# Setting the stage for lecture listening: how representative are EAP coursebooks?

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Although teachers may be under the impression that a textbook is the product of a **careful collaboration** between theoreticians and practitioners, this is a **dubious assumption**.

(Richards, 1993, cited in Harwood, 2005, p. 150)

The evidence suggests that textbook authors are **not** yet habitually checking their materials against relevant **corpus data** to ensure that the language models they provide are as naturalistic and pedagogically useful as possible.
(Gilmore, 2015, p. 517)

# How listening coursebooks may **not** be 'setting the stage'

[...] most EAP listening programs are based upon commercial textbooks. The downside of this is that these textbooks tend to **present the structure and language of the lectures as simply organized and transparently coherent**. **Actual lectures**, however, are a **much less tidy** form of discourse.
(Rodgers & Webb, 2016, p. 171)

so **the only thing what i would like you to know and to remember** and **i will ask on the exam** of course what is this GSM GSM coordinate system  (ELFA)

# This talk draws on three studies

Importance marking in 160 lectures by L1 English speakers (BASE):
Deroey (2015); Deroey & Taverniers (2012)

'**Lexicogrammatical** devices that overtly mark the importance […] of **points** that are presented **verbally** or **visually**.' (Deroey, 2015, p. 52)

  ✓**the most important thing to b bear in mind** throughout the lecture really is pest is a human definition

  ✗ **the first thing** i want to do today is to is to formally er try and explain what the connection is

  ✗ mass warfare which is obviously such **an important thing** in the nineteenth century

# This talk draws on three studies

Importance marking in 160 L1 lectures (BASE):
Deroey (2015); Deroey & Taverniers (2012)


Importance marking in 20 EMI lectures (ELFA): Deroey (2014)


Lecture listening coursebooks: Deroey (2018). **The representativeness of lecture listening coursebooks: language, lectures, research-informedness**. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes, 34, 57-67.*

# Importance marking in 'real' lectures

Deroey (2014, 2015); Deroey & Taveniers (2012)

# Classification: lexical core (L1)
(Deroey & Taverniers, 2012)

| Core (& number of subtypes) | Pattern example | Illustration |
|---|---|---|
| Noun (6) | MN v-link | *the **point** is* |
| Verb (6) | V nom/clause | *and **remember** that …* |
| Adjective (5) | deic v-link ADJ | *this is absolutely **crucial*** |
| Adverb | ADV | ***importantly*** |
| Assessment reference | - | *it's something we can sort of **ask exam questions** on* |

# Classification: interactive orientation
(Deroey, 2015)

**Participant**

**Content**

**Listener**

**pay attention** to this

the **point** is

this is an **essential point**

**Speaker**

**i** want to **emphasise**

**Joint**

**i** ask **you** to **bear in mind**

# L1 ≈ EMI

Extent to which importance is marked

Variety of lexicogrammatical patterns of markers

Content-oriented markers: most frequent

# EMI marking was less listener-oriented

| | BASE: L1 (N=782) | ELFA: EMI (N=83) |
|---|---|---|
| Content<br>*the point is; this is an essential point* | ± 46% | ± 73% |
| Listener<br>*pay attention to this particular vesicle*<br>*you have to remember* | ± 39% | ± 11% |
| Speaker<br>*i want to emphasise* | ± 10% | ± 13% |
| Joint<br>*i ask you to bear in mind* | ± 5% | ± 2% |

# Content orientation: L1 vs EMI

**Multifunctional idiomatic 'metanoun + v-link'**
   ***the point is*** *that people can't do that* (BASE)

One of two predominant markers in L1

L1 > EMI ($\pm$45% vs $\pm$10%)

**Markers with deictics**
   ***that****'s the* ***point*** (ELFA)

Potential issue with referent assignment

L1 < EMI ($\pm$ 17% vs $\pm$ 36%)

**Adjectival modification**
   *that's the* ***main*** *idea* (ELFA)

Explicit marking

L1 < EMI ($\pm$ 19% vs $\pm$ 51%)

# Listener orientation: L1 vs EMI

|  | BASE: L1 (N=304) | ELFA: EMI (N=9) |
|---|---|---|
| **remember** … (BASE) | ± 86% | ± 56% |
| **you** must **remember** …(ELFA) | ± 13% | ± 44% |

Multifunctional imperatives: second most popular marker in L1

Explicit directives with *you*: EMI > L1

# Importance marking in coursebooks

Deroey (2018)

# Coursebooks analysed

1. *Academic listening strategies* (Salehzadeh) (US)
2. *Cambridge academic English* (all levels)
3. *Contemporary topics* (all levels) (2017)
4. *EASE volume one: Listening to lectures* (Kelly et al)
5. *English for academic study* (Campbell & Smith)
6. *Four point* (level 2) (Parrish) (US)
7. *LEAP advanced* (Beatty)
8. *Lecture ready* ( all levels) (Sarosy & Sherak)
9. *Lectures* (Aish & Tomlinson)
10. *Oxford EAP* (all levels)
11. *Study listening* (Lynch)
12. *Unlock* (all levels)

# L1 authentic markers vs textbook markers

**L1**

- Great variety

- Preference for: less explicit, multifunctional markers $\rightarrow$ require identification training

- Less common: markers signalling speaker's intent to highlight, addressing listeners explicitly, containing importance adjectives

**Coursebooks**

- Limited & apparently random presentation

- Commonly listing of points or evaluation of 'real world' entities

- Preference for explicit markers

# Lots of exercises on identifying main ideas; little language to guide identification thereof



*Contemporary topics (2)*

# Explicit markers predominate

*Study listening, p. 39*

Lecture language: Importance markers

One vital listening skill is the ability to recognise and exploit the importance markers with which lecturers underline or emphasise points in their argument. They can do so in any of three ways.

1  By speaking about the subject matter itself

| The | central | problem | is | that ... |
| A(n) | basic | point | | |
| One | essential | fact | | |
| Another | key | issue | is | the ... |
| (etc.) | crucial | difference | | |
| | | (etc.) | (etc.) | |

2  By speaking to the audience

| It's | important | to bear in mind that ... |
| | (etc.) | |
| It's | worth(while) | ...ing that ... |

Remember that ...

Don't forget that ...

You shouldn't lose sight of the fact that ...

3  By speaking about themselves

I want to stress/emphasise/underline ...

My point is ...

What I'm getting at is ...

# Coursebooks versus lectures: top 5

| Type (coursebooks) | N (52) % |
|---|---|
| The important point is | $\pm21$ |
| I want to stress | $\pm13$ |
| Remember | $\pm11$ |
| You have to remember | $\pm11$ |
| It's important to note | $\pm10$ |

| Type (L1 lectures) | N (782) % |
|---|---|
| Remember/notice/note | $\pm34$ |
| The point/question is | $\pm21$ |
| I want to emphasize | $\pm9$ |
| The important/key point/thing is | $\pm8$ |
| You have to remember | $\pm5$ |

# How coursebooks are not 'setting the stage'

$\rightarrow$Few importance markers

$\rightarrow$Mismatch with common markers in real lectures = poor preparation

$\rightarrow$Less 'clear' markers that require most training not often included

# Why does this mismatch exist?

Deroey (2018)

Applied linguistics **researchers** often energetically pursue their own narrow fields of interest with <u>minimal concern for the accessibility</u> […] to other stakeholders […]

**language teachers** are rarely encouraged (or able) to keep up to date with theoretical advances […]

**materials writers** seem to rely more on <u>replication</u> of previous successful models, […] and their <u>own creative muses</u> than theory-driven, principled design criteria […]

**publishers** appear to show more concern for their <u>bottom dollar </u>than the provision of innovative textbooks, in tune with contemporary theory […]

Gilmore (2015, p. 521)

# Pedagogical recommendations

Deroey (2018)

- Supplement: representative, authentic lectures (local/disciplinary)

- Research language (BASE, ELFA, MICASE)

- **Be a critical user: inspect and object!**

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