

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

LINKING GRAMMAR TO CLB-BASED MATERIALS: THEORY TO PRACTICE

BY

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A PROJECT REPORT

SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF EDUCATION

IN

TEACHING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

Fall 2014

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
RELEASE FORM

NAME OF AUTHOR: Brenda Lynn Chwyl

TITLE OF PROJECT: Linking Grammar to CLB-Based Materials: Theory to Practice

DEGREE: Master of Education

YEAR THIS DEGREE GRANTED: 2014

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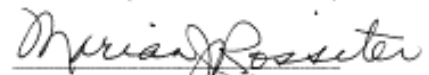
UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, a Project Report entitled "Linking Grammar to CLB-Based Materials: Theory to Practice" submitted by Brenda Lynn Chwyl in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of MASTER OF EDUCATION in Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL).



(Dr. Ranta-1st Reader)



(Dr. Rosser-2nd Reader)

Date: August 20, 2014

Dedication

Thank you to my family: Orlando for encouraging me to pursue my Master's degree in the first place. To my daughter, Amber, and father, Jim, for their understanding and patience; and in special memory of my mother, Mary, who passed away during my studies. She would have been so proud of me.

Abstract

Second language acquisition research has well established that learners require input, interaction and focus on form during communicative language lessons (Ellis, 2012; Spada & Lightbown, 2008). The question now is no longer if form-focused instruction should be included but where and how the inclusion is most effective in integrating grammar instruction within task-based lessons (Spada & Lightbown, 2008). In order to explore this issue, a set of task-based materials (*Canadian Snapshots, Raising Issues*) based on the Canadian Language Benchmarks were systematically analyzed in three categories: pedagogical language rules, type of production and use of contextual supports. The results showed accurate grammatical explanations and meta-language were consistently provided. However, explanations do not always indicate when or when not to use a grammatical item; there was a lack of more open-ended grammar practice activities, and grammar was more often contextualized within the topics of the tasks than adequately integrated with language learning tasks. Based on these results, it appears that a discrepancy exists between current grammar teaching theories and the types of grammar focus and practice exercises in this particular ESL textbook. Implications for classroom instruction are discussed.

Acknowledgements

There are several people to whom I wish to express my gratitude. First, I would like to thank the faculty members in the TESL program: Dr. Marilyn Abbott, Dr. Tracey Derwing, Dr. Marian Rossiter and Dr. Leila Ranta, for their expertise and guidance throughout my scholarly work.

With special thanks to Dr. Marian Rossiter, program advisor, and Dr. Leila Ranta, capping project supervisor, for their insightful comments, support, and patience. Thank you for contributing to my growth as a student and professional.

Additionally, I am appreciative of the academic community for supporting my academic endeavors; NorQuest College's LINC and ESL programs, MacEwan University for providing the practicum placement, and all the ESL instructors and ESL students for permitting me access to their classrooms and lives. My acknowledgements would not be complete without a final word to my TESL classmates, past and present: thank you for providing me with invaluable support, collaboration, encouragement and laughter when most needed.

Over the past four years or so, second language acquisition (SLA) research has provided a substantial amount of technical knowledge into how a second language (L2) is learnt (Ellis, 1998). Since grammar instruction is recognized as important for accuracy and fluency in second language learning, SLA researchers working in the area of form-focused instruction (FFI) have provided a strong rationale for including grammar instruction within communicative teaching and a limited set of instructional principles (Ellis, 2005; Lightbown, 2000; Nassaji & Fotos, 2011). Although current language curriculum design in adult English as a Second Language (ESL) in Canada is informed by SLA theory and research, it also builds on developments in language teaching theory. Language instruction for newcomers (LINC) is based on the Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB) which are descriptive scales incorporating 12 distinct levels of communicative proficiency in ESL. The CLB's outline the communicative competencies and performance tasks that learners are expected to demonstrate through application of language knowledge and skill (Pawlikowska-Smith, 2002). It is expected that the teaching approach used in CLB-based programs is task-based. A task-based approach emphasizes communicative tasks based on real-life communication. But this does not mean that grammar instruction has no place in a task-based curriculum. Grammar is regarded as essential to a task-based approach and is not viewed as a disconnected area of study. It can be integrated into task-based lessons in two ways: pre-task in an enabling role that supports task performance or post-task as an extension activity (Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks, 2012).

CLB support documents such as the CLB Support Kit and Best Practices for Adult ESL and LINC programming in Alberta provide limited examples of how grammar integration can be implemented. The purpose of this study is to examine how grammar instruction is integrated within a set of well-known published CLB-based materials, *Canadian Snapshots: Raising Issues*

(Kingwell, Bonkowski, Stephenson & Holmes, 2005). This textbook is based on a task-based philosophy as referenced by the Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000 (Holmes, Kingwell, Pettis & Pidlaski, 2001) edition.

Literature Review

The following literature review begins with definitions of terms and literature relevant to the topic of integration of grammar within task-based lessons.

Grammar instruction vs. focus on form vs. form focused instruction (FFI)

Ellis (2006) describes grammar teaching as “any instructional technique that draws learners’ attention to some specific grammatical form in such a way that it helps them either to understand it meta-linguistically and/or process it in comprehension and/or production so that they can internalize it” (p. 84). This broad definition is to illustrate that grammar lessons might only consist of: presentation by itself; learners discover grammar rules themselves; expose learners to input (contrived or existing exemplars in reading and/or listening), through production (written and/or spoken) and/or through corrective feedback. In the SLA literature, the topic of grammar instruction is often referred to as form-focused instruction (FFI) or focus on form with some researchers using the latter two expressions as synonyms (Lightbown & Spada, 2006) whereas others making a clear distinction (Long, 1990). Ellis, Basturkmen and Loewen (2001) define focus on form instruction as drawing learners’ attention to or providing opportunities for them to practice specific linguistic features in the context of meaning centered activities. In this paper, the terms FFI and focus on form will be used interchangeably.

Exercise vs. task vs. activity

Ellis (2000) has provided the following descriptions of exercise, task and activity. A grammar exercise such as fill-in-the-blank, primarily engages learners in producing correct

linguistic forms. Learners are focusing on the grammar target and aiming for grammatical accuracy. A task, in contrast, is meant to contribute to effective language use that facilitates second language acquisition. A task requires input that learners are required to process and use in an outcome that learners are to achieve, be evaluated on, and the end results are to be reflective of real-life communication. The word *activity* is used as a cover term for both exercises and tasks.

Enabling activity and extension grammar activity

An enabling grammar activity is presented prior to a task performance in order to gain knowledge and skills to enhance performance of the following communicative task. An extension activity is presented once the task is complete and further grammar work is required. It is often associated with the exploitation of language in a text used for a preceding task (Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks, 2012).

Practice and production

To facilitate practice of grammar items, reinforcement is needed to improve on or to maintain proficiency. Controlled (mechanical) practice and production would be filling-in-the-blank type of exercises where obtaining the correct answer is the outcome and open production practice is centered on learners creating their own text wherein producing multiple arrangements that are more real-life in communicative responses are the goal. (Alberta Teachers of English as a Second Language, 2009).

Contextualized vs. integrated instruction

The terms *contextualization* and integration are sometimes used as synonyms although others make a clear distinction. For example, the grammar textbook writers (Kingwell et al., 2005) purport that their activities will assist learners in learning grammatical features of English

in context. It is useful to consider the distinction made by Perin. Writing about the teaching of basic skills like reading, writing, and math adult education, Perin (2011) distinguishes between contextualization and integration of basic skills instruction. Contextualization refers to the teaching of basic skills in the context of content topics. For example, adult ESL students in a theme-based course are presented with grammar as they explore different topics. Conversely, integrated instruction involves incorporating explicit instruction of basic skills within the teaching of content. An example of integrated instruction is when a course for foreign trained nurses includes explicit instruction on pragmatics needed for nurses.

SLA perspective on grammar instruction

There is a very large body of research on the impact of FFI including classroom studies, teaching experiments, and meta-analyses. Norris and Ortega's (2000) seminal meta-analysis of 49 published studies on the effectiveness of differing types of pedagogical techniques for grammar instruction. Although this meta-analysis has limitations (e.g. comparing differing instructional methods), overall it provided some evidence of the extent to which focused L2 instructional treatments surpassed non-focused treatments in terms of effectiveness. Norris and Ortega (2000) concluded that their "empirical findings indicated that explicit instruction [was] more effective than implicit instruction and that a focus on form and a focus on forms [were] equally effective" (p. 501).

In applying the findings of SLA, Ellis (1998) proposed four theoretically motivated instructional options. The first option is to provide the learner with structured input (within listening or reading texts) that is contrived to induce comprehension of a target structure. The second option is explicit explanations of grammar rules, which learners may be presented with deductively or inductively or through a *consciousness-raising task* in which learners analyze data

to discover the grammar rule,. The third option is to provide learners with production practice using text manipulation (controlled practice) and text creation activities. The final option is the provision of negative feedback to help learners notice the gap between their utterances and grammatically correct production (Ellis, 1998) during communicative activities.

Spada & Lightbown (2008): Isolated and integrated form-focused instruction

Using results from empirical research combined with second language theories, Spada and Lightbown (2008) argue that “instruction is most effective when it includes attention to both form and meaning” (p. 184). They contend that when FFI is absent from either communicative language teaching (CLT) or content-based instruction, then even when L2 learners develop comprehension skills, oral fluency, self-confidence and communicative abilities, “they will continue to have difficulties with pronunciation as well as with morphological, syntactic and pragmatic features of the L2” (p. 184). In addition, without FFI, some language features would not emerge in learners’ language, and some non-target forms may persist for years and become fossilized. Therefore, Spada and Lightbown have concluded that by “providing integrated FFI in CLT and CBI contexts is the instructional model that has the greatest potential for facilitating the development of fluent and accurate language that is available for use outside the classroom” (2008, p. 188).

Spada and Lightbown distinguish between isolated FFI (which is similar to Long’s focus on formS) and integrated FFI (similar to Long’s focus on form). Isolated FFI focuses on language forms separated from the communicative activity. It may be taught in preparation for or after a communicative activity. This usually involves intentional learning and explicit instruction. In contrast, integrated FFI focuses the learners’ attention on the language form during the communicative activity. The primary focus remains on meaning and instruction and is

usually in the form of feedback, recasts or brief explanations (Spada & Lightbown, 2008). It follows from this definition that grammar instruction as proposed by the CLB documents would be considered isolated FFI in Spada and Lightbown's terms.

Research on integration of grammar and tasks

To date, there has been limited research that has directly addressed the topic of integration of grammar and tasks. However, Spada and Lightbown (2008) have argued that integrated FFI is beneficial in transfer-appropriate processing. Proponents of transfer-appropriate processing argue that learners can retrieve knowledge if the processes for retrieval are similar to those that were used in the learning condition. Spada and Lightbown argue that using integrated FFI during communicative activities when learners' attention is drawn to form results in retrieval in other communicative situations because it is integrated and not decontextualized.

Although there is no empirical evidence of the benefits of integrated FFI, a survey of teachers by Borg and Burns (2008) provides some insights about how teachers try to integrate grammar within what they referred to as "skills work". They distributed a questionnaire to 176 teachers of adult English language learners in 18 countries. The questionnaire collected three types of data: demographic information; answers to 15 statements on grammar teaching and learning and two open-ended questions on the integration of grammar teaching with the teaching of other communicative skills. The analyzed demographic information revealed the following: the teachers experience in English language teaching (ELT) was evenly distributed and they were highly qualified (just under 49% had an MA or doctorate) with most working in adult education colleges and universities. Relevant highlights on the analyses of the beliefs about grammar learning and teaching revealed the following:

- a) Most held strong views on the value grammar practice has on developing fluency and that there is value in inductive grammar learning,
- b) 84% disagreed with the statement that ‘grammar should be taught separately, and not integrated with other skills such as reading and writing’,
- c) Explicit grammar work was a “salient feature in the different views on integration and the need to avoid conducting grammar work in isolation of meaning-oriented activities also came across very strongly” (p. 472).
- d) The teachers reported a variety of ways of integrating grammar and skills teaching including: presenting grammar in context, deriving grammar from texts, presenting grammar through texts, task-driven grammar work, grammar in preparation for skills work, grammar after skills work, and reactive focus on grammar.

The respondents also cited four major sources of evidence for the effectiveness on integrating grammar but none of their evidence contained references to “formal knowledge-specific insight or theoretical knowledge obtained through study, training, professional development, and reading” (p. 476). In fact, their notion of “integration was largely practical and experiential rather than theoretical and formal; it was grounded predominantly in teachers’ past or more immediate classroom experiences, especially their perceptions of their learners’ achievement and affective states, and much less so in insights from received knowledge” (p. 476). It is important to note that there were no Canadian teachers in the sample of teachers surveyed and that the teachers taught in a very wide range of settings.

Purpose of study

The current study focused on *Canadian Snapshots: Raising Issues* (student book and student workbook), texts designed for adult ESL learners in Canada. The following research questions were addressed:

- (1) What kinds of grammar explanations and practice activities are found in *Canadian Snapshots: Raising Issues*?
- (2) Are the grammar explanations consistent with grammar reference books?
- (3) Do the grammar practice activities conform to best practice standards for grammar instruction?
- (4) How are form focused activities and communicative tasks linked together?

Canadian Snapshots: Raising Issues was selected for several reasons. First, the tasks and activities are based on the competency, outcomes, and standards outlined in Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB) 6 (Pawlikowska-Smith, 2002). Second, to my knowledge, the grammar activities in the aforementioned textbook have not been evaluated with respect to their range and balance, skill appropriateness, and integration. Third, academic interest in teaching-learning materials is a continually growing field (McGrath, 2013). The results of this study may be able to determine the extent in which best informed/evidenced-based practices of grammar instruction based on SLA research and CLB content are represented in this text.

Method

The textbook, *Canadian Snapshots: Raising Issues* (Kingwell et al., 2005) is an integrated multimedia educational package based on the Canadian Language Benchmarks 6 using a task-based approach. The textbook contains an accessories package and supplementary materials, including items such as classroom videotape cassettes and CDs, a student workbook,

and a teacher's manual. Only the student book (SB) and the student work book (WB) were analyzed.

The *Canadian Snapshots* student book has nine units and a wrap-up unit. All units deal with a range of Canadian life in either an educational (e.g. Unit 8: Healthy Lifestyles), social (e.g. Unit 3: Humour, Canadian Style), work related (e.g. Unit 4: Starting a New Business), or community (e.g. Unit 9: Water, Water Everywhere, But Dare We Take a Drink?) setting. Each unit follows a similar pattern which is explained in the beginning pages of the student book. An overview is provided that explains in each unit what type of speaking, listening, reading, writing, strategy, culture and language features are being utilized. The layout of the student book is clear in the book's Table of Contents. Each unit provides explicit details of the topics and language focus to be studied. The student book provides the exact pages in which the accompanying Focus on Grammar (FOG) exercises would be found. See Appendix A to view an example of the Table of Contents for Unit 1. Each of the nine units consists of a focus on grammar (FOG) explanation in the student book, which may or may not have an accompanying grammar exercise in the work book. See Appendix B for a full listing of the FOG targets in all nine units. The last unit entitled 'Wrap Up, Outstanding Canadians', was omitted because it did not feature a grammar target as the other units did.

All of the units had a focus on grammar explanation box (GEB) in the student book providing information on a grammatical structure accompanied by an example. See Appendix C for an example of a GEB. All focus on grammar exercises in the student book and work book were analyzed and coded according to specific features and characteristics based on information from Ellis (1997), Ranta (2013), and Swan (2012).

Ellis (1997) listed 10 factors affecting learnability of grammatical structures, Ranta (2013) devised 16 categories in which to analyze grammar textbooks, and Swan (2012) designed six criteria for pedagogic language rules. Before choosing any type of category or criteria I carefully looked through the student book and workbook several times before deciding on what types of features or categories I should use to measure the grammar targets. First, I made a chart listing each unit and type of grammar target presented in the student book and student workbook and tallied the type and number of focus on grammar targets listed for each unit. I documented this information into a chart system as seen in Appendix D

In order to establish what types of grammar explanations and practice activities there are in the *Canadian Snapshots: Raising Issues* student book and work book, I would have to have some parameters that would help me to organize and characterize my findings. I used Kennedy's (2003) grammar reference book to establish if the focus on grammar explanations found in the student book were consistent with a grammar reference book. This parameter was included in the category for pedagogical language rules and in order to help categorize the focus on grammar explanations and exercises the following parameters were included: grammar explanation box, accuracy of grammar rule, when to use or not to use a grammatical item (demarcation), use of meta-language, and using something 'other' than a grammatical item.

In order to establish how the form focused activities and communicative tasks are linked together I had to choose parameters that would measure this. First, I had to consider what type of production did the tasks, activities, and exercises lend themselves to. Second, I had to consider how to measure their linkage. I had to see how contextualization and integration of grammar items could be identified and establish how they were integrated. I had to ascertain if they were integrated through context (reading, viewing, and listening) and if so were they for a pre-task or

for consolidation of a task. Third, I had to discover what type and result of product was produced by the learners. This measure would assist me in identifying if the grammar exercises could lead the learner to transfer-appropriate processing. I had to consider if the learner has been given enough skill building and scaffolding in order to use the language in real-life situations as represented by the tasks assigned in the student book. Thus, the last two categories were borne: production oriented analysis and contextual supports. See Appendix E for the complete list of analysis categories and their explanations.

I systematically went through each focus on grammar target in the student book and work book one at a time. I constructed a tally sheet in which to keep track of information. First, I examined each focus on grammar target with Kennedy's grammar reference book. I then proceeded to analyze the other features listed in the pedagogical language rules. Second, I examined if the explanation in the grammar explanation box contained any material from the content of the unit. For example, in each unit I referenced if the grammar explanation box and examples were authentically taken from any of the readings, listening (audio) or viewing materials found in the unit. This represents using 'content' available to the learner. I examined whether the content for the grammar explanation box and grammar questions came from the content and if so how much of it. I used variables such as '*all, 1/2, less than 1/2 or none*' for measuring amount of content in the unit. Third, I looked to see if the grammar explanation box was meant as a pre-task or as an extension. I had to look at the entire unit and the other exercises in order to determine this. The integration of tasks with the focus on grammar activities was addressed through the student book. In analyzing the grammar explanation box I had to determine if the focus on grammar target was a pre-task or an extension activity and in some cases it was acting as both a pre-task and an extension activity. This was determined by looking

at the preceding and following activities (reading texts, listening transcripts, and viewing transcripts) to measure if the focus on grammar target was integrated into textual material and activities. If the focus on grammar target came before the textual material it was deemed a pre-task and if the focus on grammar target came after the content it was deemed an extension activity. I used my judgment on this and tried to see the connection that the focus on grammar explanation had to other activities previous to and following it before deciding if the focus on grammar acted as a pre-task or extension. Finally, when examining the work book I took notice of three areas. I looked to see if: (a) the examples in the grammar explanation box were taken from the content of the unit; (b) I examined the type of exercise it was and; (c) what type of production were the learners engaged in. I composed a tally sheet in which I could count, document and make notes for specific criteria (see Appendix F). These three categories (pedagogical language rules, production oriented analysis, and contextual supports) were constructed to analyze the grammar explanations and exercises in the student book and workbook.

Results

Number and distribution of grammar targets and practice activities

The overall number and distribution of focus on grammar (FOG) targets and practice activities found in the student book and workbook are seen as follows. First, there were a total of 18 FOG targets in the student book. Three of the nine units (1, 2, and 3) had two FOG targets in the student book including two accompanying exercises in the student workbook. Exceptions to these included units 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 (see Figure 1).

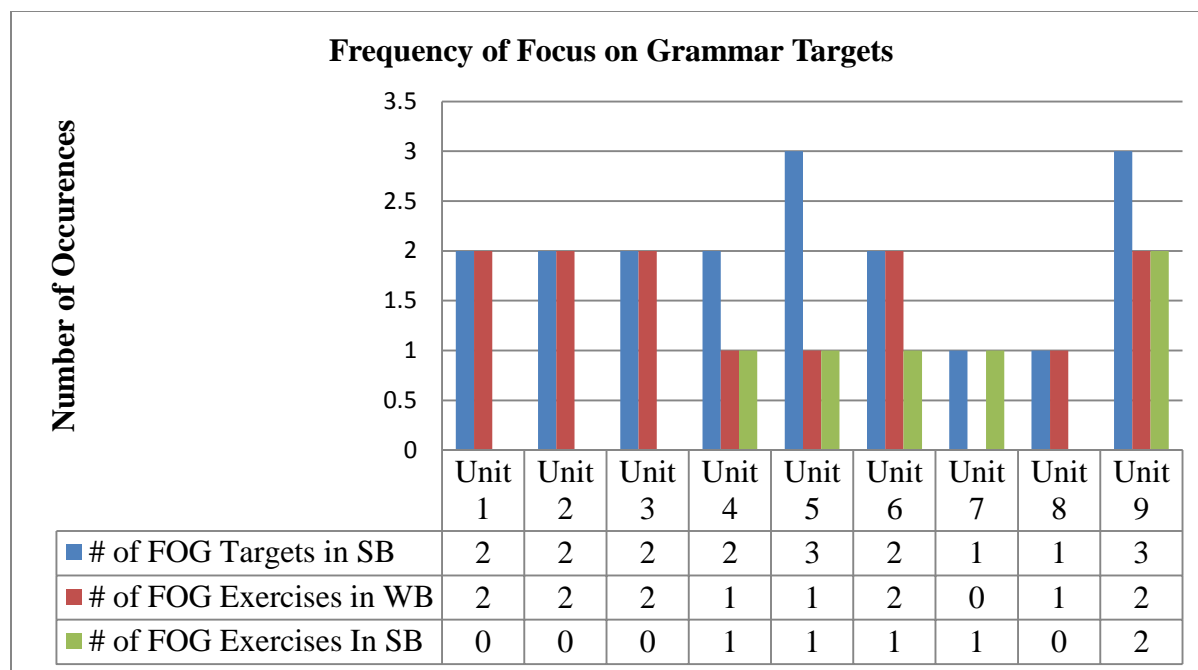


Figure 1. Frequency of Focus on Grammar Targets in Student Book and Workbook

Use of Pedagogical Language Rules in Grammar Targets

The types of grammar explanations and practice activities presented in *Canadian Snapshots: Raising Issues* text will be discussed according to their categories. First, there were some omissions. For example, Unit 1, FOG 2 and Unit 3, FOG 6 were not included in the overall pedagogical language rule count as they were seen to be only targeting punctuation types of grammar (e.g. capitalization and punctuation of direct quotes) instead of a language grammar target. The only descriptions available to these two FOG targets were related to the ‘Other’ (OR) category and they were the only two examples to receive this distinction. Therefore, the total number of FOG targets counted in this section will be 16. Figure 2, represents the totals for the other pedagogical language rules. 88% of the FOG targets had an accurate grammar rule (AGR) but less than 1% had rules explaining when to use or not use a grammar target (demarcation).

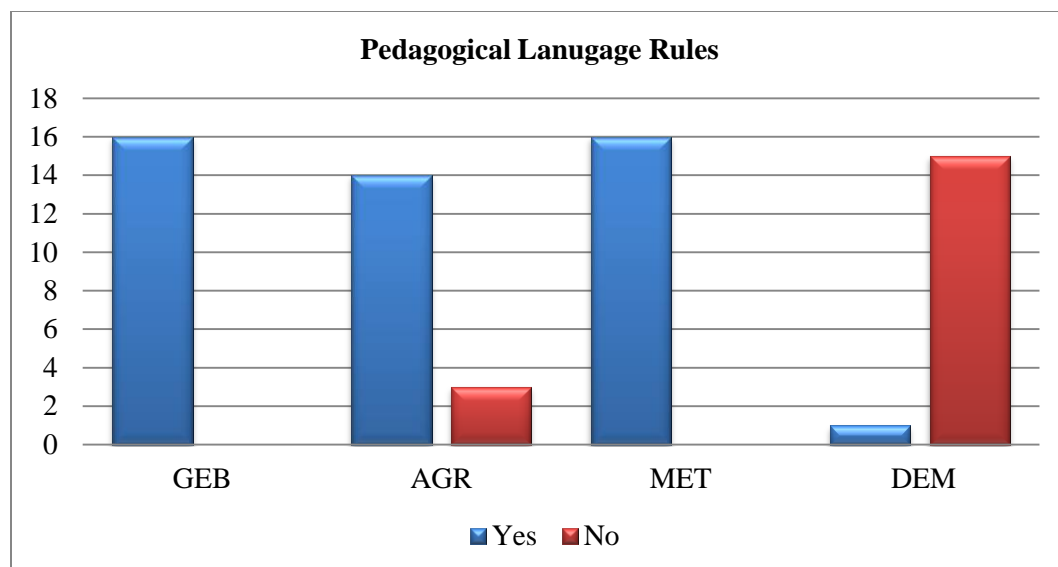


Figure 2. Frequency and Type of Pedagogical Language Rules per Focus on Grammar Target
 Note. GEB = grammar explanation box; AGR = accuracy of grammar rule; MET = use of meta-language; DEM = demarcation. Unit 1, FOG 2 and Unit 3, FOG 6 were not included in this summary. Thus the total number of FOG targets for units 1-9 is 16.

Distribution and type of production exercise for grammar targets

Figure 3 illustrates the cumulative number and type of production exercise that occurs in the FOG target in each unit with a maximum of 19 production outputs. The majority, 74% (14/19) of production outputs were classified as closed production. Consistent with closed production the majority, 68% (13/19) of production outputs required reading and writing; 26% (5/19) were open production, 21% (4/19) of production outputs required speaking and writing and 11% (2/19) of production output required speaking and writing.

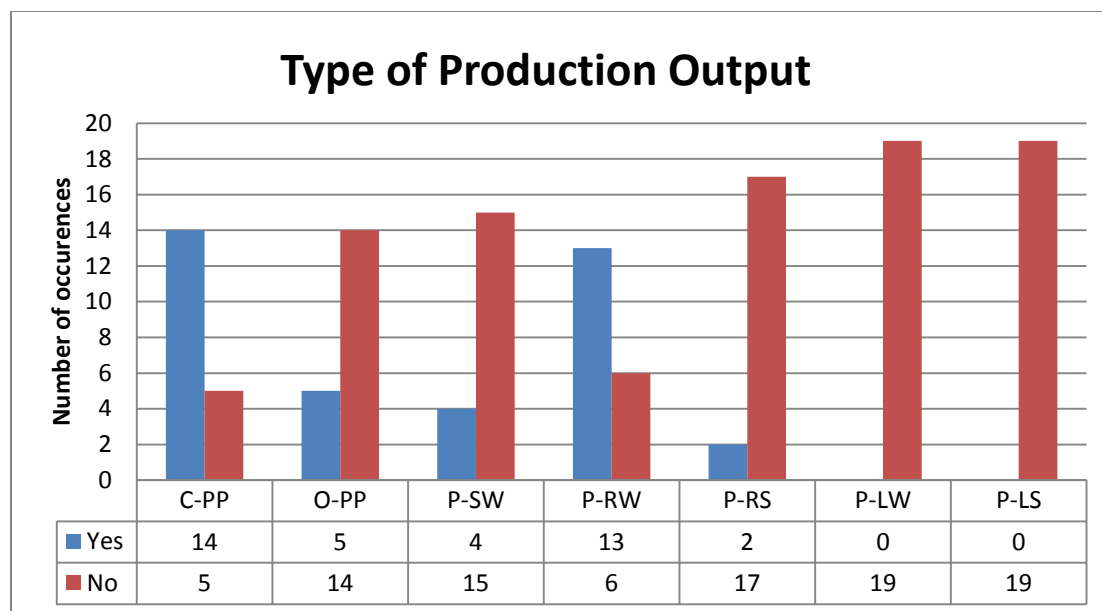


Figure 3. Cumulative Frequency and Type of Production Counts per Focus on Grammar Target

Note. C-PP = closed production and practice; O-PP = open production and practice; P-SW = speaking and writing production task; P-RW = reading and writing production task; P-RS = reading and speaking production task; P-LW = listening and writing production task; P-LS = listening and speaking production task.

The grammar practice in the WB was largely deductive, closed production; limited practice is provided in the WB for inductive practice and open production of grammatical items.

Distribution of textual supports for grammar targets

In regard to textual supports, each of the FOG targets could be found in the reading material (text) in each unit in the student book; therefore, an investigation of the extent to which other types of contextual supports were available in the audio and video and accompanying transcripts) was pursued. As seen in Figure 4, almost all of the units had at least one additional contextual support, either in the audio or video program. The exception was Unit 3, in which one of the audio transcripts was not available because of copyright agreements. Overall, the textual supports were varied and easily accessible.

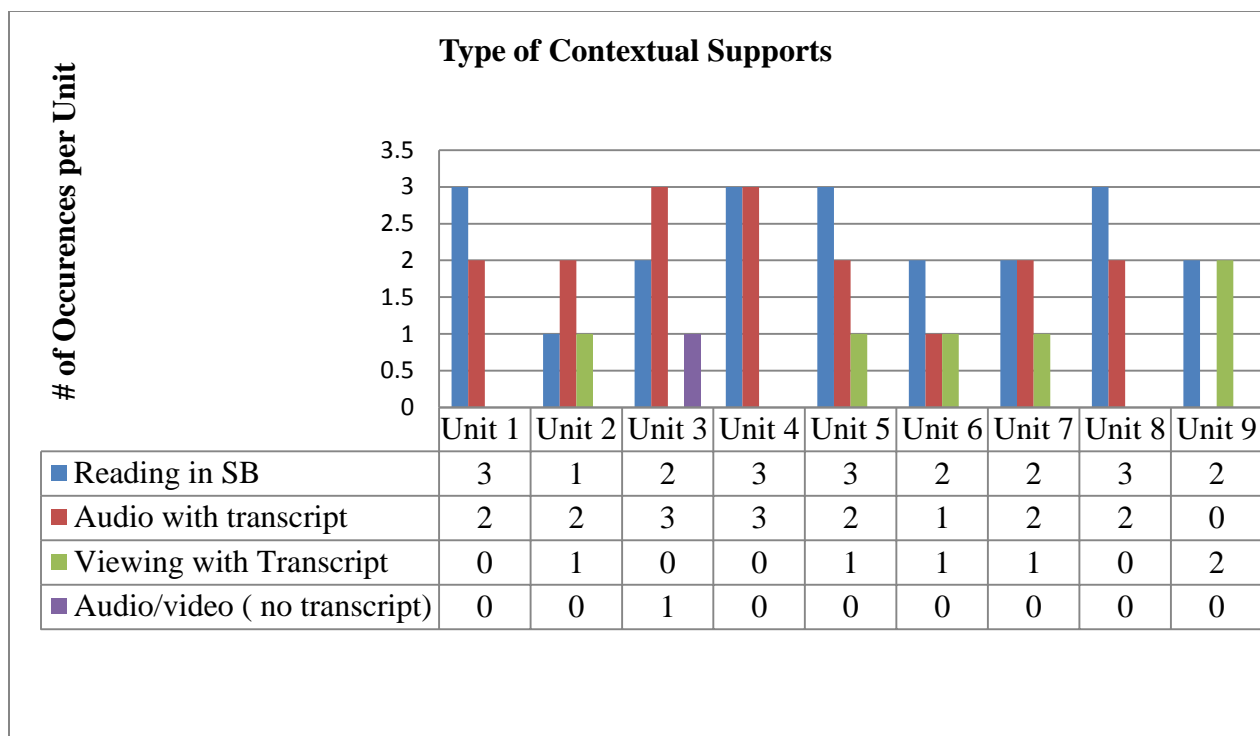


Figure 4. Frequency and Type of Contextual Support for FOG Target per Unit

Quality of grammar explanations: Accuracy

Each explanation and example of a FOG target regarding accuracy was compared to Kennedy's (2003) grammar reference book. 88% of the grammar targets were seen as accurate. Unit 8, FOG 15, and Unit 9, FOG 16 were considered slightly inaccurate as a grammar explanation for the following reasons. In Unit 8, FOG 15 the use of gerunds is explained by using the *-ing* form of the verb or the present participle. Kennedy (2003) explains that using the term 'present participle' can be a misleading term for students because a sentence such as, "*I saw her eating a pie*", is referencing the past, not the present. Students need to notice 'context' as well as grammatical forms in order to determine which rule is being presented by the *-ing* form. Implying that all *-ing* forms are present participles is misleading to students and may cause inaccuracies to follow. Kennedy names the top three types of *-ing* participles according to a corpus analysis are: adjectives in noun phrases constitute 22% of the *-ing* form; verb (+noun) + -

ing participle (i.e. *I like shopping.*) amounts to 17.6 %; and as a noun (i.e. *You left your knitting.*) at 16.6 % usage. The FOG explanation in the student book also mentions, which Kennedy concludes, that many adjectives can be used after the verb *-be*. As I said, it was only a slight inaccuracy; however, being clear as possible with grammatical rules and examples backed by grammar references ensures misleading information presented to learners will be at a minimum.

The FOG target in Unit 9, FOG 16, is on cohesion links. The text provided four most common ways of using grammatical cohesions to refer to previously mentioned text. Three of the four connectors were also mentioned by Kennedy (2003). They were: using pronouns, demonstratives, and determiners. The grammatical cohesion I could not reference back to Kennedy that was mentioned in the text is as follows: “Referring back to a whole idea by using nouns that show feelings about the action or event.” (Kingwell et al., 2005, p.139). I could not find a suitable match for the previous definition in a Kennedy’s (2003) grammatical reference book, thus I categorized it as an inaccurate grammar rule.

Quality of grammar explanations: Demarcation

Each explanation and example of a FOG target regarding demarcation was compared to Kennedy’s (2003) grammar reference book. When to use or not use a grammatical form (demarcation rule) were mostly absent from the FOG targets. Each explanation and example for a FOG target was compared to a grammar reference book (Kennedy, 2003) for quality and level of demarcation. For example, in Unit 4, FOG 8, the lesson is on stating necessity and advice by using certain modal auxiliaries. According to Kennedy (2003) there is a distinction between modal auxiliary verbs, marginal modals which are not frequent and semi-modals which are even more infrequent in use. Additionally, there are other important rules for modals including: (a) modals do not have a third person singular (stem +s) form, (b) nor an *-ing* or *-ed* participle, (c)

they come before not in negative constructions –*cannot* and before the subject in yes-no questions (p. 184). Finally, modals occur more often in spoken English than in written English and the most frequent modal verbs are (will, would, can, and could). The importance of having demarcation rules is that the learner is learning the most relevant information about a grammatical item and is using their resources and time learning the more frequent modals than the least frequent ones.

Another example of a lack of a demarcation rule is in Unit 1, FOG 1. The FOG target explains the use of adverbial time clauses acting either as a subordinate or dependent clause. The examples of conjunctions used with time clauses included: *when, before, after, since, while, as, until*, etc. The FOG explains that the adverbial time clause can be at the beginning or middle of a sentence. What the FOG did not explain is that adverbial time clauses can express different temporal relations: “When the order of mention of two events in a sentence is not the same as their chronological occurrence, time sequences can be confused” (Kennedy, 2003, p. 289). An example of this is as follows when using *after, before, or when*.

- a. Event 1: I had breakfast.
- b. Event 2: I phoned my mother.
 - 1. I had breakfast *before* I phoned my mother.
 - 2. *After* I had breakfast, I phoned my mother.
 - 3. I had breakfast *when* I phoned my mother.

The point of this example is that learners will come across two events in a sentence and they need this information in order to know how to process the sentence by using clues of the grammatical items. The difficulty of comprehension depends on whether the order of mention of two events is the same as the chronological order. The fact that according to the Corpus of

British English when adverbial time clauses begin by *after* or *when* usually the reverse of chronological order happens about 60% of the time (Kennedy, 2003).

Production practice

As Table 1 highlights, most of the FOG production practice illustrated in the workbook is categorized as closed production practice (C-PP) with isolated and decontextualized grammar type of exercises. 28% of grammar exercises from the workbook were not included from the student book's FOG. Closed production practice measured at 61% and open production practice is less than 1%. It also should be noted that the student book had three closed production practices and one open production practice always following the grammar explanation box.

Table 1

Type and Distribution of Production Practice

Unit and FOG	WB	WB	SB
Unit 1: FOG 1	C-PP	P-RW	
Unit 1: FOG 2	C-PP	P-RW	
Unit 2: FOG 3	C-PP	P-RW	
Unit 2: FOG 4	C-PP	P-RW	
Unit 3: FOG 5	C-PP	P-RW	
Unit 3: FOG 6	C-PP	P-RW	
Unit 4: FOG 7	O-PP	P-SW	
Unit 4: FOG 8	NA	NA	
Unit 5: FOG 9	C-PP	P-RW	SB: C-PP
Unit 5: FOG 10	NA	NA	
Unit 5: FOG 11	NA	NA	

Unit 6: FOG 12	O-PP	P-WS	
Unit 6: FOG 13	C-PP	P-RW	
Unit 7: FOG 14	NA	NA	SB: O-PP
Unit 8: FOG 15	C-PP	P-RW	
Unit 9: FOG 16	C-PP	P-RW	SB: P-RW
Unit 9: FOG 17	C-PP	P-RW	SB: P-RS
Unit 9: FOG 18	NA	NA	SB: P-RW

Note. NA = is not applicable as there is no corresponding grammar exercise; C-PP = closed production practice; O-PP = open production practice; SB = student book.

Integration of tasks with FOG activities

Overall, there were more extension type activities (nine) than pre-task activities (two) and four that could be viewed as both pre-task and extension (Unit 2, FOG 3; Unit 6, FOG 12; Unit 8, FOG 15, and Unit 9, FOG 16). The textual supports (reading, listening and viewing transcripts) were readily available to use in supporting grammar in context through exercises. Slightly more GEB examples (10) came from existing content in the student book than content (6) not from the material in the student book.

The question of how well grammar is integrated within tasks requires a more qualitative examination of the FOG activities. Consider, for example, Unit 3, Humour Canadian Style. Exercise FOG 6 focuses on capitalization of nouns, which is related to a preceding reading text (“The Cost of Fame”). It is therefore contextualized. However, there is no writing task in which learners would need to use their knowledge of capitalization so it is not well integrated, to use Perin’s (2011) distinction. The same can be seen with the tasks that follow; they are a listening task (Listen 3: *Josh Freed on Winning the Medal*) and a final task in which students prepare and

perform a role-play of an interview of a Canadian writer (*Wrap-up: Interviewing Writers*). No enabling grammar activity is provided to help learners to perform the role-play even though it is evident from the listening text (in which a writer talks about receiving an award) that the present perfect would have been an excellent choice. It would have made sense to draw learners' attention to the use of the present perfect that is frequently used in the text after they had discussed the ideas expressed in it. Targeting the present perfect would provide practice for a difficult grammatical form that is natural in the context of interviews and would likely be transferable to communication in real life. Thus, it appears from the FOG activities in this unit that the authors of *Canadian Snapshots* were more concerned with contextualizing grammar activities within the themes/topics of the communicative tasks than to integrate grammar by identifying target forms needed to carry out tasks with greater accuracy.

Discussion

In response to the assertion that the *Canadian Snapshots: Raising Issues* textbook is designed to include practical multi-skill, communicative language tasks to provide grammar in context was not achieved for several reasons. The first research question regarding the types of grammar explanations and practice activities found in *Canadian Snapshots: Raising Issues* student book and workbook, I found that the focus on grammar targets included more exemplars of isolated form-focused instruction, since the majority of grammar exercises were decontextualized and/ or pre-determined contextualized exercises. Authentic tasks in which learners replicate or rehearse communicative behaviors which could be required in the 'real-world' such as conducting an interview or presenting a speech would have worked well with the authentic texts that were available in the text (Burgess & Etherington, 2002; McGrath, 2002). However, the analysis has confirmed that authentic tasks were not integrated with the focus on

grammar exercises, but instead the pedagogic activities consisted largely of controlled grammar practice, one sentence, and context-free illustrations of grammar. Decontextualized examples of language were used in activities such as gap filling or transformation exercise focusing on accuracy rather than language use. The study of grammar was presented deductively; in other words, the learners studied grammar rules before applying them in the exercises. This seemed to be the main formula used for grammar exercises in this textbook. There were only two examples of learners having to identify the grammar rule and pattern themselves before applying them in mechanical exercises. In Unit 6 of the workbook, learners had to identify whether the sentences containing modal verbs were a) certainty, b) possibility, c) improbability, and d) uncertainty according to the grammatical items used. Unit 8 of the workbook had learners deciding whether the *-ing* forms are used after a preposition or as a gerund (subject or object).

The second research question focused on whether the grammar explanations were consistent with grammar reference books. In general, it was found that the accurate use of grammar explanations, use of meta-language, and access to authentic material was well presented. Noticeably absent were demarcation rules.

The third research question on whether the form focused practice activities conform to best practice standards for grammar instruction I would have to say that this is the area that needs the most improvement. According to *ATESL: Best Practices for Adult ESL and LINC Programming in Alberta* (2009):

Grammar instruction encourages learners to notice and analyze the forms, meanings, and uses of target structures; provides ample exposure to target structures; provides opportunity for pushed output, in which learners are encouraged to use new structures in spoken and written communication; and provides feedback. (ATESL, 2009, p. 75)

Learners could have had more opportunities to notice grammatical forms through input from listening activities and more output through speaking and writing.

Form-focused instruction in task-based language lessons, according to Ellis (2012), can be integrated through pre-task enabling activities (e.g., learners work out the rules of direct speech from examples within the authentic text), within-task focus-on-form activities (e.g., asking learners to investigate when and why a character uses the modal ‘can’ in a reading), and post-task consolidation/expansion type activities (e.g., using a specific grammar structure in an open-production activity such as an interview). For example, in Unit 1, there were no demarcation rules provided for discourse markers; instead of a grammar focus on ‘quoting someone’s exact words’, the ‘Interview with Paul Chiang’ could have raised students’ awareness of discourse markers (hesitation markers, initiators and fillers) in authentic, unscripted, and informal conversation.

In my estimation, better use of the instructor’s and student’s time could have been spent on actual grammar language targets as students at the intermediate level could be assumed to know about ‘quotation marks’ and such information and a whole lesson dedicated to this seems out of place.

In my view, *Canadian Snapshots: Raising Issues* is not congruent with current grammar instructional methods. I found most of the grammar exercises to be decontextualized and lacking in authenticity and meaningful practice.

The fourth research question on determining how the form focused activities and communicative tasks are linked together, I would say the results are mixed. The results show that the practices of the grammatical forms were often contextualized within the topics of the tasks but they were lacking in open-ended practice activities. The grammar therefore was not

integrated with language learning tasks. This impedes the process of transfer appropriateness in which the grammar practice is similar to the demands of real communication.

In the beginning when I first perused the text I was very hopeful because I noticed listening, viewing, speaking, pronunciation, reading and grammatical activities. But, upon further review, I couldn't quite see how the grammar targets were being linked to the communicative tasks. Basically, the only exposure to the grammar item was in a practice form that was mostly through reading and writing in a controlled and mechanical fashion. I couldn't see how the form focused instruction with the closed practice could be '*transfer-appropriate*' to a real-life communicative activity. The grammar focus was so isolated that I had a difficult time imagining the students being able to retrieve this knowledge in a communicative activity in the classroom and certainly outside of it.

Conclusion

In order for grammar instruction to be effective, grammar teaching needs to be supported and embedded in meaning-oriented activities and tasks, which enable the learner to have immediate opportunities for practice and use (Borg & Burns, 2008). Grammar should be a "...part of the larger linguistic, contextual, and communicational phenomenon of language acquisition (p. 457). The focus on grammar targets in *Canadian Snapshots: Raising Issues* were systematically organized in a similar manner: grammar rules and explanations were followed by a production output that culminated (with few exceptions) in a closed production practice. Research has shown that these types of grammar exercises are an isolated type of form-focused instruction, as the focus on language form is separated from the communicative or content-based activity, which "implies intentional learning and explicit instruction" (Spada & Lightbown, 2008, p. 187).

Given the widespread use of texts that include grammar work and the interest in developing grammar exercises that increase fluency and accuracy, this research seems pertinent in discovering the support that *Canadian Snapshots: Raising Issues* provides for these learning goals. First, the topics in the textbook are relevant to the Canadian context, exploring real life situations and providing authentic examples. However, in order to engage the learner in meaningful L2 interaction, the grammar task activities need to be less structured and more creative (e.g., problem-solving and producing unscripted situation role plays) (Dornyei, 2013).

Another equally important factor related to grammar instruction is the quality of teacher education and the amount of formal grammar instruction they have acquired. Funk (2012) reported that “a direct correlation between the extent and quality of teacher education and the amount of formal grammar instruction in classrooms has less well-trained teachers making extensive use of explicit grammar instruction, while better trained teachers use a more balanced approach and employ fewer grammar exercises” (p. 309).

Second, using authentic texts may present challenges for teachers (e.g., the difficulty and the time required to produce suitable tasks for the text) (Burgess & Etherington, 2002). This is one reason why it is crucial for curriculum designers and material writers to have knowledge of grammar theories and the results of empirical research in SLA. It is important to have theoretical and evidence-based research realized through classroom practice; this is ultimately in the best interests of learners and language learning (Nunan, 1987).

Third, “if learners are to benefit from form-focused instruction, TESOL professionals need to better understand when and how focus on form occurs” (Ellis, Basturkmen & Loewen, 2001, p. 408). Experienced instructors and pre-service teachers need to develop a repertoire of options for addressing grammar forms in the context of communicative task-based teaching.

Limitations

This study had several limitations. The first limitation concerns the generalizability of the findings. This study did not include observations of teachers' actual classroom instruction or presentations of the grammar exercises from the text. There was no questionnaire provided to instructors or students who had used the text, no initial or follow-up interviews with instructors or students who had used the text, and no discussion with the curriculum /material developers on the grammatical elements. These would be useful suggestions for future research. The categories and coding measures were conducted by one researcher. The author may also have been influenced by unknown prejudgments concerning teaching approaches and biases related to grammar instruction practices. Despite these limitations, it is felt that this work represents a step towards a clearer retrospection on the extent to which pedagogic principles are congruent with current grammar instructional methods.

Implications

Current research studies are in agreement that more than one approach is required in grammar teaching; that different grammatical phenomena can be explained using different grammatical theories; and that focusing on one particular type of grammar does not prepare learners adequately for language acquisition (Petraki & Hill, 2010). Because course books are a central part of teaching and learning, "...they tend to dictate what is taught, in what order, and to some extent, how as well as what learners learn" (McGrath, 2006, p. 171). Thus, McGrath (2006) clearly identifies having a multidimensional approach to teaching materials that includes all the stakeholders and materials users' such as the instructors, learners, publishers and writers. Informed decisions based on current research must be implemented during materials development to minimize gaps between theory and practice. Second, ESL teachers need to be

knowledgeable about grammar instruction. When using a course book similar to the one reviewed here, hopefully, they will be able to compensate for the lack in the grammar exercises and not feel under-prepared to teach grammar (Petraki & Hill, 2010). Overall, it is of vital importance for curriculum and material writers to have both grammatical knowledge and current pedagogical content knowledge in order to develop the textbooks instructors require to teach grammar effectively.

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Appendix A

Table of Contents for Unit 1

Section 1	Life in Canada	1
Unit 1	Canadian Mosaic.....	2
Did you know that?	3
Listening 1	An Interview with Paul Chiang.....	3
Reading 1	What is Culture?	5
Reading 2	Reporting Statistics	6
Reading Strategy	Scanning for Information	6
Research	Researching Your Community	8
Speaking/Writing	Conduct a Survey	8
Pronunciation Pointer	Making Polite Informal Requests	10
Listening 2	Who Are You? Who Am I?	10
Reading 3	Newcomer Youth	12
Focus on Grammar	Expressing Ideas about Time	15
Focus on Grammar	Quoting Someone’s Exact Words	15
Wrap-Up	Investigating Immigrant Serving Agencies	16

Note. Based on “*Canadian Snapshots: Raising Issues,*” by Kingwell, G., Bonkowski, F.J.,

Stephenson, L., and Holmes, T., 2005, p. XIII. Copyright 2007 by Saint-Laurent, QC: Éditions du Renouveau Pédagogique.

Appendix B

Focus on Grammar target forms listed in Units 1-9

Unit	Focus on Grammar (FOG)	Student book page	Work book page
1	Adverbial time clauses FOG 1	15	7
1	Punctuating direct quotes FOG 2	15, 16	8
2	Phrasal verbs FOG 3	22	16, 17
2	Reporting questions FOG 4	30	23, 24
3	Descriptive verbal forms FOG 5	36	28
3	Capitalization: writing mechanics FOG 6	45	34
4	Instructing and advising FOG 7	52	40
4	Stating necessity and advice FOG 8	54, 56	No Example
5	Comparing FOG 9	67, 68	No example
5	Expressing preference FOG 10	71	52
5	Expressing future prediction FOG 11	74	No example
6	Certainty, possibility and improbability FOG 12	82, 83	60
6	Expressing doubt or uncertainty FOG 13	90	65
7	Possible future occurrences FOG 14	111	No example
8	Using gerunds FOG 15	119, 120	89
9	Cohesion links FOG 16	139, 140	96
9	Present perfect FOG17	140, 141	97
9	Passive voice FOG 18	147	No example

Note. SB = student book; WB = work book.

Appendix C

Example of a Grammar Explanation Box as found in the student book: parts of a sentence.

Independent/Main Clause	Subordinate/Dependent Clause	Note
Francisco's family had a big house	when they lived in Guatemala.	There is no comma when the dependent clause comes second.
Dependent clause	Independent clause	
When Francisco lived in Guatemala,	his family had a big house.	When the dependent clause comes first in the sentence, we use a comma.
When I asked him how he had endured the transition,	he said (that) he enjoyed the peace here.	

Note. Based on *Canadian Snapshots: Raising Issues*, by Kingwell, G., Bonkowski, F. J., Stephenson, L., & Holmes, T. (2005), p. XIII. Copyright 2007 by Saint-Laurent, QC: Éditions du Renouveau Pédagogique.

Appendix D

Coding example from Unit 3: Focus on Grammar Target: Phrasal Verbs and Reporting Questions

Pedagogic Language Rules	Student book, page 36 Descriptive verbal forms	Student book, page 45 Capitalization
GEB	Yes	Yes
AGR	Yes	Yes
DEM	No	No
MET	Yes	Yes
OR	No	Yes
Production Oriented Analysis	Workbook: page 28	Workbook: page 34
C-PP	Yes	Yes
O-PP	No	No
P-	P-RW	P-RW
Contextual supports:		
CS-R	Yes	Yes
CS-L	Yes	No
CS-T	Yes	Yes
Context comments:	Student book The GEB only had 2 sentences taken from context (audio transcript) the other examples were not.	Student Book FOG is the writing mechanics of capitalization. Missed out on highlighting and identifying present progressives which are

		<p>needed when conducting interviews (SB p 48).</p> <p>Dialogue needed for interviews.</p>
	<p>Workbook</p> <p>Sentence questions are not from context of readings, audio, video or transcripts</p>	<p>Workbook</p> <p>Could have really focused on the Present progressive in the Stephen Leacock: Behind the Laughter transcript would have worked well as there are a lot of examples of this: Listening 3: Josh Freed on Winning the Medal the use of: Present Perfect: ("I've always...I've learned...I haven't gotten...I've received...I have never...etc...)</p> <p>Present perfect simple: has/have</p> <p>Instead of the capitalization exercise, time better spent on a pre-task for the interviews by focusing on the use of the present perfect:</p>
Pre-task /enabling		
Extension/consolidation	Extension	

Appendix E

Analysis Outline for Focus on Grammar Targets

Category	Feature	Explanation
Pedagogical language rules	Grammar Explanation Box (GEB)	Provides a descriptive explanation about a grammar form or rule accompanied with examples (Ranta, 2013).
	Accuracy of Grammar Rule (AGR)	The language rule should reasonably correspond well to the linguistic facts taken from a well-known pedagogical and general purpose reference book (Swan, 2012).
	Demarcation (DEM)	Explains to the learner when to use the form and when not to (Swan, 2012). For example, informing learners that adverbial time clauses account for up to 50% of all adverbial clauses in spoken and written texts might help learners identify usages and frequencies of adverbial clauses (Kennedy, 2003).
	Meta-Language (MET)	Use of the rules should be of familiar terminology appropriate to the student's level of language learning and sophistication (Swan, 2012).
	Other than a grammar structure (OR)	Describes a feature that is not related to a grammatical structure (e.g., the mechanics of grammar, such as punctuation), (Ranta, 2013).
Production Oriented	Closed Production	Is typified by a "controlled practice" or "narrow drill" type of production-based practice incorporating text

Analysis	Practice (C-PP)	manipulation activities such as: fill-in-the-blank, multiple choice, and sentence transformation by using the word(s) provided (Ellis, 1997). Learner performance features output oriented towards error avoidance and text manipulation Ranta (2013).
	Open Production Practice (O-PP)	Is a type of practice that supports a more open type of production. Input, for example, could be from a reading or listening text requiring learners to attend to specific grammatical features, followed by more open production of written and/or spoken text in which they create their own dialogues (Ranta, 2013).
	Production Type (P-RW, P-LW, P-LS, P-SW, P-RS)	The tasks in which learners were asked to produce the grammatical structures outlined in units one to nine: reading and writing production tasks (P-RW); listening and writing production tasks (P-LW); listening and speaking production tasks (P-LS); speaking and writing production tasks (P-SW); reading and speaking production tasks (P-RS), (Ranta, 2013).
Contextual Supports in...	Reading (CS-R)	Identifies the grammar target to be contextualized in the readings (text) in the student book.
	Listening (CS-L)	Identifies the grammar target to be contextualized in the audio/video recordings.
	Transcripts	Identifies the grammar target to be contextualized in the

	(CS-T)	transcripts of the audio/video recordings.
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Appendix F

Example of Criteria and Tally Sheet

SB: Unit 1- FOG 1	Criteria:	Score:	Content in:	Score:
How many examples in the grammar explanation box (GEB) are from content?	-all examples	Yes	Reading #3	Yes
	-1/2 of examples	-	Listening	-
	-less than ½ of examples	-	Viewing	-
	-none	-		
Does the GEB come before or after examples in content?	-before	-	Pre-task	-
	-after	Yes	Extension	Yes
WB: Unit 1 –FOG 1	Criteria:	Score:	Content in:	Score:
Exercise questions?	-all examples	Yes	Reading #3	Yes
	-1/2 of examples	-	Listening	-
	-less than ½ of examples	-	Viewing	-
	-none	-		
Type of exercise?	C-PP	Yes		
	O-PP	-		
Production type?	P-Reading & Writing		Formula sentences	

Note. C-PP = closed production practice, O-PP = open production practice, P = production.