples (models) to the students.

To achieve (1) above, the teacher must supply (either in his own voice or on tape) clear models of the structure. Not all teachers agree about the *amount* of exposure to the new patterns which should be given at this stage. Some believe that plenty of examples should be given or the same example repeated many times, often with the new forms spoken louder or with more emphasis. Others prefer to give less exposure to the patterns and force the students to work hard to pick them out. Another popular technique is for the teacher to slip the new forms into an earlier practice activity without focusing the students' attention on them or asking them to reproduce the patterns. Probably all these techniques work well in different



circumstances and it is a good idea to experiment with all of them rather than choosing one and sticking to it.

An economical way of achieving (2) is for the teacher to present the models in a readily understandable *situation*, one which makes the meaning of the patterns clear. This situation might be live in the classroom (*Mario is sitting behind Anna*); or it might be some true statement which is known by the students (*Mario has got two sisters. France is bigger than Spain*); or it might be a fictional situation (such as events or a state of affairs in a picture or a text).

---

### Practical exercise

Here is a list of structural items which are found in beginners' textbooks. Choose *one* and decide how you would present it to your students. Collect any materials you need (pictures, real objects, etc.) and demonstrate it in front of the other teachers. See if they agree that it is perfectly clear and the meaning unmistakable.

*He, she* form of the simple present (*He goes*, etc.)

*There is/are*

*I, you, we, they* form of the present continuous

*He's/she's got*

*My, your, his, her*

*Is it a...?*

*Which (one)...?*

*This is a pencil; that's a pen*

Do you have students who are coming up to a new structure in the book in a few days' time? If so, plan the presentation of that structure. Show it to other teachers to get their reaction.

Would you normally do your presentation at the beginning, in the middle or at the end of a lesson? Discuss this point with other teachers.

---

### Reading assignment and exercises

Now read *Introduction to English Language Teaching* by John Haycraft, pages 31-35 (Section 4.2) on different methods of presentation.

- 1 Think of one structure which would be suitable for presenting in a dialogue (apart from the example in the book). Work out a suitable presentation for this. Give details of the stages you would follow in doing the presentation. (Section 4.2.3)
  - 2 Do the same for a presentation through mime. (Section 4.2.5)
  - 3 Do the same for a presentation through descriptions or narrative. (Section 4.2.6)
-