

# Does the CEF require different materials or teaching?

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# Attitudes to the CEF...

- Ignorance
- Paranoia
- Worship
- Anger / annoyance
- Cynicism / complacency

## An example of complacency?

- Uses some simple structures correctly, but still makes basic mistakes, for example tends to mix up tenses and forget to mark agreement; nevertheless, it is usually clear what they are trying to say.
- Uses reasonably accurately a repertoire of frequently-used ‘routines’ and patterns associated with more predictable situations.

# What the CEF actually says!

One thing should be made clear right away.

We have NOT set out to tell practitioners what to do or how to do it. We are raising questions, not answering them. It is not the function of the CEF to lay down the objectives that users should pursue or the methods they should employ.

So does the CEF *demand*  
different methods and materials?

NO!

# Some questions for coursebook writers...

- On which theory of grammar have they based their work?
- What are the assumptions as to the nature of the learning process are the coursebooks based on?
- What language will the learner need / be equipped / be required to a) recognise and understand b) use

# Underlying political goals...

To ensure ... that **all sections** of [the CoE's] populations have access to **effective means** of acquiring a knowledge of languages...as well as skills in the use of those languages that will enable them to **satisfy their communicative needs** and in particular:

- To deal with the business of **everyday life**...;
- To exchange information and ideas ...and **communicate their thoughts and feelings** ...

To promote, encourage and support the efforts of teachers and learners at all levels...

- by **basing language teaching** and learning on the **needs, motivations, characteristics** and resources of learners
- by defining **worthwhile and realistic objectives** as **explicitly** as possible
- by developing **appropriate methods** and **materials**

Do the CEF *goals* require different materials and teaching?

NO ?

# Learners needs, motivations, characteristics and resources

- What will they need to do with the language?
- What do they need to learn in order to be able to achieve those ends?
- What sort of people are they?
- How much time can they afford to spend?
- [and why do they come to a class to learn?]

# Some Elementary unit titles...

- You
- People
- Time off
- Work
- Relatively famous
- Pretty woman
- Have a good trip
- Food
- Sea
- How terribly clever!
- Mind and body
- Bigger and better
- Future plans
- World records
- Can you speak English?
- Neighbours from hell

# Their theory of language learning...

- Grammar and words are separate.
- Students can learn a canon of grammar rules and grammar is generative.
- Words slot in to the grammar structures.
- Grammar needs to be taught in a particular order.
- Natural usage is relatively unimportant.

# The effect of a grammar driven course:

## Bad examples of usage

Angela's running.

I'm not wearing a jacket, I'm wearing a jumper.

Did people drive cars one hundred years ago?

Are you going to wash your hair?

Can you walk backwards in a straight line?

Never will I forget holding him for the first time.

Explain the difference between these words:

shack / hut / hovel / shed

## The effect of a grammar driven course: restricted examples of natural conversation

- What do you do?
- What are you doing ...later?
- What did you do ...last night?
- Have you been there / to ...?
- How long have you ...?

## The CEF is *not* prescriptive...

It is not the function of this guide nor of CEF to state a preference for one [syllabus] strand over another. The choice of driving strands will depend on your own beliefs and preferences about language and language learning. However, CEF does suggest a number of ways in which learners' needs and wants can be described.

# Meeting CEF goals - an alternative approach

- Start from typical topics of conversation.
- Imagine the actual conversations. (What would you say, when, to whom, why?)
- Devise language exercises to help students vary and personalise those conversations.
- Select conversations and grade tasks according to level.

# A theory of language learning ...

- Grammar and vocabulary are inter-dependent.
- Learners can learn and use grammaticalised chunks before they learn any underlying rule.
- Grammar and lexis is learnt through repeated exposure over time to typical examples in their natural context / collocations.
- Learners need exposure to many more grammatical / lexical patterns outside the EFL canon.

## In what ways should learners be expected or required to develop their vocabulary?

- Simple exposure in authentic texts?
- Learner elicitation or dictionary - look up / teach as needed?
- In context in texts and subsequent recycling in exercises?
- With visuals - pictures, mime, realia, etc?
- By memorisation of word lists? - with translations?
- Through semantic fields and mind maps?
- By dictionary training?
- By training in the application of lexical structure?

**What distinction, if any, is made between learning for recognition and learning for productive use?**

# Non-prescriptive key words from can do statements

- Memorised
- Stock phrases
- Patterns
- Repertoire
- Routine
- Familiar
- General topics
- Range

My own attitude to the CEF:

Cautious optimism

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