

Extension exercises

Chapter 28: Non-finite clauses

Exploring how learners use English

- 1 Look for a short section of text which contains a number of non-finite clauses and, as far as possible, a variety of non-finite clause types. (You can choose one of the examples used in 'Language in context' pages 429–30 of this chapter.)

Use the text with a class of learners with a good level of English, concentrating on general reading skills. When you are satisfied that they understand the main points in the text and much of the key vocabulary, ask them very specific questions to test whether they understand the function of the non-finite clauses in the text, and ask them to write down their answers so that you can collect them in and analyse them. For example, if you used the text about Czech beers on page 429, you might ask:

- What is the subject of *turning* in line 4?
- Does *turning* refer to past, present or future?
- Is the use of *confined* in line 9 active or passive?

Then point out the non-finite clauses and ask the learners to underline them. Ask them whether they see these as presenting any problems of comprehension.

- What are the problems?
- How generally do they think we use non-finite clauses?
- Do they use non-finite clauses in their own English? How much? What types?
- How accurately and appropriately do they think they use them?

- 2 Ask a group of students with a good level of English to write a composition. Prepare the activity so that they are motivated to write, and so that they have sufficient ideas and vocabulary for this not to be too difficult.

The aim of this exercise is to analyse what they write to see if and how they use non-finite clauses, and so you may want to encourage them to do this by reminding them explicitly to use the clauses. Alternatively you may want to do this more indirectly. You can give them a text to read which includes a lot of non-finite clauses, and you can ask them then to put this on one side and to express what the writer said in their own words, adding their own opinions and reactions to the topic.

Analyse their compositions to see how much use they make of non-finite clauses.

- What kinds do they use? How appropriately? How many?
- If you have carried out 'Exploring how learners use English' 1 with the same learners, to what extent are their impressions about how they use non-finite clauses confirmed in these compositions?

Course materials

Choose a coursebook or series of coursebooks and identify where non-finite clauses are taught. You may need to look under different headings to find the relevant materials (for example, participle clauses or *-ing* clauses or infinitives).

- 1 How comprehensively does the material deal with non-finite clauses?
- 2 How systematically does it teach them?
- 3 How much attention is paid to recognition and comprehension?
- 4 How much attention is paid to the functions these clauses express?
- 5 How much attention is paid to appropriacy of use (for example, whether the clause is appropriate in spoken or written English, whether its use is particularly formal)?
- 6 What opportunities are provided for practice of these clauses? For example:
 - Are there exercises which involve combining sentences using a non-finite clause?
 - Are learners asked to write complete texts?
 - What kinds of models or encouragement are they given to use the clauses accurately and appropriately when they write?