

# TESOL QUARTERLY

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A Journal for Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages

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The *TESOL Quarterly* encourages submission of previously unpublished articles of general professional significance to teachers of English to speakers of other languages and dialects, especially in the following areas: (1) The definition and scope of our profession; assessment of needs within the profession; teacher education; (2) Instructional methods and techniques; material needs and developments; testing and evaluation; (3) Language planning; psychology and sociology of language learning; curricular problems and developments; (4) Implications and applications of research from related fields, such as anthropology, communication, education, linguistics, psychology, sociology. The *TESOL Quarterly* also encourages submission of reviews of textbooks and background books of general interest to the profession. Submit articles to the Editor (Barry Taylor, English Program for Foreign Students, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA 19104). Submit reviews to the Review Editor (Richard Schmidt, Department of ESL, 1890 East West Road, University of Hawaii, Honolulu, HI 96822).

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### **Research Notes**

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## ***The Effect of "Superlearning Techniques" on the Vocabulary Acquisition and Alpha Brainwave Production of Language Learners\****

**Michael J. Wagner and Germaine Tilney**

This study investigated the applicability of techniques adapted from Lozanov's "Suggestopedia" described in Ostrander and Schroeder *Superlearning* (1979). Lack of scientific validity in experiments substantiating claims about Suggestology as cited in Scovel's review of Lozanov's Suggestology and outlines of Suggestopedya, prompted this investigation. While using relaxation tapes manufactured by Superlearning, Inc., Superlearning methodology, and an electroencephalograph to measure brainwave activity during Superlearning sessions, twenty-one adult intensive English students, language teachers, and graduate music education students were taught a discrete 300-word German language vocabulary list over a five week period, both with Baroque music (n=7) and without Baroque music (n=7). A no-contact control group (n=7) learned the same vocabulary by "traditional" methods using a teacher in a classroom setting.

Analysis of language acquisition data revealed no significant improvement across the five-week experimental period. Also, no significant drop in scores across the experimental period suggests that vocabulary was retained in all groups. When modes of presentation were compared, those taught by a traditional classroom method learned significantly more vocabulary than those taught by Superlearning techniques. Left hemisphere monitoring of brainwaves showed no significant changes in Alpha brainwave rhythms across the experimental period in any group. There was no significant increase in Alpha activity during relaxation sessions or during language presentation sessions in the areas of the brain which were monitored. Although scrupulous care to preserve "Superlearning" methodology was taken in this investigation, accelerated learning could not be substantiated.

In the educational system of the United States, there has traditionally been a bias toward rational, linear, logical modes of learning which are consistent with the cognitive processes and hierarchies of growth described by Piaget. Research continues to indicate that the areas of the two cerebral hemispheres

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\*This is a slightly revised version of a paper presented at TESOL, 1982. The authors would like to thank Tom Scovel and an anonymous *Tesol Quarterly* reviewer for helpful comments on an earlier draft.

of the human brain are specialized for different cognitive functions (Gazzaniga 1967:24-25). The left hemisphere of the brain is primarily in control of the rational, linear, logical thinking processes. The right hemisphere exerts control over intuition, creativity and possibly, imagination (Bogen 1973).

Recently, the popular press has focused on generalizations of the complex functions of the hemispheric lateralized structure of the brain. Claims regarding stress reduction, mind control, improved physical performance, have been made. The recent popularity of the book *Superlearning* by Ostrander and Schroeder (1979), seemed to hold great promise in the field of education and more exciting . . . in the area of language and vocabulary retention.

Superlearning techniques find their origin in a foreign language instructional technique based on the application of "Suggestopedia" methods to classroom learning. This approach, which is used in the Soviet Union and Bulgaria, and developed by Georgi Lozanov, a Bulgarian physician and psychotherapist, utilizes Yoga, Baroque music, parapsychology, and autogenic therapy and provides "pupil-centered" rather than "curriculum-centered" classroom experiences. Lozanov's work is based on Suggestology, the scientific study of suggestion and its effect on human behavior and on Suggestopedia which is the application of Suggestology to the educational realm (Lozanov 1979). Suggestopedia addresses the total person including the vast subsensory world of the paraconscious (or unconscious). Disclaiming former limiting and negative assumptions about mental capability, Suggestology purports new norms for mental capability. This approach combines the Raja Yoga techniques of the Brahman, who could memorize volumes of Vedic literature, with other scientifically researched techniques such as: music therapy, psychodrama, autosuggestion, and psychorelaxation (Meier 1979:53). Lozanov's experiments started with foreign language study to see if he could produce hypermnesia or supermemory in a group of average people by providing the proper environment and conditioning. The results reported were exceptional: a learning rate of 5 to 50 times that of a normal classroom (Meier 1979). There is a great interest in "Suggestopedia" in the Soviet Bloc countries because they have traditionally been interested in rapid learning systems to help "catch up" with western industrialized countries. As information on the methodology of Suggestopedia began to reach Canada, claims began to appear here in the United States also. In Iowa, for example, it was reported that students learned a full year of Spanish in 10 days (Bordon 1976:3-15). Some researchers and teachers in Iowa publish a journal entitled SALT, an acronym for Suggestive-Accelerative Learning and Teaching. The SALT society also has teacher training programs and hosts international conferences. Its methods vary from almost a pure replication of Lozanov's methods to adaptations that eliminate or change various elements of the method with supposedly similar results. In 1977, Ivan Barzakov who worked in Lozanov's schools in Bulgaria, defected

to the U.S. Since then he has established his own version of Suggestopedia in San Francisco and Toronto and advertised in professional publications that he can train teachers to deliver 2,000 lexical units with basic grammar and speaking proficiency in 23 days at 3 hours daily.

Two Americans, Shiela Ostrander and Lynn Schroeder, visited Bulgaria to research Lozanov's methods. They subsequently published the best-selling book *Superlearning* (1979). The authors draw heavily from Lozanov's basic methods in their adaptation of "Suggestopedia," and provide instructions for creating a learning program using some of the primary elements necessary for accelerated learning. They outline specific instructions for relaxation, and breathing techniques, combined with mental imagery, rhythmic intonation, and specific selections of Baroque music. There is also a commercial enterprise, Superlearning, Inc. which markets tapes to aid in the setting up of Superlearning sessions. Foreign language vocabulary learning is suggested as a particularly apt application for Superlearning (Ostrander & Schroeder 1979).

An integral part of second language learning is vocabulary. Experts say a minimum working vocabulary should be anywhere from 2,000 to 3,000 words with 7,000 to sufficiently cover most everyday situations (Keller 1978). This formidable task often causes students to become discouraged. After mastering 1,000 beginning level words, students see no end to the process. Many abandon their language studies after 1 or 2 years because they feel that it is impossible to learning the necessary number of words in a reasonable amount of time. For this reason, primarily, Superlearning techniques looked exciting and promising.

Further, *Superlearning* (1979) also claims that "Supermemory" sessions cause physiological changes, specifically that Alpha brainwave production increases by 6% during sessions. Accelerated vocabulary learning and increased brainwave production seemed reason enough to justify an experiment testing the efficacy of Superlearning methods. Ostrander and Schroeder cite interesting, if not extravagant claims for Lozanov's learning techniques. It seems prudent for purposes of this introduction to list some of these claims (Ostrander and Schroeder 1979):

1. "... 1,000 words had been learned in a day" (p. 15)
2. "this system speeds up learning from five to fifty times, increases retention, requires virtually no effort on the part of the student . . ." (p. 15)
3. "... the method appeared to improve health and cure stress-related illnesses." (p. 33)
4. "In 1977, Lozanov reported, some tests showed people capable of absorbing even 3,000 words per day" (p. 35)
5. "... material can be presented at a rate of around 400 data-bits an hour . . ." (p. 35)



If the claims made for Lozanov's work by Ostrander and Schroeder in *Superlearning* could be substantiated, it seemed that above all, the field of education could benefit.

In view of the fact that *Superlearning* is Ostrander and Schroeder's American adaptation of Lozanov's methodology, a study was designed to test Superlearning's effectiveness. The experiment proposed that the vocabulary test scores and Alpha brainwave levels of subjects using Superlearning methods would be significantly higher than those whose instruction does not follow the strategies of Superlearning.

### Method

Nine adult advanced intensive English student volunteers, whose principal language is Spanish served as one subset of the experimental population. Three Intensive English Program instructors and nine graduate music education students at Florida International University also volunteered to serve as subjects. Each of the twenty-one subjects was randomly assigned to one of three experimental treatments or modes of vocabulary presentation so that there was an equal number of subjects from each category in the three modes of vocabulary presentation. The experimental group (n=7) received German language training using "Superlearning" methodology. A contact control group (n=7) received exactly the same "Superlearning" sessions as the experimental group but without the Baroque music. A third group (n=7), receiving German language training in the classroom, served as a no-contact control. All twenty-one subjects were right-handed.

FIGURE 1

Vocabulary Presentation, Testing and Brainwave Monitoring Schedule

	Wk 1	Wk 2		Wk 3	Wk 4		Wk 5
		Mon.	Thurs.		Mon.	Thurs.	
Ind. Sessions with Brainwave Monitoring	X			X			X
Group Sessions		X	X		X	X	
Vocabulary List Presentations	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5		V6
Tests		Test 1 over (V2)	Test 2 over (V1)			Test 3 over (V1 + V4)	

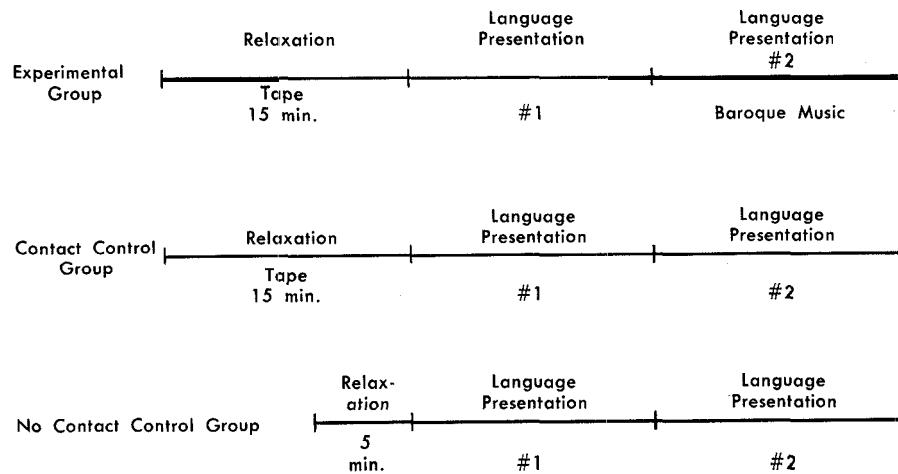
A discrete list of 300 German vocabulary words was divided into six lists with 50 randomly assigned words per list. These lists were recorded on cassette tapes in the manner prescribed by Superlearning (one word presented every eight seconds and at three alternating dynamic levels), and served as the experimental German vocabulary presentations.

The experiment spanned a five-week period (See Figure 1). In weeks one, three and five, S's came once every week to the FIU Psychophysiological Learning Laboratory at times which were mutually convenient to the subject and the laboratory staff.

During weeks two and four, S's in the experimental and control groups attended a special session on Monday and Thursday evenings in the FIU Language Laboratory. During the first, third and fifth week sessions, all S's came to the Psychophysiological Learning Lab, one at a time, and had the left hemisphere of their brains monitored using an electrode montage which monitored between points T3 and T5 (10-20 Electrode System). This area, associated with speech and known as Broca's area and the adjacent Wernicke's area (Geschwind 1970:941) was monitored on an Autogenic Systems, Inc. 120A electroencephalograph and recorded on a model DASH-1, Astro-Med thermal chart printer. Language presentations were via Pioneer SE-2 wafer headphones from a Harman-Kardon hk100m cassette deck. Subjects sat in a quiet, well-lighted room, in an overstuffed, reclining, easy-chair.

FIGURE 2

Configuration of week 1, 3, and 5 physiological monitoring in the FIU psychophysiological learning laboratory.



"Superlearning" techniques were strictly followed in this study (see Figure 2). The following description of a memory session is excerpted from *Superlearning* (1979:107-108):

"... Before beginning part one, do your relaxation exercises. . .

*Part One - Without Music*

There are only two things you have to do. Silently read the material as a voice recites it rhythmically. Second, try to breathe in rhythm on the eight beat cycle. As you'll hear, the teaching voice pauses for four seconds, then recites the information during the next four seconds, then pauses four seconds, and so on. Breathe out and in during the silence. Hold your breath for the four seconds when material is being delivered. That's all you have to do.

Let's say it takes fifteen minutes to run through the material once. In fifteen minutes you can absorb as many as eighty to one hundred new bits of information. Most people begin with forty to fifty new things.

*Part Two - With Music*

Immediately after running through the material once, put down your paper, dim the lights, lean back, and close your eyes. Listen to the same material recited again, but this time with music. Pay attention to what is being said. Breathe along with the recitation - breathing out and in during the silences, merely holding your breath as the information is delivered. As you begin to feel comfortable with the technique, try visualizing the material to further hook your memory. But don't strain and don't try too hard. Just listen to the words and breathe, and review images of the material.

Afterward, most people give themselves a short quiz after the sessions. Think of this as a feedback device, helping you keep on course. . ."

Subjects in the "Superlearning" mode of presentation (experimental group) and the "Superlearning without music" (contact control) group received a taped relaxation session which began with deep muscle relaxation exercises. S's were asked to first tense, then systematically relax each of the body's muscles. The second phase of relaxation concerned establishing rhythmic, eight-second breathing, and the third phase used a combination of the behavioral techniques of systematic desensitization and guided imagery. S's were guided down an imaginary escalator for seven floors, each more relaxing than the next. The entire relaxation tape took 15 minutes. Then the language tapes were presented.

The no-contact control group subjects also individually came to their appointment time in the Psychophysiological Learning Laboratory once during weeks one, three and five. Like the other two groups, they also sat in a comfortable reclining chair and had electrodes attached to their scalps at points T3 and T5. Subjects in this no-contact control group were asked to sit back and relax for a few minutes before the language presentation. Their relaxation period lasted only five minutes. Previous studies in the Psychophysiological Learning Laboratory have shown that without directed relaxation methods, baseline sessions longer than five minutes tend to be tedious to subjects without revealing any new information. These subjects were then given the discrete vocabulary list. First they read silently along with the tape and then closed their eyes and listened to the list for a second time. No musical background occurred in this second presentation either for the contact control or the no-contact control groups.

Vocabulary (language) presentation tapes were prepared on a TEAC 80-8

eight-channel tape recorder and a DBX 155 noise reduction system. The voice was recorded using a Sennheiser MU-421 microphone. The "Superlearning, Inc." 20-minute cassette tape of Baroque music was rerecorded on track 1 of the master tape. A female voice recorded word lists 1 through 6 using the prescribed three alternate dynamic levels on tracks 2 through 7. The English equivalent of the German vocabulary word was given first, followed by the German word to be memorized. Presentations were alternately given in a "normal" voice, in a "commanding" voice, and in a "confidential whisper." When the experimental cassette tapes were dubbed, one cassette of each list was recorded with the female voice mixed over the Baroque music. Another cassette was recorded using the same voice track, but without music, thus ensuring controlled presentations across groups. \*

During weeks two and four, the experimental and contact control group met in the Florida International University Language Laboratory. Here, via a Sony LLC-11/RM-1030 Console Language System with remote controlled ER-840 Cassette Booth Recorders, both groups received orientation and instructions as to procedures, more vocabulary presentations and all vocabulary tests (see Figure 1). Tests consisted of the same vocabulary as in the learning sessions, with the words presented in a different order. English language word lists were presented to S's who were also asked to listen to a taped, oral presentation of the list with no dynamic intonations. The task was to write the German equivalent words during an eight-second pause between aural presentations of the English words. Phonetic spellings of German words were scored as correct responses. No music was presented during any testing of vocabulary.

During weeks two and four, the no-contact control group met in a regular classroom. No special seating arrangement was used. The teacher recited the same randomized discrete list of vocabulary word scheduled for that week that experimental and contact control groups heard on their tapes. In this classroom, the teacher read the same randomized vocabulary list scheduled for that week that the experimental groups heard. The voice for the no-contact control group was the same voice as on the experimental tapes. No-contact control sessions began with the teacher handing out the list and asking the subjects to read silently along with the teacher. No special intonation or timing was used. The voice was a normal animated speaking voice. This list was then read through a second time, stopping for questions and using the blackboard for explanations when necessary. If spontaneous oral repetition occurred, it was not suppressed. The length of these sessions were the same as the experimental group's. It might be noted that these sessions closely resembled traditional, rote, classroom vocabulary sessions.

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\* Special thanks is extended to the Miami-Dade Community College, Miami, FL for the use of its recording studio and to Mr. Gerald Johnson for the excellent mastering of the tapes used in this experiment.

## Results

The percentage of correct responses on vocabulary tests provides one measure for this study. The percentage of Alpha brainwave content measured between points T3 and T5 of the left hemisphere serve as another measure.

When the vocabulary test data were analyzed using a two-way analysis of variance (Madsen & Moore 1978), significant differences were revealed between groups in the mode of presentation variable.

TABLE 1  
Two-Way Analysis of Variance of Test Scores by  
Test, Presentation and Mode of Presentation

Source	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Mean Sums of Squares	F
Test 1, Test 2, Test 3	937	2	468.5	1.37
Mode of Presentation (Group)	3,323	2	1661.5	4.85*
Interaction	1,487	4	371.8	1.09
Within Cell	18,486	54	342.3	
Total	24,233	62		

\* Significant at .05

A Newman-Keuls Multiple Comparison Procedure revealed that the means of test scores of the no-contact group, i.e., those who learned vocabulary by the "traditional classroom method" were significantly higher than the means of the other two groups.

TABLE 2  
Newman-Keuls multiple comparison of means of test scores (%) (line over means indicates no significant differences)

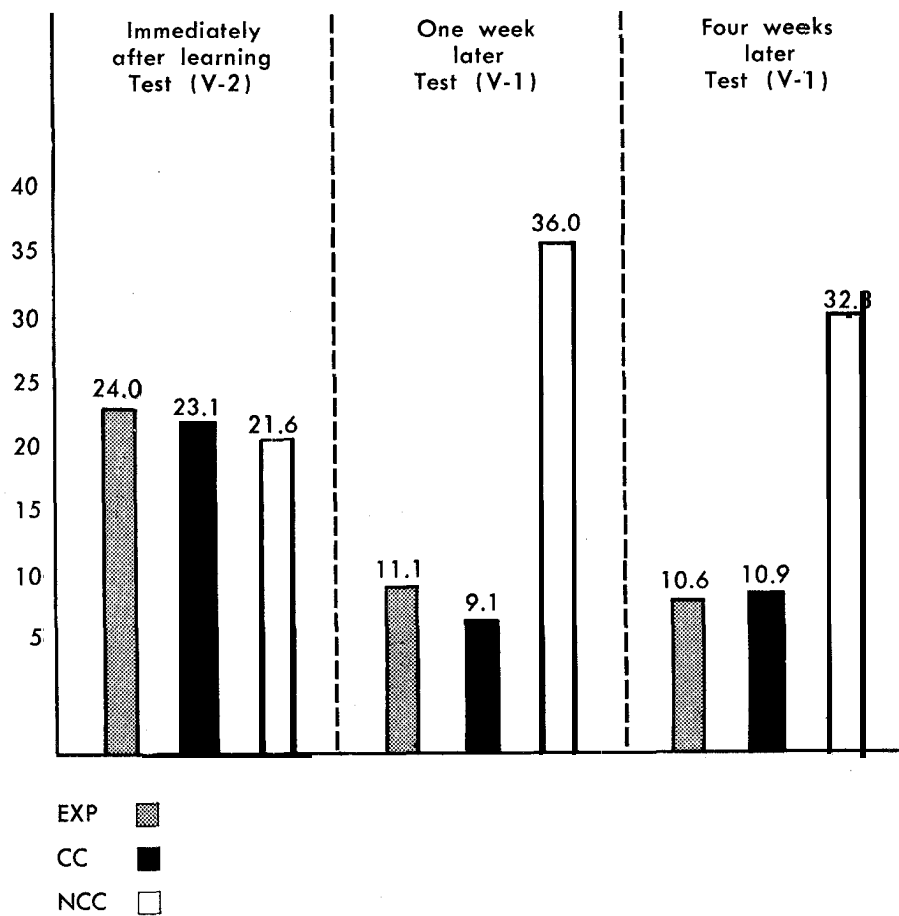
N.S.

N.S.		
12.7	13.8	28.7
<hr/>		
Contact Control Group	Experimental Group	No Contact Control Group

A graph of means of test scores for each group (presentation mode) is shown in Figure 3. It should be noted that there was no attempt to create equal time intervals between the administrations of the three tests. Rather, the test schedule for this research was designed to yield data in a variety of ways.

FIGURE 3

Graph of means of test scores for groups across Test 1, Test 2, Test 3.



Brainwave data were analyzed using a two-way analysis of variance. Possibly one of the more interesting findings of this research is that no significant differences were revealed either between groups, or across the five weeks of the experiment.

A graph of the mean percentage of left hemisphere, temporal lobe, Alpha brainwave content is provided. While each group's Alpha brainwave content was less during the mid-phase of the experiment, all groups increased Alpha production in the post monitoring session.

The percentage of Alpha brainwave activity during relaxation sessions was compared to the percentage of Alpha brainwave content during vocabulary presentation across mode of presentation (group). A two-way analysis of variance of these data revealed no significance between relaxa-

TABLE 3  
Two-Way Analysis of Variance of Percentage of Alpha Brainwave Content  
by Pre, Mid and Postmonitoring and Mode of Presentation (Group)

Source	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Mean Sums of Squares	F
Pre, Mid, Postmonitoring	2,355	2	1,178	2.7
Mode of Presentation	1,489	2	745	1.7
Interaction	1,316	4	329	<1
Within Cell	23,396	54	433	
Total	28,556			

an F value of 3.18 would be necessary to achieve a probability <.05.

TABLE 4  
Two-Way Analysis of Variance of the Means of Percentage of Alpha Brainwave Content  
During Relaxation Sessions vs. Vocabulary Presentation Sessions  
by Mode of Presentation (Group)

Source	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Mean Sums of Squares	F
Relaxation/Learning	2	1	2	<1
Mode of Presentation (Group)	590	2	295	2.03
Interaction	108	2	54	<1
Within Cell	5,236	36	145	
Total	5,936	41		

an F value of 3.27 would have been necessary to achieve a probability <.05.

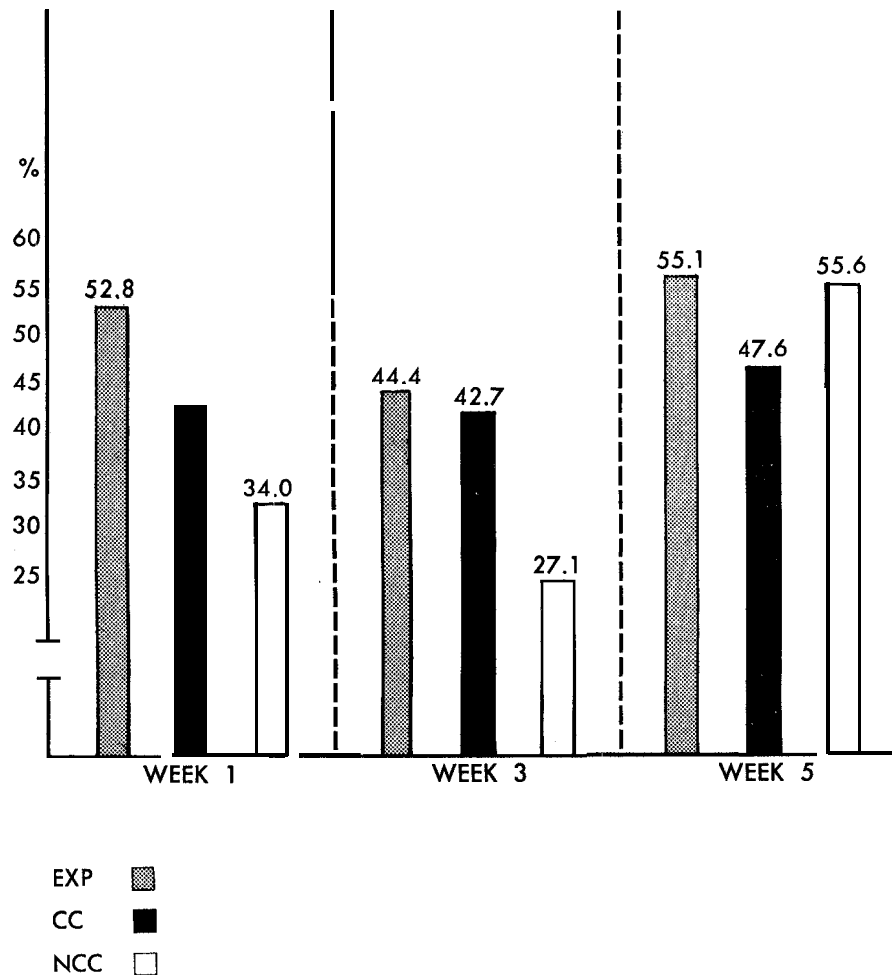
tion sessions and vocabulary learning sessions in any group, between points T3 and T5 of the left temporal lobe.

### Discussion

While the "method" tested in this study is clearly "Superlearning", the claims presented in the book *Superlearning* apply not to *its* own methods, but to the original "Suggestopedia" methodology by Lozanov. Indeed, all data and testimonials in the book refer to Lozanov's work. The mixing of data selected from Lozanov's work with the related but substantially different methodology presented in *Superlearning* (1979) and by Superlearning, Inc. gives the impression that at least better-than-average learning will be the result. This is misleading. Without careful perusal of the text and making a clear distinction between Lozanov's methods and Ostrander & Schroeder's methods, it could easily be assumed that 1) the two methodologies are so similar as to be inconsequentially different, and 2) that the Lozanov data can be generalized to support the "Superlearning" methodology. It was the purpose of this research to determine the effect of "Superlearning" methodology on vocabulary retention and to monitor Alpha brainwave production in the speech centers of subjects' brains.

FIGURE 4

Graph of means of percent of Alpha Brainwave Content between points T3 and T5 in three modes of presentations (groups) during Vocabulary Presentation in Weeks 1, 3 and 5.



To empirically verify claims made for "Superlearning" techniques, a careful design using scientific controls was chosen to isolate methodological variables (Campbell & Stanley 1963). The results of this study show that the no-contact control group achieved the highest scores. Considering the claims of Lozanov as quoted by Ostrander and Schroeder (1979), these experimental results of vocabulary acquisition are quite surprising. It is possible that a larger N might have distributed test scores differently. However, because of the homogeneity of scores on test 1, it would seem that the scores on tests 2 and 3 are plausible.



Brainwave data for this experiment seem more difficult to interpret. Alpha brainwave production seemed somewhat blocked in all groups in the midphase of the experiment, yet all groups increased left temporal Alpha production in the fifth week. Although no significant differences in brainwave activity between groups or over the first week period were found, it may be interesting to note that there seems to be a trend toward increased Alpha brainwave activity.

Difficulty arose in assigning a name to the methodology used by the no-contact control group. It seemed important to use a methodology whose elements were in some ways similar to those of the experimental groups. The rote method, while not necessarily a traditional methodology, seemed a conservative and fair method for vocabulary acquisition. Care was taken not to enhance the no-contact control group's vocabulary sessions beyond traditional rote means.

One of the findings of this research was that some words which were missed the first time the test was given were remembered two weeks later when the same test was given again. Further research focusing on this positive aspect of "Superlearning" might be interesting.

Further replications might focus on the relationship between vocabulary acquisition and brainwave production. In at least one other field, learning and Alpha brainwave activity have been shown to have a relationship (Wagner & Menzel 1977:151-164).

In summary, the combination of relaxation, special breathing, intonation, and music apparently were not enough to produce "super" results. Much of Lozanov's technique has been left out of Superlearning. Lozanov does not advocate that his techniques be taken apart to form new eclectic methodology and practical application to the average American classroom seems remote at this time. In view of this preliminary research, it remains to be shown that "Superlearning" really is better than an experienced, successful, "traditional" teacher in a "traditional" classroom setting.

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## ***Semantic Constructivity in ESL Reading Comprehension\****

**Kyle Perkins**

This paper reports the results of a study whose focus was semantic constructivity in ESL reading comprehension. It was found that ESL students exhibit semantic constructivity similar to L1 children and adults, i.e., they use their knowledge of the world and contribute to information found in the text. However, ESL readers' contributions to the text may be marred by language interference, developing English language competence and data- and resource-limitation phenomena.

This study attempts to extend empirical research on subjects' comprehension of single sentences by examining their comprehension of sets of related sentences, the research reported here focussing on L2 subjects. That readers bring meaning to the text during the reading comprehension process and that readers frequently remember more propositions than are encoded in the sentences which they read are by now well established tenets in both L1 children and adult reading research. These acknowledged tenets imply that reading is an active process wherein the reader brings meaning to the text itself and the reading process; much, if not all, of this meaning comes from the reader's knowledge of the world and previous experience with language.

### **Background**

There has been a perceived change in focus on both the linguistic units studied and measured in reading comprehension research and the processes attributed to the reader during the act of reading comprehension. For too long a period of time the sentence has been the principal unit of linguistic analysis and description and the object measure in reading comprehension (Bormuth et al 1970, Pearson 1974-75). Linguists and reading comprehension researchers have concerned themselves with how a reader associates a surface string of words (surface structure, constituent structure) with a semantic representation (deep structure).

Presently, the focus of research has shifted to larger (than sentence) units, the reader's contributions to the text and reading process, and how the reader relates incoming knowledge to previous knowledge, and various

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\*An expanded version of a paper read at the Fifteenth Annual International Conference of TESOL.

other topics. Anderson (1976) has claimed that information in larger-than-sentence units of discourse is processed, stored and retrieved by generating a "scenario;" the purpose of the scenario is to hold the information together. Extracting both explicit and implicit information from a written text and storing that information in scenarios or schemas is now of great interest to reading researchers. A schema has been defined as "a description of a particular class of concepts and is composed of a hierarchy of schemata" (Adams and Collins 1979:3). Schema theory goes back at least to Bartlett (1932) who described the types of information recalled by college students over incremental times from the initial presentation of a passage. Bartlett noted that subjects did not experience accurate recall of a prose passage; what the subjects did was to make inferences from the passage from a few details in terms of their schemas. According to Bartlett a schema is the organization of a subject's past experiences that directly influence current perception. New information is fitted into existing schema; if there is no particular fit, low grade information is lost (cf. Brown's 1972 cognitive pruning).

Bartlett, Kant (1963), and Woodworth (1938) have used the term schema; Charniak (1975) and Minsky (1975), frame; Lehnert (1977) and Schank and Abelson (1975), script; Becker (1973), Bobrow and Norman (1975), and Rumelhart and Ortony (1972), schemata.

The relevance of schema theory to reading comprehension is that it acknowledges semantic constructivity. Adams and Collins described the role of semantic constructivity:

A fundamental assumption of schema-theoretic approaches to language comprehension is that spoken or written text does not in itself carry meaning. Rather, a text only provides directions for listeners or readers as to how they should retrieve or construct the intended meaning from their own, previously acquired knowledge. The words of a text evoke in the reader associated concepts, their past interrelationships and their potential interrelationships. (Adams and Collins 1979:3)

Goodman's (1968) model of the reading process is a close parallel to the constructive view of reading. According to Goodman, the reader samples the graphemic, phonological, syntactic and semantic cues in the text, predicts or hypothesizes what the text is about, tests the predictions and then confirms or disconfirms the hypotheses. The reader is using world knowledge and previous experience with language to make hypotheses and is thereby constructing meaning by applying this store of knowledge to the text.

Blachowicz (1977-78) researched semantic constructivity in L1 children. The paradigm for semantic constructivity research involves acquisition sets of sentences and recognition sets of sentences involving causal, instrumental, spatial or temporal inferences. Subjects are provided sets of acquisition sentences and sets of recognition sentences which comprise a silent reading task. The recognition sentences contain various kinds of inferential state-

ments and subjects' misrecognitions of such inferences constitute evidence of semantic constructivity (e. g., the subjects indicate that they have seen an inferential sentence in the acquisition set, when in reality they have not; they have drawn an inference).

### The Study

This paper reports the results of a systematic investigation of semantic constructivity in ESL reading comprehension. The study reported herein was modeled after Blachowicz's excellent L1 study which focussed on the production of spatial inferences.

### The Subjects

This study was conducted at the Center for English as a Second Language, Southern Illinois University at Carbondale. The subjects were 43 adults receiving intensive ESL instruction at the Center. Native languages represented were Arabic, Chinese, Farsi, French, Greek, Japanese, Malaysian, Spanish, Thai, and Turkish. Three different proficiency levels were involved: R2-a beginning reading class; R3-an advanced.

### The Materials

The study was modeled exclusively after Blachowicz; the author wrote all materials using Blachowicz's examples as models. The acquisition materials consisted of 10 short, 3-sentence paragraphs like the following:

The birds sat on the branch.  
A hawk flew over it.  
The birds were robins.

All paragraphs conformed to the format

A, B (birds, branch)  
C, B (Hawk, branch)  
A, equivalence or attribute (birds, robins)

The relations were locative/spatial and the terms were nominal, e.g., *sat on*, *flew over* and *birds*, *branch*, *it*. The order of the three sentence types was randomly presented within the paragraphs to preclude evidence of a relational pattern. Furthermore, the order of the paragraphs in the acquisition packet was randomized to avoid a response set.

The recognition set of sentences consisted of 40 sentences, 4 related to each acquisition paragraph. For each paragraph read, the subjects were asked to classify each of the following 4 types of sentences as ones they had or had not read (cf. Blachowicz 1977-1978:193):

A true statement (TS)—one identical to a sentence in the acquisition paragraph.  
A false statement (FS)—one contradicting a single sentence in the acquisition paragraph.

A true inference (TI)—one that correctly links 2 or more sentences in the paragraph.

A false inference (FI)—one that falsely connects 2 or more sentences in the paragraph.

**Examples:**

The birds sat on the branch (TS).

A hawk flew under it (FS).

A hawk flew over the birds (TI).

A hawk flew under the birds (FI).

Like the acquisition sentences, the recognition sentences were randomly presented to preclude response set. The object of this episode was to compare the subjects' misrecognitions of the items that they had never seen before (FS, TI, FI) with their recognition of the sentences in the acquisition set (TS) that they had seen.

**Procedure**

The subjects were tested in their own classes as part of their regular classroom activity. They were presented with the acquisition packets consisting of the 10 short paragraphs with the following instructions, a copy of which was provided to each student. The instructor read the instructions aloud while the students read silently.

Please read the following paragraphs carefully so that you will understand and remember them. Later you will be asked questions about them. You will have 5 minutes to read. If you finish, you may go back and reread them so that you will understand and remember them.

After 5 minutes the acquisition packets were collected and the recognition packets were distributed with the following instructions, a copy of which was provided to each student. The instructor read the instructions aloud while the students read silently:

If you saw the sentence in the stories you read, mark YES in front of it. If you did not see it, mark NO. Mark YES only for those sentences that are exactly the same as the ones you read.

Working time for the recognition set was 5 minutes.

**Results**

Table 1 gives the usual descriptive statistics for the data. An analysis of variance indicated a significant difference in the magnitude of misrecognitions across proficiency levels,  $F_{2,40}=7.304$ ,  $p<.01$ , i.e., there was a significant difference between the mean total misrecognitions by group. Various t-tests for independent samples (Table 2) indicates that there was no significant difference in total misrecognitions between the beginning and intermediate classes, i.e., R2 and R3, but both the beginning and intermedi-

ate classes made significantly more total misrecognitions than the advanced class, R4.

TABLE 1  
Means and Standard Deviations of Misrecognitions

Group	TS	FS	TI	FI	Total
R2	mean = 3.47	3.58	3.58	1.76	12.41
R3	3.36	2.54	4.18	1.18	11.27
n = 11	1.68	1.69	1.66	1.16	4.58
R4	1.60	1.73	2.93	0.20	6.46
n = 15	1.54	1.33	2.73	0.41	3.77

TABLE 2  
T-tests — Total Misrecognitions

R3, 11.27; R2, 12.41	$T_{26} = .575$ , n.s.
R2, 12.41; R4, 6.46	$T_{30} = 3.57$ , < .01
R3, 11.27; R4, 6.46	$T_{24} = 2.81$ , < .01

Table 3 shows that there was a significant difference between the mean number of misrecognitions of sentence types by group. That is, for R2, there was a significant difference between the mean number of misrecognitions for TS, FS, TI and FI, when the four means are considered together. The fact that the R2's averaged 3.58 for both TI and FS undoubtedly explains the lower significance level. For the intermediate and advanced groups, R3 and R4, the F ratios were significant at the .01 level.

TABLE 3  
Analysis of Variance (TS, FS, TI, FI, X Group)

R2	
TS, 3.47; FS, 3.58; TI, 3.58; FI, 1.76	$F_{3,64} = 3.82$ , < .05
R3	
TS, 3.36; FS, 2.54; TI, 4.18; FI, 1.18	$F_{3,40} = 7.30$ , < .01
R4	
TS, 1.6; FS, 1.73; TI, 2.93; FI, 0.20	$F_{3,56} = 6.337$ , < .01

The ultimate question was whether each L2 proficiency group would falsely recognize more TI than either TS, FS or FI. Blachowicz studied 4 different age groups of L1 subjects: 7-year-olds, 9-year-olds, 11-year-olds, adults (see Table 5 for Blachowicz's summary statistics). Blachowicz found



that each L1 age group falsely recognized more TI than either TS, FS, or FI.

Table 4 depicts various t-tests for dependent samples for the L2 subjects to determine whether or not they falsely recognize more TI than any other sentence type. R2 is not similar to Blachowicz's L1 subjects; the R2's falsely recognized the same number of TI and FS. They do falsely recognize more TS, FS and TI than FI.

TABLE 4  
T-tests (Misrecognition Types Within Groups)

	R2	
TS, 3.47; FI, 1.76		$T_{16} = 2.76, < .05$
FS, 3.58; FI, 1.76		$T_{16} = 5.63, < .01$
TI, 3.58; FI, 1.76		$T_{16} = 4.84, < .01$
	R3	
TS, 3.36; FI, 1.81		$T_{10} = 4.20, < .01$
TI, 4.18; FS, 2.54		$T_{10} = 3.61, < .01$
FS, 2.54; FI, 1.18		$T_{10} = 3.15, < .05$
TI, 4.18; FI, 1.18		$T_{10} = 6.42, < .01$
	R4	
TS, 1.6; FI, 0.20		$T_{14} = 2.32, < .05$
FS, 1.73; FI, 0.20		$T_{14} = 5.04, < .01$
TI, 2.93; FI, 0.20		$T_{14} = 4.153, < .01$

For the R3's there is no significant difference between TI and TS, between TS and FS. However, they falsely recognized more TI than FS, which the two other groups did not do.

For the advanced group, R4, there was a significant difference between TI, FS, TS and FI, which one would expect from an advanced class. In all cases, for all groups, there was a clear demarcation between TI and every other sentence type.

### Implications

What can be gleaned from these data? It cannot be claimed that each L2 proficiency group falsely recognized significantly more TI than either TS, FS or FI, as Blachowicz's subject did. However, with the exception of R2, the L2 subject did falsely recognize more TI than any other sentence type; the L2 subjects were clearly exhibiting semantic constructivity in a silent reading task. That being the case, classroom reading teachers, materials writers, ESL publishers and ESL test constructors must recognize what L1 reading specialists have known for a good while: semantic content may be more important than syntactic content; the ESL reader contributes to the reading process in a constructive manner by making inferences. Very few ESL reading texts and few, if any, standardized ESL reading comprehension tests acknowledge the existence of semantic constructivity by ESL readers at any proficiency level.

## Discussion

The data support the constructive view of reading. The analysis of variance indicated a difference in the magnitude of misrecognitions across proficiency levels. In Blachowicz's study there were analogous results among her L1 subjects, the youngest subjects making significantly more errors; the middle-graders forming a homogeneous set and the adults making the fewest misrecognitions (see Table 5).

TABLE 5  
Blachowicz's L1 Data

Group	TS	FS	TI	FI
7 year olds N = 40	2.2	2.65	4.83	2.43
9 year olds N = 40	1.7	1.4	4.56	1.7
11 year olds N = 40	1.56	1.8	4.6	1.58
Adults N = 30	1.07	.47	3.7	1.07

What can explain the results for the various proficiency levels on the different types of inferences? Fisher and Smith (1977) claimed that there are four skills necessary for processing text structure, and by analogy it can be seen that these four skills are necessary for inferencing and semantic constructivity: prior knowledge, logical skills, systematic integration, and active processing. Prior knowledge influences the reading process, because it directly affects the quality and quantity of prose processing. An advanced ESL student in a R4 class has more proficiency in English and likely more experience with English than an R2 student, and the advanced R4 student can probably form more hypotheses about a particular piece of text.

The logical skills that an ESL reader brings to the reading task will also have a determining effect on semantic constructivity and the processing of implicit textual relations. Fisher and Smith pointed out that the conclusion that a given pair of sentences stand in some relation to each other often entails lengthy and non-trivial deductions. ESL students coming from different languages and different sorts of "logical" reasoning (cf. Kaplan 1980) will react differently to semantic constructivity tasks. One can expect language differences, cultural differences and culture ethnic differences to produce variance in the tasks examined in this research.

The amount of information in a text that the reader takes account of will have a bearing on semantic constructivity. The reader who processes all the information in a text will understand more than the reader who perceives on the relations holding between contiguous sentences.

Fisher and Smith concluded:

In short, the processing of text requires the reader to have the knowledge and skills necessary to supply the relations between sentences, to look for possible relations obtaining between any of the sentences in the text, and to actively process text (Fisher and Smith 1977:24).

Wanat (1977) has claimed that linguistic-cognitive operations such as inferencing can serve as language accesses to reading. While inferencing is an important aspect of reading and semantic constructivity, Wanat further claimed that inferencing is one language access to meaning and that comprehension of relations within and between sentences is not specific to reading; inferencing may be one component of broad, global language proficiency.

There are additional reasons for the observed variance in the misrecognitions in the constructivity tasks across language groups and proficiency levels. Adams and Collins (1979), in discussing schema processing, noted that there are two basic ways in which the processing capabilities may be limited. First, the schema processor may not be able to map input data into the memory structure, producing a system that is data-limited. Second, there may be a variety of simultaneous demands which may exceed the system's capacity to cope, producing a resource-limited system.

Both types of systems may have some validity in explaining the variability in the L2 students' responses to the semantic constructivity tasks. The beginning students may not have had sufficient exposure to and experience with spatial relations to have been able to process what an inference is notwithstanding the ability to sort out true inferences from false statements, false inferences and so on. They may have been taught spatial vocabulary and sentence structures which entail spatial relations but their capacity to hold such information in long-term memory was not adequate, i.e., such subjects may have been data-limited. Although examples and explanations of true statements, false statements, true inferences, and false inferences were given at the outset, keeping these four kinds of responses separate may have been beyond the language competence and short term memory of many of the subjects; the task of reading the acquisition sets and correctly identifying the recognition sets proved to be too much for completely accurate identification, i.e., the subjects may have been resource-limited.

In sum, the L2 subjects in this study clearly exhibited semantic constructivity in a silent reading task. There was evidence that the ESL reader does contribute to the reading process in a constructive manner, but the ESL reader's contribution may be marred by language interference, lack of background knowledge, faulty inferencing, and certain data- and resource-limitation phenomena.

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## ***Field Dependence-Independence as a Variable in Second Language Cloze Test Performance\****

Charles Stansfield and Jacqueline Hansen

In recent years second language researchers have examined particular learner traits, such as cognitive style, to ascertain their relationship to progress in learning another language. This paper explores the influence of one student characteristic, field dependent-independent cognitive style, on second language test performance, especially as it relates to performance on the integrative type of measure known as the cloze test.

Approximately 250 college students enrolled in a first semester Spanish course formed the sample group for this correlational study. Students were administered the Group Embedded Figures Test of field dependence-independence (FD/I) along with several measures of linguistic, communicative, and integrative competence. The results showed student FI to be related consistently in a positive albeit modest fashion to second language test performance. Most notable was the correlation between student FI and cloze test performance ( $r = .43$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The relationship was less marked on other measures such as final course grade ( $r = .21$ ,  $p < .001$ ). This suggests there may be a cognitive style bias operating in conjunction with cloze test performance. That is, such measures may call forth cognitive restructuring abilities more readily available to more field independent individuals. In turn, it implies the need to use some caution when employing or interpreting cloze tests for placement or achievement purposes.

During the past decade scholars in the field of second language testing have directed an increasing amount of attention to the cloze test procedure as a measure of general second language proficiency. A verbal cloze test presents the reader with a prose passage which has had words deleted systematically from the text. The reader must then fill in the blanks with the appropriate words. Research studies have shown the cloze test to correlate rather well with other measures of second language proficiency. This suggests that it is a valid and reliable procedure. However, since its first application to the L2 learner (Carroll et al. 1959), there has been considerable uncertainty about exactly which language skills and cognitive processes are tapped in cloze test performance. As a result there is continued

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\* This article is based on a paper which was presented at the Sixteenth International TESOL Convention, Honolulu, May 1, 1982.

controversy about the validity of this procedure as a test of general L2 proficiency (Alderson 1979). The basic question remains, is success on a cloze test solely a function of second language proficiency, or do other non-linguistic factors influence the ability to fill in the blanks appropriately? In this paper we will explore the influence of one non-linguistic factor, field dependent-independent cognitive style (FD/1), on L2 cloze test performance by presenting further analyses of data collected during a study that is described elsewhere (Hansen and Stansfield 1981, 1982).

### Background

As mentioned above, the verbal cloze test presents the reader with a prose passage in which words have been systematically eliminated from the text. The deletions usually occur at every fifth to tenth word, while the first and last sentences of the passage are generally left intact. The reader must then fill in the blanks with the appropriate words to complete the text. Scoring of the insertions varies, since credit can be given for the exact word only, for synonyms, or for any semantically acceptable word choice.

The procedure was pioneered by Taylor (1953), who experimented with it as a measure of contextual redundancy. Taylor derived the name from the concept of closure in Gestalt psychology. Gestaltists believe that learning follows a sequence through which one first understands the whole or broader issues, and then grasps the individual details. Similarly, the cloze procedure requires the student to perceive the whole by filling in the missing words as if they were not missing at all (Stansfield 1980).

Since Taylor's initial work, the cloze test has been used for a variety of purposes. In particular, it is recognized as a reliable and valid measure of reading comprehension and text readability for native speakers of English (Alderson 1980, Readance et al. 1980). When applied to nonnative speakers, it is viewed by many as a valid and reliable measure of general second language proficiency (Bialystok and Howard 1979, Aitken 1977, Oller 1976). Proponents of the test suggest that it is an integrative test of global skills in the second language (Oller, 1976). As such it measures overall or general proficiency to a greater degree than do more traditional discrete-point tests of vocabulary and grammar. At present the cloze test is used as a testing device on standardized second language proficiency measures, such as the Secondary Level English Proficiency Test, and on foreign language classroom tests at all levels.

Research on the cloze procedure in the L2 setting has basically focused on the correlation between cloze test performance and scores on other types of second language tests such as dictation and reading comprehension tests, and on standardized proficiency measures like the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). In a review of the literature, Aitken (1977) reported that the majority of studies shows that cloze performance correlates well with other measures of L2 proficiency. For example, in an early study

Darnell (1968, 1970) obtained a correlation of .84 between cloze performance and scores on the TOEFL. Oller (1972) found correlations of .75 and .83 between the cloze and the UCLA English as a Second Language Placement Exam. Canadian researchers report correlations ranging from .52 to .70 between cloze data and second language achievement. (Swain, Lapkin and Barik 1976, Lapkin and Swain 1977). Given these fairly high and consistent correlations, proponents of the cloze procedure have argued that it offers an easily constructed, reliable, and valid test of general L2 proficiency.

Yet some researchers in the field of second language testing urge caution before embracing those assumptions until more is known about the validity of this procedure to measure L2 proficiency. For instance, Alderson (1979) reports that the utility of cloze tests as actual measures of second language skill varies widely. He shows that performance differs as a function of text difficulty, scoring procedures, and word deletion frequency. It is his view that as those factors vary, the cloze measures different abilities. Thus its reliability and validity vary from one situation to another.

One point of confusion arises from the fact that we have little understanding of the way or degree to which cloze testing actually taps or reflects second language processing. This is true even with respect to the well established use of the cloze test as an indicator of reading comprehension for native speakers (Readance et al. 1980, Bormuth 1969, Weaver 1965). Bialystok and Howard (1979:27) recognize this problem in the area of L2 testing also:

However, in spite of the sample demonstration of cloze test reliability as given by the correlations with numerous other proficiency measures, the precise skills measured by the cloze test and the problem-solving processes which they presuppose have not been specified.

Oller and Conrad (1971:187) acknowledge this deficiency but pose the question: "Is it necessary to know exactly what a test is a test of in order to make use of it?" They proceed to respond to that question in the negative. Nevertheless, most psychologists and specialists in educational measurement would affirm the need to establish the construct validity of any test. Construct validity in language testing must necessarily be based on a theory of language processing that bears a relationship to the processes called forth on the test. Psycholinguists suggest that both receptive and productive language processing involves a strategy of sampling, predicting, testing, and confirming meaning based on one's internalized language system (Goodman 1971, Aitken 1977). Similar processes appear to be called forth in solving a cloze task.

Theoretically, in a cloze test a person needs to employ a large number of the interrelated skills that comprise a language system (e. g., lexical, grammatical, contextual) in order to predict accurately what word most appropriately fits into each empty space. This prediction is said to take place



through an hypothesis-testing strategy based on one's internalized language competence. According to Oller (1973) the taker of an L2 cloze test infers or projects an acceptable word on the basis of a whole or complete message. As one notices the details and samples from the information available while trying to fill in the spaces, one formulates hypotheses about the information expected to follow. By further sampling of subsequent information, the original hypotheses are confirmed or challenged. If they are repudiated, one revises the first expectations, restructuring information to form a new hypothesis. For the second language learner, the accuracy of this strategy on a cloze test or a dictation reflects the degree of underlying, internalized second language competence.

Bialystok and Howard (1979), concerned with identifying the actual processes involved in solving verbal cloze tasks, investigated the skill of inferencing as a factor in cloze performance. They defined inferencing as the ability to exploit maximally all available information sources in order to arrive at new insights into unknown aspects of the second language. They hypothesized that if inferencing were involved in cloze solutions, then factors that facilitated inferencing should enhance performance on a cloze test. In their study, cues and instructions to facilitate inferencing behavior did result in improved cloze test performance. They concluded that inferencing was an integral component in performance on cloze tests.

### **The Problem**

As outlined above, inferencing has been identified as an integral, nonlinguistic factor in L2 cloze test performance. Interestingly, the psychological literature describes the cognitive style construct of field dependence-independence as a cognitive factor that affects hypothesis-testing, inferencing, and restructuring behavior on various problem-solving tasks (Goodenough 1976, Witkin, Moore, Goodenough and Cox 1977). Thus, field dependence-independence might also be a nonlinguistic factor that influences L2 cloze test performance.

Field dependence-independence refers to individual differences in preferred ways of perceiving, organizing, analyzing, or recalling information and experience. Field dependence indicates a tendency to rely on external frames of reference in cognitive activities and is thought to foster skill in interpersonal relations, whereas field independence suggests reliance on internal rules or strategies for processing information and the existence of mental restructuring abilities (Witkin and Goodenough 1977).

Witkin, Moore, Goodenough and Cox (1977) explain that persons with a well articulated, field-independent cognitive style are apt to analyze actively the elements of a perceptual field when it is organized and to impose structure on a field that lacks an inherent organization. Field-independent persons are likely to employ such mediational processes or strategies as analyzing, structuring, hypothesis-testing, and inferencing to generate solu-

tions to problems. They appear to experience the details of a “field” as separate elements, and they can alter that field or context when necessary to accomplish a task. Moreover, they behave as though governed by general internalized principles which they have actively abstracted from their experiences. In contrast, field-dependent persons make less use of these mediational strategies in information processing. They are likely to use the “field” as they find it, to make less use of surrounding information, and to have more difficulty analyzing that information to solve a particular problem (Readance et al. 1980). In other words, they are not likely to exploit maximally all information sources. This exploitation of information sources is the definition of inferencing behavior offered earlier. However, it is possible to train field-dependent persons to utilize an analytical, hypothesis-testing approach in appropriate situations (Witkin et al. 1977).

If the L2 cloze test is conceived as a task that asks the test-taker to infer or predict the appropriate word in order to fill the gap through an hypothesis-testing strategy, it could be related to the cognitive restructuring abilities fostered by a field-independent cognitive style. As a result, the test may be making cognitive demands which allow the field-independent person to fill in the blanks more easily or accurately regardless of second language proficiency. Field-dependent persons, on the other hand, may be at a disadvantage when taking this type of test, since they aren't as likely to utilize the strategies helpful to the solution of L2 cloze problems. In that event a cognitive style bias would be operating in cloze performance—a bias that would lessen the validity of this instrument as a test of general second language proficiency.

In an attempt to address the issue of possible cognitive style bias in the cloze procedure, this paper compares the achievement patterns of foreign language students on a variety of Spanish proficiency measures, including the cloze test, in order to ascertain the relationship between performance on the different tests and the degree of field dependence-independence.

### Method

**Subjects.** The subjects for the study were 293 college students in an introductory Spanish course at the University of Colorado. The 16-week course emphasized both linguistic and communicative competence through large group lectures (two hours per week), small group recitation classes (three hours per week), language laboratory sessions, and textbook-workbook exercises.

**Instrumentation.** The students' degree of field dependence-independence was determined by the Group Embedded Figures Test (GEFT). The GEFT (Oltman, Raskin, and Witkin 1971) is a group administered test that requires the subject to outline a simple geometric shape within a complex design. The subject must locate or separate the relevant information from the contextual field and restructure it to design the correct shape. In theory, this task discriminates the extent to which the person perceives analytically and is

able to identify the relevant information within the organized field.

Foreign language proficiency was assessed in terms of three areas of competence: linguistic, communicative, and integrative.<sup>1</sup> Linguistic competence was defined as the ability to use basic structural units of Spanish. This was tested by each student's Written Exam Grade Average, derived from scores on six unit tests designed to assess mastery of grammar; and by scores on the Final Exam, a comprehensive discrete-point achievement test similar to the unit tests in format. Communicative competence, defined as the ability to give and receive oral messages in Spanish, was assessed by each student's Oral Grade Average, obtained from performance on oral tests of communicative ability given throughout the semester, and by teacher ratings on an Oral Skill Evaluation questionnaire. Integrative competence, interpreted as general language proficiency or a combined linguistic and communicative competence, was measured via each student's Final Course Grade and Cloze Test score.

Procedures. Toward the end of the semester, the GEFT was administered to all the students who were present at a large-group lecture session. Everyone was urged to participate in the test, though a few students chose to study instead. No effort was made to coerce those students or to test anyone who was absent. As a result, GEFT scores were obtained for 253 students. American College Test (ACT) English and Math scores were recorded for a subset of 102 students on whom such data were available in the university Admissions Office. The course instructors provided the Oral Skill Evaluation for each student as well as the various exam and course grades. The Cloze Test was given at the time of the Final Exam.

Data Analysis Procedures. A correlational design was chosen to analyze the relationship between student FD/I and Spanish achievement. The initial procedure involved obtaining Hoyt reliability data on the GEFT (.90) and the Cloze Test (.75). Pearson product-moment correlations were then established among the several variables, correcting for attenuation wherever possible. For a subgroup of 102 students, correlations were next obtained between academic aptitude, Spanish achievement, and FD/I. In a further step academic aptitude was removed from the correlations by a first-order partial correlation technique.

### Results and Discussion

The correlations between the various measures of Spanish language proficiency ranged from .60 to .93. They are presented in Table 1. These findings indicate that a substantial relationship exists between several diverse types of language tests. This suggests that the various instruments are measuring overlapping language skills or a general aspect of language

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<sup>1</sup> Since the context of this study is a first semester foreign language course, we will use the terms achievement and proficiency interchangeably. For a detailed explanation of this usage of terminology see Stansfield (1981).

competence. It should be noted, however, that the (categories were generally lowest between the Cloze Test and the other measures, ranging from .60 to .80. While these correlations are rather strong, the amount of shared variance between the Cloze Test and the other measures of language competence is slightly less than the amount of variance those measures share with each other. Thus the Cloze Test appears to be tapping some ability that is not incorporated into the other measures as completely as it is into the Cloze.

TABLE 1  
Correlations Between Six Measures of Spanish Proficiency  
and Student Field Independence

	Written Exam Grade Average	Final Exam	Oral Grade Average	Oral Skill Evaluation	Final Course Grade	Cloze Test
Final Exam	.86					
Oral Grade Average	.70	.67				
Oral Skill Evaluation	.70	.70	.76			
Final Course Grade	.93	.88	.76	.73		
Cloze Test	.68	.80	.60	.64	.69	
GEFT <sup>1</sup>	.24	.28	.20	.21	.21	.43

p < .001 in all instances.

<sup>1</sup> A higher GEFT score indicates a relatively greater degree of field independence.

The correlations between GEFT score and the measures of Spanish proficiency were all positive but modest. Since a higher GEFT score indicates a greater degree of field independence, the positive nature of these correlations shows that a field-independent cognitive style is associated with a higher level of achievement on all measures of second language proficiency. For traditional measures, such as course grades and discrete-point grammar tests, the correlations with FD/I ranged from .20 to .28. Yet the correlation between FD/I and Cloze Test score rose to .43, a notable difference.

When discussing the relation of cognitive style to scholastic achievement, academic aptitude should be held constant. Although the evidence reveals that FD/I is a factor in cognition separate from general intelligence (Vernon 1972), there is some overlap with both verbal and quantitative aptitude (Witkin, Moore, Oltman, Fiedman and Owen 1977). In this study, these constructs were assessed for a subgroup of students via ACT English and Math scores. The correlation for verbal and quantitative aptitude with FD/I was .32 and .48 respectively, as shown in Table 2. The correlations between

academic aptitude and Spanish proficiency were in the .16 to .46 range. Verbal aptitude showed a somewhat stronger and more consistent relationship to second language achievement than did mathematical aptitude, except on the Cloze Test. In that instance, ACT Math score correlated .46 with the cloze measure while ACT English scores exhibited a correlation of .39. Thus the more positive relationship was demonstrated between quantitative aptitude and cloze performance.

TABLE 2  
Academic Aptitude Correlations with Six Measures  
of Spanish Proficiency and Field Independence

	ACT English	ACT Math	n
Written Exam Grade Average	.36***	.36***	102
Final Exam	.34***	.36***	102
Oral Grade Average	.35***	.25**	95
Oral Skill Evaluation	.31***	.16*	102
Final Course Grade	.34***	.22*	102
Cloze Test	.39***	.46***	90
GEFT	.32***	.48***	102

\*p < .05

\*\*p < .01

\*\*\*p < .001

It is noteworthy that GEFT and Cloze Test scores show a nearly identical pattern of correlation with ACT scores and that both are more related to quantitative ability than to verbal aptitude. In addition, they both correlate more highly with mathematical aptitude than do the other Spanish achievement tests. Apparently the GEFT and the Cloze Test are tapping the same aptitude construct to a greater degree than are the other instruments.

TABLE 3  
Correlations Between Measures of Spanish Proficiency and Field Independence,  
Partialing Out Academic Aptitude  
(ACT Math Score)

	GEFT	n
Written Exam Grade Average	.07	102
Final Exam	.13	102
Oral Grade Average	.08	95
Oral Skill Evaluation	.15	102
Final Course Grade	.12	102
Cloze Test	.22*	90

\* p < .05

In order to disambiguate the overlapping relationships between academic aptitude, Spanish proficiency, and field dependent-independent cognitive style, the stronger of the two aptitude measures, the ACT Math score, was

removed from the correlation through a partial correlation procedure. That analysis is presented in Table 3. The effect of removing quantitative ability from the correlations between GEFT and the traditional measures of Spanish proficiency is to reduce the relationships to a non-significant level ( $r = .07$  to  $.15$ ). This is to be expected, since when we partial out aptitude it should be impossible to predict achievement. However, L2 Cloze Test scores continue to correlate significantly with FD/I ( $r = .22$ ,  $p < .05$ ) when aptitude is removed. This suggests that Cloze Test performance is influenced to a greater degree by field independent cognitive style than are traditional measures of Spanish proficiency.

Since the correlations between GEFT and the Cloze Test are much higher than those between GEFT and the other measures of Spanish proficiency, it seems that a cognitive style bias may be operational in cloze solutions. That is, the evidence indicates that field independent individuals do indeed fill in the blanks on a Cloze Test more easily than do field dependent persons. Their FI cognitive restructuring abilities are more conducive to success on a cloze reconstruction task. Based on this data, it appears that general second language proficiency and academic aptitude do not fully explain L2 Cloze Test performance. The cloze incorporates a non-linguistic, cognitive style factor as well. It is noteworthy that Carroll, Carton and Wilds (1959, p. 116) obtained similar findings in an initial investigation of the cloze done for the College Entrance Examination Board. After comparing the cloze with other measures, they conducted that it is "affected by various sources of extraneous variance," including certain intellectual traits. Further research into the actual cognitive processes involved in solving L2 cloze tests may lend insights into how field independence influences performance on cloze reconstruction tasks.

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## ***Story Writing Principles and ESL Teaching\****

**John W. Oller, Jr.**

Is it possible that we ESL/EFL teachers can profit by using principles of good story-telling along with the more familiar and more traditional principles of structural analysis? Four hypotheses about language use and language acquisition are discussed. They include the textuality hypothesis, the expectancy hypothesis, Krashen's input hypothesis, and the episode hypothesis (closely related to Krashen's "net" hypothesis). These working hypotheses are used to support the overarching suggestion that story-telling techniques may be helpful in making ESL/EFL materials meaningful, comprehensible, recallable, and in a word, learnable. Eleven specific principles are discussed and exemplified.

Most teachers agree that the goal is somehow to help our students to become able to use and understand English. According to some theorists, methods of language teaching are a lot like the roads of the Roman empire, they all lead to the same destination. Any of them can get us to Rome, or better yet, to heaven. However, there are enough cases of failure in language teaching to cause thoughtful teachers to wonder. Aren't some methods in fact better than others? If so, how are we to choose between the many recommended routes to communicative competence? Many of us, I believe, are less interested in finding additional methods to add to the existing plethora than we are in finding *principles* that will provide guidance in discriminating better methods from less effective ones.

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Of course, this isn't to say that the methods themselves are unimportant. On the contrary, it is precisely because some methods are more effective than others that many of us are looking for *principles* that can guide our choices and adaptations of methods. Someone has offered the following rhyme to support this approach. It isn't great poetry, but it is easy to remember:

Methods are many,  
Principles are few.  
Methods often change,  
Principles rarely do.<sup>1</sup>

Therefore, it might be useful to have a look at some of the principles that seem to follow from certain hypotheses concerned generally with language use and acquisition and particularly with second language acquisition. The purpose is not to survey theories, much less to review the vast and growing literature on which they are based, but rather to distill certain principles—eleven of them actually—from four working premises: (1) the textuality hypothesis, (2) the expectancy hypothesis, (3) the input hypothesis (from Krashen 1980), and (4) the episode hypothesis. The second and third of these hypotheses have been discussed fairly extensively, but the other two will probably be less familiar. Overarching all of them is the deepening awareness that story writing techniques may be more pertinent to language teaching than has commonly been realized.

### The Textuality Hypothesis

An apparently universal aspect of human experience is its temporal development. Many readers may have heard the riddle that asks: "Do you know how to eat an elephant?" The answer, of course, is: "One bite at a time." This little conundrum is instructive. In a microcosm it reveals the problem of understanding experience. If we tried to take in everything all at once, it would be impossible. So, experience comes to us in manageable doses, and we digest it one bite at a time. What is more, it is somehow the sequence in which all the events and sub-events take place that is crucial to our ability to understand and negotiate the elements of our world. The *textuality hypothesis* is simply a way of capsulizing this temporal organization of experience. It says that *the elements of experience are organized into hierarchies of sequences and subsequences much the way a text is organized*. In fact, this fascinating aspect of intelligence is probably best demonstrated through errors.

An error that I love to recount was committed by one of my favorite mentors and dissertation advisor, Dean H. Obrecht. He cheerily told this story on himself, so I do not think that my repeating it here would be too

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<sup>1</sup> This bit of rhyme was passed on to me by my friend Stephen Kunkle. He is responsible for adult ministries at Hoffmantown Baptist Church in Albuquerque, New Mexico. I do not know where it originated.

tacky. One day he was driving down a Rochester expressway at the speed limit when he decided to light up a cigarette with a brand new lighter purchased a short while earlier. It was a warm summer day and after lighting up, he proceeded to shake out the lighter and toss it out the window of his speeding vehicle. Realizing too late what he had done, he returned to the scene of the crime in vain. The coveted lighter, feathered fish-hook and all was lost forever, all because of a category error followed by a sequence of otherwise appropriate moves.

Consider just what he did. First, he took the lighter to be a match. Then, he shook it out, and disposed of it, by throwing it out the window of his car. (It was before the days of \$500 fines for littering.) From the beginning, the error is “lexical” in spite of the fact that there was probably no verbal activity until after the fact. By that point, the phrases “spent match” and “new cigarette lighter” probably did not figure in the discussion. The initial error was a category foul-up not unlike many lexical errors. It was followed by a series of phrase-like event sequences. For instance, shaking out the “match” (actually, the new cigarette lighter) served the purpose of extinguishing the flame. This is not unlike the transformational operation of negating a proposition. In this case, the negated proposition was the fact that the match was burning. Throwing it out the window served the purpose of disposing of a piece of trash. The appropriateness of this subsequent action depended on the previous action (putting out the flame) and the presupposition that a spent match is worthless.

The whole sequence helps to show that event-structures in experience are textual in nature. That is, unless we posit propositional operations such as predication (e.g., the match is burning), negation (shaking out the match to extinguish the flame), presupposition (e.g., spent matches are worthless), implication (e.g., a lighted match may burn one’s fingers if not extinguished), and the like, it will not be possible to explain simple motoric behavior, or the understanding of ordinary events. This line of reasoning results in *the textuality hypothesis*-- the idea that experience is textual in nature. This notion is a corollary to the expectancy hypothesis which relates to the use of language in ordinary discourse.

### The Expectancy Hypothesis

*The expectancy hypothesis* stresses the cognitive momentum that fluctuates dynamically in relation to mental performances. It says that *discourse processing depends to a great extent on the correct anticipation of elements in sequence*. For instance, when we start into the sentence, “The lighter was discarded by \_\_\_\_\_” we naturally anticipate mention of an agent, e.g., “the professor”. If instead we find a locative phrase as in “The lighter was discarded by the roadside”, we are mildly surprised. In a manner of speaking, we have to come to a halt, back up, and take a different turn on the second attempt. The significance of just this sort

of grammatical expectancy or cognitive momentum is illustrated in many interesting sorts of tactical foul-ups in discourse processing.

For instance, a category error similar in some respects to the cigarette lighter example, and one that turned out to be tragically prophetic, occurred in a news conference some years ago. Anwar Sadat was asked to comment on the likelihood of a successful treaty with Israel. He indicated that if the peace talks did not succeed, he would turn in his "assassination" which he immediately corrected to "resignation". Errors of this type are in fact often termed Freudian slips because they reveal subconscious fears, desires, and motives. They are the very sort of raw material that spurred the development of psychoanalysis.

Sometimes a tactical error involves a more routine breakdown. For example, a woman reported, "You know how George is, give him an inch and he'll hang himself." She mixed two proverbial statements—"give him an inch and he'll take a mile" and "give him enough rope and he'll hang himself". Such tactical slips often reveal the delicate coordination that usually integrates thoughts, words, and actions. For example, after a long day at a meeting in Washington sponsored by the National Institute for Education conferees were beginning to look forward to a relaxing evening. The talk turned to possibilities for dinner and the prospect of entertainment to follow. People were in the sort of mood where each one is congratulating the others on their amiability and intelligence when a certain lawyer cheerfully took leave, turned around, and ran into the door jamb. He reached out, patted the wall, and at the same time said, "Excuse me," in a cooperative tone of voice. Suddenly, mortified at what he had done, he cast a sideward glance over his shoulder and walked briskly down the corridor.

When he had run into the wall, he had acted as if he were in a crowded room. This behavior was not entirely inappropriate given the circumstances preceding the collision with the wall. The awareness of people in a crowded space set him up for the apology as well as the reassuring pat. Apparently he took the wall to be a person.

This error illustrates the delicate synchronization between word and action in the normal course of human activity. However, in ordinary communicative settings, there are also multiple levels of intention which are at work more or less simultaneously. One final example will show how this is so. Not long ago, I stopped in at a grocery store to pick up a few items for dinner. On my way out the check-out clerk said something which in the noise and confusion of the busy store, I could not make out. So, I said, "I'm sorry, I couldn't hear you." She repeated the message turning up the volume. I still didn't make out what she said. She said it again, I still didn't get it. On the fourth shot she could be heard by everyone in the store. "I SAID THANK YOU !!!" Every head turned. Except for the smiles of bemused customers, one might have supposed that E. F. Hutton had spoken.

What this example shows is a surprising independence between what may

be termed the cognitive level of communication and the affective level. On the one hand, the clerk intended to say she appreciated having had the opportunity to serve the customer, and on the other, she intended to express intense anger for having to repeat that she was grateful. Her words still said, "Thank you," but her tone of voice said, something else. Thus, the affective and cognitive aspects of a message may be communicated somewhat independently—though simultaneously.

All of the foregoing examples help to illustrate the appeal of the expectancy hypothesis. That hypothesis also suggests, incidentally, that language acquisition may be viewed as a process of constructing a grammar of expectancy.

### The Input Hypothesis

At the 1980 meeting of the Georgetown Round Table, Krashen presented the *input hypothesis*. Roughly paraphrased, it says that *for language acquisition to occur, the student must have access to and must utilize comprehensible input*. Actually, as Krashen acknowledges, this idea was widely accepted even before he stated it so succinctly. For instance, the late Valerian Postovsky had stressed (1974, 1976) the importance of practice in listening and understanding ahead of productive use. Later such scholars as Benson and Hjelt (1978) offered a more comprehensive theoretical rationale. Unlike Postovsky, they advocated the development of all four of the traditionally recognized skills in small unit cycles where comprehension would only briefly precede productive use.

The theoretical problem which the input hypothesis helps to bring into focus is what makes input "comprehensible"? Or, putting it somewhat differently, why is it that some "input" is transformed into "intake"? Krashen (1980, 1981, 1982) has provided some useful supporting ideas about how this transformation takes place. Perhaps the central notion is what he calls the "net hypothesis". He suggests that instead of aiming precisely at the very next structure which the student is believed to be prepared to add (subconsciously) to the developing grammatical system, it would make more sense to roughly tune the input by aiming instead at the general target of  $i + 1$ —where  $i$  is the student's current stage of grammatical development. The "net" in Krashen's theory is any source of input which covers several (possibly many) points of development a little beyond the student's  $i$ , say,  $i + 1$ ,  $i + 2$ , and so forth, and a little prior to it, say  $i - 1$ ,  $i - 2$ , and so on. It is the nature of the communication "net" which the episode hypothesis may help to clarify. The problem is how to bridge the chasm that exists between comprehensible input on the one hand and comprehended input on the other.

### The Episode Hypothesis

The episode hypothesis presupposes that utterances are linked to the

events of experience by a process that may be called pragmatic mapping. We may say that the utterances of a language are mapped into experience through a grammar of expectancy. The following formula may be useful:

Experience(s) —PRAGMATIC LINKAGE—Utterance form(s)

It is understood that the bridge which connects the elements of experience to the perceivable elements of language is bi-directional. However, sometimes the information moves predominantly in one direction and sometimes in the other. For instance, when we are comprehending discourse, we are usually concerned primarily to make the connection to the experience side. When we are producing discourse, on the other hand, the flow seems to move in the other direction—toward utterance form(s). Ordinarily, of course, things move a great deal in both directions.

*The episode hypothesis says that texts (oral or written forms of discourse) which are more episodically organized can be stored and recalled more easily than less episodically organized material.* Actually, two aspects of episodic organization need to be recognized. On the one hand, there is the logical structure of events in experience which is ordinarily reflected in discourse, and on the other, there is the affective motivation of discourse. Ordinarily we avoid nonsense, and also we avoid talk about things which lack interest to our listeners.

Roger Schank (1975) and Schank and Abelson (1977) have argued for an especially strong form of the episode hypothesis. They claim that all memories are episodically organized. Apparently they are concerned especially with the structure of events in experience and the way in which that structure bears on the creation and understanding of texts. Certainly it is true that the events of experience do not just suddenly appear as if from nowhere, but with a history and a future. There are antecedent events, or facts, leading up to what happens in experience, and there are consequent events which form an unbroken line of successors. This chain extends from history past beyond the point of birth, and into the future beyond the point of death. It is apparently this linkage of event structures that causes us to have the kinds of expectations illustrated above through errors.

Not all of the links in the chain are causal necessities, but the progression from event to event, does have a kind of natural logic to it. In fact, at many points the logic does seem to be causal. Whenever this logic is violated, difficulties necessarily arise, not only in comprehension, but also in recall. When things do not conform to our expectations sufficiently, we have difficulty in understanding them, and also in remembering them. Two example texts, selected from SL/FL sources—one typical, one atypical—will reveal what the episode hypothesis means in very practical terms. For convenience sake, arbitrary titles, “The Millers” and “The Boys”, are used to refer to the sample discourses. After each text, a few questions will be asked

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to probe comprehension and to help illustrate the nature of episodic organization.

### Examples of Discourse

#### *The Millers<sup>2</sup>*

Mr. and Mrs. Miller are now flying to Hong Kong. Miss Yamada is their stewardess once again. She is showing Mr. and Mrs. Miller pictures of her family and friends. . . .

Miss Yamada: This is my best friend. Her name is Fumiko.

Mrs. Miller: She's very pretty. Is she older or younger than you?

Miss Yamada: She's one year younger.

Mrs. Miller: Aren't you thinner than she is?

Miss Yamada: Yes I am. Fumiko loves to eat.

Mr. Miller: So do I. I hope it will be time for lunch soon.

#### *Questions for "The Millers"*

- (1) Where are Mr. and Mrs. Miller going?  
(Hong Kong.)
- (2) How are they getting there?  
(By plane.)
- (3) Who is Fumiko?  
(Miss Yamada's friend.)
- (4) Who is Miss Yamada?  
(A Japanese stewardess on the flight to Hong Kong.)
- (5) What is the relation between Miss Yamada and Fumiko?  
(They're best friends.)
- (6) What is Miss Yamada showing Mr. and Mrs. Miller?  
(She has apparently brought along her picture album which she is showing to the Millers. )
- (7) Why is she doing this?  
(Could she have promised to bring her album on the next trip where she might encounter the Millers? Or perhaps she is a remarkably forward stewardess.)
- (8) Who is younger, Miss Yamada or Fumiko?  
(Fumiko is a year younger.)
- (9) Why does Mrs. Miller ask this question?  
(Perhaps Mrs. Miller asks this question because she is an ESL teacher who wants to know if Miss Yamada has mastered comparative constructions in English. Otherwise, the question seems almost impertinent. Its motivation is uncertain at best. )
- (10) What difference does it make to the outcome of the story?  
(Who is younger or older makes no difference to the outcome of the

<sup>2</sup>This example was located with the help of Patricia A. Richard.

story. The point is never brought up again, and has nothing to do with getting to Hong Kong. )

- (11) Who is thinner, Miss Yamada or Fumiko?  
(Miss Yamada is thinner.)
- (12) Why does Mrs. Miller want to know who is thinner?  
(Perhaps Mrs. Miller, possibly an excessively diligent grammarian, was not satisfied that Miss Yamada knew the comparative from the previous question about age. Or, maybe she was looking for a way out of the conversation and knew that her husband would bring up lunch at the drop of a crumb.)
- (13) What consequence does it have for the story?  
(The question has nothing to do with the overall outcome of the story—concerning which, incidentally, we remain in doubt even at the end.)
- (14) When Mr. Miller hears about eating what does he think of?  
(Lunch, of course.)
- (15) Do Mr. and Mrs., Miller ever make it to Hong Kong?  
(We do not know if they ever get to Hong Kong or not.)
- (16) Why are they going there in the first place?  
(Their business in Hong Kong is also a matter of uncertainty. Given Mr. Miller's penchant for eating, perhaps they are going there in search of outstanding Chinese cuisine, or possibly Mrs. Miller wants to check on comparative constructions among speakers of ESL in Hong Kong. But, of course, all of this is conjecture.)

Now here is the second text:

### *The Boys<sup>3</sup>*

Two teen-age boys are entering an enclosed yard. A younger boy is playing there by a large fountain. One of the older boys is carrying a shoe-box. The smaller boy asks his brother, "What've you got in there, Sam?" Sam turns to his friend and whispers in his ear, "Listen, Henry. Don't tell him it's a frog."

- Joseph: Let me see what's in the box.
- Sam: Nope. You have to guess.
- Joseph: Is it candy?
- Henry: No. It's not candy.
- Joseph: Is it alive?
- Sam: Yeah, it's alive.
- Joseph: It must be a kitten.
- Sam: No. It's not a kitten.
- Joseph: What color is it?
- Sam: Guess.
- Joseph: Is it red?
- Henry: No. It isn't red.

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<sup>3</sup> This episode is translated from lesson 10 of *La Familia Fernandez* (Oller, 1963).

Joseph: It must be blue.  
 Sam: No. It isn't blue.  
 Joseph: Is it green?  
 Henry: Un hunh. It's green.  
 Joseph: I don't know. I give up. Let me see. Let me see.  
 . . .  
 Ah a frog!  
 Where did you find him?  
 Henry: In the irrigation ditch down the road.  
 Joseph: Can I have him?  
 Sam: What are you gonna do with him?  
 Joseph: Put him in my pocket.  
 Sam: Your pocket's not big enough. Besides, he needs water.  
 Joseph: I know! I know! Let's throw him in the fountain!  
 Henry: Good idea. Go on Sam, throw him in the fountain.  
 Sam: Hey, Joseph! Where're you goin'?  
 Joseph: To the ditch to catch a whole bunch of frogs!

*Questions for "The Boys"*

- (1) What is Sam carrying when he enters the yard where Joseph is playing?  
 (A shoe-box.)
- (2) What is in the box?  
 (A frog.)
- (3) Is Sam alone?  
 (No. His friend Henry is with him.)
- (4) What is Joseph's first question as soon as he sees Sam and Henry?  
 (He wants to know what they have in the box.)
- (5) What does Sam decide to do?  
 (To make Joseph guess what's in the box.)
- (6) Why does Sam do this?  
 (He already knows that Joseph is interested and he wants to have some fun. He is apparently a person with some wit and a sense of humor. He also knows his little brother pretty well.)
- (7) Does Henry agree to play along?  
 (Sure. He's willing to have some fun too.)
- (8) What is Joseph's first guess?  
 (He guesses that they must have candy in the box.)
- (9) Why does Joseph guess this?  
 (He hopes there's candy in the box.)
- (10) Ever know any little boys who liked candy?  
 (Aw shucks. I guess I've known a few.)
- (11) When Joseph finds out it isn't candy but it is alive, what is his next guess?  
 (A kitten.)



- (12) Why is this a reasonable guess?  
(Well, because a kitten would be alive and it would be small enough to fit into the shoe box. )
- (13) After he finds out it's a frog, what does he want to do with it?  
(To put it in his pocket.)
- (14) What is his brother's reaction?  
(No dice.)
- (15) Why not?  
(Right. It has nothing to do with comparative structures or surface grammar. It is because the pocket is too small and the frog needs water.)
- (16) What is Joseph's next plan for the frog?  
(Throw him in the fountain!)
- (17) Why does Joseph think of this possibility?  
(The fountain is there, and Sam has just told him that the frog needs water. Therefore, his idea is logically linked to the contingencies of his experience.)
- (18) Reaction?  
(Not a bad idea. Henry urges Sam to go ahead and throw him in the fountain, )
- (19) Where did the boys find the frog by the way?  
(In the irrigation ditch down the road.)
- (20) Where does Joseph end up going in the end of the story?  
(To the ditch to catch a bunch more frogs.)

### **The Natural Logic of Episodes**

Now, consider some more general questions about the impact of the two texts. Which one conforms more closely to the natural logic of ordinary experience? Which would be more likely to occur in real life? Is one more interesting than the other? Is one more motivated than the other in the sense defined above? Which is easier to recall?

We can be more specific. For instance, do you feel certain about whether it was Miss Yamada or Fumiko who was younger? Why not? Contrast the difficulty of recalling who was older or who was younger with the question about what Joseph wanted to do with the frog at first? Or consider the question about what the boys actually did with the frog, or where Joseph was going at the end of the story. Why do we feel so certain about so much in the story about the boys and so uncertain about so much in the story about the Millers. Note that there was a lot more text concerning the boys than the Millers. This length factor should normally make it more difficult to recall the more complicated episode about the boys. Why doesn't it?

The answer to the foregoing puzzle may be interesting. Roger Schank (1975) suggests that material in a story which does not carry it forward toward a logical conclusion is easily forgotten. So we might ask, "Of what

relevance is Miss Yamada's age relative to Fumiko's?" What does any of the conversation have to do with going to Hong Kong? Except for the fact that the flight is headed there, apparently, the answer would have to be, "Nothing!" Joseph's idea about putting the frog in his pocket on the other hand, and its potential consequences for the frog, is an entirely different matter. It does have point in relation to the eventual plan to throw the frog in the fountain.

Also, we may observe that there is a story-line in the episode about the frog, but there is scarcely any at all in the discourse of the Millers. Imagine trying to summarize what takes place in the Miller story. This couple is on their way to Hong Kong. The stewardess whom they chanced to meet on an earlier flight has brought along her picture album. She takes it out and proceeds to show pictures of her family and friends to the Millers. (How many times have you been on an airplane where a stewardess whips out the good old family album? It appears that Miss Yamada is treating the Millers as if they were long lost friends. ) Mrs. Miller then asks some personal questions about age and weight. Then, her husband asks about lunch.

Just what is it that the story about the boys has that the other discourse seems to lack? For one thing, it has a modicum of motivation. The question about what is in the box seems sufficient to motivate the exchange. When that question is answered the query about what to do with him carries it further. It is based on an episodic development that has some relationship to experience. It could happen. To just the extent that their communications are motivated in this sense, the characters seem to come to life. On the other hand, to the extent that the communications of the characters seem unmotivated, they themselves seem flat and lifeless.

The end result of a better story is a richer yield in learning and in recall. From all of this a number of practical principles for language teaching can be gleaned. Overarching all of the principles is the hunch that *perhaps language teaching should be more like story writing than it is like grammatical analysis*. This isn't to say that we should neglect the traditional concepts of structural analysis, but that perhaps we should enrich them by attending more deliberately to the pragmatic factors affecting the meaningfulness and comprehensibility of discourse. From the foregoing hypotheses eleven principles can be inferred. The first three principles derive from the textuality and expectancy hypotheses:

Principle I: *Respect logic and causality.*

Expectancies are based largely on the causal order of facts and events in experience. Therefore, much of our material in the language classroom should be factual and logical.

Principle II: *Be aware of plans and goals.*

Attention and intelligence are guided by the plans and goals that make the facts and events of experience meaningful. Therefore, they should be taken

into account in selecting materials. There are two types: the fictional plans and goals of the characters in the stories we use, and there are the real plans and goals of the students in the classroom. Both are important, and the students' actual objectives can help us in screening the fictional ones that we may use in materials or activities.

Principle III: *Use surprise-value to motivate learning.*

Surprise value in ordinary experience is linked to expectancies concerning plans and goals. Therefore, conflicts which impede the attainment of desirable goals can be expected to motivate the very sorts of mental activities that produce learning. Dewey (1910) carried this argument so far in his book, *How We Think*, that he insisted the *only* thing certain to motivate reflective thinking is trouble. However, the difficulties that produce hypothesis formation and problem solving in the language classroom do not have to be earth-shaking. For example, in the story about the boys, Joseph's desire to know what is in the box is a goal. His first plan is to get Sam to tell him. Conflict arises when he is asked to guess. Reflective thinking ensues. When he finds out it's a frog, a new goal is formed and with it a plan—the pocket idea. A new conflict enters followed by a substitute plan. Then Joseph sets out to pursue more frogs.

The next two principles are traceable to the input hypothesis and the correlative notion of pragmatic mapping:

Principle IV: *Operate with facts or believable fictions.*

To insure comprehensibility of utterances or texts, we need to make certain that the input gets linked up with the facts of experience. Therefore, we need material that is true or that is at least believable fiction. Or we require activities which possess their own natural logic and thereby provide a meaningful basis for communicative exchanges.

Principle V: *Do not ask students to comprehend nonsense.*

This is a necessary corollary to Principle IV. In fact it is the converse of IV. It suggests that we should not ask students to say things like,

George is a pilot.  
 George is not a pilot.  
 Is George a pilot?  
 What if George were a pilot?  
 I wish George were a pilot.  
 If only George had become a pilot.  
 Be a pilot George.  
 You're a pilot, George.  
 George can fly because he's a pilot.  
 George can't pilot because he's a fly.

And so forth for an innumerable set of other permutations. The trouble with

this sort of material is that it is nonsensical. It may be amusing to the ESL/EFL teacher momentarily, but the meager gain in humor is soon eaten up in a loss of comprehensibility. Only a native can interpret such nonsense, but the native lacks the motivation to do so. Who cares whether George is a pilot or not? We don't know if there is anyone named George, and if there were he couldn't both be a pilot and not be a pilot. To expect people to learn such nonsense just doesn't make sense.

Now we come to three principles that seem to follow from the episode hypothesis:

Principle VI: *Find interesting characters.*

The degree of interest commanded by a given personality is related to the goals and plans that the character reveals in the course of the story. If the goals are desirable and the plans are reasonable, there is a potential for commanding interest. Or, if we think in terms of classroom activities not directly linked to stories, they must define goals where the students themselves (the performers) stand to gain or lose. (The stakes, as we saw in the story about the frog, or as any video game will teach us, need not be extraordinarily high.)

Principle VII: *Look for meaningful conflicts.*

A conflict that does not interfere with the attainment of a desirable goal is not a meaningful conflict. It will lack significance in the story because it will have no relation to the goals and plans of the characters. On the other hand, a conflict that interferes with the attainment of a desirable goal is a natural curiosity trap. How will the character handle the problem? This is the key that unlocks the door of human intelligence. This is the sort of curiosity that stirs thoughts and awakens ideas.

Principle VIII: *Find material with action.*

Look for stories that do not just tell the students about experience but ones that cause them to live through the experience and have their own reactions much as the characters in the story might. Erie Stanley Gardner, of Perry Mason fame, told an aspiring writer in a letter:

Don't say that the villain is a mean man with a wicked wallop. Show him sliding down from his horse in a rage because the animal jerks away from him. Show him swing a terrific fist and crash the horse on the nose. That gives the reader the idea of the wickedness of his wallop. Then when the villain advances toward the hero with doubled fist the reader gets some suspense because he's seen what happened to the horse. But if you tell the reader the villain is bad and has a mean wallop it's history, and the less history you get into a yarn the better (Fugate and Fugate, 1980, p. 79).

Gardner incidentally is still the world's best selling author. His books had sold more than 310 million copies as of January 1, 1979 (Fugate and Fugate, 1980, p. 1). According to a release by Ballantine Publishers in 1981, Gardner outsells Agatha Christie, Harold Robbins, Barbara Cartland, and Louis L'Amour combined.

The last three principles derive from all four hypotheses:

Principle IX: *Ask questions.*

Motivate attention and increase comprehension by asking leading questions. For instance, "Who are the characters?" "What is their relationship to each other?" "What happens in the story?" Or, in relation to some non-narrative classroom activity or game, "What is at stake?" "Who is playing?" "Who is winning?" "Who is losing?" and the like.

Principle X: *Cut the elephant (i.e., episode) into small bites.*

The question technique will show how this can be done. For instance, in the story about the boys, "Who was carrying the box with the frog in it?" (Sam.) "What was Sam carrying?" (A box.) "What was in the box?" (A frog.) "Where was the frog?" (In the box.) "What was Sam doing?" (Carrying the box.) And so forth.

Principle XI: *Make multiple meals out of the elephant (i.e., make multiple passes through the story).*

Don't just go through the story, chapter, or activity only once. Go through it multiple times so that the students get a fuller grasp of the material on each pass. As one ESL learner commented, he found it useful to read each history assignment more than once.<sup>4</sup> A trick that makes eating an elephant more manageable is to take it in many sittings—not all in one meal.

### Summary

In the final analysis, if the objective is to get students to understand and use English, it may be that this can be done best by developing in them correct expectancies about how sequences of elements in English relate to meaningful episodes of experience.<sup>5</sup> Several of the students at a recent forum commented that they learned more from watching television programs such as "The Bionic Woman" and "The Six Million Dollar Man" than from any other study activity. (*Not* to say that these are stellar examples of literature in video, but, if it works . . . Also, see note 5.) Is it possible that ESL/EFL methodologies have been putting too many eggs in the structural analysis basket? Perhaps we should look somewhat more to principles of story-telling.

<sup>4</sup> The Forum referred to was a panel discussion at TexTESOL IV, January 1982. The members of the panel were all students at Texas A & M who were acquiring English as a second language. All of them had made considerable progress—some more than others. The questions they dealt with included: "What advice would you give your best friend if you knew he or she were planning to come to the United States?" "What methods of studying English have you found most effective?" "What changes would you want to see in ESL courses you have taken?" Several students commented that they felt they would have advanced more rapidly in English if they had been allowed to do reading and writing on topics more closely related to their ultimate career goals (see Principle II). Also, they generally agreed that watching programs in English on television was one of their most effective study methods.

<sup>5</sup> One anonymous reader commented that Widdowson, Wilkins, Munby, Sinclair, Candlin and others in the British community of applied linguists have also advocated more attention to

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the sequential organization of discourse in second language teaching. I was aware of this and find some community of interest between the notional/functional approach and what I have been calling a pragmatic approach for some years. For instance, see Widdowson (1979) and the references he gives there; also, his plenary address from *On TESOL '80* edited by Fisher, Schachter, and Clarke (1980). Further, in a slightly different vein, there is a commonality of interest with the recent applications of Gricean theory by Jack C. Richards (1980). However, in addition to the sources cited in the text of the paper, the approach discussed here has been mainly influenced by John Dewey, especially his *Essays in Experimental Logic* (1916), Jean Piaget (1947, 1981) and more recently by certain teachers of fictional techniques, especially Robert Newton Peck (1980) and Dwight V. Swain (1980). There are also some fundamental differences in theory and practice between the pragmatic approach and the notional/functional approach as I understand them, but this is not the place to try to sort through those differences.

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## ***Natural Language Learning by Design: A Classroom Experiment in Social Interaction and Second Language Acquisition\****

**Donna M. Johnson**

The purpose of this classroom experiment was to examine the effects of Inter-ethnolinguistic Peer Tutoring (IEPT) on the social interaction and English language proficiency of Spanish-speaking elementary children. The relationship between verbal interaction in English and growth in English language proficiency was also examined. A matched pairs experimental design was employed. Subjects were tested on three measures of English language proficiency, the PPVT, the LAS and the CCCT. They were observed to determine the degree to which they interacted in English with fluent English speakers. They were then matched on the basis of an overall English proficiency score and an interaction score, and were assigned to a treatment or control group. The IEPT treatment consisted of sessions designed to provide a structured setting for natural language practice between an LES and an FES student. Students were observed weekly for verbal interactions during their free time. They were posttested on the three measures of English language proficiency. A trend analysis, correlations, and *t* tests provided some evidence that the IEPT treatment resulted in increased verbal interaction in English. No relationship was demonstrated between amount of verbal interaction in English and growth in English language proficiency based on an analysis using partial correlations. The results of *t* tests revealed that the IEPT treatment resulted in increased vocabulary comprehension as measured by the PPVT, but no differences between treatment and control group were found on the LAS and the CCCT tests. The discussion emphasizes the importance of utilizing the language input of FES children in designing ESL programs.

One of the critical problems in the education of students of limited English proficiency in the elementary schools is the scheduling of instruction in such a way that there is sufficient time to teach subject matter and concepts in the language in which the student can best learn, and to teach the student English. There are two major problems often found in programs designed for LEP students. In some schools LEP children are segregated from their

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native English-speaking peers for much of the school day (Epstein 1977, Fishman 1978, Horst et al. 1979). Segregation occurs both within and between classes and it limits the degree to which children can profit from interaction with English-speaking peers. Since it is generally accepted that much of child second language acquisition takes place through such interaction, segregation poses a problem for L2 learning. A second problem is that many ESL teaching methods employed in elementary schools were originally designed for adults, and are not entirely appropriate for children. (Sampson 1977, Troike 1976, Saville-Troike 1976). Practical methods and materials based on recent research and theory are not widely available (Saville-Troike 1978, California State Department of Education 1982). There is a need, then, to develop practical, up-to-date ESL methods that are appropriate for children. In addition, there is a need to increase students' second language learning time (SLLT) through increased time spent interacting in English, while, at the same time, ensuring their progress in all content areas. An ESL methodology for children should address both the formal L2 learning that results from direct teaching and the informal L2 acquisition that occurs during extra SLLT that teachers can create.

There is general agreement among L2 researchers that exposure to peers who speak the L2 is important and can influence both the kind of language that is acquired and the speed with which it is acquired (Hatch 1977, McLaughlin 1981). A number of researchers have examined the characteristics of the linguistic input adult learners receive from English-speaking peers (Henzl 1974, Hatch, Shapira & Gough 1975, Long 1980). Studies on child bilingualism have also indicated that the linguistic and social environment in which children find themselves and which they create for themselves can have a strong influence on their language acquisition (Chun & Politzer 1976, Hatch 1978). Wong-Fillmore's year-long study (1976) of five children learning English as a second language provided strong evidence that fluent English-speaking (FES) children provide useful input for their peers who are learning a second language. The speech of the FES children she studied had certain characteristics that made it easy to understand. It was simplified yet entirely natural speech. It was repetitive. It was contextualized: that is, it was carefully related to the activities in which the children were engaged. In addition, it was accompanied by gestures that helped to make meanings clearer. FES peers seemed to be well aware of the limits of the L2 learners' comprehension and, based on feedback from the learners indicating how much they could comprehend, they gradually modified their speech in the direction of higher complexity. Most elementary ESL programs are not designed to take advantage of this valuable source of input. Often formal grammar-based lessons are provided, but informal L2 acquisition is left up to chance. Wong-Fillmore's study, however, showed that children varied greatly in their ability to acquire English informally. The most successful learners were those who were able to establish and maintain

social contact with peers and adults who gave them the kind of input they needed for learning. It follows, then, that some learners may need assistance in gaining access to such input and creating opportunities for practice.

The majority of second language education research in the last two decades has focused on the learner (Politzer 1977). More recently, studies conducted in classroom settings have provided information about the nature of discourse in L2 classrooms (Allwright 1980, Long & Sato 1981); teaching behaviors in elementary ESL classrooms (Ramirez & Stromquist 1979) and language use in bilingual elementary classrooms (Legaretta 1979, Bruck, Schultz & Rodriguez-Brown 1979, Milk 1980). There have been few classroom experiments focusing on specific treatment variables. In addition, the informal, social, language-acquisition environment at school has not been viewed as a manipulable variable by researchers. The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of Inter-ethnolinguistic Peer Tutoring (IEPT) on the social interaction and second language acquisition of children. IEPT was developed to provide a structured setting for natural, functional English language practice between a limited English speaker (LES) and a fluent, monolingual, English speaker (FES). It was expected that IEPT would lead to increased social interaction among LES and FES students and that LEP students would increase their English proficiency as a result of the treatment and the social interaction.

## Method

Three hypotheses were investigated:

1. Limited English-speaking (LES) children who undergo an Inter-ethnolinguistic Peer Tutoring (IEPT) treatment will interact verbally with fluent English speakers (FES's) to a greater extent than will LES children in a control group.
2. LES children who interact verbally to a greater extent with FES's will make more growth in English language proficiency than will LES children who interact to a lesser degree with FES's.
3. LES children who undergo an IEPT treatment will make more growth in English language proficiency than will LES children in a control group.

*Subjects.* The subjects were 16 LES, Mexican-American children from a school district in Mountain View, California. All were fluent speakers of Spanish and all spoke at least some English. The other participants in the study were 18 fluent English speakers from the Palo Alto-Stanford area who neither understood nor spoke Spanish. No data were collected on these children, although they participated in the study by interacting with the LES children. The children ranged between five and nine years of age.

*Setting.* All 34 children were attending a seven-week bilingual program at Stanford's experimental school in the summer of 1978. The program was bilingual only in the sense that both English and Spanish were used by students and teachers, and a limited number of ESL and SSL vocabulary lessons were provided. It was a daycamp program with an open-classroom

atmosphere and a wide range of activities for the children to choose from, both indoors and outdoors. There were some large group and small group activities directed by teachers, but, for the most part, children were free to choose their own activities and their own playmates. The LES children attended three days a week for a total of 21 days. Of the five teachers, two were monolingual English speakers, two were fluent Spanish speakers, and one had a fair degree of proficiency in Spanish.

*Overview of design.* A matched pairs experimental design was employed. During the first week of the program all LES children were pre-tested on three measures of English language proficiency: the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (Dunn 1965), the Language Assessment Scales (DeAvila & Duncan 1977), and the Child-Child Communication Test developed by the researcher (Johnson 1978). Also, during the first week, all LES children were observed in order to determine the degree to which they interacted in English with FES children. The Language Use and Interaction System (LUIS) was developed by the researcher for this purpose (Johnson 1978). Children were matched on the basis of two criteria: (1) overall English language proficiency as measured by the three tests, and (2) frequency of interaction in English with FES's as measured by the LUIS. After adjusting the pairs on age and sex, members of the matched pairs were randomly assigned to a treatment and a control group. FES children were paired on age and sex and members of the pairs were assigned to the treatment or the control group.

The IEPT treatment was carried out for a five-week period. All LES children were observed weekly during their free time to record their language use and interaction patterns. During the last week of the program, after the treatment had terminated, the LES children were posttested on the same three proficiency measures and were observed again for verbal interactions.

*Observations.* To measure the quantity and type of verbal interactions in which the students engaged, the Language Use and Interaction System (LUIS) was employed. The basic idea was derived from a simple coding and tabulation system used by Seliger (1977), but the format is based on Stalling's Five Minute Observation System (1977). Observers focus on one child at a time and the basic unit they code is the utterance. The instrument allows for recording information concerning: (1) the type of utterance (whether an initiation or a non-initiation); (2) characteristics of the addressee, such as language classification (LES or FES), whether a student or a teacher, whether an individual or a group, and (3) the language of the utterance (Spanish, English, or code switching). In addition, information about the setting is recorded, including: location, group size, teacher presence and role, activity, and who selected the activity.

Live observations were conducted by two observers, who underwent twelve hours of training. In order to reduce bias, one observer was kept

uninformed of the purpose of the treatment and of the hypotheses under investigation. A randomized rotation system was used in order to control for effects due to setting, time of day, and state of alertness of the observers.

Subjects were observed outside the treatment situation at times when they were free to interact with children of their own choice and to use the language of their choice. Each LES child was observed for a total of 40 minutes before and after the five-week treatment. In addition, during the five-week treatment period, each child was observed for 20 minutes each week. All observations were conducted in five-minute time segments spaced throughout the day.

*Reliability of observers and of time sample.* Interobserver reliability was established for the observation instrument by computing the percent of agreement between simultaneous and independent observers. Reliabilities of .76 and .82 were established prior to and at the start of the program based on observations of two hours and of 45 minutes respectively. Two additional spot checks were made half-way through the program and at the end of the program. The percent of agreement was respectively .74 and .81 based on five minutes of observation.

In order to determine the extent to which the observed behavior of the children was representative of their behavior throughout the day at unstructured times, a split-half reliability check was performed. For 20 minutes of observation, reliabilities ranged from .36 to 1.0 with a median of .86, indicating that for most students 20 minutes was an adequate sample of behavior. Reliability coefficients for 40 minutes of observation were estimated using the Spearman Brown formula. They ranged from .53 to 1.0 with a median of .94.

*Language proficiency testing.* Forty items of the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT), which measures comprehension of vocabulary, were administered. In this test, a vocabulary word is read to the student who then chooses the correct picture from a plate of four pictures. The Language Assessment Scales (LAS) is an overall proficiency test with sections on comprehension and production of phonology, vocabulary production, syntax comprehension, and a story retelling task. It was administered and scored according to the publisher's instructions. Interrater agreement for the pretest stories was .91 and for the posttest stories was .95.

The Child-Child Communication Test (CCCT) is a functional test designed to measure the kind of language children would be likely to learn by interacting with one another in an open-classroom setting. It involves a comprehension-imitation-production task (Fraser, Bellugi and Brown 1973) and contains seven items. Each item is based on a picture of two children engaged in dialogue in a school situation. The tester explains each situation briefly in Spanish, then supplies the dialogue in English, and the child is asked to recreate the conversation. Each child's speech was recorded and later rated by two independent raters on four criteria: quantity, grammati-

cality, comprehensibility, and appropriateness. The rating scale used was an adaptation of one developed by Overall (1978). The reliability of the CCCT was established through interrater reliability. Pearson correlation coefficients, computed for each subscale as well as for the total score, were .79 for grammaticality, .87 for comprehensibility, .91 for appropriateness, .96 for amount of communication, and .93 for the total score. Ideally, the concurrent validity of the CCCT would be established by comparing it to a standard communication test. Since no such test was available, CCCT scores were correlated with LAS scores (pretest:  $r = .84$ , posttest:  $r = .86$ ) and PPVT scores (pretest:  $r = .75$ , posttest:  $r = .78$ ).

*Treatment.* The IEPT treatment sessions differ fundamentally from conventional peer tutoring in which a tutor instructs an underachieving tutee. The peer teaching in this study had a different purpose: to provide a structured setting for meaningful, natural conversation through an exchange of information between a Spanish-dominant student and a monolingual English-speaking student. The outcomes of interest were social as well as linguistic. How would these sessions affect the LES students' behavior during the rest of the day? Would they choose to interact with their tutoring partners and children of the other language group? Would their language proficiency improve as a result?

The entire treatment session lasted about one hour, with the first 30-minute period devoted to training the tutors and the second 30-minute period devoted to peer tutoring. During the first 30 minutes, half of the treatment group children were taken aside and trained. This group included four LES and four FES children. Training consisted of teaching them an activity appropriate to their age level, in an area such as cooking, science, or art, using primarily English. They were taught the English vocabulary necessary to discuss each step of the activity. The eight trained children were designated as tutors for the day. Meanwhile, the rest of the treatment group and all of the control group children were outside together engaged in free play.

During the second half hour, the tutoring took place. Each of the eight trained tutors was paired with a tutee with whom he or she was very compatible. The pairs were linguistically mixed; that is, a LES child was paired with a FES, non-Spanish speaking, child. Language use for tutoring was necessarily English, since the FES children could not speak or understand Spanish. Meanwhile, outside, the entire group of control students received instruction in the same activity, in English, from a teacher.

A control for curriculum was imposed by providing both groups with the same activities. Teacher effects were controlled by having teachers alternate weekly between the treatment and the control group for the one-hour session. The roles of the children as tutor and tutee were alternated daily so that each child spent as many sessions in the tutee role as in the tutor role.

### Analyses and Results

*Hypothesis 1.* Three analyses were performed to determine the effect of the IEPT treatment on the amount of verbal interaction in English in which the LES children engaged. Eight statistics from the observation data were calculated for each LES student for each of the seven weeks of the program. The types of statistics are summarized in Table 1.

TABLE 1  
Types of Statistics Calculated for Each LES Student  
Based on LUIS Observation Data

Addressee(s)	Frequencies		Ratios	
	Initiation	Utterances	Initiation	Utterances
Fluent English Speaking Children	AC	BC	CC	DC
Fluent English Speakers	AS	BS	CS	DS

Although it was expected that English language use with all persons would increase as a result of the treatment, the specific aim of the treatment was to promote interaction between LES and FES children. Thus data were summarized according to two categories of addressee. Statistics AC through DC refer to speech addressed to FES children (C), while statistics AS through DS refer to speech addressed to fluent English speakers (S), including both children and adults. Both frequencies and ratios were calculated. Denominators of ratios were the total number of utterances including both Spanish and English. Information on initiative behavior was also summarized, as a subset of utterances. The eight statistics are:

- Statistic AC: Frequency of initiations by LES students to fluent English-speaking children in English
- Statistic BC: Frequency of utterances by LES students to fluent English-speaking children in English
- Statistic CC: Ratio of initiations by LES students to fluent English-speaking children in English over total utterances
- Statistic DC: Ratio of utterances by LES students to fluent English-speaking children in English over total utterances
- Statistic AS: Frequency of initiations by LES students to fluent English speakers in English
- Statistic BS: Frequency of utterances by LES students to fluent English speakers in English
- Statistic CS: Ratio of initiations by LES students to fluent English speakers in English over total utterances
- Statistic DS: Ratio of utterances by LES students to fluent English speakers in English over total utterances

Three analyses were performed: (1) a trend analysis, (2) a correlational analysis, and (3) *t* tests. Each analysis represents a different method of modeling the data and each produced somewhat different results, although results point in the same general direction.

A trend analysis was employed to examine the nature of the relationship between the number of English utterances and exposure to the treatment over time. For both the treatment and the control group, group sums<sup>1</sup> were calculated for each week of observation. These points were plotted and a linear regression line was fit to the sums for each group. The relationship is assumed to be linear since there are too few data points to detect non-linear relationships. A test for homogeneity of regression was applied to determine whether the slope of the regression line for the treatment group is significantly different from the slope of the regression line for the control group for each statistic (Cronbach and Snow 1977). In each case the slope of the regression line for the treatment group is greater than the slope for the control group. Treatment-group slopes are either zero or positive while all control-group slopes are negative. This indicates that the treatment group either maintained or increased the frequency and percentage of interactions in English over time, while the control group decreased over time. The differences between the treatment group and the control group, however, were small. None were statistically significant, although the difference between the two groups on statistic BC approached significance ( $F(1,10) = 2.39, p = .15$ ). The scatterplots and regression lines for Statistics BC and BS are displayed in Figures 1 and 2 respectively.

Testing the difference between regression line slopes involves not only two correlations, but also four standard deviations. There can be clear differences between correlations that can be obscured by the intervention of the other statistics (Cronbach and Snow 1977:26). Correlation coefficients were, therefore, calculated between frequency of English utterances and time, measured in weeks. Fisher's *z* transformation was then used to test for the significance of the difference between the correlations for the treatment group and the control group for each statistic (Edwards 1953). Significant treatment effects were found for statistic BC ( $p < .05$ ). The correlation was slightly positive for treatment group children ( $r = .30$ ) and substantially negative for control group children ( $r = -.74$ ), indicating that, over time, the treatment children spoke more English to fluent English speaking children while control children spoke less. No significant differences were found for the other seven statistics, although correlations for the treatment group were positive, while those for the control group were negative. These results suggest (as do the trend analysis results) that the treatment served to prevent the decline in English speech to FES children that occurred in its absence.

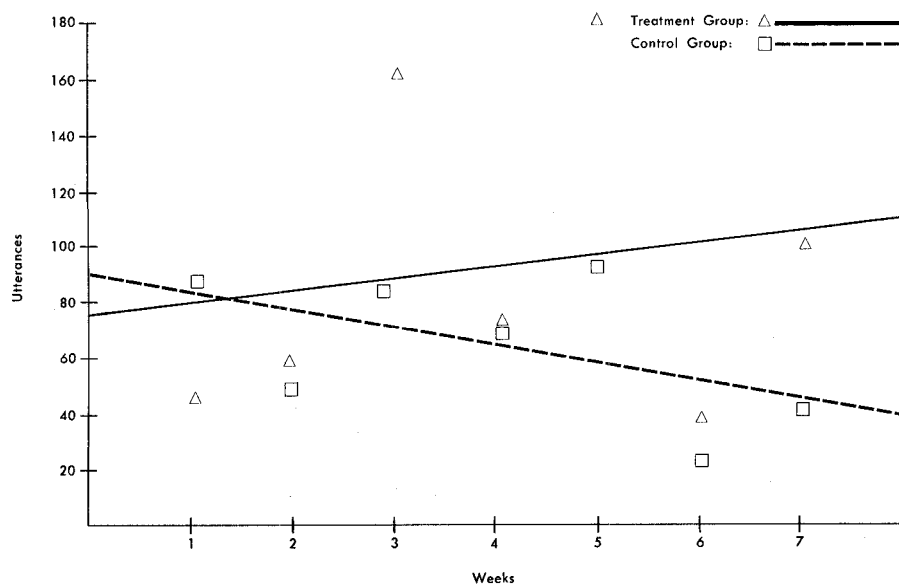
*T* tests were also performed in order to compare the amount of English

<sup>1</sup> Either group sums or group means can be used in the plotting of regression lines since they are mathematically equivalent (sum =  $NM$ ).

spoken by the treatment group to the amount spoken by the control group. The two groups were compared each week after the start of treatment sessions, for each of the eight statistics. While the  $t$  tests revealed no significant differences between the amount of English spoken by treatment and control students during the program, there was a significant difference between the two groups ( $p < .05$ ) on statistics CS and DC at posttest time. These results mean that, after termination of the treatment, the treatment group outperformed the control group in two ways: (1) a greater proportion of their total speech was devoted to initiating verbal interactions with English speakers, and (2) a greater proportion of their total speech was devoted to engaging in verbal interactions with FES children.

FIGURE 1

Scattergrams and Regression Lines for Treatment and Control Groups for Statistic BS:  
Frequency of Utterances in English to Fluent English Speakers



It can be concluded from the three analyses that there is some evidence to support the first hypothesis.

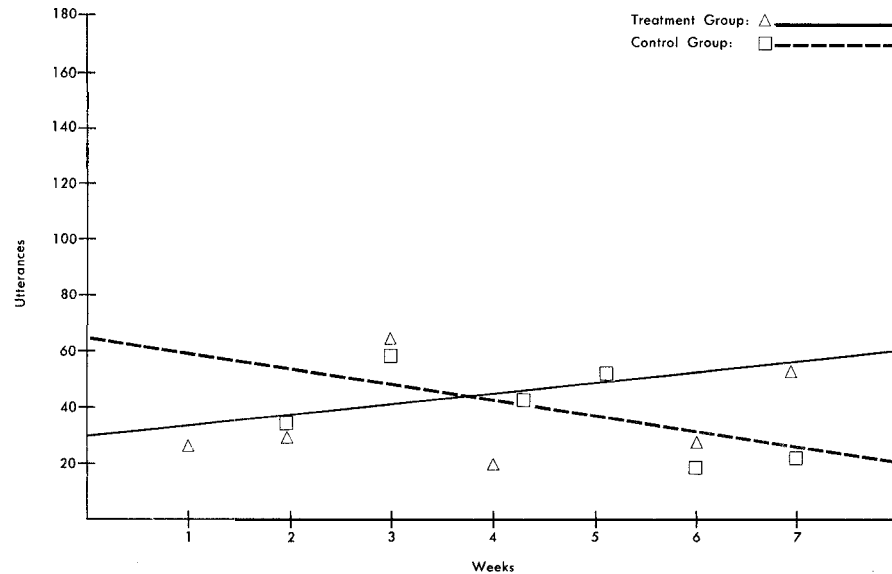
*Hypothesis 2.* To determine whether a relationship was demonstrated between amount of interaction in English and growth in English proficiency, partial correlation coefficients were calculated between the posttest scores (for all sixteen LES students) on the three language proficiency tests and the four measures of the frequency of children's English utterances to English speakers, partialing out the effect of the pretest. By using partial correla-



tions, the influence of the pretest is eliminated or held constant (McNemar 1969). Partial correlations range from .027 to .238. Although the correlations are positive, they are not different from what could have occurred by chance; thus, the second hypothesis is not supported. There is no evidence that the amount of growth in English proficiency was related to the amount of practice speaking English.

FIGURE 2

Scattergrams and Regression Lines for Treatment and Control Groups for Statistic BC:  
Frequency of Utterances in English to Fluent English-speaking Children



*Hypothesis 3.* In order to determine whether students in the treatment group made more growth in English language proficiency than students in the control group, *t* tests for related samples were applied to difference scores on the PPVT and the LAS. The treatment group outperformed the control group on the PPVT,  $t(7) = 3.888$ ,  $p < .005$ . There was no significant difference between the performance of the treatment group and the control group on the LAS. The application of a statistical test to the results of the CCCT was not warranted since two of the scores were determined to be invalid. There was no apparent difference between the treatment and the control group on this measure. The results of these analyses indicate that the IEPT treatment was an effective means of improving vocabulary comprehension.

## Discussion

Before beginning a discussion of the results it would be useful to address two questions: (1) how much English did the LES children speak to FESs in their free time? and (2) how much growth in English language proficiency was there during the seven-week program?

The LES children were all Spanish speakers who had come from the same school. It might be expected that, given the existence of pre-existing friendship patterns and the children's dominance in Spanish, very little English would have been spoken during their free, unstructured time. While all LES children spoke at least some English during free time, there was a great deal of variation across children and across weeks. The ratio of utterances in English to FES's over total utterances (including all speech in both English and Spanish) during the seven weeks ranged from zero for some LES treatment and control children during some weeks to a high of 56% for one child during one week. Thus, most of the LES students spoke Spanish most of the time during free play.

Although the program lasted only seven weeks, there was discernible growth in English language proficiency. The amount of growth between pretest and posttest was significant on two measures as determined by a *t* test for related samples. The mean gain on the PPVT across all 16 students was 1.3 points out of 40 points possible on the test,  $t(15) = 3.01$ ,  $p < .005$ . Average growth on the LAS was 3.6 points out of 100,  $t(15) = 2.83$ ,  $p < .01$ , and on the CCCT the mean gain was 12.3 out of 140 points possible,  $t(15) = 1.64$ ,  $p < .10$ . Thus, while most LES students spoke English during less than half of their free time, they did increase their English proficiency during the summer program.

The no-treatment expectation in this particular program was that, without the IEPT treatment, children would gradually decrease both the frequency and percent of their utterances in English to FESS. The study provided some evidence that the effect of the treatment was to arrest this decline and to cause students to either maintain or increase the number and percent of English utterances over time.

The study was conducted under some common practical and theoretical constraints such as limited funding, a small *N*, and a short treatment period. In addition, the treatment group exhibited extreme within-group variability and variability across weeks in their verbal interactions. Stronger positive results might be obtained in future studies if some of these constraints can be reduced.

One implication, however, of the results of the analyses testing hypothesis 1 is that the informal social environment at school may not be a factor over which educators have no control. Children's social interaction may be influenced by the way educators structure classroom groups and activities. The IEPT technique shows promise as a means of breaking down communi-

cation barriers between different ethnolinguistic groups and helping to create an environment more conducive to informal second language acquisition.

There are several possible explanations for the failure to demonstrate a relationship between amount of informal verbal practice with FESs and growth in English proficiency. It is possible that other aspects of social interaction, such as active listening, contributed as much to the children's language learning as did speaking. Another possibility is that students substantially increased their receptive repertoire through what they learned in informal interactions but did not make this new knowledge part of their productive repertoire. This is plausible since treatment group children increased their scores on the PPVT, a comprehension test, significantly more than control group children, but did not do better on the measures of production. An equally plausible explanation is that the relationship did exist but was not detected due to either (1) the small size of gains actually resulting from speaking practice or (2) inadequate measurement of that portion of the communicative competence that was gained as a result of speaking practice. More work needs to be done in developing measures of the communicative skills of young children and in determining the role active listening plays in second language acquisition.

The IEPT technique proved to be an effective method of increasing children's vocabulary comprehension. Although it is not possible to determine whether the increased knowledge of vocabulary was a result of the actual tutoring session or a result of increased social interaction, it was determined that IEPT caused improved vocabulary comprehension.

These findings add some weight to the argument that methods of teaching ESL can make a difference even for young minority children acquiring English in an English-dominant society. They suggest that native English-speaking peers provide a valuable source of L2 input and that teachers might be able to increase the amount of such input and proficiency in listening comprehension by using interactional techniques such as IEPT. The concept of elementary-level ESL teaching should be broadened to include designing ways to help students in both their formal L2 learning and their informal L2 acquisition.

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## ***Teaching ESL: Incorporating a Communicative, Student-Centered Component\****

Barry P. Taylor

Current research in applied linguistics claims that most adult learners acquire a second language only to the extent that they are exposed to and actively involved in real, meaningful communication in that language. An ESL class which sets out to provide opportunities for such communication, therefore, requires at least two basic components: an environment which will encourage learners to exercise their own initiative in communicating, and activities which will motivate them to do so.

This article explores these issues by briefly reviewing the research which supports incorporating a strong communicative component in language teaching. It then discusses five features of real communication which have implications for the design of such a component and highlights the need to consider not only curricular content but methodology as well. It stresses the importance of classroom atmosphere for the learning and practicing of communicative skills and discusses some of the potential benefits of student-centered teaching. It then outlines some principles for creating appropriate task-oriented classroom materials which promote real communication and can involve the use of any of the four language skills. This article concludes with a discussion of the role of explicit grammar instruction within the context of communicative, student-centered teaching.

Recent writings in second language acquisition and classroom methodology have raised important questions about language learning and teaching. The observation that many students fail to acquire communicative competence in the target language despite years of language instruction has prompted researchers, theoreticians, and teachers to question the effectiveness of our current approaches: traditional, grammar-based instruction has been widely criticized as being ineffective, and recent notional/functional syllabuses, although proposed as potentially more viable curricular alterna-

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tives, are not without their critics. Evaluations of both of these approaches to curriculum design have been discussed widely (see Taylor 1982 for a representative summary).

In response to the perceived weaknesses of both structural and notional/functional syllabuses in producing communicatively competent speakers, the current literature stresses the importance of providing language learners with more opportunities to interact directly with the target language—to acquire it by using it rather than to learn it by studying it. It has been suggested that when language classrooms focus on task-oriented activities which give students experience in functioning in extended, realistic discourse in the target language, those students are able to learn not only appropriate language use, but real communicative processes as well.

But a teaching approach which focuses on real communication also requires a classroom atmosphere in which communication can take place comfortably. Our roles as teachers and our students' roles as learners therefore become significant considerations. Our particular students' needs and the dynamics of our particular classes become major factors in deciding what to teach and how to teach it. This article will begin exploring these issues by first offering a brief summary of some recent research.

### Background Research

One of the most frequently repeated suggestions in the current literature on language learning and teaching is that, for most learners, acquisition of a second language will take place only to the extent that those learners are exposed to and engaged in contextually-rich, genuine, meaningful communication in that language (see Taylor 1982). An examination of the relevant literature reveals two major arguments to support this claim:

1. First, findings from research in second language acquisition indicate that although some adult learners are successful at learning grammar rules which they have been taught and then using those rules productively and communicatively, most learners cannot utilize their intellectual understanding of the grammar of the language in real communication (Johnson 1981a, d'Anglejan 1978, Long *et al.* 1976). Krashen (1977, 1979) and others have argued that communicative competence, for most learners, can only be achieved by subconsciously acquiring the language through active participation in real communication that is of interest to those learners—such as in conversation—in a process similar to the way children acquire their first language. Although this claim is based only on research findings relating to the learning of explicit grammar rules, it seems reasonable to conclude that it would apply equally to cases involving the learning of any explicit language rules, including those which are functional (see Johnson 1979 for his discussion of “analytic” vs. “synthetic” teaching).
2. The second argument in favor of providing students with real communi-

cative experiences in the target language is supported by investigations into communicative curriculum design. It has been argued that the ability to be grammatical and formally correct is important—and it is—but formal correctness is only part of communicative competence (Johnson 1981a, Allwright 1979, Brumfit 1981, Scott 1981). If we expect our students to learn how to use language to fulfill real communicative functions, they must have opportunities to do so in a full range of real situations and social settings. Widdowson (1978) has pointed out that classroom presentations and contrived simulations that focus on language and language forms are inadequate; because such presentations are artificial and often incomplete, they do not provide enough examples of the different kinds of authentic discourse data which students will need in order to learn.

Taken together, these two arguments appear to suggest that for most students language is best acquired when it is not studied in a direct or explicit way; it is acquired most effectively when it is used as a vehicle for doing something else (Saegert *et al.* 1974, Upshur 1968, Tucker 1977) —when learners are directly involved in accomplishing something via the language and therefore have a personal interest in the outcome of what they are using the language to do.

Warshawsky's finding (1978:472) that "grammatical structure appears to develop in the learner's speech in response to communicational need" provides further evidence for this claim. Her research supports the hypothesis that when the transmission of essential information is at stake and there is a compelling communicative need, learners will be motivated to continue to try to communicate. These attempts to communicate can, in turn, facilitate acquisition as students work to meet that need (see Taylor 1982 for a fuller discussion).

Most of us have undoubtedly observed situations that support this hypothesis. How often have those of us who work in domestic pre-university ESL programs, for example, wondered why students did not improve appreciably despite months of language study, and then later marveled at how much their proficiency had increased—but only after they had left our classes and had actually had to struggle with academic courses taught in English? One conclusion which can be drawn is that students are not as likely to involve themselves as fully in our classroom activities, which are often contrived and unconvincing, as they are when they have a real stake in the outcome of their endeavors. This example illustrates, and there are research findings and observations (for example, Gardner and Lambert 1972, Lukmani 1972, Schumann 1978, Stevick 1976, 1980, and Taylor 1973) to suggest, that although many adult second language learners may stop learning when they feel that their proficiency is adequate for their purposes (Selinker 1972), "when there is a pressing need, and the motivation is high, . . . the acquisition process seems to continue" (Taylor and Wolfson 1978:32).

In sum, then, it appears that second language acquisition depends upon



the extent to which learners are exposed to and involved in genuine communication in the target language. Although some students do appear to be able to transfer their intellectual understanding of the structure of the target language (either of the syntax or of notions and functions) into real communicative situations, most cannot do so successfully. But even if they could, neither a grammatical focus nor a notional/functional focus without a real communicative component would be sufficient; neither approach alone provides students with enough examples of how language is used in real communication and with adequate opportunities for them to actually use it.

In the classroom our goal as language teachers is, therefore, to maximize opportunities for language acquisition to take place. While language teaching need not always be entirely communicative (Yorio 1982; also see section, "The role of explicit grammar," in this article), the research which we have considered highlights the need to include a strong communicative component in our teaching and suggests that classroom instruction incorporate the following features:

1. opportunities for students to be exposed to real communication
2. opportunities for students to engage in using real communication
3. activities which are meaningful to students and which will motivate them to become committed to sustaining that communication to accomplish a specific goal, such as solving a problem or completing a task.

#### **Designing a Communicative Component**

In devising ways to make these features operational in the language classroom, we must first consider what is involved in designing a strong communicative component. It has been proposed (Johnson 1981a) that an effective communicative approach must include at least two independent factors.

The first is the selection of appropriate linguistic information to be taught. Johnson (1979) and Morrow (1981) have both suggested that information about the language should be chosen to be taught not simply because it exists, but rather on the basis of what contribution it can be presumed to make to the acquisition of skills or to the performance of specific tasks which are both communicatively useful and relevant to the students' own particular language needs.

But a fuller specification of what to teach, whether it be grammar or linguistic categories of meaning and use (notions and functions), is not enough. The second major factor to consider in implementing a communicative approach is the methodology that will be used to impart that information. Syllabuses, either grammatical or functional, are, in the end, only lists of forms to be taught. The way in which they are taught can make the difference between an approach which is communicative and one that is not (Brumfit 1981, Morrow 1981, Johnson 1981a). A coherent, principled

methodology that will help students to acquire the linguistic skills and abilities which we want them to learn, and then use them productively and communicatively, is required. As Johnson (1981a: 10) notes,

we may begin our teaching operation with a semantic syllabus carefully and scientifically drawn up to cover the student's communicative needs, yet utterly fail to teach him how to communicate. If, in other words, we are to meet our communicative aims, we must give attention to questions of methodology as well as syllabus design.

Recent explorations into communication-based language teaching has begun to identify some of the features of real communication which can have direct applicability to the development of a communicative methodology. Let us briefly consider five:

1. Morrow (1981) has pointed out that in order to engage in real communication participants must be able to deal with stretches of spontaneous language above the sentence level. Since the ability to manipulate the formal features of language in isolation does not necessarily imply the larger ability to be communicatively competent, a communicative teaching approach will need to provide students with the opportunity to engage in extended discourse in a real context.
2. Johnson (1979) and Morrow (1981) have proposed that one of the major purposes of communication is to bridge an information gap. If the speaker and hearer are both in possession of the same information prior to beginning their communication, communication cannot, technically, be said to take place. Therefore, a communicative methodology will need to create situations in which students share information not previously known by all participants in the communication.
3. Morrow (1981) has observed that real communication always allows speakers choices to decide not only what they will say but also how they will say it. In similar fashion, since there is always uncertainty about what a speaker will say, the hearer remains in doubt and must maintain a state of readiness (Johnson 1979, Morrow 1981). A communicative methodology, therefore, will need to provide learners with opportunities to engage in unrehearsed communication and thereby experience doubt and uncertainty, and learn to make appropriate content and linguistic choices accordingly.
4. Morrow (1981) has noted that most participants in real communication keep a goal in mind while they are speaking. That goal is usually the successful completion of some kind of real task. What speakers decide to say to each other and how they evaluate what is said to them are both determined by that goal. That is, what one speaker says to a second speaker is shaped not only by what the second speaker has just said, but also by what the first speaker wants to get out of the conversation (also see Johnson 1979). A communicative methodology, therefore, will need

to provide learners with opportunities to negotiate conversations on topics which are goal-oriented and in which the learners have a vested interest.

5. Johnson (1979) has suggested that real communication requires that both the speaker and hearer attend to many factors quickly and at the same time. A communicative methodology, therefore, will need to provide students with opportunities to engage in extended discourse on real topics, using real language and, most importantly, in real time.

Johnson (1981a:11) elaborates on some of these features of communication when he writes that

apart from being grammatical, the utterance must also be appropriate on many levels at the same time; it must conform to the speaker's aim, to the role relationship between the interactants, to the setting, topic, linguistic context, etc. The speaker must also produce his utterance within severe constraints; he does not know in advance what will be said to him (and hence what his utterance will be in response to) yet, if the conversation is not to flag, he must respond extremely quickly. The rapid formulation of utterances which are simultaneously "right" on several levels is central to the (spoken) communicative skill.

This view of some of the processes involved in real communication prompts a reconsideration of many of our current teaching practices and highlights the need for students to be communicatively active in class. In fact, Johnson (1979) proposed that

these processes . . . can only really be practiced in a language teaching which is "task-orientated" (199) . . . [one which focuses] on tasks to be mediated through language, and where success or failure is seen to be judged in terms of whether or not these tasks are performed (200).

Such a teaching approach requires "an environment where doing things is possible" (Morrow 1981:64). Concerns for curriculum and syllabus design, methodology, and, ultimately, the classroom atmosphere in which that teaching approach takes place all become relevant.

### **The Classroom**

In adopting a communicative approach, therefore, it does not appear possible to separate issues of curriculum and methodology from issues of classroom interaction and environment. Real communication is a shared activity which requires the active involvement of its participants, who must all exercise what we can call "communicating initiative" in guiding that communication. If it is our intention to provide opportunities for students to communicate realistically in class, we have a responsibility to create an atmosphere in which communication is possible, one in which students can feel free to take communicating initiative and are motivated to do so. Making classes "student-centered" (see Bodman 1979) can contribute to creating such an atmosphere.

But creating a supportive, student-centered environment, while important, is not enough. True communication to which students are committed will only take place if we also have engaging content that will involve the participants and in which those participants have a stake.

We can find such content by basing our instruction on task-oriented activities in the target language which focus on issues that are relevant and meaningful to students. When these activities are undertaken in an atmosphere conducive to active participation, they can be intrinsically motivating and can engage learners directly. In this environment students can feel comfortable exercising the communicating initiative necessary to complete the tasks. When they have a personal stake in what they are communicating and in the outcome of that communication, teaching can then be most profitably addressed to those learners' immediate language needs (be they grammatical or functional) as they emerge in the course of their communicative attempts (see Taylor 1982).

D'Anglejan's summary (1978:231) of Corder's observations on the teaching/learning process is significant here. She writes that the teacher and the learner must function as

equal partners in a cooperative enterprise. The learner must seek out the linguistic data and process it when he needs it and can assimilate it. It must be the learner and not the teacher who sets the pace. The role of the teacher is that of responding to the developing communicative needs of the learner by making the appropriate linguistic data available "on request." If the focus of the second language classroom is to be on developing the learner's ability to get the message across, then the teacher's feedback must be related to the communicative appropriateness and not the linguistic form of the students' utterances.

In this way, "communicative functions arise naturally from the activity itself" (Maley 1980:11), and students are able to determine for themselves how successful they have been at getting their meaning across. An evaluation by the teacher becomes unnecessary.

Much of what has been said here is not new. Over the last few years there has been a strong movement away from highly-structured, teacher-centered, grammar-based teaching in favor of task-oriented, communicatively-based, learner-centered teaching, often including the use of certain so-called "humanistic" approaches. Some of these newer approaches, however, have been misunderstood and have caused considerable anxiety and confusion among both ESL teachers and their students (Stevick 1980, Clarke 1980).

Let us now examine some of these issues more closely by addressing two significant concerns: 1) the role of classroom atmosphere in communicatively-based, student-centered language classes, and 2) the selection and use of communicative teaching materials.

*Classroom Atmosphere.* Student-centered teaching does not require that the teacher abdicate authority in the classroom. To do so would create

chaos. Teachers are invested with a responsibility which only they have the right to assume. According to Allwright (1979), that responsibility includes providing samples of the target language, providing guidance concerning the nature of the target language (which includes rules, cues, and feedback on success or failure), and providing classroom management. These issues are not in question. What is significant in student-centered teaching, however, is the manner in which teachers assume this responsibility and how much of it they share (see Bodman 1979, Stevick 1980).

For many of us, there appears to be an assumed incompatibility between learner-centered teaching and the teacher's authority to direct the class. Stevick (1980) addresses this point directly by making a distinction between what he calls teacher "control" and student "initiative." Control, Stevick suggests, consists of two elements: the structuring of classroom activities and the providing of constructive feedback on performance. He proposes that at the beginning stages of any course both aspects of control should reside entirely with the teacher in order to create a secure, stable environment for the students; in time, these responsibilities can be shared with the students but only as long as those students feel secure in knowing that this shift in responsibility is part of the teacher's overall plan, and there is no serious disruption of the effectiveness of the activity. Stevick warns that it can be dangerous to turn these responsibilities over to the students prematurely.

Stevick contrasts control with initiative, which, he says (1980:19), "refers to decisions about who says what, to whom, and when. . . and consist[s] of choices among a narrow or a very broad range of possibilities which are provided by whoever is exercising 'control.'" He argues that control and initiative must be kept distinct and can be adjusted independently of each other; in the name of "taking control," teachers must be careful not to monopolize initiative. As he explains (1980:20),

in exercising "control," then, the teacher is giving some kind of order, or structure, to the learning space of the student. In encouraging him to take "initiative," she is allowing him to work, and to grow, within that space. The trick, for the teacher, is not only to preserve this distinction; it is also to provide just the right *amount* of learning space. If there is too little, the learner will be stifled. If there is too much, the student will feel that the teacher has abandoned him" (for further discussion of these and related issues, see Stevick 1980, Chapter 2).

This kind of teaching approach places some serious responsibilities on teachers and requires that they adopt a point of view toward their teaching which can be significantly different from that which they may be most accustomed to. The teacher's attitude and the resultant relationship created between the teacher and the students is the single most important variable in successfully executing student-centered teaching. Within this framework, the teacher does not function as a drill leader or an authority figure, no matter how benevolent, but rather as a "facilitator" (Rardin 1977) who responds to the students' emerging language needs.

One current teaching approach which has attempted to incorporate these ideas in an explicit way is Counseling-Learning/Community Language Learning (C-L/CLL), founded by Charles Curran (1961, 1972, 1976). In brief, C-L/CLL represents a philosophy of education which draws heavily on the field of counseling psychology, and especially "client-centered therapy" (Rogers 1965). When Curran, who was himself a psychologist and not a language teacher, began to notice that many language students exhibited the same kinds of anxieties and fears as clients in psychotherapy, he began to experiment with applying counseling techniques to language teaching. Curran felt that competition, fear of failure or rejection, and a host of other personal conflicts and hostilities which students bring to the language learning situation could create serious blocks to intellectual learning and needed to be dealt with productively if successful, non-defensive language learning and language use were to take place (Rardin 1976).

Curran (1976) envisioned a low-pressure language class in which students could feel secure and could cooperate, rather than compete, in a community learning environment. In this environment the teacher and the students supported and accepted each other and worked together as a group. The teacher, in this setting, did not function as an authority or strong presence, but rather as an understanding, supportive, non-judgmental counselor who had the knowledge that the students were there to learn and who was able to see the learners and their fears and needs from their perspective. The teacher's responsibility was to relate to the learners as "whole persons" and to structure opportunities for those learners to draw knowledge from him/her, as they felt ready to do so.

In formulating the C-L/CLL approach, Curran (1976) stressed the importance of this kind of supportive atmosphere to encourage students to exercise what we have called communicating initiative. But a primary focus of Curran's work was to highlight what we can call "learning initiative."

From Curran's perspective, students would be truly receptive to learning only if they assumed some of the responsibility for directing that learning and played a role in determining both the content and manner of their instruction. He envisioned a nurturing learning environment taught by a teacher who provided structure and direction without placing demands on the students. The teacher's function was to be sincerely responsive to student needs and input and encouraging of student initiative. This responsibility included taking into consideration what the students wanted to learn and how they wanted to learn it as long as the general goals and objectives which the teacher had established for the course were being met (Bodman 1979). A brief description of a technique which practitioners of C-L/CLL call the "human computer" can serve as a good illustration of one way that C-L/CLL accomplishes this goal.

The "human computer" is used in C-L/CLL classes to practice both pronunciation and what C-L/CLL teachers call "creative sentence building."

As a teaching technique, it is consistent with Stevick's (1980) distinction between control and initiative; that is, it enables the teacher to maintain full control of the activity while at the same time it allows students to play a role in directing their own learning by offering them the possibility of taking as much initiative as they wish. The key element is that students are permitted options within the teacher's structure. As in all C-L/CLL techniques, the atmosphere is secure and supportive.

The "human computer" is a simple procedure. When it is used to practice "creative sentence building," for example, students take turns orally constructing their own original sentences. They are entirely free either to draw on grammar and vocabulary that they already know and feel confident of, or to explore and test out structures that they are unsure of. There are no teacher-imposed expectations on how complicated or adventuresome those sentences need to be, and the students can feel secure in knowing that they can take as much or as little risk as they feel comfortable with. The teacher, standing at the back of the room facing in the same direction as the students, offers feedback after each sentence by repeating the full sentence (in corrected form, if necessary) back to the students, without comment, to give the students themselves the opportunity and the responsibility to recognize and correct whatever mistakes they may have made. The teacher does not judge or make evaluative remarks, and the students are free to try their sentences as many times as they wish, or, if they prefer, they can experiment with different sentences. Individual students take their turns in an orderly fashion, without being called on by the teacher, and are free to participate, or not participate, as they see fit.

This kind of non-threatening teaching technique can serve as a clear example of one way that student motivation and initiative can be maximized at the same time that the teacher is able to maintain full control of the activity. Because the atmosphere is supportive, students are able to take risks and actively participate, at their own pace, without feeling pressured to keep up with an imposed learning agenda. As they become increasingly involved in the activity, their self-investment can be an even greater motivating force than any teacher's demands (see Curran 1976).

*Communicative Teaching Materials.* Earlier in this article we outlined several features of real communication which could have applicability both to our teaching and to communicative curriculum design. In examining these characteristics from the point of view of the classroom, we noted (Johnson 1979) that these kinds of communicative skills could be most effectively practiced only in a classroom environment in which it was possible to engage in task-oriented activities mediated through language, but not focusing on it. We highlighted the importance of creating a structured, yet supportive, non-judgmental atmosphere in order to allow the students to feel free to take the risks inherent in these kinds of activities and stressed that performance should be evaluated not in terms of language, but rather in terms of successful failure in completing the task.

Creating opportunities for students to exercise their own communicating and learning initiative and play a role in directing their own learning, while at the same time maintaining teacher control, does not necessarily require adopting any kind of special curriculum or following any of the so-called "humanistic" methodologies. "Humanism," if it can be defined at all, is more of a philosophy or an attitude than a method or a technique (Clarke 1980). Even C-L/CLL, although it does have some specific techniques which have become associated with it, does not prescribe what should happen in class; it is only an approach, not an explicit syllabus (Taylor 1979). Within this general learner-centered approach, instructors are free to structure their classes as they see fit; the teacher always has that right. This approach can be applied to the teaching of any of the language skills, using any curriculum, and the proponents of C-L/CLL have repeatedly stressed that there is considerable variation in the way different teachers use C-L/CLL (Rardin, personal communication).

For teachers who are able to create some of their own teaching materials or adapt existing ones, there are numerous ways to structure their classes to provide opportunities for students to be actively engaged in real communication and to thereby learn communicative skills in the classroom. For example, such activities might include involving students in goal- or task-oriented group projects which interest or affect them (see Allwright 1979, Geddes 1981, Johnson 1981b, White 1981, Wright 1981), in logical problem-solving activities which are conceptually worth solving (see Huckin 1980, Maley 1980, 1981, Long 1975, Widdowson 1981), in information-gathering activities (see d'Anglejan 1978), or in task-oriented communication with invited native-speaker "guests" (see Gunterman 1980) (*e. g.*, public opinion surveys or interviews). These activities can be undertaken not only in class, but out of class as well and can be designed to incorporate practice in any of the language skills. The students and the teacher can get ideas for topics and activities from a variety of sources, such as books, magazines, newspapers, radio, television, students' interests, experiences, feelings, or reactions.

The setting up of an information gap in the classroom is one particularly valuable tool to use to create a real communicative situation. Activities which require the bridging of information gaps provide students with opportunities to learn how to deal with extended discourse above the sentence level, to cope with receiving information which is new and unexpected, to exercise both linguistic and informational choices in forming their responses, and to do so at a natural pace.

Two pedagogical techniques which have been developed to create information gaps in the classroom are the "jigsaw" (Geddes and Sturtridge 1979) and "task dependency" (Johnson 1981b) principles. The jigsaw principle is used primarily in group activities which are of a task-oriented or problem-solving nature. When activities are structured according to this principle, key information required to complete the task is given only to



some of the students, but withheld from others. Because a pooling of information is then required to successfully complete the task, this kind of information gap creates a real need for students to communicate with each other.

The task dependency principle is often used in conjunction with the jigsaw principle. When activities are structured according to the task dependency principle, students must first successfully complete certain sub-tasks before they are able to complete the major task which they have been assigned. For example (adapted from Geddes 1981), if students in a class are planning to take an automobile trip of some kind, the major task of selecting the best route for them to take might be set up to require that they first complete several sub-tasks, such as extracting the pertinent information they will need from a number of real informational sources. These sources might include taped discussions of road conditions in a specific region, road maps, recorded weather reports, weather maps, and recorded traffic reports. The jigsaw principle could also be employed here by structuring the activity so that different students engage in different sub-tasks. All students would then need to pool their information before they would be able to jointly complete the major task of selecting the best route.

An activity of this kind provides opportunities for students to practice a variety of communicative skills. The major task of selecting the best route creates real reasons for students to undertake the sub-tasks and offers an opportunity for them to practice evaluating a body of information against a real goal, extracting the relevant, rejecting the irrelevant. The jigsaw principle creates an information gap that enables the students to practice serving as both giver and receiver of new information. Bridging this information gap makes individual students accountable to the whole group and allows them to experience the unexpectedness which is characteristic of spontaneous communication. Throughout this communication they remain in a state of uncertainty regarding what they will hear, and they therefore experience the freedom to choose what they consider to be the most appropriate response. Negotiating the final solution to the major task of selecting the best route gives them practice in engaging in extended discourse in real time.

Students can be given considerable latitude in how they engage in these kinds of activities. The teacher's role is to assume the responsibility for setting up the conditions for communication to take place (Scott 1981) by structuring and outlining the activity. Rather than taking an active role, however, teachers are advised to maintain a "low profile," perhaps asking only "attention-directing" questions (Allwright 1979), allowing the students to pursue the task largely on their own. In C-L/CLL, for example, the teacher often divides the class into small groups, allowing each group to work on the task in its own way. Alternatively, different groups can each be given the responsibility to decide which aspect of a larger class project they

wish to pursue. Or, the teacher may decide to set up several alternative activities, incorporating student suggestions, and allow students to choose which activity they would like to participate in; small groups are created accordingly. Each small group has the responsibility to carry out its own activity, calling upon the teacher, as needed.

It does not matter, ultimately, how successful students actually are in accomplishing the tasks that they undertake. The real language experience is what is most important, and this kind of approach can be particularly successful because students are directly involved. They are interested in what they are doing because they have a say in selecting their own tasks and activities and in deciding how they will carry them out. They develop confidence in their ability to cope with the language for some useful purpose (Allwright 1979). They are self-invested and their motivation is likely to be greater. In these kinds of activities students get real, meaningful practice in authentic communication with their minds directly on communication, rather than on language. As they plan and execute their projects, or discuss their tasks, they are engaging in purposeful communication that focuses on content and real issues. While it may not always be possible to devise activities that are real in an absolute sense, it has been suggested that activities of this kind, even when they are simulated, can “foster ‘natural,’ ‘creative,’ ‘authentic’ language behavior on the part of learners once the framework of rules and conventions has been firmly established” (Maley 1981:137).

### **The Role of Explicit Grammar**

In the light of these comments, it is now appropriate to question where explicit grammar teaching fits into this general framework. If, as has been suggested, students need to be actively engaged in real communication with the focus of their attention on content rather than on grammar, should grammar be taught at all? And if so, how, when, and in what sequence?

Although long-standing traditions have supported an explicit, sequential grammar component in language teaching, recent research in second language acquisition has questioned its value. Consider the following four observations:

1. Most learners are unable to successfully transfer their mechanical control of grammatical patterns to real communicative situations (d'Anglejan 1978, Long *et al.* 1976).
2. The acquisition of syntax appears to be a natural developmental process in learners and may have its own timetable (Krashen 1979).
3. The order of acquisition of grammar rules may be determined more by communicative need than by the teaching order (Kessler *et al.* 1979, Taylor 1981).
4. There is considerable variation among learners in the manner in which they acquire grammatical forms: some can profit from rules, some

cannot; some can use forms quickly—almost immediately after they are presented, others need more time; many students need to see how the form is used in a number of different contexts—approached from a number of different directions—before they can use it, some do not (Krashen 1977, Bodman 1979, Taylor 1982).

Taken together, these observations suggest that since it is unlikely that all of our students will be at the same learning stage at the same time, a sequenced presentation of grammar may not meet their needs. Just because an item is next on the syllabus does not imply that the students are ready to receive that information. So, while we may feel the need to “cover” a certain amount of material in class, what is actually acquired may well be beyond our control.

There are few linguistically-compelling reasons to support sequencing grammar teaching in any particular way. While it is clear that some of the more complex linguistic structures require a prior control of some of the simpler structures, the order in which those structures is learned need not be fixed. Why, for example, is it necessary for students to learn the simple present tense before the past? Or the progressive before the imperative? Or questions before modal auxiliaries? If we take a communicative point of view, in fact, it would be fair to say that students who are studying in the target culture need all of the structures simultaneously if they are going to be able to meet the real communicative needs which they face every day. When, in their daily encounters, they find that they are required to ask for information, or give directions, or talk about something that happened to them yesterday, it will not help them to know that the necessary linguistic forms are on the syllabus, but will not be taught for another month. Students will simply make do with whatever linguistic resources are at their disposal to get their point across (Selinker 1972, Taylor 1974), and what has been suggested throughout this article is that this kind of real communicative need provides a more reasonable starting-off point for language instruction than a pre-determined teaching order.

When an explanation of a new linguistic form is offered at a time when it can be perceived to fulfill a real or present communicative need, learners are able to focus on active, communicatively-based, self-invested learning. The psychological impact of recognizing the immediate communicative utility of a new form is greater than that which exists when language forms are presented in an arbitrary order and then practiced through contrived activities designed to create the illusion of reality. Not only does this approach demonstrate to students quite clearly that what they are learning can enable them to successfully communicate in a realistic way on issues that matter to them, it also provides real language input for processing and rules for those students who can use them. This is a very different situation from one in which we make the decisions about when to teach new structures to our students, since it is entirely likely that those new linguistic forms will only

be stored away as just more information about the language, their functional value as yet undemonstrated (Taylor 1982).

It is important to recognize that this article is not proposing that there is no need for explicit grammar instruction. It is simply being suggested that we reconsider the long-standing assumption that that instruction needs to follow a prescribed sequence. Widdowson (1981) has pointed out, for example, that the major weakness of grammar-based instruction is not that the focus of attention is on structure, but rather that, in teaching, structures are often not represented as a resource to communicate meaning. Taught within a communicative, needs-based context, however, explicit grammar instruction can meet four significant needs:

1. Since it has been shown that some students are able to profit from direct instruction in grammar (Krashen 1977), that instruction should be offered as a supplement to, but not instead of, real communicative experiences for those students who can profit from it. "Mastery," however, should not be required—nor should participation.
2. Since our classes, no matter how communicatively-based, may not provide enough real language input for students to be able to acquire forms on their own (Krashen 1980), grammar can be offered as an optional supplement for those students who can make use of explanations, clarification, and rules.
3. Because the language used in presenting, explaining, and discussing grammar is real, communicative language, students can profit from this additional exposure to language even if they cannot profit directly from the grammatical information being discussed (Krashen 1980).
4. Students typically expect, want, and demand instruction in explicit grammar. To ignore what they consider to be important or necessary, regardless of our point of view, is to invite resistance, either overt or covert, to our teaching (Stevick 1980). It seems more reasonable to try to expand and broaden their expectations than to try to change them. This may well involve our spending a limited amount of time on activities which we might otherwise prefer to avoid.

C-L/CLL deals with explicit grammar instruction in much the way it has been discussed here. While there is a strong grammatical component incorporated within the approach, grammar rules are typically taught in the order in which they are needed by the students. The teacher rarely engages in long, elaborate explanations, but rather concentrates on the specific need as it arises. The teacher offers the grammar as an aid to students and does not require mastery or force students to participate.

What is significant is that the students motivate themselves to learn the rules. Because of the strong emphasis in C-L/CLL on group work and on students' assuming responsibility for their own learning, the pressure to learn comes directly from the students. Students become motivated to learn

because they do not want to let their group down, or because they feel a pressing need to acquire what has been taught. The teacher is therefore relieved of having to impose that pressure.

The extent to which students are able to assume this responsibility comes out most clearly in small group work. In groups, students are occasionally given flexibility, within the general structure established by the teacher, to select for themselves what they want to practice and how they want to practice it, whether it be grammar, or vocabulary, or idioms. Different groups select different points and practice them in different ways. The better learners help the slower learners. The language forms which have been most recently presented or discussed are left on the blackboard or on large sheets of newsprint posted on the wall in full view of the class. The teacher is always there to answer any questions that the students may have, but only if called on. It is apparent, in observing these groups, that a lot of learning is going on. Students are practicing, puzzling out points, experimenting, testing hypotheses, and drawing conclusions. They are relying on each other and learning from each other. And, most importantly, they are communicating. As Krashen points out (1976:165), even during times when students may choose to discuss grammar, or vocabulary, or idioms, "to the extent that the target language is used realistically, to that extent will acquisition occur."

There will be times, of course, when the teacher may want to take the lead—to offer forms, to introduce a new pattern, to explain a structure, to provide vocabulary, or to identify an error. This is not inconsistent with the approach which has been presented here if it is done subtly, sparingly, and in the spirit of learner-centeredness. That is, when trust between the students and the teacher is established, teachers can assume this kind of role as long as students understand that what is being offered is optional, and that the teacher is not requiring "mastery." For students who, for whatever reason, would not be able to acquire the form being taught in such a direct way, demands for immediate learning can be threatening and demoralizing. It can take a long time for teachers to acquire this kind of judgment (Stevick 1980, Bodman 1979).

### Conclusion

What has been suggested throughout this article is that we take the students' communicative attempts in the target language as the starting-off point for our instruction, rather than the rules or the structure of the language. The basic approach, as outlined here, requires a commitment on the part of the teacher to reverse many of the teaching practices which have become traditional in language teaching methodology over the years. It involves looking at students, not as students, *per se*, but as whole people with needs, and fears, and goals, and commitments and then capitalizing on those students' ability to invest themselves in accomplishing their goals and objectives. It stresses the close interrelationship which exists between the

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issues of classroom interaction and curriculum, content and atmosphere, and focuses on the need for students to feel secure, unthreatened, and non-defensive. It highlights the need for instructors to avoid adopting a teacher-centered, authoritarian posture.

When such an atmosphere is achieved, students can then feel free to exercise their own initiative in communicating and in directing their own learning. This approach recognizes that the need to accomplish something can be a compelling factor in language learning and can foster “self-investment”—a whole-person commitment to accomplishing a goal. When a class provides opportunities for students to participate in guiding their own learning, selecting their own activities, and deciding what they want to practice, those students have a stake in the outcome of their endeavors, their interest and motivation are likely to be higher, and they become more receptive to instruction if that instruction will help them meet that goal—whether it is to understand a syntactic pattern, or to solve a problem, or to complete a task. This approach highlights the importance that initiative plays in promoting real communication. This communication provides opportunities for students to be exposed to language and to use it. The need to accomplish something through that language keeps the communication going.

When students are committed to accomplishing something which depends upon their further mastery of the target language, instruction can then be provided to meet those emerging language needs. This kind of situation can create the sort of classroom atmosphere in which teaching can be most profitably received. This approach stresses the need to teach what is needed when it is needed—to give learners the flexibility to learn in their own way, at their own pace, rather than to follow a pre-determined syllabus. It emphasizes the need to provide learners with the space they need to receive the instruction without feeling compelled to master it immediately. It points out the need to maintain a non-authoritarian presence throughout this process so that students can continue to feel secure and non-defensive—to enable them to learn not because the teacher demands it of them, but because they need to in order to accomplish their own goals.

And finally, this approach stresses that sharing the responsibility for structuring learning with the students does not require that teachers abdicate their fundamental authority to guide and structure their classes. It highlights the need for teachers to be sensitive to what is happening in the classroom and to respond to the dynamics of the class. This approach may not work equally well for all teachers and all students. Nevertheless, for those who are able to use it, classes which incorporate these ideas can be exciting, exhilarating, and satisfying. This approach has been called “student-centered,” but the responsibility for accomplishing it resides with us.

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## ***Voice Quality Settings and the Teaching of Pronunciation\****

**John H. Esling and Rita F. Wong**

Voice quality settings can be used to characterize ESL students' accents and to help non-native speakers of English improve their pronunciation. The concept of voice quality settings is discussed, drawing from the descriptive phonetic methodology of Abercrombie, Laver, Honikman, and Esling. A broad model of the voice quality setting of one variety of English spoken in North America is described, and settings in other languages are identified. Finally, suggestions for making students aware of their own settings are presented.

### **Voice Quality Settings**

The accent of a speaker is typically characterized by a description of the pronunciation of individual sounds, the placement of stress and of rhythm and intonation. Another way of characterizing accent, which may be less familiar to ESL teachers in North America, is the description of voice quality settings, which are the long-term postures of the larynx, pharynx, tongue, velopharyngeal system and lips, as well as long-term laryngeal configurations reflected in the diverse phonation types described by Catford (1964). Voice quality settings may function linguistically, to characterize the particular language or dialect or social group to which a speaker belongs; or they may function paralinguistically, to signal mood or emotion in conversational contexts; or they may also function extralinguistically to characterize or identify the individual speaker. For example, a typical setting would be

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a quasi-permanent tendency to keep the lips in a rounded position throughout speech. Another would be a habitual tendency to keep the body of the tongue slightly retracted into the pharynx while speaking. Another would be the persistent choice of a characteristically 'whispery' mode of phonation (Laver 1980:2).

When a feature of voice quality figures prominently in the setting of an ESL student's native language but does not occur commonly or to the same degree in English, it is a potential obstacle to intelligibility. Examples of accents which illustrate voice quality settings often found in ESL classrooms include extreme *retroflexion* of the tongue and *open jaw* in some accents of India; *close jaw*, *nasal voice*, and a *dentalized* or *alveolarized* tongue body setting in Chinese; *uvularized* tongue body position in Hebrew and in some dialects of Arabic; *uvularized* tongue body and *faucal constriction* (that is, habitual constriction of the upper pharynx) in other dialects of Arabic; *lowered larynx*, *faucal constriction* and *uvularization*, with lip *spreading* in Japanese; and tongue *tip articulation*, *nasal voice*, and *breathy voice* in Persian. Features of voice dynamics, including loudness, speed of speaking, pauses, rhythm, pitch range and intonation, also influence intelligibility, as does the articulation of individual vowels and consonants, but in this paper we shall concentrate only on voice quality settings, which are the longest-term, "quasi-permanent" component of speech (Abercrombie 1967:89-110).

Because voice quality setting features are often associated with individual speaker recognition or paralinguistic emotional coloring, the extent to which they incorporate the segmental phonology of the language and the extent to which they signal regional or social information may be overlooked. Distinctions in voice quality would be particularly difficult for a foreign learner of the language to recognize, lacking the opportunity or ability to observe the distribution of the phenomenon. In ESL pronunciation classes, segmental features tend to receive more emphasis, as in the presentation of minimal pairs, making it harder for students to recognize the linguistic significance of the more general, higher-level setting features in the target language. It may be that a segmental approach is not the most efficient way of introducing pronunciation in a second language, since it focuses on the specific rather than first directing attention to the general characteristics of accent. Whereas the child learning his/her native language acquires setting and segmental features as a mutually combined system, the second language learner may impose the new phonemes of English on the old background posture of a non-English, and perhaps inappropriate, voice quality setting. As a result, the identity of segmental contrasts may be obscured or masked by the old posture.

Another problem is that the ESL student may not recognize the difference in acceptability between various settings in English, with their contrasting social or regional implications. The student's own native setting may contain features which, without the speaker's knowing it, evoke an unfavorable re-

sponse from English speakers. To increase awareness of settings in English, a voice quality description of one variety of English is proposed for ESL teachers to present as a model of the vocal configurations we have been talking about.

### **A Model of Voice Quality Setting in American English**

It is difficult to speak of learning pronunciation in a second language as if all native speakers of the language used only one setting. The same is true of the vowel system at the segmental level. All languages have regional and social dialects, each with particular setting features that function as indicators or indices of that language variety. Beyond this level of generalization, there is still a considerable amount of individual variation among native speakers. This diversity is characteristic of English, although we will attempt to demonstrate that a combination of setting features common to a wide variety of North American English speakers can be identified and presented to ESL students in the same way that the distinctive segments, the vowels and consonants of a representative variety of American English, for example, are presented for improving or practicing pronunciation.

In the United States, a broad model of voice quality setting might include the following features:

- (1) spread lips
- (2) open jaw
- (3) palatalized tongue body position
- (4) retroflex articulation
- (5) nasal voice
- (6) lowered larynx
- (7) creaky voice

Not all dialect groups will share the same features, and some dialect groups may even demonstrate opposite features, but settings that combine some if not all of these features are very common, and represent articulatory habits that students can easily observe and learn to recognize. We do not mean to suggest that the second language student's aim should be to sound exactly like a native speaker of the target language, but rather that identification with the target group, insofar as that is the student's goal, is often realized phonologically through the mechanism of voice quality.

Spreadness of the lips is common in many dialects of English. Students with excessive rounding at inappropriate moments, for example during /s/ or /l/ which are normally unrounded, can practice smiling slightly as they speak. Slightly rounded segments such as /ʃ/ or /r/ must then be thought of as the marked case where a slight labial adjustment is introduced. Openness is common in American English but not in British English as described by Honikman (1964:75). The stereotype that Americans speak as though chewing gum has its origins in this setting feature. Accents in many American television programs visually reinforce both spreading and openness.

Palatalized, or fronted and slightly raised tongue body position can be illustrated by common vowel raising in English, for example in the word *yeah* which may be realized as [jæ:], [jɛə], or [jĩẽə]. Retroflexion of the tongue tip, as in much Irish English, characterizes many varieties of North American English which have postvocalic /r/. Nasalization as a voice quality setting is common in many accents of North American as well as British English.

Lowering of the larynx, giving the voice a deeper or hollower sound, often characterizes national political figures or news and public address announcers in the United States and Canada, where the degree of prestige of the setting can be assumed to be high. This would be an unusual feature in a corresponding British or French context. Creaky phonation, or a low pitch range, is often present in similar North American contexts. Neither feature is necessarily confined, exclusively to males.

### Settings in Other Languages

What about voice quality settings in other languages? Honikman (1984) describes a typical setting of French as *rounded*, with *fronted* tongue and *blade articulation*, with slightly open jaw setting. German is also characterized as lip-rounded. Russian, in contrast, is close in jaw setting, with spread lips and fronted (palatal) articulation. Indian and Pakistani languages are described as having open lips and jaw, with retroflex articulation of the tongue. Turkish and Persian are cited as examples of languages where articulation is performed primarily by the tongue tip. These descriptions are restricted to features which can be identified both auditorily and visually. Only labial, mandibular, and front lingual settings are evaluated.

Using the descriptive framework proposed by Laver (1975, 1980), it is possible to elaborate on these descriptions, identifying features associated with articulations which are not necessarily visible. In addition to open rounding, some French accents demonstrate habitual backing of the tongue—uvularization, or pharyngalization in some cases—where a fronted tongue tip performs dental articulations at the same time as a retracted tongue back performs uvular articulations. Nasal voice, breathy or *whispery voice*, and a relatively high pitch range are common features of French. Since some of these features are also found in a variety of accents of English, it may be that they pose no problem for the French speaker learning English. In fact, features such as breathy or whispery phonation may be a positive asset, ranking relatively high in sociolinguistic prestige in English, and often giving what is recognized as a French accent higher status among foreign accents in English.

German accents, because of their historical proximity to English both since Anglo-Saxon times and in North American colonial development, may also share many of the setting features found in dialects of English, causing

few problems of accommodation. Although lip rounding usually differentiates German from English settings, accents of Durham or Northumberland in the north of England have this feature in common with German. Dialects of German vary considerably, but characteristic features often include *laryngo-pharyngealized* tongue setting and combinations of degrees of *raised larynx* and faucal constriction (tightening of the upper pharynx) in many northern accents, with lowered larynx (lengthening the pharynx) in many southern accents. As is the case of French, these settings may carry varying degrees of prestige in an English-speaking community, possibly improving the image of the speaker in areas where the same features are found in familiar, socially prestigious varieties of English. Extreme open rounding, fronted, *palato-alveolarized* tongue position, and *whispery creaky voice* in Norwegian or Swedish are another example of a setting that does not differ much from English. Only extreme rounding is uncharacteristic of English taught in ESL classes. The palatalized or palato-alveolarized tongue setting and whispery creaky phonation of Norwegian are common and even prestigious in some varieties of English, according to socio-linguistic studies of English in Norwich (Trudgill 1974) and in Edinburgh (Esling 1978a, 1981). Russian accents, in contrast, often combine the features mentioned above, close jaw, spread lips and palatalized tongue position, with faucal constriction.

### Suggestions for Teaching

Knowledge of voice quality settings of English as well as those of other languages provides a useful tool in improving pronunciation performance. A number of pronunciation difficulties may be the combined result of the learner's inability to grasp the generalization that a particular setting, or long-term configuration, represents. Many characteristic vowel and consonant phonemes of English share features which can be grouped together to constitute the habitual articulatory posture of English. If the voice quality of the learner's native language differs from the setting normally found in the target language, both intelligibility and comprehension in spoken communication may suffer. It follows that if the learner can be taught the relatively small number of higher-level features that constitute setting, then the pronunciation of a relatively large number of the lower-level segmental features captured within the generalized setting should improve as a result. In addition, voice quality settings help to improve the image that students project when they speak English. As settings have been shown to differentiate individuals according to social background (Trudgill 1974:190, Esling 1978b), non-native speakers of English can find it helpful to be presented with setting features that reflect the range of social status in an English-speaking community. Since the social background, and even notions of the intelligence or ability of the individual are communicated to some extent

through voice quality, attention drawn to these long-term aspects of pronunciation can be revealing, and provide a way of making progress in speaking English for many students.

One effective method of sensitizing ESL students to their own and each other's native voice qualities is to ask students to prepare a short phrase from everyday conversation, an announcement, or a tongue-twister to produce in their native language to the rest of the class. Even with only one or two representatives of each language, a linguistically heterogeneous class can yield noticeable differences. Particularly salient voice quality features can usually be assumed, provisionally, to be linguistically motivated, and can be contrasted from language to language. Students quickly learn that voice quality is not only individual, but also a part of one's accent in a language. Rapid presentation of native language material also tends to make the speaker approximate the average setting of his/her language variety.

Another technique for building awareness of voice quality in pronunciation is for students to observe and make notes of the settings of various personalities that they see on television. Certain programs might reflect a variety of regional or social dialects in English, whereas national newscasts might present a model which students wish to imitate. Students can also be asked to imitate an American accent, for example, in their own native languages. Stereotypes of English-speakers speaking other languages often include visible characteristic vocal postures. Whether or not imitation is used as a technique, it should be pointed out to students that there are voice quality settings which one adopts in increasingly formal or prestigious varieties of English. The features of a socially higher valued setting in English may or may not correspond to the voice quality features that students bring from their native languages. If not, the difference may contribute, along with differences in rhythm, intonation, and segmental phonology, to low intelligibility or unfavorable social judgments against the speaker. It is important for these students to become aware of voice quality and of how to observe and recognize different settings. They should also be presented with a model containing salient features which are likely to occur in the pronunciations of English which they are accustomed to hearing.

In conclusion, it is desirable to make ESL students aware of the voice quality settings that characterize their own languages, as well as to present voice quality characteristics which they can use as a model of pronunciation in English. This model can be referred to analytically to identify the settings of English speakers whom students hear and observe, or for sensitization as an example of one accent of English which is easy to recognize and to practice. Voice quality comprises the constant background of settings that define both (1) the voice of the individual and (2) the accent of the individual's language variety. While the former are personal, the latter are language-specific, socially indexical and phonologically relevant, and should

be described and taught within the pronunciation component of the ESL curriculum.

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## ***Rationalizing Placement and Promotion Decisions in a Major ELT Program\****

**Jane Gaffney and Victor Mason**

A large ELT program administered a highly reliable test in common to the students of all required courses, finding 1) excessive heterogeneity of student proficiency levels within each credit course and 2) unsatisfactory differences in mean group proficiency between those credit courses. A thorough re-evaluation of the program identified several key areas in need of modification, primarily: certain placement and promotion practices, procedures in the development of major course examinations such as midterm and final examinations, and specification of overall program and individual course objectives. Major changes were instituted in problem areas, and one year later the results of a second common test, similar to the first, not only revealed considerable progress in rationalizing course enrollment patterns, but suggested the possibility of markedly improved levels of student achievement in the higher credit courses.

### **Homogeneity of Ability Levels in the EFL Class**

*General Considerations.* A common problem for the EFL teacher is the class that is too heterogeneous in ability levels for all students to be taught according to their needs. The instructor understandably must concentrate on teaching the majority of students in a class. Those too weak to keep up will become frustrated and may give up while those much better than the average are frequently bored; either sub-group may then become a disruptive presence in the classroom.

Unsuitable class composition is a factor which can adversely influence a teacher's hopes for success with a group of students. Unlike most other variables in the classroom setting, however, it is the consequence of administrative decisions over which the average teacher generally has little or no control.

No matter how dedicated a teaching staff may be or how impressive a program may at first glance appear to be, inappropriate placement, promo-

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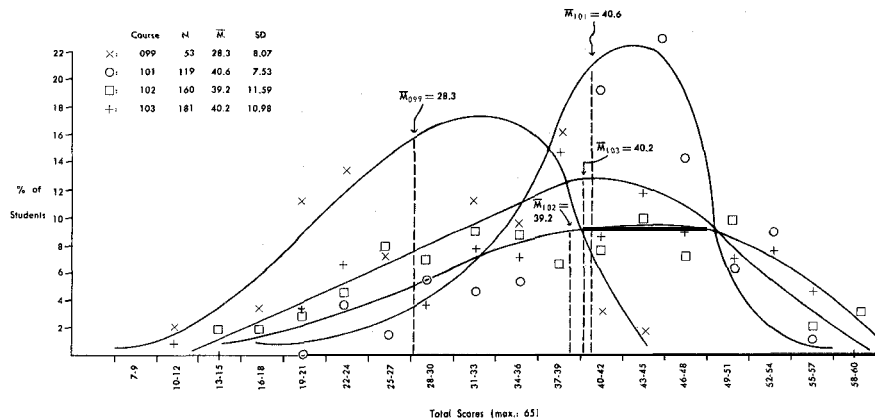
Mr. Mason is the Acting Head of the Tests and Measurement Office of the Kuwait University Language Center.

\* The authors wish to express their thanks to Dr. Donald J. Malcolm and Dr. G. Richard Tucker for kindly reviewing this paper; to the members of the teaching staff of the English Language Unit, College of Commerce, Kuwait University, for their cooperation in helping to obtain the results reported here; and to the Director and staff of Kuwait University Computer Center for their generous assistance in processing the test data upon which this report is based.

tion, and testing practices will tend seriously to undermine staff and program effectiveness. It is then (to borrow a thought from Ronald Reagan's 1980 election campaign) that administration is no longer there to solve the problem; administration then becomes the problem.

*The Program of the Commerce English Language Unit of Kuwait University Language Center.* Teachers of the English Language Unit (ELU) attached to Kuwait University's College of Commerce, Economics and Political Science (Commerce, for short) had long observed 1) that students enrolled in the same classes and courses often differed widely in their English ability; 2) that often students in lower courses were better in English than those enrolled at higher levels; and 3) that new students just out of high school almost always tended as a group significantly to outperform their classmates promoted from the unit's own lower (prerequisite) courses. These impressions were rather dramatically confirmed by the results of a test administered in common to students enrolled in all of the unit's required courses (099, 101, 102 and 103) during the fall semester of 1979. Figure 1 below reveals that not only did ability ranges in most courses greatly overlap one another; the mean score for the lowest credit course, 101, was actually higher than that for Course 102 and virtually the same as that for Course 103, as Table 1 below demonstrates.

FIGURE 1  
Distribution of Total Scores, Norming Test  
ELU Commerce, December 1979



The 100 per cent objective test was the pretest of the unit's English Placement Test (EPT) to be given to new students entering the college the following September of 1980. Being a norming test (ENT) as well, it was

administered as near to the end of the fall 1979 semester as possible, so that the results would closely approximate the leaving proficiency of students then enrolled in the unit's required courses.

TABLE 1  
Part and Total Means and Standard Deviations for All Courses:  
Commerce Norming Test, December 1979<sup>1</sup>

Course	N	Part 1: Grammar (25)	Part 2: Vocabulary (20)	Part 3: Reading (20)	Totals <sup>2</sup> (65)
099	53	11.21 3.63	8.08 3.27	8.43 3.27	28.32 8.07
101	119	14.47 3.67	12.92 3.17	12.87 3.07	40.59 7.53
102	160	14.18 4.76	12.97 4.61	11.76 3.97	39.17 11.59
103	181	14.22 4.58	12.75 4.53	12.75 3.34	40.15 10.98

<sup>1</sup> For this test administration, there were two 65-item half tests, Form A and Form B. Approximately one half of the students at each course level took Form A and the other half, Form B. Form B results were then converted to the Form A scale to compensate for differences in difficulty and spread of scores, and the half-test results were then combined to give the figures presented in this table.

<sup>2</sup> The fact that the sums of the means of the part scores do not exactly equal the means of the total scores is attributable to rounding-off errors in the computer-processing of the data.

Quality of the ENT was carefully controlled, since the statistical properties of the 130 objective items used were known. Reliabilities of the two one-hour, 65-item half tests can be seen in Table 2 below. The 130-item EPTs of the Commerce ELU regularly achieve reliabilities well above 0.09, when administered to incoming freshman classes. (The reliability of that given in September 1980 to 440 New Commerce students was 0.947; this EPT was, of course, assembled from the two half forms given as the December 1979 Norming Test, the results for which are seen in Figure 1.)

The EPT of the College of Commerce is administered in common to

TABLE 2  
Part and Total-Test Reliabilities:  
Commerce Norming Tests of December 1979 and December 1980

Year	Form	N	Part 1: Grammar	Part 2: Vocabulary	Part 3: Reading	Total
1979	A	249	0.776	0.829	0.755	0.903
	B	264	0.751	0.721	0.630	0.858
1980	A	264	0.785	0.830	0.837	0.924
	B	229	0.793	0.837	0.854	0.927

students of the various Arabic-medium colleges whose ELUs follow basically EAP curricula. The items have been prepared by the teachers of these ELUs to be generally reflective of their program curricula at every course level into which new students may be placed. The 130 items are carefully selected each year according to criteria specified by the KULC *Test Development Manual* (Malcolm, 1980a). Following computer analysis of the results of both ENTs and EPTs, the item data are then recorded on the cards of the item bank and maintained by the KULC testing program for future use.

The three multiple-choice parts of every ENT and EPT form—grammar, vocabulary and reading—are, therefore, broadly representative of the full range of difficulty levels of the teaching programs of the ELUs which follow EAP curricula. The EPTs have proven themselves highly effective over the years in discriminating among students of various ability levels, and thus in helping the ELUs to form very homogeneous classes of new students at each required-course level. EPT results demonstrate year after year that the range of English ability levels among incoming students of the College of Commerce is extremely wide—a result confirmed by a recent experimental administration of the TOEFL (Malcolm 1980b). Not surprisingly, therefore, the three parts of the Commerce ENTs and EPTs are expected to rank students of the college similarly and to produce reasonably high part-vs.-part and part-vs.-total intercorrelations. (See Table 8 with correlation coefficient matrices for the ENTs. Correlation coefficients have not been corrected for attenuation.)

It might be added that the program has many other strengths, aside from the quality of test-development procedures. All instructors are qualified professionals, holding at least an M.A. in EFL, ESL or applied linguistics, or its equivalent. Moreover, class size is generally held to 20 or fewer students, who receive five hours of instruction in English per week. That is, all classes are scheduled to meet every day of the semester. Also, student motivation in the courses, especially at advanced levels, has been promoted in recent years with teaching materials that reflect more closely the actual concerns and needs of students planning to step into responsible positions in the Kuwait business community.

Despite these strengths of the program, it was apparent to the staff that many students were deriving little benefit from the four semesters of English that are set by the college as a minimum foreign-language requirement. As a result, they would often leave the university without the English language skills needed to function satisfactorily in the Kuwait business community, where English is a *sine qua non* for those aspiring to positions of responsibility in business: commerce and finance. It is not surprising then that the English language programs of the units attached to the various colleges of the university have not infrequently been the subject of commentary—not always flattering—in the nation's press.

**Program Reform**

*Identification of Areas and Program Weakness.* The staff of the Commerce ELU investigated the problem of undesirable enrollment patterns in its courses in depth, and several possible contributory causes were identified:

*A. Program and course goals*

- 1) Staff tended to be unable to articulate the linguistic objectives of the overall unit program and even of the individual courses they were teaching.
- 2) There was a lack of coherence between courses, with insufficient continuity in skills development from course to course.
- 3) Statements of course behavioral objectives in the files were reflected in course final-exam content specifications (the test “blueprints”) either not at all or often quite inadequately.

*B. Major course examinations (midterm and final examinations)*

- 1) Some courses tended to administer major course examinations, including finals, not adequately reflecting stated course and program objectives.
- 2) Major course examinations often tended to be neither comprehensive in their coverage of course content nor sufficiently challenging to the students. After a course of some 70-75 contact hours, students frequently spent little more than an hour on final examinations scheduled to last a minimum of two hours.
- 3) Although panel-marking of subjectively-scored test parts is required of all major KULC English tests, assignment of grades by teachers was not controlled, so different instructors might assign different grades for similar total-exam scores.

*C. Promotion practices*

- 1) Continuing students tended to pass their courses almost automatically, regardless of actual achievement of formally stated course objectives.
- 2) Too large a part of a student’s semester marks was left entirely to the individual teacher’s discretion, especially in the category of “coursework.” Teachers’ standards of strictness tended to vary greatly.
- 3) Grading and promotion practices were left almost entirely up to individual teachers on a *laissez faire* basis, with their differing standards of strictness. Too many students were being passed, some even after having failed their final examinations.

*D. Placement decisions*

Cut-off points between courses tended to be set too high, forcing relatively able freshmen to study with less able promoted students.

*Remedial Steps.* A number of program reforms were soon instituted. First,

a unit curriculum committee composed of course coordinators was formed to review and to revise program objectives from the standpoint of both content of courses and behavioral (linguistic) objectives. One notable change was a greater ESP emphasis in the program. In many instances, the revised goals became guidelines both for the modification of existing course syllabi and for the design of revised content specifications of major course examinations; in particular, of final examinations.

The unit leadership surmised that a principal reason for the results seen in Figure 1 above was a notable discrepancy in relative difficulty between the unit's EPT and many of its midterm and final examinations, for courses into which new students would be placed on the basis of their EPT scores. The *Test Development Manual* of Kuwait University Language Center has promoted the use of timed EPTs of "middle difficulty" (Malcolm 1980a) to obtain a maximum spread of student scores, so as to minimize the chance of error in placement decisions at course cut-off points. With such EPTs, the "average" new student was expected to obtain a score of around 62.5 per cent—because he knew about 50 per cent of the answers to the multiple-choice questions and would guess approximately one-fourth of the remainder correctly. Major course examinations, on the other hand, tended to be written not at middle difficulty for a given course level but rather to be made inherently easier, since students are required to pass at higher "absolute levels" (e. g., 90-100 per cent for an A, 80-89 for a B, etc.).

Therefore, midterm and final examinations soon started to become notably longer and more difficult. Major skills stated in course objectives but not tested previously, such as listening comprehension, were added to the exams of all courses.

In addition, Placement Test cut-off points were to be set with careful reference to performance by continuing students on the norming test—generally lower than previously. Handling of results of major course examinations, especially finals, was tightened up, so that letter grades were determined by the unit on the basis of the distribution of total semester marks of all students. The unit also began looking askance at teachers still trying to pass students who had failed their final exams (and sometimes even the midterm as well!). In addition, the weight of coursework was reduced to 5-10 per cent of the semester mark, and criteria for that work were introduced.

*Staff and Student Reactions.* Predictably, enthusiasm of staff over these reforms varied considerably. Most accepted the importance of the changes for assuring proper academic standards in their unit, but some complained about the more difficult tests. Others were unaccustomed to the limitations placed on their role in student evaluation and determination of final grades.

Some students, accustomed to sliding through their courses with a minimum of effort, complained about the new regimen. Indications were, however, that the great majority of students enrolled in the credit courses

responded by working harder as a consequence of the longer and more challenging course midterm and final examinations.

### Results of Commerce Norming Test of December 1980

Exactly a year after the first Commerce ENT, a second was administered of comparable length, content and difficulty. The results of that test can be seen below in Figure 2 and in Table 3. While the distribution of class scores on the 1980 Commerce ENT, as seen in the graph, is still far from the ideal, the degree of improvement in the enrollment patterns over the year-earlier results is a clear sign of significant progress in the unit's reform efforts.

FIGURE 2

Distribution of Total Scores, Norming Test, ELU Commerce, December 1980

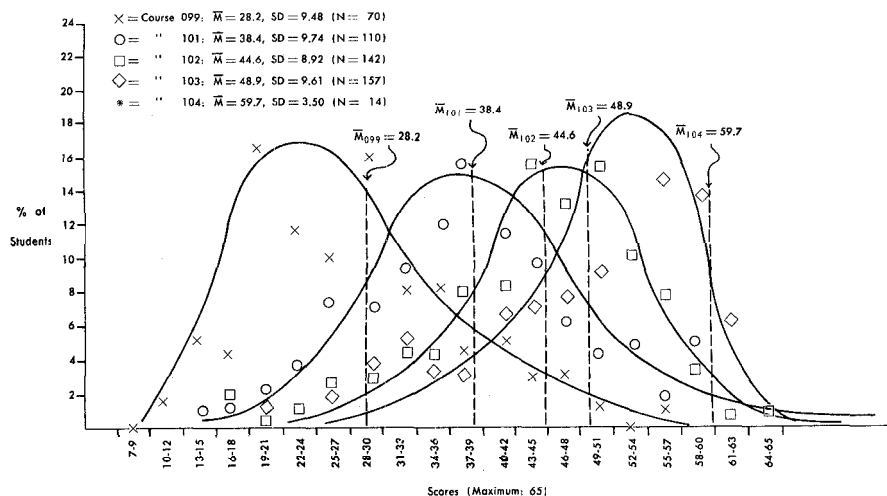


Table 4 presents the raw A+B mean results for Courses 099-103 for the 1979 and 1980 Commerce ENTs. (Results for Course 104 are available only for the fall of 1980, when this course first became required.) Results for the two administrations are not directly comparable, since the test forms are not statistically equated. They are, however, similar in their item and test statistics as to level of relative difficulty and average correlation of individual items, as Table 5 shows. Additionally, the distribution of English proficiency levels of new students entering the unit each year has remained relatively constant, so one would not expect great differences in the results of tests of comparable length, difficulty, content and reliability from one year to the next.

Form B of the pretest administered in December 1979 was somewhat more difficult than was Form A, as results for that test show for all courses, 099-103 (see Table 4). When, however, the 1979 Form B results are



TABLE 3  
Part and Total Means and Standard Deviations for  
All Courses: Commerce Norming Test, December 1980

Course	N	Part 1: Grammar (25)	Part 2: Vocabulary (20)	Part 3: Reading (20)	Totals (65)
099	70	11.79	8.33	7.91	28.17
		4.16	3.54	3.35	9.48
101	110	15.69	10.93	10.92	38.43
		3.85	3.71	3.81	9.74
102	142	17.13	13.50	13.61	44.65
		3.88	3.29	3.56	8.92
103	157	18.31	14.96	15.14	48.87
		3.70	3.74	3.50	9.61
104 <sup>1</sup>	14	22.07	18.79	18.50	59.71
		2.02	1.25	1.02	3.50

<sup>1</sup> Course 104 first became a required course during the fall semester of 1980. Therefore, no results were available for this course in Table 1.

converted to the Form A scale, to compensate for differences in difficulty and spread of scores (as seen in Table 1), and when the raw A+B results for 1979 and 1980 are compared (as seen in Table 4), it may be safe to assume that ability levels in Courses 099 and 101 were not very different these two years. However, the increased rationalization of key aspects of the unit's English program has produced quite remarkable differences in A+B results for Courses 102 and 103 for the two years. Without statistical equating of the test forms, it can only be speculated as to the extent to which the ever-widening differences in pairs of corresponding course means are the result of 1) differences in test difficulty, 2) more serious study efforts on the part of the students, 3) more effective instruction by the teaching staff and 4) more rational placement and promotion policies in the unit. Results for the latter year are no doubt influenced to some extent by the interaction among all of these important factors.

### Comments and Conclusions

The staff of this ELT program can be satisfied with the demonstrable progress made in only three semesters to rationalize placement and promotion policy and to bring these into harmony with other crucial aspects of their program; in particular, with policy and practices governing major course examinations, with curriculum development, with specification of

behavioral objectives at all course levels, and with institution of sound grading practices. The expenditure of much effort has produced a victory,

TABLE 4  
Raw A+B Mean Results for All Required Courses:  
Commerce Norming Tests of December 1979 & 1980<sup>1</sup>

Course	Year	Form	N	Mean	SD
099	1979	A	26	28.5	8.53
		B	27	26.3	6.28
		T	53	54.8	
	1980	A	36	28.6	9.36
		B	34	29.7	9.16
		T	70	58.3	
101	1979	A	58	40.9	7.57
		B	61	32.3	7.42
		T	119	73.2	
	1980	A	56	38.5	9.66
		B	54	37.5	10.40
		T	110	76.0	
102	1979	A	78	39.4	11.58
		B	82	33.2	8.46
		T	160	72.6	
	1980	A	78	44.9	8.91
		B	64	45.5	8.07
		T	142	90.4	
103	1979	A	87	40.4	11.00
		B	94	34.0	10.28
		T	181	74.4	
	1980	A	85	49.1	9.58
		B	72	48.0	11.75
		T	157	97.1	
104	1980	T	14	121.9	—

<sup>1</sup> The A+B results are important to the teaching staff for providing a direct basis of comparison of proficiency between continuing students enrolled in the unit's required courses and new students to be enrolled in those courses the following academic year on the basis of their EPT scores.

but still only a partial one, as figure 2 above and Table 6 below demonstrate.

Relaxation of the new stricter standards in any major area of unit concern would probably result very soon in an enrollment picture more like Figure 1

than Figure 2. Table 6 provides an excellent yardstick for measuring the degree of improvement in the unit's enrollment picture in the fall semester of 1980 over that of just one year earlier. At all course levels except one (101), there have been very sharp reductions in the numbers of students scoring on the 1980 ENT at levels below the mean results of lower courses; the strict new unit policy of not passing very weak 099 and 101 students means that many of those students are among the higher percentage of failures in these two courses to be seen in the data of Table 7 below. Such students must now work much harder to earn their promotions.

TABLE 5  
Indices of Part Speededness and Average Item Difficulty and Correlation:  
Commerce Norming Tests of December 1979 and December 1980

Year	Form	N	Part*	% of Students Finishing All Items	$\bar{M}$ of $\Delta$	$\bar{M}$ of $r^{**}$
1979	A	249	1	70.3	11.82	0.41
			2	94.0	11.43	0.60
			3	92.4	11.52	0.49
	B	264	1	75.4	12.08	0.36
			2	92.8	13.25	0.51
			3	92.0	13.00	0.44
1980	A	264	1	97.0	10.94	0.55
			2	93.6	11.13	0.63
			3	91.3	11.10	0.64
	B	229	1	96.1	10.78	0.56
			2	96.9	11.34	0.66
			3	91.3	11.63	0.65

\* Part 1: Grammar  
Part 2: Vocabulary  
Part 3: Reading

\*\* Biserial Coefficient of Correlation

To summarize, it is apparent that the key determinants that helped to rationalize enrollment patterns of this major ELT program were 1) the availability of vital statistical data revealing the dimensions of the problem, 2) a unit leadership and staff that accepted the implications of that information as a spur to undertake essential reforms and 3) a determination on the part of leadership and staff members alike to remedy a complex of difficulties in administration, pedagogy and testing. There were not a few occasions when some vital aspect of the reforms came under fire from staff members, usually because it was not fully understood in the context of the interests of the overall program and of the real needs of the student body, of the college and of the Kuwait educational system.

In recent semesters there has been much greater homogeneity of student proficiency at all course levels. This has made the average teacher's job both

TABLE 6  
Number and Per Cent of Students with Norming Test  
Scores Below the Mean Results of Lower Courses

Course	Year	N	Below			
			$\bar{M}_{099}$	$\bar{M}_{101}$	$\bar{M}_{102}$	$\bar{M}_{103}$
101	1979	119	8 (6.7)			
	1980	110	16 (14.5)			
102	1979	160	34 (21.2)	86 (47.5)		
	1980	142	8 (5.6)	33 (23.2)		
103	1979	181	30 (16.6)	93 (51.4)	88 (48.6)	
	1980	157	5 (3.2)	25 (15.9)	44 (28.0)	
104	1980	14	0	0	0	0

easier and professionally more rewarding. There is good reason to think, too, that the students have worked harder and perhaps learned more than they otherwise would have.

TABLE 7  
Academic Failure Rates in ELU Commerce Courses 099-103:  
Fall 1979 vs. Fall 1980

Course	Academic Year	No. of Failures	Per Cent of Failures
099	1979	8/ 67	11.9
	1980	18/ 81	22.2
101	1979	10/141	7.1
	1980	14/134	10.4
102	1979	13/183	7.1
	1980	7/188	3.7
103	1979	4/233	1.7
	1980	5/203	2.5

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- Report on the Commerce Placement Test of September 1980. Kuwait University Language Center.

## APPENDIX:

TABLE 8

Correlation Coefficient Matrices for Commerce  
Norming Tests of December 1979 and 1980

Year	Form	N	Part			
			1	2	3	T
1979	A	249	1.00			
			0.64	1.00		
			0.54	0.66	1.00	
			0.86	0.89	0.83	1.00
	B	264	1.00			
			0.55	1.00		
0.48			0.62	1.00		
0.84			0.86	0.81	1.00	
1980	A	264	1.00			
			0.71	1.00		
			0.74	0.74	1.00	
			0.90	0.90	0.91	1.00
	B	229	1.00			
			0.69	1.00		
0.67			0.76	1.00		
0.87			0.91	0.91	1.00	

## **Review Articles**

### **SURVEY OF MATERIALS FOR TEACHING ADVANCED LISTENING AND NOTE-TAKING. Liz Hamp-Lyons.**

The number of ESL programs which teach a university preparation course, either as a distinct unit/level within the program, or as a module/series of modules with the general English program, is rapidly increasing. Until recently there was little commercially published material available for use in teaching students on such courses the essential skills of listening to lectures and taking notes on lectures. This review examines some of the materials, old and new, which teachers can use to teach these skills.

#### **BIBLIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS OF TITLES REVIEWED**

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6. *Take Note* by Michael Berman, 1980. Pergamon Press. Oxford, UK.
7. *Listening Contours* by Michael Rost. 2nd edition 1981 with Athènèè Français. Lingual House: Tucson, Arizona.
8. *Better Listening Skills* by Jean Sims and Patricia Wilcox Peterson, 1981. Prentice-Hall: Englewood Cliffs, N.J.

Before I can review any of the texts, however, I have to be clear in my own mind what factors a good course to teach listening and note-taking skills should consist of. Once I have a list of such factors I am in a position to make adoption/rejection decisions, and to defend those decisions rationally. Such a list must always be personal, but below is a list of those features which I have found to be most important in pre-judging an advanced listening and note-taking course for possible adoption:

- appropriate level
- quality of tape production
- approximation of real lectures in the delivery
- relevance of content of the lectures to students' needs
- appropriacy of material (esp. culturally)

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course should teach, not only practice, skills  
 teach note-taking techniques  
 completeness (ie. takes student from no note-taking ability re. lectures,  
 to performative competence in one course)  
 quality of text production  
 pedagogic accuracy (does not teach what is not true)  
 presence of answer key is a minimum  
 teacher's book is a definite plus  
 model notes (pref. several alternatives)  
 transcript  
 rationale for the course and method used  
 suggestions for classroom activities  
 student's book or worksheets  
 pre/post tests  
 sufficient practice material—this is partly a question of the number of  
 lessons, and partly a question of tape length  
 reasonable price (this must be judged in relation to all the preceding  
 features)

The review firstly discusses some specific aspects of each course, and then makes a comparison between all the courses reviewed on a matrix (Figure 6).

### Listening and Note-Taking

*Listening and Note-Taking* was not written for foreign students, but for college-bound high school students and college students who need to improve their listening and note-taking skills. For ESL teachers, this is both a strength and a weakness. It is a strength because most of our university-bound foreign students respond well to material which they perceive as 'the real thing'. However, it is also a weakness because it contains many cultural assumptions which our students have trouble with.

The introductory chapter in the textbook is very useful for setting the students thinking about the whole process of listening, the structure of lectures, and about how to use the structure of lectures to take their notes. Sadly, the first recording the students hear is an extremely long lecture on "10 Bad Listening Habits", which is probably as bad a lecture as one could hope not to hear. It ends with a Christian homily which many, not all of them foreigners, would find cloying if not offensive.

*Listening and Note-Taking* does a good job of teaching some of the skills involved in taking notes on lectures. It teaches students to listen for cues to main ideas, examples, details, and digressions. It provides plenty of reinforcement so that students do succeed in learning these skills. It also teaches them to recognize the parts which most lectures are divided into (introduction—main body—summary/review). It teaches these skills through very short listening samples taken from a wide range of academic topics, each

sample being unrelated to any previous sample. The problem with this, for ESL students, is that they often have no background knowledge or prior experience of the topics, and they come to each one absolutely cold, which makes their listening task many times more difficult. Often, providing the students with enough background knowledge so that they can listen meaningfully takes much longer than the listening activity itself. The course would be much more suitable for use with non-native learners if the listening samples were related to each other, and on a generally accessible topic.

The book teaches the formal outline structure as its standard note-taking format (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Formal outline

- Title
- I.
  - II.
    - A.
      - 1.
      - 2.
      - 3.
    - B.
      - 1.
        - a)
        - b)
      - 2.
    - C.
  - III.
  - (etc.)

This is a useful format because it can extend to as many levels of generalization as would ever be necessary. A weakness of this book, and of all the other books reviewed here, is that it only teaches one method of note-taking. However, *Listening and Note-Taking* does a very thorough job of teaching formal outline structure, providing about 40 opportunities for practice.

The course takes a large and virtually unannounced jump to a higher level of difficulty in the middle of Section IV Part I. The students have been working on identifying the part of a lecture they are listening to, and deciding whether brief or detailed notes are appropriate. The samples have been quite short and the activities fairly easy. Suddenly, they find themselves in the middle of a lecture on "3 levels of thinking." This is quite long, comes at them cold, since the introduction has been omitted, is a very unfamiliar topic to most of them, and is conceptually quite difficult. From this point on the students are on their own. There are only seven more lecture samples, all long and on topics which are obscure to most of our students: the Interregnum; Piaget's Theories of Mental Development, etc.



The course does have a lot of strengths, and we would still be using it for at least its introductory sections, if it were not that both textbook and tape have a number of omissions and errors, some of which are quite serious, particularly the omissions in the model notes which are given for each sample. If the publishers decide to go for a third edition, revising the later parts of the course and eliminating all the problems in the manuscript and tapes, *Listening and Note-Taking* would certainly be worth serious consideration.

### The Sack-Yourman Study Skills Program

This course was designed for "under-achieving" high school seniors and college freshmen, and not for ESL students. The course begins by teaching a method of taking notes from books, and then applies a version of this method to fifteen taped lectures described as "as near to a college lecture as can be designed without carrying the students bodily into a lecture hall." The lectures are of realistic lengths and fully developed. The delivery is slow but some natural features, such as hesitations, are retained.

The first taped lecture is on taking notes on lectures, and the students' first attempt at a set of lecture notes is on how to take lecture notes! The note-taking system Sack and Yourman teach is to take raw notes, review them soon after, and organize them. The organizational format they teach is in two steps. First, in the raw notes, "Subject Matters" (ie. topic headings) are put on the left side of the page, while generalizations and details are listed on the right. Secondly, in the reorganized notes, "G's" (generalizations) are put on the left with the subject matters, but indented to the right, while details ("D's") are listed on the right. This system gives three levels of generalization, which is a compromise between the formal outline structure taught in *Listening and Note-Taking*, and the simple shopping list approach, which is where we usually start our students (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Shopping list note form

<i>Banana Cake Ingredients</i>	baking powder
lemon juice	walnuts
milk	butter
sugar	cream cheese
bananas	
vanilla	
eggs	
confectioner's sugar	
<i>Equipment Needed</i>	
large bowl	
measuring cup	
fork	
greased pan	
spoon	

Even if one wants to teach a method of note-taking other than the Sack-

Yourman method, the lectures themselves are good to have, as the set consists of some 410 minutes of fairly authentic lecture presentation which can be used to practice whatever note-taking techniques you are teaching. The Sack-Yourman package includes a student notebook, a test booklet, a model notes booklet, and a teacher's manual. It seems unnecessary for the students to have either the notebook or the test booklet, and sets of model notes could be given out and then returned, thus saving some expense, but the course would make little sense without the teacher's manual.

### **ALA Lectures for Listening Comprehension**

This course consists of a very slim booklet and seven taped mini-lectures. It is designed to "simulate a university classroom" and to make the Talks and Conversations part of the TOEFL test easier for the students. The lectures have deliberately been recorded at a slow pace and with clear pronunciation. The introduction refers to the lectures as "practice tests," which indeed they are. There are no activities based on the lectures or the lecture notes the students were required to take, except for 12-15 multiple-choice questions which the students can answer by referring to their notes. The answers to the multiple-choice questions are in the back of the booklet. There is no contents page in the booklet, and the lectures have titles only on the tape. The choice of the seven lecture topics seems rather odd: Ifaluk Indians; Pilaga Indians; the 1929 Depression (2 lectures); the invention of ether; life of Darwin; life of Daniel Boone.

Within the material there is no attempt made to teach either listening skills or note-taking skills, although the introduction does contain 16 suggestions for success in "understanding these lectures and answering the questions correctly." Suggestion number 1.4 says:

Try to develop your skills as you practice. If you are bewildered by the first lecture and cannot answer the questions, think of new strategies for the next lecture . . .

Close examination of the suggestions in the introduction reveals that the course functions solely as a set of listening comprehension tests, the nearest equivalent to which would indeed be TOEFL. Beyond the need to pass TOEFL, one cannot see that the material serves any function at all, since there is no real expectation that learning will take place as a result of teaching. This is a series of decontextualized listening tests, and its only real potential use would seem to be for pre- and post-testing of students with material distinct from that used in the teaching program.

### **Collins' Listening Comprehension and Note-Taking Course**

The aim of this course is to prepare foreign university-bound students to follow lectures and to write adequate notes on lectures in English. The course also aims, interestingly, to stimulate the students' interests in language

learning and the study skills necessary for success at tertiary level. It does this by using these skills as the topics of all the recorded lectures, which brings a sense of realism into the course through continuity and relevance. It also makes the tasks more accessible to the students, since they can bring both personal experience and predictions about the topic into action in their own behalf.

A detailed rationale for the course design is given, and there are detailed teachers' notes. Note-taking is not broken down into skills to be learned, but there is a "How to Take Notes" section in the front of the book which is quite explicit. The students are helped by a three-stage approach to each lecture:

Stage 1: introduction to the lecture: a brief taped summary. This can be used for dictation, or as introductory discussion input.

Stage 2: an intermediary recorded version of the lecture with comprehension activities.

Stage 3: guided note-taking on the full version of the recorded lecture.

In Stage 3 the students complete a partial set of notes for each lecture. The note-taking format presented in the course seems less clearly organized than the more usual formal outline structure, and places perhaps more emphasis on the use of abbreviations than many of our students can safely handle. I would personally prefer to see the emphasis laid on ensuring that students can at least identify the main points in a lecture and organize them on paper. I would also like to see much less guidance in the notes for the later units, although of course a teacher can use the material as she/he sees fit.

Overall, however, the conceptualization and design of this course are very sound. This course is a British production, and some ESL teachers would object to using it in an American setting. I would see considerable potential for an American version.

### **Listening Focus**

*Listening Focus* was designed to "help students enter a more advanced stage" of listening, ie. understanding lectures, broadcasts and discussions. There is a complete text available for teachers, and the course is well-presented and well-organized, with good use of visuals to support the auditory input.

This is not a note-taking course: rather, it is a pre-note-taking course. Outline structure, of any kind, is neither taught nor expected of the students. After listening to each talk, the students have to answer some "focus questions." These are generally well chosen to teach students to listen for the main ideas in the talk. Some listening anticipation activities would have been useful, to prepare the students for the topic they will hear. After the focus questions there is a "detail check quiz," which, unless the students have taken some kind of notes, would be a memory rather than a listening activity. The recordings themselves are very short, delivered at a slow pace, in simplified

language with many pauses, There are no repetitions, hesitations or digressions, and consequently it sounds like an oral reading or a high school textbook. As with almost all the recorded material reviewed in this survey, the natural redundancy of speech style is lacking, a fact which always surprises me, because it makes the listening task considerably more difficult than it would be in most real lecture or other aural/oral situations.

We find *Listening Focus* useful for remedial work for our weak students, as it is at an easier level than that aimed at in our main course, and also it is presented very clearly and accurately, with no errors that we have found, so that students can work independently in the listening laboratory under the supervision of a tutor.

### Take Note

*Take Note* is a British publication, which consists of 24 taped short passages in a variety of accents, predominantly British B. B. C., and a slim book, which contains a one-page "note to the teacher," transcripts of the tape, and model notes for each passage. The publisher's blurb on the back of the book states that the passages "are also suitable for dictation, oral discussion and written summaries." I am always suspicious of the "also suitable for. . ." sales pitch, and in this case with, I believe, good reason. These are recorded readings, resembling lecture delivery in no way; no instruction in note-taking techniques is given. The specimen notes in the back of the book are in sentence form, hardly practical for lecture note-taking, one would think, and are undifferentiated, only numbered 1) 2)3 etc. Although the tape is not necessary, making it possible for the passages to be read in whatever accent one chooses, *Take Note* seems to serve no useful function relative to note-taking whatever.

### Listening Contours

The first edition of *Listening Contours* left a great deal to be desired. Happily the second edition is more than a revision; it is a completely restructured text which is infinitely superior to its predecessor.

The second edition consists of a student book which contains only student activities, while the typescript, sample notes and answer key have now been separated into a teacher's book. In the first edition the sample notes were often poorly constructed and non-parallel, breaking the very rules we were laboring to teach our students. The sample notes for the second edition have been extensively rewritten and are much better. Some of the talks have been rerecorded in a slightly different form to make the construction of clear notes easier. Some of the talks from the first edition have been completely replaced.

*Listening Contours* still doesn't teach any skills for students to apply when listening and taking notes, but the organization of the units does provide them with useful support. It should be noted that the new *Listening Contours*

is a little easier than the first edition, and this course cannot be considered advanced. In fact, we find it useful for the level before our college preparation course, to teach the basic formal outline structure and to fill the gap between the kinds of listening found with integrated courses and the kinds of listening we need to expose students to in preparation for listening to real university lectures.

*Listening Contours* comes from the same publishing house as *Listening Focus*, and shares with it superior production and sophisticated appearance. Lingual House seem to have decided to specialize in producing high quality listening materials. One may hope that they will eventually add to their list a truly advanced listening and note-taking course of similarly superior quality.

### **Better Listening Skills**

This is an intermediate listening course, which, although the recordings are described as lectures, and although it is designed for use in a study skills course, does not claim to teach note-taking. There are five lectures, varying from 5 to 15 minutes in length. These are delivered in the oral reading style which has been noted in the reviews of almost all the other courses here, at a slow pace and without any natural speech features. The authors claim that the course makes it "possible for students to begin this kind of lecture listening very early in their program of English study." Of course their definition of "very early" may not be the same as mine, but I would not see the course as suitable for use before the 6th level of a 7-level program.

Each unit is structured so that the students hear each lecture three times. The first time they hear it, they are asked to complete an outline. The outline form is briefly explained in the book, and the teacher's book suggests that one class period be spent discussing outline form. Since comprehension of the organization of information into different levels of generality, the skill required for understanding an outline (let alone making one), is at a very difficult conceptual level, it seems unlikely that one lesson would be enough to teach it satisfactorily. Also, once the concept has been taught and grasped, it seems a pity that it is not utilized more extensively. In this course, completion of an outline is the first stage towards comprehension. The other exercises in each unit are true/false or multiple-choice. The teacher's book suggests:

(Lesson 7) Third Listening: Students take notes while they listen.  
Check and discuss.

At this stage (third listening) it would seem more appropriate to ask the students to complete a much less guided outline, or to provide them only with the format to complete. As no note-taking strategies have been taught, it seems unreasonable to ask them to make notes without guidance at all. If they are able to do it, presumably it is because they have remembered some of the content from all the work that has gone before, and have remembered

the outline organization from the earlier activity. The problem with this is that the students don't seem to have been taught anything which they can generalize as a strategy for future actual note-taking situations, yet because they experience some degree of success with this assignment, they may think they have.

The course does have many good features, on the other hand. The use of a thesis statement to focus attention on the topic of the lecture, and to give the students an overview of the ideas which will be presented within the lecture, is very sound. The listening strategies which are suggested prior to the first listening are also a good idea. Unfortunately, the book talks about strategies without ever teaching them, or allowing practice in strictly focussed bits or extracts from the lecture. The teacher's book is more than an answer key: it provides lesson plans for every lesson, and from these it is clear that the authors expect the classroom teacher to be doing many of the things which I have criticized the book for not doing. For example, I have said that the book suggests strategies which the students should use when listening to a particular lecture, without teaching or practicing these. However, in the teacher's book under "Preparation for Listening" (prior to the first listening) we find this for the first three lectures:

Have students silently read over the Incomplete Outline. Point out the listening cues and organizational strategies. Point out what kind of information to expect in each blank.

The listening cues and organizational strategies which should be pointed out are not, however, given in either the student or the teacher's book.

It seems that *Better Listening Skills* was prepared by two very professional and dedicated classroom teachers, who felt that they knew clearly in their own minds what a good preparation for academic listening should entail. In the preparation of their ideas and classroom practices for publication, however, those features which would have made the course the most valuable, ie. the actual teaching activities, somehow got left out. I think that *Better Listening Skills* has a lot of potential, and I would like to see the authors produce a greatly expanded teacher's book to help those teachers whose experience may not match their own.

### **Towards an ideal listening and note-taking course**

A glance at the matrix (Figure 6) will show you that I have not, as yet, found a perfect listening and note-taking course. What is the perfect listening and note-taking course? Obviously people's answers to that question will differ. For me the answer is fairly simple: a perfect score on all the criteria in the matrix would indicate the perfect course. I would, however, like to expand on some of the areas where I think most listening and note-taking courses fall down, and suggest how some improvements could be made.

How many of us, when taking notes in lectures, use a formal outline

structure? How many of those who make the attempt can look at their notes at the end of the lecture and see that they do in fact have a perfect formal outline, all levels of generalization correctly parallel and complete? Not even one odd point jotted in the margin because they weren't sure which generalization it belonged with, yet felt it was important? My hypothesis is, not many. If so many native speakers with graduate and/or undergraduate degrees in English can't do it—why expect it of our foreign students? In my opinion, the advice given in *Listening and Note-Taking* about immediate revision/review of notes is sound and could well be an automatic step in the note-taking process taught to ESL students. The approach of the *Sack-Yourman Study Skills Program*, in which the students first take raw notes and then immediately organize them, is very realistic and realizable.

FIGURE 3: T formation note form

Banana Cake	
ingredients needed	lemon juice milk sugar bananas vanilla eggs (etc.)
equipment needed	large bowl measuring cup fork greased pan spoon

The shopping list or the T-formation (see Figure 3) would be suitable for raw notes, and when the notes are recited (ie. reread, expanded, digressions deleted, and organized) the formal outline structure could be used. Of course this immediate revision requires a mental reconstruction of the lecture, and acts as a memory aid, to make future quizzes and tests easier.

A good lecture, like a good composition, has a structure. I think ESL listening and note-taking courses could be doing much more to help students learn the general structure they can expect in a lecture. Some listening and note-taking courses do provide pre-listening activities, but a good lecturer provides this in his/her lecture, with an introduction. Similarly, a good lecturer provides a post-listening activity in the form of a conclusion, summary or review. A good listening and note-taking course should take advantage of these natural features of real lectures, and teach ESL students to use the introduction and conclusion given by a lecturer for planning and organizing their notes. The introduction can be used for predicting the structure of the main body, and the conclusion is very important for checking back through raw notes to make sure all main points have been included. By using extracts from lectures rather than full lectures, these extremely helpful and natural features of a good, real lecture are not utilized.

In addition, the main body of a lecture usually has a structure which we can teach our students to recognize. The great majority of lectures are organized deductively; that is, from general to specific. The lecturer will open with a statement such as:

“There are three reasons why . . .”

“The frog develops through three stages . . .”

“Generators can be grouped according to . . .”

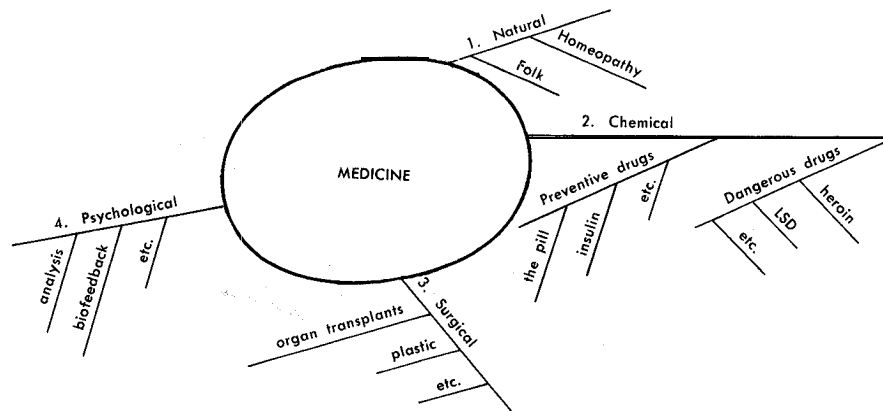
“There are a number of behavior patterns associated with paranoia . . .”

and will move on to discuss these reasons, stages, groupings, patterns, etc. in some sort of logical order. For the student to be able to follow the lecturer through his/her development of each point to its specific detail and into the next major sub-division, recognizing when the rhetorical shift is made from sub-topic A to the introduction of the general statement of sub-topic B, his general listening ability must be fairly good, but he must also be aware of the organizational conventions of lectures. I think we can do much more than most listening and note-taking courses do to teach these organizational conventions, and some techniques for recognizing when structural shifts are made. We need to teach our students the sub-skills involved in following a lecture: recognizing rhetorical shifts; recognizing examples; recognizing digressions or other irrelevant material; recognizing rephrasing of the same point. Much can be done in this regard by introducing the students to sets of verbal cues (and non-verbal ones, such as voice modulation) and giving them practice in deciding “what’s going on here?” The crucial skill which they must learn is the ability to distinguish levels of generalization: at the very least, they must be able to distinguish the thesis or main topic, from the supports which validate it, from the examples which illustrate them, ie. three levels of generalization. This can be done by plenty of exposure in open-ended situations (class discussion, working in pairs or groups) moving from very short and simple samples to increasingly longer and more complex ones. The work students are doing at the same time in their reading and writing courses on the structure of discourse will also have a direct carry-over to their understanding of the structure of formal oral discourse.

My perfect listening and note-taking course would also suggest other forms for notes besides the outline, formal or less formal. I have already mentioned the shopping list, which is a simple listing of items, with headings picked out when they are easy to recognize, but without a clear overall framework. I also mentioned the T-formation, where the concept, or main topic, is clearly separated from the supporting details, which are not further differentiated. This is the type of raw notes suggested by Sack and Yourman. Another note-taking format useful when the material in the lecture lends itself to a visually contrastive presentation is the spray chart (see Figure 4), which can also be used as a format for raw notes prior to the organization of a formal outline. In some situations, a form of tree diagram can also be useful (see Figure 5).

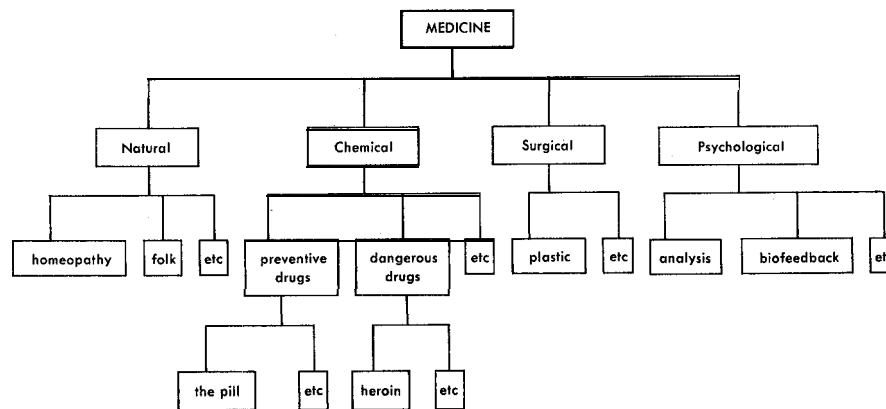


FIGURE 4: spray chart



The obvious advantage of introducing students to a variety of note-taking forms is that they will later be able to select an appropriate form for a particular lecture.

FIGURE 5: tree diagram



Also, there are many advantages to a listening and note-taking course which has a single theme. This is the approach which the Collins course takes, and it also has the advantage of having chosen a topic which is highly relevant to all students taking the course. The danger with a thematic course would be that it might become boring, but I feel that this danger could be avoided by careful selection of material.

An absolute must for a listening and note-taking course, in my opinion, is

an increasing approximation of realism as the course progresses. I feel that any such course which purports to prepare students for real university lectures must culminate with five or six real, if short, university lectures, with all the hesitations, false starts, repetitions and digressions they will have to deal with, unaided, in real university classes. The Sack-Yourman course scores the highest in this regard of the selection reviewed here.

Finally, the perfect listening and note-taking course will need the perfect teacher's book. Too often, a teacher's book contains nothing more than the typescript and an answer key to objective questions. I would expect a good teacher's manual to contain model notes, suggested answers to open-ended questions, key points expected in response to discussion and other free activities, and suggested lesson plans. It also should contain a statement of objectives of the course and the rationale for the approach used, as well as an overview of the structure of the course and the items taught in each unit. A teacher's book seems to be especially important for an area such as listening and note-taking, since very often this is the kind of course which is given to a graduate student to teach, under the mistaken assumption that listening is easy to teach.

### **Conclusion**

This survey is by no means exhaustive, and certainly still more courses will be published before it comes to press. It is worth noting, however, that the more recent courses do not necessarily perform better on the features I have looked at than do the older courses. In fact, the two oldest courses (Listening and Notetaking, Sack-Yourman) score as high as or higher than courses written and produced ten years more recently. Can this mean that "off with the old, on with the new" is not necessarily the best motto in the area of ESL materials?

FIGURE 6

Matrix Comparing Eight Listening and Note-Taking Courses

CRITERIA	Listening & Note-Taking	Sack-Yourman	ALA Lectures	Collins Listening	Listening Focus	Take Note	Listening Contours	Better Listening
1. Est. level	Adv	Adv	High Intm	Adv	Intm	High Intm	High Intm	Intm
2. Tape production	3	9	4	8	8	7	8	9
3. Tape realism	5	8	2	6	5	3	5	5
4. Relevance	10	9	2	10	5	3	7	7
5. Appropriacy	2	6	3	8	5	4	5	6
6. Teaches listening skills	8	1	1	4	4	1	4	4
7. Teaches note-taking techniques	9	9	1	6	1	3	6	3
8. Integrates 6 w/ 7	8	3	1	5	1	1	5	4
9. Completeness	9	6	1	6	3	1	5	5
10. Text production	4	9	9	8	10	5	10	9
11. Pedagogic accuracy	9	9	1	9	8	2	9	8
12. Teacher's book	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
13. Transcript	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
14. Answer Key	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
15. Model Notes	5	9	No	7	No	2	7	8
16. Rationale	2	6	1	9	3	1	3	4
17. Suggestions	1	6	2	6	2	1	2	5
18. Student book	7	4	2	5	10	2	10	8
19. Pre/post tests	5	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
20. Est. # of lessons	30	20	7	30	24	20	24	40
21. Est. tape length	240'	410'	50'	150'	60'	50'	120'	50'
22. Price of full set of tapes	\$131	\$99	\$20	\$100 approx.	\$29.50	\$30	\$29.50	\$20
OVERALL SCORE	158	165	55	162	122	73	154	158

Notes for Figure 6:

- (1) scores 1-10 indicate a negative or positive response to the quality/quantity of a feature present, 1 = most negative.
- (2) Yes/No = presence/absence of a feature (Y=10; N=0)
- (3) all responses relate only to the course's suitability for use in a pre-university/college listening and note-taking course.

*Comments*

Reference to the overall scores shows that the course which scores highest, i.e. is most successful, is the Sack-Yourman Study Skills Program. The overall score is arrived at by totaling the scores for numbers 2-20 (total possible 180), adding 1 for every 10 minutes of tape time and subtracting 1 for every \$10 of cost: score 10 for advanced, 5 for high intermediate and 0 for intermediate. Add the raw figure for the number of lessons suggested for the course (this last step is very dubious: readers may think of a more valid way to take this factor into account).

This is a personal matrix, using personal criteria on the vertical axis, and personal responses on the horizontal axis. Readers might like to try a similar exercise themselves.

## Reviews

**CONVERSATIONS OF MIGUEL AND MARIA: HOW CHILDREN LEARN A SECOND LANGUAGE.** Linda Ventriglia. Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1982. Pp. ix + 182.

*Conversations of Miguel and Maria: How Children Learn a Second Language* offers more than its cover title implies. It is not only a text which analyzes the way in which children learn a second language, it also explores the implications of how children learn, and suggests sound and reasonable teaching strategies. Hence, it is a much needed 'how-to' guide.

Ventriglia's book is based on a study of four hundred and fifty conversations recorded from children of diverse native languages. Analyzing the conversations with insights from recent research, she deduces cognitive styles, learning strategies, and what she calls motivational or attitudinal styles which both influence cognitive styles and direct the young child in the use of particular learning strategies.

The format of the text is interesting and readable. Each chapter begins with a conversation of Miguel and Maria. Ventriglia is a gifted conjurer of character and the two young protagonists, though fictional composites of the many language groups represented in the study, assume a reality for the reader. Miguel and Maria embody ubiquitous traits of children and yet appear as distinct individuals.

Each conversation is analysed in terms of the learning processes Ventriglia sees operating in it. And each chapter ends with a section on implications for second language learning and classroom teaching. In these pertinent sections, Ventriglia gives several examples of specific teaching strategies and activities so that teachers can adapt or develop similar techniques and materials to meet the same ends. She clearly describes a classroom in which young students are very much involved in learning, though they take on that learning at their own pace and in their own style, guided by teacher planned experiences. Where drill is recommended, it is the natural drill of game or play, it is the repetition children engage in spontaneously and willingly, and it is more akin to Piaget's observation that children set up their own practice patterns than it is to Skinnerian inspired repetition exercises.

### Cognitive Developmental Strategies

Part I of *Conversations* cites cognitive developmental strategies which children use in second language learning. Ventriglia notes three processes here: *Bridging*, *Chunking*, and *Creating*.

In *Bridging*, children appear to tie words to concepts they already know in their first language. Bridging is the first clearly discernible strategy children employ. However, Ventriglia stresses that simply listening, or receptive

learning, while assuredly not clearly discernible, is a most important factor in second language learning and children must be afforded the time and opportunity they need to engage in it.

Children move or develop from Bridging to *Chunking*, a process whereby they use whole chunks or phrases of language they have heard in their efforts to communicate. Finally, young children employ *Creating*, combining words and patterns to make meaning.

These particular processes are well described in recent psycholinguistic literature. Ventriglia is not simply assigning catchy names to them, however. She describes them through a careful review of the literature and meticulously gives credit to the schools of thought and to the scholars associated with each process. Her contribution in this section rests in her clear outline of the strategies which renders them recognizable to teachers so that they, upon discerning them, can plan appropriate teaching activities. She also demonstrates how such activities can be planned to meet the differing linguistic abilities of the students participating in them. The classroom she depicts is a classroom where young children learn through interaction with each other and with the teacher.

### **Social Affective Strategies**

Part II of *Conversations* is faithful to the theme that children learn language through meaningful interaction. Here, Ventriglia focuses on those social-affective strategies which children use naturally. For example, she notes that children make inferences and guesses about the meanings in their second language. And in their guessing, they look to others for clues. To illustrate the strategy, she presents Miguel in a situation where he learns the meaning of a word from clues his classmates provide. In a show-and-tell type of activity, Miguel is asked what color the ribbon on his Easter basket is. He knows his colors in English but he is unsure of the meaning of the word, ribbon. His eyes search the circle of children for one who will give him a clue. Maria points to a ribbon in another girl's hair. Miguel understands. "A yellow ribbon," he says triumphantly.

Guessing and making inferences are thinking skills which we all use daily. They are, as well, developmental in nature, and their practice and refinement are basic to the growth of logic. In her suggestions for classroom activities to foster inferencing, Ventriglia makes an important link between early childhood pedagogy and second language learning. Teachers trained in that pedagogy will recognize that the kinds of activities they see as providing practice in thinking skills can also be geared effectively to second language learning.

Code switching, both linguistic and cultural, is one of the most important strategies cited in this section. Ventriglia argues that this strategy leads finally to a linguistic and social flexibility and to a rapport between two

cultural identities. The role of the teacher in helping students establish a positive rapport between two communities is crucial, just as it is crucial that teachers perceive such code switching as an integral part of the second language learning process.

### Learning Styles

In addition to social-affective strategies, Ventriglia also categorizes three distinct learning styles: 1. *Beading*, a style of learning based on the individual's need to learn a word at a time, a style in which meaning or semantics is of the utmost importance, 2. *Braiding*, a style which utilizes chunking, in which the learner attends to the context of phrases and to the relationships among them, 3. *Orchestrating*, a style in which sounds and the repetition of those sounds are the individual's key to language.

One style is not better than another. Each represents only a mode of learning. Nor are the styles mutually exclusive, for all three are combined by children as they become immersed in the second language learning process.

### Motivational Styles

Motivational styles play a part in determining which cognitive style a child may use. All children undoubtedly experience some sort of identity crisis when they leave the confines of their homes and enter into the new environment of the school. It is axiomatic that when the values, attitudes, and modes of expression in the school setting are drastically different from those of a child's home, the identity crisis will be greater in proportion to those differences. Like Erikson (1968) whom she cites, Ventriglia does not see identity crisis per se as an evil or as a malfunctioning of the personality. Rather, it is a dynamic state by which the child continually defines selfhood.

The unique personality traits and penchants of each individual combine with myriad factors, including sociolinguistic ones, to influence the way in which identity crisis is resolved. Both the mode and the outcome of the resolution may be debilitating or enabling, or may partake of a kaleidoscope of nuances between two such extremes.

A healthy self image, enriched by the ability to function in a bilingual, multicultural world, is, of course, a teacher's cherished goal for students. Yet even in the best of all bilingual worlds, crisis exists. There will always be situations where the student is forced to identify with one language or with one culture over another. And there must be times when making the choice represents a real or imagined loss or denial of one culture, even if that loss is only momentary.

*Conversations* records such instances and, in identifying the three motivational styles which prompt the use of certain social-affective strategies, Ventriglia offers some suggestions on guiding children who exhibit them. The motivational styles are *Crystalizing*, *Crossing-Over*, and *Crisscrossing*.

In the first, Crystallizing, children initially reject the second language and the culture it represents, and maintain their identity with their native language and culture. In the second, Crossing-Over, the student is characterized by a decided preference for the second language and culture over the first. The third style, Crisscrossing, involves an identification with both languages and cultures.

All three styles may manifest themselves at different times in a given child. And they are viewed as the natural psychological responses of children. It is in keeping with the general tone of her thesis that Ventriglia views the motivational styles in terms of elements within them which can be used positively to strengthen healthy language and culture learning.

For example, of the two fictional children who exemplify the second language learning styles, Maria is a Crystallizer. She desires to maintain Spanish as her most frequently used language, and she socializes little with English speaking children outside the classroom. She is a cautious speaker of English, preferring to speak only when she is confident of being correct. At this point, most of her English practice comes in the school setting. Ventriglia's suggestions make sense for this child: stories on tapes, expressive language in choral response so that the student does not feel singled out, pairing with an English speaker who is 'motherly' rather than aggressive, enlisting parent involvement so that the student sees interaction and rapport between school and home (and  $L_1$  and  $L_2$ ), and activities in which the Crystallizer can speak with that confidence so needed.

Despite the richness of *Conversations*, there are a few jarring flaws. In her discussion of bilingual classroom procedures, Ventriglia states that there is evidence to support the teaching of math concepts in only the language of the predominant culture. She does not cite the source of this evidence, nor does she mention evidence to the contrary.

The statement is puzzling and incongruous in the text. Math concepts particularly in early childhood curriculum, are taught in numerous ways involving social situations as well as problem-solving with a variety of manipulative materials. Children work with, and play with, the very essence of mathematical thinking long before, and even while, they are learning basic math facts. Seriation, measurement, sets, patterns, and more are approached through activity, and through the language of the activity. A child decides how many stars s/he can give each classmate so that each will have the same amount, or s/he makes a set of blue buttons and then finds a way to keep that set intact while incorporating all the large blue buttons into a set of all large buttons. An intuitive understanding of basic mathematical operations is thus formed, laying the basics for firm comprehension of abstract operations and their symbols. Math activities should be part of ESL curriculum, to be sure, but they must be part of native language curriculum as well if young children are to draw upon the thinking constructs they have already developed. All of Ventriglia's discussion and recommended activities preceding and following this strange comment on math instruction for

bilingual children seem to war with the comment, rendering it the gratuitous anachronism it is, and must be, until some clarification shall be made to redeem it. And Ventriglia proffers no redemption for it in this text.

Another lapse in reference citing occurs when Ventriglia talks about studies of self-concept in minority language children. She writes, "Evidence from research concerning the self-concept among children indicates a tendency of children from ethnic minorities to make a negative evaluation of themselves, their skin color, and their culture." (p. 109). No reference to that research is cited. And this omission, like the one noted above, is glaring precisely because chapter and verse are so scrupulously noted in the main body of the text.

Perhaps it might be possible to fault Ventriglia for not delving more deeply into effects of community attitudes or the socio-economic environment on language learning, but this reviewer would not. Certainly, such knowledge, as well as knowledge of all phases of a student's home culture (such as are delineated in Saville-Troike's fine book, *A Guide to Culture in the Classroom*, 1978) are now recognized as necessary to the classroom and ESL teacher (bilingual or not). Nowhere does Ventriglia deny that necessity, and indeed she alludes to it in a number of contexts. A more thorough investigation of such undeniably critical factors can and should be sought in other texts. Conversations succeeds as an invaluable resource guide on its own terms for it weaves important second language acquisition research and theory into the tenets of sound early childhood education curriculum. The resulting tapestry well merits its place in every teacher's library.

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**THE SPICE OF LIFE.** James Hendrickson and Angela Labarca. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1979. Pp. 180.

*The Spice of Life* is an intermediate-level reader for adult and young adult ESL students which offers a series of twenty-four articles adapted from newspapers and magazines. Its avowed purpose is to motivate students to communicate in English about real-life people and events. Its diverse range of activities is geared toward a presentation of the four skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking.

The book's strong point is its variety of exercises based on the readings and related topics. While exercises following the readings are of high quality, the text fails to develop any pre-reading activities which would serve to orient the students to the individual passages. As it is, the readings are



preceded only by a single black and white photograph or drawing which lacks visual interest. A useful pre-reading exercise on vocabulary, for example, might have been attempted. Instead, vocabulary is consistently presented in glosses along the right-hand margin of the text. It becomes too easy for the students to use the glosses as a crutch rather than to make the effort to examine new vocabulary items in light of context. The reader also lacks a dimension included in a number of the more recent reading texts: how to acquire reading skills and, in particular, how to increase speed while reading for meaning.

The shortcomings of *The Spice of Life* are significantly outweighed by its strong points. The activities which follow the readings are, as the book's title suggests, full of variety in both format and focus. They should both entertain and place a demand on the creativity of intermediate-level students. The number of purely mechanical exercises is limited and the emphasis is placed on a well-balanced distribution of exercises of the meaningful and communicative types. Learning activities are divided into five groups: comprehension exercises, vocabulary and grammar exercises, reading strategies, small group activities and suggestions for independent study activities. Comprehension exercises include practice on paragraph skimming through cloze exercises as well as questions of the completion, short answer, multiple choice and true/false types. Vocabulary exercises effectively encourage development of a feel for the workings of English morphology. Useful writing exercises such as those in sentence combining or sentence expansion foster development of a student's command of English syntax and build a good foundation for guided compositions presented in the later chapters.

The most striking feature of the book is the diversity of means it uses to promote communication and interaction among the students. While some of the activities suggested are individual and creative, such as that of writing your own poem, many encourage small group discussion of material with a cross-cultural interest. The student's awareness is, for example, expanded by such discussion topics as how the form for giving names and titles may vary from culture to culture and how signs of affection differ for people of different cultures.

One small but useful feature which is included in the text concerns the subtle way it reinforces the teaching of numbers. The spelling of the page number is given by the side of each Arabic numeral.

*The Spice of Life* has a sound approach and a well-thought-out format which presents a diversity of topics and activities. It should appeal to teachers and students alike.

Kathleen M. Sayers  
University of Houston

**WHADDAYA SAY? GUIDED PRACTICE IN RELAXED ENGLISH.**

Nina Weinstein. Culver City, California: ELS Publications. 1982. PP. xi+ 68.

Foreign and second language teachers have too often felt that their two principle roles were those of protectors of the language and protectors of their innocent students. This has frequently led to two main problems. First, after years of studying a foreign or second language many students, including those with A's in their language classes, find themselves lost and confused when they try to understand and communicate with native speakers of the language that they studied. As Nina Weinstein points out, the problem is often that "what they expect to hear and what they actually hear are not the same thing" (p. viii). The second main problem with teaching a variety of a language that exists mainly in the classroom, such as "classroom English" (viii), is that overprotective language teachers often produce more closed-minded language zealots like themselves. For example, in Puerto Rico, where I taught ESL, I found that those who had learned English in school usually rejected what Nina Weinstein refers to as the "relaxed speech" of native speakers. Whenever I would try to teach "relaxed" or natural speech, the students not only found it difficult to understand and produce but, more importantly, they often found it impossible to believe that people in the United States really spoke like that. This rejection of "relaxed speech" can produce some rather illogical situations. For example, while I was teaching ESL in Puerto Rico, it was not at all uncommon to hear a non-native speaker of English "correcting" the speech of a native-speaker.

It is precisely because the two previously mentioned problems still exist that Nina Weinstein's book should be heartily welcomed by all ESL teachers who want their students to be able to deal with what the author calls "the English of the real world" (viii). Ms. Weinstein begins her book by giving the student some honest and useful information about the functions of two varieties of American English.

. .. relaxed speech is not used in all situations. It is not acceptable, for example, at any kind of formal function, or when people must repeat something that was not understood. Relaxed speech is very natural and common, however, when people are talking at informal gatherings or meetings, or when they are making "small talk" with friends (p. vii).

And in the section "To the Teacher", the author defends "relaxed speech" by briefly refuting the charges that it is slang or sloppy. But Ms. Weinstein's book is not intended as a rejection of "careful" speech in favor of "relaxed" speech, for that would also be a mistake. Nor is it "intended to teach relaxed speech in and of itself." "Instead, its goal is to help students understand the relationship between carefully articulated English and its more informal, relaxed counterpart" (p. viii). Students must not only be able to comprehend both varieties of English but must also understand when they are appropriate. Thus, in *Whaddaya Say?* students are to practice both "careful" and "relaxed" speech forms. Ms. Weinstein also draws attention to the important

distinction between written and spoken English. While she employs “special spellings” (e.g. \*whaddaya) to represent certain reduced forms, the author makes it very clear that these “special spellings” are only used to represent spoken forms. She tells the student, “Do not use these ‘special spellings’ in your own writing. They are not acceptable in written English” (p. vii). These “special spellings” are not to be used by the students in any of the exercises. Thus, Ms. Weinstein’s book teaches two important distinctions: careful vs. relaxed speech and spoken vs. written English.

While I applaud Ms. Weinstein’s book and intend to use it in my ESL classes whenever possible, there are two things that bother me. First, I am not sure why the author places so much importance on “translating” relaxed speech into “careful pronunciation.” It would seem to me that the objective should be the ability to comprehend both forms and use both forms in appropriate situations. The only possible reason that I can imagine for “translating” is in order to try to prevent some mistakes that are common in native-speakers’ writing. For example, native-speakers often write *would of*, *could of*, etc. for *would have*, *could have*, etc. I can see no other reason for this translating.

The second thing that troubles me is that Ms. Weinstein states that the meaning of the careful and relaxed renderings of the sentences is the same. First, it is possible that on occasions a change from careful to relaxed speech will signal a change in meaning. In *Patterns of English Pronunciation*, J. Donald Bowen gives some examples of meaning differences between the two forms.

- |                               |                     |          |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|----------|
| 3a. So you got to go.         | (yesterday)         |          |
| b. So you gotta go.           | (tomorrow)          |          |
| 4a. What do you have to eat?  | (available)         |          |
| b. What do you hafta eat?     | (diet requirement)  |          |
| 6a. He’s supposed to be sick. | (is presumed to be) |          |
| b. He’s supposta be sick.     | (ought to be)       | (p. 164) |

Second, it seems somewhat contradictory to tell students that the meaning is the same but the “feeling” changes. It would seem to me that the feeling changes because there is a change in meaning. For example, the use of careful speech with one’s friends would give them a feeling of coldness precisely because one of the rules of English discourse is that careful speech among friends means either coldness or irony and humor. It seems to me that Ms. Weinstein should have given more importance to the effect that the form of an utterance can have on meaning.

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**FORESTVILLE TALES: INTERNATIONAL FOLK TALES.** Aaron Berman. New York: Collier Macmillan, 1977.

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Because there are two groups of teachers who might consider using this text, we have included two separate reviews. The first is from the perspective of a teacher in an intensive English program for adults. The second is by a teacher at the primary school level.

*Forestville Tales* is a delightful reading book for beginning ESL students in an intensive English program. The appropriateness of the reader comes from the following:

1. the simplicity of the language
2. the clearly drawn and carefully sequenced line drawings
3. the use of heuristic universals as subject matter
4. the variety and quality of the exercises
5. the quality of the production

The language is simple, even as measured by readability formulas and as measured against word lists. There are double-based sentences, but they are not so frequent as to hinder new ESL readers in their first language course.

The line drawings are so clear that they explain the story. The students' reading supplies the words in English, fills in the gaps in the story line, and increases the students' experience with both the process of reading and the English language.

The reader is the only book that I have seen that exploits the ideas that form the basis of most folk lessons as the subject matter for teaching reading to non-native speakers. The principle is simple: because nearly all cultures reinforce fundamentals of socialization through stories (metaphors), and because humor is such an effective way of emphasizing the meta-lesson to be learned, folktales in general can be understood by a very large audience. In other words, folktales are predictable. The ones chosen by Berman are engaging for all as well as accessible to the adult beginning ESL student. The messages are common, the style is easy to understand, and the result is learning while being involved.

In addition, the exercises are good. True/False questions require understanding restatements. Vocabulary Practice exercises require understanding the context in which a word is used. There are also exercises which focus on the kind of thinking that leads to development of specific necessary skills: summarizing (mostly fill-ins in a summary of the main points of the story), pre-outlining exercises (making lists of parallel items), sentence-combining (such as reducing the content of a sentence to a prepositional phrase to add to a second sentence), guided writing techniques (such as changing tenses). All of this is done at a simple English level.

The book is also attractive. The large, clear type and choice of typeface make the text easy to read. White space is used well, and the cover interests

adults—perhaps more than it does children, those for whom one usually considers a book that contains stories about animals as well as people.

The author's introduction is a short course in teaching ESL reading at the beginning level. Berman also includes activity suggestions for expanding the use of each story.

For the ESL reading teacher who has been searching for low-level readings, the book of folktales is a solid blend of readings and introduction to reading and thinking skills.

**Jean Zukowski/Faust**

The University of Arizona

*Forestville Tales* is a collection of international folk tales written for children learning English as a foreign or second language. The stories, however, can be enjoyed by *all* children. The stories range from second to fifth grade readability according to the Fry Readability Formula. While the vocabulary is not controlled, more than half (60-70%) of the words are found in the Dolch Basic Sight Word List. Most of the additional vocabulary—which contributes to the content of the stories—could be found in fourth grade readers. The stories are especially useful for third and fourth graders reading below grade level because a basic sight vocabulary is utilized with more complex sentence structures than the words of that level are usually used in and because the stories are short, with eye-catching illustrations.

Children would enjoy reading the stories on their own, but teachers will find the stories particularly useful for teaching comprehension skills such as making predictions, drawing conclusions, making inferences, and identifying cause and effect relationships. For example, in "Silly Saburo," students can be asked to predict what they think Saburo will do next. The students do not need to be correct, but they can base their predictions on Saburo's past behavior. In "There's Always Room for More," before finishing the story, the students could be asked why the beggar filled a box with stones and sand. They would have to make inferences from the context of the story. In "Jabury, the Strongest Animal in the Forest," students may be asked whether they think Jabury is the strongest animal in the forest and why, basing their conclusions on what happened in the story. In "The King of Frogs," students can tell why the author says that frogs become quiet when you go too close to a lake and tell what they think is the truth.

In addition, the stories lend themselves well to a variety of extended activities, such as dramatizing, creative writing, studying other cultures, and listening to and reading other stories and other folktales from around the world. For example, after reading "Why the Rabbit Has a Short Tail and Long Ears," students can learn how to write similar tales about how other animals acquired certain characteristics. These are only a few ways the book of international folktales can be utilized in the elementary school classroom.

Eileen Walter

The University of Arizona

## ***Research Notes***

### **Abstracts**

#### **THE FOREIGN STUDENT'S FIRST ACADEMIC YEAR: TWELVE CASE STUDIES**

Phyllis Mithen, International Programs, St. Louis University

Thirteen foreign students were followed during their first year of regular academic study after the completion of an intensive English program. Twelve case studies were analyzed.

Students were observed in and out of their classes. They rated their own English skills and the amount of help they felt they received from the English program. Professors from classes in which the students were observed provided English skill ratings of the students and profiles of their own teaching styles for comparison with students' learning styles. Three psychological instruments were used to provide further insight into attitudinal and adjustment factors.

An analysis of data provided results in three areas. First, when personal factors (that had been found in other research to be predictors of satisfaction for a broad cross-section of foreign students) were considered for these individuals, no simple correlation with personal satisfaction or academic success was found. Factors included region of origin, self-evaluation of English skills, job prospects in the home country, living arrangements, sponsorship, academic level, major, age and marital status.

Second, the case studies themselves provided twelve descriptions of the foreign student's first academic year and served as an indicator of the effectiveness of an intensive English program.

Third, anxiety level as measured by Shattuck's Adaptation (culture shock) Questionnaire; learning style as measured by Witkin's Group Embedded Figures Test; and locus of control as measured by Rotter's I-E Scale were found to have some observable relationships with other aspects of the students' lives. However, none was considered to be an effective predictor of academic success, although anxiety level functioned as an index of personal satisfaction.

(Ph.D. Dissertation, St. Louis University, St. Louis, MO)

#### **ADAPTATION OF THE BURLING READING MODEL FOR TEACHING READING TO BEGINNING ESL/EFL STUDENTS**

Garth H. Sleight, Brigham Young University

This study examined the Burling Reading Model and its potential value as a pedagogical instrument. By design, this reading model begins with L<sub>1</sub> as the

dominant language and gradually switches to L<sub>2</sub>. It was examined theoretically from a psycholinguistic and affective perspective.

A sample text, in the form of a full-length novel, was prepared which could be used by Spanish-speaking ESL students. A case study was conducted in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the text and to identify additional ways in which it could be refined for further, more in-depth study.

Initial results revealed that this reading model has the potential of being a very effective learning facilitator. However, it was observed that beginning ESL students would benefit from a study guide to help them keep pace with the transition from Spanish to English, for it was found that the text prepared for this study would be too short to allow a sufficiently gradual transition without such an aid. The results also revealed that a tape recording of the text would likely prove to be helpful because constant code switching could become cumbersome for the students, thereby causing them to over-concentrate on decoding instead of understanding and processing the language.

(MA. Thesis, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT)

### **ROLE-PLAYING IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING**

Hana Raz, Oranim School of Education, Haifa University, Israel

Role-playing is considered a useful technique for the implementation of the Communicative Approach. The purpose of this study was to investigate its possibilities and effects, in theory and in practice. The rationale deals with the potential effects of role-playing on communicative competence, on motivation and on under-achieving foreign language learners.

The theoretical assumptions provided for experimentation in schools. The Communicative Competence Tests, administered before and after the experiment, demonstrated the effectiveness of the technique: on the post-tests the Experimental Group scored significantly higher than the Control Group on all parts of the test. The influence of role-playing on motivation was investigated by way of attitude questionnaires. These revealed the beneficial effect of role-playing on intrinsic motivation, on self-concept and the expectations of success of the learners and on their anxiety when speaking the language.

In addition to group comparisons, a case study approach was used in order to reveal why in certain classes role-playing was more successful than in others. This enabled us to draw conclusions as to the conditions necessary for the successful implementation of the technique and implications for the regular use of role-playing in the classroom. The educational value of role-playing for personal growth was also emphasized. The study highlights the great potential value of creative drama in the learning of foreign languages. (Ph.D. Dissertation, Hebrew University, Jerusalem)

### **A STUDY OF SYNTACTIC ERRORS MADE BY CANTONESE-SPEAKING LEARNERS OF ENGLISH**

Cheung Shing Leung, University of Hawaii

This study examined the causes of syntactic errors made by Cantonese-speaking learners of English. Eighty compositions were collected from students taking a college remedial writing course for non-native English speaking undergraduates and a freshman composition course for non-native speakers at the University of Hawaii. The errors were analyzed and various causes of errors were suggested and discussed. They included the following: Cantonese interference, overgeneralization from English structures previously learned, hypercorrection, false hypotheses, inadequate

learning of English rules, redundancy of target language features and semantic complexity of the target language system.  
(M.A. Thesis, University of Hawaii at Manoa)

### **TRANSFER OF BEGINNING READING SKILLS FROM SPANISH TO ENGLISH AMONG SPANISH-SPEAKING CHILDREN IN SECOND GRADE BILINGUAL CLASSROOMS**

Christian Faltis, College of Education, University of Alabama

The purpose of this study was to shed some light on the transfer of beginning reading skills from Spanish ( $L_1$ ) to English ( $L_2$ ), among bilingually schooled children. Four major research questions were addressed: 1) What is the relationship between  $L_1$  and  $L_2$  decoding performance? 2) What effect does  $L_2$  proficiency have on the relationship between  $L_1$  and  $L_2$  decoding performance? 3) What effect do different orthographic patterns have on the relationship between  $L_1$  and  $L_2$  decoding performance? 4) How does the English decoding performance of bilingually schooled students compare with that of students who were taught reading in English only?

Spanish and English decoding performance of 49 bilingually schooled second graders was measured on a series of tests designed to tap decoding abilities at the word and paragraph levels. The results of this assessment were used to answer questions 1-3. To answer question 4, the  $L_2$  decoding performance of the bilingual group was compared with that of 20 first grade  $L_1$  English speakers/readers, 20 second grade  $L_1$  English speakers/readers and 20 ESL second grade students who had not had any bilingual instruction.

The finding of the study indicated that: 1) There is a strong positive relationship between Spanish decoding skill and English decoding performance at the word level, but only a mild one when the  $L_2$  decoding task involved connected prose; 2)  $L_2$  proficiency had a substantial effect on  $L_2$  decoding performance except when non-standard pronunciation was counted in the analysis; 3) Different orthographic word patterns had almost no effect on  $L_2$  decoding performance; 4) Bilingually schooled students performed as well as regular first grade and ESL second grade students on an oral pronunciation decoding task, and as well as regular first grade students on a silent word and a connected prose decoding task.

(Ph.D. Dissertation, Stanford University)

#### *Notes*

### **NOTES ON THE TESOL RESEARCH INTEREST SECTION**

Andrew D. Cohen, Hebrew University, Jerusalem, Israel

As many TESOLers are aware, there have been changes in the structure of the organization. Among those changes has been the elimination of the Research Committee, and in its place the establishment of a Research Interest Section. The Executive Committee felt that committees were more for financial and organizational matters, while Interest Sections were for issues of a more academic nature. Under this new arrangement, those TESOLers interested in research can freely participate in all activities of the group, whereas in the past participation in the business meeting was by appointment only. Hopefully this change will enhance participation of a greater number of skilled researchers. We would also hope that adding a Research Interest Section does not prove redundant, given that research issues crosscut all the various interest sections. Rather we would like to find that giving research its own



separate status within the Interest Sections will further promote concern for issues of a research nature.

By the time this note appears, TESOL Toronto '83 will most likely have taken place. The State-of-the-Art in Research session this year is on Interlanguage Syntax. Patsy Lightbown (Concordia) organized the session, and participants included Sue Gass (U. of Michigan), Bill Rutherford (USC), and Roger Andersen (UCLA). The 1981 session on Neurolinguistics and Second Language Acquisition yielded the set of papers which led off the September 1982 *TESOL Quarterly*. This collection has been viewed as a considerable contribution to the field. Ideally, we will continue to provide such state-of-the-art articles based on Research Interest Section sessions.

Among the aims of the Research Interest Section will be:

- (1) to promote rap sessions regarding research issues in ESL/EFL,
- (2) to continue to organize state-of-the-art sessions on research topics,
- (3) to setup special projects in support of research efforts—such as computerized data banks in given research areas,
- (4) to suggest the names of researchers to read TESOL Convention proposals.

As of the TESOL Convention '83, Dick Allwright assumes the role of chair of the Research Interest Section. At the convention, a new associate chair and representative to the Advisory Council are being elected. Any TESOLers who have interests in research that they would like to have addressed either during the year or at the next TESOL convention, are encouraged to contact Dick Allwright (Dept. of Linguistics and Modern English Language, School of English, University of Lancaster, Lancaster, England LA1 4YT).

## ***The Forum***

**Comments on Vivian Zamel, "Writing: The process of discovering meaning" (TESOL Quarterly, June 1982).**

Vivian Zamel's article effectively makes the case for process writing. She also presented her ideas at TESOL 82, in a session which generated considerable controversy. Time ran out just as the debate turned warm; now, having had the opportunity to study her argument in the cool of the Philadelphia summer, I wish to raise a few questions for her.

Prof. Zamel builds her case upon recent research (e.g. Perl 1980) showing that students write better when their writing involves them personally, and when they are allowed to discover what they wish to say while they are saying it. We have concentrated too long, she believes, on what students (should) write rather than how they (do) write. Along the way, she suggests six fallacies in traditional approaches: an insistence on outlines, the proscription of writing topics, a reliance on models, a skimping on prewriting, a skimping on rewriting, and/or the linking of writing exercises to grammar points. I question whether some of these fallacies (e.g., inadequate rewriting) are inherent in any traditional approach, and whether outlining is not to be considered a form of prewriting.

But these are minor. The major problem is the question of the written product, which Prof. Zamel does not define (other than saying it need not be intensely personal). Toward what scenic summit is she building her road? Is the ESL writing course merely a vehicle for teaching English, or does it have some tangible end? One is reluctant to take her road without knowing her destination.

The real world (according to ESP) seems product-oriented. Linda Lanon Blanton (1982) has written about a hypothetical (but not improbable) ESL course producing students who write fine narratives but cannot write successfully in college courses:

How might this . . . situation be improved? A brief survey of the examinations, class discussions, assignments, and textbooks of college-credit courses would reveal a basic core of linguistic and cognitive approaches and responses to academic topics and situations. Those who teach composition in an ESL program need to know this information because such is the reality for which college-preparatory ESL students must prepare.

In short, the ESP approach demands, of the writing teacher, a formulation of needs, goals, objectives, and criteria.

Many of us are indeed preparing students for college work, and most of these students are destined for technical and professional fields. Very few of

them will then write personal narratives or ruminative essays in English. They will, collectively, write on demand thousands of history papers, economic analyses, business memoranda, lab reports, scientific articles, and engineering proposals. These products set the students' needs and our own goals. The final question, then, is whether process-oriented approaches lead to the achievement of these goals as efficiently as other approaches.

**Gregory A. Barnes**  
Drexel University

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#### Reply to Barnes

In an attempt to take issue with approaches to the teaching of writing that are based on recent process-centered research, Mr. Barnes raises several questions. It appears that Mr. Barnes is concerned with the fact that these approaches may not adequately prepare ESL students to become proficient writers, particularly in academic settings. He believes that more traditional methods, with their emphasis on the written product, better take into account the demands of the "real world" and suggests, furthermore, that such methods do not necessarily ignore crucial aspects of composing, such as prewriting and rewriting.

The literature on the teaching of composition over the last few years, based not only on process-centered research but on surveys of actual classroom practices and writing textbooks, overwhelmingly states the case for the inadequacies of the "traditional paradigm" (Hairston 1982, Young 1978), and underlines the need to base instruction on what writing actually entails. We have learned, for example, that outlining may not be an effective means of prewriting, for it may prevent students from experiencing the exploratory and creative nature of writing. We have found that a preoccupation with the composed product, focusing as it does on form and correctness, may give students the erroneous notion that writing is systematic and proceeds according to certain pre-established formulae.

It is precisely because traditional approaches focus on the written product that they may not be meeting the needs of students, for a linear and prescriptive view of writing "denies that writing requires intellectual activity and ignores the importance of writing as a basic method of learning" (Hairston 1982:79). A process-based approach, on the other hand, promotes critical thinking, inquiry and problem-solving and thus equips our students with the skills they need to develop as independent writers in their content-area courses. The criteria used for the evaluation of writing, which takes

place throughout the process, are rigorous since students must learn not only to fulfill the expectations of the teacher-reader, but those of the student-readers as well. Finally, contrary to what Mr. Barnes implies, involving students personally in their writing does not therefore mean that what they compose is limited to "personal narratives or ruminative essays." What is meant rather is that process-centered instruction attempts to engage students in the topics they are writing about, even when these topics are expository (see, for example, Irmscher 1979, Maimon et al, 1981.) As a matter of fact, the students who participated in the study I reported in my paper spoke at length about the generative nature of writing, all with reference to the essays and term papers assigned to them in their college courses.

That the process model of teaching composition is controversial is not at all surprising, given the fact that it raises doubts about approaches that most writing instruction and conventional textbooks are based upon. It should not be concluded, however, that because such a model does not insist upon the construction of rigid outlines and the formulation of topic sentences and thesis statements, that the written product is ignored, for the underlying assumption of process-centered writing pedagogy is that instruction in and guidance throughout the composing process will lead to better written products. I should like to remind Mr. Barnes that I made this very point at the end of the article to which he refers:

If . . . students learn that writing is a process through which they can explore and discover their thoughts and ideas, then product is likely to improve as well (Zamel 1982:207).

**Vivian Zamel**

University of Massachusetts, Boston

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**Comments on Meghan Donahue and Adelaide Heyde Parsons', "The Use of Roleplay to Overcome Cultural Fatigue" (TESOL Quarterly, September 1982).**

I disagree with some of Donahue and Parsons' contentions concerning the use of the transcultural dialogue as a technique to overcome cultural fatigue. First, the authors claim that the teacher "recognizes and accepts the students'

expressions of negativity as statements of their confused feelings towards the new environment” and that this “acceptance permits the students to feel understood on their own terms” (p. 360). In reality, teachers are often—although perhaps unwittingly—reluctant or unable to accept expressions of negative feelings towards their own culture and thus pass off as “confusion” such student perceptions, as if they were all devoid of authenticity. Furthermore, Donahue and Parsons’ students would appear to be unaware of this chiefly ethnocentric attitude on the teacher’s part, given the fact that they feel “understood.” To assume that foreign students are so naive as not to differentiate between teachers’ role-playing in this respect and their actual ethnocentrism is unrealistic for one thing; for another, to think that all negative statements about the English-speaking culture expressed by foreign students consist of illusions is to make of cultural fatigue a serious psychotic state for which there is no cure.

Secondly, Donahue and Parsons assume that an “*exchange*” (my italics) of information about each other’s cultures will take place between the students and teacher during the second stage of the transcultural dialogue. As a result, the authors argue, students will realize that “they are not being asked to change their identity but are being asked to change the form through which they express their identity” (p. 360). A true exchange involves reciprocity and equivalency. In Donahue and Parsons’ context, where “mutual participation” (p. 361) is a crucial component of the transcultural dialogue, an exchange would thus necessitate not only mutual knowledge beyond the level of myth, bias, and tourist impression, but also a status of equivalency, or nondominance (Schumann 1978), between the parties. One soon notices, however, that both of these conditions are absent in the authors’ notion of exchange. To begin with, most foreign students in this country, as Allen and Valette (1977:331) point out, have at least some rudimentary ideas about the United States; this is due to the *lingua franca* status of English in the world and the Anglo-American sociocultural influences that accompany technology transfer to many nations (Alptekin 1982). On the other hand, what characterizes the chiefly monoglot and parochial American scene is, as indicated by several critics (Fishman 1977, Hall 1977, Moles 1979, Alatis 1979, Marchand 1979), a notorious lack of awareness about foreign languages and cultures. Thus, it is not easy to find many ESL teachers whose world view extends beyond their country’s border. Clarke (1976), who happens to be one of the authors’ sources, further confirms this fact on pragmatic grounds: “It is impossible for language teachers to attempt to become familiar with the culture and customs of every student in class, especially when twenty students might represent as many as twelve to fifteen countries” (p. 378).

In addition to the imbalance existing between the two parties concerning their information of each other’s cultures, there are other serious problems which negatively affect Donahue and Parsons’ notion of exchange. One is

that the students are at a sociopsychological disadvantage in the transcultural dialogue—irrespective of the teacher's efforts to create an emphatic atmosphere—not simply because they are abroad, or “playing away,” but also because of their very status as students (Daniel 1975). Moreover, having been exposed to the detrimental effects of Anglo-American dominance in their native countries, the students may often feel resigned to a status of cultural subordination (Alptekin 1982) and are at a loss to establish equality in intercultural communication which, in turn, “tends to suppress true personal communication between the peoples of the two cultures” (Nishikawa 1976:24).

Given the complexities involved in a transcultural dialogue in ESL, it is little wonder that Donahue and Parsons' “exchange” soon turns into a one-way flow of information—as evidenced by the third stage of the process, during which explanations of U.S. culture are given. Teachers thus attempt to instill the norms and values of American culture in their students, despite the potentially risky consequences of such an approach (Alptekin 1981), and also the fundamental contradiction it creates—the conversion of the transcultural dialogue into a cultural monologue.

Finally, Donahue and Parsons' contention that it is possible to change the form through which one expresses one's identity without altering that identity seems to reflect a simplistic understanding of human behavior. This belief is not even in accord with Brown's theory of target language acquisition, to which the authors subscribe. Brown (1973), in fact, states in no uncertain terms that “a person is forced to take on a new identity if he is to become competent in a second language” (p. 233). Elsewhere, he reiterates the same idea by noting that “the language learner takes on a new identity with his newly acquired competence” (1981: 116). Clarke (1976), whom the authors also quote, seems to be of the same opinion as Brown when he speaks of the loss of personal identity in learning a second language. Similarly, other critics cite empirical data suggesting various changes in the language learner's personality (Guiora et al. 1972, Green 1977, Meara 1977). If changes in the language learner's identity are an integral part of the second language acquisition process, then it is extremely naive to think that Donahue and Parsons' students will be able to modify their modes of expression without altering their personal identity, especially considering the fact that the intended transcultural dialogue rests on a dubious notion of exchange and chiefly ethnocentric attitudes on the part of the teachers.

Cem Alptekin  
Ohio State University

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## Reply to Alptekin

Mr. Alptekin's comments appear to center around the stages which we outlined on page 360 of our article. In order to understand and accept our concept of the stages which we outlined, one must understand and accept certain premises about humanistic education. Since space does not permit sharing all of these premises, I have chosen only those which apply to the stages outlined.

The first premise is that people are capable of accepting and understanding one another provided they are willing to give of themselves. Giving of one's self, or the "gift of self" as Curran calls it, is the willingness to put aside one's own feelings and opinions in order to understand and accept the feelings of those around us. The gift of self is essential to the teacher's recognition and acceptance of the feelings of her students in the humanistic classroom.

A second premise is that the teacher's gift of self enables students to give their own gift of self to one another in the classroom. The acceptance which comes with these gifts permits the open exchange of ideas and comparison of views in an objective manner. Information is exchanged in such a setting without judgments being made as to which culture is "right" or "wrong". Differences are a statement of fact rather than a point to be disputed over.

A third premise then is that one can understand another viewpoint (culture here) without changing one's opinion of how one feels (e.g. You can walk in another person's moccasins without becoming that person.).

A fourth premise is that once a person has an understanding of how people in another culture respond in a given situation, they may choose to change their "surface" behavior but not their "deep" behavior (identity).

As we say on page 361, "Essential to the development of a successful transcultural dialogue is the simultaneous acceptance of the responsibility for personal growth and expansion of world views by both the teacher and the students." We continue on to speak of "mutual participation" and acceptance. We feel that teachers, especially ESL teachers, are more tolerant of other world views and criticism towards our culture than Mr. Alptekin appears to feel. We believe in a "fellowship of man" rather than a strictly "ethnocentric" view of the world. Our approach is thus consistent with our method and our technique as outlined in this article.

**Adelaide Heyde Parsons**  
Ohio University

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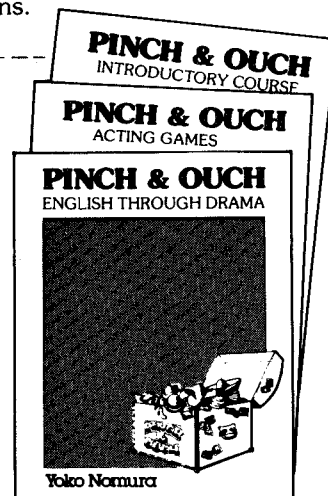
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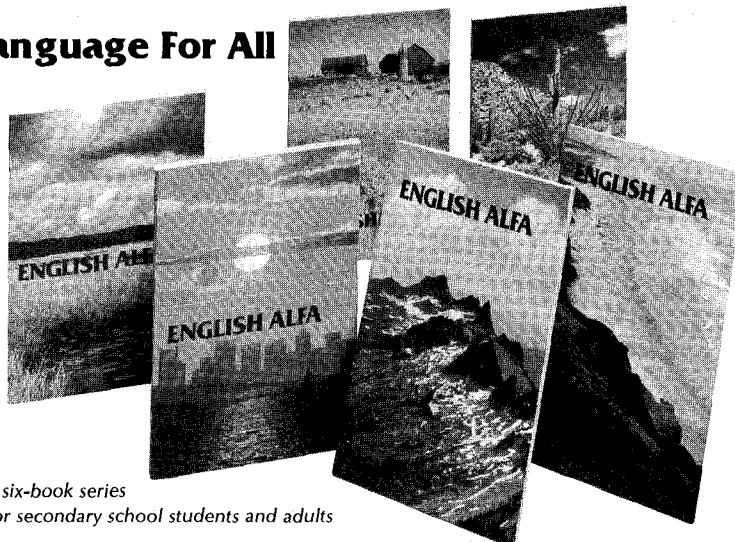
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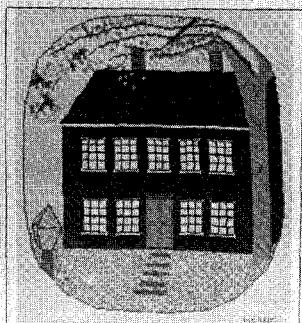
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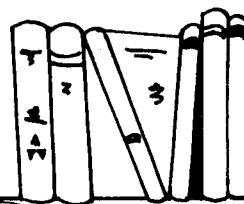
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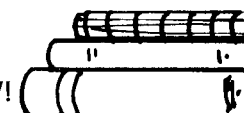
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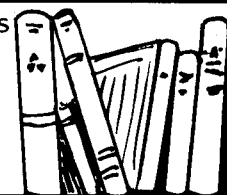
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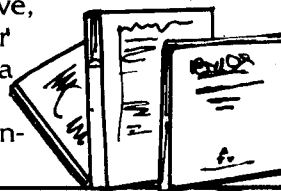
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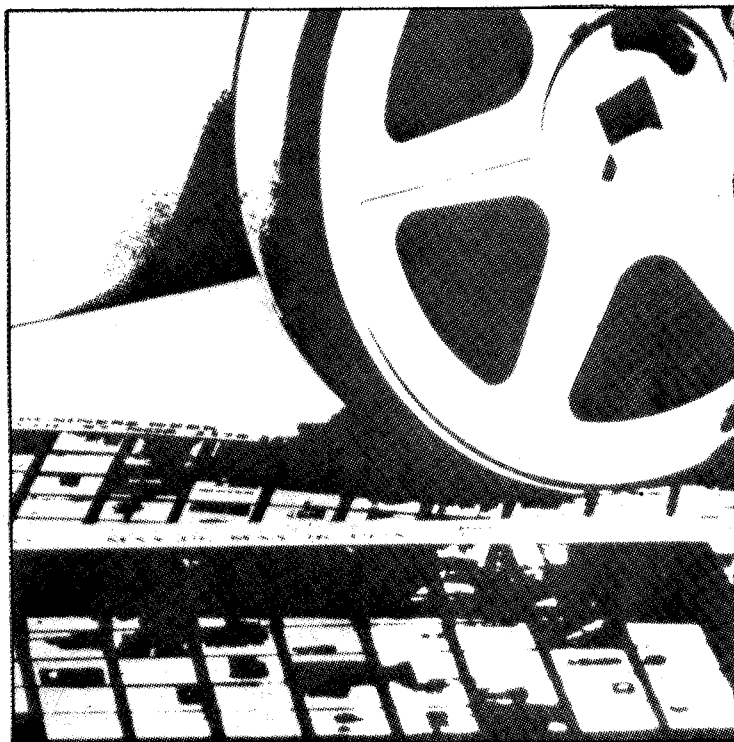
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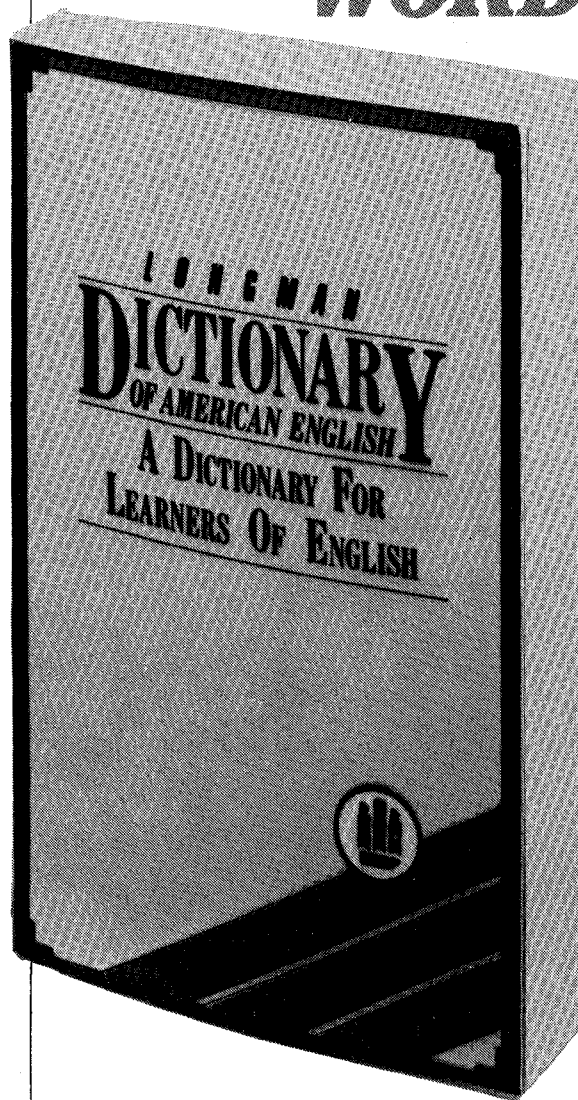
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