



**Effective Learning
and Application of
Grammar Knowledge
in the Senior
Secondary English
Language Classroom**

Grammar

English

**Senior
Secondary**

**Learning
and
Teaching**

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Overview

1. Reflections on grammar and grammar teaching
2. Grammmaring and how it links grammar to the four macro skills
3. Grammar consciousness-raising tasks
4. Discourse/text grammar

Reflections on Grammar and Grammar teaching

A Whatsapp Conversation between an English panel head and an ELT educator

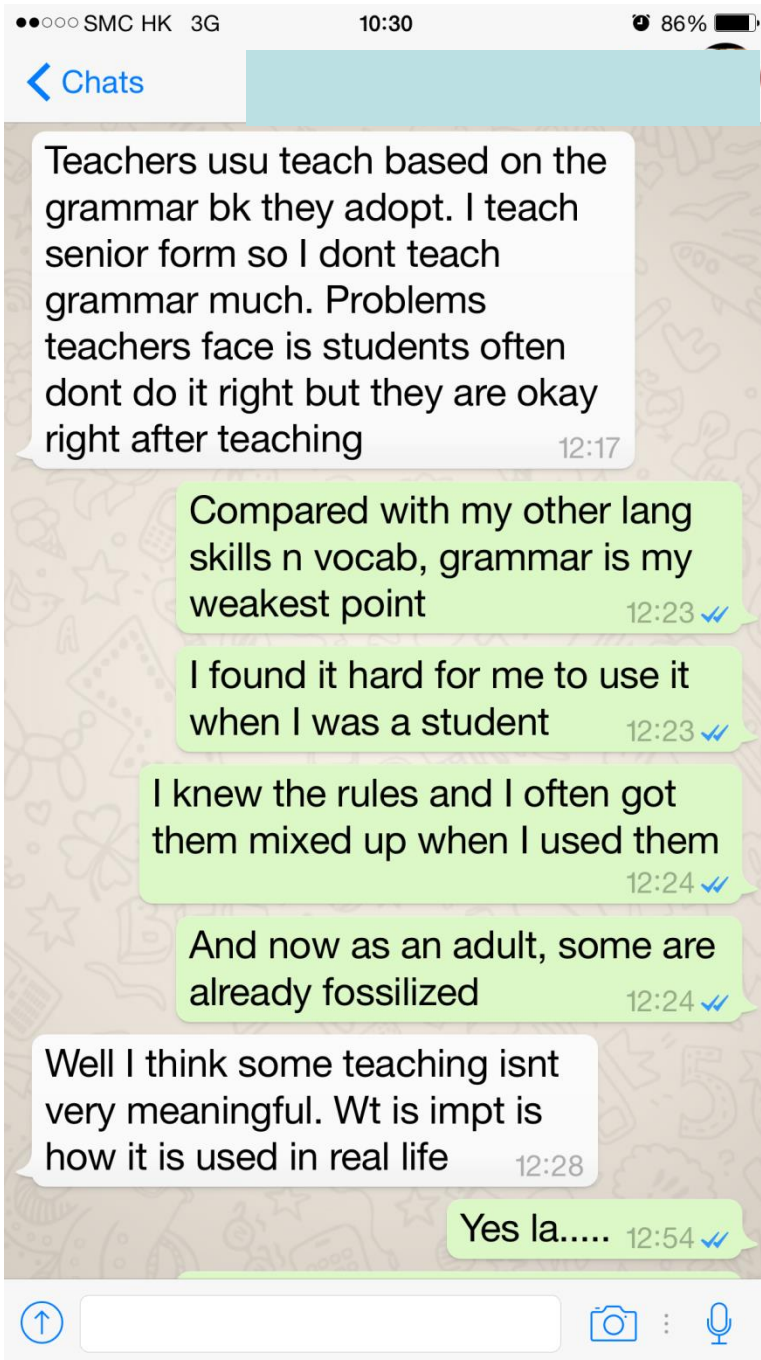
Do you agree with what the teacher suggested?

Do you think this is something Hong Kong students are facing?

What can we do to help improve this situation?

What else is needed?

Courtesy of the conversation:
Dr Tracy Cheung



1- min Brainstorming Task

- Come up with a definition of “grammar” in 1 min.
- Share your definition with your partner(s).

Part 1: What is grammar?

A. Product vs. Process View of Grammar

- A set of static rules Vs **a process of mapping grammar onto lexical items**
- **‘Grammaring’** (Larsen-Freeman):
 - ‘The process by which a sequence of words is **fine-tuned** in order to create a **more complex message** than mere words can express’ (Thornbury 2006:93)

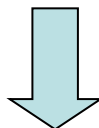
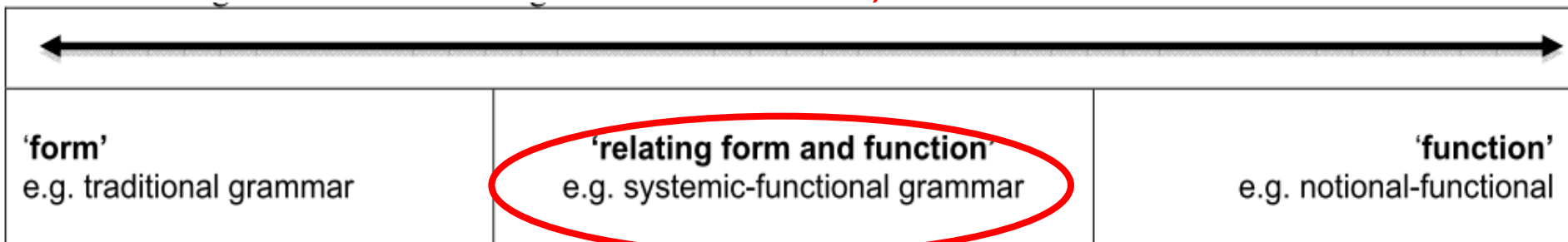
Two Key Pedagogic Implications:

- ▶ **Grammar has to be taught and assessed in conjunction with (rather than separately from!) the four macro skills**
- ▶ **Grammar should be considered at the level of texts (and not just sentences!)**

B. Functional and Discourse View of Grammar

Traditional grammar

vs Functional grammar (i.e. organising grammar items according to the communicative functions) at the discourse level



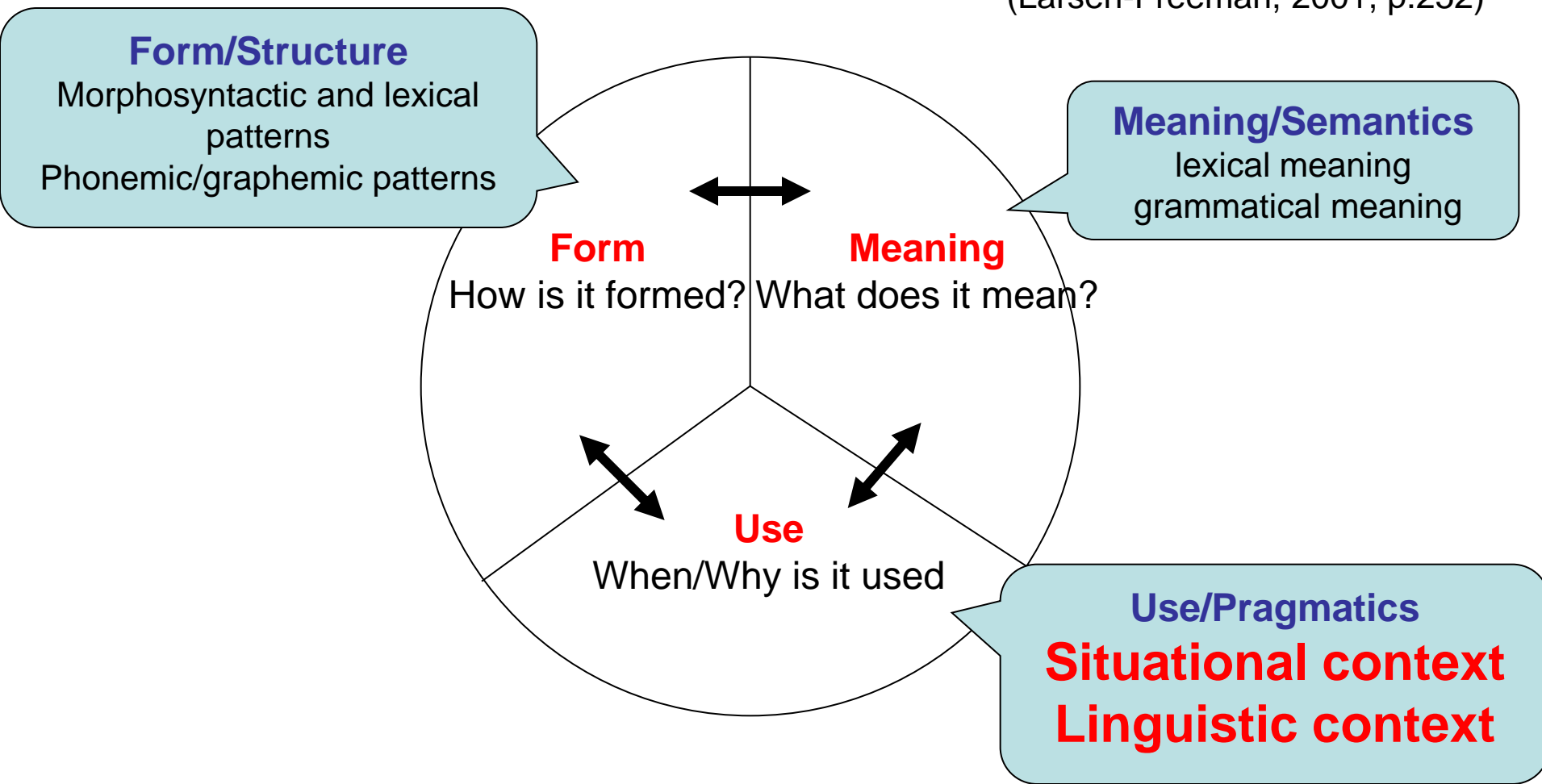
“...a *bridge* between ***form*** and ***meaning*** beyond the *sentence level*”

A three-dimensional grammar framework

(Larsen-Freeman, 2001)

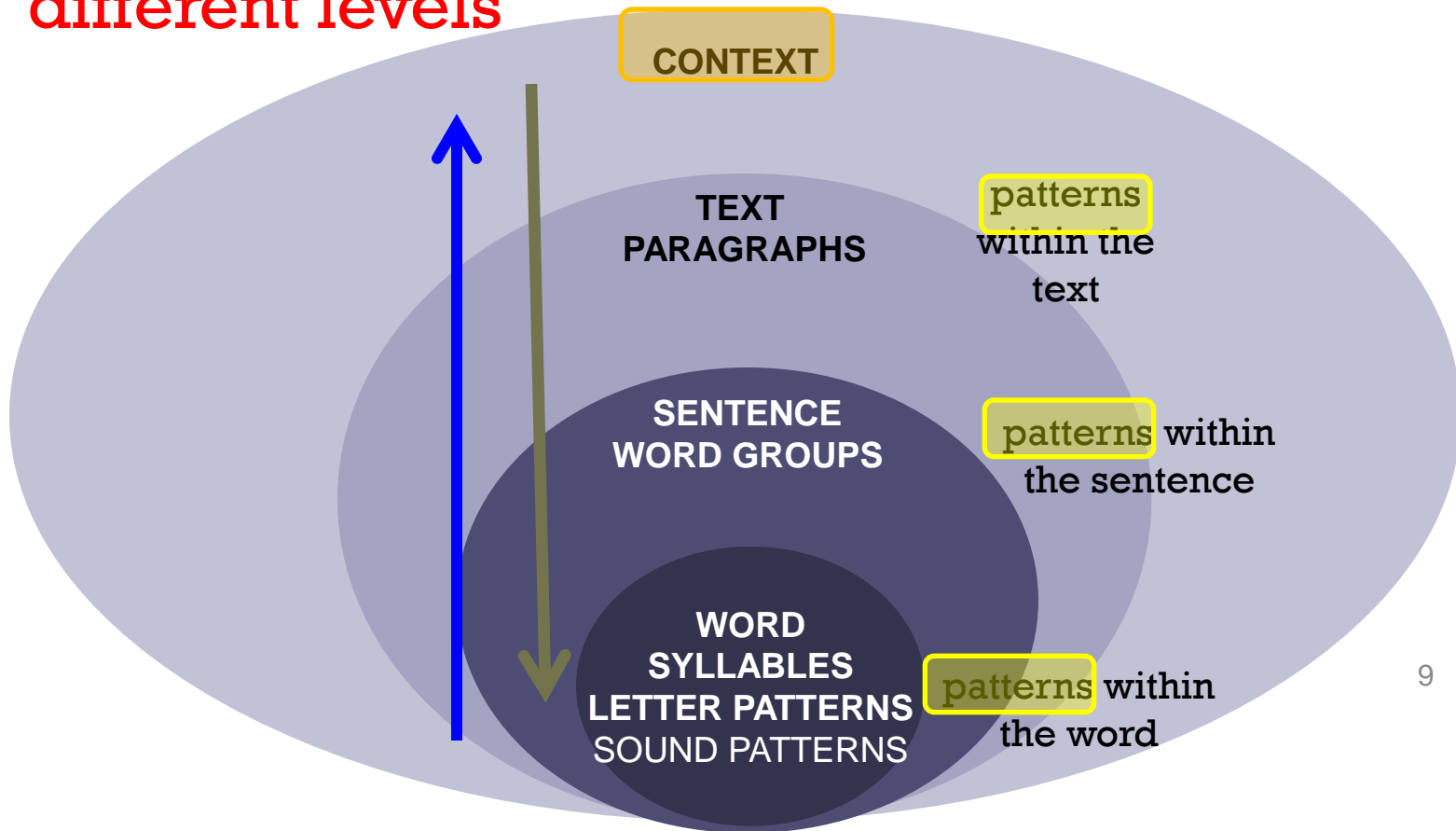
“...in dealing with the complexity of grammar, three dimensions must concern us: structure or form, semantics or meaning, and the pragmatic conditions governing use.”

(Larsen-Freeman, 2001, p.252)



+ A Functional View of Language in Context (Rose, 2005) (The Genre Egg Approach)

→ Provide scaffolding to students through different levels



2. Grammmaring Activities/Tasks

Grammmaring tasks:

- A. Practice type tasks (Thornbury's examples)
- B. Text reconstruction (Thornbury's example and 'Texting' example)
- C. Dictogloss/Grammar dictation ('Stir-fry' example)

A. Practice type tasks

- Please refer to Grammmaring Task Sheets
1,3

B. Text Reconstruction

- Please refer to Task Sheet 2

B. Text Reconstruction (Cont'd)

u got d
gaga tkts?

internet
jammed 2.
try l8r

no prob
thx 4
trying

still in d
q @20
ahead

sry 😞
sold out

Texting seems to have features of both spoken and written language. Write out this text dialogue as if the two people were talking on the phone.

Why is this called “grammaring”?

C. Dictogloss

- Let's try it!
- Form groups of 3-4
- Listen to the text **two** times
 - For the first time, do not write anything; just grasp **what the text talks about**
 - For the second time, jot down as many **key words** as you can
- Then reconstruct the text with your group members. Make sure you try to **keep the meanings as far as possible** and **all sentences are grammatical**

Advanced Grammmaring: Dictogloss

Nothing says Hong Kong home-cooking like a stir-fry. Fortunately for travellers, many home-style stir-fry dishes are offered in restaurants too. Although stir-fries are a humble home dish, they are quite difficult to pull off. To make a good stir-fry, the chef has to have excellent cutting skills and ensure there is sufficient heat, precise seasoning, quick thickening and plenty of 'wok hei'

Source: <http://www.discoverhongkong.com/eng/dine-drink/what-to-eat/local-flavours/hk-stir-fry.jsp#ixzz3eW9vI8Ma>

Dictogloss: Text Reconstruction

- Blending meanings/ functions and forms
- Focusing extensively on a range of grammar items
- Focusing on grammar at the text level
- Connecting grammar with lexis

Grammar Dictation (Wajnryb, 1990)

<http://library.hku.hk/search/t?SEARCH=grammar+dictation>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4DtEuf0wNck>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IRQIDMCjS9c>

3. Consciousness-raising Tasks

A C-R teaching and learning sequence for SS:

Step 1: Video-watching:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uCezICQNgJU>

Watch the video and answer the following questions:

1. What's special about the car in the video?
2. Who makes the car?
3. Would you buy that car if you can afford it? Why/why not?

A C-R teaching and learning sequence for SS:

Step 2: Reading

Read the text and answer the following four questions.

1. Who wrote the text?
2. Where would you expect to find the text?
3. Could you suggest a title for the text?
4. Do you think the GM agrees with Bill Gates comment on lines 2-3? Why/why not?

A C-R teaching and learning sequence for SS:

Step 3: Grammar Discovery

Work in pairs. One of you will use SET A of the task sheet (P.1→P.2→P.3) and the other will use SET B (P.4→P.2→P.3). Follow the instructions and complete the tasks.

Consciousness-raising Tasks

- Promoting learner autonomy?
- Integrating grammar with the four macro skills
- Possibly deeper engagement and memory through self-discovery?
- Presenting multiple examples of the targeted grammar item in a contextualised manner
- Looking at grammar at the discourse level

4. Grammar at the Discourse Level

- **Goal:** Building students' awareness of uses of grammar items in texts (through which communication takes place)
- **Strategy:** Analysing texts and matching grammar items with their communicative purposes with the rhetorical structure of common genres

(Please refer to the sample in Discourse Grammar Reading Text and Task Sheet)

Use of Graphic organisers

Section	Function in the text	Typical language Patterns (examples)
Subject	To state what the letter is about	A noun phrase beginning with 'Proposal to...' e.g. Proposal To Hold An ELT Book Fair At Your School
Introduction (first two paragraphs)	To...	
Objectives	To...	
Benefits	To...	
Arrangements	To...	
Conclusion (the last two paragraphs)	To...	

Grammar at the Discourse Level

- Aiming at identifying:
 - the relationship between grammar and genre (text type)
 - grammar items typically found in (different parts of) the targeted genre
 - common genres in which the targeted grammar items are found
 - the meaning/function of the grammar items and how they relate to the overall purpose of texts of various genres (i.e. form-function mappings that are transferrable across genres)
- Going beyond the sentence level (e.g. conjunctions, passive voice)
- Linking grammar with the four macro skills
- Providing a platform for ‘reading-to-write’
- Possibility of alternatively starting with identifying the grammar item we want to focus on and then match it with a genre in which the item is typically used (e.g. the C-R task)

Common Genres in SS

- Discussion Texts
- Exposition Texts
- Narratives
- Recounts
- Explanation Texts
- Letters (formal/informal)
- Reports
- Procedural texts
- Descriptions

Conclusion: Principles of grammar teaching

- Grammar should be considered **at the level of texts**
- Focusing on the relationships between **form, meaning** and **use**
- Grammar has to be taught and assessed **in conjunction with** the **four macro skills to promote its application**, i.e. learning grammar through the four skills and applying grammar while performing the four skills

