Encouraging discovery and discussion with lower level students

Danny Norrington-Davies
International House London/King’s College London
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What do we want from materials?

• To be cognitively and affectively engaging

• To give students opportunities for meaningful language use

• Opportunities for feedback on their language use

• To help students make genuine discoveries about language
A common situation

• “When teaching lower levels there may be fewer opportunities to improvise or engage in dialogic talk than with higher proficiency learners” (Richards, 2017)
Why might this be the case?

• Comprehension questions (CQs)

• Discrete items of grammar

• Practice activities
I'M SORRY, MY RESPONSES ARE LIMITED. YOU MUST ASK THE RIGHT QUESTIONS.
Problems with CQs

• They don’t engage students with the content

• They are not particularly cognitively demanding (Freeman 2014; Mishan & Timmis 2015)

• Answers are pre-chosen by the materials writer

• They encourage a testing procedure (Swan and Walter 2017)

• Can lead to text processing weaknesses (Davoudi & Sadeghi 2015)
4 question types (Freeman 2014)

- Comprehension questions (CQs)
- Language questions (LQs)
- Evaluative questions (EQs)
- Personal Response Questions (PRQs)
Distribution of question types

- **Reading**:
  - CQs: 110
  - LQs: 12
  - EQs: 18
  - PRQs: 15

- **Listening**:
  - CQs: 282
  - LQs: 171
  - EQs: 15
  - PRQs: 10
Distribution of question types

- Reading:
  - CQs: 110
  - EQs: 18
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- Listening:
  - CQs: 282
  - EQs: 15
  - PRQs: 10
Significance

- 87% of questions are CQs

“..the literature shows that the most frequent and dominant type of questioning strategy used in classrooms is display questions which address lower-level cognitive processes and have predictable answers” (Davoudi & Sadeghi 2015:86)
Significance

- Out of 88 texts, students evaluate or personally respond to only 28 (31%)
A tale of 3 texts and 3 teachers

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**OZBUS** an exciting way to travel from London to Sydney

The OZBUS is the longest bus ride in the world and the ultimate journey for backpackers. In twelve weeks it travels 16,000 kilometres through twenty different countries.

Most people fly from London to Sydney at 40,000 feet and never see anything,” says Mark Creasey from OZbus. “On this OZbus people can see the most beautiful places in the world. We go across Europe, through Turkey, India, China, Malaysia and Australia. We travel through deserts, mountains and jungles – it’s amazing.

Jeff Lane travelled on the OZbus last summer. ‘The best thing was the Taj Mahal,’ he said. ‘The most exciting place was the tiger reserve in the Himalayas, and I really enjoyed visiting the base camp of Mount Everest.’ And what were the worst things? Well, in Tehran the bus broke down and we waited a whole day for a new one. That wasn’t so good. And I didn’t always enjoy camping at night. Sometimes I wanted to stay somewhere more comfortable!

The OZbus takes up to forty people of all ages. At night, the passengers usually stay in camps or sometimes in small hotels. Everyone takes turns to buy food in the market and cook for the group.

The greatest journey in the world? Creasey thinks want a truly awesome experience, then the OZbus is the way to go.

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**Family welcomes baby seventeen**

BABY DAVID is the latest child of Vladimir and Zymara Chernivetsky. The Chernivetsky family come from Ukraine and now live in the USA. They have got 17 children, 8 girls and 9 boys. (Sergey, 22, isn’t in the photo.)

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**MENU**

**DRINKS**

Coffee ........................................ €1.50
Tea .............................................
Hot chocolate ................................
Mineral water ...................
Cola ...........................................

**SANDWICHES**

Cheese ........................................ €3.00
Egg ...........................................
Chicken ....................................

**CAKES**

Chocolate cake ............................
Coffee cake ..............................

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Speakout Elementary (Pearson 2011)
Linda’s lesson

- Speakout Elementary (Pearson 2011)

BIG is beautiful

For Tracy and Pete Lewis ‘Big is beautiful’ when you talk about families. They’ve got 12 children – 11 girls and a boy. Ages range from daughter Shaznay (2) to Carly (19).

Life in the Lewis house starts at 6.30 in the morning. Tracy serves the kids breakfast in 2 sittings – 6 children have breakfast from 6.30 until 7, then the other 6 have breakfast from 7 to 7.30. For breakfast every day they usually eat 2 boxes of cereal and drink 7 litres of milk. Then Tracy makes packed lunches for the children and drives them all to school. At 9.30 she’s back home and she starts making dinner.

Tracy and Pete’s son, Charles (15), is the only boy in the house. ‘I’m lucky because I’ve got my own bedroom. My sisters all share bedrooms.’

How do Charles’s parents feel about their big family? Pete says, ‘It’s never boring in our house. It’s great doing everything together and I really enjoy being in such a large, happy family.’

And the biggest problem? ‘Waiting for the bathroom!’ The house has got only 1 bathroom!
Questions in the course-book

B  Work in pairs. Student A: look at page 165. Student B: read the text on this page. Circle the numbers in the box which are in your text. What do they refer to?

12 17 11 8 17
9 6 15

D  Work in pairs. Draw lines to complete the information. Use the texts to help.

The Cherenko family
don’t eat breakfast together.
eat dinner together
all live together

The Lewis family
don’t all live together.
like their big family

Speakout elementary (Pearson 2011)
A personal response task

‘Would you like to be part of a family like this?’
Student responses

- **Edima**: Oh my god no! Too many people!

- **Jhonni**: Is big table in the house for dinner, no?

- **Jhonni**: (Mimes banging on the door) “I need the bathroom. I need the bathroom”
Student responses

• **Maura:** In my house in Chile is always 20 people. Brother, sister, nietos, cousins, friends. No problem.

• **Jose:** I has 5 brothers and 3 sisters. Is nice because the friends for your brother are friends for you. And your old brothers always your home. It’s no boring. “We do this?” Your plans your brother plans.
A practice activity

**SPEAKING**

5A Complete the questions.
1 ________ you ________ any brothers or sisters?
2 How many brothers ________ you ________?
3 ________ your brother ________ any children?
4 How many children ________ he ________?

B Draw your family tree in your notebook. Write your name and two family members in your tree.

C Work in pairs. Exchange family trees with your partner. Ask and answer questions. Add names, ages and jobs to your partner’s family tree.

A: How many brothers and sisters have you got?
B: I’ve got two brothers and one sister.
A: What are their names?
B: Joel, Santiago and Cecilia.
A: And how old are they?
Student responses

• Jose: I has 5 brothers and 3 sisters. Is nice because the friends for your brother are friends for you. And your old brothers always your home. It’s no boring. “We do this?” Your plans your brother plans.
Focusing on emerging language

- Learners are more predisposed to notice language features relevant to the task they have performed (Johnson 1988 in Thornbury 1997)

- Helps learners 'notice the gap' in their current stage of interlanguage. (Ellis 1995 in Thornbury 1997)
My lesson

OZBUS an exciting way to travel from London to Sydney

The OZBUS is the longest bus ride in the world and the ultimate journey for backpackers. In twelve weeks it travels 16,000 kilometres through twenty different countries.

‘Most people fly from London to Sydney at 40,000 feet and never see anything,’ says Mark Creasey from Ozbus. ‘On the Ozbus people can see the most beautiful places in the world. We go across Europe, through Turkey, India, China, Malaysia and Australia. We travel through deserts, mountains and jungles – it’s amazing.’

Jeff Lane travelled on the Ozbus last summer. ‘The best thing was the Taj Mahal,’ he said. ‘The most exciting place was the tiger reserve in the Himalayas, and I really enjoyed visiting the base camp of Mount Everest.’ And what were the worst things? ‘Well, in Tehran the bus broke down and we waited a whole day for a new one. That wasn’t so good. And I didn’t always enjoy camping at night. Sometimes I wanted to stay somewhere more comfortable!’

The Ozbus takes up to forty people of all ages. At night, the passengers usually stay in camps or sometimes in small hotels. Everyone takes turns to buy food in local markets and cook for the group.

The greatest journey in the world? Creasey thinks so: ‘If you want a truly awesome experience, then the Ozbus is for you.’

• Speakout Elementary (Pearson 2011)
Comprehension questions

B Read the article again. Are sentences 1–5 true (T) or false (F)?

1. The Ozbus travels through twelve countries in twenty weeks.
2. Ozbus passengers fly from London to Sydney.
3. Jeff Lane took the Ozbus in the summer.
4. He liked the Taj Mahal, the tiger reserve and camping.
5. Most Ozbus passengers are forty years old.
6. They stay in hotels and camps.
A personal response question

Would you like to go on the Ozbus? Why/Why not?
Student responses (9 minutes)

• **Edima:** Well.... I don’t like that the bathroom is for everyone. It’s horrible! (Groans) I need my bathroom only for me. For 3 months? No.

• **Muhammad:** I don’t like because.... people sit down the bus, some people sleep... and them (mimics snoring)
### An evaluative task (15 minutes)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A married couple with kids</th>
<th>A mother and teenage son</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image1.png" alt="Images" /></td>
<td><img src="image2.png" alt="Images" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes/No?</td>
<td>Yes/No?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why/why not?</td>
<td>Why/why not?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A single female traveller</th>
<th>A retired couple</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image3.png" alt="Images" /></td>
<td><img src="image4.png" alt="Images" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes/No?</td>
<td>Yes/No?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why/why not?</td>
<td>Why/why not?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A young couple</th>
<th>Your teacher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image5.png" alt="Images" /></td>
<td><img src="image6.png" alt="Images" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes/No?</td>
<td>Yes/No?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why/why not?</td>
<td>Why/why not?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Student responses

• **Johnni**: (Having children on the bus) is too much stress for other.... viajeros

• **Maura**: Is more safe for her (single traveller)

• **Edima**: The teenager want to be alone. Not alone with her mother. He want to be alone with her friends or her phone

• **Maura**: Two friends is the best

• **Johnni**: For me yes because my mother is very funny
From rules to reasons

- Why are we using ‘would’?
From rules to reasons

**Edima**: Gustaria

**Teacher**: Yes. Yes. Can you explain?

**Edima**: It’s the future that you like to do but (points to head)….. it’s in my mind.

**Johnni**: Is opinion.
Roy’s lesson

**SPEAKING**

8A Work in pairs. Complete the menu with prices.
B Take turns to role-play the conversation in a sandwich bar. Student A: look at the menu. Choose and order your food and drink. Student B: take your partner’s order. Say how much it costs.

A: Could I have a coffee and a cheese sandwich?
B: A coffee and a sandwich? That’s four euros fifty.

**MENU**

**DRINKS**
- Coffee ..................................... €1.50
- Tea ..........................................
- Hot chocolate ............................
- Mineral water ............................
- Cola ........................................

**SANDWICHES**
- Cheese .................................... €3.00
- Egg ..........................................  
- Chicken ...................................

**CAKES**
- Chocolate cake ...........................
- Coffee cake ..............................
Roy’s lesson

THE GRILL

American Style Lobster 18.00
Boston wild lobster, BBQ sauce

Steak & Wing Combo 13.50
300g rump steak & 500g chicken wings

Lamb & Wing Combo 12.50
300g lamb ribs & 500g chicken wings

*The grill series come with 1) vegetable salad 2) egg fried rice or 3) chips. You can choose one.

PASTA

King Prawns 6.00
Fresh king prawns, chorizo, dried tomatoes, onion & pesto sauce

Roasted Vegetables 4.50
Selected fresh vegetables, nuts & pesto cream

Grilled Chicken 7.50
Chicken, smoked bacon, mushroom, onion, garlic, white wine cream sauce

PIZZAS

Pepperoni 6.00
Italian pepperoni, tomato sauce and Mozzarella cheese

Green Party 5.50
Tomato sauce, Mozzarella cheese, red & green peppers and mushrooms

Four Cheese 5.50
Tomato sauce, topped with Mozzarella, Emmental, Cheddar & Gorgonzola cheese

Christmas Special 10.00
Beef slices, mushroom, tomato sauce with fresh basil and Mozzarella cheese

SANDWICHES

#Spring 1.50
Mozzarella cheese, tomato & olive oil

#Summer 2.50
Tuna, lemon mayo & sweetcorn

#Autumn 2.50
Ham, tomato & cheese

#Winter 3.50
Beef, Mozzarella cheese & olive oil

DRINKS

Cappuccino M 1.80 L 2.30
Latte M 1.75 L 2.25
Hot Chocolate M 2.20
Green Tea M 1.50
Cola (250ml) 0.90
Roy’s lesson

**ACTIVITY 1**
Look at the menu of Danny’s Restaurant. What would you like to eat or drink?

**ACTIVITY 2**
Look at the menu. Will the following people be happy with the menu? Why?

1) *Families with children*  
2) *Vegetarians*  
3) *People who eat meat*
Conclusion

- Limit comprehension questions
- Ask more evaluative questions and personal response questions
- Work with what emerges from discussions
- Explore language through tasks as well as texts
danny.norrington-davies@ihlondon.com

https://dannynorringtondavies.wordpress.com/conference-presentations/
Bibliography & useful reading

• **Davoudi, M. & N. Sadeghi** (2014) Systematic review of research on questioning as a high-level cognitive strategy. *English Language Teaching* 8/10, 76-90


