**Slide 1:** Use your own title if you want.

**Slide 2**: Tell your audience that there will be five parts to the presentation. (But feel free to add or omit parts in your own presentation.) Decide whether you want to make the slides available to your audience after the presentation. (The advantage is that participants do not need to make so many notes and can listen and think instead.) Explain that you will use the terms ‘feature’ or ‘item’ to describe individual ‘bits’ of spoken grammar.

Note: Q? on the slides and in these notes indicates a moment when you may want to ask your audience for their thoughts.

**Slide 3**: **PART A (What is spoken grammar?)** Show your audience these utterances, each with an item of spoken grammar in it. Q? Ask them if they can identify any features that are particularly ‘conversational’ so that they can quickly see the kind of thing you’re talking about. This is a way of checking their knowledge. Then show them Slide 4.

**Slide 4:** Here are the ‘answers’:

1. ‘Barcelona’ is a tail, allowing you to alter the normal order of words to put information at the end of an utterance.

2. ‘That friend of yours’ is a head, allowing you to put information at the front of your utterance.

3. ‘Or something’, is an example of vague language.

4. ‘Beautiful day’ and ‘Lovely’ are elliptical forms. (‘**It’s a** beautiful day’ … ‘**(Yes), it’s** lovely.’) But they also follow the pattern of cooperative/synonymous responses, which you’ll mention later.

5. & 7. ‘Hey’ and ‘Look’ are spoken discourse markers. In these examples, ‘hey’ introduces direct speech and ‘look’ introduces an assertive comment.

6. ‘Nice and quick’ are binomial adjectives, where the first adjective carries little meaning.

Make sure that your audience understands 1) that all these utterances are examples of conversational English rather than slang, 2) spoken language has its own grammatical rules and shouldn’t be regarded as an ‘incorrect’ form of written language and 3) some of the features included in the umbrella term ‘spoken grammar’ are lexical.

**Slide 5**: This is where you explain that descriptions of spoken grammar in journal articles and books (examples on the slide) began as early as the 1990s. They resulted from the computer processing of thousands of conversations (collected in ‘corpora’). McCarthy and Carter used the Cambridge CANCODE corpus.

**Slide 6**: The first two grammars to describe spoken grammar in detail were published by Longman and Cambridge University Press. These are still very useful for anyone interested in spoken grammar. Longman gives very precise information on the frequency of grammar items. Cambridge is more accessible, perhaps.

**Slide 7**: You can also point out that spoken grammar is an evolving rather than a fixed field. Terms may be described in different ways. In this presentation, we use the term ‘heads’ or ‘headers’, but other terms for this same feature have been used, as you can see on this slide.

**Slide 8**: Conclude this part of the talk by explaining that the term ‘spoken grammar’, as used by researchers and teachers in the context of this presentation, tends to have a special meaning, i.e., it doesn’t just mean ‘all the grammar used in speaking’. This slide offers a definition.

**Slide 9**: Time to begin **PART B (Is it teachable?)**

**Slide 10**: Here are three criteria of teachability. In this presentation, we would argue that for many items of spoken grammar these criteria can be met, just as they can for more traditional grammatical items such as verb tenses.

**Slide 11**: Let’s take ‘heads’ as an example.

**Slide 12**: Q? Ask the audience to comment on the formation of a head.

**Slide 13**: Here’s the answer. On this slide you can see that when you change the normal word order of an utterance to put a ‘head’ at the front, the new form has an extra word, a pronoun, which ‘represents’ the head in the second part of the utterance. (This is called a co-referential pronoun.) This is a ‘rule’ of formation.

**Slide 14**: Q? Now ask the audience to look at these examples. What additional information about the structure of heads can they see?

**Slide 15**: Here’s the answer. Students need to know that prepositional phrases and relative clauses can also be used as heads. And that heads can be subjects or objects. As for usage, show the audience the next slide.

**Slide 16**: Q? Now ask your audience to look at all the examples and suggest why people use heads in conversation.

**Slide 17**: These slides show summary notes, but here are the full explanations that you can give.

1) in the ‘heat’ of real-time conversation, heads allow you to say the important thing first, and then ‘do’ the grammar later. I.e., you can ‘break’ your utterance into two parts.

2) Heads are often questions, asking for clarification. (But they don’t have to be, e.g.: ‘Your dad, he’s so helpful.’)

3) A head can be a bit like pointing your finger (‘That white building…?)

4) Heads (and tails) usually refer to things we know about already or can see (‘shared information’ rather than ‘new information’) and often use ‘that/those’.

**Slide 18**: Q? Let’s take another example. Ask your audience to look at these two-line dialogues and identify a frequent feature of conversational English.

**Slide 19**: Here the feature is highlighted. It’s a ‘demonstrative wh- cleft’, which is common in spoken English and is used for emphatic purposes. (Simple wh-clefts, e.g. *What I want is a nice, hot bath* and ‘it’ clefts (more common in written English), e.g. *It is Parliament that needs to make these decisions* are both already taught in traditional materials.)

**Slide 20:** Again, this is a ‘teachable’ item in that students have a formational pattern to learn.

**Slide 21: PART C (Should we teach it?)** Q? This is for the audience to discuss in an open way. Here are some views you may hear or want to suggest:

**Pro**:Carefully selected items of spoken grammarare easy to use and helpful in natural conversation. They offer students additional ‘choices. They contribute to a friendly, ‘personable’ English.

**Anti**: Should we add more grammatical items to students’ syllabuses? Are spoken grammar items too native-like when we should be trying to ‘create’ a simpler global English?

In the end, individual teachers must decide. (And this presentation may help!)

**Slide 22**: As part of the ‘pro’ argument, here are some examples where spoken grammar may make life easier for students. Using ‘or something’ means you don’t have to give a list of alternatives. Using ‘the thing’ and ‘sort of’ means you don’t need to find the precise word. ‘Any messages?’ (an example of ellipsis) is easier to say than ‘Are there any messages?’. And, in the final example, using someone else’s direct speech in your conversation means you don’t have to make tense and pronoun shifts.

**Slide 23**: **PART** **D (Which features of spoken grammar should we teach?)** Descriptive corpus-based grammars offer a *very* wide range of spoken grammar items because it’s their job to *describe* (not *prescribe*) as much native-speaker English as possible. So how can we select from these?

**Slide 24**: Suggest that we could use the three criteria on this slide for selecting an item.

**Slide 25** Q? If you want, ask the audience why the examples might *not* meet these criteria. Here are possible answers:

1. This is a ‘clausal blend’ where speakers, under the pressure of time, mix up their syntax. Probably, there’s no point in teaching students how to make mistakes, even if these are ‘natural’ mistakes (which descriptive grammarians will include in their grammars)? Other ‘natural’ mistakes include ‘multiple consecutive repeats’ and ‘retrace and repair sequences’.

2. Similarly, forms such as ’innit’ are certainly used by speakers but, as socially or regionally ‘marked’ forms are probably not appropriate.

3. This is an example of a ‘head’ that involves a subject change, rather than a co-referential pronoun. It is quite common but probably should be regarded as a *receptive* rather a *productive* form except for advanced students who are looking for this kind of English.

**Slide 26**: So, if we apply these three criteria, what would a syllabus look like? Two publications have attempted to provide the answer. The first was *A Handbook of Spoken Grammar*, a student book first published in 2011 by DELTA. The cover you see here is of the 2020 edition.

**Slide 27**: The second is an online course with materials for teachers first published in 2018 on the Udemy learning platform. Let’s look at that second syllabus.

**Slide 28**: The online course divides its syllabus into these five sections and covers 15 items. (Give the audience a chance to look at this syllabus.)

**Slides 29 - 33**: Go through each of the five sections. The audience will be keen (we hope!) to see examples of each item. Make comments on any of the items that you would like to, using your knowledge of spoken grammar.

A note on ‘Vague lexical bundles’ slide 31. Point out, if you like, that Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English has a fascinating section on lexical bundles: strings of words that are used to ‘launch’ spoken utterances. Three-word bundles are perhaps too frequent to be interesting; five-word bundles are too infrequent. But four-word bundles are particularly useful. Many of these express uncertainty. In this context, ‘don’t’ is counted as one word.

**Slide 34:** **PART E (How can we teach it?)** Ask the audience for ideas.One point you might like to make is that spoken grammar is as teachable as any other, traditional item of grammar/lexis, so different teachers will use different techniques.

**Slide 35:** Here is the three-part approach taken in the online course.

**Slide 36**: Guided discovery through two/three-line dialogues. Q? What feature is being discovered here? Answer: binomial adjectives. Students will already be familiar with fixed noun binomials such as ‘fish and chips’, ‘black and white’ and adverb pairs such as ‘round and round’. But how do adjective binomials work? Ask the audience to tell you the difference in type between ‘rich and famous’ and ‘lovely and warm’ in the dialogues that they see on this slide. The answer is that ‘rich and famous’ is a fixed pair (which simply needs to be learnt) and ‘lovely and warm’ is semi-fixed.

**Slide 37**: Guided discovery 🡪 elicit further examples. Students may know more examples of type A. (fixed) and type B. (semi-fixed). Q? Can the audience suggest any ‘rules’ governing type B?

**Slide 38**: Guided discovery 🡪 elicit formation/usage/rules. In both ‘lovely/nice’ and ‘good’ pairs, the first adjective intensifies the second but has little meaning itself. Where ‘lovely/nice’ pairs are used in a wide variety of positive situations, ‘good’ pairs tend to be used in ‘practical’ situations.

**Slide 39**: Guided discovery 🡪 through longer, ‘compromise’ dialogues. ‘Compromise’ means natural language but, for teaching purposes, with the target items occurring more often that is likely. Q? Which feature are we focusing on in this dialogue? Answer: heads.

**Slide 40:** Controlled practice: gap-filling.This example dialogue focuses on the vague suffixes ‘-ish’ and ‘-y’.

**Slide 41 :** Controlled practice: gap-filling. These dialogues are practising cooperative/synonymous responses (where, normally at the beginning of conversations, the listener repeats the speaker’s opening line, using a synonym word or phrase.) The gaps are ‘open’: many options are possible.

**Slide 42**: Controlled practice: transforming. In these dialogues students look for potential initial ellipsis.

**Slide 43**: Freer practice: heads and tails.

**Slide 44**: Freer practice: (short) response questions.

**Slide 45**: Freer practice: discourse markers.

**Q & A** if you want. (Do what I do: if you don’t know that answer to a question, just say ‘I don’t know’, but I’ll find out and get back to you – by email etc.)