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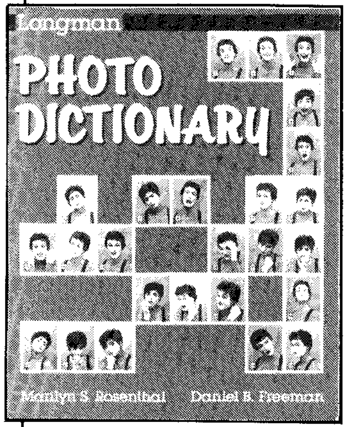
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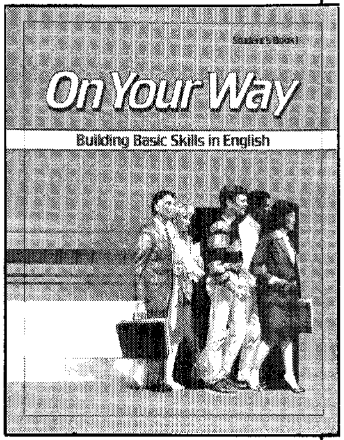
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TESOL QUARTERLY

In This Issue

■ In examining the five articles in this issue of the *TESOL Quarterly,* readers will be reminded that the development of TESOL results from renewal from within our field proper and through insights from related fields. The lead article, which describes a content-based instructional program for English for academic purposes, emphasizes TESOL'S obvious and important links with other areas of education, as does an article on a testing procedure developed by the National Assessment of Educational Progress. Articles on the teaching of pronunciation and of grammar draw insights from various subfields of linguistics, one of our traditional and perennial sources for the development of principles and procedures for classroom language teaching. Finally, an article on ethnography explores the relevance to TESOL researchers and practitioners of a research methodology with a long tradition of use in the social sciences.

- Marguerite Snow and Donna Brinton describe the rationale and operation of the Freshman Summer Program (FSP) at the University of California, Los Angeles. The FSP was designed as "a content-based instructional program . . . based on the adjunct model, in which students are enrolled concurrently in two linked courses—a language course . . . and a content course . . . that share the content base and complement each other in terms of mutually coordinated assignments." The authors describe the findings of two studies of the effectiveness of the FSP in helping "underprepared ESL students to cope with the demands of university study." The article concludes with a discussion of the pedagogical strengths and practical limitations of the adjunct model and with a call for further and more definitive investigations of the effectiveness of this program model.
- Karen Watson-Gegeo argues that "an understanding of what constitutes high-quality, scientific ethnographic work has not kept pace with ethnography's increasing popularity in ESL." For that reason, her discussion addresses two basic questions: What is ethnography? and Why should ethnography be of interest to English language-teaching professionals? To answer the first question, Watson-Gegeo distinguishes among the terms *ethnographic, qualitative,* and *naturalistic* and then identifies essential characteristics of ethnography. The author emphasizes that "the ethnographic perspective on language learning is

one of language socialization rather than one of language acquisition." Thus, learning a second language involves learning more than a structure for communication; it involves, among other things, the learning of social and cultural norms, procedures for interpretation, and forms of reasoning. The relevance of ethnography to TESOL extends from basic research on language teaching and learning to teacher training and classroom practices. For each and all of these possible applications, "the promise of ethnography . . . lies in its emphasis on holistic, richly detailed descriptions and analyses of teacher-learner interactions and the multilevel contexts in which these interactions occur."

- Adam Brown discusses the concept of functional load and considers its relevance in pronunciation teaching. Functional load is a concept that, as the author points out, has been widely used in linguistic analysis; however, different "writers define the term in differing and often vague terms and calculate its value differently." Using Received Pronunciation as a reference accent, Brown examines "various factors that may with justification be thought to contribute to functional load and that may help us to place phonemic contrasts along a continuum of importance." The author proposes that of the factors that help to define functional load, cumulative frequency of occurrence of the two phonemes that distinguish a minimal pair and the abundance of minimal pairs involving that particular phonemic contrast would seem to be the most important. Accordingly, teachers might profitably adopt the three-part procedure of identifying phonemic contrasts that pose difficulty for a particular group of students; determining the relative importance, in terms of functional load, of these problem areas; and assigning greater priority in pronunciation work to contrasts involving a higher functional load.

- Kyle Perkins and Sheila Brutten describe the goals and procedures of behavioral anchoring through an analysis of three tests of ESL reading comprehension. Behavioral anchoring seeks to identify achievement levels, or anchor points, and to make test scores interpretable in terms of what students at each point can do that students at lower points on the ability scale cannot do. The authors' analysis of performance on the three tests of reading ability attempted to characterize levels of reading achievement in terms of some of the major constructs identified by recent research on reading text structure, prior knowledge, and cognitive processes. The authors emphasize that "classroom teachers should not be intimidated by the statistical analysis necessary for a behavioral anchoring study" and point out that the calculations performed in their study required only a hand-held calculator. Equally important, behavioral anchoring, in addition to its many other advantages, can yield comprehensible descriptions of what students can and cannot do in terms of the trait being measured by a particular test.

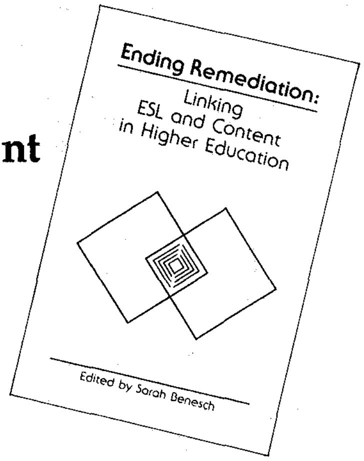
- Pauline Rea Dickins and Edward Woods examine "the role of grammar and grammar tasks within the communicative language learning and teaching curriculum." On the basis of their own experiences in implementing a communicative framework for language learning and on the basis of both theoretical and empirical investigations of the relationship between grammatical and communicative competence, the authors argue that "the development of communication skills should include not only language and study-skills areas but also the improvement of grammatical competence." However, the grammar tasks that the authors advocate differ from traditional activities, which treat grammar as a set of static, discrete elements. Instead, they recommend that grammar be introduced to learners "as a complex of integrated networks that function as a means to successful communication." The article includes several examples of what the authors identify as key criteria of communicative grammar tasks: Such tasks must help build "an awareness of grammatical choice and . . . the capacity to make the appropriate choices according to given contextual constraints."

Also in this issue:

- Review: Susan Dicker reviews three ESL writing texts: Nancy Arapoff Cramer's *The Writing Process: 20 Projects for Group Work,* Nancy Duke S. Lay's *Making the Most of English*, and Trudy Smoke's *A Writer's Workbook.*
- Book Notices
- Brief Reports and Summaries: Graham Crookes and Kathryn Rulon report a study of the effects of three types of native-speaker/nonnative-speaker conversations on interlanguage development; and Katherine Beaty Chiste and Judith O'Shea report the findings of their study of question-selection patterns of ESL students on a test of writing proficiency.
- The Forum: Mark Clarke and Sandra Silberstein explore the nature of professional advice in "Problems, Prescriptions, and Paradoxes in Second Language Teaching"; and commentaries by George Braine and by Ann Johns on Ruth Spack's recent *TESOL Quarterly* article, "Initiating ESL Students Into the Academic Discourse Community: How Far Should We Go?", are each followed by a response by the author.
- The Cumulative Index for the *TESOL Quarterly,* Volumes 21 and 22.

Stephen J. Gaies

ESL in higher education — remedial or credit-bearing?



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TESOL QUARTERLY, Vol. 22, No. 4, December 1988

Content-Based Language Instruction: Investigating the Effectiveness of the Adjunct Model

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This article describes the adjunct model of language instruction, in which English/ESL courses are linked with content courses to integrate better the reading, writing, and study skills required for academic success in the university setting. Following a rationale for the adjunct model and a description of its key features as employed in the Freshman Summer Program (FSP) at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), the findings of two studies carried out at UCLA are presented: (a) former students' evaluation of the program and (b) follow-up interviews with selected ESL students and results of a simulated examination comparing the FSP follow-up students and non-FSP ESL students.

The nation's colleges and universities are faced with the mounting challenge of educating a steady stream of underprepared students entering higher education. These incoming students, both from language majority and language minority backgrounds, enter the university lacking the essential skills required to succeed academically, such as the ability to synthesize lecture and text material and to express this information clearly in written assignments and on examinations. Language minority students, in addition to being deficient in academic skills, also may be less proficient in English, thus further limiting their potential for university success.

In terms of university admissions, language minority students comprise an ever-increasing segment of the undergraduate population. In the state of California, for example, the number of Hispanic high-school graduates grew from 22,000 in the mid-1960s to 52,000 in the mid-1980s, and the number of Asian high-school graduates grew from 6,000 to 20,000 in the same period (Kissler, 1983). And although not all of these graduates enter the university, the impact of changing demographics on university admissions is undeniable.

This shift in population demographics alone would be no cause for concern. However, coupled with the educational “gap” that exists between the high school and the university and the growing percentage of language minority students enrolling at the university, we cannot overlook its impact on higher education. First, although no clear correlation has been established between language proficiency and academic success (Graham, 1987), it makes intuitive sense that there exists a threshold level of proficiency without which these students will not succeed at university studies. Second, given the low retention rates of certain groups of language minority students at the university, there is clear cause for concern. In essence, what is occurring is that the university system is generally unprepared to assist these students in attaining academic success by providing the necessary support system.

What options exist at the university to better prepare students to cope with the academic demands? The answer lies, at least to some degree, in recognizing what it is that students need to be able to do at the university, particularly in terms of writing skills. Partial insight into this issue can be gleaned from a number of academic skills surveys that have examined the issue of what students are required to do at the university.

The earliest of these studies, both at the University of Southern California (Kroll, 1979; Ostler, 1980), surveyed the native-speaking and nonnative-speaking populations of this institution, asking students to self-assess the types of writing assignments they encountered in their various disciplines. Differences between disciplines and status (graduate versus undergraduate) notwithstanding, the studies suggested that the personal essay has little place in an English-for-academic-purposes (EAP) writing curriculum. Furthermore, although lending credence to the place of the research paper in the curriculum, they also provided support for an increased focus on essay-exam writing, critique writing, and summary writing.

In follow-up studies, Johns (1981) and Bridgeman and Carlson (1984) surveyed faculty members across disciplines to determine further the types of academic tasks actually engaged in at the university. Johns concluded in her survey of 140 faculty members at San Diego State University that writing assignments at the university invariably involve listening and reading, and she suggested that the writing curriculum mirror this integration by asking students to paraphrase or summarize reading materials or to reorganize and rewrite lecture notes.

Similarly, Bridgeman and Carlson (1984), in their comprehensive survey of 190 academic departments at 34 East Coast universities, examined the frequency of topic types (ranging from the personal essay to the assessment of a point of view in a passage) in the seven university disciplines in which nonnative-speaking students most commonly major. Although no one topic type emerged as most common across disciplines, creative or personal writing appeared to be just as rare at the university level as expository or critical writing assignments were frequent. The three most popular topic types noted were the description and interpretation of charts and graphs, the argumentation of a topic with the audience designated, and the comparison and contrast of two items in which the writer concludes by taking a position. In keeping with Johns's (1981) conclusions, Bridgeman and Carlson concluded that in the writing curriculum, students would best be prepared for cross-disciplinary academic writing by tasks that require them to organize arguments from several sources and by assignments that require them to analyze and critique ideas, excerpts, and passages.

In a similarly focused study into the genre, range, and nature of writing tasks assigned by university professors, Horowitz (1986) collected 54 writing tasks assigned by 38 faculty members at Western Illinois University and classified them into seven categories, two of which were not included in the classifications of the previous studies. Horowitz concluded that the most common writing tasks across the curriculum were the synthesis of multiple sources, the connection of theory and data, the summary/reaction to a reading, and the report on participatory experience. Echoing John's (1981) finding that undergraduate students typically lack the ability to recognize relevant data, Horowitz suggested that the writing curriculum stress the recognition and reorganization of data by creating assignments that get students to practice "academic information processing."

Given the above research findings, what should the priorities be for helping students to attain advanced literacy skills? Clearly, a focus on critical writing and thinking skills appears to be a top (if not the top) priority in the university language curriculum. This article describes one approach to providing language students with the academic skills cited in the various surveys as requisite for success at the university. The major premise here is that in order to meet this challenge, we need a broader perspective, namely, that language and content instruction must be integrated.

In the past few years, there has been growing interest in content-based approaches to language teaching (see Mohan, 1979, 1986; Willetts, 1986), the roots of which can be traced to a variety of sources. The Language Across the Curriculum movement, begun as an approach for teaching native English speakers, claims that effective language teaching should cross over all subject-matter domains. Furthermore, in the area of English for specific purposes, advocates such as Widdowson (1978) recommend integrating language teaching in the schools with other subjects "as this not only helps ensure the link with reality and pupils' own experience, but also provides us with the certain means of teaching language as communication, as use rather than simply as usage" (p. 16). In the foreign language context, monolingual English-speaking children in immersion programs receive the majority of their elementary education through the medium of content presented in the foreign language. Finally, in a comprehensive review, Shih (1986) describes five content-based approaches to writing instruction in the university context for both native and nonnative speakers.

This article examines one such approach—the Freshman Summer Program (FSP) at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). First, the adjunct model employed in the FSP since 1977 is described, as well as key features of the program. The results of two studies that were undertaken to examine the effectiveness of the model are then presented. The final section of the article provides a critique of the adjunct model. The applicability of this model to other instructional settings is also discussed.

THE FSP INSTRUCTIONAL MODEL

The FSP is a content-based instructional program designed to meet the linguistic and academic needs of students who lack exposure to the types of tasks required for success at the university. This 7-week, cross-curricular program is based on the adjunct model, in which students are enrolled concurrently in two linked courses—a language course (e. g., Intermediate ESL) and a content course (e. g., Introductory Psychology) — that share the content base and complement each other in terms of mutually coordinated assignments.

Key features of the adjunct model's academic component are the integration of native and nonnative speakers in the content course and the sheltering of ESL students in the ESL language component. In this way, the language needs of the ESL students can be attended to while at the same time the authenticity of the academic demands placed on the students in the content course is ensured.

The focus in the ESL class is on essential modes of academic writing, academic reading, study skills development, and the treatment of persistent structural errors. The activities of the content-based language course are geared to stimulate students to think and learn in the target language by requiring them to synthesize information from the content-area lectures and readings. Since these materials provide authentic content for students to discuss and write about, the adjunct model provides a context for integrating the four traditional language skills. (For a comprehensive discussion of the theoretical rationale and practical considerations in implementing content-based language programs, including adjunct courses, see Brinton, Snow, & Wesche, in press.)

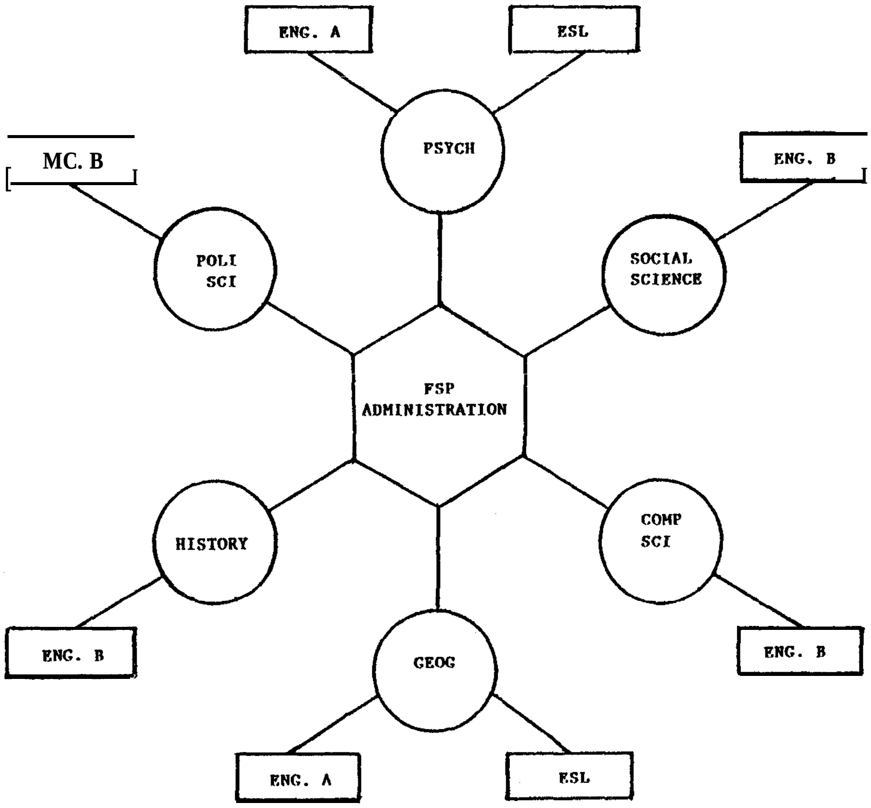
In addition to the academic component, the FSP at UCLA also includes a strong network of tutorial and counseling services, as well as an on-campus residential program and an organized recreational and social program. These components provide the students with additional benefits crucial to incoming students who are adjusting to many aspects of their new environment.

Every summer, incoming freshman students at UCLA are invited to attend the FSP, which attracts approximately 600 to 700 students each year. The participants primarily consist of low-income, ethnic minority, or linguistic minority students, with nonnative speakers of English comprising 10% to 20% of the student population. The bulk of the ESL students, who are the focus of this article, are Asian immigrants who have completed their secondary education in the United States.

Based on their freshman English placement scores on the systemwide University of California Subject A Examination and/or the UCLA English as a Second Language Placement Exam (ESLPE), students are tracked into the parallel sequences of native-speaker or ESL courses. Thus, lower proficiency students are placed into English A/ESL 33B, whereas intermediate-level students are placed into English B/ESL 33C.

The introductory-level content courses offered vary each year but are always typical of those that undergraduates take to fulfill their general education requirements. Typically, 6 to 10 linked content/language courses are offered, and students are allowed to express a preference for a certain content course. Where possible, this preference is taken into consideration in enrolling students in the linked courses. However, in the case of ESL students, their level of English language proficiency generally dictates the content course to which they are assigned; in any given summer, only 1 to 4 content courses will have an ESL section attached to them. A typical summer's adjunct design is displayed in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1
The Academic Component of the UCLA Freshman Summer Program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Students in the FSP attend 12 to 14 hours of language classes weekly and have 8 contact hours per week of lectures/discussion sections in the content courses. They receive regular university credit for both courses that they take during the program.

In order to realize the goal of linking the language and content courses, extensive planning takes place prior to the summer term. During the FSP curriculum development process, a needs assessment of the required skills of the content discipline is conducted to determine the instructional priorities of the language class. This assessment includes feedback from the instructors of the content and language courses; analyses of the language and content materials (e.g., syllabuses, textbooks, and supplementary readings); review of the previous years' curricula and assignments; and additional input from the administrative staff and other specialists called in to help plan the summer's curriculum. The resulting curriculum plan is a synthesis of the factors identified in this assessment process.

The language curriculum is determined by taking into consideration two factors: the standard UCLA curricular objectives for the particular level of ESL proficiency and the feasibility of integrating the language and content objectives of the two courses. Language instructors in an adjunct course therefore have to juggle the demands of their language syllabus with the constraints and added dimensions placed on it by the demands of the content course and attempt to resolve possible disparities between these to the best of their abilities.

During the curriculum-planning stage, then, the language instructors determine the optimal sequence of topics and skills so that the objectives of the two linked courses can map onto each other most effectively. For example, during the first 2 weeks, in which the content professor typically presents an overview of the field and its various branches and introduces basic discipline-specific terminology, the language course reflects this emphasis by covering the definition and classification modes and focusing on the study skills most needed at this critical first stage of university study—that is, time management and academic reading and note-taking strategies.

Assignments in the ESL component of the adjunct program are based almost entirely on material from the content course. A typical first reading activity, for example, is a survey of the content course textbook, with students being required to answer a series of questions that familiarize them with their textbook—that is, how to use the table of contents, index, references, glossary, and so on. Similarly, a typical writing lesson might require students to use their content course lecture notes to write sentence-level definitions and then build from the sentence level to write a paragraph of definition or a more extended definition paper. In all such assignments, emphasis is placed on both the accuracy of content and on the accuracy and sophistication of the language used to communicate this content.

Throughout the instructional period, weekly meetings are scheduled to ensure continued cooperation between the two teams of instructors. These meetings provide a forum for discussing the week's evaluation activity (examination or paper assignment) in the content course as well as individual student progress and/or problems. When necessary, decisions are made to refer students to tutorial and counseling services. (For a more detailed description of the curriculum, methodology, and materials used in the FSP, see Snow & Brinton, 1984, in press.)

Although there has been extensive work in the design and implementation of the adjunct model at UCLA, little formal research had been conducted to document the effectiveness of the model. The previously collected data consisted mainly of some student background information, student program evaluations, and individual course/teacher evaluations. The purpose of the two studies reported in this article, therefore, was to build on the existing data base and to attempt a more comprehensive examination of the ESL component of the FSP. (For a more detailed discussion of the research project, see Snow & Brinton, 1988.)

STUDY 1: STUDENT PROFILE AND RETROSPECTIVE EVALUATION OF THE FSP

Since little follow-up had been conducted on the former ESL students who had participated in the FSP, the first study sought to locate former participants and to collect data on their academic performance at UCLA. Furthermore, this study included a retrospective evaluation of the FSP. The research questions were as follows:

1. What was the profile of former ESL students who had participated in the FSP from 1981-1985 (e.g., major, grade point average [GPA], persistence at the university)?
2. What was the former ESL students' retrospective evaluation of the FSP after they had taken regular courses during other school years?

Methodology

Subjects. Subjects for the profile component of Study 1 were the 224 students who were enrolled in the ESL track of the FSP during the summers of 1981-1985 and for whom addresses were available. These students had been enrolled in the two levels of ESL courses, ESL 33B or ESL 33C. As noted earlier, the majority of these students were Asian immigrants and were incoming freshmen at the time they attended the FSP. Seventy-nine of the former FSP students completed the retrospective evaluation.

Instrument. A questionnaire consisting of four sections was designed by the researchers to collect information from these former students. The first section asked the students to supply current demographic information such as year of FSP participation, adjunct courses attended, birthplace, home language, current address, present occupation / student status, and major field of study.

The second part of the questionnaire asked the students to rate the usefulness of certain academic activities or skills they were exposed to in the FSP curriculum—for example, time management techniques, in-class essay-exam strategies, "psyching out" (or second-guessing) the professor, and preparing reading guides. In addition, students were asked to rate the more global benefits of the FSP, namely, their adjustment to UCLA, their increase in self-confidence, and their ability to use UCLA facilities and resources. The third part of the questionnaire required students to estimate the amount of actual writing they had to do per quarter.

In the final section of the questionnaire, students were asked to write open-ended comments on two questions. The first question asked students to comment on "the single most important thing [they had] learned in the FSP." The second question asked for any other comments the students had about their experiences in dealing with the language and academic demands at UCLA.

Procedures. With the cooperation of the UCLA Office of Student Preparatory Programs, records of the 224 ESL students were obtained. These records contained information such as the students' cumulative GPA, major fields of study, ethnic background, and current status (e.g., continuing student, graduated student).

The questionnaires were mailed to the 224 former ESL students. Of these, 25 were returned as undeliverable, netting a target sample of 199. After two mailings, 79 (39.7%) were completed and returned.

Results

Student profile. According to student records, the vast majority of the 224 former ESL students were Asian immigrants, mainly from Korean (31%), Chinese (28%), other Asian (26%), Filipino (4.5%), and Japanese (0.9%) backgrounds. Of the remaining students, 5 were from Central or South America (2.2%); 10 were Mexican American (4.5%); 4 were white (1.8%); and 4 students checked "Other" (1.8%). (Rounding error accounts for the total exceeding 100%.) In regard to resident status, 150 (67%) were permanent residents of the United

States, and another 69 (31%) were U.S. citizens. Three reported having business visas, and 1 student had an F 1 student visa. Only 1 student in the sample had refugee-visa status.

The majority of the students were majoring in science at UCLA: 44 (19.8%) were math/computer science majors; 30 (13.4%) were engineering majors; 26 (11.6%) were biology majors; 15 (6.7%) were chemistry majors; and 9 (4%) were physics majors. The rest of the students had declared majors in a variety of fields. Economics (*n*= 20) and Spanish (*n* = 3) led the list, with other majors having only 1 or 2 students. The cumulative mean UCLA GPA for the 224 students in this study was 2.66 (*SD* = 0.57) at the time the information was obtained from the Office of Student Preparatory Programs (May 1986). Only 15 of the 224 students (6.7%) had withdrawn or been dismissed from UCLA at this time.

Retrospective program evaluation. The first part of the questionnaire elicited demographic information from the students. Responses were obtained from students who attended the FSP in 1981 (*n*= 10), 1982 (*n*= 25), 1983 (*n*= 30), 1984 (*n*= 5), and 1985 (*n* = 9). Of the 79 ESL students, 25 were enrolled in the lower proficiency course (ESL 33B), 48 in the intermediate ESL course (ESL 33C), and 6 in the native-speaker course (English B). The students had participated in a variety of content courses: 35 had studied psychology, 18 political science, 7 anthropology, 11 history, and 1 math; 7 students did not specify which content course they had taken. The majority of the students had declared “hard” science majors, that is, engineering (14), math (12), biology (12), physics (6), and chemistry (4). The rest of the students had declared majors in a variety of fields. Economics led the list (10), with other majors having only 1 or 2 students each.

The bulk of the questionnaires came from students who were born in Korea (24), Vietnam (17), and Taiwan (12). The rest of the respondents came from other Asian countries such as the Philippines or Cambodia, except for 3 who were born in South America. Accordingly, Korean was the stated home language of the largest number of the students, and 21 of the students spoke a variety of Chinese (including 7 of the Vietnamese students who were ethnic Chinese). Forty-seven of the former FSP students were still students at the time they completed the questionnaire; 3 of the students were accountants, 3 were engineers, and the rest worked at a variety of occupations, including computer programmer and receptionist.

The second part of the questionnaire asked the students to rate certain activities or skills they were exposed to in the FSP, as well as more global benefits of the FSP, on a Likert-type 5-point scale, ranging from *not useful* (1 point) to *very useful* (5 points). Table 1 presents the rankings based on the students' mean scores.

TABLE 1
Former Students' Rankings of Usefulness of Skills Learned in the FSP and of Additional Benefits of the FSP

Item rated	Mean score
Academic skills	
Taking lecture notes	3.92
Prewriting strategies	3.71
Proofreading for errors in written work	3.68
Preparing reading guides/notes	3.67
Using rhetorical modes in writing	3.62
"Psyching-out" the professor	3.50
In-class essay-exam strategies	3.48
Revising drafts of take-home paper assignments	3.47
Ability to participate in class discussions	3.39
Time management techniques	3.37
Objective test-taking strategies	3.30
Vocabulary development skills	3.12
Oral presentations	2.64
Additional benefits	
Adjusting to UCLA	4.12
Increased self-confidence	3.86
Ability to use UCLA facilities	3.85
Ability to use UCLA resources (e.g., counselors)	3.78

Note: Students responded on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = not useful; 5 = very useful). The survey was completed by 79 students.

These results indicate that the former ESL students in the FSP generally valued the activities aimed at easing the adjustment from high school to college. Three of the four items that received the highest ratings were the additional benefits of the FSP—"adjusting to UCLA," "increased self-confidence," and "ability to use UCLA facilities." "Taking lecture notes" was the highest rated academic skill. Other academic skills such as "rewriting strategies," "proofreading for errors in written work," and "preparing reading guides/notes" were also highly rated.

The third part of the questionnaire requested information on the amount of actual writing the students had to do per quarter. The mean number of in-class essays they wrote per quarter was 2.4; the mean number of take-home papers per quarter was 2.2.

On the final section of the questionnaire, which requested open-ended comments about the students' experience in the FSP, the responses were overwhelmingly positive. Three themes stood out among the positive comments: easing the adjustment, increased self-confidence, and learning how to get help. The following comments from the questionnaires illustrate the themes in the students' own words (mechanical errors corrected):

1. Ease of adjustment

   "The most important contribution from the FSP was that the program helped me to adjust to UCLA life with much ease."

   "FSP gave me an edge in fall quarter. I knew roughly what to expect from UCLA."
2. Self-confidence

   "I'll say it's 'Increased self-confidence' because I think I didn't realize that I can actually do well in UCLA, until I . . . started to believe that I *can do well.*"

   "I grew up more mature after spending 7 weeks in FSP and was very confident to work hard to overcome all the barriers."
3. Learning to get help

   "The most important thing that I've learned during my participation in FSP was that professors and the staff are really eager to help the students to assist them in every possible way, if the students *ask* for help."

   "Knowing where to get help, tutoring, and to set aside time to talk to professors. Time management was also a great benefit."

Despite the overall positive tone of the open-ended comments, students had some constructive comments to offer to the program's administrators. As exemplified by the quotes below, one main concern was the excess support provided by the FSP, which students felt gave them a somewhat false sense of their ability to compete at the university. An additional concern expressed by those students majoring in the sciences was the program's focus on the social sciences and humanities.

1. Excess support

   "It was a great confidence builder, which could be both to its advantage and disadvantage. The disadvantage of it could be building *too* much confidence."

   "During the FSP, I was working closely with friends, tutors, and counselors, but after the real freshman year began, I was mostly on my own. . . I hope that the follow-up can somehow help the students who were discouraged in the competition."
2. Program focus

   "Because I am a science major, I feel that the skills I learned hardly helped me in writing a scientific lab report."

> "I also believe the FSP can be improved by giving more speech courses because for my major [biology] I had to speak a lot."

Discussion of Study 1 Results

The student profile that emerged from Study 1 provided useful information for future FSP curricular planning. The predominance of Asian immigrant students enrolled in the program throughout the years came as no surprise; however, the high percentage of science majors, coupled with their dissatisfaction with the program focus, has important implications for the selection of content courses to be offered in the FSP. Although no causal connections can be drawn between FSP participation and persistence at the university, it is interesting that the number of students who had withdrawn or who had left for academic reasons was small and that FSP students overall maintained a respectable GPA.

The results of the retrospective evaluation by the former ESL students provided strong validation of the overall usefulness of the FSP in easing the transition period from high school to the university. They also confirmed the program objectives of the FSP, which emphasize the essential academic skills that students will need throughout their university career.

Another interesting finding concerned the amount of writing the students were required to do each quarter in their regular classes. This finding goes to the heart of a lingering question—namely, how much writing do ESL students (who typically major in science or who may avoid courses that require a lot of writing) actually do, once they have completed the required ESL/English courses? The findings indicate that the former FSP students *did*, in fact, have to write in-class and out-of-class papers in their content classes, thereby validating the specific focus of the FSP and EAP courses in general.

STUDY 2: ESL STUDENT FOLLOW-UP

The second study, which involved an intensive follow-up of ESL students who had participated in the 1986 summer program, consisted of a series of interviews and the administration of a simulated final exam. The research questions were as follows:

1. How did the former ESL students in the FSP adjust to UCLA during the regular year?
2. How did the former ESL participants in the FSP compare—in terms of English proficiency and academic skills—with ESL students who did not participate in the program?

Methodology

Subjects. Subjects for the first part of the study were 12 students from the 1986 program, who were selected in equal numbers from both levels of ESL (33B and 33C) based on their willingness to participate. The native languages of the 12 students were Spanish (3), Korean (3), Cambodian (2), Chinese (2), Vietnamese (l), and Tagalog (l).

A comparison group was composed of 15 ESL students who were enrolled in an ESL 33C class in the fall of 1986. This class was selected, since the students enrolled were most comparable in terms of student status and proficiency level to the FSP students. In this group, the languages spoken were Spanish (2), Korean (4), Chinese (6), Armenian (2), and Vietnamese (l).

Although the term *comparison group* is used to refer to the non-FSP students, it should be noted that a number of disparities existed between the two groups. First, since the FSP is funded through the university's Affirmative Active Program (AAP), most of the FSP students qualify as AAP students. Second, by definition, all FSP students are entering freshmen. This was not the case with the non-FSP group, although the majority were freshmen, all were undergraduates, and all had been placed into ESL 33C via the fall ESLPE. Finally, because of the heterogeneity of ESL students enrolled in the 1986 FSP, the proficiency range of these students was quite wide compared with that of the non-FSP students.

Instruments. Two instruments were designed for Study 2. The first was a questionnaire for a structured interview administered to the former FSP participants. The structured questions pertained to the academic problems these students were experiencing during fall quarter and their assessment of how the FSP had helped prepare them to cope with the realities of study at the university. In addition, other more extemporaneous questions were posed regarding issues that arose during the interviews.

As additional support for the self-report data obtained, a second instrument, a simulated final exam from a content area, was developed to assess more quantitatively the extent to which these students had been prepared for the academic demands of the university. The objective was to present students with an academic task that they were likely to encounter across the curriculum at the university, not one that resembled a typical second language proficiency exam. A second objective was to construct a type of task that reflected the orientation of the adjunct model—that is, an exam that could assess the students' ability to integrate language and content.

The simulated academic task designed for this purpose consisted of the following components: (a) a selection from an audiotaped university lecture (approximately 8 minutes in length), (b) an excerpt from a university textbook, (c) objective questions and short-answer definitions that drew on the lecture and reading selections, and (d) a short essay-exam question requiring students to synthesize information from both the lecture and reading passages.

The topic "political elites" was selected, since it was felt that the students would have minimal familiarity with the content. The lecture was taken from *Module 3, Political Science and Law,* of *Listening and Learning Lectures* (Young & Fitzgerald, 1982), an academic ESL listening series; the reading passage was drawn from *American Politics* (Dolbeare & Edelman, 1981, pp. 253-263), a college-level text of the type used in introductory political science courses. Both the lecture and the reading were slightly edited to increase coherence; however, every attempt was made to preserve the authenticity of the passages.

Procedures. Three structured l-hour interviews were conducted with each of the 12 former FSP students during Weeks 3, 6, and 10 of the fall quarter. The same questions were posed to each student during each of the three interview sessions. The interviewer took notes and later summarized them for coding.

The simulated final examination was administered to each group during the same week of fall quarter 1986. The regular classroom instructor administered the examination to the comparison group during regular class time, and the researchers conducted the FSP administration. Both groups had 2 hours to complete the entire academic task (without time limits for individual segments) following the same set of instructions. First, the students read general instructions outlining the task, which informed them that they had to use the lecture and reading materials to complete the examination. They then listened to the lecture and took notes, read the passage, and answered a series of true-false and multiple-choice questions. They next wrote sentence definitions and composed a comparison/contrast essay requiring them to synthesize the lecture and reading materials.

The objective section was marked by the researchers. The essays were blind-rated by three experienced composition instructors using a composition rating scale (Jacobs, Zinkgraf, Wormuth, Hartfiel, & Hughey, 1981) with which all three raters were familiar. A norming session was conducted using four student essays selected by the researchers as exemplifying a range of proficiency levels and containing a variety of structural and discourse problems. The interrater reliability of the three composition raters, determined by computing Spearman correlation coefficients, was .64, .65, and .74.

Results

Interviews with the FSP students. The most relevant issues raised during the structured interviews fell into the following four categories: (a) students' assessment of their study skills in the fall quarter, (b) their ability to participate in class discussions, (c) their ability to cope with the writing tasks faced in the fall quarter, and (d) the degree to which they felt the FSP had prepared them for the regular school year.

Regarding the study skills issue, an overwhelming majority of the students commented that the FSP had helped them to achieve success in time management, lecture note taking, and reading. Several commented that the FSP had helped make them wise to the "system." Especially in the first interview, students appeared quite confident of their note-taking and reading skills. However, in the second interview, which occurred after midterm exams, there was a noticeable decline in confidence regarding these skills, as well as an awareness among the students that their time management skills were still weak. Specifically, students noted difficulties in picking out major points in lectures and expressed surprise that so much of the midterm exam material was drawn from lectures. Many admitted that after midterm exams, they had resorted to buying the lecture notes available through the university's note-taking service.

The question concerning students' ability to participate in class discussions met with mixed reactions from students. On the one hand, students noted that the small class size and amount of individual attention paid to them in the FSP was a great confidence builder and that this had made them less nervous about participating in class discussions. However, many of the students who were enrolled in mathematics or science classes commented that participation was not encouraged. Others remarked that the presence of graduate students in their ESL classes during the regular school year diminished some of their confidence.

Since the FSP was designed to emphasize writing in both the language and content courses, it was almost inevitable that all students would note a decreased emphasis on writing during the fall term. This was especially true of the mathematics and science students. Nonetheless, students reported a variety of writing assignments in their content courses, and almost all noted that they felt better able to cope with these as a result of the FSP. In terms of the English classes in which these students were enrolled subsequent to the FSP class, they almost universally felt that not enough "intensive" writing was being required. Overall, despite the boost that students felt they had received in the FSP, they appeared very aware that they had a number of residual writing problems, particularly in the areas of grammar and organization.

Finally, concerning the degree to which the FSP had prepared them for the regular session, students felt that the program had "pretty much covered everything" they needed in order to face the academic demands of the university. However, they complained that after the network of support services in the FSP, they had been surprised by the more bureaucratic demands of the university, such as registration and bookstore lines, parking difficulties, and financial-aid "hassles."

Simulated final examination. The test scores of the FSP group and the non-FSP group on the UCLA ESLPE were analyzed using a Wilcoxon matched-pairs signed-rank test. The analysis revealed significant differences between the two groups on English language proficiency ($z = 2.11$, $p < .05$) (see Table 2). In other words, the ESL students in the FSP had significantly lower placement scores than the non-FSP ESL students. However, there were no significant differences in performance between the two groups on either the objective or essay portions of the simulated examination. Thus, although the FSP students in this study had lower English placement scores, they performed as well as the non-FSP students on an exam that tested listening and reading comprehension and required the higher order thinking skills of synthesis and evaluation in the composition of the essay.

TABLE 2

FSP versus Non-FSP Students on Placement Exam and Simulated Final Exam Means and Standard Deviations

Examination	FSP	Non-FSP	*z*	*p*
ESLPE				
M	90.8	99.4	2.11	< .05
SD	11.9	13.5		
Objective final				
M	25.4	26.1	0.63	n.s.
SD	5.4	7.8		
Essay final				
M	66.5	67.2	0.42	n.s.
SD	13.3	16.3		

Note: Significance testing was by the Wilcoxon matched-pairs signed-rank test. Subjects were 12 FSP students and 15 non-FSP students. ESLPE = the English as a Second Language Placement Exam given at UCLA.

Discussion of Study 2 Results

The data from the structured interviews provided additional evidence of the beneficial effects of the FSP in helping to prepare students to cope with college-level work. Of particular interest were the students' comments concerning the rigorous nature of the FSP English course, which the students realized in retrospect. Apparently, the students felt that the FSP had prepared them not only academically for the regular school year, but also in other ways, such as helping them to become wise to the system. This was a rewarding finding, since it validates the entire fabric of the FSP, with its strong network of counseling and tutorial services in addition to the academic component. The students' reports of little opportunity to participate in class discussions reinforced the FSP'S emphasis on reading and writing skills, since such discussions are rare in many university courses.

The results of the simulated final exam provided evidence that the adjunct model is an appropriate one for students who come to the university with weak language and academic skills. It is gratifying to note that despite the FSP students' significantly lower ESL placement scores, they were able to compete with their ESL counterparts on a task requiring them to use the kinds of academic skills crucial for success at the university. This is especially true of the FSP students' essay results, which were the most powerful indicator of their academic achievement.

A final note regarding the essay-rating procedures is perhaps in order. The interrater reliability of the essay portion of the final exam was somewhat disappointing. In retrospect, we believe that our choice of the Jacobs et al. (1981) scale was perhaps not the most appropriate because the raters experienced difficulties coming to terms with such issues as how to deal quantitatively with the amount of the original source text used (i.e., not correctly paraphrased) and how to take into account the degree to which the information from the two sources had been synthesized. As suggested by Cruikshank and Sullivan-Tuncan (1987), the Jacobs et al. scale is designed to assess nonconsent-based essays, that is, essays that do not require students to synthesize source materials such as reading passages or text materials. Clearly, there is a need for a composition rating scale that takes into account how effectively students are able to integrate source texts into their own writing.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

An underlying assumption of the pedagogical framework of the adjunct model is that student motivation in the language class will increase in direct proportion to the relevance of its activities, and in turn student success in the content course will reflect the carefully coordinated efforts of this team approach. The program evaluation findings and student self-reports appear to validate this assumption: The former students reported that they felt they were better readers and writers as a result of the FSP. Moreover, results from the comparison study indicate that the FSP students were able to perform as well as their non-FSP peers, despite lower English language placement scores. In sum, the data collected in these two studies provide a first attempt to document the effectiveness of the FSP in assisting underprepared ESL students to cope with the demands of university study.

Clearly, the adjunct model offers multiple pedagogical strengths; however, a number of factors may limit its applicability. First, since the model depends on the availability of content course offerings, a full-blown adjunct model is probably not feasible at an intensive language institute. Second, as we have described it, adjunct instruction assumes that students can cope (with assistance from the language and content staff) with the authentic readings and lectures in the content course. Thus, the model is not applicable to beginning proficiency levels. Third, the model requires an administration willing to fund the large network of instructors and staff necessitated by the program and a strong commitment of time and energy on the part of the language and content teachers to integrate the content materials with the language-teaching aims. Finally, more than anything else, the adjunct model rests on the strength of its central administration and the effectiveness of the various coordination meetings held before and during the term. In situations where these conditions cannot be met, the implementation of the model will be severely hampered.

Despite these limitations, we believe the adjunct model can be adapted to fit other institutional settings and populations. As evidence of this, adjunct programs such as the FSP at UCLA or modified adjuncts—that is, language workshops attached to a content course—currently exist both here and abroad: with undergraduate international students studying human geography at Macalester College in St. Paul, MN (Peterson, 1985), and graduate students in pharmacy (Seal, 1985) and business law (Snow & Brinton, 1984) at the University of Southern California; with foreign students studying the philosophy of science (Jonas & Li, 1983) and American history and economics (Spencer, 1986) in the People’s Republic of China; and with both francophone and anglophone students learning English and French through subject-matter courses at the University of Ottawa (Wesche, 1985).

Overall, we believe that these studies have far-reaching implications for educational planning and policy. First, the current movement in second language education at all levels of instruction (elementary through higher education) is toward content-based approaches. This descriptive study documents the effectiveness of one type of content-based program, the adjunct model. A second major policy implication concerns the multicultural reality of education today in the United States, particularly in large urban areas with burgeoning populations of language minority students. As documented by this study, the adjunct model holds great promise as a viable approach for preparing these types of students to succeed in a university setting.

Clearly, more comprehensive, controlled research on the adjunct model is called for. One possible direction would be a longitudinal study of the participating students over the 4-year period of their undergraduate education; such a study would yield important information about students' academic success and persistence at the university. More convincing evidence of the effectiveness of the model could also be established by designing more rigorous research studies. For example, a pre/post design might be employed, in which an instrument such as the simulated final examination developed for this study is administered at the beginning and end of the term to measure student progress. Moreover, with the increasing implementation of content-based programs, a concomitant need arises to develop assessment instruments that better reflect the curricular objectives of these kinds of programs.

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Ethnography in ESL: Defining the Essentials

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Ethnography has recently become fashionable in ESL, second language classroom, and educational research. But many studies bearing the name *ethnographic* are impressionistic and superficial rather than careful and detailed. This article addresses two questions: What is ethnography? And what can it do for us in ESL? Ethnography is defined, and some principles of quality ethnographic work are discussed, including the focus on behavior in groups, holism, emit-etic perspectives, comparison, grounded theory, and techniques of data collection and treatment. The promise of ethnography for research and for improving teaching and teacher training is then addressed.

Classroom research in ESL, second language acquisition, and bilingual education has drawn on a variety of research methodologies over the past decade (for reviews, see Allwright, 1983; Chaudron, 1986, 1987; Gaies, 1983; Long, 1980; Mitchell, 1985). Recently, ethnographic methods have become fashionable in both educational and ESL research. Ethnography has been greeted with enthusiasm because of its promise for investigating issues difficult to address through experimental research, such as sociocultural processes in language learning, how institutional and societal pressures are played out in moment-to-moment classroom interaction, and how to gain a more holistic perspective on teacher-student interactions to aid teacher training and improve practice.

Yet an understanding of what constitutes high-quality, scientific ethnographic work has not kept pace with ethnography's increasing popularity in ESL. For some, *ethnography* has become a synonym for qualitative research, so that any qualitative approach may be called ethnographic in whole or part, as long as it involves observation in nonlaboratory settings. Some qualitative or "naturalistic" studies are structured by coding schemes based on predetermined categories. Others involve impressionistic accounts and very short periods of observation (e.g., Lightfoot, 1983). The superficial nature of many studies, which caricature rather than characterize teaching-learning settings, has led Rist (1980) to call them "blitzkrieg ethnography": The researcher "dive-bombs" into a setting, makes a few fixed-category or entirely impressionistic observations, then takes off again to write up the results.

If impressionistic accounts are not ethnography—and they are not—what *is* ethnography? What constitutes a methodological framework for ethnographic study? Why should we study second language learning and teaching ethnographically?

The purpose of this article is to address these questions through an overview of some essential characteristics of ethnography. It is not my intent to critique existing studies or to conduct a comprehensive review of the ethnographic literature. Instead, ethnography as a research perspective and method is outlined, and ways in which ethnography can serve second language learning and teaching are suggested.

DEFINITION OF ETHNOGRAPHY

Originally developed in anthropology to describe the "ways of living" of a social group (Heath, 1982), ethnography is the study of people's behavior in naturally occurring, ongoing settings, with a focus on the cultural interpretation of behavior (see also Firth, 1961; Hymes, 1982). The ethnographer's goal is to provide a description and an interpretive-explanatory account of what people do in a setting (such as a classroom, neighborhood, or community), the outcome of their interactions, and the way they understand what they are doing (the meaning interactions have for them). This characterization of ethnography, although general enough to include most forms of ethnographic work, also stays true to an anthropological perspective. (For discussions of varying kinds of ethnographic work and suggested classification schemes, see Hymes, 1982, and Werner& Schoepfle, 1987.)

The terms ethnographic, qualitative, and naturalistic are often used interchangeably in the educational literature, but they differ in essential ways. In its primary meaning, qualitative research is concerned with identifying the presence or absence of something and with determining its nature or distinguishing features (in contrast to quantitative research, which is concerned with measurement). *Qualitative research* is an umbrella term for many kinds of research approaches and techniques, including ethnography, case studies, analytic induction, content analysis, semiotics, hermeneutics, life histories, and certain types of computer and statistical approaches (Kirk & Miller, 1986). *Naturalistic research* is a descriptive term that implies that the researcher conducts observations in the “natural, ongoing environment where [people] live and work” (Schatzman & Strauss, 1973, p. 5). By these definitions, ethnography is qualitative and, like many other forms of qualitative research, also naturalistic. Ethnography differs from other forms of qualitative research in its concern with holism and in the way it treats culture as integral to the analysis (not just as one of many factors to take into consideration).

To accomplish the goal of providing a descriptive and interpretive-explanatory account of people’s behavior in a given setting, the ethnographer carries out systematic, intensive, detailed observation of that behavior—examining how behavior and interaction are socially organized—and the social rules, interfactional expectations, and cultural values underlying behavior.

SOME PRINCIPLES OF ETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH

Several principles of ethnographic research are entailed by the above discussion. First, ethnography focuses on people’s behavior in groups and on cultural patterns in that behavior. Ethnographers are of course interested in individuals, for it is individuals who are observed and interviewed and with whom the ethnographer develops personal relationships. Individual differences are also important for establishing variation in behavior. However, most ethnographic studies are concerned with group rather than individual characteristics because cultural behavior is by definition shared behavior. For example, an ethnographer in an ESL classroom is more likely to focus on the role of classroom organization in student access to types of language input or practice than to focus on individual language-learning problems. When ethnographic reports focus on an individual’s behavior, the individual is usually treated as representative of a group. An example is Carrasco’s (1981) article on social organization in a bilingual classroom, in which he illustrates how ethnographer-teacher collaboration can expand teacher awareness of unrecognized abilities in individual children whom the teacher may have “written off” as “not making it.”

Second, ethnography is holistic; that is, any aspect of a culture or a behavior has to be described and explained in relation to the whole system of which it is a part (Diesing, 1971; Firth, 1961). An instance of teacher-student interaction occurring in a lesson on English conversation, for example, can be seen as embedded in a series of concentric rings of increasingly larger (more “macro”) contexts. If we move from the microcontext of the interaction outward, these rings might include other interactions during the lesson, the lesson taken as a whole, the classroom with its characteristics and constraints, the school, the district (or other regional administrative level), and the society.

To fully account for an instance of teacher-student interaction may require tracing its meaning or implications across all the theoretically salient or descriptively relevant micro- and macrocontexts in which it is embedded. For example, in an ethnographic study of process writing in two sixth-grade, multiethnic, urban classrooms (Cazden, Michaels, & Watson-Gegeo, 1987), classroom writing lessons were examined in the context of whole classroom activities, the training and background of teachers, family and neighborhood cultures, the school's social organization and leadership, the district's implementation of process writing, and the state writing examination. Ulichny and Watson-Gegeo (in press) went on to demonstrate the importance of institutional and societal levels of analysis for explaining the discourse of teacher-student writing conferences.

Third, ethnographic data collection begins with a theoretical framework directing the researcher's attention to certain aspects of situations and certain kinds of research questions. The role of theory in guiding observation and interpretation in ethnography seems to be poorly understood outside anthropology. Ethnographers do not claim that they come to a situation like a "blank slate," with no preconceptions or guides for observation. Theory is important for helping ethnographers decide what kinds of evidence are likely to be significant in answering research questions posed at the beginning of the study and developed while in the field (Narroll & Cohen, 1970, 1973; Pelto & Pelto, 1970). If observation is not guided by an explicit theoretical framework, it will be guided only by the observer's "implicit ontology," that is, his or her values, attitudes, and assumptions about "what sorts of things make up the world [or universe of study], how they are related, and how they act" (Diesing, 1971, p. 124).

In classroom ethnography, the research literature now includes many studies detailing the characteristics of classroom organization and interaction; identifying and analyzing patterns, topologies, or models of interaction (e.g., Mehan's [1979] three-part instructional sequence; see also Mehan, 1982); and/or relating these to institutional, social, and cultural factors (e. g., Boggs, 1985; McDermott & Hood, 1982; Ulichny & Watson-Gegeo, in press). Although each classroom is a unique setting and situation, these studies have developed a conceptual vocabulary for examining patterns of social organization and interaction (e.g., speech activities [Levinson, 1979], participation structures [Philips, 1972], routines [Watson, 1975]) that directs the ethnographer's attention to ways in which behavior is typically organized or structured in classrooms and why. These studies provide theoretical grounding for comparison among settings and for the ethnographer's initial decisions on what to observe.

Though guided by received (especially ethnographically based) theory, ethnographic observation and interpretation are not determined by it. For one thing, each situation investigated by an ethnographer must be understood in its own terms. With regard to the research process, this means that the ethnographer shifts the focus of observation to include phenomena and interactions outside the scope suggested by prior theory, both to correct for what may be missing from or misleading in prior theory and to search for interactions, patterns of behavior, and other phenomena significant to and perhaps unique in the situation under study. Understanding a situation in its own terms is closely related to the generation of grounded theory (discussed below).

Moreover, each situation investigated by an ethnographer must be understood from the perspective of the participants in that situation. This latter characteristic of ethnographic research is often expressed as the *emic-etic* principle of analysis, to which we now turn.

Emic-Etic Analysis and Comparison

We owe the emit-etic distinction to Pike (1964), who extended the phon*etic*/phon*emic* distinction in linguistic meaning to cultural meaning. Pike pointed out that the emit or culturally specific framework used by the members of a society/culture for interpreting and assigning meaning to experiences differs in various ways from the researcher's ontological or interpretive framework (an etic framework) (see also Hymes, 1982).

Etic analyses and interpretations are based on the use of frameworks, concepts, and categories from the analytic language of the social sciences and are potentially useful for comparative research across languages, settings, and cultures. To be useful in that way, however, etic terms must be very carefully defined and operationalized. Thus, for example, phonetic "distinctive difference" categories are relatively stable and therefore useful for cross-linguistic analyses. Perhaps the classic case of etic terminology is anthropological kin labels, which refer to biological relationships (e.g., mother's brother) rather than to social relationships (e.g., uncle). The English term *uncle* carries with it assumptions about obligations and behavior specific to American or British culture but not shared by other cultures.

However, etic terminology is rarely culturally neutral because its source is typically either the culture to which the researcher belongs or what we might call the "culture of research" itself (referring here to the traditions and ways of speaking that have evolved in particular research disciplines). For example, categories used in nonethnographic classroom-interaction coding schemes (e.g., the Flanders system and its descendants) are often problematic in this way. *Attitude, correction, praise, higher level question, initiates interaction, accepts feeling,* and similar terms or phrases have frequently been used in ESL and second language classroom research. Aside from the problem of inconsistency in defining and operationalizing such categories (Chaudron, 1986) and the problem that checklists obscure the contingent nature of interaction (Mehan, 1981), such terms, along with their operational definitions, may or may not have validity for the teachers and students whose behavior is being rated or evaluated.

Concern with the understandings participants themselves have of the situations in which they are observed has led ethnographers to emphasize *emic* analysis. As indicated above, *emic* refers to culturally based perspectives, interpretations, and categories used by members of the group under study to conceptualize and encode knowledge and to guide their own behavior. Emit terms, concepts, and categories are therefore functionally relevant to the behavior of the people studied by the ethnographer. An analysis built on emit concepts incorporates the participants' perspectives and interpretations of behavior, events, and situations and does so in the descriptive language they themselves use (see also Spradley, 1979).

It is important to recognize that an *emic* analysis does not merely substitute the terms used in one language or setting for the researcher's own. For example, an analysis is not emit simply if, in referring to a person whose occupation is to instruct others, it substitutes *profesora* for teacher because the setting studied is a classroom in Puerto Rico. To the contrary, what is important about the *teacher-profesora* distinction is that the two terms are part of *differing frameworks* involving what role the instructor takes in relation to her students, what she expects of them and they of her in terms of mutual obligations and behavior, larger societal expectations of instructors' responsibilities, and so on. These differences must become part of the analysis.

Ethnographic analysis is not exclusively *emic.* Rather, a carefully done *emic* analysis precedes and forms the basis for etic extensions that allow for cross-cultural or cross-setting comparisons. The fourth principle or characteristic of ethnographic research is that it is comparative (Firth, 1961). The ethnographer first seeks to build a theory of the setting under study, then to extrapolate or generalize from that setting or situation to others studied in a similar way. The comparison must be built on careful *emic* work, and it must be recognized that direct comparison of the details of two or more settings is usually not possible. Comparison is possible at a more abstract level, however.

For instance, I am particularly interested in developing culturally appropriate classroom strategies as a "bridge" for bilingual, minority, and Third World students whose cultural and/or linguistic background differs from that of the school. One successful example has been the Kamehameha Early Education Program (KEEP), where, in experimental classrooms, first-grade Hawaiian children's reading scores on nationally normed tests improved dramatically after the introduction of reading lessons based on "talk-story" speech events in the Hawaiian community. A key characteristic of talk story is co-narration, the joint presentation of personal experiences, information, and interpretations of events by two or more storytellers. KEEP researchers structured reading lessons around talk-story formats to create what Boggs (1985) called "talking story with a book" (p. 139), and they made culturally based changes in classroom organization (Au & Jordan, 1981; Boggs, 1985; see also Watson, 1975; Watson-Gegeo & Boggs, 1977).

The KEEP experience inspired my current work with rural communities in the Solomon Islands, where children enter English immersion classrooms beginning in kindergarten and where their failure rates are very high (Watson-Gegeo & Gegeo, 1988). As an ethnographer, my expectation had not been that I would find an exact equivalent to talk story (part of a Hawaiian emit framework) in the Solomons, but rather that I might discover a corresponding speech event that, like talk story, could be adapted for classroom use.

It now appears that a Solomon Islands speech event called "shaping the mind" may be the right candidate. As a speech event, shaping the mind involves the intensive teaching of language, proper behavior, forms of reasoning, and cultural knowledge in special sesssions characterized by a serious tone, a formal register of speech, and tightly argued discussion. Because an important focus of shaping-the-mind activities is the direct teaching of linguistic skills (especially vocabulary and metalinguistics awareness [Watson-Gegeo, 1987]), it could prove highly valuable if adapted for use in English immersion classrooms. Shaping the mind is based on an *emic* teaching framework different from both Hawaiian talk story and from American/Western models of education (Watson-Gegeo, 1986; Watson-Gegeo & Gegeo, 1988).

As contrasting speech events based on differing cultural assumptions, Hawaiian talk story and Solomon Islands shaping the mind are emit concepts, not etic or directly comparable. However, at a more abstract level, we can talk about culturally appropriate strategies for teaching and can compare from one ethnographic study to another what such strategies are, how they relate to other aspects of the cultures in which they are found (e.g., values, local theories of learning, social structure, institutions), how they may be adapted to classroom pedagogy, and to what extent they are effective in terms of learners' improved performance.

The examples I have used to illustrate the principles of ethnographic research all assume a model of language learning through interaction. The ethnographic perspective on language learning is one of language socialization rather than one of language acquisition (Cook-Gumperz, Corsaro, & Streeck, 1986; Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986; Watson-Gegeo, in press). The substitution of socialization for acquisition places language learning within the more comprehensive domain of socialization, the lifelong process through which individuals are initiated into cultural meanings and learn to perform the skills, tasks, roles, and identities expected by whatever society or societies they may live in (Wuthnow, Hunter, Bergesen, & Kurzweil, 1984, p. 40).

The language socialization perspective implies that language is learned through social interaction. It also implies that language is a primary vehicle of socialization: When we learn a second language, we are learning more than a structure for communication; we are also learning (for example) social and cultural norms, procedures for interpretation, and forms of reasoning. The ethnographic study of language socialization therefore focuses the researcher's attention not only on the teaching and learning or acquiring of language skills, but also on the context of that learning and on what else (values, attitudes, frameworks for interpretation) is learned and taught at the same time as language structure.

Product and Process in Ethnography

As *product*, ethnography is a detailed description and analysis of a social setting and the interaction that goes on within it. A social setting might be a classroom, institution, neighborhood, or community, and settings may be defined at various levels of social inclusion. A completed ethnography offers a grounded theory

(Glaser & Strauss, 1967) of the setting and its culture. By *grounded,* we mean theory based in and derived from data and arrived at through a systematic process of induction. Grounded theory may be either substantive (focused on an empirical topic, such as teacher-student interaction in second language classrooms) or formal (focused on a conceptual topic, such as a model for second language acquisition) (Diesing, 1971, p. 31; Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 32).

As *method,* ethnography includes the techniques of observation, participant-observation (observing while interacting with those under study), informal and formal interviewing of the participants observed in situations, audio- or videotaping of interactions for close analysis, collection of relevant or available documents and other materials from the setting, and other techniques as required to answer research questions posed by a given study. Historically, ethnographers have been methodologically very eclectic, using both quantitative and qualitative research methods where appropriate (Pelto & Pelto, 1970). Over the past 15 years, discourse analysis (of various types) has become a central approach to data analysis in ethnographic work (e.g., Boggs, 1985; Cazden, John, & Hymes, 1972; Heath, 1983; Mehan, 1979; Trueba, Guthrie, & Au, 1981).

One of the hallmarks of ethnographic method is intensive, detailed observation of a setting over a long period of time. Ideally, an ethnographer observing a university-level ESL class, for example, would observe all class meetings for the entire semester, conduct interviews with a sample of the students and the teacher, and observe the students in other settings, if possible. If the ethnographer is studying second language acquisition in community settings, he or she will systematically sample locations, participants, events, times, and types of interactions in the setting, conducting observations and interviews over the course of several months or years. Choices of settings, situations, and sample size for observation and interviewing depend on the research questions being asked and the aims of the study.

Ethnographers do not use quantified, fixed-category checklist observational schemes in their observations because such schemes cannot capture the complexity of classroom interaction and cannot address the relationship between verbal and nonverbal behavior or between behavior and context (Mehan, 1981, p. 39). Furthermore, most existing coding schemes involve short, recurrent periods of observation-for example, a coding sheet is marked once every 3 seconds for 2 minutes at intervals of 10 minutes over an hour of observation time in a classroom. Such arbitrary units of observational time fail to capture whole interactions, which may be played out over several minutes or even longer, and therefore further obscure the functional use of language and the complexity of interaction (Gleason, in press).

A long-term ethnographic project of a year or more usually involves three stages of work: comprehensive, topic oriented, and hypothesis oriented (to borrow Hymes's [1982] terms). In the comprehensive stage, the ethnographer studies all theoretically salient aspects of a setting, conducting a broad spectrum of observations, with mapping of the site, census taking, and interviewing. For example, in a bilingual classroom setting, the ethnographer observes classroom activities throughout the school day and also conducts observations in various microcontexts at the school, such as in the teachers' room, on the playground, and during lunch in the cafeteria (e.g., see Guthrie, 1985). All such locations may provide insights into children's bilingual skills; their attitudes toward and use of their linguistic repertoire; and other information on students, teachers, and parent involvement at the school. Triangulation—the putting together of information from different data sources and/or data collected through different research methods, such as participant-observation, interviewing, network mapping, and surveys (Fielding & Fielding, 1986) —is an important strategy for arriving at valid (or "dependable") findings in ethnographic work (Diesing, 1971).

During the topic-oriented stage, the ethnographer concentrates on clarifying and usually narrowing the study's main topic of interest through focused observations, interviewing, and analysis of the data already collected. The ethnographer concentrates on carefully describing interactions and events as they occur in context, with the aim of generating focused research questions and/or hypotheses. Data collected so far in the form of observation-based field notes are coded into categories salient to interaction in the setting and relevant to the evolving research questions. Tape recordings or videotapes are transcribed and annotated with the aid of observational notes, and where interaction is the focus of study, preliminary discourse analyses will be carried out on the transcripts.

The hypothesis-oriented stage involves the testing of hypotheses and answering of research questions through further focused observations, in-depth (often structured) interviews, continued discourse analysis, and other forms of systematic analysis (see Werner & Schoepfle, 1987). Some of the hypotheses considered during this stage may be generated from the literature, others from observation, interviews, or analysis. This stage may very well involve quantification in the form of frequency counts, tests of significance, or multivariate analyses of patterns and themes (such as in discourse data; see also Jacob, 1982).

Among Mehan's (1979) proposed set of methodological guidelines for ethnographic research is a crucial one often omitted in studies called ethnographic in ESL and education: *comprehensive data treatment.* By this, Mehan means that the analysis must be carried out on all the materials or data collected. One of the greatest weaknesses in many published studies is their reliance on a few anecdotes used to support the researcher's theoretical point of view or conclusions, but chosen by criteria usually not clarified for the reader (e.g., Preston, 1981, seems to equate anecdotal evidence with ethnography). When illustrative examples are presented in an ethnographic report, they should be the result of a systematic selection of representative examples, in which both variation and central tendency or typicality in the data are reflected. Anything less caricatures rather than characterizes what the ethnographer has observed and recorded. (See also Werner & Schoepfle's [1987] discussion of 28 minimum standards for ethnographic research design and analysis.)

USES OF ETHNOGRAPHY IN ESL

So why should we study second language learning and teaching ethnographically? Ethnography is an important alternative to other forms of educational research because it allows us to address very basic questions of theory and practice.

One such basic question has to do with what is going on from moment to moment in settings where second languages are taught and learned. Second language teaching occurs in a wide spectrum of institutional contexts, including EFL classrooms in Japan, bilingual classrooms in New Mexico, and ESL pullout programs for Southeast Asian refugees in the Midwest. Second language *learning* occurs in an even wider spectrum of contexts, including family and community settings. Yet so far we have few careful studies characterizing these contexts and the teaching-learning interactions taking place within them (Breen, 1985).

Ethnographic methods offer us an approach for systematically documenting teaching-learning interactions in rich, contextualized detail with the aim of developing grounded theory (i.e., theory generated from data). This is an alternative to "top-down" research approaches based on preexisting models that may obscure important characteristics of previously unstudied settings (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The long-term nature of ethnographic research allows for an examination of how teaching and other interfactional patterns develop and change over time in a given setting. This dynamic perspective is an important corrective to the static nature of research involving single-time observations or testing.

Ethnographic research reminds us of the important role of culture in second language teaching and learning and gives us a way of addressing this issue. With regard to culture and teaching, for example, we can use ethnography to study the role of the classroom teacher in relation to how that role is defined and enacted in various societies. In Japan, teaching is a prestigious and respected role, the teacher-student relationship is one of polite distance, and the burden of responsibility for learning is placed on the student rather than on the teacher (White, 1987). In the United States, teachers do not enjoy such prestige or respect, and they are increasingly expected to meet more and more of their students' needs. Americans expect teachers to fill in as surrogate parents, and teachers are nearly always at the forefront of blame for their students' low achievement.

Such differences in societal expectations should alert us to the fact that appropriate behavior between teachers and students varies substantially from one cultural setting to another. The advice we give to ESL student teachers—such as to be friendly, caring, and sharing to their students—may be very inappropriate in some cultural settings if it is given an American definition (for example, the teacher sharing his or her personal life with students would be inappropriate in many Asian societies). Ethnographic research can document and analyze what it takes to establish good relationships between teachers and students in the context of particular cultural or school settings, so that this information is available for teacher training.

Second, with regard to culture and learning, psycholinguistic research has explored the importance of schema theory for learning. Ethnography alerts us to the fact that many schemata are culturally based and capable of study through ethnographic means (e.g., see Quinn & Holland, 1986).

Another important contribution ethnography can make to ESL and educational research has been alluded to earlier: analysis of the institutional context of schooling, together with societal pressures on teachers and students (e.g., Ogbu, 1974, 1978). Only a few studies have focused on how societal and institutional pressures affect life in second language or second dialect classrooms. Guthrie's (1985) study of bilingual education in an American Chinese community illustrated well the complex role that the school district, federal policy and support for types of bilingual programs, and factions in the local community play in the debate between maintenance and transitional bilingual programs. Cleghorn and Genesee (1984) clearly illustrated the links between educational and societal factors affecting program objectives and outcomes in their analysis of Cleghorn's ethnographic study of a French immersion program in Montreal.

Similarly, ethnographic methods can be used to study institutional and societal pressures that affect educational innovations in ways unanticipated by those who have developed them. Two examples are the pedagogical use of computers in classrooms and the process for teaching writing. Cazden et al.'s (1987) study, mentioned earlier, showed that in two sixth-grade classrooms studied over a 2-year period, the teachers, instead of using microcomputers to change the way writing was taught, fitted the microcomputers into the existing classroom organization. The result was that the microcomputers were used as electronic typewriters to type up final copies, rather than for editing and revising drafts.

The classroom and institutional constraints that created this situation also affected the introduction of the process approach to writing in these classrooms. Because teachers were under institutional pressures to have their students (who were perceived as low achievers) pass the year-end writing test, they concentrated on students' mechanical errors in written drafts. Writing conferences (which were meant to help children focus on ideas and develop an awareness of standards for good writing; see Calkins, 1979) became correction-oriented interactions (Ulichny & Watson-Gegeo, in press; see also Zamel, 1985).

The holistic approach of ethnographic research allows us to integrate research on reading with research on writing and to address both as the acquisition of literacy. Heath's (1983) extensive ethnography on uses of reading and writing in black and white working-class children's homes and communities in the Carolinas has shown the importance of understanding the learner's prior experiences with language and literacy. Such an understanding is critical to effective teaching of standard English in the classroom (see also Spolsky, 1982). Her work has important implications not only for teaching nonstandard speakers, but also for teaching English to immigrants and refugees. Ethnographic studies in other societies could greatly assist ESL teachers working abroad to anticipate their students' needs in relation to their prior literacy experiences and ways of thinking and to develop appropriate learning materials for them. Ethnographic studies can also help teachers to understand the expectations that their students bring with them for what classroom life entails and for appropriate styles of interaction.

Ethnography can directly serve practice in two major ways, in addition to the application of research results to practice. First, ethnographic techniques of observation and interviewing can be applied to teacher supervision and feedback, whether in initial teacher training or in staff development. Because ethnographic observations take a holistic perspective on behavior in settings and because the ethnographer seeks to achieve an insider's understanding of interactions, ethnographic techniques can be used to provide helpful feedback to teachers about what is going on in the classroom, including interactions that are outside teacher notice or teacher behaviors outside the teacher's conscious awareness. Hymes (1981) refers to this kind of feedback to teachers as "ethnographic monitoring" of the classroom. Carrasco (1981), mentioned above, used his findings in just this way, with important outcomes for both the students and teacher involved. Other classroom ethnographers have emphasized the value of collaborative teacher-researcher relations for direct, positive changes in the quality of classroom teaching and learning (e.g., Florio & Walsh, 1981; Grimmett & Granger, 1983).

Second, ethnography can help teachers make a difference in their own classrooms. Teachers can learn ethnographic research methods either formally, by taking a course on ethnography, or informally, through a collaborative, apprentice-like relationship with an experienced ethnographer. By increasing their observational skills, teachers can gain new awareness of classroom organization, teaching and learning strategies, and interfactional patterns in their own classrooms. These observations then become a basis for teachers to reflect on their own practice and to experiment with alternative teaching and classroom management techniques. The combination of intensive ethnographic research in classrooms and of teachers' ethnographic observations of their own practice can potentially produce the multilevel understanding of good teaching called for by Richards (1987).

Moreover, teachers can involve their students in doing ethnographic work in their own communities and then use the materials the students develop through observations and interviews as a basis for learning writing skills (Heath, 1983).

CONCLUSION

My aim in this article has been to show that true ethnographic work is systematic, detailed, and rigorous, rather than anecdotal or impressionistic. The promise of ethnography for ESL research, teacher training, and classroom practices lies in its emphasis on holistic, richly detailed descriptions and analyses of teacher-learner interactions and the multilevel contexts in which these interactions occur. It is important that research called ethnography actually be ethnographic—which means that it be conducted with the same standards of systematicity and rigor expected of quality ethnographic research in ESL's sister social science disciplines.

■

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Functional Load and the Teaching of Pronunciation

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The concept of functional load has been used by various writers in various linguistic fields and has consequently received differing definitions and methods of calculation. It has not, however, been applied to the teaching of pronunciation. This article examines several aspects of functional load in English that may be relevant for assessing the relative importance of segmental features of learners' speech. Implications for the use of pronunciation drill books are discussed.

In the English language teaching (ELT) literature, one often comes across statements such as "it is important that students learn to pronounce the distinction between the sounds *x* and *y*." However, one rarely finds any detailed discussion of why the particular phonemic contrast is considered important, nor is any measure usually given of how important this contrast is in comparison with other contrasts. Indeed, the impression is often conveyed that all phonemic contrasts are equally important; if that were the case, then no particular phonemic contrast could be said to be any more important than any other.

This dilemma is faced by the ELT teacher, who must often decide which features of language, on the one hand, are important and therefore merit precious class time and which, on the other hand, are relatively unimportant and may be overlooked until a more advanced stage. This situation is approached by G. Brown (1974): "Suppose you are teaching English to foreign students, on a tight schedule, with no special time for pronunciation teaching. Which of the following problems would you tackle first? Discrimination of /θ/ and /ð/, . . . [etc.]" (p. 53). Her answer is as follows:

> When time is short it is probably not worthwhile spending time on teaching /θ/ and /ð/ if the students find them difficult, but be sure that the sounds substituted by the students are /f/ and /v/ sounds which are

> acoustically similar to /θ/ and /ð/ and bear a low functional load in English (i.e. don't distinguish many words), and not /s/ and /z/, which are acoustically very different from /θ/ and /ð/ and bear a much higher functional load. (p. 54)

DEFINITIONS OF FUNCTIONAL LOAD

Many writers have appealed to the notion of functional load, and for various purposes. However, the precise definition given to the concept has varied from writer to writer (Meyerstein, 1970). King (1967a) notes:

> In its simplest expression, functional load is a measure of the number of minimal pairs which can be found for a given opposition. More generally, in phonology, it is a measure of the work which two phonemes (or a distinctive feature) do in keeping utterances apart—in other words, a gauge of the frequency with which two phonemes contrast in all possible environments. (p. 631)

It is not at all clear how much thought has been given to the problem of definition by writers making appeal to the notion. For instance, we could disagree with G. Brown (1974) above, in that phonemes such as /f/ and /v/ do not have functional loads in isolation; it is only the contrasts between pairs of phonemes that can carry functional loads.

King (1967b) proposes a formula for the calculation of functional load that

> is the product of two factors: the first measures the global text frequencies of the two phonemes in the opposition; the second measures the degree to which the two phonemes contrast in all possible environments, where environment means, roughly speaking, one phoneme to the left and right. (p. 7)

As Vachek (1969, p. 65) points out, although environment is of obvious importance, King's definition of this as "one phoneme to the left and right" should have been stated in finer terms.

The main difference between King's (1967b) formulation and those of other writers is that it is based on conditional probabilities instead of being an information theory approach. Wang (1967; see also Wang & Thatcher, 1962) compares four information theory measures of functional load, including those of Greenberg (1959) and Hockett (1955; see also Hockett, 1966), by considering the extent to which they fulfill five conditions: (a) that we should be able to calculate the functional load of any set of phonemes in a language, (b) that the functional load of a set containing only one phoneme is zero, (c) that the phonemes of a set whose functional load is zero are in complementary distribution, (d) that the functional load of the union of two nonoverlapping sets is greater than or equal to the sum of their individual functional loads, and (e) that the functional load of a set is equal to the uncertainty of the language if the set corresponds to the entire phonemic system.

The measures reviewed fulfill these criteria to varying degrees. However,

> while the measures examined . . . clarify certain issues and suggest avenues for further research, the problem has not been solved. More important than the development of a measure that is internally consistent and which conforms to certain linguistic requirements is the task of providing empirical justification for the measure. (Wang, 1987, p. 50)

Since writers define the term in differing and often vague terms and calculate its value differently, it is perhaps more fruitful to examine the uses to which the concept has been applied.

APPLICATIONS OF THE CONCEPT OF FUNCTIONAL LOAD

Writers have for long acknowledged the importance of a statistical approach to linguistic analysis. It has been proposed as a component of a full descriptive analysis of the sound system of a language, alongside descriptions of segmental (vowel and consonant) and suprasegmental features, and so on.

> It should hardly be necessary to dwell on the synchronic implications of functional load. A tabulation of all the phonologic contrasts in a system, showing the relative functional load carried by each, would constitute a valuable addition to any description of a phonologic system. (Hockett, 1955, p. 218)

The use of the concept of functional load has also been investigated from the diachronic viewpoint, that is, as a possible explanation for historical sound changes. In its baldest form, the hypothesis is as follows:

> Given the assumption that communication must be maintained, and given the fact that sounds change, it simply seems indisputably true that sounds should change in a way which does the least damage to communication; and this implies that oppositions with low functional loads should be destroyed in preference to those which carry a high functional load. (King, 1987a, p. 834)

The use of functional load, and frequency statistics in general, for automatic speech synthesis and recognition systems has been discussed by Fry (1947) and Denes (1963). They have shown (Fry& Denes, 1957, 1958) that automatic speech recognition is more successful when a limited amount of information on language statistics is made available to the system.

The notion of functional load may also be usefully employed in the field of spelling reform. Wells (1986), noting the small number of words distinguished by /ʊ, uː/ or /ʃ, ʒ/, concludes that a reformed spelling system that conflates these pairs of phonemes would suffer little: “When functional load is low, then a contrast can be ignored, whereas when functional load is rather high, then presumably it ought to be reflected in the spelling” (p. 8).

In my opinion, it has been an oversight that the concept of functional load has not been applied to the area of language teaching. In this article, I therefore wish to explore certain considerations that have a bearing on the usefulness of the concept to the teaching of pronunciation. This discussion owes much to the ideas of Avram (1964).

FUNCTIONAL LOAD AND PRONUNCIATION TEACHING

For illustration, I shall deal in particular with the following pairs of Received Pronunciation (RP) phonemes, which are often conflated by learners: /iː, ɪ; ɪə, eə; e, æ; ɔː, ɔɪ; uː, ʊ; p, b; ð, d; n, ŋ; tʃ, dʒ/. That is, for example, if a hypothetical learner conflates all these contrasts, which ones should a teacher with limited time concentrate on remedying?

The use of RP as the reference accent here, as opposed to General American (GA), with which the reader may be more familiar, does not in fact pose a problem but rather brings with it certain benefits. RP is widely used, rightly or wrongly, throughout the world as a pronunciation model for foreign learners. In its mainstream form, RP has 20 vowel phonemes, which is a relatively large number compared with other accents of English. As is shown below, the fact that certain RP contrasts are not found in other accents (e.g., *balm*. and *bomb* are distinct for RP speakers, but are homophones in GA) may be taken as an indication of lack of importance of that RP contrast. The calculations given below for RP may therefore be replicated for CA by taking as the starting point a statement of the text frequencies of GA phonemes (e.g., Roberts, 1965). From the point of view of consonants, the use of RP as the reference here creates no difficulties, since the English consonant system is the same across virtually all accents.

Cumulative Frequency

Table 1 gives the cumulative frequencies for these pairs of RP phonemes based on the figures given by Denes (1963). Thus, for example, the cumulative frequency for the pair /e, æ/ (11.05%) is calculated by adding the individual frequencies of 7.16% for /e/ and 3.89% for /æ/. On the basis of these calculations, we may then propose that a pair with a high cumulative frequency (e.g., /e, æ/, 11.05%) is of greater importance than one with a low cumulative frequency (e.g., /ɪə, eə/, 1.83%). That is, over 1 in every 10 vowels is either /e/ or /æ/, whereas under 1 in every 50 vowels is either /ɪə/ or /eə/. The risks, as far as loss of intelligibility are concerned, of conflating /e, æ/ may thus be considered greater than those of conflating /ɪə, eə/.

Probability of Occurrence

However, these cumulative frequencies disguise the fact that one member of a conflated pair may occur much more frequently than the other (see Table 1). For example, the pair /iː, ɪ/ has a high cumulative frequency (25.57%); one in four of all vowels in connected speech is either /iː/ or /ɪ/. Given that a learner has produced a vowel of the [i] type, it is, however, almost five times as likely that this corresponds to /ɪ/ than to /iː/. The basic figures are 21.02% for /ɪ/ and 4.55% for /iː/. The probability of occurrence of a member of a pair is calculated by dividing its individual frequency by the cumulative frequency for the pair. For example: prob /ɪ/ = freq /ɪ/ ÷ (freq /ɪ/ + freq /iː/) = 21.02 ÷ 25.57 = .82.

The closer the probability of occurrence of each member is to .50, the greater is the potential confusion to be caused by the conflation of the pair. In this way, we may distinguish four extremes: (a) pairs with a high cumulative frequency and relatively equal probability, for example, /ð, d/; (b) pairs with a high cumulative frequency but unequal probability, for example, /iː, ɪ/, /n, ŋ/; (c) pairs with a low cumulative frequency but relatively equal probability, for example, /ɪə, eə/, /tʃ, dʒ/; and (d) pairs with a low cumulative frequency and unequal probability, for example, /ɔː, ɔɪ/. It seems reasonable to rank order them as above in decreasing order of importance for learners and teachers.

Occurrence and Stigmatization in Native Accents

Although RP is used as the reference accent in this article, certain of the learners' conflation are to be found in other native accents

TABLE 1
Values of Certain Factors of Functional Load for Selected RF Phonemes

Phoneme	Frequency (in %)		Probability of less frequent member	No. of minimal pairs[b]	Occurrence in native accents
	Individual	Cumulative[a]			
/iː/	4.55	25.57	.18	+	−
/ɪ/	21.02				
/ɪə/	0.73	1.83	.40	−	+
/eə/	1.10				
/e/	7.16	11.05	.35	+	−
/æ/	3.89				
/ɔː/	3.05	3.28	.07	−	−
/ɔɪ/	0.23				
/uː/	3.62	5.57	.35	−	+
/ʊ/	1.95				
/p/	2.92	6.34	.46	+ +	−
/b/	3.42				
/ð/	4.96	11.81	.42	− −	+
/d/	6.85				
/n/	11.66	13.72	.15	−	−
/ŋ/	2.06				
/tʃ/	0.61	1.46	.42	− −	−
/dʒ/	0.85				

[a] Cumulative frequencies are based on the figures given by Denes (1963).

[b] + = more than 20 minimal pairs can be found; − = fewer than 20 pairs can be found. For consonants, minimal pairs were calculated separately for word-initial and word-final positions, except for /ŋ/, which does not occur initially in English words.

(see Table 1). The conflation of /uː, ʊ/ is widespread in Scotland; /ɪə, eə/ conflation is an increasingly common phenomenon in New Zealand, the West Indies, and East Anglia; and /ð, d/ conflation is found, if only sporadically, in the Republic of Ireland, although it is heavily stigmatized. We may conclude that listeners are accustomed to making the perceptual adjustment necessary for intelligibility of these conflation, but not for the others.

Acoustic Similarity

As G. Brown (1974), quoted above, notes, acoustic similarity between sounds is a relevant factor. That is, /θ, f/ and /ð, v/ share more acoustic features than do /θ, s/ and /ð, z/. For example, /θ, f/ may be difficult to distinguish in bad transmission conditions, as on a telephone line; listeners are therefore accustomed to recognizing the intended sound from context. On the other hand, /θ, s/ are more distinct, even on noisy telephone lines; listeners are therefore unaccustomed to realizing that a misinterpretation or conflation may have taken place. Comparable acoustic similarity is found between the nasal consonants /m, n, ŋ/.

It is perhaps unjustified to expect the language teacher to possess, or to have access to, sufficient knowledge of acoustics for this criterion to be of great practical importance.

Structural Distribution of Phonemes

It is a rule of English syllable structure that /ŋ/ only occurs in syllables containing short vowel phonemes (/ɪ, æ, ʌ, ɒ/ as in *sing, sang, sung, song*). On the other hand, /n/ occurs in syllables with either long or short vowel phonemes (e.g., *seen, sin, sign, sun*). Thus, learners who conflate /n, ŋ/ will not be open to misunderstanding in all phonological contexts; their conflation may only lead to confusion when it occurs after a short vowel phoneme, since any occurrence after a long vowel must be /n/, not /ŋ/.

In a similar vein, it is a feature of English that stressed word-final syllables do not contain short vowel phonemes unless they also contain a final consonant. Thus /'tip/ is permissible *(tip),* but not /'tɪ/. Long vowel phonemes are not subject to this constraint (e.g., /'tiː/, *tea*). Thus, any vowel in a stressed word-final syllable without a final consonant cannot be a short vowel phoneme.

Syllable structure constraints therefore limit the potential confusion of conflated pairs (/n, ŋ/, /iː, ɪ/) in particular environments.

Lexical sets

We must not lose sight of the fact that phonemes combine to create the actual words of the English lexicon. Some phonemes are not contained in many words. For example, Wells (1982, p. 133) notes that the set of lexical items containing the phoneme /ʊ/ as the stressed vowel is relatively small—around 40 words. The frequency of this phoneme is a mere 1.95% and would be even lower were it not for the fact that this lexical set includes a number of words of very frequent occurrence, such as *put, good, look, would.*

Number of Minimal Pairs

The simplest expression of the functional load of a phonemic contrast is the number of minimal pairs that this contrast serves to distinguish. For some English phonemic contrasts, there are plenty of minimal pairs; for others, there are relatively few. For example, for /uː, ʊ/, the only minimal pairs involving common modern words are *pool/pull, fool/full, who'd/hood, suit/soot* (if the former is pronounced /suːt/).

Misunderstanding is therefore very unlikely to occur for these contrasts, and on this basis, we may consider them to be relatively unimportant. Table 1 shows the relative importance of all the vowel and consonant conflation introduced earlier, in terms of the number of minimal pairs exemplifying the contrasts. The criterion has been set, somewhat arbitrarily, at 20 minimal pairs. For certain contrasts (e.g., /n, ŋ/), the number of minimal pairs is around the 20 mark. Fewer than 20 pairs can be found for those contrasts marked with a minus sign (–), whereas over 20 pairs can be found for those marked with a plus sign (+). Minimal pairs for consonants in word-initial position and in word-final position have been calculated separately.

Number of Minimal Pairs Belonging to the Same Part of Speech

Although for certain contrasts there are several minimal pairs, sometimes these minimal pairs involve few words from the same part of speech. These pairs are therefore unlikely to cause confusion in the context of a sentence. For example, there are several minimal pairs for initial /ð, d/. However, it is a phenomenon of English that words beginning with /ð/ are grammatical function words (articles, pronouns, demonstratives, connective, such as *the, those, they, then, though).* They are thus unlikely to be confused in context with the corresponding /d/ words, which are virtually all lexical content words (nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, such as *doze, day, den, dough).*

Consideration also ought to be given to the fact that the frequency of occurrence of members of the closed set of grammatical words is higher than that for lexical words.

Number of Inflections of Minimal Pairs

One problem in counting the number of minimal pairs relying on particular phonemic contrasts is the use that English makes of inflections, such as the suffixes for plural, past tense, and *-ing* forms. Thus, for example, the words *fear/fare* constitute a minimal pair, but equally, so do *fears/fares, feared/fared,* and *fearing/faring.* The same problem applies to *spear/spare, steer/stare,* and so on. Whether one speaks with nonrhotic RP (without syllable-final /r/, as in /fɪə, fɪəz, fɪəd, fɪərɪŋ/) or rhotic GA (with syllable-final /r/ in all four words), the principle is the same. It is a methodological consideration to calculate minimal pairs either in terms of lexemes (thus *fear, fears, feared,* and *fearing* count as one) or in terms of individual items (thus four). The former seems the better procedure.

Frequency of Members of Minimal Pairs

Minimal pairs for the English contrast /uː, ʊ/ are scarce. A few examples exist, in addition to those given in the section on the number of minimal pairs, but in these, one member is of such infrequent occurrence that the minimal pair can hardly be said to have any importance. Thus, whereas the /ʊ/ words *would, could, should, look* may be considered frequent, the corresponding /uː/ words *wooed, cooed, shoed/shooed, Luke* are so infrequent as to be considered almost contrived. As Rischel (1962) points out, "the functional load of a contrast in the text depends on the existence of minimal pairs of words that are *both* frequent" (pp. 18-19).

Number of Common Contexts in Which Members of Minimal Pairs Occur

It is also worthwhile to consider whether the members of minimal pairs belong to the same semantic field or not, that is, whether contexts can be easily supplied in which both members of a minimal pair are plausible alternatives, both grammatically and semantically. Such contexts are easily supplied for English pairs such as *fate/faith, trek/track, sherry/cherry, shin/chin, cheer/jeer.* However, this is not possible for the majority of minimal pairs in English.

Phonetic Similarity

It is theoretically possible to calculate the functional loads of all contrastive permutations of the phonemes of RP English: 276 permutations for the consonants and 190 for the vowels.[1] However, the vast majority of these calculated functional loads will be of no value for our present purpose. Most consonant contrasts are never conflated by learners (e.g., /p, ʒ/), and this is also the case with vowels (e.g., /iː, ɔː/). The functional loads of contrasts such as /p, ʒ; iː, ɔː/, although calculable, are of no use to us. What is required instead is a measure of the functional loads of only those contrasts typically conflated by learners.

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[1] The 24 consonant phonemes of RP English are multiplied by 23, since a consonant cannot contrast with itself. This figure is divided by 2 because any contrast, for example, /p/ versus /b/, is the same as its reverse, /b/ versus /p/. Thus, 24 x 23 ÷ 2 == 276. For the 20 vowel phonemes of RP English, the calculation is 20 X 19 ÷ 2 = 190.

The pairs used for illustration in this article represent conflation commonly made by English language learners and typically practiced in pronunciation drill books. These pairs share phonetic similarity; that is, they are articulated in similar ways. This use of the notion of phonetic similarity may be compared with its use in phoneme theory; two sounds are unlikely to be allophones of the same phoneme unless they share phonetic similarity (although phonetic similarity alone is not sufficient to prove that two sounds belong to the same phoneme; distributional criteria also need to be fulfilled).

For example, the words *push* and *pull* may seem like an important pair; they constitute a minimal pair, and one can easily think of circumstances in which they may both plausibly occur. However, the distinguishing sounds /ʃ/ and /l/ are articulated as a voiceless palato-alveolar fricative and a voiced alveolar lateral-approximant, respectively. That is, they have virtually no articulatory and acoustic/auditory features in common. A language teacher would not expect any learner to confuse these two sounds and would not need to have students practice discrimination drills between them. The functional load of this contrast, although calculable, would therefore be of no value in pronunciation teaching.

DISCUSSION

Clearly, more advanced analysis than a counting of the number of minimal pairs is involved in the calculation of functional load. Avram (1964) summarizes this point succinctly:

> If we suppose that one opposition is illustrated by ten minimal pairs and another by twenty, it does not necessarily mean that the second opposition is twice as important as the first. Starting from minimal pairs, the successive application of certain correctives is essential if we wish to establish the actual value of an opposition more clearly. (p. 42)

We have examined various factors that may with justification be thought to contribute to functional load and that may help us to place phonemic contrasts along a continuum of importance. At one extreme are contrasts such as /e, æ/, which are very important, since both phonemes occur frequently, are distinct in all native accents of English, and give rise to numerous minimal pairs. At the other extreme are unimportant contrasts such as /uː, ʊ/, which are both infrequent phonemes, are conflated by many Scottish speakers, and produce few minimal pairs. The point is that both these contrasts are contained in pronunciation drill books and are no doubt practiced with equal emphasis by language teachers, whereas far greater weight ought to be given to the former, since it is a much greater potential barrier to intelligibility.

The need to look beyond mere minimal pairs in an assessment of the importance of phonemic contrasts is well illustrated by a personal experience (A. Brown, 1986). I once went on a camping holiday with three Singaporean friends, who often made reference to my [pɛʔ]. In the circumstances, it was unclear whether they were referring to my *bag, back, pack (*= rucksack) or (tent- or clothes-) *peg,* and I had to ask continually for clarification. These four words contain only two minimal pairs *(bag/back* and *back/pack);* a far better measure of the breakdown in communication is afforded by the high functional loads of the contrasts /p, b; e, æ; k, g/, which were all conflated.

Of all the issues and questions raised above, perhaps the most difficult to find a satisfactory solution to is that of the relative weighting of the 12 factors. Cumulative frequency and the abundance of minimal pairs would seem to be the most important (see King's [1967b] formula for functional load quoted above), with occurrence in native accents and probability of less importance. On the basis of the above observations, we may propose that the relative importance of the phonemic RP contrasts used for illustration in this article can be ranked as follows, most important first: /p, b; e, æ; iː, ɪ; ð, d; n, ŋ; tʃ, dʒ; uː, ʊ; ɪə, eə; ɔː, ɔɪ/.

These arguments may be applied to any pair of phonemes. Table 2 gives the rank ordering for several pairs of vowels and consonants commonly conflated by foreign learners (and therefore commonly included in RP-oriented pronunciation drill books). The table takes the form of two 10-point scales, one for vowels and one for consonants, where 10 represents maximal importance and 1 minimal importance.

The English language teacher may therefore carry out a three-part procedure. First, the teacher must determine which particular phonemic conflation are made by the particular group of students being taught. Such conflation are usually quite evident to the teacher and may be easily tested by minimal-pair exercises. Second, the teacher can use Table 2 to establish the relative importance of

TABLE 2

Rank Ordering of RP Phoneme Pairs Commonly Conflated by Learners

	Vowels		Consonants
10	/e, æ/ /æ, ʌ/ /æ, ɒ/ /ʌ, ɒ/ /ɔː, əʊ/	10	/p, b/ /p, f/ /m, n/ /n, l/ /l, r/
9	/e, ɪ/ /e, eɪ/ /ɑː, aɪ/ /ɜː, əʊ/	9	/f, h/ /t, d/ /k, g/
8	/iː, ɪ/	8	/w, v/ /s, z/
7	—	7	/b, v/ /f, v/ /ð, z/ /s, ʃ/
6	/ɔː, ɜː/ /ɒ, əʊ/	6	/v, ð/ /s, ʒ/
5	/ɑː, ʌ/ /ɔː, ɒ/ /ɜː, ʌ/	5	/θ, ð/ /θ, s/ /ð, d/ /z, dʒ/ /n, ŋ/
4	/e, eə/ /æ, ɑː/ /ɑː, ɒ/ /ɔː, ʊ/ /ɜː, e/	4	/θ, t/
3	/iː, ɪə/ /ɑː, aʊ/ /uː, ʊ/	3	/tʃ, dʒ/
2	/ɪə, eə/	2	/tʃ, ʃ/ /ʃ, ʒ/ /j, ʒ/
1	/ɔː, ɔɪ/ /uː, ʊə/	1	/f, θ/ /dʒ, j/

these various conflations. Third, pronunciation work should be designed to give priority to those conflations of relatively greater importance, whereas those of lesser importance may be left for later practice, if indeed there is sufficient time to cover them at all.

Once again, the use of RP as the reference accent can be seen to pose no problems for readers more familiar with GA. The /ɑː, ɒ/ conflation found in GA is seen to be relatively unimportant. Conflations involving the RP centering diphthongs /ɪə, eə, ʊə/ are similarly unimportant. The fact that these do not occur in GA, but instead are pronounced rhotically as /ɪr, er, ʊr/, respectively, confirms their lack of importance for foreign learners.

■

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A Behavioral Anchoring Analysis of Three ESL Reading Comprehension Tests

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This article reports the results of a behavioral anchoring analysis of three ESL reading comprehension tests. For each test, anchor points on a continuum of ability level were selected for analysis. Items that discriminated between adjacent anchor points were batched and analyzed in terms of their relation to the structure of the text, the reader's prior knowledge, and the cognitive processes required to answer the question. The results indicated that for each of three proficiency levels (Levels 2, 3, and 4), the higher ability students could comprehend micropropositions, whereas the lower ability students could not. The higher ability students at Levels 3 and 4 could comprehend questions whose sources of information were implicit, whereas the lower ability students at these levels could not. Higher ability students and lower ability students at all proficiency levels showed competence with linguistic structures that related parts of the text. And finally, the derivational complexity and the readability levels of the texts covaried with an increase in proficiency level.

This article reports the results of a behavioral anchoring analysis of three ESL reading comprehension tests. Behavioral anchoring, a procedure recently developed by the National Assessment of Educational Progress, describes what students at different anchor points on the ability / proficiency continuum can do that students at lower anchor points cannot do (Messick, Beaton, & Lord, 1983; National Assessment of Educational Progress, 1985). The descriptions derive from an analysis of those test items that are shown to be robust discriminators between the previously selected anchor points on the ability scale. The analysis of those test items that discriminate between what students at each point can do that students at lower levels cannot do provides the necessary information for generalizing from the test items to different classes of competence, or accomplishment. In essence, behavioral anchoring has a twofold purpose: (a) to define achievements and (b) to make test scores interpretable in terms of what students at different ability levels can and cannot do.

The study reported in this article was undertaken because there have been no previous applications of behavioral anchoring in ESL reading research. Another principal motivation was to show ESL reading researchers how to make reading test score information more usable to persons who have no interest in psychometric considerations.

METHOD

Subjects

The subjects for this research were 113 nonnative speakers of English enrolled in full-time intensive English classes at the Center for English as a Second Language (CESL) at Southern Illinois University. The subjects were chosen by a natural-assembly process: We collected data from all the students who were enrolled in three different proficiency levels at the time of testing (after 8 weeks of intensive English instruction): 28 Level 2 subjects, 28 Level 3 subjects, and 57 Level 4 subjects.

At the Center, placement of students into the four full-time proficiency levels (1, 2,3, and 4) is determined by the results of the TOEFL, which is administered to new students at the beginning of each term. Students who score 374 or lower are placed into Level 1; students who score between 375 and 429 are placed into Level 2; those who score between 430 and 409 are placed into Level 3; and those who score between 470 and 524 are placed into Level 4.

Materials

Each proficiency level has its own final reading comprehension exam (Center for English as a Second Language, 1980), which is administered at the conclusion of every 8-week term. Each exam contains 25 multiple-choice questions with a single correct response.

The Level 2 exam has five sections: (a) a 409-word passage about early groups of settlers in the United States, followed by 10 questions; (b) a section of newspaper classified advertisements for apartments, houses, and mobile homes, followed by 4 scanning questions, for example, “How much does the gorgeous one-bedroom apartment cost per month?”; (c) a 131-word passage about volcanos, followed by 4 questions; (d) a 132-word passage about color, followed by 5 questions; and (e) a 171-word passage about the differential effects of gravity upon bodies, depending on the location of those bodies on the earth, followed by 2 questions. According to McLaughlin’s (1969) SMOG formula, the readability level of this exam was estimated to be at Grade 8. Level 2 subjects used Lewis’s *Reading for Adults* (1971) as their text,

The Level 3 exam has seven sections: (a) a 431-word passage about tornadoes, followed by eight questions; (b) a 177-word passage about the behavioral patterns of plant cuttings, followed by five questions; (c) a 165-word, one-paragraph passage about the blue whale, followed by two questions; (d) a 100-word, one-paragraph passage about retarding the aging process, followed by two questions; (e) a 93-word, one-paragraph passage about the effects of television on society, followed by two questions; (f) a 125-word, two-paragraph passage about how the coyote is too wily to become endangered, followed by two questions; and (g) a 238-word passage about Hawaii’s geothermal energy, followed by four questions. The SMOG readability estimate for the Level 3 exam was Grade 10. Level 3 subjects used Zukowski/Faust’s *Between the Lines (1983)* as their text.

The Level 4 exam has two sections: (a) a 684-word passage on industrial America and the worker, followed by 15 questions, and (b) a 1,648-word passage about the theory of demand, followed by 10 questions. The SMOG readability estimate for the Level 4 exam was Grade 12. Level 4 subjects used Long’s *Reading English for Academic Purposes (1980)* as their text.

These exams can be considered criterion-referenced measures. The students’ quizzes, homework, and final exam scores form a composite score, and the criterion for passing into the next higher proficiency level is 75% The final exam score comprises 30% of the composite score.

General Procedure for Behavioral Anchoring

For the reading test at each proficiency level, we followed the general procedures for behavioral anchoring detailed in Beaton (1985). First, for each test we selected three anchor points at which items could be found that discriminated between what students at each point can do that students at lower points on the ability scale cannot do. This first step was carried out by submitting the item responses from each test to the Rasch item response theory model. This was done to generate estimates of person ability for each student in each of the three proficiency levels and to generate estimates of item difficulty for each item in each test, using the PROX method (Wright & Stone, 1979). The unit of measurement generated by the Rasch model is called a logit, which is a general mathematical unit to calibrate person ability and item difficulty.

With the Rasch model, positive logits of person ability indicate high ability; negative logits of person ability, low ability. Positive logits of item difficulty indicate high item difficulty; negative logits of item difficulty, low item difficulty. The Rasch logits, which are on an equal-interval scale, are standardized so that the average person ability over all persons and the average item difficulty over all items is zero, and the standard deviation is unity.

With this type of model, the item difficulty estimates for the items are independent of the sample of students used from the population of students for whom the test was designed and intended. With regard to the estimates of person ability, the logits of person ability are independent of the particular selection of test items used from the population of items for which calibration estimates were generated.

Logits are used by the model to determine the probability of a person having *X* estimated latent ability succeeding on an item with *Y* estimated difficulty. Person ability and item difficulty represent the positions of persons and the positions of items on the latent variable that they share. The probability of a person's success on a particular item depends on the difference between person ability and item difficult y as follows: When the person ability and the item difficulty are equally matched, the person's probability of success on an item is .5. When a person has more latent ability than the item requires, the person's probability of success on the item is greater than .5. When a person has less latent ability than the item requires, the person's probability of success is less than .5.

A person's ability in logits is his or her natural log odds for succeeding on items chosen to define the scale origin, or "zero." Likewise, an item's difficulty in logits is the natural log odds for failure on that item by persons having abilities at the scale origin. What this means in practical, nonmeasurement terms is that a person who has been estimated to have 0 logit of person ability is at the midpoint of the ability continuum. Likewise, an item whose logit of difficulty has been estimated at 0 logit lies at the midpoint of the difficulty continuum. Because logits are standardized units on an equal-interval scale, a person whose person ability has been estimated at +2 logits can be said to have twice the latent ability as a person whose person ability has been estimated at +1 Iogit. In a similar vein, an item at —1 logit is twice as easy as an item at 0 logit of difficulty.

After using the Rasch model to generate estimates of person ability and item difficulty, we chose the scale points to anchor for each proficiency-level test. For the Level 2 test, the anchor points were +4 logits (23 correct responses); +2 logits (20 correct responses); and 0 logit (12 correct responses). The same anchor points were chosen for the Level 3 test. For the Level 4 test, the anchor points were +3 logits (23 correct responses); +1 logit (18 correct responses); and —1 logit (7 correct responses).

We then selected items that discriminated between each pair of adjacent anchor points, and we used the following criteria for selecting items at each anchor point (a) Students at that anchor point had an 88% probability of correctly answering the item, and (b) students at the next lower anchor point had a 50% probability of correctly answering the item. To determine the probability values, we used the procedures suggested by Wright and Stone (1979).

An item could be selected for discriminating between only one pair of adjacent anchoring points. For the Level 2 test, 2 items met the criteria at +4 logits; 6 items at +2 logits. For the Level 3 test, 3 items met the criteria at +4 logits; 10 items at +2 logits. For the Level 4 test, 6 items met the criteria at +3 logits; 6 items at +1 logit. (No means exist to determine the items that discriminate well at the lowest anchoring point.)

Once items had been selected, the next step was to batch those items found to discriminate between pairs of adjacent anchoring points for each test. We then analyzed the items and their relationship to the text from which they were derived and wrote a one-paragraph description of what the items at each adjacent anchoring point represented.

Bases for the Generalized Descriptions of Achievement

We wanted to base our generalized descriptions of achievement at the adjacent anchoring points on a synthesis of recent research on some of the major constructs in reading and to apply that synthesis in this behavioral anchoring study. Thus, our descriptions were based on the constructs of (a) the relationship of each item to the structure of the text, (b) the reader’s prior knowledge, and (c) the nature of the cognitive processes required to answer the question. We decided to focus on these constructs because of Johnston’s (1981) advice to reading-test developers and researchers:

> We are approaching the stage of being able to classify items and item clusters with respect to the information they could yield. Thus we approach, a Position from which to select items which have a clear relationship to the structure of the text, the reader’s prior knowledge, and the nature of the requisite cognitive processes. Knowing the characteristics of these item clusters, we should be able to generate more, and more meaningful, information. (p. 69)

Although Johnston's comment concerns test construction, the choice of these three constructs as the bases for the descriptions seemed logical because they are among the most thoroughly researched constructs in reading research today and because behavioral anchoring does deal with item clusters or batches.

Text structure. We elected to use Meyer's (1975) prose analysis system as a guideline for discussing how the items related to the structure of the text. Using a "content structure," Meyer's system relates all of a text's information and shows how some textual ideas are superordinate to other ideas. There are three distinct levels of content structure. The top-level structure consists of the rhetorical relationship that binds together all the propositions in a text and gives the text texture, or overall organization. This level also contains the main ideas, the gist, the text's message, which are called macropropositions. The middle third of the total content structure contains the major supporting details that complement the major premises of the text's message; these are called micropropositions. The bottom third contains very specific, minor details.

The purpose of the rhetorical relationships, according to Meyer (1984), is to "interrelate sentences, subordinate certain propositions to other propositions, and give a text its top level structure" (p. 114). These rhetorical relationships fall into five basic groups: antecedent/consequent (cause and effect); comparison; collection; description; and response.

The following test item, from the Level 3 test, illustrates an antecedent/consequent rhetorical relationship. The reason why a house may explode during a tornado was a microproposition in a much larger description of tornadoes. The rhetorical purpose of the entire text, of which the cited paragraph was one of five, was to relate various attributes or characteristics of a tornado.

> The whirling winds of the tornado are so strong that they can lift horses, cows, and even cars off the ground. They break trees and destroy homes and other buildings. Inside the spinning winds of the funnel is an area of very low pressure. This low pressure may cause houses to explode as the funnel moves through an area. Although a tornado may affect only a small area (about one-and-a-half kilometers in width), it moves at a speed of one-hundred kilometers per hour toward the northeast.
>
> A tornado hits a house and the house explodes. According to the article, why?
>
> a) Houses are not made strong enough.
> b) The heavy rain destroys the house.
> c) The air pressure inside a tornado is much lower than the air pressure inside the house.

d) Tornadoes break down trees and lift cars, which then fly against the houses.

The reader's prior knowledge. Textually relevant background knowledge is a widely researched phenomenon in both first and second language reading research. Farr, Carey, and Tone (1986) have noted the role that background knowledge plays in the reading comprehension process:

> The emerging model of comprehension asserts that comprehension is an active process in which the reader constructs meaning from text cues, calling upon knowledge of language, text structure and conventions, content concepts, and communication. This process is essentially inferential with readers using their existing knowledge to link discrete pieces of information in the text, to ascribe appropriate meanings to words, and to fill in implied information. (p. 136)

Farr and Carey (1986) summarized the importance of prior knowledge by noting that "meaning is as dependent on the reader as it is on the text" (p. 34).

To help us ascertain the extent to which the correct responses to the discriminating items were dependent on the reader's prior knowledge, we used Schlesinger and Weiser's (1970) facet design and Pearson and Johnson's (1978) classification scheme and operational rules for determining different comprehension categories.

Schlesinger and Weiser's (1970) facet design is a test development procedure based on an a priori conceptual analysis that focuses on the explicit relationship of a reading test's items to the passages on which the items are based. Schlesinger and Weiser describe the facet design as follows:

> Facet design concentrates on the relationship of the item to the information presented in the text or elsewhere, rather than on skills and abilities presumably involved in comprehending the text. An item is conceived of as consisting of one or more statements. Each statement usually has several parts, each of which stands in the relation of agreement or contradiction with a given source of information or in some cases, the source supplies no information. The facets include form of information (explicit or implicit), source of information (the text, formal instruction, and informal experiences), content (appropriate or not appropriate) and the frequency with which information appears in the source. (p. 566)

Pearson and Johnson (1978) originated a three-part classification scheme for reading comprehension items that focuses on the relations between each question and its keyed response. They provide the following operational rules for determining the comprehension categories:

> A question-answer relation is classified as *textually explicit if* both question and answer are derivable from the text *and if* the relation between question and answer was explicitly cued by the language of the text. . . . A question-answer relation is classified as *textually implicit if* both question and answer are derivable from the text *but* there is no logical or grammatical cue tying the question to the answer *and* the answer given is plausible in light of the question. . . . A *scriptally implicit* relation (comprehension) occurs *whenever* a plausible nontextual response is given to a question derivable from the text. (pp. 163-164)

The following item, from the Level 3 test, requires that readers use their previous knowledge of a semantic network of vocabulary that includes *flesh, meat, burger,* and *sandwich* to answer the question correctly. No explicit or implicit source of information otherwise available in the text could have been used by the readers to determine the correct answer.

> No single adjective is adequate to describe the size of the blue whale, and few people realize how it compares with other mammals. By any standard, it is the largest creature known to man. For example, one of its fins would fill the cargo space of the average dump truck. Although its skull is the size and weight of a car, its brain is only the size of a carburetor. Its heart is so large that five strong men would be needed to lift it, while its skin could be used as a tarpaulin to cover half a football field. Every person in Boston could be supplied with a whale-burger sandwich from the flesh of one blue whale. If you combined the weights of 100 horses, 100 dairy cows, and 5 Indian elephants, you would have the weight of one female blue whale. Fortunately for the whale, its watery environment has protected it from the extinction suffered by the dinosaur millions of years ago.
>
> In the paragraph above, the word *flesh* refers to
>
> a) the whale's meat
> b) the whale's size
> c) the whale's strength
> d) the whale's weight

Cognitive processes. Carpenter and Just (1986), who provided the framework for our consideration of cognitive processes, discuss three issues that are particularly germane to this analysis: (a) decoding; (b) the language processes of syntax and semantics; and (c) specific linguistic structures, such as pronouns, repeated references, and connective.

According to Carpenter and Just (1986), "The first step in reading is to register the printed text and decode words, identifying the orthographic form and accessing the corresponding word in the mental lexicon" (p. 15). The second category, the language processes of syntax and semantics, refers to the effects that the structural characteristics of language, in particular, the characteristics of sentences, have on the reading process.

We were particularly interested in the derivational complexity of the texts' sentences that were related to the keyed responses of the discriminating items. The theory of derivational complexity, originally postulated by Miller and McKeon (1964), holds that the comprehensibility of a sentence is determined in large measure by its syntactic complexity, as measured by the number of transformations required to derive the surface structure of a sentence from its deep structure. In the context of this research, our rationale for considering derivational complexity was twofold. First, if a sentence's comprehensibility is affected by some measure of syntactic and semantic complexity, then the psychometric properties of an item based on that sentence will, by some measure, also depend on the syntactic and semantic complexity of the source sentence. Second, Perkins, Brutten, and Angelis (1986) have previously demonstrated the validity of the derivational complexity theory in an ESL context. We used Akmajian and Heny's (1975) model of transformational syntax to analyze the complexity of the source sentences.

Carpenter and Just (1986) report that the goal of research on specific linguistic structures such as pronouns, repeated references, and connective, which establish relations among the parts of a text, "has been to see what processes are triggered by a particular linguistic construction" (p. 18). For example, the occurrence of the definite article *the* signals old information, whereas the indefinite article *a* signals new information.

The following example, from the second paragraph of the first section of the Level 4 exam, focuses on anaphoric processing and establishing a link between an antecedent and its referent. The pronoun *it* has at least six possible antecedents, and the reader must look backward and forward to determine how this particular pronoun establishes intersentential relations and relations among the parts of the text. *It* must trigger a memory search to find a logically and linguistically acceptable antecedent in order for the reader to relate a new comment ("an enormous capital investment") with an old topic ("machinery").

> Machinery had a tendency, too, to take the place of the worker in the economy of industry. It represented an enormous capital investment; it could work twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, and it came to determine working conditions. Machinery was in part responsible, therefore, for a great deal of unemployment. It is probably true that in the end, machines made more jobs than they eliminated, but it was not

always the same people who got the new jobs, and there were usually agonizing periods of want before older men found new work. Large-scale unemployment is a product of the machine age.

In paragraph 2, line 2, what does the word *it* refer to?

a) industry
b) the worker
c) economy
d) machinery

RESULTS

Level *2* (TOEFL 375-429)

+4 logits person ability level. Readers at this level of achievement demonstrated comprehension of micropropositions when the source of the information was explicit and appeared at least three times in texts exhibiting antecedent/consequent and descriptive rhetorical relations. These readers could also process anaphoric references and the use of *the* to signal old information. The source material was estimated to be at the Grade 8 level, and the source sentences averaged five transformations per complete derivation. In sum, readers at this level could literally comprehend micropropositions such as facts and specific pieces of information when these were presented more than once in a textually explicit manner.

+2 logits person ability level. Readers at this level demonstrated proficiency in (a) literal comprehension of macropropositions, (b) determining the main idea, and (c) decoding vocabulary in context from texts exhibiting antecedent/consequent and descriptive rhetorical relationships. Readers at this level could also process anaphoric pronoun cohesion and the use of *the* to signal old information. The sources of the information were textually explicit and appeared as many as 10 times. In brief, readers at this level could determine the main idea of a passage or the author’s purpose in writing the passage when the information was presented numerous times in a specific and noninferential manner. They could also scan classified advertisements for specific information.

Level 3 (TOEFL 430-469)

+4 logits person ability level. These readers demonstrated competence in drawing scriptally and textually implicit inferences about micropropositions from texts exhibiting antecedent/consequent and descriptive rhetorical relationships. In many cases the text supplied no information for the keyed responses; when the information was supplied, it was in an implicit form. The source material was estimated to be at the Grade 10 level, and the source sentences averaged some nine transformations per complete derivation. In sum, readers at this level could analyze critically and summarize in detail by drawing inferences when the text material did not explicitly present information and had a moderately high syntactic complexity.

+2 logits person ability level. Readers at this level of achievement demonstrated competence in literally comprehending textually explicit macropropositions from passages that contained antecedent/consequent and descriptive rhetorical relations. The explicit source of the information appeared as frequently as 10 times. Readers at this level could also process cohesive pronoun anaphoric relations. Generally speaking, readers at this level could literally comprehend textually explicit macropropositions when they were presented quite frequently.

Level 4 (TOEFL 470-524)

+3 logits person ability level. These readers could make scriptally and textually implicit inferences based on micropropositions and could infer specific attributes from texts exhibiting a descriptive rhetorical relation. The source provided no information at all or only very limited implicit information. Readers at this level of competence were also able to process vocabulary in context and specific linguistic structures such as connective, pronouns, and repeated references that established relations among parts of the text. The source material was estimated to be at the Grade 12 level, and the source sentences averaged 14 transformations per complete derivation. In general, readers at this level could draw inferences based on micropropositions, utilizing to a great extent their textually relevant background knowledge.

+1 logit person ability level. Readers at this level could infer textually explicit macropropositions and could literally comprehend macropropositions based on source information that appeared as frequently as four times in texts exhibiting a descriptive rhetorical relationship. They could also comprehend the meaning of particular vocabulary items in context. In brief, these readers could process macropropositions when the source of the information was explicit, appeared quite frequently, and had a dense clause per sentence ratio.

The lowest levels of person ability for each test are not described because the lowest anchoring point serves as a benchmark for the identification of robustly discriminating items in the next higher anchoring point. In other words, no bases exist for determining the items that discriminate well at the lowest anchoring point.

DISCUSSION

We have attempted to provide a criterion-referenced interpretation of ability levels on a continuum of proficiency by defining the reading tasks that a majority of students at that ability level could successfully do. Batches of items were selected that were shown to discriminate robustly between ability levels, with the identification criterion being that students at any given ability level had an 88% probability of answering the item correctly, whereas students at the next lower ability level had a 50% chance of answering the item correctly.

The results of this analysis can best be summarized in four generalizations. First, for each proficiency level, subjects with higher person ability showed competence with items that dealt with micropropositions found in the lower two thirds of a Meyer total content structure analysis, whereas subjects with lower person ability showed competence with items that dealt with macropropositions found in the upper one third of such an analysis. This finding from an ESL context nicely complements six basic research findings that have emerged from the Meyer system:

> First, ideas which are located at the top levels of a structural analysis of prose are recalled and retained better than ideas which are located at the lower levels. . . . Second, different items of information located high in the structure are more likely to be integrated in memory than items located low in the structure. . . . Third, the type and structure of relationships among ideas in prose dramatically influence recall when they occur at the top levels of the structure; however, when the same relationships occur low in the structure, they have little effect on recall. . . . Fourth, different types of relationships at the top levels of the structure differentially affect memory. . . . Fifth, students who are able to identify and use these top-level structures in prose remember more from their reading than those who do not. . . . Sixth, training in how to recognize and use these top-level structures improves recall from text materials. (Meyer & Rice, 1984, p. 329)

Second, for each proficiency level, students at the higher ability level excelled with items whose keyed responses depended on implicit sources of information or on explicit sources of information that appeared at a lower frequency; this was not the case for students at the lower person ability level.

Third, all proficiency levels exhibited achievement with linguistic structures that related parts of the text to one another.

Fourth, the derivational complexity and the readability-level estimates covaried with an increase in proficiency level.

In defense of the behavioral anchoring description derived from our analysis, we must emphasize our acute awareness that reading comprehension is a dynamic, interactive process that integrates “a variety of declarative, procedural, and strategic knowledge in different ways, depending on the state of the comprehending system and the information available to it from various sources” (Johnston, 1984, p. 160). In other words, reading must not be viewed as a listing of discrete, separate subskills to be measured independently. For these reasons we elected to base our descriptions on the relationship of the items to the structure of the text, the reader’s prior knowledge, and the nature of the cognitive processes required to answer an item.

Several advantages accrue from conducting a behavioral anchoring analysis such as the one reported in this article. First, the use of a common scale permitted performance to be compared across different ability levels within a proficiency-level group. With a larger data set, a common scale could be used to compare performance across different language groups.

Second, behavioral anchoring allows the researcher to relate group performance to scales anchored by clusters of benchmark items. These clusters provide concrete examples with associated real-world reading capabilities, which are in turn used for deriving verbal summaries of reading achievement at each scale level.

Third, with the Rasch test statistics, it is possible to estimate at any point on the ability scale the proportion of students who can reasonably be expected to pass or to fail a given item. This type of information could be used to establish new criterion-setting procedures or to inform established standard-setting procedures.

Fourth, it is possible to extend the utility of behavioral anchoring data by linking them to cognitive, language-background, and educational variables in order to further inform second language acquisition research.

Fifth, the use of item response models like the Rasch model generates invariance of item difficulty and person ability across sets of items, something that is not possible with norm-referenced or criterion-referenced measurement. Messick et al. (1983) explain invariance of item difficulty and person ability as follows:

> This means that each individual’s skill level may be estimated from any subset of items and that items may be added or retired from the

> assessment at any point without affecting comparability of results. Furthermore, since the skill scales are unbounded, they are not warped by floor and ceiling effects in the way percentages and total scores are, so they tend to be more linearly related to other quantitative variables. (p. 55)

The results of this behavioral anchoring study could also have important pedagogical implications for reading instruction. The Rasch person ability estimates could be used to group CESL students for instructional purposes, particularly for individualized instruction. If the reading content, instruction, and exercises were calibrated, a student whose latent ability was greater than a particular instructional unit required could proceed to a more difficult unit of instruction. In this manner, the curriculum could be fitted to the students rather than the students fitted to the curriculum.

We heartily recommend the behavioral anchoring approach to the classroom ESL teacher because the prose descriptions contained in this article are more meaningful to us than statements such as "Jorge's score on a 25-item test was 1.75 standard deviations above the mean." Such a sentence can arouse only a first-semester measurement student. It does not tell us what Jorge can and cannot do in terms of the trait being measured.

Moreover, every calculation that went into the preparation of this article was done with a hand-held calculator and a fountain pen, not with a Macintosh personal computer and a stat package. The PROX method in Wright and Stone (1979), whose book is a paragon of clarity, was used for estimating the item difficulties and person abilities. Thus, classroom teachers should not be intimidated by the statistical analysis necessary for a behavioral anchoring study. ■

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Some Criteria for the Development of Communicative Grammar Tasks

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This article focuses on the development of criteria for the design, implementation, and evaluation of grammar teaching and learning tasks within the communicative curriculum. It attempts three things. First, it addresses the question, Why are we interested in grammar? It is suggested, for example, that the rise of the notional/functional/communicative curriculum has sometimes been accompanied by a devaluation of grammar as one of the organizing principles in commercially available language-learning materials. Moreover, one cannot always assume that students at higher secondary-school level or in tertiary education institutions have an adequate grasp of English grammar, a necessary (but not sufficient) condition for efficient and effective communication at these levels of language use. Second, the article provides a working definition of grammar. From the above perspectives, the third section focuses on some of the criteria of communicative grammar-learning tasks and on the implications for the design and implementation of these tasks within the communicative curriculum.

This article grew out of our realization that many of our students abroad (in West Berlin and at the University of Dar es Salaam) shared similar problems. Furthermore, these problems were also similar to those of overseas students studying at the University of Lancaster. This commonality of problems across students was of particular interest in that the language inadequacies faced by those majoring in English were in some key respects not different from those experienced by students whose main specializations were subjects other than English but who required English for purposes of advanced study.

The problems faced by some of our students arose from their need to communicate at a rather sophisticated level in English when their linguistic competence was at a very low level. This is not to say that they were unable to communicate; most of them were able to, albeit in a very confused and/or simple form. They managed to express most of their ideas in English, but in a way that did not do themselves justice as intelligent, educated individuals. Often at the heart of the matter were their use of grammar and their inability to manipulate structure and form in such a way as to convey messages with their full force.

It became apparent to us that the development of communication skills should include not only language and study-skills areas but also the improvement of grammatical competence. This article therefore focuses on the role of grammar and grammar tasks within the communicative language learning and teaching curriculum.

WHY ARE WE INTERESTED IN GRAMMAR?

This question can be answered from a range of different perspectives, three of which are considered here. First, when we say that someone "knows a language," we mean that this person has acquired the ability to produce grammatically acceptable sentences in the target language, together with an ability to use these forms correctly as the occasion demands. Cummins (1979) found that basic interpersonal language skills may be acquired fairly rapidly, whereas literacy-related language proficiency, involving a wider and more sophisticated manipulation of language structures, takes a longer time to develop. One can therefore anticipate difficulties when second language learners try to operate at a higher level of understanding and communication in the language but find they are unable to do so because of an inadequate knowledge of the grammatical system of English and how to apply it.

Second, in terms of language teaching and learning texts, several further points may be made:

1. In some commercially available materials, grammar has been devalued as an organizing principle and subordinated to the presentation of notional, functional, and communicative categories (Candlin & Edelhoff, 1982; Jones, 1981; see also Figure 5 in this article).
2. It sometimes appears practical to assume that target language learners have already acquired a "basic level of grammatical competence," and as a result, learning materials then concentrate on the development of the relevant communication skills for a variety of specific purposes, for example, *Reading and Thinking in English* (1980) for a South American audience and *Skills for Learning* (1980) for Southeast Asia.

3. Although some textbooks claim to be communicative/functional, this is not actually the case, as syllabuses may be derived from an essentially structural base, realized by materials and learning tasks that concentrate on grammar largely at the level of accuracy (for example, Harmer, 1985; Hutchinson, 1985; Swan & Walter, 1984).

A further motivation behind our interest in grammar stems from the generally held view that pupils and students, at school or following tertiary-level studies, may be disadvantaged if they have a limited proficiency in the target language. Numerous studies have investigated the relationship between language achievement and scholastic/academic performance. The results are not conclusive, but evidence available from some studies (Davies, 1977; Heaton & Pugh, 1974; Ingram, 1973; Moller, 1977; Rea, 1983) suggests that students with language weaknesses are more likely to underachieve in their studies than those students considered proficient.

An issue to raise here, however, relates to the type of language competencies that have been correlated with the target academic criterion measures. With specific reference to grammar, we may wish to inquire into the extent to which this language predictor is composed of different elements or is independent from other areas of language knowledge and skill. How, for example, does knowledge of the grammatical system relate to the ability to use it accurately and appropriately in the target speech situation? How do grammatical competence, on the one hand, and a language skill such as reading or another construct such as overall communicative competence, on the other, relate to academic achievement? Let us examine a few relevant findings from applied linguistics research.

There is some evidence for the distinctiveness of grammar as a construct independent from overall communicative competence. Savignon (1972) investigated the effects of classroom training on the development of two traits: (a) linguistic competence and (b) communicative competence. Her subjects ($N = 42$) were divided into three groups (El, E2, C), all of which received basic instruction in French following the audiolingual method. However, for an additional hour per week, El received special training in oral French communication skills; E2 was exposed to aspects of French culture; and C received extra audiolingual language laboratory training. At the end of the semester, all students took two standardized tests of linguistic achievement and an oral communicative competence test. Although the mean scores for El were higher than the other two groups on all of the measures, there was no significant difference across the groups on the tests of linguistic competence and on the final grade. However, there was a significant difference on the instructors' ratings (*p* < .05) and on the test of communicative competence (*p* < .001). The absence of differentiation on the linguistic competence measures and the presence of one on the communicative test may be interpreted as evidence for the distinctiveness of linguistic competence from communicative competence.

Politzer and McGroarty (1983) undertook a correlational study to investigate the communicative competence of Spanish-speaking pupils in bilingual education programs. Along with the TOEFL and the Comprehensive English Language Test (Harris & Palmer, 1970), two classes of communicative tests were administered: active communicative competence tests and receptive communicative competence tests. Their results indicate that (a) low levels of linguistic competence appear incompatible with high levels of communicative competence; (b) high linguistic competence does not guarantee a high degree of communicative competence; and (c) different levels of communicative competence are possible at the same level of linguistic competence.

Thus, a certain amount of evidence points to a distinction between linguistic and communicative competence as separate constructs. On the other hand, Politzer and McGroarty's (1983) study also lends support to the notion of interdependence because of the general tendency for high linguistic competence to correlate with high communicative competence. Indeed, Politzer and McGroarty conclude that their results suggest an association between high linguistic and high communicative competence, since lower levels of the former are shown to be largely incompatible with high levels of the latter. They even suggest the existence of a minimum low level of linguistic competence as a prerequisite for adequate communicative competence. In addition, they assert that linguistic competence emerges as distinct from communicative competence, since the latter presupposes the former, whereas the converse does not hold.

Other investigations relevant to the distinction between grammatical and communicative competence have been conducted by researchers such as Schulz (1977), Palmer (1979), and Bachman and Palmer (1982). In making the transfer from empirical research to classroom practice, it is relevant to note that the acquisition of communicative competence has sometimes obscured the need to develop grammatical competence as an essential component. However, in the light of empirical data supportive of grammatical competence as a main construct in a structural model of communicative competence (e.g., Bachman & Palmer, 1982), there seems to be a case for reintroducing grammar as an at least equal organizing principle in curriculum development and practice. At this point, however, we need to make clear what we mean by the term *grammar*.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY GRAMMAR?

There have been many attempts to answer the question, What is grammar? According to Close (1982), “English grammar is chiefly a system of syntax that decides the order and patterns in which words are arranged in sentences” (p. 13). Smith and Wilson (1979) note that “they [linguistic rules] combine with each other to form a system—a grammar—which gives an explicit and exhaustive description of every sentence which goes to make up a language” (p. 14).

In most cases, however, such definitions raise more questions than they answer: What is a sentence? To what extent are the different possibilities for word ordering determined on syntactic rather than on other grounds? How does position determine meaning? If grammar is concerned only with sentences, does this mean that in any given text there is no grammatical relationship between sentences? To determine what grammar means to us, it is probably better to look at the relationship between linguistic competence and communicative competence and at what we expect the grammar to tell us.

In their model of communicative competence, Canale and Swain (1980) show three separate elements interacting and influencing each other as parts of communicative competence: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, and strategic competence. Leech (1983, p. 58), in discussing grammar, separates the elements of language use and shows their interaction. In these models, both Canale and Swain and Leech separate grammar from pragmatic and semantic forces, while admitting that both these other forces have an effect on grammar.

Halliday (1970, 1973, 1978), in his functional grammar (sometimes known as systemic grammar or functional-systemic grammar), sees all these forces as part of grammar. His three functions—ideational, textual, and interpersonal—are, in his opinion, all aspects of grammar in that they play a part in arranging the form in which we combine the words to convey our message. For example, should we say, *To be, or not to be: that is the question* or *The question is whether to be or not to be?* Hamlet chose a rather elegant ordering with great effect, but it may not be suitable to convey the same message in another situation.

Whichever form one chooses, however, one must understand not only how words can be combined in certain patterns, but also that there are choices to be made about which combinations to use. Furthermore, such choices are not made on a whim, but with the purpose of enhancing the message to be conveyed, so that its interpretation by the receiver will be not only accurate with regard to meaning but also made with an awareness of the attitude of the speaker. Consider, for example, the use of medals in this extract from the membership rules of the *Scottish Youth Hostel Association Handbook* (1982):

1. Preparing Beds: Either a) each member must use a sheet sleeping-bag of the approved type, or b) if a down sleeping-bag is used, a sheet sleeping-bag of the approved type must also be used to protect blankets. Beds should be prepared one hour before closing time. (p. 8)

Clearly, the rule is setting down three obligations that members must follow. Two interesting questions are raised, however: (a) Why has the writer shifted from the strong *must* in the first sentence to the weaker *should* in the second? and (b) Would it make any difference if there had been no shift?

We can often find grammar rules that justify such shifts. In the case of medals, these rules usually give explanations in semantic terms at sentence level suggesting shades of differences in meaning (see Figure 1). Such rules hardly answer the two questions above because they are concerned with looking at the medals as a collection of discrete items, whereas what concerns us in Example 1 is the whole context in which the shift has occurred.

The importance of taking context into account while trying to explain what is happening in the grammar is highlighted by the following examples:

2. I’ve been living in New York for 10 years.
3. I’ve lived in New York for 10 years.

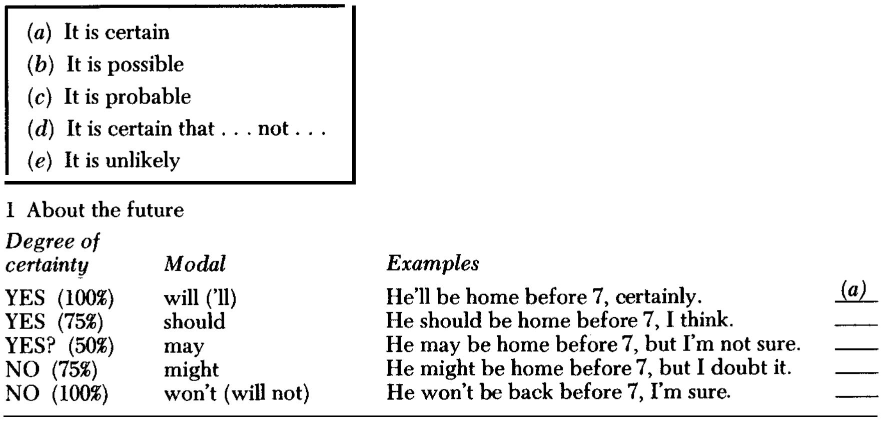
Most learners assume that there will be a difference in meaning here, but explanations offered in some grammar books are often quite inadequate: “An action which began in the past and is still continuing or has only just finished can, with certain verbs, be expressed by either the present perfect simple or the present perfect continuous” (Thomson & Martinet, 1986, p. 173). In terms of semantic distinction between the forms, there is probably little more to say. If we look at the context, however, where one of these utterances has been chosen in preference to the other, we might find

FIGURE 1

Explaining Probability and Certainty

From *Ways to Grammar* (p. 101) by J. Shepherd, R. Rossner, and J. Taylor, 1984, London: Macmillan. Copyright 1984 by Macmillan. Reprinted by permission.

Study the examples in 1,2 and 3 below and then put in the letters (a) to (e) according to the descriptions in the box:



(*a*) It is certain
(*b*) It is possible
(*c*) It is probable
(*d*) It is certain that . . . not . . .
(*e*) It is unlikely

1 About the future

Degree of certainty	*Modal*	*Examples*	
YES (100%)	will ('ll)	He'll be home before 7, certainly.	(*a*)
YES (75%)	should	He should be home before 7, I think.	____
YES? (50%)	may	He may be home before 7, but I'm not sure.	____
NO (75%)	might	He might be home before 7, but I doubt it.	____
NO (100%)	won't (will not)	He won't be back before 7, I'm sure.	____

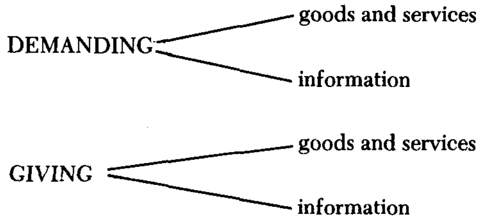
clues to explain the choice made by the speaker. Hitherto, *context* has often meant putting the sentence into some kind of discoursal framework. But the context, as in the examples above, may be more a case of looking at the speaker's *attitude* to what he or she is saying. In Examples 2 and 3, the choice between the nonprogressive and the progressive forms could depend on the speaker's attitude toward the time spent in New York. Thus, grammar rules are likely to have to extend beyond explanations of the use of forms in purely semantic terms and examine uses made in pragmatic terms (see, for example, Givon, 1984; Moore & Carling, 1982).

As stated earlier, grammar is the means by which we organize our messages in any communicative act. So we must first be clear what we mean by *communication*. Halliday (1985, pp. 68-71) divides *messages* into two basic types: demanding and giving. *Demanding* is when we request information or services, as in the following examples:

4. "Can I have a pound of apples, please?"
5. "Did you see Halley's comet?"
6. "What are the main features of the RTC in an all-CMOS device with extremely low power consumption?"

Giving is the response to any of these or similar requests or simply the presentation of information. With this kind of organization, communication might be described as in Figure 2.

FIGURE 2
Use of Language



This model illustrates what we do in communicating messages. A message, however, contains much more than basic information:

> Linguistic meaning covers a great deal more than reports of events in the real world. It expresses, sometimes in very obvious ways, other times in ways that are hard to ferret out, such things as what is the central part of the message as against the peripheral part, what our attitudes are to the person we are speaking to, how we feel about the reliability of our message, how we situate ourselves in the events we report, and many other things that make our messages not merely a recital of facts, but a complex of facts and comments about facts and situations. (Bolinger, 1977, p. 4)

Thus, any communicative act is a very complex performance. With grammar, we are concerned with how we make up the message we are communicating, not simply in terms of forms and structures, but in terms of meaning. Halliday (1985, p. xiv) claims that traditional grammar asks the question, What do these forms mean? However, the question should be, How are these meanings expressed? In this way, the forms or structures of grammar become a means to an end, rather than just an end in themselves.

When we communicate a message, we want that message to be interpreted as effectively and as efficiently as possible. In order that this should happen, our messages contain signals to guide the listener to a proper interpretation and to avoid any misunderstanding or ambiguity. The grammar is the means we have to send these signals. Therefore, the answer to the question of what we expect grammar to tell us must be that it provides us with signals to render possible the proper interpretation of a message. It does this through the ordering of the words or groups of words, through time, and through mood.

The ordering of the words or groups of words is an important signaling device that works in two ways. First, it helps to convey meaning. Although we cannot always give a complete interpretation, we can give a partial one from the order of the words.

7. Queen Bee Lay Egg

Most people would interpret the group of words in Example 7, which correspond to a child's early use of language, as meaning that the queen bee is laying an egg. This is partly because of the meaning of the individual lexical items—we would not expect an egg to lay a queen bee—but also because of the ordering of words in English: The subject is followed by the verb, which is followed by the object (S-V-O). This ordering becomes more important as a means of interpretation with groups of words such as the following, for which either the first or the third word could be the perceiver in the event.

8. Man See Woman

Our interpretation, however, is likely to be that it is the man who has seen the woman. This is because of the S-V-O word order, which in English helps us to identify who is doing what to whom.

Second, the ordering of the words or groups of words helps to focus the information; it can show the listener where the focus and / or topic of the message is.

9. The queen bee lays eggs in the honeycomb during the summer.
10. During the summer, the queen bee lays eggs in the honeycomb.

By choosing to send the information as it is packaged in Example 9, the speaker is making "the queen bee" the theme of the message. In Example 10, the adverbial "during the summer" is fronting the utterance and has become its theme. The theme tells the listener what the topic of the sentence is, that is, what the speaker is talking about at that particular moment. In Example 9, the speaker is talking about what the queen bee does, whereas in Example 10, the speaker is talking about what happens during the summer.

A shift of topic similar to that in Examples 9 and 10 is illustrated below:

11. The man saw the woman.
12. The woman was seen by the man.

In Example 11, we are talking about the man, whereas in Example 12, the woman is the topic of the utterance. These examples, with Examples 9 and 10, extend the role of grammar beyond the sentence to a consideration of its role in the organization of discourse. Grammar helps to carry the discourse forward, showing what the topic is at each stage.

Within the grammar, there is also the means for us to explain time, that is, when an event took place. Example 7 could be expanded in the following ways:

13. The queen bee lays eggs.
14. The queen bee is laying eggs.
15. The queen bee has laid eggs.
16. The queen bee laid eggs.

By the use of tense, the grammar enables the speaker to discuss past, present, and future happenings as well as to show relationships within those time phases.

As noted earlier, our messages can be giving or demanding. Here again, the speaker signals the listener. Thus, Example 17 is interpreted as a statement, whereas Example 18 is interpreted as a question.

17. The queen bee laid eggs. (giving information)
18. Did the queen bee lay eggs? (demanding information)

We also provide other clues for the receiver of the message. We can show through modality the probabilities or obligations involved in what is being said. In Halliday's (1985, p. 75) terms, this is the mood element, which consists of the subject and the auxiliary. In the case of the nonprogressive aspect, the auxiliary is the verb *do,* whether it appears in use or not.

19. The queen bee (did) laid eggs.
20. The queen bee might lay eggs.

In Example 19, the mood is "the queen bee" + "(did)," and in Example 20, the mood is "the queen bee" + "might." Thus, the mood can inform us whether our messages are giving or demanding and the degree of certainty, probability, obligation, and so on within them.

In summary, then, we can say that grammar is the resource available to indicate a number of elements crucial to the appropriate and accurate interpretation of utterances: (a) the relationship between the participants in an interaction, (b) the topic being discussed, (c) the time of the event, (d) the mood of the utterance(s), and (e) the attitude taken by the speaker. Furthermore, within grammar, there is constant interaction that brings all these functions together to allow a full interpretation of the message. We must now consider how this approach to grammar affects the design of communicative grammar materials.

In the following section, some of the criteria of communicative grammar tasks are examined. A brief overview of past practices in the teaching and learning of grammatical competence is contrasted with what we believe should be incorporated within current practice.

SOME CRITERIA OF COMMUNICATIVE GRAMMAR-LEARNING TASKS

We are making an initial distinction between the *content* and the *construct* of grammar tasks. *Content,* predictably, refers to what is being presented to students, and in our case, this is defined as communicative grammar. *Construct,* on the other hand, relates to the overall process of task implementation. In other words, the notion of construct here addresses issues of how the content is to be presented to learners via the grammar-learning tasks. And this we aim to do communicatively.

Until recently, there has been some confusion and/or ambivalence about the importance of grammar in communication. If one takes a historical perspective, grammar and communication were, for a long time, considered as two independent features, that is, as autonomous elements, rather than as two complementary and integrated elements necessary for effective language use. The consequence of this view for language-teaching pedagogy at the level of classroom practice, illustrated by the substitution table in Figure 3, was the presentation to learners of exercises that encouraged the manipulation of grammatical structures but that took little or no account of the context in which these structures (may have) occurred. The subsequent stage, according to this view of the learning process, was that of situational grammar practice, as the example in Figure 4 shows. However, for reasons to be discussed, the substitution table cannot be said to be providing communicative grammar practice. The pedagogy separates grammar from communication practice, and it is only by chance that the two might meet.

In contrast, current pedagogical practice places the emphasis on communication, and learners are more than likely to be presented with learning tasks primarily designed to promote interaction. In many cases, however, the functions of grammar in the effective communication of ideas, beliefs, feelings, and so on are ignored. Take the example in Figure 5, which presents learners with several ways to express the politeness functions associated with requests.

FIGURE 3

Traditional Substitution Table

Make correct sentences from the table below.

I		him		go
You	told	Mary		sit down
He	asked	her		stop talking
She	ordered	them	to	come early
It	wanted	Joe		watch the play
We		the couple		pay the bill
They		the teacher		leave

FIGURE 4

Situational Grammar Practice

From *English in Situations* (p. 105) by R. O'Neill, 1970, London: Oxford University Press. Copyright 1970 by Oxford University Press. Reprinted by permission.

99 **MUSTN'T vs. DON'T/DOESN'T HAVE TO**

Illustrative Situations

Observe the difference in meaning between MUSTN'T and DON'T/ DOESN'T HAVE TO.

Charles Gripp, the ex-bank robber, is in prison now. He has to get up early every morning. He has to wear a blue uniform and work hard all day. Then, at ten o'clock every evening, he has to turn off the light in his cell and go to bed. Charles often thinks of his friends outside. They can do what they want. It is not necessary for them to do these things.

HE HAS TO GET UP EARLY EVERY MORNING. HIS FRIENDS DON'T HAVE TO GET UP EARLY. THEY DON'T HAVE TO WEAR A BLUE UNIFORM. THEY DON'T HAVE TO GO TO BED AT TEN, EITHER.

1. Where is Charles now?
2. What are some of the things he has to do?
3. Why does he think his friends are so lucky?

Prompts:
(a) early (b) uniform (c) bed at ten.

The requests are presented as discrete phrases, with no explicit focus on the grammatical exponents; that is, they do not concentrate on structure, the use of tense, word order, and so on. With this type of learning activity, the learner is being asked to work with only half the possible information and procedures available for the effective processing of language: On what basis is the learner to "know" why certain grammatical choices are made in favor of others in the expression of a given communicative function?

FIGURE 5

Exercise on the Politeness Functions Associated With Requests

From "Pilot Project in Computer-Aided Stylistic Analysis" by J. Draskau, in *Papers From the Eighth Scandinavian Conference of Linguistics* (p. 117) edited by O. Togeby, 1984, Copenhagen: University of Copenhagen. Copyright 1984 by J. Draskau. Adapted by permission.

Arrange in order of politeness (1 = most, 10 = least polite)

You could open the window.
You can open the window.
Please open the window.
Why is the window closed?
I must ask you to open the window.
Open the window.
It's very hot in here.
Can you open the window?
Could you open the window?
Open the window, please.

Suggest other ways of making the request:
How do your suggestions fit into the scale above?
Discuss your results with the other groups.
What do you notice about the word 'please'?

We believe that the tasks presented to learners should demonstrate both content and construct validity (much in the same way that we require of our language tests). The inadequacies of the examples in Figures 3, 4, and 5 seem to arise from a restricted view of how the presentation of grammatical content may be appropriately introduced to the language learner.

In the development of a grammar course or a grammar component within a broader language-training program, a wide range of questions must be asked about grammar both as content and as construct. The following discussion raises issues associated with grammar as construct, since in our view, this is the neglected area and the one with more far-reaching implications for the development of grammatical and communicative competencies. The main question we ask is, What considerations need to be taken into account in developing a framework for the integration of grammar within the language curriculum?

It is beyond the scope of this article to address all the issues that this question raises. We focus on what we consider to be certain key aspects of grammar-learning activities within the communicative teaching and learning curriculum. Our intent is to illustrate that grammar does not function as an end in itself but, rather, as a means toward successful communication. Given the range of possible curriculum components (notions, functions, skills, etc.), we are interested in how grammar relates to, and integrates with, these other aspects of language competence. In other words, what is the relationship between grammatical and communicative competence and the influence that it exerts on the design and implementation of grammar-learning tasks?

Although one definition of a communicative task might be that it creates interaction among learners, another can be that it should assist the learner in developing (a) an awareness of grammatical choice and (b) the capacity to make the appropriate choices according to given contextual constraints. In other words, a communicative grammar-learning environment should facilitate the comprehension of *how* grammar works in the conveying and interpretation of meaning, in the way that Rutherford and Sharwood Smith (1985) discuss the role of consciousness-raising in grammar teaching. It does not mean that in terms of curriculum implementation, we need to jettison all existing grammatical exercises. Too often, recently, instead of looking carefully at what is already available to us and how this may be used to reflect some of the criteria of communicative grammar tasks, "the baby has been thrown out with the bath water."

For example, the acquisition of structural competence is still an important element within the overall development of grammatical competence, and for this reason, many existing learning activities need *not* be rejected. Recall the substitution table in Figure 3, and then consider the following contrasting example in Figure 6. In the latter, the learner is asked to perform an identical function as in the exercise in Figure 3; this time, however, there is the added dimension of having to decide not only if the sentence is grammatically correct but also whether it is accurate in form and meaning *with reference to an accompanying text* (not included here).

Compare the two exercises in Figures 7 and 8. In the exercise in Figure 7, the learner is instructed to manipulate uncontextualized sentences into the passive voice. In the exercise in Figure 8, the learner is also required to change the active into the passive voice, but here the learner is invited to think about the reasons for certain grammatical choices.

To what extent, then, do the examples in Figures 6 and 8 meet communicative criteria? In many ways, they resemble the old type

FIGURE 6
Exercise on Medals

Look at the table below and make statements from it which you feel represent what the writer says and feels about "vertical" people. Then give reasons for rejecting the statements that are possible from the table but which you have not included.

He	must	lose weight
She	have to	write a play
I	has to	have a baby
You	should	learn Russian
They	could	mow the lawn
We	need(s) to	look at the garden

FIGURE 7
Exercise on the passive

From *Living English Structure* (p. 281) by W. Stannard Allen, 1960, London: Longman. Copyright 1960 by Longman. Reprinted by permission.

Turn the following sentences into the passive voice:

1. People always admire this picture.
2. He hurt his leg in an accident.
3. Some people dress their children very badly. Some children . . .
4. No one has opened that box for the last hundred years.
5. People formerly used the Tower of London as a prison.
6. Someone has broken two of my dinner-plates.
7. They fought a big battle here two hundred years ago.
8. Somebody has invited you to lunch tomorrow.
9. People will forget this play in a few years' time.
10. Somebody built this bridge last year.
11. No one has ever beaten my brother at tennis.
12. People speak English all over the world.
13. Did anyone ask any questions about me?
14. You must write the answers on one side of the paper only.
15. People mustn't take these books away.

of exercise that concentrated solely on form. However, these examples reflect authenticity in the construct of communicative competence, particularly in that they provide the learner with a more adequate linguistic environment that more overtly integrates linguistic form and communicative intention. In the exercise in Figure 6, for example, it is hypothesized that the learner's use of a given grammatical form is less likely to be made mechanistically

FIGURE 8
An Alternative Learning Task on the Passive

In groups, examine the following text and see where you think it can be improved by using the passive. Give reasons for the changes you make.

"If it is true that one can tell an area from its noticeboards, then one can easily find out if one would like to live there. Of course, one has to interpret the messages very carefully, and also consider them as a whole. This is necessary in order to avoid the situation where a minor piece of exotica takes you in, although it isn't representative of the notices as a whole. Equally one should not totally ignore the unusual notice, since this may herald a new trend in the area. While it is true that one swallow doesn't make a summer, one should remember that a change has to start somewhere. Often this affects older districts which people have neglected and allowed to run down. Suddenly, because these are often quite cheap areas to live in, some young people move into them, and this starts the change in the district."

CHANGES TO BE MADE:	REASONS:

and more likely to actually engage the learner in making decisions about language use and appropriateness of grammatical forms on the basis of the function that these forms perform within the given context. In addition, such tasks may be used interactively, with learners cooperating through the task's problem-solving dimensions. In Figure 8, the decision-making activity specifically involves issues of selection—between contrasting active and passive forms—and appropriateness of use, according to context.

This issue of context is also important when we take account of the role that rules play in the teaching of grammar and the ways in which these rules have been and are presented to students. Two clear examples of past practice may be identified. On the one hand, following the principles of traditional grammar, we find learning texts that provide explicit information about the rules of English grammar. In some cases, these rules address issues both of form and meaning, as in Figure 9. More commonly, however, and in line with the structuralist-behaviorist and transformational approaches to linguistic description, grammatical rules are presented in the form of explicit and rather inviolate rules of usage, as in Figure 10. On the other hand, they may be hidden within learning materials from which learners are expected to extract the rules of usage, as in Figure 4. In such cases, there seldom seems to bean opportunity for students to develop insights into the rules of use, since the situations represented in the learning materials are largely contrived and represent inaccurate simulations of actual communicative events.

Within the current model of the learning and teaching of communicative competence, which draws upon a psychological/psycholinguistic framework, it appears more appropriate that

FIGURE 9

Grammar Rules on Proper Nouns

From *Patterns and Skills in English, Book 2* (p. 180), by J.A. Bright, 1905, London: Longman. Copyright 1965 by Longman. Reprinted by permission.

1. The names of ships are in the pattern *the* + name, e.g. the *Queen Elizabeth*. Queen Elizabeth is a woman. The *Queen Elizabeth* is a ship.

2. The names of newspapers are commonly *The* + name:

The Times
The *Daily Mail*
The Guardian
The *Uganda Argus*
The *Nation*

1. Climbers, however, refer to 'the Matterhorn', perhaps because it is so famous. The idea may be 'the one and only Matterhorn'.

Another possible reason for using *the* is that Matterhorn is a descriptive name. A number of other peaks in Switzerland with descriptive names in German are similar exceptions, e.g. the Jungfrau—the young virgin, the Weisshorn—the white horn.

learners be provided with (a) contexts and situations in which the application of grammatical rules in use may be demonstrated and (b) explicit information about how the relevant elements of the grammatical system of English work. In these two ways at least, we would hope to engage the learners' involvement, thereby promoting their cognitive recognition and processing of grammatical rules.

In turn, these rules would reflect not a view of the invariance of English grammar (see Figures 9 and 10) but a view that recognizes that grammatical rules "exhibit only *partial categoriality:* Categories conform to their basic definitions *in the majority of cases,* and rules obey their strict description *more likely than not*" (Givon, 1984, p. 12) (see Figures 6 and 8). We may note that the rules themselves fall within the category of content, whereas considerations of their presentation and use come within that of construct. Variation and grammatical choice are key characteristics in the development of grammatical competence; this view should be reflected equally across learning tasks and the presentation of grammar rules.

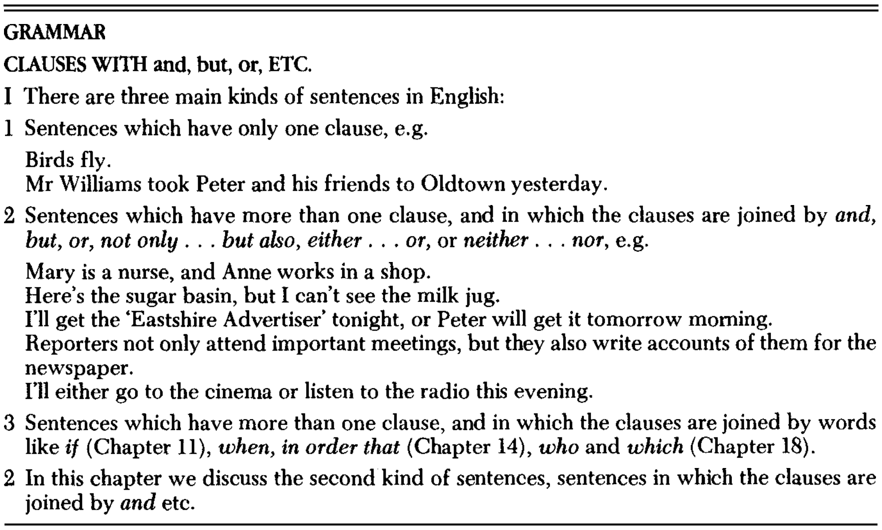
When presented as an end in itself, grammar is frequently realized as an autonomous coding device, but as we have seen earlier, grammar entails more than this. For instance, as Givon (1984) states:

> The first stage of sentence level analysis only tells the linguist that some structures are possible, may occur. It reveals nothing about the context

FIGURE 10

Grammar Rules on Types of Sentences

From An *English Course for French-Speakers, Book Four* (p. 18), by H.A. Cartledge and T.J.C. Baly, 1967, London: Longman. Copyright 1967 by the British Council. Reprinted by permission.



GRAMMAR

CLAUSES WITH and, but, or, ETC.

1 There are three main kinds of sentences in English:

1 Sentences which have only one clause, e.g.

Birds fly.
Mr Williams took Peter and his friends to Oldtown yesterday.

2 Sentences which have more than one clause, and in which the clauses are joined by *and, but, or, not only . . . but also, either . . . or,* or *neither . . . nor,* e.g.

Mary is a nurse, and Anne works in a shop.
Here's the sugar basin, but I can't see the milk jug.
I'll get the 'Eastshire Advertiser' tonight, or Peter will get it tomorrow morning.
Reporters not only attend important meetings, but they also write accounts of them for the newspaper.
I'll either go to the cinema or listen to the radio this evening.

3 Sentences which have more than one clause, and in which the clauses are joined by words like *if* (Chapter 11), *when, in order that* (Chapter 14), *who* and *which* (Chapter 18).

2 In this chapter we discuss the second kind of sentences, sentences in which the clauses are joined by *and* etc.

> and the purpose of their occurrence, or how often they occur in comparison with other constructions that seemingly perform "the same" or similar function(s). (p. 11)

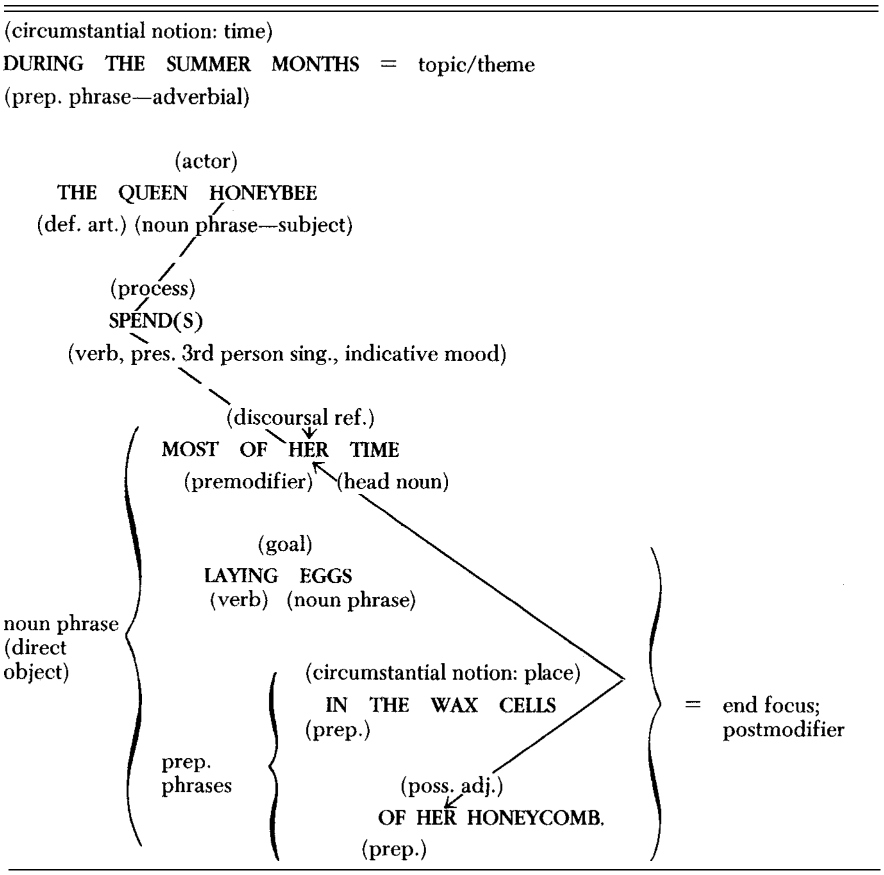
Such an analysis thus reveals nothing about how grammar functions to signal meanings in a text. Consider the sentence in Example 21 and its grammatical description in Figure 11.

21. During the summer months the queen honeybee spends most of her time laying eggs in the wax cells of her honeycomb.

Here, a wide range of grammatical components have been identified, but within the confines of a single sentence, the ways in which these elements are related in the communication of a full message are not clearly accessible at this level of description. In the unscrambling task in Figure 12, learners have to draw connections between an array of grammatical signals and apply their knowledge of the grammatical system of English to understand a description of the life cycle of the honeybee.

As noted earlier, in some of the existing approaches to the teaching of English grammar, structure and form have been presented and practiced as an end in themselves; that is, grammar

FIGURE 11
Sample Sentence-Level Grammatical Description


(circumstantial notion: time)
DURING THE SUMMER MONTHS = topic/theme
(prep. phrase—adverbial)
(actor)
THE QUEEN HONEYBEE
(def. art.) (noun phrase—subject)
(process)
SPEND(S)
(verb, pres. 3rd person sing., indicative mood)
(discoursal ref.)
MOST OF HER TIME
(premodifier) (head noun)
(goal)
LAYING EGGS
(verb) (noun phrase)
noun phrase
(direct
object)
(circumstantial notion: place)
IN THE WAX CELLS
(prep.)
prep.
phrases
(poss. adj.)
OF HER HONEYCOMB.
(prep.)
= end focus;
postmodifier

has been presented as a goal rather than as a means for communication. Figure 12 shows how the latter function may be incorporated in learning tasks, so that links are provided between grammar, on the one hand, and the complexes of (language) data, on the other, that together make communication possible. The provision of a much richer context, in which the dimensions of grammar as construct may be embedded, is what makes these links possible. A sample descriptive analysis showing the complex relations between elements of Example 21, which is also one of the sentences involved in the unscrambling exercise in Figure 12, is given in Figure 13.

FIGURE 12
Unscrambling Task

The sentences below make up a paragraph on the Life History of the Honeybee but they are not written in the right order. Number the sentences in their proper order. The first sentence of the paragraph is given to you.

No. ___ When the eggs hatch into larvae, they are looked after and fed by the worker bees.

No. ___ During the summer months she spends most of her time laying eggs in the wax cells of her honeycomb.

No. _1_ The life of the honeybee colony centers around the activities of its single queen.

No. ___ The honeybee does this by releasing sperm from her storage sacs which were filled at the time of her mating flights.

No. ___ A new worker bee emerges three weeks after the egg was laid.

No. ___ Fertilization of these eggs takes place before they are deposited in the cells.

CONCLUSIONS

In this article, we have attempted to do three main things. First, we have given a number of reasons behind current heightened interest in the development of learners' grammatical competence. Second, we have presented a definition of grammar that takes into account a constant interaction of functions, and we have illustrated ways in which grammar, through a variety of signaling devices, enables access to ideas and intentions expressed through messages. In the last section of the article, we have put forward a number of criteria considered crucial to the development of communicative grammatical competence. We have taken the view that grammar should rarely be examined in terms of discrete items but, rather, should be introduced to learners as a complex of integrated networks that function as a means to successful communication. This applies to the presentation both of content areas and grammatical rules. In essence, we have argued for an approach to grammar teaching and the design of learning tasks that emphasizes the total construct of grammar, in which, for example, learners will be required to make selections between contrasting forms and structures according to context and language use. In other words, variation and grammatical choice replace the static determinacy, or conformity, implicit in a discrete-point approach to grammar teaching.

At the same time, we are also very much aware that we have only just begun to address some of the issues associated with the communicative teaching of grammatical competence. Indeed, a

FIGURE 13

Descriptive Analysis of Some of the Elements for A Sentence in the Unscrambling Exercise

During the summer months, the queen honeybee spends most of her time laying eggs in the wax cells of her honeycomb.

1. CATEGORIES:	1 = preposition 2 = article 3 = adjective 4 = noun 5 = verb
2. PHRASE STRUCTURE:	
Prepositional phrase:	During the summer months in the wax cells of her honeycomb
Noun phrase:	the queen honeybee most of her time eggs most of her time laying eggs in the wax cells of her honeycomb
Verb phrase:	spends most of her time laying eggs in the wax cells of her honeycomb
3. STRUCTURAL:	
Adverbial (time):	During the summer months
Subject:	the queen honeybee
Predicate:	
Verb:	spends
Object:	most of her time
Adverbial (manner):	laying eggs
Adverbial (place):	in the wax cells of her honeycomb
4. IDEATIONAL:	
Circumstantial—location (temporal):	During the summer months
Actor:	the queen honeybee
Process ("doing"):	spends
Range:	most of her time
Circumstantial—manner:	laying eggs
Circumstantial—location (spatial):	in the wax cells of her honeycomb
5. TEXTUAL:	
Theme:	During the summer months
Rheme:	the queen honeybee spends most of her time laying eggs in the wax cells of her honeycomb
6. INTERPERSONAL:	
Adjunct:	During the summer months
Subject (finite):	the queen honeybee
Mood:	(does)
Residue:	spends most of her time laying eggs in the wax cells of her honeycomb

Note: The terms *theme* and *rheme* are from the Prague School of Linguistics. Theme is what the clause is concerned with, that is, the topic; rheme is the remainder of the clause, that is, a development of the theme.

wide range of other questions need careful consideration. How, for example, do we determine learners' grammatical needs in relation to their communicative needs, especially for students who have a low level of linguistic competence but who need a sophisticated command of English grammar? What, in turn, are the implications for the overall organization of the curriculum for such students? Which grammatical areas will be excluded / included? And how can we assess the effectiveness of these "new" grammar-learning tasks to meet those goals for which they have been introduced?
■

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REVIEW

The *TESOL Quarterly* welcomes evaluative reviews of publications relevant to TESOL professional. In addition to textbooks and reference materials, these include computer and video software, testing instruments, and other forms of nonprint materials.

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The Writing Process: 20 Projects for Group Work

Nancy Arapoff Cramer. Rawley, MA: Newbury House, 1985. Pp. viii + 331.

Making the Most of English

Nancy Duke S. Lay. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1983. Pp. x + 214.

A Writer's Workbook

Trudy Smoke. New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1987. Pp. xxix + 362.

■ In the last 17 years, writing research has undergone a tremendous shift. Instead of focusing on the end product of writing, the words on the page and their degree of correctness, researchers have become more interested in the process in which the writer is engaged on the way to that end product. The seminal research of Emig (1971) and the studies of those who followed (e.g., Perl, 1979; Pianko, 1979; Sommers, 1980) showed that among native speakers of English, successful writers make use of certain writing strategies that are unknown to those who are less successful. Research involving ESL subjects (e.g., Jacobs, 1982; Jones, 1982; Zamel, 1983) showed that skilled and unskilled ESL writers exhibit characteristics similar to their native-speaking counterparts. This research has produced a kind of revolution in the way we think about writing and in the way we teach our students to write. I would venture to say that very few professionals in the ESL field today have not been influenced to some extent by the “composing process theory of writing.”

Such influence has been, in my opinion, a largely positive one. We have all become more reflective of the conditions under which we ask our students to write, more mindful of the particular agonies that they suffer in the act of writing and of how we can lessen those agonies. Curricula and lesson plans have been adapted to this more enlightened way of teaching writing. And, not surprisingly, textbooks have begun to crop up using the new grammar of composing process theory and espousing adherence to new techniques of teaching writing.

However, although such books may have reassuring titles or prefaces and some of their exercises may appear to be in agreement with process theory, the texts as a whole may or may not be consonant with the advice that composing process experts are giving us in regard to the best approaches to teaching writing. This review examines three ESL textbooks—two writing texts and one reading-writing text—that in some way bear the influence of writing process theory and attempts to determine whether or not they actually put into practice the tenets of that theory.

The first text states its allegiance to the theory in its title, *The Writing Process: 20 Projects for Group Work.* The preface explains the premises on which the text is based: (a) It is important to get students to write in quantity and in a variety of circumstances; (b) motivation and good attitudes toward writing are engendered when students work cooperatively in groups; (c) students at an advanced level of ESL are ready to focus on process versus product; and (d) direct grammar instruction at an advanced level of ESL is not necessary.

Accordingly, each unit, based on a particular theme, directs student groups through a series of exercises leading to the writing of a composition. In the first step, Getting Ideas, students do a 15-minute "quick-write," or free writing, based on a specific question, and are presented with an information-gathering task, sometimes involving an activity outside of the classroom. The second step, Putting Ideas Together, brings the students back to class to share the notes they have taken, to answer a list of questions on the task, and to brainstorm orally on a given question related to the unit's theme.

The students are now ready for the third step, Drafting, in which they choose a topic from a list and quick-write on it for 15 minutes. They are then instructed to "focus" their ideas by underlining the parts of the quick-write they would like to use in their composition, checking the rest of their notes in the unit for more ideas, and writing a rough draft of the piece. Getting Feedback puts the students into pairs so they can answer a list of questions about each other's drafts regarding parts they like or dislike, aspects that are not clear, and information that may be missing. In Revising, a list of questions guides students to evaluate their pieces in regard to their purpose in writing, the audience they are addressing, and the voice they are using. The last step, Editing, directs students to check their papers for one or two grammatical points chosen from a given checklist.

Of the four premises stated in the preface, three are certainly adhered to: The tasks elicit different kinds of writing; group work is emphasized; and attention to grammar is relegated to the last stage of writing. However, it is highly questionable whether students are really going through a writing process, in the way advocated by current theory and research.

What strikes this writer most strongly about the structure of the text is the extreme regimentation and linearity of what it calls the writing process. Historically, the impetus for the writing process movement was a desire to eradicate the restraints and narrowness of traditional approaches to teaching writing (e.g., students read a newspaper article, discuss the issue in the article, write a composition; the teacher corrects; the students rewrite). However, this text seems merely to be replacing traditional regimentation with a new one. The steps within this regimentation may be new and innovative (free writing, brainstorming, drafting), but when put into a fixed series of exercises, they lose their original intent: to allow writers to explore a subject in a manner that satisfies their writing needs at a particular point in their individual processes.

The notion that writing is a linear process, that one must follow a certain series of steps that will lead to the appropriate completion of the task, is one that writing researchers and experts have been trying to dispel. Murray (1978) states that "the writing process is too experimental and exploratory to be contained in a rigid definition; writers move back and forth through all stages of the writing process as they search for meaning and then attempt to clarify it" (p. 86). Rose (1980) found that blocked writers "may be stymied by possessing rigid or inappropriate rules, or inflexible or confused plans," which may be "instilled by the composition teacher or gleaned from the writing textbook (p. 393). The experienced writers studied by Sommers (1980) described the writing process as being unrestrained by time, as having no definite beginning or ending; they said they revised recursively, in cycles, throughout the process.

Writing experts also emphasize the connections between writing and the acts of thinking and learning. Smith (1982) describes writing as "an extremely efficient way of gaining access to the knowledge that we cannot explore directly. . . . Writing does more than reflect underlying thought, it liberates and develops it" (p. 33). Emig (1977) calls writing "a unique mode of learning" because "writing as process-and-product possesses a cluster of attributes that correspond uniquely to certain powerful learning strategies" (p. 122).

Cramer's text does to some extent use writing as a thinking tool: Students take notes on various activities and record what goes on in their group discussions. However, the connection between writing and developing one's thought does not come through in the writing of the compositions. Information gathering comes first, writing follows, and revision and editing come last. What happens if, at some stage in the act of composing, a student decides he or she needs to clarify some information in his or her notes or needs to get new information? The student is set into the pattern offered by the text and, unless advised otherwise, may not think about returning to the information-gathering step; writing as learning and developing thought is thereby stymied.

Researchers who have studied the writing processes of experienced writers (e.g., Sommers, 1980; Zamel, 1983) have done so to find out what techniques these writers use to guide themselves successfully through the composing process. These techniques were not imposed on the writers but developed from the writers' own trials and experimentations and eventually became integral and natural parts of their personal writing processes. Elbow (1981) offers a variety of suggestions on how to write; however, he makes it clear that it is up to the individual writer to choose those techniques that suit his or her own writing situation.

In contrast, there is little choice for student writers who follow Cramer's text. Nor is there anything natural in the order of steps that make up the writing process. Each unit begins with a 15-minute free-writing session on a topic that has just been introduced, but I have never heard or read of any writer who consistently begins a piece of writing in this way. Furthermore, the number of questions directed to students is staggering; in one unit alone, the count is 27. It becomes imperative to ask whether it is at all a necessary or integral part of the writing process to have to continually answer sets of questions posed by a textbook. More important, the structure of the text does not allow students to formulate and answer their own questions during the exploration of a topic. If writing is a learning tool, a means of developing thought, this activity is surely an essential part of the writing process.

The text presents a further problem in regard to the content of the questions posed and whether they actually contribute to the process of thinking and writing about a particular topic. It is intrinsic to any kind of process that each step facilitate the succeeding one. If a step fails in this regard, one needs to go back and try it again or to try an alternate step. Whether or not the process breaks down at some point, it is essential that the steps eventually mesh with or build on each other.

In Cramer's textbook, the sequence of activities and the questions posed in them do not mesh in this way. Consider as an example the unit entitled "Food!" The initial quick- writing exercise is as follows: "You are putting on a huge banquet. . . . You have plenty of money to spend. . . . It is going to be the best feast ever. What will you serve?" (p. 89). The information-gathering task involves going to a local restaurant and filling out a sheet with specific data about the type of service, type of food, prices, and so on. After comparing notes on the task, students brainstorm on the question, "What measures can be taken to insure that everyone in the world is adequately fed?" (p. 91). Finally, a list of topics to choose from for the composition includes "Write an advertisement for a food service you like," "The joys of fast food," "My country's food problems," and "My experience with foreign food" (pp. 91-92). I think it is a valid criticism to say that the connections between these steps in the process are spurious; answering a question at one stage does not always help writers to answer a question at the next stage and does not always help them when they begin to write on the particular composition question they have chosen.

Of course, all of the questions and tasks in this unit are interesting and can lead to lively discussions and writing activities through which students can develop their English. However, if the purpose of a unit is to prepare students to write a composition, it does not truly accomplish this. Instead of choosing a topic at the end of a unit, it would make more sense for students to choose what they will write about at an earlier stage and then to pursue the kinds of activities that would help them develop their ideas and transform those ideas into coherent essays. Instead of the entire class following a set series of tasks, students who have chosen the same topic might come together to participate in information-gathering and idea-generating activities specific to their topic. Furthermore, the entire process should be recursive rather than linear, with writing, revising, generating ideas, gathering data, and consulting taking place when it seems necessary and natural for the writer. In this way, students would truly be experiencing what is called the process of writing.

The second textbook under consideration, *Making the Most of English: An Intermediate Reading-Writing Text for ESL Students,* emphasizes reading over writing, despite its subtitle. The preface explains that the text, on the basis of research results showing that vocabulary is retained to a greater degree when groups of related words are experienced together, “introduces lexical networks and grammatical points in contexts that are interesting and meaningful to adults and builds practical networks for students to use in their daily life” (p. iii).

Each unit contains a reading passage, lists of related vocabulary words from the reading, discussion questions, a fill-in exercise based on the new words, an exercise on words with the same root, grammar exercises, dictation passages, editing practice, and finally a writing task. Students are directed to refer to a list of guideline questions and suggestions given in the second chapter (p. 22) while they are writing. The present analysis focuses on the writing guidelines.

Although there is no overt reference in the text to writing process theory, the use of guide questions and suggestions for writing, a common feature in many recent writing texts, is closely associated with the current focus on the act of writing and how students deal with it. This association is evident in the guide points in Lay’s textbook, for example, “Don’t be discouraged if your thoughts and ideas don’t come to you right away,” and “Spend a few minutes *thinking* about the topic. What is (are) the *key* word(s) in this topic?” (p. 22). Careful consideration of these and other suggestions shows that the advice may be basically sound, but one wonders how effective it is in light of the casual way it is presented in the text, the level of difficulty students may be having with English, their possible lack of writing experience in any language, and the appropriateness of the questions to the writing tasks.

I must admit that I have in the past given students guide questions to follow, usually after they had written a first draft, and I assumed that they would follow through on the advice on their own. However, my experience has been that students usually ignore these questions. One reason they do this may be that at this stage of the process, students are still struggling with shaping their thoughts into meaningful English and are not focused on perfecting the content and form of what they have written. Another reason may be that they do not have the skills necessary to answer the questions and that I have failed to give them these skills. For example, asking a student to focus on the key words in a topic means nothing if the student is not shown how to find them and given practice in finding them, with the teacher nearby to confirm whether or not the student has mastered that particular skill.

Another problem with many guide questions is that they fail to take into account the difficulty of the act of writing in a second language. One of Lay’s questions is “Did I use correct ‘wording’?” (p. 22). When I attempted to use a question like this with my students, I usually received a reaction like "Well, I put in the best words I knew. As far as I know, they're correct." What other answer can be expected from students struggling with a limited range of English vocabulary? Persons writing in their first language or those who are highly proficient in a second language might make use of this question if they sense that a word they originally chose does not have quite the meaning they intended. However, beginning or intermediate ESL students do not have a large store of vocabulary; their choices are much more restricted.

Certainly, we want our students to reflect on their writing, to consider options that occur to them, to search their minds for the best way of expressing themselves. However, simple observation of ESL students at work on a writing task, stopping to look pensively at a word, combing the dictionary, asking questions of their peers and teacher, is proof that they are already being reflective and thoughtful in their writing. Asking them the question stated above seems fruitless.

A number of the questions in Lay's lists are meant to involve writers in an intense analysis of the ideas they have put to paper. These include questions like "Did I explain my point clearly?", "Am I specific enough?", and "Do I see a total picture of what I would like to write?" (p. 22). The problem with these questions is that there are no simple, easy-to-learn skills that can show someone how to answer them. Indeed, these are questions that experienced writers grapple with all the time. Answering them involves removing oneself from the text and reading it as if it were written by someone else. This takes a great deal of experience in writing, and in reading, in any language.

In assessing students' ability to tackle this kind of task, we have to consider not only how much control over English they possess, but also how much experience they have with the act of writing in their native language. The skill of looking at one's writing critically needs to be nurtured and developed as students' writing skills develop; we cannot assume that this skill will be acquired automatically or that merely telling students to consider their writing in this way will endow them with the ability to do it.

A final criticism of the guidelines concerns the inappropriateness of one of the suggestions to the tasks in the text: "Think of a possible audience for this piece of writing. Are you writing for your teacher? a friend? a specific group of people?" (p. 22). An analysis of the writing tasks reveals that only two, a letter and a résumé, are examples of real-life writing directed at real audiences. The rest of the tasks are phrased as typical English-class writing assignments, meant for the teacher to read and correct. It seems, then, presumptuous to ask students to pretend to be writing to an audience other than their teacher when they know they are not. Although this question is of importance to students simulating or engaged in real-life writing experiences, when transferred to a conventional ESL writing assignment, it loses all meaning.

All of the questions and suggestions listed in Lay's guidelines are important and valid. However, they are out of place in a text directed toward students who are inexperienced in the language and in writing. Why has this happened? How did these important concepts in the writing process end up in this inappropriate context ?

I believe that the answer lies in the way research results have become misdirected and misused in the act of teaching and in the writing of textbooks. The body of research on writing has given us a great deal of knowledge in two areas: how inexperienced writers write and how experienced writers write. We have learned that beginning writers use Strategies A, B, and C, and basically, they fail to produce good writing. Experienced writers, however, use Strategies X, Y, and Z, and they produce much better writing. It is easy, then, to reach the following conclusion: To write better, inexperienced writers should use Strategies X, Y, and Z.

An analogy will show the fallacy of this line of thinking. I am a beginning skier. When I am on the slopes, I can barely stand up straight on my skis; I fail to make a turn and almost hit a tree; I fall a lot. Off in the distance, I watch admiringly as an ace skier schusses effortlessly down the slopes. However, if I tried to copy that skier, I would not become a more successful skier. I would instead end up in traction in a hospital bed with a number of broken bones.

People learn how to ski by following a few simple, basic techniques; as they master these techniques, they can acquire more advanced ones, learning to ski faster or more smoothly or on more challenging slopes. Writers learn the same way. They begin by falling down, making mistakes; they first acquire the basic strategies of writing and then slowly incorporate more sophisticated strategies as their control over their writing increases. One cannot become a proficient skier or writer immediately: All experienced skiers began by acting like beginning skiers; all experienced writers began by acting like beginning writers.

Interestingly, this misdirected line of thinking appears to be putting us back on the old track, the goal of which was the best possible product. In search of that product, we are pushing students to use processes that are believed to lead to that goal. We need instead to accept the fact that beginning writers will produce beginning writing products. Both processes and products need to be nurtured and encouraged as they go through their developmental stages.

We must be careful, then, what we do with the profiles that have been gleaned from research on the typical inexperienced and experienced writers. Certainly the authors of this research never meant us to incorporate whole into our curricula and textbooks those techniques that they found utilized by successful writers. It is interesting to note the scarcity of research that goes beyond describing these prototype writers, research that shows the development of an inexperienced adult writer into an experienced one (although ample evidence exists of the writing development of children). This kind of research is time-consuming and therefore costly. However, it might serve to dispel the oversimplified vision of writing development that has led to the misdirected application of writing process concepts to the textbooks analyzed above.

The third text under discussion, *A Writer's Workbook: An Interactive Writing Text for ESL Students*, differs substantially from the previous texts. In the preface the author expresses the belief that "each writer is unique and each writer's process is unique as well" (p. xxviii). It is this belief that makes the text a more accurate guide to what the experts refer to as the composing process.

Each of the five units in the text focuses on a particular theme. Units are divided into three chapters, which revolve around a particular type of reading selection based on the theme: In each unit, the first chapter begins with a sample of journalistic writing; the second, an excerpt from a textbook; and the third, an excerpt from a novel, a short story, or an autobiography. The unit topics are of universal appeal, and the selections are evocative and thought-provoking. For example, a unit on "Coming of Age and Knowing Ourselves" includes an essay by a Cuban American journalist on the prospect of being able to return to her native country, an excerpt from a sociology textbook on how people adapt to social and cultural changes, and a passage on growing old from the autobiography of musician Pablo Casals.

Each reading selection is followed by exercises in vocabulary and text analysis related to the passage. Because the selections represent a variety of topics and genres, students are able to expand their vocabulary widely and are asked to react to texts in a variety of ways. An excerpt from a biology text is followed by a discussion of medical and biological terms that students might not be exposed to if they only read fiction. The variety of reading selections also elicits different kinds of text analysis. After reading a story by Ernest Hemingway, students are asked to reflect on the relationships between the characters; after an article on jobs in the 1990s, students are asked to speculate on the connection between the aging of the country's population and the types of jobs likely to be available in the future.

For each reading selection, the book suggests a related topic for journal writing. Students are encouraged to put aside concerns for grammar and spelling and to concentrate on expressing their feelings and reactions. The journal serves as a private means of communication between the students and their teacher. The text also encourages students to go beyond the suggested topics if they wish to record more general thoughts and concerns.

Surface problems of writing, at the word, sentence, and paragraph levels, are dealt with in three sections of each chapter. Students are directed to do only those exercises that address their particular trouble spots. The final section of each chapter addresses one type of essay skill, suggesting techniques for stimulating ideas (brainstorming, free writing, visualization), focusing on a genre (description, narration, persuasion), or giving tips on starting to write (using anecdotes, using observation, clustering). Writing topics representing different rhetorical modes are suggested. Each chapter ends with a revising tip, a different way for students to look at their finished products as a whole.

What sets this text apart is that students are not forced into a rigid set of steps in the process of writing, revising, and editing. Choice and variety, in the rhetorical mode of writing and in the process of writing, are the strengths of the text. In a particular unit, students may choose to deal with the topic in the form of a letter, a story, or a formal essay. If they have difficulty at a particular stage of writing or are concerned about a particular editing point, they can search the "Rhetorical Considerations" index for the section in which their particular problem is dealt with. There is also a "Grammatical Categories" index if students need help with surface-level writing problems. Students using the book can try their hand at both formal and informal discourse modes and should be able to discover what composing techniques are best suited to their own writing process. Putting this kind of freedom and responsibility in the hands of each student is, I believe, something that composing process researchers and theorists would approve of.

It is essential, then, to consider the new writing textbooks with a very critical eye. Some of them may seek to draw attention by using composing process jargon or by offering techniques that have come to light from recent writing research. However, we must look at how the jargon and techniques are packaged in the text and whether they are of practical and meaningful use to our students. We must ask whether the text locks students into a preset, artificial series of tasks or whether it encourages students to be independent learners and writers. And if we find ourselves having to use a text that we do not wholly approve of, we need to ask how we can adapt the text in a way that allows students to develop writing processes designed to suit their individual needs.

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BOOK NOTICES

The *TESOL Quarterly* welcomes short evaluative reviews of print and nonprint publications relevant to TESOL professionals. Book notices may not exceed 500 words and must contain some discussion of the significance of the work in the context of current theory and practice in TESOL.

Reading Strategies for University Students. Kathleen Romstedt and Julia Tevis McGory. New York: Collier Macmillan, 1988. Pp. xi+ 223.

This textbook is for high-intermediate to advanced students at the university or secondary level. Its purpose is to provide "students with practice in reading and understanding full-length, unsimplified materials" (p. v). The stated philosophy is that "students learn to read by reading" (p. v). The book has 10 chapters, each having a theme representative of the areas typical of a university curriculum (humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, business, etc.). The selections are natural texts from periodicals or university textbooks.

Each chapter centers around a major reading. Preceding each reading are two exercises: Discussion, which provides background knowledge on the topic, and Preview, which asks students to scan the text. Following each selection are seven types of exercises: (a) True/False, which assesses the comprehension of factual information; (b) Reading Workshop, which chronologically dissects the text by asking questions on lexical items, discourse features, factual information, and data application; (c) Inference and Restatement, which asks the reader to decide if statements are inferences, restatements, or false statements; (d) either Outlining, which asks students to outline the entire selection or parts of it, or Skills Checkup, which emphasizes chronological organization or classification of ideas; (e) Vocabulary from Context, which asks students to determine the meaning of a word in a sentence context; (f) Summary, which employs either cloze drills or guided essays; and (g) Essay Questions, which ask students to compose themes based on the reading. The only difference among chapters is the placement of the short Related Reading, which either introduces the main reading or appears at the end of the chapter.

Does the text meet its goals? Students are exposed to natural texts representative of those encountered in universities. The exercises used are in line with current theory. Prereading drills activate students' schemata, and previewing skills are taught. The postreading exercises stress skills necessary for text comprehension: understanding factual information, deducing meaning from context, recognizing discourse markers and rhetorical strategies, separating facts from inferences, and so on.

However, if readers become more proficient by reading more, then the text deserves some criticism. The major readings are followed by an excessive number of exercises. For example, chapter 6 has a four-page reading followed by eight pages of exercises. How much time is spent on actual reading when there are so many items to be answered? Would it be better to have fewer items and shorter texts, but more of them, so that students can be exposed to more reading? Related to this criticism is the validity of having students engage in outlining, essay writing, and the writing of summaries. Do these activities take away too much time from actual reading? Do they foster successful reading strategies?

In summary, my reaction to the text is mixed. I like what the authors do in terms of how they teach reading but feel they often do too much. A reading teacher using this book may choose to skip some of the exercises that deal with writing and instead employ supplementary readings to give students greater opportunities to read.

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Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage (Studies in Interactional Sociolinguistics 4). Penelope Brown and Stephen C. Levinson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987. Pp. xiv + 345.

The main body of this book is a reissue of a work first published in 1978 as part of *Questions and Politeness* (Cambridge University Press), edited by E. N. Goody. John Gumperz says in the Foreword to the 1987 book, “In the years since it first appeared it has come to be accepted as the classic treatment on politeness in communication” (p. xiii). The authors have written a 54-page introduction to the 1987 reissue, in which they provide a critical analysis of the theory discussed in the original work and review recent related sociolinguistic work.

Brown and Levinson claim that certain universal principles guide human communication across languages and cultures. They argue that as people communicate, they are continually aware of their own and others’ “face” and that they cooperate to maintain one another’s face. This is accomplished through the use of politeness strategies that serve to soften the effects of face-threatening acts (FTAs). People assess the seriousness of a FTA by taking into consideration three major social factors: social distance, power, and perceived imposition. In accordance with their assessment of the “weightiness” of a FTA, they rationally select and use various politeness strategies. The authors present taxonomies of positive and negative politeness strategies, providing examples from the study of three languages—English (U.S. and British), Tzeltal (a Mayan language of Chiapas, Mexico), and South Indian Tamil.

Brown and Levinson’s introduction reviews research that supports, challenges, or builds upon the 1978 work. The authors address issues such as the relationship between pragmatics and politeness, cultural variations in the notion of face, and other scholars' efforts to investigate and amplify the three social factors of power, distance, and imposition. Of particular interest to TESOL audiences are brief reviews of some recent research on women's language use, on cross-cultural differences in interaction, and on politeness in first and second language learning. The importance of the theory for second language learning and teaching lies in the way it links language use to underlying principles of social life.

DONNA M. JOHNSON and AGNES WEIYUN YANG
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Content-Area Language Instruction: Approaches and Strategies. Gina Cantoni-Harvey. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1987. Pp. xiv+ 210.

Cantoni-Harvey's book explores the relationship between L2 acquisition and the development of academic knowledge and skills at the elementary and secondary grade levels. The book provides its readers with information on the characteristics and needs of limited English proficient (LEP) students–or minority students, as Cantoni-Harvey refers to them–and the means of accommodating such students in the classroom.

Part I of the three-part book gives some general background on the subject, beginning with the educational implications of providing for increasing numbers of ethnic minority students in U.S. elementary and secondary schools. Next, it summarizes what is known about second language acquisition, ESL methodologies, and current approaches to teaching ESL. Finally, it suggests some basic principles to be applied in the classroom to encourage educational excellence among all learners. The theme of the book is that all students benefit from teaching that encourages the development of language skills and of increasingly complex schemata, those mental representations with which everyone organizes the world and his or her experiences therein.

In pursuit of the goal of enhancing linguistic and experiential knowledge, the author, in Parts II and III, discusses content courses, language, and the relationship between teaching both. Part II gives suggestions for teaching language arts—literacy, reading, and writing—to LEP students. Part III outlines specific strategies for teaching such students the content of social sciences, mathematics, science, and "other" areas (music, arts and crafts, and physical education) in ways that take into consideration the limited language skills of the student while encouraging the development of those skills.

The author knows her audience well and speaks to them as professional colleagues. Her approach is particularly beneficial to those who have had no (or only limited) experience in linguistics, ESL, or bilingual methodology. The style and presentation is direct, helpful, and very readable.

Cantoni-Harvey is specific in her recommendations, and she presents theoretical materials in an enlightening and succinct way, always directing the reader's attention to the implications that research and theory have on actual classroom practice. For example, she emphasizes the need for every teacher to promote cognitive development as well as English proficiency in the LEP student by explaining the important distinction Jim Cummins has made between basic interpersonal communicative skills and cognitive-academic language proficiency.

Cantoni-Harvey's basic premise, which she states carefully in chapter 1 and which she supports throughout, is that "EFL methodology, which focuses predominantly on language, is less effective than an ESL approach, which combines language with content" (p. 22). After making her point, she provides an excellent overview of the current ESL methodologies that stress the "importance of meaning over grammar and the pragmatic and creative use of English" (p. 25), such as Total Physical Response, communicative approaches, the Natural Approach, and the Whole Language Approach.

Through her very thorough approach to the problem of teaching LEP students in content areas, Cantoni-Harvey gives teachers encouragement in working with minority students, a conviction that such students need not be ignored, and the key to organizing and presenting material in a way that makes learning possible.

TERESA DALLE
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Interactive Approaches to Second Language Reading (Cambridge Applied Linguistics Series). Patricia Carrell, Joanne Devine, and David Eskey (Eds.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988. Pp. xiii + 289.

Interactive Approaches to Second Language Reading is organized in four major sections, each with an introduction that provides a précis of the chapters in it as well as a set of questions to guide the untutored reader in the field. More than half of the contributions to the volume are new, with the remainder coming from a variety of sources, including published anthologies and journals.

After a comprehensive introduction to the entire book by Carrell, the first section provides the theoretical context in L1 reading on which much of the rest of the book is based. This includes Goodman's view of reading as an interactive process that operates on several levels—the interaction of language and thought, the interaction of three sources of linguistic information (orthographic/phonological, syntactic, semantic), and the interaction of reading and social context. The following two chapters provide a comprehensive overview of various interactive models in L1 reading, and Grabe's analysis of the different dimensions of interactivity, in the context of both L1 and L2 reading, provides a transition to the L2 aspects of the book.

Part II contains four chapters that address theoretical issues in L2 reading. The lead chapter (Carrell and Eisterhold) follows up Anderson and Pearson's chapter from the previous section, looking at the interaction of reader and text in a schema-based view of L2 reading. Eskey's chapter keeps the volume intellectually honest; he talks of the special need for rapid and accurate decoding of language in L2 reading, providing a balance to the more top-down orientation of some of the other chapters. In the next chapter, Carrell discusses five areas that she maintains are causes of failure to utilize the interactive aspects involved in reading. Finally, Clarke's chapter looks at proficiency in L2 reading and, like Eskey's, emphasizes text-based aspects of reading in a second language.

The empirical research section of the book (Part III) is somewhat disappointing, three of the six chapters coming from studies conducted 10 years ago. This, however, may be more a reflection of the state of the empirical art than anything else. Moreover, this section does discuss a wide range of research methods extant in L2 reading research (oral reading analysis, recall, interview techniques, cloze, gap filling, short answers to questions, cued prediction). Issues include the role of different types of texts; schemata, or knowledge, brought from various disciplines (English for specific purposes); and oral aspects of reading.

The greatest strength of the volume is the fourth and final section, which treats the pedagogical implications and applications of interactive approaches to L2 reading. Each of the editors has a chapter in this section, and it is here that the uniquely L2 perspective on reading comes through the strongest, for example, the role of the first language in L2 reading, proficiency and its influence on text-based aspects of reading, and the nature of schemata in L2 reading. Although these issues are also treated in the rest of the volume, these chapters referring to the respective authors' own pedagogical insight make the strongest presentation.

Parenthetically, it is interesting to note that theoretical issues in L1 reading have provided an impetus for the field of L2 reading as expressed in this work. Unfortunately, this relegates issues like the interaction between L1 and L2 information (both text based as well as knowledge based) to a relatively minor role in the overall scheme of things in L2 reading.

JOEL WALTERS
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Developing Second-Language Skills: Theory and Practice (3rd ed.). Kenneth Chastain. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1987. pp. X + 438.

I reviewed this book without examining earlier editions in order to determine whether the third edition could stand on its own merit as a methodology book applicable to the teaching of second language in the late 1980s. My considered opinion is that it can.

Chastain takes a skills approach to the subject, as the title suggests. There are specific chapters on developing L2 listening fluency, reading comprehension, writing skills, and speaking proficiency. Other chapters cover the nature, components, and complexity of language; the learner and situational and affective factors influencing L2 learning / teaching; the teaching of culture; traditional and innovative approaches to L2 teaching; lesson planning and classroom activities; and the evaluation of learning.

Each chapter provides a set of discussion questions concerning the issues taken up in the chapter as well as a list of directives, many of which seek to engage the students / teachers in extra-classroom activities to broaden their understanding and application of the concepts presented. They are asked, for example, to "interview a language student to determine his (or her) opinions with regard to the characteristics of language teachers and classes that are beneficial and those that are not helpful" (p. 182). A list of selected references for more in-depth study of the topics closes each chapter.

Developing Second-Language Skills could be used as one of the primary textbooks for postulant teachers in a Methods of Teaching English as a Second / Foreign Language course to provide a general introduction to the area of skills-based second / foreign language teaching. Practicing teachers who have garnered years of experience teaching in the field could also profit from reading Chastain's book to familiarize themselves with current thinking on some of the theoretical issues involved in L2 learning and teaching.

In fact, one of the stated goals of the author in this third edition is to make evident the relationship between theory and practice. Chastain's attempt to do so is extremely worthwhile. However, the attempt is not always successful because the author needs, perforce, to constrain in-depth discussion of theoretical issues in order to provide brief but critical overviews thereof. Still, the amalgamation of theory and practice is an important feature of this L2 methodology book. In the early chapters, for instance, information gleaned from neurolinguistic and sociolinguistic research is overviewed and related to general classroom practices. In the chapter on developing listening comprehension, the theoretical framework of the listening process is set forth in brief, and then pedagogical activities to help students develop listening comprehension are suggested. Chastain's book is weighted more toward the pedagogical side of the theory-practice equation; however, the setting of practice within the framework of second language acquisition / learning theory is wholly essential in a second / foreign language methodology book, at least in a good foundations book, such as this one is.

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Strategic Interaction. Robert Di Pietro. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987. Pp. ix + 155.

Strategic Interaction describes a language-teaching approach conceived within an interactive and dialectic—that is, communicative—framework, an approach well worth examining as a viable route for language teaching. Di Pietro explains that strategic interaction has at its center a scenario that replicates real-life situations and requires the use of language to reach a resolution. The real-life situations are generally set forth in a dialectic with one interlocutor choosing one path toward resolution; the other, another. For example, in one scenario a flower shop clerk wants to get rid of the roses he has for sale, but a customer is only interested in buying carnations. Students, one in the role of the clerk and the other in the role of the customer, try to resolve the problem.

Di Pietro devotes several chapters in the book to a detailed discussion of the three phases in strategic interaction. In the first phase, rehearsal, each group is assigned a role. After reading a description of the role, the group spends time developing vocabulary and different interactive routes the scenario may take. At the same time, the teacher emphasizes that there will bean element of surprise during the performance and that each performer will need to interact strategically, persuasively using language to satisfy his or her own agenda, and then resolve the problem with the other interlocutor. During rehearsal, the group also chooses the performer to enact the scenario.

In *Strategic Interaction,* much attention is given to the second phase—performance. The scenarios allow the entire class to participate during this phase, since the students performing refer to their group if they come to an impasse in communication. Another feature of this phase is that its dramatic pressure and emotional involvement *may* increase motivation and improve vocabulary retention. However, the scenario chosen must have an interesting problem to resolve in order to induce this emotional involvement, and the dramatic pressure must be sufficient to facilitate communication, but not so great as to debilitate it. Unfortunately, no research is cited in the book on how to maintain this precarious balance between facilitating and debilitating anxiety.

The third phase, debriefing, in which the teacher focuses on the students' questions after performing the scenario, is learner centered. Di Pietro does not neglect grammar but contextualized it; the teacher's role involves answering the students' grammatical questions concerning what was said in the scenario.

I would not hesitate to recommend this book to all who are interested in the foreign and second language field. The author is very thorough in describing a method that has the most essential ingredients of effective role play. It focuses attention on the role the student is to assume and provides preparation, motivation, and follow-up.

KATHLEEN WELCH
Ohio State University

Integrating English: Developing English Language and Literacy in the Multilingual Classroom. D. Scott Enright and Mary Lou McC1oskey. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1988. Pp. 363.

Elementary teachers have for years needed a single volume that (a) is soundly based in current theory so clearly stated that undergraduates taking their first (and perhaps only) TESL class can understand it; (b) transforms the theories into practice, into specific activities and materials that the regular classroom teacher can actually use; and (c) integrates the specific practices with curricular constraints imposed by state and local departments of education and by federal requirements for funded programs (Chapter I, Title VII, etc.). At last this need has been met. Enright and McCloskey's *Integrating English,* part of Addison-Wesley's *Second Language Professional Library series,* unites theory and practice in clear language, giving specific suggestions for teachers, suggestions that are based both on sound theoretical principles and on the realities of classrooms.

The book is clearly directed at teachers in elementary schools, both those already teaching and those preparing to teach English to speakers of other languages. Regular classroom teachers, most of whom have one or more ESOL students, can also use this volume. I am currently using it as the major text in an undergraduate course for bilingual teachers, after my students in this year's TESOL Summer Institute gave it rave reviews.

The book is organized from the theoretical to the practical: It begins by explaining the "integrated language teaching model" and proceeds to indicate how that model informs the curriculum and the social and physical environments of the classroom. The theoretical foundation is based on current research in both first and second language development and on research in both oral and written language. The authors' underlying philosophy of teaching is indicated by their goals: joy in learning, pluralistic classroom communities, access to educational resources, literacy in its fullest sense, and power for both teachers and students. Enright and McCloskey assert that the best language curriculum is one that not only integrates all of the language arts, but integrates school subjects, including language, through thematic units. A thematic unit can focus on anything; it needs to be fascinating enough so that the students will remain interested in working on the topic for 4 to 6 weeks. The topic of superheroes, for example, maintains high interest and involves not only all the language arts, but also math, the arts, social sciences, and some natural science.

Chapters 5 and 6 focus on ways of developing oral and written language. Chapters 7 and 8 discuss building the classroom community and developing ties with larger communities in and out of school. Part II, the last quarter of the book, presents examples of thematic units, one for Grades 2 through 5, the other for Grades 3 through 6. These sample units, developed and actually used in classes, are constantly referred to, serving as touchstones of authenticity throughout.

Clarity and authenticity are two chief characteristics of this fine volume: The authors present both theory and practice lucidly, never talking down to teachers, nor ignoring the complexities inherent in trying to integrate theory with practice, curriculum constraints with teacher and student empowerment, and language with content. This is a teachers' book: It is written by two former classroom teachers for teachers, both those currently teaching and those preparing to do so. The suggestions for classroom organization and for thematic units ring true because they come from actual classes, classes led by what are obviously some quite gifted teachers.

The list price of $30 is far too much for a paperback, but Addison-Wesley offers a "school price" of $20 (Order no. 11554). This probably will become a required text in many teacher preparation courses around the country. It is a welcome and much-needed contribution to the profession.

PAT RIGG
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Bilingual Education and Bilingual Special Education: A Guide for Administrators. Sandra H. Fradd and William J. Tikunoff (Eds.). Boston: Little, Brown, 1987. Pp. xvi + 335.

This book is for educational leaders, those responsible for "helping others achieve their goals; [and] enabling students to master new skills" (p. v), often with limited resources. Given the growing numbers of limited and non-English speakers at all grade levels and the increasingly common requirement of English proficiency for success in the current job market, administrators need to be informed on the needs and characteristics of the limited English proficient (LEP) population as well as on the difficult issue of learning-disabled LEP students.

The book contains chapters by various authors addressing these areas. Sandra Fradd, in the first chapter, defines basic concepts, describes instructional models, discusses entry and exit criteria for program participation, and identifies potential sources of funding. The second chapter, by Sandra Fradd and Jose Vega, focuses on legal issues and requirements.

In chapter 3, Jim Cummins and Sharon Nichols McNeely address differences in underlying assumptions of particular program types and detail some principles of language acquisition. The authors go on to discuss four elements in the schooling environment that promote minority student success: cultural/linguistic incorporation, community participation, pedagogy, and assessment (p. 87).

William Tikunoff, in the fourth chapter, discusses instructional strategies and mediational strategies that have been found to be educationally effective. In chapter 5, Sandra Fradd addresses the LEP student in regular classrooms. After describing the kinds of cognitive and linguistic demands of typical classrooms, she provides specific instructional techniques, such as building on students' experiences, that can be of immediate practical help to the teacher.

Andres Barona and Maryann Santos de Barona, in chapter 6, focus specifically on the difficulty of recognizing learning versus language difficulties, that is, how to identify a nonnative-speaking child's need for special education services. They propose a model that administrators can employ that minimizes bias. In a similar vein, the next chapter, by Jeffery Braden and Sandra Fradd, suggests ways that administrators can anticipate difficulties and intervene before such referrals are necessary.

William Tikunoff, in the eighth chapter, focuses on instructional leadership. He discusses the characteristics of an effective principal and targets specific areas, such as effective time management. The final chapter, by Beatrice Ward, addresses the greatest resource of any educational institution: the teachers. She describes the clinical approach to teacher development and how it can be implemented.

Overall, this book fills a need for basic, factual information about legal requirements, program types, and effective instructional and leadership strategies with respect to the LEP population. Furthermore, it provides guidance on the complex issue of special education for LEP students, particularly the referral process. An additional chapter exploring different models for assessment and program design for these students would have provided depth and balance. Although there is necessarily some overlap between the chapters, it is reinforcing, not repetitive. In addition to being extremely useful to administrators, this book would be of value to school personnel such as psychologists, special education consultants, LEP consultants, instructors—in short, for anyone committed to the design and delivery of effective instructional programs for LEP students.

CHERYL A. ROBERTS
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The Computational Analysis of English—A Corpus-Based Approach. Roger Garside, Geoffrey Leech, and Geoffrey Sampson (Eds.). New York: Longman, 1987. Pp. xi+ 196.

Offering a unique perspective on computational analysis of language, this book of articles will obviously be of interest to readers working with computers in ESL, but it will also prompt any linguist to reexamine assumptions underlying various approaches toward language study.

The articles, which describe a 1979-1986 project in the Unit for Computer Research on the English Language, were written by members of a research team based at the University of Lancaster. The project's aim was computer recognition of unrestricted text. (Recognition refers to a computer's assignment of word classes and syntactic structures to text.) The application for TESL is computer recognition of students' linguistic errors.

The first two chapters introduce the project, discuss its objectives, and justify the approach for linguistic analysis it uses. This project was atypical in its use of a corpus (the Lancaster/Oslo-Bergen Corpus of British English) of naturally occurring text as a basis for developing language-analysis procedures. This corpus-based approach requires examination of a large number of texts to obtain statistical probabilities that a given word will belong to a particular word class and that it will be a member of a particular type of syntactic constituent. These probabilities are then used to assign word classes and constituent structures to new texts, thereby achieving text recognition. Chapter 2 contrasts this corpus-based, probabilistic approach with typical generative linguistic and artificial intelligence approaches, which are designed to parse a limited set of structures and therefore are limited in their capability to analyze unrestricted text.

Chapters 3 through 9 systematically detail aspects of the working text recognition system. First, use of the probabilistic methods for grammatical word-tagging is described in chapters 3 and 4. The next two chapters outline how a "constituent likelihood grammar" assigns the most probable structure to input sentences on the basis of probabilities derived from the corpus of text. Chapters 7 through 9 point out some specific problems and solutions for working with the system: Chapter 7 presents a method for evaluating the computer's parse; chapter 8 discusses problems with the form of the input text; and chapter 9 describes how the system analyzes idioms, which present a special problem.

The final three chapters describe other unrestricted-text applications of the approach. Of particular interest is chapter 10's discussion of its use for detecting errors in English text. Chapter 11 describes the application of the approach for text-to-speech synthesis, and chapter 12 outlines its use for producing a distributional lexicon—a data base with frequencies and co-occurrences of words.

The articles are sufficiently detailed to provide an understanding of the basics of the system. Yet they are easy to read, and the reoccurring theme is clear: The corpus-based, probabilistic method is successful for computer recognition of unrestricted text.

CAROL CHAPELLE
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Philosophy, Science, and Social Inquiry: Contemporary Methodological Controversies in Social Science and Related Applied Fields of Research.
D. C. Phillips. Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1987, Pp. xiii+ 210.

At first sight this book seems only marginally relevant to teachers and researchers in TESOL. After all, what does language teaching have to do with the philosophy of science? Yet, many articles and books discuss research methods and scientific principles, and many researchers refer to the work of, for example, Popper, Kuhn, Piaget, and Freire, although the principles behind research choices and methodological positions are not often examined in depth.

Phillips's introductory text can be of substantial service to those who wish to add depth and interdisciplinary congruence to the research they read or undertake. It can be invaluable as background reading, both for students in courses that must focus on techniques and recipes for research and for practicing researchers who wish to place their research in the perspective of the main currents that shape modern social science,

In the first part, "Expositions," Phillips traces the historical developments that have led to "the demise of positivism" and the ascendancy of more relativistic and holistic approaches to social science research, for example, ethnography and case study. Along the way, he skillfully introduces and explains the major concepts in the debate, as well as its main players: Kuhn, Lakatos, Feyerabend, but above all Popper, whose work provides the essential connecting pattern throughout the book.

In the second part, "Refutations," Phillips examines a number of theoretical and practical problems in social science research and highlights the central arguments that shape our own professional discussions as well as those of other disciplines. The problems raised here are extremely important and relevant: Are the controversies we live with (e.g., the arguments for and against Krashen's Monitor model, the demands for a conscious versus an unconscious approach to language learning) due merely to differences in attempts to solve problems (research method), or are they due to different views about what we consider important, relevant, true, and so on? Phillips shows, through a judicious choice and juxtaposition of quotes, that adherence to a certain view may predispose a researcher to see certain things but not others, to explain certain things in one way when they might be explained in other ways as well, and to rely on certain accepted definitions of concepts rather than others. In one of the most illuminating chapters in the book, "The New Philosophy of Science Run Rampant," Phillips shows convincingly, through a number of examples, how new ideas are turned into movements, and sketchy proposals into bandwagons.

In the third and final part of the book, Phillips conducts a "case study" of one construct that is of particular interest to language teachers: students' cognitive structure. He describes the work of Hirst, Schwab, Peters, Piaget, and others, then links it to the philosophy of science of Popper and his followers, thus demonstrating how theory and practice are always intertwined. Throughout, in this section as well as in earlier parts of the book, fascinating real-life examples from research provide illustrations for and relevance to the theoretical discussion.

The book is written in nontechnical language and does not assume prior philosophical training (and contains a useful index as well as a glossary). It is thought-provoking, informative, and relevant to all who wish to be informed about different alternatives to scientific inquiry.

LEO A. W. van LIER
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Crosscultural Understanding: Processes and Approaches for Foreign Language, English as a Second Language and Bilingual Educators. Gail L. Nemetz Robinson. Englewood Cliffs, NJ Prentice-Hall, 1985. Pp. x + 133.

This book for bilingual, ESL, and foreign language teachers addresses cross-cultural understanding from the individual learner's point of view. Robinson poses the question, "how can an individual from one culture understand someone from another culture?" (p. 1). Her answer, the central theme of the book, is that "understanding someone from another culture involves modifying one's own cultural repertoire, that is, developing cultural versatility" (p. 5).

Robinson is concerned that merely presenting students with information on cultural differences will not lead to cultural understanding and may in fact reinforce negative stereotypes or result in "learned helplessness" in cross-cultural encounters. The approach Robinson proposes focuses on changing students' behavior. For example, students' negative impressions of others—viewed by Robinson as largely the result of "errors in cognitive processing" (p. 49)—are overcome by methods that focus on the similarities among people and that introduce culture gradually and in terms of what is familiar to the learner. Through these methods, students learn new cultural behaviors. New behaviors lead to new attitudes and ultimately to acceptance of the target culture.

However, is modifying one's cultural repertoire equivalent to or sufficient for cultural understanding, as Robinson sometimes seems to suggest? In other words, do changes in behavior necessarily lead to understanding? Robinson ignores the issue of the effects of behavior modification within a social context that does not reward, reinforce, or value the new behavior. Nor is there any discussion of the possible relationship between negative attitudes and real social, political, or historical experience.

The author herself notes that hers is "a selective, interdisciplinary approach (p. 5). Although she draws heavily from the literature on learning theory and considers, to some extent, the literature on culture theory, there is almost no consideration of issues of acculturation, social or linguistic identity, cultural values, or the political context of learning.

The most frequent complaint about texts that aim to increase students' cross-cultural awareness is that the readings they provide (usually in the form of literary selections, short articles, or chapters on issues of importance to members of the target culture) teach students *about* the target culture but do not address the issue of appropriate behavior, or cultural competence. Students may thus come to know something about why people from a particular culture act the way they do, but they learn little about how to behave in culturally appropriate ways.

Robinson's book corrects this neglect by focusing on the development of a behavioral competence. But it does so without ever really integrating that competence into a larger cultural understanding. Changing one's behavior can certainly be a step toward understanding. However, students must recognize that appropriate behavior need not involve acceptance; they can learn how to function within a culture without accepting or even admiring all of its assumptions or values. Understanding involves the ability to evaluate and choose what in a culture is right, valuable, and useful. This critical appreciation may be the most important step in the development of cross-cultural understanding and ultimately in the process of becoming "multicultural."

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The Relation of Theoretical and Applied Linguistics. Olga Miseska Tomic and Roger W. Shuy (Eds). New York: Plenum Press, 1987. Pp. xxi + 193.

For many decades applied linguistics has been identified as the Rodney Dangerfield of linguistic study; theoretical linguists have looked at the discipline (in reality, disciplines) as representing something not entirely pure, almost second class, in the search for knowledge about languages. This dichotomy has evolved over the concept of theory; "pure" linguists (structural and generative grammarians) have focused their attention on the description of various languages in their "correct" form, whereas applied linguists (TESOL personnel included) have been left to focus their attention on the acquisition of language, with all the errors and mistakes associated with this acquisition and use.

The nine essays presented in this text are an attempt to discover how far theory and application have drifted apart. The collection is divided into two parts: Four essays attempt to place applied linguistics in the overall linguistic field, and the other five offer insight into how applied linguistics actually can help advance both the theoretical and practical aspects of language study. For those interested in the theoretical cornerstones of our profession and how these cornerstones modify and are modified by our actions, this book will be of great interest.

The first four papers offer the TESOL reader insightful, well-written overviews outlining the interdisciplinarian nature of our field. These essays go a long way in debunking the myth that there are two separate linguistics: theoretical and applied. The authors note that the philosophical differences in subdiscipline are soon subsumed by the need to study both languages and speakers of these languages concurrently.

The five remaining essays offer more practical evidence of the interrelationship of theory and practice for TESOL personnel. Shuy's discussion of how applied linguistic study of sixth-grade writing skills can help theoretical linguists understand more about language learning is both comprehensive and persuasive. Chitoran's discussion of the interdependence of the theoretical and practical dimensions of speech-act theory and Gagne's and Davies's applications of first language theory amalgamate effectively to demonstrate the joint importance both theory and practice play in the study and teaching of any language. Finally, Fraser calls on linguistic theorists interested in the Gricean cooperative principles to rethink their classifications after looking at the research collected by applied linguists on the resolution of disputes.

Although these essays, taken from the Seventh Congress of Applied Linguistics, can sometimes be overly theoretical in their descriptions, they do offer our profession various demonstrations of the roles both theory and practice play in the development of first and second language study. This book will provide stimulating reading for those interested in how the TESOL field is evolving through the interdependence of theoretical *and* practical linguistic research.

RAY WALLACE
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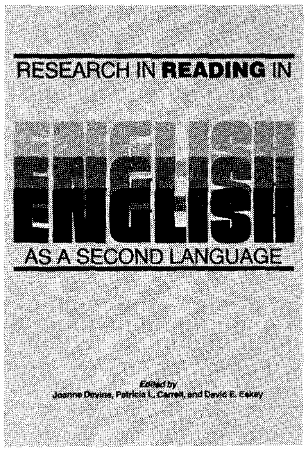

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AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

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The *TESOL Quarterly* invites readers to submit short reports and updates on their work. These summaries may address any areas of interest to *Quarterly* readers. Authors' addresses are printed with these reports to enable interested readers to contact the authors for more details.

Edited by D. SCOTT ENRIGHT
Georgia State University

Topic and Feedback in Native-Speaker/ Nonnative-Speaker Conversation

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■Much attention has been given to the role of conversational interactions between native speakers (NSs) and nonnative speakers (NNSs) in second language acquisition (SLA). Investigations have been undertaken into the basis for interactions, such as tasks (e.g., Gass & Varonis, 1985; Pica & Doughty, 1985). The study summarized in this report compared sets of three NS/NNS conversations, each set performed by the same speakers: Two were associated with the completion of problem-solving "communication tasks," and one was a "free conversation," in which there was no explicit task objective. Evidence for different conditions for interlanguage development occurring in these three "two-way tasks" (Long, 1980) was examined.

Feedback is an important part of all learning tasks. With regard to SLA, Vigil and Oller (1976) have claimed that a certain amount of "corrective feedback from a NNS's interlocutors is necessary for continued interlanguage development. This idea was developed by Schachter (1982), who suggested that a broad range of "negative input," that is, information provided to the NNS that "something has gone wrong in the transmission of a message" (p. 183), should be considered. The form that negative input takes may vary from simple expressions of noncomprehension to explicit correction.

Chun, Day, Chenoweth, and Luppescu (1982) found relatively little explicit "on-record" feedback in free conversations between NSs and NNSs. In a follow-up study, Brock, Crookes, Day, and Long (1986) broadened the scope of investigation to examine Schachter's concept of negative input in NS/NNS free conversations; they found surprisingly little short-term change occurring in the NNSs' interlanguage, despite the negative input that was provided. It seemed possible, however, that the lack of short-term change may have resulted from the fact that in free conversation interlocutors have little obligation to remain on topic. Abrupt or unsignaled topic changes following communicative difficulties are characteristic of conversation with low-level NNSs, as Long (1981a, 1981b) has observed. By comparison, conversations in which interlocutors have an explicit task objective would seem less likely to permit such topic changes—at least if both parties were committed to completing the task.

The following hypotheses were derived from these considerations:

1. There will be significantly more feedback—operationally defined as the ratio of NS utterances containing feedback to the number of NNS utterances containing errors—in problem-solving, task-related conversation than in free conversation.
2. There will be significantly more topic continuation—operationally defined as the ratio of topic-continuing turns to topic-initiating turns—in problem-solving, task-related conversation than in free conversation.

METHOD

The data base for this study was derived from audiotapes of NS/NNS conversations collected for an earlier investigation (Long, 1980). From these data, audiotapes of three communication tasks, each performed by 15 adult NS/NNS dyads, were selected. (The original corpus contained 16 NS/NNS dyads, but 1 dyad did not complete all three tasks of interest here.)

Each dyad did the tasks in the same order. First, pairs spent about 3 minutes getting to know each other, having just met for the first time, in free conversation (FC). In the second task—Odd Man Out (OMO)—the participants were given the names of four items and were asked to agree jointly on a category that would include all but one of the items and to give reasons for their choice. The third task—Spot the Difference (STD)—involved a pair of pictures that were almost but not quite identical. Separated by a screen, subjects were to identify the differences by describing their pictures to each other.

Transcriptions of the conversations were made, checked carefully, and analyzed. The utterance was used as the basic unit of analysis. Following Scollon (1974), an utterance was identified as a stream of speech with at least one of the following characteristics: (a) under one intonation contour, (b) bounded by pauses, and (c) constituting a single semantic unit.

For the purpose of comparability, Keenan and Schieffelin's (1976) conception of topic, already utilized in the SLA literature (Gaies, 1982; Long, 1980, 1981b, 1983), was adopted for this study:

> We take the discourse topic to refer to the PROPOSITION (or set of propositions) about which the speaker is either providing or requesting new information. . . . The discourse topic is based on the question of immediate concern. It is the proposition (or set of propositions) that the question of immediate concern presupposes. (pp. 338, 344)

Given the complex nature of this territory (Brown & Yule, 1983; Van Oosten, 1984), another reason for adopting this notion of topic was the ease with which it could be utilized in operationalizing a measure of topic continuation.

Following Richards, Platt, and Weber (1985), an error was defined as "the use of a linguistic item in a way, which, according to fluent users of the language, indicates faulty or incomplete learning of the [target language]" (p. 95). "Use" was interpreted to cover nonuse as well, so that this definition also encompassed cases of lexical voids (as when a NNS might say, "What is *bouteille?").* All NNS utterances containing errors were identified.

Feedback was defined as the correct use by a NS of a grammatical construction that in an immediately preceding NNS utterance had been used incorrectly. In addition, the provision of a lexical item that had been incorrectly used, markedly mispronounced, or solicited by the NNS was also considered to be feedback. NS utterances that followed an incorrect NNS utterance and preceded the next NNS utterance were analyzed in terms of whether or not they provided feedback.

Incorporation of feedback was defined as the use, following feedback, of a target or more target-like form for *a* previously incorrect form. It also included the use of a lexical item where there had been previous evidence of confusion or of a lexical void.

Each of two raters coded half the corpus. Levels of agreement were high (kappa [Cohen,1960]: 0.85-1.0; percent agreement: 97-100).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

For each hypothesis, a one-way, repeated measure analysis of variance (ANOVA) was calculated. It was found that NSS provided significantly more feedback in the problem-solving, task-related conversations than in free conversation ($p < .05$). The OMO task produced the highest mean ratio (0.45), followed by the STD task (0.32) and FC (0.07). Hypothesis 1 was thus supported. An additional ANOVA indicated that a significantly greater proportion of errors were modified and incorporated into interlanguage in OMO than in FC ($p < .05$). The STD task produced twice the proportion of incorporations as were produced in FC, but this difference was not significant.

The mean ratio of topic-continuing utterances to topic-initiating utterances for the OMO task was 4.25. There was no significant difference between this figure and that for FC (7.45). A significant difference ($p< .05$) was found between the ratio for STD (18.79) and those of the other two activities, however. Subjects stayed on topic significantly longer when they were participating in the STD task than when they performed either of the other activities. Hypothesis 2, therefore, was supported by one case (STD versus FC), but not in the other (OMO versus FC).

As predicted, a significant difference was observed between the problem-solving, task-related conversations and free conversation regarding the amount of feedback produced by the NSs, with the former eliciting significantly more NS feedback. The linguistic environment, then, was *potentially* more beneficial under these conditions. However, more interlanguage development could be observed in only one of these two tasks. Although STD showed a strong trend in the same direction, only the OMO task produced significantly more incorporations than did FC as a proportion of the number of NNS errors made; however, the importance of this finding is arguable, since OMO produced greater feedback overall.

It had been hypothesized that differences between problem-solving, task-related conversation and free conversation might be due to the extent to which topics were continued rather than dropped. It seems obvious that if the same linguistic elements are used repeatedly in the course of a conversation because the task entails the "recycling" of topics, such a conversation is potentially more useful to a NNS than one in which many lexical items and grammatical constructions occur once only. There was a significant difference between the STD task and FC in terms of the ratio of topic-initiating to topic-continuing utterances, but a nonsignificant difference in interlanguage development.

There are two possible explanations: Either the amount of recycling of linguistic material is irrelevant to interlanguage destabilization, or topic continuation is an inadequate measure of it. We suggest that the latter is the case. Within a conversation concerned with doing a problem or task, one part of the conversation may deal with stating the problem, and another with stating or discussing its answer. These are two different topics, according to the level of analysis employed in this study. However, a close examination of the conversations, particularly those related to the OMO task, showed that speakers may make use of similar linguistic material when handling two different topics. By comparison, describing two pictures which have some differences (STD) is a task in which one topic—What is in my picture?—can be developed at relatively great length without necessarily making use of the same material.

If topic maintenance is ruled out as an indicator of the potential utility of discourse, what other possible relationships between task characteristics and the utility of the NS/NNS interaction they generate can be considered? It has been suggested that conversations in which "negotiation of outcome" as well as "negotiation of meaning" occurs, as opposed to those in which "negotiation of meaning" alone occurs (Young, 1984), may be more useful. The former type of interactions have a "give-and-take" quality, as well as extensive NS acceptance of topics nominated by the NNS. Young argues that "mutual negotiation of topics in NS/NNS interactions, as well as acceptance by the NS of topics initiated by the NNS, will aid retention of the verbal items used in the interaction" (p. 7). However, all forms of dyadic NS/NNS conversation that involve some two-way transfer of information and opinions appear to involve negotiation of outcome.

In addition, Young (1984) appears to expect conversations that learners are able to relate to their own experience to be most productive. Of the three tasks in the present study, FC, in which parties told each other details of their personal experiences and attitudes, appears to have been the *least* useful in terms of interlanguage development. Thus, this distinction, made originally to differentiate between the discourse characteristics of the traditional teacher-fronted second language classroom and other types of discourse, would not appear to be useful here.

Duff (1986) has classified tasks of the sort used in this study as "divergent" or "convergent." In convergent tasks, pairs solve a problem together by finding a "mutually acceptable solution" (p. 150). Duff predicts "a certain degree of recycling of language related to the problem in order to achieve this goal" (p. 150). In divergent tasks, by contrast, individuals "are assigned different viewpoints on an issue, and they are asked to defend the given position and refute their partner's" (p. 150).

It would certainly seem that both OMO and STD are convergent tasks. However, some of the conversations associated with STD have relatively long stretches in which one party describes the picture, while the other party does little more than back-channel. Such behavior might be thought of as having a slightly divergent quality. Convergence most obviously occurs when there is a difference that both parties need to investigate. If, however, such problems are capable of swift resolution, less interlanguage development may occur in such conversations than in those accompanying more uniformly convergent activities.

Of the two problem-solving tasks used in this study, a greater degree of interlanguage development was observed in OMO. Since little progress could be made in this task unless both parties knew exactly what was being discussed, a common feature observed in discourse was a sequence in which knowledge of items was checked and lexical voids explained. The less useful problem-solving conversations occurred with the task that had visual support (STD). Most items described by both NSS and NNSs were in both pictures. Thus, even if a lexical item, construction, or pronunciation was not understood, it was possible for it to be identified through the picture under discussion, that is, by reference to a nearby object, a possessor, and so on. There was a lesser likelihood that feedback on an error would become available. A great deal of comprehensible input was produced, and that small quantity that was somewhat less comprehensible was readily understood by recourse to the visual support. Once it was established that a difference did or did not exist, further discussion was often unnecessary.

The cognitive and linguistic demands of the STD task were slight for most of the NNSs in this study, and recycling of linguistic material occurred in relatively few instances. It is of course possible that changes in the level of difficulty of the task, even with continued visual support, might have altered this; indeed, it may be that for maximum interlanguage development to occur, linguistic material should be slightly unfamiliar to the NNS, and the structure of the task should require maximum use of this same material by both parties.

One limitation of the study was that sex and first language background could not be controlled. Second language ability and familiarity with the interlocutor were controlled: NNSs were all beginners who did not know their NS partners. This is relevant to the issue of topic control (see Gaies, 1982), and it might have affected other aspects of the conversations.

A second limitation was that the two problem-solving tasks differed in more than one characteristic. The level of cognitive complexity required to arrive at an answer and to explain or defend it, the amount of world knowledge needed, and the degree of abstractness or immediacy also differed, in addition to the already mentioned factor of visual support.

Finally, there was the brevity of the observation. The effect of an event on interlanguage development may not be precisely measurable if the period of observation is limited. On the other hand, how can one attribute interlanguage development to the effect of one particular event if one observes after the event has ceased? A form of triangulation, in which Longitudinal and cross-sectional observations are compared with self-report data, might be one solution.

This study, then, together with earlier work (Brock et al., 1986), questions the validity of assuming the absolute utility of all types of NS/NNS conversation for SLA. The results do give cause for greater optimism, however, about discourse that has the characteristics exhibited by certain types of task-related conversation.[1]

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Patterns of Question Selection and Writing Performance of ESL Students

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■ Students for whom English is a second language now form a significant proportion of enrollments in colleges and universities across North America. University writing requirements can be a formidable hurdle for these students (see, for example, Bridgeman & Carlson, 1984; Horowitz, 1986; Ostler, 1980). One such requirement is the increasingly common essay test of writing competence. At universities in Alberta, Canada, students have been required since 1983 to pass the Alberta Universities' Writing Competence Test (AUWCT), a compulsory, timed (2-hour) test in which students respond to one of four questions of general interest in a short expository or argumentative essay.

The study reported here examined the pattern of question selection by ESL students on the AUWCT and its relationship with performance. Our questions were as follows: How did the ESL writers fare on the AUWCT as compared with "mainstream" writers? Did their question choices fall into a pattern of any kind? By what criteria did ESL writers appear to select among the questions on each exam?

METHODOLOGY

This study draws on the AUWCT exams written at the University of Lethbridge during a 2-year period (July 1985 to June 1987), a total of 2,608 exams written on 20 dates; of these, 305 exams (11.7%) were identified as ESL papers. For purposes of comparison with the ESL pattern, we used a mainstream sample drawn from the four largest exam sittings in the 2-year period; the mainstream papers on these dates totaled 544.

We first compared the grades achieved by the ESL and mainstream writers. Then we noted the question selections of ESL writers on the 20 dates. (Questions varied from exam sitting to exam sitting.) We analyzed these data in two ways: pattern of choice by question position in set (first, second, third, or fourth) and pattern of choice by question length (shortest, second shortest, second longest, or longest in set).

RESULTS

During the 2-year period, the ESL writers performed markedly less well than the mainstream writers, achieving a pass rate of 27.8%, compared with the non-ESL pass rate of 62.8%. The ESL writers, whether consciously or unconsciously, appeared to select questions to write on by the most superficial criteria. They heavily favored first and second questions in each set of four; 41% chose the first question and 34% the second, as compared with a mere 11% choosing the third and 14% the fourth. This pattern of choice contrasts with the mainstream pattern of 19% for Question 1, 37% for Question 2, 16% for Question 3, and 28% for Question 4.

The ESL writers also favored the shortest or second shortest question in a set: 35% chose the shortest question and 29% the second shortest, compared with 19% choosing the second longest and 17% the longest. Again, this pattern contrasts with that of the mainstream writers, who favored questions of middle length; of these writers 16% chose the shortest question, 32% the second shortest, 31% the second longest, and 21% the longest. The range of length was considerable, the shortest questions averaging 22 words and the longest 62.

There was, however, a statistical tendency on the 20 exams for the short questions to be positioned at the beginning of the set and the long ones at the end. For example, the shortest question in the set appears six times (30%) in Position 1, nine times (45%) in Position 2, twice (10%) in Position 3, and three times (15%) in Position 4; the correlation coefficient relating question length to position is –.65, showing the obvious tendency for the earlier questions to be shorter. This correlation hinders any attempt to attribute primary responsibility to either of these factors.

Choosing the shorter and/or earlier positioned questions in a set did not correlate with success. The pass rate for ESL students who wrote on the first and last questions was almost identical: 28.8% for Question 1 and 28.6% for Question 4; students who wrote on Questions 2 and 3 passed at rates of 26.7% and 27.3%, respectively. Students who chose the shortest question in a set did have the highest pass rate, 31.1%, but by a minimal margin; the pass rate for the second shortest was 27.8%; for the second longest, 22.1%; and for the longest, 28.8%.

DISCUSSION

The constraints on writers that timed testing imposes have already been documented (see Newkirk, 1979; O'Shea, 1987; Wolcott, 1987). We know from personal interviews that students are keenly aware of the 2-hour time limit of the AUWCT. It seems likely that time pressure was a factor in the question selection process for many writers. Could the pressure of time, compounded by the difficulties of writing in a second language (as described by Carlson & Bridgeman, 1986; Swales, 1982), explain the ESL students' marked preference for Questions 1 and 2 in a set? Did they believe for some reason that Question 1 was the easiest and Question 4 the hardest? Or did they read all four questions and deliberately return to the top of the page? Did they read only the first one or two and stop right there? If so, did they limit their choices to save time or to save the effort of further reading? Without further student interviews, an explanation for this pattern is not possible.

The clear preference of the ESL students for the shorter questions is also understandable. Yet ESL writers in this sample did not score significantly higher on short questions; the pass rate on the shortest questions was only 2.3% higher than that on the longest questions. Brossell (1983) found that the "information load" in an essay topic has a discernible effect on the quality of student writing on timed examinations; in his study, essays written at the "moderate" level had the highest mean score. Gee (1985), in a study of Grade 12 essays, found that longer, more complex questions correlated with higher marks: "Shorter, simple declarative sentences may appeal in their brevity but ultimately offer less insight into an essay's development and structure. Longer topic sentences . . . provide more direction even as they frighten away the less able student" (p. 84). Thus, the allure of shorter questions may represent a trap for ESL writers in more ways than the obvious; that is, such questions may narrow writers' range of topic choices.

This study has the following implications for test design. Questions that seem most accessible to ESL students should be positioned at the beginning of the set, where they are most likely to receive attention, and questions should be phrased as succinctly as possible. To prevent selection by length alone and to encourage reading of all questions, questions should be comparable in length. Finally, ESL students, even more than mainstream students, need to be encouraged, even trained, to read all questions carefully before making a selection. They need to be familiar not just with the typology of the questions, as Horowitz (1986) points out, but also with the typology of exams; that is, they should know better than to restrict their choices to the shortest or first questions in a set.

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THE FORUM

The *TESOL Quarterly* invites commentary on current trends or practices in the TESOL profession. It also welcomes responses or rebuttals to any articles or remarks published here in The Forum or elsewhere in the *Quarterly*.

Problems, Prescriptions, and Paradoxes in Second Language Teaching

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As teachers who have worked in a variety of settings during most of the past two decades, we have struggled to find answers to problems that confront language teachers everywhere. Now, as teacher trainers in Denver and Seattle, we find that we are routinely asked to give advice to teachers, to offer suggestions concerning activities and program goals.

We are just beginning to appreciate the extent to which teachers are bound up in giving and receiving advice, and recently we have become intrigued by the realization that prescriptions are implicit in virtually all discussions of the relationship between theory and practice. Our profession seems to subscribe to the notion that embedded in every new insight into language learning and teaching lies advice to be followed.

One has only to look at a sampling of journals in education to discover that most research articles conclude with “implications for teaching,” containing explicit and implicit prescriptions for teachers. However, it is rare for an article on teaching practice to contain “implications for researchers.” This unidirectional flow of knowledge and insight is also evident at professional conferences: Researchers are frequently sought as plenary speakers for teachers, but it is rare for researchers to request classroom teachers to address them.

Perhaps as a response to this situation, the past several years have witnessed an increasing number of calls for teachers to be given greater autonomy and discretion in their jobs. *Language Arts,* for example, recently devoted two issues (Vol. 64, No. 7, November

1987; Vol. 65, No. 4, April 1988) to an examination of the roles and relationships of teachers in education. A number of writers have begun to acknowledge the prescriptiveness of the literature, the authoritarian nature of centralized decision making, and the subservient status of classroom teachers (see Clarke, 1982, 1983, 1984; Giroux & McLaren, 1986; Silberstein, 1984, 1987; Stevick, 1980, pp. 283-295; Wilden, 1980).

Consider also the implicit assertion of teachers' incompetence, and the call for prescription and guidance from experts, policymakers, and administrators, to be found in the national studies on American education (see, for example, Gross & Gross, 1985; Karp, 1985). And finally, one need only reflect on the approach of school boards and administrations of schools when conducting program reviews and renovations. The standard procedure is to require an explanation of how current curriculum, materials, and teaching practice conform with "the available knowledge" in the profession concerning language learning and teaching. This tendency to look to the literature for authoritative descriptions of how languages are learned and how they should be taught is a deeply ingrained trait in all of us, which begins with our first course work as neophyte teachers.

We believe that teachers need to challenge the assumption that professional advice should be perceived as prescriptions for language learning and teaching. We argue, moreover, for the need to reexamine the relationship between advice givers and advice receivers. Finally, we assert that the connection between problems and solutions does not necessarily include prescriptions.

PROBLEMS

For teachers, day-to-day reality can be characterized as a series of "problems" to be solved: obtaining some level of orderly progress, covering the material, attacking persistent language problems. Although these are important and compelling aspects of our daily existence, they are not our focus here. This article addresses issues that seem to endure over time, problems that consistently characterize second language teaching. For our purposes, we will define *problems* as persistently troublesome aspects of the teacher/learner relationship or as frustrating and perplexing conditions of the process of second language teaching.

The following vignettes provide examples of these problems in modern guise. These anecdotes, which represent composite descriptions drawn from numerous conversations with teachers in a variety of situations, are intended to evoke the atmosphere in which teachers work. They are not equally representative of the day-to-day world of all teachers; some reflect public school contexts, others intensive English programs. Each vignette is intended to illuminate a type of problem teachers regularly face. Do you recognize yourself in any of the following situations?

1. Teachers: Love your students! You are a professionally trained, experienced teacher who daily invests many hours conscientiously preparing classes. Increasingly, you encounter the suggestion from supervisors and colleagues, as well as in the literature and at conferences, that this is not sufficient, that your competence as a teacher will be judged by how "involved" you are with your students. You suddenly realize that all the work you do to accommodate individual problems is not considered relevant. Apparently, only public displays of involvement with and concern for students will qualify you as a humanistic teacher.
2. Students: Feel good about yourselves! You have also been told that the key to successful teaching (and, incidentally, an important part of your evaluation) is the cultivation of students' sense of personal self-worth. You have been handed a packet of materials and a list of activities designed, you are told, to improve your students' self-concepts. You thought you were teaching language; now you discover that you must perform "psychological manipulation and emotional rehabilitation."[1]
3. Students: Take responsibility! You want your students to take responsibility for their learning, to take an active part in setting goals for the class and in staging and evaluating class activities. Yet they resist your attempts at democratizing the curriculum; they appear content to allow you to exercise total control.
4. Students: Communicate! Although your students excel in structured practice and other class activities, you are consistently frustrated when you encourage them to express their inner feelings and true opinions in the target language. Despite your best efforts, they remain students in a class employing the language of the classroom. They do not use language for anything resembling real communication.

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[1] This language may seem excessive, but these are in fact the words of a teacher at an intensive English center who believed he was being judged on "a lot of touchy-feely mumbo jumbo" rather than on his abilities as an English teacher. He had just been chided by the director for not participating in the school's international picnic. This phenomenon has its institutional manifestations as well. It is not uncommon to find "improve self-concept of students" listed among the goals of ESL and bilingual education programs in large metropolitan school districts.

5. Teachers: Trust me/Trust your instincts! You are regularly confronted by experts of various kinds—professors, mentors, older colleagues, supervisors, superintendents, gurus, and so on—who profess to have the knowledge, experience, or insight necessary to help you solve particular teaching problems. You have found many of their ideas helpful as you attempt to construct a theoretical/philosophical foundation for your teaching. When you press for specific solutions to complex or recurring problems, however, they chide you for your lack of independent thinking and assure you that you will know what to do when the time comes. In other words, "I am the expert, and therefore it is appropriate for you to ask my advice on this matter. Trust me. My advice is 'Don't worry; you know the answer. Trust your instincts.'" This problem surfaces in discussions with public school teachers who are required to attend a certain number of "inservices" each year. They are often confronted with an expert who, because of the size of the audiences and time constraints, presents only general information. Frequently, the expert has time only to assure teachers that they can adapt the information to their own situations. This problem arises as well for teachers in training, who are constantly faced with the paradox of being evaluated on their ability to apply insights from experts while being told to trust their instincts.

6. Teachers: The best classroom is a nonclassroom! You are told, and perhaps you believe, that the best second language classroom is the one in which students encounter the language in "real" situations rather than by consciously focusing on learning the language. You spend an enormous amount of time and energy (before and during class) attempting to structure your lessons to be unstructured. The closer you come to reaching this ideal, the more your classes resemble total chaos.

Of course, one explanation for the scenarios described in Vignettes 3, 4, and 6 is that the teacher has merely failed to execute an activity properly or to prepare students adequately for the techniques he or she is using. We are not criticizing efforts to produce more interactive activities in L2 classes, but rather the uninformed, generic assumption that *all* techniques and materials must meet the single criterion that the best classroom does not look like a classroom, a criterion that by logical extension cannot be met. Every generation of teachers must face similar prejudices; for example, E. W. Stevick (personal communication) reported that as a young teacher, he faced considerable pressure to conform with audiolingual practices.

7. Teachers: Test, test, test! You are an ESL/bilingual education teacher in a school district where student and teacher competence is a hot issue. Your students are making steady progress in their ability to use English, but your superiors are only interested in students' performance on standardized tests. You find that you are spending an increasingly greater amount of time administering tests to your students and in disputing the value of those tests in meetings with colleagues and administrators.
8. Teachers: Stick to the curriculum! You are teaching in an intensive English program that has a good reputation for preparing students for university-level academic work. A great deal of time and effort has been devoted to developing and refining the curriculum and materials, and teachers are expected to push students to their limit with academic tasks. Lately, you feel so pressured by the demands of the curriculum that you have come to look upon communicative language use—class discussion and small-group interaction—as a waste of time.

PRESCRIPTIONS

You may recognize yourself in one *or* more of these situations. In fact, the descriptions may seem so familiar that you may have difficulty seeing them as problems–perhaps you think of them merely as "conditions of existence" or "life in the trenches." But we submit that these eight vignettes are the behavioral correlates, the "real-life" manifestations, of difficulties that have always confronted the language-teaching profession. In the current literature these problems can be found under such headings as "learner anxiety," or "affective factors in language learning"; "developing communicative competence"; "integrating theory and practice"; and "teacher accountability."

And, of course, wherever we find problems, we will find suggestions and advice for solving them. These may take the form of specific behavioral directions ("Speak more clearly" or "Allow a few seconds of silence before rephrasing the question") or general guidelines ("Establish a predictable rhythm and pace in your teaching"). Sources of advice include colleagues, mentors, supervisors, journal articles, and conference presentations. In general, teachers welcome help in solving problems. And the role of advice receiver presents no problem when we are under no obligation to follow it.

However, we believe that the profession has encouraged all of us, in our roles as givers and receivers, to perceive professional advice as prescription. Prescription carries (by implication, at least) more authority than does advice. It implies that the prescriber is in a position of authority over the receiver or is in a better position to know the truth of the matter. The exact nature of this authority varies from the real power of a director or department chair to the less direct influence of a friend or guru.

Prescription also implies that the problem will yield to frontal assault, to a simple cause/effect sort of solution. This is precisely the issue. We submit that when people find themselves in situations such as those described in the vignettes above, they are placed in what Bateson (1972b, 1972d), Watzlawick, Beavin, and Jackson (1967), and others have described as pragmatic paradox, or double bind.

PARADOXES

There are three conditions for pragmatic paradox. First, individuals find themselves in a significant relationship, and one of them perceives himself or herself as being in the inferior position. That is, there exists a difference in status or power between the individuals. Second, an injunction is issued that cannot be obeyed, disobeyed, or ignored. And third, the situation cannot be explained away; no amount of talk will extricate the individuals from the problem (for elaboration, see Bateson, 1972b, 1972d; Watzlawick et al., 1967).

Pragmatic paradoxes develop in a number of ways. A few familiar examples will help us make our point. Consider, for example, the case of exasperated parents who would like their child to be just a bit more independent. They might be heard to mutter, “Jane, don’t be so obedient!” Or there is the lover who complains, “You don’t bring me flowers anymore.” The receivers of these injunctions find themselves in a peculiar position If they comply with the command, they have done so not because they felt motivated to do it, but only to please the person who uttered it. Because the behavior is not spontaneous, their efforts are not likely to satisfy the person who demanded the behavior. But refusing to comply indicates a lack of cooperation, which is equally unacceptable. In other words, the behavior is required to maintain the relationship, but it will be appreciated only if it is spontaneous. However, since it has been commanded, it cannot be spontaneous.

Furthermore, people caught in this situation are not usually in a position to explain the bind in which they have been placed, even if they understand what has happened. Lovers and children are a captive and, in this situation, an inarticulate audience. This is the

"Be spontaneous!" paradox: One cannot comply with the command, cannot refuse to comply, and cannot explain away the problem.

Another type of pragmatic paradox occurs when individuals confuse levels of abstraction. This is called *confusion of logical type* and is the focus of considerable philosophical inquiry (see Bateson, 1972b, 1972d; Watzlawick, Weakland, & Fisch, 1974). This is the error made by a child who measures the distance between two points on a map using his or her fingers and concludes that the trip to the beach will not take long. Another example of this type of error is the schizophrenic who enters a restaurant and eats the menu. The error is in confusing the real thing with the representation of the thing, and the pragmatic paradox occurs when someone is required to act as if the map were the territory or the menu were the meal.

Although the clinical literature demonstrates that these double binds can result in mental illness, ordinarily they are merely annoying characteristics of human interaction. And, we argue, they are a subtle and pervasive aspect of the language-teaching profession, especially with regard to the relationship of problems and prescriptions.

The eight vignettes described above illustrate these binds. Vignettes 1-4 qualify as examples of the "Be spontaneous!" paradox. In each of these situations, individuals are commanded (either directly or indirectly) to behave in a manner that will be meaningful only if their behavior is spontaneous. Because it is impossible to improve one's attitude under compulsion, injunctions to teachers to "love your students" or to students to "feel good about yourselves" (Vignettes 1 and 2) are worse than nonsensical; they are dangerous because the receiver of the command is placed in the untenable position of the double bind, in which it is impossible either to act meaningfully (one cannot plan to be spontaneous) or to ignore the command. We place students in a similar situation when we tell them to take control over the classroom (Vignette 3). Students know that teachers are ultimately in charge. The pretense that we are not makes it impossible for students to act and ultimately strengthens the authority of the teacher. The same thing occurs when we ask students to communicate about something of personal importance to them when, from their perspective, the classroom may be an inappropriate context for such behavior (Vignette 4).

Vignettes 5-8 provide examples of the confusion of logical type. In each case, one level of abstraction is confused with another. In addition, Vignettes 5 and 6 represent paradoxical definitions. "Teachers: Trust me/Trust your instincts!" rests on a paradoxical definition of *the expert:* If I am an expert, you should heed my advice; I am telling you that you are the only one who knows what to do. If I am right (if you are the only one who knows), then you should not be listening to me; however, if I am wrong (if you can learn from me), then I am not an expert. This becomes a confusion of logical types. When experts claim that the only good advice is the advice we take, they are asking us to pay attention to two situations at the same time: the generic conditions for certain behaviors and the specific situation in which we find ourselves. To accept advice from experts suggests that an individual who has never been in our classroom can give us advice of a general nature for handling the day-to-day difficulties with which only we are familiar.

Vignette 6 ("Teachers: The best classroom is a nonclassroom!") also begins as a paradoxical definition: The best class is just like life. But if it is life, it is not a class. The class can be what it claims to be only if it is not a class. And it can be a class only if it is not what it claims to be. This paradox, too, rests on a confusion of logical types. The reality of the classroom is confused with the reality of the "real world." In our zeal to improve the verisimilitude of our classroom activities, we begin to behave as if the classroom has no legitimate reality of its own.

Obviously, we are not referring here to those techniques and procedures that teachers can implement to simulate genuine communication in their classes. Rather, we are commenting on the "tyrannical" aura of authority that has accompanied many recent movements in the field (see Clarke, 1982). As innovative ideas take hold in the profession, an increasingly wider circle of individuals (administrators, policy makers, etc.) become aware, at least superficially, of the implicit demands of the new ideas. At this point in the development of a movement, it is common for a prevalent assumption to develop that good language teaching will always display certain key characteristics. In the case of communicative approaches, the value of drill and explicit language instruction has decreased dramatically, so that teachers are made to feel that all good teaching can be measured against the "unteachiness" of activities. As ideas reach the level of acceptance as common sense (see Geertz, 1977), there is less explicit discussion of the value of certain procedures because everyone assumes that this is what teachers are striving to accomplish. Communicative activities lose their status as one of the many techniques a teacher can utilize and become, instead, the implicitly mandated reality to which all teachers are expected to aspire.

The situations illustrated by the last vignettes ("Teachers: Test, test, test!" and "Teachers: Stick to the curriculum!") have become increasingly common in recent years. In these times of limited educational funding, schools are pushed to justify their effectiveness by demonstrating that students are learning. This pressure has led to a confusion of logical types—a confusion of test scores and curriculum guides with the language competence and behaviors of individual learners. Teachers find themselves caught between pieces of paper and actual behavior as they are asked to ignore the evidence of their senses and to believe that completed syllabuses or test scores reflect the language abilities of their students.

We acknowledge several possible objections to the foregoing characterization. It may seem to stretch credulity to suggest that well-intentioned advice has the unfortunate effect of producing pathological conditions in teachers' day-to-day lives. By invoking the concept of the double bind, originally intended for use in clinical settings, we may have released a cave-load of bats from psychology's belfries. In addition, we run the risk of exaggerating the already difficult task that teachers face in attempting to translate theory into practice by suggesting that the task is inherently paradoxical. Furthermore, to the extent that we capture attention with our comments, we may deflect the debate from more important issues. Let us examine each of these objections in turn.

With regard to the first objection, we must look at human interaction in general before focusing more specifically on language teaching. The concept of the double bind is appropriately applied to everyday interaction because all human intercourse is, to some extent, double binding: Face-to-face interaction constitutes an important event, and even the simplest exchange entails some negotiation of the hierarchical relationship so that we are constantly negotiating not only the topic but also the relationship. Furthermore, in many conversations, this second negotiation is the more important of the two, and it is the one that we cannot explicitly address.

Human interaction requires, by definition, the contact of private worlds. The double bind occurs because the individual is placed in the position of having to reconcile the demands of public and private spheres of constraint (see Scollon & Scollon, 1981, pp. 344-355). The physical and interpersonal constraints on participants in a conversation force them to focus their attention and effort on the ongoing situation; they must negotiate a satisfactory interaction. At the same time, however, each individual must channel internal forces, the kaleidoscope of emotions, perceptions, and interests of his or her individual consciousness.

The everyday, commonplace status of conversation should not lead us to diminish the importance of this conflict between the public and private spheres of interaction. In fact, it is precisely because of its ubiquity that communication is the matrix of mental illness (see Ruesch & Bateson, 1968). Thus, although some would claim that it is an exaggeration to broaden the definition of the double bind to include more than strictly clinical cases, we tend toward the other extreme. We argue that if it is descriptive of psychotic interaction within a culture, then it is also, by definition, true of all human interaction.

Most of the differences between the conversations of “normal” individuals and those of “abnormal” individuals are differences of degree, not of kind (see, for example, Geertz, 1977; Goffman, 1961, 1963; Ruesch & Bateson, 1968). Conversations can be located at points along a particular cultural continuum (such as normal/abnormal, sane/insane, or social/antisocial, for example), if that should prove useful for analysts or linguists or playwrights, but all conversations are of a piece. This is the conceptual context in which we generalize the notion of the double bind beyond its original clinical application.

To the charge that we run the risk of exaggerating teachers’ difficulties, our response is the following: Teachers, like all employees, must negotiate conflicts between public and private spheres of interaction, between explicit and implicit communications. However, teachers, especially ESL and bilingual teachers, whose status within educational hierarchies is often marginal, frequently find themselves in double-binding situations. The reason for this is that teachers, like clergy, nurses, and doctors, are subject to unrealistic expectations by society at large. Teachers are expected not only to fulfill the letter of contracts but also to conform to mythical standards of moral stature. This has always been true, but we contend that the recent trend in language teaching toward so-called humanistic and communicative approaches has increased the pressure on teachers to be more than merely the efficient managers of students’ learning. Teachers are therefore placed in a position of having to reconcile conflicts between public and private demands, explicit and implicit expectations. (See Watzlawick, 1977, and Watzlawick et al., 1967, for elaboration on the occurrence of paradoxes in everyday life.)

With regard to the final objection, that discussions of fine points such as these deflect attention from the more important issues in the field, we make the following assertion: The subordination of teachers to other professionals constitutes the single most crippling problem of the profession today, and the problem is greatly increased by the fact that it is generally not recognized as a problem at all, but merely as a fact of life. That teachers unconsciously accept this status is everywhere evident: in journal articles and conference workshops, where the speakers are usually "experts" from universities and state or federal departments of education, whereas the listeners are teachers, precisely the people who know enough about their situation and its difficulties to be able to offer advice to each other; in schools, where administrators and other decision makers are typically individuals who left the classroom because of their interest in things other than teaching; in the larger sphere of society, where legislators, school boards, and the public consistently demonstrate that teachers are not the experts at all, but rather the instruments of the system, who will merely put into effect whatever decisions the governing bodies deem necessary after consulting with the expert. This situation reveals critical flaws in our thinking that result from the following fundamental epistemological errors.

EPISTEMOLOGICAL ERRORS

1. *It's all quite simple.* This error can be found at all levels of education. Legislators, echoing public outcry, want to know the answer, without qualification or temporizing, to the problems in education. Policymakers and administrators implement one educational innovation after another in the search for the quick fix. This error may be the result of the technological advances of this century, which have led us to believe that all problems have solutions that can be derived by the straightforward application of simple principles (see P. Berger, B. Berger, & Kellner, 1974; P. Berger & Luckmann, 1967).

   This is *The One-Minute Manager* (Blanchard & Johnson, 1982) mentality, reflecting an underlying assumption that problems have single sources: If we can merely locate that source, we will be able to cut the Gordian knot. It further reflects the assumption that people can be programmed, that people respond like billiard balls: Pointed in the right direction, they will reach their goal. These assumptions are strengthened by the tendency to demand instant action and immediate results and by the practice of assigning people hierarchical roles with rigid job descriptions.
2. *The experts have the answers.* This is another outgrowth of modernized, technologically advanced society: The complexity of life seems to demand specialization and rigid role definitions (see P. Berger et al., 1974; P. Berger & Luckmann, 1967). In education, this means that experts are the source of information

and insight, leaving teachers as the receivers and appliers. In other words, the people who have the most contact with learners, and therefore the greatest amount of experience, are relegated to a relatively passive role in the profession.

3. *Problems have generic solutions.* It is perilously easy to assume that the existence of labels such as *affective variables in education*, *learner initiative*, or *communicative competence* guarantees the existence of generic solutions that can be applied without regard to individual situations. But pedagogical problems manifest themselves in specific circumstances with unique individuals. The only appropriate response to a problem is therefore specific to the situation. Although this should seem obvious, virtually all educational decisions these days reflect the assumption by commissions, policymakers, and administrators that solutions can be generalized to contexts other than those from which they arose. Increases in centralized decision making, curriculum coordination, and standardized testing are just three examples of the result of this trend.
4. *Solutions can be mandated.* Generic, "simple" solutions suggested by experts easily become mandates. The assumption is that solutions can be prescribed, like a universal public health program, to cure entire populations. Individual and specific problems are addressed by large-scale educational mandate; appropriate in theory, these programs may in practice serve no individual learner's needs. A case in point is the recent spate of "excellence reports"— *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983), *Action for Excellence* (Task Force on Education for Economic Growth, 1983), and so on— which consistently recommend solutions that ignore the special characteristics of the populations for which they were developed (see Gross & Gross, 1985; Karp, 1985). For example, recommendations for more homework, longer school days, more rigid evaluation, and so on, based on Japanese high-school performance, ignore vast differences between the two countries in terms of cultural traditions, governmental participation in schools, and curricular options and goals (Stedman & Smith, 1985).
5. *Stability in the form of uniformity is possible and desirable.* Implicit in educational mandates is the assumption that homogeneity is an achievable goal, that a desirable solution to a pedagogical problem would be a uniform program for a large number of teachers and learners.

We contend that these errors give rise to attempts at problem solving that create the behavioral paradoxes described above. The errors result from the apparently human propensity for reductionism, the pervasive tendency to accommodate the complexity of life by making it less complex. We have attempted to demonstrate the seriousness of this tendency by focusing on relatively common situations from what we hope is an uncommon perspective.

We are not unaware of the ironic situation in which we place ourselves: We argue that widely disparate problems can be reduced to the single problem of reductionism. We publish our critique of experts and generic solutions in a major professional journal. Nonetheless, we submit that there is a fundamental difference between prescriptions that must be followed and solutions that can be ignored or followed in specific and idiosyncratic ways.

By advocating individual solutions, however, we do not endorse a laissez-faire attitude toward teaching, nor do we deny the importance of formal teacher training. We believe that in most situations, there are good and bad decisions and that these decisions are often informed by research. But decisions specific to a situation can only be developed by the knowledgeable classroom teacher. Thus, we propose the following antidote to the epistemological errors that can place teachers and students in double binds.

BREAKING THE BINDS

We believe that the first steps toward reaching a healthy perspective of the profession and ourselves as teachers can be attained by recognizing certain features of life in the classroom:

First, *language learning is a complex process.* We are reminded of the aphorism credited to H.L. Mencken: “For every complex problem there is a straightforward, simple solution, and it is always wrong.” We must learn to live with complexity and to appreciate ambiguity.

Second, *there are problems for which there are no prescriptions, even though they may have solutions.* In these instances, solutions cannot be mandated; they must be discovered by teachers in the messy reality of day-to-day life in the classroom.

Finally, *we can begin to break the bind of paradoxical situations.* This is not always easy, nor is it always possible to do in precisely the manner we would like. But we can break the binds in several ways:

1. *We can deny the validity of hierarchical relationships.* Teachers are professionals with responsibility for making the decisions on

which the education system depends. Titles such as *director* or *expert* do not confer wisdom by virtue of being attached to an individual's name. As teachers, we must learn to assert our professional prerogatives.

2. *We can refuse to choose among unacceptable alternatives.* The question is not, This text/curriculum or that? but rather, How do we determine progress? and, How can we accommodate a suitable variety of materials and activities? Perhaps no test or standardized curriculum will meet our needs.
3. *We can recognize paradox when confronted with it.* We cannot expect people to respond to injunctions such as "Be more humanistic!" or "Communicate!" Recall the social worker in *A Thousand Clowns* (Gardner, 1962). She did not like Raymond Ledbetter so she decided to get to know him. Once she got to know him, she decided she hated him. We cannot legislate feelings, but we can create environments that foster humane behavior.
4. *We can step outside of the frame and comment on the situation.* In that way, we can make people aware of the binds in which they place each other. One condition of the double bind is the inability to comment upon it. We break the bind by stepping outside the frame. In instances when we are unable to comment on an unpleasant situation, it is necessary to disengage ourselves mentally, to gain some psychological distance from double-binding situations and win some measure of mental health merely by realizing that we can define roles and relationships differently. We must strive to limit our sense of responsibility for bad situations. Although this is easier said than done, we must resolve to leave school problems at school; it is extremely debilitating to carry home the stress caused by incompetent colleagues, unruly students, or mean-spirited administrators.
5. *We can be content with small, focused solutions.* Our greatest problems are often created by small acts of omission and gradual stages of deterioration, rather than by cataclysmic events. The repair of the education system will come in the same way.

We believe that it is possible to build a humane teaching and learning environment, but this will require a shift in focus. We need to examine the assumptions behind the roles and the relationships behind the system. Most important, we must remember that teachers are the source of energy and information in the system (for elaboration, see Bateson, 1972a, 1972b, 1972c, 1972d; Clarke, 1987). Like the tightrope walker who needs the freedom to be unstable, and thereby remain on the wire, teachers need the slack to make their own decisions—to be wrong on occasion, but to stay on the wire.

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Two Commentaries on Ruth Spack's "Initiating ESL Students Into the Academic Discourse Community: How Far Should We Go?"

A Reader Reacts. . .

GEORGE BRAINE
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Ruth Spack's article in the March 1988 issue (Vol. 22, No. 1) of the *TESOL Quarterly* is welcome for a number of reasons. Although she espouses a somewhat vague concept of "general principles of inquiry and rhetoric" (p. 29) in place of academic writing courses, the article does contain a sound analysis of the current status of academic writing and a useful description of both Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) and English for specific purposes (ESP). The article also provides teachers of academic writing an opportunity to reexamine their practice and clarify any misconceptions.

No L2 composition teacher would contest Spack's assertions that, to date, academic writing has not been accurately defined, that the linguistic and cultural differences of L2 writers are obstacles to academic success, and that the personal essay does not prepare students for academic writing. However, the article also contains some contradictions and misinterpretations.

For instance, although she recommends that teachers of English "should leave the teaching of writing in the disciplines to the teachers of those disciplines" (p. 30), Spack also states that WAC programs have not always been successful, which implies that the teaching of academic writing should still be the responsibility of English teachers. Spack also may have misinterpreted the term *academic writing.* In the English classroom, academic writing has been, at most, a simulation of the real thing, although team teaching in collaboration with subject teachers is also common practice.

As a practitioner of English for academic purposes (EAP) both here and abroad, I also take issue with Spack's statement that composition teachers may be "ill equipped to handle" (p. 30) the academic papers they assign. EAP is more relevant in this context, since unlike WAC, EAP is concerned solely with nonnative learners. The numerous EAP publications of the British Council, the in-house curriculum material at academic institutions around the world, and the proven success of Longman's *Nucleus* and the Oxford University Press's *English in Focus* series attest to the successful integration of ESL and academic courses. However, research and curriculum design in EAP have occurred mainly in Britain and in the Middle East, the single American exception being those at the University of Washington (Trimble, Selinker, Lackstrom, etc.) who did pioneering work in English for science and technology in the 1960s and 1970s. In fact, many American ESL practitioners seem to be unaware of the depth and range of ESP/EAP research and curriculum design.

During the last 6 months, I have been studying the writing tasks assigned in undergraduate courses in science and technology. Subject-area teachers often tell me that writings by foreign students are mostly cut-and-paste jobs—a claim substantiated by Abraham (1987), whose study spotlighted the high incidence of plagiarism in writing by foreign students. This is not surprising: Cram schools train students to obtain sufficiently high TOEFL scores to enter U.S. colleges, so they can bypass the extra time and expense of intensive English programs. As a result, from their first week in college, many students face an intense, immediate struggle with the demands of the academy.

Although Spack suggests that the teaching of writing in the disciplines be left to the subject-area teachers, my observation is that, even where technical writing programs exist, sometimes the emphasis is not on writing instruction but merely on assigning a grade to the product. In the undergraduate courses I have observed, students are often required to compose 6,000 words or more per semester, with little more than one-page handouts being the only guidelines provided. Since Freshman English (or its equivalent) is often the only “service” course offered at college level, there simply is not time for “linguistic and cultural” instruction. If we do not assist our students in their concurrent academic needs, we have failed in our aims.

Although collaboration between English and subject-area teachers has enriched EAP curricula, our students are probably our best source of information. Trimble (1985), in what he terms the individualizing process, has demonstrated how authentic assignments brought by students can be used as curriculum material in the English classroom. The English teacher remains the language expert, but the students are the sources of information from the various disciplines.

The English teacher should not aim to teach writing in the disciplines. However, only the successful integration of English courses with academic tasks will enable our students to succeed in the academy. I am reminded of Kinneavy’s (1983) suggestion that English department faculty extend their knowledge to expository narrative, familiarizing themselves with lab reports, case histories, and field studies. Perhaps then, we can avoid the complaint made by Rose (1983) that basic writing courses are “self-contained,” having “little conceptual or practical connection to the larger academic writing environment” (p. 109).

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The Author Responds to Braine. . .

RUTH SPACK
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In writing about initiating students into the academic discourse community, I had hoped to provide a thought-provoking discussion that would lead to a reexamination of certain practices in the composition field. I am therefore gratified that George Braine has chosen to respond. Unfortunately, I do not feel that he has provided a solution to the problem discussed at length in the article.

To briefly summarize the problem: The teaching of rhetoric cannot be divorced from the teaching of content, and therefore English faculty who have little or no knowledge of a discipline cannot adequately teach or respond to discipline-specific writing. This has been shown to be true even when composition teachers collaborate with subject-area teachers (Faigley & Hansen, 1985; Wilkinson, 1985).

Nevertheless, Braine continues to recommend composition teacher/subject-area teacher collaboration. He offers no evidence to refute the findings of the research cited above; instead he presents an unsubstantiated claim of “the proven success” of several English-for-academic-purposes textbooks. Nor has he given any counterevidence to allay the concerns of specialists who claim that too few teachers combine sufficient experience in the use of English in general and the knowledge of the subject-area specialty in particular (see pp. 37-38).

Furthermore, Braine misrepresents Rose (1983) in suggesting that the answer to the problem of “self-contained” writing classes is for English department faculty to familiarize themselves with lab reports, field studies, and case histories. True, Rose encourages composition instructors to disabuse themselves of the notion that only personal, “relevant” topics should be assigned. But he does not ask English teachers to gain a little knowledge about a lot of disciplines as an alternative. He calls instead for assignments that encourage students to deal with challenging, academically oriented topics that help them develop into more critical thinkers. What is truly relevant for students, Rose’s research shows, includes the kind of academic writing that allows for and develops “the complex ability to write from other texts—to summarize, to disambiguate key notions and useful facts and incorporate them in one’s own writing, to react critically to prose” (Rose, 1983, p. 117). That is the kind of academic writing that can be taught by English department faculty. I concur with this view.

Yet Braine thinks I "may have misinterpreted the term *academic writing.*" It is obvious that the L2 composition field needs to come to an understanding about what this term refers to. To some, academic writing exists if the writing is directed toward an academic audience. Therefore, a letter written to a parent—and for the parent's eyes only—is not academic, but any paper written for a professor, even a personal essay, can be considered academic writing. To others, academic writing is writing done for an academic audience in response to texts or data. Braine represents that group who believe that the writing done for an English classroom is only "a simulation of the real thing." The only real academic writing, according to that logic, is done in disciplines other than English. That point is obviously subject to debate, but belief in that point has led some English teachers to become involved in the teaching of discipline-specific writing.

Braine virtually admits that English teachers are the wrong audience for field-specific writing when he recommends that they remain "the language expert [s]" while their students—who are not full-fledged members of their respective disciplinary communities—become "the sources of information from the various disciplines." To work collaboratively in a discipline, however, students should be guided by those who know more, not by those who know as little or less. Braine's solution, then, is just a problem. Other solutions must be sought.

One logical solution is to have subject-area teachers teach their own students to become writers in their respective disciplines. But Braine questions the effectiveness of university content-course instructors as composition teachers because many currently follow the practice of "merely . . . assigning a grade to the product," rather than providing writing instruction. I do not believe this practice is reason enough to give up on this solution, and it certainly does not justify having English teachers become evaluators of papers whose conventions and subject matter they have not mastered. A major barrier to the success of Writing Across the Curriculum programs has been that subject-area teachers are "understandably reluctant" to devote much time to new approaches if they do not promote learning of the teachers' own subjects (Langer & Applebee, 1987, p. 7). We can work to discover creative solutions to this problem.

I would like to repeat here that I do not deny that composition programs that teach discipline-specific writing can work. My concern continues to be with the expertise of the teacher. I wish that Braine, rather than denying that composition teachers may be ill-equipped to handle the academic papers they assign, had qualified his remarks. The emphasis should be on finding teachers who are

qualified or on providing discipline-specific training for those ESL composition teachers who already have a background in other disciplines, to strengthen that background, before they teach our students. We should reexamine any practice that, in the interest of providing a “service,” might do a disservice to both student and teacher.
❑

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Another Reader Reacts. . .

ANN M. JOHNS
San Diego State University

Ruth Spack’s well-researched and carefully crafted article in the *TESOL Quarterly* is an important one. It discusses at length the two movements that are central to English-for-academic-purposes (EAP) teaching: Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) and English for specific purposes (ESP). It puts to rest (I hope!) the artificial dichotomy between process and product. It views reading and writing as integrated, and it advocates an academic writing curriculum that includes important tasks such as working with data and manipulating information from texts and interviews.

Nevertheless, the article leaves me uneasy. I come away with the message that since we are not experts in the disciplines into which our students are becoming initiated, we should not attempt to fine-tune our curricula. We should, instead, settle upon an academic-purposes program that is “pedagogically sound,” moving “the students away from a primarily personal approach to a more critical approach” (p. 44). This is a conservative view. It encourages us to withdraw from the academic fray at a time when the WAC movement, among other factors, has opened up new possibilities for joint research with faculty and creative approaches to EAP courses.

Other issues also contribute to my uneasiness, such as the failure to distinguish among individual differences in student proficiency levels, learning environments, and majors. Perhaps the most important contribution of the ESP movement is its insistence upon designing curricula specific to students and their target cultures. At a very basic level, academic students may need a course that relies heavily upon sentence-level features. Frequently, discourse can be successfully introduced at this early stage through controlled composition, a technique that Spack rejects. Other, more advanced students, such as those already enrolled in universities, need classes that go well beyond this basic approach. For these students, an adjunct course, whatever its pedagogical demands, is most valuable and meaningful. “General” academic English, employing artificially constructed topics and materials, is insufficient for students who are exposed daily to the linguistic and cultural demands of authentic university classes. It should be apparent that there are significant differences between the needs of graduate and undergraduate students as well: Whereas graduates frequently devote most of their attention to production, both oral and written, undergraduates, who often write very little in their first 2 years of instruction, need to concentrate on the skills required in reading, listening, and question posing.

Though the author alludes at several points to the cultural and linguistic difficulties students face when confronting the academic milieu for the first time, her suggested techniques for empowering students to succeed are essentially limited to general reading and writing tasks. What else can we do to sharpen students’ awareness of the specific demands of the target academic culture? How can we assist them to understand various professors as audiences? What kinds of observation practices can they develop to grasp the meaning of the interaction between students and professors in a classroom or to know when to ask questions and take notes? What kinds of techniques do they need for examining various genres? How can they learn to determine the important problems in a discipline, the appropriate methods of argumentation, and the data that are accepted in support of an argument? These questions about academic empowerment need to be answered, and the methods of ethnography, if employed by both students and faculty, can provide an excellent means for answering them.

Ruth Spack has written a rich and valuable article on the current problems and complexities in EAP research and pedagogy. We needed this. However, I wish that she had encouraged further research and pedagogical experimentation rather than advocating what is, for many, the status quo.
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The Author Responds to Johns. . .

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I agree with Ann Johns that the dialogue among disciplines promoted by the Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) movement and the English-for-specific-purposes (ESP) movement is an important and exciting feature of university life. This dialogue has led faculty members to an increased awareness of the stylistic features and contexts of each other's disciplinary writing. But Johns and I appear to differ in our responses to current composition research and practice.

Johns contends that "undergraduates, who often write very little in their first 2 years of instruction, need to concentrate on . . . reading, listening, and question posing." That undergraduates may write little in their first 2 years—a finding open to challenge—does not, in my opinion, justify our giving writing a low priority in our language teaching. To do so is to ignore the findings of composition research: Writing shapes thinking and fosters learning (see Langer & Applebee, 1987). In fact, there is clear evidence that activities involving writing lead to better learning than activities involving reading and studying only (Langer & Applebee, 1987). To improve the quality of thinking and learning that our students do, then, we need to improve the teaching of writing. In fact, this principle underlies the WAC movement.

Though the specific writing program I outline is geared toward the undergraduate ESL student enrolled in a freshman composition program, the problem discussed in my article transcends issues of "individual differences in student proficiency levels, learning environments, and majors." I have no argument with the Johns/ESP "insistence upon designing curricula specific to students and their target cultures." My concern is with the means through which this goal is achieved.

I am uneasy with the practice of asking language teachers who have a weak grasp of other disciplines to teach, supervise, or evaluate the writing of those disciplines. This is a practice that needs reexamination, regardless of student level or interest. Yes, students need to learn "to determine the important problems in a discipline, the appropriate methods of argumentation, and the data that are accepted in support of an argument." But they will learn most efficiently and accurately from those faculty members who have fully grasped the concepts and conventions. To suggest that an ESL/EFL instructor can unlock the door to the entire academic universe of discourse is to overlook the complexity and diversity among and within disciplines.

Certainly, there is a need for further research and pedagogical experimentation. We should investigate English-for-academic-purposes practices, weighing the advantages and disadvantages of the ESL/EFL teacher's involvement in the other disciplines, in studies similar to those of Faigley and Hansen (1985) and Wilkinson (1985). We should engage in dialogue with other faculty members to discover ways in which students can be helped to become better academic writers. And we should continue to design composition programs that link inquiry-based learning with process-oriented writing tasks. But in fine-tuning our curricula, we should be careful to match our concern for students' practical needs with a concern for teachers' knowledge and abilities. The quest for authenticity may otherwise result in a counterproductive program.

■

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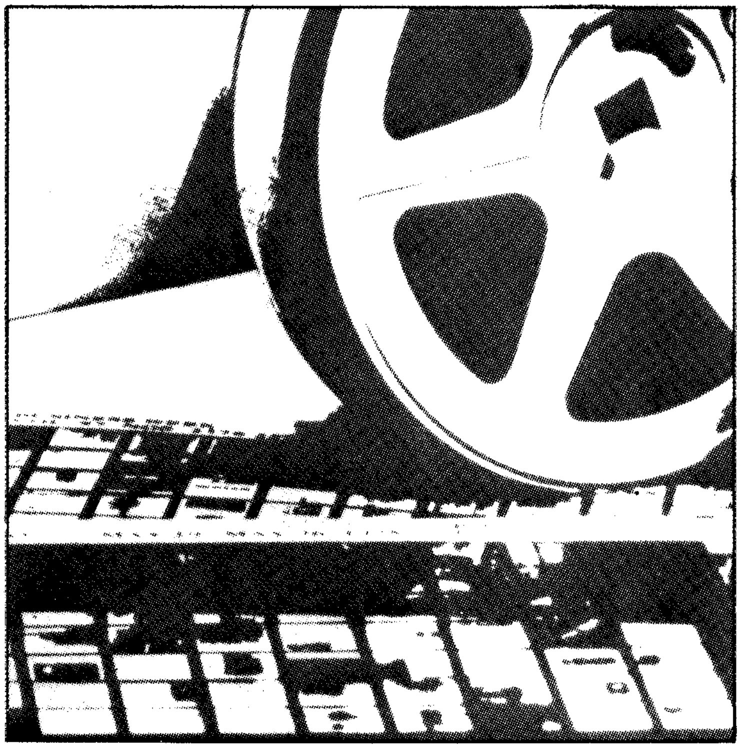

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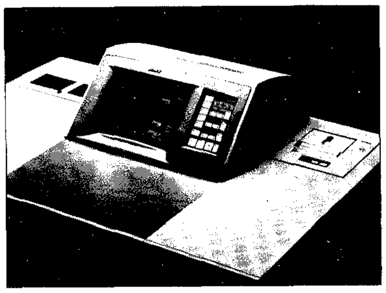

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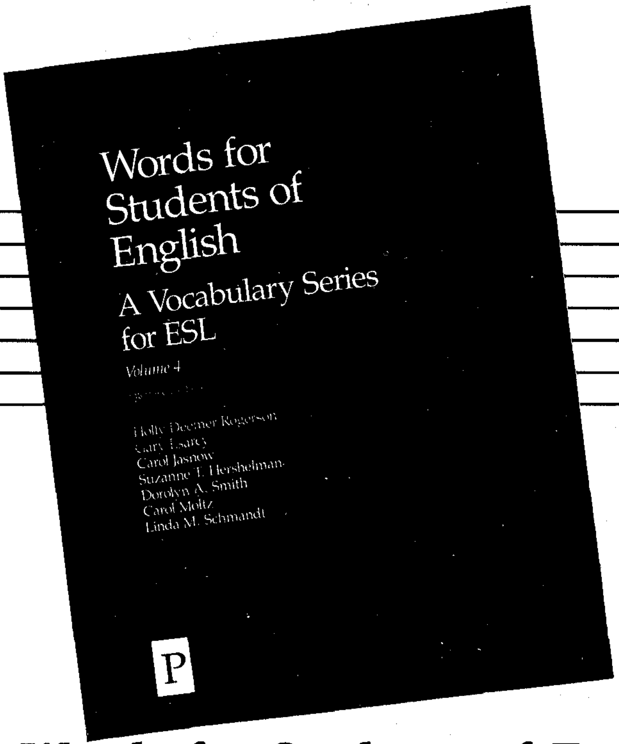
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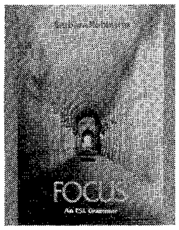

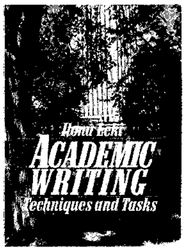

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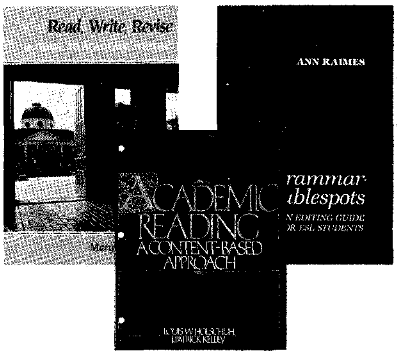

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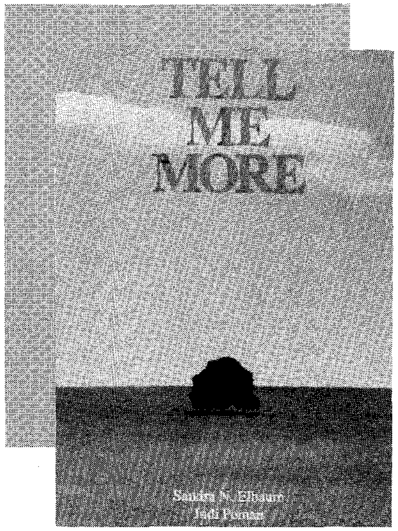

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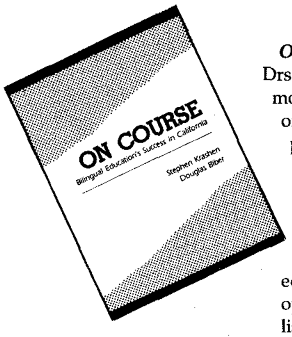
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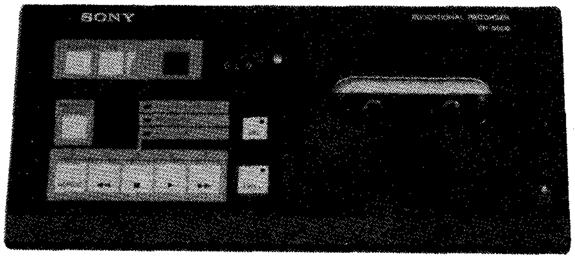

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