Exploring the Power of Parallel Texts

THE DIDACTIC POTENTIAL OF SAMPLE TEXTS IN EFL

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OVERVIEW

Brief Introduction

Lead-in Activity

Theoretical Framework

Concrete Examples and Materials

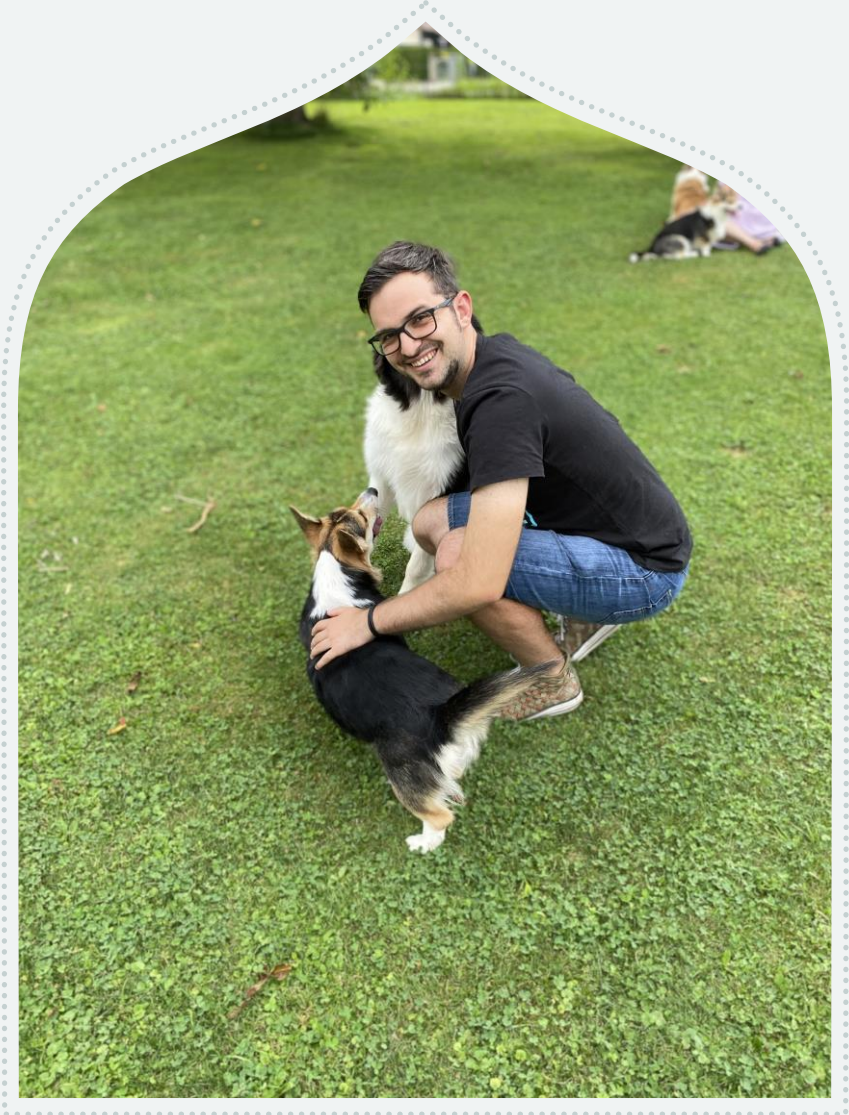Discussion of Students' work

Conclusion

Questions? – Feel free to intervene at any time! :D

Getting to know: Raphi, a novice teacher

- Raphael (26) – born in Carinthia

- Language and Literature nerd

- Semi-gifted tennis player

- Proud owner of a stubborn fluffy Corgi

- True-Crime addict (Podcasts + Netflix)

- English teacher at the BHAK/BHAS Judenburg since February 2022

- Member of Career Counselling Team

- Forms being currently taught: 2S, 2C, 3A, 5C

Lead-in Activity: Brainstorming (5 min.)

You are doing an internship at *Kantar TNS*, a market research agency in London, and your boss wants to organise a multicultural week in his company to gain a better understanding of the importance of cultural diversity in the community and the workplace. He asked you to write a leaflet for the employees of *Kantar TNS* in which you should:

- Explain the importance of mutual respect
- Highlight the benefits of cultural diversity in the workplace
- Give information about activities during the multicultural week of *Kantar TNS* (250 words)

Try to think of potential ideas for these bullet points
Year + Language Level?
Would you assign such a writing task to your students?

THE POWER OF SAMPLE TEXTS

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND – Part I

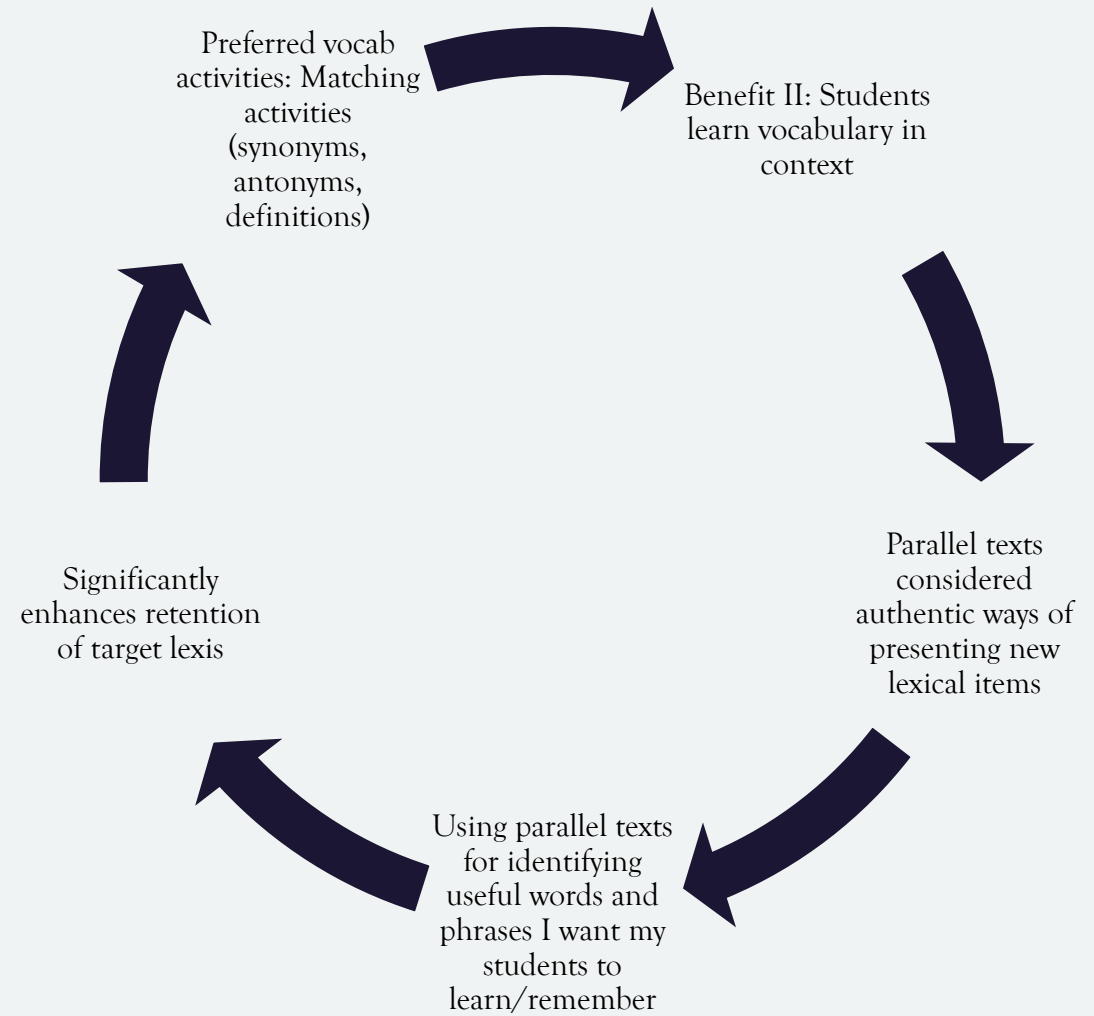How can parallel texts impact foreign language learning? (Conti, 2015)

Benefit I: They encourage '**noticing**'

Noticing hypothesis put forward by Schmidt (1990): a foreign language grammar structure cannot occur unless the learner '**notices**' the gap between the way a structure is used in the target language and their own L1

'**Noticing**' occurs in authentic linguistic contexts

To encourage and scaffold '**noticing**', it is advisable to ask metalinguistic questions on the next to elicit a specific grammar or lexical structure

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND – PART II

Preferred vocab activities: Matching activities (synonyms, antonyms, definitions)

Benefit II: Students learn vocabulary in context

Parallel texts considered authentic ways of presenting new lexical items

Using parallel texts for identifying useful words and phrases I want my students to learn/remember

Significantly enhances retention of target lexis

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND – PART III

Sample texts enable students to get familiar with Standard English Writing conventions

Benefit III: Versatile use of sample texts within the classroom of EFL

Sample texts facilitate content work and provides students with ideas for written and oral assignments

The usage of sample texts is not restricted to one single language skill (Reading, Word Formation and subsequent speaking task)

How to go about using parallel texts in an EFL-setting: Cyberbullying (Written and Oral Task)

- Target Group: 2S

- Number of Students: 9

- Language Level: A2/A2+

- General Topic: Are you connected?

- Specific Focus: Cyberbullying

- Book: Focus on Modern Careers (A2) – Reading Comprehension proposed

Can-do statements for this chapter:

- I can express my own opinion about familiar topics in blog comments

- I can find necessary information in longer texts or parts of texts in order to solve a task

- I can express my own opinion in longer stretches of speech. Furthermore, I can give advice and suggest strategies when it comes to familiar topics

What does the book propose?

Here is some additional material if you want to do further work on these topics and improve your English skills:

1 More cyberbullying

It is not just girls who are bullied. Find an example of a boy who was bullied online and write a short report about what happened. What would you do to help him?

I would talk to … • I would tell him to … • Perhaps he should …

2 A survey

Is your class online? Write a questionnaire to find out what your friends use the Internet for and how much time they spend online. These questions can help you:

1 How often are you online?
2 Do you use a social networking site?
3 What is the name of the social networking site that you use?
4 Do you play multiplayer online games?
5 Do you use an online dictionary? If so, which one?
6 What do you use to go online (a laptop, mobile phone, tablet)?
7 Do you watch films online?
8 Do you download music?

Now present your results to the class.

3 A mind map

Make a poster for your classroom with a mind map of computer words and phrases.

← COMPUTER →

Writing Task: A blog comment

WRITING TASK: UNIT 1 – CYBERBULLYING

1. You have read the following blog entry on the webpage *cyberbullying.org*

By Lucie15
16th August, 1.43 p.m.

I posted a photo of myself on Instagram with the caption "Life is good". A bunch of people including a boy I was hanging out with attacked this post with really mean and rude comments about me. I was so upset that I privately texted the girl who seemed to be leading these comments asking her why she was writing these hurtful things and she replied by saying "it's a joke and we are just having fun." She then continued to write more mean things about me. She even threatened me by saying "I deserved this" and that she would hurt me and live stream it for other people to watch. I was scared and devastated when students from my grade who I thought were my friends commented about how funny she was and how annoying I was. People from other schools that I didn't know even took part! I felt attacked and all alone. My close friends tried to comfort me, but no one had the courage to actually defend me on social media.

I don't know if you have ever been confronted with cyberbullying and I'd be curious to read your comments!

You have decided to reply to Lucie's blog post. In your blog comment you should:

- **Describe** your personal situation
- **Discuss** why cyberbullying is nowadays much more common
- **Give advice** and **suggest strategies** on how to help victims of cyberbullying

Write between 150 and 180 words!

Content Work: Characteristics of a Blog comment – Part I

SAMPLE: BLOG COMMENT

By: Raphi26

Date: 19th September, 2022

Time: 1:30 p.m.

Jeff, I have recently stumbled across your blog post, and it has given me the courage to share my thoughts with you. I realized a while ago that a couple of students from my school started to bully a girl on Facebook and Instagram.

Fortunately, I have never been bullied before, however, I can really relate to you. It must have been a shock for you when you discovered that someone hacked your account and started posting private photos on Facebook. I think I would have reacted in the same way as you did and talked to my parents right away.

The reason why I think that cyberbullying is much more common nowadays is that people remain anonymous on the Internet. They can post pictures, send mean comments to your friends and even threaten you without being identified.

In your case, I would strongly suggest reporting the incidents to the police and try to set all social accounts to private. This way, you would avoid being hacked.

Let me know if my pieces of advice helped you.

Content Work: Characteristics of a Blog comment – Part II: Students' answers/ideas

📅 Username, Date, Time

📄 Paragraphs

📚 Reference to the original post

💬 You 'communicate' with the author

✏️ All paragraphs have the same length

🏆 No final sign-off but you wish the author all the best

💡 Each paragraph talks about a separate idea

Collecting ideas: Brainstorming

- BP2 and BP3: some ideas already present in sample blog post

- Sample Text full of useful sample phrases and language chunks

- Precise terminology (offender, victim, bully, to attack, to harass, hostile ...)

- Grammar: passive constructions, modal verbs, if-clauses

- Collocations: to hide one's identity, to have access to, to be a victim of, have you ever seen, have face-to-face encounters

The Differences between Cyber Bullying and Traditional Bullying

1. Anonymity: How the Internet Protects the Bully
The biggest difference between cyber bullying and traditional bullying is the fact that the Internet actually gives the offender an extra degree of protection. Why? Because when you're on the Internet, bullies can attack their targets anonymously.

Back in the 'traditional bullying' days, at least victims knew who their aggressor was. Now, the victims are clearly identifiable online and cyber bullies can hide their identities while harassing that person.

2. Cyber Bullying Can Happen Anywhere, Anytime
Another difference between cyber bullying and traditional bullying is that cyber bullying can happen anywhere. As long as someone has access to the Internet, a bully can harass someone and a victim can find an offensive comment about them.

Before everyone had easy access to the Internet, bullying was more isolated. It typically happened during school hours and in places where the bully and victim were in the same location. In today's age, there is literally nowhere to hide if you are a victim of bullying.

3. Cyber Bullying Incidents Can Go Viral
Have you ever seen an image or meme go viral before?
While people can be hostile both online or offline, one of the other key differences between cyber bullying and traditional bullying is the fact that things can be shared easily. While most traditional bullying takes place in front of a relatively small number of witnesses, cyberbullying plays out in front of anyone who has access to the Internet and comes across a cyber bully's post.

4. There Is a Lot Less Remorse in the Online World
Generally, solving a problem that happens online is very different from what happens in the real world. The Internet is still a relatively new phenomenon for most people, and it is constantly changing based on how we react to it. Victims are less likely to tell their parents or teachers about a cyber bullying incident because they may fear that they'll receive a worse punishment, like having their computer or phone taken away.

Furthermore, because cyber bullies don't have face-to-face encounters with their victim, they are also less likely to feel guilty for what they do. In other words, they do not know how their words or actions actually affect someone else online. This leads to bullies being more aggressive and victims being more vulnerable.

Language of Giving Advice

LANGUAGE OF GIVING ADVICE

Elementary:

I really think you **need to/must/should...**

- I really think you **should stop smoking** to live a healthy life.

It is usually **a good idea to...**

- It is usually **a good idea to ask** your teacher if you don't know how to form the passive voice.

My suggestion is **to...**

- My suggestion is **to talk** to your child if it feels stressed out.

One thing you **could do is to...**

- One thing you **could do is to** try to take pressure off and just enjoy your life.

Pre-intermediate:

I **would strongly suggest/advise/recommend that...**

- I **would strongly suggest that you** study harder for the upcoming English exam.

If I were you, I would ...

- **If I were you, I would talk** to my parents in case I suffer from test anxiety.

To me, **the most important thing is to...**

- To me, **the most important thing is to keep** calm and relaxed.

My **main recommendation would be...**

- My **main recommendation would be** to avoid fattening and salty dishes.

Intermediate:

If I were in your place, I would...

- **If I were in your place, I would** take a break and finish work a little bit later

In this kind of situation, **I would always recommend/suggest...**

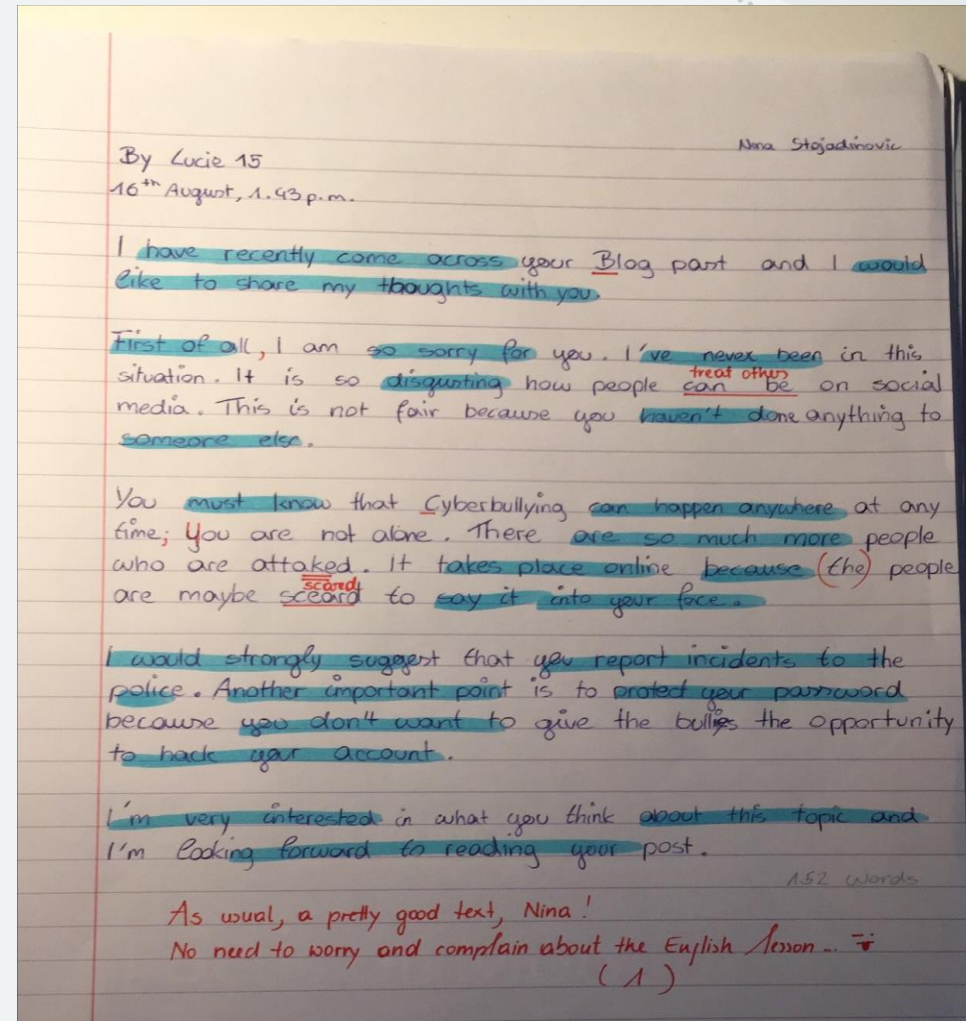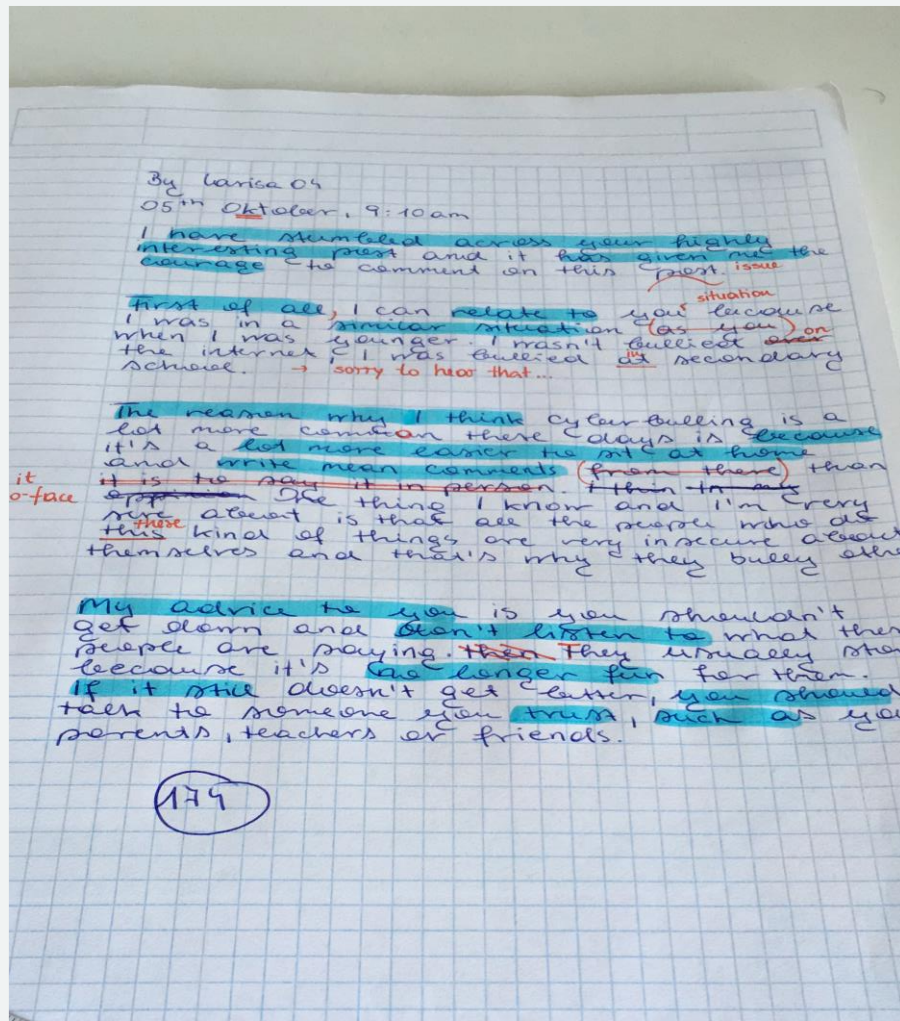- In this kind of situation, **I would always recommend talking** to the headmaster.

A **piece of advice from ... I would like to pass on is to...**

- **A piece of advice from my grandmother I would like to pass on is to** always be friendly.

Tell your students to use different sentence structures and after some time they will find their most favourite ones! ☺

Students' final products

Follow-up Task: Oral Assignment

Over to you: Would you be able to talk about this issue for three minutes straight?

SPEAKING TASK – UNIT 1

https://nordvpn.com/de/blog/was-ist-cybermobbing/

Situation: After graduating from HAS Judenburg, you decide to do an internship at a social media marketing agency. Your boss has come across the fact that more and more young people are confronted with a relatively new form of humiliation, namely cyberbullying. Therefore, your boss has organised an event in which he would like you to give a presentation on cyberbullying. In your presentation, you should:

- **Define** what cyberbullying is (**Input 1**)
- **Give examples of forms** of cyberbullying (**Input 2**)
- **Suggest strategies on** how to prevent cyberbullying (**Input 3**)

Various Sources of Input

Input 1:

What Is Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place over digital devices like cell phones, computers, and tablets. Cyberbullying can occur through SMS, Text, and apps, or online in social media, forums, or gaming where people can view, participate in, or share content. Cyberbullying includes sending, posting, or sharing negative, harmful, false, or mean content about someone else. It can include sharing personal or private information about someone else causing embarrassment or humiliation.

The most common places where cyberbullying occurs are:

- Social Media, such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and Tik Tok
- Text messaging and messaging apps on mobile or tablet devices
- Instant messaging, direct messaging, and online chatting over the internet
- Online forums, chat rooms, and message boards, such as Reddit
- Email
- Online gaming communities

Input 2:

It is important to understand how children are cyberbullied so it can be easily recognized, and action can be taken. Some of the most common cyberbullying tactics include:

- Posting comments about someone online that are mean, hurtful, or embarrassing.
- Threatening to hurt someone or telling them to kill themselves.

- Posting a mean or hurtful picture or video.
- Pretending to be someone else online in order to post personal or false information about someone else.
- Posting mean or hateful names, comments, or content about any race, religion, ethnicity, or other personal characteristics online.
- Creating a mean or hurtful webpage about someone.

Input 3:

https://www.verywellfamily.com/how-to-prevent-cyberbullying-5113808

How to structure your ILT (Individual Long Turn)

General Introduction

Before you even start with the topic, make sure to briefly introduce yourself and tell the audience what you are going to talk about. Use one of the following sentences to leave a first impression:

- Good morning/Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. My name is … and today **I would like to use the opportunity** to talk about …

- Good morning/Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. I am … and **I have the pleasure to introduce you to the topic of**…

Announcing your plan

In the English-speaking world, it is important to properly structure your discourse, i.e., give an overview of what the audience is going to expect in the next couple of minutes. Instead of directly diving into a topic, tell the audience what you are going to do.

- Before I start with my presentation, I would like to shortly provide a quick overview of what's to come within the next couple of minutes.
- **First of all, I would like to address/explain/outline**
- **Second of all, I would like to deal with/highlight/comment on/illustrate**
- **Third of all, I would like to give an example of/evaluate/inform about…**

Transitions (Signposting)

Professional speakers often use transitioning phrases to allow the listeners to 'digest' the provided information and to signal that the next aspect is going to be covered. Transitioning is a smooth way to connect two aspects and avoid abrupt interruptions and endings.

Transition between Announcement and Aspect Number 1:

- Without much further ado, let us begin with **talking about/addressing the issue of/ covering the aspect of…**
- So, **let's start with**…

Transition between Individual Aspects

- Now, **let's move on to** the next aspect, namely…
- Now, **let's take a closer look at** the next aspect, namely…
- This **brings me to**…

Why bother working with 'Input'?

Proposed input makes students feel more secure

Repetitive use of linguistic structures enhances language retention

Students learn how to properly structure their discourse (oral and written)

Students' confidence rises over time

How to combine different linguistic skills?

- Language in Use (B2) → Word Formation

- Reading Comprehension → Follow-up Activity (True/False + Justification)

- Speaking Input (Matura Task) → Talk about the Future of Banking

THE FUTURE OF BANKING

1. Read through the following text and complete the gaps by forming the correct word based on the one indicated in parenthesis. The first one (0) has been done for you.

The banking industry is facing a series of challenges as more consumers manage their personal finances from their smartphones. With banking technology becoming more advanced, **(0) innovation** (**innovate**) is necessary for the future of banking.

Challenges facing the banking sector

Younger **(1)** _____ (**consume**) grew up almost entirely within a digital world. As a matter of fact, this generation uses a smartphone or tablet to manage almost any aspect of their lives.

With this in mind, it's no surprise that millennial consumers consider traditional high-street banking to be a thing of the past. Receiving a cheque from a relative on their birthday is likely to be met with a sigh when they consider the hassle of depositing it. At the most basic level, changing consumer habits mean that brand **(2)** _____ (**loyal**) is dropping. Consumers long for cheaper deals and better services. Banking is certainly no exception to this trend. With active and engaged consumers prepared to move on if they're unhappy with a service, there's a market to **(3)** _____ (**exploitation**) for those who are prepared to innovate.

This **(4)** _____ (**increase**) competition means the traditional bank faces a fight to remain relevant to younger consumers in several key areas: innovation, service, and **(5)** _____ (**reliable**). Digitalization is changing how people interact and do business on a day-to-day basis, and advancements in banking technology are continuing to influence the future of **(6)** _____ (**finance**) services around the world. An increasing demand for a digital banking experience from millennials and Gen Zers is transforming how the entire banking industry operates.

From retail and mobile banking to neo bank startups, technology has its hand in seemingly every aspect of the banking industry; and. the influence of technology will continue to launch banking into a digitized future.

Writing Assignment: Leaflet

You work for an Austrian bank. The bank wants to promote their services to international students who need Austrian bank accounts. Your manager has asked you to write the text for a leaflet.

In your **leaflet** you should:

- describe the services your bank offers to international students
- give reasons why a personal bank advisor is important
- highlight a special offer for new customers

Divide your leaflet into **sections** and give them **headings**. Write around **250 words**.

Sample Text: Student Accounts – HSBC UK

- Useful Terminology in Context!

- Structure and the target audience similar to the task

- Provides ideas for BP 3

Stay on top of your money while you study

Going to uni? Our Student Bank Account helps you boss your budget while you're studying, so you can enjoy student life to the full. With no monthly account fee.

Bank on the go with our app

Our app makes staying on top of your finances a breeze. Convenient, secure and in your pocket.

✓ Check your balance, make payments and chat to us if you need support

✓ Pay your friends using just their mobile number with PayM

✓ Manage your arranged overdraft and regular payments like standing orders, Direct Debits and subsciptions

Here's what you'll get with your Student Bank Account

An interest-free arranged overdraft

Get a guaranteed interest-free limit of up to £1,000 in your first year, which could rise to £3,000 by year 3. Learn more.

Easy online and mobile banking

Mange your money with your mobile. You can also bank online, by phone or in-branch.[1]

Mobile payments

Pay on the go quickly and securely with Apple Pay, Google Pay or Samsung Pay.[2]

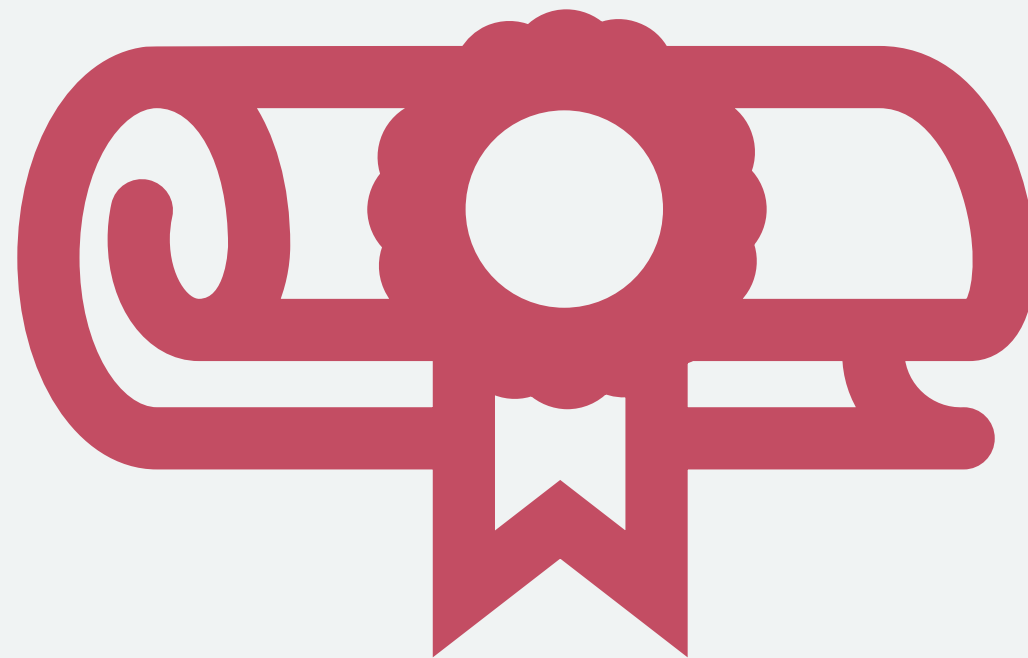Chat

Written Assignments: Leaflet Task

Potential Challenges and Drawbacks

Challenges and Drawbacks

- Time factor (usually takes some time to find suitable texts)

- Plagiarism (running the risk of having your students blindly copy and paste phrases)

- Level of sample texts (sometimes they are too easy or too difficult)

- Authenticity ? (Sometimes I have to modify certain lexical items, grammar structures, syntax…)

- Openness (Students have to grow accustomed to using sample texts)

- Autonomy ? (working with sample texts still needs a lot of guidance even though it should foster autonomous learning)

'Teaching is the greatest act of optimism'

Follow-up
Discussion

Reference List

Conti, Gianfranco (2015). Parallel texts – How they can enhance learning and effectively scaffold reading proficiency development. Last Retrieved: November 14th, https://gianfrancoconti.com/2015/06/07/870/

Schmidt, Richard (1990). "The role of consciousness in second language learning". *Applied Linguistics, 11(2)*, 129–158.

Banking Service Sample Text: https://www.hsbc.co.uk/current-accounts/products/student/

Cyberbullying Sample Text: https://onlinesense.org/5-differences-cyber-bullying-traditional-bullying/

https://www.hakju.at