

MD7020 Approaches Methods and Techniques:

Thread: Appropriate methodology tasks

Student cohort = 21

Total postings in thread = 68

Message no. 31

Agent post = T; target post = GS

Posted by **Armellini (md667)** on Friday, April 15, 2005 3:48pm

Subject: **App. Methodology - Tasks**

Dear Participants,

This is the area of the Discussion Forum where we will discuss the tasks within the "Appropriate Methodology" component of the course unit. A structure has been set up so that you can post your replies to the tasks as required. Please make sure you post your replies to the relevant thread.

If you'd like to send your reflections to the forum on other issues raised in the App. Methodology component, please feel free to open a new thread.

See you here soon,

Ale

Elements	Categories	catCode	Instances
Cognitive presence in posting	Triggering event	cte	
	Exploration	ce	
	Integration	ci	
	Resolution	cr	
Social presence in posting	Emotional expression	see	
	Open communication	soc	
	Group cohesion	sgc	
Teaching presence in posting	Instructional management	tim	
	Building understanding	tbu	
	Direct instruction	tdi	

Message no. 431 [Branch from no. 31]

Agent post = T; target post = GS

Posted by **Alejandro Armellini (md7020)** on Tuesday, October 18, 2005 9:44pm

Subject: Threads

Dear All

I'd like to remind everyone to try and keep their postings within the relevant threads. This is achieved simply by replying to an existing message in that thread (or using the "Quote" button, if you wish the original text to appear in your message).

If you open a new thread (ie by using the "Compose message" button) the assumption is that the theme of that new thread will be different from all the others. If this is the case, do feel free to do so. In general, however, please keep your postings within existing threads - this makes things much easier to manage to everyone.

Regards,

-Ale

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Cognitive presence in posting	Triggering event	cte	
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Message no. 32

Agent post = T; target post = GS

Posted by **Alejandro Armellini (md667)** on Friday, April 15, 2005 3:50pm

Subject: Section 2, Task 7 Task 7

Watch Video 9, and make notes on what Mike argues the four influences have in common.

Compare Mike's theory with yours.

Discussion: Share your views with your colleagues on the extent to which you feel the ELT agenda has been dominated by the "West" in this way. Post your replies within this thread,

i.e. as a reply to this message.

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Cognitive presence in posting	Triggering event	cte	
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Social presence in posting	Emotional expression	see	
	Open communication	soc	
	Group cohesion	sgc	
Teaching presence in posting	Instructional management	tim	
	Building understanding	tbu	
	Direct instruction	tdi	

Message no. 437[Branch from no. 32]

Agent post = S; target post = GST

Posted by **xxx** on Wednesday, October 19, 2005 2:27pm

Subject: Re: Section 2, Task 7

By and large, I think a large proportion of teachers working abroad in EFL contexts use will be using coursebooks designed and produced in the West (or NABA as I've seen it expressed - North America, Britain, Australia). This may be a generalization, I know for example that private English institutes in Korea produce their own materials in-house, but it's usually written by native-speaker English teachers and has a recognizably communicative or structural approach. Still, many teachers will find themselves using on their courses one or other of the usual suspects, Headway, Inside Out, Cutting Edge et al, books which are informed by the most recent theories and methods of English language leaning.

In teaching from this kind of material, to be honest, I don't find the same set of cultural blocks that Hu Gangwei mentions in his article on China and the applicability of CLT to that context, at least in terms of learner response. It may be because many Korean students who come to study with a native-speaker teacher expect to be involved in different learning methods and forms of classroom interaction and dynamics, etc. than they were used to at high school, or the attractiveness of a 'fresh approach'. A more teacher centred (teacher as mentor) class, furthermore, is positively designed to attract complaints - "the teacher talks too much". CLT methodology, techniques and the kind of material design associated with it is something the learners in my classes are quite comfortable with.

On the other hand, in terms of content, I do wonder sometimes what makes the authors feels that Britain or the US is so great that the want to read or listen about it all the time? Planning a trip in Britain, Hollywood movie stars, what British people like to eat, (to take a few examples from books in front of me). I sometimes feel like the local embassy should give me a bit of a retainer as cultural attache. Some of the situatios, manners, habits, ways of living, futhermore, may be culturally specific and things with which learners have little cultural or social affinity, something which may act as a block to learner

processing. Thus while you're teaching a certain piece of functional language, which the book has tried to say a listening with two people at a party in order to give it meaningful, authentic context, for Koreans it may have no recognizable context because this country has no 'party-culture' and they've never been to one.

Lastly, on the point Mike made vis-a-vis the influences of the profession of ELT development, it's maybe problematic how native-speaker English dominates what language is taught. It's possible that native speaker English (and a very restrictive definition of it at that) is taught as a convenient model (or else what do we teach?), but maybe it is an unnecessary and purely notional standard of perfectibility. And at a time when English is increasingly the 'world language' and thus always under negotiation in each different locale, the question of 'correctness' is perhaps culturally loaded.

Elements	Categories	catCode	Instances
Cognitive presence in posting	Triggering event	cte	
	Exploration	ce	
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	Resolution	cr	
Social presence in posting	Emotional expression	see	
	Open communication	soc	
	Group cohesion	sgc	
Teaching presence in posting	Instructional management	tim	
	Building understanding	tbu	
	Direct instruction	tdi	

Message no. 440[Branch from no. 437]

Agent post = T; target post = GS

Posted by **Alejandro Armellini (md7020)** on Wednesday, October 19, 2005 10:28pm

Subject: **Re: Section 2, Task 7**

Interesting points made by xxx:

It's possible that native speaker English (and a very restrictive definition of it at that) is taught as a convenient model (or else what do we teach?), but maybe it is an unnecessary and purely notional standard of perfectibility. And at a time when English is increasingly the 'world language' and thus always under negotiation in each different locale, the question of 'correctness' is perhaps culturally loaded.

Reactions?

-Ale

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	Integration	ci	
	Resolution	cr	
Social presence in posting	Emotional expression	see	

	Open communication	soc
	Group cohesion	sgc
Teaching presence in posting	Instructional management	tim
	Building understanding	tbu
	Direct instruction	tdi

Message no. 466[Branch from no. 452]

Agent post = S; target post = GST

Posted by **xxx** on Sunday, October 23, 2005 10:59pm

Subject: Re: Section 2, Task 7

Interesting postings...

Re. the 'correctness' issue... I think this is, very slowly, changing towards a more flexible approach to language. There have been huge shifts in Britain re. acceptability of different accents, along with a more relaxed attitude towards use of grammar and vocabulary (it is no longer such a crime to make a mistake - you only have to listen to the radio and tv to see the changes compared to the days of 'RP' or nothing). With so many people speaking English as a second language, this too will influence our perceptions of what is 'correct' and what is acceptable.

xxx

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	Group cohesion	sgc	
Teaching presence in posting	Instructional management	tim	
	Building understanding	tbu	
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Message no. 469[Branch from no. 440]

Agent post = S; target post = GST

Posted by **xxx** on Monday, October 24, 2005 1:58am

Subject: Re: Section 2, Task 7

What I have seen is that people tend to speak depending on where and how they were brought up, the models they followed (some children tend to speak as their parents and even fall in the same grammatical or lexical mistakes), their individual motivations to improve their language and later on, if they have the opportunity, the schools or institutions they attend with will either improve or maybe not, their knowledge of the language.

I tell my students that although it is important to learn the functions, let say, to order a meal in a restaurant, correctly. It is more important to be able to communicate and get the message across even if this mean using chunks of language. I don't really pressure them into speaking 'correctly' because after all: what is a 'correct' language? Who or whom determine this? Is there such thing as a 'perfectly correct' spoken language? If this is so then that means I am very very far from it.

On the other hand, focusing on the 'correctness' of the English language; there is quite a controversy, at least at the level of ESL instructors. For example; in our faculty we have teachers that have a bachelor's degree in EFL teaching, others have one in English Literature, but some don't even have a high school diploma; the funny

part is that the latter is one of our experts in English grammar and it is not even his L1. But, does this mean that the the teachers that have the degree in EFL don't speak English correctly? Or does it mean that despite some flaws in their English grammar they do speak a 'correct' English? Can a teacher that has a perfect understanding and usage of the English language but a less than desirable to native pronunciation be considered a 'correct' user of the language?

And what about African American Vernacular English [AAVE], if we teach it in our English classes, will we be teaching a 'correct' English? My guess is that it is as valid as teaching British English, that, by the way, in many academies here in Mexico it is thought of as 'the correct way' to speak English.

xxx

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	Group cohesion	sgc	
Teaching presence in posting	Instructional management	tim	
	Building understanding	tbu	
	Direct instruction	tdi	

Message no. 471 [Branch from no. 440]

Agent post = S; target post = GST

Posted by xxx on Monday, October 24, 2005 12:34pm

Subject: Re: Section 2, Task 7

>Interesting points made by xxx:

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>It's possible that native speaker English (and a very restrictive definition of it at that) is >taught as a convenient model (or else what do we teach?), but maybe it is an >unnecessary and purely notional standard of perfectibility. And at a time when English is >increasingly the 'world language' and thus always under negotiation in each different >locale, the question of 'correctness' is perhaps culturally loaded.

>

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>Reactions?

Hmmm. Well, there is such variation in the English spoken from country to country, region to region, that it's a very complicated situation. Even "Native Speaker English" is a bit of an artificial category in a way, because it seems to imply that all native speakers use the same language. The way my British and Australian coworkers speak is quite different from the way I speak.

Not only are there regional variations, but English (as with all languages) is constantly

evolving over time, and what was considered correct English a few centuries ago is almost incomprehensible now. Thus attempts to strictly define and cling to a particular set of rules will not work over time. We must be flexible. However, there are basic guidelines that can be followed in more formal situations where a certain type of English is expected (for example, academic writing). There are books that outline what to do in such situations. But for the purposes of many people learning English for travel, social or business purposes, they just need to be able to get their point across. Different needs demand a different focus.

So, while the word "correct" is of questionable value, we must have a goal in our teaching. Recent movements seem to support the goal of enabling students to communicate in English, to understand and be understood in transactions with both native and non-native speakers where English is the language both parties have in common. I think this is a useful and reasonable general goal. Whatever particular mix of vocabulary and grammar and expressions we have learned in our lives thus far, whether it is our first or second (or third) language, becomes our own particular version of "English" (and it could be argued that no two people speak the same "English"). We teach our students to speak English as we speak it. As **xxx** pointed out, what else can we do?

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Message no. 448[Branch from no. 32]

Agent post = S; target post = GST

Posted by **xxx** on Friday, October 21, 2005 2:19pm

Subject: Re: Section 2, Task 7

Has ELT been dominated by the West?

I think it has been for quite a long time. Firstly, all the leading researchers and promoters of appropriate methodologies are scholars of the West / for reference, the introductory lecture on the different theories which have shaped ELT by Mike Beaumont/. Substantial research has been done on second language acquisition, how languages are learned, how different is the process from first language learning, the psychology of language learning, is there a thing like universal grammar, can computers assist in this cognitive process or even can they revolutionise teaching, is task-based approach better than CLT, is CLT the universal answer to language teaching Frameworks have been drawn, different and often contradictory methods devised. Such experts on the subject, to name but just a few : Ellis, Kreshen, Nunan, Pinker, Schank, Chomsky, Holliday / the list is enormous/ are native speakers, who can based their research on classroom data and observations but could not resort to their experience as learners of English as a second language, because they are simply not. They draw the general picture,

but it can be successfully implemented in a particular context if the latter is given its due priority, if research is done in that particular language speaking context together with teachers who speak its mother tongue.

The second implementation of the westernising of language teaching has been the widely spread until recently idea of the preference of native speakers no matter how qualified or not / in some cases/ over non-native speakers. It is, in my opinion, another form of dominance by the West. Native speakers can be a model of the English language but not necessarily of teaching it and a shift of this paradigm is already taking place. Studying the local context, first language awareness, sensitivity to cultural differences are only few of the key issues that western theories have to face. I strongly agree with Andrew over the idea of negotiated correctness in English as a 'world language' context and that trying to teach 'perfect' English is unrealistic, does not apply to the real world. Students should feel comfortable getting their meaning across, not feel intimidated by mistakes. Non-native teachers should gain more confidence, become competitive, observe and possibly research areas that have been neglected in language teaching or even revise theoretical ideas. This is what English language teaching might be ready for.

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Teaching presence in posting	Instructional management	tim	
	Building understanding	tbu	
	Direct instruction	tdi	

Message no. 514[Branch from no. 32]

Agent post = T; target post = GS

Posted by **Alejandro Armellini (md7020)** on Monday, October 31, 2005 9:01pm

Subject: Re: Section 2, Task 7

It's hard to prioritise, never mind summarise, the multiple issues that are being debated in this thread. I am, once again, impressed by the level of critical engagement the group are showing and the enthusiasm, professionalism and respect with which the views are aired. Having said that, if anyone wishes to have a go at capturing the main points of the thread, please, feel free...

I would like to refer to **xxx's** comment, later used by other colleagues:

If we then, as teachers of the English language, are to celebrate the fact that English has established itself as a global language, then we have to give-in to the idea that true internationalism favors no nation. Therefore, we have to concede that it no longer makes any sense to differentiate between the native speaker and the non-native speaker.

I'd say there are several market-driven constraints we need to be aware of. For

example, in a previous life, I used to bring groups of language learners to the UK for 6 weeks. Their expectation was to be taught by native speakers. There were enough excellent teachers of English in Uruguay. They wanted British natives. And my business depended on meeting those demands. So it did, in that context, make sense (and a lot of it) to differentiate between natives and non natives. And here's a non native writing about it!

-Ale

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