

# Cambridge English Teacher Development

# **Analysing new language**

## Anticipating difficulties

When planning to teach new language, it helps to think about any potential problems learners might have with the new language so as to avoid confusion and help learners most effectively with new language. The following questions may help you.

### Meaning

- 1. Does the concept have a clear equivalent in the learner's L1?
- 2. What concept is similar to this?
- 3. Is there anything hard conceptually for the learner? For example, is there a very specific meaning? Or is it an abstract idea?
- 4. Are there any connotations to the language which the learner needs to be aware of?
- 5. Are there other meanings of the language which the learner may confuse with this?

#### **Pronunciation**

- 1. Is there spelling-sound correlation? Are there silent letters?
- 2. Is the intonation an important feature?
- 3. Are there any weak forms? For example with 'are', it could be  $\partial$  (weak) rather than /a:/ (full).
- 4. Is there a pattern of stress over the phrase (sentence stress)? For example, 'If I were you, I'd buy a car' would be:

# If I were you, I'd buy a car

- 5. Are there words that sound similar which the learner might confuse the new language with?
- 6. Are there any contractions?



#### Form

- 1. What is the form?
- 2. Are there any unusual or difficult forms in the new language? For example, does it use the past participle? Are there plurals?
- 3. Does the form match the meaning? For example, if the verb form is past, is the meaning past?
- 4. Is the spelling confusing?
- 5. Is the form similar to other structures? Could learners mix them up?

#### Task

Now add your ideas, using the questions above to help you.

New language	Anticipated difficulty	Source of error
Vocab – describing people's age. For example: He's 20 years old.	Learners may say the wrong verb. For example: He has 20 years old.	L1 transference – learners may translate <i>He has 20 years.</i>
Grammar – to talk about events in progress. For example: Ouch! You're standing on my foot.	Learners may use the tense for the wrong meaning. For example: <i>I'm getting the bus to work every day</i> .	Over-generalisation – learners may use present continuous for all present tenses.