Brief Description of the Reading and Writing Course in Production and use at DTEC Language Institute

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The DTEC Language Institute gives English courses to Thai government civil servants who are about to go on scholarship to English-speaking countries. One component of the work is the Reading and Writing course.

The approach of the course is functional, and to some extent notional; that is, with particular emphasis on the logical and conceptual organization of language. The course is intended for students who have had a fairly good basic grounding in English structure (higher classes in secondary schools, institutes of education, language institutes etc.) and it is hoped that a functional approach in the intermediate stage will give a sense of cohesion to material previously learned in a more traditional, structural manner. At DTEC the course in fact supplements language classes taught in this more traditional way, the course book usually being "Kernel Lessons." The structural elements within the course (conditional forms, for example) are therefore not intended to be complete in themselves.

The DTEC course is intended to promote awareness of the logical connection between semantic groups at the intra and introsentential level, and between groups of sentences and paragraphs, so that a framework may be provided to support both the reading and writing skills. Thus, each unit, at least initially, concentrates upon one rhetorical function or "logical area" of language use. The areas for which I am preparing material are:

Cause and Effect
Comparison and Contrast
Inclusion and Exclusion
Condition and Uncertainty
Probability and Certainty
Classification, Definition and Exemplification
The Language of Argument or Persuasion
Time

There is also support material, particularly in the area of writing, on Introductions, Conclusions and The Ordering of Material.

Reading and writing are not seen as separate skills and their close connection is emphasized by the work in each unit being centred around one reading passage. There is no strict need to work first through the whole comprehension section and then through the writing section–indeed, I have found that more

interesting and varied lessons can be produced by mixing the two activities. The writing, after all, continually turns the student back to the passage, which helps towards fuller comprehesion. The general emphasis of the course is upon formal or semiformal English, since its direction is towards producing an academic writing ability. Many of the students at DTEC will be following academic courses when they go abroad.

A typical unit is laid out in the following way:

1. Introduction to the main concept (cause/effect, condition/uncertainty etc.)
2. The reading passage, which is accompanied by several sets of questions.
3. The writing sub-unit, involving exercises largely developing from the passage.

1. The Introduction involves the presentation of the principal "markers" of the "rhetorical function" in question. Writing exercises are included here to practise recognition and use of the various structures or items involved.
2. The reading passages are between 70-90 lines in length and are adapted from such sources as "Readers' Digest" and Encylcopaedia Britannica. Naturally all the passages contain examples of all the functions included in the course, but each passage contains many examples of the function dealt with in that particular unit. The subjects of the passages are of a semi-specialist nature, roughly divided between "hard-fact" topics and more speculative ones. The passages usually have a large information content which is processed by the comprehension questions in a number of ways. Labelled diagrams and summary tables are often required as answers and students are required to collect the available data into tables and then make judgements about the information. The passages are graded to the extent that later ones become more polemical and the student is required not only to understand the material but to interpret the author's attitude towards it. The titles of the passages prepared (not always complete) so far are:

The Life of a Star
Typhoons
Sleep
Unsolved Mysteries of the Great Pyramid
World Energy
Loch Ness Monster - Fact or Imagination
The Evils of Inflation
Extrasensory Perception
Are We Now Engaged in World War III?
Population Explosion
Unidentified Flying Objects

The questions following the passage are of various kinds but many of them tend to stress the particular functions dealt with during the course.

3. The emphasis is upon controlled writing throughout, although there is some scope for freer expression in the later units. The writing sub-units are divided into several parts, which are usually organised as follows:

   a) Transformation or construction exercises concentrating upon the particular function dealt with in the unit–e.g. building cause/effect sentences from the basic information or transforming certain statements into conditional clauses.

   b) Sentence construction centred on one or more of the functions already dealt with – i.e. linking information by using inclusion/exclusion markers, contrast markers etc. As the units progress, this section moves from the construction of single sentences to the building of paragraphs. The discourse analysis involved in some of the comprehension exercises provides a basis for this writing section.

   c) Usually devoted to the use of relative clauses to support section b) above. These exercises involve linking ideas by means of relatives (and connected qualifying clauses) and also reducing compound sentences to simple sentences.

   d) Various drills. Sometimes discovery and transformation of passives, work with nominalizations, transforms of adjectives to verbs, manipulation of verbs of different types (state, event) etc., in order to stress the case relationships within the sentence.

   e) This exercise, if included, is some kind of cloze test, sometimes derived from passages in the course. This provides the opportunity for some further, contextualized work on logical markers as well as on details of grammar, articles, etc.

   f) This section is devoted, in later units, to less controlled writing, beginning with brief summaries of individual paragraphs or simple descriptions of an object or a process found in the passage. Specific areas of writing can be stressed here. Producing paragraphs from the tables of data or diagrams constructed in the comprehension sub-unit is included as an exercise in this section.

The writing material attached to the course is still in a very incomplete state, and all the units referred to above are in the process of considerable revision made in the light of teaching experience with the material.

SHEET 7

CAUSE AND EFFECT

A *Verbs expressing cause*

i) Table 1 Cause ——————→ Effect

A	B	C
NP_1	causes leads to results in brings about	NP_2
	means that	NP_2 + VP

Example : Excessive rainfall causes flooding.
Excessive rainfall means that there will be flooding.

ii) Table 2 Effect ←—————— Cause

Passive

A	B	C	D
NP_2	is	caused by brought about by	NP_1 (including -ing form of verb)

Example : Flooding is brought about by excessive rainfall.

iii) Table 3 Effect ——————→ Cause

A	B	C
NP_2 (including -ing form)	results from arises from	NP_1 (including -ing form)

Example : Political slavery arises from apathy.
Being rich results from working hard.

B *Other cause markers*

i) Table 4 Cause ——————→ Effect

	A	B	C	D
Type a)	As a result of On account of Because of Due to, owing to	NP_1 or NP_1 + V – ing	NP_2	occurs happens takes place ect.
Type b)	Because Since Due to the fact that	NP_1 + VP_1		

Examples :

Type a) As a result of the influenza epidemic, we had very few students in class.

Type a) On account of the traffic being heavy, many people were late for work.

Type b) Because there was an influenza epidemic, we had very few students in class.

CAUSE AND EFFECT

N.B. The order of these sentences can also be CDAB, thus presenting effect before cause. In this case there is no comma in the middle of the sentence. It is also possible to begin a cause/effect structure with the -ing clause on its own, thus:

The weather being unusually hot, we decided to go to the seaside.

The engine being faulty, the car broke down soon after we left.

ii) Table 6 Cause ——————————→ Effect

Markers between two ideas only.
Conjunctions:

	A	B	C
Type a)	$NP_1 + VP_1$	and consequently (and) so and therefore so that with the result that	$NP_2 + VP_2$
Type b)	$NP_1 + VP_1$	Accordingly Therefore	

Examples: Type a) My brother was ill and so we couldn't go on holiday.

Type b) My brother was ill. Accordingly we couldn't go on holiday.

N.B. Type b) is usually found in more formal situations.

iii) Table 7 Cause ——————————→ Effect

A definite action causing something to happen.

A	B	C	D
$NP_1 + VP_1 + NP_2$ (action verb)	thereby thus	V + ing	NP_3

Examples: Many students missed the lecture, thereby annoying the teacher.

iv) Table 8 Cause ——————————→ Effect

A	B	C	D
$NP_1 + VP_1 + NP_2$ (action verb)	and	by this method by that action by so doing in this way	$NP_1 + VP_2$

Examples: The aeroplane climbed steeply and in this way avoided an accident.

The tourist office cancelled many reservations and by so doing disappointed many customers.

N.B. "by this method" is used when the effect is intentional or desired.

Items in column C can only be used when a definite *action* occurs – not for a state of being ('He was ill....').

CAUSE AND EFFECT

v) Table 9

So ....
Such a ....

Cause ——————————→ Effect

A	B	C	D
NP_1 + VP	such a	ADJ + NP_2	that
	so	ADV	

Examples: He was such a bad driver that he had three accidents in two days.
He was so bad at driving that he made everyone very nervous.
He drove so badly that in the end he lost his license.

vi) Table 10

Cause ——————————→ Effect

A	B	C	D
If / When	NP_1 + VP_1 (occurs)	then	NP_2 + VP_2 (occurs)

Example: If phosphorus is placed in water, spontaneous combustion occurs.

Exercises:

a) Apply patterns in tables 1, 3, 5, 6a to the following

Cause	**Effect**
failure of air-conditioning	students leave the room
klongs flood	traffic badly disrupted
eat a big lunch	not hungry in the evening
drive carelessly	accidents

b) Think up some new items for columns A and D in tables 7 and 8. Write two sentences for each table.
Transform these sentences by using patterns in tables 4 and 10.

c) Think up some new items for columns A and C in table 9, write three sentences using the patterns given.

Adapted from *Reader's Digest*, Jan. 1975
"Unsolved Mysteries of the Great Pyramid", by R. Schiller.

UNSOLVED MYSTERIES OF THE GREAT PYRAMID

1 No monuments on earth have inspired greater awe and admiration than the Pyramids at Giza in Egypt, particularly the Great Pyramid of Pharaoh Khufu, or Cheops as he was called by the Greeks. Although it was built 4500 years ago, it is the most massive stone structure ever erected, with space in its 13 – acre base to enclose 5 of the world's greatest cathedrals. The pyramid is composed of 2 – 3 million blocks of stone, weighing from $2\frac{1}{2}$ – 50 tons each, and it rises to a height of 481 feet (about 160 m.) above the desert. Napoleon calculated that if these stones were used to build a wall around France, there would be sufficient masonry to raise this wall to about 10 feet in height.

2 The Great Pyramid embodies extraordinary architectural skills. For example, the limestone slabs covering the surface were cut and fitted so accurately that a sheet of paper can hardly be inserted into the joints between them. The south – east corner stands only $\frac{1}{2}$ inch higher than the north – west corner, and the difference between the longest and shortest sides is less than 8 inches, which is a discrepancy of 0.09%. Moreover, the angle of elevation of the Great Pyramid is $51^{\circ}\,52'$ which gives the remarkable geometrical property that its height stands in the same ration to its circumference as the radius to the circumference of a circle. This ratio is $1/2\pi$, and the really strange thing is that the Egyptians did not discover the accurate value of π until more than 1000 years after Khufu.

3 All this has led some investigators to suggest, quite seriously, that the pyramid may have been constructed with the aid of computors or perhaps by visitors from other planets. If members of a more advanced civilization had visited the earth thousands of years ago, then they might have left certain secrets of technology to help the Egyptian architects. Other investigators hold the opinion that the pyramid is a place where major events of history can be prophesied, or that the dimensions of the great building contain many significant pieces of information, such as the precise length of the year or the speed of light and the orbit of the planets.

4 Although modern Egyptologists consider these theories to be nonsense, there are a number of fundamental unanswered questions about the pyramid. The first of these is how was it built? The ancient Egyptians did not

use the wheel and had no knowledge of pulleys and winches. How, then, could they move so much stone so far and erect such a perfectly proportioned structure with nothing more than simple tools and their own physical strength? Stone for the core was cut from the coarse, red sandstone on the Giza plateau where the Great Pyramid stands. The limestone facing came from the east bank of the Nile, while the granite for the galleries and chambers came from Aswan 900 km. south.

5 The next real problem concerns the length of time all the cutting and building must have taken. Herodotus, the Greek historian, stated that the Great Pyramid took 100,000 men a total of 30 years to build, but Egyptologists point out that Khufu reigned for only 23 years. If he died before the structure was completed, it would probably have remained unfinished.

6 Even more difficult to understand is how the heavy stones were raised to such a height. It is now considered likely that the blocks were dragged up a huge ramp made of stone and earth, and each time a layer of stone was completed, the ramp would be raised and lengthened. In the case of the Great Pyramid the ramp would finally have been a mile long, with a volume of masonry 4 times greater than the pyramid itself. It is doubtful whether there was enough manpower in the country to construct more than half of such a ramp.

7 Finally, *why* was the Great Pyramid built? The most probable answer seemed to be that pyramid was a burial place for the embalmed body of the pharaoh, an impenetrable tomb which contained not only the king himself but also everything he would need for the life after death. However, in AD 820 an Egyptain ruler Abdullah Al Mamun broke into the pyramid, driving a tunnel through the stone a few feet above the sand. The original single entrance, 8 metres above ground on the northern face, had long since been forgotten, but after tunneling for 30 metres, Al Mamun's men hit a descending passage. At the end of this they discovered the first burial crypt, which contained nothing but dust and debris. Halfway up the passage, however, they found the entrance to an ascending passage plugged with granite blocks. Cutting around the granite, they came across a tunnel which led to a larger vault, today called the Queen's Chamber, which was also empty. Finally, they reached the King's Chamber at the top of the ascending passage, the final section of which is much wider and higher and is known as the Grand Gallery. In the King's Chamber they once again found nothing, except for a huge lidless sarcophagus of dark, polished granite.

8 This is incredible. Tutankhamen, an unimportant ruler who died after only 9 years on the throne, had a tomb containing an immense treasure, and so we might expect that Khufu, a powerful King who ruled for 23 years would have had even more treasure in his burial place. Another passage was discovered in the pyramid in 1763, a winding, rough shaft 70 m. long, leading from the Grand Gallery to the descending passage. This was probably dug without Khufu's knowledge, to allow the workers who had put the granite plugs in place to escape. It is possible that the king's treasure was also removed by this route, provided that such large objects as the king's gold - encased mummy were broken up first. But where are the thousands of food - jars which can still be seen in other pyramids and where is the cover of the huge sarcophagus?

9 Perhaps, then, Khufu was never in fact buried in his pyramid but in a place which has not yet been discovered. Alternatively, there may be a chamber still hidden in the Great Pyramid which contains the body of the pharaoh and his treasure. In that case the new cosmic - ray detector developed at the University of California may be able to discover it. This machine can, in effect, take X - ray pictures of the pyramid's interior and could therefore reveal the presence of a secret chamber. If no such room is discovered in the Great Pyramid, then the questions will still remain, why was it built and where *was* Khufu buried?

Questions

I. a) What specific information is given to describe the size of the Great Pyramid? (several points)
   b) What evidence is given for the skill with which the pyramid was built?
   c) What are the questions or problems still surrounding the Great Pyramid?
   d) What evidence is there that the Great Pyramid may not have been used for burial?
   e) Label the parts on the diagram of the pyramid as indicated.

II. Establish the meaning of the following words from their context in the passage.
   a) masonry (10)
   b) slabs (12)
   c) accurately (13)
   d) discrepancy (16)
   e) prophesied (29)
   f) significant (30)
   g) proportioned (37-38)
   h) ramp (51)
   i) impenetrable (59)
   j) plugged (68)

III. a) Did Napoleon want to build a wall from the Great Pyramid stones? How do you know? (para. 1)
   b) How might space - travellers have influenced the building of the pyramids? (para. 3)

c) Why was the winding passage leading out from the Grand Gallery dug? (para. 8)

d) How do you know that it is not certain if there was a ramp to aid construction of the Great Pyramid? (para. 6)

e) What does the possible removal of large objects from the King's Chamber depend upon? (para. 8)

f) Why might the new cosmic - ray machine be helpful in studying the Great Pyramid?

IV. a) Find the contrast in para. 1. What are the contrasted ideas?

b) What noun could stand in place of "its" (5)

c) Underline all conditional/uncertainty markers in para. 9.

d) What does "this" refer to? (23)

e) What is the large, central contrast in para. 7 marked by "however" (61).

f) Find the cause/effect relationship in para. 2. What is the cause and what is the effect?

g) What does 'this' refer to? (75)

WRITING

I. Transform conditional/uncertainty to certainty in a) - d) below.

a) Napoleon calculated that if these stones were used to build a wall around France, there would be sufficient masonry to raise this wall to about 10 feet in height.

b) If members of a more advanced civilization had visited the earth thousands of years ago, then they might have left certain secrets of technology to help the Egyptians.

c) It is doubtful whether there was enough manpower in the country to construct more than half of such a ramp.

d) It is possible that the king's treasure was also removed by this route, provided that such large objects as the king's gold - encased mummy were broken up first.

e) Rewrite paragraph 9 using different uncertainty/conditional markers in place of the ones which are already there.

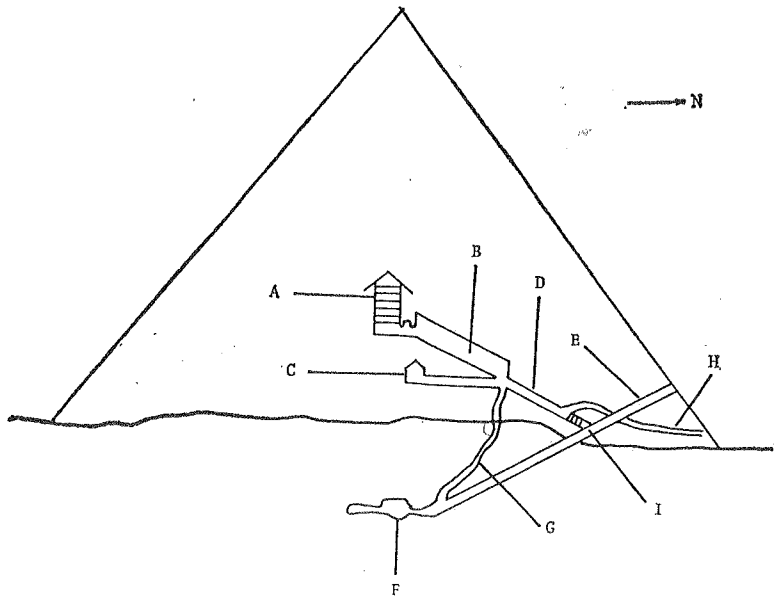
II. Join the following items into single sentences according to instructions.

a) The tomb contained the king himself.
The tomb contained everything the king would need □ + □
in the life after death. [uncertainty]

b) [contrast] Modern Egyptologists consider these theories to be nonsense. There are a number of fundamental unanswered questions about the pyramid.

c) [cause/effect] The pyramids of Egypt have inspired great awe and admiration. The size of the pyramids is very great. The age of the pyramids is very great.

Section of Khufu's Pyramid at Giza



d) [compare] The limestone facing came □ + □
from the east bank of the Nile.
The granite for the galleries and chambers came from Aswan. [relative] Aswan is 900 km to the south.

e) [possibility, except for relative clause] ↓ + ↓
Khufu was buried in his pyramid. □ □
Khufu was buried in another place.
[relative] This place has not yet been discovered.

III. a) Find all relative clauses in para. 7 and rewrite the main and qualifying ideas as separate sentences.

b) Use relatives and any other necessary connectives to make each of the following groups into one sentence:

i) We might expect that Khufu would have had even more treasure in his burial place.
Khufu was a powerful king.
Khufu reigned for 23 years.

ii) Another passage was discovered in the pyramid in 1763.
This passage is a winding rough shaft 70 m. long.
This passage leads from the Grand Gallery to the descending passage.

iii) There might be a chamber still hidden in the great pyramid.
This chamber might contain the body of the pharaoh.
This chamber might contain the treasure of the pharaoh.

IV. a) Find the uses of the passive in para. 8. Rewrite with verbs in active form the sentences containing these passives, providing a suitable subject where necessary.

b) Complete the following sentences using verbs in passive/form.

i) In AD 820 an entrance to an ascending passage/find/, plugged with granite blocks.

ii) In the next year or two a secret chamber in the Great pyramid/discover/.

iii) During the last 150 years many theories about the meaning of the pyramids/suggest/.

V. a) Write one sentence to summarize or state the main idea of paragraphs 1, 2, 3, 7, 9,

b) Go back to the cross-section diagram of the Great Pyramid and write a brief description of the lay-out of the interior. Pay attention to prepositional relationships (above, below, at the end of, etc.).