

UNIVERSAL GRAMMAR AND LEXICALISED LANGUAGE

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ABSTRACT. *This paper tries to establish the type of expressions learners use when communicating in the foreign language, particularly on beginner levels. Two theoretical possibilities are discussed: either the learners produce a rule-governed language using the limitations generative models propose for the first and the second language, or they use a more memorised type of expressions. The second part of the paper argues in favour of the existence of a combination of both kinds of language. This argument is then supported with the analysis of two students' productions in the secondary classroom, where we show the presence of formulaic and rule-generated language coexisting within the same sample. This fact leads us to conclude that, as rule-governed language is (and has been) dealt with very frequently in the classroom, students should also be offered the possibility of learning memorised chunks of language, because it gives them a tool for further analysis, improves their confidence, it facilitates processing and serves as a communication and learning strategy.*

KEYWORDS. *Rule-generated language, automatic language, routines, foreign language learning, secondary education, Universal Grammar.*

RESUMEN. *Este artículo intenta describir el tipo de expresiones que los aprendices de nivel inicial de una lengua extranjera usan cuando se comunican. Se discuten dos posibilidades teóricas: la primera es que los aprendices producen un tipo de lengua basado en reglas, y analizado según las reglas de la gramática generativa. La segunda consiste en el uso de un lenguaje memorizado globalmente: frases léxicas o fórmulas. Se concluye asumiendo la presencia de ambos tipos de expresiones en la producción de los aprendices, argumento que se apoya mediante el análisis cualitativo de dos muestras recogidas en el aula de Secundaria. Por todo ello se concluye con la propuesta de reforzar las oportunidades de aprendizaje del lenguaje automático, sin abandonar los procesos gobernados por la generación de reglas, ya que con el lenguaje tipo fórmula los alumnos tienen una herramienta para su posterior análisis, se sienten más confiados al hablar, sus producciones pueden hacerse más fluidas, las demandas de procesamiento son menores y además pueden usarlo como estrategia de comunicación y aprendizaje.*

PALABRAS CLAVE. *Lenguaje gobernado por reglas, lenguaje formulaico, aprendizaje de lenguas extranjeras, Enseñanza Secundaria, Gramática Universal.*

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. *Universal grammar and creative language or memory processes and formulaic language*

This paper begins with two words: ‘Universal Grammar’ (UG), which have formed part of the vocabulary of SLA for several decades, since behavioural approaches in psychology and structural linguistics with its contrastive analysis and hierarchy of difficulty proved to be insufficient to describe the psycholinguistic phenomenon of second (and first) language learning. Among the phenomena behaviourist models were unable to account for we find the fact that children learning their first language would say things they had not heard in the input, or that they would not say things frequently used in the input of their caretakers (e.g. articles).

From that moment onwards, observable language learning phenomena began to be contemplated as a ‘deeper’ phenomenon with an innate basis, the Language Acquisition Device (LAD) (Chomsky 1965), which all children learning their first language would use as a basis for contrast with the input they listen to. This theory also accounted for many first language acquisition processes which had gone unexplained by prechomskian models. For instance, the LAD as an innate mechanism was able to explain the fact that all children develop their language around the same age, no matter the concrete language they learn, and it also justified why it is a very fast process. UG models also addressed several problems such as the projection problem, in the sense that learners (in their L1) know more utterances than they can have heard in the input; and the negative evidence problem, considering that children do not really receive negative feedback when they make mistakes. Thus, within this model, children started to be considered active subjects in the process of learning a language, as they form hypotheses about the rules of their mother tongue and check them against the input they receive, rejecting or confirming them.

From a linguistic point of view, UG also considered language not as an *entity* to be described and systematically compared with other languages, but as a set of principles, conditions, limitations and rules forming part of all the languages in the world.

The question of the existence of the LAD for first language learning has been well proven, and it is also a fact that there are conditions and limitations that all children follow when learning their mother tongue, so that UG models account for many L1 processes which went unexplained before (for further study, see Muñoz 1990).

But, is this model relevant for second language learning? In other words, is there a UG for L2 learners? Do they also use a LAD? If so, then we should take this fact into account for teaching purposes, and adapt our methodology accordingly. Following this model, teachers would not be needed to explain rules, because learners would only need to contrast input with the innate limitations and operations imposed by their LAD. Also, it would be *nonsense* to insist on forming habits about the language, and imitation and repetition in the classroom would be a loss of time. The reasons for not doing such activities are that L2 learners would be involved in a completely creative process in

which they would extract rules and hypotheses and confirm or reject them, thus building, step by step, the units of the second language. According to this position, phenomena such as attention, memory and control do not have a place, only analysis (Bialystok 1993) would play a part.

Following this approach, teachers and other related professionals would have to bear in mind those UG rules mentioned above, although unfortunately most of the work in this area is yet unfinished. They would also have to consider the role of factors important for language teaching such as proficiency, teaching techniques, type of language to be taught, and the like. The UG-based account, however, does not go very deep into these questions. A third aspect is that of the role of output. If the learning process was only a process of forming and testing rules, learners would not need to produce output, and if they did, it would not be needed for learning, so that teachers would not need to spend hours on end doing practice, and helping their students negotiate meanings or communicate. Even suggesting or reinforcing the use of communication strategies would be useless, as these mechanisms do not foster the process of analysis of language, but rather, constitute problem-solving communication techniques in most of the cases.

An added problem, also in connection with the use of communication strategies, is the problem of time. If learners, while immersed in the production process, have to create the units of the language by using the rules (and also limitations and conditions) of both the UG and the grammar of the L2, they would take much longer than they in fact do when trying to communicate.

Moreover, the role the UG has in second language learning is not yet clear. Some people think learners can have access to their UG (full access hypothesis), some other people think that learners have already accessed to that UG for their first language, so that they can only partly use the UG (partial access hypothesis), while others still think that as learners have already utilised it for learning their first language, they would be using some other mechanisms for learning a second language (no-access hypothesis) (for further discussion on this particular topic, see the work of Epstein *et al.* 1996). Thus, the role of UG is still unclear for second language learning and use, and consequently we cannot conclude that learners' language is a rule-formed, analytic and word-for-word process.

1.2. *Universal grammar and creative language and memory processes and formulaic language*

That is why the title contains a second term: lexicalised language. Without rejecting some of the facts the UG approach advanced, such as the innateness of one part of language, or the creative processes involved in producing that language (either the L1 or the L2), there needs to be another type of language not based on rules. This 'special' language should account for processing demands (such as time) and ought to explain the actual language used by both learners and native people, which in fact is not very creative (Bolinger 1975), but rather, repetitive and not very original. The combination of

this language, called formulaic language, lexicalised language or routines, and a more rule-based and creative one explains some of the questions the UG-based approach has left without an answer, such as the problem of time, the role of output, and also that of memory, practice and teaching techniques focused on the negotiation and the development of communicative competence.

Thus, together with a type of rule-based and creative language for both the first and the second language (Chomsky 1965; Brown 1973; Burt, Dulay and Krashen 1982; Larsen-Freeman and Long 1991) there exist unanalysed chunks of language produced as single units that are not accounted for in a theory that claims language is systematic and rule-governed. Krashen and Scarcella (1978) attach a peripheral role to this prefabricated language, but as we will see, "there is an alternative perspective, which suggests that language is much more lexical than is usually accepted, particularly when real-time processing is involved" (Skehan 1998: 29). In fact there are linguistic, psychological and pedagogical reasons to attach a fairly important role to lexicalised language, and this role is at least as important as that of analytic language.

Linguistically speaking, and while trying to demonstrate the rule-based nature of language through computational linguistics, Biber (1988) and Biber *et al.* (1994) show much of the irregularities and exceptions in previously considered rule-based language. Carter and McCarthy (1995) and McCarthy (1998) do something similar while analysing a corpus of spoken English. In fact they argue against teaching grammar rules of the written language, as they are not used for the spoken code, which uses different rules (if any). Sinclair (1991) also discusses, in a similar vein, the fact that many language combinations are possible but never used by native speakers, who will use only some collocations from the open and nearly infinite net of possibilities of the language. Discourse analysis studies such as narrative analysis (Hatch 1992), also tend to suggest that a number of particular ritualised formulae (*once upon a time*) are used in particular linguistic and social contexts but not in others, and that all the combinatory possibilities of the language are in fact not always possible in a given situation. In sum, what linguistics and discourse analysis suggest is not that rules are associated to forms, meanings and particular contexts, but that lexical elements of varying size fulfil this function most of the times.

Psychologically speaking, the brain has a very limited processing ability, and the fluency of native speakers cannot be explained unless we consider that they are also using sequences or chunks of ready-made language memorised as a whole. If all the language speakers used were generated by rules, and slotting elements within the limits of those rules, we would be assuming the brain has an impossibly big processing ability, in the sense of both time economy and effectiveness. In other words, there must exist both types of language to account for production phenomena. The same implication is drawn by Nattinger and DeCarrico (1992), who talk about the L2 and argue in favour of the existence of both types of language, in an automatic-creative continuum, where both hemispheres have a complementary function: the left brain related to analytic functions and the right one connected with more lexical and memorised language. Later studies

using non-invasive techniques, such as the regional cerebral blood flow (rCBF) (for a further analysis, see Berko and Bernstein 1999) have proved these authors' intuitions right. Of course we could still explain the fluency of speakers using a UG solution: Bygate (1988) has proposed the use of *time-creating devices* such as fillers, hesitations or rephrasings to account for real time language processing, which would enable learners to concentrate on generating rules and using a more creative language, but as Skehan (1998: 34) says, "there are limits to the newness of the language and to the propositions that we can cope with". Thus, it is fairly obvious that formulaic language has a very important presence in adult native speakers' productions.

And in fact, there is also wide evidence that little children learning their mother tongue start at very early ages using this type of language together with more creative constructions (Brown 1973). So, even if the process of SLA is somewhat different from mother tongue acquisition, if native speakers need this synthetic language to reduce their processing load and concentrate on the more creative parts of their productions, how can we assume learners can create word-by-word all they produce? How big would then their processing load be? That is the reason why many authors propose the use of routines and formulae in L2 learning –*islands of reliability*, in Dechert's work (1983); *scripts* for Ellis (1984); *formulaic stage in early interlanguage* for Ellis (1994) or *lexicalized language*, according to Pawley and Syder (1983)¹, to argue in favour of a memorised set of chunks which the brain has the power to store and can access at relative speed, leaving time for rule generation when needed.

Pedagogically speaking, and once we have reasonably established the presence of formulaic language in L2 productions at a theoretical level, we should now turn towards the teaching implications in connection with the existence of this kind of language. The most obvious implication is that we should teach 'chunks' of language, or at least help students learn them, as their processing load would be reduced (Skehan 1998), and also they would have the possibility of creating a language somewhat similar to that of native speakers. Learners would also be less anxious about their productions, as they would have ready-made strings of language already memorised and easily recalled when needed.

As things go, this *alternative* to rule-formed language seems easier to defend than to define, as we are not talking about a system of rules or limitations, but about an enormous set of lexical units of different length that are joined and produced together without the use of obvious or explicit rules. Thus, *what are the features of this language?* According to Weinert (1995), L2 learners' formulae can be distinguished because they have phonological coherence, so they are produced without pauses or intonation doubts. They are longer and more complex than the average learner's production. They seem to use rules above the actual level of learners. They are widely used in an idiosyncratic way, depending on the situational context to be understood. They are also frequently used, always with the same linguistic form. And last but not least, there seems to be two types of 'formulae': those chunks which never change ('routines' or 'closed formulae') and another group which has 'slots' or open blanks, which can be filled by learners with different words of the same category ('open formulae'). As an example, Tejada Molina

(1994) distinguishes between open and closed formulae in a corpus of questions produced by secondary and primary students. A sentence like ‘how do you do?’ would be a closed formula or routine, as the learner always uses it in the same way, without any change, and in most cases without having yet learnt the rule for the inversion of the auxiliary verb. A sentence like ‘*do you like ...?*’ is an open formula, as the student is able to slot different options after the verb. In this way the sentence taken from our corpus:

Do you like go to the cinema with me?

is an open formula, as the student puts together ‘do you like’ ‘go’ ‘to the cinema’ and ‘with me’, and with the exception of the verb ‘go’, all the other phrases are unanalysed chunks of language the learner has combined to create the intended message.

2. STUDY OF A CORPUS IN THE CLASSROOM

We would like to show some examples in a learner’s corpus to see the practical role of formulaic language in beginners’ productions. The corpus was obtained in a secondary classroom, when fifty-two 12 to 15 year old Spanish students learning English were asked to reproduce, with the help of pictures, a story² the teacher had told them the previous day. Students had a beginner to lower intermediate level, as this was their third year of English. The teacher told the story three consecutive times in the same session, and a comprehension sheet³ was given to the students after the second time they had heard the story. The comprehension sheet was then corrected and nearly all the students had understood the story (98 %).

They were not allowed to write down what they heard, but they had a photocopy of the story drawings they had to order while listening to the story. This set of pictures helped them recall the content of the story for their production the following day. They had to tell the story as they remembered it, and their productions were recorded by interviewers different from the story-teller and transcribed for further analysis. In the present work we will only use some examples (for more details, see Luque Agulló 1998).

Story 1⁴

Time: 2.25 minutes

(line 1) *Once upon a time there was a ‘marriach’ – bueno - a marriage ((pause))*

-< sí- sí >

(line 3) *< a husband and a wife - they live in a house (pointing at drawing) is very old - One day- they are sleeping - and the husband woke up - and he see a través in the window - and - see a UFO - a UFO ((pause)) bueno - no sé cómo decirlo*

-< no te preocupes - lo estás haciendo muy bien

(line 7) < and the 'husband' woke up the 'wif' - the wife - and the wife look - look in the window- and see - and see the garden and the dog - she think - que his 'husband' is crazy - and rang and to the psychiatrist. ((pause))

-< muy bien - muy bien>

(line 11) < and the police - the psychiatrist - the psychiatrist and the police come- come- come here in her - in his house

- < muy bien - muy bien>

(line 13) < his house - and 'answer' the 'husband': do you - do you see a UFO? - and the husband ((pause)) ¿responde?

- bueno - no te preocupes

(line 15) responde: no - I did - I did not UFO - I did see not UFO - the police put the woman bueno - the police think the woman is crazy - and put in the prison...

Story 2

Time: 2'10 minutes

(line 1) Once upon a time- wife and husband ((pause)) in the street- they live- in the- in- in the 'hold' (old) house ((pause)) one day they are sleeping and- husband- look through the window and look UFO and told ((pause)) woke up the wife- and- she looked through the (line 5) window and she looked the garden and the dog ((long pause)) wife rang the doctor and the police- y- y- and 'come here please!' ((long pause)) the doctor and the police ((20 secs.))

- A ver si te acuerdas// piensa un poquillo en español a ver qué pasó ((pause))

(line 8) Preguntó a- a the husband- 'you look the- a UFO? and he- 'no UFO no do not exist' and the police and the doctor- wife crazy- and the wife go- go the prison

- ¿Algo más? ¿algo que se te ocurra además algo que quieras decir después de todo esto?- no nada más ¿no? // bueno- ya se acabó está bien

3. QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

In story 1 the learner begins with a formulaic expression *once upon a time* also used by native speakers (Hatch 1992). The student in this way gains some confidence, as he has memorised one way to begin, and then he can follow from that moment onwards. In a sense it acts as a tool to break the initial ice. In that same initial line he uses another open formula *there was*, which is clearly above his grammatical level, as they had not yet learnt the past tense. Even if he has not analysed the individual words in that 'chunk', he is able to use it in the appropriate context and probably also knows its general meaning. After struggling with the words that refer to the actors of the story (see the number of short pauses, symbolized with '-' and longer ones in double parenthesis) he is able to create a

sentence *they live* where the last part is again a formula *in a house* (in a + noun). The following sentence lacks subject, as he is already pointing to it. *One day* and *they are sleeping* are again formulae. The first expression was very frequently used by all the students, who probably would have had problems to analyse it and transform it into other alternative expressions such as *one morning*, or *one week*. The second case is more problematic. In a sense it can be considered as a formula because it is uttered in a single intonation unit, but in another sense it could also be an example of creative-analysed language which is so well learnt that it seems an automatic memorised chunk, particularly taking into account that the present continuous is something students at this level already know very well and have already practised one year after another. In a similar vein, the following expression *and the husband woke up* could be considered as a memorised one, as the learners did not know the past tense, or either, it might be an example of creative language, though considering it within the latter type would imply a grammatical level above the learners' general proficiency. Besides, the student uses again the same unchanged expression in line seven, to which he attaches an object: *the 'wif'*, so probably we are talking again about a lexicalised stem. Between lines 4 and 7 the student is not able to use formulae, so he switches back and forth to his first language or repeats words or asks for help: *no sé cómo decirlo*. The formula in line seven helps him continue producing the intended message, gaining confidence and speed, and helping him produce the next utterance, as the object of the first expression, *the wife*, is the subject or actor of the following one. *In the window* is another formula of the type: -in the + noun-. After this there is some use of creative language combined with what Bygate (1988) calls 'time-creating devices', such as repetitions, pauses or switches to the mother tongue. Again the student finishes the paragraph with a formula of the type: -to the+noun-, that constitutes an error in this context (because of the use of 'to') but remains useful and valid communicatively speaking. Something similar happens with the following formula on line 12, *come here*: the message is appropriate but not the expression. Probably this is a typical example of what Corder (1967) calls 'teaching induced' errors, as the teacher spent part of the two previous years using the technique of Total Physical Response to students, and one of the first expressions introduced is that of *come here*. The following chunk: *in his house* is an example of an analysed routine (Tejada 1994), as we can see how the student has used it previously as a single unit but now he is able to change from the feminine to the masculine version of the possessive adjective. Line 13 introduces an example of an open formula for questions: *do you...?*, and after that the student continues with creative language full of short pauses and the strategy of asking for help. Besides, the repetition of *do you...* probably gives him more time to think about the next message. Line 15 begins with another repetition of the language switch of the previous paragraph, but again he uses an open formula for the negative in the past: *I did – I did not*. Three lines before the student used the present auxiliary for a question, and now he uses the past, though we can see he has not yet reached the stage of being able to produce negative sentences correctly. The repetitions constitute an effort of the student to look for the appropriate language to be 'slotted in' next. As we can see, the grammatical level of formulae is again above the

grammatical level the student has when producing more creative language. The last two lines show the learner monitoring his language, correcting his production and then finishing with a formula of the type -in the + noun- *in the prison*.

Thus, how is this student able to communicate? As we can see, either he struggles with creative language, making errors, repetitions, using his first language and asking for help or he uses chunks of language that help him gain some confidence, time to think about what comes later and are, in fact, a shortcut for an easier production.

In story 2 we again find the same ritualised beginning *once upon a time*, as it seems that beginning the production was the hardest part. Then the student mentions the protagonists of the story using syntactic and semantic simplification (Ellis 1994) and avoiding the articles, as they are not needed for communication. Then on lines 1 and 2 he introduces another formula of the type in the + noun: *in the street*. As we have seen in story 1, it is a very frequent formula for the students in this level. In this case it seems that the learner uses this formula to have time to think about what comes afterward, as line 2 is full of short pauses, repetitions and words introduced individually. Line 3 begins with another formula, again coincident with that of story one –*one day*– and perhaps –*they are sleeping*– could also be considered as such, as it is uttered in a single time unit and according to Weinert (1995), it is widely used in an idiosyncratic way: in this case the two stories present exactly the same expression. Immediately after this memorised formula we find creative language which has been simplified, as it lacks the article, and again after that word, which has been produced within two pauses, there is another lexicalised stem, *look through the window*. In this case we consider it a formula because of the way it was presented in the teacher's narrative, and also because the student produces it with phonological coherence and without intonation pauses. However, the following language shows how the student was able to analyse –at least in part– this formula, as he uses the same verb, though in this case with some simplification (avoidance of the indefinite article: *UFO*). The following line offers a repeated version of the formula *looked through the window* with an appropriate subject and using an appropriate verbal tense. This constitutes an additional confirmation of the memorised character of the expression but also of its further analysis by the student, as he is able to use the past tense. He repeats the verb to build up the following message, but stops later to think about what comes later (see the long pause). Then again the learner creates the language word by word, introducing *wife* without an article but using it one word later: *the doctor and the police*. After that his resources are stretched to the limit and he switches to Spanish and repeats several times the word *y* while he thinks about the next message, which is a formula (*come here please!*). On line 8, after having thought for a long time, and probably to fill in an embarrassing silence, the learner switches to Spanish and afterwards struggles to find an appropriate way to formulate a question. The lack of an appropriate formula on line 8 shows the use of a declarative sentence with rising intonation. If he had learnt *do you* or *did you* as a formula the error would have been avoided, as we see with the previous story. Perhaps, following Pienemann's teachability hypothesis (1989), the stage of development of this learner would not allow him to learn

a form which is in fact above his grammatical level of competence, though he could have learnt it as a memorised chunk, without further analysis. The next line offers an example of external negation: '*no UFO*' and immediately afterwards an unanalysed formula *do not + verb* in which the student is unable to use the third person, though he achieves a stage of negation beyond that of the previous question. After that he finishes with some creative language in which there is a simplification of 'unneeded' words such as *think, that* or *the* because the remaining words convey the message intended. Perhaps the learner tried to produce them, as he makes a pause before every omission. There is another pause and a repetition and then the learner is able to create the end of the story: the final event, which is that *the wife went to prison*.

So, how is this second learner able to communicate? Combining individual words that have been simplified with formulaic language, as in the first case. In other words, he uses 'time-creating' devices, communication strategies and memorised chunks which are sometimes analysed and recombined with more creative language.

In sum, these two learners use what Nattinger and DeCarrico (1992) have called the 'automatic-creative continuum'. In a similar vein, and according to Skehan (1998), learners produce memorised chunks in order to have time to think about, process and produce more creative language. These authors recognise the existence of two types of language, and we hope the two examples selected from learners' productions in the classroom also support this theoretical conclusion.

4. PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

If we turn now towards the practice in the classroom, there is a possibility that too much time is being devoted to rule-generated language, leaving the option of learning memorised language as a peripheral phenomena, when we have seen the role of the latter type of language is much more important for communicative purposes, particularly in beginner and intermediate levels. In fact, it acts as a communication strategy (Bialystok 1992) when the learners lack grammatical competence. It is a production strategy whereby the learner is able to produce a message he would be hardly pressed to create in a rule-oriented way. It also facilitates the processing load of the learner (Skehan 1998), giving him time to think about and plan later language. It fills up embarrassing silences, when learners fight for communicating. It makes learners' productions more fluent. It also acts as a learning strategy⁵ (Ellis 1984), giving learners a sample of language which can later be analysed, adding, substituting, erasing or re-ordering the elements contained in those formulae (see the example of story two: *look through the window* and then *looked through the window* and later still *look...looked the garden and the dog*) and contributing to produce more creative language, in time.

The question is then if we should explicitly teach, or at least foster the learning of, formulae and routines. Playing the devils' advocate, one could think that it might be better to devote all the classroom time to learn the grammar rules of the language, as in the end that is what the students will arrive at after analysing the memorised formulae,

so, as a shortcut, we could teach them only rules. But, following Carter and McCarthy (1995), the rules of the written grammar are not the rules speakers use for oral communication, and our main purpose is developing the communicative competence of the students. Besides, we should also consider the order of presentation of grammar rules and functions appearing in textbooks. Usually the selected criterion of presentation does not follow any kind of psychological arguments, but rather, traditional ones: first the verb 'to be' is introduced, then the verb 'to have', and so on, because it has always been done in this way. Furthermore, this criterion is also questionable on *teachability* grounds (Pienemann 1989): are students ready to learn the grammatical rules presented? Or rather, are they at a development stage that is not going to change no matter what the teacher or even the learner himself does? What would take longer, teaching 'chunks' of memorised language with no apparent cohesion or teaching rules- assuming individuals are ready to learn them and then teaching the exceptions to those rules?

For advanced learners to be considered as acceptable speakers of the target language, they need a big set of 'chunks' or collocations that native speakers use. In fact even if a learner uses perfect target language grammar, he would still be considered as a foreigner, without the use of those lexicalised stems. This part of the second language does not follow rules, so it has to be learnt and memorised as a whole.

For beginners or lower intermediate learners memorised language fulfils an even more important function, as it helps students communicate with some fluency, it gives time for planning rule-governed language, it gives them confidence, it makes their task more feasible, it compensates their lack of grammatical competence and last but not least, it constitutes a starting point for further analysis, giving learners the option of formulating and becoming aware of the rules behind the formulae. Thus, what we are suggesting is to foster teaching, using and helping students learn lexical stems, attaching them the same importance rule-governed language has in our teaching system.

NOTAS

1. In Skehan (1998).
2. The story was adapted from Morgan and Rivolucri (1989), and a series of 11 pictures were created to facilitate comprehension. The Teacher's version is in Appendix 1.
3. In Appendix 2.
4. The story, as it was told by the teacher, appears in Appendix 1.
5. This use has also been criticised by some authors, who believe an emphasis on memorised language may lead to over-learning and to too many production errors (Felix 1981).

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APPENDIX 1

*'The husband woke up and looked out of the window
He saw a unicorn eating a lily in the garden
He woke his wife up and told her there was a unicorn in the
garden eating a lily. She said 'don't be silly, there can't
be; the unicorn is a mythical beast'
The husband went down to take a closer look at the unicorn, but
it had gone. He sat down on a bench near the roses and went
to sleep. He had a dream.
The wife rang the psychiatrist and the police. She told them
her husband was going mad. She asked them to come quickly
with a straightjacket
She told the psychiatrist: 'My husband said he saw a unicorn
in the garden eating a lily' the psychiatrist asked the husband:
'Did you see a unicorn in the garden eating a lily?' '
To this the husband replied: 'Of course not - the unicorn is a
Mythical beast'*

Morgan and Rinvoluceri (1989: 63)

1st Task: Order drawings without having listened to the story

(1) *Teacher: Vale - once upon a time there was a couple
a husband and a wife (picture1) - once upon a time there
was a couple couple? two people: a husband and a wife
- they lived in a house (picture 2) they lived in a house //
do you like the house?*

(6) *Participants: Yes*

(7) *TEACHER: Would you like to live here?*

(8) *Participants: No*

(9) *TEACHER: Why?*

(10) *Participants: It's ugly /old*

(11) *TEACHER: All right -no because it's ugly and very
old - this is the house where they lived - one day they
were sleeping (picture 3) one day they were sleeping -
the husband and the wife ((pause)) the husband woke up
(pointing at husband) the husband was sleeping and
woke up (opening the eyes) and looked through (15) the
window (picture 4) - the husband woke up - he was*

sleeping he woke up and looked through the window and through the window the husband saw a UFO (picture 5)- Unidentified Flying Object- the husband saw a UFO - Unidentified Flying Object- the husband told his wife 'I can see a UFO through the window' the husband told the wife 'I (23) can see a UFO through the window' and the wife said - the wife said 'You are crazy UFOS do not exist' the wife said 'you are crazy - UFOS do not exist' and the wife looked through the window (picture 6) and there was no UFO - the wife looked and here every thing was normal (picture 7) this is a normal house Yes? (picture 8) (29)- the wife ((pause)) thought 'My husband is crazy' so she rang the psychiatrist - doctor-(pictures 9 and 10) she rang (making gesture of calling on the phone) the psychiatrist and the police and she told them 'My husband is crazy he has seen a - he saw a UFO in the garden so the psychiatrist and the police ask the husband - the psychiatrist and the police ask the husband 'have you seen an Unidentified Flying Object in the garden?' and the husband said 'me? (37) no! Unidentified Flying Objects do not exist' so the psychiatrist and the police - picked up the wife and sent her to prison because they (40) thought she was crazy...(picture 11)

2nd task: Students review the order of the pictures and answer some of the questions in the comprehension sheet. They listen to the story again

Once upon a time there was a couple - the husband and the wife // they lived in this house // it's an old house and ugly house // one day they were sleeping and the husband woke up- one day they were sleeping and the husband woke up and he looked through the window - the husband looked through the window and he saw a UFO - this is a UFO - he looked through the window and saw a UFO // woke up the wife -the wife was also sleeping - the husband said 'eh, wake up' and the husband said 'I can see a UFO through the window' 'I can see a UFO through the window'- the wife thought the husband was crazy so she went and looked through the window and she saw the house - the garden and the dog // she thought 'my husband is crazy' so she rang -

the wife rang -ring ring- (onomatopoeic) the psychiatrist and the police and said 'My husband is crazy- come here' and they went to the house and asked the husband 'Did you see a UFO through the window?' and the husband said 'me? No! I haven't seen a UFO' and the psychiatrist -doctor- and the police thought that the wife is crazy - the wife was crazy so they put -sent her to prison // the Psychiatrist and the police went to the house and asked the husband 'Did you see a UFO through the window?' and the husband said 'Me? No, I haven't seen a UFO' and the doctor and the police thought that the wife was crazy - so they sent her to prison.

3rd task: Answer the rest of the questions and listen to the story one last time.

APPENDIX 2:

'A UFO in the Garden'

Name and surname:

1. Order the story
2. Escribe lo que tú crees que pasa.
3. Order the story
4. Responde a estas preguntas:
 - **What did the husband see?**
 - **What did the wife see?**
 - **Who went to prison?**
5. Responde de nuevo:
 - **¿Quién llamó a la policía y al psiquiatra?**
 - **¿Qué pasa al final? ¿Por qué?**
6. ¿Te gusta la historia?