

So far this book has focused on the more passive language skills of understanding and analysis. This chapter bridges the gap from the receptive use of dialogues to their productive use, and lays the foundations for dialogues as something to be practised and created. We will explore this aspect further in the chapters that follow.

One task type that bridges the receptive–productive gap is the dictogloss. A basic dictogloss procedure for reconstructing a short dialogue might be as follows:

- 1 The students listen to a recording of the dialogue or the teacher reads it out.
- 2 They discuss in pairs what they can remember about it.
- 3 They listen to the dialogue again and are asked to make a note of the key words used.
- 4 They work in pairs again, pool the words they wrote down and together write up their best version of the complete dialogue.
- 5 They are given a written copy of the original dialogue to compare with their own.

An activity like this is a useful one for a number of reasons. Firstly, there is a focus on listening and speaking – students need to understand the dialogue they have heard in order to talk about it or make notes on it, and if they didn't understand certain parts there is a chance that they can be helped towards understanding through discussion with a partner.

There is also an emphasis on writing and accuracy: when students come to write the dialogue down there is an inherent need for them to make it as accurate as they possibly can.

Ideally a task like this also encourages negotiation between students. Because the students work in pairs throughout the exercise, they need to discuss and agree on the suitability of different language items to be included in their dialogue, and this serves the purpose of both encouraging them to use the language items in speech, and focusing clearly on meaning as well as form.

Finally, it is conducive to noticing. When students compare their versions of the dialogue with the original one, they often pick out differences between

the two. The process they have been through will make them more open to acquiring the language items which they had been unable to reproduce when writing the dialogue themselves.

The activities in this chapter address some or all of the issues outlined above by asking learners to reproduce and reconstruct a range of different dialogues. The initial activities are very accuracy based, with the later ones requiring more and more creativity on the part of the learners. In the first set of activities, the class are given the complete text of the dialogue they are working with, and need to decide on an appropriate way of organising it. Jumbled lines (3.1), Dialogue rebuilding (3.2), The ultimate gapfill (3.3) and Listen again (3.4) ask the learners to piece together dialogues that they have already heard, while Jumbled reconstruction (3.5) and Dialogue pairs (3.6) focus on constructing new ones.

In Dialogue retranslation (3.7), Retranslated tapescript (3.8) and Dubbing (3.9), the learners compare and contrast dialogues with mother tongue equivalents in order to notice the gap between their ability to express ideas in their first language and their ability to do so in English.

From monologue to dialogue (3.10), Turning news items into dialogue (3.11), Shadow dialogues (3.12) and Mimed dialogues (3.13) involve the learners creating dialogues out of other sources. Modernised voiceovers (3.14) and Roughing up and censoring (3.15) encourage the class to produce alternative versions of dialogues, which are suitable for a different audience than the one that was originally intended.

3.1 Jumbled lines

Outline	The class take part in a competitive race to rearrange the words in lines of a dialogue from the coursebook
Focus	Reviewing and reactivating the language of a dialogue already used in class
Level	Any
Time	20 minutes
Materials and preparation	Rewrite a section of a dialogue which the class have already listened to in a previous lesson, so that the words of each utterance are jumbled up. Intersperse these lines with the original unjumbled lines. (See the example below from <i>Language in Use – Beginner</i> (p. 111)) Copy this onto a transparency and find the appropriate place on the tape.