

Suggested Readings

Ideas: Speaking and Listening Activities for Upper-intermediate Students

By Leo Jones

Student's book and
Teacher's book

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Student's book
(Paperback)

ISBN 0521 270812 Teacher's book
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Comprising a unique collection of absorbing and enjoyable activities, *Ideas* aims to improve the listening and speaking abilities of students at upper-intermediate and advanced levels. The two-book series originally came with a set of two cassettes, and the activities listed in the same can be adapted to suit classroom requirements in the Indian context to the exclusion of the cassettes. Each activity encourages language practice, and also involves genuine communication whereby students can solve problems, exchange information and participate in role play and discussions.

Ideas (students' book) is divided into a total of twenty-two units on wide-ranging topics such as 'Personal information', 'Weather and climate', 'Strange phenomenon', 'Transport', 'Health', 'Technology', 'Language and communication', and 'Advertising'. Each unit in turn has at least five to eight student-centered activities designed to encourage students to share their ideas, opinions and experiences with each other. Of course, some of the activities such as those listed under the 'Current affairs'

unit will have to be adapted for each class according to the current news, but the type of activities envisaged (writing captions for pictures; making stories from combination pictures) are valid even for the examples as cited in the text. There is a wide range of photographs, advertisements, cartoons, and maps and drawings which can be modified and used for the higher classes to facilitate oral/aural skills in language learners. The liberal use of pictures, sketches and diagrams makes the book an extremely lucid and entertaining read. Some of the activities cited in the chapters (example 'new clothes' in chapter 2) will make sense only in conjunction with the recordings in the cassettes but nevertheless, by inference, extension and adaptability, these activities too can be used to encourage learners to speak and listen in their target language. All the activities recommend group initiative and learners are supposed to work together to get the answers to the questions (example 'speak about your country' in chapter 3); to imagine situations (what if you are marooned in a flood); to listen to and report communication (a menu on television, phone messages), etc. The unit 'Stranger than fiction' has interesting activities which require the students to sit together and distinguish between true and false statements (i. A pencil can draw a continuous line 5.5 km long; ii. Humans can perceive only four tastes; iii. The whale is the world's largest fish). The teacher's book serves as a ready reference by providing answers to these questions (i. False - the answer is 55 km; ii. True - sweet, sour, salt and bitter; iii. False - whale is a mammal). It also gives instructions to the teacher on how s/he can adapt some of the activities and encourage students to work in groups. The teacher may for instance divide students into multicultural groups to discuss culture-specific superstitions such as avoiding

walking under a ladder, stopping when a black cat crosses one's path, throwing a coin in a fountain to make a wish, etc. Each unit in the teacher's book is preceded by a vocabulary section. The unit also has the transcript of the recordings and suggestions for written work for the students.

Language Transfer: Cross-linguistic Influence in Language Learning

By Terence Odlin

Series Editors:
Michael H. Long and
Jack C. Richards

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The idea of language transfer is of crucial importance in applied linguistics, second language acquisition and language teaching. Although it had waned in the 1960s (when learners' errors were seen not as evidence of language transfer but of 'creative construction process'), in recent years, the role of transfer has come to be acknowledged. Terry Odlin's *Language Transfer* provides an account of the nature of language transfer or cross-linguistic influence, and its role in second language acquisition. In the words of the Series Editors:

Odlin documents the historical development of the concept of language transfer, explores the role of transfer in discourse, semantics, syntax, phonology and writing systems, and examines the way language transfer interacts with linguistic as well as cultural, social and

personal factors in second language learning and use (p. ix).

The book is divided into ten chapters each of which deals with a different linguistic aspect of transfer. The first two chapters give an introduction and earlier views on the issue of transfer; the third chapter defines some fundamental problems in the study of transfer. Chapters four-eight form the theoretical base of the book and follow a somewhat top-down approach to the issue of transfer, starting with discourse (chapter 4), semantics (chapter 5), syntax (chapter 6), phonetics, phonology and writing systems (chapter 7), and moving on to non-structural factors in transfer (Chapter 8).

Chapter 1 provides a brief introduction of the issue of transfer; chapter 2 provides its background. With plenty of examples, this chapter introduces the differences between borrowing transfer and substratum transfer: the former refers to the influence a second language has on a previously acquired language, while the latter refers to a type of cross-linguistic influence (typically of the source language) on the acquisition of a target language. This chapter also has a few sections dealing with contrastive analysis and the universal processes in acquisition. Chapter 3 identifies some theoretical and practical problems associated with the study of transfer (mainly that it is *not* a consequence of habit formation; it is *not* interference or falling back on the native language, and is *not* always the 'influence of native language'). The problems of generalization arising from language universals and linguistic typologies are also addressed in this chapter. The next four chapters present detailed analyses: Chapter 4 begins by addressing what Odlin calls the most challenging areas in contrastive analysis—discourse. Phenomenon such as politeness (including requests, apologies, other speech acts, conversational style, etc.) and coherence are addressed (including narratives, indirection in