

Introductory unit

Introduction

This unit is designed to get you started, and invites you to consider some key issues related to the teaching of language – language being the operative word here – since the focus of this book is less on methodology than on the nature of language itself. Nevertheless, since it is written for language teachers, questions of methodology will inevitably enter into the discussion.

Tasks

- 1 Opinions about language learning and teaching** Consider these statements. To what extent and in what respects do you agree/disagree?
- Learning a language is first and foremost a question of learning its grammar.
 - It is the language teacher's responsibility to know as much as possible about the language itself.
 - Grammar is best learned deductively – that is, by studying rules and then applying the rules to examples.
 - Grammatical terminology is best avoided in the classroom.
 - Giving learners complete rules, even if these are more complicated, is better than giving them half-rules.
 - Language should always be studied in its typical contexts of use, rather than in isolation.
 - English doesn't have very much grammar, compared to some languages.
 - The most important part of grammar is the verb system.

Tasks

2 Read this text and answer the questions:

Webber blocks 'Evita' Madonna

By KEVIN SMITH

A PLAN to star pop queen Madonna in a film version of *Evita* has been vetoed by composer Andrew Lloyd Webber. 15

Angry Andrew, who co-wrote the stage blockbuster with Tim Rice, vowed that anyone BUT Madonna should play the part after she demanded to rewrite some of his songs. 20

Now Walt Disney, makers of the £30 million picture, are insisting that she must star. 25

And they have called for a meeting between her and Lloyd Webber in New York this week to sort out their differences.

Madonna was offered the part last year but was dumped when she clashed with Webber over the award-winning score.

She said then: "The music needs updating.

I told Oliver Stone, the director, that I was interested in working with Andrew and writing some new songs.

In the end Oliver thought I was going to be a huge pain in the butt."

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Text type

- In what sort of publication did this text appear? What features of the layout tell you this?
- What is the overall purpose (or function) of the text – is it, for example, to advertise, to inform, to complain, to criticise?
- Identify any stylistic features that are typical of this kind of text, for example, the use of the present tense in the headline.

Text organisation

Put these facts in chronological order:

- Webber vetoed the choice of Madonna.
- Webber co-wrote *Evita*.
- Madonna demanded to rewrite some songs.
- Disney called a meeting.
- Madonna was offered the part.
- Oliver Stone thought Madonna was a pain.

Why has the above order been chosen for the text, rather than the chronological one?

Cohesion

- What do the following words refer to: *his* (line 8); *they* (line 12); *their* (line 14). How do you know?
- Composer Andrew Lloyd Webber; Angry Andrew; Lloyd Webber; Webber; Andrew* – is this the same person? If so, why is he referred to in five different ways?
- How many words can you find that have something to do with (1) cinema; (2) music; (3) argument?
- Identify these references: *Now* (line 9); *this* (line 14); *last* (line 16); *then* (line 20).
- Why do the features in (a–d) help make the text cohesive?

Now that you have looked at the text as a whole, work through the following questions, which focus on specific parts of it.

Vocabulary

- How are the following words formed: *rewrite*; *composer*; *award-winning*; *pop*; *to star*.
- What is the connotation of the words *dumped* (line 17) and *clashed* (line 18)?
- What is the style of the expression *a pain in the butt* (line 26)?

Grammar

- Can you identify the part of speech of each of the following words in the text:
 a plan vetoed by angry who after now
- Can you match the phrase with the example

| | |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| a noun phrase | then |
| a verb phrase | in the end |
| an adverb phrase | has been vetoed |
| an adjective phrase | a film version of Evita |
| a prepositional phrase | interested in working with Andrew |
- Can you analyse the headline in terms of subject, verb and object?
- Do the same for the sentence beginning *Now Walt Disney . . .* (line 9).

Tasks

- e) Find an example of:
 - an infinitive
 - a present participle
 - a past participle
 - an auxiliary verb
 - a modal auxiliary

- f) Find an example of:
 - present tense
 - past tense
 - perfect aspect
 - progressive aspect

- g) Find an example of:
 - a transitive verb
 - an intransitive verb
 - a phrasal verb

Discussion

How useful do you think it is to be familiar with the kind of terminology dealt with above? Do you think it is possible to teach successfully (a) without knowing the terminology; (b) knowing it, but without using it?