Screening appropriate teaching materials. Closings from textbooks and television soap operas.
Screening appropriate teaching materials Closings from textbooks and television soap operas

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Abstract
Textbook conversational closings have come under criticism for their failure to replicate natural conversation. Given that authentic conversation is both difficult to collect and use in a classroom context, television and video materials have been suggested as an alternative (McCarthy and Carter 1994; Vanderplank 1993; Allan 1985; MacKnight 1983). This paper uses Schegloff and Sacks’ (1973) description of native speaker conversational closings as a framework for analysing closings in ESL/EFL textbooks and soap operas. It compares textbook closings with closings from fifty episodes of the New Zealand soap opera *Shortland Street*. The results show that although New Zealand soap opera materials are far from ideal, they are a better source of data than many textbook examples.

In this paper conversational closings from a range of textbooks are compared with closings from episodes of the New Zealand week night soap opera *Shortland Street* to determine the usefulness of soap opera language in the teaching of conversation to second- and foreign-language students. Closings were chosen because they are particularly difficult. Levinson (1983: 316) explains:

> Closings are a delicate matter both technically in the sense that they must be so placed that no party is forced to exit while still having compelling things to say, and socially in the sense that both over-hasty and over-slow terminations can carry unwelcome inferences about the social relationships between the participants.

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**About the article**

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