

Extension exercises

Chapter 28: Non-finite clauses | Comments

Exploring how learners use English

- 1 Answers to these questions will depend very much on the learners concerned, on the text chosen, and on the particular features of non-finite clauses present in that text.

Learners whose first language resembles English in clause structure most closely, and those learners who read extensively in English, are likely to have an advantage.

Many learners, nonetheless, have some difficulty in understanding non-finite clauses (if only initially), and feel insecure about using them.

- 2 Again, answers to this will depend on the learners, and partly also on the nature of the task you set.

Generally, unless the learners are extremely proficient and have had specific practice in this aspect of grammar, they are likely to avoid using non-finite clauses – at least to some extent. Alternatively, you may find that they try to use them but do so awkwardly or inappropriately.

Learners who are aware of their difficulties are not necessarily those who have the greatest difficulties.

Course materials

Books produced in English-speaking countries for a local (for example, European in the case of the UK) or international market, often pay little attention to this aspect of clause structure.

Materials produced ‘in country’, which make specific contrasts between English and the first language of the students (for example, bilingual materials produced in China) sometimes pay more attention to this and other features of clause construction. Sometimes these concentrate on aspects of structure rather more than on considerations of meaning and function.