

FRAME OF REFERENCE

Evaluation and Approval of Grammars for English as a Second Language Programs

Secondary Education - May 2013



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PART ONE

General Information

1. Orientations of the English as a Second Language programs with respect to grammar

The secondary-level English as a Second Language (ESL) programs are based on the communicative approach in which language conventions are addressed using focus on form instruction. Focus on form instruction draws students' attention to the intonation, pronunciation and grammar through the following three dimensions: form, meaning and use.

In class, students benefit from reactive feedback, proactive teaching and noticing form. Reactive feedback is used to direct students' attention to their errors and is provided through techniques such as elicitation, clarification requests and metalinguistic feedback. Proactive teaching is when teachers anticipate students' difficulties and plan the teaching of language conventions essential for carrying out prescribed tasks. Noticing form allows students to better understand how the use of form contributes to understanding the meaning of a message.

At the secondary level, grammar includes grammatical structures, capitalization, punctuation and spelling. Grammatical structures include parts of speech (*e.g. verbs, conjunctions, prepositions*), sentence constructions (*e.g. affirmative, negative, simple, complex*), word forms (*e.g. prefixes, suffixes, gerunds*) and agreement (*e.g. subject-verb, pronoun-antecedent*).

Knowledge of language conventions helps develop students' communicative competence by enabling them to better understand oral and written messages and to express their own messages more accurately. At the elementary level, students acquired some knowledge of English language conventions, in accordance with the focus on form approach favoured at the secondary level. Throughout the secondary level, students following a core program deepen their knowledge of language conventions in carrying out meaningful tasks with the support of various resources (*e.g. peers, grammars, verb lists*). They will not draw any benefit from having their errors with respect to language conventions corrected unless they have achieved a certain mastery of the English language. As they progress in acquiring the language, they make conscious efforts to use the correct forms.

Students taking the enriched program make a conscious effort to use accurate language conventions in order to communicate effectively in a variety of contexts.

Since language conventions are not necessarily acquired in a linear manner, there is no predetermined order in which they are presented. Some language conventions may require continued emphasis throughout secondary school as they are difficult to acquire but are necessary for effective communication. Consequently, repeated exposure to language conventions in a variety of meaningful contexts is crucial to the development of linguistic

knowledge. When targeting language conventions and deciding how much attention to give them, it is important to consider the following:

- Complexity: Are students ready to learn these language conventions, given their level of language development?
- Frequency: Will students have sufficient opportunities to encounter and use these language conventions in the task at hand?
- Recurrence: Are these language conventions useful for students' communication needs?¹

¹ Québec, Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport, *Québec Education Program, Progression of Learning in Secondary School, English as a Second Language (Core Program and Enriched Program)*, 2010.

2. Role of a grammar in teaching and learning

Grammar plays an important part in the teaching and learning of a language. In fact, the effective use of a second language presupposes the use of a set of rules governing the various aspects of grammar that are presented, explained and illustrated by examples in grammars. This is why grammars are included in the standard reference works requiring approval by the Minister of Education, Recreation and Sports.

In ESL class, a grammar can be used as a reference tool to check how a particular rule is applied. The role of a grammar intended for students in a learning situation is to enable them to rapidly find, throughout their course, a solution or a correct answer supplemented by clear examples and explanations of problems encountered and questions asked. This type of reference work can easily serve students well from one cycle to the next.

3. Prerequisites for approval of grammars

In general and given the preceding explanations, grammars may be submitted to the Minister for approval if they meet the following criteria:

- They are structured as reference works, presenting an overview of grammar.
- They contain statements concerning quality of the language (linguistic revision) and conformity with the rules and conventions of the International System of Units as well as with certain other writing standards (normative revision).

4. Evaluation of grammars

The evaluation of grammars deals with the pedagogical and linguistic aspects. The pedagogical aspects concern content: conformity with the programs; organization of content to facilitate consultation and learning; adaptation to the age of the targeted students. The linguistic aspects pertain to the correctness and coherence of linguistic elements (including translation, if required) as well as to compliance with the standards of the English language and current usage.

Grammars are also evaluated for their material and sociocultural aspects.

The list of grammars approved by the Minister is published on the Web site. To support teaching and learning, a grammar must comply with the orientations of the English as a Second Language programs. Therefore, the

Bureau d'approbation du matériel didactique (BAMD) reserves the right to include in this list specific comments indicating that certain works partially comply.

5. Duration of approval of grammars

The duration of approval for a standard grammar is seven years. The approval may be renewed if, at the end of this period, the grammar is still current. The purpose of this clause is to ensure that the works take into account lexical changes (neologisms and archaic expressions).

PART TWO

Evaluation Criteria

Pedagogical Aspects

First criterion: The work is consistent with the content of the English as a Second Language programs of the *Québec Education Program*.²

Elements to Consider	Points for Analysis
1.1 The content (rules, statements, definitions, explanations, examples, tables, etc.) covers all aspects of the language repertoire set forth in the secondary education programs.	<p>1.1.1 The various grammatical concepts in English as a Second Language programs, that is to say, parts of speech, sentence constructions, word forms and agreement, and the rules for capitalization, punctuation and spelling are presented in the work and conform to established standards.</p> <p>1.1.2 The terminology used (metalanguage) is the same as that used in the secondary school programs.</p> <p>1.1.3 The work presents links to the knowledge of grammar acquired in previous cycles and carries on from them.</p> <p>1.1.4 The work is in English only.</p> <p>1.1.5 The work clearly states that these concepts should not be systematically taught or evaluated.</p>

² Guidelines pertaining to language conventions are contained in the *Progression of Learning* and the *Québec Education Program*.

Pedagogical Aspects

Second criterion: The work is designed to help students in their different practices and support them in understanding the language.

Elements to Consider	Points for Analysis
<p>2.1 The work's content facilitates the observation and study of language phenomena.</p>	<p>2.1.1 The structure of the work, in other words, its presentation and organization of the cases and phenomena being studied, makes it easy to understand and is consistent with the description of how the English language functions.</p> <p>2.1.2 References and other guidelines facilitate further research.</p> <p>2.1.3 The terminology used to refer to the same elements is consistent throughout the work.</p> <p>2.1.4 The texts and examples are coherent and varied, and facilitate the observation of cases and phenomena.</p> <p>2.1.5 Emphasis, whether by means of text or graphics (use of boldface type or italics, colours, etc.), highlights the regularities of the language and facilitates the observation and understanding of language phenomena.</p> <p>2.1.6 The structure is consistent, with the elements of different concepts being presented in the same way.</p>

Elements to Consider	Points for Analysis
2.2 Guidelines and examples enhance the sentence structure and the structure of the text.	<p>2.2.1 The explanations and examples illustrate regular language patterns first and then, if applicable, instances that could lead to confusion, exceptions, etc.</p> <p>2.2.2 The explanations of difficulties, pitfalls and exceptions take into account what the students are likely to see in a given cycle and correspond to their level of language development.</p> <p>2.2.3 Examples are varied and show how the rules of grammar are applied in different texts (genres, subject areas) from a variety of sources.</p> <p>2.2.4 Counterexamples are used when necessary. They are clearly indicated and are used within the context of a study of the patterns of the language.</p> <p>2.2.5 The work is free of deliberate errors.</p>
2.3 The table of contents, index and general content are organized in such a way that students can quickly find the language phenomena that they must study or to which they need to refer.	<p>2.3.1 The table of contents and index are designed to provide easy access to the various elements of the content.</p> <p>2.3.2 The page layout is well organized and spaced out.</p> <p>2.3.3 The figures, tables, appendixes, text boxes and illustrations make it easy to find important elements.</p>
2.4 The typography makes it easy to find important elements.	<p>2.4.1 The font type and size make the work easy to read and are appropriate to the students' age group.</p> <p>2.4.2 Emphasis (boldface, italics, brackets, capital letters, etc.), colours and pictograms are used appropriately, and in moderation, throughout the work.</p>

Pedagogical Aspects

Third criterion: The work is suitable for the students for whom it is intended.

Elements to Consider	Points for Analysis
3.1 The content (rules, wording, definitions, explanations, examples, etc.) is presented in a clear manner.	<p>3.1.1 The rules, wording, definitions, explanations and examples are clear and presented simply.</p> <p>3.1.2 The writing style and amount of detail on the phenomena studied are appropriate to the students' level. The terminology is appropriate, and the approaches used make it accessible to the students.</p>
3.2 The examples chosen are oriented to the targeted students so as to pique their interest and motivate them.	<p>3.2.1 The examples and texts are appropriate to the age of the students.</p> <p>3.2.2 The examples and texts reflect the students' experience, areas of interest and needs.</p> <p>3.2.3 The examples and texts are at a level of language development appropriate to learning English as a second language.</p>
3.3 Guidelines are provided on how to best use the tables, diagrams, lists, index, table of contents, etc., thus contributing to making the grammar a regularly consulted work.	<p>3.3.1 The work is easy for students to use in learning English as a second language.</p> <p>3.3.2 Where necessary, explanations are provided on how to use the index, the verb tables, etc.</p> <p>3.3.3 Pictograms, symbols, abbreviations, colour coding and other graphic elements are clearly explained.</p>

Linguistic Aspects

First criterion: The linguistic concepts in the work are sound and coherent.

Elements to Consider	Points for Analysis
1.1 The rules, definitions, explanations and wording are accurate and clear. The examples presented are relevant.	<p>1.1.1 The rules, definitions, explanations and wording are free from errors.</p> <p>1.1.2 The examples properly illustrate the rules and usage of the English language.</p>

Second criterion: The work takes into account current English standards and usage.

Elements to Consider	Points for Analysis
2.1 The work follows language conventions and bears witness to the ever-evolving nature of the English language.	<p>2.1.1 Standardized or recommended terms are used and are accompanied by explicit guidelines when interchangeable terms are used frequently.</p> <p>2.1.2 Changes in spelling are taken into consideration, subject to MELS decisions in that regard.</p> <p>2.1.3 Modern grammatical trends and neologisms are given (e.g. gender-neutral phrasing, hyphenated words, etc.).</p> <p>2.1.4 Varieties of language are used in a carefully thought out way, differentiating between what is informal usage and what is standard usage.</p> <p>2.1.5 The work contains a bibliography of the references consulted when it was being written.</p>



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