

A Critique of a Pedagogical Sequence: Cutting Edge 3rd ED. Intermediate Unit 8

Ying Chi

Xiamen University Tan Kah Kee College, Zhangzhou 363105, Fujian, China

Abstract

Based on some empirical studies and theories in the field of second language acquisition, this article critiques a pedagogical sequence from a popular L2 textbook. It evaluates the chosen sequence to determine whether the activities in the reading section serve to develop learners' reading skills and whether the design of the two vocabulary sections is in line with the research findings on the acquisition of formulaic sequences. It is found that the design of the vocabulary sections provide both meaning-focused input and output and language-oriented learning, although a fluency-focused learning strand is missing. Also, the presentation of the verb-phrases may be problematic. As for the reading section, the target reading skills may be better developed if external guidance is in place.

Keywords

Evaluation of a Pedagogical Sequence; Development of Reading Skills and Strategies; Facilitating Word Acquisition; Acquisition of Formulaic Sequences.

1. Introduction

This critique addresses a pedagogical sequence in the 8th unit (p.76-77, p.80-81) of Cutting Edge Intermediate Third Edition [1], a textbook for English learners at the B1- B1 (+) level under CEFR. Based on some empirical studies on reading and vocabulary acquisition, this article aims to analyze and evaluate the chosen sequence to determine whether the activities in the reading section serve to develop learners' reading skills and whether the design of the two vocabulary sections is in line with the research findings on the acquisition of formulaic sequences.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Theoretical Background

To effectively critique the chosen sequence, both theories and empirical studies concerning vocabulary learning and reading development in the second language acquisition domain are reviewed.

2.1.1. On Vocabulary

Nation and Meara [2] point out that the concept of vocabulary extends from isolated words to multi-word units (or formulaic sequences, e.g., idioms, collocations, phrases, etc.). They believe vocabulary worthy of classroom attention. Classroom efforts should be directed at vocabulary that is useful and that can meet learners' needs. In other words, words that are of high frequency or those required by learners' specific needs, such as technical terms, need to be addressed by teaching. Before deliberate learning or teaching, one question that needs to be answered is what it means to know a word.

Knowing a word is multifaceted, encompassing various aspects of a word [3] [4]. These include the traditional features-meaning, form (spelling and pronunciation)-and a more

comprehensive interpretation of the ideas of meaning, form, and use. For meaning, it is not enough to know a single explanation of a word but to be able to expound it in various contexts. For form, knowledge of its word parts (root, affixation) and inflections is indispensable. For use, the idea embraces part of speech (i.e., the position of the word in a clause), collocation, register, and frequency of use.

Although it may now sound complicated to learn a word, the effort required for knowing a word, according to Nation [5] and Webb and Nation [6], actually varies. In other words, some words need more effort, whereas others are easier to acquire. The amount of endeavor involved in learning a word is referred to as its “learning burden” (p. 44) [5]. Nation [5] notes that learning burden can originate from different sources: form-meaning association, both inter-linguistically between L1 and L2, and intra-linguistically in the L2 system, such as homographs and different meanings a word can have; word-form, relating to the length, frequency, and pronunciation-spelling connection of a word, and resemblance to its L1 counterpart; the required control over the word—receptive and productive use of the word, with the latter being more demanding than the former; and the way a word is presented (stand-alone or embedded in a text) and possible interference from words accompanying it.

To deal with the challenge of vocabulary learning, Nation [7] presents the pathway of four-strand training. It dictates that vocabulary should be learned through a balanced integration of four approaches. These are deliberate learning through self-work or teaching, incidental learning from comprehensible reading and listening, meaning-oriented speaking and writing, learning focusing on the lexical items themselves, and fluency-oriented practice of the aforementioned four language skills. In pedagogical settings, these strands are often fused into classroom activities or exercises.

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of learning activities, they can be gauged in terms of the “learning conditions” (p. 77) [6] they create for vocabulary learning. Generally, there are two perspectives to analyze the conditions: the number of repetitions and the quality of the attention [4] [6]. Webb and Nation [6] further divide the quality of attention into four conditions: “noticing, receptive or productive retrieval, varied encounters and varied use and elaboration” (p. 77-78). Noticing simply requires learners to recognize the existence of the target. Retrieval occurs when learners encounter the target in reading, listening, speaking, or writing for a second time or more. Varied encounters or use contribute to a higher quality of attention as it is a situation where the retrievals are in new contexts or in new forms. In a similar vein, elaboration occurs when the encounters involve various aspects of the meaning, form, or use of the target. All of these conditions can be created in both incidental and deliberate learning.

Apart from the spotlight on the acquisition of single-word items, L2 research suggests it is also beneficial to incorporate formulaic sequences into vocabulary teaching programs, because studies have found that phraseological knowledge benefits learners’ language proficiency both receptively and productively (see [8] [9] [10] [11]).

Peters [30] probed into the learning burden of formulaic sequences in 2016. She suggests that the composition of the sequence and learner vocabulary size moderate the effort for learning a phrase and that whether the sequence has an L1 equivalent could also possibly play a role (which he calls for further exploration). For example, a learner with a larger vocabulary size might find it easier to add a sequence to their mental lexicon than a learner with a smaller size. Regarding the composition of a sequence, it means how it is made up affects the difficulty of learning it. For example, if the lengths of the component words of a phrase are long, it is easier for learners to recognize it receptively but more challenging to retrieve it for productive use. An adjective-noun phrase could be more readily learned than a verb-initiated phrase.

Boers, Demecheleer, Coxhead, and Webb [12] further point out the challenge of acquiring verb-noun phrases. They attribute the problems to three possible reasons. First, the component words in such phrases are usually high-frequency words, which means learners might know the constituents so well that they do not realize there is a need to pay attention to the whole phrase. Second, it is usually the noun in the phrase that carries meaning (such as 'crime' in 'commit a crime'), rendering the verb seemingly insignificant. Finally, many verbs in verb-noun phrases are often synonyms, which can cause learners with no previous knowledge of a specific phrase to think it is reasonable to use the first one that comes to mind, like 'make' rather than 'commit' a crime.

Considering the latent challenges of learning verb phrases, experiments have been conducted to find effective pedagogical exercises to promote the learning of such sequences. Boers et al. [11] and Boers, Dang and Strong [13] show it is advisable to present verb-initiated phrases intact for the first time so that they are more likely to be retained as a whole. Findings suggest that it might cause erroneous verb-noun combination to be learned if learners are made to put together the broken-up component and they glue them incorrectly.

2.1.2. On Reading

Reading is a complicated process [14], often regarded as an interactive process [15]. The interaction that takes place during reading can be interpreted from two perspectives. For Nuttall [16], reading is the interaction between a writer (referred to as she hereafter) and a reader (referred to as he hereafter) via the medium of written text without actually meeting each other. In this regard, a reader needs to actively receive, decode, and interpret for the message to be successfully transferred. Hedge [15] describes another type of interaction in the second half of the mentioned writer-text-reader communication process. For this stage to proceed smoothly, a reader's "linguistic knowledge" (p. 189) constantly interplays with his "schematic knowledge" (p. 189) [14]. The former encompasses knowledge of the language system, such as vocabulary, grammar, discourse, etc., which enables the reader to decode the literal meaning of the message, whereas the latter refers to knowledge ranging from topic and genre knowledge in "sociocultural knowledge" (p. 189) [14] to common sense, which enables the learner to interpret the meaning of the message. When a reader relies dominantly on schematic knowledge to make sense of the meaning, he is using top-down processing, while bottom-up processing is mainly at work if he builds up the meaning mainly employing linguistic knowledge. Likewise, the two pathways of processing are always under reciprocal influence.

Jiang et al. [14] probe into reading comprehension from the angle of mental processes involved. These are "lower-level processes," including recognizing words, syntactic parsing, and integrating the products from former processes into "clause-level meaning units" (p. 266) [13]; "higher-level processes," entailing creating a mental representation of meaning units resulting from the lower-level stage and interpreting the representation with the reader's schemata (it is the final product in this process that might enter the reader's long-term memory); and "general cognitive skills," encompassing the working memory (influencing both lower- and higher-level processes), basic cognitive skills involved in the general process of learning (like monitoring, problem-solving, etc.). This means general reading comprehension also "requires some level of demand on attentional processes, metacognitive awareness, and strategic support" (p. 206) [17].

Hence, reading is also a strategic process. Grabe [17] makes a list of strategies used by skilled readers. They are making summaries while reading, asking questions during reading, answering questions, especially elaborative interrogation (why-questions) during or after reading, monitoring understanding when reading, activating background knowledge pre- and while-reading, utilizing text-structure knowledge, using visual instruments to represent the organization of ideas read, and "inferencing" (p. 209) [16] and so forth. Although the use of

strategic metacognitive awareness can sometimes compensate for occasional deficiencies in linguistic resources [14]. Hedge, Jiang et al., and Williams [15] [14] [18] all warn that a certain language proficiency must be reached before higher-level processes and conscious strategy use can come into play. That is, if a reader does not know most of the words in a text, there is no way that schematic or strategic knowledge can be triggered.

When it comes to pedagogic instruction for L2 reading, it is not uncommon that teachers complain about learners' lack of motivation to read even in the classroom [19]. To address the problem, Williams [19] proposes a "three-phase approach" (p. 40) [19], that is, the pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading phases in an instructional cycle of classroom reading. The aim of the pre-reading phase is to generate interest, a purpose to read, or to linguistically prepare learners. Nuttall [16] and Hedge [15] add that activating schemata can also be an aim of this phase. The purpose of the while-reading phase, according to Williams [19], is to facilitate comprehension, whereas Hedge [15] extends it as far as to ensure the reader stays active during reading. The post-reading phase serves to "consolidate or reflect upon what has been read" (p. 39) and to relate the text to the reader [19]. Nuttall [16] suggests it is also the stage in which learners can work on linguistic knowledge from the text to buttress future bottom-up processing.

As suggested in Callender [20], Dornisch [21], and Nuttall [16] asking questions is a useful way to boost reading comprehension. Day and Park [22] specify a group of comprehension questions: Who/What/When/Where/How questions. A collection of literature (see [23] [24] [25]) shows that the use of elaborative interrogation (EI) questions, or why-questions, are beneficial for reading comprehension, as they may have pushed readers to interact with the information in-depth.

Research [26] [27] [28] finds that explicit instruction on reading strategies is facilitative of reading comprehension. Grabe [17] and Jiang et al. [14] emphasize that strategies should be taught explicitly as a part of making the meanings out of the text. Grabe [17] clarifies that the line between reading skills and reading strategies is blurred, but generally, when learners use them subconsciously, they are more of skills as they have been automatized, and if readers use them with metacognitive awareness, they are more of strategies to navigate through the reading challenges. Finally, Nuttall [16], Hedge [15], and Nation [29] all accentuate that the role of classroom exercises in reading is to teach, to facilitate the process of reading rather than testing learners' reading performance. The consolidation of what is taught to the learner requires practice outside the classroom.

2.2. Empirical Studies

Apart from relevant theories concerning vocabulary and reading development, relevant empirical studies are also consulted. The following four studies were frequently referred to.

Ozgunor and Guthrie [23] examined the effects of elaborative interrogation (EI) - why questions - on the reading performance of a long exposition from three perspectives: recall, inference, and coherence; and explored how these effects may be moderated by background knowledge and interest respectively. One hundred nine university students read an exposition at their own pace. An experimental group answered embedded EI questions while reading, whereas a control group just read the same text twice. Before the treatment, all subjects were administered two tests to determine their prior knowledge of and interest in the topic respectively. Divided by the mean scores, participants were classified as having more prior knowledge and less prior knowledge, and again as having more interest and less interest. After the reading, participants received three post-tests to measure their comprehension: the recall and inference tests, and a computer-administered task asking participants to rate how closely related the key concepts in the text are, to attain coherence scores via the Pathfinder scaling algorithm, which can also generate a graphic depiction reflecting the mental representation of

the relationships among the concepts based on the ratings. Analyses were conducted to examine the relationships between independent variables (knowledge, interest, condition, condition*knowledge, condition*interest) and dependent variables (recall, inference, and coherence). Effect sizes of subgroups in the interaction terms are compared when statistically significant effects are found. For example, to analyze the effect size of the condition*knowledge interaction on coherence, the effect sizes of the condition for the more knowledgeable group and for the less knowledgeable group will be compared. The results of the coherence test were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. For the latter, comparisons were made between a referent and the other two representations based on the average data respectively for the less knowledgeable readers with and without treatment. Results showed that with moderator variables controlled, the EI questions were facilitative of all three aspects of reading performance. For coherence, EI questions benefit the less knowledgeable readers more significantly than their abler counterparts; similarly, EI benefits less interested readers more than more interested ones for inference. Their study corroborates the benefits of including EI questions in reading and further highlights the greater gains for readers who are traditionally considered at a disadvantaged position in reading with the help of EI. One possible confounder future research designs need to consider is the significantly longer time spent by the experimental group.

Dabarera, Renandya, and Zhang [28] conducted an experiment to determine how the improvement in reading comprehension relates to the raising of metacognitive awareness of strategy use and what effects the former has on the latter. Sixty-seven secondary school students from two classes with comparable levels in reading comprehension ability and metacognitive awareness of reading strategies participated. The comparability was decided by the execution of a pre-test comprising the Metacognitive Awareness of Reading Strategies Inventory (MARSI) to measure the extent of a learner's metacognitive awareness and the University of New South Wales, International Competitions and Assessments for Schools (UNSW ICAS) English competition Paper F (2008) to gauge a learner's reading comprehension abilities. An experimental group received a 10-session treatment over five weeks. Subjects first read a text, then were involved in a discussion aimed to elaborate on the strategies entailed in the reading, and finally attempted comprehension questions. After the first two teacher-led, model-setting discussions, learners worked in groups to perform reciprocal teaching on the pertinent strategies with the instructor's monitoring and assistance to ensure the target strategies were addressed. In contrast, a control group received traditional reading instruction without any deliberate or explicit work on reading strategies, but measures were taken to ensure they reached a certain comprehension level. The same tests used in the pre-test were administered to collect post-intervention data. A semi-structured interview was conducted with three representatives (high, average, and low reading proficiency) in the experimental group to collect qualitative data. Data were compared within groups, and the post-test data were also compared between groups. Results showed that heightened metacognitive awareness positively related to improvement in reading ability and explicit teaching of reading strategies promotes metacognitive awareness of them, which moderately linked to statistically significant reading improvement. Their research corroborates that strategies can be taught and trained and further contributes to metacognitive awareness of them, which results in progress in reading comprehension. It also confirms the effectiveness of and highlights the necessity of explicit instruction on reading strategies. It is, however, suggested that future research could inspect how teachers' perception of metacognitive use of strategies affects the learners' reading attainment.

Boers, Eyckmans, Kappel, Stengers, and Demecheleer [8] reported an experiment that tests the hypotheses that the use of formulaic sequences (FSs) can help L2 speakers be perceived as having higher proficiency, operationalized as fluency, lexical resourcefulness, and accuracy, and

that directing learners' attention to FSs in teaching practice can extend learners' vocabulary breadth and further facilitate their perceived L2 oral performance. Thirty-two English majors, with an estimated proficiency at the upper-intermediate to advanced level, were divided into an experimental group and a control group. A pretest three months before the experiment suggested the speaking proficiency of both groups was on a par. Embedded in a general language course adding up to 22 hours over eight months and with its lexical instruction focused on individual words, the weekly treatment entailed instructional emphasis on learners consciously paying attention to FSs without further analysis. After the intervention, two blind judges, A and B, marked the learners' oral proficiency via in-person interviews and recordings of the interviews, respectively. The interview comprised two parts: a themed conversation on a topic for which an article was provided to the learner 10 minutes prior to the interview and a talk without preparation over daily familiar topics. Judge B also rated learners' sub-performance in fluency, lexical resource, and accuracy. Another two blind judges, X and Y, counted the amount of FSs (operationalized as collocations and idiomatic expressions) in learners' oral output independently, and the numbers of FSs corresponding to each part of the interviews were also tallied for analysis. Results confirmed the two hypotheses. Although total FS counts and separate counts in interview Part 1 were shown to correspond significantly to the treatment, the counts of FSs in interview Part 2 were not significantly related to the intervention. This means subjects who received treatment might have had the awareness to collect FSs from material and put them into immediate use but might not have transferred what they had noticed during the treatment into long-term memory for future active use. The study verifies that the use of FSs is beneficial to L2 learners' speaking, encourages classroom attention on FSs, and suggests the possibility of actively teaching FSs. It should be noted that the limitations of the study include its small scale, lack of qualitative assessment, and the long interval between the pre-test and the experiment.

Boers, Dang, and Strong [13] reported how they measured the effects of three exercise formats (A. choosing the correct verb, B. providing the complete verb by following the initial-letter hint, C. choosing the right intact phrase) on the retention of the composition and meaning of verb-noun collocations. Four groups of Vietnamese English majors of intermediate proficiency level participated. Although the four groups were generally on par regarding proficiency, Group A was the most able, whereas Group D was the weakest. A norming test was administered to Group A to select 12 targets out of 20 phrases that were most likely to be unknown to all subjects. Groups B, C, and D received treatments consisting of a 15-minute exercise accompanied by printed L1 translations, and a self-help answer check to mark the right and correct the wrong ones. In order to complete each sentence in the exercise, Group B chose the right verb from a list, Group C finished the verb with a first-letter cue, and Group D chose the appropriate intact phrase from a list. Two weeks later, the three experimental groups took a 15-minute post-test which examined the acquisition of the phrases included in the treatment in terms of composition and meaning. It required a blank in each sentence to be filled with a felicitous verb and the meaning of the tested phrase to be provided in Vietnamese. Results found that verb-noun collocations, concerning forms and meanings, might be best learned when presented intact at first. Correction of wrong combinations does not appear to benefit learners' acquisition in the long term, so the rate of error during exercise should probably be minimized. More empirical study is called for to identify what type of tasks and how they are sequenced to facilitate the acquisition of formulaic sequences. Extra work included in the study was that ten globally used EFL textbooks were examined for exercises concerning phrases. Findings are that almost a quarter of these exercises rely on assembling separate sequences, and that over 40 percent of the exercises lack explicit instruction on answer-checking and correction.

2.3. Guiding Questions:

Based on the literature reviewed above, the following description and analyses aim to answer the following questions regarding the effectiveness of the design of reading and vocabulary sections in the chosen sequence.

- 1) Are the four strands of vocabulary learning involved in the sequence?
- 2) Do the activities provide promoting conditions for vocabulary learning?
- 3) Are the exercises in line with the recent study on the learning of formulaic sequences?
- 4) Does the sequence provide a good chance to develop reading skills?

3. The Sequence and Discussion

3.1. Overview of the Student's Book

The textbook evaluated is a topic-based syllabus, consisting of 12 units. Each unit comprises the following sections (table 1).

Table 1. Components of each unit

<i>sections</i>	<i>Language Focus</i>	<i>Vocabulary</i>	<i>Skills</i>	<i>pronunciation</i>	<i>Task</i>	<i>Language live/World Culture</i>	<i>Study, Practice & Remembering</i>
content	<i>Function/grammar</i>	<i>collocations</i>	<i>Listening, reading</i>	Stress, weak forms, intonation	Task based teaching and learning	Speaking, writing with current issues; research skills	Consolidating practice

3.2. The Sequence

The sequence under examination is from Unit 8 of the book, under the unit topic of social life. The sequence starts with a vocabulary sub-section juxtaposed with a reading section and continues with another vocabulary sub-section (see image 1-4). Due to the focus of this critique, the listening section along with the second lexis section will not be assessed. The first part is under the sub-topic of nightlife, whereas the second part concerns the sub-theme of social behavior.

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SOCIAL LIFE

IN THIS UNIT

- Grammar: Polite requests; *will* and *shall* for instant responses
- Vocabulary: Social behaviour; Talking about norms and customs
- Task: Give tips on how to behave
- World culture: Addicted to games

MY BIG NIGHT OUT!

The DJ sits in a Bentley in the middle of the dance floor

The nightlife in Beijing is unbelievable. I usually meet up with my friends around midnight. That's quite early in BPT (Beijing Party Time). First we hit the bars in the Chaoyang Park district. There's a club there called Bling where the DJ sits in a Bentley car in the middle of the dance floor. It's outrageous! Around four in the morning we often head over to Ghost Street, where the restaurants are open all night. By the time I get home the sun is coming up. In the past we rarely went clubbing. We would usually have a long dinner in a restaurant and then go to an all-night karaoke bar. But nowadays there's so much choice and the clubs are always full. In BPT, every night is party night!



Jiao Wu is 28 years old and lives in Beijing in China.

Reading and vocabulary

1a Look at the activities in the box. Tick the things that you sometimes do on a night out with your friends. Cross out the things that you never do.

go to the cinema	go out for a coffee	go dancing
go to a private party	have dinner in a restaurant	go to a karaoke bar
watch live music	go to a bar	go for a walk
go clubbing	go driving around town	grab a snack
stay out late	go home early	

b Work in groups and compare your answers.

2 Discuss the questions using phrases from exercise 1a.

- What do you do on a typical Friday/Saturday night out?
- What would you do on your ideal night out?
- Which activities are most popular with young people in your country?
- Which activities do older people prefer?

3 Look at the photos and read the photo captions and quotes, but do not read the full article. Answer the questions.

- Where do the three people live?
- Can you guess what they do or don't do on Saturday nights?

Figure 1. Page 76 of the textbook [1]

From Beijing to Barcelona, from Scotland to Sydney, people everywhere love a big night out. We all want to unwind and have fun with our friends, colleagues or partner. But do we all enjoy ourselves in the same way? We hear from people in three very different places.

We throw little notes from our car windows

Iranzamin Street in the centre of Tehran is where all the young fashionable Iranians hang out. On Saturday night my friends and I go driving there. We write our mobile numbers on pieces of paper and throw them into girls' cars. But they usually only read the note if they see you're driving a smart car! One night, we were driving around in my friend's car and we drove up beside some girls, trying to give them our numbers. Suddenly we realised that one of the girls in the car was my friend's girlfriend. She was furious! My friend tried to make excuses, but she knew what he was up to. I hate to be alone, so I always surround myself with my friends. We chat and make jokes and have fun. We're just the same as young people all over the world, I guess.

Hassan Kashani is 19 years old and lives in Tehran in Iran.

It's a bit like going clubbing with your parents

There are only 70 inhabitants on the Isle of Eigg where I live, so there isn't a lot of choice. We do the same thing most Saturday nights. Around 9 o'clock we all head down to the community hall. By ten the hall is full of people; young and old, friend and foe, we all socialise together. Some people might find it a bit strange – it's a bit like going to a club with your parents – but it's our way. There's usually a folk band from the mainland. When they get going, people start flying round the hall, dancing like crazy and having fun. The older people go home around midnight, but some of the younger ones are still there the next morning.

Ewen Anderson is 22 years old and lives on the tiny Isle of Eigg, off the west coast of Scotland.

4a Read the article, then work in pairs. Explain why the things below are important in each person's night out.

Jiao Wu	BPT, Bling, a Bentley, Ghost Street
Hassan	driving, mobile numbers, pieces of paper, a smart car
Ewen	70, the community hall, young and old people, a folk band

b Read the article again, then answer the questions.

- How has nightlife changed in Beijing?
- Why was Hassan's friend's girlfriend angry?
- How is Saturday night on Eigg different for young and old people?

5 Look at these expressions from the text. Can you guess the meaning of the words and phrases in bold?

- we **hit the bars** in ... (line 05)
- to be **outrageous** (line 09)
- to **make excuses** (line 30)
- what he's **up to** (line 30)
- we all **head down to** ... (lines 40–1)
- a **foe** (line 42)
- it's **our way** (line 44)
- the **mainland** (line 45)

FACT! GOING OUT

- Pubs have been at the centre of British social life for over a thousand years. The oldest pub is over 1,200 years old.
- Restaurants existed in the city of Kaifeng in China in the 11th century. People ordered from a menu and used paper money to pay.
- The first discos took place in Paris during the Second World War. People danced to records in clubs because live music was banned.
- In Spain and Latin America, many people don't even go out until 11 o'clock or midnight.

6a Work in groups. Choose one of the questions and discuss your ideas.

- What does each account tell you about life in that place?
- Whose night out sounds the most/least fun? Why?
- Is nightlife changing where you live? In what ways?

b Read the fact box above. Which facts didn't you know? Which are surprising?

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Figure 2. Page 77 of the textbook [1]

Vocabulary and listening

Social behaviour

1a Work in pairs. Look at the pictures and talk about what 'good manners' and 'bad manners' mean for you. Add three ideas to each column of the table.

Good manners	Bad manners
say thank you when someone helps you	talk on your mobile phone in the cinema

b Work as a class and compare your opinions. Is there any behaviour that you disagree about?

2a Match the verbs in A with the expressions in B to make phrases related to social behaviour.

A

- 1 to offer
- 2 to share
- 3 to shake
- 4 to go out on
- 5 to kiss someone
- 6 to take someone
- 7 to hug
- 8 to insist on
- 9 to refuse
- 10 to invite someone
- 11 to pick

B

- a on both cheeks
- b each other
- c to pay
- d paying
- e a date
- f the bill
- g home
- h an invitation
- i to your house
- j someone up
- k hands

b Find the phrases from exercise 2a in the quiz and underline them. Were your answers correct?

3 Work in pairs. Do the quiz, then explain your answers to each other. Compare your answers with the class.

4a **8.5** Listen to five excerpts from a conversation about the issues in the quiz. Answer the questions.

- 1 How old do you think Florence and Ruth are? What is their relationship?
- 2 Which questions from the quiz are they discussing in each excerpt?
A ___ B ___ C ___ D ___ E ___

b Listen again. Which answers does each speaker choose? If they give more than one answer, in which situation is each answer true?

5 Work in pairs and discuss.

- Which of Florence and Ruth's answers do you particularly agree/disagree with?
- Are there differences in manners between generations in your country? If so, give examples.
- Has the way that men and women treat each other in social situations changed in the last 30 years?




MODERN

- 1 While you are out, you meet a friend in the street. What do you do?**
 - a Shake hands.
 - b Say hello.
 - c Kiss each other on one or both cheeks.
 - d Hug each other.
- 2 You are having a meal with friends in a restaurant. What do you do with your mobile phone?**
 - a Put it on the table and answer any calls or text messages that you receive.
 - b Switch it to vibrate, then check discreetly if you have any important messages which you need to answer.
 - c Switch it off until you leave the restaurant.
- 3 A friend invites you to her house for the evening, together with six other guests. When should you arrive?**
 - a At exactly the time you were invited, or just before.
 - b Ten or 15 minutes after the time you were invited.
 - c No more than an hour after you were invited.
 - d At least an hour after you were invited.
- 4 A smoker is visiting friends who don't smoke. What should he do?**
 - a Ask politely for an ashtray.
 - b Ask if it's OK to smoke in the house.
 - c Ask if it's OK to smoke in the garden or on the balcony.
 - d Wait until he leaves before he has a cigarette.

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Figure 3. Page 80 of the textbook [1]

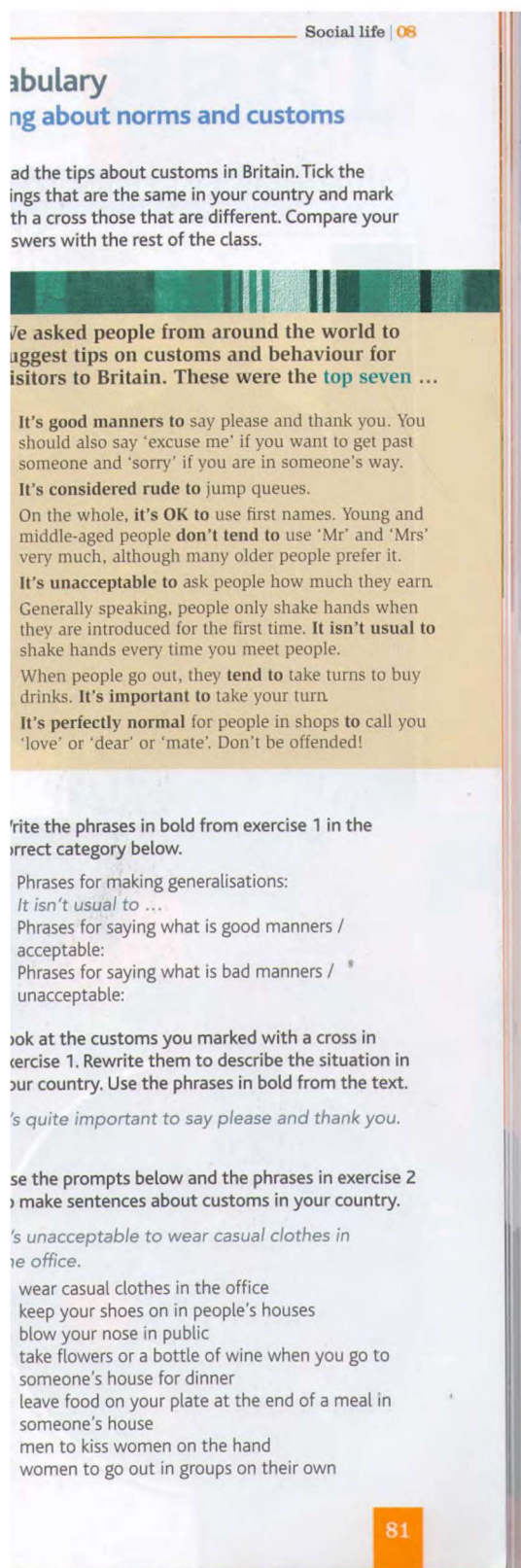


Figure 4. Relevant section from Page 81 of the textbook [1]

3.3. Discussion

3.3.1. Analysis of the Vocabulary Sections

The first vocabulary section precedes the reading. Activity 1a presents a list of verb-initiating collocations and asks learners to tick the activities they do on their night out and cross those they never do. Students are required to compare their choices in groups in Activity 1b. Activity

2 involves a group discussion where learners exchange their answers to four questions about their personal or a general night out. Some, but not all, of the collocations are repeated in the reading.

The second subsection precedes the listening. The sub-topic of this part is social behavior. Activity 1a asks learners to discuss in pairs to come up with three good and three bad manners/behaviors under the prompts of two images and two verbal examples. Activity 1b suggests pooling the whole class' ideas together to see if there are different opinions. Activity 2a requires learners to match verbs to the rest of the phrases before they check answers by scanning a long quiz to locate the right combinations in Activity 2b. Just like the last subsection, only some of the phrases recur in the listening.

In terms of the "learning conditions" (Webb & Nation, 2017, p. 77) these activities provide for vocabulary learning, they cater to repetition and the quality of attention in several ways. Activities 1a & 1b in the second subsection entail learners' incidental noticing of the meaning types of the following collocations. Activity 1a in the first subsection and Activity 2a in the second require deliberate noticing of the target phrases, as learners have to mark or match. These requirements might either lead to the negotiation of meaning or invite focal attention on form (constituents of the collocations). Group work in Activity 1b and Activity 2 in section 1 could confer productive retrieval because learners need to use the phrases in conversation, which might further elicit varied productive use. In contrast, Activity 2 in section 2 involves receptive retrieval of these phrases in concrete contexts, as learners screen answers embedded in full sentences under various scenarios. Both sections are followed by meaning-focused input, where varied encounters are realized as some phrases are employed in the reading and listening.

Nation and Meara [2] advocate that it is high-frequency and useful vocabulary that is worth deliberate teaching. Boers et al. (2006) prove the benefits of formulaic sequences for oral proficiency. Among the formulaic sequences, Peters' research [30] found that learning verb-phrases might require more effort than other kinds of collocations, such as adjective-noun phrases. As suggested by File and Adams [31], isolated instruction could result in better acquisition of vocabulary than integrated instruction. The intentional classroom attention on common verb-phrases related to 'social life' can be deemed as a merit because it can promote the acquisition of formulaic sequences and further facilitate language proficiency. These two sections also meet the criteria of the deliberate learning strand, one of the four strands for vocabulary learning by Nation [7]. With regard to this four-strand standard, the follow-up reading and listening qualify as meaning-focused input. Also, the oral discussion and group work in both sections satisfy the strand of meaningful output. The fluency development strand, however, is missing.

The way the target sequences are presented is another angle to analyze the sequence. Boers et al. (2017) attest that presenting verb-phrases intact as a whole for the first time might result in better learning than assembling component words to form a whole, and Stengers and Boers (2015) [32] find that incorrect word matching the first time might be negative for learning even after correction. In this regard, the presentation of Activity 1a in section 1 is beneficial for the long-term retention of these phrases, whereas there is a risk in Activity 2a in section 2 that learners store the erroneous combination in their memory if they fail to draw the right lines. This might be exacerbated by the need to sift the correct answers from 10 questions and 40 options on the same topic. As research (e.g., [33] [34]) suggests, presenting items semantically related might generate interference to their learning; such a flood of semantically similar input might overwhelm some learners.

3.3.2. Analysis of the Reading Section

Pre-reading activities usually serve a variety of purposes [19] [15] providing a reason as a motive to read and activating topic-related background knowledge (or schema), among others. This pre-reading section is concise yet effective, comprised of only one activity with two questions. The first is a factual question asking about locations, which requires scanning, whereas the second asks learners to predict according to what they have read. The answer to the latter may have a two-fold purpose: eliciting schematic knowledge about having a night out to trigger the top-down comprehending approach [15] and a prediction which necessitates further reading to verify. Besides, the preceding vocabulary also attunes learners to the 'a night out' situation. The instruction for this part is well-formulated, directing learners to the photos, captions, and quotes, and also specifies not reading the full article before they answer the questions mentioned before. By following these steps carefully, learners can practice generating a quick preview of the text, a skilled reader often uses [35], through the "non-linear text" (p. 45) [16], which refers to those in the text except for paragraphs: in this case, the title, the photos, photo captions, and quotes.

The while-reading stage mainly acts to promote comprehension [19]. Two activities (4a and 4b) constitute the section: a pair discussion over why-questions after the first reading and answering another three why- and how-questions after the second reading.

According to the teacher's book, the aim here is to practice two skills: scanning to locate required information in a longer text and collecting information from different parts of the text to tackle specific tasks. It might be safe to say the lexical items listed in 4a can serve the first purpose because, for many of these, such as BTP, Bentley, a smart car, 70 and the community hall, learners can locate them simply by glancing rapidly through the text without meaning decoding. Simple though it may sound, such a skill, according to Nuttall (p. 49) [16], is "worth spending time on." Similarly, the second goal can also be satisfied in that it is not enough that learners simply read separately the single pieces of information around the keywords (e.g., Bentley, pieces of paper, young and old) in order to answer the why-questions in both 4a and 4b. In other words, they have to synthesize the information they have read to work out the answers. It is, however, important to note that both scanning and gathering information have to be used jointly in order to successfully reach the answers, which echoes an emphasis by Grabe [17] on the combination of reading strategies (or skills).

The choice of elaborative interrogation (why-questions) and interaction mode in this sequence are worth applause. The use of elaborative interrogation (EI) does not just rule out the possibility of simply adding up verbatim messages, but also pushes learners to retrieve, elaborate on, and integrate information [20] [21], which enhances comprehension [23] [24]. In addition, Grabe [17] and Macalister [36] point out that the development of reading strategies needs to take place in a meaning-making process. Therefore, the improvement of comprehension is also good for skill development.

Dabarera, Renandya, and Zhang [28] appeal for the effectiveness of explicit strategy instruction. Also, a motivated reader is a reader with purposes in mind [15]; an able reader is one who reads flexibly and selectively [16]. A flaw of this part may be that there is no clear strategy instruction and no clear indication that the questions need to be read before the reading of the text, which means it depends on the teacher to bridge the gaps. If the teacher does not fill in, learners may read everything frivolously or in detail, which is not scanning, gathering, or purposeful reading. There could be a risk that the tasks end up testing readers instead.

The post-reading section includes 3 activities: a vocabulary-related task 5, a group discussion 6a, and a brief extra reading of factual information and giving opinions task 6b. Activity 5a is initially teacher-led and continues into individual work, while both activities 6a and 6b are group work. At this stage, activities serve to push learners to make use of what they have read

or to improve learners' language competence [15]. Clearly, activity 5 aims to expand learners' vocabulary reservoir and improve learners' ability to guess word meaning by inferring from context, as pointed out in the teacher's book. In this way, the task is helping learners to build up their 'word attack' (p. 64) [16] skill, which in the long term benefits the bottom-up approach [15]. In comparison, activity 6a offers an opportunity either to articulate what readers gain from the reading or to give a personal response/contrast to the reading. The last activity supplies the learners with 4 unfamiliar facts relating to the topics in the text, extending readers' schematic knowledge, which may facilitate future use of top-down processing. Despite all the merits, one pity is post-reading's lack of a response to the prediction learners made in the pre-reading stage, leaving a presumably closed cycle uncompleted.

4. Conclusion

Based on the analyses of the vocabulary, the design of the vocabulary sections covers the three strands of vocabulary learning, but fluency development is missing. The two sections provide stimulating learning conditions, but there is a risk that it presents the verb-phrases as not intact for the first time. For the reading part, it generally creates a good opportunity for skill development to happen, though it would be better if there were explicit strategy instruction.

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